



BOSWELL REGIONAL CENTER'S **BULLETIN**

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Raymond Johnson

One of the requirements of serving as director of Boswell Regional Center is dealing with numbers.

Working on the annual budget, checking staffing totals and perusing other expenditures are a necessary function of this job. But despite being faced with daily financial reports, I am still surprised when I see one list of figures – the number of individuals served in some capacity by our center.

At last count, over 800 individuals are receiving care as either a full-time resident at our Magee campus, or community groups in Magee, Mendenhall, Brookhaven and Wesson, or through a variety of other community services designed to benefit both the individual and the family.

One of these community services is our in-home respite program, designed to allow a medical professional or other qualified staff member to provide one-on-one care to the disabled individual. This visit from one of our staff – usually someone from our nursing department – allows family members to address needs related to everyday life. The caregiver can tend to tasks or personal interests in the home, or they are free to leave the home.

Services that are routinely provided to the individual during the allotted time period include administering medications, serving meals, including tube feedings, interacting with the patient and monitoring them while they are sleeping.

Other programs include attendant care, which provides relief to the caregiver by meeting personal needs related to grooming, getting ready for school,

work or day programs. The program offers assistance during a specific time of the day that is most beneficial to the family.

Another aspect of attendant care allows staff to accompany individuals to medical appointments, shopping or similar activities that would ordinarily require assistance or participation from family or caregivers.

In addition, Boswell offers:

- Day habilitation services that provide training, often in a community setting, in daily living, socialization, communication and self-help skills.
- Behavior Support/Intervention services that offer communication and modification services to individuals who, due to behavior problems, are not able to access many opportunities that are available to them; and
- Community Respite, offered outside an individual's home for those who do not have a complete family and/or caregiver support system.

While we often receive compliments from family members whose loved ones reside with us full-time, the heartfelt thanks we get from those who benefit from our assistance for as little as two hours each day is often more poignant.

These family members who choose to keep their disabled individual in the home are extremely grateful for the opportunity to get a much-needed break from the stressful task of caring full-time for someone with a disability. Most family members tell us that without our services, they would not be able to keep their loved one at home. Navigating the ordinary tasks we all take for granted, such as running errands, shopping for groceries and attending social events, would simply not be possible without Boswell's in-home services.

Due to our 30-year history, we have an innate understanding of the challenges that face those who live on our campuses, or who are caring for those with disabilities. This knowledge helps us provide the best support services to meet all of our individuals' - and their family's - lifelong needs.

Our goal is that in 30 years, Boswell Regional Center will be providing 800 additional Mississippians with the best possible care, treatment and services as they move toward a more independent way of life.

BRC BULLETIN



The Boswell Bulletin is a publication of Boswell Regional Center. The Bulletin is published free of charge to inform the public and interested family members and individuals about Boswell Regional Center activities, policies and progress. This publication also serves to provide information to those interested in mental retardation and the clients served at BRC.

Raymond Johnson, Director
Kara Kimbrough, Editor

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and each facility to recruit, employ, and promote qualified employees and applicants without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability. The Department of Mental Health/Bureau of Mental Retardation complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. It is the sole purpose of this act to provide a clear mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.



COVER PHOTO

John Robertson, center, was named Boswell's 2005 Employee of the Year at the recent Employee of the Year banquet.

John works at Boswell's State Farm Apartments in Magee. Pictured to the left is Dr. Randy Hendrix, executive director of DMH. BRC Director Raymond Johnson is pictured on the right.

RESIDENTS OF BOSWELL'S BROOKHAVEN GROUP HOMES ENJOYED 'CLASS' AT COPIAH-LINCOLN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Placing all the sometimes-confusing dinner forks in the right place, arranging a tasteful floral centerpiece, serving several courses of a meal in the space of a few minutes and conducting swift cleanup afterwards are just a few of the tasks students in Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Food Production Management courses practice on a daily basis. These important dining and etiquette skills were among the ones students shared with individuals from Boswell Regional Center's Brookhaven Group Homes when they visited the class recently.

Students were paired with an individual from Boswell during the two-hour instruction period. Individuals were taught how to clean and skirt a dinner table, arrange place settings complete with several different utensils, fold cloth napkins, create centerpieces, serve a multi-course lunch, and clean up following the meal.

The course provided valuable instruction that Boswell's individuals will be able to utilize daily at their homes," said Kerry Bynum, director of Boswell's Community ICF/MR program, which includes the Brookhaven and Wesson area.

"Not only are our individuals encouraged to function independently in their group homes, but are actually required on many levels to do so," Bynum said. "Learning more about table setting and dining etiquette is not only useful information for their home life, but also for the many occasions when they dine out at area restaurants, both for socialization and to increase their living skills."

Following the instruction period, individuals along with Boswell staff members were treated to a special lunch prepared by the students. Bynum expressed appreciation to Co-Lin for hosting the event, which was enjoyed by individuals and students.

"This was a great learning experience for our individuals, made even more enjoyable by the excellent one-on-one attention from the students," he said. "In

addition, many of the students said they had gained a greater understanding of those with disabilities. We appreciate Co-Lin for taking the time to host such a

meaningful event in the lives of our individuals."

Boswell's trip to Co-Lin was sponsored by United Way of the Brookhaven Area.



Students in Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Food Production Management class are pictured on the front row, along with Director Jody Hoff, far right. Pictured on the second and third rows are individuals who reside in Boswell Regional Center's Brookhaven Group Homes, along with Boswell staff members Kerry Bynum, Director of Community ICF/MR Services, Renee Cotton, Director of Brookhaven ICF/MR Group Homes, and Marany Yates, R.D.

EMPLOYEES RECEIVE AWARDS, HEARTFELT SEND-OFFS

Three of Boswell employees were recognized recently for their job accomplishments during ceremonies that marked retirements as well public recognition for furthering their education. Below are photos from the recognition ceremonies:



William Gates, a resident services program director, was recently awarded the Certificate in Public Management (CPM) designation after successfully completing six management and leadership courses in the State of Mississippi's CPM program.

Belinda Arrington, director of constituency services at BRC, was awarded the Certificate in Supervisory Management (CSM) designation after successfully completing three of the six required courses in the program.

BRC employees received their diplomas at the State Department of Education headquarters in Jackson at an awards ceremony attended by numerous state officials and dignitaries. Pictured at the CPM awards ceremony were, from left: BRC Director Raymond Johnson, William Gates, Belinda Arrington and Ed LeGrand, deputy director of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.



Buster Stubbs, far left, was honored at the time of his retirement with a reception attended by a large number of friends and family. He is pictured with BRC Director Raymond Johnson, right, who presented him with a certificate of appreciation as well as his personalized parking sign proclaiming his status as a veteran employee. Buster, a long-time employee in the maintenance department, was known for his in depth knowledge of Boswell's infrastructure, particularly the "subterranean" maze of pipes and tunnels that have been in existence for almost a century.

TOP EMPLOYEES FOR 2005 HO

Boswell Regional Center recently held its Employee Recognition Banquet to honor the top employees for 2005. John Robertson, a 12-year veteran of Boswell who currently works at the State Farm Apartments in Magee, was named the 2005 Overall Employee of the Year. All of the honorees in the monthly recognition program are involved in the direct care of BRC individuals. All employees of the

month from the three divisions, including Resident Living, Community ICF/MR and Community/DD Services were honored at the banquet. Supervisors and managers of the employees were also invited to the event, along with department directors and special guests.

The top employees recognized at the banquet included: Residential Living-Herbert Sasser, Magee campus;

Community ICF/MR- Ruby Hall, Brookhaven Group Homes, and Community/DD Services-John Robertson.

Each of the winners received an engraved plaque announcing their status as their division's Employee of the Year. Robertson also received a \$100 savings bond from the Friends & Family Association, and a personalized parking sign to place at the apartments.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Ruby Hall, center was named the top employee in the Community ICF/MR division. Hall, an employee at the Brookhaven group homes, is pictured with, from left: Dr. Randy Hendrix, Renee Cotton, director of Brookhaven group homes, Kerry Bynum, Community ICF/MR Director and BRC Director Raymond Johnson.

BELOW, RIGHT: Herbert Sasser, left, was named the top residential living employee for 2005. Sasser received his award from Steven Allen, right, assistant director for resident services.



ABOVE: Overall Employee of the Year John Robertson, right, was presented with his own parking sign by BRC Director Raymond Johnson, left.

RIGHT: Clevis Grant, right, a resident living employee at the Magee campus, is a regular fixture at annual awards banquets. Grant, along with Terrell Hayes, pictured to her right, enjoyed the delicious meal prepared by BRC's dietary department.



HONORED AT FEBRUARY BANQUET



ABOVE: Residential living's top employee for the 1st shift, JoAnn Nelson, left, proudly shows off her recognition plaque presented by director Bruce Womack, far right. John Tillman, center, was named the top 3rd shift employee in resident living.



BELOW: Britney Craft, right, a resident living employee, enjoyed visiting at the banquet with fellow co-workers, from right, Shirley Hooker, Elva Enoch and Maurice Berkhalter.



VALENTINE'S DAY BALL ENJOYED BY INDIVIDUALS, STAFF

Holidays such as Valentine's Day are anticipated all year long by Boswell's individuals, primarily due to the center's tradition of hosting special celebrations and meals. This year was no exception, as the annual Valentine's Ball was attended by a record number of individuals, including those from Brookhaven and Wesson group homes.

Organized by the Recreation Department, the night's events included taking keepsake photos under the balloon arch, enjoying a special meal, and finally, a dance that showcased everyone's particular talents.

Plans are already underway to make next year's event even bigger and better. Below are photos from the 2006 Valentine's Ball:



Mechelle, left, was named Queen of the Valentine's Ball. She is pictured with her friend Maurice, right, who presented her with a special Valentine's bouquet.



Suzanne and Bobo enjoyed having their photo made under the balloon arch.



Robert's new red suit was the envy of all his friends at the Valentine's Ball.



Linda waited patiently for dinner to be served prior to the dance.

BOSWELL EMPLOYEES PROVIDE CHILDREN A 'SAFE PLACE TO PLAY'



Bobby Hamilton, left, and Jason Holloway, right, are pictured in front of the playground equipment they donated to Boswell for the enjoyment of children who visit the center.

Children who visit Boswell Regional Center will now have a safe place to play, courtesy of a door prize donated by two of the center's recreation employees.

Bobby Hamilton, a recreation therapist, and Jason Holloway, an active treatment technician, won a complete playground set while attending the National Conference for Therapeutic Recreation held in 2005 in Natchez. The set, which includes covered slides and other attractions, is worth \$5,000, according to manufacturers.

The two decided to donate the set to the center so that children

who come to the center either to see loved ones or attend events could enjoy the playground.

"We decided that the playground set would be a good addition to Boswell's park, as it is far enough from the road and traffic that parents would feel secure in letting their children play there while they are on center grounds," Hamilton said. "We were happy to do this, especially if it will bring some enjoyment to those who visit Boswell."

Boswell Director Raymond Johnson praised Hamilton and Holloway's generosity in donating

the equipment to the center.

"Bobby and Jason were certainly under no obligation to donate this equipment to Boswell," Johnson said. "Their first thoughts were on providing enjoyment to the children who visit our center, and that says a lot about their generosity and desire to provide a good experience for everyone who visits Boswell. This clearly illustrates the type of employees they are; I am extremely proud of their actions."

“Neither rain nor snow...”

Boswell has a new on-campus service – a mail delivery system – that is proving to be popular with employees. Most importantly, it has created significant time and cost-savings for the center.

Mail is now sorted and boxed in a centrally-located mail room, and then hand-delivered and picked up at campus offices twice each day. A staff member supervises a Boswell individual who performs each of these tasks, as well as the time-consuming job of shredding confidential material. The new system has resulted in less down-time on the part of employees, many of whom had to drive across campus twice a day or more to pick up their mail. The elimination of an outside shredding contractor has also saved the center additional dollars.

Dovie Hall is pictured driving mailroom attendant John across campus to deliver and pickup mail on Boswell's unique version of a mail truck.



Boswell Regional Center



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