



INSPIRE • EMPOWER • CONNECT

Ascend Services, Inc.
2818 Meadow Lane
Manitowoc, WI 54220

920-682-4663

July 2022

SUMMER

From the Heart... by Deanna Genske, Executive Director

How many times have you heard: "It all began with a wreath?" You are probably wondering why does this sixty-five-year-old story continue to be repeated? This story says something positive about the values we want to preserve. I believe a sophisticated understanding of the past is one of the most powerful tools we have for shaping our future. This history that was created by our founders, Bj and Les Ann Halvorsen, instills a sense of identity and purpose.



A shared history is a large part of what binds individuals into a community and infuses a group with a distinct identity. A history with a narrative thread also helps people understand what is happening around them. Discovering or rediscovering the story, reminding ourselves where we stand, where we have been and where we are going—these are as important for groups as for individuals. Knowing the history of a group to which we belong, in other words, can help us see events, and ourselves, as part of a still unfolding story and of something larger than ourselves.

To lead with a sense of history is not to be a slave to the past but, rather, to acknowledge its power. The ability to identify opportunities or problems in the present (and to frame aspirations for the future) inevitably grows out of personal experience augmented by our broader societal knowledge of what has come before. I leave you with "How can you know where you're going if you don't know where you've been?"

I look forward to continuing our story and seeing where we "Ascend" to in the years ahead of us.

From the Heart,
Deanna

Ascend Services Prepares to Celebrate 65th Anniversary in October!

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www.ascendservicesinc.org

Honoring our Past.
Empowering the Future!

We are excited to announce that this year we are celebrating our 65th Anniversary in October. To honor the anniversary, we will be hosting an open house. The public is invited to join us Wednesday, October 12th at either session of the open house 9:00-11:00 a.m. or 1:00-3:00 p.m.

This will be an opportunity to explore our history (as both Holiday House and Ascend) and view our recently produced historical video which documents the history of the organization from the beginning, in 1957, to the rebranding in 2018. There will also be an unveiling of our new historical mural in the front entryway, painted by Erin Labonte and Don Krumpus. Attendees will have the opportunity to witness Ascend's diverse programs in action, see samples of work, and most importantly, get to know some of the people that make this all possible.

The month of October is also National Disability Employment Awareness (NDEAM). In honor of this they have planned an Employment Recognition Reception to thank all of the area businesses that support Ascend by partnering with their various Employment Programs. That reception will be Thursday, October 20th from 4 p.m to 6 p.m. at the Community Center.

65 years ago, Bj Halvorsen and his fiancée Les Ann Kafka began Holiday House in October of 1957. Community



Bj and Les Ann, founders of Holiday House.



Bj and the original wreath makers getting ready for the holiday season.

members in the early 1950's noticed a need for people with significant disabilities to have access to opportunities, rather than being placed in to state institutions.

Anniversary Celebration Honors Holiday House and Ascend Services, Inc.

Bj, Les Ann and several others in the community felt that people with disabilities could become contributing members of society and pursued that goal. As the Christmas season was approaching, Bj gathered a group of young men and began making Christmas wreaths to sell in the community. The ARC (Association for Retarded Children) donated \$25.00 for red ribbon to decorate the wreaths. The idea took off and became a staple of the organization for 57 years, ending in 2014. As the saying goes, "It All Began with a Wreath!"

The organization was named "Holiday House" by Bj and the original wreath makers, as they began their project during the holiday season and worked out of a small club house. Little did they know what the future would hold. That initial wreath-making project, in 1957, was a dream, an idea, a then unproven concept, that Bj and his Les Ann had in the belief that a community could benefit from the efforts of its "handicapped citizens." What was once a small group gathered for wreath making has now become one of the largest employers in the Manitowoc area.

From that day forward, the dream, the idea has become a proven concept, that people with disabilities can contribute to a community by becoming part of the workforce. Holiday House knew then that it was in the business of job creation and in the business of providing opportunities for people with disabilities to experience dignity, self-realization, human relationships, and civic responsibility.

In 2018 our organization went through a rebranding and became Ascend Services, Inc. Currently we serve about two hundred youth and adults with diverse abilities in Manitowoc County.

We have expanded our programs and services to include a suite of Workforce Solutions: Production Services, Mobile Work Crews, and Integrated Employment. We also offer Day Services, LINKED (Community Based Service) and Youth Services.

In honor of that humble beginning, we have chosen to honor the month of October every year. It also is National Disability Employment Awareness Month.



Deanna Genske, Executive Director and Karen Nichols, Chamber of Manitowoc at the Ascend Ribbon Cutting.

Everything we do at Ascend is geared toward serving our community - both by serving clients in our programs and by serving the greater Manitowoc County! So please join us on October 12th during one of the two open house sessions. Ask questions, enjoy light refreshments, and enjoy a tour! We are looking forward to connecting with you!

The mission of Ascend Services, Inc. is to promote individual growth by providing community experiences, education, and employment opportunities to individuals with exceptional abilities. Events like this help to further that mission.

For more information about Ascend's programs and services visit our webpage www.ascendservicesinc.org or call 920-682-4663.

Ascend Services' Youth Summer Program Off to an Awesome Start!

Recently our Youth Program visited Soaring Eagle Dairy in Newton. They got to see how the cows are milked and how they are rotated in and out of the parlor. They were able to see where they put the calves and where the calves go when they are born. Our group was surprised to hear that the cows produce on average about 101 pounds of milk in a day! They had such a great time and were very excited to see where the milk comes from that makes the cheese and ice cream that we enjoy!



Ascend Services Swing Fore Ascend Golf Outing was a “Hole in One!”




SAVE THE DATE!
2nd Annual
Swing Fore Ascend
Golf Tournament
Monday
June 26, 2023



Day Services Clients Are Having A Busy Start to Summer!



Participants will be voting on their top 5 favorites.

Ascend
SERVICES INC.
Car Show
2818 Meadow Lane
Manitowoc

♥ Friday, July 22nd 2022 ♥

To register, please call Tracy at 920-682-4663 ext. 113 or email her at tolson@ascendservicesinc.org
Please arrive at 10:30 AM to allow set up with the show starting at 11 am until 12:30pm with the top 5 awards being presented at that time.

Ascend SERVICES INC. **1st Place \$200!**
2022

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SAT., AUGUST 6, 2022
NOON-5 P.M.

TO REGISTER
visit the Ascend Facebook page or our website ascendservicesinc.org

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