

# *The* BEACON *Spring 2016*

# 30 Years

April 19, 1986 - April 19, 2016



*"A new beginning"*

## *Anniversaries* in April, May, June

Grant Ailie	5	Mark Eidson	14
Jessica Effertz	5	Holly Hakes	14
Kristen Gossel	5	Kelly Johnson	14
Ronald Grundeman	5	Walter Knudtson	14
Taylor Knetsch	5	Dawn Mashak	14
David Sickinger	5	Melissa Stoneburg	14
Roy Thomas	5	Cyndi Johnson	15
Emily Jones	6	Ronda Simons	15
Adam Little	6	Linda Liebzeit	16
Krystal Richardson	6	Theodore Belisle	17
Orlando Simon	6	Terri Bollinger	18
Kymerly Thompson	6	Kathy Doering	18
Sandi Brooks	7	Sue Hertz	18
Mikki Freeman	7	Carrie Horn	18
Amanda Rageth	7	Cindy Leach	18
Scott Schulz	7	Dorothy Reed	19
Robin Abraham	8	Lynn Corrado	20
Edna Juech	8	Cindy Merkel	20
Christina Kortez	8	Lorene Miller	20
Jennifer Ottum	8	Deborah Seibel	23
Chiara Andahazy	9	Linda Aton	24
Julie Gumz	9	Kelly McIntyre	26
Angela Mandera	9	David Barnard	30
Amanda Yaeger	9	Pamela Barnard	30
Justin Boiteau	10	Deborah Neuman	30
Elizabeth Dunaway	10	James Neuman	30
Edward Gengenbach	10		
Anna Johnson	10		
Pamela Knetsch	10		
Nancy Nauer	10		
Rhonda Bungartz	11		
Donna Woellner	11		
Carris Bible	12		
Patricia Brown	12		
Sue Davidson	12		
Andrea Olson	12		
Heidi Schultz	12		
Jacqueline Smith	12		
Cornelia Bohn	13		

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

*Aurora*  
community services

## CEO Corner

*by* Dave Barnard

Once a year each one of us has our birthday come and go. Often times when we reach that annual anniversary of our birth many reflect on what we have experienced in the past year – what did we accomplish, how did we change, and hopefully what have we learned. Then there are the milestone birthdays, typically considered in five year increments – 20, 25, 30 and so on. At those celebrations of life it is not uncommon to look at the big picture of our life rather than just the past year; to review where we started, where we have arrived and consideration of how we have changed.

I am very proud to say Aurora is about to celebrate one of those milestone birthdays. On April 19 – Aurora will turn 30. Although there are varying statistics on business survival rates ranging from 80-90% failures in the first five years to the one that I have seen recently that says of the businesses that make it past their first five years 25% will make it to their 15th anniversary. Interestingly, but not unexpectedly, those that make it past the 15 year mark have a very high likelihood of continuing their existence long into the future. This is attributed to the fact that if you make it to 15 years you have learned how to make your business work and thrive. You have experienced enough of the ups and downs to know how to navigate your business on a successful track. But the main reason these businesses succeed is that they have learned how to grow with change.

There is an old saying, "Change is inevitable, growth is intentional." Most of you have heard the story of Aurora's origin. You know the one with the two guys (Jim and I) standing out in the rain at an auction on Aurora's first day of existence (April 19, 1986) to bid on two twin beds. Times were very different then. The idea of helping people to move out of institutional life and live in their communities was brand new. Everyone was excited about it, even though it hadn't been done before.

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Aurora Residential Alternatives began with one Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF) for eight individuals in Menomonie, WI. It was an eight person because that was the only model anyone was familiar with. Aurora wanted to present "residential alternatives." We were fortunate that after proving ourselves successful with the eight person model one county gave us the opportunity to go the next step. We created a two person apartment setting with live-in staff. Everything was designed around what the two ladies who would be the consumers of our services wanted. It was a huge success and, as they say, the rest is history.

Aurora grew rapidly and as we grew through time and change we found opportunities for new growth. Along came Aurora Community Health (Licensed Home Health Agency), Aurora Vocational Services, Aurora Community Counseling (Outpatient Mental Health Counseling Centers), Aurora Crisis Intervention Home, Aurora 24 hour Call Center, Colorado Homes for Traumatic Brain Injured individuals and most recently REALiving (provider of EAP services and Trifecta Workers Comp). All of these programs developed as

the environment within which we operated changed. Aurora was constantly aware of changes and identified and developed the opportunities that came with that change.

Aurora can be very proud of what we have accomplished over the past three decades. The great thing about Aurora is, although we enjoy the success we have experienced, our greatest joy is in discovering "what's next." One of our guiding mantras has been and will always be "The best way to predict the future, is to create it!" It is what we have done for the past 30 years and what we will continue to do long into the future.

Happy 30th birthday Aurora! To you - Aurora's owners - thank you for all that you do to create Aurora's success and for all that you will do to ensure our success into the future!

*Dave*

## Consumer Spotlight

*by* Cindy Leach



Missy came to the Menomonie Day Center in December 2005. She brought a ray of sunshine with her. If you have ever had a chance to meet her, you surely walked away with an incredible smile, as Missy is one dynamic lady. Missy has lived with an intense seizure disorder most of her life, but has never let that slow her down. She doesn't see it as a barrier to living LIFE.

Missy is a social person with a great big heart. She has been called "Miss Sunshine" to reflect the most radiant and positive attitude. I sat down and talked to her about what she enjoys in LIFE at the Day Center and at home with her family.

Missy told me she loves attending the Day Center. In fact, she says she has a hard time sleeping the night

before a big activity or party day as she is so excited for it. When Missy is there she is always up for trying anything. She enjoys games, but is especially fond of Bingo. She also loves to participate in group activities: crafts, baking, wellness, beauty, reading and other educational groups. She has formed many relationships at the Day Center, but is especially proud of becoming best friends with another lady that attends the Center. They sit by each other every day talking, laughing, and complimenting each other on their projects. Missy has become vital in planning activities. She leads a group of her peers in weekly brain storming to plan the following week activities. She is always looking for input from others, and writes it down in her precious journal.

At home, one of the most important things to her is her family! She loves spending time with them, especially her nieces and nephews. There she enjoys spending time outside watching the birds, eating homemade macaroni and cheese, as well as chocolate ice cream. She tells us she eats that every night! Another thing Missy looks forward to is "The Voice." She loves watching the singers and listening to all the diverse music.

We are all very lucky to have such a wonderful woman in our lives!

# Employee of the Quarter



## Lynn Corrado is the Employee of the Quarter!

Congratulations to Lynn Corrado, Employee of the Quarter for the fourth quarter! Lynn is the program manager of operation 082 in Spooner. She has been with Aurora since April 1996 and has worked at 082 for most of that time. She was nominated by her supervisor, Program Director Emily Mujwid because according to Emily, Lynn "has built an amazing working program in the house that has assisted both consumers to a stable and loving home." The team at 082 is credited for the way they focus on safety and always put the consumers first, and this teamwork starts with Lynn's leadership. Even guardians and MCO's comment on what an asset Lynn is. When asked what she enjoys about working at Aurora Lynn said "I like the way you never know what can or will happen during your day. The consumers can always make me smile about something and there is the satisfaction of knowing that I'm hopefully making a difference in the consumers' lives." In her free time, she enjoys caring for her household of cats, two dogs and seven chickens which she says she loves to the moon and back. Thanks Lynn for being one of Aurora's BEST employees!



# Star of the Quarter



## Wendy Schlaefer is the Star of the Quarter!



Congratulations to Wendy Schlaefer on winning the Star of the Quarter for the fourth quarter! Wendy has worked for Aurora for 11 years as the Regional Coordinator and Behavioral Specialist for the Eastern Region. She was nominated by Program Director Jena Sandor because of her commitment to Aurora and the consumers. According to Jena, "Wendy has a way of leading that is both playful and effective which results in a fun and productive environment. Wendy adores the consumers and they adore her." Wendy can be counted on to be an advocate for the consumers and for Aurora no matter the time of day, often being at the hospital or dealing with the police in the middle of the night. When asked what she likes about working for Aurora Wendy had this to say, "Aurora's culture has always been a good fit for my personality and has always been willing to change and evolve quickly." When she is not at work, Wendy can be found spending time with her children and friends playing cards and games, traveling, and participating in cribbage tournaments. We thank Wendy for her dedication to Aurora these last 11 years; employees like Wendy make Aurora the BEST!

# Employee of the Year

**Ericka Peterson is the Employee of the Year!**

Left to right: Dave Barnard, Lyn Johnson, Lynn Corrado, Ericka Peterson, Kathleen Smith, and Jim Neuman



# Star of the Year

**Wendy Schlaefer is the Star of the Year!**

Left to right: Dave Barnard, Carla Treder, Joel Kruse, Wendy Schlaefer, Hayley Suckow, and Jim Neuman



# A Day In The Life

By Linda Aton



It is a hard assignment to try to capture the DAY IN THE LIFE of a very busy maintenance man. I actually ended up interviewing him in my car... at an operation...while he was helping move and make final repairs on the house. I decided it was the perfect way to capture a day in the life of Orlando Simon!

Orlando Simon, Regional Maintenance Director in the NW Region has worked

with Aurora since June of 2010. He started as a part time employee, but we very quickly realized that we needed this talented man working for us full time. Most of the work he does for Aurora is in the NW region but is often asked to assist with big projects company wide. The variety of work is what he says he likes best about the job and toilet issues

are what he likes least! The most challenging part of his job is keeping up with the daily projects while managing the emergencies that arise. He provides quality work, quick response and he has a great attention to safety issues. Orlando has a great sense of humor and is a favorite among the consumers in the NW region. He knows the staff and consumers very well and never misses a chance to talk and joke around with them.

His busy life does not stop when he is done with work! He and his family live on a small hobby farm near Luck, WI. He has a beautiful 10 month old son, named Jackson, and a 6 month old puppy named Belle. They have chickens and goats and a large garden. They like to cook and can and make their own baby food. Orlando claims to make a WONDERFUL apple crisp! In his "free time" he says that he loves to spend time with his family, fish and hunt and complete NEVER ending remodeling projects.

He is an all around GOOD GUY and a GREAT maintenance man!