

August 2005

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

Volume IV, Issue 3

VOICES & VISIONS

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

Working & Planning: A Winning Combination

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In 2003, the Board awarded a \$87,000 grant to vaACCSES for an 18-month initiative to strengthen Virginia's work incentives and benefits planning service systems for young people and adults with disabilities. No one anticipated the overwhelming success, popularity and long-term impact of the training clinics, individual counseling, information-sharing and resource development that were implemented during the Work Incentive Training Project (Project "WIT").

Project "WIT" successes include the development of a comprehensive work incentive/benefits planning curriculum and implementation of 14 intensive two-day training clinics conducted in five regions throughout Virginia during the grant period. Over 500 participants completed Project "WIT" training with many more disability stakeholders, including consumers and their family members as well as employment, benefits planning and transition service providers interested in additional sessions. Each participant at the training clinics received a comprehensive resource manual that included valuable reference and informational materials regarding career development, job exploration, employment options and benefits planning. vaACCSES has distributed widely the Social Security Administration Redbook; brochures from the Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy; copies of "Virginia's Roadmap to Services;" Medicaid Mentor training schedules; information on Medicaid 1619 (b) programs; "Ticket-to-

Work" information; WorkWORLD© customization information; and Benefits Planning Assistance Organization (BPAO) information. In addition, the grantee estimated that at least 26 new clients were referred for employment/benefits coordination services as a result of the specialized outreach provided through grant activities. Over the past 18 months vaACCSES has facilitated development of a paid, part-time position to work in the Central Virginia BPAO region. The position will serve a model for other regions as they seek to expand awareness and knowledge of work incentives and benefits planning throughout the State. Finally, grant activities have resulted in increased referrals for benefits planning services from diverse sources.

Because of the importance of benefits training, the Board recently awarded a second \$100,000 competitive grant to vaACCSES to continue Project "WIT" activities from July 1, 2005 through December, 2006. Persons interested in attending training sessions or obtaining additional information about this program should contact Karen Tefelski, Executive Director, vaACCSES, toll free at (877) 822-2777. ♡



Spotlight on Board Grants

This is the third in a series of four articles highlighting grant projects from each of the Board's standing committees. Employment and Benefits Outreach: Project WIT is a project of the Board's Employment Committee.

Letter from the Chair

Sandy Hermann



Congratulations to our newly appointed Board members, Charles Cooper and Patricia Wootten, and also to our current Board members who were reappointed for another four year term. We are looking forward to the wonderful experience, insight, and knowledge that they will now bring to the table.

As we complete our grant cycle and are now looking forward to new opportunities for the Virginia Board, we will be planning for many activities, tasks and responsibilities. During the upcoming year, the Virginia Board will be planning and preparing for its next five year State Plan. The new State Plan will drive the areas for the next five years in which the Virginia Board funds grants and targets the activities and advocacy that are determined as important for Virginians with disabilities. Board members are looking forward to a retreat in October which will help

prioritize the direction of our goals and objectives for advancing inclusion of Virginians with disabilities in ALL facets of community life.

The Board appreciates the public input and comments that have been and continue to be provided regularly to us. This critical link is what keeps us connected with the realities of daily life of individuals with disabilities within Virginia communities.

Through the public comments and input gained, we are better able to focus our advocacy efforts and identify changes needed in the Commonwealth.

Advocacy is a necessary component of making any positive changes a reality. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Virginians with Disabilities Act, we reflect how far we have come and how far we have to go. It takes all individuals to band together in their advocacy efforts to support the equality and access to community living that individuals with disabilities actually DESERVE and WANT. ♡

Community Service Board and Arc of Virginia Leaders Attend Board Meeting

Phil Campbell, Director of Virginia's Region 10 Community Services Board, was invited to the Board meeting to present an overview of the strategy used by the Massachusetts' Department of Mental Retardation to effect successful transition of the state's service system from one that was historically institution-based to one that is now community centered. Mr. Campbell described the essential ingredients leading to success in service system restructuring which included, among other ideas: 1) Developing broad-based community support for change characterized by four key values-respect, dignity, choice and self-determination; 2) Recognizing that waiver services are highly flexible tools that can be used to facilitate community-based services in diverse settings; 3) Acknowledging the political realities and difficulties of changing the service system, but keeping in mind that it can be done; 4) Using existing resources as a framework for future planning regarding infrastructure; and 5) Educating service providers about the opportunities and challenges inherent in the change process as well as the resulting system. Mr. Campbell inspired the Board with his "Just do it!" philosophy and his down-to-earth observation that systems are most fundamentally changed with successes that occur "one person at a time." He noted that changed dialogue, which focuses on what can be done for individuals rather than what cannot be done, is the underpinning of systems change. "Its about creating shared values."

Nita Gringol, President of the Arc of Virginia Board of Directors, and Paul Steele, new Arc of Virginia Executive Director, were also honored guests at the June meeting of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. They attended the Board meeting to observe first-hand the Board's work and to discuss issues critical for improving the lives of people with developmental and other disabilities in Virginia.



Nita Gringol and Paul Steele

The Arc of Virginia is a statewide advocacy organization composed of individuals with disabilities, families and professionals who work to enable individuals with developmental and other disabilities to lead productive and fulfilling lives. The organization works for the creation of individualized and self-determined community-based supports through leadership, advocacy and education.

The Arc of Virginia has partnered with the Board on a number of grant initiatives aimed at empowering consumers to live, learn, work, and participate fully in safe and healthy communities of their choosing. The Board looks forward to future productive collaboration with the Arc of Virginia sharing mutual goals of changing systems and improving the lives of people with developmental and other disabilities. ♡



Phil Campbell

DD Network Update

Colleen Miller

Difficult Decisions

For most of us, death is not something we like to think about. But a few months ago, the death of a young woman with a severe disability caught the entire nation's attention and forced us all to think about death and the quality of living.

Terri Schiavo died on March 31, 2005. The 42 year old woman's death was watched by much of the country. Many people had passionate views about how her death occurred. But advocates for people with disabilities saw her death -- and her life -- from a different perspective.

Today, in nursing homes, in training centers and in homes across the country, there are many people with disabilities living lives much like Ms. Schiavo's life had been. Many people live with severe disabilities. Like Ms. Schiavo, they are not terminally ill. Some of these are people with complex medical needs and uncertain cognitive functioning, but who smile and frown and bring meaning to other people's lives as well as their own.

Unlike many people with severe disabilities, Ms. Schiavo's disability was not life long. Many years before, Ms. Schiavo had the opportunity to express her views about how end of life decision should be made for her. The same is not true for many people with disabilities, especially those with lifelong cognitive disabilities. For them, ending life sustaining measures is not a choice they get to make, but is a choice that others will make for them. They must rely on people close to them to make the right decisions about their care, and whether or not to stop that care.

Regardless of whether you have a disability or not, you should think about how you would like end of life decisions to be made for you. Write your thoughts

down, and talk about them with people that you know and trust.

We recognize that this is a complex matter - far too complex to cover well in a short newsletter article. If you would like some other thoughts on this from a disability perspective, we suggest you contact groups like "Not Dead Yet" (www.notdeadyet.org) or ADAPT (www.adapt.org).

The DD Network Partner agencies include: the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (Heidi Lawyer, Director), Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, (Colleen Miller, Director), Partnership for People with Disabilities (Fred Orelove, Director). ♡♡

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The 2005 New Voices Conference
Our Lives, Our Voices!
October 6 & 7
Richmond Marriott Hotel Downtown

A conference to discuss topics identified by people with developmental disabilities as being important to the way they live their lives. Issues identified for the Our Lives, Our Voices! conference include: housing, transportation, employment, attendant care, post-secondary education and assistive technology. Invited guests include people with disabilities, providers, agency leaders, legislators, policy makers and others. A post conference monograph highlighting conference events, discussions and systems change recommendations will be developed and distributed in early 2006. ♡♡



New Voices Planning Team

Partners in Policymaking Update

Teri Barker-Morgan



Partners graduates are putting their PIP advocacy skills to use, as demonstrated in several recently-reported alumni achievements:

Carletta Wilson '05 was named Chair and John Richmond '98 was named Vice-Chair of the Richmond City Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) in June, 2005. Vicki Beatty '02 had been SEAC Chair for the last two years.

Cynthia Lantz '03 and Dana Yarbrough '97 worked with the Partnership for People with Disabilities to train parents and self-advocates to create Care Coordination Notebooks that document financial, medical and other important care-related information.

Eric Clark '99 was appointed by Gov. Warner to the Board. Seven other PIP graduates have been appointed to the Board including Christy Crowther '04, Sandy Hermann '03, Lisbet Ward '99, Norma Draper '03,

Thomas Leach '96, Jenny Thornburg '04, and Monique Tinsley '03. Lisbet, Norma, and Monique chair the committees on which they sit; Sandy is current Board Chair.

Joanna Frank '01 was recently interviewed on Channel 6, Richmond's local CBS affiliate, during a segment on autism. Joanna's final project for PIP was to educate and develop a registry of people with autism for 911 first responders in Hanover County. Randy Burak '98, ran unopposed for the Gloucester County School Board and served for two years. Leanne Jenkins '98 ran for the Culpeper County School Board in 2001 and is running for reelection this year. Jennifer Moore '05 was appointed to the Greensville County School Board. She began her term July 1.

Thirty individuals will soon begin their journey of becoming effective advocates for system change. The first PIP session for the Class of 2006 will take place on September 16 & 17 - congratulations to all of those who were selected! ♡♡

YLF Update

Teri Barker-Morgan



This year's Youth Leadership Forum, with the theme "Leaders of Tomorrow, Rise to the Challenge!," was held July 11-15 at Christopher Newport University with 24 Delegates and 19 volunteer staff in attendance. The theme communicates the importance of Delegates becoming a new generation of leaders as they use their newly-acquired skills to seek out leadership opportunities in their families, schools and communities.

YLF activities, which began on Monday, included small group discussions, panel presentations, guest lectures and social events. On Thursday YLF Delegates traveled to Richmond for Capitol Day where they delivered mock testimony in the General Assembly Building and met legislators Senator Yvonne Miller and Delegate John Cosgrove, and Secretary of Health and Human

Resources, Jane Woods. Delegates also debated a bill on the floor of the House, and had their Capitol Day photo taken with Governor Mark Warner.

On Friday morning student delegates were inspired by a fantastic closing keynote presenter, Peggy Fields, a motivational speaker and person with a disability. The events culminated with tributes from YLF staff and a graduation ceremony celebrating the hard work and successes of the week. YLF 2005 graduates are the "Leaders of Tomorrow" and are sure to "Rise to the Challenge"! ♡♡



2005 YLF Delegates at Capitol Day



After a long day...

2005 Competitive Grant Program Awardees!

Lynne Talley

The following organizations were recently awarded grants under the Board's 2005 Competitive Grant Program. Grants began on July 1, 2005.

Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living

\$270,000

2 years

Project Title: Consumer Choice in Community Living: Nursing Home Outreach and Transition Planning

Goal: To identify and provide information to people with developmental and other disabilities who live in nursing homes in order to transition into more integrated settings if they choose to do so. The project will gather information that will be used to inform policy makers of the needs and barriers facing people who want to transition out of nursing homes.

Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

\$100,000

18 months

Project Title: Transportation and Housing Alliance

Goal: To develop a Transportation and Housing Alliance (THA) that will serve as a conduit of information, resources, technical assistance and education. The THA will make public policy recommendations in the areas of transportation and housing and work to build and improve community infrastructure in localities and statewide.

Virginia Tech

\$68,521

18 months

Project Title: Facilitating Transition to College: A Program for Middle and High School Students with Disabilities

Goal: To engage interest, awareness and knowledge of middle and high school educators, students and family members in underserved areas of southwest Virginia. The project will provide awareness of the opportunities and resources available that assists students with developmental disabilities plan and achieve their post secondary education goals.

Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce

\$99,180

18 months

Project Title: Business Awareness - Chamber and Small Business Outreach

Goal: To promote employment practices that actively recruit and engage workers with disabilities, and to deepen the contact pool and exchange between employers, business developers and the disability community for future collaborative efforts. The project will serve as a model for further engagement initiatives and create a resource base for other organizations to use in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities.

vaACCSES

\$100,000

18 months

Project Title: Employment and Benefits Outreach: Project Work Incentive Training

Goal: To build community capacity and an infrastructure of knowledge concerning SSI, SSDI and respective work incentives through increased access to quality interactive training and one-to-one benefits counseling for people with disabilities, their families and providers of disability services. The project will affect a measurable increase in individuals with disabilities that can make informed decisions about employment and benefits.



On June 23, 2005, the 2005 grantees attended a grant orientation workshop in Richmond. The workshop offered an opportunity for grantee program and fiscal coordinators to learn about the Board and its administrative, programmatic and fiscal requirements. It also allowed them to network with each other and their VBPD project managers. Persons interested in receiving future RFP announcements should contact Karen Lindley at Karen.Lindley@vbpd.virginia.gov. Questions about the Board's grant programs should be directed to lynne.talley@vbpd.virginia.gov. ♡

Board Member Update

Barbara Ettner

Two new Board members were appointed by Governor Mark Warner to serve on the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, and five current Board members, who were recognized for their dedicated service on the Board during the four previous years, were re-appointed by the Governor.

New Members

Charles A. Cooper was appointed to a four-year term on the Board beginning on July 1, 2005 and ending on June 30, 2009. Mr. Cooper, who lives in Fredericksburg, fills the slot representing immediate relatives or guardians of persons with mentally impairing developmental disabilities. He has been involved in numerous volunteer activities on behalf of people with disabilities. Mr. Cooper fills the position previously occupied by Ms. Elin Doval.

Patricia E. Wooten, who lives in Alexandria, Virginia, fills the slot representing people with developmental disabilities. She succeeds Mike Collis. Ms. Wooten, who is a graduate of the University of Maryland and Catholic University, has extensive computer experience and work experience in higher education. Ms. Wooten will begin a four-year term beginning on July 1, 2005 and ending on June 30, 2009.

Re-Appointees

Reappointed to the Board for second terms were Thomas J. Leach, Lynne Leary, Lisbet R. Ward, Norma Draper and William K. Daniel. Each will serve a four-year term that will expire June 30, 2009.

In addition, the Board recognized the long-standing service of Diana Thorpe, who represented the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). Ms. Thorpe is retiring after a long career in public service. DMAS will now be represented on the Board by Terry Smith. ♡♡



(L-R) Chair, Sandy Herman, Mike Collis, and Director, Heidi Lawyer



(L-R) Chair, Sandy Hermann, Elin Doval, and Director, Heidi Lawyer

Health Promotion for People with Disabilities

The Virginia Department of Health-in partnership with the Board and other organizations statewide-has developed a plan, Health Promotion for People with Disabilities (HPPD) to enable people with disabilities to lead healthier, more physically active lifestyles. Over the summer, the HPPD Task Force sponsored town hall meetings across Virginia to collect public comments on the plan for a final draft to be issued this fall. Feedback from those events will also be shared with the Board for its planning needs.

To find out more about the HPPD state plan, including how to provide input to the final draft, go to www.vahealth.org/cdpc or contact HPPD

**Health Promotion
for People with
Disabilities Project**



Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control
www.vdhf.virginia.gov

Coordinator Holly
Tiller at
(804) 864-7891. ♡♡



Nominations Sought for New Outstanding Achievement Award

The Board has created a new **Outstanding Achievement Award** to recognize an individual or organization that has provided exemplary service and support on behalf of people with disabilities. The Award seeks to reinforce new approaches and best practices and to encourage others to join in efforts to improve the service system for people with disabilities.

Detailed information on the **Outstanding Achievement Award** --including nomination criteria, procedures and forms -- may be found on the Board's website (www.vaboard.org). Nominations will be accepted through October 15, 2005. ♡♡

Disability Constituents Attend Public Forums, Comment on Virginia's Service System

Barbara Ettner

Public forums held throughout Virginia between April and June provided opportunities for disability constituents to comment on the interim draft of the Board's first, formal "2005 Biennial Report on Services for People with Disabilities in Virginia." Centers for Independent Living in Tidewater, Northern Virginia, Central Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley and Southwest Virginia hosted the forums which were attended by consumers, family members, service



Forum attendees discuss report

providers and related organizations and agencies. Board staff facilitated forum logistics at each site and recorded attendee comments and input. Nearly sixty individuals provided comments on the interim report at the forums, and additional comments have been received on the Board's web site and via e-mail.

Consumers and service providers attending the forums described the report as a valuable document that, for the first time, provides important insights into

the resources, programs and system infrastructure that characterize Virginia's disability service system. The Board was commended for producing this first-ever comprehensive overview of critically-needed services that affect the lives of so many people in the Commonwealth. Several attendees also thanked the Board for conducting local forums and listening to peoples' experiences, frustrations and successes accessing and using Virginia's disability services system.

"Next steps" leading to production of the final report, which will occur throughout the fall, include: 1) review of the public comments by an ad-hoc committee of the Board; 2) inclusion of feedback and identified issues and comments in the final draft of the report; and 3) revision of all information contained in the report to reflect 2004 data. The report is expected to be finalized in the Spring, 2006, and will be distributed widely to diverse disability constituent groups and key policymakers throughout Virginia. After 2006, the Board will update the report on a biennial basis. ♡♡



Janet Hill, Greg Morrell at Abingdon forum



Julie Stanley (L), Shannon Hamm (R) discuss Olmstead issues

"State of the State" in Olmstead Implementation

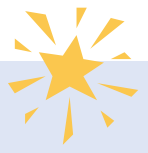
Shannon Hamm

In the push to provide greater opportunities for community-based services for people with disabilities, Virginia is making progress! In an interview on July 12, 2005 with Julie Stanley, the Director of Community Integration, Shannon Hamm, the Board's 2005-2006 Disability Policy Fellow, sought to obtain a picture of the "state of the State" in Olmstead implementation. Ms. Stanley reported that the Olmstead Community Integration Implementation Team (CIIT) and the Community Integration Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) have worked hard to take the 226 Olmstead Task Force recommendations and devise a strategic framework for implementation. After much

deliberation and research, the two committees narrowed Virginia's focus to 54 of the original 226 recommendations for 2005. The top five priorities are: 1) Increase the availability of funded Medicaid Waiver slots, 2) Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates, 3) Eliminate State mental health facility discharge waiting lists, 4) Fund incentives to attract and retain qualified people to disability fields of care, and 5) Increase Medicaid financial eligibility to 100% of the federal poverty level. Ms. Stanley believes that the greatest gains have been made in regards to rates and waiver slots, two issues that are closely interwoven, as the former builds infrastructure so providers are available and the latter provides services and supports that people with disabilities need. The OAC met recently (July 26th) to prioritize the remaining 49 Focus 2005 recommendations. ♡♡



Meetings of Interest



September 13-15, 2005
Governor's Housing Conference 2005
Hotel Roanoke
Roanoke, VA
<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/>

September 21-23, 2005
The Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) Summit 2005
National Disability Summit: Travel Stipends for Self-Advocates and Family Members
Hilton Washington and Towers Hotel
1919 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202-483-3000. www.allianceforfullparticipation.org

October 1, 2005
College Quest 2005
Hosted by Virginia Commonwealth University, co-sponsored by Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center
University Student Commons, Richmond, VA
www.vacollegequest.org

October 1, 2005
10:00 AM
MARCh for Virginians with Disabilities
Mayo Island to the Bell Tower on the Capitol Grounds
Richmond, VA
Contact: The Arc of Virginia at 1-888-604-2677

November 4-5, 2005
Disability & Senior Expo
Sponsored by Caring Communities
Landmark Hall, Alexandria, VA
410-549-5707 or 1-866-227-4644
www.caringcommunities.org

To learn more about grant monies available to improve community living, go to www.dmhmrsas.gov.

*This publication was prepared with 100% federal funding under the Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act
VBPD publications are available in alternate formats, upon request*



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Future Board Meetings

September 1, 2005
December 2, 2005

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for future locations
www.vaboard.org

