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Ready to Serve! Come Check Out the Koch♦Young Resource Center's New Space



Find out what the Resource Center has to offer for you – our clients, families, professionals and general community – including information, education and support.

See story on page 5

Are You Ready for the Big One?

The Great Southern California ShakeOut Drill Tests Lanterman's Disaster Preparedness and Reminds All of Us About the Importance to Get Prepared Personally

DO YOU KNOW WHAT ARE THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT WORDS TO KNOW IN an earthquake? If you had participated in The Great Southern California ShakeOut Drill on November 13, 2008, you would have learned that they are – Drop, Cover and Hold On.

Along with millions of other people in Southern California, at 10 a.m., staff at Lanterman Regional Center, as well as Lanterman clients living independently or attending programs in the Burbank area, participated in the largest earthquake preparedness activity in U.S. history.

"We were already organizing our own drill to test the Center's disaster response plan with our community," explains Maureen Wilson, director of Training and Development, "and when the opportunity to participate in the ShakeOut Drill presented itself, we got on board."

Lanterman chose Burbank as the test city because it is a smaller geographic area and a number of our clients living independently reside in apartments in this area. All clients who participated did so in conjunction with their independent living skills providers, or residential or day program providers. Some just practiced Drop, Cover and Hold On, while others took this opportunity to revise their disaster plans, and even verify emergency contacts. All clients living

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► Staff Highlight: Psychologist Avo Yetenekian Marks Over Three Decades of Service and Counting

CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT IF YOU'VE been through the eligibility and assessment process at Lanterman, reevaluated for ongoing services, or with the Center for any length of time, you've met Dr. Avo Yetenekian. Affiliated with Lanterman for over 30 years, Yetenekian estimates that he's seen approximately 10,000 individuals and their families as part of the diagnosis, assessment and reevaluation process.

Most of Yetenekian's education has been in the field of clinical psychology, including bachelor's degrees in psychology and biology and a master's degree in clinical psychology with an

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The Director's Viewpoint

I Have Been Here Before

"It's like déjà vu."

I DON'T KNOW WHAT PROMPTED this often-quoted phrase, but considering the unprecedented state of our national, state and regional center budgets, this remark is quite appropriate for today.

As you well know by now, California projected a \$42 billion deficit over the next 16 months unless it dramatically reduced expenditures or significantly raised revenues.

The effect of this budget on regional centers is described in detail elsewhere in this newsletter, but suffice it to say that we are looking at some lean and challenging times ahead. As one example, because of our financial constraints, we are increasingly using e-mail to communicate with members of our community – and we are posting printed material like our newsletter online, rather than incur the costs of printing and mailing.

Why is it "déjà vu"? Because both the State and the developmental services system have been masking, dodging and in general avoiding serious systemic

"Now is the time for everyone – government, regional centers, clients, families and service providers – to work as partners to address these issues. We have to reconsider everything, re-invent ourselves, be creative and willing to think in unconventional ways."

—DIANE ANAND

issues that have been with us since the crisis of the early 1990s.

While it is true that the State's economic situation is dire, the regional center system is also being strained by the fact that our costs for purchasing services for clients and families have been increasing far faster than projected by inflation or the increase in our client population – in other words, we've been spending more than we can afford. This pattern of increases is clearly not sustainable.

To respond to this unprecedented situation, regional centers will have to look at basic structural changes to enable them to continue providing services with significantly reduced funding. In 2003, Lanterman's board of directors published a paper analyzing some of the major structural issues and offering recommendations for significant changes in how regional centers do business. Reaffirmed in 2008, the paper "Sustaining the Entitlement for the Developmental Services System: A Regional Center Perspective" was distributed to legislators and members of the



Executive Director Diane Anand

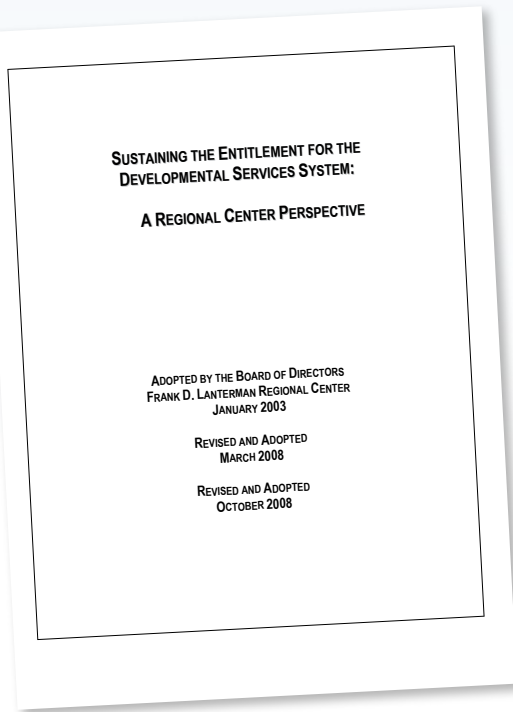
Schwarzenegger Administration. What we said in 2003 and reaffirmed in 2008 is even more applicable in 2009. If you haven't read this paper, I encourage you to do so. You can find it at www.lanterman.org/index.php/bulletin_board.

Our system cannot simply say "no more cuts." The directive to cut \$100 million is already here. We can, however, provide guidance to the Department of Developmental Services and the Legislature as to how these savings can be achieved while lessening the impact to our clients and families and preserving the entitlement.

Now is the time for everyone – government, regional centers, clients, families and service providers – to work as partners to address these issues. We have to reconsider everything, re-invent ourselves, be creative and willing to think in unconventional ways.

As a community, we have made it through difficult periods in the past, but the current situation is unparalleled. These are trying times to say the least, and it is incumbent upon us in trying times to do just that – try, really try, to work together in a spirit of shared sacrifice to help ensure that the promise of the Lanterman Act continues to benefit children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Over the years, I've seen our Lanterman community rise to meet every challenge. I am confident that we will do so again, and emerge from these difficult days stronger and better.



New Budget Brings Big Challenges and Tough Choices for Regional Centers

OVER THE NEXT 16 MONTHS, through June 2010, the state of California had projected a \$42 billion deficit unless it were to reduce expenditures or significantly raise revenues. After much delay, the State finally has a budget that will cover the period through June 2010. There is still uncertainty as to how successfully it will address the current economic problems since certain of its provisions can only be implemented if approved by the voters in a special election in May. It is also not certain that revenue from taxes will meet projections.

Provisions of the budget agreement include:

- ❖ Increases in the state sales tax, personal income tax, and vehicle license fee, and a reduction in the dependent tax credit.
- ❖ Transfer to the general fund of funds originally targeted for mental health programs and programs aimed at children younger than 5 years.
- ❖ A cap on future spending by the State.
- ❖ Borrowing against future lottery proceeds.

How Does the New Budget Affect Regional Centers?

The following are provisions of the budget that will affect regional centers for the remainder of this fiscal year through June 2009:

- ❖ A 3 percent reduction in direct services (staffing and operations) funding for regional centers, effective February 1.
- ❖ A 3 percent rate *discount* to most service providers, except for “generic” community services, such as neighborhood preschools, which are reimbursed at usual and customary rates.

Changes affecting funding for 2009-10 include:

- ❖ Continuation of the 3 percent reduction to regional center operations and most service providers.
- ❖ An additional reduction to regional center budgets of \$100 million out of the state general fund to be achieved in one of two ways:

① The Department of Developmental Services is to work with stakeholders to devise a plan to achieve the \$100 million reduction that will identify statutory changes needed to make the plan work.

② If required statutory changes are not made by September 1, 2009, regional center provider rates will be reduced an additional 7.1 percent for all services rendered on or after September 1.

- ❖ The total reduction could be greater, as state actions may affect the receipt of federal funds.

Other Program Cuts That Would Impact People with Developmental Disabilities

The following are other California programs that provide services to people with disabilities that would also be significantly affected by the budget cuts.

Special Education

California’s special education programs serve over 650,000 students with special needs. This 16-month budget would impact special education by cutting \$1.9 billion from K-12 programs for the remainder of this fiscal year, and \$2.4 billion from the 2009-10 budget. Even though special education is exempted from categorical reductions of approximately 15 percent, it will feel the overall impact of the other major cuts to education.

SSI/SSP (Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment)

The following cuts to SSI/SSP were passed and included in the state budget:

- ❖ Withhold the January 1, 2009 federal cost of living money starting May 1, 2009.
- ❖ Suspend the June 2010 cost of living adjustment for the state portion of the SSI/SSP grant.

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal, California’s federal Medicaid program, provides health services to over 1.6 million children and adults with disabilities, the blind and low-income seniors. The budget impacts the Medi-Cal program in the following ways:

- ❖ Implementing a 1 percent rate reduction for Medi-Cal Fee-for-Service providers, including physicians, medical transportation, home health agencies, dental, outpatient services and other medical services effective as of March 1, 2009
- ❖ Cutting rates by 5 percent for Medi-Cal pharmacy providers, and also for certain long-term care providers and adult day health services.

When originally passed in September 2008, these same cuts were blocked by a federal district court judge. Reintroduced as part of the 16-month budget, these rate cuts, scheduled to go into effect March 1, 2009, were again challenged in court and blocked by the same federal district court judge on February 27.

Trigger Cuts Affecting Multiple Programs, Including IHSS, Medi-Cal, SSI/SSP and CalWORKS

In addition to the cuts mentioned above, there are other cuts, called “trigger cuts,” that could happen if California does not receive enough federal funds from the economic stimulus bill and other sources. If the State doesn’t receive at least \$10 billion in federal funds, which does not appear likely, the following cuts could take effect on July 1, 2009, including:

- ❖ Reductions in state funding (participation) toward In-Home Support Services (IHSS) workers wages and benefits to up to \$9.50 per hour and up to 60 cents per hour for health benefits for each IHSS worker.
- ❖ Elimination of several Medi-Cal optional benefits, including adult dental services and vision services.
- ❖ A 2.3 percent reduction to the SSI/SSP grant level.
- ❖ A 4 percent cut to the CalWORKS grant level.

The budget situation is very fluid at this time and is contingent upon a number of uncontrollable factors. As Lanterman learns more about how the regional center system will be affected by the cuts, we will share this information with our community – our clients, families and service providers. One thing is for sure – we are facing big challenges and tough choices ahead. ■

Psychologist Avo Yetenekian Marks Over Three Decades of Service and Counting

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emphasis on diagnostic evaluation and psychopathology. An émigré from Lebanon, he came to the United States in 1976 when he was 27 to continue his education at the University of Southern California, pursuing a doctorate in psychology with an emphasis in forensics and clinical assessments, and later at the California Graduate Institute to gain expertise in psychoanalytic therapy, projective assessments and treatment modalities.

He says: "Starting when I was an undergraduate student both through research and as a volunteer at the American University Family Health and Developmental Program, I developed an interest in the field of developmental disabilities, particularly in the area of diagnosis. We encountered a lot of enriching experiences and by the time I'd finished my master's degree I'd completed well over 300 evaluations of children with mental health and developmental concerns from PKU to Down syndrome and even various hunger-related diseases and infections."

A year after coming to the States, while working as a graduate student at USC's Student Counseling Center, Yetenekian discovered the Regional Center. He adds, "I was thrilled with the concept of the regional center. At that time, it was based within a hospital setting at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, and also integrated genetic, physical and neurological services/inputs as part of the diagnostic process."

He worked as a service coordinator in what was then called the Residential Services unit for two months, and then transferred to the Intake unit. In addition to doing Intake, he evaluated patients under the supervision of Dr. Philip Weise and Dr. Karol Fishler, to earn hours towards completing his doctoral program and meet California state licensing requirements.

He admits that while children are fun to work with, he prefers working with adolescents and adults as their situations are often more complex, multi-dimensional and challenging to resolve.



Psychologist Avo Yetenekian

"The most important life lessons that I've learned are that you cannot satisfy everyone, you must be open to healthy criticism, be flexible, not take things personally, and engage everyone with dignity, respect and a positive attitude."

—AVO YETENEKIAN

In addition to working at Lanterman about three days per week, in the past Yetenekian has also consulted with other local regional centers. For over 20 years, he has also been affiliated with a number of local hospitals, treating patients with mental health issues and drug addiction who require in-house care. "I enjoy the intensive clinical involvement of working with patients in a hospital setting and being active in the treatment process," he adds.

In the past Yetenekian has taught psychology, and has supervised interns in the fields of psychiatry and psychology.

"One of the biggest responsibilities I face as a clinical psychologist is to make certain that when I diagnose an individual I've given them a proper diagnosis. This is the first

step in ensuring that they receive the appropriate services and in fostering the best quality of life possible," says Yetenekian. "The challenge we all face is to stay abreast of the current research and literature, and to continually educate ourselves about all aspects of the field, including improvements in diagnostic methods and new assessment tools. Since I started practicing, a lot has changed in the way we think about and approach developmental delays and mental health issues. The more informed I become in all aspects of this profession, the better able I am to serve the clients and contribute to the Center."

On a larger scale, he believes that some of the major challenges facing society are how to address the steadily increasing number of children diagnosed with autism, as well as meeting the health care and treatment needs of our aging and dually diagnosed populations. Additionally, there is a need for our community to educate the public and professionals about the field of developmental disabilities, especially as we face increasing funding and financial challenges.

This field of work has been rewarding for Yetenekian "from minute one." He adds, "When you see the difference that the proper services make in the quality of our clients' lives, even if it's a small improvement, that is very gratifying." He has very much enjoyed his time at Lanterman and considers the Center to be his second family.

He offers everyone a piece of professional advice for free, "The most important life lessons that I've learned are that you cannot satisfy everyone, you must be open to healthy criticism, be flexible, not take things personally, and engage everyone with dignity, respect and a positive attitude."

In his free time, Yetenekian loves fixing things, especially cars, and also building furniture, woodworking and painting (not walls though). Although he used to play as a professional musician in the 1970s, he only tinkers on his keyboard now. He and his wife live in Sherman Oaks, and have two adult children. ■

Ready to Serve! Come Check Out the Koch♦Young Resource Center's New Space

WELL AHEAD OF schedule, the new space for the Koch♦Young Resource Center was move-in ready by mid-November. With all of the books and other resources packed and ready to go, the Resource Center had one week to set-up shop on the ground floor and be ready to open for business Thanksgiving week.



The library space includes a children's section, reading area, computer workstations and Help Desk.

The new space features a Help Desk, customized library area to display the ever-growing multimedia collection, reading tables, a screening room, a private quiet room for families, public access computer stations, dedicated rooms for assistive technology consultations, and a large training room for hosting presentations and other events.

The Resource Center plays a key role in providing information, education and support to people with developmental disabilities, their families, professionals and the general community. Utilizing the Resource Center is one way that families can gain sufficient knowledge and understanding to make informed choices and decisions about resources, services and supports. "As the strain on resources within our service system continues to grow, our clients and their families will have to partner with us to meet these challenges by becoming active and informed participants," says Diane Anand, executive director.

Come check out the Resource Center's new space, meet the staff and find out what we have to offer for our clients, their families, professionals and the general community. ■

Here are some highlights of what the Resource Center offers:

HelpLine – A service linking people to community resources related to developmental disabilities – 213.252.5600, 213.383.1300, x. 5600, 800.546.3676 or kycrc@lanterman.org

Library – A multimedia, multilingual collection of approximately 7,000 disability-related materials – Searchable online at: <http://library.lanterman.org>

Network of Care – Listings of a variety of community-based resources, including social and recreational, health care and education – www.lanterman.networkofcare.org

Peer Support Partner Program – A one-on-one family support program matching individuals with trained and experienced family members – www.lanterman.org/psm

Support Groups – Meeting a variety of support needs based on disability, age, location, language, etc.

Education and Training – On a variety of topics, such as Service Coordination and Advocacy Training, IEPs and Special Needs Planning

Location and Schedule

The Resource Center is located at 3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90010, on the first floor, and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. No appointment is necessary. We look forward to seeing you.

Be the First to Know -

Subscribe to Lanterman's E-mail Bulletins

It's easy to subscribe to Lanterman's e-mail bulletins. Simply visit www.lanterman.org and click on "[Subscribe](#)" to provide us with your e-mail address. You will automatically be signed up to receive e-mail bulletins about information related to Lanterman Regional Center's general activities and events.

You can also sign up for bulletins about a specific topic, such as legislative issues, or bulletins specific to a certain age, disability or area, by providing us with additional information. No information collected will be given to anyone outside of Lanterman; it's just for the purpose of sending targeted e-mails to the Lanterman community.

There are many events, including valuable trainings and workshops, we at the Center hear about, but due to limited financial resources, we cannot mail flyers for each of these events. By subscribing to the e-mail bulletins, you too will be able to hear about them and be informed about what's going on in the Lanterman community.



New Autism Resources in the Koch♦Young Resource Center

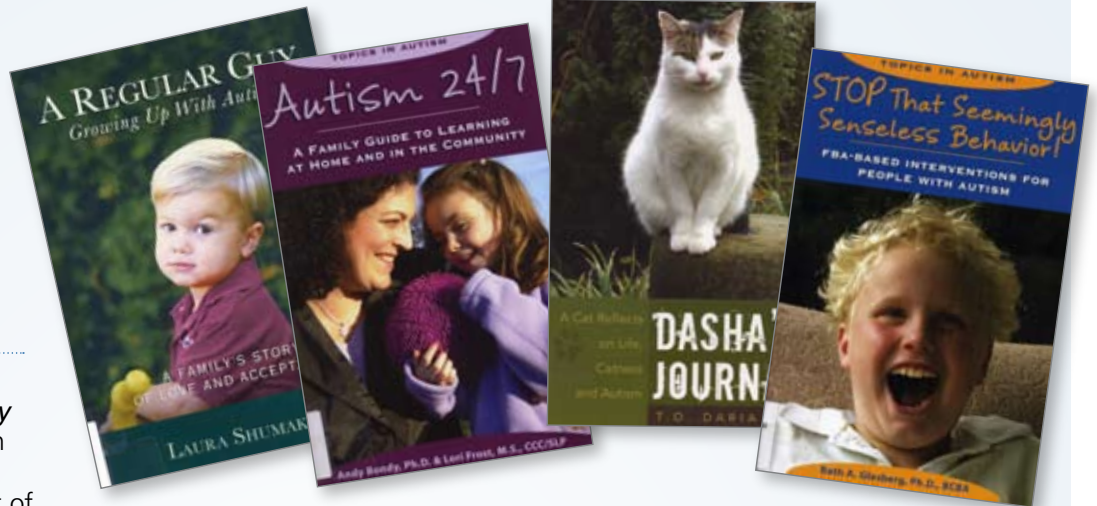
WITH APRIL FAST

approaching, National Autism Awareness Month will be upon us, and the Koch♦Young Resource Center would like to share with you some of our new resources on autism, including memoirs, how-to books and other great reads. Following are six books selected from our collection.

▶ ***“A Regular Guy: Growing Up with Autism ~ A Family’s Story of Love and Acceptance”*** is an intimate memoir that provides readers with a firsthand account of Author Laura Shumaker’s family life from the time of her first son Matthew’s birth to his early twenties, including his diagnosis with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the family’s determination to provide Matthew with the relationships and support that he needs, and their efforts to help Matthew become a connected and productive member of society.

▶ In ***“Autism 24/7: A Family Guide to Learning at Home and in the Community,”*** by Andy Bondy and Lori Frost, founders of the award-winning Pyramid Approach to educating children with autism, readers learn strategies to keep family life running smoothly, pinpoint times when their child’s behavior or lack of skills interferes with family functioning, and how to set goals for what to teach and how to teach family activities at home and in the community to encourage independence and cooperation, improve behavior and reinforce classroom learning.

▶ Also part of the Topics in Autism series, ***“STOP That Seemingly Senseless Behavior!: FBA-Based Interventions for People with Autism”*** describes how to develop behavior intervention plans to stop or diminish typical problem behaviors such as noncompliance, aggression and repetitive actions. Authored by Dr. Beth Glasberg, the book offers effective, easy-to-implement strategies and techniques that can shape the behavior of



children and adults with autism helping them to have more productive and inclusive futures.

▶ Authored by T.O. Daria, the mother of a son with autism and daughter with Asperger’s syndrome, ***“Dasha’s Journal: A Cat Reflects on Life, Catness and Autism”*** explores autism from the feline perspective of the family cat, Dasha, who adopted them in 1999. An enjoyable read, the book provides an easy introduction to explain the myths and mysteries of autism and is inspired by Temple Grandin’s work with animals.

▶ British Author Michael Blastland is the father of a son with severe autism, Joe. In ***“The Only Boy in the World: A Father Explores the Mysteries of Autism,”*** he explores what it’s like to be Joe – living a life almost entirely unto himself, in a place that doesn’t make any sense, mentally isolated from others, and unable to understand their emotions or actions. Readers gain insight into understanding Joe’s odd and difficult behaviors, as the author objectively and passionately shares how he achieved understanding of his son’s autism.

▶ Rounding out the selection is ***“Early Intervention and Autism: Real-Life Questions, Real-Life Answers,”*** by James Ball, a board certified behavior analyst, that is designed to guide parents through their child’s early years by providing sound advice based on over 20 years of experience. Structured in an easy-to-read question-answer format, the author explains what makes a child tick, how to get the most out of early intervention services, and how to choose the most effective treatment options. The book also features 10 common myths about children with autism, seven effective teaching strategies, and 10 behavior rules to live by. In the special how-to section, parents learn what to do, what not to do, what to say, and not say, and how to use the strategies in the book to teach their child new skills and manage behavior.

For more resources on autism, check out the Resource Center’s online catalog at <http://library.lanterman.org>. You can also browse books on other topics from this site and access the library’s entire collection.



Great Southern California ShakeOut

Continued from page 1

independently also received backpacks filled with disaster preparedness items.

Wilson shares: "By participating in the drill we were able to identify gaps in our plan and areas where we can better prepare. From a client standpoint, our recommendation is that all clients living independently should have a disaster preparedness goal in their Individual Program Plan. For some clients their ability to respond is not any different, but when the disability significantly impacts their ability to respond or prepare for a disaster there should be an outcome included in the IPP. Goals can cover everything from what to do in a power outage, to building a personal network or making arrangements for maintaining a disaster kit."

Overall, the Center was evaluated to be very prepared in handling the aftermath of a disaster. "We do need to clarify the instructions related to the emergency information line and what information callers need to provide the Center with," adds Wilson. Although not all providers in the Burbank area participated in the drill, for those who did, the drill was a good exercise and helped them identify what they could do to be better prepared in the future.

In addition to participating in The Great Southern California ShakeOut, the Center hosted preparedness training for clients at the UCP apartments in Burbank, and also trained English and Spanish-speaking parents on how to prepare for their children who are technology dependent. The Center has a training planned in Pasadena at the UCP apartments in conjunction with the Pasadena Fire Department.

To learn more about Lanterman's participation in the ShakeOut Drill, visit <http://lrcgreatshakeout.blogspot.com/>. Check out www.shakeout.org for more details about The Great Southern California ShakeOut, and for information on how you can personally get prepared.

Lanterman Emergency Information Line

In the event of a real disaster, Lanterman staff, clients and their families, and service providers should call the Lanterman Emergency Information Line for information on regional center operation and assistance.

Staff should call **800.578.2335**.

Clients, families and service providers should call **800.657.3239**.

So be sure to keep these numbers handy.

Information About Back-up/Emergency Power Planning During Outages

Electrical outages, whether caused by nature or other means can occur at any time, and it's important to have a back-up/emergency plan in place to survive an outage.

Check out a handout developed by Lanterman called "Emergency Power Planning for People who use Electricity and Battery Dependent Assistive Technology and Medical Devices" at www.lanterman.org/info/DisasterPreparednessEmergencyPowerPlanning.pdf to better prepare yourself for an outage.

Southern California Edison's Outage Center also provides additional information regarding outages and how to best prepare for them. Visit www.sce.com/outages for useful tips.

Drop, Cover and Hold On Steps

- 1 DROP to the ground (before the earthquake drops you),
- 2 Take COVER by getting under a sturdy desk or table, and
- 3 HOLD ON to it until the shaking stops.

If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building. Do not try to run to another room just to get under a table.

What NOT to do:

DO NOT get in a doorway! An early earthquake image of California is a collapsed adobe home with the door frame as the only standing part. From this came our belief that a doorway is the safest place to be during an earthquake. In modern houses and buildings, doorways are no safer, and they do not protect you from flying or falling objects. Get under a table instead.

DO NOT run outside! Trying to run in an earthquake is dangerous, as the ground is moving and you can easily fall or be injured by debris or glass. Running outside is especially dangerous, as glass, bricks or other building components may be falling. You are much safer to stay inside and get under a table.



Resolve to Be Ready in 2009 with Ready.gov

IN FEBRUARY 2003, THE

Department of Homeland Security launched *Ready*, a national public service advertising campaign designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks. The goal of the campaign is to get the public involved and ultimately to increase the level of basic preparedness across the nation.

Ready (www.ready.gov or 800. BE.READY) and its Spanish language version *Listo* (www.listo.gov or 888. SE.LISTO) ask individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. By taking these three steps, Americans will be ready in the event of an emergency.

In 2004, Homeland Security launched *Ready Business*, an extension of the *Ready* campaign that focuses on business preparedness. *Ready Business* helps owners and managers of small- to medium-sized businesses prepare their employees, operations and assets in the event of an emergency. And in 2006, the Department launched *Ready Kids*, a tool to help parents and teachers

educate children ages 8 to 12 about emergencies and how they can help get their family prepared.

The program includes a family-friendly Web site at www.ready.gov and in-school materials developed by Scholastic, Inc.

Homeland Security has also developed tailored preparedness information for specific Americans. They offer materials that highlight the key steps pet owners should take to prepare themselves and their animals, and also created emergency information for seniors and Americans with disabilities and special needs. Materials developed for these specific groups are also available at www.ready.gov.

Additionally, the Department highlights public emergency preparedness through National Preparedness Month, a nationwide effort held each September to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. And the public can now stay current with the latest Ready activities through

Twitter, a social networking tool that will open new lines of communication with the public and ensure preparedness is top of the mind year-round. Keep up through Twitter by following the Department's username, ReadydotGov.

By resolving to get ready in 2009, and preparing in advance, Americans will minimize the impact of emergencies on themselves, their families and their businesses. Check out www.ready.gov to access a wealth of free resources and information, and get ready. ■



Notice of Proposed Settlement of Class Action Lawsuit and Hearing Date for Final Court Approval in Capitol People First v. DDS

The Superior Court of California for the County of Alameda has authorized this notice of proposed settlement of class action lawsuit and hearing date for final court approval in Capitol People First v. Department of Developmental Services. This notice sets forth the basic terms of the proposed settlement agreement in the case and advises class members of their procedural rights relating to the settlement. This notice is for all persons with a developmental disability who reside in California and now live in, or have lived during the last year in, a government or privately operated facility with 16 or more other people. Please read this notice carefully. It may affect your legal rights. If you wish to object to the settlement agreement or appear at the April 24, 2009, court hearing regarding final approval of the settlement agreement, you must follow the directions in this notice. In addition to reading a PDF of the notice, you can also access the notice on the DDS Web site at www.dds.ca.gov/CapitolPeopleFirst/. Read the notice in PDF format at www.lanterman.org/uploads/news/Capitol_People_First_v_DDS_Final_Notice.pdf. Read the full text of the proposed settlement agreement at www.lanterman.org/uploads/news/Capitol_People_First_v_DDS_Final_Agreement.pdf.



Word Prediction Software Helps Writers Express Their Thoughts More Freely

By Stanley J. Tom, ATEC

LET'S SAY THAT A WRITER WANTS TO USE THE WORD "WONDERFUL" IN A PAPER they're doing on the computer – nine key strokes are required to type it – one stroke for each letter. But this writer has physical limitations that hinder his or her ability to type at a "useful" rate. What could he or she do to speed up the writing process?

One assistive technology tool that may offer a solution is word prediction software, which is designed for individuals who have trouble with spelling, difficulty with achieving a useful typing rate, who fatigue easily during the typing task, do not have the use of both hands, or perhaps have a combination of challenges.

Based on the initial keystrokes input by the writer, word prediction software offers a list of words it believes the user is trying to type. In the example above, after typing the three letters "w-o-n", the word prediction software may offer the following words as numbered choices: "1: won't", "2: won", "3: wonderful", "4: wonder", and "5: wondered". By reading the offered choices, the writer recognizes that number three is the word they are looking for, and by hitting the "3" key, the software types out the remaining six letters.

In just four keystrokes, the prediction software has saved the writer the effort of five key strokes. While it seems like a small savings, these savings add up, and after several paragraphs the writer will have saved several hundred key strokes. These savings may mean the difference between finishing a school assignment or task before the due date, or whether an employee meets employment productivity standards for a job.

There are a number of word prediction products currently available, either as standalone applications or as support features in other software packages. Each product offers unique features and custom options that target the differing needs of various writers. For example, the young writer learning rules of grammar and spelling has different word prediction support needs than a mature writer who has mastery of spelling and composition but needs typing rate and endurance enhancement.

Some word prediction products also offer auditory feedback that supports a person with auditory strengths. For example, this feature can help a writer with moderate to severe dyslexia match their written fluency and vocabulary richness to their spoken ability, or it can help poor spellers who are able to listen to the program read a sentence back to them and because "it sounds wrong" they can detect a spelling, composition or syntax error. Word prediction software can also support the struggling speller by interpreting the phonetic spelling being used and offer the standard spelling of words. Many of them also provide custom word lists or the option to create a list to suit the needs of a particular user whether in an educational or employment setting.

As helpful as word prediction is in a variety of situations, it is essential to recognize crucial pre-requisites for its successful use. The writer must be able to cognitively generate sentences independently, have knowledge of basic grammar and punctuation, be familiar with the standard computer keyboard layout so they can focus on writing rather than looking for keys, and be able to see a task through to completion. Also critical for successful use is some ability to spell phonetically – if the software is not provided any clues to the intended word, it will likely fail to offer reasonable choices.

Word prediction software is designed to help facilitate a writer's expression and is not intended to teach spelling. By relieving the pressure to spell correctly, the user is freer to concentrate on getting his or her thoughts down in written form.

If you think you or your family member would benefit from the use of word prediction software, contact your service coordinator and ask them to make a referral for an assistive technology consultation with ATEC.

Word Prediction Software Helps Miguel Gonzalez with College Work



A student at Los Angeles City College, Miguel Gonzalez has to complete the majority of his assignments on his computer. He shares, "I'm a slow typer, and struggled with completing my homework assignments because of this."

Referred for an assistive technology consultation last year, his evaluation by specialists at ATEC determined that Gonzalez would benefit for the use of word prediction software on his computer.

After the software was installed, Gonzalez began using it to help him complete school assignments, write papers and e-mail. He adds, "It's pretty easy to learn, it's good for slow typers, and it's helped me out a lot."

Gonzalez believes that his writing has become better because of the software. He says, "It's really ingenious technology. There are so many new words that you're exposed to by the program that it has helped me increase my vocabulary."

Meet the Ladies of La Esperanza – Support Group Facilitators Maria Carranza and Anita Castillo-Pafford

LANTERMAN'S SUPPORT GROUPS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN helping families connect with other families going through similar experiences. During meetings, participants have an opportunity to network, share their stories, gain knowledge, learn about new resources, and become informed advocates. And La Esperanza, which means hope in English, is one of the oldest Spanish-speaking support groups at Lanterman, and is no exception.

Service coordinators Maria Carranza and Anita Castillo-Pafford are the facilitators for La Esperanza. Carranza, who works in the Los Angeles Hollywood unit, joined the group three years ago shortly after starting at Lanterman. Castillo-Pafford, a service coordinator in the Los Angeles School Age unit for nine years, has been part of the group for about one year.

Carranza says: "The group is very focused on supporting each other – emotionally and with information and resources. There's a core group of parents that have been part of the group for a while and they really embrace and welcome new participants to the group. It's rewarding to see the bond they form with each other."

As many of the families that attend have children who are adolescents and young adults, the presentation topics are primarily focused on transition issues related to this age group. This year's topics include: In-Home Support Services; nutrition; sexuality; Social Security; conservatorships, trusts and wills; tenant's rights; immigration; dental hygiene; and depression.

"Depending on the monthly topic, anywhere from 10 to 25 people will attend the meeting," explains Castillo-Pafford. "The group is open to both mothers and fathers, and we've found that when both parents are there, and share in the support group experience, they are better able to support and help one another outside of the group."

"We really want to address all of the different issues affecting the families in our group, and assist them in becoming knowledgeable, so they know their rights and can be better advocates for themselves," adds Carranza.

La Esperanza meets monthly on the second Monday of the month at Lanterman Regional Center from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Castillo-Pafford shares: "At the occasional meeting when we don't have a presentation scheduled, we'll organize a potluck. We check in with all the families at every



Service Coordinators Maria Carranza (left) and Anita Castillo-Pafford facilitate the La Esperanza support group.

meeting to see how things are going, if there's anything they need support with, however, the potluck creates a more social atmosphere that makes it easier for our families to open up, talk about issues and express themselves."

Carranza, a graduate of California State University, Los Angeles, majored in business with an emphasis on marketing and management, and has a minor in economics. Shortly before graduating, she started working for an organization dealing with mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence issues. She would go out on domestic violence calls, work at the organization's shelter and run a support group for women impacted by domestic violence. "I really enjoy working with Lanterman families, getting them involved in the Lanterman community and opening new horizons for them," she says.

Castillo-Pafford attended California State University, Northridge, and majored in recreation. She has been involved in the field of developmental disabilities most of her life – personally and professionally. She shares: "My brother is a regional center client, and my daughter was recently diagnosed with autism. As a parent and sibling,

my personal experiences help me better understand the concerns and issues that families are dealing with." Prior to Lanterman, Castillo-Pafford worked at a day program doing case management, and throughout college provided respite and worked as a supported living educator.

"The group is very focused on supporting each other – emotionally and with information and resources. There's a core group of parents that have been part of the group for a while and they really embrace and welcome new participants to the group. It's rewarding to see the bond they form with each other."

—MARIA CARRANZA

Holidays are for Sharing Meets the Needs of Clients and Families During 2008 Campaign

HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT DURING ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS AND RECESSIONS,

charitable giving in most areas is negatively impacted, although the human services sector tends to fair better than do sectors such as health, arts and culture, and international affairs. And thankfully this trend proved true for the families served by Lanterman that requested help from the Center this past year.

Diane Anand, executive director, says, "The incredible generosity and support of the overall Lanterman community during these tough economic times enabled the Center to help the members of our community who truly needed our assistance."

This year, the Center was able to provide clients and their families with 433 gift cards to Target and 419 food vouchers. Additionally, 111 individuals were adopted by the Westlake Lutheran Church through their Christmas Angels program, 82 families were adopted through the *Holidays are for Sharing* Adopt-a-Family program, and approximately 1370 toys for children and gifts for adults were received. Special thanks to the following organizations for their toy and gift donations: Toys for Tots, The Alliance for Children's Rights, Accredited Nursing, Temple Ahavat Shalom, P.A.C.E., Paramount Pictures, and Turning Point Church. Temple Ahavat Shalom also donated 32 holiday food baskets.

In addition to the above totals, the Lanterman community donated approximately \$37,000 and Lanterman staff contributed \$7,500 through payroll deductions. Another \$4,600 was raised at the Center through various fundraising efforts, such as bake and craft sales, raffles, the Center's recycling program and Lanterman Lotto.

"During the 30-plus years that I've been with Lanterman, friends and families of the Regional Center have always stepped up to meet the critical needs of members of our community who require a little extra help not only during the holidays, but throughout the year as well. We must continue this spirit of caring and helping those who are less fortunate than ourselves," shares Anand.

—DIANE ANAND



"The incredible generosity and support of the overall Lanterman community during these tough economic times enabled the Center to help the members of our community who truly needed our assistance."



Say Cheese! Looking for Photos of Lanterman Clients and Families

LANTERMAN REGIONAL CENTER HAS SEVERAL PROJECTS

in the works and we're looking for recent pictures of Lanterman clients:

- with their families
- with their friends
- at work
- at home
- at school
- out in the community, such as at a sporting event, the park, the beach, on vacation, etc.

If you have any photos that you'd like to share for possible use in these projects, including several publications and for online media, please e-mail them to Vinita Anand, resource and information specialist, at vanand@lanterman.org.

Also, the higher the photo resolution and the larger the file size (i.e. 1 MB, 2 MB) the better, but lower resolution and file size photos can be used for digital/online media.

Photo Consent

Following is the text from the Center's photo consent release, and by sending the photos in via e-mail, you hereby give consent

for the use of your or your family members' likenesses in photographs/video recordings to Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center. The photographs/video recordings will be used for any/or all purposes related to publicity, promotion and education. And you hereby agree to hold harmless Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center and the photographer/video recording personnel for any liability that may arise from the use of these photographs/video recordings.

Additional Information

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Vinita Anand at **213.252.4996** or vanand@lanterman.org.

We also welcome service providers to submit photos of their clients, however, we'd need to have a hard copy photo consent form filled out. You can access the consent form at www.lanterman.org/uploads/news/Photo_Release_Consent_Forms_English.doc. ■



► Meet the People Behind the Titles: Candice LaMere

As regional manager of the Foothill School Age Service Coordination unit at Lanterman Regional Center, Candice LaMere is an integral member of our leadership team. We feel it's important for everyone in our community to have a better idea of the person behind the title and her responsibilities, so "Viewpoint" recently met with LaMere and asked about her background, as well as the biggest challenges and most rewarding aspects of her job.



Foothill
School Age
Regional
Manager
Candice
LaMere

"When working with families, I've found that when I put myself in their place, approach each situation as if this was me or my family, and think about how I would want to be supported in my relationship with the regional center, it offers me a greater understanding of where our families are coming from and what they are coping with."

—CANDICE LAMERE

CANDICE LAMERE HAS IMPLEMENTED this approach to working with Lanterman families since she joined the Regional Center in 2000. A service coordinator in the Early Intervention unit for three months, she applied and was selected to be manager of the unit, where she worked until 2003. She then became manager of the newly created Foothill School Age unit.

LaMere became interested in the field of developmental disabilities while pursuing her bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in child development at California State University, Stanislaus, where she also worked as an early childhood educator. After graduating, she remained in the Central Valley for a time working at a pre- and peri-natal program for substance exposed children as a program director, parent counselor/educator. She completed a master's degree in clinical psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute in 2004.

Her overall responsibilities include supervising the work of 13 service coordinators and one support staff; providing oversight and monitoring of case management requirements related to federal and state mandates; and ensuring the coordination of services is individualized to each family and provided cost effectively.

"As professionals, we often get caught up focusing on and supporting goals and objectives tied to functional areas where a child needs to make gains. However, we also need to help families focus on the strengths and accomplishments of their child. It's also about assisting families to find a balance between what is related to their child's special needs and what is just part of typical child development at a particular age, and then supporting the parts that need a more specialized approach," says LaMere.

In addition to executing their service coordination responsibilities, the Foothill School Age unit also coordinates the annual community resource fair, which features community-based resources that are inclusive. "This fair stands out as one of the most rewarding events I've participated in. It's an avenue through which we can promote the importance of including people with special needs in the community and share existing community-based resources with Lanterman families," notes LaMere. The unit also actively fundraises for the Center's *Holidays are for Sharing* program.

One of the biggest challenges LaMere sees in the near future for service coordination

is the increasing caseload numbers. She adds: "We're just beginning to see numbers creep up, and as the numbers rise, service coordinators are going to face increasing demands on their time. Our challenge will be to maintain the quality of the service we provide, while at the same time meeting our mandates and documentation requirements."

Looking towards the future, she would like to expand collaboration between the Regional Center and the school districts. And in response to the question, "What is the one thing, if you could change it, that would make the job easier?," LaMere indicated that the federal government and State should extend early intervention to a child's 6th birthday for those who remain eligible. This would eliminate the need for children and families to shift to new providers halfway through their intensive programs, primarily because of different funding sources and regulations.

LaMere says: "I feel every day that I'm doing something rewarding. I think that everything that we do, every family that we touch, we're doing something positive. That is what makes this job so enjoyable." And each year, she looks forward to the holidays, when families send in letters and pictures of their children and you get to remember their growth and progress over the past year.

In her free time, the Marina del Rey resident enjoys yoga, reading and spending time at the beach, and is looking forward to starting her doctoral program. She has three sons, two of whom are in college. ■

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Contributors

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"Viewpoint" can be viewed online at www.lanterman.org/index.php/viewpoint.