

BCRC Staffer Covered With Warmth

by Pat Healey

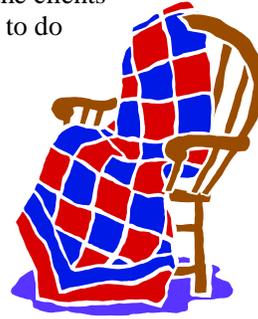
BCRC clients displayed their usual sense of caring and generosity after BCRC Job Coach Trina Hall was involved in a serious accident a few months ago. They felt the need to show Trina their concern and their desire for her speedy return to health.

Sheila Silbaugh, Director of Employment Services, suggested that the clients make a warm fleece blanket for Trina as a way of channeling their need to do something positive for her.

The blanket was made from double thickness of fleece, one side blue the other green to reflect BCRC's colors. The blanket measured two yards by 60 inches and was assembled in the client lunchroom at the Administration Building. Lunchroom tables were pushed together in the middle of the room to work on the blanket. Strips were cut at the edge of the fleece on all four sides. Space was left for workers to walk around all sides of the blanket and tie the strips together. After the blanket was completed, it was signed by all of the clients and staff in the 1517 building.

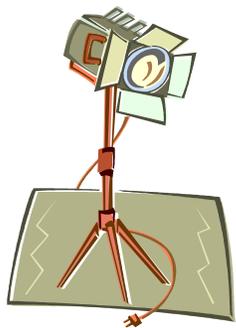
What was presented to Trina was a cuddly, "reversible", personalized throw full of well wishes and heartfelt messages.

Thankfully, Trina has recovered well and returned to work. She talks fondly about the gift created with love and concern by BCRC. She says, "The blanket was such a wonderful gift. When I saw it and read all the little get well notes and saw all of my client's signatures on it I cried! It meant so much to me that everyone took the time to make the blanket for me and then sign it. I used it at night while I sat awake sad and read it to cheer up a little. It is still used today and it is wonderful. The most important part to me was that my guys helped and I love them all for it!" ■



Spotlight on: Joanna Flook

by Jennifer Gengarella



An often overlooked group in the background of BCRC's success is the Accounting department. Joanna Flook is an integral part of this department, which is responsible for all of BCRC's financial matters.

Joanna has worked at BCRC since February, 2002, and is currently the Accounting Supervisor. Her duties include accounts payable, payroll, the Program Administrative Services program, and supervising the accounting staff. She says she enjoys her job, in part, because she enjoys the people she works with. The upbeat personalities of the clients also are a reminder that she is part of a great organization.

Joanna has seen the computerization of the accounting department take off since she began working at BCRC. She claims this makes us more efficient and better able to track all of BCRC's varied funding sources. Joanna enjoys the challenge of working with all of these funding sources.

In her spare time, she enjoys camping, going to the beach and spending time with family and friends, including her cat Tigger. Always one for a bargain, Joanna loves to "yard - sale".

Thank you to Joanna, for working hard to keep the Accounting Department running so smoothly. ■

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**EMPLOYEES OF THE
MONTH
SPEAK OUT**

by Karen Buccelli, Lavinia Craft, Linda Glaab, Mike Hitt, Jason Kaponin, Mike Little, Laura Medarac, Tyler Patterson, Stacy Quick and Kristina Stiteler

As the year 2008 draws to a close, there are several new Employees of the Month.

The first winner for May is Stacy Humphries. Although Stacy has only been with BCRC since 2003, she has worked hard during those five years. She is always ready to help her job coach. Stacy was shocked when told she won the Employee of the Month. She was so excited she had to call her grandmother to tell her the good news. Stacy feels that her quiet work habits and good work skills helped her win. Stacy's future work goal is to be able to work in a day care center because she loves children.

The June Employee of the Month, Jessica Donaldson, has been working at BCRC for almost 10 years. Jessica keeps her good attitude by working hard. She feels she received this honor because she has improved while working in the laundry enclave. Jessica would love to fulfill her dream of working in a greenhouse.

Chris Worthy, our July Employee of the Month, has been working at BCRC for five years. He loves coming to work and doing a good job. He was so excited about winning ▶ that

he wanted to jump up and down, and he did just that. He feels he received his award because of his work at BCRC and the courthouse. When Chris was asked what he wanted to do in the future he responded by saying, "I just want to be me."

BCRC's August Employee of the Month was Ross Colonna. Winning this award has made Ross very happy. He feels he won by coming to work on time and doing jobs he is asked to do. Ross has a future goal of working at a playground.

In September, Regina Oravitz was chosen for the Employee of the Month. She says the way she keeps a good work attitude is by smiling. When Regina was told she won the September award she said "Crazy man" and was very surprised. Regina feels she was selected because she is a good worker. Even though Regina has only been with BCRC a short time, she has made great progress. She says she would like to work in a library some day.

The October Employee of the Month was awarded to Dory Janke. Dory has been with BCRC for 20 years. She feels being helpful to her coworkers is how she achieves a good work attitude. Dory is very excited about winning. She feels her hard work has made this possible. Her future goal is to continue working in the community.

Rosalie Drenzo, the November Employee of the Month, says she has worked at BCRC off and on since 1994. She says she is able to keep her good work attitude because she likes to work. Keeping busy and setting personal goals also helps her. Rosalie says she feels good about the award ▶



Me Want Cookie? Yes, If David Bakes It!

by Frank Shialabba

After an absence of many years, David Parker performed at the BCRC client Christmas party on Friday, December twelfth. David was genuinely excited to perform for his old friends at BCRC, and that enthusiasm lit up the stage. David received "rave" reviews from everyone in attendance.

Clients and staff "performed" along with David as he signed to songs like "What a Wonderful Time of the Year." David entertains while he teaches his audience the signs for words such as "cookie," "happy," "world," "love," and "wonderful."

David expressed his admiration for the caring and respectful attitude of the BCRC staff. He performs all over the United States and Canada, and he feels that the staff of BCRC is exemplary in the joy that they show in their service to people with disabilities.

David has entertained and educated people at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He has also performed with famed television and Broadway performer Ben Vereen, and on all three major television networks. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the National Council on Communicative Disorders.

David is currently working on his doctorate degree in special education. He hopes to continue performing and to teach at the college level some day.

Meanwhile, David continues to teach us about "the joy of caring" with his very special shows that are always performed from the heart. ■

Deaf Receive Crucial Services at Aurora

by Frank Shialabba

Persons who are Deaf and recovering from mental illness often experience depression, anxiety and feelings of isolation. Unfair treatment and lack of accommodations also negatively impact the lives of these individuals.

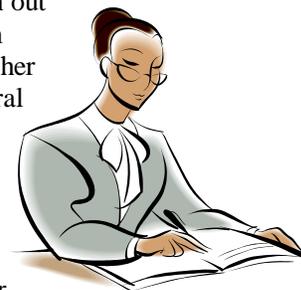
The staff at Aurora Rehabilitation recognizes that the added burden of mental illness can be devastating for someone who has been isolated by their Deafness. Where does a Beaver County citizen who is experiencing these problems go for help? Until recently the answer was Pittsburgh. Thanks to the efforts of Beaver County Behavioral Health, in cooperation with BCRC Aurora Rehabilitation Services, the answer to that question is now Beaver County.

Dr. Kim Mathos provides psychiatric services and consultation out of the Aurora offices for persons who are deaf and recovering from mental illness. Dr. Mathos also serves the Pittsburgh area through her work at the Center for Hearing and Deaf Services and the Behavioral Health Task Force for persons who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing of Allegheny County.

According to the Hearing Loss Association of America, Dr. Kim Mathos is "one of only a handful of medical doctors in the state [of PA] who specialize in the emotional effects of hearing loss." Dr. Mathos feels that support systems need to be in place for people who are trying to cope with life in a hearing world.

In addition to Dr. Mathos, Ms. Ashley Greenawalt has been hired as a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Deaf Specialist. Ms. Greenawalt graduated from Kent State University with a degree in American Sign Language. Ms. Greenawalt has many years of experience in interpreting and communicating through sign language. She will conduct an educational group in sign language dealing with topics such as work, social life, various forms of mental illness, stress reduction, anger management, connecting and engaging, etc.

Dr. Mathos and Ms. Greenawalt are an invaluable part of the Aurora team that provides an ever-increasing array of services to persons who are recovering from mental illness. For more information call Aurora at 724-775-2298 or visit www.bcrc.net. ■



Thinking “Green” Pays off for Dave Colella

by Frank Shialabba

David Colella was thinking “green” long before it became the politically correct thing to do. As a child David loved spending time working with plants and nature’s “green things.” He started a garden at a very young age and dreamed of working with plants for a living.

As David reached adulthood, he hoped to fulfill his dream by taking the greenhouse certification program at the Community College of Allegheny County. David’s dream was put on hold, however, as he was unable to find a practicum at a local greenhouse. For David, “it wasn’t easy being green.”

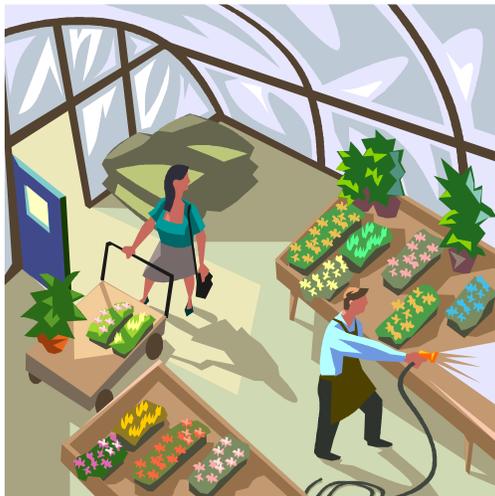
Instead, BCRC aided David to secure a practicum and training program at Wal-Mart and Goodwill Industries. According to BCRC Director of Employment Services, Sheila Silbaugh, “David excelled at his practicum and skills training programs. He was always pleasant and eager to work. People loved David wherever he went. He did such a good job.”

Eventually, David advanced from his training programs and secured a job at Christy’s Restaurant. David once again showed his desire and motivation to be an “excellent employee.” Ms. Silbaugh states, “David is everything that is good about BCRC and the people that we serve. He puts his full effort into anything he does. He never complains, he never misses work, and he makes friends easily.”

David’s persistence eventually helped him to achieve his dream. He was awarded the greenhouse certification by CCAC, and he recently

secured a second job at Gumpf’s Greenhouse in Chippewa. Initially, David was hired to water the plants. However according to Ms. Silbaugh, he now does “just about everything, including unloading the truck, pruning and stocking.”

David has achieved his dream of working with “green things”, and he has been rewarded with a little more “green” in his paycheck. ■



BCRC Participates in State-wide Forum

Pam Loaskie of Beaver County Behavioral Health, Diane Watson, President of NAMI and Frank Shialabba of BCRC attended the Employment Transformation Forum at State College on Tuesday, December 16. The forum is part of a state-wide initiative to provide on-going and individualized support to persons with mental illness who wish to work in the community. Representatives from eleven counties participated in this discussion of “best practices” in supported employment for persons with mental illness.

Topics included: funding and administrative issues, benefits counseling, data collection, environmental barriers, and transforming systems to provide the competencies necessary for engagement in normative activity.

Representatives from Allegheny, Butler, Montgomery and Cumberland/Perry counties related their practical experiences in implementing the evidence based practice of supported employment. ■



but really doesn’t like all the attention. Her good work record, doing quality work and being reliable is why she feels she won. Rosalie’s goals for the future are to stay healthy and someday be able to retire.

As you can see each winner has similar reasons for winning their award, but we are very proud of each one of them. Congratulations to all and keep up the good work. ■

Safety Lights



Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Each year more than 200 Americans die from carbon monoxide poisoning. CO is produced by fuel-burning motor vehicles, appliances, and heating systems. The risk of CO poisoning increases during the winter, as more people run furnaces and space heaters and use fireplaces. Deaths from CO poisoning also occur when people sit in an idling vehicle with the doors and windows closed. Everyone should install a carbon monoxide alarm near bedrooms and on each floor of the home. If your alarm sounds, call 911 or your local fire department and immediately move to fresh air. Know the symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, fatigue, dizziness, and shortness of breath. ■

Competitive Edge
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Shop Talk

More than 350 people attended this year's annual Client Christmas Party at the Monaca Turners. This was a record turnout for the party that is funded annually by the John A. Antoline Memorial Foundation.



Norman Council, consultant for the MH Employment Advisory Committee, spoke to a gathering of Mental Health providers, including BCRC, at the offices of Beaver County Behavioral Health on De-

ember 4. Mr. Council spoke about the need to support people with mental illness in every way possible as they strive for community employment.



BCRC will be offering evening sign language classes this spring. The classes last eight weeks and are held on Wednesday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. The cost of the class is \$35, while the text book is \$20. Please call **724-847-1306** to register.



www.bcrc.net

Don't forget to order your Valentine and birthday bouquets from Gifts Delivered Featuring Candy Bouquet. We have a wide variety of beautiful candy and silk arrangements to choose from. Stop in or visit our website to see some of our selections. You can also call to place your order.