



inside

Ability Building Center

September 2006

ABC

50th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon



On May 11, 2006, ABC had a celebration luncheon at the Ramada Inn. In attendance was past and present staff, past and current board members, ABC workers and employers from the surrounding area who support ABC.

The featured speaker for the event was former Minnesota Viking defensive end Paul Krause. Krause shared with the attendees his own personal story of living and taking care of someone with a disability as well as his life in football.

On October 5, 1995, his wife of 36 years, Pam was injured when a truck struck the car she was driving. Pam suffered a brain stem injury and spent more than five months in a coma. Pam has difficulty walking and her speech is slurred, but she is alive, making progress daily and attends a program for people with disabilities in the Twin Cities area. These are, Paul says, good reasons to be grateful.



Krause praised the ABC staff and programs for their continued efforts to find jobs and provide programs for people with disabilities and special needs.

Published for friends of Ability Building Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Southeastern Minnesota by providing rehabilitation and employment services for persons with disabilities and other special needs.

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www.abcinc.org



From the Desk of the Executive Director **Steve Hill**

It is hard to believe that we are almost through the 3rd Quarter of 2006. With only three months remaining in our 50th Anniversary Year there are only a couple of events remaining that you can come out and celebrate with us. Our Recognition Banquet in Rochester will be held on October 11th and October 26th in Houston County. Our final celebration event for the year will be on November 2nd. That will be a public open house in the early afternoon and then in the late afternoon we'll be holding a Chamber of Commerce "Business After Hours" event at ABC. We hope to see you at one of these events.

So far, the turn out at our celebration events has been terrific. I reported in the last newsletter on the success of our Kick-off event in February. In May we held the Stakeholder Recognition event with Paul Krause as our guest speaker. There was a great turnout and based on the feedback we received from our guests, everyone enjoyed the program. Our annual fundraising golf tournament was held in June and we had filled our available "golfer slots" three weeks before the tournament and actually had to turn away some that wanted to participate. It was also a record breaker in the amount of money raised for ABC. In early August, we held our most exciting Anniversary Celebration event, at least in my opinion, the ABC Participant Dance. We had over 200 people that receive services from ABC in attendance. Although it was a warm summer evening everyone enjoyed an evening of dancing and refreshments in the ABC parking lot and cafeteria.

On a sad note, I want to acknowledge the passing of Father Virgil Duellman. Father Duellman served on the ABC Board of Directors for over 14 years. He held many leadership positions on the board including President. He'll be remembered by the staff and board members of ABC for his bold leadership, wisdom and gentle spirit. His great smile and words of encouragement will be greatly missed.

ABC Welcomes Wes Brandenburger



In June, Wes Brandenburger, joined the ABC staff as Program Director for Vocational Development, Extended Employment, Ability Enterprises, Ability Options, and Abilities Unlimited.

Wes grew up in St. Joseph, Minnesota, obtained a BA in Psychology and a MS in Psychology from St. Cloud State and a BS in Business and Computer Information Sciences degree from Mankato State University.

He has worked as a Psychologist for the State of Wisconsin in Chippewa Falls and has also worked as a Psychologist for the state of Iowa for five years specializing in disabilities. For three years, he had a private consulting firm specializing in disability assessment, and consultation of behavioral problems, especially those associated with rare disorders.

Wes most recently served as the Program Director at Catholic Charities in Winona, Minnesota.

Successful Fifth Annual Golf Tournament

On June 28th, at the four person best shot tournament at Willow Creek golf course in Rochester, 156 golfers were greeted with blue skies and abundant sunshine. With temperatures looming in the high 80's, low humidity and little wind, golfers had a picture perfect day.

The tournament, which included golf, a silent auction featuring a donated 1993 Cadillac Sedan DeVille, an autographed Paul Krause football, and dinner raised over \$47,000 with the proceeds supporting ABC programs and services.

The staff and participants would like to thank all of the tournament's major, corporate, media, tee, and cart sponsors, those who donated to the silent auction, as well as the Kasson-Mantorville boys golf team for their support in making this year's tournament a success.

Hole Contest Winners:

Willow

Hole #2	Longest Drive – Men	Andy Larson
	Longest Drive – Women	Yvonne Olson
Hole #6	Closest to Pin – Men	Keith Landhuis
	Closest to Pin – Women	Lori Lovett
Hole #8	Longest Putt – Men	Randy Grimm
Hole #10	Longest Putt – Women	Carolyn Isaak

Little Willow

Hole #2	Longest Putt	Jen Burmeister
Hole #8	Longest Drive	Joe Appel

Putting Contest Winners:

1st Ward Opitz
2nd Leon Maas

Chipping Contest Winners: 5 in the pool

Corey Campbell, Landon Koss, Steve Kann, Don Moonen, Jay Wangen

Closest to Cooler:

Carolyn Isaak



First place team photo (Eric Mundfrom, Joe Diees, John Bouquet, Rob Holte)



Second Place Team Photo (Landon Koss, Jay Nelson, Pat McNeilus, Keith Schandorf)



Third Place Team Photo (Mike McNeill, Damon Gowllanb, Paul Sands, Pat Bigelow)



See you at Willow Creek
June 27, 2007



Woodland's Outstanding Worker



Lois Feller is this quarter's WOW Award winner.

Lois is one of the friendliest people we know. She always has a great attitude, positive energy, and is always willing to help anyone who asks. Lois has a great attendance record and enjoys learning new jobs.

Thank You Lois for everything.

Woodlands Spotlight Enclave

For the last seven summers, Woodland workers have been a part of Camp Winnebago's workforce.

Camp Winnebago is an enclave that provides two participants the opportunity to work outside of Woodland for a couple of hours Tuesdays thru Fridays. Camp started on June 13th and went until August 11th. A job coach takes two participants to the camp each day to do light cleaning in the bathrooms of the cabins. Several participants have had the opportunity to clean at the camp this summer. Our primary job coach at Camp is Vince Carolan. Our enclave workers work from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and then enjoy lunch provided by Camp Winnebago with the weekly campers.



What's happening at ABC Works?



During the month of May, Curves For Women in LaCrescent hosted a fundraiser for ABC Works. Several photographs, brochures, and work samples were featured in a display. Throughout the month, donations came in from many of the club members. At the end of the month, club members were eligible for a drawing for a pair of diamond earrings donated by Howes Diamond Jewelers.

The money raised was used to purchase a paper shredder to be used by participants in the ABC Works program.

ABC Works staff and participants would like to thank all the women at Curves, Curves manager Patty, and Jan Howes from Howes Jewelers, for their support.

Jesse Alexander is busy crushing cans at ABC Works in Caledonia.



In LaCrescent, Mike Augedahl assembles pins for Bestway Manufacturing.



Kudos, to Sally Kulmaczewski, a job coach at ABC Works in LaCrescent, who had two of her patterns selected to appear in "Easy Knit: Bags and Purses" She is pictured here autographing books sold at Baskets of Yarn in Onalaska.



Lowry Award Winners

The Lowry Award is given bi-monthly to recognize workers in ABC's Extended Employment programs for their outstanding progress towards goals and improvement in overall work performance.

Winners of the Lowry Award are then eligible for the annual Employee of the Year Award.



Suzanne Peyla has been a member of the ABC Messenger Service team at IBM for twenty years. Jane Kreidermacher, Suzanne's supervisor said, "Suzanne has done a great job of being more assertive with her team members, shown to be a great role model for all team members with her excellent work ethic and attendance, and

has had 100% quality when delivering to her customer base of approximately 250."

We are proud of you, Suzanne and are happy to present you this award.



Darci Parker is a member of the Ability Enterprises' Ramada laundry team. Ellen Kastner, Darci's program coordinator said, "Darci works hard at being a good role model for her peers. She is dependable and can work independently. Darci knows the job site and her co-workers almost as well as the job coach."

Great job, Darci! Keep up the good work.



Thyrith Pol, who works in General Services was awarded the Lowry Award for her consistency in work performance, exemplary work habits (cooperative, dependable, and hard working), and always meeting or exceeding her goals.

Congratulations Thyrith!

Working in the community...



The ROC school has worked with ABC for the past three years and the experience has been great. As soon as the crew walks in the door, they are greeted by

staff and students. Many of the staff know our crew by name and notice when they are absent from work. The ROC is a place where the crew looks forward to cleaning on a daily basis.

The students and staff have shown ABC the utmost respect and care. They give our custodial crew parties for holidays and retirement. They are not afraid to show us how much they appreciate our hard work. We try to make sure the ROC knows how much we appreciate them.

"Over the years, our student body has been responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of our school building. When it became apparent we would need some professional assistance in maintaining our brand new building, the students were very particular as to whom they would select to care for "their school". Ability Building Center was the choice made. The care, attention, respect and even ownership the crew has shown for our school is apparent in the quality of work done and affirms our selection of ABC. We are blessed that ABC as been part of our long and successful journey."

~Jay Martini, Administrator of ROC Charter High School



Open House
November 2, 2006
1:00 – 4:00pm



Ability Options

Ability Options, ABC's newest DT&H program, officially opened its doors at 308A Elton Hills Drive NW, Rochester, in the Valhalla Center on July 17, 2006. Ability Options (AO),

formerly known as Ability Enterprises' Options to Work program, is a structured social/leisure program. Participants of all ages are involved in activities on-site and in the community. Participants are involved in planning the scheduled activities. There is also time for individual choice activities. One of the biggest assets of the Valhalla site is the additional room for activities. While in the Ability Enterprises' space, there was only one room to have activities, but at AO there is a large room set up for eating, relaxing and crafting; there with two additional rooms for small group activities. One of the small rooms is set up with activities to stimulate the senses and the other is used for small group activities such as discussion groups and club meetings so participants won't be distracted by others.

The program is staffed by 4 direct care staff and one program coordinator. Currently there are 12 – 15 participants at any given time, with room for more as the program is licensed for 40 participants.

The participants are happy with their new location. They adapted well to the move. For the participants already in the leisure program, the only thing that changed was the building. The same staff and peers are here, and many of them are happy to see their favorite games, puzzles and crafts. It is also fun to see the new things that have been purchased for the program.

Please stop by anytime for a visit. We are happy to show off our new space and talk about our current and future plans. If you want to learn more about Ability Options, please contact Kelly Voigt, Program Manager, at 507-535-7126, e-mail kellyv@abcinc.org or Kaye Fenske, Program Coordinator, at 507-280-3489, email kayef@abcinc.org.

PACTT/VDS Update

The last couple of months have been very busy for the staff at ABC's PACTT and VDS departments.

The staff in Vocational Development Services moved to their new space at 316 Elton Hills Drive NW the first part of April.

In mid-July, the staff at PACTT moved from the main ABC location to 310 Elton Hills Drive NW.

Board Changes

During the annual Board meeting in May, Board President Bruce Remme presented Deb Garry and Dick Quinn with a plaque denoting their years of service to ABC; Garry with 13 and Quinn with 12 years.

In July, Ross Messick resigned his position from the Board.

At the August meeting Tom Murphy, who lives in Houston County, joined the board.



On July 20, 2006, Ability Building Center lost a board member and friend to cancer.

For most of its history, ABC's board has included a clergy member with a special interest in the people we serve. Although outnumbered by lay people of many denominations, their participation has been one of our unpublished strengths in building a board with broad experience

open to the ideas and perceptions of others.

Most clergy are time pressed ministering to needs of their congregations and it is quite rare for Catholic priests to take leadership roles outside the church. Father Duellman was an extraordinary priest who in his long career quietly blazed new trails while setting examples of priestly service in Southern Minnesota. He was a pioneer hospital chaplain at St Mary's Hospital and served as pastor to many Catholic parishes in the Diocese of Winona. He joined the ABC Board in 1986 and was president from 1992-1993 where his duties put him in charge of all meetings and frequent participation in special meetings and duties including the master of ceremonies at our annual awards banquets and other events. He was an avid golfer and is remembered for his warm friendship and an endless store of "corny" jokes.

He continued serving on our board even when he was assigned to parishes outside of Rochester. After his retirement, he scheduled travel to Rochester for the 4th Tuesday monthly ABC board meeting followed by a meeting with a group of Rochester married couples in Teams of our Lady which he served as spiritual adviser. In addition to members of his family, he remained close to his roots in his cabin on the Mississippi near Wabasha. When his health began to decline, he became a patient at St. Elizabeth's Health Center while also serving as a chaplain there and frequently substituted in nearby parishes during temporary absence of regular clergy. Virgil Duellman was truly a busy and fully engaged priest and during his last battles with pancreatic cancer, taught all those close to him to remain cheerful and positive as he prepared for death. His last official function with ABC was to give the invocation for our 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Ramada Inn on May 11th.



Tributes and Memorials

ABC is honored to have received gifts from family, friends and loved ones in memory of those who have died and in tribute to others who live on. The following gifts were received through July 31, 2006.

In Memory of:

Bill Bauer
Richard Bedard

Donor:

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Beyer
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Heile Walter
Janet Storhoff Weber
Katherine Weber
Richard & Lynne Weber
Sherry Wood
Christopher Zabel
Benjamin Zwart
Richard Zwart

In Memory of:

Richard Bedard
Elmer Bjergum
Father Virgil Duellman

Eleanore Albert
Steve & Sara Frettem
Helen Hanson
Walter Hill
Ida Kubitz
Kenneth Lawrence
Clinton Opsahl
Ray Ostern
Sara Ranzenberger
Julie Ristani
Robert Smith
Ray Tebay
Valery Thillen
Will Thurk
Beulah Wetchen

In Honor of:

Tom Murray
David Papenfus
Brent & Ryan Wieser

Donor:

Zachary Zwart
Donna Otterness
Wally & Faye Bigelow
Jane Kreidermacher
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Ann Ferguson
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Lydia Johnson
John Brenna
Judy Tollefsrud
Doris Williams
John & Rhonda Mitchell
Harry & Evelyn Sykes
Terry & Autumn Thillen
Bob & Judy Thurk
Doris Williams

Donor:

Ruth Murray
Jerry & Norma Nordstrom
Al & Karen Wieser

In Memorial



On Monday August 7, 2006
Louise Sheflbine lost her life to
cancer.

Sheflbine along with Jean
Peterson, and Lorna Schunke
was one of the co-founders of
ARC of Southeastern
Minnesota.

Louise and her family were great advocates for persons
with disabilities and substantial contributors to ABC.



50th Anniversary Events

On June 23, nine representatives from ABC's various programs (below) participated in the Rochesterfest Grand Parade.

This year's float entry "Celebrating 50 years of working in the community," highlighted the mid-year celebration of the ABC 50th anniversary.



On August 4, several ABC staff and participants (above) celebrated the anniversary with a dance and refreshments. Fun was had by all!



Please notify us if you would like to read our newsletter online.

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