



NewsNotes

A Quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association
2009 Fourth Quarter, October-Dec. No. 36

Presidential Pondering by Jane Bennett

I hope this finds everyone well and enjoying the lovely fall weather we are having. It continues to be a year of changes and challenges with cutbacks, the economy and budget issues. One thing that I've noticed however; folks in Rehabilitation continue to strive to do the best they can do no matter what the circumstances. I applaud you all for that!

VRA and its divisions continue to be busy planning training opportunities, fund raisers and other similar opportunities for its members. During this year, particularly during the summer we have had three fundraisers that were very profitable. There were two yard sales done – one in the Richmond area and one in the Charlottesville area. A little over \$800 was raised from the yard sales. Last month we had our largest fund raiser – the annual VRA Golf Tournament which was held on Tuesday, September 15th at Hunting Hawk Golf Club in Glen Allen, VA. There were 18 foursomes playing that day. The weather was very cooperative and it was overall a great day. This event raised approximately \$2,500.00 for VRA!! We were thrilled!

This past weekend was the 13th annual Collaborations Conference in Virginia Beach, VA at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront. The conference offered various workshops for participants including: ethics training; training on working with folks with autism; strategic planning; and conducting effective staff meetings just to mention a few. A highlight of the weekend was the hands on Assistive Technology display that remained open for the entire conference. This gave folks the opportunity to see and try out the latest state of the art assistive

technology devices. It appeared to be a well received display. The conference ended with a working lunch with a presentation on the updates to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Despite having to shorten the conference from three days to two, it was very well attended with folks from across the state.

VRA board continues to meet on a quarterly basis and the next meeting is scheduled for: December 11, 2009 at the Resources for Independent Living in Richmond, VA beginning at 10 a.m.. As many of you know, we recently voted for our new board members for 2010. Our new board members will be in place starting in January 2010. Liz Smith from DRS will be the President of VRA beginning in January. We will be having a special ballot coming soon for President Elect as we were unable to secure a nominee until after the ballots were sent. Please keep your eyes open for that email so you can vote for the new President Elect for 2011.

VRA is always looking to provide more services for its members, so if you have ideas on what you as a member would like to see from VRA, please email me with your suggestions:
Jane.Bennett@drs.virginia.gov

Remember to check the VRA website often for updates on training opportunities, legislative news and other activities within VRA and its divisions. www.vra.org

Yours in Rehabilitation,

Jane E. Bennett, MA, CRC, CRP
VRA President, 2009-2010



The 2009 Virginia Rehabilitation Association Awards

Norman C. Hammond Award recognizes business and industry leaders whose contributions to the field of rehabilitation in Virginia are outstanding and result in the employment of persons with disabilities.

Recipient: Sue Cline, Active Grey Matter/Cyclonic Consulting

Virginia Rehabilitation Association Distinguished Achievement Award recognizes 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.

Recipient: Jennifer Woodward, Department of Rehabilitative Services, Policy & Planning Unit

Corbett Reedy Award for Excellence recognizes a resident of Virginia currently involved in the rehabilitation field who has creatively pursued excellence in contributions to the rehabilitation program, projects, issues, publications or a significant rehabilitation cause.

Recipient: Beth Tetrault, Henrico County Mental Health Mental Retardation

R. N. Anderson Leadership Award recognizes a current member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association who has demonstrated excellence in services to persons with disabilities.

Recipient: Dale (DeeDee) Batten, Department of Rehabilitative Services Regional Director, VRA Member

Franz Stillfried Barrier-Free Achievers Honor Roll recognizes efforts made by individuals, businesses or organizations for the removing of architectural, attitudinal and environmental barriers.

Recipient: Appalachian Independence Center
Abingdon, Virginia

A. R. Dawson Humanitarian Award recognizes 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.

Recipient: Helen Kimble, Charlottesville Department of Social Services

Dr. Roy M. Hoover Award for Outstanding Medical Achievement recognizes a physician practicing in the Virginia in the field of medicine, or in any field rehabilitative in nature who has given outstanding rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities and whose contributions are substantial.

Recipient: Dr. Harvey E. Jacobs, Private Practice, Richmond, VA

Don T. Johnston President's Award honors an individual who demonstrates similar qualities and attributes of the person for whom this award is named, and in support of VRA.

Recipient: Amy Miller, Department of Rehabilitative Services, Immediate Past President VRA



VARL Election Results

The VARL election is now closed and we had 31 members vote out of 53 members. That is almost 60% of our members.

The Board that will be in place on January 1, 2010 will be as follows:

Those with a ** are newly elected in this election.

President – Naomi Aitken

Past –President – Jack Smith

President –elect ** – Teri Bertsch

Secretary ** – Robin Metcalf
(term ends Dec 2011)

Treasurer – Eleana Boyer (term ends Dec. 2010)

Board of Directors:

Term ends Dec. 2010 – Jane Bennett and Shawn Zimmerman

Term ends Dec. 2011 – Kem Kirby and Ralph Figaro

Term ends Dec. 2012 ** – Sharon Cheek and Doug James

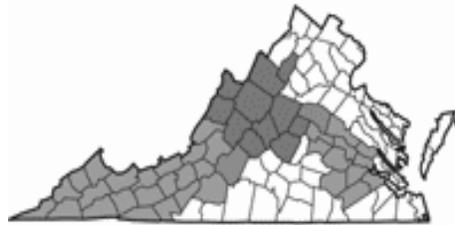
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The Virginia Rehabilitation VRA Legislative Liaison Tax Policy and the Election

While there are signs that the economy is beginning to recover and the recession might be over, the state's fiscal situation shows few signs that balancing the budget will be any easier for Governor Kaine's successor. State revenues will continue to lag into the next administration for some time. Although Governor Kaine will propose a budget for the next biennium before he leaves office, Creigh Deeds or Bob McDonnell will still have to balance public needs with declining revenues.

That said, there's not a great deal of difference between the two candidates' tax policy. In reviewing their positions, the Commonwealth Institute found both propose to increase revenues using employer tax credits for adding new jobs. While these proposals target building the business base in Virginia, nothing in either proposal mentions tax credits for the hiring and/or training of people with disabilities. It's widely known that approximately 70% of people with disabilities are unemployed so why wouldn't we want to offer employers incentives for hiring these people? When you look at the positive economic benefit – a person paying taxes as opposed to a person not working and receiving public assistance – it's hard to figure why we wouldn't want to target this population. VRA has talked with both candidates' staff and will continue to work with them over the next couple of weeks and after the election to promote tax credits for hiring people with disabilities.

If you'd like to learn more about the candidates go to: www.bobmcdonnell.com for Bob McDonnell R, and www.deedsforvirginia.com for Creigh Deeds. Both candidates have tabs you can click on to see where they stand on the issues, but Creigh Deeds is the only one who has a plan for helping Virginians with disabilities. Here's what he says:

More than 1 million Virginians are living with some type of disability. Whether they are born with a disability or have experienced some form of trauma, most disabled Virginians find themselves unemployed and dependent on some level of support. Each year there are increases in the overall population with disabilities as diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorders increase along with survival rates for Traumatic Brain Injuries. Virginia must also deal with the steady flow of Wounded Warriors who are returning from conflicts around the world and who look to the Commonwealth for the helping hand they need and deserve.

Creigh Deeds has stood up for Virginians with disabilities throughout his career. As a State Senator, Deeds introduced legislation to help disabled Virginians pay for prescription drugs, sponsored real estate tax relief for disabled persons, and supported the creation of Virginia's Wounded Warrior program. As governor, Creigh will work with Virginians with disabilities, their families, and advocates to:

- Expand a wide array of services (including affordable housing) with a focus on community based programming to respond to the needs of all Virginians with disabilities;
- Make the Commonwealth a model employer and contractor in order to create new job opportunities for Virginians with disabilities;
- Eliminate barriers to employment services and improve service delivery systems related to employment;
- Require insurers to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorders;

VRA Legislative Update (Continued on page 5)



VRA Legislative Committee (Continued from page 4)

- Ensure accessible and affordable transportation for Virginians with disabilities;
- Continue to appoint Virginians with disabilities to boards and commissions that direct services to all Virginians;
- Maintain and strengthen the position of Special Advisor on Disability Issues in the Workforce;
- Enforce laws and regulations that diminish discrimination against Virginians with disabilities;
- Reform eligibility policies that prevent many Virginians with disabilities from working due to fear of losing their benefits, particularly Medicaid; and
- Maintain constant contact with Virginians with disabilities to assure that services are provided in the most efficient and effective manner.

In the race for Lt. Governor, Jody Wagner – D <http://www.jodyforva.com> is challenging current Lt. Governor Bill Bolling – R <http://www.billbolling.com/>. Like Creigh Deeds, Jody Wagner came out recently in coordination with the beginning of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, with her agenda to help Virginians with disabilities pledging to protect their rights and improve the quality of life. To read her agenda that was published in the Augusta Free Press, go to www.augustafreepress.com/index.php?s=jody+wagner.

At this writing, McDonnell and his Republican running mates are ahead of their Democratic rivals in all the polls. This is either good news or the worst possible news depending on your preference.

Please take the time to figure out which candidates best reflect your views on issues you deem important, and by all means vote! It's a wonderful privilege we have in this county – don't waste it.

Budget Cuts - Again

What's the old saying – three's a charm, right? Well, not in today's economy.

For the fourth time in the current two-year budget cycle, Governor Kaine has had to make cuts to the state's \$77 billion budget. On September 9th, he announced lay-offs totaling nearly 600 positions and a required one-day, unpaid furlough of state employees to save money although the Governor could not provide a precise figure for how much money the day-off plan would generate. The cost saving measures are focused on meeting the projected revenue shortfall of \$1.5 billion for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2010, and will bring total reductions to \$7 billion.

And it's not over yet. Addressing the Republican Committee in Powhatan, state Senator John Walkins, told the audience not to expect "things" to return to the way they were before the economic meltdown last fall – ever. As a member of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, he predicted not only a hard budget cycle this year, but next year as well. He emphasized repeatedly that we're going to have to learn to live with less – whether its funding for education, roads, human services or whatever part of government, the game has changed forever. "Don't look to Richmond to solve your problems. State agencies and localities are going to have to do more with fewer dollars," he said. It was a sobering message for all in attendance.

VRA Legislative Update (Continued on page 6)



VRA Legislative Update (Continued from page 5)

For those who missed the Governor's announcement in September, here are some of his reductions to agencies we typically follow in the Health and Human Resources Secretariat:

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

- Eliminates 15 staff positions (13 classified and 2 wage): GF reduction \$884,413

Department of Rehabilitative Services

- Supplants administrative GF dollars in the Employment Support Services (EES) Program and the Personal Assistance Services (PAS) Program: GF reduction \$283,442
- Reduce Long Term Employment Support Services (LTESS) funding: This reduces the program by \$51k. During the previous round of reductions, \$519,000 was reallocated from Local Disability Service Boards to the LTESS program. Utilizing these additional funds, LTESS programming will continue at current levels and there will be no additional cuts to Employment Service Organizations (ESOs)
- Reduce brain injury discretionary services: GF reduction \$10,982
- Reduce personal attendant services by 3 percent of total program: GF reduction \$82,593
- Reduce staffing levels by eliminating both vacant and filled wage and classified positions in the central and regional offices (18 vacant positions as well as up to 5 classified staff and 6 wage): GF reduction \$1,905,104

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

- Reduce jail diversion services – General Fund (GF) reduction: \$300,000
- Ceases direct management of the Community Resource Pharmacy by January 1, 2010 eliminating 9 positions. Funding for medications will be transferred to local community services boards.
- Eliminate 20 positions in Central Office: GF reduction \$780,000
- Reduce special hospitalization funding: GF reduction \$187,767
- Reduce operating costs: GF reduction \$149,245

Mental Health Treatment Centers

- Reduce the number of contract physicians at SW Va. Mental Health Inst.: GF reduction \$256,550
- Reduce expenditures not related to patient care: GF reduction \$4,485,190
- Reduce the number of direct care positions (13): GF reduction \$1,500,000
- Reduce the number of admin. And support positions statewide (70): GF reduction \$3,202,025

Intellectual Disabilities Training Centers

- Reduce number of support and admin. Positions: GF reduction \$1,576,020

VRA Legislative Update (Continued on page 7)



VRA Legislative Update (Continued from page 6)

Department of Medical Assistance

- Reduce residential psychiatric facility rates: GF reduction \$288,281
- Eliminate 100 MR wavier slots. The 2009 General Assembly funded 200 MR slots that will become available on January 1, 2010. This action reduces those slots by one-half: GF reduction \$1,235,099
- Reduce indigent care funding paid to UVA and VCU: GF reduction \$7,000,000

VRA as in previous years will partner with vaACCSES, the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living, the Coalition for the Mentally Disabled Citizens of Virginia and others to restore funding in critical areas when the General Assembly convenes in January. Last year's session was softened by the stimulus package coming out of Washington. The upcoming session promises to be tougher – there aren't "any rabbits to pull out of the hat" or for that manner anything that can buffer the current round of cuts that as one legislator described recently, "We're not cutting to the bone – we're in it."

Submitted by David Williams
VRA Legislative Liaison

VRA Election Notice for 2010

Thank you to all of the members who voted in our recent election!! I would like to announce our newly elected Officer and Board Members:

Secretary – Samantha Ruppert

Board Members - Robert Froehlich, Kim Shepard and Ned Campbell.

I would like to extend my thanks to Sandra Mottesheard for running for President-Elect. Unfortunately for VRA, Sandra accepted a position with the VA Administration and did not feel she would have the time needed to fulfill the duties of this office.

Now, for our Special Announcement – Jennifer Todd McDonough has graciously agreed to run for President-Elect. Jennifer has been a faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and working in the field of employment for people with disabilities for over 10 years. Jennifer is the Associate Director of Training at the VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center and the Project Coordinator for the Vocational Rehabilitation Service Models for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders DRRP. Ms. McDonough is a national expert on Social Security Disability Benefits and Work Incentives. She is currently serving as a Board Member with VRA.

Submitted by Amy Millier, VRA Past President and Nomination Committee Chair



VARL

LEADERS EMERGE !

Virginia Association for Rehabilitation Leadership

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

As 2009 quickly moves on, VARL is making considerable progress. We continue to function to serve the leaders of vocational rehabilitation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. If you are missing the VARL meetings you are really missing out. Our next meeting will be our planning meeting scheduled for December 10, 2009 in at the DRS Central Office in Richmond.

We have recently been privileged to have David Gitlin join us as our Student Representative on the VARL Board. He is presently a graduate student at George Washington University and employed with SOC Enterprises in Arlington, Virginia. David will be a welcome liaison to other vocational rehabilitation students at GW. He is planning a “chat” with the students.

We are now looking forward to the training that Sabrina Harmon will be presenting on October 29th. This NISH training that will be sponsored by VARL in cooperation with STEPS, Inc. is titled “What To Manage When You are Walking Around”. The presentation opens the door for managers to look for specific items that can directly and positively impact work performance.

Usually we utilize several VTC sights throughout the state. However, for the upcoming December meeting we strongly encourage everyone to be with us in person. Find someone to ride with to the meeting; it will make the ride to Richmond shorter. At each meeting we have a short planned presentation covering an aspect of leadership. We always have fun while planning meaningful trainings for the development of leadership for vocational rehabilitation professionals.

We are happy to announce the winner of the 2nd annual Emerging Leader Award. This award is presented to a developing professional in the vocational rehabilitation field who deserves special recognition as an Emerging Leader. As announced at the awards dinner at Collaborations, Cindy Roberts was the deserving recipient of the 2nd Annual Emerging Leader Award. Cindy is a Placement Counselor in the Fishersville DRS Office where she provides her consumers and employers with high quality service. Ms. Roberts is very active in her community and demonstrates strong professional leadership and creativity in her profession. The award will entitle the award winner to a VARL membership for a year.

The Virginia Association for Rehabilitation Leadership promotes the development of emerging leaders within all individuals working to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. VARL strives to develop, improve, and strengthen leadership skills and practices in both public and private rehabilitation organizations.

Facilitators from VARL would like to come to your area in order to have a lunchtime chat. Could you host a leadership chat in your area? This is an easy and convenient way to communicate with other leaders in your area. It is motivating to have the opportunity discuss leadership ideas in such a convenient manner. We will come to your location, provide the materials and facilitate the discussion. We just ask you to schedule the office and help us get the word out to professionals in your area.

VARL Leaders Emerge! (continued on page 9)



VARL Leaders Emerge

(Continued from page 8)

We all are leaders, so let's set the positive example in the office. Our behavior is catchy. "A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm" a quote from Henrik Ibsen. Encouraging others is one way to help us all EMERGE!!!!

Look for more information on the web site and via email. We hope many of you will join us to see what is happening in the world of Leadership development.

Yours in leadership,

Jack Smith, VARL President, Jack.Smith@DRS.Virginia.Gov

VARL 2009: President Elect – Naomi Aitken, Past-President – Shirley Lyons, Treasurer - Eleana Boyer, Secretary – Amy Mosher, Board Members, Teri Bertsch, Doug James, Jane Bennett, Kem Kirby, Ralph Figaro and Shawn Zimmerman

The National Association of Rehabilitation Leadership (NARL) 2009 Award Presentation

Susan H. Green, a member of NRA since 1975 as well as a member of NARL/VARL, received the NARL 2009 "Presidential Citation for Distinguished Rehabilitation Service". The award was presented to Susan during the 2009 Virginia Collaborations Conference awards dinner held on Sunday, October 4, 2009, at Virginia Beach, Virginia.

From a VR Counselor, to an Education Consultant, to a Staff Development Specialist, to a Human Services/Counselor Manager, to a Staff Development Manager/Special Assistant, Susan has exhibited exceptional rehabilitation service in the area of administration, supervision, program planning, and evaluation, staff development and training throughout every aspect of her career. Susan leads by example, providing education and leadership opportunities for others, while looking for the best in everyone, and always maintaining a "can do" attitude for herself as well as others.

Susan is a Past President of NARL/VARL, and serves as the on-going Chair of Educational Programming. She is very creative in the development of new ways to reach out to people, one example was the implementation of "Leadership Chats" throughout Virginia, and this helped to bring membership from 3 to almost 60 members with Virginia having the largest Leadership Association in the United States. Susan has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills in her work, personal life, and with the Virginia Rehabilitation Association as well as the Virginia Association of Rehabilitation Leadership Division.

We the members of NARL say congratulations to Susan for a job well done!

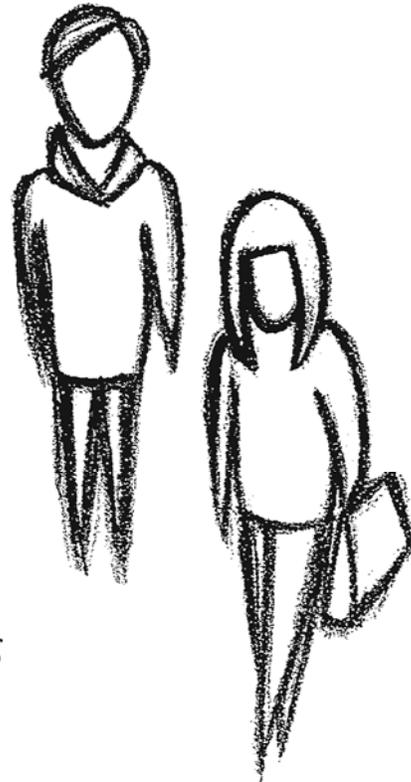
Submitted by Eleanor Williams





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VRA Award Recipients



Sue Cline, Active Grey Matter/Cyclonic Consulting



Jennifer Woodward, (center) Department of Rehabilitative Services, Policy & Planning



Send VRA News for the January 2010 issue by **1/8/10**. Please send all the VRA articles by email to Steven Sommer at steve.sommer@drs.virginia.gov. Also read the NewsNotes at www.vra.org



Dr. Harvey E. Jacobs, Private Practice, Richmond, VA



Helen Kimble, Charlottesville Department of Social Services

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Amy Miller, Department of Rehabilitative Services, Immediate Past President VRA



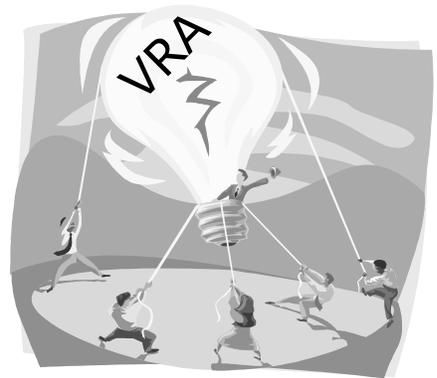
Dale (DeeDee) Batten, Department of Rehabilitative Services Regional Director



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