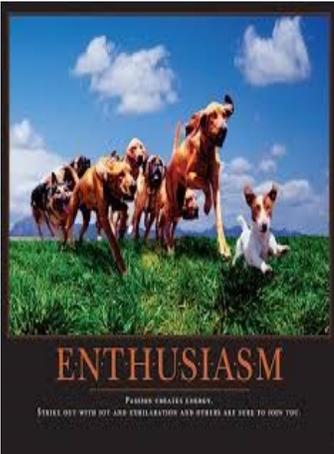




BE PROUD
BE PROFESSIONAL
BE PROFICIENT
BE PRODUCTIVE



Like us on **FACEBOOK**,
check out our **Website** , join
the **Blog** and we are now on
Twitter

BPRO Members, it is almost time for us to come together for our spring conference at the Hotel Roanoke. Are you as excited as we are?

- Great workshops are planned
- State Panel
- VaCMS User Group
- Networking Suite
- Three days filled with learning, growing and achieving!!!!

See you soon, drive safe and for new members, members who have not been to conference, stop in and say hello to your executive board. We want to hear from you.

facebook

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Calendar of Events

- ◆ May 17, 2019 Medicaid Committee Meeting
- ◆ May 29-31 BPRO Spring Conference
- ◆ June 11, 2019 SNAP Committee Meeting
- ◆ June 13, 2019 Energy Committee Meeting
- ◆ June 19, 2019 PD 14 Meeting
- ◆ June 27, 2019 Information Tech Committee
- ◆ June 27, 2019 Foster Care- IV-E committee

As a reminder, please update the calendar on the website so members can attend meetings and trainings by planning ahead.

Communication is the key to success !



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Our Membership drive is on, I challenge you to bring a member on board this year. Lets keep our membership growing. There is strength in numbers. Together we can make a difference.

JOIN BPRO—now more than ever, it helps to be connected to your fellow benefit specialists.

Our membership is climbing, jump on board and become involved. You will be glad you did.

Our Membership in BPRO is over 1,000 members strong in 2019. Together we can make a difference. CONGRATULATIONS BPRO MEMBERS, we have done it again, two years in a row,



Are you Connected?

Check out our webpage:

<http://www.mybpro.org/>

As a BPRO member, you have many benefit opportunities.

Some are for members only

Are you taking advantage of these benefits?

Check out our website

<http://www.mybpro.org>



Not sure what all the benefits are? Contact your PD President and make sure you attend your local PD Meetings, to get all of the information available.

BPRO Committees

Have you attended a BPRO committee meeting ?

If not you are missing out on a lot of available information.

Not sure of what committees are out there?

We have them listed for you and the current committee chairs.

Sometimes taking the time to attend a committee meeting will provide you the information to excel at your caseload management and processing

Why attend ?

Meet your Committee Chairs

Meet your State Program Managers

Meet fellow members

Members who attend BPRO committees usually get more from their membership.

Additional training on state programs and systems

Improving and enhancing your skill set



Committee Chairs, have you sent in a picture yet?

We want to see you on our webpage so the members can put a face to the name.

Please send us your pics, to

quinn.hughley@dss.virginia.gov

Committee Chairpersons

- ◇ *Stephanie Wood, Foster Care & Adoption Assistance (IV-E) - Fairfax DSS*
- ◇ *Elaine Thweatt, Ambassador -Retired*
- ◇ *Jo Linton, Archives-Bedford*
- ◇ *Mignon Jones, Bylaws/Policies and Procedures -Albemarle*
- ◇ *Phoebe Wright, Energy Assistance-Powhatan*
- ◇ *Maha Martin, Awards & Fundraising-Fairfax*
- ◇ *Samantha Arney, Hospitality-Bedford*
- ◇ *Minnie Pender, Legislative-Henrico*
- ◇ *Bellamy Monger, Medicaid & Auxiliary Grant-Harrisonburg/Rockingham*
- ◇ *Donna Montgomery, Professional Development-Roanoke Cty*
- ◇ *Trerina Richardson, SNAP- Chesapeake*
- ◇ *Christie Bruce, TANF/VIEW- Amelia*
- ◇ *Rick Waugh, VaCMS/Technology- Henrico*
- ◇ *Quinn Hughley, Communications- Chesapeake*



Committees

that make a difference



We are dedicated to promoting understanding, fellowship, and cooperation among Benefit Programs Professionals in Virginia; to improving the quality of eligibility practices and the advancement of eligibility work as a profession; to developing effective methods of interpreting our work to the public; to helping provide skilled, family-based assistance to those who need the services we have to offer.

- Elaine Burgess, President
- Deana Bennett, First Vice President
- Tina Caldwell-Eheart, Second Vice President
- Tonia Alexander, Third Vice President
- Stacy Bowman, Secretary
- Beckie Carter-Nutter, Treasurer
- Carolyn Harlow, Past President
- Kay Lewis, Parliamentarian

Check out the article below, BPRO is famous. Article is from the Virginia Business magazine



Four of Virginia's most picturesque municipalities — Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Middleburg and Staunton — once were rather limited in their ability to attract meetings and conventions. The demand wasn't there, and neither was the capacity.

But in the past 20 years, demand has arrived. Business and leisure travelers alike have developed a big appetite for the kind of local flavor that these communities offer, and that is a trend that shows no sign of abating.

Until recently, however, these communities lacked the facilities to fully leverage their charms, but that, too, now is changing. New hotels have opened, while old ones are expanding and updating in these up-and-coming markets.



Harrisonburg tourism official Brenda Black at the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center. Photo by Norm Shafer

In Harrisonburg, the arrival of the 230-room Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center downtown has given the city's hospitality industry a big boost. Judy Wilbur, the hotel's director of sales and marketing, says that since the complex opened last May, the Madison has hosted more than 500 meetings, the largest of which, for the Virginia Benefit Programs Organization, brought in 450 guests. State associations, corporate and academic gatherings fill beds midweek as do weddings and galas on weekends.

Brenda Black, tourism and visitor services manager of Harrisonburg's Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center, says the new Madison prompted the city to emphasize its walkable downtown, accessibility to transportation options and proximity to rural attractions such as wineries.

At the other end of town, the 143-room DoubleTree, under Hilton ownership since September 2017, also has done well in attracting social, military, educational, religious and fraternal groups.

Last year, the hotel hosted about 50 meetings. Occupancy rates reached 69% in 2018's final quarter, a 9% increase from the last quarter of 2017, says Lorne Taylor, the hotel's director of sales and marketing.

In this year's first quarter, business was up again by about the same percentage from the first quarter of 2018. "It's been a wonderful start to the year," Taylor says.

Members, I wanted to share with you an article from Ron Culberson, a former hospice social worker, manager and leader whose mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. Sounds great doesn't it? Take a moment to read this article and if you are interested you can sign up on his web site to receive more information. His theme says it all—DO IT WELL, MAKE IT FUN

My wife Wendy is really good at asking questions. She doesn't ask them in an annoying way like "You did what?" or "Why can't you put the lid down?" or "Who let the dogs out?" Instead, she asks them in both a thoughtful and interested way. If you watch her in a conversation, you'll see someone who really knows how to engage others.

I think most of us probably don't ask enough questions. I have no research to back this up, and I suppose I could ask, but like many people, I prefer to appear knowledgeable rather than show my ignorance in any particular situation. And yet, when I ask more questions and show a little humility, I tend to connect with others in a more human way.

A few weeks ago, I was speaking at a healthcare event on Long Island in New York. I asked the hotel desk clerk to recommend a good sandwich place for lunch. He referred me to a kosher deli. Now, just so you know, I grew up in a small town in the south. As a child, I was not familiar with northern style delis. In fact, I never even had a bagel until I went to college. I remember biting into my first bagel and thinking, "The donuts at this university are horrible."

I guess I was a bit deprived in a hometown where there were no restaurants, no gas stations, and not one traffic light. And I'm pretty certain there wasn't a kosher deli anywhere near my house. Thus, the opportunity to get a taste of New York was exciting but just a tad bit intimidating to me.

I walked into the deli and the owner asked, "What will you have?"

Feeling a bit awkward and not wanting to order something that I might regret, I said, "Well, I'm actually from the south and this is the first time I've been to a kosher deli. Could you recommend something?"

A man at the end of the counter said, "Well, first of all, you need to know that nothing here comes with a side of grits!"

We all laughed and then the owner walked me through the menu and recommended a few of their most popular sandwiches. He then mentioned that he had recently visited the south and really loved the people and the food. We had a lovely conversation and I left with a good feeling, and a delicious pastrami on rye.

In hindsight, I wondered if the situation progressed a bit more smoothly because I was willing to ask a question rather than pretending to know what I was doing when, in fact, I did not.

We've all been in those situations where we don't want to look stupid. Once, a friend of mine was discussing a classic piece of literature he was reading. I had never heard of the book but rather than admit it, I just nodded my head and said "oh, yeah, great book." In other words, I acted as if I was not only familiar with it but had actually read it. In that situation, I didn't want to appear stupid and yet I acted like an idiot.

Will Rogers once said, “Everybody is ignorant—only on different subjects.”

It’s a good concept to remember.

Instead of being proud, pretending to know it all, or fearing embarrassment, the act of asking questions can accomplish two things. First, it expands our knowledge. And second, it connects us with others. Let’s briefly consider each of these benefits.

I wholeheartedly believe that one of our goals in life should be to expand our thinking and broaden our perspectives. By understanding in new ways, we can prevent our limited knowledge from becoming a barrier to growth. In the mid 1980’s, when I worked in hospice care, I had the privilege of caring for people with AIDS. It was a tragic situation and many of these individuals, mostly young men, had been shunned by society, by their families, and by some healthcare providers. At that time, we didn’t know a lot about the disease so we were all potentially at risk. Yet, we felt a drive and an obligation to care for these unfortunate souls.

My teammates and I asked a lot questions of our medical colleagues, the infectious disease experts, and anyone who had information that we did not have. We didn’t get every question answered but the inquiries helped us to gain more knowledge than we had on our own. This knowledge made us more comfortable in an uncertain situation and allowed us to provide care to a group of individuals who had become disenfranchised.

Asking questions also helps us to connect with others. When we ask people questions, we show that we’re interested in them. That makes them feel valued. Watch how someone’s behavior changes when you ask them to tell you about their day, their background, or their family. Most people love to share information with someone who is interested. Additionally, if we ask questions about topics we don’t know much about, we not only show our interest, we also show that we’re open to gaining new perspectives. This leads to a better understanding of ourselves and of others. And that, is a very human way of connecting.

So, do *you* need to ask more questions? (See how I did that?) Probably. When we consider those times when we are frustrated, disconnected, and not sure where to turn, perhaps we need to ask a question. Remember, not only will it help expand our thinking and connect us with others, it’s just the kosher thing to do.

Members, thank you for all you do, without you, our organization would not be the success we are. Our membership is growing and we have a lot of new projects on the horizon. As my Presidency comes to a close and we embrace the new BPRO President, Ms. Deana Bennett, I know that we will continue to move forward and grow in many directions. So many of you work tirelessly within your community in addition to your dedication to the local citizens at Social Services. I commend you and I am so proud of each and every one of our BPRO members. Be safe and I hope to see you in Roanoke at the conference

Elaine Burgess

BPRO President

