On February 1st the staff at VAIL piled in the van at 6:30 am to travel to Richmond, Virginia for Independent Living (IL) day at the General Assembly Building. As a group, we met with the delegates and senators from our districts. Many of the delegates and senators were in meetings and were unavailable to meet with us in person. However, we were happy and appreciative to meet with their legislative assistants such as Holly Herman, legislative assistant to Senator Emmett Hanger, “D.J.” Daniel Spiker, legislative assistant to Senator Mark Obenshain, Chad Funkhouser, legislative assistant to Delegate Tony Wilt, Savanna R Funkhouser, legislative assistant to Delegate Richard Bell, and William Wrobleski, Communications Director for Delegate Steve Landes. The staff at VAIL was grateful to be able to meet with Delegate Benjamin Cline and Senator Creigh Deeds for some time as well.

Executive Director, Gayl Brunk, led the discussion of our top priorities for Centers for Independent Living (CILs) with Delegate Benjamin Cline, Senator Creigh Deeds, and the legislative assistants. The team had three priorities going into IL day. The first priority was that we
wanted the restoration of funds for independent living services. In the fall of 2016, funding for independent living services to assist people with transitions was reduced by $200,000. This funding is imperative for VAIL to provide transition services to youth and people transitioning out of nursing homes.

Our second priority was to advocate that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate care. Currently, legislation limits every attendant to 40 hours per week per Employer of Record (EOR). Due to the rural area we serve, this has created a challenge for some individuals as they have been unable to secure another attendant for hours they are authorized to use and/or respite. VAIL supports an exemption process to this.

Our final priority to be discussed was reducing waiting lists for Medicaid Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waivers. The waiting list includes over 11,000 people. We advocated for the addition of Waiver slots for people who are on the DD Waiver waiting lists.

After meeting with legislators at the General Assembly Building, the group divided as some of us went to the Capitol to watch the House in session while some went to the CIL meeting. All Centers for Independent Living of Virginia who participated in IL day convened for a meeting. There were many speakers at this meeting; including our own Gayl Brunk, who is also the President of Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living (VACIL). Other speakers at this meeting included the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Dr. William Hazel, the Commissioner of Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Jim Rothrock, the Director of Independent Living Services of DARS, Rhonda Jeter, the Director of Community Integration of DARS, Catherine Harrison, Colleen Miller with the disAbility Law Center, Heidi Lawyer with the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities and the Deputy Commissioner of Department of Behavioral Health and Disability Services (DBHDS), Connie Cochran. Advocates and leaders that have passed away were also recognized in this meeting.

It was very exciting to watch the House in session, as it was the first time for some of us! A good portion of the session was spent making introductions of groups that were present in the Gallery, one such group being VAIL! Big thank you to Delegate Tony Wilt for introducing our group and giving us a warm House welcome! Overall, it was a successful day in Richmond! The VAIL staff left Richmond feeling tired yet accomplished!
New Year, New Staff!

Please join us in welcoming **Kim Murray** as VAIL's new Program Support Specialist!

Kim comes from a background in marketing, customer service, and management for larger companies and the military. She looks forward to putting her wealth of knowledge and experience to use for the benefit of an organization that "gives back to the community in such a significant way." Kim grew up in Harrisonburg and returned to the area 4 and ½ years ago with her teenage son. She enjoys supporting and attending her son's sports activities, reading, decorating, and going to the movies. Welcome, Kim!

VAIL is thrilled to announce that our colleague, **Diane Haldane**, has moved into the full-time roll of Independent Living Specialist, Work Incentive Specialist position, and Service Coordinator! Diane joined VAIL in the Summer of 2014 as our Program Support Specialist. Her background in career services and training led her to fill-in providing direct services and to teach VAIL's Independent Living Skills class (which she absolutely loved). Her passion for working directly with consumers prompted Diane to pursue intensive training through Cornell to become a certified Work Incentive Specialist Advocate (WISA). As VAIL's resident WISA, she provides benefits analysis and assists people who want to get back to work in understanding how their benefits will be affected. In November, Diane transitioned to the position of Independent Living Specialist and has taken on the role of Service Coordinator one day per week at the Lineweaver Apartments - assisting residents with aging and disability-related needs. Thank You, Diane, for your dedication and passion to serve people with disabilities in our community!

**Candy Tharpe**, a Consumer-Directed Service Facilitator here at VAIL has decided to pursue her career as a chaplain. Feelings are bittersweet as we are excited for her but also sad to see her go. Thank you Candy for your hard work and dedication to VAIL! You will be missed!
Meet the Interns!

Meet **Amanda Bomfim**, one of VAIL’s new interns! She is a senior at James Madison University (JMU) from New Fairfield, Connecticut. She is currently studying Social Work and is planning to graduate in May 2017. Amanda is excited to have the opportunity to shadow under VAIL’s employees and learn more about the operations of a non-profit organization as she aspires to work in one after graduation. When Amanda isn’t working at VAIL, she is busy with other JMU organizations like Student Ambassadors and Relay For Life of JMU. She enjoys serving JMU and the greater Harrisonburg community in any way she can. Amanda also enjoys hanging out with her friends, go hiking, and watching TV in her spare time. Welcome Amanda!

Meet **Veronica Olko**, another new VAIL intern! She grew up not too far from here in Charlottesville, Virginia. Veronica is a Social Work student at Mary Baldwin University and will graduate with her Bachelors in Social Work in May 2017. Under the supervision of Gayl Brunk, Veronica will be shadowing staff members and helping with the Rebuilding Together program. She chose to do her Field Practicum at VAIL because she believes in advocating for people with disabilities. She is excited to learn more about VAIL and to utilize the skills she has learned thus far in her schooling. We learned that Veronica has a black Lab, Great Dane mix named Django. She’s going to have to bring him by the office some time! Welcome Veronica!

Meet **Cheyenne Sheffer**, another student intern at VAIL! Cheyenne is from Stuarts Draft, Virginia and will be graduating this May with her Bachelors in Psychology and two minors in Social Work and Neuroscience at Bridgewater College. She is the Vice-President of Active Minds, an organization for mental health awareness for college students. She will be attending a conference in Norfolk, Virginia called the Virginia Psychology Association Conference in April. Cheyenne enjoys hanging out with friends and reading in her free time. Welcome Cheyenne!
Did you know that VAIL can receive 0.5% of the price of eligible AmazonSmile purchases? Use our link when you log in to shop and help support people with disabilities in our community.

https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1512497

**Keep up to date on Legislative Issues we are Tracking**

Virginia General Assembly Disability Issues

Series of webinars discussing state legislation addressing disability issues

Wednesdays, 3:00 PM Now—February 22

The webinars are open to people with disabilities, their families and other advocates.

Live stream with us at the VAIL Office: 3210 Peoples Drive Harrisonburg, VA 22801 OR watch on your own! Register for the webinars at https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5671329726326986241

**Eat a meal and support VAIL!**

VAIL is having two proceeds nights at Jalapeños Southwest Grill

Thursday April 6, 2017 from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the 1039 Port Republic Road Harrisonburg, VA 22801 location

Tuesday April 18, 2017 from 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the 418 North Main Street Bridgewater, VA 22812 location

Drop your receipts in the GroupRaise box at the end of your meal!
**EQUIPMENT LENDING CLOSET UPDATE!**

VAIL is no longer providing equipment loans. For logistical reasons, along with the fact that other facilities such as Briary Branch Church of the Brethren provide recycling closets, VAIL has decided to discontinue the program.

Briary Branch Church of the Brethren provides expert knowledge on the equipment that people might require.

For more information, please contact Tammy Kiser at (540) 746-6336

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**QUICK Facts**

As of January 1st 2017,
VAIL is serving 426 people

From July 1st to December 31st, 2016, VAIL prevented 348 people from costly institutionalization

In FY2016,
VAIL served 632 individuals

There were 1,053 Information & Referral Requests

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**3rd Annual Arctic Dip**

February 18, 2017
Shenandoah Acres Family Campground
Stuarts Draft, VA

Do the Dip!
visit www.dip.govail.org to sign up or donate

All proceeds benefit
Valley Associates for Independent Living
Serving people with disabilities since 1988

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**Mark Your Calendar!**

**Designer Handbags, Jewels & Tools Bingo**

Saturday, March 11, 2017
Weyers Cave Community Center
Call 540-433-6513 to reserve your cards
VAIL’s Board of Directors

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Seth Whitten  President
Scott Pruett  Vice President
Chris Grandle  Secretary

Members
Kristian Moore  Retha Reed
Joseph Martin  Betty Southerly
Paul McFarland  Debra York
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VAIL Staff
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Holly Prochaska  Finance & Operations Director
Andrea King  Community Services Director
Mat Magruder  Lineweaver Service Coordinator
Jesse Compagnari  Community Living Specialist
Paula Ford  Options Counselor /CLS
Chelsea Tumer  Community Living Specialist
Svetlana Adamson  Community Living Specialist
Diane Haldane  ILS/Support Coordinator/WISA
Kim Murray  Program Support Specialist
Kathy Kaeli  CD Service Facilitator
Candy Tharpe  CD Service Facilitator
Lelia Graham  Advancement & Development Coordinator
Roger Southerly  Custodial Assistant

Contact VAIL at:
3210 Peoples Drive, Suite 220
Harrisonburg, VA  22801
(540) 433-6513  Voice
1-888-242-VAIL  Toll-free
(540) 433-6313  Fax
vail@govail.org  Email

Find Us Online at:
www.govail.org
www.youtube.com/user/govail
www.facebook.com/valleyassociatesforindependentliving

Virginia’s Elected Officials, Including the Senators and Delegates who Serve our Area

Governor Terry McAuliffe—804.786.2211
Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam—804.786.2078
Atty. Gen. Mark Herring—804.786.2071
Senator Creigh Deeds—434.296.5491
Senator Emmett Hanger—540.885.6898
Senator Mark Obenshain—540.437.1451
Delegate Dickie Bell—540.448.3999
Delegate Ben Cline—434.946.9908
Delegate Todd Gilbert—540.459.7550
Delegate Steve Landes—540.255.5335
Delegate Tony Wilt—540.208.0735

We thank them for their service

Wish List
As is true with all non-profit agencies, VAIL has a wish list of items that would be very useful in making our work more efficient and professional.

- Copier paper
- Forever Stamps
- Paper Clips
- Black Pens
- Black Sharpies

We are extremely grateful for any support we receive in helping us acquire these items.

Special **Thank You** to our **Donors:**

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