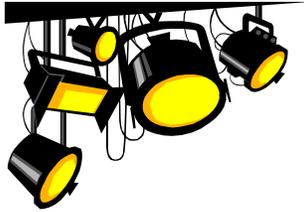


Spotlight on: Rebecca Pieri

by Jennifer Gengarella



BCRC welcomed Rebecca Pieri to our staff in July, 2009. She worked briefly as a job coach in the WIN program before becoming a program specialist at the production center. Becca is a graduate of Geneva College and prior to joining BCRC she was employed by the Autism Society for North Carolina.

Rebecca has a love for people with disabilities. Naturally, the favorite part of her new job is working with the clients. She enjoys getting to know them and the personal qualities that make them so great.

“Becca”, as her new coworkers refer to her, has also enjoyed getting to know the many things that BCRC has to offer. She feels that BCRC brings much to the community through both the enclave and subcontract work. She admires the determination of BCRC’s workers to give their best effort. “Our clients work hard to make sure everything is done correctly and efficiently, so they can show their talents and keep the contract, she says.”

Rebecca’s hobbies include spending time with her parents, fiancé, and her dog Brewtus. She will be married on August 14, 2010, and will spend a week honeymooning in Aruba. We wish her well, and we know the clients will anxiously await her return. ■

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Employees of the Month Speak Out

by Mike Little and Gloria Beighey

Our fourth quarter 2009 winners for Employee of the Month are Michele Roquas, Linda Gatto, and Connie Smith.

Michele Roquas received this award for the month of October. Michele has been with BCRC since 2006. She feels she has a good attitude, and she focuses on her work. She’s sure that doing good work and following BCRC’s rules made it possible to win the award. Michele’s future goal is to continue working at BCRC.

Our November Employee of the Month was Linda Gatto. Linda is proud to be born in Italy. She started working at BCRC in 1987. Linda feels that her good hard work and being motivated by money made it possible to win this award. Linda says she loves working with her teacher (job coach, Linda Glaab). Linda hopes to take more vacations in the future.

The December candidate was Connie Smith. Connie has been employed at BCRC for five years. Connie feels her ability to concentrate on her work helps keep her attitude positive. Upon finding out that she was the December winner, she was very surprised. She knows listening and following the rules helped her receive Employee of the Month. Connie would like to continue working at BCRC, while deciding on any future goals. ■

Rosa’s Law: An Inspiring Story and a Call to Action

by Amanda Pullinger

In mid November 2009, Maryland Senator Barbara Mikulski proposed that “mentally retarded” be eradicated from our federal vocabulary through a U.S. Senate bill affectionately called Rosa’s Law. According to an article written by ABC News Correspondent, Susan Donaldson James, the impetus behind the bill was Rosa Marcellino who is eight years old and diagnosed with Down Syndrome. The coding on Rosa’s education plan in an elementary school in Maryland changed from “health impaired” to “mentally retarded.” In response to the newly established label and its associated stigma, the Marcellino family acquired the support of Ted Sophocleus, a Maryland state delegate, and together, worked to change Maryland’s health and education code. In January of 2009, Nick, Rosa’s 14-year-old brother, persuaded the state legislature that establishing the term “individual with an intellectual disability” as the official phrase for those with mental retardation would lessen the discrimination and loss of dignity experienced by these individuals. These initial steps have lead to the movement to eradicate the term “mentally retarded” at the national level via the proposal of Rosa’s Law.

Undoubtedly, the United States has come a long way in transforming the way mental retardation is viewed. Advocacy groups and associations continue replacing this term with phrases that more specifically address the type of disability. This is done in an effort to prevent a diagnosis from becoming a means to describe an individual, thus preserving a person’s dignity and humanity.

It is important to note, however, that these terms, no matter how they evolve or change, will always carry with them some degree of stigma and judgment. Instead of becoming wrapped up in terminology, perhaps the best solution is to redirect our focus toward what these individuals have to offer by providing them with opportunities to share their gifts with the world around them. (James, Susan Donaldson. (2009). *Rosa’s law to end term ‘mentally retarded’*. 2009 Nov. 18. ABC News.) ■

Aurora Raises Funds and Awareness

Aurora Psychiatric Services staff raised \$500 during the annual NAMI Walk on a cold October day in Pittsburgh. Three Aurora staff, six Aurora consumers, as well as additional staff and friends, bundled up to brave the cold for this annual event at the South Side Works/Three Rivers Heritage Trail.

The NAMI Walk is held to raise community awareness and acceptance of persons with mental illness. In total, the event raised \$128,000 for NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill). The Honorary Chairperson for the event was Michelle Wright of WTAE TV. ■



Safety Lights:

H1N1 Update

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

While reported cases of the H1N1 virus have leveled off in all age groups, the Centers for Disease Control continues to recommend influenza vaccination as the first and most important step in protecting against the flu. The CDC is now encouraging everyone to get vaccinated against H1N1 including people 65 years and older. These older individuals are subject to serious complications if they do get sick. Vaccination of people with certain health conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart, or neurologic disease and pregnancy is also important. The CDC continues to urge everyone to take universal precautions, including hand washing. ■

Janna Nelson Believes “Social Interaction is A Tremendous Priority”

by Ashley Greenawalt

Janna Nelson, an individual who does not have vision or hearing, is for the first time in her life, interacting in a group setting with her peers. As a participant at Aurora Psychiatric Rehabilitation since 2009, she now, gives and receives advice about life skills.

Janna, who has worked at BCRC since 2002, works one on one with the deaf specialist, setting goals and working toward achieving these goals. Janna has also had the opportunity to become a part of the psycho-educational groups that are held at Aurora. She truly believes that these groups have been instrumental in her life. She states, “It was remarkable when I began coming to Aurora. The necessity of having and achieving goals cannot be overstated. Social interaction is a tremendous priority. It is an uplifting feeling to be involved with a group of peers and this is so special to me. It was a welcoming experience to have other group members input, as well as being able to provide encouraging words to others, it makes me feel productive.”

Janna has also made a connection with Aurora’s mascot/therapy dog Manny. Manny will jump up on Janna’s lap and ride down the hallways, up the elevator, and outside to the parking lot with Janna. Janna states “holding Cindy’s (Henry) little dog is such a special experience for me. I know how bad someone treated Manny, and I am very happy he ended up in the care of a very good and kind owner and that I got to become one of his friends as well.”

Janna continues to amaze many of her staff and peers and in return, they want to learn and practice sign language. Janna has accomplished a lot during her time at Aurora and BCRC, but has also given much inspiration, humor, and pride to the staff and her peers. ■



Janna spends quiet time with therapy dog, Manny.

Aleks Lange is Mr. Clean and More

by Sheila Silbaugh and Frank Shialabba

Aleks Lange is the new Mr. Clean at MedFast in Aliquippa. His goal of finding a job was complicated by the fact that he was new to Beaver County. However, WIN services used their knowledge of the area and employment to provide much needed help and guidance.

Aleks was extremely unsure of his future, but was very open to assistance. After completing the initial steps of job exploration, WIN services received a phone call from the manager of MedFast. The



manager wanted someone to clean rental medical equipment, who was dependable and thorough. It was vitally important that the equipment, which is reused, be sanitized to perfection. It was obvious from his assessments that Aleks was the man for the job. He interviewed for the position and was hired immediately.

Aleks took great pride in his work and demonstrated meticulous skill in cleaning. He organized his work space and made sure that everything was completed within the required time frame. In addition to mastering job skills, Aleks developed confidence and independence in the community. He learned to take the public bus from Aliquippa, and he discovered the many stores in the area near his employment. Aleks confidently discussed his work schedule with his employer so that his transportation costs were kept to a minimum. He also investigated many wellness activities. Aleks currently is taking a self defense class and rides his bike regularly. He takes great pride in the fact that he has worked for sixteen months and leads a full and successful life. ■



Thousands of Science and Weather Kits Assembled at BCRC

by Kelly Newhouse

BCRC now plays an integral role in the refurbishment of more than 12,000 hands-on science modules as well as weather kits that are distributed to classrooms annually.

BCRC recently acquired a contract with a company that provides the science curriculum and themed science kits for children in grades K-8. These kits provide 5,000 teachers in 180 school districts, serving 142,000 students, the opportunity for educational growth.



BCRC clients count six different rocks and minerals, measure, bottle, and label seven different types of liquids, cut and collate construction paper, disassemble K-Nex pieces, and prepare science survival kits.

BCRC clients will also prepare and package items for 428 weather kits. A company spokesperson said, "We are happy to be involved in such a worthwhile endeavor providing local teachers and students with the new and innovative learning resources they need." ■

Local TV Show Highlights BCRC Services

Joanna Greco, BCRC Director of Contract Acquisition, appeared recently on the television program "Comcast Local Edition." Ms. Greco was interviewed about BCRC's mission and services by moderator Tonia Caruso.

Comcast Local Edition provides a forum for nonprofit organizations, community leaders and government officials to discuss pertinent issues of the day. Ms. Greco discussed, "Helping People with Disabilities Thrive in Our Community." She highlighted many of BCRC's services and concluded by relating a story that illustrated the pride and self-esteem that people with disabilities derive from working. Ms. Greco's interview may be viewed in its entirety at BCRC's web site www.bcrc.net. Just click on the Comcast logo. ■

BCRC Clients Are Friends Indeed

Whether those in need are homeless, serving in our armed services, living in hurricane ravaged Haiti or of the four legged variety, BCRC's clients are always ready with a helping hand.

Individuals participating in BCRC's WIN Services tackled two community service projects recently. WIN clients raised money for victims of the hurricane in Haiti by selling a variety of sweet treats to staff of Beaver County Behavioral Health and staff and clients of BCRC. WIN set up shop in the conference rooms at BCBH and BCRC. A total of \$250 was raised for Haiti.

In addition, WIN clients collected a wide range of needed items for the members of our armed services, serving overseas.

School to Work students helped both people and canines without homes recently. The students made homemade dog biscuits for animals at the Beaver County Humane Society shelter. They also participated in the Hope for the Homeless Survey by assembling one hundred bag lunches to distribute to those in need. ■



From left to right- Transition Coach, Jayne Sainer, Robert Shultz, Zack Endler, Nicole Sutton, and Ashley Irvin assemble the bag lunches for the Hope for the Homeless point in time survey held in Beaver County on January 27, 2010.

2009 Is Banner Year for Plastic Envelopes at BCRC

BCRC's Production Centers have been very busy working on plastic envelopes, or sleeves, that are combined with small magnets. Important information is then placed in the see-through envelopes and attached to metal surfaces. Last year, 466,150 fifty plastic envelopes were punched out of three different sizes of molds. In addition, 932,300 magnets were attached to these envelopes and packed in 9,323 boxes by BCRC's clients. The clients and staff of the Production Centers deserve our thanks and congratulations for being tops in processing these useful communication aids. ■

Thanks for Persevering

by Paulette Miller,
BCRC Executive Director

Due to a budget impasse that lasted nearly six months, this past year was difficult for BCRC and all PA social service agencies. BCRC received little or no payment for many services during that time. We relied on our good credit standing and some federally funded programs to survive during these lean times. However, we also relied on the indomitable spirit and caring of our wonderful staff to continue to provide services without interruption or decline in quality. Our staff is our backbone and our clients are our inspiration. Thank you to everyone who persevered and kept the faith. ■

Shop Talk

by Kay Podbielski

Competitive Edge Editorial Staff

Gloria Beighey, Jennifer Gengarella,
Ashley Greenawalt, Pat Healey,
Cindy Kirkpatrick, Kelly Newhouse,
Nancy Perkins, Kay Podbielski,
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The annual Christmas party was held on December 11 at the Monaca Turners. Disc jockey Chuck Webb got the party started and the dance floor quickly filled. The Bingo players sat at the tables waiting for their lucky numbers to be called. Everyone took a break from these activities when it was time to be entertained by the ventriloquist. A delicious buffet lunch was served followed by the awards presentation. Each client received an end of year bonus from BCRC and the staff raised enough money to give each person a fleece throw. This special day is made possible in part through the sponsorship of the John Antoline Foundation. ■



BCRC has added five more members to our growing staff this quarter. Jessica McNear, Kelly Dolenak, and Amber Mayer are serving as clerical support to the Records Management Department. Gretchen Whipple was hired as a habilitation worker and Cheryl Leydig is an employment specialist, both at WIN Services. Jayne Sainer has joined the School to Work staff as a transition specialist. We welcome all of our new employees and hope that you all enjoy your tenure at BCRC. ■

Sign Language Classes Offered

BCRC will offer two levels of sign language class this spring. Level one sign language will be offered on Mondays from March 22 through May 10 at the Aurora Building, 363 Third St. Beaver. The class costs \$35 and runs from 6 to 8 p.m. The cost of the book is \$20. The class will be taught by Ashley Greenawalt.

Due to popular demand, Michael Bobanic will teach Sign Language Level Two at BCRC's Administration Center, 1517 Sixth Ave., New Brighton from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesdays March 24 through May 12. The class was requested by many of the graduates from Michael's Level One class. The cost of this class is also \$35. To register for either class, phone BCRC at 724-847-1306. ■