



VOICES & VISIONS

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

Positive Behavioral Supports

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The Board's Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) initiative began in early 2002 during its Community Inclusion Committee Meetings. Committee members were concerned that individuals with disabilities often lack the proper supports to remain in the community and consequently end up in institutions or other restrictive settings.

PBS is an empirically validated, function-based approach designed to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with pro-social skills. Use of PBS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change. PBS providers understand that all behavior is communication and serves a function for the individual. Unlike traditional behavioral management, which views the individual as the problem and seeks to "fix" him or her by quickly eliminating the challenging behavior, PBS and functional behavioral analysis (FBA) view system, setting, and lack of skill as parts of the problem and work to change those through identifying the cause of the behavior, altering environments and teaching new skills.

At one time in Virginia, there were quite a few practicing PBS providers. Shifts in governmental payment and licensing requirements resulted in the pool of providers dwindling to extremely low levels. The Board acknowledged that rebuilding the

supply of providers was vitally necessary for successful inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in employment, education, and community living.

The Board has invested in two consecutive grants to develop a curriculum for Virginia, recruit and train PBS providers to improve the availability of services, and draft and pilot a process that could potentially be used to recognize the expertise of trained providers. The grants were awarded to the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The first grant, in the amount of \$75,000, began on October 15, 2002, and ended April 14, 2004. A second grant for \$150,000 is ongoing. Objectives include research into best practices associated with credentialing, oversight and payment. Other objectives supported through this grant include finalizing a curriculum, training PBS providers, and making recommendations for developing a sustainable recognition/endorsement process. The curriculum has now been developed and training is ongoing in Virginia with great success.

(continued on page 2)



Spotlight on Board Grants

This is the fourth in a series of four articles highlighting grant projects from each of the Board's standing committees. Positive Behavioral Supports is a project of the Board's Community Integration Committee.

Letter from the Executive Director

Heidi Lawyer



It is a busy fall season, as always. By the time you read this newsletter, Virginia will have elected a new Governor, a new Lt. Governor, and a new Attorney General. There will also be changes in the membership of the General Assembly. These new leaders will set forth their vision for Virginia and it will be the responsibility of the Board and all of you to work proactively with our elected officials to educate and inform them of the needs of and challenges faced by people with developmental disabilities in our Commonwealth and to advocate with and on behalf of our constituents! We have enjoyed a wonderful working relationship with the current Administration and look forward to developing an equally effective relationship with our new state leaders.

As the Commonwealth's DD Planning Council, the Board represents an independent voice and a source of knowledge and expertise on a variety of issues. We are continuing to strengthen and enhance our role as a systems change agent and policy advisor on issues affecting people with developmental disabilities. In October, the Board held a two day retreat to examine past activities and began developing our areas of focus for the next five years. The retreat was a wonderful opportunity for open dialogue among our diverse members and a renewed commitment to facilitating community inclusion for people with DD and other disabilities in all aspects of community life. We have many avenues with which to accomplish this goal, including our policy, outreach, advocacy and grant work.

Recently Board staff Teri Morgan and I, as well as Board members, Sandy Hermann, Lisbet Ward, and Christy Crowther, had the opportunity to attend the Alliance for Full Participation Summit in Washington. Many others from Virginia, including representatives of the Partnership for People with Disabilities, VOPA, DMHMRSAS, and several CSBs, also attended this unique event which brought together more than 2,200 consumers, family members, advocates, providers, and policymakers. The mission for the Alliance organizers was: *to dream, plan, work, mobilize and organize people with DD, their families, and supporting communities and organizations to make the promise of integration, productivity, independence, and quality of life a reality in policy and practice.* This mission reflects what DD Councils like the Board are all about.

Consistent with the message communicated so eloquently by so many people with DD at the Summit, the Board believes that people with disabilities, and their families, when appropriate, must and can be the primary decision-makers on issues affecting their lives and be the key advocates for systems change. The Board supports self-advocacy and self determination by providing training and education through its Partners in Policymaking program, Youth Leadership Program, and the New Voices initiative. Program participants tell us that these programs have changed their lives and their futures and how they have become inspired to help change the futures of others. In the words of the Summit leaders, which cannot be improved upon:

If not now, then when? If not us, then who? ♡♡

Positive Behavioral Supports (continued from page 1)

One of the key challenges brought forth was the inability of PBS providers, who were not licensed in appropriate categories, to receive payment under the therapeutic consultation services category of the DD and MR waivers. An interagency workgroup comprised of Board and Partnership staff, representatives from DMAS, DMHMRSAS, and private providers worked closely over the last year to address this challenge and although work in this area is ongoing, significant progress has been made thanks to the support of DMAS, the Department of Health Professions, and DMHMRSAS. The Board can be very proud of this long term investment that will provide critical supports to children and adults with developmental and other disabilities and improve the quality of life in all areas of community. To learn more, please contact:

The Partnership for People with Disabilities
Virginia Commonwealth University
P.O. Box 843020
Richmond Virginia, 23284-3020
(804) 828-3879 ♡♡



DD Network Update

Fred Orelove

Full Participation in Virginia?

The DD Network Directors, along with several dozen other Virginians, attended the Alliance for Full Participation summit on September 22-23. The summit's purpose was to bring together many voices from every state and every walk of life and to conclude the meeting with one vision: "We want dignity and respect for all. We want full participation for all."

In an Agenda for Full Participation released after the meeting concluded, summit leaders listed 12 steps necessary to make the vision a reality. The first step was: "For states that still fund public and private institutions, we want to see a plan to close them over the next few years, and people with life-long disabilities helped to live in communities, in regular houses and regular neighborhoods. Starting today we expect all states to stop placing children in institutions and segregated residential schools."

Do the leaders in Virginia share the same vision as thousands of Virginians with developmental disabilities? Are we supporting people with disabilities in the Commonwealth so that they can convey their hopes and dreams of full participation and citizenship, with all of its benefits and responsibilities, to elected and appointed officials who have the authority and responsibility to determine public policy?

The *State of the States in Developmental Disabilities* summarizes data on the amount of funding that each state provides to support individuals with disabilities and their families in community and institutional settings (Braddock et al., 2005). Where does Virginia stand based on the most recent data? Near the bottom in almost every category. According to the Braddock et al. report, Virginia ranks 39th nationally in terms of its per person utilization rate of institutions (16+ beds) versus community based settings. Virginia ranks 48th in terms of its per person utilization rate of institutions with 1-15 beds. Our state is 41st in per person spending on Home and Community Based Waiver

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Services, and ranks 44th in spending on family support (based on spending per family). Finally, Virginia's state fiscal effort ranking for community supports dropped two places from 2002, and now stands at 47th nationally.

Virginia's low rankings are the result of its historical bias towards institutional services and its failure to commit sufficient resources to individuals with developmental disabilities or their families. We cannot develop a strong system of community supports while continuing to finance large congregate facilities and expand institutional slots.

In the words of leaders following the Summit: "We are Americans too! We want to be included in all communities in our great nation and to have all the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship. We need to be safe and free at the same time." ♡

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).

Third Annual YLF Greeting Cards Now Available

The YLF is selling Holiday Cards designed by YLF alumni. Five different designs are included in the pack of 20 cards. The cards cost \$14.00 per pack plus \$2.44 for shipping totaling \$16.44. All proceeds go to support the Youth Leadership Forum Alumni Association.

If you would like to order holiday greeting cards please email Jennifer.Peers@vbpd.virginia.gov

If you have any questions, please call Jennifer or Teri at 1-800-846-4464.



Thank you for
supporting the
Youth
Leadership
Forum!

Partners in Policymaking Update

Teri Barker-Morgan



Partner's Session Highlights DD Network Activities

The Partners in Policymaking (PIP) class of 2006 is well underway. The October 2005 session was the second of eight monthly sessions that make up the annual advocacy and leadership training program. The October session highlighted Virginia's DD network - The Partnership for People with Disabilities, the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) and The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD). Under the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act), these three agencies work in collaboration to implement programs designed to improve services, knowledge and policy in the disability arena. The work of the three "DD Partners" is always of interest to the Partner's participants.



Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger presents to the Partners class of 2006

Partners Alumni Share Their News!

Partners in Policymaking graduates are an outstanding resource on a local, state and national level. Their advocacy and influence is far reaching --- impacting many of the important issues of our time, such as: inclusive education, community inclusion, accessibility, employment and equal opportunity, attitudes and values, and civil rights.

The Board has recently initiated a new opportunity for Partners graduates to share their news; what they're involved in, how their advocacy is making a difference, in small and large ways - no success is too small. The updates can be made right from the VBPD website through an auto-submit form. The website will be regularly updated with the successes and accomplishments of Partners from throughout Virginia. ♡

YLF Update

Teri Barker-Morgan



The Virginia Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), now in its seventh year, has begun recruitment for Student Delegates for the 2006 class. Application packets have been mailed to high schools, service providers, and appropriate agencies and organizations throughout Virginia. If you have not received a YLF recruitment package please contact the Board right away.

The 2006 YLF will take place from July 10 - 14, 2006, at Christopher Newport University in Newport News. The deadline for the receipt of application materials is 5:00 p.m. Friday, February 25, 2006.

Gabe Rogers from Stuarts Draft, VA and Jermese Dudley from Centerville, VA shared with VBPD Board members what they learned at the 2005 YLF during a luncheon presentation at the Board's September Board meeting. Their poise and self-confidence was notable and their comments about leadership, perseverance, integrity, courage and friendship - important lessons, all part of their YLF experience, were encouraging and

uplifting. They both left the forum feeling more empowered and in control of their future.

PLEASE, HELP GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THE 2006 YLF OPPORTUNITY - applications may be downloaded and printed off the VBPD website at www.vaboard.org, or individuals may contact Jennifer Peers at 1-800-846-4464 (voice or TTY) or Jennifer.peers@vbpd.virginia.gov for application materials.

Together, we can ensure that all Virginia high school students with disabilities who have a desire to further develop their leadership skills, have the opportunity to apply to be a YLF Student Delegate. ♡



Governor Warner with YLF students at Capitol Day, July 2005

What's News Across Virginia

Tom Driscoll

Earlier this year, Board staff visited communities across Virginia to hear public comment on the interim draft of the Biennial Report and disability issues in general. While many of the same concerns were expressed everywhere, there were clear local differences in interests and attitudes. Similar differences are also evident in local news coverage. As time permits, Board staff monitors Virginia newspapers to see what is being written and read about people with disabilities and the issues that concern them.

A look back at coverage last summer showed distinct regional differences. Some differences reflect the reporting and editorial perspectives of individual newspapers, but successful newspapers also reflect the communities they serve. Highlighted or continuing coverage of a story is a good indication of what strongly interests readers.

Some stories of national interest were prominent everywhere -- No Child Left Behind and special education, Medicaid Part D, whether convicted criminals with mental retardation should suffer the death penalty, and continuing discussion of the Terry Schiavo case. Other stories were more regional. Stories about hunting regulations affecting sportsmen with disabilities popped up regularly in central and western Virginia but were barely mentioned in the east or north. Autism and childhood vaccinations appeared sparingly statewide, but produced a steady exchange of views between columnists and readers in Washington and Tidewater.

As might be expected, federal issues were covered as local news in northern Virginia. State government actions were more prominent in Richmond. Papers statewide covered major developments regarding Virginia's schools for the deaf and blind, but the topic appeared almost daily in the Valley. Mention of the battle between Maryland's state and local governments over special education started in local sections of the Washington papers then spilled over to the front pages as interest in the controversy spread to the Virginia suburbs. Metro system accessibility and service for people with disabilities were of constant interest to northern Virginia readers. In Richmond, changes in the state's birth-injury program and the accessibility of city schools became significant storylines, and local news about training and employment for people with

disabilities highlighted the Positive Vibe Café and municipal recycling programs.

Local coverage can also have a particular "flavor." No region can compete with Hampton Roads in column-inches dedicated to people with disabilities striving for and achieving independence and success in all parts of daily living. In contrast, news in the southwest often highlights their difficulties. Much coverage in that region dealt with cutbacks and shortages in affordable, accessible transportation and housing, loss of a popular animal-therapy program, inaccessibility of public facilities, and the potential effect of housing for the elderly and people with disabilities on property values and crime.

The western part of the state was also more attentive to tourism with frequent stories on the accessibility of historic sites and guides for travelers with disabilities. Northern Virginia had far more stories describing accessible

"high-end" homes and concerns about accessible parking and accessibility at sports and concert venues. Vigorous debate of artistic and cultural depictions of people with disabilities was much more prominent in the DC papers, sparking praise and controversy in reviews and readers' letters.

Soon, legislators and staff, lobbyists and advocates will gather in Richmond to convene the 2006 General Assembly. It is already evident that the session will deal with multiple issues of strong interest to Virginians with disabilities, their families, supporters, and service providers. Based on what they read in their newspapers, they will bring different awareness and perspectives on what are the important and pressing issues of the day that will certainly enliven and enrich the 2006 session. ♡♡



The **Consumer and Family Participation Fund**, supported by a grant from the Virginia Board, provides supplemental funds for consumers and family members to attend conferences, workshops and other training opportunities. For more information, visit www.cfpf.net or call Toll Free: (866) 625-2373V/TDD

"Our Lives, Our Voices"

Teri Barker-Morgan

On October 6 & 7, the first ever New Voices "Our Lives, Our Voices" conference took place at the Richmond Marriott Hotel. The conference was developed and organized by people with developmental disabilities and included presentations and discussion on such topics as: housing, transportation, employment, quality attendant care, post-secondary education and assistive technology.

The "Our Lives, Our Voices" conference was made possible through a grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. The grant was awarded to the Partnership for People with Disabilities which established the New Voices Planning Committee (NVPC) comprised of ten individuals with developmental disabilities who represent diverse regional, demographic and disability diverse populations.

The NVPC identified issues, developed an agenda of the key issues, and organized a statewide forum where individuals with disabilities, policymakers, service providers and other affected stakeholders could come together to discuss issues critical to the lives of people with disabilities. Prior to the NVPC, no such initiative to unite and magnify the voices and concerns of people with disabilities,

their family members and service providers existed in Virginia.

The conference's focus on topics important to people with disabilities and how they live their lives was an overwhelming success. It began with an opening luncheon at which a video introduction to the conference topics was presented. The video was a "reality moment" illustrating the challenges many people with disabilities face on a daily basis to live a life of their choosing - a life full of opportunities, productivity, self-determination, and relationships, just like everyone else.

Other conference highlights include Dan Wilkens' opening keynote presentation. Mr. Wilkens is the well known founder of The Nth Degree. Ed Turner's inspiring talk on self-advocacy was followed by the presentation of the first Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award to him. Finally, Annie Forts, founder of the Annie Forts "UP"

Syndrome Fund, Inc. gave an energetic closing presentation. Recommendations for system change resulting from topics addressed during the "Our Lives, Our Voices!" conference will be published in a monograph. ♡



VBPD Board member Thomas Leach congratulates Ed Turner at the New Voices Conference.

Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award Winner



The first annual Jackie Crews Excellence in Leadership Award was presented at the New Voices "Our Lives, Our Vision" conference on October 6, 2005. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities was pleased to recognize Edmond Turner as the first recipient of the award and presented him with a \$1,000 cash stipend. The award ceremony concluded with the reading of personal letters of congratulations to Ed from both Governor Mark Warner and Lieutenant Governor Tim Kaine.

In his life and through his work, Ed Turner, who was born with cerebral palsy, exemplifies and advances the four goals of the Jackie Crews Award: independence, productivity, inclusion, and self-determination. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities calls on all Virginians to congratulate and recognize Mr. Turner for his diligent work and his steadfast commitment to these four goals on behalf of all citizens. To find out more about Ed Turner visit the VBPD website at www.vaboard.org. ♡



(left) Board Chair, Sandy Hermann with Ed Turner

(right) Ed Turner with family and friends

Emergency Planning: Post-Katrina

Katherine Lawson



As we have all recently learned, natural disasters can strike anywhere and result in enormous challenges to all citizens. These challenges can be even greater for people with developmental and other disabilities whose needs are frequently not addressed in local emergency plans. The damage caused by Hurricane Katrina was a harsh reminder of the need to include everyone in disaster planning. Prior to Katrina, the Board had responded to requests for information from the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness regarding emergency planning for people with disabilities. Resource materials were provided and relationships began to develop. Post-Katrina, it became even clearer that a coordinated effort among state and local planners and experts in the disability arena would be essential to ensuring the safety of Virginians with disabilities. Many of our sister state agencies provided invaluable direct assistance post-Katrina. At the same time, Board staff began to provide consultation and guidance to The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and asked them to consider a closer collaboration in planning to support individuals with disabilities who live in the community in the event of an emergency situation.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management is responsible for, "Protecting the lives and property of Virginia's citizens from emergencies and disasters by coordinating the state's emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts." Reporting directly to the Secretary of Public Safety and the Governor of Virginia, VDEM works under the broad authority of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Services and Disaster Law of 2000, as amended:

Title 44-146.13-44-146.40 of the Code of Virginia outlines the responsibilities of the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to:

- Declare State of Emergency
- Control and Regulate Resources
- Direct Mandatory Evacuation
- Commit State Resources
- Expend "Sum Sufficient" Monies
- Suspend Normal Procurement Procedures
- Request Federal Assistance
- All Actions Necessary for Protection of the Public
- Pre-Delegation of Authority

The VDEM website has tips and news regarding their progress in planning in Virginia. The website notes that the best way to weather a disaster safely and with minimal financial impact is to prepare in advance. There are topical links to family disaster planning, disaster supply kits, preparing your home for a disaster, special needs concerns, animal safety planning and emergency alert systems.

Board staff was invited to a VDEM meeting to discuss the Board's activities and areas of interest. That relationship is now ongoing. There are many activities taking place to improve communication between planners and citizens. Since Hurricane Katrina, volunteerism and medical response teams have grown in strength. With the recent development of a special populations work group at VDEM, it is anticipated that planning will improve for individuals living in the community who have special needs. ♡♡

2005 VBPD Planning Retreat Highlights

Retreat facilitator Susan Wilkes assists Board members and staff drafting goals for the 2007-2011 State Plan.

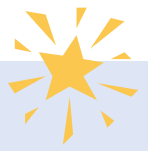


Staff intern Serena Walkin (center) and Board members Cindy Daniel (left) and Lisbet Ward focus on a Retreat work group presentation.

Future Board Meetings

December 2, 2005
March 9, 2006
June 15, 2006
September 13, 2006

Check out our website
for future locations
www.vaboard.org



Meetings of Interest

December, 5-7, 2005
2005 Educational Technology Leadership Conference
Technology: Unlocking the Potential
 VDOE Division of Technology
 Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center, Roanoke, VA
 804-371-2767
<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Technology/OET/conf.shtml>

December 5-8, 2005
Shaping the Future: Introduction to Applied Behavioral Analysis
 Virginia Institute of Autism, Charlottesville, VA
 434-923-8252
<http://www.viaschool.org/workshops.html>

December 6, 2005
Adolescence and Autism Spectrum Disorders: Mobilizing Strengths and Minimizing Challenges in Everyday Life
 Commonwealth Autism Service, Sheraton Park South,
 9901 Midlothian Turnpike, Richmond, VA
 1-800-649-8481 or email: information@autismva.org

December 8, 2005, 10:00 AM
Virginia Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board
 Virginia Department for the Aging, 1610 Forest Avenue,
 Suite 100, Richmond, VA 23229

December 10, 2005, 10:00 AM
Statewide Rehabilitation Council for the Blind
 Dept f/t Blind & Vision Impaired, 397 Azalea Avenue,
 Richmond, VA 23227

January 12, 2006
Pediatric Sleep Issues in Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder
 Commonwealth Autism Services
 ODU, Virginia Beach, VA
 800-649-8481
www.autismva.org/Workshops_and_Conferences.htm

January 18, 2006
Inclusion, Collaboration, and Differentiation: Tying It All Together
 JMU T/TAC, JMU, Harrisonburg, VA
 888-205-4824
<http://ttac.cisat.jmu.edu/docs/inclusion.pdf>

January 20, 2006, 9:00 AM
Board for Protection and Advocacy
 Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, Byrd Building,
 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5, Richmond, VA

March 18, 2006
Down Syndrome Association of Roanoke Conference
 Wyndham Hotel, Roanoke, VA
 540-772-6460
<http://www.dsar.org/Events.htm>

March 20-22, 2006
Virginia Transition Forum 2006
Leadership Through Change
 VDOE Special Education Instruction Services, Career & Technical
 Education & T/TACs and DRS
 Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center, Roanoke, VA
 540-831-5357
<http://www.radford.edu/~conf-serv/>

March 23-25, 2006
50th Annual VAECE Conference
 Today's Children-Tomorrow's World: Helping Children Reach
 Their Dreams
 Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education
 Marriott Hotel, Richmond, VA
 888-228-2323
<http://www.vaece.org/futureconference.html>



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 People with Disabilities

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