



# The Competitive Edge

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

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## BCRC Takes Active Role in Community Employment

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC looks forward with pride in the past and confidence in the future. It has many new initiatives designed to give people the confidence to pursue their dream of employment in the community. BCRC's production centers, WIN Services, Aurora Services and School to Work Program are all actively engaged in promoting community employment to individuals receiving their services.

BCRC Director of Client Services, Kathryn Davis states "At the production centers, we are doing things to foster community employment. We are speaking with families about some of the changes coming in the future and encouraging individuals to consider additional services and employment." Some other employment related activities mentioned by Ms. Davis are employment classes taught by the BCRC job coaches, and interest inventories that will help staff identify individual client interests so they can tailor work tasks to develop abilities in those areas. In addition, more people are getting a chance to participate in community work sites that will foster abilities and the confidence to try community employment. Ms. Davis goes on to say, "As a department, we have worked for years on creating a great program where people have had the ability to grow, learn, take pride in accomplishments and set goals to achieve what they have dreamed about. We now have the opportunity to do the same with the transition to new services by helping individuals move forward with new goals and services that will meet their needs."

Both individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental illness have benefited from BCRC's efforts. The Mental Health Transformation has been a vital part of BCRC's employment ▶

initiative. In 2008, BCRC was selected to aid Beaver County Behavioral Health (BCBH) in the development of this program. Beaver County's MHT program has helped consumers with mental health disabilities choose and find jobs as part of their recovery process.

All of BCRC's programs have played a part in giving people the tools and confidence to enter the labor force. The production centers initiated the Illness Management and Recovery Program to support persons with mental illness in developing the coping skills necessary to deal with their illness. These recovery skills and self-confidence are the first steps necessary to seek employment. Aurora Services has also developed an employment group designed to promote recovery skills necessary for employment. WIN Services has played its part by giving persons with intellectual disabilities and mental illness access to job search and job support services. WIN uses Supported Employment principles to give persons with mental illness quick, nonjudgmental access to employment support.

Also playing an active part in the employment effort is BCRC's School to Work Program. STW provides high school students with the opportunity to learn good job habits and skills. The program has joined with WIN Services to administer OVR's Pre-employment Transition Services (PETS). WIN Services Director, Sheila Silbaugh states, "A number of staff are getting their certifications in Supported Employment so they can be part of the OVR program." She anticipates that hundreds of school students could potentially participate in Pre-employment Transition.

Active participation in the community is a rewarding experience. BCRC is united in its goal to help as many individuals as possible make this dream a reality. ■

## Summer Employees Represent Six States

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

BCRC's Human Resources department is finalizing the employment of 22 individuals for summer employment. Those individuals will service the departments of WIN, the prevocational program, the records management enclave, and our maintenance department. Our temporary staff includes undergraduate college students, an individual entering Duquesne Law School, an individual soon to depart for military service, and family members of current staff. Colleges represented include Community College of Beaver County, Geneva College, Indiana University of PA, Penn State Beaver, Slippery Rock University, and Westminster College. Other colleges represented span numerous states including: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. We express our thanks to our summer staff as you ease the workload of our current staff and invest in the lives of our participants. ■



## Christina Does One Sweet Job

by Bonnie Boguszewski

Christina Bruce has used her experience at Candy Bouquet to gain an exciting job in the community for the first time. She has been hired to work at Edible Arrangements in Beaver. In February, 2016, Christina began her duties at Edible Arrangements. She assists with building the arrangements and making flowers out of kale leaves.

Christina is well prepared for handling her new responsibilities. She has done many jobs over the last 20 years at BCRC, Inc. One of her favorites is working in Candy Bouquet, where she makes candy roses, puts decorative cellophane on the floral stems, and secures candy onto the wire stems. "She is especially skilled in Candy Bouquet," says Program Specialist Kelly Newhouse. "She is very meticulous about her work and has a great creative flair. She often designs her own arrangements for friends and family."

Christina started at BCRC, Inc. in the School to Work Program and transitioned into the adult program. Along with her Candy Bouquet experience, Christina has worked on a variety of assembly and packaging jobs, and she also goes to WIN Services two days a week. In her free time, Christina likes to cheer on the Freedom Bulldogs, and listen to the high school band. ■



## From Neighbors to Friends

by Gina Alberti

"We have a commitment to fostering independence in participants while providing them with the best quality of life possible." Does this sound familiar? This statement may call to mind the mission of BCRC, but it also reflects the mission of our CenterPlace neighbor, Living Independence for the Elderly (LIFE) Beaver County. BCRC and LIFE bring a specific demographic together in an environment in which participants can socialize.

While BCRC's goal is to teach participants necessary job skills and bring them in to the community, LIFE strives to ensure that participants can remain in their homes for as long as possible by providing them with comprehensive medical care, adult day programs, and support care in the home. On many occasions, participants of BCRC and LIFE have joined together to celebrate their commitment to their clients. On most holidays, a group from WIN Services visits LIFE to sing songs and perform skits. BCRC participants have even stopped by to honor veterans with a special flag ceremony. Organizing such joint events allows participants from both organizations the chance to socialize with individuals they may not otherwise meet, but from whom they can learn. Recently, a LIFE participant taught a BCRC participant how to crochet.

From neighbors to friends, it will be exciting to watch the relationship between BCRC and LIFE continue to develop. ■

## P.E.T.S. Comes to BCRC

The Beaver County Rehabilitation Center has partnered with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide services that will prepare students with disabilities from age 14 to 21 for community employment. The P.E.T.S Program (Pre-Employment Transition Services Program) provides job exploration, vocational counseling, and self-advocacy training in the early stages of the transition process for students.

BCRC's School to Work Program will facilitate group classes in the community centered around the following three subjects: Independent Living Skills Training, Self-Advocacy Training, and Workplace Readiness Training. WIN Services will provide individual work based learning experiences (WBLEs) and job shadowing opportunities. Persons receiving group classes will not have to be a customer of OVR to receive this service. Classes may occur anywhere in the community from school districts to a private room in a restaurant or coffee shop. These classes will, therefore, impact many students in their quest for community employment. Individual Services (WBLEs and Job Shadowing) can only be offered to those in the planning stage with OVR. These opportunities, however, will help students build a resume and, in the case of work experience, provide a wage.

It is hoped that this program will begin sometime in the summer of 2016. ■



## An Ode to Frank

by Susan Hill

{Honoring him as he has written so many}

"Scouting for Food" announced our very enthusiastic Italian accent, Assuring that with his leadership thousands of cans have been sent! The United Way and its' community expressed thanks a bunch, Yearly inviting Frank to include clients for a special lunch.

His Client Picnic baseball game announcing is legendary, Each one assigned a creative name along with playing commentary! Frank wrote Christmas plays and Safety Day skits with fact, Guiding fellow staff to don crazy costumes and pretend to act!

It was noted in 1972 that client social time needed to be enhanced, So weekly Rec Night was born and they danced and they danced! Bringing in records, tapes then CD's which drew many to the fun, With snacks and Halloween costumes giving Rec Night quite the run!

Throughout his 44 years Frank was so loving and steadfast, The amazing good times hold memories that will forever last! This man's heart for the clients has been tender and true, For these highlights mentioned and many others... we honor you!!

*On Thursday, April 7, the last Rec Night dance, Executive Director, Paulette Miller presented Frank Shialabba with a large basket of fruit and thanked him for starting the recreation program and also his continuing support and dedication to the clients.*



## WIN Moves in the Right Direction

by Jessica Rusak

Big things are happening here at BCRC, and WIN participants will soon be able to see those changes in the coming months. After seven years in their current location, WIN Services will be relocating to a larger 701 Fifth Street location in Beaver.

“We knew that it (the property) was coming up for sale, said Facilities Manager, Laura Medarac. We looked at the cost involved and what we could do with the space and it seemed like a match, so we went for it.”

The new location will better serve WIN participants. While still providing direct access to the bus line, the new location is away from the hustle of the main street and offers safe travels when clients are out in the community.

The projected growth WIN is expected to experience means this space will be essential. A monetary contribution in the form of a grant, allowed the move to be possible.

Medarac continues to work with contractors, engineers, and architects as the final phase of the approximately 5,000 square foot renovation is set to begin. Changes to the interior layout and updating the ADA accessibility will be addressed. “The space will fit their (WIN’s) needs much better once renovations are completed,” she said.

WIN will own and occupy both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of the new building. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor remains individually owned healthcare offices. Aurora Services will then take over WIN’s previous space. Things are moving in the right direction at BCRC. “Everyone is very anxious for the move,” Medarac said. “It’s exciting.” ■



## Psychiatric Rehabilitation Makes Dreams Happen

by Laurel Baker

Melissa Coakley, Aurora Services Coordinator, addressed the BCRC Board of Directors regarding the process of Psychiatric Rehabilitation on May 18, 2016. Her presentation is part of an overall effort to educate the community on this growing service designed to address mental health needs. It is also important that the BCRC Board is aware of the emphasis on recovery and empowerment which is central to psychiatric rehabilitation philosophy.

Psychiatric Rehabilitation developed in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s in response to the deinstitutionalization of state facilities. Its original goal was to assist those with mental health issues to reintegrate into communities. Based on a high success rate, it quickly led to a recovery mindset, which had not previously existed in the field of mental health. Individuals with a serious mental health diagnosis can thrive in the environment of his or her choice and live a productive, happy life. This is the premise on ▶

which the current psych rehab discipline is based, and programs such as Aurora Services focus on being person-centered and person-driven. This means that the individual decides the goal they want, and the practitioners teach skills and supports to help achieve this goal.

The Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (PRA) is the professional certification organization that oversees strict ethical standards of practice. A program must adhere to 12 core principles, which center on hope, empowerment, respect, and collaboration. Interventions must be evidence-based and emphasize an individual’s strengths. Practitioners undergo a rigorous certification process that strongly explores cultural competence. Aurora Services currently offers three certified practitioners who, above all else, believe that everyone deserves hope and the opportunity to make dreams happen! ■

## BCRC Has “Band of Brothers”

by Frank Shialabba

If you have ever seen the movie “Band of Brothers,” you have a sense of the comradery that exists between Eric Robson and Chris Piper as they perform their duties at the PA Department of Transportation Driver Examination Center in Chippewa Township.

Eric and Chris clean every week night at the examination center and according to WIN Services Employment Specialist, Sylvia McCutcheon, “They are very thorough.” The two men do very well together and they are able to work independently of WIN Staff. WIN Staffers, Isabelle Ward and Katie Bernard, describe the two as “very good workers who have been able to adjust to many changes in staff without missing a beat. Their work remains excellent when we are not there to check on them.” According to Employment Specialist, John Palmer, “This flexibility extends to their ability to adjust their schedule and priorities according to the season. During the winter they must concentrate more on the front offices and reception area due to the dirt that is brought in from constant traffic.”

Eric and Chris have pride in their job, and themselves. At times they must work during the holiday season and their attendance remains excellent. Eric states, “I love my job!” It is obvious that Eric and Chris love their jobs and the working relationship that they have developed with each other. ■



**Paulette Miller**  
*Executive Director*

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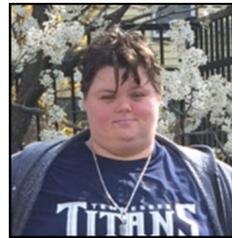
**Website: [www.bcrc.net](http://www.bcrc.net)**

**Employee of the Month**

**601 Production Center**



**Roger McClain**  
*February 2016*



**Katie Hanton**  
*March 2016*



**Courtney Redlinger**  
*April 2016*

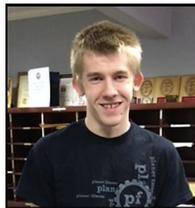


**Jason Kaponin**  
*May 2016*

**School to Work**

**Training Rm #1 Training Rm #2 Production Center**

March 2016



**Kade McDonough**



**Mozelle Shepherd**



**Diamonte Anderson**

April 2016



**Kirstin Neely**



**Courtney Hall**



**Jonathan Churilla**

May 2016



**Dylan McCarriher**



**Susan Bond**



**James Bird**



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