

# BA Member Gives Something Back

*Adjustable Forms Offers  
Half-Million Dollar  
Helping Hand To  
Those Who Need It Most*

BY ASHLEY SLOVINSKI

As a concrete frame contractor on large scale commercial projects for over 75 years, Adjustable Forms, Inc. has gotten used to dealing with its share of acronyms...from CSI codes to MBE/WBE/DBE to OSHA.

When business slowed down, company President James Lindquist felt it was a great time to add another one to the list...GSB, or Give Something Back.

When the market took a turn for the worst, many construction companies were facing a bleak reality in terms of less work and more layoffs. Adjustable Forms, which boasted a 400 person employee base just last year, has since then been forced to lay off almost all of its workers. Lindquist did not want to let the remaining 28 employees go.

"He felt very strongly about not laying them off," Janet Kral, Office Manager for Adjustable Forms, said. "He felt that these employees were the backbone of the company."

Lindquist met with these employees to let them know he was committed to keeping their benefits up-to-date and to keep them employed three days a week, despite the company's lack of incoming projects. Lindquist sought to do this by donating labor to different charity organizations. In two months, Adjustable Forms has donated \$500,000 in labor to 13 different Chicagoland non-profits. This amount covered the employees' wages and benefits during that time.

"[Lindquist] felt this was a time to give back by donating labor, which is where the name came from: Give Something Back," Kral said.

Getting the ball rolling on the program, which began in March, wasn't easy, though. Most organizations had very long "wish lists" of work they needed done but could not afford and were skeptical of the company offering free labor.

"It was kind of an interesting experience,"

she said. "A lot of people were suspect about it. It took a little while for people to take our offer seriously. When they finally did, though, it sort of mushroomed."

The company asked employees to suggest charities they were involved in and also donated labor to many of the employees' churches.

The firm began to receive a lot of labor requests from different organizations, and although they had to turn down some, the company was able to donate a significant amount of work to 13 organizations.

Employees painted, built ramps, repaired roofs, replaced flooring and performed a number of other tasks on the "wish lists" of these organizations. The company built a greenhouse for the Academy of Global Citizenship in Chicago and put a foundation in a home for a disabled soldier that recently returned from Iraq.

"It has been a very humbling experience not only for our office but for all of the employees," Kral said.

One of the non-profits the firm worked with extensively was Clearbrook, which is an organization that works with developmentally disabled children and adults.

"They've been a Godsend," Jim Turi, Operations Manager for Clearbrook, said. "I can't say enough positive things about them."

Clearbrook has 40 buildings in Schaumburg, Arlington Heights and Rolling Meadows. Adjustable Forms employees worked with the organization for two months, completing projects that Turi said they could have never afforded without the company's help. Workers replaced the ceramic tiling in the bathrooms of all of these buildings, which Turi said were in horrible shape, as well as the driveways of three single-family homes.

"The upgrades have just been wonderful,"

he said. "It provides for cleaner and safer environments. We had a lot of safety concerns that we would not have been able to afford to fix otherwise."

The company provided concrete work for Lambs Farm, located in Libertyville, which also serves developmentally disabled persons. Workers poured over 5,000 square-feet of concrete to replace dilapidated sidewalks and built a concrete accessible ramp for one of the buildings. Among a laundry list of other services the workers carried out, they helped with landscaping for the 70 acre campus: everything from planting new shrubs to trimming and mowing.

Among the highlights for the workers at Lambs Farm was seeing thrilled children when Adjustable Forms reinstalled the kiddie train that now runs through the property once again.

"For us the cement work was such a big thing, especially the accessible ramp, because the people we serve have intellectual disabilities and some have physical disabilities as well," Claud Urlich, Director of Facilities Management for Lambs Farm, said. "They've just been a big help."

Adjustable Forms has already received letters of acknowledgment from five of the organizations, including Clearbrook, thanking the company for its service.

"This is something you definitely don't hear about in an economy like this," Kral said. "I hope maybe someone will learn about this and do it as well. I think it's a wonderful thing, and it was a great experience."

Although the campaign has begun wrapping up, Kral stated that Lindquist hopes to do it again in the future. Despite the unpredictability of the economy, she said that the company would like to repeat the campaign once a year if possible.

