

Human Writes

State Human Rights Committee Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue I

Summer 2010

Welcome

Welcome to the summer 2010 edition of Human Writes, a newsletter from the State Human Rights Committee (SHRC). The purpose of this newsletter is to share ideas, problems, solutions and other items of mutual interest to the Local Human Rights Committees and the SHRC. Please submit your thoughts and ideas to:

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LHRC HONOREE

By: Randy Johnsey

Elizabeth Bruns, or Liz as she likes to be referred to as, is very well suited to be our LHRC Honoree. Liz has served on not one but two LHRC's. In her experience of being on committees, Liz served on the Region Ten committee, and the UVA LHRC committee. She has served as a committee Chair for a total of seven years, during her tenure. This writer suggested to her that she apply to the SHRC in a couple of years, to see if the time will be right for her to join the committee. This might create a bit of friction between myself, and the Regional Advocate she works with, Chuck Collins, as he is interested in keeping her on a local committee, as long as he can. Just a little humor, at Chuck's and my expense, as I have never met an advocate that would not be delighted to have an LHRC member move up to the state level.

While on the local committee's Liz had the opportunity of serving both as a member, and a chairperson, giving her the perspective, of the LHRC, that many members never get the chance to experience. She says that when working as chair, she had to make sure that all the members voices were heard, and that the providers had an equal chance to give their side of the story, as well. But as a member, she could exercise, with more freedom the chance to voice her personal point of view.

She reported that in her experience, the providers seemed to be very open, and truthful, to the committees. Liz also shares, as most of us do, a high opinion of the advocate that she worked with, Chuck Collins, to help her become a highly desired member of local committee's. During her time on the committee's, she has spent considerable time reading, and learning, the Blue Book, an item every member, of the local committee should do.

Region 10's LHRC, the latest committee that Liz has worked on, has grown so big that it will be split into two committee's, one for adult programs, and the other for children's programs. Overall, Liz's varied experience has been challenging, but positive, with many learning situations.

MEET THE ADVOCATE

By: Randy Johnsey

Deb Lochart plans to spend her remaining nine years, before she retires, working as a Regional Advocate, with the Office of Human Rights. She says that she is currently able to manage the workload in Region II thanks to the help of Advocate Tim Simmons, however if she had her wish, NVTC, would have its own Advocate. Region II covers the smallest geographic area of all the six regions-but has one of the highest populations in the state. It covers just south of Washington D.C., to just north of Richmond. When asked about the traffic, she responded that it does not bother her, however depending on many factors, she can be on the road anywhere from two to four hours a day. She credits her training to fellow advocate Chuck Collins, who speaks highly of her. The pride of her life is her family, having three sons-that are successful each in their own way. Her oldest son lives in Alaska, the middle son works with the Park Service in northern Va., and her youngest son is a Lt. In the Marines. As if that were not enough, her husband-also works with the Park Service. She, being successful in her own right, makes for a family to be truly proud of. While she is proud of her family, Deb, gets great pleasure from her job. Deb said that she finds great satisfaction in helping people that can not help themselves, to have a voice-and be protected by the system-in every way allowed. Although sometimes she has had negative encounters with some individuals, she does not let those very few cases distract her, and cause her to leave her position. She truly believes that over all the system works to do what it was designed to do. Although there are many positive things about Deb's job, she says that one of the greatest challenges that she finds-is helping LHRC's to function within their scope and authority.

Deb states that NOVA has seen an increase in intensive-in-home providers, however she believes that the high cost of doing business in her area, helps to keep the numbers low. Changing with the times has never been a problem for Deb., as she uses all the up to date technology, to do her job more effectively. All I can say is keep up the good work,

Hail and Farewell-SHRC

On June 25, 2010 the DBHDS State Board appointed Dr. Penny Cameron and Mr. Thomas Bullock to the SHRC attended their first SHRC meeting on July 9, 2010.

Introducing T. C. Bullock

By: Randy Johnsey

T. C. Bullock has been employed by the Virginia Department of Corrections for 36 years. He is employed by Mecklenburg Correctional as a Hearings Officer, also, serves as an Adjunct Trainer at the Department of Corrections Training Academy for Staff Development. He is a member of the Department's Critical Incident Negotiation Team. Bullock is a part of a mentoring program that has been active in Mecklenburg County Schools since 1999. The program "Keep in Touch" is supported by Mecklenburg Correctional Center. Currently the program is at Bluestone Middle School. The program

stresses to the children the need for an education, respect for self and others, respect toward authority figures, and to be active in their community.

Bullock is used to being active in the community. He is currently on the Board of Directors for the Mecklenburg Business Education Partnership, a member of the Youth Council for the South Central Workforce, Advisory Board Member for First Citizen Bank. He is a former member of the Board of Trustees for Community Memorial Health Center. Bullock is a member of the Mecklenburg County School Board, serving as Vice Chairman.

He is also active in his church, North View Baptist Church. Bullock is a life member of Epsilon Omicron Lambda Chapter, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. On February 15, 1998 he was selected as Chapter Man of the Year. Then in March of the same year, he was selected as State Man of the Year by the Virginia Chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. Also, Bullock served as Grand Marshall for South Hill, VA Christmas Parade during December 2006.

Bullock has been married to his high school sweetheart Stella L. Spencer Bullock for 42 years. They have two children Thomas C. Bullock, III and Brian Elliot Bullock and are proud grandparents to five

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Mr. Kirby Wright (third from right) June 12, 2010

On June 11 meeting, we said goodbye to Mr. Kirby Wright who completed six years of serving on the SHRC. Mr. Wright provided leadership as the SHRC chairman for the past three years. The SHRC will miss Mr. Wright's dedication, compassion and advocacy for client's rights. We thank Mr. Wright and wish him well in his endeavors.

Annual Report

The State Human Rights Committee 2009 Annual Report On the Status of the Human Rights System was approved by the SHRC on April 16, 2010 and presented to the State Board of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services at their meeting on June 25, 2010. The full report is available at the Department's web site at www.dbhds.virginia.gov/OHR-SHRC.htm

This annual report presents the activities and achievements of the State Human Rights Committee (SHRC) and the Office of Human Rights (OHR) in 2009 in accordance with our duties and responsibilities under the *Rules and Regulations to Assure the Rights of Individuals Receiving Services from Providers Licensed, Funded or Operated by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*. It is our hope that this report enlightens you about the protection of the human rights of individuals receiving services and the contributions of Virginia's citizens who serve as volunteers to assure these rights.

A critical function of the SHRC is to serve as the final step in the complaint resolution process. In 2009, approximately 7342 allegations of abuse or neglect (over 50% of the allegations of abuse/neglect were acts of peer on peer aggression) and 2722 human rights complaints were managed through the statewide human rights system and all but eleven of those were resolved at the provider level. The SHRC heard five of those complaints on appeal. If responsiveness to consumer complaints is an indicator of system success, then the fact that over 99.89 % of complaints are resolved at the lowest level indicates a highly effective system of dispute resolution. The SHRC commends the consumers, providers, advocates and family members who worked together to resolve these issues.

SHRC MEETINGS

Our June SHRC meeting was held in Petersburg Virginia at the Southside Virginia Training Center on June 10 and 11, 2010. This was the last meeting for Chairman Mr. Kirby Wright and the committee will miss him. The July 9, 2010 meeting was held in Fredericksburg, Virginia at the Rappahannock Area Community Services Board.. Meetings are open to the public except for parts of the meeting that may be in executive session