



The OVR Review

"To assist Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence"

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Article by Jason Jones

2011 Employer Awards

"Statewide Council along with OVR staff recognize employers across Kentucky"

At its annual Employer Awards Luncheon on September 19, 2011, the Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) recognized six employers from across the state for their exemplary efforts in employing individuals with disabilities.

The luncheon was held at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington. Lee Gordon, SCVR chairperson, Nancy Hunter, SCVR vice-chair, and Beth Smith, executive director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, presented awards to the following employers:

- The Cartridge Shop and Shipping Center, Paducah**
- Olive Garden, Richmond**
- Little Caesar's Pizza, Erlanger**
- Hermitage Care and Rehabilitation Center, Owensboro**
- Fashion Bug, Pikeville**
- Best Buy Distribution Center, Shepherdsville**

In accepting the award for Hermitage Care and Rehabilitation Center, Human Resources Coordinator Jenny Bartel said she is grateful for the opportunities she has been given to work with OVR. "We strive on empowering our employees and harvesting potential within every employee to be the best they

can be because they are serving an important population, the elderly," she said. "The employees (OVR) has sent to us have been wonderful to work with. They have exceeded any expectation we would have had for any employee."

Employment Specialist Steve Wedding made the trip from Owensboro to present Bartel with the award. "Hermitage Care and Rehabilitation Center is truly a company that values their clients as well as their employees," he said. "Hermitage invests in their employees' training and wants them to be well adjusted and happy in their careers. Their commitment extends to their employees as well as their clients and is evident in the satisfaction of everyone involved."

Representatives from four of the five remaining businesses were also on hand to accept awards. A representative from the Fashion Bug in Pikeville had to cancel last minute. Rosemary Moore, who had nominated the business accepted on its behalf.

Cindy Ragland, Employment Specialist, presented the award to owners Dan and Pam Harrison of The Cartridge Shop. "Any time (Pam) needs a position filled or hears of other available positions, she forwards the information on to me. She is a great partner of OVR," Ragland said.

Pam Harrison said the relationship she has with Ragland



Representatives from (clockwise from bottom left) The Cartridge Shop and Shipping Center, Paducah, Little Caesar's Pizza, Erlanger, Olive Garden, Richmond, Best Buy Distribution Center, Shepherdsville and Hermitage Care and Rehabilitation Center, Owensboro, are joined by OVR staff, OVR Executive Director Beth Smith, and Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation chairs Nancy Hunter and Lee Gordon.



2011 Kentucky Rehabilitation Association Conference

"Northern Kentucky welcomes state rehab professionals"



The Kentucky Rehabilitation Annual Conference was held August 30 - September 1 at the Embassy Suites in Covington. The theme for the conference was "KRA Proud! KRA Strong".

KYJPD opened the conference with Brigid Adams, from the Kentucky Department of Corrections, presenting on "Reentry Chal-

lenges and Solutions."

The opening session featured Welcoming Statements from Keith Banks, President Kentucky Rehabilitation Association; Beth Brinly, Commissioner, Department of Workforce Investment; Beth Smith, Executive Director, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; Christopher Smith, Executive Director, Office of the Blind; and Roland Blahnik, President & CEO Goodwill Industries. Lynnae Ruttledge, Commissioner Rehabilitation Services Admini-

stration, gave updates on RSA Initiatives. Stephen A. Wooderson, CEO Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation ended with CSAVR Activities and Legislative Issue Updates.

Day one capped off with the President's Reception and the KARRS dance, with the theme "Summer in the City."

The second day of the conference was a concurrent session day with the awards luncheon sandwiched between two halves of providing up to date information related to Ethics, Assistive Technology, Substance Abuse and Dependence, Housing, Mentoring, Autism and Supported Higher Education ... just to name a few.

The awards luncheon was hosted by Bluegrass Branch Manager Brad Mills. A complete list of award winners can be found on page 11.

The last day of the conference was kicked off by the KRA Board Meeting and conclude with Rohan Murray and his presentation: No Legs, No Problem: Living a Life without Limiting Yourself.

In the business meeting, Scott Coulter was elected president elect, Alan Gullet, treasurer, Roxanna Robinson, secretary and Elodie Dickinson and Keith Brown, board members.



(clockwise from bottom left) Pat Butcher receives award from KRA President Keith Banks. Ryan Henson displays the "KRA Proud KRA Strong" picture. Veronica Dale receives award from Banks. Workforce Commissioner Beth Brinly gives opening remarks. Jim Wallace and Jane Smith share a smile and embrace. Rohan Murray talks in the closing session about how he has not let his disability hold him back.



KRA 2011

Special thanks to Jason Herron for taking all the pictures at KRA and for making this page possible .

Employee Spotlight Presents "The Exit Interview"

"Peggy Justus talks about life after rehab"



(Left to right) Vicki Yeary, Regina Hair, Veronica Dale, Teresa Barnes, Willie Hyde, Donna Osburn, Mindy Yates and Peggy Justus, (seated). (Bottom) Peggy poses with Executive Director Beth Smith

1. Tell me about how you grew up.

I was born into a wonderful Christian family of nine; three brothers, three sisters, my mother and dad. The small community where we all grew up was Pisgah Forest, North Carolina, located at the foothills of the Pisgah National Forest and the beautiful Blue Ridge Parkway on Vanderbilt Road. According to history, the famous and rich George Vanderbilt built this road and traveled it many times, doing his forestry business to a nearby sawmill. The Pisgah Forest Grammar School I attended was located directly across the street from our house, which I must say was very convenient for my mother. Later we attended Brevard High School where I met my lifelong sweetheart and husband, Robert J. Justus, (who retired in 2010 as Minister of Sr. Adults and Pastoral Care, at the Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky). Upon the death of my parents, I inherited the home place where I plan to spend a lot of my retirement time.

2. I know you are really proud of your family. Tell me about them.

I married at the young age of 18 and

we had three children. They are married and live in the state of Kentucky. If you worked with me, I'm sure you saw the many pictures displayed of my grandchildren. We are the "proud grandparents" of eight "adorable" grandchildren. The ages range from three to 23. We are so thankful God has blessed us with such a beautiful family.

3. I heard you recently celebrated your 50th wedding anniversary. What does it take to make it 50 years?

To make it 50 years? Be sure "he" does everything I tell him to do! - Just teasing. Bob is a wonderful husband and I'm so thankful for him. I think in order to live together for 50 years it takes a lot of patience, understanding, and communication. Accepting each other for who they really are and staying committed to the marriage vows. Even if you make a mistake, admit it, push it aside, and move on. Life is too short to dwell on the negative, and most of all, make sure God is the center of your marriage.

4. What do you do outside of work?

Outside of working, I love spending time with my family, church, and friends. We attend the Highland Baptist Church on Georgetown Road. I thoroughly enjoy my floral design hobby as well as sewing and interior designing. In the past I have done some freelance writing for the Southern Baptist Convention, in the area of Special Education, and may try my hand at writing again.

5. How long have you been with OVR? Why VR? How did you end up here?

After my kids were in school, I decided to seek out a job. I had worked as Director of Special Education in my church and felt God wanted me to go in the direction of working with people with disabilities. I first worked as a secretary in a local church, then took a job with the Fayette County Schools in Special Pupils Services as a typist of teaching materials used in Special Education classrooms. While working at the school board, I met Linda Brown who was an assistant to an OVR counselor whose office was located there. She told me of an open position with Esther Taylor, State Coordinator in the SSA/VR Program. I called her, set up an appointment, and was hired to be her assistant. Now that I'm retiring, it's amazing to see how God opened doors for me, and I just walked through them. I have always felt like my job was given to me by God and now it's time for me to move on.

6. Any memories of your early days?

I remember working in the office at Industry Road. Most of the assistants had to set up offices in the hallways due to a space problem. My office area was in the very back of the office beside the women's restroom. I must say,



Continued on Page 12

Governor's Ambassador Awards 2011

"Unsung Heroes: OVR's Sharon White honored in Frankfort"

After decades of injustice, 75 hearing-impaired black students finally got their high school diplomas – thanks to Sharon White of the state Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in Frankfort.

White was one of several state employees honored at the third-annual Governor's Ambassador Awards ceremony, established in 2008 to recognize the service of state workers.

"It's inspiring; it's exciting," said White of receiving the Leadership Award after the ceremony in the Frankfort Convention Center Thursday. She's an administrative assistant to the deaf and hard of hearing with the vocational rehabilitation agency.

After learning that hearing-impaired black students who graduated from the Kentucky School for the Deaf from 1930 to 1955 were denied diplomas because of their race, White worked with the state Commission of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to get those students their diplomas.

"I wanted to help the former students there who should've graduated from the Kentucky School for the Deaf years ago, and I wanted to motivate them to make a difference," said White, also the first black president of the Kentucky Association of the Deaf and secretary of the National Black Deaf Advocates.

"I just contacted different people and asked questions, and then we went from there and accomplished our goal."

During an August ceremony in Danville, 75 former students – some still living – were officially recognized as graduates and received diplomas.

"(White) has exceeded all the expectations of her service to the deaf and hard of hearing communities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky," Personnel Cabinet Secretary Tim Longmeyer said while announcing White's award.

Hundreds of state employees, some with family and friends, converged on the convention center for the one-hour ceremony.

Winners received a framed certificate and a brick with their name and award placed outside the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History.



First lady Jane Beshear, speaking on behalf of Gov. Steve Beshear and citizens across the state, repeatedly thanked employees for their service.

"Our state and all its people have endured many hardships during these last several years," Jane Beshear said, noting 10 federally-declared disasters and the recession. "... Kentuckians look more and more to the jobs you do to help them in their lives, and we do understand that besides the jobs that you do day in and day out, your own families and your own lives have not been easy during this period of time."

State employees were furloughed six days this fiscal year to save some \$24 million and help balance the state budget. Gov.

Steve Beshear announced in June that furloughs wouldn't be necessary in 2012 because of higher revenues.

More than 230 employees were nominated for awards this year, the highest in the ceremony's three years, Jane Beshear said.

This article is reprinted with permission from The State Journal in Frankfort and iNews Editor Keren Henderson.



(top of page) Sharon White displays her brick that will award placed outside the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History. Photo by Lori Bishop (above) White gets two high fives from Lori Bishop as she is announced as the recipient for the Leadership Award Thursday afternoon during the third annual Governor's Ambassador Awards Ceremony at the Frankfort Convention Center. White advocated for black deaf students from the Kentucky School for the Deaf from 1930-1955 to receive diplomas that they were deprived of due to their race. As a result of her collaborative work with organizations, 75 people received diplomas. Photo by Tricia Spaulding, State Journal.

Message from Executive Director, Beth Smith



What a crazy and busy summer it was. I have to admit, I like falling back into the routine that comes with the children going back to school and the structure of events that help you know that it is Autumn. I hope all of you are finding your own routines and getting back to some normalcy as the weather

begins to turn cooler.

First of all, I wanted to tell everyone how good it was to so many of you at KRA. I hope everyone received a boost of motivation by attending like I did.

Also, several of you received letters from me about the Partner for Success trainings coming up in November. As I stated in the letter, It has been almost a year and a half since the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board adopted the WorkSmart Kentucky Plan. It is grounded in a workforce development system that is streamlined, customer friendly, partnership based and solutions driven. Partner for Success is one of the strategic action items in the plan.

The conferences are scheduled to take place November 9th and 10 at General Butler State Park in Carrollton, November 16 and 17th at Jenny Wiley State Park in Prestonsburg, and November 30 and December 1, 2011 at Lake Barkley in Cadiz. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the trainings.

Also, I would like to congratulate all of you on reaching our goal for the fiscal year for Positive Employment Outcomes. For the first time in three years, with an amazing amount of hard work, we exceeded our goal with 3,544 Kentuckians with significant disabilities becoming competitively employed. In addition, you met all seven of the federal Standards & Indicators for FY 2011. These results are a direct reflection of your dedication to individuals with disabilities. Kudos!

In closing, I would like to congratulate Sharon White for winning a Governor's Ambassador Award. I was able to attend the ceremony with Commissioner Brinly and it was wonderful. Also congratulations to Linda Irvin and Janis Friend, both of whom were also nominated.

This will be my final commentary of 2011. Please know that I wish all of you the happiest holiday season. Enjoy your families and your time off.

Submitted by Vickey Reilly

Transition Update

Mentoring Update

Our Mentor Training will be October 25-27. Cumberland Falls is our destination this year and the theme is 'In One Accord'. Of special note is our evening event where Norb Ryan will be our guest speaker.

Our current tentative agenda topics include: New Mentor Training, You Might be a Good Mentor if..., Giving Positive Feedback, Claiming Your Inheritance, Counseling Styles, Teaching Cost Participation, Team Building, Ethics: It is "Order of Selection"; not "Personal Selection", and Teaching Time & Organizational Skills.

The NCRE/RSA/CSAVR Conference Committee chose Vickey Reilly to present in Washington, D.C. during the 2011 National Rehabilitation Education Conference, October 30-November 1. The topic will be: Preparing New

Personnel to be Effective Counselors Utilizing a Mentoring Program. The session will discuss our Mentoring Program, the curriculum, the trainings and to have a discussion on how it may be possible to replicate in other states.

Transition

The Community Based Work Transition Program (CBWTP) yearly trainings took place throughout July and August, all across the state. Just over 300 OVR staff and school personnel participated. This year we tried something new and had breakout sessions in the afternoon on topics such as Working with Students with Behavioral Issues, SSI Work Incentives, Paperwork and Documentation, as well as our New Coach Orientation. Also, our Trainings were approved by KDE in order for the teachers and job coaches to be able to

earn up to six hours of professional development credits.

Currently there are 68 school districts and 768 students estimated to be participating this year. We welcome four new schools for the 2011-12 year – Barren County, Laurel County, Owen County, & Pulaski County!

We gave a shout out during our Lexington training to Merrelyn Carmichael from Jessamine County. She has been their Job Coach and with our Program since 1984. Kudos to Merrelyn for her outstanding service to her students and dedication to our program!

Lastly, congratulations to the CBWTP for winning the 2011 American Council on Rural Special Education Exemplary Program Award for exemplary program in Vocational Training and Transition.

Consumer Spotlight

“Somerset consumer able to shine with counseling, job placement and assistive technology”

Martin Perkins came to OVR in August of 2010 for assistance in finding employment, because even with his infectious smile, charming personality, and previous work experience, he had difficulty finding a job due to his disability. Martin has been diagnosed with cervical dystonia, also known as spasmodic torticollis. It is characterized by neck muscles contracting involuntarily, causing abnormal movements and awkward posture of the neck and head.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Beth McFall and Job Placement Specialist Tracy Wheeldon provided Martin with job leads, resume preparation, and vocational guidance and direction. As a result of these efforts, Martin applied for employment, completed Safe Auto's pre-employment classes, passed the insurance agent test, and was offered a position as a CSR (Customer Service Representative), fielding calls from customers and assisting them with questions regarding their insurance coverage.

Safe Auto was open to OVR coming in with their expertise and allowing Erin Gray a Rehabilitation Technologist with OVR, to conduct an assistive technology assessment of Martin's workstation to assess disability related needs. As a result of the assessment, Martin was provided with a supportive chair with a built-in headrest, high back and adjustable armrests, (replacing



Martin Perkins shows off some of the assistive technology he uses to help him on his job with Safe Auto.



the company provided chair that only went up to shoulder height), providing Martin the support he needs when experiencing the involuntary movements brought on by cervical dystonia. OVR also provided an adjustable height monitor stand, raising his computer monitor to eye level, and “flippers” (page turners) that allow him to access quick reference guides when assisting customers without having to lean up from his chair. These accommodations allow

Martin to have better posture, thus speaking more clearly and reducing the demands on his neck.

Martin states he loves his job, working with great people in a great environment. Since he began his employment with Safe Auto in February of 2011, Martin has proven to be an exemplary employee, and earned the company's Perfect Attendance Award for the month of March.

When approached with the idea of an article on Martin, Cynthia Burkett, Human Resources Manager for the company stated “Sounds great. We are very pleased Martin has been chosen. He is a wonderful young man”.

Martin continues in his efforts to raise awareness about his disability by writing a song about his experience with Cervical Dystonia and has produced a video for YouTube titled Laterocollis, which has garnered over 6,000 views.

Job Placement Training

“New Job Placement Administrator holds first statewide training ”

Julie Wade, new Job Placement Administrator, held the Job Placement Training on August 24-25th. Featured speakers were: Mark Johnson, Re-entry Coordinator FCI Federal Bureau of Prisons and OES Trainer; Kellie Scott CO Program Evaluator; Tony DeName, Branch Manager of Systems and Fiscal Branch; Myra Campbell, Jewish Family and Career Services, and Pat Hillegrass, JLodge. Pam Jarboe, Director of Program Services gave opening remarks as well as recent news in OVR. Julie Wade welcomed everyone, made announcements and presented the speakers.

Mark Johnson spoke on how to best help consumers with criminal backgrounds obtain jobs, create resumes, and interview skills. He discussed House Bill 463 and how it may affect OVR. He gave a PowerPoint presentation about what barriers ex-offenders face as well as ways different agencies are helping and can help. Kellie Scott went over the results of the recent Job Placement Surveys; the survey was given to JP staff, counselors, and managers. The results show that in house JP staff is more economical and that overall staff are satisfied with job placement services.

Tony DeName gave a history of PACE and how training stipends have been developed as well as why they are exempt from other income guidelines such as unemployment, social security, etc. There was discussion about lowering the PACE training stipend per hour and why that benefits the consumer.

Myra Campbell gave a presentation of the Gateway to Careers their agency offers as well as all the services they provide.

Pat Hillegrass gave a PowerPoint presentation via conference call about new changes in JLodge and her desire to work more with Ky OVR.

There was a group activity that ended the meeting in which job placement staff met as a group and managers met as a group. Each group then discussed areas they would like training in, the Bill Santos Training, and shared ideas.

Dave Matheis, Branch Manager of Program Planning and Development Branch, gave closing remarks as well as updates. The training was very successful according to Survey Monkey results.

Staff Report

2011 Employer Awards (cont.)

and OVR continues to pay dividends for the business. “They are gracious and accommodating when the candidate doesn’t work out after the initial period and are willing to search for other candidates to interview,” she said. “Vocational Rehab is my first contact when I am searching for an employee, and I have recommended the program to several other business owners.”

Olive Garden of Richmond was nominated for the award by OVR Counselor Joe Scott. “This employer has shown that even in tough economic times, employment of individuals with disabilities is still an important consideration,” he said. “(Olive Garden) is a true exhibit of what it means to be an employer who cares about what we do as OVR and the consumers we serve.”

General Manager Amy Ping accepted for Olive Garden. “The em-

ployee recommended by (OVR) showed dedication and passion. That is what we look for when we hire someone,” Ping said. “It is an honor to be nominated for this award.”

Other presenters included OVR Counselor Michelle Cobb, who gave the award to Little Caesar's Pizza in Erlanger. “(Little Caesars managers) are most accommodating, and show great patience with our consumers. So in my view, they are most deserving of this award.”

Owner Brian Raffler said the relationship they have with OVR and BAWAC Job Coach Emily Simpson has been very beneficial to his business. “It has been great working with them. Some of my best employees have come through Vocational Rehab’s partnership with BAWAC.”

The final winner was the Best Buy Distribution Center in Shepherdsville. OVR Community Partner Willie Byrd of

Options Unlimited presented the award. “Best Buy’s distribution center in Shepherdsville makes a concerted effort to have an inclusive work environment that employs individuals with disabilities,” he said. “They have partnered with local agencies and Voc. Rehab to employ more than 50 people with disabilities from this region in their warehouse. It has been tremendously encouraging to work with Best Buy because everybody is on the same page.”

Best Buy Accessibility Coordinator Tammie Hollar commented on the work that has been put in by all the partners of the Best Buy initiative to hire people with disabilities. “It’s not always easy, we have had to work at it. We work together everyday learning about all the things we can do to recognize people’s abilities and strengths to help them be successful and in turn help make Best Buy successful.”

Perkins Center Award

“CDPVTTC recognized as Volunteer of the Month by Bluegrass PRIDE”

For dedication to serving the community with PRIDE (Personal Responsibility In a Desirable Environment), the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Training Center earned southern and eastern Kentucky's PRIDE Volunteer of the Month Award for August 2011.

The award was shared by students and staff at the Perkins Center, which assists Kentuckians with disabilities to achieve suitable employment and independence.

“You are an asset to your community and our entire Commonwealth, and we appreciate you,” said PRIDE's Mark Davis, who presented the award at the Perkins Center on July 21. “You are making a difference by helping to keep our beautiful scenery looking its best.”

“I hope you have found that volunteering is fun and rewarding — just an all around great experience,” Davis said. “It's a wonderful feeling to see the area you just cleaned and know you accomplished something.

And, taking care of the environment makes you more aware of its value.”

Since 2006, the Perkins Center's students and staff have volunteered to pick up roadside litter at least three times annually. In April and October, they join Johnson County's roadside cleanup projects, and in June, they organize their own cleanup, to make sure roads leading to the facility look their best as visitors arrive for the annual graduation ceremony.

In April 2011, 105 volunteers from the Perkins Center spent a total of 405 hours picking up 146 bags of garbage, four tires, several appliances and large furniture items along 3 miles of SR1107.

The center also cares for the environment by recycling and composting. The recycling program currently includes plastics and cardboard, and there are plans for expansion. Grass clippings, leaves, vegetables and shredded paper are composted for use on the ground

where they grow a vegetable garden.

The center uses volunteering, recycling and composting “as teaching tools to gain knowledge of what can be done to protect the environment and leave it better for future generations,” said Lillian Wheeler, who is the Johnson County PRIDE Coordinator and who nominated the Perkins Center for the PRIDE award.

Wheeler said the Perkins Center students and staff are appreciated for volunteering in many ways in the community, based on their abilities and interests. For example, cosmetology students and staff provide free services for disadvantaged youth and others with special

needs, and food service students donate catering services to community groups.

The Perkins Center is a division of the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. The Perkins Center was created in 1973 to enable Kentuckians with disabilities to obtain all the services they need to become



employed in one location. The Perkins Center provides several types of programs and services to persons with a wide range of disabilities.

The PRIDE Volunteer of the Month program recognizes hard work and dedication to the PRIDE initiative, which promotes environmental education and cleanup efforts in 38 counties of southern and eastern Kentucky. With corporate sponsorship from TECO Coal, WYMT-TV airs commercials about each PRIDE Volunteer of the Month.

“Volunteers are the backbone of PRIDE,” said Congressman Hal Rogers, who founded PRIDE in 1997. “We wouldn't be where we are without our volunteers. More than 360,000 volunteers have helped with PRIDE cleanup and education projects. We want to thank TECO Coal for helping PRIDE give these generous people the recognition they deserve.”

Meet Council Member Roberta Alston

"Lifelong advocate joins SCVR"



Roberta Alston was appointed to the Council in June of 2011 as the representative of the Kentucky Special Parent Involvement Network (KY-SPIN). By federal law, the federally funded parent training and information center in each state must have representation on the state vocational rehabilitation advisory council.

Roberta has been with KY-SPIN since 1988. She has worn many hats from copying materials that go into workshops to developing those same materials, conducting workshops and working as one of the in-house consultants.

Roberta has one child, but claims five children. She has been advocating for the rights of people with disabilities for over 20 years, before she knew what the word "advocate" meant. She has served on many boards, including the State Advisory Panel and has travelled all over the state helping families be their child's best advocate.

Article Submitted by Dave Matheis

SCVR/SILC Meeting

"SILC, SCVR Hold First Ever Joint Meeting"

On September 19, the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Statewide Council of Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR) held their first joint meeting ever at the Marriott Griffin Gate in Lexington.

The 16-member SILC and 25-member SCVR decided to meet together to learn more about each other and to start a dialogue between the two groups. Both councils are federally mandated, the SILC to develop, implement, and maintain the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) and the SCVR to advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation on eligibility and services. They meet separately on a quarterly basis.

After an introduction by KYOVR Executive Director Beth Smith, Sandy Radford, co-chair of the SILC, and Lee Gordon chair of the SCVR, provided a brief overview of the two councils' membership, duties and responsibilities. The combined group spent the rest of the afternoon reviewing the preliminary results of KYOVR's comprehensive Needs Assessment and generating ideas for the agency's strategic plan.

Patricia Crawford, and independent Living Services consultant from Colorado, who attended the event as part of a training visit to Kentucky, told the group she was not aware of a similar event anywhere in the country. She was very impressed by the effort and called it a natural collaboration.

Save the Date

Upcoming Meetings

Statewide Council for Vocational Rehabilitation (SCVR)

Monday, December 12, 2011 - 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Marriott Griffin Gate Resort

1800 Newtown Pike

Lexington, KY 40511

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Wednesday, December 7, 2011 - 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Fairfield Inn and Suites

2100 Hackney Place

Lexington, KY 40511

Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC) Board of Directors

Thursday, December 15, 2011 - 9:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Charles McDowell Center

8412 Westport Road

Louisville, KY 40242

NEWS BITS

KATLC Third Most Active Alternative Financing Program in the Nation

The Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC) has been providing loans for the purchase of assistive technology since the summer of 2000.

From its inception, KATLC has always been one of the more active of the 33 alternative financing programs in the states and territories, but the last federal fiscal year of 2010 was particularly good one for the corporation. Last year, it made the third most loans in the country.

KATLC's 113 loans trailed only Pennsylvania (215 loans) and Utah (144). KATLC was also third in the number of applications processed (182) and fifth in the amount loaned (\$931,134). In the eleven years of operation, the corporation has now loaned over \$6.5 million through its lending partner, Fifth Third Bank of Kentucky.

Hearing aids account for about 60 percent of KATLC loans, with vehicles and vehicle modifications accounting for nearly 30 percent. The remaining 10 percent is made up of home modifications, computers, prosthetics, and vision aids. For more information about KATLC or to request an application, call 1-877-675-0195 or online at www.katlc.ky.gov.

OVR Reaches Positive Employment Outcomes Goal for FY 2011

With the end of the 2011 federal fiscal year ending on September 30, the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (KYOVR) surpassed its goal of positive employment outcomes.

We assisted 3,544 Kentuckians with significant disabilities in becoming competitively employed, surpassing the previous year's total by 49. Those 3,544 individuals averaged \$11.53 per hour in wages and worked an average of 32 hours per week. Way to go, staff and consumers of KYOVR!

The Bluegrass district (one of two KYOVR districts serving the Lexington area), was the district with the most employment outcomes, 331. The Fort Wright district in Northern Kentucky had the highest outcomes per vocational rehabilitation counselor with 31. Consumers in the Louisville district averaged \$16.95 per hour in wages and consumers in the Danville district averaged 37 hours per week.

In addition, OVR met all seven of the federal Standards & Indicators for FY 2011.

2011 Kentucky Rehabilitation Association Award Winners

- Charles McDowell Education and Advocacy Award – **Gerri Gordon Brown - CAP**
- Esther K. Taylor Award – **Joe Scott - OVR**
- Ben F. Coffman Award – **Amber Hagen - OVR**
- Gerald Williams Accessibility Award - **Kathy Regan—OVR**
- Janet Gold Job Placement Award – **Pat Butcher – OVR**
- Wendell Taylor Award – **Keith Banks - OVR**
- Outstanding Employer of Persons with Disabilities – **Best Buy Distribution Center**
- KRA Staff Award – **Cheryl Thompson - OVR**
- Personal Professional Achievement Award – **Veronica Dale - OVR**
- KARL Leadership Award – **Jim Wallace - OVR**
- Margaret T. Wilson Service Award – **Tracy Wheeldon - OVR**
- KRCEA Counselor of the Year – **Brenda Eadens - OFB**

Employee Spotlight Presents "The Exit Interview" (cont.)

"Peggy Justus"

I did enjoy that area since I had several visitors at my desk through out the day. Most of them "had been" or were just "waiting"!

7. What changes have you seen over the years?

It's amazing how technology has taken over the workplace. When I first began working, I only had a typewriter on my desk, "then came the computers!" From what I recall, that's what led Esther to retire as well as a few other co-workers. They all decided it was just too difficult to make such a big change with this "strange" instrument. We all had to learn the computer without specialized training. In the beginning, games were used on the computers to get us used to the feel of it. I must admit, that was loads of fun. The first computer program I can remember was the "Bull" system. I have no idea how that name came about. I'll never forget the first time I looked at a SSA TPQY. It looked Greek to me and honestly, it still looks the same! Everything had a code and it was like learning a foreign language.

8. What were your favorite and least favorite things about your job?

Actually, there is nothing I dislike about my job. I'm a person who functions better with challenges; being in the area of SSA definitely brings challenges at times. I always described my job as a "big wheel that just keeps turning". Also, I had much rather be

busy working than have nothing to do, and this position has always met that need. I guess learning another new computer program is not my most favorite thing to do, but I keep telling myself, "Surely, this was set up to make things function better!"

9. Anything you want to say about coworkers?

I think the OVR Agency has the best group of people anyone can find. Actually, I don't look at them as co-workers, but family. When you work together every single day, there is no way you can keep from taking them into your heart and life. I love every person I have worked with over the years. Sure, just like family, there are times of stress and frustration, but that's what makes us all so much closer. It's amazing to see how everyone pulls together when someone is suffering in any way. I've seen many co-workers pass on, and this is not easy to handle being so closely knit as a team. The time of joy has outweighed the times of sadness. New babies born, marriages, showers, parties, conferences and conventions; those have been some of our highlights.

10. Who was your mentor?

I've had many mentors over the years due to so many changes but I'll always remember Margaretta Thomas. She was the assistant who first trained me about SSA. When I think of someone as a fantastic example, I think of

people like Vicki Yeary, Linda Weber, Mindy Yates, Donna Osburn, Esther Taylor, Margaret Wilson, Janet Gold, Diane Hargrove, Jason Jones, Donna Howard with Federal SSA, and many more. So many have been an inspiration to me. My husband has definitely been an encouragement to me all through my working career. He always told me, "Work for 7.5hrs, do the best you can, and then leave it all at the office as you go out the door". That was some of the best advice I ever had. I should never forget how my dad taught me my organizational and working skills. He was a person of perfection and passed that on to me from childhood. I'm also greatly inspired when I see a consumer on the job. They know how to "keep on, keeping on", in spite of a disability.

11. Would you do anything different if given the opportunity?

I would never want anything different from what God has blessed me with over these many years. I don't think there is a greater, more fulfilling career than working for OVR.

12. Anything you would like to add?

I want to thank all of you for your love, encouragement, support, patience and time in order for me to have a most wonderful life and working career. Trust God, follow his leadership and He'll never fail you.

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(Jason Jones - Editor)