



November 2003

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Virginia's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Vol. II, Issue 4

VOICES & VISIONS

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

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Letter from the Director

"Business" at the Board is booming! The last 8 months have flown by and the Board is now approaching 2004 and a new legislative session! It continues to be an exciting but challenging time in the Commonwealth. Governor Warner continues to grapple with budget shortfalls and current sluggish economic conditions. Vigilance about public safety and commitment to the nation's troops overseas affect all Virginians. Every day, there are new challenges to be faced--but citizens with developmental and other disabilities continue to face challenges beyond those experienced by their friends, neighbors and coworkers without disabilities.

In light of these continuing challenges, the Board continues its mission to eliminate barriers and change service delivery systems. And, despite these challenges, it is also an exciting time. The Olmstead Task Force has completed its report and submitted it to the Governor. With an understanding of the fiscal situation, the disability community is anxiously awaiting the prioritization of initiatives from this overarching report that will enable the Commonwealth to meet the letter and spirit of the Olmstead decision and facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities who are unnecessarily segregated in institutional settings to the community with the supports they need to live, learn, work, and play.

The Board continues its work in capacity building and systems change. The Board awarded eight new competitive grants in the areas of housing, transportation, employment, and community inclusion and is about to issue a new round of Requests for Proposals for its 2004-2005 funding cycle. The Board has been increasing its activity in the policy arena as well, from its comprehensive public comment on the Olmstead report to review and comment of a variety of proposed regulations, legislation, and policy, to participation in interagency liaison activities involving over 15 different workgroups, taskforces, and committees. And of course, the Board continues to provide research and consultative support to the legislative Disability Commission. DD network collaboration is also a renewed priority and this newsletter includes the first DD Network update from the three DD Partner agencies. This feature, which will appear in the newsletters of all three agencies, will help facilitate collaboration and a better understanding of the linkages between the three agencies funded by the DD Act.

The next issue of Visions and Voices will be distributed next year! So on behalf of the Board and the staff, best wishes for the holiday season and for a 2004 that brings about new opportunities and achievements that dramatically improve the lives of our citizens with disabilities.

Heidi Lawyer



New Board Appointees Announced

Dr. Barbara Ettner



Eleven new Board members have been appointed to VBPD. With these 11 new appointees, and the nine Board members who attended their first meeting eight months ago, half of the Board is reasonably new! This infusion of new members affords great opportunities for the Board to benefit from diverse ideas, perspectives, and enthusiasm that are certain to enrich the Board’s activities and projects. On August 26, 2003, new Board members participated in a comprehensive day-long Board member orientation presented by VBPD staff to review a range of important topics including the Board’s history, mission, legislative mandates, organizational structure, state plan development process, grant and other programmatic activities, and fiscal and reporting responsibilities. New Board members also had an opportunity to talk informally with each other and with staff, helping to build relationships and knowledge in advance of their attending their first formal Board meeting on September 17th. New Board Committee Chairs received a separate orientation by staff to review their roles and responsibilities as Chairs of standing committees. A two-day planning retreat has been scheduled for Board members in October. Newest Board members include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Victor Branch | Richmond, VA |
| John Burgess | Fairfax, VA |
| Calvin “Chip” Coleman | Culpepper, VA |
| Norma Draper | Hopewell, VA |
| Richard Harris | Raphine, VA |
| Jason Harvey* | Big Stone Gap, VA |
| Joyce Knight | Mechanicsville, VA |
| Thomas Leach* | Richmond, VA |
| Lynne Leary | Blacksburg, VA |
| Kenley Mays, Sr. | Lynchburg, VA |
| Sudan Ra | VA Beach, VA |
| Monique Tinsley* | Midlothian, VA |
| Eddie Wimbish | Gordonsville, VA |



Seated left to right: Sandy Hermann, Thomas Leach, Monique Tinsley
 Standing left to right: Jason Harvey, John Burgess, Lynne Leary, Richard Harris, Sudan Ra, Kenley Mays, Sr., Eddie Wimbish

* Graduates of the Board’s Partners in Policymaking Program.

New members are selected following an extensive Gubernational appointment application process. Their reasons for wishing to serve on the Board include:

“I would like to use my experience as a person with a developmental disability who at one time lived in an institution and now lives in an apartment to make positive changes for others with disabilities...”

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“...a position on the Board for People with Disabilities is my chance to be [a] voice for *everyone* with disabilities. It would be an honor and a privilege to serve in this manner and I relish the chance to do so...”

“I myself have a disability. I hope to give some insight to the frustration people face in attempting to work.”

“We are very satisfied with the care (our child) is receiving....But we feel constantly threatened by the possibility that budget cuts will impact his services. Our experience... gives me strong empathy for the plight of the mentally disabled and their families...I would appreciate the opportunity to work on the board.” *✍*



Welcome from the Virginia DD Network

Fred Orelove

Heidi Lawyer, Director, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Colleen Miller, Director, Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, Fred Orelove, Executive Director, Partnership for People with Disabilities

“Congress finds that disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, to exert control and choice over their own lives, and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and education mainstream of United States society.”

That is the first sentence of Public Law 106-402, also known as the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act). The purpose of the DD Act is to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families “participate in the design of and have access to...

community services [and] individualized supports....”

Three different entities were established to accomplish this goal:

State Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Protection and Advocacy Systems, and University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service.

Like other states, Virginia has one of each of the DD partner agencies. The Virginia Board for People for Disabilities is this

state’s DD Council, the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy is the state’s “P&A” system, and the Partnership for People with Disabilities (at Virginia Commonwealth University) is Virginia’s University Center for Excellence. Each entity has a different focus and organizational structure. Together, however, they comprise the Virginia DD Network. The directors of these agencies are committed to working collaboratively on critical issues that affect Virginians with disabilities and their families.

In the past, the three agencies have worked on such initiatives as Improving Special Education Experiences and training for professionals to prevent maltreatment of individuals with disabilities. The DD partner agencies continue to meet regularly to discuss major initiatives, such as the Olmstead process, and planning to determine future direction. Writing joint columns that will regularly appear in the DD partner agencies’ newsletters is intended to enhance the collaborative process and promote communication among the DD Network partners. Disability stakeholders are encouraged to visit the DD partner websites for more information on agency activities: www.vaboard.org; www.vopa.state.va.us; www.vcu.edu/partnership. ✍

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Sponsored Programs Mgr.—
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2004-2005

Policy Fellowship Recruitment Begins

Recruitment announcements for the Board’s 2004-2005 Disability Policy Fellowship are being distributed to graduate and doctoral programs at Virginia Commonwealth University in November, 2003. Each year the Board awards a fellowship stipend of \$15,500 to a graduate or doctoral student for a year-long study and research experience with the Board. The purpose of the fellowship is to foster scholarly work and enhance disability policy studies through applied research and intensive study. The announcement and additional information about the Disability Policy Fellowship is also available on the Board’s website at www.vaboard.org.

New Class, New Group Enhance Partners Program

Teri Barker-Morgan



The 2004 class of Partners in Policymaking (PIP) is well underway. The first two sessions included training on the history of the Disability Rights Movement and an introduction to Virginia's disability services network which includes The Partnership for People with Disabilities, the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy and the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (Virginia's DD Council); all federally required entities per the DD Act.

New to the 2004 Partners in Policymaking class is a Partners in Policymaking Alumni Mentor Program (PIPAMP). Three Partners from previous classes, Joan Brunner from the class of 2002 and Sarah Russell and Jennifer Brown both from the 2003 Partners class, submitted a proposal for a Partners mentor program. As alumni who learned a great deal about advocacy and systems change, calling their Partners experience a life changing one, they wanted to give back to the program.

The goal of the mentor program is twofold. First, it provides the current Partners with a valuable resource, a Partner alumni who's walked in their shoes, as they navigate through tons of valuable information, homework and final project program requirements. Second, it facilitates the networking of Partners with other Partners as they work collaboratively for positive systems change in their local communities and throughout Virginia.

True to the spirit of Partners, they are accomplishing the tasks of surveying past partners for interest in being a mentor, matching each current Partner with and alumni who responded to their survey, and providing support as needed as relationships develop, solely as volunteers and through donations of postage for mailing materials and postage for communication. They are also using electronic communication whenever possible as a cost saving measure. ✍



YLF: Building Bridges Through Leadership

Teri Barker-Morgan

The 2003 Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) was held from July 13 - 18, 2003. Twenty-three highly motivated young leaders from across Virginia came together for the purpose of sharpening their leadership skills.

The 2003 YLF possessed a unique energy. The high caliber organization and planning of this year's forum, coupled with the positive energy and enthusiasm of student delegates and volunteer staff, provided the optimal environment for the YLF to achieve its mission of "training new leaders...". The environment was one of learning, of discussing new ideas and sharing experiences and of discovering important leadership qualities, skills and traits necessary for personal and professional development.

Two Student Delegates from the 2003 YLF attended the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' quarterly Board meeting held on September 17, 2003. Antonio Skinner of Norfolk, Virginia and Stephen Joseph of Lynchburg, Virginia both shared with the Board their YLF experience conveying what they learned about leadership and about themselves. They expressed their appreciation to the Board for having the opportunity to participate at the YLF and they acknowledged the positive impact it has had on their lives. ✍



Antonio Skinner,
YLF 2003 Delegate



Stephen Joseph,
YLF 2003 Delegate



Olmstead Report Delivered to Governor and Public

Katherine W. Lawson

The last formal meeting of Virginia’s Olmstead Task Force was held at the Community Services Board in Henrico County, Virginia on August 28, 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to adopt a final report to be submitted to the Joint Health Care Commission and the Governor. The Governor will use the report, which was officially submitted to him on September 15th, 2003, as the basis for implementing the state’s Olmstead Plan.

The final Task Force meeting signified the culmination of many months of work by various Issues Teams and the Steering Committee responsible for overseeing production of the final Olmstead Plan document. The report is the result of the work of 70 Task Force members and over 100 disability stakeholders who committed personal time and energy to deliberations, writing, analysis and preparation of Virginia’s “One Community” document. Embedded in the report are many differing perspectives on diverse and sometimes controversial issues of critical importance to people with disabilities, family members, service providers and policymakers. Reaching a respectful consensus required patience, tolerance of differing viewpoints, much study and deliberation, and intense collaboration. To the credit of all involved, work proceeded in a timely fashion and the document has been generally well-received by diverse constituent groups.

The Honorable Jane H. Woods, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, complimented the Task force members for their work and later confirmed via written correspondence that “we were given a challenge by

the General Assembly to prepare a report to assist Virginia in complying with the requirements of the Olmstead Supreme Court decision, and I am very pleased to say, we have met the challenge.” Further, she confirmed that, “the Governor announced at our meeting that he will work with me in appointing a multi-agency team to cost out the Report recommendations and that he plans to establish an Olmstead Oversight Advisory Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.”



Board members, staff and related stakeholders “rolled up their sleeves” to support the report development process through participation on Issues Teams and attendance at Task Force meetings. In addition, the Board issued a solicited grant to the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, lead agency in development of Virginia’s Olmstead Plan, to support research and data analysis regarding agency self-assessments and facility population surveys included in the report. Finally, the Board issued substantive, formal comments on critical areas of the draft document when it was initially released for public comment.

Much work remains to be done. Stay tuned to the “One Community” website by logging on to www.olmsteadva.com for additional updates on implementation of the plan. ✍

The Board and Disability Commission Address Key Issues in State

Janet W. Hill, Consultant

The Virginia Disability Commission is a legislative commission and the primary forum where the needs and issues of people with disabilities are addressed through the joint cooperation of the Lieutenant Governor, legislators, Governor's appointees, and representatives of service providing agencies. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (the Board) has a unique relationship with the Disability Commission, specified in House Joint Resolution No.34, to provide “technical assistance and staff support... to the Disability Commission.” This role allows the Board to assist the Commission in formulating its agendas, identifying appropriate topics and presenters, and clarifying Commission priorities on behalf of Virginians with disabilities. The Commission meets three to four times each year to consider issues of importance to people with disabilities in the Commonwealth. Major accomplishments of the Commission in 2003 included:

- **Sponsored** legislation to modify §51.5-31 of the Code of Virginia to specify that at least one VBPD member be a representative of a service provider organization by replacing the term, agency concerned with services, with the term, agency that provides services in the listing of the Board’s composition.

(continued on page 6)



Board Funded Study Yields Recommendations on Virginia's Transition Service System

Dr. Barbara Ettner



Researchers from the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center briefed the Board's Education Committee members at their meeting on September 17th, 2003 on findings from a Board-funded, 18-month study of Virginia's transition service system. The study sought to identify specific components in the state's transition system needing improvement and to gain a better understanding of the most effective strategies to strengthen the system overall. The study was conducted as part of the Board's state plan goal addressing the critical life area of education for people with disabilities, to "Empower young people with disabilities and family members through improved transition services."

The study-- the first systematic examination of Virginia's transition services from both consumer and provider perspectives--utilized data obtained from a statewide survey of service providers and educators (225 responses) and focus groups with 91 individuals involved in the state's transition service system. Study activities also included analysis of related state studies and a comprehensive literature review of national research reports and documents concerning provision of transition services. A project management team, including representatives of Virginia's key transition service-related agencies, provided oversight and guidance of study activities.

Findings from the study, which are extensive, were articulated broadly in the Executive Summary:

"In terms of systemic change, transition planning and services are not yet fully integrated into Virginia's agency and education support services for you and young adults with disabilities. The data from this study suggests that a momentum for change is increasing as more agencies and adult service provider see themselves as having a role in transition planning and service delivery and as collaboration between adult services and education continues to mature."

Thirty-one recommendations for improving transition services in the state were presented to the Board at the September meeting. In addition, findings from the study related to requirements for professional development based on IDEA transition requirements were also presented. ✍

The Board and Disability Commission Address Key Issues in State

(continued from page 5)

- **Passed** Employment- Medicaid Buy-In-Legislation to require the Department of Medical Assistance Services to apply for a Section 1115 Waiver from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement a Medicaid buy-in for those working persons with disabilities whose earnings are too high to qualify for traditional Medicaid comprehensive health care services.
- **Worked** in collaboration with VA Housing Development Authority (VHDA) to make a change in a Virginia housing policy to assist Virginians who need accessible apartments. The change involves a simple modification of the competitive LIHTC bid scoring system, which gives every developer of LIHTC housing a strong incentive to include accessible units in their development plan.
- **Accelerated** the schedule for renovations to restroom in the General Assembly building. The Commission will also be monitoring renovations to the Capitol Square area that will take place in the future and improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

For more information about the Disability Commission contact Janet Hill, Research Associate, VCU Commonwealth Institute, at jhill@hsc.vcu.edu. ✍

Changing Systems—Changing Lives: Board Celebrates 20 Years of Successful Grant Investments and Initiatives

Amy G. Wright

At its September 17, 2003 quarterly meeting, Board members, staff and former grantees from across Virginia gathered for a gala lunch to celebrate the 20th anniversary of successful grant investments and initiatives. Attendees enjoyed an historical overview that highlighted successful outcomes and significant achievements resulting from the over 200 grant awards the Board has made over the past 20 years. The celebration included a festive display of selected historical grant products--training manuals, reference guides, curricula, videos, CDs, educational brochures and public awareness materials – all produced and developed by past grantees to effect meaningful change in the lives of people with disabilities and to enhance service provision. Also featured at the lunch celebration were newly developed marketing materials for the grant programs, and a presentation highlighting the personal impact and life-changing outcomes of the Board's past projects.

Remarks made during the celebration paid tribute to Board members--past and present--who, as public officers representing diverse stakeholders throughout Virginia, drove the

creative engine of systems change through its grant making activities. Together with staff and collaborating organizations, they planned and invested resources in diverse initiatives throughout Virginia that, even today, continue to promote independence, productivity, family support, and community participation across the lifespan of Virginians with disabilities. Staff project managers Dr. Barbara Ettner, Katherine Lawson and Amy

for Independent Living, Community Service Boards, and for-profit organizations.

While the Board continues to work to achieve meaningful and sustainable change in the lives of people with disabilities, particularly those with developmental disabilities, it took the time during the September quarterly meeting to reflect on the outcomes of multiple initiatives that have varied in response over the past two decades to the changing needs of Virginians with disabilities and have addressed key areas of importance in the lives of people with disabilities – education, community inclusion, employment, early intervention, transition, housing and transportation--to fulfill the mission of creating systems change.

Even though

Hurricane Isabel was rapidly approaching, a grand grant time was had by all! *✍*



*Front L-R: Dana Yarbrough, Colleen Miller, Tera Yoda
Back: L-R: Christy Carroll, Cindy Weinstock, Monica Smyth*



Wright shared vignettes of successful past projects with Board members, citing the extensive work of numerous collaborating partners--including sister agencies in the DD Network (Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy & the Partnership for People with Disabilities), State and other public agencies, the higher education system--including universities, colleges and community colleges, non-profit entities such as ARC chapters, PEATC, Training and Technical Assistance Centers, Centers

Watch the Web!

***Funds Available
Announcement to be Made!
New RFPs (Requests for Proposals) from the Board available in December in Community Inclusion, Education and Employment on our website at www.vaboard.org!***



Meetings of Interest



November 19-20, 2003

**DRS
Public Forum on State Plan for Vocational
Rehabilitation and Supported Employment**

**November 19, 3:30 pm—5:30 pm
S.W. Virginia Mental Health Institute
304 Bagley Circle, Marion, VA**

**November 19, 3:30 pm—5:30 pm
S.W. Virginia Training Center
State Route 707
Hillsville, VA**

**November 20, 3:30 pm—5:30 pm
Northern Virginia Training Center
9901 Braddock Road
Fairfax, VA
Contact: Rhonda Earman
(804) 662-7611 or
srcweb@dsa.state.va.us**

December 4-6, 2003

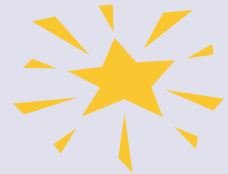
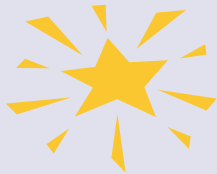
**International Conference on Aging, Disability
and Independence
*Advancing Technology and Services to Promote
Quality of Life***

**Arlington, VA
Contact: American Society on Aging
833 Market St., Suite 511
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: 800 537-9728
fax: 415 974-0300
www.asaging.org/icadi**

Next Board Meeting

**December 3, 2003
9—4:30**

**Sheraton Richmond West
6624 West Broad Street, Richmond VA**



**Virginia Board for
People with Disabilities**

Ninth Street Office Building
202 N. 9th Street, 9th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

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