So many things have happened and are in the works since our last NewNotes edition. I hope you all will permit me to ponder a bit on each.

To begin with, on May 7, 2013 fourteen VRA Members/Board Members participated in the VRA Retreat held at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. The agenda for the day focused on reviewing the VRA Constitution, Bylaws, Duties and Responsibilities Manual for Officers and Board Members, and Policy and Procedural Guide. Using small groups to review and provide feedback, specific suggestions for updates and revisions to those documents were gathered.

One other item for follow up from the Retreat is the concept of VRA Gives Back. During the April Board meeting we discussed the idea of a VRA effort to directly give service back in an attempt to directly impact the lives of people with disabilities. At the retreat we had a discussion of a proposed overarching effort throughout the state, allowing us all to participate in such an activity without requiring travel throughout the state. Using a unified approach we can all participate without all having to be in the same place at the same time. Suggestions made included participation in multiple 5K run/walk/participate events (maybe under the theme of TEAM VRA) with the funds raised and then donated to an entity geared toward enhancing the lives of Virginians with disabilities. A suggested entity was the FREE Foundation (Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment). It was suggested that ‘VRA Gives Back’ activities should be guided via an ad-hoc committee and such a committee has been put together. Contacts for this group are co-chairs Margie Milner margie.millner@dars.virginia.gov and Toni Smith antoinette.smith@dars.virginia.gov.

Switching gears, I know I reflected a bit on this in my past presidential pondering, but it bears repeating. I had no idea how much work goes into the work of VRA and how many people are needed to make that work happen. Having been a board member, I had heard quarterly reports from committees on various topics, but the level of commitment, professionalism, creativity, and energy devoted to VRA activities has quite literally surprised me with each additional VRA group that I have encountered. From Collaborations, to the Education committee, to Legislative Issues, to the Foundation, the Golf Tournament, Mid-Atlantic Rehabilitation Association, the Membership committee, and on and on. A heartfelt ‘Thank You!’ goes out to all those involved in VRA activities at all levels.

One of those much-appreciated labor-intensive activities is the 2013 VRA Benjy Burnett Golf Tournament. The date is Tuesday, September 10th at Hunting Hawk Golf course. According to Golf Committee Chair, Howard Green, “WE NEED YOUR HELP! As of July 15th we have 7 hole-sponsors and 12 committed teams (some paid). We need more! The more hole-sponsors we have the more money VRA
makes and your help with this fund raiser would certainly be appreciated. So, can we count on you?"
Contact Howard if you can help with finding new hole sponsors and prizes such as golf balls, golf clubs, or Golf anything ! GreenH@nod.org

There are two big upcoming events I want to draw to your attention, and I will cover them in date order. First, the National Rehabilitation Association Annual Conference (the theme this year is Bridge to Employment: Breaking the Barriers for Persons with Disabilities) will be held at the Brooklyn Bridge Marriott in New York City, NY from August 17 – August 20th. VRA will have several members in attendance and we will look forward to proudly representing our State Chapter through networking, presenting, and gathering ideas from other chapters to enhance our operations in Virginia. If you have not yet registered and would like to attend, you can do so at the NRA website www.nationalrehab.org

Next, and closer to home is the 2013 Virginia Collaborations Conference. The Collaborations Conference theme this year is Success: Dream to Reality and once again the conference will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel from September 29th through October 1st. More information (as well as registration) can be found at http://www.vaaccses.org/collaborations_conference/information/ I hope to see many VRA members at the conference this year.

I’m happy to report to you all on the above great events and activities, but I feel I need to close this pondering with an issue of potential concern. As I write this pondering there are a number of proposed changes to Title V of the Workforce Investment Act that the Senate HELP Committee is planning on filing on July 24th, with a markup session proposed on July 31st. I bring this to your attention as some of the changes could potentially have a big impact on Independent Living services and on Vocational Rehabilitation service delivery as well. You can find more information on this topic and related NRA position statements at the following link:


I look forward to working with you again over the next quarter and to updating you on the above-mentioned activities in our next NewsNotes edition.

--Submitted by Rob Froehlich

VRA News
Call for 2013 VRA Award Nominations!

It is that time again to recognize your colleagues and businesses for award winning EXCELLENCE! The Virginia Rehabilitation Association is seeking nominations for each of its association awards. The award categories and descriptions of each can be found on the VRA website. Nominations will be accepted through August 30, 2013 and can be submitted by email/fax/mail to:

Eleanor Williams
c/o DARS/CBS Division
8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23229
Phone: 804-662-7075
Fax: 804-662-7663
Email: Eleanor.Williams@dars.virginia.gov

The 2013 VRA Awards celebration will be held in conjunction with the Collaborations Conference again this year in Virginia Beach. Be sure to take time NOW to acknowledge outstanding individuals and businesses!

--Submitted by Eleanor Williams
VRA Officer and Board Member Call for Nominations

The VRA is seeking candidates for Officers and Board Members for calendar year 2014. Ballots will be sent to members August 31st, elections will be conducted in September, and results will be announced at the Annual Membership Meeting to be held in conjunction with the Collaborations Conference, September 30. We will be electing the following positions:

- President-Elect (One year term)
- Secretary (One year term)
- 3@ Board Members At Large (Three year term)

Deadline for Nominations: **August 28, 2013**.

**Ballot Information**

Please provide the following information:

1. Position considered: (President-Elect, Secretary, or Board Member)
2. Short bio paragraph/background, including service and experience with VRA/NRA, and any other information for members to consider.

Send nominations and inquiries to:

Ned Campbell  
e-mail: ned.campbell@dars.virginia.gov  
snail-mail: 8004 Franklin Farms Dr., Richmond, VA 23229  
phone: (804) 662-7616

**Position Descriptions:**

**President-Elect** (one year term)

The President-Elect serves as a VRA representative to the Collaborations Conference Steering Committee. This officer aids and assists the President, Officers, and Board members in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as well as other duties as assigned by the President. In the absence of the President, the President-Elect will preside at board meetings and assume other responsibilities of that office. Initiates and dates any invoice for expenditures related to his/her responsibilities, prior to sending it to the Treasurer for payment. Assists in the development of goals and activities of the chapter and is a resource person to the President in committee appointments. Serves as the primary VRA liaison for the following committees: Communications and Membership (Awards, Website, NewsNotes) and Historian. Presents the President with an appropriate award in appreciation for his/her service to the association. This activity should be coordinated with the Awards Chairperson. Prepares and submits Collaborations Conference Committee reports at VRA board meetings.

**Secretary** (one year term)

The Secretary records minutes of all Board meetings and annual meetings; transcribes the minutes, confers with the President for content and accuracy, and forwards a copy to all Board members, Officers, Committee Chairperson(s) and Division Presidents, Mid-Atlantic and/or NRA representatives, and others as requested. The Secretary is responsible for having adequate copies of the previous year's annual meeting minutes and distributing to the membership present at the current annual meeting. The Secretary is to distribute a roster of current officers, Board members, Committee Chairperson(s), and Divisional Presidents to the Officers, Board members, Committee Chairperson(s) and Division Presidents, Mid-Atlantic and/or NRA representatives, and others as requested. The Secretary purchases stationery and supplies for the Association and distributes as requested by Board members, Officers and Committee Chairperson(s). The Secretary reviews, maintains and updates the historical records of the Association in collaboration with the Historian. Historical files should be converted to .pdf format and saved to the VRA external drive as well as the backup external drive. The Secretary expedites matters which require clerical attention. Initials and dates any invoices for
position expenditures prior to submitting it to the Treasurer. Ensures that changes to the VRA policy and procedures manual is updated annually as directed by the President.

**Board Member At Large** (three year term)

Members are expected to participate in all Board meetings. If an absence is necessary, the President should be notified in writing prior to the meeting and provided an explanation for the absence. Two (2) absences during a calendar year may result in removal from the Board. Board Members are expected to be proactive in Association Activities, Meetings, and Business, and to participate, lead, assist, advocate and promote. Every Board Member should actively serve on at least one VRA Committee. Senior Class Board Members (third year) should assume responsibility as a Committee Chair to add knowledge and strength to the committee. Encourage membership and support in all the Divisions. Assure the financial solvency of the Association. Become knowledgeable about Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised edition to assure that the business of the Association is conducted democratically and orderly.

---Submitted by Ned Campbell

**Golf Tournament Update**

The 2013 VRA Benjy Burnett Golf Tournament is almost here. The date is Tuesday, September 10th at Hunting Hawk Golf course. We will start at 7:45am, with registration and tee off at 8:30am. WE NEED YOUR HELP! We currently have 7 hole sponsors and 12 committed teams. We need more! The more hole sponsors we have, the more money VRA makes. Your help with this fund raiser would certainly be appreciated. So, can we count on you? Call Howard if you can help with finding new hole sponsors and prizes such as golf balls, golf clubs, or golf anything! 804-379-1286.

---Submitted by Howard Green

**2013 Collaborations Conference**

Register now!

2013 Collaborations Conference  
September 29 - October 1, 2013  
Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront

For more information, please visit:  
http://www.vaaccses.org/collaborations_conference/information/

Exhibit space, advertising and other promotional opportunities are available through August 30th. Contact Marilyn Morrison at 571-339-1305 or mmorrison@vaaccses.org for more information.
Rehabilitation Counselor’s Day

All rehabilitation professionals are welcome as the Virginia Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association, a Division of VRA, and the Virginia Rehabilitation Counselors Association are celebrating Rehabilitation Counselors Day!

Friday, September 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2013
9:00am-3:00pm
DARS Maywill Office
2001 Maywill Street, Richmond, VA 23230

A full day of activity is being planned with training topics that include ethics and self-care. More details will be forthcoming. ALL Rehabilitation Counselors are welcome at no cost! This is a day of recognition, appreciation and celebration for the profession and work you do each day! Lunch will be provided and CRCs are available.

Registration should go to Karen Akers (karen.akers@dars.virginia.gov; 804-588-3350). The registration deadline is August 21\textsuperscript{st}.

VRA Division and Committee News

Legislative Liaison & Committee Report

Ah, summer time, and the living is easy. Unless, of course, you are the Governor or Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia; one of the statewide candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, or Attorney General; or one of the candidates running for 53 competitive (at least two individuals running) seats in the House of Delegates (47 are running unopposed). And then there is the looming prospect of the Governor’s budget bill to be introduced in December. Let’s briefly explore these interesting happenings. And spoiler alert: unless you’re a political junkie, skip to the last two paragraphs.

So, as far as the Governor’s and Attorney General’s current challenges, you’ve probably been keeping abreast of the issues surrounding undisclosed (or disclosed after being outed by the media) gifts to the Governor and Attorney General by Jonnie Williams of Star Scientific. Nothing more to be said to that except that the issues make for great theatre in Richmond among political wonks. If you’re on Twitter and are not following Jeff Schapiro (Richmond Times-Dispatch) or Larry Sabato (UVA), you might want to add them to your Twitter feeds.

Now to the statewide races. Virginia is one of two states that elect governors this year (the other state being New Jersey). And we are the only state that has a one-term governor. Needless to say, those two facts also make Virginia fair game for the political watchers across the nation. And if you check the Virginia Public Access Project’s website (www.vpap.org), you’ll be able to monitor outside money coming into the gubernatorial campaigns.

Please pay special attention to what the statewide candidates are saying about our communities of interest. Here are the “official” websites that may shed light on their perspectives:

- http://terrymcauliffe.com/on-the-issues/healthcare/
- http://www.cuccinelli.com/issues/
- http://www.jacksonforlg.com/issues/
- http://www.northamforlg.com/issues
- http://www.markherring.org/issues/
- http://www.markobenshain.com/on-the-issues/

The House of Delegate races are just as interesting and in the long term, may have more dramatic impact on our community than even the statewide races. The
2014 House of Delegates will have the same number of committees as ever before, but the leadership and membership of the committees will be strikingly different. Delegates and committee chairmen Lacey Putney (retirement, House Appropriations), Bob Purkey (retirement, Finance), Beverly Sherwood (beat in primary, Agriculture, Chesapeake & Natural Resources), Joe May (beat in primary, Transportation), and Bob Tata (retirement, Education) will no longer be leading their respective committees. The loss of Lacey Putney (Bedford) is of particular interest to our concerns. In addition, the following delegates will retire: Jim Scott (a champion for brain injury and on House Appropriations), John Cox, Annie B Crockett-Stark, Sal Iaquinto, Joe Johnson, and Don Merricks.

Before the primary losses of Delegates Sherwood and May, there was much speculation about shuffling of leadership for House Appropriations. Their losses (both delegates sit on Appropriations and Sherwood was a budget conferee) leave the door wide open for control of that committee. In terms of seniority, Delegates Riley Ingram, Chris Jones, and Steve Landes are in prime position to assume leadership. Jones and Landes each have served for a number of years as budget conferees. So stay tuned!

The Senate will remain the same since senators stand for election every four years. However, Senator Harry Blevins is retiring, and Delegate John Cosgrove is running for his seat. The Governor has set August 6th as the special election to replace Senator Blevins. If Cosgrove wins, his seat will be up for contention (as it is now with four candidates vying for his seat).

So, what does this all mean for us VRA members? Pay special attention to the gubernatorial positions on health care and job creation (although in this instance, health care is probably more discriminating on the positions of the candidates). Then if you happen to live in a House of Delegates district with competition, check the voting record of the incumbent and what the opponent’s priorities are. Make informed decisions. Meet with the candidates (they will have lots of public appearances), listen to what they have to say. Give to campaigns if you are so inclined. And don’t forget to vote. Election Day is Tuesday, November 5th.

Finally, a few words about the 2014 budget. This will be Governor McDonnell’s second biennial budget, and he will get to craft it but not implement it (crazy system we have on this issue in Virginia). That said, revenues have been running par with the budget, although the final report on FY 12-13 is not in yet. We probably should expect a modest budget bill delivered to the money committees in December. Stay tuned on this.

--Submitted by Becky Bowers-Lanier

Membership Committee Update

As of July 25th, 2013 there were 157 VRA members. This number includes 18 Life Members; 6 Student Members; 1 Affiliate; 3 New Professional; and several individuals designated via the PRS organizational membership. The remaining members have Professional Memberships, as do the PRS staff.

The NRA March Report indicates Virginia had 156 members. This included one new member, Matthew Fields, and 3 lapsed members, Angela Edmonds, Chuck Kelley, and Lori Schultz.

The NewsNotes Editor, Kristina Derderian, is currently soliciting additional advertisers for the NewsNotes. All NewsNotes are posted on the website and remain there indefinitely so advertisers get a lot of exposure. Members access the NewsNotes via the website with the exception of 17 individuals this publication.

The website (www.vra.org) maintenance continues to keep the news current. Mike Cody, an associate of Mary Kaye Johnston, is the current webmaster. He is satisfied with the business arrangement, has been responsive to requests, and is doing the work at reasonable cost.

After the VRA retreat we explored the possibility of having a volunteer help out with some of the work, but have decided not to pursue it further at this time. Please let Mary Kaye know of any information to be posted or corrections needed.

Welcome, New Members:
Jan Hattingh, Leesburg, VA
Lisa Hart, Richmond, VA

--Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston
VRA Education Committee Update

The Emotional Intelligence workshop, held in Wytheville on June 7, 2013 had a good turnout with 16 in attendance. After expenses are paid, VRA made approximately $244.00 at this workshop and we had the opportunity to reach out to non-members in the Southwest Region to encourage them to consider membership.

VRA offered a two-part workshop in Fairfax on Monday, July 29, 2013. The morning session featured Jose Campos, Director from Job Avenue with the Arlington CSB, sharing tips and strategies for working with individuals with serious mental illness towards competitive employment. The afternoon session featured Shari Matry from the GWU TACE sharing an overview of research and resources available to assist in job placement for persons with criminal backgrounds. The response to this workshop was very good, with 32 people in attendance, and several more on a wait list. The audience was primarily Community Rehabilitation Provider staff, including Job Coaches, Employment Specialists and Program Managers. A few local (Northern VA) DARS VR Counselors were also in attendance. Workshop evaluations were mixed; more time was needed for sharing information and ideas and for questions/answers with the presenters. Clearly, a more in-depth discussion, with real-life application for VR professionals, is needed, particularly in reference to working with persons with criminal backgrounds.

It was great to see so many CRP staff in attendance at a VRA workshop! Attendees traveled to Fairfax from as far as Petersburg, Henrico, Hanover, Harrisonburg and Charlottesville, to attend. This topic is one of great need and interest in the field. Consideration is being given to offering a workshop on this topic again in another region of the state to allow others a similar opportunity to hear about strategies and resources and to share ideas.

Two more training topics of interest have been suggested:
1) Avoiding Burnout
2) Back Injuries and Work

The Education Committee is interested in offering the next workshop in the Eastern Region with the topic still to be determined.

--Submitted by Susan Gaillard

VRA Foundation Update

It is again an honor to bring greetings and an update from the VRA Foundation.

The VRA Foundation Board met on July 15, 2013. We had one application to review. Ms. Sarah Branch, a member of VRA, applied for the scholarship this year towards her educational pursuits as a VR counselor. The Board voted on her application and approved a $1,000 scholarship.
At this meeting we also discussed our investment which is doing well. The interest from our investment covered the scholarship this year. We are planning our annual fund raising drive and will be meeting in November to coordinate this effort. We will be doing our annual Capital Campaign by letter. Last year, our Campaign raised over $1,000 in donations. Additionally, we receive a contribution from VRA (5% of the proceeds from the Collaborations Conference). Discussion was also held regarding the archiving of records and research will be done on how VRA archives their records and information. Other alternatives can be explored as well. Discussion was held on partnering with VRA or VARL for a table at Collaborations.

This Chairman would like to thank her fellow VRA Foundation Board Members, Dale (“Dee Dee”) Batton, Howard Green, Mary Kaye Johnston, Margaret Gillispie, Bill Burnside and Mark Fletcher, and Member Emeritus, Al Dickerson for their dedication to the VRA Foundation and their support.

--Submitted by Bonnie Hawley

VARL Division Update

VARL is the division for LEADERS – and it is our view that LEADERS are everywhere. It is not a title; it is a set of behaviors. There is much research about LEADERSHIP and LEADERS. And yet from my research, much of what you read is similar.

Here are some common perceptions that should be embraced:

- Leadership can be learned... it is not just for a few “born” into it
- Leadership isn’t about position – you can be a leader without the job title
- Leadership is about influencing – it is about relationships
- Leadership Development is about self-development

These are pearls of wisdom gleaned from the book The Leadership Challenge by James Kouzes and Barry Posner written in 2002. After ten plus years, these tenets still hold true. Leadership starts by looking at one’s self and finding the leader in us.

VARL’s mission is to develop the LEADER in all of us. We invite you to join us on our journey. Take one hour to search the internet and find a leadership survey...they are all over the place. Take a look at what you do and see where you are a leader...how can you expand your influence...where else can you be a leader? What skills do you need to improve?

We invite you to join VARL and be a part of our journey. Each of our meetings includes a leadership chat – just to hone our skills and keep us current on the latest information. After all, we are ALL Emerging Leaders – it is a journey where the destination is different each day.

We hope to see you at the Collaborations Conference where VARL will co-sponsor a session on leading change.

--Submitted by Shirley Lyons
VRCEA Call for Nominations

The Virginia Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (VRCEA) is calling for nominations for Officers and Board Members. The following positions are open for vote during the FALL election. Please consider making a nomination of a colleague or nominate yourself. The term of office begins January 1st and varies in duration dependent upon the position held.

Nominations are accepted for President Elect (and will ascend to the President and Past President the following two years), Secretary (one year term), 2 Board Members (3 year terms). Contact Mary Kaye Johnston at marykaye.johnston@gmail.com for additional information and to make nominations. Deadline is August 29th.

Additionally, there are some vacancies currently, positions that can be appointed by the President with approval of the Board. PLEASE let us know of your interest. VRCEA needs YOUR active participation and support.

--Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston

NRA News
NRA Updates on Senate Bill 1356

On July 31st, the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee reported favorably, on a roll call vote of 18 yeas to 3 nays, with one abstention, the bill, S. 1356, as amended.

This bill, which would reauthorize the programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Workforce Investment Act, enjoys bipartisan support, but would, among other things, remove the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) from the U.S. Department of Education, where it rightfully resides, to the U.S. Department of Labor, would remove Titles II and VII, NIDRR and IL programs, respectively, from RSA in the U.S. Department of Education to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (not to the U.S. Department of Labor) and would dilute the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) credentials for rehabilitation counselors.

The National Rehabilitation Association and many other organizations are opposed to this bill. Three Senators voted against the bill. They are: Senator Richard Burr (R.N.C.); Senator Pat Roberts (R.KS.) and Senator Tim Scott (R.S.C.). We suspect, but we do not know for sure, that some of these Senators may have had concerns with the process for producing this bill which was on a very fast track with little time to respond. Senator Rand Paul (R.KY.) abstained from voting.

Although some Senators advised they would offer amendments on the Senate Floor, the only Senator to offer an amendment during the markup was Senator Bobby Casey (D.PA.) which called for much greater oversight, accountability and transparency on the part of the U.S. Department of Labor in administering Job Corps. Senator Casey cited the poor job that the Department of Labor had done in the past on this program which resulted in a $60 million shortfall this past May. Senator Casey went on to note that these are taxpayer dollars which must be restored.

Again, here is another example of the U.S. Department of Labor not doing its job in serving the American public or protecting taxpayer dollars. And, yet, some on the Senate HELP Committee and some in the disability community, seem content to entrust one of the most successful education, job training and job placement programs for Americans with disabilities -- the VR program -- to the U.S. Department of Labor, which, to this day, is not in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and considers individuals with disabilities being served by referring them to VR and then checking them off as being served.

Senator Casey also filed but did not offer an amendment on the Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success Act of 2013 (SECTORS Act). This amendment would amend the Workforce
Investment Act to require the Secretary of Labor to award renewable three-year competitive industry or sector partnership grants to eligible entities to develop strategies that:

(1) encourage growth and competitiveness through work with employers within a target industry cluster
(2) help workers move toward economic self-sufficiency and for other purposes.

This amendment will either be offered by Senator Casey or Senator Sherrod Brown (D.OH.) when this bill reaches the Senate Floor. We anticipate that S. 1356, as amended, to reach the Floor in late September or early October. Please remember the September/October timeline is when the Congress begins in earnest discussions on the Appropriations bills, sequestration, the debt ceiling and Continuing Resolutions to keep the Federal government funded. So, Floor time is more challenging to come by at this time.

Assuming S. 1356, as amended, is passed on the Senate Floor (and the amendment process continues on the Senate Floor during discussion on the bill), a Conference begins with the House WIA/VR bill, the Skills Act. Conferences between the House and Senate on bills are conducted behind closed doors. If a Conference Report (a bill) emerges from the Conference, it must be identical (right down to the punctuation), cannot be amended on the Floor of the House or the Senate, and takes a simple majority to pass.

The Congress will return from its August recess sometime after Labor Day. We will continue our advocacy throughout the summer and will keep you advised through Washington Wire alerts.

Thank you for your continued advocacy. --Submitted by Patricia Leahy

Other News & Notes

State Agency Brain Injury Report Out Day a Success!

DARS and the Virginia Brain Injury Council hosted 115 participants at the third biennial Brain Injury Report Out Day on Friday, July 26, 2013 at the Westin Hotel, from, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Brain Injury Report Out Day allowed selected state agencies to report on how they are serving and meeting the needs of Virginians with acquired brain injury, including new or continuing initiatives. This event provided a forum for strengthening the network of providers of brain injury service providers in Virginia.

This year, the focus was on the risk and impact of sports concussion on young athletes and how the Commonwealth is responding through the Department of Education’s role in implementing recent legislation and education in this area. The afternoon State Agency Panel presentation provided an opportunity for state agencies to also address issues such as crisis intervention, neurobehavioral needs, veterans’ issues, and Medicaid funding.

The morning keynote speaker was Christopher Nowinski, a Harvard football player and professional wrestler who sustained a series of career-ending concussions. Chris is the co-founder of the Sports Legacy Institute (SLI) (www.sportslegacy.org) which he established in 2007 in Boston, Massachusetts with Dr. Robert Cantu in reaction to the alarming results of medical research using post-mortem analysis of brain tissue of former contact sports athletes. The research revealed that repeated brain injuries, both concussive and sub-concussive blows, could lead to a neurodegenerative disease known as Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy or CTE. In 2008, the SLI partnered with Boston University School of Medicine to form the Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy (BU CSTE).
Additional presenters included luncheon keynote speaker Dr. Jeffrey Barth, Director of the Neurocognitive Science Center at UVA School of Medicine, and a panel presentation with Vanessa Wigand and Debbie Pfeiffer, Ed.D. of the Virginia Department of Education and Mitchell Callis with Virginia Athletic Trainers Association (VATA). The Brain Injury Association of Virginia also featured an update at the meeting.

State agencies that presented updates on their work with brain injury included: Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department for Medical Assistance Services, Virginia Department for Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Virginia Department of Veterans Services, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice and the Community Integration Advisory Commission.

The Brain Injury Report Out Day is supported by Grant Number 6 H21MC06763-05-02 awarded to the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services.

--Submitted by Kristie Chamberlain

DARS co-hosts Executive Order 55 Kick-Off Summit

On June 27, 2013, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), in collaboration with Virginia Community College System and Virginia Workforce Council, held the Executive Order 55 Kick-off Summit. Approximately 100 representatives of state agencies from across the Commonwealth came together to hear representatives from other state agencies and private sector business share business practices that promote hiring people with disabilities. Commissioner Rothrock, DARS, acted as the emcee for the Summit.

The day focused on the intent of Governor McDonnell’s EO 55, including why and how agencies such as DARS, DBVI and DVS can partner with their agencies to increase best practices related to hiring people with disabilities and veterans. Speakers included; Elizabeth Creamer, Office of the Governor; Commissioner Hopkins, DBVI; Commissioner Galanti, DVS; Joe Barto, Virginia Values Veterans; Jim Mueller, Universal Design Consultant and Todd “Parney” Parnell, Richmond Flying Squirrels. The afternoon session, hosted by the Virginia Workforce Council was attended by approximately 30 local business leaders. Facilitated by Gregory Brittingham with VCU Performance Management Group, the attendees developed strategies to improve hiring for Virginians with disabilities in the private sector. This first event was very successful and paves the way for regional discussions to be held over the next several months.

--Submitted by Donna Bonessi

disAbility Resource Center Celebrates 20 years of Independent Living

The disAbility Resource Center of the Rappahannock is 20 years old and celebrating! To mark its 20th anniversary, the dRC is sponsoring a Masquerade Gala on September 14th at the Fredericksburg Country Club. The Board, staff, consumers, and community members will celebrate the two decades of Independent Living services provided by the dRC to the Fredericksburg region.
The dRC, as a Center for Independent Living, offers the four main CIL services of advocacy, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and information and referral. The dRC also provides supports and services through our youth and deaf and hard of hearing departments, provides case management and facilitation for those who utilize Medicaid Waivers, transitions people from nursing homes back to the community through the Money Follows the Person program, assists with Social Security filings, provides work incentives benefits counseling, and operates a durable medical equipment donation and “gifting” program. Trainings and workshops for the community, which the dRC developed and sponsored, include topics ranging from Medicare coverage for durable medical equipment to SSI/SSDI to scuba diving for people with disabilities.

Many newly disabled people, particularly veterans, have a difficult time adjusting to living life differently. The dRC, like all 16 CILs in Virginia and 400 around the country, is better prepared to help people as they learn and process their independent living skills because the dRC has the individual experience of disability; the majority of the staff and Board are people with disabilities themselves or have family members with disabilities. Whether it’s a youth getting ready to transition out of high school who attends our Youth Leadership Team, a Veteran who comes in for free assistive listening devices, a 40 year old who suffered a spinal cord injury and needs long term care or an elderly person who wants to leave the nursing home and live with their family, the dRC can help.

Last year the dRC assisted 735 individuals in setting independent living goals, provided 44 workshops, participated in 63 outreach events, gave 1,614 pieces of adaptive medical equipment to 1,190 people and participated in 55 community coalitions, commissions, or committees on a variety of topics important to community and independent living. If those numbers are expanded over 20 years, it shows the impressive impact the dRC has made for people with disabilities and their families in the Fredericksburg region.

The dRC staff is proud of their work and happy that they have the opportunity to do it every day. It is hoped that the September 14 dRC Masquerade Gala will raise awareness of people with disabilities in our community and will help to raise funds so that dRC independent living services continue in the Fredericksburg region.

Anyone wishing to help sponsor the gala or who needs a ticket is encouraged to contact the dRC at 540-373-2559. Come enjoy great food and music. It will be fun and it’s for a good cause!

--Submitted by Kim Lett

**VACILs Awarded Empowerment to Prevent Institutionalization Grant**

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living certainly hope there is a doctor and other health care professionals in the Commonwealth who will learn from VACIL’s new outreach grant, Empowerment to Prevent Institutionalization. The grant, awarded by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, is aimed at preventing the institutionalization of people with developmental and other disabilities who experience medical interventions, behavioral stresses or changes in family dynamics that can result in risk of placement in an institutional setting.

EPI will utilize four-person training teams consisting of a CIL staff member, a person with a disability or family member, a Medicaid Waiver Mentor, and a healthcare or human service professional. Teams will develop materials and provide outreach to medical professionals and assess the project’s success. A steering committee will guide the development of materials and outreach information by identifying needs and making recommendations to address the needs.

The two-year grant begins in October and will be overseen by Project Coordinator Kim Lett from the disAbility Resource Center and Project Consultants Kelly Hickock from Resources for Independent Living and Teresa Volk from Blue Ridge Independent Living Center. Work groups from ten different areas of Virginia will also contribute to improving healthcare processes and policies that prevent the institutionalization of people with developmental and other disabilities.

--Submitted by Kim Lett
VACIL Awarded Grant for Increased Statewide Accessibility

VACIL’s proposed “ABLE Project (Advocates Building Livable Environments)” was recently awarded grant funding by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

The ABLE Project is primarily targeted towards building professionals—especially building inspectors, architects, and builders. The project includes several components, including the development of a training manual, an online video training module, and an extensive outreach training program for all building inspection offices in the Commonwealth.

Once the training manual and training manuals are developed VACIL advocates will work directly with the 130 building inspections offices in Virginia to assist in the training of building inspections officials.

The grant begins on October 1, 2013 and will conclude on September 30, 2014.

--Submitted by Karen Michalski

VCU Rehab Counseling Professor Elected to NCRE Board

Dr. Carolyn Hawley, VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling, was recently elected as the Regional Representative for the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) Board of Directors. In this capacity, she will serve three years and will represent Rehabilitation Educators in Region 3 to include Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Washington D.C. and Virginia. Congratulations Carolyn!

--Submitted by Robin Metcalf

Meet a VRA Board Member: Jean Steveson

Jean Steveson is currently the Eastern Regional Director for the Division of Rehabilitative Services since November 1, 2009. She has worked for the agency since 1987 when she began her career as a Rehabilitation Counselor serving youth and adults with disabilities towards gainful employment and greater independence. She has also worked as a Transition Coordinator for the agency in providing training opportunities for Rehabilitation and Education professionals as well as co-chair of the Virginia Transition Forum. Jean has spent her career being devoted to the betterment of the lives of persons with disabilities.

Originally from Lynchburg, Virginia, Jean received an AA degree from Ferrum College, a BSW degree from James Madison University and a MSW degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. She is also a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor. She is now a resident of Newport News, VA and lives with her husband Lee who is the owner of the Hilton Tavern. She has a 25 year old daughter Emily, who resides and works in Newport News. Jean has been a member of VRA for more than two decades and has served as Board Member for two different terms. While a board member Jean has served on the Education and Ways and Means committees. In her free time Jean enjoys traveling, spending time with her daughter and has an appreciation of art.

--Submitted by Jean Steveson
Meet a VRA Board Member: Kim Shepard

Kim Shepard currently works for the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and serves as the Human Services Manager of the Hampton and Williamsburg field offices. Ms. Shepard has twenty-four years of experience in the field of human services with the primary focus on vocational rehabilitation. Ms. Shepard’s work experiences include outpatient mental health services, supported employment, and vocational rehabilitation counseling. Ms. Shepard has been an active member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA) since 2007. She has served on both the Education and Social Committees and is currently serving as President-Elect.

Ms. Shepard holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Work from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Virginia Commonwealth University. Kim is a 2013 recipient of the State Rehabilitation Council Roy J. Ward Employee Leadership Recognition Award. Kim enjoys advocating for Virginians with disabilities, shoes and long walks on the beach!

--Submitted by Kim Shepard

VARL Leadership Book Review

Some people get to right blogs and others “consult.” Many of us have taken courses and most of us have attended seminars. There is a whole industry built on leadership with books, articles, journals and web pages. But what is important? How do you know what to spend your money on?

I thought it would be neat for members to offer to write reviews on leadership books that they learned something from – books that others might get something from.

So – I’ll start! This is an older book – published in 2004-2005, but it is one I often go to when looking for a quote or to refresh myself. The book is “First In, Last Out: Leadership Lessons from the New York Fire
"Department” by John Salka. It is published by Portfolio (of the Penguin Group) and the ISBN is 1-59184-068-6. This is a series of stories about the New York Fire Department, including some from that day in September 2001. But it is more than just stories. It is a look at how we lead and how we delegate. It is a book about the importance of trust and the ways that we follow.

One chapter deals with self-awareness and the importance for a leader to understand their own bias and shortcomings in order to understand how to find the abilities in the people they lead. There are chapters on building trust and on connecting with your followers. My favorite chapter is on decision making. He tells a story about following the smoke in a grocery store where there was plenty of smoke but no apparent fire. Through perseverance, it was discovered that there was a false ceiling and while the fire was not visible from above or from below, following the smoke eventually led them to discover the cause of the fire and they were able to save the building. The captain followed the smoke by enlisting the help of his various crews and not letting the difference perspectives deter him from understanding the essential fact...where there is smoke, there is usually fire. His four steps of decision making are to “Observe – Orient – Decide – and Act”. It is well worth reading!

At VARL, we are always trying to educate ourselves and increase our knowledge. We welcome dialogue about leadership. Join us in our LinkedIn group and hey, have you read anything interesting lately?

--Submitted by Shirley Lyons
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

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(804) 278-9151 • Toll-free 877-374-5312
E-mail: info@thechoicegroup.com • www.thechoicegroup.com
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

Join the VRA Facebook Group

Network with other members of VRA by joining the VRA Facebook group! Members can discuss VRA issues and upcoming events on this social networking website:

https://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/groups/258928867454860

Please visit VRA.org

Please be sure to visit the VRA website at 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!

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

VRA is seeking copies of old VRA NewsNotes and would like your help! If you happen to have a copy of NewsNotes the year 2000, 4th quarter; year 1999 3rd quarter; year 1998 2nd quarter; or anything earlier than that, please contact Mary Kaye Johnston at info@vra.org or call 804-965-0514. We would love to have your copy, scan your copy, or copy your copy to include in the VRA Archives. Your help is very much appreciated!

VRA Events Calendar

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 18-20th</td>
<td>NRA 2013 Annual Training Conference, New York, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 20th</td>
<td>VARL Board Meeting, Charlottesville, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 6th</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Counselor Day (9AM-3PM, DARS Maywill Office)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 10th</td>
<td>2013 Annual Benjy Burnett Golf Tournament, Hunting Hawk Golf Course, Richmond, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 14th</td>
<td>disAbility Resource Center Masquerade Gala (Fredericksburg Country Club)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 29th - 20th</td>
<td>2013 Collaborations Conference, Virginia Beach, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 1st</td>
<td>VRA Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 1st</td>
<td>NewsNotes article submission deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 10th</td>
<td>VARL Board Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 13th</td>
<td>VRA Board Meeting</td>
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Events and training programs also available on the VRA and NRA web sites.

**Deadline for next issue’s NewsNotes articles is November 1st, 2013.**

Send to newsnotes@vra.org
Virginia Rehabilitation Association

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VARL President  Shirley Lyons
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Virginia Rehabilitation Association

Next Deadline for NewsNotes: Nov 1st.
Please Submit NewsNotes articles to Kristina Derderian by Email at:
newsnotes@vra.org

Or send by US Mail to:
VRA NewsNotes c/o Mary Kaye Johnston
4612 Kingsrow Drive
Glen Allen, VA 23060

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