Rehabilitation for WI (RFW) & WI Rehabilitation Association (WRA) Select Cindy Cain for the 2010 Rehabilitation Leadership Award

The 2010 Rehabilitation Leadership Award was presented to Cindy Cain on March 25th at the RFW/WRA Rehab and Transition Conference in Kohler, WI.

Ms. Cain was nominated by Deb Henderson-Guenther who presented her with the award. The following is a transcript of the speech.

“In recognition of your work as a Statewide Transition leader and for the generation of high school students with disabilities whose quality of life has been improved by your tireless efforts.”

Good afternoon. My name is Deb Henderson-Guenther. I am the current Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association President. It is my honor today to present the 2010 Rehabilitation Leadership Award to Cindy Cain for her work.

**NRA Governmental Affairs Summit – A Firsthand Look**

by Allison Lourash, WRA Legislative Affairs Co-Chair

The National Rehabilitation Association hosted its 29th Annual Governmental Affairs Summit in Alexandria, VA on March 14-16, 2010. A mainstay of the Summit is the presentation of the NRA’s Issue Statements, which can be found at www.nationalrehab.org. Many of the position papers discuss various issues relating to the Workforce Investment Act, which includes the Rehabilitation Act, and its impending reauthorization. The implications on the vocational rehabilitation system were discussed with concern that the specialized role that vocational rehabilitation serves is not understood in the larger context of the workforce investment system.

A panel presentation from national partners on how they are working together to engage employers was a highlight of the Summit. This discussion included Kathy West-Evans on “The NET”, which is a project of CSAVR (Consortium of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation). The NET seeks to be a national system for sharing employment resources, best practices and business connections. This includes having a business consultant named by each agency (http://www.rehabnetwork.org/busrel/default.htm).

Several representatives from the US Business Leadership Network provided an overview of their Disability Supplier Diversity Program which is a certification program for

Continued on page 2
Leaders can come with a title and authority. Cindy leads by behavior and attitude. She has developed her leadership talents so that they impact not only events, but the lives of transition aged students and their parents.

Cindy Cain Rehab Leadership Award from page 1

with both transition aged youth and with the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association (WRA). Cindy has been active with WRA since the early 1970’s. She has held many board positions over the years including Vice President in 2007. Cindy is the District Director for DVR’s Workforce Development Area 3, which includes Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington Counties. Her infectious, positive, and can-do attitude has had an irrefutable impact on everyone she meets. She has played a significant role in developing a collaborative partnership between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Instruction and Department of Health Services to improve the services to youth transitioning from school to work. She has a natural ability to connect with transition youth and their parents. She is able to speak to students and parents in a language that they understand. She has empowered many transition aged youth and their families to take charge of their educational and vocational futures. Cindy has not only demonstrated a high level of performance as a Workforce Development Director for the DVR, she has excelled as a Statewide Transition leader serving as the Division’s Statewide Transition Coordinator. Cindy created the DVR Statewide Transition Team called S.T.A. R. T. (Statewide Transition Action and Resource Team) and provides leadership to that team. She has also led this team in developing a Strategic Plan for improving the provision of transition services throughout the state. She has served on the State Superintendent’s Council for Special Education, the Assistive Technology Transition Committee, and several other transition related committees and workgroups. Her skills and passion in the field of transition is evident in her accomplishments and contributions on a statewide level. Leaders can come with a title and authority. Cindy leads by behavior and attitude. She has developed her leadership talents so that they impact not only events, but the lives of transition aged students and their parents. She inspires those around her to work at peak efficiency while also enhancing the quality of individual lives. She is a respected and accomplished leader in the field of transition. This award could not go to a more deserving individual.

NRA Governmental Affairs Summit from page 1

businesses owned by individuals with disabilities that allow for increased contracting opportunities (http://www.usbln.org/programs.html).

Three key players of the Obama Administration also presented. Alexa Posny, Assistant Secretary for the US Dept of Ed for OSERS, provided an overview of the new direction for the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act and IDEA, as well as discussing the distribution of ARRA funds to vocational rehabilitation. Lynnae Rutledge, the incoming Rehabilitation Services Administrator, discussed her previous work as the Director of the vocational rehabilitation agencies in Oregon and Washington as well as her philosophy and personal experiences with disability. Christine Griffin, Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, discussed the Federal Hiring event occurring on April 26. (http://www.usajobs.gov/DisabilityHiringEvent.asp).

She highlighted the need for the federal government to hire more people with significant disabilities and the opportunities to do so through Schedule A.

Interested in attending the Summit next year? The Tom Stewart Scholarship Fund is available for first time attendees (www.nationalrehab.org).
Strategies to Build Leadership Within an Organization

Submitted by Susie Eberhard

We had phenomenal participation at the WRA organizational session at the Rehab for WI and WI Rehab Association Annual Conference. National, state and local leaders came together to talk about leadership and what it means to professionals, organizations and the field. Participants broke into small groups to discuss (1) strategies to grow a successful organization, (2) how leadership can be spread throughout the organization and, (3) how succession planning can be accomplished within an organization. The entire group decided to share the discussion with everyone in WRA via this newsletter. The following article was developed by the session participants and includes summaries of the discussions and plans for next year’s conference.

The first small group focused on the team and team leaders, as well as the organizational structure to promote maximum participation and outcomes. Team leaders did not have to hold any particular rank or position. Instead, leaders emerged as a result of their contributions, their supportive and helpful group and interpersonal interactions and their passion and enthusiasm for the group purpose and interaction opportunities. This in turn inspired others and increased motivation of all. Effective groups need people who model good facilitation and planning. Each group must be intentional about the team temperament, or the way that the group works together. Work groups and committees were seen as a great avenue for getting people involved and connected to the organizational purpose, but these groups needed to have age diversity for maximum effectiveness. There were a number of organizational supports that were identified as helpful including a culture that honors different levels and perspectives within the organization, non-traditional people are included in decision making, there is transparency about organization actions, decisions, etc. so all members are informed and can contribute.

The second group focused on fostering situational leadership. Steps that were outlined include: (1) recognize individual strengths, (2) create a safe environment to share ideas/take risks, (3) invite engagement by being supportive and acknowledging strengths, (4) recognize contributions, and (5) provide mentoring. The group had one caveat – leadership must not be threatened by others’ gifts! The third group discussed ways to spread leadership throughout an organization. Delegation was viewed as key. This required understanding members, with ample opportunities to collaborate. Members needed assignments or tasks that helped the organization, and all members needed to be involved in recruitment so that the organization had access to a wide range of ideas, skills and expertise. Three factors were identified as essential to spread leadership (1) an atmosphere of openness, (2) all members must be willing to listen to each other and (3) an ability to get needed resources to members with opportunities to use those resources through involvement.

The fourth group focused on benefits of professional organizations. Organizations provide protection for the professional and client. Consider the best practice information found at the WRA or NRA conferences, in the organizational newsletters, policy briefs, sponsored journal, etc. Professional organizations also support and help members to maintain credentialing. Within the organization, there is a sense of community and numerous opportunities to mentor and be mentored to help promote our efficacy as practitioners and to ensure that there is a viable, well prepared core of practitioners in the future.

The large group discussion focused on strategies to build the professional organization into the future. Participants acknowledged that students are the future of rehabilitation and have valuable contributions to offer. Leadership training could be offered such as how to write to legislators, effective advocacy strategies, and tailoring messages to various groups. Such efforts need to use a marketing approach (e.g. What’s in it for me? Will this help me get a job?). The large group also wanted a leadership track or session at the annual conference. Another avenue to build the organization might be through a 2-3 day development training.

Plans are in the works to have similar session content included in the WRA/RFW Conference next year. We would love to see every member of the organization come join us so that we all can be most effective in enhancing our personal and organizational effectiveness. All are better than one!
Annual Job Placement and Development Award
Seeking Nominations!

The Wisconsin Job Placement Division of WRA annually present awards to outstanding employers who go above and beyond their regular duties to uphold people with disabilities becoming more independent through employment. The categories for JPD annual awards are Small Employer of the Year (25 or fewer employees), Large Employer of the Year (26 or more employees), and Franchise Operations of the Year (several locations of the same company).

To make a nomination, please contact Meredith Dressel at Meredith.dressel@dwd.wisconsin.gov for a nomination form or go to www.wra-org.org.

Recipients will receive their award at the RFW/WRA Annual Conference. Nominations are due by September 3, 2010.

JPD Scholarship

The purpose of Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association of Job Placement and Development is to provide an organization for professional development and to advance employment for all persons with disabilities. Toward this goal the JPD Division annually awards a $200.00 scholarship to a student who is enrolled in the field of Rehabilitation, Placement, or a related field.

To apply, please include your name, address, phone, school your attending, major and a short essay (1 page) outlining your educational and experiential background as well as future career goals, specifically as it relates to the field of Vocational Rehabilitation and/or Placement. Indicate why you have chosen to work in this field and why you feel you are deserving of this scholarship. Scholarship applications are due December 1, 2010.

Send completed applications to: Meredith Dressel 37732 Valley Rd Oconomowoc, WI 53066

Our first member to hit the spotlight is Dr. Norm Berven, an admired professor of 34 years in the Rehab Psychology program at UW-Madison. He is the 2010 recipient of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education Distinguished Career in Rehabilitation Education Award!

Norm teaches undergraduate, master’s and Ph.D. courses, coordinates practicum and internships, advises students, supervises research, works on his own research and scholarly projects and manages training grants. When asked if he would change anything about his job, he said he would want more time!

Norm is currently on sabbatical and taking time to audit classes. By auditing classes he can explore subjects outside of his profession. Norm and his wife Stella audited a Political Science course last fall and are currently enjoying a Scandinavian Studies course. Before becoming a professor, Norm began his career by attending the University of Iowa. He received his bachelor’s degree in Psychology and General Science then obtained his Masters in Counseling. Norm then relocated to San Francisco, where he worked in a mental health program. He met his wife there, who was also working as a rehab counselor in the same program. They celebrated their 40th anniversary last October! He received his Ph.D. at UW-Madison and, after working in New York and New Jersey for a few years, he returned to UW-Madison in 1976. When Norm is not busy working, he’s cheering on the badger sports teams!
WRA/WRCEA Scholarship Recipients Reflect on Their Conference Experience

By Megan Grasser, WRA Scholarship Recipient

I wanted to attend the RFW/WRA Rehabilitation and Transition Conference in order to gain information and skills on behavioral health, employment, management, transition planning, legislative issues, ethics, and current hot topics to better serve my clients. After attending the conference and returning to work, these expectations were certainly met. Some of the highlights included learning specific job development techniques to enhance job placement, learning how self-employment can be used as a viable vocational option by using the self-employment tool kit, and learning about current research on demand-side employment factors that will help me work with employers and consumers to create a good match. Learning about Certified Peer Specialists was especially interesting to me, since I work in the area of mental health. I work with several clients who are excellent candidates for this program. The information and resources that I gained from this conference will allow me to help these clients succeed in this endeavor.

I enjoyed the professional networking opportunities. It was a pleasant surprise to see professionals I had worked with in the past, as well as the opportunity to meet students from the program at UW Stout. Being able to learn about what they do within the field and share our experiences was a wonderful opportunity.

I am truly grateful for the WRA scholarship, as I would not have been able to attend without their help. It was a truly rewarding experience and provided me with a broad base of knowledge and skills to apply to my professional work for years to come.

By Stefanie Dozak, WRCEA Scholarship Recipient

I am currently enrolled in the UW Stout masters program in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling. I work as an intern at the DVR office in Green Bay and also as a Senior Therapist in an in home autism treatment program.

My favorite session was “How to Create a Student’s Transition Plan for the Future”. It had a strong and meaningful message about empowerment at an early age. I often encounter parents who don’t want to talk to their child about having autism, but this session made me realize that if we do not, we are not encouraging empowerment. If a child learns early how to express what’s hard for them, what accommodations are beneficial to them, and what people are in their life to help them, then they are most likely to be successful in the future.

I was pleasantly surprised by Chad Crittenden’s session. He offered a very interesting perspective on disability, not only because he overcame adversity and thrived on a popular reality television show, but also because he showed everyone that watches Survivor that a person with a disability is just as capable of doing everything on the show as the other contestants.

I will take back to my position at DVR a better understanding of rehabilitation, more knowledge about assessments, transition and assistive technology and how I can assist consumers in making sure they receive the appropriate equipment. I will take back to my position within the autism program more knowledge about how I can start preparing individuals with autism for independent living, work and how I can start to move towards empowerment at an early age. I hope to start discussing their disabilities at an earlier age so that they can better advocate for themselves.

Thank you to those who assisted in making this possible for me. As I near the end of my internship, this was a great way to tie everything I have learned together.
Celebrating the 2010 RFW/WRA Rehab & Transition Conference

Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association

We’re on the Web!
See us at:
www.wra-org.org

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association is a member organization committed to the promotion of ethical and excellent practice in rehabilitation, through collaboration, education and advocacy.

About Our Organization...

The Wisconsin Rehabilitation Association is a member organization committed to the promotion of ethical and excellent practice in rehabilitation, through collaboration, education and advocacy.

Calendar of Events


Assistive Technology Expo, October 21st, 10 am to 3 pm, UW Madison Engineering Campus. For more information or if you need access to disabled parking, please contact Samantha Ninnemann at Samantha.ninnemann@wisconsin.gov or Amy Thomson at amy.thomson@wisconsin.gov.
