



The Competitive Edge

BCRC, Inc., 131 Pleasant Drive, 2nd Floor, Aliquippa, PA 15001-3515

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RECOVERY: A JOURNEY OF HOPE

by Laurel Baker

A woman recently had an epiphany. She needed new pants. It occurred to her that she could simply drive to the store, and buy herself some new clothes. This woman is in her 50's, and had never done that before. She was told she couldn't, wouldn't ever be independent and do things for herself. The woman happens to have bipolar disorder. The well-intentioned helpers in her life emphasized her limitations. Now, she knows that she is not her deficits. She's a grown woman who can go to the store any time she

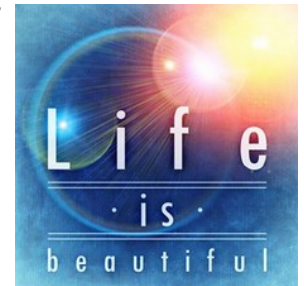
chooses.

Prior to the recovery movement, mental illness was something to be *managed*, much like other health conditions. A diagnosis automatically equated to a life of symptoms, medication, and quite possibly exclusion from the rest of society. The professionals dictated everything because that's what they were taught to do. Somehow, the individual was no longer visible.

The deinstitutionalization movement began in the 1950's, and focused on closing down costly long-term psychiatric facilities and building up community-based treatment facilities. The concept of recovery in mental health blossomed as a direct result. Today, 2016, we absolutely know that people with mental health

diagnoses CAN and DO recover. We have come a long way in our understanding of recovery dynamics, but we can go even further.

A diagnosis does not define a person; no one thing does. We are complex beings, designed to be resilient and amazing. Recovery simply builds on what already exists: strength, perseverance, the ability to grow and change, and perhaps faith in a better tomorrow. Recovery is not about labels. It is about the person, and therefore is defined by the individual. Recovery is having hope, and hope is a gift we can all give freely.



Basswood Initiatives, LLC, Bearing Fruit for Youth and Young Adults

by Frank Shialabba

The Basswood tree is known for providing shade, surviving and growing in multiple types of terrain, and producing honey through its flowers and tea through its leaves. This tree, whose wood is easily carved, and indigenous to Pennsylvania was a perfect metaphor for our new agency (Basswood Initiatives, LLC), which is designed to be welcoming, and

provide all participants the opportunity to grow and flourish.

BCRC's School to Work program is currently being administered through the Basswood Initiatives agency. School to Work activities include classes/career labs, community activities, and work-based learning experiences that pay minimum wage or higher. Activities are highly customized and work in support of the student's IEP. Emphasis is placed on independent living skills, community participation, post-secondary education, community employment and assessment of natural supports in the community.

Services may be provided individually or in group sessions.

Persons seeking information about Basswood Initiatives, LLC and the School to Work program should contact one's school guidance counselor, or Maureen Hawk at 131 Pleasant Drive, Aliquippa, PA, 724-419-2222 or go to www.basswoodonline.net.





Ann Embraces Her Abilities

by Gina Alberti

Congratulations are in order for Ann Arena, who was honored at UniqueSource's *Embrace the Abilities Banquet* in Harrisburg in June. Ann, an employee of BCRC's Records Management department, was nominated for Employee of the Year in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For her commendable work at the Department of

Vital Records, she was awarded a beautiful crystal trophy and a monetary gift. In a bio included in the dinner program, Ann said she feels pride knowing her work is valuable for Pennsylvania and its residents and finds her work engaging. Ann also expressed gratitude to her supervisors for acting as role models and for the BCRC community as a whole.

We thank Ann for her contribution to BCRC and congratulate her on this spectacular honor!

Youth Ambassador Program Promotes Mental Health Awareness

by Jessica Rusak

The first Youth Ambassador event was held on September, 19th at the Community College of Beaver County with almost 70 Beaver County high school students in attendance.

Students were selected for this program to help increase awareness and understanding of mental health issues. Each district chose a minimum of 10 students with leadership abilities and different levels of mental health knowledge. Aliquippa, Big Beaver Falls Area, Freedom Area, New Brighton Area and Rochester Area school districts were invited to take part in the program.

The event connected students with faculty and representatives from county wide social service agencies. Susan Smith, a BCRC program specialist and one of the ambassador's organizers, and Maureen Hawk, BCRC's coordinator of youth services attended the event.

This newly launched program is funded by the Helping BC Scores grant through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and is intended to improve the existing system of care for youth ages 13 to 21 who have a behavioral diagnosis.

Youth Ambassadors are encouraged to create peer support networks and introduce student-run clubs promoting mental health awareness within their schools to help lessen the stigma. Ambassadors receive ongoing training, cultivate friendships, and meet quarterly to discuss their accomplishments within their schools.

Jessica Has Song of Joy

by Frank Shialabba

Maintaining a positive outlook on life, is something that very few people can accomplish. Jessica McFadden, a 15-year employee of the Brighton Hot Dog Shoppe in Rochester, has done that and more.

Jessica is someone who makes other people comfortable with her warm and welcoming smile. I know from experience, as she always is one of the first people to greet me when I attend BCRC's annual Christmas party. WIN Services Director Sheila Silbaugh and, Jonni Kichta, supervisor of habilitation services, tell of a recent day at WIN, when the halls were filled with the sounds of Jessica

singing about how much she loves the staff at WIN. This is a young lady who manages to bring joy to others.

Jessica's giving spirit has won her many fans at her job in Rochester, in addition to many tips. Her family has always been very supportive of her employment, transporting her from Hookstown to Midland where she then caught a bus to Rochester.

Jessica has grown immensely in her independence and her ability to express her feelings. She has moved into a community living residence where she has blossomed. Ms. Silbaugh states, "Jessica is now able to talk about things that frighten her or make her sad. She no longer has to keep these things inside."

Indeed, the only thing that radiates from Jessica now is her warm and welcoming smile.



Community Assessments Change Lives

by Frank Shialabba

According to the 21st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1999, students with disabilities are less likely to drop out of school and be competitively employed if they receive adequate vocational training before they graduate. One of the most significant ways that any program can implement vocational education is through a compre-

hensive program that discovers a student's vocational interests and aptitudes. The School to Work program addresses this issue through its Community-Based Assessment program.

STW staff conduct student interviews, obtain input from family and teachers and utilize interest inventories to help plan a student's community experiences. Then staff make contacts with local businesses and nonprofits so that students may experience a hands-on work experience through a community-based assessment. According to Supervisor of Youth Services Maureen Hawk, "Beaver County businesses have been overwhelmingly

supportive of our mission to help students gain employment. For example, one student was able to try his hand at cooking and baking at a restaurant in Aliquippa."

The School to Work program has also been able to partner with Job Training of Beaver County to provide paid work experiences at many businesses around Beaver County. These experiences often lead to summer jobs or part-time employment while the student is still in school.

Businesses in Beaver County interested in this program can contact Maureen Hawk at 724-419-2222.

New Award Named for William Lintz

by Frank Shialabba

A new BCRC award will be named after one of BCRC's founders, William Lintz, Sr. In the 1950's, Mr. Lintz spearheaded an effort by a group of parents to obtain funding for persons with intellectual disabilities in Beaver County. BCRC was originally named the William Lintz Sheltered Workshop in his honor. The award will highlight many of the qualities of Mr. Lintz's son, Joseph Lintz, who was one of the original workshop employees. Joe was well known for carrying himself with an air of self-confidence. He was very outgoing and active in the community and truly one of BCRC's first goodwill ambassadors.



Spotlight on Pam Hineman

by Kelly Newhouse

Pam Hineman came to chilly PA from warm North Carolina and has worked for almost two years as a job coach overseeing groups of workers and as a one-to-one coach providing individual support.

Whether coaching in a group setting or one-to-one, she is equally devoted to each person. She is attentive to their specific needs and identifies working directly with the clients as the best part of her job.

Having worked for a local domestic service in North Carolina, Pam understands the need for organization, commitment to tasks, and stamina required to complete assigned jobs. She passes on all these work skills as well as the interpersonal skills needed in competitive employment. Pam's fun and warm personality has resulted in her being a positive role model for our consumers. Her hope for the future is that she, and those she supports, continue to grow, and that she is able to help them reach their goals.

Pam is energetic and committed. Her spare time is quite full since she has married her "best friend." Dale. They bring together a blended family of 5 children, 2 grandchildren, while they await the arrival of a third grandchild. When there is time left after being with family, she and her husband practice target shooting at a local range. BCRC has certainly hit the bull's eye with this job coach!

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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CenterPlace Office: 724-378-4750
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Fax: 724-775-0419
Aurora Services: 724-775-2298
Fax: 724-774-7603
TTY/TDD Operator Services: 711

Website: www.bcrc.net

SHOP TALK

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

- In October 2016 BCRC's New Brighton location was visited by Senator Vogel and Representative Gibbons. The visit was to explain the new changes in services and the impact on the people we serve.
- On October 12th, WIN Services moved to their new location, BeaverPlace, at 701 5th Street in Beaver. The increased space will provide a comfortable environment that includes a locker room, large kitchen with dining area, resource room and sensory room.
- Aurora Psych Rehab will now operate from the top two floors of the Aurora building.

Employee of the Month Production Center



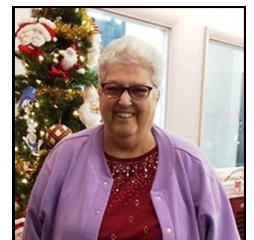
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