

SOWER

Shining a light on integrated community employment: **Mark Hill's story**

When Mark was a child, doctors were sure he wouldn't live past the age of five. He certainly didn't let that stop him! Mark is now 33 years old and is dedicated to his long term goals. He would like to live in his own apartment

and obtain his driver's license. As he works toward those goals, he enjoys living with his mom and riding his bike to one of his jobs. He has proudly logged 317 miles on his brand new bike.

Mark works every day in the

Waverly and Lincoln communities. He has two jobs. On Monday and Wednesday he works at a church day care where he has been employed for eight years. On Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, he works in a school kitchen. He has been working in the school system for seven years.

You might be able to tell from the picture that Mark is an enthusiastic Husker fan. Mark's dream

job is student manager of the football team. He was the student manager for his high school team, the Waverly Vikings.

In his free time, Mark likes to go fishing with his job coach, Veronica (in the picture). He also enjoys traveling with his family. He has been to Alaska to visit his brother a few times. He has recently purchased a new charbroil grill and likes coming up with new things to cook on it. You might guess that he also enjoys going to Husker football games.

Mark is a shining example of what can be done with integrated community employment. Integrated community employment includes assistance in getting and keeping a job in the general workforce at or above minimum wage. Individuals choose their own job, and services are provided on the job site.



Mark Hill
and job coach
Veronica Gutierrez

PHOTO BY JODY HANSEN

Contact Christina with your story ideas:

Christina Mayer
Community Liaison
402-440-4129

christina.mayer@nebraska.gov

Be sure to let her know that you're contacting her with an idea for the Sower, and give her your name and a way to contact you so she can find out more.

We hope you'll enjoy reading the Sower. It'll come to you quarterly. If you'd like to read it online, go to:

http://dhhs.ne.gov/pages/newsletters_Sower.aspx

Sower is published quarterly by the Division of Developmental Disabilities, part of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. It is a celebration of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, guardians, service providers, community agencies and services, advocates and other interested individuals.



DHHS CEO: Kerry Winterer

DD Division Director: Jodi Fenner

Creative team: Gwen Hurst-Anderson, Jody Hansen & Christina Mayer

Layout & design: Cynthia Schneider

Readers are invited to submit time-sensitive news items for Sower's monthly edition to Christina.Mayer@nebraska.gov or contact Christina Mayer at 402.440.4129.

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ADA/AA/EOE

I had a dream!



PHOTO BY DONNA SVANDA

"Special Agent" Doug Blecha

how fingerprints are collected and used, and then Doug was fingerprinted.

The Omaha Police Department was on site to demonstrate the skills of the specially trained dog who seeks out explosives. Doug was able to sit inside of an FBI all-terrain vehicle and an Omaha Police officer's truck

where he turned on the sirens and spoke over the loud speaker. He toured the gun vault where he was shown various types of guns and got to hold a tommy gun similar to the one used by Bonnie and Clyde. Doug sat in a polygraph chair, and an agent demonstrated how the process works.

"We want to make this a memorable day for Doug and make him a special agent for the day."

Doug was asked questions to see if his body language was being deceitful. (It was!) He toured the communications room and the video surveillance room. While in the video surveillance room, he got to operate cameras to view a restaurant two blocks away. Doug sat in a special agent's chair and was given a few minutes to enjoy what it might feel like to hold a position of such importance and of someone Doug regards so highly.

At the end of the tour, Doug was honored with a cake reception. He got to meet all of the staff and sit with agents to have discussions about their jobs. Doug was full of questions. The Omaha FBI office showered him with gifts and mementos and made every effort to make Doug feel like he was an agent for the day. His mother, Donna, commented, "This is a day that Doug will remember forever."

"I had a dream!"

Doug Blecha had a dream. He wanted to go to Washington, DC and meet some members of the Secret Service and FBI agents. Doug's Service Coordinator (SC), Rhonda Erikson, asked Doug if he would compromise and take a tour of a local FBI office instead of going all the way to Washington, DC. He whole heartedly agreed, so Rhonda set out to make it happen.

The Omaha FBI office had to grant special permission for Doug to take the tour. The Media and Public Affairs Coordinator in the Omaha FBI office made sure everyone had the proper checks and permissions. She said, "We don't do this for everyone so this is a special occasion for us as well. We want to make this a memorable day for Doug and make him a special agent for the day."

On May 28, 2013, Doug's dream was fulfilled. Doug arrived for his tour with his mother, Donna, her friend, Bob, SC Rhonda, and representatives from the Omaha World Herald and KETV Omaha. Rhonda stated, "We were all led through a metal detector and instructed about how the tour would go, who and what was off limits."

The tour began in the bomb unit. Doug was shown how the bomb robot works and got to wear some protective gear. He was shown how footprint molds are made and how the agents can find trace evidence by using luminal and black lights. Agents demonstrated

Unique HOLIDAY gift-giving

The holiday season is fast approaching. Don't know what to get those special people on your list? Consider a handmade gift from **Bear Creek Gifts**. Bear Creek Gifts is open to the public and is located at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). It takes its name from the creek that runs along the east side of BSDC.

Bear Creek Production Studio is attached to the Gift Shop and is a place of employment for individuals living at the Center. Individuals create unique gift and art products while honing their artistic skills. Some of the individuals consign and sell their products in the Gift Shop. Others may work on different steps of projects (priming, staining, assembling doormats, etc.) and are paid a commensurate wage for the work they do.

The Bear Creek product line includes:

- Individuals' artwork
- Candles/room fresheners
- Custom doormats
- Nebraska-themed products
- Bead jewelry
- Slumped wine bottles
- Special occasion balloons
- Holiday-themed products

You can see examples of the unique items by visiting Bear Creek online at:

http://dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities/Pages/bearcreek.aspx

Emerald Acres

CONTINUED

Don't live in Beatrice?
 No problem.

Just contact:

Bear Creek

402.223.8542

or email:

James Bush at

james.bush@nebraska.gov

to arrange payment and delivery. Then sit back and have the camera ready for the miles of smiles your loved ones will beam when they open their handmade gifts from Bear Creek.

10%
 Entire
 purchase
 through
 October 15,
 2013



Growing people, growing plants



Twenty acres of scenic farmland near Emerald, Nebraska is the setting for a unique employment opportunity for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The mission of Emerald Acres, managed by Integrated Life Choices (ILC), is to provide work opportunities and teach skills to individuals with developmental disabilities. Their goal is to produce the finest naturally-grown vegetables and other plants for the community and surrounding area.

Thirteen full time employees build a connection with the land, and they develop a sense of accomplishment while providing great produce for the community. The employees do the planting, composting, watering, tilling, weeding, and harvesting of the crops. They also make ornamental pots and plant carriers. Seven staff members provide support for individuals who work mostly independently.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 4

Recognition Week

**Direct Support
 Professionals
 Recognition Week -
 September 9-15, 2013**



The Nebraska Division of Developmental Disabilities recognizes and honors all Direct Support Professionals who help individuals receiving services throughout the state. Each of you makes a tremendous difference in the lives of these individuals, and your hard work and efforts are valued. Thank you for all you do. We hope you'll enjoy this week that is dedicated to you!

Emerald Acres

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

The people truly grow with the plants at Emerald Acres.

Where you can find Emerald Acres produce:

- **St. Paul United Church of Christ Farmers' Market**
13th and F Streets, Lincoln
on Tuesdays from
4:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Fallbrook Market**
Hwy 34 and Fallbrook
Boulevard, Lincoln
on Thursdays from
4:00-8:30 p.m.
- **Old Cheney Market**
55th and Old Cheney, Lincoln
on Sundays from
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.



OMNI Training



OMNI Behavioral Health

SPECIALISTS IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Training opportunity for service providers and care takers

If you are a service provider or care taker of a person or persons who have intellectual or developmental disabilities, you'll be interested in attending a training series provided by OMNI Behavioral Health. The series, entitled "Self Care and Boundaries for Care-Takers and Service Providers for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities," is free and open to the public. A webinar option is available. Licensed Mental Health Practitioners are eligible for 2 CEUs for the afternoon session. Dates and agenda are listed below.

Agenda:

9:30-11:30

- What is stress? What is burnout? Is there a difference?
- Signs and symptoms
- Methods for individuals to reduce stress and prevent burn-out
- How to maintain good boundaries

11:30-1:00 - Lunch on your own

1:00-3:00

Learning objectives for afternoon session (2 CEUs for LMHP):

- Participants will be able to identify the symptoms of compassion fatigue.
- Participants will be able to articulate the risk factors of stress and burn-out.
- Participants will understand the role of self-care, boundaries and stress reduction in the provision of mental health treatment and care of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Participants will identify what agencies and individuals can do to reduce stress and burn-out.

Afternoon session meets the criteria of an approved CEU program for mental health practice.

September 13, 2013

LINCOLN:

UNL Extension Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68528-1507
1-402-441-7180

September 25th, 2013

KEARNEY:

Kearney Public Library
2020 1st Avenue
Platte Room
Kearney, NE 68845
1-308-233-3282

September 27, 2013

OMAHA:

King of Kings Church
Education Center (East side of building)
11615 I Street, Omaha, NE 68137
1-402-333-6464

A webinar option is available for the September 27, 2013 training. Please specify if you will be attending in person or via webinar.

RSVP to:

Susan Feyen, LICSW at
sfeyen@omnibehavioralhealth.com
or by phone at 397-9866 Ext. 108

Please let us know if you are requesting CEUs, and which location you will be attending or via webinar.

Space is limited at each location and will be reserved on a first come, first served basis.

Please let us know if you would like to be added to our mailing list for future trainings!

Trainer:

Dr. Meredith Griffin is a clinical psychologist with extensive experience working with persons with developmental disabilities and mental health disorders. Go to <http://www.omnibehavioralhealth.com> for more information about Dr. Griffin and Intensive Treatment Mobility Services at OMNI Behavioral Health.

The next training in the series is on persons with developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental health disorders.

Dates October 25, 2013 (Lincoln), November 1, 2013 (Kearney) and November 5, 2013 (Omaha).

Watch for future training opportunities!

DD State Plan

September is National Preparedness Month



Pledge to Prepare by Joining the



ready.gov/pledge



Ready

citizen corps

National Preparedness Month (NPM)

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM).

It is a time to prepare yourself and those in your care for emergencies and disasters. This September, consider preparing and planning in the event you must go for three days without electricity, water service, access to a supermarket, or local services. Just follow these four steps:

- ✓ *Be Informed*
- ✓ *Make a Plan*
- ✓ *Build a Kit*
- ✓ *Get Involved*

If you or someone close to you has a disability or other access or functional needs, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family. Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.

- ✓ *Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs or the needs of someone you care for*
- ✓ *It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drugstore. Plan to make it on your own, at least for a period of time.*
- ✓ *Identify what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if they are limited or not available.*

YOU can help determine the DD State Plan!

You are invited! Division Director Jodi Fenner and others will travel the state over the next several months holding public forums. The public forums are open to individuals receiving services, their family members and/or guardians, community service providers and other interested individuals. The traveling team will provide updates on activities in the Division, but the primary purpose of the forums is to hear from you—addressing your questions and concerns and hearing your ideas for what services and supports will be helpful as the Division develops a long range plan.

Dates and locations for the early evening public forums include:

- October 1, 2013 North Platte
- October 2, 2013 North Platte/Scottsbluff
- October 3, 2013 Scottsbluff
- October 8, 2013 Norfolk
- October 22, 2013 South Sioux City
- October 23, 2013 Columbus
- November 7, 2013 Hastings
- November 19, 2013 Beatrice
- November 20, 2013 Omaha
- December 3, 2013 McCook
- December 4, 2013 Ogallala
- December 5, 2013 Sidney
- December 6, 2013 Alliance
- December 7, 2013 Chadron (AM)
- December 7, 2013 Valentine (PM)
- December 18, 2013 Lincoln
- January 6, 2014 O'Neill
- January 7, 2014 Broken Bow
- January 13, 2014 Kearney
- January 14, 2014 Kearney & Grand Island
- January 15, 2014 Grand Island
- January 22, 2014 Papillion
- January 28, 2014 Nebraska City
- January 30, 2014 Lincoln



September 22 is Fun Day at BSDC!

The public is invited to Fun Day at BSDC on Sunday, September 22, 2013. Fun activities and a picnic lunch are in store for all who head to 3000 Lincoln Boulevard in Beatrice. Here's a quick glimpse of some of the activities in which you can partake:

- ☺ **9:15 a.m.** - Worship at the All Faiths Chapel
- ☺ **10:00 a.m.** - BSDC Friends and Family Association at All Faiths Chapel
- ☺ **11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** - Free picnic lunch (reservations required)
- ☺ **12:30 to 4:00 p.m.** - Activities in and around the Carstens Center

If you plan to attend the picnic, please make reservations by Friday, September 13th, by contacting Connie Mahloch at **(402) 223-6600, extension 223-6130, Connie.Mahloch@nebraska.gov**, or at BSDC Carstens Center, 3000 Lincoln Blvd, Beatrice NE 68310-3319.

Making a Difference



Wedding Story

Cindy O'Meara made Julie Pirnie's day! Cindy is a resident at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC) where Julie has worked for 20 years. Cindy was the maid of honor at Julie's wedding in late July. Her participation was a highlight of Julie's day.

Cindy and her housemates Stephanie Kroeker and Debra Havlat went with Julie and other staff to shop for dresses to wear to the wedding. Not only did they find dresses, they also found jewelry, shoes and purses to round out their ensembles.

When the wedding day came, the three luxuriated in the preparations provided by an area beautician. They arrived at the wedding in style.

Cindy was so excited to be there for Julie on her special day! She held a white rose ball with lace. Ever the supportive maid of honor, Cindy smiled and nodded her head, "Yes," as Julie repeated her vows. As Julie responded, "I do!" so did Cindy. Stephanie and Debra were just as happy to be able to be a part of the special moment.

All attending the special ceremony enjoyed cupcakes before they said their good-byes to the newlyweds, who headed off on their honeymoon. Julie Pirnie Williams left knowing she had Cindy's support and affirmation, and that made all the difference!



A Service Coordinator's welcome

I have been sharing an office with **Tina Bruning** in West Point since March. It has been one of my most positive experiences working for the State. Tina shows such

empathy for the individuals she works with. I see Tina going above and beyond every day. Tina has a unique way of dealing with people in a strong yet compassionate way, and she has such dedication to the State of Nebraska and the people she serves every day.

Tina has made my move to West Point such a positive experience. Tina has made me feel welcome. Although I was hesitant, she has reassured me with her actions that she does not see my move to West Point as an intrusion on her space. I enjoy coming into the office every day to her positive attitude.

I am sure you are well aware of how lucky the State has to have an employee like Tina. I just wanted you to know that I appreciate it too.

Dawn Peatrowsky

INTERIM PROGRAM ACCURACY SPECIALIST SUPERVISOR

Cub Scout Makes a Difference

Eight year-old **Barrett Nitz** recently earned a Disability Awareness Belt Loop (award) for his work with people who are developmentally disabled.

Barrett and his parents belong to Legion Riders, an association within the American Legion for motorcycle enthusiasts. At a meeting a few years ago, the group's secretary asked for volunteers to help with a bowling event related to Special Olympics. Barrett and his parents volunteered. Barrett was immediately hooked. He enjoyed taking bowling balls to players who were in wheelchairs and watching them bowl. He liked the challenge of remembering which ball belonged with which bowler!

Because of his great volunteer experience, Barrett became interested in working toward the Disability Awareness Belt Loop within his Cub Scout Pack. To qualify for the award, he learned about assistance dogs. He made a display and gave a presentation to his Scout Pack, inviting them to learn more about people with disabilities. He continues to volunteer with the Special Olympics, helping to make a difference in people's lives.



Jottings from Jodi



Jottings from Jodi Fenner

Director of DHHS
 Division of
 Developmental
 Disabilities

We Nebraskans can't help but think of harvest

as we head into fall. As our Nebraska football players gear up, we're reminded that our corn growing farmers will soon be gathering the fruits of their summer labors.

This issue of the Sower highlights some ways that people with intellectual or developmental disabilities are reaping rewards. Special Agent Doug Blecha recently realized a life-long dream. Mark Hill enjoys his jobs, fishing, cooking and biking. Individuals work at Emerald Acres are harvesting vegetables and selling them at area farmers' markets. Artists and craftspersons are making and selling items at the Bear Creek Gift Shop. Several people are making a difference for others. You'll read all about these and more within these pages.

I'll be traveling the state over the next several months to hear from you. A tentative schedule is included, and I urge you to attend a public forum in your area. We have expanded the number of forums to include additional geographic areas so that more people have opportunities to participate. In addition to these public forums, we will be sending out surveys in October to gather information about current services and to learn about challenges and successes across the state to help us evaluate our programs and plan for the future. The information gathered at the public forums and through the surveys will be used to prepare our 2015 Comprehensive DD Waiver renewal, which serves as the basis for our 5-year state plan.

We respect your wishes.
 If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, or would like to receive it electronically or at a different mailing address, please contact: **Christina Mayer, Community Liaison**
 Phone: 402-440-4129
 Email: christina.mayer@nebraska.gov
 Address: PO Box 98947, Lincoln, NE 68509-9847

ready | set | go!

What'll I do after graduation?



Are you between the ages of 16 and 21? Are you the parent or guardian of a student who is between those ages? If so, you'll be interested in some resources available on the Division of Developmental Disabilities website. The DD Eligibility page gives information about how to apply to learn if you're eligible for DD services. You'll find a referral form there as well as some fast facts and other helpful information. The direct link to the eligibility page is: http://dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities/Pages/DD-Eligibility-2.aspx

For some helpful resources related to transitioning after high school, you'll want to check out the Transition Resources page at http://dhhs.ne.gov/developmental_disabilities/Pages/Transition-Resources.aspx. You'll find links to information about Vocational Rehabilitation, the state's Education Service Units, and a transition planning resource called, "Ready, Set, Go!"

The division works with individuals, their families and schools to make the transition as seamless as possible.