

Kilzers' interest.

When Darrell and Renee asked family about the Center, they received glowing endorsements. These family members had interned at ACC and spoke highly of the Center's Campus and the expert staff. Ben attended ACC Week at Camp Grassick that summer, meeting other students and Center staff at the yearly Techno-Camp. The family then met with Center staff and was further pleased.

"We attended a planning meeting and were really impressed," Renee said. "They were committed to determining what his interests were and taking him into the community. The staff determined all that by working with him. They took the time to figure out who he was."

Ben started class in the fall, moving to Jamestown and living away from family for the first time. The separation isn't always easy—Ben is Darrell and Renee's youngest child. Though the Kilzers are separated by many miles, they remain close. Ben and his parents stay in contact throughout the week by e-mail or telephone calls, and Darrell and Renee visit their son at least once a month. Each time they visit, the family enjoys their time together by visiting and learning about the new skills Ben is learning. On Sundays the family goes to church and then out to eat.

"We go to Jamestown now—and as we go to Perkins, or any restaurant, or to church—people, that we have no idea who they are, are saying hi to Ben and asking how he's doing. They like him, and enjoy being around him," says Darrell. "It is so neat for Ben to be associated with people on that level."

Future Preparations

ACC offers many vocational opportunities for students ages 14 and up. At Jamestown's West Country Products, Ben has the opportunity to get back to his roots.

"Ben is a country boy and West Country Projects is a good place for him," said Renee Spitzer, one of the Center's Community Integration Specialists. "He can use both hands and a lot of the jobs here take using two hands. There is some problem solving, and Ben and I try and have a good time, too."

Later in the week, Ben is off to Prairie Veterinary Hospital to place syringes into plastic holders and to catch up with some canine friends. He also helps keep the commons area at the Buffalo Mall clean, using an adapted mop that hooks onto his power chair.

"Ben's jobs have to do with a lot of problem solving where he needs to follow certain steps," said Spitzer. "It requires a good thinking process and coordination."

After completing tasks around town, it's time for Ben to get into one of the Center vans that brought him to the business site. In minutes, he'll ride off into the sunset with the satisfaction of another job well done.

Message from the CEO



Fortitude, Friends Help in Flood Fight

The Anne Carlsen Center is—as this issue of *The Ambassador* goes to print—in the middle of a flood fight and evacuation of our campus. Students and staff are spread out at relocation sites throughout Jamestown, as walls of clay and sand protect our campus from the rising James River.

While we recognize the importance of the buildings we call home, the spirit of the Anne Carlsen Center resides in our staff, the people we serve, and the many individuals who support our mission. They embody the character and compassion of the Anne Carlsen Center—no matter what challenges we face.

Our students have demonstrated courage, resiliency and patience since our March 23 evacuation. We are so proud of the way they continue to learn, grow and reach new milestones. At our relocation sites throughout Jamestown, they have forged new friendships and created fun memories.

Community members help keep ACC strong, and during this flood fight, their kindness and generosity have been overwhelming. Whether hefting sandbags, donating supplies, or offering safe shelter, our friends and neighbors have shown us their love in so many meaningful ways.

I have marveled at the efforts and energy of ACC staff during this time. Each has demonstrated adaptability, calmness, creativity and cooperation. Many have come in early and left late, to make sure ACC students are comfortable, cared for, and engaged in meaningful activities. Other staff members have waged a brave battle against floodwaters, forsaking sleep to keep our campus safe. I have been deeply touched by this level of commitment.

Our donors have also helped our organization thrive during this flood fight. Because of you, the Anne Carlsen Center has many of the resources needed to support and empower children, young adults and families affected by developmental disabilities. Thank you for your faith in, and generous support of, our life-changing programs and services.

It's only appropriate that an organization focused on empowering the individual should itself be strengthened and safeguarded by people. Working together, there's no end to our abilities to transform lives, eliminate obstacles, and face the future with hope.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Howell". The signature is stylized and written over a white background.

Dan Howell
Chief Executive Officer