



# MARYLAND STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MARYLAND'S ADVOCATES FOR  
PUBLIC VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION

FY 2007 ANNUAL REPORT



# MARYLAND STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL



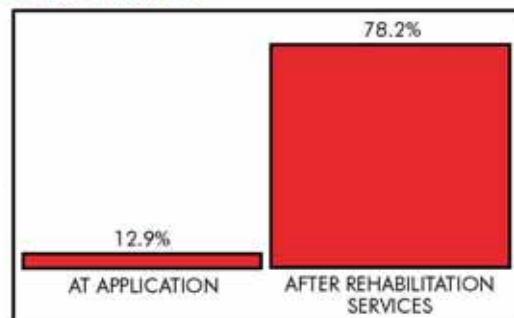
## Maryland's Advocates for Public Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs operated by the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) help people with significant disabilities go to work and become financially independent.



### VR programs change lives and remain cost-effective.

PERCENT OF INDIVIDUALS  
WITH WAGES AS  
THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE  
OF SUPPORT



- Last year, DORS matched 3,097 qualified individuals to job openings in Maryland's businesses.
- The average cost per person rehabilitated was \$4,431.22. This cost to the State is paid back, through taxes and reduced reliance on public benefits, in 2 to 4 years.
- People who went to work after taking part in DORS programs contributed over \$46.6 million to the state's economy in their first year working.



### Yet, there is not enough money to help everyone who needs VR services.

- At the end of FY 2007, over 4,492 people with significant disabilities were on a waiting list for services.
- This past year, DORS served 6,855 high school students, an increase over the two previous years. However, DORS is only able to serve approximately one of five students (aged 16-21) who has a disability.

Please work with your colleagues to support increased funding for public vocational rehabilitation in Maryland.

# Maryland State Rehabilitation Council

December 2007

To the Citizens of Maryland:

The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) serves as the people's advocate for increased employment for Marylanders with disabilities, for increased awareness of the employment capabilities of people with disabilities, and for State and national policies that support those goals. Accordingly, the Council monitors and oversees Maryland's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS, the State agency that provides public vocational rehabilitation services to enable persons with disabilities to go to work) and reports its findings to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Governor of Maryland and, most importantly, the people of Maryland, as set out in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

For many years, this annual summary has had much good news to report – more Marylanders with significant disabilities were served by DORS than the year previous, more jobs were found for them paying a higher average wage than ever before. FY 2007 was no exception: DORS matched 3,097 qualified individuals to job openings in Maryland businesses (an increase over 2006), nearly 1,000 others began work and were receiving follow-along services, and more than 12,000 additional people with disabilities were in the process of preparing for work through education, skills training, career counseling and job placement services.

That's the good news. The very troubling news is that in 2007, and for the current year, DORS is an agency experiencing a very significant shortfall in resources which has resulted, and continues to result, in a significant reduction in service capacity.

**At the end of FY 2007, 4,492 people with significant and most significant disabilities were on a waiting list for DORS services.**

Currently, a Marylander with a significant disability can expect to wait about a year before services to help him or her return to work can even begin. Even those with "most significant" disabilities (e.g., blindness, quadriplegia) who, by law, are required to be given the agency's highest priority, face a four- to six-month wait for services to start.

Why? Simply stated, the demand for public vocational rehabilitation (VR) services has increased dramatically over a three-year period; conversely, the State and federal funding has not. Since June 2004, DORS has seen a 36% increase in the number of consumers receiving rehabilitation services. However, the agency's funding has risen just over 6% in the last eight years while inflation alone has risen more than 20%. The failure to keep pace with inflation results in an annual shortfall of \$5 million for Maryland.

The Council strongly believes that the chronic under-funding of Maryland's vocational rehabilitation program is short-sighted public policy. This program has long been recognized as one of the best in the country for providing a path to employment and economic self-sufficiency for persons with significant disabilities. The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will be working closely with elected officials, DORS consumers and staff and other stakeholders in the coming year to try to resolve these funding issues so that DORS can offer that path to all Marylanders with disabilities who want to go to work.

Sincerely,



Andrea Buonincontro  
2008 Chair, MSRC



Larry Abramson  
2007 Chair, MSRC

## **Additional impact of the VR funding crisis:**

- ❖ 34 staff positions were abolished in 2007, representing 7% of DORS workforce. (An additional 10 positions are projected to be abolished in 2008.)
- ❖ 14 of those positions had to be vacated by laying-off current employees.
- ❖ Effective and popular training programs for individuals with disabilities at the Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) in Baltimore were discontinued, including programs in office technology/accounting, A+ and Net+ computer technician certifications and cosmetology.
- ❖ The assisted living residential unit at WTC was closed and related medical services cut back.
- ❖ Community partners have seen their funding from DORS drop significantly, resulting in additional hardship for those non-profit agencies.

## **How does the Maryland VR program funding compare with other states?**

While federal funding for DORS has only increased 6.7%, because of an antiquated funding distribution formula, states such as Nevada, Wyoming and Arizona have seen increases over the last eight years of 54%, 44% and 39%, respectively. In addition, the President's FY 2008 budget will result in the loss of an additional \$1.4 million to Maryland, a decrease of an additional 3.6%.

## **Missed opportunity – return on investment:**

Return on investment analysis demonstrates that if the roughly 4,500 individuals with disabilities currently on the waiting list for DORS services were served and the standard percentage of those achieved successful employment, the State and federal governments would see over \$24 million in reduced public benefits and increased tax contributions over the work life of those citizens. The Social Security Administration estimates that when SSDI/SSI recipients go to work, these individuals generate a savings to the federal treasury and SS trust fund of \$7 for every dollar spent on their VR services.

**For more information about DORS, public vocational rehabilitation in Maryland, the waiting list and the current funding shortfall, please visit:  
[www.dors.state.md.us](http://www.dors.state.md.us)  
and click on DORS Annual Report**

# The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council

## Who are we?



The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) is made up of individuals interested in the success of public vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs. Members are appointed by the Governor and include representatives from education, rehabilitation, employment, industry and consumer advocacy groups. The MSRC believes that employment is critical to the quality of life of people with disabilities in Maryland. A majority

of Council members are persons with a disability.

## What is vocational rehabilitation?

VR prepares people with disabilities to go to work, stay on the job and remain independent in their homes and communities. In Maryland, public VR is provided by the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).

DORS rehabilitation counselors state-wide provide for services that may include career counseling, assistive technology, vocational training and job placement. DORS provides personalized support and employment services so individuals with disabilities can plan a path to a successful career and independent living.



## What do we do?

The MSRC takes an active and visible role in how Maryland's public vocational rehabilitation program is administered.



- ❖ We review, analyze and advise DORS regarding performance of its responsibilities and quality of its services.
- ❖ We ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are identified and addressed by state and federal legislators, service providers, employers and the community.
- ❖ We collaborate with organizations and other state councils to promote services to underserved and unserved populations.
- ❖ We develop and review State goals and priorities, and assist in the preparation of Maryland's annual State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation.

## Popular DJ Goes Back on the Air in Western Maryland



Charlie Harris is back doing what he loves at WCBC-AM Cumberland.

WCBC-AM is a lifeline for listeners, especially those who are aged or have a disability. It was ironic when Charlie Harris, a long-time Cumberland radio personality, found himself disabled -- sudden vision deterioration kept him from reading public service announcements, ads, news bulletins and other on-air materials.

For nearly two years, he was out of work. Then a local doctor referred Charlie to DORS, with the hope there might be a way to get him back into the studio.

A DORS Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) team visited Charlie's job site. Working with WCBC-AM's management, they identified solutions including a hand-held magnifying device, software to enlarge the image on his computer and a video device that lets him once again read printed material. These days, Charlie's voice once again keeps Cumberland in the know.

# Committees of the MSRC

## 2007 SRC Honors



Catonsville Counselor Lynette Cohen (right)

Each meeting, the MSRC recognizes outstanding VR professionals and others who make a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities.



Lanham Counselor Annie Norwood (left)

In May, DORS Counselors Lynette Cohen, Annie Norwood and Tracey Wyant were honored for helping consumers achieve economic self-sufficiency and discontinue Social Security benefits.



Germantown Counselor Tracey Wyant (right)

The role of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) is to review, analyze and advise on plans, needs assessments, policy issues, reports and consumer satisfaction studies to enhance the quality of and access to vocational rehabilitation services provided by DORS in order to promote the employment, economic self-sufficiency and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Much of the hands-on work of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council is performed by its six committees:

- ❖ **Blindness & Vision Services Committee: Joyce Callahan, Chair**  
The Blindness & Vision Services Committee assists in the development, monitoring and evaluation of DORS services for consumers who are blind and vision impaired, including oversight of DORS Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS). A majority of this committee's members are individuals with significant vision impairments.
- ❖ **Employment & Career Development Committee: Robert A. Burns, Chair**  
The Employment & Career Development Committee advises DORS about building relationships with businesses in order to produce quality employment outcomes for DORS consumers. It also provides oversight for programs and services at the Workforce & Technology Center.
- ❖ **Membership Committee: Kali Mallik, Chair**  
The Membership Committee recruits prospective MSRC members, staying mindful of the geographic and disability representation of the membership and compliance with the Rehabilitation Act.
- ❖ **Policy & State Plan Development Committee: Beth Lash, Chair**  
The Policy & State Plan Development Committee assists DORS in the preparation, development and monitoring of the annual State Plan for Rehabilitation Services, participates in DORS policy development and review processes, assists in planning and facilitating annual public forums and ensures that public feedback from these forums is incorporated into strategic planning.
- ❖ **Public Relations & Quality Assurance Committee: Jerry Pantaleo, Chair**  
The Public Relations & Quality Assurance Committee develops the MSRC Annual Report, coordinates legislative and other publicity activities of the MSRC, reviews and analyzes the results of DORS annual consumer satisfaction surveys and periodically reviews the Client Assistance Program and Mediation and Appeals processes.
- ❖ **Resource & Program Planning Committee: Niles Ellingson, Chair**  
The Resource & Program Planning Committee assists in the development and monitoring of DORS program plans and activities, assists in the development of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment of the rehabilitation and career needs of individuals with severe disabilities, and evaluates the effectiveness and outcomes of DORS programs and services.

# The Work of the State Rehabilitation Council

## Review, analyze and advise DORS regarding performance of its responsibilities and quality of its services

- ❖ Public meetings were held throughout Maryland to gather feedback on DORS performance from consumers and other stakeholders, and to discuss topics crucial to the future direction of the agency.
- ❖ The Council reviewed findings of the annual DORS consumer satisfaction survey. 84% of consumers who received DORS services reported overall satisfaction with their VR experience.
- ❖ The Blindness & Vision Services Committee revised and improved the consumer satisfaction survey given to consumers of DORS Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) to ensure that blind consumers could fully participate. 85% of the consumers surveyed reported being satisfied with their services from OBVS.
- ❖ The Employment & Career Development Committee had a primary role in providing advice and counsel regarding major restructuring of DORS Workforce & Technology Center due to the agency's financial crunch. The restructuring resulted in the termination of a number of WTC programs and services but, more importantly, in the formulation of new and efficient strategies to provide interdisciplinary services within the State's comprehensive rehabilitation center.
- ❖ DORS Policy Committee worked with the MSRC's Policy & State Plan Development Committee to revise and update WTC policies and procedures.
- ❖ To increase the agency's transparency to the people it serves, the MSRC had DORS policy and procedures manuals added to the DORS public website ([www.dors.state.md.us](http://www.dors.state.md.us)).
- ❖ The Resource & Program Planning Committee oversaw DORS comprehensive system of personnel development to ensure that DORS maintains a well-trained and up-to-date staff.
- ❖ The Blindness & Vision Services Committee worked with DORS Public Information staff to ensure that printed and electronic documents and websites are accessible by people who are blind or have vision impairments.
- ❖ DORS Reaching Independence through Self-Employment (RISE) program was reviewed by the Employment & Career Development Committee, which gave input into the program. At the May council meeting, the full MSRC recognized long-time members of RISE's Business Plan Review Committee.
- ❖ DORS employment retention study was reviewed and analyzed by the Employment & Career Development Committee.



MSRC member Al Sonnenstrahl moderates the public meeting at Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick

## DORS Office for Blindness & Vision Services Honored



(left to right:) MSRC Chair Larry Abramson, OBVS Bel Air Counselor Derick Serra, OBVS VR Specialist Lou Smith and MSRC Vice-Chair Kali Mallik

In September, the Council recognized Derick Serra, a DORS counselor in the Bel Air Office, and Lou Smith, a VR Specialist in Rehabilitation Technology Services at WTC. Both men are part of the Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS).

Thanks to Derick's hard work, 34 blind or visually impaired individuals were successfully employed – 170% of his goal for 2007.

In addition, rehabilitation technology specialist Lou Smith and Derick Serra reviewed each employment and job search website DORS counselors generally recommend to consumers. They tested each site for accessibility with screen readers and other assistive technology used by blind or visually impaired individuals and then developed tips for navigating those sites. Derick and Lou then went to each OBVS district statewide and gave training sessions on their findings.

# The Work of the State Rehabilitation Council

## Governor's QUEST Internship Program Recognized



(left to right:) John Wasilisin, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of Budget & Management (MDBM); Andrea Fulton, Executive Director, MDBM; Steven Serra, Recruitment & Examination Director, MDBM; and MSRC Chair Larry Abramson

Council citations were presented to Cecilia Januszkiewicz, Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management and Steven Serra, Director of Recruitment & Examination, for their work and support of the Governor's QUEST Internship Program for Persons with Disabilities. Deputy Secretary John Wasilisin accepted on behalf of Secretary Januszkiewicz.

The Governor's Quest Internship Program for Persons with Disabilities is a collaboration between MDBM's Office of Personnel Services & Benefits, the Maryland Department of Disabilities and DORS which provides meaningful work experiences in State government for individuals with disabilities. The three-month internships are voluntary, but program participants receive a stipend to cover work expenses.

Ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are identified and addressed by state and federal legislators, service providers, employers and the community

### Legislative

- ❖ Letters introducing the MSRC, DORS and vocational rehabilitation were sent to all newly elected State legislators.
- ❖ At the Annapolis legislative event, Council members paid calls on more than 60 State delegates and senators to report on the activities of DORS and the MSRC, with an emphasis on the growing waiting list and funding issues.
- ❖ In September, the MSRC implemented a Strategic Federal and State Legislative Action Plan regarding the funding situation.
  - **Federal:** The MSRC contacted Maryland's Congressional delegation and the Office of Management & Budget requesting an inquiry into the inequitable federal funding formula, which has raised some state's allocations of VR funds by more than 50% while Maryland's portion has not kept pace with the cost of living.
  - **State:** Council members contacted the Governor and their State representatives, urging support of DORS Waiting List Initiative, which requests an additional \$4.1 million in the Governor's budget to specifically target the growing waiting list. Each Council member also mobilized his or her own professional network/advocacy groups to lobby for the Waiting List Initiative.
- ❖ MSRC worked with the State Board of Education to support new State regulations that would expand eligibility to take the GED exam to individuals with disabilities who left high school with a certificate.
- ❖ The Employment & Career Development Committee gave advice & counsel regarding the Maryland Disability Employment Tax Credit.



MSRC members Joyce Callahan (left) and Carol Lewis met with State Senator James Brochin at the MSRC Legislative Day

### Service Providers, Employers & the Community

- ❖ The Employment & Career Development Committee worked with DORS to implement its philosophy of serving "Dual Customers" – Marylanders with disabilities and Maryland businesses. The committee worked with DORS Employer Services Implementation Council to provide the infrastructure necessary to ensure the agency can effectively serve the Maryland business community.
- ❖ Members of the Council met with Montgomery County community service provider St. Luke's House to discuss providing employment opportunities for persons with significant mental illness.
- ❖ The Blindness & Vision Service Committee includes ad hoc members from the major advocacy groups for the blind/vision impairment community as well as service provider organizations. Members act as advocates within their agencies/organizations/communities to network job opportunities and promote employment for individuals with disabilities.



# The Work of the State Rehabilitation Council

## Collaborate with organizations and other state councils to promote services to underserved/unserved populations

- ❖ Catherine Raggio, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities, met with the Council to discuss future plans for her department as well as the administration's plans for improving the lives of Marylanders with disabilities.
- ❖ The MSRC established a working relationship with the MDBM Disability Employment Workgroup.
- ❖ The MSRC, DORS and Parents' Place of Maryland held a teleconference for parents on services for students with disabilities transitioning from school to employment or higher education.
- ❖ MSRC members served as one-on-one mentors to high school students at the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum, sponsored by DORS, MSDE Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Maryland Department of Disabilities and other agencies and community programs.
- ❖ The Council was active in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR).
- ❖ Council members participated in national SRC teleconferences on topics of concern for State Rehabilitation Councils nationwide.
- ❖ The MSRC issued letters in support of DORS applications for a Universal Design for Learning grant, a US Department of Education Employment & Recreation Program grant and a US Department of Education Transition grant.



DORS Director Robert Burns, MSRC 2007 Chair Larry Abramson, MSRC 2008 Chair Andrea Buonincontro and MDOD Secretary Catherine Raggio

## Develop and review State goals and priorities, and assist in the preparation of the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation

- ❖ As required by the Rehabilitation Act, the MSRC contributed to and reviewed the annual State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation, which can be found at [www.dors.state.md.us](http://www.dors.state.md.us).
- ❖ Two Council members were part of the team collecting and analyzing data regarding the needs of individuals with disabilities throughout the state for the triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The full Council reviewed the final report, which can be found at [www.dors.state.md.us](http://www.dors.state.md.us).
- ❖ The Blindness & Vision Services Committee worked with the Maryland Department of Disabilities on the State Disabilities Plan in areas relating to individuals who are blind or have vision impairments.
- ❖ The Council gave feedback to the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on ways DORS could be improved, which was incorporated into RSA's triennial review and audit of the agency.

## Three Business Leaders Honored



(left to right:) Deric Mims, MSRC Chair Larry Abramson, Joyce Lehrer, RISE President Morris Tranen and Fred Rigney

In May, the MSRC honored three individuals for the countless hours they've spent helping individuals with disabilities pursue their dreams of becoming entrepreneurs. The honorees were:

- ❖ Deric Mims, Senior Vice-President of Sun Trust Bank's Community Affairs Division
- ❖ Fred Rigney, a recent Wachovia Bank retiree who was the former Senior Vice President of the Community Development Group
- ❖ Joyce Lehrer, Disabilities Service Coordinator at the Howard County Department of Citizens Services

They provide business guidance, practical advice and constructive feedback to prospective entrepreneurs as members of the Business Plan Review Committee of DORS Reach Independence through Self-Employment (RISE) program.

RISE helps people with physical, mental, sensory and developmental disabilities plan and start their own businesses.

# DORS VR Programs by the Numbers

## Successful Store Manager Reaches Out to Others



MBEPB manager Shiffon Gray counts the change at her convenience store.

As a licensed vendor in the Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (MBEPB), Shiffon Gray manages a convenience store at the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration in Silver Spring.

MBEPB provides opportunities and comprehensive training for legally blind individuals to operate retail concession, gift or food services businesses in public facilities. Since Shiffon became manager of the site in 2006, sales have increased 12%.

Shiffon often reaches out to other individuals with disabilities, offering job interview, work tryout and job shadowing experiences to other DORS consumers. She gives them an opportunity to improve their interviewing skills and gain valuable retail experience for their resumes as they begin their quest for a career as successful and fulfilling as Shiffon's.



- ❖ DORS matched **3,097 qualified individuals to job openings** in Maryland businesses. **Another 966 were working** and getting follow-along services that will allow them to move into permanent employment.
- ❖ DORS assisted **77 Maryland businesses** with worksite reviews so they can hire new employees or keep valued employees with disabilities.
- ❖ **227 individuals who are blind or visually impaired were successfully employed.** Their average wage was **\$14.73/hour**. **Another 76 were working** and getting follow-along services.
- ❖ DORS served **6,855 students with disabilities** to prepare them to move from high school to employment, higher education or training, an increase over the previous years.
- ❖ DORS helped **1,321 people with significant disabilities** move from receiving public benefits to becoming **employed taxpayers**.
- ❖ After taking part in programs at DORS Workforce & Technology Center (WTC), **743 individuals went to work**.
- ❖ WTC served **1,001 transitioning youths** with specialized residential and day programs designed to help high school students with disabilities reach their work and independent living goals.
- ❖ At the end of FY 2007, **73 individuals with brain injuries** were taking part in programs and services and **20 were employed** with the assistance of job coaches as part of the Governor's Employment Initiative for Persons with Acquired Brain Injuries.
- ❖ **90 high school students with disabilities earned work experience** in DORS-supported summer employment programs.
- ❖ **20 DORS consumers** successfully completed the Governor's QUEST Internship Program for Persons with Disabilities, which provides three-month internships in State government.



# What Can DORS Do for Maryland Businesses?

The MSRC supports DORS in its efforts to help Maryland's business community recruit qualified workers and build a diverse workforce. Members of the MSRC are part of the Employer Service Implementation Council, which builds corporate partnerships and streamlines intra-agency communication to better serve Maryland's workforce.

## Match qualified applicants with job openings

- ❖ Pre-screened, qualified applicants ready for work, many with successful completion of vocational training, higher education and work preparation services.
- ❖ Workforce & Technology Center graduates with valuable job skills including computer-aided drafting, office technology and security.



## Funding for on-the-job training

- ❖ Train new employees to the specific needs of a business.
- ❖ Arrange reimbursement for a percentage of the trainee's wages.
- ❖ Follow-along services to the trainee and employer.

## Identify and obtain technologies to increase workplace productivity and success



- ❖ Customized magnifiers, lighting, computer screen enlargement or reading software for people who have difficulty reading standard print.
- ❖ Modified workstations to increase the productivity of people with orthopedic and other disabilities.
- ❖ Computer software and adaptive keyboards for people who have difficulty using a standard mouse and keyboard.

## No-cost worksite consultation

- ❖ On-the-job worksite consultations help employers hire qualified workers and retain valued employees with disabilities.

## Provide services for workplace disability issues

- ❖ Guidance about federal and state disability tax credits.
- ❖ Worksite assessments and recommendations.
- ❖ Accessible worksites and services for employees and customers.
- ❖ Staff training about disabilities and disability myths.
- ❖ Inclusion of candidates with disabilities in recruitment.
- ❖ Information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## Ongoing employment consultation

- ❖ Employer satisfaction with personal follow-up for at least the employee's first three months on the job.

## Partnership Initiates New Career Program



Proud graduates of WTC's first Personal Care Aide class

Nine students celebrated completion of the first Personal Care Aide training program at DORS Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) in 2007. The result of a unique partnership between DORS and ActionTemp Services, these students felt confident and ready to begin their new careers assisting elderly, ill or disabled individuals in adult day care centers, nursing homes and other facilities.

Part of WTC's Customized & Partnership Training, the intensive two-week course featured ActionTemp Services instructors providing classroom lecture and hands-on practice. Then the students gained practical experience working with elderly patients at an adult medical daycare.

After graduation, WTC staff placed the students in internships at care facilities staffed by ActionTemp Services, with the goal to become ActionTemp active employees at the end of the internship and start their careers in the health care industry.

# What Can DORS Do for Maryland Students?

## WTC Students Gain Real World Experience



WTC Environmental Services student preps the floors in the State Center Café

Students in WTC's Environmental Services program put their new floor care skills to the test in a real world setting as they removed a five-year accumulation of old wax and polish from the State Center Café in the State Office Building in Baltimore. This on-the-job experience came about because of a new partnership between DORS, the State of Maryland's Department of General Services and the Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (MBEPB), which manages the café.

Supervised by their WTC Environmental Services instructor, three students stripped the floors, cleaned and re-waxed them over two mornings, between the breakfast and lunch rushes at the busy café.

This partnership illustrates WTC's increased focus on creating opportunities for students in career training programs to gain valuable work experience in real world settings before they graduate from WTC.

The MSRC believes that students with disabilities should be able to make good choices about their lives. Young adults with disabilities should live and work alongside people who do not have disabilities. The MSRC supports and encourages DORS programs that give students with disabilities the specialized help they need to take their place in the world.



DORS counselors throughout Maryland help students with disabilities get ready to make the transition from high school to training, higher education or employment. They talk with students and their families about choices for the future, arrange for specialized career assessments, place students in internships or mentoring activities as well as provide for assistive technology services.

### Programs & Services for Eligible Students:



- ❖ **Career decision-making, counseling and referral**—DORS rehabilitation counselors are skilled in helping students explore options about jobs and the needed training to get those jobs.
- ❖ **Assistive technology**—DORS is a leader in technology services that help a person get or keep a job. Worksite accommodations include adapted computers and workstations, and mobility aids.
- ❖ **Vocational training**—Many job-training programs are available as well as specialized training that helps students adjust to working. Using financial guidelines, DORS may help pay for books, tools, materials, college or technical training.
- ❖ **Independent living skills training**—To help students reach a greater degree of independence, certain programs teach the basics of household and community living.
- ❖ **Job search, placement and job-keeping services**—DORS rehabilitation specialists help develop job-seeking skills or may refer students to other agencies that provide these services. Follow-up is provided for at least 90 days after the job begins.
- ❖ **Supported employment/job coaching**—DORS may provide funding for job coaching services. Job coaches teach work skills and behaviors, often at the worksite.
- ❖ **Medical rehabilitation services**—DORS may supply certain medical services such as short-term counseling, visual aids and prosthetics.





## 2007 Members

### **Lawrence Abramson**

**Director of Vocational Services, St. Luke's House, Inc.**  
Immediate Past Chair

### **Thomas Barkley**

**Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services,  
Maryland State Department of Education**  
Member, Public Relations & Quality Assurance Committee

### **John Brennan**

**Chief of Staff, Maryland Department of Disabilities**  
Member, Blindness & Vision Services Committee

### **Andrea Buonincontro**

**Executive Director, Making Choices for Independent Living**  
MSRC Chairperson  
Member, Policy & State Plan Development Committee

### **Robert Burns**

**Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services**  
Chairperson, Employment & Career Development Committee

### **Joyce Callahan**

**ADA Compliance Advocate, Maryland Transit Administration**  
Chairperson, Blindness & Vision Services Committee

### **Charles Crawford**

**Public Advocate**  
Member, Blindness & Vision Services Committee

### **Tim Daly**

**The Access Group**  
Member, Employment & Career Development Committee

### **Ross Edwards**

**Ross & Tine Transportation, Owner**  
Member, Employment & Career Development Committee

### **Niles Ellingson**

**Director of Vocational Services, Helping Up Mission**  
Chair, Resource & Program Planning Committee

### **Beth Lash**

**Client Assistance Program Director, DORS**  
Chairperson, Policy & State Plan Development Committee  
Member, Public Relations & Quality Assurance Committee

## SRC Bids Farewell to Long-Time Council Member



DORS Director Robert Burns (right) and incoming MSRC Vice-Chair Kali Mallik (left) present retiring MSRC member Terri Massie-Burrell with a token of the Council's appreciation.

As director of Towson University's Academic Achievement Center and a six-year veteran of the MSRC, Terri Massie-Burrell is especially interested in the issues that face students with disabilities. "As a child growing up (with a disability) I did not have those services," she says.

With the MSRC, Ms. Massie-Burrell has served on policy and planning committees for such major initiatives as the High School/High Tech Grant, the Transition Task Force and the creation of DORS Office for Blindness & Vision Services. She served as Council chairperson and has met with numerous state and federal legislators to advocate for the public vocational rehabilitation program.

As her term-limited time with the MSRC comes to its end, the Council salutes Terri Massie-Burrell.

# 2007 Members

## Abramson Ends Tenure as MSRC Chairperson



Incoming MSRC Vice-Chair Kali Mallik (right) and DORS Director Robert Burns (left) thank Larry Abramson for his hard work and dedication chairing the Council for the past two years.

In addition to his role as MSRC chairperson since 2005, Larry Abramson is also the Director of Vocational Services at St. Luke's House, a community-based psychiatric rehabilitation program in Montgomery County.

At St. Luke's house, he has developed award-winning employment programs serving individuals with serious and persistent mental illness and transitioning youth with emotional disabilities. The Back to Work and Career Transition programs are nationally known for their high outcomes and services to the business community.

As Mr. Abramson turns the MSRC gavel over to incoming chairperson Andrea Buonincontro, the Council is grateful for his years of leadership and commitment.



### **Carol Lewis**

#### **Rehabilitation Counselor, DORS**

Member, Resource & Program Planning Committee

### **Kali Mallik**

#### **Public Advocate**

MSRC Vice Chairperson

Member, MSRC Employment & Career Development Committee

### **Mary Manzoni**

#### **Humanim, Inc.**

Member, MSRC Resource & Program Planning Committee

### **Gerald Pantaleo, Jr.**

#### **Educator/Public Advocate**

Chairperson, MSRC Public Relations & Quality Assurance Committee

### **Anne Rea**

#### **Director of Employment & Resource Management Services, Way Station**

Member, MSRC Resource & Program Planning Committee

### **Eric Selzenow**

#### **Executive Director, Governor's Workforce Investment Board**

Member, MSRC Employment & Career Development Committee

### **Michael Shaw**

#### **Academic Advisor, Baltimore City Community College**

Member, MSRC Policy & State Plan Development Committee

### **Alfred Sonnenstrahl**

#### **Public Advocate**

Member, MSRC Policy & State Plan Development Committee

### **Josie Thomas**

#### **Executive Director, Parent's Place of Maryland, Inc.**

Member, MSRC Policy & State Plan Development Committee

### **Teresa Uttermohlen**

#### **Public Advocate**

Member, MSRC Blindness & Vision Services Committee

### **Jennifer Whitcomb**

#### **Executive Director, Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc.**

Member, MSRC Public Relations & Quality Assurance Committee

# Maryland State Rehabilitation Council 2008 Meeting Schedule

MSRC members assist DORS in carrying out its mission and advocate for Marylanders with disabilities at quarterly meetings, in extensive sub-committee work and with informal consultation.

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>LOCATION/TIME</b>
February 5, 2008	Legislative Event Annapolis, Maryland
March 2008	Statewide Public Forums
May 7, 2008	Workforce & Technology Center Baltimore, Maryland 4:30 – 7:00 pm
August 2008	Executive Committee Retreat
September 17, 2008	Workforce & Technology Center Baltimore, Maryland 4:30 – 7:00 pm
November 12, 2008	Workforce & Technology Center Baltimore, Maryland 4:30 – 7:00 pm

If you are interested in obtaining more information about the MSRC or would like to be considered for membership, please contact:

### **MSRC Membership Chairperson**

c/o Division of Rehabilitation Services  
2301 Argonne Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21218

410-554-9437

Toll-free: 1-888-554-0334

TTY: 410-554-9411

Fax: 410-554-9412

Email: [dors@dors.state.md.us](mailto:dors@dors.state.md.us)

*Braille and large print copies and other formats of this report may be obtained by calling 1-888-554-0334.*

**For more information about the  
Maryland State Rehabilitation Council,  
its meetings and activities:**

**[www.dors.state.md.us/DORS/SRC](http://www.dors.state.md.us/DORS/SRC)**

## **BELIEF STATEMENT**

**The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council (MSRC) believes that employment is critical to the quality of citizenship of people with disabilities in Maryland.**

**The MSRC advocates in Maryland for:**

- ❖ Increased employment for people with disabilities.**
- ❖ Increased awareness of individuals with disabilities and their employment capabilities.**
- ❖ State policies that encourage and support employment.**

### **MARYLAND STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**

**2301 Argonne Drive, Baltimore MD 21218  
410-554-9437 TTY 410-554-9411  
Fax: 410-554-9412 Toll Free: 1-888-554-0334  
e-mail: [dors@dors.state.md.us](mailto:dors@dors.state.md.us)  
[www.dors.state.md.us/src](http://www.dors.state.md.us/src)**