

News from Edwards Center, Inc.

Edwards group homes adopt earth friendly recycling practices

On Earth Day, April 22, Edwards Center launched a company-wide campaign to use environmentally friendly energy and to recycle commonly used materials. This marks a new effort to extend recycling practices to our group homes.

To date, all recyclable office paper products are collected in special containers. Recycling posters and signs guide the handling of household materials at each group home.

In addition to highly efficient recycling, much of Edwards Center information technology will run on renewable energy. In early July, Business Class Technology, the corporate internet service provider, upgraded its power support systems to use renewable wind energy for all of their servers. Now, all the power necessary for Edwards Center network and internet service runs on environment-friendly wind energy.

Inside

Calendar..... Page 3

Passages Page 2

Director's column..... Page 2

Family Ties Page 3

Shrink wrap..... Page 3

Gardens..... Page 3

Company techie fills vital niche birddogging information system

Who ya gonna call? If your printer has just choked on a job? If your computer lacks a vital piece of software? If your email seems to be stuck in cyberspace? At Edwards Center you call Aaron Allen. This soft spoken young man of enduring patience answers the SOS from all who beckon, as he manages the company's computer system and other electronic devices. "If it has a power button, chances are I'm the one responsible for it," he explains.



Aaron Allen

Aaron seems born to the role of Edwards' first full time Information Technology Specialist. "There is no question about it," says Executive Director Jessica Leitner, "Aaron is a perfect match for the job, when you combine his background in the DD [developmental disabilities] field with his passion for, and knowledge of, business technology."

As the son of an agency founder, Aaron points out that he has had 22 years of experience (his entire lifetime) interacting with people with disabilities. "I constantly had foster brothers and sisters with disabilities, and with a wide range of behavior issues, coming into my home. Where many people view those with disabilities as abnormal or at a lower social status than the rest of us, I see everyone as equal and have no issues treating everyone the same," he says.

Equipped with a Certificate of Advanced Mastery in Business Technology, Aaron started at Edwards working as direct care staff at the Shaw Street apartments in Aloha.

Soon after, by August 2008, his tech skills had become evident, and he was dividing his time be-

tween Shaw and the Edwards offices, troubleshooting wherever necessary.

By this time, management was wrestling with a bug-ridden, California-based networking system in critical need of redesign. The system was plagued with computer crashes and server downtimes. With the central server in California, the problems grew unmanageable.

Enter Bill Sikkens, head of Business Class Technologies and friend of Edwards Center, who took on the challenge. Over the course of several months, Bill mentored Aaron as they "basically tore down and rebuilt everything," according to Aaron. They installed a dedicated, physical server near the Edwards offices, and moved all data and email from the distant, "virtual" server to the new, dedicated hardware.

These days Aaron prioritizes the written requests submitted to him from throughout the many Edwards sites that range throughout Washington and Clackamas counties. "Everyone insists that his or her problem is top priority," he laughs. His day

Continued on Page 3



The Edwards community turned out in force for food and fun at the July barbeque in Aloha.



She said what?

Happy Summer, everyone! I am pleased to report we are moving into next fiscal year in a stable position with no major cuts in funding for services. In June our Board approved a new budget and next year's strategic plan, so now it's back to the trenches to finish the makeover of our group homes and kick off our goals for next year.

Our strategic plan carries over all major goals from last year, where we focus on improvements in: employment, the needs of our aging population, communication, recreation/socialization, and compensation for our most valuable resource, our workforce.

To these ends, Edwards Center, in partnership with Heffernan Insurance and Kaiser Permanente, is launching an employee wellness campaign. Our employees will be afforded information and

classes on smoking cessation, weight loss, and stress management, as well as exercise and nutrition programs.

Toward our goal of best serving our aging population, we have begun planning a major expansion of our alternative to employment programs in both counties.

I hope you will join us in September for our annual stakeholder meeting to hear more about our plans for the coming year. As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas.



Jessica Leitner
Executive Director
jleitner@edwardscenter.org



Passages

Karen Bruhn, a longtime Edwards Center resident, died April 29, 2009, at age 52. Karen had recently moved to Kinnaman group home from Shaw Street, where she had lived for most of her time with Edwards Center. Born in Portland, Karen lived at Fairview for many years, from the age of about 5. She was among the original clients to join the Edwards community in the mid 1980s at its then-only group home on 185th Avenue in Aloha.

Karen loved her job at Edwards Enterprises Bethany. She also loved shopping at Big Lots and dining at Shari's, where her standard meal consisted of cheeseburger, fries, soup, diet soda and a hot fudge sundae. She was fond of spendable cash, especially \$5 bills, which she managed to finagle from her father and brother whenever she saw them. She also enjoyed Upward Bound and Special Olympics.

She is survived by her father, Lyle Bruhn, Gresham, and her twin brother, Randy Bruhn, Portland.

Randy Anderegg died July 2, 2009, at age 50. Randy worked at Edwards Enterprises Milwaukie. Randy had been living with his sister, Carol Powers, since October. Previously he had lived first with his mother, until her death, and then in foster care. As a youngster he attended Holcomb Elementary School in Oregon City, where he participated in Scouting. One of his favorite pastimes was bowling. He also loved swimming, shopping, and watching favorite TV shows, which included "Mash" and "Little House on the Prairie."

Surviving are his brother, Gary Anderegg, Seattle, and his sister, Carol Powers, Milwaukie, who wishes to acknowledge the special dedication and caring offered by Dr. Susan Ferguson at Providence St. Vincent Hospital.

FAMILY TIES

Trip from coast routine

When John Suter was born, his sister, Louise, was 5. They spent their childhood together on the family dairy farm in Tillamook, along with older brother Martin and the young-

their respective group homes in the mid-1980s, when Louise still lived in Medford. Despite the logistical hurdles, she found a way to gather the family for Thanksgiving.



Siblings Louise Bogard and John Suter

est, Joe. Sixty-one years and a lifetime later, the family remains close. Martin Suter, who lives in Portland, serves as guardian to his two brothers, and sister Louise Bogard serves as Vox representative for John's group home, Bonnie Brae in Beaverton. Joe lives in a group home in Cornelius.

The younger brothers were enrolled at Fairview when they were about 10 and 12. Louise married and, with husband, Vince, worked and raised a family in Southern Oregon. Now retired, they have returned to Tillamook, where they can enjoy their three grandsons, and where she, a Master Gardener, can pursue her passion for gardening.

John and Joe left Fairview for

"We drove up to Tillamook from Medford on Wednesday, got the turkey in the oven at Mom's on Thanksgiving morning. I drove to the Valley to get John and Joe, drove back to Tillamook, and we finished fixing dinner. Mom (who didn't drive) would ride with us to take the brothers back home, and on Sunday Vince and I drove home to Medford."

Now, Louise makes the two-hour commute to the metro area for Vox meetings, ISP meetings and other important occasions for her younger brothers. "Living closer now, I can be somewhat more involved in their lives, she says. "Martin and I believe that family advocacy and guardianship are something that responsible families do. We care about our brothers' health and happiness just as much as if they were able to live on their own."

John phones Martin every night for a chat. He likes Upward Bound camp and his weekly Aim High Martial Arts classes.



Edwards Enterprises employees John Sunday (left) and Annette Elder work the new shrink wrap machine, purchased with a gift from the William G. Gilmore Foundation. The largest of its kind in the tri-county area, the machine can package items as large as 3-by-4 feet, as well as smaller things such as books and toys.



The East Ave. team shows off its vegetable garden. From left: Wayne Smith, Beth Enos, Merle Wolfer, Marc Connor, Lily Enos, Marygail Sullivan, Dan Tran, James Enos and Destry Williams.

Gardens provide menu variety

In keeping up with a company-wide demand for fresh, locally-grown fruit and vegetables, backyard gardens have sprung up at Edwards Center's Clackamas County group homes this summer. A grass-roots effort brought to life by volunteers and

CB Wright, Edwards Center volunteer coordinator, this idea was pioneered at the Torbank group home last summer.

Following the success of the Torbank garden, East Avenue and Valley View group homes got involved in amateur agronomy. In addition to a unique opportunity to participate in gardening for the residents, each group home has been adding home-grown produce to its table, from fresh-basil pesto to homemade salsa.

Techie contd. from P1

may include troubleshooting a stubborn printer and replacing its toner cartridge, or totally reformatting a client's virus-infected hard drive and restoring the operating system.

On the fly, Aaron has learned to test, configure and install internal telephone lines, crucial to the DSL-connected computers. When offices were shuffled within the Aloha headquarters building, Aaron had to trace and rewire the phone lines throughout the building according to who was moving where. This he accomplished while folding his 6-foot-7-inch frame into the attic space where the phone lines were strung. "So far, that job has been my single biggest challenge," he declares.

A bigger challenge, apparently, than dealing with the mess created when a cartridge of blue, powder toner let loose all over his shoes, rendering them unwearable. It's all in a day's work for this young wizard of biztech. KP

Important Dates

August 8 • Vox appreciation party

August 16 • 20th birthday party: Founding of The Matthew House, Oregon City

August 14 • Open house, Florence Street Group Home, Aloha

August 29 • Hike 'n' Bike with the Tualatin Hills Park Foundation

September 19 • Edwards Center Annual Meeting

September 26 • Vox meeting, Beaverton Community Center, 10 a.m.–Noon

October 19 • Wills, Trusts and Bequests Part 2, Edwards Enterprises Milwaukie

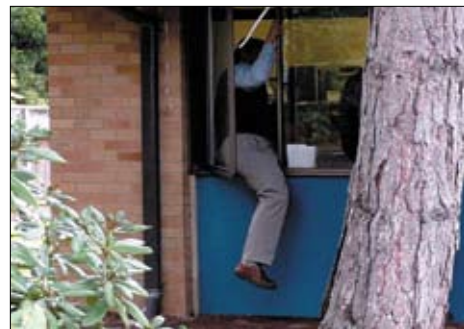
November 17 • Annual fund raising luncheon, Multnomah Athletic Club

Board of Directors

- Dick Hands, President
- Jean Edwards, Vice President
- Suzanne Thiel, Secretary
- John Dougall, Treasurer
- Elizabeth Bergman
- Mary Ann Bors
- David Butler
- Beth Enos
- Suzy Gross
- Kenneth Karalus
- Sara Marchus
- Smith Piper
- Joe West

Manager joins training team

Chelsea Weigelt, 184th Avenue group home manager, has taken on added duties, teaching her peers a critical component of staff-client interaction. Newly certified, Chelsea will teach Oregon Intervention System (OIS) techniques to other Edwards staff. OIS is the statewide approved system for positive behavior supports and protective physical intervention. Edwards Center staff must complete 16 hours of OIS training biannually.



What goes on here? Answer next time.

The Express is published quarterly by
 Edwards Center, Inc., 20250 SW Kinnaman Road, Aloha OR 97007
 Jessica Leitner, Executive Director
 Phone 503-642-1581

Contributors to this issue include:
 Editor and designer, Kathleen Piper
 Writers, Kathleen Piper, Gleb Velikanov, Georgia Lampros, Jessica Leitner
 Photographers, Kathleen Piper, Betty Coulson
 Proofreader, Julie Williams

Other principal Edwards Center locations include:
 Edwards Enterprises Bethany, 16500 NW Bethany Ct. Ste. 130, Beaverton OR 97006
 Phone 503-466-2171
 Edwards Enterprises Milwaukie, 4287 SE International Way, Milwaukie OR 97222
 Phone 503-653-2381

Worldwide Web address, www.edwardscenter.org

edwardscenter.org

PO Box 6269
Aloha OR 97007

EDWARDS
CENTER, INC.



Non-Profit Org.
 US Postage
 PAID
 Beaverton OR
 Permit No. 300