

TRANSITIONS

Black Hills Workshop & Training Center

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

Self-Advocates becoming empowered

Black Hills Workshop and the local People First chapter were represented at the Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) national conference September 4-7 in Indianapolis. Chuck Henrie, Nancy Weiss, and Michelle Aman all attended the conference along with 1500 people from across the United States and Canada. Nancy says one of the highlights for her was seeing how many people attended. "Just to be a part of that many was exciting. I've never been to anything that big."

She says she was even more excited to learn that all presentations at the conference would be made by people with disabilities learning to advocate for themselves. Nancy and Chuck were co-presenters at one of the break-out sessions with three self-advocates from Illinois. Their topic, "Together We Are Stronger" was about how they have not only learned to advocate for themselves, but how they

have been part of starting self-advocacy networks in their states. "They did really well. They got a lot of good feedback. They really got their audience involved," says Michelle Aman.

Nancy and Chuck are co-leaders of the state-wide advocacy movement, Advocates for Change. Chuck is also the President of People First, a local group which promotes people with disabilities speaking up for themselves. He was chosen at the conference to be an alternate regional representative to the national SABE board which will plan the next conference. Michelle Aman is a Resource and Support Supervisor at Black Hills Workshop & Training Center.

Throughout the four-day conference, there were many sessions covering a wide variety of issues faced by people with disabilities. Chuck and Nancy will be discussing what they learned at the confer-

ence with the South Dakota Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Black Hills Workshop Foundation Board, who contributed to pay their travel expenses, as well as People First, people served by Black Hills Workshop, and other groups.



Chuck Henrie presents at the Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered conference.

Molitor participates in national competition

Miss Wheelchair South Dakota Natalie Molitor traveled to Maryland July 21-27 for the national Miss Wheelchair Competition. Natalie said contestants were judged on a platform speech, dress, and poise. Her platform was disability awareness for children, a message she hopes to share with school children. Natalie, who has presented in front of audiences on many occasions, says this was the biggest audience she's had and that she was a little nervous. "It was kind of like a job interview."

"I didn't win, but I made a lot of good friends," says Natalie. She says she also had a wonderful time. She enjoyed a fifties night dance and a comedy night, and she says the highlight was the evening Miss Texas was crowned Miss Wheelchair America.



Natalie was named Miss Wheel Chair South Dakota this past summer. She has received services from Black Hills Workshop since 1999 and is currently employed as a receptionist at our Concourse Enterprises facility. In 2003, she received the Black Hills Workshop's Founder's Award for Outstanding Achievement.

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Employees take living wage issue to congress

Two employees from Black Hills Workshop visited South Dakota's Congressional delegation to call for an end to the direct support workforce crisis threatening the quality of life for millions of people with disabilities. "At issue is the alarming shortage of direct support professionals nationwide and their need for better compensation," said Chief Executive Officer Brad Saathoff. "Direct support services are funded through Medicaid reimbursements and state governments set the reimbursement rates, but the funding needs to keep pace with the economy and provide a living wage for direct support workers."

The week beginning September 8 was designated National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week by the Senate. The American Network of Community Options and Resources passed a companion resolution and assembled hundreds of direct support professionals, individuals with disabilities and their families from across the country to visit their elected representatives in Washington, DC September 9. Their goal was to promote the social and economic value that people with disabilities and the direct support professionals (DSP) who support them bring to their communities and to gain visibility for the DSP workforce wage crisis. Representing Black Hills Workshop, along with Saathoff, was Barry Gates, a residential instructor at Black Hills Workshop. "It was gratifying to see the amount of attention we were paid as we told our stories and the level of concern and support by the congressional delegations."

"Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), provide the critical daily supports people with disabilities need to live and work in the community," said Saathoff. "Millions of elderly and individuals with disabilities who receive personal and very intimate supports from DSPs every day bear the brunt of this workforce shortage."

Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin has signed on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 1279, a bill that would provide additional public funding for competitive wages and benefits for DSPs." On September 9, she presented a special order speech to the House of Representatives recognizing the need for DSPs and urging her colleagues to join her in co-sponsoring H.R. 1279.

Direct Support Professionals, often referred to as caregivers, personal assistants or home care aides, are the lynch pin to the ultimate success or failure of community-based long-term supports. DSP workers build close, trusted relationships with the millions of people with disabilities. They work in community settings assisting people with disabilities with medications, preparing and eating meals, dressing, mobility, and handling daily affairs. Unfortunately, these critical supports are being threatened by a growing workforce crisis.

Black Hills Workshop supports more than 600 people with a variety of disabilities. In South Dakota, more than 2,600 direct support professionals provide a broad range of support and care to approximately 4,000 individuals with disabilities receiving support and care by professionals on a daily basis, enabling them to live meaningful, productive lives, and stay connected to their families and communities. Nationwide, there are approximately 1.4 million individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who require professional support in order to live and work in their own communities rather than in institutions. Unfortunately, there are only about 875,000 direct support workers serving this one segment of the population. DSP positions will continue to be among the fastest growing jobs in America as 70 million Americans will be age 65 or older by 2030, twice as many as there were in 2000.



Fred Romkema, Director Northern Hills Training Center; Barry Gates, instructor Black Hills Workshop; Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin; Mackenzie Umberger, Instructor Northern Hills Training Center; Brad Saathoff, Chief Executive Officer Black Hills Workshop; and Becca Carlson, Director Community Connections, Winner.

BHW participates in United Way Day of Caring

Among the more than 900 volunteers who participated in the 10th annual United Way Day of Caring on September 4 was a group of staff and people supported by BHW. Thank you **Jimi Obretenov, Deanette Frein, Luke Utecht, Kandie Ronfeldt, Jeff McGlade, and Scott Schroeder**, who spent the afternoon helping to clean at the Central States Fair Grounds.

Meanwhile, eight volunteers from the **Explosive Ordinance Disposal Flight from Ellsworth Air Force Base's Civil Engineering Squadron** helped move file cabinets and build flower boxes for group homes. We appreciate their help and we are pleased that we could also make a contribution during United Way Day of Caring.



Alicia Goodner from the EAFB Civil Engineering Squadron

A friend of a friend said . . .

That is how information about the Black Hills Workshop is often shared. Many of our supporters don't have personal experiences with our quality of services and may not personally know a person with a severe disability in their family.

We recently received \$324,550 from the estate of John Scully, a long-time professor at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. Professor Scully established a charitable remainder trust a number of years ago and lived on the earnings of his trust until his death in early 2008. The trust included the Black Hills Workshop as one of his select charities because his financial advisor Kent Brugger recommended it. John learned about the Workshop and enjoyed seeing his trust grow in value knowing that many people in need would eventually benefit from his efforts and desire to share. Because of his interests in sports, some of his gift will go toward improvement in our Health, Fitness, and Sport Center.

The Black Hills Workshop has a list of professionals in the legal, financial, and accounting fields that specialize in helping people select the right type of trust or investment for their financial situation and desire to share.

As a friend of the Black Hills Workshop, we hope you will tell your friends about our quality services and ever increasing needs. For more information please call Dennis Popp at 605-718-7466.



Artists participate in Community

Artists in the Suzie Cappa Center have been busy with several projects for Chamber of Commerce events. They created 27 tablecloths for the Rushmore Honors Banquet which was held September 14 at the Rushmore Mall, and they are in the process of creating nine eight-foot cityscapes for the Chamber's annual meeting scheduled for October 4.

Meanwhile, members of the Suzie Cappa bell choir and director Melissa Even-son have started meeting two times per month at the Golden Living Center, performing with residents there.

In other news, 13 artists brought home prizes from the Central States Fair held August 16-23. Congratulations **Shawn Stratton, Sara Mellegard, Russell Steinback, Mike Leithauser, Lew Rock, Amy Fugate, Lisa Crow, Shawn Bifulco, Shad Bebout, Jacob Two Bulls, Kimberly Gade, Nancy Weiss, and Sandra Miller.**

Two group projects also received honors. A chair decorated with stamps received a blue ribbon and a judge's choice ribbon and the PEACE quilt received a blue ribbon.

Nationally-recognized speaker presents

Nationally recognized spokesperson for people with disabilities, Evelyne Villines, presented to the Rapid City People First organization and all three boards of the Black Hills Workshop during a visit August 26-27.

Villines told the People First group that there is still much to do as far as changing attitudes about people with disabilities. People First is a local group made up of people with disabilities learning to advocate for themselves. She encouraged them to continue to learn to speak up for themselves and their needs, to be open about their disabilities, and become politically knowledgeable and active, all of which she practices in her life.

Villines, who is from Des Moines, Iowa, travels extensively throughout the country promoting programs to enhance the quality of life for those with disabilities. She also talked about her own disability. As a child she had polio and faced many obstacles in her education and career, and her story and message hit home with many of people who attended her presentations. Villines is a former member of the presidentially-appointed Committee for Purchase from People who are Blind or Severely Disabled. She is also an advisory member of the Board of Goodwill Industries International and a consultant for NISH (formerly National Industries for the Severely Handicapped) both of which serve people with disabilities.



Pure Gold Gala

Brian Bertsch, Heather Kickery, Eric Rude, and Darlene Running Bear have been selected to receive our Founder's 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** will receive our Community Connection Award.

The Black Hills Workshop Gala is our chance to honor those who have made outstanding progress in our programs as well as those who have helped to make their success possible. The Gala is not only an entertaining and inspirational event, it is the night of a lifetime for our Founder's Award winners. It is hosted by the Black Hills Workshop Foundation and this year's sponsor is Duhamel Broadcasting. For ticket information, contact JoAnne Schriver at Black Hills Workshop at 605-718-6204.

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Festival of Fun

There's no official attendance count, but service coordinators served more than 700 hot dogs during the Festival of Fun held July 24 at Black Hills Workshop. Staff, people served, and guests from the community enjoyed free food, games, and entertainment by Sheltered Reality Drum Group, Miss Bows the Clown, and a group of cloggers. The event was part of a series of events held throughout the year to commemorate the Black Hills Workshop's 50th anniversary.



Twisted Nightmares

The Black Hills Workshop will host its annual Haunted House, Twisted Nightmares, October 24-25 from 7:00-9:30 p.m. at the Workshop, 3603 Range Road. Twisted Nightmares is open to the public, but is not recommend for children under the age of 8. Admission is one non-perishable food item which will be donated to the Food Bank.

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

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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Lose to Win: Round 2

Thirty teams of two people each are signed up for the second round of Lose To Win. Back by popular demand, the program got underway on September 2 with the first weigh-in. It will end on May 5. Teams made up of employees, people supported, and community members paid participation fees in order to raise money for prizes, the grand prize being round trip tickets to Las Vegas.

Overall 1565.58 pounds were lost by the 22 teams who participated in the original competition which ran from October 2007 through May 2008. The Lose to Win contest was the brain child of the Black Hills Workshop nursing department and was part of a series of events that is taking place throughout 2008 to celebrate the Black Hills Workshop's 50th anniversary. Like the original version, this Lose to Win contest will incorporate teamwork, education by nursing and dietary staff, and monthly weigh-ins.

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 focuses on how the more than 600 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 will highlight 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.

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. 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.

136 enjoy golf classic



Under the direction of the Black Hills Golf Classic Committee, 136 golfers enjoyed a fabulous day of golf and dinner on Monday, July 21. The Classic, which was held at Meadowbrook Golf Course with dinner at Canyon Lake Resort, raised \$28,000 to support our programs. Our platinum sponsor was FCE Benefit Administrators, represented by Warren Knocks, pictured here at the dinner with Black Hills Workshop Chief Executive Officer Brad Saathoff, Information Systems Manager Larry Thovson, and Director of Federal Contracts Larry Meendering. Other gold sponsors were Black Hills Gold by Coleman and Rapid Chevrolet and Cadillac.

Hong shares story in DC



Hong Dao was among the AbilityOne employees who shared personal stories with members of Congress at the 2008 NISH Grassroots Advocacy Conference June 9-13 in Washington DC. Hong has been employed on the BH Services AbilityOne food service contract at Offutt Air Force Base since July, 2007. AbilityOne is the largest single source of employment for people with severe disabilities in the United States. BH Services employs more than 60 people with disabilities at Offutt Air Force Base and nearly 80 at Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City through the AbilityOne program.

Hong shared with the conference attendees how he is able to support himself fully with his wages. Hong's supervisor, Juan Padilla, says Hong is responsible for kitchen cleanup, cleaning grills and pots, and replenishing the beverage line. "I like to do all of them," says Hong.

Contract Manager Terry Wilson says Hong's consistence, his willingness to work a variety of shifts, his ability to get along with others, and his knowledge of safety make him a valuable employee. Hong, 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.

A record-breaking number—180 individuals from 29 nonprofits nationwide participated in the conference. Along with Hong, BH Services was represented by BH Services Vice President of Operations Marty Krause, AbilityOne employee Tom Miller, BH Services Food Services Manager Terry Wilson, Paul Stabile, and Chief Executive Officer Brad Saathoff. Hong says it was his first trip to Washington. He visited Arlington Cemetery, several memorials, and the capital. "I learned a lot. It was a good experience."