

# A message from our PRESIDENT

## We're 50... Let's Celebrate!

Everyone enjoys a celebration, especially when it marks a milestone. This year, OWL is excited to be celebrating our 50th year of serving the community and we want to share our excitement with you. OWL's 50-year anniversary celebration will kick off with an open house on May 12 from 2 to 6 p.m. Whether it has been one year or 50 years since your last visit to OWL, we want to show you what we've been up to . . . I think you will like what you see. So, come on over and join us for a tour, refreshments, and to catch up on the latest from OWL.

Our celebration continues with an employee and family picnic on June 17 to honor and thank our valuable employees—without them, OWL simply would not be. Then, it's our Fourth Annual Charity Golf Outing at Greenbrier Golf and Country Club on Monday, July 25. Be on the lookout for participation and sponsorship information in the very near future.

Our celebration will culminate with a 50th anniversary banquet, during which we will honor our business partners, community friends and especially those who have finished their programming at OWL and entered into community employment over the past 50 years. For more information about our 50th anniversary celebration, sponsorship opportunities or to register for our golf outing, call us or visit our website at [www.owlinc.net](http://www.owlinc.net).



As we enter our sixth decade in business, we hope you know what it has meant to have you as a part of the OWL family. Our success as a community service provider would not have been nearly as significant if it weren't for the efforts of the hundreds of folks who have believed in our vision and mission. Thank you for being one of those people.

With that said, let's get this party started!

David Boggs, President/CEO, OWL, Inc.

## FOUNDATION TO HOST 4TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

The OWL Foundation was formally incorporated on February 14, 2007. Since its inception, it has maintained its mission of securing startup funding for new projects at OWL. Because of the founding philosophy of Opportunity for Work & Learning was so strongly motivated to self sustainment, OWL entertained very little focus on seeking charitable contributions. For nearly 50 years, under very capable leadership, OWL has flourished as a financially viable non-profit organization.

The establishment of the OWL Foundation represents visionary thinking relative to the new philanthropic attitudes and possibilities current in the 21st Century. Over the past 10 years, thousands of private family foundations have been created as a means to maintain control of personal wealth and manage the manner in which it passes into the community at large. The OWL Foundation is well positioned to approach these family foundations



and other individuals for financial support.

In addition to individual solicitations the OWL Foundation has established an annual golf event that is growing in prominence each year. This July, the OWL Foundation will hold its 4th Annual Golf Outing at Greenbrier Golf & Country Club. This event, held at one of Lexington's premiere golf courses, enables friends of OWL to meet and mingle in informal settings, cultivate relationships with clients and provide support for OWL programming. This year's Annual Golf Outing promises to be the most successful to date.

Funding from the Annual Golf Outings and other annual giving programs has been used by OWL to establish a number of programs that aid consumers in overcoming barriers to employment. The OWL Foundation has identified several projects for immediate funding: a summer 2011 youth Program; an employee scholarship program; a Hoot Shop rejuvenation project; a green house project; and a communications and technology upgrade.

Additionally, successes of the OWL Foundation program support have created jobs for clients that have allowed necessary work to remain here in the Kentucky's Bluegrass region. We are particularly proud that the OWL Foundation has been able to enhance our local business and manufacturing community by securing essential funding to provide a strong and efficient workforce in a very competitive economic climate.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**MAY**  
May 12, 2 to 6 pm  
50th Anniversary Open House  
OWL, Inc.

Closed Monday, May 30 in  
observation of Memorial Day

**JUNE**  
June 17, 12:30 to 4:30 pm  
Employee Appreciation Picnic  
Jacobson Park

**JULY**  
Closed Monday, July 4 in  
observation of Independence Day

July 25, 11 am to 6 pm  
4th Annual Charity Golf Outing  
Greenbrier Golf & Country Club

**SEPTEMBER**  
Closed Monday, September 5 in  
observation of Labor Day

**NOVEMBER**  
November 10  
50th Anniversary Banquet  
Time, Location TBA

### 4th Annual OWL Charity Golf Outing

**When:**  
Monday, July 25, 2011  
11 am - 6 pm

**Where:**  
Greenbrier Country Club

Limited space available, secure  
your foursome or advertising  
sponsorship today

CALL 254-0576 or register  
online at [www.owlinc.net](http://www.owlinc.net)



OWL, Inc. • 650 Kennedy Road  
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### OUR MISSION

OWL partners within communities to educate and equip individuals with barriers to employment to reach their vocational goals

# On the HORIZON

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1, Spring 2011



OWL TURNS 50

DEPARTMENTAL  
HISTORIES

4TH ANNUAL  
GOLF OUTING

## OWL CELEBRATING 50 YEARS FORTY-YEAR VETERAN PRIME EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

Some 50 years ago, a group of concerned parents came together to discuss ways to enhance and better the lives of their adult children living with disabilities. These initial discussions evolved into a full-fledged movement to establish an organization to rehabilitate, train and provide jobs to those with "barriers to employment." By 1961, the Junior League of Lexington adopted the initiative and donated funds from their annual horse show to open the Opportunity Workshop of Lexington, or OWL, Inc. The original building was located in a small warehouse in downtown Lexington.

Since that time, OWL has grown in scope and size, and even changed its name in 2001 to Opportunity for Work and Learning to more accurately reflect the organization's wide range of clients and services.

"OWL is so much more than a rehab facility," said David Boggs, president and CEO of OWL. "It is a place of new beginnings where people from all walks of life are given the chance to live more productive, self-sufficient lives. It is a place where judgement, prejudices and preconceived notions are absent—where individuals can truly wipe the slate clean and start anew. It is a place of inspiration and motivation—where peers help peers, and examples of persistence and perseverance are evident everywhere you look."

Perhaps the best example of this is Sally Lynam who came to OWL in 1967 after being discharged from Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital because her age made her ineligible to continue services. Sally has maintained her job with OWL for over 40 years and shows no sign of slowing down.

"Cardinal Hill taught me that I needed to be independent—I think they taught me too well," quipped Sally.

Unwilling to let her disability keep her from living a normal life, in 1980, Sally got her drivers license and, in



Sally Lynam provides inspiration to those who pass through the OWL program.

1992, she bought her first home where she has lived by herself for periods of time. Sally is a celebrated fixture at OWL, and many of those who have come through the program credit her for being their inspiration to continue on.

"When I look at Sally, no one should have an excuse.... Nobody should say, 'I can't do it,'" said Sherrian Peyton, who went through the OWL program herself and has worked in OWL's finance department for some 22 years. "When you look at her, you're looking at dedication."

Being a lead job coach has been Sally's favorite position to date, as she enjoyed helping others become prepared for employment outside of OWL. She said, "I was supposed to 'lead' them out the door."

Why Sally has been so dedicated to her job at OWL is quite simple.

"I like having control over my life," she said.



## LMC'S GROWTH HAS CREATED MORE JOBS FOR THOSE IN NEED

In 2001, OWL began the process of upgrading to world-class manufacturing concepts with the creation of the Lexington Manufacturing Center and the focus on obtaining ISO-9001:2000 certification. In October 2004, we achieved certification and recently completed our recertification in August of 2009 to ISO 9001:2008. We continue to follow the concepts of best manufacturing practices by continually evaluating our processes to ensure we are providing the best possible service to our clients and our customers.

In 2007, we realized that the job market was undergoing a transition to higher skilled jobs and that if our clients were going to be employable we had to provide the type of training that would prepare them to work in the jobs available. That year, we added another dimension to our work environment by creating our logistics program. In this program, clients are trained in the use of equipment like forklifts and are provided with insight on the requirements to effectively operate a warehouse and fulfillment center. This business segment continues to grow and we have recently expanded to a 13,000 square-foot warehouse that is used primarily for our Pilkington project.

Today, although the complexity of the work has increased substantially, the primary focus of the Lexington Manufacturing Center continues to be to provide training and a work environment that will lead to full-time employment for clients completing the program. As we have evolved over the years, many upgrades in our internal capability have been incorporated in the training process to ensure we are providing the type of skills that are required to compete in a very competitive job market.

A major part of our transformation has been in the diversification of our customer base that has allowed us to provide additional work experiences for our clients. We now have 11 customers with monthly workloads and another 10 that we work for throughout the year. The work ranges from assembly, packaging



Production in the '60s



LMC production today

and rework to warehousing and fulfillment. In addition to our current customer base, we have new projects in the process of being launched that will provide additional training opportunities for our clients.

Finally, we are encouraged by the support we've received from our customers in 2011 with growth in each business area. We expect the balance of 2011 to remain strong and the prospects for 2012 and beyond to be encouraging as we develop new clients and launch new projects.

## SUCCESS CORNER

### Ben Garcia

When Ben Garcia was referred to OWL in May of 2010, his battle with depression left his confidence at an all-time low. While Ben had years of education and work experience under his belt—including his own remodeling business—he felt “stuck in a pit.”

Ben's first job at OWL was in LMC's production department and he admits that he struggled with the expectations for this job.

“At first I just couldn't believe in the system as far as the amount of products you had to get done for a certain amount of pay,” explained Ben.

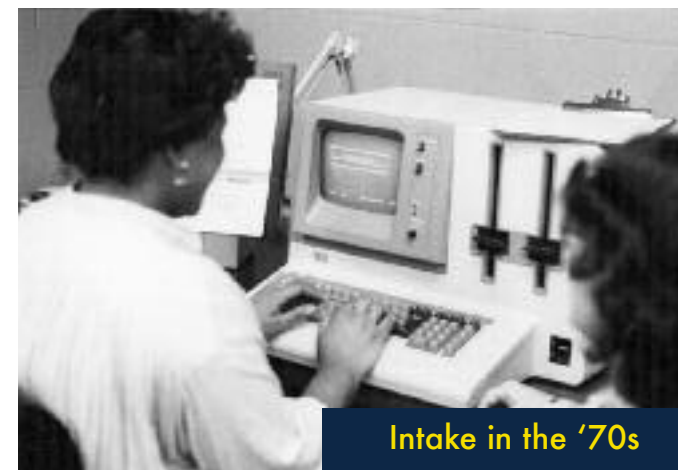
But as Ben became more and more accustomed to the job, his enthusiasm increased and he began not just meeting his goals, but adding value to LMC's production process.

“I was building crates and I had a lot of ‘oomph’ when building those crates,” he said. “I created a system of how to get the crates built a little quicker.”

It was this ingenuity and drive to add value that led Ben to his next job with OWL as a quality technician. He now has his own office and is responsible for inspecting all of the products prior to customer delivery to ensure LMC's customers get the highest quality parts and products possible.

“It's the best job I've ever had.... It's less frustrating and you get a sense of accomplishment. It just makes me happy.”

Ben Garcia is LMC's quality technician and an OWL success story.



Intake in the '70s

## CLIENT SERVICES REMAIN KEY TO CENTER'S SUCCESS

The OWL Center has seen many changes since 1961. Trends, methods, and techniques of vocational rehabilitation have changed over the years. However, the core of why clients come to OWL hasn't changed—they come because they want to work. All have had barriers that have made it difficult to find a job and they enter our program with the expectation of having a job in the community when they finish.

Early services included a vocational evaluation that could last up to six weeks and, once completed, a work adjustment service that could last over six months. Only then did job development and placement services start. Today, a vocational evaluation often takes less than a day and job development starts in the initial planning sessions with their employment counselor.

Many of the barriers remain the same for clients, including low self-confidence, along with lack of good work habits and work experience. Economic and employment trends have always affected our consumers and now some who were placed in the 1990s have come back after years of steady employment after being laid off as the employment needs of the community have changed. LMC has provided work on a transitional basis since the beginning, and for over half of our consumers, it continues to provide a real work experience where they can strengthen their work habits and gain a current work reference while they are job seeking.

Over the years, our service area has expanded to over 20 counties to reach more people who need rehabilitation and job placement services.

Since 1961, the OWL Center has helped place over 3,000 consumers in jobs. Without our partnership with the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as numerous community support services and positive employers, none of it could have been possible. But most of all, the Center's success is attributed to each consumer's input and determination to succeed.

## SEEC TURNS 20, MEETING NEED FOR KENTUCKY'S LEARNING DISABLED

In 1991, there were no services in Lexington for the adolescent and adult with Learning Disabilities. Hence, a new program was initiated at OWL, Inc. targeted to help adolescents and adults with learning disabilities (LD), attention deficit disorder (ADHD), or any other emotional or neurological disorder. Over the past two decades, SEEC's focus has been to provide each consumer an individualized plan culminating in successful employment or academic training with accommodations. To better accomplish its goals, SEEC moved off site to the present West Jefferson Place location in 1998. Since then it has more than doubled in space, staff and community project offerings.

SEEC has provided a variety of services to consumers who are referred by third party payers, the Workforce Development Cabinet (Office of Vocational Rehabilitation), or those consumers who pay privately. These services have included an evaluation of cognitive and performance areas, community based assessments, learning strategy classes, and employment services.

In 1998, SEEC initiated a collaborative effort with the Cabinet for Families and Children to provide assessments for individuals enrolled in the Kentucky Works Program. These assessments have been completed on all individuals in Lexington receiving K-TAP since 2001; since that time, nine other counties in the Southern Bluegrass and Jefferson County (Louisville) have been added to the counties served by SEEC's contract with the Cabinet. To date, approximately 5,013 assessments have been completed.

SEEC has also been responsible for job readiness classes, an employment program, and a program called TIP: Transitioning to Independence Program. All of these programs are built on the foundation of the assessment in helping individuals on K-TAP work toward self-sufficiency.

Throughout the last two decades, success in procuring grants has been a driving force in shaping SEEC's focus. In 1993, a grant from JTPA was funded for Integrated Academic/Vocational/Social Assessments performed at Dunbar High School. This grant initiated SEEC's vocational evaluation to the Fayette County School System. In 2001, SEEC was awarded two grants: the Non-Custodial Initiative through the Community Action Council for which SEEC assessed individuals for indications of disabilities and support services; and the Construction Project through the Fayette County Urban League for which SEEC assessed individuals with criminal backgrounds for disabilities and support services. In 2005, SEEC received a Project with Industry (PWI) grant that generated approximately \$1 million in funding over three years. This project provided evaluations, community-based assessments, learning strategy classes and job placement to over 30 individuals a year with neurological disabilities. In 2006, SEEC was notified that its RFP for Safe Havens, a program through the Kentucky Housing Corporation, was funded. This involved performing employment assessments on individuals eligible to own homes in the Bluegrass Area Development District.

Over the years, SEEC has worked cooperatively with state, federal, local profit, and non-profit agencies and churches in order to deliver services to consumers.

