



# The Competitive Edge

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

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## Community Based Settings?-We Have Them!

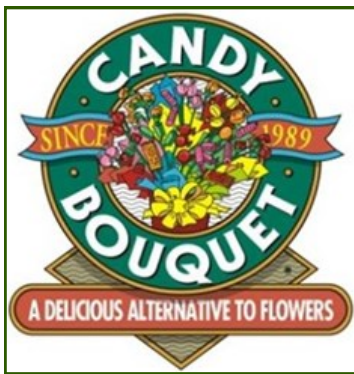
by Frank Shialabba

The cry, "Let people with disabilities work in community-based settings!" is commonly expressed by community advocates. However, BCRC has been doing just that through work enclaves for many years. Clients of BCRC have worked at a variety of community office, retail and industrial settings since at least the early 1980's. BCRC enclave settings have included activities as varied as refurbishing headsets, collating newspapers, repackaging videos, assembling wrench parts, microfilming, preparing documents for scanning, hanging and sorting clothes, scanning source documents, sorting refinancing information, and packaging perfume and toiletries. BCRC's oldest enclave, at the Beaver County Courthouse, has been operating for nearly 20 years.

These enclaves provide clients of BCRC with real work in a real work environment. They give individuals with disabilities the opportunity to both learn from and share their skills with people who are not disabled. Enclaves give a sense of pride and accomplishment to those individuals who may eat in a lunchroom with attorneys and judges or share a story at the water cooler with one of the company's hourly employees.

An enclave is defined as "a group of individuals, usually three to eight, who work together in a group with the assistance of a permanent full-time supervisor. Employment occurs within a community-based industry -called the host company - with participants earnings based upon production results (Rhodes & Valenta, 1985a).

Enclaves have, and will continue to be a part of BCRC's ongoing attempt to provide quality work experiences for our clients. We've been doing it for years and our clients have reaped many benefits from their enclave experiences. ■



## Candy Bouquet Celebrates 14 Years

*Hip, Hip Hooray for Candy Bouquet!*  
by Susan Hill

"I just really like to work there. Everyone is very nice to me. I like tipping stems." These are the words of Patty DelGreco as she expresses her love for BCRC's Gifts Delivered Featuring Candy Bouquet. This unique business is celebrating 14 years of successfully providing creative work and beautiful arrangements to persons in Beaver County.

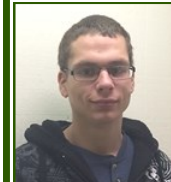
In the year 2000, BCRC staff began looking at gift businesses that would get individuals with disabilities involved in the creative process. BCRC did feasibility studies to determine whether the clients would like the work. In July 2001, Gifts Delivered was born! During the following year, almost 100 tasks were identified and time studied. The clients responded well, as did the demand for bouquets. Stacy Quick, who has been with Candy Bouquet since its inception, states, "I loved learning all the new jobs, especially making bows and baby arrangements."

In addition to Patty and Stacy, Candy Bouquet gives work to 10 other clients weekly. The clients are all enthusiastic in expressing their love for the work! Sarah Holly states, "I like to work in the smaller group. I love to make roses! "Brandon Belich likes, "working with Mary Jo and Susan, tipping stems, putting on cellos and making roses." Candy Witherow loves, "everything about Candy Bouquet!" While Nancy Young likes to, " make money, wrap candy, put cellos on stems and fluff bows."

Candy Bouquet offers a wide variety of creative experiences and everyone seems to have their favorite. The one thing that is shared by everyone involved with Candy Bouquet is their love for their work and their pride in their long and successful history. ■

## STW Student Gets Full-Time Job

by Marjorie Marcellus



In March of 2015, School to Work student, Morgan Sova, was hired full time by a local industry. Morgan has been a student in BCRC's School to Work Program since September 2012. He is a great example of how students mature and grow within the STW program.

Starting with his regularly scheduled assessments, Morgan then progressed to attending several community work sites. He also volunteered weekly with Habitat for Humanity and Old Economy Village. Working over the summer through JTBC, he was a valued worker who was given extra tasks due to his great work ethic.

At his new job, Morgan completes a variety of tasks daily, which include: making boxes, pulling materials, filling orders, weighing rods, labeling boxes, taping boxes, and teamwork. He continues to grow each day at his new job and is excited to finish his high school career working full-time with company benefits. Great job Morgan! ■

## WIN Gets Scientific

by Frank Shialabba

"It's not about whether we were successful. What's more important is that we tried our best to do well." Those sentiments expressed by WIN participant Jon Koehler sum up the spirit of WIN Services' most recent spring event. On Wednesday, April 22 at New Horizon School, WIN participants presented a play and 70 science projects covering a variety of topics. Projects were displayed individually and project creators were on hand to explain them. Twenty-seven persons participated in the play that focused on spring gardens. In a surprise twist, a compost pile was the hero that saved the day!

The variety of science projects gave WIN participants a chance to display their originality and creativity. Ms. Silbaugh states, "I marvel at the creativity shown by the participants. The projects were an expression of each individual's interests and personality. They included such varied topics as "the ten steps to making a cup of coffee, the "heat" that you get from different types of peppers, the history of the Penguins, how to make nail polish, how to safely approach a dog, the history of BCRC, the solar system and how to make a car out of pop bottles."

Once again the WIN participants have enriched both their lives and ours by sharing their many talents. ■

## Clients Travel to Exciting New Enclave

by Frank Shialabba

"I am continuously amazed by the clients. No task is too difficult. No matter what we come across, our clients are willing to learn, eager to succeed, and produce a wonderful product." This is how BCRC staffer, Lisa Vesolich describes the efforts of BCRC clients at the new enclave at the Bureau of Vital Statistics in New Castle. This state contract was secured through Unique Source, ▶

formerly known as Pennsylvania Industries for the Blind and Handicapped.

Twenty to 25 different individuals are involved in the contract which involves microfilming, scanning documents and document preparation. In addition to filming and scanning, clients remove staples and press creases in pages, tape papers and index documents. Ten to fifteen individuals are transported to New Castle in two vans five days a week.

Ms. Vesolich states, "We have received very positive feedback from our clients. On many occasions they have told us how much they enjoy coming to work at our New Castle enclave." Ms. Vesolich goes on to describe one individual who "will watch what you're working on and then later ask to give it a try. Because this individual spends some time watching the process, training is quite simple and the client does a beautiful job."

It is apparent that BCRC clients are enjoying this new and exciting experience. It is just as exciting for staff as they see individuals constantly strive to learn and improve the quality of their work. ■

## Hughes Is Certified MH Youth Trainer

by Gina Alberti

Congratulations are in order for BCRC's Traci Hughes, as she recently became a Certified Youth Mental Health First Aid Administrator in Beaver County. Traci obtained this certification through a five-day, county-funded program in Somerset. This training was designed to teach providers how to recognize a mental health crisis and prepare them to act as first responders. Attendees were also educated on ways to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. At the conclusion of the training, Traci took a written test and prepared a 30-minute presentation on listening and giving information and reassurance to those experiencing a mental health crisis. Best of luck in this new role. ■

## Marianne Leaves Lasting Legacy

by Frank Shialabba

The Beaver County Rehabilitation Center was forever changed for the better when Marianne LaSalle joined the staff in 1972 after graduating from Duquesne University. Whether writing grants, starting and overseeing new programs or interacting with clients, Marianne has left a positive and indelible image on all who have known her these last forty-three years.

Marianne's impact has been particularly evident with two programs that she has successfully guided. As Maureen Hawk, School to Work Coordinator states, "Marianne has been instrumental in the



development and growth of the School to Work Program and Aurora Psychiatric Rehabilitation. Her dedication to helping those with mental illness is inspiring. She has always strived to do what was needed to help the clients."

The staff at Aurora also praise Marianne for her passion for the program and for persons with mental illness. Aurora Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner Laurel Baker states, "She takes time to hear how they [consumers] are doing, and spends time talking with them. She does the same with staff, taking time to touch base and offer her support. It is evident that she is very committed to helping others in any way she can."

Sheila Silbaugh, Director of WIN Services sees Marianne as a valuable member of BCRC and a mentor to many. She states, "I have admired Marianne for all of her dedication, accomplishments and genuine concern and love for BCRC." ▶

Ms. Hawk also cites Marianne as a "wonderful mentor and friend who will be greatly missed."

As BCRC Program Director, Marianne has achieved a great deal. She has been honored for her contributions to individuals with mental illness by both the local and state chapters of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. She has also been honored by ARC of Beaver County for her service to persons with intellectual disabilities.

Marianne's greatest impact has been on her coworkers and the many people with disabilities that she has helped over the years. As a former co-worker of Marianne's, I would like to thank her for her friendship and the high standard of caring that she has set for us all. As many have stated, it will be a challenge to carry on your legacy and all the good that you have done over the years. Enjoy your retirement and those wonderful grandchildren! ■



## Spotlight on Tammy Scheers

by Kelly Newhouse

Job coaching is an essential element in providing vocational training to people with disabilities. BCRC is proud to have among our valued job coaching staff, Mrs. Tammy Scheers. Tammy began working at BCRC in February, 2015. Having worked in the social service field for many years, she brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience. Tammy owned and ran Scheers' Personal Care Home in Baden for 11 years. She managed the home's business and cared for 8 residents, giving them a wonderful environment in which they learned and flourished. This dedication is apparent as you watch Tammy work with the individuals in the workshop. She states that her favorite part of the job is working directly with the participants. She supervises BCRC's in house mobile janitorial crew and hopes to continue, as she likes teaching them valuable vocational skills as they work together. Tammy is married with 4 children and 4 grandchildren and stays very active in her church. She also enjoys crafts, riding bikes, gardening, and going to the movies. During vacation time, you might find her in her favorite vacation spot in Disney World Florida. ■

## Early Entrepreneurs Work at School to Work

by Stephanie Godlewski

In the coldest part of our harsh winter, right around Valentine's Day, School to Work (STW) warmed our hearts with Kisses! The Hershey treat was included in the healthy lunch that the department sold to raise money for the client gift fund.

With their hard work and wonderful cooking, STW sold 34 lunches and raised \$103.90 for the client gift fund, which will buy gifts for clients at Christmas, 2016. They

served homemade chicken noodle soup, a salad, a roll, a piece of fruit, and water. The meals, which cost \$7.00 each, was hand delivered to each building by ever-kind School to Work staff and clients.

The project not only benefitted the gift fund, but was also a valuable way for the School to Work staff to "teach independent living skills, healthy eating, and proper food handling skills that could possibly be used in a job later on," says Maureen Hawk, Supervisor of Youth Services. All students in the Community Integration section of the program participated in some way: planning the menu, calculating cost, making and distributing fliers, purchasing food, cooking the soup or clean-up afterward. The fundraiser, in fact, was just one of the projects that STW has undertaken to promote growth in their clients through community engagement. Earlier this year, students bagged lunches and took them to T.R.A.I.L.S. Ministries in Beaver Falls to

contribute to the Point in Time Homeless Survey.

The department staff and clients look forward to doing similar activities in the future and to affording their students opportunities to apply the skills that they learn in real life situations. ■

## People Make BCRC Great Place To Work!

by Laurel Baker

May 1, 2015 marks my one year anniversary at BCRC. Reflecting back, my first impression of BCRC was really a WOW factor. Walking into the beautiful reception area at CenterPlace, being greeted by such welcoming folk and treated with such professionalism was something I hadn't experienced in a great while. There had to be a catch – what was with these people, so happy and friendly?

Fast forward to the present...what I've learned over the past year is that people are actually kind and genuine. The support I've encountered on a daily basis is something I cannot put into words. I've not met a single person who has been less than pleasant. Being a bit of a dinosaur in the social services field, I feel confident in attributing this to something I call "setting the tone". Clearly the foundation of BCRC is composed of professional, caring, and nurturing people, as this is visible in every department. When I sought input from others regarding the agency, I overwhelmingly heard about the amazing employees. Sure, there were other things: great work hours, flexible time off, paid trainings, nice facilities, attendance bonuses and employee incentives, and so on and so forth. No question about it, however; it is the people that rock this company. ▶

Let's not also forget the people we serve – they are diverse, gifted, and tons of fun. BCRC hosts wonderful events, such as the summer picnic, to celebrate these wonderful people. Everyone has a blast, participants and employees alike. Which brings me to another fantastic point: BCRC aggressively pursues growth and opportunity, in order to provide good services to as many people as possible. There is no sense of being stuck in the status quo. Beaver County is truly blessed to have BCRC as a resource, and I am honored to have joined the team. ■

## Safety Lights: Tornadoes Can Reach 300 MPH

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. The winds of a tornado can reach 300 mph. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. For the northeast section of the United States, tornadoes generally occur in the late spring or early summer.

They are most likely to occur between 3pm and 9 pm, but of course can occur any time. In order to stay safe it is important to be alert to changing weather conditions by watching the sky and listening to radio or TV announcements. It is also important to know the difference between a watch and a warning. A watch means that conditions are favorable for a tornado and you need to stay alert. A warning means that a tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately. Seek shelter in a basement or interior room. If you are in a vehicle, mobile home or outside, find a safe shelter or lie flat in a ditch and cover your head with your hands. ■



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**Nancy Young**  
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**Ken Gentsy**  
*April 2015*

**School to Work**



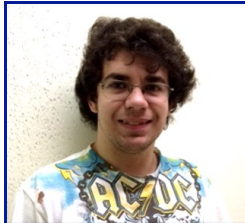
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