



# BOSWELL REGIONAL CENTER'S **BULLETIN**

**VOLUME VII**  
**SUMMER 2008**  
**NUMBER 7**



*In Memory of Tina Nesmith  
Sharing Love, Laughter and Joy with everyone she touched*

## **Brookhaven Memorial Bench Dedicated**

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# DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Raymond Johnson



Here at Boswell Regional Center we have so much to be thankful for, including a successful Ribbon Cutting and Open House for our building

in Magee on June 17th. The event was very well attended by community leaders, businesses, and Chamber members. It was so nice to have so many on hand to support us.

In April we celebrated Autism Awareness Month. We appreciate our employees' hard work in recognizing the month and for having a successful Silent Auction.

Our Spring Fling, which is one of the most enjoyable events we have during the year, was also held in April. It's a wonderful time for us to cookout, participate in sports, play games and just be part of the Boswell family.

I think one of the most meaningful events we had this year was held in May, our annual Education Awards

program. Individuals were awarded for their hard work in each of the four education classes. There were a number of family members in attendance for this program. It was so good to have each and everyone with us to support a most important event in the lives of our individuals.

Probably the most significant change we will see in the next few months will be Boswell becoming a tobacco free facility. Letters were sent in June to family and employees to inform them that, tobacco products could no longer be used as of October 1, 2008. This decision was made to ensure a safe living and working environment for individuals and employees alike.

We've had approximately 70 employees to sign up to participate in a voluntary program provided by Blue Cross/Blue Shield designed to assist those who wish to quit the use of tobacco products. We are proud of these employees who want to take this step in their lives to improve their overall health.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Boswell Regional Center provides Mississippians with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities, a comprehensive array of service options promoting independence and an optimal quality of life. Through an active partnership of client, family, staff and community, these service options are designed to enhance each client'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 mental retardation and the clients served at BRC.

**Raymond Johnson, Director**  
**Kathy Lee, 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.

## ON THE COVER

On hand for the dedication of a memorial bench located at Boswell Industries, Brookhaven, are from left: Darrell, Clara, Virginia and Marvin Nesmith, family of Tina Nesmith. Funds were donated by family and friends to purchase the bench in memory of Tina, who worked at the Brookhaven site for several years. She is missed by her Boswell family.

# Ribbon Cutting, Open House held June 17th

Boswell Regional Center held a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Open House at the building located across from the Magee Post Office.

A number of members of the community, Chamber Board members, and other dignitaries were on hand to show their support.

Boswell is happy to have this presence in Magee and appreciates all the support from local businesses, including McAlisters who provided some of the refreshments served at the Open House.



*Pictured during the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony are, from left, Ronald Britt, Director of Community MR/DD programs at Boswell; James Smith; Beulah Stevens; Dick Ainsworth, Magee Chamber of Commerce President, Gloria Johnson, Assistant Director, Community Programs; Hollie Holbrook, Magee's Miss Hospitality; Lori McAlpin, and Darrell Temple. Pictured in the back row from left, Ashley Moseley; Drummonds McAlpin; Raymond Johnson, BRC Director; Susan Lott, Director of Home and Community Based Waiver Services; Fontaine McNair; Brandon Hubbard; and Chuck Cooper.*

# Employees graduate from leadership program

Six employees of Boswell Regional Center have joined other facility employees in participating in Focus, a leadership program sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Mental Health.

Boswell employees Belinda Arrington, Director of Constituency Services and Kathy Pittman, Public Relations Department, were selected as members of the first class and graduated in June.

William Gates, Unit 3 Administrator, was chosen to participate in the second group.

Boswell employees selected to participate in the third group are: Susan Butler, Susan Lott and Calvert Sims, Jr.

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health's Accelerated Leadership Development Program Focus offers a unique opportunity to hone skills to greater and higher personal performance and self-awareness.



*Focus graduate Belinda Arrington, Director of Constituency Services, is pictured with DMH Executive Director Ed LeGrand, at left and Ann Thames, DMH Director of the Bureau of Workforce Development and Training.*

The goal of Focus 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

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# Autism Awareness Month celebrated in April

The month of April was designated again this year as Autism Awareness Month by a proclamation from Governor Haley Barbour. The purpose of the month-long recognition each year is to raise awareness and educate the general public about Autism.

On campus, Puzzle Pieces (the symbol for Autism) were sold throughout the month of April and displayed near the front entrance of Jaquith. The money was donated to TEAAM (Together Enhancing Autism Awareness in Mississippi). In an effort to raise additional funds to be donated to TEAAM, a Silent Auction was held on April 30th at Boswell with the event raising over \$600. Residents of Morton Group Home also participated in the Annual Walk for Autism held in Flowood at Winners Circle Park on Saturday, April 26th.

Events at Morton Group Home were held on Friday, April 25th. Various arts and crafts, and sporting activities were enjoyed by the individuals and staff.

An article in the Magee Courier was published on April 24th and featured twin brothers, Eric and Derrick Lee. Their mother, Aretha

Lee told her story of the struggle she faced early on when they were both diagnosed with Autism. She was persistent in communicating with agencies and schools to find services and educational opportunities for her sons. In the article, Mrs. Lee refers to Morton Group Home operated by Boswell Regional Center as a “life-saver.” She and her husband, Johnny, pick up both sons every weekend, she said they are ready to return to their home when it’s time to go. Mr. and Mrs. Lee reside in Jackson.

TEAAM, established in 1998, has been the driving force behind early detection and intervention.



*A staff member assists an individual at the Morton Group Home in finding letters to decorate a sun visor. This was one of many events that took place in recognition of Autism Awareness Day at Morton.*

Boswell employees serve on the TEAAM board and are active participants in events. Gloria Johnson, Assistant Director of Community Programs at BRC, serves as TEAAM Chair/President.

Each year a number of staff from Boswell participate in Kamp Kaleidoscope, Mississippi’s only summer camp for children with Autism. Boswell employees who participated in this year’s camp in June were: Lisa Bryant, Kerry Bynum, Gloria Johnson, Jason Holloway, Carol Tobias, Calvert Sims, Shalondra Miner, Willis Garrison, Bonita Sullivan, and Angie Freeman.



## Morton Pavilion Completed



A pavilion was completed at Morton Group Home recently. Individuals, as well as staff, will be able to enjoy this addition, especially during cooler weather, for years to come.

## FRIENDS & FAMILY THANK EMPLOYEES

The Friends & Family Association honored Boswell Regional Center employees by distributing a token of appreciation in May.

Each employee received a small bottle of hand sanitizer in a holder with a clip. These are convenient for employees to wear on their lanyards. A note was attached expressing appreciation to the employees.

Several employees have expressed their gratitude for this recognition and its purpose of letting employees know how much they are appreciated.

During the year, Friends & Family also recognizes the Employee of the Year at the annual banquet.

Friends & Family meets twice a year, and will be meeting again in the Fall. During the Fall, officers and board members will be elected for the next two years and a Christmas present will be brought before the membership from the Christmas Committee.



## BRC hosts Special Olympics

Boswell hosted the Area 2 Regional Games on Saturday, April 12th. Besides Boswell individuals from campus and the community, two other Area 2 teams participated: Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility, located in Brookhaven and Millcreek, located in Magee.

Approximately 63 individuals and 22 staff traveled to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi on Saturday, May 17th to compete in the State Games. Individuals look forward to this event where they compete in sports, including swimming, volleyball, and tennis, just to name a few. The Boswell Team won 1st place in volleyball.

Individuals and staff receive medals for their participation in these events in a special ceremony at the games.

You are all winners!

### Barry Nominated for Post

President George Bush recently nominated Meridian lawyer J. Richard Barry to an opening on the Jackson-based U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi. Mr. Barry serves as a member of the Board of Mental Health.

Barry, a native of Quitman, has been practicing law since 1979. He graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Law and received his bachelor's degree in public administration from Ole Miss.

## Boswell hosts Co-Lin graduation

Boswell Regional Center's historic auditorium was the site of the second annual commencement ceremonies for Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Simpson County Center on Saturday, May 17th.

The tradition of utilizing BRC's auditorium as the location for CoLin's Simpson Center began last year when their very first commencement exercises were held in the auditorium

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## Boswell Retirees Honored With Certificates, Receptions

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Carolyn Williamson, at left, is pictured with Director Raymond Johnson after receiving her certificate at a Retirement Reception held in her honor in April. At the time of her retirement, Carolyn was working at Goodwater ICF/MR Group Home.

Betty Johnson is pictured at right receiving her Certificate of Appreciation from Mr. Johnson at her reception in May. She has been employed with Community MR/DD Services and worked at the Brookwood Group Home in Brookhaven.



Darlene King, at far left, is pictured with Steve Allen, Assistant Director, following the presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation recognizing her retirement. She was employed in the Community DD/MR Division. A reception was held in her honor in June.



### **Newsletter Can Be Emailed**

In our fast paced world, sometimes we don't have time to read all our mail. But most of us who have email read it faithfully. If you find that you are in this category, you may prefer receiving BRC's Bulletin by email. Send an email to the following and indicate your preference for an email copy of the Bulletin: [klee@boswell.state.ms.us](mailto:klee@boswell.state.ms.us)

## Leadership...

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both ability and attitude. Focus lasts 12-18 months and involves four multi-day retreats.

Focus gives participants opportunities including:

- undergoing comprehensive competency and career assessments
- participating in leadership activities designed to enhance personal and organizational leadership capabilities
- stretching and enlarging technical and leadership skills
- networking with Department leaders

Participation in Focus is strictly voluntary.

The mission of Focus is dedicated to enhancing the knowledge and skills of Mississippi's future leaders today.



*Pictured from left is Ed LeGrand, DMH Executive Director; Focus graduate Kathy Pittman, Public Relations, Boswell; and Ann Thames, DMH Director of the Bureau of Workforce Development and Training.*

## Education Department Recognizes Individuals, Staff at Ceremony

Boswell's Education Department recognized individuals and staff during the annual Education Awards Day held May 30th in the Auditorium.

Each division handed out attendance awards. The areas that recognized individuals were: Prime Timers, The Learning Center, Jaquith Basement Classroom, Sign Language, and the LIFE Center.

A tradition that continued this year was Favorite Direct Care Staff. The female direct care staff receiving the honor was Ebony Duckworth and the male staff was Gerald Payne.

The most coveted awards are the Human Rights Award and the Lester G. Evans Citizenship Awards, one given to female and the other to a male.

This special event highlights the achievements of the students enrolled in each of these areas of the Education Department.



*Ebony Duckworth*



*Gerald Payne*

## BRC Welcomes New Members to Mental Health Board

Boswell welcomes two new board members recently appointed by Governor Haley Barbour to the Board of Mental Health.

We congratulate the newest members, James D. Herzog, Ph.D. of Jackson and Rose D. Roberts of Pontotoc, on their appointments.

Board member George Harrison is currently serving as chairperson with Dr. Margaret Cassada as vice-chairperson.

## WE REMEMBER...

Boswell mourns the loss of a retired employee, **HALBERT THAMES**. Mr. Thames was the husband of retired BRC employee, Shirley Thames.

**ANTHONY "BUDDY" HESTER**, who retired in 1998, also passed away. He was a purchasing agent at the time of his retirement.

Pictured at right is the BRC flag which we fly at half mast in memory of employees and retired employees who pass away.



## Boswell Regional Center



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*Raymond Johnson, Director*