



# The Competitive Edge

BCRC, Inc., 131 Pleasant Drive, 2nd Floor, Aliquippa, PA 15001-3515

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## John Vukich Recognized as a 2015 Nettie Mann Award Winner

by Laurel Baker

John Vukich is a respected, hard-working and all-around great guy. He is a champion pool player and bowler. And now, he is a recipient of the 2015 Nettie Mann Achievement Award in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the workplace!

The Nettie Mann award was developed in 1996 by UniqueSource Products and Services, a company that contracts with agencies like BCRC to offer employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The award is named after a young woman who was the "Worker of the Year" in 1993 due to her work on the maintenance of highway rest areas, under the Keystone Blind Association. Sadly, Nettie passed away before she could receive the award, thus inspiring the dedication of the award in honor of her memory. John has been with BCRC since October of 1999, and has been working for BCRC's records management enclave for over 15 years. Throughout the years, he has demonstrated a dedicated work ethic, continuously expanding skills and knowledge, and diligence in completing his job duties. It is for these reasons that BCRC staff felt he was an excellent candidate for the award.

The awards were presented at a dinner in Harrisburg in June, with Christine Ha, the first blind MasterChef USA winner, as the guest speaker. John and his family were unable to attend; instead, he celebrated here at BCRC. He was presented a plaque, a \$500 cash award, and Ms. Ha's cookbook. Congratulations John! ■



## Job Coaches Have Key Impact on BCRC Mission

by Frank Shialabba

"BCRC's job coaches are the base and foundation of the organization," according to Job Coach Supervisor Pat Sullivan. That is because serving individuals with disabilities is BCRC's most important mission, and job coaches directly help to "develop independence and respect the dignity and uniqueness of each individual."

Director of Client Services, Kathy Davis feels that BCRC's job coaches are "dedicated, caring individuals who positively impact the lives of the people they serve in many ways." These caring individuals help BCRC's clients to "reach for the stars and achieve their dreams." She admires the way that job coaches work with program specialists as a unified team to help people grow and develop. As a former program specialist, I can vouch for the time and energy expended by each job coach to develop and carry out individualized goals designed to encourage personal growth.

BCRC's job coaches feel that the agency's clients make their jobs both rewarding and enjoyable. Job Coach Starlette McNutt calls, "The joy I get from watching people learn new things and the pride they take in their accomplishments," as the most rewarding part of her job. McNutt loves to see the smiles on peoples' faces as they overcome obstacles and achieve more than they thought possible. Job Coach Leahan Bock calls this "building skills and helping people with their life's journey." Pam Crawford, another Job Coach, takes pride in providing a "safe learning environment." Job Coach Sue Middleman enjoys "building the self-esteem" of the people she works with. She feels that patience, consistency, and positive approach are the hallmarks of a good job coach. She says, "The clients are the reason that I come to work

every day."

It is obvious that BCRC could not perform its most important function: helping people grow and develop, without the dedicated and caring job coaches who take such pride in working side by side with BCRC's clients every day. ■

## First Director Remembered, BCRC "Alumni" Visit

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC has experienced a great deal of nostalgia recently-both happy and sad.

Sad news was received when we learned of the passing of Charles "Chuck" Peters. Peters was BCRC's first executive director. He was a larger than life person who relished living and loved the clients of BCRC. He "breathed life" into BCRC as the initial director who dreamed of a better life for people with disabilities in Beaver County. As we reflect on the growth of BCRC over the years, we will be forever grateful to Chuck Peters for leading the way with his own indomitable spirit.

The spirit of some other "BCRC alumni" was displayed recently when members of BCRC's Retired Men's club visited the new facilities at CenterPlace. The "alumni" were impressed with the growth of BCRC and the work done by Executive Director, Paulette Miller, to provide a state-of-the art work place and an ever growing array of services. Alumni included former Executive Director Samuel Lippincott, former ARC Board Member (and son of BCRC founder William Lintz) William Lintz Jr., former Project Director Frank Shialabba, one of BCRC's earliest employees Bruce Maratta, and former Westinghouse Administrator and BCRC Contractor William Schmidt. ■

## Spotlight on Pam Crawford

by Kelly Newhouse



Job Coaches are a vital part of BCRC's prevocational training as they prepare people for competitive employment. Pam Crawford has been a part of BCRC's incredible job coaching staff for the past eight years. She has provided vocational training to numerous clients in a variety of ways. A favorite part of

her job is "helping the clients". She takes the time to show each client how best to learn and complete a job. Pam is flexible in her teaching and creatively alters her approach to suit each individual's learning styles. Her hope for BCRC is to continue to be helpful to the clients so that they reach their fullest vocational potential.

Pam formerly worked for a real estate attorney and has passed on her knowledge of the business world by teaching the clients the importance of being a good employee. In addition to teaching job techniques in assembly, packaging, clerical, and production, she encourages and models professional behaviors and offers problem solving skills needed in competitive employment. Pam is energetic and in constant motion while on the workshop floor. It is this tireless effort that gives the clients a positive and successful experience while working at BCRC. When Pam slows down for some leisure time, she enjoys swimming, walking, and spending time with her husband. ■

## Mental Health Program Defies State Statistics

by Frank Shialabba

According to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Pennsylvania has the fourth highest unemployment rate for people with mental illness in the nation at 90.3%. In spite of this statistic, BCRC's Mental Health Transformation Program has helped 52 people attain competitive jobs over the last few years.

MHT Program Specialist, Adam Loverich describes the program as "a joy to be a part of because of the speed with which people receive services." According to Loverich, "People come to the MHT program at WIN Services looking for a job and we immediately begin to assist them with their search. They do not have to jump through any hoops to receive services, and I think this makes the program very accessible and appealing."

MHT Recovery Specialist, Rhonette Gibbs, feels the program is a special one because "I give people hope. I can relate to just how hard it is for someone to get up every morning and keep striving for a better life. I become a support system for the individuals, and I help them to realize that they are not alone in their struggle. I listen to their needs and provide hope that they can work as part

of their recovery. I also do a follow-up by calling and letting them know that help is always available." In addition to on-going support Rhonette says that the MHT program helps with interview and presentation skills. Rhonette states that, "WIN Services has been very welcoming to me. I feel very comfortable here; I'm where I am supposed to be." She describes WIN Director, Sheila Silbaugh, as a "mentor who has helped me progress through the years. I searched a long time for the right fit and the MHT program is definitely it."

The MHT program has been the "right fit" for many individuals with mental illness. This includes people who have come to the program without a place to live and enough money to eat. According to Loverich, "We work with case managers, homeless shelters, the housing authority and anyone who can get people off the streets and in a position where they can achieve a better life." Loverich describes one situation where we provided clothes and shoes for a person to work and helped the individual make the right connections so they could access food banks and find shelter. Today this person has a job and an apartment. The person told Loverich, "I am going to tell people to come here because of what you have done for me."

Let's hope that the MHT program can continue helping people for many years to come, and that Pennsylvania and every state see more people with mental illness achieve employment in the community. ■

## New Gifts Delivered Item Will Help Bereaved

by Susan Hill



Gifts Delivered has a new featured item for 2015. The "Sympathy Gift Bag" is both a classy and sturdy black bag with a cord handle that can be given to families after the death of a loved one. Items in the bag are useful for family gatherings. Each bag, priced at \$29.99, contains 24 of each of the following: Styrofoam plates, cups, napkins, forks, knives, and spoons. The bags also contain salt, pepper, Equal, sugar, one roll of aluminum foil, four garbage bags, one regular coffee and one decaf coffee. The sympathy bags are decorated with an elegant long stemmed silk rose and a gift tag. To order this item stop in at BCRC's 1517 Sixth Ave., New Brighton location or phone 724-847-4513 or 724-847-1306.

Another new creation from Candy Bouquet is our "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." The ceramic baseball shaped container, priced at \$40.99, is arranged with a variety of fun candies, chocolate baseballs and a baseball game favorite...Cracker Jack! This gift is truly a "Homerun!" ■



## This Mission Is Possible!

by Frank Shialabba



"Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation" is a summer box office hit at local theaters. The BCRC School to Work Program's summer "Mission Possible" experience has also been a hit with local students. The experience took place from July 6 through August 5 and involved extensive field work in the community. Although not as dangerous as hanging on a moving airplane, STW students found their experiences very exciting.

The four week program was designed to help students find out who they are and what they want to do when they graduate from high school. Students explored career opportunities, community resources, and educational programs and matched them to their own interests and aspirations. Students learned to dress appropriately for different types of community experiences and were asked to get plenty of sleep in order to enhance their problem solving skills.

Students learned that much is possible if one keeps an open mind and a positive attitude. This is a message that will never self-destruct. ■



## Deputy Secretary Tours Contract Site

by Bonnie Smith

Everyone likes to hear their work is appreciated, and on July 10, 2015, the staff and clients of Records Management had such an opportunity. Department of Health Deputy Secretary, Mike Suchanick visited BCRC in New Castle. He talked to BCRC clients and staff about how important this project is in order to accurately and effectively serve the citizens of PA. This job includes scanning, microfilming, prepping, indexing, and searching records. Before his visit, Suchanick was unaware that much of the labor is done by employees with disabilities. During his tour, Suchanick expressed how impressed he was with the operation and the scope of the project. Suchanick met several of the clients

who were working and chatted with them about their job and lives.

"I'm glad he came," says Records Management Facilitator Nancy Perkins. "We always like to brag about our clients and the work they do."

Records Management has been completing subcontracted work from the Department of Health for two and a half years. Suchanick's visit this year was part of moving the Department of Health into a new building. BCRC's project will assist in making the move more manageable. ■

## BCRC Looking for Motivated Individuals

by Gina Alberti

BCRC is committed to recruiting and retaining motivated individuals with a passion for helping others. To reach potential job candidates, employment opportunities are posted online through electronic job boards and social networks and sites such as PA Career Link and Job Gateway; advertised through local colleges and universities; and printed in local newspapers. BCRC also sends representatives to job fairs and regularly hosts open interviews. If an individual is interested in an advertised employment opportunity, applications are accepted online through BCRC's website (under the "Employment Link" heading) or may be sent to Human Resources via Amy Albanese. While prior experience working with individuals with disabilities is preferred, pre-employment training is available. BCRC also offers ongoing training to current staff. Potential candidates should possess good communication skills and be able to work as part of a team. BCRC employees work primarily Monday through Friday. BCRC also offers full-time, part-time, and school year-only positions. Such schedules may be appealing to parents with school-age children or other familial responsibilities. Other major benefits of working for BCRC include PTO and holiday pay being offered to both part-time and full-time employees.



BCRC is always eager to welcome new employees! ■

## Stephanie "Pays It Forward"

by Frank Shialabba

As a home-based staff member of a local service provider, Stephanie Bohon provides services to people with disabilities that help them achieve the outcomes that they have chosen for their lives. As a participant in BCRC's Mental Health Transformation Program, Stephanie has achieved many of the outcomes that she has chosen to pursue in her own life.

After graduating from Geneva College with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services, Stephanie contacted the MHT program for assistance in finding employment. Stephanie initially found employment as a recovery specialist; however, her work environment was not conducive to sustaining her recovery. Over time, Stephanie has become adept at learning the environments and conditions that help her to stay healthy. She, therefore, returned to the MHT program for assistance in finding a different job. She researched opportunities through various internet sites and found a job that involved working one-to-one, providing community habilitation services to people with disabilities. According to WIN Director Sheila Silbaugh, "Stephanie is doing really well. She recently met with a benefits counselor for assistance developing greater independence in managing her finances. In many ways, Stephanie has become more self-sufficient, including her ability to maintain a healthy, happy life. She seeks out the services that she needs and provides needed services to others."

Stephanie is thankful to the MHT program for providing needed support at a key moment in her life. She hopes to "pay it forward" by providing the support that others need through her gifts as a human service professional. ■

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Fax: 724-774-7603  
TTY/TDD Operator Services: 711  
**Website: www.bcrc.net****Shop Talk** *by Marisa Scalamogna*

- This summer has flown by! Staff and clients really enjoyed the BCRC Annual Summer Picnic on June 12<sup>th</sup> and we are all looking forward to the Safety Carnival coming up on September 18<sup>th</sup>!
- BCRC staff and clients are proud of passing our state inspection this year here in the production centers!
- BCRC clients have been working hard on many projects. We have a contract job called “switches” that is an eight step job. During the last quarter the clients made 18,000 switches! Keep up the good work!
- Candy Bouquet is gearing up for another season of open houses. Our fall open house will be September 15<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>! We look forward to seeing you all there!
- BCRC was honored as United Way Member of the Year by United Way of Beaver County.
- BCRC has a drop box at the CenterPlace building where business related items may be placed after business hours. The box is at the right of the main entrance.
- School to Work students offered a delicious lunch for staff and received donations for the client gift fund. The lunch was tacos and cookies and the tomatoes used were from the students very own garden here at BCRC. ■

**Employee of the Month**  
**Production Centers****Alex Berry**  
*May 2015***Taylor Neidorfer**  
*July 2015***Jeff Whipple**  
*June 2015***Ninety-eight Percent are Satisfied***by Cindy Kirkpatrick*

In an effort to provide quality programming for those participating in six of BCRC’s programs, 250 people were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. One very satisfying result showed that 90% felt that their quality of life has improved. Overall, participants feel safe, their needs are promptly addressed and their choices are respected. As to what is best about BCRC, the majority cited staff, the opportunity to work and a sense of community. Of course, there is always room for improvement. Participants would like to see more work, a greater variety of tasks, more activities, different classes and better parking availability. When asked to rate BCRC services, 98% surveyed were satisfied. Information gathered enables BCRC to better meet the needs of its consumers. ■

*BCRC is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

A decorative background for the Fall Open House featuring a large, detailed pinecone in the center, surrounded by vibrant autumn leaves in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The scene is set against a warm, golden-yellow background with faint, embossed leaf patterns in the corners.

*Gifts Delivered  
1517 Sixth Avenue  
New Brighton*

***FALL OPEN HOUSE***

*Tuesday, Sept. 15 - Friday, Sept. 18  
Time 10 - 4*

*724-847-1306*

*724-847-4513*

A decorative background for the Christmas Open House featuring several wrapped gifts in shimmering gold paper, tied with green ribbons and adorned with red berries and green leaves. The gifts are set against a light green, textured background with a few teal Christmas ornaments visible on the right side.

***CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE***

*Gifts Delivered  
1517 Sixth Avenue  
New Brighton*

*Wednesday, Nov. 17 - Friday, Nov. 20  
Time 10 - 4*

*Extended Hours Till 7:00 on Thursday*

*724-847-1306*

*724-847-4513*