



The Competitive Edge

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

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Manny Received and Gave Happiness

In great sadness, we must share that Manny Henry has passed away. If you ever had the privilege of meeting Manny, you knew what a great little dog he was.

Manny found a wonderful home with Cindy and Hank Henry in August, 2009. A little abused "puppy" that everyone fell in love with, he immediately became a part of Aurora Services.



Manny was able to have the surgeries he needed to begin a life of healing due to the kindness of BCRC's staff. Not only did Manny heal, but he also brought joy, peace and healing to everyone he touched. ■

Rest in Peace Manny!

BCRC Makes a Great Impression!

by Laurel Baker

The dedication and hard work of BCRC's employees is never more evident than when a guest comes for a tour of the agency, and leaves fully impressed with all that BCRC has to offer. This was reaffirmed on November 5, 2014, when Vincent Loose, President and CEO of UniqueSource, formerly known as Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind and Handicapped (PIBH), came to visit.

BCRC is one of 75 member agencies across the state who partner with UniqueSource to provide employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. UniqueSource, located in Harrisburg, facilitates the marketing of goods and services provided by its member agencies. BCRC has three state janitorial contracts via UniqueSource, and has recently established an important records management contract with the Department of Vital Records. As a result of this contract, Mr. Loose felt it was time to see BCRC in action.

Joanna Greco, BCRC Contract Acquisition Coordinator, who is serving her second term on the board of directors for UniqueSource, along with Lisa Vesolich, Nancy Perkins, Pat Healey, and Paulette Miller, hosted a tour of the New Brighton buildings, CenterPlace, and the Records Management department. Mr. Loose was pleasantly surprised at the scope of BCRC, and the large number of clients that are served. ■

BCRC—United Way Partnership Has New Energy

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC Executive Director Paulette Miller is excited about the energy and enthusiasm brought to this year's United Way campaign by new United Way Executive Director, Michael Rubino. She states, "BCRC shares a common goal with the United Way of Beaver County to provide resources and assistance to those Beaver County residents who are most in need." In the spirit of this shared vision, BCRC looks forward to its continued partnership with the United Way. According to Ms. Miller, "Mike has already shown his commitment to a successful campaign. He has secured a corporate gift of \$100,000 from a new donor. In addition, this same donor will be running an internal fund raising campaign for the first time. We depend highly on the support of the United Way, and we benefit greatly from our collaboration with other United Way agencies." Ms. Miller especially appreciates the opportunity to share ideas, resources and opportunities for training with her United Way partners. For more information on the United Way and donor opportunities, see the new United Way web site at unitedwaybeaver.org. ■

Crocks Tamed at WIN Services

by Frank Shialabba

There is more than one way to tame a crock, and WIN Services will be tackling this daunting task in 2015. WIN will be training interested participants to master crock pot cooking in a series of classes designed to give individuals the opportunity to use a crock pot to cook healthy and balanced meals.

According to WIN Service Director Sheila Silbaugh, "Our plan is to provide instruction on the safety and usage of a crock pot, teach our clients how to properly shop for foods and then prepare the items...." Clients will learn budgeting, the use of measurements and utensils, and how to read recipes and follow instructions on food preparation. Individuals will use recipes that have been researched to fit a healthy life style and individual dietary restrictions. Classes will be held for eight weeks and recipes will be chosen to feed two to four people. Participants get to take their completed meals home, along with a new found confidence in their ability to cook a balanced meal using a crock pot. ■



Big City Style Equals Small Town Success

by Frank Shialabba

Kara Tjernlund loves people with "big city style." Her goal is to someday get her own apartment in the big city and enjoy the multitude of activities and culture that are available. Meanwhile, however, Kara has brought her own special style to a small town job, where she has achieved tremendous success.

Initially, Kara attended the Hiram G. Andrews Center in Johnstown to prepare for a career as an office worker. While attending WIN Services, Kara considered many prospective placements and participated in numerous interviews. Eventually, she found an opening on-line and applied immediately. WIN Program Specialist Jayne Sainer accompanied her to the interview where, "The manager immediately took to her and she was hired on-the-spot."

Since her initial hire, Kara has taken this local retail store by storm. In a year and a half, she has risen from separating clothes on a conveyor belt to chief trainer of new backroom employees. According to the store manager, "We couldn't operate the backroom without her."

Kara's job is unpacking, and displaying store apparel. Having a superior memory has been invaluable as Kara has memorized clothes sizes and work schedules and recorded bar codes. In addition, her work speed has enabled her to exceed production goals and be called, "absolutely sensational" by the store manager.

Kara has never lost sight of her goal of living in the big city. She continues to save her money and admire people like WIN Program Specialist Jonni Kichta, whom she greets with, "You got big city style!"

We admire Kara's style, and whether big or small, any city or employer would be lucky to have her. ■

Samantha Excels With Changes

by Bonnie Smith

Samantha Schmidley has experienced quite a few changes over the last couple of months. In December, she started going to the CenterPlace building as part of the cleaning crew that cleans the administrative offices two days a week. Last month, Samantha also started daily cleaning at an outside site. WIN Program Specialist Jayne Sainer says, "She has transitioned beautifully [to the new position]. She does a good and thorough job," and Program Specialist Tom Marsilio agrees. "She works very hard and is a good worker." Marsilio notes that Samantha appears to be more self-confident and outgoing since beginning the new jobs and moving to a new living arrangement.



When she is not at her cleaning jobs, Samantha continues to attend the production center two days a week, and she goes to WIN Services on Fridays. Samantha's excellent work ethic was acknowledged recently when she was named Employee of the Month for January. To unwind from her busy schedule, Samantha likes to play with her dog Snuggles and relax while watching TV. ■

Is There a Silent Killer in Your Home?

Safety Lights

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

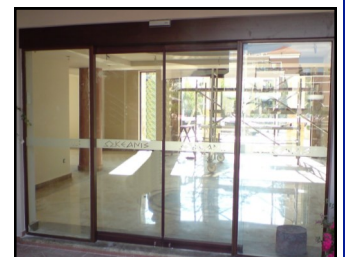
Carbon monoxide is called the silent killer because the gas cannot be seen or smelled. This gas can make a person feel sick and is deadly, as it replaces oxygen in the blood. In your home, eating and cooking devices like stoves, furnaces and heaters that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide. Some symptoms of the poisoning are headache, breathlessness, dizziness, nausea and sleepiness; and with continued exposure, even death. To protect ▶

everyone in your home, including pets, make sure that you install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of the house. Once installed, if the alarm sounds, make sure everyone gets to fresh air. Call the fire department from the fresh air location and wait for the fire department to arrive. Don't put your safety on hold. Install the alarms. ■



BCRC Receives \$100,000 Grant

BCRC's new client entrance and building safety at CenterPlace have received an assist from an area foundation in the form of a \$100,000 grant. The grant is intended for extensive painting and the installation of six sliding, automatic doors for the new entrance. According to Facilities Coordinator, Laura Medarac, "The doors will play an integral role in the creation of the new entrance. Automatic doors will increase accessibility for persons using walkers, wheel chairs, etc. Access will be easier for all BCRC clients who use the new entrance. Also, an inner set of automatic doors will lead from the office/reception area to a side foyer and client lunchroom. This will allow a seamless flow to the workshop area."



In addition to improving access, the grant will provide greater safety at CenterPlace. Ms. Medarac states that painting will weatherize the exterior of the building to prevent mold and mildew from forming. She states, "We are attempting to improve building safety and ease of use before BCRC clients move to the new production center at CenterPlace. Improvements will continue until everything is ready for the transition." ■

SHOP TALK *by Marisa Scalamogna*

- This year's Gifts Delivered client Christmas sale was the best ever with a profit of \$1,800. Every client had the opportunity to buy gifts for friends and family. Thank you to BCRC staff and WIN and STW staff and clients who processed sales and wrapped gifts.
- Gifts Delivered also held its very successful open house in mid-November. People continued purchasing long after the open house ended.
- Three hundred twenty-nine people attended the annual client Christmas party in December at the Fez. They enjoyed wonderful food, music, dancing and a Christmas play put on by clients from WIN. Award winners were Nick Zak (Competitive Employment) and Candy Witherow (Employee of the Year).
- BCRC has added a new janitorial job for the clients. The job is located in the community and teaches many good work skills.
- Congratulations to Laurel Baker and Marie Krechowski for recently achieving their Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) designation! Earning the degree reflects Laurel's and Marie's compassion for the consumers they serve and a commitment to their dignity and maximum recovery. ■



Spotlight on: Lisa Vesolich

by Kelly Newhouse

Jalapeno Hannah, the pierogi, has come to BCRC! Being a former pierogi impersonator during her college days may not qualify Lisa Vesolich for her position as Records Management Assistant at BCRC, but her experience in medical billing does.

Lisa began working at BCRC in June, 2014. She comes to us from the medical field where she worked as an insurance and authorization specialist, and processed medical billing. Lisa has been working hard attending trainings and pursuing her CDIA+ certification. Her current training and specialized knowledge make her a great fit for our Records Management Department. Lisa reports that her duties vary from pricing quotations and meeting new customers to working side by side with the clients to complete contract work. She loves the busy pace and varied ▶

workday. Lisa states that the best part of her job is the clients. Her hope is to bring new and creative contracts to the department that will help the clients grow.

In her free time, Lisa shares her home with her husband Stephen and their "very sweet" 60 lb. lap dog, Harley Quinn. Lisa and Stephen enjoy being very involved in their church. Lisa also carries a degree in Musical Theatre and Dance. ■

Staff Receive Unique Training Opportunities

by Gina Alberti

Since July, BCRC staff members have successfully completed a total of 2,505.75 hours of training! As the needs of our client base continue to transform, it is crucial for BCRC staff to stay current through a variety of unique training opportunities.

Over the past several months, staff members have participated in trainings covering diverse topics such as:

Non-Violent Crisis Intervention: training helps staff spot the early signs of an impending crisis; use verbal and nonverbal communications to reduce hostility, prevent a situation from escalating to violence; and assist staff in coping with their own reservations and anxiety in potential crisis situations.

How an Adult with Autism Might Feel: provides an eye-opening simulation of potential challenges an adult with autism may face. Participants are expected to identify hallmark characteristics of individuals with autism, understand and practice useful communications techniques and use "people first" language.

Accessing the Power of Empathy: This training was a part of the Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) Series addressing "Interpersonal Competencies." Participants honed their interpersonal skills by first becoming self-aware. Goals for participants included recognizing and understanding the subjectivity of perception and analyzing and combating their own hesitancy in interpersonal scenarios.

Poverty Simulation: This unique experience placed individuals into small groups and asked them to navigate a week in the life of a low-income family. Group members were given roles within the family and acted out scenarios, including visiting a bank, mortgage company, pawn shop, and grocery store. Participants were expected to live within certain economical restraints while balancing the responsibilities of providing for a family. ■

STW Students and Staff Flourish

by Stephanie Godlewski



Jane Ondrusek, a student from New Horizon School, received the first annual School to Work Transition Excellence Award at the annual client Christmas party. Jane has been involved with the School to Work program for over four years. She is described by Stephanie Baldwin, Program Specialist, as, "enthusiastic, friendly and sociable," and having "a good personality, a good sense of humor, listening well, and having excellent manners." Jane is focused on her work and eager to learn new jobs. She has worked at other worksites through the Records Management Department. Additionally, this award winner is enrolled in the culinary program at the Beaver County Career and Technical Center.

School to Work also boasts of the recent accomplishment of Susan Smith, a program specialist who was invited to speak at the Lowe's Women's Leadership Conference, held in Hermitage on November 19th. The conference afforded Susan the opportunity to share her personal experience and advice on mentoring. She encouraged women to be more aggressive in moving to high management levels. Susan has been employed at BCRC for five years and has been instrumental in the development of CAPS (Creating Alternative Pathways to Success).

School to Work is excited to continue to provide the sorts of opportunities and environment that allow people like Jane and Susan to flourish. ■

Employee of the Month

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

Competitive Edge Editorial Staff

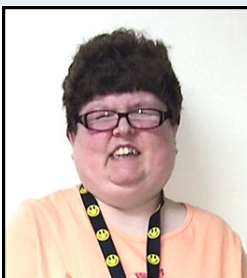
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Stephanie Godlewski,
Cindy Kirkpatrick, Kelly Newhouse,
Kay Podbielski, Marisa Scalamogna,
Frank Shialabba, Bonnie Smith
Sean Sen Website Editor
Pat Tengeres Layout and
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Aurora Services: 724-775-2298
Fax: 724-774-7603
TTY/TDD Operator Services: 711
Website: www.bcrc.net

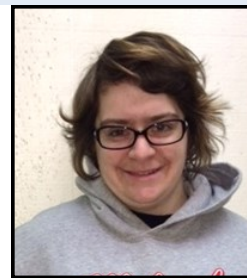
Production Centers



Tammy Jo Zirot
November 2014

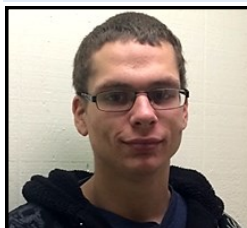


Aaron Harris
December 2014

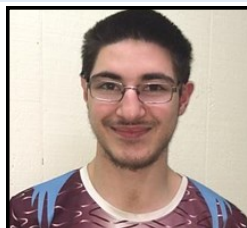


Samantha Schmidley
January 2015

School to Work



Morgan Sova
December 2014
Community Integration



Shayne Remler
January 2015
Community Integration



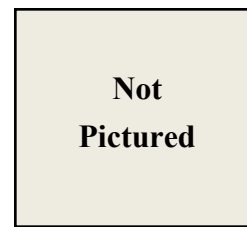
Andrew Baker
February 2015
Community Integration



Jane Ondrusek
December 2014
Production Center



Jeremy Landon
January 2015
Production Center



Caleb Mazinski
February 2015
Production Center

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