

**VOR was founded in 1983 when family advocates from around the country banded together to defeat the Chafee Bill.**

**The efforts of these family advocates set the stage for the next 30 years. Throughout all this time VOR has remained a voice for choice!**



**2013 MARKS VOR'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY!**  
**Watch for celebration details in the coming months!**

***Also Inside:***

**We're all in This Together!**

**Page 3**

**When Turning 50 is a Miracle - Roger's Story**

**Page 6-7**

**NJ State Senator Seeks Deinstitutionalization Impact Study**

**Page 9**

**Social Media: VOR's New Frontier**

**Page 10**

**Year End Giving Form**

**Page 11**

# Celebrating 30 Years

By Ann Knighton, President

In 2013, VOR will *celebrate its 30 year Anniversary*. This truly is a milestone worth celebrating.

Throughout these 30 years, we have survived on membership support alone, no doubt due to the fact that we are the only voice for choice among disability advocacy organizations. VOR is a necessary and relevant voice that families and individuals over three decades have invested in and trusted.

For VOR members, the words "Mission accomplished" would sound so wonderful. However, despite VOR's many accomplishments over our 30 year history, we are facing perhaps the most challenging times in both advocacy and economy. Something I once said to my fellow advocates in Georgia has never been truer for VOR advocates: VOR members have "carried the banner, stepped up to the plate, and risen to the issues, knowing that we have much work to do and many miles yet to go."

## Thinking Strategically: Planning for the Miles Ahead

As I write this, VOR's Board of Directors is preparing a comprehensive Resource Development Plan for Fiscal Years 2013 - 2015. The proposed plan provides a case statement, an overview of the organization, new initiatives and a comprehensive overall fundraising strategy:

*"VOR exists to speak for the voiceless' (VOR Membership Survey, 2012). For 30 years, VOR has been the only national voice for affected individuals. For nearly 3 decades, VOR's advocacy has helped connect countless families to the services their profoundly disabled loved ones require, no matter the setting they choose, and provided many more with advocacy support in an effort to prevent the closure of specialized homes. It is a classic David and Goliath struggle." (VOR Resource Development Plan, Case Statement (excerpt) (Oct. 2012, proposed).*

Enhanced resource development (fundraising), including the expansion of VOR's membership, is necessary for VOR to remain effective in this economy and in response to the many anti-choice (including in government) forces. According to the U.S. Census, about 1.2 million adults and 1.7 million children have an intellectual disability. Another 944,000 adults have other developmental disabilities including autism and cerebral palsy. Other sources estimate that 3% (about 870,000) of all citizens with intellectual disabilities have severe or profound intellectual disabilities. These individuals are most at risk due to the prevailing ideology in support of aggressive deinstitutionalization which eliminates access to specialized care and health care services. Without VOR, there would be no effective voice for these individuals.

Social media is one way to reach these families (see page 10), but having more people committed to a strong and viable VOR for 30 more years is also a critical component of VOR's future. Alone we are strong; together we are much stronger and can make a difference on behalf of all our family members and their peers with intellectual and developmental disabilities. "If not us, then who? **If not now, then when?**" Thank you.



## In this Issue

Executive Director's Message	3
"My Life as an Advocate"	
Sibling Perspective	4
"Our Sister Tee Tee"	
Sibling' Perspective	5
Feature Story:	
When turning 50 is a miracle:	
Roger's Story	6
Virginia Legal Update	7
Legislative Update	8
Legal Update	8
State News	9
Social Media:	
VOR's New Frontier	10
Celebrating Home Fundraiser!	10
Contribution Form	11
Tributes	12

## VOR MISSION STATEMENT

VOR is a national organization that advocates for high quality care and human rights for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## VOR: Celebrating 30 Years

In 2013, VOR will celebrate 30 years of advocating for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families. For 30 years, VOR has been the only voice for choice.

Throughout 2013, VOR will celebrate this milestone by remembering our rich history, while also planning for a strong and viable future. Just as in VOR's past, so in our future we will be stronger working together. Your voice matters. Choice matters.

## MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE!

**Here's an easy way you can help increase VOR membership and earn a chance to win a 2-year VOR membership!**

We are calling on every VOR member to recruit five (5) new members by January 1, 2013. Ask your family members to join. Bring VOR membership applications (see page 11) to your family association meetings. Consider the direct care workers and professionals that care for your family member.

All members recruiting at least 5 new members by January 1, 2013 will be entered into a drawing for a free 2-year membership. Just make sure that the individuals you recruit for membership include your name ("referred by") on the membership application.

**Thank you for participating and helping to ensure a strong future for VOR.** If you would like membership application materials, contact Julie at [jhuso@vor.net](mailto:jhuso@vor.net) or 605-370-4652.

## Making a Will Bequest to VOR!!

Will bequests are the most popular and personal way to making a difference beyond your lifetime. **Why? (1)** Charitable bequests are an excellent way to pass on assets that may otherwise be substantially taxed. **(2)** The donor's estate may be entitled to an estate tax charitable deduction for the value of the bequest; and **(3)** You will be supporting a charitable organization that you value.

If you would like additional information on how to leave a bequest to VOR please contact Julie Huso, Executive Director, 605-370-4652 or [jhuso@vor.net](mailto:jhuso@vor.net).

## We Are All in This Together!

By Julie Huso, Executive Director



VOR's strength is the national scope of our shared advocacy and the recognition that **we are all in this together.**

Our involvement in a Pennsylvania lawsuit, tells a story that so many VOR members have experienced personally and represents VOR's role and impact, not just in Pennsylvania, but in many states.

In 2009, VOR became involved in a Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy (P&A) lawsuit that to this day continues to threaten state operated facilities. In response, **VOR quickly secured pro bono counsel for family interveners and VOR has filed "friend of the court" legal briefs in support of affected individuals and their families.**

We've provided similar advocacy and expertise in many states, including but not limited to Virginia, Connecticut, California, Georgia, Washington, Florida, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and more, where legal or legislative action threatened choice.

We also continue our efforts to secure a federal law to restore individual and family decision-making in these cases so families right away have a voice in court when P&A or DOJ tries to close centers without regard to family input.

In 2013, VOR will celebrate 30 years of advocating for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In these 30 years we have been building on advocacy and lessons learned from one state's experiences to another.

**We are all in this together and that is our collective strength.** VOR and its members are a family!

## Please Consider a Year-End Gift and Invest in VOR's Advocacy and Programs

For VOR to support individuals and their families through our legislative and government affairs, legal advocacy, family advocacy, state coordinator, and VOR's Annual Conference and Initiative programs, and to pursue new programs such as an online **advocacy tool and quality, community based standards**, VOR needs a funding future that will allow us stability and growth. We've set an ambitious goal of \$50,000 to be raised by the end of December for VOR's current national advocacy programs and exciting new programs in 2013.

With your help, this holiday season and the New Year will be brighter for all people with I/DD and their families across the nation.

**Thank you for standing up for choice!** Your year-end gift is an investment for the future of your loved one and **will ensure that VOR moves into the future with a loud voice for quality care and choice for all individuals with I/DD.**

## “My life as an Advocate”

by David Hart, VOR Board Member

I know when my parents became advocates for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). It was March 4, 1964, when their son, Christopher, my older brother was born. My father led the charge, and my mother was the support needed at home. I do not believe my father realized the depth to which his advocacy would take him, nor did he realize the impact his advocacy would have on me.

My brother suffered from Hydrocephalus, which simply is fluid on the brain that does not drain naturally, causing severe headaches and brain damage. At his best, my brother's cognitive level was no more than 12-18 months with a rudimentary vocabulary of about 20 words. Eventually, due to many physical complications of this condition, Christopher was wheelchair bound from about twelve years old.

For this article, I have been asked to offer a sibling's perspective and share when and, more importantly, why I became an advocate - first for my brother and then for all individuals with I/DD. The why is simple. I firmly believe that as human beings it is our duty to help those that are less fortunate than us. The when? That is a little more difficult to answer, although, as with most people who are passionate advocates, I did have an “AH HA” moment.

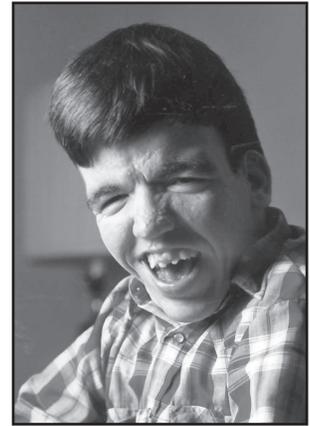
I was attending my first Individual Service Plan (ISP) with my parents at Hogan Developmental Center in Massachusetts where my brother lived. I remember sitting in the conference room with the (and I use the term loosely) “team” discussing my brother's current status. My parents and I were there to discuss the services being provided, and future services for the following year. The “team” members were telling my parents and me all the great things they did for Chris, the services he received, will receive, and how happy he said he was.

Wait a minute, “how happy he said he was?” Not knowing if I was a full-fledged member of the “team” I was unsure if I could ask a question or make a comment. However, I did simply ask, “when did Christopher start talking?” The ISP was written in the first person and made him sound like he was a “Rhodes Scholar.” My father looked at me smiled and shrugged knowingly and my mother groaned (probably thinking the apple did not fall far from the tree), as we all looked at the “team”.

To most this might not be an issue, but to me I found it to be very insulting to both my family and my brother. This was my “AH HA” moment. This was the point in my life that I realized I was an advocate for not only my brother but for others with I/DD. My father started a parents group, (now called CCMR, Inc.) at Hogan in 1976, which I am proud to say is still advocating on behalf of people with I/DD in Massachusetts.

As for me, I am the current President of CCMR. About ten years ago I came across VOR and realized that the fight for dignity, services, safety and equality for all with I/DD is not only local but also national. CCMR is now a Massachusetts affiliate of VOR and I am a Board member and serve on three VOR committees.

My brother died in July of 1996. It was one of the most difficult and emotional times in my life and without the support of my wife, Elizabeth, I could not have moved forward. I pledged then, as I do now, that I will forever in his memory advocate for people with I/DD.



### VOR Officers and Board Members

July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

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Mary Reese (MD)

Mary Vitale (MO)

# Our Sister “Tee Tee”

By Lorraine and Julie Koury

We are the sisters and legal guardians of Teresa Koury, or “Tee Tee” as we call her. Teresa is a resident of Southside Virginia Training Center (SVTC) in Petersburg, Virginia. She has lived at SVTC since 1971, when she was eleven years old.

Lorraine is four years older than Teresa; Teresa is three years older than Julie. When we were children we accompanied our mother to Petersburg every single weekend for years – into our adulthood – to visit our sister. It was after our mother got sick in 2002 (and finally passed in 2007) that we assumed full guardianship roles for Teresa. We’ve had literally a lifetime to see the changes and progress in our sister.

Teresa is classified as moderately mentally handicapped, with autism and psychosis. When she was a child, she had several seizures. She can communicate to some degree. She speaks in single words and phrases with a fairly severe speech impediment, and only those who know her well can understand her.

Over the years Teresa has exhibited violent behavior, and for most of her life these outbreaks have been regular and consistent. She has hit, pushed and bitten other residents at SVTC, the staff there, and her family. She has broken or destroyed many, many objects.

Over the years, the staff at SVTC have worked hard and diligently to find the right combination of medicines and programs to create a stable and happier life for her.

It has only been in the last few years that Teresa has had a period of ease. She is at home at SVTC. She has known some of her caretakers for years and there is a genuine bond, even love, between them. When our mother was dying, one staff person came to us and offered to drive Teresa the one hundred mile round trip to our mother, so that our mother and Teresa could see each other. She and another staff person did that every month for several months before our mother died.

Just down the hall from Teresa is a nurse’s station. Teresa has diabetes, high blood pressure, glaucoma and a susceptibility to inflammatory gum disease. These nurses take her vitals daily, give her medicine and administer eye drops. Her caretakers, working closely with the dental clinic at SVTC, have returned her gums to health and are able to sustain it.

Teresa is well-taken care of in a secure and loving environment and exhibits a level of peace that we did not imagine possible.

The Commonwealth of Virginia, in conjunction with the Department of Justice, is attempting to close down all but one of the training centers in Virginia, including SVTC.

Words cannot express the level of distress we feel at the prospect of the training center closing, and of Teresa – finally stable after decades of working for it – losing the only home she has ever known. We believe the radical change would devastate her and create an on-going crisis for her.

We do not believe there is truly a place for Teresa in the community. We fear for her security and safety, for the safety of others, and for her physical AND emotional health. Teresa’s psychiatrist has told us that unless Teresa moves to a location with staff who have the EXACT level of understanding of Teresa and her behaviors, and the EXACT extensive history of dealing with her, as does the staff at SVTC, that she most likely will go into a “downward spiral”.

We are fighting to stop the closure of the state training centers. VOR has provided critical help, both legal help in our lawsuit, and every other type of non-legal help possible. Thank goodness for VOR; we do not know where we would be without their help.



## VOR Awareness Spotlight: Linda Lotzi Works Overtime

VOR Board Member, Linda Lotzi, is working overtime for VOR awareness, sharing information about VOR’s mission with families, friends and the general public at events in Maryland and Pennsylvania. These events reached thousands of individuals, many of whom stopped by VOR’s displays to learn more.

For both conferences, VOR provided all the handouts. We are very grateful for Linda’s time and energy on behalf of VOR.

### Are there events in your area where VOR can be promoted?

Please contact Julie Huso at [jhuso@vor.net](mailto:jhuso@vor.net) or 605-370-4652 for more information.

# When Turning 50 is a Miracle: Roger's Story

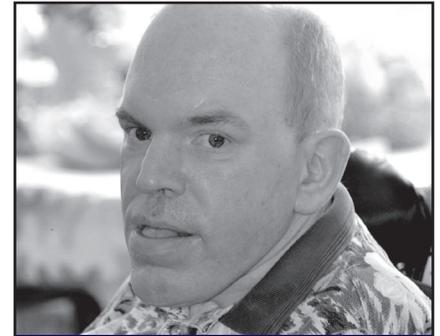
Submitted by Anne Sale, Roger's mom and long-time VOR member

When Roger was born, most of the doctors did not expect him to get to his teens. I'm very proud to say that on August 4 of this year, he celebrated his 50th birthday.

## SCARY TIMES

Roger suffers from brain damage due to an oxygen deficiency at birth, epilepsy with uncontrolled mixed seizures, profound swallowing problems, brittle bones, optic atrophy with myopia, incontinence, stenosis of his neck and back, peripheral neuropathy and hyper-salivation. He is non-verbal and completely non-ambulatory, and gets all nutrition, hydration and medication via a gastrostomy tube.

In all likelihood Roger would not have made it to celebrate his half century mark if it had not been for being so well-served at Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC), a state operated ICF/MR. The doctors there are onsite and know Roger so well.



Roger on his 50th birthday.

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*“In all likelihood Roger would not have made it to celebrate his half century mark if it had not been for being so well-served at Northern Virginia Training Center (NVTC), a state operated ICF/MR.”*

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There was a particularly scary two year period when Roger had to have a tracheal tube inserted for tube feedings because of his seizures. As part of this process he contracted a MRSA (bacterial) infection. While in the hospital he had to be put on a ventilator and in an induced coma. It was an NVTC physician that worked a miracle and brought him back to the training center. Over time, this physician succeeded in getting the trach closed, cured the MRSA and returned him to his home at NVTC after spending about two years in the infirmary at the center.

I bless Roger's entire medical team, direct care staff and all at NVTC and pray for the state to realize the importance of keeping training centers open. (See related article, "Virginia Legal Update.")

## HAPPY TIMES

Roger got to come home for his 50th birthday. The staff volunteered to transport him home. Two staff were required - a driver and the rider who had to be in the van and at the party to handle any emergency that might arise with Roger, such as a seizure or other medical crisis.

The logistics were difficult for the Center to arrange, although they did not complain. Roger is like family and they were determined to help him celebrate his birthday. Still, Roger's health needs didn't always cooperate during planning. As plans came together for his celebration, it was still touch and go because of his many medical problems.

Thanks to everyone's determination, however, Roger's party at home was a big success, with many family members and friends here to celebrate. It was a wonderful time. For my birthday – just a few days after Roger's - one of my daughters surprised me with a beautiful album with pictures of all the guests and Roger at his birthday party.

...Continued on page 7



Although I visit Roger at the Center about five times each week, his medical situation has made it difficult for Roger to come home, especially after my husband died in 2009. Until his birthday celebration, Roger had not been home for over a year. Celebrating his birthday at home, therefore, was extra special. Roger really enjoyed the visit, but not one bit more than I and the rest of the family enjoyed having him home for his 50th birthday. It was such a perfect few hours that I am still on a high from it.

## LIFE GOES ON

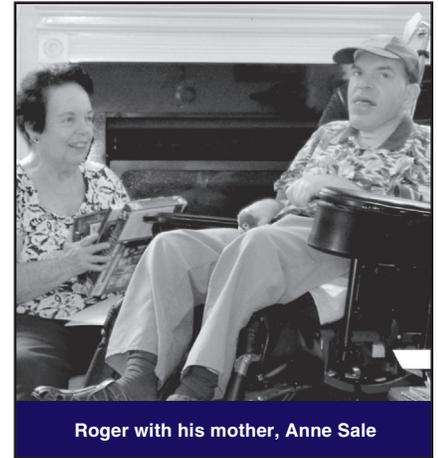
I was at the Center not long after his birthday and Roger was being examined for a scratched eye which happened during a seizure. From there he went to pet therapy, though I could tell he was not himself. The therapist had a difficult time getting him to interact with Baxter, a beautiful golden lab, although the recreation therapist was successful in helping Roger give Baxter a treat and throw him the ball several times (with hand over hand help). From pet therapy we went back to his home at NVTC for lunch and medications (he gets several seizure medications throughout the day). I fussed over him for a while and we watched a couple of DVDs he got for his birthday.

I needed to leave him then and it broke my heart. He had four seizures today while I was with him. However, Roger needed to rest and staff was there to help change his position.

## GRATITUDE

Roger is so fragile and has been such a gift to our family. You can see why I am still so thankful for his birthday milestone and celebration, while also being upset and stressed about his future. These are the conflicting emotions that come daily with everything that is going on in the State and with Roger.

I'm very grateful to our NVTC family association and to VOR for all the work you do for our gang of kids. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your dedication and for all that you have done and do.



Roger with his mother, Anne Sale

## Virginia Legal Update:

### Consent Decree Includes Some Protections for Training Center Residents

On August 23, 2012, U.S. District Court Judge John Gibney approved an amended consent decree between the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Commonwealth of Virginia, including some protections for training center (state ICF/MR) residents.

“Nothing in the decree compels Virginia to close any facility,” wrote Judge Gibney in his Order. “Decisions of that sort lie in the hands of the General Assembly. If it deems it wise, the General Assembly can appropriate funds to continue to operate some or all of the Training Centers, even while funding the Medicaid waivers.”

The approved order also includes language to protect the residents’ legal right to choose to continue to receive training center supports. “[N]o one may be forced to leave a Training Center against his or her will . . . The [Virginia] statute serves as bedrock assurance that no one will be evicted from a Training Center.” If this code is repealed – something the Commonwealth has signaled it will attempt – Judge Gibney may “reopen the case” and “revisit the fairness of the decree.”

In the same Order approving the consent decree, Judge Gibney also dismissed the residents’ (Intervenor’s) Third Party Complaint. The Intervenor’s complaint alleged that actions by the Commonwealth that “seek to compel Intervenor’s discharge from the Training Centers to other settings,” without consent and contrary to the recommendations by treating professionals violate several federal laws. Judge Gibney held that the Complaint was not ripe because “[n]o one has been involuntarily removed from a state facility. Whatever injury the Intervenor might suffer simply has not occurred yet.” He also found that “the claim is based on a misreading of the settlement agreement,” which “does not does not compel the shutdown of any Training Center.” Even so, the Judge also acknowledged that is “unlikely that the Commonwealth can afford to operate five Training Centers while funding the Medicaid waivers.” Throughout this litigation, families have attempted to expose the errors in the Commonwealth’s cost assumptions.

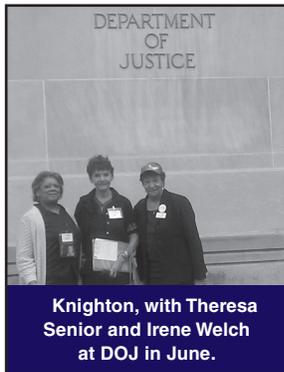
**VOR Submits Federal Comments in Response to P&A’s “Public input” Process; Objects to Deinstitutionalization Priority**

On September 17, VOR submitted federal comments to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration on Community Living (ACL). ACL sought comments on the proposed collection of the Statement of Goals and Objectives (SGPs) submitted by state P&As after a public input process.

In its written comment, VOR stated that deinstitutionalization is a goal in most P&As’ SGP, “yet VOR knows of no State P&A that has made any effort to determine if deinstitutionalization is a goal supported by those directly affected when ICFs/MR close – the residents and their families and legal guardians.” VOR also objected to the monitoring and technical assistance proposed as biased. Instead, VOR calls for “independent and oversight and an unbiased audit of P&A program outcomes.” VOR’s comment is at [www.vor.net/images/PAOMBCommentsSeptember2012.pdf](http://www.vor.net/images/PAOMBCommentsSeptember2012.pdf).

**Georgia: Family Advocates Continue to Press for Their Rightful “Seat at the Table” in the Wake of Central State’s Closure**

On September 29, the *New York Times* featured the closure of Central State Hospital in Milledgeville, Georgia earlier this year, focusing on how some residents are faring in their first few months after its closure. While some residents are slowly adjusting, others are suffering from isolation, abuse, neglect and even death, according to *the Times* and court monitor reports. The closure was called for in a DOJ/ Georgia Settlement Agreement.



Knighon, with Theresa Senior and Irene Welch at DOJ in June.

“It’s no wonder that the transition has ‘been fraught with anxiety,’ as *the Times* article indicates,” remarked Ann Knighton, VOR’s President and President of the East Central Georgia Regional Hospital (Gracewood) Family Council. “Families who are not parties to the legal agreement find little solace in being able to say, ‘I told you so.’”



Knighon and Congressman John Barrow at East Central Georgia Regional Hospital in October.

Knighon’s daughter, Erica, is a Gracewood resident. “Gracewood has been her home for many years,” said Knighton. “Georgia and Justice Department officials boast about stakeholder involvement. Yet, here I am – a mother and a state and national leader in disability advocacy. No one thought to ask my opinion.” Knighton, with Gracewood Family Council and VOR representatives, have taken their concerns to local, state and federal officials, including to DOJ officials in Washington, D.C.

It’s unconscionable to exclude families from decisions which end up closing their loved ones’ homes. Families of individuals who have the cognitive abilities of infants are the most informed advocates.

“I won’t give up,” said Knighton. “We deserve a seat at the table. If not us, then who?”

**New York: VOR Members Deliver Olmstead Testimony**

In September, VOR’s Cristy Dwyer testified at a New York “Olmstead Implementation Plan” public forum. “Olmstead requires consideration of personal choice, not just one choice,” stated Dwyer. “Forcing ‘integrated community settings’ on every disabled person is the wrong starting point for Olmstead implementation.” VOR member, Linda Blumkin provided similar testimony. Dwyer’s and Blumkin’s testimonies are on VOR’s website at [www.vor.net/get-involved](http://www.vor.net/get-involved).

*Legal Briefs continued on page 11...*

**Mark Your Calendar**

**2013 Annual Conference and Initiative**  
June 7 – 11, 2013

**New Location!**  
**Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill**  
(across from the Liaison)

**Join VOR advocates from around the country in Washington, D.C.**

*Join us in support of quality and choice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.*

## Illinois: Aggressive Closure Plan Goes Forward Despite a “Few Bumps in the Road”

Advanced by Governor Pat Quinn, Illinois plans to close four of its eight centers for the developmentally disabled during the next two years. In all, the plan calls for 600 of the roughly 2,000 residents to be placed in new homes.

Critics of the proposal, including families and workers, contend that some residents are better served in specialized care settings. They say specialized care isn't available in certain parts of the state, particularly after social service providers have struggled under years of state budget cuts.

The employee union and a parents group also have raised questions about how the administration has handled moves that have already taken place, saying that in the rush to close facilities, some families are being pressured to make decisions they aren't ready to make.

State officials claimed union reports of broken bones, incarceration, hospitalization and psychiatric placements following displacement from the Jacksonville Center are exaggerated, indicating the closure process has hit just “a few bumps in the road.” (Chicago Tribune, October 9, 2012)

State Representative John Cavaletto also raised questions about Community Resource Associates (CRA), the contractor hired by the state to transfer parents out of Murray Center. He filed a House Resolution directing the Auditor General to conduct a formal audit of the grant issued to CRA. Cavaletto has concerns regarding CRA's resident assessments which he says has had “very little observation and interaction with the patients before they make their transition recommendations,” adding “these are very vulnerable lives we're dealing with here and it's most definitely not the time to be cutting corners.” (WJBD News, October 5, 2012)

## New Jersey: State Senator Seeks Deinstitutionalization Impact Study

More than 500 disabled individuals will need new homes if the state closes its Totowa (North Jersey) and Woodbridge developmental centers over the next five years. Sen. Loretta Weinberg wants to make sure that in planning for those relocations, the state Division of Developmental Disabilities takes into account lessons learned from earlier developmental center closures.

Weinberg has introduced legislation to require a study of how several hundred former residents of the North Princeton fared after it was closed in 1998. She wants the State to study everything from the types of residences and programs in which the former North Princeton clients are participating to mortality rates and the extent to which they've had to interact with the police.

Cindy Bartman, New Jersey State Coordinator for VOR, supported Weinberg's call for a new study. “The original [North Princeton 2005] study which Dawn Apgar [Deputy Commissioner] had a hand in was all too brief to determine actual outcomes,” Bartman said. “We, the family members with loved ones residing at one of the seven developmental centers, hope for transparency in reporting and a non-prejudicial approach to this investigation.” Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle said she plans to introduce a companion bill. Huttle added that she's also working on bills requiring the state to conduct follow-up studies on residents who leave the Totowa and Woodbridge centers as well as residents of other state centers who transition into community programs.

## California Passes Resident Protection Law

California has passed two new laws to require its developmental centers to alert outside police and a disability protection organization when patients die under suspicious circumstances, are abused or are seriously injured. Additionally, the new law sets minimum job requirements for the chief of the Office of Protective Services. The chief now must be a certified peace officer “with extensive management experience directing uniformed peace officer and investigation operations,” the legislation said. (Source: The Bay Citizen, September 28, 2012)

“Families and conservators of these individuals value the high-quality care received by their loved ones and take great comfort in the existing layers of state and federal oversight which ensure adequate treatment, humane and safe care. Families view [the new law] as further assurance that consistently good care will be received, with any egregious actions against their well-being being reported, investigated and resolved with urgency,” wrote VOR and its affiliate, Sonoma Parent Hospital Association, in its position in support.

# Social Media: VOR's New Frontier

VOR and its members have been slow to jump on the Social Media bandwagon. Well, that's not quite fair.

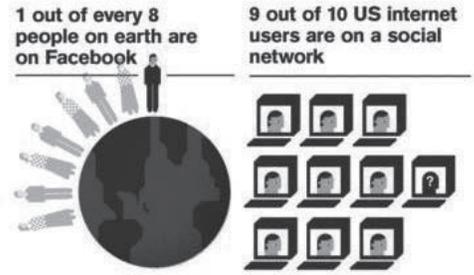
VOR has had a Facebook page for at least 2 years and we have a few experienced bloggers within our membership. VOR has also been disseminating the Weekly E-Mail Update publication for more than a decade and while not a true "social media" tool it has social media-like advantages such as connecting like-minded advocates with each other and providing very timely news and advocacy features.

Still, we only just recently ventured into "Twittersphere," and just this month VOR launched a LinkedIn page. We are also exploring Pinterest.

These advancements are due to VOR's Marketing/Communication Committee, which has made leveraging the significant potential of social media a Committee priority. "It only takes a few clicks from a number of our members to help increase our internet presence, resulting in a wider circulation of our message, greater awareness of our shared mission, more advocacy, and increased members and donations," wrote Hugo and Cristy Dwyer, committee co-chairs. [Committee members are Hugo and Cristy Dwyer, Jill Barker, Jill Goldstein and Larry Stopa].

To encourage more social media use to VOR's benefit, VOR sent out a series of "101s" on social media favorites – Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Going forward, VOR will continue to tweet, post and send more information to members and others relating to news, action alerts, and VOR happenings.

So, please follow, friend, forward, and yes, even mail, VOR's information to your family and friends network. VOR's future will be stronger for your efforts.



## Get Connected with VOR!



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[info@vor.net](mailto:info@vor.net)



## Happy Shopping! VOR and Celebrating Home Partner to Benefit VOR

VOR is pleased to announce a partnership with *Celebrating Home*, a company which sells candles, candle holders, gift wrap, cookbooks, and more. Celebrating Home products make great gifts for family and friends and – here's the best part - **VOR will receive 50% of all sales as part of the Celebrating Home – Bringing Families Together fundraiser!**

To get started, visit the VOR/Celebrating Home website at <http://www.celebratinghome.com/Fundraiser/VOR2012/OnlineFundraiserHome.aspx> and register as a participant (lower left on page).

Once you register, you will have access to the VOR shopping page. From there, start shopping and please share with friends! **50% of all sale proceeds made from the VOR shopping link will go directly to VOR.**

The Holidays are right around the corner. Start shopping today and benefit VOR at the same time. **THANK YOU!**

## Does VOR Have Your Current e-mail Address?

If you do not receive the VOR Weekly News Update publication, then chances are we do not have your current e-mail address.

Help us update our email records by emailing your current email address

to [info@vor.net](mailto:info@vor.net).

**Thank you!**

**VOR CONTACT  
INFORMATION:**

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**@VOR\_NET** (Twitter)

**Toll free**  
877-399-4867

**www.vor.net**

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**Legal Briefs, continued from page 5**

**Pennsylvania: Families Appeal Settlement; Present Oral Argument Before 3rd Circuit of Appeals**

In 2011, family intervenors in Benjamin v. PA Department of Public Welfare appealed a District Court order approving a settlement between the State and P&A. The intervenors challenged class certification and the fairness of the settlement in light of significant opposition by residents of state ICFs/MR. The class includes all residents of state-operated ICFs/MR who “do not oppose” community placement, without regard to individual capacity to object to community placement.

On October 3, 2012, attorney Carl Solano argued on behalf of intervenors before the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, seeking an order to overturn the lower court’s approval of class certification and settlement. If successful, the lower court will be directed to proceed with the lawsuit only on behalf of the five named plaintiffs who seek community placement and not a class of more than 1,000, many of whom require ICF/MR care.

**Membership/Contribution Form: VOR, 836 S. Arlington Heights Rd., #351, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007; by fax 605-271-0445 or donate online @ <http://www.vor.net/online-membership-form>**

**Thank you for your dues  
and year-end contributions!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**My contact information has changed.**

**Membership Categories**  
Individual --- \$40  
Family/Parents' Association --- \$200  
Professional Assoc./Corp. --- \$250

**I would like to make an additional year-end gift to support future efforts of VOR. An additional gift is enclosed for:**  
\_\_\_ \$5,000 \_\_\_ \$1,000 \_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_ \$250 \_\_\_ \$100 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Checks made payable to VOR, or by credit card:

**Visa**  **MasterCard**  **Discover**

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ CVC (3-digit security) Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount to charge: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If the minimum dues requirement poses a financial difficulty, please contact our office in confidence (877-399-4867). It is in our best interest that you receive VOR's information, so please call if \$40 per year poses a financial hardship.

**This Holiday season, I would like  
to gift a VOR membership to:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to make a gift in  
honor/memory of:**

This gift is in \_\_\_ In Memory \_\_\_ In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Send Acknowledgment to: Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_



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*A national, non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer association  
speaking out for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

Thank you to all of the individuals who requested or gave donations in honor of someone special, or in memory of a loved one. For those who have lost someone special, please accept our deepest sympathy.

### **IN MEMORY**

Diane Aerts  
Dolores A. Cannon  
Doug Carr  
Mary Elizabeth Johnson "Beth" Colon  
Paul Heckt  
James H. Jones  
Linda Lotzi's Mother and Father

Marc Maden  
Jerry Moyer  
Don Neary  
Marty Pratt  
Robin Sims  
William (Bill) Spare  
Pete Wiggins

### **IN HONOR**

Theresa DeBell Tamie Hopp  
Donna McIntyre Mary Ann and Bob McKuin James Muto