

The Competitive Edge



BCRC, Inc.

131 Pleasant Drive, 2nd Floor • Aliquippa, PA 15001-3515 • (724) 378-4750

Summer 2022

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.

YAP Event Helps Youth Address Mental Health Issues

by Cindy Lauderbaugh

Did you know suicide is a leading cause of death among people ages 10 to 34? Or, that one in six youth in the United States ages six to 17 experience a mental health disorder each year? Beaver County's Youth Ambassador Program held a community event on April 20, 2022 designed to address these and other mental health issues confronting Beaver County's youth.

Over 300 Youth Ambassadors, school district representatives, service agency providers and leaders from the community gathered at the CCBC Dome for a very successful Spring Summit. This group of dynamic young leaders benefitted from a day of learning with interactive speakers, meeting others with similar experiences and interests, and being part of making a difference.

Along with Beaver County System of Care partners, Supervisor Youth Services Traci Hughes and Program Specialist Susan Smith led the initiative on behalf of BCRC. "It was truly beautiful to see schools come together for one important purpose rather than compete and have rivalry," said Traci Hughes. Susan Smith added, "The energy these students generate never ceases to amaze me. Their efforts to bring awareness and acceptance of mental health issues into the schools is invaluable."

The Beaver County Youth Ambassador's Program (YAP) is a youth-centered, youth-driven program that operates in Beaver County schools to change the culture enhancing mental health awareness and acceptance. Student leaders work closely with BCRC staff and other social service agency providers to deliver programs and events in their school districts. YAP representatives actively work to change the culture enhancing mental health awareness and acceptance. Any youth who resides in Beaver County from 8th through 12th grade is eligible to participate. Please contact Traci Hughes or Susan Smith at (724) 378-4750 for further information.



BCRC Lights Up Green and Raises Mental Health Awareness

by Deanna McCracken

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and throughout BCRC, many activities accented support, awareness and promotion of wellness throughout the community. All three BCRC locations lit up with green lights of hope and displayed signs promoting awareness. Staff members utilized these signs to promote awareness in their own neighborhoods.

The Beaver County Zero Suicide Committee / Beaver County Behavior Health also provided signs that listed mental health resources and encouraged ending the stigma of mental illness.

Every Monday, emails authored by staff at Aurora and STW provided education to employees regarding ways to increase attention to wellness. Also, staff from these programs represented BCRC at the Beaver County Bounces Back event at Brady's Run on May 14. This event was sponsored by the System of Care and Beaver County Zero Suicide committee.

Aurora worked with participants to increase awareness regarding mental health resources in the community and continued wellness activities such as "round table talk", creative coping collages, and education on mental health topics.

School to Work engaged in Wellness Wednesdays when coping videos were used in morning lessons. Activities included the creation of mental health-themed pictures and discussion of coping strategies.

BCRC's Mental Health Service Manager Melissa Coakley was featured on WBVP Radio to talk about mental health in Beaver County as a guest of the "We Are at Your Service" show hosted by Valerie McKelvey on May 8. Later, School to Work Program Specialist Susan Smith participated in an interview with KDKA News Radio on May 13.

In coordination with the Beaver County YAP program, BCRC participants and staff showed their support for mental health awareness month by wearing green on May 12. The Youth Ambassadors met at the courthouse on that day to celebrate the Beaver County commissioners' proclamation for May as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Picnic fun returns

by Frank Shialabba

The much-loved BCRC picnic will return on June 10, 2022 after a two-year absence due to the COVID pandemic.

The return of the picnic brings a sense of normalcy to the lives of all involved. This event will be a welcomed relief from the trials that have faced BCRC and the world in recent years.

The annual softball game will allow individuals with disabilities to participate in a spirited competition which is always the highlight of the day. Regardless of their disability, any interested client can be the team member with the potential of driving in the winning run.

While the Pirates may struggle to capture the imagination of local baseball fans, there are always plenty of excited spectators ready to cheer on their favorite teams at BCRC's picnic. Staff get in the spirit of the day as umpires, pitchers, coaches and designated runners.

In addition to the game, our friends at Monaca Recreation always provide a delicious meal and staff will run a bingo game for those who wish to try their luck.

Our thanks go out to the wonderful volunteers from Monaca Recreation and to the BCRC staff who always make this such special day.



5 Steps to Ground Yourself in the Moment

Take a deep breath and then do the following ...

- Describe **5** things you see in your surroundings
- Name **4** things you can feel or touch
- Listen for **3** things you can hear
- What are **2** things you can smell
- Think of **1** good thing about our current situation

Janitorial crews keep BCRC safe

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC's janitorial crews have been a bright light during the dark times of the pandemic. According to BCRC Executive Director Paulette Miller, "BCRC's janitorial crews have excelled in providing cleaning services to BCRC's buildings and the community. I often get comments about the cleanliness of our buildings".

BCRC Building Manager Laura Medarac lauds the cleaning crews as "a vital part of BCRC's COVID response. Our success throughout the pandemic is due, in large part, to how well the crews cleaned and disinfected our facilities. These crews took on a very important role in keeping everyone safe. Visitors and new staff rave about how clean our facilities are."

BCRC has several different janitorial crews. There are in-house crews, as well as eleven community sites. These crews may be manned by clients from the Production Center, WIN Services, or the School to Work program.

BCRC's janitorial programs are set up so the clients learn and build their janitorial skills. Gradually, they move on to more difficult sites and increase their hourly pay.

Ms. Medarac states, "I love watching the clients progress through the program, learning new skills, and reaching their next goal."

Chad celebrates nine years of employment

by Kristina Beal

This year, Chad Lewandowski will celebrate nine years of employment at Giant Eagle in Aliquippa and 20 years working in BCRC's prevocational program.

Chad has achieved success in both of his jobs due to his many positive attributes. BCRC Program Specialist Amy McClymonds says Chad is "well organized, friendly, has good work ethics and is respectful."

At Giant Eagle, Chad typically works two days a week as a bagger. He maintains his job independently and receives follow-along job support on an as-needed basis. He receives positive feedback from his managers regularly.

At BCRC, Chad enjoys "seeing my friends" and earning additional money while having a consistent schedule and continuing to grow vocationally. He works on a variety of piece-rate and hourly-paid jobs at BCRC including preparing state documents for scanning, box assembly, packaging, electrical plunger assembly and handling glass products.

Chad's goal is to keep working at both of his jobs as long as possible. He also enjoys playing baseball, basketball, and mowing grass.



May 12, 2022: Aurora staff sporting swag in support of mental health awareness and acceptance

Sara's leadership makes a difference by Frank Shialabba

Sara Tesnovich is a generous individual, who is seen by her employer as a potential leader.

Sara has excelled in her job where she has worked in the women's clothing department for the last two years. She sorts, tags and racks clothing. Sara was placed in the job by BCRC's WIN Services. WIN Program Specialist Madeline McGee states, "Sara caught on fast and she's doing so well. She is accurate and very detailed. Sara is hard working and always willing to take on extra tasks."

According to Ms. McGee, Sara has also developed interaction skills like compromising and working as part of a team. "She is friendly, loves meeting new people, and being involved in new things."

Sara is involved in a number of things like crafting and volunteering to help others. Her generous spirit shined through recently when she suggested that WIN make donations to a local hospital. Sara led the way and she used her artistic skills to make "kindness cards" for the patients.

While giving to others, Sara has also gained in her quest to be more independent. Her job has allowed to save money, that she hopes will soon lead to her own apartment in the community.

Sara Tesnovich is truly a success in her current job and she is learning and growing each and every day. She has shown her ability to lead others and to make a difference in this world.



Highly successful United Way executive retires



by Frank Shialabba

Michael Rubino will be retiring in 2022 as Executive Director of the Beaver County United Way.

Rubino was a highly successful fundraiser who achieved his goal to "help more people, all kinds of people" as he led local United Way campaigns since 2014.

Rubino was convinced to leave his position as Director of Advancement at Quigley High School by his friend, former United Way Director, Bruce Simmeth. Rubino was highly successful in his role at Quigley where he increased development funds by more than 300%.

Prior to his position at Quigley, Rubino raised funds for WQED, a Pittsburgh public television station.

Success followed Rubino to the United Way as he reinvented the agency's fundraising efforts.

Rubino was steadfast in his commitment to individuals in need throughout Beaver County. He stayed positive even during the pandemic years that delivered a "body blow" to the local campaign.

Rubino's leadership will be missed by the 17 United Way member agencies and the many people that have benefited from his commitment to serve others.

In the Spotlight

AMY McCLYMONDS



She's "part of something bigger" by Ian Thomas

Program Specialist Amy McClymonds believes that at BCRC "you are part of something bigger". Amy was hired in September of 2018, and she quickly became a "part of something bigger" as an integral member of BCRC's staff.

Amy was initially hired as a job coach, working with clients in the Production Center and in the community. She loved her time as a job coach and says, "It was rewarding to see clients gain confidence as they experienced volunteer opportunities, such as at a thrift shop where they helped sort and hang clothes."

When BCRC reopened after the COVID shutdown, Amy took on the added responsibility of client and staff wellness screenings. Screening temperatures and individual wellness helped BCRC to mitigate the spread of the virus. Amy also considered it a great way for her to meet co-workers in the different departments of the organization.

Eventually, Amy became a program specialist. In this position, she strives "to recognize each client's role in the learning process as active participants, decision makers, and problem solvers."

Despite ongoing challenges such as the pandemic, Amy finds her efforts to be satisfying. "The most rewarding part of my job is helping others. It is such a joy to see clients learn new skills and build on skills they already acquired." She hopes to increase community participation opportunities for BCRC's clients in the future.

Amy feels that BCRC is "making a difference" and she, too, strives to have a positive impact on the lives of others.



Executive Director

Paulette Miller

BCRC Board of Directors

- Janice Kaminski, President
- Joseph Martonik, Vice President
- Madge Nichols, 2nd Vice President
- Robert Kadilak, Secretary
- Lucas Rihely, Treasurer

Tracey Antoline-Patton, Ren Bartoe,
Donald Bolland, Arthur Cornell, Jr.,
Grant Farmer, Sarah Gardner,
Thomas Helsing, Michael Nalli,
Natalia Onufrey, Richard Sheffield

Competitive Edge Editorial Staff

Mary Alviani, Kris Beal,
Jessie Dvorzak, Deanna McCracken,
Mary Jo Sanders, Ian Thomas
Sean Sen ... Website Editor
Frank Shialabba ... Copy Editor
Cindy Lauderbaugh ... Layout

CenterPlace Office

(724) 378-4750

Fax: (724) 378-4526

WIN Services

Fax: (724) 775-0419

Aurora Services

Fax: (724) 774-7603

TTY/TDD Operator Services: 711

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.



Staff members from BCRC's School to Work program pose for photo wearing green in support of National Mental Health Acceptance and Awareness

Back row (left to right): Tricia Sarver, Todd Weischedel, Eden Smith, Pam Butler, Rodney Brown, Katie Wisniewski. *Front row (left to right):* Cindy Lauderbaugh, Bekah Zagorski, Bethany Buchmann, Traci Hughes, Susan Smith, Jess Boso, Kim Hildman

Employee of the Month



Joe Poling
April 2022



Chad Lewandowski
May 2022



Chalk Talk

School to Work students participated with five area school districts in Chalk Talk at the Beaver County courthouse on May 12, 2022.

Beaver County commissioners declared the day as Mental Health Awareness and Acceptance Day in Beaver County.