

# Beacon TIMES

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Beacon Group



## The Way We Were

*A Look Back at Beacon's History*



**COVER STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 4**

**E**ven as the last pieces of Beacon's new facility addition are being completed, we can't help but look back at where we came from, and reflect on just how far we've come over our history. Very few of us can remember what things were like in 1952, and fewer still can say they were there when it all began. The world wasn't a welcoming place for people born with disabilities back then. Families with a special needs child had nowhere to turn if they wanted education for their daughter or son. And disabled adults were rarely given a chance to work so they could support themselves. Sometimes, the "good ol' days" just weren't all that good for everyone.

In 1952, an organization called Homecrafters was started as a modest program for adults with disabilities to receive job training, learn work skills and actually earn their own money. Years later, the name had been changed to Tetra Corporation, and it had become a thriving nonprofit organization where lots of Tucsonans with disabilities could perform sub-contract work for many local businesses, earning an income and learning what they needed to pursue an independent life on their own.

In 1955, eight local mothers with developmentally disabled children opened a small school specifically for children with mental retardation. They named it Beacon Foundation. In the 1970s, when public schools began accepting developmentally disabled students, they, too, started serving adults who needed work training and real employment opportunities.

### EVENT UPDATE:



*Due to unforeseen delays, Beacon's Open House event has been postponed until early February 2009. Watch for our announcement!*

### IN THIS ISSUE:

*Our movie-themed Cover Feature Story continues inside... After a brief look at "The Way We Were," we can proudly go...*



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- Client Spotlight**
- Measures of Success**
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- CARF Accreditation**
- Alcoa Star Award**
- Halloween Dance Fun!**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our goal of having clients, staff and programs under one roof was finally realized as we moved into our newly expanded and remodeled building. In the short time since the move-in date, August 3rd, we are already seeing the benefits. Clients have more and varied work opportunities, staff have more resources available,

services. *CARF* accreditation certifies the high level of standards set by and reviewed by outside experts.

*Quality* is also crucial in the service we offer to our commercial customers. They too, rightfully expect a *quality* product or service completed in a timely manner at a fair price. At Beacon, we are committed

**At Beacon Group,  
“Quality is Job One.”**

and programs have more space and equipment for use. We believe the end result will be higher *quality* services to all of our customers as we work together in this outstanding new facility.

At Beacon Group, “*Quality is Job One.*” Our clients and families expect and deserve *quality* services when they come to Beacon. To assure our best, every three years we undergo *CARF* accreditation. We have successfully achieved this national approval rating since our first evaluation of services in 1980. (More details concerning *CARF* appears in a related article elsewhere in this edition of *BEACON TIMES*). Not only does *CARF* assure high *quality* of services to our clients and families, but also to our governmental agencies which purchase our

to doing just that. Recently we received a supplier award from Alcoa Aluminum for exceptional service, recognizing the on-time delivery and competitive pricing we provide them. Last year Beacon clients assembled and delivered over 28,000,000 fasteners/rivets with *ZERO (0) quality* issues! *Quality* with our commercial customers is measured by what they say about us. Much of the growth of our document destruction (shredding) business, for example, can be attributed to our existing shredding customers referring others to us. Word of mouth is by far the most effective way to get new customers and clients!

Another gauge of *quality* for an organization is a financial audit. A team of several Certified Public Accountants arrive at



Steve King, President/CEO


Beacon annually and spend nearly a week looking at all aspects of our financial operations, internal controls, and written financial procedures. Consistently each year, Beacon Group has received an unqualified


report, signifying no material weaknesses exist in our established procedures. We have received only one minor management comment in the last five years.


Beacon Group continually strives to provide a safe, state-of-the-art environment in which clients can grow in their work experience. In turn, our clients provide the highest *quality* of products to our customers. We are completely committed to *quality* in every aspect of our organization’s operations!

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

There are many different ways to measure success. One of the ways is to look at growth. Here some snapshots from Beacon’s recent program year.

 Total number of clients served (1,758) ..... Up 10%

 Clients referred for Job Development and Placement ..... Up 27%  
*Helping clients identify, search, interview and secure employment*

 Clients referred for Work Adjustment ..... Up 54%  
*Helping clients learn about the values, skills, pace and habits of work*

 Referrals for Parenting Program Services ..... Up 20%  
*Assisting families to better understand and care for infants with Developmental disabilities*

## LEAVING A GOOD IMPRESSION



### Beacon Client SPOTLIGHT Jason HOLLAND



Beacon's courthouse custodial crew, which has been under contract since 2000, was recently visited by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords as part of her goal to become a Champion for the AbilityOne program in Washington, D.C.

Pictured above is Jason, Barb Walker, and Rep. Giffords.

The Evo DeConcini Federal Courthouse is the largest office building in Tucson. It has over 440,000 square feet of courtrooms, judges' chambers, jury rooms, offices, hallways and one impressive-looking lobby. The judges, attorneys and the General Services Administration (GSA) which is responsible for the building's management, all have very demanding standards for the building's cleanliness and overall appearance. And Beacon people are responsible for cleaning every square foot of it!

Beacon has a contract through the *AbilityOne* program to provide custodial services for the courthouse, the Federal Building across the street and the Border Patrol Station on Ajo Way. *AbilityOne* is a Federal program that helps generate employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities through government contracts for products and services.

Beacon has two crews that are assigned to the courthouse and the other two facilities. There is a crew of seven part-time clients, and a crew of six ex-clients who are now full-time employees of Beacon. The members of this crew are paid according to Federal wage standards and receive health and retirement benefits. Jason Holland is one of these full-time employees that helps keep the courthouse sparkling clean.

Jason has now worked on the Beacon courthouse crew for six years. Everyday, he sweeps, mops and vacuums— cleaning offices, elevators and common areas. His responsibilities include the security office and the holding cell for prisoners. His real specialty, however, is the main lobby. Just inside the main entrance to the courthouse, there is a beautiful black marble-looking terrazzo floor with inlaid turquoise stone. It gets buffed and polished every night to keep its lustrous look. It's really beautiful, but difficult to keep clean. You could say it has become Jason's "signature" at the courthouse.

During his eight hour shift, Jason will tend to the lobby ten or more times. Spills are immediately cleaned up. If necessary, he'll sweep and spray any problem areas. But mostly he dry mops. The dust is constant and shows up any footprint on the floor. Jason mops up the dust and footprints until the whole lobby is shining again.

Jason is a very good worker who has overcome disabilities and health challenges to earn the respect of his supervisor and co-workers. He does a good job with all his responsibilities, but it's on that lobby floor where he really "shines." His supervisor, Barb Walker, says that when Jason is on vacation, the GSA people know by simply looking at the lobby floor. Others have tried, but just can't get that floor to look as good as Jason does. He has developed the skills to make the terrazzo shine. And that reflects well on *all of us* at Beacon!

# The Way We Were

*A Look Back at Beacon's History*



TOP: The old Homecrafters workshop, at Glenn Street and Balboa Avenue, is now gone. MIDDLE: The old Beacon Foundation building on Drachman Street is in the process of being sold. BOTTOM: The original Glenn Street entrance to Tetra is now our back door.

## COVER STORY CONTINUED

The two organizations continued to operate and grow over the next 25 years, essentially serving the same population and pursuing the same sub-contract work from local businesses. Five years ago this Fall, these two great Tucson programs decided to join forces to provide the best possible opportunities for local people with disabilities and their families. That merger has been a “match made in heaven” for thousands of people with big needs and little hope of getting help. The new organization, Beacon Group, was twice the size as either organization was before, and because of their partnership, well positioned to grow even bigger.

Beacon Group has grown by 70% since we merged Beacon and Tetra. That union of two long-standing and effective programs has been a huge success by any standard. The plan— and dream— was to one day operate as one facility under one roof. The tremendous growth of our organization made the need for a new, expanded facility more than just an idea for sometime in the future. We were “bursting at the seams” and the future was now!





**SO NOW THAT OUR LOOK BACK AT THE PAST IS COMPLETE, IT'S TIME TO GO...**

After two years of planning and a year of construction, we're all finally under one roof. We had hoped that, by now, our beautiful new facility would be completely finished. However, there are a few rooms and areas that took a little longer than we thought. So, to be sure that everything was completely done before we started showing her off, we've had to push our Open House back to early February— after the holidays.



While work continues on those few unfinished parts of the building and parking lots, we are already enjoying the great new spaces that *are* done. Here's a look...

*Clockwise from Top: Upstairs Foyer with a view of the mountains; Day Treatment; Workshop showing the newer-half of our 20,000 sq.ft. of production space; Main Lobby; Boardroom; Client Breakroom, with seating both inside and outdoors; Multi-purpose Room.*



## FOUR BEACON CLIENTS RECOGNIZED WITH RSA AWARDS

The Arizona DES Rehabilitation Services Administration held its annual Client & Employer Awards presentation on October 15th. Each Counselor from their six offices here in Tucson selected a “Client of the Year” from their own caseload to be recognized for their individual accomplishments.

Four current or former Beacon clients were selected for this honor this year. All are now fully employed somewhere after being in Beacon’s vocational training programs. The four winners, proudly pictured here (from left to right) are:



**Tim Cupis**— Tim was referred to Beacon in January of this year after graduating from high school. Originally, he was interested in our Courtesy Clerk training for Safeway. However, after just a short stint on rivet assembly to assess his needs and strengths, Tim asked about becoming a Presser in rivet production. Tim was so good at pressing, when he had successfully completed his training and work adjustment, Beacon hired him as a full-time employee.



**Maria Sparks**— Maria was referred to Beacon in December, 2005. Maria always wanted to work but never could find a job. After less than a year training in our workshop, Maria was referred to our Job Development Department to help her secure outside competitive employment. Just over a year ago, Maria was hired by Sears here in Tucson where she remains successfully employed. Maria’s story was spotlighted in our Spring 2008 newsletter.

**Steve Adams**— Steve began at Beacon just a year ago. He seemed very interested in custodial work from the very beginning. Since he does not receive SSI or SSDI benefits, he really needed a full-time job. Vocational Rehabilitation referred him to Beacon in hopes we could help him get his wish. After a few months training as a client custodian here at Beacon, the Job Development team helped him prepare his resumé, fill-out applications, and practice interviewing. Before he could complete his search for competitive employment, Steve was offered a spot on Beacon’s full-time custodial crew downtown. No longer a client, he is now on staff with AbilityOne Contract, servicing the DeConcini Federal Courthouse, the Federal Building, and the Border Patrol Station on Ajo Way in southern Tucson.

**David Bennette**— David also came to Beacon one year ago. After just a couple of months of work adjustment he was successfully transitioned to employment at Café 54— a restaurant operated by “Our Clubhouse,” an organization that works with the mentally ill here in Tucson.

### IN MEMORIAM



Leroy Adams, who was in charge of Beacon’s building maintenance for the last seven years, passed away in mid-October. In addition to keeping everything in working order and running smoothly at Beacon, Leroy was also our official photographer, providing many of the photos for our newsletters and annual reports.



## BEACON EARNS CARF ACCREDITATION

**B**eacon Group was recently surveyed by *CARF*— the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission. Three surveyors from different parts of the country spent three days reviewing our written policies and procedures and interviewing clients, staff, referring agencies and employers, to ensure that Beacon Group is in substantial conformance with internationally accepted standards.

As a result, **Beacon Group was awarded its tenth consecutive three-year accreditation, the maximum granted by CARF.** In addition, based upon our performance, Beacon Group is in the top 14% of all accredited organizations throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. *CARF* accreditation affords Beacon Group and other providers of rehabilitation services many benefits, such as:

- *Accountability to funding sources, referral agencies, and the community.*
- *Evidence to assure federal, state and local governments of the quality of programs and services.*
- *Guidance for responsible management and professional growth of personnel.*
- *Management techniques that are efficient, cost-effective, and based on outcomes and consumer satisfaction.*
- *Person-focused standards that emphasize an integrated and individualized approach to services and outcomes.*

The Board and staff of Beacon Group are extremely proud of the results of our recent survey and of our long standing relationship with *CARF* that focuses our organization on continuous quality improvement.

## BEACON RECEIVES AWARD FROM ALCOA FASTENING SYSTEMS

**O**n September 10, Alcoa Fastening Systems visited Beacon Group to present their *Star Supplier Award*. The award reads: “*To Beacon Group, In Recognition for Consistently Providing Outstanding levels of Excellence in Quality, Service and Support*”.

For more than twenty years, Beacon Group has been assembling rivets for Alcoa. “Every day, Beacon Group receives between 25,000 and 300,000 rivets from Alcoa, and every day we deliver the completed assemblies at the end of the day with no delays or backorders. This award is a great honor for our clients and staff who complete this work for Alcoa,” says Greg Natvig, Beacon Group Vice President of Business Operations.

On top of our service, Beacon Group continues to meet Alcoa Fastening Systems’ stringent quality requirements. We received the award to recognize our contributions to Alcoa Fastening Systems’ growth over the years and Alcoa wanted to recognize how valuable our relationship has been to them. The rivets that we assemble for Alcoa are used in both commercial and military aircraft and other equipment.

Beacon Group provides high quality mechanical assembly, cable/wire harness assembly and packaging services to many manufacturers like Alcoa Fastening Systems. Contact Greg Natvig, 622-4874 ext. 157, to discuss any assembly needs that your business may have.



*Presenting the Star Supplier Award from Alcoa Fastening Systems is (from left to right) Laurinda MacKinnon, Alcoa’s Plant Manager; Steven King, Beacon’s CEO; and Robert Salazar, Alcoa’s Operations Manager.*

## DO YOU WANNA DANCE?

**A**ll work and no play... just isn't much fun! It also isn't healthy. In addition to work opportunities, we try to encourage social and recreational activities for our clients. Dances are a good way to provide both. Last month's Halloween Dance was just one of the events sponsored by the Beacon Auxiliary during the year. And even though the clients came dressed as someone—or something—else, it was a welcomed chance for them to just be themselves.

Besides the client dances, we are looking at other social and recreational activities to sponsor as part of our program mix through the year. This is an area where volunteers can participate and provide helpful input and support.

If you would like to be part of Beacon's Auxiliary, or would like to volunteer in some way, please call Patrick McCarthy at Beacon (622-4874 ext. 166) to get involved.



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