



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association

Spring/Summer 2014

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

Happy Summer to all of you! It sure has been wonderful to enjoy the beautiful weather this spring after the brutal winter that we experienced here in Pennsylvania. I do believe that when we survive challenging seasons like this winter, we appreciate the end of these seasons and the sense of hope that a season like spring brings so much more. And as summer arrives our minds turn to summer vacation and travel plans— often with friends or family. We are also no strangers to challenging times in our work— given the field that we have committed ourselves to! But it's always easier to get through challenging times when you have a sense of hope and fellow travelers on the journey. And that's what PRA can provide—a sense of hope **and** fellow travelers for your journey.

One way PRA provides this is through our annual Professional Development Institute. This year we held this event on April 3rd and our theme was "Employment: Pathway to Earning, Learning and Living." We had over 150 attendees and the evaluations confirmed that everyone really enjoyed the day— from learning to networking opportunities to poster sessions and raffles! The day started with a great morning session lead by Kathy West-Evans and Steve Surovic and included many terrific concurrent sessions and an update on NRA Legislative issues by our own Dr. Ralph Pacinelli and Trish Lapotsky. We also celebrated our award winners- which is my favorite part of the day— it is always amazing and inspiring to hear about the accomplishments of these fellow travelers! Please take time to read more about our award winners in this newsletter and about how you can nominate individuals for various awards for next year. Thank you to everyone involved in the planning process and to all participants who ultimately helped make the day a success! The 2015 PDI planning team is already starting to plan next year's event and we are always open to ideas and suggestions. Also, if you are interested in helping, please let us know.

Another way we provide hope and strength for the journey is through our Board. The PRA Board of Directors is an awesome group! We meet four times a year in person, but our committees are working via phone and email all year long. In addition to planning next year's PDI, we also are working actively to engage more employers in PRA, increase our young professional membership (which includes students) and review/revise our by-laws. That is just a sampling of our work – and it does not even touch upon a cornerstone of PRA/NRA, which is advocacy. We work hard to keep our membership up to date on all state and federal legislative activity that relates to the lives of individuals with disabilities. You are always welcome to attend our board meetings; the next one will be held September 12, 2014, in Camp Hill, PA. We will have 4 openings on the board with our fall election cycle— please consider running for the board. If you have an interest in learning more about the board or would like to run for the board, please contact me. I know everyone is busy, so if you would like to participate more in PRA, but cannot commit to a board position, we would still love to have your input! Call me at (717) 468-4862, or e-mail me at ssoderberg@yourgoodwill.org with your questions, ideas, thoughts or concerns.

Finally, I hope that you will consider attending NRA's Annual Training Conference to be held in Des Moines, Iowa from October 30th- November 1st, 2014.

Wherever this summer (and beyond) take you...Happy Travels!

Sincerely,

Susan Soderberg
PRA President

Visit us at: <http://parehab.org>

Check us out on Facebook, Twitter
and LinkedIn, too!

SAVE THE DATE!



2015 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

April 2, 2015

Location...

Central Pennsylvania College
College Hill & Valley Roads
Summerdale, PA 17093
<http://www.centralpenn.edu>

*If you'd like to volunteer to participate
on a great planning team for the 2015 PDI,
please contact Ashlee McKeon
amckeon@pitt.edu*

PRA Award Nominations Requested

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association (PRA) would like to encourage you to recognize an employee, boss, co-worker, organization or individual that you feel is doing an outstanding job in the field of rehabilitation. Please read over the PRA Award categories included in this letter. If you would like to submit a nomination, please complete the nomination form on page 6 and send it along with supporting documentation to:

Bonnie Bluett, PRA Awards Chairperson
49 Park Street
Seven Valleys, PA 17360

If you prefer to use the electronic version of the PRA Awards nomination form, please go to the PRA website at www.parehab.org and click on the Awards link. You may also email award nominations to: bonniebluett@yahoo.com. The deadline for our 2014 PRA Award nominations is November 1, 2014.

Please see the enclosed summaries of our award winners from 2013. It is inspiring to see the names of so many dedicated rehabilitation professionals and we encourage you to recognize some additional candidates! If you have any questions, please call Bonnie Bluett at 717-515-4995.

Thanks for your nominations and input,

Bonnie Bluett, PRA Awards Chairperson

2013 PRA AWARD RECIPIENTS

Charles L. Eby Counselor Award for Independence: Crystal Mangir

Crystal was nominated by her supervisor, Jill Rosenblum, from the Philadelphia District Office of OVR for her work and dedication in assisting customers with Traumatic Brain Injury in gaining independence. Crystal served as a counselor for over 34 years, primarily serving customers with TBI and physical disabilities. She also worked as a key partner with the Drucker Brain Injury Center and with Career Path at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP); helping both to increase their vocational services to their customers.

Charles L. Eby Counselor Award for Independence: Kelsi Phares

Kelsi has been a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Reading District Office of OVR since 2010. Kelsi was nominated by her supervisor, Yvelisse Gonzalez. During the past year, Kelsi has successfully placed 32 customers into competitive employment. Her supervisor reported that Kelsi continually looks for creative ways to serve her customers and "is a team player, an advocate for people with disabilities and proficient in ASL and Deaf culture."

2013 PRA AWARD RECIPIENTS (Continued)

Ralph N. Pacinelli Leadership Award: Dr. Lori Bruch

Dr. Lori Bruch was nominated for the Ralph N. Pacinelli Leadership Award by her colleague, Dr. Rebecca Spirito Dalgin. Dr. Bruch has over three decades of extraordinary leadership and service in the field of rehabilitation as a direct service provider, supervisor, administrator, educator, researcher and advocate. When OVR adopted higher educational standards for rehab counselors she worked with OVR administration to create and implement an offsite cohort program— eventually helping over 40 counselors to obtain their Master’s degrees. Rick Walters, District Administrator for the Allentown District Office described Dr. Bruch’s support of OVR by saying “ this commitment to the professional development of excellent public VR counselors is a shining example of a PRA member who has exercised extraordinary state leadership to rehab professionals in order to strengthen, broaden and hone their professional development.” In her current role as Associate Professor and Director of the Graduate Rehabilitation Counseling Program in the College of Professional Studies at the University of Scranton, Dr. Bruch is responsible for preparing qualified rehabilitation counselors needed to meet the critical shortage of these professionals across the United States.

2014 PRA STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

Undergraduate Award for Direct Service: Emma Fickel

Emma is majoring in Rehabilitative Sciences with a concentration in Developmental Disabilities and a minor in Psychology at Clarion State. Emma has a long history of volunteer activities with both children and adults with disabilities – last summer she even went to Costa Rica to volunteer with the Children’s Project, a group she works extensively with to help support those with Ataxia Telangiectasia. In addition to all this, Emma plays for the school’s basketball team and is only the 15th athlete in school history to score 1,000 points. Emma’s goal is to attend graduate school and earn a Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Graduate Award for Advocacy: Kelley McKee

Kelley is completing her Master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at The George Washington University and will graduate in August. In addition to her studies and a part time position with a community based rehab program, Kelley is active in her community around ADA accessibility issues, especially transportation for persons with disabilities . As a person with a disability, this mother of three children knows how difficult it can be to remain active in the community when facing transportation issues. She has advocated on a local and state level for accessible public transportation. Kelley also recently spoke to the Pennsylvania State Rehabilitation Council about the challenges of accessible transportation for individuals with disabilities who are trying to enter the job market.

Here's a description of all of our award categories

KENNETH W. HYLBERT AWARD

Presented to an individual PRA member for significant contributions in the professional preparation and up-grading of rehabilitation manpower.

PRA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD – (AFFIRMATIVE ACTION)

Presented to an individual or organization in recognition of achievements in advancing equal employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

CHARLES L. EBY AWARDS

- A. **Administration** – Established to honor an individual who has shown unusual initiative and creativity in the development and administration of a program of demonstrated value for persons with disabilities. Sustained PRA membership is a requirement.
- B. **Counseling** – To honor a counselor who shows a special approach to assist persons with severe disabilities to gain independence.
- C. **Counseling** – To honor a counselor who has demonstrated the ability to match potential with job performance and has a consistent record in placement of persons with disabilities.

PRA ORGANIZATION AWARD

Presented to an organization with an outstanding record of sustained service to individuals with disabilities. The organization may be one whose principal objectives are in the rehabilitation field, or one that regardless of its major objectives, has demonstrated effective concern for the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.

LLOYD O. GROVE MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

Presented to an individual who has demonstrated years of faithful service and leadership to the PRA through any segment or combination of segments of PRA activities. Emphasis is placed on both the length of service and the levels of service.

THE PRA PHILADELPHIA FOUNDERS AWARD

Presented to an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding community leadership role by supporting activities that have a far-reaching impact and that have made a contribution toward the rehabilitation of a considerable number of citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

CECELIA E. JACOBS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Presented to a distinguished PRA member with a disability who has demonstrated imagination, tenacity, resolution, and an indomitable spirit in working to overcome obstacles and has contributed to the goals established by PRA.

MARY E. SWITZER AWARD

Presented to a Pennsylvania woman who has distinguished herself in the field of rehabilitation, has made significant contributions to that field of endeavor, and who is an active member of PRA.

MARK M. WALTER HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Presented to an individual who has exercised notable leadership in removing either environmental or legal barriers thereby overcoming discrimination that prevents individuals with disabilities from living normal lives and/or who has contributed to the attainment of independence of people with disabilities by significantly supporting the growth of rehabilitation services throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

RALPH N. PACINELLI LEADERSHIP AWARD

Presented to a Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association member who has exercised extraordinary national and/or state leadership to rehabilitation professionals in order to strengthen, broaden, and hone their professional development. These enlightened characteristics should serve to substantially impact the public/private vocational rehabilitation program, assist PRA in achieving its mission, and make a positive contribution to the lives of individuals with disabilities.

PENNSYLVANIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION NOMINATION FORM

I. _____
(Name of Nominee)

(Street Address of Nominee)

(City) (State) (Zip Code) (Telephone Number) (Email)

II. The person/organization named above is being nominated for the _____ Award.

The nominee is () is not () a PRA member.

III. On a separate sheet, in narrative form, give professional background of nominee and state in detail why this individual or organization should receive the award. Your statement may be as long as you wish, but judging will rely more on content than length. Explanatory or corroboration statements from others may be added. Statements should be specific regarding nature, scope and importance of the contributions made by the nominee to the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities or their well being. All statements must be signed.

IV. _____
(Name of Nominator)

(Street Address of Nominator)

(City) (State) (Zip Code) (Telephone Number) (Email)

(Date Nomination Submitted)

Winners can be nominated for appropriate Mid-Atlantic or National Awards.

Award nominations should be submitted by: **NOVEMBER 1.**

To: **Bonnie Bluett, Chairperson**
PRA Awards
49 Park St.
Seven Valleys, PA 17360
717-515-4995
or you can email Bonnie at
bonniebluett@yahoo.com

Reauthorization. With more than 10 years to craft the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, which includes The Rehabilitation Act, on May 21, 2014, the House and Senate announced agreement on a bipartisan, bicameral bill which could reach the floor for a vote before the July 4 holiday recess. In earlier newsletters, we have explained actions taken separately in the House (HR 803) and the Senate (S 1356) toward writing a bill that will improve service delivery and concurrently be acceptable to all stakeholders including people with disabilities and their families. The compromise bill is titled, The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Key aspects of the reauthorization include strengthening the connection between adult education, post-secondary education and workforce, and setting high expectations for individuals with disabilities with respect to employment.

Notably, the new bill retains the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in the U.S. Department of Education and holds fast on the appointment level of the Commissioner. Much to the displeasure of rehabilitation professionals, it dilutes the personnel qualifications of the vocational rehabilitation counselor by making changes in current law provisions on the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). The bill moves the Independent Living authorities to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). It also moves the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to DHHS. Other changes focus on target populations, accountability measures and data collection requirements and are worthy of further study and understanding.

ROI Study of VR Proposed. The U.S. Department of Education is seeking comments (by June 23) on a proposal to study ways to improve state vocational rehabilitation services. The project will focus on developing a standard method for evaluating return on investment (ROI) and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services. It is expected that NIDRR will take a lead role in this planned investigation. Historically, a longitudinal study of VR was carried out over a five year period almost 15 years ago. ROI studies must be conducted with great care because they can have a negative impact on the provision of services to significantly disabled populations, the individuals who need VR services the most.

PRA Legislative Mantra. Never forget that informed, targeted and timely advocacy is imperative to maintain the integrity of the Public VR program. If we don't do it, who will?

Pennsylvania Rehab. Association
1150 Goodwill Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17101

www.nationalrehab.org/pennsylvania

PRA Newsletter Disclaimer

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities, publishes the newsletter as a free membership service. Through the newsletter, PRA makes reasonable effort to provide quality information to its readers, but does not assume legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the material disclosed. The information is provided “as is” and not intended as legal or professional advice. Therefore, the original source or a competent professional should be consulted regarding specific circumstances. Unless otherwise noted, the expressed views and opinions of the writers do not necessarily represent those of PRA and reference to a product or service does not necessarily imply endorsement by PRA. You may visit our website at <http://www.nationalrehab.org/pennsylvania>



Upon request, this newsletter is available in alternate format.

CONTACT -
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ssoderberg@yourgoodwill.org