

TRANSITIONS

Black Hills Workshop & Training Center

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

BH Services begins new contract

On May 11, BH Services began providing services to the Base Information and Transfer Center at Ellsworth Air Force Base. The center handles the business mail for the base. Five people, including three people served and two staff, are now responsible for picking up, sorting and delivering mail from the Box Elder Post Office, as well as preparing outgoing mail and taking it to the post office.

Director of Federal Contracts Larry Meendering says things are going great so far. "We have had the opportunity to work with the military for several months during the transition. Our employees love it. They're always moving." Larry says BH Services was especially fortunate in the employees they were able to hire. Contract Manager Joe Sabrowski recently retired from the military where he actually ran the Base Information and Transfer Center, so he has been a great help in getting our contract up and running. Supervisor Bob Birnie was hired from within the agency so has experience supporting people with disabilities.

The new contract had stringent requirements, not only for staff, but for the people supported who were hired. They all had to have government driver's licenses and security clearances. They needed reading skills and the ability to lift and carry 70 pounds.

For the first time, BH Services is subcontracting with the ARC of Virginia Peninsula which has nine similar sites around the country. Like our other contracts at Ellsworth Air Force Base and Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, these contracts are provided under the AbilityOne Program, which make it possible for people with severe disabilities to be employed on federal contracts across the country.



The BITC crew: Bob Birnie, Supervisor; Jay Looman; Airman First Class Moore; Staff Sergeant McNair; Tom Meadows; Airman First Class Hazleton; Eric Anderson; Joe Sabrowski, Project Manager; Airman First Class Swanson. Senior Airman Austin not pictured.

Commissary best in the nation

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has named the Ellsworth Air Force Base Commissary the Best Large U.S. Commissary in the continental United States. The commissary employs 33 people served by Black Hills Workshop through BH Services, which partners with the DeCA to provide services to the commissary. First selected as Best Large U.S. Commissary in the Western region, the Ellsworth Commissary competed with and topped the Eastern region winner, Marine Corps Recruit Depot of Parris Island, South Carolina.

The award was presented May 19 to DeCA Store Director Nancy Mitchell at the DeCA and American Logistics Association Training Event and Conference in Richmond, Virginia. BH Services Vice President of Operations Marty Krause says the award represents a successful partnership between DeCA and BH Services. "DeCA has a great management team and employees. They are very deserving of this award. And John Antar (BH Services Project Manager) and the rest of the BH Services crew do a wonderful job. Together they make a terrific team."

DeCA operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees, and their families. This is one of four categories in the annual awards program which recognizes overall excellence in commissary operations and service. The selection of nominees is highly competitive and is based on operations, performance, and accountability.

People served by Black Hills Workshop have been providing shelf stocking, warehouse and janitorial services to the Ellsworth Commissary since January 1989.

Man on a mission



Brian Essex is on a mission: He wants to be a chef. Brian was named the May BH Services Food Service Employee of the Month at our contract at Offutt Air

Force Base where he has worked for 13 years. Supervisor Bob Matthews says Brian can complete any of the tasks on the shift and has trained as a team leader. In the course of his employment, he became acquainted with supervisor Timmi Aston, who also works for Metropolitan Community College. Almost a year ago, she helped Brian get a part-time job cashiering in the school cafeteria. As a school employee, Brian could take classes free of charge, so he signed up for culinary arts classes two evenings each week and plans on more this summer. Bob says Brian's current class in sanitary procedures in food preparation is helpful on the job as food service attendant and in his position on the safety committee. Brian says he will continue taking classes until he reaches his goal.

BH Services supervisor wins national award

Dawn Wozna, BH Services Project Manager for Custodial Operations, has been named the 2008 AbilityOne Supervisor of the Year. AbilityOne creates employment and training opportunities for people who have severe disabilities, primarily by requiring Government agencies to purchase selected products and services from nonprofit organizations employing such individuals.

Dawn has been with Black Hills Workshop/BH Services since 1991. In her position as Project Manager for Custodial Operations, she oversees 48 employees with disabilities and 19 staff which together service 54 custodial contracts and the Federal Building in the Rapid City Community and 55 buildings at Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Dawn was presented with her award on May 1 by Rick Van Hoose, Executive Director of the NISH Northwest Region. "It was a complete surprise," says Dawn. "They told me it was a budget meeting."

NISH is a national nonprofit agency whose mission is to create employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities by securing Federal contracts through the Ability One Program for its network of community-based, nonprofit agencies.



Dawn Wozna receives Supervisor of the Year Award from Rick Van Hoose, Executive Director of NISH Northwest. On the right is BH Services Vice President of Operations Marty Krause.

Students make contract more efficient

For a decade now, we have benefitted from the skill and knowledge of students from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology who have chosen Black Hills Workshop for projects. This year, those working on one of our contracts have benefitted. Since 2007, we have had a contract with Balance Systems Incorporated of Sioux Falls which supplies window and sash balances to window companies. Nearly 90 people with disabilities work on the contract, but many were unable to cut the necessary strings using the string cutter we had. A new string-cutting device created by seniors Reid Sorensen, Christopher Setera, Jared Martin, and Casey Ritz is more user-friendly, allowing more people to do that part of the job and making the work faster and more efficient. Our thanks to the students for sharing their knowledge and talents to help the people we support have more work opportunities. Thanks also to their advisors, Jason Ash and Frank Matejcek.



Black Hills Workshop Instructor Billy Lucas demonstrates a new string-cutting device that was created by four students from the South Dakota School of Mines Industrial Engineering Program for their senior design project.

Taking on leadership roles

Black Hills Workshop envisions a community where all people are good neighbors, valued friends, productive workers, caring volunteers, and respected leaders. People we support are increasingly taking on all of these roles, including the leadership role.



Tom Miller has been appointed to a three-year term on the Workshop's Operating Board. Tom is a cashier, team leader, and part-time supervisor who has

worked on our BH Services contract at Ellsworth since 1990. He is also beginning his fifth term on the board of NISH, a national nonprofit group which provides technical support to community support providers who have federal contracts. He says his new role has some things in common with the NISH position. "My main concern (on both boards) is individuals with disabilities."



Chuck Henrie was recently selected to serve as the State Coordinator for South Dakota Advocates for Change whose mission is to encourage self-advocacy for

people with disabilities across the state. The group is in the process of planning a September conference. For three years, Chuck has served as president of the local People First chapter, a group made up of people with disabilities learning to speak for themselves. He has also served on the Mayor's Committee on Disabilities for two years.



Keven Moulton graduated from Partners in Policy Making April 18 in Sioux Falls. Partners in Policy Making is a six-month training program which teaches participants about disability-related issues and leadership skills so that they can advocate for themselves

and others. "I didn't take it for myself. It was basically to help others become better advocates," says Keven, who is also a member of South Dakota Advocates for Change and People First. He is currently working with Chuck Henrie on a project to increase membership in People First. Keven works doing shredding and filing for Black Hills Workshop.



Cindy Roan Eagle is serving a three-year term as a board member on the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities. Cindy says she was ap-

pointed by Governor Rounds to represent the Black Hills Workshop. "What I do is not only for me, it's for you guys (staff and people served)." After each meeting, Cindy says she shares information with Workshop leaders. The board meets every three months in various parts of the state. At the last meeting in Pierre, Cindy was able to see the legislature in session.

BH Services honored by American Legion

BH Services was chosen by the American Legion National Economics Commission as the 2009 recipient of the American Legion's National Employer of the Year for Hiring the Disabled. They had been nominated and selected to receive the 2009 South Dakota American Legion Employer of the Disabled Award by the South Dakota American Legion Employment Committee. That nomination was then passed on to the national level where they took top honors again. BH Services will be recognized at the 91st Annual Department Convention of the South Dakota American Legion in Huron in June, and they have been invited to attend the 91st National Convention of The American Legion in Louisville, Kentucky to receive the national award. BH Services was nominated for both awards by the Box Elder American Legion Post 315.

Fourth brain injury conference draws more than 100

Approximately 115 people from across the country attended the 4th annual Black Hills Brain Injury Conference May 7-8 at the Ramkota Hotel in Rapid City. Professionals, survivors, and family members attended the event which was cosponsored by the Mayo Clinic and Community Transitions, our community re-entry program for people with brain injury.

Among the presenters was PJ Long, the survivor of a traumatic brain injury who tells the story of rebuilding her life in the acclaimed autobiography, *Gifts From the Broken Jar*.

Also presenting was Thomas F. Bergquist, Ph.D., LP, ABPP Assistant Professor of Psychology in the Mayo College of Medicine and Program Director of the Mayo Brain Injury Outpatient Program. He is board certified in Clinical Neuropsychology and is co-investigator of a study on use of the Internet to deliver cognitive rehabilitation services to rural populations.

James Malec, Ph.D., ABPP spoke on "Specialized Approaches to Vocational Rehabilitation and Re-integration after Brain Injury." He is Research Director of the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Foundation and Professor Emeritus at Mayo Clinic. Other presenters included K. Alan Kelts, M.D., Ph.D., a Neurologist at Black Hills Neurology; James Gardiner, Ph.D., ABPN, a Neuropsychologist at the Veterans Administration Outpatient Clinic as well as at Community Transitions in Rapid City; Christopher Elia, Ph.D, founding director and staff psychologist for Specialized Substance Use/Post Traumatic Stress Outpatient Program at the Fort Meade Veteran's Administration Medical Center; and Ron Sasso, MS, NCC, LPC. Director of Community Transitions. Many attendees also toured the Community Transitions facility.

BLACK HILLS WORKSHOP AND TRAINING CENTER, INC.
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Nancy Weiss honored

Nancy Weiss, the 2009 Black Hills Workshop Artist of the Year, was honored at Suzie's Royal Tea April 19 at the Radisson. More than one hundred and forty people were on hand at the event, which is also a fund raiser for the Suzie Cappa Center for Art Expression and Enjoyment. Like previous winners, Nancy has had one of her paintings reproduced on note cards which will be added to the selection of cards produced by Suzie Cappa artists.

Art instructor Brad Winter says Nancy has blossomed into a multi-media artist at the Center. She participates in bell choir and is one of the volunteers from the Suzie Cappa Center who performs regularly at a local nursing home.

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. "Oh, that was very fun," says Nancy. "They tied cloth on my wheelchair and they swung me around. I liked that part the best."

Nancy works at Black Hills Workshop on our contract with Rapid City Regional Hospital. "We're just so proud of Nancy and the accomplishments she's had. She's done so well," says her mother, Joyce Weiss.



The 2009 Artist of the Year, Nancy Weiss (right), poses with the 2008 winner, Sara Mellegard during the tea held April 19.

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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Meeting the Need



Thirty-nine people spent the day volunteering at Meeting the Need Camp on April 25. Meeting the Need is a camp for people with disabilities located near Keystone. One crew cut down three trees and cut them up for firewood; one raked; and one worked on slash piles. Coordinator Suzette Coy says it was a beautiful day. The weather cooperated until the end of the day, then ten inches of snow fell after the work was completed and everyone was home safe. Plans are being made for another visit to finish a few projects.

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The
Black Hills Workshop
Foundation
is now on Facebook!**

The Foundation's new Facebook page keeps Facebook users up to date on Workshop events. Become a fan and help introduce the Black Hills Workshop to your Facebook friends.

**BHW helps
shelter**

RSC donates to Humane Society
On April 11, Shelly Blank delivered 140 pounds of puppy chow to the Humane Society thanks to donations from RSC employees. A big thank you to all that donated to the Humane Society.

**Artists display
work**

Suzie Cappa artists have been invited to display their artwork on the set of KOTA Television news. Be watching for it! Meanwhile, nine pieces of Suzie Cappa art were also shown at the open house for the Autism Society's new office on April 28.

Homes from the heart

We need your help!

The Black Hills Workshop Foundation has recently launched a capital campaign to build or buy five homes that are accessible and affordable. Board members and staff are making personal contacts to detail the needs for people with disabilities to have homes in our community.

Our goal is to raise \$500,000 with the Foundation matching it dollar-for-dollar. We can use your help! The most successful campaigns are when friends and family members share this information and ask for financial help. Informational documents have been developed and we are able to send more information and personally assist you as you help tell our story.

We have already had positive response as a result of our first mailing and with your help we can reach our goal. For more information please contact Dennis Popp at 718-7466.



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