

# VOICES & VISIONS

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

## Virginia Housing Registry Available OnLine

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### Website Helps Virginians with Disabilities Find Accessible Housing

Because almost 30 percent of Virginians have some type of disability, the Virginia Housing Development Authority, with funding from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, recently created Access Virginia, an online housing registry designed to help Virginians with disabilities find accessible, affordable apartments. The website, which lists both subsidized and market rate units, is also designed to assist consumers and family members learn more about housing accessibility requirements.



The availability of this much-needed resource was unveiled at the Governor's Housing Conference which was held in Norfolk last fall. Governor Mark R. Warner said, "Access Virginia allows those with disabilities to look for accessible, affordable housing in a one-stop shopping format." In his address, the Governor praised the website and also commended the collaborative partnerships that made the website possible. The housing registry planning team included the Department of Social Services, Department of Rehabilitative Services, representa-

tives of Community Services Boards and other diverse consultants, consumers and technical assistants. "This is the kind of innovation, commitment and partnership that allows us to address Virginia's broad spectrum of housing needs," noted the Governor.

In addition to the fully-accessible and comprehensive website, the Board's two-



year, \$160,000 investment of grant funding in the Access Virginia project will also result in development of an informational CD

learning module that will be distributed statewide to promote awareness and utilization of the website. During the next year, Access Virginia will add more rental listings and additional links to other relevant and informative web pages. It will also work with Centers for Independent Living to create public awareness of accessibility issues.

Access Virginia can be located at [www.accessva.org](http://www.accessva.org). For more information about the housing registry contact Gail Braham at (804) 343-5512. ♾

### Spotlight on Board Grants

*This is the first in a series of four articles highlighting grant projects from each of the Board's standing committees. The Accessible Housing Registry is a project of the Board's Community Living and Transportation Committee.*



## Letter from the Chair

Sandy Hermann



As the New Year begins, many exciting opportunities lie ahead for the Board and other agencies and individuals striving to improve the service delivery system for individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The Board continues to focus its efforts

towards improving the service delivery system through its representation on many workgroups, committees, and taskforces; by advising Virginia's political leaders about areas of concern or need; through its systems-change grant making initiatives throughout the Commonwealth; and its advocacy work.

One area of focus for the Board is to fund grants that will provide positive systemic changes for individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth. One grant recently funded by the Board strives to positively impact the educational system in Virginia by improving the effectiveness of Special Education Advisory Committees (SEAC).

In support of the Olmstead decision, the Board has identified the need for improved outreach to individuals living in institutions (i.e. nursing homes, ICF's/MR) and increased choices for integrated community living options for individuals with disabilities. The Board recently released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to facilitate education, outreach, and future transition into the community for individuals with disabilities residing in nursing homes/facili-

ties. Other issues that the Board has recently identified include the inequity between reimbursement rates for institutional services versus rates for Medicaid Waiver services for individuals living in their communities; the state's limited group home monitoring; licensing of new ICF's/MR; and the lack of affordable and accessible housing for individuals with disabilities.

Another recently released RFP from the Board targets transportation and housing needs through the development of a Transportation and Housing Alliance that will ultimately make public policy recommendations to build/improve community infrastructure in localities and statewide. To increase opportunities for employment of persons with disabilities, the Board has released an RFP with a strategic focus of increased awareness and education for Chambers of Commerce and small businesses of the benefits of employing persons with disabilities.

In order to positively impact the service delivery system in Virginia, individuals must NOW come together and advocate on a united front for ALL individuals with disabilities, regardless of the particular disability. In fulfilling its mission, the Board will continue to strive towards making Virginia a place where ALL individuals with disabilities are fully included with their peers in all areas of their daily life and provided with the supports necessary to live in the most integrated settings possible. ♡♡

### Board Develops Community Leadership Award

The Board's award development steering committee is in the process of finalizing the nomination forms, eligibility criteria and procedures that will guide the award process for the new "Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award." Award nomination forms are slated for distribution in the summer, 2005

The "Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award" will be given to a self advocate who has demonstrated excellence in leadership in Virginia through exceptional work on behalf of people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. The award is named in memory of Jackie Crews who was a dynamic self-advocate and a beloved participant in the Board's Partners in Policymaking Program. The award, to be given for the first time in fall of 2005, includes a \$1,000 prize. ♡♡



## From the DD Network. What is an Olmstead Plan?

Colleen Miller

There is a lot of talk in Virginia these days about an "Olmstead" plan. But what exactly is that?

"Olmstead" is the short-hand name of a case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1999. The suit was brought by two women, Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, to challenge their confinement in state run institutions. The women claimed that living in institutions violated the integration mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The integration mandate says that states must serve people with disabilities in the most integrated settings possible. According to federal regulations, such settings must allow people with disabilities to interact with nondisabled persons to the fullest extent.

In "Olmstead," the Supreme Court was asked whether the integration mandate means that states are required to place people with mental disabilities

in community settings rather than in institutions. "The answer," said the Court, "is a qualified 'yes.'"

The "yes" part of the "qualified 'yes'" answer was hailed as a huge victory by disability advocates nationwide.

Although advocates have long believed that institutions are not the best place for people with disabilities, this was the first time that the Supreme Court acknowledged that the law was on the side of people with disabilities. The challenge for advo-

cates came with the "qualified" part of the "qualified 'yes.'"

One of the qualifications was that the Court acknowledged that State governments cannot close all of their institutions at once. They noted, as well, that states have an obligation to administer services with an "even hand." That is where the notion of an "Olmstead" plan came in. The Court said that if a State has a comprehensive, effectively working plan to move people with disabilities out of institutions and into the community, and if that plan is not controlled by a need to keep institutions fully populated, that will show that a state is trying to comply with the integration mandate.

As you consider Virginia's "Olmstead" efforts, ask whether this is what the Supreme Court described. Is this a plan to move people out of institutions? Is it controlled by Virginia's historical embrace of large state facilities and its apparent desire to keep all of those facilities operating, despite a national trend to close institutions? Virginia's DD Network hopes that Virginia will work to come into compliance with the integration mandate.

*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). ♡♡*

### Staff

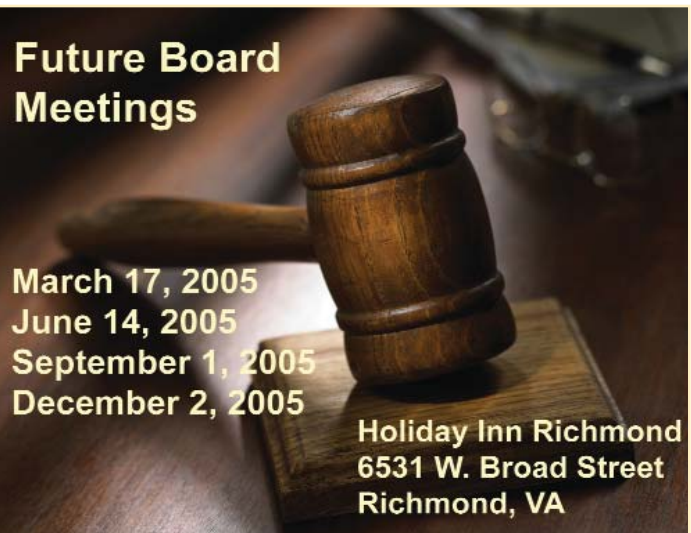
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**Future Board Meetings**

March 17, 2005  
June 14, 2005  
September 1, 2005  
December 2, 2005

Holiday Inn Richmond  
6531 W. Broad Street  
Richmond, VA

## Partners in Policymaking News & Updates

Teri Barker-Morgan



### Empowerment Topics Discussed at Fourth PIP Session

The fourth session of the 2005 Partners in Policymaking (PIP) class met in Richmond on January 14 - 15th at the Holiday Inn Koger Center. The session focused on Inclusive Education, Assistive Technology, Coalition Building and Legislative Advocacy. Each PIP session is packed with topical information and skill building exercises to help prepare future advocates for the challenge of continuing to empower other Virginians with disabilities and to influence policymakers.



Left to right: John Richmond, Board members Jennifer Thornburg & Elin Doval. Top: Christina Draper

that are held from September to May. This year, participants selected various projects -- from

producing a video and educating local public schools on disability awareness and inclusive education to raising funds for computer equipment at a nursing home. This is an ambitious class! Each Partner presents his/her project outcomes at graduation ceremonies in May 2005.

### PIP Recruitment Underway

Recruitment is currently underway for the Fall 2005 Class! We ask interested readers to help with Partner recruitment by recommending this program to individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities.

The deadline for receipt of applications is April 29. Applications can be downloaded from the Board's website, [www.vaboard.org](http://www.vaboard.org) or contact John Richmond, PIP staff, at (804) 786-3456 or (800) 846-4464 or e-mail [john.richmond@vbpd.virginia.gov](mailto:john.richmond@vbpd.virginia.gov). ♡

Each year, Partners' participants select advocacy-related projects to work on during the course of the Partners 8-month weekend training sessions



## YLF Updates

Four Youth Leadership Forum Alumni will participate as panel presenters at this year's Virginia Transition Forum which will take place March 14-16 in Williamsburg. The four YLF alumni, Stephen Joseph, Danielle Fortney, Sarah Gray and Lenorah Adams, will each discuss their transition planning experience as well as their ideas on how to improve transition planning for students with disabilities. The session is titled "Young Leaders Share".

YLF Alumni Association planning committee members are developing a Transition "Top Ten List Do's and Don'ts" handout for session attendees and others interested in the youth experiences and perspectives. ♡

### YLF Application Deadline

The deadline for receipt of applications for the 2005 YLF is February 25, 2005. Applications can be downloaded at the Board's website, [www.vaboard.org](http://www.vaboard.org). The 2005 YLF is also seeking Mentors for this year's forum. Mentors are people with disabilities who are leaders and positive role models who can provide guidance, information and inspiration to YLF student delegates as they make important decisions about their future. For more information about the YLF and Mentor program please visit the Board's website or call Jennifer Peers at 1-800-846-4464.

## Virginia Accses to Continue Successful Statewide Training Project

Katherine Lawson

At the Board's December meeting Virginia Accses received unanimous support for a critical grant extension that will facilitate additional Workforce Investment Trainings (WIT) in Virginia. The extension will enable Virginia Access to continue its "Employment and Benefits Outreach" initiative to:

- ❖ Train an additional 160 people in SSI and SSDI advocacy and corresponding work incentives by providing additional training sessions between January and April 2005 in Abingdon, Lynchburg, Hampton/Williamsburg and Ashland/Richmond;
- ❖ Expand and intensify outreach to encourage more parents and consumers to attend the trainings;
- ❖ Hold two Saturday training workshops for parents, employed consumers and consumers who are underemployed; and

❖ Provide parent training scholarships and stipends in order to attract and better accommodate the travel and respite care needs of parents and consumers who would like to attend the trainings.

Karen Tefelski, WIT Project Director, was pleased to have the grant extension and resources available to continue the important work that began in July 2003. The Board was also pleased to enable more Virginians to take advantage of the project's learning opportunities and its important goal: facilitating competitive, community-based employment for people with disabilities through informed and prudent benefits management.

To learn more about this project or to participate in the trainings, contact Karen Tefelski, Project Director, at (703) 461-8747. **VV**

### New Staff Join the Board



The Board welcomes two new staff to the agency. **Lynne Talley** joined the agency as the new Grants Administrative Manager on January 10, 2005. Lynne replaced Amy Wright who left the position to assume new responsibilities as Director of Grants Administration for Culpeper Human Services in October, 2004. In addition to her duties managing the Board's sub-grant programs, Lynne will also serve as lead staff to the Employment Committee and will become Project Manager for the Board's Employment grants. Lynne is an experienced grants administrator and has served Virginians of the Commonwealth working most recently with the Department of Motor Vehicles as a Grants Manager.

Lynne will also be assuming liaison duties with commissions, councils, boards and advisory groups working on employment issues pertaining to Virginians with disabilities.



**Tom Driscoll** joined the Board on January 31st as Strategic Planning and Marketing Manager. This is a new position designed to provide leadership, assistance, and support to the Board in its planning, public awareness and marketing initiatives. Tom joins the Board with many years of experience in strategic planning, marketing, research, analysis and evaluation. In addition to his experience in state government, most recently at the Science Museum of Virginia, Tom has done considerable pro bono work for a variety of organizations, including but not limited to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and Richmond Hospital Hospitality House. Tom will be working in several areas including the Board's

award programs, publications, long term planning, and grant evaluation. He will also be assisting Sponsored Programs with marketing and recruitment efforts. Tom's experience and job skills will allow the Board to expand its initiatives and accomplishments. **VV**



## Board Announces FY '06 Funds Available

Barbara Ettner

The Board released its FY '06 Requests for Proposals (RFPs) in December 2004, for funding an array of systems change and demonstration initiatives in the areas of education, employment, community integration and community living for people with disabilities. The RFPs and grant application procedures are available on the Board's website at [www.vaboard.org](http://www.vaboard.org) or by calling Lynne Talley, Grants Administrative Manager at 804-786-9375. The deadline for this year's proposals is **5 P.M. on March 9, 2005**. Proposals must be received in the office by that time. Proposals postmarked by the deadline but not received in the office by 5 P.M. on March 9th will not be considered. Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be accepted. The RFPs and maximum grant awards which will be considered under the Board's competitive grants program for FY '06 include:

### *Community Integration*

Consumer Choice in Community Living: Nursing Home Outreach and Transition Planning  
(\$270,000 for 2 years)

### *Community Living/Transportation*

Transportation and Housing Alliance  
(\$100,000 for 18 months)

### *Education*

Facilitating Transition to College  
(\$75,000 for 18 months)

### *Employment*

Business Awareness/Chamber and Small Business Outreach  
(\$100,000 for 18 months)

Community Employment Transition and Training  
(\$85,000 for 18 months)

Employment and Benefits (Work Incentive) Outreach (\$100,000 for 18 months) **VV**

## Grant Workshops Held Statewide

Barbara Ettner

Each January, VBPD staff conduct grant workshops in several of the Board's regions throughout Virginia. This January was no exception: four workshops were scheduled - one in Region 2 - Far Southwest (Wytheville); one in Region 3 - Central (Richmond); one in Region 4 - Tidewater (Hampton); and one in Region 7 - Northern Virginia (Fredericksburg). The purpose of the workshops, which are held approximately eight weeks prior to the deadline for receipt of grant applications, is to clarify, in interactive settings, proposal submission requirements and other aspects of applying for and administering Board-funded projects. The workshops include detailed information about the technical and administrative requirements of submitting competitive proposals to the Board; grantee reporting and accountability procedures; and strategies for developing collaborative relationships for sustaining grant initiatives after the grants are over. At the workshops participants are encouraged to ask Board staff questions about individual Requests for Proposals. This year, Katherine Lawson, Community Outreach and Program Manager, scheduled and facilitated the trainings. **VV**



*Richmond workshop participants and Board staff discuss proposal submission procedures for upcoming grant initiatives.*

## VBPD Seeks to Fill Upcoming Board Vacancies

Nan Pemberton

The Board is currently seeking candidates to fill upcoming vacancies that will occur in the upcoming fiscal year (FY '06). Individuals interested in committing time and energy towards accomplishing the Board's mission, "To enrich the lives of people with disabilities by providing a VOICE for their concerns..." are invited to seek appointment to the Board for the designated slots described below. Board appointees must be able to commit time to attend a minimum of four full Board meetings a year (usually held in Richmond) and to engage in other Board related activities including attending additional meetings and participating in ongoing work regarding grant review and oversight, policy development, education and outreach, and other activities designed to enhance the service delivery systems for persons with developmental disabilities.

Board appointments are made by the Governor and vacancies must be filled in accordance with federal and state statute. Effective July 1, 2005, the Board will have the following anticipated vacancies comprising the statutory "slots" of:

- ❖ Person with developmental disability -- 5 slots
- ❖ Parent or guardian of a person with developmental disabilities --1 slot

- ❖ Immediate relative or guardian of a person with mentally impairing development disabilities -- 2 slots

To apply for one of these upcoming vacancies send your nomination form (found at <http://www.vaboard.org/aboutvbpd.htm#GubernatorialAppointment>) along with your resume and a letter of interest (via fax, or mail), by March 1, 2005 to:

Sandra Smalls  
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities  
202 North 9th Street, 9th Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Fax: 804-786-1118  
Sandra.Smalls@vbpd.virginia.gov

Please also remember that persons with disabilities, family members and advocates are also encouraged to apply for appointments to boards and commissions which are not specifically within the disability arena. Diverse voices and viewpoints are needed in all areas of the Commonwealth's work. Information on how to apply for a gubernatorial appointment other than the Board is also available on the VBPD website. ♡♡

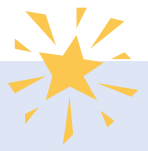
## "New Voices" Planning Team Works for Systems Change

Teri Barker-Morgan

A specific goal of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' 2001-2006 State Plan is to provide technical assistance and financial resources to develop, strengthen, and promote self-advocacy to effect meaningful systems change for people with developmental disabilities in Virginia.

The Board is accomplishing this through its New Voices initiative - a grant awarded to the Partnership for People with Disabilities to develop a New Voices Planning Committee. The Planning Committee, consisting of 8 - 12 individuals with developmental disabilities, are taking ownership and developing leadership initiatives that will enable their voices to be heard throughout the Commonwealth - loud and clear! Currently, the Planning Committee is working to identify issues, develop an agenda of key issues, and organize a statewide conference to be held in the fall of 2005. Additional information and details on the conference will be forthcoming. ♡♡





# Meetings of Interest

## VDDHH Advisory Board

February 20, 2005  
10:00 AM  
Department for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing  
1602 Rolling Hills Drive  
2nd Floor Conference Room  
Richmond, VA

## Leading the Way

March 3-5, 2005  
4th Annual Autism Conference  
Marriott Richmond West  
Richmond, VA

## Virginia Transition Forum

March 14-16, 2005  
Connections for Life: Students... Community... Education...  
Employment  
Williamsburg Marriott, Williamsburg, VA  
<http://www.radford.edu/~conf-serv> (click on Programs & Events)  
Contact: 540-831-5800 or [conf-serv@radford.edu](mailto:conf-serv@radford.edu)

## Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission

March 22, 2005  
Department for the Aging  
1610 Forest Avenue  
Richmond, VA

## VGA/VERC Joint Conference

April 4-5, 2005  
Woodlands Hotel & Suites  
Williamsburg, VA  
Contact: [joyduke@msn.com](mailto:joyduke@msn.com) or 804-261-4046

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*VBPD publications are available in alternate formats, upon request*



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People with Disabilities

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