



The Competitive Edge

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

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Joanna Greco Participates in Employment Event in Harrisburg

by *Bonnie Smith*

On October 20th, Joanna Greco, along with families, people with disabilities and representatives from 17 other non-profit agencies attended "Embrace the Abilities Day on the Hill" in Harrisburg. This event was arranged by UniqueSource Products and Services, and was designed to educate legislators regarding employment for people with disabilities, and to discuss Governor Wolf's executive order, "Diversity, Inclusion and Small Business Opportunities in Commonwealth Procurement and in Pennsylvania's Economy."

A large focus of the discussion revolved around the importance of persons having a choice about where and how they wish to work. Unemployment among individuals with ▶

disabilities is three times the unemployment rate of the general population. Attendees also discussed the possible effects of eliminating or phasing out sheltered workshops and the loss of state and local contracts. Included was an area that showcased products made by people with disabilities.

Greco was able to meet one-on-one with Senator Vogel and Senator Bartolotta, as well as Representatives Marshall, Gibbons, Matzie, and Christiana. All of the legislators Greco met with contacted her after the event requesting more information regarding the discussed topics and how they could help.

Days later, Greco received an official document from one of the Representatives alerting her that the Governor had issued a proclamation to observe January 30th as "Pennsylvanians with Disabilities Day." Many of the legislators said they will try to attend BCRC's annual client Christmas party to meet the clients and learn more about their concerns. ■

MHT Program Given High Marks!

by *Laurel Baker*

Employment is often a vital part of one's recovery journey. Knowing this, BCRC provides employment support to individuals with a serious mental health diagnosis, through Project Recovery, a countywide initiative that focuses on the peer driven recovery model, funded by the SAMSHA Mental Health Transformation grant.

Housed with WIN services, the MHT program has been operating for five years, and recently was given a no-cost extension to the grant for an additional year of service. There is no doubt that this is a reflection of the success of the program, which is monitored by Kim Hall, Project Director for the grant, and HPW Associates, LLC.

The audits have all reflected that BCRC is doing an excellent job with this program. In June, BCRC scored perfectly in areas such as adherence to program philosophy, individualizing treatment planning, and quality assurance. Through interviews with participants, a peer employment specialist, and the peer supervisor, the auditor determined that the program is successful in providing rapid searches for competitive employment, diversity and permanence of jobs developed, and appropriate follow-along supports.

Vanessa Schmidt, from HPW Associates, summed up the audit by stating that "BCRC's supported employment services are being implemented with fidelity and there was a high level of consistency among responses from both consumers and program staff."

Congratulations to the MHT program on its continued success! ■

Spotlight On: Jessica Skirchak

by *Kelly Newhouse*

As BCRC's production centers grow and evolve, so does our need for a caring and talented job coaching staff. BCRC is grateful to have found such a person in Jessica Skirchak.

Jessica has been a job coach in our 1517 6th Ave., New Brighton building since December 2013.

Jessica has a wealth of experience, having worked for a community residential rehabilitation program for 14 years; the last 8 years as a residential supervisor. She states that the favorite part of her job is the clients with whom she works. This is easily observed through her interaction and care of each client. Jessica takes time in guiding the learning experiences of each individual. She considers each person's individual needs and takes time to consider each individual learning style. Jessica also offers great support to fellow coworkers. This positive approach builds strong relationships, making the clients experiences even more valuable.

In the future, Jessica hopes "to continue to support the clients as they advance their skills." She looks forward to new contract work and the opportunity to support the clients as they expand their knowledge of the working world.

In her free time, Jessica enjoys activities with her husband and two children. ■



BCRC Eager to Go to the Dogs, Safety Day is Howling Success

by Frank Shialabba

Not all dogs are created equal. Some canines are more intelligent and more in tune with safety than others. Such is the case with Stella, Aragon and Ciro, three dogs who were the stars of BCRC's annual Safety Day in September. All eyes were on these three canines as they charmed clients and staff with their talents and dedication.

Stella, the talented Corgi, lent her own brand of doggy charm to one of the basic tenants of fire safety- **the stop, drop and role**. BCRC clients delighted, when on cue, Stella demonstrated this important fire safety measure. As usual, Jack Skerlac and his daughter Amy (Stella's owner) from Aerial Fire Equipment, gave a highly entertaining presentation, highlighted by Stella's performance. Hopefully, we can all remember to follow Stella's example if we ever have fire on our clothes or person.

Golden Retriever Aragon, a canine companion trained facility dog and her owner Peggy of Turner Funeral Home in Ellwood City, were on hand to provide a calming influence on all who came in contact with them. Aragon waited patiently as one by one clients stepped forward to pet her. She is a true example of the calm that is needed in an emergency.

Last but not least Canine Officer Ciro demonstrated his ability to root out drugs that are hidden by his friend and fellow officer, Deputy Jim Brown. Deputy Brown and Sergeant Yonlisky treated BCRC clients with patience and respect as they gave interesting and easily understood answers to a variety of questions. Meanwhile, Ciro had no trouble finding the items hidden by Officer Brown. Ciro surprised and thrilled everyone when he first jumped up on a table and then jumped into the arms of Deputy Brown, who cradled him like a puppy. The affection between dog and master was obvious.

BCRC clients and staff also have a great deal of affection for these fabulous dogs and their owners. Yes, BCRC has eagerly gone to the dogs, and we have been well rewarded as these talented canines have truly shown us the meaning of "puppy love." ■



Corgi, Stella, enjoys the day with BCRC clients.



Canine Officer Ciro is pictured with Deputy Jim Brown.

Missy Has Sense of Self

by Frank Shialabba

Missy Kuppinger is an exuberant person who is loyal to friends and loves the holidays. She is also someone who has accomplished a great deal in her time at BCRC's Production Centers.

According to BCRC Program Specialist Kelly Newhouse, "Missy has been chosen to attend one of BCRC's newest enclaves because she learns quickly and her work is of very good quality." Missy is especially skilled at services such as collating, folding, filling envelopes and placing labels accurately. She keeps her work very organized whether working with documents, assembly or packaging. Missy states that her favorite part of her work at the enclave is "preparing documents." However, in her typical enthusiastic way she states, "I like everything." There is a great deal to like about Missy and Newhouse states, "I enjoy working with Missy because of her direct honesty, her appreciation of the fun things in life and her independent thinking."

Since starting at BCRC, Missy has attempted and mastered all jobs offered to her. In August 2015 she was named Employee of the Month. She was recently asked to help with an assembly job that had to be done to meet a pressing deadline. Missy came through with flying colors and loved being part of a team. She is very proud of the money she earns and always asks for additional work when her assignments are completed.

Newhouse feels that Missy, "has a true sense of self; she likes who she is." BCRC has gotten a true sense of the type of worker and person that Missy is, and we know that there is much fun and success in her future. ■

Burkhart has Positive Influence on Others

by Frank Shialabba

According to PennDot Driver License Center worker Joseph Burkhart, "If Daryl's happy we're all happy!" Daryl is Burkhart's supervisor at the PennDot Driver License Center in Beaver Falls, and he is very happy with Joe's work at the Center.

Joe is the senior maintenance worker at the PennDot Driver Center, and he is the picture of dedication and dependability.

Arriving early to work and never missing a day are just two of the ways that Joe demonstrates his dedication. According to WIN Services Director Sheila Silbaugh, "Joe has matured greatly over the last few years. He takes great pride in his job, and that pride causes him to care very much about how he performs his duties and the way he conducts himself." Once the building has been locked for the evening, Joe was instructed to never open the door for anyone. According to Silbaugh, "Joe is very diligent about following the rules. He frequently has to turn people away, but Joe understands the importance of security."

Part of Joe's maturation is the leadership role he has taken with other workers. According to WIN Employment Specialist Debbie Doyle, "He has learned to gently guide others to develop better work habits and methods. He has become a role model for other workers at the Center." One of Joe's friends, who he helped train, has moved on to competitive employment.

Joe is proud of his friend and coworker, and he is proud of his work for the Driver's License Center. He is a true example of the growth and success achieved by many at WIN Services. ■



BCRC Welcomes All Inquiries *by Gina Alberti*

WELCOME! Any recent visitors will have noticed this word proudly displayed throughout BCRC. In an attempt to better serve our communities, BCRC has developed a new “welcome” initiative. Beaver County Behavioral Health is encouraging service agencies to adopt a Single Point of Accountability (SPA) approach, which provides those receiving services with a recovery-oriented, proactive system of care. In accordance with this new plan, BCRC strives to provide a “welcoming” atmosphere to any individual who inquires about services. If BCRC does not perform such services, staff members will actively assist in finding out which organizations do. According to Executive Director, Paulette Miller, “BCRC welcomes all inquiries for help and will be happy to take time and care to direct people to the agencies and services that will meet their needs.” To emphasize this new plan, staff members were encouraged to decorate “welcome” signs and display them in their respective work areas. These creative and colorful designs prove how dedicated BCRC staff members are to this supportive initiative and to making BCRC a more “welcoming” place for all! ■

Elderly, Service Men and Women and Needy Served by WIN

by Frank Shialabba

WIN Services participants love to do things for other people. At no time has that been more evident than this fall. WIN clients and staff have scheduled activities designed to positively impact the lives of the elderly, veterans, active soldiers and the needy.

WIN will work with a foundation and local churches to provide food and clothing for the needy. The Beaver Heritage Foundation stated that WIN came highly recommended and were at the top of the list of volunteers to help with a Beaver County project. Through a grant from Duquesne Light and in cooperation with the Beaver Police Department, WIN participants packaged carbon monoxide/smoke detectors designed to help people who were eligible for the program in Beaver, Vanport and Industry. WIN will also work with local churches to pack garments for rummage sales that will benefit residents of Beaver County.



WIN clients package smoke detectors for needy Beaver Countians.

Elderly residents of Beaver County will benefit from the talent and efforts of WIN participants during the holiday season. During the week of Thanksgiving, WIN will pack lunches for the elderly at one location, while “one hundred lunches for one hundred dollars” is the theme of an effort to help a local soup kitchen. WIN clients will work at the kitchen and donate one dollar toward this effort. Meanwhile, WIN will entertain the elderly at a large local program that provides senior services and continue to volunteer for the Meals on Wheels program.

WIN clients love our service men and women, both active and retired. Area veterans will celebrate Thanksgiving with WIN clients and staff at the 911 Air Force base. WIN participants will provide cookies and punch for our heroes as a way of thanking them for their service. WIN also continues as an active volunteer for the Yellow Ribbon girls to benefit service men and women who currently serve our country. ■



Prayer and Halloween?

by Frank Shialabba

Prayer and Halloween are not often mentioned in the same sentence. However, that changed this October as WIN Service participants celebrated Halloween at Prayer Mountain in Darlington.

Prayer Mountain is a scenic retreat that was formerly run by the Fisher of Boys Ministry. The retreat is still owned by descendants of the original founder of the ministry. Dan Hayes, son-in-law of the founder, kindly offered the use of the extensive facilities at Prayer Mountain to WIN Services this October.

The result of this generosity was an evening that provided entertainment of every sort to the costumed Halloween revelers of WIN Services. Hay rides, a bonfire, music, dancing, crafts, games, football and basketball were among the numerous activities that entertained party goers. Participants dined on pizza and s'mores as they enjoyed the scenic fall landscapes. WIN Director, Sheila Silbaugh, describes the “gorgeous fall foliage at Prayer Mountain” as the perfect spot to celebrate the Halloween season.

Ms. Silbaugh would like to thank Mr. Hayes and all those who helped to make the evening a success. ■

Shop Talk

by Marisa Scalamogna

◆ BCRC staff and clients participated in Safety Day in September in addition to the Safety Carnival. All clients and staff received updated training on fire safety and the use of fire extinguishers.

◆ BCRC participated in the Day of Caring once again this year. Volunteers for this special day were from Columbia Gas and Heritage Valley Health Systems. They did a beautiful job painting the front and back hallways at the 1517 building.

◆ It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at BCRC! The Gifts Delivered Christmas Open House was held November 17 through November 20.

◆ The School to Work transition students gave thanks at their annual Thanksgiving dinner held at BCRC on November 18 and 19. Both staff and students assisted in the food preparation.

◆ The client holiday party was held at The Fez on December 11. Staff and clients played bingo, enjoyed music and dancing and ate delicious food. ■

Employee of the Month

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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Production Centers



Melissa Kuppinger
August



Kayla Edgington
September



Connie Smith
October

School to Work

Training Rm #1 Training Rm #2 Production Center

September



Hunter Giles



Keandre Johnson



Grace Wilson

October



Justin Leavitt

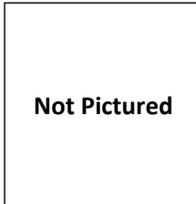


Ben Biggs



Zackary Andrews

November



Not Pictured



Quandra Myers



Elizabeth Lambert

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