

OCP VOCATIONAL NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2009

EDITORS:

Brenda Boyd.....ext. 1144

Tom Ferkler.....ext. 1124

Vocational Department Mission Statement

The Vocational Department provides services designed to utilize existing strengths and promote self-determination. Every participant is provided vocational opportunities to develop their unique potential, experience fulfillment, and develop a sense of purpose in an integrated setting.

“LOST WITHOUT THEM”

Reflections on Thirty-Four Years (and counting!) of Service

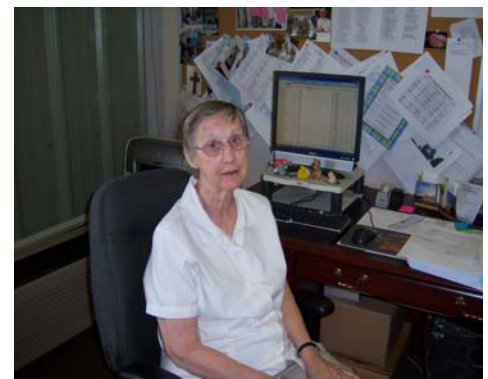
Words in italics throughout this brief sketch of Sister Mary Agnes’s contributions to the life here at Benedictine were provided by staff asked to share the first three words or phrases that came to mind when thinking about Sister Mary Agnes.

Humble, loving, dedicated... These are just a few words that come to mind to those who have known and worked with Sister Mary Agnes over the years. Sister Mary Agnes was called to the Benedictine School in June of 1975, from Our Lady of Fatima in Delaware. When she arrived to Benedictine she found a note on her door: “Come and see me before you unpack your bags—Sister Jeannette.” The resulting conversation led Sister down a path that would change her life as well as countless others. Sister unpacked her suitcase at the Benet Center, where she helped Sister Patrick with the teenage girls in the evenings and taught primary grades during the day. On the weekends she assisted in the dorms with the boys. In her spare time she enrolled at the University of Maryland to obtain her teacher’s certification in Special Education. Yes, Sister has, since her arrival here, worked 28/7. That’s not a typo; it’s a miracle!

Wonderful, helpful, caring, gentle... In the early 80’s the school developed a work skills development program for transitioning youth. Sue Bennett had been using classroom space to teach work skills with contracts she found from neighboring industries. By 1985, Sue, under Sister Jeannette’s wing, moved into the space currently housing the Graphics Department. Back then contracts included assembling, packing, and heat sealing computer kits for Celeste, Dixon Valve contracts, making “Miss Util-

ity” signs for Talbot County, as well as assembling, packing, and mailing goggles for the US Military. By 1989, someone was needed to do all the paperwork required for the Department of Labor and MD Works, for payroll, as well as to supervise and monitor the entire operation, and that someone, was, you guessed it.... Sister Mary Agnes.

Understanding, selfless, indefatigable... In 1989 the Contract Area and Graphics Department served up to 60 students per week for workplace training, with only a few OCP adults (Sue recalls David C., Mark, Zach, and Rebecca C.). Sister also looked after the children at DeSales Hall. Today, thirty years later, Sister Mary Agnes continues a routine of love and commitment. Some of us newcomers have wondered about that routine... does Sister ever sleep?



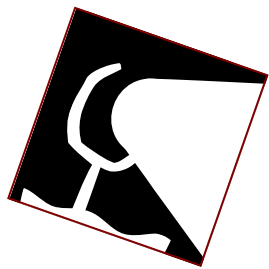
Hardworking, supportive, perseverance, devoted... Well before the sun rises, at 4:45 a.m., Sister begins her day with prayers in the Monastery Chapel, and retires to bed well after sundown, at 11:00 p.m. In between, Sister can be found bathing and dressing children at DeSales Hall, working on

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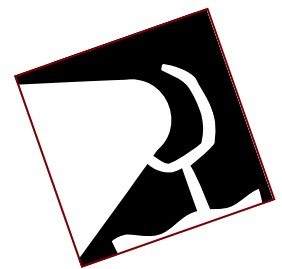
LOST WITHOUT THEM (FROM PG 2)

quarterly reports for Department of Labor, at prayer, entering new students into the excel spreadsheet required for MD Works, mediating a problem for an individual at work, helping to problem solve with worksite staff always needing to adapt approaches to fit changing needs, more prayer, calculating time studies, updating residential school staff at the end of the day on status of the children, and after prayers and supper, assisting with evening activities and bedtime routines.

*Patient, understanding, a joy, inspiring...*Sister Mary Agnes has served Benedictine’s children and adult children, for thirty-four years now. When asked to comment on her experience here, Sister Mary Agnes says the following: “I love what I do. I try to be patient and focus on the best in people. We all say more by example than by words. It is not what you say, but what you do that is important. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with special needs children. They are a blessing, and have taught me many things, such as not holding malice, such as forgiving and loving. I have learned much. I would be lost without them.” Enough said. *Submitted by Kelley Malone*



**“SPOTLIGHT”
ON**



Todd S.

The vocational department would like to recognize Todd for his outstanding work ethic and self determination. Since January of 2006, Todd has effectively maintained his part time community employment position with the Easton Tastee Freeze. Employed for over three (3) years as a lobby and counter assistant, Todd has developed many lasting relationships and is a familiar face for customers. Over the last three years, Todd has sequentially advanced in his work responsibilities as a result of hard work and dedication. Todd has consistently demonstrated his commitment to improving self management skills and is a valued and dependable employee. Todd arrives early to work prepared to start his shift; initiates his work routine independently; and provides assistance to his co-workers when additional “customer service” is required during peak times. Todd takes pride in his work and is always willing to learn new aspects of the Restaurant business. To maximize his independence and to promote community inclusion, Todd successfully works under the “natural supports” available in the restaurant. Keep up the good work Todd..... You are a shining star!

Kelly T.

The vocational department would like to recognize Kelly T. for her progress in setting and reaching goals consistently in the last four years. She has achieved community readiness through hard work, perseverance, determination, and initiative in improving work ethic and self-management skills to move closer to her dream of working in the community. Kelly once was challenged to manage anger, frustration, or boredom well while at work. She now utilizes her existing support system to reach out for help when she needs it, responding positively to staff supports and constructive criticism. Kelly has excelled in “practice” sessions in the community at a real estate office, the Talbot Humane Society, and at JC Penny’s. She has shown tremendous progress in mastering expectations for job performance at Busy Bee, despite physical challenges in manipulating some of the equipment, and is production focused in the ITC. Recently Kelly began to work out in the aquatics program to strengthen her left hand and leg. Kelly’s determination and positive attitude is a beacon for us all. Keep up the hard work Kelly, and your dream will come true



A FOCUS ON BUSY BEE

In the late 1980's Busy Bee was created as a small residential cleaning service. Beginning with only a few residential customers they continued to expand, shifting from residential to commercial contracts. They now service 23 businesses in 4 counties. Presently Busy Bee employs 7 full time crews consisting of 12 staff persons, 17 OCP individuals and 17 school students, all under the supervision of Teresa Ebling.

Busy Bee offers customers a wide variety of cleaning services, primarily general office cleaning such as dusting, vacuuming, trash removal, and restroom cleaning. They also steam clean or bonnet clean carpeting, strip and wax tile flooring, and yes, they do windows.

Servicing the entire Benedictine campus is Busy Bee's first and foremost responsibility. State contracts provide most of the off campus work. Busy Bee contracts include all State Highway Administrations in the surrounding 4 counties, the Denton and Centreville District Court Multi-Service Centers, The Business Economic and Development Corp., Department of Agriculture, Carter Building as well as other local businesses, churches and organizations.

While cleaning skills are essential to what they do, Teresa and her staff's primary focus is for the individuals and students to learn the valuable work habits and attitudes essential in maintaining a job. To help the students become familiar with the

interview process they are required to interview for the job. They are trained in the proper handling of chemicals and equipment as well as utilizing proper safety precautions. Teamwork is encouraged as well as individual achievement. The focus is not on one's disability but on one's ability.

Busy Bee is an integral part of the vocational program's effort to develop individuals' vocational skills and personal growth, while providing an important service to our community.



Back: Charles Hilton-bey, Mary Hatter, Angela Russell, Peggy Morgan, Amanda Stubbs, and Stacey Hickey. Front: Jacqueline Johnson, Linda Tripp, Janice Covington, Kelly Fazenbaker, Theresa Ebling, and Cindy Thomas

ABOUT BENEDICTINE'S VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

FAQ's....

Why is the Vocational Department offering activities such as art that have nothing to do with work?

Actually, there is a relationship between art and work.; participation in one impacts quality of participation in the other. Art is relaxing, and work can be stressful. We recently added an Art Therapy group for only those individuals who demonstrate through their behavior a need for opportunity to reduce stress. Studies from inpatient settings, working with dually diagnosed individuals, show that "drawing helps many people to reconcile inner conflicts, release deeply repressed emotions, and foster self-awareness as well as personal growth." The hope is that through participation in the art group, targeted participants will, in a relaxing and non-threatening way, be able to reach an understanding of themselves, their lives, their circumstances and relationships, resulting in higher productivity, decreased disruptive behaviors, and increased enjoyment of day to day vocational routines and relationships. Similar in function to Stress Management group, Art Therapy is designed for those individuals who may benefit from a less verbal and structured approach to therapeutic interventions. Art therapy will be the last addition to the Vocational repertoire of support services for a good while. Thank you to Anna Landis, job coach, for facilitating this group



Group Updates

ART THERAPY

"Art is your personal diary where you may color your thoughts and emotions on a page." This is the basis and one of the many goals of the newly formed art therapy group. The idea of an art therapy group stemmed from the success of current group member Barbara B. Barbara was enrolled in a water color class at The Talbot County Senior Center. She both enjoyed and excelled in this class. Barbara's achievement and enjoyment of the class brought forth the idea of an art therapy group for Benedictine's Open Community individuals. This group is geared toward individuals who would benefit from art therapeutically. It is an outlet to express themselves creatively and to help relieve anger and stress. The projects will include emotions symbolized through color and lines as well as self portraits. Various materials will be used including watercolors, graphite and oil pastels. Using these materials group leaders will demonstrate how to best express themselves through art.

The individuals participating are: Dominic, Barbara B., Holly, Jason B., Paula, Mary, Bridgett, Linda, Eileen and Kathleen. Group leader is Anna Landis with Kelley Malone assisting. The group meets every Monday from 2:30 pm to 3:15 pm in the Holy Family House. Stay tuned for great work featured from the art therapy group!

Worksite Updates

DAC

EDWARD'S PHARMACY RECOGNIZES

ONE OF OUR OWN

On March 30, 2009, Rick Leonard (store manager of Edward's Pharmacy) presented an Appreciation Award to Windy Sherwood. Windy volunteers her time and skills each day to the pharmacy sorting and shredding confidential documents. Windy began volunteering at Edward's in February 2007 and has worked there ever since. Rick Leonard says "Windy is a hard worker. All of us here at Edward's Pharmacy are very proud of her accomplishments". Anil Cherukuri (owner) was heard over the loud speaker congratulating Windy on her award. Windy's mother and grandmother were also there to share in this special event. *Submitted by Candy Chandler*



Windy S.

DAC WELCOMES

CASSANDRA (Cassie) MILLER

Cassandra, a Queen Anne's County graduate resides in Chestertown with her son and daughter, ages 10 and 7. After leaving a career in banking to care for her grandmother, she came to the realization that helping others makes life more meaningful. This led Cassie to apply for a position with Benedictine. She was hired in May of 2008 as a job coach for Benedictine's Open Community Program. In February of this year Cassie transferred to the Day Activity Center. Cassie spends her leisure time reading, going to the beach and relaxing at home with family. Welcome Cassie to the DAC team.

ITC

Combining both creativity and fun as well as expanding the work skills of the individuals, once a month the Cookie Club and ITC join together to recognize birthdays. The cookie club designs and decorates a cookie with the initials of the individuals who celebrate their birthday in that month. Thanks Cookie Club for your creative way of providing work skill training while commemorating birthdays.

REMINDER:

- School closes June 10th OCP individuals may wear casual attire during the school closure