Summer has faded, and Fall is emerging with warm colorful leaves. Much like these Fall leaves, VRA has demonstrated warmth and color through the many accomplishments occurring through this third quarter! As I reflect on the VRA activities below, I am filled with pride and reminded of the reason I am dedicated and passionate about this field.

Our annual Collaborations Conference was held at the Norfolk Sheraton from September 10, 2017 through September 12, 2017. This conference is jointly sponsored each year by VRA, VA-APSE, and Virginia ACCSES. At this event, we celebrated twenty years of collaboration, while leaders in the field shared their vision and knowledge, aiding to guide us towards the future in vocational rehabilitation.

The VRA Golf Tournament was another great success this year. This tournament, hosted at Stonehenge Golf and Country Club on October 23, 2017, fostered comradery and a good time for all. A special thank you goes to Kim Shepard, Golf Tournament Chair.

The VRA Gives Back – Special Projects committee, chaired by Lisa Biler, continues in the mission of endorsing VRA’s mission. Our second 2017 recipient, REACHcycles, was honored with our $500.00 donation during their celebratory event at ARCpark in Richmond on August 5, 2017. At this event, REACHcycles presented 22 specially adapted donated three-wheeler cycles (AmTrykes) to area children with disabilities who had been pre-selected by REACHcycles based on desire and need. Let it be noted that the VRA Gives Back – Special Projects was highlighted in the NRA’s Contemporary Rehab Publication nationwide. Go Virginia Rehabilitation Association!

Legislative involvement for VRA has had a focus on surveying membership on advocacy issues, monitoring the need for increased state general funding for VR match, and raising interest in advocacy among members. Sue Collins has worked diligently to enhance and improve our VRA website. Please take time to check out our updated page. Thanks to Sue for bringing VRA forward in this endeavor.

In closing, Dawn Scott has worked tirelessly to improve VRA membership and communications efforts. Through increased email blasts, Newsnotes and Facebook, VRA members are kept current on events with ease of access. VRA could not have come this far without you Dawn! VRA meetings are now offered via VTC and Conference Call modalities to increase accessibility and member involvement.

Each of these committee accomplishments have made up for a Fall abundance of warmth and color. There are so many good things happening with VRA right now. Please consider joining us for our next board meeting on December 8, 2017 from 10:00 AM-12:00PM at the DARS Central Office. Conference Call and VTC options are available for those who don’t want to travel. We look forward to your participation!
VRA Division and Committee News

VRA Membership and Communications -- Submitted by Dawn Scott, Chair

We want to give a huge welcome to our newest VRA Members:

Janice Chory in Falls Church
Ann Marie Fickes in Stanardsville
And, Karen Kahn in Midlothian

We are excited to have you and urge each of you to attend our Board Meetings and find more ways to get involved with this amazing group of collaborators, mentors, trailblazers, and rehab industry leaders!

Our most up to date list on VRA Membership is at 103 members. We have some members who have recently lapsed in membership and so they will get a reminder this month from our Membership Committee to renew and to learn of some new and exciting plans for this Winter and 2018 plans. Stay tuned!

VRA 2018 Elections -- Submitted by Dale Batton, VRA Past President

It is time to elect your 2018 VRA Board Members. After reading the candidate profiles, please cast your vote here: https://www.research.net/r/VRABallot.

2018 VRA President-Elect

William A. Sutton, Jr.

William A. Sutton, Jr. is a Workforce Development professional that has worked in the rehabilitation field for over 10 years. William has held a variety of positions which include project management, staff development and team building. William has held various positions in private, nonprofit as well as government sectors. William is committed to community engagement and capacity building. During his free time, William loves spending time with his family, camping/hiking and volunteering as a youth sports coach. William sits on the Board for Saving Our Youth and is also a member of the Innsbrook Rotary Club. William is also a member of the Virginia Chapter of SHRM. William is very excited about the launch of the Virginia chapter of the Job Placement Division for VRA and looks forward to serving as a best practice model for other states that might be interested in a similar division.
2018 VRA Board Members at Large (Choose 3)

Angela Volkening

Angela Volkening has been working to assist individuals with obtaining employment for most of her professional career. She was an Academic Counselor before moving on to working as a recruiter for a staffing agency. From there she worked as an Admissions and Outreach Counselor with the Job Corps program before moving on to assist individuals who were transitioning out of prison with OAR. Angela then went to work with the Workforce Resource Center where she facilitated work readiness classes and assisted individuals to obtain employment. Currently Angela is working as a Vocational Counselor with The Choice Group. Angela’s professional career as well as her successes reflects that she has a passion for assisting individuals with barriers to employment, find and maintain jobs. She believes that everyone who wants to work can with the right tools and resources in place.

Rhonda Beavers-Chandler

Rhonda Beavers-Chandler began her career in human services counseling individuals with disabilities 27 years ago at Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services (DPCS) in 1990. Rhonda has worked for DARS as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) in the Danville office with both transition and adult caseload for almost 6 years. She is a former board member of the Danville Association for Retarded Citizens (DARC) Hatcher Center and a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) since 2004. Rhonda holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marketing/Business Management from Averett University and a Master of Arts Degree in Marriage & Family Therapy from Liberty University. She serves as a committee member of the Adult & Career Education Advisory Council (ACEC), with Danville Public Schools since 2012. Rhonda has been a member of NRA/VRA and board member of VRCEA since 2013 hosting trainings in her area. Rhonda enjoys reading, watching The Andy Griffith Show, and traveling.
Rhonda would like to serve on the board of VRA because she values the strength and leadership of this professional organization and supports the mission to advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. She also wants to assist the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia with a better quality of life, help strengthen the membership of VRA, continue to host educational programs, trainings, and activities in the community, and advance her professional growth.

Tyler Schreffler

Tyler Schreffler is a Rehabilitation Counselor with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. He is currently serving as a Counselor in the Fairfax DARS Office, primarily engaging with high school aged students with disabilities to identify barriers to independence and successful competitive employment in addition to working with clients to develop and design a plan to overcome such barriers.

Tyler is a passionate young professional who welcomes challenges and enjoys taking on new projects. In his time with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, he has assisted in planning numerous district events and trainings, volunteered to present at resource fairs, and has helped organize training for new Fairfax County school staff and community partners.

Tyler holds a Master’s Degree from the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the George Washington University in Rehabilitation Counseling. In addition, he holds a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology with a minor in special education from James Madison University. Although relatively new to the field of Rehabilitation Counseling, Tyler has a number of years of experience working with both children and adults with disabilities through various educational and employment settings. He hopes that he is able to bring a fresh perspective and new ideas to the field. He hopes to continue to get involved with the VRA, VRCEA, and NRA in order to be a part of the change and the future of Rehabilitation Counseling. Tyler is passionate about continuing to help individuals with disabilities understand barriers and explore opportunities for success.
Hello, my name is Sarah Storck. I have been a Job Placement Counselor with DARS in Roanoke for just under a year and a half. Prior to that I worked as a job coach with RSVP. I have been a member of the NRA and VRA since I came on board with DARS. I am working closely with Dale Batten and William Sutton, as well as other chapters of the NRA, to revitalize the Virginia Job Placement Division, as I believe collaboration on all levels is key to making progress both in our field as a profession as well as specifically for the success of the consumers we serve. I believe we have an opportunity to make an impact through the VRA, particularly through professional education and through events like the Collaborations Conference each year. I would be honored to serve as a member of the board and become a fully contributing member.

VRA Foundation Scholarship – Submitted by Dale Batten

Are you a member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association? Are you or a family member attending college? Are you aware of the VRA Foundation Scholarship?

Each year the Virginia Rehabilitation Association Education Foundation requests applications from interested and eligible members or family members in consideration for the VRA Education Foundation Scholarship. The application may be found on the VRA Website on the Foundation link. Applications are due by June 30th ... so don’t delay!

For additional information contact: Dee Dee Batten Dale.Batten@dars.virginia.gov 804-662-9792

VRCEA Update -- Submitted by Kelly Desclos-Estes, VRCEA President
The leaves are starting to turn, and the air is getting crisp. As we enter fall our thoughts move to reviewing goals, winding up training, and planning for next year.

**Spirit Award:** VRCEA’s 2017 Spirit Award was given to Traci Branch, DARS’ Regional Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Traci has been with DARS for 20 years, and splits her time between the Maywill and Petersburg offices. Her dedication to the field of vocational rehabilitation, as well as to the individuals she serves, is exceptional. Although VRCEA was not able to offer this award at the Collaborations Conference, a special presentation was conducted at a September staff meeting. Please join VRCEA in congratulating Traci on this achievement!!

**Fall Training:** In collaboration with VARL, VRCEA will sponsor an all-day Ethics Training in Richmond Thursday, October 19 at the DARS-Maywill office. Presenters will be Dr. Amy Armstrong and Dr. Chris Reid with VCU, joined by Robin Metcalf, President of The Choice Group. If interested, please refer to the attached flyer for more information. I hope many of you will be able to attend. VRCEA is also working with Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services and Rebecca Lyons with the ABLE-Now, to schedule an overview of ABLE Accounts. This new incentive program will celebrate its one-year anniversary this December, and is not being used to its fullest extent. A training is being coordinated in the Danville area for November.

**Nominations:** VRCEA is in the process of seeking rehabilitation professionals, to provide new insight and leadership to the organization. For years, VRCEA has had a number of long-standing members willing to serve as officers and board members at large. Yet with so many career “rehabers” retiring, our ranks have dwindled significantly. Nominations for President Elect and Board members are being requested until Friday, October 27. We would like to have at least three people from different parts of the state to put on the ballot. However, this is not a requirement. Election ballots will be sent electronically to current members in November. New officers will be announced at our December Board Meeting.

If you are not a VRCEA member, or your membership has expired, we ask that you consider joining or renew your membership. If you are already a member and willing to offer your expertise, I ask that you consider running for a board position. One term is 3 years. Meetings are conducted via teleconference quarterly, with the General Meeting taking place at the Collaborations Conference.

**Dates to Remember:**
- Thursday, October 19: Ethics Training-Richmond, VA
- Friday, October 27: Deadline for Nominations for 2018 Board
- November 1-30: VRCEA Elections
- November: ABLE Account Training-Danville, VA TBD
- Thursday, December 7: VRCEA Board Meeting

**VRAL Committee Report -- Submitted by Roxanne Slaughter, VARL President**

VARL continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The board meetings are followed by a Leadership Chat. The topics presented have been Self-Care as a Leader and Appreciative Inquiry. Thanks to Andrew Stowe and Robin Metcalf for leading the chats. The chats are always informative and fun.
On October 19th, VARL and VRCEA sponsored Appreciative Inquiry and Ethics for Supervisors training at the DARS Maywill office. Presenters for the training were Dr. Christine Reid, Dr. Amy Armstrong, and Robin Metcalf, LPC. We hope that you enjoyed this training and continue to enjoy upcoming trainings to be held in the Spring, 2018!

Other News & Notes

Congratulations!!

Congratulations to Rick Sizemore, who is the recipient of the 2017 R.N. Anderson Leadership Award, presented on September 11, 2017. This award was presented at the Collaborations Conference in Norfolk with around 200 public/private rehabilitation professionals and rehab provider networks in attendance. This prestigious award is given annually to a current member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA) who has demonstrated excellence in services to persons with disabilities. Rick is recognized for his career-long passion for helping people with disabilities become productive citizens through employment and independence. Most recently, in his 10 years as the WWRC Director, he has created and nurtured a living, learning, and work culture at WWRC built around values that: place clients first; take care of customers; appreciate and respect employee contributions, innovation and teamwork; and place high worth on quality of service, performance accountability, and outcomes. Under Rick’s leadership, WWRC has significantly strengthened its Collaborative relationship with DARS/DRS and with local, regional, and statewide workforce partners, routinely sharing stories of success through a podcast series (VR Workforce Studio funded through the WWRC Foundation) that focuses on employment issues for individuals with disabilities, the first of its kind for vocational rehabilitation and one that has received national recognition. Rick joins the ranks of many other dedicated VR professionals who have earned this award since 1961. For a full listing of former R.N. Anderson Award recipients, visit the VRA website.
Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center News and Updates! -- Submitted by Jackie M. Davis, WWRC Representative

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center and AmeriCare Plus Partnership

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) hosted an event in August for AmeriCare Plus to recognize the company’s “Why I Love Team Teal Spirit Award” Grand Prize Winner. WWRC Health Occupations consumer, Odessa Johnson, won the award. AmeriCare’s Vice President for Development, Bill Hurt, attended the ceremony along with AmeriCare Director of Operations, Kim Hurt, and AmeriCare Staff Director, Jaclyn Hostetter. AmeriCare’s Management Team, with representatives from each of the Virginia District’s also attended and brought a plaque as well as a “Publishers Clearinghouse Style” check for Two Thousand Dollars. AmeriCare planned this surprise award along with the Center Administration and Foundation. About 30 people total, from AmeriCare and WWRC, all associated with Odessa, assembled in our main lobby. Odessa was shocked beyond belief to win this prestigious award given only once a year to one employee of AmeriCare. Jaclyn Hostetter presented the check and plaque and noted that Odessa’s essay, out of the extraordinary number of entries, was hands down the clear and compelling winner. Odessa, currently enrolled in Health Occupations at WWRC is nearing completion of her Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) accreditation, but holds a Personal Care Aide Certification, which qualifies her to provide in-home care in the numerous hard-to-fill positions with AmeriCare. In addition to demonstrating extraordinary excellence in her work and winning the Essay Contest, Odessa has been given a permanent assignment with AmeriCare with her anticipated graduation. Odessa has severe hearing loss and utilizes assistive technology (blue tooth technology) to complete core responsibilities of her job. She plans to complete her CNA, work for AmeriCare, and pursue course work that will enable her to become a Registered Nurse. Bill Hurt mailed WWRC after the event and relayed that, “What WWRC is able to help the students achieve is wonderful. I look forward to our continued partnership.” Also meet AmeriCare’s Jacklyn Hostetter who discusses the amazing partnership with WWRC in this month’s feature episode of the VR Workforce Studio Podcast. [http://vrworkforcestudio.com/story-of-odessa-johnson-and-americare-plus/](http://vrworkforcestudio.com/story-of-odessa-johnson-and-americare-plus/)
WWRC Physical Therapy Department Installs SafeGait

A SafeGait®360 Balance and Mobility Trainer has been installed in the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Physical Therapy (PT) Department. This ceiling-mounted rail running the length of the PT gym supports a computerized actuator overhead of the client who is connected to it via a harness. Therapists program system sensitivity for Dynamic Fall Protection, as well as selecting mobility tasks that will be performed while the SafeGait system prevents falls, or assists the movement by partially supporting a specified percentage of body weight. We are very appreciative to the WWRC Foundation’s two-year effort to raise the funds to purchase and install this system, and our Facility Services staff who have supported this effort throughout.

WWRC MTT Graduates Hired by the Hershey Company

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) has just learned that two of our recent Manufacturing Technology Training (MTT) graduates were hired by the Hershey Company. One of them, Chris Hall, just finished a podcast interview where he describes an amazing journey of vocational rehabilitation. Chris reflects on the horrible challenges of trauma as a young person, a life of isolation and how Vocational Rehabilitation provided a pathway out of seclusion to a new life and a career in manufacturing.


Chris Hall with WWRC Behavioral Specialist, Jenny Roudabush
Homestead Resort “Mini” Job Fair

On Wednesday, August 2, Nate Mahanes, Business Development Manager for the Blue Ridge District, in conjunction with Penni Wetherell, Placement Counselor in the Fishersville DARS office, held a “mini” job fair for the consumers of the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center. Nate arranged for the Homestead Resort (Bath County, VA) to come to WWRC from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to meet with potentially eligible consumers interested in a variety of open positions, such as customer service associate, groundskeeper, culinary skills, computer support, housekeeping, and security officer. Representatives from the Homestead were able to answer general employment questions, offer application support, and explain some of the benefits of working at the Homestead, such as living on site for a reduced rate. This event was a perfect example of the business engagement model in action that both WWRC and DARS promote. In an earlier visit this year, John Ferguson, pictured above, had lunch in Woody’s. Little did Brody Stotler, Food Service and Culinary Arts consumer, know that John is a world-renowned Chef with experience, not only at the Homestead, but as a Sous Chef with the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas. Hear John critique the meal and Brody’s comments about not getting chopped in this short special episode podcast.

50,000 Workforce Credentials

Much attention has been focused on Executive Order 23 Establishing the New Virginia Economy and Workforce Initiative. Over the past couple of years, the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center has been embracing a vision of workforce driven curriculum and engaging business. WWRC has worked to be a key contributor to one of the key goals of E023 to help Virginia citizens obtain 50,000 workforce credentials. Joe Ashly and Rick Sizemore were invited to an event at the Patrick Henry Building on Monday of this week for the reading of a resolution by Governor McAuliffe celebrating this accomplishment. Sarah Dunnigan, who now works as the key advisory to the Governor, commented that WWRC’s impact was significant and the evolution of our programs was central to what the Administration was gathered to celebrate.
Editor’s Note – Submitted by Dawn Scott and Kate Gariepy, NewsNotes Editors

VRA wants to thank you for your continued support and advertisement in this quarterly membership newsletter. It is made available to all VRA members, occasionally legislators, and is posted on the website at www.vra.org with exposure to the public. The rates remain the same and are as follows:

¼ a page is $15 per issue or $50 for the full year and ½ a page is $24 per issue or $90 for the full year

A full page is $50 per issue or $175 for the entire year. A billing form is available for completion and should be submitted with payment to VRA. Ads may be purchased throughout the year and should be submitted as a Word document. Article submissions are also appreciated to be in the Word format and pictures are welcome as separate attachments. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact me at dawn.scott@vra.org or phone at 434-326-2185.

Community Events

SAVE THE DATE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2017 GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY JOHNSON CENTER

FUTURE QUEST MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES, AND ADULT PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH THEM

FREE!

You can learn about:

- Options After High School - Employment Strategies
- Career Planning - College Application Process
- Career/Technical Schools - Supports and Resources in College

Pre-registration beginning FALL 2017

For more information, please visit: www.futurequest.gmu.edu

Sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education, Training & Technical Assistance Center and The Northern Virginia Transition Coalition www.nvtransition.org
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
The Choice Group

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

We Help People With Disabilities Live Up To Their Abilities

The Choice Group
4807 Radford Avenue, Suite 106 • Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 278-9151 • Toll-free 877-374-5312
E-mail: info@thechoicegroup.com • www.thechoicegroup.com
At the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, most of our employees can say this at the end of each day. We hire individuals with a variety of occupational skills: vocational rehabilitation counselors, vocational evaluators, disability determination analysts, program specialists and more. Join us in our mission to secure independence, inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities into our communities. Our employees truly make a difference in the lives of Virginians. Visit www.vadsa.org/jobs/default.asp to learn more about careers at DARS.
## 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 8th</td>
<td>10-12pm; VRA Board Meeting, Richmond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 12th</td>
<td>8:30am-9:30am; VRCEA Board Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 22nd</td>
<td>NewsNotes Deadline, Fourth Quarter</td>
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</tbody>
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**Deadline for next issue’s NewsNotes articles is December 22nd, 2017**

Send to newsnotes@vra.org

VRA would like to hear from YOU! What would you like to see included in the NewsNotes? How do you use the NewsNotes and the information provided? What would be useful to you?

Thank you for your time in assisting us!
MEMBERSHIP
Virginia Rehabilitation Association

Training opportunities for professional development at little to no cost

Network and build connections across the state with various providers and specialists/mentors/leaders

Connect and become involved in projects that develop the mission of vocational rehabilitation

Join today! https://www.vra.org/membership/index.html


Like us on Facebook and become part of our public group to receive articles and info on upcoming events and trainings!
https://www.facebook.com/Virginia-Rehabilitation-Association-221447861231371/?ref=page_internal
Virginia Rehabilitation Association

VRA President: Margie Millner
President-Elect: Adair Jensen-Smith
Past President: Dale Batten
Treasurer: Eleanor Williams
Secretary: Ericka Neville
Board Members: Dawn Scott, Tiffany Jenkins, Susan Gaillard, Vera Hensley, Sue Collins, Susan Collins, Tiffany Jenkins

VRCEA President: Kelly Desclos-Estes
VARL President: Roxanne Slaughter
NewsNotes Editor: Dawn Scott, Kate Gariepy

Next Deadline for NewsNotes: December 22nd, 2017
Please Submit NewsNotes articles to Dawn Scott by Email at: newsnotes@vra.org or dawn.scott@vra.org