



The Competitive Edge

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Newest Client has Delicious History

by Susan Hill

The newest addition to our Candy Bouquet project has come to us with a delicious history of chocolate making! Nancy Young worked at Highland Chocolates in Wellsboro, PA prior to her family relocating to Beaver County. The motto at Highland Chocolates is, “Extraordinary chocolates by extraordinary people!” Nancy has proven to be just that...extraordinary! She has quickly and determinedly learned most of the Candy Bouquet jobs. She works quietly with complete focus and has truly been a “sweet” addition to our group. We are currently selling some of the products from her former employer such as snack and nut mixes as well as chocolate covered graham crackers and Oreos. ■



ing in one location and allow for greater safety for everyone involved.

BCRC will also have a reception area at the new entrance that will allow staff to screen visitors and add to the overall security of the agency. ■

Taylor Recognized for Work Ethic

by Frank Shialabba

On June 16, Jonathan Taylor, of Beaver Falls, was recognized at the annual Nettie Mann Achievement Awards dinner in Harrisburg, PA. The dinner was held at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center and annually highlights the achievements of persons who are employed through UniqueSource (formerly the Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind and Handicapped).

Jonathan first became involved with BCRC in 2012 through the School to Work Program. He progressed in his work skills and eventually achieved community employment. Since 2013, Jonathan has provided cleaning services to the State Police Barracks in Brighton Township. The staff at the police barracks acknowledge Jonathan for, “a job well done.” Joanna Greco, Contract Acquisition Coordinator of BCRC, praises Jonathan for his courtesy to the officers at his work place. She also feels that he is thorough in the completion of his duties.



Jonathan was recognized at the awards dinner for his “personal fortitude, work ethic and abilities.” He is also active in his church and has acted as team manager for a number of sports teams in Beaver Falls. ■

Security Upgrades Continue at CenterPlace

by Frank Shialabba

In anticipation of the future relocation of BCRC's work centers to CenterPlace, efforts to upgrade safety and security at the Center location continue. The latest plans include the installation of a new entrance that will eliminate potential congestion.

Currently, BCRC shares an entrance with Life of Beaver County. Life has numerous buses that come and go daily from this entrance. Plans are to have a separate entrance for Life at the far right side of the building, while BCRC clients will enter on the far left. This will lessen the number of cars and buses congregat-

Partnership Formed

by Amanda Dodd

Many Beaver County women stand to benefit from a partnership that has been formed between BCRC and the Women’s Center of Beaver County. The recent partnership has been both rewarding and a time of growth for BCRC staff.

Through this collaboration, BCRC

provides vocational support in the form of assessments, supported employment classes, illness management and recovery classes, academic tutoring, and computer skills training.

As with most new programs, time has been helpful in developing a solid and relevant program for these women. To increase accessibility to services, and to accommodate the women's’ schedules, BCRC operates this

program on a mobile basis, often utilizing space provided by the Women’s Center. As a result, staff has witnessed a steady increase in program participation.

This particular project is scheduled to run through the latter part of 2015. BCRC, alongside of the Women’s Center, looks forward to sharing and celebrating in the successes of many women as they move forward in their lives to safety and independence. ■

Newsletter Celebrates 21st Year

This year, BCRC's newsletter, *The Competitive Edge*, celebrates its 21st year of providing the latest BCRC news to consumers, families and friends.

In 1993, BCRC Executive Director, Paulette Miller, decided that BCRC needed a newsletter to encourage individuals and their families to strive toward competitive employment in the community. She appointed Frank Shialabba as chairperson of the newly formed newsletter committee. With Ms. Miller's approval and in keeping with the theme of competitive employment, Shialabba christened the newsletter, "*The Competitive Edge*."

While still encouraging community employment, today *The Competitive Edge* also chronicles the achievements of BCRC clients and staff, outlines the latest agency developments in programming, safety, training, etc., offers safety tips, and provides news on exciting events and items that might be of interest to others.

While retired from BCRC, Shialabba still chairs the newsletter committee, because as he says, "I especially enjoy chronicling the individual accomplishments of the clients and staff. They are the heart and soul of BCRC." ■

WIN Participants Prepare for Medical Emergencies

by Frank Shialabba

Forty staff and participants of WIN Services have received First Aid and CPR certification as a result of a new WIN initiative. Linda Uhernik, an American Heart Association certified instructor, has provided the training.

Sheila Silbaugh, Director of WIN Services, was concerned that many of WIN's participants live on their own and may not know what to do in a medical emergency. Also, some individuals live with parents who are older and may be confronted with a



medical emergency at some point in the future. She decided to contact Ms. Uhernik, the mother of one of WIN's participants, about starting the innovative new program.

The new "buddy program" is a pairing of one staff and one participant as partners in learning. According to Ms. Silbaugh, "Participants receive certification in First Aid and CPR. They also learn how to use an AED and EpiPen. The program has given individuals a new sense of security and competence when dealing with medical emergencies. It has also been valuable training for our staff. I am excited that so far everyone has taken their test and passed."

The new program is another example of BCRC's commitment to safety. ■

Spotlight On: Denise McCormish

by Jennifer Gengarella

When visiting BCRC's CenterPlace building, one of the first encounters you have is with Denise McCormish. An administrative assistant since 2008, Denise wears many hats --from front office and clerical duties, to working the new security system for admitting visitors. With an Associate's Degree from CCBC, she has previously worked as a medical secretary and for Bank of America before bringing her skills to BCRC.



Noting the growth of personnel, Denise also applauds the addition of the CenterPlace building and new enhanced security measures as part of BCRC's transformation since she began. She also remarks on the great working relationship with our clients and friendships she has developed with other co-workers as some of her favorite elements of working here. She makes a difference in the lives of those she helps at BCRC.

Although relaxing at home with her fiancée is one of her favorite things to do, in her leisure time, Denise also enjoys hosting spa parties for her friends. ■

Production Centers and Aurora Welcome Summer

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC celebrated the dawn of summer on June 13 with a picnic and a luau. While the production centers enjoyed their annual picnic at John A. Antoline Memorial Park, Aurora participants got their "Hawaiian" on with a luau at their Beaver location.

The client picnic was sponsored by Monaca Recreation and featured a DJ and more than 100 softball participants. Burgers, halushki, baked beans, watermelon and cookies galore were provided by the wonderful members of the Monaca Recreation. Softball hats were provided by ESB Bank.



Star McNutt and Sarah Holly pictured walking to right field.

Eighteen Aurora participants attended a luau sponsored by the Lutheran Church on the same day. Luau goers enjoyed music and karaoke provided by DJ Lucas Guthrie. Participants also had fun with bingo and an old-fashioned beach ball toss. Fried chicken, potato salad, corn, baked beans, and watermelon were provided by the church. As a special treat, Betsy Kohlman of the Aurora staff, baked her famous brownies! ■



L-R, 1st row: Wyllette Lyons, Frances Brown, Brittany Pagani, Blaine Grimm, Lois Schweitzer, **2nd row:** Eileen Reismeyer, Pam Breindel, Rich Cauley, Judy Nadelman, Wendy Nadzam, Sandy Petrella, **3rd row:** Anita Cooper, Salvatore DeMarco, John Travers, Cheryl Young, Raymond Szparaga (hidden), Heathera Smith, Tonya Rictoros

Always Pay It Forward

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

Many people today struggle with depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. The stress we feel everyday contributes greatly to these feelings. The participants in the Hope and Wellness class at BCRC know this all too well. They have come to understand that one way to improve their mental well-being is to give to others. Small acts of kindness towards other people can give you a sense of purpose, make you feel happier, and help you cope with negative feelings. Being aware of the needs of others often makes your own problems seem less intense. Therefore, we started a new class, "Pay It Forward," to put our beliefs into action. We meet two to four times a week and have made various items, such as candy bags, mugs filled with cakes and candies, cards, and sachets. Once made and beautifully bagged, we deliver the gifts to local nursing homes. We also made a trip to the Beaver County Humane Society to donate fleece dog pulls. Everyone who participates enjoys the giving and is always eager to come to the next class. The class wants to encourage everyone to "Pay It Forward." You will find that your actions will brighten someone's day and in turn brighten your own.

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." Ralph Waldo Emerson. ■



L-R: Kristina Keillor, Anita Copper, Michael Hitt and Frances Beth Hradecky pictured measuring cat food, making sachets and tying lap quilt borders.

Anthony Works for Independence

by Bonnie Smith

When Anthony Walpole began working in the Vocational Development Program in January of last year, he may not have realized how well he was suited to the work. Every job he tried, he learned quickly, excelling with accuracy and speed, and he got along well with his coworkers. Friendly conversation comes easily to such an outgoing person.

After spending some time working at the mobile work site, sorting and filing documents, Anthony eventually felt it was time to move on. With support from staff and other connections, Anthony has been able to secure a position at the MSI (Motel Sleepers Inc.) in Ambridge where he works in maintenance and house-keeping. When asked about his new position, Anthony says, "I love the job because it makes me feel independent, and I can be a productive member of society." ■



Anthony sorting documents at the mine work site.

Pledge has Special Importance

by Frank Shialabba

The Pledge of Allegiance is important to every American, but it has special significance for Adam Padgett of BCRC's WIN Services in Beaver.

Adam was faced with doing a presentation for a dinner party that WIN held this spring for family and friends of participants. However, Adam had never given a speech of any kind. In addition, staff had been working with Adam on improving his communication skills; but they had not seen a significant breakthrough.

According to WIN Director, Sheila Silbaugh, that breakthrough came because Adam wanted to make his family proud. Adam has made not only his family proud, but also his staff and most importantly himself.

Ms. Silbaugh states, "It was like a light went on and grew brighter and brighter as Adam learned more and more of the Pledge of Allegiance. He and his staff were so happy that Adam

went to every staff at WIN to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. It was a joy to see the pride shown by Adam and his family at his dinner party when he completed reciting those words that are so important to us all." ■

ESY Students Complete "Mission: Possible"

by Riverside H.S. Student Andrew Baker

The theme of the ESY (Extended School Year) program this year was "*Mission: Possible*". With the aid of job coach Darcelle Slappy, the students took part in a scavenger-esque adventure of job skills, life skills, and educational development.

The team (group of students) was taken on several tours and assessments which resulted in clues that ultimately led to the villain, Professor Procrast, a genius at procrastination, one of the prohibitors of superb work habits. With the cooperation of the other BCRC departments, the students solved the crime, along with learning social skills, life lessons and which skills can help them to excel in a work environment.

Some of the tours included: WQED, YMCA, Hampton Inn, New Castle School of Trades, Habitat for Humanity, Habitat ReStore, Beaver Valley Mall and the Pittsburgh Int'l Airport. ■



L-R: Grace Wilson, Madison Mercadante, Andrew Baker, Shane Murphy, Cierra Wise touring the WQED TV station.

For more information about the ESY or School to Work Transition Program, and to view an expanded edition of this article with more pictures, please visit our website at www.bcrc.net.

Employee of the Month

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

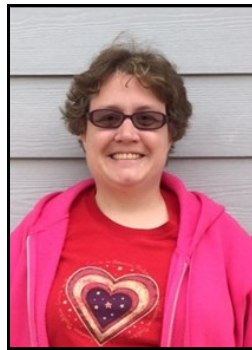
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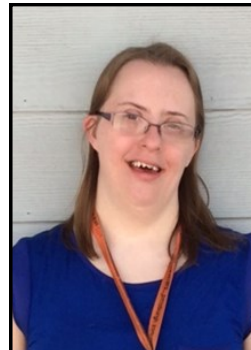
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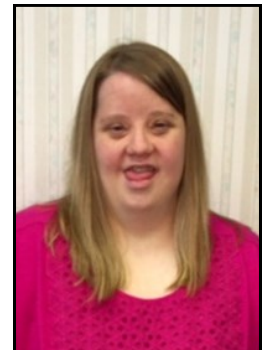
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Juliette Smith
May



Juliette Dorsner
June



Christina Bruce
July

BCRC Clients and Soldiers have Joint Operation

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 107th Regiment of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard led a troop of “recruits” from BCRC as they marched in cadence across the parking lot of Cascade Park in New Castle this past May.

Bonnie Phillippi of BCRC had organized this get together with the soldiers so that BCRC clients who had helped the yellow ribbon girls pack care boxes for U.S. Soldiers could meet some of the deserving recipients.

In addition to hearing about the experiences of Sgt. First Class Chookie LaCamera, Sgt. Frist Class Raymond Corvino and Staff Sgt. Randall Rickman, the BCRC participants also had an opportunity to view equipment and ride in a Humvee and a heavy truck used to haul artillery.

BCRC wishes to thank our brave men in arms for this experience and for their service. ■

United Way Director to Retire

by Frank Shialabba

Beaver County United Way Executive Director, Bruce Simmeth will retire soon. The local agency has been led by Simmeth since the 1990's. A sincere concern for poor and disadvantaged persons in Beaver County is the trademark of his tenure.

Simmeth will be replaced by Michael Rubino. Mr. Rubino worked previously as a fundraiser for Quigley High School and WQED public television.

BCRC would like to express our profound thanks and well wishes to Mr. Simmeth. ■