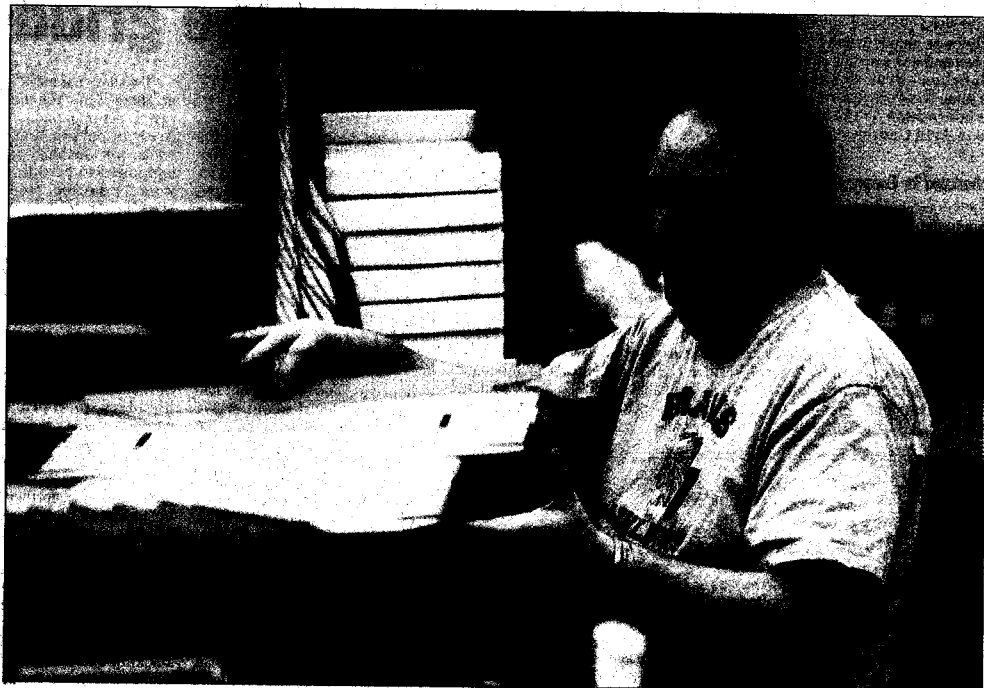


YourLife



MARINA SAMOVSKY / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bill Nixon of Waukegan works on putting together welcome kits for the Quill Corporation at the Lakeside Center in Waukegan.

Getting help

SBC grant helps Lakeside Center update technology

By Jim Newton
STAFF WRITER

Things are about to get a little easier for workers at the Lakeside Center in Waukegan, where tasks can be simultaneously menial and meaningful.

The center, located on Lewis Avenue near 14th Street, provides employment opportunities for those with developmental disabilities.

Run by the Countryside Association for People with Disabilities, Lakeside Center is a popular place. It has a waiting list, and the roughly 160 clients who work manufacturing and processing jobs there often express their disappointment that it is closed on weekends.

A new \$12,500 grant from the

SBC Foundation will be used to implement new production tracking and payroll technology at both the Lakeside Center in Waukegan and at the Countryside Association's second campus facility in Palatine.

Until now, staff at both facilities have had to do the payroll by hand, and manually keep track of the tasks completed by workers, whether it is assembling test tube trays for corporations such as Abbott Laboratories or shredding confidential business documents.

With the new technology, the workers at Lakeside Center will be able to receive timely information on their daily and weekly production totals and how much they have earned for completing certain tasks. Staff workers who



Lester Wofford of Zion (left) and staff member Jim VanCleve work together on the shredding machine that is part of the Lakeside Confidential Document Shredding Operations.

used to be bogged down tracking such totals and doing payroll will be freed to spend more time with the facility's workers, also referred to as clients.

"A number of our clients may have an objective — they need to increase their productivity rate

over the course of a quarter or a year. This helps with that as well," said Larry Winn, the on-site director at Lakeside Center.

Wayne Kulick, executive director of the Countryside Associ-

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ation, said such technology grants are vital to non-profit organizations serving the needs of the disabled.

"Technology is the great equalizer for people with disabilities," Kulick said.

The new system is expected to be up and running by Jan. 1.

The Countryside Association began in 1954 as a school serving five children with disabilities on a Lake Zurich farm. The two facilities run by the association now serve more than 300 adults with disabilities in Lake and Cook counties.

Lakeside Center offers several levels of employment opportunities for its clients, based on individual abilities. Some work in closely supervised and sheltered conditions at the facility. Others, as they improve their skills, are provided transportation to off-site work enclaves such as a Cardinal Health facility in the Waukegan area and Galloway Plastics in

Libertyville.

"We're advocates to give them independent choices in their lives," said Janice Janovic, director of development for Countryside.

By steering business Countryside's way, corporations such as Abbott, Walgreens and Rust-Oleum help the association fulfill its mission. More work, from businesses large and small, is always welcome at both of the association's facilities.

Lakeside Center offers subcontracting and outsourcing

services including light assembly, hand packaging, shrink wrapping, inspection, heat sealing, collating, mail stuffing, sorting, bulk mailing, rework and automated bagging. To contract services, call (847) 336-1700.

The center also has a new commercial paper shredder and offers shredding services. For more information, call Kim Frierson at (847) 540-3765.

For more information on the Countryside Association, visit www.countrysideassn.org.