

Quarterly Newsletter

A NOTE FROM NITA Chief Executive Officer Nita Hobbs

As we enter the final stretch of the year, I'm encouraged by the progress we've made together and the momentum building around the State Use Program. This has been a season of connection, visibility, and renewed focus on helping our members make the most of the benefits available to them.

I'm proud to share that WVAF's presence at the West Virginia Purchasing Division Conference was a tremendous success. Our CRP exhibitors had the opportunity to showcase their capabilities directly to state agency buyers, leading to new conversations, potential partnerships, and a stronger understanding of the value CRPs bring to state contracting. This visibility is key to expanding opportunities for individuals with disabilities while strengthening our network's reputation as a trusted provider of high-quality goods and services.

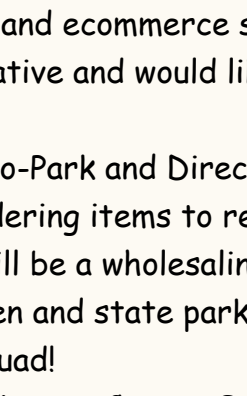
We were also honored to participate in the Regional Disability Resource Awareness Expo, where we connected with community partners, shared the mission of the State Use Program, and deepened relationships that will support employment and inclusion efforts statewide. Events like these amplify the important work you do every day and help us tell the powerful story of how CRPs change lives.

Looking ahead, I couldn't be more excited about our first-ever WVAF Annual Conference: *Reignite, Reinvent, Reconnect*. This event is a cornerstone of our commitment to you. It's a chance for CRP leaders and staff to assess top-tier professional development at no cost, strengthen operations, and connect with peers and partners who share your mission.

Beyond events, our focus remains on helping members fully utilize their benefits. We're prioritizing timely payments, quality assurance, contract management, price negotiations, and invoicing support all critical areas that strengthen your operations and sustain your mission. Our goal is to make sure every CRP partner has the tools and support needed to thrive.

Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to creating meaningful employment opportunities for West Virginians with disabilities. Together, we're building a stronger State Use Program and a brighter future for the people we serve.

Nita Hobbs



Contract Management Update Stay in the know!!!

Janitorial:

With all janitorial agreements renewed for 2025-2026 our Contract Management Team is shifting our focus to quality assurance and business development. All janitorial CRPs will have a meeting scheduled with Contract Managers, Gary Wolfe and/or Misty Mayville, to discuss the results of last year's quality assurance visits and discuss new business opportunities. Gary and Misty will be in touch to get the meetings scheduled!

Commodities/Services:

Our relationship with WV State Parks continues to grow!
Laundry - Hancock County Sheltered Workshop is entering into an agreement with 7 additional state parks for laundry services!
State Park Merchandise - we're kicking it into gear to get CRPs to source some of the merchandise for the state park gift shops and e-commerce site. If you're a CRP that hasn't already been a part of this initiative and would like more information, please let us know!
E-commerce - we are expanding to include Direct-to-Park and Direct-to-Stores order fulfillment. Direct-to-Park is the parks ordering items to refill their brick-and-mortar gift shops. Direct-to-Stores will be a wholesaling opportunity for businesses that want to sell the Almost Heaven and state park merchandise! All of this will flow through Job Squad.
The Op Shop, Lillian James Learning Center and Mercer County Opportunity Industries stepped in with a limited time-frame to deep clean and complete a carpet extraction of the lodge and the cabins at Pipestem Resort State Park.

WVAF and WVADE Statewide Disability Resource Expo

On August 14, 2025, WVAF and WVADE sponsored a statewide Disability Resource Expo at Job Squad Incorporated in Charleston and at The Op Shop in Fairmont. The goal was to make sure that all West Virginians who have a disability diagnosis have access to current, reliable information from dedicated providers throughout the state. The community came out and met with several vendors offering disability resources. Attendees learned about disability employment resources and opportunities, disability services from several different providers, social security benefits and counseling, WVADE information and veteran services, just to name a few! Several key community partners and guests, came out to show their support of their West Virginians! Check out some great news coverage [here](#) and [here](#).

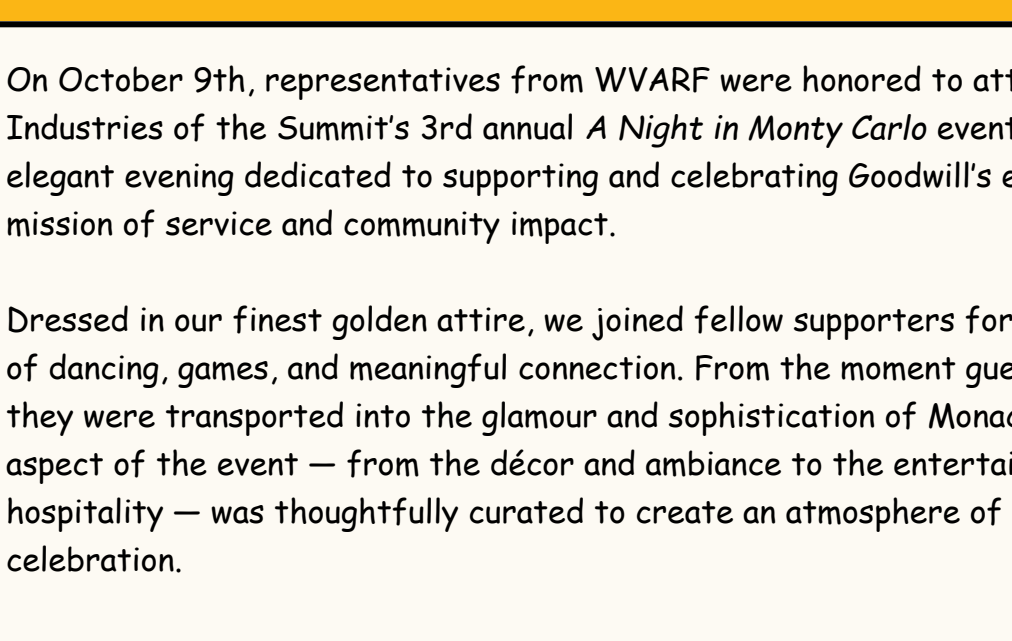
Driving Toward Independence: WVAF and Partners at the Freedom Car Show

Independence is more than a goal it's a way of life. For West Virginians with disabilities, achieving that independence often means overcoming barriers many people never have to consider. That's why WVAF was proud to join partners like the West Virginia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) for this year's Freedom Car Show in Charleston on an event dedicated to showing what's possible when accessibility meets opportunity.

The show, which filled Kanawha Boulevard with classic cars and vehicles equipped with adaptive technology, was about far more than horsepower. It was about freedom of movement and the ripple effect that freedom has on daily life. As SILC Executive Director Jerry Boyko explained, "Transportation is a big problem in West Virginia for people with disabilities... that's how we came up with the name — The Freedom Car Show because it's your freedom." For attendees like Devin Warner, driving a modified vehicle provided "the ability to do things on [his] own schedule without having to ask for rides" a milestone that underscores how deeply mobility and independence are connected.

At WVAF, our mission has always centered on helping individuals with disabilities find and thrive in meaningful employment. But we know that independence doesn't begin and end with a job. It extends into every part of life: from transportation and housing to recreation and community connection. That's why collaborations like this one are so important. By working alongside organizations like SILC, we're helping ensure that West Virginians with disabilities have access to the full spectrum of resources they need to live self-directed, independent lives.

The Freedom Car Show is a celebration of that vision and a reminder that independence is possible when communities come together. WVAF is honored to be part of the journey, helping pave the road toward greater opportunity, mobility, and freedom for all. Check out the local news story [here](#).



Strengthening Connections at the State Purchasing Conference

On August 26th and 27th, representatives from WVAF and several CRPs attended the State Purchasing Conference at Glades Springs Resort. The four-day event brought together two groups of procurement officials from agencies across West Virginia, totaling nearly 260 attendees.

Our participation gave WVAF and our CRP partners an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with purchasing officials from across the state. These face-to-face interactions allowed us to build stronger relationships, answer questions, and clarify key aspects of the State Use Program—including payment processes, program scope, and collaboration with CRPs.

We were proud to represent our network alongside: Job Squad, Pace, Goodwill Industries of the Summit (under the banner of SW Resources), Jackson County Development Center, Buckhannon Upshur Work Adjustment Center, The Op Shop, and The Developmental Center. A heartfelt thank-you goes out to everyone who made the trip and helped make our presence so impactful.

This year's conference was not only a success in promoting the State Use Program but also a valuable step toward strengthening the partnerships between WVAF and our CRP members. To build on this momentum, we hope to see even more CRPs join us in future conferences. A larger collective presence showcases the depth and reach of our network, reinforcing to the state how effectively we can meet their needs.

We're exploring the idea of extending our participation to cover three or four days of the event and rotating CRPs throughout. This approach would lessen the time commitment for individual organizations while maintaining a strong, consistent WVAF presence.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the State of West Virginia for the invitation to participate in such an important event. We look forward to future opportunities to demonstrate how the State Use Program continues to create meaningful impact for all stakeholders.



WVAF Attends Goodwill Industries of the Summit's 3rd Annual A Night in Monty Carlo

On October 9th, representatives from WVAF were honored to attend Goodwill Industries of the Summit's 3rd annual *A Night in Monty Carlo* event — an elegant evening dedicated to supporting and celebrating Goodwill's enduring mission of service and community impact.

Dressed in our finest golden attire, we joined fellow supporters for an evening of dancing, games, and meaningful connection. From the moment guests arrived, they were transported into the glamour and sophistication of Monaco. Every aspect of the event — from the décor and ambiance to the entertainment and hospitality — was thoughtfully curated to create an atmosphere of elegance and celebration.

The attention to detail and seamless flow of the evening made *A Night in Monty Carlo* a truly memorable experience. WVAF is proud to stand alongside Goodwill Industries of the Summit in its mission to empower individuals and strengthen our communities. We look forward to continuing our support and participation in this outstanding event in the future.

WVAF Annual Awards Banquet: A Night to Remember

The West Virginia Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (WVAF) held its Annual Awards Banquet on October 29th at Fairmont State University, in conjunction with our first-ever conference—a milestone event celebrating our shared mission and achievements.

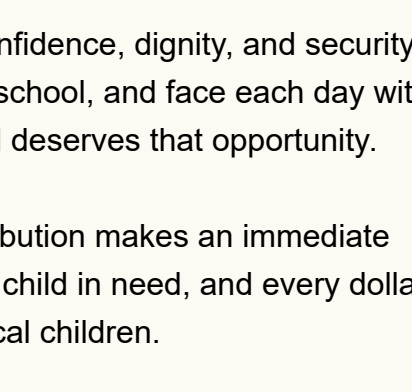
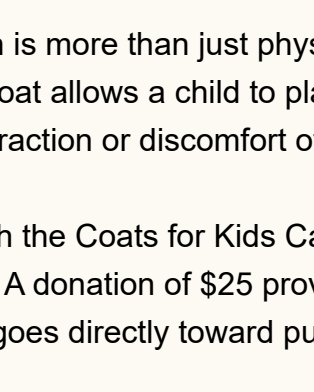
The venue was adorned in beautiful fall colors, setting the stage for an evening filled with gratitude, recognition, and inspiration. The atmosphere was warm and festive as we gathered to honor our Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), outstanding individuals, supportive organizations, and dedicated companies—all of whom play a vital role in advancing our shared mission.

A highlight of the evening was the keynote address by Booker Walton III, whose motivational and inspiring words energized and uplifted everyone in attendance. His message reminded us of the power of perseverance, purpose, and partnership in the work we do every day.

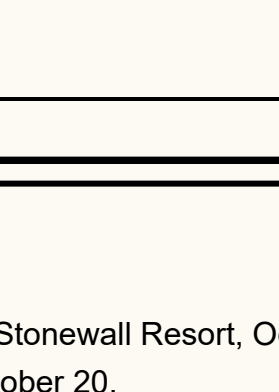
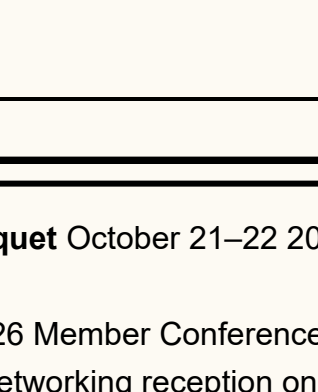
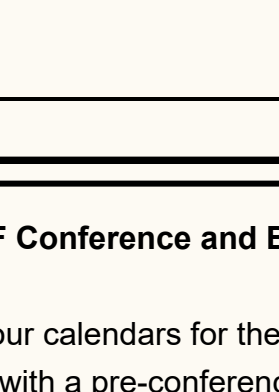
The awards presentation, led by Nita, was a wonderful celebration of excellence and dedication. Among this year's honorees, Mary Dean of Buckhannon Upshur Work Adjustment Center was recognized with the State Use Q.J. Humphreys Distinguished Career Award, honoring her exceptional commitment and lasting contributions to the field.

Their professionalism and heartfelt delivery made the evening even more memorable as we recognized those who go above and beyond to make a difference.

As we reflect on this special night, we extend our deepest appreciation to everyone who contributed to its success. The 2024 WVAF Annual Awards Banquet and Conference was not only a celebration of accomplishments—it was a reaffirmation of our collective commitment to empowering individuals and strengthening communities across West Virginia.



Thank You To Our Sponsors OUR DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO YOU!



WVAF's First Member Conference: Connection, Celebration, and Collaboration

Our first-ever WVAF Member Conference was an incredible success—made possible by the engagement, energy, and support of CRPs from across the state! More than 50 participants gathered at Fairmont State University for two days of learning, networking, and celebration focused on strengthening our shared mission and elevating the State Use Program.

The agenda brought together state leaders, advocates, and experts for sessions on workforce trends, proposal writing, social media, cybersecurity, and inclusive employment. Key highlights included:

- A bipartisan legislative panel featuring Senator Ryan Weld and Senator Joey Garcia, who shared their insights on employment and workforce priorities.
- The active participation and support of DBS leadership, reinforcing the vital partnership between CRPs and vocational rehabilitation services.
- The inaugural Awards Banquet, where we proudly recognized Senator Mike Oliverio with the Mountaineer Award for his ongoing legislative support of the State Use Program, and Tyler Crowe of Op Shop as Employee of the Year for his outstanding dedication and performance.

Thanks to generous sponsorships and the donation of event space by Fairmont State University, WVAF met \$25,000 of its \$30,000 fundraising goal—enough to fund one more CRP Mini Grant in 2026.

We're already planning for next year—so mark your calendars for the 2026 Member Conference at Stonewall Resort, October 21-22, with a pre-conference networking reception on October 20.

We'd love your feedback to make next year even better:

➡ **Share your thoughts here.**
Thank you again to every attendee, sponsor, and presenter who helped make this first conference a success. Together, we're proving what's possible when CRPs come together to learn, collaborate, and celebrate each other's impact across West Virginia.

CRP Engagement Opportunities: More Than Just Exhibits- Be Seen, Be Heard, Be Connected!

As members of the State Use Program, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) have a powerful platform not only to market their goods and services—but also to educate, advocate, and grow their impact across West Virginia. This fall, a dynamic lineup of events provides the perfect stage to do just that. These aren't just vendor tables—they're opportunities to raise visibility, build relationships, and amplify your mission.

We urge all CRPs to go beyond the exhibit booth and fully engage in these valuable statewide opportunities:

Coats for Kids Campaign: Keeping Children Warm This Winter

No child should have to face a freezing winter morning without a warm coat. Yet in communities across our region, too many children board the school bus each day wearing coats that are too thin, too small, or none at all.

This winter, Goodwill KYOWA and United Way of the River Cities are joining forces to make a difference. Together, they have launched the Coats for Kids Campaign, a community-wide initiative to raise funds for purchasing brand-new, high-quality coats for children in need throughout our area.

Warmth is more than just physical comfort—it's confidence, dignity, and security. A warm coat allows a child to play at recess, walk to school, and face each day without the distraction or discomfort of the cold. Every child deserves that opportunity.

Through the Coats for Kids Campaign, every contribution makes an immediate impact. A donation of \$25 provides a new coat to a child in need, and every dollar raised goes directly toward purchasing coats for local children.

When our community comes together, we ensure that no child faces winter alone. We can all play a part in bringing warmth, comfort, and hope to families across the region this season.

To contribute or learn more, visit the campaign page at: [Coats for Kids Campaign on Facebook](#)

Together, we can make sure every child experiences the warmth they deserve this winter.

WVAF Conference and Banquet October 21–22 2026

Mark your calendars for the 2026 Member Conference at Stonewall Resort, October 21–22, with a pre-conference networking reception on October 20.

Do You have News You want to Share?

Do you have news that you feel is exciting and that you would like to share? Send it to josbin@wvarf.org so it can be featured in our next newsletter.

"WITH THE NEW DAY COMES NEW STRENGTH AND NEW THOUGHTS."
—ELIARON RODRIGUEZ

