

The BEACON

May 2011



"A new beginning"

Anniversaries in May

Congratulations

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

Jon Jacobs	18
Deborah Seibel	18
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Brenda Kannenberg	7
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CEO Corner

by Dave Barnard



If you have been following the CEO Corner for the past few months you know that I have chosen this forum to give all of you, the owners of Aurora, a brief history of your company. In my first column of this series in February I explained how the idea of Aurora was developed and launched. Last month in the April issue of The Beacon I covered the first five years of our existence – 1986 – 1990. This month I will address the next five years which were 1991 – 1996.

The first five years of Aurora's existence were what I call "foundation building". As in the creation of any good structure it is important to build a solid foundation before adding on. Many businesses fail because they try to go from point A to point Z in one quick leap. Because they have not established a solid foundation they begin to crumble at the slightest sign of difficulty and eventually fail. From 1986

to 1990 Aurora experienced strong and rapid growth but it was all in the community based residential service area. We knew what we were doing, we did it very well and contract agencies kept us busy as we built that base foundation – community based residential services.

From 1991 to 1996 we began to build upon that strong foundation that we had laid over the previous five years. All of our new services were essentially outgrowths from our base of residential services.

As we were growing we became aware of a number of service areas that were not readily available to those whom we served. One of those areas was regarding counseling center services.

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Safety Spotlight of the month

CEO Corner cont'd

Very few counseling services existed that understood the special issues related to individuals with disabilities living in the community. In addition there were no therapists who seemed to understand or work with families that had a member with special needs. In addition, Aurora's staff had dramatically expanded and we felt it was time to add an Employee Assistance component to our company. After recognizing these service gaps in the community we established Aurora Community Counseling and Employee Support Services (Access). From the humble beginning of one therapist (Scott Jacobs) we have since grown to nine offices throughout Northern Wisconsin and employ therapists who provide community counseling and aid in our employee assistance program throughout our area.

It was also during this period that we recognized a special need for pre-vocational services. Many of those we served could not attend vocational service programs that existed at that time. The Voc Day Centers were typically geared to those individuals with higher functional skills than many of those individuals whom we served. Everyone functions best when their life is balanced – 8 hours sleep, 8 hours of recreation and 8 hours of meaningful work activity. Because many of those we served were unable to attend the existing centers, we decided to fill that void by starting our own day service program and created Aurora Vocational Services (AVS). AVS allowed everyone the opportunity to experience a balanced life. We began our first center in New Richmond and have since expanded the centers throughout Auroraland and have also added Vocational Services for job placement and retention.

The third major program we established during this five year period was Aurora Community Health (ACH) – a State licensed Home Health Agency. With ACH Aurora was able to capture funding for those individuals we served with personal care needs. This aided our contract agencies to offset the daily rates for services with an additional funding source. Since its inception ACH has served tens of thousands of hours of service and has now expanded into providing day services for the Senior population throughout Northern Wisconsin in their own homes.

As you can see 1991 to 1996 was a major growth and development time for Aurora and it was all possible due to the fact that we had established a solid foundation in our first five years of 1986 – 1990.

In next month's column we will look at the years 1997 – 2002. This was a period that brought us back to rebuilding and strengthening our foundation after experiencing challenging times that definitely got our attention and taught us some very important lessons.

Until then, thanks for all that you do and again I wish all of you as owners of this great company a very happy 25th anniversary!

Dave

Operation 035 is the Northwest Region's winner. Operation 035 was recently nominated at the Program Managers meeting and was the recipient for the Safety Spotlight of the Month. There has been a substantial decrease in First Reports of Injury at this home as a result of improved behavior through effective communication, teamwork and implementation of BSP. There have also been several medical concerns in the past year that required more staff assistance to ensure safety for the consumers. Staff did not blink an eye when these medical concerns arose. They worked together to develop a plan that was implemented as soon as the consumers returned home! Thank you to every staff at this house, without each of you, the house wouldn't be what it is today!

Operation 074 is the Central Region's winner. 074 is a home where we provide heavy personal cares for 4 individuals who all require assistance with transfers. They also require heavy medical and behavioral support and supervision. Everyone at 074 is very busy during their entire shift. With all that being said, 074 had no injury claims in 2010, and still has a perfect record for 2011. This assures me staff are following safety precautions and utilizing safety equipment to assure the safety of not only themselves, but the consumers who live in the home. Great job 074, I could not be more proud of your accomplishment.

Operation 129 is the Eastern Region's winner. Recently, 129 has experienced an increase in behaviors with an autistic gentleman that we serve. The behaviors consisted of some significant property destruction. Not only did staff have to support this individual and keep the home safe they had to support his roommates in understanding how to be good friends and support him through this difficult time. The home had supports and the consumer received a sensory evaluation and fully embraced the thoughts of our Sensory Processing Systems. Through this they have learned how to incorporate a lot of brain and mind stimulation through many different vestibular, proprioceptive and touch activities. They have learned that this is not only beneficial to a consumer that is struggling but also to for his roommates and staff. We are proud to say that behaviors have decreased and the team is safer and stronger than ever.

Employees of the Month

by Donna Ernst

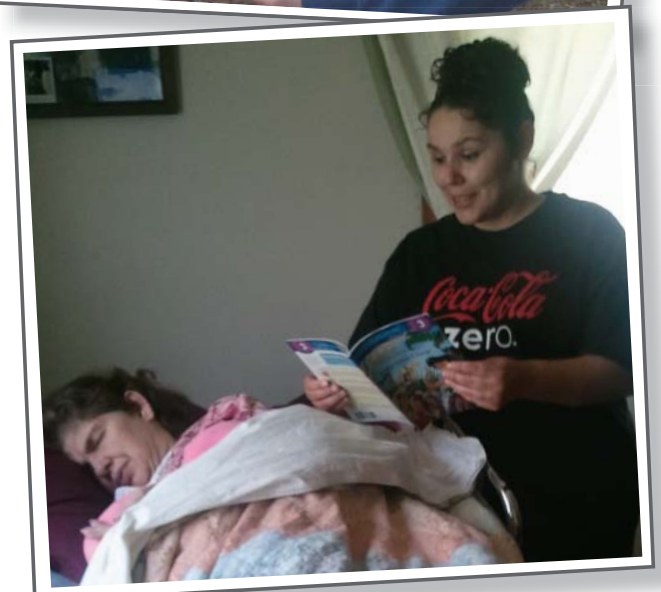
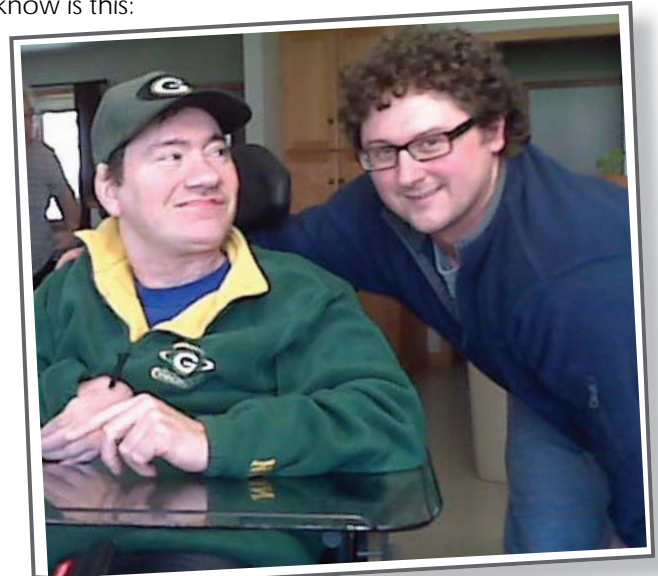
The employee of the month is chosen for his or her outstanding work performance and awesome attitude in working with consumers, their co-workers and their job. What you may not know is this:

Calming presence. Active. Motivator. Positive attitude.

These are all words used to describe the Northwest Region's Employee of the Month – **Tyler Giedd**. Tyler works at several operations in the Region for both Program Directors out of the Spooner office, Sue Wheeler and Emily Mujwid. Emily states that Tyler brings a calming presence to the homes. She describes it as a quiet confidence. Sue states that Tyler is great with activities and can motivate the consumers to get out and about in the community. He takes consumers to local community events as well as planning camping trips for entire weekends with them. He has taken consumers fishing, to concerts and does it all with a positive attitude. One of the PMII's that works with Tyler says that, "He is good with consumers – he makes that sparkle come out. He dives in and takes charge of outings. Even when consumers are upset, Tyler doesn't let the negativity get to him. He's good at drawing boundaries." These are all fine qualities and are qualities that make an Employee of the Month. Congratulations Tyler, and thanks for all that you do!

Joel Bosse was selected as employee of the month by a panel of Central Region management for his outstanding performance in his work supporting the gentlemen at Operation 072 in Eau Claire. Joel has been a very dedicated employee who has always been very punctual and dependable. He is very flexible with his schedule to allow for certain consumer events and vacations. He is a quiet leader and leads with actions rather than words. Joel has been an excellent advocate for the consumers and is well liked by both consumers and co-workers. Congratulations Joel for being awarded employee of the month.

The Eastern Region Employee of the month is **Ophelia Carter**. Ophelia is a CLA that has been working at Operation #052 in Plover since October of last year. Amber Lubinski, PD says: "Although Ophelia has only been with us a short time it is clear that she makes the most of every minute she spends as part of the Aurora family. Ophelia always displays a positive attitude and can be found laughing/joking around with the consumers. She is also an extremely hard worker that goes to great lengths to ensure that the job is done right. In recent months she was caught scrubbing the kitchen floor at the operation with a magic eraser to ensure that it shined!" Thanks for all you do and congratulations!



Tech Edge

by Dustin Doornink

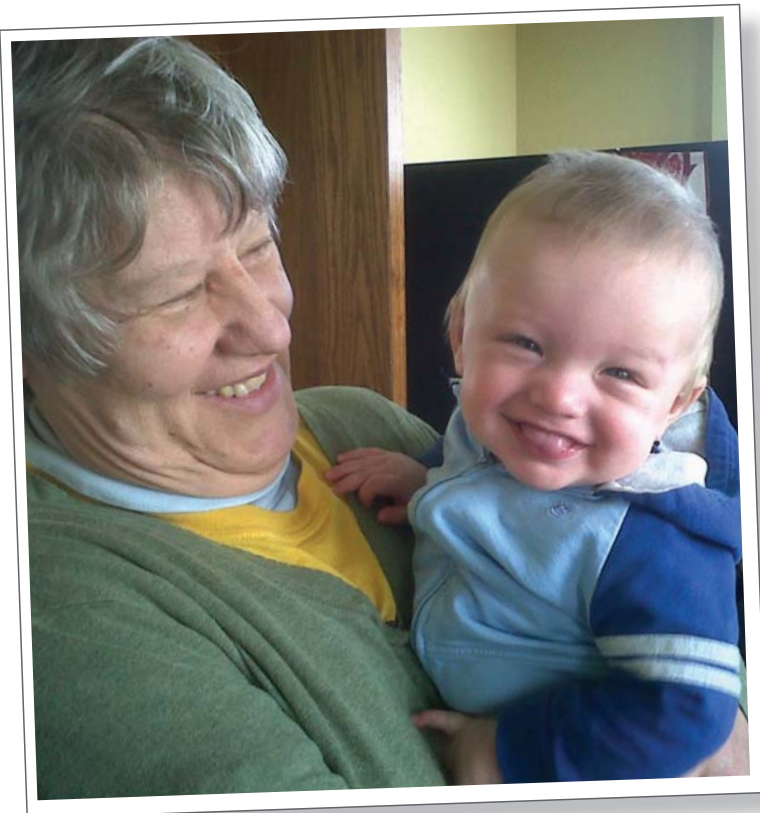
Is Big Brother watching? Some people may be worried about recent headlines like: "Apple slammed over iPhone, iPad location tracking" or "High-Tech Police Spying Sparks Privacy Battle." For years technology has been developed to help people with everyday tasks. For example, the iPhone and iPad have a built-in GPS so that you can use it for directions or maybe to find it if you lost it or it was stolen. Whenever new software or hardware is developed, you have people that look to "hack" it. Many people think of Hackers as people that break into computer systems to steal data, but the actual definition of hacker is: one who makes innovative customizations or combinations of retail electronic and computer equipment. The term came from people who enjoyed changing computers and software to do something other than what it was designed for. But the opposite end of that is people that look to change software or hardware to gain access to computer systems they don't own.

For example on the Apple article, privacy groups are worried that hackers could gain access to the tracking information to be able to track where you are to gain access to your home or other personal information. Some businesses even look to "market" to people that are in a certain area. Many websites you visit are tracking data that is available to them. Some examples of this could be

what website did you come from, where did you go on the website and when did you leave? It can also be in depth information like getting your IP Address (an online number that is registered to your internet provider) or what version of software you use. Some websites will also put a "cookie" on your computer so that it knows if you return to the website or not and they can also start showing you ads on other website for their products.

To help protect some of your information, web browsers have privacy options which allow you to some protection, but it may mean the website you are visiting will not work as well as you like due to the website requiring you to accept their cookie. Look at your current favorite web browser to see what options they give you. Remember, you never will be completely private when browsing the web as your internet provider can always track where you visit. Be sure to keep your computer up to date with security patches and the latest version of your web browser. (Some of the main browsers in today's market are Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Apple's Safari and Internet Explorer.) It is also important to keep an updated version of antivirus and firewall on your computer. A couple of free options that exist are AVG (Anti-virus) <http://free.avg.com> and Zonealarm (Firewall) <http://www.zonelabs.com>.

Life Photo of the Month



Chris WINS!!

Day Center/Office 2011 Basketball Pool

Chris is this year's winner of the 2011 College Basketball pool at the Eau Claire Center. He beat out Kyle, Nick, Jodi, Pat, Rick, Paul, Jenn, Shelly, Andy F. and Riley. This year's winner was treated to Buffalo Wild Wings and beer (root beer of course). When asked what his secret to winning was, Chris said he watches basketball games, remembers stats, and most importantly, asks his dad. Good Job, Chris!



Perfect Fit

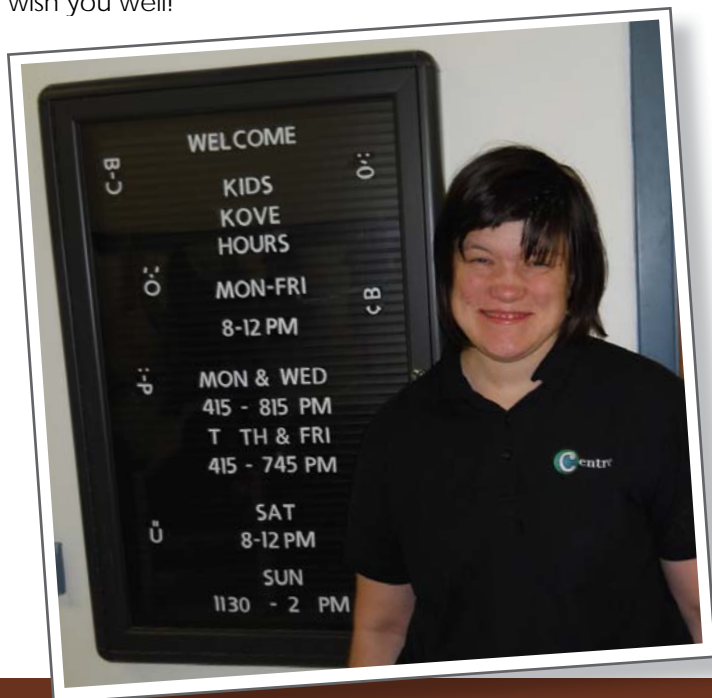
By Shannon Moberg

This month we would like to feature Melissa who has been working hard with Aurora's help to find that 'perfect fit' in regards to employment. Melissa came to Aurora in December of 2009; she showed interest in retail, cleaning, food service, working with children and animals. Her number one focus was to work with children hoping to become a day care provider someday. By mid-April 2010 Melissa completed a temporary work experience at Pamida in Ellsworth, WI and was then hired. She loved her position and was happy at Pamida.

However due to the economic climate, Melissa's hours were decreased to 4 hours per week. Although she still loved her work, she needed more hours. As her 90 day closure mark neared, Melissa returned to Aurora asking for assistance in finding more hours.

In November 2010, an opportunity arose at the New Richmond Area Centre (formally the YMCA.) They had a number of open shifts they could not fill within their Kid's Kove. The 'Kid's Kove' is a drop-in child care center for people utilizing the Centre's facilities. After a tour and spending time with the Kid's Kove Coordinator Sarah, Melissa was asked to try out a temporary work experience and was hired at the Centre. Melissa worked hard and fit right in with her big smile and willingness to learn.

Melissa says she enjoys the time she spends at the Centre playing with the children, socializing with co-workers and parents, and closing the gap on her dream career of one day being a child care provider. Sarah at Kid's Kove stated, "Melissa has been doing a wonderful job. She has been picking up extra shifts, which is great for the team aspect of Kids Kove." Melissa has decided to move to New Richmond to be closer to her job. Melissa has been with the Centre over 90 days and continues to work hard and is always persistent. Congratulations Melissa and we wish you well!



Consumer Spotlight

By Jonathan Hefler



Regional Coordinator Dave Jorsch recently had a grand adventure while assisting an Aurora consumer in living LIFE! Dave offered to take Andy, a young man whom we serve in Eau Claire, on a snow-shoeing outing. Andy is a very active guy who is easily stimulated by noise so a "quiet" walk in the woods seemed just the thing for him. Andy had never been snow-shoeing before so he was very excited to go. Dave and Andy arrived at the park, strapped on their shoes, and started off. For a while things went smoothly with Dave in the lead, setting the pace, and keeping things slow, steady, and relaxing. Andy however had other ideas so when the shoe trail forked he saw his opportunity and kicked into what Dave called "another gear". Andy rocketed off at high speed, kicking up a cloud of snow behind him and leaving Dave far behind. Dave scrambled to keep up with the energetic Andy who ran on at full speed, talking non-stop as he went. As Dave fought to close the gap between them and "just keep breathing" Andy just kept rocketing down the trail with his head down, going faster and faster and leaving Dave farther and farther behind. Concerned that they would get lost, Dave tried to steer Andy in the right direction as they wove their way through the various trails, and miraculously, they made it back to the car in one piece. Though exhausted, Dave was able to drive them home safely.

Andy has expressed interest in going snow-shoeing again when the snow returns but Dave says "I'll be busy that day". Andy is looking for a partner for his next snow-shoeing outing - any takers?

Proper Tie down Procedure/GOAL

If you're driving on the freeway, you can travel more than the length of a football field in the time it takes to read a short text message or dial a number. When you're in the car, keep your hands off the phone.

Quick facts about cell phone use while driving

- 6,000 people — equal to every citizen of the Pierce County city of Steilacoom — were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver in 2008; 500,000 were injured.
- A driver talking on a cell phone is as impaired as a driver with a .08 blood-alcohol level.
- A driver who is texting is as impaired as a driver with a .16 blood-alcohol level. That's double the legal limit.
- Drivers talking on cell phones are half a second slower to hit the brakes in emergencies and miss more than half the visual cues seen by attentive drivers.

Wheelchair Tie-down

Procedure (Retractable)

Front of Chair

- Position Wheelchair **facing forward** between the two tie-down rails that are on the floor in the van.
- Apply the brakes on the wheelchair.
- Attach two retractable tie-downs to the front track at a **30-45 degree** angle to the side of the chair.
- Attach the "S" hook end of the tie-down to a welded "T" joint of the frame on the wheelchair. **Note:** *this should not be a removable piece and should be as close to the majority of the weight of the chair as possible.*
- In order for the Retractable style tie-downs to be most affective there needs to be several inches of strap withdrawn from the tie-down.

Rear of Chair

- Attach two retractable tie-downs to back track **directly behind** tie down location on chair.
- Attach the s hook end of the tie-down to a welded "T" joint of the frame on the wheelchair. **Note:** *this should not be a removable piece and should be as close to the majority of the weight of the chair as possible.*

Five Keys to Crash Prevention

- **Buckle Up!** Make sure you and your passengers are properly restrained – this is the single most important thing you can do to protect your life and the lives of your loved ones if involved in a motor vehicle crash.
- **Never Drive Impaired.** Avoid alcohol and drugs if driving. Assign a designated driver.
- **Drive Attentively.** Avoid the three most common distractions: cell phones, CDs and coffee.
- **Drive Defensively.** Aggressive drivers take unnecessary risks and often cause crashes.
- **Share the Road.** Look out for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and commercial truck drivers

GOAL – Get Out And Look!!!! This needs to be done every time before you drive!! You need to know your surroundings and to make sure the vehicle is in good order.

by Sarah Scheeringa & Cindy Wolbert of the Safety Team

- In order for the Retractable style tie-downs to be most affective there needs to be several inches of strap withdrawn from the tie-down.
- Remove breaks on chair and tighten back straps if possible.
- Re-apply breaks.
- Position lap belt up against persons body (**not around arm rests**) attaching ends of belt to back track so as no straps are twisted or interfering with anything.

Common Concerns

If any of the straps appear to be malfunctioning or are showing wear do not use them under any circumstance. Either replace them with a working strap in good condition or if this is not an option **do not transport.**

Never cross straps or use them while they are twisted. Straps are to be checked for condition before every use. This means pulling strap out completely and inspecting it to assure it is in good condition and working properly.

"Whatever you are, be a good one."

Abraham Lincoln