

**WIN Services' Amy Kochanowski
Truly is a Winner**

by Frank Shialabba

Amy Kochanowski's smile reflects a heart that yearns to help and a spirit that seeks to be independent. Sometimes in life, it is necessary to receive assistance before we can serve others and achieve our personal goals. This was the case with Amy.

Amy received that assistance in the form of WIN Services' Supported Employment Program. Amy worked one day a week at Eat n' Park in Center Township, but she wanted to increase her income and her potential for independence. According to WIN Employment Specialist, Abby Gouldsbarry, "We talked to Amy's employers and they readily agreed to increase her hours. They stated that Amy does a wonderful job and they felt that she didn't need further job coaching." Amy bused tables for many years, but she is now learning to run the dishwasher. According to Ms. Gouldsbarry, "Amy has matured greatly since her days as a student in BCRC's School to Work Program. She is a person who not only strives to better herself, but desires to help others. She does well at every endeavor she undertakes."



Amy's love for children led her to volunteer at the Life Steps day care program. Her volunteer efforts also include re-shelving books at the Beaver Library and working at the Beaver Falls soup kitchen. She was also instrumental in the WIN Services Habilitation Program bake sale for victims of the Haiti earthquake.



Amy is also moving close to her goal of independence. She hopes to move into her own apartment one day in the not-so-distant future.

Meanwhile, Amy works hard, helps others and wins trips on the Internet. According to Ms. Gouldsbarry, "Amy and her family have gone on many trips courtesy of Internet contests that she has won. She is a lucky young lady, who deserves all the respect in the world for her accomplishments and giving nature." ■

Passionately Pursuing Education

by Amanda L. Pullinger

Career Education classes in the areas of independent living and job readiness are now available to some very excited BCRC employees through a grant from the Beaver County Community Development Office.

Christina Thompson, our newly hired Career Education teacher, is very enthusiastic about the new program. Christina interviewed Work Activity Center clients to learn the topics that would provide the greatest amount of assistance in achieving greater independence and vocational success. She then designed a curriculum that touched all aspects



of life, consisting of basic education, health and wellness education, and job

readiness education.

Each week Christina features a new topic, discussed through a series of multiple classes. Each class is offered three times a day, due to varying work duties and schedules, and all classes are made available to anyone who is interested. A calendar of classes can be found in each lunch room and on Christina's classroom door. Recent topics include: following directions, telling time, taking safety precautions in bad weather, and practicing proper hygiene. These classes are designed to benefit learners from all academic stages, utilizing methods like group discussions, craft projects, a CCD projector and monitor, interpreters, job coach assistance, community education and exposure, and computers, just to name a few. Approximately 100 workshop employees have attended at least one class. ■

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**EMPLOYEES
OF THE
MONTH SPEAK OUT**

*by Mike Little and
Gloria Beighey*

For the second quarter of 2010, BCRC employees are still going strong. Receiving the Employee of the Month are John Vukich for May and Jeff Whipple for June.

John Vukich won the award once before but to win a second time was "even better." He has worked at BCRC for over 10 years, and he feels that "I do my best even when I'm not feeling well." When asked how he keeps a good work attitude, John says "I take pride in my work." In the future, John wants to "keep my car and apartment."

Jeff Whipple is the June Employee of the Month. Jeff states that he keeps his good work attitude by staying positive and enjoying work. He feels that winning "is really good" and it happened because "I show up for work and do the best I can." Jeff's future plans are to keep working at BCRC's Records Management Building. Jeff has been employed at BCRC for seven years. ■

**Go Direct With
Federal Benefit
Checks**

The US Department of the Treasury and Federal Reserve Banks are sponsoring "Go Direct", a campaign to motivate people who receive federal benefit checks to use direct deposit. The PA Governor's Office for ▶

People with Disabilities touts this method as having the potential to make life easier and safer.

In 2009, more than 440,000 Social Security and SSI checks were reported lost or stolen. The PA Governor's Office on People with Disabilities states that electronic payments can eliminate the risk of lost or stolen checks. Plus, money is available on payment day each month, so there's no need to wait for the mail to arrive or to make a special trip to cash or deposit the check.

To sign up for direct deposit call 800-333-1795 or go to www.GoDirect.org or visit your bank or credit union.

The Direct Express Debit MasterCard card is also recommended by the Treasury Department. This is a prepaid debit card that allows cardholders to make purchases, get cash or pay bills. No bank account is required, and there are no sign-up fees, monthly fees or overdraft charge. To sign up call toll free 877-212-9991, go to www.USDirectExpress.com or visit your Social Security office. ■



Safety Lights: Cell Phone Safety

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

Cell phones provide us with instant access to people and information. This communication can raise safety concerns. Here are some things to remember when using a cell phone.

- ✓ Never give out personal information to persons you do not know, like your name, address, and account numbers.
- ✓ When you send a picture, remember that photos stay online forever and can be forwarded to anyone. ▶

Staff Addition Sparks New Program

by Jennifer Gengarella

**Spotlight on:
Susan Smith**



Program Specialist Susan Smith has been a wonderful addition to the exciting new CAPS program. She began her employment at BCRC in June, 2009 as a job coach for the Job Training of Beaver County Summer Program. In September 2009, she joined CAPS, which is designed to meet the challenges of children and youth ages 10 to 21 with mental health disorders, drug and alcohol addiction, and juvenile justice and behavioral issues.

Susan notes that the CAPS Youth Program has surged from an initial enrollment of four in the summer of 2009, to 12 BC SCORES students this past year. She is also proud that the overall academic performance and attendance of those enrolled in CAPS improved significantly during the past school year. She truly enjoys the interaction she has with the CAPS students—building supports, exploring vocational interests, and developing rapport.

Susan has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from Robert Morris College, and she is currently working toward her Masters Degree in Education.

She is receiving much additional training to prepare her to work with adolescents, including her certification in the Student Assistance Program.

In addition, great in-roads have been made in developing relationships with school districts and alternative schools. The districts have subsidized many support services such as evaluations, individualized programming, and psychiatric rehabilitation. BCRC has received many referrals for the new school year, as well.

In addition to her BCRC duties, Susan is the proud mother of three daughters. She enjoys being the “Team Mom” for all of their sports and activities. She also enjoys gardening, walking, and activities with her church.

Thank you, Susan, for being an inspiration and mentor to the many young people who look to you for guidance. ■

BCRC Gets First Place Ribbon in Giving

by Frank Shialabba

The recent deaths of local servicemen and women in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq brought great sadness to clients and staff at the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center. However, BCRC employees responded by opening up their giving hearts with their usual sense of compassion.

BCRC job coaches, Jim Smith and Lavinia Craft, came to work one Monday and almost simultaneously said, “Let’s do something for our troops.” They had been undecided about a monthly activity for BCRC clients, when “we had exactly the same idea at the same time.”

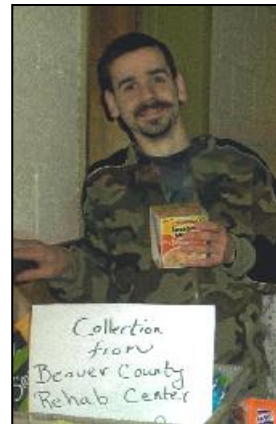
Job Coach Smith’s wife volunteers with the Yellow Ribbon Girls, and he suggested collecting “supplies for the troops.” BCRC staff and clients responded with eleven containers filled to overflowing with items such as DVD’s, playing cards, board games, batteries, beef jerky and Ramon Noodles.

Tony Prunty and Melissa Kuppinger, two of the top donors, were chosen to represent

BCRC as they presented the items to the Yellow Ribbon Girls.

BCRC clients and staff received a thank you for “all the goodies and supplies you collected and donated for the soldiers. They will be happy to receive everything and they are so proud to be your friends!”

We, in turn, are proud of our clients and staff, who never fail to take joy in giving to others. We would also like to thank all those friends, parents and staff from other agencies who generously donated to this worthy effort. ■



Tony Prunty shown with BCRC donations to Yellow Ribbon Girls.

Clients and Staff Learn to Promote Individual Rights

by Kelly Newhouse

BCRC clients and staff have attended several valuable trainings in recent months designed to develop clients' abilities to advocate for their individual rights and participate in developing their own programs.

Clients received some excellent training on developing their own ISP from "Self Advocates United as One." This is an organization composed primarily of people with disabilities, who travel around the state teaching clients to advocate for themselves. The training gives people the opportunity to truly participate in working toward their dreams and desired outcomes. Clients also attended a training presented by the same agency on understanding their rights and how to access those rights.

Staff also attended training designed to improve their sensitivity toward client's rights and program choice. Staff attended "Exploration of Professional Ethical Choice," presented by the J. Andrews National Association of Social Workers. The speaker was E. Mulvaney from the University of Pittsburgh's School for Social Work.

Additional training was acquired on person centered planning to help participants (clients) strive for the outcomes they want to achieve in their own lives. Topics covered goal setting and helping individuals choose and achieve their own goals by understanding the support systems that are available to them.

Finally, Supported Employment staff completed a certification in Supported Employment from the Virginia Commonwealth University. This is a web based certificate series. Staff receiving their certifications were; Alyssa DeMello, Colleen Sjoberg, Diane Beck, Cheryl Leydig, and Jenine Pyle. Congratulations ladies on your success. Congratulations to BCRC for keeping current and continuing to be a person centered agency. ■

Aurora Survey Highlights Accomplishments

During a recent satisfaction survey conducted by Aurora Rehabilitation, forty consumers responded by highlighting their numerous accomplishments since entering the program.

- Thirty-eight of 40 consumers listed one or more accomplishments that they have achieved since starting the Aurora Program.
- Independence was high on the list of achievements. Consumers sighted being able to speak out, increased assertiveness, being able to take care of myself, getting out in the community more, and improved problem solving skills as signs of their newly acquired independence.
- Personal development was also high on the list of consumers, who sighted thinking more positively, improved self-esteem, being able to talk in public, being able to express my feelings, improved time management, improved anger management, being more confident, and being more open.
- Possibly most importantly, consumers touted their improved ability to deal with their mental illness through medication management, coping with depression, completing WRAP plans, staying out of the hospital, and being able to cope with stress and chaos.
- Finally, the efforts of Aurora consumers resulted in more friends, school graduations, working more hours, and community employment.

Congratulations to the consumers and staff of Aurora for a year full of accomplishments. ■



✓ If you receive a call, text message, picture, or voicemail message that makes you uncomfortable, tell someone you trust.

Cell phones are a great convenience, but you need to use them wisely. ■

NAMI Walk Set for October 3

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill will be sponsoring their 4th Annual NAMI Walk on Sunday, October 3. The Walk will be held at the SouthSide Works/Three Rivers Heritage Trail, Pittsburgh, PA, and check-in is at 9:00 a.m. This is a 5K walk that is held to raise awareness of mental illness in southwestern Pennsylvania.

For more information about the event contact Darcy Garda at 412-366-3788. You may also contact Marianne LaSalle of BCRC at 724-847-1306 about joining the Beaver County Aurora Team for this year's walk. Be sure to check out the NAMI website at www.namiswa.org for more details. ■



Wage Subsidies Benefit Local Employers

BCRC's Supported Work Program offers numerous incentives to prospective employers who hire individuals with economic disadvantages. Through the PA Way to Work Initiative wages are reimbursed 100% for the first 30 days, 75% for days 31-60 and 50% from day 61 through the remainder of the contract. Employers interested in participating in this program should contact BCRC Employment Specialist Laura Medarac at 724-847-1306. ■

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Shop Talk

BCRC Picnics in the Park

by Kay Podbielski



The Monaca Recreation Board once again sponsored the BCRC picnic on June 11 at John A. Antoline Memorial Park. It was a great day for softball, dancing, bingo, Uno, and picnic food. The day began with a four team softball tournament featuring the Pirate Parrot as the celebrity pitcher. Each year the players assign themselves a creative nickname and proudly step to the batter's box as their name is announced over the public address system. Those who prefer a more relaxing day were able to try their luck at bingo and Uno. The talented volunteers from the recreation board showed off their culinary skills by preparing hot dogs, sloppy joes, baked beans and home-made cookies. After lunch, we danced the calories away as the disc jockey kept things going with lively music.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the Monaca Recreation Board who has provided so many fun filled picnics to BCRC over the years. ■



BCRC's annual Safety Carnival is set for Friday, September 17. This year's carnival will feature magician Eric Davis and a variety of safety presentations. Look for lots of food, fun, games, and prizes. Let's all make BCRC a safe place to work! ■