



Sheila Sets Gold Standard in Care

by Frank Shialabba

Sheila Silbaugh, the distinguished director of WIN Services, retired recently after 21 years with the Beaver County Rehabilitation Center. She leaves an enduring legacy, and her contributions to BCRC's clients are immeasurable.

Sheila was hired in September 1999 as a program specialist in the Supported Employment department. In addition to her work as program specialist, she helped to provide job coaching to individuals who were placed in competitive employment. Soon after her employment, Sheila began providing habilitation services because she was attempting to meet the needs of one individual that she served. In this case, necessity was the mother of invention, and she became a pioneer of habilitation services in Beaver County.

Sheila began to lay the foundation for other individuals to have the opportunity to receive habilitation services. Over the next few years, more staff were hired to provide employment and habilitation services due to increased referrals from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation for employment services and Beaver County Behavioral Health for the ever-expanding need for habilitation. Between 2005 and 2006, employment and habilitation services were moved to the Aurora building in Beaver. Sheila was named director of WIN Services in 2013.

It was obvious from the beginning that Sheila would be a different kind of administrator. In addition to her administrative



duties, she took a personal and active interest in the welfare and development of each individual served by WIN. Ever hands on, Sheila attended each Individual Service Plan meeting and displayed a thorough knowledge of the progress and needs of each person. This dedication often required Sheila to work 12-hour days to meet the many demands of her job. She “did it her way” and “her way” meant total dedication and self-sacrifice. If you were visiting Sheila, you could expect individuals with disabilities to pop in to say hello. These individuals always received a warm and welcoming response from Sheila, regardless of how busy she might be.

As of her retirement, WIN Services was providing community habilitation services to 115 individuals each week, and 40 clients were receiving employment supports. Sheila feels that “I am proudest that I had the opportunity to provide service and support to so many wonderful individuals. The clients always had something to teach me and the staff humbled me as they enabled miracles to occur with our clients. I grew as a person because of BCRC and will always be grateful for the opportunities provided to me. I will greatly miss the individuals I spent time with each day.” Sheila's advice to others is to “treasure each moment that is spent with our clients as an opportunity for growth, development and positivity. Embrace change as it always provides opportunity for growth.”■



Aurora Reaches Out During Pandemic

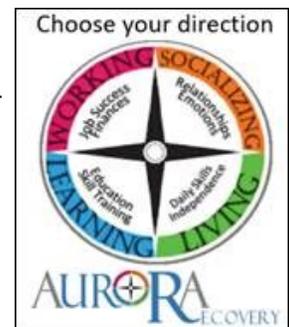
by Jessie Dvorzak

Aurora Services got creative during the statewide coronavirus shutdown by using technology to connect with individuals. Maintaining contact with individuals to provide help and support was a priority.

Disconnected from in-person services – and from one another – practitioners initially contacted individuals one-on-one via telephone. Individuals were also able to receive valuable information through the mail. However, through advancements with technology, staff were able to quickly implement Zoom's secure, convenient video conferencing, which allowed practitioners and individuals to resume group services. A survey was conducted with individuals who participated in Zoom and it revealed that individuals were happy that they could continue working on recovery oriented goals. They also reported that they were happy to reconnect as a group.

Staff were able to provide support remotely and via telephone in order to trouble shoot technological difficulties. The Peer Support program was also able to utilize the services so that there was never an interruption in programming. BCRC worked collaboratively with Beaver County Behavioral Health in order to help individuals access needed resources to continue to provide quality services.

Aurora was able to resume site based groups effective June 15th and welcomed back participants who were ready to come back to the facility. Telehealth services continue to be an option for those individuals who are not ready to return to site based services. As human beings, we are engineered for in person support. Thankfully, with a positive attitude and technological advancements, individuals could receive the support they wanted during these unprecedented times. ■



In the Spotlight

Annette Yankello

by Kelly Newhouse



Do you have a desire to get out in the community, but don't know where to go? BCRC's Community Activity Specialist Annette Yankello can help.

Annette plans and coordinates community events for the clients, while working at WIN Services. Events can include volunteer experiences and special events that get the clients involved in their local and surrounding communities.

Annette has been with WIN Services for 5½ years. She left for a short time, but missed the clients and happily returned. She enjoys interaction with the clients and the opportunity to watch them grow. Through the activities she plans, clients learn to enhance their abilities and lifestyles. Annette finds unique and varied opportunities that provide memorable experiences. It brings her great pleasure seeing the joy on the clients faces as they return from an event.

Prior to coming to BCRC, Annette worked in catering and children's ministries. She continues to volunteer at her church, working with children. She also volunteers at her children's school by organizing fundraisers and other activities. When not working or volunteering, she enjoys camping and boating with family and friends. She is also a football fan and enjoys scrapbooking.

Annette credits her coworkers for the encouragement, appreciation, and support she receives every day. She hopes that BCRC/WIN Services has a bright future with great clients and staff to share in wonderful and growth-promoting opportunities. ■

Cindy's Humor and Sense of Caring Will Be Missed

by Ian Thomas

Program Specialist Cindy Kirkpatrick started her retirement on May 15, 2020, after 27 years of employment at BCRC. Her sense of humor and caring ways will be greatly missed by those who worked with her.

Cindy joined BCRC in 1993 as a readiness instructor. In this capacity, she instructed clients on the subjects of interview skills, job skills, and positive workplace habits.

Cindy quickly demonstrated her ability to achieve positive results with clients. She was soon asked to be a job coach and given a caseload of clients to manage. In 1994, she changed roles and became a vocational evaluator. She stayed in this role until 2008, when she took on the title and responsibilities of program specialist. In this capacity, she facilitated the placement of clients in work roles, helped to construct Individual Support Plans for clients, and addressed the day to day needs of clients.

"I hope I was able to offer caring and support to all with whom I interacted and brightened their day with laughter," Cindy said of her lengthy tenure at BCRC. "I will miss most the great people I worked with throughout the years."

Cindy will be greatly missed by her coworkers, as well. "Cindy had the gift of making others laugh. She was very sympathetic and she always left you smiling or feeling reassured," said Program Specialist Kelly Newhouse. "The program specialist hallway has never been as quiet as it is without her. Her sense of humor is greatly missed! She would jump in and help wherever she could," said Program Specialist Karen Adamo.

In addition to her helpfulness, Cindy's cooking will also be missed by staff. "Cindy is a great cook and we always looked forward to her dishes. I think we all miss her wit and her outlook on life. She had a wealth of information and would give you an answer to any questions you may have and if she didn't know she would quickly find out," said Job Coach Sue Middleman.

Cindy plans to spend her retirement with her four grandchildren. She welcomed her second grandson on July 12. She will also spend time on hobbies. "I want to return to quilting and just do what I want when I want," Cindy said. ■

BCRC Enacts Safety Procedures During Pandemic

by Mary Jo Sanders

BCRC has put many safety procedures into place to combat the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the well-being of our clients and staff members. Laura Medarac, properties and facilities manager, and her team have worked tirelessly writing policies, procuring personal protective equipment, and cleaning and sanitizing our buildings.

The clients and staff are required to have their temperature checked and answer four health questions before they enter the building. Once inside, everyone is required to wear a mask and engage in social distancing to the best of their ability. The janitorial department taped X's in six foot increments on the floors to act as reminders, and all unnecessary movement has been paused. We are extremely fortunate to have such an expansive shop area at CenterPlace, which allows for the clients to have separate and safe work areas. They are able to have their lunch at their seats. The lunchrooms, vending machines and microwaves are temporarily unavailable. Non-essential visitors have been barred from entering the building to limit any potential exposures.

BCRC is also taking precautions when transporting clients in our company vans. We limit the occupancy to aid in distancing and the riders and drivers wear masks. Disinfecting spray is used at the beginning and end of each trip and visits to highly populated public places are as limited as possible.

These unparalleled times have called for herculean efforts to maintain the health and safety of our clients and staff. We strongly encourage hand washing, and hand sanitizer is in great supply. The scope of this extremely important undertaking is huge, but with the hard work of Laura, her team, and our janitorial department, we have been able to welcome our clients and staff back to a safe workplace. Hats off to everyone who has helped to make this happen. We go forward with the knowledge that BCRC will adapt to this new normal while we await better, virus free days ahead! ■



BCRC Makes 500 Masks for County

by Jessica Rusak

In the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic, BCRC staff produced nearly 500 face masks that were sent to numerous county agencies. Sue Leiper, executive assistant, offered to spearhead this project and found that many staff were willing to take part. "Staff were happy to use this time to help," she said.

BCRC partnered with Beaver County Behavioral Health (BCBH) in early April and by mid-April BCRC began picking up donated supplies to prepare and sew masks. BCRC had 10 staffers who worked to create the masks. Some would cut and iron the material, while others would sew the masks.

The masks were created using a 100% cotton material, which was surprisingly difficult to find in the stores. "We got creative and purchased a few cotton sheets," Leiper said.

The mask pattern was adapted from versions found online and each mask took about 10 minutes to sew. Many of the masks have been sent to BCBH and

others have been donated to BCRC staff and clients. Leiper is the only one left currently producing masks and has about 75 – 100 remaining that are cut and ready to be sewn.

"It was a privilege to work with our dedicated staff to do something much needed and meaningful for our community," she said. ■



Rashawn is Employee of The Month and "Master Switch Maker"

by Suzanne Hardman

BCRC employee Rashawn Smith's strong work ethic was rewarded recently, when he was named Employee of the Month for July.

Rashawn has been working at BCRC since March 2019. His recent award is evidence of the great progress he has made. He comes to work four days a week with a positive attitude and ready to work. His attendance record reflects his commitment to his job. He is prompt and ready to go as soon as he enters the door!

Rashawn has many qualities that make him an excellent worker. He is very responsive to direction from staff. He is polite and courteous to all he interacts with, and he is very helpful to his coworkers.

With a strong skill set, Rashawn has excelled on every contract offered to him. Switches seem to be his favorite, and he has adopted the name, "Master Switch Maker" given to him by his program specialist, Sabine Kane. She is often in the workshop giving Rashawn a good hearted challenge to complete more switches than he did the day before. Currently, he is averaging over 275 switches a day and he is constantly striving to do more while maintaining a high standard of quality.

When he is not at work, Rashawn enjoys relaxing at home. He is looking forward to a trip to see family in the near future, as well. Through hard work, structure, and determination, Rashawn continues to show great success. ■

K-9 Officers Conduct Successful Training at CenterPlace

by Sarah Hazel

On July 16th, local K-9 officers utilized BCRC's CenterPlace building to conduct a very successful K-9 training on narcotic detection.

The large size of the facility was strategically used to set up training scenarios throughout the building. Officers started by hiding narcotics inside the building and had the K-9's use their sense of smell to detect where they were placed. The training was advanced by several officers or other human decoys hiding in various locations within the building for the K-9's to find and apprehend. These training scenarios are used in real life situations such as narcotic searches in vehicles, residences, and hotels. Using scent, K-9's can search 10 times faster and more proficiently than regular officers.



All of the K-9's in the training group came from Shallow Creek K-9. The owner, John Brannon, travels overseas to Holland and Czechoslovakia to select K-9's that meet several criteria he is looking for. He then transports them back to the United States where they begin their training.

Sgt. Jason Cindric of the Center Township Police Department graciously provided the information used in this article. Sgt. Cindric, on behalf of all the K-9's and their handlers, would like to thank BCRC for affording them the use of the facility, and he hopes they will be invited back again. ■



On a hot sunny day in August, Executive Director, Paulette Miller treated the staff and clients to cold, delicious ice cream. Yum!!

Paulette Miller
Executive Director

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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 Director Praises Staff

by Frank Shialabba

Challenging times can be devastating, or they can be a rallying point, which spur people to show their best selves. In the case of BCRC's staff, the latter is true. BCRC Executive Director Paulette Miller beams with pride when she talks about her staff's response to the recent pandemic.

Ms. Miller praises the creativity and resourcefulness of her staff in response to COVID-19. She says, "As director, I was amazed at how fast our staff stepped up. I heard no complaints. I saw dedication, kindness and caring for each other and our clients." When most of BCRC was required to close, the staff quickly changed their routine and concentrated on researching the latest information in an effort to make the best decisions for the agency, the staff and most importantly BCRC's clients.

According to Ms. Miller, "the caring and creativity of the staff stood out during this time. Staff made weekly wellness calls to each of the clients to make sure they had everything they needed to be safe and well." BCRC began offering ways to communicate via social media, Zoom, and phone contacts to offer programming and connection. Games were invented, virtual tours were taken, and van caravans to client homes were organized. Every client received casual correspondence via the US mail to ensure that contact was maintained. Job coaching continued for many in the community, and those furloughed from their jobs received support from staff.

Ms. Miller's emotion is obvious as she expresses her appreciation to her staff. She states, "Our staff deserve a round of applause for a job well done. They have my deepest appreciation and respect. They have shone brightly during this crisis!" ■

Employee of the Month



Rashawn Smith
 July 2020



Donald Midon
 August 2020



Millie Elliott
 September 2020

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