

**BCRC Chosen as “Best Practice” Agency**

*by Kathleen Ayers*

BCRC’s Supported Work Program has been chosen as a “Best Practices” Program. BCRC was invited to be a presenter at “Keeping Our Communities Working: Workforce Development from a Grassroots Perspective,” held at the University of Pittsburgh in Oakland on October 26, 2001.

The invitation was extended from the Regional Coalition of Community Builders in co-sponsorship with the following: University of Pittsburgh’s School of Social Work and the Institute of Policy Initiative, the United Way of Allegheny County, Workforce Connections and the Career Development Program Network.

Numerous Western Pennsylvania agencies attended in different capacities. Project Success, BCRC’s Supported Work Program, was responsible for sharing their methods and techniques for the success of their Supported Work Program.

Case Manager, Dawna Bott and Employment Specialist, Kathleen Ayers attended and manned an informational table that highlighted the program’s mission, objectives and procedures. SWP brochures, a synopsis of the program and other informational literature were distributed. They networked with over a hundred people who stopped by their table for literature or to inquire about Project Success. Many people inquired about the Adkins Life Skills Program, a component of BCRC’s Supported Work program that teaches career development and planning.

Both Dawna Bott and Kathleen Ayers thought the session was informative and that it provided a great networking opportunity. They were amazed at the positive response to BCRC’s Supported Work Program, in addition to feeling gratified that BCRC Supported Work Program was chosen as a “Best Practices” agency.

**Many Staff Certified in Specialized Areas**

*by Jessica Cataldo*

The BCRC is committed to providing quality services to the people we serve. We believe that staff training is a key factor in developing quality programs. BCRC recently initiated the TheraEd program, a series of twenty-one self-instructional courses in areas such as Autism, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Value Based Caregiving, Mental Illness, etc. All BCRC staff are required to complete and receive a passing grade on every TheraEd course. In addition to TheraEd and the required training staff receive yearly, a number of staff have received certification in specialized areas in the past year. Staff certifications received during 2001 includes:

- Colette Johnston, Wendy Summa, Ivy Russo, Linda Smega, Jessica Cataldo, & Marianne LaSalle are certified by The Commonwealth of Virginia University in Supported Employment.
- Candy Bouquet International certified Pat Healey, Elizabeth Green, Sue Middleman and Jill McAlister.
- Colette Johnston received certification as licensed sign language interpreter.

**BCRC Selected as Payment Agent**

*By Kay Podbielski*

In the spring of 2000, the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center was selected by the MH/MR program of Beaver County to serve as the payment agent for the Person Family Directed Support Waiver (PFDS). PFDS is a Medicaid home and community based services waiver for individuals with mental retardation living at home with their families or in other community settings. Homemaker/chore, day habilitation, supported employment, prevocational, respite, and transportation are among those services provided for through the waiver. Environmental accessibility adaptations and adaptive equipment can also be obtained. As payment agent BCRC is responsible for ensuring that the providers of these services are certified according to the specific standards set forth by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The

payment agent signs letters of agreement with each provider identified by the individual participant, his/her family and the Base Service Unit case manager. The payment agent also orders equipment and submits payment for services that have been specified in the participant’s Plan of Care and Budget. BCRC coordinates the training for the providers and is a member of a team along with representatives from MH/MR and the Base Service Unit to ensure that services are being provided according to the waiver guidelines. Although this is a brand new role for BCRC, our history of fiscal responsibility, experience with state regulations and work with individuals with mental retardation, along with strong relationships with other service providers, have facilitated the addition of this new program.

**Certified** (continued) page 2

## ☺ **Don't Worry Be Happy!**

*by Frank Shialabba*

▪ Betty Schotsch received certification from IASPRS as a certified Psychosocial Rehabilitation Practitioner.

▪ Elizabeth Green, Ruth Porto and Heather Frazzini are certified as First Aid/CPR Instructors by the American Red Cross. Elizabeth is also a First Aid Instructor Trainer and a First Responder Instructor.

▪ Frank Shialabba is certified by the Crisis Prevention Institute as a Crisis Prevention Trainer.

▪ Ivy Russo, Wendy Summa and Raylene Boots have completed the THERAED training program.

▪ Tony Innocent and Jim Smith are certified Tow Motor Operators and Tony is certified to train Tow Motor Operators.

David Moffett's eyes grew large and his skin tingled as he looked with shock at the BCRC Christmas Party program. David was listed as winner of the Competitive Employment Award. David had not expected the honor, and he was characteristically humble. His nervousness, however, was anything but characteristic. Program Specialist, Sheila Silbaugh states that, "The BCRC Christmas Party was the only time I have ever seen David nervous."

BCRC staff have seen steady growth and improvement as David has moved through various levels of vocational programming. David began working in BCRC's Production Center and quickly advanced to Applied Concepts. As one of BCRC's top producers at Applied Concepts, David was recommended for competitive employment. BCRC's supported employment staff placed David at Advanced Alloys in Ambridge on May 22, 2000. The song "Don't Worry Be Happy" would best describe David's attitude about his job at Advanced Alloys.

David has accepted every challenge with a calm and quiet resolve. Program Specialist Sheila Silbaugh states, "I have never seen David rattled." As an assembler, David inserts a tiny fork into a one quarter inch opening in a piece of felt. When the felt is not perfect, a number of things can go wrong. Instead of panicking, David accepts the fact that not every piece of felt will be perfect. When a piece of felt is bad, he simply moves on to the next piece. David also knows that life does not always run smoothly. However, he continues his record of steady attendance and positive attitude about his job.

David feels that his current job "is the best job I have ever had." He enjoys the positive atmosphere at his job and likes the fact that "we all get along." He also enjoys the independence that his pay check brings him. Because of his employment, David is able to live independently and to purchase a new car. He displays the confidence and easy laugh of someone who is content with what he has accomplished.

During these times of uncertainty, it would benefit us all to adopt just a little of David's calm outlook on life. I know that whenever I see him, I feel like singing a few bars of "Don't Worry Be Happy."

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### **Employees of the Month Speak Out**

*by Jill McAlister  
and Delores Dean*

The BCRC Employee of the Month for November was Cheryl Beightly. Cheryl has worked at BCRC for a year and a half and has been an exemplary employee. Her motivation to keep working hard is knowing that every step she takes here will get her closer to finding a position in the community. Cheryl was very excited to find that she had won Employee of the Month, even though she is unsure how she was chosen. She states, "It shows me how much I

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### **Psychiatric Rehabilitation Proposal Approved**

*by Kay Podbielski*

The state and county have approved a proposal submitted by BCRC to receive funding to develop a psychiatric rehabilitation program in Beaver County. Psychiatric Rehabilitation is designed so that people with psychiatric disabilities may increase satisfaction and success in the program environment of their choice. The ultimate goal is recovery, however, recovery is defined according to the definition of the person receiving services. Recovery may be a decrease in inpatient hospitalizations, decrease in symptoms, improved quality of life, etc. BCRC will utilize the Boston University approach. This approach helps people choose, get and keep the roles in life that are important to them. These include roles in their living, learning, working and social environments. Participants can choose a flexible schedule in either a site based or community setting.

Roni Wise has been hired to oversee the program. She is committed to the program and feels that "it gives clients choice. They get to pick their services and direct their goals. Psychiatric Rehabilitation is driven solely by the people who are involved in the program. It requires optimism, hope and creativity on the part of everyone involved." Joining Ms. Wise in the program are Psychiatric Rehabilitation Specialist Kathy Smith and Psychiatric Rehabilitation Worker Cindy Henry. They believe that this service will fill a service gap that exists in Beaver County. They also hope that people participating in the service will reduce the length and occurrence of hospital stays. Most of all they look forward with optimism to a future where individuals with mental illness can choose their own life goals in an environment of their choosing.



## Clients Love Candy Bouquet

By Frank Shialabba

BCRC's new Candy Bouquet venture has been a breath of fresh air for many of BCRC's clients. They have expressed their delight in being involved in the process of creating something so beautiful. Donna Runyon states, "I like working with the candy and flowers." According to Job Coach, Sue Middleman, "Donna has quickly developed the skill of making candy roses. This is one of the more difficult steps in making the bouquets and Donna just gets better and better." Ms. Middleman is enthused about

**BCRC staff sold Candy Bouquets, candy, etc., during the recent Valentine's holiday. Pictured are Pat Healey (left) and Kathy Davis.**

working with Candy Bouquet, and she enjoys seeing the progress of the individuals involved. She states, "I really like teaching the clients the different jobs. There is such a variety of work. I have a great crew; they are improving daily!" Job Coach Elizabeth Green agrees that, "the confidence of many individuals has grown significantly." Stacy Quick is one member of the group who has grown in confidence. Along with attaching candy and cellophane to the wire stems, Stacy has also been involved in arranging the bouquets.

According to Pat Healey of BCRC, some clients handle the more skilled aspects of Candy Bouquet, while other BCRC clients are involved in cutting stems, packaging candy, and putting tips on the stems.

During the recent Valentine's holiday, BCRC sold bouquets at two locations. According to Ms. Healey, "sales exceeded expectations." I wish that all of the clients and staff of BCRC could see the smiles on people's faces when they saw the bouquets. All of BCRC's clients and staff play a role in the success of this project and they should be proud of the progress that has been made."

## Employees (continued)

have accomplished in the past year." Cheryl has big plans for her future, including going to college where she plans to begin in January.

Davis Huff earned the title Employee of the Month for December. Davis has worked at BCRC for five years. He says that the way he keeps a winning work attitude is to "stay cheerful and be happy." Part of the reason he won this award is by his daily participation in the Say Yes to Contract contest recently held for all BCRC employees. Davis said that being recognized for his efforts "feels good." He plans to continue to work at BCRC in the future.

January's Employee of the Month was Michelle Morgan. Michelle thinks that "working quietly" is one way that she is able to keep her attitude about work a winning one. Michelle has worked at BCRC since 1997. She believes that she was chosen for the award for being a good worker and doing the work she was assigned everyday. Michelle admits that she was excited when she found out that she had won the honor. She does not have any definite plans for the future, except to "keep on working."

## Safety Highlighted During Week of Activities

- BCRC celebrated its annual Safety week from February 11 to February 15. This year's event featured a wide array of activities designed to promote safety awareness and to make both clients and staff aware of safety procedures. The Brobeck Company presented a film on fire safety, and answered questions from an inquisitive audience. Clients and staff also had an opportunity to use a fire extinguisher.
- Medic Rescue visited BCRC and BCRC's clients were able to become more familiar with the Emergency Medical Technicians by talking with them and viewing the inside of an ambulance. Clients learned that the emergency personnel are friends who are not to be feared.
- There were additional presentations on pedestrian safety, universal precautions, BCRC's Exposure Control Plan, and vehicle passenger safety. Safety Committee Chairperson, Janet Simon, coordinated this year's activities with the help of the BCRC Safety Committee.

## Safety Lights



BCRC recently replaced two doors at 1517 Sixth Avenue, New Brighton. Heavy metal doors with security locks were installed for added safety. The doors have large windows which allow staff to screen visitors.

## **SHOP TALK**

*by Pat Healey*

### **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...layout

### **BCRC Board of Directors**

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John Rackley, Hon. J. Q. Salmon,  
Jack Simon, William Steele,  
Delores Tisdale, Mary Welch

The BCRC Client Christmas Party was held Friday, December 14, 2001 at the Monaca Turners. This year's party was possible due to a donation from the John A. Antoline Foundation. Gift certificates for pizza were provided by Pizza Joe's (New Brighton) and Pizza Outlet. McDonald's provided their delicious orange drink and Wendy's (Monaca) supplied coupons for frosties and french fries. BCTA donated free ride passes and King's Family Restaurant offered gift certificates as well. Boxes of candy, supplied by Local Union 712 IBEW, were given to each client at the conclusion of the party. Congratulations are in order for the following BCRC award winners:

- THE SAM LIPPINCOTT AWARD: **Jessica Cogis**
- THE BETTY MEADOR AWARD: **James Lary**
- THE COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT AWARD: **David Moffett**
- THE WILLIAM LEWIS AWARD: **Donald Midon**

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The following new staff have joined BCRC: Mike Little as Program Specialist, Raylene Boots as Program Specialist, Lorrie Elms as Job Coach and Gloria Beighey as Receptionist.

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Recent training attended by BCRC staff are: HIPAA Issues, Fair Labor Standards Act and Red Cross First Aid and CPR Training and Certification, Microsoft Outlook, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Front Desk Security, Supporting People with Difficult Behavior.

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Two of BCRC's business friends and supporters are retiring from their longtime positions.

- Randy Brown, District Administrator of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in New Castle retired on January 11, 2002. Marianne LaSalle and Frank Shialabba represented BCRC at a retirement dinner given in his honor on January 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Al Dahma will retire as the Administrator of MHMR in March of this year. BCRC wishes to express it's appreciation for the assistance and friendship both gentlemen have offered to us over the past decades. We wish them both the very best.

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BCRC recently held a Valentine raffle to raise money for Christmas gifts for the clients of BCRC. The winner of the Valentine Candy Bouquet was William Steele of the BCRC Board of Directors.