



Boswell Regional Center's

VOLUME VII

BULLETIN

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Raymond Johnson

First of all, I'd like to thank the staff at Goodwater Meadows Group Home for their quick action in making sure the residents there were in a safe place when the tornado struck in the wee hours of the morning of Thursday, March 26th. Goodwater suffered substantial damage, but due to staff heeding the tornado siren warning, there were no injuries. We also experienced minor damage at State Farm. We feel so fortunate and blessed this was the only damage Boswell buildings sustained. However, we do have significant damage to our timber.

Over 101 acres were affected and on the advise of the Forestry Department, much of it has been logged.

Individuals that were living at Goodwater are now residing at Pineview on campus. They seem to be adjusting well in their temporary home.

We have the final drawings and plans from the architect on the buildings that will be built to house individuals that are currently living in the Jaquith building. Four ICF/MR buildings are slated to be built. This will allow individuals to live two to a room and will place everyone at ground level. This will help everyone, especially our individuals that have mobility issues.

This is an exciting time at Boswell Regional Center and we are looking forward to all the positive changes that are being made at our facility to help us better serve the individuals in our care.

Mission Statement

Boswell Regional Center provides Mississippians with intellectual and other developmental disabilities a comprehensive array of service options promoting independence and an optimal quality of life. Through an active partnership of individual, family, staff and community, these service options are designed to enhance each individual's quality of life through teaching skills which aid in reaching personal potential.



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 intellectual disabilities and the individuals served at BRC.

Raymond Johnson, Director

Kathy Lee, Editor

Kathy Dampeer-Pittman, Assistant

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 Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 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.

On the cover...

The final wall still stands in this picture of the Parents Association and Recreation Center, known as the PAR Center. The building, built by the Masons in 1924 and named the Masonic Pavilion, was beyond repair. The building was already in poor condition when Hurricane Katrina hit campus in 2005 and further damaged the building.

Celebrating IDD Awareness 'Just like you'

Each year March is designated as Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Month in Mississippi in an effort to educate area citizens and to create an awareness in local communities regarding individuals diagnosed with a disability.

Boswell Regional Center serves individuals 21 and older who have been diagnosed with intellectual or other developmental disabilities.

The facility first opened in 1976 and started out by serving 35 adult individuals diagnosed with an intellectual or developmental disability. Today the number has grown to serve approximately 690 with some of those individuals living on campus, many in various apartments, a number in group homes, and individuals who receive services right in their own home.

This past year, Boswell made a more visible appearance in Magee with the occupancy of a building in the heart of the town, located across from the post office. This space houses many of the facility's community programs including the offices for Community IDD (Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled) Programs, Home and Community Based Support offices, and the Diagnostics and Evaluation Department.



Pictured above is Magee Mayor Jimmy Clyde signing a proclamation designating March 5, 2009, as Intellectual and Development Disabilities Day in Magee. Also pictured at left is Boswell Regional Center Director Raymond Johnson and at right is Joe, a recipient of services.

BRC employees, which number close to 600, utilize many businesses in Magee by shopping, eating,

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Day at the Capitol

The theme of this year's Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Month was "Just Like You." Boswell's display during the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Day at the Capitol, held March 4th, featured Vocational Services.

The display focused on manufacturing, and highlighted BRC's Pine Straw Project with an actual bale on display. A number of examples of items produced by individuals were also featured at the display.

Pictured at right, from left: David Tedford, Director of Vocational Services; Eddie Conn, Director of Boswell Industries, Brookhaven and DeWayne Pittman, Program Coordinator, Vocational Services.



Tornado damage

Goodwater damaged in March tornado

In the wee hours of the morning of March 26th, two staff members gathered the 10 residents at Goodwater Meadows Group Home in the hallway to heed a tornado warning siren. The building sustained substantial roof damage and major water damage.

Staff are to be commended for their swift action and devotion to the individuals they displayed during this emergency.

Individuals and staff are making Pineview, located on the main campus, their temporary home.

Due to all the structural damage it received, Goodwater will be torn down to the slab and rebuilt.



Gates graduates from FOCUS program

William Gates, Boswell Regional Center's Unit 3 Administrator, recently graduated from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Focus Program. DMH's Pi-

lot Group Focus Graduation was held on Friday, May 15 at Tara Wildlife in Vicksburg. DMH's Accelerated Leadership Development Program "Focus" offers a unique op-

portunity for employees to hone their skills to greater and higher personal performance and self-awareness. The goal is to help DMH employees reach maximum capacity and to develop "bench strength" for the agency. This experience challenges participants to grow to new heights in both ability and attitude. "Focus" lasts 12-18 months and involves four multi-day retreats.



Pictured from left: Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director; Boswell employee William Gates of Magee; and Ann Thames, DMH Director of the Bureau of Workforce Development and Training.

ports our agency has been involved with,"

Gates is the third Boswell employee to graduate from the FOCUS program.

BRC Staff members serving country

While we in the United States are far removed physically from the war overseas, it hits close to home when loved ones and co-workers are activated.

Two Boswell Regional Center employees have been called to serve their country—Vanessa Autmon and

Joshua Powell.

Vanessa works 2nd shift on Unit 1. Her home is in Mize.

Joshua is employed at the group home in Wesson. He is from Brookhaven.

Our thoughts will be with these two staff members and their fellow soldiers.

If there are other employees who are currently activated, please let us know so that we can recognize them and acknowledge the sacrifices they and their families make.

April Activities Celebrate Autism Awareness

Individuals at Boswell's Mary Elizabeth Morton Group Home enjoyed a day of activities during April in celebration of Autism Awareness Month.

After an enjoyable cookout, they made bird feeders from pine cones, peanut butter and bird seed. These bird feeders were then hung from the various trees that are included in the backyard landscape at the group home. They also put together stress balls using bird seed and balloons.

Later, several individuals joined in for a game of croquet.

Individuals from the Morton Group Home also participated in the annual walk for Autism sponsored by TE-AAM, Together Enhancing Autism Awareness in Mississippi, on April 18th.

Top picture: A staff member assists an individual in putting together a stress ball.

Picture at far right: An individual is pictured putting the finishing touches on a bird feeder.

Picture at right: Individuals enjoyed playing a game of croquet.



Individuals respond to Pet Therapy

Several staff members at Boswell Regional Center thought Pet Therapy would be beneficial to individuals.

So after some investigating, Boswell was able to find someone locally to address this need.

That "someone" is Al Gordy of Magee. Together with his dog, Smooch, Gordy visits Boswell about once a month.

Smooch isn't just any dog; he's a labradoodle. No, it's not a made up name. He's a cross between a Labrador and a poodle. But more than that he's a trained Therapy Dog.

"He has more degrees than I do," Gordy recently said.

And this dog rightfully earns the name Smooch. Gordy demonstrates this by calling to him while opening his arms wide. In response, Smooch runs into the waiting arms and gives Gordy a big kiss.

Smooch has been to Boswell several times now and has been a big hit with the individuals.

The pair has visited the Prime Timers program, which consists of older individuals; Morton Group Home that houses individuals diagnosed with autism; and a num-



ber of individuals that live in Jaquith, the ICF/MR building on campus.

BRC Director Raymond Johnson recently said after observing a Pet Therapy session, "It's a delightful scene to witness. The response from the individuals to Smooch has been very positive, and we plan to continue the program. We are very grateful to Mr. Gordy for taking time out of his busy schedule to come to Boswell to bring this program which has provided so much joy to the individuals."

Gordy and Smooch travel to other facilities on a regular basis, including MS State Hospital.

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banking and going to local medical professionals for their needs. Not to mention the number of employees who live in and around Magee who pay city and county taxes.

Boswell individuals also spend their money in Magee with many of the same type of needs as the staff that serve them. Individuals also participate in community events, including Annual Crazy Day activities and some attend local and area churches. A number of individuals live in the community and work in local businesses.

Growth for Boswell is continuing in 2009 with the current renovation of the old Fred's building downtown. The City of Magee donated the building to Boswell in

April 2008. The building will house the Community DD Program's Pre-Vocational Workshop and the Day Habilitation Program. Funding for the renovations and necessary equipment for the 13,664 square foot building is generated from the on-campus Vocational Services program.

"In the past 32 years, as we've continued to grow we've watched the city of Magee grow. We are fortunate that the city fathers and the citizens of Magee support us in our efforts to continue to work toward more community-based services," Raymond Johnson, facility director, said. "We, in turn, support the town, its citizens, the Chamber, businesses and community activities that make Magee a great place to be located."

Education Awards Recognize Individuals, Staff



Sheila Graves



Lance Epting

Several individuals received certificates and trophies for attendance, participation and special recognition at the recent Education Awards Day held at the auditorium.

Each year, a female staff member and a male staff member are recognized by the individuals as a favorite among the direct care staff. This year's favorites were Sheila Graves, Unit 2 and Lance Epting, Unit 4 (both pictured at left).

This year's program also featured a speaker, Dr. Barry Morris, who presented a delightful motivational speech that was enjoyed by all.

A special thank you to the Education Department for hosting this event.



Getting a new look.

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This one didn't get away.



Championship Volleyball Team

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Passing a Hot Potato!

We remember....

Funeral services were held on Thursday, June 4 for Henry Brown who passed away on May 28. He was Director of Risk Management, and will be missed by staff and individuals.

Retired employee Darlene King passed away in April.

Larry Blackwell, former employee of BRC and son of Lisa Blackwell, DCW, Unit 2 also passed away in April.

The Boswell flag, at right, flies at half mast in remembrance.



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