Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services

2011 Annual Report

Greetings to our consumers, colleagues, business partners, and community

With the extraordinary programs and services provided through the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), it has been another successful year for Marylanders' with disabilities.

DORS has made it possible for thousands with disabilities to find true independence, become employed, and have remarkable futures — something they may not have ever considered without receiving such support.

This year's report highlights the many successes of the DORS programs that help people with disabilities transition to higher education, vocational training, and employment. The success of the programs also translates into success for Maryland businesses as DORS is equipped to match candidates with job openings, identify technologies to increase productivity in an ever-changing economy, and even coordinate services for workplace disability issues. It's a win-win for those with disabilities and Maryland!

The personal stories included in this report exemplify the successful rehabilitation of more than 2,400 DORS consumers. These new employees added $35.9 million to Maryland's economy. This year alone, DORS helped 1,044 people move from public benefits into employment. Proudly, the programs offered through DORS work.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with its consumers, its staff, and its community and business partners, remains true to its mission — to ensure success of each of its programs.

I am certain 2012 will reap similar rewards for the many DORS programs.

Bernard J. Sadusky, Ed.D.
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Preparing World-Class Students

Suzanne Page
Assistant State Superintendent
in Rehabilitation Services

It is my pleasure to present the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) 2011 Annual Report. DORS consumers, staff, businesses, and partners have worked hard to ensure a successful year of assisting individuals with significant disabilities, and from diverse cultural backgrounds, achieve their employment goals. We pause and reflect on the accomplishments of our consumers, highlight some special projects, acknowledge business champions, and thank community partners.

DORS staff have again demonstrated their commitment to excellent public service and their passion for promoting the successful employment and independence of individuals with significant disabilities. DORS served a total of 24,819 individuals with significant disabilities, including 8,421 transitioning youth. The Disability Determination Services (DDS) also adjudicated a record 75,883 claims filed by Maryland citizens for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income benefits.

We welcome 2012 with enthusiasm and a renewed commitment to promoting the employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independence of individuals with significant disabilities. DORS will continue to explore improved efficiencies to ensure that we provide quality services and strengthen partnerships.

The Maryland Disability Determination Services – Serving Maryland Citizens with Pride

The Maryland DDS continued its history of high achievement during fiscal year 2011. The DDS adjudicated 75,883 disability claims, while maintaining a quality rate of 97.3% and reducing case processing time by more than 40 days. In addition to efficiently processing Social Security disability claims filed by Maryland citizens, the DDS was also active with partner agencies.

The DDS collaborated with the Mental Hygiene Administration, Health Care for the Homeless, and several community advocates throughout the State on the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Initiative. SOAR has proven highly successful in providing access to cash benefits, medical benefits, treatment, housing, and several other resources for individuals with severe mental impairments who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

DDS also provided work experiences to two young adults through the summer YouthWorks Program of Baltimore City. Assigned to the Fiscal unit and the Management Information System unit, the youth learned about the important services provided by the DDS, as well as the importance of accuracy and production in the world of work. The students left the DDS with work experience, some financial support, and a new appreciation for the importance of public service.

During the year, the DDS hosted numerous visitors. Officials from Service Canada visited the DDS to learn about the Social Security Disability program. The DDS also hosted a presidential intern from the Social Security Administration. The intern helped develop an electronic Case Analysis Guide, a new tool for the DDS staff.

DORS

Marian Bland, Director, Office of Special Needs Populations, Mental Hygiene Administration with DDS' Medical Relations Director, Caroline Mason, who received the *Mental Hygiene Administration Partnership Award* for her efforts on the SOAR Initiative

WTC RTS Program

DORS Workforce & Technology Center's (WTC) Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) program is a national leader in providing worksite evaluation and assistive technology (AT) services that help people with disabilities get and keep jobs. Through the effective use of assistive technology, RTS staff solve problems for people who have limitations in communication, mobility, vision and thinking.

Will Greenfield Using His EyeTech VT2 Gaze System

Over the past year, services to DORS consumers and employers were provided in the areas of worksite job accommodations, adaptive driving, AT assessment and training, and residential modification consultation. Examples of AT provided included hand controls for cars, ramps and stair glides for the home, alternative keyboards and mice or screen magnification and screen readers for computers, and specialized computer-based writing tools.

During FY 2011, 78 employers and individuals received 107 interdisciplinary worksite job accommodation services. Across all RTS program areas, 1,375 individual services were provided. Of special note was the launch of a new program that provided Drivers Education for 17 individuals who are deaf.

The story of RTS' work with **Wilbert Greenfield II** is a model of how vocational rehabilitation services help individuals with disabilities to maintain employment. Wilbert was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) several years ago, but other than having to use a wheelchair and drive a modified van to get to his office, the ALS did not affect his ability to work for some time. Wilbert is a network engineer, helping to staff the Help Desk for the George Washington University Medical Center.

Over the past two years he has begun to lose his upper body strength, and this was making it very difficult for him to do his work. He contacted DORS last February and was soon working with DORS Rehabilitation counselor Kristal Turner and RTS Occupational Therapist Ann Reed. Partnering with an AT service provider, Kristal and Ann determined that an eye gaze system would work best for Wilbert.

"I have been working from home for about a year now," says Wilbert, "and the EyeTech is great for the type of work I do." The EyeTech VT2 is an eye gaze system that allows Wilbert to use his computer mouse through eye movements. "I use my eyes to move the mouse…my blinking can equal a right or left click."

Despite decreasing physical abilities, Wilbert is able to do tasks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible. "Bottom line, without this program, I would not be able to work." DORS Rehabilitation counselor Kristal Turner says RTS accomplished its mission in working with Wilbert. "He just wanted AT so he could maintain his employment, he just wanted to work. [And] he was happy to get services and still be able to live a productive life." Wilbert's experience with DORS RTS program is an excellent example of how AT can transform lives.

Working with Melwood at Fort Meade

DORS Business Employment Specialist Jody Boone was contacted by John Oliver, recruiting consultant for Melwood, early in 2011. Melwood, an *AbilityOne* participant, had taken over the contract at Fort Meade and contacted Jody for help with filling positions. AbilityOne is a Federal initiative to help people who are blind or have other significant disabilities find employment.

Fort Meade was looking for people to be general maintenance laborers, general office clerks, tractor operators, grounds crew, and tool and parts attendants.

In April, Jody helped circulate the job announcements among DORS consumers and by the end of May, more than 50 had been interviewed. Over the next several weeks, 18 DORS consumers were hired to work at Fort Meade. Some of these individuals had not been able to find work for a number of years.

Three Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) Deaf Services consumers are among the new Melwood/Fort Meade employees and they are enjoying their new careers!

Ken Bower came to DORS for assistance in finding a job, first working with DORS rehabilitation counselor Alisa Redmon. Alisa referred Ken to WTC's Staff Specialist for Deaf Services Kathy Schwabeland. Kathy was working with Jody to help fill the Melwood positions.

Ken now works at Fort Meade as a Maintenance Trade Helper. This position offers Ken a lot of variety. "I go from job to job…carpentry, custodian…the locksmith shop…it's different every day." He is pleased with the job. "I like working here…it's a good place. We all get along really well."

Ken is also pleased with the assistance he received at DORS. "DORS has a good system for sharing information between staff…they get a lot of credit for how they worked things out…things moved quickly."

Ilan Dvir works at Fort Meade with the Grounds Crew. Ilan is originally from Israel and heard about DORS through the grapevine within both the deaf and deaf/immigrant communities. He knows six languages, but says without DORS, he would probably still be looking for work. "It would be very hard for me to find a job…before DORS, I was looking for a long time…because I am deaf, and it was really hard."

He first worked with DORS rehabilitation counselor Tracey Wyant. She referred him to WTC where he participated in the Warehouse Training, receiving a forklift operator certification. DORS also helped Ilan by providing funds for transportation and equipment, like his steel-toe boots.

At Fort Meade, Ilan helps with grounds maintenance, fence repairs, and tree removal. He is very happy at his new job. "It's the best! I'm very comfortable with everyone here...we have great teamwork, it's like a family."

Ilan hopes to learn new skills and says his supervisor is very supportive. "My supervisor lets me try new things and doesn't let the fact that I am deaf get in the way. I'm looking forward to helping with snow removal and learning how to drive the motorcycle plows!" He also hopes to be promoted someday. Ilan stated that "the one word they never use here is 'can't'…so I hope to one day be a supervisor."

Kibru Minuta is from Ethiopia. He also found out about DORS within the deaf and deaf/immigrant communities; there are a significant number of deaf immigrants in Maryland. Before coming East, Kibru worked for Federal Express in Minnesota, but he was not able to find full-time work at the Maryland facility. "So I asked DORS to help me find a full-time job and they helped me find this opportunity at Melwood."

Kibru works with the Grounds Crew and says he likes working outside where his favorite jobs are mowing and using the weed whackers and leaf blowers. "I like it here because I like the variety of grounds work."

Kibru echoes Ilan's praise of his co-workers. "From the time I started, if I don't understand something people will help me. And my supervisor tells me when I am doing a good job…I like how I am recognized for my efforts."

Melwood Grounds Maintenance Lead Danny Williams says the good feelings are mutual. "[Kibru and Ilan] are great additions to our team." Danny wants to improve the team's exchange of information, so he is looking into software and services to assist in communicating with Ilan and Kibru during group meetings. "They are both good workers and we're glad they joined us. I want to do what I can to make things work for everyone."

SOURCE OF FUNDS

STATE FUNDS

State Matching Funds	13,613,413
State Non-matching Funds	854,493
TOTAL	**14,467,906**

FEDERAL FUNDS MATCHING FUNDS

Basic Program	37,280,801
Basic Program - ARRA	2,726,958
Independent Living (Older Blind) - ARRA	270,347
Independent Living (Older Blind)	592,647
State Independent Living Services	224,700
State Independent Living Services – ARRA	124,737
Training	146,729
SUB TOTAL	**41,366,919**

FEDERAL NON-MATCHING FUNDS

Social Security Administration/DDS	32,497,203
Social Security Reimbursement	2,404,617
Seamless Transition Collaborative	718,099
Supported Employment State Grants	524,260
Client Assistance Program	167,259
Individuals With Disabilities Education Act	150,000
SUB TOTAL	**36,461,438**
TOTAL	**92,296,263**

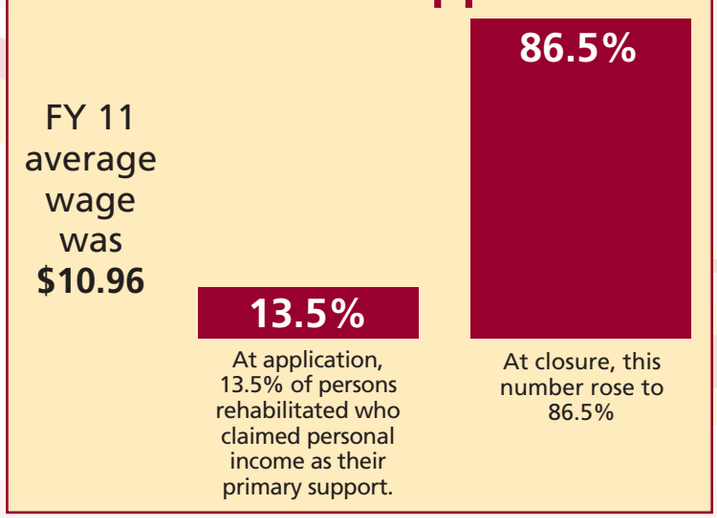
SPECIAL FUNDS

Business Enterprise Program for the Blind	2,818,839
Third Party	93,393
TOTAL	**2,912,232**
TOTAL COMBINED FUNDS AVAILABLE	**95,208,495**

EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS

Disability Determination Services	32,497,203
VR Client Services Program	20,358,617
Case Services	19,511,522
Workforce & Technology Center	11,980,898
Basic Program ARRA	1,835,972
Administration	5,186,985
Business Enterprise Program for the Blind	3,169,636
Seamless Transition Collaborative	539,872
Independent Living (Older Blind) ARRA	57,385
State Independent Living Services ARRA	70,405
TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED	**95,208,495**

Percentage of Individuals with wages as their primary source of support:



Rehabilitated Persons Served: 2010-2011

Persons Rehabilitated by Primary Disability	Number Rehabilitated
Psychiatric Disability	969
Cognitive Disability	636
Orthopedic	152
Deaf & Hard of Hearing	198
Other Physical Disabilities	261
Blind & Visual Impairments	183
Communication Disabilities	29
Respiratory Impairments	9
Total	**2,437**

Persons Rehabilitated by Occupation at Case Closure

Service	1,260
Clerical, Sales	456
Professional, Technical, Managerial	321
Production, Construction, Operating, Materials Handling	179
Homemaker	179
Farming, Fishery & Forestry	35
Unpaid Family Worker	6
Vending Operator/Worker	1
Miscellaneous, NEC	0
Total	**2,437**

NOTES:
1. "Persons Rehabilitated" refers to those individuals who have achieved gainful employment as a result of DORS services.
2. The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) provides statewide rehabilitative services to assist Maryland citizens with disabilities in becoming employed.

Students Served by Primary Disability

	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11
Psychiatric:	1,705	2,005	2,187
Cognitive:	3,826	4,078	4,559
Orthopedic:	277	274	270
Deaf or HoH:	428	461	535
Other Physical Disabilities:	363	418	447
Blind & Other Visual:	193	208	239
Communication:	152	162	172
Respiratory:	22	17	12
	6,966	7,623	8,421

In FY 11, DORS vocational rehabilitation counselor caseloads consisted of a total of 26,694 consumers. 9,228 (34.56%) of these individuals were transition youth. Of those figures, DORS served 24,819 eligible consumers, of whom 8,421 (33.92%) were transition youth.

Front row: (seated) Laurie Elinoff, Timothy Daly, Earl Cooper.
Middle row: Josie Thomas, Paulette Epps, Kali Mallik, Sue Page, Beth Lash, Mary Manzoni, Thomas Laverty.
Back row: Barry Shaw, Thomas Barkley, Daniel Frye, Alfred Sonnenstrahl.
Not Shown: Michael Bullis, Charles Crawford, Carol Lewis, Anne Rea, Rashid Reyazzuddin, Jennifer Whitcomb, Michael Whitehill

MARYLAND STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

A Greeting from the New Chairman of the MSRC:

As the newly elected chairman of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC), I look forward to continuing and strengthening our tradition of active partnership and collaboration with the management and staff of DORS on behalf of the state's disabled community. With its members appointed by the Governor and its mission and purpose defined in the Federal Rehabilitation Act, I want to lead the MSRC in a year of engaged dialogue with DORS to enhance delivery of rehabilitation services to eligible Maryland residents who are looking for employment.

Dan Frye

WTC Deaf Services

Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) Internships Build Resumes and Help DORS Consumers Prepare For Future Employment

Many **WTC Deaf Services** consumers build their resumes by completing training programs at WTC and then move on to internships with community businesses and organizations.

Joey Conner was referred to WTC Deaf Services by DORS Rehabilitation counselor Lisette Belanger. At WTC he participated in interview practice, job seeking skills classes, and the Warehouse Training course, where he earned a lift-truck operator certification. After graduation, he moved on to an internship at the *Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission* (M-NCPPC) during the summer of 2010. Joey worked at M-NCPPC's *Bladensburg Waterfront Park* and had several duties, including cleaning the grounds and the waterway areas, helping with the groups taking boat rides on the canal, and sizing people for the life preservers they wore on the boat. One of his favorite experiences at the park was helping with a particular group. "One afternoon I noticed a group of deaf people…and I interpreted for their boat ride."

The staff at M-NCPPC were so pleased with Joey's work that they brought him back to do another internship during the summer of 2011.

Of his experiences working with WTC programs, Joey says, "It was helpful to connect with others and go on the worksite tours." He continues with his job search and hopes to find a permanent position soon. "I have a lot of experience now…and my forklift certificate is good for three years." He also has longer-term goals. "Eventually, I'd like to go back to school."

Carmen Vasquez (left) with Kate Snider, DORS Employment Services Specialist

Carmen Vasquez interned part-time from January to May at *Towson University's Chartwells* dining facility. Finding employment has been especially challenging for Carmen because she was raised in Mexico where she did not have any formal schooling and she has only recently learned American Sign Language. Her mother-in-law suggested that she contact DORS, and Carmen began working with Wheaton Rehabilitation counselor Lisette Belanger, who suggested she take the Food Services Training program at WTC. Carmen enjoyed the program. "I was busy during the Food Services training at WTC…in the kitchen, I did a lot of chopping of fruits and vegetables."

She also attended the WTC Job Seeking Skills class, but her favorite experience was her internship. At Chartwells, she prepared the fresh fruits and vegetables and learned how to make homemade sauces and salad dressings; soon she was made responsible for these tasks on a regular basis.

Carmen now has her WTC Food Services Training certificate and she is working with WTC's Employment Services staff to find a permanent position. She also has some real world dining hall experience on her resume. "I would like to get a job in food services…restaurant, hotel…that's what I'm hoping for. I liked [Chartwells] a lot…I learned a lot during my internship."

Kate Snider (DORS), Richard Moore (Ivelisse's Supervisor at the Maryland Aviation Administration), Ivelisse Gonzalez Rodriguez, Rhonda Walkins (DBM), Chris Franklin (DORS)

Ivelisse Gonzalez Rodriguez studied at the WTC Office Technology program for six months. She then moved on to a Governor's QUEST Internship, which matches persons with disabilities to work experiences in State government, Ivy interned at *Maryland Aviation Administration* (MAA). Ivey had several duties, but her primary job was to set up a library system for the Department's many software systems. Ivey sorted and discarded software, arranged the new library, and used the MAXIMO system to catalog the software.

She enjoyed the work environment at MAA, including a chance to have a tour of the airport. "It was really cool!" She also liked her co-workers. "They gave me my own office! And, I had a great relationship with the other people." One co-worker was very interested in learning American Sign Language (ASL). "Rick [Richard Moore] picked-up ASL so quickly, so we had lunch conversations and he showed me around the office."

Ivey now attends WTC's Job Club and she knows that she would like to work in an office setting, maybe doing data entry. She says her internship experience was very helpful, "I've gained experience to put on my resume which will help me have a better chance of getting a job…I'll get a job now. . . I'll find a way."

Yongrui Li was born in China and moved to the United States with his mother a few years ago. Since he came to the United States, Yongrui has struggled with the double language barrier of not initially knowing any English or ASL. These obstacles, combined with little work experience, had made finding a job very difficult. He began working with DORS counselor Lisette Belanger in 2008, had an evaluation, and eventually joined the WTC Warehouse Training program in 2010. Yongrui completed the program and earned a forklift driver certification. He then moved on to a part-time internship at Time Out for Sports, Inc.

At Time Out, Yongrui helped with inventory and with embroidering sports apparel. His favorite part of the job? "I loved making money!" He also valued WTC Deaf Services' support during his job search. "If I didn't have DORS support, and I went to an interview, there would be a lack of communication… things would be a lot more difficult."

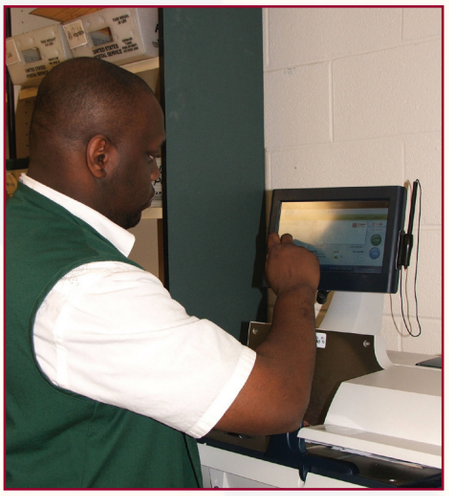
The skills Yongrui learned helped him land a job; last summer he was hired to work in the Office Max warehouse in Elkridge. He says DORS gave him the tools he needed. "[DORS] helped me get the experience, prepare for interviews, and everything else. And having the experience helped me in the real world, the working world."

Office of Field Services & MSD'S Work-to-Learn Program

The Maryland School for the Deaf's (MSD) Work-to-Learn program offers specialized transition services for MSD high school students who are nearing graduation and preparing for the world of work. Work-to-Learn's main goal is to integrate students into community employment, while providing on-site support from an MSD employment specialist.

Work-to-Learn was originally funded by a two-year American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant through DORS. DORS continued funding the program in FY 2011 with Case Services funds. This year, Work-to-Learn has assisted 35 students, working an average of 12 hours per week, at 24 local employers.

Aleasha Harrington is completing her Work-to-Learn assignment at Frederick Memorial Hospital (FMH). She works in the Pre and Post-Op wards and helps with preparing the areas for patients. Her tasks include setting up beds and recliners with clean bedding and warm blankets, cleaning the blood pressure machines, and stocking supplies. As FMH's needs change, Aleasha has been moved to different assignments in the hospital and she's enjoyed learning and meeting new people. "Now I know what to do and I'm fine…I see people I know, we say 'Hi,' we're friends."



Branden Forman also works at FMH in the mail room. Branden's duties include sorting the mail for distribution within the hospital and for Post Office pickup, distributing the patient mail, and adding postage to a variety of sizes of envelopes and packages. He has mastered the complicated Pitney Bowes postage machine and enjoys working in the hospital. "Sometimes I deliver the mail," says Branden. "I get to go to the offices, the Volunteer Center, and even X-ray."

Kane Beatty sometimes works at FMH with Branden, but his primary assignment is at the US Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection and Quarantine office in Frederick. The USDA does a lot of training at this office and it is Kane's job to set up the classrooms with lab kits and equipment. When training is scheduled, there is a lot of work for Kane to do in a short period of time. "When I have work here, it tends to be a lot and it can be overwhelming." Kane's Employment Specialist Jenica Winnings says this is a good thing. "He's learning how to prioritize his work."

Learning these real-world work skills is a key component of Work-to-Learn. Jenica teaches the students soft and hard skills and they all must attend regular workshops on communication, workplace behaviors, time management, dress codes, and how to use social media appropriately.

Gabrielle Smith is working at Plato's Closet, a retail store that buys and sells gently used clothing for teens and young adults. Gabby's duties are to empty the dressing rooms and bins, put clothes on the racks, and organize new arrivals. Gabby enjoys the work. "I like being organized," and the socializing. "I have some new friends…I've taught them some sign language." Best of all, Gabby likes the paycheck. "I like buying my own things." And she is doing well at her job. "Gabby never, never misses work…and she never complains," says Work-to-Learn Program Coordinator Jennifer Weeks.

Jennifer believes that the students' experiences in Work-to-Learn are invaluable. "What they learn may carry with them for the rest of their lives. They learn things they can't learn in a classroom. It gives them exposure to the [real] world."

DORS rehabilitation counselor Karen Love Hanes says the program helps prepare the students for life after graduation. "This program gives them a starting point, with some supports, so they can get some work experience and skills."

Without Work-to-Learn, these students might leave MSD unprepared for life after graduation."We're planting the seeds of 'I can!'." says Karen.

A bonus outcome, says Jennifer, is that Work-to-Learn participation strengthens communication within the students' families. "The work experience provides an opportunity for students to earn a paycheck, learn how to set up a budget, pay 'real-life' expenses, and set up goals for purchases they'd like to make."

Jennifer and Karen stress that the program's success hinges on the partnerships between MSD, DORS, community-based businesses, and state and local service agencies. These partners include the Frederick Business and Employment Center, and summer youth programs from Baltimore City, the Western Maryland Consortium, Anne Arundel County Workforce Services, Montgomery County and Baltimore County.

All About College Exploration (ACE) is a two-week Office for Blindness & Vision Services summer program for high school students who are blind or have a significant vision loss. ACE exposes students to college life by emphasizing real-life experiences, like navigating a college campus, living in a dormitory, and participating in social activities.

Six students participated in this summer's ACE program and toured the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) Essex, CCBC Catonsville, Harford Community College, and Towson University. The ACE participants met with the colleges' disability support services staff, and learned how to get support and assistance with their classes or other college experiences.

ACE participants Ke'Shaun Thomas and Cody Disabatino enjoyed visiting the college bookstores and having lunch in the cafeterias.

Office of Field Services & Project Search

The DORS Office of Field Services (OFS) works with Community Rehabilitation Programs and community agencies to partner and coordinate the best possible services for our consumers. Project SEARCH is one such partnership effort. Project SEARCH is based on a program started in Cincinnati, which provides work and career development opportunities for adults and students with disabilities.

In Baltimore City, The Arc of Baltimore's Project SEARCH program is a one-year education and internship program for students with disabilities who are in their last year of high school in Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) and whose main goal is to get a job with competitive pay.

Project SEARCH Job Coach Tameka Brooks with Andrew Pope at Blades & Rosenfeld, P.A.

This year, a collaboration between DORS Office of Field Services, The Arc of Baltimore, the University of Maryland, and BCPS, helped ***Andrew Pope***, who has an autism spectrum disorder, transition from high school to working at the prestigious law firm of Blades & Rosenfeld, P.A.

DORS rehabilitation counselor Jerry Cooperman helped Andrew by providing support and guidance, and DORS paid for job coaching services. Jerry says he tried to help keep Andrew focused. "The goal was to help him stay on track and not get discouraged."

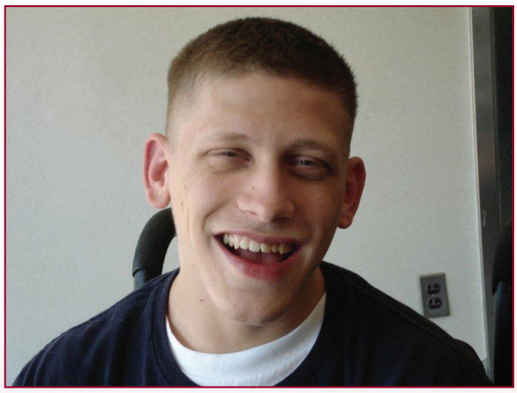
Joanna Falcone, director of The Arc of Baltimore's Project SEARCH, approached Blades & Rosenfeld partner David L. Jacobson and asked him to consider hiring a Project SEARCH participant. Mr. Jacobs put Joanna in touch with his Director of Administration, Gynette Parker. Initially, the firm had some reluctance about participating, but an excellent reference from Andrew's internship at Enoch Pratt and reassurance from Tameka Brooks (his job coach) convinced the firm to give Andrew a chance.

Nearly a year later, they cannot imagine life without him. "He has been absorbed into the life and culture of this firm," says Ms. Parker "All the staff say they cannot live without him." Andrew, now 24, is Blades & Rosenfeld's Photocopy Scanning Clerk and he is responsible for scanning, copying, collating, and distributing the vast amount of paperwork that is generated within the office.

Andrew is a young man of few words, but his warm smile says a lot about his opinion of Blades & Rosenfeld. When asked if he likes the job, his response is, "Oh yes."

Partner David Jacobson says the situation has been, "…win, win, win. He's earning a living, it's good for The Arc's program, and he's doing great work for us."

In **Montgomery County**, The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Center, Ivymount School, and SEEC, a DDA provider of employment services, developed a Project SEARCH focused on creating opportunities for federal employment for young adults with developmental disabilities. Funding partners include DORS Office of Field Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, DC Public Schools, and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration.



Richard Day (Ricky) is a 25-year-old man with cerebral palsy. Before his NIH internship, Ricky had had limited exposure to employment in a real workplace. Before beginning his job training program, job coaches (funded by DORS) worked one-on-one with Ricky to help him navigate a two-bus and one-shuttle commute from his home to the Clinical Center. The ride takes an hour and a half each way. Each morning, Ricky would attend a class at the Clinical Center taught by a teacher provided by Ivymount School. The classroom provided Ricky and other interns with opportunities to practice work skills and etiquette, and the "soft skills" expected in the workplace and community such as promptness, accountability, politeness and appearance. On-site job coaches provided by SEEC worked hands-on with Ricky as he learned the basic tasks of his work. The training paid off when Ricky was hired as a full time Hospitality Aide in June. While Ricky received a great deal of support from his supervisor, job coaches, and classroom teacher, it was his strong motivation that was the key to his success. Today Ricky is an integral part of the Hospitality Department at NIH's Clinical Center. He is the first person visitors see when entering from the Center's parking garage. His smiling face and friendly "hello" help the hospital meet their hospitality goals for patients and visitors.

"I can't ride the train alone until I'm 24" were the words uttered by ***Ashton Bell*** for the first three months he interned at NIH Clinical Center. As a 20-year-old man with autism, Ashton and his mother could not imagine that within a year he would not only be using public transportation, but also have a paid part-time job.

Ashton was given an iTouch and a number of apps to assist him with schedules and time management. He practiced using these applications in the classroom and at his internship assignments with the help of SEEC job coaches. These tools help Ashton stay focused at work and entertain him while commuting. Ashton's job coaches provided job analysis and support to help him learn his duties within the NIH Materials Management Department. Ashton's supervisor also received training and education on autism, and how best to support, manage and motivate Ashton.

In June 2011, Ashton was hired as a permanent employee in the NIH Clinical Center, Materials Management Department, joining the Storage and Distribution (S&D) Division as a Supply Clerk. Ashton also has one other significant accomplishment he worked hard to achieve: Ashton has learned to drive a "tugger," which is used to move large items. In June, Aston took his tugger driving test and passed with flying colors.

The Montgomery County Project SEARCH partnerships created a successful opportunity for a total of 12 transitioning youth interns; eight of the 12 found full or part-time positions within NIH. Three of the four not hired by NIH used the skills they learned in their subsequent job searches. The successful NIH Project SEARCH is now in its second year.

Office for Blindness & Vision Services, Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind

The Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (BEP) provides opportunities for individuals who are legally blind to operate retail concession, gift or food services businesses in public facilities. BEP operates under the authority of the Randolph-Sheppard Act.

In fiscal year 2011, 58 licensed vendors operated 72 BEP vending facilities, with annual sales in excess of $23,538,709. These facilities also collected over $808,269 in state sales taxes and employed nearly 370 people, of whom 47 were individuals with disabilities, including seven visually impaired employees. The average vendor salary was $49,213.

The screening and training procedures for BEP are intense and difficult and the whole process typically takes a year or more. Candidates participate in thorough interviews, aptitude and interest testing, and multiple background checks to determine their suitability for the program.

Martin Smutek got involved in BEP in the fall of 2010. Previously, he had worked for the Maryland Transit Administration, but his low vision prevented him from furthering that career. At 27, Martin felt he was too young to retire, so when he met OBVS's Darlene Peregoy he told her, "I just want to work." Martin successfully completed the BEP interview and training process and went on to take college-level management and business classes. He then completed a BEP internship and a work-based learning experience before going on to training in the BEP facilities in the State Office Building on Preston Street and in the Baltimore IBM Building.

At the end of the fiscal year, Martin was poised to take over his first BEP facility, the snack bar at the Maryland Insurance Fund Building at 1750 Forest Drive in Annapolis. "It's a great opportunity," said Martin, "if you are willing to put in the work you can be successful." Martin says he's very excited about running the cafeteria. "I love to cook…and now I get to do something I love and be my own boss. If it wasn't for BEP, I'd probably still be trying to find a job." Martin credits Workforce & Technology Center cafeteria manager and Food Services trainer Jim Papania with helping him believe that he could manage a full-service food facility. "Jim was instrumental in getting me to do this; he said 'Don't sell yourself short.' He was right. This is a better opportunity for me."

Maya Redfearn started working with DORS counselor Laura Gloner in 2004 when a stroke left her completely blind. She had previously been employed as a manager for McDonald's and knew that she wanted to go back to work. After her DORS career assessment, she participated in training at the Workforce & Technology Center where she became somewhat famous because of her large and unusual collection of sunglasses. Maya

also trained at Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, graduating in 2007. She then spent some time looking at career options and got involved in BEP in early 2010. At the end of the fiscal year, Ms. Redfearn was poised to take over her first BEP facility, the Pratt Marketplace at 100 East Pratt Street in Baltimore.

"I am a totally blind person and I can do this… BEP gives you everything…there's no reason I can't be successful. I want to do my best to make BEP proud."

A long-time BEP professional received a significant honor this year. ***Melba Taylor***, who has managed a large military food service operation at the Freedom Inn Dining Facility at Fort Meade for more than eight years, received the Philip A. Connelly Award for Excellence in Army Food Service. Ms. Taylor and teaming partner Son's Quality Food Company were given the award in a ceremony on April 2, 2011 in Schaumburg, Illinois.

This award conveys much prestige in the industry and Ms. Taylor and her team beat out some tough competition among 33 military dining facilities, including facilities in Fort Bragg, NC; Korea; Schoefield, Hawaii; Fort Bliss, Texas; Grafenwoehr, Germany and Qatar.

Mr. Son (of Son's Quality Food Company) and Melba Taylor, with the Philip A. Connelly Award for Excellence in Army Food Service

Ms. Taylor also manages a BEP facility in the IRS building in New Carrollton. "My vision started to deteriorate in my 30s and I had to give up the corporate world, so I started to explore BEP." She says that she believes her success has proven that blind managers can succeed and excel in operating large, complex, multi-faceted food service contracts.

FROM LEFT: Kate Drake (DORS),Meka McNeal (Evidence-Based Practice Ctr. Dept. of Psychiatry-UMD),Diana McNeil (Humanim), Rick Martinez (Medical Affairs and Corporate Contributions, Johnson & Johnson), Jessica Hawes (DORS), Steven Reeder (MD Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene-MHA), Debbie Becker (Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Ctr.)

The mission of the **Johnson & Johnson - Dartmouth Community Mental Health Program** *is to increase access to Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment (EBPSE), also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illness who are interested in improving their work lives.*

Diana McNeil and Jessica Hawes were selected to receive the **Johnson & Johnson Dartmouth Achievement Award** *because the Maryland IPS supported employment program had the most significant improvement in the number of people receiving fidelity supported employment services.*

Federal Employment

During FY 2011, 62 DORS consumers found or retained jobs in 29 federal agencies. These employees work in a wide-range of positions: from office clerks to aeronautical and astronautical engineers.

Several of these consumers worked with DORS' Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS).

OBVS rehabilitation counselor Katie Perry says of DORS consumer ***Lydia Richardson***, "When she was looking for work, she never stopped… she applied for job after job." Lydia's persistence paid off and she now works at the Social Security Administration (SSA) Call Center in Baltimore where she handles callers' questions about their benefits and statements, and helps with new benefits applications.

The road to competitive employment was a long one for Lydia. Blind since she was a toddler, Lydia had begun working with OBVS counselor Toni March while she was in high school. DORS helped Lydia attend college by providing assistive technology (AT) and other support services while she majored in Criminal Justice at Coppin State University. After college, Lydia had trouble securing long-term employment and came back to DORS for assistance with her job search. In 2009, she began working with OBVS counselor Katie Perry. Katie learned of some Schedule A openings at SSA and helped Lydia apply. Lydia aced the interview process and was soon offered not one, but two positions; one in Pennsylvania and one in Baltimore. She decided to accept the Baltimore-based position and has been very successful, already being promoted twice. Lydia is grateful to her DORS counselors and the Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) staff. "They [DORS] helped by offering many different resources…I never would have known about all the [AT] available. And they believed in me." Katie says the DORS support helped, but it was Lydia's resolve that ultimately made her successful - "She was determined."

Lydia enjoys her work at SSA and hopes to continue to advance professionally, but she is most pleased by her independence. "I was determined to be independent [and] I can now show people that blind people can be independent."

Roxanne Barger wondered if she would ever be able to fulfill her career goals. She has sickle cell anemia and it has caused bilateral sickle cell retinopathy, which affects her vision. The vision loss, combined with other symptoms of her illness, resulted in a job loss about seven years ago. Soon after losing her job, with her house close to foreclosure, Roxanne began working with OBVS counselor Katie Perry.

Soon, Katie was helping Roxanne apply for a job at the SSA. Katie helped Roxanne apply through the Federal Government's Schedule A process. Roxanne applied for 15 positions, and she says she was not alone, "Four thousand people applied for those 15 positions, but Katie sent me everything I needed… that the government needed." Next there were interviews, background checks, education checks, and finally Roxanne was offered two positions. She accepted a job at SSA in Maryland and she says she couldn't be happier. "I'm making more money, doing something I love…I now get to help people get their Social Security benefits." DORS also helped Roxanne by providing assistive technology including a CCTV, computer, printer, large monitor, headsets and training, and she reports, "it was all set up for a person with low vision. I now have everything I need to do the job."

Now Roxanne sees a bright future doing fulfilling, challenging work. However, if she hadn't found DORS, she says "I might have found some work, but…I wouldn't have been able to get *here*…DORS is the foundation of everything I have today. It worked!"

Kerry Walker is an Oracle Support Analyst, working through the Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind subcontractor, Deloitte, for the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). He decided to go back to school to complete his second degree, but in order to do this he needed help getting some assistive technology; his mother suggested he contact DORS.

Kerry worked with OBVS Rehabilitation Supervisor Debbi Williamson and Employment Specialist Darlene Peregoy. "Debbie put me in touch with Darlene and she set me up with a lot of opportunities that I wasn't aware of." Kerry says the AT provided by DORS RTS program was essential to achieving his goals. Some of the DORS-provided AT includes a *Kurzweil* scanner, *Type and Speak* software, and *JAWS* screen reading software. "I use *JAWS* a lot at work because I mostly need a screen reader…Introducing me to the AT was most helpful, because without that, you can know things, but you can't apply them."

Kerry now has two degrees, one in Computer Science and Math and the other in Information Assurance; he also has a certificate in Project Management for IT Professionals. Kerry is enjoying his job. "I've been here since April and I like it…I like to work."

DORS Counselor **Julieanne White** *(Glen Burnie) won the* **2011 Brain Injury Association of Maryland, Partnership for Independence Professional Award.** *Julieanne is a technical specialist in the area of brain injury and works with the DORS Acquired Brain Injury program.*

DORS employment specialists match pre-screened, job-ready individuals with disabilities to job opening in Maryland's businesses.

Go to www.dorsworks.org to post a free job announcement with DORS.

We will send the information to our network of employment specialists. They will review our job-ready candidates to see if we know of a candidate who possesses the experience and education needed for the position.

DORS

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Suzanne Page, Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services

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