



The Competitive Edge

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

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Betty Overcomes Hardship to Find a Better Life

by Sabine Kane

Betty B. has had a life marked by extreme hardship, addiction and incarceration, but she has overcome it all to make a better life for herself. BCRC had the opportunity to work with her through the BC Homes Grant.

Betty became addicted to drugs while recuperating from a broken back sustained in a car accident in 2000; her addiction led to criminal activity and finally, incarceration for seven years in a state prison. Soon after she enrolled in the BC Homes Grant Program she found gainful employment; first in food service in Beaver, then in New Brighton, and finally in August of 2017, as a part-time fry cook at McDonald's in Beaver Falls. Shortly thereafter, she moved to a "three-quarter" house (one-step beyond a halfway house) to be closer to work.

In mid-August, Betty celebrated her one-year anniversary at McDonald's. In early September, she moved from the three-quarter house to a one-bedroom cottage. She enjoys picking out paint for the rooms and making the cottage her home. Because of an outreach program, she became involved with the women's guild at St. Monica Parish in Beaver Falls who have assisted her with home goods, and recently agreed to pay for her studies to become a Certified Recovery Specialist at PSU-Beaver beginning on September 8. The husband of one of the St. Monica women is tutoring her in math so she can obtain her GED. Her current goals include regaining her driving privileges, passing the GED exam and then working to help others overcome addiction.▶

Betty is an example to us all of tenacity, hard work, and patience; and I feel privileged and honored to know and be able to support her.■

BC Homes Grant is funded through a grant which was awarded to Beaver County Behavioral Health through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Community Times Continues to Climb

by Jessica Rusak

BCRC clients have spent more than double the time required by the PA Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) in Community Participation Supports (CPS). At this time last year, 41% of those enrolled in CPS were spending at least 25% of their time in community. This percentage continues to climb, and is currently 87%. CPS is an initiative from the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) to increase a client's potential for employment and community inclusion.

According to ODP, by July 2019, individuals enrolled in CPS will be required to spend at least 25% of their monthly program time in the community. This means that while those enrolled in CPS receive a combination of both facility and community time, the amount of time in each has state guidelines.

What once seemed like a difficult task has proven to be attainable and very rewarding for both clients and staff. Community outings continue to provide a natural setting where participants can increase social roles and relationships, build supports, and increase their independence. BCRC clients are enjoying their interactions within the community.■



Recovery Aids in Regaining Valued Roles

by Laurel Baker

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts..." You might have heard this before, taken from Shakespeare's comedy "As You Like It." It seems that famous playwright was wise in many ways, and somehow knew one of the biggest secrets to mental wellness: the importance of a valued role.

At one point or another, everyone ponders that existential question: what is my purpose? Most of the time, all we have to do is look around us. We are mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, employees, students, teachers, friends, mentors, parishioners, volunteers, and so on. We wear many hats, and all of these roles help us feel valuable and needed within our communities. Now imagine being stripped of one or more of these roles, and the feelings of loss and lack of worth that could accompany this? This is what mental illness can do. When symptoms emerge and spiral out-of-control, people might miss work, bow out of social events, avoid family gatherings, and withdraw from daily living activities. Mental illness can say awful things, disputing relationships, crushing confidence, even questioning the very reasons to get out of bed in the morning. The stage becomes dark, the roles long forgotten. That is, until help arrives on scene, in the form of recovery.

Recovery emphasizes self-worth by encouraging individuals to regain valued roles, or pursue new ones. This is why psych rehab specifically focuses on the living, working, learning and social domains. Participants are assisted in setting goals within these areas, defining what role(s) will help them feel whole and connected again. Once a goal is identified, the steps that lead there are taken with the support of education, skill-building, and guided practice. With perseverance and the appropriate resources, people with mental illness can take center stage once again, and be the star of their own lives.■



Beaver and Allegheny Students Advocate for Youth Mental Health in Harrisburg

by Sabine Kane

On May 6, Maureen Hawk and Susan Smith accompanied a group of 13 students from the Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) representing Aliquippa, Beaver, Beaver Falls, Freedom, Hopewell, New Brighton, South Side, Quigley, and Robert Morris University to our state capitol in Harrisburg to advocate for youth mental health as part of Pennsylvania's celebration of Youth Mental Health Awareness month. Through a partnership developed over the last year with the Jewish Healthcare Foundation in Pittsburgh, five other students from Baldwin, Gateway, Montour, Urban Pathways and Yeshiva Schools joined these YAP participants.

Jamal Ford, Youth Resources Coordinator for the PA Care Partnership, was instrumental in facilitating the Beaver and Allegheny County students' attendance through a statewide System of Care grant. Students met with Rep. Michael Schlossberg, the co-founder and co-chair of the House Mental Health Caucus, who shared his personal struggle with mental illness and encouraged the students to share their stories with the legislators. The students then were able to meet with other legislators or their staff, among them the offices of Representatives Kulik, Miller and Matzie, and Senators Iovino, Costa and Bartolotta, in order to share their passion for this issue.

Under the theme: "Better Together: Strength in Numbers", the students were able to further show their support by sitting on the steps of the rotunda while listening to speakers that included the PA Department of Human Services Secretary Teresa Miller, Ruth Fox of the Allegheny Family Network, and Kaitlyn Arrow, a senior at Central York High School. The group was also able to observe a legislative session and receive a tour of the capitol before making the trip back home. ■

The Youth Ambassador Program is funded through the BC-SCORES grant which was awarded to Beaver County Behavioral Health through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).



Sean is "Employee with Everything"

by Frank Shialabba

The Energizer Bunny has nothing on Sean Bresnahan. Sean is a bundle of positive energy that he directs toward two competitive jobs and his contribution as a vital volunteer to a community agency.

Sean is fast and thorough as he goes "above and beyond" at his two community jobs. His hands move with incredible speed as he assembles 300 to 400 boxes an hour at a local pizzeria. He hates to take a break as it will disrupt his work and lessen his hourly production. It is not necessary for Sean's employer to encourage him to maintain his production. He knows his routine and he counts the number of boxes he completes as he works, to be sure his work is up to his usual standards. Sean's employer realizes his value and according to Sheila Silbaugh, WIN Services Director, "they are very kind and appreciative of his work." In addition to his regular wage, Sean receives a delicious pizza 'with everything.' Sean is the "employee with everything" as he also lends his talents to an area greenhouse. According to Ms. Silbaugh, "Sean is just an incredible worker."

In addition to Sean's paid jobs, he volunteers every Friday at the Watson Institute

library. Ms. Silbaugh says that the staff try to plan ahead to provide enough work to keep Sean busy, but he is so fast and efficient that he frequently completes all of the tasks that they have planned for him. Sean's tasks include shredding, copying, organizing documents, and moving books, but staff often have to find additional work for him as he completes his jobs thoroughly and at a record pace.

According to WIN Services' Jonni Kichta, in addition to his impressive work skills Sean is kind, polite, mannerly and observant of the needs of others. Sean is truly the "employee with everything." ■

Debbie Doyle Leaves Legacy of Kindness

by Frank Shialabba

Compassionate, hopeful, positive, flexible, committed, honest, and empathetic are all adjectives that describe Employment Specialist Debbie Doyle, who retired recently from WIN Services. Ms. Doyle retires after approximately 15 years with BCRC. Sheila Silbaugh, WIN Director, describes her as "irreplaceable."

According to Ms. Silbaugh, "Debbie was a natural when it came to job coaching, and she was one of the first five staff mem-

bers of the newly formed WIN Services." Debbie was responsible for organizing janitorial operations at more than eight sites in the community. She was also excellent at ascertaining job accommodations that would ensure the success of people with physical disabilities.

Above all, Debbie always maintained her belief in WIN's clients. Whether it was someone who needed her patience and gentle guidance during training, a homeless man who received her unwavering support and belief, or a woman with mental illness who was lost and alone, Debbie was always there, going the extra mile with kindness and caring.

Debbie is one of those special people who leaves an enduring legacy of kindness that is a light for others who follow in her footsteps. ■



★ **SCOUTING FOR FOOD:** Congratulations go out to the staff and clients! They surpassed the goal of 1,000 food items by 284 items. The food donated to the local food banks will be distributed to those in need in our community. A pizza party was given on May 8th as a thank you for everyone's efforts and generosity.

★ Aurora has received a security upgrade. All visitors need to be buzzed in by the receptionist to enter the buildings. In addition, water pressure regulators were installed in an effort to avoid future incidents of flooding.

★ In an effort to provide quality programming and meet the needs of those participating in BCRC's programs, people were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. One hundred ninety four clients responded. One very satisfying result showed that 95% felt that their quality of life has improved by attending. Overall, participants feel safe and their choices are respected. As to what is best about BCRC, activities/fellowship and the opportunity to earn money were cited by the majority. Of course, there is always room for improvement. Participates would like to see more work and a greater variety of tasks. Finally, participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with BCRC services. Out of the 194 responders, 183 were satisfied or very satisfied with the services. Thanks to all who took the time to participate in the survey. ■

School to Work's Rebekah Patterson Receives Scholarship

by Mary Jo Sanders



Rebekah Patterson, a program specialist in our School to Work program, has received a scholarship from George Washington University in Washington D.C. to receive a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Secondary Transition, with a concentration in Autism.

Ms. Patterson learned about the opportunity while attending monthly

transition meetings with her peers at the Intermediate Unit of Beaver County. She applied and did a mock assignment dealing specifically with providing supports to people with autism; and after consideration, received the scholarship. The program is funded through the Department of Education, Office of Special Education. She will spend approximately 15-20 hours per week on her online classes and will be finished in two years.

Rebekah is extremely thankful to be able to continue her education and is eager to begin. She will be very busy with both her studies and her full time job here at BCRC, but she is ready for the challenge. We all congratulate Rebekah and wish her continued success in the future! ■



Spotlight on Rick Roberts

by Kelly Newhouse

What does it take to keep all three of BCRC's buildings safe and working well? A great maintenance staff! This includes Rick Roberts who joined the staff in December 2018. Rick performs a myriad of jobs including, but certainly not limited to, painting, delivering contract, electrical, plumbing, and carpentry.

Rick comes to us from a local equipment rental where he performed maintenance, delivery, and equipment repair. His skills prove vital to the operation of our buildings. He enjoys his job because every day is something new and different. Rick looks forward to each new project.

He especially enjoys working around our clients and the job coaches. In looking to the future, Rick states that he and coworkers will do the best they can to keep BCRC running smoothly and providing a great place for all to work.

Rick is always on the job. When he leaves BCRC, he heads home to his farm where there are always jobs to do. His great maintenance work continues at home in repairing fences, mowing fields, repairing equipment, or feeding animals. Rick has a wonderful family with his wife of 32 years and his daughter who happens to be a veterinarian, which helps on the farm. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family, fixing things, and being active in his church. Rick is a kind man who feels very blessed in life. We are blessed to have you, thanks for all you do Rick! ■

Clients Make Up to \$12 per Hour at RMC

by Ian Thomas

The BCRC records department is growing. This growth is an opportunity for clients to expand upon their job skill set and, in some cases, earn a higher wage. With the BCRC records department's expansion into the territory of state and federal contracts, clients can earn up to \$12.00 an hour.

In the records department, clients are tasked with such jobs as document preparation, document shredding, and document scanning. Document preparation entails the removal of staples from documents, the repair of torn paper, the smoothing of bent or folded corners of paper- sometimes called "dog-ears" – and the ability to keep stacked documents in the order in which they are received.

Some clients may work on document scanning, which entails the operation of a computer terminal, a high quality document scanner, and the accompanying software. Clients tasked with scanning must also learn how to keep the scanner clean and learn how to confirm that scanned documents meet the standard of quality set by the records department.

Clients who want to work in the records department should be aware that jobs are assigned based on priority and that jobs within the records department have varying rates of pay. However, clients who are interested in gaining work experience that will prepare them for an office environment will find work in the records department to be very helpful. ■

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*It is the mission of the Beaver County
Rehabilitation Center, Inc. to provide the
opportunity for growth and independence
while respecting the dignity and
uniqueness of each individual.*



WIN Places 7 People in 5 Days

by Frank Shialabba

Do not tell BCRC's WIN Services that it is hard to find jobs for people with disabilities. WIN staff just placed seven people in competitive jobs in the community in only five days. While WIN regularly places more than 50 people a year in the community, their current pace may be some kind of a record.

According to WIN Services Director Sheila Silbaugh, "most of the placements were done in cooperation with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Our partnership with OVR has been very productive and beneficial for individuals with disabilities throughout Beaver County."

Ms. Silbaugh states that WIN clients have begun working at a variety of jobs that include baggage handling at the airport, restaurant work, bagging at a grocery store, stocking at a department store, and cleaning at a retail store. Some of the individuals went to work for the first time, while others advanced to jobs where they worked more hours and made more money.

WIN Services continues to set new goals and even higher standards in their delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. ■

Embracing Our History

Chapter 3 by Josh Ward

Don Harris

Don Harris started working for BCRC as a procurement director in 1972. He had many opportunities to help the clients get jobs. When Don went to work, he had his day set for him. He attended meetings, visited business in Beaver and other counties, and socialized with the clients in the workshop.

Don brought a number of interesting contracts for the clients to work on. One job permitted our clients to work together for the Beaver County Times. Clients worked on inserting advertisements and completing janitorial assignments. Some other unique contracts Don brought to BCRC clients included work for US Airlines, the Pittsburgh Pirates and Magee Plastics.

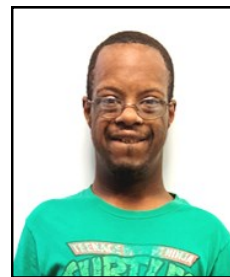
Over the years, Don witnessed many changes: the number of staff and clients, increased services, and new buildings.

Some of Don's favorite memories are from the picnic where he was involved in the baseball games. During his 25 years of employment with BCRC, Don never took a sick day and he says he enjoyed every minute of his job! ■

Employee of the Month



Connie Smith
April 2019



Shaun Reid
May 2019



Joe McElhaney
June 2019

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