

Beacon **TIMES**

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BEACON GROUP

SPRING 2010

It Takes a Village!

The old Skate Country building near Stone and Glenn has had quite a history in Tucson. From 1984 to 2002, thousands and thousands of young and old Tucsonans made it a regular recreation destination. Hopefully, many of those same people will be returning to find great deals on used furniture, clothing and electronic items at the all new Value Village which now operates there. Beacon purchased the building back in 2005 because it offered something that was in short supply at the old Value Village location on 4th Ave.

Value Village re-opens bigger and better than ever

First opened in 1965, Value Village was the 3rd longest tenured business on 4th Ave. What it had in history however, it lacked in space.

The new Value Village location has lots of retail space, good parking and plenty of room for processing, sorting, cleaning and repairing the truckloads of donated items we receive daily. It has room for a laundry so all clothes and bedding can be washed before re-sale. There's space for repairing furniture as well as for testing all electronic items and appliances. Best of all, there are many more training and employment opportunities for Beacon clients in the new location.



From the **PRESIDENT**

The motivational story goes like this: Every day on the African plains, a lion wakes up and thinks, "I'd better run fast today or I won't catch a thing and I'll starve." And every day on these same plains, a young gazelle wakes up and thinks, "I'd better run like the wind today or I'll end up someone's lunch." The moral of the story is "whether you are the king of beasts or the fragile gazelle, you'd better wake up running or you won't survive."

For most of us, some days go as planned — no big problems for us to overcome. We feel like we are "masters of our domain." At other times, we feel completely beset by threats and challenges that can potentially cause our ruin. But, according to the moral of my story, it doesn't matter, either way the answer is basically the same; you've got to scramble like the dickens every day if you're going to stay a success.

"...you'd better wake up running..."

Beacon has been a tremendous success story here in Tucson for close to sixty years now. We have trained, employed and supported tens of thousands of local individuals with disabilities, giving them the skills to compete and survive. For the clients we serve, every day is a threat and even simple strategies are a major challenge. They rarely get to wake up feeling like the king of the jungle.

This last year brought some major threats in the form of State budget cuts and a very weak local

economy. I can tell you, there were many days I felt like we were running for our lives and the threats were real. I wouldn't say I think we were about to be devoured, but we had to reduce expenses by close to a million dollars and that definitely felt like we had been mauled. We protected the most vulnerable clients only by sacrificing some of our staff.

The good news is we avoided the worst scenarios by reacting quickly and by chasing every new opportunity we could hunt down. As they say, the best defense is a good offense. We added new subcontract jobs in-house and new community worksites out in local businesses. Our paper-shredding business grew by 25%. And we actually ended the year with over twenty more clients than we started with.

It appears that we seem to have avoided yet another round of State budget cuts for this year (*that could change tomorrow!*). Next year's outlook will rest on the outcome of this May's vote on a three-year sales tax increase. We're not out of danger by a long shot yet, so we



STEVE KING, President/CEO

FEELING
Like
A KING

can't let up and get caught flat-footed.

We will continue to send alerts to our parents, providers and customers as we get updates from the State. Their quick response to elected officials helped raise awareness of the harmful impact of their proposed budget cuts.

For now, I'm going to wrap this up — 'cause I've got to run!

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For New Commercial Accounts & Beacon Family Customers Only. Valid for up to 250 pounds.



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Chad is just like a lot of young men. He likes to relax by reading, surfing the internet or playing golf. He moved out after graduating high school to have more freedom. When he can, he likes to go hunting and fishing. He has taken a number of college courses, but doesn't have a degree yet. His prized possession is his baseball card collection. You could say Chad was typical in every way... except one.



Speak for Yourself!

Chad McKinley was born with Down Syndrome. He doesn't mind talking about it. In fact, he talks about it all the time. As a bonafide "Self-Advocate", Chad regularly gives talks and conducts workshops for people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities. He is so good at it, he has been elected a Board Member of the Southern Arizona Network for Down Syndrome, and he was voted "Self-Advocate of the Year" by the ARC of Arizona in 2001.

When Chad isn't self-advocating, or just relaxing doing normal guy stuff, he is working at Beacon. He has had a few jobs in the community as well. He worked at a nursery and at Pima Federal Credit Union doing grounds keeping. He first worked for Beacon in 1998 on the Jim Click crew and at Tucson Electric Power. After that, Chad got a job at Pima County Flood Control doing office work. He is back now at Beacon doing rivet assembly.

Chad would like a job out in the community again. He'd especially

like to work in an office with computers. In the meantime, he is working at Beacon to improve his productivity rate and interaction with others. Being able to function at such a high level, and yet still have to deal with the realities of having Down Syndrome, can lead to a lot of frustration for someone like Chad.

Chad also has a "mentor", Carmen Vallejo, who is also a Job Coach for Beacon during the day. Carmen helps Chad work on things like shopping, cooking and socializing. "Chad is very independent," says Carmen, "he keeps his own schedule and tells me what we have to do each day."

While Chad works on finding his way in the world of work, he will continue to speak up for himself as well as for those still waiting for the chance to work. This summer, Chad will be speaking at the Down Syndrome Congress in Orlando, and he is running for a spot on their national board. He's currently reading a book entitled "Adults with Down Syndrome" by Dr. Friedrieich M. Pueschel, who is a Professor and former Down Syndrome Congress Board Member. Chad doesn't want to only speak from experience; he really wants to know what he is talking about.



Value Village re-opens bigger and better than ever

It Takes a Village!

Cover Story, continued

The "new and improved" Beacon's Value Village is located at 2700 N. Stone Ave just south of Glenn. It is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm. More than ever, we need donations of furniture, clothes and household items, and as always we will send a truck to your house or business to pick them up. Just call 622-JANE to arrange a convenient time. You can also go to our website (www.thebeacongroup.org) for information about sales and specials going on each month. Better yet, go see Value Village *in person!*

A GRAND RE-OPENING!

The Value Village Grand Re-Opening festivities in mid-January included a Saturday "Shop 'til you Drop" promotion complete with a live radio remote broadcast hosted by Chita from 96.1 KLPX.



Rockin' the house with KLPX's Chita!



Electronics, Entertainment, Home Appliances and Accessories...





...Collectibles, Fitness Items, and Home & Office Furnishings



...Books, Magazines, Toys, Music, Software, and a huge selection of "Clean&Fresh" clothing for Men, Women, and Children



...And of course, a friendly staff ready to assist!

Value Village employs many Beacon clients in the retail, warehouse and laundering operations



Back to School!

In September 2008, when we opened our new 64,000 sq. ft. facility, we moved all the clients and staff from the old Beacon Foundation into our combined new home. The Beacon Foundation was started in 1955 as a school for developmentally disabled children. It had operated at that old site at Drachman and Stone since 1966. Over the last forty-five years, Beacon Foundation had been the best known organization in Tucson serving the needs of the developmentally disabled.



Now, combined with Tetra Corporation under one roof at our new expanded facility, Beacon Group has no need for the old Drachman site. Those who didn't want to see that bit of history disappear will be happy to know that old Beacon Foundation facility has a new life – and a new mission.

Last September, the old facility got a whole new “lease” on life as a public charter academy. The Wildcat School – affiliated with the U of A – opened the doors again to about one hundred students. It currently serves grades 6, 7 and 8 with an emphasis on math and science to prepare students for higher education.

It's nice to know that young Tucsonans will still be learning and developing there; that reaching your potential – at whatever level – will still be the goal; and that Tucson hasn't lost a part of history, but rather is still striving to give everyone an equal chance for a future.

Staff SPOTLIGHT



STEVE KING, President/CEO CHUCK TILLER, Vice President

Steve King, Beacon's President and CEO, and Chuck Tiller, Vice President, Rehabilitation Services, provide steady guidance and strong leadership for the people and programs of Beacon on a daily basis. They also help by providing leadership on behalf of people with disabilities on a state and even national level as well.

Chuck Tiller has been appointed to the Arizona State Rehabilitation Advisory Council by Gov. Jan Brewer. Formed in 1993, the Council's role is to advise, evaluate and partner with public vocational rehabilitation programs to improve access to employment for all citizens.

Steve King has been elected to the national Board of Directors of NISH. NISH is a national nonprofit supporting over 600 agencies which provide employment opportunities for almost 40,000 people with severe disabilities, by procuring Federal contracts for goods and services.

For Beacon's President and Vice President, *leadership by example* is the very best kind.

Leading the Way

Special **RECOGNITION**

At our holiday party in December, Beacon Group recognized special clients, staff, businesses and professionals for exceptional achievements during 2009. *Congratulations to all the winners!*



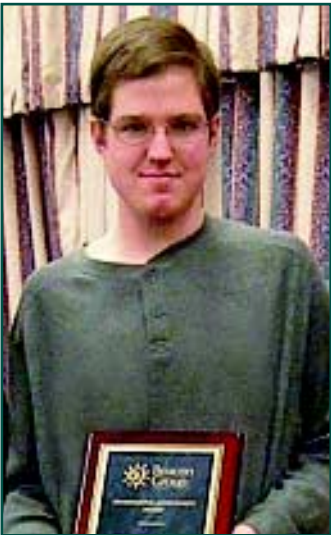
Dr. BRIAN BOON, CARF, congratulated by Board Member Barb Sadler (left) and President Steve King



CARRIE LONG
Leadership Award



MARY ROBLES
Employee of the Year



JUSTIN HAMMONDS
Client of the Year



JARED PINEGAR
Client of the Year



KIRK FISHER
Fisher Industries



BARB WALKER
Leroy Adams Award (staff)



Every 10 years, the United States Census Bureau is supposed to count every U.S. resident. With roughly 308,000,000 people – *give or take* – that's a lot of counting. And it's that "give or take" that's the hard part. Counting everyone is not easy to do because finding everyone is very difficult.

Beacon has volunteered to be a Questionnaire Assistance Center for the U.S. Census. From March 19th through April 19th, we will be working with the Census to help count everyone – especially those traditionally undercounted groups, like our clients. The Census will have a staff person at Beacon in the afternoon (1 to 4pm) to help people fill out their questionnaire. We want to encourage everyone to fill it out and send it in. If you need help or have a question, you're welcome to come to Beacon during that month and ask for the Census worker.

Special **EVENT**

Estates, Wills & Special Needs Trusts Seminar

Beacon will host another financial planning seminar on Wednesday, March 24th from 5:00 to 6:30pm at our main facility at Glenn and Oracle. This will be the third time Beacon has held this kind of event due to its popularity with parents and donors. Within the presentation there will be ample opportunity for questions for our well-qualified presenters; Steven Wagner JD, CPA and Dee O'Neill Attorney, Board Member and Beacon parent.

There is no cost for this seminar, but you do need to RSVP with Beacon's Patrick McCarthy. See details at right.



Seminar **RSVP**

If you wish to attend this event, you must first RSVP to Patrick McCarthy at (520) 622-4874 ext 166 Or, send an email to: pmccarthy@thebeaongroup.org

*Beacon***TIMES** is the official publication of Beacon Group, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, and is published by the Beacon Group Community Development Department.

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The Beacon Group is proud to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

www.thebeaongroup.org

COVER STORY: **IT TAKES A VILLAGE!**



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Creating Opportunities for People with Disabilities
Beacon Group
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