



NewsNotes

A quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association
2010 Third Quarter, July-September No. 39

Presidential Pondering

Liz Smith

Happy Summer to everyone!! It's been a tough month or so with this hot and dry weather, but I hope everyone has taken, or will be taking, some time off to enjoy their favorite Summer time activities. As we move towards the end of Summer and into the Fall, your VRA has much to offer you.

This past Friday, your dedicated Board met to continue planning for some exciting upcoming events. The discussion of the Board always revolves around what we can do to make your membership in this outstanding organization as meaningful to you as possible. Our membership continues to grow and we'll be participating in the upcoming NRA "drive" for new members to bring new members into the VRA family. There also are some excellent upcoming training programs that will be of benefit to you and we're looking to re-vamp our VRA mentor program. Thanks to Susan Green and our VRA mentors for all they do to keep this program vital. For those members in Southwest Virginia, we'll be holding a teleconference shortly with you to discuss your interests and the ways VRA can best serve you. On the social side, look for upcoming announcements on fun events to bring VRA members together.

If you haven't already done so, please register for the 2010 Collaborations Conference to be held on October 3-5 in Norfolk. The conference program is looking great and we'll be holding the Annual VRA Business Meeting during the conference. Please make time to attend this important meeting to learn more about your Association and, more importantly, to tell your Board what you need from your Association. Also, please be sure to submit your nominations for the many VRA awards to be presented at the conference to recognize deserving rehabilitation professionals and others for all they do for Virginians with disabilities.

Also, remember the September 14 VRA Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Tournament to be held at Hunting Hawk Golf Course in Glen Allen, Va. We still need hole sponsors, players, and volunteers. So please contact Howard Green if you can help.

Let me close with some very important "thank you's". Recently, Steve Sommer notified me that, due to other commitments, he would no longer be able to continue as the Editor of NewsNotes. Best I can tell, Steve has served as Editor for almost 10 years! He made it his personal goal to ensure that our newsletter was a quality and timely product. Steve, your commitment to this challenging job has been remarkable and I know that all VRA members (past and present) join me in thanking you for your hard work, dedication, and exceptional talent. It ain't always been easy for you to produce the newsletter, but you got it done!!! Many, many thanks. And many, many thanks to Kristina Blough for her willingness to take on the job as the new Editor. Kristina, like so many other new VRA members, asked "what can I do to help this association?" Well, I can think of no greater contribution than taking on the Editor assignment. Thanks again Kristina for bringing your talent to this important job. And, we'll all be here to help you. And, thanks to Ned Campbell and Mary Kaye Johnston for stepping up to produce this edition.

Finally, I know all VRA members join me in congratulating Jim Rothrock on his reappointment as the Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitative Services. Jim has been a long term member of VRA and one of its greatest supporters. Jim, thanks for all you do to help VRA continue to be a vibrant and growing organization!!

Thanks to you all for allowing me to serve as your President. It's an honor. I look forward to seeing you all at an upcoming VRA event!

--Submitted by Liz Smith, VRA President



Call for Nominations: Officers/Board Members and Awards

VRA Board Members and Officers for the new year

The Virginia Rehabilitation Association is currently recruiting for new Officers and Board Members: President Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board Members at large. President Elect and Secretary serve a one year term, Treasurer serves a 2 year term, and Board Members at large serve a 3 year term.

If you have an interest in running for any of the positions or you have questions, please contact me at Jane.Bennett@drs.virginia.gov or 703-277-3510.

--Submitted by Jane Bennett

VRA Award Nominations

It's time to nominate your colleagues, businesses, and successful customers for their award winning **EXCELLENCE!**

The VRA Awards Committee will be accepting nominations until August 31, 2010. The awards will be presented at the 2010 Collaborations Conference Awards Luncheon. Don't put it off, take the time right now and nominate someone you feel is deserving of an award. The award categories are:

R.N. Anderson - awarded to a current member of VRA who has demonstrated excellence in services to persons with disabilities

Roy M. Hoover - awarded to a physician practicing in Virginia who has given outstanding medical rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities and whose contributions are substantial

Norman C. Hammond - to honor business and industry leaders whose contribution to the field of rehabilitation in Virginia are outstanding and resulted in the employment of persons with disabilities..

A. Ray Dawson Humanitarian - for outstanding service to the disabled 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.

Corbett Reedy - honors a Virginian that has creatively pursued excellence in contributions to rehabilitation programs, projects, issues, publications or a significant rehabilitation cause.

VRA Distinguished Achievement - 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.

Franz Stillfried Barrier Free Achievers Honor Roll - 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.

For more information on these awards and past recipients, go to VRA website at <http://www.vra.org/ngw/about/fsbAchieversRoster.shtml>

Nominations may be submitted to: Eleanor Williams at Eleanor.Williams@drs.virginia.gov, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23229, Phone: 804-662-7075

--Submitted by Eleanor Williams

VARL: Emerging Leader Award

The Virginia Association for Rehabilitation Leadership (VARL) 2010 "Emerging Leader Award" is given annually at the Collaborations Conference. Please note that while the nominator must be a VARL member, the nominee does not. Deadline for nominations is August 13, 2010 and should be sent to drj922@gmail.com.

[Eligibility](#)



1. Individual must be involved in the field of vocational rehabilitation (employee, teacher, intern, volunteer, etc.).
2. No restrictions regarding age, years of experience in field or current role in the field.
3. Nominator must be a VARL member but nominee need not be a VARL or VRA member.

Criteria for Emerging Leader Award

The VARL Emerging Leader award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated leadership potential within the field of Vocational Rehabilitation. This emerging leader will have demonstrated a commitment to the advancement and development of exemplary leadership qualities through innovative thinking, leadership of others, effective participation in leadership activities, and study leading to a positive impact on the vocational rehabilitation community.

Nomination Process

1. You may email, fax or mail nominations to Doug James.
2. Please include with your nomination your contact information – name, email address and phone number.
3. Include in your nomination a statement as to why you believe your nominee is deserving of VARL's "Emerging Leader" Award.
4. Please include any documents, letters, etc. in support of your nomination.

Nominations should be sent to Doug James no later than August 13, 2010

Email: drj922@gmail.com

Mailing address: 7584 Blanford Court, Alexandria, VA 22315

Fax: 703-277-3500

Questions? Email Doug James or call at (703) 277-3562

--submitted By Doug James

NARL Awards Nominations (National Awards)

Following is an invitation to submit nominations for awards to be presented by the National Association for Rehabilitation Leadership (NARL) at the 2010 NRA Annual Training Conference. NARL will present the following awards:

MARY E. SWITZER AWARD FOR REHABILITATION LEADERSHIP. This is the highest award granted by NARL. It recognizes and honors outstanding rehabilitation leadership of a national scope in either the public or private sector. A Nominee must demonstrate exceptional competence in rehabilitation administration or supervision and be recognized as a rehabilitation leader of national importance. Nominations may be made by individual members or state chapter.

PRESIDENTIAL CITATION FOR DISTINGUISHED REHABILITATION SERVICE. This award is granted in recognition of exceptional rehabilitation service in administration, supervision, program planning and evaluation, research, teaching and legislation. It may be presented to one or more individuals in either the public or private sector. Nominations may be made by individual members or state chapter.

GUY F. HUBBARD AWARD. This award is conferred in recognition of a rehabilitation management practitioner who has demonstrated excellence in rehabilitation supervision or administration. The award is named in honor of the late Guy F. Hubbard, Asst. Dir. Of the NC Div. of Vocational Rehabilitation, who believed that successes in VR are the result of the ability of rehabilitation management to promote growth and development. The nominee should have demonstrated excellence, innovation, initiative, as well as outstanding competence in supervision or administration. Individuals from the public sector may be nominated. Nominations may be made by individual members, state chapters or regional chapters.

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMING AWARD. This award is presented to the state chapter with the most outstanding professional programming during the year. In addition to the award, the state chapter will receive a 50% supplement of the Professional Program Grant funds during the following year. The "Report of Usage of the NARL Professional Program Grant Funds" is the primary basis for selecting the recipient. Nominations should include a



description of the types of professional programming, and of the duration and frequency of the programs presented. Nominations can be made either by an individual member or by a state chapter.

The Nomination Process. Gather documentation to substantiate the particular award. This can include letters of support, copies of work, newspaper articles and other compelling information. Complete the nomination form below. Keep a copy for yourself and submit two copies of the form and supporting documentation to:

NARL AWARDS c/o Rick Walters, 18 White Oak Lane, Emmaus, Pennsylvania 18049.

Deadline: Nominations must be received or post-marked by **September 18, 2010**.

To submit NARL nominations, please use the following as a guide:

NOMINEE INFORMATION:

- NAME
- ADDRESS
- PHONE #
- FAX #
- E-MAIL
- Explain why the individual should receive the particular award. Please cite the award criteria.

NOMINATOR INFORMATION:

- NAME
- ADDRESS
- PHONE #
- FAX #
- E-MAIL
- DATE

VRA Division and Committee News

VRA Golf Tournament, Tuesday, September 14: Get Into "The Swing" at Hunting Hawk



The 11TH Annual **Benjy Burnett Golf Classic** will be held at **Hunting Hawk Golf Club** on **Tuesday, September 14th at 8:30 am**. For only \$75.00 you can play a round, have lunch and take part in our drawing for door prizes. Don't miss it!

To Register: Please sign up your foursome by contacting **Howard Green:**

- (1) Email: jgreen1949@verizon.net
- (2) Call: **804-305-3999**.

Sponsor a Hole: Individuals, businesses and organizations support the VRA by sponsoring a hole.

Contribute Door Prizes: We have drawings for items and gift certificates donated by our members.

Volunteer: You don't have to be a golfer to participate. Our many volunteers help make this event a success.

View pictures of the 2009 tournament at VRA's events gallery: <http://www.vra.org/ngw/events.shtml>

Something's Fishy In Hampton: First Annual VRA Fish Fry-Stay tuned for dates



Arrr...

Don't be missin' ye "First Annual VRA Fish Fry" in the Tidewater area this Fall.

Aye, remember, this is a fundraisin' event for VRA.

Members and prospective members welcome!

Details to follow...me parrot concurs.

--Submitted by Barclay Shepard



Membership Committee

Annual Membership Meeting

VRA will conduct its annual membership business meeting at the **Collaborations Conference on Monday, October 4th at 4:00 pm.**

Be sure to check the conference agenda for more details.

Membership Recruitment Drive Underway!

Following the lead of NRA, VRA is also initiating a membership recruitment drive effective July 15th. Talk it up and encourage your colleagues, community partners and friends to JOIN now!

Prizes will be awarded at the Annual Business Meeting, held at the Collaborations Conference in October 2010, for the two VRA members recruiting the most new members (at least five) between July 15th - September 30th. New members are considered to be anyone brand new to the association or members renewing after six months or more of a lapsed membership. Be sure your recruits indicate on the membership application that YOU made the referral.

Let's get going!

--By Andrew Stowe

New VRA Members Receive Real Benefits

(Editor's note: Sponsorship for the first year of membership in the VRA is an attractive benefit for new DRS counselors. In addition to VRA membership new counselors can be considered for reimbursement for attending the annual Collaborations Conference. Commissioner Rothrock shared a message he sent to recent new VRA members. We print it here with permission as a reminder to us all that participation in your professional organization can provide many benefits far more important than just monetary).

"Susan just notified me that you had taken advantage of the offer to be sponsored in your first year, of what I hope is many years, of VRA membership. Welcome aboard.

Let me assure you that VRA can be a real asset in your career development irrespective of what role you choose to work in here at DRS.

When I was about 26, I was frustrated w my career path and seemingly stuck. I met w a guru who advised me to get involved in some activities outside of my workplace--I was in private rehab at the time. I was a VRA member, but went a bit beyond to be on a committee. Pretty soon I was chairing that committee and shortly thereafter I realized that I was garnering new skills, and my career was more satisfying and opportunities were becoming available.

Now this is not solely the result of VRA membership, but I guarantee that what I learned and the people I met, were big aids in my advancement both professionally and career-wise.

I look forward to seeing you at Collaborations and other DRS events where we can chat. Congratulations and we expect big things from you all.

Good luck and if I can ever be of aid, don't hesitate to let me know how I can help.

Take care."

Jim



VRA Welcomes New Members in 2010!

Penni Wetherell – Fishersville, VA
Buck Hall - Sandy, VA
Danaan Riley – Lynchburg, VA
Maria Calero - Gainesville, VA
Jimmy McKenzie - Princeton, WVA
Dawn Yates - Christiansburg, VA
Phil Black - Virginia Beach, VA

Ralph Figaro - Manassas, VA
Kathy Hayfield - Richmond, VA
Doral Jackson - Chesapeake, VA
Maureen Gibson - Virginia Beach, VA
Susan Gaillard – Richmond, VA
Vera Hansley – Hampton, VA

Why I Am Still A Member of VRA After 35 Years?

Recently I had reason to be surveying some Dept. of Rehabilitative Services staff who have been members of NRA-VRA for going on just one year. I help coordinate a collaboration between DRS and VRA to get new rehab counselors with DRS on board as VRA members in hopes of strengthening their professional connections and involvement. A couple of the counselors' memberships are coming up for renewal very soon and they had legitimate questions, especially in these economic times, as to whether to renew the membership or not. I shared with them of course that NRA now offers us the ability to pay over time for our memberships which helps financially, but I also thought perhaps I would share with them the reasons I am still a member. I guess I hadn't really thought about it myself until I began to put it into words. Now that I have, I decided perhaps it would be helpful to someone else if I shared it in this edition of the NewsNotes. In fact, I encourage you to consider this as well and let's start having a corner of the newsletter for this purpose!

So here, unedited, is what I wrote to one of our DRS counselors who is a VRA member:

"I frankly have stayed a member of VRA all these years for several reasons; not all necessarily good ones. More training options from VRA and its divisions are offered to me at a discount. Also DRS usually sponsors members at some level financially to attend the annual conference which has been in many nice places and is fun and good training. I feel good knowing that both NRA and VRA do great lobbying and legislative work to keep our VR program funded, and I know if I had a desire to be part of the group doing legislative advocacy VRA would help me to learn how. The publications for me professionally aren't all that great due to the very research slant but I sometimes do find really interesting info that I have incorporated into my work. My leadership and volunteer opportunities are enhanced due to my involvement with helping with things like the annual VRA golf tournament (which supports our paying our registered lobbyist), other fund raisers, and by taking on work on committees or as now, being very involved with VARL. I have met many neat people both in and out of DRS who are members and have been able to use them as a resource.

There are probably other reasons. I guess for any professional association, its more about what you put into it than what you get from it. NRA does offer some other more tangible member benefits but I can't reel them off for you but you could research more about it at www.nationalrehab.org"

That's it! I would be happy to chat with anyone about VRA (my email is below) and encourage you to get involved! Service to the Association is where much of the fulfillment comes. I know we all have busy jobs and a lot to do but this type of service is a diversion, it is fun, and for a very worthwhile purpose!

--Submitted by Susan Green, jgreen1949@verizon.net

VRA Education Committee

Training: Autism-Spectrum Spectrum Disorders in September (TBA): Plans are currently underway for a VRA sponsored training event in September, (originally planned for June/July) focused on Spectrum Disorders that will include a panel representing different points on the spectrum and the vocational implication of serving individuals that experience Spectrum Disorders. Training is planned for the Roanoke area. Watch for more details to be announced via email, VRA website at <http://www.vra.org> or contact **Ron Simmons at (434) 907-5398.**



Ex-Offender Re-Entry Training, August 13: Sponsored by The Virginia Rehabilitation Association and The Virginia Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association, this training is targeted for the human services professional who work with the ex-offender population and will focus on examining your values in working with this population and developing new skills for helping the ex-offender to secure appropriate employment.

Date and Time:

Friday, August 13, 2010
10:00 – 3:30
Registration to begin at 9:30

Location:

Peninsula Workforce Development Center
At Thomas Nelson Community College
600 Butler Farm Road, Suite B
Hampton, VA 23666

Register early! Space will be limited!
CRC credit available.

To reserve your place and for disability accommodation needs, contact
Margaret Gillispie by August 4th

Call (434) 200-9277 or email margaret.gillispie@drs.virginia.gov

Cost: VRA and VRCEA members \$15; Non members \$25. Lunch is on your own.

Virginia Association of Rehabilitation Leadership (VARL)

In April VARL sponsored Dr. Deborah Roberts who provided training on Emotional Intelligence. This seminar reinforced the importance of knowing your emotional quotient [EQ] and continuing to maintain your emotional wellness. Response was very positive and attendees recommended addition trainings on this topic.



On June 8th Terri Glass provided an interactive training on *Ethics Beyond 101: A reflection and dialogue about the really tough choices*. The room was full and the evaluations were very positive in terms of the practicality of the session and the important of consulting with others when faced with a tough ethical decision.

A save the date notice has been sent out for the November 3rd training entitled *“Soft Skills for Hard Results or the Magic in the Middle”*. This training is jointly sponsored by VARL and STEPS, Inc. Our presenter is Sabrina Harmon, Trainer for NISH.

During the brief business meeting, Susan Green and Jack Smith received recognition for their service to VARL as president in 2006 and 2009 respectively. Membership is at 54, and the Virginia chapter continues to lead the nation in membership. Eleanor Williams, NARL President, encourages VARL & VRA members to attend the NRA conference in New Orleans.

The VARL Emerging Leader Award nominations are open and due to Doug James by August 13th, 2010. We respectfully request of the VRA Board to present this award at the VRA Annual Business Meeting being held at the Collaborations Conference 2010. VARL will not be hosting a chat during the Collaborations Conference as the evening schedules are very full this year. A chat will be held in Lynchburg on July 22nd hosted by Sharon Cheek and Margaret Gillispie. The brown bag lunch discussion will follow the book *The Energy Bus* by Jon Conboy.

The VARL Board Meetings have been scheduled for August 11th in Charlottesville at the Workforce Center and December 8th in Richmond. There will be a chat following the August 11th meeting.

--Submitted By Naomi Aitken, VARL President

Be part of the “IN” crowd!

Would you like to network online with other VARL members rehabilitation professionals? VARL now has a secure members-only site devoted to sharing information and resources related to rehab leadership. Check it out

VARL LinkedIN Network: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=2613703>



Virginia Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (VRCEA)

The new Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Division (VRCEA) continues to work on organizational structure and developmental activities in order to grow its membership and become a stronger division. Although still in its infancy, VRCEA has a membership body of 21 as of the June NRA reports (the largest Mid-Atlantic Regional Chapter); is sponsoring a training in Richmond on July 22nd entitled "PDAs as Cognitive Aids"; jointly sponsoring a training with VRA in Hampton August 13th entitled "Ex-Offender – Re-entry"; and hosting another training session at the Collaborations Conference.



In addition to seeking nominations for the upcoming Fall election, there are currently some VRCEA Board vacancies. Anyone interested in becoming more involved and/or learning more about VRCEA should contact Richard Kriner, President, at Richard.kriner@drs.virginia.gov or 804.662.7438. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining and helping develop this division into a viable Virginia Chapter!

--Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston

NRA News

From the National Rehabilitation Association

NRA Conference, "Let The Good Times Roll": This year and national conference will be at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel On October 12-17, 2010. All members are welcome. Award nominations are outlined in the nominations sections of this newsletter. Be sure to submit your NARL nominations by the deadline, Sep. 18. Last year VARL and Susan Green received national awards.

CEU Credit Courses: A benefit of NRA membership includes access to over 1,600 online courses for CEU credit. NRA members receive a ten percent discount on all courses. New members receive one online course free. Connect to the NRA web site for more information. NRA members are automatically included in their respective state associations. So, Join today!

Virginia Leaders Emerge: Bonnie Hawley, VRA President, is a VR Counselor from the DRS Manassas Office. Eleanor Williams, long time VRA member and officer from Richmond is the President of the National Association of Rehabilitation Leadership division. The VRA is honored to have these outstanding members serving as leaders for our national organization. Thank you for your time, energy and expertise.

Ethics Update: The latest NRA newsletter featured the new CRC Code of Ethics. This is a reminder to make sure you read and understand the new provisions.

National Membership Drive: Andrew Stowe's membership article alerted you to the Virginia drive that started July 15. The NRA has sponsored this activity for all state associations. Virginia has been one of the strongest organizations in the country for many years and our leadership has been awarded as the number one division. At Collaborations let's celebrate our continued strength and drive. And in New Orleans let's give Liz, Bonnie, and Eleanor something to talk about!



Collaborations Conference 2010

October 3-5, 2010

*"Navigate Your Way to Success in
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Co-Hosted By:

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mmorrison@vaaccses.org

571-339-1305 or Fax 703-569-3932



WWRC Foundation Receives Donation

Dominion Va. Power helps WWRC Maintenance "Keep on Truckin"

Dominion Virginia Power, through its Dominion Foundation, donated a 2003 Chevrolet Truck, Extended Cab, 4 X 4 to the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC). The truck, valued at \$9,000, will support various maintenance activities necessary to sustain a safe and well-maintained campus environment for faculty, students, and visitors.

"WWRC appreciates the generosity of Dominion Virginia Power and its willingness to support the WWRC Foundation. Donations of this kind support the Center and its mission to help people with disabilities maximize their independence and employment success," said WWRC Director Rick Sizemore.

"Charitable giving and leadership of campaigns that benefit non-profit organizations are an integral part of Dominion's social responsibility," said Emmett W. Toms, Jr., Manager, State and Local Affairs, Dominion, Inc. Principally through the Dominion Foundation, the company contributes more than \$20 million annually to qualified charitable 501(c)(3) organizations.



Picture, left to right: Victor Morzark, WWRC Physical Plant Services Operations Manager; Emmett W. Toms, Jr., Manager-State and Local Affairs, Dominion; Richard L. Sizemore, WWRC Director; Dr. Richard Luck, CEO, WWRC Foundation

--Edited from the original news release submitted by Aileen Colorado

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Join us on September 26, 2010 for the 7th Annual Kit Callahan's Miracle Mile, 10K Run/Walk and Fun Run at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. To learn more call me at 703-451-8881 or visit www.kitsmiraclemile.org. BIS is also a proud partner of *The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program-Northern Region*

--submitted by Karen W. Brown, Executive Director
Brain Injury Services, Inc., www.braininjurysvcs.org



New Federal Jobs in Hampton Roads

DRS Leads Referral Process-Federal Contracts Offering Employment Opportunities for Individuals With Disabilities

Professional Contract Services, Inc. (PCSI), a Texas-based organization that provides employment opportunities through federal contracts, has partnered with DRS and Didlake, Inc., of Manassas to recruit individuals with disabilities for as many as 215 new jobs at military sites in the Hampton Roads region. Two separate government contracts created these jobs under the AbilityOne Program.

DRS leads the pre-screening and referral process to fill these positions. "This welcomed venture comes at a critical time of high unemployment for job seekers with disabilities," says DRS Commissioner Rothrock. "I am encouraged that our new partnership with PCSI, along with continued support from employment-based organizations such as Didlake, Inc., will help secure well-paying, federal jobs for persons with disabilities who would otherwise rely on public benefit programs."

This effort is already achieving significant results. Since April, DRS has been working with PCSI to fill 175 positions at the Naval Medical Center of Portsmouth (NMCP). To date, all 42 clients referred to NMCP thus far have been hired full-time with benefits. In June, PCSI secured an additional contract with 40 warehouse positions between the Naval Operations Base in Norfolk and Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach. Although recruitment for the warehouse positions officially begins in August, DRS has already started pre-screening for these jobs. The warehouse contract includes positions with pay ranging from \$15 to \$22/hour with benefits.

"What has made this such a successful partnership with PCSI is the fact that their contract specialists work hand in hand with our vocational rehabilitation staff to ensure quality job matching," said Lisa Zahraiddin, DRS regional business development manager for Hampton Roads.

Rex Parr, president and chief executive officer, Didlake, Inc. added, "We are pleased to be able to help PCSI get their start in Virginia. Our strong ties with the AbilityOne Program and partnership with Department of Rehabilitative Services made us uniquely qualified to meet their workforce needs."

"The community response has been nothing short of fantastic," said Ace Burt, president and chief executive officer, PCSI. "We are honored to have this opportunity to serve the men and women in uniform, while fulfilling our mission of creating jobs for people with significant disabilities."

--from the DRS news release by Commissioner Rothrock, June 10, 2010

Making History In Surry?

Accessible Buildings and Historic Preservation-Potential Workforce Center

Robert Mason, Surry Department of Social Services (SDSS), and Ben Blumenthal, Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), met on 7-12-10 in Surry to go over a recent accessibility report on a site being considered for use as a Virginia Workforce Center. The Center may be funded by Surry County, the Crater Region Workforce Investment Board, and the Virginia Employment Commission.

The building was once a Surry courthouse and may have historical significance. The historic preservation section of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) requires research to determine if the property is a qualified historic structure. Alterations to a qualified historic building must comply with required specifications for accessible building alterations unless it is determined in accordance with procedures that compliance with the requirements for accessible routes (exterior and interior), ramps, entrances, or toilets would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building in which case alternative requirements may be used.

Currently community residents must travel by ferry across the James River to access Workforce Investment Act resources in Williamsburg or must travel to Suffolk or Hopewell. Not only will residents be able to enjoy a historic preservation project but will also enjoy historic access to services if the Center becomes a reality.



An Award Winning Program in Chesterfield: Project Search

“Employment Champion of the Year” Awarded at the 2010 Project Search International Conference

In September of 2008 Chesterfield launched the first Project SEARCH program in Virginia. Project SEARCH is a nationally recognized high school transition program which provides employment and education opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. The program is dedicated to workforce development that benefits the individual, community and workplace. It originated at [Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center](#) in 1996 and currently has over 140 sites in 42 states with both private and public employers as well as the UK and Australia. This program received the 2004 New Freedom Initiative Award for their extraordinary efforts to train, recruit and hire people with disabilities.

“Project SEARCH Chesterfield” is a one-year educational program for students with intellectual disabilities in their last year of high school who have a desire to work. It is a joint venture between Chesterfield County Government as an employer in partnership, Department of Rehabilitative Services, Chesterfield Employment Services and Chesterfield County Public Schools. The program is totally immersed in Chesterfield County Government where the student has the opportunity to learn job specific skills and develop working relationships. Each student participates in up to three 12-week internships during the school year. Five days a week they begin in the Chesterfield County Government classroom for approximately 30 minutes to prepare for the day and then report to their internship sites for 4 hours. Students end their day back in the classroom to reflect on their experience, problem solve challenges, and plan for the next day. The ultimate goal upon program completion is competitive employment.

Our first year 7 students were accepted in the program and 10 county departments participated. Some of the work sites included Fleet Management where students gained mechanical and technical experience working on school buses and emergency vehicles, the Police Department in Animal Control where the student assisted the Kennel Master in the care and feeding of animals, and Mental Health Support Services in Accounts Receivable where they performed basic daily office duties and data entry as well as in Medical Records as a file clerk.

From the 2008 graduating class two students are working for Wal-Mart, two for Virginia State University, one for T.J. Maxx; one at Fort Lee and one for Community Christian Childcare Center.

There were 6 graduates for the 2009 school year. Three of them were hired by Chesterfield County Government in the Mental Health Support Services Department, 1 student is working at the New Yorker Bar and Grill. The remaining 2 students are still in the process of perusing jobs in the retail and automotive field.

For the 2010 school year eight eager students who are ready to get jobs have been accepted in the program. Their transition from school to work has already begun.

Project SEARCH Chesterfield received the “Employment Champion Award of the Year” for successfully obtaining employment for all 2008 graduating students at the Project SEARCH 2010 International Conference.

--Submitted by Frances Schiavone, Employment Supervisor, Project SEARCH Chesterfield

Virginia's CILs assist in increasing local housing options

For nearly three years Virginia's Network on Centers for Independent Living (CILs), including 16 locally driven Centers and four Satellite Centers, have successfully increased housing options for people with significant disabilities. The housing and transportation project was a major goal of the 2008 through 2010 State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), which is nearing completion. The local advocacy and collaborative efforts also interface with Virginia's Olmstead Plan.

During the period covering the current State Plan for Independent Living each local CIL has focused on increasing housing options and in some areas transportation options through a variety of ways. The objectives included the development and pursuit of strategies to address the local housing needs of people with disabilities with local housing officials and policymakers, improving housing policies of the local and State level to ensure successful transitions for



people currently living in institutional settings, enhancing the knowledge of HUD and local housing officials to increase housing availability, and to support the Money Follows the Person (MFP) protocol.

CILs have worked tirelessly to understand each Public Housing Authority's (PHA) planning process for public funds in order to advocate for people with disabilities on funding priorities. CIL staff and consumers have become regular attendees at PHA planning meetings where decisions about resources are made. In turn the knowledge of CIL staff has increased public official's awareness of not only the needs of people with disabilities, but equally important, their desire to live in their own communities.

Outcomes of this important project have included:

- Training of CIL staff across the State on each locality's Consolidated Plan process which drives how housing recourses are expended
- Ten Consolidated Plans (local level processes) have been reviewed and commented on
- Many local planning authorities have been made aware of the housing needs of people with disabilities
- Localities have applied for more Federal housing vouchers targeted specifically for people with disabilities

The most important outcome is that local CILs have established ongoing relationships with PHAs and other housing officials as exemplified by the following successes:

- Clinch Independent Living Services (CILS) in Grundy contacted the Social Worker at a local nursing home regarding transitioning people to the community. New Federal housing vouchers were discussed and the fact that they would be able to assist in transition. The nursing home stated that four people were ready to move as the vouchers became available.
- Based on comments made the Endependence Center Inc (ECI) in Norfolk the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority (NRHA) proposed in their Agency Plan to include universal design in their new housing developments, creating new accessible housing units, and that NRHA will be applying for targeted housing vouchers.
- The Wise County Housing and Redevelopment Authority is in process of rehabilitating a fairly large complex in the Town of Wise. The Junction Center for Independent Living (JCIL) in collaboration with is advocating that a substantial number, if not all of the refurbished units be rebuilt to be accessible to all persons. A new idea for them since the PHA is only used to making the HUD minimum number accessible.

This effort will continue with the new 2011-2013 State Plan for Independent Living so stay tuned for increased housing opportunities for people with disabilities.

--Submitted by Theresa Preda

VBPD Grant to VACIL's: More Professionals For Consumer-Directed Support

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL) has received a grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) to increase the number of professionals who provide consumer-directed support to people with developmental and other disabilities.

One of the objectives of the 18-month grant includes developing and implementing an outreach and awareness campaign to recruit individuals interested in providing these services. In conjunction with a steering committee, VACIL and centers for independent living (CILs) will also develop and conduct workshops about consumer-directed services and independent living philosophy for juniors and seniors in high school, college students and others who are interested in working as consumer-directed professionals.

A web-based registry of individuals interested in providing consumer-directed services will be developed and promoted. In addition, the grant will identify barriers to quality consumer-directed services and suggest resolutions to these barriers. For more information about this grant, contact Karen Michalski-Karney at 540-342-1231 (v/tty)

--Submitted by: Karen Michalski-Karney



Virginia Reuse Network (VRN): AT Success Recycled

Donations of Assistive Technology Allow Other Individuals To Benefit Through Low Cost Re-Use

L.J. is a 44 year old male who resides in Winchester, VA, and attends the NW Works' work center. L.J. was ambulatory until a few years ago when his cerebral palsy and arthritis made it more and more difficult for him to get safely around the work center.

Karen Farnsworth, program coordinator at NW Works, attended the Virginia Reuse Network's (VRN) presentation at the DRS-Winchester field office. The informational session was coordinated by members of Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS), the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (F.R.E.E.), and the manager of the DRS-Winchester field office. The VRN is supported by several funding sources, including the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI), the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), and the federal Assistive Technology Act. Although the VRN serves all qualifying Virginians with disabilities, the VRN is building its capacity to more effectively serve persons with spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, Veterans with disabilities and DRS vocational rehabilitation participants.

Several days after the VRN presentation, Ms. Farnsworth submitted an application for L.J. to the F.R.E.E.-Winchester Chapter. Ms. Farnsworth reported that within a week, L.J. was very proudly using his new wheelchair. The wheelchair provided by the VRN greatly improved L.J.'s ability to participate in the Center's social and work activities. L.J. had just three things to say about his new chair... "I love it."

If you would like to donate gently used wheel chairs, scooters, walkers, shower chairs, tub benches and bariatric equipment to the Virginia Reuse Network, please call (800) 435-8490.



--Submitted by Barclay Shepard, Virginia Assistive Technology System

Sweet! Daylight Donuts Offers New Employment Opportunities in Henrico



With the help of the **Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)** and stimulus money, *Career Support Systems* has created an innovative business partnership with a nationally established retail donut franchise to create numerous job opportunities for our customers with disabilities. The first **Daylight Donuts** shop in Virginia opened its doors on June 12, 2010 to big crowds and rave reviews from Richmond's donut loving community. It is one of 900 independently owned **Daylight Donuts** locations in the U.S.

This image-enhancing community business will provide stable, flexible, and fully integrated community employment for 6-7 workers with disabilities within the first year of operation. In addition, they anticipate performing up to twenty comprehensive Situational-Assessments (SA's) in order to provide customers with objective and detailed information and data to assist with the job placement process.

DRS Provides Funds for Brain Injury Services (BIS)

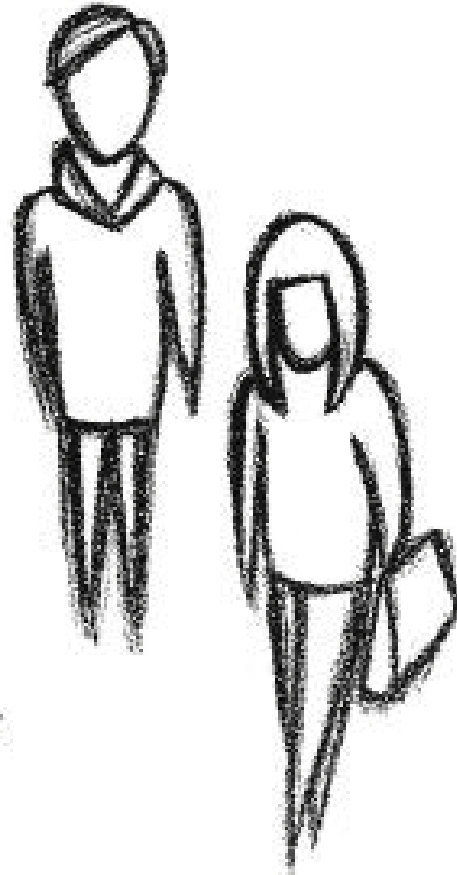
The Department of Rehabilitative Services has identified agency funds to be used by the state-funded Brain Injury Services (BIS) Programs to enhance working relationships and collaborative activities between the BIS Programs and DRS' Vocational Rehabilitation field offices. Specific VR related goals were written into each of the State Fiscal Year 2011 contracts. The funds will allow more effective, comprehensive services to DRS consumers with brain injury, while also offsetting the \$194,000 (or 5%) budget reduction that was taken from the state-funded programs for FY '11. The new contract goals and activities, which begin July 1, will benefit the VR service system, as well as individuals with brain injury and the service providers statewide. Monitoring of the state-funded BIS Programs contracts is done through the agency's Brain Injury Services Coordination (BISC) Unit in Central Office.

--submitted by Patti Goodall, Manager, BISC Unit



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Celebrating 20 Years: Americans with Disabilities Act

July 26 is the anniversary of the signing of the national ADA legislation

What were you doing twenty years ago? And what are you doing **NOW!** This year we have an opportunity to celebrate the incredible accomplishment that brought together people of all backgrounds in a truly bipartisan effort to bring the ADA into being. If you are unaware of how these coalitions and leaders came together you are missing some great and inspiring history. But this is not just about looking back. You are also called to action so for the next twenty years the rights of individuals with disabilities continue to be protected and advanced. Only you can make sure that independence, inclusion, dignity and opportunity are principles that continue to lead our efforts. Get involved! Continue the celebration!

Then: Climbing the Hill (Clip from April 1990 NewsNotes)



-- Photo by Karen Michalski

VRA members attend ADA Rally in Washington, D.C. on March 12, 1990.

(Left to right) President Elect Don Johnston, Sandra Howie, Theresa Preda, President Mary Kaye Padgett and Johanna Wallace.

The rally attracted 1,000 from all over the country to show support of the ADA.

Now: Climbing the Hill....Still (pics from the 2010 Legislative Summit)



Twenty years later: VRA leaders participate in the NRA Legislative Summit 2010 with others from around the country. Summit activities included visits to members of Congress to educate and support them on legislative issues that affect individuals with disabilities. This year's Summit coincided with the historic and contentious debate on health care affordability and availability. VRA and NRA members took the opportunity to educate their members of Congress on how critical affordable health care is for individuals with disabilities as

well as for those who serve them. Pictured left are Carol Thacker (VRA Board), Bonnie Hawley (NRA President), Eleanor Williams (NARL President), and Ned Campbell (VRA Board) meeting with Neeta Bidwai (center), Senator Warner's Chief Policy Advisor. Pictured right are Carol, Bonnie, Eleanor and Ned in front of the Capitol.





Centers for Independent Living Challenge You To Celebrate Integration and Inclusion!

On July 26, 1990, President George H. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities. This legislation established a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

While the ADA has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities by reducing barriers and changing perceptions, increasing participation in community life, the full promise of the ADA will only be reached if public entities remain committed in their efforts to fully implement the ADA.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the ADA, centers for independent living (CILs) will be requesting that localities celebrate and recognize the progress that has been made by reaffirming the principals of equality and inclusion. Our hope is that city and town councils and county boards of supervisors will issue a proclamation of recommitment to full implementation of the ADA.

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL) is a statewide association of Virginia's 16 centers for independent living. VACIL advocates for the integration and inclusion of people with disabilities into all aspects of society. The association also promotes the professional development, improvement, and expansion of community-based, consumer-controlled CILs, and promotes community education throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. VACIL's vision is that people with disabilities will have a community-based consumer-directed service delivery system.

To locate your nearest center for independent living go to www.vacil.org or to request an example of an ADA recommitment proclamation, contact Karen Michalski-Karney at kmichalski@brilc.org or 540-342-1231 (v/tty).

--Submitted by: Karen Michalski-Karney

Hermitage Enterprises Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the ADA!

Staff and participants at Hermitage Enterprises, a vocational and day services program for individuals with intellectual disabilities operated by the Henrico Area Mental Health & Developmental Services, decided that there was a great reason to celebrate on July 26th - The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) was turning 20 years old. For many of the individuals who attend Hermitage Enterprises, this landmark legislation opened up opportunities for them in their local communities that they had never experienced before! And for those who are younger and have always benefited from this legislation, everyone realized that it was time for them to know the history.

A committee made up of staff and individuals who attend the program was formed. They requested information and received a variety of videos and posters to help educate everyone. It was decided to have a picnic for everyone at Hermitage Enterprises and then open up an agency wide celebration with an ice cream social in the afternoon. A similar celebration will take place at Cypress Enterprises, a location in Charles City County that serves citizens from that county and New Kent County.

Activities are planned all month to help educate everyone about the significant changes that have been experienced since July 26, 1990. A self-advocate led the company meeting and introduced the video. Arts and Crafts activities are being conducted with a theme of what the ADA has meant to individuals. Members of the committee are in charge of planning the menu and helping staff with the shopping for the event. And games are planned with prizes to round out the fun.

Here are some the things that have been learned by watching the video, which included a speech by then President George H.W. Bush:

THE ADA:

1. Ensures that employers cannot discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities.
2. Ensures that all individuals are able to access restrooms.
3. Ensures that all individuals have access to transportation services.



4. Ensures that equivalent Telephone services are provided for people who are speech and hearing impaired.

President Bush ended his speech by stating that it is the Duty of all Americans to ensure every other American's Rights are guaranteed by removing physical and social barriers.

LinkedIn: Join with other members and share your stories about the ADA

Do you have a story to share? Go to the VRA member LinkedIn discussion board. This is a secure, professional networking site devoted to issues and interests of our members. VARL also has a site for leadership topics.

VRA LinkedIn Network: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=2114298>

VARL LinkedIn Network: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=2613703>

From CSAVR: Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program After 82 Years of Service-Know Your Facts

Overview: Corresponding with the anniversary of the ADA, summer is a great time to educate our communities and our legislative leaders about the work of public vocational rehabilitation services. Even in the fact of tough economic times and negative attitudes toward public service professionals and staff continue to work diligently on behalf of individuals with disabilities seeking opportunities for independence and employment. Everyone should know the facts about the public VR program. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation provides the following fact sheet for you:

The American economy needs workers, people with disabilities need work, and the Federal Treasury needs taxpayers.

49 million Americans have a disability.

Unemployment for Americans with disabilities is unacceptably high, with some estimates as high as 70%.

The U.S. government spends approximately \$200 billion a year on public assistance for persons with disabilities, but only \$2.4 billion in Federal money was invested in helping consumers with disabilities get jobs and become independent members of our society.

Public VR is in its 82nd year helping people with disabilities enter or return to the workplace.

- Public VR Program counselors provide the information and services necessary to assist people with disabilities in making informed choices about their employment and career goals.
- Overall, 1.2 million people with disabilities are served annually by the Public VR Program.
- Assisted 233,000 individuals with disabilities across America in entering the work force last year. These individuals will continue to earn wages and pay taxes in excess of the Federal/State investment in the Public VR Program.
- Individuals assisted last year earned \$3.4 billion in wages and paid \$977 million in Federal/State/Local and Social Security and Medicare taxes.
- Despite the Program's success, 37 state agencies restrict the provision of services to only the individuals with the most significant disabilities due to inadequate resources.
- Program funding for FY 2002 is \$2.45 billion in Federal funding and \$680 million in State matching monies, resulting in a \$3.1 billion National Program.
- It is estimated that an additional \$245 million in Federal funds in FY 2003, coupled with the State match of \$52 million, would serve another 120,000 people in all states and put another 23,000 people with disabilities to work.
- Each state's Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program pays for itself many times over in taxes paid and human potential realized.



VRA Events Calendar

Mark your calendars for these important dates for your state and national associations

- Jul 15 NRA/VRA Membership Drive begins, Contact: Andrew Stowe
- Jul 22 Training: VARL Chat, Brown Bag Lunch, DRS Office, Lynchburg, Contact Margaret Gillispie or Sharon Cheek
- Jul 26 **20th Anniversary of the ADA**
- Jul 19 Contest: Decal/Bumper sticker Contest begins, Contact any VRA Board member
- Aug 4 TeleSeminar: "A Conversation with the Commissioner of RSA, the Hon. Lynnae Rutledge"
- Aug 4 VRA/VRCEA Training: Ex-Offender Re-Entry Training, Hampton/Thomas Nelson, Contact Margaret Gillispie
- Aug 11 VARL Board Meeting: Workforce Center, Charlottesville, Contact Naomi Aitken
- Aug 11 Training: VARL Brown Bag Chat following Board meeting, Charlottesville, Contact Naomi Aitken
- Aug 13 Nominations: Deadline for VARL "Emerging Leader" submissions, Contact Doug James
- Sep (tba) Training: Autism Spectrum Disorders, Roanoke area, Contact Ron Simmons
- Sep 14 **VRA Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Tournament**, Hunting Hawk GC, Glen Allen, VA. Contact Howard Green
- Sep 15 Deadline: Submissions for Decal/Bumper Sticker Design Competition, Contact Liz Smith
- Sep 18 Nominations: Deadline for NARL awards
- Sep 26 Kit Callahan's Miracle Mile 10k/Walk and Fun Run, George Mason Univ., Contact Karen Brown
- Sep 30 NRA/VRA Membership Drive contest ends
- Oct 3-5 **VRA COLLABORATIONS CONFERENCE**, Norfolk Sheraton Waterfront
- Oct 8 Deadline: NewsNotes articles, via email: info@vra.org
- Oct 12-17 NRA: National Rehabilitation Association Conference, New Orleans
- Nov 3 VARL Training: "Soft Skills for Hard Results or the Magic in the Middle" sponsored by VARL and STEPS, Inc.
- Dec 8 VARL Board Meeting, Richmond, Contact: Naomi Aitken

Events and training programs also available on the VRA and NRA web sites

Deadline for NewsNotes articles is October 8. Send to info@vra.org

VRA Car Decal/Bumper Sticker Design Competition

Get your creative juices flowing by participating in the VRA Car Decal/Bumper Sticker design competition. What design do you think would best reflect the mission of VRA and bring heightened awareness to our Association? Please submit your design idea to Liz Smith (Lizred@verizon.net) **by September 15**. All submissions will be exhibited at the Collaborations Conference for a vote. The winner will be announced at the conference, receive a deserving recognition prize, and the design will be reproduced and distributed for VRA members to proudly display.



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