



Mai's Hard Work Pays Off An AAI Success Story

*By Teresa Tillson
AAI Development Officer*

Mai Lee Vang's best Christmas present last year was a permanent job. She started work right after the holiday, performing data entry and document preparation for National Business Systems. It has been over three months now, and she is still delighted.

NBS is a friendly company, according to Mai. She is part of a large internal group that does data entry, prepares documents by removing staples, and notes and scans them into an electronic

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AccessAbility Provides More Immediate Work Thanks to Customers Like SalonQuest

*By Lisa Lundmark
AAI Sales and Marketing Manager*

Working with SalonQuest has been a great experience for everyone involved at both companies. AccessAbility provides an increasing amount of training and immediate work for people. SalonQuest benefits from fast turn-around times, quality processes and a flexible, limitless labor force.

SalonQuest is located in Ohio and has been a customer of AccessAbility's Packaging and Assembly Division since 2003. They create, manufacture and distribute hair care products to salons around the country. Under the brand name Aquage, SalonQuest offers shampoos, conditioners, sprays and gels, pastes and mists for the best in hair care.

Logistically, it makes sense for SalonQuest to have AccessAbility perform the packaging of its promotional sets, large sales kits and other specialty configurations, because we are located near its contract filler and we are a centralized distribution point to their U.S. sites. Competitively, AccessAbility's responsiveness and history of on-time delivery have created value-added service as the supply and demand of Aquage products fluctuates and grows.

In only three years, SalonQuest has become one of AccessAbility's top five customers. This is good news for people who want the work experience needed to provide for their families and become financially independent.



SalonQuest promotional items are packaged by workers at AccessAbility.

In 2005, AccessAbility packaged a total of 116,173 units of varied sizes for SalonQuest. This also represented 14,381 full-time equivalent hours of work and immediate work for 34 different people.

On behalf of everyone at AccessAbility, we salute SalonQuest for its valuable business and wonderful team of people.



Zamzam slides a band around bottles to create twin packs for a SalonQuest "get one free" promotion.

Inside ...

Jackie Welle, Employee of the Year • AAI investor Jason Beaber • Dancing at AAI



Jackie Welle Employee of the Year 2005

"Dedicated," "Easy to work with," "Patient," "Willing to stretch herself into any role," "Always going the extra mile"... People are quick to praise Jackie Welle, AccessAbility's 2005 Employee of the Year. Jackie herself is modest and quiet about her achievements. This may be what makes her such a successful case manager.

Take a client we'll call Mark. He comes to Jackie's office when he needs to regain his composure. Transitions are difficult for anyone, says AAI President Barbara Arnold. "For people with disabilities, they can be overwhelming." Mark has always had trouble managing his emotions, and as he moved from work to retirement last year, he had a difficult time. Jackie helped Mark feel safe, and his outbursts became fewer. Now Mark comes to her office just to visit. Working with someone like Mark is not easy, even for seasoned case managers. Jackie never lost her calm in the presence of Mark's emotions.

How did a woman just three years out of college gain such prestige at AccessAbility? Like a quiet stream, Jackie just keeps moving to where she is going. An internship to complete her social work degree at the University of St. Thomas brought Jackie to AccessAbility three years ago. Her case manager duties — advocacy, paperwork, interdisciplinary team coordination, creating and developing work and leisure activities — would certainly keep her busy. Jackie regularly does more.

Message from the President AccessAbility's Investments are Paying Off

Dear Friends of AccessAbility,

I get a great feeling seeing AccessAbility's investments pay off in real benefits to the people we serve. Our Evening Stars recreation project, an expansion of our socially active Day Training and Habilitation program, kicked off with a Rock 'n' Roll dance in March. Workers in our Business Service Division gained experience on new automated packaging and labeling equipment, including an RF Sealer, a machine that uses radio frequency waves to seal plastic packages. And AAI SecureDocssm, our document conversion and destruction business, created new opportunities for many.



President Barbara Arnold

For example, our investments in AAI SecureDocs resulted in sales that almost doubled last year. As I write this, nearly 40 people are hard at work in two shifts to complete an important contract with the State of Minnesota to prepare, scan, index and archive paper records dating back to the 1800s. AAI SecureDocs has completed contracts with private businesses and federal and state governments. We have learned from our experiences, our successes and our mistakes, and we hope to double sales again this year.

More important are the people who work at AAI SecureDocs. Individuals from our Extended Employment program earned an average wage of \$9.01 last year — high in comparison to what is usually available to people with disabilities and severe barriers to employment. Many, like Mai Lee Vang (see story on page 1), gain skills at AAI SecureDocs that are in high demand and will help them advance in the workplace.

People are AccessAbility's most important investment. Through Mai Lee and others like her, we are investing in the economic and social strength of the Twin Cities community. Every person who succeeds makes us all stronger.

Thanks for investing along with us.

When the ACE Red Hat Society formed last year, Jackie made it something special. She devised silly games to raise money, took the ladies to pick out their own red hats, and led in creating the Red Hat Society entry in the Northeast Minneapolis Parade. Imagine eight elderly ladies — many in wheelchairs and all in red hats and big grins — atop a parade float. After waving at over 10,000

parade goers, one of the ladies was heard to say, "This was the best night of my life."

Congratulations, Jackie. We know you are only getting started.



Jackie Welle, 2005 Employee of the Year, with Rebecca in her red hat.

AAI Wishlist

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Spring gardeners
- A Red Hat Society partner group
- State Fair outing (August 2006)
- The Evening Stars program

To volunteer, call Laura Hollinger at 612-331-5958 or e-mail lhollinger@accessability.org.

IN-KIND ITEMS

- Newer, good quality microwaves
- Book binder
- Televisions (19" to 29") for classrooms
- DVD/video players
- Heavy duty popcorn popper
- Kodak photo printer
- Craft supplies for scrapbooking

INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ITEMS

- Laminator

SPONSORS FOR EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

- Evening Stars events
- Horticulture program
- Red Hat Society
- AAI entry in Northeast neighborhood parade

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

- A 1–2 ton cargo or cube van
- Standing fork lift
- Replacement file server
- 15 lunchroom chairs
- Pneumatic hand tools
- Defibrillator (2)

If you want to consider helping AAI with any of these items, call Teresa Tillson at 612-331-5958 or e-mail ttillson@accessability.org



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Working Together,
Growing Together,
Changing Futures.

AccessAbility at Work



Fuad performs precision metal assembly at one of AccessAbility's community work sites.



Chue Lee works at Steven's Fabrics in Northeast Minneapolis, where he cuts and paints window shades. AccessAbility helped Chue find his job and he has been successfully employed since 2001.



Faduma parks, shuttles and cleans rental cars at the Minneapolis Airport. She is thrilled with the permanent job she found with help from AccessAbility.



Lavinia takes a break from AccessAbility's janitorial crew to help package Whirl-a-Style products.

Mai Lee Vang, continued from page 1

format. When asked what she brings to her job, Mai Lee says, "I'm a hard worker, independent and reliable. I'll do anything they tell me to do."

At AccessAbility Mai Lee worked at AAI SecureDocssm. She was referred to AAI through her caseworker at Rehabilitation Services, which collaborated with AAI by helping Mai search and apply for permanent jobs. Mai gained skills and work history at AAI that were not available through her previous internships. "AAI helped me speed up on my 10-key entry," she says. "They also told me what the work environment would look like.

AccessAbility President Barbara Arnold says Mai Lee Vang's story illustrates why AAI invested in expanding the AAI SecureDocs document conversion business two years ago. "Computer skills to do data entry and document scanning are in demand by many

businesses, and these jobs pay a good living wage."

Mai is special because she has gone through a lot personally to achieve community employment, according to Heather Lutz of AccessAbility. "I have always been impressed with Mai's determination to meet her goals. We might be quick to say that Mai has been successful despite the obstacles that she has faced, but it might be more accurate to say that those obstacles have helped Mai become the determined, professional young woman that she is today."

Mai is proud of herself for having a job and working hard. Her physical and speech disabilities are not a barrier to the work she does. Asked what she wants to achieve in the next two years, Mai says she would like to learn more and more and one day become a line lead. Then she grins. "Maybe I could buy a car."

2005 St. Louis Park Human Rights Award



Tom and Maureen Marolt of St. Louis Park were presented with the 2005 St. Louis Park Human Rights Award. They

were honored for making outstanding contributions toward increasing the understanding and cooperation between people of different

backgrounds in St. Louis Park. The Marolts have advocated for better community services for people with developmental disabilities, supporting good public transportation as critical to people with disabilities before the state legislature.

Everyone at AAI is proud of Tom and Maureen's community involvement. AAI continues to coach Maureen in her job at PetSmart.



Development Officer Teresa Tillson

Teresa Tillson joined AAI as Development Officer in November 2005. She was previously Director of Annual Fund at Scholarship America's Minneapolis office.

Building on an already successful grant program, Teresa will help AccessAbility increase donations from individuals and prepare for an expected capital campaign to expand the building, purchase capital equipment and establish an endowment.

Previous Development Manager Theresa Biggerstaff has been promoted to Director of Operations, overseeing all business services at AccessAbility.

Teresa is enjoying getting to know the staff and clients of AAI and all our extended circle of friends and supporters.

Evening Stars Dance the Night Away

At the kick-off event of the new Evening Stars program, an overflow crowd danced to the live music of Make Mama Proud. Excited consumers talked about the dance all week and brought along friends and family to enjoy the evening.

Evening Stars, the brainchild of AAI's Amy Jones and Betsy Halcomb, responds to an overwhelming number of requests for fun evening activities. The evening activities are low cost and open to AccessAbility participants and their friends.

To register, call 612-331-5958 ext. 147 and leave a message, including name, address, zip code, phone, and the activity name and date. Registration deadline is one week in advance of each activity date. Please mail payment upon registration. Registration is not needed for dances.

Upcoming Evening Stars Programs

Tuesday, April 25, Bingo (\$5)
Friday, April 28, '50s Dance (\$5)
Thursday, May 4, Arts and crafts (\$5)
Friday, May 5, Movie (\$3)
Friday, May 19, Spring Dance (\$5)
Tuesday, May 23, Bingo (\$5)



Leah and Lori at AccessAbility's Evening Stars dance.



Barbara Arnold and Cheri are all smiles on the dance floor.



Rock and Roll variety band Make Mama Proud volunteered to launch the Evening Stars program. Lead singer Lisa Lundmark is also AAI's Sales and Marketing Manager (www.makemamaproud.com).

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 3, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Consumer Appreciation Day

Tuesday, June 20, 6:30 p.m.
Northeast Minneapolis Parade

August 2006 —
Watch for date and details!
Annual State Fair Outing

Thursday, Sept. 14, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
AccessAbility Annual Open House

Thanks!

2005 CORNERSTONE DONORS TO OUR \$1,000+ INITIATIVE

Barbara and Robert Arnold
Jason Beaber
Terrance Brown
Patrick and Paula Foley
Daniel Komarek
Pat and Doug Strachan
Barry McCullough
David Ellis

You Can Help

INDIVIDUAL GIFTS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

In five short years, investments in new programs and equipment have grown AccessAbility from an organization that supports 340 to one that supports 700 people. Individuals have more options for work and the opportunity to earn more income than just a few years ago, according to Barbara Arnold, President of AccessAbility.

As with any growing organization AccessAbility needs support to help bridge the gap between the initial cost of investments and established revenue. Our most important source of extra income is contributions from our friends, family members and supporters.

Board Chair Pat Strachan and her husband increased their personal pledge last year. "It feels good to support something that is making a difference for so many people. AccessAbility can depend on contributions to fund programs like Evening Stars and to buy equipment to help people get work experience to find a living wage job."

Gifts from individuals are an important source of income for AccessAbility, adds Arnold. "Grant income is often restricted to a specific purchase. AccessAbility can spend unrestricted gifts where they are most needed to take advantage of new opportunities."

Jason Beaber Invests in AccessAbility



AAI monthly donor
Jason Beaber

Jason Beaber is clear about what he values. "Giving in general is a part of who I am, a fundamental part of being Jason Beaber." One of his gifts is participation as an AccessAbility investor.

Jason worked at AccessAbility while attending graduate school in counseling psychology. When he accepted a management position at US Bank, he continued to contribute to AAI. The people, both consumers and staff, are what attracted and keeps Jason with AAI. They were a positive group to work around. According to Jason, "It is already so difficult to find gainful, meaningful employment even without

other problems. AAI is there to build job skills so people can compete in the marketplace on the same footing as everyone else. Employment is a basic need, though people usually don't think of it in the same category as food. A paycheck is a source of pride and accomplishment and none of us can get enough of pride and accomplishment."

For Jason, monthly deductions are a simple and convenient way to give a gift of importance. "Monthly deduction is not something I miss from my paycheck. Break it down to monthly payments and it is a more palatable number. At the end of the year, it adds up to be significant amounts of money."

Thank you, Jason, for your dedicated support for AccessAbility.

Monthly Deduction Makes Gifts Easy

Giving a meaningful gift to AccessAbility just got easier. Using an automatic bank draft or your Visa or MasterCard, AAI can arrange an automatic monthly contribution for any amount you choose. "For many people, a monthly payment is the best way to give an important gift to support AccessAbility," according to Fund Development Officer Teresa Tillson. "Just \$20 or \$50 a month adds up to a \$240 or \$600 a year, a bigger gift than many people can give all at once. At \$84 a month, giving \$1,000 a year becomes possible for many."

Board member Pat Foley makes his gift by monthly payment. "My belief

in the mission has motivated me to contribute for many years. Now, as a member of the board, I find it extremely important to contribute a meaningful amount, which I do so through continuous monthly payments."



Board Treasurer
Pat Foley

"Major credit cards and recurring bank drafts are the most convenient way for AAI to accept automatic monthly gifts from individuals," says AAI Controller Doug Anderson. "The donor pays a regular monthly amount and AAI is able to count on the income."

		<p>Yes, I pledge an important gift to help others join the community of work.</p>	
Name _____		Address _____	
Address _____		Phone _____	
<p>EACH MONTH I pledge: \$100 _____ \$84 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ \$15 _____ Other _____</p>		<p>I am making a single gift of: \$1,000 _____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ Other _____</p>	
<p>for a total of 12 x \$ _____ = \$ _____</p>		<p>I want my gift to celebrate: _____ In memory _____ In honor _____ Occasion of _____</p>	
<p>_____ Enclosed is a cancelled check or deposit slip - OR - _____ Please bill my credit card monthly for 12 months _____ Visa _____ MasterCard Exp. Date _____</p>		<p>_____ I want my gift to be anonymous _____ I would like to include AccessAbility in my will _____ My employer _____ will match this gift</p>	
Credit Card Number _____		Name on Card _____	
<p>Please make checks payable to AccessAbility, Inc., 360 Hoover Street NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413-2940</p>			



Working together.
Growing together.

The Newsletter of AccessAbility, Inc.

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Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, AccessAbility provides immediate work opportunities for adults with barriers to employment and a broad choice of services to meet individual long-term needs. Populations we serve include people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees and unemployed or underemployed individuals.

For questions about our newsletter, contact Teresa Tillson at ttillson@accessability.org or 612-331-5958. Please forward all address changes to our Development Department.

Our Mission

To provide opportunities for self-sufficiency for people with barriers to employment and community inclusion.

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