

Beacon **TIMES**

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BEACON GROUP

FALL 2009

Making Dollars and \$ense!

- REDUCING THE NEED FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

A recent study shows that people with disabilities, when given a chance to work, save taxpayers thousands of dollars in reduced government benefits and increased taxes paid. That's right: The more they make, the more *we all* make.

The study was conducted in late 2008 by LMI Government Consulting to assess the economic benefits of employment for people with disabilities. Specifically, they surveyed individuals with severe disabilities employed through AbilityOne Programs in four different kinds of businesses: Food Service, Custodial, Administrative Services and Grounds Maintenance. Almost 800 people participated in the study nationwide. The participants were employed through 77 different community rehabilitation programs, including Beacon's custodial crews at the Federal Courthouse here in Tucson.

Story continues Page 3

Below: Beacon's custodial crew and staff pause at the Federal Courthouse in Tucson.



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Harold "Aris" Rumusod makes quick work of the DYNO KWICK LOCKPICK

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From the **PRESIDENT**

There is one article in this issue of our newsletter on the economic benefits to taxpayers as a result of employing people with disabilities and how it reduces their need for public assistance. There is another article on the “win-win” for a blind client who works at Beacon on a contract from a local businessman who happens to have a severe disability himself. The notice of an upcoming Planned Giving Seminar will be of interest to our parents and family members responsible for financial planning for the future of our clients. And the photos of clients getting a workout in

our gym show how we try to meet more than just “employment” needs for our clients.

The underlying theme of all these pieces may well be summed up in a quote from Rep. Gabby Giffords: *“The history and vision of Beacon Group stands as a clear example of why this program is a winning proposition for all parties involved.”*

I couldn’t help but think about just how many “parties” there actually are benefiting from what we do. Here’s my list of “winners.”



STEVE KING, President/CEO

JOIN *the* PARTY!

That’s lots of “parties!”

Can there really be that many “winners” without there being “losers?” I thought about that awhile, and couldn’t come up with a single one!

- **Over 1,700 people with disabilities served each year**
- **Their families, guardians and caregivers**
- **Hundreds of local businesses who take advantage of high-quality, reasonable cost sub-contract services or paper-shredding**
- **The local economy — Beacon either employs or helps find jobs for approximately 750 people, which makes us a Top 100 employer in Tucson**
- **Our neighborhood benefits from a strong, steady influence**
- **Taxpayers — through reduced need for government assistance and more taxpayers**
- **The environment — We recycle over 3,000,000 pounds of shredded paper a year**
- **Our community, which can boast it has the largest employer of people with disabilities in Southern Arizona, a significant example of its humanity and fairness**

SAFeway GIVES BACK!

For just over three years now Safeway has been doing the taking. They have taken over 60 clients from Beacon and given them good jobs! Safeway — by far — has hired *more Beacon clients than any other business!* Giving a person with a disability a job and a chance to begin a full independent life, is the ultimate goal for all the clients we serve at Beacon. When it comes to giving people a chance, Safeway takes the prize.

Recently, Safeway took their support of Beacon to a whole new level. They presented us with a \$12,500 donation raised from their stores, their customers, and their employees. “We are proud and honored to present you with this check today as we continue to support local community organizations that support job training and coaching programs for people with disabilities,” said Cathy Kloos, Director, Public Affairs and Government Relations for Safeway. “In Arizona alone, we hire almost 425 special needs employees.”



Beacon’s Patrick McCarthy (center) accepts a very generous donation from Safeway representatives (from left to right) Joyce Lingle, Betty Stewart, Marion Huber, and Cathy Kloos.

Cover Story, continued

The study looked at individuals with severe disabilities before and after they were employed through an AbilityOne contract. The goal was to assess the impact that employment had on their use of seven government entitlement programs as well as state and federal taxes paid. The entitlement programs examined were: Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), food stamps, welfare and public housing.

The results were proof of the positive impact that employment has on the use of public assistance.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STUDY:

- *Government savings, as a result of employment, was between \$3,000 and almost \$7,000 per employee per year*
- *Use of government entitlement programs was greatly reduced or eliminated across the board*
- *State and federal income taxes paid went from \$300 to \$1,819 on average*



This study was conducted on behalf of NISH, a national organization that facilitates the AbilityOne Program which trains and employs people with disabilities to provide goods and services to the federal government.

For almost 10 years, Beacon has had an AbilityOne contract to provide custodial services to the Evo DeConcini Federal Courthouse, the Federal Building across the street and the Border Patrol Station on Ajo Way in southwest Tucson. There are a total of 18 people working for Beacon as part of this contract. It is one of 24 community work sites that Beacon has established within local businesses. Combined, they employ almost 150 Beacon clients on a daily basis.

At Beacon, we know the clear benefits of providing people with disabilities the chance to work, to be productive and to live a fulfilling life. And of course, being able to help support themselves is an added bonus for our clients and their families. But having proof that the general public — the taxpayer — gets a substantial benefit from clients who get the chance to “pay their own way,” makes it more than the intelligent thing to do.

It's so simple: *Let them work and everybody wins!* You could say, the more cents they can make, the more sense it makes.

Take Your PICK

Who gets the most benefit from the work that Beacon does? Is it really the people with disabilities (*clients*) who work here? Or is it the local businesses that get good quality, high-volume sub-contract assembly and packaging services at a really good price? If you talk to Beacon client Aris Rumusod, or to



Beacon business customer, Kirk Fisher, you would have a tough time picking a clear winner. They are both very happy they came to Beacon.

Harold "Aris" Rumusod was born in the Philippines. His parents brought him to the United States when he was 15 so he could get an education and other opportunities not available back home. Aris is blind and has mild mental retardation. After coming to Tucson, he attended the Arizona School for the Deaf and Blind.

When he was done with school, Aris came to work at Beacon Foundation. At that time, he was the first blind person to work at Beacon Foundation (it later merged with Tetra Corp. to form Beacon Group.) "Aris loves working at Beacon," says Aris' stepfather, Kenneth Wendt, "he gets up on his own in the morning ready to go, and he'll keep working until you tell him to stop."

At Beacon, Aris usually works on the Dyno lock pick assembly. It's a 10-piece, 8-step process that isn't easy for someone who can't see. So, even though Aris is pretty good on the lock pick assembly, he



ABOVE: Beacon customer Kirk Fisher (*at left*) appreciates the high-quality assembly capabilities of clients like Harold "Aris" Rumusod (*at right*). **BELOW, right:** Kirk's product, the Dyno KWICK LockPick, requires careful assembly of 10 small machined components prior to mounting the completed unit inside a retail blister pack.

doesn't earn a lot of money doing it. He earns enough to cover his transportation costs, which is fine with his parents. They both work, so if Aris didn't have a place like Beacon to go to, one of them would have to quit work, or he would have to stay home alone, which is dangerous. When Aris is left alone, he scratches himself severely because he is bored. He never does this when working at Beacon.

Kirk Fisher, the owner of Fisher Industries that sells the "Dyno KWICK LockPick" that Aris assembles at Beacon, says that, "If it weren't for a

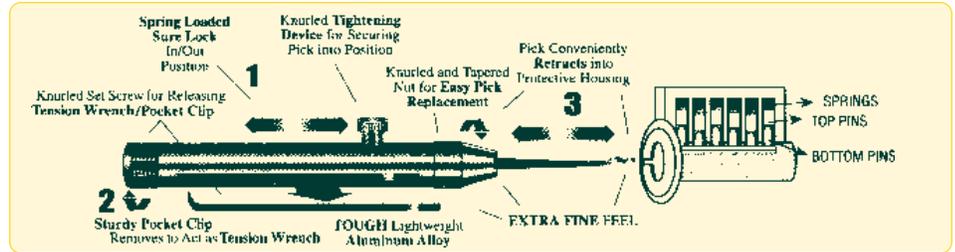


Harold
"Aris"
Rumusod



place like Beacon, I would be sitting at home too! I wouldn't have a business. When people ask to see my business, I tell them go look at Beacon — that's my business!"

"That was my whole plan when I bought the business almost eight years ago," explains Kirk. "I didn't want any employees, a building or equipment. Beacon handles everything for me — the people, parts, assembly, quality-checking, packaging and shipping — Beacon handles it all." Since November, 2001, when Beacon began working with Fisher Industries, that has meant producing 150,000 lock picks



for Kirk. "I came to Beacon because I knew the people there need help. But it's really 50/50... They are helping me, too."

A swimming accident at 17 years old left Kirk a quadriplegic confined to a wheelchair. Kirk went on to finish college and earn a degree in business. After working for CitiBank for many years in South Dakota, Kirk moved to Tucson with his parents 10 years ago. After two years of frustration in not being able to land a job here, Kirk put together his plan to buy a business and use the services offered by Beacon to take care of the "hands on" end of his business.

"I'm surprised more people don't utilize you guys," says Kirk. "I don't

worry about the work that Beacon does. It gets done, and it gets done right. I'm not all that different from your clients — I can't drive. But I don't have to be here. It's a load off my mind."

"And business is good," according to Kirk. "It's actually up this year. Then again, I don't have to worry about a downturn, I don't have the liability of people and a building to pay for." Kirk says he's actually looking for other business opportunities to buy. "I'd love nothing better than to have an *entire wing at Beacon* just doing work for me!"

Beacon and Aris are just glad Kirk picked them to put *his* business plan into action.



Beacon adds new training in Phoenix

Tetra Services, Beacon's program in Phoenix, has a couple of new features to help them train and place clients in full- or part-time jobs in the community.

A new computer training lab (top right) will give Tetra the ability to train clients to use computers with the latest Office software. This kind of training would be a huge boost to a client's employability.

Tetra has also set up a "mini" Safeway store (lower right) inside their offices. Like the one at our main facility here in Tucson, it will help train and pre-qualify clients for jobs with Safeway.



We can work it out!

During a slower work week recently, Beacon clients got a chance to spend some time working out in our second floor gym. With a volunteer parent and staff providing supervision and instruction, clients got to spend about forty minutes on the resistance machines and punching bags. Exercise and diet are a priority for many Beacon clients and their families.



Going to bat for Beacon!

Brandon McCarthy is a pitcher with the Texas Rangers baseball team. He is also the son of Beacon's Director of Development, Patrick McCarthy. Brandon has been to Beacon on a few occasions in the past and wanted to do something special for the program, the clients, and for his Dad. This last off-season, when he was negotiating his contract, he put in a sizeable donation to the Texas Rangers Foundation earmarked for Beacon Group. Brandon presented the check to his father before a recent game in Arlington, TX.



Giffords recognizes AbilityOne Program and Beacon Group

U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ), recently recognized the AbilityOne Program and one of its more than 600 agencies, Beacon Group SW located in Tucson, AZ.

"I am proud to acknowledge the important work of Beacon Group, which since 1952, has provided training and employment services to people with disabilities. The history and mission of Beacon Group stands as a clear example of why this program is a winning proposition for all parties involved," Giffords stated. Her remarks were read into the Congressional record in early March.

"The direct impact of these services on the lives of Americans with disabilities cannot be overstated. For an individual with a severe disability who has never had the opportunity to hold a job, be independent, participate in community life, or contribute their talents to society, the AbilityOne Program and agencies like the Beacon Group are invaluable," said Giffords.

"I am pleased to acknowledge the tremendous accomplishments of the AbilityOne Program and the dedication and commitment of Steven R. King, the President and

CEO of Beacon Group and his staff. Each day they assist individuals with disabilities to find meaningful employment and assume their rightful place in our nation's workforce. I also want to commend each AbilityOne employee for their hard work and their participation in this important program," Giffords stated.



Below: Representative Giffords visits Beacon crew at the Federal Courthouse in Tucson



*This is the money
you could be saving with...*

...ESTATE PLANNING II



— *Help available once again to
friends and families of Beacon
clients with Wills, Special Needs
Trusts and more!*

Back in March, Beacon co-sponsored an Estate Planning seminar for our parents and donors. It was obvious from the questions and discussion at the seminar, that more events like this would be needed. There seemed to be a lot of confusion and misinformation about the best way to handle finances on behalf of our clients and the best way to provide for their needs in the future.

So, Beacon will host “Estate Planning II” on Thursday, October 22nd from 5:00 - 6:30pm in our upstairs Multi-Purpose Room. Anyone can attend, and there is no charge. There will be information and materials from legal and financial experts, and time for lots of questions.

*If you wish to attend this event,
please RSVP to Patrick McCarthy
by telephoning
(520) 622-4874 ext 166
Or, send an email to:
pmccarthy@thebeacongroup.org*

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

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