



West Virginia Civil Rights Awards



WVSILC Vice-Chairperson, **David Stewart** was among 15 West Virginians honored at the 2009 West Virginia Civil Rights Day. David received the award for his efforts to better the community and enhance civil rights. Mary Jo Thompson, Director of Constituent Services for Governor Joe Manchin, was the speaker at the awards luncheon. David has spent the past two decades advocating for people with disabilities through the SILC, the Fair Shake Network, and several other roles and appointments.

May is Mental Health Month

May has been recognized as Mental Health month for more than 50 years and was created to raise awareness about mental illness and the importance of mental wellness for all. In May 2009 the West Virginia Mental Health Consumers Association (WVMHCA) will join the “Charlie West Blues Fest” with an information booth from WVMHCA promoting recovery from mental illness. Organizations joining WVMHCA in celebrating mental health recovery at the event include the West Virginia Mental Health Planning Council.

The “Charlie West Blues Fest” will take place at Oaks Field in South Charleston, WV on Saturday May 16th from 1:00 pm to 11:00 pm and everyone is welcome. Gates open at noon. Admission at the gate is \$20.00 Military personnel and family members are admitted free. Proceeds for this event will benefit the WV Guard and their Family Relief Fund. The event will feature live music and food vendors. The event is sponsored by the Kanawha County Commission, The South Charleston CVB and the Central WV CVB, AFM 136, WV Division of Culture and History, and the city of South Charleston.

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NCIL Update



The NCIL Board of Directors has appointed **Kelly Buckland** as the new Executive Director, succeeding John Lancaster who is retiring. Kelly is completing his second term as President of the NCIL board and is currently the Executive Director of the Idaho SILC. Kelly will begin his new position May 15th and he and his wife Merle and their son Rodney will relocate to the Washington, DC area in June.

Obama's Disability Team

Kareem Dale appointed Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy – the first presidential assistant exclusively for disability policy. Mr. Dale, who is partially blind, with direct access to the President, will coordinate the efforts to see that people with disabilities are on a level playing field with all Americans.

Jeff Crowley appointed Director of Office of National AIDS Policy (ONAP). Mr. Crowley has spent the last 14 years working to improve access to health and social services for people living with HIV/AIDS. ONAP is tasked with coordinating government efforts to reduce the number of HIV infections through wide ranging education initiatives and also coordinates the care and treatment of citizens with HIV/AIDS.

Seth Harris nominated Deputy Secretary of the Department of Labor. Mr. Harris served during the Clinton Administration as Counselor to the Secretary of Labor and as Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy. He is also a Senior Fellow of the Life Without Limits Project of the United Cerebral Palsy Association and a member of the National Advisory Committee on Workplace Flexibility.

Kathi Martinez nominated Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the Department of Labor. Ms. Martinez is an internationally recognized disability rights leader specializing in employment, asset building, independent living, international development, diversity, and gender issues.

Changes at RSA

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) at the U.S. Department of Education has seen many changes lately with more to come. Here is a list of the players at this point: (Please note that those in “acting” positions may be moved again.)

- Andrew Pepin – Acting Assistant Secretary of OSERS (replacing Tracy Justesen)
- Ed Anthony – Acting Commissioner of RSA since 2005 (Deputy Commissioner of RSA)
- Tom Kelley – Acting Director of the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs, U.S. Department of Education (the IL Unit Chief)
- Roseann Ashby – Acting Chief of the IL Unit (from the Basic State Grants Branch)
- David Jones – RSA liaison assigned to WV (replacing Craig McManus)
- Deb Cotter – RSA IL rep assigned to Team 5 which includes WV, FL, ID, MI, NE, NV, NH, SD, & UT
- Elizabeth Akinola – RSA IL rep previously assigned to WV – now assigned to Team 1 which includes MT, VT, DE, MN, MA, CA, ND, WY, MS, VA, ME, & RI

Northern FSN Chapter Formed

The Northern Chapter of the Fair Shake Network had their first meeting at the Spring Hill Suites in Sabraton, West Virginia on February 20th. We were pleasantly surprised that over fifteen people showed up for our first meeting. Many of these people were long time advocates, but some were first time participants. Everyone at the meeting got a brief history of the Fair Shake Network. We also learned about the importance of informing our Senators and the legislative body about what we need in order for us to have a “fair shake” just like anyone else. It was explained to us that the FSN is a Statewide organization but travel is so expensive that they are trying to create local chapters. There may be core issues that the community does not know about occurring in different parts of the state so we want to set up a means of communicating these issues with the State as a whole. The FSN wants us to help them and they will help us. They are willing to do trainings in different parts of the state. The legislature has no idea how large the FSN is but they know that we have a voice because of our presence at the Capitol in Charleston. The power of our voice would be much stronger if we could unite under one network. If we all work together, we can take advantage of all of the separate entities’ strengths and put them to good use.

We look forward to helping people with disabilities in West Virginia.

Brian Nestor
NWVCIL

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SILC Update

First of all, I want to apologize for the time that has passed since the last SILC Newsletter! There is a multitude of reasons – but for now, let’s just say we have restarted publication and you will be receiving a quarterly newsletter from now on. Second, my health has caused many delays and “back burners” in the SILC office – but I am doing very well and back at full speed now.

In case you don’t know, the Rehabilitation Services Administration conducted a site review in West Virginia last year. The review included the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the State Rehabilitation Council, and the SILC. As a result, we have changed our focus and eliminated many of our on-going activities.

For now, we are going to focus on improving our efforts to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the State Plan for Independent Living, beginning with a statewide series of public forums.

So watch for coming announcements about the public forums and be sure to attend the one in your area!

Ann McDaniel
Executive Director

Summer 2009

Walk for Independence 2009

Mountain State CIL's sixth annual Walk For Independence will be held Saturday, July 25th at Ritter Park in Huntington, WV.

The Walk brings awareness to the successes and the empowerment of people with disabilities through the Community Living Service Program (CLSP) and other services at Mountain State Centers for Independent Living. Proceeds from the Walk benefit the CLSP, which provides supports that help people with disabilities continue to live in their own homes and communities rather than in nursing homes or other institutional settings. Funding for the program is so limited that people often wait more than two years to be served.

People with disabilities, friends, neighbors, local businesses, and legislators walk together to raise money to ensure the continuation of these important programs. Participants may walk as individuals or as teams. Teams that raise \$200 or more will receive a t-shirt for each team member. Individuals that register by July 1st and raise \$25 will receive a t-shirt. Awards will be given for most money raised by an individual, most money raised by a team, and team with the most walkers.

Registration and sign-in begins at 8:00 a.m. the day of the walk. For more information on how to register, how to form a team, how to become a volunteer and more contact Brenda Goodfellow at 866-687-8245 or visit www.mtstcil.org. Registration forms are available at <http://www.mtstcil.org/walk/TeamRegistration09.pdf>

