



Beatrice State Developmental Center Vocational and Recreational Services

BSDC has a Vocational and Recreational Services team that operates independent of the 5 Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) on the BSDC Campus. While the ICFs participate in vocational and recreational activities utilizing their internal staff, they also have full access to the array of programs provided by the Vocational and Recreational Services team. This team is led by Pam Kunzman and is divided into two departments: Vocational Services Department and Recreational Services Department.

Vocational Services Department

The Vocational Services Department is led by Jason Cohorst and consists of three focus areas: work skills acquisition (consisting of a supervisor and 15 staff); community employment and production (consisting of a supervisor and 5 staff); and active treatment (consisting of a supervisor and 6 home room leaders/human service treatment specialists). The primary purpose of the Vocational Services Department is to develop the skill and ability of the people living at BSDC to enable each person to realize his or her full potential and achieve the greatest degree of independence possible.

For each person to realize his/her potential, the Vocational Services Department provides appropriate active treatment based on the person's age, health, and their personal goals. This is accomplished through the day program. The day program is organized into "home rooms," where personalized activities are developed that support the goals of the individuals. The home room facilitators design activities that lead to additional skill acquisition to support future employment options.

The Vocational Services Department focuses on finding jobs for individuals who are not classified as retired. Currently eighty-eight percent (88%) of the people living at BSDC are involved in some type of paid employment. The goal is for 100% of the non-retired people living at BSDC to be employed at least 20 hours per month, with more than 50% of them working in jobs in the community.

The Department provides opportunities for job exploration and offers a natural progression for job development. Those who want to try out different types of employment may work on campus to see if they like janitorial, food service, or volunteer and job shadow. Each campus job is a stepping stone to a community job; it is not a final or permanent position. This allows individuals to try out different types of work, gain skills, and prepare for a job in the community.

The current BSDC job opportunities include:

- Restaurant work: Carstens Café and Snack Shack are places on campus where foodservice is provided to the public. Individuals have also worked at restaurants in the Beatrice community. Retail/sales: Treasures Unlimited is a thrift store on campus where retail skills, such as cashiering and merchandising, can be obtained.
- Entrepreneurship: Many individuals are involved in various forms of off-campus self-employment, such as: mowing crews, janitorial services and cleaning crews, woodworking, cement and various artistic ventures. The wood benches, cement crafts, cards and calendars created by the individuals are sold at Treasures Unlimited, Farmer's Market, the Gage County Fair, and a booth in the Beatrice Mall at Christmas time.
- Horticulture: The residents have access to an immense greenhouse where they grow unusual greenhouse plants and vegetable gardens, which are then taken to the Beatrice Farmer's Market each week in the summer to sell. The Department also holds sales on-site at the greenhouse several times per year.
- Production/factory work: The local Beatrice community supports BSDC by offering limited assembly work to individuals living at BSDC, such as: assembling bolt bags, hubs and zerks, and fishing lure packages. Some of these opportunities are on-campus, and others are on-site at the various commercial factories in the community.
- General Employment: Individuals are employed at various service and sales companies in the Beatrice community. They have access to job coaches to work with them on-site, and the Department coordinates with each employer to ensure proper training and supports are available to ensure that people succeed in their community jobs.
- A variety of on-campus jobs are also available involving operational support services: deliveries, janitorial and cleaning crews, mowing, mail route, etc.

In addition to existing employment opportunities, the Vocational Services Department is in the process of developing a new gift shop and a service bureau/copy center. The gift shop will feature artistic items created by the individuals who live at BSDC. The items being created for sale include our own candle line and unique jewelry designs. We also have the ability to create cutting boards, spoon rests and decorative wall hangings using "slumped" or flattened bottles. The service bureau/copy center will offer general copy, laminating and binding services to the public, as well as handle these services for the BSDC campus. Both of these new ventures offer an opportunity for people living at BSDC to learn retail and merchandising skills in environments that mirror community opportunities. Furthermore, the artistic items being created will offer many opportunities for people to explore and design items to be included in the store's inventory.

Another new venture is the movement of the BSDC thrift store, Treasures Unlimited, to a location in the Beatrice community. The thrift store format will be revised to feature a limited inventory of nice quality used items, and the inventory will be expanded to include some of the BSDC craft and artistic items as well (door mats, wooden rockers and benches, cement figures, candles, jewelry, etc.) For some BSDC residents, moving from an on-campus job directly to a community job can be quite intimidating. The movement of Treasures Unlimited into the Beatrice community provides an additional stepping stone for people, from on-campus employment to true integrated community employment, for individuals who need additional assistance in this process.

BSDC currently has 43 people working in the community. The jobs they hold include cleaning crew positions for Department of Roads, D'Andrea Realty, Old Chicago, and Asera Care. People are also employed by Beatrice Ford, Accuma, and Wurth Adams. We have partnered with Oasis Staffing to fill temporary positions in the community, and this has been a great way for our individuals to try a variety of jobs.

BSDC's Vocational Services Department is blessed with strong community partnerships. It has partnered with the local Chamber of Commerce and Oasis Staffing to grow community employment opportunities for people living at BSDC. It has also partnered with Integrated Life Choices and the Nebraska Autism Center on several product development projects for the new gift shop. The Department also participates in Alliance for Full Participation in collaborating to improve employment options for people with developmental disabilities living throughout Nebraska. Relationships with our community partners are crucial to the success of the Vocational Services Department.

The Vocational Services Department will continue to progress with its current projects. It will meet quarterly with leadership from the ICFs on campus to determine the needs and preferences of the individuals living at BSDC, and it will work with them to make any necessary adjustments to the vocational programs at BSDC.

Recreational Services Department

The Recreation Services Department sponsors several social and volunteer opportunities for the individuals who live at BSDC. The Department is led by Julie Belding, LuAnn Faris, and Dale DeBuhr, and consists of a staff of 20 that includes activity specialists, recreational aides and assistants, a chaplain, and human services treatment specialists.

Volunteer activity is one way in which the residents of BSDC can have meaningful impact on their community. Each month more than 20 people help deliver meals on wheels. A group of people on campus has adopted sections of a Veteran's Memorial Park and Hannibal Park and each week they clean their sections. Another group has a community garden plot at Homestead National Monument Park where they have planted and harvested vegetables. The individuals are active in community volunteerism through the Red Hat Society, the Boy Scouts, Special Olympics, various churches, and other local clubs and organizations.

Initiated by the donation of a scoreboard and other equipment, BSDC developed a new baseball field. With the 2010 summer kickoff baseball game and picnic, a new BSDC tradition has been initiated. All staff, people living at BSDC, people supported in the community by Mosaic and Region V, and all community members are invited. The rules of the game are modified so that people of all ages and abilities can play and enjoy the game. Of course, the picnic afterwards is just as much fun.

BSDC sponsors many other recreational events that involve the community. The end of summer tradition, Family Fun Day, has continued to be well attended. A fall music festival was initiated in 2009. Ice cream socials, street dances, and other events are planned by the Recreational Services Department throughout the year as well. These activities give people living and working at BSDC a sense of community and provide an opportunity for us to know each other better.

The Department coordinates all Special Olympics activities for people living at BSDC. The Special Olympics teams we participate in include track & field, basketball, basketball skills, bowling, roller skating and swimming. Special Olympics activities provide opportunities for physical activity, friendly competition, and the development of lifelong friendships with other community competitors.

The Recreation Services Department has improved its health and wellness programs by partnering with the clinical therapy areas, referred to as the Integrated Therapies program. This program involves two or more therapy areas working together to gain the most wellness benefit for the individual. It has allowed the recreational therapists to work closely with other therapists such as respiratory, occupational, physical, and music therapists. Several new programs were developed this spring including an obstacle course, using mobility devices, the NuStep, as well as a continued focus on aquatic therapy. The pilot program involved an individual who was in aquatic therapy and respiratory therapy. By scheduling these two therapies back-to-back, the team saw dramatic improvements in the individual's lung capacity. The individual started with 13% lung capacity and by the end of the 6 month period had more than doubled his capacity to breathe. This individual also increased his strength and endurance by increasing the laps he was able to swim from 4 to 14 laps. The Integrated Therapies program promises to provide many more positive impacts for our BSDC residents. Since the integrated therapies program began in 2011, many individual successes have been evident:

- One individual who started her involvement in the Obstacle Course saying "I don't want to" is now singing, greeting others coming into the gymnasium, and extremely happy to be there. She has increased her strength from throwing a non-weighted ball to throwing an 8-pound weighted ball.
- Mobility devices are used to assist individuals with walking. One individual who had the ability to walk approximately 200 feet is now walking half a mile. He has also improved his strength to the point that he will be evaluated to determine if the walking device is still necessary. Another accomplishment for this particular individual is that upon initial inclusion, this individual was quiet and non-verbal; now he is verbal and excited to be there.
- An individual who participates in the Wii Dance program has lost 7 pounds since this program started this summer.
- One of the individuals in Music Therapy has increased her participation and involvement in recent sessions. Instead of just having her head down and listening, she now fills in

parts of the song when the Music Therapist sings a line of the song and she is actively engaged in the activities.

- In a recent Karaoke activity, several gentlemen started line dancing with encouragement and really enjoyed the activity.

Recreation isn't just fun – it truly has a positive impact on the health and well being of the people we support at BSDC. The Recreational Services Department will continue to collaborate with the ICF leaders to ensure that a wide array of preferred and appropriate recreation opportunities are available, both on and off the BSDC campus.