Greetings to all, and I hope that you are enjoying this wonderful, hot summer we are having right now. Summer is generally a time for family vacations and things are more laid back and relaxed. However, let me just say that VRA has been busy, and I would like to take this time to share some upcoming events.

Speaking of hot, I have had the great opportunity to work very closely with the Membership Committee again this quarter. We have been working to continue to grow our membership and also to maintain our current members. I would really love to receive your input as to how we could better serve you as an association and what would keep you coming back again and again. We have the philosophy now of “giving back” and that is exactly what I am committed to – giving back. Please stay tuned for more training and networking opportunities that will be announced in the near future. Once again, any suggestions will be heard and greatly appreciated.

While we are talking about membership, it was also an honor to be asked to share some of our strategies for membership ideas at the national level. It is my understanding that these ideas were well received and appreciated.

As fast as the summer has rushed in, it will be time for the Collaborations Conference before you know it. We are so excited and look forward to a wonderful conference this year. The Collaborations Conference will be held on November 16-18, 2014 at the Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront. The theme this year is “together-unlocking potential”. I am excited about the conference and will keep you posted as information is provided. Thanks to Jean Steveson and Rob Froehlich for representing us well. More information can be found at http://www.vaaccesses.org/collaborations_conference/information/.

Please remember as we prepare for the conference to please take a moment and consider nominating someone for one of the many VRA awards. What a wonderful way to honor someone for their hard work and dedication in the field of rehabilitation! The Awards Committee will be sending out information to all members as to the deadline for submissions. The awards will be presented at the 2014 Collaborations Conference Awards Luncheon. Don’t put it off. Take the time right now to nominate someone you feel is deserving and let me know if I can be of any assistance!
One more reminder . . . The Virginia Rehabilitation Association Benjy Burnette Memorial Golf Classic will be held on Monday, September 8, 2014 at the Stonehenge Golf & Country Club. Make sure you register a team for the tournament. Not a golfer? You may want to consider sponsoring a hole, donating a prize or volunteering your time. Thanks, again, to our newly-formed Golf Committee for the great job they are doing. If you need further information, please contact Howard Green at jgreen1949@verizon.net.

In closing, I always feel inclined to express my appreciation to all the board members and committee representatives for their commitment, professionalism, creativity, and energy that they devote to VRA activities. I so appreciate all that you do from collaborations to the Education Committee, to our legislative Committee, the golf tournament, the list goes on and on. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart! Not only do we work hard, but we have fun doing it! I hope the remainder of your summer is fun, safe and hurricane-free!

--Submitted by Kim Shepard

VRA News

2014 Golf Tournament Update

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. (Beautiful course)

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


--Submitted by Howard Green

VRA Seeking Nominations for Board Positions

VRA is seeking candidates for Officers and Board Members for calendar year 2015. Service to the VRA Board and to VRA overall has been a career highlight for me and I would like for others to have that wonderful opportunity as well. Ballots will be sent to members September 2nd, 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, November 17, 2014.

We will be holding elections for the following positions: 1- President-Elect (One year term), 2 - Treasurer (Two year term), 3 - Secretary (One year term), 4 - Three Board Members At Large (Three year term).

Deadline for Nominations: August 29, 2014. In order to run (you may nominate yourself) or to nominate and individual, the following information is required: 1. Position considered: (President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer,
or Board Member)  2. Short bio paragraph/background, including service and experience with VRA/NRA 3. Any other relevant information for members to consider when making their candidate choice. Send nominations and inquiries to: Rob Froehlich e-mail: rfr@gwu.edu, or US Post office mail: 11740 Hazleton Drive, Richmond, VA 23236, or phone: (804) 794-6529.

Position Descriptions: Detailed position descriptions for these important VRA Board roles can be found at VRA.org (under the about VRA TAB – Important Links – VRA Duties) or by calling Rob Froehlich (804)794-6667 for more detail. Please consider running and/or nominating colleagues who you feel would be excellent candidates.

--Submitted by Rob Froelich

VRA Membership News

VRA is pleased to announce that we will be holding a lottery and the lucky VRA winner will receive sponsorship to the upcoming Collaborations Conference held November 16, 2014 through November 18, 2014 at the Hilton – Virginia Beach! Details to come!

The VRA annual membership/business meeting will be held on November 17, 2014 in conjunction with the Collaborations Conference at the Hilton-Virginia Beach. Please come out and join us!

--Submitted by Margie Millner

Call for VRA Awards Nominations

IT’S THAT TIME AGAIN. GET BUSY, LOOK AROUND, AND COMPLETE A NOMINATION PACKAGE FOR THAT DESERVING SOMEONE! The Awards Committee will be accepting nominations until August 30, 2013. Award descriptions as well as the nomination form are included here. Don’t put it off, take the time right now and nominate someone you feel is deserving of an award.

Nominations will be accepted through August 30, 2014 and can be submitted by email/fax/mail to:

Margie Millner
c/o DARS
300 Butler Farm Rd, Suite 105
Hampton, VA 23666
Phone: 757-865-3117
Email: margie.millner@dars.virginia.gov

The 2014 VRA Awards celebration will be held in conjunction with the Collaborations Conference again in the fall of this year. A nomination form can be found on page 17 of this newsletter.
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 Alison Mundy

VRA Division and Committee News


The Good News is that the Virginia General Assembly completed its budget work supposedly for the biennium, and the Commonwealth is solvent as of July 1st. Further, the DARS budget seems to have made it through intact, primarily because there was little increased proposed spending for DARS in Governor McDonnell’s budget. The same cannot be said for other state agencies. So while we’re not flush with cash, for right now we’re doing OK.

The Bad News is that the budget bill does not include any language for Medicaid expansion. In fact, to the contrary, Senator Stanley crafted an amendment which specifically requires that the General Assembly act on Medicaid expansion, thereby supposedly prohibiting the Governor from taking any executive action to the contrary. That said, Governor McAuliffe has instructed HHR Secretary Bill Hazel to “come up” with a plan to expand Medicaid (by executive action) by September 1st. Then the real fireworks will begin.

The Good News is, I have been told, that there are optimistic money committee members who believe that this budget bill errs on the conservative side with all of its reductions that had borne promise in the McDonnell bill. The declining revenue forecast has the appropriators worried; hence a fairly parsimonious bill. The optimistic money committee members are hopeful that come December, the Governor might be able to reinsert additional spending in some areas of the budget. The current Bad News is that June revenues fell behind projections by $100M. So the revenue outlook is not looking good.

Depending upon your political persuasion, the re-composition of the Senate has changed, and that may be Good News or Bad News. With the departure of Senator Phil Puckett, the Senate is now back in Republican hands. Committees have been reconfigured. Senator Wagner is once again chair of Rehab and Social Services. Senator Martin is back at the helm of Education and Health, and Senator Stosch is back as chair of Finance, with Senator Colgan serving as co-chair.

Additionally, you need a playbook to keep up with other “issues” regarding the General Assembly.
Del. Joe Morrissey (D) has been indicted on five charges for rather unseemly behavior, and he is vowing to stay in the House of Delegates. Delegates Bob Brink (D) and Algie Howell (D) have resigned their positions in the House, Bob to take a Deputy Director position at DARS and Algie to take a position as Vice Chairman of the Virginia Parole Board. Senator Henry Marsh (D) has retired from the Senate and will serve on the Virginia ABC Board. All of these legislators are in safe Blue districts, but surprises can occur. Stay tuned for more Good News/Bad News, made in Virginia.

--Submitted by Becky Bowers-Lanier

**VRCEA Update**

VRCEA is proud to announce that a Rehabilitation Counselor has been selected to receive the associations Spirit Award which will be presented at the VRA Annual Membership Business Meeting in November. We are excited to make this award to a very deserving individual.

Busy with planning educational/training opportunities for its members and guests, VRCEA sponsored training focused on Individuals with Autism in February; has scheduled training later in July focused on Negotiating Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals with “Invisible Disabilities”; and planning a celebration for Rehabilitation Counselors in September with two trainings focused on (1) Creating Mindful Ethical Practices and (2) Integrating Contemplative Practices in Rehabilitation Counseling. Plan to join us for these events! For more information contact Karen.akers@dars.virginia.gov or marykaye.johnston@gmail.com

The membership in VRCEA is still small and we need YOU to help us continue the focused offerings to Rehabilitation Counselors and Rehabilitation Educators. If you are not yet a member, please consider adding this NRA Divisional Membership to your NRA/VRA Membership. It is easy to add at the time of your membership renewal online or anytime during the year by calling the NRA Membership Coordinator at 703.836.0850 or email membership@nationalrehab.org

This Division’s purpose is to advance the profession of rehabilitation counseling and rehabilitation education by promoting ethical practice, enhancing public understanding, and developing innovative programs and services for all persons with disabilities. If you are a Rehabilitation Counselor or Educator, this division specifically supports your work and targets your needs. Please join!

--Submitted by Bonnie Hawley and Mary Kaye Johnston

**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), Treasurer (2 year term) and 2 Board Members (3 year terms).
Contact Karen Backus at karen.backus@dars.virginia.gov for additional information and to make nominations. Deadline is August 29th.

**VRCEA needs YOUR active participation and support.**

--Submitted by Karen Backus

### VRA Education Committee Update

The VRA workshop in Roanoke on 3/31/14 on Appreciative Inquiry was well attended, with 23 people. Attendees represented DARS, ESO’s, Brain Injury Association and DOE. Feedback from the training has been positive. The social in Blacksburg that evening was not as well attended as we had hoped.

Topics for suggestion for future trainings included a more in-depth workshop on Appreciative Inquiry and training on best practices, strategies and tips for working effectively with individuals with serious mental illness.

The repeat workshop on Change Management and Social Media was held at WWRC on 5/1/14. Nineteen people were registered to attend, though 12 were able to attend on the day of the event. Attendees represented DARS, WWRC and the ESO community. Proceeds will be split between VRA and VARL as this was a collaborative effort.

June and July are busy with various VARL and VRCEA training events, so VRA is not looking to schedule anything during those months. We have not been able to confirm a date for an August training at WWRC, though still hope to hold a repeat session of the Synthetic Drugs workshop with Patrick Slifka of the National Counseling Group.

--Submitted by Susan Gaillard

### VARL Update

VARL held two very successful training opportunities in the last 4 months. In May, I presented at the WWRC on change and social media. It was well-received and we all enjoyed a beautiful day. In June, we tried something new – a training that occurred over the VTC network. The speaker, the wonderful and engaging Amy Armstrong was in Richmond with almost 20 people and we had over 20 people at three other sites – Lynchburg, Hampton and Fairfax. It was a highly energetic and interesting day – with the topic of Positive Leadership. Special thanks to Naomi Aitken and her site coordinators, Roxanne Slaughter, Kim Shepherd and Ralph Figaro.

VARL continues to work on strategies to engage and increase membership. Many of our members are “old timers” – those who have been in the field for over 15 years. We are hoping to attract the up and coming leaders to continue the strong legacy that this Division has in Virginia.

Leadership, as Amy stated, can be something we can improve upon. Most studies have shown that we have control over 40% - of our attitude, our happiness, our growth. We can choose whether we change; we can choose whether we become a more positive person and leader. According to a Gallup poll, only 22% of
American workers are engaged and thriving in their work. And there is a direct correlation between our overall satisfaction and our performance at work.

VARL hopes you will choose to be a Positive Leader – someone who builds a positive climate around them, someone who builds positive relationships, someone who connects to others with positive meaning and someone who uses positive communication to support those around you. Join us on your journey.

--Submitted by Shirley Lyons

Other News & Notes

State Rehabilitation Council Leadership Award

The DARS State Rehabilitation Council earlier this month presented their 2014 Employee Leadership Roy J. Ward Recognition Awards for outstanding service and contribution to the field of vocational rehabilitation and the disability community. The award honors DARS’ vocational rehabilitation staff who distinguish themselves by the quality of service they provide their clients as well as their contributions to advance the employment and independence of people with disabilities. Five awards were given this year at a recognition luncheon.

Sandy is a highly respected VR counselor serving adult consumers in the City of Portsmouth. She has been an active member of NRA and VRA and is a recipient of the Virginia Rehabilitation Counselor/Educator “Spirit Award”.

Kristin began her career at DARS as a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Charlottesville and at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. In 2013, she assumed leadership of the Behavior Specialist program at WWRC and has led the efforts at WWRC to redesign the campus wide behavioral intervention system to assist all direct service staff in crafting interventions that correct and teach rather than provoking negative behaviors. She also has served on the Board of the Virginia Rehabilitation Counseling Association and is an active member of the American Counseling Association, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, and is on the Training Standards Committee for the Association for Specialists in Group Work. Wendy began her career at WWRC in 2000, serving as a mobile evaluator, vocational evaluator and providing leadership as the program manager for vocational evaluation. One of her greatest contributions at WWRC is
the cross training of all vocational evaluators and the development of notebooks for each evaluation area enabling WWRC clients to receive the evaluation of their choice and consistently meeting or exceeding her department’s yearly client goal of 1020 clients served in vocational evaluation. Wendy also is a member of the Board of Directors of the Rockbridge Diamond Club, a volunteer organization designed to promote competitive baseball in Rockbridge County.

In 2012, Tracy, who has been with the agency for about 20 years, transferred to a new position that serves a medical caseload, coordinating continued therapy services for consumers who are close to completing acute rehabilitation but need additional services and recovery before returning to work. For the past three years, Tracy has volunteered with the Mid-Atlantic Wheelchair Athletic Association supporting the games and other activities at the Center that benefit persons with physical and mental challenges.

And finally, our colleague Doug Eads, who passed away in May. Doug’s family was on hand at the awards ceremony to receive his award for distinguished leadership as a job development/job placement counselor in the Christiansburg office and his tireless work to secure successful employment for our VR consumers. Due to his exceptional work, Doug garnered several awards at DARS to include the Star Award, Customer First Awards, Services Excellence Award, and Managers Award for Performance two years in a row. As a member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association, Doug worked ardently to make VRA more active in the Southwest Region. Doug exemplified DARS as a dedicated and dependable employee who served as a positive ambassador for the agency and we miss him greatly.

--Submitted by Liz Smith

NRA President’s Update

To all Virginia NRA Chapter Members:

Let me begin by saying how privileged and honored I am to be working with the National Rehabilitation Association. As many of you know, I served as the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) during President Clinton’s time in office. While with RSA, I was able to help integrate a number of important principles into the work of state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. For example we issued regulations that made it clear that the purpose of rehabilitation is to prepare individuals with disabilities for a lifetime of employment, not just the first job that comes along. Of course preparing people for careers has been the hallmark of the VR program for many years, but we wanted to make sure that limited resources did not result in states being pressured by their governors or legislatures to constrict cost on the misguided belief that the only purpose of the VR program is to get people with disabilities into jobs as quickly and inexpensively as possible.

The public VR program, and by extension, the network of private VR providers are facing new and serious challenges. As I write, later today the House of Representatives will take up H.R. 803, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), as Amended which reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act. One of the most troubling changes contained in H.R. 803 is a weakening of the standards for qualified rehabilitation personnel.
Specifically, Section 412(a)(4)(B) provides that states may hire rehabilitation counselors who hold a bachelor’s degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field and expands the fields of study to include bachelor’s degrees in business administration and human resources. This provision shows a serious misunderstanding about the role of the qualified rehabilitation counselor. Weakening the standards for qualified rehabilitation personnel could not come at a worse time. As the VR program works with people who have more and more significant levels of disability, the importance of professional training is increased, not diminished.

Fortunately, the new language does not require states to lower their existing standards; it only gives them the authority to do so. That means that rehabilitation professionals need to advocate to insure that cost considerations do not compel state VR agencies to lower their standards. This also means partnering with consumers to advocate for high personnel standards.

There are many other challenges to the public and private VR program, and the only way to guard against them and to affirmatively advance the VR program is through advocacy. This is why your membership in NRA is so important. We are a known and respective force in national policymaking because of the number of rehabilitation personnel who are members of the Association. But our presence will be strengthened and our effectiveness bolstered by growing our membership. Our collective challenge is to help our colleagues to understand the importance of joining NRA and advocating for the individuals with disabilities we serve. People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to live integrated, productive lives, and that means they deserve the right to receive the highest quality professional services from qualified rehabilitation professionals. Please help spread the word of the importance of membership in NRA and help further opportunities for people with disabilities.

--Submitted by Fredric Schroeder

**NRA Legislative Update**

The past month has been an eventful, even historic, for rehabilitation on the Federal front. SB 1356 was passed. This landmark legislation was sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee) had strong Bi-Partisan support. It passed on a vote of 95-3 on June 25th. In his remarks after the passage, Senator Harkin praised the committee for focusing on the common grounds of agreement versus what was not agreed upon to move this legislation forward and address the workforce needs of the country. This reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act under the name of the “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act” (WIOA). The scope of this legislation is far reaching, eliminating and/or blending the funding for 15 programs related to employment and creating a system of common metrics and outcomes for those programs that receive funding thru this Act. On a positive note, thanks to advocacy by stakeholders and partners, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) was maintained in the Dept of Education.

Additionally, the Commissioner of Rehabilitation remains a Presidential appointment. By continuing as an appointed and vetted position, the Commissioner maintains the privilege of addressing directly to Congress and the President, concerns related to RSA and the employment of people with disabilities. Also included in the final language of the Bill were sections that relocated the responsibilities for the administration of the Independent Living (IL) program and National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) from RSA to the Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS). Unfortunately, the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standards were diluted and as such will
now permit those with degrees outside of the rehabilitation field to be employed by State VR programs as Rehabilitation Counselors; also, In-service training grants were released from mandatory funding and placed into a discretionary funding line...meaning that states may determine how to use these funds. The Bill language as proposed and passed in the WIOA in relationship to the CSPD and In-service training grants was strongly opposed by the National Rehab Association and the Virginia Rehab Association. Susan Gaillard, Director of Training at DARS, shared at our recent Board meeting that the Commissioner of DARS, Jim Rothrock, has pledged to continue funding and supporting continued professional development of rehabilitation personnel.

On a positive note, language which would have allowed the employment of people with disabilities at sub minimum wage was stricken from the final legislation paving the way for better opportunities for people with severe disabilities to enjoy the benefit of integrated and competitive employment.

To view a complete version of this Act, please follow this link: http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/wioa_sa_hr803.pdf

In relationship to advocacy, President Kim Shepard sent a letter to Senator Warner and to Senator Kaine regarding SB 1356 (now the WOIA) and received responses from both of our elected Senators pledging their continued support.

For a full transcript of the reading of SB 1356 as well as the reading of two related amendments (Flake and Lee, both of which failed) please follow this link https://beta.congress.gov/congressional-record/2014/06/25/senate-section/article/S3964-2

On the next horizon of advocacy, there is a Notice of Proposed Priority. This proposes a priority to establish a new Technical Assistance Center to replace the 10 TACE Centers effective October 1, 2014. All TACE services end on September 20, 2014. All comments about this proposal must be received by Monday, July 21, 2014. Please consult the following notice for instructions to submit your comments.

The Virginia Rehabilitation Association has sent a letter opposing this action and requesting a one year extension of TACE services and encouraged an extended period of time to solicit stakeholder commentary.


If you have any questions regarding these issues, please feel free to contact me at Bonnie.hawley@comcast.net.

--Submitted by Bonnie Hawley

**WWRC Updates**

**Hershey Chocolate**

In the summer of 2013, the Hershey Chocolate Plant in Stuarts Draft, Virginia, announced an initiative to offer apprenticeships for approximately six individuals with disabilities. The program sponsored through a Hershey Chocolate corporate initiative was entitled *Hershey Extends Real Opportunities to Succeed* (HEROS). The apprenticeship program offered individuals with disabilities a six-month work experience on the production line in the plant. During the apprenticeship, clients could access any needed supports to enable
their successful completion of the program so long as they were able to perform the required duties at the end of the six-month apprenticeship. Cindy Roberts, DRS BDM, connected the Fishersville DRS and WWRC with HEROS when the program was announced at the Stuarts Draft Plant. Through a strategic collaboration, Cindy and WWRC determined that it would be critical for candidates to have the physical strength and stamina to perform labor at a typical work station in the Hershey Plant. As the agency began screening likely candidates for the program, WWRC was utilized for a Physical Work Performance Evaluation administered by a physical therapist, which provided a reliable and valid clinical assessment of someone’s ability to complete physical labor. In addition to this, Steve Sweeney, Vocational Instructor, and the WWRC Director of Physical Therapy, Sharon Russo, visited the Stuarts Draft plant and assessed the typical work station that clients would utilize during the program.

This enabled WWRC to create a work sample that replicated the physical demands/stamina of the job for evaluation purposes. Hershey accepted six clients into the program which concluded in the spring of 2014. Five of the six completed the Physical Work Performance Evaluation and simulated conveyor work sample at WWRC prior to acceptance into the HEROS program. A report detailing their vocational potential and physical capacity was provided to the DRS counselors sponsoring clients into the HEROS program. The BDM and Hershey staff indicated that the assessments were extremely valuable in determining the readiness of candidates to perform on the Hershey production line. The five clients assessed by WWRC were offered and accepted full-time employment with Hershey at the conclusion of their apprenticeship.

**Southern States**

Our DRS and WWRC Team recently visited Southern States near Roanoke. Their operation utilizes upwards of 30 forklift operators per shift. The Southern States Human Resources Manager, Joyce Manning from Richmond, as well as the General Manager of the Distribution Center, toured our team and engaged in a detailed conversation about the potential of our clients working for Southern States, not only at the distribution center, but at the numerous stores across the state. The Center’s Forklift training program curriculum seemed highly relevant to the staff who provided the tour of the facility.

Eighty-two percent of Materials Handling graduates are working at an average salary of just over $9.00 an hour.
Building Trades
Commissioner Rothrock recently attended the dedication of the new Western State Hospital (WSH) and commissioned WWRC’s Building Trades students to build a handcrafted piece of furniture to show the Center’s support for our partners at WSH. Dwight Foster and two Building Trades students, Morgan Bean and Darius Ross, recently delivered this chimney cabinet which is proudly displayed in the WSH main lobby. Dr. Barber and staff were awed by this gesture, and relayed that it would stand as a symbol of our partnership, and that it demonstrates the skills of WWRC clients.

Assistive Technology Training
On Wednesday, April 9, 2014, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center conducted an Assistive Technology (AT) workshop for 24 Division of Rehabilitative Services Rehabilitation Counselors and Program Support Technicians from across the Commonwealth. This workshop highlighted the use of various technologies to enhance employment outcomes for Agency Vocational Rehabilitation clients, and offered opportunities for participants to learn more about augmentative alternative communication (AAC) technologies.

Success Stories

Business and Information Technology (BIT)
The Center’s BIT program currently has a 100% pass rate for A+ certification. Students are being placed in jobs at big box computer firms, as well as mom and pop shops and government positions. WWRC recently hired Ashley McDaniel, a BIT graduate, in the Information Services department.

Food Service
Susan Watkins-Dalton, DRS Danville, reports that Brett Talbott, WWRC Food Service Training graduate is employed in utility work at the Averett University cafeteria. Susan says it has been an exciting journey to work with Brett and has appreciated WWRC’s service in preparing him for employment. Staff who work with Brett also commented that his willingness to learn new things gives him that competitive advantage in the workplace.
Automotive
Ashley Clark, DRS Culpeper, and Cindy Robert, BDM, report that Jeremiah Johnson was hired full time with Hamilton Tire in Warrenton, Virginia. Jeremiah attended WWRC for Auto Mechanics training. While at WWRC he earned his GED and earned his Gold level Career Readiness Certificate.

---Submitted by Jackie Davis

Meet Your Committee Members: Margaret Gillispie

Margaret worked most of her career with Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services in various capacities, including as a Rehabilitation Counselor, Marketing/Business Development Manager, Office Manager and Regional Director. She retired from DARS in 2011 and since that time has continued her involvement with VRA particularly with the VRA Foundation. In retirement she has enjoyed gardening, reading, travel and spending time with family and friends.

Margaret has been a VRA member since the late 1970’s and during that time she has been active in many aspects of VRA including VARL and VRCEA. She served on the VRA Board for several terms and as President in 2006. She has been active in VARL, serving on the Board and as President in 2005. She helped to develop and get approval for the VRCEA state chapter in 2007 and has also served on that Board. She was instrumental in developing and getting approval for DARS to offer a free VRA membership to all new DARS Counselors, enhancing membership for VRA. She also has served on the VRA Foundation Board and is the current Chairperson.

Margaret has a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from VCU. She was recognized by VRA in 2007 with the Corbett Reedy Award for Excellence and with the RN Anderson Award for Leadership in 2008. She continues to be committed to the VRA mission of improving the quality of life for all persons with disabilities. Margaret would like to encourage all VRA members to get involved in VRA as it provides many community and professional linkages and is an excellent means for developing new skills and getting to know others in the rehabilitation community. She has always believed that you get out of things what you put into them and this certainly applies to your involvement with VRA. Get involved and make a difference!

---Submitted by Margaret Gillispie

Long-term Care Resource Training Offered

The Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living is rolling out “Empowerment to Prevent Institutionalization” trainings for medical and human service professionals across the state. The trainings begin September 2014 and will focus on long-term care resources that help to shift care for individuals with disabilities from a nursing home to the person’s home.

The trainings include a variety of resources that can help prevent the institutionalization of people with
disabilities so they can live a full life in their community. Resource Directories have been developed listing local and state information for professionals to use and distribute to their patients and clients.

Doctors’ offices, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and other organizations are encouraged to sponsor a long-term care training for their staff. The trainings can be done at the organization’s office if requested. Trainings can be scheduled throughout the year by contacting a local Center for Independent Living (CIL). To find a CIL in your area, link to http://www.vacil.org/va_cils_directory.htm.

Ten CILs across Virginia are offering the long-term care resource training. CILs advocate for the integration and inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities and they develop and provide community education that will further integration and independent living for those with disabilities.

The long-term care community resource training was developed through a grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The VBPD is contributing 73% of the funding for the statewide trainings under the federal Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act. The mission of the Board is to create a Commonwealth that advances opportunities for independence, personal decision-making and full participation in community life for individuals with developmental and other disabilities. More information on the Board can be found at www.vaboard.org.

Contact Kim Lett, grant coordinator, at 540-373-2559 or klett@cildrc.org for more information.

--Submitted by Kim Lett
SAVE THE DATE! September 12, 2014

Please plan to join us in a day of celebration of our profession in rehabilitation counseling!

At Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
TWO educational sessions
(including 2 hours of ethics and four total CRC hours for the day!)

Creating Mindful Ethical Practices in Rehabilitation in the AM
and
Integrating Contemplative Practices in Rehabilitation Counseling in the PM

Presenter: Dr. Margaret Glenn

Margaret Glenn is an Associate Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling and coordinator of the program at West Virginia University. A 35 year veteran of the vocational rehabilitation and counseling arenas, she received her doctorate in counseling with a rehabilitation emphasis from The George Washington University. She started her career in rehabilitation as a counselor with VADARS. Margaret has spent much of her career focusing on vocational rehabilitation needs of special populations, including people with substance use disorders, HIV and problem gambling disorders. Her work has expanded to an interest in how emerging scientific information and indigenous practices can inform the practice of rehabilitation counseling, focusing on mind-body medicine and neurobiology. She was awarded a Switzer Distinguished Rehabilitation Research Fellowship for an Exploratory Study of Successful Service Dog Partnerships in the Workplace.

For more information contact:
Mary Kaye Johnston at marykaye.johnston@gmail.com
Or info@vra.org
VIRGINIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Name of Award__________________________________________________________

Name of Nominee________________________________________________________

Nominee’s Address_______________________________________________________

SUPPORT FOR NOMINEE
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. Consider including supporting documents from others knowledgeable of the nominee’s outstanding accomplishments.

Name of Nominator______________________________________________________

Nominator’s Address_____________________________________________________ 

Telephone Number (H)__________________________ (W)______________________

E-mail Address__________________________________________________________

Signature_______________________________Date___________________________

Nominations and supporting documents must be received by:
Margie Millner
c/o DARS
300 Butler Farm Rd, Suite 105
Hampton, VA 23666
Phone: 757-865-3117
Email: margie.millner@dars.virginia.gov

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS IS AUGUST 30, 2014
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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.

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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>Aug 8th</td>
<td>Golf Tournament Committee Meeting, DARS Central Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 30th</td>
<td>VRA Award Nominations Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 8th</td>
<td>VRA Annual Benjy Burnett Memorial Golf Tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 12th</td>
<td>VRCEA Training, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 30th</td>
<td>NRA Annual Conference, Des Moines, Iowa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2nd</td>
<td>2014 Collaborations Conference, Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 17th</td>
<td>Annual Membership Business Meeting, Collaborations Conference, Virginia Beach</td>
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<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 Nov 28th, 2014

Send to newsnotes@vra.org
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1/2 PAGE  $24 / issue : $90 / year
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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