

“I’m the facilities manager - facilities, maintenance, we listen. To whatever extent we can, we try to make it better ... even if it has nothing to do with maintenance ... Dedicated to PEACE, Inc. since 2006.”



**Jerry
Barker**



EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO THRIVE | EST. 1968

HOW DOES YOUR DEPARTMENT HELP KEEP THE PEACE AT PEACE, INC.?

BARKER: We help keep the peace by maintaining the PEACE, Inc. facilities. We field requests and complaints. By nature of being at the sites regularly and talking to the staff, we often get to hear about people's days - if their days are going well or not going well. We listen. To whatever extent we can, we try to make it better ... even if it has nothing to do with maintenance. We try to take into account that people have bad days. The goal is to not let the facility be the cause.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE PEACE, INC. PART OF YOUR LIFE?

BARKER: I was in private industry, a carpenter, and I was not happy. I was looking to do something bigger, more important, more fulfilling I guess. My in-laws told me there was an ad in the paper for a facilities director at PEACE, Inc. I knew nothing about PEACE, Inc. and being a facilities director didn't sound like something I wanted to become. My in-laws persuaded me to "give PEACE a chance." They recounted the story of when they were newly married and starting a family, PEACE, Incorporated was also just beginning. My in-laws were very active in the community as well. My mother-in-law was a methodist pastor volunteering at the Dunbar Mothers' Club. This was back in the late 1960s - 1968, 1969. My father-in-law was an accountant for city hall and Carrier, and volunteered doing taxes. It all connected to PEACE, Inc. somehow. Anyway, they could not praise PEACE, Inc. enough, and urged me to apply, so I did. That's a story in itself. I was filling out an application online, and I accidentally submitted it before I finished filling it out. I tried it again, and this time I took too long and the session timed out - another incomplete application! I finally got one submitted, and Jamie Colucci calls to say it looked like I was having some trouble with the online application, and could I fill out a paper application. When I told him I was interested in the facilities director job, he said that unfortunately they had just finished interviewing candidates. He asked me a little about myself, and told me he'd get back to me. I think it was just later that day that Jamie called me back to see if I could come in for an interview. That was it. I wound up having a fantastic interview, and when I walked out of it, I knew the position was mine. I found out years later from Jamie that he really had to persuade PEACE, Inc. to even interview me. I owe my life at PEACE, Inc. to Jamie, and he will not let me forget it!

SHARE A DEFINITIVE MOMENT IN YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE.

BARKER: In the summer of 2017, we were trying to construct a bus loop at Sumner Head Start school. We ran into problems with city zoning during the permitting process. It was frustrating and taking a long time. I shared my frustration with Nancy Turo and Becky Heberle. They instantly started helping me. They got a team together of folks inside and outside of PEACE, Inc. who all shared a common interest in getting this project completed successfully. Together we brought the matter successfully all the way through even a public hearing. Even though it took a significant amount of time and effort in addition to their already full schedules, they all seemed honestly happy to help. It was such a positive experience of teamwork that it was more like a family than a team.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ESSENTIAL AT PEACE, INC.?

BARKER: I really think each person at PEACE, Inc. is essential, but possibly the most under appreciated are the people in the fiscal department.

ARE YOU THE SAME YOU, YOU WERE WHEN YOU STARTED WORKING AT PEACE, INC.?

BARKER: I am not the same me. I am more at peace.

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE TO KNOW?

BARKER: Do good, and do no harm.

PRETEND TODAY IS YOUR FIRST DAY AT PEACE, INC. – AND YOU GET TO KEEP ALL OF THE INSIGHT YOU HAVE FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE AT PEACE, INC. TO DATE – WHAT WOULD YOUR FIRST DAY BE LIKE?

BARKER: On my first day, rather than focus on the specific work of maintenance and the daily tasks of facilities management, I would pay attention to the people who are using the facilities. Rather than be overwhelmed by all that had to be done, I would see that the work is part of something bigger, which is the mission of PEACE, Inc. I would know on my first day that I am on a team working together to help people thrive.