



Julie Loves Life and Her New Job *by Frank Shialabba*

The pandemic has stopped many of us in our tracks, but not WIN Services' Julie Lane. Julie wasn't always sure when her new job would start due to pandemic related closures. However, she persevered and was ecstatic when she got the call to start her job with a local restaurant chain.

Julie has been involved with BCRC for 17 years. Her first experience with BCRC was with the School-to-Work Program, and she has been a dependable member of both the janitorial crew and BCRC's Record Management. She is very excited as she begins her new adventure with competitive employment.

Julie is a dining room attendant, and she is in charge of the very important job of sanitizing the benches and tables after each customer leaves. She also fills condiments and sanitizes the bottles.



According to WIN Services Transition Coordinator Magic Sentz, "Julie is very proud of her job, and she looks forward to each new day with excitement. She is a fast worker who learns quickly and loves her job. Her supervisors are happy with her work."

Julie is very enthusiastic about life in general, and she has many interests. She loves Disney and especially Minnie Mouse. She is a Steelers, Penguins and Pirates fan, and she likes bowling, dancing, shopping, spending time with her family and attending musicals and plays. Julie's love of life has extended to great

success in her new job. Ms. Sentz states, "Julie has transitioned well into role of competitive work, and she continues to impress her supervisors and job coaches each day that she works." ■

School to Work Students Lauded by Local Business *by Mary Jo Sanders*

For the past few years, students in our School to Work program and their job coaches have been volunteering at a business called the Way Station. The management at the Way Station recently named our STW students and staff their "Employees of the Month." The Way Station showed their gratitude for the students' dedication and hard work by putting their names on a plaque on a wall in the store!

The Way Station is a christian faith based retail store, similar to a Goodwill Store and it provides a wealth of retail experience to the students who help there. The STW participants go to the Way Station two days a week on a rotating basis. That way everyone can try their hand at organizing shelves, pricing items and hanging up clothing, packing hygiene bags, and learning about inventory management by rotating the store's stock.

The students are learning many valuable lessons at the Way Station and they approach the work with their usual enthusiasm and desire to explore and learn new things. ■

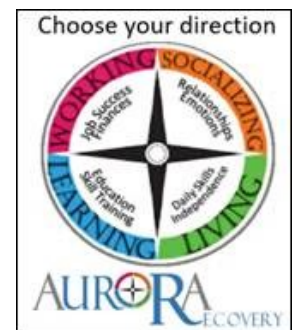
Aurora Participants "Sharpen the Saw" with Day of Fun *by Deanna McCracken*

Each Friday, Aurora services provides a day of fun and games for participants, as an integral part of recovery. Throughout the week participants learn and practice life skills, such as effective communication and coping practices to strengthen interpersonal relationships, but Fridays have a different vibe!

In the form of perplexing puzzles and tantalizing teasers, Aurora participants "sharpen the saw" with a variety of word searches, find the hidden objects, crossword puzzles, word unscramble and crack the code secret messages. "Sharpen the saw" is one of "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" from the bestselling self-help book by Stephen Covey; a self-improvement method taught all over the world. Covey states that sharpening the saw "means preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have – you."

Not only do the participants work on building cognitive skills with puzzles, but team building skills are promoted when participants break into two groups, playing games such as Family Feud and Scattergories. Every other Friday, "Recovery Bingo" is a popular game, in which participants have the opportunity to win a variety of new or gently used prizes, such as jewelry, candy, stuffed animals, candles, household goods, or cold weather gear. This game encourages listening skills and focus.

Participants also hope to return to the Aurora kitchen to practice cooking skills when restrictions are lifted. Until then, we won't lose our Friday smiles. Lunch is still served every Friday at Aurora after the fun and games, with individual lunches as we sit family style, six feet apart, with gratitude for our special time together. ■



Electrostatic Sprayers Enhance Safety Protocols

by Frank Shialabba

While continuing to increase safety protocols related to COVID-19, BCRC has purchased three electrostatic sprayers that have greatly enhanced the agency's ability to thoroughly disinfect large areas.

The electrostatic sprayers work by charging liquids (i.e. cleaners, sanitizers, and disinfectants) as they pass through a sprayer nozzle. According to Janitorial Coordinator Patricia Sarver, "this generates charged droplets that repel one another and actively seek out environmental surfaces, which they stick to and even wrap around to coat all sides."

Ms. Sarver states, "BCRC is doing a lot as an agency to ensure safety, including screening visitors, clients and staff before they enter the buildings." According to Facilities Manager Laura Medarac, visitation by persons not employed by BCRC has been kept to a minimum. "All staff, clients, and vendors are required to be screened prior to entering any of BCRC's facilities." Anyone who is not a



John Baumgardner, Tricia Sarver and Rick Roberts shown displaying the three new electrostatic sprayers.

BCRC employee must wait in their car, answer a series of questions and have their temperature taken before entering the building. Staff work remotely when possible and departments have been physically separated to reduce the chance of exposure. Client workspaces have been separated to allow for social distancing, and all departments have been provided with disinfectants to clean their own workspaces. High touch surfaces are cleaned at least three times daily.

Ms. Medarac believes that "BCRC is doing very well regarding our pandemic safety protocols. We instituted many of our protocols before they were mandated by the state, and we have continued to add additional equipment such as electrostatic sprayers." ■

In the
Spotlight

Melissa Coakley
by Kelly Newhouse

In these exceptional times, it is of the utmost importance to care for one another and ourselves. For those who live with a mental health diagnosis or battle substance use, these very frightening and precarious times can cause a tremendous amount of additional worry and fear. It is programs like BCRC's Aurora Services that help to support these individuals.

At the helm of this program is Melissa Coakley, supervisor of BCRC's Aurora Services in Beaver. She began her career with Aurora six years ago. She offers not only a kind and supportive approach, but also her professionalism and experience of 26 years in the field of Human Services. Melissa's background includes case management services and supportive housing.

Currently, Melissa oversees the daily operations at Aurora and provides direct support services. She teaches classes and works with people individually. To add more to these wonderful credentials, she also serves as the co-chair of the Beaver County Steering Committee and is a member of the Zero Suicide Committee for Beaver County. She credits her "amazing coworkers" for their contributions to this valuable service. Melissa states that she "really enjoys working collaboratively with individuals in service to pursue their goals". Melissa's goal for Aurora is to continue to see the program grow and decrease stigma associated with mental health and substance use.

In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her three daughters and husband. She is a soccer and cheer mom and loves watching her children do what they love. Melissa likes to hike and spend time with her two German Shepherds, Murphy and Hope.

Thank you Melissa for your team's efforts in helping the individuals in our community to live healthy lives and be well. ■



Pictured is just one of the 11 Christmas tree arrangements displayed throughout the BCRC buildings.

Newsletter Marks 30 Years

by Frank Shialabba

The year 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of BCRC's newsletter the, "Competitive Edge." Over the years, the newsletter has been a key component in connecting BCRC stakeholders, summarizing events for current and former clients and employees.

In 1991, shortly after she became executive director, Paulette Miller expressed the need to have a means of communicating with clients, staff, other agencies, friends and customers. At about the same time, BCRC was the recipient of an "ICE" grant designed to increase placement of individuals in competitive employment. Those two needs resulted in BCRC's newsletter, the "Competitive Edge."

Due to his background in journalism at Duquesne University, Frank Shialabba was chosen as editor of the newsletter, a position he holds to this day. He says, "I have always loved writing and the process of putting together the newsletter is something I enjoy immensely. It has been a great way, in my retirement, to stay creative and stay connected with BCRC." Frank is the only remaining staff member of the original newsletter, and he shares Ms. Miller's desire to keep people connected.



Ms. Miller states, "The newsletter has evolved over the years, but it is still a major factor in our agency goal to improve communication. In these trying times, the importance of agency safety is another focus of the publication. Our message is be safe, be well and be kind."

Currently, many people receive the newsletter via e-mail. You can also access current and archived copies of the newsletter at BCRC's website www.bcrc.net. If you would like to receive an e-mail copy, call BCRC at 724-378-4750. ■

Safety Day has Added Importance and New Look

by Sarah Hazel

BCRC's 2020 Safety Day took on added importance and had a new look this year as pandemic protocols played an important role. Safety Day was held on Friday, September 25, 2020 for all clients and staff. Pandemic protocols were reviewed and trainings were completed in socially distanced groups. Those who were unable to attend the trainings in person were able to watch them virtually.

The annual training topics included bloodborne pathogens, fire safety and fire extinguisher use, and Narcan administration. Mike Welhorsky, Henderson Brothers Inc., provided a power point training on bloodborne pathogens that covered protective

measures, epidemiology and symptoms of bloodborne diseases. The fire safety training was offered through a video presentation that discussed OSHA requirements and fire extinguisher use. The NARCAN training was completed through a video presentation as well, and it explained how to administer NARCAN when someone is experiencing a drug overdose.

Clients and staff also reviewed COVID-19 safety procedures and BCRC policies. Clients and staff were reminded to wear their masks appropriately, wash their hands frequently, and practice social distancing.

After the training sessions, clients and staff enjoyed boxed lunches, while watching a slideshow of safety days from previous years. ■

**SAFETY
MATTERS!**

BCRC Clients Inspire Others as They Repair Bikes

by Ian Thomas

Clients of BCRC's WIN Services and students in the School to Work program inspire others as they repair bicycles to ensure that kids have access to a safe bike to ride. Since August 2020, Communicycle volunteers have been teaching the clients and students the many skills involved in repairing bikes. Communicycle is a Beaver County faith-based organization that collects, repairs, and redistributes bicycles to community members throughout Beaver County.

The clients and students attend work training at Communicycle's New Brighton site (the site of BCRC's former workshop). Clients Josh Ward and Steven Lambert attend every Monday performing tasks like changing tires, removing tires from used bikes, and putting broken bikes back together for redistribution.

Communicycle is fulfilling its mission statement: "Working on a bike together fosters real relationship and meets real needs." Volunteers teach kids and community members how to repair bikes, thus empowering individuals while teaching valuable skills. Partnering with businesses and outreach organizations, Communicycle connects "with our community rather than compete, bringing better services to those who need them." Since the organization's inception in 2011, Communicycle leadership estimates that they have repaired and redistributed thousands of bicycles.

Communicycle leadership and mentors are thrilled with the help, and they are inspired by the clients and students ability to master such complicated tasks in such a short amount of time.

Once again, BCRC's program participants show their ability, and their compassion for others. ■



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 inde-
pendence while respecting the dignity
and uniqueness of each individual.*



BCRC Hosts Saturday Morning Bowlers

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC served as host to a group of very excited and appreciative bowlers recently. The 2020-2021 season of the "Saturday morning bowlers" had been cancelled due to the COVID-19. BCRC stepped in to provide a fun experience and a chance for the bowlers to see one another.

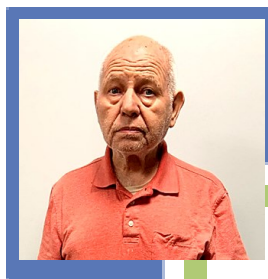
According to Patricia Sarver, one of the group's leaders, "we made the difficult decision to cancel the season based on CDC guidelines, social distancing and disinfecting concerns and concern for the safety of the bowlers."

BCRC offered to help and coordinated the special event with Ms. Sarver and Nadine Levinger, who have been coordinating activities for the bowlers for the last six years. According to Ms. Sarver, "BCRC promoted a contactless drive-through event and posted it on their electronic sign." Bowlers were directed to BCRC's main entrance where volunteers, including the "Grinch," met them. The bowlers were given a tote, a jacket, a DVD collection of bowler's photos entitled "Through the Years" and other gifts." Ms. Sarver states, "The bowler usually receive their gifts at the end of the season so this was our way of lifting their spirits in a difficult time. They were excited to receive their gifts and say hello to their friends, even if just from their vehicles."

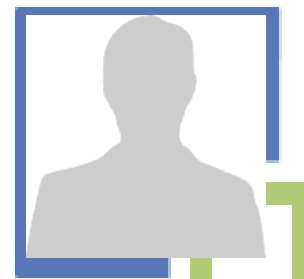
Ms. Sarver would like to thank BCRC, Executive Director Paulette Miller and volunteers John Baumgardner (the Grinch) and Rick Roberts for their help with this very special day. According to Ms. Miller, "We truly do need to be kind and work together to lift each other's spirits in this difficult time." ■



Employee of the Month



Anthony D'Agostino
October 2020



James Kish
November 2020

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