

TRANSITIONS

Black Hills Workshop & Training Center

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

Hong wins Usdane award



BH Services employee Hong Dao has been chosen to receive the 2008 AbilityOne/NISH Northwest Region William M. Usdane Award. The Usdane Award was

established to commemorate Dr. William Usdane, former Assistant Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, who worked tirelessly for people with severe disabilities. The award is presented to an individual with disabilities who has exhibited outstanding achievement and exceptional character as an employee in the AbilityOne Program.

AbilityOne is the largest single source of employment for people with severe disabilities in the United States. NISH is the nonprofit agency that supports community service providers like BH Services in procuring AbilityOne contracts. BH Services provides employment to 72 people with disabilities at Offutt Air Force Base through AbilityOne contracts.

Hong has been employed on the BH Services AbilityOne food service contract at Offutt since July, 2002. He is responsible for kitchen cleanup, cleaning grills and pots, and replenishing the beverage line. Contract Manager Terry Wilson says he is consistent and willing to work a variety of shifts. He is well-liked by his co-workers and is knowledgeable about safety. "He is a very valuable employee," says Terry. Dao who emigrated from Vietnam as a nine-year-old in 1975, has his own apartment near the base and rides his bike to work every day. Because of his AbilityOne job, Hong is able to fully support himself without Social Security benefits. Along with his award, he will receive a \$500 check from NISH.

BH Services wins Assistive Technology Award

BH Services has been selected to receive the 2008 AbilityOne/NISH Assistive Technology Award. The award is the result of BH Services commissary contract staff's participation in a pilot project using a scanner created by NISH tech staff.

AbilityOne is the largest single source of employment for people with severe disabilities in the United States. NISH is the nonprofit agency that supports community service providers like BH Services in procuring AbilityOne contracts. BH Services employs 76 people served by Black Hills Workshop at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The Assistive Technology Award is presented by NISH to recognize a non-profit agency, individual, or business which has contributed significantly to the employment of people with severe disabilities through the application or development of assistive technology.

The scanner reads UPC codes on items and provides directions to the shelf stocker. It operates with text or verbally, so it is usable by nonreaders. It also eliminates the need to memorize where every product goes in the store. The scanner has made shelf stocking more efficient for those who were able to perform the tasks already, and it has created more opportunity for those who did not have the necessary skills.

The Assistive Technology Award will be presented at the Opening Session of the NISH National Training and Achievement Conference in Atlanta on May 12.



Eric Rude demonstrates the wearable scanner in use at the Commissary.

Brain Injury Conference May 7-8

The 4th Annual Black Hills Brain Injury Conference will be held May 7-8, 2009 at the Ramkota Hotel. The event is cosponsored by Community Transitions and the Mayo Clinic. Along with other speakers, neuropsychologist Dr. Thomas Bergquist from Mayo Clinic and Dr. James Malec, who is internationally known for his research in the brain injury field, will present. Continuing Education Units will be available. More conference details are available at the Community Transition's web site, www.brainrehab.org. Check back periodically as information is added.

Anthony Capra's art featured at Apex Gallery



Congratulations Anthony Capra, whose art was featured at the Apex Gallery at the School of Mines and Technology February 20-March 18. Anthony came to Black Hills Workshop in 1988 from his ranch home in Montana. As a child, Anthony was attracted to color and began drawing

at a young age. Since January 2004 he has worked with artist Janet Sohl. The two get together two mornings a week to draw and paint his ideas. "I view my role more as a facilitator to help him get his ideas on canvas. He knows what he wants to do. It becomes 'How do we do it?' How do we break down the tasks in order for Anthony to express all of those many details of his observations and experiences?"



Jan says that Anthony loves color and likes to use it in its purest and unmixed form. "It has always been a reference for him. When Anthony is unfamiliar with the name of an item, he refers to that item by its color. Color becomes a compensation tool for his expressive language difficulties."

Anthony often comes to their meetings ready with his idea for a painting. Often these are inspired by his visits home to Montana or an activity or interest from the group home where he lives. His strong connection to his Montana home shows up in the form of John Deere tractors, cattle, sheep, brands, and even ear tags. He has also done several floral pieces, which he gave as gifts to significant women in his life, including his mother, sisters, caregivers, and friends.

Field trips with Jan play a significant role in his paintings as well. Anthony has completed a collage showing him with his father and brother flying kites. The piece was inspired by a morning spent flying a kite at Sioux Park.

He did a football piece featuring his favorite team, the Kansas City Chiefs, playing the Denver Broncos. Rather than just showing him pictures, Jan found an old jersey and she and Anthony spent several mornings on Dunham Field at O'Hara Stadium at South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. She says he walked and ran the entire field, goal line to goal line. He also enjoyed kicking field goals and throwing passes. At the opening reception for his art show, several Hardrocker football players and cheerleaders joined the other patrons to meet Anthony and see his paintings.

Anthony is very proud of all of the work he does: ranching in Montana, stringing pulleys for a manufacturing company contract at Black Hills Workshop Industries, and of course creating his art.

Housekeeping employees honored



Sam Sheffer

George Rogers, Mark Samuelson, and instructor Roxi Larson who work at the Days Inn, and Sam Sheffer who works at the Comfort Inn, were all honored with Great Service Stars from the South Dakota Office of Tourism for outstanding customer service in 2008. Bob Evans, who was also employed at the Days Inn until his recent death, was also honored posthumously. The award is given to those who are singled out by tourists for going beyond what is expected. When customers fill out comment cards complimenting their service, the motel sends these cards to the state tourism board who honors the employees with certificates.



George Rogers, Roxi Larson, and Mark Samuelson were all honored recently with 2008 hospitality awards.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail, e-mail drosby@bhws.com.

Nancy Weiss to be honored at Suzie's Royal Tea April 19

Nancy Weiss, this year's Black Hills Workshop Artist of the Year, will be honored at Suzie's Royal Tea April 19 at the Radisson. The tea is a fund raiser for the Suzie Cappa Center. One of Nancy's paintings has been reproduced on note cards and will be added to the selection of cards produced by Suzie Cappa artists.

Nancy has blossomed into a multi-media artist at the center. Along with painting, she takes dance and theatre classes and was one of the performers in Flutter, last summer's joint production by the Suzie Cappa Center and Black Hills Community Theatre. She participates in bell choir and is one of the volunteers from the Suzie Cappa Center who performs regularly at a local nursing home.

If you would like to purchase tickets to Suzie's Royal Tea, contact JoAnne Schriver at 605-718-6204.



Artist of the Year Nancy Weiss poses with her painting. Nancy will be honored at Suzie's Royal Tea April 19 at the Radisson.

Homes from the heart

Currently, forty individuals on our waiting list are in need of a safe, accessible, and affordable place to live. Many adults with disabilities still live with aging parents and must prepare for a future when their parents can no longer provide support. That's why Black Hills Workshop Foundation is planning to purchase or build five homes, each of which would be home to up to five individuals. The Black Hills Workshop Foundation has committed \$500,000 in matching funds, and we are asking our friends to help us raise the remaining \$500,000. Our supporters see purchasing real estate as a sound investment today and into the future. It also provides hope for parents who are still caring for their severely disabled sons and daughters in their homes. We know that helping individuals obtain a suitable place to live enhances their lives and abilities. To support this project, contact Dennis Popp at 718-7466.

Holiday Inn wins Outstanding Employer Award

The Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn has been selected to receive the 2009 Outstanding Private Employer Award by the Governor's Office, and the Black Hills Workshop housekeeping crew who works at the Holiday Inn couldn't agree more.

Becky Pitts, the Black Hills Workshop instructor who oversees the crew says the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn is "a very good hotel to work for. I've worked at three or four others. They treat their employees very well here." Sara Renay, who has worked at the Holiday Inn for eight years, once worked for a hotel in Denver. She says she's much happier at the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn.

The hotel won in the Large Employer Category after being nominated by the Black Hills Workshop. The Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn has employed people served by Black Hills Workshop for more than 14 years and currently employs five housekeepers from the Workshop.

General Manager Sherry Beck says members of the crew are very thorough and consistent. She encourages other employers to hire through Black Hills Workshop. "I'm surprised that everybody doesn't jump on board. They do a great job. It's very little work for us. I can't see a downside."

Darcy Peterson says the best part of her job was when a customer turned in a comment card to management praising her for quality service. This results in a star and a \$5 gift.

One of the things that everyone on the team enjoys is seeing the many celebrities who stay in the hotel. Sara and Darcy say they saw Hulk Hogan and ZZ Top, and during the presidential campaign, they saw Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Sherry says all employees are encouraged to visit with guests and the Black Hills Workshop crew is no exception. "They are a highlight to everybody's day and a nice addition to this hotel."

The 2009 Outstanding Private Employer Award was presented at an awards luncheon on March 10 at the Best Western Ramkota Inn in Pierre. Black Hills Workshop is grateful to employers like the Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn who demonstrate their belief in the potential of people with disabilities by providing employment opportunities to the people we support.



Sara Renay makes a bed at the Rushmore Holiday Inn where she has worked for eight years.

BLACK HILLS WORKSHOP AND TRAINING CENTER, INC.
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Freezin' for a reason!



The Black Hills Workshop Polar Plunge Team raised over \$4000 for Special Olympics during this year's Polar Plunge Saturday, February 28. Pictured are Black Hills Workshop Chief Executive Officer Brad Saathoff, Kevin Jones, David Tanner, and Billy Lucas. Other members of the team were Jackie Smith, Bill Stevens, and Joe Burmeister, as well as several coaches and baseball players from Stevens High School who joined our team. Like the rest of the "plungers," they raised pledges for the privilege of diving into the icy waters at Memorial Park.

Check your label!

Please check your address label. If you have changes or corrections, send them to: **Sheila Muehlberg, Black Hills Workshop, P.O. Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709.** You can also e-mail your changes to smuehlberg@bhws.com or call 605-718-6208.

Tough enough to wear pink

Black Hills Workshop employees raised a total of \$1287 in January for the John T. Vucurevich Regional Cancer Care Institute.

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.

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Thanks Rushmore Lions Club!

Thank you to the hardworking members of the Rushmore Lions Club for another successful Pancake Breakfast. An estimated 900 people attended the annual event which is sponsored and hosted by the group each year on the last Sunday of February. The money raised this year will be used toward the purchase of a wheelchair accessible bathtub.

Thank you also to our many friends who attended this year's pancake breakfast and to the generous businesses who contributed equipment and supplies again this year: **Coca-Cola Bottling of the Black Hills, Westside and Midtown Family Thrift Centers, Pepsi Cola Bottling of the Black Hills, Rapid City New Car Dealer's Association, Rapid Valley Fire Department, Safeway, Sam's Club, Simpson's Printing, Sysco Foods, U.S. Food Service/GFG, and Wal-Mart.**



Lion Stan Anker mixes up pancake batter at the Black Hills Workshop Pancake Breakfast February 22. The Lions Club sponsors and hosts the event.

BHW receives gift from Rasmussen Trust

Black Hills Workshop received more than \$15,000 from the Wilfred M. and Margaret Rasmussen Trust on January 20. Each year since 1995, we have benefitted from Rasmussen funds, which are designated for equipment and supplies for educational, recreational, and craft projects.

After retiring from the agriculture industry in 1975, Mr. Rasmussen moved to Rapid City and became very active in the support of several human service agencies including the Workshop. The Workshop was one of several agencies he remembered in his will. He was honored posthumously in 1995 with our Spirit of Giving Award.



Trustee Keith Ham (right), visited the Black Hills Workshop January 20 to deliver a check from the Rasmussen Trust. He is pictured with Brad Saathoff, Black Hills Workshop's Chief Executive Officer in front of equipment purchased last year with money from the trust.

**Thank you to the 2009 boards of the Black Hills Workshop,
Black Hills Workshop Foundation, and BH Services!**



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