



CHOICES & CHALLENGES

Noteworthy Spotlight

Stakeholder Spotlight

Health and Safety Tip

During the cold months, it is important to keep a few things in mind. These quick tips will help keep you warm and healthy this winter.

+ Hypothermia occurs when the entire body cools because its ability to keep warm fails. The person will die if not given care.

+ Signal of hypothermia

- Shivering, numbness, glassy stare
- Apathy, weakness, impaired judgment
- Loss of consciousness

+ Care for hypothermia

- Gently move the person to a warm place.
- Monitor airway, breathing and circulation.
- Give rescue breathing or CPR if needed.
- Remove any wet clothing and dry the person.

Staff Update

The Choice Group would like to welcome two new employees :

Elaine Austin comes to The Choice Group with eight years of experience working with children that have developmental and sensory related challenges. Her most recent experience includes an internship with the Harrisonburg Rockingham Social Services District where she assisted with case

Collaborations by Sherman Gifford



The 12th Annual Collaborations Conference took place in Virginia Beach at the beginning of October and was attended by a number of Vocational Counselors from The Choice Group. The event is the primary conference in Virginia for rehabilitation professionals and is hosted each year by the Virginia Chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (VA-APSE),

The Virginia Association of Community Rehabilitation Programs (vaACCSES), and the Virginia Rehabilitation Association (VRA). In addition to over two days of workshops on timely issues, including nationally recognized speakers, there was an awards luncheon which gave the three organizations an opportunity to recognize excellence in their fields. Among the twelve awards presented were VRA's Distinguished Achievement Award, which went to Choice Group Supervisor, Ericka Umbarger, and vaACCSES's Regional Staff Recognition Award for Excellence in Service to People with Disabilities, which was awarded to Chris Lavach, Choice Group Director of Vocational Services.

The Choice Group Receives Perfect CARF Survey by Robin Metcalf and Richard Lucyshyn

During the month of September, three surveyors from CARF made their home at The Choice Group in order to complete a three-day survey for the purposes of accreditation. These surveys are comprehensive in nature and necessary to ensure effective and thorough service to our clients. The surveyors met with numerous clients and employers on an independent basis, thoroughly audited all records and bookkeeping practices, and interviewed Choice Group employees and referral sources.

As a result of this survey, The Choice Group was accredited by CARF for a three-year period in Community Services (Community Integration) and Employment Services, focusing on Job Development, Job Supports, Job Site Training, Employment Planning Services, and Employment Skills Training.

As part of the accreditation process, CARF issues recommendations for improvement in specific areas. For the second survey in a row, The Choice Group received no recommendations. This accomplishment is only met by

three percent of all CARF surveys and will be recognized by CARF in its listing of organizations with accreditation.

Accreditation by CARF is essential to ensure the highest quality of service to our clients. The Choice Group would like to thank our partners at the Virginia

management, confidentiality policies, advocating, and coordinating resources such as Social Security, Support Groups and Special Education programs within schools. Her diverse experience makes her a valuable asset to our team.

Elaine holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology with a Social Work studies concentration from Bridgewater College.



Jessica Collins comes to The Choice Group with experience in the human services field. Her experience includes work with both the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents and the James River Alcohol Safety program. Her experience and dedication make her a valuable asset to our team. Jessica attended Mary Baldwin College where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Sociology in 2005.

Department of Rehabilitative Services, Community Service Boards, and employers across the state for their continued support of our clients and for helping make this achievement possible.

Employer and Employee of the Quarter by Pam Russell, Jessica Collins, Lisa Hart, and Richard Lucyshyn

Every quarter, The Choice Group seeks to highlight employers and employees in the communities we serve. In this issue, we would like to recognize several clients and employers in Richmond and Charlottesville.

Plan 9 Music, Richmond, VA



Shoppers browsing the racks of Richmond's Plan 9 Music may have noticed an improvement in organization in the past several months thanks to Alan Milby. Alan works part-time at the Carytown landmark as a "rack runner," patrolling the stores thousands of CDs and re-alphabetizing the bins several times per week.

The Choice Group has had a very close relationship with Plan 9 over the years. Jay Leavitt re-opened the Carytown store's doors to situational assessments early in 2008. When Jay was promoted to General Manager of Plan 9 Music, David "Sully" Sullivan took over as store manager in Richmond. The store has always had difficulty keeping the CD bins organized, a consequence of high consumer traffic and over-stretched employees.

Vocational Counselor Richard Lucyshyn talked with Sully over the course of several months about the possibility of Plan 9 hiring someone to be in charge of keeping the bins in order. Vocational Counselor Pam Russell continued these discussions with Sully and her client, Alan, designing a schedule and a set of duties. Soon after, Alan went to work in one of the hottest spots in Richmond.

Alan writes of himself - *I was born in a family that grew to seven children - a family of nine. I was born in a body that has many physical challenges. I had many surgeries to correct/improve them. I walked a few years with braces and a walker. Although I had these challenges, they didn't stop me from doing some stuff, such as getting onto the track team. I started to run on the middle school track and field team. I continued to run in high school. My coach asked me in my sophomore school year to join the cross country team. I thought about it and did come to join the cross country team to practice in my junior year of high school. I graduated from high school with a diploma in 1991.*

I worked thirteen years (seasons), 1991 - 2004, at Kings Dominion. I was called as a Street Host (janitor) as I was cleaning the park streets & restrooms, about six years. I spent a few years in the stores, stocking the shelves, and I was in the cafeteria, cleaning up.

I'm interested in getting on the computer, listening to music, and/or in writing poems/short stories.

PLAN 9 is an okay/fine place to work. The manager that I have is very understanding. He knows about the transportation (CARE) and will allow for me to come in late. He will allow for me to sit down when I'm feeling tired.

Plan 9 Music continues to offer its support to the community and individuals with disabilities. The Charlottesville store has recently opened its doors for situational assessments. We look forward to a long and healthy partnership.

Kroger, Barracks Road Shopping Center, Charlottesville, VA

When you walk into the Kroger in Barrack's Road Shopping Center in



Charlottesville, VA, you are automatically drawn to the attractiveness of the produce department. You will also probably find a young man, Kevin Monroe, making sure that every shelf is neatly stocked and organized.

Kevin has been working with The Choice Group since July and has excelled at his job by leaps and bounds. About three months ago, Kevin was promoted from the front end to the produce department, where he helped secure his store's position as the number one Kroger in the country, previously held by a store in Cincinnati, Ohio.

When asked if there are any responsibilities at Kroger he finds difficult to do, he simply replies, "The job is hard when people make it hard."

The Melting Pot, Charlottesville, VA



Tucked away on the backside of the Downtown Mall in Charlottesville, VA, The Melting Pot restaurant serves up fondue and other cuisine to hungry diners out for some time on the town. Choice Group employee, Lisa Hart works closely with the managers and four clients to ensure that

The Melting Pot is one of the most favored dinner spots in town.

For its commitment to employing individuals with disabilities, The Melting Pot in Charlottesville, VA was spotlighted by DRS and received one of the Champion Awards.

Avenue 805, Richmond, VA



On a quiet side-street across from The Science Museum of Virginia, Avenue 805 offers guests an elegant dining experience in a quiet and intimate setting. During the day, Choice Group client, Warren Franklin ensures that the lunch rush runs smoothly, working as a utility person.

Sarah and Jeff hired Warren about eight months ago. They were so impressed with Warren that they hired him on for a brand-new position. Working with Vocational Counselor Pam Russell, the team set out to create a set of duties.

Warren has since become an essential part of the team. He and his family recently joined the staff for their in-house holiday celebrations.

Transportation News by LaWanda Jones and Richard Lucyshyn

GRTC Transit Systems held several town hall meetings throughout the fall to discuss proposed route changes. Due to budget shortfalls and rising fuel prices, GRTC Transit Systems conducted an operational analysis which resulted in a proposal to shut down underperforming routes. While any changes to bus fares or routes is subject to approval by City Council, The Choice Group will be sure to monitor closely any changes which will affect our clients. At present, no changes have been made.



About The Choice Group...

The Choice Group was established in 1998 as a private rehabilitation and employment services organization. Please feel free to call us anytime at 877-374-5312. You may also visit us weekdays between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:30 pm. We have plenty of reference material for vocational counseling, resources for employers, and resources for people with disabilities, including pamphlets that further describe the extent of our services.

CARF ACCREDITATION



The Choice Group received the highest accreditation available from CARF: a three year accreditation. We are proud of our entire staff for their contribution to attaining this award. This award makes it possible for our stakeholders to feel secure in the knowledge that they are receiving the best possible services from The Choice Group.

What is CARF?

CARF is a nonprofit organization that accredits human services providers throughout the United States, Canada, and Western Europe in the areas of rehabilitation, employment, aging, and family services.

What does it mean to be accredited?

The mission of CARF is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served.

A hallmark of quality

When the service or program you choose is CARF-accredited, it means your provider has passed an in-depth review of its services. It is your assurance that the provider meets rigorous CARF guidelines for service and quality -- a qualified endorsement that your provider conforms to nationally and internationally recognized service standards and is focused on delivering the most favorable results for you.

After an organization applies for accreditation of its services or programs, CARF sends professionals in the field to conduct an on-site survey to determine the degree to which the organization meets the standards. CARF surveyors also consult with staff members and offer suggestions for improving the quality of services.

CARF-accredited programs and services have demonstrated that they substantially meet internationally recognized standards. CARF accreditation means that you can be confident that an organization has made a commitment to continually enhance the quality of its services and programs and its focus on the satisfaction of the persons served.

Choosing CARF-accredited programs and services gives you the assurance that:

* The programs and services actively involve consumers in selecting, planning, and using services.

The benefits of accreditation to the consumer of services

* The organization's programs and services have met consumer-focused, state-of-the-art national standards of performance.

* These standards were developed with the involvement and input of consumers.

* The organization is focused on assisting each consumer in achieving his or her chosen goals and outcomes.

Newsletter Staff – Richard Lucyshyn, Matthew Ray, LaWanda Jones, Robin Metcalf, Chris Lapallo, Pam Russell, Jessica Collins, Lisa Hart, Sherman Gifford

EMPLOYER PARTNERS

The Choice Group has partnered with a diverse and large segment of the business community. Our aim is to establish long term relationships with businesses in our community and we build these by providing employers with the support they need to obtain and maintain qualified, reliable, dependable employees. Our list of Employer Partners reads like the Who's Who in the Business Community. Listed below are some of the businesses that have hired our clients.

7-Eleven	Mail America
A Touch of Care, Inc.	Main Software Solutions
A&E Service	Manpower
A.G. Dillard	Marriott
Able Couriers	Martha Jefferson Hospital
Advance Auto Parts	McGraw GRP
Auto Zone	McDonald's
All Dog Playskool	MCV
America House	MCI World Communication
American Family Fitness	Michael's
American Security Group	Milhous Machine Company
Applebee's	Monticello Area Community Action Agency
Aramark. MCV	Morehead Memorial Hospital
Averett University	Mrs. Marshall's
Belle Kuisine	Nabisco
Beverly Healthcare	Office Max
Big Lots	Old Dominion Box Company

Bill's Barbeque	Old Dominion Health Services
Blue Ridge Mountain Sports	Omni Hotel
Bon Secours	Pegasus Cleaning
Breath of Life Landscaping	Personal Touch Hair Design
Brighton Gardens	Pet Club
Brooks Gray Sign Company	Pet Smart
Brown Toyota	Photowork Creative Camp
Burger King	Pizza Hut
Burrus Lamber	Porter Associates
C. Digital	Printer Alley
Capitol One	Quality Meats
Cartaret Mortgage	RC Drafting
Cedarfield	Radisson
Central VA Housing Coalition	Rainbow Station
Chesterfield County Disability Service Board	Ramada Inn
Children's World	Regal Cinema
City of Richmond	Richmond Country Club
Civic Development Group	Rose Department
Comfort Inn	Rountree
Computer Learning Solution	Ruby Tuesday's
Coyne Textile	Ryan's Family Steakhouse
Creative Signs	SAS Plumbing
Crutchfield	Saint Catherine's
Chester	Saint Christopher's
Crowne Plaza	Sam's Club
Cybo Tech	Sea Ray
Deen Foods	Sears
Dept. of Taxation	Service Master
Department of Motor Vehicles	Shoney's
Domino's Pizza	Springs Industries
Double Tree Hotel	Standard Parking
EC. Link	Stanley Furniture

E.R. Carpenters	Stanley Hardware
Eastern Aluminum	Staples
Einstein (EOM)	Stein Mart
England's Wood Stoves	Strange's
Enterprise	Super 8
ESI, School of Business	Target
Family Care Home Health	TEC Access
First North American National Bank	Textilease
Food Lion	The Boars Head Inn
Geico	The Body Shop
General Nutrition Center	The Cedars
Glass Masters	The Goddards
Gold's Gym	The Virginia Home
Golden Corral	Tour Time
Goochland Custom Buildings and Play Center	Trugreen Chemlawn
Goodly Bicycle	Tyson Foods
Goody's	Ukrops, Midlothian
Greyhound	University of Richmond
Hampton Inn	University of Virginia Hospital
Hawkeye Manufacturing	University of Virginia Maintenance
Health Data Copiers	University of Virginia Observatory Hill
Health South Rehabilitation Hospital	Vanguard Plastics
Henrico County	Virginia Baptist Hospital
Holiday Inn	Virginia Commonwealth University
Holly Manor Nursing Home	Virginia Correctional Enterprises
Home Depot	Virginia Employment Commission
Hopewell Craft	Virginia Linens
Howard Johnson	Virginia School of Technology
Hyatt Hotel	Virginia State University
Ikon	Wachovia Bank
Imperial Plaza	Wal-Mart
ISS/Excel	Wallace B. Tucker Mechanical Contractors

Ivy Hill Golf Club
Jackie's Hair Company
James River Nurseries
The Jefferson Hotel
Jo Ann Fabrics
Keebler
K-Mart
Liberty University
Longwood College
Lowe's
Lucy Corr Nursing Home

Wendy's
West End Orthopedic
Westminster Canterbury
Whitten Bros Mercury
Wildbirds Unlimited
Winn Dixie
Wintergreen Resort
Wolf Management
YMCA
YMCA Daycare
World Access
And many more...