Looking to the past can provide stories of hope and resilience. The past teaches us how difficult times were overcome with innovation and ingenuity, and how hope for the future is found. When the entire arc of an organization is analyzed, the hills and valleys equal out, and we can see our current moment in perspective.

When Homecrafters, later to become Tetra Corporation, was founded in 1952, very few services for adults with disabilities — especially employment services — were available for workers with disabilities in Tucson. Similarly, when Beacon Foundation was started in 1955, a group of parents saw a need for their children with developmental disabilities, and they took the steps to ensure that greater resources were made available to these students.

Today, Beacon Group is the culmination of the years of collective effort from dedicated staff and the people with disabilities that Beacon serves. While our programs have changed and adapted over our nearly 70 year history, Beacon Group remains committed to creating greater opportunities for people with disabilities... then, now, and in the future!

One such person who has witnessed the evolution and history at Beacon Group is Becky Segundo. After nearly fifty years from when she first came to Beacon, Becky can still recall a clay mold project she completed while attending what was then Beacon Foundation’s preschool program. Just four years old at the time, she remembers fondly the skits she participated in and how her mother also volunteered there. Becky has returned to Beacon throughout the years and is still an employee here today.

Her story is just one of four featured examples you’ll find inside that demonstrate how Beacon’s vision has stayed true to its original purpose and mission.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3
Beacon Group continues to fulfill our vision through innovation.

A vision statement is what an organization ultimately would like to achieve. Our Beacon Group vision statement has included this aspiration for decades: A society where people with disabilities live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

For most of us, living a meaningful and fulfilling life includes work. Work brings value to our day. We develop relationships with peers and gain greater independence by earning money for our family and ourselves. Unfortunately, for those of us with disabilities, obtaining work is often much more difficult. As of September 2020, the percentage of working age people with disabilities in the United States who are working has declined to 28%. That compares with 70% of working age people without disabilities who are working.

In Arizona alone, 270,000 working age people with disabilities do not work. That’s a lot of mission for Beacon Group to accomplish! We have been working for almost 70 years to deliver on this vision and mission and will continue to do for many years to come.

One of the ways, over the years, that Beacon has made lives more meaningful and fulfilling through work, is innovation. One of our main innovation themes has been to provide a wide array of employment services and job opportunities for people with disabilities. We have steadily increased our offerings almost every year. Some examples are seen below.

Recent examples of how we’ve expanded through innovation.

- We have created a dozen or so new production jobs in the Phoenix market. To accomplish this, we offered an existing customer a new way to increase their capacity.

- Beacon now offers many new services for young people interested in work — some of which are highlighted in this newsletter. These efforts were made in response to opportunities brought about by revisions to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We are aiming to make work the first aspiration for young people transitioning out of the education system.

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Beacon identified very early on that the need for disinfecting services would grow dramatically. We purchased equipment before others realized the need and beat the rush. Today, through these efforts, we now have eleven people dedicated to disinfecting, most of whom are people with disabilities. Implementing this process early, Beacon could continue essential employment services where and when safely possible.

- Beacon recently expanded our Work Adjustment Training (WAT) program, offering the people with disabilities we serve a real life working (typically paid) experience where they can develop basic job skills such as punctuality and work pace, as well as specific job skills that will help them find employment. We expanded the job skill areas to include reception/clerical, direct support professional, material handling, and soon, information technology help desk. The number of people with disabilities in the program has expanded by 30%, even during the pandemic.

A person who has benefitted from Beacon’s wide array of choices throughout our organization’s history is Becky Segundo. Fifty years ago, Becky was in a pre-school program (before it was offered as a public program) at Beacon, then progressed through other Beacon programs, and is now back as an employee of Beacon Group. We are proud to highlight Becky’s story in this newsletter.

In the future, Beacon Group will continue to provide new and innovative services that allow individuals with disabilities to achieve a meaningful and fulfilling life through work. We love to do it, and we appreciate the support from the entire Beacon community.
Becky has faced many challenges throughout her life. She is visually impaired with complete blindness in her left eye, and she was the victim of bullying during her school years growing up. Undiagnosed until age thirty-nine, Becky navigates social and work settings with Asperger’s syndrome. She now also must manage diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis.

Becky has experienced firsthand how the disability world has changed over time. She remembers the enacting of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and can also recall more locally, the merger of Tetra and Beacon in 2003.

Returning as a young adult in 1990, Becky has worked numerous positions mainly on the production floor. She is most proud that her work has contributed to greater financial freedom and the ability to live independently as she explains, “I’m amazed that I’m able to live independently. I never dreamed such a thing when I was younger.”

Challenging especially for someone with Asperger’s syndrome, Becky touts that her time at Beacon Group has given her the opportunity to socialize and “have more friends.” Because of her dedication and ability to complete manufacturing job tasks, Becky became staff in Beacon’s on-call program, which is coordinated by Production Manager Muriel Rutherford.

“Becky is a great worker and has been at Beacon for a very long time,” says Muriel. “She works hard and shifts between different tasks well as an on-call staff. She is happy working and is a great advocate for herself.”

Becky’s long dedication to working with disabilities throughout her life is a testament to her strength and commitment each day. She has witnessed the arc of Beacon Group as an organization with its challenges and triumphs. Like Becky’s story, Beacon continues each day in its commitment to creating greater opportunity for people with disabilities.

Prior to coming to Beacon Group, Taylor had a rough time in high school. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, he had significant challenges as a result of his mental health disability, requiring a medication which greatly hindered his ability to learn throughout a typical school day.

Taylor went to the nurse’s office every day to take his medication which often made him tired and unable to participate in classroom learning. Taylor explains, “I slept the whole day or most of the day. I did not learn anything. I didn’t retain anything I learned.”

Not only did this impact his academic performance, but it also caused a significant strain on his physical health. During this time, Taylor gained nearly 100 pounds.

For Taylor Bowden, earning his GED at Beacon Group in Phoenix was a vital first step towards building a career to support himself.

Taylor’s story is unique, not just because he so quickly completed the GED program at Beacon Group, (finishing in just three months), but for Taylor, obtaining his GED was another step towards self-improvement in what had been a difficult period for this young adult with mental health disabilities.
Despite intense barriers created by his mental health disabilities, Taylor decided to make a change for the better. He began a strict weight loss regimen, improving nutritional choices and participating in regular physical activity to lose the weight.

Working with Beacon Educational Support Specialist Kelli Jones, he used that same commitment in coursework to complete his GED at Beacon Group. As Taylor explains, working towards his GED was the change from his high school setting that he needed. “It was a lot different. So I was more focused. I wanted the GED more than I wanted a high school diploma when I was at the high school. I wanted it more. I wanted it bad. I needed it. I had to go on. I had to move on so that’s what I had to do.”

Kelli commends his effort, “I just want to emphasize how much drive Taylor has. Every time he was scheduled [for class, for testing], he was there. He showed up. But also, he put in a lot of time and effort into studying on his own. He even purchased his own GED study book.”

Through his drive, motivation, and hard work, Taylor completed the GED program requirements in record time and was an inspiration to others.

Right now, Taylor lives with his grandparents who have been supportive, stable figures in his life. “I want them to retire. I want to make enough money so they can be safe and don’t have to work anymore and just be okay.”

With his eyes on the future, Taylor is currently enrolled in a financial planning training associate program and aims to become a financial advisor. His future is bright as he continues to focus on “what’s real” while facing his challenges head-on.

**TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT (TTE)**

Tony Eckloff counts his years at Beacon Group by the number of holiday parties he has attended. To date, he has celebrated two holiday parties, and he is getting ready to celebrate his third.

Tony graduated from high school in 2014 and completed a special program at the University of Arizona in 2015-16.

Tony came to Beacon in 2018 and joined the Transition to Employment (TTE) program. TTE, a seven-week curriculum with hands-on learning components, provides meaningful and individualized job training. In both a classroom setting and throughout the community, they learn practical work-related skills like developing work positive behaviors, developing a résumé and job-related tools, and budgeting skills. They also volunteer at community organizations when it is safe to do so.

Even more impressively, Tony took on a leadership role in TTE and mentored others. According to TTE instructor Cynthia Gonzales, “Tony has a very good personality and is aware of others’ feelings. When a student was down or something was bothering them, he took the time to talk to them. He listened to them and offered help. He has a very calming quality.”

During his time in Transition To Employment, Tony excelled and especially enjoyed the employment etiquette videos. He credits TTE with teaching him how to be a self-advocate.

Tony explains, “It showed me that even people with disabilities — it doesn’t matter what disability it is — that they can also self-advocate for themselves. Even if it is tough for them, they can still do it.”

Tony’s disabilities include intellectual disabilities related to Cerebral Palsy and the effects from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, but he doesn’t let his disabilities hold him back. Currently, he is working in Beacon Group manufacturing while looking for employment.

Job coach Magda Cohen compliments, “Tony is very reliable. His positive work ethic and attitude allow him to be a mentor for his co-workers.”

His advice to other job seekers with a disability? “Keep going out there and search for a job. And then when you get that job, try to show your best self at work. Also, you can do anything that comes to your heart or mind. You can do it. The most important thing is to never give up.”
WORK ADJUSTMENT TRAINING (WAT) TO COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT

With a bright smile and a positive outlook on life, Rebecca “Addie” Shepherd, has come a long way in the past year. From Beacon Group’s Work Adjustment Training (WAT) program to competitive employment, Addie has made great strides in her young life during a time of great economic uncertainty when people with disabilities are facing higher rates of unemployment.

Prior to her time at Beacon, Addie experienced significant difficulty finding a job due to her work history. She admits her biggest problem was her work attendance stemming from her mental health disabilities including a major depressive disorder. “I was struggling with circumstantial things and could barely make it out of bed and the thought of work made me so anxious,” she says.

In combination with accessing greater mental health resources, Addie credits the employment services she receives through Beacon Group with helping to get her life back on track. “I was able to make it past obstacles that I had been struggling with for years.”

Her Beacon journey started with a referral from a behavioral health organization and a breakfast with Beacon Employment Specialist, Kimberly Clawson. “When Addie came to us for employment services, she had no family support. She was out in the world finding out that the world can be quite difficult to live in and be unkind.” Clawson continues, “she utilized the support we offered her, walked with her head held high, was very professional and demonstrated the utmost respect towards others.”

Clawson made it a point to support Addie, not only in employment but as an understanding peer, believing in her abilities and helping her conquer her ongoing challenges.

Addie’s professionalism, respect and positive attitude are apparent from the moment you meet her. She found her place at Beacon in WAT, learning the ropes at her “favorite job”, the reception desk. WAT includes work-related group activities that teach the meaning and value of an independent work environment. WAT focuses on acquiring greater soft skills and learning new work behaviors and attitudes.

After completing WAT, Clawson helped prepare Addie for competitive employment by working on Addie’s interview skills. Just a few months after coming to Beacon Group, Addie was hired into an entry level answering service position at Contact One Call Center. After only a month on the job, she was promoted to a customer support center role for Banner Insurance.

Comfortable in her new position, Addie is happy to have the employment stability she has always wanted. Her ideas for the future include advancement opportunities within Contact One Call Center and going to college to study Psychology. Addie’s perseverance and motivation to better herself, along with her outlook on life, positions her well to meet those goals.

Her advice for others, “You are capable of great changes. People are built like phoenixes. We rise from our ashes. Sometimes we crumble to the ground, but there is always a way back up again. Always.”
Kirsten Stephens has been donating to Beacon Group through employee giving at her employer Raytheon Technologies since 2009.

Kirsten shares why she supports Beacon Group, “I started donating to Beacon because I was grateful that the organization was willing to help one of my uncles who had Down Syndrome.”

She continues, “He worked in a similar organization in Pennsylvania and when it was time to move him to Tucson, Beacon had a job waiting for him.”

Unfortunately for Kirsten and her family, her uncle Richard passed away before he could move to Tucson and begin working with Beacon Group. “The fact that Beacon was willing to give him a chance endeared the organization to me forever,” she explains.

Raytheon Technologies offers a payroll deduction program that allows her to make a donation with every paycheck. “Signing up for payroll deduction is easy, quick, reliable, produces an excellent documentation trail and provides Beacon with a guaranteed monthly income.”

Kirsten recommends donating through your employer, to organizations like Beacon Group, to all who have the opportunity. She says, “Don’t wait, donate now as every contribution is more important than ever in these tough times. It’s easy and gratifying to support an excellent organization that helps those in need in our own community become more self-sufficient.”

To find out more about employee giving, speak with your employer’s Human Resources or Accounting Payroll departments. Many employers also provide a match to your contribution, doubling the impact.

For any further questions about donating to Beacon Group, you can visit www.BeaconGroup.org/donate or make contact with our Marketing and Development Department directly via phone at (520) 622-4874 extension 195, or via email at marketing@BeaconGroup.org.

What is #GIVINGTUESDAY?

After Black Friday and Cyber Monday, two of the biggest shopping days of the year, comes Giving Tuesday. Even though this year looks a little different, Giving Tuesday is one of the biggest giving days of the year for nonprofits worldwide. This global day of giving is one with incredible impact in our local community.

Join with us this year to kick-off Beacon Group’s year-end giving season and give the gift of employment opportunity during this critical time of economic uncertainty for many people with disabilities.

Beacon Group is asking that all of our supporters take part in #GIVINGTUESDAY in 2020. No gift is too small, and if you aren’t able to give, share our upcoming #GIVINGTUESDAY content with your friends and family.

Watch for Beacon Group E-Newsletters and Facebook posts about how we plan to celebrate on Tuesday, December 1, 2020.

#GIVINGTUESDAY Facts:

♥ No gift is too small for #GIVINGTUESDAY.
♥ #GIVINGTUESDAY is engaging, so share your donation to Beacon Group with your friends and family.
♥ #GIVINGTUESDAY was started in 2012 by fundraisers at New York City’s 92nd Street “Y.”
♥ In just seven years, Giving Tuesday has grown to include participation by over 30,000 organizations.
Sitting in the office of Beacon Group’s new Vice President of Rehabilitation Services, Chris McNamara, you wouldn’t know he’s only held the position just shy of eight months, coming on board during a highly challenging time for Beacon. Desk stacked high with binders and a row of mini helmets from his favorite sports teams lined up across the shelf above his desk, it’s easy to see that McNamara feels at home, and his office has been made his own now.

Like many other East Coast transplants, McNamara, originally from Massachusetts, found his place in the Old Pueblo. He originally moved to Arizona to complete his undergraduate degree at Northern Arizona University before moving to Tucson to complete his first of two master’s degrees, one in Public Administration and the next in Legal Studies.

During his undergraduate years, he found his enthusiasm for charitable work while volunteering at the local Boys & Girls Club. “At the time, I was only a year or two older than some of these kids. I just really enjoyed working with them and thought that maybe I could make a difference in the non-profit world,” says McNamara.

Prior to becoming Vice President of Rehabilitation Services, McNamara was Director of Quality, Risk, and Compliance. He credits his time in that position as providing a step towards his current role. Throughout his time, McNamara has enjoyed the ability to work with departments across the organization and gain an in-depth understanding of the vital services Beacon has to offer people with a range of disabilities.

Looking towards creating a successful future for Rehabilitation Services at Beacon Group, McNamara credits his predecessor, Chuck Tiller, for laying the groundwork as well as the support of great staff. “We have a wonderful and talented team in our department, and Beacon supports innovation. So, we have the structure in place and the support from the top to make things happen.” McNamara continues, “We can make significant impact to our community — we can get initiatives started fairly quickly.”

In Rehabilitation Services, there is a growing emphasis on a more individualized approach to serving the unique needs of each person with disabilities, or a person-centered approach. As McNamara puts it, “I see us continuing to work with each client as an individual to help them get to where they want to be in their employment goals based on their interests, skills, and preferences. It’s their choice.”

This direction is very apparent with new programs launching this year and the expansion of existing programs.

Beacon Group recently started a youth-focused Career Exploration contract from Vocational Rehabilitation to help youth and young adults with disabilities identify which career fields they may be interested in. Also focused on tailoring the full employment journey to the needs of the youth and young adults with disabilities, ENCORE is in its second year of providing customized employment. The Work Adjustment Training (WAT) program has ramped up significantly to offer numerous exciting positions including administrative and leadership positions in areas like manufacturing, business operations, and administration. There is hope for continuation from the state for the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program, which focuses on career exploration and job readiness for students with disabilities.

With new opportunity on the horizon, during a time of great change, McNamara’s passion for Beacon and positive outlook is vital. “I have a passion for our mission and for our Beacon community. We have a safe and supportive environment for our current and future clients so that they can reach their individual goals and aspirations.”
Giving means more than ever before. We know you’re a supporter who cares...

$100 provides a 2-hour workshop for four students with disabilities in self-advocacy, post-secondary education, job exploration, or workplace readiness.

$200 provides four hours of Computer Skills Training for four individuals with disabilities.

$300 provides one week of job training services for an individual with a disability.

Questions? Call (520) 622-4874 ext 195

Make a secure online donation at BeaconGroup.org/donate or mail a check to: Beacon Group, P.O. Box 50544, Tucson, AZ 85703-1544

$100 provides a 2-hour workshop for four students with disabilities in self-advocacy, post-secondary education, job exploration, or workplace readiness.

$200 provides four hours of Computer Skills Training for four individuals with disabilities.

$300 provides one week of job training services for an individual with a disability.

The Perspective of History

Beacon looks back to move forward into a brighter future!

Beacon Group
308 W. Glenn St • Tucson, AZ 85705
(520) 622-4874

2222 N. 24th St, Phoenix, AZ 85008
(602) 685-9703

Beacon Secure
Confidential Shredding
308 W. Glenn St, Tucson, AZ 85705
(520) 352-9951

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

www.BeaconGroup.org

Questions? Call (520) 622-4874 ext 195

Make a secure online donation at BeaconGroup.org/donate or mail a check to: Beacon Group, P.O. Box 50544, Tucson, AZ 85703-1544

$100 provides a 2-hour workshop for four students with disabilities in self-advocacy, post-secondary education, job exploration, or workplace readiness.

$200 provides four hours of Computer Skills Training for four individuals with disabilities.

$300 provides one week of job training services for an individual with a disability.

The Perspective of History

Beacon looks back to move forward into a brighter future!

Beacon Group
308 W. Glenn St • Tucson, AZ 85705
(520) 622-4874

2222 N. 24th St, Phoenix, AZ 85008
(602) 685-9703

Beacon Secure
Confidential Shredding
308 W. Glenn St, Tucson, AZ 85705
(520) 352-9951

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

www.BeaconGroup.org

Questions? Call (520) 622-4874 ext 195

Make a secure online donation at BeaconGroup.org/donate or mail a check to: Beacon Group, P.O. Box 50544, Tucson, AZ 85703-1544