



NewsNotes

A Quarterly Publication of the Virginia Rehabilitation Association
2007 Fourth Quarter, Oct-December No. 28

Presidential Pondering by Alison Mundy

Wow, what a wonderful Collaborations Conference we had this year. Everyone I talked to at the conference commented on how great it was. The weather was fabulous and you couldn't tell that it was October. As usual the training sessions were great and offered a variety of areas for attendees to choose from. The Collaborations committee did a fantastic job this year and if you missed it, think about joining us next year. As usual we held our annual business meeting, with a great attendance and wonderful input by members, officers, board members and committee chairs. We covered quite a bit of business including membership, training, legislative, VARL, VRCEA and updates from Mid Atlantic Region and NRA conference. VARL and VRCEA sponsored presentors at the conference this year. VARL: Believe, Choose, Do: Setting yourself up for personal and profession success, and VRCEA : The Formula – Four Keys to Unfolding Your Full Potential.

The awards luncheon was a great success and I am proud of the nominees we received this year for the annual VRA awards. Congratulations to all the recipients of each of these awards and thank you for all that each of you have done for the Citizens of Virginia with Disabilities and for the field for Vocational Rehabilitation. You are each an inspiration to us all and your impact is felt far and wide.

As our year is winding down, I would like to remind you of the exciting trainings that will continue to be offered by VRA and our divisions. Especially our training on December 12, 2007, with Scott D. Miller, Ph.D., "The Heart and Soul of

Presidential Pondering (continued on page 2)

The Virginia Rehabilitation VRA Legislative Liaison

Shortfalls, Budgets and Priorities

I believe it was Mark Twain who said, "Predicting is a difficult business – particularly when it comes to the future." Governor Kaine may be inclined to agree.

Some months ago, it almost went unnoticed when Governor Kaine announced revenue estimates were falling short of projections for the year and there would likely be a \$400 million shortfall. It wasn't a big deal, you see, because the dollar figure as a percent of the overall budget was so small – no need to be concerned, right? Well, maybe –

The revised figure is now \$641 million and the Governor is scrambling to make up the difference. The Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Vincent Callahan, didn't throw the Governor a "life line" when he recently announced, "It would be premature and inappropriate" to use the so-called rainy-day fund to help bring the budget into balance." He said money should only be taken from the fund during periods of recession. The tough love continued as he then took the Governor to task saying that nearly half of the \$641 million shortfall was caused by forecasting and accounting errors by the Kaine administration.

Taking the Chairman's comments to heart, the Governor recently announced state agency savings and spending reductions of approximately \$300 million by doing such things as laying off 74 employees, cutting state agency budgets from 5 to 7 percent, keeping state cars longer, etc., but

VRA Legislative Update (Continued on page 4)



Presidential Pondering (Continued from page 1)

Change: What Works in Counseling".

More information on this and other trainings can be found on VRA website www.vra.org

I would like to remind you of the election for officers and board members that is going on. You should have received your ballot for the slate of officers, which is exciting and offers a strong group this year, which years of experience. Please take the time to vote and return your ballots as requested. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the officers, whose information is listed on our website.

Our mentoring program which is being provided through collaboration with Department of Rehabilitative Services and Commissioner James Rothrock, VARL and VRA has become a tremendous success and we have matched 9 mentors and mentees to date. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Susan Green at Susan.Green@drs.virginia.gov to provide your name as we are looking at developing another group to train.

VRCEA is now up and running and this is an exciting time for VRA as we now have two divisions active and your involvement will help in continuing to build VRCEA and VARL, which happens to be the largest state division in the country.

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 7, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. at Resources for Independent Living, Inc., 4009 Fitzhugh Ave., Richmond. We invite you to join us for the meeting and to get involved in VRA and the committees and activities.

This has been a fantastic year for me as your President. I have worked with a tremendous group of folks, and my heartfelt thanks and appreciation go out to the officers, board members, committee members and membership who have worked so hard to make the year such a success. Your dedication and commitment to VRA and the field of rehabilitation is awe inspiring and I am honored to have served in as the VRA President.

Submitted by:

Alison M. Mundy

VRA President

Alison.Mundy@drs.virginia.gov

We honor our dear friend, colleague and VRA associate, Benjy Burnett who died on October 28, 2007. Benjy was a long time member of NRA/VRA, serving in many different capacities including Board member, Foundation Board Member, Committee Chair person and active committee member. In addition to his involvement in NRA/VRA he was a long time employee of the Department of Rehabilitative Services, retiring in 2003. He also was very involved in a number of statewide and community organizations. He was a kind man who had a huge impact in his local community as well as in the statewide rehabilitation community and he will be missed by all that knew him. For more information go to www.vra.org



Let VRA Work For You



Study Shows Disabled Less Likely to be Online

Americans with disabilities and other chronic conditions are less likely to use the Internet, but those who are online are among the most avid consumers of health-related information, a new study finds. Half of those with chronic conditions use the Internet, compared with three-quarters of those without, the Pew Internet and American Life Project said Monday. That's partly because those with chronic conditions tend to be older and less educated, two factors linked with lower Internet usage overall, said Susannah Fox, an associate director at Pew and the study's main author. Other barriers include difficulties navigating the Web for those with, say, poor vision or motion control. But when they are online, those with chronic conditions are more apt to seek health information online at least for some tasks. "It's an indication of what could happen in the future if there were more universal access to the Internet," Fox said. "This population is just as likely as anyone else to take advantage of the technology's promises." To read the rest of the article, go to:
<http://www.aapd.com/News/tech/071011usat.htm>

SOURCE: USA Today

Outstanding Staff...Exceptional Service

**Call 877.889.1727
or visit:
www.CareerSupport.net**



***Proudly Serving: Central, SW, Far SW,
& the Blue Ridge Regions of Virginia***

Let VRA Work For You

Check out this site today on your computer!!

www.vra.org



VRA Legislative Update (Continued from page 1)

he still wants to use the rainy day fund to make-up the rest. This puts him at odds with the Speaker of the House, William Howell, R – Stafford, who said, “If we can’t find \$300 million in savings in a \$74 billion budget, we ought not to be there,” indicating a preference for more cuts.

But, the Governor’s problems don’t stop there. Reports have surfaced projecting revenue shortfalls in the neighborhood of \$1.2 billion for the next biennial budget. In every administration, this is the critical budget because it’s the Governor’s one chance to put his stamp on history. The new budget will serve as the foundation of his legacy. But, with slowing revenues and mandated spending cuts to existing state programs, it’s going to be a hard sell to convince the legislature to fund new programs such as The Governor’s pre-kindergarten program for low-income children. As Senator Ken Stolle, R – Virginia Beach, declared, “I’m not going to cut state employees and dip into the rainy day fund so we can afford to do a new program.” The Governor has got his work cutout for him.

Mental Health Reform

Two things will focus legislation on mental health reform when the General Assembly convenes in January 2008: a report with recommendations from the 26 member Commission on Mental Health Law Reform that was convened by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Leroy Rountree Hassell, Sr. and a recently released report from Virginia Tech panel appointed by the Governor to investigate the slaying of 32 people on April 16.

The Virginia Tech panel made 13 recommendations concerning the mental health system – a system that for years has been under attack due to the lack of adequate funding. So the question now is how will the Governor and General Assembly address the recommendations in a meaningful way knowing that needed improvements could cost tens of millions of dollars a year? Under the best of times this would be a difficult proposition, but when you overlay it with the budget shortfall and associated spending cuts, it becomes even more daunting. Tough choices lie ahead.

Election Time

VRA is proud to be one of many advocacy associations to have signed-on to the Disability Issues Platform which was developed as means to communicate to legislators the important issues affecting people with disabilities and help guide their positions during and after the elections. Remember, all 140 seats in the General Assembly are up for re-election in November. The Platform sends a unified message to candidates as to what we feel are the critical issues affecting people with disabilities. I hope you will take the time to follow-up with candidates in your district and communicate your support for the platform. To see the platform, go to VRA’s website: <http://www.vra.org/ngw/index.shtml>

Speaking of the elections, Democrats only need four seats to take back the Senate – and even Republicans concede that’s doable. In the House the magic number is 11 and that’s not going to happen. Democrats are hoping to add three to six seats. We’ll have to wait and see, but whatever you do, exercise your right as an American and vote. In my district, only 46 percent of the eligible voters voted four years ago. That’s not only sad – it’s plain wrong. Go vote November 6, OK?

Submitted by David Williams
VRA Legislative Liaison



VRA Membership Committee

- 1- Committee Meeting: The Membership Committee met by conference call on May 31st in order to discuss the responsibilities of the committee and to assure that they will be completed. We were able to assure that we were addressing the need to recruit new members, contact previous members who have allowed their membership lapse and welcome new members.
- 2- I would like to especially thank Maggie Butler, Mary Kaye Johnston, and Tanya Piotrowski-Hickam for putting much effort into assuring that the tasks of the Membership Committee get accomplished.
- 3- VRA/DRS Mentor Program- the Membership Committee is playing an active role in the newly established mentor program which is in partnership with DRS. We now have three (3) new VRA members who had their membership reimbursed by DRS. These new members have a mentor who is an active member of VRA. The mentor is charged with easing the transition to both DRS and VRA while encouraging the new member to become actively involved in VRA. The new VRA members are Ralph Figaro from the Fairfax Office, Christina Forster in the Fairfax Office and Fran Smith in the Petersburg Office. The members who have agreed to be mentors and attended the training are Ellen Brasswell, Mark Fletcher, Margaret Gillispie, Susan Green, Jim Hall, Bonnie Hawley, Mary Kaye Johnston, Amy Miller, Alison Mundy, Ronald Simmons, and Jack Smith.
- 4- National Membership Conference Call- A conference call was held on June 20th. The topics for the meeting included:
 - A- a brief history of NRA
 - B- recruitment strategies
 - C- reasons to become a member (power point)
 - D- Top ten reasons to join NRA

Submitted by Jack Smith

VRA Education



I am happy to report that we have had successful trainings this year!

Previous trainings include:

- ü **Jane Bennett's -More than a Lunch: Best Practices for Working Employers**, March 2007, Charlottesville, Virginia
- ü **Susan Green's- Leadership is like an Earthquake**, June 14, 2007, Henrico, Virginia
- ü **Donna Grumiaux's- Engaging the Autistic Consumer in the Rehabilitative Process**, July 23, 2007, Richmond, Virginia
- ü **Ellen Braswell's- Exploring Connections between Race and Class**, August 10, 2007, Charlottesville, Virginia

Upcoming Trainings include:

- o **VARL's- Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, October 23, 2007, Daleville, VA
- o **Margaret Gillispie's- The Puzzle of Employment: Promoting Success of Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder**, November 30, 2007, Wythville, VA
- o **Donna Grumiaux's- The Heart and Soul of Change: What Works in Counseling, presented by Scott Miller**, December 12, 2007, Chester, VA

All training thus far had been a success with a great turn out for each training.

Submitted by Samantha Ruppert
Education Chair
Saman-



VARL

LEADERS EMERGE !

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

“Every kind of peaceful cooperation among men is primarily based on mutual trust and only secondarily on institutions such as courts of justice and police.” This was said by Albert Einstein many years ago. I got this quote from a book I read recently by Stephen M. R. Covey (son of the 7 Habits Covey) entitled The Speed of Trust. Covey said, “Like a ripple in the pond, the speed of trust begins with each of us personally, continues into our relationships, expands into our organizations, extends into our marketplace relationships, and ultimately encompasses our global society at large.” If you really think about the impact trust has on our relationships, it is pretty incredible. Simply put, trust means confidence. The opposite of trust – distrust- is suspicion. In his book Covey writes that leading companies have learned that the answer to one question is more predictive of team and organizational performance than any other question they might ask. What is that question you ask? “Do you trust your boss?”

I think it is pretty safe to say this same question and its impact on teamwork, relationships, and outcomes applies to many scenarios. Do you trust your spouse, your parents, your rehab counselor, your colleagues, and so on? So who do you trust? Why do you trust this person? What is it that inspires confidence in this particular relationship? More importantly, find a mirror, look yourself squarely in the eyes and ask, “Who trusts me?” What is it in me that inspires the trust of others?

I was in an interesting group recently where people were discussing that there is an increase in successful supported employment service outcomes when the relationship between the rehab counselor and the job coach is very good – clear and frequent communication, agreement on consumer progress, etc. Someone else in the discussion said that they didn’t think this was it all by itself but that a perception of competence was also a factor. In other words the counselor more often will select job coaches that they trust can get the job done. This supports what Covey also says in his book. He says trust is a function of two things: character and competence. So one’s integrity, motive, and intentions are important but one’s capability, skill, and ability to get results is also a factor in whether you will be called on in a leadership capacity. He says that whether in the family room or the boardroom, leadership failure is always a failure of one or the other: character or competence.

Early next spring, VARL intends to present a workshop on this topic, dig a little deeper, have opportunities to discuss, help you do some self assessments and provide some of Covey’s ideas on how to increase the level of trust others have in you.

Other news from VARL:

- Our membership continues to be the largest of all the NARL chapters in the country. We have between 50 – 55 members. This is fantastic! If you are reading this article and are not a member yet, please get in touch with us so we can tell you more about what we do and the benefits of belonging.
- VARL is on the technology cutting edge! In order to reduce wasted time and money due to traveling and to provide an opportunity for as many members as possible to participate in

VARL Leaders Emerge! (continued on page 7)



VARL Leaders Emerge

(Continued from page 6)

VARL Board meetings, on August 9th, VARL had its meeting via video-teleconferencing (VTC). There were sites in Fishersville, Richmond, Portsmouth, and Fairfax. Plans are for the October 30 Board meeting to be in the same format. If you are interested in participating, let a VARL officer or board member know. Our final meeting this year will be held on December 6 also via VTC.

- We are working on increasing our membership in the Tidewater area so following the October 30 Board meeting there will be a first time leadership chat on the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (habits # 1 and 2) from noon to 1:00 in the Portsmouth office of DRS. Contact Marie.Gibson@drs.virginia.gov if you desire to attend and she can share more details.
- VARL lived up to its mission to strengthen leadership abilities at the Collaborations conference this year. This was accomplished through an excellent two session workshop with Dr. Amy Armstrong on "Believe, Choose, Do!" as well as through a fun and educational leadership chat with an overflow crowd on Covey's The Eighth Habit. VARL will likely spread and expand on this Covey topic in 2008 in local brown bag chats.
- By the time you read this newsletter, our "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" workshop in the Roanoke area will have taken place. Over 40 people were registered as of this writing. VARL is very excited to take a program of such caliber out to our western friends in Virginia.
- Our election of officers/board members for 2008 is finished and our newly elected are President-Elect – Jack Smith; Secretary – Amy Mosher; Board members – Ellen Braswell and Jane Bennett. Congratulations and thanks to all!!

Let the Leader in You Emerge!

**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

VRA Golf

We had a good turnout (20 teams) as well as a great day for the golf. ***We had 17 hole sponsors and about 30 people and companies who donated gift certificates or money to the event.***

I appreciate the volunteers who assisted this year who were **Susan Green, Mary Kaye Johnston, Dale Batten, Philip Cooke, Ericka Umbarger, & Samantha Ruppert.**

I want to thank our President, Alison Mundy, for writing a personal thank you letter from VRA for each golfer, as well as stopping by to assist Mary Kaye with the pictures.

I would like to thank **Bill Burnside** for donating ball for prizes and give a GREAT BIG THANKS to one of our golfers, **Butch Mim**, who donated a sleeve of balls for every golfer.

Sherman should have a report for our success with the tournament. *Based on my rough estimate we should clear almost \$4,000.00 for the event.*

Thanks and hope we can do it again next year!

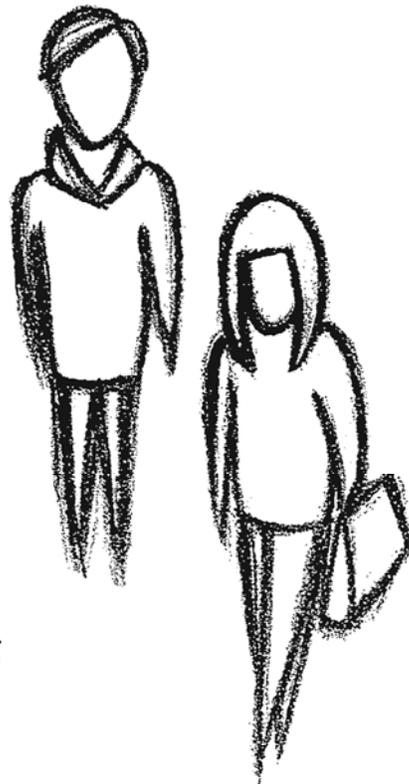
**Submitted by Howard Green,
Chairman**

Let VRA Work For You



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



Ways and Means

This year, our fund-raising was enhanced with a cruise raffle, which supplemented the always successful golf tournament. We learned where shortcomings were in the marketing of the cruise, and should we offer this opportunity again, we should increase sales dramatically.

Diane Whitney, from Woodbridge, was the winner of the cruise. Two friends joined her and reported back that everything was wonderful. First time cruisers! Our thanks to Carnival Cruise Lines.

Volunteers to assist in promoting any fundraising activity, are always welcome! We thank all those involved with getting the word out, and with working the golf tournament.

I would like for the VRA membership to suggest additional fund-raising projects to expand our training offerings around the state, and eventually within the newly growing Mid-Atlantic Region. New ideas are always welcome.

Submitted by Philip Cooke

Governor Kaine Directs State Agencies to Hire People with Disabilities

Governor Kaine has directed state agencies to tap into an underused but qualified labor market, people with disabilities, to fill open positions. Effective October 23, 2007, the Governor directs "all executive branch agencies, including institutions of higher education, boards, and commissions to expand existing efforts for recruiting, accommodating, retaining and advancing people with disabilities for positions available in state government." The Executive Directive is a result of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' grant to VCU Research & Rehabilitation Training Center, State Government Employment Initiative, and Ed Turner, Senior Advisor to the Governor on Disability Issues. The Board is hopeful that state agencies will become leaders in promoting true diversity in the workplace. For additional information, please contact Lynne Talley at lynne.talley@vbpd.virginia.gov.

Submitted by Lynne Talley



Send VRA News for the January 2008 issue by **12/21/07**. 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

1/4 PAGE

\$ 15 / issue : \$ 50 / year

1/2 PAGE

\$ 24 / issue : \$ 90 / year

Full Page

\$ 50 / issue : \$ 175 / year

This Ad Space Could Be Yours

Call Steve Sommer at 804-662-7159, and your ad will be seen by more than 250 leaders in the field of Rehabilitation, starting July 2006. Tell a friend!



VRA Mentoring Program

VRA began a new partnership with the VA Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) in 2007. As part of this agreement VRA has been providing mentors for new Rehabilitation Counselors/Evaluators hired at DRS as well as a free VRA/VARL/VRCEA sponsored training for each new counselor during their first year of employment. In return DRS is providing a NRA/VRA membership for one year for these new employees. This has been a win-win for both organizations. Since June 2007, VRA has gained 7 new members and provided mentors to 9 new staff (two came to DRS already NRA members.)

Last spring DRS in conjunction with GWU and VRA provided training to VRA members desirous of becoming mentors. Eleven people were trained which of course means with 9 already assigned to a mentee, we need more mentors!

Before we identify a date, I am writing you now to determine if you would be interested in training to become a mentor. You do not have to be a DRS employee to be a mentor to DRS staff. Mentoring is not to tell the new employee about how to do their job but it mentoring them professionally, helping them make connections with others, encouraging their involvement in VRA activities, and so on. See information and Internet link provided below about some basic characteristics of a mentor and if it sounds like you, let me know of your interest. As soon as I see how many people are interested and where they are located, we will look at scheduling a date. The training will only be a part of one day. The mentoring itself is not time consuming. You will only be assigned one mentee for one year before you would be asked to take on a new one. We request a minimum of one contact a month between the mentor and the mentee.

Let me hear from you as soon as possible.
Thanks!

Susan Green
Susan.Green@drs.virginia.gov
or 804-726-1901

VRA Legislative Committee

The 2008 General Assembly will soon be upon us. A number of issues have arisen recently that will have an impact on individuals with disabilities and will need continued monitoring. For instance, with the state-wide cuts, LTESS dollars are being cut by 3%. Although this is low figure, it has the ability to greatly affect our consumers who need on-going support to be successful with their employment. I urge you to stay informed of these issues to understand the bigger impact they may have. You can also contact your legislators by phone, fax, or email. If you are unsure who your legislators are, you can find their information by going to <http://legis.state.va.us>, clicking on "Who's My Legislator" and typing in your address.

In addition, VRA is in discussion with other rehabilitation organizations regarding the possibility of collaborating for a Legislative Day at the General Assembly, along with a Legislative Reception, with both to be held in January. Once more information is known, it will be disseminated to all members.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at Ericka.Umbarger@thechoicegroup.com.

Submitted by Ericka Umbarger

Legislative Chair

Art Show at RIL

RESOURCES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING is hosting its 4th Annual Juried Exhibition and sale of art and crafts created by artisans with disabilities from across Virginia. Items include jewelry, paintings, drawings, pottery, weavings, woodcarving, candles and much more. No admission charge. Friday, November 9th, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday, November 10th, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Resources for Independent Living, 4009 Fitzhugh Ave., Richmond, Virginia. For more details call 804-353-6503.

Submitted by Freida Woodson



VRCEA Update On October 21, 2007

August and September were busy months as the VRCEA Officers and Board Members prepared for our debut as the newest VRA Division at the annual, state-wide Collaborations Conference 2007, held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Our theme was "Come Grow with Us", as we adopted a "Flower Power" motto that was carried throughout the conference. We shared a display table with VRA. We gave away flower seed packets with our national RCEA logo on them, a beautiful fall plant donated by Board Member, Ellen Braswell and several mini mums. Board Member, Lori Schultz made beautiful flower decorated pens that were given out to members. Each Officer and Board Member wore a "flower embellished" name tag made by President-Elect, Debbie Veale.

We held our first Annual Meeting. Our 2008 Election Slate was introduced to members. A President's Report, Treasurer's Report and Committee Reports were presented. Goals for 2008 were discussed by each Committee Chairperson.

An array of refreshments were prepared by Officers and Board Members and enjoyed by all attendees. Custom wines processed by Kathy Wright and spouse were also shared.

I had the honor to represent our new VRCEA division at the 2007VRA Annual Meeting and share with VRA members a summary of the events of our first year.

VRCEA also sponsored our first speaker at Collaborations 2007. Vernon M. Sylvest, M.D. addressed over 75 participants with a presentation of his book, "The Formula – Four Ways to Unfolding Your full Potential". Each member who attended was given a copy Dr. Sylvest's book.

Our election will be held and results will be announced on November 6th. We are pleased to present Ellen Braswell, recipient of the 2007 VRA Don T. Johnston President's Award, as President-Elect for 2008, Deborah Holliday, DRS Navigator – 3 Year Board Member and Barbara Spence, Virginia Beach Department of Social Services -3 year Board Member.

It has been a pleasure to be a leader in the development of Virginia's RCEA this year!

Submitted by Susan Cianfaglione, VRCEA President





Update on the Substance Abuse Program being developed at WWRC for individuals with Neurotrauma Disabilities

The first year of a three year grant funded through the Virginia Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund (CNI) to develop a unique substance abuse program for individuals with neurotrauma disabilities at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) has been completed. Much of the activity during the first year has involved conducting stakeholder meetings, providing education, developing a community network, along with visiting programs with a similar mission around the country. Activities have also focused on the development of a public - private partnership to manage the program at WWRC. The most striking thing learned from the first year is the overwhelming need for this service. Persons with neurotrauma disabilities experience significant barriers to accessing appropriate treatment for substance abuse services. We also found that substance abuse treatment providers, for the most part, do not understand the unique needs of this population.

The major thrust of grant activities at this time is focused on developing a partnership with a private substance abuse provider and identifying an appropriate location for the program to be housed at WWRC. A consulting firm is being used to assist in developing the partnership. The Mountain Eagle Consulting Group will assist in developing a business plan that will address program cost structure, revenue issues, and profitability margins. The Mountain Eagle Group has extensive experience working with healthcare organizations in developing business processes and partnerships. This firm has unique experience with programs serving individuals with neurotrauma disabilities. Plans are still in place to pilot the program with 5 or more consumers in 2008.

Please contact Dr. Fred Capps or Dr. Richard Luck if you have any questions regarding the program.

Dr. Fred Capps 540-332-7151

c.fred.capps@wwrc.virginia.gov

Dr. Richard Luck 540-332-7452

richard.luck@wwrc.virginia.gov

WWRC Receives Donation of Surplus PC's from Blue Ridge Community College

The Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center is pleased to announce the receipt of 28 Surplus Personal Computers from Blue Ridge Community College. The PCs will be used in the Center's Microcomputer Support Specialist (D.O.T. 039.264-010) training curriculum. The donation was a collaborative effort between James Richerson, Associate Professor at BRCC and Mike Curry, WWRC Instructor Microcomputer Support Specialist. Students will acquire skills and knowledge necessary for an entry-level employment as a computer support specialist. Two certification paths are available for this career goal: A+ and MCDST (Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician). Computer Support Specialists provide technical assistance and training to computer system users. "James, a training program advisor, has arranged donations of countless computers over the six years that I have been here," said Curry. "Additional assistance with the donation was provided by BRCC's, Tom Ward, for facilitating the physical transfer, and Robert Baldygo, Vice President of Finance and Administration. "Our students and area employers demand that the computers that we use be the latest and the greatest, almost on the extreme leading edge of available technology. 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 DRS.

Submitted by Keith Burt, WWRC



WWRC Foundation List of Contributions for 2006

In 2006 the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Foundation made continuing contributions to the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center as follows:

- Cash contributions to the WWRC trail project
- Support of Vocational Training through provision of diploma covers
- Sponsored lunch and dinner meetings for Vocational Training Advisory Committee meetings
- Savings bonds awards to graduating students who were designated award winners
- Support of Administration for working lunches
- Hosted receptions for the SRAC and the Commissioners Joint Leadership Conference at WWRC
- Continued participation in recycling durable medical equipment
- Provided matching funds and in kind contributions for grant applications for medical services
- Provided for numerous other small individual requests that supported WWRC programs and departments

The WWRC-F is currently undergoing a process of renewal and revitalization. With a small core of very dedicated board members the Foundation has begun to recruit new members very successfully. Currently the WWRC-F has no paid employees and all administrative work is conducted by volunteers. The Foundation has an approximate 1 quarter million dollars in its treasury from which modest investment income is earned each year and allocated to projects at WWRC. The highest priority of the Board is to grow this core endowment fund in the years ahead and all contributions not specifically earmarked will be used to accomplish this purpose. CVC contributions can be made this year by designating WWRC-F CVC Charity # 3238 on the employees pledge card. All contributions will be greatly appreciated and exclusively used to benefit the programs, projects, students and staff of WWRC.

**Submitted by David G. Frackleton, President
WWRC Foundation Board of Directors**

Notice to VRA Members:

www.wcdexpo.com

Check out information about this year's World Congress and Expo on Disabilities being held in D.C., on November 15-17.

There will be workshops galore, speakers of note, a trade show exhibit. It is a great opportunity to network with colleagues and participate in programs that add to your professional development. The website link is found above.

2007 VRA Awards

Norman c. Hammond Award: Omni Richmond &
Loudoun Workforce Center

A. R. Dawson Humanitarian Award: Ellen Braswell

Corbett Reedy Award for Excellence: Margaret Gillispie

R. N. Anderson Award for Leadership: Robin Metcalf

VRA Distinguished Achievement Award: Janice Austin

Don T. Johnston's President's Award: Susan Green &
Steve Sommer



To: LEGISLATION@HERMES.GWU.EDU

Sent: Friday, October 19, 2007 1:11 PM

Subject: Disability Legislative Update: **A Duty to the Wounded** by Bob Dole and Donna E. Shalala

Bush seeks total reform, Dole, Shalala focus on new vets **A Duty to the Wounded**

Our Newest Veterans Need Help Now

By Bob Dole and Donna E. Shalala

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

It is time to decide -- do we reform the current military and veterans' disability evaluation and compensation systems or limp along, placing Band-Aids over existing flaws?

It has been more than 2 1/2 months since our commission presented its six pragmatic recommendations to improve the system of care for our injured service members and their families. Our recommendations are eminently doable and designed for immediate implementation. While progress has been made, more work remains. And the clock is ticking.

The vast majority of the steps needed to implement our recommendations must be taken by the administration. Since unveiling our report, we have met frequently with officials from the White House and the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. We are pleased that they are moving forward with several critical changes, including the development of recovery plans and assigning coordinators to oversee the care of our most seriously injured troops.

We have also testified before Congress and met individually with lawmakers. Overall, we are buoyed by the strong bipartisan support being given to the proposals.

Despite this support, however, it is clear that our recommendations are being swept up in a decades-long battle to reform the entire disability system for all service members. It is important to remember that our commission was tasked with improving care and benefits for those returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While we

hope that our recommendations will help many others, our mission was to make the system work better for this new generation of veterans...

To read the rest of the editorial, go to:

<http://www.aapd.com/News/veterans/071017wp.htm>

SOURCE: Washington Post

Bush Calls for Simplifying Military Disability System

By GINGER THOMPSON

WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 President Bush on Tuesday proposed a series of changes intended to streamline a military disability system that he said had fallen behind the times and had left too many disabled soldiers falling through the cracks.

The proposals, outlined in a document that Mr. Bush sent to Congress, would pull apart a convoluted system that gave both the Defense Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs authority over determining the level of benefits and care provided to injured soldiers, often pitting the two bureaucracies against each other and holding up services.

In an announcement from the Rose Garden, Mr. Bush said that, under his proposal, the agencies' authorities would be separated. The Pentagon would have the authority to determine whether injured soldiers were fit to return to duty and would provide a pension to those who were considered unfit, based on their rank and years of service. Soldiers determined to be permanently disabled would move into the V.A. system, and receive care and compensation based on their loss of earnings and the impact of their injuries on their quality of life..

To read the rest of the article, go to:

<http://www.aapd.com/News/veterans/071017nyt.htm>

SOURCE: New York Times

Submitted by Maureen McGuire-Kuletz



Disability Issues Platform

VRA is proud to be one of many advocacy associations to have signed-on to the Disability Issues Platform presented below. This issues driven platform was sent to all candidates - all 140 seats in the General Assembly are up for re-election in November. The Platform sends a unified message to candidates as to what we feel are the critical issues affecting people with disabilities.

I hope you will take the time to follow-up with candidates in your district and communicate your support for the platform.

To find out who your current representatives in the House and Senate are, go to <http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>.

FOR CANDIDATES IN THE 2007 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Disability advocacy organizations of the Commonwealth of Virginia share these same beliefs; we believe in freedom, choice, equal access and opportunity, dignity, and respect for all citizens of the Commonwealth who have disabilities.

The Commonwealth's policies and practices should reflect the right of citizens with disabilities to lead productive lives as they so choose. Currently, 18% of Virginians have a disability and their issues and concerns with policies related to disabilities need to be addressed forthright. As a candidate for the General Assembly, you can become a positive change for citizens with disabilities. You will be faced with many policy issues during the General Assembly session and this Platform gives you guidance on these policy choices to be a positive force for citizens with disabilities. We encourage you to utilize the Platform as guidance in developing disability positions for your campaign.

As you conduct your campaign we encourage you to engage all citizens by making your campaign accessible, by providing fully accessible locations, by providing sign language interpreters, by ensuring that websites are accessible, and when requested providing campaign materials in alternative formats, such as Braille and large print. We look forward to seeing you on the campaign trail and at the polls.

Services for Virginians with Disabilities

No Place Like Home

DD AND MR MEDICAID WAIVERS

Additional Medicaid wavier slots are needed to significantly reduce waiting lists. Medicaid Waiver services include personal care, respite care, day support, supported employment, skilled nursing, residential services, and other long term care services. Long waiting lists exist for both Developmental Disabilities (DD) and Mental Retardation (MR) Waiver services. Over 750 people are on the DD Waiver waiting list. Over 4,000 people are on the MR Waiver waiting list with 2,000 in the Aurgent@ category. The Olmstead Task Force recommended reducing waiting lists over a specified period to ensure Olmstead compliance. Action: Fund 300 Medicaid Waiver slots for people with DD and 800 Medicaid Waiver slots for people with MR each year of the biennium.

Disability Issues Platform (Continued on page 16)

Disability Issues Platform (Continued from page 15)**EARLY INTERVENTION AND PRE-K SERVICES**

Intensive, early intervention and pre-kindergarten services for children with developmental disabilities and other disabilities ensure their needs are addressed early in the "window of opportunity" to reduce the long-term intensity of their needs.

Action: Increase state funding for intensive, early intervention and pre-kindergarten services.

HOUSING TRUST FUND

There needs to be stable, on-going funding for the Housing Trust Fund and additional funds dedicated to increasing the availability of accessible, affordable housing that is in compliance with federal law, and that utilizes universal design principles.

Action: Fund the Housing Trust Fund.

MOBILITY OPTIONS

More than 1 in 5 adults age 65 and over do not drive. Additionally, a significant number of persons with disabilities do not drive as a result of their disabilities. Adequate funding for transportation would increase the independence and self-sufficiency of Virginians with disabilities and seniors. Support investment in public transportation systems (both inter- and intra-jurisdictional), including completion of the Dulles Corridor Rail Extension Project in Northern Virginia; and in rural parts of the state develop strategies better meeting the transportation needs of people who rely on public transportation. Increased funding for specialized transportation programs serving persons with disabilities and seniors; and funding to improve coordination among service providers statewide are needed.

Action: Request that the Department of Rail and Public Transportation conduct a study that would outline what is needed to expand public transportation in parts of Virginia that are currently underserved or not served.

MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON (MFP) PROJECT

A Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration Project, was awarded to Virginia in May 2007 by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). MFP is intended to assist persons with disabilities and seniors who want to move out of nursing homes, Intermediate Care Facilities for Mental Retardation (ICF/MRs), and long-stay hospitals to live in their own homes in the community. It is expected that at least 1,041 individuals would transition from the institutional setting over the five years of the project. CMS will provide an enhanced federal Medicaid match for each individual in the MFP demonstration for the first year after their transition from institution to community-

Disability Issues Platform (Continued on page 17)

Disability Issues Platform (Continued from page 16)

based services. Virginia will experience significant cost savings in the long-term by shifting emphasis from provision of services in more costly institutional settings to provision of community based services. The 2007 General Assembly Session considered funding the state match for MFP but a decision to approve it was postponed until the federal government actually awarded the grant. Action: Fund state match to ensure successful implementation of MFP. Action: Support a state funded housing supplement to facilitate an individual's move from an institution to a community setting.

PERSONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

The Personal Maintenance Allowance (PMA) is designed to cover basic community living costs such as housing, food and basic needs. Virginia has not kept up with inflationary trends in this area. The PMA was raised 65% two years ago; the PMA is currently \$1,028. However, the PMA needs to be raised to the federally allowed amount of 300% of the monthly SSI payment to reflect the current cost of living and inflationary rates. A 2005 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report well described the problem with Virginia=s low PMA. The Joint Commission on Health Care and Virginia=s Olmstead Task Force have recommended that the PMA be increased to 300%. The current low PMA rate makes community living for people with disabilities marginal at best and impossible for some. Action: Raise the Medicaid PMA to 300% of the monthly SSI payment.

PREVENTION OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

People with disabilities are sometimes placed in nursing homes and other institutions because of the lack of information and supports that could have prevented their institutionalization. Once someone is institutionalized they often lose their housing and informal supports that can be very difficult to reestablish when they choose to leave the institution. It is vital that timely, correct, and thorough information and supports be provided so that people can avoid unnecessary institutionalization. Action: Increase funding for information and referral services, support services and outreach to persons who are at risk of institutionalization.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH BRAIN INJURY

JLARC was directed by the 2007 General Assembly to report on the effectiveness of and access to brain injury services in Virginia. Brain injuries result in a variety of physical, cognitive, and emotional problems. Recent increases in state funding and potential implementation of a Medicaid Waiver program prompted calls for a review. Action: Support implementation of the recommendations in the JLARC report due in the fall of 2007 that enhance access to community based services for people with brain injury services.

STREAMLINE BENEFIT ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

Virginia is one of only eleven remaining states that requires people to complete two separate eligibility processes – one for SSI and one for Medicaid. The administrative costs for this duplicate process could be saved. Action: Amend the eligibility process so that people who are eligible for SSI become eligible for Medicaid, without having to go through a second eligibility process.

Submitted by David Williams

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

PRESIDENT:	Alison Mundy
PRESIDENT-ELECT:	Amy Miller
PAST PRESIDENT:	Margaret Gillispie
TREASURER:	Sherman Gifford
SECRETARY:	Ellen Braswell
BOARD MEMBERS:	Samantha Ruppert Kelly Hickok Ericka Umbarger Dale Batten Donna Grumiaux Mark Hawkins Marie Worley Jack Smith Philip Cooke
RCEA	To Be Determined
VARL	Jim Hall
NEWSNOTES EDITOR	Steven Sommer



Please submit NewsNotes articles to
the editor by Email at :
Steve.Sommer@drs.virginia.gov

Or send by US Mail to:
VRA NewsNotes c/o Steven Sommer,
DRS Henrico Office, 1601 Willow
Lawn Dr., Suite 370-A,
Richmond, Virginia 23230

Phone 804-662-7159