

**FOUR BCRC STAFF MEMBERS  
ATTEND CANDY BOUQUET TRAINING**

*by Pat Healey*

**B**CRC staff members Elizabeth Green, Sue Middleman, Jill McAlister and Pat Healey traveled to Little Rock, Arkansas in early July to learn the business of creating, marketing and selling Candy Bouquet arrangements.

During the full week's training, the foursome learned to securely attach delectable gourmet candies from the United States and all over the world to sturdy wire stems along with beautiful cellophane and foil squares. The stems were then arranged in various containers to create what Candy Bouquet refers to as "A Delicious Alternative to Flowers." The arrangements are every bit as beautiful as flower arrangements but with added benefits; they will not wilt and die, and best of all, can be eaten after they have served their purpose as decorations.

The parent company, Candy Bouquet International, Inc., is dedicated to the success of each and every franchise. Training was intense and dealt not only with arrangement design and creation, but workplace setup, inventory control, customer service, marketing and sales, and worker comfort and safety.

An average arrangement will offer at least 10 different job tasks to BCRC workers from preparation of the container and creating the actual arrangement to packaging the item for delivery.

Candy Bouquet International, Inc. presently consists of over 500 active franchises in the United States and all over the world. During the training session BCRC attended, six groups from the continental United States and a group from Egypt, who will establish a store in Cairo, joined them. Future training sessions offered by the parent company include groups from the Bahamas and from Lebanon. BCRC workers have truly become citizens of a much smaller world through our association with Candy Bouquet.

**Gerry VanAman Retires  
After 16 Years with BCRC**

*by Jennifer Gengarella*

**E**xchanging her pencil and adding machine for the beach and golf, BCRC's Business Manager, Gerry VanAman, retired in August 2001. After 16 years with BCRC, Gerry plans to relocate to Bradenton, Florida with her husband Rip. Her son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Sylvia will be living next door to her.

Listing her hobby as her work, Gerry states that, "I will be without any hobbies when I retire." She is eagerly anticipating the arrival of her first grandchild, and expects to "do a lot of babysitting." She also plans on "sitting in the hot tub, learning golf, and seeing some club activity." She also enjoys the fact that she will be only twenty minutes from the Gulf of Mexico and much closer to her daughter who lives in Tennessee.

Starting as a bookkeeper for BCRC in March 1985, Gerry has seen "the tremendous progress BCRC has made"

over the past sixteen years. She reports that she will miss all of the people associated with BCRC. She will especially miss singing Mac the Knife in the morning with one of BCRC's clients. She has many fond memories of BCRC, such as riding the blue bus to the Gateway Clipper and bringing Christmas trees back on that same blue bus from the Festival of Trees.

Gerry will be missed by everyone at BCRC. She has been a respected coworker and friend, and an integral part of the progress made by BCRC during her last sixteen years.



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**Charles Quetot Wins  
"Gold Star" Award**

*by Kathleen Ayers*

Former BCRC employee, Charles Quetot, recently received the Gold Star Award presented by the Holiday Inn of Beaver Falls. In his typical modest fashion, Charles replied, "I am just doing my job."

Gold Stars are presented to Holiday Inn employees nationwide who exemplify exceptional customer service and who go above and beyond the normal course requirements for their job. According to Holiday Inn dining room server, Renee Beltoni, this is exactly what Charles does on a consistent basis. She said, "We are *never* letting Charles leave our shift. I can speak for all the daylight servers when I say, "He's the best." Charles goes out of his way to help everyone, both customers and employees. He is truly deserving of this honor."

Ms. Beltoni also commented that, "it takes some people four to five years to get a Gold Star and some employees never get one." Charles received his Gold Star in record time. Charles started working at the Holiday Inn in October of 1999. Charles' BCRC Job Coach, Colette Johnston, commented that, "Charles is so deserving of the Gold Star. From the first day he started working he would always help the waitress out. He wanted to work and receiving the Gold Star did not

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## Callus is Reminder of Both Struggles and Success

by Frank Shialabba

### Gold Star (con't)

impress him in the way it might have for some people because Charles has a tremendous work ethic and helping spirit."

Regional Director of Operations, Diane Jaggerz, presented Charles with his Gold Star at the Holiday Inn while Charles was working. Charles takes it all in stride for, to him, "this is what we all should do at work for everyone all the time." That attitude is precisely why Charles has his Gold Star. Congratulations Charles on a job well done!

### Employees of the Month Speak Out

by Jill McAlister and Michael Bell

Randy Fox was Employee of the Month for May. He has worked at BCRC for 19 years. He tries to maintain a good work attitude by "thinking positive and keeping busy." Over the last few months, Randy has completed his goals and increased his workdays. He has also worked at the Records Management Center and the Applied Concepts enclave. Randy was "surprised and happy" to win the award. He is thankful that he can make his parents proud of him.

Niaga Griffin was Employee of the Month for June. Niaga feels that she has greatly improved her attitude at work, and she is always willing to try new jobs. Niaga has worked at BCRC for one year and she is proud of the progress that she has made. She hopes some day to "get a job in the community, either cleaning or working with children."

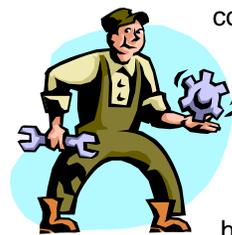
The Employee of the Month for July was Jessica Donaldson. Jessica has worked at BCRC for two years. She feels that her

Joe Pflugh of New Brighton looks at the callus on his right thumb and smiles. The callus reminds him of both the struggles and successes that he has experienced over the last few years. Until he decided to find employment at the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center's Records Management Program, Joe experienced mostly hard times.

After a period of unemployment, Joe began his employment at BCRC in November of 1998. He doubted his ability and felt uncomfortable with other people. Joe recalls that, "There have been lots of obstacles to overcome." Things changed quickly, however. Joe says, "At BCRC I felt like I was really needed and appreciated." Program Specialist Betty Schotsch states, "Joe truly was needed and appreciated. He did his work thoroughly and was always willing to do anything he was asked to do." Joe was asked to do everything at the Records Management Program and according to Job Coach, Sue Leiper, "He did it well." Joe worked on scanning, microfilming, computer indexing, and CD duplicating. Joe liked the variety of the work and the supportive atmosphere provided by BCRC. According to Ms. Schotsch, "BCRC provided a good place for Joe to learn to problem solve. He learned how to handle the stress of working, and he developed good relationships with his coworkers."

Joe's natural ability and newly developed coping skills enabled him to achieve community employment at

Advanced Alloys in Ambridge on July 24, 2000. Joe was apprehensive about leaving the supportive environment of BCRC, but staff assured him that BCRC's support would continue. Joe was entrusted with some of the complicated assembly of plastic parts at Advanced Alloys and quickly began to excel. BCRC Employment Specialist, Colette Johnston states, "Joe is very quality conscious, as well as being very fast. His supervisors like him and trust him to do some of the



company's most difficult jobs." Joe is as conscientious as he is quality conscious. When he had to miss work recently for some medical tests, he made sure that he made up for the production that he missed on his day off. Ms. Schotsch states, "Joe is always at work, always on time and always ready to do his best."

According to Ms. Johnson, "Along with being a successful worker, Joe has evolved into a more complete and confident person." Joe has achieved successful employment and is now working on getting his own apartment. Joe shrugs off praise from his coworkers and states, "Many people were responsible for my getting ahead." He can't help but smile though when he looks at that callus, because as Joe says, "I got it from working really, really hard."

## An Original Celebrates Thirty Years

by Debbie Howell

Grocery store shelves are lined with products labeled "original" sitting beside new products. Although not a grocery store, BCRC also has an original.

Frank Shialabba reported to his new job on September 27, 1971 as BCRC's first "Rehabilitation Counselor." That makes him the "original" Program Specialist. Back then, the "Counselor" made house calls; and all of the approximately 60 BCRC clients on Frank's caseload received a home visit. Early that first year, Frank started the Recreation Program dances. Thirty years later, "Rec Night" has grown to be a popular program for BCRC clients as well as consumers in the community. It was the first of many "original" projects and activities that Frank would create and refine.

Although Frank's duties have evolved and changed over the years, it's plain to all who know him that caring for the clients has remained his primary focus. As coworker Kay Podbielski says, "The clients are Frank's life, not just his job."

Frank feels he has a "close bond with the clients of BCRC" and he says, "I enjoy the fact that they associate me with some of their favorite BCRC activities."

## **An Original (con't)**

Staff members also associate Frank with some of their fondest memories. Several staff members expressed a sentiment similar to Sandy Rizzo's when she says, "Frank's creativity and talent are like a gift, which he freely shares with all of us." Coworkers reminisce about the original poetry written to commemorate each special occasion, and many of the staff fondly remember the early days of client talent shows and hilarious skits, which Frank would write, produce, direct and act in. "He was the Sid Caesar in BCRC's Show of Shows," states Kathy Davis.

Newly hired coworkers appreciate Frank's kind and helpful personality. Joan Bell, who worked with Frank at the courthouse enclave remarks, "He made me feel welcome at BCRC, and always had time to answer my questions or step in to help me."

It's often the simple things that make working with Frank a pleasure, like the "Top-o-the-mornin' to you" done in perfect Irish brogue on St. Patrick's Day, or the cheers and giggles that follow his morning announcements during the ever-successful Scouting for Food Campaign. Then there's his hilarious Mike Lang style announcing at the Client Picnic softball games. Executive Director, Paulette Miller says, "Frank always had a way of making work more fun. I guess that's what we've come to expect from him, and all the other work he does is just icing on the cake."

Frank was appointed Project Director in 1990. Now Frank coordinates Staff training and oversees one of BCRC's federal programs. His current position also allows him to utilize his love of writing as editor of the Competitive Edge, writing proposals, and writing agency policies and job descriptions.

Frank goes above and beyond his job description to advocate for BCRC in the community. He has been the voice of BCRC at a great many public speaking engagements. In the late 1980's, Frank became the Beaver County Special Olympics Outreach Coordinator after having started a popular Special Olympics Program at BCRC. The enthusiasm still emanates when he tells about the tournament at the A.J. Palumbo Center. "Our basketball team, 'Y Slamma Jamma,' overcame an eight

point deficit in the last two minutes of the game to win a gold medal as a client sank a three point shot at the buzzer." Just as memorable to Frank is the 25 run loss to the state softball champions.

Frank has been a past board member of ARC, served three terms as President of the Beaver County Mental Health / Mental Retardation advisory board, has been a recipient of the ARC Appreciation Award, the Special Olympics Leadership Award, and the Special Olympics Special Friends Award.

It seems that BCRC's "original" does a lot more than sit on the shelf with the new products! Yet in his characteristically humble way, Frank states that he believes the "good old days" for BCRC are today. He is proud of the high level of service that the current Program Specialists and Job Coaches provide to the clients.

Yes, Frank, the "good old days" are with us now and will be with us as long as the original is here to set the standard. Happy 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **BCRC Clients Praise Working Conditions**

*by Kay Podbielski*

The forecast for BCRC promised to be cool and comfortable this summer as all of the facilities are now completely air-conditioned. The air conditioning was financed in part from savings that the agency received from the Workmen's Compensation carrier as a reward for its excellent safety record. Members of the Power Team, which is made up of participants of BCRC's vocational programs, had high praise for the comfortable work environments. Team members remarked that the cool work areas make working easier and more comfortable. The conditions of BCRC's buildings also received high praise during the annual licensing inspection in April, as one of the inspectors commented that the Production Center was the nicest facility she has ever visited.

Building renovations will continue as the construction for the new courtyard is scheduled to start soon. The courtyard is designed to facilitate a safe, efficient traffic flow at arrival and dismissal times, as well as provide an attractive area for relaxation during breaks and lunch periods.

## **Employees (con't)**

pleasant disposition is accomplished by having an all-around good attitude. Jessica says she was very excited about winning the title. She thinks her excellent hygiene and hard work also contributed to her award-winning month. She plans to use all of these qualities to find "a good job" some day.

Congratulations to all of the Employees of the Month for your hard work.

## **Autism is Neurological Disorder**

*by Janice McGhee*

**A**utism is a neurological disorder caused by dysfunctions of the body, especially of the brain. It is a spectrum disorder, which means there are differing degrees of intensity of symptoms in each individual. Some of the symptoms displayed by Autism are irregular learning patterns, extreme sensitivity to sound, touch, sight and smells, an inability to hear or understand speech patterns, unusual or no communication skills and an inability to relate socially to others. Often, the frustration caused by these dysfunctions result in behavioral problems ranging from high anxiety to temper tantrums to aggressive behavior towards themselves or others.

Given the severity of this disability, the question remains, how can persons with autism be helped? Some of the answers may be in developing a steady routine with careful reinforcement for positive behavior as well as providing an atmosphere where there is social acceptance.

## SHOP TALK

*by Paula Cordes*

### **Competitive Edge Editorial Staff**

Kathleen Ayers  
Jessica Cataldo  
Paula Cordes  
Pam DePace  
Jennifer Gengarella  
Pat Healey  
Debbie Howell  
Colette Johnston  
Jill McAlister  
Janice McGhee  
Kay Podbielski  
Frank Shialabba  
Pat Tengeres...typing & layout

### **BCRC Board of Directors Officers**

Maureen Donnelly, President  
Michael Rayz, 1<sup>st</sup> VP  
Commora Woodfork, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP  
John Francis, Secretary  
Marilyn Furno, Treasurer

- BCRC recently received 100% on its state inspections for all three of its buildings: the Production Center @ 601 15<sup>th</sup> Street, the Records Management Center @ 401 Seventh Street and its Administration Center located @ 1517 Sixth Avenue, all in New Brighton. Congratulations to all for a job well done.
- BCRC would like to welcome Erin McGraw and Roni Wise to its staff, along with workers Laura Lowen, Tom Craig, Stefanie Pushinski, Anthony Easton and Carl Boler.
- BCRC recognized a number of employees for their outstanding effort during the recent Scouting for Food Campaign. Among those enjoying the award luncheon on July 10<sup>th</sup> at Chi Chi's were Holly Schwab, Tony D'Agostino, James Lary, Randy Fox, Darrick Cockfield, Julie Bogdan, Patty Wagner, Duwayne Haskins, Debbie Zubroski, Ammie Jo Brandon, Trina Hall and Phil Mabin.
- Employees at the Production Center will soon be enjoying a new courtyard located right outside the front of the building on 15<sup>th</sup> Street. This project is part of the new Community Services Block Grant plan to renovate the parking lot and provide safety for BCRC's workers.
- Although weather forced the August 10<sup>th</sup> picnic to move from John Antoline Memorial Park to the Monaca Turners, it was still a success. Music, games and bingo highlighted the day. The food was plentiful and outstanding, as were our gracious hosts, the Monaca Recreation Department.
- More than 200 golfers attended the John A. Antoline Memorial Golf outing held July 27<sup>th</sup> at Blackhawk Golf Course. A portion of the proceeds raised by the John A. Antoline Memorial Foundation is used to pay for BCRC's annual Christmas Party. Our thanks go to the Antoline Foundation and to Darrick Cockfield and Julie Bogdan for helping with the day's events.