GVRA
Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

GVRA NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 4
June 2013

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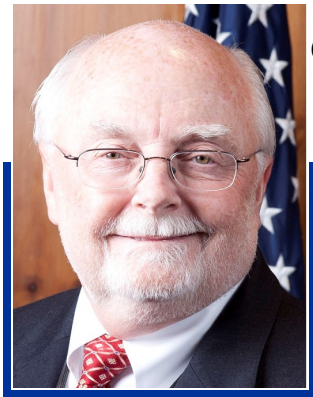


Greg Schmieg
Executive Director

Greetings From Greg

"The Soul of Leadership"

As we approach the end of our first year anniversary as an agency, and we look forward to what year number two will bring, one thing stands out to be above all else. That one thing is the need for leadership at all levels throughout the agency. I don't mean management, I mean genuine leadership. And as we all know, leadership does not come from having a title, it comes from within, and it often comes at all levels of an organization. One does not have to be a manager to be a leader. So when I think about this need for our agency, I am referring to a very specific type of leadership – the soul of leadership.

Recently, a good friend of mine gave me a book by Deepak Chopra called *The Soul of Leadership*, and this book captures exactly what I think our agency needs. And here is the best part; I believe that we have these individuals within our agency now…in fact, you may be one of them and we just need to allow you to blossom, or as Deepak Chopra would say "unlock your potential for greatness." In his book, Deepak Chopra describes leadership that is not leadership as we've traditionally defined it. According to that old definition, leadership belongs to the few. Instead, he describes how anyone and everyone has the potential to be an inspired leader. Inspired leadership is established in being, where there is no need to adopt a strategy for climbing to the top. As you unfold your potential for greatness, you unfold the same potential in others.

GVRA will only become better when more and more of our staff have the opportunity to unlock their potential for greatness. Just imagine what that would be like. Imagine leadership that is not about control and power, but true inspiration. Imagine what we could accomplish. It excites me to think about lies ahead and what we can become, but only if we as an agency allow everyone else to find their greatness, foster their talents, and give them such an opportunity as Deepak Chopra describes.

WOW! Let our second year be a year of discovering all the leadership souls that are waiting to be unleashed.

June was an Active Month for GVRA

VR Region 5 Hosts GVRA Monthly Meeting

The GVRA Board continued its commitment to meeting across the state. On Wednesday, June 12, 2013, the GVRA Board met in Athens for its monthly meeting. The Board approved a number of critical items, including the plan for VR services for FY 2014.

Keith Horton has been instrumental in the formation and development of GVRA . To express appreciation for his service, the GVRA Board drafted its first resolution expressing appreciation to a GVRA staff member in the history of the organization. During his tenure, Keith made significant strides to help GVRA become a stand-alone agency. Deputy Director Horton was nominated by Governor Nathan Deal to become Commissioner of DHS effective July 1, 2013.

During May, the Board traveled to Columbus and experienced the Business Enterprise Program. The June meeting turned attention to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Region 5 Athens Unit hosted the meeting and did a magnificent job showcasing Athens and the state flagship academic institution, the University of Georgia.

June was an Active Month for GVRA

VR Region 5 Hosts GVRA Monthly Meeting

With Executive Director Greg Schmieg recovering from surgery, Lynn Vellinga was named as the Interim Executive Director for GVRA. In addition to his current assignment at GVRA, Lynn serves as the Deputy Director for Georgia Department of Human Services.

Mr. Vellinga has over 32 years of experience in state government accounting and financial reporting. Prior to his employment at DSH, Vellinga served as the first State Accounting Officer in Georgia where he helped establish the newly created central accounting office.
Lynn will provide steady, proven leadership as Greg's health continues to improve.

It is official-Georgia Regents and Roosevelt Warm Springs have entered into an interagency agreement to operate the hospitals. Here, Board Chair Jimmy Defoor looks on as GVRA Executive Director Greg Schmieg signs the agreement effective July 1, 2013.

Colleagues and friends, Executive Director Greg Schmieg surprised Keith Horton with the resolution from the Board. In addition, RWS Executive Director Bill Bulloch presented Horton with a plague from Roosevelt Warm Springs.

Breaking Ground for the New VR Program

Greg Schmieg, GVRA Executive Director, outlining the VR Goals for SFY2014

GVRA VR Program Managers, Directors and Counselor Coaches met on June 10 & 11, 2013 in Atlanta to hear a summary of the milestones and accomplishments made during our first year as a program within our new independent agency. Presentations were made by the GVRA Board of Directors Chairman, Jimmy DeFoor, Executive Director Greg Schmieg and Field Services Director Twyla Crump.

Kayla Wilson, VR Program customer and HSHT participant, sharing her experiences with the VR Program and to "Embrace Who You Are."

An insightful and delightful presentation was made by Ms. Kayla Wilson from Augusta, GA regarding her progress through school while learning to work with her disability and the support she received from parents, school, VR Program staff and the High School/High Tech program.

Elijah Carter, a new hire in the Statesboro office, was poignant in his description of his progress from VR Program customer to VR Program CRC counselor and his conviction that he is exactly where he wants to be. Mr. Carter described the impact his VR Counselor had in his life; that of finding a purpose which led to a passion. He sees VR and VR Counselors as making the difference by getting to know the person, providing guidance and helping him/her see that achieving a work goal is possible. His key words were, finding a **purpose**, following your **passion**, being **persistent,** changing **perceptions** and, as a result, everyone is **productive**.

Ending on a productive note, RWSand CSVRC jointly presented their new collaboration and focus on providing services to their customers – both the VR field counselor and the client - that are *needed* for the client to go to work. It was clear that both the centers and VR clients will benefit from their client-centered approach and continuous feedback on effectiveness.

Twyla Crump cutting the ribbon for the ground breaking of the New VR!

Breaking Ground for the New VR Program

Twyla Crump, VR Field Services Director, using the analogy of concrete components to emphasize the importance that each of us has to the foundation of the New VR Program.

Jimmy DeFoor, GVRA Board Chairman, providing a historical perspective and insight into the forming of GVRA.

Bill Bulloch, RWS Director, and Russell Fleming, CSRC Director, energetically announcing their collaborative plans for targeted services to VR Program clients.

Former VR client and now staff member, Elijah Carter, with VR RUM Lee Davis

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Fay Loggins

GVRA Board Member

In July, 2012 Governor Deal appointed Fay Loggins to the first Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board to help establish and lead the new GVRA. Fay brings a unique perspective to the Board as many years ago he received services from both the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program and Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation (RWS). Fay had recently completed military duty when he was in a severe car accident that resulted in total blindness. His VR Counselor referred him to RWS where he lived for five months in 1965.

Fay noted that RWS taught him he could do many things, just differently, and that losing his sight was not the end of his life. After five months at RWS, Fay knew he had the potential to go to college and create a better life for himself. With VR assistance, Fay earned his Associates degree from Truett-McConnell, his Bachelor of Arts degree from Piedmont College, and his law degree from the University of Georgia (UGA) in 1971.

Among his many hobbies, Fay likes to take cars apart and rebuild them "to relieve tension".

Fay chose not to study Braille in college, but instead found that recorded books and readers were more effective for him. Fay belonged to study groups throughout college that were very beneficial to all involved. An interesting VR connection is that Cleveland Unit Manager Ken Hise's wife, Lynn, went through four years of college with Fay. Fay said that he was fortunate to have Lynn as a reader for him in the study groups, and that he knew Lynn before Ken met her at Piedmont. Fay also met his wife, Pat, while a student at Piedmont.

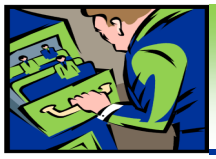
Fay was the first student who is blind to graduate from the UGA Law School. When he applied, the Dean of Admissions told Fay he admired his goals, but that the three previous individuals with low vision or blindness who had started law school all dropped out after the first quarter. Fay just smiled and said maybe he would be the first to graduate, and he actually did that faster than many other students. He went on to pass the State Bar on his first try. In May 1972, Fay practiced law in Columbus for the Georgia Indigent Legal Services. After one year, he and his wife, Pat, decided to return home to Gainesville where he established his law practice that he shares with his son today.

Gainesville resident and Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board Member Fay Loggins

Among his many hobbies, Fay likes to take cars apart and rebuild them "to relieve tension". While his son was becoming an Eagle Scout, Fay worked alone over three months to rebuild an engine of the large van he had donated to the scout troop. Also, Fay has a 1955 Chevrolet show car and a 1968 Camero Convertible that he and Pat enjoy riding through the Georgia mountains.

Fay said, "He did not know he would enjoy meeting folks on Board so much, and it is a privilege to serve with such a wonderful group of people." He looks forward to continuing to be a Board member and help lead GVRA to a bright future.

Contributed by Daronne Patterson



The Desk

Although I have always known the general definition of irony, I never really experienced it in my life until June 1998. I was then, as now, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in Georgia and transferred from Perry to Macon because it was closer to my home. On my first day in Macon, my supervisor, and a co-worker – once my VR counselor - Mike Harrell, showed me to my work area.

Mike had worked as a general counselor in the Macon Office since 1984 when he acquired his caseload from a retiring counselor, Howard Allen. At the time, Mike served Jones county in middle Georgia and inherited a nineteen-year-old kid in his first year of college – me. With Mike's encouragement and assistance, and services from the Georgia Division of Rehabilitation Services, I graduated from Georgia College and began as a caseworker for the Division of Family and Children Services in 1989. In 1992 I was accepted as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Perry office, and remained there until my transfer in June 1998 to the same office in Macon where once I had been a client. My amazement at the circle of circumstances was just beginning.

As I was shown to my new work area, my supervisor noticed that my desk had two broken drawers. Someone mentioned that there was an old desk in an interview room which, although several years old, was better than the broken desk. When the desk from the interview room was carried in, Mike was standing next to me. Upon closer inspection of this new (old) desk he seemed stunned as he said, "You know what, Charles? I just realized that this is my old desk. I used this desk for years before I got the desk I'm using now." He paused then said, " And I used it when I first came to work here in Macon Office. Since I took over Howard Allen's caseload and office, this would mean that this is Howard's old desk." We stood there in pensive amazement. The irony was too overwhelming for a second as we realized what this all meant. Once a nineteen-year-old kid sat on the client side of this desk, without a clue as to what he wanted to do with his life. He only knew that he had a disability, and his mother told him that Mr. Allen and the people at Vocational Rehabilitation would someday help him get a job. And now, I was a thirty-three old man, sitting on the other side of that same desk, counseling persons with disabilities, writing vocational plans, helping people plan their future.

God has a very interesting way of showing us he is watching out for us all and I, like most people, often have to be reminded of that in very apparent ways. When I think about how far I have come since I sat on the other side of that desk, I can't help but be thankful to Him and to a lot of people. As rehabilitation specialists, we do make incredible differences in people's lives. With my present position as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor with GVRA, I have not just a job, but a career. I know Vocational Rehabilitation has made a difference in my life.

EPILOGUE

In 2001, our Macon office caught fire and we had to move into a new building with new furniture, and the old desk appears headed for the salvage yard. That's okay. Life and change are constants, but I can always look back in amazement that I was once served as a client from that desk, and then served from the desk as a counselor. The circle is now complete.

Contributed by Charles F. Wells, MS, CRC

HR CORNER

WELCOME

ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS

Emma J. Searcy

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Sanka Davis, Jr.

GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND

Vivian Komla Adjah

BEST WISHES

DISABILITY ADJUDICATION SERVICES

William C. Moreno

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

Celestina Nwizu

ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS

Jennifer V. Adams
Shannon Elizabeth Kincade
Mary Neal
Donna Turner
Natalie J. Young
Dreina Michelle Battle
Tracy Marshall
Ashley M. Thompson
Naqator N. White

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Fulani Doughty
Carol M. Hollis
Vanessa Richard
Faigann Letoi Hankerson
Peter Reganato, Jr.
William G. Richardson

GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND

Krys H. Palmo

HR CORNER

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RECENT RETIREES

DISABILITY ADJUDICATION SERVICES

Ginger Barton
Andre Phipps
Dennis Thomason
Iralean Shaw
Charlene Ketchen
Pattie Prichard
Tom White

GVRA-2 PEACHTREE

Frank Bartholomew
Janet Hill
Diane Green
Gregory Smith

ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS

John Abney
Ben Eubanks
Biase Lowe
Connie McDaniel
Georgia Stokes
Nikki Ellard
Rachel Keith
Sherry McCoy-Holland
Bobby Phillips
Cathy Lee Watson

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Barry Argroves
Bruce Green
Leigh Harris
Patty King
Mary Bell
Glennis Grimes
Juanita Johnson
Lavonia Tucker

GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND

Dr. Jim “Coach” Hughes

Due to recent legislation impacting state retirement plans, a large number of GVRA and other state employees made the decision to retire prior to June 1, 2013.

Several current GVRA Programs and employees wanted an opportunity in the newsletter to acknowledge their work and efforts. Beginning on page 17, items and comments that were forwarded are provided in this letter. Due to the high level of response, additional items will be in next month’s newsletter as well.

This month, several of the pictures and comments submitted for our retirees were included in this Newsletter .

CAVE SPRING

Cave Spring Students Participate in Deaf Awareness Day at KSU

Students and staff from Cave Spring attended Kennesaw State University's (KSU) Deaf Awareness Day on April 11th, 2013. The purpose of the event was to bring attention to deaf awareness and the services that are provided to the deaf and hard of hearing. Along with three staff members, students who are deaf/hearing/hard of hearing worked for several weeks to learn Lee Greenwood's song, "God Bless the USA" . Throughout the day, they performed in sign language for Kennesaw State University students and visitors. During the visit, they enjoyed others experiencing their music whether it was through song or sign language.

Cave Spring students and staff attending the Kennesaw State University's Deaf Awareness Day

In addition to KSU, students have visited the Veterans Hospital in Atlanta and performed for veterans. GVRA and the Cave Spring staff are very proud of the students for taking the opportunity to give back to the community by making a difference while feeling good about themselves at the same time.

GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND (GIB)

GIB SUCCESSFULLY PASSES ISO 9000 Audit

During the last two months, the Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB) completed its International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification audits. The **ISO 9000** family of standards is related to quality management systems designed to help organizations ensure that they meet the needs of customers and other stakeholders while meeting statutory and regulatory requirements related to the product. Independent audits confirm that organizations meet the requirements of ISO 9001. Over a million organizations worldwide are independently certified, making ISO 9001 one of the most widely used management tools in the world today.

GVRA is proud of GIB and its high quality operations- GIB is ready for business!!

Early this month, GIB Executive Director Kevin Kelley was notified that GIB had successfully passed the audit. The auditor had great comments about the effectiveness of our system and the people involved with the process. There are minor actions being addressed following the audit, but GIB will receive their certificate in the near future. (Continued on page 11)

GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND (GIB)

GIB SUCCESSFULLY PASSES ISO 9000 Audit

(Continued from page 10)

GIB Executive Director Kevin Kelly was deeply appreciative to EVERYONE for their efforts, but expressed special thanks to Teresa Roberts and Phyllis Cole for their tireless devotion for preparation entering the audit. Congratulations to GIB! GIB is proud to have been ISO compliant since 2004 and looks forward to having this audit certify that it meets these stringent quality standards.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

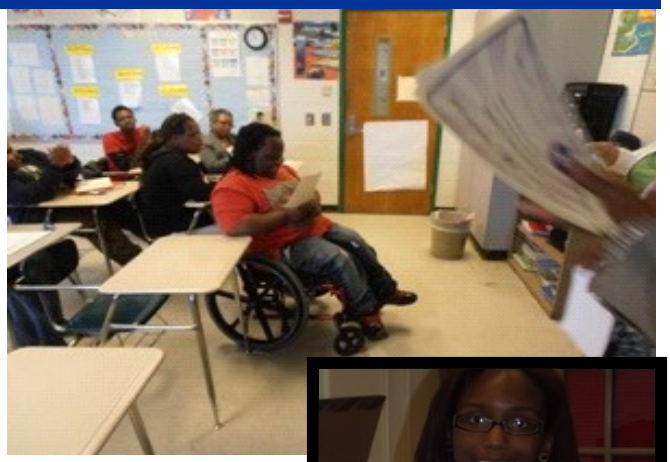
Business is Good with the Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

Due to a change made in legislation referenced as Map 21 H.R. 4348, the blind vendors of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's (GVRA) Business Enterprise Program (BEP) were afforded the opportunity to put Georgia Lottery vending machines in the highway Welcome Centers. Lynn Tallant, BEP Contract Specialist, prepared a Request For Proposal (RFP) to obtain a third party vendor to install Lottery and ATM Machines in the Welcome Centers under the BEP's preference to provide interstate vending.

Left to Right: Raj Gandy, Program Director—BEP, Ms. Nagel—Alpine Creek Enterprises Inc., and Lynn Tallant, Contract Specialist—BEP. Not in picture; Paul Selby—Georgia Department of Economic Development

BEP Director Raj Gandy and Ms. Tallant awarded the vending opportunity to Alpine Creek Enterprises, Inc. on June 4, 2013, thus forming a partnership between the BEP Blind Vendors, the Georgia Department of Economic Development and Alpine Creek Enterprises, Inc.

Region 7 Augusta Unit
High School Joy Club



The High School Job Club is designed to prepare Juniors and Seniors for competitive employment in the community after graduation. After completion of Job Club sessions , the club will refer students identified as job ready to the Regional Employment Specialist for Community Work Adjustment Training or direct placement and those needing job readiness training will continuing working with the Rehabilitation Job Readiness Specialist.

The VR conducted this pilot program at Academy of Richmond County and T.W. Josey High School for one session a month with a total of 8 months targeting points such as: completing job applications; developing good interviewing skills; understanding how to look for employment and retain employment ; and many more. At the conclusion of the program, students received a rewards celebration at their respective schools.

With school out for the summer, Academy of Richmond County student Latrell Lee reported that he was already working part-time summer jobs and expressed that the skills gained helped him to successfully apply for the positions.

Contributed by Candice Roberts

DISABILITY ADJUDICATION SERVICES (DAS)

DAS EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Veronica Green-Brown was chosen as the June DAS Employee of the Month.

Congratulations to Veronica Green Brown, the DAS Employee of the Month. Her nomination spoke volumes about Veronica's dedication to making a difference:

"Veronica Green-Brown exhibits a strong commitment to her duties as an Adjudicator and provides excellent service to the disabled citizens of Georgia. Veronica has been with the Agency since July 1987. She has weathered many changes in how we process our cases with grace, always willing to go above and beyond to learn the skills necessary to successfully perform her job duties. As of the end of April, Veronica was meeting or exceeding the performance goals in all areas. Most notably, she has maintained a caseload size of 126, with an average processing time of 67.9 days, 8.1% aged cases, 100 % substantive quality, and zero customer service lags. It has been my pleasure to watch her steady growth as a member of our Unit, especially in learning to navigate in our new electronic environment. She prefers not to have a spotlight shined on her, but no one deserves it more. It is my pleasure to nominate Veronica Green-Brown for Employee of the Month."

She has weathered many changes in how we process our cases with grace, always willing to go above and beyond to learn the skills necessary to successfully perform her job duties.

Each month, members of the Employee of the Month Committee select a deserving employee at DAS. The employees with this distinction include:

Antonio Andrews
Jeannie Baggett
Dick Gonter
Tonya Scott
Susan Auchmutey
Cathy Chafin
Mary Quarles

Contributed by Richard Gonter

Congratulations to Dr. Allen Carter

Dr. Allen Carter, past president of the Georgia Licensing Board for Psychologists, and a Psychological Consultant for DAS, was recently given the Programmer of The Year Award at the 11th Annual Allen Awards banquet by the Atlanta Interfaith Broadcast (AIB) Channel for his television show: "Who Am I?" This award is given to the show as representing the best program of the network as voted by the viewing audience. The primary theme of the show focuses on the relationship between Spirit and Mind by asking the question: "What Is Absolutely TRUE?" The show is aired weekly on the AIB channel and can be viewed on Tuesday evenings at 8:30 on Channel 5 on Comcast, and Channel 6 on AT &T U-verse, or anytime via computer by assessing AIBTV.com and clicking Video on Demand.

***Dr. Carter Allen received** Programmer of The Year Award at the 11th Annual Allen Awards banquet by the Atlanta Interfaith Broadcast Channel for his television show: "Who Am I?"*

ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS (RWS)

Andrews Named Nurse of the Year

Tina Andrews received the award on May 9 during National Nurses Week festivities at the comprehensive medical and vocational rehabilitation center founded by Franklin D. Roosevelt In 1927. A coworker nominated Andrews for the award, and the entire nursing staff voted for her from a slate of six nominees.

"She leads by example, which inspires others to perform at their best. She expects Roosevelt patients to receive the best possible care, and they do. Tina truly is the living example of excellence in nursing."

"Nurses have to deal with a lot of emotions, demands and an ever changing patient/family population," her nomination read. "For some it is hard to maintain that first love of nursing you have as a new graduate nurse. For Tina Andrews, that is not the case. She approaches every patient with professionalism and a heart full of compassionate care, as if this were her first patient."

Tina Andrews (right) receives the Roosevelt Warm Springs Nurse of the Year Award from Chief Nurse Executive, Cathy Harbin. Roosevelt Warm Springs has been recognizing excellence on the nursing staff during National Nurses Week since 1982.

The nomination also complimented her leadership ability saying, "Tina has the ability to encourage team work….She is a true nurse leader. She leads by example, which inspires others to perform at their best. She expects Roosevelt patients to receive the best possible care, and they do. Tina truly is the living example of excellence in nursing."

A lifelong resident of Upson County, Andrews received her nursing degree from Gordon State College in 2003. She joined the Roosevelt Warm Springs staff in November of the same year working one weekend a month as a Baylor nurse. She became a full-time member of the staff in 2008. Since 2009, she has served as first-shift charge nurse in the Rehabilitation Hospital. As charge nurse, she is first line management responsible for maintaining the function of the unit and supervising the other RNs, LPNs and HSTs on the day shift. She became a Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN) in 2010.

Contributed by Mike Shadix

Young Haitians Participate In Annual Blaze Sports Camp

A group of 12 young people with disabilities from Haiti participated last month in the annual Blaze Sports Camp at Roosevelt Warm Springs (continued on page 15)

Young Haitians Participate In Annual Blaze Sports Camp (continued from page 14)

Twelve young Haitians with disabilities participated in the Blaze Sports Camp recently at Roosevelt Warm Springs. They are pictured above with their adult chaperons. Their visit to Georgia was provided by the Sports United grant program of the U. S. State Department.

The Haitians were able to visit Atlanta and participate in camp through a grant from the U.S. State Department Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs Sports United Program. They joined 30 other young people with disabilities from across the country for five days of fun and cultural exchange at Camp Dream. Their activities included swimming, canoeing, kayaking and dancing. The campers also had an opportunity to learn archery and to compete in a variety of track and field events.

Blaze Sports America is a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the well being of children and adults with disabilities through sports. The organization, headquartered in Decatur, Georgia, is a legacy of the 1996 Paralympic games in Atlanta. The organization has held its annual sports camp at Warm Springs since the late 1990's.

The annual Blaze Sports Camp in Warm Springs ended with a "Hoedown" in the Camp Dining Hall. The special guests returned to Haiti on June 2.

Contributed by Mike Shadix

Facilities Management Update

Introduction

Facilities Management Support for GVRA (Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency) is located at 2 Peachtree Street, Suite 6.395. The team of six staff members include Paul Bryant and Kenneth Mann (Project Managers); Debra Barnes-Homer (Property and Fleet Coordinator); Daryl Blake (Telecom); Mark Muzii (Risk Manager) and Precious Davis (Leasing Coordinator/Building Coordinator). There are also several coordinators directly attached to three of the six programs within GVRA. These staff are directed by Richard D. Eskridge, who serves as the Facilities Management Director for the agency. Working with all six of the program Directors and the Executive Staff, this team of staffers work to ensure the day to day operation needs are addressed. Below is a brief listing of some current activities underway around the state and contact information for the Director.

Current Activities

- Relocation of Perry VR Staff – Phase I completed on June 13, 2013.
- Relocation of the Bainbridge VR staff – completed for June 21, 2013
- Relocation of Memorial Drive/Commerce Drive VR staff – location still being identified
- Office Signage updates around the state - Ongoing
- Consolidation of the Savannah VR Offices – completed April 2013
- Relocation of the Macon RO and Hub Offices – location still being identified
- Relocation of the Carrollton VR Office – projected for August 2013
- Relocation of the Cleveland VR Office – location still being identified
- Relocation of the Blue Ridge VR Office – location still being identified
- Consolidation of the Dublin RO and Hub – In progress
- Relocation of Monroe VR Office – working with DFCS
- Expansion of Tifton VR Office – working with SPC and landlord

*** This is only a snapshot of the full portfolio of activities. ***

Contact Information

Richard D. Eskridge
Director of Administrative Services
2 Peachtree Street – Suite 6.395
Atlanta, GA 30303
Office Number: 404-232-1884

Contributed by Richard Eskridge

GVRA EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZE RETIREES

VR Carrollton Unit Will Miss Bruce Green

Bruce Green (CRC) recently retired from the Carrollton VR Unit March 2013. A retiree luncheon was hosted for Bruce prior to his retirement.

VR Region 3A's Mary Bell

Region 3A would like to personally congratulate Mary Bell on her retirement after 26 years of service as a Rehabilitation Assistant. For the past 26 years Mary Bell has dedicatedly worked as a Rehabilitation Assistant. She has an excellent reputation in VR for being ethical, efficient, hard working and dedicated in working with staff, providers and clients to insure timely, accurate and excellent customer service. The VR Program truly enjoyed working with Mary during her tenure and considered her a valuable asset to the VR Program.

While she will be missed by all at GVRA, Mary certainly deserves her retirement. Her hard work and diligence has greatly benefitted our agency. It has always been a pleasure to work with Mary, so while we are saddened to see her go, we are most confident that she will find more success and happiness in retirement. We wish Mary the best in her future endeavors. We are sure retirement will offer her many new opportunities, which we know she will embrace wholeheartedly, just as she did at GVRA. Mary we hope you have a fun, prosperous and restful retirement!

Best wishes to you Mary Bell!

YOU WILL BE MISSED BY ALL!

GVRA EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZE RETIREES

DAS Will Miss Over 150 Years of Experience

Ginger Barton started with the State on April 1, 1986 and with DAS on February 1, 1997.

Andre Phipps started with the State on September 16, 1986 and with DAS on July 16, 2000.

Charlene Ketchen started with the State on June 1, 1985 and with DAS on February 16, 2002

Pattie Prichard started with the State and DAS on September 16, 1997.

Dennis Thomason started with the State on July 16, 1986 and with DAS on May 16, 1992.

Tom White started with the State on November 1, 1992 and with DAS on October 1, 1994.

GVRA EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZE RETIREES

VR Region 1 Commends Glennis Grimes

Retiring from Region 1 Vocational Rehabilitation on May 31, 2013 was Glennis Grimes. Glennis retired from VR-Rome HUB with 26 years of service to the State of Georgia. She began her career at Northwest GA Regional Hospital in Rome. She transferred to Vocational Rehabilitation in 2006.Glennis lives with her husband in Silver Creek, GA. They have 3 children and they are expecting their first grandchild in June of this year. Their only baby at home now is precious Cockapoo Puppy named Honey.

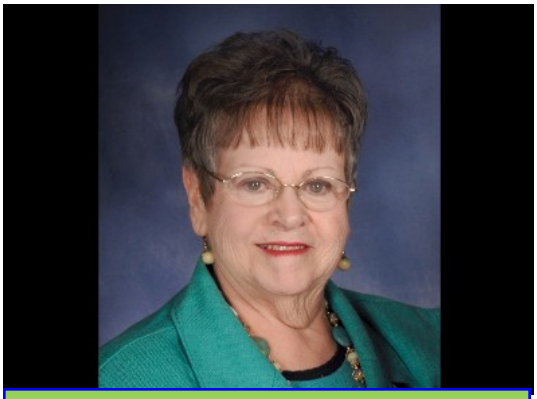
Glennis looks forward to enjoying her hobbies of music, especially piano, keeping up with friends and spending time with family during retirement.

VR Region 16 and Others Express Gratitude Toward Patti King

Sharon Angel:

On May 31, GVRA bids farewell, and salutes Mrs. Patricia King who has worked as the Operational Analysis Technician (OAT) for the former Region 9 and currently the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program.

Affectionately called "Patty", is a woman who works extremely hard to ensue that Authorizations and Invoices (A & I) are accurately encumbered and meet business standards for payment processing. Patty takes her job seriously as she aids in processing thousands of A & I's on a daily basis which helps to put people with disabilities to work.



Patti King was loved and admired by her colleagues and friends in VR

Because of her tenacity and professional demeanor, Patty is often asked to work on regional or state administrative assignments. She is known widely for her "state of the art" organizational skills and thorough note taking. Through the years she has provided training for the regional program assistants and has been a major contributor in her region for reducing the number of errors on A & I's.

When Patty is not working long hard hours in the Dublin Regional office, she is home baking all kinds of sweet treats to bring into the office. She would often surprise us when attending a meeting by bringing in one of her famous cakes or pies. Meeting with her was always a welcoming opportunity to learn and expand your repertoire for cutting edge business operation standards and to be in the presence of one of the greatest cooks south of Macon.

Patty is well respected and admired by her colleagues, staff and management. She is an excellent example of a virtuous woman and truly deserves to be celebrated for her contributions to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Program and agency. Her presence will be greatly missed, and her shoes cannot be filled quickly. She takes with her a vast knowledge of experience; yet she leaves VR better prepared in becoming a stand-alone agency and to moving to the next level. *"Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates." Psalm 31:31*

Patti King (Continued)

Sharla Howe:
Patty King embodies the spirit of GVRA. She has been a true champion to our agency and its mission to assist people with disabilities to work. It has been a privilege to have served on the team with such a remarkable woman. She had a great sense of humor especially when I needed to laugh to keep from crying. Her invaluable skills knowledge dedication and support is irreplaceable. Patty will be truly missed! Wishing you all the best in your retirement!

Raj Pagadala :
I have known Patty King since 2002 when I started with VR as a Rehab Technologist in Dublin. We worked in the same office for five years. Even after I moved to a position in the State Office, Patty and I always kept in touch. She is the most sincere VR employee I have known and is an even better person. Efficient people work smart and not hard. Patty on the other hand worked smarter and harder. She worked twice as hard and twice as efficiently as others. But more importantly she was the most caring friend one could ask for.

Maureen Porter:
There are not enough words to express how much Patty will be missed. She is truly a hard worker and she cares so much about her work and doing it right. Anytime any of us OATs needed a business memorandum or a website, we knew Patty would have what we needed. She is going to be sorely missed by all of the OATs. Patty was also one of the first to volunteer to back us up when we were out. A person of her caliber and integrity will be very hard to replace. She has also done so much for me personally. I consider her to be a very dear personal friend of mine and I will always cherish our VR memories.

Jan Greene:
Patty King has been an inspiration to me as an OAT. I've been working alongside her since 1998. She offered much assistance throughout the years which has helped me perform well in my position. She not only performed excellent in her field, she also became a good friend. I will miss her tremendously.

Team USA and Germany Train at Roosevelt Warm Springs

Two mighty women's wheelchair basketball teams met in friendly competition last month in the Ruzycki Center for Therapeutic Recreation at Roosevelt Warm Springs.

Team USA player Jen Poist looks to pass during a training game with Germany last month at Roosevelt Warm Springs.

Team USA under the leadership of new coach Stephanie Wheeler played a week-long series of training matches with Germany, the reigning women's wheelchair basketball Paralympic champions. The teams played a total of 10 games, with Germany winning all but one of the matches. According to Reenae White, RWS Camp Coordinator, team USA might have won more games if Team USA had not used the training camp to develop new players. The Germans brought their veteran players, those that had competed in the London Paralympics last year, she said, but the Team USA veteran players stayed away from the training camp to allow the newer players a chance to grow.

Roosevelt Warm Springs has regularly hosted international wheelchair basketball competitions since the opening of the Ruzkcki Center in 1996.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Attention 2 Peachtree Street Employees

Dear Georgia Building Authority Parking Customer,

As a monthly GBA parking permit holder, you must renew your online parking account annually by confirming your address, email and telephone number. Please visit and click the "Renew/Manage My Parking Account" link. Your "Login ID" is your building access card number without the leading zeros. If you have forgotten your password, click the link in the text to recover your password via email. Then, click the red "Confirm Personal Information" link to review your address, email and telephone number, then click **Next** for the "Thank you" confirmation. The "Thank You" screen is your confirmation that your 2014 parking renewal is complete.

If you would like to manage your vehicles, update your waitlist options, or change your password, click "Home" and choose the appropriate link.

Don't forget - you must renew your parking permit by **June 30th** in order to keep your parking activated.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DISABILITY QUIZ–TRUE OR FALSE (Answers in the July 2013 ISSUE)

1. Three in 10 workers entering the work force today will become disabled before retiring.
2. More mortgage foreclosures are caused by premature death than disability.
3. Most workers receiving Social Security disability benefits are over 55 years old.
4. Working men are more likely to become disabled than working women.
5. Most disabling injuries occur on the job.

?? IDEAS OR COMMENTS ??

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE GVRA NEWSLETTER OR DAILY EMAIL UPDATES, PLEASE SEND YOU SUBMISSIONS TO KEVIN HARRIS, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR. THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2013. EMAIL: KEVIN.HARRIS@GVRA.GA.GOV