In starting off my first Presidential pondering for 2014, I would like to thank everyone for electing me and giving me this great opportunity to be the VRA President this year. For those of you who do not know me, the field of rehabilitation counseling has been my passion for the past 24 years! I have had the opportunity to work in community mental health as well as state vocational rehabilitation. I am currently a proud employee of DARS and have been since 1992 when I made Virginia my new home. I am now serving as the Human Services Manager of the Hampton/Williamsburg field offices and have held this position for the past 4 years. Prior to that, I was afforded other great opportunities within the agency such as lead counselor, transition counselor, SEPD counselor and LTMI counselor. I now call Poquoson my home, along with my husband Barclay and my son, Gaston (10). I feel very lucky to have such a wonderful family that supports me in all my endeavors.

So what are my hopes and goals for this year to make VRA a stronger organization? I hope to grow our membership significantly throughout the year. I feel that we are only as strong as our membership, so I plan to make an impact in this area. I would like to offer many more networking and outreach activities to inspire others in the field to join our mission. We would like to continue the legacy of our past president’s VRA “Elevator Speech” concept. The concept of the elevator speech, as you may know, is about a 30 second sound bit in which you describe why you are a VRA member and why they should be. This is a good tool for all members to have in their VRA toolbox as we should all be providing outreach and recruitment efforts across the state.

Lastly, I’d like to take this opportunity to encourage anyone who has always thought about becoming more active with VRA in some capacity to contact me at kimberly.shepard@dars.virginia.gov or 757-865-3110. You may also chose to reach out to any of my fellow VRA board Members. I know our VRA membership is comprised of individuals with many talents and we would love to benefit and become stronger as a result.

I wish you all a very happy 2014! I am so looking forward to serving as your President this year. Please always feel free to contact me with any suggestions that you may have to make our organization stronger!

--Submitted by Kim Shepard
VRA News

2014 Golf Tournament Update

NEWS FLASH!!!!

The 2014 VRA Benjy Burnett Golf Tournament is moving to a new location and day.

The tournament will be held on MONDAY, September 8th, at the STONEHENGE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB. It is a beautiful course!

Mark your calendars now! Same price $75.00 per golfer!

All profits are used to support the advocacy of people with disabilities. Contact Howard Green at 804-379-1286 or 804-305-3999 to reserve your spot.


--Submitted by Howard Green

Welcome New VRA Members!

Welcome to the following new members of VRA:

Farrah Taylor – Fairfax
Rebecca Farthing – Chesterfield
Jaime Head - Quantico

--Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston

VRA Division and Committee News

Legislative Advocate Report

At the time of this writing, the General Assembly has been in session 2 ½ weeks, and it’s been a crazy, happenin’ place. For starters, and this is probably old news for you political junkies, Governor McAuliffe was inaugurated on Saturday, January 11th, along with Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam and Attorney General Mark Herring, marking the first three-way Democrat statewide sweep in several decades. As a result of the loss of two D senators in the Senate, the Republicans have continued to be in the majority, but all that may change on Monday, January 27th (I am writing this on Sunday, the 26th). Jennifer Wexton (D) won the special election to fill the seat vacated by AG Herring, and the official recount for the Lewis/Coleman run-off for LG Northam’s seat is tomorrow. If the Dems hold on to the Senate seat in Norfolk, they will claim the majority in the Senate, with a 20-20 tie that can be broken by Northam for most votes except judgeships and the budget. We political junkies on Capitol Hill are holding our breaths.
Two other incidents continue to create somewhat of a pall around the Capitol, and they are the indictment of former Governor McDonnell and his wife on January 24th on 14 counts, including conspiracy and wire fraud. The second is the continuing sadness around the Sen. Creigh Deeds situation. Regarding the latter, we’ve seen a number of bills filed to amend the Code related to emergency custody and temporary detention orders, psychiatric hospital bed registries, and so forth. The Governor’s mental health task force held a second meeting on January 24th, and various workgroups have been established to recommend changes to the mental health system.

Bills of Interest
Our bill list highlights in green the bills that have successfully been reported out of committee, are being considered on the floor of the originating house, or assigned to committees in the opposite house after successful passage out of the originating house. The bills highlighted in red have been stricken from the docket. You can access the bill language by clicking on the bill number.

VRA submitted one bill HB 1076 (Del. Wilt, Harrisonburg) to update the Code of Virginia with reference to Long-Term Rehabilitation Case Management. It is non-controversial, and we do not expect any problems with it.

The budget process to date
You may remember that Governor McDonnell introduced his budget to the “money” committees in December. On Friday of the first week of the General Assembly session, all budget amendments from advocacy interests through General Assembly members were due, and these amendments were released Wednesday of the first week of the session. Hearings on the amendments begin this coming week in House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees. Below is the short list of those that are of interest to VRA members. I may have missed some, and by all means, email me (Bowerslanier@gmail.com) if you don’t find one on the list.

The “money” committees will begin the sausage-making process associated with their versions of the Governor’s budget soon, and their final committee versions are due to be introduced on Sunday, February 16th.

The list below contains links to the specific budget amendments as well as the patrons of each amendment (with approximate geographic district). As members of the public and not associated with any government agency (if you are, you may advocate but only on your own time and with your own personal email address), you may contact the patron of the amendment and indicate your support. More importantly, you should consider contacting the members of the HHR subcommittees for House Appropriations and Senate Finance. The members are listed below with links to their contact information. If one of them is your delegate and/or state senator, please contact them as a constituent.

House Appropriations HHR subcommittee members:
- Ingram (Chairman),
- Landes,
- O’Bannon,
- Peace,
- Garrett,
- Brink,
- Dance

Senate Finance HHR subcommittee members:
- Emmett W. Hanger, Jr., Chair
- Janet D. Howell
- John C. Watkins
- Henry L. Marsh, III
- Frank W. Wagner
- Jill Holtzman Vogel
- Charles W. Carrico
DMAS
301 #18h (Del. Riley Ingram, Hopewell) and 301 #11s (Sen. Frank Wagner, Virginia Beach): amend the 1915 (c) home-and-community-based Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and Individual and Family Developmental Disabilities (DD) Support Waivers to develop a consumer-direction option for in-home residential and supported employment services.

301 #19h (Del. Marcus Simon, Fairfax, Falls Church) and 301 #13s (Sen. Janet Howell, Reston/Fairfax): provide five days of sick leave each year for consumer-directed home- and community-based Medicaid providers who work an average of 20 or more hours per week.

301 #20h (Del. Bob Brink, Arlington) and 301 #15s (Howell): increase reimbursements for consumer-directed personal care by 10 percent for services provided through Medicaid home- and community-based waivers.

DBHDS
307 #5h (Del.Rosalyn Dance, Petersburg, Dinwiddie), 307 #3s (Sen. Emmett Hanger, Staunton), and 307 #5s (Hanger): Increase supported employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disability.

DARS
325 #1h (Del. Kirk Cox, Colonial Heights) and 315 #1s (Marsh) would expand community based brain injury core services in unserved and underserved areas.

325 #2h (Del. John O’Bannor, Henrico), 325 #12s (Sen. Philip Puckett, Bland, Montgomery, Norton, Radford), 326 #8s (Sen. Bill Carrico, Bristol, Lee, Scott, Smyth) and 326 #7s (Sen. Todd Puller, Prince Wm) would meet the needs of individuals with physical and sensory disabilities seeking assistance in accessing assistive technology who are in need of additional assistance not covered by other programs or third party payors.

325 #3h (Del. Patrick Hope, Arlington), 325 #4h (Del. Jennifer McClellan, Richmond), 325 #5h (Del. David Toscano, Charlottesville), 325 #4s (Howell), 325 #6s (Sen. Colgan, Manassas and Prince Wm), and 325 #13s (Sen. Jill Vogel, Winchester) would increase funding for long-term employment support services (LTESS) and job maintenance programs for individuals with disabilities.

325 #6h (Del. Tony Wilt, Harrisonburg), 325 #7h (Del. Ron Villanueva, Virginia Beach), 325 #8h (Brink), 325 #9h (Brink), 325 #10h (Ingram), 325 #2s (Colgan), 325#5s (Colgan), 325 #7s (Sen. Steve Newman, Bedford, Campbell, Lynchburg, Craig), 325 #9s (Marsh), and 325 #11s (Hanger) would seek to restore and increase funding for centers for independent living (CILs).

325 #11h (Del. Richard Anderson, Prince Wm) and 325 #3s (Hanger), 325 #10s (Marsh) would increase funding for the vocational rehabilitation program for 850 individuals who are on the waiting list for services.

325 #12h (Del. Brenda Fogge, Yorktown) would increase funding for the long-term employment support services programs that only support those individuals who are working in supported, competitive employment and receiving at least minimum wage.

325 #8s (Puller) would funding for the long-term rehabilitation case management program.

--Submitted by Becky Bowers-Lanier
It has been an interesting year on the Legislative front for all VR and Work related programs and Federal Legislative events in general. While over 6,491 bills were introduced in the 113th Congress during calendar year 2013, only 171 Bills were passed in the House and only 39 in the Senate. Congress was largely consumed with the debt ceiling crisis which resulted in a 16 day partial shutdown of the Federal Government. In tandem with the Debt ceiling crisis was the 12th hour attempt to derail the Affordable Healthcare Act…and then the resulting 13th hour crisis with the website associated with the Healthcare Market. Congress has had little time to focus on concerns that affect the employment of people with disabilities. However, with the current focus on the extension of unemployment benefits, the unemployment rate of people with disabilities may come to the front.

SB 1356, The Workforce Investment Act of 2013, has not gone to the floor for a vote as of the writing of this article. On behalf of VRA and in conjunction with the Legislative Committee, 2013 VRA President Rob Froehlich wrote a letter in August, to Senators Warner and Kaine, regarding SB 1356 (Workforce Investment Reauthorization Act which includes portions of the Vocational Rehabilitation program) and stating our opposition to this Bill as it is currently worded. This Bill includes language that, among many things, authorizes the relocation of the VR program from the Dept of Education (the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, OSERS, Rehabilitation Services Administration, RSA) to the Dept of Labor and the Independent Living program (currently also housed in RSA) to Health and Human Services. The National Council of Independent Living (NCIL) strongly supports this move for the IL program. Additionally, there are caveats in the Bill that support services to Native Americans and addresses specific requests that community has made…as such, The Community Association for Native American Rehabilitation programs (CANAR) has voiced support of the Bill for these reasons, however, is not in complete agreement with all aspects of this legislation. Both of these groups have strong advocates at a national level. The National Council on Disability (NCD) also supports this Bill. With the interests of so many groups being represented, it is very difficult to predict how and when this will conclude.

Of more immediate concern to rehabilitation counselors are cuts to the CSPD program (Title IV), which would reduce the amount of funding that is granted to the State VR programs to provide continuing education to VR Counselors. This education is what sets VR apart from public employment programs within the One Stop Centers. While we certainly advocate for infrastructure funding for the One Stops, our partners in employment, we also recognize that the skills and knowledge that we have as VR counselors is a valuable resource at a grassroots level to those Centers. Funding to continue that expertise is critical to our partners as well as our customers who depend upon our knowledge to assist them in their pursuit of gainful employment.

VR Counselors are encouraged to become aware of these issues and contact their representatives as they see appropriate to advocate for funding that supports the services of programs that assist their customers and appropriate legislation that will assist all Americans in their pursuit of education, training and careers.

In conclusion and on a positive note, Janet LaBreck, was confirmed as the Commissioner of RSA in August of 2013. Prior to her Presidential appointment as RSA Commissioner, Mrs. LeBreck was the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), a position she held since 2007. With her appointment comes the
voice to advocate directly to Congress for the employment programs supported by RSA, including the VR program. Please stay tuned to the Washington Wire on the National Rehab website http://www.nationalrehab.org for up to date news on SB 1356 and other notes of legislative concern for the rehabilitation community.

--Submitted by Bonnie Hawley

VRA Education Committee Update

The last VRA workshop was held in Portsmouth on 1/24/14. Margie Millner was able to secure the presenter at no cost for a full day workshop providing updates on the latest street drugs, treatment and counseling strategies, and implications for service provision.

VRA is collaborating with VARL to offer a jointly sponsored workshop on “Change – How to manage it within today’s technology driven – social media driven world,” with presenter Shirley Lyons. VARL is offering this training in Henrico (Central Region) in December and several VRA members from further west in the state have expressed interest in attending but cannot travel that distance to do so. We hope to be able to offer a repeat of this workshop in the Staunton area in the Spring 2014 to allow folks from along the Interstate 81 corridor an opportunity to attend this workshop closer to their home bases.

The Education Committee will meet after the first of the year to brainstorm additional training workshop needs/ideas for the next calendar year.

--Submitted by Susan Gaillard

VRA Foundation Update

The Foundation Board members this year include Margaret Gillispie, Chairperson, Mark Fletcher, Secretary, Dale Batten, Treasurer, Mary Kaye Johnston, Bonnie Hawley, Howard Green, Bill Burnside and Member Emeritus, Al Dickerson. Their support and dedication to the VRA Foundation is much appreciated.

The annual capital campaign in the form of a mailing was sent in November 2013 and has been very successful to date. As of January 24, 2014, a total of $2075 had been received, exceeding our $2000 goal. We will continue with fundraising all through the year and these funds will be used to supplement our investments. The interest received from the investments will be used for Foundation scholarships.

We will be accepting applications for Foundation scholarships on an ongoing basis until Jun 30th for the 2014 scholarship. VRA members, their children and family members who are pursuing an educational program are eligible to apply for the scholarships. More information about this and the scholarship application is available on the VRA website.

--Submitted by Margaret Gillispie
The Virginia Chapter of RCEA is looking forward to the next year!

Our Board Members are:
President – Bonnie Hawley
Past President – Karen Backus
President Elect – vacant
Secretary – Mary Kaye Johnston
Treasurer – Kathleen Shifflett
Board Members: Paula McMahon, Ron Simmons, Samantha Ruppert, Rhonda Chandler, Karen Akers and Loretta Harris.

All of our positions are filled with the exception of President Elect. Our Immediate Past President, Karen Backus was recognized by our Virginia State Chapter at our December meeting for her excellent work during the past year as President. At the same meeting, our Board discussed plans for the upcoming year, including a nearly finalized training to be presented on 2/13/14 at the Fairfax DARS office by Richard Kriner and Jessica Stehle. We are also collaborating with WWRC and Dr. Margaret Glenn for a presentation in June of 2014. Stay tuned for more news on this exciting presentation! Discussion is also underway regarding the celebration of Rehabilitation Counselor Day. We are looking forward to sponsoring a speaker for the Collaborations Conference this year as well.

--Submitted by Bonnie Hawley

Leadership is one of those things that people assume just happens. But the reality is, leadership is a role that individuals take on, especially in organizations and things that are outside the realm of personal work. Many times, taking on a leadership role in an organization can be stressful, as well as rewarding.

VARL is the organization within VRA that promotes leadership activities and encourages growing one’s leadership skills on a continuing basis. You can use these skills in your everyday work as well as in leadership roles. Even VARL members struggle with taking on leadership roles. VARL is set to hold their elections in February, several months past our objective of November. One of the reasons is hesitancy on the part of members to jump into leadership roles.

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.” —John F. Kennedy

This quote is one that resonates with me because of the need we all have to commit to lifelong learning. As a leader, I don’t have all the answers, nor should I act like I do. As a leader I have to promote learning and encourage members to stretch their skills so they can accomplish more.

VARL is at a crossroads. We have set up ideas for training throughout the year to challenge all of us in our thinking, to empower us to stretch and grow and to encourage us to take some chances. Working together, we
cannot fail. As Andrew Carnegie said: “No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself, or to get all the credit for doing it”.

No matter your job; no matter your skill sets- step up and join us as we grow.  

--Submitted by Shirley Lyons

**NRA Updates**

**Message from the NRA President**

Members of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association:

I would like to take this time to recognize that in 2014, the Virginia Rehabilitation Association will be celebrating 55 years of being an integral association to not only rehabilitation professionals in Virginia, but being a vital part of the National Rehabilitation Association.

Your association has continued to provide leadership to the National Rehabilitation Association with individuals serving not only as Board Members but also as Presidents of the Association. Thank you for sharing that with the National Rehabilitation Association.

Collaborations are the hallmark of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association and the Collaborations Conference that is held annually is a striking example of that. I know that you will have outstanding success with your conference and I wish you the best of luck with your Collaboration Conference in 2014.

March 23-25 at the Hilton in Old Town Alexandria, the National Rehabilitation Association will be conducting its 33rd Annual Governmental Affairs Summit. Registration information for the hotel and the conference is available on the NRA webpage. I hope that many of you will be able to attend the Summit as individuals with disabilities and the field of rehabilitation are relying on our voices to be heard.

The Iowa Rehabilitation Association is in the process of planning the Annual Training Conference in Des Moines, Iowa from October 30-November 2, 2014. Please watch the NRA web page for additional information such as registration, program information, etc.

I look forward to not only working with your President, Kim Shepard, as well as meeting many of you in the near future.

Thank you again for this opportunity to serve as your NRA President.

--Submitted by Ellen Sokolowski

**Other News & Notes**

**DARS Launches Website, Twitter for Employer Services**

DARS recently revamped its website directed at employers. “The existing site was outdated and needed to be refreshed,” said Kathy Hayfield, director of the Division of Rehabilitative Services. The site, titled “Put Ability
to Work,” focuses on being a one-stop resource on disability employment in Virginia for businesses and DARS’ partnering organizations.

The site’s sections include:

- DRS’ services
- Profiles of business development managers
- State map of regions and field offices
- Success stories on employers and clients
- Listing of Commonwealth Workforce Networks
- DARS in the news
- FAQs
- Resources

The site is also a tool for DARS’ employer services team to promote them as the “go to” people for disability employment resources such as training on disability awareness, etiquette and workplace regulations, recruiting employees, setting up internships, assessing workplaces and recommending accommodations.

Additional features will be added to the website including a monthly blog written by staff, featuring best practices, success stories and tools and tips relevant to disability awareness and employment.

DARS also started a second Twitter feed, @dars4employers, targeting employment issues, workforce development and job market trends. Not only is DARS a service agency to assist clients, partnering organizations and employers, but it strives to be a thought leader on all things related to disability employment.

Stay connected with DARS:
Agency website: vadars.org
Employer Services website: vdars.org
Facebook.com/vadars
Youtube.com/vadrs
Pinterest.com/vaeo55
Agency Twitter: @vadars
Employer Twitter @dars4employers

--Submitted by Betsy C. McElfresh
WWRC Updates

WWRC staff and clients surprised Jim Rothrock during his recent visit to Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) with a poster congratulating him on his reappointment. The Commissioner was quoted as saying, “I thought I was stopping by WWRC for a fish sandwich and a short visit with our clients, and it turns out they had a surprise for me.” Once Jim went through the line, the entire cafeteria started chanting “four more years” and a delegation of clients and staff brought the poster pictured here to Jim’s table. The surprise congratulatory poster had over 300 signatures and well-wishes from the WWRC community.

WWRC Float in Staunton Christmas Parade

The recent collaboration and teamwork across WWRC to put a float in the Staunton Christmas Parade stands out as a hallmark of a “vision realized.” Every training program was represented and consumers, as well as staff, embraced what we are all about and gave a powerful message to our community.

The theme for WWRC’s Christmas parade float was “Where Dreams Do Come True.” Each training area was represented by staff and/or students and their banners. Seventy-eight students and staff walked in the parade. This literally touched every division at the Center. Photos showcase this powerful and amazing testimony to what can happen when we all work together to tell the story of comprehensive medical services and workforce training in action.

WWRC Clients and Staff in Governor’s Inaugural Parade

What a spectacular weekend it was with our WWRC representation in the Inaugural parade in Richmond. Thanks to our Commissioner for leading the way to make this possible, as well as our WWRC participants and everyone who supported this event.
Success Story: Business Information and Technology Student Lands Job

Richard Bell came to Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center unsure of what his future would be. He did know that he wanted to pursue the Business area. He worked very hard and was an excellent student while in the General Office and Administrative Assistant program. His overall GPA was 96%. Richard did his Student Intern Program at the Valley Community Services Board (VCSB) in Staunton, Virginia. He graduated from Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center on June 28, 2013. The Valley Community Services Board was so impressed with his work ethic and skills that he was offered full-time employment. Since gaining full-time employment, it is important to know, that he also continues to assist current interns from the Business Department at this location.

The following quotes are from the Clerical and Client Services staff at VCSB: “Richard is an invaluable part of our team at VCSB. There is no way our office could function without all the work Richard does in the background. He happily completes any task we ask of him, from stamping/delivering mountains of mail, to making copies at a moment’s notice. He always makes himself available, is a quick learner, and is an absolute joy to be around.”

“Richard is one of the sincerest people I’ve ever met. He’s not only a hard worker, but a dependable and genuine person that is a joy to work with every day.” “Richard is a great asset to Valley and I am very glad that he has joined our team.” He performs every task with a smile on his face and never complains.”

--Submitted by Jackie Davis

DisAbility Resources Center’s Equipment Connection

Working on Thursday, Dec. 26, 2013, a call came into the disAbility Resource Center from an elderly woman who was due to have surgery the following Monday. Because she wanted to recuperate at home with the help of family members, she asked about getting a wheelchair to help her get back and forth to medical appointments, a bath chair, and a bedside commode. The dRC’s Equipment Connection (EC) staff was on vacation so I met her and her family at the EC. Having only visited the building from time to time through my work as the Program Manager at the dRC, I was stunned by how crowded the building had become with donations of every kind since my last visit.
I had only planned to help this one woman but as I helped her locate the appropriate sized chair (who knew there were so many different styles of chairs and footrests?) and different items she would need in her recuperation, another woman came in looking for a cane for her mother that needed to be adjusted to her height and have the correct base (who knew there were different types of bases on canes?). She was followed by a gentleman looking for a wheelchair for his friend who had no job, no insurance, and had an old wheelchair that was rusted through. I again went through the process of finding a chair that fit this gentleman. As I was locking up the building, one-and-a-half hours later, another woman stopped by to retrieve three different pieces of equipment for individuals served.

While at the EC I had each person fill out an application, asked them what their needs were, and made sure they each had the equipment they needed. I also asked how having the equipment would affect the quality of their lives or the lives of those they helped. The elderly woman emphatically stated that the equipment she received would help her recuperate at home with her family. The gentleman who received the wheelchair wanted “to get around” by himself, and the last woman noted that it would aid in the recovery and independence of her clients.

I was amazed and touched that, literally, each person that day left the EC stating “Bless you for what you do.” As the elderly woman left, one of her family members came back in and put $10 in the donation jar. I’m pretty sure that was a significant contribution for them. This was the first time I had spent working in the Equipment Connection. By the time I left the building, I was very impressed by the amount of equipment available at the EC and I had new found respect for the work the dRC does to continue this service that so obviously helps our community.

I promote the EC in my work at the disAbility Resource Center, write about it, and tell people about it, but I didn’t truly appreciate it until I worked there. As evidenced by the people I met and by our data collection, there is great need for durable medical equipment. From January 1 to December 31, 2013, 1505 people received 2,120 pieces of equipment!
people and manage that amount of equipment, a great deal of work is needed to keep the EC up and running including obtaining equipment, repairing it, cleaning it, and helping people as they stream in. Through donations the dRC has been able to keep the EC doors open but there is always a need for more funding to continue the work. On April 6, 2014, the dRC will be hosting a “Walk and Roll,” an inclusive fundraising and disability awareness event around Fredericksburg’s newest walking trail. All are encouraged to come and participate for, what I have found, to be a very worthwhile service for people with disabilities.

--Submitted by Kim Lett

WorkWORLD: An Employment Tool for People SSI/SSDI Recipients

What is WorkWorld?
WorkWORLD is an online, state-specific program that’s extremely beneficial to individuals who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability (SSD) that are working or interested in returning to work. WorkWORLD is a benefits planning tool that asks several benefits and employment related questions. Based on the answers to those questions, the program can calculate how employment will impact the cash benefits and health insurance an individual receives, while also screening for work incentives that may protect an individual’s benefits for a time while they test their ability to work. These are employment incentives that the individual may have not otherwise known to exist. An analysis is completed by comparing an individual’s current financial situation to situations that will demonstrate how their benefits will change when they return to work, increase their hours, get a raise, or experience any other employment related changes.

What are the Benefits?
A WorkWORLD Analysis is intended to give the user an idea of how their financial circumstances will change once they go to work. The intent is not to focus on how benefits will change, but rather how by going to work, the person’s overall disposable monthly income can increase. WorkWORLD can assist with financial planning in this regard, but can also help alleviate the fear that an individual has about going to work. Because WorkWORLD educates the user on the work incentives available to him or her, the user will be able to realize that returning to work doesn’t automatically result in a loss of health insurance and cash benefits. WorkWORLD is to be used as a benefits planning tool that can educate and empower the user to make a more informed choice about going to work, helping him or her increase employment potential. A WorkWORLD analysis is one of the many Work Incentive (WIS) services that can be authorized by Vocational Rehabilitation counselors in Virginia for their clients. Virginia has identified that counselors who authorize work incentives services with their consumers have a 72% successful closure rate compared to 41% for the same population when no work incentives are used.

How Can I Access WorkWORLD?
You can find more information about the program and create an online account at www.workworld.wwrc.net.

--Submitted by Michael Klinger
Meet Your Board Members: Beth Groff

Beth Groff has worked at DARS since 1998 in various positions including Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Manager of Vocational Evaluators, Workforce Development Specialist, Assistive Technology Specialist, Manager of the Petersburg field office and now is Business Development Manager for DARS’ Danville, Farmville; Petersburg and South Boston offices. Prior to DARS, she worked for employment services organizations including Goodwill of Central Virginia and PARC Services. Beth has served on multiple committees both internal to DARS and within the Rehabilitation community and served on the VRA Board in the past. She received the Counselor of the Year award from the Virginia Rehabilitation Counselors Association in 2005. Beth is excited to work with VRA again in supporting their initiatives to enhance the Vocational Rehabilitation profession.

--Submitted by Beth Groff

Meet Your Board Members: Patti Drescher

Patti Drescher received her BS in Occupational Therapy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1991. She has worked in numerous settings including the public schools, rehabilitation hospitals, home health, and private practice. In 2004 she received her Master’s Degree in Assistive Technology from George Mason University where she also coordinated the Mason LIFE Program, a post-secondary program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who desire a university experience in a supportive academic environment. She also served as an adjunct professor in the Special Education Master’s program. After many years working as a private contractor for Vocational Rehabilitation in Wisconsin and Michigan, Patti joined DARS as the Assistive Technology Specialist for the Southwest Region in 2010.

--Submitted by Patti Drescher
“Positive Engagement + Effective Employment Plans= Successful Careers”

Please join us for an interactive training on providing vocational services to customers who are on the Autism Spectrum...

February 13th, 2014
10AM-2 PM
Fairfax DARS Conference Room (A&B)
11150 Fairfax Blvd. Suite 300
Fairfax, Va. 22030

Presented by:
Richard Kriner, MS, PBSF, CRC, LPC and Jessica Stehle, MA, CRC
Featuring a panel presentation by Self Advocates with Autism

Sponsored by: The Virginia Rehabilitation Counselor And Educators Association

Registration begins 9:30 AM - Coffee will be provided
Lunch Provided (Pizza and sodas)
CRC's will be available
VRA and VRCEA Members: $20.00
Non-Members: $25.00

RSVP: Bonnie Hawley by February 8, 2014
bonnie.hawley@dars.virginia.gov

Payment by Check (payable to VRCEA) by February 10, 2014
Kathleen Shifflett, Treasurer
VRCEA
9309 Center Street Suite 304
Manassas, Va. 20110
SAVE THE DATE!
VRA/VARL Training coming soon
MAY 1, 2014

Location at Woodrow Wilson – please plan to join us soon. More details to come…

“Change – How to manage it within today’s technology driven – social media driven world”

At the 2013 Collaborations Conference, we learned about Managing Change using John Kotter’s process he detailed in *My Iceberg is Melting*. This training continues to explore the world of managing change particularly as we are confronted with the ethical dilemmas presented by technology and social media. How can we manage our stress and deal with the pressure of change? How do we help those we serve deal with the stress of change? And what do we need to know about doing our work with the easy access of social media sites? This interactive session will further your understanding of managing change using self-awareness and will introduce ideas of how to handle technology/social media issues.

(Attendance at the Collaborations Conference is not a pre-requisite).

Presenter ~ Shirley Lyons, M.S.
University of Phoenix, Richmond/Va Beach Campus
YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!

Contact VRA at newsnotes@vra.org to reserve space in the next issue.

Ads are available in quarter, half and full-page sizes and can be purchased per quarter or year. Prices are available on the back page of this issue. All NewsNotes issues are posted and archived to the VRA website.

www.vra.org
The Choice Group

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- 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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E-mail: info@thechoicegroup.com • www.thechoicegroup.com
Connect with other members of VRA!

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

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!

VRA Events Calendar

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 7th</td>
<td>VRA Membership/Communications Committee Meeting, 1PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 13th</td>
<td>VRCEA Autism Training: Positive Engagement + Effective Employment Plans = Successful Careers,” Fairfax, VA, 10AM-2PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 23-25th</td>
<td>NRA Government Affairs Summit, Alexandria, VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 28th</td>
<td>VRA Board Meeting, 10:00-11:30am, VRCEA Board Meeting, 1:30-2:30pm, DARS Central Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4th</td>
<td>VRA NewsNotes Submission Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1st</td>
<td>VRA/VARL Training: “Change: How to manage it within today’s technology driven, social media driven world,” Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 27</td>
<td>VRA Board Meeting, 10:00-11:30am, VRCEA Board Meeting, 1:30-2:30pm, Location TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5th</td>
<td>VRA NewsNotes Submission Deadline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 8th</td>
<td>VRA Annual Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Tournament</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>2014 Collaborations Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 30th-Nov 2nd</td>
<td>NRA Annual Conference, Des Moines, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21</td>
<td>VRA Board Meeting, 10:00-11:30am, VRCEA Board Meeting, 1:30-2:30pm, Location TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 28th</td>
<td>VRA NewsNotes Submission Deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Deadline for next issue’s NewsNotes articles is April 4th, 2014

Send to newsnotes@vra.org
Virginia Rehabilitation Association

VRA President Kim Shepard
President-Elect Jean Steveson
Past President Rob Froehlich
Treasurer Eleanor Williams
Secretary Adair Jensen-Smith
Past President Rob Froehlich
Treasurer Eleanor Williams
Secretary Adair Jensen-Smith
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VARL President Shirley Lyons
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1/4 PAGE  
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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