



BOSWELL REGIONAL CENTER'S **BULLETIN**

VOLUME V

SUMMER 2006

NUMBER 2



DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Raymond Johnson

As usual, we are having a busy summer at Boswell Regional Center. One of the highlights of the summer was a successful birthday party on June 30, which marked our 30th year of operation.

Staff and individuals were treated to a cookout and a giant birthday cake, but the most memorable part of the event was the time we spent together enjoying the day and socializing with each other.

Photos of our Birthday Party, which will now be an annual recreational event each June, can be found on page seven of this publication.

In order to provide the most modern, accessible and comfortable facilities for both our individuals and our employees, our Maintenance Department works year-round on projects that improve both our buildings and grounds.

Following is just a small sample of the progress we are making toward helping us achieve that important goal:

- PAR Center Renovations- This building, formerly used for recreational and programming activities, is one of the oldest and most historic structures on our campus. However, it was heavily damaged when Hurricane Katrina blew through our area last summer. The decision has been to renovate this building with ADA upgrades in order to restore as well as

improve this important structure for future use by our individuals.

- Auditorium and Roofing Repairs- Our historic Auditorium, which is one of the only buildings on campus that underwent a renovation project in recent years, also received a sizable amount of damage from the hurricane. In addition, roof damage was incurred on many buildings around campus. These important repair jobs are scheduled for the immediate future. We look forward to restoring our buildings to their former glory.
- Jaquith Plumbing- I have mentioned the many problems and concerns of our outdated, and in many cases, irreparable plumbing system in this column before. This is not often a topic of discussion, but it has been a very real concern for us, particularly as it relates to the safe living conditions of our individuals who reside in the Jaquith Building. After several years, it appears this project may be coming to fruition. We are currently working with architects on the design of the new ADA-accessible bath and restrooms in the building. If all goes according to plan, we hope to begin work in August.
- New Sidewalks- We encourage our individuals to walk on our campus whenever weather permits, both for exercise and to spend time outdoors. In an effort to aid these efforts, we are in the process of completing a project that provided wide, wheelchair-accessible sidewalks across a heavily-traveled area. In addition, Boswell's welders and painters have done an excellent job of creating attractive handrails that enhance the look of the sidewalks and grounds.

While some may not put the upgrading of facilities on their priority list, we feel that this is an important part of our mission – to care for our individuals in the best possible environment.

After all, Boswell is "home" to many who depend on us to take care of their daily needs, both large and small.

That is something that we will continue to do, both today and into the future.

Author Pens Book Based At Sanatorium

Broken Spirit, a book chronicling the life of a former patient at the old Mississippi Tuberculosis Sanatorium, which now houses Boswell Regional Center, made its debut in Simpson County in mid-July.

Research for the fictional story set in Simpson County was provided in part from old records, photos and artifacts of the Sanatorium viewed by author John Shivers during visits to Boswell over the past couple of years.

In addition, a wealth of information was provided by David Tedford, Boswell's Vocational Services Director, who grew up near the Sanatorium, as well as Jimmie and Billie Duckworth, former Sanatorium staff members who lived on the grounds.

In honor of Boswell's assistance to the book, Shivers held a special book signing on July 18 at the LeGrand Café just a few days after the book was published.

BRC BULLETIN

The Boswell Bulletin is a publication of Boswell Regional Center. The Bulletin is published free of charge to inform the public and interested family members and individuals about Boswell Regional Center activities, policies and progress. This publication also serves to provide information to those interested in mental retardation and the clients served at BRC.



Raymond Johnson, Director
Kara Kimbrough, Editor

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and each facility to recruit, employ, and promote qualified employees and applicants without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability. The Department of Mental Health/Bureau of Mental Retardation complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. It is the sole purpose of this act to provide a clear mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

COVER PHOTO



Author John Shivers is pictured autographing copies of his second book, "Broken Spirit," for BRC employees in the LeGrand Café on July 18. For more on Shivers' visit, see the story on the left.

Gloria Johnson Receives National Honor

One of Boswell Regional Center's assistant directors was nationally honored recently by her peers for her leadership in the American Association of Mental Retardation (AAMR). Gloria Johnson was named a Fellow at the association's May international meeting, the highest honor a member can receive.



"Gloria has helped strengthen AAMR's efforts on the state, southeastern and national levels," said Raymond Johnson, Director of Boswell. "Her dedication to the individuals served by Boswell and AAMR, and the contributions to its programs has

made her a leader in her field and this esteemed organization." Johnson has been a member of AAMR for over 20 years. She has held numerous offices in both the state and southeastern chapters, including chairperson for the annual conferences during consecutive years.

Johnson was acknowledged by the judges for her leadership in program development and administration as it relates to the advancement of those with developmental disabilities. She also was recognized for engaging those in the field of mental retardation through outstanding academic achievement, publications and the presentation of professional papers.



L. C. Industries of Hazlehurst recently honored several Boswell individuals with 15 years or more of service to their company, which is a contractor in Boswell's Vocational Programs.

"This recognition ceremony gives us the opportunity to publicly thank Boswell and these dedicated individuals for their invaluable contribution to L.C. Industries," said Jeff Easterling, senior plant manager for the company, which manufactures a variety of products ranging from janitorial supplies to plastic cutlery.

Individuals and BRC staff were treated to a reception following the recognition ceremony.

BRC individuals who received service awards from L.C. Industries were, front row from left: Merle, David and Mary Ann. Pictured on the back row are, from left: Jeff Easterling, senior plant manager for L.C. Industries and David Tedford, director of Vocational Services.



Rosalynn Forrest, director of Boswell's Early Intervention Program in Meadville, and Barbara Buie, director of the Brookhaven Day Habilitation Center, were recently awarded the Certificate in Supervisory Management (CSM) designation after successfully completing three of the six management and leadership courses in the State of Mississippi's CPM program.

Pictured at the ceremony are, from left: Steven Allen, assistant director of Boswell, Barbara Buie, Rosalynn Forrest, Roger McMurtry, bureau director/mental health for the Department of Mental Health; Ed LeGrand, deputy executive director of DMH; and Robert Bass, executive director of the Mississippi State Personnel Board.



Frankie Cahee, center, a valued employee in BRC's Education Department, retired recently with 25 years of dedicated service to BRC. Most recently, Cahee worked with the center's retirees, and was a favorite among individuals and staff. Cahee was honored at a reception attended by a large number of co-workers and friends. She received a retirement certificate from BRC Director Raymond Johnson, right.

MR/DD Awareness Month Celebrations

In honor of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Month, BRC staged a number of events in the counties and areas in which its facilities are located to increase public awareness of, and provide education on the programs and services offered to those with disabilities.

Events included the signing of a proclamation by the mayors of Magee, Mendenhall and Brookhaven in honor of BRC's contributions to those cities; open houses of community group homes in Magee and Wesson; display boards and literature

distributed throughout Simpson and Lincoln Counties; weekly newspaper articles and photos highlighting various programs; tours of BRC's vocational centers and group homes provided to elected officials, special education teachers and business professionals; and most important, health screenings and receptions for BRC individuals and staff.

In addition, BRC participated in the Department of Mental Health's "Day at the Capitol," where the center's Early Intervention Program was spotlighted.



Boswell Regional Center Director Raymond Johnson, a plaque of appreciation to Magee WalMart manager from right, in recognition of the store's commitment to ties. WalMart is the largest community employer of BRC graduates who have graduated into the center's Employment Services program. Johnson and Ellington are a few of the individuals who have benefited from the center's services, including, from left: Pam, James, Deshon and Christi.



Brookhaven Mayor Bob Massengill, far right, talks with Mary, an individual at the Brookhaven Work Activity Center during a tour of the facility. The center hosted an Open House and tour for members of the Brookhaven Chamber of Commerce and other elected officials following the signing of an MR/DD Month proclamation signed by the mayor. On the left is Board of Mental Health member Billy Buford of Brookhaven, who attended to show his support.



Dr. Tommy Blackledge, center, a family medicine physician who resides in BRC's community apartments and homes to provide health screenings and a reception staged in their honor.

ated With Variety of Events



third from left, presented Mark Ellington, third hiring those with disabilities-RC individuals who have am. Pictured with o work at Walmart, ne.



Yashica Davis, right, a teacher in Boswell's Early Intervention Program in Meadville, points out materials to an interested parent at the Department of Mental Health's "Day in the Capitol" event.



Simpson County Tax Assessor Charles Baldwin, left, visits with Magee ICF/MR Group Home Director Mike Jones, right, at an Open House held at the Morton Group Home. Baldwin was one of several county and city officials who stopped by to view the home's operations and visit with individuals.



physician, invited individuals who visit his Magee clinic for free



Magee General Hospital provide free health screenings to Boswell employees during the month at the request of BRC's Human Resources department. At far right, security Chief Johnny Graham takes advantage of free cholesterol and blood pressure checks.

Warm Weather Heralds Special Events

Activities designed to celebrate the end of winter and the advent of warm, sunny weather were staged throughout BRC's campuses for the enjoyment of individuals and staff. The barbecue grill, volleyball nets and basketballs were brought out of storage and the fun began!



Denise Brown from the Education department took time out to paint faces during Spring Fling, an annual event at BRC.



Individuals from Brookhaven and Wesson made the trip over for Spring Fling and enjoyed visiting with their friends from the Magee campus.



Kerri East, left, from the Recreation department, gave Jane's hand and nails some special attention at Spring Fling.



BRC staff members, from left, Sam Cole, Angie Freeman, Susan Butler and Amber Craft put on their aprons and assisted the dietary staff in serving individuals lunch during Spring Fling.

New Safety Measure Added At Boswell Regional Center

A new crossing gate was added recently to the railroad tracks that cross Boswell's front entrance. The addition will increase safety for the hundreds who enter the grounds each day. Special thanks is extended to State Sen. Billy Thames, who helped make the safety measure a reality.



Boswell Celebrates 30th Year With Birthday Party

Food, fun and socializing were on the agenda June 30, when Boswell officially turned 30 years old. To mark the day, a cookout was held for all individuals and staff, who enjoyed the time together, free of schedules and regular activities.

Following are photos from the day, which will be celebrated annually:



Above, Left: Employees and individuals who often work and live in different areas were reunited at the birthday party. Staff members Lamache Boykin and Sharon Floyd, from left, enjoyed visiting with Della, far right.

Above, Right: Taking a break from the office was a treat for these Business Services employees that included, from left: Lynn Johnson, Sonjia Kittrell and Jennifer Kittrell.



Left: Dietary Director Laurie Watts, second from left, serves the first piece of birthday cake to BRC individual Jay, far right. Also pictured are shift supervisor Betty Dollar, far left, and Shannon Austin, second from right, administrative assistant in Dietary.

First Job Fair Deemed A Success

Boswell's first-ever Job Fair was held recently, drawing over 100 from a four-county area interested in learning more about employment opportunities at BRC.

Organized by BRC's Human Resources and Public Relations departments, the Job Fair will be an annual event, according to Human Resources Director Suzanne Smith.

"We were surprised not only by the large number who attended, but by the caliber of those who were seeking employment at Boswell," Smith said. "We discovered this is an excellent way to obtain applications from those with a wide range of education and employment skills."



Human Resources Director Suzanne Smith, far right, talks to applicants at BRCs' first annual Job Fair.

IN MEMORIAM

Boswell mourns the loss of Marcus Hamilton, an employee in the Resident Living department, who passed away June 11, 2006

Marcus was a valued employee at Boswell for seven years. He is survived by a host of friends and family, including his brother Bobby, a recreation therapist at BRC.



Marcus Hamilton, pictured on the back row, far right, was photographed for the last time at Boswell during Spring Fling doing what he loved best – interacting with individuals. Marcus' athletic skills helped his volleyball team, composed of both staff and individuals, win the championship trophy.

Boswell Regional Center



Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 128
Magee, MS 39111

Physical Address:
1049 Simpson Highway 149
Magee, MS 39111

(601) 867-5000

Raymond Johnson, Director