Boswell Regional Center's

BULLEBUL

May 2023



Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month



Mental health is very important at any age, from childhood and adolescence, and even throughout adulthood. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps in determining how we handle stress, relate to others and make personal choices on a daily basis. Mental Illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the United States, with more than 1 in 5 adults living with mental illness and over 1 in 5 youth (age 13-18) having some form of debilitating mental illness at some point in their lives. Currently about 1 in 25 American adults lives with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar depression or major depressive disorders. Mental illnesses are more common than cancer and heart disease combined.

What causes mental illness?

Though no single cause of mental illness has yet been discovered, a number of factors are thought to contribute to someone's overall risk of developing some form of mental illness, such as adverse childhood experiences, experiences related to medical conditions, biological factors or chemical imbalances in the brain, as well as alcohol and/or drug use. It's also important to remember that, depending on many factors, a person's mental health can change over time. When life's demands exceed a person's resources or coping capabilities, their mental health can be negatively impacted. Working long hours, caring for aging or sick loved ones, and economic hardships can all serve as contributing factors to a decline in one's mental health.

What are the symptoms?

Though symptoms may vary greatly among individuals, it's important to be aware of common signs and symptoms of mental distress and to know where to turn for help. *Depression* could include feelings of a loss of hope and possibly thoughts of self harm or suicide. *Unusual fa-tigue* can be noted when activities that used to be handled with ease become increasingly difficult, or things that once brought joy lose their appeal. *Trouble concentrating* due to chronic stress may appear as difficulty performing work tasks or driving. *Changes in appetite* can be seen by someone not eating enough or possibly eating too much. The stress hormone cortisol can trigger cravings for high-fat, high-sugar foods. *Changes in sleep patterns* include going into sleep overload or struggling with insomnia. *Indifference and/or isolation* can affect activities of daily living, including one's hygiene or appearance. *Behavioral changes* demonstrating hypersensitivity and over-reacting, or avoiding social activities, missing work or school, etc. While these are a few general symptoms, it's important to remember that each person experiences life differently, and these experiences often influence how they respond to stressful situations.

Where do I get help?

Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) is dedicated to providing services in the least restrictive environments possible. Many mental disorders and illnesses can be successfully treated within one's community through local behavioral health providers. With proper assessment, a provider can determine if there is a need for mental health services, such as medication, individual and/or family therapy, psychosocial rehabilitation services, etc. If necessary, staff can guide those seeking help for themselves, or on behalf of someone else, through the process of receiving treatment in a hospital setting. Private providers in the community may also provide treatment alternatives to successfully address mental health disorders. Social stigma surrounding mental illness remains the biggest barrier to someone seeking out help for themselves or for someone they care about. For more information about services or if you or someone you know needs help, call the Mississippi Department of Mental Health's Helpline. Staff are available and ready to assist around the clock.

DMH's Toll-Free Helpline

1-877-210-8513

www.dmh.ms.gov



It's never too late to celebrate...

especially when it's for a great cause. The 3 primary characteristics of indi-The individuals and staff of the Brookhaven Group Home were gracious enough to postpone their annual Autism Awareness Day, which typically takes place in April to a day in May, in order to allow the BRC Spring Fling to take place during the month of April.

Needless to say, this didn't stop anyone from having a good time. There were plenty of engaging activities, music, dancing, and great food for everyone to enjoy. Celebrating the unique attributes of individuals with autism is something that can take place any day of the year.

In Mississippi, an estimated six in every one thousand babies born will be diagnosed with some form of autism before their eighteenth birthday. Individuals with autism can live just as long as the average person and can go on to lead very fulfilling lives.

Often those with high-functioning autism, or Asperger's Syndrome, go on to marry, attend college, have successful careers and are play an active role in their communities. Other individuals may require some level of assistance in order to achieve optimal function.

viduals with autism are: 1) poorly developed social skills, 2) difficulty with expressive and receptive communication, and 3) the presence of restrictive and repetitive behaviors. Because social norms are of no concern to them, they are very genuine and will tell it like it is.

They can also be very enthusiastic. If they have an interest in something, they are really engaged and excited about it. In addition, some individuals with autism are social and eager to be around other people and can make good friends because they care deeply for others.

Men and women with autism are often goal-focused and achievement oriented. They can make excellent employees, because they are detail oriented and take a great deal of pride in their work. Oftentimes they demonstrate good recall abilities and are very organized, with a strong desire to finish the tasks they have started.

We are thankful for individuals with autism and for the qualities they bring to the table. BRC and the world are much better places with them in it.

Sources: msdh.gov; mayinstitute.org

Ricky and Rhonda stopped by to check on Eric and other leadership at Brookhaven to ensure everyone was having a good time.





Trizi's face painting booth was a hot spot for anyone who wanted to add a some elevate to their celebrate.



Amber demonstrates her matching skills as Erika and Caitlyn guide her through the process.



There's no substitute for the smell of popcorn in the air. After several tries and a few burnt fingers, James Randolph was finally able to get the popcorn machine cooperating.

MAC Announces Employees of the Year

On May 5, 2023, staff and clients of MS Adolescent Center (MAC) enjoyed a fiesta, consisting of delicious Mexican cuisine, party favors, and games. Bur this was no ordinary fiesta! It was a colorful and fun-filled celebration, honoring the 2022 Employees of the Year— *Cinco de Mayo* style! Below, MAC Director, Jamie Prine, presented awards to both Antoune and Lange at the Employee of the Year event and highlighted that each of them were very deserving of the awards, and MAC is a better home for our clients because of their contributions to the facility.



The 2022 Employee of the Year for Support Services, Lange Porter, returned to work in the Housekeeping Department at MAC in 2022. Lange has been referred to as a "father figure" for the clients at MAC, and "they are excited to see him each day." He takes a great deal of pride in his work in the Housekeeping Department, and we are thankful for his experience and diligence.



The 2022 Employee of the Year for Direct Care Services, Antoune Matee, has been employed at MAC for seven years. He is highly regarded by his supervisors and co-workers. His supervisor noted, "He knows his job, does it well, and is always willing to go the extra mile when needed." Antoune's calm and patient temperament allows him to build a special bond with the clients, and this shows in his daily interactions with them.



On Friday, May 12, 2023, MS Adolescent Center recognized the nurses who provide excellent care to the clients! All nurses were invited to enjoy lunch, desserts from Nothing Bundt Cakes, and games! We appreciate them every day but took time during Nurses Appreciation Week to make them feel extra special. We are thankful for all nurses, but we believe ours are the BEST!

Toya Humphrey

The nurses at MAC have an exceptional leader who supports them, motivates them, and showers them with monthly "happies" she refers to as MAC-pacs! Toya Humphrey wears many hats at MAC—she is the Director of Nursing, but she is always willing to work in any capacity needed. We especially enjoy her talent as the facility's party planner and decorator! Thank you, Toya, for all you do to show appreciation to others and to make them feel special.





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More Cinco de Mayo at MAC





Ms. Erma Butler has been employed at MS Adolescent Center as a teacher since 2016. Prior to coming to the MAC, Ms. Butler taught in the public school system for 19 years. Since beginning her career in 1997, she has earned a Master's Degree and, most recently, a Specialist's Degree in Special Education with emphasis in severe disabilities from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Ms. Butler was accepted into the Specialist's program at USM in August of 2020, and prior to earning a Specialist's Degree in May 2023, she was required to complete a field study. This study was a single case study summary entitled, "Will using Teacher Delivered Instruction on a Fixed Time Schedule Increase On-task Behavior?" The results of the study revealed successful intervention methods and results. Discussion of this study being published is on-going.

We are excited to have Ms. Butler as part of our team at MAC. She uses every "tool in her toolbox" to individualize instruction to the clients in her classroom, and she is an asset to the Education Department and MAC's interdisciplinary programs.



Erma Butler, ED.S pictured with MAC Director, Jamie Prine.

Co-Lin Community College Class of 2023



On Wednesday, May 10, 2023, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Simpson County Campus held its 2023 graduation commencement ceremony in the historical BRC auditorium. Under the direction of Nicole Cheramie, Director of Student Services, several students and staff members arrived a day earlier in order to decorate the stage and hold graduation rehearsal. On the day of graduation, BRC campus was lined with traffic, and the auditorium was at near capacity, as friends and family came out to show their support for this graduating class. Co-Lin Simpson Campus has held graduation ceremonies at the BRC auditorium since 2007, and we are honored to be the chosen site for this milestone event.







TORCH RUN





Above left: City of Magee Police Chief, Shane Little, bears the "Flame of Hope" as a symbol of inclusion, courage and diversity.

Above Right: BRC Assistant Director, Ricky Grimes, shares the history of the LEO Torch Run and the significance it holds for the individuals at Boswell Regional Center.

Left: Special Olympic athlete, Justin Wyatt, recites the Special Olympic athlete's oath, "Let me win."

Below: City of Magee Mayor, Dale Berry, shares his love and compassion for the individuals of BRC.

May 10, 2023, marked BRC's participation in the annual LEO Torch Run, an event that has gained global recognition as the signal for the beginning of The Special Olympics Games. Mississippi LEOs carry the "Flame of Hope" throughout the state in an effort to raise money and demonstrate support for The Special Olympics. This year's Mississippi run began in Southaven and ended in Biloxi, stopping at multiple points throughout the state to allow other county and city law enforcement officials an opportunity to participate. The Torch Run at Boswell began at the front gate, with Police Chief, Shane Little carrying the torch while being escorted by BRC Security, members of the City of Magee Fire and Police Departments, Chris DeBack from the Biloxi Police Department. A brief ceremony was conducted at Green Park to commemorate the annual event, with special remarks from BRC Assistant Director, Ricky Grimes; City of Magee Mayor, Dale Berry and others.





Left: BRC Chaplain, Rev. Charlie Meadows, Jr begins the Torch Run ceremony with a word of prayer.



Left: Chris Deback, Assistant Chief of the Biloxi Police Department and organizer for the annual LEO Torch Run in Mississippi shares encouraging words with BRC Special Olympics participants.



Special Olympics





Left: Johnathan Traxler (far right) earned the Bronze metal in Bocce Singles Event





BRC Athletes Bring Home Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals

Special Olympics is always an exciting time for individuals to showcase their athletic prowess and be center-stage for a brief moment of time, as they receive their much-earned gold, silver, and bronze medals. This year's winners pictured top right are, from Left: Shannon Lavorn, Johnathan Traxler, Frankie Lamb, Willie Bailey, and Justin Wyatt.



Left: Director, Clint Ashley (far right), and Assistant Director, Ricky Grimes (far left) join staff and family members to ensure a safe sendoff for BRC athletes who traveled to Biloxi, MS to compete in the Special Olympic Games at Keesler Airforce Base.

Honoring Our Mothers

There are many ways to honor the ones we call, Mom. Staff and Individuals at Connections chose to express their love for moms in a way that's as unique as she is. Tonya George, Program Specialist, had a great idea of allowing individuals from Community Day Services to release different colored balloons representing their own individual moms.

Pink balloons were given to clients to represent those moms who were still living. After reading a poem designated to these moms, Tonya instructed the clients to release their balloons, and within a few seconds, the sky was filled with the shimmer of dancing pink balloons.

Purple balloons were given to clients to represent moms who were no longer living. Tonya read a separate poem designated to the these particular moms and instructed the clients to release their purple

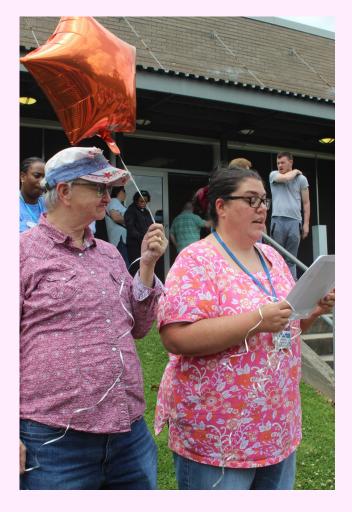
balloons into the air in honor of her memory.

A single **Orange** balloon was given to a client to represent the childless mother. This mother has no children of her own, but attends to the needs of others. She could be a stepmother, an aunt, a friend, or any woman who chooses to love and nurture others in the same manner she would her own children. After reading the poem of the childless mother, the single balloon was released into the sky.

It doesn't take much to show moms how much we love and appreciate them, even those moms who are no longer with us, or the moms to whom we have no relation. Nothing we could ever do or buy could come close to conveying her genuine beauty and invaluable worth. While reading a poem and releasing a balloon in her honor/ memory may seem like a simple jester to some, the affections behind it are priceless.







Osby Named Employee of the Year



Selected as Boswell Regional Center's Employee of the Year for 2022, Catina Osby is seen being congratulated by Director Clint Ashley. Catina received an engraved trophy along with \$100 cash award sponsored by BRC's Friends and Family Association.



Catina attributes her success to a strong support system consisting of friends and coworkers. Pictured with her above from Left: Aaron Walker, Nyla Wells, Ann Brinson, Natisha Polk, Roxie Weathersby, Arthur Milton, Catina Osby, Rakeem Duckworth, Ingrid Mills, Mollye Hancock, Maci Taylor, Dakota Lofton and back row is Derrick Lewis



Catina Osby fulfills her first duty as Employee of the Year by assisting Director Clint Ashley in awarding several employees with door prizes and \$50 gift cards, all sponsored by the The Friends & Family Association. In addition, Catina will serve on the Board of Friends and Family for one year.

Employee Appreciation Day



Employees awarded Governor's Service Awards for 10 and 20 years of service, pictured with Asst. Director, Ricky Grimes (L) and Director, Clint Ashley (far R): Angela Muphy, Calvin Bynum, Carla Nichols, Beth Luper, and Greg Amason.



Friends and Family (F&F) Association awards Sapphire pins to donors of \$100 per year. Pictured above with Ricky Grimes and Clint Ashley, from left: F&F President, Lee Maddox; F&F Board Member, Josh Allen; F&F Secretary, Renee Burton; Linda McGill; HR Director, Suzie Wilder; and Georgia Smith.



Amber Canoy and Chasity Butler work hard to ensure everyone gets registered for door prizes and giveaways.



Shawntae Walker and Kassie Ibarra hit the target by signing up over 20 new Friends and Family members.



Friends and Family Association awards Emerald pins to donors of \$50 per year. Pictured with Director, Clint Ashley from Left: Rebecca Nixon, Nanette Rankin, and Valerie Willis.



Shana Thompson and Luvenia (Vinnie) Banks assist in sorting through names as winners are being notified.

Good Times Sponsored by











Join today! It benefits you and the individuals we serve. Contact Renee Burton Ext. 75078

Door prizes furnished by these generous donors:

<u>Petals & Blooms</u> 252 Simpson Hwy 149 Magee, MS 39111 601-382-3291

Tillman Furniture 203 Pinola Drive SW Magee, MS 39111 601-849-2580

<u>Cole Western & Workwear</u> 503 Pinola Drive Magee, MS 39111 601-745-5529

Zips Café 405 Pinola Drive Magee, MS 39111 601-849-3385

<u>Fernando's Fajita Factory</u> 1670 US 49 Magee, MS 39111 601-849-9377 <u>The F.R.O.G.</u> 309 Pinola Drive Magee, MS 39111 601-921-9698

<u>Gene Polk Gifts</u> 406 Simpson Hwy 149 Magee, MS 39111 601-849-2533

<u>Dairy Queen</u> 1463 Simpson Hwy 49 Magee, MS 39111 601-849-2100

R&M Tractor Supply, Inc. 501 Pinola Dr. SE Magee, MS 39111 601-849-2141

<u>Cattle Drive Grill</u> 509 1st Ave. SW Magee, MS 39111 601-299-4202 Poppy Petal Florist & Gifts 109 1st St SE Magee, MS 39111 601-849-5243

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Angela's Garden, Gifts... 203 Pinola Drive SE Magee, MS 39111 601-439-7444 <u>KFC</u> 225 Pinola Drive Magee, MS 39111 601-849-4511

<u>Tractor Supply Co.</u> 1800 Simpson Hwy 49 Magee, MS 39111

<u>Subway</u> 421 Pinola Drive Magee, MS 39111 601-439-7222



Spa Day When you look good, you feel good...

Lillian McGill, Nina MaGee, and Larissa Sims wanted to make sure the men and women on campus felt as good on the inside as they looked on the outside. Using their own money, these ladies decorated and supplied the existing beauty shop with everything you'd expect to find in a real beauty salon or barber shop.

Set up for both men and women to enjoy having their hair washed and/or styled, their nails trimmed and/or painted, or just hanging out to enjoy the barber/beauty shop atmosphere, the shop has everything needed for a full day of pampering, even magazines to read while you wait. In addition, each of these ladies is highly skilled in the unique area of service they are providing.

The idea behind this new service was not only to provide individuals with an incentive for good behavior, but also to have a tool for mitigating unwanted behavior

Kudos to these ladies for not just seeing a need, but for taking the initiative to fulfill this need in the lives of our individuals. May their investment of time, love, and money bring them a hundred fold return in the happy hearts they create.











Beauty Salon



Williams Bids Farewell





Lynn Williams, Social Worker for Oakbrook bids farewell after serving at Boswell Regional Center for 28 years.

Lynn says she became familiar with Boswell through her mom, who worked as a DCW, and that she never wanted to work here herself because of fear of the unknown. "My mama tried to tell me how wonderful it was, but I was just scared." After a life-changing event, she decided she would give it a try, and it didn't take long before she too fell in love. "The campus is so beautiful, the staff are friendly and supportive, and you can't help falling in love with the individuals. I said, 'I wasn't going anywhere'."

She began her journey as a DCW in 1994, and while raising a family, she continued her education at Co-Lin. She says her plan was to get a degree in medical records and begin working with a friend at UMMC. But after working here a while, she decided she wanted to stay, especially with her children attending Mendenhall Schools.

She was among the first class of Copiah-Lincoln Community College to hold their graduation ceremony here on BRC campus back in 2007. She continued her education at Jackson State University, and in 2009 earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. When asked if any person of event comes to mind when she looks back on her time here, Lynn says she remembers the firework shows that would take place by the lake every year. "These were so nice, and it was such a big deal for everybody...all Simpson County knew about it, especially the Magee area."

She recalls several individuals who share a place in her heart...people like Barbara Edge. "She is my little mini-me; I call her my micro manager. She keeps me on track; anytime she's expecting money or a pass, or something, she makes sure I'm on top of it." Lynn said she broke the news of her upcoming retirement to Barbara back in April to give time for her transition to someone else handling her affairs.

She says her supervisor, Natasha Polk, has been a Godsend. "She is just so down to earth, and her energy...she's always so positive and such an encourager. And Will, what can I say about Will Beeson? We've been together since the Jacquith days; he's been great to me as well."

After retirement, Lynn says she plans to take about 3 months for leisure and light

travel, and then she plans to work part time in a school or hospital setting. Giving her best advice, she says, "Each day you come in, find something positive to share with our individuals, because they love it. To them, we are their family. Working with our population is hard, but it is very, very rewarding."

Her final words to staff and individuals: "This isn't good bye; it's just farewell. I will be back to visit. When y'all have special events, I will come back to share them with you guys."

Good luck to you, Lynn. Your cheerful smile and pleasant demeanor will be certainly be missed.



Lynn Williams congratulated by BRC Director Clint Ashley

Josie Taylor Retires after 17 years



"We think we're teaching them something, but they've taught me more than I ever thought about teaching them."

Surrounded by family and friends, Josie Taylor celebrated her retirement after 17 years. To say that her coworkers went out of their way to give her a great sendoff would be an understatement. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but even pictures fail to capture the amount of effort that was put into making sure everything was just right cause of the close proximity to her home in Brookhaven, but she stayed for her retirement party.

The tables were draped with navy blue table cloths, each chair was enveloped in beautiful pink fabric, and an amazing balloon arch with coordinating colors was created to serve as the perfect backdrop for picture taking. Celine Dion's "Because You Loved Me" played as coworkers showered Josie Taylor with gifts and sentiments of appreciation. Then there was the food...oh the amount of food...enough to feed a small army. There was fried catfish, chicken wings, spaghetti, pasta salad, potato salad, garden salad, you name it, not to mention the delicious butter pecan cake with a sugary screen print of Josie herself.

After everyone had eaten, and Josie had opened her gifts, the staff and individuals broke out into dancing and singing, even paying a tribute to the Queen of Rock-n-Roll, the late Tina Turner, with "Proud Mary" karaoke style. Great food, great friends, and great fun...what could be better?

Josie Taylor began her career at Boswell back in 2006, when she moved to Mississippi from Illinois to care for a grandmother who had

been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. She says prior to this she worked as a medical assistant for 20 years. Her first position at Boswell was that of a Direct Care Worker, which she held for 11 years before becoming a Therapeutic Tech. She says she chose Boswell behere because of her love for the individuals and the staff.

She recalls certain staff members, like Eric Brown, Mary Kelly, and Katina Runnels, who have made a significant impact on her over the years. She says she always felt supported and encouraged by them, and that they helped to keep her focused.

After retirement, Josie says she plans to travel, starting in early June with a trip to New York, and that she will also stay busy this summer preparing for her son's wedding. Afterwards she plans to work part time as a receptionist in a medical office and to reserve plenty of time for spending with family and taking care of herself.

Josie says she plans to keep in touch with everyone and will participate in the Adopt-A-Friend program, where employees can "adopt" individuals for brief outings off campus. She says, "To the individuals, I give you my love, and to the staff, if you don't think this is the job for you, then don't stay." We think that's pretty good advice.

We wish you the best, Josie; enjoy this new journey.

Reflections on Memorial Day

For those of us who have never known anything but freedom, the thought of it being something worth dying for might seem a bit foreign. After all, the United States of America has been a free nation for nearly 250 years. We have laws in place that protect our freedom. And our

rights, we can certainly get hung up on these and will quickly let someone know when they've imposed upon our rights.

Admittedly, our freedom is something so familiar to us that we rarely ever consider what it would be like if we no longer had it. Like our heart beat or our next breath, we take it for granted. In fact, most of us never even think about those things unless they're threatened. But for anyone who has experienced respiratory or cardiovascular issues, they can tell you just how important it is,

and how we should do everything in our power to preserve it.

Thanks to modern medicine, respiratory or cardiovascular diseases are largely treatable, and one can hope to add years to his/her life by simply following a physician's orders. The same holds true for freedom; when it comes under attack, and our very way of life is threatened, there is a treatment for it; it's called, battle, and the orders which must be followed often come with a heavy price.



Memorial Day has become known as the unofficial first day of summer; the official day is actually June 21st. Many people take advantage of this national holiday by opening up their pools for the first time, firing up the grill to cook hot dogs and hamburgers, or just using the time to

> get caught up on chores around the house. And while most of us do our best to honor and remember the reason for the day, we can't truly begin to understand the sacrifice being observed. For anyone who's lost a loved one on the battlefield, its something they can never forget.

> So how do we begin to pay our respect and show our appreciation for those who have fallen, who laid down their lives and paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we enjoy? The answer to this is unclear, but what's not un-

clear is the fact that freedom has never been free, and it should not be taken for granted. Because like the servicemember, whose heart beats within the walls of his chest for the very last time, when our freedom is gone, it will be gone for good, and only the memory of it will remain.

Ahh... snow cones, the perfect kickoff to summer!

Shaved ice, molded into just the right shape, drenched with loads of flavored, syrupy goodness, served up in a paper cup with a plastic spoon. Oh yeah, that's what it's all about! Making snow cones can be a lot of work, and it's definitely super messy; but it's always a hit for making people smile, and it just might be the most refreshing treat around for tackling those hot Mississippi summers.

Campus individuals started the summer out on the right foot this year with popcorn and snow cones. Recreation staff pulled out all the stops in order to provide sweet and savory treats for individuals in honor of Memorial Day, the first unofficial day of summer.

Green Park was crowded with individuals hanging out, playing basketball, and of course watching and waiting as recreation staff popped popcorn and made snow cones for them to enjoy. It doesn't usually take a lot to make others feel special. Desire, coupled with initiative, can usually hit the target pretty easily.

We appreciate the recreation staff for their hard work and for making this Memorial Day a special time for our individuals.





BOSWELL REGIONAL CENTER

BRC BULLETIN

<u>The Boswell Bulletin</u> is published without cost to inform the public, employees, friends, and family of Boswell Regional Center's (BRC) activities, programs, and progress. This publication also serves to provide information to those interested in the work conducted by BRC employees to enrich the lives of those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

Boswell Regional Center

1049 Simpson Hwy 149 Magee, MS 39111 Telephone Number: (601) 867-5000 www.boswell.state.ms.us

Clint Ashley

Director

Renee Burton

Editor

Mission Statement

Boswell Regional Center offers specialized program options to Mississippians with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. These programs are designed to identify the necessary supports for successful community transition. With collaboration between the individual, family, and community...

where dreams can become reality.