



## THE FLORIDA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION (FRA)



# 2012 NEWSLETTER

Florida Rehabilitation Association • 606 Marla Creek Court—Jacksonville FL 32220—904.632.5007



**Above:** Call to Order address,  
Denise Giarrusso, SERNRA President

Dear Friends, as president of SERNRA for 2012, I want to personally thank Donna Ferrell and the FRA Board for all of their hard work during the planning and the SERNRA training that was held in Safety Harbor, Florida on May 6-9, 2012. We are truly blessed to have such a hard working team of people who worked tirelessly to put this training conference together. The event was well attended and it was great to see so many friends from Florida and the southeast region. These training opportunities provide an excellent opportunity for professional development, but also for networking with others to learn about successful best practices, as well as new programs being implemented in other areas of the state and country. I would also like to acknowledge the University of South Florida, Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling professors and students. All were willing to assist when and where needed. I will continue to serve FRA as treasurer and look forward to planning the 2013 FRA-training conference.



**Above:** Donna Ferrell, FRA President provided the Welcome to Florida address,

Hello All,

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2012 Florida Rehabilitation (FRA) Newsletter. The FRA board worked hard this year to host the Southeast Region National Rehabilitation Association's (SERNRA) 64th annual conference. The conference was well attended and a wonderful success.

This year an emphasis is being put on our membership drive. A few benefits of joining the NRA are:

- 1) expanding your professional network, 2) receiving consistent updates on current industry trends and developments, 3) discovering what others in the field are doing, 4) instant access to newsletters and journals, and 5) protecting and preserving our profession. I challenge you to send me the reasons you joined NRA and to share this information with others.

### Cover

- Call to order—SERNRA President
- Welcome—FRA President

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### FRA Board Members

Donna Farrell, President  
Denise Giarrusso, Past President & Treasurer  
Don Barnes  
Madeline Davidson, Chair—Membership  
Sandra Desler  
Tina Dillahunt-Aspilaga  
William Hudson, Newsletter Editor  
Andrea Melvin, Secretary  
Harry McEwen  
Linda Rimmer  
Susan Sprayberry  
Karla Wooten



Jennifer Thor, Stephanie Moir and Melody Mansour are student Volunteers pictured below.



The students who volunteered at the conference were graduate students in the Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling program at the University of South Florida. The SERNRA and FRA Boards informed the volunteers of the great work that they had done and wished them much success..

**Pictured to the left** is Sara Sundeen, who serves as the 2012 NRA President. Ms. Sundeen provided an indepth update on the status of NRA. There were several questions about the status of personnel, the NRA building and the status of chapter rebate checks. It was announced that the NRA building is on the market to be sold. There is some concern that's due to the real estate market, the sale may take some time. Ms. Sundeen was excited about the future of NRA and informed attendees that SERNRA was the largest chapter in NRA.

There were several important issues presented to the conference attendees. One of the most important issues was credentialing. The issue was credentialing, whether the CRC should be maintained or if a license should replace it. Portability was also discussed.

**Shown below:**

Will McCormack, who was a student volunteer and one of the many volunteers.



Many of the volunteers spent their days at the registration desk, monitoring sessions and approving contact hour forms for attendees.

Volunteers not pictured are Gloria Golson, Samuel Holte, Hope Shaw, Tiffany Sloan-Ally, Heidi Claypool and Megan Whelan.

**Pictured below** is Ms. Beverlee Stafford, Executive Director, NRA. Ms. Stafford provided an update on issues and legislation being submitted or considered in Washington.



**Pictured Below** is Mr. Gregory L. McClinton, Esq., EEOC who presented on “Defining Disability Under the ADAAA and FAQs Regarding GINA.



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**Below:** FRA Board Meeting held on 5/7/12

The Florida Rehabilitation Association Board meeting was held during the 2012 SERNRA conference /training held at the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa in Safety Harbor, Florida. The members in attendance were having lunch at Crispers. Tentative updates on the conference were provided. There were a few late requests for rooms but the hotel was accommodating. Various comments from Board members regarding the conference indicated that the efforts of the board were paying off.



Pictured left in dark suit is Dr. Jamie Pomeranz

**Pictured to the left** is Dr. Steven Collins, Dr. Darlene Groomes and Mr. Michael Shoemaker. Their breakout session was entitled “Change is Constant: How can You Guide It Toward Program Improvement”.

**Below:** Linda Rimmer receiving the H.B. Cummings Award which was presented to her By Denise Giarrusso.





The SERNRA luncheon provided an opportunity for networking and the sharing of new ideas.

During the awards banquet numerous attendees were recognized for their contribution to the field and to the individuals they serve.



The 64th Annual SERNRA Conference ("Sailing the Winds of Change: Challenges and Opportunities in Rehabilitation) was held at the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa. This conference was sponsored by FRA.



Picture #1 is the Paraprofessional Achievement award winner: Lila Crameens. Picture #2 is of a group of counselors from the Duval/Jacksonville office accepting the Yvonne Johnson scholarship award. The third picture is of the SERNRA Past President Shirley Brown being given an achievement award by the current SERNRA President Denese Giarrusso.

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The director announced that the reauthorization and other VR legislation have been delayed. House Republicans have introduced HR 4295. NRA will oppose this bill. It was indicated that the House has a new bill to move Veterans programs out of the Department of Labor and into the Department of Veterans Affairs. VR did not get the full Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). There has been a cut in rehabilitation counselor training programs. There will be no new training grants this year. Unobligated VR dollars may be reassigned by the legislature. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is investigating new software for future utilization.

**Pictured far left:** Division of Blind Services (DBS) updates of it's strategic plan were provided by Ivey Romero and Bobbie Howard Davis.



**Pictured left:**  
Christina Dilla  
hunt-Aspilla  
and Linda  
Rumrell



Counselor Achievement Award winner, Pam Hunter

SERNRA Board Members.

## Assorted pictures

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We would like to acknowledge all of our sponsors, exhibitors and presenters who shared their time and expertise with us. It is through their support that we are able to continue in our efforts.

### Sponsors:

**Platinum Level**—Goodwill Industries of Florida, **Gold Level**: University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions, **Silver Level**—Access Interpreting Services, LLC, **Silver Level**: The Diversity Initiative, Inc.

### Exhibitors:

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Blind Services, Wheelchair Specialties Inc., dba M.T.S., Enhanced Vision Seeing Eye, Inc., ISIS Institute/The Joy Within, Magnifying Aids, First Coast Vision Aids, Disability Achievement Center, Goodwill Industries of Florida, NAMI, Pinellas County, Florida Inc., Self-Reliance Inc., Center for Independent Living, University of Florida College of Public Health and Health Professions, and the University of South Florida Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Program

### **ANNOUNCEMENT:**

It is time for the election of FRA Board members. Anyone who wish to nominate or run for the FRA Board, please contact Donna Farrell, FRA President ([donna.farrell@vr.fl doe.org](mailto:donna.farrell@vr.fl doe.org)) or Denise Giarrusso, FRA Treasurer ([denise.giarrusso@fscj.edu](mailto:denise.giarrusso@fscj.edu)) or visit us online at [www.floridarehabilitationassociation.org](http://www.floridarehabilitationassociation.org) for other nomination information.

*On behalf of the SERNRA/FRA Officers and Board Members we are appreciative of your attendance and participation in the SERNRA/FRA annual training conference. Bill Hudson, Editor*