

TRANSITIONS

Black Hills Workshop & Training Center

P.O. Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709

Self-Advocate presents to legislators

Darcy Peterson, a self-advocate from the Black Hills Workshop, traveled to Washington D.C. February 23-26 on behalf of the Ups of Downs Family Support Group, a nonprofit organization representing individuals with Down syndrome in western South Dakota. Accompanying Darcy was Monica Burgess, a board member of Ups of Downs. They were in the capital to take part in the Buddy Walk on Washington, a project of the National Down Syndrome Society which brings together organizations and advocates from across the country to meet policy makers and raise issues of importance to people with Down syndrome and their families.

Darcy met with Senator John Thune, Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, and aids from Senator Tim Johnson's office to provide information and request support for three bills that will impact the lives of people with Down syndrome and others with disabilities. Darcy says she prepared her talk and didn't feel nervous. "I don't know if it made a difference or not, but I feel like I did something right. I think when I went up there, I proved myself to myself." "She did a great job," says Monica. "She was very professional and held her own."

"I'm an advocate now for people with Down syndrome. That is my passion; help people out with Down syndrome," Darcy said prior to her trip. The Washington trip made her feel even more strongly about her role as an advocate. "I don't want to step down. I want to move on and do more."

This was Darcy's first trip to Washington. While there, Darcy and Monica visited many of the Capitol buildings, toured the city on a double-decker bus, rode the subway, heard a choir rehearsal at the National Cathedral and visited the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History. She met with other advocates and self-advocates including actor Chris Burke, the star of the 1980's hit TV show "Life Goes On." Darcy says she had a wonderful time. "I didn't want to go home."

There are more than 400,000 Americans living with Down syndrome and an estimated 1500 living in South Dakota. It is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition. One in every 733 babies is born with Down syndrome. According to the Ups of Downs group, approximately 35 babies with Down syndrome have been born in the Black Hills area in the last decade. People with Down syndrome contribute to society in many ways. We at Black Hills Workshop are very proud of Darcy for her efforts to make life better for those with Down syndrome and other disabilities.



Monica Burgess, Darcy Peterson, and Stephanie Herseth Sandlin.

People First brings actress/comedian to town

In order to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March, People First brought actress and motivational speaker



Gerri Jewell to town for a free performance at the Elks Theatre in Rapid City on March 12.

Jewell, who started her career as a stand-up comedian, is best known as Cousin Geri on the NBC sitcom, "The Facts of Life." She was the first person with a disability to have a regular role in a prime time television series, and she has also appeared in other shows including the HBO hit series "Deadwood."

Her motivational presentation, "Celebrating Abilities," in which she talked about her experiences in the entertainment industry, was inspiring and entertaining to those with and without disabilities. Our thanks to People First, the Elks Theatre, and the South Dakota Council on Development Disabilities for making her appearance possible.

People First, who sponsored the event, has approximately 20 members. Another 80-100 people regularly attend their informational classes on a variety of topics including self-advocacy, employment, owning your own home, and other topics for people with disabilities. For information on the group, contact Keven Moulton at 390-6884 or Michelle Aman at 718-6286.

AmeriCorps NCCC volunteers assist at BHW

Black Hills Workshop welcomed ten AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) volunteers with an open house on March 5. The volunteers will be with us for seven weeks, working throughout the Black Hills Workshop's facility on Range Road to support people in activities.

AmeriCorps is often referred to as "the domestic Peace Corps." Both agencies are committed to service, and both offer challenging and rewarding volunteer opportunities. But while Peace Corps assignments are all overseas, AmeriCorps members serve only in the United States. Black Hills Workshop is the third stint for this particular group's ten-month service. Most recently, they worked with Project Homecoming, a rebuilding organization in New Orleans.

One of the many benefits of the AmeriCorps program is that, because it is administered by the Volunteers of America, all of the screening and matching is done for us. Joe Burmeister who heads up our Health, Fitness & Sport Center is overseeing the volunteers while they're here says, "This is a tremendous opportunity. The volunteers have really shown a lot of initiative and have really started to bond and create friendships with the people we support. They're doing a lot of quality work." Joe says the volunteers have been and will be involved in a good mixture of life enriching activities for people supported as well as more maintenance type projects. They've assisted with fitness activities and sports like basketball, bowling, swimming and walking. And they've assisted in the Elderly Area and Suzie Cappa Art Center with projects and outings. They have also helped on some painting projects, cleaned up the softball field, cleaned the bleachers, and helped reconfigure the art center. "They've been go-getters. They've been doing a wide variety of things," says Joe.

Another AmeriCorps Vista volunteer will be visiting Black Hills Workshop at a later date. That person will assist us in the development of our volunteer program.



AJ Nordbye and NCCC volunteer Meredith Kamis ham it up during a round of bowling at Meadowood Bowling Lanes. Meredith is from Glastonbury, Connecticut.

Check your label!

Send your address changes or corrections to: Sheila Muehlberg, Black Hills Workshop, P.O. Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709. Or e-mail your changes to smuehlberg@bhws.com or call 605-718-6208.

E-newsletter available

To receive this newsletter via e-mail, contact drosby@bhws.com. Your e-mail address will not be shared with other organizations.

Dear friend of Black Hills Workshop,

Over the past year, we involved the people we support more directly than we ever have in our strategic planning efforts. We hosted meetings throughout the agency in order to hear from as many people as possible about the direction they would like the agency to go. These meetings were moderated by leaders from People First, a group of people we support, who are learning to advocate for themselves and training others to do the same.

We learned a great deal from these meetings, much of it that we are incorporating in our strategic planning process. One of the biggest issues brought up in these meetings was that of employment. Assisting people with disabilities to find and maintain employment has always been a big priority to us, and we pride ourselves on being a leader in the area of employment for people with disabilities. But our visits with the people we support show us that there is still much to do. Not only do people want jobs, they want fulfilling jobs. They want more employment choices and better pay.

In order to meet this expectation, we have reorganized to consolidate the majority of our employment services in one department which will be overseen by Larry Meendering, Director of Vocational Services. We have hired Dennis Bishop, Employment Supervisor, to work with local businesses to find new work opportunities both inside and outside of the agency. Kim Kringen and Kathy LaForest will continue as employment specialists assisting people to find work and supporting them and their employers so that placements can be successful.

As we work to create the employment opportunities that people are interested in, we'd like to hear from you. If you know of either potential contracting opportunities or jobs that need filling, please call me at 718-6200 or Larry Meendering at 718-6381. We'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Brad Saathoff

Chief Executive Officer

Open house held for Shad Bebout

An open house was held February 11 for Shad Bebout, Black Hills Workshop's Artist of the Year for 2010. Shad is an active artist at the Black Hills Workshop's Suzie Cappa Art Center and has been since it opened in 2001. He paints, knits, plays piano and has performed in several theatrical productions including Oklahoma and Flutter. He is also a member of the new mixed-ability dance company, Outright Dance Theatre which made its debut on Valentines Day with a performance at Central High School. The Artist of the Year award is sponsored by the Black Hills Workshop Foundation and the recipient is also honored at our annual Suzie's Royal Tea, which this year will be held on April 25 from 2-4 in the art center at the Black Hills Workshop. For ticket information, contact JoAnne Schriver at 718-6204.



Shad Bebout

Open house highlights expansion at Suzie Cappa Center for Art Expression and Enjoyment

Another open house was held on January 28 to show off the recent expansion which doubled the space of the Suzie Cappa art center. Thirteen of the artists who work in the Suzie Cappa Center were able to sell work at the open house, which was attended by more than 130 people.

The new pARTners Volunteer Opportunity was also introduced at the open house. PARTners will match up people who are interested in art with people served by Black Hills Workshop & Training Center who have similar interests. Volunteers might support people with disabilities by creating art together or enjoying art together in the community. For more information about volunteering at the Suzie Cappa Center, contact Brad A. Winter at 343-4581, extension 355.

5th Annual Brain Injury Conference May 13-14

Author of "I am the Central Park Jogger" to present at conference



Trisha Meili's story of trauma and survival captivated the world after she was assaulted while jogging in New York's Central Park in 1989. She had gone for a run in the evening and was found hours later, near death, after being raped and brutally beaten. For years she remained anonymous, known to the world as the Central Park Jogger. Fourteen years after the attack, she told her story of survival and recovery in her best-selling memoir, "I Am the Central Park Jogger: A Story of Hope and Possibility." She has become a much sought after inspirational speaker and joins us to talk about hope and recovery at the 5th Annual Black Hills Brain Injury Conference May 13-14 at the Ramkota Hotel in Rapid City.

The conference, which is cosponsored by Community Transitions and the Mayo Clinic, is geared toward professionals, family members, and survivors of all different types of brain injury. There will be a professional track and a family/survivor track. For more information or a registration form, go to the Community Transitions web site, www.brainrehab.org or call (605) 718-8446 or (605) 343-7297.

Other presenters include: **Anne Moesner, RN, MSN, CRRN**, who is an Assistant Professor in the Mayo Clinic Department of Nursing and Project Coordinator for the TBI Model Systems.

Michael P. Mozzoni, Ph.D./BCBA/CBIST is the Director of Behavioral Services & Training for Lakeview Neuro-Rehabilitation Center in Effingham, New Hampshire. He is a board certified behavior analyst and certified brain injury specialist clinical trainer who has worked with persons with brain injuries since 1985.

Steven Manlove, MD is a psychiatrist in Rapid City, SD and is certified by the American Board of Psychology and Neurology.

Matthew Simmons, MD is a neurologist at Black Hills Neurology in Rapid City, SD.

Christopher Elia, Ph.D. is the Founding Director and Staff Psychologist for Specialized Substance Use/Post Traumatic Stress Outpatient Program at the Fort Meade Veteran's Administration Medical Center.

James Gardiner, Ph.D., ABPN is a Neuropsychologist at Community Transitions in Rapid City and had worked for over 20 years as the primary neuropsychologist at the Fort Meade Veteran's Administration Hospital.

Ron Sasso, MS, NCC, LPC is the Director of Community Transitions, one of the country's oldest community re-entry programs for people with brain injury.

Annette Pearson, MS, LADC, CBIS has 11 years experience working with people with cognitive disabilities and addiction.

Justine Ashokar, MS, NCC, LPC is a licensed professional counselor at Community Transitions in Rapid City.

Leah Jester, BS is a cognitive therapist at Community Transitions and has coordinated the cognitive therapy for people with all types of brain injury.

BLACK HILLS WORKSHOP AND TRAINING CENTER, INC.
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Lions Club holds 48th annual BHW pancake breakfast

Estimates are that approximately 900 people attended the 48th annual Black Hills Workshop Pancake Breakfast sponsored and hosted by the Rushmore Lions Club on February 28. Proceeds will be used to build a sun room off the sensory area at the main facility on Range Road. The people served in the sensory area have severe limitations and the sun room will provide a pleasant and comfortable place for them to spend their time.

Thanks so much to members of the Rushmore Lions Club for their hard work year after year to make this event the success it is.



Lion Chuck Albright mans the grill at the BHW pancake breakfast on February 28.

Transitions is published bimonthly by the Black Hills Workshop Foundation. The Black Hills Workshop Foundation is dedicated to supporting comprehensive, quality services for people with disabilities. The Foundation is committed to ensuring those services now and in the future. Comments and questions are encouraged and may be addressed to Dorothy Rosby, Editor, Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709, or call (605) 343-4550. You can also e-mail drosby@bhws.com. Visit us at our web site at bhws.com.

Thank you to our generous contributors

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BHW receives nutrition grants

Black Hills Workshop recently received two mini-grants from the South Dakota Department of Education to educate the people we support about good nutrition.

The first grant, for \$500, will be used at an upcoming health fair where a booth will expose people to new fruits and vegetables and teach safe food handling techniques. Dietician Elaine Mellegard says she will incorporate videos that show the people how to prepare and serve fruits and vegetables they haven't tried yet, such as avocados or pineapples.

The second grant for \$2000 will be used over an 18-month period to determine if people at Black Hills Workshop who are on modified diets are getting adequate calories and nutrition. Elaine says that the Black Hills Workshop provides 55 meals per day that require some modification in texture, ranging from pureed, to ground, soft, or easy to chew. Elaine will be working with nursing staff and other staff to determine if diets are adequate and train them to assure that they continue to be adequate.

Just like You

Governor M. Michael Rounds has declared March Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in South Dakota. South Dakota's Developmental Disabilities Network and other organizations celebrate DD Awareness Month, and invite you to consider the true meaning of this year's theme, "Just like You – Living, Learning, Working, Playing".

The goal of the month is to raise awareness of the many abilities people have, regardless of disability. And we encourage people to learn more about the people in our community who have developmental disabilities. "Just like You" encourages people to bring diversity to their communities by welcoming people with disabilities into local neighborhoods, workplaces, places of worship, and schools. "This is a time when our organizations' focus on encouraging the public to embrace people with developmental disabilities as members of our communities," said Arlene Poncelet, Executive Director of the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Currently Black Hills Workshop supports more than 600 people with a variety of disabilities in their quest to be a greater part of our community. Rapid City is a welcoming place and we continue to find more and better ways to assist the people we support to be a part of it. Housing and employment are some of the main ways people can be integrated, but there are many other innovative ways to achieve this goal. Heroes & Hardrockers matches people we support with students from the School of Mines and Technology to create new friendships. The new pARTners Program is matching up people interested in the arts with people in the community who have the same interests. We are looking at a similar program for those interested in attending worship services.

People we support have been involved in countless activities in the community including the Vickie Powers Park building project, Relay for Life, and United Way Day of Caring, and we have worked to bring the community to us as well, through our annual Haunted House, open houses, and other events. In all of these ways, the people we support demonstrate this year's theme, "Just like You – Living, Learning, Working, Playing".

Freezin' for a reason

Thank you to the Black Hills Workshop Polar Plunge team: Brad Saathoff, Billy Clucas, David Tanner, Joe Burmeister, Bill Stevens, and staff members from Golden Living Center. Like the rest of the "plungers," they raised pledges for the privilege of diving into the icy waters at Memorial Park on Saturday, February 27. A big thank you to all who pledged them also! Nearly 40,000 was raised for Special Olympics. The Black Hills Workshop gets 25% of the money raised to support our own athletes.

First Performance of dance company February 14

"I remember when I felt for the first time dancing in my wheelchair. I had to go down stage to do circles. I was moving so fast in practice. I knew I was dancing. Wow! I was so happy." Connie Whitley

Connie along with Nancy Weiss, Karrin Rolfstad, Cindy Rooney, Shad Bebout, Tim Hathaway, and Shawn Stratton, are all part of Rapid City's new mixed-ability dance company which made its debut on Valentine's Day. Outright Dance Theatre Company is directed by Andrea Schaefer of Barefoot Dance Studios. Heather Pickering, Technical Director for the Stevens High School Drama Department, co-directed the first performance called Winter Bloom.

Outright Dance Theatre has proven to be an exciting opportunity for people with disabilities as well as others from our community to get involved with dance. Auditions for the first performance were held in October and 18 people were chosen to be in the new company, seven of them from Black Hills Workshop. "Because I had worked previously with folks from Suzie Cappa Art Center, it had always been in my head that I wanted to develop a way to encourage these folks to come down to the studio to dance instead of me going to them to teach. When I moved the studio to its current location I finally had the room and handicap accessibility to move forward with this idea," says Andrea.

"Andrea helped me to realize my dream of dancing and would not allow my disabilities to get in the way," says Connie.



Nancy Weiss and Connie Whitley, members of Outright Dance Theatre, rehearse for their first show, "Winter Bloom" which was presented on February 14.