The Competitive Edge

BCRC
BE PART OF SOMETHING

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Safety Assessment and Active Shooter Training Completed

by Jessica Rusak

After nearly nine months of planning with local law enforcement, BCRC completed a full-scale building vulnerability assessment and active shooter training on December 12, 2019.

The most effective violence prevention plan in the workplace is one that is in place long before trouble occurs. Employees need to understand what to do in an emergency and what our agency's response will be.

To prepare for the training, BCRC conducted four planning meetings with local emergency responders and Beaver County Emergency Services personnel. During the in-service training, staff had the opportunity to take part in five instructional breakout sessions that introduced best practices in emergency preparedness and response.

Staff were then able to participate in two active shooter exercises. These scenarios provided the opportunity to apply the information introduced in the breakout sessions. This drill allowed staff and emergency responders to learn and practice BCRC's Emergency Response Plan in real time.

Knowing how to react is a key component of this training: getting away from the danger, finding a hiding place, or self-defense as a last resort. (Run, Hide, Fight). This interactive scenario allowed staff to recognize the importance of workplace violence prevention.

Staff successfully applied the training and local responders increased their knowledge of our building, enhancing their ability to assist our agency in the event of an emergency. We will continue to work together to maintain a safe workplace.■

BCRC Clients Empowered Through Work First Climate and Self Advocacy

by Mary Jo Sanders

Thanks to BCRC's work first climate in the Production Center at Centerplace, BCRC clients are enjoying renewed excitement and interest in being productive. They are learning and working on new jobs, and reaping the benefits with gained knowledge and the pride that comes with earning a higher wage.

The Production Center staff, led by Production Manager Barb Shearer and Director of Client Services Mary Ruhnke, are working diligently to empower individual workers and maximize their production time. This means that the coaches plan ahead to ensure supplies are provided and ready, and the work area is prepped. The clients have been more aware of their productivity, and love to track and announce their progress.

The work first climate promotes our clients to become more vocal and ask to try new or different jobs. The program specialists have been working to obtain funding for one-on-one training; allowing for extremely focused and individualized time to teach a new task. This ensures that the worker has the knowledge and tools needed for future success. The job coaches are very open and willing to work with the clients and teach them these valuable skills.

BCRC has procured some exciting new jobs working for local companies. Clients have an opportunity to place labels on cement bags, and to prepare pieces for the aeronautic industry. They work on cleaning and deburring plastic pieces used for airplanes. Some clients come in early or stay to complete their projects. Productivity and positivity are at an all-time high, and this could open the door for more companies to entrust their work to us.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The future depends on what you do today."■

Spotlight On: Suzanne Hardman

by Kelly Newhouse

Job coaches make sure BCRC participants have the most fulfilling experience possible. Suzanne "Suzy" Hardman is a very dedicated job coach, who comes to us from the banking industry where she worked as a teller manager. She was a natural fit for this position, given her good-natured personality and commitment to giving our clients the support they need.

Suzy began working at BCRC in October 2017. She works closely with a client who responds very well and flourishes under her care. She has a way of engaging this young man in a lighthearted, but very effective way. This makes his day not only fun and pleasant, but also very productive.

Suzy stated that her favorite part of her job is seeing the clients grow and being a part of that growth. In addition, getting to know each person individually has been a great pleasure. She realizes the need for a team approach and hopes, with continued support, our clients will grow in their work and community experiences.

In addition to her job coaching duties, Suzy is a new mom. She and her husband, Tom, just welcomed their baby girl Kingsley. Suzy glows when she says, "She is the light of our lives and every day she brings a smile to our faces." Kingsley has a beautiful home on their 76 acre farm. Her current playmates are four horses and two dogs. Suzy also does barrel racing. This wonderful country life also provides a great swimming and fishing spot on their two acre lake in the summer months. To put it in Suzy's words, "There is never a dull moment."■

Two Hundred and Seventy-five Attend Youth Ambassador Event

by Ian Thomas

On January, 275 attendees convened at CCBC for one of the best-attended Beaver County Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) events since its inception in 2016. BCRC, along with on-going support from Beaver County Behavioral Health, worked with multiple partners from the Beaver County System of Care, in order to hold the 11th YAP event. YAP is a youth-centered, youth-driven program operating in Beaver County schools that promotes awareness of current issues that youth face today. Its focus is on mental health awareness. The goals of the program are to increase awareness of mental health and wellness, to decrease stigma, to promote leadership and self-advocacy among youth, and to build relationships with other youth in their districts and across the county.

This event was sponsored by the Women's Center of Beaver County as part of a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Community Violence Prevention/ Reduction. Attendees interacted with event sponsors and service vendors to gain awareness about dating violence and sexual assault. They participated in interactive presentations and role-playing dating scenarios. Participants also engaged in a discussion around Bystander Awareness, a preventive measure against dating violence. This culminated with the students formulating their own action plans that can be executed in their schools.

Funding is further available through the grant for the Women's Center and BCRC to continue working with multiple schools in the county to address this important topic initially identified as an area of concern by the youth ambassadors.

Any interested youth in Beaver County who is in 7th through 12th grade can participate by contacting their district representatives. Youth ambassadors not only take part in countywide events, but also have opportunities to attend local and national conferences and advocate for mental health issues across the state. Above all, youth ambassadors act as change agents by taking a proactive approach to issues surrounding youth and mental health.

Youth planning sessions are currently being held for the next YAP event that will be held on Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at the CCBC dome. If you are interested, you can learn more at www.bc-systemofcare.org or follow YAP on twitter and instagram @bcyaprogram.■

Don't Wait For Road To Open!

by Jessie L. Dvorzak

"Road closed!" the sign says as I recalculate an unfamiliar route. Recovery sometimes feels like a "road closed" that is unexpected.

Most people are uncomfortable with change, whether it's the way we do things, our actions or beliefs. When recovering from mental illness, a person is usually facing choices that don't seem great, or worse, having those choices made for them! Maybe insurance coverage for their mental health provider, who was on the accepted list the previous year, is a now a closed road. In navigating mental health issues, one chooses between keeping an unhealthy, unhappy status quo, or a hard, steep path through bumpy obstacles. Other roads, like changing thoughts or medication or starting an exercise program, have unfamiliar potholes. Many would rather sit and wait for the road to clear or simply turn around and go home.

My name is Jessie and I work at Aurora as a peer support specialist. I tend to communicate my ideas with comparisons and figures of speech, helping people who have never experienced anxiety or depression gain new perspectives. Using language and creativity as tools for empathy and reducing stigma opens conversation kind of like connecting a new utility pole in the neighborhood. Together we can listen, share road maps and detours, and help each other to understand that support is available and none of us is on our own.■

Christina Lets Her Light Shine

by Suzanne Hardman

Christina Divil plays an important role in the BCRC workshop. She is known for her dedication to the CenterPlace janitorial crew, her welcoming attitude to those around her, and her openness to trying new contract jobs. There is not a day that passes when she is in the workshop that you will find Christina "taking it easy." When she walks in the door, she is asking what her job will be for the day.

Christina has been attending BCRC since 2000 when she was in the School to Work program. Since then, Christina has tried various jobs and has succeeded at them. She even used to work at a local business doing documentation preparation. When speaking to her program specialist, Karen Adamo, she says that Christina loves to be challenged by new things, whether it be jobs or working with a new job coach. Her attendance, which she once struggled with, is no longer an issue. She only misses the program when she is attending an appointment or spending a vacation day with her family.▸

Two days a week, Christina spends her time out in the community where she volunteers at the near by thrift store. According to job coach Amy McClymonds, Christina enjoys hanging the donated shirts that are then put out on the floor for purchase. She keeps her focus while she is working and has also gotten to know the employees of the store. She enjoys talking with them each week. After she completes her work, Christina likes to browse the books for sale at the store. Christina is also an avid walker. She enjoys going to the Beaver Valley Mall and Brady's Run indoor track to walk and in the summer enjoys going to different parks to walk in the outdoors. Christina is proud of her walking and loves to share her accomplishments with others!

Christina delivers newspapers throughout the building.

Whether Christina is "training" those working with her on a job or she herself is being trained on a new job, Christina puts everything she has into it. When asked what she enjoys most about BCRC, Christina states, "I like labeling, seeing my friends, and delivering the newspaper to my friend Paulette!" Great work Christina!■

ID Badges Will Recognize Years of Service and Reduce Data Entry

by Frank Shialabba

The addition of new client ID badges will continue BCRC's impetus to modernize safety and record keeping. While some clients have received badges as recognition of their years of service, other clients are eagerly awaiting their new ID's.

According to Building Manager Laura Medarac, "The badges will be used as identification inside BCRC's facilities. The badges will contain barcodes and Business Manager Michael Gaguzis states, "the barcode system is being designed to save resources across the board. There will be minimal data entry necessary, and it will capture the client's start and stop times, their job, and the type of contract (including service ratio)." According to Gaguzis, in addition to reducing data entry, less time will need to be spent double checking records. In addition to being more efficient, the new system will enable the accounting department to speed up the billing process.

BCRC clients are looking forward to using their new badges, which will proudly display their years of service. BCRC staff are looking forward to less data entry and more one-on-one time with the clients.■

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www.bcrc.net

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.

United Way

SHOP TALK

by Cindy Kirkpatrick

❋ BCRC has decided to make the change to all LED lighting at all of our facilities. The most notable change happened when the workshop lights were updated to LED at the CenterPlace location. This greatly improved the visibility in the shop, aiding workers preforming detailed contract assignments. BCRC will be eligible for rebates through the lighting company program once the changeover is completed.

❋ CenterPlace will be getting a new roof! BCRC was able to secure grant monies to pay for the bulk of the cost. Umbrella Roofing will begin the installation this spring/summer. The install will help improve conditions that currently exist in our upper mezzanine and workshop areas.

❋ On Monday, February 27th, PA State Representative Josh Kail visited CenterPlace and toured the facility. After his tour, Representative Kail met with the management team and expressed his amazement at the variety of opportunities that we provide to our workers. He had the opportunity to speak with many individuals and noticed the great involvement the staff has with the clients. Paulette Miller, the Executive Director, stated that she would match our staff up to any in the state! She shared her concerns with the federal government's movement to end the 14c licensing, which allows piece rate payment while individuals learn work skills and work habits for successful community employment. We would like to thank Representative Kail for his time and interest in our vocational program.■

Employee of the Month

Roger McClain
January 2020

Thomas Koehler
February 2020

Raymond Szparaga
March 2020

BCRC is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.