



# NewsNotes

A quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association  
2011 Second Quarter, April-June, No. 42

## Presidential Pondering by Jennifer McDonough

I hope everyone is enjoying the burst of color that we are experiencing with the hope of warmer weather this spring. It has been a difficult winter! The cold weather has been harsh and budgets around the state are strained. As a result, Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services has had to go into Order of Selection. This is stressful for everyone: Rehabilitation counselors, employment services organizations and our customers with disabilities. I know that the leadership team is working hard to develop plans that will lessen the stress for everyone. It is important in times like this that we stay focused and work as a team.

The VRA Board has been busy over the past few months. Our last meeting was April 8<sup>th</sup> and our next meeting will be on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. All of our meetings are open to the membership and we would love to have you attend! It is a great way to find out more about what is going on at a state level.

As you know, we hired a new legislative advocate this year. Becky Bowers-Lanier worked hard with our Legislative Committee to lobby for bills that would improve funding and services for individuals with disabilities. In addition, VRA was well represented at the 2011 Legislative Reception held on January 19<sup>th</sup>. We were able to talk with legislators and their aides about needed services for Virginians with disabilities and the mission of VRA. As a result of all of this work, Becky shared at the conclusion of the General Assembly that the budget showed modest restorations for LTESS, ESS, long-term rehab case management, brain injury services, and the CILs. Vocational rehab services provided by the DBVI were reduced for each year.

Mark your calendar for the 2011 Collaborations Conference! The conference will be held on October 2-4 at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront. There will be four tracks for concurrent sessions:



Transition, Employment Development, Emerging Practices in Service Delivery, Leadership and Management in Changing World, and Employment First. Please consider sharing your expertise by presenting at the conference. The call for papers deadline is May 1<sup>st</sup>!

Our Training Committee is doing a marvelous job getting trainings organized! Training on "Ethics, Emerging Technologies and Generational Diversity in the Workplace" was held April 14<sup>th</sup> and the next training will be held on July 13<sup>th</sup> in Roanoke. The topic will be "VR for Individuals with Autism."

Also mark your calendar for September 13<sup>th</sup> for the annual VRA Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Tournament. It will be held at Hunting Hawk Golf Course in Glen Allen, VA. Many thanks as always to Howard Green for doing such a fantastic job on putting together this event. Howard will need to support for this event! Please consider playing or sponsoring. A third area of support are the awards given, gift certificates, paintings, other donations are always wonderful to have for the players.

--Submitted by Jennifer McDonough, VRA President



## VRA News

### Call for VRA Nominations for Officers

As immediate past President of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association it is my responsibility to recruit nominations for officers and board members. Currently we are in need of the following officers and board positions:

President-Elect - will serve as President in 2013-2014

Secretary - one year term

3 Board member positions - 3 year terms 2012-2015

Please consider running for one or more of these leadership positions. Being a member of VRA provides excellent benefits to its members. The board and officers are the folks who make all the trainings and other activities happen. The election deadline will be announced later, but it's never too soon to get those nominations in!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [Elizabeth.Smith@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Smith@drs.virginia.gov). If you are interested in running for an office or nominating someone else, please let me know. For further information please visit the VRA website at [www.vra.org](http://www.vra.org).

Thanks so much for your consideration.

--Submitted by Liz Smith

### 2011 VRA Award Nominations

**HEAR YE! HEAR YE! HEAR YE!** The year is 2011 and it is never too early to nominate your colleagues, businesses, and successful customers for their award winning EXCELLENCE!

The Awards Committee will be accepting nominations from January 1, 2011 through August 1, 2011. Don't put it off, take the time right now and nominate someone you feel is deserving of an award. Please see the nomination form on page 17. Nominations can be submitted by email/mail to:

**Eleanor Williams**

c/o DRS – CBS Division

8004 Franklin Farms Drive

Richmond, Virginia 23229

Phone: 804-662-7075

Fax: 804-662-7663

Email: [Eleanor.williams@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:Eleanor.williams@drs.virginia.gov)

### 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. Excellence in the field of service to persons with disabilities is recognized through this award.

--Submitted by Eleanor Williams

### **Sponsors Needed for VRA Benjy Burnett Golf Tournament**

The Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Classic is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011** at Hunting Hawk Golf Club.

Please sign up to solicit one hole sponsor (\$125.00) which cover a 3x3 sign and recognition in the program. Your help is needed. So far we have three sponsors and one foursome signed up for the event. This could be a tough year for raising money and getting players, so anything you can do will be appreciated by VRA.

Contact Howard Green with questions at (804) 305-3999 or [jgreen1949@verizon.net](mailto:jgreen1949@verizon.net).

--Submitted by Howard Green



## 2011 Collaborations Program Committee Seeks Workshop Proposals

Please share your expertise!

The 2011 Collaborations Conference Program Committee seeks innovative and best practice workshop proposals in the following categories:

- Employment Development  
Sessions should focus on engaging employers and understanding the employment market in the 21st century.
- Transition from School to Work  
Sessions should focus on emerging practices including career development, post secondary vocational preparation and training and employment.
- Emerging Practices in Service Delivery  
Sessions should focus on innovation in program delivery, employment programs and overall effective practice in serving persons with disabilities.
- Leadership and Management in a Changing World  
Sessions should focus on leadership techniques to influence change, shift organizational practices and manage in the changing environment.

All tracks may include Ethics for rehabilitation professionals.

For online submission, visit: [http://vaaccses.org/collaborations\\_conference/call\\_for\\_papers/](http://vaaccses.org/collaborations_conference/call_for_papers/).

--Submitted by Karen Tefelski

## Date Change for Collaborations 2011

**Please save the NEW date! The 2011 Collaborations Conference has been scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Virginia Beach Wyndham Oceanfront Hotel.**

The Conference schedule has two General Sessions with Keynote speakers. At this time, the Conference Planners are looking for some great ideas for Keynote Speakers. If you have any thoughts/suggestions, please share them with either Liz Smith ([Elizabeth.Smith@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Smith@drs.virginia.gov)) or Ned Campbell ([Ned.Campbell@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:Ned.Campbell@drs.virginia.gov))



## VRA Member Testimonial

As a two-time president of VRA, a lifetime member and a two-time president of NRA, it is a privilege to share with you my thoughts on the importance of membership in VRA and NRA for anyone truly interested in the lives of people with disabilities. There are many good, sound organizations advocating on behalf of persons with disabilities, ARC, NOD, NAMU, advocacy groups for the blind, deaf, spinal cord injured, etc. But VRA/NRA is THE advocate on behalf of all persons with disabilities. We have a long and proud history in this arena, which included the long and challenging struggle to draft and get passed by the Congress, and signed by then president George H. W. Bush [41] the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA].



Only VRA/NRA members stand up for all persons with disabilities in both the public/governmental sector and the public for-profit and non-profit sectors. I had the privilege of being a part of the dozens of “Hill staffers” and advocates involved in drafting the ADA, and in working with our fellow advocacy groups to get the bill passed by the Congress. Then we had to ensure that President Bush would pass it over the objections of some in his own party. I also had the privilege of being on the White House grounds on that glorious July day when the President signed the ADA bill. And I was able to meet with then President Bush in the Oval Office at the White House to present him with NRA recognition of his support! What a day that was in my memory!

More importantly though was the fact that I was just one person, representing the thousands of NRA members AND the hundreds of VRA members who had worked so diligently to get the ADA passed. You, the VRA members represent the best of America. It is vital that you continue your good and laudable efforts and that you make every effort to get your colleagues to join our organization to do what must be done for our citizens who may not be as blessed in some ways as are we.

As former President George H.W. Bush said, on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA, “As long as we never forget that every life is a miracle and each person has something to contribute, we will finish the job.”

I am now retired and to some, over the hill; and so it is up to you, members of VRA/NRA, to “finish the job.” I know you can do it!

--Submitted by Bill Brownfield

## VRA Division and Committee News

### RCEA Launches Division Website

Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (RCEA) has recently launched a division website at [rehabcea.org](http://rehabcea.org). If you are a member of the division, check it out and be sure to sign up and log in. Use your membership name and the initial set up password, "password". If you have any questions, contact Mary Kaye Johnston through the VRA website at [www.vra.org](http://www.vra.org).

--Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston

### VRA Education Committee Update

The VRA workshop on “Ethics, Emerging Technologies and Generations in the Workforce,” held in Radford, VA on April 14, 2011 brought nineteen member and non-members together to discuss updates to the CRCC Code of Ethics, appropriate use of technologies such as social networking, emails, and text messaging, for example, and generational diversity in the workplace. The training activity offered 7 CRC credits in the focus area of ethics, popular with those who require such credits for continuing education purposes. Participants appreciated the timely and relevant discussions, as well as the opportunity to discuss problem-solving and decision-making models to address dilemmas dealt with on a daily basis.

The next VRA workshop, “Vocational Counseling for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism,” is scheduled for July 13, 2011 in the Roanoke DRS Office from 10:00 - 4:30. Additional details are available on the flyer on page 6.

--Submitted by Susan Gaillard



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*The Virginia Rehabilitation Association*

*presents*

**Vocational Counseling for Individuals with  
Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism**

This training will focus on examining your values in working with this population, neurological substrates of autism spectrum disorders, resources for further understanding, and developing effective vocational and employment strategies. This training will also include a panel of individuals on the spectrum and an ESO representative.

**Wednesday, July 13, 2011**

**10:00 – 4:30**

Registration to begin at 9:30

**Roanoke Valley Workforce Center  
1351 Hershberger Road NW, Suite 205  
Roanoke, VA 24015**

**Register early! Space will be limited!**

**CRC credit available**

To reserve your place and for disability accommodation needs, contact Susan Gaillard by June 15 by email at [Susan.Gaillard@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:Susan.Gaillard@drs.virginia.gov).

VRA members \$15; Non members \$25

*Checks made payable to VRA should be mailed to*

*Susan Gaillard @ 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA 23229*

(Lunch on your own)

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## VRCA Foundation News

One of the benefits of your membership in the Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA) is access to educational awards given by the VRA Foundation. Through an application process, the Foundation awards scholarships to VRA members and/or their family members. The Foundation is committed to the education, personal development and opportunity for its membership.

Please mark calendars! This year's applications for assistance will be due on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Please visit the site below to find out how you can apply for assistance with you or a family member's education:

<http://www.vra.org/ngw/foundation.shtml>

Please help us grow the investments of the Foundation so that we can do more to help in scholarship awards. Your contributions to the VRA Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, are tax deductible. Contributions are accepted at any time and can be for any amount. However the BIGGER THE BETTER!

For those that attended the 2010 Collaborations Conference in Norfolk, wonderful music by two great musicians and VRA members was heard. During the Collaborations Conference Exhibit Reception, Bill Burnside and Roxie Wilkerson played instrumental

music and all the money collected for their talents went to the VRA Foundation. We thank the folks who donated last year and asked Bill and Roxie back to play for us again this year at the 2011 Collaborations Conference because of its success. If you cannot make the conference, please consider sending a nice contribution to the VRA Foundation, P.O. Box 71864, Henrico, VA 23255.

In addition, we want to thank some of our friends who donated last year. These individuals and VRA friends love this profession and give so others can enjoy a profession in rehabilitation. We want to thank everyone but especially Al Dickinson, Keith Wright, Becky Bowers-Lanier, our friends at RSVP and other Foundation Board Members.

Lastly, we want to welcome a new VRA Foundation Board member. Dale (Dee Dee) Batten has been elected to serve and we are happy to have her and her wonderful talents. Dee Dee has been a long time member and serves VRA in many capacities. She also is the Regional Manager for the DRS Central Region

--Submitted by Howard Green

## VRCEA Saluted Rehabilitation Counselor Day 2011

RCEA, the new Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Division of NRA, proudly recognized and celebrated Rehabilitation Counselors on March 22nd!

"Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated, thus, everyone's task is unique as his specific opportunity."

The above quote by the Austrian psychiatrist and author Viktor Frankl applies to our mission to serve our clients. It also rings true for our own lives and choices, most especially the choice to work as a rehabilitation counselor. On a daily basis, we rehabilitation counselors are privileged to guide people with mental, physical, developmental and emotional disabilities through the rehabilitation process to successful employment.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, there are over 141,000 vocational rehabilitation counselors now working in the United States. Our profession is slated to grow exponentially in the coming years in response to the challenges of an aging population and the return of injured veterans from combat duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now more than ever we need to build, educate and strengthen our profession. The Virginia Rehabilitation Counselor and



Educators Association would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all of those who have chosen to work as rehabilitation counselors.

Join us for more information on the division page of the VRA website at [www.vra.org](http://www.vra.org). and at the national website at [www.rehabcea.org](http://www.rehabcea.org).

--Submitted by Emily West

## VRCEA Training Announcement—Register Now!

VRCEA is sponsoring a training, **“Working with Combat Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury in the Counseling Setting.”**

**When:** April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 from 9:00AM until 3:30PM

**Where:** Dept. of Rehabilitative Services  
Conference Room A  
8004 Franklin Farms Drive  
Richmond, VA 23229

The session will include presentations by Wounded Warrior Region 1 Coordinator, Camilla Schwoebel, M.S., LPC; a Wounded Warrior Peer Counselor Panel; Mary Beth Williams, PhD, LCSW; and Dr. Donald Nidiffer.

CRC Credits will be available. Snacks and beverages will be served.

For more information contact Emily West at [Emily.West@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:Emily.West@drs.virginia.gov) or (804) 863-1621.

## Virginia Association of Rehabilitation Leadership (VARL)

Happy Spring! The VARL Board would like to share with you some exciting trainings that are coming your way this year.

“Ethics and Social Networking” will be presented on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011 by Terrie Glass. Please see the flyer on page 9 for additional information. Additionally, this summer VARL will also sponsor

“Leaving a Leadership Legacy” presented by Shirley Lyons. This training will be held in August with the date and location to be determined soon. Please look for upcoming information regarding this exciting event.

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, NISH will be presenting their highly acclaimed training based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. This is being co-sponsored by STEPS. Please mark your calendars and look for upcoming information on how to register.

The VARL Board invites all of you to actively participate as leaders by joining VARL, becoming an active member, taking on the opportunity to develop and coordinate exciting programs such as those listed above. We need your energy and expertise by signing on to serve on our Education, Membership or Awards committees. You can make the difference!

I will end with a quote from Emerson: “That which we persist in doing becomes easier-not that the nature of the task has changed, but our ability to do has increased.”

--Submitted by Teri Bertsch





*Save the date! The following training is sponsored by VARL:*

## ***Ethics and Social Networking***

Presenter **Terrie Glass**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2011**

**9:30 – 3:00 p.m.**

Check in and refreshments at 9:00AM

Lunch on your own

CRC Ethics Credits available

**Dept. of Rehabilitative Services Central Office**

8004 Franklin Farms Drive

Richmond, VA 23229

*\$15 for members and \$25 for non members*

*Seating is limited – No refunds after May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

*Disability related accommodations requests must be received by Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.*

*Make check payable to **VARL** and mail to the attention of Susan Green, Dept. of Rehabilitative Services, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA 23229.*

### **For More Information**

Contact Susan Green

804-305-4009 or [susan.green@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:susan.green@drs.virginia.gov) or [jgreen1949@verizon.net](mailto:jgreen1949@verizon.net)

**Terrie Glass** is the President of Leadership Solutions. She had a 20 year career in the Community Services Board system and has been a trainer and consultant for the past 7+ years. Terrie's clients include those in behavioral health, rehabilitation services, healthcare, the financial industry and many others. She has done training for the Dept. of Rehabilitative Services, the Va. Rehabilitation Association, as well as VARL in the past. She is energetic and passionate about the work of helping others—clients, staff, and ourselves—to reach the potential that lies within all of us. Terrie has a MSW, teaches at VCU, and has been a keynote speaker and presenter at the Collaborations Conference. She is excellent!

Social networking is revolutionizing our world. Connections are now possible and easily made across the boundaries of geography and time. Meeting people, learning more about others, and making professional connections are efficient and effective through social networking tools. But what ethical dilemmas are Facebook, Linked In, and Twitter presenting for those of us who are bound to keep some boundaries intact (i.e. professional boundaries)? In this workshop we will examine case studies that illustrate the possible new areas for ethical concern for rehabilitation counselors and other human service professionals. Please plan to join us for this time of reflection and dialogue.



## National Network

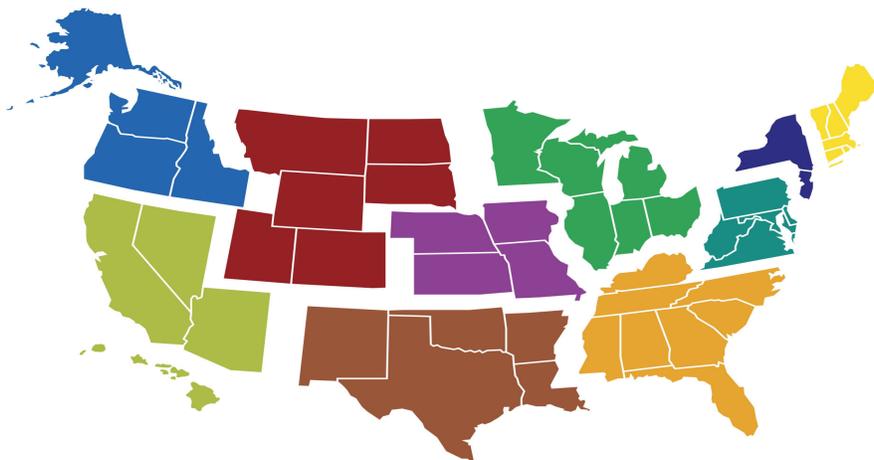
*Information, Guidance and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act by DBTAC*

**The ADA National Network provides information, guidance and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), tailored to meet the needs of business, government and individuals at local, regional and national levels.**

The ADA National Network consists of ten Regional ADA National Network Centers located throughout the United States that provides personalized, local assistance to ensure that the ADA is implemented wherever possible. We are not an enforcement or regulatory agency, but a helpful resource supporting the ADA's mission to "make it possible for everyone with a disability to live a life of freedom and equality."

### **Contact Your Regional ADA Center:**

- Confidential ADA Call Center
- Customized and Local Training
- Webinars and Podcasts
- ADA Resources and Documents
- Regional and State Conferences
- Web-based Training & Resources



**1-800-949-4232 (V/TTY)**

**[www.adata.org](http://www.adata.org)**



## Other News & Notes

### RSA Commissioner Meets with State Rehabilitation Council

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner Lynnae Rutledge met with the members of the State Rehabilitation Council at their regularly scheduled meeting. Commissioner Rutledge shared with the SRC her goals for RSA which include:

- 1) increasing the visibility of the public VR program and RSA;
- 2) developing a more effective and respectful relationship between RSA and the State VR agencies; and
- 3) establishing better collaboration between the many Federal agencies that serve individuals with disabilities.

Commissioner Rutledge also discussed the future priorities for RSA Monitoring of State VR agencies that will include 1) organizational placement; 2) fiscal issues; and 3) transition services. She stated that RSA remains committed to ensuring that VR consumers are successfully employed in competitive jobs in integrated settings.

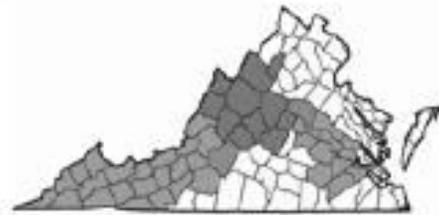
She talked about Executive Order 13548 that was signed by President Obama in July, 2010 to increase the employment of persons with disabilities by the Federal Government. She explained that given the current economic situation, the only way some Federal agencies would be able to hire anyone would be through Schedule A appointments. She encouraged VR agencies to not wait until eligibility for VR services is determined before writing a Schedule A appointment letter for persons seeking employment with the Federal Government. Writing Schedule A letters is a service that DRS counselors can provide for consumers that do not meet the order of selection criteria.

More information about Federal employment of persons with disabilities can be found at the following website:  
<http://www.opm.gov/disability/PeopleWithDisabilities.asp>

--Article appeared in the April edition of the DRS On PARS Newsletter

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## Update from Woodrow Wilson Rehab Center

### Ms. Wheelchair Virginia 2011-2012

On Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, WWRC hosted the 2011-2012 Ms. Wheelchair Pageant. Ms. Emily McGrail of Radford was crowned Ms. Wheelchair of Virginia. The program theme “Celebrate Life” showcased the accomplishments of six remarkable women who have overcome challenges and obstacles to achieve great success. Emily is a former elementary school teacher who is currently seeking to return to school to obtain her Master’s Degree. Emily’s platform for advocacy is “Educating Our Future on How There is Ability in Disability.” Her Motto of Inspiration is “There is ability in disability.” Emily said “As Ms. Wheelchair Virginia, I will be a voice for those with disabilities, and I hope to be an inspiration to all Virginians.”



Emily McGrail of Radford was crowned Ms. Wheelchair Virginia for 2011.



Art Program students created artwork for the DRS Central Office lobby. From left to right: Mitch Gore, Alexis McDowell, Bernita Bradshaw, Jacob Taylor and Aidelle DeLeon, Art Program Coordinator.

### Artwork for the Central Office Lobby

Aidelle DeLeon, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Art Program Coordinator, received a request from the Department of Rehabilitative Services Central Office in Richmond to produce artwork for their newly renovated lobby. Aidelle got right to work and enlisted the help of four very talented students. Together they produced four incredible pieces of art (see below and on page 13). It was just what the Central Office was looking for. Aidelle is now recruiting students to work on some art work for the business office at Woodrow Wilson.

--Submitted by Jackie Davis





## General Assembly Updates: Advocating for LTESS Funds

In January, representatives from across the Commonwealth gathered in Richmond for the annual General Assembly. On the legislative agenda this year were several bills and proposals that have a direct and negative impact on individuals with disabilities and employment services for these populations.

As the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the United States as a whole, recover from a devastating recession, Governor McDonnell has included a proposal to cut LTESS and ESS dollars by \$200,000 in this fiscal year and \$298,000 in the next. These dollars are used to serve individuals with disabilities so that they may maintain stability in the workplace.

Already, since 2008, LTESS and EES dollars have been reduced by \$2,032,421 which can be translated to an elimination of services to over 2,000 individuals. With the proposed cuts, an additional 498 individuals will be affected.

LTESS dollars are of vital importance to helping maintain employment for individuals with disabilities. To put the above figures into perspective, with every one LTESS dollar spent on services, \$3.50 is earned. This earned

income is then put back into the local economy.

Also in January, representative from The Choice Group, vaACCSES, and Virginia APSE gathered at the General Assembly to urge legislators to support individuals with disabilities. Some of the issues raised were restoring a 5% cut in the waiver rates for fiscal year 2012. These cuts directly affect service providers and their ability to offer supports, with a further impact of limiting access of services to families in need.

Additionally, legislators are urged to restore the 66% cut from the budget for Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) Waivers. These are just some of the issues being considered by the General Assembly. For more information, please consult vaACCSES ([www.vaaccses.org](http://www.vaaccses.org)) or Virginia APSE (<http://www.va-apse.org>). You can also contact your representatives directly to voice your concerns and offer support for individuals with disabilities.

--Article written by Richard Lucyshyn, Choices & Challenges, Winter 2011 edition



## Partners in Policymaking Deadline Approaching!

Do you know a person with a developmental disability? Invest your time and become a Partner.

There's only a short time left to apply for the 2011-2012 Partners in Policymaking (PIP) program applications must be received by **April 29, 2011**.

Only 30 individuals will be selected to participate in the series of eight weekend PIP sessions. Sponsored by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), all expenses are covered for participants' training, lodging, meals, and travel.

Featuring national experts through eight weekend sessions in 2011-2012, Partners learn about self-advocacy, supported employment, building inclusive communities, assistive technology, communication, independent living, and more!

Participants must reside in Virginia, have a developmental disability, or are the parents of young children with developmental disabilities. Sessions are held in Richmond on Friday afternoon to late Saturday afternoon. For a complete schedule or to download the application, visit <http://bit.ly/gcmQX7>. You can also learn more at [www.vaboard.org](http://www.vaboard.org).

Hurry—this program fills up quickly, so don't delay!

--Submitted by Barbara Dodd

## LinkedIN: Join with other members of VRA and VARL!

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>

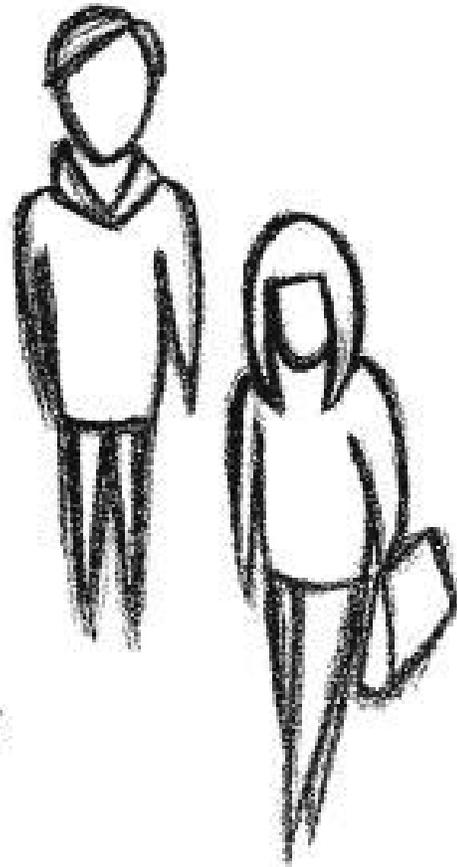
## Please visit VRA.org

Please be sure to visit the VRA website at [www.vra.org](http://www.vra.org) for important information about NRA and VRA news, updates on trainings and events, access to NewsNotes online, and photos of past VRA events!



## THE CHOICE GROUP

- Independent Living Skills
- Life Skills Training
- Job Seeking Skills Training
- Vocational Assessments
- Situational Assessments
- Job Development
- Job Placement and Training
- Long Term Follow Along
- Job Coach Training Services
- Support Employment
- Placement
- Educational Services
- Individual and Group Counseling
- Therapeutic Consultation
- Career Counseling



**We Help People With Disabilities  
Live Up To Their Abilities**

### THE CHOICE GROUP

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## Getting Work for Ex-Offenders

*The following is part of an article taken from the March 2011 Job Training & Placement Report, Training Toolkit, www.impactpublications.com.*

In today's economy, finding a job is quite a challenge for the nearly 700,000 ex-offenders who leave state and federal prisons each year. And yet, without a job and support network to meet their basic needs, many ex-offenders fall back into old habits that lead them back to jail.

It's true that some employers may not want to hire someone with a criminal record. In fact, some laws specify that certain occupations (such as banking, insurance, and childcare) are either off limits or carry restrictions for individuals with various types of criminal convictions. However, *many others* are willing to give ex-offenders a second chance.

But what should ex-offenders do to land a good job that will keep them out of jail? The following are some points of consideration that job developers can share with ex-offender clients:

**The ex-offender job seeker is responsible for his/her own employment fate.** While many people (such as a job developer) will assist with your job search, you are responsible for taking the actions necessary to get a job. Don't rationalize your current situation, lack of progress, or frustrations, by blaming other people or believing that you are a victim. After all, you are where you are because of choices you made. Don't expect others to find, or give, you a job. You have to *earn* a job by communicating your qualifications to prospective employers and gaining their trust.

**The ex-offender job seeker must develop and maintain a positive attitude and remain motivated throughout the job search.** Finding a job can be a frustrating experience filled with disappointments. But it can also be an exciting time to learn about yourself and land a job you really love. While you will encounter disappointments, frustrations, and rejections along the way, accept these negatives as part of the process in finding a job. Constantly check your attitude to make sure you're positive and pointed in the right direction.

**The ex-offender job seeker must be honest with**

**himself/ herself – and others.** Take a good look in the mirror. Who and what do you see? If you have a history of deception and excuses, it's time to come clean and face who you really are. Once you discover who you really are, there's no need to deceive yourself and others.

**The ex-offender job seeker must disclose a criminal record at the appropriate time and place.** When and to whom should you disclose your record? In today's high-tech society, in which employers can easily conduct background checks, there's no place for ex-offenders to hide. The best time and place to disclose your record is usually *during* a job interview and *before* accepting a job offer. Many employers will ask about red flags in your background during a job interview, or they will conduct a background check just before or immediately after offering you a job.

You should never disclose your criminal background in a letter or on a résumé. This is an important issue that needs to be handled in a face-to-face meeting with a prospective employer.

**The ex-offender job seeker must seek the help of other people who can assist at various stages of the job search.** Your support network will be an important asset. This includes family, friends, acquaintances, and organizations designed to help ex-offenders. Make sure you develop a support network that can give you good advice, referrals, and encouragement.

**SUMMARY.** Ex-offenders didn't get themselves into the situations they're in overnight, and they aren't likely to get out of them overnight either. They need to be patient, honest, organized, energetic, and they need to believe in themselves. But it is possible to meet employers who will want to hire them because of their talents and new attitudes.

-- Excerpt taken from the Spring 2011 issue of  
DRScovey



## VIRGINIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Name of Award \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Address \_\_\_\_\_

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### 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.

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Name of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Nominations and supporting documents must be received by:

Eleanor Williams, @ DRS-CBS Division, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23229 or  
[eleanor.williams@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:eleanor.williams@drs.virginia.gov)

**DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS AUGUST 1, 2011**

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## VRA Events Calendar

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

- April 28 VRCEA Training, "Working with Combat Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury in the Counseling Setting" (DRS Central Office)
- May 1 2011 Collaborations Conference Call for Papers deadline
- June 8 VARL Training, Ethics and Social Networking (DRS Central Office)
- June 15 VRA Foundation scholarship application deadline
- July 9 Deadline for submitting articles for NewsNotes
- July 13 VRA Training, "Vocational Counselor for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism" (Roanoke Valley Workforce Center, Roanoke, VA)
- July 22 VRA Board Meeting
- Aug 1 VRA Awards Nominations due
- Sept 13 Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Classic
- Oct 2-4 Collaborations Conference, September 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel
- Oct 8 Deadline for submitting articles for NewsNotes

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

**Deadline for NewsNotes articles is July 9th, 2011. Send to [kristina.blough@drs.virginia.gov](mailto:kristina.blough@drs.virginia.gov)**

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**Next Deadline for NewsNotes: July 9<sup>th</sup>.**  
**Please Submit NewsNotes articles to**  
**Kristina Blough by Email at:**  
[\*\*newsnotes@vra.org\*\*](mailto:newsnotes@vra.org)

**Or send by US Mail to:**  
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