

inside

April 2008



For many the goal is...working in the community!



The Crew
Pepsi Bottling Company LaCrosse



Mitch Bentley - HyVee North



Kevin and Dave
Dodge County Recycling



Jerry Kurtz Jr.
Kwik Trip in Caledonia.



Jenny Omoth
Copper Penny



Bruce Hoffman - HyVee North



Larry Goetzinger
Joe Rud Trucking



Sarah Wiste
Quillins IGA



Josephine, Rosa and Holly
Rochester Athletic Club

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Steve Hill



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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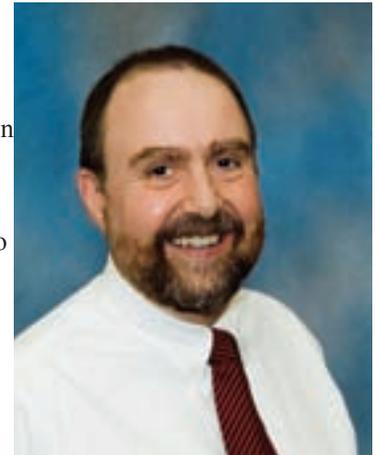
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www.abcinc.org



It is hard to believe that we are already into the second quarter of 2008. However, since this is the first newsletter of the year, I do want to take this opportunity to mention a few highlights from 2007. First, just over 874 individuals with disabilities received services from ABC last year. Also, during 2007 our job development staff was able to provide over 120 new community based jobs. Congratulations to our staff in Houston County and Rochester that were instrumental in developing these job opportunities which are so important to the people we serve. At year end, we were able to accomplish many of our program goals and still finish 2007 in a strong financial position.

As we move into 2008, two of our programs have already received special recognition. The United Way, at its awards banquet, gave special recognition to ABC's People Achieving Change Through Technology (PACTT) program for its impact on teaching technology skills to individuals with disabilities. We also received, at the same banquet, special recognition for "Organizational Responsiveness" for working together with PossAbilities in providing community-based work opportunities for people with disabilities.

We certainly have a number of successes to appreciate and be thankful for from 2007 and 2008, but we also have several challenges to face and work on during 2008. One of the growing challenges we face is the provision of transportation. We are all very aware of the rising gas costs. In fact, just recently I heard on a news show, that by as early as Memorial Day weekend we could be facing \$4.00 a gallon gas prices. These skyrocketing costs are causing providers like ABC to look closely at how we are providing transportation services and making changes that will likely cause everyone involved some minor inconveniences.

As our economy tightens we often face greater challenges in identifying adequate and appropriate work opportunities for people. We certainly plan to expand our capacity to provide digital imaging and document shredding services. We feel that this type of work matches the skill sets of many of people we serve. In addition, this type of work lends itself to being done at ABC's work floor or in an employer's place of business. For more information see the article on the following page describing ABC's Paperless Office Solutions (POS).

Over the past two years, I have mentioned on several occasions that we will need to expand our program options for individuals with disabilities that are aging out of the work force. We have developed our Ability Options program in Rochester and currently we are serving nearly 30 individuals that desire a program with a "social/recreational" focus. Over the next couple months we will be starting a similar program in Caledonia through our ABC Works program. In the future, we plan to expand this program option to our LaCrescent location. We'll keep you apprised as to how these new program options develop.

We have a lot to do during 2008 at ABC, but with your continued involvement and support many of these initiatives are achievable. If you get a chance read the article in this newsletter, "How We Get There!", to get a perspective on how your gifts to ABC have a huge impact on our mission.

What's Happening!



The Community Based School Employment (CBScE) program is a work experience program providing students with disabilities the opportunity to explore their vocational interests and expand their skills through employment at ABC and in the community. The program works closely to educate employers, assists with modifications, to individual program plans and objectives, and is designed to move an individual toward independent living.

In the CBScE program students receive assistance with job development, job coaching, case management, and transportation training. The goal of the program is to assist students in gaining solid work experience and skills so that they are able to identify their work interests and strengths. Also, as their graduation from high school approaches, the goal is to connect them with adult vocational programs or services that will best meet their vocational needs.



The program currently has 32 students between the ages of 16 and 21 from the Rochester Public School District and the Zumbro Education District.

In the CBScE program, students gain a variety of work experience's. Students work in-center at the ABC main site doing assembly/production work as well as on job crews at community businesses, working with a job coach and 3 to 4 peers. They can be found working on custodial, dishwashing, housekeeping, laundry, newspaper delivery, and digital imaging work crews.

Many businesses in the community allow students to do short term job tryouts to explore interests and skills. Stocking and facing shelves, cashier training, processing/sorting merchandise before it goes out on the sales floor, table bussing/dishwashing, assisting with daycare, and bagging groceries are examples of the kinds of work students are given the opportunity to try.



Paperless Office Solutions, what does it mean?



ABC purchased its first document scanner over 2 years ago, and since then the agency has been building a "business within the business". Paperless Office Solutions, or P.O.S., provides an environment for hands-on training and job opportunities for people who desire "high-tech" work. P.O.S. serves businesses by providing modern ways to save money, work smarter, and reduce their dependence on paper. As P.O.S. gains momentum and interest from workers, students and other prospective ABC consumers, staff, and the business community, it continues to grow. It's a new platform for vocational training – a launch pad for clients interested in the real application of technology in the work place. From scanning delicate family archives for use on an interactive genealogy website, to providing a small business with completely digital versions of its most critical customer information, P.O.S. represents the future of business as well as the future of

vocational opportunities for many ABC participants. **To learn more, visit www.abcinc.org/services/paperlessoffice.php.**

Lowry Award Winners



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

Jason Iverson, who works on the Senior Center dish crew, was awarded the Lowry Award for October 2007.

Stephen Convery, Job Coach said, "Jason is very helpful to co-workers and does not stand by watching others struggle; rather he will offer his knowledge and expertise. Jason is a great example of being all that you can be."

Congratulations, Jason! Keep up the good work!

Victor Reineke, has worked several years on the PM Cleaning Crew and continued on the crew while also beginning to work in Paperless Office Solutions last summer. Victor was the December 2007 Lowry Award Winner. At the end of April, Victor will begin his new job at Charter House.

Donette Mitchell and Doreen Markus said, "Victor is always respectful of others no matter what their limitations or needs are. He works hard to make positive changes in himself, and puts full energy into anything that he does. Victor is a model worker, and has been a great role model for all of his co-workers."

Great Job, Victor! Keep up the exceptional work!



Kevin Miller, a member of the Dodge County Recycling Team, was awarded the Lowry Award for February.

Linda Eisterhold, Supported Employment Program Coordinator said, "During the last six months Kevin has made a complete 180 degree turn in both his appearance and attitude. Kevin is always dressed appropriately for his job, is willing to substitute on custodial and laundry shifts on short notice, and has developed a great attitude toward his supervisors and co-workers. I'm very proud of him!"

Way to go, Kevin!



ABC Works Receives Donation



ABC Works was awarded the proceeds of a diamond earring raffle sponsored by Howes Diamond Jewelers of LaCrosse, WI. Raffle tickets were sold throughout the month of January at Curves for Women in LaCrescent. ABC Works provided a display featuring participants and job sites. The money will go towards a wheelchair accessible swing.

1st Quarter Wow Award Winner



Laura Breeser is Woodland Industries first WOW Award winner of 2008. She earned this award because of her positive attitude and hard work. Laura is very friendly and is always helpful to those around her. Laura also does a great job of keeping safety a priority at Woodland by being very safety conscious and aware of her environment.

Keep up the great work Laura!

The donation you give today helps us now, a planned gift ensures the future of ABC!

For more information on how to leave a lasting gift, call Laurie at (507) 535-7105.

Twice is Nice



After opening its doors in 1992, the Twice is Nice store has continued to grow and provide learning opportunities to a variety of people. Twice is Nice is currently providing opportunities and support for our participants at Woodland, as well as for people from Experience Works, the retired and senior volunteer program, and many volunteers help make the store the success it is today.

The wonderful people who work in the store gain experience in taking donations, sorting and pricing items, displaying them, and assisting the customers in making their purchases. They are also finding new and creative ways of using the space to display products and make the store a fun place to work. Besides retail experience, the

Twice is Nice staff

make rags out of used t-shirts to sell to area businesses. Other clothing items that aren't sold or used to make rags are donated to others who find a use for them. Very little of the huge amount of donations to the Twice is Nice Store ever goes to waste.

Thank you to Audrey Stadtler and the rest of the people who have made and continue to make the Twice is Nice store an overall asset to our community.



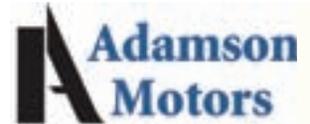
Golf Tournament & Auction



ABC's annual golf tournament is **Wednesday June 25, 2008**. Registration and silent auction begin at 12:00pm, followed by warm up on the chipping and putting green. The 4 Person Best Shot scramble will tee off at 1:00pm with the Kasson – Mantorville High School golf teams hitting mulligan shots on select holes. The event will conclude with dinner, program, prizes and awards starting at 5:30pm. The live auction will begin at 6:00pm.

This year's tournament features the **Chrysler Club Champoinship**. If you stop by the course between 12:00pm and 6:00pm to look at a new Chrysler product, they will donate \$5.00 to ABC.

Thanks to all our sponsors, which include the following major and corporate levels!



We still have openings for sponsorships, golfers, and auction items. Please contact Laurie Kellagher at (507) 535-7105 or visit www.abcinc.org/golf for more information.



Community Lawn Care donates 10% of every dollar you spend to local non-profits like ABC. Call Nate at (877) 400-5696 or visit <http://www.communitylawncare.com> to see how you can get a healthy, great-looking lawn and help create an inclusive community at the same time!

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 February 29, 2008.

In Honor of:

Michael Augedahl
 Alan Bourquin
 Debra Byers
 Jane Campion
 Pat Cutaia
 Mark Ekstrom
 Sharon Fitting
 Bob Kester
 Anne MacGillivray
 John Murphy
 Tom Murray
 Larry Myhre
 Cindy Nichols
 Melissa Oakes
 Susan Olson

 Jeff & Jane Radditz
 Louis & LeeAnne Ramaker
 Renee Sherry
 Karen Solberg
 Janessa Wagner
 Rachel Weitzel
 Melissa Yolton

In Memory of:

Ruth Arnoldy
 Arthur Augedahl

 Vincent Bauer
 Richard Bedard

 Joyce Bolduan
 Amanda Carlson
 Becky Dison
 Anne Ferguson
 Sara & Steve Frettem
 Allen Furlow
 Margaret Groby
 Donald Harrington
 Bonnie Helgerson
 Walter Hill
 Ed Husman
 Aaron Husmann
 Heather Kraetsch
 Kenneth Lawrence
 Betty Markus
 David Mogensen
 Greg Mullally
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 Betty Peyla
 Tony Tschida Sr.
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Donor:

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 John & Geraldine Ekstrom
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 Ruth Murray
 Glynis Myhre
 Marlys & Fred Wagner
 Russell & Donna Oakes
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 Harv & Dorothy Spencer
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 Benjamin & Alison Zwart
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 Laurel Frettem
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 Doris Williams
 Beatrice Hill
 Doris Williams
 Olive Husmann
 Mary Bell
 Rita Ann Lawrence
 Richard & Lynne Weber
 Wally & Faye Bigelow
 Karen Horstman
 Leona Nelson
 Barbara Burgess
 Doris Williams
 Lorraine Pearson
 Glenn Kinneberg
 Tom & Pat Peyla
 Sandra Tschida
 Katherine Weber
 Charles & Regina Chihak

How We Get There!



To meet the needs of all the ABC programs and job sites our agency provides over 1,900 rides per week in the Rochester area alone—plus the hundreds of miles a week ABC Works and Woodland Industries travel in Houston County.

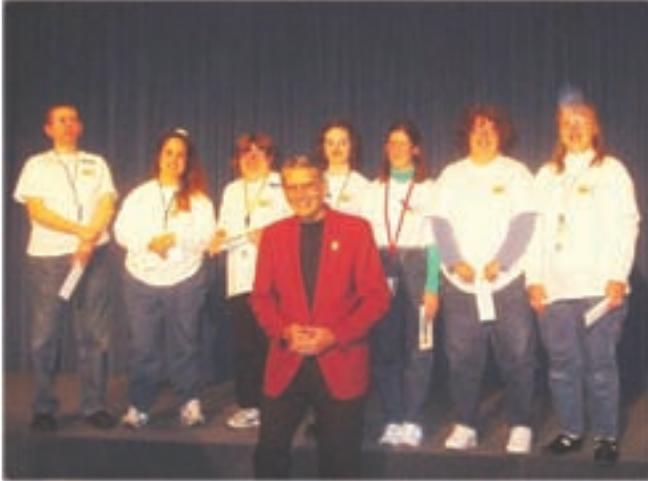
The Rochester fleet of 15 vans and buses travel over 8,100 miles to cover 1,000 of the 1,900 weekly rides. In addition to our ABC owned vehicles, participants are transported from home to ABC or other places of employment by City Bus, R&S, ZIPS, HandiVan, and several private parties.

But ‘special needs’ means special transportation, and wheelchair accessible vans are in high demand and costly to operate. ABC coordinates with PossAbilities to utilize vans from both agencies to create the most efficient routes possible.

The cost of transportation is phenomenal with state program travel per diem reimbursements only covering half the cost of transportation expenses in 2007. Expenses for 2008 are projected to rise sharply creating an even larger disparity between income and expense.

We sincerely appreciate all who have donated to the transportation fund from our annual solicitation. Thanks to your generous gifts, we have raised \$72,800 which has enabled us to purchase and upgrade three vans this year. YOU have provided an opportunity for those that want to work to get there.

The Next Best Thing to “Taking It With You”.....



While making the trip between birth and eternity, we find organizations we want to support because they do an outstanding job of helping people in need. When it’s “time to put our house in order”, we often want to continue supporting these organizations. However in the past we had few options to ensure that organizations we wanted to continually take care of would receive our help. So we would have to give funds to a benevolent agency that would have the final word as to who should receive our funds and in what amount. This meant that our favorite organizations may or may not be taken care of as we desired.

Times have changed and new strategies for making charitable donations have been created. One of these strategies is a donor advised fund, which is a charitable giving technique that can be set up through a public charity or tax exempt community foundation. Locally, the Rochester Area Foundation (RAF) has that type of fund.

The RAF allows you to set up a specific family based donor advised fund that you can gift cash and/or appreciated investments. It is like setting up your own personal foundation. Your gift to the donor advised fund is tax deductible, your funds will be professionally managed, and distributions from your donor advised fund can be made at any time to the charities of your choice.

Our family has a Donor Advised Fund from which distributions are made as we direct to organizations like ABC, with whom we’ve had a 50 year association.

It is comforting to know that after the next 50 years (when Mary and I will be 133 years old); we will still be able to help ABC participants.

We suggest you try it, we are sure you will like it. For more information contact Laurie at 535-7105

Peace
Mary & Ken Zubay



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

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