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The official newsletter of the
National Rehabilitation Association



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Hello All,

March was a busy month in and for the Association. We held a successful Disability Employment Summit over the dates of March 13-14, 2024. The theme was "Ever Up, & Onward." Attendee post-Summit evaluations results (70%+ response rate) indicated that the material presented was of high quality and beneficial. The

most notable area for improvement is not surprising- feedback that members want a return to an in-person Summit. While the Association is not yet in a fiscal position for in-person conferences, I am working with President-Elect, Karren Cresap, on strategies in hopes of resuming in person conferences in 2025. The summit opened with welcome comments from me, followed by an opening Keynote address on the topic of thinking ever up and onward as a rehabilitation profession by CSAVR CEO Steve Wooderson. Thereafter, we had training sessions on innovative practices in rehabilitation for employment success, advocacy & legislative updates on matters important to the profession, inclusive apprenticeships, and psychological trauma among college students with a history of childhood trauma. The Summit closed with a closing Keynote address by Kyle Walker, a member of the NRA Executive Committee and Director of the Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute at the University of Wisconsin Stout.

April thus far has been no less busy. The work of transition to the new management firm, Seamless Events, continues and are progressing nicely. Seamless Events is noting through the transition ways we can streamline and automate much of the work that has been being done manually which will benefit us greatly. I am greatly encouraged by what is going to be in place when the transition is completed (estimated to be early July 2024). I continue to be both grateful and impressed with the relationship between Seamless Events and the NRA ad hoc management committee. Members of this committee are Past-President Paul Barnes, Kim Nortz, Janet Fiore, and Kyle Walker. I realize in writing this that members are not yet seeing much of the work and changes that are taking place. This is because most of this is foundational progress that will not be apparent to membership yet until the “behind the scenes” efforts conclude, and we are able to launch them. As President, and on behalf of the ad hoc committee and Seamless Events, we ask for your patience as things get things ready and fully functional before putting them in place. I assure you that when they launch you will be pleased with the results.

Any member who has questions or would like further information on anything happening in the Association at this time should feel free to contact me. I always look forward to talking with members. I can be contacted at president@nationalrehab.org.

Respectfully Submitted,
Russ Thelin
2024 NRA President
April 18, 2024

Update from the Ad hoc Management Transition Committee, April 2024

As many of you are aware, the National Rehabilitation Association Board of Directors researched management options throughout 2023 and by the end of the year voted to move ahead with Seamless Events as our management company. Their services are designed for organizations of our size and to further our mission. We officially signed the contract to work with them, as of January 8, 2024. This immediately eliminated the role of Executive Director or Chief Administrative Officer, which we have used for many years. It also includes the goal of finding systems and services that better meet the needs of our members and partners. This report is to provide you with transparency of what has been accomplished and the timeline for full implementation of the changes Seamless has committed to provide. This committee meets with Seamless on a regular basis to obtain needed updates and provide support.

For those who have been paying attention by jumping on the website, renewing membership, or registering for events will note that we are still not fully functional yet. As has been said, “Rome was not built in a day” and we know what happened to that civilization. Team Seamless, as I like to call them, is moving forward in a strategic manner to get us where we need to be and to not have more of the same thing we have had for many years. I can speak to this, as I have worked closely with our past presidents and read as much historical data on the association as I can get my hands on. This is not a 5-year, 10 year, or even 15-year problem, this has been going on for closer to forty years in one form or another. So, we ask that you bear with us as we clean up messes and create real solutions that are sustainable.

I will briefly mention the key areas that are being worked on at present and refer to some timelines to watch for significant progress that will be visible to you as members.

1. Seamless has dug into our email system and had to answer many requests, as well as resolve unfinished business. We are pleased to report that complaints are down, and efficiency is up. Specifically, we have our Journal of Rehabilitation (JOR) that has subscribers all around the world. We were receiving requests for missing journal issues on a weekly basis, and we have already seen a sharp decline in these to the point that they are nearly eliminated. Seamless has identified the weaknesses that lead to this and have ideas to avoid this issue entirely.
2. Seamless is working with our Systems Administrator to identify exactly what is being done behind the scenes that leads to problems in the way we do business. They are designing customized systems that will be automated and user friendly, thus eliminating redundancy and frustration.

3. Many of us know our good friend Leon Russ, who was our typesetter for the JOR for over 25 years. He had to step away from this role at the end of 2023, which left our valued publication without the final steps to get it published. This is why you have not seen a JOR since October 2023. Seamless accepted our challenge to take this on and will have us back on track with a reprint of the 3rd issue of 2023 (due to errors), the 4th issue of 2023, and the 1st issue of 2024 in the next few weeks. They have identified weaknesses in our processes and will implement systems to move us into a place where it will not only be released on time, but we will increase subscriptions through marketing efforts.
4. In the past few days, a contract was signed with a membership platform we researched and voted on last year. Your Membership is a membership and website platform that is designed to meet our needs and move us forward. This is done by automating much of the labor-intensive processes we now have in place. It will also provide us with reports that show us growth, areas of need, and real data to help with recruiting efforts. These reports will be provided to Chapters and Divisions, monthly. Seamless had us hold off signing the original proposal, as they have identified needs that would not have been met, as well as renegotiating fees for service that have saved us valuable financial resources. You will probably not see much of what is being done until the face of these systems are rolled out mid-July 2024, but rest assured significant changes are going on behind the scenes.
5. When we interviewed Seamless staff for this contract, they saw how important our Divisions, Regions, and Chapters are to this organization. With this in mind, they are identifying ways that we can have consistent outreach to these entities and provide support to them as needed. The lines of communication will be established and maintained,, as well as drawing us together to have more impact on our profession.

We thank you for your patience and support, as many of you have endured some challenging years. Now is the time that your efforts and patience will pay off. Brace yourself for the reinvented and renewed National Rehabilitation Association.

Submitted by the Management transition Ad Hoc Committee-
Members: Janet Fiore, Kim Nortz, Kyle Walker, Russ Thelin, and Paul Barnes (chair)

Welcome Seamless Events as NRA's New Association Management Company

NRA has been working to create a partnership with a team that could offer expertise, staffing and resources to allow their national organization the ability to effectively advance their long-term goals. We are thrilled to have been chosen as NRA's new Association Management Company! Our team is determined to foster a community who advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities while also promoting high quality, ethical, and collaborative practice across the rehabilitation profession.

Seamless will be spending a few months evaluating the association to create upcoming goals while tightening up the operational foundation. When the foundation is stable, there is the ability to grow and enhance. The Seamless team will be launching a new membership database and fresh website that allows members to connect, gain access to valuable resources as well as share knowledge. We are observing and processing ways to increase the focus on community. Our goal is to ensure that the National Rehabilitation Association is fulfilling its mission, values and commitment to members.

Seamless Events offers highly personalized event planning (in-person or virtual) and association management services for companies and membership-based organizations.

They have been providing expert management services for companies and associations since 2005. Over the years, we've helped many organizations realize a return on investment through brand awareness and relationship building events and efforts. As our name and ribbon suggests, we provide our clients with only sophisticated services that meet our well-defined standards. Our experienced and friendly team works hard to deliver measurable results for all our clients. We take the time to evaluate the actual needs and create services based on those items.

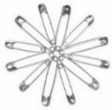
We're proud to be a woman-owned and women-operated business. Our energetic team members come from diverse personal and professional backgrounds, allowing us to pair their specialties to each client's needs and values. Internally, we empower our team to work collaboratively to encourage fresh ideas and new approaches.

Our executive team works with each client from a strategic planning standpoint. From there, our clients are assigned a core team to focus on driving the direction overall. For larger events that require more staffing, the full Seamless Events team as well as additional part-time staff are available as needed to manage and/or execute those events. We have an internal structure to support clients in a team approach allowing consistency and encouraging collaboration. Learn more about our team, www.seamlesseventsinc.com/our-team.

Our Core Values as a small business focus on:

- **Passion** – loving what we do.


- **Commitment** – never give up on achieving our goals even when things are challenging.
- **Teamwork** – keep energy high around working together towards the same end goal.
- **Integrity** – taking pride in everything we do; honesty and a desire to build trust in every situation.
- **Leadership** – create visions for clients, inspire team members and advance the business mission.
- **Innovation & Change** – Be innovative in all details; adapt to change and open yourself to risks.
- **Leverage** – take advantage of the connections that are already made to keep building.
- **Results** – ensure our clients know we are someone they can count on to be attentive to their goals.
- **Open Communication** – be open with ideas; don't be afraid to speak up.
- **Competence** – continue to self-improve in this evolving industry; showcase skills, experience & desire.
- **Relationship Building** - become a true partner internally and externally.
- **Excellence** – be known for quality in everything we do.
- **Celebration** – it is okay to celebrate achievements, milestones, and personal accomplishments.
- **Appreciation** – never forget a simple recognition goes a long way.
- **Be Powerful** – stand up, create, develop, stand out and make good things happen.
- **Believe in Possible** – knowing and acting that nothing is impossible.





...there's accountability & trust in your partnership with Seamless Events. We look forward to being your partner! Expect to see positive changes within the National Rehabilitation Association's organization. Our passion is to showcase the personality and values of our clients through each interaction – and our goal is to provide you with event planning and association services that exceed your expectations! **Thank you for your continued membership as members are the lifeline to an organization.**


High-Level General Services Overview


e **Meeting & Event Planning** - We pride ourselves on our flawless execution of events. Whether a small client dinner, an education seminar, fundraising event, golf outing or a large conference, our team follows the same process to ensure every detail is covered and the event runs *seamlessly*.


 **Operational Support** - Seamless Events acts as the headquarters for our clients if needed. Our professionals work in a team environment to ensure all phone calls, emails and mail items are addressed in a timely fashion and your members experience excellent customer service. We understand that many times headquarters is the first experience, and we maintain high standards to ensure your organization is represented in the best way.


 **Financial** - Vital to the success of any organization are the financials. We know this is a key piece in making everything run smoothly.

 **Membership** - Members are the pulse of the association and we strive to provide a seamless experience for all members and prospects. Our association clients have memberships that range from 100 to 5,500 members. We support our associations by providing a home base for all members and prospects to access information about the organization and implement the same process regardless of association size.

 **Marketing/Communications** - Many of our team members have a background in marketing/communications allowing us to provide our clients with an extra edge in this category. We support our clients through various facets including website management, copy development, email communications, promotional pieces, special event invitations, newsletters and much more. All graphic design services are an additional level of support.

 **Fundraising** - Our team has planned numerous events with different fundraising facets – silent & live auctions, raffles, wine pulls and the like. We support our clients with planning from pre & post-event and/or small portions to help hit their goals.

 **Programming Development/Speaker Management** - When creating a program for our clients, we evaluate many factors and focus on the value-add and overall experience of the attendee. We have strong connections that help us develop a speaker line-up bringing success to our organizations. Seamless has developed partnerships within the community of speakers (through business, networking, and bureaus) – allowing us to make suggestions for a one speaker platform to high profile speakers.

 **Sponsorship/Partnership Management** - Seamless Events is well versed in sponsorship and partnership management. We have played an integral role with our clients in developing and selling sponsorship packages and partnership agreements for individual events and conferences as well as annual chapter support.

NRA Strategic Planning Effort Underway April 2024

With all the exciting transitions occurring in the Association at this time, our leadership rightfully decided that this is the perfect time to begin working on our strategic plan. Therefore, with Russ and Paul's blessing, a Strategic Plan Committee (SPC) has been established to start work on this important task.

Having a strategic plan will help reinforce our mission and provide us with a sense of direction; it will ensure that our focus stays on the most pressing matters while also allowing us to plan for the future. The SPC hopes to draft a plan that will improve decision-making, increase efficacy, promote cohesiveness between National and all Divisions, Chapters, and Regions, and propel the Association into a brighter future.

We aim to proactively identify our current challenges and develop a plan that will transform them into opportunities for growth.

Throughout this journey, we will continually seek input from the Executive Committee, and, in the spirit of full transparency, we will periodically report our progress to all members via this newsletter.

Respectfully.

The Strategic Plan Committee

L'Tanya Fish, Heather Servais, Frank Herd, and Karren Cresap

Actions by the Association Board of Directors

National Rehabilitation Association members, your Board of Directors have been active the past few months since the last Board update found in the earlier Contemporary Rehabilitation issue this year. In addition to overseeing the ongoing transition to our new management firm, Seamless Events Inc., the Board has addressed many action items coming from the Constitution & Bylaws Committee, Membership Committee, and Executive Committee. Your Board is very active and are both vested and conscientious in all items that come before it. Discussion and debate on items are robust, respectful, and results oriented. Here is a summary of items that the Board has acted on:

April Board Meeting (4/16/24)

- The Board addressed, motioned on, and passed an updated proposal to contract with Your Membership who is working in tandem with Seamless Events to house and operate the membership database of the Association. This contract represented an effort by the Association to take advantage of significant discounts offered through the alignment between Seamless and Your Membership we would otherwise miss, and to “right-size” the membership platform to meet the needs of the Association.
- The Board also revisited a statement for the bylaws that is required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for all non-profit 501(c)3 organizations, which the NRA is. The Board previously recommended revisions in late 2023 that have now been incorporated. This revised statement was moved and voted on by the Board unanimously.
- The Board reviewed updated and new (where needed) descriptions for each of the membership levels coming out of last Fall’s Delegate Assembly. These descriptions came out of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee with

Executive Committee recommendation for approval to the Board. The descriptions are clearer and clean up some confusion in the most recent version. A motion to accept the membership levels descriptions was made and seconded, and the Board approved them unanimously.

Please feel free to connect with President Russ Thelin (president@nationalrehab.org) with any questions or comments.

NAMRC Voting Statement

The National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC), a division of the National Rehabilitation Association, is a professional association of dedicated individuals, whose mission is promoting cultural diversity and disability through advocacy for excellence and equity in rehabilitation research, education and practice. Efforts to protect and expand voting rights are crucial for promoting democracy and ensuring that all citizens have a voice in the political process, regardless of their race, ethnicity, disability status, or other characteristics. NAMRC is engaged in advocacy efforts aimed at ensuring equitable access to the voting process for individuals from diverse backgrounds, particularly those with disabilities who may require additional support to vote. Please contact us at hello.namrc@gmail.com for more information about how you can help get the vote!

Save the Date and Call for Proposals for Our 2024 NRA Fall Conference

The banner is divided into four quadrants. Top-left: Black background with white text: "Mark Your Calendars Now! for the 2024 NRA Fall Conference". Top-right: Blue background with a silhouette of a person jumping over a large number '9' and the text "the National Rehabilitation Association". Bottom-left: Blue background with a white icon of two people climbing stairs. Bottom-right: Black background with white text: "2024 Fall Conference (Virtual) Monday, August 26 - Wednesday, August 28, 2024. A Call for proposals is open at https://umassboston.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3HNIM4NkKI2zm4u."/>

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Automated Clearing House (ACH) Payments

On behalf of the entire leadership team, I want to extend my sincerest apology to the members who have elected to pay their dues through the monthly debit process. We are aware that many of you have experienced issues such as no withdrawals one month and multiple withdrawals the next. We understand that this issue has posed a hardship for many of you and for that we humbly beg your forgiveness.

Regrettably, we cannot undo past errors but, going forward, please rest assured that NRA's leadership values our members above all else and we have worked diligently to prevent a recurrence of this issue.

Therefore, beginning in May, members using the ACH payment method can expect to see withdrawals on or about the 15th of each month.

We thank you for your patience and tolerance as we continue to work toward a newer and better NRA.

-Karren Cresap, 2024 NRA President-Elect



2024 NRAJPD Development Grant Application

NRAJPD is pleased to announce that we will be awarding three development grants in 2024 to assist our State Chapter Divisions at \$100, \$150, & \$200! Those JPDs selected will be required to complete a final budget and report, and we are excited to see all the wonderful things you have planned this year for your JPD!

Please submit your completed application no later than Friday, May 31st to NRAJPD Treasurer, Christa Martin at: christa.martin@kysu.edu

NRA Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report April 2024

The NRA Constitution and Bylaws Committee presented to the NRA Board a proposal for a Dissolution provision to be included in the NRA Bylaws as required by the IRS for any 501(c)(3) organization. The IRS requires assets of the 501(c)(3) to be distributed to another 501(c)(3) organization or for other overtly charitable purposes.

The Dissolution Statement was voted on and approved by the NRA Board at the April NRA Board meeting.

The NRA Constitution and Bylaws Committee is reaching out to all NRA Divisions, Regions and Chapters to encourage their board members to review the current bylaws for their entity to ensure that a Dissolution Statement is included.

The NRA Constitution and Bylaws Committee has developed templates and checklists for Divisions, Regions, and Chapters to assist in updating their

bylaws. Copies of these can be obtained by emailing: president-elect@nationalrehab.org

The following is a recommend article for the Dissolution Statement that can be used to update bylaws:

DISSOLUTION

The “DIVISON/CHAPTER/REGION NAME” may vote to dissolve the organization with a majority vote of the board.

If the “DIVISON/CHAPTER/REGION NAME” board votes to dissolve the organization a mail or electronic vote shall be conducted of all of the “DIVISON/CHAPTER/REGION NAME” members.

Upon dissolution of “DIVISON/CHAPTER/REGION NAME”, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for payment for all the liabilities of “DIVISON/CHAPTER/REGION NAME” dispose of all assets of “DIVISON/CHAPTER/REGION NAME” in such a manner or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Board of Directors shall determine.

If you have questions regarding your bylaws, please reach out to: president-elect@nationalrehab.org

2024 Elections for the Board of Directors of the National Rehabilitation Association

As Past President of the Association, one of my duties is to help ensure we have a full and functional board of directors next year. Our constitution and bylaws have processes built in for us to accomplish this. First, I will be working with the representatives from our seven regions. They are, North-East, Mid-Atlantic, South-East, Great Lakes, Great Plains, South-West, and Pacific. They will help spread the word and maintain the integrity of the election process.

You can expect to see ballots and instructions in the next few weeks that will be posted on our national website, as well as being distributed through your regional and divisional representatives. We are at a critical point with our organization and

now is the time we need great leaders to step up, jump in the trenches, and see us through to a bright future.

I have been in the Association for 21 years and seen you professionals out there in the states. You know who you are, and the time is now! More details to follow very soon!

We have four positions we need to fill, which are:

President-Elect

Treasurer

Two (2) Board Members at Large

I have included these descriptions (below) for your information. It seems only fair that you know what your duties will be before you agree to step up to the plate.

Please feel free to contact me directly at pbarnes@wcf.com or 801-842-6452, as I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you,

Paul J. Barnes

2024 National Rehabilitation Association Past-President

Board Position Title: President Elect

Term of Office: 1-year (January – December) beginning on the first day of the calendar year immediately following his/her election.

Position Description: Prepares to lead the Association as President as part of the tripartite role of President-Elect, President, and Immediate Past-President.

The duties of the President-Elect include, but are not limited to the following:

- The President-Elect serves on the Board and the Executive Committee.
- The President-Elect assumes the Presidency on January 1 of the second year following election.
- The President-Elect becomes apprised of the current and long-term goals of the Association and the timelines affixed to such, to ensure the goals are met during the President-Elect's tenure.
- The President-Elect performs various functions as requested by the President.
- The President-Elect attends the NRA Annual Training Conference and the NRA Disability Employment Summit.
- The President-Elect represents and participates in NRA Annual Training Conference activities as assigned by the President.
- The President-Elect establishes and maintains contact with the President-Elects of NRA Chapters, Subchapters, and Divisions.

- The President-Elect apprises the NRA President, Staff, Executive Director, Executive Committee, and Board of the status of all assignments as directed by the President.
- The President-Elect presents to the outgoing President a Recognition Award for Service to the Association at the NRA Annual Training Conference.
- The President-Elect will manage and administer the NRA Memorial Fund per Article XIV of the NRA By-laws.
- The President-Elect passes to their successor all relevant file material.

Board Position Title: Treasurer

Term of Office: 3-years (January – December) beginning on the first day of the calendar year immediately following his/her election.

Position Description: Oversees the management and reporting of the Association's finances.

The duties of the Treasurer include, but are not limited to the following:

- The Treasurer serves as a member of the Executive Committee.
- The Treasurer serves as chair of the Finance Committee.
- The Treasurer makes financial policy recommendations to the Executive Committee and Board.
- The Treasurer reports the financial status of the Association at the Board Meetings, Executive Committee Meetings, and the Annual General Membership Business Meeting.
- The Treasurer works closely with the NRA Executive Director and Executive Committee in the preparation of an annual budget and distributes the budget to the Executive Committee and Board for approval.
- The Treasurer maintains a timely and accurate account of the Association's finances and provides financial documents for fiscal review at the request of the NRA Board.
- The Treasurer makes recommendations for individual budget categories and budget procedures, as well as reports any budgetary problems.
- The Treasurer works closely with the Executive Director and Executive Committee to ensure an independent financial audit of the fiscal records is completed each year, as well as ensure that the appropriate tax form is filed on time.
- The Treasurer monitors and maintains a current balance for each individual budget item of the approved annual budget.
- The Treasurer performs additional functions as requested by the President, Executive Committee and/or the Board.
- The Treasurer passes to their successor all relevant file material.
- Actively participates in all NRA Board meetings and functions.
- Works to advance the mission of the Association.
- Serves as an ambassador for the Association.
- May serve on various committees at the request of the NRA President.

Board Position Title: Board Member (At-Large)

Term of Office: 3-years (January – December) beginning on the first day of the calendar year immediately following his/her election.

Position Description: Represents and advocates for the NRA members.

The duties of the At-Large Board Member include, but are not limited to the following:

- Serve as Committee Chairperson or Committee Member at the request of the President.
- Serve as liaison between the general membership and the Board.
- Actively participates in all NRA Board meetings and functions.
- Advocates to the Association on issues important to the members.
- Maintains communication between the NRA Board and the members.
- Ensures the Association has the economic resources to fulfill its mission.
- Works to advance the mission of the Association.
- Serves as an ambassador for the Association.

