



VOICES & VISIONS

MAKING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HEARD TODAY AND CREATING PROMISING VISIONS FOR TOMORROW

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Governor Warner Appoints New Members to Virginia DD Council

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities is pleased to welcome nine new Governor Warner appointees. The new appointees include individuals from diverse regions of the state and various disability stakeholder groups. The new Board members are: William K. Daniel of Richmond; Barbara A. Gilley of Alexandria; Sandra A. Herman of Virginia Beach; Marilyn M. Riddle of Williamsburg; Vincent M. Russell, Jr. of Lynchburg; Monica S. Smyth of Glen Allen; Kathy E. Vesley of Urbana; Lisbet R. Ward of Virginia Beach; and Delphine K. White of Portsmouth.

The new Board members also represent specific categories of membership mandated under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act and the Virginians with Disabilities Act including individuals with developmental disabilities, immediate relatives or guardians of institutionalized persons with developmental disabilities, a public transit representative, and relatives or guardians of persons with mentally impairing developmental disabilities. Board members serve four-

year terms on the Board and work on committees involved in issues pertaining to Education, Employment, Community Inclusion, Transportation, and Quality Assurance as specified in the Board's five year State Plan.

Veteran Board members and staff look forward to working with the new appointees in effecting successful systems change initiatives through involvement in grant oversight, policy development, and the Board's sponsored programs. *W*

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YLF Alumni Association Planning Committee Meeting

Teri D. Barker



The first Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Alumni Association Planning Committee (AAPC) meeting was held on Saturday, January 11, 2003 from 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. in Chesterfield, Virginia. The meeting included YLF alumni from 2001 and 2002 representing diverse areas across Virginia including Fairfax, Chesapeake, Williamsburg, Richmond and Kinsale.

The YLF Alumni Association consists of all 63 graduates of the Board's YLF program and the AAPC consists of alumni who have expressed an interest and commitment to plan future activities of the alumni association. The mission statement of the YLF Alumni Association is:

To support development of leadership qualities and abilities by providing opportunities for continued leadership education and experiences to YLF alumni, and to create a forum for YLF alumni to communicate and build upon their past accomplishments, to discuss leadership issues, and to develop plans for future success.

First on the day's agenda was the development of the Alumni Association mission statement. Following

development of the mission statement, members of the AAPC discussed their desire to hold a YLF alumni delegate reunion in the late summer. Also discussed were ideas to increase alumni involvement in The Comet newsletter and planning for the next meeting of the planning committee which will take place on April 12, 2003.

As evidence of their commitment to assuming leadership roles in the YLF AAPC, several alumni volunteered for specific roles and responsibilities including Marisa Laios and Leslie Kelly, who volunteered to be Co-Chairs of the new association, Carrie Gonsoulin, who will assume duties of Treasurer, Alyssa Gribbon who volunteered to be Secretary. Tim Moore and Corey Parker offered to take the lead in conducting research on fundraising ideas, and Antony Turner volunteered to write reunion invitations and contribute an article for The Comet.

Meeting participants were energetic and full of great ideas on how to carry their positive leadership message to their communities and peers. The first official meeting of the AAPC was not only a success, it also provided a vision of exciting future initiatives. ✍

Partners Participants To Practice Advocacy Skills At the General Assembly

Teri D. Barker

Learning how to effectively communicate with legislators and to participate as an advocate for systems change and capacity building is one of the cornerstone competencies of the Board's Partners in Policy-making (PIP) program. The PIP class of 2003 will have an opportunity to put their skills to the test when they deliver testimony to legislators during a mock public comment session to take place on March 8, 2003 from 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the General Assembly building in House Room D. The testimony is intended to be a learning experience, however the issues and opinions discussed will express the real concerns of PIP participants.

Partners are sending personal invitations to their legislators asking for their support by attending the

mock session. Topics for testimony will include the Medicaid Waiver, Transportation, Leisure and Recreation for people with disabilities, monitoring IDEA, and Health Insurance. Delivering testimony at the General Assembly is intended to enhance and demonstrate skills in public speaking and advocacy which are fundamental tools that all PIP graduates must possess.

Board members and others wishing to participate as audience members during the mock testimony at the General Assembly Building in House Room D on March 8 may contact Teri Barker, Sponsored Programs Manager, at 786-9381 for further details. ✍



Board Members and Staff: "Making Our Point Clear" in Alabama

Katherine W. Lawson

Board members along with VBPD staff attended the annual meeting of the National Conference of Developmental Disabilities Councils on November 17-19, 2002 in Point Clear, Alabama. The theme of the conference, "Making Our Point Clear," underscored its historic importance: at this meeting the newly-formed National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) was formalized as a merged organization of two separate associations -- the Consortium of Developmental Disabilities Councils (CDDC) and the National Association of Developmental Disabilities Councils (NADDC). As of the November meeting, DD Councils (such as the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities) would henceforth be represented by one merged, national organization--NACDD.



Katherine Lawson, VBPD's Planning & Constituent Outreach Manager pictured with Mark Griffin, Acting Chairman of Alabama's DD Council

The conference in Alabama afforded VBPD Board members and staff opportunities for exchanging information in diverse subject areas, and discussing issues of national importance to people with developmental disabilities.

Featured Speakers

Featured speakers at the "Making Our Point Clear" included Greg

Smith, Founder of "On a Roll," and Michael Kendrick, Kendrick Consulting Services, Holyoke, MA.

Mr. Kendrick spoke of the importance of "making our point clear" to a whole new generation, particularly those who are transitioning from teenage years to adult years. There was rousing acknowledgement by conference participants that Councils should look proactively at involving the "next generation" in all aspects of organizational activity.

Other Activities

VBPD staff and Board members attended workshops with the goal of bringing back information and resources that would benefit the entire agency. Some of the most interesting workshops included "Using the Media to make Our Point Clear," "Building Inclusive Child Care," and "Presenting a Clear Message to Policymakers." Two top areas of interest emerged: improving community inclusion and improving representation of people with DD in policy making.

Linda Miller, VBPD Board member and Chair of the Employment Committee, was particularly impressed with a session that addressed self-determination. "I was struck by how independently two speakers were able to live given the proper community supports. The two speakers illustrated through their life experiences and by expressing their point of view how they managed to get married, obtain control of their fiscal resources, purchase a van, and now plan to purchase a home. Virginia can learn from other states through the conference environment," said Ms. Miller.

Staff, Executive Directors, and Council members met in separate meetings to "cross fertilize," share ideas on important issues, and talk about areas of concern. Staff of the Virginia Board facilitated the Executive Director meeting.



VBPD's Grant Manager, Amy Wright pictured with Linda Miller and Antoinette Amoh

The last event of the conference was the planning meeting for the newly formed NACDD. Executive Directors and staff from DD Councils formed a conference planning team and another team to deliberate next steps. The leadership informed participants that there would be periodic e-mails, telephone conference calls, and written mailings to ensure all Councils are well informed as the new association gains momentum. As a goal for next year's NACDD Conference, staff hope to participate as conference presenters. ☺

VBPD
Board Meeting
March 12, 2003
9-4:30
Holiday Inn
Koger Center

Nottoway County Public Schools Launches Board-Funded Transition Initiative

Dr. Barbara J. Ettner



Special educators and administrators at Nottoway County Middle and High Schools launched the Board's newest initiative in improving transition services for rural youth by hosting an "Orientation Night for Transition Services" this past Fall. Dr. Barbara J. Ettner, Assistant Director for Policy and Programs, attended the event held in the Nottoway County Middle School auditorium, and delivered congratulatory remarks to attendees and grant staff on behalf of the Board.

The purpose of "Orientation Night" was to introduce parents, students, educators and related transition professionals to opportunities for training, collaboration, college visitation, and demonstration of services available under the Board's grant, "Facilitating Successful Transitions to College." Approximately 75 attendees from all groups involved in transition services including parents, students, educators, transition professionals, college representatives, and service providers were informed about activities to be implemented over the next 2 years.

The funding (\$60,000), awarded to Nottoway County Public Schools by the Board through its competitive grant-making process, will be used to replicate successful transition activities previously demonstrated in the Spotsylvania County school system in FY '01. The replication project in Nottoway, like the original initiative in Spotsylvania, will yield increased awareness of younger-aged students and their teachers of the importance of early college-related transition planning; demonstrated increase in knowledge of transition planning by students, parents and educators in secondary school; and actual increases in the number of high school students with disabilities applying for and successfully admitted into colleges, community colleges, and universities in Virginia. Linda G. Staylor, Director of Grants and Staff Development for Nottoway Co. Public Schools, is Project Director for this grant and she is assisted by Amy W. Griffin, Director of Special Education. *✍*



Meetings of Interest



Olmstead Accountability Team, DMHMRSAS

February 18, 2003
Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy
202 N. 9th St., 9th Floor
Richmond, VA
Contact: www.olmsteadva.com

Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority, Board Meeting

February 20, 2003
Ratcliffe Building, 1602 Rolling Hills Drive
Richmond, VA, Koger Center
Contact: Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority

Olmstead Steering Committee, DMHMRSAS

March 7, 2003
Koger Center
VDDHH, Ratcliffe Building, 1602 Rolling Hills Drive
Contact: www.olmsteadva.com

Statewide Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

March 3, 2003
DBVI, 397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227

Transition Forum 2003: Shared Responsibility for the Educated Employee

March 17-19, 2003
Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center
Roanoke, Virginia
Contact: Radford University Department of Continuing Education and Conference Services
(540)-831-5800 or conf-serv@radford.edu

Virginia Workforce Council

March 27, 2003
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens, Education Building
1800 Lakeside Avenue, Richmond, VA 23228

Project Evolution: Linking Consumers and Communities Through Innovation

Katherine Lawson

Project Evolution, recently funded under the Board's Innovative Grants Program and assigned to the Community Inclusion Committee, is a truly innovative project. Recently, Katherine Lawson, staff to the Community Inclusion Committee and Project Manager for Project Evolution conducted a site visit to Arc Acres Farm in Rockbridge County where project activities are ongoing.

The purpose of Project Evolution is to engage people with severe developmental disabilities in agricultural and livestock maintenance activities for the purpose of increasing their levels of socialization, cognitive processing, and community interaction. The project uses an innovative approach to accomplishing these objectives: to raise and care for Churro sheep, to create a wool harvesting business, to engage local business communities in marketing wool products, and ultimately to find sustainable funding sources for several "spin-off" projects.

In the meantime, client successes are being documented every day. Project participants record their daily activities in journals to review their progress with project staff.



Project Evolution participants sorting wool

The journals include pictures of the clients, the Churro sheep they are caring for, the products of their labors, the farm where they work, and interactive events with people from surrounding communities and visitors.



Tours to the Arc Acres Farm are conducted weekly, and resident activities are featured in local news articles and publications. Visits by local school children and others improve the communities understanding of the capacities of the residents to create marketable industries.

Project Evolution staff have documented that through consistent planned activities for the residents, and because intensive supports are

available under the grant, overall resident behavior and socialization skills have improved -- even to a degree that surpasses gains expected of residents in institutional settings. Clearly, program participants are reaching higher levels of productivity, and the quality of their lives has improved substantially as the result of Project Evolution. *ℳ*



Policy Fellow Solicits Community Caregiver Responses to Practitioner Survey

Dr. Barbara J. Ettner

Mr. Ed Bostick, VBPD 2002-2003 Disability Policy Fellow, will be conducting an exploratory survey of Virginia's community-based caregivers as part of his research activities during the coming months. Mr. Bostick's interest in conducting the Practitioner Survey is an outgrowth of his previous analysis and historical overview of Virginia's Plan of Cooperation and his present involvement in activities associated with development of the Olmstead Plan in the Commonwealth. The Olmstead Plan (www.olmsteadva.com) will describe initiatives needed to redesign Virginia's service system for people with disabilities and the elderly to focus on providing community-based care under a new paradigm that includes community inclusion, meaningful employment, physical accessibility and full participation in all aspects of community life.

Virginia's Olmstead Plan will be based on results of a statewide consumer survey and a comprehensive as-

essment of services and waiting list information concerning Virginians with disabilities. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) has been assigned the lead in developing Virginia's Olmstead Plan and VBPD recently provided funding to support needed research and data analysis to develop the plan. Little is known, however, about the needs, concerns, barriers and opportunities of the caregivers, professional practitioners and paraprofessionals who will be providing increased levels of services in communities under the Olmstead initiative. Mr. Bostick's survey seeks input directly from these individuals to enhance policymakers' understanding of the needs and issues of community caregivers who are vital players in the implementation of the Olmstead vision. Mr. Bostick's survey can be found at a link on the Board's website at www.vaboard.org. All interested practitioners are encouraged to respond. *ℳ*

Board Announces FY '03 Funds Available, Staff Conduct Grant Workshops

Amy Wright

The Board released its FY '03 Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in December, 2002, for funding an array of systems change and demonstration initiatives in areas of education, employment, transportation, housing, and community inclusion for people with disabilities. The funds, which will be awarded under the Board's competitive grants program, are listed below.

Employment

- Augmenting Relationships and Recognition: Private Sector Business Owners and People with Disabilities
- Employment & Benefits Outreach
- Long-Term Employment Demonstration Project: Supporting & Replicating Success
- Long-Term Employment Demonstration Project: Telework/Telecommute

Community Inclusion

- Accessible Recreation and Socialization
- Medicaid Waiver Technical Assistance Center
- New Voices
- Public Awareness: Youth Outreach Fund
- Public Guardianship for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Education

- Demonstration Project: A Model After-School program for Middle School Students with Disabilities
- Educator Awareness Project: Educating Teachers about Students with Disabilities

Housing

- Virginia's Accessible Housing Registry

Transportation

- Community Transportation Coordination Demonstration Project

Links: A Unified Transportation Clearinghouse

Along with release of the RFPs, staff scheduled three informational workshops to enable respondents to learn more about applying for and administering initiatives funded by the Board. Grant workshops were held in Hampton, Fredericksburg and Wytheville.



Amy Wright, conducting grant workshop at Thomas Nelson Community College



Katherine Lawson helping two workshop attendees

The RFPs and grant application procedures are available on the Board's website at www.vaboard.org or by calling Amy Wright, Grants Administrative Manager at (804-786-9375). The deadline for proposals is March 3, 2003 and grant activities will begin on July 1, 2003. RFPs and all grants administration materials are available in accessible format. Persons needing special accommodations should contact the Board's offices at 1-800-846-4464. *W*

Information and "Hot! Topics!" Addressed in CI Meeting

Dr. Barbara Ettner

On January 14th VBPD Policy and Program Section staff met with new and "veteran" Board members currently serving on the Community Inclusion Committee. The meeting was an initial, informal get-together at which personal stories were shared and "hot topic" issues were identified. The Community Inclusion Committee is charged with enhancing participation and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life. Committee members develop and sponsor projects that proactively and demonstrably develop the capacity of persons with disabilities to live in community-based settings and for communities to include and support them.

Attendees at the "Hot Topics!" meeting discussed a potpourri of items including Virginia's Olmstead activities, grants administration, Board-sponsored programs, and the State Plan

development process. Board members preparing to serve on the Community Inclusion Committee. Barbara Gilley, Mark Russell, Lisbet Ward and Will Daniel, all new Board members, attended the meeting along with Janet Riddick and Martha Adams, the "veteran" members. Also discussed were the recent national Developmental Disabilities Council Conference attended by staff and Board and ongoing activities under Virginia's Olmstead Plan development process.



Community Inclusion members pictured: Katherine Lawson, Martha Adams, Mark Russell, Janet Riddick, Will Daniel, Barbara Gilley and Lisbet Ward.

Many of the new members expressed an interest in getting to know each other better, working on Board projects and issues, and meeting again in the future in an informal atmosphere to share personal life stories and experiences as stakeholders in Virginia's developmental disabilities environment through future informal meetings and attending a formal orientation to the Board.

development process. Katherine Lawson, staff to the Community Inclusion Committee, facilitated the meeting which was held in response to numerous questions from new



The Board's youngest member, Will Daniel, attended the "Hot! Topics" Community Inclusion Meeting



Katherine Lawson pictured with board member, Lisbet Ward.

Staff

Director—Heidi Lawyer
Exec. Asst.—Sandra Smalls
Asst. Dir.—Policy & Programs
Dr. Barbara Ettner
Grants Administrative Mgr.
Amy G. Wright
Planning/Constituent Outreach
Mgr.—Katherine Lawson
Admin. Coord. Sr.—Karen Lindley
Sponsored Programs Mgr.
Teri Barker
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*"Voices & Visions" is available
in accessible formats*

BULLETIN BOARD



The US Department of Transportation has just announced a web site for individuals with disabilities to submit comments on transportation services for individuals with disabilities. The current Transportation for Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) is set to expire September 30, 2003 and Congress is seeking input as they develop replacement legislation.

The web site is <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization>

Written comments can be sent to:

Docket Clerk

USDOT, Room PL-401

Docket Number OST-2002-12170

400 Seventh Street, SW

Washington, DC 20590



VIRGINIA BOARD FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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