



NewsNotes

A Quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association
2007 Third Quarter, July-September No. 27

Presidential Pondering by Alison Mundy

Happy Summer 07! It's officially here and I hope everyone is going to have the time to get away and relax and enjoy.

Our VRA team is doing a great job this year and we continue to strive for enhancement of our organization, the effectiveness with which we improve and grow our chapters, our membership and our communities, partners and our disabled citizens to continue with the advocacy for disabled.

VARL and VRCEA chapters are diligently working and expanding their membership and activities and have separate works in the NewsNotes. President Jim Hall, Department of Rehabilitative Services Winchester office for VARL and Susan Cianfaglione, Portsmouth Department of Rehabilitative Services office for VRCEA can answer questions you may have concerning the respective divisions.

Also, plans are underway for our annual Golf tournament, which is scheduled for September 18, 2007 at Hunting Hawk Club. If you are interested in forming a team, assisting in obtaining sponsors for the tournament and various holes, have time to volunteer on the day of the tournament or can do door prizes, please contact Howard Green at jhgreen@vcu.edu or 804-828-9548 (w), log on to our website or contact me if you would like further information.

Legislative Committee and the advocacy efforts as represented by David Williams, VRA Legislative Liaison, continue. Please read the report in this NewsNotes provided by Ericka Umbarger, chair of our legislative committee for her comments.

Our education committee has always worked diligently in providing opportunities to continue lifelong learning to keep rehabilitation issues and best practices information available. We are committed to continuing training opportunities to our members at reasonable costs. VRA works closely with and in compliance with The Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) to provide trainings approved and certified for CRC credits. Trainings are offered state wide and throughout the year and info can be found on our website at: www.VRA.org

We are very excited by several training opportunities that are in the works and you can find reference to these session in our Mark Your Calendar inserts along with a report from our committee chair, Donna Grumiaux. If you have an idea for training, please don't hesitate to contact our committee members or any member of the board of directors. Additionally if you are in a part of the state that is not typically provided with training, if you have an interest in working on this committee don't hesitate to contact Donna. We are always looking for locations to provide training and your assistance could prove crucial in that development.

Presidential Pondering (continued on page 2)



Presidential Pondering (Continued from page 1)

SAVE THE DATE: exciting upcoming training: Scott D. Miller, Ph.D.
"The Heart and Soul of Change:
What Works in Counseling"
Dec 12, 2007

Please go to our website: www.VRA.org for details and plan to attend. What an awesome speaker and opportunity.

Membership remains a vital component of our successes and we appreciate your continued membership and support to VRA. We are looking at ways to increase membership and hope to have previous members rejoin and get involved. Let's work together to talk about VRA, what we are all about and the benefits of membership. Each of us can work on membership and together we can work to see our state chapter become the largest in the NRA Region.

RCEA – the new division for Counselors is up and running in our state. Susan Cianfaglione is the President of this new division and has done a wonderful job with her committee members. Please consider joining this chapter and participating in the planning and growth of this important division, a vital resource for counselors in the field of rehabilitation.

The development of a mentorship program for new counselors and service providers in the field of Rehabilitation is now up and running. Training has been provided to potential mentors and several matches have been made at this point. A big thanks to Margaret Gillespie, Susan Green and Susan Burns for their efforts and coordination of the training and to Robert Froehlich of GWU for his provision of the training. Any thoughts, comments or willingness to become a mentor from our members is welcome and I challenge your involvement in this exciting opportunity. Remember you don't have to be counselor to be a great Mentor. We all have experience and knowledge and leadership comes from many avenues, providing a whole picture of Rehabilitation to new counselors can be found in many venues.

Encouraging leadership at all levels and providing opportunities for its members and other interested parties in developing these skills is a true asset to our work and success and our VARL division is doing a superb job in this area. They continue to offer great training opportunities and have collaborated with VRA in offering joint training. Questions should be sent to Jim Hall, president at: Jim.Hall@drs.virginia.gov

The Mid Atlantic Ad Hoc Committee has been successful in being active and strong in their exploration and commitment in the revitalization of the NRA Mid Atlantic Region. Bonnie Hawley, Department of Rehabilitative Services field office in Manassas, VA is our representation to the NRA Board as a member at large. At this time the committee is looking to fill their election slate and the ballots should be coming out at anytime.

Presidential Pondering (continued on page 4)

Let VRA Work For You



VRA Education



The VRA Education committee has many planned trainings in the works. We continue to plan and schedule trainings that would be beneficial for Rehab professionals. The trainings that have been scheduled are as follows:

- 7/23/07- Engaging the Autistic Consumer in the Rehabilitative Process- DRS Central office, Richmond, VA
- 8/10/07- Exploring Connections between Race and Class- Dept. of Forestry, Charlottesville, VA
- 12/12/07- The Heart and Soul of Change: What Works in Counseling- Scott Miller

Previous Trainings include:

- 5/23/07- More than a Lunch: Best Practices for Working with Employers

Best regards,

Samantha L. Ruppert,

DRS

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Suite 370-A

Richmond, VA 23230

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Presidential Pondering

(Continued from page 2)

As our work continues, please consider getting involved in VRA efforts. We have numerous committees and opportunities to collaborate and your involvement will insure our continued growth and success! If you are interested in becoming involved you may contact me or any other officer and board member. Our remaining Board Meeting dates for 2007 are: 7/13, 12/7. We will have our annual membership meeting at the Collaboration Conference in September/October at Virginia Beach. Please refer to NewsNotes for locations and other important information as well as our website: www.VRA.org which we keep up to date with important information and links.

Please know that I am available to you and feel free to contact me if you have questions, concerns, ideas or anything else I may be of assistance to you.

Email: mundyam@adelphia.net
Office phone: 540-535-1810
Department of Rehabilitative Services,
Winchester Field Office.

Submitted by Alison Mundy

Calling All VRA Members!!

Calling all VRA Members – VRA is looking for a few good men and women. ***We will have openings for a President Elect, Secretary and three Board positions.*** The election will be held early this fall and the winners will take office in January 2008. If you are interested in getting involved in your professional organization or want more information about the responsibilities and benefits please call or email Margaret Gillispie at 434-947-6721 or margaret.gillispie@drs.virginia.gov.

Submitted by Margaret Gillispie

The Annual Golf Tournament Needs Your Help

The VRA annual golf tournament will be on Tuesday, September 18th at Hunting Hawk Golf Course. You can see details at the VRA web site (www.vra.org).

Based on feedback and as well as participating in other golf tournaments, we would like to offer a prize of special gift to all golfers. For example we would like to give each golfer a sleeve of balls (3) when they arrive for the tournament. Here is where you can help. If you could find a sponsor or donate some balls it would be appreciated.

We still need your help in securing potential teams as well as corporate hole sponsors. If you have contacts with businesses or organizations please see if they would like to buy a sign for \$125.00 or donate money for gifts.

This is a great way to get involved as well as raise money for our chapter. Thanks you. Please contact Howard Green at 804-379-1286 or at jgreen1949@verizon.net if you can help or need more information. Again visit the web site for details regarding the tournament and sample letter for recruiting sponsors. THANKS

Submitted by Howard Green

VRA Communications Committee

Check the latest news on the VRA website at www.vra.org

There are several new training announcements, a WWRC news release on a water Project, VARL newsnotes, among others. In the legislative section, there is a VOPA survey and other legislative news.

Thanks for accepting your notices electronically.

Submitted by Mary Kaye Johnston



VRA Membership Is Growing

As we enter the summer growing season we realize that VRA membership continues sprout with new initiatives to encourage you and others to join and maintain your VRA/NRA membership. Our state now has 154 members. Our state chapter is second only to the Pennsylvania Chapter in total membership in the Mid-Atlantic Region. We have eight student memberships in Virginia. We certainly are happy that we have you students. However we certainly would like that number to increase. We know that most people join N.R.A. as a result of direct face to face contact with another member. I encourage you to speak to other students and professionals in order to invite them to become VRA members. Students are able to join at the reduced student rate and then after they graduate they are able to join or renew their membership for a one year period following their graduation for half of the regular price.

The National Rehabilitation Association has advocated for consumers with disabilities and professionals in vocational rehabilitation since 1925. NRA has been continuously active since that time in order to seek best practices in the field of VR. We continue to seek these ideals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. We ask that you learn if people you know in VR are not members ask them to join. If they are members lead them to become more actively involved in our professional organization.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding membership of VRA please contact me. I am Jack Smith. My email address is Jack.Smith@drs.virginia.gov If you need any info or literature regarding membership I will be happy to supply it to you or get it from NRA. Have a great summer.

Submitted by Jack Smith

Recent ADA Court Decision On Mental Retardation

This recent US Court of Appeals decision is cause for concern!

Court Decision: "Mental retardation" is not a disability under ADA

In the case of Littleton v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, in an unpublished opinion from May 11, held that an individual with mental retardation did not have a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

With guidance from the Alabama Independent Living Center, Mr. Littleton interviewed for a job as a cart-push associate at Wal-Mart. However he was not allowed to have his job coach accompany him into the interview, and he was ultimately not hired. While acknowledging his intellectual disability, in the Court's analysis, Littleton, who receives Social Security benefits because of his disability, was found not to be substantially limited in major life activities.

The following are excerpts from the court decision:

"We do not doubt that Littleton has certain limitations because of his mental retardation. In order to qualify as 'disabled' under the ADA, however, Littleton has the burden of proving that he actually is, is perceived to be, or has a record of being substantially limited as to 'major life activities' under the ADA. "It is unclear whether thinking, communicating, and social interaction are 'major life activities' under the ADA."

The entire court opinion is available as a pdf at:
<http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov/unpub/ops/200512770.pdf>
 <<http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov/unpub/ops/200512770.pdf>>

SOURCE: AAPD
 Alan D. Wooten
 Director, Mental Retardation Services
 Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
 703-324-4460 office
 703-324-4429 fax
alan.wooten@fairfaxcounty.gov

Submitted by Shirley Lyons



VARL

The VARL mission is to develop, improve, and strengthen leadership skills and practices in both public and private rehabilitation organizations.

Summer is here and it's hot! But it's not any hotter than the growing membership and activities of VARL. At 50 members, VARL continues to be the largest state chapter of the National Association for Rehabilitation Leadership in the country. A lot of people continue to believe that VARL is only for supervisors and administrators. When workshops are advertised, it never fails, someone asks, "Can anyone attend this?" The answer is "YES!" VARL recognizes that in order for the field of rehabilitation to continue to be effective in supporting the needs of persons with disabilities, we need people in all positions in all organizations/agencies, both public and private, to be involved in the process and delivery. Henry Kissinger said, "The task of a leader is to get his people from where they are to where they've never been." Isn't this what we want to achieve with and for our consumers? Doesn't that give all rehabilitation staff the opportunity to lead? To be a leader takes initiative. It can clearly come from the rehabilitation counselor or employment specialist or rehabilitation supervisor but support staff also have tremendous potential to encourage consumers and model the way. We are all learning how to be leaders and will continue to do so. The other thing about summer is that the rain and sun have everything growing. Are you? Ray Kroc (of McDonald's fame) said, "As long as you're green, you're growing. As soon as you're ripe, you start to rot." So keep learning and growing and never stop!

Call for Nominations! VARL members will be voting for President-Elect, Secretary, and two Board members for 2008. If you are interested in running; would like to nominate someone, or have questions about what is involved, contact Susan Green, Past President. Being on the Board is a great way to expand your network and 'grow' your leadership skills in a supportive environment.

About 25 people attended our June 14 workshop, "Leadership is Like an Earthquake" with Shirley Lyons as our presenter. The workshop evaluations were excellent and people took away very useful information about change and communication that will have a positive impact on their professional growth and personal lives.

Leadership Chats this year have been focusing on going into more depth and discussion on the Seven Habits from Stephen Covey's book, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People". Participation at chats in several geographic locations has been good as people dwell more on Be Proactive, Begin With the End in Mind, and Put First Things First. Although no chat dates were available when this article went to print, there will be more throughout the year focusing on Habits 4 - 7. You may contact the following VARL members to be on a chat notification list: Staunton/Charlottesville area: Naomi.aitken@drs.virginia.gov. Richmond area: Susan.green@drs.virginia.gov. Fairfax area: Suzanne.simpson@drs.virginia.gov. Lynchburg/Roanoke area: Margaret.gillispie@drs.virginia.gov.

Save the date! Speaking of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, on October 23, VARL along with STEPS, Inc. will be sponsoring this workshop in the Roanoke area. The presenter is Sabrina Harmon, of NISH, who is a certified 'Covey' trainer. Registration will begin later this summer. Contact Margaret.gillispie@drs.virginia.gov for more information.

We hope you will join VARL at the Collaborations Conference in Virginia Beach in welcoming back Dr.

VARL Leaders Emerge! (continued on page 7)



VARL Leaders Emerge (Continued from page 6)

Amy Armstrong who will present a double session on Monday afternoon on the topic of "Believe, Choose, Do: Setting Yourself up for Personal & Professional Success". Amy is always fun and insightful and will help you become a stronger leader. Join us also for a leadership chat on Monday on Stephen Covey's "8th Habit".

Please feel welcome to join us at our Board meetings. In 2007 we have been moving our meetings around so more members might be able to attend. For our August 9 meeting, we are trying out the use of videoconferencing in hopes of having more of our members as well as interested others able to participate statewide. There will be sites in Richmond, Fishersville, as well as Northern VA and Tidewater. Feel free to contact Susan Green (contact info below) for a site near you. After the August 9 meeting, there are meetings on October 11 – Charlottesville and December 6 – Richmond. All meetings begin at 10:00 a.m. and adjourn by noon or 12:30. We hope to see you there whether you are a VARL member or not.

Let the Leader in You Emerge in 2007!

Submitted by Susan Green

804-726-1901,

susan.green@drs.virginia.gov

VARL 2007: President – Jim Hall,

President Elect – Shirley Lyons,

Past President – Susan Green,

Treasurer – Eleana Boyer,

Secretary – Bonnie Hawley,

Board Members

Naomi Aitken, Teri Bertsch, Ned Campbell,

Marie Gibson, Doug James, Amy Mosher

WWRC Canine Helps Clients

Fishersville, VA – Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center is privileged to have a highly trained assistance dog from Canine Companions for Independence. Cardin, a 2 1/2 year old black Labrador Retriever is trained to be a facility dog and works with clients at WWRC alongside Occupational Therapy Director, Kelly Lum.

Cardin completed six months of Advanced Training at the Northeast Regional Canine Companions for Independence center in Farmingdale, New York, where he learned forty-four different commands. After being matched with Kelly Lum at WWRC, they completed a two-week educational course familiarizing Kelly on how to work with Cardin. Having been at WWRC since November 2006, Cardin now works with several clients on both occupational and physical therapy and also has the capability to work with speech pathology clients. CCI regulations limit all Canine Companions to four 45 minute client sessions per day to protect the dogs from being overworked. When it comes to different ways of helping clients during those sessions, Kelly says that "We are only limited by our imaginations."

Facility Dogs are usually paired with rehabilitation professionals, caregivers or educators and utilize a Canine Companion to improve the mental, physical or emotional health of those in their care. These facilities include schools, rehabilitation programs and psychiatric programs. The dogs are used to break the monotony of physical therapy exercises, to provide rewards and motivation in an educational setting, and many other facility uses. Facility Dogs are able to carry out most of the commands of a Service Dog or Skilled Companion.

The work of a Facility Team is varied and is geared toward the range of settings at which a Facility Dog

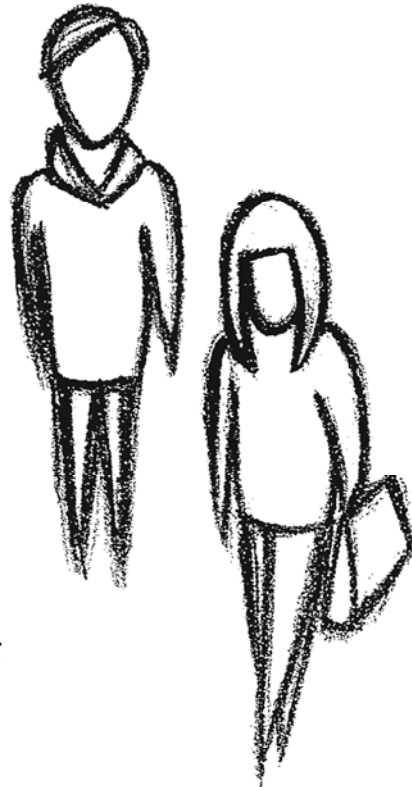
WWRC Canine (Continued on page 9)

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WWRC Canine (Continued from page 7)

might work. For example, a team working at a physical therapy center might engage patients in simple exercises, such as throwing a ball for the dog to retrieve. A team working at a program for people with developmental disabilities might focus on scheduled activities such as feeding time for the dog, or grooming. Such experience can be helpful in broadening daily living skills.

Perhaps the greatest value of a Facility Dog is the unconditional love and attention the dog gives to the clients and patients who encounter it. For a person in recovery or in extended care, the mere presence of a friendly, safe, clean dog can be an uplifting experience.

About WWRC

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center is the first state-owned and operated comprehensive rehabilitation center in the country. WWRC provides comprehensive medical, assistive technology and vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities to help them gain increased independence and employment. WWRC is a division of the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services. For more information about WWRC, visit www.wwrc.virginia.gov

Submitted by Keith W. Burt

The Virginia Rehabilitation Foundation

Many of you and your family members are making plans for college or taking a class or two to further your education and professional development. *VRA members and their family are eligible to apply for scholarship assistance from the VRA Foundation.* Applications are being accepted NOW until June 30th. Send applications to: William M. Burnside, P.O. Box 1085, Locust Grove, VA. 22508

A copy of the scholarship award application can be found on the VRA website at www.vra.org on the Foundations page.

Submitted by Mary Kay Johnston



Send VRA News for the October 2007 issue by **8/1/07**. Please send all the VRA articles by email to Steven Sommer at steve.sommer@drs.virginia.gov.

Please visit www.vra.org for up to date information on what is happening in VRA!

Run An Ad in the VRA NEWNOTES

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\$ 24 / issue : \$ 90 / year
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\$ 50 / issue : \$ 175 / year

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Call for VRA Nominations for 2007 Awards

Is it early? YES! It is time to think about recognizing your colleagues, businesses, and successful customers for their award winning EXCELLENCE? YES!

This year, in an effort to get more nominations as well as nominations in all categories, the Awards Committee will be accepting nominations from January 1, 2007 – August 24, 2007. The award categories, descriptions of each, and nomination for are located within your NewsNotes. Take the time right now and each month to follow to nominate someone you feel is deserving of an award.

Nominations and supporting documents must be submitted by email/fax/mail to:

Eleanor Williams
c/o DRS – Internal Audit
8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23229
Phone: 804-662-7075
Fax: 804-662-7437
Email: Eleanor.williams@drs.virginia.gov

**Deadline for Nominations is
August 24, 2007**

VIRGINIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION AWARDS NOMINATION FORM

Name of Award _____

Name of Nominee _____

Nominee's Address _____

SUPPORT FOR NOMINEE

(1) 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.

(2) Please include 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 _____



VRCEA Update On June 25, 2007

As of June 25, 2007, the **new Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association** is moving forward with gusto! Our Board has met for the past few months at the Tuckahoe Library in Richmond to organize and set goals for our first year as a new division of VRA.

VRCEA is sponsoring a speaker at this year's Collaborations Conference 2007 being held September 30th through October 2nd, at the Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

We are honored to have Vernon Sylvest, M.D., one of the founders of the Healing Waters Lodge of Virginia, present: "The Formula- Four Keys to Unfolding Your Full Potential".

We look forward to renewing friendships with our current membership and meeting interested new members at this annual event.

Our next Board Meeting will be held on August 21, 10:00 a.m. – Noon, at the Tuckahoe Library in Richmond.

For further information about VRCEA, please contact:

Susan Cianfaglione, VRCEA President
Susan.Cianfaglione@drs.virginia.gov

Submitted by Susan Cianfaglione



Top 10 Reasons to Join the National Rehab Assoc.

1. **Affordable, multiple, and varied opportunities to earn continuing education credits.**
2. **Networking with other professionals toward "best practices" in the professions.**
 - **Opportunity for membership in Professional and Special Interest Divisions**
3. **Leadership development and skill building:**
 - **Join a committee.**
 - **Seek leadership roles on the local, state, regional or national level.**
 - **Present at the state, regional, and national conferences.**
 - **Publish in the Journal of Rehabilitation.**
 - **Be recognized through the NRA Awards program.**
 - **Be a mentor or be a mentee.**
4. **A Governmental Affairs Program that provides current and accurate advocacy and legislative updates relating to rehabilitation.**
5. **The Journal of Rehabilitation – a Quarterly Journal.**
 - **Internationally acclaimed scholarly journal providing cutting edge rehabilitation research.**
6. **The Contemporary Rehab – a Bi-monthly Newsletter.**
 - **The Association's newsletter, filled with timely rehabilitation information, and important Division and general membership news.**
7. **The perception by public and private employers, non-profits organizations, insurers, and the general public of NRA membership as a mark of excellence.**
8. **Participation in community service activities that build good will toward the rehabilitation professions as a whole.**
9. **Access to websites on the local and national level with current rehabilitation information.**
 - **Regular E-mail notifications and announcements.**
10. **Professional liability and health insurance**



Save the Date!

You do not want to miss this workshop!

Scott D. Miller, Ph.D.
"The Heart and Soul of Change:
What Works in Counseling"

This workshop will change the way you think!

Wednesday, December 12, 2007
Richmond, VA
John Tyler Community College, Chester Campus

Registration will begin the week of October 8.

*Sponsored by
The Virginia Rehabilitation Association
Resources for Independent Living
Virginia Association for Rehabilitation Leadership

Scott D. Miller, Ph.D. is a co-founder of the Institute for the Study of Therapeutic Change, a private group of clinicians and researchers dedicated to studying 'what works' in treatment. He also works as a therapist providing clinical services pro bono to traditionally under served clients. Dr. Miller conducts workshops and training internationally and is known for his engaging and humorous presentation style.

*Co-sponsorship opportunities still available! Contact Donna Grumiaux for details on the benefits of co-sponsoring. donna.grumiaux@drs.virginia.gov

www.vra.org



Friday, August 10, 2007
9:00 AM – Noon
Dept. of Forestry Building
Charlottesville, VA

Virginia Rehabilitation Association
Presents
Exploring Connections Between Race and Class
by
Lisa Speidel, M.Ed.
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia

In a society where the idea that all people are created equal and that a poor child can become President is part of our national legend, real discussion on the subject of socio-economic class is often very difficult. This workshop will consist of experiential activities designed to facilitate awareness and promote an in-depth discussion on classism and how it can specifically intersect with racism. Discussion will also include the connections to these issues in the work we do.

Lisa Speidel teaches Multicultural Education classes for teachers and students and conducts diversity trainings locally and statewide.

Location:
Department of Forestry
Fontaine Research Park
900 Natural Resources Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22903

Cost: VRA Members \$10.00 Non-Members \$20.00

CRC Credits Available

To Register: E-mail Ellen.Braswell@drs.virginia.gov and send a check made to Virginia Rehabilitation Association to: Ellen Braswell at

600 E. Water St., Suite E Charlottesville, VA 22902
(434)296-5621

Space is limited to first 50 people



VRA Sponsorship Application

The Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA) will feature Scott D. Miller, Ph.D., presenting “What Works in Counseling” on December 12, 2007. This training event will be held in Richmond, VA. Sponsorship opportunities are offered on three levels.

Gold Sponsorship: \$1000

- Listing in the agenda and registration announcement
- 3 complimentary admissions/registrations
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship on VRA website and in newsletter.
- Exhibit space available

Silver Sponsorship: \$500

- Listing in the agenda and registration announcement
- 2 complimentary admissions/registrations
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship on VRA website and in newsletter.
- Exhibit space available

Bronze Sponsorship: \$250

- Listing in the agenda and registration announcement
- 1 complimentary admission/registration
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship on VRA website and in newsletter.
- Exhibit space available

To become a sponsor, please complete this application with check payable to VRA and mail to:

Donna Grumiaux
2930 West Broad St.
Suite 15
Richmond, VA 23230
Tel: 804-367-1545

Organization: _____
Contact Person: _____
Address: _____

Telephone: _____
Sponsorship Level: _____

Sponsors will receive confirmation letters upon receipt of their application and check payable to VRA.

www.vra.org



Governor Kaine Announces Grant to Promote Hiring of Individuals with Disabilities

RICHMOND – Governor Timothy M. Kaine today announced a two-year, \$244,000 grant to Virginia Commonwealth University’s Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC) to promote public-private partnerships that will result in the employment of at least 20 individuals with disabilities by state government. The initiative, approved by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), also includes training for rehabilitation professionals to develop more effective partnerships with private-sector staffing organizations that will increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Board authorized a \$244,000 grant comprised of federal funding from the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, and VCU-RRTC will provide an additional \$82,000 in matching cash and in-kind support. The project will include training for approximately 400 rehabilitation professionals in community-based programs, employment agencies, and staffing companies in the greater Richmond area to identify appropriate job opportunities, develop referral procedures, recruit applicants with disabilities, and place those applicants in temporary jobs with potential to become permanent. Training in working with qualified on-site employment coaches, disability awareness, communications issues, and other job accommodations will also be provided.

“Improved employment opportunities for our citizens with disabilities can have a profound impact not only for these individuals and their families and caregivers, but also for those who work alongside them,” Governor Kaine said. “We should encourage additional state hiring of employees with disabilities not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because state government can serve as a role model for other public and private employers.”

Governor Kaine’s Special Advisor on Disability Issues, Ed Turner – a training associate with VCU-RRTC and the 2005 recipient of the Board’s Jackie Crews Award for Excellence in Leadership – will play a principal role in the project’s implementation.

For more information about the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, its grant-funding, and other activities, please visit the Board’s website at www.vaboard.org, or contact the Board at info@vbpd.virginia.gov, 1-800-846-4464 (Toll-free, Voice/TDD), 804-786-1118 (Fax), or write to 202 N. 9th Street, 9th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219.

Submitted by Tom Driscoll

Promoting Partnerships and Employment for Virginians with Disabilities

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities has awarded the Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention a two year grant to develop and implement an initiative promoting public - private partnerships in order to increase employment in state government agencies for people with disabilities. This state initiative will provide training and resources to state approved staffing agencies, state hiring managers, community rehabilitation programs, and staff with the state rehabilitation agencies on the benefits of recruiting and hiring people with disabilities. The program will provide training opportunities and develop a system of recruitment of people with disabilities for the state approved staffing vendors by designing a referral and follow-up tracking system between the staffing companies, as well as community rehabilitation programs and agencies working with candidates who are seeking employment. The grant initiative began on January 1, 2007.

Contact Us:
 VCU-RRTC on Workplace Supports and Job Retention
 1314 West Main Street
 P.O. Box 842011
 Richmond, VA 23284-2011
 Howard Green
jhgreen@vcu.edu
 804-828-9548
 Jennifer Todd McDonough
jltodd@vcu.edu
 804-828-6984

Submitted by Tom Driscoll

Virginia Rehabilitation Association
PO Box 71864
Richmond, VA 23229-9998
<http://www.vra.org>

PRESIDENT:	Alison Mundy
PRESIDENT-ELECT:	Amy Miller
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