

MR Services Undergo Statewide Transformation

by Kay Podbielski

Services for persons with mental retardation are in the process of undergoing a statewide transformation. The transformation was initiated by the Office of Mental Retardation to create a more person and family driven system that promotes individuality and choice. The quality of supports and the health and safety of people receiving those supports and services will be closely monitored.

The framework for the transformation was provided by the values and vision expressed in Everyday Lives. Everyday Lives was published by the OMR Planning Advisory Committee which includes people with disabilities and families. The development of Everyday Lives focused on what people with disabilities and families said was important to them and the kind of supports they needed.

BCRC has been working on transformation since 2001. The project is being coordinated by Kathy Davis, Director of Client Services. A committee has been established to review all of the information coming from the state and ensure that each department within BCRC meets the deadlines. Ms. Davis explained that, "Each piece of the transformation project has generated new internal workings for providers to ensure choice, quality, and health and safety for the people we serve. It has been a great deal of work, but if transforming means better supports and services for people with disabilities, it will be time well spent."



BCRC Starts New Program in Beaver

by Cindy Kirkpatrick



After over a year of searching and negotiating for the ideal building, BCRC's Psychiatric Rehabilitation program has found a home. With the acquisition of the Aurora Building at 363 Third Street in Beaver, the program is expected to begin full operation by early March. Executive Director, Paulette Miller, feels that "the Beaver location is ideal. It was worth waiting for a site that matched the criterion established for the program."

The Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program will assist people with psychiatric disabilities to increase their success and satisfaction in an environment of their choice. The building had to be easily accessible to both those who drive and those who use public transportation. The Aurora Building is professional, yet welcoming and will provide consumers with opportunities to enjoy shopping, community activities, restaurants, banks and convenient transportation in Beaver's attractive business district.



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New Contracts Come to BCRC

by Pam DePace

It smells sweet at BCRC! Many of BCRC's new contract jobs tease the senses. One of our newer ventures is an order fulfillment service for a company in California. This company supplies spas all over the world. BCRC stores their fragrant oils, lotions, and teas, along with other spa products. We also receive their orders by fax and pack and ship items to their customers. This worked out well for them because one of their major manufacturers is located in Beaver Falls.

BCRC will also soon become soap makers. One of our good customers has expanded our packaging service and we will now make one of their products from start to finish. We will have a soap melter/filler, molds, and will make soap and package it. In addition, a local development center has been sending us a variety of small jobs that range from placing a foam buffer on a plastic product, to inspecting parts for defects. As always, BCRC continues to look for new company contacts and business ventures.



Employees of the Month Speak Out

by Julie Bogdan,
Mary Jane Hudak,
Davis Huff, Pam Kelly,
Mark Kerns, Mike Little,



Michael Hitt was very happy when he learned of his recognition as November's Employee of the Month. Michael has made a great effort to improve both the quality and quantity of his work. He has a great attitude towards work and to his co-workers. Perhaps his smile and warm personality have helped him get along so well with others. Michael's great attitude about work is apparent from his statement, "You should feel good about your work. Making money helps." Michael has also had good attendance since he began working at BCRC in June of 1990.



Davis Huff has been named the December Employee of the Month. Davis is a gentle person who began working for BCRC in 1996. About one year ago, Davis moved to a new building, which meant new job coaches and new co-

New Board Officers Elected

The BCRC Board of Directors has elected a new group of officers for 2003. Michael Rayz is the new Board President, while Commora Woodfork and Dolores Tisdale are serving as First and Second Vice Presidents. John Francis is the Board Secretary, while Mary Welch is serving as Treasurer.



New Board president, Michael Rayz is proud of his association with BCRC. He says, "I have served on the Board for

a number of years. I was on the board before Paulette Miller became Executive Director in 1990. During this association with BCRC I have witnessed an impressive increase in the array of programs and services provided by the organization. We can attribute much of this growth to the leadership and vision provided by Paulette Miller. Our fortieth anniversary will truly be a celebration due to the success of BCRC and the successes of our clients."



Anna Looks to the Finish Line

by Frank Shialabba

Anna Wychryk took one last powerful stroke and left the swimming pool to the cheers of her teammates on the Blackhawk High School swimming team. Meanwhile, in the stands, Sheila Silbaugh, BCRC Supported Employment Program Specialist, marveled at the discipline and determination of this young lady. She recalls the incident vividly, "It was obvious that nothing was going to stop Anna from finishing the race that day. She had such a look of determination on her face. Nothing could distract her from her goal, not even the cheers of the crowd."

Ms. Silbaugh was introduced to Anna again when she was referred to the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center for community employment in 2002. Anna, age 20 of Chippewa, always wanted to work at Geneva College. She told her parents that some day she would have a job at the school. She graduated from Blackhawk High School, but she did not face the future with the typical doubts of High School graduates. She knew what she wanted to do with her life. Ms. Silbaugh describes Anna as "a very determined individual. Her parents raised her to be independent and to make good decisions."

BCRC gave Anna the opportunity to experience employment at Geneva College through a vocational assessment. She immediately impressed her coworkers with her work ethic and her desire to "give her all" to the job. Shortly after this "trial period," she was asked to return to Geneva as a permanent employee. Upon meeting Anna, I was taken by her confidence and comfort level. She graciously instructed me to "please follow me" to the dining room, where she spoke freely about the "love of my job." Anna says, "I make a lot of good money and a lot of good friends." BCRC Employment Specialist Linda Shawger says that Anna is "a dedicated worker who is also very generous toward her coworkers." Ms. Shawger describes one incident when she visited Anna at work. "I wanted to talk with Anna but she told me, 'I'm not allowed to talk now.' Anna truly knows how to separate her work and social time. She is determined to do the best job that she possibly can."

Anna's desire to "do her best" extends to many facets of her life. She volunteers as an assistant for the Blackhawk girl's basketball team and sings for her church choir. Through it all, she remains close to her family and credits them for always believing in her.

Anna's family believes that she can dream big dreams, and accomplish big things. Anna's employers at Geneva College believe in her. They believe in her boundless energy and her capacity to give greatly of herself. Most importantly, Anna believes in herself and she faces life with the determination of the Blackhawk High School swimmer who always had her eye on the finish line.



Safety Month Celebrated, Three Receive Safety Awards



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For the fifth straight year, Brobeck Co. presented fire safety and fire extinguisher training during Safety Month festivities celebrated at BCRC during the month of February. Activities were highlighted by the annual Safety Day held on February 14. As part of the annual fire safety training, clients and staff were given an opportunity to actually operate a fire extinguisher. Clients and staff also participated in a spirited question and answer session following a fire safety film. Annual Safety Month activities also included daily safety tips, Safety Bingo, training on hand washing techniques and Bloodborne Pathogens training. Clients and staff received free soft drinks and coffee on Safety Day, courtesy of Karnavas Co., while ten clients were the lucky winners in a Safety Day drawing. The drawing was sponsored by Selective Insurance.

Executive Director Paulette Miller presented BCRC Safety Awards to three staff at the annual staff Christmas Party, held December 23 at Jeffrey's Landing. Pat Householder, Dawna Bott and Susan Leiper were recipients of this award. The awards were presented to recognize outstanding contributions to the safety of BCRC's clients and staff. The awards were sponsored by Guard Insurance, Selective Insurance and Henderson Brothers Insurance Brokers.

Ms. Householder conducts monthly safety inspections at the Administration Center and 601 Production Center. She assists with fire drills, readiness for state licensing, and implementation of safety recommendations. Ms. Leiper oversees safety related issues at the Records Management Building. She also assists with implementation of safety recommendations and readiness for state licensing. Dawna Bott is responsible for the organization and updating of required federal and state postings for BCRC buildings. She also takes charge of any safety related issues at the BCRC Evaluation Center. All three award recipients have been members of the BCRC Safety Committee for the past five years.

Congratulations!



workers. Change is not always easy, but Davis adapted well to his new situation. He has made new friends and became more outgoing with his co-workers. In addition to adjusting socially, Davis has made great improvements on his work skills and his work pace. He has shown particular improvement on making boxes

Mark Kerns has faithfully attended BCRC over the years. This terrific attendance record is just one of the many reasons he has been chosen as January's Employee of the Month. Through the years, Mark has gained considerable work experience and knowledge. Mark has always been willing to take on any job assigned to him. As Mark modestly says, "You take a job assignment and you do it." Mark sets very high goals for himself. He tries to maintain a good workplace and to be a role model for his peers. If anyone has a question about the local bus schedules, Mark is the man to see. He is always willing to lend a helping hand to co-workers when there are problems. In addition to his work, Mark maintains a variety of interests. He loves to work with numbers and is very knowledgeable about local and national politics. BCRC is fortunate to have such a dedicated and intelligent employee.

BCRC PRODUCTION CENTER PROVIDES VALUABLE SERVICES

BCRC is seeking to create partnerships with area companies that will give them a cost efficient source of labor. These partnerships also result in new work and training opportunities for BCRC clients. BCRC provides assembly/sub-assembly, sorting, refurbishing, heat-sealing, packaging, weighing, inspecting, gauging, drilling, deburring, or tapping jobs in our workshop. BCRC has several drill presses, high-speed saws, grinders, heat sealers, air powered tools and standard specialty tools. If a project is steady in nature and can utilize at least eight clients three days per week, BCRC can set up an enclave, and do the work on-site at the company's location. A supervisor is provided. Otherwise, the



project can be done in one of BCRC's production centers. Pickup and delivery service is available. BCRC now has a large shrink tunnel and can shrink wrap a variety of items.

BCRC Mailing Services can also provide valuable assistance to area companies. Services include collating, folding, labeling, sealing, sorting, stapling, stuffing, tabbing, and include local post office deliveries. BCRC is willing to do small projects that are often rejected by the larger mailing houses.



*If you know a company that is in need of one of these services, please call either **Pam DePace** or **Frank Sniezek** at **724-847-1306**, and they will be glad to discuss your project.*

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SHOP TALK

by Paula Cordes



What a hit this year's Client Christmas Party was. The highlight of the festivities was the staff's performance of the original skit written by Frank Shialabba. It was so much fun to see Frank Sniezek perform as "Tiny Tim" or to catch a glimpse of former staffer Elaine Alberts' rap as Snoop Doggie Dog. If the clients had as much fun trying to figure out who each character was as the staff did in performing for them, then it was a resounding success. Our thanks go out to the John A. Antoline Memorial Foundation for once again sponsoring the Client Christmas Party.

Have you seen a lot of blue sweatshirts with the BCRC logo walking around town lately? That might be because each client this year received a beautiful blue monogrammed shirt as their Christmas gift from staff. These heavy, well-made shirts were a big hit with everyone. For information or to purchase a sweatshirt, call 724-847-1306. I'm sure we'll have your size. 



When you see Leahan Bock and Peggy Sue Tribone please congratulate them. They went to full-time on January 27th.

Our Candy Bouquets were recently sold at the Beaver County Courthouse for Valentine's Day. Whether you picked up a chocolate rose for your sweetheart, one of the many floral arrangements or a gift basket featuring coffee, tea, cookies, candles or collectibles, we had it all. If you're still in the market for corporate gifts or custom wedding favors and accessories, stop by our BCRC lobby at 1517 6th Street in New Brighton where a lot more are on display. 



Much of the staff training this quarter focused on TheraEd Training. This consists of 21 courses ranging from Dual Diagnosis, Bipolar Disorders, Anxiety and Personality Disorders to Autism, Sleep Disorders and Issues with the Aging Process.

BCRC's Fortieth Anniversary Open House has been set for Thursday, October 16th from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. and Friday, October 17th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please mark your calendars as you are invited to attend. 