

Rally 'Round Rehab Great Success

By Mariann Houseweart

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association's 2006 Professional Development Institute (PDI) was held on April 6, 2006 at Harrisburg Area Community College's Wildwood Conference Center. The theme was "*Rally 'Round Rehab: Live, Learn & Lead.*"

The keynote speaker, Robert Burns, Assistant State Superintendent, Rehabilitation Services, Maryland Department of Education, and CSAVR Chair, provided observations on the Future of Vocational Rehabilitation in America. Dynamic, informative, and contemporary sessions included *Ethics: Common Ground for Rehabilitation and Human Resource Professionals*; *Rehabilitation Leadership Development: Effective Mentoring*; and *Pathways to Leadership Positions* which included a panel of rehabilitation professionals, and *Cultural Diversity: Understanding & Integrating Effective Models for Rehabilitation*. There were 10 exhibitors sharing displays and information for those in attendance.

William A. Gannon, Executive Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, in his luncheon address provided an update regarding the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Various door prizes and raffle items were awarded at lunchtime.

On behalf of PRA, President Carl Marshall surprised Dr. Ralph N. Pacinelli with a newly created PRA Outstanding Leadership Award. Dr. Pacinelli is the former RSA Regional Commissioner, current PRA Board member, Legislative Committee Chairperson, and a national leader and advocate for employment services for persons with disabilities. Dr. Pacinelli received a standing ovation from those present. In his honor, and with financial support from The Sierra Group Inc., the Ralph N. Pacinelli Outstanding Leadership Award will include a monetary gift available to other leaders in vocational rehabilitation services through nominations to the PRA Awards Committee.

CRC credits were available upon adjournment for appropriate staff. Don't miss next year's PRA Professional Development Institute, scheduled for Wednesday, April 4, 2007. If you have ideas for next year's event or just want to get involved, please contact any PRA Board member. We hope to see all of you there!