

BOSWELL REGIONAL CENTER'S BULLETIN

Vol. XVIII, No. 2 • May / June 2021



our appreciation for you

2020 Employee of the Year Named

Boswell Regional Center's

The Boswell Bulletin is published to inform the public, employees, family members and friends on Boswell Regional Center's activities, programs and progress. This publication also seeks to provide information to those interested in the work conducted by Boswell's employees to enrich the lives of those with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

Clint Ashley, Director
Kara Kimbrough,
Editor



Boswell Regional Center
1049 Simpson Highway 149 N.
P. O. Box 128
Magee, MS 39111

ON THE COVER:



Katina Runnels was named 2020 Employee of the Year in May at Boswell's first-annual Employee Recognition Picnic

Katina Runnels named 2020 Employee of the Year

Katina Runnels, described as "one of the strongest advocates for Boswell clients that you'll ever find," was selected as Boswell's top employee of the year for 2020. The majority of the honorees in Boswell's quarterly recognition program are involved in the direct care of Boswell individuals. The category in which Runnels was recognized honors outstanding staff members at a community ICF group home.

Katina was promoted to behavior health technician from direct support professional at one of Boswell's Wesson group homes after earning her bachelor's degree and later, a Master's. As Employee of the Year, she received a cash award from Boswell's Friends and Family Association, an engraved award and personalized parking sign declaring her status as Employee of the Year.

Katina's nomination form contained glowing accolades from ICF director Jamie Prine and peers with statements that included the following statements:

"Katina is self-motivated, shows initiative in all areas, gets along well with co-workers and promotes and models positive client interaction and building rapport with individuals. She is diligent, on-time, and works long hours when needed. She has a strong work ethic and is an essential part of her team."

Another supervisor stated:

"Katina adapts to client changes and challenges in a positive manner, demonstrates excellent solving problem skills and is committed to learning and improving job performance. In short, she is passionate about our clients and their well-being."

Her supervisor added:

"Katina is not one to cause problems, but she will not sit back and allow anything negative to be said or done to any of her clients. I was happy to recommend her for advancement, especially as I witnessed her furthering her education despite a busy personal life that includes taking care of a household of three children. She has been a tremendous asset to Boswell since Day One and I only anticipate more of the same from this exceptional employee. In short, she is AWESOME and most deserving of Employee of the Year!"

Boswell director Clint Ashley emphasized his support for the contributions made by Katina as well as those from each 2020 employee of the quarter.

"Thank you for all that you do each and every day for our center and for those in our care," Ashley said. "Your dedication changes lives, enhances our center and creates long-lasting results for those we serve."

Assistant director Cindy Womack, who supervises Prine, stated, *"It's reassuring to know someone like Katina looking out for our individuals' best interests. Her compassion for them is admirable and serves as for others in our group homes to emulate."*

Katina has worked at Boswell for six years and credits her "team" for helping her excel on the job.

"I would not be able to do my job in the way I feel it should be done if not for my supervisors and co-workers," she said. "Knowing that I have their support and knowing Boswell cares about those of us that care for individuals makes me even more determined to do the best possible job that I can."

2020 Employee of the Year Named



Boswell Regional Center's Employee of the Year for 2020 Katina Runnels, center, is congratulated by Jamie Prine, left, ICF group homes director, who nominated Katina for the top award, and Wendy Bailey, right, Executive Director of MS Department of Mental Health, who was present for the ceremony.



Boswell Regional Center's Employee of the Year for 2020 Katina Runnels, center, is congratulated by Cindy Womack, Clint Ashley, Wendy Bailey, Executive Director of DMH, and Craig Kittrell, Deputy Director of State Operated Programs.



Katina credits a group of friends, supervisors and co-workers from the Wesson Group Homes with being a strong support system. Cheering her on both before and during her selection as Employee of the Year were, from left: Josie Taylor, Eric Brown, Sherian Camerson, Katina, Chelsea Bassett and Jamie Prine



Spotlight On...

First 'Employee Recognition Picnic' was enjoyed by all!

Just as we have with every aspect of dealing with COVID-19, Boswell has improvised and come up with new ways to operate as well as experience some of the enjoyable events to which everyone looks forward. To allow staff to socially distance and enjoy being outside, the decision was made to move the regular Employee of the Year reception to Green Park on Boswell's campus.

From all accounts, the event, held for several hours to allow different shifts to attend or take a meal back to their unit or home, was a big success. More employees were able to attend and visit with others with whom they don't normally see. And, unlike the reception, a grilled burger meal was served and offered for each employee instead of lighter reception food.

Katina Runnels of the Wesson group homes, was named 2020 Employee of the Year. Businesses that supported Friends and Family, especially during the pandemic, members of the Friends board and employees that donated to the association were also honored.



Maintenance director Marty Sasser and his team were very instrumental in the picnic's success. His team cleaned the grills and helped cook burgers; set up all tables and chairs and built a stage for the program, among many other tasks.

Below, Maurice Young grills burgers for the crowd.



Brad Fairchild of Maintenance showed off his grilling skills as he assisted several others.



Milton King, a recreation therapist, changed hats for the day and helped grill burgers.



The employee of the year received an engraved trophy, while supporters of Boswell were awarded insulated mugs with the picnic's slogan, "We can't mask our appreciation for you!"



Many churches and businesses stepped up to assist Boswell during the pandemic, while many simply stepped up their ongoing support during the challenging time. Each one received a framed certificate and engraved mug.



Spotlight On...



Games were enjoyed throughout the park before and after the meal. Left, HR employees Chasity Butler, Kassie Ibarra and Jessica Holleman played corn hole, while right, Clint Ashley and Kelly Jones shot a few hoops.



Office staff not only cooked burgers but served meals to front line workers. Lacey Bourn of Administration, left, was one of several that assisted



Staff enjoyed sitting under the covered pavilion and visiting following the meal. For many, this was the first time they'd seen co-workers since the beginning of the pandemic. Staff were also offered the chance to take a meal back to their workplace if they were not able to stay and eat on-site.



Susan Shoemaker of Community and Amber Lowrey of Business Services manned the to-go line for staff that preferred to take a meal back to their unit or group home.



Becky Wells, president of Friends and Family, provided music during the event while signing up attendees for the association. Becky worked for many years as Recreation Director and today is an active volunteer.



Ronald Britt, left, Director of Community Services, and Clint Ashley, right, enjoyed catching up at the picnic.

Retirement reception for assistant director

Assistant director Cindy Womack retires after 29-1/2 years of dedicated service

Long-time Boswell assistant director Cindy Womack retired at the end of May, receiving kind words from the director and her peers at a reception held in her honor. The overriding sentiment was the same: everyone expressed appreciation for Cindy's professionalism, leadership, sound advice and many kindnesses extended to individuals and staff over the years. In short, she will be greatly missed.

A graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor of Science degree in education and a Master of Education in Special Education, also from USM, Cindy began her career as a teacher in Louisiana. She began working for a Jackson accounting firm, then moved to Magee to work for Millcreek as a teacher.

On Dec. 16, 1991, she was hired by Boswell as an academic teacher. She was soon promoted to director of education, a position in which she implemented numerous programs and practices for the benefit of individuals.

In 2005, she was promoted to bureau director, then assistant director in 2013, a role she has held for 8 years.

During the course of her career, she became a licensed Nursing Home Administrator, a Certified Public Manager with the State of Mississippi and a graduate of the Stennis Institute.

Mississippi Department of Mental Health certifications she has earned include DMH Certified Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Therapist and DMH Licensed Administrator.

In 2017, she celebrated 25 years of state service. Four years later, she now celebrates her retirement after serving Boswell for almost three decades.

Clint Ashley cited her "steadiness and dependability" as two attributes that have proven valuable to him and the center.

"Cindy has performed her job in a way that serves as a model for past and present employees and for those to come," said Ashley. "From a personal standpoint, she has been a valuable asset to me as assistant director and as someone on whom I can depend to make the right decisions, always with the best interests of our individuals at heart.

Cindy received an engraved trophy from Friends and Family at the reception held in her honor.



Cindy Womack, holding her granddaughter, Penelope Duran, was presented with an engraved trophy from Clint Ashley, director, far left. Also pictured from left are her daughter Hanna Duran and husband Bruce.



Cindy's granddaughter Penelope Duran enjoyed the delicious cake served at the reception.



Clint Ashley, above, expressed his appreciation for Cindy's dedication and assistance to him as she and her granddaughter look on. In the background, a photo of them popped up in the ongoing collage of family photos displayed during the reception.

Right, after working together for many years, Greg Amason of Maintenance, stopped by to extend best wishes to Cindy at the reception.



Retirement reception for assistant director



All food for the reception was purchased by Boswell's Friends and Family Association, including the cake decorated with "Boswell roses." The cake was made by a local baker, while the remainder of the refreshments was created by Boswell's nutritional services department.



Sharing memories of Cindy was something staff members enjoyed doing. Above right, Marty Sasser, left, and Will Beeson, right, listen to everyone's memories of working with Cindy at various times. Will enjoyed working for Cindy for many years.



Left, Cindy Sanders, far left, recreation director, was under Cindy's supervision and considers it one of the highlights of the past three years. Here she's pictured serving punch to Cindy.



Magnolias were in bloom on Boswell's campus in time for the reception. They paired perfectly with the new state flag featuring a magnolia in the center.



Many employees have worked with Cindy for a number of years and came out to wish her well, including from left, Suzie Wilder, HR director, Kerry Bynum, Community director and Michelle Davidson, personnel officer.



Spotlight On...

Boswell's staff, volunteers go the extra mile



Built in 1920, the historic Auditorium was refreshed and renewed courtesy of new paint, landscaping and power-washing, among many upgrades provided by Maintenance.

At top right of photo, one of the hundreds of magnolias growing across Boswell's campus is a perfect foil for the classic Southern architecture.

Taking care of Boswell's buildings and grounds alone is a challenging task. Combine that with taking care of individuals 24/7 and it adds up to a monumental challenge. However, working together as a team, Boswell's team accomplished a lot in the first few months of 2021.

For starters, Boswell's historic Auditorium, left, was chosen by Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Simpson County Center for its 2021 Commencement. Boswell's Maintenance department went to work power-washing, painting, cleaning carpets, landscaping and repairing minor issues to ensure the 101-year-old building was refreshed and ready for visitors at the socially-distanced, scaled-down ceremony.

Earlier in the month, Boswell's first Employee Recognition Picnic was held in Green Park. This was a large-scale effort that required assistance at all levels. Building props, setting up tables, ordering supplies, grilling burgers, preparing and serving food and other tasks were necessary to ensure the picnic's success.

Assistance was provided by:

- * Administration
- * Business Services
- * Community Services
- * Day Services
- * Human Resources
- * ICF Division
- * IT
- * Maintenance
- * Nutritional Services
- * Public Relations
- * Recreation
- * Staff Development

Additional ice storm workers

Two names of staff that worked overtime/overnight during the February ice storm were submitted after publication of the last issue. They include:

- Rhonda Stringer, Taylorsville Group Homes
- Susan Shoemaker, formerly Medical Services, now Community Services

Boswell hosts Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Simpson Center graduation

Copiah-Lincoln and Boswell have been long-time partners over the years, working together on many different projects, including assisting in the training of LPNs and supporting additional programs that are important to both organizations. After an absence of several years, in 2020 CLCC asked to hold its 2021 Spring Commencement in the Auditorium. The building was closed to public use during the pandemic, but when COVID vaccinations created a reduction in county-wide cases, a smaller event was planned for May 12.

Plans have already been set for Co-Lin to return to Boswell for its 2022 Commencement.



Dr. Dewayne Middleton, left, Dean of CLCC's Simpson County Center, checks on the sound system operated by CLCC staff member Bryon Conville, just before walking to the stage with other dignitaries.



Dr. Jane Hulon Sims, second from left on stage, confers a degree to a CLCC student. Dr. Middleton is pictured on the far left.



Spotlight On...



Pictured with their awards are, from left: Pam Webb and Christine Jarrard.

Boswell individuals recognized for years of service to Walmart in Magee

Two of Boswell's Community individuals were recognized recently by Walmart for celebrating milestone service anniversaries at the Magee location. Pam Webb was recognized for 20 years of service and Christine Jarrard for 15 years. Both ladies are dedicated members of Walmart's maintenance team and help keep the store clean and orderly.

Kindness is alive and well...just ask these Ridgeview individuals and staff

It began as a fun outing at Berry's in Magee. Ridgeview staff members Natisha Polk, social worker, Mollye Hancock, recreation therapist, and supervisor Deivion Fairly took individuals from the unit to enjoy a buffet lunch as they often do. What they didn't know is that a Texas couple passing through Magee had stopped at Berry's for lunch and were observing the ladies' positive interactions with those in their care. The couple known only as Marty and Bre (no last name was provided) said they felt "led" to pick up the tab for the entire group after watching them as they dined nearby.

The couple's actions prove that the "kindness of strangers" is still prevalent. For their part, Natisha and Mollye say they enjoyed being on an outing with "their boys" and most definitely didn't expect anyone to notice, much less buy their lunch.



After observing Ridgeview staff members and individuals as they dined at Berry's in Magee recently, a Dallas couple traveling through bought the lunch of both Boswell staff and individuals. Pictured from left are: Boswell individual Marcus, Dallas couple Marty and Bre, Boswell individual Nathan, social worker Natisha Polk, Boswell individual Eddie, supervisor Deivion Fairly and recreation therapist Mollye Hancock.

Governor's Service Award recipients for 2020

Employees reaching State of Mississippi employment milestones of 10, 20 and 30 years are normally recognized at special meetings or events. However, no gatherings were held in 2020; therefore, those that reached milestones received a certificate and service pin, but were not recognized.

Below are the names of those (both past and current employees) that reached milestone years in 2020:

10 Years

John David Barnett
Yolanda Beard
Claire Bevell
Kevin Fairchild
Cheryl Finley
Sharon D. Floyd
Valerie Lee Puckett
Rhonda Stringer
Karen Renee Wade
Betty L. Williams

20 Years

Kay Adcox
Clint Ashley
Carol D. Brent
Shan Crumpton
Rhonda Lett
James Randolph
Shirley J. Redd
Bill Blair
Cassie Bynum
Roland Ingram

Curtis Magee Jr.

Eric McLemore
Lee Middleton
Theresa L. Partman
Carla Barnett-Pickering
Janet Runnels

30 Years

Rosalynn D. Forrest
Robert N. Price