



CRA AT FORTY

What CRA Means to Me:

Independence through Job Skills

Evelyn McPherson
Blue River Services

BR Grafix, a division of Blue River Services, Inc. (BRS), is truly grateful to be a recipient of community support from local banks. BRS was founded in 1959 by six families who believed that all people are capable of learning when given the opportunity and appropriate support services. With this guiding philosophy and the support from local community partners, BRS is fulfilling its mission to further the independence of people with disabilities and the general public through support programs and resources for all income levels and ages, from infants to seniors, in all areas of life and at all levels of ability.

As a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the official mission of Blue River Services is to assist people with disabilities in realizing maximum personal growth and development in home, work and community by providing a continuum of individualized services and supports in settings least restrictive for the needs of the individual. As an adjunct to these services, whenever possible, Blue River Services, Inc. will serve the similar needs of the general community by providing services in non-segregated, community-based settings which emphasize the integrated inclusion of people with disabilities into all areas of life which are enjoyed by members of the community.

In 1990, the agency developed a screen-printing program to provide a training facility and work opportunities for adults with disabilities. Today, this program has grown into a full-fledged commercial screen print shop and storefront known as BR Grafix, located in historic downtown Corydon, Indiana. The shop produces customized apparel and offers embroidery services for communities throughout Southern Indiana.

In a recent effort to improve the production process at BR Grafix, we were seeking funds to purchase a Laser Alignment Wizard® to use in conjunction with our heat press equipment. The laser alignment equipment ensures the consistent and accurate positioning of heat pressed numbers, names, etc. onto shirts and other apparel. Many of the orders that we do for local schools include cutting vinyl to heat press athletes' names on the back of their jerseys and uniforms, and the manual process we had been using was inefficient and sometimes led to costly mistakes.

Using a new fundraising website, we posted online about our need for the laser alignment machine, and were also able to share this online listing with a few local bankers. After just a couple of weeks, the production crew at **BR Grafix** was overjoyed to hear that **First Harrison Bank (FHB)** in Corydon, Indiana was interested in supporting us. Their funding made it possible to purchase the laser alignment equipment, which greatly improved the efficiency of our heat pressing and also gave our staff the chance to learn and be trained on a new machine.

On behalf of **BRS** we want to thank **FHB** for their continued support of our agency and the people that we serve.

We're also very thankful for the online fundraising tool that helped us share our story efficiently and connect with the support we needed. As a former banker, I have a deep appreciation for the time and energy it takes to find community projects that meet the financial institution's obligations required by the Community Reinvestment Act. The website that helped us connect with a local banker is truly awesome!

It's a pleasure to share the success of this coordinated effort, where so many different parties came together to meet a need in our community. We are extremely thankful to all those who contributed. The community support we received helps our agency to fulfill our motto: "People Serving People."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

EVELYN MCPHERSON is Director of BR Grafix, a Division of Blue River Services, Inc. Prior to working for BRS she worked for 21 years at The Farmers State Bank in Lanesville, Indiana serving as the Data Processing Officer. She is a member of the Lanesville United Methodist Church, where she serves as the Chair of the Administrative Council and Financial Secretary, President of the Corydon Lions Club, member of the Corydon Rotary Club and Trustee of the Lanesville Protestant Cemetery.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This article first appeared in **CRA at 40: Views on the Present and Future of Community Reinvestment**, published by findCRA in November 2017. The book was created in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Community Reinvestment Act. It tells the stories of community development, from the perspective of those working in our communities who bring their knowledge and passion to bear every day in confronting the most critical problems facing communities in need. The book is about real-world experiences told in plain language by those who live them to provide a lens for readers to see CRA at work, ideas for its future and most importantly, what it means in people's lives. To access the full text or order copies of the book, please visit www.findCRA.com/CRAat40.