

August 2003

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Virginia's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Volume II, Issue 3

VOICES & VISIONS

A VOICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES; A PROMISING VISION FOR TOMORROW

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Please refer to our
website
www.vaboard.org,
for the announcement of
our newly appointed
Board members when
available

Letter from the Chair



Melissa Edmonds,
VBPD's new Chair

What an exciting time to come into chair of the Board. Having served the disabled

community for 13 years, it is always enlightening to expand the working knowledge of services and fund services for individuals with barriers to employment. We have dramatic impact in changing lives with the grants awarded to the different agencies.

Whether it is employment, community inclusion or education the impact is great all around the state.

The Board is in a planning stage, which, in my opinion is always a good time to get involved. We cannot and do not want to operate the Board without the input of all the Board members. It is so important to become a part of our large group and have a voice -- and believe me every voice counts! So I encourage you to get involved in as much as you can -- it will make a difference.

As we come into our planning stages, I challenge each of you to look at the issues from the Board's perspective and always keep in mind our mission to the fullest. We have our work cut out for us these next couple of months but it is so exciting to be a part of the planning process and an excellent group.

Each of you should be commended on your dedication and commitment as VBPD Board members. I look forward to working with each and everyone of you in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,
Melissa Edmonds

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Sharing Expectations with 2003 Grantees

Amy G. Wright

In December of last year, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) invited non-profit organizations, state and other public agencies, and for-profit companies to submit grant applications in response to the RFPs released in Community Inclusion, Education, Housing, Employment and Transportation. RFPs, along with a fact sheet on DD Grants and invitations to Grant Workshops, were mailed to approximately 1,500 organizations around the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Board received numerous proposals and created review teams from each standing committee of the Board to discuss, review, and score them with particular attention to the criteria listed in the DD Grant Manual.



New projects began July 1, 2003, and range in duration from 12 months to 2 years. Initially each grantee attends a grant orientation workshop at the Board's offices---this year, the workshop was held on June 30, 2003. It offered an opportunity for programmatic and administrative coordinators on the projects to meet one another, hear about what other people are doing, solicit advice and hear about the administrative and programmatic requirements of Board grants. For those interested in receiving future RFP releases, please contact the Senior Administrative Coordinator, Karen Lindley at lindlev@vbpd.state.va.us . If you have any questions about the processes or other grant programs, please contact the Grants Administrative Manager, Amy G. Wright at wrightag@vbpd.state.va.us.

Top left to right:
L. Alder (Four County Transit),
C. Tyler-Northan (Insight),
B. Fuller (VHDA)



Top left to right:
D. Rosanelli (VA BLN),
T. Yoder (Partnership)
S. Fleshman (Rockbridge CSB)



"Building Bridges Through Leadership"

Teri Barker-Morgan

Twenty-three rising high school juniors and seniors attended the Board's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) which was held at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, VA, the week of July 14th, 2003. Congratulations to this year's class!

- ★Rakeem Austin, *Richmond*
- ★Christopher Bartley, *Clifton Forge*
- ★Leslie Boyd, *Winchester*
- ★Michael Claude, *Portsmouth*
- ★Allan Dimapelis, *Virginia Beach*
- ★Damian Eychner, *Danville*
- ★Allison Ferris, *Goode*
- ★Lynzey Fitzgerald, *Lyndhurst*
- ★Danielle Fortney, *Ashburn*
- ★Alicia Frank, *Smithfield*
- ★Kristopher Fulks, *Toano*
- ★Teresa Fuller, *Arlington*

2003 YLF Delegates



- ★Sarah Gray, *Richmond*
- ★Latorya Hagwood, *Rockymount*
- ★Stephen Joseph, *Lynchburg*
- ★Israel Lowe, *Waynesboro*
- ★Jennifer Melton, *Chesapeake*
- ★Daniel Melton, *Poquoson*
- ★Kristen Price, *Ashburn*
- ★Matthew Reik, *Fredricksburg*
- ★Antonio Skinner, *Norfolk*
- ★Kimberly Walters, *Norfolk*
- ★Heidi Welsh, *Petersburg*

Partners In Policymaking—Future Advocates Complete Training

Teri Barker-Morgan

The 2003 Partners in Policymaking (PIP) class graduated on May 10, 2003 in a gala ceremony marking participants' successful completion of an intensive eight-month advocacy-training program sponsored by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

Leading up to graduation on the final weekend, Partners participants presented the results of the advocacy projects they have worked on, independently, during the 8-month course. Final project topics included developing a non-profit respite center; conducting legislative advocacy; developing a support group network; mapping community resources in a local

service area for people with disabilities; and coordinating the development and implementation of a local transportation committee. Final projects of all of the 2003 PIP graduates reflected a significant amount of work as they put into practice many of the advocacy skills they learned in the program. As the cliché goes... "all good things must come to an end." But, in many ways, as past



Bottom Row Left to right: J. Hilderbrand, L. Baker-Scheib, J. Brinkley, J. Crews, B. Rogers, M. Owens
Second Row, left to-right (sitting): S. Rice, A. Williams, D. Rowe, L. Mewhinney, C. Joseph, W. DeMarzio, J. Brown, L. Priest-Wallace, M. Beeken, B. Salisbury
Back Row, left to right (standing): M. Tinsley, S. Castleman-Argue, S. Murray, B. Hadley-Goggin, S. Russell, G. Lowery, N. Draper, C. Klock, T. Mongin, B. Wickard

Partners have observed, graduation from the Partners in Policymaking program is not an end but a beginning. As the 2003 graduating class started on its new journey, another group of 30 parents and self-advocates – the Partners class of 2004 -- was selected for the upcoming class. The PIP selection committee, made up of

Partners alumni from around the State, selected 30 applicants, including 10 self-advocates, for participation in PIP 2004. The 2004 PIP sessions are slated to begin on September 12th and 13th and will be held on one weekend each month over the course of the seven following months.

Historically, the PIP kick-off session each year includes a history of the disability rights movement, a recap of the independent living movement in the U.S., and a moving testimonial from a PIP favorite presenter and long-time self-advocate, Melvin Fensom. Mr. Fensom now lives independently in his own apartment in the Charlottesville area, having spent 40 years

of his early life at Central Virginia Training Center. Mr. Fensom's story of determination and success in achieving personal independence living in the community of his choice was featured in a PBS documentary and is always inspirational and instructive to each new class of future advocates trained in the PIP program. ✍



**VBPD
Board Meeting
Sept. 17, 2003
9-4:30
Holiday Inn
Koger South**

Olmstead Planning

Katherine W. Lawson



The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) has continued its participation in the Olmstead Planning process that has been ongoing in Virginia for many months.

Earlier in the year, the Board's Community Inclusion Committee funded a proposal from the Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) to obtain consumer feedback and conduct data analysis regarding population demographics and census information in various institutions throughout Virginia. With this grant, it is expected that the Board will be able to launch a further examination of the service delivery system in Virginia, particularly with respect to institutionalized populations with developmental disabilities.

At the Board's June 11th meeting, a panel of experts presented an update on Virginia's Olmstead plan development process. The Panel consisted of John Toscano, Carter Harrison, Dana Martin Johnson, Karen Tefelski, Julie Stanley, and Harry Weinstock.



Olmstead Panel (left to right) John Toscano, Carter Harrison, Dana Martin Johnson, Karen Tefelski, Julie Stanley, and Harry Weinstock (also pictured above)



Julie Stanley, Assistant Commissioner to DMHMRSAS, provided an overview of the work of the Olmstead Task Force which is chaired by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Jane Woods. Assistant Commissioner Stanley highlighted several areas where the VBPD is en-

visioned to have a possible role in responding to several recommendations contained in the draft Olmstead Plan. Panel presenters provided their perspectives regarding the deliberations of the Task Force over the last several months.

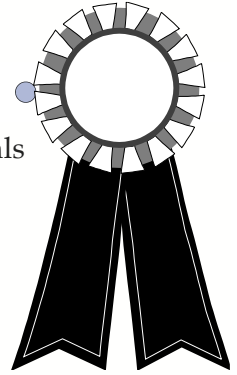
Most exciting, two recommendations of the Task Force have already been initiated by the VBPD Community Inclusion Committee. First, the Accessible Housing Registry was funded, the grant awarded to the Virginia Housing and Development Authority. This initiative, which began in July 2003, will result in an accessible web based housing registry available to people with disabilities seeking adequate and appropriate housing. The second initiative, funding of a Medicaid Waiver Technical Assistance Center, is intended to improve education of consumers regarding Medicaid waivers in Virginia. The award was made to the Endependence Center in Norfolk, Virginia. The Center will educate consumers and family members throughout Virginia using mentoring development and training programs.

Ultimately, through both of these initiatives, improved community living will result for our citizens with disabilities. Further, preventing unnecessary institutionalized placements and reaching the highest level of community integration for consumers is more possible with such initiatives.

During the month of July, the Board convened a work group to develop responses to the draft Olmstead "One Community" planning document released for public comment. The Board's comment is posted on our website. To learn more about the Olmstead Decision, and the Virginia's "One Community" plan visit the state's Olmstead web-site located at www.olmsteadva.com. *KL*

Announcing the 2003 Competitive Grant Awards

Amy G. Wright



Community Inclusion:

Medicaid Waiver Technical Assistance Center-Endeppence Center, Inc.-\$80,000

Goal: To promote improved utilization of Medicaid Waivers with the provision of technical assistance & complementary activities.

New Voices-Partnership for People with Disabilities-\$150,000

Goal: To develop and support planning activities leading to consumer identification needs and priorities throughout the State as well as a planned event to publicize critical issues.

Employment:

Augmenting Relationships & Recognition/VA Business Leadership Network-\$81,445

Goal: To strengthen the capacity of owners and operators of businesses across Virginia to come together to understand and promote the employment of people with disabilities, to involve people with disabilities as part of that process, and to implement a coordinated statewide program that recognizes business owners.

Employment & Benefits Outreach-VA ACCSES-\$75,000

Goal: To increase the availability of trained benefits specialists to assess people with disabilities interested in going to work and to conduct outreach to the disability community on further understanding of benefits including specific work incentives.

Long-Term Employment Demonstration Project: Supporting & Replicating Success-Rockbridge CSB-\$64,245

Goal: To replicate the success of previous strategies used for achieving long-term, community based employment. Grant is for the placement and retention of at least 15 people with developmental disabilities in private sector employment settings with the majority of job placements with employers who have

not previously employed individuals with developmental disabilities.

Housing:

Virginia's Accessible Housing Registry-Virginia Housing Development Authority-\$100,000

Goal: To establish a housing registry for VA that would provide accessible housing information and improve the viability of community living options to reduce reliance upon congregate and institutional living options.

Transportation:

Community Transportation Coordination Demonstration Project-Four County Transit-\$100,000

Goal: To develop and implement a program that demonstrates the provision of coordinated transportation services involving significant community participation with the community and utilization of existing transportation resources.

Links: Unified Transportation Clearinghouse-Insight Enterprises, Inc., Peninsula CIL-\$45,000

Goal: To capture the status of transportation services and service delivery across the state to share with transportation planning entities. *✍*

Notice of Availability:

VBPD has grant products available on select topics important to people with disabilities and their families including: Entrepreneurial Guide for People with Disabilities, Celebrating Special Children Resource Directory, Special Education Mediation Video and Discovering an Untapped Resource Video.

Products are available first-come, first serve and only available at the Board's offices. Please send a request to Amy G. Wright, Grants Administrative Manager at wrightag@vbpd.state.va.us, or Karen Lindley at lindlevk@vbpd.state.va.us. *✍*



Policy Fellow Presents Study Findings to Board

Dr. Barbara Ettner



Ed Bostick, the Board's 2002-2003 Disability Policy Fellow, presented the findings of his statewide survey of community-based care providers to Board members at the quarterly Board meeting on June 11, 2003. The statewide survey was conducted as part of Mr. Bostick's fellowship activities that also included a previous comprehensive analysis of the Board's role in the early 1990s in the Plan of Cooperation envisioned in the Virginians With Disabilities Act (Code of Virginia, § 51.5-2).

Mr. Bostick's statewide survey of community-based service providers yielded the first-ever systematically collected information on the demographics and perceptions of Virginia's community-based service providers. Information from this exploratory study demonstrated that Virginia's community care providers are highly diverse in terms of education, experience, work setting, and professional involvement in their careers. Transportation, lack of communication and coordination of services, low reimbursement rates, and inadequate professional development opportunities were cited as barriers to providing community care in Virginia. Though not a definitive study, Mr. Bostick's findings, based on over 300 responses to his survey, provided the impe-

tus for subsequent recommendations to the Board and service-providing agencies to promote opportunities for professional development among Virginia's community-based providers and to examine in greater detail barriers to services that exist in different regions throughout the state. Mr. Bostick's findings may be significant in assisting Virginia in optimal implementation of Olmstead planning initiatives which cannot occur without a competent, well informed and highly motivated community-care workforce.

At the end of his presentation Mr. Bostick was congratulated for his excellent work during his fellowship with the Board. He received a Certificate of Completion of the 2002-2003 Disability Policy Fellowship from Dr. Barbara Ettner, Director of the Fellowship program, and Heidi Lawyer, Executive Director of the Board. *✍*



Barbara Ettner and Heidi Lawyer present Certificate of Completion to Policy Fellow, Ed Bostick

Board Updates State Plan

Dr. Barbara Ettner

Board and staff spent the month of July conducting the annual review and update of the agency's Five-Year State Plan. The Board's state plan -- which began in 2001 and will end in 2006 -- provides the "blueprint" for the DD Council's funding initiatives, staff work priorities, and Board member activities over a five year period. Incrementally, on an annual basis, Council members undertake a formal review of the goals and objectives of the plan to ensure that they are consistent with current and emerging needs of people with disabilities throughout the state.

This year Board members made only minor changes to the plan including a statement of emphasis on the importance of promoting successful implementation of Virginia's Olmstead plan. The Board's state plan update is due for submission to the Administration on Developmental Disabilities -- the federal oversight entity for DD Councils nationwide -- no later than August 15, 2003. *✍*



Board's "Alternatives to Guardianship Study Group" Considers Critical Issue

Katherine W. Lawson

The Washington Post recently published a two part series on the mistreatment and neglect of vulnerable people by guardians and conservators appointed by D.C. Superior Court. The articles detail multiple incidents of people with mental illness and mental retardation or who are elderly and their victimization by "slovenly court assigned probate attorney-guardians who are rarely held accountable for their negligence."

The committee is resolute in their belief that some protective measurers need to be put in place to support people with disabilities in their pursuit of community integrated living

The articles were published June 15th and 16th, 2003, and reveal:

- Since 1995, one of five guardians has gone years without reporting to the court on the conditions of the client;
- Some guardians had not visited their clients, and in more than two dozen cases guardians or conservators had taken or mishandled money;
- Neglectful probate lawyers are rarely disciplined, even when they have broken the law, violated ethical standards, or wasted their clients' assets.

The May issue of "Voices and Visions" included a report on the VBPD Community Inclusion Committee's interest in guardianship issues in the Commonwealth. Following a formal meeting of the "Alternatives to Guardianship Study Group" on May 23rd, 2003, members have continued to examine diverse perspectives and issues relating to guardianship. In particular, the Work Group has developed a keen interest in developing possible alternatives to guardianship to help people with developmental and other disabilities live in the community with the highest possible degree of independence.

Barbara Gilley, a member of Virginia's Board for People with Disabilities from Arlington Virginia,

noted, "Often guardianship results in a second person having complete control over a person with a disability who may be able to make many decisions for themselves. A person with a disability, who may need help with their finances, or simply writing checks, doesn't necessarily need anything else. Taking the time to listen, and spending time with the person to be sure there is clarity in level of support necessary is vital in the assessment of what alternatives to guardianship are most appropriate."

Mark Russell, Board member and Chairman of the "Alternatives to Guardianship Study Group," has often reiterated the importance of appropriate legal representation in effecting optimal community living options and consumer choice for people with disabilities who wish to live in "least restrictive settings" in the community of their choice. Mr. Russell has listed priorities for the study group that include:

- Learning more about the role of authorized representatives for residents in facilities as well as people with disabilities residing in community-based settings;
- Determining the quality minimum requirements for authorized representatives and guardians;
- Expanding private and non-profit guardianship groups in Virginia;
- Exploring alternatives in effect in other states that would have viability in Virginia and the implications for legislative initiatives in Virginia to improve legal representation of people with disabilities;
- Determining types of training needed to ensure appropriate implementation of alternatives to guardianship.

The Community Inclusion Committee is continuing to examine the current landscape to better understand all possible alternatives to guardianship. The committee is resolute in their belief that some protective measurers need to be put in place to support people with disabilities in their pursuit of community integrated living. *✍*



Meetings of Interest



August 16, 2003

Event: Community Friends Project. The Project assists families in locating and accessing disability services, advocating with the family for educational services, and hosting sharing sessions to learn more about what is needed in the community to support children with disabilities.

Location: New Kent County Fair, Charles City.
Contact: Parent to Parent of Eastern Richmond, (804) 222-1945, PTPofVA@aol.com.

September 13, 2003

Statewide Rehabilitation Council for the Blind. Administrative Headquarters, 397 Azalea Ave., Richmond, VA, 10:00 AM.

September 23-24, 2003

Disability Service Providers of America Annual Meeting
Contact Yvonne D.H. Cock, CAE. 1875 Eye St., NW, 12th Floor, Washington, DC 20006. Tel: 202-429-6810
FAX: 202-429-6813, dspa_of_america@comcast.net, www.dspofamerica.org

September 25, 2003

Public Guardianship and Conservator Advisory Board, 1600 Forest Ave., Suite 102, Richmond, VA. 10:00 AM

September 28, 2003

Olmstead Task Force. Hosted by DMHMRSAS. Henrico Training Center, 7701 E. Parham Rd., Richmond, VA

September 28-30, 2003

The Collaborations Conference 2003 is co-hosted by VRA, Va-APSE and VaACCSES. This year's theme, "Navigate New Horizons", includes concurrent sessions on topics including Supported Employment, Ticket to Work, Safety and Preparedness, Serving TANF Clients with Disabilities, Neuropsychological Assessments, Marketing and Job Development. Contact Susan Burns, burnssh@drs.state.va.us , (804) 662-7613

October 14, 2003

Medicaid Physician Advisory Committee
DMAS, , 600 E. Broad St., Suite 1300, Richmond, VA. 4:00 PM.

October 23 - 25, 2003

Event: A Season of Change for Transition. The 2003 international transition conference. Registration required. Location: Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. Contact: Office of Continuing Education and Conference Services, (540) 831-6037, www.radford.edu/~conf-serv.

November 15, 2003

Event: Future Quest 2003: A College and Career Forum for Students with Disabilities, Parents and Professionals.
Location: George Mason University's Johnson Center, Fairfax.
Contact: Clare Talbert, 703-993-3670, ctalber1@gmu.edu or Karen Sherman, 703-228-5420, ksherman@arlington.k12.va.us.



Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

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formats*

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