

Beacon **TIMES**

SPRING 2015

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BEACON GROUP



Doug Ducey and Martha McSally visit Beacon

In February, new U.S. Representative Martha McSally came to take a tour of Beacon. In March, it was Governor Doug Ducey's turn. Both officials visited with clients and staff, learned about our programs and services, saw the hundreds of workers with disabilities who choose to work at Beacon, and heard about the numerous efforts happening around the nation to take away that choice from people.

Both Congresswoman McSally and Governor Ducey were particularly interested in the volume of subcontract work Beacon performs for dozens of local businesses, as well as providing business services (like shredding, custodial, packaging and landscaping) for almost 2,000 more.



Arizona's Governor and Congresswoman take tours of our program

After their tours, they both met with Beacon managers to discuss the mostly unintended consequences of recent Federal regulations and upcoming decisions that, if adopted, could eliminate successful programs like Beacon. Both the Congresswoman and the Governor agreed to help make sure Beacon's clients' and families' voices are properly heard and that their choices are respected.

Governor Doug Ducey (in top left photo) and U.S. Representative Martha McSally (top right) interacted with Beacon clients and even learned some of the finer points of rivet assembly! During their tours, both elected officials witnessed first-hand the tremendous variety and scope of work choices available within our main facility. Beacon Operations Manager Greg Natvig (lower photo, far right) emphasized Beacon's mission of providing a safe, rewarding work environment for clients facing a multitude of special needs and limitations.

From the **PRESIDENT**

For my column in this issue of the Beacon Times, I asked the President and CEO of ACCSES, Terry Farmer, to give us his take on Disability Policy from a national perspective. ACCSES is a nonprofit membership organization that represents over 1,200 disability service providers across the country. As the national “voice” of service providers, ACCSES works to promote and enhance community-based solutions for people with disabilities.

Beacon is an active member of ACCSES, and we appreciate their leadership efforts, especially in the last year or so, as programs like Beacon are being threatened by government and activists on many fronts. Below is Terry’s overview of the situation. —Steve



STEVE KING, President/CEO

National trends in services for people with disabilities are being driven by changes in public policy and service delivery systems. Our elected officials and public servants in every level of government are actively working today to shape the policies and programs that affect people with disabilities and their families. Many advocates and national advocacy groups are pushing for reforms they believe will fulfill the promise of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* — that people with disabilities will all attain full participation in society. At the same time, economic concerns are leading governments to constrain public spending on human service programs. As governments respond to advocates, they are also confronting the reality of trying to serve more people within the already strained financial resources available.

The movement towards full community inclusion is visible in nearly every action the federal government has taken over the last six years to shape emerging disability policy; both in Congress and the Administration. These actions are strongly motivating states to change their service delivery systems away from congregate and center-based models and towards support systems that they believe are person-centered and will lead to full integration in society. Meanwhile, the states continue to seek ways to cut spending, with disability programs spared no exception. This creates a “perfect storm” — a thrust towards more personalized and expensive delivery systems that are running up against the demands for services from a growing, unserved and underserved population while public spending is being shackled by government deficits and debt. The major disability programs affected by this storm include special

education, vocational rehabilitation, labor (employment), and Medicaid services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as programs for other vulnerable populations.

One example is a Bill in Congress, *HR 188* — the “Transitioning to Integrated and Meaningful Employment Act (*TIME*).” If passed, it would phase out and repeal the authority to pay a sub-minimum wage under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It is currently unclear how far the *TIME* Act may get in this session of Congress. Historically, similar bills have never been acted on by Congress. However, the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (*WIOA*), enacted into law last year, encourages ways to increase employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities or other individuals with significant disabilities in competitive integrated employment. However, it prohibits the use of the certificate program carried out under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (*FLSA*) for the employment of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Another recent major driver of policy change via the executive branch was the issuance of new rules last year by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (*CMS*). The rules affect how the states design and administer their Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services programs. Using the principles of self-determination and full community inclusion, among others, as set forth in the rules, the states were directed to redesign their Medicaid programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as for other vulnerable

“As changes are being made around you, everyone needs to be involved.”

What's Ahead for Disability Policy?

populations. A controversy over where people live, work and play, and how they receive services, has resulted. As states develop their transition plans to comply with the new rules, citizens who will be affected by the changes are trying to be heard by state policy makers to make sure their needs and desires are known, and options they need and want are maintained in the plans. Public engagement will determine how the states reshape and transform their Medicaid programs for the future.

Although the volume of federal policy change is likely to wane moving forward, it is a different story at the state level. Federal edicts contained in new laws and regulations have kicked the states into gear. There will continue to be active, if not dramatic, reshaping of disability policy affecting state programs in local communities. Decisions will be made about whom to serve, how much funding to allocate to programs, what services to fund, and what methods of financing to employ. Medicaid, Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce systems, among others, have been stimulated to transform. As changes in public policy and programs are being made around you, everyone needs to be involved. After all, it should be *your choice!*

In the coming months and years ahead, there is no doubt that economic, political and other forces will continue to alter the face of disability policy and service delivery systems. People with disabilities will be faced with the choice of either accepting the changes that are driven by others, or taking an active role in influencing the changes that will ultimately affect their lives and the lives of their families. It would be tragic if they wound up as casualties of these "reforms".

Parent's Campaign Update



Have you "liked" us on Facebook yet?

It's a great way to get updates, read about what's happening in Arizona and other states, and find the three great videos we've produced for parents and families. These videos have been watched a couple of thousand times already — including by Tucson's Mayor, our Congresswoman and the Governor — and are being used in the national "What Matters Most" campaign to protect family choices of workplace settings.

 **My Job My Choice AZ**

Beacon's clients and staff have begun wearing their new "My Job, My Choice" T-shirts.

Many clients were wearing these shirts when the Governor visited Beacon (see cover photo).

The T-shirts proclaim they are proud of their job... and proud of their choice!



Want a Beacon "My Job, My Choice" T-shirt of your very own?

To order, call Sean at Sunset Screen Print at (520) 323-2244, or send him an email: sean@sunsetscreenprint.com

Special **RECOGNITION**

At our annual Holiday Party last December, we recognized clients, staff, leaders in the disability community and business partners for their achievement, dedication and support for Beacon's mission. Even though the clear highlight of the event is always the client dance following the luncheon, taking time to recognize and thank those who make our program an award winner as well, is very important. When Mayor Rothschild could not be there to accept a Visionary Award on behalf of the City of Tucson, he sent a very nice letter commending Beacon on our work. He also came to visit Beacon in-person just a few weeks later.



YEE-SUN ARMSTRONG
2014 Leadership Award



IBRAHIM ABACKER



ESTELLA MADRIGAL



AMANDA POPP

Congratulations go to Beacon Group's 2014 Outstanding Achievement Award Recipients!



LISA BEAGLES

Beacon Group's 2014 Leroy Adams Award Recipients are appreciated for their work and dedication "behind the scenes!"



CECILY GALLARDO



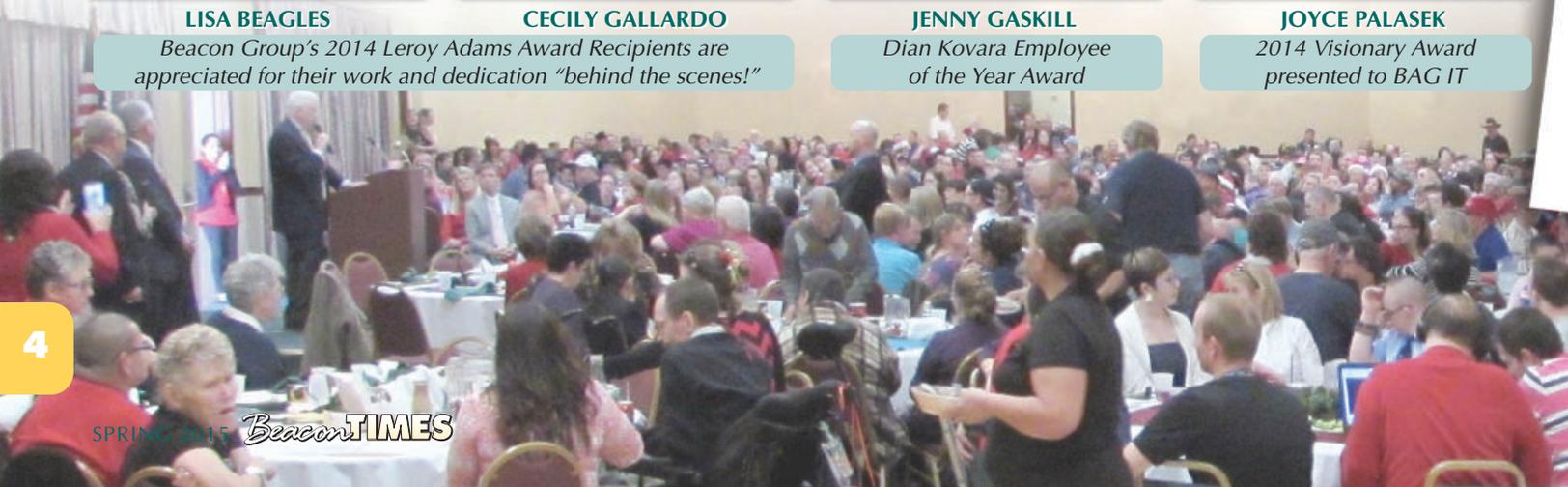
JENNY GASKILL

Dian Kovara Employee of the Year Award



JOYCE PALASEK

2014 Visionary Award presented to BAG IT



JONATHAN ROTHSCHILD
MAYOR



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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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December 11th, 2014

Dear Beacon Group,

I am honored to accept this year's Beacon Group Visionary Award on behalf of the City of Tucson. As many of you know, Beacon Group and the city have a longstanding partnership, going back, I'm told, to at least 1988.

I enjoyed joining you for another event recently at the federal courthouse, acknowledging Beacon staff and custodial crews who have cleaned the courthouse now going on 14 years. Clearly, Beacon staff and clients are valued there, just as you are valued by the City of Tucson.

The people who started the Homecrafters organization in 1952—one of the predecessors to Beacon—were true visionaries. At a time when people with disabilities were sometimes shut away from society, Homecrafters offered them job skills training.

More than 60 years later, Beacon continues to offer people with disabilities training and employment. More than that, they offer what everybody wants, meaningful work and the opportunity to become self-reliant, to develop to the fullest extent of their potential.

The City of Tucson currently has contracts with Beacon Group for custodial services, landscape maintenance and recycling services. Our offices and grounds look clean and well kept, thanks to Beacon crews.

I want to commend Beacon staff for the work you do. You are making an immeasurable difference in the lives of many Tucsonans and in our community at large. I also want to congratulate your clients on the great job you do every day. The City of Tucson is a very satisfied customer.

Enjoy the rest of your event, especially the dance, and thank you again for this honor.

Sincerely,


Jonathan Rothschild
Mayor



RYAN ANDERSON (center) proudly accepted a 2014 "Visionary" Award on behalf of Mayor Rothschild. Also pictured above (from L to R) is Beacon Group President & CEO Steve King and Beacon Board Members Barb Sadler and Dwight Whitley, Jr.

Beacon would like to recognize and thank all our generous donors including those who supported last year’s successful “Drive to Thrive” year-end campaign. The following list reflects donations received through 12-31-14

We regret any omissions or errors. To make a donation, contact Beacon’s Patrick McCarthy at (520) 622-4874 extension 166, or pmccarthy@BeaconGroup.org, or visit our website.

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Since 1987, Beacon has been providing landscaping maintenance for the City of Tucson. We have three crews — East, West and Midtown — that provide clean-up, weeding, raking and trash removal for over 140 separate locations in and around Tucson.

Our three Beacon crews set out each day to tend to roadsides, street medians, washes, bike paths, traffic circles, recycling centers, parks and alleys in all six wards of the city. There are three other non-Beacon crews that also do landscaping and maintenance for the City. One of these other crews handles the planting or removal of trees and bushes. The Beacon crews only perform basic clean up.

The recycling centers, especially, need a lot of attention. Some people illegally dump trash along with old or broken household items they want to get rid of. Our crews collect this trash and take it to the dump almost daily. When they've cleaned and weeded all 140 designated sites, they start back at the top of the list again.

It's certainly not easy work and our crews can often go unnoticed. However, we can't say it's a "thankless" job. Our well-marked vans are out and about every day, and many Tucsonans take the time to stop and compliment our crews on the job they do. Our crews appreciate the thanks they get for their diligent efforts to keep Tucson looking its best!

All Around the Town

Beacon Helps Keep Tucson Beautiful!



In the COMMUNITY

Beacon Looking for New Business Partners in Phoenix

Beacon has been asked to do for Phoenix what we've done for Tucson. We have over 60 community worksites in the Tucson area where Beacon clients can be found working in "integrated" business settings. That's more than twice as many as all other local programs — *combined!*

According to the Division of Developmental Disabilities (*DDD*), over 29% of their clients served in the Tucson region are served in integrated settings. In Phoenix, a little over 18% are in integrated settings. Our plan is to add more businesses in Phoenix that will hire a Beacon crew to work on site for them.

Beacon would like to talk to Phoenix businesses — *large and small* — about jobs that our clients can do for them (custodial, landscaping, assembly, stocking and more!) If anyone has any business contacts in Phoenix that we could talk to, we'd like to hear from you. Please call Greg Natvig at (520) 622-4874 extension #157.



*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. Beacon does not sell or share any donor names or personal information to anyone else for any reason.

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

www.BeaconGroup.org



Beacon Crews are "All Around the Town!" — Look for story and photos on Page 7



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