



The Competitive Edge

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

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ESY's MISSION: POSSIBLE

by Gina Alberti

Once again, School to Work (STW) hosted its Extended School Year program during the summer. The **Mission: Possible** theme was designed to ensure students had fun while completing goals and objectives.

In keeping with Pennsylvania's employment-first initiative, STW strove to ensure that students ventured into the community to learn about independent living, volunteering and career-building, and securing and keeping a job. Volunteer opportunities not only provided valuable resume additions, but they helped students learn more about the communities in which they reside. Students also encountered new "villains" – like Disrespectful Doug – who created barriers to team building and positive behavior. With actions like 'respect', students learned to conquer these potential pitfalls and work together harmoniously.

While all participants did phenomenal work, STW staff identified two young men who demonstrated exceptional vocational talent. Logan joined STW this summer, so ESY was his first encounter with many of the staff. Initially concerned about the new environment, staff were quickly put at ease when Logan displayed careful attention to instructions, thorough adherence to direction, and a penchant for making new friends. Though Logan is nonverbal, he has mastered typing and was comfortable doing research online.

Devonte was not a stranger to STW, spending one day per week in the program this past school year. STW staffers waited anxiously to see how he would respond to volunteer opportunities in the community. To their delight, Devonte was eager to tackle new activities and managed to retain the new processes he learned. He required minimal supervision and prompting when it came to completing his work.

A big CONGRATULATIONS to STW on a **MISSION** made **POSSIBLE!**■



ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!

by Mary Jo Sanders

The results of the annual client satisfaction survey have been compiled and an action plan has been formulated to address any concerns.

The 219 individual clients polled, 45% male and 55% female, overwhelmingly agreed that they felt like their needs and choices were respected at BCRC, they felt welcome and comfortable and the services they were receiving here are helping them reach their personal, vocational, and/or recovery goals. An extremely large percentage of responders strongly agree that they feel safe and secure at our facilities and are able to easily access the types of individual support needed.

Some things that the clients enjoy most about BCRC are the different work experiences, opportunities to earn wages, feeling a sense of community and friendships within the organization, the helpful staff and engaging in fun activities. BCRC has also learned that it could improve its services by providing a larger variety of paid work experiences and some different classes.

The staff works hard to fulfill BCRC's mission of providing the clients with an opportunity for personal growth and independence while respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each individual. This survey has given us the tools to continue providing services in ways that will best benefit each client. ■

Adam is a Man to be Admired

by Frank Shialabba

Adam Pietrandea believes in filling his days with as much purposeful activity as possible. His supportive parents have instilled a sense of purpose in him that is to be admired and emulated. He is "one in a million" as both a worker and person.

In addition to working at a local country club, Adam also works at a pizzeria, volunteers at his church and takes exercise classes. He is an altar server at his church and recently spoke at a Down Syndrome Convention in Las Vegas. Adam attends WIN Services to improve his academic skills, as he is always trying to do better.

Once in a while, a truly admirable individual enters your life; Adam Pietrandea is such a person. According to WIN Services Director Sheila Silbaugh, "He is a "self-starter who has amazing drive and motivation. His coworkers have to beg him to take a break." Program Specialist, Krista Peace describes him as "an inspiration, who makes other people want to be like him. Adam is always positive and brings a light into the life of everyone who knows him."

Adam hopes to move out on his own and get an apartment in the future. Eventually, he wants to get a house. Adam, you see, always has a goal, and he is always striving to do more with his life. He is truly a man to be respected and admired. ■

Spotlight On: Job Coach Karen Valko, A Calming Influence

by Kelly Newhouse



In the midst of contract work, vocational classes, keeping paperwork and documentation up-to-date, writing case notes, managing a cleaning crew, and spending quality time with those she serves, there is one steady figure: Job Coach Karen Valko. Karen is a calming and solid presence in a flurry of daily activity in BCRC's production center.

As Karen carries out a multitude of duties, her favorite part of the day is working directly with BCRC's clients. Karen is vested in the lives of everyone she serves here. Her hope is that clients continue to "have a choice of what they would like to do and to have those choices respected by others."

Karen joined BCRC three years ago after a 13-year career in materials management at a local skilled nursing facility.

On a personal note, Karen has been happily married to her husband for 30 years. She has a son, a daughter, and a four-year-old grandson, whom she loves spending time with. She spends a great deal of her free time helping out at her church, taking care of three dogs, and doing yardwork.

We thank Karen for her organization and peaceful demeanor that helps BCRC clients learn and grow in a supportive environment. ■

New Program Has Positive Impact

by Jessica Rusak

As of July 2017, Prevocational Services are now referred to as the Community Participation program. This newly named service is a combination of existing facility based training and work experience, and the addition of community membership activities.

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has required that by next year 25% of the participant's time under community participation must be spent interacting in the community. This ratio will gradually increase, resulting in further developed social roles and relationships, increased independence, additional natural supports, and meaningful community participation and inclusion.

According to Kathryn Davis, Director of Client Services, nearly 60 participants are benefitting from this program. "I think this is positive," Davis said. "They (participants) are expanding their view of what is in Beaver County and getting to learn about many different jobs and activities."

Although similar habilitation services exist, this program provides participants the opportunity to establish positive connections in the community. Various outings are scheduled to libraries, thrift shops, fire departments, historical landmarks, and to local community events. "Every day the

participants come in excited that it's their turn to go out," Davis said.

While participants are gaining more independence by helping to make decisions about their day, they're also having fun and are happy visiting places they've suggested. ■



Art Enhances Wellness

by Laurel Baker

At Aurora Services, on a Monday or Wednesday afternoon, the energy in the air seems different. Any other time, the practitioners provide classroom structured learning and discussion. Twice a week, however, this is set aside for a more hands-on approach. The inspiration flows freely, and lesser used parts of the brain are getting a much needed workout. This is Creative Expressions, facilitated by Deanna McCracken.

Deanna is a talented artist and a naturally warm and inviting person, who has been able to offer clients a healthy outlet for their thoughts and emotions. The proud feeling of starting a project and seeing it through to the end is a new emotion for many attendees, and they are pleasantly surprised with what they have been able to create with their own two hands. They have also been given an increased connection to the community by providing artwork for the recent ice cream social.

From magazine art to mini books, affirmation stones and lanterns, the ideas never stop. Deanna believes strongly in "repurposing" by using other peoples' "trash" for artistic treasure. Susan Hill,

Project Assistant, contributed by donating many supplies she unearthed during the move to CenterPlace, and several employees within the agency have brought items they no longer needed. This beautifully parallels the message that Aurora is trying to impart to all clients: that something amazing can be created out of what seems like nothing.

Aurora is truly grateful to be able to offer such an opportunity of growth and resilience as part of its recovery program. ■



Lunch and Learn by Susan Hill and Sabine Kane

Our Executive Director, Paulette Miller, recently invited a group of clients to the boardroom at CenterPlace to enjoy their lunches as BCRC provided the beverages. She informally spoke to them about the building plans and the construction schedule. She also answered any of the inquiries that they had.

Laura Medarac, Buildings and Properties Manager, was also present to show the architectural plans and address any construction concerns. She also informed and discussed CenterPlace's safety procedures.

Further plans for "Lunch and Learn" are to make this a quarterly event. Each manager will have the opportunity to talk to the clients about their departments and the jobs and responsibilities involved.

This is another step on the journey of communicating with clients and staff as we continue our positive transition into the future. ■

Jonathan Dances to His Own Tune

by Adam Loverich

Jonathan Taylor talked about getting a job for the past four years. He felt that the ideal job was working at a local restaurant where he could do western dances with his coworkers.

While doing the "boot scootin' boogie" hasn't quite materialized, Jonathan has achieved a great deal in the world of work during that time. He has demonstrated improved skills as he has worked on various contracts with BCRC, helped to clean a number of properties, and taken on the responsibility of cleaning both Aurora and WIN Services.

After moving to a new residence last year and adjusting to those changes, Jonathan decided to tackle a new challenge. He happily completed the application for the YMCA when they advertised for summer help. Jonathan was "dressed to the nines" when he went for his interview. When asked to do a "working interview," Jonathan handled it calmly and impressed the interviewer with his work skill. It was said to all employees, that if they worked hard at the YMCA, a more permanent opportunity could be extended to the workers that they felt worthy. Jonathan proved his worth and now works competitively at the YMCA three days per week.

While not doing western dances, Jonathan dances to his own tune, as he continues to demonstrate tremendous pride in his job at the YMCA. ■



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Mary's Eagerness to Learn Pays Off

by Jillian Brickley and Frank Shialabba



Mary Richardson beamed with excitement and couldn't wait to tell everyone that she was offered a job in the community. Gaining employment has always been a goal of Mary's, however, transportation was always an obstacle. But her dreams were realized when she was offered a position at a local flower shop that fit her transportation needs.

At Mary's new job, she completes numerous tasks such as cleaning out coolers, taking inventory of tapestries, separating tags, filling buckets with water and food for flowers and processing flowers by stripping the stems and cutting them.

Prior to this community position, Mary gained work experience as part of BCRC's transitional janitorial crew and matured greatly in her ability to work as part of a team. According to Program Specialist Jillian Brickley, "Mary continues to

improve her skills every day, and she is always eager to learn."

Mary is just one of BCRC's production center clients who have achieved success in the community. We wish her continued growth and success in the future. ■

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Fun Welcome to CenterPlace for BCRC Clients

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC's clients were welcomed to the CenterPlace building with smiles, prizes and special events during a two-week period between Monday, June 5 and Friday, June 16. All of the clients have been officially relocated to the CenterPlace building with much fun and fanfare.

BCRC's Project Assistant, Susan Hill, describes the welcoming as "a team effort. Every client and staff person participated in some way. The goal was to introduce everyone to our CenterPlace building and enable them to feel comfortable in their new surroundings while having some fun."

Events included five welcoming breakfasts hosted by Executive Director, Paulette Miller, visits with each department, a black and gold day, drawings for restaurant gift certificates, and visits to the board room candy bar. Clients participated in interactive games while they learned about the function of each department. They won Pittsburgh Pirate and Penguin items as part of black and gold day, had donuts with Ms. Miller in the board room and shared their break with her in the lunch room. According to Ms. Hill, "The success of the welcoming event was evident! The clients expressed their happiness with the CenterPlace building and the opportunity to get to know so many new people." ■

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Shop Talk



★ We would once again like to thank the wonderful folks at Monaca Recreation Board for a great picnic. They have been sponsoring the picnic since 1977. **Thank you!**

★ Paulette treated the clients to ice cream from the ice cream truck on Monday, July 17, in honor of National Ice Cream Day on Sunday July 16.



★ In addition to the CenterPlace building, BCRC clients are now providing cleaning for both WIN and Aurora Services.

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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BCRC currently has two buildings for sale in New Brighton. Both buildings have offices and a production area. If interested, please contact Laura Medarac at 724-378-4750 or lmedarac@bcrc.net.



The former Administration Center,
located at 1517 6th Avenue, New Brighton



The Production Center, located at
601 15th Street, New Brighton

**Employee of the
Month**



Tony Prunty
July 2017



Kathryn Hanton
August 2017



Jessica Donaldson
September 2017

SAFETY LIGHTS

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

The mission of the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center's Safety Committee is to provide for the health, safety and well-being of all clients, staff, and associates through awareness, proactive planning, active monitoring and extensive training. The purpose of the committee is to provide a mechanism to address safety issues within the organization. Additionally, the committee strives to bring workers and management together in a non-adversarial, cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the workplace. The primary purpose is to detect and correct workplace hazards. As an additional bonus for providing a safe work environment, BCRC qualifies to receive a 5% discount from the state of PA for our worker's compensation.

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, 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. BCRC programs are funded in part by DCED.