



Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh

CENTRAL OFFICE
1800 West Street
Homestead, PA 15120

412-368-4400
800-706-5050
TDD: 412-368-4095
Fax: 412-368-4090

www.BlindVR.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

After National Search, Pittsburgh Executive Selected To Head Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh

July 12, 2010 -- After launching a national search for a new president, Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh (BVRS) has hired an accomplished Pittsburgh native who has more than 10 years experience in nonprofit management.

Erika Arbogast, 31, of Cranberry, will oversee all programs and services for BVRS, a 100-year-old private nonprofit with a \$5.1 million operating budget that employs 110 persons at two locations. She began duties July 1.

Before accepting the position at BVRS, Mrs. Arbogast was employed as the Vice President of Programs for Life'sWork of Western Pennsylvania where she supervised a staff of 75 people, and assisted the CEO in managing a \$6.5 million annual budget.

At BVRS, Mrs. Arbogast said her top priority will be to address budgetary shortfalls with a goal of diversifying revenue streams so the full-service vision rehabilitation center may better weather tough economic conditions.

"A nonprofit agency is simply a business with a mission and it needs to be managed with good business practices so the mission can be carried out," Mrs. Arbogast said.

As it begins 100 years of service to people with vision loss, BVRS is facing financial challenges, as are many nonprofit agencies in the current economic downturn.

"My goal is to get the finances to a point where we are more comfortable and diversified so if we lose one funding stream or face reductions, we will be able to securely operate," she said.

BVRS received 58 applications from experienced professionals nationwide, and Mrs. Arbogast's skills and experience made her the best person for the job, said Mike Romano, Chairman of the Board of BVRS.

"We interviewed some pretty good candidates, but she stood out," said Mr. Romano, Senior Vice President for Procurement and Administrative Services at Highmark. "Not only does she have the skills needed for this job, but she brings a great deal of energy and excitement and is not afraid to tackle new ground. She has what it takes to move BVRS into its next 100 years of service to the community."

BVRS operates diverse rehabilitation programs at its 1800 West Street, Homestead headquarters, including Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training, a Low Vision Clinic, summer youth programs and employment services. PBA Industries, BVRS' manufacturing and assembly division, and PBA Products and Services, the commercial services division, are both located at 1204 Western Avenue on Pittsburgh's North Side.

Mrs. Arbogast, a Mars native, earned a Bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Pittsburgh, and a Master's in Professional Leadership, Concentration in Nonprofit Management from Carlow University.

She began working at Life'sWork February 2006 where she supervised multiple programs, assisted with the development of strategic plans, and worked closely with the CEO on program and fiscal matters.

Mrs. Arbogast served as a behavioral specialist consultant for Family Behavioral Resources in Gibsonia from 2005-2008, where she developed and implemented treatment plans for children with Autism and supervised therapeutic staff support workers.

At HAP Enterprises in Hopewell, Mrs. Arbogast served as program director from 2005-2006 where she was responsible for preparing and submitting county budgets, preparing grant proposals, Human Resource activities, planning and executing major fundraising activities, and developing and implementing an agency restructuring plan.

Mrs. Arbogast was employed as Clinical Coordinator for the Wesley Institute in Gibsonia from 2001-2005, where she supervised a staff of 150 persons and provided clinical supervision for therapeutic staff support workers.

###