

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.

## BCRC's New Director is "Mover and Groover"

by Frank Shialabba

BCRC's recently appointed Executive Director, Lesley Hallas, brings "a heart for service" to her new position. She states, "I have a desire to serve people who may be vulnerable or who just need to be given a chance by society."

Ms. Hallas previously served as Director of Children and Youth Services at Beaver Children and Youth. Working with this vulnerable population, she developed the problem-solving skills necessary to handle acute crises on a daily basis. She hopes that those skills, plus her ability to network and inspire others, will provide "new opportunities for growth for BCRC and the clients we serve."

She has lofty goals for BCRC as she wants "to create employment opportunities for BCRC's clients throughout Beaver County and beyond."

She also hopes to create "a culture and environment where employees feel valued." She feels that BCRC's staff and clients are the agency's biggest strengths. While the staff have a "commitment and passion to serve the clients and help them achieve their dreams," Ms. Hallas feels that it is her job to support that passion and sense of purpose. It is also BCRC's job to support the aspirations of its clients, who have talents that are not always recognized. She hopes to empower them and help them gain the recognition they deserve.

The abilities and aspirations of BCRC's clients give no doubt as to the agency's purpose. Ms. Hallas feels that the agency's purpose is embodied by "the positive spirit of the clients that is present in everything we do."

Lesley is a "hands on" administrator and a "mover and groover" who loves to "engage with the clients." She beams when she describes dancing with the clients at the agency's recent safety day.

Ms. Hallas wishes to thank BCRC's staff and clients for their kind and welcome reception and generous support. It is her wish that she can impact everyone at BCRC in way that makes their lives better, and that leads to a promising future for BCRC and everyone we serve.



## A Personal Message from the Director

As the end of 2022 approaches, I find myself humbled and immensely thankful for my first four months serving as the Executive Director for BCRC. Whether it has been collaborating with the board, staff, partners, supporters or clients, I am fortunate to be in the company of such inspirational, compassionate and knowledgeable individuals.

While we face a time in our nation challenged with health, economic and social issues, I am encouraged at the prospects that 2023 will bring to the communities we serve as our political landscape changes and takes shape. My enthusiasm is bolstered by all the life changing work done by our employees and our partners committed to fulfilling the mission of BCRC. With a heavy societal focus on transition aged youth, mental health and suicide prevention, BCRC is positioned to grow as we continue to invest in the training and expansion of our youth and mental health services. We continue to make connections in the business community opening doors for growth in our Records Management Department, as well as job placement opportunities for those we serve. Despite the national threat to the 14c license, BCRC's Production Center has continued to bring in new contract opportunities in 2022, where our clients skill sets have been utilized and strengthened. We have opened our doors to the public for the first time since the onset of the Covid Pandemic, and we are once again welcoming tours, visits, and arranging meetings with political candidates, recognizing the value of in person engagement and the old adage "seeing is believing" in the incredible work of BCRC and its extraordinary clients.

In closing, I am reminded of a quote expressed by one of our clients at the onset of my transition into the Executive Director position, "Just so you know, BCRC rocks".....I couldn't have said it better myself!

## ANNUAL SAFETY DAY

by Mary Jo Sanders

On September 23, 2022 BCRC celebrated our yearly Safety Day with bright and beautiful weather.

The day began with Program Specialist Karen Adamo's client rights instruction followed by an extremely informative presentation about bloodborne pathogens by Mr. Mike Welhorsky of Henderson Brothers, Inc. After a small break we were treated to an entertaining presentation and lively discussion of fire safety by the always informative fan favorite Jack Skrlac.

After a delicious lunch of pepperoni rolls, chips and drinks, the activities moved outdoors. The clients and staff were able to tour a fire truck, MRAP (SWAT) vehicle and an ambulance. There was a drawing and several lucky winners were awarded rides in these vehicles, certainly the highlight of the day!

Other activities included safety themed games, and hands on fire extinguisher training. Nico the therapy dog paid a visit and everyone loved meeting him. As the day wound down ice cream was served and several people won McDonald's gift cards.

Properties Manager Laura Medarac and her team worked diligently to plan and execute the day, which proved to be a tremendous success! We thank them and our community partners, who donated their time!



## BCRC Offers Family-Friendly Environment

By Amy Albanese

Executive Director Lesley Hallas is proud of the dedication and talent of BCRC's team of professionals and invites you to "Be Part of Something". Whether working directly with clients or behind the scenes, every BCRC employee is making a difference in the lives of individuals every day. The work is rewarding as staff assists others in the community while working in an environment filled with variety.

As a Human Resource Specialist, I am always looking for energetic and talented individuals to join BCRC's team. BCRC offers a great work-life balance with family-friendly hours and typical work schedules that run Monday thru Friday. BCRC offers a comprehensive benefit package for staff who qualify, including competitive compensation; health insurance; vision insurance, dental insurance and reimbursement plan; retirement plan; short-term / long-term disability insurance; life and AD&D insurance; paid time off and eleven paid holidays.

BCRC has a variety of job opportunities available including full-time, part-time and temporary employment. Whether someone is interested in starting a career, building upon their present profession or is looking for a job that allows them to work a couple of days a week in their retirement, BCRC is always happy to speak with them.

Explore BCRC's current openings by visiting [www.bcrc.net](http://www.bcrc.net) or contact Human Resource Specialist, Amy Albanese at 724-378-4750 Ext. 1253 to find out more.

## Dustin Grows As Person And Worker

By Frank Shialabba

Dustin Taylor is a considerate and capable young man, who has found success working at a local restaurant. Dustin was placed by WIN Services and has been working as a cook for the last year at a restaurant in Aliquippa.

Being a cook is a demanding job that requires speed and accuracy. Dustin more than meets the demands of the job as he mans the grill and fryers with skill and competency. WIN Services Program Specialist Bruce Bell says that "Dustin is doing really well. He has a good work ethic, and his work record shows no problems. Dustin has excellent attendance, and he is always on time for work."

Bell notes that Dustin has made significant progress in handling difficult and challenging situations. He explains, "Dustin is hard on himself, and he is quick to blame himself even when things are not his fault." He is learning that everything bad that happens is not his fault, and that he is a highly skilled individual, capable of great things.

Bell also marvels at Dustin's kind and considerate nature. "He calls me and always want to make sure that he hasn't disturbed me. He doesn't like to impose."

According to Bell, "Dustin is very capable of handling his own business. He pays his own bills, rides public transportation independently, and will use the phone to make arrangements and inquiries."

Dustin is certainly "handling his business" at work and in his personal life. Bell expresses his pride in Dustin when he states, "He is rewarding to work with, and it is wonderful to see his growth as a person and a worker."

## Missy Is “Mailing Princess”

by Mary Alviani

Thirty-six year-old Melissa “Missy” Kuppinger, has achieved the title “Mailing Princess” due to her expertise in all things mailing- related.

Missy has worked at BCRC for 15 years. During that time she has gained proficiency in mailings, Ardex, document prepping in Records Management, and heat sealing. She takes great pride in her work.



Missy is a joy to work with. Her Program Specialist, Amy McClymonds, reports “Missy is friendly, outgoing, and fun. She has a great lively personality.” Amy also states, “Missy is a hard worker. She shows up every day with a positive attitude, and a smile on her face, ready to get to work.” Missy’s job coaches and coworkers say she is an awesome worker! No matter what job she is assigned to, she does it well. She is hilarious and has a lot of fun with her co-workers. Missy can

be shy at first, but once she gets to know you, she lets her true self shine through.

In her spare time, Missy bowls in a league on Saturday mornings. She enjoys watching movies and playing video games. Missy loves scary movies, especially Chucky.

Missy is an integral member of BCRC's work force; she is proud of her work and her ability to earn a pay check. She has made many good friends with her outgoing nature, and she has contributed greatly with her excellent work skills.

## Zagorski Passes Certified Psych Rehab

**Practitioner Exam** By Deanna McCracken

Ryan Zagorski overcame much adversity to complete the certification for psych rehab practitioner at Aurora services recently.

The pandemic and Covid restrictions created many challenges including shutting down the certification process for a while, the manner in which the test could be taken and the location of test.

The certified psych rehab practitioner exam is a comprehensive test that covers the domains of psychiatric rehabilitation, which encompass many areas including interpersonal competencies, community integration, assessments and strategies for facilitating and supporting health and wellness for those in recovery.



According to Ryan, his hands-on experience with Aurora’s participants, as well as the support he received from Aurora’s staff helped him tremendously to prepare for the

challenging three-hour long examination.

Ryan began his career with BCRC in 2016 as a part time transition specialist with the School to Work Program, and later became a full time mental health program specialist working with both the workcenter population and Aurora’s mental health recovery participants. In 2019 Ryan became a full time employee at Aurora and began studying for the exam to transition from psych rehab worker to full time certified psych rehab specialist.

Our thanks to Ryan for being a great role model, who worked hard to achieve his goal.

SUE MIDDLEMAN &  
PAM CRAWFORD

In the  
**Spotlight**



## In the Spotlight: Dedicated Job Coaches

**Sue Middleman and Pam Crawford Find Joy at BCRC**  
by Kristina Beal

“True back bones of the Production Center, watchdogs of the department, unmatched quality management,” this how Mary Ruhnke, Director of Client Services and Barb Shearer, Production Manager describe BCRC Job Coaches Sue Middleman and Pamela Crawford.

As Job Coaches Ms. Middleman and Ms. Crawford provide direct support to BCRC's clients on a daily basis. They are two of the “unsung heroes” who make up BCRC's direct support staff.

Middleman has job coached at BCRC for 22 years. Previously, she was an office manager, waitress, and stay-at-home mother, and had hesitated for two years to accept the offer to work at BCRC. Over the years, Middleman has learned to “find joy in the small things.” She shared that she loves the clients’ excitement when they get to learn a new job, when a mailing comes in, or are looking forward to a special event. She has learned that BCRC offers clients “a community” to find and socialize with friends, to find purpose, and to earn a pay check. In her free time, she loves going on beach vacations with her family, reading, walking, spending time with her friends, and maintaining her household.

Crawford has worked at BCRC for 14 years. She was initially hired in Records Management because of her experience working for a Real Estate attorney. She eventually transitioned into job coaching. Crawford shared that her favorite part about working at BCRC is “helping the clients learn new jobs and seeing their success as they learn.” She believes the clients are “special.” Outside of work, she enjoys swimming, walking on the beach, and taking care of her family.

Ruhnke, stated “their knowledge, work ethic, and energy far surpass most others. Sue and Pam have weathered many changes from personnel to contracts and vendors, but have always embraced opportunities to learn and teach our clients new vocational skills. Their passion and belief in our clients has never waned. This has allowed us to celebrate their successes, and experience the daily joy of watching each client work to their fullest potential. They are very committed to BCRC, it’s vision and our service to others. Sue and Pam, we are so fortunate and proud to know you and have you as a part of our team!”

**Executive Director**

Lesley Hallas

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**BCRC Celebrates Disability Awareness**

By Ian Thomas

BCRC celebrates October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month as a way of recognizing the abilities and contributions of the people with disabilities that we serve. In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor “celebrates the contributions of America’s workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices.”

Clients from WIN, in particular, benefit from supportive employment practices and work accommodations in supported work environments. BCRC works with numerous exemplary employers across the Beaver County area, and many of these relationships have been ongoing for over a decade. This is remarkable when considering that each client who participates in the supported work program has an individual set of needs.

There are a multitude of considerations and exceptions that participating employers can use to accommodate workers with disabilities. First and foremost, clients are afforded the opportunity to work with the assistance of a job coach. Having a job coach nearby allows clients to feel supported in the work environment. Another helpful accommodation enjoyed by clients is the ability to share a position with another individual (carved position). Participating employers also provide physical supports for clients with disabilities.

The whole community benefits when workers with disabilities are afforded the support they need to perform a job. The work force becomes more diverse, which increases cultural awareness and allows participating employers to demonstrate their commitment to the community. For clients of BCRC, it offers the experience and confidence necessary for them to move on to more independent employment. “I think one of the most important or impressive factors about individuals with disabilities in the workforce is their perseverance and determination to obtain and maintain employment despite the barriers that try to stand in their way,” Manager of WIN Services Jonni Kichta says.

**Employee of the Month**

**Eric Robson**  
*Sept 2022*



**Kalyn Roofner**  
*Oct 2022*



**Ed Gomolek**  
*Nov 2022*

