The National Award Winning

...Sowing Seeds of Closer Communication Between the Center and the Community-At-Large

Vol. 27, No. 3 **26th year keeping readers in-the-know!** **Fall 2008**

Within the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the **BEATRICE STATE DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER** provides 24-hour residential, medical, habilitative and consultative services for Nebraskans with mental retardation or related conditions.
BSDC VISION: *B*est *S*upport for *D*ignity and *C*hoice: "Learning for Life."

Department of Justice, DHHS reach agreeement

An agreement reached with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) in June affirms that steps taken to improve care for people served at the Beatrice State Developmental Center are on the right track.

"I am very pleased about the collaborative agreement that affirms the future of BSDC and protects the rights of people with developmental disabilities," said **John Wyvill**, Director of the DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities. "DOJ recognizes the commitment BSDC staff have to making improvements, and now we can focus on improving the safety and quality of life of BSDC clients."

"We applaud the state of Nebraska for its innovative efforts to more effectively serve BSDC clients and ensure their health, safety and welfare," said **Grace Chung Becker**, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at DOJ, in a DOJ news release.

DOJ's Civil Rights Division visited BSDC in October 2007 and alleged violations of constitutional or federal statutory rights. The settlement requirements are consistent with the five-point plan DHHS announced in March 2008.

Among other stipulations in the settlement, DHHS agrees to regular on-site visits by an independent expert, taking steps to minimize or eliminate injuries, ensuring placement of clients in the most integrated setting possible, enhancing transition plans for individuals served at BSDC, expanding and monitoring community capacity and placements including expansion of BSDC's intensive treatment and outpatient treatment services.

Efforts to reduce the number of people served at BSDC so that staffing is consistent with providing quality care are having a tremendous impact already, Wyvill said. For example, in December 2007, the census was 329 individuals, on March 15 it was 305, and on June 27 it was 267. At the same time, mandatory overtime dropped from over 604 hours for the March 3-16, 2008, pay period to 84 hours for the June 9-22, 2008, pay period.

"Staff at BSDC have continued to step up to meet the challenges of improving services, and our success in reducing census and mandatory overtime are due in large part to their efforts and efforts of our co-workers across the Division of Developmental Disabilities," said Center CEO **Ron Stegemann**.

"We appreciate DOJ's efforts and are pleased to have reached a settlement that provides for real solutions at BSDC," Wyvill said.

Sower becomes an on-line publication

Except for a few quick copies distributed across the BSDC campus, *Sower's* next issues will be available only on-line at *www.dhhs.ne.gov/Sower*.
See page 6 for more details.

Center citizen moves closer to home

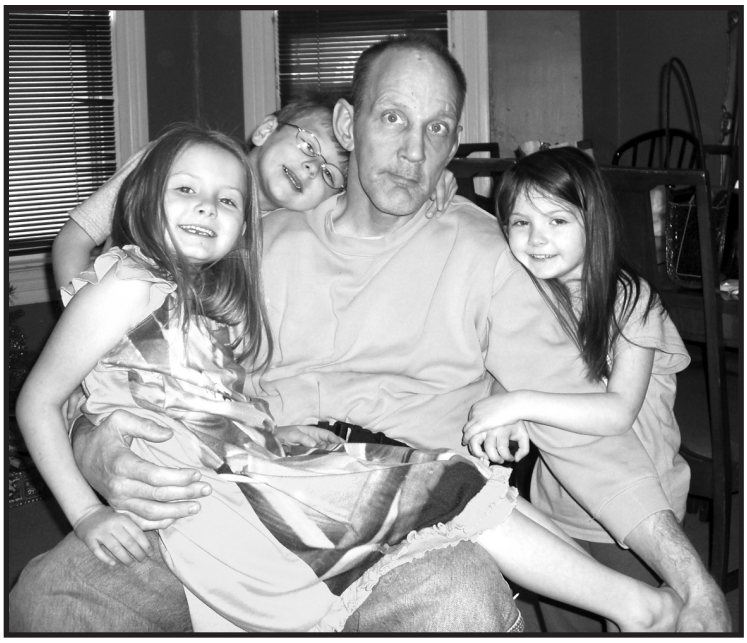
Philip Patrick grew up in Omaha and, after being served in a Beatrice community-based program, came to BSDC at age 18. After placements at the Lincoln Regional Center and a community-based program in Bellevue, he returned to BSDC in 1990. Last winter, Phil moved back to Omaha, where he will be closer to his family.

"The BSDC team helped tremendously during Phil's return," says **Fylis Falk**, Developmental Disabilities Service Coordinator who arranged the move. "They have been awesome and are always available to lend support."

"We love our Phil to pieces and are thrilled to have him back home," says **Nikki Patrick**, wife of Phil's younger brother, **Paul**, who recently became his legal guardians. Phil's father is **Joe Patrick**, popular TV personality of the 1950s, '60s and '70s, now living in retirement in Branson, Missouri.

"We can now participate in his life and he in ours," Nikki says. "Our children, **Lainey** (age 7) and **Leah** (age 5), as well as two nephews and a niece, enjoy spending time with their Uncle Phil. They look forward to their weekend visits with him and often remind me not to make plans unless he's included."

"Phil loves home cook-outs, shopping at the mall, helping pay for any purchases, and riding in his brother's big red pickup" Nikki says. "He loves our kids even more. You can see how he hugs them, enjoys and cares deeply about them. That's what makes us happiest about him moving closer to us. Our children's lives would be very different without Uncle Phil!"



Philip Patrick with nieces and nephew after his return home last year. From left, Lainey Patrick, Colton Goss and Leah Patrick. *Photo: Carie Kreiser*

When Phil was young, his grandfather taught him some things about electronics that has stayed with him through the years.

"No matter how many times you put something back together, he has to "fix" it again, says Nikki.

Beef Torrey, a Psychological Associate at BSDC, has had a special relationship for 20 years with Phil, both during and after his stay in Beatrice. The pair dined together weekly on campus and enjoyed birthday dinners at downtown restaurants and football games in both Beatrice and Crete.

"I miss the multiple knocks on my office door each morning and afternoon just to chat," Torrey says. "Always a tinkerer, he also looked forward to my bringing an old radio or phone from home for him to tinker with. He didn't always get them put back together, but he sure enjoyed taking them apart to see what was inside."

In Omaha, Phil receives services from Nebraska MENTOR, a private provider. He lives in an apartment with one roommate, has his own bedroom and bathroom, and helps plan meals.

Phil attends the MENTOR vocational center Monday through Friday from morning until mid-afternoon. At the day center, he participates in an exercise group, reading group, plays bingo and does arts and crafts. He also volunteers at the Douglas County Hospital, where he folds towels among other laundry duties.

"Still a real tinkerer, Phil enjoys taking apart vacuum cleaners and computers," says **Angela Gibson**, Regional Director with MENTOR. "Phil also has a wonderful sense of humor and is always up for making new friends. He's a very caring guy who simply knows no strangers."

The following editorial is from **James Plate**, former Center citizen who contributed to *Sower* for three years, edited a newsletter of his own for BSDC clients, and is now served by Mid-Nebraska Individual Services (MNIS) in Kearney, where he edits the *MNIS Round Up*. Thanks to MNIS instructor **Marvin Fisher**, James' articles will continue to appear in *Sower*.

Words of Wisdom

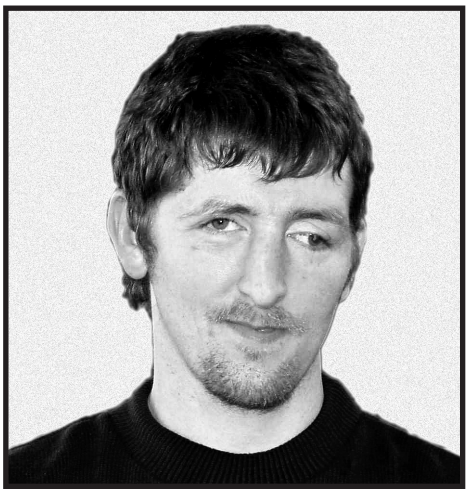
By James Plate

Meeting new people can be a joy or a hassle. It sort of depends on your choice. But I would go for kindness. If kind, you will make more friends and have more fun.

Working with different individuals can't always be bad. So try to be open-minded and have fun with new people. You never know who you will make as a friends unless you have a chance and try something new. However, you have to remember that you always need to believe.

This job has worked out well for me and I would hope you would enjoy the same results. Even if you don't, good luck and keep trying. You have to keep the faith. We're all pullin' for you little buddy.

Well, that's all I know for now.



James Plate
Photo: Roger Girch

CORRECTION: *Sower's* previous front cover misidentified The ARC of Nebraska as "Association for Retarded Citizens" — a designation including archaic terminology of an earlier era rather than the people-first language of today. However, "The Arc" is no longer an acronym but now a word denoting the national organization of family members and friends advocating in the interests of individuals with developmental disabilities since 1950. *Sower* regrets this lapse and joins with the Arc of Nebraska in urging everyone to put all people, including citizens with developmental disabilities, first.

BSDC Family and Friends Association seeks funds!

When the budget won't stretch, the BSDC Family and Friends Association raises funds to purchase items tax dollars can't. More than 40 years old, the Association is incorporated and granted federal tax exemption.

Among projects the Foundation targets: A golf cart for individuals who are aging or with disabilities to transport themselves around campus; two-seated trikes for individuals to enjoy cycling experiences; landscaping improvements for the BSDC section of Evergreen Cemetery; and awards for exemplary care-giving.

Please send your donation to the BSDC Family and Friends Association in care of **Joel Bute** at 1126 North 150th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68154. If you desire more information about developing a trust for a person served that may ultimately benefit the BSDC Family and Friends Association, please contact Joel at the address above or call (402) 496-1686.

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Former Center citizen enjoying new home in McCook

*By **Bonnie Dible***
Developmental Disabilities Service Coordinator
McCook, Nebraska

Craig Kuchel moved to McCook in May 2008 after living at BSDC for most of his life. The past few weeks have offered new faces and friends, as well as new learning opportunities.

Craig Kuchel at his new home in McCook.
Photo: Bonnie Dible

Craig is enjoying a family style home life with five other gentlemen. He learns from his house mates by mimicking behaviors he sees, such as using a napkin and taking his dirty dishes to the kitchen.

Craig expresses himself primarily without words, so it came as something of a surprise at the vocational site when he mimicked the term of co-workers and boldly proclaimed, *"Awesome!"*

With the additional privacy of his own bedroom, Craig also experiences the joy of solitude. He spends time alone in his room looking outside at the wonderful trees and landscaping that surround his home. Even without words, his smiles and facial expressions speak clearly of his approval and pleasure.

So many things to do and so little time! Recently Craig and his friends went to the circus. His eyes were glued to the sights he saw, and his laughter let everyone know just how much he enjoyed it. Craig and his house mates also went to the park for an evening picnic. Exercise aids good health, and Craig has taken a stroll to church, once again relishing the outdoors.

Craig is still getting to know everyone, and people around him are getting to know him. If you ever wonder if Craig accepts you, he will give you a friendly pat on the wrist just to let you know. He is a unique individual and just being around him and his infectious laugh makes you happy!

Craig Kuchel sums up all of these major changes in his life with one word: *"Awesome!"*

Seeing *IS* Believing!

Here's what some recent visitors to campus had to say...

I was amazed...I expected a more institutional setting but very happy to see that was not the case.

Pamela Harper
Humboldt, Nebraska

Not at all what I envisioned. More like a college campus or small town, and clients truly have lives.

Suzanne Mooradian
Marysville, Kansas

I'm impressed. Very clean, homey environment. Clients appear well cared for, and staff treat them like family.

Doris Erickson
Falls City, Nebraska

If you'd like to see for yourself, contact **Jan Whitehead** now at (402) 223-6116 to schedule a tour!

Patient-centered approach helps Center citizens take basic dental procedures in stride

While many might anticipate a trip to the dentist's office less than eagerly, a patient-centered approach at the BSDC Dental Clinic helps make Center citizens less anxious about basic procedures like cleaning teeth.

A patient-centered approach is simply one which puts the patient first and personalizes services. The approach often starts at the campus address shortly after an appointment at the BSDC Dental Clinic is made, when staff members explain what will take place ahead of time so individuals know what to expect.

This approach continues when patients arrive at the Dental Clinic to be greeted by long-time Dental Assistant **Rosie Reedy**.

"I've been here during the tenure of 16 dentists since 1969," she says. "If I haven't learned something about how to make patients feel welcome and relaxed, then I'd certainly owe an explanation!"

Reedy makes the patient comfortable in the dental chair, explains in more detail what will occur, and tries to calm any apprehension.

"I've know many of them for a long time, and a familiar face puts many of them at ease right away," Reedy explains. "Just chatting, teasing or joking with any patient also goes a long way toward making them feel more comfortable and relaxed."

The dentist's chair-side manner is the next step in a patient-centered approach.

Dr. Dennis Pestal and Rosie Reedy use a patient-centered approach to make Jay Swoboda's visit as pleasant and risk-free as possible. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*

"I start with a smile and a friendly greeting," says Center dentist **Dr. Dennis Pestal**. "Then I explain what I will be doing and ask if that's OK. Talking patients through each step of the procedure and taking their feelings into account along the way helps patients feel more in control."

In the Dental Clinic, getting the job done right with as much patient cooperation as possible is more important than getting it done quickly.

"If we don't achieve complete cleaning done on the first try," says Dr. Pestal, "the patient is brought back on another day."

The Dental Clinic also puts a major emphasis on preventive care rather than waiting until problems develop.

"If we can prevent a dental problem rather than fix one," says Dr. Pestal," then we've done the patient a real service."

A patient-centered approach not only helps assure patients' comfort and cooperation but is safer as well.

"While patients like ours in earlier times were often given general anesthesia to ensure cooperation for even the most basic procedures, that approach also created an additional risk for patients," says Dr. Pestal. "However, sometimes general anesthesia is the kindest approach and needed to achieve optimal dental health. That decision must always be made in concert with medical staff, the family or guardian, the interdisciplinary team, the Human & Legal Rights Committee, and the CEO to ensure the patient's safety and quality of care."

As a patient-centered approach demonstrates, visits to the BSDC Dental Clinic can be as pleasant and risk-free as possible.

Giving back to the community a BSDC habit

Two BSDC teams including clients, employees and community friends took part in the 2008 American Cancer Relay for Life. Several team members are cancer survivors. The total BSDC teams contributed to the American Cancer Society was $2,550!

Members on one BSDC team each paid their own entry fees, and BSDC paid a $300 fee for Center citizens on the other team. Cancer survivors pay no fee. In addition to entry fee funds, each team raised approximately $1,000 in additional contributions for the cause.

"The excitement of individuals who participated was contagious," says BSDC Community Integration Liaison **Fran Stegemann**, "and even a bit of rain and cold couldn't dampen their spirits about giving back to the community."

The Relay for Life is only one community cause to which Center clients and employees give their time and talents. Others include helping with clean-up following tornadoes, contributing to Gage County food drives, donating blood to the Red Cross, taking gifts to nursing home residents, and picking up trash along the roadway.

RELAY FOR LIFE PARTICIPANTS: Seated (l-r): Bernadette Dudgeon, Tim Grabowski, Randy Stalnaker, Gretchen Stauffer and Leona Hansen; Second row (l-r): Volunteer Marcella Higer and Developmental Technicians Katie Burgess, Trish Parde, and Karena Willoughby; Back row (l-r) BSDC Employment Coordinator Jan Hiner and Community Integration Liaison Fran Stegemann *Photo: Sherry Knapp*

Sower's new address: *www.dhhs.ne.gov/Sower*

To save money and allow for more current coverage, the Center's national award-winning *Sower* newsletter will now be published on-line. While a few quick-copies will be provided in BSDC break rooms and common areas for employees without computer access, the November and all subsequent issues will be accessed at *www.dhhs.ne.gov/Sower*.

Another benefit of on-line publication is that *Sower* can be viewed in color, and color copies can be downloaded for those with color printers.

"The same effort will be made to update our readers about Center services and activities as before," says **Jerry Crisp**, Public Information Officer with DHHS's Communication & Legislative Services section, who has served as *Sower's* only editor. "The only difference will be the way in which the publication is accessed."

Sower began 26 years ago with a circulation of several hundred that grew to nearly 4,000.

If you want to start or renew your subscription, find out how on the following insert. You'll receive an e-mail reminder about the availability of each quarterly issue.

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

* An update from DD Director John Wyvill

* A “Speaking for Myself” interview with a Center citizen

* An update on a former BSDC client now living in the community

* A community-based success story contributed by a Service Coordinator

at a glance

SPECIAL OLYMPICS: BSDC athletes succeeded spectacularly again at the 2008 Special Olympics State Games at Crieghton University in Omaha this spring. Thirty-three BSDC Athletes competed, earning 21 gold medals, 20 silver, 13 bronze medals, three 4th-place ribbons, two 5th place and one 6th-place ribbon.

"Everyone worked hard all year long to get ready for the games," says **Bill Clark** of the Center's Recreation Department. "They did a great job, and more importantly they had fun doing it. We are already practicing to participate next year." *Photo courtesy of Special Olympics*

WORTHY OF NOTE: Several 203 Kennedy Drive staff needed someone to fill in while they attended the funeral of a former client. Human Services Treatment Specialist **Karen Engelman** (at left) says the first four people she asked—LPN **Lois Kotas**, Nursing Administrator **Alan McVay**, Operating Officer **Mike Mulvaney**, and Associate Nursing Administrator **Debi Rinne**—agreed to help. Professionals like these put the idea of supporting direct care providers into action. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*

TRAINING THAT MATTERS: Clinical Nurse Trainers **Sharon McVay** (left) and **Marci Regier** show how to clear an airway and apply CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) on a "Resusci-Annie," as they do in Staff Development classes. McVay was recently recognized for 25 years and Regier for five years of training service. The quality training McVay and Regier provide enables BSDC staff to respond to emergencies promptly and appropriately.

A dozen employees who have applied CPR, Rescue Breathing and the Heimlich Maneuver both on and off campus were recognized at the same ceremony. This handful is only the latest of scores of other employees similarly honored at the Center over many years.

"The ultimate value of all of this training and preparedness are realized by individuals who have been spared serious injury and even death," says Staff Developmental Resource Coordinator **Rick Mayfield**. "These beneficiaries are living proof of how classroom concepts find their way into real-life situations to make a dramatic difference. *Photo: Gail Russell*

When BSDC employees help individuals with developmental disabilities live better lives...

Facility Faces

...then Center services and Center service providers become one and the same.

Direct care provider **Retha Siems** is among the third generation of her family to serve Center clients. Her grandparents, **LeRoy** and **Bernice Koller**, worked at the facility, and family members who still do are mom **Sandy Clark**, dad **Bill Clark**, uncle **George Clark**, aunt **Theresa Clark**, and sisters **Kim Clark** and **Jackie Saathoff**. Unsure at first if she would be up to serving high-need clients, Retha now says "It makes my day when some extra attention or a few words can put a big smile on someone's face."

The most unusual event she recalls in 8 years on the job was one day at the pool when three male staff members had to rely on the pool's emergency supply of swimming trunks. "When they came out of the locker room in hot pink trunks because nothing else was available," says Retha, "we all shared a big laugh!"

Working at BSDC might not be all laughs, but according to Retha Siems, periodic bursts of fun sure help make the workplace more enjoyable. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*

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