



inside

Newsletter of Ability Building Center

December 2005

ABC

ABC Woodland Industries Growing Together – 25 Years



Woodland Industries' manager, "Mac" Roger McCabe, shows visitors some of the many products made at Woodland Industries.

Woodland Industries celebrated its 25th year August 23, 2005!

Staff gave visitors tours of the Twice Is Nice store, the work floor and displays of polishing pads, tote bags, retriever trainer dummies and other products, while Tim served up goodies.



Tim is pictured above at Woodland's 25th Anniversary

Published for friends of Ability Building Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and other special needs in Southeastern MN by providing rehabilitation and employment services.

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ABC and ECCC... not just alphabet soup



For several years now participants from ABC have been playing an active role in representing the good that can come from employee donations during IBM's annual ECCC (Employee Charitable Contribution Campaign). IBM's ECCC coincides with the "United Way Campaign," but it is truly a separate campaign allowing employees to choose from various Non Profit 501 C3 Health and Human

Resources agencies to donate to in the annual campaign.

The Errand and Messenger Service provided by ABC at IBM gives our participants visibility on a daily basis to thousands of IBMers. Many IBMers have gotten to know the ABC participants over their many years of service and have developed friendships that are very genuine and deeply held.

ABC workers are seen walking through the hallways pushing their carts and setting an example that shows how wonderful it is to have a meaningful job, despite having disabilities. To highlight that fact during the Employee Charitable Contribution Campaign, we often attach placards to the errand carts advertising special events that will be taking place throughout the campaign. The participants get to have a little fun displaying their decorated carts, showing Sumo Wrestler contestants representing ABC, or calling for support for the "Human Dart - VP of Mfg" for the Campaign Final event. For the past two years, ABC participants have also been involved in the Campaign Kick-off event in the cafeteria by leading in the hosts for the event.

In conclusion, just the fact that thousands of people on a daily basis have exposure to the good that ABC and IBM does by providing a wonderful work environment for the many participants that have worked on site truly shows the value of our programs. So many people have connected on an individual basis with our participants and that develops a connection for giving and supporting non-profit agencies in the community such as ABC.

From the Desk of the Executive Director, Steve Hill



There is always a lot of anticipation and excitement around ABC as our recognition banquets approach each fall. This past October, represented the 23rd year that we have carried out this tradition at ABC. It is a great opportunity to recognize all the people that make ABC the great organization it is. At both our banquets we were able to recognize the people served through ABC programs, volunteers,

donors and our staff. In addition, special recognition is given to community businesses and employers that provide work and employment to the many individuals that receive services through ABC. I think this is one of the best "snapshots" of ABC that a person can experience, to get a feel of what our mission is all about.

This year marked a record year in many respects for our banquets. A record number of people participated. Combining the Rochester and Houston County banquets there was a total of 777 people that attended. This represents significant growth over last year. We recognized 14 new benefactors in Rochester and 18 in Houston County. This is a record number for ABC. Benefactors are those individuals that have made a cumulative gift of \$1,000 or more.

Despite the numbers and all the formal recognition that occurred, there were 3 other events that occurred during the banquet that demonstrated the impact ABC and its mission has on the community.

I realized as we were handing out "years of service" recognition awards that I had not seen many of the participants in 5 years or more. Many of these individuals

have been working "long term" in the community in our supported employment programs. Many of these people rarely come back to the ABC building, because their work and life is out in the community, where it should be.

Another banquet occurrence that had a significant impact on us, were the comments made by Richard Edwards, who accepted the "Employer of the Year" award on behalf of Charter House. Richard indicated that he was totally surprised to learn that Charter House was working with ABC to place several people into employment in their business. He indicated that until his staff pointed the people out and explained to him who was being served through ABC that he had no idea that these individuals had and were receiving special supports in learning and doing their jobs. From his perspective they were like every other employee in their business that received training and then went about doing their job. These comments reflected the great attitude and support that ABC receives from so many of our community businesses.

As ABC recognized our Business Partner of the Year, for the second year in a row, Mayo Medical Laboratories, they turned around and gave special recognition of one of our staff, Will Thurk. The staff at Mayo Medical Laboratories presented Will a special award and went on to explain how Will's great attitude has had a significant impact in the growth and expansion of the working relationship between ABC and Mayo. On behalf of all the staff of ABC I want to thank Will for being a great ABC ambassador and such a positive reflection of all the great work that is done on behalf of ABC by its staff everyday.

If you have the opportunity to attend an ABC banquet in the future I would encourage you to do so. I think you would experience and learn some positive things about ABC.

Rochester 2005 Awards Banquet



Rochester Employee of the Year-Derek Jackson

Derek is in our Abilities Enterprises program and has been working at Country Inn & Suites since 2001 on a housekeeping crew of four. While gaining work skills, Derek has had the “opportunity” to strip and make beds, dust and vacuum. His favorite job is cleaning the porcelain in the bathrooms.

He is an extremely hard worker and valued individual as part of the Country Inn team and has a great relationship with his co-workers and job coaches. Those that know him best know that he accepts life as it comes and takes advantage of every minute of his day. Congratulations, Derek!

Rochester Employer of the Year-Charter House

Charter House has partnered with ABC for the past 7 years and has provided employment to 10 ABC program participants utilizing the Mayo Internship Program. Charter House demonstrates a strong commitment to services by providing prompt and open communication with ABC staff, permits ABC job coaches to assist and support new hires with on the job training and re-training as needed, allows ABC participants opportunities for job shadows and situational assessments in the Vocational Evaluation process, and initiates contact with ABC when they have job openings. Additionally, Charter House has participated in our agency’s accreditation process with Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and has been a willing advocate in providing testimonials on behalf of ABC and individuals with disabilities.

Linda Anderson, Director of Nursing at Charter House, has been our primary contact in coordinating these services. In addition to Linda, we have worked with and become very familiar with many Charter House staff including: Bonnie Hubka/Nurse Manager, Carolyn Jansen/Scheduler, Patty Kisley/Nurse Manager, and Brook Kaske/Nurse Manager. These positions are significant to this relationship and contribute to the success of the employees they hire through ABC.



Tammy Radloff and Dick Edwards

When Richard Edwards, Administrator at the Charter House, was informed that they were receiving the Employer of the Year Award for their ABC program, his response was “what program?” “ABC participants are an integral part of our staff and contribute daily to the success of others at our organization. They are the reward!”

We would like to thank these Charter House staff for joining us at the ABC Awards Banquet to accept the 2005 ABC Employer of the Year Award.



Houston County 20



David Wiste

Woodland Industries Employee of the Year

In November of 2004 David Wiste started subbing at University Wisconsin LaCrosse; he became a full time worker there with the crew on March 30, 2005. Dave also started subbing for Crossing Guards in November 2004. A job coach assisted him his first time, and he independently subbed thereafter. Dave started subbing at Merchant's Bank in May 2005 and in July 2005 Dave was independently working 3:00-4:30 Tuesday thru Friday doing light janitorial work, and Mondays with the Woodland Enclave. In June 2005 Dave started working for Quillin's also, doing light janitorial work for an employee that took the summer off. Quillin's appreciated Dave's work and hired him to continue doing janitorial work on Tuesday and Sunday mornings, which he does independently. Dave has subbed at almost every enclave and at Houston County Recycling Center, where he drives to Houston to help out. When Dave is Center Based at Woodland, he does janitorial work, sews and does general production. As of September 2005, Dave returned to UWL with the enclave crew, and works Tuesdays and Sundays at Quillin's. Dave has also agreed to sub for Crossing Guards in September. Dave is very punctual, has great attendance and was the second quarter WOW award winner.

ABC Works Employee of the Year

Sarah has been in our program since 1998. She started working part-time at McDonald's washing dishes; she worked at Ready Bus Line cleaning coaches, and at UWL in the dish room. She then began working at River Valley Sprouts weighing shallots and garlic two days a week. She also helped out at the LaCrescent High School wiping off tables during lunch break. She is currently working a McDonald's 5 days a week. Because of her thoughtfulness and caring disposition along with her initiative to help others, we created a new position for her in-center as job coach assistant. Her knowledge of the day to day activities are valued and appreciated by everyone. Congratulations, Sarah Wiste!



Sarah Wiste and Cathy McCabe

Vicki Wilkes Memorial Award



Jennifer Omoth, Danielle Berg and Judy Wandling

The Vicki Wilkes Spirit of Independence Award is given in memory of Vicki Wilkes by Danielle Burg, owner of Time Travel. This award is given annually to a participant from Woodland Industries or ABC Works who has demonstrated a growth in independence over the past year. This marks the second year that the award has been given.

Jennifer Omoth started working at ABC Works on June 8, 1987. Throughout the past 18 years she has been employed at many community job sites. Her first employment setting was on a crew at Wildcat Boat Landing, where she helped maintain the grounds and camping accommodations. She also worked at the Houston County Courthouse, Houston High School, LaCrescent High School, UWL, Ace Telephone and various crews cleaning jobs. At all of these job sites, she worked alongside her peers and with a supervisor.

This year Jennifer has been hired directly by a community employer in Brownsville and works there independently without a Job Coach. She is employed five days a week at the Copper Penny where she washes dishes, busses tables and helps unload the delivery truck.

05 Awards Banquet



Helen Olson, Larry Goetzinger and Randy Denstad

Woodland Industries Employer of the Year

APN hired Larry Goetzinger in January 2002. He works Monday through Friday three hours a day doing light janitorial work. APN is very flexible with the schedule and accommodating for time off. APN always includes Larry in their activities, such as their company picnics and Christmas parties. APN has been great to work with as a supportive employment site, and as a customer of Woodland Industries. Larry has voiced numerous times his satisfaction with APN, how great he gets along with everyone, and is treated so well. Woodland has appreciated the opportunity to work so closely with the employees of APN, hopes to continue the relationship for many years to come.

ABC Works Employer of the Year

This year's employer has provided work for our people since May 2002. The first employee was hired to do various cleaning jobs such as sweeping, mopping and cleaning kennels. Other tasks include mowing the lawn, shoveling the walk way, doing laundry and stocking the shelves. Over the years they have employed 5 of our participants. Just recently they have moved to a larger newly remodeled location in LaCrescent and currently employ 2 of our participants, Jason Stinson and Terry Miller. Between the two participants, they are working a total of 30 hours a week. This employer has been more than accommodating and supportive in meeting our special needs. This year's winner is LaCrescent Animal Care.



Mike McCormick and Cathy McCabe



Jolene Sabo and Audrey Stadler

Woodland's Outstanding Worker

Jolene Sabo was the recipient of Woodland Industries' third quarter WOW (Woodland Outstanding Worker) Award. Jolene was cited for her excellent service in the Twice Is Nice store and her positive attitude when working in General Production. Jolene has been working hard to raise her productivity folding polishing pads. She has been practicing tolerance of others and letting her sense of humor shine. Congratulations, Jolene!

Outstanding Worker) award. Rose works as a member of enclaves serving Merchant's Bank, USDA Farm Service Center, Rippe, Hammell, and Murphy Law Office and Caledonia Haulers. She performs daily safety inspections at Woodland as well as final inspection of products before shipping. Rose loves sharing "Laffy Taffy" jokes with staff and coworkers. Way to go, Rose!

Rose was selected as Woodland Industries' fourth quarter WOW (Woodland



Mac McCabe, Rose and Audrey Stadler



Brain Injury Community Committee Sponsors Eighth Conference

This year was the BICC 's Eighth Conference on Brain Injury for the Rochester Area. "Tools for Brain Injury Survivors, Families and Providers" was held on Wednesday, October 5, at the Comfort Inn of Rochester.

Martin J. McMorrow was the keynote speaker presenting, "Interacting with Persons who Experience Behavior Residuals after Tramatic Brain Injury." Martin is the director of National Business Development for The MENTOR Network.

Other presenters included RCTC, Zumbro Valley Mental Health Center, Mayo Clinic and Region 10 QA Commission. A tradition of the conference is the special lunch panel made up of TBI survivors and family members. It is the most attended conference topic and the audience is able to ask questions directly to the panel.

The mission of the BICC is to advocate and educate the community about brain injury. This year there were over 165 people in attendance at the Comfort Inn. The BICC will now be offering a fall conference every year that pertains to the issues of brain injury.

For more information, contact Neva Stavlund 507-535-7132, BICC Secretary.

Memorials and Tributes

ABC is honored to have received gifts from family, friends and loved ones in memory of those who have died and in tribute to others who live on. The following gifts were received through September 30, 2005.

Donor

Dolores Augedahl
R Bains
Carl & Holly Baumhardt
Nancy Bjorge
Steven & Sharon Boyce
Don & Donnis Buchan
Darrell Busness
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Miles & Elsie Marnach
Jim & Carol McCabe
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Robert & Carolyn Patterson

In Memory of:

Arthur Augedahl
Virgil Bjorge
Elmer Baumhardt
Virgil Bjorge
Johnny Gillespie
Virgil Bjorge
Virgil Bjorge
Anna McGee
Virgil Bjorge
Ruby Engrav
Ruby Engrav
Virgil Bjorge
Marian Cutter
Glen Hartman
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Aaron Husmann
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Bernice Nichols
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Alan & Judy Wandling
Katherine Weber
Al & Karen Wieser Jr.
Brad & Lorraine Williams
Julia Zackery
Horst & Maren Zincke

Donor

Eleanore Albert
Carl & Holly Baumhardt
Sherman & Rachel Coltvvet
Terri Dugan & Van Schwartz
Grace Franz
John & Jenni Hulsizer
Carol Meeks
Sheila McNallan
Jerry & Norma Nordstrom
Eugene & Marilyn Wojtczak

In Memory of:

Emil Gauthier
Virgil Bjorge
Virgil Bjorge
Betty Peyla
Virgil Bjorge
Virgil Bjorge
Richard Lewis
Virgil Bjorge
Tony Tschida Sr.
Virgil Bjorge
Leslie Weber
Virgil Bjorge
Virgil Bjorge
Robert Zackery
Karin Siggelkow

In Honor of:

Ann & Dick Ferguson
Elmer Baumhardt
Rachel Coltvvet
John Hill
David & Cheryl Ellringer
Eric Hulsizer
Renee Sherry
Brian Benner
David Papenfus
Justin Riekmann

Rochester Business Partner of the Year-Mayo Medical Laboratories



Mayo Medical Labs and ABC have worked together for more than 21 years. The express mailers project employs 75 workers, 8 staff and provides over 10,000 hours of work for employees annually.

In addition to cooperativeness and flexibility, we would have to add friendly to the criteria. MML has the greatest group of employees we have ever worked with. They have become an extension of our

ABC family. MML provides ABC employees a variety of opportunities. The many projects we assemble for Mayo provide a healthy challenge for a multitude of skill levels and an additional 16 hours for workers.

Greg Brown, supervisor states, "We value the great working relationship we've had with ABC over the past six years. Everyone we interact with at ABC has been very professional and always goes the extra mile to meet the needs of our patients. We are also proud of the fact that we can assist so many workers in our community lead a more productive life-by being employed at ABC. It's an honor for all of us at Mayo to be a business partner with ABC."

Mayo Medical Laboratories honors Will Thurk

Following the acceptance of their award, Greg Brown and the staff of MML added a twist to the program when they recognized ABC's shipping and receiving supervisor, Will Thurk with an award of their own!

Greg said, "Will has been providing excellent quality services to Mayo Medical Laboratories for over 5 years. Will always goes the extra mile when he delivers our products. Will not only drops off our supplies, but he insists in bringing them to our work area and putting them on the shelf."

Anyone who knows and works with Will is inspired by him. There isn't anyone who would not welcome the opportunity to have him as a part of their team.

Community Development Block Grant

Everyone here at Ability Building Center would like to thank the City of Rochester for their funding to renovate the restrooms at our main facility. The original design was done in 1956 and was in need of better accessibility for wheel chair and special needs traffic. As our programs continue to grow, more people are utilizing our facilities on a daily basis.

Thank you for helping us improve the quality of life for participants, staff and visitors at ABC!

Thank You

You may have noticed some of the excellent photos that have been featured in the ABC newsletter, web site and other publications. We would like to extend a special thank you to Howard and Bev Lower of Lower Photography who have donated their talents to help us continue our mission here at Ability Building Center.

It has been **fantastic** working with you!



Join us at ABC to kick-off
our 50th Anniversary
Thursday, February 9, 2006
3:00-5:00pm



Mayor Ardell Brede will be on hand to help us celebrate.



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