

Profile of the Northern Virginia Training Center

by Margaret Graham

In the center of Fairfax sits the 100-acre campus of the Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC), which opened its doors in 1973. Home to 175 people, the campus consists of 11 residences, each of which is shared by 15 to 18 residents. Family, friends and neighbors are welcome to visit any time, just as residents are supported in visiting with family whenever possible.

One of five similar training centers within the Commonwealth, NVTC is a long-term care facility certified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as an intermediate care facility for people with mental retardation (ICF/MR). For residents of the Fairfax, Falls Church, Alexandria, Arlington, Prince William and Loudoun, NVTC is one service option among many available to adults with intellectual disabilities.

Everyone working at NVTC has come together with the goal of supporting people with intellectual disabilities (ID) live life to the fullest. To advance this mission, NVTC employs 559 employees: direct support specialists, instructors, occupational, physical and speech therapists, nurses, doctors, therapeutic recreation specialists, psychologists, nutritionists, housekeepers, maintenance and grounds professionals, and social workers.

Living life to the fullest presents many opportunities to all of us as we build partnerships and support choices every day, every month, every year.

Using an interdisciplinary team process, individuals who reside at

NVTC are given the tools they need to live life to the fullest every day, every month, every year. Support is provided to enable each individual to define his/her own goals and preferences; to establish meaningful involvement in work and socialization; and to maintain their health and wellness. The NVTC workforce commits time and energy to maintain well-established networks of supports and services that provide opportunities for residents to engage in a well-balanced life by establishing relationships and membership within the community at local places of worship, markets, and parks and with volunteers, who come to the NVTC campus to read, walk, swim, or celebrate birthdays.

There are also opportunities to work and socialize. NVTC residents are paid to work at locations such as Central Fairfax Services, Job Discovery Inc, Service Source, MVLE, Alexandria Workshop, George Mason University and Merry Maids. For those who don't enjoy daily commuting, there is work available on campus at the Skills Training Center (STC). Employees of STC provide mailing services for local businesses and churches, clean state-owned vehicles, perform document storage services, paper shredding, cardboard and aluminum recycling for all of the departments and buildings on the NVTC campus.

Socially, NVTC residents and staff enjoy all of the resources Northern Virginia has to offer. They support the local economy and contribute to the wellbeing of the community as they access the local shops, grocery stores, restaurants, libraries, parks,



etc. Community involvement is encouraged, and individuals living at NVTC frequently support community assistance efforts. NVTC residents have responded to the calls for assistance by the victims of Hurricane Katrina and house fires, and to the requests for support from the Salvation Army during the holiday seasons. Local homeless shelters, too, have benefited from the community service of several NVTC residents who have assembled personal care packages for distribution at the shelters.

Health and wellness are integral parts of life at NVTC. Everyone has the opportunity to access medical, clinical, behavioral and social supports services. The employees of NVTC coordinate specific opportunities that serve people with intellectual disabilities, and those opportunities are available to anyone who can participate. For example, the Therapeutic Recreation Department offers year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports. NVTC residents along with teammates from other homes work together to increase their level of physical fitness, to demonstrate courage, to learn the rules and regulations of sports and games and to experience the fun and fulfillment of teamwork.

Another important aspect of NVTC support is overnight respite for families in need. This service provides family members/caregivers temporary relief from the responsibilities of long-term care so they can enjoy a short vacation, tend to family matters or to just rest for a weekend. Very often a brief respite

with somewhat regular consistency is all that a family needs to continue the ongoing support in the home.

Perhaps most important is the fact that NVTC maintains the resources of skilled employees who are caring, committed and interested in working with this unique population. In addition, NVTC has been fortunate enough to be able to share the skills of these employees with those in the region who may need to access the services of an NVTC doctor or a psychiatrist, dentist, psychologist, therapeutic recreation specialist, aquatic specialist, social worker, speech

pathologist, physical or occupational therapist (to name a few). Residents of Northern Virginia with ID who need consultation or treatment from any of the clinical or medical specialties on staff at NVTC can access it through the Regional Community Support Center (RCSC) and by referral of the Community Services Board (CSB).

In closing, NVTC recognizes that our network is only as extensive as our reach. Long-term care is currently in transition. We are committed to reaching out to develop new and different options to support people

with intellectual disabilities as they live life fully; and we are committed to developing services that will support the citizens of Northern Virginia who choose to be served in or by an intermediate care facility for people with intellectual disabilities. It is one of a broad spectrum of choices available; but for some, it is the best choice there is. ■

Margaret Graham is a member of the staff at NVTC.

Services Provided by Virginia's Five Mental Retardation Training Centers

by Jane Anthony

There are five regional, residential training centers for individuals with a primary diagnosis of mental retardation operated by the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia. These include: Central Virginia Training Center; Northern Virginia Training Center; Southeastern Virginia Training Center; Southside Virginia Training Center; and Southwestern Virginia Training Center.

The training centers offer a range of highly structured services that address the occupational, speech, vocational, motor development, and physical health care needs of their residents. All five training centers are certified as intermediate care facilities (ICF/MR) under Medicaid. Training center services are client-centered and highly individualized. To meet each individual's challenging and extensive requirements for care and habilitation, a network of clinical and direct care staff are available on a 24-hour basis. Training center services are provided in the least intrusive and non-restrictive manner. They are designed to promote growth and development in an integrated and diverse environment. Some training centers have agreements with community services boards (CSBs) for off-campus vocational programs. Upon request from the CSB, behavioral and habilitation training can be provided to community providers serving clients from the training centers.

The admission process into a training center is coordinated by the CSB that is responsible for providing case management services to the individual who is seeking admission. This is almost always the CSB serving the city or county in which the applicant resides.

To be eligible, a person must have a primary diagnosis of mental retardation (MR) and meet certain criteria related to the level of functioning that qualifies him or her for admission to an intermediate care facility. It must also be

determined that the center can provide the most appropriate services based on the intensity of need. After the CSB review is completed, it then submits an application to the training center that serves its region. The training center reviews the information provided in the application package. If the applicant is determined to be eligible for admission, a circuit court judge must certify the individual for admission. The facility director then sets a date for admission.

The training centers offer emergency and respite admission if space is available. Again, the CSB is the point of entry. (See list of CSBs on p. 28.)

The CSB with case management responsibility also coordinates discharge planning with the training center when a resident, with his guardian/legally authorized representative (LAR) or family member has chosen to continue his training and habilitation in the community. ■

Training Center Locations

Central Virginia Training Center (CVTC)

521 Colony Road • Madison Heights, VA 24572
434-947-6326 • www.cvtc.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC)

9901 Braddock Road • Fairfax, VA. 22032
703-323-4002 • www.nvtc.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

Southeast Virginia Training Center (SEVTC)

2100 Steppingstone Square • Chesapeake, VA 23320
757-424-8379 • www.sevtc.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

Southside Virginia Training Center (SVTC)

Albemarle Street • Petersburg, VA 23802
804-524-7208 • www.svtc.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov

Southwest Virginia Training Center (SWVTC)

160 Training Center Road • Hillsville, VA 24343-8408
276-728-1124 • www.swvtc.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov