

BCRC Offers Benefits Counseling

by Frank Shialabba

As of February 2023, Kristina Beal and Madeline McGee of BCRC are credentialed benefits counselors. Ms. Beal is currently providing benefits planning and Ms. McGee will do so in the near future.

As benefits counselors, Kristina and Madeline will provide information to participants regarding the effect that working may have on their benefits.

According to Ms. Beal, "Beaver County residents interested in understanding how working may affect their benefits can receive benefits counseling at BCRC. We can provide information regarding how working can affect a variety of benefits and their corresponding work incentives. This includes Social Security, veteran's benefits, unemployment, worker's compensation, Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, ID/A waiver, housing-EID (Earned Income Disregard), FSS (family self-sufficiency plan) ABLE accounts, PASS accounts, EITC (Earned Income Tax Credits) and more."

Funding for benefits counseling may be available through waiver and base funding for individuals with intellectual disabilities and through base funding for individuals with a mental health diagnosis, or through a private pay option. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) may also provide funding (pending approval).

Ms. Beal believes that "all people with a disability must be encouraged and supported to pursue their goals", which may include working in competitive employment.

Beaver County residents interested in benefits counseling can call BCRC or email Kristina at kbeal@bcrc.net.



Board President Continues Life of Service

By Frank Shialabba

BCRC's current Board President, Joe Martonik, is a man of compassion and commitment who delights in seeing the progress and comradery of our participants.

Martonik taught for 35 years in the Moon Area School District; he was the winner of numerous teaching awards, and he developed many outstanding athletes while coaching track and field and basketball. Joe stressed character, sportsmanship and loyalty during his distinguished career. He brings those same qualities to BCRC in his current position as board president.

Joe had a love for teaching and the students he taught during his illustrious career. He has that same love for BCRC and our participants. He states, "All you have to do is attend the Christmas party and see how the individuals support one another. They are as happy when one of

their friends wins an award as they would be if they won themselves. Seeing this positive spirit and caring for each other is very gratifying."

It is also gratifying to see the deep respect that Joe has for BCRC's mission and its history of supporting people with disabilities for more than 50 years. As president, he hopes to "spread the word" about BCRC's wonderful programs and staff. He wants BCRC to be visible in the community as a place where people with disabilities can grow and contribute to society. He feels that it is very satisfying to see all of the individuals who have entered the world of work through BCRC's tutelage. He states, "BCRC's participants don't want to be defined by their disabilities; they want to be defined by their work ethic."

Joe's work ethic is unmatched. Although he retired in 2010, he continues to serve the Moon School District as head of the Student Assistance Program, providing mentors for needy and at-risk students.

As former "Educator of the Year" and Department of Education honoree, Joe has excelled at whatever he has done. However, his greatest achievement has been his willingness to give of himself through a life of service to others.



Thomas Koehler is BCRC's "World Champion"

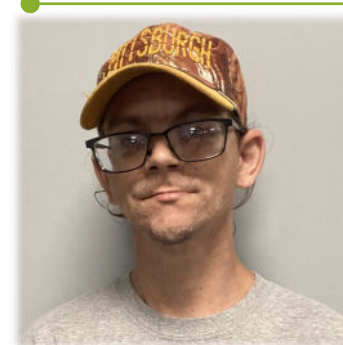
By Adam Loverich

According to BCRC Job Coach Coordinator Rich Edder, Thomas Koehler is one of the most helpful, well-rounded, and kind individuals that BCRC serves.

Edder states, "Thomas dives into tasks and always has a positive view of the jobs he performs." He works on general labor tasks, where he replenishes product for his peers, counts product, and acts as a second set of hands for job coaches. He is growing vocationally each and every day and is learning how to use the skid loader. Thomas excels at keeping track of the count for many jobs. He is a hard worker who knows many BCRC jobs and takes pride in his work. According to Edder, "Thomas follows instructions exactly."

In addition to being a great worker, Thomas is helpful to everyone and that includes the BCRC receptionist. He relays information to her each morning regarding who rode and did not ride the DART bus with him. This gives her a "heads up" as to who may be attending services.

When he's not working hard or helping others, Thomas follows wrestling. Along with his ever-present smile, he is often seen carrying his WWE Championship belt to and from services. We only wish we had a championship belt to give Thomas as he is BCRC's "world champion."



Jimmy Has "10 Out of 10 Life"

By Frank Shialabba

According to Jimmy Kinney of Industry, "Life is now a ten out of ten since I got my job." Jimmy is talking about his new job at a Beaver restaurant, where he has worked since February of 2023.

Jimmy is thriving at this new job because he has learned many new skills and improved greatly

as a worker. According to WIN Services Program Specialist Madeline McGee, "Jimmy has learned time management skills, and he's learned to separate time for work and time for other things in his life." Jimmy feels that he has achieved a "sense of balance", which has allowed him to have success at his job.

Jimmy's employer says that he is "extremely helpful and a fast learner who rarely calls off". Jimmy says that his coworkers are "nice and friendly" and his job is great.

According to Ms. McGee, "Jimmy really excels in his interaction with others. He has developed friends and work supports through his friendliness and positive attitude." Jimmy is generous with his knowledge and skill, and he is helping another person who is new on the job.

Jimmy is also generous with other people in his life. He says that "I am happy that I can buy presents for my friends and family."

He is also able to pay some of his bills and engage in hobbies like hunting, fishing and video games. Jimmy is truly enjoying his "ten out of ten life" and his new found success.



Students Gain Valuable Experience Through My Work Initiative

by Ian Thomas

For the third year, high school students gained community work experience through the My Work Initiative, coordinated by the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). By working in municipalities and with non-profit organizations, students help their community directly and see the results.

BCRC provides job coaches to guide the students at each site. This summer students learned tasks like cleaning, painting, and helping to maintain property.

The My Work Initiative benefits students by giving them valuable work experience, and helps them to move on to more traditional employment. "The goal is to help the students learn soft and hard skills that will prepare them for working in a competitive work environment beyond high school", says Coordinator of Employment Services Julianna Tisak. "Also, allowing the students to better their communities is special in and of itself."

Ms. Tisak and Program Specialist Mary Alviani coordinate with work sites and participating students to develop the experiences. WIN staff supervise the work sites, with additional assistance from School to Work staff. Participating in such close partnership with OVR strengthens our relationship and provides OVR with a view of the talent and knowledge possessed by BCRC staff and clients.



September 29th—
National Coffee Day
Today, raise your coffee mug
and toast to the roasted beans
that keep us going!



College Students Bring Energy to BCRC's Workforce

By Mary Jo Sanders

Each summer college students bring new energy to BCRC's work force as temporary employees.

This year BCRC welcomed twelve students to summer employment.

The Production Center welcomed five students, WIN services had four, School To Work added two (to help with the Extended School Year (ESY) program), and Records Management had one.

Executive Director Lesley Hallas believes, "Our summer students are invaluable. They bring fresh energy to the work environment, which is beneficial to both participants and staff. Full time employees have time to engage in trainings and our participants have more opportunities to go into the community. The students' innovative thoughts and work ethic are also greatly appreciated. BCRC is lucky to have them; their presence will be sorely missed when they return to college."

The arrangement is also beneficial to the students as they get invaluable hands-on experience and knowledge of the inner workings of departments within BCRC. They are also able to earn money for their future college expenses.

Our participants and staff of BCRC would like to extend our sincere thanks to all these summer students, and we wish them well in all their future endeavors!



In the Spotlight

DEBORAH PROVENCHER

By Kristina Beal



Previously a baker and homeschooling mom, Deborah Provencher used to drive through New Brighton and wonder what "BCRC" meant. In 2016, she experienced BCRC for herself when she was hired to work as an Employment Specialist with WIN Services.

Initially, Deborah served both youth and adults in community and employment environments. Deborah admitted that she was "out of her element" and extended her gratitude to the "very gracious" BCRC staff. They were a great help as she learned about BCRC and gained technical skills. Deborah was able to experience the community through the eyes of her participants and learned to "recapture enthusiasm and delight" in the little things.

Deborah now works in the Records Management Center, where she provides job coaching for 4-6 participants each day and oversees documents that need scanned, indexed or prepped for scanning. She said she "loves being alongside the participants" as they succeed at learning both their jobs and transferrable skills like confidence, conversation skills, and motivation.

In her spare time, Deborah enjoys gardening, baking, and spending time with her husband, adult children, and grandchildren. Her favorite flowers are lupines and lavender.

did you know?

There are four towns in the United States named "Turkey". They can be found in Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, and North Carolina.



**Happy Thanksgiving
Thursday November 23rd!**



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Participants Prepare Food for Homeless Shelter

By Mary Alviani

BCRC participants continue a tradition of contributing to our community through an exciting new partnership with Cornerstone of Beaver Men's Emergency Shelter. In July 2023, individuals from the Production Center and WIN Services began preparing daily lunches for residents of the shelter.

Cornerstone receives donations of food from local grocery stores, and BCRC is given a weekly menu to fulfill. Krista Peace, from WIN, is the site liaison tasked with fulfilling this menu. It is her responsibility to establish a work routine and get people in place at the work site. Krista reports, "The transition to the enclave has been going well and the participants are really enjoying their job duties."

All indicators point to a successful venture. Cornerstone's site supervisor expresses her satisfaction with the new partnership and with BCRC participants. She states, "We appreciate what you have been doing for us. They [the participants] are doing such a wonderful job!"

As the shelter continues to gain more residents, BCRC participants look forward to expanding their skills and responsibilities, and continuing to "do a good job." As always, they embrace the opportunity to help others and contribute to the community.



Jimmy Segal and Kayla Edgington

Listen! The wind is rising, and the air is wild with leaves, we have had our summer evenings, now for October eves!

Don and Ricky Rock Golf Outing

By Frank Shialabba

On July 29, BCRC participants Darrick Cockfield and Don Midon celebrated their twenty third year volunteering at the John A. Antoline Memorial Golf Outing. Annually, Ricky and Don lend their efforts and enthusiasm to this effort to raise money for ten charities in Beaver County. According to event organizer John P. Antoline, the outing has raised more than \$600,000 for charity since its inception.

The Antoline's hold the golf outing to pay tribute to family patriarch John A. Antoline, who passed away in 1997. They are dedicated to perpetuating former County Commissioner Antoline's tradition of philanthropism. Every year, BCRC's Christmas party is supported by a grant from this foundation.



Darrick "Ricky" Cockfield, Helen Antoline, and Don Midon

Don and Ricky look forward to spending time with the many golfers who annually show up to support the event's good work. They help family matriarch Helen Antoline and myself at the concession stand as the golfers stop for fresh grilled hot dogs, drinks and snacks. According to event organizer Antoline, golfers are booked for the event months in advance. Many of the same individuals come back every year. Don and Ricky eagerly returned to the event this year after a few years absence due to the pandemic. Don says, "I like talking to the golfers and making sure they get their hot dogs." Ricky says, "My father always told me to help other people and to show love to everybody."

Faithfully, year after year, Don and Ricky show their love and appreciation for the wonderful work done by all those involved with the John A. Antoline Foundation.

Chris Riesmeyer
Jun 2023



Employee of the Month

Donnie Midon
Jul 2023



Ricky Cockfield
Aug 2023



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