

ACHIEVE CEO TO RETIRE

Achieve Services' CEO Tom Weaver has announced he will be retiring this summer, after leading the organization for the past 14 years.

Weaver assumed the role of CEO at Achieve Services in 2011. At that time, the legislature was in the process of changing the way disability service providers were reimbursed, which threatened to significantly impact Achieve's bottom line. Part of the solution for Achieve was to significantly increase its fundraising efforts. During Weaver's tenure, Achieve grew its fundraising revenues from under \$60,000 in 2011, to well over \$600,000 in 2024.

Other achievements include starting "Achieve Clean," a company that bottled and sold an environmentally-friendly laundry detergent, while creating jobs for Achieve participants; it launched an in-house band – called Dance at Your Own Risk - which has recorded 11 CDs; and its Arts program recently combined the talent of 40 participants, and 20 staff and volunteers to create 5 large interactive butterfly murals at Northtown Mall. And in the last legislative session, Achieve and Anoka County were awarded a large grant to make improvements to Achieve's space in the Anoka County Human Services Building.

Achieve Board Chair, Tami Hagen, had this to say: "We will certainly miss Tom's leadership and commitment. He has provided Achieve with the essential tools required for future success. His emphasis on and his ability to fight for independence and accountability for all is commendable. Furthermore, his decision to lead a non-profit organization rather than remain in the public/private sector illustrates the depth of his character and dedication to service."

"Two things stand out for me in Tom's time as CEO of Achieve," added Board Member Kathy Svanda. "As a member of the organization's Board of Directors, I value his ability to manage a unique nonprofit, making it very successful and financially secure. As the parent of a participant, I truly appreciate his personal connection to his staff and the people Achieve serves. This is a place filled with smiles where everyone is valued and respected."

Weaver refuses to accept credit for Achieve's accomplishments during his tenure, insisting that they were all part of a team effort: "Whatever successes we've had in the last 14 years are entirely due to the culture of collaboration and the spirit of doing whatever it takes to best serve our participants. From our engaged Board of Directors, to our talented senior staff and rock-star front-line professionals, to our community of dedicated supporters – all have been critical partners in achieving our accomplishments and successes" Weaver said.

What is Weaver's legacy? "I'd like to think I'm leaving Achieve in a much stronger financial position than it was when I started, and that we've cultivated an amazing team that is 100% committed to serving our participants. And that is also why I'm comfortable stepping away at this time – Achieve will be in good hands."

When asked about unfinished business, Weaver said there is one issue that looms large- the potential elimination of on-site employment opportunities. “State and federal ‘advocates’ are pushing to repeal 14c – a federal provision that allows people with disabilities to be paid based on production, encouraging employers to hire disabled workers who might not work as fast as others. So far, we’ve succeeded in beating back efforts to repeal 14c, but it’s a continuing battle.”

Achieve Board Member Susan Holden, commended Weaver’s public policy work: “Tom is leaving Achieve Services far stronger than it was 14 years ago. Tom’s experience in the law and lobbying has truly been an asset. He has been instrumental in educating our elected officials on the needs of the people Achieve serves, so that our clients continue to have the full array of options in their work settings.”

Reflecting on a career that spanned law, public service, lobbying and energy, Weaver observed that “this has been, by far, the most gratifying work of my career. I have been incredibly blessed to work with so many truly amazing people, and I leave this job with my heart full of gratitude and appreciation.”

The search for Weaver’s successor is being led by the Ballinger/Leafblad executive search firm.

Achieve Services’ mission is to create innovative opportunities to inspire people with disabilities. Achieve Services enables every participant to lead a meaningful and self-determined life. Programming at Achieve consists of both employment opportunities and day programming for adults with disabilities. Achieve offers employment in the community, employment in their workrooms, and social skills and art programs, along with volunteer and recreational activities. To learn more about Achieve Services, visit www.achieveservices.org or call 763-783-4909.

###