



The Competitive Edge

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

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Criminal Justice Grants Serve Many

by Kay Podbielski

For the past 3 years, BCRC, Inc. has been working in collaboration with partnering agencies through several grants that the county has been awarded to serve those with mental illness and substance abuse disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system. Our role has been to provide vocational services to inmates

while they are serving their sentences, and to support their job seeking efforts at the time of reentry. The specific services that we provide at the jail are vocational assessment, supported employment, psychiatric rehabilitation, and assistance in preparing for the GED exam as well as brushing up on academic skills.

The vocational assessment provides information on skills, interests, and aptitudes that can enlighten the participant concerning possible careers that may be

able available to the inmates as returning citizens. Supported employment staff then assists in developing a resume, searching for jobs, reviewing the record of arrests and prosecutions, and teaching job seeking and retention skills. Psychiatric rehabilitation services include goal setting, mental health education, coping skills, and important issues that will strengthen recovery. Thus far, BCRC has served nearly 150 people through the criminal justice grants.

Aurora 10th Anniversary Highlights Clients' Accomplishments

by Frank Shialabba

"Don't waste one single moment. How very precious they are. What seems a long way off, is really not that far." This beautiful sentiment about recovery is taken from a poem written by a participant at Aurora Services and highlighted at their 10th Anniversary Open house on Friday, May 3. The poem was one of many examples of the creativity of Aurora's clients that was on display at the open house. Client's handmade items, poems, Photo Voice displays and a published book were also exhibited.

These displays were manifestations of the progress toward recovery made by Aurora's participants, and the contributions toward that recovery made by the Aurora program over the last 10 years. Photo Voice displays were photos chosen or taken by Aurora clients that were accompanied by thoughts about their recoveries. The book, written by an Aurora participant, is currently on sale on Amazon.com. It highlights the history of Baroque music and was the result of the client's doctoral dissertation. Client's poems were personal expressions of their life experiences and progress toward recovery, while craft items showed their creativity. Visitors seemed to enjoy witnessing the personal stories and accomplishments of the Aurora clients as they toured the facility.



Approximately 65 people attended the event. Visitors included former and current Aurora clients, BCRC staff, WIN staff, Glade Run caseworkers and administrators, and BCBH Administrative staff, including Deputy District Administrator Lisa McCoy.

Aurora Services Program Director, Marianne LaSalle, expressed her feelings about Aurora with the words, "Ten years ago, when Paulette Miller suggested that we create another pathway to recovery for people with mental illness, we received a grant from BCBH to search for new and creative services. Aurora Services was the result. It is the pleasure of everyone at Aurora to witness and encourage the philosophy of recovery. The courage and growth of individuals in the program give testament to her vision and their work."

An Aurora client summed up this vision and his experience through a Photo Voice Display that depicted hands molding a clay object. He stated, "In many ways we are like the clay in this photograph. It is being subjected to strong external forces... We don't always get to choose the external forces that affect us, but we can trust that the end result will be a work of art."



Vince is "Go To Guy"

by Frank Shialabba

Vince Wallace of Beaver Falls receives high praise from BCRC job coaches and program specialists. He is the "go to guy" whenever someone is needed for a difficult last minute assignment.

Vince has worked at BCRC since September, 2010. Program Specialist Cindy Kirkpatrick states, "Vince is very motivated. He is willing to work wherever he is needed. Recently he gave up his day off on Friday to help out at a community work site."

Vince cleans, moves boxes, straightens and indexes important files at the community work site two days a week. His job coach Paula Hart describes his work as "phenomenal." She says that his work production has increased every week, and he has gone from straightening 15 to 26 pounds of files per day. She states, "It has been a pleasure working with Vince. He



is a nice young man who has a contagious laugh and great sense of humor. Vince is "an all-around good worker. He is always willing to do anything that he's asked to do, he's kind to his coworkers, and he makes friends easily."

Vince likes to "keep busy and earn money." He states, "I like my job coach and I like the work. It's not too difficult and I enjoy the pay check."

Vince, who likes rap music and clothes, uses his pay check to buy the latest CD or fashion. He points to his designer bomber's jacket with pride, and he often talks about a new CD that he is purchasing.

In addition to listening to music, Vince enjoys going to the Mall, surfing the net at the library and playing basketball.

As BCRC's "go to guy," Vince is truly an asset to BCRC's mobile work sites and production center. He can be depended on to supply quality work whenever and wherever it is needed.

"Flash of the Decades" is Wave of Nostalgia and Talent

by Frank Shialabba

WIN's "Flash of the Decades" swept up more than 300 enthusiastic attendees in a wave of nostalgia and talent on Thursday, April 25 at New Horizon School.

"Flash of the Decades" was a trip through music, fashion and historical events of the 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, and 90's. According to WIN Director Sheila Silbaugh, "Our annual presentation is an opportunity to display the growth and talent of the wonderful participants at BCRC's WIN Services."

Ms. Silbaugh believes in giving people the opportunity to be successful and receive the cheers of family and friends. She credits the staff of WIN for doing all the work and organizing and creating an atmosphere of teamwork. Staff members Latasha Nelson and Karen Horstman did an excellent job of planning and organizing the event and they received the help and cooperation of many other WIN staff.

Ms. Silbaugh marvels at the flexibility of WIN clients and staff who never had a chance to practice on the New Horizon stage and runway.

There are many examples of individuals "rising to the occasion." However, these moments often happen behind the scenes. One individual, who initially said he could never speak on stage, recited his lines flawlessly. Another person, who was unable to initially say her lines, received support from backstage staff and returned to the stage to do a beautiful job.

It's these small but significant victories that motivate Ms. Silbaugh and her staff to elevate us all by their steadfast belief in the talent and abilities of the clients of WIN Services.



Spotlight On:

Lori Kennedy

by Jennifer Gengarella

One of BCRC's newest team members comes to us with a wide variety of experience. Lori Kennedy has held positions in a variety of careers from training horses, to designing jewelry, to selling beer to hotels in Tampa, and also as the HR Director of the largest concrete distributor in Las Vegas. Since March 19, 2013, she can now add program specialist at BCRC to her repertoire of experience. Lori had previously provided psychological and learning evaluations for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and with a BA in psychology from Slippery Rock University, and a Masters in Higher Education from Geneva, she is well versed in meeting the needs of BCRC's clients.

Lori finds it hard to distinguish between the staff and clients as to what she likes best about BCRC so far. She remarked that she would like to see even greater opportunities become available for our clients in the future, thus enabling them to grow both professionally and personally.

Away from BCRC, Lori enjoys painting with watercolors and kayaking to relax. She and her husband are the proud parents of two "fur babies" as well. We welcome Lori to the BCRC family and look forward to a long and enjoyable relationship together.



Technology is Necessary to Meet Standards

by Amanda Dodd

Like many other non-profit organizations, BCRC has felt the increasing pressures of obtaining and maintaining data and statistics to ensure service quality as well as compliance with program standards. There seems to be a direct correlation between an agency's scope of programming and their reporting requirements. As services increase, the need for accurate and productive data collection also increases. As prior newsletters have demonstrated, BCRC continues to evolve into a highly diversified agency. Consequently, we have found ourselves in the position of seeking support for our data collection efforts.

After researching several software systems designed for non-profit management, BCRC finally decided to pilot a software

system known as Apricot, offered by Community TechKnowledge, Inc. As described on their website:

"Apricot is the most affordable and flexible non-profit software solution, including client, donor and volunteer tracking and outcomes management - an all-in-one solution, proving your Outcomes Achievement™ to increase community impact and funding..."

Though BCRC is in the beginning stages of implementation, the tracking mechanisms and report functions made available through this program have already begun to make grant management more user-friendly, more efficient, and more informative. Though our usage of Apricot has been purposefully limited to grant tracking, the hope is that it will be useful agency-wide as we track staff information, client progress, and general agency outcomes. Be on the lookout for updates as we continue the exploration of technology's place in the social service world!

Moving on Up

by Pat Healey

While it will be awhile until the BCRC clients move into the new BCRC building at Center-Place, most of the administration staff are now in Center Township. Along with moving staff, BCRC is planning for the future and improving many aspects of the building and infrastructure.

Infrastructure improvements include upgrading the phone system, creating a workroom for transitional clients and upgrading the BCRC computer network (creating a new intranet service in the building).

Work on the building includes upgrading the sprinkler system and ordering a new sign for the front of the building. Another addition to the building was a badly needed supply ordering system that will allow inventory to cycle more efficiently and quickly. A downstairs shower room has also been converted into an accessible bathroom.

Client and staff safety is always the primary concern for BCRC, so evacuation plans and transportation plans have been identified. Pull stations have been installed in the restrooms and new electrical devices have been installed in the workshop area.

Although recent budget crunches have delayed most of the clients moving to the Center Township building, meetings are held every Monday morning to make plans to move the existing workshops into Center and to have the building licensed. The goal is to have workshop clients and their support staff (job coaches and program specialists) together in one location.

The actual move date is still undetermined, but much progress is taking place every day.

Safety Lights



Public Bus Safety

While waiting for the bus, have your fare or ticket ready. As you board the bus, be sure to have correct change for the fare box. Drivers do not carry change and the fare boxes don't give change. After boarding, be seated as quickly as possible. When exiting the bus, ring the bell one half block before the stop to allow the driver enough time to make a smooth stop. Students and former students need to realize that the public bus does not wait for you to cross the street like a school bus. Transit buses move away from the stop as soon as passengers have gotten on or off. Never cross the street in front of the bus. Wait for the bus to pull away so that you have a clear view of the street. Cross at the cross walk or street corner. Wait for the traffic to stop.



Shop Talk

by Kay Podbielski

Employee of The Month

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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Jessica Cogis
January



Matt Barth
February



Vincent Wallace
March

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