



MESSENGER

Keeping family and friends informed

1st Quarter 2012

From the Executive Director



Over the last few months, Tenco has gone through many changes

*including hiring new leadership. Please welcome, **Benjamin Wight**, our new Executive Director.*

It is with great enthusiasm that I begin my position, as Executive Director of Tenco Industries. I've been fortunate in having the opportunity to work in the field of serving those with disabilities for the last twenty-six years.

During that time, I have worked in both residential and vocational settings for those in need. For the last twenty plus years I have assumed the

responsibility of running programs such as Tenco.

In these tough economic times, we cannot look solely to service revenue to ensure that we have what we require to meet the needs of the individuals. It will be necessary for the organization to look, not only for community support, but to ventures which generate revenue for both individuals we serve as well as the organization as a whole.

In the upcoming months, you will see the organization evolve into an agency that is trying to meet the needs of those we serve while increasing independence from service dollars. This will not be a quick process, but the end result will mean greater choices for all and increased growth

for Tenco.

As a team, we can accomplish the needed growth. We understand that to be successful, we need to include the community as a partner. Growth will only occur with support from all who are stakeholders of Tenco, including: family members, guardians, providers, employees and the individuals we serve.

Communication and transparency are the cornerstones for the success we pursue. The future holds many possibilities and it will be exciting as we take on the challenges necessary for growth and stability.

**-BEN WRIGHT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Benjamin Wright,
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Dixie Merritt,
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Rhonda Johnson,
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E-MAIL LIST

Starting January 1st, 2012, Tenco will be e-mailing all staff and individual upcoming events and activities.

If you would like to add your e-mail address to our distribution list please send it to Allison Chapin at achapin@tenco.org.

This new system is a great way to stay connected with Tenco all year round. You will receive notice when we have our monthly luncheons, movie nights, and all other activities or events individuals and staff are offered.

Your e-mail address will not be shared with anyone and will not be used for anything other than Tenco related activities.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Allison Chapin at 641-682-8114 or achapin@tenco.org.

THANK YOU!

IMPORTANT DATES AND CLOSINGS

January 17th	AKTION CLUB MEETING — 6:00 PM
February 7th	AKTION CLUB MEETING — 6:00 PM
February 21st	AKTION CLUB MEETING — 6:00 PM
February 25th	FAMILY FUN DAY -Bridge View Center, Ottumwa 10:00 AM—5:00 PM
March 6th	AKTION CLUB MEETING — 6:00 PM
March 20th	AKTION CLUB MEETING — 6:00 PM
April 3rd	AKTION CLUB MEETING — 6:00 PM
April 13th	TENCO ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET Ottumwa High School- 5:30 PM

Lets say hello to Rhonda and Dixie...



Hello, my name is Rhonda Johnson, and I am Tenco's new Support Services Director. I am very honored to have this opportunity to work with the staff at Tenco and to be a part of the excellence that Tenco offers individuals.

I have a BA degree from Buena Vista University with a double major in Psychology and Human Services. In my professional career I have worked for SIEDA as a

FaDSS Counselor and as a Parent Educator. I briefly worked as an FSPR Worker for Children and Families of Iowa. I have also worked as a Rehabilitation Assistant for Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services. My most recent employment was that of a Case

Manager for five and half years, in which time I have learned about the ID, BI, Habilitation and Elderly Waivers as well as rules and regulations, funding streams and state mandated reports. However, the most valuable things I have learned are the personal stories and values of the individuals that I serve. I believe in protecting the rights of a person with disabilities and in providing opportunities for growth to those individuals who desire it.

This is an exciting time to be joining the Tenco team under the leadership of Ben Wright as he has fascinating ideas for expansion of services and growth for Tenco. I am looking forward to being a part of Tenco's growth and to ensure that Tenco provides excellent services to individuals with disabilities.

**-RHONDA JOHNSON
SUPPORT SERVICES DIRECTOR**



Hello, I am Dixie Merritt, Tenco's new Vocational Director. I have, over the past twenty years, worked with your current Executive Director, Benjamin Wright. I lived in Maquoketa, Iowa all my life until the past 19 months where I lived in Midland, Texas and was a Vocational Director there. In Midland, I developed a vocational program, that enhanced a lot

of people's lives. I developed janitorial enclaves in the community, a big shredding operation to assist the oil wells, and brought in additional opportunities in the kitchen. This included catering and a weekly grill lunch option for the community which proved to be very successful. I also provided the individuals an opportunity to grow in customer service skills and kitchen prep skills. In addition we developed green houses and provided a variety of paid work opportunities to our individuals.

I have also built a vocational program in DeWitt, Iowa, starting out serving 13 individuals with intellectual disabilities. This program grew to serve 109 individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental illness. These services included contract work in light assembly, packaging, shredding and bailing, paper separation, janitorial enclaves, and also provided community employment for individuals in local business.

My husband, Bob and I moved back to Iowa this year. Between the two of us we have five sons, who all live in Iowa. One of our sons, Adam, was born with Down's Syndrome. He lives in our family home with a roommate and receives HCBS services in Jackson

County. He is currently employed in the community and enjoys his job greatly. He came to visit us over the Christmas holiday and said "Mom, this place rocks." He said "I might live here."

Since we have arrived here, the people at Tenco, and in the community, have made us feel very welcome. I love challenges, and I have found in a few weeks of being here at Tenco, and getting to know the staff and individuals we serve, just how much potential they have. I am looking forward to helping Tenco provide the best opportunities possible, which includes developing job skills for employment. I am so glad to have the opportunity to be a part of a great organization!

My vision for expansion of Tenco's vocational program is already evident. My goals are focused on helping the men and women who participate in the program to build and enhance job skills for competitive employment in the community and at the same time earn a paycheck. For others, it will mean building skills in staying on task, following instructions, taking redirection, taking the initiative to complete tasks, and learning proper social/work skills. One of the new skill-building vocational experiences is Tenco's lunch vending operation call "The Grill", starting this spring. Every Wednesday people from all around can come to the Vocational Center and purchase their lunch. (More information about The Grill will be released at a later date.) There are other ventures I believe we can create or enhance such as, increasing our contract work, more involvement in document destruction, expanding into lawn maintenance services, and expanding into community employment.



2012 should prove to be an exciting year!!!

**-DIXIE MERRITT
VOCATIONAL DIRECTOR**