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**Greg Schmiege**  
Executive Director

## Greetings From Greg

**W**hen I was in the US Navy, I served as a navigator on the USS Hitchiti. And as a navigator, one thing you always do when you're out at sea is to scan the horizon. You always need to know what's ahead so you can chart a safe passage to your destination. As you can imagine, the further out the horizon is, the more difficult it is to see. On the ocean, a clear horizon is about 10 nautical miles ahead. In many ways, this year of transition has been a lot like sailing – and we have certainly faced our share of storms. The good news is that when I scan the GVRA horizon, I do see calmer seas ahead.

July 1 will begin a new state fiscal year, and my belief is that it will be a better year than this year has been. For example, we will have one complete year of financial information to rely on, and with that we should do a better job at predicting our expenses and sticking to the budget. Likewise, policy changes this past year will lead to cost-savings that can directly translate into client services. In all the programs, there will be some organizational changes and hopefully greater efficiencies. And we will begin this coming year with several new and exciting partnerships that will create new service opportunities, such as those with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD), the Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), and the Department of Education (DOE). So I picture a much calmer sea ahead.

However, a good sailor never stops checking the horizon. At sea, every sailor has a specific job to do to ensure a safe passage, and GVRA is no different. Each one of us has a specific job to do, and we must be accountable to do that job to the best of our ability. Starting July 1, to be better than this year, I will rely on each one of us, myself included, to stay focused on the task at hand, and to hold each other accountable. GVRA will sail the smoothest when we can safely rely on each other to do our jobs.

Our destination as an agency is to be the best rehabilitation agency in the country. We are underway, we have weathered some stormy seas, and I can see a brighter horizon. So I thank each of you "holding steady as we go", and here's to better sailing ahead.



# IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Jimmy DeFoor

**GVRA Board Member**



**Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board Chair James "Jimmy" DeFoor with Governor Nathan Deal.**

applicants for licensure and review citizen complaints. Jimmy is also gratified that he was one of the original individuals in the nation to achieve the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification. For more than a decade now, Georgia VR requires the CRC as the qualification to be a VR Counselor.

*After 34 years of state service, Jimmy DeFoor retired in 2002 as Assistant Commissioner over Rehabilitation Services and the five statutory programs that now comprise GVRA.*

**A**fter signing legislation creating the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), Governor Deal appointed James "Jimmy" DeFoor to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board for a term that expires in 2015. One of the first actions the Board took was to elect him Chair. Jimmy was an excellent choice for that position since he spent his entire career in VR and the Rehabilitation Services Programs assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment goals. After earning his Bachelor's degree in Education, Jimmy joined VR as one of eight Counselor Interns statewide. While working with VR, he earned

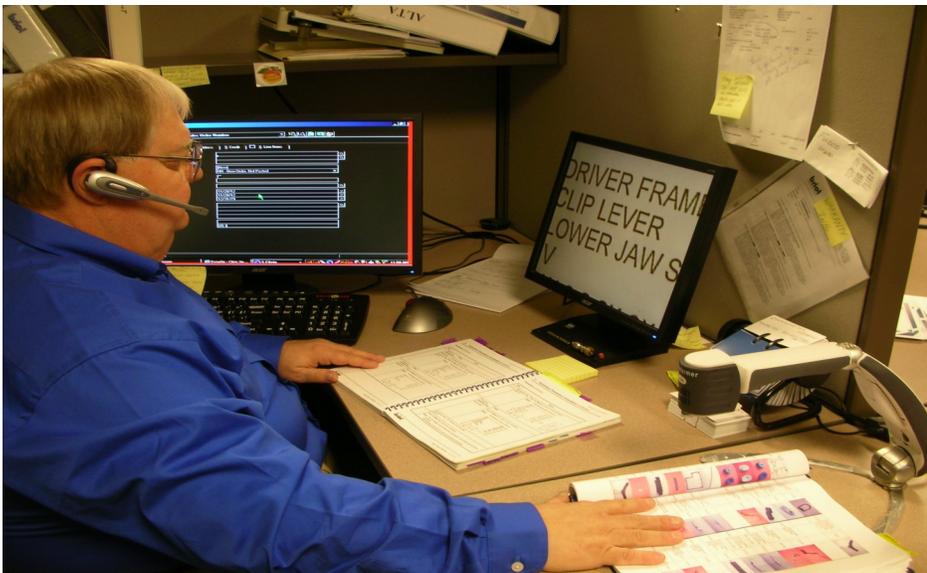
his Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Georgia.

Jimmy has many professional highlights including that as the 1995 President of the Georgia Rehabilitation Association (GRA) and President of the Georgia Rehabilitation Counselors Association, a division of GRA, he helped write and advocate for the legislation that established the Licensed Professional Counselor state licensure requirements. That important legislation established professional credentials and standards for ethical practice in Georgia for counselors, including requirements for continuing education and a state composite licensing board to approve

Jimmy and his wife, Aurena, are proud parents of three children and eight grandchildren who love to visit their Gainesville home. Jimmy and Aurena have been active members of the First United Methodist Church of Gainesville for over 40 years, including being members of a very active Sunday school class for over 35 years. Jimmy enjoyed singing in the church choir for more than 25 years although he cannot read a note of music. He laughed as he observed the "choir advanced further than he did", so he just enjoys listening to them now.

**Contributed by Daronne Patterson**

## Vocational Rehabilitation Client Success Story: Lewis Tankersley



**L**ewis Tankersley was born with a rare form of albinism resulting in a loss of sharpness of his vision. Lewis worked hard to be accepted to the University of South Carolina where he earned an Associate's Degree in commercial education and business in 1979. He became a licensed optician (LDO) in South Carolina and Georgia. Lewis is also an American Board of Opticianry Master in Ophthalmic Optics (ABOM). His career took him through several different companies until a major interruption for two knee replacement surgeries and a cataract procedure.

So, in 2008, Lewis began the process to restart his career when he met VR Counselor Beth Frey who encouraged Lewis to learn new skills and to explore the relatively new field of assistive technology for persons with disabilities. Beth referred Lewis to the Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI) in Atlanta for computer and customer service skills training. She also referred him to Rehabilitation Technologist

Gigi Taylor of the VR Assistive Work Technology (AWT) Unit who analyzed Lewis's needs and made recommendations that Beth purchase assistive technology to enable Lewis to succeed on the job. These recommendations included items such as magnification computer software and devices.

With the help of VR counseling, job readiness services and AWT, along with skills he developed at CVI,

Lewis got a job with Briot Visionix as a Technical Service Representative in June, 2012. His primary responsibilities involve assisting customers by telephone to quickly resolve equipment and technical problems. Lewis troubleshoots over the phone, orders replacement parts or schedules field technicians on site as needed. Company President Matt Cevasco said, "It's not about the disability, it's about the person getting the job done. Lewis has the technical knowledge. It (his visual challenge) has all been completely transparent."

On May 8, 2013, Lewis received the "All Star Award for Outstanding Employee" at the annual Galaxy of Stars and Tommy Awards Luncheon, sponsored by Nobis Works of Marietta.

Contributed by Jack Gilson



**Pictured at the Awards Luncheon are L to R: Jack Gilson, Gigi Taylor, Lewis Tankersley and Gail Tankersley.**



## Building Positive and Effective Work Relationships

Laura Stokes, Employee Relations Analyst

**A**mong the biggest keys to an organization's success are its people, and how they interact with one another. Building positive relationships can be difficult, at times, when we are interacting with others who are not "like us." In other words, we sometimes struggle with how we can get along with people whose personalities are different than our own, or who have different communication strategies. The keys to building positive and effective work relationships can be as easy as 1-2-3!

**Communication is Critical...**and assumptions are asinine! Keep open lines of communication, even when the information being shared is difficult or uncomfortable. *Make communication timely*—don't wait to convey important information. Utilize a variety of communication methods, and tailor them to the individual—communication is not "one size fits all." Don't assume that someone knows something or *should know* something! Be *proactive* in keeping the lines of communication open. Be mindful of your non-verbal communication. Ask questions when you don't understand. Apologize when you've done or said something wrong. Be honest and don't embarrass others in public. (And don't forget the most important element of communication...LISTEN.)

**Kindness Goes a Long Way...**and empathy builds bridges. It seems like such a simple principle, but kindness—true, genuine kindness—can earn respect. The old saying, "You can catch more flies with honey than you ever will with vinegar," is quite true. You can build trust, earn respect, and develop strong teams when kindness is displayed. Kindness should not be confused with leniency or allowing a lack of responsibility. Rather, it can be displayed when helping a stressed co-worker to finish a project, being patient with a difficult customer, or showing concern when a co-worker seems upset. Treating a co-worker with respect and kindness builds a level of trust that thrusts a team from good to great.

**Speak positive things about each other...**and be willing to give and accept constructive criticism. Managers—don't forget one of the most important elements to helping your employees to perform at their peak is providing balanced feedback. Be sure to celebrate the "wins" and have open conversations—not lectures—about "losses." Employees—listen to feedback and know that, by providing balanced feedback, your supervisor *cares* about your success at work. Talk about your co-workers in a way that builds trust with the people we serve. For example, "Lily will be your case manager and she is excellent with communication. I know you will be pleased with her." This serves two purposes: (1) it puts the customer at ease, and (2) shows Lily that you believe in her and she won't want to let you or the customer down.

Contributed by Laura Stokes, Employee Relations Analyst



# HR CORNER

WELCOME	
<b>DISABILITY ADJUCATION SERVICES</b>	
Shirley Wilson	Thomas Sigman
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	
Dawnn Johnson	Lisa Zaccaro
<b>ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS</b>	
Christy Cloudt	Renee Gentry
Sunette Payne	Karon Sheely
Anna Ogletree	
<b>VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM</b>	
Jaleassia Edgerton	Alex Lee
<b>GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND</b>	
Kenneth Davis	Thomas Hayes
Christina Jones;	Cynthia Mitchell
Rixon Smith	Gary Stephen Woodall
<b>FACILITIES</b>	
Mark Muzii	

**I**n our June newsletter we will provide a complete listing of GVRA retirees. If you have pictures or memories you would like to share, get them to [Kevin.harris@gvra.ga.gov](mailto:Kevin.harris@gvra.ga.gov).



# HR CORNER

## BEST WISHES

### DISABILITY ADJUDICATION SERVICES

Sharon Baker	Regina Bishop
Vivian Epps	William Fleming
Ava Johnson	Cheryl Quarterman
Kenyetta White	Dale Womack

### BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

Celestina Nwizu

### ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS

Kim Allen	Cheryl Brown
Cynthia Campbell	Jennifer Cargile
Chuck Robert Chapman	Gail Cranshaw
Wanda Davis	Crystal Ware Dukes
Gerald Eugene Erkhart	Nancy Ellen Gibson
Andy Henderson	Pamela Hill
Brenda Howe	April Womack Johnson
Elaine Jones	Shannon Kincade
Richard Charles McDaniel	Tarlisha McFerson
Stacey McLain	Bhavin Mehta
Kristen Moore	Jackie O'Hara
Richard F Quesenberry	Emma Searcy
Nancy Suggs	Sharon Tidwell
Paige Lee Trone	Sherri Watt

### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Piyush Bareria	Walter Benefield
Joy Bryan	Jerry Cain
Tjuana Callahan	Jessica Greene
Michelle Guy	Whitney Hewitt
Carol Hollis	Coretta Houston
Laura Jones	Kelli Littlefield
Demetria McCrary	Jamaica Miles
Ann Wesley Pruitt	Brian Spillers
Angelique Wade	

### GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND

Cherie Jarrell

## Vocational Rehabilitation Staff Become Farmers for a Day



Counselors from all over the state converged on Tifton, Georgia to be farmers for a day. From tending calves to picking strawberries, VR personnel experienced firsthand many of the jobs that are available in agriculture.

*"It's a win-win situation for everybody!"*

*- Cindy Newsome*

Agriculture in Georgia is big business. From the mountains to the coastal plains, Georgia's geography and climate provide perfect conditions for growing diverse commodities.

Agribusiness is Georgia's largest industry.

Agribusiness is Georgia's largest industry, accounting for \$71.1 billion of the state's \$763.6 billion economic output. One in seven Georgians work in agriculture. It is estimated between 25,000 and 35,000 Georgians that live in an agricultural households have some type of disability. Yet, very few of these individuals have accessed VR services.

Through an interactive workshop, the counselors learned about farm culture, farm equipment, assistive technology, and VR policy related to farmers returning to work. The workshops are part of a new partnership between VR and The University of Georgia's AgrAbility project. AgrAbility is funded by the USDA and aides farmers and ranchers with disabilities that are employed in production agriculture. From work site modifications to assistive technology, the staff with AgrAbility has vast expertise to contribute to the VR team.



VR Personnel learning about farm equipment from Andy Carter of AgrAbility

"How AgrAbility helps us is that we have the rehab knowledge and the information about the person's physical limitations and needs, but we didn't understand the needs of the agricultural business like AgrAbility did," said Kathy Joule, Region 1 manager.

Cindy Newsome, Region 10 counselor, has also worked with AgrAbility. "It's a win-win situation for everybody," said Newsome. VR is able to count successful employment outcomes, and farmers reap the benefits as well.

You can learn more about the AgrAbility project in Georgia by visiting their website at [www.farmagain.com](http://www.farmagain.com).

There you will

Find farmer stories, examples of assistive technology and a wealth of other information. AgrAbility in Georgia is managed by staff at the University of Georgia Athens and Tifton Georgia campuses. It is a joint initiative between the College of Family & Consumer Sciences and the College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences. Call 1-877-524-6264 or visit [www.farmagain.com](http://www.farmagain.com) for more information.



Scott Karlan, Newnan Region Counselor, makes a new friend

## GEORGIA INDUSTRIES FOR THE BLIND (GIB)

### GIB Delegation Discusses Employment Issues Affecting Blindness Community During Annual Public Policy Forum

Representatives from GIB met with members of Congress and their staffs in Washington, D.C. as part of the annual Public Policy Forum, hosted by National Industries for the Blind (NIB), the nation's largest employment resource for people who are blind, and the National Association for the Employment of People Who Are Blind (NAEPB).

The GIB delegation consisted of Dr. Jim Hughes (retiring CEO), Kevin Kelley (newly announced CEO) and Luis Nari-matsu, (Public Relations Coordinator). In addition, Luis is one of the 14 "Advocates for Leadership and Employment" who for the past two years have represented their agencies and NIB on employment issues affecting the blindness community. The GIB delegation met with staffers from the office of both Senator Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson along with a meeting with US Representative Lynn Westmoreland. The day culminated with the presentation of the AbilityOne Champions Award to US Representative Austin Scott for his support of the AbilityOne® Program and the employment of people who are blind.



Georgia Congressman Austin Scott receiving the AbilityOne Champions Award

The Public Policy Forum, held May 13-15 in the Washington, D.C. area, featured educational sessions for NIB associated agency participants and public policy advocates who learned about engaging lawmakers and their staffs on a variety of employment issues facing the blindness community.

2013 marks the 75th anniversary of NIB and the Wagner-O'Day Act, the legislation that established a federal government initiative that creates employment opportunities for people who are blind. The program, known today as the AbilityOne® Program, requires federal government agencies to purchase certain products made by people who are blind or have severe disabilities.

### GIB SUCCESS STORY

GIB has been creating employment opportunities that enable blind employees such as Deon Jones to be promoted into jobs traditionally held by sighted individuals. Deon Jones began working at the GIB Griffin plant in March 2008. He worked as a J-spoon machine operator for over 2 years. This machine placed J-spoons into their protective sleeve which was then ship to the military for use as an extremely sturdy biodegradable utensil in the field. At the end of 2009 Deon responded to an internal job posting for a position in GIB's first Service Project at Robins Air Force Base (RAFB). In July 2010 he transferred to RAFB as a box reclamation Operator. This job consisted of removing labels and markings off of shipping boxes so they could be re-use. Several months later he received a promotion to alternate lead worker and ran the operation in absence of the supervisor. In December 2012, due to his dedication and performance, he was promoted to site Supervisor. Deon now runs the operation, including staffing needs and reporting daily weekly and monthly production as well as supervising 2 other blind employees. Deon Jones is a real asset to the GIB team and to the success of the service project at RAFB.



Deon Jones, Supervisor—RAFB

# PROJECT SEARCH

**M**eranda Morton was referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) while in her senior year at Windsor Forest High School. Her employability was impacted by deficits in the areas of reading comprehension, math reasoning, written expression and short-term auditory memory. Meranda's counselor referred her to the Project SEARCH Program, which provides training, job placement and supported employment services in a collaborative effort between the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, St. Joseph's/Candler, the Coastal Center for Developmental Services and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Meranda was selected to participate in the program due to her strong motivation to work, excellent interpersonal skills and her desire to live a successful, independent life.

During her participation in Project SEARCH, Meranda attended the driver's education training offered by the Vocational Rehabilitation Savannah office's Rehabilitation Job Readiness Specialist, Jamie Herbster. Meranda worked diligently to become the first Project SEARCH intern to pass the written portion of the driver's test. The same day that Meranda passed the driver's test, she was hired by the Sam's Club in Pooler to work in the bakery. This was a culmination of a dream job that she embraced while taking a culinary class with Chef Steve



of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System. Through the collaborative efforts of the school system, the Project SEARCH Program, the VR Program and Meranda's own hard work as well as determination, Meranda is well on her way to having the successful and independent life she desires.

**Would you like to submit an article or photos for the June Newsletter? The Deadline is Friday, June 7, 2013.**

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) PROGRAM: REGIONAL NEWS

### CSRA Hosts Transition Fair

The Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Transition Resource Fair was held on Saturday, April 20, 2013 at Evans High School. The event was hosted by the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Richmond County Special Education Department, Columbia County Special Services Department and East Georgia Learning Resource System. This fair provides parents, students with disabilities, and professionals in the field of special education the opportunity to locate appropriate community services and resources.

Thirty-two vendors from the CSRA attended this event. A few of the participating vendors included Easter Seals, Goodwill Industries, Parent to Parent, Richmond Burke/Job Training Authority, Walton Options, Serenity Behavioral Health System, Department of Behavior Health and Developmental Disabilities.

Three informative sessions available for the participants were Now and Comp Waiver/Georgia Medicaid Waiver, Social Security Benefits, and Transition - "Where Do We Go From Here..."

### Waycross Receives Community Partner of the Year for 2012

The Waycross Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency received an award for Community Partner of the Year for 2012 on Friday, May 3, 2013 at the Goodwill Annual Community Partners Awards luncheon held on St. Simons Island, GA. Kelley Wright, Counselor, and Eryn Carter, RES, from the Waycross VR office were present to receive this award.

When asked about the award recipient, Edgar Alamo, Case Manager for Goodwill of the Coastal Empire responded, "We chose the Waycross GVRA to receive this award because of the work and dedication that staff exhibit with people with disabilities. Since we are on the same mission to help people with disabilities obtain employment and to live independently, we were very delighted to have chosen hard-working, dedicated staff such as Kelley Wright and Eryn Carter. Their mission is very evident when setting up referrals to us for job training, at staffings to meet with clients, and as we observe their care and passion in helping clients achieve independence. Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are the first step in helping clients. They know how to help clients and where to send them for job training at the Goodwill Job Connection/Goodwill Stores. Thank you for considering Goodwill Industries of the Coastal Empire." (Edgar Alamo, Case Manager, Goodwill of the Coastal Empire)



Pictured from L to R: Eryn Carter (RES), Kelley Wright (CRC), and Edgar Alamo (Case Manager, Goodwill of the Coastal Empire)

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) PROGRAM: REGIONAL NEWS

### Regions 10/11 Success Story



**Gabriel Shultz was the April 2013 Client Success Story for Regions 10/11.**

**G**abriel Shultz is a 21-year-old male who recently gained successful employment. He was a self-referral to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, having difficulties in obtaining a job. Mr. Shultz graduated from Berrien High School in Nashville, Georgia in May 2008. Mr. Shultz is a single male who was trying to start his life after completing school, very motivated to work, and willing to take the necessary steps to obtain and keep a job.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Valdosta assisted Mr. Shultz by providing work readiness/job retention, counseling, guidance, and ultimately a direct job placement at Lowes' Distribution Center in Valdosta, GA. VR provided Mr. Shultz with a uniform and job coaching was used to assist him with learning job tasks. He continues to work full-time with benefits at Lowes' Distribution Center. Mr. Shultz has a 52 mile round trip commute from Nashville to Valdosta every day. He began working at Lowe's on October 22, 2012 and has not since been late or missed a day. Mr. Shultz's self-esteem has improved tremendously and he has lost 40 pounds since starting his job at Lowe's.

### HIGH SCHOOL HIGH TECH-COLUMBUS



**Regional Director Denine Woodson and Regional Unit Manager Lauren Knox**

**T**he Columbus High School High Tech Awards Luncheon was held on May 1, 2013 at the National Infantry Museum in Ft. Benning, GA. The event was a culmination of the events of the program for the 2012-2013 school year and was attended by over 60 Muscogee County high school students, along with teachers, and representatives from the Georgia Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities, Muscogee County School District, Georgia Department of Labor and other community partners. Vocational Rehabilitation staff members in attendance included Regional Director Denine Woodson, Unit Manager Lauren Knox, CRC Shannon Barnhill and RES Paul Workman.

The Georgia High School High Tech Program (HSHT) is a community-based program that provides youth with disabilities a link to academic and career development experiences that enable them to meet the workforce demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This year, the students toured local institutions of higher learning as well as businesses, including St. Francis Hospital, Total System Services and AFLAC. In addition HSHT awarded 11 laptop computers to students who participated in the computer competition.

Five students from three different schools (Jordan, Northside and Shaw High Schools) gave testimonies about how the HSHT program had assisted them to make informed choices and plans for post-secondary education and/or employment after graduation. They also praised the HSHT program for connecting them with community partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Disability Services at post-secondary institutions.

## DISABILITY ADJUDICATION SERVICES (DAS)

### Congratulations to Dr. Ndiya Nkongho



Dr. Ndiya Nkongho was chosen as Anti-Fraud Award Recipient for the **Atlanta Region** for the quarter.

**C**ongratulations to Dr. Ndiya Nkongho, this Quarter's DDS Anti-Fraud Award Recipient for the **Atlanta Region**. Dr. Nkongho has been with the Georgia DAS since August 2009. Since that time, she has been vigilant in detecting fraud in disability claims.

In August 2011, she assisted with training of the new Kentucky CDI unit, providing excellent insight into the benefits a CDI investigation has in documenting a claimant's true functional ability. She encouraged Kentucky to train their medical/psychological consultants on fraud so they can improve referrals of suspicious claims.

Dr. Ndiya Nkongho's referrals over the past 2 years have yielded a program savings of \$1,860,220.

An example of these false claims is a 44-year old female, who had alleged a chronic head injury, memory loss, depression and anxiety after sustaining a motor vehicle accident. The claimant's daughter reported she was unable to function and could not leave the house since the accident. The claimant reported she could no longer drive and suffered from panic attacks three times weekly when out in public. Her medical evidence from Grady Hospital noted Somatoform Disorder/Fictitious Disorder and Malingering suspected due to a pending lawsuit.

Dr. Nkongho's investigation, however, found the claimant was friendly and outgoing and suffered no panic attacks when out in public. She was observed driving a Mercedes and going out with her boyfriend regularly. Also, she did not appear to be lost, confused or have any mental problems. Moreover, she had two driving citations for DUI and speeding. Therefore, her claim was denied for a Non-Severe Mental Impairment.

### DAS EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**C**ongratulations to **Tammy Hernandez** for her selection as the May 2013 Employee of the Month. The following nomination was submitted by Rita Wcwhorter in the category of Teamwork: "Tammy has always made herself available to adjudicators, medical/psychological consultants, GBI investigators, etc. to ensure proper and timely processing of CDI cases. She never hesitates to offer new ideas and ways of getting the work done more efficiently and she has a great eye for ensuring that investigations are warranted before accepting the referral.

As a former adjudicator, Tammy knows what to look for in the case and how to determine whether more development is needed rather than a CDI investigation. Her goal is to make decisions that are overall best for DAS, the claimants and SSA. Her hard work is evidence of her commitment as a team player."

*"She never hesitates to offer new ideas and ways of getting the work done more efficiently and she has a great eye for ensuring that investigations are warranted before accepting the referral."*

*Rita McWhorter, DAS—Legal Services Officer on Tammy Hernandez*

## ROOSEVELT WARM SPRINGS (RWS)

### Roosevelt Warm Springs Holds Employee Recognition Luncheon

Roosevelt Warm Springs held its 86<sup>th</sup> annual employee recognition luncheon on April 24. Yearly gatherings to give thanks and celebrate the accomplishments of the staff have been a tradition at Roosevelt Warm Springs since the Franklin D. Roosevelt days. Roosevelt established the tradition of annual celebrations back in the 1920s when RWS was serving polio patients as the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation.

Employees Kathy Clark and Lisa Waddell received the top honors at this year's luncheon. Clark, associate nurse executive for the RWS Rehabilitation Hospital, received the Leadership Award for her work facilitating a multidisciplinary team that achieved certified stroke rehabilitation program status for the hospital from the Joint Commission, an independent organization that ensures healthcare organizations meet best practice standards. Only four hospitals in Georgia have achieved this certification.

Waddell received the Employee of the Year Award for her work as RWS conference coordinator and manager of the volunteer program. In her job, Waddell serves as the face of RWS for many customers that use the facility for meetings, training sessions or special events.



The RWS Employee of the Year Award this year went to Lisa Waddell, conference/volunteer coordinator. Here she receives a framed photograph of Georgia Hall from Executive Director Bill Bulloch.



During the luncheon, RWS Executive Director Bill Bulloch also presented service pins to 51 employees celebrating employment milestones at Warm Springs. Since 2006, RWS has given "Legacy" pins to employees with an image of historic Georgia Hall modeled after pins given by the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation in the 1950s. Among those receiving "Legacy" pins this year are Sue Chapman, who received her 30-year pin, as well as Rufus Braddy, Connie McDaniel, and Shawn Mustacchio, who each received 25-year pins. A donation from the Roosevelt Warm Springs Rehabilitation Development Fund paid for the luncheon and the awards. The Development Fund, an independent 501(c)3

Roosevelt himself established the tradition of annual celebrations back in the 1920s when RWS was serving polio patients as the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation.

charitable corporation supports the patient and student programs as Roosevelt Warm Springs.

Bill Bulloch presents the annual Leadership Award to Kathy Clark, Associate Nurse Executive for the RWS Hospital.

## Calhoun Jobs and Resource Fair a Definite Success

### Excitement Builds around TEAM 26

The third installment of the TEAM 26 Jobs and Resources Fairs for veterans with disabilities rolled into the Senoraville Recreational Complex in Calhoun on May 16, 2013. TEAM 26 Champion, Paul Ray (Rehab Unit Manager) and Ed James (Regional Director) were leaders in forming TEAM Calhoun, the regional team of volunteers working on the Calhoun event. This group of passionate volunteers was instrumental in beating the pavement to drum employer and community support the synergy for an enormously successful Fair.



**7 of the 45 veterans attending the event obtained jobs that day!**

The veterans who identified themselves as having disabilities will be referred to the local TEAM 26 Champion for follow up activities.

Since TEAM 26 launched its first fair, over 56 veterans who attended that event have received jobs. Scores of local businesses and community partners co-sponsored the event by donating refreshments for the participants of the Fair. Retired Captain Chris Hayden was the keynote speaker at the launch program and he emphasized the importance of everyone getting involved in service to our veterans. A value added component of the Jobs and Resources Fair held

in Calhoun last week was the fact that everyone was asked to bring a non-perishable food item which was donated to a local shelter for distribution to those in need.

Through the Jobs and Resources Fairs, **TEAM 26** is matching veterans with potential employers and other resources. While the services offered by the VR program focused on veterans with disabilities, these Jobs and Resources Fairs are open to all veterans. The next Fair will be held on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the Goodwill of Southern Rivers (Behind Longhorns Steakhouse) 2601 Cross Country Drive Columbus GA 31906 beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 2:00 p.m. Pre-conference activities begins at 9:00 a.m. including resume prep and interview skills training.

Contributed by Carl McRae



**Over 53 employers participated in the jobs and resource fair.**

# GVRA Employee Appreciation Week May 6th-May 10th, 2013



VR Program Region 4 (Newnan), from L to R:  
Javonda Booker-Wilson (RA), Denine Woodson (RD),  
Delinda Forbus (OAT), Lisa Webb (PA), Betty Sims  
(Receptionist)



Kenneth Mann—2 Peachtree

**GVRA Employee Appreciation Week  
May 6th-May 10th, 2013**



*Lynn Tallant and Mike  
Haffey-BEP*

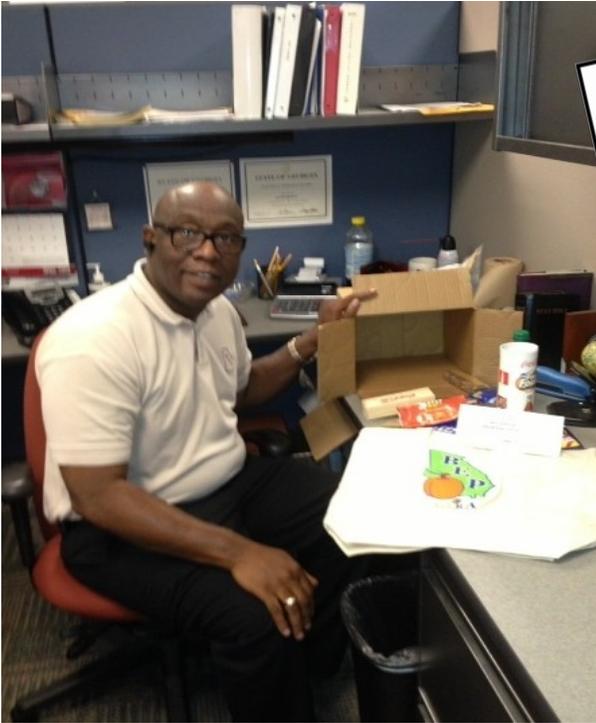


*Teresa Eggleston and  
Chris Okoye-BEP*



*Teresa Eggleston & Raj  
Gandy (standing)-BEP*

**GVRA Employee Appreciation Week  
May 6th-May 10th, 2013**



*Al Belin, BEP Counselor*



*Liz McGarey and Diane Dailey -  
BEP Program*



*Raymond Jacobs, Anne Aplin and Danny Murr -  
BEP Program*

**GVRA Employee Appreciation Week  
May 6th-May 10th, 2013**



*VR Program Region 7 (Augusta) Regional Office Team*



*VR Program Region 9 - Dublin Unit:*

*Sitting: Alfred Wheeler, CRC & Doris Gilmore, CRC*

*Standing: Sandi Dixon, RJRS; Holly Sapp, RES; April Miller, CRC;  
Kelly Perry, RA*

# VR Program Employee Appreciation Week

## May 6<sup>th</sup> – May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013



**Marvelous Monday**

*Bring your "To Die For" Desserts and share with your team members*

*Vote on the best dessert!*



**Terrific Tuesday**

*Wear your favorite hats!!*

*Vote on the coolest hat!*

*Send your group picture to Diane Patterson*



**Wacky Wednesday**

*Ugliest Belt and Shoes Day  
Show off your ugliest belt and shoes*

*Vote on the ugliest attire!*

*Send your group picture to Diane Patterson*

**SURPRISE! Surprise Thursday**

*Check your e-mail @ 9:00am*



**CASUAL Formal Friday**

*Stress-down Dress-down  
Bring a snack and share with your co-workers!*



*GVRA's Fearless Leaders:  
Greg Schmieg and Keith Horton*

*Mike Hartley, Vocational  
Rehabilitation - Augusta, AWT*

## GVRA FORMS ADA/504 COMPLIANCE TEAM

Leading by example is important for GVRA. Before its first birthday, GVRA has already launched efforts to establish a team responsible for ensuring the agency's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Act. A project outline has developed following planning and several meetings with Mike Galifianakis. Mike is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator for the Georgia State Financing & Investment Commission. He is responsible for developing and implementing programs and activities to advance and monitor agency compliance with the ADA statewide.

At the agency level, Travis Salley was selected to serve as the Agency's Coordinator for the ADA/504 project. Executive Director Greg Schmiege and Deputy Director Keith Horton will join the following GVRA ADA Team members in developing and implementing the plan:

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Lee Brinkley Bryan | Russell Fleming |
| Richard Eskridge   | Raj Gandy       |
| Kevin Harris       | Deidre Jackson  |
| Kevin Kelly        | Rita McWhorter  |
| Raj Pagadala       | Terri Rushing   |
| Travis Salley      | Jimmy Wilson    |



The new team is now working with the State ADA Coordinator's office to complete four phases:

- Phase 1: Planning for 504/ADA Compliance
- Phase 2: Conducting an Updated 504/ADA Self-Evaluation
- Phase 3: Implementing the 504/ADA Plan
- Phase 4: Maintaining and Updating the 504/ADA Plan as Necessary

Phase I is well underway, and phase II should be completed within the next 30 days.

## Friends Helping Friends take Students to Braves Game

Friends Club, sponsored by Mrs. Sandy Adams, recently attended an Atlanta Braves game as a result of State Representative Tom McCall contacting the Braves Reach Out Program. Several Braves players generously contributed to the "Reach Out, Be Our Guest Program" making this trip possible.

FHF members, who pay their own way on all FHF trips, invited EC Primary, EC Elementary, ECMS and ECCHS students in Mr. Eubanks, Mrs. Mindy Black, Mrs. Chrystal Thomas, Mrs. Pam Brown & Mrs. Daniele Frankin's classes to go to Atlanta to Turner Field where they watched the Braves play Kansas City during the exciting afternoon game on Wednesday, April 17th. Thanks to Jamie Colvard, ECCHS alumni, former Braves Cheerleader, and cousin to FHF Founding Officers Committee member Amy Turner, the Braves Girls, including Elberton native Jennifer Bennett, joined the Elberton group for pics and



gave each student a free Braves cap. FHF provides all funds for transportation for FHF trips so that there is no cost to the school system. Friends Helping Friends is dedicated to the memory of Bud McCall.

## disABILITY QUIZ

### ANSWERS OF DISABILITY QUIZ—April 2013 ISSUE



1. An employer is required to provide additional insurance for employees with disabilities.	FALSE
2. Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate most workers with disabilities	FALSE
3. There is a difference between a disability and a handicap	FALSE
4. When speaking with a person who is deaf, one should direct the conversation to interpreter/companion	FALSE
5. It is okay to finish sentences or supply words to people who have speech disorders	FALSE

# Facilities Management Update

Facilities Management Support for GVRA is located at 2 Peachtree Street, Suite 6.395. The team consists of six staff members including: 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 Eskridge who serves as the Facilities Management Director for the agency. Working with all six of the program directors and the Executive Staff, the team of staffers works 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 the Perry VR staff
- Relocation of the Memorial Drive/Commerce Drive VR staff
- Consolidation of the Savannah VR offices
- Relocation of the Macon RO and Hub offices
- Office signage updates around the state
- Relocation of the Bainbridge VR staff
- Relocation of the Carrollton VR office
- Relocation of the Cleveland VR office
- Relocation of the Blue Ridge VR office
- Consolidation of the Dublin RO and Hub offices
- Relocation of the Monroe VR office
- Expansion of the Tifton VR office

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

Contact Information: Richard Eskridge, 2 Peachtree Street-Suite 6/395, Atlanta, GA 30303  
Office Number: 404-232-1884

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE GVRA NEWSLETTER OR TO THE GVRA DAILY EMAIL UPDATES, PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO KEVIN HARRIS, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR. THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IS FRIDAY, JUNE 7, 2013. EMAIL: [KEVIN.HARRIS@GVRA.GA.GOV](mailto:KEVIN.HARRIS@GVRA.GA.GOV)