

# HORIZONS

SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

## SCVRA honors Walterboro woman as Client of the Year for 2004

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association honored Coretha Daniels-Smith of Walterboro as the 2004 Client of the Year at its annual conference in Columbia on March 22.

Daniels-Smith came to SCVRD in 2002. She had been unable to find an appropriate vocation but, inspired by her dying father, she was determined to succeed and provide a stable environment for her six children.

At the Walterboro area office, Daniels-Smith received counseling and guidance to help her deal with her disability and to focus on employment possibilities. The career planning and employment team assessed her abilities and helped her form a plan to reach her goal of becoming a certified nursing assistant. She received job-readiness training through outsource work performed at the work training center and obtained her GED diploma through adult education classes at the center. The agency arranged for nursing training at Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center.

She became a certified nursing assistant in June 2003 and began employment at an Orangeburg nursing facility. Daniels-Smith enjoys her new career and her



**Coretha Daniels-Smith, left, with her counselor, Kimberly White-Footman.**

home life with her husband and children, and she no longer relies on Social Security disability benefits.

Recognized for their roles in Daniels-Smith's success were Walterboro area staffers Kimberly White-Footman, Suzanne Hill, Richard Chapman, Tammy Clements, Rosalind Roberts, John Turbeville, Glen Ackerman, Beth Hudson and Aleck Williams.

## Eastover woman named Runner-up Client of Year

Tiffany Hasty of Eastover was honored as Runner-up Client of the Year at the SCVRA meeting.

Hasty works as a kitchen helper for Sodexo Campus Services, which provides food services for the

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**Enabling eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to prepare for, achieve and maintain competitive employment.**

## SCVRA honors business partners around the state

Business partnerships are at the heart of the vocational rehabilitation program. Businesses recognized during the SCVRA meeting included:

■ The Westinghouse Savannah River Site, for its partnership with the Aiken Work Training Center. Clients at the center work on air hoses, air-distribution systems, air-testing planchets, sewn items, glass vials and cap assemblies for SRS. Between 10 and 25 clients a day receive valuable job training and provide a high level of quality workmanship on the contracts. The center also stores and ships products to SRS as needed.

■ ILPEA Inc., for its partnership with the Anderson Work Training Center. ILPEA manufactures gasket material for refrigerator doors. During the process, excess vinyl is produced. For the past two years, clients at the center reclaimed usable materials that can be recycled and put back into production. The contract has grown so that VR centers in Laurens, Spartanburg and Greenville also are involved.

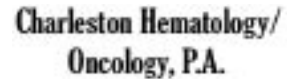
■ Service Source Employment Services, for its partnership with the Beaufort Work Training Center. Service Source provides workers for the mess halls at Parris Island. In two years, more than 40 VR clients have been placed through Service Source as cashiers, servers, and in food preparation

and utility maintenance.

■ Linde Lift Truck Corporation, for its partnership with the Berkeley-Dorchester area office. Rather than terminate employees whose jobs are jeopardized by a disability, Linde Lift uses the Job Retention Services program, resulting in improved work quality, staff relationships and length of employment.

■ Charleston Hematology/Oncology, for its use of the Job Retention Services program through the Charleston area office.





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## Rep. Howard receives award

Richland County Rep. Leon Howard received the Legislative Award at the SCVRA meeting.

SCVRD Commissioner Larry Bryant said Howard's behind-the-scenes work has had a major impact in helping to change or reverse negative legislation proposed for the agency.

"He can always be counted on to keep us abreast of upcoming bills that could have a negative impact on our clients," Bryant said.



**Howard**

## Hill, Gum awarded Medals of Excellence

SCVRD Commissioner Larry C. Bryant awarded two Commissioner's Medals of Excellence at the meeting.

They went to **Susanne Hill**, manager of the Walterboro Work Training Center, and **Betty Gum**, a DDS disability examiner in Columbia.



**Hill**

In presenting Hill's award, Bryant noted her positive attitude and willingness to get the job done.

"She has made it a duty of each production staff member in the training center to place job-ready clients in jobs they can be successful in," Bryant said. "She has instilled her great sense of teamwork in her staff and takes on any task asked of her with enthusiasm."



**Gum**

Bryant cited Gum's ability to quickly master complex skills and her willingness to take on additional work for the achievement of team goals.

"Betty demonstrates a genuine concern for the well-being of both her colleagues and her claimants," Bryant said. "...she is the consummate professional in dealing with the sensitive, emotional issues that arise in processing disability claims."

## SCVRA recognizes partners

A number of partnerships were recognized during the SCVRA meeting, including program partners, VR partners and mentors.

### Program partners

Program partners honored were Paul Barnes, regional commissioner for the Social Security Administration's Atlanta Region and Dr. Stan Butkus, state director of the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.



**Barnes**

Barnes was cited for his willingness to obtain systems equipment and software that allowed Disability Determination Services to open a State Claims Medicaid Unit; for obtaining SSA authorization to hire new employees to supplement the gap the TERI program will begin to make on the SCVRD workforce this year; and his commitment to management principles that includes balance, teamwork and a definition of quality encompassing accuracy, timeliness, cost effectiveness, productivity and good public service.

Butkus was honored for his agency's cooperation with SCVRD on such issues as complementary services and client needs that challenge resource limits. Both agencies have benefited from the partnership, which has enabled substantial resources to be redirected to client services.



**Butkus**

### VR partners

VR partners are former clients who have agreed to help tell the SCVRD story. Recognized at the meeting were Louise Dunkin of Florence and Carlos Johnson of Spartanburg.

Dunkin is a dispatcher with the Marion County Sheriff's Department. Last year she participated in the Leadership Development Initiative in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. She also is active on the Loan Review Panel for the Assistive Technology and Telework grant programs.



**Dunkin**

Johnson is a patient transporter at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center. He was cited for his willingness to educate legislators, share his experiences with the local newspaper and give speeches on behalf of SCVRD.



**Johnson**

### Mentors

Mentors who participated in Disability Mentoring Day last October were honored for their willingness to provide a real-life career experience to a person with a disability.

They were: Pat Bresnahan of Richland County; Craig Burgess of B.P. Barber & Associates Inc.; Christy Burton of Springdale Elementary School; Lynn Goodman of SCVRD's Information Technology Department; Eric James of Nexsen Pruet LLC; Peggy Lane of Abella's Spa; and Ella Marshall of the University of South Carolina.

Also, Cedric Nicholes of Salon 2000; J. Glyn Smith of Palmetto Utility Protection Services; Janet Spires of SCVRD's Evaluation Center; Stan Weatherall of Sign It Quick; and Roxie Williamson of the S.C. Chamber of Commerce.

# VR staffers praised for local case work

SCVRA honored staff members from across the state for their work on local cases of the year. They were:

## **Aiken**

Jim Jurgens, Cindy Johnson, Luanna Childers, Darlene Conley, Jerlyn Lee and Glenda Addley worked with a man who was battling alcoholism.

He received extensive counseling and guidance as well as job-readiness training. He did a job tryout at a social service agency and was hired. He now helps place VR clients on job tryouts and community-based evaluations.

## **Anderson**

Rick Poole, Gary Snipes, Allen Caldwell, Charles Crite, Wendy Johnson, Margaret Norryce, Mandy Makison and Cheryl Wilson helped a man who began job-readiness training three years ago after he graduated from high school.

He was placed at a nursing home as a custodian and, with the help of a job coach, was able to learn a very detailed cleaning procedure required by the facility.

## **Beaufort**

Greggory Gilbert, Joycestea Pringle, Gail Murray, Melissa Weber and Cecilie Grant-Pinckney assisted a woman who is deaf.

After attending the S.C. School for the Deaf and Blind in Spartanburg, she returned to the Beaufort Work Training Center. She also was involved in disability classes and her counselor learned sign language to better communicate with her.

The client was placed as a salad/hot bar attendant at a family restaurant and has become one of the restaurant's most industrious, committed and dependable workers.

## **Berkeley-Dorchester**

Beatrice Mole, Chantal Etling, the job-readiness training staff and the Career Planning and Employment unit helped a man who has schizophrenia. He also was a substance abuser, but he has been sober for more than three years. He had not held a job since 1981 and was receiving Social Security disability benefits.

His counselor, job coach and JRT staff worked very hard on behavior modifications with this client. He was placed as a bagger at a grocery store where the employer knew him and wanted to give him a chance. The employer is pleased with his attendance, diligence and enthusiasm.

## **Charleston**

Lynne Rich, Jean McMillan, Vivian Pinckney, Heather Glasgow, Jennifer Jerome, Morgan Fancher, Jerry Rodgers, Kelly Ray and the Comprehensive Center staff teamed up to help a man who had suffered a massive stroke.

The client, who was referred to VR through the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program, had severe residual limitations, including needing a cane to walk, paralysis of the left side of his face resulting in poor articulation and the inability to blink his left eye, as well as deafness in his left ear.

His stamina and strength were significantly reduced and he was unable to work at his previous job in the construction industry. He received substantial counseling and guidance, career planning and employment services, and job-readiness training at the area office and an assessment at the Center for Comprehensive Programs.

He was placed as a bagger at

a local grocery store where he is considered one of their best and most reliable employees.

## **Conway**

Holly Hoover, Gwen Blondmonville, Donna Turner, the Conway Work Training Center production staff, and the staffs of the Evaluation, Muscular Development and Computer Training centers assisted a man who had injured his knee and was unable to return to his job in construction and carpentry.

He had undergone multiple surgeries, but suffered chronic pain, degenerative changes, arthritis and atrophy in his knee. He also has insulin-dependent diabetes.

The client needed to improve his stamina and work tolerance and seek training in another line of work. He spent a month at the Evaluation Center and then was accepted into the Computer Training Program.

He is now a self-employed CADD technician, designing cabinets, doing kitchen remodeling plans and drawing house blueprints.

## **Florence**

Patricia Gilliard, David Wiggins and Betty Cooper from the Kingstree sub-office assisted a man who had his leg amputated above the knee following a truck accident.

The client had worked as a truck driver and backhoe operator. But after the 1992 accident, he had significant difficulties during his recuperation and readjustment period.

He received numerous hours of counseling and guidance and career planning and employment services. Based on his interests, physical limitations, aptitude and love for

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## Local

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children, he wanted to become a social worker. He received a prosthesis, along with tuition and transportation assistance while he attended college. After graduation, he became employed as a school adjustment counselor.

### Greenville

Blaine White, Cathy Jollie, Margaret Heatherly, Linda Looper, Betty Ann Landrum, Charles Clark and the Comprehensive Center staff worked with a man who had severely injured his back.

The client had undergone five surgeries but still had chronic pain. He was receiving Social Security benefits but was unable to provide adequately for his wife and their three children.

An extensive stay at the Evaluation Center determined that the client was a good candidate for college training. With VR assistance, he attended a local university and graduated with a degree in mathematics and a GPA of 3.6.

He is working as a high school math teacher and is no longer receiving Social Security benefits.

### Laurens-Greenwood

Shannon Lindsay, Elizabeth Cann, Jonelle Boozer, Melissa McDowell, Renie Adair, Tim Gary, Wade Brewington, the Newberry Team and the Laurens Work Training Center staff worked together to help a Newberry woman who had been in a house fire.

The woman suffered burns over 90 percent of her body. Scarring from the burns had caused loss of function in her hands and reduced the range of motion in her legs. She entered the Laurens Work Training Center and quickly moved into the

house-maintenance contract. She was placed as a housekeeper at a college where she has excelled at her work.

### Lexington

Jennifer Unekis, Iris Kleinlercher, Barbara Kinard and Debra Temples from the Lexington office; Debbie Triplett, Jim Stroman, Freda King and Birt Dowling from the Evaluation Center; Jeff Blackwell and Rachel Harjes from the Computer Training Program; and the Muscular Development Center staff teamed up to help a man who suffered from seizures.

The man lost his job as a computer programmer because of complications from his seizures and side effects from the medications he was taking. He had seen several doctors, been prescribed several medications and even had surgery, but the seizures continued uncontrolled.

At VR, he received a neuropsychological assessment and a comprehensive assessment at the Evaluation Center as well as an assessment of his computer skills at the Computer Training Program. He participated in job-readiness training, career planning and employment classes, community-based evaluation and on-the-job training.

He was placed as a technical phone support agent at a communications company.

### Marlboro

Joe Elvington, JoAnn Price, Fran Rivers, Jennifer Daniels, Betty Winburn, Judy Fullard, Alan Altman and Julia Ellerbee assisted a man who had suffered a traumatic brain injury from a gunshot wound.

The man had some paralysis on his left side, couldn't use his left hand and had limited range of motion with his left leg. He also had chronic severe pain, short-

term memory loss, was easily frustrated and agitated, had bouts of depression and anxiety and seizures that were controlled with medication.

With counseling and guidance, job-readiness training, career planning and employment services, supported employment and job placement, the client is working as a bagger at a grocery store.

### Oconee-Pickens

Sam Medders, Libby Hill, Jane Emerson, Tameka Graham, Janice Ayers, Lillian Rochester and Layneigh Scott of the Oconee-Pickens area office and Russell Richey Chen, a benefits specialist for S.C. Pathways Toward Employment, helped a woman who had problems with her knee.

The woman came to VR through Social Security's Ticket to Work program. She had undergone several operations on her right knee and eventually required surgery, which fused the bone and created a limited range of motion.

With financial support from VR, she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and, with the assistance of a job coach, found employment as a social worker at a human services organization. She has since become office manager for a general contractor.

### Orangeburg

Chloe Freeman, Gloria Dean, Vincent Pendarvis and Kay Union of the Orangeburg area office and SCPTe benefits specialist Dwight Cooper worked with a man who has mental disabilities.

The client came to VR with no work experience. He was having trouble concentrating and completing tasks as well as with interaction with peers, family members and authority figures.

Family members were concerned

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## Local

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that he might lose his Social Security benefits if he got a job, but after talking with the benefits specialist, they became more supportive.

He received counseling and guidance, and did a job tryout as a grocery store stocker. He and the job coach worked on the skills needed to stock shelves, move from one task to another and stay focused.

The store manager was so impressed, he hired the client.

### Rock Hill

Gary Conrad, Kathy Brownlee, Andy Harrell, Frankie Griffin, Tina Stuber, Phil Hall, Connie Agee and Penny Smart of the Lancaster office and SCPTTE benefits specialist Tom Mayne worked together to help a woman who has multiple disabilities.

The woman had orthopedic injuries caused by a traffic accident. She also was dealing with bipolar disorder, diabetes, agoraphobia and poly-substance abuse.

Although she was receiving Social Security benefits, she wanted to return to work. The benefits specialist assisted her in developing a Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) to achieve a vocational goal.

Following VR services, she was able to overcome many obstacles and was placed as an office assistant. She since has been promoted to office manager.

### Spartanburg

David Turnipseed, Jean Knox, Donna Scoggins, Pauline Shippy, Barbara Farmer, Wayne Mathis, Joan Crain, Holmes Bishop, Ernie Hardin, Bill Wyatt, Barry Waddell, Jim Hawkins, LeShaunda Splawn, DeCole Gallman and James Scoggin of the Gaffney office and

SCPTTE benefits specialist Tom Mayne helped a man with kidney problems.

The man had completed high school but had little work experience or training. He had been on Social Security benefits for much of his life due to chronic renal failure and severe visual acuity problems. He received a kidney transplant in 2002.

The client was provided with job-readiness training, career planning and employment services, and job coaching.

He also was involved in two community-based evaluations and, due to his success at one, he is working in the service industry.

### Sumter

Carol Lawson, Agnes McDaniel, Louise Kay, Doritha Dix and Jerry Rodgers worked with a woman with mental disabilities.

The woman's symptoms included anxiety, restlessness, depression, interrupted sleep patterns, decreased energy level and appetite, lack of concentration and irritability.

After VR services of counseling and guidance, physical and mental restoration for compliance with mental health appointments and medications, and adjustment training, the client was hired as a silverware roller at a restaurant.

Follow-up services revealed a totally new person. The client went from a woman hiding under a big, brown floppy hat and sunglasses to a lady with confidence, self-esteem, beauty, grace and lots of smiles.

## First Kuffel award given

The first Richard M. Kuffel Excellence in Education Award was presented to Kathy Fender of the S.C. Department of Education Office of Exceptional Children.



**Fender**

In presenting the award, SCVRD Case Services Director Kerry Mandeville said Fender "has been a tireless, dedicated proponent of providing the best possible services to help prepare students with disabilities for work...and for life.

"She has a gift for bringing people together and a unique ability to bring out the best in others," Mandeville said.

Kuffel, an SCVRD client services consultant, passed away in November of 2003. The

award pays "tribute to his work on behalf of students with disabilities in whom he saw the promise of lives of greater fulfillment and productivity," Mandeville said.

Kuffel was instrumental in shaping the agency's school transition program.



**Kuffel**

## Berkeley-Dorchester wins Social Security Achievement Award

SCVRD's Berkeley-Dorchester area office received the Social Security Achievement Award for its outstanding service to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries last year.

The office had the highest percentage of employed clients among that population, resulting in a substantial reimbursement from the Social Security Administration.

## Business

*Continued from page 2*

■ The Sun News, for its partnership with the Conway area office. The newspaper has provided job-readiness training opportunities and has hired several clients in production jobs. It also provided a successful job tryout as a reporter for a client who had just finished college. In addition The Sun News has used Job Retention Services for the past 15 years.



■ GE Supply, for its partnership with the Florence Work Training Center.

The company distributes products to the electrical industry. Clients at the center do a variety of outsource tasks for GE Supply, including assembling wiring harnesses for MRI magnets, cutting tubing, and date-coding all tape and epoxy used at GE.



GE Supply

■ Wholesale Glass Distributors Inc., for its partnership with the Greenville area office.

Over the past two years, the company has provided 15 job tryouts for VR clients and has hired nine of them. They are warehouse workers, drivers, maintenance workers, customer service representatives, data entry clerks, glass buffers and production workers.

Wholesale Glass  
Distributors, Inc.

■ Richloom Home Fashions, for its outstanding history in both job placement and job-readiness training for VR clients.



More than 50 clients have been trained through this relationship and Richloom has hired 21 clients at its plants, which are located in both the Laurens and

Greenwood areas.

■ Love Chevrolet Hummer, for its partnership with the Lexington area office.

In the past two years alone, Love has hired about 20 VR clients in jobs ranging from cashiers to porters to parts delivery drivers. The company provides worksite accommodations and flexible work schedules for employees with disabilities so they can attend adult education classes and keep appointments related to their disabilities.



■ Georgia-Pacific in Darlington, for its partnership with the Hartsville Work Training Center.



Georgia-Pacific has provided the center with general labor contract work that has accounted for nearly 17,000 man hours in the past year. Each month, an average of 23 clients get job-readiness training thanks to this partnership.

■ Diversco Integrated Services, for its business partnership with the Oconee-Pickens office. The company offers community-based evaluations and job tryouts for VR clients. It has hired 10 VR clients.



■ Claflin University, for its consistent commitment to providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



The university has partnered with the Orangeburg VR staff to place at least 10 clients in positions in the dining hall, maintenance department and housekeeping department. If a placement doesn't

work out, Claflin is willing to try again to find the right combination.

■ Thompson Industrial Services was honored for its commitment to the Job Retention Services program through the Rock Hill area office.



Thompson  
Industrial Services

Thompson employees have received counseling, guidance and inpatient treatment to retain their jobs and enhance job performance.

■ Nestlé Prepared Foods in



Gaffney, for its partnership with the Gaffney office and the Spartanburg area office.

Nestlé has used Job Retention Services for 20 years. It has had very positive results at Nestlé, and the company's managers have become outspoken supporters of VR within the local business community.

The company also is a charter member of the VR Business Partnership Network.

■ International Paper, for its long-time partnership with the Sumter Work Training Center. It has provided consistent job-readiness training for 16 Sumter clients a day.



■ The U.S. Marine Corps facility at Parris Island, for its partnership with the Walterboro Work Training Center.



The center has produced target frames used on the shooting range, repaired footlockers, refurbished office furniture, and assembled footlockers for recruits.

This partnership keeps about 10 clients busy year-round.

## Hasty

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University of South Carolina.

Hasty was born three months prematurely and was given little chance of survival due to fluid on the brain and resulting seizures. She fought her way through a childhood filled with medical and developmental challenges and eventually received a special education certificate at a local high school.

She was determined to go to work and sought services from SCVRD's Richland area office.

She received counseling and guidance services, job readiness training, and career planning and employment services.

At the Richland Work Training Center, she learned work skills and how to adjust to the frustrations that occur with the first exposure to a work environment.

As she gained confidence and a spirited, motivated attitude, SCVRD staff knew Hasty was ready

to find a job. Her job coach, Philip McNeil, arranged for several job tryouts, and eventually Hasty was hired by Sodexo, where she cleans tables and chairs, fills salt and pepper shakers, and performs other dining area tasks.

Sodexo has a long history of hiring people with disabilities and received a Business Partner award at the conference.

Hasty now earns a paycheck, pays her bills, does her own shopping, and has an apartment of her own through the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.

"I'm very proud of her. I never

imagined she'd be able to do all the things she's doing now," said her mother Katherine Dow.

Richland area staff members who were honored for their roles in Hasty's success were Gardenia Coleman, Philip McNeil, Bernard Grant, Gwen Austin, and the "Groundbreakers" team.



*Tiffany Hasty, right, with her counselor, Gardenia Coleman*

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department reports that it printed 5,000 copies of this newsletter at a cost of \$292, or about \$.06 a copy.

**NEW**  
**HORIZONS**

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