

**Eagle Soars at Evaluation Center**

*by Kay Podbielski*

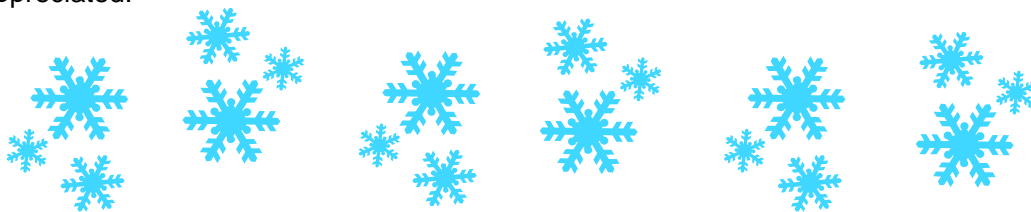
BCRC has a beautiful new outdoor break area thanks to the hard work of a local boy scout. Dean Ciccone approached Project Director Frank Shialabba about doing a project for the agency in order to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. The Eagle Scout is the highest achievement rank in scouting and is earned by only 4% of boy scouts. Mr. Shialabba informed Dean of the need for an outdoor

break area for the participants in the programs at the evaluation center. The project needed to be completed before Dean's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 27<sup>th</sup>. He drew up plans, acquired materials, organized a work crew, and began work on the project. The project crew consisted of Dean's mom, dad, uncle, cousin, and several scouts. The break area was made of vinyl picket fences to afford privacy. Dean and his crew built benches of recycled materials and the area was landscaped with shrubs and mulch. Dean can be assured that the break area is being enjoyed, and that his hard work is appreciated.

**EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH PROFILED**

*by Virginia Chaklos, Mary Jane Hudak, Mike Little and Robert Pollock*

October's employee of the month, Kevin Bonnar, has some excellent advice for all of us about good work habits. "You have to get along with your co-workers, come to work on time and stay focused on your job", reports Kevin. Kevin is very proud of being named Employee of the Month for October and feels it is a great honor. Having worked for BCRC since 1998, Kevin states in his own words that, "I think I won this award by working hard, following directions and listening to the staff." He would like to someday work in the community.



**Fundraisers abound for Client Christmas Fund**

*by Pam DePace*

BCRC staff take joy every year in providing a Christmas gift for the clients of BCRC. This year BCRC staff sponsored a number of fundraisers to provide money for the clients' gifts. One such fundraiser is the Friends helping Friends day at Boscov's Department Store. BCRC receives discount tickets from Boscov's, and staff sell them for \$5.00 each. Boscov's has a one day event where these discount tickets are honored. In addition, all tickets can be entered into a drawing for prizes from Boscov's. This fundraiser was very successful this year. Internally, various departments have sponsored their own fundraisers. BCRC staff had a silent auction, a Steelers tailgate party, and nacho sales. Staff also auctioned off tickets to the play "Tommy" at the Benedum Center and a patriotic wreath. Many thanks to all those who donated to these worthwhile fundraisers.



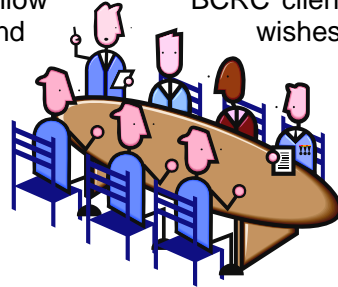
Congratulations also go out to Desaray Washington who was named The Employee of the Month for September. Desaray takes great pride in her work and reports, "I'm happy and excited about winning this award." She is sure that being on time and being

## Self Advocacy Helps People Speak Out

by Jennifer Gengarella

prepared also helped her to win. She has worked for BCRC for nine years. She would like to continue to work at BCRC and to try new work sites in the community. Desaray's willingness to try new jobs keeps her excited about working here. She will continue to do her best and to treat her co-workers with patience and respect.

Increasing self advocacy is the primary goal of classes conducted recently by BCRC's program specialists. BCRC hopes to enable individuals to be active participants in their yearly team meetings and Individual Service Plans. Every individual's likes and dislikes are important in the daily decisions that they make. Lessons in self advocacy allow BCRC clients to feel more comfortable in expressing their needs and wishes. BCRC clients are encouraged to express their views about agency programs, jobs, activities, etc. Clients are taught to direct their own planning and to have the courage to take responsibility for their choices. Self advocacy gives people the knowledge to speak for themselves.



## Dustin Rides Roller Coaster of Change

by Frank Shialabba

The August Employee of the Month, Debbie Germusa, has been with BCRC since August, 2003. Debbie loves to win, and states that she is very happy with this award. Program Specialist, Robert Pollock, says, "Debbie is always so positive with a nice smile on her face. She is extremely reliable and willing to do anything you ask her." Debbie feels that "good attendance, a good work attitude and cooperation" are the reason she won this award.

Change can be difficult. For Dustin Taylor of Aliquippa, change was akin to riding a roller coaster with no safety bar and no time limit.

As a School to Work student at BCRC, Dustin looked ahead with anticipation and trepidation. What would the future bring? Could he adapt to the many changes expected of him in the real world of competitive employment?

These questions were answered gradually as Dustin moved through the various phases of BCRC's Supported Employment Program. Dustin was shy when he entered BCRC's Skills Training Program at Goodwill Industries in Rochester, PA. However, after an adjustment period, Dustin became happy with his new surroundings. SE Program Specialist Kristine Deasey states, "Dustin began to feel comfortable enough to talk and joke with his coworkers." As Dustin adjusted socially, his work also improved. Goodwill helped to prepare Dustin for the world of competitive work.

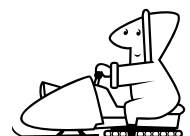
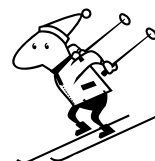


Dustin's experiences at Goodwill were invaluable when he began a new job nine months ago as a dishwasher at Harold's Inn Restaurant. The kitchen is an environment of noise and constant movement. It is an atmosphere that can be intimidating for someone who likes calm and order. Dustin's experience with the retail world at Goodwill helped to strengthen him for this new challenge. Ms. Deasey states, "Dustin is an excellent worker. The most remarkable thing is the pace that he is able to maintain." According to Ms. Deasey, "Dustin's pace derives from his efficiency of motion. He has no wasted movements."

Also remarkable is Dustin's ability to adjust to a flexible work schedule. When Dustin is expected to work beyond his scheduled time, his employer prepares him at the beginning of his shift. Dustin then has time to adjust to this schedule change.

Dustin has found acceptance in his new job. He values his job and the invaluable opportunity to form friendships with his peers. Dustin has ridden the roller coaster of change, surviving its many twists and turns.

These workers offer good lessons to follow. Hard working, dependable, helpful and courteous describes Kevin, Desaray and Debbie. By taking pride in what they do each day, Kevin, Desaray and Debbie are great assets to BCRC.





## Safety Lights



### Safety Day Celebrated

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

BCRC celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> annual Safety Day on October 5, 2005. The event was sponsored by the safety committee and featured a presentation by Jack Skrlac of Aerial Fire Systems. All clients and staff were oriented to general fire safety and extensive fire extinguisher usage and guidelines. Many of us took advantage of the opportunity to practice using a fire extinguisher. Safety Committee Chairperson Janet Simon expressed her thanks to the BCRC staff for their ongoing commitment to safety. Safety week concluded on October 7<sup>th</sup> with a presentation on ambulance service from Medic Rescue.



### **Bobanic Mixes Humor and Sign Language**

by Frank Shialabba

Due to an overwhelmingly positive response to BCRC's recent sign language class, another eight week class will begin at BCRC on Wednesday, January 11. Mike Bobanic will again serve as class instructor. The class will be held in the lunchroom at 1517 Sixth Ave., New Brighton on Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The class costs \$35.00, and the book Signing: How to Speak with your Hands sells for \$20.00.

Bobanic, an individual who is deaf, is an experienced sign language instructor. He also teaches at the Community College of Allegheny County. Mr. Bobanic brings his own unique personality and insight to the class. He gradually builds confidence in his students by combining a laid back approach with a wonderful sense of humor. Bobanic is both teacher and "performer." He personalizes the curriculum and teaching vocabulary words that will help students in their particular jobs or personal situations.



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Fifteen students, including a number of local police officers, participated in the Fall Sign Language class. Students stated that they "loved the class." Many students related that they learned best because they were relaxed and having fun. Nine students from the most recent class have already signed up for the January class.

Persons interested in the January class may sign up by calling the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center at 724-847-1306.

### **CONSTRUCTION PLANNED**

By Gloria Beighey

BCRC hopes to start construction of a new bathroom in 2006 at the 601 15<sup>th</sup> Street Production Center. The bathroom will be accessible to individuals who need accommodations. Construction will begin sometime after the first of the year. Funds for the restroom have been provided by the Beaver County Office of Community Development.

The bathroom will be unisex and ADA compliant and will be located close to the workshop to facilitate access by consumers with physical disabilities.



### **BCRC Programs Have Job Placement Success**

BCRC's Supported Employment and Project Success Programs had excellent job placement records during the last fiscal year. A total of 72 persons were placed in competitive employment. Placement services funded by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Office of Mental Health/Mental Retardation resulted in 46 placements. Project Success (BCRC's Welfare-to-Work Program) had 26 competitive job placements.

Thirty-two different employers, a record number, hired individuals referred by BCRC's Supported Employment Department. Individuals were placed in 20 different types of jobs. Some of the positions included data entry clerk, machine operator, child care worker, assembler, clerical worker, laborer, sales clerk, retail worker, driver, waitress and horse caretaker.

### **Technology Growing at BCRC**

In the new millennium all companies, even social service agencies, must keep abreast of improvements in technology. The Beaver County Rehabilitation Center is no exception. New software and billing systems have required that BCRC update and expand existing technology. In addition to emphasizing computer training for staff, BCRC has expanded computer work stations for staff and clients to eighty-five.

**Competitive Edge**  
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**SHOP TALK**

*By Paula Cordes*

BCRC once again participated in the United Way "Day of Caring" on Wednesday, September 14, 2005. Eight employees from The Medical Center, Brighton Township, participated in this year's event. They included Gloria Johnson, Mary Torcasso, Paula Keitzer, Debby Marchionda, Mary Kay Quintana and Michael Baker. These individuals painted and areas They especially enjoyed the tour of the production centers, where they saw the wide array of work and services provided by BCRC.great for all involved.



BCRC recently hired a number of new employees - *Hedy Pflug*, part-time Job Coach RMC, on August 24<sup>th</sup>, *Karen Gibson*, part-time Employment Specialist, October 4<sup>th</sup>, *Starlette McNutt*, part-time Job Coach, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, *Deborah Doyle*, part-time Job Coach, on October 24<sup>th</sup> and *Steve Lambert*, part-time Custodian, on November 4, 2005. Welcome to all!

If you haven't already made a donation to the local United Way campaign, you still have time. Contact the United Way of Beaver County and tell them you want your pledge to go to the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center, donor option **# 6 8 5**. Our clients would certainly appreciate it!

