

Ability Building Center

Year-end Program Outcomes Report

2008



... The Mission of ABC is to improve the quality of life in Southern Minnesota by providing rehabilitation and employment services for persons with disabilities and other special needs.

ACRONYM KEY

AE	Ability Enterprises	CD	Chemical Dependant
AU	Abilities Unlimited	MR	Mental Retardation
CBE	Center Based Employment	MI	Mental Illness
CBSce	Community Based School Employment	OTW	Options To Work
DT&H	Day Training and Habilitation	SE	Supported Employment
ILS	Independent living skills	TTW	Ticket to Work
PACTT	People Achieving Change through Technology	VOC	Vocational Evaluation
LD	Learning Disability	VA	Veterans Administration
P/N	Physiological/Neurological	WAT	Work Adjustment Training
		WI	Woodland Industries



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Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

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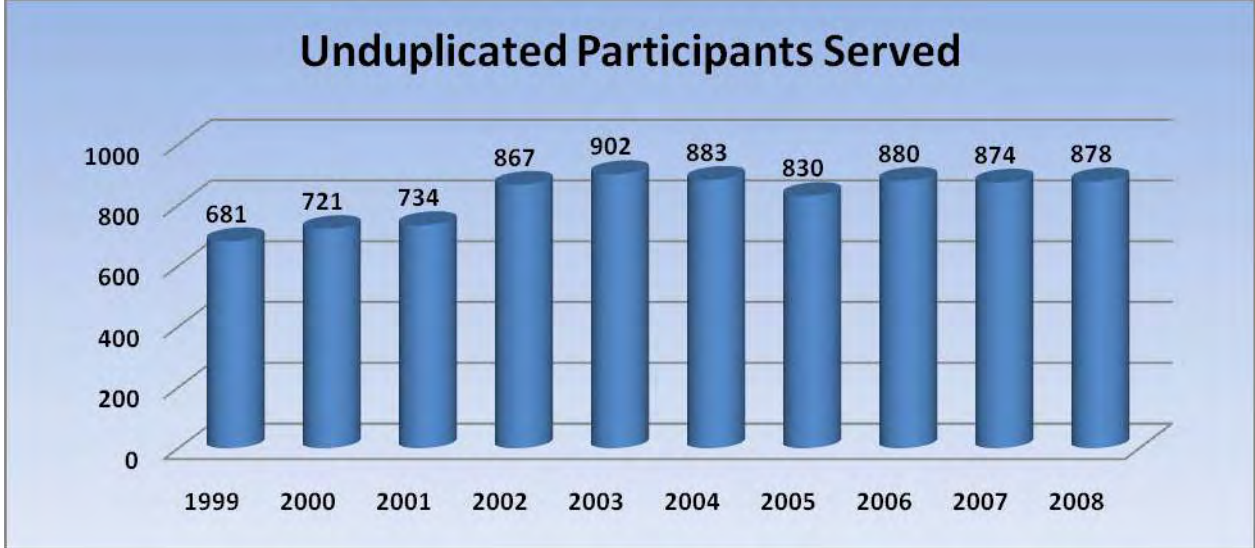
Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities

Foreword

As a non-profit organization, ABC is accountable to those participants it serves and to the community. The information presented in this report serves as a mid-year accounting to the community on the impact of ABC's services to those it serves, its' funders, and to the communities in which it operates for the 2008 program year.

ABC is committed to providing the best possible services to those that utilize its programs. The information presented in this report is a reflection on the recent history from which ABC has incorporated new ideas, new approaches, and insight on best practices. ABC strives to incorporate new methodology in measuring growth and to collect regular feedback from its stakeholders.

ABC trusts that by presenting this information it will invite discussion and participation from its stakeholders so that the agency may continue to improve its proficiencies and advance its services in the field of rehabilitation.

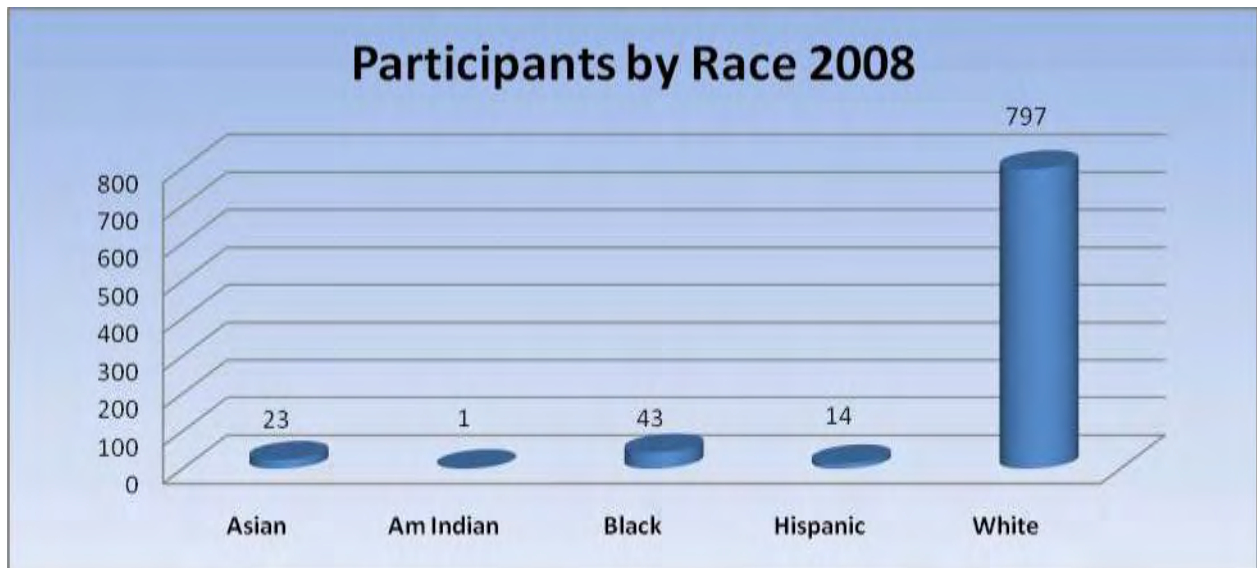
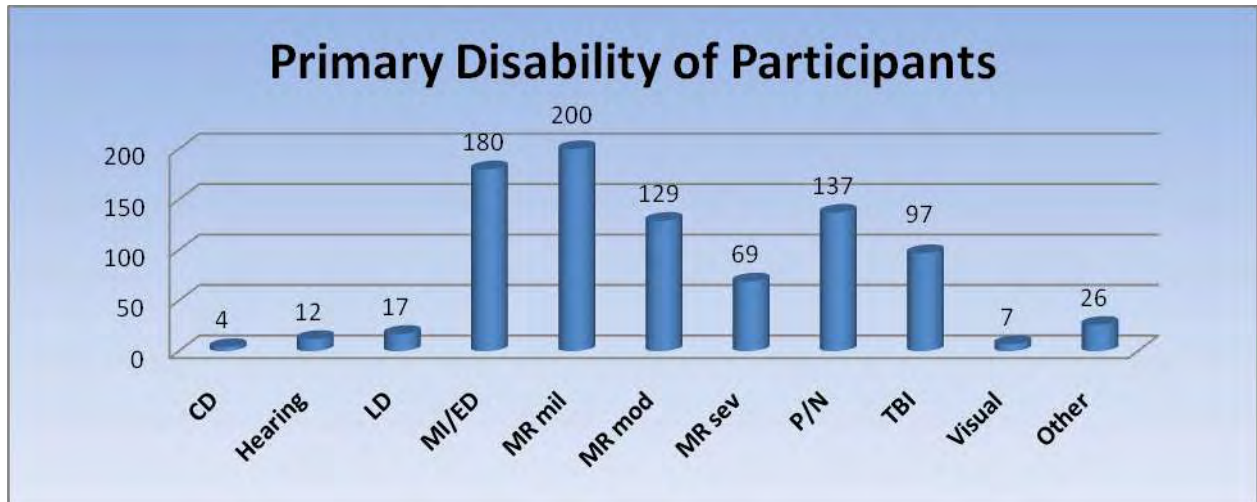


The total number of unduplicated participants served in 2008 is 878 across all programs offered by Ability Building Center, in all locations.



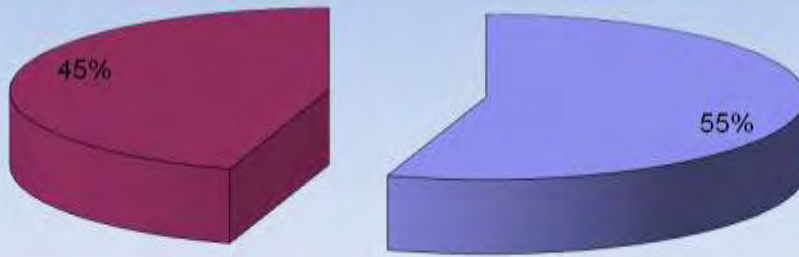
The most rapid program growth has been in the PACTT program, which appears to be fueled by the number of grants received from the STAR program and other funders. The addition of a part-time staff in PACTT has been instrumental in not only meeting the program volume, but expanding the variety of assistance available to participants and programs. For example, PACTT is now providing an evaluation for

persons wishing to participate in the work opportunities provided by digital imaging, and the necessary training if skill deficits are identified.

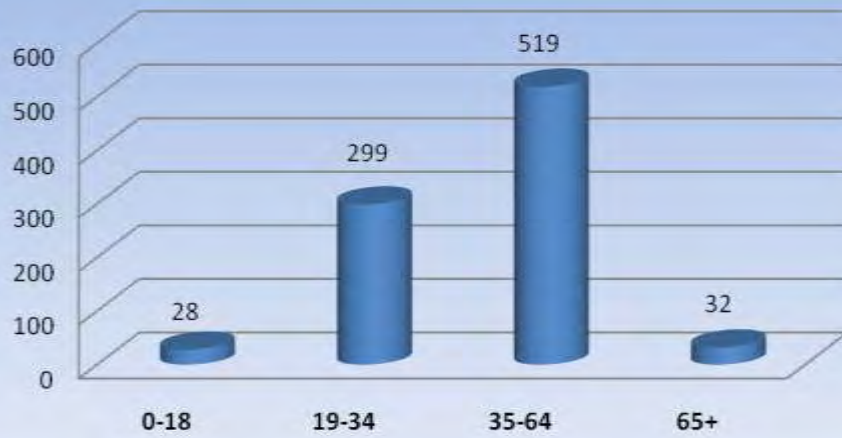


ABC Participant Gender 2008

□ Male ■ Female



ABC Participants by Age Groups 2008



Ability Enterprises - Data provided by Kerri Vagness, AE Coordinator

Ability Enterprises has 66% of its participants in community based work sites in 2008. A full-time site employs a work crew more than 4 hours per day, 5 days per week. A part-time site employs a work crew for 1-4 hours per day, 4 or less days per week.

Transportation continues to be the second highest expenditure in the AE program budget, led only by staff wages and benefits. Contracted services accounted for much of AE's transportation budget and included monies paid to R&S, ZIPS, Rochester City Lines, and private contract. Great efforts have been made by both AE staff and the Transportation Department to reduce transportation expense which has already led to some savings through adjusting routes and shifting some participants to the city bus.

In June, Ability Enterprises created the Skills Enhancement Area, which is a place where clients can work on new community employment skills such as collating laundry and custodial, so that they are more prepared for community opportunities that may arise. Currently staff and clients are in this room 4-5 days per week. AE is moving towards skills enhancement activities being done throughout the in-center area, and working on building a list of activities and supplies that support skills clients need both in-center and in the community.

Ability Options - Data provided by Candace Kash, AE Coordinator

The Ability Options program served a total of 21 participants and offered an average of 4.7 community-based activities per week with 59% participation. Providing choice and variety of activities is vital to Ability Options success.

Ability Options started the year with 22 participants. We currently have 18 active participants, with no participants on interrupted service. The number of participants has decreased, the actual number of hours billed is also lower. The participants that are being referred to Ability Options are most often referred for part-time participation.

AO serves people of a diverse age range (22-67; average age is 42) and abilities (almost completely immobile to able-bodied persons; persons with a range of cognitive disabilities from profound mental retardation to mild mental retardation and a few clients with mental illnesses and/or dementia). The activity

schedule combines a group of standard activities, baking day, bingo and movie day, with arts and crafts activities. Ability Options participants are also able to make good use of the PACTT assistive technology computer lab next door. Outing activities include trips to stores to shop for supplies, going to parks, going to the library, and volunteering at Sunrise Cottages. In the past six months six of our senior age clients have attended Senior Dinner on Tuesday's at Peace Church through a donation from the Lion's Club.

We believe that our population will increase as more people with developmental disabilities age and need retirement activity options. Further, we believe Ability Options is well-positioned to provide the needed resource within the community for people with disabilities who are considering retirement choices, or who may not have the physical stamina to engage in employment options.

Abilities Unlimited - Data provided by Brett Graham, AU Program Manager

Abilities Unlimited served 75 people in 2008, 45 in the day program and 38 in ILS (Independent Living Skills) with 8 duplicated. The independent living skills branch of Abilities Unlimited has been expanding throughout the year in areas outside of Rochester, and will continue to do so in 2009. The efforts of the ILS staff to provide quality services have been met with excitement in outlying counties and there remains potential for further expansion of the program. The total number of people we served in the last year was almost identical to the year before, but we saw an increase in ILS numbers coupled with a decrease in the day program numbers. It is expected that this trend will remain in 2009. Another emerging trend is the preference among the population we serve to have part-time schedules, either in number of days per week or number of hours per day. As the availability of waiver funding is in question, waiver dollars are being stretched as far as possible despite funding issues at the state level.

Despite these trends, AU continues to serve a large number of participants with brain injuries in the Rochester community. The program is continually changing in how we meet the needs of individuals with brain injury and responding well to these changes. We continue to enjoy our close working relationships with other providers in the community. The categories we measure to determine satisfaction, effectiveness, and efficiency are for the most part where we expect them to be, and reveal that through changes the program remains adept in providing meaningful programming and services for the people we serve.

ABC Works - Data provided by Judy Wandling, Program Manager

In 2008, ABC Works served a total of 95 participants.

ABC Works has recently expanded their services to include an "Options to Work" program in Caledonia. This program is similar to the Ability Options program located in Rochester. The program currently serves ten participants. The participants involved enjoy of variety of activities including exercises, crafts, baking,

music, art, games, community outings and social time. Currently "Options" is open one day a week on Mondays but plans are in the near future to grow towards a week long program. As the program matures, ABC intends on pursuing their Adult Day Care License and provide services to elderly and other interested parties in Houston County.

ABC is now offering Employer of Record Services in Houston County. This service assists participants and care takers in their efforts to direct their own supports. This service allows for a very person-centered program where individuals recruit, interview, hire, determine wages, schedule and supervise their direct care staff. ABC provides payroll services, background checks, workers compensation, liability insurance and consultation on employment related issues.

A Space Team Committee is currently evaluating space needs in Caledonia for programs at ABC Works and Woodland Industries. Potential building sites have been identified and discussion continues to determine which location will be the most suitable to meet the needs of ABC.

Pending cuts in program funding are one of the biggest issues facing ABC Works in the coming year.

Some program highlights include:

- 90% Percentage of participants working in the community
- 100% Percentage of VOICE reviews resulting in "reasonable"/"excellent" outcomes
- 100% Percentage of new referrals that resulted in community placement <45 days
- 97% Stakeholder satisfaction surveys with "excellent" or "good" ratings

Community Based School Employment – Data provided by Andrea Light, Program Staff.

The Community Based School-to-Employment (CBScE) program served a total of 42 program participants from January 1, 2008 through December 31st, 2008. These measurements takes into account the program participants who were working exclusively in-center at ABC, those that were working on ABC enclaves, those working both on ABC enclaves and in-center at ABC, those participants that a at a community based employer paid job site. These measures also look at participants who were transferred or discharged from the CBScE program in 2008

During 2008, the CBScE program at ABC maintains consistent numbers of referrals, but has experienced a drop in the number of consumers who are ready for independent placements in the community. This has required that job development efforts at ABC focus on securing employment opportunities more often in increased support situations such as supervised work crews. The focus of 2009 will be to investigate what options are available for students wishing to pursue independent jobs but needing additional supports. Securing additional community businesses to provide opportunity for skills enhancement and assessment will be key to the eventual placement of many students.

Some program highlights include:

- 71% Percentage of participants working in the community at an employer paid job or on an enclave
- 88% Percentage of participants working in a community work experience >3 months
- 90% Stakeholder satisfaction surveys with “excellent” or “good” ratings

Competitive Placement Services – Data provided by Stacey Boysen

The Competitive Placement Program served a total 21 consumers from January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008. Nine consumers achieved 90 days of competitive employment, while the average number of days from referral to job start per consumer is 82; short of our goal of 45 days or less.

Referrals for placement services often have other barriers to becoming gainfully employed such as a relapse in chemical dependence, change in mental health status.

Competitive placements over the past year have included cashier, custodian, dietary aide, appliance delivery, auto mechanic, laundry, nail technician as opportunities for those participating in this program.

Some program highlights include:

- 100% Percentage of consumer’s earnings above minimum wage
- \$1700 Average billed income for PACTT clients/month
- 100% Percentage of new referrals that resulted in community placement <45 days
- 97% Stakeholder satisfaction surveys with “excellent” or “good” ratings

PACTT – Data provided by Rachael Weitzel, PACTT Program Coordinator

PACTT served a total of 135 clients in the area of technology between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008. 91 of the 135 or 67% served were duplicates of another program of Ability Building Center. A breakdown of core services performed between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008 is as follows:

- Technology assessments (43 performed)
- Technology training (36 clients referred for training)
- Use of technology in PACTT Lab (135 individuals 2008)

A total number of 82 items were borrowed from PACTT’s equipment loan program during 2008. The equipment loan program serves PACTT and its clients as a complementary program in order to evaluate assistive technology tools prior to purchasing the assistive technology.

PACTT has continued to increase the variety of assistive technology tools available through the loan program with funds received through a grant provided by STAR the State of Minnesota’s AT ACT Program. During the year 2007, there were a total of 87 loans. PACTT continues to increase awareness of the loan program and the various items that are available for loan. Because of the grant provided by STAR items are loaned out at no cost.

Some program highlights include:

- 10 Average number of days from assessment to report completion
- \$1700 Average billed income for PACTT clients/month
- 100% Percentage of new referrals that resulted in community placement <45 days
- 97% Stakeholder satisfaction surveys with “excellent” or “good” ratings

In the fall of 2008, PACTT obtained additional funding through a STAR Grant, Recycle and Refurbish Assistive Technology. Additional tools were purchased to refurbish assistive technology which could then be available for reuse or resale at a discount.

The Parents Advisory Group (PANG) continued to grow over the year since it's beginning mid-year 2008. The purpose of this group is to increase parents awareness of community resources available in regard to assistive technology, but also to educate parents as advocates and help them learn to navigate the educational system.

Center Based Employment – Data provided by Sami Mohr, VS Program Manager

Center Based Employment has seen a slight increase in referrals this year, but many are arriving with no recent employment history. Securing jobs for individuals with limited physical capacity remains a challenge. This year we did see a drop in the overall productivity of individuals in this program. This program serves a good number of individual with SPMI (Severe and Persistent Mental Illness) and attendance is a struggle for many of these individuals. Good attendance is crucial to increasing skill and productivity.

The upcoming year will present some challenges as business review and revise their contracted labor force. Providing adequate work quantities for participants in CBE program continues to be a struggle, and it appears this will continue in the foreseeable future. The skill level of the majority is not sufficient to support many types of work available. Also, a few individuals are not challenged by the work available to them as it is below their skill level. The immediate focus of the CBE department includes developing more work to support the various skill levels of individuals in programming such as the digital imaging and supporting individuals to be transitioned to community employment.

Supported Employment – Data provided by Sami Mohr, VS Program Manager

Supported Employment has had a number of referrals requiring settings of more extensive supervision rather than independent placements. It becomes challenging to meet the desires of the individual's work needs in group settings. Finding unique jobs that are able to be complete by small groups is difficult, particularly in more stressing economic times. Of those individuals who were placed independently, retention rates are excellent (100%), identifying a successful matching process is occurring. Of those consumers responding,

100% are satisfied with their job situation and 94% are satisfied with the services they are receiving from ABC. Looking toward the future, a shrinking job market will surely tax our ability to effectively serve individuals, so we must be mindful of maintaining our current relationships with business in our community as well as looking to develop new partnerships in the area.

Some program highlights include:

- 100% Percentage of workers maintaining their new job for more than 90 days
- 71% Percentage of workers placed in a community job within 90 days
- 96% Stakeholder satisfaction surveys with “excellent” or “good” ratings

Vocational Evaluation Services – Data provided by Sarah Timmerman, Voc Eval Program Coordinator

The vocational evaluation program served a total of 75 participants in 2008. Referrals remained steady and the number of individuals who completed programming increased during the last half of the year. Out of the 23 individuals who did not complete programming in 2008, roughly half of them were screened, but then opted to not participate in programming. There was a decrease in individuals no-showing for scheduled assessments. Lack of completed satisfaction surveys continues to be a problem. The vocational evaluation program could see an increase in referrals for 2009 if the economic conditions continue to deteriorate, however this will be dependent on whether the state is able to continue to provide monetary support for these individuals.

Some program highlights include:

- 65% Percentage of clients who participated in community-based situational assessments
- 16 Days Average length of time from referral to start of vocational evaluation
- 22 Days Average length of time to complete vocational evaluation report

Work Adjustment Training - Data provided by S. Timmerman, Voc Eval Program Coordinator

The Work Adjustment Training programming did not see an increase in referrals throughout the year, serving only 5 program participants in 2008. Those numbers reflect participants who have been discharged or transferred to another ABC program, not those currently in programming. The program continues to be underutilized and frequently individuals are referred to the Supported Employment or Center-based Employment programs instead of Work Adjustment to address and work on specific areas of need as it will take more than three or four months to clearly see improvements. The WAT program is most often utilized for those individuals who have obtained independent community employment and are not on a Performance

Based Agreement (PBA), but are struggling with learning aspects of their job. In addition to Rehabilitation Services, private business has been responsible for a portion of these referrals.

Some program highlights include:

- 100% Percentage of participants who completed Work Adjustment Training Program
- 12 Days Average length of time from referral to start of WAT programming

Woodland Industries - Data provided by Helen Olson, WI Program Coordinator

Woodland Industries served a total of 65 participants during the program year. There were 2 CBE referrals and 1 SE referral from the county. Rehabilitation Services referred 22 participants for Job Placement, and 11 participants to our Work Adjustment Training Program, 7 of these 11 were also in the Job Placement program. 10 Participants were successfully employed in the community.

- In 2008 86% of CBE workers at Woodland Industries (WI) accomplished at least one or more work related goals. On average 24 out of 33 participants were duplicated in the CBE program and SE program, out of those 24 participants 100% of them served at least 2 hours a month in the community, with average being over 40 hours a month.
- WI placed 100% of referred SE and 53% of Competitive participants in community jobs within 90 days of referral.
- A total of 70% (23 out of 33) of those served in the SE program at WI have held their community job for more than one year. 12 of those 33 have held their community position for five or more years.

Satisfaction surveys for 2008, with 40 participants responding, indicated the following:

- Their Job: 65% "I like it a lot."
35% "It's ok."
0% "I don't like it."
- My Program Coordinator 75% "Is very helpful."
25% "Is OK."
0% "I would like a change."
- My Supervisor: 65% "Is very helpful."
33% "Is OK."
2% "Is not helpful."
- My Goals: 95% "Yes, I am receiving help with my goals."
2.5% "No I am not receiving help with my goals."
2.5% "Not sure."
- Rate my satisfaction with WI 65% "Very Satisfied."
32.5% "Satisfied."
2.5% "Not Satisfied."

ABC Year-end Summary

Programming in 2008 again has faced funding challenges; waiver funding lags behind the need in the community for services. In addition, efforts continue to enhance service provision and reduce staff turnover. Program outcomes continue to be met in many key areas, and new ones will be added in 2009 to adjust to changing standards.

Ability Building Center in 2008 began laying the groundwork to begin preparations for re-accreditation by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). Early in 2009 we will begin the process with the newly updated standards and ready for the 2010 survey. CARF is considered the preemptive national standard-setting and accrediting body in the United States for vocational rehabilitation programs. CARF-accredited service providers enjoy recognition among an international community of persons served, peer facilities, and programs for superior standards of care and excellence in outcomes.

Community-based work activities continue to be the foundation for most of the programs at ABC. Late in 2008 the effects of the economic conditions began to make an impact with some contractors and employers looking for ways to save costs or reduce their workforce. In 2008, growth in areas of independent living and assistive technology continues as in prior years, with these areas expected to continue to expand in the numbers served throughout 2009. Ability Building Center must take steps to ensure is positioned service these growth areas.

Areas of challenge include a need to control the costs of transportation in which we have made several cost saving changes, Another area is staff training and recruitment. Ability Building Center is beginning to see an reduction in staff turnover which may be in part attributed to a new hiring process, as well as other factors. Job development remains a challenge, not only due to economic conditions, but as we appear to be seeing more and more persons who are more difficult to place, finding a good "fit" in job placement which aligns with skills and abilities becomes more challenging. While steps have been taken to collaborate on transportation, further cost reduction will likely come from a serious look at our inefficiencies in scheduling (job supports and transportation) and promotion of greater collaboration between Job Developers, the Transportation Coordinator, and Work Schedulers to leverage available resources and consider them when developing work sites.

ABC continues to appear to maintain a good position in the community which could be considered a result of the quality programming and the talented staff we employ. In addition, ABC experiences much support from the community. Further, it maybe considered a reflection of the fine direction and leadership the agency receives from its Board and Management.
