



NewsNotes

A Quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association
2007 First Quarter, January—April No. 25

Past Presidential Pondering by Margaret Gillispie

2006, what a busy year! I don't usually like to look backwards but think it is often enlightening and gives us a perspective for planning for the future. In the past year VRA had a lot of accomplishments and I believe laid a good foundation for the future. Some of the accomplishments are highlighted below.

VRA and VARL sponsored a record number of trainings in 2006. Trainings were provided in locations throughout the state and at Collaborations and were well received by our members and community partners. Many thanks to Marie Worley, her committee and our VARL division members who did an outstanding providing interesting and relevant training programs.

VARL continued to grow in 2006, is very active, and membership is now the highest in the nation. In the past year VARL has had an informal membership race with Georgia (I don't think Georgia was aware of it) and at last count VARL membership was at 50+ exceeding membership in the Georgia chapter. Congratulations to VARL!

The Medicaid Buy-In legislation was passed by the General Assembly in early 2006. VRA was one of the major players supporting the legislation and was critical to this success. This landmark legislation will positively affect rehabilitation and the lives of individuals with disabilities for many years to come.

Our revised Constitution and By Laws was provisionally approved by NRA, thanks to the efforts of Mark Hawkins and Mark Fletcher. This has been in the works for several years and is another job

Past Presidential Pondering (continued on page 2)

New Presidential Pondering by Alison Mundy

Wow, it's already 2007! Where has the time gone? I wish the best of health and good tidings to all of you. I can honestly say, as the incoming President for VRA, I am excited as well as nervous. I am confident we will continue to grow, offer opportunities for member involvement, and provide advocacy for our consumers and members of our disability community.

I extend my congratulations to our new officers, who are: Amy Miller as President Elect, Ellen Braswell as Secretary, Sherman Gifford as Treasurer, and board members: Samantha Ruppert, Kelly Hickok and Ericka Umbarger. In addition, we have a wonderful group of members who are chairing our numerous committees, and we are looking forward to a great and productive year.

As we begin our working together as a team for 2007, some of the things that I want to concentrate on this year include:

Continuation of our *Legislative Committee* and the advocacy efforts as represented by David Williams, VRA Legislative Liaison. This committee is involved in a number of activities, including VA General Assembly legislative day and National Rehabilitation Association, 2007 Governmental Affairs Summit - ALLIANCES, ADVOCACY, AND ACTION.

Our *education committee* has always worked diligently in providing opportunities to continue life-long learning to keep rehabilitation issues and best practices information available. We are

New Presidential Pondering (Continued on page 2)

VRA Meeting will be April 13, 2007



Past Presidential Pondering (Continued from page 1)

well done.

Revitalization of the Mid Atlantic Region is another issue that I had heard about for a number of years prior to 2006 and it has finally come to pass. The Mid Atlantic Constitution and By Laws were approved by NRA and an election of officers is in the process of being held. *Bonnie Hawley has been serving as the interim president of the Mid Atlantic Region and has been a critical to the success of the revitalization.*

Howard Green put together another successful golf tournament which was held in September 2006. To supplement our fund raising efforts VRA will raffle a Caribbean cruise in 2007, with the drawing to be held in July. The cruise package was donated by our very own Board Member, Philip Cook. We have also begun the process of becoming a 501-C3 organization which will enable VRA to provide a tax deduction to those who make a contribution to our organization. A small and committed workgroup headed by Sherman Gifford has been working to gather the information necessary to complete the application and the goal in 2007 is to become a 501-C3, tax exempt organization.

This year started out with a lot of uncertainty, trying to determine the implications

Past Presidential Pondering (continued on page 3)

New Presidential Pondering (Continued from page 1)

committed to continuing training opportunities to our members at reasonable costs. If you have an idea for training, please don't hesitate to contact our committee chairs.

Membership remains a vital component of our successes, and I am committed to working with our new committee chair and members to increase our numbers. We are looking at ways to increase membership and hope to have previous members rejoin and get involved. Talk to your co workers, those you interact with in the community, your partners and let them know what VRA is all about and the benefits to them as members. Each of us can work on membership and I would like to see our state chapter become the largest in our Region, where we are currently 2nd.

RCEA – the new division for Counselors, is up and running in our state, thanks to the commitment of Margaret Gillispie, our past president. Susan Cianfaglione has stepped up to the plate chairing these efforts and has done a wonderful job with her committee members. As the current President I extend the invitation to each of you to consider joining this chapter and participating in the planning and growth of this important division. Together we can insure this chapter is successful and a vital resource for counselors.

During 2006, VRA had begun talks about *developing a mentorship program for new counselors and service providers in the field of Rehabilitation*. I am committed to working on this and having it in place before

New Presidential Pondering (Continued on page 9)





Past Presidential Pondering

(Continued from page 2)

of the withdrawal of VRCA from VRA. We have lost a few members but have *worked to develop the new Rehabilitation Counselor and Educators Association (RCEA)*. The RCEA division is alive and well on both the national level and in Virginia. The new VRCEA Constitution and By Laws have been developed and an election of officers and Board members is scheduled for Wednesday, January 24th at the new Tuckahoe Library in Richmond. Stay tuned for the exciting developments in this new division. This is just a short synopsis of some of our great accomplishments for last year. I was honored to be the 2006 President and would like to personally thank the 2006 Officers, Board Members, Committee Chairs, and Committee Members for all their hard work. They were a wonderful group to work with and made all these accomplishments a reality. With that said there is still much work to be done. I am looking forward to working with VRA's new leadership and the exciting opportunities of 2007. I hope you'll do the same.

**Submitted by
Margaret Gillispie,
2006 VRA President**

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Contemporary Rehab, December 2006 reports that **Evan Jones** was presented with the **Meritorious Service Award**. Evan has been a dedicated member of NRA and VRA for many years. He created and still maintains the NARL website and participates in the NARL pilot mentoring program. **Congratulations, Evan!**

Check out this site today on your computer!!

www.vra.org





VRA Education Report



The VRA Education Committee will have new leadership for 2007. Marie Worley has graciously accepted the task of mentoring Donna Grumiaux and Samantha Ruppert as the Co-Chairpersons. A meeting at the December Holiday Luncheon allowed all present members to briefly discuss ideas and dates for upcoming trainings. We will continue to work hard to secure speakers for the upcoming year that will provide exciting and worthwhile training to our members. If you have particular areas of interest please do not hesitate to contact either of the committee chairs. The following Education Committee members will be providing training in their respective areas:

Donna L. Grumiaux-Richmond-February or March

Ellen Braswell-Charlottesville-June, July or August

Annette Pope, Jane Steveson-Tidewater-October or November

Margaret Gillespie and Larry Overbey-Southwest- June, July or August

Marie Worley-Richmond-Fall

Jane Bennett-Northern VA-April or May

Contact Donna L. Grumiaux, LPC, Employment Counselor, Department of Rehabilitative Service, Center for Career and Business Development, 2930 West Broad Street, Suite 15, Richmond, VA. 23230; Telephone 804-367-1545 and 804-564-1032 (cell)

Submitted by Donna Grumiaux

VRA Legislative Update David Williams – VRA Legislative Liaison

VRA Needs You: Martin Luther King said it best, "Our Lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

The reason most people chose to belong to an advocacy organization is to affect change on behalf of a cause or issue they feel strongly about. In our case, it's about advocating on behalf of people with disabilities – to make their lives better.

To do that, means getting involved. When VRA stakes out a position on a particular issue during this session of the General Assembly, we need members who are willing to send emails, faxes, letters or make calls on behalf of those positions. Automation has made it easy; all you have to do is send me your name and email address and I will add you to our email list for legislative updates and alerts. The emails will contain a succinct summary of the issue at hand and instructions for whom

VRA Legislative Update (Continued on page 5)



VRA Legislative Update (Continued from page 4)

to contact, what to say along with contact information, e.g. email address, phone number, FAX, etc. You won't believe how much of a difference a few calls or emails can make -legislators keep count!

So please, get involved and email me you address. My email is williadt@i-c.net.

To follow the action this session, go the General Assembly's Website <http://legis.state.va.us/>. From here you can track meetings and bills, find out who your representatives are in the House and Senate, review the budgets and their amendments, and more. Check it out – that's a ton of good information you can use as an advocate.

That Time Again: It happens every year at this time with some people lapsing into depression over the onset of winter while others struggle with getting over the financial hangover of holiday spending. And some just pack-up and leave town altogether preferring friendlier climates to the south.

But if there's one thing we all have in common at this time of year - whether we're rich or poor – young or old – it's a fear for our own safety and well-being. You see, the General Assembly has convened and it's at this very time we're most at risk. My senator from Powhatan, Senator John Watkins, always laughs when he says this, but you can tell behind the smile he's more than a little bit serious. And so should we.

Going into this year's short session, which is the year in which the legislature considers amendments to the enacted biennial budget, the state continues to see revenue growth for the fifth consecutive year. While the trend is still positive, it has begun to slow. But since we have a surplus, and all 140 seats in the House and Senate are up for re-election next November, it will be interesting to see how the surplus is used and for what purpose. Some legislators have already gone on record as saying the surplus should only be used for one time "fixes" (read pet projects) while others prefer preserving the extra dollars for times when the economy and revenues are not so rosy. Still others want to use it for transportation. We'll see.

Typically, in an election year, no one wants to go on record raising taxes. This year could be different. Governor Kaine and the Democrats have made it clear that transportation will continue to be an issue this session as it was last year and legislators opposing higher taxes for transportation will be held accountable. It will be interesting to see how people sitting in traffic in the populous regions of Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads will vote and whether the Democrats can use the issue to gain seats.

Virginia operates under a biennial budget, which means in the even numbered years the General Assembly enacts a budget that controls spending in the state for two years. In the odd numbered years, the legislature considers amendments to change the enacted budget. This year, Governor Kaine, has proposed a number of amendments to the budget that VRA will support. Here's a sampling:

Address Waiting List for Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Adds \$578,871 GF
In the second year to serve 180 eligible vocational rehabilitation consumers who are on the waiting list for services. The caseload for vocational rehabilitation

VRA Legislative Update (Continued on page 7)



LEADERS *EMERGE!*

The VARL mission is to develop, improve, and strengthen leadership skills and practices in both public and private rehabilitation organizations.

Happy New Year to All! In this time of year when many of us are making resolutions for fresh starts in some area of our lives, it seems fitting to share some pieces that many of you have seen before but seem like good philosophy for emerging leaders to emulate at the start of a new year. The first is about Success and is by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"To laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation (praise) of honest citizens and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived - this is to have succeeded."

The other piece is about Attitude and is by Charles Swindoll:

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our Attitudes."

If we approach each day being successful in the way Emerson defined it and if we go out each day choosing to respond to life's up's and down's with a positive, possibility- thinking attitude, that is Leadership!! Try it on!

Now, let's move on to VARL news. Our workshop with Norm Crouse on "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" was very well received. So well that we have 'booked' Norm again for October 23, 2007 and this time it will be in the Roanoke area. So get the word out to your rehabilitation colleagues in public and private, counselor and support staff, evaluator and job coach sectors so they can save the date. Specifics on location will be forthcoming later in the year.

So many who attended the workshop expressed an interest in further growth and ideas for incorporating the Seven Habits that we have decided to make the 'habits' the topic for our Brown Bag Leadership Chats in 2007. We have facilitators in several areas of the state that will schedule and announce these. (We could use additional facilitators for Northern Virginia, Fredericksburg, and Winchester areas if anyone is interested. VARL will provide you with guidance on how to do this.) Anyone is welcome to participate in these chats even if they didn't attend the workshop. Of course, reading Stephen Covey's book on the Seven Habits would be excellent for developing leadership

VARL Leaders Emerge! (continued on page 7)

VARL Leaders Emerge (Continued from page 6)

skills. You can check it out at your public library.

If you are a student member of VRA but not a VARL member, we want you! VARL will soon be sending out letters to VRA student members offering a 'scholarship' of one year's VARL paid membership in return for assisting us with expanding our student presence. Feel free to contact our membership chairperson, Bill Burnside or Past President, Susan Green, for more information.

Please join us at our Board meetings. In 2007 we plan to move our meetings around so more members might be able to attend. The schedule is February 8 - Charlottesville, April 12 - Williamsburg, June 14 - Richmond, August 9 - Staunton, October 11 - Charlottesville, December 6 - Richmond. Please contact a VARL Board Member or Officer for specific location information. All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn by noon or 12:30. We hope to see you there whether you are a VARL member or not.

Let the Leader in You Emerge in 2007!

Submitted by Susan Green,

804-726-1901, susan.green@drs.virginia.gov

*VARL 2006: President - Jim Hall
President Elect - Carol Thacker,
Past President - Susan Green,
Treasurer - Eleana Boyer,
Secretary - Bonnie Hawley,
Board Members
Shirley Lyons, Naomi Aitken,
Ned Campbell, Marie Gibson,
Doug James, Teri Bertsch*

VRA Legislative Update (Continued from page 5)

services increased by 13.7 percent compared to last year. Had the Governor not addressed this, VRA was prepared to submit its own budget amendment.

Mental Retardation (MR) Waivers for Community Residents: Adds \$5.3 million GF and \$5.3 million NGF from federal Medicaid matching funds to serve 170 additional individuals with mental retardation waiver services who are on the urgent waiting list and living in the community. Approximately 3,400 individuals are currently on the waiting list for the MR waiver program.

Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project: Provides \$489,354 GF and \$6.7 million NGF from federal funds in FY 2008 to facilitate the movement of up to 290 individuals each year from more costly institutional settings to the community. The federal government is providing Medicaid funding at a higher match rate - three to one instead of a dollar for dollar match - to encourage states to build the community infrastructure necessary to transition individuals from nursing homes, intermediate care facilities, and long-stay hospitals into the community. As part of this initiative, 15 new developmental disabilities waivers will be set aside for children currently residing in nursing homes.

Additionally, VRA will continue to support additional funding for Long Term Employment Support Services (LTSS), reinstatement of an Economic Development Fund to assist Employment Services organizations with improving and expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities, expansion of independent living services provided by the Centers for Independent Living, support Medicaid Eligibility at 100% of the Federal Poverty Level, improvement of services for persons with brain injuries, intellectual and sensory disabilities, as well as a number of other amendments that will follow later.

Submitted by David Williams

Contemporary Rehab reports that **Bonnie Hawley** was elected as an NRA Board Member at Large and will begin her term this month.

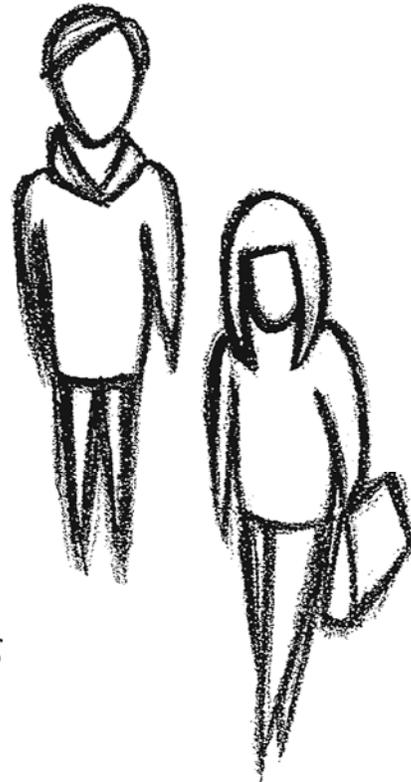
Congratulations, Bonnie!





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New Presidential Pondering

(continued from page 2)

the end of this year. Any thoughts, comments, or willingness of our members becoming mentors, will be welcome. I challenge your involvement in this exciting opportunity!

We are excited and so proud that our *VARL chapter is currently the largest division chapter in the country* and the work they have done, and continue to do, speaks for that commitment. Encouraging leadership at all levels, and providing opportunities for its members and other interested parties in developing these skills, is a true asset to our work and success.

The *Mid Atlantic Ad Hoc Committee* has been successful in being active and strong in their exploration and commitment in the revitalization of the NRA Mid Atlantic Region. Bonnie Hawley has been serving on this committee, and I offer her congratulations on her election to the NRA Board as a member at large.

As we begin our work for 2007 I would like to extend my personal invitation to each and every member to consider getting involved in VRA efforts. We have numerous committees and opportunities to collaborate and your involvement will insure our continued growth and success! If you are interested in becoming involved you may contact me or any other officer and board member. **Our Board Meeting dates for 2007 are: 1/10, 4/13, 7/13, 12/7.** Please refer to NewsNotes for locations and other important information as well as our website: www.VRA.org which we keep up to date with important information and links.

I am honored by your election to serve as your President this year and know with the support of VRA's officers and board members, committee chairs, and you the members at large, I will look back on 2007 as a successful year in which continued progress has been achieved. Please know that I am available to you, and feel free to contact me if you feel the need.

Email: mundyam@adelphia.net
office phone: 540-535-1810

**Submitted by Alison Mundy,
2007 VRA President**



Send VRA News for the April 2007 issue by **4/1/07**. Please send all the VRA articles by email to Steven Sommer at steve.sommer@drs.virginia.gov.

Please visit www.vra.org for up to date information on what is happening in VRA!

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Call for VRA Nominations for 2007 Awards

Is it early? YES! It is time to think about recognizing your colleagues, businesses, and successful customers for their award winning EXCELLENCE? YES!

This year, in an effort to get more nominations as well as nominations in all categories, the Awards Committee will be accepting nominations from January 1, 2007 – August 24, 2007. The award categories, descriptions of each, and nomination for are located within your NewsNotes. Take the time right now and each month to follow to nominate someone you feel is deserving of an award.

Nominations and supporting documents must be submitted by email/fax/mail to:

Eleanor Williams
c/o DRS – Internal Audit
8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23229
Phone: 804-662-7075
Fax: 804-662-7437
Email: Eleanor.williams@drs.virginia.gov

**Deadline for Nominations is
August 24, 2007**

VIRGINIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Name of Award _____

Name of Nominee _____

Nominee's Address _____

SUPPORT FOR NOMINEE

(1) On a separate page, please submit a statement detailing why the nominee is deserving of the award. Please provide historical information that supports the nomination. The nominee's resume or curriculum vita may also be included.

(2) Please include supporting documents from others knowledgeable of the nominee's outstanding accomplishments.

Name of Nominator _____

Nominator's Address _____

Telephone Number (H) _____ (W) _____

E-mail Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____



VRA Award Descriptions

Norman C. Hammond Award: Mr. Hammond was credited with creating “IBM Data Processing for the Handicapped” Program. This award was established to honor business and industry leaders whose contributions to the field of rehabilitation in Virginia are outstanding and result in the employment of persons with disabilities. Eligible for this award may be organizations or industrial leaders that have made a contribution to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities in activities over and beyond the purpose for which the organization was established. Preference is given to individuals or organizations that have effectively and actively advocated for individuals with disabilities; introduced innovative programs and approaches to rehabilitation; and impact rehabilitation beyond the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Franz Stillfried Barrier Free Achievers Honor Roll: Established in 1988 to recognize efforts made by individuals, businesses or organizations for the removing of architectural, attitudinal and environmental barriers. A plaque honoring Mr. Stillfried’s work for more accessible facilities was prepared and presented to Mr. Stillfried’s family when this award was established. Awarded to an individual who has exercised notable leadership in either removing environmental, attitudinal or legal barriers and/or has contributed to the attainment of independence for persons with disabilities by significantly supporting the growth of rehabilitation services throughout Virginia. The purpose of this award is threefold: (1) to develop a cooperative resource link between Virginia’s Mayors’ Committees/Commissions and the Virginia Rehabilitation Association; (2) to increase awareness and share information on innovative projects; and (3) to generate more activities and participation in barrier removal.

Dr. Roy M. Hoover Award for Outstanding Medical Achievement: Dr. Hoover of Tallahassee, Florida, former Roanoke orthopedic surgeon and former medical director of Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, initiated this award at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. In 1969 WWRC requested that the Virginia Rehabilitation Association accept the responsibility for its administration. It honors a physician practicing in Virginia who has given outstanding medical rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities and whose contributions are substantial. This nominee may have a local, statewide, or regional impact on services to clients through rehabilitation, in the field of medicine or in any field, rehabilitative in nature. Length of service in Virginia and voluntary efforts is a consideration.

A. R. Dawson Humanitarian Award: In 1971, Dr. Dawson, Director of geriatric and rehabilitation services for the Virginia Department of Mental Hygiene and Hospitals, initiated this award with a \$1,000 grant and presented the first award. It is presented for outstanding services to people with disabilities by a practitioner, who is not in an administrative or supervisory position. Awarded to a professional person having direct contact with persons with disabilities in the rehabilitation process, and whose efforts have had a significant impact on their lives. Individuals may have worked in psychology, vocational evaluation, or medical specialties.

R.N. Anderson Award for Leadership: In 1986 a classroom at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center was dedicated to the memory of Mr. Anderson, the first Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services. This award is given to a current member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association who has demonstrated excellence in services to persons with disabilities. The first R.N. Anderson Award was presented in 1961.

Virginia Rehabilitation Association Distinguished Achievement Award: Awarded to a person with a disability who has demonstrated imagination, perseverance, resolve, and an indomitable spirit in working to overcome barriers in their lives resulting in a better quality of life for themselves and others. When making nominations for this award, volunteer work, part time and full time employment is a consideration but not a requirement.

Corbett Reedy Award for Excellence: This award was created in 1985 to honor Corbett Reedy who was a Virginia Rehabilitation Association service provider, as well as an official of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Upon his retirement to his native Virginia, he was appointed to serve on the policymaking Board of the Department of Rehabilitative Services. Awarded to a resident of Virginia currently involved in the rehabilitation field, but not limited to rehabilitation professionals. This person must have creatively pursued excellence in contributions to the rehabilitation program, projects, issues, publications or a significant rehabilitation cause. Excel-



New Work Incentives Specialist (WIS) Services for Agency Consumers

The Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) recently launched an innovative strategy that could very well be the first in the nation, to help increase the independence and self-sufficiency of thousands of Virginians with disabilities. The Social Security Administration (SSA) indicates that existing work incentives are substantially underutilized by Virginians with disabilities who receive SSA benefits. To increase the use of these significant work incentives, DRS staff (Drs. Kirsten Rowe and Joe Ashley) and the Virginia Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) project developed a group of experts within Virginia that are qualified to assist interested individuals to more successfully access work incentives, i.e., Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE), Blind Work Expenses (BWE), the Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE), Medicaid While Working (Section 1619(b)), the Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS), and Subsidy.

DRS has established a new fee-for-service arrangement with the qualified Work Incentives Specialist (WIS) service providers to aid vocational rehabilitation (VR) customers who are SSA beneficiaries to enhance their earnings and resources. VR case services funds can be used to pay these specialists to assist VR customers, including transition-aged youth, to successfully access the SSA work incentives. DRS encourages its counselors to make use of the new service to benefit customers and increase the likelihood for successful vocational rehabilitation outcomes.

If you have any questions about the new WIS services, please contact Ben Blumenthal (804-662-7605 or Ben.Blumenthal@drs.virginia.gov) or Kirsten Rowe (804-640-0435 or Kirsten.Rowe@drs.virginia.gov) in the DRS Grants & Special Programs Office.

Submitted by Ben Blumenthal

DRS Brain Injury Services

The General Assembly appropriated an unprecedented \$1,160,000 for FY '07 for brain injury services statewide: \$285,000 targeted for case management services in Southwest Virginia; \$150,000 for brain injury services in Shenandoah Valley; and an additional \$875,000 for brain injury services in unserved / underserved areas of the state. DRS issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) which resulted in eight (8) organizations receiving funds, including two newly formed organizations and two organizations that are expanding either the type of service provided or their target population. More information on the new / expanded services and the specific organizations that received funding will be available on the DRS website (see SCORECARD information below).

Virginia's expanding network is receiving national attention due to its innovative programming. There are currently a total of 15 clubhouses for people with brain injury in the U.S. and Canada - five of them are located in Virginia. Several outside entities are exploring funding options to conduct independent evaluations of the variety of "successes" achieved by members who attend clubhouse programs.

DRS has also developed a state-funded Brain Injury Services (BIS) SCORECARD that will better define the outcomes and impact of the new funds that have been appropriated and to allow us to better measure the effectiveness of the programs. You can view the "field testing" version at <http://www.vadrs.org/cbs/outcomes/>. Although this is "live," we are working out the bugs in the system and assessing how well the reporting mechanisms are working. We welcome your feedback and questions - Patti.Goodall@drs.virginia.gov or 800/552-5019.

Submitted by Patti Goodall



The National Rehabilitation Association 2007 Governmental Affairs Summit

ALLIANCES, ADVOCACY, AND ACTION

Sunday March 11 - Tuesday March 13



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Special rate cut off date is February 10, 2007. Reservations received after February 10, 2007 will be accepted on a space available basis. ALL changes, cancellations, etc., of hotel reservations should be made directly with the hotel.

Paulo Luizaga
Special Assistant to the Executive Director
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(703) 836-0848 FAX
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Paulo@nationalrehab.org
<http://www.nationalrehab.org>

Rally for Virginians with Mental Disabilities

Good Evening VRA Board Members:

I was very fortunate to attend the **Rally for Virginians with Mental Disabilities** this morning at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church and hope many of you were also able to take part in this wonderful event. I wanted to take the time to send a quick email summarizing the Rally and subsequent visits with the legislators. This was my first time attending the Rally and I was very impressed by the sheer number of individuals present, especially individuals with disabilities. During the rally, various individuals spoke in support of the legislation being proposed and in support of individuals with disabilities. These individuals included Delegate Kathleen Waddell of Richmond, DRS Commissioner Jim Rothrock, the DMHMRSAS Commissioner, and other various legislators and advocates for individuals with disabilities. Most of the legislators spoke about how they became involved in the fight for Virginians with disabilities through personal experiences with their own family members or close friends. Others, however, noted that it was the persistence of advocates and actual visits with individuals with disabilities that earned their support in these important issues.

After the rally, individuals walked to the General Assembly to meet with their legislators. Although it seemed to be a rather busy day at the GA, many individuals were able to speak directly to their legislators, and if not, were able to discuss the issues with the Legislative Aides. Individuals attending the Rally were given bright orange hats with the coalition’s logo and catch phrase-Make Waves Virginia-, in addition to bright orange stickers and bright orange calling cards that we were able to leave behind. On every floor that I visited, the sea of orange was very visible and made a definite statement to all legislators and visitors. The coalition most certainly made waves this morning, and I hope the waves continue to gather strength throughout the entire session.

Although my personal legislators are in support of the most of the legislation being proposed, many legislators still are not on board, and have other issues weighing heavily on their mind as David Williams explained during previous VRA meetings. If you have not contacted your legislators yet to ask for their support please consider doing so regardless of their stance on these issues. I plan to create a spreadsheet of all VRA members and their legislators for future use for any legislative trainings or if we are trying to gain a certain legislator’s support. If you do not know who your legislators are, you can find out their contact information by going to the following website <http://legis.state.va.us/>, clicking on "Who's my legislator," and inputting your address. Or feel free to contact me at Ericka.umbarger@thechoicegroup.com or 804-334-2862 and I will be more than happy to assist you in finding this information.

Although all of the proposed legislation is very important to our consumers, the ones that affect DRS and the Rehab Community specifically include continued support for LTESS funding, providing an Economic Development Fund to help ESOs expand on employment opportunities for consumers, and enabling DRS to serve all eligible Virginians with disabilities rather than utilizing the current Order of Selection.

Sincerely,

Ericka Umbarger, MSW

Vocational Counselor, The Choice Group

The newly established division of NRA, called the **Rehabilitation Counselor and Educators Association** (RCEA) is developing in Virginia! If you are interested in RCEA please contact Susan Cianfaglione for more information at Susan.Cianfaglione@drs.virginia.gov . And for more information at the national level, check out <http://>



VRA Golf Classic

Mark Your Calendar!! The 7th Annual Virginia Rehabilitation Association Golf Classic will be held on Tuesday, September 18th at Hunting hawk Golf Course. It is a beautiful course and you will truly enjoy a great day of golf. Hunting Hawk is located in Glen Allen. To get to the course you take exit 173 off I-64 and then a right on Route 623 for 3.2 miles. The cost is \$280.00 for a foursome or \$70.00 per person. We need lots of support from our members so please play or help secure a foursome. Also, hole sponsorship is \$125.00 for a 3' x 3' sign and we need your help to find corporate sponsors. Thanks and please call Howard Green at 828-9548 or e-mail him at jgreen1949@verizon.net

Submitted by Howard Green

Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality

Philip Cooke, founder of Travel Plans Unlimited, in Orange, will participate in the eleventh annual Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality [SATH] World Congress, January 10-14, in Miami. The Congress draws several hundred attendees, who gather to meet with executives of the major divisions of the travel industry: Air, Hotel, Rail, Tour, Cruise, to address specific problems and needs that still require improvements to accommodate all travelers. SATH has been working to break down barriers in the travel industry, creating accessibility standards, for thirty years. Philip is a lifetime member of SATH, and since 1985 an advocate for training and employment of individuals with disabilities, for opportunities within the travel industry. This advocacy led to his serving two years as President of the National Association of Rehabilitation Instructors, a former division of NRA.

Submitted by Philip Cooke

VRA Raffle

RAFFLE Underway... To use a nautical term! **Please JOIN VRA in raising funds through a RAFFLE!**

VRA Member, Phil Cooke, Travel Plans Unlimited, has generously donated a Cruise for Two, to be used as a raffle prize.

The cruise is four nights (Monday out - Friday return) sailing September 10, 2007 from Miami to Key West and Calica, Yucatan, Mexico. Join the fun and excitement of this fund raiser during the next several months. Tickets are available NOW at \$2.00 each and are sold by VRA Officers, Board Members and other designated members. If you are willing to help sell tickets, want to buy tickets, or want additional information, you may **contact Mary Kaye Johnston** at her email: mkaye1@cavtel.net Please help support VRA activities by buying your ticket NOW!

VRA Makes \$460 Donation to the Fisher House

This year, VRA's donation for community support of individuals with disabilities or in crisis went to the Fisher House Foundation at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth. As described in the Foundation's web site, www.FisherHouse.org, "The Fisher House™ program is a unique private-public partnership that supports America's military in their time of need. The program recognizes the special sacrifices of our men and women in uniform and the hardships of military service by meeting a humanitarian need beyond that normally provided by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

Fisher House™ Foundation donates "comfort homes," built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful times - during the hospitalization for an unexpected illness, disease, or injury. Annually, the Fisher House™ program serves more than 8,500 families. VRA is pleased to support this service to the Commonwealth's veterans and their families. **Submitted by Sherman Gifford**

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