

BCRC Implements New “My Work Initiative” Program

By Sheila Bell

This summer, BCRC WIN Services and School to Work staff partnered with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to implement a new program called the “My Work Initiative” for high school students who were looking for summer internships. The program served eight students and ran two sessions – one in June and one in July.

In the first session, four students worked at the New Brighton YMCA in the Maintenance Department. Their responsibilities included cleaning high contact areas in the YMCA and Life Center, cleaning windows and baseboards, and weeding. During the second session, four students worked at Sahli Park in Chippewa. These students provided maintenance of the nature trails throughout the park. This involved learning about invasive plant life including which plants/weeds needed to be removed and learning how to take care of park grounds by removing weeds, trimming bushes, planting and staking trees, and painting tables and benches. The students also tended to the butterfly garden at the park and learned how to take apart plants and separate the seeds for butterflies. Indoor tasks included cleaning tables, chairs, sweeping the floors, organizing and moving furniture, watering plants, and cleaning the inside of the butterfly greenhouse.

For most of the students who participated, this was their first time working. They were excited to learn about the skills needed to maintain employment and to earn a paycheck while having a little fun during their summer break. The businesses chosen to be a part of this experience were also pleased with the partnership and with the work of the students. Some students were even offered a job at the end of their internships! Overall, the program was deemed a success and BCRC hopes to offer it again next year.



School to Work Hosts Successful ESY Program

By Mary Jo Sanders

BCRC’s School to Work department enjoyed another successful Extended School Year (ESY) program during the month of July. Twenty-three students from eight local school districts participated. The students spent most of their time in the community. They took tours, learned about different jobs, and put their skills to the test by working and volunteering at several local businesses.

The participants enjoyed the beautiful summer weather by taking a wildlife tour, a tour of a local mill, and they spent time at a fire department where they were able to interact with the fire trucks and try their hand at aiming the fire hoses. They also visited a candle company where they learned how to make scented jar candles. They traveled to several different museums and historical sites throughout Beaver County and the surrounding areas. Here they saw many interesting exhibits and learned a little about the past.

The students were able to learn new job skills at several businesses throughout the area; the merchants and business owners were gracious and welcoming to the students. Rodney Brown, Coordinator of Transition Specialists said “the program was a great success, the students had the opportunity to get out into the community and learn many valuable lessons that will serve them well into the future.”

Aurora’s Creative Expressions Class Participates in ArtAbility

By Deanna McCracken

September is National Recovery Month, and several of Aurora’s Creative Expressions participants produced outstanding works of art to commemorate this event. “Summer Selfies” was a special group project dedicated to expressing an alternate, more creative aspect of the individual’s personality by taking a selfie and recreating the picture, via collage, to demonstrate a unique aspect of their imagination. Donated magazines and other materials were used to transform the everyday smiles into something even Picasso would envy! “Scissors and glue equals a new you!” was the theme the participants worked towards as they utilized skills of organization, focus, and creativity. Aurora’s participants worked hard and had a lot of fun, and are proud of their contribution to this year’s ArtAbility virtual art exhibit sponsored by Beaver County’s System of Care.

Check out our work here: [It is National Recovery Month! Check out the 2021 ArtAbility Gallery!](#)
[Beaver County System of Care \(bc-systemofcare.org\)](http://bc-systemofcare.org)

BCRC Receives Gracious Donations

By Kristina Beal, Program Specialist

This summer, BCRC staff and clients received several gracious donations from numerous thoughtful community members including Energy Harbor, Citizens Bank / Ashley Stein, and Linda Gadomski's family.

This year, Energy Harbor (previously Duquesne Light First Energy) donated about \$700 worth of Hookstown Fair tickets directly to WIN Services staff and clients, as they have annually for the past six years. Community Activity Specialist Annette Yankello said, "We greatly appreciate the experiences they offer to our clients who would not have the opportunities otherwise."

Furthermore, as part of a Top Performer Award from Citizens Bank, Ashley Stein earned a trip and was asked to choose a nonprofit to receive a \$2,500 donation in her honor. She chose BCRC because of our work with her sister, Megan Patterson, in the Production Center. Ashley designated her generous gift toward the Client Christmas Gift Fund, which will allow each client to receive a special gift.



Kris Beal, Megan Patterson, Ashley Stein



The Gadomski Family

In August, the Gadomski family provided our staff and clients with a refreshing ice cream truck visit in honor of their late sister Linda, who was a former BCRC client. BCRC clients and staff were excited to receive their free ice cream treats.

These are just three examples of the many donations BCRC has been grateful to accept.

"The generosity of all of our donors, whether through grants or individual donations, has been key in providing a variety of experiences to enhance the lives of those we serve," said Executive Assistant Sue Leiper.

THANK YOU!

Jonathan Walker is Cruising in New Position

By Frank Shialabba

Jonathan Walker, of Beaver Falls, would like to go on a cruise with his family. His excellent job performance at KFC in Chippewa may just afford him that opportunity someday.

Jonathan began his employment at KFC in February 2021. He was placed in the job by BCRC's WIN Services. Jonathan prepares orders such as sandwiches, meals and sides. He also maintains cleanliness in the KFC dining area. After an initial adjustment period, Jonathan is doing well in his new position. According to WIN Services Transition Coordinator Magic Sentz, "This is a fast paced and demanding job. Jon learned how to deal with a changing environment that is not always routine. Jon has shown a great deal of resilience, growth, and improvement in his job."

The management team at KFC is proud of Jonathan and how far he has come. They state that he is "very dependable, easy going and a hard worker." Ms. Sentz echoes these sentiments saying that Jonathan is "friendly, polite, respectful and a good self-advocate." Jonathan continues to grow in his position, making friends with coworkers, opening up socially and gaining stamina and endurance.

Jonathan is a huge fan of action movies and likes to attend weekly drive-in movies. He also enjoys following Pittsburgh sports teams and riding his bike. Hopefully there is a well-deserved trip to some exotic location in the future for this very talented and motivated young man.



Jonathan Walker

New Program Director - Welcome, Sheila Bell

By Frank Shialabba

BCRC has a new and highly qualified Program Director. Sheila Bell M.A. of Wexford has entered the position with a world of education and experience.

Sheila has a Master's degree in public policy and a bachelor's degree in sociology and political science from Duquesne University. She also has over 24 years' experience in human services. She spent 20 years at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and most recently worked at the University of Pittsburgh. Sheila's last title at Allegheny County DHS was assistant executive deputy director for Integrated Program Services. She was responsible for the design and implementation of several cross system program initiatives. She also directed initiatives for policy, training, grants management, contract and quality monitoring, and emergency response. As the portfolio director for Community Health Initiatives at Pitt's School of Pharmacy, she led a team to administer several substance use disorder grants and initiatives across PA to address the opioid epidemic. Sheila also serves as an adjunct faculty member at Pitt's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) where she co-teaches the program evaluation course in the summer semesters.

Sheila's job duties as BCRC's program director include providing leadership, direction and supervision of BCRC programming including Small Group Employment, Supported Employment, Mental Health Services, Youth Services, community grant programs, and In Home and Community Based Supports. She is also responsible for overseeing compliance with service definitions/processes and licensing regulations.

Sheila states, "Everyone at BCRC has been incredibly welcoming and supportive. Over the last three months, I have been so impressed by the staff's dedication both to the clients and to ensuring quality programming. I think there are many opportunities for the programs to continue to grow and I am excited to be part of it!"

Being able to get to know some of the clients and staff has been a great experience for Sheila. She feels that "Working with Paulette (Miller) has also been a great privilege. Her leadership and support have clearly made BCRC the special place it is today. I am just really glad to be at BCRC and feel so lucky to work with such a talented and dedicated group of people."



In the Spotlight

Kris Beal
By Ian Thomas



Program Specialist Kris Beal has worked at BCRC for almost five years. She began in November 2016 at WIN Services, working as an employment specialist. Just two months after starting, she took on program specialist responsibilities. During the pandemic, there was a need to streamline the Client Services, Records Management, and WIN Services departments. Kris volunteered to fulfill this role and now provides support to clients who receive pre-vocational community participation services, in-home and community support, small group employment, and supported employment.



WIN Clients participate in Geneva College Homecoming Parade in conjunction with Beaver County Special Olympics



Youth Ambassador Program participants at the Beaver County Courthouse with County Commissioner Tony Amadio Teen Mental Health Awareness Day

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

Competitive Edge Editorial Staff

Kris Beal, Sheila Bell, Jessie Dvorzak,
 Sarah Hazel, Deanna McCracken,
 Mary Jo Sanders, Ian Thomas
 Sean Sen..... Website Editor
 Frank Shialabba.. Copy Editor
 Cindy Lauderbaugh... Layout

BCRC Board of Directors

Janice Kaminski **President**
 Joseph Martonik **Vice President**
 Robert Kadilak **Secretary**
 Thomas Helsing **Treasurer**
 Tracey Antoline-Patton, Ren Bartoe,
 Donald Bolland, Arthur Cornell, Jr.,
 Grant Farmer, Sarah Gardner,
 Michael Nalli, Madge Nichols,
 Natalia Onufrey, Lucas Rihley,
 Richard Sheffield

CenterPlace Office

724-378-4750
 Fax: 724-378-4526

WIN Services

Fax: 724-775-0419

Aurora Services

Fax: 724-774-7603

TTY/TDD Operator Services: 711

www.bcrc.net

It is the mission of the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center, Inc. to provide the opportunity for growth and independence while respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each individual.



“Be Part of Something” at BCRC

Whether you are interested in starting a career or building upon your present profession, you can find your ideal job at BCRC.

Our team has the ability to change clients’ lives each and every day. Whether working directly with clients or behind the scenes, every BCRC employee is making a difference.

BCRC offers robust employee benefit packages designed to meet employee needs and the needs of their families. Comprehensive benefits for staff who qualify include competitive compensation; health insurance; vision insurance; dental insurance and reimbursement plan; retirement plan; short-term/long-term disability insurance; life and AD&D insurance. BCRC also offers paid time off, 11 paid holidays and extensive training and educational opportunities.

For more information, visit our website at www.bcrc.net and see BCRC-Careers.

“Be Part of Something” at BCRC for work that is both fulfilling and purposeful.

Amy Albanese, Human Resource Specialist
 (724) 378-4750 ext. 1253

BCRC Praised by Office of Domestic Security
By Frank Shialabba

BCRC received praise for its security training from the Office of Domestic Security of the Pennsylvania State Police during a risk assessment conducted on June 22, 2021. According to Facilities Manager Laura Medarac, BCRC was lauded for its extensive training in emergency response, evacuation procedures, active shooter and first aid.

Ms. Medarac states that the assessment was done to “provide BCRC with knowledge of possible risk vulnerabilities and the best approaches to address potential threats.” BCRC gained valuable knowledge that will help in the development of future safety policies and procedures that will best enable the agency to protect clients and staff.

BCRC facilities were thoroughly examined for any apparent risks. Areas that were covered included interior and exterior safety, cyber security, communications, deliveries, utilities, floor plans and video surveillance.

Employee of the Month



Nick Mininni
 July 2021



Devonte Moon
 August 2021



Carol McCullough
 September 2021

BCRC is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the *USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF)*, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.