

Winter 2012 Edition
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“Mikey, Mikey, Mikey,” You’re Doing Fine!

by Frank Shialabba

Mike Funovits has always had an independent streak. He taught himself to use a computer and travel by public bus to any place of his choosing in Beaver County. However, he never knew that his independence would be so dearly tested.

Due to illnesses to his grandparents, Mike found himself living by himself at his home in Aliquippa. In addition to worrying about his grandparents, the responsibilities of cooking, paying bills, and getting to work soon confronted him. Being a man of many resources, Mike knew where to go for help. He contacted family and his many friends, who inundated his county supports coordinator with calls seeking assistance for him. When asked about his well-being, Michael proudly declares, “I’m fine!”



Most impressively, Mike maintains his responsibilities at his two jobs. He makes breakfast and keeps his six day a week work schedule without a hitch. According to WIN Program Specialist, Kristi Schwarz, Michael’s two employers at a restaurant and local advertising firm continue to praise him as “a very good and positive worker who is liked by everyone.”

Michael always dreamed that he would have a job in the community. However, through his determination and ambition he now has two. He uses his computer knowledge at the advertising firm to work with an excel program and help with mailings. While at the restaurant, he works on cleaning and sanitation tasks. He is described as “independent... friendly ...and determined to do what needs to be done.”

Through difficult times, Michael maintains a lively sense of humor and will often admonish himself for a mistake by saying “Mikey, Mikey, Mikey!” We would just like to add, “Mikey, Mikey, Mikey”... congratulations for your independence of spirit and your drive to succeed!■

New Officer and Members Installed

At a recent meeting of the Mental Health Transformation Employment Advisory Committee, Sheila Silbaugh, Director of WIN Services, was approved by unanimous vote as the new chairperson. Also installed in as voting members of the committee were Carol Kirk, Gregory Hill and Miranda Booth.

Miranda will also serve as the new leader for BCRC’s Illness Management and Recovery Program for persons with mental illness.

Ms. Silbaugh currently oversees the supported employment phase of BCRC’s employment transformation. She will preside at the next meeting of the committee on February 13th at CenterPlace.■

New Program Takes Classroom to the Work Place

by Kelly Newhouse

On September 4th, BCRC initiated a new transitional work program that combines job readiness skills in a classroom setting with actual employment experience on a mobile work crew.

As a progressive agency dedicated to providing opportunities for vocational growth, BCRC offers this new program to persons interested in competitive employment. BCRC’s transitional employees work in several local businesses providing janitorial, laundry services or document management. While at these community work sites, these individuals work with a job coach to learn the duties of each job. They carry out all of their daily work tasks, while learning skills necessary to succeed in the working world. The job coach offers guidance and support as each person takes steps toward

improving their work skills.

Individuals participating in this program work in the community as much as 15 hours per week, while earning a paycheck.

In addition to working, many of these clients participate in a supported employment curriculum for one to two hours each week. The supported employment curriculum includes, writing resumes, filling out job applications, learning employer expectations, and work place ethics. These and many other topics are taught through one-to-one instruction at BCRC’s Center Township location.

BCRC’s new transitional work program provides participants with the opportunity to obtain gainful employment, while fulfilling their desire to be citizens who play a key role in their communities.■

Police Dog is Carnival Hit

BCRC’s annual safety carnival “came to town” on September 14th. Officer Jeff Wijnen-Reims of the Beaver Police Department and police dog K-9 CZAR were the main attraction. Officer Wijnen-Reims spoke on the duties of a police dog as well as pedestrian safety. After a picnic lunch, the afternoon was spent enjoying ice cream and playing the safety themed carnival games. BCRC has an excellent safety record and the carnival is just one example of how we teach the importance of safety at our facilities, as well as in the community.■

Employees of the Month

Production Centers



Mildred Elliott
July



Sherry Lombardo
August



Patty DelGreco
September

More Than Just a Co-Worker: Best Wishes Frank Shialabba!

by Amanda Dodd

It's difficult to say goodbye to a workplace that's become far more than simply a place of employment. For retiring BCRC employee, Frank Shialabba, this statement couldn't be truer.

Frank's retirement in January 2013 will mark 41 years of diligent and compassionate service to both staff and clients alike at the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center. As with most relationships, time and devotion leads to a deepened and familiar bond, which Frank admits to being the most difficult part of transitioning out of BCRC. "I'll miss the relationships with clients and staff the most," says Shialabba, "but also the joy and reward that comes in working together as a team toward the same goal and watching as people make progress."

Frank began serving BCRC in September of 1971, working as a vocational counselor. During that time, this position involved what we commonly term today as "case management." Frank recalls visiting clients and their families and having the capacity to address needs and barriers in a very comprehensive manner. Today, Frank fulfills a wide variety of invaluable roles for this agency, including, but certainly not limited to, overseeing the IT department, coordinating staff training, developing and writing agency policies, serving as a program specialist, and helping introduce and implement new agency programs, such as the Illness, Management, and Recovery classes that are now running in our workshop. And of course, it can't go without being said that Frank

was responsible for starting the very popular "REC nights" at New Horizon School, the start of the Scouting for Food campaign at BCRC, and for securing funds from the John Antoline Foundation to provide a Christmas party for our clients each year. And if you've ever come to a BCRC event, you'll find that Frank is not only a behind-the-scenes worker, but that he's also a front-line entertainer! It's difficult to walk away from time with Frank Shialabba without a smile on your face. As receptionist, Glo Beighey says, "I'll miss his humor the most. Frank keeps me happy during the day."

Though Frank will be sorely missed, he will forever be remembered in all of our hearts as a compassionate friend, a dedicated and hard-working coworker, a trustworthy mentor and teacher, a passionate and genuine person, and an infectious joyful spirit. To his beloved BCRC family, he leaves these thoughts: "Always treat people with respect, and value people you spend time with every day; you will find your job more enjoyable if you truly appreciate what you're doing and the people you're with. Always look for the strengths in others and the positives in every situation."

As he deserves, Frank looks forward to a retirement full of reading, exercise, and relaxation. But of course, Frank promises to keep his time constructive- whether volunteering or getting involved in local programs. How can we ever begin to say how much we are grateful for your heart and years of service, Frank Shialabba? Many blessings to you as you begin this next journey! ■

Safety Lights

by Cindy Kirkpatrick



Every winter 5% to 20% of the population is hit with the influenza virus, and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized with flu complications. There is a simple way to stop the spread of the flu- get a flu vaccine. This simple action can protect you and possibly the people around you. In addition to the standard flu shot, FluMist, a nasal flu vaccine, is now available for healthy people between the ages of 2 and 49.

Everyone should get a flu shot, but those people who are at high risk of having serious flu complications, such as the elderly and those with serious medical issues; or, the people who live with or care for those at high risk should certainly get the vaccine.

Other actions you can take to stop the flu are to wash your hands often or use an instant hand sanitizer. Finally, always remember to cover your cough and sneeze.

Remember to protect yourself and those around you. Get vaccinated! ■

Spotlight On: Karen Buccelli

by Jennifer Gengarella

For the last 21 years Karen Buccelli has watched as BCRC has grown and evolved into the multi-faceted agency it is today. As a program specialist, she has enjoyed working with job coaches to create a team approach to assist individuals in fulfilling their vocational plans. Karen has been an integral part of BCRC's vocational services. She assists in training clients to learn new job skills, while improving their independence, problem solving, and decision making skills.

Karen has watched BCRC grow from one building to five. She has also seen many new programs such as the Candy Bouquet franchise, Psychiatric Rehabilita-

tion and the School to Work program. With all of the changes over the years, one constant remains- BCRC's commitment to providing quality services to individuals with intellectual disabilities. Karen notes there isn't one moment that stands out as more enjoyable than others. However, she enjoys the client parties and picnics and the camaraderie they evoke. She also remembers when staff and clients worked alongside each other to complete a contract.

Karen sees an emphasis on moving toward transitional work in the future. She believes that more individuals will prepare to enter community employment.

Whether in the production area or her office, Karen has proven her dedication to ensure that BCRC continues to provide our clients with the best possible services. ■

School to Work

Alec Fraser
(not pictured)
September



Benjamin Hersperger
October

Work Programs Like BCRC Need Your Support

The Beaver County Rehabilitation Center continues to encounter many challenges in the face of recent funding cuts and movements designed to eliminate programs that enable prevocational programs like BCRC to operate.

The National Council on Disability, an independent federal agency making recommendation to the president and Congress, has recommended that the 14c program (that allows agencies to pay a subminimum wage) be "phased out gradually."

Another recommendation of this committee was to "align reimbursement rates to reflect a bias in favor of integrated settings." Coincidentally, BCRC has received an approximate 33% cut in reimbursement rates for individuals who receive waiver funding in the prevocational setting. Rates for habilitation and supported employment services have also decreased dramatically.

The NCD has also recommended that the Department of Education undertake

rulemaking to prohibit school districts from establishing placement in a setting whereby the student will receive subminimum wage as a goal in any ISP." Such a ruling will greatly restrict and may even eliminate the existing School to Work program at BCRC.

The NCD itself acknowledges that "there are weaknesses in the availability of community-based option, and it would be short-sighted and inconsistent with NCD's mission to ignore those realities..."

The reality is that work centers must often pay individuals based on their productivity in order to stay competitive in bidding for work. Carl Ochsner, Executive Director of Work Training, Inc. states the idea of prevocational center was to enable workers with disabilities to pool their efforts so they could compete with workers who are not disabled. The subminimum wage allows this to happen, as it allows prevocational centers to stay competitive.

If you would like to see a tradition of caring work opportunities continue in the future for your son or daughter, please contact your congressmen and support the retention of the 14c program and the reinstatement of previous rates for services. ■

Mary Lintz was Instrumental in Formation of BCRC

Mary Lintz, formerly of Beaver, passed away in August, 2012. BCRC would not be where it is at today without the dedication of Mary and the rest of the Lintz family.

Both Mary and her husband William Lintz were instrumental in starting the Lintz Workshop in 1962. The workshop started with nine clients and became the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center in 1971.

Mary's son, Joe Lintz who also passed away recently, was one of the first clients when the Lintz Sheltered Workshop began operations in Beaver Falls, PA in 1962.

William, Mary and Joseph will always have the thanks and respect of everyone at BCRC. ■

Paulette Miller
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Shop Talk

Client Sale Is Huge Success

This year's client gift sale was a great success with more than 100 clients participating. Individuals bought items ranging from beautiful Christmas wreaths to men's razors.. Two of the most popular items were women's body wash and Steeler paraphernalia.

The sale was truly a team effort that combined the efforts of BCRC's Gift Delivered, WIN Services and the School to Work Program. Gifts Delivered Coordinator, Susan Hill would like to thank everyone involved for their cooperation and contributions to a very successful sale. ■



To My Friends at BCRC

from Frank Shialabba

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the many individuals that I have worked with at BCRC through the years. My time spent with you has been a joy that has brought me great happiness. Each of you is unique and wonderful and yes... fun! We have shared good times and bad, but mostly good, because we have shared them together. You will always be in my thoughts and prayers.

With Deepest Affection, Frank

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