



# The Competitive Edge

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

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## Quarterly Safety Meetings Provide Useful Information for All Staff

by Mary Jo Sanders

BCRC has recently implemented quarterly safety meetings held in each of our buildings. Laura Medarac, Facilities Manager, prepares the information and acts as host. She schedules the meeting at a time that will accommodate many different schedules, allowing for maximum staff attendance. Our Executive Director, Paulette Miller, also makes time to attend, often interjecting her knowledge and insight gleaned during her many years of service.

Laura covers general safety and building specific information. This education is extremely valuable to the participants. Recent subjects have included emergency response preparedness, the locations of the AED's and fire extinguishers, and the building evacuation routes and destinations. This is useful as both a refresher for long-standing staff members and gives much needed information for newer staff. It also qualifies for training hours for the attendees.

As the seasons change, Laura will address different pertinent subjects including hazardous weather, icy conditions, vehicle safety, etc. She imparts her expertise to all involved with an eye on keeping our many clients and staff as safe as possible.

The quarterly safety meetings have proved to be both interesting and informative; they are even more necessary as we continue to change, grow, and move into the future.\*

**SAFETY  
MATTERS**

## Scott has Passion for Work and Sports

by Frank Shialabba

After approximately ten years of community employment and many more years following sports, Scott Grimes is a seasoned employee and a knowledgeable sports fan. He is very passionate about both endeavors. Scott entered WIN Services from BCRC's School to Work program. He wanted to get a job, be a responsible person and help his family. He has certainly accomplished those goals.

Scott is currently employed at a local Taco Bell. While he started primarily with janitorial duties, Scott has advanced to doing some cooking at the restaurant. Program Specialist Adam Loverich states, "Scott has gained the trust of his employer. He is always reliable and shows up for work on time." WIN Director Sheila Silbaugh praises Scott, "because he never gets discouraged. He thinks ahead and plans what he needs to do for the day. He has mastered all of his tasks both inside and outside the restaurant. He rides the bus independently during the week, and his father takes him to work on the weekends."

Meanwhile, Scott enjoys his passion for sports, especially football. Formally from Texas, Scott follows that state's college and professional teams, and he also roots for the Philadelphia Eagles.

Whether working in the community or following sports, Scott gives one hundred percent of his time and effort.\*

**A good, hard  
worker is a  
valuable asset**

## Recovery Can't Take Spring Break

by Laurel Baker

In Western Pennsylvania, the mere thought of spring keeps hope alive as the last brutal blasts of winter roar through the region. For many, the warmth of the sun, the increased daylight, the sound of birds chirping, and the sudden bursts of color bring a sense of relief and renewed spirit. Logically, individuals with mental health issues should also experience this lift out of the darkness. The reality is that mental health does not tend to follow any logic, at least not in the traditional sense.

Mental health symptoms can actually increase with the onset of warmer weather. Sadly, suicide rates rise in April and May. While researchers have not pinpointed an exact cause for this, many theories do exist, ranging from the impact of sunshine on serotonin levels to pollen responses. One thing remains clear: recovery cannot take a spring break vacation.

Subscribing to the belief that increased knowledge leads to improved coping skills, Aurora practitioners provide participants with information that can help them make educated decisions. Classes on understanding triggers, establishing healthy routines, and the importance of social support all contribute to managing the symptoms of mental illness. There is no one correct way to recover. By offering a myriad of perspectives, tools, and valid resources, individuals can determine what combination of resources will best meet their own needs.

Likewise, educating the larger community about the true nature of mental illness helps create an environment that supports recovery. One in four people in our country have a mental health diagnosis. The awareness that spring can have a detrimental effect for some is just one thing that can lead to greater empathy and better-informed conversations in the overall effort to ensure that individuals connect with recovery-based services.\*



## Be Part of...Your Community

by Jessica Rusak

Communicycle is a unique community service program that collects used bicycles and parts, and then offers the repaired rides to any child or adult who is in need of a bike. This idea launched in 2011, as a way to build relationships within communities by repairing bicycles. This program is a part of the Aliquippa Mission Programs, which is a community outreach organization through the efforts of various area churches.

Did you know that BCRC has collaborated with Communicycle by offering the 1517 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New Brighton building as a temporary workspace for the program? Our location provides ample space for the growing inventory and numerous volunteers. Their goal is to have 1,000 bikes repaired and ready for spring. As of mid-February, Communicycle is *geared* up with over 540 bikes ready to hit the pavement!

From pumping air into flat tires, to needing new parts, the folks at Communicycle will help fix it...no *chains* attached. Children must have permission from their parents and the desire to learn how to fix the bike. If someone is in need of a bike, simply select one from the inventory and in return, agree to contribute his or her time. This 'payment' in the form of volunteering, can include donating time at church, in the community, or even at the Communicycle bike shop. Communicycle believes this exchange helps people to gain confidence, and take pride in their bikes...and their community!

Would you like to donate a helmet, bike part, complete bicycle, or your time? Visit [www.communicycle.org](http://www.communicycle.org) for more information on how you can be part of your community!\*



## RMC Seeks Federal Contracts

by Ian Thomas

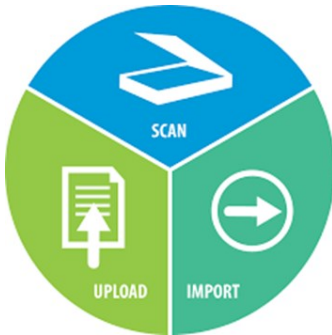
BCRC's Records Management staff recently attended training that may make BCRC eligible for important federal records management contracts. In February, Coordinator Lisa Vesolich and Supervisor Bethany Westbrook traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to attend training conducted by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

NARA is an independent agency of the United States government that is tasked with documenting, preserving and improving public access to government and historical records. For example, it is responsible for the publication of presidential directives and the transmission of electoral votes to Congress.

NARA documents include paper, films, photographs, electronic media, and microfilm.

The training sessions focused on creating and maintaining agency business information, and records scheduling. Upon completion of certification in these areas, the records department will be able to compete for federal records management contracts.

The expansion of the record department's scope and capabilities will create more opportunities for BCRC. Coordinator Lisa Vesolich states, "Due to the strong foundations we've built in the records department, we are now at a place to expand our operations to the federal level. I'm grateful for the opportunity to grow the records department and the potential to serve more clients."\*



## A Memorial to Frank Sniezek

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC lost a long time staff member and a favorite of the clients and staff when Frank Sniezek passed away unexpectedly on January 13, 2019.

Frank enjoyed a special relationship with the clients, who often referred to him as the "Big Guy." He was someone who enjoyed life's little pleasures- good food, fun, and time with friends and family. Frank was known to tell a story or two as he "held court" in his own charismatic way.

Frank came to us more than 45 years ago by way of a student intern program that was sponsored by Geneva College. Frank, a lineman on Geneva's football team, found his calling as a supervisor and later Production Manager. He often spent time with clients overseeing individual work projects, and said that his time working as direct staff support was his favorite.

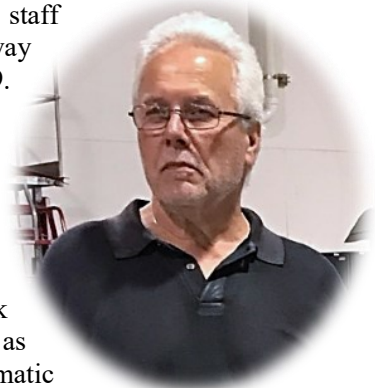
Frank recently retired in June 2018, and became a welcome addition to the BCRC retired men's breakfast group. He added his usual life and warmth to the breakfasts, and he will be sorely missed by his buddies.

On a personal note, Frank always helped me with sartorial appropriateness as he reminded me when I missed a belt loop.

We wish to extend our condolences to Frank's wife Connie and his son and daughter-in-law, Frank Jr. and Marissa.\*



*"Goodbye dear friend."*



☛ February was RAK month (random acts of kindness). Everyone was encouraged to show kindness to others through their words and actions. During Valentine's week, staff presented everyone with chocolates and a note of appreciation/encouragement.



☛ Brianna D'Itri, Medical Advocacy & Community Education Specialist at the Women's Center, presented the basics of domestic violence. The PowerPoint presentation explained why domestic violence occurs, that it includes abuse of any variety in an intimate relationship including parent-child and romantic partners, and how the Women's Center can help.

☛ Patricia Sarver accepted the new position of Janitorial Coordinator. Her eleven years of job coaching experience along with her previous position of janitorial coaching at the transitional mobile sites made her the ideal person to fill the position. Her responsibilities include: train others on proper cleaning techniques, develop a quality cleaning schedule, monitor outside cleaning sites to ensure cleaning standards are met and equipment is in working condition.

☛ The Grinch is not only a mean one but is also a careless one when it comes to safety in the workplace. During his Christmas safety visit, he was observed not following safety rules. Anytime he broke a safety rule, the clients bombarded him with stuffed snowballs. Now he knows we don't mess around when it comes to safety.\*



## Spotlight on: Rodney Brown

by Kelly Newhouse

BCRC Program Specialist, Rodney Brown, is man of both letters and sports who has won many friends at BCRC. In addition to being a wonderful employee, he is an athlete and avid reader.

Rodney has worked with School to Work students for the past two years, and he enjoys seeing the students mature and learn new things. He also enjoys meeting other people from local schools, businesses, and volunteer organizations. Rodney wants the students to be "happy, healthy, and use their abilities the best that they can."

In addition to keeping program documents up to date, Rodney attends IEP meetings, works with families, and develops sites for students to attend. Rodney's former work as a case manager and tutor gives him the experience to create and plan goals and experiences for the students. He often accompanies the students, working alongside them.▶



Rodney, a resident of North Sewickley Twp., has been married for 29 years to his wife Cristina. They have two adult children, Emily and Joshua, and two dogs and a cat that Rodney will reluctantly claim.

Rodney's personal interests are varied and fascinating. He currently has 23 pen pals in 12 different countries. He has had the pleasure of meeting several in person, and would love to meet more. His correspondence through old fashion letter writing and technology has "made an impact" on how he sees the world. Being a history buff, he is especially interested in East and Southeast Asia.

Rodney is an athlete and has been a cyclist for many years. He has toured beautiful places like the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina, the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, and the horse farms of Kentucky. While cycling, he takes opportunity to capture those beautiful sites through photography. His dream is to tour the world on his bike. While his variety of experiences give Rodney a well-rounded background, it's the chocolate he keeps in his office that wins him many friends.\*

## Youth Ambassadors Change Culture of Understanding

by Sabine Kane

The Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) consists of youths residing in Beaver County from 7th through 12th grade who participate in club activities at their schools, promote YAP, represent the program by being change agents at national conferences, and help change the culture of understanding and acceptance of mental health and related issues. Did you know that BCRC has its own Youth Ambassador Club?

The most recent YAP event took place on Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at the Golden Dome at the Community College of Beaver County. One hundred sixty-six students in 7th grade and up from all Beaver County public school districts as well as the alternative options such as Glade Run, CLASS Academy, PA Cyber Charter School, Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School and Beaver County Christian School attended. The keynote speaker came from Drug Free Aliquippa Youth. Additionally, the LGBTQ Web Series "To Be Me" was introduced. All afternoon breakdown discussion groups were student led. Topics included bullying, paying for college, teen pregnancy, stress, social media, and vaping.

Facilitators for YAP are BCRC's own Maureen Hawk and Susan Smith. Maureen stated that it is her personal goal to make the program available statewide by speaking with legislators and the governor during the National Mental Health Awareness Week in May in Harrisburg.

The spring YAP event is scheduled for April 17th again at CCBC's dome.\*



*The Youth Ambassador Program is funded through the BC-SCORES grant which was awarded to Beaver County Behavioral Health through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).*



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*It is the mission of the Beaver County  
Rehabilitation Center, Inc. to provide the  
opportunity for growth and independence  
while respecting the dignity and  
uniqueness of each individual.*



## Leadership Team Play Role in BCRC's Future

*by Frank Shialabba*

BCRC has developed a new leadership team that is composed of a cross section of staff who have shown a desire to help determine the future of BCRC. The Executive Director feels that "there is much valuable input to be obtained by tapping the talents and creativity of our staff." She cites a staff member who voluntarily developed a power point presentation to present her ideas on a particular issue.



Team members are involved in such crucial issues as developing classes, dealing with a changing environment, creating more work opportunities and expanding community participation. Ms. Miller feels that the leadership team concept is consistent with the agency's new mantra "be part of something." She feels that when people are allowed to have input into their future they become more invested in the agency's overall mission and goals. ■

## Embracing Our History

*Chapter 2 by Josh Ward*

Lintz Workshop's (later named BCRC) first Executive Director, Chuck Peters took clients to the first worksites in the community where they had their first paid contracts. One of the paid contracts was making craft items. Another contract was with the American Can Company, where clients worked on lids with fasteners.

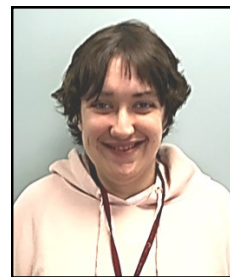
Peters and Samuel Lippincott were there when the workshop moved from a church in Beaver Falls to a theater in Rochester. At this new Rochester workshop, Peters helped 16-year-old individuals with disabilities get into programs. Lippincott, a Lintz Workshop staff member, drove a truck around the community to find work. The clients were able to find work, such as janitorial cleanup, unloading trucks, and other similar jobs. While Lippincott sought out jobs, his superhero sidekick, Chuck Peters worked on a study which turned into the Mental Health/Mental Retardation Act of 1966. Peters then became Executive Director of the MH/MR Program of Allegheny County.

Thanks to Peters, whose dynamic personality paved the way for job seekers just like me, I now am working at a job I love, and my fellow peers have found enjoyable work, too. ■

## Employee of the Month



**Tiffany Strickler**  
January 2019



**Meghan Burkhart**  
February 2019



**Chad Lewandowski**  
March 2019

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