

TRANSITIONS

Black Hills Workshop & Training Center

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

Four receive Outstanding Achievement Awards

Jorgia Steenberg, Heather Therkildsen, Mike Turner, and Nancy Weiss were honored with *Outstanding Achievement Awards* at the Black Hills Workshop's annual Recognition Gala Saturday, November 5 at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. The four were chosen out of the more than 600 people served by Black Hills Workshop because of the outstanding progress they have shown in our programs.

Ken Tritsch, former contracting officer at Ellsworth Air Force Base, received our Distinguished Service Award and optometrist **Dr. Bill Holec** was honored with our Health Professional of the Year Award. Our thanks to **Black Hills Corporation and Black Hills Power** for sponsoring this year's "Black and Light Gala." The Gala is the Black Hills Workshop's largest fund raiser of the year and is also a time for the public to get to know more about the Workshop's services through videos shown about the winners.

Jorgia Steenberg came to Black Hills Workshop in 1996 and spends her days in our Sensory Area on Range Road. She enjoys listening to music and watching scary movies, and she has been a volunteer "scarer" at the Black Hills Workshop Haunted House for the past two years. Jorgia has participated in mixed-ability dance classes through Outright Dance Theatre and in May, she performed in a recital with the rest of the Outright Dance company. "She had the lights shining on her and the whole audience watching and she just beamed," says Andrea Schaefer, Director, Outright Dance Theatre.

Heather Therkildsen has been employed at Rapid City Regional Hospital on our Black Hills Workshop contract since 2004. Her responsibilities have increased dramatically since she began. She does a variety of tasks including

delivering materials to pre-op and medical records to patient floors, working in the Central Sterile Services Department, and distributing disposable gowns, masks, and biohazard bags to patient rooms. All of these require strict following of protocols for patient confidentiality. Heather enjoys Facebook, knitting, and writing letters to family and friends. "Over the years, she has just gotten more and more self-confident and able to branch out," says instructor Lynn Vallette. "I don't think there's anything that's going to hold her back now."

Mike Turner has been employed with the Black Hills Workshop's maintenance crew for the past four years. He has a variety of duties including snow removal, lawn care, painting, general building/grounds maintenance, and

moving furniture and other items. Those who know him know he NEVER turns down the opportunity to help others. He has volunteered for Meeting the Need Camp, the city-wide clean-up day, Special Olympics, the building of the Vickie Powers Park, and the United Way Day of Caring. He has also recently joined the new Lions Club which meets at Black Hills Workshop. "All of us feel so blessed to have him in our department," says Tammy Murner, administrative assistant in the maintenance department. "He is the shining example of what a great human being is."

Nancy Weiss worked for fast food restaurants for many years until she was injured in an accident in 2005. Since then she has worked in the

Continued on page 2 . . .



Mike Turner, Heather Therkildsen, Jorgia Steenberg, and Nancy Weiss take a moment to pose after the Gala.

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Assistant HUD secretary visits Allen Avenue

Assistant HUD Secretary Mercedes Marquez was part of a group that toured Black Hills Workshop's newest homes on October 24. Also on the visit to Jake's Place and Helena's Home were Rapid City Mayor Sam Kooiker, HUD Field Office Director Roger Jacobs, Regional HUD Director Rick Garcia, South Dakota Housing Development Authority Mark Lausing, Director of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program Lorraine Polack, and Jim Semmler of Semmler Construction Company, who built the two homes which were completed earlier this year.

Marquez was in Rapid City to tour these and other homes that have been built or improved by the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. Jake's Place and Helena's Home were built with funds from the program along with donations.



Assistant HUD Secretary Mercedes Marquez talks with Jewell Nelson who lives at Helena's Home. In the background are BHW Community Living Supervisor Tara Wilcox, Regional HUD Director Rick Garcia, and Black Hills Workshop Chief Executive Officer, Brad Saathoff.

Outstanding Achievement Award

... continued from page 1.

manufacturing area at Black Hills Workshop where she works on a variety of contracts involving collating and packaging. She is very involved in the Suzie Cappa Center for Art Expression and Enjoyment, participating in theatre, dance, painting, and more. In 2008, her design was chosen for the Black Hills Workshop Christmas card, and in 2009, she was named Artist of the Year. Nancy is also very involved in learning to advocate for herself and others through groups like People First, South Dakota Advocates for Change, and Partners in Policymaking.

Optometrist **Dr. Bill Holec** not only has a wonderful rapport with people supported by Black Hills Workshop, he comes to our facility to meet with them. His efforts are above and beyond what is expected of a health professional. He has truly made a positive difference in the health of those we serve.

Before his retirement **Ken Tritsch** served as contracting officer at Ellsworth Air Force Base. His integrity, openness, and belief in our mission resulted in many employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities as well as the highest quality service to our government customers.

Congratulations to all our winners and thanks our wonderful committee who helped to make the night special for them: **Pam Lindquist, Chair, JoVayne Cappa, Patti Herlihy, Sandra Burns, Nancy Trautman, Jeanette Deurloo, Tura Synhorst, Sarah Folsland, Anna Norton, Dorothy Rosby, Sheila Vetsch, JoAnne Schriver, Brian Munsell, and Shawn Wilson.**

Elks donate new flag



Thanks to the Rapid City Elks Club, who donated the money to purchase a new 8x5 foot flag as well as a lock box, channel, and rope for it. The Elks had also donated the original flag pole in 1972. A dedication was held October 19. Pictured above are Brad Saathoff, Jeremy Corcoran, and Elks Exalted Ruler Tim Werlinger.

Native culture celebration



Belinda Joe, Education and Culture Specialist for Crazy Horse, was one of the presenters at the Black Hills Workshop's fourth annual Native American Cultural Celebration held in October.

AmeriCorps volunteers share experiences

Eight AmeriCorps NCCC members spent eight weeks working throughout the Workshop supporting people in a variety of activities. This is the fourth time NCCC has assisted us. AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time, team-based residential program for people ages 18-24. Members are organized into teams and serve in the areas of disaster preparation, response, and recovery; environmental conservation; public safety; urban and rural development; and education. NCCC and other AmeriCorps programs are administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Each year, the Corporation engages four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Service American programs. For information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

The following was submitted by Kristen and Alex, two of the AmeriCorps members who served at Black Hills Workshop.

An AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps team is serving at the Black Hills Workshop through November 7. During their time here, the team members help to supervise people during their daily activities. While the corps members' job is to teach, some of them have been learning as much from the people served as they have been teaching.

Corps member Alex Johnson is one of these members who has experienced how every student is a teacher. Part of the reason the team is here is to help teach life skills so people can move to jobs outside of the Workshop. Alex works in the kitchen, where he helps to cook and helps to supervise the kitchen crew. However, during his time in the kitchen, he has also been learning sign language in order to better communicate with Kathryn, who is hard of hearing and can not speak well. Learning a new language was not something Alex expected to do during his time at the Black Hills Workshop, much less learning it from one of the people he helps to supervise. "It's crazy. I've never known any sign language. Now I'm learning a little bit each day. It's gotten to the point where I not only know what she's telling me, but I can tell her how to improve and she understands."

This is a real life example of how teachers can learn things from their students. Since AmeriCorps arrived, everybody, corps members and people served alike, have been learning new things. It goes to show there's always something new to learn and that you might learn it from the most unexpected places.



Michael Studer works in the Suzie Cappa Art Center with NCCC volunteer Amanda Amstutz, who is from Indiana.

Eric Rude honored for volunteerism



Congratulations Eric Rude, who was recently honored by KSLT/KLMP/The Point radio stations and Hills Alive for his volunteer service at Hills Alive.

Suzie Cappa show at the Dahl through January 28

Artists from the Black Hills Workshop's Suzie Cappa Center for Art Expression and Enjoyment will show their work at the Dahl Arts Center through January 28. The show, **Threads**, features fabric arts. The exhibit is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, and Fridays 11 a.m. until 7 p.m.



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Interfaith project underway

Black Hills Workshop has its first match in the Interfaith Project. Hubert Zimmerman will now be attending services at South Canyon Lutheran Church with Ronni McKay. The Interfaith Project aims to match people served with church members who can help

them become more active in the church of their choosing and in church-related activities. Jocelyn Haskell, who is coordinating the program says currently 150 people supported are attending services regularly. Another 43 would like to attend but are not because of transportation or other issues. For more information, contact Jocelyn at 605-343-6466 or 858-0770.



Hubert Zimmerman and Ronni McKay attend church together at South Canyon Lutheran Church.

Address changes?

Please check your address label carefully. Send your address changes to:

Sheila Vetsch
Black Hills Workshop
P.O. Box 2104
Rapid City, SD 57709.

You can also e-mail your changes to svetsch@bhws.com or call 605-718-6208.

If you would prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail, send your e-mail address to svetsch@bhws.com. Your address will not be shared with other organizations.

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 or bhwsfoundation.org.

Thanks to our generous donors! Christmas card selected

Donations received September 1-October 31

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Cahill, Jeremy

Capital Bedding

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The drawing pictured above was created by artist Annette Schreiber in our Suzie Cappa Center for Art Expression and Enjoyment. It has been chosen for this year's Black Hills Workshop Christmas card. Along with art, Annette enjoys playing softball and watching movies. She is employed with our custodial crew which cleans buildings at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The card will be added to our selection of holiday-themed cards which are available for sale. Call JoAnne Schriver at 605-718-6204 for information.



Black Hills Workshop hosts South Dakotans Talking

Black Hills Workshop hosted two South Dakotans Talking events at which area residents came to discuss and learn about state budgets. The free, non-partisan events took place November 7 and 8 at the Workshop. Event participants discussed budget transparency, citizen input to the budget process, tax fairness and income, K-12 school services, and other topics. The events were co-sponsored by Black Hills Workshop, the Rapid City Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee and the Chiesman Center for Democracy.

Discussion on South Dakotas' budget choices were facilitated throughout the state by SDSU Extension Community Development and the South Dakota Budget & Policy Project, with funding from the Bush Foundation and Northwest Area Foundation.

Kimberly Tollman *Simply the Best!*



Congratulations **Kimberly Tollman, RN**, Black Hills Workshop's Excellence In Service nominee for 2011. Kimberly has been a nurse at Black Hills Workshop since 2006. Her nominator, Pat McDowell, says, "Her co-worker nurses trust and value her judgments. The staff in residence and on the committees she is on all admire her medical expertise and ability to get the job done. The people she supports with medical problems know that she will take the time to explain the treatment, testing and follow up, so they will understand the information about their health care and are able to take an active role in managing their health. Kimberly also has

the admiration of several physicians in the community because of her accountability and responsiveness to their queries." Kimberly and nominees from other facilities were honored at *Simply the Best*, October 26 in Sioux Falls. Excellence in Service awards are presented to direct support professionals for outstanding service and performance.

Skeen lands job at Walgreens

Zach Skeen has worked at the Bandit Inn for several years, doing a variety of jobs including busing tables, running the dishwasher, serving meals, and cashiering. Contract manager Carl Dixon says Zach was so successful on the job that they were already looking at the possibility of competitive employment when a remodeling project at the Bandit Inn hastened the move. Major renovations mean that around twenty-two people will be out of work for around ten months, leaving employment staff scrambling to find employment for them all. Meanwhile Zach's experience cashiering, his people skills, and his excellent work ethic helped open doors for him.

Employment specialist Kim Kringen assisted Zach to apply for several jobs and early last spring he landed a job at Walgreens. He continues to work at the Bandit Inn part-time, but his hours there have decreased gradually as they have increased at Walgreens. Store manager Rob Holso says Zach is now working around 24 hours per week mainly as a cashier. But he also assists with stocking shelves, unloading trucks, and other tasks. "He has been a great employee since Day 1," says Rob, citing Zach's punctuality and friendliness with both customers and other employees.

Zach says, being a good employee means "doing what you're told and being there on time. Showing up every day and helping the customers." We're proud of Zach and grateful to Walgreens, whose corporate leaders have made hiring people with disabilities a company priority.



Zach Skeen at work at Walgreens.

Olive Garden celebrates Mentoring Day



The Olive Garden celebrated Disability Mentoring Day October 24 by bringing lunch to the Elderly Area at Black Hills Workshop. Disability Mentoring Day is a nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities through hands-on career exploration. Bob Mason is pictured above with his tray.

1100 attend Haunted House

Congratulations to organizers of the annual Black Hills Workshop Haunted House and thank you to the staff, people supported, and 39 volunteers who made it possible. More than 1100 people attended the two-night event October 28 and 29. The haunted house was free, but those who attended donated non-perishable food which was given to the food bank.

