
◆ BrainWaves ◆

Volume 25 Issue 3

The Community Skills Program® Newsletter

Fall 2009

Once More With Feeling...Thrilled!!

Successful Vocational Outcomes in a Tight Economy

We are all aware of our nation's economic problems and the impact on the labor market. Many millions of people are unemployed and the competition for the limited number of jobs is intense. So, we are *thrilled* with the recent successes of some of our clients in finding new jobs and keeping them. One of our clients has been working at Giant for almost a year now, and another one started last month at a Giant store in another county. We also have a client working at Target (please see *Spotlight* on page 3) and one at Walmart. Another of our clients is working at Sears, after a long job search, and another one has just finished her first three months as a physical therapist assistant at a health-care facility. Another client is working as a janitor at a school. So, we congratulate them on their notable achievements and appreciate the opportunities we have had to work along with them (literally) as they learned their new job tasks.

The currently complex economy, new technology, and the huge numbers of applicants for jobs have also led to a change in the ways our clients have had to apply for jobs. The old, familiar process of paper job applications and personal interviews has been replaced by many companies with online applications (sometimes at kiosks in shopping malls), group interviews with as many as 40 to 50 applicants at a time, more frequent use of online personality inventories (especially in retail and other customer service positions), drug testing through urinalyses at the time of the interview,

more emphasis on criminal background checks, etc.

Our neurorehabilitation specialists who do job coaching have also more frequently had to adapt to early morning hours (for example, beginning at 4:00 a.m. when stores like Target have trained their new hires on-site *before* the store opened) and rotating shifts with work schedules posted week-by-week when employers have responded to slow business by reducing all employees' hours rather than laying off individuals entirely.

The fluctuations in their work schedules have presented problems for some of our clients with memory difficulties. To be sure they are aware of their work shifts and get to work on time, our staff have provided assistance to them in developing and implementing effective compensatory strategies. We want to acknowledge the abilities and successful efforts of our clients, the dedication and commitment of our staff under these challenging circumstances, and the positive attitude toward, and responsiveness of the employers to, our clients and staff.

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Update

- Welcome to our new clients—Amy, Betty, Donald (“Mike”), Donna, Gerald, Janice, John, Judith, Lloyd, Maureen, Paula, Thomas (“TJ”) C., Thomas S., Todd—our new neuro-rehabilitation specialists—Sarah DeMarco, M.S., BCABA and Victoria Stewart, B.A.—our new client services liaison for Southern New Jersey—Melissa Hosier, M.A., CBIS—and our new office assistant in the Wyomissing, PA office—Kathleen (Kate) Carr.

Our clients and staff continue to be involved in many interesting, varied activities. As usual, in each issue we mention some of them; more will be mentioned in the next issue of *BrainWaves*.

- In September, Reggie attended a three-part computer class at his local library. He continues to look for new computer-oriented classes and has joined another local library where the classes are free for members of the library. Also, Reggie continues to volunteer three days a week at a local medical center; he independently takes the bus to and from his volunteer site.
- In October, Kathleen began participating in scrapbooking activities; she chose her daughters' birthdays for her scrapbook theme. Kathleen also volunteered at her local United Way where she assisted with making ornaments.
- Phil registered for a senior citizens' computer class at his local Jewish Community Center. In September, he resumed reading to a class of preschool children.

(continued on page 2)

Update continued (from page 1)

- In October, Paul began attending Goodwill for a 15-day vocational evaluation. In addition, Paul continues to live within his means, prevent overdrawing his checking account, and have money available for discretionary spending.
- Melinda has been working with her neurorehabilitation specialist on filling her medication container, and in October she filled it independently without making any errors.
- Kirk is continuing to work on his craft project for display at the 2010 *Creativity Expo*.
- Donyell has been engaging in more household tasks; he takes out the garbage, vacuums and does laundry, by following a weekly schedule that is posted on the refrigerator.
- In October, Michael was approved for Access Link transportation services. He also obtained a library card from his local library where he has been borrowing DVDs to watch movies.
- Patsy has begun crafting wreaths for her family members and friends. She spends several hours per week designing and working on these projects. (Please see page 6.)
- In October, Ray began his involvement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and is looking forward to returning as soon as possible to full-time, competitive employment.
- October 2009 marked Tom's ninth year of employment at the Shores at Wesley Manor, where he works full-time as a dishwasher.
- William has been planning for his upcoming move to New York. He has been planning and budgeting for the purchase of new appliances. With the assistance of his neurorehabilitation specialist, he went to Sears to research the cost of new appliances, which he reported was an eye-opening experience.
- Zack (our youngest client) picks up his belongings every night, with only infrequent cues now. He also can tie his shoelaces better and has a routine place in his bedroom to do so.
- Steven has been participating in the Arthur and Friends hydroponic gardening program.
- Anju recently joined Planet Fitness and continues to be interested in participating in physical activity. She attends a sheltered workshop four days a week where she typically performs assembly tasks. She also volunteers at the Alliance for Disabled in Action (ADA) once a week; she performs office tasks with the assistance of her neurorehabilitation specialist.
- Harris is a full-time student at his local community college. He is motivated to perform well in his college courses and recently sought out a tutor for his algebra class.
- In October, Adam volunteered at several different locations in his community, including the American Cancer Society, the United Way, Berks Encore, and Opportunity House's Early Learning Center. In addition, with the assistance of his neurorehabilitation specialist, Adam participated in the Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center's brain injury support group meeting and reported that he really enjoyed it.
- In October, Jonathan attended an orientation program at the Special Olympics Sports Complex in Lawrenceville, NJ. He anticipates being trained as a coach or referee. Also, Jonathan and his team won a silver medal for soccer in October.
- Our congratulations to our staff members René Kauffman (now René Puglisi) and Stephanie Molnar (now Stephanie Hartman) on their marriages in October and November, respectively.
- Six of our neurorehabilitation specialists have received training to

prepare for the certification exam by the Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists.

- Several of our staff members (neurorehabilitation specialists and client services liaisons) have been attending continuing education courses for their professional development and to maintain the continuing education required for their professional licenses; recent continuing education courses have included personality disorders, assistive technology, and ethical issues.
- On December 11, 2009, our Management Planning Group met at The Inn at Reading in Wyomissing, PA, for its quarterly meeting. We were pleased to have our newest client services liaison, Melissa Hosier, M.A., CBIS, participate in her first management meeting with us. (She will be carrying out her responsibilities in southern New Jersey, reporting to Maria Zakula, M.A., CBIS, our program coordinator for southern New Jersey.) At the meeting, we discussed recent accomplishments in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and development that is underway. We also generated ideas for new initiatives, and look forward to a great year in 2010.

Correction Regarding The Contact Person for The Mechanicsburg TBI Support Group

In our Spring 2009 issue of *BrainWaves*, the contact person for the Mechanicsburg, PA traumatic brain injury support group was *incorrectly* reported as Paul Kautz. The contact person is *Pat* Kautz. We apologize for this error. The support group meets at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Mechanicsburg, 175 Lancaster Boulevard, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 (717/691-3700), on the second Tuesday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Pat can be reached by phone at (717) 580-6129 or by e-mail at pkautz@aol.com.

Spotlight: Joseph (Joey) Tomalis



Spotlight: Joey Tomalis

Spotlight: Please tell me a little bit about yourself.

Joey: My name is Joseph V. Tomalis, but most people call me Joey. I am 28 years old.

Spotlight: Where do you live?

Joey: I live with my mother and father in Exeter, PA. My sister and her husband, along with my two nieces, Abby and Gabby, live close-by. I have a really good, supportive family that helps me a lot.

Spotlight: Tell me what you enjoy doing.

Joey: My favorite activities are bike riding, surfing the net, going to the movies, and playing video games. My favorite movies are from Marvel Entertainment. My favorite video games to play are *Defender* and *PacMan* from the 1980's. My favorite music is also from the 1980's, with my very favorite being the "Pet Shop Boys." I used to enjoy MTV, but only the stuff from the 80's, so I watch it now on YouTube.com.

Spotlight: Is there anything else you enjoy doing?

Joey: I like playing the arcade game *Dance Dance Revolution*.

Spotlight: What do you do in that game?

Joey: You dance by putting your feet on the right color.

Spotlight: Can you talk a little about your disability?

Joey: Aspergers—I can't describe what this diagnosis is, but I learned to handle it and I feel I have learned to overcome it.

Spotlight: Tell me about your work history.

Joey: I graduated from Wilson High School in 2002 and then took computer classes at Reading Area Community College (RACC) for two years. I had good grades. After RACC, I worked for the Reading School District, and then Head Start, doing data entry, until April 2006. I struggled to find a job to make money. I have worked at Target since June 2009.

Spotlight: How did you find your job at Target?

Joey: I found the job online. But Donna Kramer from OVR [Office of Vocational Rehabilitation] came to my house a couple of times to help me find a job.

Spotlight: What was the hiring process like at Target?

Joey: I went with Megan to the interview. [Joey is referring to Megan Rohrbach, M.S.S., LSW, client services liaison for Community Skills Program.] It was a big group interview with a lot of people. I also had to take a little test before the interview. After the test, I was interviewed by a man named Drew. I also got interviewed by a couple of other people as well.

Spotlight: After the test and interview, did you have to do anything else before you were hired?

Joey: I also had to take a urinalysis test before I left that day. We were there for a long time that day.

Spotlight: Was Target's interview like any other you ever experienced?

Joey: It was different because we were there for a very long time and talked to a lot of different people.

Spotlight: What do you do at Target?

Joey: I am a flow team member. I work at the truck and every aisle, looking at barcodes and scanning items to see if it's the right number. Then, I put the items on the shelf in the correct location. I really like my job and am doing a good job. I have learned to ask for help from my team members when carrying heavy things like kitty litter.

Spotlight: Do you have any additional responsibilities at Target?

Joey: I look at all of the expiration dates of the items in the grocery department. This is called FIFO (First In, First Out).

Spotlight: What does that mean?

Joey: That means that I put all of the older items first on the shelves so people buy those items first. The newer items go in the back.

Spotlight: Is there anything else you have to do in the grocery department?

Joey: I also count the items and then restock the shelves.

Spotlight: Can you give me an example?

Joey: If three boxes of Cheerios were bought, I put three boxes back out on the shelf.

Spotlight: Do you participate in any other activities?

Joey: I spend some time volunteering. I volunteer at the Salvation Army, doing data entry once a week on Fridays for two hours.

Spotlight: What data do you enter?

Joey: I work on food distribution and the furniture bank. I also enter volunteer hours.

(continued on page 4)

Spotlight continued (from page 3)

Spotlight: Can you explain that further?

Joey: I put in numbers such as how much stuff was donated and how much stuff was given away to people.

Spotlight: How did Community Skills Program help you?

Joey: Megan [Rohrbach] helped me find my job at Target. You helped me very much at Target. [Joey is referring to Erin Coulehan, M.S.W., Joey's neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program, who conducted this interview.]

Spotlight: How did I help you at Target?

Joey: You showed me how to put the stuff on the shelves, and taught me how to do all of my tasks in the grocery department as well.

Spotlight: Do you do anything else with Community Skills Program?

Joey: I attend a group every Thursday. First, we go somewhere to eat lunch. Then, we play games or go somewhere in the community. [Joey is referring to Community Skills Program's Therapeutic Activities Group that meets weekly to work on social skills.]

Spotlight: Do you enjoy the group?

Joey: I really enjoy the group and feel that it is helping me meet new people.

Spotlight: What was your favorite activity with the group?

Joey: My favorite activity was when we went miniature golfing.

Spotlight: Do you have any future goals?

Joey: I would like to be married one day.

Spotlight: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Joey: I want to thank OVR for helping me find this job.

David's Drive 2009

Penn Oaks Golf Club in West Chester, PA was the setting for the third annual **David's Drive**, held on September 15, 2009. The event is sponsored by the Council on Brain Injury (CoBI), a non-profit organization formed by ReMed in May 2007 in memory of David Strauss, Ph.D., neuropsychologist and founding member of ReMed. One hundred and twenty-two golfers participated in the golf tournament and there was a chance to win a 2010 Toyota Camry in the hole-in-one putting challenge. This year, Community Skills Program sponsored a foursome in the golf tournament, which included four firefighters from the Philadelphia Fire Department (see photo below), one of whom is the husband of a staff member of Community Skills Program. In addition to the golf tournament, a dinner, silent auction, and golf clinic were highlights of the day. The golf clinic, supervised by Bob Buck, director of the Eastern Amputee Golf Association, was attended by 15 participants with disabilities. Approximately \$38,000 was raised at the event, to be donated to programs benefitting individuals with brain injury and their families. Next year's **David's Drive** is planned for October 2010. For more information on the event or CoBI, go to www.davidsdrive.org.



Pictured left to right: Lieutenant Charlie Grover, Firefighter Ed Leber, Captain Cary Boyd, and Lieutenant Rocky Sgrillo of the Philadelphia Fire Department. The "Philly Fire" foursome won first place in the men's division. Congratulations, Charlie, Ed, Cary and Rocky!

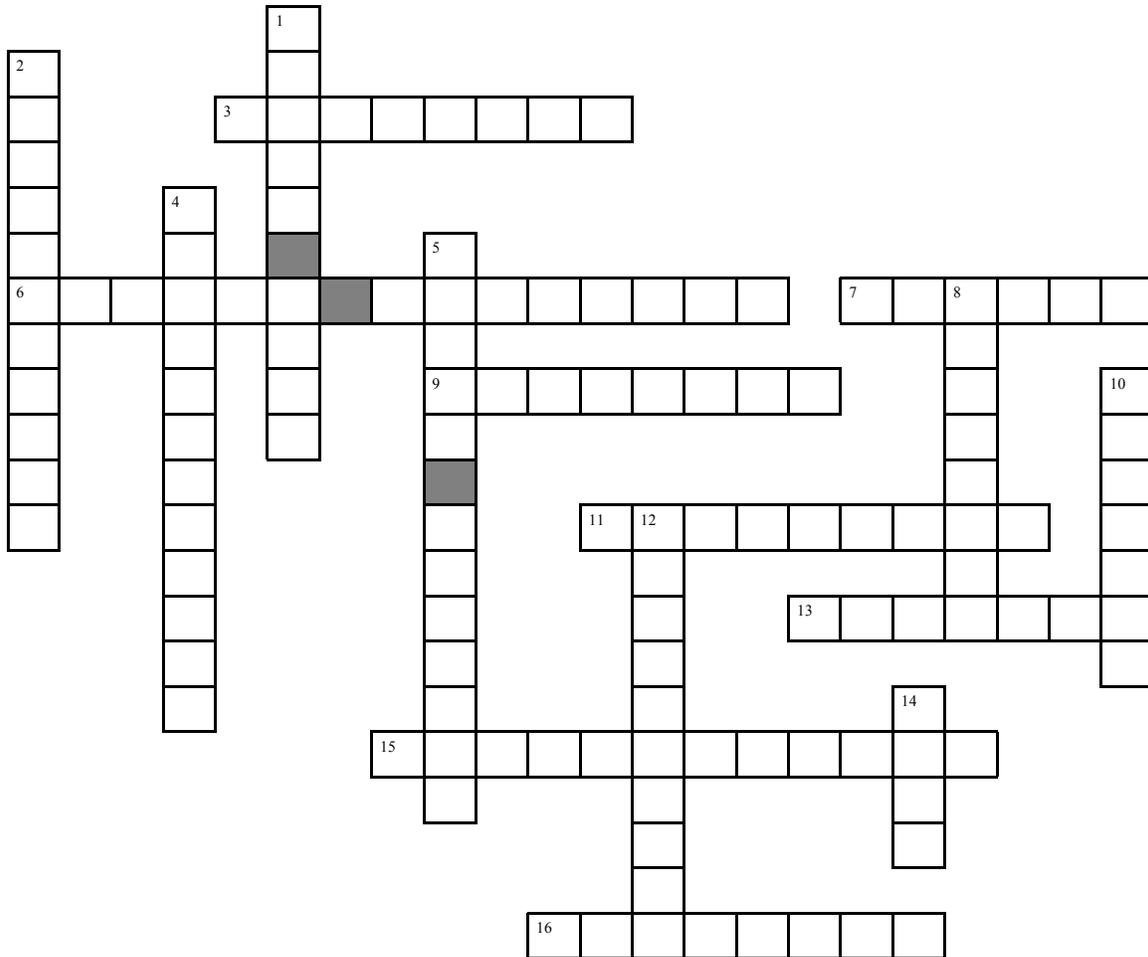
Did You Know??

Thanks to the quick response of firefighters, like the men who are pictured above, brain damage from smoke inhalation can be prevented. We are grateful to men and women first responders who put themselves at risk to save others.

Creativity Corner

Crossword Puzzle: Parts of the Brain

Some of our newest staff members are studying for the exam to become certified brain injury specialists. To enhance the enjoyment of learning, Stefani Hallinger, M.S.W., LSW created a crossword puzzle on **Parts of the Brain**. With a few minor editing changes, see how you do with Stefani's learning aid. (Note: The shaded boxes indicate a space in a two-word answer.) When you have completed as much of the puzzle as you can, turn to page 7 for the answers. Good luck!



Across

Down

- 3. Lobe associated with sense of touch, spatial and visual perception.
- 6. Complex band of nerve fibers that exchanges information between the two hemispheres.
- 7. System involved in emotions and basic elemental feelings.
- 9. "Fight-flight" structure; associated with emotional memories and reactions.
- 11. Lobe associated with vision.
- 13. Lobe in charge of executive functioning.
- 15. Made up of the thalamus, hypothalamus; master relay center for forwarding information, sensations and movement.
- 16. Lobe associated with memory, hearing and understanding of language.

- 1. Located at the top of the spinal column; relays information in and out of the brain.
- 2. Paired organ; associated with memory functioning.
- 4. "Conductor" of person's emotional orchestra.
- 5. "Nerve knots" that help handle physical movements by relaying information from the cerebral cortex to the brain stem and cerebellum.
- 8. Responsible for alertness and arousal.
- 10. Located in the brain stem; controls many involuntary functions.
- 12. Located in the lower back section of the brain; coordinates, modulates and stores all body movement.
- 14. Located in the brain stem; essential for facial movements and sensations.

Creativity Corner (continued)

Patsy's Wreaths

by Jacqueline Anderson, B.A., Patsy's
Neurorehabilitation Specialist with Community Skills Program

Patricia (Patsy) Mangiello began making decorative wreaths in her junior year of high school. She said that she comes from a family of talented and crafty people, including her grandmother. After she married, Patsy wanted to decorate their new home but realized how expensive many craft items were. She began studying how items were made that she liked and how they were designed. She then began designing and crafting her own ornaments and fabric flowers. Her basement eventually became her crafting room. Her family and friends constantly complimented her work, so she began making gifts for them. She started making embellished door brooms and wreaths for every occasion and holidays. At one point, people wanted to pay for her wreaths, but Patsy claims the business side of it took the joy out of her talent.

Following her brain aneurysm, the time Patsy spent on her hobby declined considerably. She recalls how, due to her inability to drive, the dependency on her husband to provide transportation to buy materials caused her to become very depressed and unmotivated. However, for the past several months, as part of her cognitive rehabilitation therapy, Patsy resumed her crafting. "It's very therapeutic," Patsy confidently expresses. "It gives me a sense of accomplishment. It keeps my mind busy and keeps things in perspective. I really enjoy it! It is fun and pleasurable."

Patsy's wreaths have become more and more creative and complex in their design. She has made many seasonal and holiday wreaths for her friends and family members. She has even made them for family members of friends because of their enjoyment of them. Her list of people for whom she wishes to create grows each new holiday! Even more recently, Patsy has challenged herself by making a wreath made of seashells and a wreath made from live Christmas greens. Patsy expresses, "The crafting of wreaths and door brooms seems to interest me more and more. I seem to be more creative in their design, depending on who the wreath is for and where it would be displayed." She looks forward to continuing her crafting for many seasons to come!



*Please be sure to check out our website
(www.communityskillsprogram.com)
to see Patsy's beautiful wreaths in color.*



Solution: Parts of the Brain Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 3. Parietal
- 6. Corpus Callosum
- 7. Limbic
- 9. Amygdala
- 11. Occipital
- 13. Frontal
- 15. Diencephalon
- 16. Temporal

Down

- 1. Brain Stem
- 2. Hippocampus
- 4. Hypothalamus
- 5. Basal Ganglia
- 8. Midbrain
- 10. Medulla
- 12. Cerebellum
- 14. Pons



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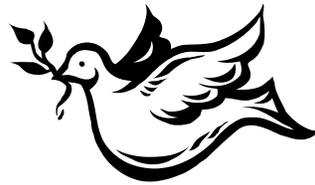
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*Serving individuals with brain injuries in
New Jersey and Pennsylvania.*



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happiness this holiday season.

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