



inside

Ability Building Center

May 2006

ABC

Growing, Building and Working Together for 50 years!

On February 9, 2006, Ability Building Center kicked off its year long celebration! In attendance were many staff both retired and present, workers retired and present, as well as a host of city officials.



Founding Board Member Ken Zubay, Mayor Ardell Brede, Board President Bruce Remme, Betsy Singer, Steve Hill, Harvey Barnard, and Eugene Parkin

Mayor Brede visiting with Jennifer Donavon



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**

If you haven't heard by now, 2006 is ABC's 50th year and we've already started celebrating. We held our 50th Anniversary Kick-off event on February 9th, Mayor Brede was our guest speaker and despite the blustery conditions outside we had a great turnout. After almost a year of intensive planning, things are underway. Our next event will be on May 11th. Paul Krause, former all-pro Viking football player, will be speaking at a noon luncheon that will be held in appreciation of our community business partners, benefactors and stakeholders. We're expecting 200-300 community leaders to help celebrate ABC's 50th.

There will be a number of other events coming up during the year when you will have an opportunity to celebrate with ABC. I encourage each of you to join us at one or more of these events throughout the year. Refer to the bottom of the page for some of the celebration events that will be available to anyone from the community.

Some of you may be wondering why we're having so many and varied events to recognize ABC's 50th Anniversary. In planning for our celebration, those on the planning team realized how dependent ABC's success has been on the contributions of so many sectors of our community. It truly requires a whole community to enable ABC to accomplish all it has in the past and what it needs to accomplish in the future. We are truly grateful for all the support we have received throughout Southeastern Minnesota over the past 50 years and are looking forward to working with each of you and your organizations in the future to carry out our very critical mission. So come on out, join us and celebrate this very important milestone in ABC's history!

50th Anniversary Events



Annual Board Meeting • May 23, 2006
Rochesterfest Parade • June 23, 2006
Golf Tournament • June 28, 2006
Participant Dance • August 4, 2006

Thanks !

ABC would like to thank Bruce Remme and IBM Rochester for the In Kind donation of a server. With the addition of the new server, we were able to upgrade our accounting software, which has benefited that department dramatically. It has permitted us to immediately change the way we process all accounting functions. The server's ability allows compatibility to interface with our word processing and spreadsheet applications as well as the transfer of information which has decreased analytical application time drastically through database queries which were not before permissible. Other benefits include staff accessibility to the accounting data, a platform for new applications such as inventory management, dispersed payroll entry, and connection to Houston County sites, VDS, and other locations for data entry/information.



We now have 3 IBM servers for e-mail, file serving, and finance. ABC has used and purchased IBM servers exclusively since 1990.

We look forward to partnering with IBM for many years to come!

2005 ABC Community Partnership Award



Manager and staff at T. J. Maxx

In October 2005, Community Partnership Awards were presented to Jim Churchill, Goodwill Retail Store Manager, and Mike Ott, T.J. Maxx Store Manager. ABC recognized these two Rochester businesses for their outstanding dedication and support of working with ABC staff in providing vocational opportunities to individuals with disabilities.

After the award presentations, Steve Ehlke, Jodi Liebenow, and Tammy Radloff obtained the following quotes from our community partners:

"Everything about ABC has been a positive experience. The staff has been easy to talk with and the partnership has been a very positive one. The partnership has created a challenging environment that has helped individuals learn new skills and

learn the importance of being part of a team environment." (Mike Ott, T.J. Maxx Store Manager)

"Goodwill/Easter Seals has benefited with its association with ABC because we have been able to meet and/or exceed our production goals, which makes it possible to increase our revenues. This also helps Goodwill/Easter Seals to fund programs that provide job skills for individuals. Working with the ABC case workers and job coaches helps us with the training of ABC participants. This helps to free up our staff from many of the training duties required for a particular job or task. We are grateful for the frequency in which ABC inquires about the progress of their participants on the job.

I feel that ABC and Goodwill/Easter Seals work well together in co-training and coaching participants to become good employees.

Thank you for the opportunity of working with you." (Jim Churchill, Goodwill Retail Store Manager).



Jim Churchill Goodwill Retail Manager with Kristin Ryan

PACTT Update

PACTT (People Achieving Change Through Technology) is an assistive technology program that provides disabled individuals of all ages, their caregivers, and professionals information regarding assistive technology to assist in reaching educational, employment, and personal goals.

PACTT also has a large loan program for those who are unsure of what the best assistive technology option may be for them. The program allows the individuals a trial period with software, devices, and other possible assistive technology options for evaluation purposes. It is a low cost method for individuals as they troubleshoot for the best assistive technology options.

PACTT'S next training day is Thursday, June 29, from 3:00-4:00pm – "What is assistive technology?"

For more information on the PACTT program, please visit www.abcinc.org/pactt/index.html or call Rachel Weitzel at (507) 535-7101.



Randy uses a sprayer rented through PACTT to wash tables at work



Options to Work Update

Ability Enterprise's Options to Work, social/leisure program, is looking forward to a new name and a new home this spring. "Ability Options" will be located in the Valhalla Shopping Center off Elton Hills Drive in Rochester. Ability Options will continue to provide structured social/leisure activities on-site and in the community for people who are retired or not interested in paid work. The new location will provide multiple rooms for



large and small group activities based on the various interests of the participants. It will also give us "room to grow" as the interest and need for social/leisure programming increases.



Special thanks to everyone who contributed to our renovation request. We received \$31,412 in donations! We look forward to seeing you at the Ability Options open house later this year.

Options to Work Wish List

As the number of participants to our program increases, so does the need for activity supplies. Here is a Wish List of several items we still need for our program.

Options to Work/Ability Options Wish List

*fiber fill *acrylic paint *craft paint *water paint *construction paper *glue sticks *rubber cement *Elmer's glue *dry erase markers *thread *needles-long sewing needles and plastic yarn needles *plastic totes/storage containers with lids *VCR movie rack *new or gently used kitchen utensils, pots, pans, cookie sheets, silverware, dishes, *plastic food storage containers with lids.

If you have any of the above items and would like to donate them, please bring them to ABC's front desk.

Spotlight on Woodland's Center Based Employment

ABC Woodland Industries began full scale production labeling bottles for Spring Grove Bottling Company the end of January.



By the 31st of March the crew at Woodland will have unloaded and labeled 83,850 bottles. They will have made up 3,494 cases of pop bottles labeled in nine different flavors.

Pictured are the

unloading crew, the labeling crew, the inspecting and boxing crew, and the crew stacking cases on pallets for shipment. This job has proven to be both challenging and fun for staff and participants alike!



Lowry Award

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 December/January was Matthew Himanga. Matt is a hard working individual who is always open to help out when needed. His positive attitude and skills make him a great worker. Kathy Molus,

Matt's program coordinator said that, "Matt has been a big help to the custodial crews and HyVee South."

Congratulations Mathew on this accomplishment!

The Lowry Award winner for February/March was Jason Bale. If ABC had kept a record of participants who had worked on the most job sites; Jason might win the prize. His great attitude, friendliness, flexibility plus good work skills makes him a man in demand. Recently Jason started a new job at Whistle Binkies. We're all a little worried about how ABC will survive without Jason being available. Another of Jason's recent accomplishments is to have completed training as a fork lift driver at ABC. Working on the dock and driving the forklift is a job that he is a little reluctant to give up. All of us have seen Jason grow as an individual and as a worker.



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

Woodland's Outstanding Worker

Steve Gauger was the recipient of Woodland's 1st Quarter Outstanding Worker (WOW!) award. Steve was cited for his exceptional attendance, his increase in hours over the past year from 16 hours per week to 35-40 hours per week as well as his dependable service in all aspects of the Twice Is Nice store. Steve recently added a position on Mondays as a part of the cleaning enclave at Merchant's Bank.



Way to go Bryan

Bryan Flick, a Woodland Industries participant has served as manager for the Caledonia Warriors High school football team for the past 20 years. This year's team went to the state AA finals at the Metrodome.



Bryan is pictured receiving the second place team medal for his contribution to the team's successful season.





ABC Works Update

ABC Works in LaCrescent will be adding a new vehicle to their fleet sometime this summer. The new medium sized, light duty bus is a result of a grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The grant will provide 80% of the funding or about \$38,000.00. Thank you to everyone who donated to our request last year, we received \$6,589. The bus will be equipped with three wheelchair tie downs, accommodate 10 ambulatory passengers and will primarily transport adults with disabilities to and from their homes to their work sites in the LaCrescent and LaCrosse area. If you did not get an opportunity to make a donation to our bus fund, please contact Laurie at 507-535-7105.



“Growing Together” in Houston County

2006 marks the final year of our “Growing Together” capital campaign in Houston County. This campaign has provided \$312,063 of the funding for the expansion of ABC Works in LaCrescent. The new facility has been a tremendous asset to the Day Training & Habilitation (DT&H) program which provides employment opportunities and person-centered services to adults with disabilities. The additional space in LaCrescent, which is licensed for 60 participants, has decreased agency transportation costs, expanded employment options, and has significantly enhanced the quality and versatility in services and supports that

can be offered to individuals. We thank you for your donations and encourage your continued support to help us generate the remaining \$187,937 during the final stretch of our campaign efforts. Our commitment to enhance the quality of lives for people with disabilities remains strong and energized. Considering a donation, please contact us at 507-895-7161 or stop by at 62 N 3rd Street to visit.

In Memory

ABC Works lost a great friend and co-worker on November 29, 2005 when Tim Ratigan passed away. Tim owned more Minnesota Viking jerseys than the team itself. Along with his purple and gold wardrobe Tim will be forever remembered for his uncanny ability to play jokes on all of us. If you overheard people laughing or teasing each other you could be sure that Tim was somewhere in the mix of it all. He will be greatly missed by each and every one of us.



The “Muffin Men” Pay a Visit to ABC



Staff of KROC with Sharon Boyce

In November, Rich and Steve from KROC AM 1340 brought muffins for the ABC Production Supervisors, in response to an email from Sharon Boyce.

Tributes and Memorials

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, 2006.

In Memory of:

Ivan Albrecht
William Beneke

Chad Blazing
Elaine Bourquin
Mildred Decker
Timothy Deedrick
Bud Demmer

Emery & Chuck Franz
Steve Frettem
Charles Gaven
Dr. & Mrs. Philip Gentling
Johnny Gillespie
Sandra Guillaume
Lorraine Hill
JoAnne Hafner
William Harnack
Glen Hartman
Walter Hill

Aaron Husmann
Lloyd Jennings
Sue Kamperschroer
Ilene Kath
Heather Kraetsch

Lily Kuhlman

Gregg & Dorothy Laging

In Honor of:

ABC Staff
Michael Augedahl
Albert Bowie
Gilbert Brown
Debra Byers
Cheryl Ellringer
Ella Eytcheson
Tom Fenstermacher
Clayton & Janene Hosch

David Jensen
Allison Larson
Anne Macgillivray
Cindy Nichols
Susan Olson
David Papenfus
Jeff & Jane Raddatz
Louis & LeeAnn Ramaker
Justin Riekman
Laureen Rupprecht
Cherryl Sykes
Geraldyn Thicke
Rachel Weitzel
Mary Joan Wiebke

Donor

Doris Williams
Don & Lavona Meiners
Marlin Omoth
James & Patricia Haley
Kenneth Bourquin
Jane Kreidermacher
Tom & Lorraine Deedrick
Ron & Kathy Lund
Don & Lavonna Meiners
Allison Larson
Ken & Jacky Swenson
Doris Williams
Colin Gentling & Lisa Clarke
Sharon Boyce
Gordon & Wanda Bauer
Helen Hafner
Helen Hafner
Eleanor Harnack
Clare Bender
Beatrice Hill
Steve & Karin Hill
Olive Husmann
Jim & Carol McCabe
Judy Tollefsrud
Jerry & Ruby Lange
Mary Bell
Kaye Fenske
Henry & Helen Frank
Dale & Joann Meiners
Don & Lavonna Meiners
Clifford Laging

Donor

Trudie Konicek
Miles & Elsie Marnach
John & Pat Lynaugh
Marcia Brown
Karin Byers
Grace Franz
Peter & Margaret Coleman
Huberta Fenstermacher
Mark Hosch
Mary, Mark, Meghan & Alex Betz
Jim, Shelly, Tyler & Jacob Hosch
Kathy, Ron, Erik & Rachel Lund
Marge Jensen
Grace Franz
Don & Arlysse Macgillivray
Fred & Marlys Wagner
Duane Olson
Jerry & Norma Nordstrom
Lawrence & Lucille Wehrs
Harv & Dorothy Spencer
Eugene & Marilyn Wojtczak
Charlotte Rupprecht
Lawrence & Lucille Wehrs
Leon & Helen Thicke
Stanley & Bonnie Jorgenson
Dolores Augedahl

In Memory of:

Anna McGee
Amy Mitchell
Alan Nelson
Linda Pearson
Sherwood Peterson
Betty Peyla
Cassie Pilger
Tim Ratigan

Sam Saxman
Helen Schumann
Butch Schwebach
Les Sheehan
Rosemary Stapleton
Melissa Stucky
Valery Thillen
Wilbur Thurk Jr

Lavina Tikal
Tony Tschida Sr.
Leslie Weber

Donor

Phil & Sheryl Scholer
Kathi Mitchell
Leona Nelson
Lorraine Pearson
Terese Peterson & Sharon Fitting
Tom and Pat Peyla
Jim and Carol McCabe
Sue Haggerty
Cathy McCabe
Tom & Angela Murphy
Alan & Judy Wandling
Doris Williams
Bill & Barb Woolley
Ted & Renee Saxman
Alfred Shumann
Mark & Mary Betz
Dave & Pat Fredrickson
Ken & Jacky Swenson
Lila Stucky
Terry Thillen
Peter & Margaret Coleman
Kaye Fenske
Raymond & Mary Jewison
Craig & Laurie Kellagher
Jane Kreidermacher
Dave & Ann Langer
Will Thurk Family
Doris Williams
Sandra Tschida
Katherine Weber



Wilbur A. Thurk

November 27, 1948-December 27, 2005

“Wilbur, Will, Punky, Bear, Bearsy, Willey-Boy, Will was a man of many names that his family and friends knew him by. Regardless of the name, Will was always the same talented, humorous, honest, generous person, so willing to do anything he could to help anyone, anywhere, albeit at work or at home.

Will very peacefully entered the gates of Heaven at 9:45 PM on the evening of December 27. He was surrounded by family members at the moment of his death, with the family members having just said the Lord’s Prayer, both sisters flanking his bed, each holding a hand and then giving him a gentle kiss on his forehead to say goodbye.” **Family of Will Thurk**

“Will Thurk expressed great love for everyone he came in contact with. It didn’t matter whether he was serving the customers of ABC’s products and services or his fondest customer of all, our program participants. We will miss you dear friend.”



ABC's Annual Golf Tournament



You are invited to participate in Ability Building Center's Annual Golf Tournament on Wednesday, June 28, 2006, 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 board and staff of ABC and our tournament sponsors "On the Tee" at 1:00pm. For more information on how you can be a sponsor, golfer, or donate items and/or services to the silent auction, check our website at www.abcinc.org.



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