

BC3 wins 2019 Collaborator of the Year Award

County praises college's commitment to human services

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Dr. Nick Neupauer, left, president of Butler County Community College, is shown with Amanda Feltenberger, Butler County Human Services' director of integrated services, after BC3 on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, received the Butler County Human Services' 2019 Collaborator of the Year Award. The award was presented during Butler County Human Services' Christmas holiday breakfast at the Atrium in Prospect.

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College's efforts to increase the quality of life in its communities were recognized Thursday by Butler County Human Services, which presented BC3 with its 2019 Collaborator of the Year Award, an honor that, a Butler County official said, acknowledges a person or organization that "clearly demonstrates commitment to the collaborative nature of this county."

BC3, "under the leadership of Dr. Nick Neupauer, has done exactly that," Amanda Feltenberger said.

Feltenberger, Butler County Human Services' director of integrated services, presented Neupauer, BC3's president, with the award during the county Human Services' Christmas holiday breakfast at the Atrium in Prospect.

"There is rarely a community meeting or a planning discussion that you attend where there is not a representative of BC3 at the table," Feltenberger said. "There are far too many examples of BC3's partnerships in this county to name them all."

Brandon Savochka, director of the county's Human Services, praised BC3 for its involvement, training and programming in Butler County.

"It is kind of rare to sit down anywhere when we are talking about working across different systems," Savochka said, "without BC3 being there to support the efforts."

"It's all about collaboration"

Directors of the county's Area Agency on Aging, Children and Youth Services, Community Action, Drug and Alcohol, and Mental Health-Early Intervention-Developmental Disabilities programs chose BC3 for the 2019 Collaborator of the Year Award after discussing "who is making an impact in the community," Savochka said.

Feltenberger commended BC3 for its "Reset Your Brain: A Revolutionary Approach to Opioid Addiction & Recovery" program, for its employees attending and the college hosting a four-week Twin Cities Rise empowerment training program, and for the college's staff members serving as volunteers at the Light of Life Community Outreach, a West North Street lunch kitchen.



Butler County Community College administrators are shown Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, at the Atrium in Prospect after BC3 won Butler County Human Services' Collaborator of the Year Award. From left, Michelle Jamieson, associate director of the BC3 Education Foundation; Ruth Purcell, executive director of BC3 Education Foundation; Lisa Campbell, dean of Workforce Development; Dr. Case Willoughby, left background, vice president for student affairs and enrollment management; Dr. Belinda Richardson, vice president for academic affairs; Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president; James Hrabosky, vice president for administration and finance; Christina Fleegeer, executive director of human resources and Equal Opportunity Compliance officer; Brian Opitz, executive director of operations; Tracy Hack, coordinator of community leadership initiatives; and Jessica Matonak, executive director of communications and marketing.

All represent an initiative within BC3's 2017-2022 strategic plan by focusing on improving the quality of life in the college's communities.

"We take very seriously our role as being the community's college. Specifically, Butler County's community college. It's an honor to partner and collaborate with, and carry out the vision of our county commissioners," Neupauer said of Leslie Osche, Kimberly Geyer and Kevin Boozel.

"We collaborate. There are no silos. It's all about collaboration."

"Hope is Dope," its subsequent class, "New Eyes" and monthly "Hope Nights" are part of BC3's "Reset Your Brain: A Revolutionary Approach to Opioid Addiction & Recovery" programming.

"Hope is Dope" and "New Eyes" served nearly 180 participants in Butler County in 2019.

"Hope is Dope" promotes natural endorphin-resurrecting ideas to confront opioid addiction and "New Eyes" is a spirituality-centered program linked to scientific data, according to instructor Steve Treu, a Cranberry Township licensed therapist and author of 2016 books "Hope is Dope: Achieving Chemical Balance" and "New Eyes: A Unifying Vision of Science & Spirituality."

"With BC3's 'Hope is Dope' program, we've seen how much that has supported the community," Feltenberger said, "and how it has flourished and is benefiting people as they work through their recovery."

"Out-of-the box approaches"

Four of BC3's seven "Hope is Dope" classes in 2019 were held in the Butler County Prison.

"'Hope is Dope' is a new approach to meeting the needs of the people in our community," Feltenberger said. "So it helps people who are struggling with recovery and people who are struggling to become employed. These are really out-of-the-box ways of trying to address issues that have been around for a long time, which I think we would all say is incredibly beneficial.



Charlie Johns, left, of Butler County's Children and Youth Services, is shown with Dr. Arlene Quinlan on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, at the Atrium in Prospect after Quinlan was presented with Butler County Human Services' 2019 Spirit of Volunteerism Award.

“We’re all at a point where we are saying, ‘It’s time to try some new things. And BC3 is really a partner in that.’”

BC3 in 2019 also debuted in downtown Butler monthly “Hope Nights,” whose goal is to provide endorphin-sparking activities, according to Tracy Hack, who spearheads BC3’s “Reset Your Brain: A Revolutionary Approach to Opioid Addiction & Recovery” programming and whose position as BC3’s coordinator of community leadership initiatives was created as a result of BC3’s 2017-2022 strategic plan.

Hack and Lisa Campbell, dean of the college’s Workforce Development division, and officials from other Butler County nonprofit organizations attended a four-week Twin Cities Rise empowerment training program hosted by BC3 in the spring.



Roy Remone, left, is shown with Bryan Colbert, of Peoples Gas Co., on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, at the Atrium in Prospect after Colbert presented Remone with the Father Harry Bielewicz Fellowship Award from the Butler Emergency Relief Initiative committee and the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

“That was probably like the icing on the cake that made us think, ‘100 percent BC3. BC3 needs to get the award this year,’” Feltenberger said.

“Get people back to work”

The premise of the Twin Cities Rise program is to help people who have had traditional employment barriers, such as having been incarcerated, having a disability or having been in generational poverty, to re-enter the workforce through empowerment training, Hack said.

“It’s all designed to get people back to work,” Hack said, “and to have a healthy, thriving community.”

As part of the college’s strategic plan, BC3 employees are permitted to volunteer up to four hours monthly during BC3 work hours at the Light of Life Community Outreach. Up to 50 lunches are served Tuesdays through Thursdays, Hack said.

The college’s employees volunteered 128 hours in 2019 at Light of Life— “which serves our homeless population,” Feltenberger said – and also with the United Way of Butler County’s Week of Caring.

BC3 in September also established a Pioneer Pantry for income-eligible Butler County students attending BC3.

BC3 in 2019 also collaborated with the Community College of Beaver County and High Flight Academy to launch a high school aviation academy in Butler County, and serves with economic development partners in the Butler County Growth Collaborative.

Dr. Arlene Quinlan on Thursday received Butler County Human Services' 2019 Spirit of Volunteerism Award, which recognizes her commitment to the Butler County Children and Youth advisory board since 1988. Roy Remone received the Father Harry Bielewicz Fellowship Award, presented by the Butler Emergency Relief Initiative committee and the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, for demonstrating Bielewicz's grace and spirit of collaboration, hospitality and team-building.

BC3 received Butler County Human Services' third collaborator of the year award, following 2017 recipient Butler County Prison and 2018 recipient Alice Del Vecchio, an assistant professor with Slippery Rock University's department of professional studies.