

# TRANSITIONS

BLACK HILLS WORKSHOP AND TRAINING CENTER, INC. P.O. Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709

## Employers honored during anniversary year

As services have improved and opportunities for people with disabilities have increased, they have made increasingly valuable contributions to our community. During this, our fiftieth anniversary year, we have focused on different aspects of our services each month. In September and October, we want to celebrate the contributions made by people with disabilities in the world of work and the many businesses who employ them.

In September we will celebrate our in-house businesses and contracts which supply products and services, while providing work and training 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. These jobs include food services, manufacturing, packaging, collating, and more. The public will have a chance to learn more about some of these jobs during an open house September 18 at our BHW Industries building, 1636 Concourse Court, and nearby at Concourse Enterprises, 1350 Concourse Drive.

In October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we will highlight the contracts we have in the community and the businesses which provide work to the people we serve. Eighty-three people have achieved independent employment with 39 different employers including hotel/motels, grocery stores, Rapid City Regional Hospital, 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 assists agencies like Black Hills Workshop to acquire and maintain

federal contracts. Sixty-four people are employed at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha on our commissary and food services contracts, also through AbilityOne.

The benefits 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. Nationally, federal and state governments save more than \$46 million a year, according to a study conducted in 2003. The study, "People with Disabilities Work: America Benefits," focused on commissary, food services and custodial programs, which collectively employ more than 10,000 people nationwide who have disabilities.

Equally important, governments and businesses get quality work at a fair price when they hire those with disabilities. Here are a few testimonials shared with us by businesses we work with:

*Working with the Black Hills Workshop crew is truly delightful. On*

*top of ALWAYS showing up for work and working hard, they are always happy and bring such joy to the workplace, to the other employees, and, most important, to the hotel guests.*

*Katie Heinis, Days Inn I-90*

*We have had a 25-year partnership with Black Hills Workshop. They consistently meet our issues of cost, delivery, and quality.*

*Duane Comes, Sanmina-SCI*

*For over ten years, Black Hills Workshop has helped us reduce costs to the hospital, as well as assisting us to fulfill our mission in the community.*

*Mark Brodin, Rapid City Regional Hospital*

We appreciate these businesses and the many others we work with for their support and their belief in our mission and in the abilities of people with disabilities!



*Darcy Peterson is one of many people served by Black Hills Workshop who is employed in the hospitality industry.*

# Suzie Cappa Artists show at the Dahl

Artists from the Black Hills Workshop's Suzie Cappa Center for Art Expression and Enjoyment displayed their work at the Dahl Arts Center July 9-July 26. An artist's reception was held July 18. The show, which was titled Peace, included many mediums including painting, quilting, and sculpture. One of its featured paintings, called Doves, is by Black Hills Workshop Artist of the Year **Sara Mellegard**.

Congratulations to participating artists including **Shawn Bifulco, Tina Schock, Amanda Minnick, Mike Leithauser, Brad A Winter, Lisa Crow, Patty Elliot, Norma Garcia, Russell Steinback, John Summers, Carisa Headid, Lea Haisch, Michelle Aman, Carole Lerdal, Rodney Keffeler, Dick Perrett, Sara Mellegard, Tom Borella, Margie Monroe, Shawn Stratton, Erica Johnson, John Clark, Mary Wipf, Joan Cox, Charlotte McLean, Nancy Weiss, Robin Murner, Imogene Good Shot, Lew Rock, Dennis Walsh, Barbara Patterson, and Shad Bebout.**

Coincidentally, 2008 marks the 50th anniversary of the Peace Symbol, a fact the show's organizers did not discover until they had already decided on the theme. Black Hills Workshop is also celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. Our Suzie Cappa Center provides the people we serve with education in a variety of art forms as well as exposure to the work of other artists. We appreciate the Dahl's support of this program.



*Shawn Bifulco poses in front of his painting during the artist's reception Friday, July 18.*

## People First: Speaking up

People First is a national organization which gives people with disabilities an opportunity to advocate for themselves on issues affecting their lives and trains them to speak out. Eight members were in attendance at a recent meeting of the local chapter held at the Rapid City Public library, but President Chuck Henrie, who is in his second term, says the group has 15-20 active members.

As is usually the case, there was a full agenda. Each member introduced themselves and answered the question of the day: Do you plan to vote in the upcoming general election. Most said that, yes, they do plan to vote. Chuck says he considers voting education to be one of the most pressing issues for the group and one he and the other officers are hoping to address before November.

The group had their own election to take care of that day; they voted unanimously to elect Kelly Blossom secretary/treasurer. Among the other business items discussed was an upcoming visit the group hopes to arrange with the mayor, a gift they want to make to the humane society with funds they raised at last November's Parade of Lights, a recruitment picnic, a national speaker they hope to bring in, and several events People First members plan to volunteer at this summer.

In new business Chuck discussed his hopes to meet with officials about making election ballots accessible to non-readers by using candidate photos. They also discussed meeting with Rapid Transit concerning their hours of operation. Transportation is a big issue for people with disabilities and People First is trying to do their part to address it.

The group's advisor, Michelle Aman, says there has been a local People First Chapter for about twenty years. She's been involved the entire time, and she says she's seen a lot of growth in people thanks to their participation. "I've seen people who weren't able to speak up who now take leadership roles. Some of the folks have been involved in agency committees and presented inservice training." She says members have even hosted state conferences with more than 100 people attending from around the state.

The People First chapter is open to participation from community members, either in advisory roles or as members. They meet the last Friday of each month at the Rapid City Public Library. For information, call President Chuck Henrie at 355-9105 or Michelle Aman at 718-6286.



*People First president Chuck Henrie runs a recent meeting of the group at the Rapid City Public Library.*

# Flutter takes flight

It took over 300 feet of plastic irrigation tube, 400 feet of green saran wrap, 60 pounds of red clay, 50 pounds of newspaper and many other items to bring the tale of a butterfly to life in Flutter, a joint production of the Black Hills Community Theatre and Black Hills Workshop. The show, a mixed ability movement and dance piece, featured 15 performers from the Black Hills Workshop's Suzie Cappa Center as well as members of the community and ran July 10-12 at Central High School.

Thanks to choreographer Andrea Muehl, puppeteer Chris Lutter and local artist Jolene Howell who oversaw the building of sixteen original pieces of animated sculpture for the production, and Justin Speck, who designed the lighting. Special thanks to Heather Pickering, Black Hills Community Theatre's Director of Education and Outreach, who wrote and directed the show. She says she had the idea on her first visit to the Suzie Cappa Center. Her inspiration came from a piece of art featuring three dimensional butterflies and the word "Diversity." Heather will receive our Community Connection award at our Recognition Gala November 1 because of her efforts with Flutter.

We are also grateful to our many volunteers and the many businesses that contributed materials used in staging Flutter. Six mattress bags, 6000-plus staples, six broken umbrellas, five boxes of corn syrup mix, 100 feet of PVC tube, 1000-plus zip ties, four cardboard boxes, 200 feet of aluminum rod, 20 feed sacks, 30 window screens, and two camping mattress pads were recycled to make the production possible. Our thanks to All American Glass & Mirror, American Electric, Dakota Mill & Grain in Sturgis, Family Thrift, Mick's Electric, Sam's Club, Motions Dancewear, Someone's in the Kitchen, Knecht's ACE Hardware, Regional Health, RC Glass & Mirror, North American Piping, Mountain View Animal Hospital, Canyon Lake Animal Hospital, and Loren Ward.

Flutter was funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and an Allied Arts Fund Stanford Adelstein grant. Our sincere thanks for their support.



*The Flutter cast.*

# ALLIED ARTS FUND

Better Together

Stanford Adelstein Grant

*Thank you to the Allied Arts Fund Stanford Adelstein Grant for your generosity to individuals with disabilities. We greatly appreciate your support of Flutter!*

## BHW supports community

### Relay for Life

A Black Hills Workshop team raised \$2166 during the American Cancer Society Relay for Life June 13-14. Fifteen employees and three people served took part in the twelve-hour walk which took place at Sioux Park. Thanks to Team Captain Kimberly Tollman, Elizabeth Lehmann, Peggy Schuman, Mandi Trebbe, Sharla Woodhead, Danette Schille, Colleen Fines, Kelly Delker, Frank Bowers, James Cottier, Diane Flahaven-Neu, Colleen Allen, Kari Thompson, and Jan Frank. Kirsten Hathorn, Imogene Goodshot, Joe Dvorak, and Mike Braden also walked the track several times with the team. The Workshop team won the award for Best Decorated Tent for their Transylvania theme.

### BHW blood donors help up to forty-eight

The Black Hills Workshop nursing department regularly coordinates blood drives in our facilities for United Blood Services. At our most recent drive on May 14, sixteen blood donors gave enough to help 48 people in need of blood.

## How can I give today?

If you'd like to make a bequest to the Black Hills Workshop but feel you don't have the resources for a lump sum gift, you can maximize the effectiveness of your gift through a life insurance policy.

You, as the policy owner, can transfer an existing life insurance policy to BHW or donate the funds necessary to purchase a new policy. Tax-deductible contributions would pay the premiums of the plan, spreading out your contribution. Through insurance you can create or enhance your legacy to include the Black Hills Workshop.

Please call Dennis at 718-7466 for more information about this gifting opportunity.

BLACK HILLS WORKSHOP AND TRAINING CENTER, INC.  
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## Memorial gifts make fishing trips possible



Rocky Allard, Russell Reynolds, Mike Schnegge, Mark Arthur, Mark Samuelson, and Bob Mason pose with their catch. The group accompanied staff members **Bob Truman, Bill Clucas, and Rich Maxwell** and volunteers **Doug Seiner and Bob Lanchen** on a fishing trip to Whitlock Bay, north of Pierre, June 3-6. Bob says the group caught their limit.

This trips and others like it were paid for in part by memorial and honor gifts from the Barnett, Samuelson, and Whisler families. On behalf of those who benefit, our sincere appreciation to these generous families.

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](mailto:drosby@bhws.com). Visit us at our web site at [bhws.com](http://bhws.com).

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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. Or e-mail your changes to [smuehlberg@bhws.com](mailto:smuehlberg@bhws.com) or call 605-718-6208.

# Rasmussen trust increases participation

Assistive technology increases the opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in the world around them. A grant from the W.M. “Shorty” Rasmussen trust has increased involvement for those in our sensory area. “The people in this area don’t always get a chance to participate. It’s just what we wanted,” says Chantil Wilkerson, an instructor in the sensory area which serves people with the most severe limitations.

Money from the trust was used to purchase a variety of items, including touch-screen computer monitors, software, and two adjustable tables, allowing easy computer access to people who use wheelchairs. “Tom (Kaiser) gets a kick out of using the computer. He’s never been able to do that before,” says Chantil.

A variety of switches that are used differently based on each person’s abilities allow access to everything from a vacuum cleaner, to mixers and blenders, to radios and musical instruments. Drums and bells were also purchased with the grant. “It gets a little loud in here,” laughs Chantil. While staff support may still be needed, the switches are easier to manipulate than traditional switches so they allow people to lend a hand in the activities they are interested in. They’ve made a real difference in several people’s lives. She mentions one man who now takes the initiative to operate several items instead of napping, as he liked to do before.

The Go Talk is a communication device that enables people who are unable to speak to communicate basic needs like food, water, rest, or rest room, by pushing buttons.

A variety of products were purchased with Rasmussen funds to assist people in the sensory area in doing craft projects safely and more easily. These include adaptable scissors and a head painter, headgear with a paint brush attached. Instructor Jeannette Johnson says Jake Lien used the device to paint pictures for his family, including one for his Grandmother’s birthday. The family was thrilled with the results.

There are also switch-activated games and puzzles that say the name of the object pictured. A magnifying screen assists those who read or are learning to read. And a reading pen speaks as a non-reader points to each word on the page. Jeannette and Chantil say they and other

staff have been experimenting with objects to discover what each individual prefers. And they say they have definitely seen more participation from people. More people are taking the initiative to start activities they’re interested in without waiting for an invitation from staff. “They are all the time going over to the table and working these things,” Chantil says of the assortment of items now operated by accessible switches.

We are so grateful that before he passed away in the early 1990s, Shorty Rasmussen included Black Hills Workshop in his will. Each year we receive some funding to purchase items like these that support our other programming. Mr. Rasmussen’s gift has made a difference in many lives and will continue for many years to come. To find out how you can support our assistive technology program or make a planned gift as Mr. Rasmussen did, contact Dennis Popp at 718-7466.



*Jeannette Johnson assists Brent Hirsch with adaptive scissors.*

## And the winner is . . .



*Shad Bebout receives a blue ribbon at the Regional Track & Field Meet held April 25 in Spearfish. (Photo courtesy Marian Reed.)*