

**Rhode Island
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services**

**Rehabilitation
Works**

2002 Annual Report



Donald L. Carcieri
Governor



Jane A. Hayward
Director

Rehabilitation Works when the whole organization works together toward a vision.

The Vision of the Department of Human Services

We are an organization of opportunity, working hand in hand with other resources in Rhode Island, to offer a full continuum of services for families, adults, children, the elderly, disabled and veterans.

Our vision is:

- Families are strong, productive, healthy and independent;
- Adults reach their maximum potential;
- Children are safe, healthy, ready to learn, and reach their full potential;
- Elders and the disabled receive a full continuum of services to enhance their quality of life;
- Veterans are honored and cared for.

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The Mission of the Office of Rehabilitation Services

To empower individuals with disabilities to choose, prepare for, obtain and maintain employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and integration into society.

Message from the Director



It is my pleasure to provide you with the Annual Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2002 for the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS). ORS is charged with empowering Rhode Islanders with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence and full integration into society. Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Disability Determination Services provide a myriad of resources and services which enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Youths with disabilities and their families work with vocational rehabilitation counselors in order to make that important transition from school to post-secondary education and careers. The business and labor community depend on ORS for trained and job-ready applicants. Rhode Islanders applying for social security disability benefits get accurate and timely decisions. From Vision Screening for young children to independent living services for older individuals who are blind, Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired provides a comprehensive array of personalized services.

In FFY 2002 6,044 persons with disabilities were provided vocational rehabilitation, training and employment services. The Disability Determination Services adjudicated 14,884 claims for social security disability benefits.

We are proud of the partnerships that our staff has developed with our citizen advisory councils, our customers and the community, which has contributed so much to the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island.

Jane A. Hayward, Director

Message from the Administrator

On behalf of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, I am pleased to present to you the 2002 Annual Report.

Our theme throughout this report is ***"Rehabilitation WORKS"***. We have included success stories that reflect the diversity of our customers and their needs. We want to describe the partnership between our staff and our customers that makes *"Rehabilitation Work"*.



Raymond A. Carroll

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program increases revenue at all levels of government and decreases the burden of income maintenance programs. As persons with disabilities achieve an employment outcome, they become tax-paying citizens and more than pay back the cost of the program.

In 2002, 571 individuals were successfully employed. The accomplishments outlined in this annual report reflect favorably on the efforts of the staff who, by hard work and commitment, have continued a long tradition of serving Rhode Islanders with disabilities.

We are also indebted to the Rhode Island State Rehabilitation Council for their partnership and help in maximizing the potential of persons with disabilities. I also extend my appreciation to our hard-working and capable staff along with our many public and private partners. We are confident that 2003 will be an outstanding year that dramatizes once again that *"Rehabilitation Works"*.

Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator

2002 - A Year of Accomplishments

1,785 Rhode Islanders applied for vocational rehabilitation services.

A total of **6,444** individuals with disabilities were provided vocational rehabilitation services.

1,004 individuals worked with a vocational rehabilitation counselor to develop a new Individualized Plan for Employment [IPE].

4,200 individuals received Counseling and Guidance Services from vocational rehabilitation counselors.

1,598 individuals received services purchased from vendors. Services ranged from evaluations, medical and psychological therapies, training, personal assistant services, job placement and training.

333 individuals received rehabilitation technology services to assist them to prepare for and to enter employment.

ORS co-sponsored the Youth Leadership Forum, the first program of its kind developed for youths with disabilities in Rhode Island.

For every \$1 spent on vocational rehabilitation services, an individual with a disability earns \$13.00 in increased taxable earnings.

571 Individuals were Successfully Employed

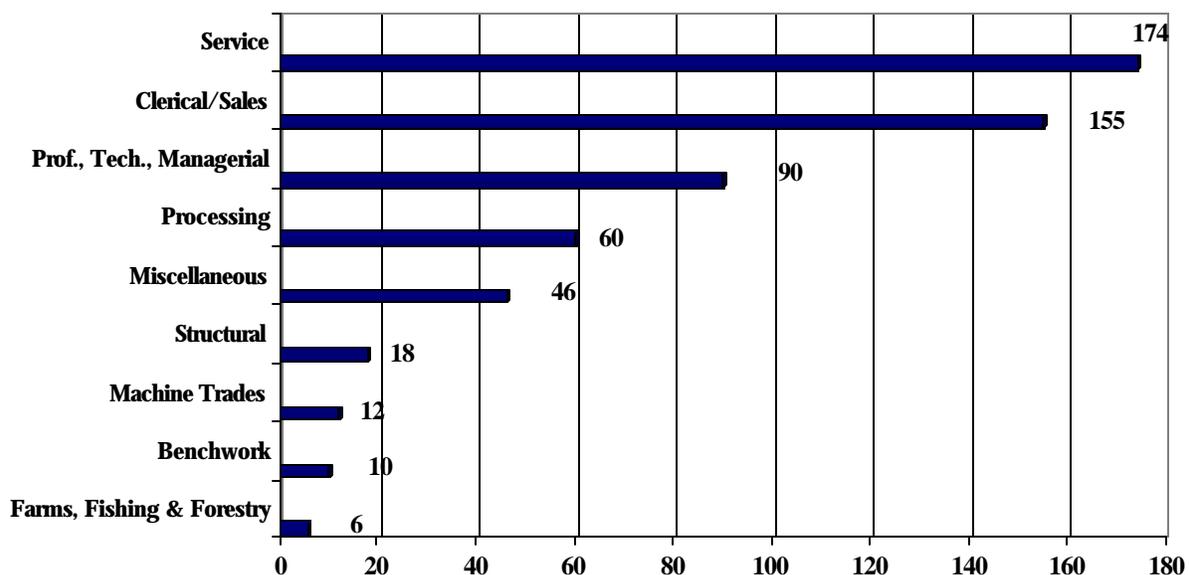
Rehabilitation Works...

Additional Accomplishments

- **23** vending facilities were supported by the Business Enterprises Program (BEP) at Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Sales increased by 1.8 % to \$1.68 million. Three new individuals were trained through the BEP for employment in their own facility.
- ATAP Resource Centers responded to **23,143** information requests about assistive technology and funding options.
- ATAP conferences served **6,328** individuals.
- Independent Living Centers (PARI and OSCIL) provided I & R and direct services to **3,900** individuals with most significant disabilities increasing their opportunities to live independently at home and in the community.
- **217** students with disabilities were provided a range of vocational assessment and career planning services through cooperative programs with 5 regional transition centers.
- **1,671** youth with disabilities from ages 14-21 have been provided transition services by 14 vocational rehabilitation counselors.

* * *

**Occupations of 571 Successfully Employed
Individuals with Disabilities
10/01/01 - 9/30/02**



Vocational Rehabilitation

What We Do...

APPLICATION



VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT



ELIGIBILITY



EMPLOYMENT PLAN



SERVICES TO EMPLOYMENT



EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SUPPORTS



OBTAINED EMPLOYMENT



POST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, IF NEEDED

The Vocational Rehabilitation process consists of assisting an individual with a disability to assess his/her vocational abilities and to identify, coordinate and provide services needed to realize employment.

The partnership between each individual with a disability and their vocational rehabilitation counselor is a key component in the vocational rehabilitation process. The individual and his/her vocational rehabilitation counselor work together to develop an Employment Plan which will assist them to reach employment.

Vocational rehabilitation services that may be included in an Employment Plan are:

- Counseling and Guidance to help plan vocational goals and services
- Transition Services from School to Career
- Rehabilitation Technology Services
- Assistive Technology Services
- Diagnostic Evaluations
- College or Vocational Training
- Job Training and Job Supports
- Job Development and Placement Services
- Vehicle Modifications
- Housing Modifications
- Post-Employment Services

Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) ...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services is the lead agency for the Rhode Island Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP). ATAP is a statewide project funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, which works to reduce or eliminate barriers that impede access to, and funding for, assistive technology devices and services for individuals with disabilities of all ages.

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Benefits Planning & Outreach Project (BPAO) - "On the Rhode to Independence"...

Benefits planning is designed to help people who receive disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) make informed decisions regarding employment, based on a complete understanding of their benefits and available work incentives. Information about these work incentives allows an individual to determine if they can improve their quality of life without irrevocably sacrificing all of their benefits.

* * *

The Rhode Island Learning Disabilities Project ...

The LD Project is a unique Department of Human Services intra-agency initiative between the Office of Rehabilitation Services and the Family Independence Program (FIP). This collaborative relationship was created to help identify parents on cash assistance with learning disabilities, and to provide the necessary accommodations and vocational training programs in order for individuals to become independent and economically self-sufficient. During 2002, the nationally-recognized LD Project served 101 new individuals and assisted 30 individuals with learning disabilities to reach their employment goals.

* * *

Transition...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services has a strong commitment to assist students with disabilities with transition planning to adult life. ORS counselors visit all school districts and work with families and students to plan services to help students reach career goals. ORS counselors provide technical assistance and information to school systems and work in partnership with the 5 Regional Educational Collaboratives to improve transition planning.

Vocational Rehabilitation (continued)

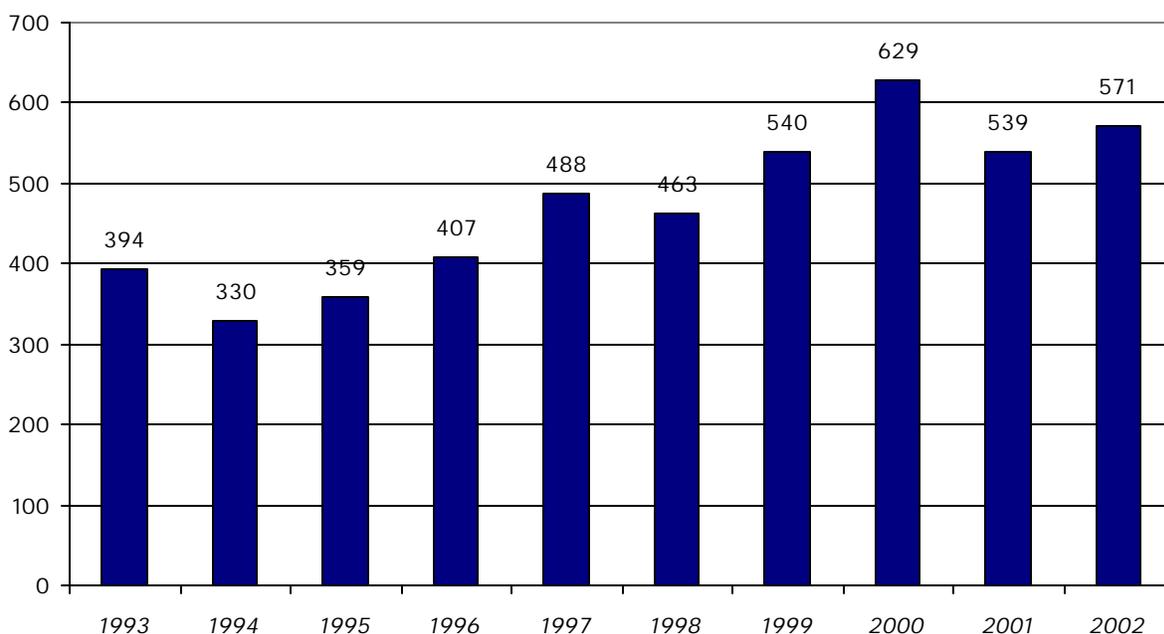
Deaf Services...

The Office of Rehabilitation Services helps individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing obtain services to meet their needs, provides counseling and guidance to help plan vocational goals and services, and assists the individual to obtain employment. They serve as a resource to professionals, state agencies, community organizations, and the public providing information related to employment, training and accommodations for persons who have a hearing loss. Clear communication between the vocational rehabilitation counselors and the individual with the hearing loss is the key to successful vocational rehabilitation services. These counselors use the deaf or hard of hearing person's preferred communication method and have a good understanding of the abilities and problems of deaf or hard of hearing individuals.

Services available may include: vocational counseling and guidance; vocational evaluation to determine skills, abilities, and potential to work; vocational training; purchase of hearing aids and appropriate communications devices; interpreter services for the purpose of obtaining and maintaining employment; job placement assistance; and rehabilitation technology services.

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*Successful Employment Outcomes
A Ten-Year Trend*



Disability Determination Services

ORS administers the Disability Determination Services (DDS) for the Social Security Administration (SSA). This unit determines the medical eligibility of children and adults with disabilities applying for cash benefits who are Rhode Island residents who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Although the DDS is fully funded by the Federal Government, the state agency is responsible for developing medical evidence and determining whether the claimant is or is not disabled or blind under the law.

During 2002,

60,089 Rhode Islanders receive SSI/SSDI benefits;

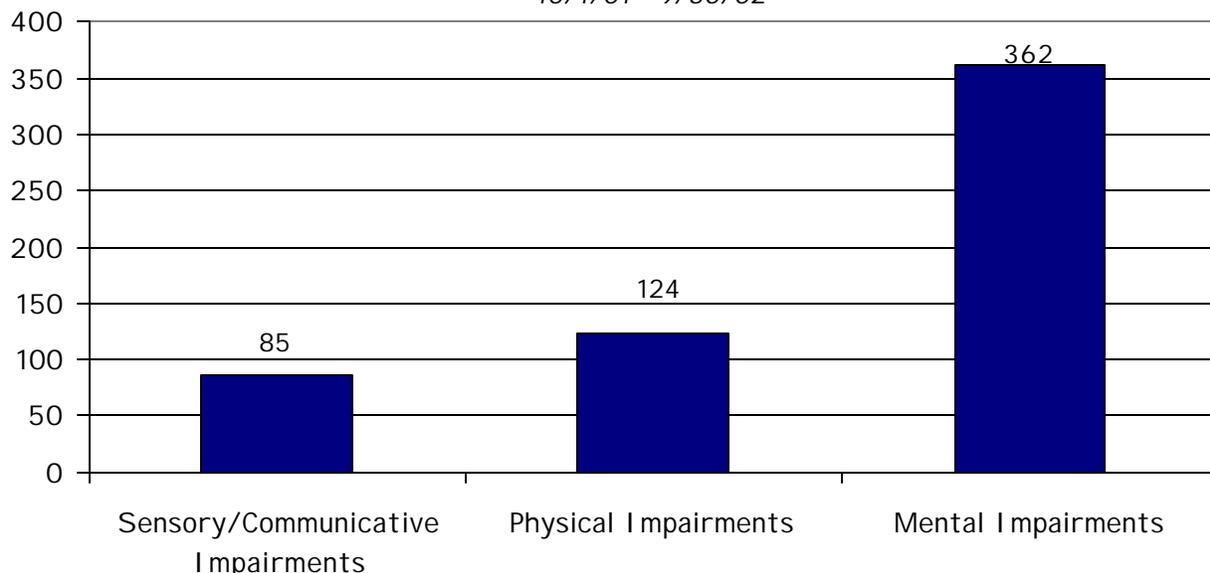
The DDS successfully processed **14,884** claims;

The production efficiency rate was higher than the national standard; and

The accuracy rate was **93.9%** for claims processed.

* * *

*Primary Disability of 571 Individuals with Disabilities
10/1/01 - 9/30/02*



Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) offers a wide array of services to eligible individuals who are blind or visually impaired through its Vocational Rehabilitation Unit, Business Enterprises Program, and Social Services Program. The various services offered by these programs are designed to help individuals of all ages achieve independence at home, in the community, and in the workplace.

Some of the many accomplishments of 2002 include:

- Comprehensive case management services were provided to **674** elderly adults, **33** of whom did not need to go into a nursing home.
- Early intervention services were provided to **24** children who are blind or visually impaired, often with other severe disabilities.
- A residential summer camp was operated for over **60** students that offered specialized experiences and activities to assist in providing opportunities for socialization and new learning in a secure but stimulating environment.
- Saving Sight Rhode Island and the Lion's Sight Foundation worked together with SBVI to screen **8,642** children for undetected visual problems. As a result, **455** children were referred to eye doctors and **330** prescriptions were filled for glasses.

Vocational Rehabilitation Program...

is a Federal/State Program created to assist people who are blind or visually impaired to obtain or maintain employment. Services provided include evaluation, orientation, mobility training, rehabilitation technology, guidance and counseling, career assessment, educational planning, vocational training, provision of adaptive equipment, job development, placement, and follow-up services.

Business Enterprises Program...

is a Federal/State Program which establishes vending facilities in state, federal or private buildings for operation by persons who are legally blind. Licensed blind vendors operate vending facilities at 23 locations throughout the state and are assigned to these locations on the basis of their seniority within the program. Types of facilities range from small snack bars serving light snacks and beverages to larger food-service sites serving hot and cold entrees prepared on-site. All operate under the name of "Coffee Plus".



Social Services Program...

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired coordinates a federal comprehensive service program which focuses primarily on children from birth through age 14, elderly individuals, and individuals for whom a vocational goal is not feasible.

- **Children's Case Management Services** include family casework, coordination with Early Intervention Programs, educational guidance, summer camp for youth, arrangement of ophthalmological and low vision evaluations, and information and referral to appropriate community programs.
- **Vision Screening Program** through Saving Sight RI which utilizes an MTI photoscreening device to take pictures of the child's eye without the child having to read an eye chart. Screenings are done in day care centers, nursery schools, public schools and other community locations.
- **Independent Living for Older Blind Program** provides case management services, along with ancillary services for mobility, and orientation, rehabilitation teaching for skills training in Activities of Daily Living, management of low vision, provisions of adaptive equipment, and information and referral to support groups and appropriate community services.

Councils

Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT)

"RICAT...promoting and supporting availability of assistive technology for people with disabilities."

RICAT is the advisory body to the RI project funded through the Assistive Technology Act ("Tech Act"). Members are actively involved in legislative and other initiatives that will increase the access to assistive technology for Rhode Islanders.

2002 RICAT Members: Marie Waldman - CHAIR, Florence Adeni-Awosika, Blair Baldwin, Larry Ceresi, David Enes, Kathy Fresher-Samways, Richard Gaffney, Kerri Hicks, Margaret Hoyer, Randy Kulman, Ph.D., Emily Lennon, Jeanne Panarace, Robert Perrello, Charles Pollock, Ron Racine, Ying Sun, Myron Waldman, Jill Waller, Edmond Zuromski

* * *

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

...working with the Office of Rehabilitation Services to maximize the potential of people with disabilities through meaningful employment....

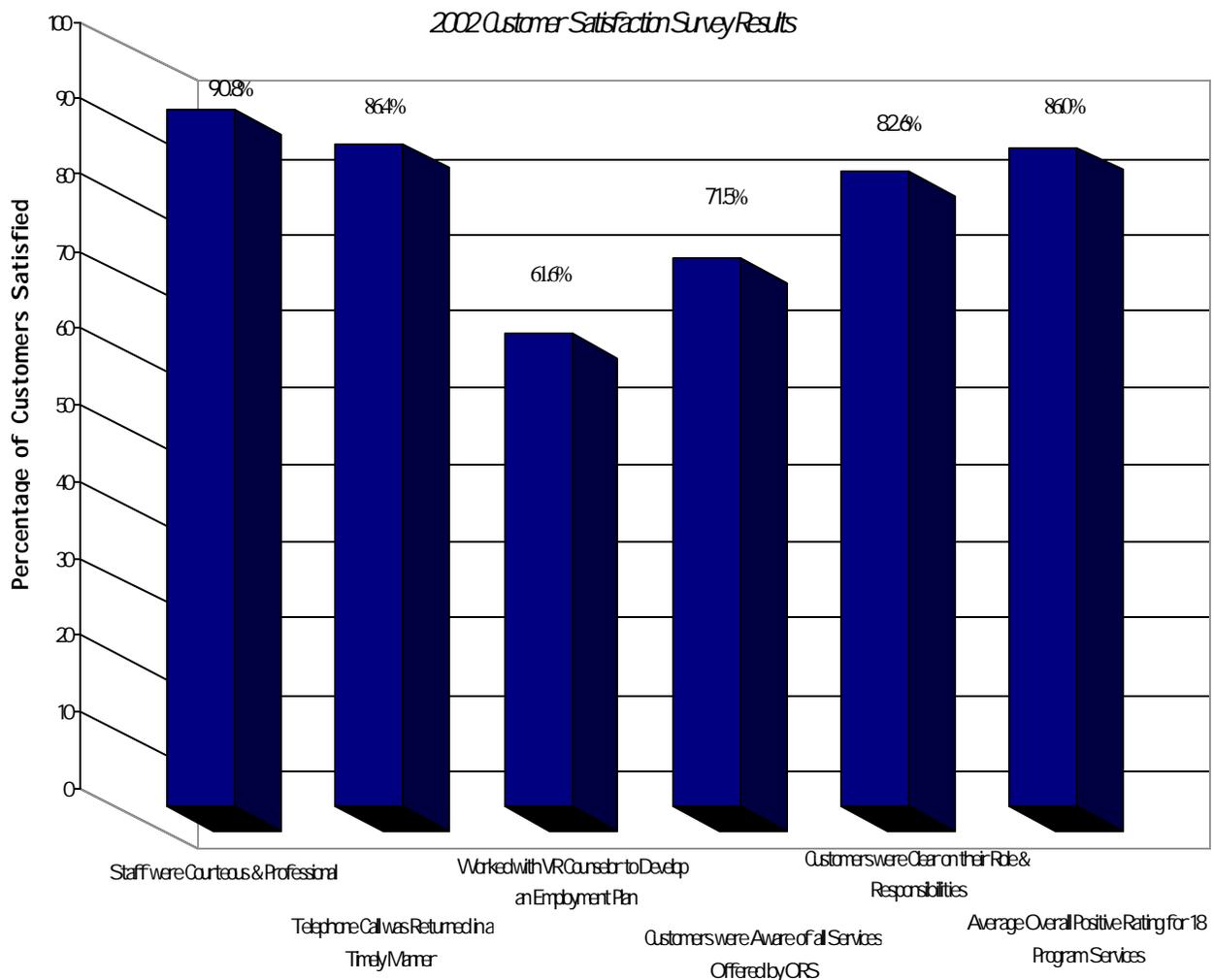
The State Rehabilitation Council is a key partner of the Office of Rehabilitation Services in planning, developing and implementing services that result in employment for individuals with disabilities. Twenty-six individuals actively participate on the SRC and its committees. The SRC is involved with legislative advocacy, policy and state plan development, employment partnerships, and strategic planning. In addition, the SRC hosted the 6th Annual Employer Honor Roll Awards Ceremony and recognized 12 employers who hired individuals with significant disabilities.

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2002 SRC Members: Carol Krause-Ferrioli, Chairperson, William Anderson, Janice Belasco, Barbara Belheumer, Annette Bourbonnaire, Paul Choquette, Robert Cooper, Thomas DiPaola, Ph.D., Robin Dolan, Ann Marie Dubuque, Craig Enos, Carmen Ferguson, Isabel Frost, Russell Gifford, Margaret Hoyer, Brian Hubbard, Melissa Jenkins, Mary Moore, Jeanne Panarace, Virginia Perelson, Paul Pickens, J. David Sienko, Susan Silva

In February 2002, the State Rehabilitation Council received the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey prepared by The Center for Research and Public Policy (CRPP) of Trumbull, Connecticut. This survey was designed to measure current satisfaction levels among ORS consumers, and is meant to guide the Office of Rehabilitation Services in building and maintaining relevant and successful programs and services to meet the needs of the residents served.

Areas included in the telephone surveys included: general awareness and understanding of ORS services, expectations of ORS, overall program ratings, personnel ratings, use and satisfaction with community providers, program participation, barriers to program or service participation, outcomes, need (met/unmet), employment and demographics.



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ORS sincerely thanks Carol Krause-Ferrioli, past-Chair, Annette Bourbonnaire, Chair and all the Council members for their commitment to the vocational rehabilitation program.

RI Youth Leadership Forum

On August 12, 2002, ten students serving as delegates from communities throughout Rhode Island met in Exeter, RI to attend the first Rhode Island Youth Leadership Forum. The forum provided a concentrated educational and motivational experience for these high school juniors and seniors, who were selected on the basis of demonstrated leadership qualities and potential. The goal to encourage these students to reach their potential of becoming active participants in the community and exercising leadership was pursued in several ways.

During the forum, the delegates participated in a wide range of activities and learning experiences. The students heard presentations from forum leaders



and distinguished guests; participated in facilitated group discussions with successful adults with disabilities, college students and fellow delegates; worked on self-assessment and career goal identification exercises; introduced forum speakers, responded to questions from the press, and attended a mentor luncheon in their honor. The students also participated in a debate on a mock disability issue bill.

Throughout a very busy three days, the delegates resided, worked and played in a spirited environment, which they shared with fellow delegates and a strongly motivated volunteer staff of coordinators, counselors, college students, sign language interpreters, nurse, and other students serving as program assistants. Throughout the students' diverse life experiences, personal challenges, and aspirations, the students shared an important characteristic that became apparent during the forum - the potential for meaningful social participation and community leadership. Each delegate developed goals and has the ability to succeed.

They will be future leaders.

6th Annual Employer Honor Roll Awards Ceremony

The 2002 Rhode Island Employer Honor Roll celebrated Rhode Island employers for excellence in hiring and supporting employees with disabilities at a ceremony on October 3, 2002. These employers included:

Anton's Air Foods, *Paul Delfino* ~ ARC of No. Rhode Island, *Louise Gagne*
Audubon Society of RI, *Dot Mathurin* ~ Bess Eaton Donut Co., *Dave Wilson*
Cedar Crest Nursing Centre, *Tyrone Jackson*
East Side Marketplace, *Joseph Moreau* ~ Excell Manufacturing, *Terry DiSano*
K-Mart, *Jay Schneider* ~ Newport Creamery, *Don Greenwood*
Ristorante Pizzico, *Cheryl Boyle, Jim & Steve Harris*
Shaw's Supermarket, *Brenda Lang*
Techmap, *Des Dowling & Tony Muscatelli*

* * *

4 Outstanding Achievement Awards

Accommodation: Techmap (Des Dowling & Tony Muscatelli) was recognized as an employer whose exceptional job accommodation demonstrates creative and flexible ways to help the employee successfully carry out the responsibilities of the position.

Integration: Newport Creamery (Don Greenwood) was recognized for its efforts to involve the employee in all aspects of the daily work environment, including training, communication and social opportunities.

Advancement: Anton's Air Foods, Inc. (Paul Delfino) was recognized as an employer who offers the same opportunities for advancement to employees with disabilities as he does to those who are not disabled.

Longevity: Shaw's Supermarket (Brenda Lang) was recognized as an employer who strengthened the employee's roots in the work community.

Success Stories

Dorothy Furlong

Dorothy currently works as a Resident Service Specialist at RI Housing & Mortgage Finance where she provides technical support to the Resident Service Coordinators who work in Section 8 housing in Rhode Island. She came to ORS for assistance in keeping this job and improving her working potential. She was having difficulty focusing on tasks, time management and priority goal setting. After receiving an evaluation, she was diagnosed with a learning disability, dyslexia, and ADHD. ORS Staff Supervisor, Steve Brunero, and VR Counselor, Patricia Keating, helped her receive the VR counseling and guidance she needed to improve her work situation. Dorothy utilized the services of a rehabilitation engineer to identify the specific equipment she would need to reduce the barriers imposed by her disabilities. ORS purchased an Alphasmart - a portable computer companion, a computer, and printer; and her work schedule was modified so she could work sometimes from home. She also received assistive technology training from TechACCESS of RI to aid in the use of the adaptive equipment provided by ORS. Dorothy was then able to perform the essential functions of her job. Dorothy is pleased to announce she has enrolled in the Masters in Social Work program at Rhode Island College.



Michael

Michael's success story began back when he was attending school and was first referred to ORS. His mother had concerns that he needed a more structured behavior management system. She also felt he needed to have objectives specifically targeted and included in his educational plan so that he could develop his independence. He was evaluated and determined to have interpersonal, behavioral and coping impairments, and was diagnosed with ADHD, a learning disability, and Asperger's Syndrome - a form of autism. Michael worked hard and made good progress over the years and transitioned through the different worlds of school, college, and is currently employed as a computer technician.

Working with his vocational rehabilitation counselor, Sheila Moffat, Michael received services including vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance, on-the-job training, job search assistance, job placement assistance, and information & referral services. He graduated from New England Institute of Technology with his Associates Degrees in Computer & Networking Servicing Technology and Electronics Technology. Sheila referred Michael to the local netWORKri where he participated in a resume workshop, and then to Opportunity Resources for job search assistance. Through these partnerships, he was hired with 3-month on-the-job training at his current position. Michael told Sheila he is very happy with his current job, but is also very busy.

Success Stories

Lisa Valeriana

Lisa came to ORS after suffering from a work-related injury she received while employed as a CNA three years ago. Her condition worsened over the years resulting in her having pain all day long that limited even her daily functions. Her ORS Counselor, Elinor Pickering, worked closely with her to determine what her limitations were after a functional capacity evaluation, and what she wanted and could do. Lisa and Elinor both felt that since Lisa was a high school graduate and was interested in doing office work, they would see how proficient she would be working in that type of employment environment.

Lisa received computer training from Opportunity Resources where she learned software for the visually impaired. She began on-the-job training at Opportunity Resources as a Teacher's Assistant working with visually impaired students, including those from SBVI, teaching them how to use a computer. The Department of Human Services provided child care for Lisa during this training through Tri-Town Community Action. Lisa was hired as a Teacher's Assistant on a part-time basis working 20-25 hours per week, but is expected to move into a full-time position in the near future. Her success was due to the collaboration among these several agencies assisting her to reach her employment goal.

Aleatha Dickerson

In 1998 when Aleatha was hired at the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired as a Rehabilitation Teacher, she knew many of the challenges her clients were going to face because she had gone through them herself. Aleatha was diagnosed in 1987 with Stevens-Johnson Syndrome, a rare disorder that resulted in the scarring of her corneas, ultimately leaving her blind. After being referred to ORS by a hospital social worker, Aleatha received vocational counseling and help with her schooling, including the purchase of a Type 'n Speak notetaker used to aid with her studies. She graduated at the top of her class from URI in May 2001 with a Master's Degree in Clinical Laboratory Science, concentrating in Adult Education.



Cultural outreach is an issue that Aleatha considers to be very important because of her own multiracial heritage. She has recently been elected as Tribal Chair of the Chappaquiddick Tribe of the Wampanoag Indian Nation. In an effort to inform the public of services available to minorities, Aleatha, who had taken on the responsibility of being the Chair of the Cultural Diversity Cadre at ORS, in addition to being the Chair of the Advisory Council for Disability and Health, and a boardmember at TechACCESS of RI, believes that through education and communication between ORS and the community, many people will get the services they need and deserve.

Field Services Leaders

Cranston/Johnston/Warwick/West Warwick - Paul Autote

East Bay and Newport County, FIP/LD Project - Ron Racine

Northern Rhode Island Area - Jeannine Dionne

Providence Area - JoAnn Nannig

SBVI - Vocational Rehabilitation Unit - Susan Silva

South County Area - Roberta Accetturo

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Community Rehabilitation Program Specialist - Joseph Orsi

Employment Supervisor - Jack Amaral

Fiscal Unit - Jennifer Patrie

Human Resource Development - Susan Shapiro

Information Services Technician - Sharon DiPinto

Office Manager/Administrative Support Staff - Sharon Fedak

Planning & Evaluation - Patricia Ryherd

Special Services/Deaf Services - Jeannine Dionne - Interim Supervisor



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Notice of Non-Discrimination

DHS does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, age, religion or sex in acceptance for or provision of services, employment or treatment in its educational and other programs and activities. For further information, contact: the Community Relations Liaison Officer, 401.462.2130 or TDD (hearing impaired) at 401.462.6239.

Information about the Rhode Island DHS/Office of Rehabilitation Services can be obtained via the World Wide Web at the following address:

<http://www.ors.state.ri.us>

Alternate formats are available. Contact Sharon DiPinto at 401.421.7005 ext. 318 to receive a copy.