



The Competitive Edge

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

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STW Hops into Former Froggy Studio

by Jessica Rusak

BCRC recently welcomed the School to Work (STW) program to their CenterPlace location. The adjoining former radio space was renovated over the holidays and offers an open floor plan and professional atmosphere. A breakfast was held to welcome the new tenants and introduce the students to the various departments within CenterPlace.

According to Maureen Hawk, Supervisor of Youth Services, staff and students alike are enjoying the new location. "Students are excited and feel the importance of what they are doing."

Maureen hopes this (programming) continues. "I don't want any student to fall through the cracks, she said. All youth in Beaver County deserve access to the same opportunities and to make the most of their abilities."

To stay in compliance under a new regulation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), the STW program is now administered through Basswood Initiatives. The focus remains on each student and their successful transition from school to being a young adult in the community.

Maureen stated, "When a student triumphs over their own personal barriers; whether it's prom, graduating, or getting a job, their success is why my job is so rewarding."

The STW program provides high school students the opportunity to learn job habits and skills, which they subsequently practice at community assessment sites. In addition, the program provides students with instructional classes based on their specific needs.

For more information about the School to Work program, please contact Maureen Hawk at 724-419-2222, mhawk@basswoodonline.net or visit www.basswoodonline.net.

Let's Talk Recovery

by Laurel Baker

Come to Aurora Services and you will find an overall recovery atmosphere; positive vibes are an essential element of the journey. The practitioners work hard to provide classes that are educational yet engaging, useful but encouraging, and conducive to each individual's needs. Participants can choose to attend any or all of the classes, including the newest addition, expressive art. The only criteria is that the class material must relate to the overall goal of the individual. The intention is that the participants take the skills they learn and generalize them to daily life, increasing the likelihood of a successful recovery.



Promoting the recovery philosophy is learning to speak the language. Throughout history, mental illness has been characterized as deviant, abnormal, even demonic. Now that we know better, it is time to recognize the importance of strength-based, person-first language. This means focusing on what is right, instead of what is wrong. It is not fancy, clinical terminology; it is natural, human, friendly, and relatable. A small detail can make a tremendous impact on a person's self-worth. Individuals who engage with Aurora services are just that, individuals or participants, actively navigating their own recoveries, rather than patients or consumers. Ultimately, the best way to reference someone is simply by using his or her name. We avoid labels, stressing that a person is so much more than a diagnosis or behaviors. Recovery means looking at a whole person as a unique and worthwhile human being, capable of deciding the best path to take. ■



Troy is "Man for All Seasons"

by Karen Adamo

Troy Levinger is a "man for all seasons" who radiates positivity with his bright smile and can-do attitude. He has many admirable traits that have helped him find success at BCRC's community work sites and in his personal relationships.

Troy's skill and flexibility have made him a natural to tackle many of BCRC's most difficult jobs. Troy has successfully prepared documents for scanning at both the New Castle

Bureau of Records and the Beaver County Courthouse. He is an integral part of the cleaning crew at the Production Center and also shows his dexterity and creativity in Gifts Delivered.

As a giving coworker, Troy is described by his many friends as "sensitive and caring." He seems tuned in to the needs of friends and coworkers, and has a friendly hello for everyone he meets. He loves life and enjoys a new challenge.

Troy is also an active participant in his community, enjoys playing basketball and volley ball with his Special Olympic teams, and bowls with the Saturday morning bowlers. Troy and his dad are avid fans of NASCAR and attend many races together. He has shown that BCRC's production center is a place where people can grow in their skill, confidence and independence. ■

Story Bowls for Board Members

by Gina Alberti

It is the mission of the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center, Inc. to provide the opportunity for personal growth and independence while respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each individual. In all that we do, BCRC encourages those whom we serve to live purposefully, work to fulfillment, and grow and flourish as community members.

These words that so eloquently describe BCRC's purpose in the community were recently transcribed in a series of hand-crafted "story bowls" for the hardworking and dedicated board members who help to promote BCRC's mission every day.



Sister Sue Clay of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Baden creates story bowls that include recipes, scripture verses, and other personalized inscriptions to benefit their various ministries. Moved by this unique philanthropic venture, BCRC purchased the story bowls as Christmas gifts for each board member. Along with the BCRC mission, each bowl was inscribed with the board member's name,

past and current positions, and years of service. Did you know that Commora Woodfork's nearly 45 years of service make her our longest serving board member, or that operations committee member Madge Nichols joined us in February 2016? Each board member has a unique background that allows him or her to provide special and invaluable contributions to our organization. For their service, we are forever indebted! ■

BCRC Awarded Grant

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC acquired a grant in December of 2016 that facilitates creating the position of transition specialist. The new transition specialist will assist graduating School to Work students and individuals participating in the prevocational program to prepare for community employment opportunities and to take advantage of the existing opportunities that BCRC has in place to participate more fully in the community.

Pennsylvania is an Employment First state and the Governor's Executive Order states, "Competitive integrated employment is the first consideration and preferred outcome of publicly-funded education, training, employment and related services, and long-term supports and services for working-age Pennsylvanians with a disability." It will be the transition specialist's responsibility to work together with the entire staff to ensure that each participant receives every support necessary to enjoy full community participation. These services will include supported employment, habilitation, and transitional employment. ■

Terrific Trio will be Missed

by Frank Shialabba

Pat Sullivan, Ivy Russo, and Nancy Perkins were three valued members of BCRC who recently retired.

Pat Sullivan, a 25 year employee, was a consummate professional who was valued for her organization, trustworthiness and dependability. As job coach supervisor, she assisted the production manager with job setup, completion and quality control and helped keep the prevocational program running smoothly.

Ivy Russo, employed for 16 years as an employment specialist at WIN Services, was a flexible and dedicated employee. Her cross training proved to be a valuable asset as she could job coach, provide habilitation services and meet with numerous individuals to secure employment for our clients. Ivy was a gifted salesperson who knew that her most valuable asset was the talents of our clients.

Nancy Perkins, employed 10 years, coordinated multiple projects in her years with BCRC as Records Management's facilitator. She was known for being very methodical in the way she processed and relayed information. According to coworker Lisa Vesolich, "She always tried to bring out the best in our clients."

Indeed, everyone at BCRC is happy to have had the pleasure of working with these three outstanding individuals. ■

Sowing Seeds of Happiness

by Frank Shialabba

Ron Hoffman was a free spirit
Who knew his own mind.
You always knew where you stood with him,
He communicated just fine.

He loved to work,
And proudly show off his pay.
His nimble hands completed jobs
That had to be done today.

Every summer Ron had a garden
And he liked to watch things grow.
His hearty laugh sowed seeds of happiness
Wherever he'd go.

He loved to dress up,
And in a tux he looked real good.
He would flash an ear to ear grin
That could brighten anybody's mood.

So thank you Ron for all the times
With a dear and cherished friend.
Our memories of a life well lived
Will surely never end.



Spotlight on: Leahan Bock

by Frank Shialabba



“Good Manners are Always in Style”

“Good manners are always in style, free, but priceless in our relationships.” This quote reflects the philosophy of BCRC Job Coach, Leahan Bock. Leahan has worked with the participants at BCRC for over 16 years with an approach that is

both accepting and forgiving.

Before joining BCRC, Leahan worked as a teaching assistant in the New Brighton Area School District. She ▶

brought with her this great experience and true dedication to helping people learn and realize success.

Leahan then brought this gentle style to her job as a BCRC job coach. She states, “I love to see everyone respecting and accepting each other and treating each other in the manner that they, themselves, would like to be treated.” She feels that we can go far with caring and kindness toward others. This approach is reflected in her work and shared with participants and coworkers at BCRC. Her gentle ways are also shared with her children and husband of 41 years. She and her husband Ken have two grown sons and their lovely wives and children. They are the proud grandparents of 4-year old Addison and 5-month-old Liam. Together they all enjoy family gatherings, church, and special events. Leahan states that she feels very blessed to have good health and a purposeful life. ■

WIN Position Provides Flexibility and Sense of Purpose

by Frank Shialabba

If you are interested in a job that provides rewarding experiences and a flexible schedule, the client support position at WIN Services is for you. Many people, including a number of retired persons, have found that client support suits their need to have purpose in their life while maintaining a sense of freedom not found in your typical nine to five job.

Individuals in the client support position provide home and community habilitation to persons with disabilities who are served by WIN Services. However, this particular position was designed to appeal to people who are seeking part time, daylight employment but spend most of their time helping, not doing paper work. According to WIN Director of Employment Services, Sheila Silbaugh, “client support staff have a daily case note but very little additional paper work. Some retired individuals like the job because they can take vacations and still have their job waiting for them when they come back. Client support staff work only during the day with no weekend work.”

Client support also appeals to people who have limits on their time but have the desire to be a part of something meaningful. Staff often help individuals participate in volunteer opportunities and other community-based experiences that not only enhance their skills and self-esteem but also serve the community. On Tuesdays, WIN clients work in the WIN kitchens to prepare bake goods for as many as 60 seniors at a local church. This past Thanksgiving, WIN clients worked with church members to provide a Thanksgiving dinner for the seniors. Staff and clients also enjoy their time together at places like Steelers camp and area museums.

Support staff say that they love their interaction with WIN clients, and the opportunity to see them grow and live more independently. There is an obvious bond that develops between staff and client, and this connection makes for a rewarding work environment. For information about the client support ▶

position, contact BCRC's Human Resources Department at 131 Pleasant Drive, 2nd Floor, Aliquippa, PA 15001, 724-378-4750.

You may also apply online at www.bcrc.net. ■

John's Love for Work Can't be Matched

by Frank Shialabba

After five years as a Foodland employee, John Botinovch is truly loved. John likes to joke that if he's on vacation and if you see a cardboard figure of him at Foodland, it's because he misses the customers and staff as much as they miss him. John's love for his job is something that few people can match. The only thing he may enjoy as much as working is being an uncle. Still, it's hard for John to tear himself away from his job to visit his new nephew in North Carolina. According to WIN Director of Employment Services Sheila Silbaugh, “John is a good guy and he's good at what he does. We provide job coaching for John at his job, and he attends habilitation services at WIN two days per week.”

John has been a dedicated worker during his five years at Foodland. There have been very few days when he's missed work, and he is depended upon to perform a variety of duties. He may be called upon to bag groceries, bring in carts or stock the shelves. He is adept at “blocking”, the process of bringing product forward on the shelves so it is lined up evenly and easy for customers to reach.

In addition to being an exemplary employee, John is a patient friend who sees the good in other people. Ms. Silbaugh describes him as “compassionate and outgoing.” John is truly missed by customers and staff when he is not at work. Stop by on a Tuesday or Thursday morning when you can see John spreading cheer on his regular shift. However, if you see a cardboard cutout of John, make sure to smile and say hello and stop again another time. ■

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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Work Activity Center will do Work of Gifts Delivered

by Frank Shialabba

Due to the changes in the mandates we received from the Office of Developmental Programs, our Gifts Delivered featuring Candy Bouquet franchise has been closed. The production of specific products will be handled by our workshop and produced by our clients attending prevocational services.

While the primary impetus of Gifts Delivered in the past has been the creation of general gifts to individual customers, BCRC will now focus on group sales of our memorial wreaths, lanterns, and chocolate roses. These items will also be available to individual customers upon request. BCRC will also take orders for specific events like parties, weddings, banquets, etc.

BCRC Executive Director Paulette Miller sees the proposed changes as a chance to continue providing individuals at BCRC with the opportunities to express their creativity. She is also hopeful that even more individuals in the work activity center will get a chance to create memorial wreaths and lanterns.

Gifts Delivered Coordinator Susan Hill is busy preparing for the transition with her usual positivity. She will cherish her wonderful memories of her time with the Gifts Delivered crew. ■

Employee of the Month
Production Center



Allen Kronk
January 2017



Mildred Elliott
February 2017



Joseph Poling
March 2017

SHOP TALK

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

- ➔ Four individuals were honored at the 2016 BCRC Christmas party. Employee of Year, Brandi Senior; Student of the Year, Madison Mercadante; Competitive Employment Award, Christina Bruce; William A. Lintz Sr. Award, Gary Schlotter.
- ➔ February was RAK (random acts of kindness) month and each staff received a small wooden “story bowl,” hand printed with BCRC’s mission statement.
- ➔ Ramps were installed outside the workshop doors at CenterPlace in preparation for the upcoming move. ■

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. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.