

# Clearing the AIR

## Vermont AIRS 2010 Winter Newsletter



## Doing more with less...

As economic times continue to be a challenge not only in Vermont, but nation wide, it becomes increasingly difficult to effectively meet the needs of Vermonters. We have chosen "Doing More With Less" as this years 2010 Annual Conference Theme. The Conference will be held on May 12, 2010.

We are happy to announce this year's keynote speaker as Hal Colston. In addition to being a guest on the Oprah Winfrey Show, Hal's commitment to collaboration and community is extremely evident in the work that he does. Hal's lifelong interests of social justice and entrepreneurship have been blended in his career path as the founding director of the Good News Garage which was created to address the need of transportation equity for people in poverty. Good News Garage has become a national model with locations in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Hal left GNG in March 2004 to create a new non-profit, NeighborKeepers, strengthening communities one family at a time, which launched in January of 2006 engaging families lacking resources to be in an intentional relationship of support with allies who befriend them. Circles of Support (three allies per family) are created based on trust and reciprocity where allies are in solidarity with the community member family to help them achieve their goals and break the isolation of poverty.

Hal has served on the board of several organizations: Vermont Development Credit Union, United Way of Chittenden County, Mobius, Center for Media and Democracy, and the New England Synod Council. Currently, Hal serves on the board of HowardCenter, Vermont Health Foundation, United Way's Community Investment Committee, Vermont AARP Executive Council, and the Visiting Nurse Association. Hal is a graduate of Leadership Champlain (2000) and Snelling Center's Vermont Leadership Institute (2004). In his sparetime Hal volunteers with Outreach for Earth Stewardship as a caregiver for injured.

Please keep your calendars open and be on the lookout for our registration information.



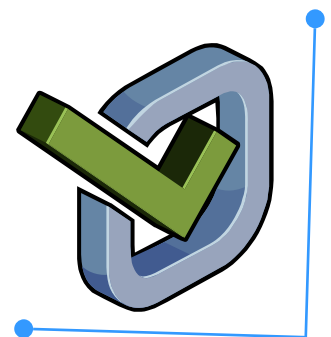
Save  
The  
Date!  
May 12,  
2010

## Membership has it's benefits!

Did you know your AIRS membership covers both state and national affiliate status? An agency, individual or organization can join both associations at a level that best meets their needs. Benefits of Vermont AIRS membership includes:

- ◆ Regular opportunities for networking in the field of I & R in Vermont
- ◆ Free access to AIRS I & R Toolkit
- ◆ Notices of workshops, training, conferences and meeting of interest
- ◆ Voting privileges
- ◆ Access to AIRS online training

Please contact Paula Gallo, VT AIRS membership director at [paula@cva.org](mailto:paula@cva.org).





## Vermont AIRS 2009 Conference In Review

This year's Vermont AIRS annual conference was held on May 12, 2009, at the Best Western Inn in Waterbury, VT. Despite economic difficulties at many agencies, 40 people attended this year's meeting. The board members of Vermont AIRS send out a hearty "thank you" to the 21 *repeat* attendees and the 12 *new* attendees who contributed to an exciting, informative day.

This year's keynote speaker, Charles M. Purinton, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel and Staff Chaplain with the Vermont Army National Guard, advised us on the impending deployment of the "Vermont Brigade" to Afghanistan at year's end. He touched many hearts with his reflections on the impact of military service for individual soldiers and their family members. Beth Bergeron, last-minute substitute for Mary Blow of the Vermont National Guard Family Readiness Program, impressed everyone with her engaging presentation on the military deployment cycle and services available for military families in Vermont.

Beth Diamond, Resource Specialist for Vermont 2-1-1, shared organizational tips and brought life to the varied aspects of managing resource data. Clinical social worker Donna Reback explained some simple yet innovative holistic methods to help regain a sense of calm and de-fuse the stress we all encounter in our work from time-to-time. Rounding out the day, Ericka Reil, Community Organizer and Disability Rights activist with the Vermont Center for Independent Living (and Co-Chair of the VT AIRS Board) provided valuable insights and suggestions on etiquette when working with people with disabilities.

We greatly appreciate the 33 folks who took the time to complete an evaluation at day's end, and can proudly report that the majority rated this year's conference as "excellent." Stay tuned for future information on our 2010 conference! - Melinda Meyer, VT AIRS Board Member

*"A nice balance of facts and spirit" (2009 Conference Attendee)*

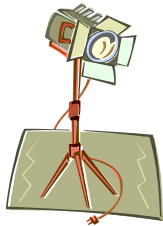
## Welcome new board member Rain Branbury

Rain Banbury is a new addition to the AIRS board. She works at the Burlington Community Justice Center for Parallel Justice, a national demonstration project that seeks to support victims of crime. She especially enjoys the opportunity to work with individuals and also to address system-wide issues that the project affords. A natural-born networker, I&R has always been a subject of great interest to Rain, who is especially interested in how to share the knowledge of various programs and resources available to those in need. Since moving to Vermont she has become a serial-home-renovator, and is currently working on her third fixer-upper in Colchester, Vermont with her husband. Their efforts are supervised by a troop of cats and a border collie.

## Spotlight Your I&R Agency!

We would like to offer a regular column for Vermont AIRS members to share information about their respective agencies. Many of us know the "basics" about the various resources available. We are hoping that by allowing various statewide agencies a chance to share information via a newsletter, further collaboration between agencies and best practices can be shared.

The next Vermont AIRS newsletter is scheduled for June 2010. If you are interested in having your agency spotlighted, please contact Gayle DiMasi at [gayle@unitedwaysvt.org](mailto:gayle@unitedwaysvt.org) or (802)861-7845.



*Vermont Alliance of Information & Referral Services (Vermont AIRS) supports professionals who provide information & referral and information & assistance services through training, advocacy and networking.*

*Established August 17,2000, Vermont AIRS is a statewide association of public and private organizations and individuals committed to the provision of accessible quality information and referral services in the State of Vermont.*

*Vermont AIRS is the Vermont Affiliate of AIRS, The Alliance of Information and Referral Systems*

We're on the  
web!  
[www.vtairs.org](http://www.vtairs.org)

## We want your input!

Vermont AIRS newsletter is a quarterly publication. We are looking to our readers for suggestions of what you would like to see in the newsletter: topics, ideas, helpful hints-whatever is on your mind. Please contact Gayle DiMasi at (802)861-7845 or [gayle@unitedwaysvt.org](mailto:gayle@unitedwaysvt.org) for more information.

