

THE EXCHANGE

*Published for parents, family members, and guardians
of individuals served by Black Hills Works*

Third Quarter 2015

Learning Institute out and about

Along with the many classes the Black Hills Works Learning Institute hosted in-house in June, they also provided 52 opportunities for people we support to learn more about our community. Participants visited local tourist attractions and the Journey Museum, tried gardening in a new program at the landfill, hiked, attended coffee clubs, and shopped at garage sales.

Hydroponic gardening providing new employment opportunities

Black Hills Works has formed a partnership with Todd and MaryAnn Gregson, owners of Gregson's Gardens, that will provide not only employment opportunities in hydroponic gardening to those we support, but also the opportunity to run their own business.

The Gregsons have restored the old greenhouse behind Black Hills Works to grow lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and eggplants. A new greenhouse will soon be added.

Gregson's Gardens has been providing organic and hydroponic culinary herbs, flowers, tomatoes, seasonal vegetables and fruits to businesses and restaurants since 2003. They have recently added Rapid City Regional Hospital to their list of customers.

People served by Black Hills Works will assist in the greenhouse with planting, caring for, harvesting, packaging, and delivering fresh vegetables to local customers. They will also have the opportunity to operate their own micro business. The Gregsons have developed six training modules to teach individuals the skills to take that step.

Hydroponic gardening is ideal for micro business because it requires less space and water and can be done year-round because it uses mineral nutrient solutions, in water, without soil. Terrestrial plants may be grown with their roots in the mineral nutrient solution only or in an inert medium, such as perlite or gravel.

Service Coordinator Wind Beneath Our Wings honoree



Service Coordinator Barb Larsen was honored at the 27th annual Wind Beneath Our Wings Outstanding Performance Awards luncheon held June 30 at the Adoba Hotel.

Barb has been diligently living out the mission of Black Hills Works for more than 30 years. Throughout the years, she has touched the lives of hundreds of people with disabilities and their families. She goes about the business of helping people live meaningful, productive lives without fanfare or accolades. Barb leads by example and mentors others with calm and wisdom. She has been one of the staff advisors for the agency's People First group for the past three years. Barb's ability to persevere in difficult situations is legendary. She has a way of establishing relationships at work and meets people where they are, addressing their fears and concerns while still pursuing their passions.

The awards are sponsored by the Health & Human Services Committee of the Chamber of Commerce.



Recognize a staff person

Black Hills Works employees are trained to live by what we call the Power of B, which is made up of four principles: Be Respectful, Be Accountable, Be Your Best, and Be Supportive. Each month we honor employees who have shown these principles in a big way or have in other ways gone above and beyond in their work. If you would like to recognize a particular Black Hills Works or BH Services employee for their service, please email Dorothy Rosby at drosby@bhws.com and tell us your story. Be as specific about what the employee has done or how they live out the principles of the Power of B.

The Exchange is published bimonthly by the Black Hills Works for parents, family members, and guardians of the individuals we serve. Comments and questions are encouraged and may be addressed to Dorothy Rosby, Editor, Black Hills Works, Box 2104, Rapid City, SD 57709; call (605) 718-6205; or email drosby@bhws.com. We also appreciate your keeping us up to date on your address changes, corrections, or duplicate mailings. If you would prefer to receive this newsletter electronically, email drosby@bhws.com.

Special Olympics

The Area Softball Tournament will be held August 22 at the Star of the West facility in Rapid City.

Unified Bocce Ball (also called Lawn Bowling) is coming to Special Olympics and we're seeking players for a trial event. Sign up now to join a two-person unified team and play Friday, September 18 prior to the State Softball Tournament at the Star of the West field in Rapid City.

The World's Largest Convoy & Truck Show is coming to Rapid City again September 18-19. The event is a fundraiser for Special Olympics. Volunteers are needed for all aspects of the event and we are also seeking items for the auction.

For information on these and other Special Olympic activities at Black Hills Works, contact Joe Burmeister at 593-1144.

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Pilot program aims for independence in transportation

Six people served by Black Hills Works will have an opportunity to experience more independence in the community thanks to a proposal Connie Melvin submitted to the South Dakota Division of Developmental Disabilities.

The Division agreed to provide funds for the purchase of six WayFinder 3s, which use an Android phone or tablet to help people with intellectual disabilities travel safely, whether by bus or on foot. The traveler simply taps on the picture of their desired destination and WayFinder 3 assures the traveler that they are on the correct route by pointing out important landmarks along the way, even telling them "this is not your stop" when they see others departing. Staff can create customized and personally meaningful content for the person and can even receive time-stamped location updates as the person travels to their location. The funds will also purchase the necessary phones or tablets and bus passes and it will also pay for a travel trainer to teach the skills necessary over a 12-week period.