

FALL  
2020

# THE BISM GRAPEVINE

## BISM HELPS PRODUCE OVER 1.5 MILLION PROTECTIVE MASKS

By TONY RODRIGUEZ

BISM began the manufacture and delivery of face coverings, or protective masks, in June of this year to protect members of the U.S. military against the spread of COVID-19. BISM is currently the lead contractor on a \$6 million mask production endeavor for the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

All of the mask materials are sourced, cut, and kitted at our Salisbury cutting facility. The material is then delivered to nine industry partners, as subcontracted work, as well as BISM sewing plants in Baltimore, Cumberland, and Raleigh. Production has quickly increased to over 100,000 units per week through the committed efforts of the associates at the BISM manufacturing sites, as well as the cooperation with our other industry partners.

To date, our team has delivered over 1.5 million masks to the DLA! The agreement allows the customer to order up to 100,000 masks per week in any of three colors; black, green or brown. The contract is about 50% complete and we are currently on schedule to complete the 12 month contract in June 2021.





## BSC ASSOCIATES RECEIVE CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

BISM's Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB) AbilityOne Base Supply Center (BSC) manager Tim Hammett (top left, middle) received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Air Force Departmental Publishing Office on June 17. Tim was honored at the ceremony for his "immediate and proactive assistance to step up during COVID-19 to ensure the Air Force Departmental Publishing Office SIPR room capability requirements were updated to be operational in support of mission requirements."



Congratulations to Tim and his entire JBAB BSC team for being so committed to their customers! The AbilityOne BSC program, which employs blind and disabled people across the country, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and is instrumental in providing the U.S. military with the products and services they need to succeed.



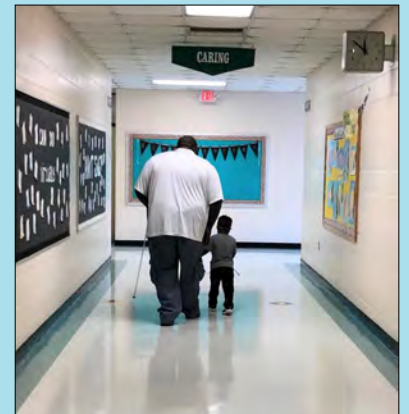
BISM's Fort Knox BSC associates Sabrina Hutchison and Tiffany Moses (bottom left) were each awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Army Cadet Command on June 18. The certificates state that Sabrina and Tiffany were recognized "for exceptional meritorious service" ... and exhibit outstanding performance while never wavering in their commitment to provide selfless service and support to 7th Brigade." Congratulations Sabrina and Tiffany!

## BISM INSTRUCTORS WORK WITH BLIND SCHOOL CHILDREN

By ANDY MCIVER

In 2019, St. Mary's County public schools were in a bind and looking for immediate help providing Orientation and Mobility for their blind students. BISM's Rehabilitation and Independence Training department was given an opportunity to provide services and exceeded St. Mary's expectations, earning a contract for this academic year. With the pandemic, Worcester County found themselves in a similar situation and, through word of mouth, found out about BISM.

BISM travel instructor Antonio had the opportunity to work one-on-one in October with blind Worcester County kindergarten student Jeremiah on his white cane travel skills. It is an incredibly rewarding program for both BISM and the young students!



# BISM'S WALL OF RECOGNITION

Blind Industries and Services of Maryland's Wall of Recognition honors associates who are celebrating an anniversary of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, or more years of employment at BISM during the year of 2020. The entire organization congratulates the following associates for their dedicated service and commitment to BISM!

## 30 YEARS

William Jones—Baltimore

Marion Garrison Baumgardner—  
Cumberland

## 25 YEARS

Frederick Puente—Baltimore

## 20 YEARS

Barbara Shrieves—Salisbury

Sabrina Lankford—Salisbury

Rosa Purnell—Salisbury

Chae Sparrow—Salisbury

Johnna Harrison—Baltimore

Stacey Johns—Cumberland

Rodney Serisis—Baltimore

Thomas Pruitt—Salisbury

Stephen Brafford—Cumberland

Nicole DiSeta—APG North BSC

## 15 YEARS

Charlese Anderson—Baltimore

Paul Messick—Salisbury Cutting

Elizabeth King—Baltimore

Cheryl Bell—Cumberland

Judy Bosler—Ft. Knox BSC

Edward Lancaster—Ft. Knox BSC

Steven Allen—Baltimore

## 10 YEARS

Goldie Stanley—Salisbury

Gail Breighner—Baltimore

Michael Backstrom—Andrews BSC

Alycia Breitschwerdt—Baltimore

Fermin Kelly-Baret—Salisbury  
Cutting

Liam Lindsay—Baltimore

Kelly Perez—Baltimore

Robbie Johnson—Cumberland

Melissa Lindsay—Baltimore

Brittany King—Baltimore

Rosa Ortiz-Lebron—Salisbury

Shaun Sheeder—Baltimore

## 5 YEARS

Bibiana Whitaker—Raleigh

Hee Park—Salisbury

Clara Felix Moreno—Raleigh

Deborah Hunter—Raleigh

Young Kwon—Salisbury

Nelson Vargas—Salisbury Cutting

Clarice Hayward—Salisbury

Eulalia Hernandez—Raleigh

Hae Kim—Salisbury

Deana Emerick—Cumberland

Alba Garcia—Raleigh

Sun Kim—Salisbury

Ada Garces Gallo—Raleigh

Emigdia Rodriguez Charmin—  
Raleigh

Terry Martin—Cumberland

Joanne Soriano—Salisbury

Beth Peery—Baltimore

Shirley Hill—Salisbury

Blanca Pacheco Quintana—Raleigh

Khadija Abali—Raleigh

Joanna Sanchez Elizalde—Raleigh

Omayma Ebrahim Hanna—Raleigh

Virginia Garcia Cortes—Raleigh

Justin Gibson—Andrews BSC

Ma Ines Soto Arrellano—Baltimore

Esther Fernandez—Raleigh

Wayne Parker—Baltimore

Mitchell Robbins—Salisbury

Kenrick Reese—Salisbury

Olga Maravilla De Solis—Raleigh

Dannell Johnson—Baltimore

Gina Shirah—Raleigh

Kevin Venable—Baltimore

Preston Brown—Salisbury Cutting

Jacob Schmude—Baltimore

Beverly Ault—Cumberland

Eric Williams—Baltimore

Ana Reyes—Raleigh

Duane Clark—Raleigh

Tony Lewis—Raleigh

Joongeui Kim—Salisbury Cutting

Adriana Lazaro-Espinoza—Raleigh

Charles Mitchell—Raleigh

Donald Hinson—Baltimore

Gloria Gaitan—Salisbury

Pamela Little—Salisbury

Shik Nam—Salisbury Cutting

Joanne Ojedis—Raleigh

Loretta Toney—Raleigh

Peggy Platt—Cumberland

## SALISBURY SENIOR SAIL STUDENT WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Congratulations to Salisbury Seniors Achieving Independent Living (SAIL) student Beatrice Parker for receiving the prestigious Anna Freysz Cable Award at the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland Virtual Convention on November 7.

The award is presented annually to a person who became blind later in life and pursued braille reading and writing, just as Anna did.

Beatrice has learned contracted braille and is working on mastering single-line braille. Beatrice is active in the SAIL program and also volunteers for the BELL youth program.



## BISM BALTIMORE ASSOCIATE PAYS IT FORWARD

By QUYNH BUDZYNSKI

For BISM Baltimore associate Nate Greene, it's about human dignity and health. For some of the most vulnerable members of society, dignity can involve access to basic resources like bathrooms and a place to sleep at night, courteous and friendly service, and a community that embraces you in your time of need. More importantly, staying healthy can be something as simple as a place to shower and wash your clothes.

Spurred by a desire to make a difference, Nate partnered with the Wash-N-Fold Express in Harford County to help our community's homeless population.

Nate's wonderful donation of \$250 will go toward laundry vouchers that local nonprofits and churches hand out to the homeless so that they can walk into the Wash-n-Fold any day of the week, hand the voucher to an attendant and then proceed to wash and dry their clothing. Detergent and dryer sheets are donated with each voucher by the Wash-N-Fold.

Nate believes that when homeless men and women have clean clothes, they feel their best; have better hygiene and are treated as human beings by the general population. Nate calls it the Laundry Love Initiative.

"Somebody once helped me out, other than my higher power," Nate said. "So now that I'm blessed... I want to spread it out and put some smiles on people's faces, too. That's what I live for now."

Nate graduated from BISM's CORE training program in November 2012 and began working at BISM in June 2013. He currently works in the Shipping and Receiving department.



## SALISBURY SENIOR SAIL STUDENT GRADUATES

Salisbury Seniors Achieving Independent Living (SAIL) student Margaret "Bozy" Markiewicz was in the process of moving to New Jersey.

Since the Salisbury SAIL program was shut down, due to COVID-19, SAIL staff decided to make a home visit to Bozy in July to deliver a SAIL Completion Certificate and a lighthouse!

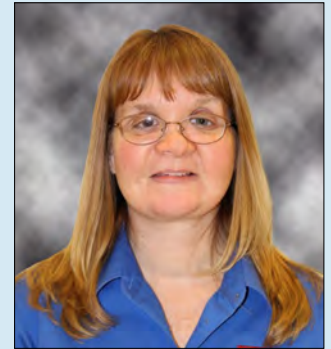
Congratulations to Bozy and we wish her the best in all of her future endeavors!





## DOVER BSC ASSOCIATE FEATURED IN NIB MAGAZINE

*Dover AbilityOne Base Supply Center (BSC) manager Kim Utley was featured in the fall issue of NIB Opportunity Magazine. The article, written by Dominic Calabrese, focuses on the 25th anniversary of the BSC program. Here is the portion of the article about Kim:*



### **Providing Opportunity**

Employees like Kim Utley, manager of the BSC at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, operated by Baltimore-based Blind Industries and Services of Maryland (BISM), are a testament to the program's power to change lives.

The oldest of three children, Utley, who was born and raised in Delaware, studied nursing at college and hoped to pursue a career in health care. Her plans took an abrupt turn when she was involved in a near-fatal car accident that took the sight in one eye and left only limited vision in the other.

Becoming involved with the BSC program in 1997 helped Utley find a new career path when she had difficulty landing a job after receiving a diploma in medical transcription.

"After going on several job interviews, I was approached by my vocational rehab counselor, who asked if I wanted to interview for a retail associate's position at a small store that was opening on the Dover Air Force Base," Utley recalls. Since she had worked in retail while attending college, she decided to apply.

One of three interview candidates offered a job, Utley started training in November and, in March of 1998, became the first associate who is blind working in BISM's BSC Division.

"I saw a sparkle in Kim and was impressed with her right from the start," says Ken Barnett, BISM's vice president of sales and marketing, who started the agency's BSC program. Recognizing Utley's potential, he provided her with not only the assistive technology to help her carry out her duties, but encouragement and support.

For her part, Utley received excellent reviews. Working her way up to store manager in 2004, she became the first person who is blind to assume that role in any of the BSCs.

Along the way, she has mentored dozens of associates, helping them excel in their jobs, and received numerous citations for her own work, including the national Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award from NIB in 2001. Utley's tenure has been marked by excellent customer service as reflected in numerous special events she holds at the store featuring the latest in SKILCRAFT® products.

Deemed essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, Utley and her staff have dealt with challenges keeping the Dover Base Supply Center open during the crisis and stocked with masks, disinfectants, hand sanitizers, and other crucial products for customers, while also keeping her staff safe.

"As the military downsized and started working from home, the BSC staff worked to protect employees and maintain a safe workplace," Utley explains. Masks were required and frequent hand washing and social distancing were strictly followed.

"More recently, the Air Force started ramping up and bringing personnel back to the base. As a result, we have also brought in associates to meet the demands of the increased business," she says. "We are still doing whatever it takes to make sure we are providing the best customer service possible while safeguarding those around us."

Looking back on her 22 years with the BSC, Utley appreciates the opportunities afforded her by BISM. "They have given me a chance to grow as a person and to serve others. I have also been blessed by having great mentors like Ken who have offered me invaluable guidance along the way. I am so grateful to work here!"

## BSC ASSOCIATE RECEIVES NIB AWARD CERTIFICATE

Joint Base Andrews AbilityOne Base Supply Center associate Keith Tyson was presented with his 2020 National Industries for the Blind (NIB) Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year Award nomination certificate on October 28 by customers and his co-workers.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, NIB's 2020 Annual Training Conference and Expo was virtual. The Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year Award and Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award nominees are normally recognized during a presentation at the conference. BISM's 2020 Samuelson Award nominee was Salisbury Cutting associate Randy Holmes.



## FORT KNOX BSC PARTICIPATES IN CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST

BISM's Fort Knox AbilityOne Base Supply Center (BSC) participated in the annual Ft. Knox Holiday Card Decoration Contest this year. The team of Ft. Knox associates worked hard on the giant card, which was handcrafted on 4'x8' plywood. The card's theme was a festive delivery truck full of gifts.

The holiday cards were displayed on Ft. Knox' Brooks Field and people were allowed to vote on their favorite card on Facebook to decide the winner. Our BSC card received over 150 votes from admirers!



## ASSOCIATES GET INTO THE HALLOWEEN SPIRIT

BISM associates from our Raleigh, Cumberland, Baltimore, Salisbury, and Hagerstown locations got into the Halloween spirit with some creative costumes!





# HOW YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF AND STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID

By TONY WARNER

BISM Human Resources has communicated to you about the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the year and unfortunately the virus is not gone. In fact, the number of cases is on the rise across the country.

BISM continues to meet with local health departments and to talk with others who are battling the virus to learn more about what is working and what steps we can take to best protect ourselves.

## **BISM has taken steps to increase our ability to resist the spread of the virus and potential for introducing the virus into our facilities:**

- We have suspended all visitors, unless the visitor is mission critical to our process. All visitors are required to wear a mask, adhere to social distancing, and maintain hand hygiene. All authorized visitors must sign the BISM Waiver of Liability.
- For the visitors/vendors that are allowed access to BISM, we will designate a defined area with increased sanitation and social distancing requirements.

## **What you can do to stop the spread and risk to yourselves and your fellow Associates:**

- Wear a mask.
- Stay home when sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then discard the tissue in the trash.
- When in common areas and the lunch room, do not congregate around tables and the microwaves. Keep your distance.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose or sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean up after yourself and keep your work area clean.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- When in public places, place six feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.

**Please take the time to know the facts about COVID-19 and keep up-to-date on CDC and state advisories. And please feel free to talk with your foreman, supervisors, managers, plant leaders, and human resources about your COVID-19 concerns.**





**BISM CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Federalsburg**

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Federalsburg, MD 21632  
410-525-5988

**Hagerstown**

19224 Longmeadow Rd.  
Hagerstown, MD 21742  
410-514-6565

**Raleigh**

2100 Harrod St.  
Raleigh, NC 27604  
919-516-9320

**Salisbury**

2240 Northwood Dr.  
Salisbury, MD 21801  
410-749-1366

**Salisbury Cutting**

1303 Old Ocean City Rd.  
Salisbury, MD 21804  
410-749-4305

**AbilityOne BSC Stores**

APG North 410-297-4950  
APG South 410-676-0564  
DIA 202-562-1790  
Dover 302-736-3506  
Ft. Knox 502-942-9690  
JBAB 202-561-6245  
JB Andrews 301-599-0316

**BISM Beverage**

888-928-3767

**ShopBISM.com**

877-647-4611

[www.bism.org](http://www.bism.org)

**CATCHING UP**

**Virtual Monthly Senior Support Group Meetings Available**

BISM Senior Services staff is offering virtual senior support group meetings on the first Friday of each month, 10 am to 12 noon. The meetings frequently include topics and speakers. Contact Sabrina Richardson at 410-737-2646 or 443-824-6606 for more details or to add your name to the monthly meeting call reminder list.

**JBAB BSC Helps To Decorate Base For The Holidays**

When Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling (JBAB) leadership needed help decorating the base for the holidays, they knew where to go: BISM’s AbilityOne Base Supply Center (BSC). JBAB BSC manager Tim Hammett and his staff found the perfect 24 ft. Christmas Tree and 12 ft. Menorah to create a joyous holiday display at JBAB’s main gate.

**Salisbury Manufacturing Featured On WBOC-TV**

BISM Salisbury’s dedicated manufacturing associates, who produce uniforms for the U.S. military, were featured on WBOC CBS-TV’s “One Delmarva” segment on November 27.

**CORE Students Prepare Thanksgiving Meal**

On November 8, a small group of Baltimore CORE students and staff prepared and served a tasty Thanksgiving dinner. The students, who used the skills they have acquired in Independent Living class, did an amazing job.

**MTA Drivers Tour BISM Baltimore**

Five Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) drivers toured BISM Baltimore on October 20 to learn more about what BISM offers. MTA staff and drivers have been touring BISM for over two years in an effort to better interact with blind passengers.

**Salisbury Associate Spotlighted By Disability Committee**

Salisbury Rehabilitation instructor Amy Crouse was featured on the City of Salisbury’s Facebook page in July for her work on the Disability Advisory Committee.

**Longtime BSC Associate Retires**

Base Supply Center associate Ed Lozzi retired in 2020 after 20 years of employment at BISM. Ed, an Air Force veteran, was a dedicated associate and we wish him the best in retirement!

