

THE EXCHANGE

*Published for parents, family members, and guardians
of individuals served by Black Hills Workshop*

September/October 2008

Anniversary celebration focuses on employment

Black Hills Workshop's vision is that all people are good neighbors, valued friends, productive workers, respected leaders, and caring volunteers. This fall, our fiftieth anniversary celebration focused on how the people we support live out this vision, specifically as productive workers.

On September 18, we hosted an open house at BHW Industries and Concourse Enterprises to focus on our in-house businesses and contracts. These supply products and services, while providing work to people who have not yet taken the step to employment in the community. More than 250 people perform a variety of jobs in-house at Black Hills Workshop while participating in many learning opportunities. Jobs include food services, manufacturing, packaging, collating, and more.

In October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we are highlighting the contracts we have in the community and the businesses which provide work to the people we serve. Sixty-five people have achieved independent employment with 36 different employers including hotel/motels, grocery stores, retail stores, restaurants, auto dealerships and many other businesses that count on the people we support for custodial help.

More than 80 people are employed at Ellsworth Air Force Base at the Commissary, Bandit Inn, supply store, and switchboard, as well as in custodial services through the AbilityOne program. AbilityOne is the federal government program that authorizes certain government contracts to be set aside for people with disabilities. Sixty-four people are employed at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha on our commissary and food services contracts, also through AbilityOne.

Black Hills Workshop's Employment Resources division, **Karri Christian, Kathy Laforest, Kim Kringen, and Frank Bowers**, assist people with disabilities to explore the world of employment. Our employment technicians visit businesses and analyze tasks according to the essential functions the employee would be required to do. Specialized evaluations and assessments determine an individual's strengths and abilities. Employment technicians are available to assist people in learning the skills needed to perform the essential functions of the job. We are available after the placement for support, further training or evaluation as needed to meet the needs of the employee and the employer.

The benefits of successful employment to the individual are obvious. But there are also benefits to society. When people with disabilities are employed, they save taxpayers money because of increased income and payroll taxes and reduced entitlements. Equally important, governments and businesses get quality work at a fair price when they hire those with disabilities. As services have improved and opportunities for people with disabilities have increased, they have made increasingly valuable contributions to our community. During our 50th anniversary year, we celebrate these contributions in the world of work.

Gala tickets available

Brian Bertsch, Heather Kickery, Eric Rude, and Darlene Running Bear have been selected to receive Founders Awards for Outstanding Achievement at our Recognition Gala, Saturday, November 1. **Linda Soucy and Pam Rice** from **Sears** will receive our Employer Merit Awards and **Heather Pickering** from Black Hills Community Theatre will receive our Community Connection Award. For ticket information, contact Joanne Schriver at 605-718-6204.

The Exchange is published bimonthly by the black Hills Workshop for parents, family members, and guardians of the individuals we serve. Comments and questions are encouraged and may be addressed to Dorothy Rosby, Editor, Black Hills Workshop, Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709; call (605) 718-6205; or e-mail drosby@bhws.com. We also appreciate your keeping us up-to-date on your address changes, corrections, or duplicate mailings.

Calendar

•**Bowling** every Thursday, October 23-March 5, 10:30 at Robbinsdale and 3:30 at Meadowood Lanes and Robbinsdale Lanes.

•**Halloween Dance**, Sunday, October 26 from 2-4:30 in the Black Hills Workshop Gymnasium. Prizes for the best costumes.

•**Regional Bowling Tournament**, 9-3 Meadowood Lanes, Friday, October 24. Registration begins at 8 a.m.

•**State Bowling Tournament**, November 7-9, Aberdeen.

•**Christmas Dance** Sunday, December 7, 5:30-8:30 at the Ramkota. Dance to music by Yo Vinny. Ramkota.

For information contact Black Hills Workshop at 343-4550.

Twisted Nightmares

Congratulations Joey Gilbert whose suggestion, Twisted Nightmares, was chosen as the name of the Black Hills Workshop Haunted House. Twisted Nightmares will take place **October 24-25 from 7:00-9:30 p.m.** at the Workshop. It is open to the public, but is not recommended for children under age 8. Admission is one non-perishable food item which will be donated to the Food Bank.

Last year, an estimated 800 people attended the haunted house. More than 450 cans of food were donated as admission. The event was so successful that coordinators decided to open this year's haunted house two nights.



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