



# Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 17, 2019

Supplemental Attachment Included

**Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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## **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities awards over \$448,000 in grants to Virginia organizations assisting individuals with disabilities**

**Richmond, Va.** – The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD) is pleased to announce it is awarding five new federal grants to Virginia organizations, administered by the Board, for over \$448,000. The grants are designed to support local, regional, and statewide efforts to encourage inclusive communities and result in sustainable systems change to improve polices and services affecting people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

The new grants are being awarded to:

**Community Knights**                      **\$159,360**                      **Newport News, Va.**

***Creating Opportunities to Advance Capable Hands***

Providing individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities opportunities and supports to successfully volunteer in their communities.

**The Arc of Northern Virginia**                      **\$130,000**                      **Falls Church, Va.**

***My Choice: Supported Decision Making for People with Developmental Disabilities***

Empowering people with developmental disabilities to use Supported-Decision Making as an alternative to Guardianship.

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The following is a list of selected statements from each of the five grantee organizations recently awarded funding by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities and may be used freely.

**Community Knights**                      **Newport News, Va.**

**Jennifer Brown, President and Chief Executive Officer**

“Volunteer opportunities accessed through COACH will provide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an inclusive way to get involved in the broader community. The bonds they form with nonprofit staff and other volunteers reach beyond their volunteerism. These relationships help people with I/DD build their social networks with naturally occurring friendships. They also provide a way for people who haven't known many members of the disability community to actually learn about the community through first-hand interactions and friendships. “

**The Arc of Northern Virginia**                      **Falls Church, Va.**

**Rikki Epstein, Executive Director**

“The Arc of Northern Virginia is thrilled to be awarded grant funds from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities to launch *My Choice Virginia: Supported-Decision Making for People with Developmental Disabilities*. The one and a half year grant will be a partnership between The Arc of Northern Virginia and the Burton Blatt Institute of Syracuse University. The project will focus on empowering people with developmental disabilities to use Supported-Decision Making as an alternative to guardianship to increase their self-determination. We hope our grant will leave people with developmental disabilities more empowered, educated on their rights and options, and better in control of their own lives.”

**The Up Center**                                      **Norfolk, Va.**

**Patricia Coale, Director of Therapeutic Recreation**

“The Up Center will use the grant funds from VBPD to develop and produce a game-based training tool, SAFARI, to engage Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and the individuals they support in a shared interactive, question-based board game experience. SAFARI will involve DSPs in learning more about the unique individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) they support. This tool will be used to promote mutual understanding while enhancing and

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affirming their relationships. The goal of SAFARI is to increase DSP job satisfaction; thereby reducing turnover, improving service provision, and enhancing the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities. “

**The Arc of Virginia** **Richmond, Va.**

**Tonya Milling, Executive Director**

“The Arc of Virginia is grateful and excited to receive a grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities that will enable people with developmental disabilities to have a stronger, unified voice in public policy and community dialogue that can have a sustained impact on the future of services in Virginia. As Virginia works to move our system to one that supports people with developmental disabilities in their communities, the most important voices to hear are those of the people who use services to live the lives they choose. The *Strengthening Self-Advocacy* project will work vigorously with advocacy groups across the Commonwealth to form an Alliance with a strong collective voice of people with developmental disabilities.”

**The Partnership for People with Disabilities**

**Richmond, Va.**

**Jackie Robinson Brock, Project Director**

“The Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University is honored to be awarded grant funding from the Board to improve the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. Our project, *Ensuring Accessibility to All Survivors*, seeks to enhance the resources available to people who are deaf and hard of hearing who might be experiencing abuse. The project will be creating two videos about how to obtain Protective Orders in American Sign Language. One video will provide information about Protective Orders in Virginia, and one will be specific to obtaining a Protective Order in Richmond, Virginia. The project is partnering with the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to disseminate the videos as well as to conduct an abuse awareness training for staff who work with people who use American Sign Language to communicate.”