

THE BEACON

Beacon Technologies Quarterly Newsletter

Employee Success Story

Francis Contreras, Senior Full Stack Developer

Born in the Dominican Republic, Francis was one of seven siblings left in their grandmother's care when their parents emigrated to the U.S. seeking a brighter future for their kids. One of Francis's earliest memories was that of his grandmother trying to enroll him in the local elementary school; because of a lack of resources, he was turned away. Eager to start school, Francis offered to bring his own chair, without any luck. This incident left a lifelong lesson of not taking education and learning in general for granted, which has stuck with him to this day. Fortunately, his older sister, who was just starting 2nd grade and aspired to someday become a teacher, homeschooled him after her own classes. Two years later, when his parents were able to obtain the visas, they reunited the entire family in the USA. Francis was placed in a bilingual second-grade class in a New York City Elementary school. Thanks to his sister's tutoring, he excelled so much that he skipped the third grade. Francis grew-up in New York City, primarily playing baseball and wrestling. He attended City University of New York (CUNY). Although he was capable of playing on the college baseball team, he realized it was time to get serious about his future and how he would make a living. After some research, it appeared to him that becoming a computer programmer could offer a bright future, since it was a growing field.

Francis Contreras,
Senior Full Stack Developer



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Wisconsin History



Wisconsin's name comes from the Wisconsin River, which was called Meskousing by the Algonquian-speaking tribes. The name was recorded in 1673 by French explorer Jacques Marquette. Over time, the word was Anglicized into Ouisconsin, Wiskonsan and finally into its current spelling and pronunciation.

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Employee Success Story, Continued

Francis decided to major in computer science and follow that new dream. The first programming class was extremely challenging. His mind was not accustomed to the rigor of abstract thinking that software development requires. He decided to mold his brain into one that was capable of writing code. Every day, as he walked to school, he dedicated that time to mentally practicing and visualizing code. In particular, he would visualize and keep track of software code that involved iterating through nested loops and attempt to keep track of the variables as they mutated. The subsequent programming courses became progressively easier and eventually enjoyable. He started to get straight A+ grades in all the remaining programming classes.

After obtaining his Computer Science degree, he moved to Northern VA. For the past 25+ years, he has worked as a software engineer, supporting small aggressive startups, medium-sized private companies, large public companies, as well as various US Government Agencies.

A few highlights of his career include helping the Nasdaq Stock Market modernize its software systems. In the 1990s, some of the Nasdaq Software Systems were created using a CASE (Computer-Aided Software Engineering) tool. He played a key role in helping the organization transition to rewriting these systems using modern distributed web architecture.

During the 2000s, he worked with a small company to create a trading floor that would allow telecommunications companies to trade internet bandwidth as if it were a commodity. This trading system was a success, and the company eventually launched a successful Initial Public Offering (IPO).

From 2009-2018, Francis worked for the Department of Justice (DEA) on important classified systems designed to keep illegal drugs off our streets. From 2018-2022, he supported the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) of the Federal Reserve Board as a Senior Application Developer. This unit was primarily responsible for providing software products to the Chairman of the Board. Jerome Powell and his team set economic policies.

One of Francis's proudest accomplishments was leading the effort to rewrite an important application used to generate the Beige Book. The main purpose of the Beige Book was to provide Federal Reserve policymakers with on-the-ground intelligence about economic conditions, helping them make informed decisions regarding monetary policy. During the coronavirus pandemic, it was crucial to get this right, and they did. The software product was a complete success.

Recently, Francis has been working to support Beacon as a platform engineer, helping one of their most important clients. He is responsible for creating reusable components, creating Storybook stories, and generally providing assistance to product teams as they create their applications.

During the Spring, Summer & Fall, Francis plays in a competitive softball league. He enjoys working out at the gym or running on the beautiful trails found in Virginia. Francis also spends time visiting the venues in Washington, DC with his wife Josette and watching the Washington Nationals play. He is a proud Dad to his son Jacob, who always seems to make the right decisions.

Fun Fact:

Francis grew up near Yankee Stadium, dreaming of one day playing first base inside the stadium. That dream came true in high school when his team became City Champs and played for the State Championship held inside Yankee Stadium. On game day, he took his position at first base, his family cheering him on from the stands, making his childhood dream a reality.



(Francis as a child)



(Francis stepping up to the plate)



(Francis with his wife Josette and son Jacob)



Reminders

PMI Madison/South Central WI Professional Development Day 2023

Where: Monona Terrace, downtown Madison

When: Wednesday, October 4

We are proud to support this great organization in our local community. [Register now!](#)

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment for Health, Dental, and Vision will be in February 2024 for a March 1 start. Look for more information at the start of the new year.



Beacon Buzz

McGMO Charity Golf Event

Beacon proudly sponsored the 25th Anniversary McGMO Charity Golf Event on July 28th in Delavan, WI. Proceeds of the event supported patients at the Aurora Cancer Center in western Racine and Walworth counties. The Beacon team enjoyed a beautiful day of golf.



(Click here for photos from the golf outing on Facebook!)

Women in Tech Job Fair

Denise Olson & Delight Oelerich participated in the 2nd Annual Women in Tech Job Fair for Women & Nonbinary Folks at the Memorial Union in Madison, WI on Aug. 24th.



Scrum Day 2023

Beacon was a Platinum sponsor of Scrum Day at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, WI on Sept. 14th. Mike Saunders, David Waite, Craig Wagner and Delight Oelerich met with participants, who enjoyed thoughtful discussions and interactive training on the Scrum framework.



Employee Anniversaries

October

Matthew Stangel - 4 years
Jeffrey Charneski - 3 years
Eric Heuvelman - 2 years
Bruce Schellinger - 2 years
Francis Contreras - 1 year
Xueming Huang - 6 years
Angela Brookman - 1 year

November

Leslie Dobbratz - 3 years
Sherri Lawinger - 2 years
Todd Meier - 25 years
Eric Smasal - 1 year
Jay Velugubantla - 6 years
Mazaher Haji - 1 year

December

Nazr Irfan - 1 year
Jennifer Baker - 1 year
Hector Martin Cepero - 2 years
Thomas Brey - 8 years
Carl Galka - 3 years
Mohammed Alibaig - 2 years



Get to Know Your Beacon Team!



Sr. Recruiter Keegan O'Brien and family



Sr. Resource Manager Kathy Maglio's favorite place: Maui, Hawaii



HR Director Kristen Suttle-Ebert and family



Office/Accounting Assistant Sherri Lawinger and family



Marketing Manager Krista Fandek and family



Sr. Technical Recruiter Tyler Erickson's dog, Taco



Sr. Account Executive Eric Oelhafen and family



Director of Recruiting Rebecca Rosenthal, Recruiting Assistant Aaron Rosenthal and family



Sr. Recruiter David Waite and family

Memories



Upcoming Events - Things To Do



hello FALL



Click the images below for more information on things to do throughout Wisconsin & Nationwide!

