



# PreVAIL

Valley Associates for Independent Living, Inc.

Promoting self-direction among people with disabilities and removing barriers to independence in the community.



## 2024 VAIL Invitational

The VAIL Harrisonburg Cardinals finished the 2023-24 season ranked 16th out of 57 in Division 3. With this ranking, the team had the opportunity to play in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) National Championship Tournament in Richmond, VA on April 12th-14th.

We hope to continue the same success for the 2024-25 season, and have resumed full practices every Thursday from 6-8 PM at Horizon's Edge Sports Campus. All individuals with a permanent lower limb disability are eligible to roster with the team and play in games, and we are always looking for new players! If interested, please reach out to team representative Tim Davis at [tim@govail.org](mailto:tim@govail.org).

### IN THIS ISSUE

Adaptive Recreation & Medicaid Works	1-2
Success Stories	3
Community Leaders Luncheon; Welcome	4
Great Community Give update; RAMP; Dominion Energy Share	5
Home Modifications; Congrats	6-7

“Basketball is a team sport and above all these are team players. One for all and all for one. Motto being team effort.”

-Community Member



# Outdoor Adaptive Recreation (OAR)

Outdoor Adaptive Recreation (OAR) is a VAIL program that focuses on getting individuals with mobility impairments in the Lexington/Rockbridge area outside and enjoying nature, exercising, and socializing together. While based out of Lexington, OAR is open to all individuals within our service area. Recent OAR events have included hiking the Chessie Trail in Lexington, pickleball, a trip to the Sea Quest Aquarium, and participation in Lake of the Woods Adaptive Watersports annual adaptive waterskiing event! If interested in participating in any future events or getting more information about the program, please reach out to program coordinator, Terri Bsullak at [tbsullak@yahoo.com](mailto:tbsullak@yahoo.com) or 540-460-3473.



VAIL OUTDOOR ADAPTIVE RECREATION PROGRAM'S

Trip to

## SEAQUEST AQUARIUM

## Medicaid Works

MEDICAID WORKS is a Virginia Medicaid program that supports individuals with disabilities who are employed or seeking employment. This plan allows participants to earn up to \$75,000 and save up to \$41,399 (as of January 1, 2021) while maintaining Medicaid coverage. The program enables higher income and resource retention, ensuring continued access to Medicaid benefits.

MEDICAID WORKS is available to current and new Medicaid enrollees who are blind or disabled, with a monthly income of no more than \$859 and resources not exceeding \$2,000 for singles or \$3,000 for couples.

Eligible individuals can enroll if they:

- Complete the MEDICAID WORKS Agreement
- Are employed or have proof of upcoming employment
- Are between 16 and 64 years old
- Establish a “Work Incentive” (WIN) account for earned income
- Submit a premium if required

To apply, contact your local Department of Social Services.

Virginia's Medicaid  
Work Incentive  
Program for  
Individuals with  
Disabilities

# SUCCESS

## STORIES

### Time Management

Michelle's journey through college was anything but conventional. Faced with the daily struggles of managing her ADHD symptoms and navigating the complexities of her learning disability, she refused to succumb to despair. Instead, she embarked on a journey of self-advocacy and working on time management.

With a persistent spirit and an avid thirst for knowledge, Michelle sought out every resource available. She worked closely with academic advisors and disability support services to develop personalized strategies for success. From utilizing specialized study techniques to researching employment, Michelle left no stone unturned in her quest for academic excellence.

Despite the challenges, Michelle thrived in college. Her passion for learning and innate curiosity propelled her to excel academically. She has worked with Valley Associates for Independent Living to build her resume, look for jobs, manage her time on tasks, and develop a routine. She got a position as a resident advisor at a college. Along the way, she discovered a knack for problem-solving and innovation, skills that would bring her grades up.

Today, Michelle is a successful college student, looking at her senior year of college and beginning her summer abroad. Through her work and advocacy with disability advocates, she continues to challenge stereotypes and champion inclusivity, ensuring that individuals with ADHD and learning disabilities have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

### Organization

VAIL began working with an individual in the beginning of October to assist her in finding strategies to keep her apartment clean and organized. When services began, the apartment was in complete disarray, and she felt as though she didn't even know where to start, so things just kept piling on.

After weekly meetings for 5 months, she has been able to decrease to meeting biweekly with VAIL staff because of the great progress she has made.

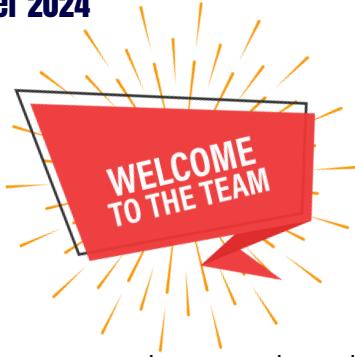
Not only have we been able to see her apartment consistently in significantly better condition than it was prior to services, but we have seen her standards on what levels of disorganization she can live with change. Continuing to have meetings on a regular basis has helped keep her accountable, but as time goes on, she is becoming more and more accountable to herself and her own increasing standards.

“

Your goals are the roadmaps that guide you and show you what is possible for your life.

Les Brown

”



Shawn Abercrombie has joined the VAIL team as a Community Living Specialist. He will primarily be providing consumer-directed service facilitation through the Medicaid Waivers.



Shawn recently completed his Associate's degree in Arts and Science at Blue Ridge Community College. Initially, he was pursuing a degree in nursing but after discussions with his advisor, he researched the possibility of a degree in social work, took a few classes, and found he really enjoyed it. He plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in social work. At VAIL, he is looking forward to making connections and friendships as well as serving individuals. When he is not at work, he enjoys being in nature either fishing or hunting as well as playing video games and hanging out with friends and family. Shawn has a two year old dog named Tito that he rescued from Texas.

## JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL VAIL COMMUNITY LEADERS LUNCHEON



We are delighted to invite you to the upcoming Community Leaders Luncheon hosted by Valley Associates for Independent Living. This special event will take place on Thursday, September 19, 2024, from 11:45 AM to 1:00 PM at First Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, VA.

This luncheon is an opportunity to honor the outstanding contributions of our community leaders, share delightful cuisine, and engage in meaningful conversations about our community's future. We look forward to celebrating our shared achievements and strengthening our bonds. Reservations are required through Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-vail-community-leaders-luncheon-tickets-933432169747?aff=oddtdtcreator> or contact Inger Knicely at 540-433-6513 or [inger@govail.org](mailto:inger@govail.org).

Date: September 19, 2024

Time: 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

Venue: First Presbyterian Church  
17 Court Square,  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
Dress Business Casual



The Great Community Give Fundraiser was held on April 17th, 2024. This one-day, sunrise to sunset charitable giving day took place from 6:30 AM to 8:00 PM. All funds donated to VAIL during this event went to the VAIL Harrisonburg Cardinals Wheelchair Basketball team. Thank you to the Community Foundation for putting this event together, VAIL raised \$6,234! We cannot thank each one of you enough for all you do and all of your support!

Valley Associates for Independent Living (VAIL) is very excited to have partnered with the Department of Aging & Rehabilitation Services (DARS) again for the Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP). This past year there were fourteen youths enrolled in RAMP at VAIL. We continue to be impressed by the youths' dedication to their future and their strong drive to succeed. We are delighted to see youth interacting with advocacy activities. We continue to look for additional mentors of any age willing to make a year commitment.

Please contact Tessa Atkins at [tessa@govail.org](mailto:tessa@govail.org) for more information.



Valley Associates for Independent Living, Inc. (VAIL) has an EnergyShare program in collaboration with Dominion Energy. This program provides for a \$500 credit to be applied to your energy bill (gas, electric, or propane) for individuals who meet the criteria. If you are interested in applying, please contact the VAIL staff person that you work with regularly or Andrea King at [andrea@govail.org](mailto:andrea@govail.org). You must reside in Harrisonburg, Lexington, Buena Vista, Waynesboro or Staunton City or the counties of Rockingham, Augusta, or Rockbridge.

- Must include a recent bill from your energy provider and complete an application
- Must not have received energy share assistance in the past 12 months
- Must have an open goal with VAIL that you are working on with VAIL staff
- Cannot have your payment set up for automatic payments
- Cannot reside in subsidized housing or receive a housing voucher

This is a first come first serve program. We make no guarantee that payment will be made until after the whole process is complete. It is imperative that you continue making payments on your account. Please reach out with questions.

# Virginia Housing Modification Programs

## OWNER-OCCUPIED MODIFICATION VIRGINIA

Owner-Occupied Modification Virginia Housing's Owner-Occupied Modification Grant makes funding available to assist with modifications to homes to make them accessible to elderly individual owners with disabilities. The modification must directly address barriers created by the disability. These funds are available to persons earning 80% or less of the area median income, based on HUD guidelines. These income limits are available here: <https://www.virginiahousing.com/.../rental./income-limits>.

This program is targeted at homeowners aged 65 and older. Applicants under 65 must provide written documentation of the need for the accessibility improvement, such as a doctor's letter, insurance documentation, or social security documentation showing the nature of the disability. Applicants must provide documentation of their ownership of the property.

Please contact Taylor Hinkle at [taylor@govail.org!](mailto:taylor@govail.org)



## Granting FREEDOM

Virginia's Military Home Modification Grant Program

Granting Freedom is a grant program for home modifications for disabled veterans and service members who sustained a line-of-duty injury resulting in a service-connected disability.

Funds of up to \$8,000 can be used to make a home wheelchair accessible, to install grab bars in a bathroom, or to make other modifications that help eligible recipients become independent. Funding to pay for modifications to houses and apartments is available on a first come-first served basis.



## RENTAL UNIT ACCESSIBILITY MODIFICATION GRANT

Landlords are required by fair housing laws to allow modifications to an apartment or rental house to make it barrier-free to the tenant. However, tenants usually bear the cost of these modifications, which can be substantial. Fortunately, help is available through grants offered by Virginia Housing.

Individuals with a disability who rent a home and who earn 80% or less of the area median income may be eligible for grant assistance up to \$8,000.

Applications for all of these programs must be submitted by a Virginia Housing-accepted agent. VAIL is a registered agent in Planning District 6.

**CONGRATULATIONS**



Please help us congratulate Monique Ware for completing her degree. She graduated from Blue Ridge Community College this spring to become a registered nurse (RN). She will be working in the operating room at Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital.

Please help us congratulate Jack Fielding for completing his internship with VAIL. He graduated from James Madison University this spring with his bachelor's degree in social work. In the fall of 2024, he plans to attend George Mason University for his Master's Degree.



It is with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of our esteemed colleague, Svetlana Adamson, who has taken an exciting new opportunity at Blue Ridge Christian School. Svetlana has been an integral part of our team for the past ten years, bringing dedication, expertise, and a positive spirit that has inspired us all.

## Schedule of Events

July 4th & 5th	VAIL Closed - Fourth of July
Sept. 2nd	VAIL Closed - Labor Day
Sept. 19th	Community Leaders Luncheon
Sept. 24th	VAIL Board of Directors meeting

## Ways to Support VAIL

SCAN THE QR CODES BELOW TO DONATE VIA  
PAYPAL OR VENMO!



**PAYPAL**



**venmo**



Follow the VAIL Harrisonburg Cardinals on Facebook!  
<https://www.facebook.com/HburgCardinals>

Find us on 

<https://www.facebook.com/ValleyAssociatesforIndependentLiving/>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/govail>



<https://www.instagram.com/valleyassociatesil/>

## Contact VAIL at:

3210 Peoples Drive Suite 220  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

(540) 433-6513	Voice
1-888-242-VAIL	Toll-free
711	VA Relay
(540) 433-6313	Fax
vail@govail.org	Email
www.govail.org	Website