Hello VRA members and friends! It is hard to believe that the year is half way over already. Summer is winding down and I am looking forward to some (hopefully!) cooler days, as I’m sure you all are. VRA has been very active this year and we have some exciting events this fall to look forward to.

As promised, one of my goals for this year was to diversify our fund raising activities and as such, I am pleased to announce our very first VRA 3K Family Color Walk/Run! Our event will be held on October 27, 2018 from 9:30am – 11am at 8000 Brook Road, Richmond, VA 23227 (St. Joseph’s Villa). Please spread the word (and hope for good weather!) for this event. We are hoping for a great turn out and are looking forward to have a lot of fun – so even if you are not a runner, please consider coming out and volunteering, donating, or just showing your support for VRA.

Additionally, don’t forget about the 21st annual Collaborations Conference to be held September 23rd – 25th in Norfolk this year. The presenters are all lined up and nominations are rolling in for the annual VRA awards. Please consider coming to the conference to support the nominees, VRA, and to learn!

Thanks again to all of the wonderful VRA members, Officers, Board and committee chairs for all of your hard work on all of our wonderful projects. I couldn’t do it without you!
**Committee Members:**
Kate Gariepy – Co-Editor for NewsNotes,
Tuana Smoot-Hairston – new member ‘friend?’
Sue Collins – website and Facebook, info@vra with MK
Rhonda Chandler – VRCEA collaboration and membership ‘friend’?
Tiffany Jenkins – awards; with Sue C also

**Activities to Date:**
NRA membership lists – heard from NRA President that Rachel Muchmore is gone so there is something new and Fred is helping them work up a list for us asap. (UPDATE – I reached out to Fred and his contact for this and they said they would get the lists to us but that was a month ago)
Membership totals are really hard to determine and we are doing our very best but no new emails can go out to welcome new members and I need to share that this is going to be detrimental in the long run to keeping members as I am not able to add them to lists so they have no contact from VRA.
--We also need an updated list with NARL/VARL and VRCEA membership as the Jan report did not have these numbers. I asked NRA for these numbers also to share with VRCEA and VARL.
--We have had a couple ZOOM Membership meetings to discuss Susan G items and also membership responsibility; sadly, not many committee members are attending these meetings..we need volunteers for VRA ‘friends’ and no one but Ericka responded to my email to membership. No update on this and I have not set up any more membership comm meetings due to lack of participation.

**Membership and Communications updates/plans:**
--Plans for 2018? we still want to revisit the possible start up of an ongoing discussion…on Facebook? In the Newsletter? To discuss topics that have been brought up by members to make membership even more fulfilling and to tap into the collaboration of leaders, specialists in the field, mentors, resources that VRA is made up of; also ways to get non-DARS members involved through ‘friends’ each Board Meeting once we have lists to determine these members and using these new members to be ‘friends’ the next year, etc
Update – we have had many discussions with Susan G before she retired to work towards ensuring that DARS continues to support new DAR Counselors with one year paid membership for VRA. We are to reach out to KH to determine. The groundwork was completed by Susan G.
--brown bag trainings? Using VARL and VRCEA committee chairs to coordinate with trainings and collaborating on needs across the divisions for membership and increasing it
--using the flyers and outreach through VTC to reach more members/possible members through other channels and outside of DARS for a diverse association
--utilizing the recent Social Media response though the NRA committee to look into sharing VRA’s social media channels/events/employer highlights/consumer highlights/program highlights/etc
Update – do we have info on VRA events that I can start using email blasts and Facebook posts to promote? If we do not start early we will not get as many participants and or sponsors?

**VRA Awards Committee – Submitted by Tiffany Jenkins, Board Member**

Hello VRA Membership and community partners,

Please take the time to read and nominate a deserving someone! Deadline is one week away --Friday August 24th.
We need your nominations!

Have you thought about recognizing a coworker, consumer or collaborative partner for all their hard work? Well, now is the time! I know you all have someone, a partner, employer, client or coworker that you feel fits the description as noted below and attached. You do NOT need to be a member of NRA/VRA to nominate for the VRA Awards. The VARL award (Emerging Leader) does require the nominator be a member of VARL but if you have someone in mind I am sure a VARL member would be more than happy to support your nomination.

VRA and VARL will be giving out special award recognitions at our upcoming Collaborations Conference September 23, 2018 through September 25, 2018. The conference will be held at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterfront Hotel. Awards will be presented at either the lunch or dinner ceremony.

Below you will find award descriptions which are also attached along with the nomination forms.

Feel free to share with anyone who may have a nomination.

Norman C. Hammond Award: 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

Franz Stillfried Barrier Free Achievers Honor Roll: individual who has exercised notable leadership either in 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

Dr. Roy M. Hoover Award for Outstanding Medical Achievement: honors a physician practicing in Virginia who has given outstanding medical rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities and whose contributions are substantial.

A.R. Dawson Humanitarian 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.

R.N. Anderson Award for Leadership: This award is given to a current member of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association who has demonstrated excellence in services with person with disabilities.

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: 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.

VARL Emerging Leader: The VARL Emerging Leader award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated leadership potential within the field of Vocational Rehabilitation. This emerging leader will have demonstrated a commitment to the advancement and development of exemplary leadership qualities through innovative thinking, leadership of others, effective participation in leadership activities, and/or study leading to a positive impact on the vocational rehabilitation community.

VRA Foundation Scholarship – Submitted by Dale Batten

Are you in school for a VR related course? The Foundation met and they have decided to extend the deadline as they have yet to receive any College Scholarship applications for a qualified applicant. Do you or someone you know take classes or is a full-time student? If so, click the link below to learn more about this scholarship for a qualified applicant!

Also, the Board wants to reach out one more time as this is an incredible opportunity to obtain a $100.00 continuing education grant. They are providing three of these grants this year and they cover training as well for the Collaboration Conference (Sept 2018) as well as other training sessions. The deadline for these are the end of the year.

Please use the link below to apply today or forward to individuals of interest for the 2018 VRA Foundation Scholarship. The deadline to apply is August 31st, 2018.

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

VRA Board Members and Nominations – submitted by Margie Milner

As we near the Fall season of 2018, it is time to start soliciting VRA Board members for upcoming 2019 VRA Board vacancies. We will need to fill 3 Board member positions.

Our very talented Sue Collins has offered to run for the President Elect Position. Thank you Sue! Ericka Neville has also offered to stay on as the Secretary. Thank you Ericka!

So, I am looking to you, the current VRA Board, to help me with securing nominations for the remaining vacancies - 3 Board Members.
If you have a person that you recommend and they accept the challenge, please shoot me an email at margie.millner@dars.virginia.gov with their name/email. If they can provide me a brief bio, I can use that to put on the nomination ballot for dissemination and selection down the road.

I am hopeful to send the ballots out to all VRA members in November, allowing for us to make determination in December - and bring the new VRA Board members on in January 2019.

Thanks in advance for helping me find some good people!

**VRCEA Update -- Submitted by Kelly Desclos-Estes, VRCEA President**

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Virginia Rehabilitation Counselor and Educator Association Division

End of the Year Report

Presented to the VRA Board of Directors

December 20, 2017

VRCEA is planning for several trainings late fall 2018 and spring 2019 which will be free to members and a reasonable costs to non-members. Topics to include: Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), Evidenced-Based Treatments for Autism, and Addiction Crisis Update. Please look for the save the date fliers soon.

Please join us for an open meeting invitation with lights refreshments to meet-and-greet the dedicated VRCEA Board Members and ask how you can be apart of our great association of VRA. We will have a special drawing for those that attend this meeting before the Pre-Conference Training Sessions at the Norfolk Sheraton Waterfront Hotel, Collaborations Conference, on Sunday, September 23, 2018, 1:00 pm -2:00 pm, Greenway Room. VRCEA Recognition and “Spirit Award” will be presented on Monday, September 24, 2018 during the VRA General Membership Meeting.

Look for our Vendor Table (VARL, VRA, VRCEA) for a drawing for 2 new memberships to VRCEA and for a Fall Gift Basket. We look forward to seeing you next month.

**Board Members at Large**
Rhonda Beavers-Chandler, President
Kelly Desclos, Past President
Dawn Mosley, Secretary
Kathleen Shifflett, Treasurer
Tuajuana Smoot-Hairston
VARL Report -- Submitted by Dawn Scott, VARL President

VARL President: Dawn Scott
Past President: Roxanne Slaughter
VARL Pres – Elect: Tiffany Jenkins
Treasurer: Alison Mundy
Secretary: Andrew Stowe
Board Members: Alex Spangler, Naomi Aitken, Sarah Storck, Sarah Cavaliere, Leah Burgess, Nichole Bean

VARL is waiting on NRA lists for the full membership count for 2018. I had reached out to the NRA Pres for an update on these lists and was told I would get a response a month ago. We had a successful May 8th Training in Boosting Moral and on Meeting Management. We had some technical problems at the Petersburg DARS site for VTC but we had a great turnout!

We have plans to determine one more training and want to reach out to VRCEA and VRA for collaboration for a FALL 2018 Training.

We have developed a gmail account to plan to use GOOGLE DOCS to save VARL minutes as well as guidelines and VARL info to share for later Board members and Leaders.

We have been planning on Brown Bag Talks after or before each Board meeting. Our next one is coming up so stay tuned for Aug 22nd and we have a Brown Bag Training with Andrew Stowe (topic to be fully determined)

Other News & Notes

VRA Training -- Shawn Zimmerman, VRA Training Chair

Please join the Virginia Rehabilitation Association and Dr. Rob Froehlich for a training in Ethics. “Using the CRCC Code of Ethics as a Source of Guidance in a Confusing World”

Topics Include:
- Boundaries
- Dual Relationships
- Social Media
- Managing the Political Climate

When: August 30th, 2018 10am to 1pm
Where: 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Henrico, VA 23229
Cost: VRA Members: $0, Non-VRA Members: $25
Registration: https://goo.gl/forms/IweXg9ZxK RcS63g62
3 Hours of Ethics Credits!

Please contact Shawn Zimmerman at shawn.zimmerman@dars.virginia.gov with any questions or concerns.
The disAbility Resource Center Update -- Submitted by Kimberly Lett, Program Coordinator/Deputy Director

DATE: July 11, 2018
RE: VRA NewsNotes
Contact: Kim Lett, klett@cildrc.org or 540-373-2559

In celebration of its 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary this year, the disAbility Resource Center is throwing a ROCK the BLOCK Party on September 8 from noon to 4 p.m. at the dRC in Fredericksburg. Partygoers can have a great time dancing to music from B101.5’s remote broadcast followed by Sterling, a local band with great sound. In between the music, STEP VA, Inc., a nonprofit performing group consisting of children and young adults with disabilities, will perform.

The dRC has brought together a conglomeration of kids’ games and some for the adults including NSWC Credit Union’s money machine and yard-size checkers, chess, Connect Four and Beer Pong. A not-so-level wheelchair obstacle course, test drives on modified vehicles from Mobility Works, an art show competition, sight and hearing tests from the Lions Club, a disability awareness cache course, and vendors of all kinds round out the day. Anyone wishing to submit art for the art show should contact Sally Cooney-Anderson at sallycooneyanderson@yahoo.com. Submission deadline is August 19, 2018.

Vendors for the event are still welcome. If you have a business and want to share your wares or a nonprofit who wants to share information, contact the dRC at 540-373-2559 or drc@cildrc.org. Vendors costs are $15 for non-profits and $25 for for-profit businesses.

The dRC culminates its 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary celebration with a gala on October 20, 2018 at 6 p.m., at the Fredericksburg Expo Center. The evening includes an elegant served dinner with complimentary wine, dancing, and a live and silent auction. The dRC will be honoring supporters of the dRC and Caregiver of the Year at the event. Tickets for this event are $85/person or $150/couple with early bird tickets available for $75/person and $140/couple until September 8. All proceeds from the gala and Rock the Block party will be used to support the dRC’s programs and services.

Well-sibling Syndrome is the topic being addressed by a Spotsylvania County Girl Scout for her Gold Award. She is being supported in her project by the dRC. A Gold Award is the highest award earned by a Girl Scout. Well-sibling Syndrome is the psychological understanding and adjustment of healthy siblings in relation to their brother’s or sister’s disability and it affects both children and adults. Educating parents, teachers, providers and siblings themselves is the core mission of the Gold Award Project. Summer events for siblings, ages 10 to 14, have been planned. For more information or to register for an event, contact Jocelyn at 540-786 - 9527 or sibssquad2018@gmail.com.
dRC staff are again active planning partners in two conferences this fall. *Pathways to the Future* will be presented by the Fredericksburg Area Council on Transition (FACT) on November 10 and *Autism: Putting the Puzzle Together Across the Lifespan* will be presented by the Rappahannock Area Autism Council on October 13. *Pathways* is a bi-annual, day-long event addressing the many issues surrounding transition from school to adult life for students with disabilities and consists of approximately 25 to 30 breakout sessions, lunch, and vendors. There is no cost to attend *Pathways*. RAAC’s conference is annual and features keynote speaker D.J. Svobada who was diagnosed at age three with autism spectrum disorder and now is a speaker, artist, author of three books, and creator of Imagifriends. There is a $30/person registration for the RAAC conference. For more information contact Kim Lett at 540-373-2559 or klett@cildrc.org.

Future trainings in the works at the disAbility Resource Center include American Sign Language basics, Medicaid Waivers, Social Security, and Chronic Disease Self-Management classes. For dates and times, link to the dRC’s website, www.cildrc.org or the dRC Facebook page, https://facebook.com/dRCVA.

The mission of the dRC is to help people with disabilities of all ages to live as independently as possible in their community. Founded in 1993, the dRC is a Center for Independent Living (CIL) that promotes community inclusion and access for all in the greater Fredericksburg area. With community support, the dRC will continue to inform, guide, and help people with disabilities and their families and to help the community realize the ABILITIES of individuals with disabilities for many years to come.

**Congratulations!!**

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**BATTEN NAMES DIRECTOR OF DARS’ DIVISION OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES**

(Richmond, Va) – Dale “Dee Dee” Batten has been named as Virginia’s new director for the Division of Rehabilitative Services, which offers vocational rehabilitation to assist people with disability for prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.

Batten, a Midlothian resident, was appointed by the Commissioner Kathryn A. Hayfield of the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Service. She assumed her new role effective Aug. 10, succeeding Hayfield. As director, Batten will oversee the federal-state-funded program that employs some 400 people in 31 offices across the Commonwealth to serve 30,000 youth and adults annually.
For the past three years, Batten has coordinated a statewide business development strategy to match DRS job candidates to employers, in alignment with the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. WIOA is designed to help job seekers, including those with disabilities, access employment, education, training and support services to succeed in the labor market and to provide employers with the skills workers they need to complete in the global economy.

“I am confident that Dee Dee will continue the great work and collaboration she is so well known for in the Commonwealth’s vocational rehabilitation community, “Hayfield said.

Batten has been with DARS since 1984 and previously served as regional director for DRS in central Virginia. During the Warner administration, she assisted in the development of the Virginia Career Readiness Certificate. She holds a master’s degree in vocational rehabilitation counseling and bachelor’s degree in vocational rehabilitation services from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center News and Updates! -- Submitted by Jackie M. Davis, WWRC Representative

WWRC Awarded Six-Year Accreditation from COE

In April 2018, Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) received official notification from the Council on Occupational Education (COE) that the Commission of COE met to take on accreditation and reaffirmation matters. At this meeting, the Commission reviewed the WWRC Self-Study Report, Team Report, Institutional Response Report, and other supporting documents for reaffirmation of accreditation. The Commission awarded WWRC six years of accreditation, which is the highest honor bestowed upon an educational institution.

Reaffirmation denotes that an institution has maintained quality programs, undergone an extensive self-study and team review process, and has continued to meet the Commission’s Standards and Conditions for Accreditation. Accreditation is granted annually with subsequent reaffirmation scheduled for two to six years. Each institution must substantiate its accreditation each year through an annual report which reflects the current status of the institution.

Alex Haddad – WWRC’s First Student to meet VA DOE Requirements for “Highly Qualified” Paraprofessional

Alex has been enrolled in the Childcare/Teacher’s Assistant ETO training program. Throughout her program at WWRC and at her community training site, Wilson Elementary School, Alex has demonstrated consistent growth with hard and essential skills. Throughout her program she participated in instruction and attained the following certificates that are preferred in Childcare employment settings: ServSafe Food Handler, Customer Service, CPR and First Aid, a Bronze level Career Readiness Certificate and Virginia Preservice Training for Childcare certification. Over the past 12
weeks, Alex has worked diligently with ESS Instructor, Sonia Costa, with Summer Roach’s support, to prepare for the Paraprofessional Exam. Alex was able to attain the designation of highly qualified Paraprofessional by passing the Paraprofessional Exam which is a formal state assessment. This demonstrates that she has the knowledge and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics.

Many school divisions throughout the state of Virginia providing instruction through Title 1, Part A funds are struggling to provide support for their current Paraprofessionals to become “highly qualified.” Alex’s ETO training program, the certificates she attained, and her diligent effort to prepare for and pass the Paraprofessional Exam have allowed her to meet the criteria sought by schools throughout the state of Virginia. To Hear Alex’s Story Click Here

Assistive Technology Training

As WWRC celebrated Occupational Therapy (OT) month in April, we were pleased to welcome Brian Evans to the Assistive Technology (AT) Training as our guest speaker. Brian is successfully employed as Assistant Vice-President and Business Consultant for Bank of America. He shared his journey of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), emphasizing the value of his VR counselor and WWRC services in helping him return to work and regaining his sense of self-worth and confidence to move forward following a catastrophic accident. He demonstrated his use of AT in the workplace and how he approaches everyday tasks that allow him to be self-sufficient.

Also attending were thirteen DRS Rehabilitation and Placement Counselors, as well as Employment Resource Service Specialists. Participating staff represented the Alexandria, Chesterfield, Harrisonburg, Henrico, Lynchburg, Norton, Richmond, Roanoke, and South Boston Offices. In addition, three WWRC staff members participated.

AT Training sessions included general information, awareness activities, case studies, and hands-on, interactive experiences.
Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Career Day

On July 11 and 12, 2018, the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) program at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center hosted the first Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Career Day at WWRC. This innovative event was an exciting opportunity for 21 potentially eligible DARS consumers from throughout the state of Virginia to explore employment opportunities. According to Jessica Stehle, statewide Pre-ETS Coordinator, the day was a huge success and really hit the mark in delivering, in part, the five required services outlined in WIOA for Pre-ETS students. Below are some great photos of students involved in job shadowing Speech-Language Pathology, Food Service, Automotive, Public Safety, and yes, even Podcasting was among the many experiences in which they participated.

Valley Computer Numerically Controlled “Dream It. Do It.” Academy

During the week of June 4-8, six students from Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center's (WWRC’s) Manufacturing Technology Training were invited to participate in the Valley Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) “Dream It. Do It.” Academy. With a total of ten students in the class, the learning environment was beneficial for WWRC students interested in shaping their career pathway toward a position as a CNC Operator.

Students spent the week machining a puzzle from metal with extremely tight tolerances. Matt Campbell, a WWRC student, returned to the campus and rejoined the MTT Class during this cohort cancer-free following extensive surgery and treatment. Matt’s parents contacted Rick Sizemore, WWRC Director, several months ago with the news that Matt had to withdraw from his vocational training due to cancer treatment. They relayed that Matt was not upset about the cancer, but more concerned about having to leave WWRC with concerns about not being able to finish. Matt’s WWRC Rehabilitation Counselor, Kevin Wray, reassured the family that Matt could return and rejoin the program at any time once he recovered from his medical procedures. Matt returned and resumed his classwork and graduated from the CNC Academy receiving the class’s highest ranking for completion of the complex project. A video is attached with Matt demonstrating the project at his graduation. He soon leaves WWRC with WIOA recognized
workforce credentials and the training necessary to enter the workforce. Matt’s mom wrote to the Center that she is eternally grateful for the program, its positive impact on Matt, and the pathway to employment MTT has created.

Virginia “Dream It. Do It.” Academy

During the week of June 11-15, the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) in conjunction with the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) hosted the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities “Dream It, Do It” Water Purification Academy in the Manufacturing Technology Training (MTT) classroom. There were nine consumers that participated in this academy with mentoring by the current five students from the MTT class. This met the goal of 100% census utilization, with two extra.

Some of the activities the consumers participated in were wiring of a basic solar power storage system, robot spider kit assembly, laser engraving, business acumen, 3-D printer usage, Computer Numeric Control simulator exposure, and a tour of McKee Foods, a local plant. However, the highlight of the academy was the water purification activity which exposes the consumer to the process flow of a product being produced in a manufacturing plant operation.

Class included a review of general manufacturing processes, types of associated employment predicted in the near future, effects of air pressure on water vapor and volume, simple polymer creation and effects of mechanical advantage. A review of potable water supplies culminated in the filtering and bottling of water, applying class created labels, and packaging the finished product.

The agenda also included a visit to a local manufacturer, Provides USA in Verona, VA, followed by a trip to McCormick’s Farm to review how horsepower was created via waterwheel and gears.
Hershey Boot Camp

In June, the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board (SVWDB) hosted an integrated “Hershey Boot Camp” at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) for individuals with and without disabilities interested in manufacturing. Hershey, in Stuarts Draft, recently incorporated a production apprenticeship, the Industrial Manufacturing Technician, an 18-month apprenticeship for the increasing skills required in entry manufacturing jobs.

Partnering with the SVWDB and the Valley 2 Virginia apprenticeship grant staff, the Hershey Production Boot Camp was designed to increase quality and retention of production hires. This innovative two-week paid immersion into manufacturing is custom designed to provide the skills and soft skills training needed for employment and registered apprenticeship at Hershey, making it an enticing option for Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) consumers, recent WWRC Manufacturing Technology Training (MTT) graduates, and other adults with a high school degree or GED. These intensive camps are bridging the gap between the Shenandoah Valley’s available workers and the employers ready and willing to grow their own skilled and motivated workforce.

Microsoft Imagine Academy

The vast majority of new jobs created in the next five years will require technology skills. Providing Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) students with Microsoft Imagine Academy (MIA) resources ensures our students have access to the latest technology training and validates new skills with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act industry-recognized Microsoft certifications. Two of the areas being introduced into the Business and Information Technology training area are the Microsoft Office Specialist certification and the Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA) certification.

In order for our teachers to differentiate themselves in the education arena, and prepare to teach the highly technical skills needed to successfully pass one of these certifications, they need to become a Microsoft Certified Educator (MCE). Two of our teachers, David Holmes and Matt Hooven, have recently completed the process to become Microsoft Certified Educators. The MIA and WWRC partnership was facilitated by Kathy West-Evans of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation in conjunction with disABLEDperson, Inc.
Zach Fuchs was the first WWRC student to pass the certification assessment for the MTA in Cybersecurity Fundamentals.

National Employment Team Summit

WWRC was invited to attend the National Employment Team (NET on twitter @theNETeam) Summit at GM Headquarters in Detroit Michigan the first week in July. Our National Consortium of State Operated Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centers sponsored the travel for WWRC staff, Dr. Kurt Sprenger, to attend and discuss WWRC’s programs along with other NET points of contact. The meeting which is facilitated by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR @csavr) has been opening up opportunities to highlight our nations VR Training Centers to showcase the kinds of services that have evolved here to support WIOA. It was truly exciting to see our programs alongside many other states that are focusing on business engagement, skills gains and workforce credentials. This meeting opened up a direct opportunity with a GM facility in Martinsburg where they have over 100 forklift operators on staff, in addition to showcasing our services and alignment with the Federal Department of Labor’s (DOL) requirements for pre-apprenticeship training.

Federal Department of Labor Audit

We were very fortunate to have staff from the Federal Department of Labor (DOL) at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) on Tuesday, June 26. They were on campus reviewing the Valley 2 Virginia Grant and its impact on apprenticeships. Our students from Manufacturing Technology Training (MTT) offered a review of their experiences to the DOL staff. DOL staff relayed that they would like to showcase the work being done at WWRC for National Apprenticeship Week during October.

The work at WWRC was recognized through collaboration with the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board and our local Hershey plant. The WWRC MTT training program has a curriculum designed to prepare students to take the nationally recognized Manufacturing Specialist and Manufacturing Technician 1 credentials, as well as meeting industry needs. The curriculum has been pre-approved by the DOL as meeting the educational requirements of the Manufacturing Technician apprenticeship. A former graduate from the WWRC MTT program was hired at our local Hershey plant, and subsequently became their first Manufacturing Technology apprentice. This model of a training program curriculum based on a nationally recognized credential leading to related significant gains in employment fully
meets goals of the WIOA. This model is successful and augments additional goals of the WIOA through collaboration with business and industry partners such as the local Workforce Development Board and Hershey.

**Employers Engagement Forum**

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) hosted their summer graduation Employers Engagement Forum (EEF) to facilitate WIOA requirements of business engagement between upcoming graduates and businesses that have the potential to employ students statewide. During this event, approximately 50 students attended presentations by eight potential employers from a variety of career clusters. Presentations focused on business expectations for employees which included hard and essential skills, the hiring process, hours and work schedule, starting salary and benefits, locations throughout the state. WWRC also enjoyed feature presentations from Sam Rothrock, DARS Fishersville, and Bret Hart, DARS Harrisonburg, to facilitate “Your next steps to employment through DARS.” Each session was extremely professional and informative with a Question and Answer session to follow.

Employers represented at the EEF included:

- Augusta Health (Cara Graham, Recruiter)
- James Madison University (Lavern Dillard, Office Manager of the Landscaping Department and Jason Saunders, Human Resources Consultant)
- American Hardwood Industries (Dan Cumbo, Human Resources)
- Food Lion (Jeff Conner, Stuarts Draft Store Manager)
- Aramark USA (Angela Carrodeguas, Office Services Supervisor)
- McDonough Toyota (Lyle Lotts, Service Manager)
- VDOT (Marcie Johnson, Human Resource Analyst II)
- Community Childcare (Beth Orebaugh, Executive Director)
SAVE THE DATE!

The Virginia Rehabilitation Association invites you to participate in our first annual VRA 3K Family Color Walk/Run!!!

Come and SHOW US YOUR COLORS while also supporting a great cause!

When: October 27, 2018 from 9:30am – 11:00am

Where: St. Joseph’s Villa, 8000 Brook Rd, Richmond, VA 23227

Who: ANY and ALL are welcome!

Stay tuned with more details to come regarding the event in regards to how to register, donate, sponsor and volunteer for this event

VRA is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all persons with disabilities
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/apps/DSAJobs/Default.aspx](http://www.vadsa.org/apps/DSAJobs/Default.aspx) to learn more about careers at DARS.
VRA Events Calendar

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

- **July 1st**: NewsNotes Deadline, Second Quarter
- **Sept 23-25th**: Collaborations in Virginia Beach
- **Sept 24th**: VRA Annual Board meeting
- **Oct 1st**: NewsNotes Deadline, Third Quarter
- **Jan 1st**: NewsNotes Deadline, Fourth Quarter

**Deadline for next issue’s NewsNotes articles is October 1st, 2018**

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


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Next Deadline for NewsNotes: October 1st, 2018

Please Submit NewsNotes articles to Dawn Scott by Email at: newsnotes@vra.org or dawn.scott@vra.org