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# HORIZONS

SOUTH CAROLINA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DEPARTMENT

## Client of Year, Kingstree team honored at SCVRA conference



### Saying thanks

Faye Parsons thanks her team and SCVRD after receiving her award from Commissioner P. Charles LaRosa Jr.

Faye Parsons of Hemingway was named 1998 Client of the Year during the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association's annual meeting held Feb. 21-23 in Greenville.

Parsons was born with a severe musculo-skeletal deformity and had always needed a crutch to get around. She came to the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department's Kingstree office in 1990 after her disability had forced her to quit her job as an accounting clerk.

The department provided tuition assistance so Parsons could finish her studies at Coastal Carolina University, but her physical condition interfered with her plans to become a teacher.

Doctors recommended that Parsons have her undeveloped left leg amputated so she could be fitted with a prosthesis to improve her mobility. She went through several fittings to find the right prosthesis and then spent several years in physical therapy at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston. Finally, for the first time in her life, she could walk without a crutch.

See **Parsons**, page 2

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### Camden man Runner-up Client of Year

Clifford G. "Gary" Little of Camden was honored as the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association's 1998 Runner-up Client of the Year.

Little was a 23-year-old Navy veteran and

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### Team effort

From left are Mae Frances Williams; Laura Spears; Dru Beckham, Camden area supervisor; Gary Little and Jeff Murrill.

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

## Divisions present awards

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association's divisions also handed out awards during the recent Greenville meeting.

The Professional Staff Association presented its Professional of the Year Award to Bill Blakely, special services coordinator at Holmesview Center.

Robert Strickland of the Walterboro Area Office took home the Counselor of the Year Award presented by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Association.

The Facility Service Providers Professional of the Year Award went to Linda Shelton, an adjustment specialist at the Greenville Work Training Center. It was given by the Vocational Rehabilitation Facility Service Providers Association.

Yvonne Starr, counselor assistant at the Florence Area Office, received the Support Staff Professional of the Year Award given by the South Carolina Association of Rehabilitation Support Staff.



*Parsons' team members who attended the conference are from left, David Wiggins, Pat Gilliard and Jeff Murrill.*

## Parsons

*Continued from page 1*

Her team at Vocational Rehabilitation thought the physical demands of teaching might prove too much for her, so they focused on other areas where she could use her degree.

After a volunteer stint at the S.C. Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Parsons was hired in May 1997 as an early intervention specialist, working with children with disabilities.

Her VR team was counselor Pat

Gilliard, who provided extensive counseling, guidance and follow-up; office support specialist Betty Cooper, who updated Parsons' résumé, scheduled appointments and provided support when Gilliard wasn't available; placement specialist David Wiggins, who provided adjustment services and placement assistance.

Jeff Murrill, did the vocational evaluation; psychologist Susan Jordan, who did the psychological evaluation; and procurement specialist Gwen Beasley, who made sure the bills got paid.

# SCVRA recognizes business partners

Business Partnership Awards went to 20 businesses and industries who support employment for people with disabilities through their hiring practices or by supplying contract work for the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department's 22 work training centers.

Former S.C. Rep. Billy Boan assisted with the presentations. Now Gov. Jim Hodges' deputy chief of staff for legislative and budget affairs, Boan praised the business partnerships.

"What better way for people with disabilities to become competitively employed, tax-paying citizens while business and industry get well-prepared, productive employees," he said.

Award recipients were:

Advanced Glass Fiber Yarns, formerly Owens Corning Fiberglas, Aiken; Automotive Electronic Control Systems Inc.,

also known as Autecs, Anderson; Grand Illusions, which makes pendulums that generate decorative designs in sand, Beaufort; Colony South Corp./Dover Designs, which manufactures food items and hand-woven baskets, Berkeley-Dorchester; Thermoid HBD Industries, which makes automotive V-belts, Camden.

Also, Homemaker Industries, which makes rugs and mats, Charleston; Resource Bancshares Mortgage Group Inc., Columbia; Tupperware Manufacturing, which makes plastic food storage items, toys and utensils, Conway; Anvil Knitwear, which makes T-shirts and knitted tops, Florence; Fabric Editions Ltd., which provides fabric products and hobby kits to retail stores, Greenville.

Also, Reelco of Abbeville Inc.,

which makes wooden reels for cable, Greenwood; Duracell North Atlantic Group, makers of AA and AAA batteries, Lancaster; Renfro FL Inc., Clinton Distribution Center, distributors of Fruit of the Loom hosiery products, Laurens; Darlington Veneer Co. Inc., a plywood panel manufacturer, Marlboro; Compact Air Products, which produces several types of air cylinders for industrial use, Oconee-Pickens.

Also, NIBCO Inc., which makes PVC pipes and couplings, Orangeburg; CONCO Medical Co., which makes medical bandages, Rock Hill; Camco Machining Inc., a metal part manufacturer, Spartanburg; Eaton-Cutler Hammer, which makes electrical control products and power distribution equipment, Sumter; and Floralife Inc., which makes floral products, Walterboro.

## Little

*Continued from page 1*

construction worker when a near-fatal accident changed his life in 1992. While he was on his way to visit his grandmother, Little swerved to avoid some parked cars on a curve. His truck hit some gravel, spun out of control and Little shot out the back window. He landed in the middle of the road, 60 feet from the truck.

When he came out of a coma several months later, he couldn't move his left side; he couldn't walk, talk or feed himself; and he couldn't take care of his personal

needs. He spent three years with a tube in his trachea to help him breathe and countless hours in speech and physical therapy.

He's regained his speech and many of his motor skills, but he doesn't use his left side much, his vision is impaired and he'll always have trouble with his short-term memory.

Little was referred to the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department's Camden Area Office in 1995.

He spent about a year at the agency's Camden Work Training Center, where his adjustment specialist and the center manager helped him get into a routine so

he could remember what to do and when to do it. By the end of the year, "he was taking the new people under his wing and showing them around," said his counselor, Laura Spears.

The Camden Winn-Dixie hired Little as a bagger and he has continued to impress his employers with his hard work and conscientiousness. The job has restored his confidence and given him a sense of usefulness. He wants to get his driver's license back and his dream is to be able to live on his own again.

Little's VR team was Spears; Jeff Murrill, center manager; and Mae Frances Williams, his job coach.

# VR staff members receive awards f

Staffers who contributed to each of the local cases of the year were honored at the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association meeting.

The cases and their teams are:

The **Aiken Area** case involved a client who lost the use of her right arm following a cancer operation and also had a vision impairment and depression. She was provided multiple services, which included counseling, a vocational evaluation and the purchase of eyeglasses. The job coach provided direct referral assistance and she is now employed full-time as an independent living coordinator for an Augusta, Ga., agency where she refers clients for VR services.

Team members contributing to her rehabilitation were Dennis Sauls, James Major, Glenda Rabun, Sherry Thomasson, Frances Burns, Luanna Childers, LaVern Nesmith, George Sessions, Teverra Chavous, Patti Mims and Ed DePriest.

The **Anderson Area** case client has spina bifida and diabetes. She received extensive counseling and adjustment services along with adaptive devices and supported employment. She now works in the fast-food industry. Her rehabilitation team members were Phillip Burgess, Elaine Childers, Sue Bates, Libby Harrison, Gary Snipes, James Senn, Emmett Tucker, Carl Hawthorne, Tom Jackman and the Evaluation Center staff.

The client in the **Beaufort Area** case has a congenital deformity

of the right foot which limits his other foot and leg. He received substantial counseling and guidance, physical restoration, assistive technology and follow-up physical therapy services. He is now a horticulture specialist at a Hilton Head resort.

His rehabilitation team members were Beth Caldwell, Constance Gardner, LaVerne Dore and Suzanne Rivera.

The **Berkeley-Dorchester Area** case client received the services of rehabilitation engineering, adjustment training, job coaching, counseling, transportation and job placement. The impairments of mental retardation coupled with hyperactivity, autistic features and epilepsy required the efforts of an extensive team composed of Harriett DuPriest, Nancy Mitchum, Ellen Neely, Lib Laffitte, Willie Mae Richardson, Roy Sparks, Sam Gourdine, Danny Dean, Mardi Lecroy and Donna Edwards.

The persistence of this team enabled the client to achieve employment as a custodian at a government installation.

The **Charleston Area** case client came to VR with a history of asthma and depression. He had had one heart attack and was at high risk for a second. He received counseling, stress management, physical and mental restoration services as well as job training and placement. He now owns his own equipment repair company.

This client's team members were Mary Lutrario Smith, Fred Thompson, Cassandra Townsend,

Mary Hart, Angela Butzon, Amy Hartley, Dick Kuffel, John Wilson, Dwayne Goodman and Beverly Byrd.

The **Columbia Area** case client sustained extensive burns to her right leg and ankle trying to extinguish a kitchen fire. Her VR services included counseling, vocational training, rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology, physical and occupational therapy and physical restoration.

She now works full-time as a barber thanks to Dena Sexton, Jennifer Unekis, Tom Jackman, Poornima Attigupam, Raymond Whitaker, Marlise Kuper, Julie Jackman, Barbara Jolly, Nita Pridgen, Kay Asbill, Pam Settle and the Mission Possible Team.

The **Conway Area** case client had a history of substance abuse and was referred to SCVRD while he was in jail for drug possession. After treatment at Holmesview Center and subsequent participation in Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and SCVRD support groups, as well as adjustment services, the client now works full-time as a clerk in a discount department store.

SCVRD team members were Robert McIntyre Jr., Orverletta Alston, Aaron Butler, Alma Middleton, the Holmesview Center staff and the Conway Training Center staff.

The **Florence Area** case client came to SCVRD with a diagnosis of mental retardation plus problems with his legs that prevented him from standing for long periods. He received counseling,

# for work on local cases of the year

adjustment services and supported employment services and is now a maintenance worker/cleaner at a fast-food restaurant.

His team members were Lisa Norris, Cindi McDuffie, Josh Pearson, Audrey Nowlin and the Florence Training Center staff.

The **Greenville Area** case client had an extensive psychiatric history due to mood swings, a personality disorder and substance abuse. He received adjustment services and a vocational evaluation revealed an interest in working with horses. SCVRD sponsored his training and provided tools and equipment. The client established his own business and now has an income of \$45,000 a year.

Contributing to his vocational rehabilitation were Gayle Mason, Teresa Nash, Roger Pedrick, Cathy Jollie and Blaine White.

The client in the **Greenwood Area** case has been living and working with sickle cell anemia for many years. Because of increasing fatigue and absenteeism, she reluctantly had to leave a job at a textile plant where she had worked for 14 years. Since she had completed a year of computer training with excellent grades, SCVRD sponsored the remainder of her training. With a recommendation from the rehabilitation technology staff, a computer system was purchased for her home and the agency assisted her in acquiring the necessary licenses and information to start a home computer business. She also tutors a student.

Team members were Lisa Malone, Sue Murray, Mary Harrison and Tom Jackman.

The **Lancaster Area** case client is a young man with mental retardation who has demonstrated extraordinary growth and maturity. While still in high school, he had trouble understanding what was expected of him and difficulty listening, concentrating and expressing himself. Through coordination of resources at his high school and SCVRD, he participated in several summer job training programs while he was still in school and also received VR adjustment services once he finished school. After several successful jobs at grocery stores, he now works as a checker at a textile company for \$9 an hour.

His SCVRD team members included Jackie Hicks and the Lancaster Training Center staff.

The **Laurens Area** case client had multiple psychological disabilities in addition to uncontrolled hypertension and vision problems. She received counseling, evaluation and adjustment services before being accepted into the Office Technology course at SCVRD's Computer Training Program. She now works as an administrative specialist with a state agency.

Team members for this case were Diane Miner, Richard Cobb, Carol Teal, Joannie Ward and Cathie Phillips.

The client from the **Marlboro Area** case originally was referred to SCVRD from the S.C. School

for the Deaf and Blind. His deafness was a very real detriment to his becoming employed. He benefited from counseling, physical restoration, training center services, rehabilitation technology, supported employment and direct job placement. He now works full-time as an artificial flower maker.

Contributing to his vocational rehabilitation were Frankie Whaley, Joe Elvington, Larry McNeil, Judy Fullard, Julia Ellerbe and the Evaluation Center staff.

The **Oconee-Pickens Area** case client has cerebral palsy that limits his mobility and a hearing deficit. He was introduced to SCVRD through the Job Retention Services Program. He received counseling and assistance with hearing aids and remains on his job as a machine operator.

His vocational rehabilitation team members were Heather Karns, Kathy Hane, Lillian Rochester, Tom Jackman and Poornima Attigupam.

In the **Orangeburg Area** case, the client's arm was amputated above the elbow after an industrial accident. He received substantial counseling and an evaluation that determined the need for a new prosthesis. He was accepted for the Computer Aided Drafting and Design Program at SCVRD's Computer Training Program and is now working as a design technician at a utility company after a 15-year period of unemployment.

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## Local

*Continued from page 5*

Team members were Chad Stillwell, Jim Wyrosdick, Kaye Union, the Evaluation Center staff, the Computer Training Program staff and the support staff of the Orangeburg Area Office.

The client from the **Rock Hill Area** case has been deaf from birth. He was provided extensive counseling and adjustment services as well as supported employment. He's working as a material handler at a lumber company.

Contributing to his vocational success were Carolyn Rowland, Gina Bass, Susanne Hill, Steve Scoggins, Shannon Nelmes, Jon Robinson, Buddy Reid and Dottie McRorie.

The **Spartanburg Area** case client came to SCVRD as a high school senior with no work experience. He has osteogenic imperfecta—or brittle-bone disease—and uses a wheelchair most of the time. He received extensive counseling, adjustment services, work experience at the training center, rehabilitation technology services and vehicle modification as well as VR sponsorship at USC-Spartanburg. He now works as a customer service representative with a telephone company.

His team members were Norma Grizzard, Lee-Ann Danko, Bernard Grant, Holmes Bishop, J.C. Bryan and Roland Salley.

The client from the **Columbia Corrections Program** case had a history of alcohol and drug addiction, which led to criminal

activity. During an incarceration, he participated enthusiastically in SCVRD counseling sessions. He was encouraged to make realistic vocational choices and he showed interest in welding and metal work. He continued to receive counseling following his release from prison and he got a job as a metal fabricator. SCVRD also provided maintenance and transportation assistance as well as job search/placement assistance to help his transition into the community.

His team members were Fulmer Shealy and Patricia Hill.

The case client from the SCVRD unit at the **Medical University of South Carolina** has lost parts of both legs following an automobile accident and suffered from hypertension. He was a Marine Corps veteran and had worked as an automobile body repair person. He received extensive vocational rehabilitation services, including computer training in AutoCAD, van modification, placement assistance and counseling. He is working full-time as an automotive body repair supervisor.

Team members were Jamie Bennekin, Vivian Pinckney, the Charleston Training Center staff, the Evaluation Center staff and the Rehabilitation Technology staff.

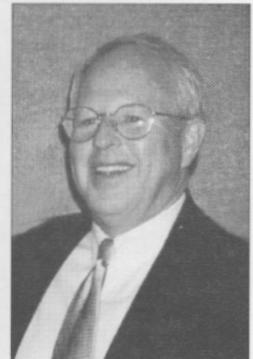
The **Morris Village VR Program** case client has a long history of chemical addiction. Although he had good skills as an electrician, his alcohol and drug abuse resulted in a string of lost jobs. Extensive counseling and adjustment services taught him more effective strategies for dealing with the pressures of his work.

He is now again working as an electrician.

His vocational rehabilitation team members were James Easterby and Nancy Barcus.

The **Walterboro Area** case client suffered a left leg amputation at an early age and wears a prosthesis. She received counseling, a vocational evaluation, sponsorship for cosmetology training and the purchase of cosmetology supplies. She now works in a beauty salon.

Her team members were Kathy Shider and John Turbeville.



*Peter B. Howell*

## SCVRA members re-elect officers

SCVRA members re-elected their officers for another one-year term.

The slate includes:

Peter B. Howell, president; Derle A. Lowder Sr., vice president; Preston Coleman, treasurer; and Laura Spears, secretary.

Lucerne Iseman will serve as liaison between the association and the agency.

Howell said re-electing officers for this year will provide the stability needed to ensure a firm foundation.

After that, he said, "we'll be ready for fresh ideas."

# Workforce act good VR opportunity

The new Workforce Investment Act is a prime opportunity for public vocational rehabilitation, according to the executive director of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Joe Owens told members of the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association that of the 150 programs consolidated and integrated under the Workforce Investment Act to provide job opportunities and training to people who otherwise would not have access, the public VR program is the one with the most documented success.

"We take taxpayer dollars to provide services and we find people jobs," Owens said.

The goal of the Workforce Investment Act, passed by Congress last year, is to stimulate cooperation among all the groups that help people get jobs. Each state must develop its own program, to be in place by July 1, 2000.

So far, federal manpower training programs for people without disabilities have not been very successful across the country, Owens said.

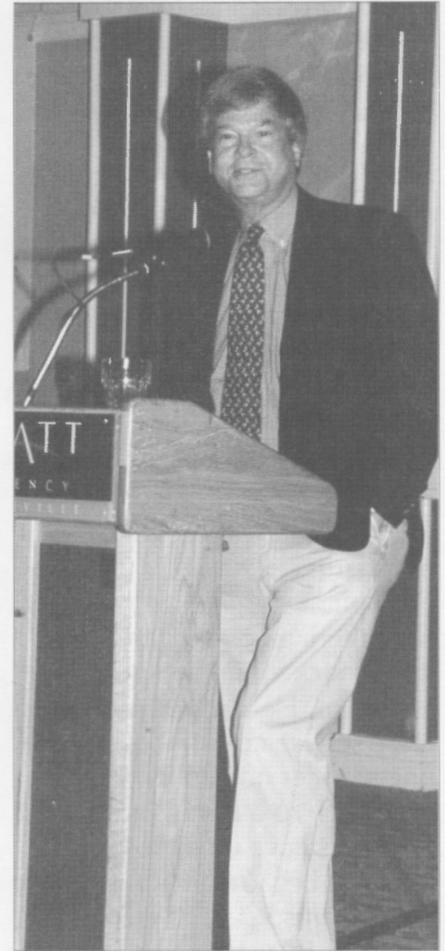
But, he said, public VR welcomes the new era.

"If the point is to provide an aggressive policy for employment, there's no way the largest underemployed segment of the population is going to be left out," he said.

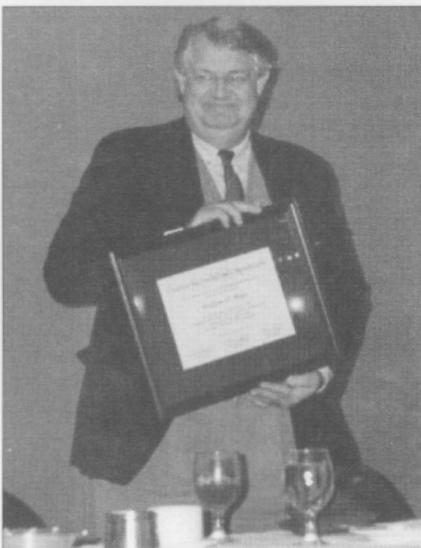
Owens said one of the big challenges will be making sure the laws are enforced to protect vocational rehabilitation and people with disabilities. As day-to-day implementation moves to the local level, "we need to ensure the [public VR] program and its identity are maintained."

Meanwhile, "get ready for the new world of workforce investment," he said. "Maybe what we do is raise the caliber of the neighborhood.

"It's a major challenge, but the opportunity is great."



*Joe Owens at podium*



*Billy Boan with citation*

## SCVRA honors Boan

The S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Association presented William D. "Billy" Boan with a Citation for Individual Contributions in recognition of his contributions toward improving vocational opportunities for South Carolinians with disabilities.

Boan, a former state representative from Lancaster County, resigned from the S.C. House in January to become Gov. Jim Hodges' deputy chief of staff for legislative and budget affairs.

A former member and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Boan is noted for his strong, fiscally conservative leadership. He also is a longtime friend of vocational rehabilitation and attended the Greenville conference to assist with the association's Business Partnership Awards.

He was executive director of the Lancaster County Economic Development Corp. from 1995 until January.

# Clark earns Customer Service Award

Charles C. Clark Jr. of the Greenville Area Office is the winner of the 1999 Commissioner's Award for Exceptional Customer Service.

Clark, special services coordinator responsible for quality control, training, mentoring and customer service, has played a major role in motivating and energizing his co-workers to carry out their redefined duties in the team concept.

He's a consultant to each of the teams in his area office in adapting to the new compliance standards.

Clark often serves as mediator for differing opinions and has a true knack for finding positive solutions. He also has reduced case service costs by investigating services offered by other agencies. As a result, other agencies have increased their referrals because they now better understand SCVRD's mission.

He also started a new project to

intervene on cases in danger of closing unsuccessfully and nurtured at least six of those to successful closure.

Kathleen Whisnant, his area supervisor, says Clark's exemplary attitude toward change has sparked both new and seasoned employees to look for the best in themselves and the best in their clients.

Other nominees for the award were: Jim Carlisle, Jerlyn Lee and Sherry Snead from Aiken; Roy Sparks from Berkeley-Dorchester; Mae Frances Williams from Camden; John Wilson from Charleston; Jo Ann Derrick from Columbia; Orverletta Alston from Conway; Carol Teal from the Evaluation Center; Pat Walker from Florence; Peggy Neel from Greenwood; Elaine Childers from Patrick B. Harris Hospital; Martha Habermehl, Skip Odom and Wehman Sieling from the State Office; and Aleck Williams from Walterboro.



*Charles Clark with the 1999 Commissioner's Award for Exceptional Customer Service*

Groups nominated were Sumter's Placement Team; Team Charleston; and the Union Sub-Office Team.

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department reports that it printed 5,000 copies of this newsletter at a cost of \$316.07, or about \$.06 per copy.

NEW  
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