

B the BEACON

October 2012



"A new beginning"

Anniversaries in October

Congratulations

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

Sandra Meier	22
Sandra Weinmann	21
Lisa Perez	19
Cynthia Smith	18
Vivian Deegan	15
Cassie Skinner	15
David Nelson	14
Ernest Perez	13
Sarah Scheeringa	12
Ursula Straka	12
Bev Kelley	10
Beth Stoner	10
Darlene Tjelta	10
Carol Champion	9
Gina Krueger	9
Jaime Pigman	9
Marian Aikin	8
Jill Mattson	8
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Barbara Salyers	7
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CEO Corner

by Dave Barnard

Reprint from May 2004

In last month's CEO Corner I wrote about "No day but today" referencing how we each make "it" happen every day that we get up and go to our work. I also spoke of Aurora's beginnings and how we have made this adventure we call Aurora become what it has become.

While writing that article I was already thinking of this month's article when one of my favorite quotes of Helen Keller's came to me. Helen Keller who had been born deaf, blind and unable to speak but ultimately learned communication was said, "Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing at all." For many of us we may read that quote and think, yeah

but, sometimes those adventures can lead to frightful results. I think that those who believe that are caught in the perception that "adventure" means running huge risks of life and limb. I feel the "adventure" that Helen Keller was referencing and what we all continually strive for in our lives, was best defined by John Amatt (interestingly the first Canadian to summit Mt. Everest).

When Amatt was questioned about his daring adventure of climbing Mt. Everest he stated, "Adventure isn't hanging on a rope off the side of a mountain. Adventure is an attitude that we must apply to the day to day obstacles of life

Continued next page





CEO Corner continued

- facing new challenges, seizing new opportunities, testing our resources against the unknown and in the process, discovering our own unique potential." Now there is "the adventure" that defines what Aurora has been all about. Over the years we have certainly faced new challenges, seized new opportunities, tested our resources against the unknown and in doing all this we have discovered our unique potential. We are a leader in community-based services to individuals with disabilities. We have never shirked at the challenges we have faced and we continue to create and define services to best meet the needs of those we serve.

Each of us individually is faced with this same adventure in life. It is because of your willingness to face those challenges and seize those new opportunities that Aurora has become what it is today. Aurora's great adventure will continue to accept the challenges, creating opportunities,

and when necessary, redefining what "has been" to ensure the most innovative and highest quality community based services possible.

Life is a daring adventure for all of us. Our continual effort to improve keeps us invigorated and challenged and moves us into the future with the same confidence that has carried us to where we are today.

Congratulations on being a key part of that adventure! My wish for all of us (one I feel very confident in) is that we may never be bored!

Thanks for all that you do!

Dave

Spotlight Caregiver of the Year Winner

by **Andrea Olson**



Tyler Giedd, current Program Manager of the Menomonie Day Center and Job Developer in Dunn County was nominated and selected for one of four "Spotlight Caregiver of the Year" awards in Wisconsin. When hearing about the opportunity to select one person for this award, I had no hesitation about who I wanted to nominate.

Tyler is a man with a warm, caring, and empathetic demeanor. Having a passion to work with and support adults with special needs is a gift that some are blessed with, and Tyler is one of those people. Tyler began his journey with Aurora Community Services in February 2007 working in a residential home supporting eight men with

varying disabilities. Tyler's gift was apparent to his co-workers and supervisors early in his career which lead him to move on, expanding his knowledge and taking an opportunity to work at Aurora's Vocational Day Center in Menomonie, WI as a Program Assistant. The Day Center's program focuses on individualized programming to a diverse group of 28 adults with special needs. Tyler strives to find creative ways to support the unique needs of each individual and empowers them to find ways to grow and find their place in the community.

In the fall of 2011 Tyler was promoted to Program Manager of the Day Center. Today, he continues to share his special gift with not only that group of individuals but to all who are given the opportunity to work with him. He has built meaningful relationships with his "friends" at the Day Center as well as the families and caregivers of those he supports. This past year, Tyler has been a respite provider on an every other weekend basis to a gentleman who currently attends the Day Center and lives at home with his parents. When this individual's parents had no respite, Tyler was willing to take their son in, despite the demands of his own schedule managing the Day Center and moving into his first home with his new wife. He is always looking out for the best interests of others and goes out of his way to accommodate those needs.

On September 7, Tyler and I traveled to Wisconsin Dells to attend the Wisconsin Direct Caregiver Alliance Conference for Direct Care Workers where he was recognized and accepted his award as "Caregiver of the Year."

Thank you, Tyler, for all your hard work and most importantly for the passion you bring to work with you each and every day!

Consumer Spotlights

by Betty Dueholm



"Mission Possible"
Aurora Vocational Services began working with David in the winter of 2012, which he relates to as one of the lowest points in his life. He entered with skepticism and doubt, wondering how anyone would be able to help end his downward spiral. The home where David was living in Chetek, WI, was lost to foreclosure, which

ultimately left this man homeless. With no income and a fading hope of finding a job, his only option would be to apply for a temporary room at Benjamin's House Shelter for the homeless. David was accepted at the residence and could begin his stay on the last day in February, which was also the final day he could be at his home in Chetek. With a heavy heart and a touch of gladness, David called Aurora with the news about his acceptance. His voice was shaky with anxiety and fear, but he graciously accepted the offer from Aurora to accompany him for his intake at Benjamin's House the next day. So began the next chapter in a proud man's life who was now facing something he could never have imagined.

Employment search became intense as time was ticking with only 90 days to achieve what seemed to be an

impossible mission. David not only needed to find a job, but one that could support rent, utilities and food. There were times when the anxiety almost outweighed hope, but David maintained a positive outlook and kept in contact daily with his job developer. Aurora and the staff at Benjamin's House kept him busy filling out applications, and his job developer followed up on all job leads.

With his ultimate goal of working in transportation, Aurora and DVR presented an On-The-Job-Training plan to work with Northwood's Transport in Rice Lake. David was accepted into the company after his interview and began working the next day. Suddenly his life went from mundane to busy, often working 10 hour days. As his stay at Benjamin's House neared its end, his application with West Cap Housing was accepted. David secured an apartment in Rice Lake on the 89th day of his stay, and moved into his new home.

Mission Impossible accomplished! David reflects on his short experience with homelessness as a positive experience. He remarked that it has made him more appreciative of the privilege of being employed. In a conversation with his employer, Aurora learned that David is a valued and dependable employee and relates that working with Aurora has been a pleasure.

As his job developer, I would share that sometimes we can learn more from our consumers than they learn from us. Watching this unfold in 90 short days has made a long lasting impression. It proves that if we want something bad enough we can create our own luck.

Employee of the Third Quarter

by The Culture Team



Bucky Hinz was selected as Aurora's Employee of the Quarter winner for the third quarter of 2012! Bucky works primarily at #129 in Wausau but has been known to go where needed when asked! He has been a valued Aurora team member since 2005. Bucky was nominated for this honor by his Program Director, Jessica Kroncke, and his Regional Director, Ann Stevens. Jessica and Ann both felt Bucky deserving of the award as described...

Bucky has a good sense of humor that makes work fun, but he is no jokester when it comes to safety in the homes – he is the first to teach consumers and staff about safety and prevention. The consumers trust Bucky implicitly and know they will remain safe both physically and emotionally when he is there to support them. Bucky also is known to remind his team to listen to consumers when it comes to behavioral precursors. Bucky is so dedicated to his job that he has been known to take a cab to work when having car trouble because he knows the consumers are depending on him! Bucky is a representative of all Aurora's value words! He

has gone above and beyond expectations to assure consumers have awesome lives, making detailed plans for trips and calmly postponing them if they can't happen. Bucky has been the stability that has helped some very "energetic" consumers transition to community living in their own homes. We all appreciate Bucky for his tireless efforts and thank him for his seven years of service to the consumers he has supported! Well done, Bucky! Congratulations!

Exceptional Employer Award

by Terri Bollinger

Aurora Vocational Services has awarded Best Western in Rice Lake an Exceptional Employer Award. This award is presented quarterly to one of the many businesses we work with to thank them for becoming partners with us.

Aurora Vocational Services assists people with various disabilities and vocational challenges to obtain employment in the community. The vocational services program provides a prescreening process for each potential applicant, training, coaching and many other services to assist employers and applicants to promote a successful employment match. Aurora Vocational Services and Best Western have established a great working relationship. Best Western was seeking reliable, quality employees and Aurora Vocational Services had applicants that met the requirements they were seeking. Tom Doyle, owner of Best Western stated, "It was perfect timing. Aurora has provided Best Western Inn with employees that are friendly and quality oriented. Aurora helped our staff by bringing workers to our establishment with virtually no risk to our company! The work experience program has definitely been wonderful. I really enjoyed the opportunities that come with the work experience as it allows the potential employee and the company time to decide if Best Western would be a good fit for them."

Aurora Vocational Services has been providing employment services for about 15 years in several communities throughout Wisconsin. We hope to continue to strengthen our relationship with Best Western and continue to assist them in meeting their employment needs with qualified candidates.

Wellness Bingo Winners

by The Wellness Team

The Wellness Team would like to give a big shout out to all that played Wellness Bingo in the month of August. We had 124 winning bingo cards submitted and each was entered into a drawing for 1 of 20 \$5 subway gift cards. Here are the lucky winners:

Pamela Knetsch	Heidi Sacia	Emily Powell
Monica Aikin	Sadie Bygd	Sherri McCabe
Alexandria Delosier	Amy Laehn	Felicia Pataska
Donna Bignell	Peg Liedtke	Sheryl Planque
Courtney Kroyer	Pat Luethi	Dawn Thompson
Jessica Itzen	Arron Solie	Ramona Flod
Karen Lieder	Debra Dzwonkowski	

Watch for a Wellness Football Challenge coming in November. Stay well!

Winners, Winners Everywhere!

by The Safety Team

Are you a winner yet? Company wide, we have already had 44 "Scratch off for Safety" winners! Heidi Riendeau of 075 won a \$100 gift card! Krista Hanson from 034 won a \$50 gift card in August and a \$5 gift card in September! Vaughn Doxtater of 063 won a \$25 gift card! They're out there... "Scratch off for Safety Cards" that offer big prizes! There have also been numerous \$5 gift card winners along with Aurora Logo item winners everywhere in Aurora Land!

In order to receive your, "Scratch off for Safety Card" from your Program Director, work at a site that worked safely and did not have a First Report of Injury the previous month. Then, attend the monthly team meeting. That's it! That's all you have to do for a chance to be the next big winner!

Be a winner: work safely, attend your site team meetings, have a positive attitude and you may be the next big winner!

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.