

# Annual Report 2006

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West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services



**Rehabilitation is Working!**

## Mission and History

The mission of the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is to enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently.

DRS has successfully fulfilled this mission for more than 80 years. During this time, DRS has assisted thousands of West Virginians with disabilities prepare for, get, keep, or advance in jobs in the competitive labor market.

The state-federal vocational rehabilitation program began in 1920 with passage of the Smith-Fess Act by the United States Congress. The Act offered vocational rehabilitation services to industrially injured workers and other people with disabilities.

Members of the state legislature established the West Virginia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on April 14, 1921, as part of the Department of Education. In 1987, the organization was renamed the Division of Rehabilitation Services to reflect the wide range of services DRS provides. State legislation transferred DRS to the Department of Education and the Arts in 1994.

Today DRS' primary focus is to provide vocational rehabilitation services designed to assist people with disabilities obtain employment. Through development of an individualized, plan for employment, DRS services are tailored to meet the specific needs of each client.

In Fiscal Year 2006, 2,318 individuals with disabilities received vocational rehabilitation services that enabled them to become competitively employed. More than 94% of these rehabilitants were people with severe disabilities. After receiving vocational rehabilitation services, those individuals increased their average annual earnings by some 347%.

Since 1921, DRS has implemented numerous program innovations and advances. With help from its many workforce development partners, DRS today delivers the most comprehensive vocational rehabilitation programming available in West Virginia.

This annual report summarizes DRS activities and accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2006.



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## Kay Goodwin, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Education and the Arts

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay Goodwin".

Everyone should know about Make a Difference Day, a national day specially dedicated to helping others. West Virginians have an agency in our state government that is making a difference every day.

Our West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) operates the comprehensive state and federal vocational rehabilitation program in the Mountain State. The agency and its team of dedicated rehabilitation counselors work with people with disabilities to help them become productive, tax-paying members of our communities. Working together, they are developing individualized employment plans that lead to jobs that DRS clients find challenging and fulfilling.

This annual report provides a snapshot of the agency's extensive involvement with clients, employers, and many other organizations. I invite you to review the data of Fiscal Year 2006. I believe you will be encouraged to see many positive signs, such as the 347 percent increase in the average earnings of DRS clients who met their vocational goals and secured employment.

I am very proud of the commitment of DRS Acting Director Deborah Lovely and her staff. I commend them for making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and ensuring their brighter economic future.



## Deborah Lovely, Acting Director, Division of Rehabilitation Services

True success is accomplished when organizations have caring staff members who strongly believe in their mission. That's the case at DRS, where helping people with disabilities work and live independently is our passion.

We are firm believers in what we do because we can see that rehabilitation is working in West Virginia. In Fiscal Year 2006, the agency assisted 2,351 individuals in achieving successful employment outcomes.

While it is encouraging to see those numbers, it's the joy on the faces of the clients we work with that really shows us how we are doing. Each October a celebration at DRS reminds us of the difference that finding meaningful careers makes in the lives of people. At the 2006 Rehabilitant of the Year Ceremony, we honored seven outstanding individuals with disabilities from across the state who demonstrated courage and determination in reaching their vocational goals.

The agency is not only getting high marks from the clients we serve, but also from our peers. Our federal oversight agency, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, consistently finds that DRS meets or exceeds all evaluation standards and performance indicators.

Whatever measuring stick is used, we pledge to continue to work hard and seek the best opportunities for people with disabilities.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah Lovely".

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006**

Number of individuals rehabilitated (with an employment outcome).....	2,351
Number (98.6%) of vocationally rehabilitated individuals placed in competitive employment .....	2,318
Number of individuals with significant disabilities served .....	12,799
Total number of clients served .....	13,182



**TOTAL ANNUAL EARNINGS OF THOSE RECEIVING VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006**

At referral .....	\$9,665,812
After rehabilitation .....	\$43,223,908
Percentage increase in annual earnings due to rehabilitation .....	347%



**\$9,665,812**



**\$43,223,908**

## Rehabilitant of the Year

Qualified people with disabilities who have marketable skills make excellent employees, and employers often find them to be invaluable resources. Each year DRS selects one rehabilitant from each district whose vocational rehabilitation experience and subsequent competitive employment exemplifies our mission. Following is a brief overview of the State Rehabilitant of the Year for 2006. Stories of district rehabilitants start on page 12.

### Jerdiah Owen • State Rehabilitant of the Year

Jerdiah Owen doesn't spare any words about his past. He faces it head-on, just as he did in federal prison when he began his amazing transformation.

"I was the worst of the worst drug addicts and drug dealers you could imagine," he said. "I wasn't a good person. I was a terrible person. I did a lot of drugs, and I didn't care about anybody. I didn't care about myself."

The Jerdiah of today is nothing like the old version. The 27-year-old Dunbar resident is a hardworking person who treats others with respect. He has a job as a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning technician with Bob Kat Heating and Cooling in Winfield. He has a fiancée, is a new father, and hopes to start his own business.

For his remarkable turnaround – a personal battle that involved overcoming a two-year prison sentence, post-traumatic stress disorder, drug addiction, and a learning disability – Jerdiah was named state Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). He also was named Beckley District Rehabilitant of the Year.



The honors pay tribute to a man who began life the hard way in his hometown of Hinton. Addicted to drugs at age 10, he was being treated for depression and substance abuse by age 13, and dropped out of high school in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. He saw his father sentenced to 31 years in prison. Jerdiah ended up there at age 23 when dealing marijuana caught up with him in 2001.

Jerdiah spent a year at a county jail and two years at a federal prison in Lexington, Kentucky. While in prison, Jerdiah went cold turkey to break his addiction to pain killers and barbiturates. He learned to read and write and obtained his General Equivalency Diploma. Most importantly, he decided to change his lifestyle and find a respectable job.

When he was released from prison, Jerdiah applied for services at DRS. He blossomed at the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center and completed training in heating and air conditioning at Ben Franklin Career Center in Dunbar. An internship led to the job at Bob Kat Heating and Cooling.

Sally Garten, his rehabilitation counselor, describes Jerdiah as an honest, trustworthy person who changed every aspect of his life to ensure a better future. "He's probably the most motivated individual I've ever met," said Garten, who works out of the DRS Princeton office. "He was an inspiration to me as a counselor."

Today Jerdiah credits DRS and the Rehabilitation Center for turning his life around. He hopes others learn from his hard lessons. "You can feel good about yourself without drugs or alcohol," he said. "There is light at the end of the tunnel. There is a way to do it."

## Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Section provides support functions to the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Included among its programs are Fiscal Services, Information Technology, Human Resources, Program Evaluation, and State and Federal Relations.

## Rehabilitation Programs and Field Services

One-to-one effective personal service is what people with disabilities receive from the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). With 29 office locations across the state, DRS has specially trained rehabilitation counselors who meet with clients to evaluate their skills and interests.

Together they develop a comprehensive, individualized plan for employment that includes the specific services needed to prepare each person to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century labor market. A long list of diverse client placements shows the great success DRS has achieved by using this intensive team approach.

Clients and counselors jointly determine the variety of services needed to meet individual vocational goals. These services may include individualized assessment, counseling, vocational guidance, vocational and technical training, vocational and technical education, rehabilitation therapy, assistive technology, environmental modification, and job placement.

Programs managed under this section include services to people with blindness or deafness, WorkForce West Virginia Career Centers, Ticket to Work, educational programs, policy, Social Security, community rehabilitation, and Randolph-Sheppard programs.



## College Education Services

A college education provides increased opportunities for success and independent living. DRS counselors are assigned liaison responsibilities with public and private colleges and universities throughout West Virginia. In Fiscal Year 2006, DRS spent more than \$4.1 million in tuition and other college expenses, helping 2,435 students get the education they needed.

## Transition Program

DRS counselors can usually begin working with students with disabilities in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to help them prepare for future employment. Cooperative agreements between the agency, all 55 county school systems, the state Board of Education, and the Schools for the Deaf and the Blind enabled 5,617 students ages 16-21 with disabilities to receive services during Fiscal Year 2006. This was 43 percent of the total number of individuals served by DRS. Of those students, 4,324 were referred directly from the schools to DRS for services. This high number of direct referrals can be attributed to DRS' commitment to serving members of the transition population.

DRS continued to emphasize support services for school students by steadily increasing its financial and human resource commitment during the year. Throughout West Virginia, 63 rehabilitation counselors are assigned to work with public and private schools, 30 of whom serve local education agencies full time. These counselors assisted 1,139 students with disabilities in developing individualized plans for employment. Successful transition from high school into appropriate vocational training, post-secondary education, or employment is the goal of this program. Comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services and careful planning that involved students, their families, and school personnel resulted in the rehabilitation and subsequent employment of 973 clients through this program. This is 41 percent of our total number of rehabilitation closures during Fiscal Year 2006.

## Hearing Services

Rehabilitation counselors for the hard of hearing, deaf, and deafblind served 1,457 clients. Of the 2,351 clients the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) rehabilitated in Fiscal Year 2006, 235 were severely hard of hearing, deaf, or deafblind.

Cooperative activities and services with the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the West Virginia Department of Education have resulted in a continuation of various initiatives, ranging from a statewide affiliation with a national interpreter certification process to operation of a system to loan assistive equipment.

With support from the state Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the DRS library maintains a large collection of reference materials about deafness and deafblindness that can be accessed statewide through the West Virginia Library Commission's inter-library loan program.

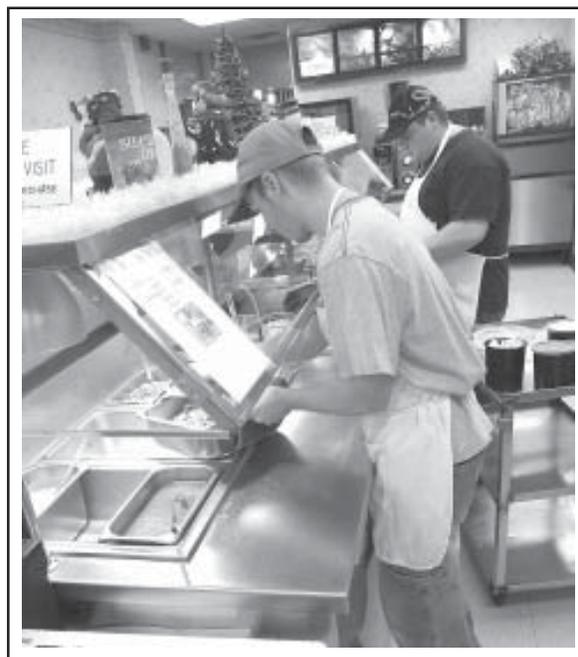


## Vision Services

Seven counselors located in district offices statewide are specially trained to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of people who are blind or visually impaired. In Fiscal Year 2006, 357 clients received such services from the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Fifty-seven of these clients entered or retained employment after completing their vocational rehabilitation programs.

## Self-Employment Services

New opportunities are available for people with disabilities to start small businesses due to advancements in computers and other electronic devices. A client must develop and receive approval of his or her business plan to receive self-employment assistance from the Division of Rehabilitation Services.



## Partnership with WorkForce West Virginia

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) continues to expand its cooperative services in workforce development through actively partnering in WorkForce West Virginia. DRS is one of eight state agencies participating in the Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) of WorkForce West Virginia. The ICT tries to identify ways to more effectively serve citizens seeking employment and employers who need trained, qualified workers. DRS involvement ensures that people with disabilities are given consideration for available jobs.

During Fiscal Year 2006, ICT teams developed a manual or model for business services teams so that all seven workforce regions can better serve employers by coordinating visits and sharing resources. All DRS employment specialists are members of those teams, and they offer their unique abilities and expertise in helping individuals with disabilities to become employed and self-sufficient.

DRS staff members are learning about the management information system used by WorkForce West Virginia and how shared data can assist both parties. Several projects share data that can benefit people served through DRS and the workforce system. This cooperation helps meet goals and facilitates federal and state WorkForce performance reporting.

In terms of staffing, shared costs, and infrastructure support, approximately 10 percent of the funds devoted to DRS client services are used in cooperation with the workforce system. DRS also is an active partner in planning the annual state WorkForce Conference attended by more than 400 workforce professionals.

DRS continues to actively assist WorkForce West Virginia in honoring the commitment of seamless access and inclusion for employment services for all citizens.

## Rehabilitation Technology

The Rehabilitation Technology Section provides services to increase the accessibility of client workplaces and homes statewide. During Fiscal Year 2006, the section provided 775 services to 392 people, including 231 assistive technology services, 393 driver education services, 102 rehabilitation engineering services, and 49 environmental modifications services.

### West Virginia Rehabilitation Center

The Division of Rehabilitation Services operates the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center (WVRC), one of only nine publicly operated rehabilitation facilities in the United States. WVRC provides an array of specialized services to prepare people with disabilities for employment. It is a founding member of the National Consortium of State Operated Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centers.

In Fiscal Year 2006, WVRC provided a total of 1,691 services to DRS clients, 474 to non-DRS clients, and recorded a total of 828 admissions. Of these, 508 were DRS clients and 320 were non-DRS.



### West Virginia Career and Technical Institute

The West Virginia Career and Technical Institute (WVCTI) offers four vocational training programs that are fully accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. They are: Business Education, Food Service, Nursing Assistant, and Hotel/Motel Janitorial.

Also available is a developmental education program that provides services students need to meet basic academic requirements of specific training areas. Students may receive instruction in and complete studies for a General Equivalency Diploma.

WVCTI, which is an element of the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center, graduated 36 students in December 2005 and 32 students in June 2006.

#### **Community Cooperative Program**

The Community Cooperative Program allows individuals to receive training locally while residing at WVRC. Students have received training at Ben Franklin Career Center, Putnam Career and Technical Center, Carver Career Center, Garnet Career Center, National Institute of Technology, PIE Career Services Driver Training, and the Charleston School of Beauty Culture.

#### **Cooperative Educational Agreements**

WVRC also maintains articulation agreements with West Virginia State Community and Technical College, West Virginia Northern Community College, and Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College that allow WVCTI graduates to continue their studies at these facilities. Students also may apply academic credits earned at WVCTI toward an associate's degree or certificate programs at these schools.

By arrangement with Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, WVRC provides facility space for the college's Associate of Applied Science Degree in nursing.

## Vocational Evaluations

Determining the work skills and interests of each client is an important first step in the rehabilitation process. The Vocational Evaluation Program helps clients gain insight to their potential and to choosing an appropriate career. The comprehensive evaluation process includes a variety of tests that assess clients' current work skills, career aptitudes and interests, physical abilities, and work behaviors. Clients who receive these evaluations walk away with a clearer picture of their vocational goals and how to achieve them.



## Disability Determination Services

Under contract with the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Disability Determination Services (DDS) adjudicates Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability applications filed by West Virginians.

While meeting quality standards during Fiscal Year 2006, DDS processed 44,277 claims, exceeding all clearance targets established by SSA. DDS surpassed a critical SSA goal, closing the fiscal year with only 5,124 initial claims pending. This was 710 claims below SSA's target of 5,834 and represented a reduction of 2,354 claims from the high of 7,478 pending on December 9, 2005.

DDS successfully completed conversion to eDIB, the electronic disability process, and after assessment and validation was certified by the SSA Commissioner to adjudicate disability claims in a fully electronic environment June 9, 2006. This conversion, which fundamentally changes DDS work processes, provides the foundation to further improve service and productivity as SSA's Disability Service Improvement (DSI) process is implemented in the future.

In December 2005, approximately 151,000 West Virginians received SSDI and/or SSI disability/blind benefits. Of these, approximately 131,000 were adults aged 18 to 64; 8,500 were disabled children under age 18; and 11,500 were adults age 65 or older. These West Virginians with disabilities receive an estimated \$1.4 billion per year in disability payments. In addition to cash payments, individuals eligible for SSI disability receive Medicaid, and those eligible for Social Security disability payments for 24 consecutive months receive Medicare. These payments and medical insurance significantly affect the state's economy and the quality of life for recipients.

## Statewide Independent Living Council

In partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), the Statewide Independent Living Council is responsible for jointly planning and submitting a state plan for independent living every three years. The council works for people with disabilities through legislative monitoring and advocacy, training, and technical assistance to local centers for independent living. DRS contracts with the council to administer the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Program, which subsidizes paid assistants to help citizens with various disabilities to live independently.

Through the Disability Caucus, the council also is a resource for developing leadership, grassroots advocacy among people with disabilities, and appropriate public policy affecting people with disabilities. The council's mission is to ensure that people with disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the fulfillment of their independent living goals. The governor of West Virginia appoints council members in accordance with provisions of the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998.



## State Rehabilitation Council

The West Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) advises the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) regarding its goals, priorities, programs, and services. Additionally, it contributes toward the development of the DRS State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment. The SRC is responsible for reviewing and analyzing the effectiveness and consumer satisfaction with the rehabilitation services provided by DRS.

The 26-member council is appointed by the governor of West Virginia according to the provisions of the federal Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, which are dedicated to helping ensure people with disabilities identify and achieve their rehabilitation goals.



## West Virginia Rehabilitation Center Foundation, Inc.

A nonprofit charitable organization, the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center (WVRC) Foundation, Inc., was chartered in 1960. Through its fund-raising efforts, the foundation has provided private funds to sponsor various projects designed to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities who receive WVRC services.

During Fiscal Year 2006, the foundation awarded \$7,538 to the WVRC Student Advisory Committee. These funds enabled students to attend and participate in such activities as the Character Development Program, adaptive ski program at Silver Creek, NASCAR races, Kentucky Horse Park, Pittsburgh Penguins hockey games, performance of "The Nutcracker" by the West Virginia Symphony and Charleston Ballet, Festival of Lights at Chief Logan State Park, a ski trip to Winterplace Ski Resort, and basketball and football games at both Marshall and West Virginia universities.



## Rehabilitation Services Administration Evaluation Standards and Performance Indicators

Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 requires the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to establish various evaluation standards and performance indicators that the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is expected to meet.

There are currently seven such standards. Fiscal Year 2006 data indicates that DRS exceeded all federal requirements. DRS improved over its own Fiscal Year 2005 performance levels in four standards. One standard remained the same, and the standard that was lower still exceeded federal requirements. The ratio of minority services to non-minority services also improved from Fiscal Year 2005.

Individual indicators assess the number of rehabilitants, percentage of rehabilitants earning at least minimum wage, average hourly earnings, percentage of rehabilitants with significant disabilities, and service rate for people of minority backgrounds. Poor performance could result in loss or reduction of federal funding.

For taxpayers and rehabilitation clients alike, the standards and indicators assure a quality outcome for the twin goals of vocational rehabilitation and competitive job placement.

## Jon Montgomery • Huntington District Rehabilitant of the Year

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Feeding 650 inmates three square meals a day and keeping them happy are not easy tasks.

Challenges are nothing new for Jon Montgomery, the assistant food service director at Huttonsville Correctional Center. Four years ago, he was crossing Fifth Avenue in Huntington after classes at Marshall University. A speeding car struck Jon's 6-foot-3, 200-pound body, and he was tossed into the air. Jon was left with a painstaking recovery from a fractured skull, a traumatic brain injury, broken vertebrae in his neck, and a broken leg.

Jon's positive attitude and amazing comeback have earned him recognition as the Huntington District Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

The determined way the 25-year-old approached his recovery impressed his DRS rehabilitation counselor, Teresa Haer, the branch office manager at Marshall. "He had a goal in mind, worked toward it, and didn't let anything get in his way," she said.

After the accident, Jon was transferred from Cabell Huntington Hospital to the agency's West Virginia Rehabilitation Center in Institute, where he received extensive physical, occupational and speech therapy, and cognitive training. DRS helped Jon get back into school, and in 2005 he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration.

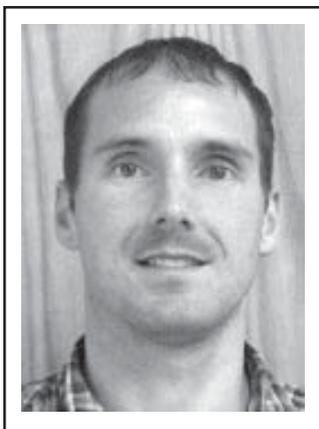
With some interviewing tips and career guidance, Jon soon landed the job with Aramark, the food service provider at the medium-security prison.

Jon appreciates DRS. "I just want them to know not only do I appreciate what they gave to me, I recognize they helped me get through this," he said.



## Matthew Sponaugle • Lewisburg District Rehabilitant of the Year

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Matthew Sponaugle is the guy who gets the job done.

That fact comes in loud and clear when you talk to his boss at Valley Health Care in Mill Creek. Chief Executive Officer Mike Hinchman describes him as a self-directed employee with good thinking and technology skills.

The persistence Matthew displays as manager of the health care clinic's information systems is the kind of determination he has shown since being paralyzed in a skiing accident at Canaan Valley. His efforts to earn his degree at West Virginia Wesleyan College and find a job have won him honors as the Lewisburg Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

John Shipman, Matthew's rehabilitation counselor at DRS, said he deserved the award. "What I first noticed about Matthew is he looks you right in the eye," Shipman said. "You feel like you can count on what he's talking about."

The 25-year-old Elkins resident was just 13 when he injured his spinal cord. DRS helped make his home accessible for his manual wheelchair. The agency offered a driver's evaluation and vehicle modifications, counseling and guidance, and job search assistance as he progressed through school to the world of work.

Matthew graduated from Wesleyan in May 2004 with a bachelor's degree in computer information science. He was hired in August 2005 at Valley Health Care.

Matthew said DRS was a great resource. "After my accident, it was a whole new world," he said. "We knew we could go somewhere to get information."

## Larry McDonnell • Charleston District Rehabilitant of the Year



Larry McDonnell is a college graduate, county government worker, Web-page and graphic designer, amateur photographer, and a brown belt in karate.

He's also 3 feet tall. "I never really see it as a challenge," the 24-year-old Pinch resident said. "I always see things in life as an adventure. If I see something I want, I don't let anything get in my way."

This determined spirit earned Larry recognition as the Charleston District Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

Larry has overcome obstacles in buildings and transportation to obtain an associate degree in information technology at West Virginia State Community and Technical College and land a job as planning clerk at the Kanawha County Planning and Development Office.

Marcia VanHook, his rehabilitation counselor at DRS, said Larry's most impressive characteristics are his "unwillingness to see himself as a person with a disability and

his perception that he is just another guy trying to live his life."

Larry's disability is diastrophic dwarfism, and he has endured multiple orthopedic surgeries for a condition that affects his size and mobility.

DRS did a driver's evaluation, gave guidance about careers, and provided funding for public transportation and his education at West Virginia State. The agency evaluated Larry to help find a way for him to get around campus, since he cannot walk long distances. He chose a motorized scooter, rather than a wheelchair, to attend classes.

As for his success, Larry credits DRS. "Rehabilitation Services gave me support. If I needed anything, it was always there," he said.



## Robin Falor • Clarksburg District Rehabilitant of the Year

When she was 6 years old, Robin Falor was paralyzed in a motor vehicle accident. The disability qualified her for financial assistance that would have covered her basic needs for life.

The 43-year-old Monongalia County resident was not satisfied as she grew up, however, with just receiving a federal government check. "I was awarded that, and I could have kept that, but what I wanted was to make a difference and have a career," Robin said.

Driven "to be more," Robin is making a difference in people's lives as a clinical therapist at Chestnut Ridge Hospital, a psychiatric facility in Morgantown.

Robin's efforts to pursue her dreams have won her honors as the Clarksburg District Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

Fred Brooks, her rehabilitation counselor at DRS, describes Robin as a very determined person. "She's not one to allow things to stand in her way," Brooks said.

After she moved here from Pennsylvania, Robin approached DRS and the agency provided financial assistance for books, supplies, and transportation so she could finish schooling. She demonstrated outstanding academic performance at West Virginia University and completed her master's degree in counseling in May 2005. In August 2005, Robin was hired at Chestnut Ridge.

Robin said Brooks and DRS were a great help. "The financial part of going to school is so overwhelming. Knowing you can get financial support and having a counselor who always has your back is very important," she said.



## Ronna Bennett • Martinsburg District Rehabilitant of the Year

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Residents at Pendleton Nursing Home in Franklin are not numbers to Ronna Bennett; they are a living library. "I love the residents and listening to their stories," she said.

By the way residents, nurses, and staff members react to Ronna, you can tell they are glad the 42-year-old registered nurse is there. She takes pride in her work and enjoys caring for people. Most importantly, she's there because she wants to be. She raised six children and overcame a learning disability to obtain her nursing degree. Her efforts won her honors as the Martinsburg District Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

Ronna was enrolled at Eastern Community and Technical College in Moorefield for a video distance learning program offered through Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College.

Ronna has attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and was referred to DRS in 2004 because she was having problems reading, spelling, and focusing on coursework. DRS did some evaluations, and Ronna soon had books on tape to improve her learning. Financial backing from the agency helped her complete college training in May 2005, and she was hired at Pendleton.

Mike Reel, her rehabilitation counselor at DRS, said Ronna put forth a tremendous effort and is well-suited for her job. "She's got a really helping, caring personality," he said.

Ronna is grateful to DRS and is proud of her accomplishments. "I may not have been the top of my class, but I still did it," she said. "I'm here helping people."



## Travis Altmeyer • Wheeling District Rehabilitant of the Year

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If there were a contest for most popular employee at Good Shepherd Nursing Home, Travis Altmeyer would be in the running.

You can see it in the positive way residents at the Wheeling facility interact with the 29-year-old nursing assistant and in the praise he receives from coworkers.

Travis learned patience from personal experience. He suffered a traumatic brain injury in 2002 during an all-terrain vehicle accident near his home in Moundsville. The determination he displayed in his recovery and finding a new career earned him recognition as the Wheeling District Rehabilitant of the Year for the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

Following the accident and emerging from a coma, Travis had to learn once again how to walk and talk. "I can't believe how far I've come," he said.

Travis' positive attitude has impressed Linda Stullenbarger, his rehabilitation counselor. "Travis has a constancy of purpose that's outstanding," she said. "He has such perseverance and a desire to achieve."

Travis came to DRS in 2003 when effects from his accident prevented him from returning to his job in construction. The agency did assessments to determine his abilities, and he was placed in a housekeeping job at Good Shepherd. With the help of a job coach, Travis mopped patients' rooms and gathered laundry. He was promoted to nursing assistant and now works directly with patients.

Travis says DRS played a key role in his recovery. "Rehabilitation Services did help me get my life back together," he said.

## Employer describes DRS clients as ‘very dependable employees’

Most businesses today can't find enough skilled and dependable workers, even in a rural place where jobs are scarce.

Aegis Communications, an international customer relations company that manages money transfers for Western Union out of its Elkins, W.Va., office, has found a source for such employees – the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). Over the last few years, DRS clients have become vital to the success of Aegis' Elkins operation.

“DRS clients are very dependable employees,” Aegis Center Director Angela Scott said. “They do not let their disability hinder their performance. They have a very good work ethic and are very happy for a company to give them the opportunity to prove they can be very productive, well-respected employees.”

Aegis, which currently employs five DRS clients, recently received an award from the WorkForce West Virginia Career Center in Elkins for hiring people with disabilities. One-Stop centers help citizens with training, job search, and other employment needs.

Elkins Branch Office Manager B. J. Manning said Aegis is a good partner with DRS, setting a good example for other employers in the area. “They were hiring people who were in wheelchairs, which got my attention,” Manning said. “As long as somebody could do the job, they didn't really care if they're in a wheelchair. They'd hire them and put them to work, and they didn't expect any governmental support to do it.”

Aegis is willing to give people a chance, Manning said. The company hired one client with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. He had trouble spelling, but Aegis trainers found a way to work around the problem. “He's done very well. They said he just needs to ask people to spell, if the names or where they live are difficult,” Manning said. “He can punch it in on the keyboard. The bottom line is getting the job done, not the form.”

“I was impressed that Aegis was willing to not only hire individuals with employment-related impairments but also would refer their employees who have acquired impairments. They are interested in protecting their assets rather than discharging their employees who are struggling with impairments that interfere with their work. I thought that was really extraordinary.”

DRS provided support to Aegis through the agency's Assistive Technology Unit at the West Virginia Rehabilitation Center. Rehabilitation Engineer Dale Castilla and Terry Courts of Assistive Technology performed workstation evaluations and provided recommendations for workers to have ergonomic chairs and keyboards, modified work stations, and adaptive equipment so they may continue in their jobs.

Angela Scott said Aegis has a good working relationship with DRS. “We work very closely with B. J. He comes in and lets us know of a potential employee,” she said. “We help place them. We make accommodations for the training if need be, as well as their transition out to the floor.”



**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STATE  
REHABILITATION CLIENTS IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006**

**NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS FROM EACH DISTRICT SERVED**

District 1 .....	1,915
District 2 .....	1,919
District 3 .....	2,250
District 4 .....	2,325
District 5 .....	2,342
District 6 .....	1,212
District 7 .....	1,219
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>13,182</b>

**EDUCATION AT APPLICATION OF INDIVIDUALS  
VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED**

No formal schooling .....	14
Elementary education (grades 1-8) .....	54
Secondary education, no high school diploma (grades 9-12) .....	826
Special education certificate of completion/attendance .....	134
High school graduate or equivalency certificate (regular education students) .....	700
Post-secondary education, no degree .....	317
Associate degree or vocational/technical certificate .....	166
Bachelor's degree .....	98
Master's degree or higher .....	42
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,351</b>

**AGE AT APPLICATION OF INDIVIDUALS VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED**

Less than 20 .....	872
20 through 34 .....	577
35 through 44 .....	364
45 through 64 .....	491
65 and over .....	47
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,351</b>

**RACE OF INDIVIDUALS VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED**

White .....	2,191
Black or African American .....	120
American Indian or Alaska Native .....	19
Asian or Pacific Islander .....	7
Hispanic or Latino .....	14
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,351</b>

**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STATE  
REHABILITATION CLIENTS IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006**

**GENDER OF INDIVIDUALS VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED**

Male .....	1,285
Female .....	1,066
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,351</b>

**REFERRAL SOURCE OF INDIVIDUALS VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED**

Educational institution (elementary/secondary) .....	687
Educational institution (post-secondary) .....	87
Physician or other medical personnel or medical institutions (public or private) .....	320
Welfare agency (state or local government) .....	32
Community rehabilitation program .....	72
Social Security Administration (Disability Determination Services or District Office) .....	26
One-stop employment/training centers .....	78
Self-referral .....	637
Other sources .....	412
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,351</b>



**PRIMARY DISABLING CONDITION OF INDIVIDUALS  
VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006**

**SENSORY/COMMUNICATIVE IMPAIRMENTS**

Blindness .....	33
Other visual impairment .....	24
Deafness, primary communication visual .....	39
Deafness, primary communication auditory .....	25
Hearing loss, primary communication visual .....	33
Hearing loss, primary communication auditory .....	211
Other hearing impairments (tinnitus, Menier's Disease, hyperacusis, etc.) .....	5
Deafblindness .....	0
Communicative impairments (expressive/receptive) .....	11



**PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENTS**

Mobility orthopedic/neurological impairments .....	182
Manipulation/dexterity orthopedic/neurological impairments .....	83
Both mobility and manipulation/dexterity orthopedic/neurological impairments .....	65
Other orthopedic impairments (e.g., limited range of motion) .....	138
Respiratory impairments .....	76
General physical debilitation (fatigue, weakness, pain, etc.) .....	20
Other physical impairments (not listed above) .....	292

**MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS**

Cognitive impairments (impairments involving learning, thinking, processing information, and concentration) .....	731
Psychosocial impairments (interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping) .....	292
Other mental impairments .....	91

**OCCUPATION OF INDIVIDUALS VOCATIONALLY REHABILITATED IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006**

Professional, technical, or managerial .....	654
Clerical and sales .....	474
Service .....	571
Industrial .....	586
Farming and agriculture .....	38
Homemaker* .....	22
Unpaid family worker* .....	4
Vending stand operator .....	2
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>2,351</b>

\*Occupation outside the competitive labor market





## Office Addresses

Beckley District Office  
200 Value City Center  
Suite 800  
Beckley, WV 25801  
(304) 256-6900

Cabell Midland  
High School  
2300 U.S. Route 60 East  
Ona, WV 25545  
(304) 743-7496

Charleston Disability  
Determination Section  
500 Quarrier St.  
Suite 500  
Charleston, WV 25301  
(304) 343-5055

Charleston District Office  
P.O. Box 547  
Institute, WV 25112  
(304) 766-2634

Clarksburg Disability  
Determination Section  
Federal Center  
320 West Pike St., Suite 120  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
(304) 624-0200

Clarksburg District Office  
722 West Pike St.  
Clarksburg, WV 26301  
(304) 624-0300

Elkins Branch Office  
1087 Beverly Pike  
Elkins, WV 26241  
(304) 637-0205

Fairmont Branch Office  
109 Adams St.  
Suite 340  
Fairmont, WV 26554  
(304) 367-2714

Fayetteville Branch Office  
217 West Maple Ave.  
Fayetteville, WV 25840  
(304) 574-0961

Huntington District Office  
2699 Park Ave., Suite 200  
Huntington, WV 25704  
(304) 528-5585

Huntington High School  
Highlander Way  
Huntington, WV 25701  
(304) 528-6511

Keyser Branch Office  
603 Locust St.  
Keyser, WV 26726  
(304) 788-2313  
(301) 777-0787

Lewisburg District Office  
777 North Jefferson St., Suite 105  
Lewisburg, WV 24901  
(304) 647-7515

Logan Branch Office  
216 Dingess St.  
Logan, WV 25601  
(304) 792-7060

Marshall University  
Prichard Hall, Room 113  
Huntington, WV 25755  
(304) 696-2394

Martinsburg District Office  
307 Monroe St.  
Martinsburg, WV 25401  
(304) 267-0005  
(304) 267-0009

Moorefield Branch Office  
1929-1 State Route 55  
Moorefield, WV 26836  
(304) 538-2701

Morgantown Branch Office  
124 South High St.  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
(304) 285-3155

Mullens Branch Office  
316 Howard Ave.  
Mullens, WV 25882  
(304) 294-5653

Parkersburg Branch Office  
State Office Building  
400 5th St.  
Parkersburg, WV 26102-1805  
(304) 420-4580

Parkersburg South High School  
1511 Blizzard Drive  
Parkersburg, WV 26101  
(304) 420-4916

Point Pleasant Branch Office  
209 5th St.  
Point Pleasant, WV 25550  
(304) 675-0867

Princeton Branch Office  
195 Davis St.  
Princeton, WV 24740  
(304) 425-1256

Romney Branch Office  
P.O. Box 943  
West Virginia Schools  
for the Deaf and Blind  
Romney, WV 26757  
(304) 822-3957  
(304) 822-3233

Sistersville Branch Office  
714 Wells St.  
Sistersville, WV 26175  
(304) 652-2354

Spencer Branch Office  
321 Market St.  
Spencer, WV 25276  
(304) 927-0954

State Office  
State Capitol  
P. O. Box 50890  
Charleston, WV 25305-0890  
(304) 766-4920

Summersville Branch Office  
812 Northside Drive, Suite 7  
Summersville, WV 26651  
(304) 872-0813

Weirton Branch Office  
100 Municipal Plaza, Suite 200  
Weirton, WV 26062  
(304) 723-5311

Welch Branch Office  
110 Park Ave.  
Welch, WV 24801  
(304) 436-3175

West Virginia  
Rehabilitation Center  
Barron Drive  
P.O. Box 1004  
Institute, WV 25112  
(304) 766-4600

Weston Branch Office  
100 Market Plaza, Suite 3B  
Weston, WV 26452  
(304) 269-0547

Wheeling District Office  
Central Union Building  
40-14th St.  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
(304) 238-1092



**Rehabilitation is Working!**



**West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts  
West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services**

State Capitol  
P. O. Box 50890  
Charleston, WV 25305-0890  
[www.wvdrs.org](http://www.wvdrs.org)  
1-800-642-8207 (V/TDD)