



inside

Newsletter of Ability Building Center

April 2005

ABC

ABC Works Building Dedication

ABC Works dedicated its "Growing Together" Project on Thursday, January 27, 2005. The community, chamber and Mayor Mike Poellinger attended the ribbon cutting ceremony that celebrated the conclusion of the construction phase of ABC Works "Growing Together" Project.



The expansion and remodeling has allowed ABC Works in LaCrescent to increase its licensing capacity for up to 60 people with disabilities and special needs. Planning for "Growing Together" began in January of 2004 and was done in consultation with Wieser Brothers General Contractors out of

LaCrescent. The \$500,000 project tripled the space for program participants and improved accessibility and safety at the facility. To date \$275,000 in contributions and pledges have been raised for this project.



Together the board, staff and participants of ABC extend their thanks to the community.



June 29, 2005



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

Ability Building Center
1911 NW 14th Street
Rochester, MN 55901
507-281-6262

ABC Vocational Development Service
604 11th Ave. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
507-529-4812

ABC Works
730 North Pine
Caledonia, MN 55921
507-725-2057

ABC Works
62 North 3rd Street
LaCrescent, MN 55947
507- 895-7161

Woodland Industries
521 Old Highway Drive
Caledonia, MN 55921
507-725-2092

Executive Director: Steve Hill
Editor: Laurie Kellagher
Assistant Editor: Jane Kreidermacher
Contributing Writers: Steve Hill, Neva Stavlund, Jeff Amaris, Jane Kreidermacher, Tammy Radloff, Kristen Stejskal, Kathy Mitchell, Tammy Radloff, Jodi Liebenow, Kim Moccia, Angela Murphy



A note from Steve Hill, Executive Director at ABC



It's always a dilemma to write an article for the first quarter of the new year, do you capture the highlights of the previous year or do you communicate the plans and expectations for the coming year? I'm sure somewhere in the scholarly texts of journalism, there are instructions to do one or the other, but not both in the same piece. Since I have no talent or aspirations to be a great journalist, I'm taking the liberty to point out some of the highlights of 2004 and address some of ABC's anticipated plans for 2005.

A lot of effort was made by staff in the first quarter of 2004 preparing for our upcoming CARF Accreditation survey in May. All the hard work paid off in July when it was announced that we had received a "three year" accreditation, which is the maximum level of accreditation awarded by CARF.

We kicked off our capital campaign and building project for the LaCrescent, ABC Works building in May. The project was successfully completed in December. We tripled the space for the ABC Works program in LaCrescent and the project came in under budget. Through the first nine months of the Capital Campaign, we've exceeded our goal of raising \$200,000 for the entire three year campaign, by raising \$248,000. Our annual golf tournament successfully raised a record \$30,000 in 2004.

Last spring the legislature did implement a 1% cut in our Day Training and Habilitation rates and our rates

for our Structured Adult Day Care program.

Despite these funding cuts several of our programs served record numbers of individuals in 2004 and overall, ABC did end the year on the positive side of the financial ledger.

Although we experienced many successes in 2004 as an organization, we really can't afford to rest on our laurels, we are preparing and planning for more accomplishments in 2005, there are still many unmet needs. We are in an important funding year as far as the state legislature is concerned.

Decisions made by the legislature this year will have a significant impact on all ABC programs over the next two years. Our state professional organizations have introduced bills that propose increases in our Extended Employment and Day Training and Habilitation programs. So far there has been a lot of positive support for these bills, but there's a long way to go before final decisions will be reached.

The Board of Directors of ABC and staff have been working on ABC's strategic plan over the past couple of months. Although the plan hasn't been finalized several important initiatives are emerging from the process including: maintaining and improving the quality of our services and programs; training and development of our staff; keeping our funding and financial position strong; and increasing the visibility of ABC throughout Southeastern Minnesota. There is still work to be done before the initiatives are finalized. I'm planning to expand on ABC's strategic initiatives in the future through these newsletter articles, starting with our next newsletter, which should be out in early July.

With determination comes success....



pictured from left to right are: Tammy Radloff, Dwight Moldenhauer and Renee Kreter.

injuries resulted in a vocal cord paralysis, moderate traumatic brain injury, left side hearing loss, blurred and double vision, difficulty swallowing, speaking and facial paralysis.

Dwight was referred by Renee Kreter, Qualified Rehabilitation Consultant from Stubbe and Associates to Ability Building Center in October 2003 for Vocational Evaluation, Work Adjustment Training, and Placement Services. After reviewing the referral and medical information, it was apparent that Dwight had numerous barriers that potentially effected and challenged his vocational options.

Our first step was to start some vocational community assessments to determine Dwight's strengths, needs, and supports. It was apparent during the first job assessment at a local grocery store, that Dwight was someone that would not let his disabilities prevent him from achieving his goals. Upon arriving at the grocery store to assist Dwight in the training process, it was reported that Dwight had saved a man's life by performing CPR. Dwight was always willing and eager to take on new tasks, relearn and develop new ways to transfer his many skills. In addition, Dwight's sense of humor and positive attitude had a powerful impact on ABC staff as well as in the community assessment sites and their employees. Throughout the rest of his vocational training Dwight continued to deliver and exceed our expectations, always maintaining his goal of returning to the work force.

Dwight began Placement Services in January 2004, demonstrating a strong commitment to achieve his vocational goal by being very active in his job development activities, contacting and following up with employers. On March 16th, 2004 Dwight obtained his current position as small engine repair technician with John Steffel at St Charles Lawn and Landscape. Dwight immediately organized his work environment to meet his needs and began teaching himself to become "certified" on how to repair different engines using manufacture manuals and materials. John Steffel has been an extraordinary employer to work with, allowing multiple ABC staff and Renee Kreter to follow up with him on Dwight's progress and keeping all of us well informed.

Dwight has touched many lives throughout his programming at Ability Building Center and it's with great pride and admiration that Tammy Radloff and Jodi Liebenow will represent Ability Building Center and have the honor of joining Dwight in Orlando, FL on April 16, 2005 to stand by him as he receives the **Outstanding Rehabilitation Participant Award** presented by the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals.

Submitted by Tammy Radloff and Jodi Liebenow

Tammy Radloff and Brie Thompson accompanied Dwight Moldenhauer to Minneapolis, MN on September 29, 2004 to acknowledge his vocational achievements during his programming at Ability Building Center and stood by him as he received the **Outstanding Rehabilitation Participant Award** presented by the *Minnesota Chapter of the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals*.

In June 2002, Dwight was repairing a skid loader when the boom dropped and Dwight's head and upper body became pinned between the skid loader and boom. Injuries included: Skull fractures, fractures of all the bones of his face, jaw and hard pallet, damage to the left spinal accessory nerve, twisted larynx, left rotator cuff damage, cranial hemorrhage, cerebral edema and blood in the upper spinal cord. These



Woodland's Spotlight on Supported Employment

Two Supported Center Based Employment participants at ABC Woodland Industries worked more than 150 hours in the community during the period July 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004. Rose Kuecker worked 188.50 hours in the community and Paula Betten worked 164.82 hours in the community.



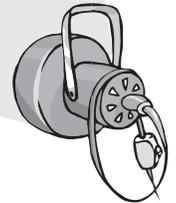
Rose works 20 hours per week at Woodland Industries and is a regular in the Monday evening custodial at Merchant's Bank. She is pictured at the Ag Center where she works on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Rose also works at several other job sites.

Rose is a great team worker!



Paula is pictured working her daily job when school is in session as a crossing guard for the Caledonia School District. Paula works 30 hours per week at Woodland Industries. She also regularly works as a part of the custodial crew at Merchant's Bank on Monday nights along with the crew at Camp Winnebago. Paula has been a reliable "go-to" person when substitutes are needed! She has filled in at the Ag Center, the Law Office, and Caledonia Haulers. Paula has been available on several occasions to bolster the team effort as a substitute member of the University of LaCrosse – Chartwell dishwashing crew!

"Everyone benefits when people with disabilities work!"



Woodland's Outstanding Worker



Jeff Landsom was the recipient of the first quarter WOW (Woodland Outstanding Worker) Award. Jeff was surprised with this recognition at "break time" on March 7, 2005. Jeff is pictured with his honoring poster, which will adorn the wall of the break room. He also received a crisp \$10 bill from Woodland Manager, Mac McCabe. Jeff was cited by staff for his "awesome attitude," great attendance, flexibility, and "nice quality" of work produced. He is also appreciated for his dependability, courteous manner, and "friendly" smile.

Congratulations, Jeff!

Lowry Award Winner

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.

The Lowry Award winner for November/December was Sach Nguyen. Sach's supervisor in General Services



describes her as a "model employee." Sach has a positive work attitude, is very productive, very reliable and conscientious. She has met her work goals, works on a variety of jobs, and continues her efforts to learn English.

Congratulations Sach on this accomplishment!

The Lowry Award winner for January/February was Kim Sutton. Kim currently works on the housekeeping crew at the Ramada and dishwashing crew at Byron schools. Kim is a reliable, punctual worker with a pleasant personality, and a cooperative attitude.

Kim has increased her productivity at her jobs. When you ask her former program coordinator, he describes Kim as "flexible with job assignments and a person who gets along well with all of her co-workers."

Congratulations Kim on this accomplishment!



Safety Program

ABC has long been committed to providing a safe work environment for all of its program participants and staff. This commitment was formally recognized in 2004 by CARF (The Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) when they reported an exemplary conformance to safety and health standards during their survey. At the very center of this success is an active safety committee where employee participation is stressed across all areas of our organization.

Membership:

Chair: Jeff Amaris, Safety Director

Rochester

Julie Erickson
Cindy Nordmann
Keta Callahan
Dan Smith
Kristen Stejskal
Janelle Steeber
Sarah Timmerman
Kelly Voigt
Elizabeth Pokorski
Don Fry*

Houston County

Roger McCabe
Lori Twite
Helen Olson
Sheila Heberlein
Carmen Barthel
Niki Gratten
Rose Kuecker*
*Program Participants

Safety Incentive Programs



The Safety Star spot recognition program immediately recognizes anyone reporting an unsafe condition, intervening in a close call situation, or making a specific safety suggestion. All those recognized are eligible for our grand prize drawing at the end of each year.

The safety committee would like to congratulate Denise Lujan as this year's grand prize winner.

ABC also conducts an annual recognition celebration where each employee who remains accident-free for the entire year is recognized.

Donated Vehicles For Sale

1982 Mercedes-Benz 4 Door 300D Diesel 158,000 miles. Cream, Power Sunroof, Clean \$1500 or make an offer.

1997 Ford Win dStar LX Passenger Van 187,500 miles, but looks good with lots of options \$2000 or make and offer.

Call Larry at 507-281-6262



Memorials and Tributes

ABC is honored to have received gifts from family, friends and loved ones in memory or those who have died and in tribute to others who live on. The following gifts were received through February 28, 2005.

Donor

Stephen & Sharon Boyce
Virgil & Nancy Bjorge

Danielle Burg
Larry & Reenie Doering
Helen Hafner
Tom & Mary Hartman
Steve & Karin Hill
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Charlotte Rupprecht
Merrill & Dorothy Spencer
Lawrence Wehrs

Correction:

Donor

Roger & Irene Herzog

In Memory of:

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Sarah Watters
Mike Hillman
Mike Hillman
Lorraine Hafner Hill
Glen Hartman
Walter Hill
Juliann Landin Kautz
Kenneth Lawrence
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Mike Hillman
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Estella Kurth
Mike Hillman
Edward Boske
Betty Anne MacPhelridge
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Illa Schild

In Honor of:

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Elizabeth Coleman
Isabel Hernlem
John Hill
Allison Larson
Cheryl Ellringer
Janis Lehman
Kenneth Herold
Rachel Weitzel
Karen Solberg
Lisa Meiners
Susan Olson
Laureen Rupprecht
Louis & Lee Ann Ramaker
Jeff Raddatz

In Honor of:

Robert Herzog

Thank you!

Special thanks to Insty Prints for their \$1,000 Footprints grant. This money will be used to update a brochure that will promote ABC.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry awarded a safety grant in the amount of \$2,000 to purchase new ergonomically designed industrial work stools for our assembly area. We appreciate your contribution.



Noah Friedt trying PACTT's new Intellikeys keyboard during a work break.

On February 24, 2004 at their annual hockey fundraiser award luncheon, Kiwanis Clubs presented PACTT with a check for \$700. This generous gift has filled PACTT with smiling faces and three new devices. A USB Intellikeys keyboard, that makes computer access easy and fun for all ages and needs. How you ask? By using special overlays created for specific computer tasks such as Internet access or mouse control. In order to improve communication skills, a SuperTalker was purchased from AbleNet, Inc. This low-tech communication device has been added to PACTT's equipment loan inventory to help teachers, parents, and therapists give voice to a child who cannot speak.

The smiling faces we mentioned earlier are now reflected by PACTT's new Peek-a-Boo Mirror. But don't be fooled by its name. This toy is designed to engage children with special needs and teach them the concept of cause and effect.

If these devices intrigue you, feel free to stop by ABC and visit PACTT to learn more!

Tribute

Elmer L. Andersen, the former governor of Minnesota who died November 15, 2004, was praised for his many accomplishments during his years of public service and in private business. It is important that the ABC community remember Gov. Andersen for his contributions benefiting the people we serve.



In an editorial in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, it was noted that Minnesotans with disabilities were among the first in the nation to have access to public school special education thanks to Elmer Andersen's leadership while he was in the state senate. As a member of a commission that saw value and potential for all our citizens, Minnesota became a national leader in special education. We have built quality programs at ABC because of a foundation that recognizes individual worth.

Gov. Andersen said in his book, **“A Man's Reach”** that he felt his most significant accomplishment was the 1957 law in support of programs for special needs children. For a man who had an impressive resume of accomplishments and honors, this speaks highly of him as a person who cared for others.

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Mail to: Ability Building Center
PO Box 6938
Rochester, MN 55903
Attn: Laurie Kellagher

E-mail to: Lauriek@abcinc.org

The ABC newsletter is now available online: www.abcinc.org



ABC's Annual Golf Tournament



You are invited to participate in Ability Building Center's Annual Golf Tournament on Wednesday, June 29, 2005, at Willow Creek Golf Course.

Once again there will be many featured silent auction items, prizes, awards, games, and of course golfing. After a fun filled afternoon of golfing, you can sit back and enjoy the program while eating a buffet dinner. All proceeds raised will benefit ABC programs and services. So grab your clubs and join the staff of ABC and our tournament sponsors "On the Tee" at 1:00pm.

For more information on how you can be a sponsor, a golfer, or to donate items and/or services to the silent auction, please contact us at 281-6262.



Ability Building Center
1911 NW 14th Street
PO Box 6938
Rochester, Minnesota 55903-6938
lauriek@abcinc.org

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