



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

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: Best Support for Dignity and Choice: "Learning for Life."

New leaders takes charge at BSDC and Division of Developmental Disabilities

Daniel L. Howell has been named as permanent Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). Howell replaces Interim CEO **Claire E. Mahon**, who held that post since February.

"We're fortunate to have someone with Dan's background and experience to lead BSDC at this critical time," said **Kerry Winterer**, the new CEO of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). "He will focus on helping BSDC get back its national reputation as a place that uses best practices to provide quality services, and getting recertified through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)."

Howell has served as CEO of the Anne Carlsen Center for Children in Jamestown, North Dakota, since 1999. His experience includes developing the first long-



New Center CEO Daniel L. Howell speaks with the media, as Kerry Winterer and Jodi Fenner look on.
Photo: Bill Wiley

term care acute care hospital in North Dakota; nine years as CEO of an organization for special needs children; recruiting physicians; working in the ICF/MR or institutional environment; leading an integrated rural delivery system; and long-range planning and marketing.

Howell has a Bachelor of Arts degree in hospital administration from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and a Masters of Management from the University

of Mary in Bismark, North Dakota.

Howell's appointment was made by **Jodi Fenner**, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities within the Nebraska Department of Developmental Disabilities. The Division is responsible for certifying community providers, technical assistance, regulations, payment for providers and community-based developmental disabilities services, and operation of BSDC.

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Fenner has been Interim Division Director since July 6 and served as DHHS Chief Legal Counsel since November 2007. Her background includes serving as Section Chief of the Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Section in the Attorney General's Office and adjunct professor at Southeast Community College in Lincoln.

"Jodi's skills will allow a new level of insight for both BSDC and community services," Winterer said. "She cares deeply about the well-being of people with developmental disabilities and will work closely with families and providers to improve services in Nebraska."

Fenner graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Law, completed a 3-year certification program for school administrators at Oklahoma State University, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business with emphasis in accounting from Oklahoma City University. She worked as a governmental auditor and was licensed as a Certified Public Accountant in Oklahoma.

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. Thanks to MNIS Production Assistant **Kathy Quail**, James' articles continue to appear in *Sower*.

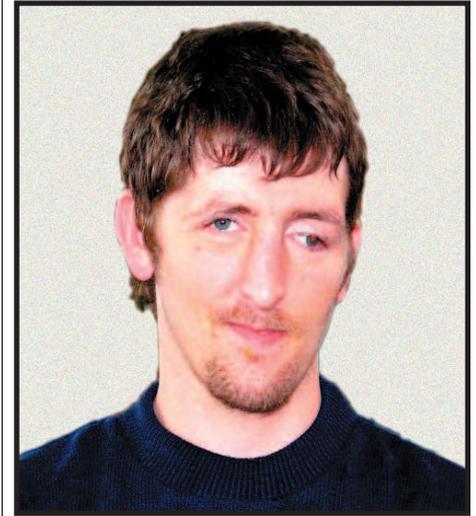
Fourth of July memory

Guess that this time, I am being coaxed into this. However, I have asked her many times to help me and then lost interest. Guess she has a good point. lol

It isn't that I don't like July Fourth fireworks, but they are just bombs that create beauty in the sky and then are gone. You remember them for a moment.

My best 4th was when I went to North Loup. They had a slow pitch tournament, and I got to play. That was awesome for me. I actually hit a home run, well, almost. They at least let me run the bases. The fireworks were fireworks, but they didn't beat my home run!

Guess I am being once again coaxed to say, well, maybe not so much, but remember the good



James Plate
Photo: Roger Girch

things that happen to you, and learn a lesson from the bad. Have to take a quote from her, "Life is short so let by-gones be by-gones, and just live it."

Tomorrow is another day to live, and I am going to make the best of it.

BSDC Family and Friends Association seeks funds

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.

Please send your donation to the BSDC Friends and Family Association in care of **Joel Bute** at 1126 North 150th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68154. If you want 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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ADA/AA/EOE

Outreach Treatment Services program reaches across state to help community clients live better lives

The Outreach Treatment Services (OTS) program has been reaching out to benefit clients in communities across Nebraska since 1995. OTS teams respond to requests from community-based programs to share skills needed to serve difficult-to-treat clients.

OTS consultations provide positive behavior support recommendations to help clients with challenging behaviors maintain their community placements. Types of behaviors addressed in an OTS consultation include verbal and physical aggression, running away, stealing, property destruction, self-injurious behavior and inappropriate sexual behaviors.

Since 2005, OTS teams have worked with approximately 179 clients and their teams. Clients are diagnosed with a developmental disability and often present a wide array of psychiatric, behavioral, genetic, and/or medical issues.

In a case involving Donnai-Barrow Syndrome—involving impairment of nerve fibers connecting the two hemispheres of the brain and experienced only by a handful of people in the world—follow-up revealed that the OTS team had contributed to a significant improvement regarding behavioral functioning in a very challenging case. A later follow-up showed that improvements had been both positive and lasting.

Over the years, OTS has pro-



OTS team members: (Seated) Human Services Treatment Specialist (HSTS) Amy Peterson, Licensed Psychologist Meredith Griffin, PsyD, and HSTS Angela Banker; (Standing left to right) newcomer Corinne Stoneking and HSTS Roger Geery. Photo: Julie Bratt

duced a track record of successes and testimonials from satisfied customers including Services Coordinators, family members, guardians, community team members, and clients themselves:

Great insight!

Very thorough!

Creative ideas!

Focused on staff strengths and

encouraged staff to focus on client strengths!

Good at fitting in and not disrupting what they're observing. They bring knowledge of outside resources areas like ours don't really know about.

OTS really worked WITH us.

I would work with them again in a heartbeat.

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Expert in behavior. Fresh perspective on individual situation. Flexible with follow-up.

The commitment of the OTS to the client and the client's team is unbelievable. Their willingness to help at all hours of the night should be commended.

OTS is always a great resource.

Amy, Roger and Meredith were awesome! They did an excellent job of getting to know the client and the client's entire team. They were

well-organized and listened to all aspects before they made any recommendations.

OTS was prepared, responsive, helpful and informative... The client's team has already seen a positive difference in the client.

The only improvement would be that they should become permanent members of the client's team.

Satisfied customers like these offer convincing testimonials of which the Center can be justly proud.

THE OTS PROCESS

The OTS team is made up of a psychologist and human services treatment specialists. The team uses a comprehensive approach, which includes direct observations in the client's home and workplace/school. The OTS team uses standardized assessments and semi-structured interviews with the client, family, teachers, therapists, employers and others.

OTS consultations occur over a 3-day period. On the first day, the OTS team meets with the client's community treatment team to develop common goals. Following the meeting, the OTS team typically observes the client and completes assessments with the client and the community team throughout the rest of the day and again the following morning.

The OTS team then develops recommendations for an exit meeting on the third day. These recommendations are aimed at helping the client and community treatment team reduce problematic behaviors and improve quality of life. The community treatment team decides which, if any, of the OTS recommendations to adopt.

The OTS team continues to consult with the client's community treatment team for three months to monitor progress and answer any questions regarding adopted recommendations. A follow-up trip can be requested and would involve part of the OTS team returning to observe, collect information and provide refined or additional recommendations.

For more information or to request information about OTS, contact Transition Specialist **Sue Spitzer** at (402) 223-6161.



Cliff Lindell gives Deb Wotipka a certificate of appreciation for making the most OTS referrals within the past year. Lindell is Program Manager for BSDC's Outreach Treatment Services (OTS), and Wotipka is a Service Coordinator in the DHHS Wahoo office.

Photo: Roni Cundiff

Former Center citizen adapts quickly to Oakland, Nebraska, home

If anyone had any doubts about **Mark Heise's** ability to make it in a community setting, those doubts have been put to rest.

"Mark has been with us for six months now, and he has done a great job of adapting to his new home and environment," says **Christy Jones**, Residential Manager with Northstar Services in Oakland, Nebraska. "It's only natural that one might be anxious about being uprooted from familiar surroundings, but he has already come to know his house mates, staff members and people in the community."

Mark has put some of the things he learned at BSDC about family-style dining to good use in his new home.

"Mark has gone from being an observer to helping make supper," Jones says. "He also shops downtown and helps make purchases for his personal needs. He also attends community suppers for different fund-raisers like pancake feeds and enjoys eating at different restaurants in town and surrounding communities."

Other signs show that Mark is overcoming his initial reservations about new surroundings.

"Mark has become more of a joiner by enjoying a TV show with his house mates and looking at the door when it opens to see who's coming in and smiling at them," says Jones. "He laughs more freely

now and wheels himself wherever he wants to go."

Mark's move to Oakland also brought him closer to his hometown. Shortly before his mother's death earlier this year, he was able to attend her birthday party.

"We used to visit Mark often in Beatrice and were always happy with the care he received there," says **Marvin Heise**, who lives just



Mark Heise

Photo: Christy Jones

north of Bancroft. "But he gets good care from Northstar, and it's a lot easier to visit more often now."

"Mark's family is a very large one, and being in closer proximity helps them all stay more closely connected," says **Tina Bruning**, Mark's Service Coordinator and member of the same church the Heise family attends.

BSDC employees remember Mark with both fondness and admiration.

"Mark had lots of ability and was lots of fun," says Treatment team Leader **Greg Penner**. "I especially admired the clever way he turned the tables and used psychology on us."

Penner recalls how Mark thrived on staff attention and enjoyed persuading people to do things for him.

"Whenever new staff came on board, Mark would get a rather forlorn look on his face that melted their hearts," Penner says. "When they approached, he'd beam broadly. They soon learned that Mark was able to do more for himself than he let on."

If truth be told, who among us doesn't use a bit of clever manipulation now and then? For instance, "Honey, as long as you're up, would you mind getting me something to drink?"

"Mark's behavior reminded us that our job is not to do for individuals served but to help them do for themselves and develop greater independence," says Penner. "We miss Mark but wish him well in his new home."

Ord resident enjoys all the comforts of her own home

By **Mary Eman**

*Developmental Disabilities
Services Coordination Supervisor,
DHHS Holdrege office*

Service Coordinator **Kay Hoppes** first met **Melissa Schaaf** at her school meeting while she was living with her mother, **Evelyn**, in Ord. Melissa went to live at Bethphage in Axtell when she was 14 years old.

When Melissa was 24 years old, her mother was looking for community-based services in Ord because Melissa wanted to live near her family. Kay met with Melissa's mom to see what services she wanted for Melissa.

She wanted her close so her grandmother could visit. We checked with the local specialized provider that could provide day services but was unable to provide residential services.

That didn't stop Evelyn Schaaf. She had a house that she let Melissa rent. Melissa qualified for services through the Aged and Disabled Waiver (A&D), and Evelyn found people to come into Melissa's home and provide the support she needs.

Melissa's house is being remodeled so that it's more accessible. Her bathroom was recently remodeled so that she can use her shower. She's happy to be able to take a "real" shower. She will soon get a Hoyer lift, and her mother and staff



Melissa Schaaf and her mom, Evelyn, in a newly-remodeled shower made more accessible for her daughter. Photo: Mary Eman

can't wait for that to come!

Melissa is also on the waiting list for funding for a proper ramp to her house. Right now she's got a "loaner" from the A&D waiver folks.

During the daytime, she goes to the workshop that Mid-Nebraska Individual Services operates. They pick her up in their van and bring her home. At the workshop, she does contract work. She also works with a speech therapist weekly.

Melissa has a vegetable garden in her back yard that her mother helps her with. They grow potatoes, cucumbers, onions and tomatoes.

She also loves going to the local McDonalds for a double cheeseburger and going for van rides and

walks. She loves the water, and her mother found someone to take her to the pool this summer.

She spends most every evening with her mother and the rest of her family. They eat supper with her and take her for walks around the neighborhood.

Melissa has been living in her own home for about seven months. She does all of this with the support of her mom, people hired through the A&D waiver, Mid-Nebraska staff, and her service coordinator. While Melissa's mother says it takes a lot work to coordinate all the people who work with her daughter, she's glad Melissa is back home.



Green thumbs *grow big red*



If you plant the right seeds, good things will grow. That's what Activity Specialist **Diane Waltke** was thinking when she suggested that BSDC become part of the "Grow Big Red" program. Recreation Director **Julie Belding** liked Diane's suggestion and contacted Vocational Services Coordinator **Nancy Sedlacek**, who agreed to help.

Grow Big Red is a statewide beautification effort sponsored by Keep Nebraska Beautiful (KNB) that encourages Nebraskans to show Cornhusker spirit by filling their com-

munities with red flowers in public areas such as parks and zoos and along highways and curb sides.

For four consecutive Fridays, "Green Thumb" clients from several campus homes met to plant donated seeds and start crimson zinnias, nasturtiums and poppies growing, and older clients potted more than 500 of these plants at the campus Senior Center.

"This was truly an intergenerational project," says Waltke.

Foster Grandparents helped plant nearly 100 plants at two local daycare sites in mid-April, and 100 plants also went to an elementary school. Some

flowers were planted in front of the school, with the rest going to the children's homes and neighborhoods.

On April 22, BSDC celebrated Earth Day with Recreation staff taking grow kits consisting of ten plants and a seed package to each campus home, where clients helped plant them. On April 25, Center citizens and Rec staff set up a booth at the Homestead National Monument to distribute free plants and flyers to the community.

The BSDC campus and community of Beatrice are now more beautiful. As Diane Waltke knows well, plant the right seeds and good things will grow.



BSDC's "Grow Big Red" effort earned 1st-place honors at Keep Nebraska Beautiful's environmental awards event on August 6 at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City, along with \$50 and a standing ovation. Kudos to all Center clients and staff who made their campus and community more beautiful!



(Above left) Center citizen **Kenny Reynolds** waters plants at the campus greenhouse. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*



(Below left) **Charlie Norris** plants a flower at his campus home, with a helping hand from Recreation Aide **Cary Udell**. *Photo: Patty Hasenkamp*

(At right) Bright red flowers on the 422 Solar cottage patio are among hundreds now thriving at campus homes and in the community of Beatrice. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*



Clients help keep community clean



Center citizen **Kristopher Handy** and Developmental Technician II (DT) **Rachel Miccicke** were among four Center citizens living at 202 Sheridan Drive and five staff members participated in the “Adopt-a-Street” program on April 19 sponsored by “Keep Beatrice Beautiful, Keep Nebraska Beautiful” and the “Great American Clean-Up.” They collected three bags of litter along a one-mile section of Lincoln Boulevard that leads to the BSDC campus. This campus address has participated in this program for a couple of years now. *Photo: Jessica Schultz*



“Adopt-a-Street areas are gateways to our community and the first image viewed by visitors,” says Human Services Treatment Specialist (HSTS) **Jessica Schultz**, who organized the event for 202 Sheridan. “As part of our Social Skills group, we spend time focusing on how to be a good citizen, which includes volunteerism, community involvement, and respecting the environment.” *Photo: Jessica Schultz*

The 202 Sheridan Drive pick-up team takes pride in their accomplishment both on campus and in their community. From left to right, DT II **Matt Johnson**, **Jacob Panwitz**, **Shawn Faatz**, DT II **Dan Bower**, **Ron Tillman** and HSTS **Jessica Schultz**. *Photo: Dixie Kimes*



To help “unlock voices” for individuals with developmental disabilities, Sower offers this installment in a series of interviews with Center citizens.

Speaking for myself

Friends are very important to **John Callow**, and one of his best friends is Program Coordinator **Deb Turman**.

“It’s nice to have friends to talk with,” says John. “It always makes me feel better. Friends care about each other and share things,” says John.

“We got in the habit of getting together for coffee when he lived at one campus address,” Deb explains, “and when John moved to another, that just didn’t seem sufficient reason to break a good tradition.”

Sometimes John even brings another friend along for his regular get-togethers with Deb Turman, and in between John still phones Deb to share an interesting experience, talk over a problem or just chat.

“I’ve even had a phone call or two at home now and then,” says Deb, “and I don’t mind a bit.”

When John isn’t socializing over a cup of coffee, he’s working at the BSDC Wood Shop. He also gets paid to fold and deliver newspapers in Beatrice.

When John isn’t working or socializing with friends, he likes to watch TV. He likes the country western music channel, “CSI” and soaps. When he needs a bit of exercise, he enjoys Wii bowling. He also enjoys bowling or going to movies downtown.



John Callow enjoys a cup of coffee with friend Deb Turman.

Photo: Jerry Crisp

John’s hobby is collecting clocks: big clocks, little clocks, all kinds of clocks. His collection includes 16 clocks he purchased for himself. The smallest is six inches in diameter, and the largest is 24 inches.

Asked why he collects clocks rather than stamps or butterflies, John says with a wink, “So I always know what time it is.”

Friends are important to John. One of his roommates and very best friend used to have coffee together often, as well as eat out and go to movies. His friend

always invited John to go with him to Omaha to visit his family.

When John’s friend contracted cancer last year, John said that if money was what it took to help his best friend get better, he could have all he had. When his friend died just before the Christmas holiday last year, John was at his bedside, along with other roommates and staff members.

If granted one wish, John says that wish would be to have his friend back again.

Continued on next page

Speaking for Myself continued

What helps John through this deeply felt and lingering loss? Like anyone else who faces such challenges, John finds consolation and comfort in his many friends who remain.

John Callow shows just a small sample of the clocks in his collection that cover more than one wall of his bedroom.

Photo: Jerry Crisp



As he said, “Friends care about each other and share things.”

Two things you can be sure of about John Callow: He always knows what time it is, and he knows the value of friendship.

Communicating with people with disabilities

Communicating with people with disabilities can be a challenge for others who don't face the same challenges. Some tips to make communicating more successful:

1. PHYSICAL DISABILITY:

Avoid making assumptions about what a person can and cannot do. Person with physical disabilities are the best judges of their own capabilities.

2. VISUAL DISABILITY:

Never pet or distract a guide dog unless the owner has given you permission.

3. SPEECH DISABILITY:

Tell the person if you do not understand what he or she is trying to say. Ask the person to repeat the message, tell you in a different way, or write it down.

4. COGNITIVE DISABILITY:

Use language that's specific rather than general or abstract. Humor is fine, but some people might not grasp the meaning of sarcasm or other subtleties.

RELAX. Don't be afraid to make a mistake! People often fear they might say something wrong so they say nothing at all, further segregating people with disabilities.

More tips in upcoming issues!

When life hands you lemons, make *lemonade!*

We've all heard that old saying, but sometimes it has more meaning than other times. One of those times is when Center citizens living at 202 Sheridan operate “Alex's Lemonade Stand.”

This effort is named for **Alexandra “Alex” Scott**, who, at age four along with her older brother, set up an annual lemonade stand on their front lawn in July 2000 to raise funds for childhood cancer research. In August 2004, Alex died peacefully in her sleep at age eight, having raised over \$1 million in her short lifetime.

Following her example, thousands of lemonade stands and other fundraisers have been held across the nation—one of which is operated on the BSDC campus by 202 Sheridan. In the two summers that 202 offered the stand, 202 clients raised more than \$230.

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation has now raised more than \$25 million to fulfill Alex Scott's dream of a cure for cancer for all children.

Custom car club *customizes route* for Center citizens



When the Nebraska Rod and Custom Association hosted its annual 250-car tour of Nebraska from Omaha to Lincoln by way of Nebraska City on June 7th, it was slated to come into Beatrice on highway 136 and proceed through the center of town. But **Brandon Shelby**, Activity Specialist in the Recreation Department, persuaded the group to detour to Lincoln Boulevard that borders the BSDC campus.

That's because Brandon organized one of the newest campus client groups—the BSDC Car Club. **Judie Braun**, Training Specialist with the Center's Human Resources & Staff Development Department who also happens to work part-time at the Beatrice Police Department, arranged with law enforcement to provide traffic control.

That new route enabled 30 BSDC Car Club members to get a close-up look at the array of eye-catching and colorful models. Credit for getting the first activity of the new client group off to a great start by...and please accept our apologies for this in advance...hitting on all eight cylinders goes to the Nebraska Rod and Custom Association for altering its route and to Center employees for going the extra mile for the sake of those they serve.



(Above left) About 30 members of the BSDC Car Club enjoyed the 250 customized vehicles that altered their route to give BSDC clients a closer look. (Above right) Center citizen Jenny Rosencrans waves a thank you and farewell to a snazzy red convertible. *Photos; Brandon Shelby*

Camping offers memory-making adventures for BSDC Boy Scouts

BSDC Boy Scouts made their annual trek to Camp Cornhusker south of Humboldt in June for a week of outdoor fun and communing with nature. Activities included boating, swimming, hiking, rifle practice and clamoring through the trees on safety ropes. Some highlights:



(Above left) **DOUBLE BILLING:** Each morning before breakfast, Scout Leader **Bill Clark** and BSDC Scout **Bill Lux** raised the flag. (Above right) **HORSING AROUND:** Bill Lux makes friends with a pony, as Scout Leader **Deb Swoboda** looks on. Also on hand for petting were rabbits and a goat, while a snapping turtle had to settle for interested observation only. (Below) **TAKING AIM:** Scout **John Hoelsing** draws a bead on the bull's eye for an appreciative audience of fellow Scouts and staff members.

It wasn't all just fun and games. Scouts also did a service project and good deed by spreading mulch under flagpoles at the camp. *Photos: Cary Udell*



at a glance



The BSDC Family and Friends Association erected this monument marking the BSDC section in Evergreen Cemetery. Photo: Linda Hyberger

REMEMBERING ON MEMORIAL DAY:

A long-standing Memorial Day tradition is for BSDC clients and staff to decorate more than 800 graves of former clients in Evergreen Community Cemetery, located one-half mile from campus. The oldest graves date back to the early 1900s.

Linda Hyberger, Supply Manager at BSDC's Warehouse, has overseen this decorating for over 30 years. Clients in the Vocational Department make new crosses to replace any damaged or worn out.

"I'm proud to be part of this show of respect for clients served at our facility in the past," Linda says.

This year, eight Vocational staff and clients and six Warehouse staff placed the decorations on graves. Quality Improvement Director **Angela Server** tagged along with her husband, **Chris**, a member of the Warehouse crew, and pitched right in.

"I like to get out of the office away from paperwork and meetings and do more hands-on work whenever I can," Angela says. "It's powerful to see how many people are buried there and makes you think."

PARADING A LIVING TRADITION:

The BSDC entry in the Homestead Day Parade that wound its way through downtown Beatrice in June consisted of seven quilts. Echoing the parade's theme of "Celebrating Our Heritage: American Pastimes," the quilts showcased that skills once practiced in popular "quilting bees" of an earlier era were still alive and well today.

The quilts were designed from cloth remnants by Center citizens, cut to size by Treatment Team Leader **Jane Lobner**, and assembled by Sewing Room staff members that included supervisor **Linda Dorn, Lory Costello, Becky Jobman, Laurie Martin and Donna McLaughlin.**

"The only thing we needed to buy was the 'batting' or stuffing for the quilts," says **Diane Waltke**, Activity Specialist in the Recreation Department.

According to Personnel Officer **Ryan Broker** who spearheaded the BSDC float project, parade judges had this to say as the BSDC float went by: "The rich and varied history of quilting in America tells the story of who we are, where we've been, and where we are going as well as any other American pastime...BSDC is proud to be part of Beatrice's history and future, and thanks you for your support." *Photo: Nancy Sedlacek*



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.

A direct care provider for nearly five years, **Kevin Williams** enjoys working with the variety of clients served at the facility. He especially likes working on athletic activities with Special Olympics participants.

“I like seeing the individuals being able to compete and really enjoying themselves,” says Kevin. “Most of them think of it as a bit of a vacation.”

Kevin has made many friends at BSDC among both clients and staff members. In fact, he met his lifetime mate on the job. He and **Kadie**, also a Developmental Technician II, have been married for more than two years.

“We met while I was working 3rd shift, and she was working 1st shift,” Kevin explains. “We have four kids ages 12 to one, two my step children and two together.”

Kevin Williams and his wife are examples of Center employees who take a family-style approach to both work and life.



Nebraska Department of Health
and Human Services...



...Helping People Live
Better Lives