

B the *January* 2013 BEACON



"A new beginning"

Anniversaries in January

Congratulations

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

Avis Wolske-Baker	25
Donna Ernst	19
Marni Waznik	19
Susan Wheeler	19
Andrew Wolf	17
Debra Brown	16
Sharon Moss	16
Sadie Bygd	15
Terri Evans	15
Joan Hauck	15
William Stone	15
Vicki Ellis	14
Sheryl Planque	14
Jennifer Dippmann	11
Linda Dalland	9
Debra Dolney	9
Richard Knudtson	9
Jude Nellessen	9
Sarah Mohr	8
John Stearns	8
Darren Cox	7
M. Jane Funk	7
Sue Laier	7
Chris LeClair	7
Katherine Mozer	7
Wendy Prigge	7
Anjuli Simon	7
Warren Stouffer	7
Elizabeth Wilcox	7
Dawn Connell	6
Leona Guider	6
Paige Meier	6
Mandy O'Malley	6
Kevin Turbin	5

CEO Corner

by Dave Barnard

Last month in the CEO Corner I told the parable of the donkey who had fallen in a well. The farmer had no idea how to get him out. After considering that the donkey was getting old and the well needed to be closed off anyway, he invited neighbors over to help him fill the well with dirt thereby closing the well and ending the donkey's suffering. As they all began shoveling dirt into the well the donkey made horrible noises realizing what was happening. After a short while the noise stopped, causing the farmer to look down in the well. What he saw was that with every shovel full of dirt that was tossed on the donkey he just shook it off and used that dirt to step up. The shovels of dirt kept falling and eventually the donkey was able to shake it off and step up and out of the well.

This parable, as I said last month, has great significance for what Aurora has been experiencing over the past several years with the Family Care program. We had shovel after shovel of dirt thrown on us as cuts to consumer funding was getting more and more dramatic. Fortunately Aurora had the attitude, perseverance and the ability to shake it off and keep stepping up hoping that eventually we would reach the top of the well. I can say with very cautious optimism that I feel as we enter the New Year we may be able to see the light at the top of the well. We have been functioning in the dark for the past two years so any light at this point is a welcome sign.

With recent changes in the MCO (Managed Care Organization) operating in one of Aurora's largest service area's we have a renewed confidence. We are seeing the new MCO as a professional organization that is truly committed to assuring individual consumers receive the best services possible with the funds that are available. The new MCO operates on a much "leaner" administrative model than the previous MCO, which played a role in the previous MCO's demise.

I am very pleased to enter this New Year with an optimism that I have not had in the previous two years. We have Aurora's long history of determination, perseverance and courage that has brought us to where



Photo by Dave Barnard

Aurora
community services

Continued next page



CEO Corner continued

we are today. I am filled with great hope for our coming new year; one that is filled with the promise of continued growth and development of new programs, along with the strengthening of our existing services. The most important thing we do, serving those individuals who so deserve the right to live in the community of their choosing, will remain assured with Aurora's commitment to protecting and fighting for that right.

I hope that you have had a happy holiday season and

I want to wish you and your families the happiest and brightest of New Years.

Let's embrace this New Year with expectations of great things!

Thank you for all that you do!

Dave

Consumer Spotlight

by Tyler Giedd

On August 17, 2012 the Menomonie Day Center held the 2012 Summer Olympics. Ten consumers from the Eau Claire Center and five consumers from the New Richmond Center joined Menomonie consumers participating in our very first Summer Olympics.

The day's activities included bean-bag toss, egg-on-a-spoon race, an obstacle course race, manual wheelchair race, and electric wheelchair race. Each center (team) had their own color and also made their own team flag. Menomonie

was purple, Eau Claire blue, and New Richmond green. Everyone had a good time cheering on their teammates as well as their friends from other centers. When all the games were finished and the results were in, everyone enjoyed the Awards Ceremony where ribbons were given out for gold, silver, and bronze. All others that joined in the Olympics received participation ribbons.

Everyone had a great time and loved being cheered on by their teammates and staff.

A Day in the Life

by Scott Jacobs



Twenty years ago Linda Aton answered a help wanted ad for Aurora Residential Alternatives (at the urging of a loved one who said, "You would be good at that!"). After her interview, Linda said, "I loved what this company stood for; the philosophy of giving people choices."

After a year of residential work in the New Richmond area, Linda became the office manager for

Aurora's second office and now twenty years later is the Director of Administrative Services for the entire company. On the morning that we spoke she had already helped with planning a holiday party, found coverage for an office, dealt with slippery sidewalks, and approved several purchase orders for supplies.

For those who know (and love) Linda, her boundless joy and enthusiasm for her work, and for the company, is contagious and inspiring. Even after twenty years you'll still find Linda teary-eyed after watching a slide show of consumers living LIFE (freely and with CHOICE).

Linda recalls the early years in the New Richmond office, learning as she went along (much like the company), filling out paper time sheets, driving payroll to Menomonie, and

then bringing paychecks back to the NR staff. She laughed as she remembered coming over the hill on Highway 64, heading to the original office there, and seeing the staff's cars lined up on the highway waiting for their paychecks.

"The only reason I was a good office manager," said Linda, "was that I loved helping people." She enjoyed "figuring things out" and drew an appropriate comparison between her nature and that of the company—Aurora has always been good at "figuring it out!"

Linda is thankful for the many opportunities Aurora has given her, especially the chance to "make mistakes, to not be afraid to learn new things, and to know people have your back." During a conversation many years ago with CEO, Dave Barnard, they were discussing some problems Linda was having in her work role. He sat quietly listening to her, paused a moment, and then said, simply, "What did you learn?"

Dave's simple question helped her figure out her own problem. And along the way she's learned the importance of creating good self-care (she meditates, exercises, and does yoga), and knowing how to ask for help.

Thank you, Linda, for 20 years of dedicated, enthusiastic, joyful service to OUR company.

Employee of the Fourth Quarter

by The Culture Team



In 1996, Melinda Stewart entered the Aurora family. To this day, she remains a vital part of this dynamic company. She is currently supporting the ladies of operation 119 in Menomonie.

Melinda was nominated by those who work with her as well as the Program Manager of the site.

Melinda is naturally a calm and supportive person which helps her ease the anxiety and hectic days of those around her. She is completely engaged in her work and is a motivating force for others around her. On a regular basis Melinda is coming up with new ideas, voicing concerns and helping out not only the ladies who live at operation 119, but also her co-workers. She assists the Program Manager with training new employees and offers much to the discussions at monthly team meetings.

The ladies at 119 depend on the consistency Melinda brings and look forward to her arrival; some with entire body enthusiasm when they hear Melinda is on her way in to help them.

We are so proud to announce Melinda as the fourth quarter employee of the quarter and can already hear the squeals of agreement from the energetic ladies at 119.

NOW LIVE!

We have launched a new website exclusively for all Aurora staff. This website has links to discounts and other important information. There is also a link to view your timecard online via Kronos. The link to get to this page is: <http://Employee.AuroraServices.com> If you have any problems or suggestions, please contact us at: Technology@AuroraServices.com.

Congrats to all 2012 nominees!

The Culture Team has had the great pleasure of selecting Aurora's Employee of the Quarter this year. Since we have concluded our selection for our fourth quarter winner, we felt this a great time to recognize ALL nominees. This select group of people has provided inspiration to all of us! The selection process was extremely difficult because of the caliber of people we were asked to choose from! All qualified nominees will receive their nomination(s) and a copy placed in their personnel files. Thanks to each of our nominees for your dedicated service to our mission! Congratulations to the following nominees:

Eric Zeinert, Rick Kayser, Jeni Stainbrook, June Knudtson, Cyndi Johnson, Ashley Lieske, Jenn Brenn, Stehaphnie Damiani, Peggy Beckstrom, Carol Miller, Chandra Oscarson, Kristen Dusek, Mya Fellenz, Gail Szarkowitz, Jessica Croteau, Ann Ellefson Miller, Angela Bautch, Kathy Doering, Ellen Zimmerman, Hannah Gausman, Whitney Berger, Tanya Leisgang, Stephanie Johnson, Dawn Brand, Monica Aikin, Chuck Lechmaier

And, in January, we will select our Employee of the Year from our 4 winners! Carrie Blanchard (First Quarter winner), Jessica Woestehoff (Second Quarter winner), Bucky Hinz (Third Quarter winner), Melinda Stewart (Fourth Quarter winner), stay tuned!

From the Wellness Team

When the Wellness Team asked... "Are you ready for some football?"...we found out that many of you were! The Football Challenge that was held during the month of November had great participation. There were 23 teams with 110 people participating. Wow! Congratulations to all that challenged themselves! Special congratulations go out to the winners listed below which were randomly drawn from the 2,438 entries. Below is a picture of all the prizes awarded to those winners. If you are listed below and have not received your prize, please contact your local office. Congratulations!

Amy Laehn, Ashley Lieske, Barb Salyers, Brandon Bautch, Brittni Straseske, Casey Lowe, Cassie Hibbard, Crystal Schmitt, Ezekiel Mose, Greg Miller, Jen Dippmann, Jena Malzahn, Jena Sandor, Jenessa Rush, Jessica Effertz,

Johnna Grant, Libby Richter, Mandi Amundson, Michelle Seehafer, Monica Aikin, Pixie Haug, Tina Kortes, Warren Stouffer



Supported Employment

by Terri Bollinger

In January of 2012 Aurora Vocational Services began a new venture working with Dunn County to provide employment services for persons with mental illness. Dunn County is involved in a consortium with three other counties developing this project in conjunction with SVRI (Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is also a partner in this project.

The employment program is called IPS (Individualized Placement and Support). The philosophy is different than most existing employment services. The IPS model focus's on an individuals strengths while it eliminates "passing" an assessment to qualify for services with the job search beginning almost immediately. It is a zero exclusion model with eligibility based on choice; if an individual indicates they want to work they are eligible to participate in the program. The model defines maximum caseload limits as well as eliminates all case management type duties that sometimes

come along with employment services. The approach is to be integrated in the Dunn County Mental Health CSP team. The model was developed by Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Institute. The IPS model is held to its standards by a fidelity test. Aurora Vocational Services expects to receive a fidelity review in early 2013.

Kyle Schemenauer is the Employment Specialist for the program. He has been instrumental in making the program successful. To remain within the fidelity of the program Kyle maintains an active caseload of five to six individuals. Over the past year, Kyle has been extremely successful assisting individuals to obtain and maintain employment. He has worked with nine different individuals, of them five have obtained successful community employment and four still remain employed. The IPS model has been very successful in Dunn County. Aurora Vocational Services hopes to expand to other counties as pilot opportunities become available.

"Scratch off for Safety" is going strong!

by The Safety Team

Since the beginning of "Scratch off for Safety" in August, we have had 103 winners across Aurora Land. That means that there are still 201 Wal Mart gift card or Aurora logo item scratch off cards still out there, just waiting to be won!

You could be the next winner of a \$5, \$25, \$50 or \$100 gift

card or an Aurora item by working safely, and attending the monthly team meeting at your site! That's all that you have to do!

The Safety Team wishes you luck to become the next big "Scratch Off for Safety" winner!

From the Payroll Department

Now available....Electronic Direct Deposit Earnings Statements! If you are enrolled to receive your payroll check via direct deposit, you now have the option to log in to a secured website to view and print your pay stubs. You also have the option to have a notification of your pay stub sent to you by text and/or e-mail. You will also be able to view and reprint your pay stubs at your convenience. If you are not currently signed up for direct deposit, you may want to do so to take advantage of these options!

Also coming soon are electronic W-2s. This will be available for all employees regardless of whether you receive a check or direct deposit throughout the year. You may view and print your W-2 as many times as you need. If you print your W-2 from the secured website, you will not receive a copy in the mail. If you choose not to retrieve your W-2 from the secured website, it will be mailed to you at the end of January. There will be a Kronos message notifying employees when W-2s become available on-line.

For further instructions on how to access these electronic options, contact your local office. We are excited to offer these options to our employees and hope that you find them helpful!

Life Photo of the Month



If you have any questions or comments about the Beacon, please send them to: Beacon@AuroraServices.com or mail to: Stavroula at Aurora Community Services, P.O. Box 68, Menomonie, WI 54751.