

October 2008

Volume 1, Issue 3



# The Rehab Council Connection



## Our Volunteer Members

**Jeffry Abe-Gunter**  
Spokane

**Joanne Butts**  
Orting

**Sandra Carr**  
Spokane

**Sharey Cleveland**  
Nespeelem

**Lou Colwell**  
Seattle

**Kimmer Gordon**  
Blaine

**John Harrison**  
Olympia

**Rudy Hernandez**  
Burien

**Jerry Johnsen**  
Seattle

**Jim Larson**  
Olympia

**Carol Maher**  
Olympia

**Martin McCallum**  
Olympia

**William Murray**  
Wenatchee

**R.L. Roberts**  
Spokane

**Lynnae Rutledge**  
Olympia  
ex-officio

**Kris Tefft**  
Olympia



*A Quarterly e-Newsletter*

## WSRC and DVR Establish Joint Committee on Transition

Members of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council are invested in the success of young people with disabilities. That is why we care about how DVR serves those making the move from high school to the world of work. Since 2005 we have been particularly interested in giving constructive input to influence DVR's delivery of services to transition students. At the July meeting we

considered the perspectives of expert panelists. At the October Council meeting we debated a slate of proposed Executive Committee recommendations, which were not adopted by the full Council.

Together with DVR, our members established a committee on transition. The committee will be co-chaired by WSRC member Joanne Butts, and DVR's Kelly Boston. The objective is to recommend guiding principles to support effective participation by DVR in transition planning. The committee will include parents, council members, DVR administration, and those working in the field.

## The Budget Climate Worsens

The economy is on the minds of many. Recent reporting on the national economy indicates that consumer confidence is at a 28-year low. Consumer spending has taken the sharpest decline since World War II. Congress has taken historic action to address the negative impact of the subprime lending debacle and the credit crunch.

Projections of the state budget deficit are sizable and fluctuating. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the tax receipts of

Washington State have dropped an inflation-adjusted 11.9%, the most on any state.

Reduced tax receipts require budget cuts across state government. Like all divisions of state government, DVR will be scaling back its budget in the current state fiscal year. DVR will also participate in planning for further cuts should they be needed.

At this point, DVR does not anticipate staff cuts. The hiring freeze remains, however, and DVR has successfully received case-by-case exceptions to policy.

### SAVE THE DATE

*Customer Forum*

**Thursday  
January 15, 2009**

**5:30-7:30 pm**

**Olympia**

For more information  
contact JoAnne Lang  
at:

[langjk@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:langjk@dshs.wa.gov)

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The volunteer members and paid staff of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council are pictured above. The photograph was taken by Jerry Johnsen in October when we met in Sea-Tac.

## Do You Want to Serve? Join the WSRC in 2009!

Everything the Washington State Rehabilitation Council achieves depends on our Council members and their commitment to service. In 2008 our volunteer members collectively served 1,250 hours, or nearly two work weeks each. According to John Harrison, who is completing his second term of service, WSRC membership is rewarding. "I've learned a lot, made lasting friendships, and helped DVR improve service and communication with its customers," he said.

In September of 2009, the terms of nine of our current members will end. Although some may be eligible to apply for reappointment, we are currently recruiting new members.

WSRC members are selected and appointed by the Governor to serve 3-year-terms. Members attend four, two-day meetings

each year. Meetings are held in different communities each quarter. Members also serve on two council committees and participate in conference calls and e-mail exchanges between meetings.

We are seeking three current or former customers of DVR, a representative of Community Rehabilitation Programs and one representative of Business and Industry. We welcome and support the leadership of people with disabilities and happily provide reasonable accommodation upon request.

The WSRC is looking for candidates who are curious about how service systems work and how to make them work better, who ask questions, and who are willing to consider varying points of view before drawing conclusions. We are also striving for geographic, political, and ethnic or cultural diversity among our membership. For more information, contact Joelle Brouner at: [brounjm@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:brounjm@dshs.wa.gov).



### Highlights of October Meeting

- \* Welcoming Sharey Cleveland, our newest member.
- \* Discovering the potential of Wellness Recovery Action Planning in the VR process for customers with psychiatric disabilities.
- \* Advancing our work to improve services for youth in transition by establishing a joint committee with DVR.
- \* Starting a dialogue about customer wages at closure.

## Customers Share Thoughts, Seek Information

The WSRC sponsored a well-attended customer forum, held in Sea-Tac on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Fifteen customers with open cases in King County spoke during the forum. Some shared frustration; others highlighted successes or shared observations based on their personal experiences navigating the Vocational Rehabilitation process.

The role of Council members during the forum was to listen

for information illuminating trends or bottlenecks in the service system.

More than any forum we hosted in 2008, the experience of the customers in King County highlighted the realities of poverty and the consequences of unemployment for those living in a county with a high cost of living.

We noted frustration about waiting -- not waiting for services as much as waiting for information,

return phone calls, and for the VR process itself. There seemed to be some confusion about the steps within the VR process.

In addition to sharing their thoughts, customers benefitted from the follow-up of representatives of the Client Assistance Program, DVR field staff and administration who were available to assist in the resolution of individual case concerns.

Our members appreciate all customers and DVR staff who joined us.

## The WSRC

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

[www.wastrehabcouncil.org](http://www.wastrehabcouncil.org)

## Bidding Farewell to Kimmer Gordon

Since August 2007, members of the WSRC have enjoyed getting to know and work with Kimmer Gordon. His interest in transition services and in self-employment, motivated Kimmer to serve on the Council.



*Kimmer Gordon of Blaine represented customers for the WSRC*

We learned this month that Kimmer secured a position he is enjoying with Enterprise Rent-a-Car in Bellingham. The news was bittersweet. We know that Enterprise will be as lucky as we have been to have Kimmer on their team. Unfortunately, his work schedule conflicts with his ability to participate in

council activities. We will miss Kimmer, his friendliness, and his extensive knowledge of the blues and sports. We all wish Kimmer continued success.

## Help the WSRC Spread the Word

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, contact Joelle Brouner at [brounjm@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:brounjm@dshs.wa.gov), or call (360) 725-3690

## The WSRC 2008 Annual Report Coming to you on CD!

We are saving 2.05% of our annual budget and countless trees by distributing our 2008 annual report on CD rather than paper. Printed reports and reports in alternative formats will be happily provided upon request by calling 1-866-252-2939 or e-mailing JoAnne Lang at [langjk@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:langjk@dshs.wa.gov)



## CORRECTION

There was an error in Volume 1 Issue 2, distributed in August 2008. Within the article entitled "The Client Assistance Program a Valuable Resource in the VR Process" the number of inquiries made to CAP in 2007 was incorrectly cited as 200. The correct number of inquiries was 2000. We regret the inaccuracy.

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FROM CYBERSPACE