

Dennis Retires After 29 Years

by Frank Shialabba

After twenty-nine years of faithful service, Dennis Gibson of Beaver Falls retired on Friday, July 31, 2009 from the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center. More than one hundred of his family and friends attended ceremonies at BCRC's Administration Center and Production Center.

Dennis received a gold watch from BCRC staff and clients and a bag of cracker jack from Program Specialist, Frank Shialabba. The gold watch symbolized Dennis' contribution to BCRC, while the cracker jack symbolized his wonderful sense of humor and the many jokes that he has "cracked" over the years.

Staff serenaded Dennis and his family with a song that was meant to capture the spirit of his playful sense of humor.

Dennis will be living with his sister Diane Ramirez in Beaver Falls, and as usual he will be surrounded by friends and family.

Congratulations Dennis, have a wonderful retirement and don't forget to "phone home" to let us know how you are doing. ■



Dennis Gibson receives a gold watch.

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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH SPEAK OUT

by Mike Little

Where has the year gone? It's half over already, but one thing is certain; the clients are still working hard to be named Employee of the Month.

Nancy Lewis was given this honor for the month of April. Nancy has been with BCRC since 1993. For the last sixteen years, she has attended work regularly and kept a good attitude about work. Nancy is excited about winning the April Employee of the Month, and she is proud to be the winner. Future plans for Nancy are to continue to work at BCRC.



Henry Ours is the May Employee of the Month and proud of it. Henry believes that he does a good job on the janitorial sites and contract work. Henry is very excited about being chosen for this award. His good work made it possible to be selected. Henry plans to continue working at BCRC.



The Employee of the Month for June was Jimmy Josapak. Jimmy has been coming to BCRC since 2000. Jimmy feels his hard work and good work attitude have helped him win the award. When Jimmy was asked how he feels about winning he said "I feel great." Jimmy believes that he is a good worker who tries hard. As Jimmy looks to the future, he would like to have a job working in a bakery. ▶

BCRC Enters World Market to Get Work

by Pat Healey

BCRC has entered the world market place, and clients are once again enthusiastically sorting financial documents.

The current economy has seen a cutback in the local work force, resulting in less work for BCRC clients. However, BCRC has aggressively entered new work partnerships to generate more work for our clients.

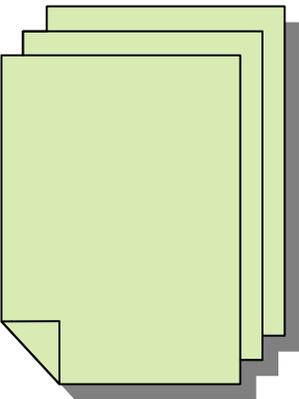
BCRC clients who traveled to the enclave in Moon Township for three years were saddened when those trips ended in December, 2008 due to the economic downturn. However, two former employees of the Moon company persevered, and resurrected much of the same work through an alliance of two different companies. They reached out to BCRC to make us a part of this new team.

The Beaver County Rehabilitation Center quickly joined forces with a 6000 person organization, headquartered in Chennai, India. BCRC also established working relationships with FEDEX, two settlement companies and many new team members from all over the country and the world.

BCRC began to slowly receive file packages and introduce clients to the new project. Currently, an average of 30 closing files arrive daily from two different companies that need to be prepared, scanned, and shipped. Once files are prepared and scanned, they are transmitted to Chennai where quality control measures assure that everything is in order for real estate closings. Upon direction from the settlement companies, the files are then shipped from our location to destinations determined by the settlement companies.

Since the process is taking place in BCRC's records management building in New Brighton, there are many more clients who can participate in the project. It is hoped that the number of files and the amount of work will grow steadily as the project progresses.

Clients are having little difficulty learning the work as it duplicates their old job in Moon Township almost to the last detail. BCRC moves forward confidently as it embraces new and exciting opportunities, while never forgetting old friendships. ■



You have read three different perspectives from the Employees of the Month but one thing is certain, all the winners enjoy their jobs. ■

Safety Lights



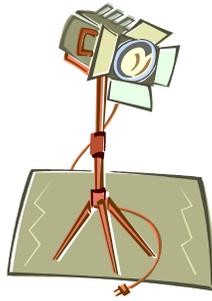
by Cindy Kirkpatrick

Statistics show that 60 percent of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips. Slips happen where there is too little traction between the footwear and the walking surface. Common causes of slips are wet or oily surfaces, weather hazards, and loose rugs or mats. Trips happen when your foot collides with an object causing you to lose balance and eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are obstructed view, poor lighting, clutter, and uneven walking surfaces. Effective housekeeping is the first level of prevention. Clean all spills immediately, remove obstacles from walkways, keep all areas well lit and clean of debris, and secure rugs, mats and carpets. Always remember, safety is everyone's business. ■

Creating Alternative Pathways to Success

by Ashley Greenawalt

The CAPS youth program is now operating at the Aurora building in Beaver and it is providing hope for Beaver County students who previously lacked a support system. The program, led by Coordinator of Youth Services Maureen Hawk, is funded by a grant from BC-CORES (Beaver County System of Care: Optimizing Resources, Education, and Services).▶



Spotlight on: Nancy Perkins

by Jennifer Gengarella

An essential part of the success behind BCRC's records management program is Nancy Perkins, Records Management Facilitator. Nancy has been behind the scenes at records management converting paper documents to digital format since April, 2006.

Nancy attended Nyack College, and received her BS in Business Administration from Geneva College.

Nancy comments that she loves having the opportunity to observe BCRC clients learning new jobs and becoming successful workers.

She has noticed the growth BCRC has made since she started work three years ago, yet BCRC "still manages to maintain a family atmosphere." She also likes that BCRC clients have "bragging rights" when a completed job is returned to the customer. BCRC utilizes high speed scanners, flatbed scanners, large document scanners, and microdaxes (machines that convert microfilm to a digital format) to convert paper to CD, DVD, or PDF format. We also have an archive writer to convert the digital format back to microfilm.

When not scanning documents, Nancy enjoys relaxing with racquetball and Zumba, as well as reading, watching movies, and working on Sudoku puzzles. ■

Vicki Perseveres and Does It "Her Way"

by Sheila Silbaugh & Frank Shialabba

Vicki Goehring proves you can be successful by marching to your own drummer. Choosing a different path on her way to her future career, she strongly believes in the adage "never give up."

Aurora staff knew from the beginning that Vicki was an "independent soul." She began her involvement with BCRC's Aurora Services on 3-21-06, and she worked diligently on her personal goals. She made the decision to go to work, and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation authorized employment services on 2/28/08. It didn't take long for Vicki to find a job. In March, 2008 Vicki obtained employment with a contractor who provides services for retail stores at the Beaver Valley Mall.

Vicki, however, did not take the traditional road with a job coach assisting her at her work site. Vicki wanted her independence and as a result, BCRC staff agreed to meet with her before and after her work shift. BCRC stayed in the background and Vicki established her own relationships with her employer. While BCRC provided support, Vicki developed skills that enable her to be independently attached to the work place.

Vicki solved one of her major barriers with BCRC providing support. Vicki awoke each week day at 5 am to catch a bus that got her to work at 7 am. She also had to work on Sunday, which proved to be more difficult. She tried to find a coworker to ride with, but when that failed, decided to take a taxi. The cost of the taxi nearly wiped out her entire week's earnings, but she prevailed. Vicki's family and friends occasionally helped with transportation and eventually her boss eliminated Sundays from her work schedule.

Vicki encountered many other difficulties during her first year of employment. Through injuries, physical ailments and sickness, Vicki demonstrated a work effort that her employer greatly appreciated.

Vicki celebrated her one year anniversary this past March at Aurora where a luncheon was hosted by BCRC Program Specialist, Sheila Silbaugh.

Vicki's accomplishments include her positive relationships with her coworkers, having money to buy presents for family and friends, and maintaining her independence. She enjoys the sense of accomplishment she derives from persevering through tough times and doing it "her way." ■



Youth Complete Comprehensive Program

by Kelly Newhouse

You may have noticed an abundance of young, energetic faces and hard working hands during the summer months at BCRC. These young people were part of the summer youth employment program, in cooperation with Job Training of Beaver County. The program began on June 15 and ran through August 12. Through practical work experience, students had an opportunity to set the path for a smooth and exciting transition from high school to higher education or directly into the work environment. This experience presented many opportunities to explore accessible career options while learning specific job etiquette, teamwork, individual responsibilities, and appropriate social and communication skills.

The program also uses academics such as math and reading skills in the planned activities. Business math exercises are offered relating to financial responsibilities including budgeting, paychecks, and banking. Reading comprehension skills are assessed through a life skills curriculum that focuses on nutritional aspects such as food preparation, good food choices and adopting a healthy lifestyle leading to overall well-being.

Skills learned while attending the program included receiving and counting stock items, packing and unpacking items to be stocked, assembling products or components of a product, operating office machines such as a microfilm reader and scanner, and filing documents, materials and supplies. Additional daily activities included cleaning work areas, following instructions to prepare a variety of foods, landscaping and general building maintenance. All of these skills directly relate to in-demand positions such as stock clerks, material handlers, shipper/receiver, office clerk, food preparation worker, or landscaper/groundskeeper. Many area businesses also provided job shadowing experiences for the students.

Congratulations to all the youth who have completed this year's comprehensive program. ■

CAPS is an approach to working with students in Beaver County who have a dual diagnosis and do not receive other accommodating services within their schools. These youth do not have Individualized Educational Plans, or 504 plans. They now have the opportunity to receive services that will help them prepare for the future. Often, these students belong to an alternative school where other issues can distract them from working toward their goals.

“Creating an Alternative Pathway to Success” is taking the initiative to identify those students who need help planning their future, staying in school, continuing their education, and accessing other services available to them. If students qualify for the CAPS program, they participate in a vocational evaluation. This evaluation allows students to identify their interests, and capabilities. The student and staff work together in hopes of achieving rewarding experiences and a positive outcome.

To learn more about the CAPS program you can visit the website: www.bcscores.org and please call the CAPS office at 724-775-0415.



Pictured are some of the students who participated in the summer youth program.



Rosalie Dizenzo's green thumb is in evidence at the 1517 break area.

Shop Talk

by Kay Podbielski

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A very rainy day couldn't ruin the fun at the annual BCRC picnic. Due to a dismal weather forecast, the Monaca Turners graciously hosted the picnic indoors. The picnic is sponsored by the Monaca Recreation Board whose volunteers provided a lunch of sloppy joes, hot dogs, baked beans, kielbasa, sauerkraut, haluski, and home baked cookies. The disc jockey played the tunes as the Pirate Parrot danced. The contestants flooded the floor for the dance contest. Others played Bingo, UNO, beach ball, and ring toss. ■

A beautiful rendition of "Amazing Grace" was performed in sign language by Stephanie Bohan and Psychiatric Deaf Specialist, Ashley Greenawalt. Stephanie had been working with Ashley on developing the song as a way to cope with the challenges of mental illness. The song is a very moving interpretation of Stephanie's journey through mental illness and recovery. Stephanie has graciously agreed to share the performance on our BCRC website and on YouTube. To view, please go to www.bcrc.net then click Aurora Services then Services for the Deaf and sit back and enjoy. ■



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