



FedEx Hires Seven Students

by Kris Beal

BCRC's School to Work's partnership with FedEx is paying off. In April 2021, seven students were hired as permanent employees at the FedEx Distribution Center in Clinton and will have opportunities for full-time employment with benefits. The students work a part-time shift from 12pm until 4pm.

The new employees began their road to successful employment with School to Work in December. They received personalized job coaching that allowed for the development of employment skills, person-centered job duties, and professional relationships. Some of their duties include using an ID badge to clock in, assembling pallets and securing them with plastic wrap, scanning packages, flipping packages so the barcode can be seen, and putting small packages in bins. To be eligible for the FedEx employment training program, individuals must be 18 years of age and enrolled in School to Work.

School to Work Program Specialist Rebekah Zagorski says that "FedEx's recruiter and managers, the school district staff, families, and students have been wonderful to work with from transporting the students to creating individualized employment plans. FedEx's managers are quick to contact us as needed."

Zagorski continued, "The students have worked through the barriers of COVID, sought employment, and have become dependable employees. They learned how to use technology to aid in their success, such as setting reminders on their phones and face timing their families to remain in contact. Many of the students are going on to work independently. Parents are even ▶

forming a community and contacting each other for carpooling. I am very proud of the students and the way they are working together."■

Aaron Harris is a Man of Many Skills

by Sarah Hazel

Aaron Harris has a multifaceted skillset and has been bringing his many talents to BCRC for 16 years. When Aaron is not at BCRC, his hobbies involve watching Disney movies, using Dictionary.com to learn new words, reading, attending church, and riding horses at a local horse farm. His Program Specialist, Kelly Newhouse, describes Aaron as one of the politest and mannerly gentleman she has ever met, noting "He is a very efficient worker who values great quality in his final product."



Recently, Aaron applied his work efficiency and organization skills to a new job task in the Records Management Department (RMC) at BCRC. With this new job, Aaron alphabetizes mortgages into labeled filing cabinets and organizes them by mortgage type. Aaron quickly picked up on the new job process and is excelling at it. RMC staff are very grateful that Aaron accepted the job task of filing mortgages, and they are very impressed by his attention to detail and organization skills.■

BCRC Participates in Mental Health Awareness Month and the Zero Suicide Initiative

by Deana McCracken

In May, BCRC participated in MH Awareness Month while following pandemic protocols.

This year, the Beaver County System of Care, Beaver County Behavioral Health, and the Beaver County Zero Suicide Initiative ran a yard sign campaign and competition to promote messages of inspiration and mental health resources. Every school received five signs to display, as well as area churches. They were strategically placed throughout the county to bring awareness and support during these unprecedented times of isolation. After the winners were selected, they received their sign and a gift card prize.

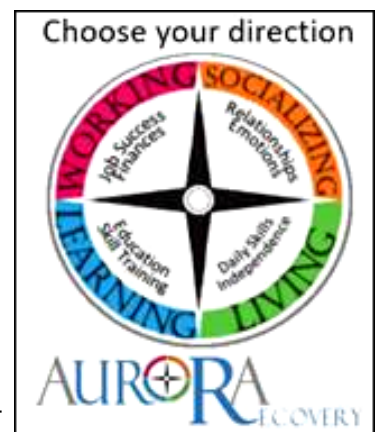
These beautiful signs of hope were designed by Beaver community members, schools, BCRC's Youth Program, and Aurora's Art for Recovery participants to assist The Zero Suicide Initiative's system wide commitment suicide awareness and prevention. (See insert)

Melissa Coakley was BCRC's team leader for this initiative. Melissa organized team representatives from each of BCRC's departments to identify and address needs for improved suicide care.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US. Ninety percent of those who died by suicide exhibited symptoms of a mental health condition according to family, friends, and medical professionals involved in these staggering statistics.

The Zero Suicide Initiative has one goal- to bring that number to zero by leading a system wide culture change to reducing suicide through training, identifying suicide risks, and treating suicidal thoughts and behaviors. BCRC is honored to be part of this initiative.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. If you or someone you know is in need of help and emotional support, The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24/7, at 1-800-273-8255. A crisis hotline is also available 24/7 by texting HOME to 741741.■



After 41 Years, Sunny Days Ahead For Kay Podbielski

by Frank Shialabba

After 41 years at the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center, Kay Podbielski, BCRC's Director of Community Programs, retired on June 1, 2021. Kay brought energy, creativity and professionalism to everything she did.

As a young college graduate, Kay began working at BCRC as a case management assistant in January 1980. She became a full time employee when she accepted a job coach position that she held for one year. She says, "My work as a job coach was very influential because the people that are working directly with the clients have always been essential to a successful program. I have the utmost respect and admiration for all of them and for everything they do every day."

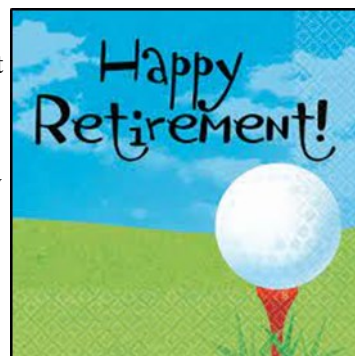
Kay then accepted a position as vocational evaluator, bringing new energy to the department. After two weeks of training at Auburn University, Kay returned to set up a vocational evaluation program using new tools and technology. She says, "I was entrusted with doing my own thing, which I absolutely loved."

Kay's most recent position as director of community programs was the most challenging. She says, "I always preferred working independently, so working as part of a team was more of a challenge for me. As I gained experience, I developed my supervision style, which is based on working from people's strengths. Executive Director Paulette Miller has always given me the green light to be creative in developing new programs. I thrived in that culture and can honestly say that in 41 years, I have never lost my enthusiasm."

Reflecting back on her years at BCRC, Kay feels that "working at BCRC was a blessing. People at BCRC are the kindest, most compassionate people who have crossed my path. They always help each other, and they always show up for each other. I could never see myself working anywhere else." Her fondest memories are the fun and laughter that she shared with staff and clients every day. She feels that "I will most definitely miss the pure joy that the clients bring. The clients are truly amazing. They demonstrate great grace and strength in facing their own challenges each day."

To those who follow her at BCRC, Ms. Podbielski would like to leave these words, "Don't be afraid to step up. Be creative. You can really make your own path. Don't be afraid to put your ideas out there!"

With our sincere gratitude for a job well done, we wish Kay sunny days on the golf course and in Florida and Siesta Key and many precious days with her grandchildren. ■



In the Spotlight

Bethany Westbrook

by Ian Thomas

BCRC has seen a lot of changes in the last year and the Records Management Center (RMC) is no exception. In addition to having new work contracts, RMC has new leadership in Bethany Westbrook. Clients and staff will likely be familiar with Bethany. She has been with BCRC for 11 years. She has been part of the records department since she started, first as a clerical temp, then as clerical coordinator.

In her new role, Bethany will work with vendors to acquire new contracts for RMC, while making sure that RMC has the required technology to meet the needs of the contracts and the clients working in BCRC. "I'm excited to have all the clients return to Records now that COVID restrictions are starting to be lifted," Bethany said.

Bethany's goals for RMC are to secure a variety of contracts in order to maximize opportunities for clients to work and prepare for employment in an office setting. She would like to create an environment in which clients learn new skills and feel like part of a team while earning a paycheck.

Outside of records, Bethany enjoys reading, nature shows, and vacationing to national parks. So far she has been to Crater Lake, Yellowstone, Yosemite, and many more. For her next outing, she hopes to visit Acadia National Park in Maine. ■



Staff Recruited For Rewarding Positions

by Mary Jo Sanders

BCRC is aggressively recruiting direct service professionals and habilitation specialists to work both in the Production Center at CenterPlace and in the community with our clients.

A day spent working in the shop with the clients is both fast paced and rewarding. The days are interesting and never dull. There are many different jobs of varying difficulty levels, making each day an opportunity to assist and teach individuals. Working directly with the clients is fun and rewarding. Teaching important vocational skills will enrich and improve their lives and bring the direct service professional the satisfaction of a day well spent aiding others.

For the more adventurous type, BCRC is also hiring habilitation specialists for WIN services. These staff members teach important life skills such as budgeting, cooking, cleaning, physical fitness, social interaction and more, to improve the quality of life. These services take place in the community and in very small groups, which pave the way for shared experiences and discoveries.

BCRC values our direct service professionals and habilitation specialists. They are the compassionate core of who we are and how we serve. They coach our clients to overcome vocational barriers and live increasingly independent lives through community activities, volunteerism and job seeking, acquisition, and supports. If you or someone you know are interested in starting a meaningful and fulfilling career or building upon a present profession, you can visit our career page at www.bcrc.net. ■

14c Exception Benefits People With Disabilities

by Kelly Newhouse

BCRC is one of many vocational training centers across the country who provide employment and training for persons with disabilities. BCRC currently holds a 14(c) certification under the Department of Labor. The 14(c) certification was developed under the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA) in 1938 to allow persons with disabilities the opportunity to work earning wages commensurate with the current prevailing wage.

The 14(c) certification allows individuals with disabilities to have a sense of purpose and to fulfill their desired employment goals while enjoying the safety and structure of a secure environment. They are provided daily job coaching support to learn and enhance work skills needed for eventual competitive employment in the community. This also provides the opportunity for fellowship and comradery among friends, coworkers, and peers. Participants find a place as part of the group while maintaining their own personal styles and interests. They have a voice and guidance in making their own choices as they relate to their employment goals and community interests.

BCRC's Production Center partners with local businesses to provide meaningful work opportunities for those attending our facility. Participants attending this programming enjoy daily work assignments while earning a paycheck. BCRC also provides opportunities for individuals to access a vast variety of community activities. Community activities present learning opportunities to access public services, explore job prospects and resources, and occasions to connect with individuals from all occupations and lifestyles in their community.

BCRC's mission is "to provide opportunity for personal growth and independence while respecting the dignity and uniqueness of each individual we serve."

Competitive employment is the ultimate goal; however, many persons with disabilities do not yet desire the competitive work environment. Instead, they appreciate the option to remain in the Production Center and enjoy receiving their paychecks for work well done. They make well-informed decisions regarding their present goals while planning for an exciting future in which they will take their training and learned skills to a new personal level. This is all possible through the 14(c) certification. ■

School to Work Enjoys Advantages of Moving to Beaver

by Jessica Rusak

After nearly six months in their new location, School to Work (STW) students and staff are adapting well to their new space. The BeaverPlace location offers community accessibility, amenities, and plenty of interior space for programming.

BCRC's youth and young adult services, provided by STW, operates within the nearly 9,800 square feet. Currently, approximately 40 students enrolled in programming enjoy the additional benefits the space presents – which include two kitchens, used for small group and individual cooking lessons. "We utilize the kitchen often, says Traci Hughes, Supervisor of Youth Services. We cook at least once a week, which is a great transition/life skill for the students." ▶

This space affords the ability to offer individualized, person-centered programming as well as small group activities. Additionally, all staff are enjoying the advantage of having a desk and workspace of their very own. This ideal location sits in close proximity to the main street (3rd Street) of Beaver and provides opportunity for safe community exploration, immediate access to local volunteer sites, and potential for numerous work experiences. "We love having access to the town where we can get the students outside more," said Hughes. "Programming has definitely enhanced." ■



Hunter Helps YMCA Attendees, Like Me

by Frank Shialabba

As a regular attendee at the New Brighton YMCA for many years, I was happy to return after a year's absence due to the pandemic. Upon my return, I was greeted by a very engaging young man who bursted with enthusiasm for his job. Little did I know that a few months later I would be writing an article, just as enthusiastically, about this very young man, Hunter Giles.

Hunter, age 23 from Conway, works as a wellness attendant.



According to WIN Services Transition Coordinator Magic Sentz, "Hunter has a great sense of humor and a great work ethic. He is determined and wants to do well. He is reliable and will help cover shifts for his coworkers if they are not able to work." As I observed, Hunter has a great personality and goes out of his way to make everyone feel welcome. He goes the extra mile for members, like myself, and for his coworkers. Hunter's supervisor,

Beth Boffo states, "Hunter always comes to work with a smile on his face and contagious enthusiasm. The Beaver County YMCA is blessed to have him on our staff team."

Part of Hunter's job as an attendant is to learn the names, functions and operation of the many machines in the wellness room. He has worked diligently to master this task and does well at assisting members with their proper use.

In addition to his work as an attendant, Hunter has started to coach youth sports at the "Y". When he is not scheduled at the wellness center, he coaches basketball and soccer for the youth programs.

Hunter loves sports, music, his family, friends and his job. It seems that he loves life and that love is transferred to everyone who knows him. It is my great pleasure to know Hunter and benefit from his expertise as I attend my daily workouts at the YMCA. ■

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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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.



Seventy-seven Percent Vaccinated

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC staff and clients have exceeded President Biden's goal to have at least 70% of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by July 4. At the beginning of June, 77% of BCRC staff and clients were fully vaccinated against the virus. According to CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, "if you are vaccinated you are protected, if you are not vaccinated you remain at risk of infection."

Executive Director Paulette Miller would like to thank BCRC's staff and clients for continuing to step up in the fight against COVID-19. ■



Shop Talk

by Frank Shialabba

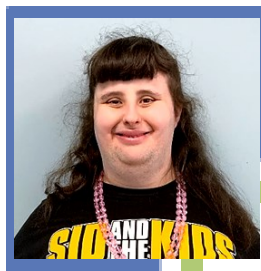
The COVID pandemic did not stop BCRC staff and clients from meeting their goal in the annual Scouting for Food Campaign. BCRC generosity came through with another successful campaign, and staff and clients celebrated with a pizza party.

Be watching as we bring inspiration and information with the latest messages on the electric messaging board at CenterPlace.

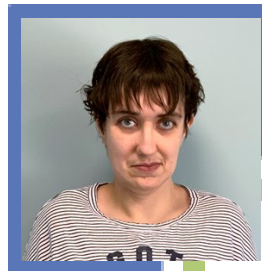
While the BCRC picnic had to be cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, we hope to renew the annual tradition sometime in late summer or early fall.



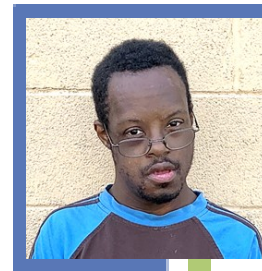
Employee of the Month



Melissa Kuppinger
April 2021



Meghan Burkhart
May 2021

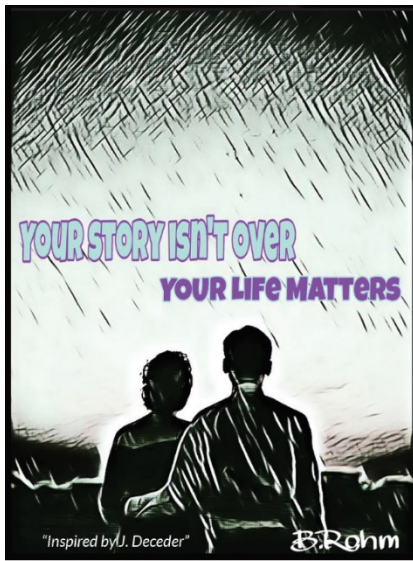


Shaun Reid
June 2021

BCRC is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.

May-Mental Health Awareness Month

Messages of Inspiration



it's a
BAD DAY
not a
BAD LIFE
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