

# B the BEACON

Summer 2014



"A new beginning"

## Anniversaries in July, August, September

Christine Hiles	5	Edward Baier	12
Stephanie Ischer	5	Jana Hansen	12
Tammy Nicholson-Morter	5	Michael Bush	13
Rosezanna Pratt	5	Betty Dueholm	13
Jayne Rieper	5	Aggie Licht	13
Desiree Sutton	5	Paul Okoroji	13
Gerald Tepe	5	Kimberly Purgett	13
Carly Thompson	5	Emily Mujwid	15
Deanna Washburn	5	Judith Stoner	15
Krista Bungartz	6	Patricia Luethi	16
Anna Halvorsen	6	Douglas Sessions	16
Charles Lechmaier	6	Sherri Stevens	16
Stavroula Marcell	6	Xang Chang	17
Kristopher Margo	6	Rhonda Buss	18
Jessica Pandel	6	Christine Kirschbaum	18
Jacqueline Perro	6	Edward Grant	20
Athena Schoenrock	6	Deena Black	22
Stan Turner	6	Helen Nichols	24
Debra Wright	6		
Linda Mandig Amundson	7		
Angela Beebe	7		
Jessica Dodge	7		
Juan Gordillo	7		
Jennifer Loken	7		
Leif Peterson	7		
Susan Podoll	7		
Guadalupe Sault	7		
Ann Tepp	7		
Gail Szarkowitz	8		
Judith Trybula	8		
Judy Bates	9		
Eric Cooper	9		
Brenda Fisher	9		
Robert Kluczinske	9		
Christiann Curley	10		
Joel Krause	10		
Susan Mueller	10		
Brittney Wagner	10		
Debra Dzwonkowski	11		
ZoRan Hoscic	11		
David Jorsch	11		
Louise Monson	11		
Kristen Shaw	11		

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

*Aurora*  
community services

## CEO Corner

by Dave Barnard

Today's world just gets faster and faster. The more technology advances, the more we seem to try to squeeze into our 24 hour day. For those of you old enough to remember, think of the days when telephones were wired to the walls and the receiver was wired to the base. If you wanted to call someone you needed to be home and stay within just a few feet of where the phone was plugged in. Today you can be almost anywhere in the world and talk to anyone you wish. We used to go to the store to buy something - today Amazon, EBay and others allow us to order nearly anything you can dream of and have it overnight delivered to your door. We used to have to go to a library to research an answer to any question we might have - today you can Google any question and have an answer almost instantaneously. These marvels of technology have saved us so much time and yet we seem to have less of it because we seem to always find something else we need to squeeze into the day.

Given the changes in the world today I want to share with you a little story that I hope helps you see a most important perspective.

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of very successful people. To drive home a point, he used an illustration. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz" and he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouth Mason jar and set it on the table in front of him. He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone in the group yelled, "Yes." The time management expert replied, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big

Continued next page



rocks. He then asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?" "No!" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good." Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?" One from the group raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!" "No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is, "If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."

From this story I want to ask you "what are the 'big rocks' in your life" - time with loved ones, your dreams, a worthy cause, a favorite hobby? Whatever they are remember to put those BIG ROCKS in first or you'll never get them in at all. So tonight, or in the morning, when you can take time to reflect on this short story, ask yourself this question, "What are the 'big rocks' in my life?" And then . . . be sure to put those in your jar first.

As always, thanks for all that you do to make the lives of those we serve so full.

*Dave*

## Employee of the Quarter



### Monica Aikin, PMII, is the Employee of the Quarter!

"For Monica, the needs of the consumers come first," says Program Director Sue Wheeler who nominated Monica for this worthy award.

Monica came to Aurora in February of 2009 and became a mentor for consumers and staff from the very beginning. She has encouraged her team to join every safety and wellness initiative and has set the example of how to be well and safe. When it comes to safety and wellness Monica seeks to become the expert of the operation and doesn't hesitate to ask for guidance and support when needed.

Monica feels it is important for consumers to be a part of their community and goes above and beyond to make that happen. Protecting the consumers' privacy while allowing them their dignity is important to Monica and she openly and consistently shares this philosophy with the staff at Operation 034.

Monica is seen as a role model and team leader to the staff she supports. She does this through encouragement and coaching, always remembering that the consumers come first.

Monica's passion for providing excellent services to the consumers she supports and the team of staff she leads has recently been officially recognized. The team from Operation 034 received the "Outstanding Provider Award" from ContinuUs, a CMO located in Northwestern Wisconsin.

# Star of the First Quarter



## **Jill Mattson, Program Director, is the Star of the First Quarter!**

This Star of the Quarter began her employment as a Program Director with Aurora in October of 2004. What you may not know is that this was her second time around! Jill worked for ARA in the 1990's and after a time away "came back home."

To try and summarize in one short article why she was chosen for this award would be difficult as she received MANY nominations from the staff that she supports. Instead, let's hear what the nominators have to say...

- It seems as though Jill's mantra is "Remember, safety first," because she is always saying it!
- She acknowledges the feelings of others and places positive "coping tools" in to the hands of staff and consumers.
- Jill shows compassion in her work by being a listener and leader. She is helpful to staff and consumers.
- Jill is respected by consumers and staff alike. She is approachable and trustworthy.
- Both staff and consumers feel like Jill is a person they can turn to when something is needed.
- Jill appears to love her job and always puts her consumers' and employees first.
- Jill abides by company policies, which I believe is a powerful way to demonstrate integrity.
- Jill exemplifies the values this company bases itself on.

These are just a few of the reasons that Jill Mattson was awarded the Star of the Quarter Award for the first quarter of 2014. Congratulations Jill!

# Star of the Second Quarter



## **Lori Hetze-Meyer, HR Specialist, is the Star of the Second Quarter!**

"Lori keeps the "Human" in Human Resources," says Ann Stevens, Regional Director for the Eastern Region of Aurora Residential, who nominated Lori for this award.

Lori began her position with Aurora in June of 2013 and with it came her many years in the long term care environment. Lori is no stranger to safety practices and openly shares her experience and ideas to make ARA homes a safer place for both consumers and staff. Her approach is open and encouraging which promotes creative ideas to improve safety.

Lori is true to her word and delivers what she promises in all aspects of her work. She assists in areas not necessarily assigned to her without hesitation and this quality makes her an integral part of the Eastern Region team.

Lori completes her daily assignments in a calm and consistent manner. Her never ending task list doesn't stop her from thoroughly researching whatever issue presented to her. She doesn't make decisions lightly, always looking at all aspects of the issue at hand.

"I'm on it" Lori says frequently with a smile on her face. And according to Ann Stevens, she truly is.

Michael was referred to Aurora Vocational Services several months ago, and presented as a fairly difficult consumer. He lacked some baseline abilities commonplace to most: he is illiterate, cannot transport himself independently due to his disabilities, and has a significant speech impediment which limits his ability to interact with his peers. Because of his differing abilities, Michael has also been known to have challenging behaviors, as he often feels he is 'being made fun of' (and no one likes to feel as though they're being belittled). Michael worked in a sheltered workshop for many years, but decided he wanted to integrate into the community workforce.

First, Michael completed a baseline employment assessment to determine his readiness to work, as well as his assets and barriers to employment. His Vocational Coordinator, Alyssa Coggins, worked hard at finding an appropriate job match within Michael's limited areas of interest. Michael proved himself to be very motivated in doing a "good job," and worked hard to prove himself despite his perceived shortcomings. Michael 'passed' his assessment and progressed to a long term work experience, to further assess his ability to work independently and maintain his own schedule.

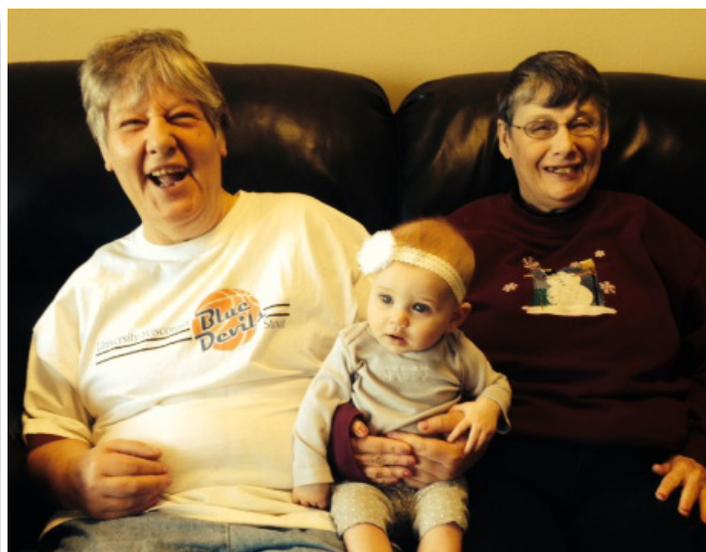
During Michael's six week work experience, he demonstrated an amazing (and somewhat unexpected) ability to work without direct support,

even completing tasks involving equipment operation and maintenance. Alyssa, and the entire Oshkosh team, put a great deal of effort into the development of a work site in which Michael could prove himself.

Michael constantly told staff at his work site, as well as AVS staff, how much he enjoyed the work he was doing, his peers, as well as how much he loved getting out and working a "real job." Alyssa maintained consistent contact with his worksite supervisor to ensure Michael was doing a satisfactory job, and made adjustments to his schedule and tasks as needed until he was able to completely work his position without the assistance of on-site supports. Michael continued to grow and thrive in his role throughout his work experience, and, when the allotted time was complete, Alyssa took one more step in approaching Michael's employer about making him a permanent part of the team at his work site. Even though the position Michael was employed in was comprised of supplemental tasks normally absorbed by standard staff, and was, in essence, 'created' by Alyssa and AVS, he had done such a fantastic job in going above and beyond expectations that his employer had decided to give him a permanent vocational home within the company. Michael's first official day with a "real job" in the community was in June of this year; he continues to be a valuable part of his new team.

Michael is overjoyed to be involved in a job outside of his sheltered workshop. His story is a testament to the effective teamwork and diligence of the entire Oshkosh staff; it also proves Aurora's commitment to 'digging in deep' when it comes to getting to know our consumers and helping them meet their goals. Because of Alyssa, and the entire Oshkosh staff's commitment to be their BEST for their consumers in any way possible, Michael was able to celebrate his last birthday with a party hosted by his new employer and peers. He hopes to spend many more birthdays to come with the same new friends he has made at his brand new job, and tries to work his hardest every day in an effort to show his gratitude for his newfound independence.

## Life Photo of the Month



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