

# Bank allows workers to punch clock to volunteer

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

Hundreds of employees from BB&T branches and corporate offices throughout Forsyth County joined forces last Thursday to engage in a community service effort that has become an annual event for the Winston-Salem based bank.

This year's "Day of Caring" saw 285 BB&T employees convene at The Enrichment Center, which serves individuals with cognitive disabilities. Employee volunteers painted the parking lot, mulched the grounds of the Marshall Street facility and cleaned and painted the building's interior.

The bank created Day of Caring to encourage its employees to get involved with worthwhile community efforts. Employees who participate are allowed to take time away from their work duties, without having to use a vacation or personal day.

Monica Culbreath was a first-time Day of Caring participant this year.

"It's been fun," said Culbreath, a corporate banking



Patton Lowe with Valerie Vizena



Monica Culbreath



BB&T volunteers paint an interior wall.

Photos by Layla Farmer

customer service representative. "I got to mix and mingle with some of the other BB&T employees that I haven't seen in awhile."

A mother of two, Culbreath said it is difficult for her to carve time out for volunteering amid her work and mothering duties, so she jumped at the chance to take part in the day-long event. Culbreath lent her talents to an interior wall that was in need of a fresh coat of paint.

"I've never painted before," she said with a smile. "Hopefully, one day when I'm getting ready to paint my own house, I'll know what I'm

doing." Day of Caring has been a tradition at BB&T for more than a decade, said Pamela Rife, assistance vice president of Insurance at BB&T and co-chair of the 2010 event. Jeff James, the other co-chair, has participated for most of the seven years that he has spent with the company.

"It's always an enriching experience to help our community," said James, assistant vice president of Materials Management Service Center. "That is one of BB&T's primary philosophies and missions, to serve our community and to help it grow and be better, and it's an honor

and a privilege to do so." The Enrichment Center was founded in the 1980s by a group of parents who wanted a college-like experience where their children could learn and grow like any other young person. The facility serves around 300 clients with three distinct programs, including the supportive employment initiative, which helps individuals find jobs that suit their needs, interests and abilities.

The Center is perhaps best known for its connection to the arts. It offers courses in disciplines like drama, dance, music, mixed media and textiles and often invites local artists to help Center students

hone their talents. Students' artwork are displayed in the Center's gallery. If a piece is sold, the artist gets 50 percent of the profit.

Enrichment Center Executive Director Valerie Vizena said she was grateful that the facility was chosen by BB&T.

"I love it. They have been the most fantastic group to work with," she declared. "The organizational skills of Pam and Jeff have been excellent."

BB&T's Patton Lowe has a special connection to The Enrichment Center - he recently joined its Board of Directors.

"It's been a great experience," he declared. "The diversity of the things that they do, the amount of stuff that happens in this building is just amazing."

Lowe sought the Center out earlier in the year because he wanted to get more actively involved in the community. It is a mindset that his employer wholeheartedly supports, Lowe said.

"Our CEO, Kelly King, talks a lot about self-esteem, and you gain a lot of self-esteem by helping others," he noted. "I think it's very important to be active in the community."

A Commercial Credit executive for BB&T for the last five years, Lowe spent much of his day working with a handful of Enrichment Center students on a giant painting. The piece of art features three trees and will hang in the Center's cafeteria.

"I've been here on the campus and toured the facility, but getting a chance to work with some of the students here is a lot of fun," related the Virginia native. "It's amazing the talents that these individuals possess."



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