

COVER:

2012 Annual Report

Maryland State Department of Education

Division of Rehabilitation Services

A montage of photos: A man in a Trader Joe's t-shirt working in the frozen foods section. A mechanic working on a tire. A man with a white cane holds open a door for another man with a cane and a woman with a service dog. A group of students in food service uniforms posing with their instructors. The high school students in DORS MAST program and their instructors. A group of students and mechanics outside a Pep Boys store. A man shaking hands with a younger man in a wheelchair.

INSIDE FRONT COVER:

Greetings To Our Consumers, Colleagues, Business Partners, and Community

As we welcome a new year, we have the opportunity to look back and reflect on the numerous successes of the remarkable programs and services provided through the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). It certainly has been another champion 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 report puts a spotlight on the many achievements 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 throughout this report exemplify the successful rehabilitation of more than 2,500 DORS consumers. This year alone, DORS helped 1,119 people move from public benefits into employment. These new employers added \$34.9 million to Maryland's economy. 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. As Maryland's State Superintendent of Schools, it is my honor to not only be charged with ensuring that our next generation is ready for the world that awaits, but also to pledge my steadfast support to the DORS staff, consumers, and partners.

I am certain 2013 will prove to be another celebratory year for the many DORS programs.

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
Maryland State Superintendent of Schools

PAGE 1:

Director's Welcome

It is my pleasure to present the Division of Rehabilitation services (DORS) 2012 annual report. As we look back on another year of collaboration and success, it is clear that the efforts of DORS staff,

businesses, and community partners have successfully assisted so many individuals with significant disabilities achieve independence and attain employment goals, in spite of a continuing challenging labor market and limited resources.

DORS is especially proud of the tremendous accomplishments of our consumers. We are delighted to share some of their personal success stories in this report.

This report also highlights accomplishments of the committed DORS staff, in collaboration with our partners. The vocational rehabilitation program served a total of 26,574 transitioning youth and adults with significant disabilities. The Disability Determination Services adjudicated 78,246 claims filed by Maryland citizens for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income benefits.

The past year was also noteworthy for several successful oversight reviews. The Rehabilitation Services Administration, United States Department of Education, conducted federal monitoring reviews of the vocational rehabilitation program and the Independent Living/Older Individuals Who Are blind programs in Maryland. The reviews identified several innovative initiatives that contribute to successful employment outcomes, including specialized autism services and customized/ partnership training programs.

Additionally, DORS' Workforce & Technology Center also received a three-year certification and kudos from the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

We welcome 2013 with enthusiasm and remain committed to promoting the employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Suzanne R. Page
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Rehabilitation Services
Maryland State Department of Education

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**Maryland State Rehabilitation Council:
A Greeting From The Chairman Of MSRC**

As the 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 another year of engaged dialogue with DORS and the general public to enhance delivery of rehabilitation services to eligible Maryland residents who are looking for employment. Mindful of this objective, and in an effort to enhance the value-added contributions of the Council to operations at DORS, the MSRC has formalized this year the inclusion of a public comment segment during each of its quarterly meetings. I encourage people to take full advantage of this forum to share their perspectives with our members and the management and staff of DORS who regularly attend these meetings.

Finally, I want to acknowledge those members of the MSRC who have rotated off the Council this year. Those leaving us in September, after years of dedicated service, are Carol Lewis, Kali Mallik and Anne Rea. The voluntary efforts of MSRC members are important to the work of DORS, and I want to recognize them publicly here.

Dan Frye, Chairman of the MSRC

Photo: 17 members of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council.
Caption: Back Row, Left to Right: Charles Crawford, Tandra Hunter-Payne, Michael Whitehill, Thomas Barkley, E.C. Townsend, Daniel Frye, Christofer Conklin, Sue Page, Alfred Sonnenstrahl.
Front Row, Left to Right: Josie Thomas, Zosia Zaks, Paulette Epps, Barry Shaw, Mary O'Connor, Carol Lewis, Ann Rea.
Seated: Laurie Elinoff.

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Disability Determination Services Remains Committed, Dedicated And Proud

The Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS) had a phenomenal Fiscal Year 2012! The DDS received 82,045 disability claims, which was a 7% increase over Fiscal Year 2011's receipts. The agency production was truly remarkable! The DDS adjudicated 78,246 claims for the citizens of Maryland. The agency's most recent Net Accuracy rate remained at 100%. The Maryland DDS continues to foster a strong partnership with the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Department of Human Resources (DHR).

Specific activities included rolling out the electronic authorization (e-authorization) form to medical providers throughout the State of Maryland. E-authorization process allows disability applicants to electronically sign their medical release forms, which then allows the DDS examiner the ability to request the applicant's medical

records. The Medical Relations Office worked with the medical community to accept the electronic signatures.

During the fiscal year, the Maryland DDS hosted numerous SSA components from the Office of Disability Determinations to gather information on the new Occupational Information System.

The DDS worked closely with the DORS and MSDE staff as disabled applicants received services across the State. The DDS hosted two YouthWorks students in the summer, along with a Quest Intern. Finally, but not least, the DDS has continued its partnership with the State Review Team, DHR, the office that makes State Medicaid disability determinations.

The entire DDS staff remains committed, dedicated, and proud to provide services to the disabled citizens of Maryland.

Photo: 10 DDS staff receive a plaque from DORS Director Sue Page.

Caption: Team Award: Front, Left to Right: Ashly Walton, Susyn Crujeiras, Monica Anderson, Bobbi Tassallo, Cara Mckenzie, Karen Bolewicki.

Back, Left to Right: Shelly Sweitzer, Scott Rittler, Vivian McClinton, Bobbi Tassallo.

Not Pictured: Cheryl Cylus.

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Workforce & Technology Center Automotive Services Training Program

DORS Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) has several automotive services training programs, including the following:

Automotive Detailing, Mechanics, and Tire, Oil & Lube Services. These programs train DORS consumers for jobs in automotive care and repair businesses.

It has been an especially successful year for the automotive training programs, with several consumers being hired at PEP Boys, Tire World, and National Tire & Battery (NTB).

Automotive Instructor Doug Pindell says their experience with PEP Boys was so successful that they decided to reach out to the company's area managers and give them information about the WTC training programs. "Two PEP Boys representatives were interested in our program and took a tour of WTC. They told us that our training is very similar to their training and recommended that we contact them directly when we have recent graduates that would excel in their general service position. Since this tour in late August, I have contacted them regarding three possible candidates; two have been hired and the third is in the final step of the application process and could possibly begin as early as the beginning of January."

DORS Consumer Benjamin Staples (who is deaf) also attended WTC's automotive training and was hired at Tire World in Frederick last year. He works full time and recently received another excellent evaluation and a raise. "Tony [Operations Manager, Tony Morone] said I was a great worker and that I keep up on all my duties."

Ben is very busy most days at Tire World, sometimes changing as many as 40 tires in a day. He also changes oil and helps the mechanics. He says communication is easy with his co-workers. "Most of us understand each other. Sometimes we write back and forth or text. We all work together as a team."

Ben still has an interest in doing electrical work and plans to eventually take classes at Frederick Community College, but he is happy with his current position at Tire World. “I would definitely tell [other consumers who are deaf] to get into the WTC automotive training program. If I hadn’t found DORS I would probably still be doing side jobs in home improvement. This is much better.”

Tony Morone is glad to have Ben as an employee. “Recently the Frederick manager called to give me an update on Ben. He is willing to work any hours that I give him. He doesn’t complain. He’s my savior out there.”

Tony says other businesses should absolutely consider hiring DORS consumers. “I know a lot of employers are somewhat hesitant that if they hire someone with a disability they [the business] will become disabled, but it’s not true. Take a chance, it will pay off.”

Photo: A young man in a mechanic's uniform stands outside the entrance to Tire World.

Caption: Benjamin Staples

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Workforce & Technology Center Environmental Services Training Program

When DORS employment specialist Lucas Gerace saw a Baltimore Business Journal about the opening of a new Hilton Home2 Suites Hotel, he decided to contact general manager Nick Speech. “I just went in [to the East Pleasant Street location] and asked for Nick.”

Their initial conversation was very productive. “One idea just begat another” said Lucas, and eventually led to the development of a unique partnership between DORS and Baywood/Hilton Home2 Suites.

Baywood/Hilton Home2 Suites established paid internships for a few DORS consumers and Darren Gibson was the first to complete the internship program. Darren had already graduated from WTC’s Environmental Services (ES) training program, so he was happy when Hilton offered him a permanent position in March. “He pulled me aside and asked if I wanted [the job]. I was ecstatic!”

Successful partnering with businesses to create internship opportunities is not new or unique for DORS or WTC. What is unique about this partnership is the development of a specialized WTC ES training program that is specific to the hospitality industry. Baywood/Hilton Home2 Suites has helped WTC create a simulated Home2 Suites room – complete with bedding, towels, furniture, accessories, etc. – where ES students can train and learn to clean a hotel room in a realistic setting.

The Home2 Suites-DORS partnership was recently celebrated at a ribbon cutting for the new WTC Environmental Services “hotel” room. Environmental Services instructor Marcia Neal says the new partnership offers many new possibilities to ES graduates. “Imagine someone graduating from a program like this and having that experience on their resume. It’s so practical!” Nick Speach agrees, “If you have experience working at a Hilton brand hotel, you can get a job in any hotel.”

Photo: A ribbon cutting ceremony.

Caption: Marcia Neal, Darren Gibson, Nick Speach, Aaron White (H2 Suites Executive Housekeeper), and Lucas Gerace opening the new Home2 Suites training room.

Our Numbers: Fiscal Year 2012

Source of Funds:

STATE FUNDS

- State Matching Funds: 13,415,617
- State Non-matching Funds: 553,843

TOTAL State funds: 13,969,460

FEDERAL MATCHING FUNDS

- Basic Program: 42,358,382
- Independent Living (Older Blind): 601,677
- State Independent Living Services: 345,682
- Training: 250,952

SUB TOTAL Federal Matching Funds: 43,556,693

FEDERAL NON-MATCHING FUNDS

- Social Security Administration/DDS: 31,644,921
- Social Security Reimbursement: 2,404,617
- Seamless Transition Collaborative: 200,000
- Supported Employment State Grants: 636,121
- Client Assistance Program: 174,381

SUB TOTAL FEDERAL NON-MATCHING FUNDS: 35,060,040

TOTAL Federal Funds: 78,616,733

SPECIAL FUNDS

- Business Enterprise Program for the Blind: 2,740,621
- Third Party: 63,471

TOTAL Special Funds: 2,804,092

TOTAL COMBINED FUNDS AVAILABLE: 95,390,285.

Expenditure of Funds:

- Disability Determination Services: 31,644,921
- VR Client Services Program: 20,994,590
- Case Services: 22,178,599
- Workforce & Technology Center: 11,766,206
- Administration: 5,497,167
- Business Enterprise Program for the Blind: 2,740,621
- Seamless Transition Collaborative: 568,181

TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED: 95,390,285.

Rehabilitated Persons Served 2011-2012

Persons Rehabilitated by Primary Disability:

- Psychiatric Disability 1,008
- Cognitive Disability 735
- Orthopedic 121
- Deaf & Hard of Hearing 202
- Other Physical Disabilities 241
- Blind & Visual Impairments 175
- Communication 26
- Respiratory Impairments 8

Total Persons Rehabilitated 2,506

Persons Rehabilitated by Occupation at Case Closure:

- Service 1,394
- Clerical, Sales 387
- Professional, Technical, Managerial 321
- Production, Construction, Operating, Materials Handling 211

- Homemaker 161
- Farming, Fishery, & Forestry 26
- Unpaid Family Worker 2
- Vending Operator/Worker 4
- Miscellaneous 0

Total Persons Rehabilitated 2,506

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 disabled Maryland citizens in becoming employed.

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Percentage of Individuals with Wages as Their Primary Source Of Support:

- At application, 11.7% of persons rehabilitated claimed personal income as their primary support.
- At closure: 82.5%.
- Fiscal Year 2012 average wage was \$10.69.

Students Served By Primary Disability

- Psychiatric:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 2,005
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 2,187
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 2,100
- Cognitive:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 4,078
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 4,559
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 4,996

- Orthopedic:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 274
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 270
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 246
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 461
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 535
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 533
- Other physical Disabilities:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 418
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 447
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 423
- Blind & other visual:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 208
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 239
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 236.
- Communication:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 162
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 172
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 172
- Respiratory:
 - Fiscal Year 2010: 17
 - Fiscal Year 2011: 12
 - Fiscal Year 2012: 8

TOTAL:

- Fiscal Year 2010: 7,623
- Fiscal Year 2011: 8,421
- Fiscal Year 2012: 8,714.

AWARDS

Time Out for Sports

Since hiring their first employee who is Deaf (see DORS 2010 annual report for Jared Hoel's Success Story), Time Out for Sports has hired 4 DORS consumers, making them WTC's 2012 Employer of the Year!

Photo: A group of employees beneath the Time Out for Sports sign.

Candace Henry

Each year, the Disability Coalition of Talbot County honors individuals who have gone above and beyond in providing services to people with disabilities.

2012's award recipient was DORS (Easton) Rehabilitation Counselor Candace Henry. Her nomination read in part: "Not only is Candace admired by her clients, she admired by her coworkers, business owners and other community members."

Candace said she was honored to be recognized for her efforts, "but I don't do what I do for recognition, I do it because I enjoy helping my consumers and making a difference for people with disabilities." Congratulations Candace!

Photo: Candace Henry with her sister and mother.

Henry Sanfilippo

DORS (Towson) Rehabilitation Counselor Henry Sanfilippo received the Brain Injury Association of Maryland's (BIAM) 2012 Professional Service Recognition.

His plaque reads, in part "... in recognition of 40 years of outstanding service, dedication and advocacy on behalf of individuals with brain injury and disabilities." Henry was nominated

for the award by former DORS consumer, Tom Longist, who is now a successful businessman.

Henry retired from DORS this year, and looks forward to new adventures. He plans to put away the awards and letters of recognition that lined his office walls, but not the BIAM award. “That one will be in my living room. It’s nice to be recognized by the people you’ve actually helped.”

Photo: Tom Longist and Henry Sanfilippo.

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DORS Summer Programs

ACE – Summer 2012

All About College Exploration (ACE) is a two-week summer WTC program for high school juniors and seniors who are blind or have a significant vision loss and plan to attend college. ACE activities help prepare students for college classes, dormitory living and social activities.

Carol Lewis, WTC Staff Specialist, Blind and Low Vision Services reported that the students’ ACE experiences were valuable. “All six participants – who came from diverse backgrounds and from all over the state - successfully completed the program and all reported that their ACE experiences will help them make future plans for college or whatever is next in their lives.”

APPS

A new DORS’ Workforce & Technology Center day program completed a successful two-week run this summer. APPS (Autism Program: Planning Success For Employment) is for transitioning youth with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The program is

designed to assist individuals with ASD in exploring employment readiness skills.

Rehabilitation counselors Lee Armstrong and James Ferrell lead group discussions, trainings, and exercises about a variety of job-readiness topics, including: self-advocacy, decision making, work expectations and responsibilities, and career interests.

MAST 2012 - Mastering A Successful Transition

MAST is a WTC program for students with learning disabilities who plan to attend college. MAST teaches strategies for managing life after high school, into college, and beyond. The program runs for four weeks and includes educational programs and an opportunity for the students to develop friendships and learn while having fun.

Montage of Class Photos: ACE, SOS, AAPS, MAST.

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YouthWorks for DORS

YouthWorks is a (Baltimore City) Mayor's Office of Employment Development program that helps place young people between the ages of 14 and 21 in six-week summer jobs with private sector, nonprofit, and government employers, including DORS.

WTC's Sonja Tubaya attends the annual YouthWorks job fair and interviews and selects candidates for positions at DORS and Disability Determination Services (DDS). These summer work opportunities offer students chances to get real work experiences that help them develop essential skills.

SOS

The Baltimore City Start on Success (SOS) program is collaboration between DORS and Humanim. SOS provides career

guidance, classroom instruction and on-the-job mentoring to assist high school students with disabilities in transitioning from school to the world of work.

Photo: Young man in a warehouse.

Caption: DeAndre Gaskins, YouthWorks for DORS Participant

Soaring at the Maryland Disability Determination Services

In partnership with the Mental Hygiene Administration's office of special needs population, the Maryland Disability Determination Services (DDS) has seen great success with the Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance Outreach (SSI/SSDI), Access and Recovery (SOAR) Initiative.

SOAR is a national initiative that expedites and improves access to SSI and SSDI for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and diagnosed with a mental illness. These programs, administered by the Social Security Administration, provide income and access to health insurance for individuals who are unable to work due to medical and/or psychiatric conditions.

The Maryland legislature recently approved funding for five SOAR outreach positions. This funding will increase the number of vulnerable individuals who will receive assistance with the DDS process.

Nationally, SOAR has achieved an allowance rate of 71% on initial applications with an average mean processing time of 101 days. In Maryland, we have seen greater success. As of September 2012, Maryland had an allowance rate of 83% on initial applications with an average mean processing time of just 72 days.

It is estimated that 2.5 million federal dollars have been brought into the State of Maryland through the SOAR program. With the success of the SOAR initiative in Maryland we will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness.

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Office of Field Services

Adrian Featherstone

Adrian Featherstone says “I had always wanted to work at Trader Joe’s! There are good benefits; it’s five minutes from home, and working here will help me reach my goals.” One of Adrian’s goals is to pay off his car loan and he expects to accomplish this one soon.

Adrian is deaf and has been working at the Silver Spring Trader Joe’s store for over a year. He says he had a hard time finding a job before he got assistance from DORS and Humanim. “I tried by myself, but Lisette [Belanger, DORS Wheaton Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf] was able to help me get an interview. She also helped me work on my goals.”

Lisette says she is often able to educate businesses around hiring an employee who is deaf. “We meet with them, explain deaf culture, explain that they can contact us for more information, and provide tips and guidance.”

During Adrian’s training at Trader Joe’s, they used an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter; for ongoing communications they write on paper or figure things out some other way. “I don’t really have a problem with communications, the written company

communications are clear.” He thinks Trader Joe’s is a good place to work and that more people who are deaf should seek employment there. Adrian is one of two employees who are deaf at the Silver Spring store. “I’d like us to be able to show that deaf people work quickly and can focus on their work. We’re really no different [than other employees].”

Manager Bill Deeds agrees. “Adrian has the right attitude. Trader Joe’s has to be a ‘Wow’ experience for the customer and we want great customer service. Adrian always has a smile on his face and he knows how to get the customers answers.”

Sarah Cain

Sarah Cain works at The Commons, Salisbury University’s dining facility. Her duties include helping load and unload the dishwashers and doing specialty cleaning throughout the building’s hallways and gallery. Sarah was hired in June 2012 and works part-time on a varying schedule.

“Sarah paved the way for others at WTC [DORS Workforce & Technology Center] with her success in CLST [Community Living Skills Training] and the Food Services program,” said her Salisbury Rehabilitation Counselor, Karen Mohler.

CLST is a supportive residential program for consumers enrolled in a DORS job training program. CLST helps consumers to become independent at home, on the job, and in the community. Sarah has Downs Syndrome and her mother, Wendy Cain, says the CLST program was a “really, really challenging, wonderful experience,” for Sarah. “I’d so encourage other parents to have their Downs kids go away and do something like this...have this kind of adventure. She learned about respect for your employer, how to communicate, and she had an apprenticeship in food services.”

The Commons manager Doug Jones says Sarah is doing so well that they are looking into expanding her job duties. “I’m thinking about doing other things,” says Sarah. “So we are looking into me doing prep work for The Commons satellite offices.” Doug is ready to consider this: “Sarah is doing an excellent job and we are very happy to have her.”

Sarah’s employment has given her self-confidence and the ability to do things for her family. Pointing to the rail in The Commons rotunda she says “I clean all of that.” Is this a time-consuming job? “No, I move fast!” And she is proud that she was recently able to buy her sister some new shoes and help with her birthday party.

“Sarah had some employment experiences that were not a piece of cake,” says her mother Wendy. “She learned it was a hard road, but it was worth it.” Sarah agrees and she likes having a job with a winter break. “I’ll get together with my friend Savvy, we’ll have stuff to eat, play Barbies and watch movies...I wanted a DVD player for this, so I bought one!”

Photo: Young man in the meat department of a grocery store.

Caption: Adrian Featherstone

Photo: A young woman cleans a bronze statue.

Caption: Sarah Cain

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Tina Shenton

Tina Shenton wondered if she’d ever be able to have the kind of professional career she hoped for. “I wanted to go to college, but with all the academics, I didn’t think I could be successful.” Tina has severe dyslexia and this makes school work difficult. DORS Easton Rehabilitation Counselor, Jena Elliott, had another idea and suggested that Tina apply to a technical training program. So, with

Jena's encouragement, Tina enrolled in a phlebotomy certification class at Tri-State Technical School where she learned to draw blood from patients and how to properly label and store blood samples. "We got her signed-up in June and soon she was pretty much at the top of her class. She was awesome to work with."

Tina then completed an internship at Dorchester General Hospital and was soon hired by Shore Health. "They liked me so much [at my internship] that they asked me to put in an application. In a week and a half they offered me the job!"

Previously, Tina had been working in a low-paying position, "but I felt a nagging to do something different." She did some research and discovered DORS where she first received help getting assessed for and confirming her disability. Jena then helped her find a GED prep class at Chesapeake College and DORS funded her technical training class and transportation. "I was dancing around what I wanted to do because of the fear. DORS helped me find the avenue to get there and to know that I could go over and beyond what I thought I could do."

Now Tina has bigger plans. "My employer is pushing me to go back and get a different certification – as a medical tech." If she had not had DORS support, Tina says she would have a job, but now she has a career. "DORS met me where my needs were. They got to know me; they didn't try to fit me into a box. Now I have a career and it's benefiting my children, too. They get to see that you can get up in the morning and do something you love every day."

Office for Blindness & Vision Services

Katie Lee

Katie Lee learned about DORS through the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program. She is an attorney and she wanted to get back to work, but said "After being out of the job market for a while, it was tough to get back in and I thought any kind of assistance would be good."

Katie worked with DORS Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) Employment Specialist Darlene Peregoy and got feedback on her resume writing and job interviewing skills. Darlene says Katie was undervaluing her professional experience. "I worked with her to rework her resume. She had done a lot of great volunteer work, so we needed to emphasize the valuable experience that she had."

DORS also helped Katie obtain Schedule A certification (Schedule A allows for non-competitive appointment to federal jobs of qualified candidates with disabilities).

Katie is now a Legal Administrative Specialist at the office of personnel Management's retirement Services Department where she adjudicates retirement claims for former federal employees.

Without DORS assistance, Katie thinks she would still be unemployed. "The job market was incredibly tough when I started looking, made more so by the fact that I had a disability and had been out of the job market for a while, which resulted in a 'gap' in my resume. My experience is that the longer you have been out of a job, the tougher it is to come back... so I really appreciate the support I got from DORS."

Jeffrey Jones

Jeffrey Jones, who is legally blind, began working with DORS in 2007 while he was still in high school. He continued to work with OBVS Rehabilitation Specialist Scott Liller throughout high school and college at the university of Maryland, college park. DORS provided counseling and assistive technology that helped Jeffrey be successful in school. “Scott was a great help. He helped me get the technical assistance I needed [ZoomText software, ClearNote, and other magnifying devices] and he would regularly give me a call and see what was going on.”

Jeffrey says he is not sure he would have been successful in college without DORS support. “When I started attending college, I was very intimidated by the large lecture halls. Scott encouraged me not to be afraid...and to approach the professors and explain my situation. He also encouraged me to contact the college Disability Support Services and that contact was a huge help.”

Jeffrey graduated from UMCP with a bachelor’s degree in Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Project Management. He is now a Mechanical Engineer at Bechtel Corporation in Frederick and working on a gas power plant project. At Scott’s suggestion, Jeffrey contacted his eye doctor about getting some equipment for work that help him magnify and read small print on some of the drawings. He enjoys the work and hopes to be moved to a new project when the current one wraps-up in six months.

Like many DORS consumers, Jeffrey still worries about transportation. “To get to work, I car pool, ride my bike, or rely on my parents or girlfriend for a ride. If the new project is not nearby, transportation will become a concern. Right now I’m very thankful for helpful people around me.” Still, he remains optimistic: “I’m

confident...we'll just see what's next. It's been a smooth transition so far.”

“Before I found DORS I did not know that all the support was out there. Before DORS helped, I was hesitant. Having their support was a cornerstone of being able to move forward.”

Photo: Woman at a desk in an office.

Caption: Katie Lee

Photo: Man standing outside next to a large Bechtel sign.

Caption: Jeffrey Jones

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Farewell, Ron Winter!

This year Ron Winter concluded a long and eventful career in vocational rehabilitation with his retirement from the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services. After a couple of years at Rosewood as a Social Work assistant, Ron began employment in late 1975 as a rehabilitation counselor in the Bel Air office of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, later to become the Division of Rehabilitation Services. Ron early on developed a specialty in working with the deaf and hard of hearing, which influenced all of his subsequent positions. Throughout his career Ron was a hard-charging, energetic, busy guy, all in the furtherance of assisting individuals with disabilities to become employed.

Becoming a supervisor in the Dundalk office in 1987, he demonstrated a supportive and pragmatic approach in determining motivation of potential consumers to achieve employment, for example, scheduling orientation sessions at 8:30 am on Monday

morning to see who would show up! In 1993 Ron was promoted to assistant Director at the Maryland Rehabilitation Center, now the Workforce & Technology Center. He brought his usual energy and a focus on employment to the Center and facilitated working relationships between Center and field staff. Ron was promoted to Office of Field Services (OFS) Branch Chief, Technical assistance branch, in 2001 and had a key role in planning for and implementing AWARE, the agency case management system, which many of us fondly called “Ron’s AWARE” since he knew all the behind the scenes secrets of the new system. In 2005 Ron became Director of OFS, guiding the agency’s 26 statewide offices, over 120 OFS counselors, and the Technical Assistance Branch through fiscal challenges, the national recession, and extended staff vacancies to achieve remarkable results for consumers seeking employment, independence, and self-sufficiency.

Our thanks to Ron Winter for his unwavering commitment to people with disabilities throughout his career, and our very best wishes to him in retirement.

Photo: Ron Winter at his retirement party, seated in a beach chair with a surf board, Hawaiian lei and straw beach hat.

Photo: Ron Winter, DORS Director Sue Page, and regional directors: E.C. Townsend, Jo Anne Materkowski, Yvonne Kranitz, Beth Lash, and Mike Breeden.

BACK COVER:

- Martin O’Malley, Governor
- Charlene M. Dukes, Ed.D., President, Maryland State Board of Education
- Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools

- Suzanne Page, Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services, Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services

DORS Administrative Office & Headquarters, Office of Field Services, Office for Blindness & Vision Services and the Workforce & Technology Center are located at:

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Annual Report: www.md-dors.org/report

DORS field and OBVS counselors are located over 20 field offices throughout Maryland. To find the nearest one, contact DORS headquarters or visit www.dors.state.md.us

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