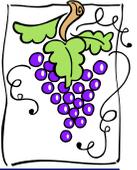


The GRApevine



The Georgia Rehabilitation Association Newsletter

Winter Edition, November 2018



Hello fellow GRA Members:

Wow – hard to believe we are wrapping up 2018!!! Thank you so much for allowing me to serve as your 2018 GRA President. It has been an honor!!

I would like to thank Jeff Allen and his wonderful conference committee for hosting an awesome conference in Savannah! I appreciate all the hard work from each of you! We have not received the evaluations as of yet, but at the conference I only heard excellent comments.

I would also like to thank Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency for their support! We truly appreciate their partnership and look forward to many years to come.

I think this year we may have set a record on new members! We had 38 new members as of the conference this year. This was one of my goals for this year. Thank you so much to Jason Williams, Chairperson Membership Committee and Ellen Longino, Administrative Assistant for GRA for all their hard work on this committee. We have had many challenges with NRA changes software and Ellen has stayed on top of this for GRA.

Another goal for this year was to have more special projects and GRA has sponsored several special projects this year. I would love to see us sponsor even more in 2019! Please get behind Dana Skelton-Sanders and her board and let's make it a record year!

Remember our motto "GRA is a membership organization who mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities through education and advocacy".

As we go into 2019, if you are interested in serving either on the board or the conference committee, please contact incoming President, Dana Skelton-Sanders (Dana.Skelton-Sanders@gvs.ga.gov) or incoming Vice President, Keita Alston (Keita.Alston@gvs.ga.gov).

Cheryl Braswell
2018 GRA President

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GRA Vice President-elect Keita Alston with the National Rehabilitation Association Chapter of the Year plaque awarded to GRA. The award was given at the 2018 NRA Annual Conference held Oct. 11-14 in Oklahoma City, OK. The award is based on 2017 with GRA Past Presidents Lauri Tuten and Jennifer Howell.

Division Reports

GAMRC: Georgia Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns

Katavia Sloan attended the National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns Conference on July 11-14, 2018 in Las Vegas, NV. A picture from the conference is located in the GReAt Pictures section on Page 12. Katavia is located directly underneath the first palm tree on the left.

GARL: Georgia Association of Rehabilitation Leadership

Thanks to everyone who donated and purchased items in the auction. Though we had a different format this year, it was still a success with over \$600 raised. The funds we raise from the auction go directly to supporting rehabilitation professionals in continuing education and training.

Congratulations to Debbie Howard and Dana Skelton–Sanders, the GARL Continuing Education Grant Recipients, who were each awarded \$250 to support them in completion of education and training as rehabilitation professionals and to Kevin Harris, the recipient of the J. Ellis Moran Leadership Award.

GRCEA: Georgia Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association

Our Annual Pre Conference Ethics training was a huge success this year. We had five individuals to aid in providing the training when our speaker could not attend the conference. We had over 120 individuals attend this training this year, which is our main funding source for our division. We profited over \$4800 for this year's training.

We provided a discount to our GRCEA members this year for our pre conference ethics training if they supported a local – rural school in Savannah with school supplies. We donated the school supplies to the school after the conference in Savannah this year in August. Our division aided GRA this year in providing a break for refreshments during our pre conference event to aid in meeting the cost for the hotel catering minimum for the conference.

The GRCEA division, alongside with another sponsor, provided lunch for the New Member Welcome for new NRA/GRA members. We work each year with the Awards Committee of GRA and provide great recommendations for awards and sponsored two of the GA awards and a scholarship for a post-secondary school student in the Georgia VR program.

Chapter Reports

EAST—Carmella Jennings

2018 East Chapter Campaign for Caring

East Chapter Special Project Committee Members will begin preparing to work on the “2018 Campaign for Caring”. The Special Projects Committee will kick off Phase One with the “Wounded Warrior Card Writing Campaign”. Committee members will collect get well cards, letters and drawings for our Recovering Wounded Warriors at Fort Gordon and Recovering Service Members at the Charlie Norwood Veterans Administration Medical Center. All cards will be given to veterans on Veterans Day. Phase Two will consist of the “Campaign for Caring Food Drive”. Members will collect donated nonperishable food items for the Golden Harvest Food Bank in Augusta. Golden Harvest Food Bank has been helping feed individuals and families in and around the CSRA since 1982.

2018 Exceptional Adult Georgian in Literacy Education (EAGLE) Competition

East Chapter President Carmella Jennings will be a judge in the EAGLE competition this year on October 24. EAGLE is the first statewide program in the nation that recognizes and rewards excellence among students enrolled in adult education programs. This student recognition program is designed to create greater awareness of educational opportunities that are available in local communities across the state and to foster greater involvement in lifelong learning pursuits. The state winner will carry the title of Technical College System of Georgia EAGLE Winner and serve as the state’s ambassador for adult education. The winner exemplifies excellence and a commitment to the mission of the Technical College System of Georgia’s Office of Adult Education and makes many public appearances throughout the year, including the TCSG Leadership Conference and the TCSG Board Meeting, to name a few. The state winner will also receive a full two-year scholarship to the technical college of their choice.

NORTHEAST—Keita Alston

Northeast Chapter partnered with Gwinnett Technical College in Alpharetta for the Community Resource Fair on Sept. 13 from 10 AM – 2 PM. About 15-20 vendors were in attendance.

Members from the Cumming VR office had a self-defense training on Sept. 10 done by the Forsyth Co. Sheriff’s Office.

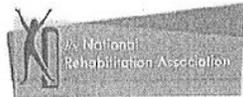
Officers for 2019 are President: Joyesha Blake, Vice President: Dana Skelton-Sanders & Secretary/Treasurer: Keita Alston. We’re looking forward to have an active 2019!

WEST—Jason Williams

Our local Chapter purchased an advertisement and donated door prizes for the Training Conference this year. We look forward to sponsoring a training event this fall for local members.

Membership Committee News

Thanks to all the new members (over 25) who attended the New Member Welcome at the Training Conference and to the Speakers at the event for the great information you provided as fellow members. A special thank you goes to GRCEA and Michael Dorsey for their sponsorship of the New Member Welcome & to Ellen Longino for her tireless work to reconcile and keep the GRA Membership List accurate and up to date. Congratulations to Keita Alston, the recipient of the Janice Black Service Award.



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Alexandria, VA 22315
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Why Membership in NRA?

1. **CONNECT** with affordable and varied opportunities to earn Continuing Education Credits in Rehabilitation
2. **NETWORK** with a variety of rehabilitation professionals
3. **DEVELOP** leadership skills through service on boards and committees
4. **ADVOCATE** to preserve the profession and the rights of individuals with disabilities
5. **ACCESS** to professional publications: Journal of Rehabilitation and Contemporary Rehab
6. **SAVE** on discounted health and professional liability insurance
7. **ENHANCE** your membership by joining divisions

Historical Context

The National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) is the oldest professional member organization in the United States that advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities while also promoting high quality, ethical, and collaborative practice across the rehabilitation profession.

The NRA, comprised of counselors, educators, researchers, and diverse agents of community integration, is committed to continuously impacting and improving upon the multifaceted conditions, across our society, necessary to enhance quality of life of individuals with disabilities, their families, and our communities.

Mission

To provide exemplary leadership through social advocacy and legislation, advance cultural awareness and competence across communities, promote excellence in research and practice, and support professionals engaged in the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Vision and Values

The NRA is committed to advancing the professional practices of rehabilitation driven by culturally-competent, ethical, evidence-based and accountable practices so that individuals with disabilities would be regarded and valued as full members of our society. These individuals deserve equal access, expression of choice, and security of freedom within our communities when engaging in all aspects of life.

**Please visit the website and click "Join Us"
to become a member today!**

2018 GRA Conference Highlights

2018 Eddie Carter Legacy Award Winner

Ken Bennett

At the awards ceremony at the 2018 GRA Conference, I was unable to tell you about my choice for the Eddie Carter Legacy award. I apologize for getting so emotional. I should have written it down so someone could have read it for me. I appreciate the opportunity to publish this in the newsletter.

When I came to Vocational Rehabilitation in Sept. 1997, one of the first persons I met was Ken Bennett. In fact, he was on the interview team that hired me as a program assistant reporting directly to him. He was the HRD/CQI Specialist for Region 11. Immediately when I began at V.R., Ken encouraged me to join NRA/GRA and I did in November of 1997. He told me how important it was for me to learn all I could to assist with my job and VR clients, and the networking opportunities with GRA. Ken has been beside me every step of the way in my career with Vocational Rehabilitation and my positions within GRA. He always told me, "You can do anything you put your mind to". I would have never had the courage to run for President of GRA without his encouragement, guidance, and support!! He was a great boss and mentor, as well as one of my best friends! I know I can always count on him!!

Please help me congratulate Ken Bennett as the 2018 Eddie Carter Legacy Award winner.

Thanks, Cheryl Braswell

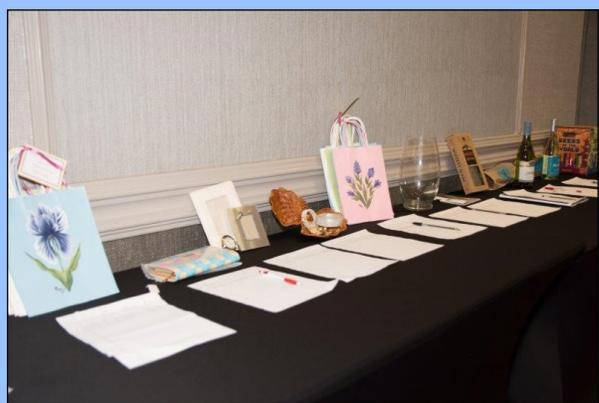
GReAt Pictures



2018 GRA Conference
Aug. 7-10, 2018
Savannah Marriott Riverfront









Nancy Crowder Scholarship Winner Trey Quinn (third from left in blue jacket) with Counselor Caitlin Johnson and Team Lead LaToya Bivins.



GARL Continuing Education Grant Winners Debbie Howard and Dana Skelton-Sanders.



2018 Legislative Service Award Winner Tom McCall.



Employer of the Year Winner Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Helen, GA.



Janice Black Spirit Award Winner Keita Alston.



GARL J. Ellies Moran Outstanding Leadership Award Winner Kevin Harris.



GRA Client Achievement Award Winner Nicholas Welch (second from right) with his counselor Debbie Howard (second from left).



ARTS Boss of the Year Award Winner Beth Williams, Service Area Manager for Region 2.



President's Awards Winner Ruby Kaspers.



President's Awards Winners Nicky Lamb, Janie Fuller and Cheryl Meadows-Ussery.



The Eddie Carter Legacy Award Winner Ken Bennett.



GRA Chapter of the Year: South Chapter.



GRA Division of the Year: GAMRC.

More pictures are available by clicking [here](#).
2018 GRA Conference training sessions are available by clicking [here](#).

GRCEA Gives Back to Transition Students

GRA Donates School Supplies

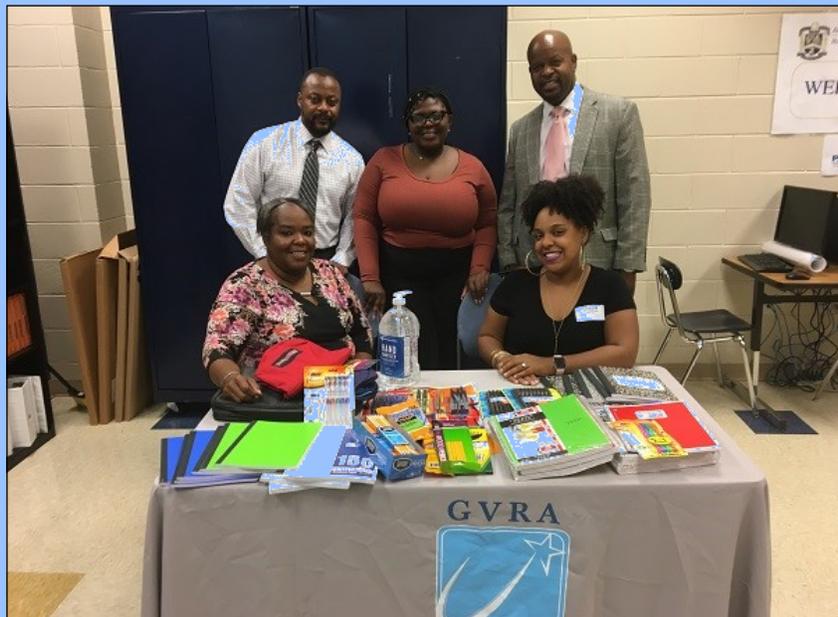
By Team Lead Frenchye Mike

Alfred Ely Beach High School is one of the oldest public high schools in Savannah, Georgia. In 1867, the Beach Institute was established by the Freedmen's Bureau with funds donated by Alfred Ely Beach, editor of Scientific American. By 1874, the institute was appropriated by the Savannah-Chatham Board of Education for the purpose of providing free education to Savannah's African American citizenry.

In 2017 Alfred Ely Beach High School celebrated its 150th Anniversary. The longstanding history of BHS still resonates with its students today; presently, Beach High School is open to residents of Chatham County grades 9-12.

As a means to ensure all students are prepared for learning and equipped with the tools for success, the Georgia Rehabilitation Association (GRA) found it necessary to donate school supplies this year.

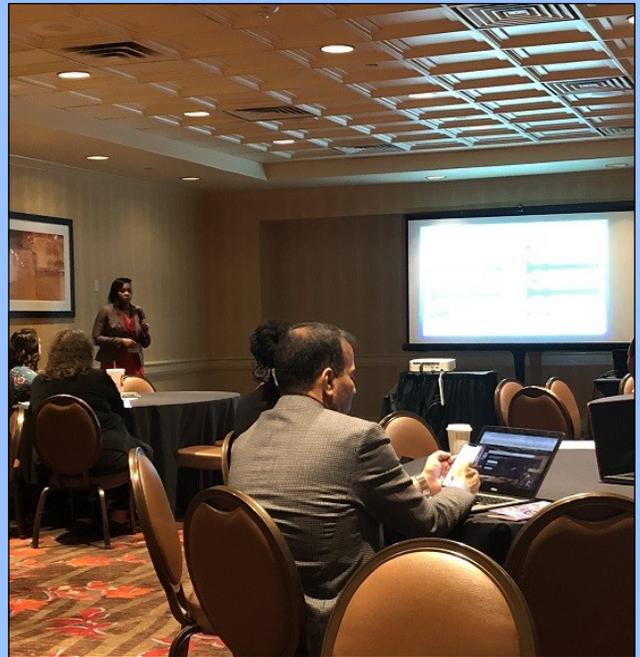
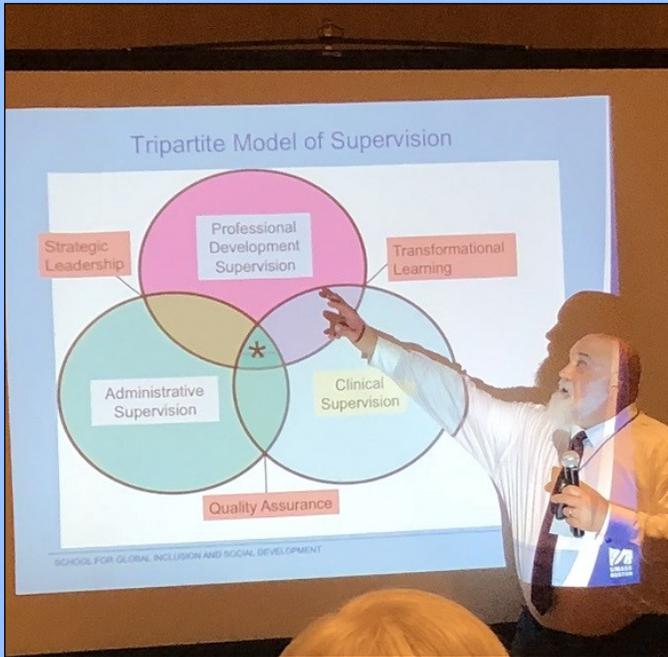
News article was published in the GVRA Newsletter Edition, Aug. 2018.

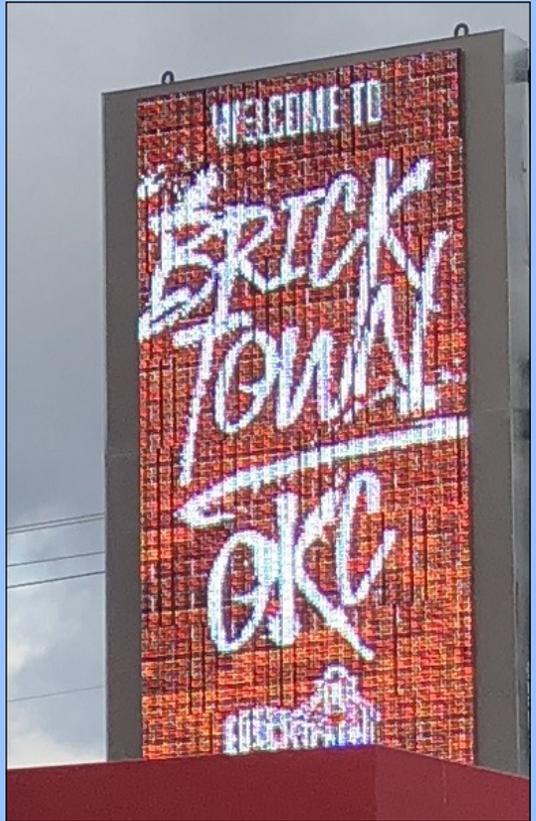


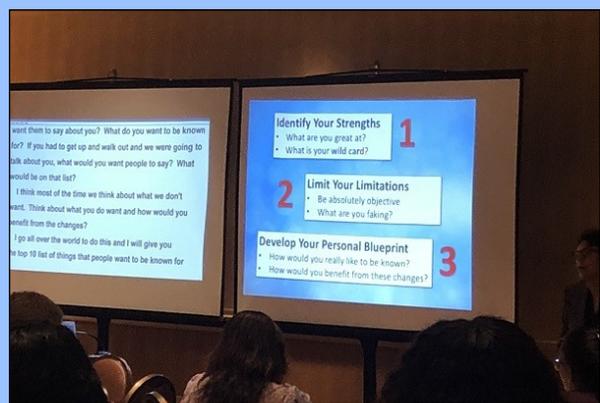
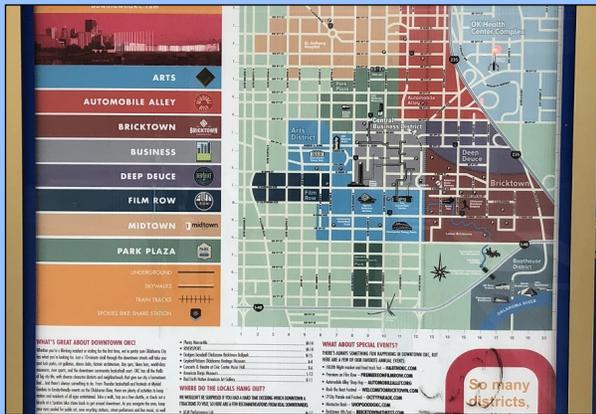
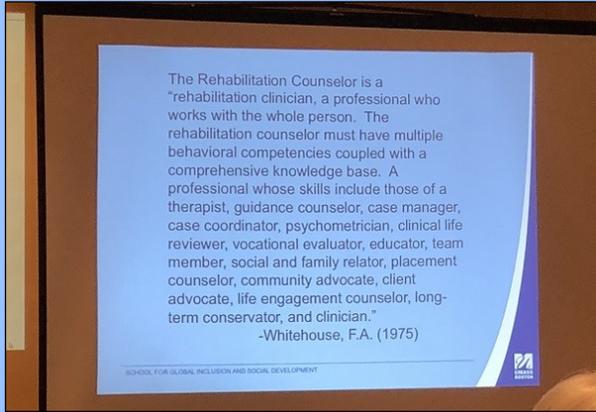
Pictured above (seated from left) GVRA Career Specialist for Transition Jacqueline Lasseter, GVRA Team Lead Frenchye Mike, (standing from left) School Counselor Dr. Douglas Simmons, Parent Involvement Facilitator Shaniqua McIver, and Assistant Principal Marlon Worrill.

2018 NRA Annual Conference

October 11-14, Oklahoma City, OK







More pictures are available by clicking [here](#).

Northeast Chapter: Community Resource Fair Sept. 13, Gwinnett Tech, Alpharetta-North Fulton Campus



The Community Resource Fair showcased products and services from vendors to the local community while connecting with students, parents and potential clients on a one-on-one basis. It was also an opportunity to connect with Gwinnett Tech's staff and learn more about the college.

2018 NAMRC Annual Training Conference

July 11-14

Las Vegas, NV



**GEORGIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
2018 BOARD MEMBERS, CHAPTER & DIVISION PRESIDENTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

* denotes Executive Committee Members

President

* Cheryl Braswell
Cheryl.braswell@gvs.ga.gov

President Elect

* Dana Skelton-Sanders
Dana.skelton-sanders@gvs.ga.gov
danapssanders@gmail.com

Past President

* Jennifer Howell
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Vice President

* Jeff Allen
jeff.allen@gvs.ga.gov

Vice President Elect

* Keita Alston
Keita.alston@gvs.ga.gov

Secretary

* Nicky Lamb
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Treasurer

* LaDetria King
ladetriaking@yahoo.com

Board Members

Class of 2018

Michael Dorsey
mcdorsey@live.com

* Ruby Kaspers
Ruby.kaspers@gvs.ga.gov

Lutrell Thomas
Lutrell.thomas@gvs.ga.gov

Cecelia Walker
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Class of 2019

* Janie Fuller
jdpfuller@yahoo.com

Carmella Jennings
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Frank Krause
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* Cheryl Meadows Ussery
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Class of 2020

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Kathryn Edger
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Raj Pagadala
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Division Presidents

GAMRC
Katavia Sloan
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GARL
Jason Williams
Jason.williams@gvs.ga.gov

ARTS
Nicky Lamb

GRCEA
Shirley Robinson
shirley.robinson@gvs.ga.gov

**GEORGIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
2018 BOARD MEMBERS, CHAPTER & DIVISION PRESIDENTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Local Chapter Presidents

East

Carmella Jennings

Carmella.Jennings@gvs.ga.gov

Highlands

Ashia Walker

awalker@ging.org

Metro

Lutrell Thomas

Northeast

Keita Alston

RWSIR

Cheryl Leidy

Cheryl.leidy@gvs.ga.gov

South

Nicky Lamb

West

Jason Williams

Committee Chairs

Accessibility Ad-hoc

Michell Temple

mtemple@gsu.edu

Administrative Policy

VACANT

Archives

Ruby Kaspers

Awards & Scholarships

Lauri Tuten

Lauri.tuten@gvs.ga.gov

Building & Modifications

Raj Pagadala

Certification (CEUs)

Cece Walker

Conference

Jeff Allen

Credentials

Shana Shelby

Shana.shelby@gvs.ga.gov

Education & Advocacy

Janie Fuller & Cheryl Meadows Ussery

Finance

LaDetria King

Finance Review

Pam Eaton

Fundraising

Ashia Walker

Hospitality

Nicky Lamb

Marketing/PR

Kathryn Edger

Membership

Jason Williams

Newsletter

Keita Alston & Ruby Kaspers

Nominations

VACANT

Remembrance

LaDetria King

Resolutions

Tom Wilson

**GEORGIA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION
2018 BOARD MEMBERS, CHAPTER & DIVISION PRESIDENTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Special Projects

Gigi Taylor

gigibushtaylor@yahoo.com

Strategic Planning

Dana Skelton-Sanders

Training Ad-hoc

Mary Ellen Mendiratta

Maryellen.mendiratta@gvs.ga.gov

Website

Keita Alston & Ruby Kaspers

Ex-Officio

(GRA members who hold office within
NRA or SERNRA or any division thereof)

GRA Rep to SERNRA

Dana Skelton-Sanders

RCEA Board

Dru Fentem

dmfentem@gmail.com

Southeast Region ARTS Board

Cheryl Braswell

Janie Fuller

Ellen Longino

ellen697@yahoo.com

Patsy Morris

NADBS Board

Paige Tidwell—Southeast Rep.

VEWAA Board

Paige Tidwell

SER RCEA Board

Dana Skelton-Sanders

NAMRC Board Member

Katavia Sloan & Michell Temple

GRA Contact Administrative Assistant

Ellen Longino

2018 GRA CALENDAR

MAR 2018	<p>Mar. 8: Financial Review 9:30 AM; Executive Board 11 AM; Conference 2 PM Mar. 9: GRA Board Meeting 9:30 AM-12 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Location: Macon VR Office</i></p> <p>Mar. 25-27: 2018 Rehabilitation Association Annual Governmental Affairs Summit @ Hilton, Old Town Alexandria, VA</p>
APR 2018	<p>Apr. 20: Required QUARTERLY FINANCIAL INFORMATION due to Administrative Assistant from all Chapters and Divisions</p>
MAY 2018	<p>May 17: Financial Review 9:30 AM; Executive Board 11 AM; Conference 2 PM May 18: GRA Board Meeting 9:30 AM-12 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Location: Macon VR Office</i></p>
JUL 2018	<p>Jul. 12: Financial Review 9:30 AM; Executive Board 11 AM; Conference 2 PM Jul. 13: GRA Board Meeting 9:30 AM-12 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Location: Macon VR Office</i></p> <p>Jul. 20: Required QUARTERLY FINANCIAL INFORMATION due to Administrative Assistant from all Chapters and Divisions</p>
AUG 2018	<p style="text-align: center;">Aug. 7-10: GRA Annual State Training Conference Savannah Marriott Riverfront</p>
SEPT 2018	<p style="text-align: center;">2018 SERNRA Annual Conference, Oklahoma City, OK September 25-28, 2018 at the IP - Biloxi, MS</p>
OCT 2018	<p>Oct. 11: Financial Review 9:30 AM; Executive Board 11 AM; Conference 2 PM Oct. 12: GRA Board Meeting 9:30 AM-12 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Location: Macon VR Office</i></p> <p>Oct. 22: Required QUARTERLY FINANCIAL INFORMATION due to Administrative Assistant from all Chapters and Divisions</p> <p>2018 NRA Annual Conference, Oklahoma City, OK</p>
DEC 2018	<p>Dec. 5: Financial Review 1 PM; Executive Board 2:30 PM Dec. 6: Leadership Training 10 AM—4 PM Dec. 7: GRA Board Meeting 9:30 AM-12 PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Location: Warm Springs</i></p>