



RVR, Ink

Summer, 2007

A newsletter for employees and friends of River Valley Resources

Success!



Stacy Fischer, a participant in the Dearborn County Older Youth Program operated by RVR at the Lawrenceburg WorkOne, received her GED during graduation ceremonies at Southeastern Career Center in Versailles. Stacy also completed a summer work experience and plans to further her education and obtain occupational skills certification in auto body repair. [Read about more RVR successes on page 3.](#)

From Don...

By Don Richardson
RVR President



One measure of writing for this newsletter is I sometimes envision that when I say something good about somebody, it might end up at their home attached to their refrigerator by a magnet....for the kids. Kid-worthy stuff.

Elaina Freeman has two kids, the beautiful Olivia and the ruggedly handsome Luke. Whether they appreciate it or not, I know that Elaina is a very special employee (and friend) and a very special asset to this entire organization. In addition to her incessant carping on CARF accreditation (for which I thank her), she brings considerably more to the table. She is involved in every major project, volunteers for virtually every task requiring attention and otherwise has earned the respect of the entire administrative team, as well as the respect of most or many front-liners.

I was concerned this past week when I overheard that our work with persons with disabilities was "Elaina's program." It isn't. That obligation is an integral part of the mission of this entire organization. Elaina, truth be known, sort of backed into a leadership role for organizing the CARF initiative and then the Vocational Rehabilitation initiatives mostly because she has those experiences in her work history. Her role in providing leadership and support for everything from Indy Youth and IMPACT grant proposals to Project GOLD, all derived from her original efforts with TANF Youth. At that time the TANF Youth program was called "Elaina's program." The preservation or creation of literally dozens of jobs can be credited, in significant part, to Elaina's efforts working with all staff and all programs, leading to what is even more important--hundreds of participants have been effectively served.



The same is true or should be true of most or all of the people in this organization. It alarms me when the Indianapolis people are regarded as the "Indianapolis people." It alarms me when the IMPACT or WIA or other specialists are perceived as the "IMPACT people" or the "WIA people." Current jargon calls that "thinking in silos." We cannot afford to think in silos. We thrive or we suffer together or we fail to exist. I don't even want to work in a fragmented, non-cohesive organization where any of us can remain cocooned in our own box. I noticed at several recent meetings that people sat with their programmatic or geographical peers. I understand that but I suffer if I have contributed to that. I will suffer even more if I allow it to become or remain the standard.

Elaina (among others) leads by example in demonstrating that we can do better by interacting with, supporting and investing in one another. Nobody suffers that. We all benefit from that.

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From around RVR...

Dearborn, Ohio, Switzerland counties

It's been another busy quarter for RVR's Dearborn County staff, located at the Lawrenceburg WorkOne. Pernod Ricard, one of the biggest industries in Dearborn County, laid off nearly 80% of its 300-plus workforce. The Lawrenceburg WorkOne Office began a series of Informational sessions to help meet the needs of the dislocated workers.

Both Daphne Spears and Debbie Cole initiated roundtable workshops on job search, training and resume development for those who had job leads but no resume. Currently there are a number enrolled in the WIA program and both case managers have potential enrollees. One of the current enrollees has been placed in a job with an 85% wage capture. Others are enrolled in training and/or have received staff-assisted core services, including some intensive services such as career exploration.

The youth program continues to meet performance measures in these counties. In June, Debbie Cole attended the Adult Basic Education (GED) graduation. Dearborn and Ohio County had 4 who earned their GED diploma as part of their involvement in the youth program. Three of the graduates also completed a youth work experience and received supportive services. The City of Lawrenceburg, Rising Sun and Moores Hill successfully provided youth work experience sites.

The team has completed the final draft of two new Work Readiness workshops for the older youth program. Daphne will be meeting with the Rising Sun High School Guidance Counselor to continue collaborative efforts of the program. Debbie has met with one school counselor and others will follow.

RVR continues its partnership services with Southeastern Community Corrections Program. The organization was one of 10 that received a Department of Corrections grant for their inmate work release program. It is a new initiative to help offenders (who are short-term incarcerated) be able to maintain employment through work release. Thus far, it has

been a very successful collaboration.

In addition, staff has been assisting in the Honda application process when job seekers experience problems navigating the website.

—Debbie Cole

Marion County

Marion County Impact staff Juli Markwell and Stephanie James received great feedback from the Division of Family Resources (DFR) Eligibility Specialists on recent visits they made to the local DFR offices. Many caseworkers thanked them for the hard work the Marion County office is doing. Comments heard included: "I only send my clients to RVR"; "Communication is great!!"; and "Paperwork is always accurate and on time!"

Juli and Stephanie visited these local offices to help promote RVR services, distribute flyers with information on our program, and to meet with the caseworkers and answer any questions they may have.

Staff in Marion County have also been able to secure donations of tickets to both the Indiana Fever and Indianapolis Indians games to distribute to program participants who are employed. These tickets are helpful as one way to boost the incentive for working clients to continue their contacts with staff, contact which is needed in order to monitor job retention.

We are very proud of our many successful program participants in Marion County, whether they be enrolled in IMPACT or in the Workforce Investment Act Older Youth program. In this issue of RVR Ink, Juli Markwell shares the story of Kenisha, a young lady involved with us through IMPACT. Kenisha is one example. There are many more and we, on the RVR team, are grateful for our association with all of them!

—Stephanie James

RVR and financial literacy

Are you financially literate? Do you know that over 40% of us now live beyond our means? And, we owe \$10,000 to \$12,000 just in revolving debt? Do you know that our youth (10-21) will earn over *\$211 billion* in their lifetime and almost a third of that will be needed for debt repayment because of lifestyle choices?

These statistics could be improved if everyone was more financially aware. To that effect, RVR submitted a proposal to the Decatur County Community Foundation to teach financial literacy to young girls through their Women & Girls Fund. Pat Van Selow, Director of Program Development for RVR, accepted the grant award on August 3rd. RVR will partner with Main-Source Bank to conduct classes and teach financial awareness, including budgeting, understanding credit, and maybe even starting an investment club. The undertaking will require substantial volunteer time (the familiar "in-kind" contribution) but Toni Collins, RVR board member, and Pat have pledged to make this happen. Toni and Pat are dedicated to teaching youth the facts and related responsibility of money management. Watch for \$ results!

Team attends conference

In August, members of RVR's Disability Employment Services team traveled to Arlington, VA to attend the 10th Annual RSA Project Director's Conference, *Innovations for Success: New Ideas for the 21st Century*. The conference was provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitative Services Administration.

RVR administers a federally funded (US Department of Education) Project with Industry grant targeting job placement for people with disabilities. Karen Rouse, Angela Kincaid, Julie Himes, and Elaina Freeman had the opportunity to network with Project with Industry grantees from across the nation, other RSA funded project representatives, and RSA personnel.

The conference also allowed project staff to learn about anticipated changes for PWI.

Success! RVR program participants excel: two examples

Elliott

By Karen Rouse
RVR Disability Services Programs
Madison

Elliott and I became acquainted in June 2005 when he was referred to me from Vocational Rehabilitation for job placement assistance. I was instantly smitten by Elliott's engaging personality and great sense of humor: he had a whole repertoire of jokes that he worked into our entire meeting.

Later, I was fortunate to meet Elliott's parents who shared a lot with me about Elliott's early life experiences. Elliott had endured years of physical therapy in order to maximize his mobility. His greatest strength and, as it sometimes turns out, his greatest weakness, is his tenacity. Dean Miller, his Voc Rehab counselor, told me that while Elliott was attending college, if he couldn't understand something, he pestered instructors, other students and tutors until he "got it." Elliott had dreamed of becoming a high school coach. Any sport would do, but track was Elliott's first choice. But since his attempt at college was not successful, he was determined to find a job.

Dean and I agreed that I should arrange some vocational exploration because Elliott was not sure exactly what he wanted to do. However, he was quite sure there were certain jobs that he did not want to do. He adamantly did not want a janitorial job or one in food service. In addition, Elliott and I had to work out a job search schedule because he volunteered to help at local track meets and would not be available for job search when he was involved with this activity. He also let me know straight away that he would have to put his job search on hold for two weeks in

July, because his parents were taking him on a great vacation out west!

We eventually worked this out and Elliott ultimately job-shadowed at the local Goodwill store, Royer, and the Lide White Boys and Girls Club. During this time, Elliott finally obtained his driver's license and made sure he came to the WorkOne to show me his newest prized possession.

The final place we job-shadowed was AVI Food Service. AVI struck me as a great place to work. The atmosphere was happy. Supervisors and staff were quite cordial and were extremely helpful in taking the time to show us the ropes. We worked for approximately four hours filling orders for vending machine contracts.

Elliott liked AVI and AVI liked Elliott. He was offered a job and began working on October 8, 2005. We closed Elliott's case in January of 2006 and since then I have contacted AVI for other job seekers on my caseload. Whenever I made contact with AVI, I asked about Elliott. His co-workers and supervisor always had positive things to say about how hard Elliott worked and about his awesome work ethic. I frequently left messages at AVI for Elliott asking him to stop by

the WorkOne and see me, but he never appeared.

Earlier this month, Dean Miller told me he had encountered Elliott's parents at Southwestern High School where they both work. Elliott's father told Dean that Elliott was looking into renting an apartment and moving out on his own. On one hand, I was very happy that Elliott was making this move toward independence, but on the other hand, I was a bit sad for reasons I couldn't place. I knew that I missed Elliott's quick wit and 24 carat smile, but why be sad?

Later, when I updated Elaina Freeman about this new development in Elliott's life, I told her that apparently Elliott didn't need me anymore! Just making this statement put things into perspective. You see, Elliott was doing what most young people eventually do. They grow up, move on and finally out. This is how it should be. The best outcome for all the folks that I serve is that they don't need me anymore. But Elliott is so special to me that I intend to covertly keep tabs on him. And I expect to hear more good stuff about him as time goes by, if only through the grapevine.

Kenisha

By Juli Markwell,
RVR IMPACT Program
Indianapolis

I met Kenisha in March 2007 for her assessment. She had graduated from high school and completed a business administrative course through Professional Careers Institute. She was quiet, but always professional; I recommended our Personal Development program for her as a way to increase her self confidence and marketability in the world of work.

April Rangel-Scott of our Marion County office placed Kenisha in a Community Work Experience (CWEP) position in a doctor's office. The physician was very pleased with her performance, but was not able to hire her at that time. Kenisha continued with job development, and we met on several occasions to discuss her job search, including additional strategies she could try and places she could look.

It occurred to me one day that with her caring attitude, attention to detail and strong work ethic, she would make

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Success!

Kenisha

(Continued from page 3)

an excellent case manager. ACS had openings in our area for Eligibility Specialists. I showed Kenisha the website and she applied online. She received a response and was asked to complete a personality evaluation.

The interview process was lengthy, but Kenisha completed each task and followed through with all of the job seeking activities we had discussed. She was very excited, but didn't want to get her hopes up, because she had previously experienced second interviews with no job offer forthcoming.

Here in our RVR office, we had a change in our IMPACT staff which caused us to rotate case loads. Kenisha was transferred to Stephanie James. Stephanie and I let Kenisha know that we work very closely with one another, and that we were both here for her. I was very happy to be the one that received the call on July 3rd that after all of these months, Kenisha was hired by ACS as an Eligibility Specialist. She is now in training and loves every minute of it.

Stephanie maintains weekly contact with Kenisha, who just won Indians tickets in a drawing we have for our working clients. She came in to pick them up, and she looked great. She was all smiles and was very thankful for the services she received from our program. It was a long road but she didn't have to go it alone. She knew that we were here for her and that her happiness in her success was shared by us.

And now she is on the other side of the desk and will be able to assist others. I know Kenisha will be an excellent case manager!

L³ grad wins Governor's Award, will serve on conference panel with RVR staff

Once again, RVR's southeastern regional Leadership Learning Lab, or L³, has produced a winner of the prestigious "Governor's Award for Tomorrow's Leaders."

Stacie Skinner, a participant in the second cycle of L³, has been chosen as a recipient of the 2007 award. She accepted this honor from Governor Mitch Daniels at the recent Indiana Humanities Council Leadership Summit in Indianapolis.

This special Governor's Award is given to young adults under the age of 29 who have demonstrated leadership capabilities in four distinct areas of education, entrepreneurship, culture, and community service. RVR's Pat Van Selow, who has coordinated RVR's L³ programs, said, "Stacie excels in all of the categories and has set definitive goals for the future."

Skinner will also be attending the International Leadership Association Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia in October with Van Selow where they will present the L³ process to an international audience. "As a participant," said Van Selow, "Stacie's perspective will give valuable insight to the panel presentation of the L³ process."

Karen Blevins, a participant in the first cycle of L³, was chosen as a recipient of the Governor's Award in 2006.

Both Skinner and Blevins were nominated for this award by Van Selow, who noted, "That is two winners out of two nominations. I definitely feel the pressure to make it three out of three for RVR and L³."

The Leadership Learning Lab is the product of the Southeastern Indiana Rural Regional Partnership including the 12 counties of Dearborn, Decatur, Fayette, Franklin, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley, Rush, Scott, Switzerland, and Union. Approximately 75 participants have been exposed to experts in leadership development, participated in focused workshops, developed critical thinking and related leadership skills, and conducted community conversations, all in the effort to achieve a more progressive rural environment.

On the conference panel, Van Selow and Skinner will represent Indiana and share their information about the L³ experience, along with Nathan Harter, professor at Purdue College of Technology.

Van Selow said, "This is an evolving opportunity for RVR and L³. The Leadership Learning Lab provides a solid foundation for rural leadership development."

RVR receives funding to benefit Marion County youth participants

River Valley Resources and MSD Washington Township Adult Education have received workforce development funding from the Department of Education to provide GED and pre-GED classes and Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3) training in RVR's Marion County Youth Program office in Indianapolis. Young people

who are disadvantaged, at-risk and have multiple barriers to education will benefit from this specially designed on-site program.

GED classes started in early September. Within the first two days, 20 young people enrolled in the sessions. As it is determined that program participants need this service, RVR staff will refer them to the classes.

Service Provider news from Region 9

By Lissa Griffin
Regional Supervisor

All of the Region 9 WorkOne offices have been feeling the effects of the recent round of applications for the Honda facility being built in Decatur County. The Greensburg WorkOne Express staff, of course, were extra busy when it was announced that Honda was beginning the application process for its 2,000 production associates positions. And the number of applications has swelled to enormous proportions, when one counts the responses submitted directly to the automaker through its online job posting. We'll be keeping RVR Ink readers

posted, as well as the Region 9 Workforce Board.

The North Vernon WorkOne Express is now in a new location! Our first day in the North Vernon Education & Training Center was August 2. We had good coverage from the local news media and Case Manager Jenny Brown has been busy.

If you're in the neighborhood, stop and see Jenny at 1200 O&M Street.

We submitted our Service Provider Annual Report for Program Year 2006 (year ending June 30, 2007) to the Regional Workforce Board. Some of the performance accomplishments highlighted in that report include:

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RVR preparing for CARF re-survey

By Elaine Freeman
Director, Disability Services

Excitement is building as we prepare for re-survey by the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The focus of the survey involves RVR's business practices and service provision by our Disability Employment Services for people with disabilities. In April 2005, RVR was proud to receive a three-year accreditation from CARF for Employment Services: Community Employment Services: Job Development. A three-year accreditation is the highest level of accreditation awarded by CARF International.

CARF-accredited programs and services demonstrate that they substantially meet internationally recognized standards. This achievement is an indication of our dedication and commitment to improving the quality of lives of the people we serve. Our services, personnel and documentation clearly indicated an established pattern of practice excellence.

The survey itself is a peer review performed by a team of surveyors associated with agencies similar to RVR. Typically, the survey is conducted over a period of 2-3 days. Basically, they look at the agency as a whole and everything that we

do that's associated with services to people with disabilities. For example, areas related to business practices that are surveyed include input from stakeholders, accessibility, information management, rights of persons served, health and safety, human resources, leadership, legal requirements, and financial planning and management.

Services to customers with disabilities are scrutinized in areas such as job development, job search activities, individual plans, employer resources, records of persons served, assistive technology, service planning and delivery, and service design. Surveyors also meet with customers and businesses to gain their input and perspective on the quality of services they have received from RVR. The survey provides us with an opportunity to "prove" what a great job we do!

CARF accreditation means that RVR has shown a commitment to continually enhance the quality of our services and programs with a focus on consumer satisfaction. Over the past three years, RVR has responded accordingly to rigorous CARF standards. We are poised to achieve accreditation, once again, when we are re-surveyed in January 2008.

Region 5 operator activity report

By Carolyn Bunzendahl, Director
Board & Community Development
and
Lori Henry, One-Stop Manager

We recently did a "Year in Review" report for the Central Indiana Regional Workforce Board. (Thanks to Peggy for her expert assistance in creating and orchestrating the PowerPoint slide presentation.)

Just that short synopsis made us realize there's been a "whole lotta shakin' goin' on" this past year, and it has indeed been a year of significant accomplishments. We think one of the major accomplishments has been building excellent working relationships with all the partners including the Board, our Service Providers, WorkOne staff and the Economic Development community. This relationship building has helped move the integration efforts forward in a positive and productive manner.

Other highlights of our year: completing the Workforce Investment Plan, establishing two community organizations to serve as access points (SNAPS) for the Share Network, applying for and receiving both Tier I and Tier II grants which total nearly \$1 million, meeting the objectives of the Strategic Skills Initiative, and developing the new website. It has been a hectic but very productive year.

Other good happenings: We will be "expanding" our office soon; moving to a bigger space and adding new staff. Well, not really "new" staff - old staff. Oops, not really "old," just "experienced"! We are delighted to welcome Pat Van Selow to Region 5. Pat will be working on the Allied Health segment of the Strategic Skills Initiative and carrying out the activities of the Region 5 Navigator grant.

We are looking forward to yet another productive year!

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Region 9 news

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- RVR met or exceeded **12 of 17 performance measures**, which should qualify Region 9 for a performance incentive award. (DWD will not officially announce final performance figures and incentive awards until fall 2007 or early winter 2008.)
- According to the May 2007 Performance Quarterly Report compiled by the Department Workforce Development, Region 9 was one of only 3 regions statewide to meet 12 of 17 performance measures.
- Clients served: **700**
- Clients enrolled: **416 (45 enrollees over goal)**
- RVR staff initiated several new collaborations resulting in: a program in Lawrenceburg to serve offenders who wish to reenter the workforce; a program in Columbus to serve juvenile offenders; and a program in Madison to serve the growing Hispanic population.
- River Valley Resources, Arbor Education & Training, and Department of Workforce Development responded to 11 layoffs/closures in the region during 2006, making special arrangements to assist **over 1,100 dislocated workers**.

Personnel news

New hires

Angela Kincaid, hired August 6, as an Employment Specialist, based in Columbus



By Rose Pate, Executive Assistant
RVR Administration Office

Leslie Abbott, hired September 10, as Case Manager, Child Care Development Fund, based in Seymour.

Christean Grauel, hired September 17, as a Case Manager, Madison Work-One.

Separations

Connie Brewer, Case Manager, Indianapolis, resigned June 14.

Mike Gallagher, Employment Specialist, Columbus, resigned July 6.

RaeAnn Mellencamp, Case Manager, Child Care Development Fund, resigned August 9.

	September
Beverly Smith	5
Valerie Grigsby	17
Tammy Thomas	20

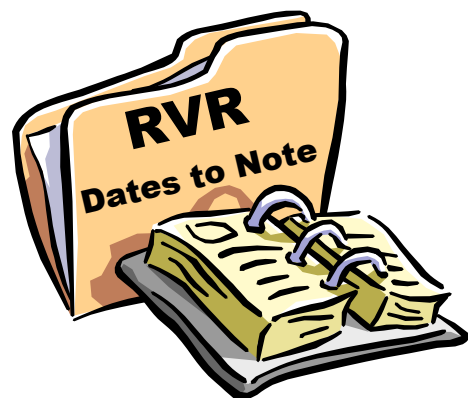
	October
MaryAnn Masek	12
Christie Hannum	17
Jennie Miles	17
Elizabeth Funk	23

	November
Julie Himes	9
Bob Smith	23

	December
Karen Rouse	12
Lisa Wheeler	14
Margo Olson	16

At RVR how long?

Karen Rouse	09/02/03
Jennie Miles	09/10/98
Erika Owen	09/13/04
April Rangel-Scott	09/16/04
Carolyn Bunzendahl	09/30/88
Valerie Grigsby	10/09/01
Mark Smith	10/23/00
Karen McKinley	10/29/98
Lisa Wheeler	10/30/06
Kelly Warren	12/04/06
Ed Miller	12/05/88
Mike Bishop	12/05/96



September 18

RVR Board of Directors Annual Meeting & Strategic Planning.

September 20

Business Expo, Lawrenceburg.

September 21

Region 9 Workforce Board meeting.

September 21

RVR All-Staff meeting and training.

October 17

Central Indiana (Region 5) Workforce Board meeting