



*...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."

DD Director visits all campus homes, all shifts, to help ensure successful team effort at BSDC

Jodi Fenner, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) within the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, is visiting all campus homes on all three shifts between September and the end of the year. Fenner administers the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC) and publicly-funded community-based developmental disability services in Nebraska. **Delvin Koch**, Neighborhood Services Administrator, is also participating in these visits.

"I am responsible for ensuring that BSDC achieves and maintains compliance with the Department of Justice and Centers for Medicaid and Medicare requirements, and our front-line staff are an integral part of our compliance efforts," says Fenner. "It's important for me to meet with as many BSDC employees and residents as possible to get a better feel for



Jodi Fenner (left) and Neighbor Services Administrator Delvin Koch chat with Developmental Technician Rebecca Adams in the wee hours of the morning during Fenner's recent visits to BSDC campus homes on 3rd shift. Photo: Greg Butler

BSDC strengths and challenges. BSDC is a 24-hour facility and to understand its needs requires its leadership to have a presence on all shifts."

Fenner believes her visits have provided additional assurances of a team effort already underway.

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“I am constantly amazed by both the long-term staff we have in BSDC homes and also by the energetic new staff,” says Fenner. “But I am most impressed by the team efforts in the homes to provide quality services.”

In addition, Fenner will visit every service coordination office in the state in the next few months. Fenner also sends regular e-mail updates to enhance communication with all employees at BSDC and throughout the DD Division.

“Ongoing communication is vital to make sure everyone is on the same page,” says Fenner. “It’s equally important to encourage a two-way flow of communication between those making policy decisions and those delivering services. Only then can we expect a successful team effort needed to get us to where we need and want to be.”



Bill West (right) offers to show Jodi Fenner around his home at 411 State Avenue during her recent visits to 1st shift campus homes. Accompanying Fenner is BSDC Neighborhood Services Administrator Delvin Koch.



During a stop at the 411 State Avenue cottage with West (2nd from right), Fenner met other cottage roommates like Carl Vacanti (far left) and was updated by direct care provider Scott Parker on occupational opportunities individuals enjoy, both on campus and in the community.



During another campus home visit, Fenner was charmed by Gretchen Stauffer’s winning smile and outgoing nature at her 104 Kennedy Boulevard home.

*Photos:
Jerry Crisp*

New CEO with Senior Cabinet input now steers BSDC course

BSDC is now led by a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with input from a Senior Cabinet.

“The Senior Cabinet meets weekly with an agenda sent out by my office,” Howell explains. “We meet more often than that, depending on the needs of the organization.”

The Cabinet’s purpose is to provide leadership, manage the budget, ensure quality services, enhance communication, and address any concerns brought before it. In addition to the CEO, Cabinet membership includes the Chief Medical Officer, Human Resources Manager, Neighborhood Services Administrator, Director of Quality Improvement, and Facility Operations Officer.

“Cabinet members may invite guests for presentations or discussions, of course,” says CEO Dan Howell. “We want to ensure a free flow of information vital to any sound decision-making process.”

Howell believes that this approach offers greater opportunities for input into the decision-making process, strengthens consensus-building, and promises a brighter future for individuals with developmental disabilities the facility serves.



Senior Cabinet members enjoy their work: from left, Becky Mencl (Human Resources Manager); Delvin Koch (Neighborhood Services Administrator); Dr. Nabih Ramadan (Chief Medical Officer); Dan Howell (CEO); Randy Christensen (Facility Operations Officer); and Angela Server (Quality Improvement Director). Photo: Nancy Sedlacek

BSDC Family and Friends Association seeks funds

The BSDC Family and Friends Association raises funds to purchase items tax dollars can't. More than 50 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

Music festival thanks community for support

Not even threatening weather that finally produced hard rain and high winds on August 9 could stop BSDC from thanking the community for its support with a music festival. A downpour that ended the event early failed to dampen the spirits of approximately 200 who attended.

Along with BSDC staff time, food and gifts were donated by members of the community solicited by Active Treatment Program Supervisor **Dan Sikyta** and Vocational Staff Assistant **Megan Spilker**. Several community musicians also performed.

“The concert was the brainchild of Dan Sikyta, and he and Active Treatment Program Administrator **Annette Hutson** coordinated the event,” says Vocational Services Coordinator **Nancy Sedlacek**. “We plan to make the music festival an annual spring event.”

T-shirts worn by BSDC staff credited community donations on the back and bore a design on the front created by a friendly competition among individuals who live on campus. The winning entry was fashioned by **Emily King**.

Emily chose a “dream catcher” design (at right) that expressed pride in her Native American origins and her BSDC home. In Native American culture, a dream catcher is decorated and hung above children’s beds to filter out nightmares and ensure pleasant dreams.

(At right) Darkening storm clouds that ended in a downpour shortened a music event but couldn’t keep BSDC from thanking



the community for its support. Helping the sun shine through the clouds was BSDC talent like Activity Specialist Karli Purscell (below left) and (below right l-r) Team Leader Jeff Patton and resident Mark Whitney. Photos: Trevor Sedlacek



Cart expands Snack Shop services with help of handy individual

The Snack Shack at Sheridan Industries on campus does a brisk business selling refreshments to about 50 or 60 BSDC individuals and staff members daily, with a menu that offers fish, Sloppy Joes, hot dogs, soups, nachos and cookies. Eight individuals work at the Shack doing jobs ranging from working the cash register to clean-up.

One of these very handy people has helped the Snack Shop expand its services even more widely. That's achieved through a Snack Cart stacked with goodies that makes campus rounds five days a week.

At the Snack Cart's helm is **Kris Handy**, a person with salesman blood in his veins. For a couple of hours on three afternoons and two mornings each week, he loads his cart and sets off to set a sales record, stopping at offices and anyone he passes on the way from one end of campus to the other.

"The Snack Shack averages \$100 daily, and the Snack Cart brings in about \$20 per day," says Employment Coordinator **Lois Oden**, "so the Snack Cart represents about one-fourth of the overall profit."

Part of the reason for the Snack Cart's success is Kris' winning smile, bubbly personality and the fact that he takes his job very seriously.

"Kris is saving his earnings to



(Above) Kris Handy makes change for staffer Sue Clausen on one of his daily Snack Cart forays across campus. (Below) Always eager to make a sale, Kris offers any passerby a chance at a tasty snack. Photos: Jerry Crisp

buy a PlayStation so he doesn't lack for motivation," says Job Coach **Susan Landon**.

"Kris is a natural salesman," says Vocational Services Coordinator **Nancy Sedlacek**. "His Snack Cart is a stepping stone for Kris to learn new skills and enhance customer service for when he applies for employment in the community. With Kris' awesome personality, he could become the next **Dave Thomas!**"



Murals brighten residents' walls

Individuals served at BSDC often personalize walls of their rooms with photos, posters and knickknacks, but typical decor can present some challenges that call for creative ways to add pizzazz.

Logan Seamann's room now has a mural of his dog, Ace, that Developmental Technician (DT) **Jenny Greer** painted for him.

"Logan views Ace as a member of his family, and his parents often bring Ace when they visit," explains QMRP **Morgan Kuhnke**. "The painting definitely enhances Logan's mood, which could very well be therapeutic."

The same was true of efforts to decorate **Robert Klein's** room across campus. DT **Jack Zeleny** offered Robert several options to choose from, and "S Building" was his preference. While the building no longer stands, this Victorian classic lives on in Jack's faithfully detailed painting, and Robert's room can now be considered a real show place.



(Above) Jack Zeleny with his painting in Robert Klein's room.



(At left) Jinny Greer beside her rendering on the wall of Logan Seamann's room.

Photos: Jerry Crisp

Four Developmental Disabilities staff named DHHS Employees, Supervisor-Managers of Year

Center employee **Nancy Mayfield** and Service Coordinator **Linda Dorrell** were among 14 named Employee of the Year by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Center dentist **Dr. Dennis Pestel** and Disability Services Coordinator **Don Severance** were among 14 named Supervisor of the Year by DHHS.

Nancy Mayfield, formerly lead Social Services Worker Supervisor at BSDC and now a Service Coordinator, focuses on the best interests and quality of life for individuals and gives solid support to their families, guardians, friends and advocates. Playing a key role in making the recent transition of BSDC-served persons to community settings as smooth as possible, she is respected for her compassion, integrity and commitment to excellence.

Center Dentist Dr. Dennis Pestal has been instrumental in helping the facility meet the challenge of providing both emergency and routine dental care for individuals. His skills enabled the facility to meet the current challenges of providing dental care and erase a backlog of dental care needs. He develops a rapport with individuals that lowers anxiety and reduces the need for dental procedures under general anesthetics.

Linda Dorrell, Service Coordinator for the Eastern Service Area in a DHHS Omaha office, has a special place in her heart for people



Nancy Mayfield



Dr. Dennis Pestel



Linda Dorrell



Don Severance

with developmental disabilities. She went the extra mile when an individual's father was in the military, and she called his commanding officer to see if he could be sent home to care for his daughter, prior to asking for funding supports. That individual's life was changed forever because of Linda's dedication.

As the Disability Services Coordinator in the Division of Developmental Disabilities, Don Severance and his staff touch the

lives of every person with developmental disabilities served in community-based services in Nebraska. He directs the Quality Improvement (QI) Committee that gathers data to identify problems. He also directs the DHHS Committee for Service Integrity, which develops practical solutions. The Service Integrity Committee has produced assessment tools and training for use by Service Coordinators and Developmental Disabilities Specialists.

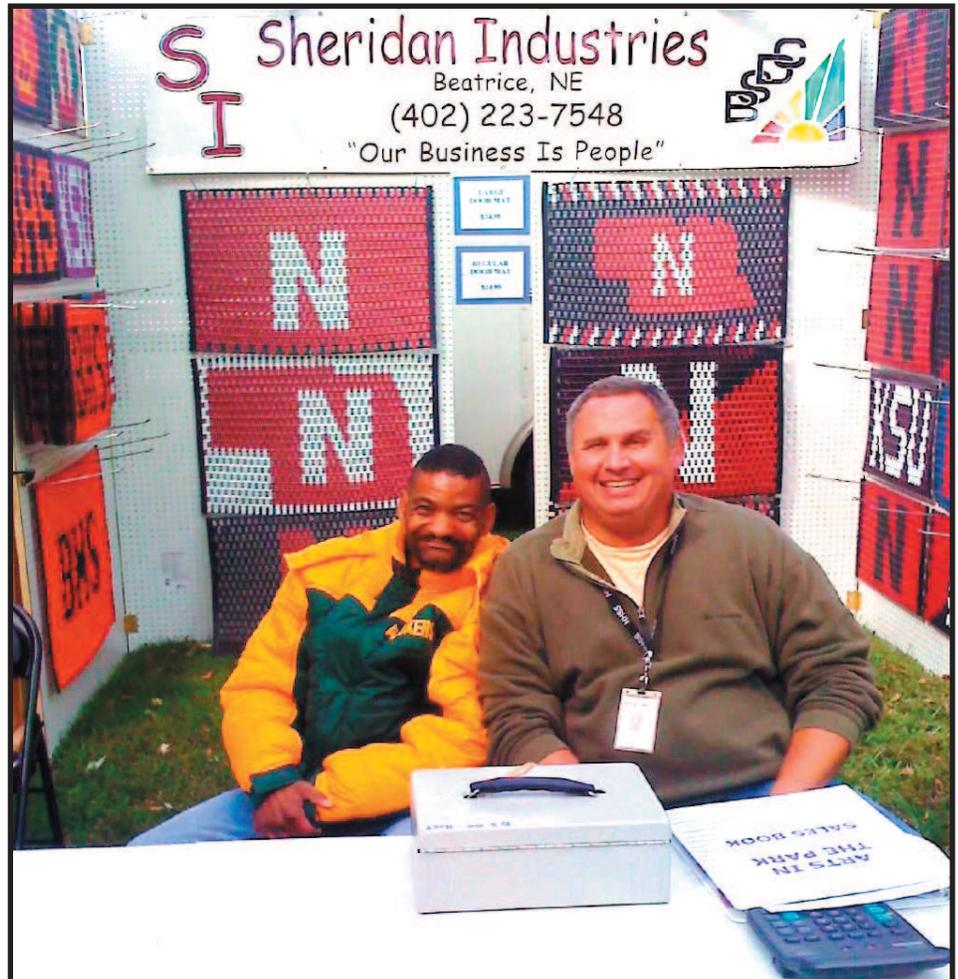
“Arts in the Park” proves valuable outlet for products made by individuals

A comfortable autumn day offered a pleasant backdrop to Arts in the Park in Beatrice on October 3rd. The event proved profitable for marketing an array of items produced by individuals who live on campus.

Thanks to the Vocational Department, the BSDC booth featured art and craft pieces, ceramics, wooden benches, concrete statuary, door mats, calendars, Christmas cards and jewelry for sale.

“We’re always on the lookout for ways to market products made by individuals at county fairs and craft shows in the community, and Arts in the Park proved another great venue,” says **James Bush**, Community Employment Active Treatment Supervisor with the Vocational Department. “We want to thank all of the individuals who made and helped sell their products, staff members who gave them, and citizens of Beatrice who visited our booth and now have a better idea of what individuals can do.”

Bush also expressed gratitude to Treatment Specialist **Karen Engelman** for serving as “Shuttle Pilot,” to Activity Specialist **Karla Bryant** for pricing and packaging ceramics, and to Activity Specialist **Rod Koch** for building displays



(Left to right) BSDC resident Tony Robinson and Community Employment Active Treatment Supervisor James Bush welcome passersby to the BSDC booth. An array of colorful door mats is on display behind them. Photo: Rod Koch

and helping host, set up and tear down the booth.

“This is the second year for a Sheridan Industries booth at Arts in the Park, and each year the event becomes more popular and attendance grows,” explains Vocational Services Coordinator

Nancy Sedlacek. “Participating in community events like this is an excellent opportunity for individuals to display and sell items they have personally produced.”

Continued on next page

Arts in Park continued



(Above) Among items for sale were wooden benches built by individuals living at 408 State Avenue on campus, two of which sold during the day. Also available were jewelry, ceramics and

(below) an array of concrete birdbaths, statuary and paving stones. *Photos: James Bush*



David Courtney shows a potential customer his collection of Christmas cards and his 2010 calendar. His calendar illustrations that focus on historical sites throughout Gage County include an early settler's cabin at Homestead National Park, Hotel Paddock in downtown Beatrice, the Wymore train station, a stone barn near Filley, Adams State Bank and the Rice Hospital at Odell. David had a profitable afternoon, selling eight calendars and a set of Christmas cards. *Photo: James Bush*

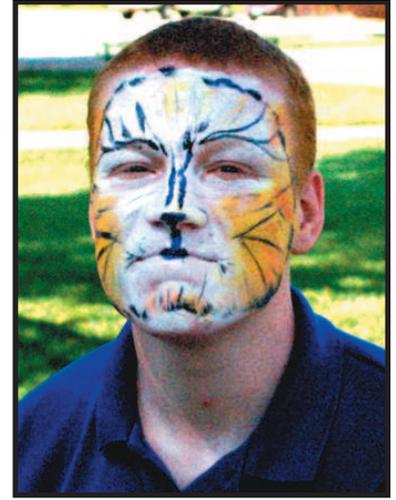
For more information or to order products seen here, contact James Bush at his office (402) 223-6845, cell phone (402) 806-3509, or james.bush@nebraska.gov.

Family Fun Day another *memory-maker*



Each year, Fun Day is a great way for BSDC individuals and their families, along with employees and their families, to gather just for fun. Here, **Cindy O'Meara** is joined by her mother, **Joan**, who heads the BSDC Family & Friends Association, and Cindy's sister, **Kathy**, and brother-in-law, **Jeff Bale**.

Fun Day is also a great way for individuals like **Joshua Talbot** and **Michael McBride** to have their faces painted or make friends with a miniature pony named "**Lobo**," provided by Maintenance Supervisor **Don Zimmerman**.



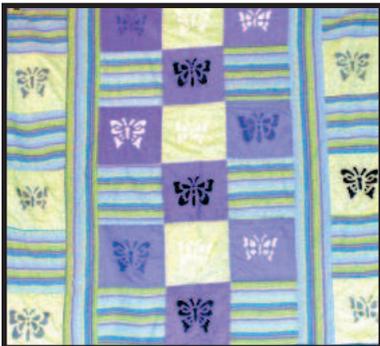
The annual autumn extravaganza is also a great way for employees like CEO **Dan Howell**, Developmental Technician **Hannah Retchless** (seated) and Food Service Assistant **Cindy Neal** to kick back and enjoy a bit of goffin' around. *Photos by Nancy Sedlacek*

Continued on next page

FUN DAY continued



A perennial Fun Day favorite is a ride on the BSDC train. According to **Deb Swoboda**, who spearheads the Special Activities Committee that coordinates Fun Day, "This event wouldn't happen without many employees and departments who know what it means to individuals, their families and the community."



On display were several quilts designed by individuals like this beautiful butterfly motif (at left) and a dazzling star pattern (at right).
Photos by Nancy Sedlacek

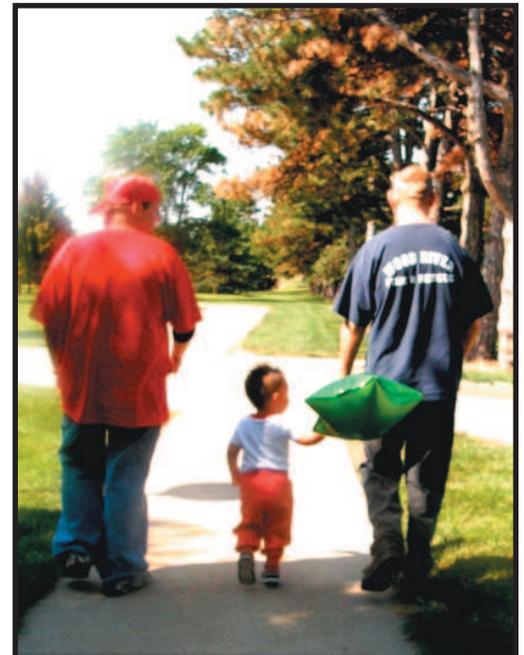


(At left) **Ripley Server**, 2 1/2-year-old son of Quality Improvement Director **Angela Server**, finds moving annoying obstacles can enhance one's score at miniature golf.

(At right) Ripley and his dad, **Chris (I)**, were walking beside **Kai Hamel**. As they approached a crossroad, Kai said, "Hold my hand to cross the street," and Rip reached up to take Kai's hand.

"It was amazing," said Rip's mom. "I nearly cried when I saw that."

Photos: Angela Server



Reuse, Reduce, Recycle!



EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE 'DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS' DAYS?

"Rufus Refuse" obviously has (at left, and in his full glory below). Rufus is a robotic champion of recycling, thanks to his creation by a very resourceful and innovative group of individuals and staff members at 104 Kennedy Boulevard on 2nd shift.

Recycling spare parts from all across campus, this creative crew fashioned a broken fan, plastic bottles, assorted wires and even a roasting pan into Rufus. The campus has gone green, and Rufus symbolizes recycling efforts on campus that help keep campus clean and beautiful and save money in the process.

Asked for a comment, Rufus remained a silent symbol. But **Karla Bryant**, Activity Specialist in the Recreation Department who coordinated the sculpture project, says "The Recreation Department sponsored a friendly competition that challenged campus homes to create sculptures using recycled objects. It's always amazing how ordinary items we typically toss in the nearest trash receptacle can be reused in other ways."

Recycling was even the theme of the recent Fun Day event (see article on pages 9 & 10). School children from the community told those attending how to reduce waste and re-use items often needlessly discarded. Pencils made of recycled denim were given out, and recreation staff helped people plant flowers in recycled shoes and build birdhouses from reused cardboard. In addition, vocational staff sponsored a competition that collected 17 pounds of pop can tabs that will go to the Ronald McDonald House.

Photos: Karla Bryant





BSDC Lady Scouts lead drive for local food pantry



(At left) Thanks to individuals and staff members across campus like (l-r) Scout **Gretchen Stauffer**, **Dan Heeley** and Scout **Bernadette Dudgeon** at 104 Kennedy Blvd. on campus who donated \$300, BSDC Lady Scouts were able to give 445 food items and \$340 to a local food pantry for those in need around the holidays. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*

(Below) Collecting food donations around campus were (l-r) **Andrea Gregory**, Scout **Janet Ejlersen**, **Karla Bryant**, Scout **Claudia Rafferty** and **Deb Swoboda**. Swoboda and Bryant are Lady Scout Leaders who coordinated the food drive. *Photo: Kathy Schroeder*



Scouting outing

BSDC Lady Scouts experience annual August adventures at Camp Catron near Nebraska City. Some highlights:



WE'RE HERE! Arriving at a much-anticipated destination is always a fun part of any trip, and this was no exception for Scout Leader **Bill Clark**.

Camping offers opportunities for everyone including Scouts in wheelchairs like **Joann Hendrickson (l)** and **Linda Free**, shown here at the lodge. Camping activities include swimming, hiking, golf cart rides and camp fires.



Even when having fun, clean-up duties are part of the program, as camper **Susan Falgione** could testify.



Campers wrap up their camping experience with a shopping trip to outlet stores at the mall, keeping purchases as a surprise to share with others back at the lodge for “Shop & Show.” Here, camper **Janet Ejlersen** shows off her new umbrella to a chorus of oohs and aahs and a round of applause.

A group of campers and staff head out for dinner at a Nebraska City eatery: (l-r) **Kristy Chandler**, Activity Specialist **Brandon Shelby**, **Kathy Norton**, **Jenny Rosencrans**, **Denise Stewart** and **Claudia Rafferty**.



“Camp Catron is a fun week and vacation for Scouts,” says Scout Leader **Deb Swoboda**. “We are surrounded by and involved with nature, yet stay in a beautiful lodge with all amenities—the best of both possible worlds.” *Photos: Cary Udell*

at a glance



“GROW BIG RED” AWARD!

BSDC’s efforts to beautify campus and the community of Beatrice by participating in Keep Nebraska Beautiful’s (KNB) “Grow Big Red” project earned 1st-place in KNB’s recognition ceremony. KNB Executive Director **Jane Polson** said, “This is the most outstanding Grow Big Red project I’ve seen since it was developed 14 years ago.”

Individuals planted donated seeds and potted more than 500 at the campus Senior Center. Tended in the campus greenhouse, these plants were delivered across campus and neighborhoods throughout the community of Beatrice.

Polson called BSDC “our model” and urged Nebraskans to fill their communities with red flowers. Shown (l-r) are project coordinator **Diane Waltke**, **Jane Polson** and Center CEO **Dan Howell**.



Photo: Nancy Sedlacek



BOCCE BALL!

BSDC athletes (l-r) **Ed McBain** and **John Hoelsing** earned 3rd and 1st-place medals, respectively, in the Special Olympics bocce

tournament in August at the Abbott Sports Complex in Lincoln. What’s bocce ball, you ask? Actually, it’s a bit like pitching horseshoes but with colored balls. For more details, ask the real experts—John and Ed!

“Lots of ribbons and medals were also earned by 13 participants in the bowling tournament, and everyone had smiles on their faces because they were having so much fun,” says Coach **Bill Clark**.

The Recreation Department will sell tickets through November for the “Big Red Raffle,” a fundraiser sponsored by Nebraska Special Olympics with proceeds allocated for participating teams to pay for meals and lodging at future Special Olympics competitions. Grand Prize is two 2010 University of Nebraska football season tickets on the 50-yard line, with \$2,000 for 2nd prize and \$1,000 travel certificate for 3rd prize, donated by supportive businesses. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*



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.

Nicole “Nikki” Woods started work as a temp in Human Resources and moved to an Office Clerk III position in Central Records last November. One of her favorite on-the-job activities is interacting with an individual who is paid to empty Central Office wastebaskets.

“Ed McBain usually sings or talks only about how fast he empties the trash, but one day out of the blue, he told me that he prayed for me,” says Nikki. “I thought that was so sweet. It just made my day.”

Outside the office, Nikki likes to spend time with her husband, **Brad**, and 2-year-old son, **Brayden**, roller blade, and write poetry. One of her poems earned honorable mention in a competition and has been published in the *National Library of Poetry*.

Nikki’s plans for the future include going back to college to study Information Technology/Networking, and doing it all online. *Photo: Jerry Crisp*



DD Spring Conference: March 25 (Lincoln), March 26 (Lincoln/Kearney)

Thursday's schedule in Lincoln includes a management track featuring a CMS presentation on DD history and trends; positive behaviors supports, and three break-out sessions with Angela Amato, Geery Howe and CMS. Thursday also includes sessions for direct support staff on positive behavior supports, and a track for family/guardians on alternatives to guardianship, special needs trusts, and considerations for end-of-life planning.

Friday features continuation of the management track with Patti Scott and Dr. Todd Stull, M.D., and addition of a medical CME component with topics covering developmental disability, epileptic disorders, behavioral manifestations of developmental disability, mental illness, respiratory illness, emergency care and nutritional management. Friday also features conference opportunities in Kearney including positive behavior supports for direct support staff and alternatives to guardianship.

On Saturday morning in Lincoln, additional sessions on alternatives to guardianship will be offered.

Watch for the conference brochure by early February 2010!