



VOICES & VISIONS

Making the voices of people with disabilities heard today and creating promising visions for tomorrow

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From Volunteer to Employee, People with Disabilities Engage!

Katherine W. Lawson

"When the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities began deliberating RFP development in 2001, and possible grant opportunities, my vision was that somehow through including people with disabilities, in a volunteer capacity, employment offerings could result," said Sandy Cranston at the September Board meeting in 2001. Ms. Cranston, from Huddleston, VA, noted that all too often volunteer recruitment does not include people with disabilities. As a member of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, she brought her view to the Community Inclusion Committee. Project Word's Volunteerism grant was funded and then adopted by Sandy in the Adopt-A-Grant program.

Staff of the Virginia Board has carefully monitored project outcomes. Interestingly, one outcome not intended in the grant was to increase employment. Through creative efforts, often unanticipated results in systems change or capacity building evolve as a result of Board funding. Specific outcomes in this project included organizing, marketing, participating in coordinator roundtables in various communities, and working with supported employment and job training as transitional service organizations for volunteer placement. Employment was an unanticipated result. In this case, the receipt of one idea from a Board member has improved the lives of many people. Through the improved relationship building in volunteer opportunities for people with disabilities, government has a greater understanding of job placement options. Finding sponsors for individuals, and placement opportunities, Project Word was then able to build relationships, which brought forward continuation funding.

George Boas, Executive Director of Project

Word, recently called asking for a speaker at their 75th Anniversary celebration. As Sandy couldn't attend, Elin Doval, Board member, graciously offered to represent the agency. She observed that the Volunteerism project is important, stating "I believe it is projects such as this that are tremendously rewarding for the Board, for the community, for people who otherwise wouldn't have a job today, or the enriching experience of working and building a presence of the value of people with disabilities in the working world."

This project demonstrates the value of our DD Council, and the rewards brought forward by the Board's robust thinking. The Board relies upon citizens to bring forward their experiences through public testimony, state plan comment, and recommendations made publicly, or through responding via electronic email and voice mail.

You can influence the Board's state planning process by providing input and feedback.

For more information on this project, please contact George Boas at Project Word, 3100 Clarendon Blvd, Arlington, Virginia 22201, 703-525-9673,

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Meeting pairs the Board's New Committee Leadership with Policy & Program Staff

Dr. Barbara Ettner

Newly-selected Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Board's Employment, Education and Community Inclusion committees were invited to attend the "first-ever" working luncheon with VBPD Policy and Program Section staff on September 20, 2002 at the Library of Virginia. The meeting, arranged at the request of new Employment Committee Chair Linda Miller, proved highly informative and energizing for all participants. Brian S. Parsons, former VBPD Director, and Bill Cherry, VBPD Chairman, stopped in at the beginning of the meeting to offer their support and encouragement for the new, informal collaborative initiative between Board members and committee support staff.

At the meeting Linda Miller (Chair, Employment), Carol Adelaar (Chair, Education), and Beth Daly (Co-Chair,



Carol Adelaar
Chair, Education Committee

Education) shared ideas for enhanced committee leadership and cross-committee collaboration. Ms. Amy Wright, VBPD Grants Administrative Manager, Dr. Barbara Ettner, Policy and Programs Director, and Katherine Lawson, Planning and Constituent Outreach Manager, agreed that face-to-face meetings were excellent mechanisms for energizing the work of the standing committees -- and other ad-hoc committees that may be developed -- as they implement the Board's work as Virginia's premiere systems change agent for people with disabilities. Ms. Wright led discussion of the diverse responsibilities of the Board's Chairs and Co-Chairs, noting that they are charged with leading an array of critical tasks including sponsored programs oversight, grants management, strategic planning, legislative advocacy and community collaboration.

Director Accepts New Position at ODEP

Amy G. Wright

After nine years of service to the Board in the capacity of a Grant Program Manager and Director, Brian Parsons has departed to work as a Policy Advisor in the Office of Disability Employment Policy in Washington, D.C. Although Brian has been working for many years to enhance delivery of disability services in education, community living, and employment, employment has been a particular focus for him and he will now have an opportunity to make an impact at the national level. The Office of Disability Employment Policy has as its mission to expand access to training, education, employment supports, assistive technology, integrated employment, entrepreneurial development and small business opportunities. The office also seeks to build partnerships with local and state level agencies to increase awareness of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

With his last Board meeting finishing up September 26, 2002 at the Holiday Inn Koger South Conference Center, Brian attended a farewell reception given in his honor. In addition to many guests, including Board members, agency representatives, long-time colleagues, and good friends, the Honorable Secretary Jane Woods paid a special surprise visit for the occasion and gave parting farewell greetings to Brian. Many tokens of appreciation were shared with him.

On his final day, Board staff had opportunity to give Brian a farewell luncheon and present him with gifts. We wish Brian well in his new endeavors.

Governor's Housing Conference Taps Issue as Key Priority

Katherine W. Lawson

The Virginia Housing 2002 Conference was held in Roanoke, VA from September 11th through September 13th. This year's theme, "Housing-The Foundation For Our Communities" underscored the vital role that housing plays in developing healthy and sustainable communities. This year conference planners included the Virginia Housing and Development Authority (VHDA), the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, (DHCD), and an array of housing-related stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. Bill Fuller, well-known Virginian and long-time pioneer for housing opportunities for Virginians with disabilities, was featured speaker at the conference. Other participants included the U.S. Department of Agriculture-- Rural Development, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Governor Warner, honorary conference speaker, announced the beginnings of a statewide campaign to educate minorities about housing and home ownership opportunities. "Minorities and new immigrants have not achieved the economic advantage through home ownership as others, and older Virginians or persons with disabilities have fixed incomes that inhibit their ability to retain or gain independence," said Warner. He also proposed improvements in addressing fair housing complaints, and he announced the establishment of a taskforce to speed up Virginia's compliance with the Olmstead Decision, a Supreme Court ruling mandating independent living opportunities for the disabled. Further he proposed \$90 million in existing bonding authority for housing revitalization and projects to link housing to employment centers and social services.

Lieutenant Governor Tim Kaine, also an honorary speaker, reiterated the importance of a renewed commitment for housing, and expressed a dramatic interest in populations with disabilities and improving the accessibility and

HUD (Housing & Urban Development) has a web site at www.hud.gov/groups/disabilities that can provide information on federal resources and fair housing laws—check it out!

affordability of housing stock in Virginia. He noted that housing is a priority issue of the Disability Commission this interim.

The participants represented a broad range of consumer groups. There was a large representation from Access Independence (AI), an

Independent Living Center in Northern Virginia. Janet Bixby from AI stated the conference was "extremely good, gave good ideas on how to more effectively serve customers from the disability community."

Specific workshops on Medicaid and the "New Freedoms" initiatives, accessibility laws, affordable rural housing, and Section 8 Choice Vouchers for the disabled, were featured at well-attended sessions.

The conference brought forward several substantial outcomes:

- ◆ The leadership in Virginia, including State Housing Authorities, the Housing Study Commission, the Disability Commission, and the Governor have now publicly committed to improve housing options for people with disabilities in affordability, accessibility, and improving housing stock.
- ◆ Housing stakeholders are now officially "on notice" to proactively include diverse stakeholders in housing planning processes including entities such as Disability Services Boards (DSBs), Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), and Community Services Boards (CSBs).
- ◆ Housing planners and policymakers must find ways to share their expertise across the various special disability populations.
- ◆ As the Olmstead Decision is examined and implemented in Virginia, funds will be needed for critical support services to meet growing population demands.

One of the most important outcomes of the conference was the strong commitment by Virginia's housing leaders and top government officials to including people with disabilities and special needs in discussions and decisions that affect their housing needs at the state and local levels. It is vital that our readers actively step up their levels of participation at meetings of the Disability Commission and the Housing Study Commission. The disability community must continue to reinforce commitments made at the Governors Housing Conference this year and must make their voices heard at all levels of decision making in Virginia. The Housing community is now working with us!





3rd Youth Leadership Forum a Rousing Success

Teri Barker

Twenty high school students from across Virginia came together from July 15-19 for the third annual Youth Leadership Forum. It was a time for learning, leadership development and skills enrichment. The student delegates, selected through a competitive statewide application process, networked with an impressive group of panel presenters and keynote speakers who came to participate at various times throughout the forum.

A highlight of the week was the engaging and thought provoking discussion the students had with Governor Mark Warner at the General Assembly Building on Capitol Day. Student Delegates shared their thoughts and asked questions

about issues that affect them and their communities.



**YOUNG LEADERS
PAVE THE WAY!**



Two YLF 2002 Delegates, Sarah Burgess and Philip Battle (above), discussed their YLF experience with VBPD Board members at the September 25 Board meeting. They were well prepared organized and poised YLF representatives. All of those who were present were indeed inspired by the motivation and commitment demonstrated by these two young leaders. YLF 2003 application information and other updates can be obtained at the Board website, www.vaboard.org.

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Partners in Policymaking Class of 2002-2003 Kick Off Session

Teri Barker

Twenty-eight self-advocates or parents/family members of young children with disabilities came together on September 13 & 14 for the kick-off session of Partners In Policymaking (PIP), one of the Board's flagship programs. PIP's mission is to train advocates in Virginia who are knowledgeable and empowered to create positive change and a new vision for people with disabilities in Virginia.



New Class of Partners busily attending to their work during a Saturday session

The September session was a perfect beginning for the new advocates' journey. On Friday, September 13, Partners learned about the history of the disability rights movement by tracing attitudes and treatment of people with disabilities down through the ages to the present day. This knowledge sets the foundation for creating systems and attitudinal change.

On Saturday, September 14, the class had the opportunity to hear from Virginia's Disability Services Agencies. Dr. Fred Orelove, Director of Partnership for People with Disabilities, discussed the multi-disciplined areas in which The Partnership operates as Virginia's university affiliated program. Heidi Lawyer, acting Executive Director of the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOVA), discussed the agency's priorities and services. Mike

Scione with the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) shared information on DRS's role in Virginia's disability services system and how to access the Consumer Loan Fund as well as other funding supports.



The next PIP training will take place on October 18 & 19. Included in that session will be a Federal Legislative update, an overview of the IDEA in Virginia, an introduction to Assistive Technologies, and an overview of the History of the Independent Living Movement. It's sure to be an information packed session!

Applications are being accepted for the PIP 2003-2004 class and can be accessed, along with additional information and program updates, on the Board's website www.vaboard.org.

Meetings and Events of Interest

November 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

CONFERENCES IN NOVEMBER

November 2:

Woodbridge-Hylton High School

Circle of Support Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs & the Professionals who work with them

November 8-10:

McLean-Hilton-McLean/Tyson's Corner

International Conference of the Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental & Learning Disorders: Autism Disorders of Relating & Communicating

November 19-20:

Charlottesville-Doubletree Hotel

Creating Connections: Celebrating Early Intervention in VA

Schedule of Events

- **1-**DBVI Vocational Rehab Public Meeting: 4:30 PM
Fredericksburg
Ramada Inn South-5324 Jefferson Davis Highway
- **4-**DDHH Advisory Board Meeting: 10:00 AM
Richmond-1602 Rolling Hills Dr 2nd Fl Conf Room
DMHMRSAS-Olmstead Task Force: 1:00 PM
Richmond-VHDA 601 S. Belvidere St.
- **6-**Board of Education 10:00 AM
Committee to Implement No Child Left Behind
Richmond-House Room C-General Assembly Bldg
- **7-**Department for Aging Listening Session: 9:00 AM
St. Paul Oxbow Center-16620 E. Riverside Dr.
Department for Aging Listening Session: 1:00 PM
Wytheville Holiday Inn-1800 E. Main St.
DRS State Plan Public Hearing: 4-6 PM
Fairfax DRS Office-66 Office Plaza Suite 300
DBVI Vocational Rehab Public Meeting: 7:00 PM
Hampton
Sammy & Nick's Restaurant-2718 W. Mercury Blvd
- **14-**DRS State Plan Public Hearing: 4-6 PM
Portsmouth-3248 Academy Ave
- **18-**DRS State Plan Public Hearing: 4-6 PM
Fishersville-WWRC Chapel
- **20-**Commonwealth Transportation Board: 2:00 PM
Richmond-1221 E. Broad St. Auditorium

December 2002

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Schedule of Events

- **4-**Board of Education 10:00 AM
Committee to Implement No Child Left Behind
House Room 2-General Assembly Building
- **7-**DBVI Vocational Rehab Public Meeting: 10:00 AM
Richmond Admin Headquarters-397 Azalea Ave.

Disability Policy Fellow Presents Findings From Study of the Plan of Cooperation

Dr. Barbara Ettner

Mr. Ed. Bostick, 2002-2003 Disability Policy Fellow and present doctoral student in Public Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University, presented findings of his retrospective study of the Plan of Cooperation to the full Board at its quarterly meeting on September 25, 2002.

In a dynamic and interactive presentation to the Board, Mr. Bostick explained the rationale and methodology for his study which included an exhaustive analysis of historical records of activities related to implementation of the Plan of Cooperation (POC) by the Board from 1985 to 1992. The historical records relating to the POC-- which was never fully implemented -- had been stored, almost in their entirety, among other archived documents pertaining to implementation of Title

51.5 of the Code of Virginia (§§ 51.5-1 to 51.5-52). The papers, memos, reports and other documents related to the POC had not been analyzed until Mr. Bostick's summary work.

Mr. Bostick noted that Virginia had been a leader in implementing state legislation calling for inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of community life. Title 51.5 of the Code of Virginia, also known as the Virginians with Disabilities Act (VDA), preceded the federal Americans with Disabilities Act by more than five years. Among the activities listed in the VDA was development of the Plan of Cooperation among disability services agencies to be developed by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (then known as the Board for the Rights of Virginians with Disabilities). Although remnants exist to this day of the POC, the plan was never fully implemented. In fact,



the directive to the Board to develop and implement the POC remains in state law. Mr. Bostick's case study documented three primary reasons for the failure of the POC: First, inadequate leadership at the highest levels of government to sustain the vision for the POC; Second, absence of meaningful, consistent, and visible incentives for agencies to initiate the systems change activities called for in the POC; and Third, failure to develop a unified and agreed-upon strategic plan for implementing massive changes needed to implement the POC. Mr. Bostick's instructive analysis can be found on the Board's website at www.vaboard.org.

Employment Public Awareness Grant Achieves Top Goals

Amy G. Wright

Vivid billboards, proclaiming the message, "Put Ability to Work" have been placed in strategic areas of the state as part of a recently concluded grant project with the Department of Rehabilitative Services. The goal of the grant was to promote the employability of people with disabilities and produce tools that could serve as resource materials for employment service providers. Other products in the employment public awareness arsenal include a video, CD-Rom, media kit, ESO (Employment Service Organization)

Resource Directory, business toolkit, and development of the Disability Friendly Business Program.



The creative development of a Disability Friendly Business Program, in collaboration with the Disability Service Boards and the Business Leadership Network now offers the opportunity for anyone to nominate businesses who have instituted and promoted best practices toward the employment, independence, and service of people with disabilities. Over 30 businesses around the state have received the Disability Friendly Business seal, and other businesses have expressed interest in obtaining

this designation. Recipients of the award have had their businesses highlighted in newspapers, magazines and newsletters around the state. Recently, the program was noted as a Success Story in the Department of Labor's Report: People with Disabilities: Strengthening the 21st Century Workforce.

Improving communication between the business community and disability service agencies is a permanent system impact that will continue to influence attitudes and opportunities for the benefit of people with disabilities for years to come. Businesses and employers are encouraged to apply for the Disability Friendly Business Seal. Information can be found at <http://www.vdrs.org/business/news.html>





Amy G. Wright

As part of the
Ticket to Work

and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, the Social Security Administration will roll out "tickets" in Virginia starting November 1. The ticket is available to every SSDI and SSI beneficiary meeting the established criteria: between the ages of 18-64; in an active pay status; and not medically expected to improve, or if medically expected to improve, must have had a continuing disability review (CDR) within the last 12 months. Eligible beneficiaries will receive a ticket from the Social Security Administration. The Ticket to Work program is voluntary, so beneficiaries will not be penalized for choosing not to use their ticket. Also, since there are no timelines within which a beneficiary must use their ticket, beneficiaries may choose not to

use their ticket initially, but then change their minds, and decide to use their ticket several months or even years into the program. In choosing to participate in the Ticket to Work program, beneficiaries will be able to assign their ticket to the Employment Network of their choice. This program will be phased in nationally over a 3-year period. 13 states have already distributed tickets including Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, and Illinois. Virginia is part of the second phase and the rest of the states will receive the tickets in 2003.

The program was designed to address the barriers that disability beneficiaries currently encounter in returning to work. The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program expands the availability of health care services and medical cover-

ages, and provides for enhanced benefits planning and assistance from public and private sources. The program provides beneficiaries with even more choices for receiving employment services while increasing provider incentives to serve these individuals. Under the program, SSA (Social Security Administration) provides disability beneficiaries with a Ticket they may use to obtain vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, and/or support from an Employment Network (EN) of their choice. This presents the beneficiary with more consumer options for employment services and enables a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiary to go to either a participating public or private EN to secure these services.

Board Project Findings Concerning Higher Education Disseminated Statewide

Dr. Barbara Ettner

Findings from the Board-sponsored study entitled "Upperclassmen with Disabilities in Higher Education: Academic Goals, Challenges and Triumphs" will be disseminated through various venues statewide and nationally in the coming months. This project of the Board's Education Committee sought to identify specific barriers encountered by students with disabilities in higher education as they pursued their studies beyond the undergraduate level in Virginia.

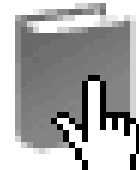
The ADA Student Services staff at VPI/State University, implementers of the grant, noted that only sparse information has been available concerning barriers to students with disabilities pursuing master's degrees, doctorates, law degrees, medical degrees or students in higher education seeking education beyond the baccalaureate level. While 86% of students with disabilities polled in Virginia reported encountering barriers

because of their disabilities, little information has been available concerning specific barriers, the gravity of reported barriers, and their sources (attitudes, physical accessibility, lack of accommodations, lack of access to technology, etc).

The Board's study of upperclassmen with disabilities revealed some surprising findings -- both positive and negative -- that will provide key information needed by policymakers and others to address and resolve problems that are creating significant barriers to advancement in professional occupations for people with disabilities. Using focus group methodology, the study found that several categories of barriers exist including: 1) pervasive barriers related to attitudes by staff and faculty in higher education to provide necessary accommodations; 2) burdensome academic workloads that hinder timely completion of assign-

ments; 3) generalized negative societal attitudes; 4) persistent physical barriers that hinder access to classrooms and facilities; and 5) personal stress.

Findings from the study will be reported to statewide and national groups influential and involved in university design, program implementation, and faculty training. One such group is the Association of Higher Education and Disabilities in Virginia (AHEAD) at which the findings of the Board's study will be presented in mid-October. Later this year the Education Committee will undertake a formal review of the findings of this study and will develop "next steps" for implementing systems change mechanisms to improve the post-baccalaureate education for Virginia's students in higher education.



BULLETIN BOARD



- ◆ Did you know that the **Department of Justice** is seeking input regarding physical access by people with disabilities to internal rooms and equipment in physicians' offices and medical centers? If you have input to share, send an email to aswWeinberg@njleg.org and indicate that you are commenting on "internal access"
- ◆ If you would like to comment on **IDEA** as it goes through reauthorization, go to <http://edworkforce.house.gov> under Latest News to give your input



VIRGINIA BOARD FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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