

BCRC Celebrates Forty Years in 2003

by Frank Shialabba

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Years of Community
Commitment

The year 2003 will be one of celebration for the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center. Two thousand three marks the Center's fortieth year of service to persons with disabilities. The year will be highlighted by a general Open House in October. The Open House will feature tours of BCRC's program buildings, as well as displays of BCRC's community programs. In addition to the general Open House, there will be an Open House in March, 2003 for agencies that fund many of the programs offered by BCRC. Among the highlights of the Open House will be the new program

building at the 601 Production Center, the new Courtyard at 601, the beautiful facilities at the Evaluation Center, and the expanded operations at the Records Management Center. An assortment of Candy Bouquets, created by the clients of BCRC, will be on display.

Forty years ago, Beaver County had very few programs to offer persons with mental retardation. William Lintz, Sr. was concerned for the welfare of his son and many other individuals with disabilities in Beaver County. He asked concerned parents to attend a meeting at the IBEW Hall in Vanport. The response was overwhelming. According to former Executive Director Samuel Lippincott, "BCRC started operations in July of 1962. Our first workshop was in the basement of a small church on 25th St. in Beaver Falls. William Lintz, Jr. and a group of other men actually had to take out the pews in the church to make room for the program." According to Mr. Lippincott, the original workshop had nine clients. He says, "I started with the program in September of 1962 and by January of 1963 we had grown from nine to 50 individuals." Shortly after, BCRC moved its operations to the old Rialto Theatre in Rochester.

In February 1971 the William Lintz Sheltered Workshop became the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center. Up until that time, BCRC had exclusively served persons with mental retardation. With the incorporation of BCRC, services were expanded to include persons with mental illness. Over the years, BCRC has also added vocational evaluation, services for persons who are deaf, community job coaching and job placement, School-To-Work services, Project Success (for persons who are economically disadvantaged), an evening social program, and Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services. The agency has also added business ventures such as Candy Bouquet and Records Management designed to increase the variety of work options available to individuals served by the program.

Paulette Miller became BCRC's sixth Executive Director in 1990. She is proud of the growth of the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center over the years. She is happy that persons with disabilities have "achieved greater acceptance in the community." She states, "I especially enjoy seeing the individual progress made by people we currently serve, and those persons that we have served throughout the years. It is gratifying to know that people's lives have changed for the better, and that BCRC may have played a part in that growth." This progress is a motivating factor for Ms. Miller and the staff of BCRC. She says, "The clients' progress inspires us to work even harder and to be more diligent in improving services." Ms. Miller states that the Fortieth Year Celebration is a chance to thank families, current and former clients, staff, and Board members, funding agencies and the community as a whole for their support over the years. She sums up her feelings by saying, "Come join us to celebrate a partnership that has resulted in forty years of progress by persons with disabilities in Beaver County."

Jessica is Global Messenger

by Kay Podbielski

Jessica Cogis won medals and ribbons as a Special Olympics athlete in swimming, track and field, and bowling. Now she's using her talents to get others involved. Jessica stated, "I had a lot of fun participating in Special Olympics so I'm encouraging other people to participate." Jessica explained that she is a global messenger. She was trained to speak at meetings and Special Olympics events. Jessica emphasizes team play because "That's a good thing for them to know." She believes that all of the athletes should be proud of themselves and given praise for what they do. Jessica related, "I really enjoy seeing the kids who have never been involved before get to participate. It's a fair chance for them." She also commended Mr. Paul Gasdick for being one of the best coaches she's ever had.

Along with her work as a global messenger, Jessica works in BCRC's Production Center and in the community as a document preparer. Although Jessica no longer participates in the Special Olympics athletic competitions, she is winning now by getting others involved.



Special Olympics



BCRC RECORDS MANAGEMENT IS GROWING

by Pat Healey

The BCRC Records Management Program has seen a significant increase in business in recent months. BCRC's biggest growth by far has been in digital scanning and paper shredding services. A new high speed scanning station is being installed to accommodate the increase in business and four to six more workers a day are being scheduled to handle just the document preparation needed to ready the papers for scanning. A second shift, working until 7:30 in the evening, has been added in order to accommodate the growth in business. The industrial paper shredder is running all day, everyday, and plans are being made to purchase a second, larger machine.

What is the reason for this growth? While computers were supposed to decrease the amount of paper generated by businesses, paper documents have actually quadrupled. Businesses are running out of room to store documents, and searching for records can be costly and time consuming. The CD's created by BCRC

workers from both paper scanners and microfilm scanner offer crystal clear, lightening fast information retrieval that can be performed from most any desk personal computer.

Along with area businesses, BCRC is currently working with companies as far away as Erie and Indiana, PA. BCRC Records Management has also been recognized as a scanning vendor for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This promises to be an excellent opportunity to generate even more business.

The increase in business has been appreciated by many of BCRC's workers. BCRC staff members Sue Leiper, Contract Facilitator, and Geri Lint, Records Management Job Coach, enjoy the fact that their work day goes quickly. Employee Julie Bogdan says, "This is a very good work atmosphere. The second shift is peaceful and serene. One of the benefits of working at Records Management is that you learn different skills to use."

Parents Benefit from Presentation

Approximately 110 persons attended a training hosted by the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center at the Community College of Beaver County on October 8. The training was funded by the PA Department of Health, Bureau of Family Health. The featured speaker, Dawn Hoffman, of Disabilities Resources, spoke on "Teaching Identification of Emotions to Individuals with Developmental Disabilities" and "Enhancing Problem Solving Skills of Individuals with Disabilities."

Attendees at the training included parents of individuals with disabilities and staff members from nine different agencies. Many individuals rated the presentation as "very good," and the speaker received an average rating of 8.2 out of a possible 10. Prior to the presentation, participants rated their knowledge of inclusion of individuals with special health care needs as 6.5. At the conclusion of the presentation, the average rating of participants' knowledge of inclusion was 8.2 (high awareness) out of a possible 10.

Many parents in particular, felt that they benefited from the presentation. They felt that they would be more diligent in seeking help for their child's disability, and they would be better prepared to deal with their child's emotions. Participants also expressed that the program would help "improve self-determination skills and self-esteem in persons with disabilities."



BCRC Staff Certified by Crisis Prevention Institute

by Frank Shialabba

During the last few months, twenty-seven BCRC staff received training certificates from the Crisis Prevention Institute. The Crisis Prevention Institute is a national training organization located in Brookfield, Wisconsin. The Institute specializes in providing high quality, meaningful training in the "safe management of disruptive and assaultive behavior." The purpose of the training is to maintain the "care, welfare, safety and security" of individuals served by BCRC, as well as the staff of the agency. Staff learned things such as: the dynamics of a crisis and appropriate staff response; recognition of nonverbal and para-verbal cues; understanding verbal escalation and appropriate response; precipitating factors in a crisis; personal safety techniques; nonviolent physical crisis intervention techniques and debriefing techniques following a crisis. BCRC's Certified Crisis Prevention Instructor Frank Shialabba states, "The training is highly interactive with opportunities for demonstration, role playing, and practice of physical techniques. The emphasis is on de-escalation of a situation before it reaches the crisis stage. This involves recognizing and understanding the signs of escalation, as well as learning the appropriate response." According to BCRC Job Coach, Crystal Adkins, "Because of the training I have had, I feel much more prepared to handle a crisis if one occurs."



In the next few months, all of BCRC's direct support staff will receive certification in crisis prevention. This certification process is part of BCRC's ongoing effort to provide quality services by ensuring that staff have the highest level of professionalism in the performance of their jobs.

Why Do Some Succeed, While Others Fail?

by Kathleen Ayers

Why do some people fail while others succeed? Some people say success requires perseverance, hard work and the ability to set goals. That sums up Jakena Costen and her rise from BCRC's Supported Work Department to her present job as a cashier at Goodwill Industries in Rochester.

Jakena first came to BCRC's Supported Work Program (SWP) on March 13, 2001 with many barriers to successful employment. She was young and did not have a driver's license or reliable childcare. Most importantly, she did not have a support system in the area. SWP Case Manager, Dawna Bott said, "When Jakena first came, she had so many obstacles to overcome. She got her learner's permit to drive and she started to take driver's lessons. She solved her childcare issues, she never gave up." Kathleen Ayers, SWP Employment Specialist, echoes those sentiments. "Although she is quiet and soft spoken, Jakena has a fighting spirit. She takes things as they come and addresses each situation individually."

On October 1, 2001 Jakena was placed with BCRC's Goodwill enclave where she excelled in her work and personal development. Collette Johnston, BCRC Employment Specialist remarked, "I've noticed that Jakena's personality has blossomed at Goodwill. Jakena is more confident and she truly is

very encouraging to new employees. She knows what she has to do and she does it."

Goodwill's management noticed the quality of Jakena's work also. Jakena was hired by Goodwill Industries as a cashier on January 15, 2002.

She receives praise for good customer service from Tracey Deutsch, Assistant Store Manager. Ms. Deutsch says, "Jakena is great with the customers. She knows the floor and she does a great job."

Jakena received her driver's license, with assistance from BCRC's Case Manager, Sheila Silbaugh. She then purchased her first automobile. Jakena expresses her gratitude when she says, "I'm not big on expressing my feelings but I'm really grateful for my job. I can't thank all the BCRC people enough for all the help I was given. Kathleen Ayers, Dawna Bott, Linda Smega and Sheila Silbaugh have been so helpful to me. They helped me get where I am today. I still want to continue to grow but I feel like I'm on my way."

When next pondering the question, "Why do some people fail while others succeed," think of Jakena Costen. She attacks goals one at a time and tenaciously looks ahead to each new accomplishment.



Employees of the Month Speak Out

by Bob Beaver, Mike Little, Corey Milliner, Karen Buccelli, Jessica Donaldson and Lavinia Craft

BCRC has announced that Deloris Dean is the Employee of the Month for August. Deloris displays an excellent attitude towards her work by making an extra effort to keep focused on her jobs. She says she enjoys her work and tries hard to get here on time. Deloris has indeed been getting to work here at BCRC for quite a number of years, 33 to be exact. Congratulations for a job well done!

When asked how she felt about becoming the September Employee of the Month, Theresa Gist readily replied, "I feel good...real nice...great!" She knows that this award comes by doing good work for BCRC. Theresa feels that keeping a calm attitude and not getting upset has been a big key to her success. Theresa hopes to keep improving, which will enable her to get even better jobs in the future.

John Gretch has been chosen as the October Employee of the Month. John feels that he received this award by working hard and being happy. All who know John would agree. His warm smile and gentle manner bring admiration from both staff and co-workers. John's clean cut appearance, general charm and excellent attendance all add up to a real winner.



Safety Lights



Winter may be approaching but the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center is prepared for the seasonal onslaught of snow and ice. Safety Committee Chairperson Janet Simon states, "As soon as there are signs of inclement weather, I call the company that handles our snow removal. They give me a report of current road conditions in the area, and I relay this report to our Executive Director. The process of removing snow and salting walkways and parking areas around BCRC also begins. According to Ms. Simon, "It is important for the safety of BCRC's clients that we have someone handling our snow removal that we can trust. We feel very good about the company that clears away our snow and salts our sidewalks." She urges, however, that clients take the utmost care in walking to and from work when conditions are wet or icy. She feels, "You can never be too careful when walking in the winter."

In other safety news, BCRC staff recently received training in "Driver Safety." The training was sponsored by Fireman's Fund Insurance Company and was called, "Out of Harm's Way." The presentation stressed the use of defensive driving techniques. All of BCRC's staff who transport clients in company vehicles also received classroom and over-the-road training in van safety.



SHOP TALK

by Paula Cordes

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Hold on to your hats! This year's Client Christmas Party, set for Friday, December 13th at the Monaca Turners, will feature an original skit portraying Elvis Sneezar Scrooge in the title role of BCRC's adaptation of the famous play, The Christmas Carol. So when you're exhausted from dancing to the tunes spun by DJ Chuck Webb or all played out at the Bingo table, pull up a chair, relax, let your food settle in, sit back and watch your staff give the performance of their lives. We're sure you'll enjoy our skit of "Christmas in Transylvania." 



Have you noticed a few new faces lately at BCRC? The SE Department's ranks grew with the addition of Program Specialist Kristine Trozzo while new Job Coaches Peggy Sue Tribone and Geri Lint joined the Production and Micrographics Centers respectively. Welcome to all! 



Sandee Monahan recently completed a week-long training in Little Rock, Arkansas at the Candy Bouquet International headquarters and earned her "Bachelors in Bouquet Making." Sandee was in the unique position of having worked with Candy Bouquet prior to receiving her training. This gave her insight into how "right on target" BCRC was with its franchise. She received extensive training in marketing, customer service, etc. and, along with her team, will be working toward BCRC's "Master's" when they complete the Advanced Certification Program requirements. As a reward for earning a specified number of points for marketing assignments, \$250 credit and website recognition will be awarded. 



Staff received an extensive amount of training this quarter. Kathleen Ayers and Dawna Bott returned from Dawson, PA for training on Building Community Capacity. Maureen Hawk and Pat Householder are attending a 9-week course on the Basics of Supervision. JoAnna Flook and Sandra Denton received training dealing with Federal & State Regulations as they pertain to HIPAA, COBRA, SHA, FMCA and EEOC. Robin Bauer and Mary Jane Hudak learned techniques for handling the hurdles of autism, while Frank Shialabba conducted a class on Crisis Intervention. Marianne LaSalle and Sheila Silbaugh reviewed regulations dealing with Medical Assistance, Social Security and SSI, while Colette Johnston learned treatment strategies for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. 

Have a Happy Holiday Season