



# The Competitive Edge

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

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## Staff and Clients "Chill Out"

by Gina Alberti

Summer is just around the corner and plans are underway for a big addition to our production center: **AIR CONDITIONING!** Sitler & Lemmon was awarded the bid and electrical work began at the end of May. Clients and staff alike can expect to "chill out" before the end of summer.

Another major project is likely to be unveiled next summer. Currently, the new client entrance abuts an unfinished space that will be divided in half for the project. The portion closest to the parking lot will be paved to not only provide additional parking for BCRC vehicles, but to create a convenient and safe drop-off and pick-up area for clients. The other half of this space will serve as secure courtyard with plans for raised flowerbeds, trees, and shrubbery. Facilities Manager Laura Medarac hopes this space can be used for clients to plant flowers and grow vegetables. Some areas will also be paved for benches and other seating. Soon, Medarac will begin talking to landscape architects in hopes of finalizing plans before October 1<sup>st</sup>. Stay tuned! ■



## This Tiger Has a Big Heart

by Susan Smith, Program Specialist, Basswood Initiatives

Emere Anderson is a senior at Beaver Falls High School and a member of BCRC's School to Work Program. He is truly an amazing young man with a big heart and a great smile! Emere has faced a great deal of adversity, but has persevered and excelled in many aspects of his life.

Emere is active in both volunteering and community activities. He volunteers weekly at Habitat for Humanity's ReStore and the Salvation Army Foodbank. He is an active member of the Second Baptist Church in Beaver Falls where he proudly serves as an usher.

This highly motivated senior has also found success in the employment community. Emere has worked as a holiday/seasonal employee at FedEx and as a laborer for Tiger Pause Youth Ministry for five years. He recently moved into his own apartment with support from Matt Nance, Tiger Pause Executive Director.

Emere looks ahead to a promising future. After graduating in May, he plans to attend the Hiram G. Andrews Center to study building maintenance.

Cedric and Jessica, Emere's parents, can take pride in their son's giving nature and many accomplishments. He is an example of the power of positive thinking and positive parenting. ■



## Summertime is Still Recovery Time by Laurel Baker

Things are heating up at Aurora Services! There is no slowing down for the summer, because mental health recovery takes no vacations. The good news is that it's not always work and no play! This is a great time to get outdoors and let nature do some of the work; in fact, research demonstrates that walking outside reduces depression, promotes mindfulness, and exposes the body to valuable Vitamin D! Participants at Aurora are encouraged to increase their time in nature after a full day of groups, enhancing learning with action! May 23<sup>rd</sup> marked the 5<sup>th</sup> annual NAMI Wellness Walk and Ice Cream Social, which took place in Beaver. Aurora had partnered with other members of the system of care to make this event creative and fun, and several of the participants donated their time and talents to provide artwork and activities.

Additionally, Aurora is honored to be hosting the Pennsylvania chapter of Psychiatric Rehabilitation this summer to hold a documentation training for practitioners, giving folks from other areas of the state an opportunity to see our space and quaint little town. For several months now, Aurora has been providing a welcoming space for the Change Agent committee, with Lisa Polidora representing our agency. This is a dedicated group of representatives from Beaver County who evaluate existing services and opportunities to determine where improvements are needed, designed to ensure the availability of the best possible resources.

Finally, everyone at Aurora is excited to be holding the recovery-themed art show here in September – big plans are in the works! Stay tuned for more information on this amazing event that features individuals who use their talents as a healing tool. Aurora is striving to contribute to our community's wellness in any way possible (but a little ice cream never hurts). ■



## Spotlight On: Nicole Grimes *by Kelly Newhouse*

BCRC welcomes Nicole Grimes to our job coaching staff, which is at the forefront of our vocational and community participation programs.

Nicole has 16 years of experience in the helping profession. She brings much knowledge and energy to BCRC. In the past, she has worked as a program aide, program instructor, and residential house manager.

Currently, Nicole is working as a one-to-one job coach. Her positive, patient, and caring approach shines through as she assists a consumer with their daily work or while interacting with them as they develop unique skills and strengths. Her personal goal is to learn all aspects of the job coaching position and be an asset to both her co-workers and the clients.

In her spare time, Nicole is a busy mom to Nathan, age 12 and Megan, age nine. She says her children are very active, and likes supporting their activities. When time allows, Nicole enjoys reading, kayaking, and being with family.

We are happy to add Nicole's knowledge and energy to BCRC's talented staff of job coaches. ■



## Joe Loves Community Work

*by Jessica Rusak*

Some say success comes from what you do consistently, and Joe Poling is a prime example of this. Joe has been working toward gaining independence and competitive employment since he began the prevocational program in June of 2015.

According to Program Specialist Kelly Newhouse, "Joe's work quality is very good, and he is a valued team member and reliable worker." He is very willing to try new things, and he does a great job of learning the variety of work tasks required of him. He can successfully complete most of his duties with minimal staff assistance. Joe is continually driven by his accomplishments which are all steps toward independence and community employment.



Joe loves any opportunity to go into the community, but with his work schedule, this became very limited. However, he was able to request and receive an additional day at WIN Services.

Joe's tremendous work ethic and love of being in the community didn't go unnoticed. He was extended the opportunity to clean at the police barracks, a position he gladly accepted. In addition, he has been able to provide coverage to other sites when the need arises. He has done a great job of meeting the standards for cleaning and has developed a great working relationship with each of the officers at the

barracks. Joe officially took over the cleaning responsibilities at the police barracks in January 2018. ■

## Seventeen School Districts Participate in Youth Initiative

*by Mary Jo Sanders*

Student youth ambassadors from 17 different school districts and programs recently joined BCRC's School to Work Program at the Community College of Beaver County to learn about different aspects of mental health awareness.

The 129 attendees listened to several speakers on different subjects. Talks centered on many pertinent topics including school safety, eating disorders and



recovery, relationships and trauma, and human trafficking. The presenters included Dena Allegra, Laurel Baker, and Nicole Ober from Aurora Recovery, Sr. Jeanette Bussen from the Sisters of St. Joseph, and Tonette Whitted, licensed psychotherapist. BCRC's own Susan Smith and Maureen Hawk engaged with the students during a breakout session.

The student youth ambassadors participated in a luncheon where they could enjoy each other's company and

share their thoughts and ideas. Many sponsor organizations throughout Beaver County helped to make the day successful and informative. The future is very bright for these students as they will have the necessary tools and information to share with peers in their school districts. The program is funded through the HELPing BC-Scores grant which is a collaborative grant obtained by the County through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration or SAMHSA. ■

## Look What's On The HORIZON

*by Cindy Kirkpatrick*

In January 2018, BCRC began using a new state-of-the-art information software system called Horizon "ID Solutions."

Horizon has become an integral part of BCRC's daily record keeping for those participating in the WIN Services and Community Participation Services. This software tracks client attendance, activities, time spent on jobs, generates client paychecks and can also bill electronically.

This program software is accessible to program specialists, job coaches and the accounting department. Program specialists use Horizon for their case notes as well as recording medications, support staff and identifying information. Job Entry Note Review (case notes) and Employee Productivity Detail History (contract jobs/attendance/pay rate during a specific time frame) are generated from this program.

Horizon is just one of BCRC's continuing efforts to provide quality service for our clients. ■

## “Uncle Frank” and Tony Still Together in Retirement

by Frank Shialabba

Production Manager, Frank Sniezek and Warehouse Assistant, Tony Innocent will bring to a close a working relationship of 26 years when they retire on June 30. Together they have been the stewards of the production center, guiding the flow of work as it is first received and then sent back to area companies.

Frank, employed since 1971, will retire with the longest period of service, 47 years, in BCRC's history. During that time, he has held many positions. In addition to production manager, he has worked as a supervisor/job coach, BCRC's first placement director, assistant workshop director, and workshop director. By far, Frank says that over the years his favorite job “was as workshop supervisor, where I worked directly with clients on many different jobs. I enjoyed the simple things like fixing the tape machine for the clients and just spending time with them. We were never bored and we had a lot of fun working together.”



Along with having fun, Frank appreciates what BCRC has done for him. He says, “BCRC has given more to me than I have given to BCRC. Here I have learned patience, something that I value very much.” His assistant and friend Tony Innocent describes Frank as “the best boss you could ever have.” Tony often refers to his boss as “Uncle Frank.” He says that in his neighborhood the term “uncle” was always used as a sign of respect.

Frank has an equal measure of respect for Tony saying, “I could not have survived the last 26 years without him.” Tony is a

sort of “jack of all trades.” His duties have included driving the bus, material handling, warehouse management, making job fixtures, inventory, ordering and pickup and delivery. In addition, Tony is responsible for vehicle maintenance. He makes sure that each agency vehicle is ready for the road.

Tony came to BCRC from a local mill and wasn't sure if he would fit in at this brand new environment. However, he says, “I

found a home at BCRC. I enjoy the clients, my coworkers and the work and that every day there is always something different.”

As for retirement, Tony is an active gardener, bike rider and handy man.

Over the years, the duo of Frank Sniezek and Tony Innocent have been very much a part of the fabric of BCRC. We wish them all the best in their retirement. ■



## Alyssa gets “Golden Ticket” to World of Delights

by Frank Shialabba

Alyssa Radatovich dreamed of getting a “golden ticket” that would let her enter a realm rivaling Willie Wonka's Chocolate Factory. This was a world of butter cream frosting, almond tortes and multi-colored jimmies. She could practically smell and taste the many delights that awaited her if she received her “golden ticket”.

Hank Kretchmar, Beaver's version of Willie Wonka, granted Alyssa's wish two years ago when he hired her at Kretchmar's Bakery in Beaver. Now, Alyssa can actually smell and taste the many delights that greet her each day as she works as a baker's assistant. She has entered a world of freshly baked goodies that please both the eye and the palate. Alyssa is the craft person who decorates cupcakes, distributing jimmies evenly in a dazzling display of color. She wears her uniform proudly while performing the many tasks that make the baker's job easier. She often decorates cakes that she purchases for family and friends.

WIN Services Director Sheila Silbaugh describes Alyssa as an incredibly motivated person in both her work and personal life. She says, “Alyssa is very conscientious and kind to others. They love her at Kretchmar's where she has become a part of the team. Kretchmar's also requested that we withdraw our job coach as they felt that they could train Alyssa themselves.”

Alyssa has a positive outlook on life and constantly works at self-improvement. According to WIN's Joni Kichta, “Alyssa has an eye for fashion and loves to exercise.”

While Alyssa may have received her “golden ticket,” she has also given many golden moments to everyone who knows her. ■



**Beauty and color greets employees and guests at the entrance to BCRC. Thank you to the School to Work gardening group**



**and their Job Coach, Kim Hildman, for all their hard work.**

**Paulette Miller**  
*Executive Director*

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## BCRC Staff and Clients Speak Out About Community Participation

*by Sabine Kane*

According to some BCRC staff and clients, the new Community Participation program has been fun and rewarding with new experiences around every corner. Magic Sentz, Transition Coordinator, arranges the community participation schedule, client groupings, job coaches and transportation. According to Magic, everybody loves going out, either for half day or a full day.

Holly Schwab enjoys community participation and takes an exercise class for an hour every Tuesday at a local church. Holly says she loves going and getting a workout. She doesn't even mind getting sore because she is getting very fit. She also enjoys the comradery at her "all ladies" exercise group.

Finally, Aaron Harris spends his time at the Human Society Thrift Store in Beaver Falls twice a week. He enjoys hanging clothes on hangers and arranging them. Aaron and his job coach have also stopped at the post office and gone through a drive-through recently; both were great experiences for Aaron.

All in all, community participation is an enriching experience and big hit with all of the clients. ■

### Employee of the Month



**Gary Schlotter**  
*April 2018*



**Lisa Lynn**  
*May 2018*



**Christopher Worthy**  
*June 2018*

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