



# The Competitive Edge

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

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## Youth Ambassador Program Showcased on WBVP

by Mary Jo Sanders

Early in September 2017 BCRC’s very own Maureen Hawk and Susan Smith were interviewed by Diane Brosuis on local radio station WBVP. This initial dialogue was used as a kick-off to the second year of the Beaver County Youth Ambassador Program. The Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) is a youth-centered, youth driven program operating in many Beaver County school districts; the mission is to increase awareness of mental health and wellness and to decrease stigma and stereotypes within the schools.

Maureen and Susan used the forum to outline and explain the many programs that would be held for the upcoming school year. There were several well attended and informative events. During these events the Youth Ambassadors learned many new things, such as how to deal with relationships, trauma, coping skills, how to recognize mental health disorders, and many more topics especially pertinent to today’s youth. The participants were then able to spread the information to their peers, family members, and their

communities.

Susan Smith was again invited to be interviewed on the air at WBVP, accompanied by Jen Milne, Rochester High School transition coordinator and special education teacher, and Angela Manno, Beaver Falls High School guidance counselor, in May to update the listeners of the success of the program and to inform the community of the upcoming Youth Mental Health Awareness Day, celebrated on Thursday, May 10, 2018. Thirteen schools/programs scheduled activities during the entire week, as a

grand finale to the school year, encompassing grades K-12 and including 6,445 students.

The Youth Ambassadors gained vital knowledge and information, learned leadership skills and built relationships with other youth in their districts and across the county. This program is made possible with funding (in part) from the County of Beaver, pursuant to a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse

and Mental Health Service Administration.

Planning is now underway for the upcoming school year and Beaver County will continue to strive to raise awareness of mental health by empowering our youth. ■



## September Shines a Light on Recovery

by Laurel Baker

September traditionally marks the start of school, vacations have winded down, and pumpkins begin to creep up everywhere. It may seem a bit sad, letting go of summer for another year, but there is still reason to celebrate! Each year, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) uses the month of September to promote recovery across the United States. The message is one of hope and possibility: people can and do recover from both mental health and substance abuse issues.

This year’s theme is “Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose and Community.” Events across the country will remind us that we are all valuable members of society, and that we all play a vital role in the overall wellness of our communities. Beaver County celebrates recovery month by holding an art show, which was hosted this year at Aurora Services. Local individuals with lived experience with recovery have the opportunity to share their talents with the greater community, in the effort to decrease stigma and increase the sense of connection that is important to all of us. This was the second year of the art show, and the hope is that it will continue to grow and blossom in the years to come. Aurora Services is continuously evaluating ways to encourage healthy community involvement for those seeking the benefits of recovery.

Recovery happens year round. However, SAMHSA’s September campaign provides a forum for the general population to learn more about it and ways to support it within their own families, friends and neighborhoods. ■



# Spotlight On: Barbara Shearer, New Production Manager

by Kelly Newhouse

With the retirement of Frank Sniezek, BCRC welcomes Barbara Shearer as the new Production Manager. Barbara comes to us with 30 years of experience in the retail industry. She has performed a multitude of jobs, having worked as a department manager, buyer, and trainer in some of the larger retail chains.

All of Barbara's experience is proving very valuable. She has tackled her new position by making sure work flow stays organized, vendors are well serviced, inventory levels are monitored, and reports are timely and accurate. She is also developing new business ventures that will "provide opportunities for participants to be exposed to various work projects for vocational growth." She hopes that the "the participants reach their maximum potential."

Barbara is excited about the process of learning her new job and especially looks forward to forklift training.

After an active day at BCRC, Barbara's idea of a perfect evening is dinner with family. She enjoys sharing stories and laughter with her four children, Julie, Jack, Riley, and Owen, along with Pete, her husband, of 23 years. Through Pete's keen interest, Barbara has also learned to love the game of soccer, or football as Pete calls it in his native home of England.

Barbara wishes to thank BCRC clients and staff for being so welcoming. ■



## Christina Officially Joins CenterPlace Crew

by Jessica Rusak

Christina Divil has embarked on a new stage of her work life; she officially joined the cleaning crew at CenterPlace in February 2018.

It has only been recently that Christina revealed a desire to work with the cleaning crew. She is very excited to work with her peers and to help contribute to the cleanliness of our facility. She takes great pride in her work and is very proud of her acquired abilities.

Christina is a familiar, smiling face here at BCRC. She started in the School to Work program in 2000 and upon graduation, she entered the adult program. Over the last 17 years, she has had various opportunities to learn and take part in many different tasks. Christina is frequently assigned to work on packaging bereavement bags and above all she enjoys working on the mailings and delivering newspapers to the CenterPlace offices and staff.

The past few years have seen great progress in Christina's work skills. She has diligently worked on increasing her stamina and has greatly improved her cleaning skills. Christina has worked with different job coaches and has shown flexibility in accepting changes in schedules as well as any changes in staff. Christina takes direction well, likes being ▶



challenged, and it's apparent that she is determined to complete what she starts.

Congratulations Christina, on a new chapter in your vocational growth! ■

## Color her blue, or red, or....

by Frank Shialabba

Her blue hair is a reflection of Taylor Neidorfer's outgoing personality. She loves people, and they, in turn, love her. Her gregarious nature is on display daily as she works at a local fast food restaurant in Chippewa.

Taylor is equally skilled at performing her job duties and getting along with people. She has become very good at making sure the sausage, egg and cheese burritos are wrapped tightly, and the salads and parfaits are prepared perfectly. In addition, WIN Program Specialist Krista Schwartz states, "Taylor loves to joke and she has a great time with her coworkers. She is an asset to her employer and a positive influence on those around her."

Taylor is also an asset to those in her everyday life. She is a "people person" who loves to help others. She was especially helpful to her father after a recent surgery.

While Taylor is consistent in her work and personal relationships, she frequently likes to change her look. Her blue hair may soon be a fiery red. However, she ▶



colors her hair, Taylor brings life and light to those who know her. ■

## Shaun Grows Through Love of Animals

by Karen Adamo and Frank Shialabba

Through his involvement in BCRC's Community Participation Services (CPS), Shaun Reid has experienced personal growth through his love for animals. He's experienced first encounters with a variety of animals, and his fascination for creatures, big and small, has grown and flourished.

Shaun has had a number of unforgettable experiences with animals through CPS. He had the unique opportunity to be present for the birthing of a calf. He also got "up close and personal" when he had the chance to brush a horse.

Shaun is now a volunteer who is talking and interacting more with others. Every Wednesday, he volunteers at a local

farm. He is never so happy as when he spends time with the horses. He looks forward to marking the calendar on the day he is to see the horses. His mother states that he is now using words that she didn't even know he

knew. His vocabulary is increasing, and he is engaging more with other people.

Shaun is growing every day through his passion for animals and his involvement in CPS. ■



## Athletes Win Silver and Gold at National Special Olympics

by Rebekah Lane and Sabine Kane

Jill Byers of WIN Services and Lydia Wert, a participant in the School to Work program, have both won honors at the National Special Olympics in Seattle Washington. Both qualified through participation in the state Special Olympics last summer.



**Jill proudly displays her silver medal.**

Jill Byers achieved a silver medal in the bocce team competition—a feat which made her and WIN Services very proud. She was thrilled with many of her experiences in Seattle, which included the opportunity to meet Maddie Poppe, the 2018 American Idol winner. She also enjoyed the combined pep rally in Philadelphia with the Olympic athletes from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It was a special treat when Jill and her teammates celebrated her birthday with a surprise birthday cake.

Jill has been participating in the Lawrence County Special Olympics bocce team for 19 years and has competed on both the local and state levels. In addition to the silver medal, Jill also received a participation ribbon in the singles event. Jill stated that “I had a fun time,” and her mother said, “It was the trip of a lifetime!

Lydia Wert also reached the winner's platform. She qualified for the national event by capturing gold in the 25-meter freestyle swim at Penn State University last summer. In Seattle, she did herself one – or rather four better: she earned medals in four different events: gold medals in the 25-meter freestyle (17.44 seconds) and 25-meter backstroke (25.55 seconds), as well as silver medals in the 4x25-meter freestyle relay, which Lydia anchored, and the 4x25-meter medley relay to which she contributed her expertise in the backstroke leg.

A lot of practice and hard work went into her preparation for this big event; everyone in School to Work is proud and thrilled for Lydia's success. We celebrate her accomplishments along with her family, class, and teammates. Just recently, Lydia was featured in an article describing her swimming prowess in the Beaver County Times, another feather in her cap.

Congratulations to our outstanding athletes, who have achieved national recognition. ■



**Lydia Wert celebrating her victories!**

## Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) Wins ECCO Awards

by Maureen Hawk

Beaver County's Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) received two honorable mentions through the Excellence in

Community Collaboration and Outreach (ECCO) Recognition Program by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) for youth mental health awareness programs.

BCRC is a very active member of the Youth Ambassador Program team. YAP was selected in two categories for events that were conducted during the 2016/2017 federal fiscal year.

The first was in the category of “Audience: Professionals” where the Youth Ambassadors held a “chalk talk” on the sidewalks of the Beaver County Courthouse. Youth and other adults representing the Beaver County System of Care gathered on the morning of September 6, 2017 eager to decorate the sidewalks with multi-colored messages showing support of those with a mental health diagnosis and to remind them that there is help and hope and that they are not alone. The activity was held in conjunction with National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Members then met with the county commissioners to explain YAP's purpose and the importance of mental health awareness.

The second award was for the category of “Strategy- National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day”. An event was held on May 2, 2017 at Penn State Beaver where a total of 13 school districts participated with 94 students in attendance. The day included a motivational speaker; screening of YAP videos; a cultural and linguistic competency presentation; and personal stories of recovery, grief, and loss. It also included an exhibit area where students could talk with service providers and gather resources, and a “Stress Free Zone” where students practiced coping skills with art, yoga, and therapy dogs.

The Youth Ambassador Program will begin their third year of activities with their first event on September 19th at CCBC. This program is made possible with funding (in part) from the County of Beaver, pursuant to a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration.

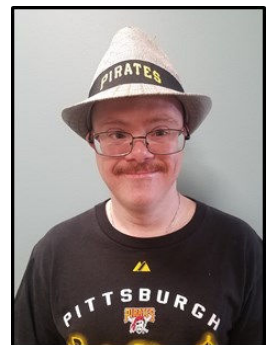
Youth can contact their school counselors if they would like to join this program. ■

## Embracing Our History

by Joshua Ward

Did you ever wonder when BCRC started or how many buildings have been part of BCRC? Do you know how long Frank Sniezek worked for BCRC or what Frank Shialabba's first job was? Do you know what BCRC's first name was or when Paulette Miller became the Executive Director? My name is Joshua James Ward and I'm going to answer these questions and more as I write BCRC's story.

I am a Special Olympics athlete and I like to collect stuff. I graduated from Beaver and then moved to Colorado but I moved back to Beaver in 2017. I enjoy traveling and have been to Belize with my sister. I am a fun, caring, kindhearted person who likes to write. I am going to interview many people for the BCRC story and hope you will look forward to my column, “Embracing our History.” ■



**Paulette Miller**  
*Executive Director*

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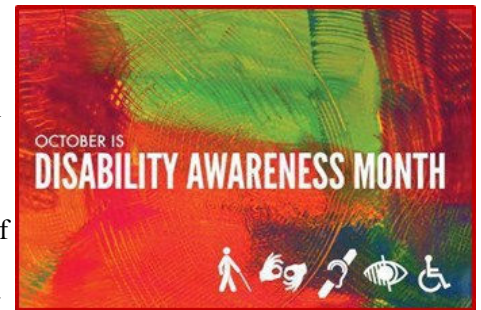
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## America's Workforce: Empowering All"

BCRC is proud to support National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Held each October, NDEAM aims to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Throughout the month, we'll be engaging in a variety of activities to educate our clients and staff on disability employment issues and the role they play in fostering a disability-friendly work culture. ■



## Carole Yuhasz Says Goodbye

*by Frank Shialabba*

Some gestures truly show the measure of a person. Such a gesture was made recently by Carole Yuhasz of Beaver County Behavioral Health. Carole retired recently after many years of dedicated service to individuals with disabilities in Beaver County. Typically, Carole did not forget the people she served those many years. She took time out of a very busy schedule, during her last few days of work, to visit the clients of BCRC and say goodbye. Everyone at BCRC would like to thank Carole for her kindness and meaningful contributions over the years. We wish her a happy and healthy retirement! ■

## Employee of the Month



**Cody Fabyanic**  
*July 2018*



**Jason Kaponin**  
*August 2018*



**John Anslin**  
*September 2018*

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