

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 East Boulevard Avenue – Department 325, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 25, 2010**

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**Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to Host Training Conference in Fargo**

BISMARCK, N.D. – A North Dakota humanitarian, a published author, and a former television actress and disability advocate will be keynote speakers at the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Training Conference on Oct. 27-29, 2010, in Fargo at the Doublewood Inn.

“This conference provides an opportunity for vocational rehabilitation professionals from our division along with independent living center representatives and community providers to learn how to better serve people with disabilities,” said Russ Cusack, director of DVR.

The training conference will feature three keynote speakers including **Sister Thomas Welder**, former president of the University of Mary in Bismarck; **V.J. Smith**, a South Dakota author of “The Richest Man in Town”; and **Geri Jewell**, known as “Cousin Geri” from the 1980s hit show “Facts of Life” and the first actress with a disability to perform on a national television show.

Another highlight of the conference includes an awards luncheon on Oct. 27 from noon to 2:30 p.m. The Director of Workforce Development, Beth Zander, and the division will honor **eight North Dakota businesses** for their support of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The agenda also includes educational workshops on audiograms, social security, hearing disorders, eye diseases, prevention of compassion fatigue, stress management, the latest in office and classroom assistive technology for people with disabilities, and more.

**Featured Keynote Speakers**

Thursday, Oct. 28, 2010

**Sister Thomas Welder**, will deliver a presentation titled “Ethical Responsibility: Leading with Integrity” from 8:15 to 10:15 a.m. on how an individual’s values, commitments, and communications influence the workplace.

**Author V.J. Smith** will share insight into his book and explain how kindness and compassion can make a difference from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. His second presentation from 4:10 to 5:10 p.m. will focus on 10 qualities associated with exceptional employees.

Friday, Oct. 29, 2010

**Geri Jewell** will give two presentations on Friday. Her first presentation from 9 to 10 a.m. will mix humor with actual life experiences to demonstrate how people can open their eyes and hearts to better understand individuals with disabilities. Her second address from 11 to 12 p.m. will focus on celebrating abilities.

North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation is a division of the Department of Human Services. Its mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment opportunities and to assist businesses owners and employers in finding solutions to disability-related issues.

For information about Vocational Rehabilitation services, go online to [www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/index.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/index.html) or call 701-328-8950, Toll Free 800-755-2745, or TTY 701-328-8968.

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