

B the *March 2012* **BEACON**



"A new beginning"

Anniversaries in March

Congratulations

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

Carrie Blanchard	16
Joseph Felling	16
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David Furst	14
Kathi Tollefson	14
Judy Koxlien	11
Maria Block	8
Dustin Doornink	8
Diane Powell	8
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CEO *Corner*

by **Dave Barnard**

(Reprint from February 2007)

Over the years of writing this column I have often addressed the issue of risk. Risk is a part of everyday life that each of us experiences in almost everything we do. Sometimes the level of risk is low and sometimes it is high, but the reality is that risk is always present. The types and levels of service that we provide place us in a position of risk pretty much 24 hours a day – 365 days a year. Some of you may not be aware that Aurora is recognized as an agency that serves individuals that other agencies will not even assess. Why do we do this? Are we adrenaline junkies trying to take as big a risk as possible just for thrills? Are we self destructive – placing ourselves in danger of litigation? Are we simply naïve? Actually, none of these reasons have anything to do with why we do what we do. Aurora does what it does because we truly believe every single individual has the right and the ability to live in their own community - and we are 100% committed to that belief. Many talk the talk, but few walk the walk. You can be proud to be a member of an organization that walks

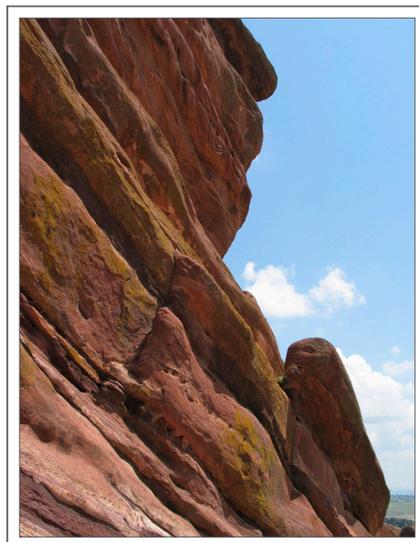
the walk every day of the year. Our commitment is to doing everything we can to ensure that an individual has the right to live in their community.

Once in a great while the risk we run has negatively impacted us. Sometimes due to the scrutiny it may bring from outside agencies, sometimes due to ambulance chasing attorneys and other times due to funding sources that back out on their commitment to the consumer...but that is the risk of risk.

I appreciate the humor in the following statement, "Risk-taking is inherently failure-prone. Otherwise, it would be called sure-thing taking." – it is, however, a solid truism. We do all that we can to cover all of the bases when we provide their services we do, but the reality is when you serve nearly 600 individuals on a daily basis it is bound to have its ups and downs. The reason we have had such great success in this risky business is that we celebrate the ups and if we have a down we learn from it and move forward. We have always subscribed to the doctrine, "Risk more than others think is safe. Care more than others think is wise. Dream more than others think is practical. Expect more than others think is possible." By following this creed we have successfully grown our company to one of great success and respect in the field of community based services. We are who we are because of all of you, who are willing to give of yourself and take the risk of reaching out to help others have a better life.

Risk is a part of that life and we recognize that and live with it – successfully!

Thanks for all that you do to make it so.



Spotlight on the Call Center



Wow how time can fly by! Can you believe it has been over two years since the Aurora Call Center was formed? The Call Center started with our existing scheduling department being centralized in the Eau Claire office, and moving to a 24 hour service. From there, we restructured some of our internal tasks to the Call Center to improve the tracking and response time. Many of the tasks included were On-Call services for all Aurora homes, which include a staff member not arriving to work on time, a medication error, client behavior issues, or receiving reports of staff injury. Currently, we have two different positions in the Call Center, a Call Center Specialist 1 and a Call Center Specialist 2. The CCS1 is primarily responsible for scheduling Aurora homes, handling on-call issues, and answering overflow Mental Health calls from our clients. The CCS2 position is primarily responsible for Crisis Call phone lines, EAP lines, Mental Health calls from our clients, and performing the duties of the CCS1.

Within a few months after opening the Call Center with the scheduling and on-call duties, we added a Mental

Health Telephonic Support line. With this line we support many clients through medication reminders, wellness and safety checks via the phone, talking through daily life issues to help plan for the day, and also helping them with issues before they could get to a crisis point. The Call Center currently handles over 3,400 Mental Health calls per month!

Early in 2011, Crisis Line services for multiple Wisconsin counties were transitioned to our Call Center Specialist 2's for immediate Crisis Assessment and determinations. The utilization of this service continues to increase, and by having it in the Call Center, we are better able to handle the fast pace situations that arrive for these services. In 2011, there were 233 Crisis situations that involved many phone calls between multiple external agencies to properly determine client needs.

Another recent service added to the Call Center is that they now receive the afterhours EAP calls for any of our EAP clients and Aurora companies to provide basic support and a notification to our Counselors and/or emergency EAP response team.

With the growth in services in just two short years, the Call Center has doubled in number of current employees and has increased the staffing pattern on the floor every day to allow for the over 16,000 calls per month that they receive or place. Sharon Steinke is the Call Center Operations Director that has created many of the processes in the Call Center to help assure all Aurora services (as well as all external services) are held to the highest standard.

To Find out more about the Call Center, go to www.AuroraServices.com/call_center.html or email us at: Beacon@AuroraServices.com

How You Can Be Responsible for Safety



Being responsible for safety is everyone's job! It just takes a minute here and there to create a safe work environment and home for everyone!

- Wipe up wetness on the floor immediately, whether it is from a spill in the kitchen or water left on the floor from a bath or shower. Prevent a slip, stop a fall!
- Salt and sand often! At the first signs of snow or ice, spread salt and sand repeatedly to ensure a slip free surface.
- Pick up clutter to prevent tripping.
- Turn pot handles to the back of the stove to prevent someone accidentally knocking a hot pan onto themselves, or the floor.
- Allow yourself extra time so that you aren't rushing to

your next appointment! Rushing causes stress to the consumers and often results in vehicle accidents.

- GOAL (Get Out And Look) before backing a vehicle.
- Stretch a number of times throughout your day to maintain flexibility in your back, shoulders and limbs.
- Get plenty of rest and your body and mind will work more efficiently.
- Take a minute to stop and think before approaching a consumer that is anxious or agitated. Stepping in when you shouldn't, could result in an unnecessary injury.
- Turn off your cell phone when driving.

Going the extra mile only needs to take a minute or a slight lifestyle change and you'll be on board for safety every day!

A Day in the Life

by Scott Jacobs



Program Managers, in Aurora's residential programs, provide oversight of consumer programming, as well as serve as advocates for the consumer's medical, personal, relationship, and work goals.

Tyler Giedd fills a similar role in Menomonie's Day Center. As Program Manager, he helps

coordinate consumer goals, creates program ideas in cooperation with other staff and directors, and writes reviews for each of the consumers served at the Center.

His path within the company (since 2007) has gone from part-time work in the Center, to residential work in our

northern region, finally arriving back to the Center. There is no "typical" day for Tyler, and the Center buzzes with activities as unique as the 20 or so consumers they serve.

Goals are created based on the needs and abilities of the individual consumers: from socializing with others, to interacting in the community (using the library, going bowling, shopping) and learning new skills. These skills could be as "basic" as using a microwave or practicing bathroom skills; things many of us would take for granted, but for someone else can mean life-changing independence and increased self-confidence.

Tyler said his days at the Center "fly by;" a sign of doing good work and enjoying it. His weeks must disappear in a blink, as he does respite care for other consumers every other Monday, as well as every other weekend.

He and his wife, Jen (who teaches school in Independence), are fixing up a house they bought in Eau Claire and they enjoy spirited games of ping-pong with friends, camping, fishing, kayaking, and snowshoeing (well, not so much this year!). They share their life with Petey, their beagle-lab mix, and their cat, Dusty.

Consumer Spotlight

by Brian Anderson

Bob has been with Aurora since before 2001, and was a local of the area, having grown up in the River Falls area. Bob is one of three children, having both a brother and a sister. Bob's parents currently live in the Clayton area, although they have a winter home in Apache Junction, Arizona. Every March, Bob goes down for a visit, and generally comes back feeling happy and refreshed (warm weather will do that if you live in Wisconsin).

Bob currently has a job at Pro Act in Red Wing, MN, and generally enjoys his work. Aside from working, Bob has interests not much different from anyone else. He enjoys reading his comic books, eating out on the town, playing a bit of basketball, as well as simply watching movies or TV. Although these are activities that any of us could generally partake in, Bob has one very special set of achievements: he is a decorated Olympian! Bob competes in the Special Olympics in multiple events, and has received multiple awards and medals for his achievements. Currently, he participates in the bowling, Bocce ball, and track and field events; any of these is an achievement in and of itself, let alone participating in all of them!

People describe Bob as overall helpful, as well as having a very happy demeanor. He is proof positive that amazing comes in all shapes, sizes, and walks of life. Bob competes on a very high level, something that should be praised no

matter the participant, or event. Through this competition, as well as other positive facets of his life, Bob is able to embody the spirit of living life as well as you can, as well as showcasing what it means to live a REAL life, true to one's self. So thank you Bob, for you are our Consumer Spotlight for this month!



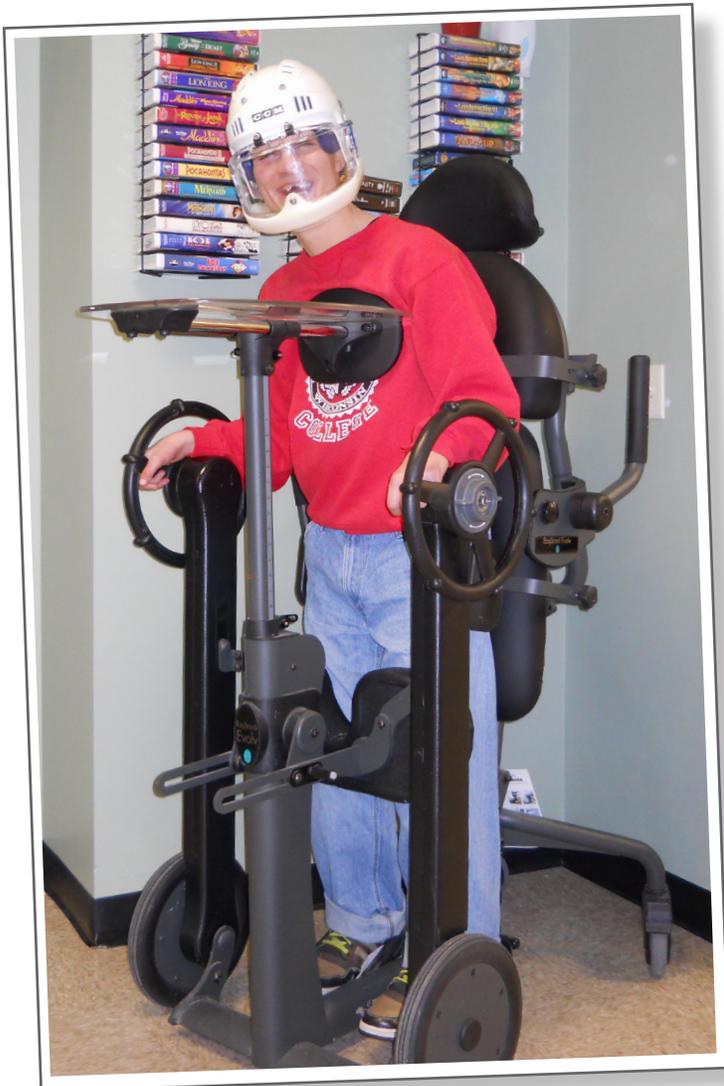
Aurora Safety & Wellness Teams

Remember to...**Leap into Safety and Wellness.** We're excited to see what the great minds of the company will develop!

If you haven't established your site's team, it's not too late (even if it is past February 29). Your safety and wellness is too important to not participate!

Please contact your local office if you have any questions regarding Leap into Safety and Wellness. A representative from the Aurora Safety and Wellness Teams will be glad to assist you!

Life Photo of the Month



New! Employee of the Quarter & Year

Enter someone to win \$250 or \$1,000 in cash!

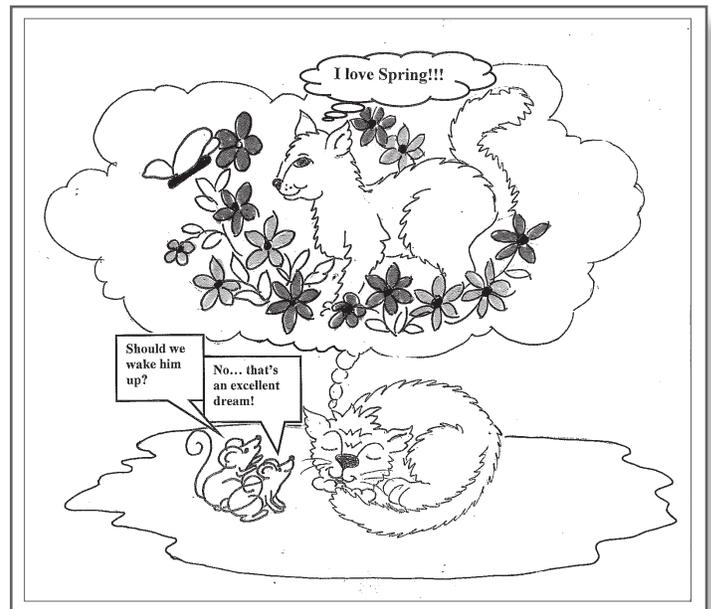
Each quarter, the Culture Team will select one employee to be the Employee of the Quarter. Selections for the quarter winners are in: March, June, September and December. Those employees will each receive \$250 and be entered into the Employee of the Year selection. The Employee of the Year will receive \$1,000!

At the end of the year, all Employee of the Quarters and the Employee of the Year will be recognized at a semi-formal dinner/banquet. Attending will be senior administration, supervisors of all winners, Dave, Jim and the Culture team. Winners will receive a ticket for a guest.

Anyone can nominate any employee for recognition! The nomination forms (P93) are available at all the offices and at the homes. Nominations are submitted to the Culture Team at the Menomonie office.

"The door to happiness opens outward."

– Søren Kierkegaard



by Kathi Tollefson

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.