

the BEACON

Fall 2013



"A new beginning"

Anniversaries in October, November, December

Sandra Meier	23	Robin Coppock	8
Sandra Weinmann	22	Jill Coss	8
Donald Andresen	21	Gilbert Efram	8
Lisa Perez	20	Michele George	8
Cynthia Smith	19	Bucky Hinz	8
Beth Alexander	18	Beverly Posta	8
Kristin Carlsrud	18	Jennifer Riley	8
Ronald Porter	18	Barbara Salyers	8
Shirley Porter	18	Afton Simpson	8
Sherri Pierce	17	Mark Turnbull	8
Carol Boles	16	Cindy Bradford	7
Vivian Deegan	16	Laurel Guertin	7
Cassie Skinner	16	D. Byron Hopke	7
David Nelson	15	Staci Johnson	7
Lorrie Nelson	15	Walter Klimek	7
Steven Vogt	15	Wayne Tuchalski	7
Brenda Halvorson	14	Erica Varsho	7
Ahren Michelbook	14	Brandon Bautch	6
Ernest Perez	14	Dianna Calzada	6
Brenda Brunner	13	Ashley Huber	6
Amber Felton	13	Marjorie Hyatt	6
Sarah Scheeringa	13	Cassandra VanderPal	6
Elvin Stoner	13	Joyce Anderson	5
Joyce Swenson	13	Sara Bembenek	5
Janell Card	12	Joel Bosse	5
Katie Wozniak	12	Katrina Ehrenberg	5
Nicolette Coss	11	Patricia Ellefson	5
Cheryl Gebhardt	11	Carley Elling	5
Candace Kapperman-Wolf	11	Carrie Fraijo	5
Bev Kelley	11	Gina Holman	5
June Knudson	11	Peter Johnson	5
Judy Markow	11	Sherry Lew	5
Beth Stoner	11	Crystal Okerglicki	5
Rochelle Berglund	10	Angela Olson	5
Carol Champion	10	Jennifer Sandor	5
Melisa Johnson	10	Rachel Smak	5
Gina Krueger	10	Jenifer Stainbrook	5
James Petroske	10	RochellemStrum	5
Jaime Pigman	10		
Ann Stevens	10		
Marian Aikin	9		
Jane Koonce	9		
Jill Mattson	9		
Paula Mickelson	9		
Carol Miller	9		
Heidi Riendeau	9		
Wendy Schlaefer	9		
Tara Aikin	8		
Kami Ayers	8		
Kathleen Bass	8		
Cole Butkowski	8		

Congratulations
to all of you who
have been here for
5 years or more!

Aurora
community services

CEO Corner

by Dave Barnard

After having written a couple of hundred CEO Corners over the years I sometimes find it helpful to look at past articles to find inspiration. As I was perusing past "Corners" I came upon one from nearly 10 years back that I found to be as relevant today as it was a decade ago. In the past article I told of being at a "watering hole" on the top of a mountain. Skiers and snowboarders were coming in at the end of the day. As I was talking with my son I happened to notice over his shoulder a snowboarder walking in. He had the "required" snow boarder appearance - baggy ski-pants, one suspender off the shoulder, stocking hat pulled down over his head and a few days beard growth. I wouldn't have paid him another moment's notice except that his shirt caught my attention - it was jet black (of course) with white lettering that simply stated - "no day but today."

Teachers come in all shapes, colors and sizes - and many times in disguise. Although I was paying attention to my conversation with my son I logged the phrase in my mind. As the conversation switched from me to others around the table I was able to more fully contemplate and appreciate this t-shirt slogan. A small nearly imperceptible smile crossed my face as I sat back and thought to myself - how true, how true - "No day but today" - four very simple words and yet it defines what success in life is all about. When it comes right down to it, we learn from our experiences of yesterday and we

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plan for our future tomorrow - but it is only "today" that provides us the opportunity to take those past experiences and future plans, and create reality.

In 1986 on April 19, Aurora was born. That first day of existence was spent at a local auction where the only two employees of Aurora at the time (Jim and myself), stood in the rain waiting for the opportunity to bid on two single beds. We brought our past experience with us . . . the planning for Aurora had taken place and the future goals were determined, but without taking action on that rainy day (we had the winning bid of \$50 for two beds) all of the planning and dreams would mean nothing. On that day it was our "no day but today." We needed to put our plan into action and begin "doing something." Every day since then, for the past 27 years, has been just as important as that first day. Each day there is "no day but today," whether in your personal life or in Aurora's life, we need to take action and do something today to create the future we want to see.

Every morning you get up and you face another day. Sometimes you face the new day after having a bad day yesterday or sometimes even a stretch of bad days. It may not consciously cross your mind, but what you are about to do after getting out of bed is have the opportunity to make "it" happen. All of our past experiences and our future goals come together "today." It is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak, all of the planning for the

future and all of the experiences from our past meet here today and we then are given the opportunity to decide if we will do "something" today that will set the course for tomorrow – it is "no day but today."

Aurora views each day as a new opportunity - a chance to improve upon something from yesterday and/or make things better for tomorrow. It is this mindset, this attitude, which has made our company the success it has been for over 27 years. It is what will make us an even greater success moving forward.

I would like to challenge you to adapt this mindset in your personal life. Make today the "no day but today" for you. Consider all that you know and all that you hope for and take that first step to bring it all together to make a better life for you. Do something today to make it happen. It has worked for this company that you are such a critical part of, and it can work for every individual who embraces the "no day but today" attitude.

I want to deeply thank each of you for making it happen – yesterday is gone and tomorrow is but a dream – there is "no day but today" to create our success both for our company and for ourselves individually.

Thanks for all you do!

Dave

A Day In The Life

by Former Employee

As I am finishing up my last week at Aurora, after eleven years of working at a job I loved, there is so much I am leaving behind. Even knowing that I have so much in the future to build up helping people as I have done here, it is still a very hard thing to do. It is the end of something; something amazing that has been such a huge part of my life for a long time.

It makes me remember how Aurora has changed my life. I was going to be a school psychologist and this was supposed to have been my college job, until a man with a shy look and bright smile came out to the horse barn with me. Aurora is the reason I opened a therapeutic riding center, that has touched many lives and with more time to do so, will continue reaching people and making a difference in their lives. And it all started with an Aurora consumer.

I have always believed in doing what I do because I loved it and because it made changes in other's lives. Lives that maybe would have gone about with their same old, until something new and different was introduced. This is why I loved my job here at Aurora. I have worked at various houses with various consumers, staff, and managers. I have been blessed to have none but the very best bosses, who were always supportive and went above

and beyond the norm to make sure their employees were doing well. This job was never just a job. It was a family, a community of friends, who all worked hard to make sure the consumers were first and foremost, and that lives were touched. Not just the consumers we worked with, but each other's lives as well. The loyalty and trust that was built here is unlike any other job I have had, and I know that I have been blessed to be a part of it.

I have also seen the other side. I have seen good teams who build each other up, and bad teams who knock each other down. I have seen the difference that each and every staff makes to the morale of an entire team, and how it takes only one negative feeling to knock a whole team down. Then I have watched as a team tries to rebuild itself into the thing it was. It may never go back completely, and sometimes it rebuilds itself missing a few stones, and so the next time it happens, the whole thing topples over and once again starts from scratch. Watching this happen will take your breath away. It is why I want to write this; to help each and every one of you reading it to know that you have a very important role in making your job exactly what you want it to be. You are a key player in creating a team, and not just any team. A

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team that changes lives, impacts people, and will make a difference each and every day that you chose to let it.

This is why, after eleven years at Aurora, I could choose to write about consumer stories, staff stories, or how much Aurora has changed my life, or how I am so excited for the future and sad about leaving the past behind, but the only thing I can think about today is responsibility.

As an Aurora staff, each and every one of us has a responsibility. It is a responsibility that is greater than ourselves. It is one that should be so ingrained in us, that personal feelings should be set aside. I have always said, I have never worked with one staff that I did not like. It is true. I have had staff that are more "fun" to work with, staff that maybe needed more guidance than others, staff who made my job easier or harder; but never one that I did not like working with. It is because it is not about me. It has always been about finding the good in the people around me, and working with them to find their strengths, and help them strengthen "weaknesses." It was never about promotions, or wanting to be a manager, or to make others look less than to promote myself. It was about a team. It was taking the responsibility when I felt it was the best decision for the team, as well as giving it up when I felt it was time.

This responsibility to this company is what makes so many of us stay here for years and years to come. There are other staff that work at this place as well, who may not be here for the same reasons or are just doing it until they can find their "niche" or finish school, and of course that is wonderful as well. Those staff keep the ones with the desire to do what they love from completely burning out on overtime and long hours that we all have grown to know and love... or not love, but do... once again out of responsibility.

As I leave Aurora, I wish I could stay. I feel responsible for my four consumers, and just want what is the very best for each and every one of them. It is hard to watch seven years of helping them each along their way, to all of a sudden come to an end; yet as my passion for helping grows more to the horse barn, it is time to once again do what is needed for the team. Leaving it behind is one of the hardest decisions I have made, but it is for the right reasons and so all I can do is hope that my team is prepared enough. That they are ready to take on the future and always put the consumers best interests ahead of their own.

By writing this, I am hoping that each and every one of you take time to sit down and really think about your life and job here at Aurora. There have been so many changes lately to Aurora, and I know that many feel those changes to their very core. This is because you are more than just an employee here; we all are. This job has a way of reaching into you and becoming part of who you are, and so as with any part of your life, change can be scary. It is definitely hard, and there is a tendency to want to cling to the way it was. But, change can also push

you. It can push you in whatever direction you choose to let it. You can take it and concentrate on the negatives and feel like people are "knocking you down" or that Aurora is finding more ways to write you up and make your life harder. Or, you can see that maybe changes are needed, and take these changes to push you to be better, stronger, and more than you have ever been. That maybe we all need change in our lives in order to have our lives touched, to no longer go about your same old, and have something bigger and better introduced. To live for a purpose beyond yourself is one that very few have a chance to live for, but each and every one of us has that opportunity here, and it is now what you choose to do with that opportunity that will make or break finding that purpose.

I wish each and every one of you well, and hope to continue to see many of you in the future. Today you have a chance to make a change. Appreciate the opportunity. Thanks for everything you do each and every day for these amazing consumers we all know and love. It may be the end of an era, but it sure was one wonderful ride!

Life Photo of the Month





On August 24, Kaylie who lives in Abbotsford participated in the 2nd Annual Kolor For Kids Funfest which benefits the Children Miracle Network. She was accompanied by her staff/friend Tanya Wesolowki, Tina Kortes and Jessica Trachte. Kaylie was so excited about doing this that she wrote a letter telling everyone about her experience. Below is the letter she wrote.

"Hi, my name is Kaylie. I just walked my first 5k and ran through the finish line. I have been walking around town with my staff and walking a couple 3.1 miles to see how I would do and to prepare myself for the 5k. There was a lot of fun things that I like about this walk. I really liked when they released the doves. I liked the colored cornstarch that they threw at us. I walked the 3.1 miles and I never thought I would be able to walk one because of my weight which I have been struggling with most of my life. And in a heartbeat I would do it again! I was so happy when I ran through the finish line. It made my day. I plan on doing more and will come back next year because the Children's Miracle Network Hospital needs that money to help the kids that are suffering from cancer and other things. At the end they gave us more powder and then told us to throw it up in the air and by the time we were done we looked like rainbows."

This was a wonderful accomplishment for Kaylie and the Aurora employees who participated in this benefit. To learn more about this benefit, go to www.kolorforkids.com.

Employee of the Quarter



Brandon Bautch, PMII, at Operation 083 is the Employee of the Quarter!

Brandon is PMII at an operation where staff deal with medical issues, necessitating the use of needles, as well as dealing with significant behavioral histories and challenges. Brandon has trained and developed the team so they manage each issue in a safe and efficient manner. Brandon is a step-up guy. He handles himself with dignity and is very humble about recognition. He has many skills and can adapt to any situation. Brandon treats the consumers with genuine dignity and respect.

Brandon realizes his job can be fun and that is a benefit, but also recognizes it as a job with responsibilities. He wants the house to look its best for the consumers and for guests. Any accomplishment is recognized as a team accomplishment. He wants each consumer to succeed and shares the joy of individual consumer success with that consumer. This program is known as a behavioral program, but based on the individual success of each consumer and the group success of the team, you wouldn't necessarily get that picture unless you were told. This is due to the work Brandon has put in to setting new personal goals, developing the team, enabling consumers to make more and better choices, developing positive and genuine relationships with consumers and by being a good role model and team leader at 083.

