

# inside



Fall 2012

a publication by and for stakeholders of Ability Building Center

## Loren's Rug.....

Southeastern Minnesota Arts Grant Summary

What is there to do during a Minnesota winter?  
Take up an indoor hobby - crocheting, knitting, weaving, perhaps!

That is what Loren and 30 other participants did. In 2011 Ability Enterprises received a Cultural Heritage Grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council. With the help of the grant, two large floor looms were donated and other looms and supplies were purchased. Once Nancy Ellison of Ellison Sheep Farms taught staff how to weave from start to finish, participant artists began working.

The first project everyone worked on in February was a scarf. After its completion they were able to choose from a variety of other projects. Some worked on placemats while others continued to make scarves. As word of mouth spread that this was a great activity, Betty, Joyce and Ken three community volunteers began working with the team. The popularity grew and soon 19 more hula hoops (used for basic frames for looms) were purchased for weaving.

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Jeremy and Loren proudly display Loren's rug!

## "Disability Day at the Capitol"

A large group from ABC was able to attend the "Disability Day at the Capitol" on April 4th. The group was made up of participants and staff from both Rochester and Houston County. While there, the group was able to participate in rallies on the rotunda of the capitol building about issues being considered by the state congress that could have an impact on people with a variety of disabilities. Some of the issues raised were photo ID requirement for voting, self advocacy and Department of Human Services (DHS) budget cuts.

Between the rallies, the participants and staff were able to meet with Representatives Tina Liebling and Kim Norton, and Senators Dave Semjem and Carla Nelson to discuss their personal stories. The Senators and Representatives were very receptive to the participants as they lobbied on how budget cuts proposed by the DHS would affect services and transportation.

The whole group from ABC had a good time not only learning about, but also participating in, the legislative process!

*"It was interesting, I'd like to go back again next year."* –Lenny Curtis



Steve Kelley, Andrew and Jeremy Krekula in the rotunda.

# Lowry and WOW Awards - Recognizing Outstanding Workers

## Lowry Awards



**Joe Garness** has been a great asset to the dishroom crew at Rochester Community & Technical College for the last 12 years. He's been doing a great job of staying focused on his work. Recently he added the task of labeling the food items that are put out on the line to be sold, and when there is no sticker, he finds it.

This summer while school was not in session, he worked at various job sites in Rochester and the surrounding communities - including Recreation Lanes, Dooley's, Microtel and Mayo Clinic cafeteria.

***Joe's flexibility and quality are greatly appreciated by his coaches!***

**Christina Peyla**, a member of the IBM Courier/Custodial crew for 15+ years, is a very good worker. She takes pride in the job she does and has been active in wellness activities at ABC.

When contract job duties changed in November of 2011, Christina was the first to volunteer to stay on the team and learn the tasks of window washing, sorting and delivering the mail 4 days a week, picking up all the outgoing mail 5 days a week and stocking the supply cabinets with paper, pens, notebooks, etc.

Christina is a great role model. When others doubted the new tasks, she told them it could be done! She is truly the face of ABC at IBM each day!

***Christina's smile and flexibility are an inspiration to all, keep up the great work!***



## WOW ! Woodland Outstanding Worker.....



**Mark Houdek** was Woodland Industries' 2nd Quarter WOW Award winner.

Mark has had excellent attendance and has grown socially and vocationally while at Woodland. Mark helps out on various enclave jobs, does various general production jobs and works once a week in the Twice is Nice store. He is great at quality control and likes to have a neat work station. Mark works safely and has raised his productivity level.

When Mark is in the Twice is Nice store he is very courteous with greeting all the customers and thanking them for shopping with us.

***Mark's excellent attendance and courtesy are what makes him an outstanding worker!***



***Congratulations Joe, Christina, and Mark!!***

## Successful Fundraisers Mean More Program and Service Support!

### Bowling and Euchre



Looking for a strike!

If you were looking for a good game of cards or bowling on April 14th, where was the place to be?

Caledonia's Starlite Bowling Alley, where for the last three years Woodland Industries and ABC Works has held a combined euchre and bowling tournament in the spring to benefit ABC programs and services in Houston County. This year's 9 Pin Tap tournament offered brackets for the serious and not so serious bowlers in our communities.

Thanks to the individuals and businesses in Houston County and the surrounding area for their donations of money, auction items, and volunteer time. Thanks to the bowling alley, all who participated and those who prepared for the event.

*When the cards were put away and the lights turned out, a total of \$7,700 was raised to help with programming costs!*



Larry Wolfs with chainsaw art!

### On the Tee with ABC in its 11th year!



Andy, Dan & Joe greeted golfers, with water & smiles!

The weather forecast for June 11th could not have been better! With blue skies, temperatures in the mid eighties and low humidity, 135 golfers that included ABC staff and participants took to the course at the Rochester Golf & Country Club to have a great day of golf, food and fun.

The celebrity guest this year was KTTC news anchor [Tom Overlie](#) and guest speaker [Elizabeth Bourman](#). Elizabeth has been with ABC since 2004 and works in the Ability Enterprises department. She is involved with a variety of work activities both at ABC and in the community. Outside of work, Elizabeth does a variety of activities, and one of her favorites is golf! She started golfing while living in Texas with her family and has continued to participate in the sport through the Rochester Area Special Olympics.

Elizabeth shared with the group some personal experiences while learning and playing golf, and stressed that even though there are days where your golf ball lands in the trees, you need to keep playing for the fun of the sport and not give up.

Elizabeth then shared her love of the work she does at ABC, both in-center and in the community. She thanked the golfers for their support of ABC and the tournament, as it allows her to continue to work at ABC, a place where she develops new skills and gives back to the community.



Elizabeth and Tom

*This year's event raised \$63,156. Sponsorships were up \$8,500 from 2011. In the 11 years we have held this event we have raised over \$500,000.*



Christina, Tom, Jessica, and Suzanne



Libby, Terry, David, and David greeted golfers at tee box #1

# What's happening at ABC?

## Woodland Industries and ABC Works



Jerry assembles Kerndt Livestock Product flags.

### *Woodland Industries has been very busy!*

In-center they are boxing bolts, folding and drilling polishing pads, and doing assembly for Kerndt Livestock Products. The sewing department has been busy making Kerndt Livestock Products, sorting flags, surgical hoods and continuing to cut and fold rags and sell them to the public for \$5 per 10 lb. bag. We have a few more people in-center during the summer due to our school jobs having summer breaks, but we have been fortunate enough to have a large work supply and the ability to keep everyone busy with different tasks. Recycling aluminum stays steady, giving our participants a chance to buy aluminum and recycle. We've had eight crews busy this summer working at Winona Controls, Ag Center, Good Times, Hiawatha Mental Health Center, Benekes, and Caledonia Haulers, and this fall we will be back having 10 crews during the work week. The Twice is Nice store continues to stay busy with donations and sales. Stop in to plan ahead for your 2012 halloween party.

### *ABC Works has more work than they can remember in the past 25 years!*

The Infastech packaging and labelling job has really picked up lately, providing us with additional work for our participants along with buttons, shredding from Uvanta, collating flyers and labeling lids for River Valley Sprouts. Things are going equally well in the community. University of Wisconsin LaCrosse has changed vendors in the cafeteria from Chartwells to Sodexo. We went through the process of reapplying and recently found out we have a contract for fall.

**Things couldn't be better!**



John labels lids for River Valley Sprouts



## ABC Rochester



Joann packages kits for Forensic Technologies

*Like our Houston County programs, ABC in Rochester has been busy this summer, both in-center and in the community.*

In-center work includes building and selling Protocult collection devices, which are sold to various medical distributors, universities, hospitals and others in the health care industry. Several participant work areas are building various kits for Mayo Medical Laboratories, packaging and labeling drug testing kits for Forensic Technologies, and building kits for Rockwood. A team has been busy building boxes for the IBM Rochester Customer Solutions Center that are used for shipping out monitors, servers and bubble kits. Others have worked on packaging and assembly jobs for Midwest Manufacturing and Fastenal.



Thyrih labels, folds, and bags for a Mayo Kit



Talbert heat-seals a kit

Community-Based work this summer has included but is not limited to: hotel housekeeping crews at Best Western, Guesthouse, Springhill and Courtyard and custodial crews at Shoppes on Maine, Veolia, Resurrection School, the Dan Abraham Healthy Living Center, and the Mayo Digital Imaging team at the Mayo Support Center.

## Rochesterfest



Approximately 40 participants and staff walked/rode in the parade. The goal was to thank the community for their continued support and raise awareness for those who are new to the area.

It was a fun, but hot June evening!

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## Photographers in the Making.....

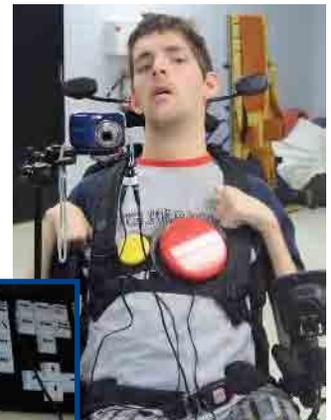
Ability Options was recently awarded a grant from the Rochester Rotary Clubs to purchase an adaptive camera, adaptive switches and a switch activated computer mouse. This equipment allows people with physical disabilities to operate a camera and participate in computer activities.

The camera is secured on an adjustable arm that can be mounted to a wheelchair. There is a double port soldered to the camera's internal wiring. Adaptive switches are then plugged into the ports - a person presses one switch to turn the camera on and off, and the other to take a picture.

To view the photographs, the camera is hooked up to the computer. The computer mouse has a port that an adaptive switch is plugged into. When there is a need for a left click on the computer mouse, the adaptive switch is pressed instead. Now a person can be actively involved in viewing, saving and deleting the photos they have taken! The mouse can be used for other computer activities/programs as well.

The first time **Bret** took a picture with the camera all he could do was say, "Wow!" through his smiles and giggles.

**Thank you to the Rochester Rotary Clubs for the grant to purchase this equipment. This year, two Ability Options participants entered photographs they took with the adaptive camera at this year's Olmsted County Fair.**



*Above: Bret with the camera  
Left: Keyboard and switch*



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## We Remember.....



After a courageous battle with cancer, Donette Mitchell passed away on May 3, 2012.

Donette began her career at Ability Building Center on April 1, 2002. During her tenure she worked in both Ability Enterprises and Supported Employment as a job coach, coordinated the Transportation Department, scheduled worksites for Ability Enterprises, and for three years supervised our fledgling Paperless Office Solutions work area, which paved the way for our digital imaging team at the Mayo Support Center. Donette had an innate style of engaging with participants that encouraged them to bring their best to the tasks at hand.

Her warmth, infectious smile and laugh will be missed by all at Ability Building Center.



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**Visit [www.abcinc.org/tributes](http://www.abcinc.org/tributes) for more tributes and memorials**

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Many projects were given as Christmas gifts, and others sold at one of the art shows held by the resident artists and volunteers. The largest show was held during the annual Recognition and Awards Banquet last October at the Rochester International Event Center. Several artists displayed and discussed their work with many of the 500 in attendance.

Of all the artists, Loren, working with a volunteer, learned how to warp (setup for use) the loom, then weaved the very first rug. This was a big accomplishment for him, the volunteers and other weavers. The rug was woven on one of the looms that was donated as part of the grant.

The grant project may have ended in December of 2011, but there are still five artists and one ABC staff who have kept it going. One of the participants enjoys weaving so much that she saved money and purchased a loom so she can work on projects at home.

*Thank you to the volunteers and the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council program for this great therapeutic opportunity.*

## Upcoming Events



### Rochester:

**October 9, 2012 - Banquet**

**November 28, 2012 - Benefactors Breakfast**

**June 10, 2013 - Golf Tournament**

### Houston County:

**October 25, 2012 - Banquet**

**Our mission: To improve the quality of life in Southeastern Minnesota by providing rehabilitation and employment services for persons with disabilities and other special needs.**

**For the latest updates visit us at [www.abcinc.org](http://www.abcinc.org)**

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