

# THE NETWORK NEWS

March | April 2018

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## OUR MISSION

To create a climate in Virginia where peers are empowered to understand and find their own recovery through programs that achieve:

- personal transformation
- community transformation
- systems transformation

The Network News is published six times per year by the

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## From the Desk of the Executive Director, Deidre Johnson

I hope this newsletter finds you well, friends. VOCAL staff have been very busy between the legislative session, gearing up for the Annual Conference, and kicking off our new trainings. One of the major successes of this year's legislative session was the passage of SB955, which offers a barrier crime exclusion for burglary. VOCAL is convening a focus group to examine the other 157 barrier crimes, so please be on the lookout for more information about when this group will commence.

The House and Senate did not come to an agreement on the Fiscal Year 2019 – 2020 biennium budget during session; this resulted in a budget conference that will convene on April 11 and session reconvening on April 18. There was a \$600 million difference between the two budgets, the biggest differences being Medicaid expansion and alternative transportation. Both budgets included money allocated for the implementation of STEP-VA and permanent supportive housing.

VOCAL's Board of Directors has also been very busy. We had a Board retreat at the beginning of March and came out of this retreat with a great action plan and revised Bylaws. Please take some time to review the attached Bylaw changes, as we will vote on these changes at the Annual Meeting on May 22.

Additionally, the Board is seeking applications for those interested in serving the VOCAL membership. There are a minimum of four positions coming available in May. Interested candidates may contact Erin Crettier at [Erin@vocalvirginia.org](mailto:Erin@vocalvirginia.org) for an application.

I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at this year's conference and I certainly hope you'll take advantage of all the wonderful trainings VOCAL has scheduled for this year. Please remember that all trainings will take place in each of the five DBHDS regions so you shouldn't have to travel too far from home to take advantage of these trainings.

## VOCAL Annual Conference in Roanoke

You are invited to "Recovery in Community," VOCAL's annual recovery conference, May 21 and 22, at the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center. Expect a celebration of our community, educational opportunities, and the chance to unwind and connect with old and new friends. Registration is open through April 20. You may register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2018-vocal-conference-recovery-in-community-tickets-43564578828?aff=es2>. Please pass the word! You will find a downloadable poster and other information at <https://vocalvirginia.org/connect/vocal-conference/>. Our Keynote Speaker will be Matthew R. Federici, MS, who will present on the topic of Community Inclusion. Individuals and peer-run programs are encouraged to sell their wares at the conference! We also have spots for exhibitors seeking table space for advertising or educational purposes. Please contact [Yolande@vocalvirginia.org](mailto:Yolande@vocalvirginia.org) or 804-343-1777 with any questions.

**From the Network Program Director,  
Malaina J. Poore**

This year will be busy around these parts.

Advocacy Day was held February 6 at the office Voices for Virginia’s Children. This year, because of major construction at the Capital, space was extremely limited. We had 50 attendees at the event who went to meet their representatives and share their views. Virginia’s Behavioral Health Advisory Committee helped support this event by donating money for food and drink for busy advocates. It was a well-organized and fruitful day.

Also in February, I was honored to speak to officers in Crisis Intervention Training, and then later with women at Goochland’s Correctional Center. I went to Goochland with Megan Sharkey from our staff and Erin Tucker of On Our Own and I think we were all touched by the openness and engagement of the women in the room.

March is blooming. VOCAL will be a part of the amazing VCU Wellness Block Party at MLK middle school in Richmond. VCU students go above and beyond with this event and create an interactive day of learning and fun. Every year we accept the invite because there is no health without mental health!

On March 21, VOCAL hosted a one-day conference in Wytheville focused on knowing and telling your story. On March 22, we offered a full day of training in Trauma-Informed Care. I’m making friends and learning about the Southwest region of this beautiful state.

In April, VOCAL staff will travel to Maryland to meet with Peer Program Directors from all over the country. SAMHSA sponsors two-day event as an opportunity for current grantees to learn and network. I enjoy these gatherings and see it as the main event of this month. But in-between big events, there is always something cooking. Committee work, plans for new projects, planning for established projects (VOCAL Conference!), advisory boards, and personal connections; a lot of this work is about collaboration and planning.

See the separate article about our May conference – hope to see you in Roanoke!

**From Ann Benner, REACH Program News  
Announcement: Upcoming Trainings**

**From the REACH Program Director, Ann Benner:  
2018 REACH Training Schedule Now Available**

**“We encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated.” – Maya Angelou**

Check out VOCAL’s **Peer Recovery and Leadership Trainings** webpage (<https://vocalvirginia.org/recovery-education/peer-leadership-trainings/>) for updated information concerning all REACH trainings! The Training Flyer includes a brief description of each of the six programs. The Training Schedule includes all currently confirmed training dates, with respective locations, and an approximate date for when each registration will be available. CEUs will also be available. Please check these out so you can plan ahead and be sure to make the most of these opportunities! Also, please share this information with folks in your community!

**From Heather Orrock, Co-OPP Program  
Director**

Co-OPP is offering two new trainings, “Governing as a Team” (via BoardSource and Cathy A. Trower) and “Creating a Culture of Philanthropy”. Other trainings topics can be found at [vocalvirginia.org](http://vocalvirginia.org).

If you would like the Co-OPP Program Director to provide training for your staff and/or Board, please contact me: 804-343-1777 or [heather@vocalvirginia.org](mailto:heather@vocalvirginia.org).

**VOCAL Board of Directors News**

The VOCAL BOD met on Wednesday, March 7 in Montpelier. The next meeting is scheduled for May 22 at the VOCAL Conference in Roanoke. For more information, contact Erin Crettier at 804-343-1777, or [erin@vocalvirginia.org](mailto:erin@vocalvirginia.org).

**Upcoming Trainings, Events, and  
Announcements**

**eCPR Training in Richmond April 19 and 20**

A 2-day Emotional CPR (eCPR) Training will be offered on April 19 and 20 in the Richmond area. Emotional CPR (eCPR) is an educational program designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis by three simple steps: C = Connecting, P = emPowering, R = Revitalizing. eCPR was developed with input from a diverse cadre of recognized leaders from across the U.S., who themselves have learned how to recover and grow from emotional crises. They have wisdom by the

grace of first-hand experience. Call Ann Benner or Megan Sharkey at 804-343-1777 for information.

**Mindfulness Meditation**

84 Main in Warsaw  
 Wednesdays from 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.  
 Call 804-333-3581 for more information

**Peer Recovery Specialist Training May 7 - 18**

McShin Warrenton Recovery Center  
 9:00 – 4:00 p.m. Lunch provided.  
 For more information about cost and registration, please contact Heather Fossen at 540-358-5656

**Get Your VOCAL T-shirt Today!**

You don't need to wait for the conference to snag yourself a great looking VOCAL t-shirt! Only \$12 plus shipping at <https://vocalvirginia.org/shop/>.

**"Avoid the Crunch" Plan Ahead with Advance Directives Crisis and End of Life**

Monday, April 16, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
 Tuckahoe Library, 1901 Starling Drive, Henrico, VA 23229  
 In honor of "National Healthcare Decisions Day", Be the Change Consulting Services, LLC is hosting an Advance Directive Workshop. Come out and gain understanding and assistance with Advance Directive planning.  
 Contact: Jamie Reavis, 804-585-8078

**WRAP® at Fairfax/Falls Church CSB**

Begins Wednesday, April 18, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. for 8 weeks at The Gartlan Center, Alexandria  
 Contact facilitators, Cicely Spencer at 703-207-7792 or Kirsten Helene Kaiser at 703-799-2702.

**Veteran "X" Peer-Led Military Transitioning Program**

To encourage a smooth transition from active duty service to veteran status and to become active participants in their own transition and recovery efforts by serving as members of a "Recovery Team".  
 Every Tuesday in Norfolk. Contact: Thomas Pratt, CPS at 757-291-3084 or David Shaw, PhD. at 757-746-6385

**Central Peer Connect to Meet April 10<sup>th</sup>**

CPC will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, April 10, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. at RAFT House  
 14433 Washington Hwy, Ashland, 23005  
 Please RSVP to Betsy Brown at 804-798-4587 before April 5.

**From Where I Sit ... Creative Offerings from Members and Friends**

**Spirit of Life** by George Waldrop

blot, blemish, tarnish  
 from harm we place blame  
 when we pardon ourselves  
 to pardon others, sot to lift burdens  
 carried by the downtrodden trampled  
 and worried, a life of haste trite living  
 hurt and unforgiving, folks driven  
 to quell the feelings of being alone  
 alone in shame, alone in fright  
 enough guilt that can't hold back the night  
 the ugly hours, the prayers for death  
 when your whole world is a big mess

thoughts of suicide...  
 the posttraumatic stress  
 the pain of feeling lifeless  
 The Stigmas of Mental Wellness  
 hold you back because all others see  
 is all that you lack, but choose not  
 to see all of the things you are not  
 but it is how you are yourself  
 that sets you apart from the "normal" people

it's how you take your medicine  
 it's how you keep your therapy appointments  
 it's how you tell your doctor the truths  
 and keep it real...  
 it's how you attend support groups  
 it's how you get involved  
 it's how you act like a grown up  
 it's how you care about your wellbeing  
 it's how much you value your life  
 it's how you make each day count  
 it's how well you work with others  
 it's not about how bad you feel  
 it's the optimism you preserve  
 it's about hope...

The spirit is an invisible dimension  
 extension in a given direction  
 abounding every living thing  
 before the priest there was spirit

to guide, to seek, to hold beliefs  
 the spirit of life is omnificent  
 the stigmas that we endure  
 will one day be dismissed  
 when we learn that all are one  
 when we hold the covenant  
 between ourselves and the spirit of life  
 when we all have found meaning  
 when we all have found purpose  
 when the bells are rung for us together  
 when forgiveness is gold  
 when no government is trying to divide us  
 when we are granted with trust  
 to make us trust worthy  
 the spirit within will know when  
 our world is safe  
 until then open your universe  
 to allowing others to live free  
 the spirit of life wants liberation  
 to be free of the need to be free

Spirit of Life

**When I Can't Be There**

by Ann Catherine Braxton

When I can't be at your side  
 To read you my latest lines  
 Bring you the fruits of my kitchen pantry, closet, or studio  
 Or hold you close to me with tender kisses  
 I'll be there in kindred spirit  
 Close your eyes and picture my smile  
 Re-read the cards and letters I've sent  
 Fondle the photos capturing happy moments  
 Channel me through the visit of a caring neighbor  
 Remember to talk to God  
 His line is never busy  
 And ponder that maybe at the same time  
 I'm praying about you too.

**Other News and Information**

**Busting 5 Myths about Eating Disorders**

by Monique Fontenot, HHS Public Affairs

You may notice a friend or family member who has dropped a considerable amount of weight or is obsessive about needing to lose weight. They may be reclusive and continuously pushing food away, bingeing or exercising excessively. They may be suffering from an eating disorder. In the United States, an estimated 30 million people may have an eating disorder in their lifetime. In recognition of Eating Disorder Awareness Week, February 26 – March 4, 2018, we would like to dispel some myths that are associated with this disease.

**Myth #1:** Only women and girls can get an eating disorder.

**False:** According to the National Eating Disorders Association, 10 million men and boys in the United States will suffer an eating disorder. Eating disorders affect a diverse array of people of various ethnicities, ages, body weight and socioeconomic groups.

**Myth #2:** You can tell someone is suffering with an eating disorder by the way they look.

**False – sometimes:** Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder in which a person unreasonably limits food intake and excessively exercises to prevent weight gain. Individuals who suffer from this disorder appear extremely thin. However, the other most common eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, uses bingeing and purging to control weight. These people may appear healthy, despite the internal damage being done to their bodies.

**Myth #3:** Only external influences, such as peer pressure or distorted physical images, can cause the onset of an eating disorder.

**False:** While it is difficult to pinpoint the cause of an eating disorder, research conducted by NIH suggests that genetic, psychological, behavioral, biological and social factors can heighten the risk.

**Myth #4:** Eating disorders are a choice.

**False:** According to NIH's National Institute of Mental Health, eating disorders are not lifestyle choices. People don't choose to have an eating disorder like they might choose to eat only vegetables or fish. Eating disorders are a biologically influenced medical illness.

**Myth #5:** Eating disorders are not really serious.

**False:** Some research has shown a direct correlation between eating disorders and suicide attempts. If untreated, eating disorders can cause an imbalance in electrolytes that can result in a stroke or heart attack, intestinal distress, brain damage and multi-organ failure.

For more information on eating disorders, visit NIH's website: <https://www.nih.gov/>.

**From the Newsletter Editor:**

The deadline for the next issue of "The Network News" is *Monday, April 23rd*. Contact Yolande Long: [yolande@vocalvirginia.org](mailto:yolande@vocalvirginia.org) with submissions.