

OCP VOCATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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OCP Vocational Department Facilitates a Forum for Professionals

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Vocational Department Mission Statement

The Vocational Department provides services designed to utilize existing strengths and promote self-determination. Every participant is provided vocational opportunities to develop their unique potential, experience fulfillment, and develop a sense of purpose in an integrated setting.

On September 30th right here on campus, Benedictine OCP staff Mary Mostrom and colleagues from DORS, and Queen Anne County Resource and Transitional Coordinators, gave members of the professional community *something to talk about!*

So what *were* they talking about? As you probably know, providers of services for DDA (Developmental Disabilities Administration) across the region are grappling with the problem of maintaining effective services amidst budget slashes and increasing caseloads. In the midst of these challenges, Benedictine Open Community Program coordinated and hosted a panel discussion titled, "Helping Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Navigate the Maze to Adult Services." DDA Resource Coordinators together with Transition Coordinators from the school systems, parent advocates and social services representatives gathered in the board room to learn from a panel of experts, problem solve, and network.

One panel presenter was our own Mary Mostrom. In the past year Mary has developed a collaborative relationship with DORS (Division of Rehabilitation Services). DORS typically receives referrals for vocational youth assessments from Transitional Coordinators in the school systems, as well as from DDA Resource Coordinators. A thorough assessment is a critical component in finding a provider agency that is the best match, while promoting a smooth transition for young adults with disabilities into the adult working world. When Mary receives a DORS referral, she coordinates with work-

site supervisors to initiate the assessment process. For readers new to Benedictine, on campus opportunities are Car Wash, Laundry, Busy Bee Cleaning Service, Screen Printing, Embroidery, Print Shop, Food Service, Bee Green Recycling, and Greenhouse. Vocational staff may also travel to observe a student or young adult at a current community placement for assessment purposes. Mary compiles and synthesizes data from interviews, existing reports, and documentation of observations to produce a product invaluable to those charged with finding the best adult service provider possible to match the strengths, interests and needs of each participant.

Forum discussion involved not only the role of assessments, but identifying

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Members of the panel from left to right are Kris Rinker-Allen/Division of Rehabilitative Services, Martha Anthony/Transition Coordinator Queen Anne Public Schools, Jennifer Malm/Resource Coordinator DDA Queen Anne County, and Mary Mostrom/Vocational Coordinator Benedictine OCP. Standing: Scott Evans, OCP Director



**“SPOTLIGHT”
ON**



Joe V.



Joe F.

The vocational team would like to recognize Joe for his outstanding participation, his commitment, and his valuable contributions to the recently developed Bee Green Recycling Program. Joe is one of the founding and “key” employees of the recycling team, fulfilling an extensive community based contract for the Caroline County Public School system. Joe removes and transports recyclable materials from 15 separate locations throughout the county; returning it to Benedictine for sorting and processing. Joe subsequently assists in the transport of the processed bulk materials to an industrial recycling plant in Crumpton, Maryland. Joe has been extremely successful in this endeavor and has enjoyed returning to work in the community. Joe has exhibited a hard working nature and has developed many positive relationships with members of our local community. Congratulations Joe for demonstrating notable improvements with independence, self management, and showing initiative!!

“Excellent worker” “dependable” “consistent, quality work” are just some of the adjectives vocational staff use to describe the work and character of Joe. A participant in the vocational program since 1992, in the past year, Joe’s work performance as measured by his efficiency rates, has increased steadily over the last few years. Joe demonstrates mastery over any job he is given in all three of his work areas. Joe works primarily in the Laundry Department, where he is not only fond of folding fitted sheets, he excels at folding fitted sheets. Working for Busy Bee twice a week as a dishwasher in the school cafeteria, Joe is able to follow through with all steps in the process with an impeccable eye for detail that results in sparkling clean dishes and countertops. In the ITC, Joe can knock out any contract he’s assigned, though he is partial to bubbles and diaper kits. Additionally, Joe has demonstrated effective coping strategies to deal with unanticipated changes, making his past year smooth sailing. Thanks for all you do Joe!

FORUM (FROM PG 1)

and brainstorming ideas for future forums.

Feedback from evaluations was excellent. Here are just a few of the comments left by attendees.

“The panel that was chosen was well informed and explained how each agency works together to resolve the issues of transitioning.”

“It would be great to continue the discussion—come up with strategies and collaborate on how to move forward.”

“Great job! Excellent information and feedback from group.”

In a time of layoffs and downsizing, Benedictine OCP Vocational department is positioning itself for growth as well as continuing a legacy of excellence. Stay tuned, and we’ll give you even more to talk about!

Submitted by Kelley Malone

TALBOT SPECIAL RIDERS



Since 1981 Talbot Special Riders has been providing therapeutic horseback riding to individuals with disabilities. Supported mostly with the help of volunteers, the riders can feel the thrill of riding a horse as well as receive therapeutic experiences. Currently there are 11 OCP individuals participating in the Spring and Fall 10 week sessions. Talbot Special Riders is also a participant in the Equestrian Special Olympics held annually in June. If interested in being a volunteer or to observe the riders please contact: TSR at Glendale Farms 30485 Matthewstown Road (Rt. 328) Easton, MD 410-770-5413 or volunteer coordinator Nancy Radosta at 410-604-2290.

A FOCUS ON THE LAUNDRY DEPARTMENT

For more than 30 years the laundry department has provided Benedictine with many essential services. It offers opportunities for OCP individuals and students to develop skills, independence, and team work. Long time employee and current supervisor, Gloria Johns, supervises both school and OCP participants. Ms. Johns can recall the early beginning of her department when it was located in the Holy Family House. The laundry department was then under the supervision of Marie Gibbs, Gloria's mother. They operated with three washers and three dryers. In 1985 the laundry department moved from the HFH to their current location next to the Jake Devin Lee Training Center. This larger facility enabled them to add additional washers and dryers.

The laundry department currently provides employment for 6 OCP individuals and 4 school students. With the assistance of staff person, Anna Wilson, they provide laundry services to 6 school dormitories as well as providing miscellaneous laundry services for Busy Bee and the Carwash.

Individuals responsibilities include: loading and unloading the washers and dryers, folding, sorting (color coded by dorm) and delivery upon completion. The tasks vary from independent work to jobs requiring teamwork. While working in the laundry department individuals learn specific work skills as

well as good work ethics, quality workmanship, self management skills and how to meet deadlines. The laundry department provides individuals the opportunity to develop transferable skills which can be used to obtain community based employment.



From L-R Joe, Gerald, Anna, James, Jason, Gloria, Matt, Paula

GROUP UPDATES

LEADS

The LEADS (Learning to Excel, Achieve, and Develop Success) Group was formed in November of 2005 and designed to provide pre-employment education to their members. Some of the topics covered include: skill identification, interest inventory assessments, job exploration, application process, resume building, interview techniques, communication, and work ethics. The group currently consist of 8 members which meet every Thursday afternoon.

The LEADS group visits local industries and businesses to gain a better knowledge of the different types of work available in their community. Some of the sites visited include: Dixon Valve & Coupling, Town of Ridgely Commissioners Office and Police Department, Target, Doug's Tire, WCEI Radio, Caroline County Emergency Services, Garden Treasures, Hard Hatters, Food Lion and Global Defense Engineering.

The knowledge and skills acquired will help the participants in their efforts to obtain and maintain successful community based employment or volunteer opportunities.



From L-R Tom Ferkler, Kevin D., Patrick M., Nick F., Brenda Boyd Sitting Michele K., Kelly T. (Missing from photo Rebecca F., Gabriel B.)

BENEDICTINE OPEN COMMUNITY

Worksite Updates

DAC

DAC individuals and staff are busy preparing their own line of specialty products for pets. Under the name, *Canine Comfort*, they produce items such as treats, toys, blankets, beds and bandanas. Although their name implies dogs only, they do market products for cat lovers. DAC will be displaying and selling their products at the upcoming 39th annual Waterfowl Festival, in Easton, on November 13, 14 and 15th. Their booth will be located near the Dock Dog competition held at Easton Middle School.

DAC welcomes new Job Coaches; Tom Wardrop, Jewel Gross and Katharine Smith.

- The newsletter will be changing to quarterly issues as of January.
- Please be sure new jackets/coats are labeled with the individual's name.

ITC

With the return of the Konsyl Pharmaceuticals contract, the individuals are busy assembling sample packets of the company's Natural Fiber Supplement. Assembling the product is a five-step process. Steps include assembling the display box, pre-folding the tri-fold pouches, inserting two packets of the product into the pouch, sealing with a sticker and finally placing 12 sealed pouches in the display box. The completed product is then loaded and ready for shipping. Other contract work from other vendors remains steady. *Congratulations to Mary Lynn who is celebrating her 20th anniversary with Benedictine. Thanks for all you do.*

GRAPHICS

The holiday season is fast approaching and the graphics department is gearing up for the annual holiday events. They are preparing for the 41st Annual St. Benedict-St. Elizabeth Catholic Church Holiday Bazaar. The bazaar will be held at the Family Life Center in Ridgely, Friday, November 13th from 5-9pm and Saturday, November 14th 8am-2pm. They will also be participating in Benedictine's annual Christmas Bazaar held on November 30th. During both events they will be introducing 3 new holiday designs. The designs will be available on sweatshirts priced at S-XL \$15 and 2X-3X \$18 and long sleeve tee shirts selling from \$10-\$12. For special or unique holiday gifts, please have your orders in by November 30th.



OCP Welcomes Brian M.