

DREAMWEAVER

Working Together to Achieve Goals and Dreams

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Winter 2010

WEATHERING THE STORMS

Winter storms are always a headache, but this school year has been particularly brutal in western South Dakota (just in case you hadn't noticed!). Starting with the two blizzards in October, our stretch of Interstate 90 has been closed three times already this school year due to wintry weather. Even when the interstate has remained open, school closings have been common, and road conditions hazardous.

For some, the prospect of a "snow day" means staying home, snuggling up with hot chocolate and the dog to watch movies. For people who work at BHSSC, the view is a little bit different!

"We provide supports 24 hours a day, 365 days a year", said DD Division director Shirley Halverson, "and the only way that is possible is with very dedicated staff." There are times when people just simply cannot get to work, and employees who live nearer to the residences are called upon to fill in.

During every major storm, employees go above and beyond to ensure that the people we support are safe. Staff sometimes can only walk to work because streets are impassable, and they often bring a bag because they know they will need to stay until more staff can arrive. In the recent Christmas



A view from inside a front door in December!

storms in the northern hills, people rescheduled holiday time with their families in order to work at residences. The person on call, snowed in at home, spent much of Christmas day on the phone. From the pre-storm planning and scheduling to those people who actually plow through the drifts and make it to work, congratulations on a job very well done!



UPCOMING DATES

- January 18th—MLK Day
- Feb. 14th—Valentine's Day
- Feb. 15th—Presidents' Day
- Feb 16-17th—NH Six Month Training
- Feb. 18th—S. Hills Open House
- Feb. 26th—NH All Staff Inservice
- March 18th—NH All Staff Inservice
- TBA— S. Hills Inservices

BHSSC WINS "MOST ORIGINAL" IN STURGIS LIGHT PARADE

Our group of dedicated float decorators from Sturgis had their efforts rewarded at the Sturgis Parade of Lights in December! The BHSSC float, "To Infinity and Beyond—Wishing You a Christmas That's Out of This World!", won *most original* in the float competition held prior to the parade. Featuring a spaceship with Santa, several robots, a robot dog and a lighted sign, the float really was out of this world! The co-op had two vehicles in the parade, the float itself, on a flatbed trailer towed by a pickup, and a bus, decorated with lights, ribbons and banners with the Mission Statement "Working Together to Achieve Goals and Dreams". About 20 people walked and rode the parade route, handing out candy and shouting Merry Christmas to onlookers. It was a cold evening, but our hearts were warm with Christmas Cheer!



To Infinity and Beyond!

THE MESSENGERS TO PREMIER IN FEBRUARY

Two years in the making, *The Messengers* is an hour long documentary featuring Art Butcher and Steve Dallman. Art and Steve formed a consulting partnership several years ago, and worked with BHSSC film and video experts to make the popular DVD "Planning for Your Life". Their latest venture is the story of how they took their DVD and their message about the importance of self advocacy on the road to share with others. Art and Steve want people who receive services from Community Support Providers to know that they have the right to run their own planning meetings and to make the decisions that impact their lives. They offer a message of hope and empowerment to people receiving services, and they send a very clear message to the staff who work for them as well. "If people don't agree with their plan, they don't have to sign it. That's what I want people to know", says Art while Steve nods in strong agreement. "People can lead their own meetings, and the plans should be about what the people want."



Art, Steve and their buddy, Loki on the road delivering their message to others!

Watch for more information about public showings of *The Messengers*. According to Bob Markve, who has closely followed Art's and Steve's consulting careers, there are plans in the works for showings in local theatres, and possibly a television premier. From there, it's on to submitting the film to various film festivals in 2010. Congratulations, Art and Steve!!! *Can we have your autograph?*

CQL Review Coming in March!

The BHSSC Quality Measures review, conducted by the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL), will take place March 9th through the 11th, 2010.

This is our first review using CQL's Quality Measures 2005. There will be three focus areas: Shared Values, Personal Outcome Measures and Basic Assurances. *Shared Values* relates to the values BHSSC exhibits in the areas of people, community and our organization. *Personal Outcome Measures* are the things that people consider important in their lives, that they want and need to lead a full and meaningful life. People who receive services have a Personal Outcomes Interview at least once a year to see if their priority outcomes are in place. *Basic Assurances* are non-negotiable aspects of services that must be in place for certification to be given;

Rights protection, safety, being treated with dignity and respect, and freedom from abuse and neglect are examples of Basic Assurances. Many people throughout the agency have served in Basic Assurances workgroups, helping to make sure that all of the required factors are and continue to be in place.

The spring review will consist of interviews with people supported, families and/or legal representatives, various organizational and community focus groups with CQL staff, interviews with BHSSC employees and observations of typical life and work as people go about their days.

We look forward to welcoming CQL staff to BHSSC in March, and to our ongoing partnership with them as we continue to work with the Quality Measures 2005.

PROJECT FRIENDSHIP RECEIVES PAMIDA GRANT

BHSSC's Project Friendship was chosen to receive a \$1,000 grant from the Pamida Foundation, scheduled to be awarded on January 15th. Project Coordinator, Angel Foster, applied for the grant in November. She said the funds will be used specifically to cover costs of various activities for the group, which can run as much as \$300.00 per gathering.

Project Friendship is a volunteer based program which facilitates friendships between local high school and college students and people supported by the agency. The friendships begin through group get-togethers at bowling alleys, pools, parks, athletic events, etc. As people get to know one another in the group gatherings, individual friendships can naturally grow and develop.

Another part of Project Friendship is the Unified sports teams, including athletes from BHSSC and from local high schools and Black Hills State University. With softball and basketball teams participating at the local and the state levels, the athletes keep busy with practice and games year round.

Thanks to the Pamida Foundation, and Congratulations to Project Friendship!



Project Friendship Participants in the Belle Fourche 4th of July Parade

"Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship itself is a slow-ripening fruit."
-- Aristotle (4th century B.C.)

Spotlight ON: Growth in Community Connections

Humans are, by our very nature, social beings. We want a sense of connection and belonging. Our families, community ties and our friendships are important to us. Community Service Providers like Black Hills Special Services continually search for ways to help the people we support form and maintain those social connections that all of us yearn to have.

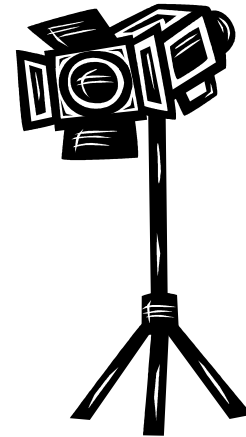
Two concepts have emerged in our efforts in recent years: bridge building and gatekeepers.

Building bridges requires that we do more than simply get people together. People can go to many events and activities and never form any real connections, just as people can live in a town and not be truly part of the community.

By using *gatekeepers*, we identify people

who already have particular connections or interests, people who perform social roles in their communities or groups. Those people can then “open the gate” for others, helping them to meet people and to fit into the group. Almost anyone can function as a gatekeeper for someone else. Churches, service organizations, interest-based groups and social groups all include people who can help others become involved.

Few of us realize our potential to help others by being gatekeepers. BHSSC has sponsored open houses in both the Northern and Southern Hills to spread the word. Staff inservices have focused on helping people see themselves in the role of gatekeepers who



can build bridges into the heart of the community. Bridge building and opening gates-working together, we really can achieve goals and dreams!

TAKING THE **PLUNGE** FOR **SPECIAL OLYMPICS!!!!**

*Freezin' for a Reason! March 13th
Spearfish Recreation Center Parking Lot*

Polar Plunge is an increasingly popular fundraising event for Special Olympics. Local communities throughout the country schedule plunges in creeks, rivers, oceans, swimming pools, tanks and troughs!

This year a local event is scheduled for March 13th in Spearfish. Special Olympics athletes from Sturgis (BHSSC) and



Spearfish (NHTC) will use the proceeds to travel to statewide athletic competitions. To participate, registered teams or individuals raise \$100.00 per person. Jumpers plunge into icy cold water in the Spearfish Rec Center Parking lot. Team members who can't bring themselves to jump receive a TCTP t-shirt -“too Chicken to Plunge”. Anyone wishing to jump with the BHSSC team or to make a donation can contact Tina Smith at 423-4444.

LOL—LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIFE!!

In computer and texting jargon, *LOL* means “laugh out loud”. At BHSSC, it's a way we share information about important topics, hopefully with some fun and laughter sprinkled in! LOL meetings are scheduled monthly at Pleasant Valley. People present short programs and allow time for questions and discussion. LOL topics are determined through recommendations from Basic Assurances Workgroups, self advocacy groups and by popular request. In the Northern Hills, the program is

coordinated by Kayla Loughlin. She develops the schedule and sends out announcements about upcoming presentations. Myrna Mowry coordinates LOL in the Southern Hills. Meeting times and presentations are scheduled as needed and take place at various places for people's convenience. For the first six months of 2010, topics on the roster include: BHSSC Complaint Policy, Understanding Medications, Person Centered Thinking, Due Process, Using Community Transportation, and

Rights Restoration/Due Process. Previous presentations have included home safety, winter preparedness, first aid and voting. Art and Steve (see article on page 2) presented “Speaking up for Your Rights”.

LOL provides people with the opportunity to learn and to ask questions in a small group setting. Have a topic you would like to suggest? Email Kayla Loughlin: pvprodasst@tie.net



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New Strategic Planning Process Includes Efforts of Many

Strategic Planning has changed!! By taking our mission statement to an organizational level, we find that *Working Together to Achieve Goals and Dreams* takes on a whole new meaning.

How does it work?

Independently functioning workgroups and committees meet regularly through the year. Monitoring Basic Assurances, promoting self advocacy, ensuring employee satisfaction, advancing safety, providing training, protecting rights—these groups and committees come together quarterly to share their progress, goals and action plans with each other and with the Leadership Representative Team (LRT—formerly known as

the Management team). These goals and objectives then become the BHSSC Strategic Plan for the Developmental Disabilities Division. Each quarter when the committees meet to share their reports, the Strategic plan is updated to reflect the progress, new goals and action plans.

How is the plan implemented?

The committees and workgroups are responsible for seeing that their action plans are carried out. Specific actions might need to be completed by staff working in various departments or by other committees. Everyone works together to make sure we are moving forward in a positive direction.

How is this different from before?

The Strategic Plan used to be based on the results from regulatory reviews. Reviewers told us what we needed to do differently, and the Management Team wrote a plan, which they then implemented. Our new process includes people supported, families, and a wide range of staff.

Can I see the Strategic Plan?

Absolutely! Employees can look under Strategic Planning in the DD Documentation folder. Others can contact Jane Hill at 605-423-4444, or email jhill@bhssc.tie.net