

Executive Director Honored

by Debbie Howell



BCRC, Executive Director, Paulette Miller recently received two honors for her service to persons with disabilities and her contributions to the community. ARC of Beaver County presented the ARC Recognition Award to Ms. Miller at their annual banquet at Franzee/Javy's on May 16. Ms. Miller was also nominated for the Beaver Valley Business and Professional Women's Club's (BPW) esteemed Athena Award.

The ARC Recognition award was presented in recognition of Ms. Miller's "Outstanding performance and dedication of the highest standard of excellence for those you serve."

Approximately twenty-three of Ms. Miller's family, friends, Board members and coworkers supported her at the banquet. She thanked her family for their love and guidance. She thanked her friends for their support, and she praised the BCRC staff for their dedication and commitment. She also thanked "Monaca", a person with mental retardation that she met many years ago at a Special Olympics Tournament. Although she didn't know "Monaca's" name, Ms. Miller was able to establish a bond that made Monaca feel important and remembered. In turn, "Monaca" inspired Ms. Miller to pursue a life of service.

Ms. Miller was also recognized for this life of service through her nomination for the Athena Award. Several of Paulette's family and coworkers attended the Athena banquet at the Fez on April 23. Ms. Miller summed up her feeling by saying, "What a wonderful honor to be nominated with a group of women who give so much back to the community."

Committees Seek to Expand Work Options

By Pat Healey

Two BCRC committees are constantly pursuing an ever expanding variety of work for the clients of BCRC.

The "Research and Development Committee," active for several years now, investigates new business ventures and new items for BCRC clients to produce. "Gifts Delivered Featuring Candy Bouquet" was born from the work of that committee. In order to grow that business, BCRC workers will create bouquet containers and package gift candies that are pleasing and attractive. Opening a separate store in order to offer retail experience to BCRC's workers is another promising venture that is currently being considered. The store would showcase the products made by BCRC workers.

The newly formed "Quality Control Committee" is responsible for analyzing the many ideas presented to its members. This committee also determines items that will be produced and sold and those that need more time in development. The purpose of this committee is to assure that all products sold to the public are of the highest quality and consistency. The criteria for the bouquets are set by the parent company, Candy Bouquet International, Inc. Gift candies will be judged on taste, aesthetics and area competition.

BCRC takes the challenge to offer new and different work for BCRC clients very seriously. Working to do just that, the Research and Development Committee and the Quality Control Committee are constantly moving forward in their quest for new and exciting work for the clients at BCRC.

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Scouting For Food Has Record Growing Season

by Frank Shialabba



While spring flowers blossomed, boxes of canned goods, cereals, peanut butter, tuna fish, etc. grew higher and higher at BCRC. This could only mean that the "growing season" for BCRC's annual Scouting for Food campaign had begun. In 2002, BCRC clients and staff combined to set new records for the Scouting for Food Campaign. One thousand one hundred and sixty items were donated to Beaver County food banks and soup kitchens as a result of the generosity of BCRC clients, staff and their family and friends. As the food items are awarded different values, the BCRC collection totaled record three thousand two hundred eighty-seven units of food. Ninety-one people (60 clients and 31 staff) participated in this year's campaign. James Lary once again did an excellent job of coordinating the campaign. This project is truly a representation of the spirit of caring that exists at BCRC. BCRC clients and staff celebrated that spirit with a pizza party. As we enjoyed our pizza, we thought of the many individuals in Beaver County who will have food due to the Scouting for Food Program.

Are You Looking For New and Improved?

by Frank Shialabba

Looking to the Stars

by Frank Shialabba

We all excel at many things,
And we want others to know
how good we are.

Maybe we know a lot about
computers,
Or maybe we are just great
at working on cars.

Please talk about our
abilities,
Not the times when things
went wrong.
Let us stick out our chests,
And may the list of our
accomplishments be long.

But what about people with
mental retardation,
Just who are they?
Well, we define them as
those people who can't
Get jobs, get married or even
make a decent day's pay.

We'd like to help them
Because we think that we
are the best.
And those poor people with
mental retardation
Were just given a little less.

But maybe, just maybe,
We need to be shown
That all people want to be
defined
According to what they know.

People with mental
retardation
Want to be held in high
esteem.
They want to be thought of
as a key member
Of our work place, and our
social scene.

So throw away those
definitions
That lower the bar,
And define people with
mental retardation
As people who can look to
the stars.



The Beaver County Rehabilitation Center celebrates forty years of service to people with disabilities in 2003. Many people recognize BCRC's years of distinguished service and applaud the growth and accomplishments of the agency. Others, however, look for something "new and improved." If these individuals take a close look at BCRC, however, they will see that BCRC combines "new and improved" with continuity and experience. The agency has grown steadily over the years, adding new programs and facilities, updating older facilities, and adding to the depth and quality of staff training.

BCRC not only meets state regulations and guidelines for vocational facilities, it usually exceeds them. The state requires that staff working directly with clients have 24 hours of annual training. BCRC direct staff more than doubled that with an average of 55 hours of training in the last training year. Last year BCRC instituted a series of 21 related courses that all staff are required to complete and pass. Staff received training in such areas as positive approaches, behavioral supports, mental illness, legal and ethical issues of service delivery, value based care giving, incident management, and more.

In addition to extensive training, BCRC staff possess a wealth of experience in vocational programming. BCRC's management personnel average 20 years of experience working with persons with disabilities in a vocational setting. Most management staff have worked directly with clients at some point in their career. Many have been recognized with awards and positions on County Advisory Boards. This experience has allowed BCRC to follow a course of steady growth while maintaining quality and continuity.

BCRC has been able to add new programs without sacrificing quality. Programs such as Candy Bouquet, Micrographics, preparation of diet kits for The Medical Center and document preparation at the Courthouse have shown BCRC's willingness to be creative. New programs such as Project Success have received statewide recognition. Psychosocial Rehabilitation is at the vanguard of new services for people with disabilities, and BCRC will lead the effort in Beaver County.

In addition to expanding programming, BCRC has focused on developing state-of-the-art vocational facilities that combine safety, comfort and practicality. Some state officials have called BCRC's facilities, "the best they have ever seen." BCRC has strived to provide real work in a real work setting. The centers are clean, well-lit and air conditioned, but they are also geared to facilitate the production and completion of a variety of jobs from business and industry.

BCRC is, by far, the most experienced provider of vocational services in the area. Experience, however, does not mean "old-fashioned." BCRC's Research & Development and Safety Committees are at the forefront of a continual effort to provide a growing variety of quality services in an atmosphere of safety and support.

Me and My Job

by Janice McGhee

Jim Chambers has always been willing to accept new challenges. Jim began working at BCRC on August 25, 1987. However, he just recently received one of his greatest challenges. Jim has been chosen to work in the Candy Bouquet work group. He looks forward to using his many work skills to make the unique candy and flower arrangements.

Jim is known for his mechanical skills and meticulous work habits. These

strong work habits have enabled him to work on jobs such as switches, Applied Concepts and Good Samaritan Enterprises. They also helped him to win the Samuel Lippincott Award in 1995. This award is presented to persons who work to overcome barriers in employment. Jim's job coach, Sue Middleman, notes that Jim has overcome many barriers and improved his work greatly. There are many reasons for Jim's success, however, he simply states, "I like to earn money and I like the people I work with."

Stacy Doesn't Quit, Realizes Her Dream

By Kathleen Ayers

Screenwriter Jerome Cady has said that "Fear has nothing to do with cowardice." Stacy Russo had some anxiety when she started at BCRC in February of 1989, however her motivation was stronger. Stacy set a goal of 'competitive employment' for herself and she didn't quit until she realized her goal.

By all accounts, Stacy is a hard worker who according to Director of Client Services, Kathy Davis, "kept working through all the programs at BCRC until she reached her goal of working competitively."

Stacy worked in BCRC's workshop, the Rank and Good Samaritan enclaves, and then moved to the Skills Training Program at Goodwill Industries. Program Specialist, Karen Buccelli states, "Stacy *always* wanted a job in the community. She worked extremely hard at achieving that goal but when the time came to leave her friends at BCRC she was a little hesitant."

Stacy had to leave her friends in addition to the comfort and routine of working at Goodwill. The reassurance of Skills Training Job Coach, Linda Smega, and the support of Employment Specialist, Wendy Summa, helped a great deal. To ease the transition, Linda Smega prepared Stacy for her new job at Foodland in Center Township. Stacy worked at Foodland

from November 19, 2001 until it closed in 2002. When Foodland closed, she had to deal with another change. Stacy began working at Shop N' Save as a bagger on March 23, 2002.

As Linda Smega states, "Stacy's concern about leaving BCRC was not unusual, but that's exactly what the program is designed for. BCRC helps clients transition to the Skills Training Program and then into competitive employment. Stacy is a very dedicated individual who can work in the community."

Shop N' Save Manager, Brian Cenderich says, "Stacy is always here when scheduled and she does whatever is asked of her. She always does a good job. The customers and the staff all like her. I can tell you she was so happy to be hired by Shop N' Save and we're happy to have her work here too!"

Supported Employment Specialist Wendy Summa echoes those sentiments. She states, "When Foodland closed, Stacy interviewed for Shop N' Save confidently and made the transition to the new store. In fact, she told me 'I don't need you anymore!'"

Fear is only a problem when it stops you from reaching your dreams. Stacy has reached her dream of competitive employment and as Wendy Summa states, "We are all happy to see how far she has come."

Employees Of The Month Speak Out

by Jill McAlister

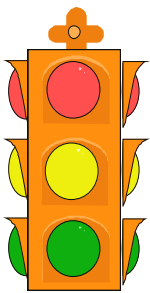


The Employee of the Month for February is Tom Dinterman. He believes he won the award by having good work habits. According to his job coach Trina Hall, Tom never misses a day of work and wants to try all jobs, no matter how challenging. Tom feels the key to keeping a good work attitude is to, "not complain, and do what my bosses tell me to do." Tom's try, try again work ethic paid off when he was chosen to work at the Allegheny Metal-working enclave. Tom also has held a competitive job at Pizza Hut washing dishes.

Shirley Fogel is the Employee of the Month for March. Shirley says that, "concentration and reaching my goals," are what keeps her motivated to do excellent work. Shirley's program specialist Kathy Smith says, "Shirley has made more improvement in the last six months than I have seen in her since she began in 1994. Her attendance is excellent, and she comes in with a positive attitude and really tries to be the best she can be." Kathy also states, "Shirley is very cooperative, helpful to her co-workers, and she learns very quickly."

The employee of the month for April is Dennis Gibson. Along with following directions, working hard is what Dennis believes has made him an outstanding worker. He says his favorite jobs are assembling strap hinges and bearings for Advances Alloy.

Safety Lights



BCRC received one hundred percent for all three program buildings during the annual state inspection. This is the fourth straight year that all three buildings have received one hundred percent. State inspectors particularly praised the efforts of BCRC to improve traffic flow at the 601 Production Center through the addition of the new courtyard. BCRC's Safety Committee was also lauded for the thorough nature of building inspections, the emphasis on safety training, the frequency of fire drills, the thoroughness of safety postings, and the efforts to follow through on safety recommendations. State Inspectors recognized the efforts of BCRC's

Safety Committee and commended it as an extremely active and productive group. The Competitive Edge congratulates the Safety Committee and all BCRC staff for another successful inspection.

SHOP TALK

by Paula Cordes

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Seven individuals from Riverside High School participated in Beaver County's Third Annual Youth Day of Service on May 2nd. This year's event was sponsored by PA Representative Mike Veon and the BRIDGE Program. Four seniors (Kimberly Boots, Hope Blair, Laura Hollerman and Nicole LeFebvre) and three juniors (Heather Marsh, Jessica Stabryla and Lori Gaus) spent their day at BCRC washing walls and windows, pulling weeds and sorting candy. The student volunteers enjoyed a buffet lunch at Center Stage after their hard work. Our thanks go out to them and teacher Kathy Walton-Hooker for all their hard work. It's great to see our youth getting involved in these programs.

BCRC has welcomed a number of new staff over the last couple of months. Joining the Accounting Department was JoAnna Flook while Leahan Bock works as a job coach in the workshop. Marty Shafer has been working with our Psychiatric Rehab Program since coming to BCRC in April. Welcome to all!

Candy Bouquet has bouquets available for graduations, birthdays, new babies, holiday celebrations, special events, center pieces, weddings, showers, children's parties, corporate gifts, etc. Candy Bouquet's patriotic arrangements would make nice gifts or center pieces for Fourth of July celebrations. Candy Bouquet also sells gourmet candy beautifully wrapped or arranged in decorative "towers." After productive sales of Mother's Day bouquets at the Beaver County Courthouse, the core group is looking forward to new prototypes for the fall and Halloween bouquets.

BCRC has said goodbye to long-time inspector, Pete Cannon. Mr. Cannon has been involved with state inspections of BCRC for the Office of Mental Retardation over the last 19 years. A small celebration with cake and good wishes was attended by all workers at both the Administration and Production Centers.

This year's Client Picnic is scheduled for Friday, August 9th at Allaire Park. This is one of our big highlights for the year so we encourage all workers to come out and enjoy an afternoon of good food, good friends, some games and maybe even a BIG Surprise!!

BCRC continues its commitment to improving staff skills through training. Recent trainings have included Team Building, The Transformation Project, Incident Management Reporting Process, the Joy of Stress, Utilizing Natural Supports, Sales & Use Tax, and Handling People with Tact and Skill.