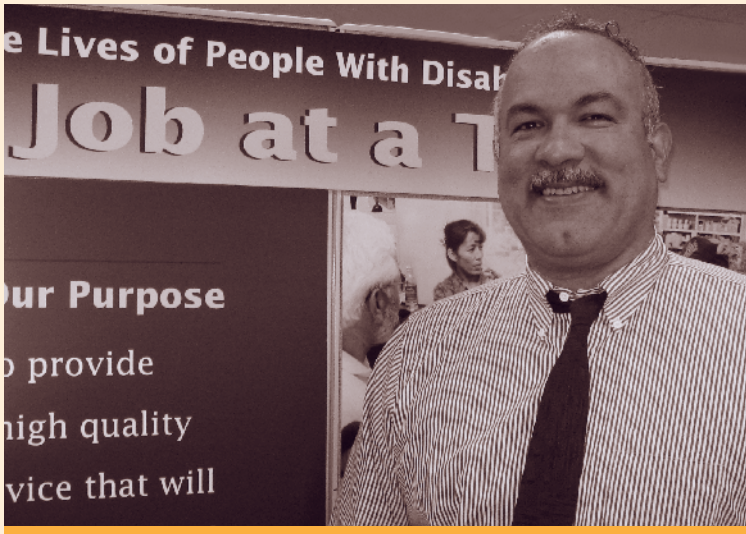
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Working in Washington

2010 Annual Report

2010 MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is my honor and pleasure to introduce to you the Washington DVR 2010 Annual Report – *Working In Washington*. It has been a very busy year at the division where we have seen an increase in the number of people coming through our door and an increase in the number of employment successes. This year's annual report features success stories of a few of our customers in a calendar format. We hope you enjoy their stories and are inspired by their lives and their unique journeys to successful employment.



Andres Aguirre

This year has definitely been a year of exciting, yet challenging, times. Exciting, as I began the year with an appointment as Interim DVR Director. During this year, our program has been frequently called to navigate uncharted territory with unprecedented state budget reductions. All aspects of our work have been impacted, but the most significant impact has been on employment opportunities for our customers. Although challenges are not fun to go through, they often provide the momentum we need to hone our skills and gather our resolve to rise above. Our staff, partners, vendors, the Washington State Rehabilitation Council, and our state's employers have risen to the challenges brought about by these times and were even more motivated to help individuals with disabilities that were relying on us to champion their abilities.

And sometimes with success comes loss – I wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate the lives of two of our dedicated staff who recently lost their battle with cancer. Debra Uhlenkott was a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Pullman Office and Larry Coburn was a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in the Wenatchee Office. Debra and Larry shared a deep passion and commitment to our customers and although they are gone from us, their lives and the impact they had will long be remembered.

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) is a group of fifteen, Governor-appointed volunteers representing a variety of stakeholder interests who lead a mandated partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Our Council was established in 1994 by federal law when Title 1, Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act was amended. At the state level, the WSRC operates under Executive Order 04-04 with the purpose of increasing employment and economic advancement for Washingtonians with disabilities served by DVR. We evaluate DVR program and performance data; gather input from DVR customers about satisfaction with the services they receive; consider the factors that influence the budgetary and programmatic integrity of DVR; and, advocate for systemic changes that align with the Rehabilitation Act and advance the interests of DVR customers. During 2010:

- WSRC members analyzed factors leading to increased demand for DVR services. Of particular concern was the implementation strategy for legislation reorganizing the delivery of General Assistance Benefits and how DVR would be impacted. The WSRC, Client Assistance Program and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment forwarded highlighted areas of technical concern to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and encouraged DVR and DSHS to seek technical assistance from Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- The WSRC followed DVR's progress in expending American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. DVR used a portion of these funds for a pilot called Project HIRE. While the aims of the pilot were positive, the Council expressed reservations about the proposed implementation strategy, concerns about fewer outcomes than anticipated and the significantly increased cost per case of rehabilitations achieved compared with successful rehabilitations achieved outside of the pilot. The Council encouraged DVR not to fund further phases of the project.
- The WSRC collaborated with DVR in the development of the annual State Plan which guides service delivery. Council staff co-facilitated two of the three forums seeking public input and several members attended multiple forums. The WSRC also hosted customer forums in 2010: two Olympia forums; one in SeaTac; and one in Spokane and provided a written summary of each forum to DVR's Senior Leadership Team.

This has been a time when the people of Washington face historic economic difficulties and a job market that is daunting for all job seekers. Our Council applauds DVR for sending 2,676 customers to work – 362 more customers than last year. We commend the hard work of the VR staff in the field and appreciate the forthright, open relationship DVR management sought with the WSRC in 2010.

Frank Grey is a highly motivated achiever with a go-getter attitude. Frank was born with Cerebral Palsy and also has communication barriers with his speech. Through diligence, hard work, persistence, creativity, and ambition Frank has created a successful life.

Frank came to DVR in August 2006, after completing his law degree from Seattle University and passing the bar exam. Afterward, he conducted a lengthy independent job search with hopes of practicing law and his efforts had been incredibly innovative and creative. Once he landed an interview by having a balloon delivered with a bear inside holding his resume. Frank is not the type of guy to give up but he continued to run into many dead ends most likely due to misconceptions about his capabilities.

Frank's DVR services were the result of collaboration among staff, from his counselor to the director, including assistive technology to address his communication barriers, and assistance with developing a professional resume. Frank was awarded a 6 month internship with the Washington Workforce Association. He gained experience as a policy coordinator and received a positive job reference. In February 2010, Frank went to work fulltime as a Policy Analyst at the Vancouver WorkSource. Frank has proven himself to be a valuable contribution to their team.

In addition to his job at WorkSource, he teaches college level law classes online and works at a law firm. Frank's services through DVR are an example of the positive outcomes that occur through teamwork and collaboration.

Frank Grey
By VRC Trisha Brown in Vancouver

Daniel Baragary
By VRC Paul Vertrees in Vancouver

Daniel Baragary, a young man with Autism, applied for DVR services in September 2006. Daniel was eager and motivated to find a good job from the first day he met with DVR. He soon began diligently working with Trillium Employment Services, a Community Rehabilitation Program, and received job interviewing assistance and support. Daniel requires ongoing supported employment services to stay employed and receives these services from Clark County Developmental Disabilities, through his Trillium job coach, Emily Dart-McLean.

His employment specialist identified a position at the Heathman Lodge, Hudson's Bar and Grill in Vancouver doing food production and preparation as well as shipping and receiving of produce orders. This position fit Daniel's skills and interests well. Daniel's great attitude, motivation, and his clear desire to do whatever it takes to meet expectations made it easy for the Heathman Lodge to hire him. He began this supported employment position in February 2010. From day one, Daniel demonstrated a unique ability to establish positive working relationships with his co-workers. He demonstrated a deep desire to learn every aspect of the job carved out for him so that he could be independent and successful. His employer supported Daniel's desire to work more independently alongside his coworkers, reducing his need for job coach support.

Daniel is a delight to work with and an excellent example of how successful and valued a supported employee can be.

January 2011

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This is a success story about an unsinkable young lady, named Lara Harding, who after completing her DVR services in November 2009 has really amped up transition services for students with disabilities in the Seattle Area. Lara moved to Seattle and applied for DVR services in June 2009. Lara has cerebral palsy, specific learning disabilities, uses a wheel chair, and is Deaf-Blind.

Lara Harding
By VRC Adriana Tossini in Seattle

Through her VR Counselor, Michelle McConaghy, Lara received services in independent living and benefits planning. She also worked with Bill Youngman, DVR Assistive Techology Practitioner extraordinaire, who helped Lara obtain assistive technology: a larger computer screen and screen magnifier program, and voice recognition software. Lara also participated in an internship at the STAR Center. The STAR Center is a state-of-the-art assistive technology lab for people with disabilities, funded through the Seattle Housing Authority and the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

Although Lara's participation in DVR services lead to a successful employment outcome, the real success story lies in what Lara has created for transitioning youth with disabilities.

Lara is a virtuoso at networking and has used her creativity and vision to partner with DVR to help many people with disabilities. She supervises a program, New Horizons Transition Learning Experience, to train nonprofit partners of Seattle Schools to provide better transition for students with disabilities to a post school setting through career assessment, vocational training, and work readiness preparation. This program prepares transition age youth through a series of challenging projects to gain work readiness skills. Students are then matched with their vocational goal in community employment settings.

After the students complete their program, Lara works with the school district personnel placing interns in the STAR Center to learn computer skills. The interns showcase their projects for the City of Seattle Technology matching fund grant. She also advocated and received computers from the City for her program.

George Hastings applied for DVR services in August 2006 when he was 18 years old and just graduating from high school. George experienced cognitive impairments and had not had any competitive work experience. George agreed to complete a Trial Work Experience giving him an opportunity to try different jobs. He obtained the trial work through Goldman and Associates, a Community Rehabilitation Program. This gave them an understanding of George's abilities, talents and strengths. From the Trial Work Experience, George learned that he wanted a job with a variety of job tasks and a supportive supervisor.

George Hastings
By VRC Susan Kelsey in Vancouver

A Project Search position in Housekeeping opened at Legacy Salmon Creek Hospital. George applied for the position and was hired on January 18, 2010. Project Search is a national program that began at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 1997 with the goal of expanding employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Project Search provides on-site-job-retention staff that creates a unique support system where people with disabilities can successfully maintain employment and advance in their careers. George's direct support through Project Search is provided by Gina Rominger, an employment consultant with Employers Overload Supported Employment Inc.

The Housekeeping manager Amanda Gordon, George, and Gina all work together. They hope to continue increasing his weekly hours. George enjoys his job and the hospital staff enjoys working with George. He is a valued part of their team.

George lives with his family and often helps to take care of his older brother who is autistic.

February 2011

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Deborah Lautt
By VRC Amanda Kipfer in Tumwater

Deborah Lautt applied for DVR services in October 2007 with the intention of finding her calling, both spiritually and vocationally. Deborah had sustained a traumatic brain injury in 1997 in a motor vehicle accident at age 25. As a result of her injuries, she had to relearn how to walk and talk again.

Deborah has a college degree in Ministerial Studies and experience operating her own business called Pride & Polish. With her education and business experience, she is definitely a woman with many desirable attributes. She is described as someone whom you can feel the smile on her face over the phone. Through her DVR services she was able to obtain employment in May, 2010 with Remax as a Marketing Support Specialist. Her clerical skills combined with her optimistic and cheerful attitude made this job an excellent match. This was a combined success on behalf of Deborah and DVR.

Advantage Employment Partnerships provided ongoing support to help her learn her job, while funding from WorkSource Mason County supported her with on the job training so she could increase her work skills. Her next goal is to purchase her own home with the money she earns from working.

March 2011

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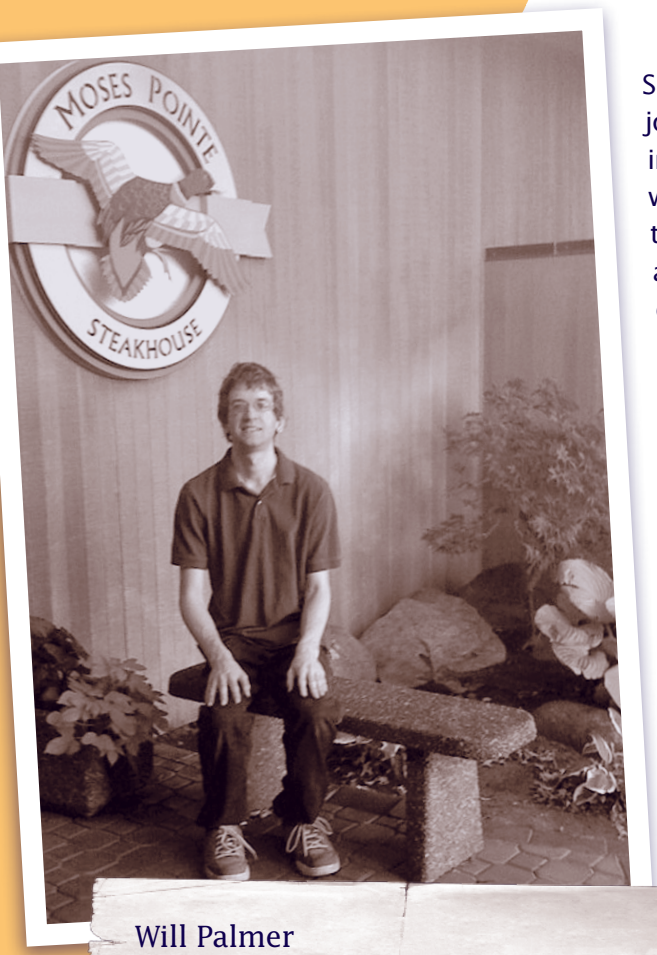

Will Palmer
By VRC Kathie Grignon in Moses Lake

Since March 2010, Will Palmer has definitely flourished from his job at the Moses Pointe Golf Course. Will applied for DVR services in June 2007 shortly after graduating from high school and began working with Kathie Grignon, VR Counselor to identify his barriers to employment and the accommodations he needed. Will needed accommodations for his specific learning disabilities and a language disorder and to gain general work skills.

Will's difficulty with processing verbal and written communication significantly impacted his work and job communication skills. Will also needed a quiet work environment to facilitate rapport building with his co-workers. Will began working with Terri and Liz at Service Alternatives, a Community Rehabilitation Program, who carved out his job at the golf course and helped him with job skill building.

Working at the Moses Pointe Golf Course is Will's first job and he really enjoys it! He cleans windows, the restrooms, the foyer and front walkway and provides help in the kitchen. In the winter Will's duties will expand to shoveling snow, sweeping sidewalks and helping prepare the conference room for holiday meetings and parties. Add in a bit of filing and Will has year-round job assignments. Will's parents provide transportation. Will's employer states: "We very much enjoy having Will at Moses Pointe. He is a pleasure to work with, does a great job, is dependable and a hard worker. He is talking a lot more and opening up and it's wonderful to see the changes in him." Will collects trains and uses the computer to research trains and historical information. He enjoys documentaries and has an avid interest in learning about his favorite actors.

April 2011

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Jeffrey Peterson
By VRC Karen Heater in Vancouver

When Jeffrey Peterson applied for DVR services in February, 2010, he was desperate for employment. At the time, his only source of income was $98 in food stamps. Jeffrey felt that DVR was the only place left for him to turn to. This must have been the right time for Jeffrey's DVR services because he took off like a ball of fire and was one of the most proactive customers his counselor had the pleasure of serving.

Jeffrey has arthritis in both knees. He also has schizoid/schizotypal and avoidant personality features and deals with recurrent depression. He faced additional barriers with transportation, legal issues, alienation from his family, and unstable housing. During his DVR services Jeffrey participated in ADEPT, a DBT-based program designed to promote optimal mental health and personal effectiveness through education and skills training. He was also active in job club and received support and assistance to conduct an independent job search. In May 2010, Jeffrey began working as a caregiver through Aging and Adult Services.

DVR helped Jeffrey with work clothes, shoes, bus passes and an organizer to keep his client information. No longer able to continue in ADEPT coursework due to his work hours, he met regularly with his counselor for counseling and guidance to continue addressing his mental health barriers.

Jeffrey enjoys the interactions with his clients. He is definitely a different person than the one who walked into DVR's door in February. He has taken control of his own destiny and created a more successful life.

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May 2011

Don Redford is deaf and is a second generation child in his family with deafness. He is married with four children and one of his children is deaf.

Don A. Redford, III
By VRC Kay Kennedy in Vancouver

Don applied for vocational rehabilitation services because he felt he couldn't advance in a career without further education. He decided to go to the local community college and obtained his Associate's degree, then went to the local university to get his Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences. Don could not find a job after his graduation, so he decided to pursue a Master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation at a university in Oregon. Don relies on sign language for communication and the schools provided interpreters for most of his classes. Don is the first in his family to obtain a Master's degree. His passion is to assist other deaf individuals to become successful in their careers and life.

After graduation, Don applied for Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling positions in Washington and Oregon. During that time, Don worked briefly as a case manager for a local deaf center. He then was offered a job as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor 3 in Las Vegas, Nevada. He worked there for approximately three months when he had to return home to Washington. When a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position at the Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation opened up in Tumwater he applied for and was offered the job. He accepted this position and started working for Washington DVR. Don is very happy to be back in Washington State, in his dream career helping other deaf individuals realize their dreams through successful careers.

June 2011

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Mary Spear
By VRC Amanda Kipfer in Tumwater

Mary Spear's services through DVR is a great example of the power of internship in creating a long-term employment success. Mary applied for services in November 2008. Mary had been laid off in July 2008 from a long-term position. Mary's extensive job search was concentrated mostly on positions in retail sales but she realized that significant pain problems with her back would prevent her from accepting any long term job offers. She began experiencing deepening depression from the pain and growing frustration with the unfruitful job search.

Mary was fully involved in her DVR services and attended job search courses such as WorkStrides and job club. She began concentrating on preparing herself for administrative jobs that would offer her more variety and opportunity to use her talents. Mary's diligence paid off. She interviewed for a temporary internship opportunity working as a receptionist at the local DVR office. She loved working with the division's staff and customers. Mary was soon offered a six-month paid internship at the Association of Washington Business. Mary thrived in this internship and was soon offered a full-time, permanent position. Mary is now in a position that challenges her to be her best and offers plenty of opportunity to contribute her skills and expertise in a wonderful collegial environment.

Mary says her best gifts from her DVR services were the strides she made in self-confidence and self-esteem. She is grateful to DVR and takes every opportunity to recommend DVR to other people with disabilities.

July 2011

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AUGUST 2011

Matt Stephens
By VRC Evelyn Hare in Vancouver

Matt Stephens was determined to move forward with his life despite his challenges with muscular dystrophy. He recalled a conversation with a doctor who, as an amputee, had received training and employment services through DVR. Matt was inspired to apply for DVR services in 2002 and began attending college to complete a Bachelor's degree. In May of 2008, Matt graduated from Washington State University with his Bachelor's of Science in Psychology.

Matt wanted to put his knowledge and skill into action and looked for employment in a social service agency. A lengthy search lead him to the Val Ogden Center. The Center had lost a number of staff to a funding crisis. Matt marketed himself on the premise that he could fill the unmet needs of the center without further burdening the center financially. For a month, Matt volunteered fulltime until his paid internship became available.

Matt was well received by the Center's administration and its members and immediately took on many administrative responsibilities as an Intake Specialist. After two months, Matt was offered a permanent position as a Generalist Staff and was soon promoted to Assistant Program Manager. Matt developed, implemented and manages the Educational Preparedness Program which includes co-facilitation of a dual recovery anonymous group, a men's group, development of a Social Network Board, facilitation of structured social activities and ongoing support of members with their educational endeavors.

He looks forward to getting his Master's degree and managing a recovery-oriented program similar to the Val Ogden Center.

August 2011

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Kermit Swift
By VRC Tony McCarty in Ellensburg

Kermit Swift has been working since his teens - very successfully one minute and then losing jobs the next. This pattern persisted for years until he was diagnosed with Bi-Polar disorder. To complicate matters, Kermit has a rare blood disorder called Von Wellebrands which does not take to the newer psychotropic medications. Because of Von Wellebrands and his Bi-Polar, it took years to finally find the right medications and therapy Kermit needed to stabilize his personal and work life.

When the recession hit, Kermit found himself older and frustrated, and unemployed again. He came to DVR for services in January 2010. His vocational assessment highlighted his strengths in sales and experience. An On-the-Job-Training (OJT) opportunity was located with Central Washington Disability Resources (CWDR), a nonprofit organization. CWDR, an Ellensburg-based Center for Independent Living, provides independent living services to people with disabilities living in the surrounding four central Washington counties.

CWDR needed a person who could create a newsletter, do some fund raising, promote the Center, and be a "jack of all trades." Kermit's OJT with Central Washington Disability Resources was just the opportunity he needed to shine and he was hired permanently in June 2010.

Because of the mission of CWDR's work, they understand Kermit's disabilities and are very supportive. Kermit is thriving and again supporting his family, making a livable wage. He provides great services to the CWDR clientele, because he knows where they are coming from and where they have been.

September 2011

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OCTOBER 2011

Daniel Thornton
By VRC Monika Robertson in Vancouver

Daniel Thornton came to DVR in June 2009 requesting assistance with his job search. Daniel had previously worked in food services, at Safeway, and SEH doing computer tasks. Daniel was highly motivated in his DVR services and never missed an appointment. He has been receiving SSDI and was interested in getting a part time job to ease back into the world of work. Daniel has learning disabilities related to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, mild Cerebral Palsy, a history of a controlled seizure disorder and dental issues.

Daniel participated in a community based assessment at the Knights of Pythias Retirement Center, an assisted living center. The assessment resulted in a job offer that Daniel accepted. Daniel works as a server and does kitchen prep. He especially enjoys being around people and easily engages in conversations with the center residents. Daniel worked with a job coach to learn his job tasks, appropriate work behaviors, and to address body mechanics. He uses small trays to limit his lifting and carrying. Although Daniel's DVR case has been closed successfully, he continues to attend the weekly Job Club held at Independent Associates, the Community Rehabilitation Program that provided job support. Daniel mentors and encourages other job club participants, sharing what employment means to him.

The Knights of the Pythias Retirement Center continues to offer Daniel a great deal of natural support and has hired other individuals with disabilities in various positions.

October 2011

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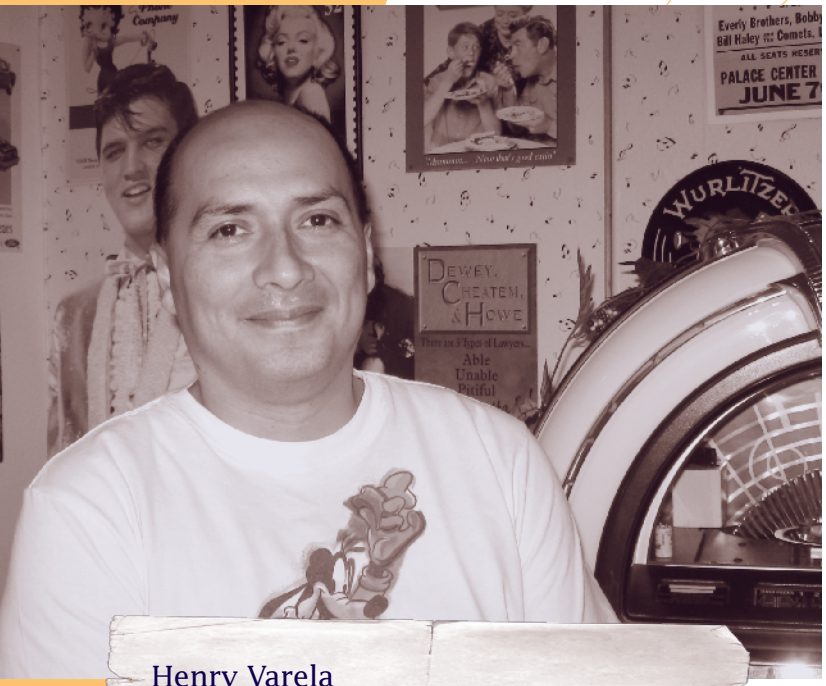

Henry Varela
By VRC Helen Christensen in Vancouver

At the time Henry Varela applied for DVR services in August 2009, he reported that his life was going well until he was in an auto accident. The accident took his long-term girlfriend and caused his head and vertebra injuries, depression and Post Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD). After his recovery, he returned to work as a chef at Elmer's Restaurant but was unable to perform his job due to severe depression.

After he lost his job, he continued a daily struggle with depression and PTSD and had no motivation to do anything. He was irritable, withdrawn, and had occasional suicidal thoughts. He was living with his parents, was isolated, and alienated from his friends. He said he simply didn't care anymore.

He started to meet regularly with his DVR counselor for support and guidance. He attended a vocational exploration class and was referred to the Val Ogden Center, a Community Rehabilitation Program, for job placement. Henry attended the center's club house activities, and moved in with his sister so he was closer to friends and had easier access to services. Gradually, Henry started to open up, look at people he talked with, and eventually his smile returned.

With Henry's ten years of culinary experience, the Center helped him obtain a position as a cook with Boppin' Bo's Malt Shop and Grill in January 2010. With a great job and through all his healing, Henry has again embraced a life of success and happiness.

November 2011

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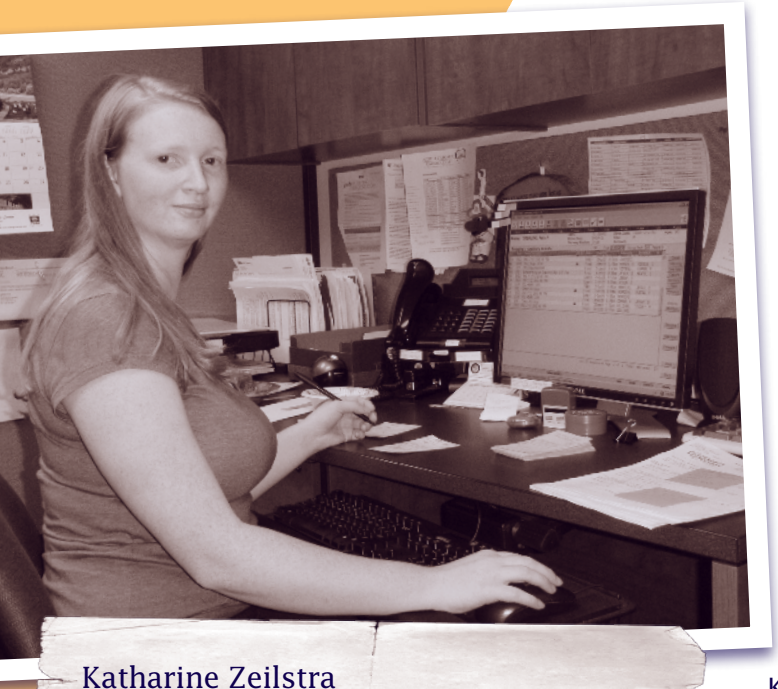

Katharine Zeilstra
By VRC Catherine Herring in Bellingham

Katharine Zeilstra came to DVR in February 2007 after just graduating from high school. She suffered a cardiac arrest at age 14 which resulted in a brain injury and a pace maker. She knew she would need a job with medical benefits and liked all the people she regularly saw at the NW Cardiology Clinic. She took the WOWI, an online career assessment, and had a neuropsych evaluation to better understand her memory, processing and concentration issues. After reviewing several career options, she selected medical billing and coding. She completed the certification program at Bellingham Technical College and did her practicum at NW Cardiology, but when she graduated, there were no positions.

An unfruitful job search lead DVR to hire Service Alternatives, a Community Rehabilitation Program, to help identify jobs for Katharine. After several months, Katharine was offered a paid internship at NW Cardiology. Katharine had a lot to learn regarding workplace organization, being proactive, knowing who to go to for questions, and incorporating feedback from her supervisors. With her persistence and job coaching from Service Alternatives and her co-workers, she was able to turn things around and became a valued member of the team. She was hired, initially at ten hours per week but as the company saw what a true asset she was, she was permanently hired full-time.

Katharine's journey shows the power of a good solid rehabilitation where DVR was instrumental every step of the way.

December 2011

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Acknowledgements

In deep appreciation to all DVR staff for the work you do every day and your heartfelt dedication to making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. Special thank you to the DVR Staff who contributed customers' success stories and ideas to this year's annual report.

Sources of Revenue

Federal Fiscal Year 2010

Total: $78,497,732

State Funds
$11,937,911

Federal Funds
$66,559,821

Average Earnings

Federal Fiscal Year 2010

Average annual earnings of customers before and after rehabilitation.

After
$18,348

Before
$3,397

Case Service Expenditures

Federal Fiscal Year 2010

Placement Services
40%

Training
19%

Transportation
5%

IL Services
11%

Assessment Services
10%

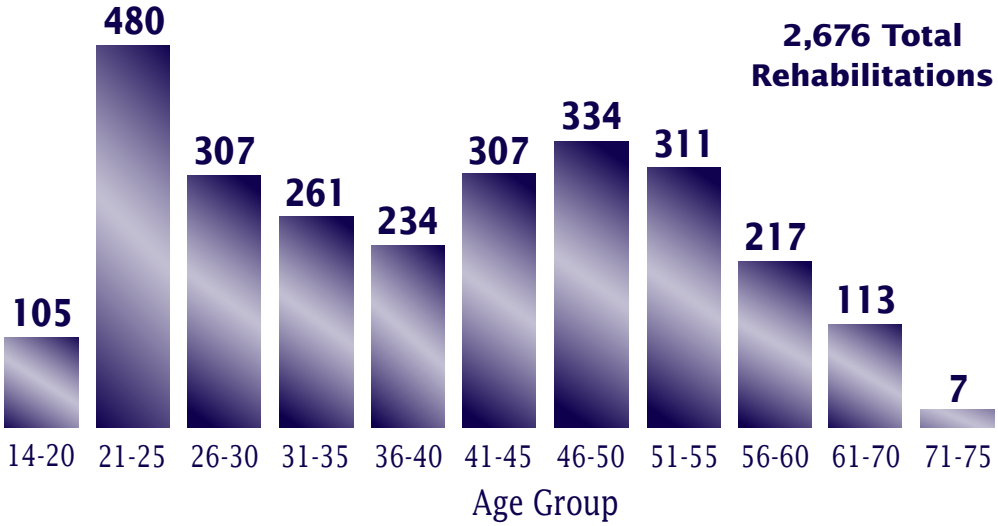
Physical/Mental Restoration/Rehab Tech
8%

Other
7%

Ages of Customers

Federal Fiscal Year 2010

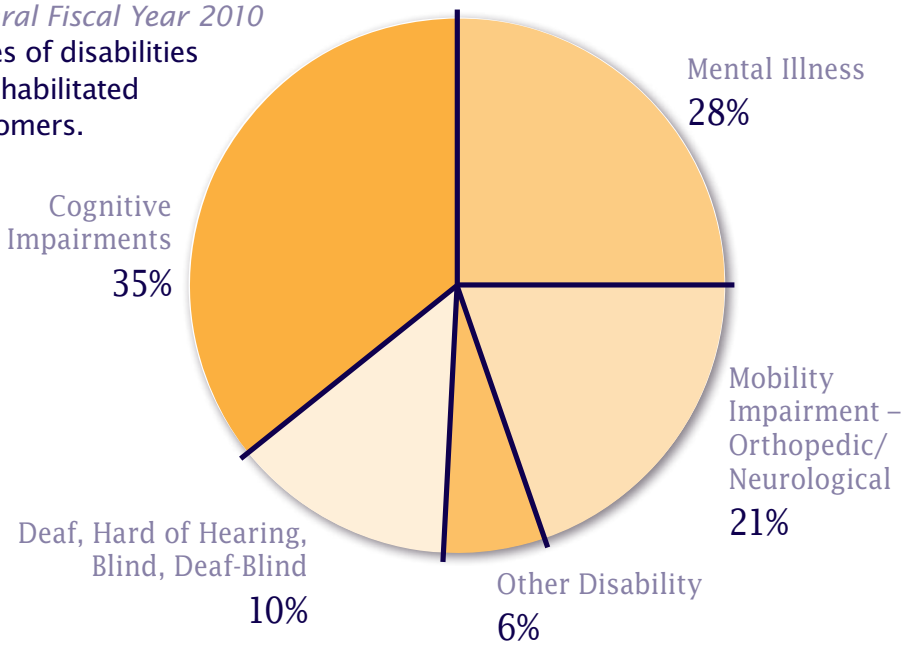
Total number of customers successfully rehabilitated in various age groups.



Types of Disabilities

Federal Fiscal Year 2010

Types of disabilities of rehabilitated customers.



Non-Discrimination

No person, because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, or disability shall be discriminated against in employment, services, or any aspect of the program's activities. This policy is consistent with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Executive Order 11246 as amended by Executive Order 11375, the Civil Rights Act of 1992, Governor's Executive Order 93-07, and the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, Chapter 49.60 RCW.

DVR'S FOCUS:

To empower individuals with disabilities to achieve a greater quality of life by obtaining and maintaining employment.

2010 DVR Annual Report

A publication of:
The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

To request this publication in alternate format, please contact a Customer Service Representative at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

DVR can be reached at 1-800-637-5627. This publication is also available on our website at www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr.

This annual report was coordinated by DVR staff Kathy Krulich

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DVR Division of Vocational Rehabilitation