The Fashion of Diet – Colors Are In, Whites and Lights Are Out – and Exercise is Still en Vogue

Lost among all the talk about war and the space shuttle disaster is a public health crisis of a real and serious threat to the entire nation — obesity. Obesity is the result of many factors including stress, diet, lack of exercise, and genetics. This disease affected over 20.9 percent of the general population in 2001, and an even larger percentage of the disabled community. “I’m on a diet, “I’m trying to eat healthier,” “I’m exercising,” are all phrases we hear tossed around wherever we go, whether it is the mall, out to eat, at work, and even in elevators. As some people say, you have the easy part done when you talk about it, but the real test is actually implementing these goals and making them a reality.

A recent Los Angeles Times headline stressed, “There are many ways to diet, but one thing is clear: Healthy eating is forever.” The impacts of not eating healthy are multi-fold and include diabetes, high blood pressure, as well as heart disease. The number of individuals with diabetes diagnosed climbed 0.6 percent between 2000 and 2001 to 7.9 percent of the total population.

“Many of the medical cases that I see cross my desk are associated with poor nutrition and being overweight,” shares Gwen Jordan, director of clinical services at Lanterman, and a nurse. “It’s truly a shame when you think about how much money is spent on curing illnesses that are preventable in the first place such as Type II diabetes, fetal impaction, which high fiber is a cure for, and even dehydration.”

“There are three key points that nearly all dieticians agree on,” shares Phyllis Jackson, a registered dietician and committee member. “Eat a balanced diet. “The trend in society as a whole is towards fast refined foods and sweet, which are offered at lower and lower prices. These trends can be accentuated in residential facilities where they often serve foods with high fat content and limited nutritional value such as fried chicken with corn and potato or dumplings. What vegetables they do serve are often overcooked, which significantly reduces their value as well,” comments Jackson.

Lanterman promotes the anti-diabetic diet not only to reduce the occurrence of diabetes, but also because it is a healthy and nutritionally balanced diet. “The trend in society as a whole is towards fast refined foods and sweet, which are offered at lower and lower prices. These trends can be accentuated in residential facilities where they often serve foods with high fat content and limited nutritional value such as fried chicken with corn and potato or dumplings. What vegetables they do serve are often overcooked, which significantly reduces their value as well,” comments Jackson.

Lanterman’s director of human resources and administrator of the “Holidays are for Sharing” campaign that targeted consumers who live independently, and in board and care homes, because many do not have family, or family is minimally involved.

The two women approached Jackie Ashman, Lanterman’s director of human resources and administrator of the “Holidays are for Sharing” campaign, with their idea of having a party. “We got the go ahead to send out a memo to gauge interest, and got a great response, so we put together a planning committee,” comments Jacobson. The core planning committee consisted of Anita Arcilla-Gutierrez, Amanda Jeffers, Janet Fang, Reyna Paredes, Orlando, and Jacobson.

Once the committee was in place, they sent e-mails to Lanterman’s staff asking for donations, and committee members approached various community merchants for donations. “We weren’t sure how this was going to turn out, but we sure were grateful for the support!”

Left, Sweeney with his daughter Eva.
A Letter to the Lanterman Community from Board Chair Bob Wedemeyer

Since the passage of the Lanterman Act in 1969, advances in our society have greatly expanded opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live independent, productive, and satisfying lives as active members of their communities. With these opportunities have come increasing numbers and types of services aimed at supporting these lifestyles, and greatly increased cost for these services. During these years, the state budget has been subject to repeated economic downturns. We are currently experiencing a budget shortfall significantly greater than any other in the state’s history, and it is projected that serious deficits will continue for at least the next three years. (Opposite this letter, you will find an article discussing the current budget crisis, what it means for the regional center, and what we should expect to see in future years.)

We recognize the seriousness of the current budget situation for the state and for the regional center system. While we strongly support the vision of the Lanterman Act and the principle of entitlement to services for people with developmental disabilities, we also believe the state will be unable to support an entitlement in coming years unless changes are made now to create a program that is sustainable in the long term.

Posted on our Web site (www.lanterman.org) is a paper that identifies and analyzes what we believe are major challenges facing the regional center system. The paper is entitled, “Toward a Sustainable Entitlement for the Developmental Services System: A Regional Center Perspective.” The Lanterman board of directors adopted this paper at its January 22 meeting.

The paper includes a set of recommendations for changes to the system that we believe will result in an equitable and cost-effective entitlement program under the Lanterman Act, and also one that is sustainable for future generations of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The recommendations are based on our experience over the years as we have tried to meet the needs of consumers and families while being good stewards of public funds. Some of the recommendations reflect strategies used successfully by individual regional centers as they addressed challenges in their own communities.

I encourage you to go to our website and read this very important paper. I also invite you to share with us your reactions to the paper and the recommendations. You may e-mail your comments to frc@lanterman.org or you may send them to Diane Anand, Executive Director; Lanterman Regional Center; 3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700; Los Angeles, CA 90010-1710. More importantly, whether or not you agree with these recommendations, I encourage you to express your opinions about the issues to your state legislators. If you are unsure of which legislator represents your specific area, or if you need contact information, visit the legislative section of the Lanterman Web site and click on “local representatives.”

This is an important time in our history, and an important time for all of our voices to be heard. One of the core values of the Lanterman community is leadership. As leaders, we hope to be in the forefront of finding real solutions to the challenges that face the regional center system.

Bob Wedemeyer, chair, board of directors

Take Me Out to the Movies – "Perspectives" is Coming Soon!

When you look at me, what do you see?

Perspectives.

An International Film Festival and Forum Promoting Understanding and Inclusion of People with Developmental Disabilities

For four days only Lanterman Regional Center, in partnership with the American Film Institute (AFI), will inaugurate “Perspectives”—an annual international film festival and forum promoting understanding and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. So mark your calendars for July 24-27, come down to the ArcLight Hollywood, and make it a date.

A CONTEST!

Each year, “Perspectives” will honor an individual in the media who has advanced the cause of understanding and inclusion by creating sensitive and accurate images of people with developmental disabilities. The honoree will be invited to comment on the influence and pivotal role of the media in shaping public awareness and inclusion.

This award needs a name and we are holding a contest to find that name. Everyone is invited to enter this contest, and there is no limit to the number of names you may submit. So get creative and name the award!

The winner of this contest will receive $100 in cash!

All entries must be submitted in writing no later than May 1, 2003. Please submit all entries to Christopher Rivera.

Entries may be submitted in one of the following ways:

• Via e-mail to christopher.rivera@lanterman.org
• Via fax at 213.383.6526
• Via mail: Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center, 3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700; Los Angeles, CA 90010-1710
• Or you may drop them off at the Family Resource Center
The Quarterly Budget Update

Many regional centers in the state continue to struggle to reduce very sizeable deficits in purchased services despite having expenditure plans, and in some cases deficits are increasing. There remains a very significant purchase of services deficit statewide. Estimates are that it could be as high as $100 million. If the state is unable to agree on a timely solution, a number of centers will run out of money before the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2003. If this happens, they may not be able to pay for services, and in some cases, may not be able to continue to conduct business in the usual manner. Because Lanterman’s remaining projected deficit is relatively small and manageable, we expect to be able to continue to provide services, and to purchase services for the remainder of this fiscal year.

You may have heard or read reports that the state treasury may also run out of money if California is unable to negotiate billions of dollars in loans. The situation in the state is very fluid right now. Advocates are working to secure additional funding for the regional centers for this fiscal year. They are also attempting to ensure that the centers get a portion of their funding in the beginning of the next fiscal year (July of 2003), even if the state is delayed in development of the budget for that year.

There remains a very significant purchase of services deficit statewide. Estimates are that it could be as high as $100 million.

For the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2003, it is expected that the deficit will be much greater than it is now — between $26 and $34 million. The budget released by the Governor on January 10 contains the following significant interest relative to the regional centers:

- The state proposes to save $100 million in purchase of service dollars by developing statewide standard services. These standards would address what services regional centers may purchase and under what circumstances they would be purchased.
- Another proposal is to transfer Habilitation Services from their current home in the Department of Rehabilitation to regional centers. The Habilitation program funds sheltered workshops, and also offers training and support to consumers who are able to work in competitive environments. Regional centers would get additional funding to pay for the services, but they would receive no additional staff to administer the program.
- The state would require parents of clients between the ages of three and 17 to contribute to the cost of their child’s services through a co-payment. The plan that has been proposed would affect families having an income equal to or, more than 206 percent of the federal poverty level ($40,000 a year for a family of four). These families would have to contribute to the cost of services, an amount up to 10 percent of their gross income.

In addition to the proposals that directly affect regional center funding, Governor Davis has made proposals concerning other state agencies and programs that affect these consumers. These include Medi-Cal, In-Home Support Services, and Education. In her analysis of the budget proposal, Elizabeth Hill, the non-partisan legislative analyst, has agreed that the Governor’s budget would resolve the state fiscal crisis. At the same time, however, she proposed a list of alternatives, including both tax increases and spending cuts, that should be considered by the state legislature in their deliberations. Details of the Governor’s proposals can be viewed at www.governor.ca.gov/state/govsite/gov_hom epage.jsp. The legislative analyst’s analysis and recommendations can be found at www.law.ca.gov.

At this time, a special session of the Legislature has been called to deal with the current fiscal year budget crisis, while regular legislative efforts proceed to deal with the 2003-04 budget and its associated challenges. There has been no significant action in either area, as there are fundamental differences among legislators in how to deal with such an unprecedented budget deficit. It is expected that the adoption of a budget, with spending reductions and tax increases necessary to balance the budget, will be very difficult to achieve in a timely manner. It is highly likely that the budget act will be delayed even longer for the coming fiscal year than it was for the current year. We will keep you informed through our Web site (www.lanterman.org) as news becomes available to us.

In view of the state of the economy in California and the nation, it is clear that we will continue to face budget crises in the years to come. For this reason, we believe it is time for us to look ahead and develop realistic recommendations for long-term, structural changes to the developmental services system. Only in this way can we ensure a sustainable entitlement in the coming years.

Opposite this update, you will find a letter from Lanterman’s board president explaining how our board of directors is attempting to take a leadership role in meeting these challenges. As the letter explains, the board has adopted a set of recommendations that it believes will help ensure an equitable and cost-effective entitlement program under the Lanterman Act, and also one that is sustainable for future generations of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Director’s Viewpoint

Despite all of the gloom about the California and the national economy, as well as global uncertainties, you will notice in this newsletter that there are nonetheless many positive things that are happening within the Lanterman community.

To begin with, when we developed our initial budget projections for purchased services early in this fiscal year, we forecasted a very large deficit of approximately $8 million. We were required to develop an expenditure plan to eliminate this deficit while still providing the needed services to our clients for the entire fiscal year (through June 2003) — a daunting task.

The plan we developed with your input targeted savings in many different areas, in some cases simply by implementing more cost-effective approaches. This has enabled Lanterman to reduce our projected deficit to about $900,000, provided our spending patterns and intake of new clients remain steady.

We owe this dramatic turnaround to the commitment, cooperation, and hard work of our entire community. I would like to express my gratitude to all our clients and families, our service providers, and our staff who have once again demonstrated the Lanterman spirit of partnership and leadership by stepping forward and successfully meeting the challenge.

Also, you may remember when we developed and introduced our customer value model (based on what our clients and families told us that they valued). One of the important values that was expressed was the understanding and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in community life. You will notice in this issue of “Viewpoint” an announcement for “Perspectives” — an annual international film festival and forum promoting understanding and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. Understanding, acceptance and inclusion are not services that can be purchased. Rather they involve changing people’s attitudes and perceptions. A group that plans a pivotal role in shaping community attitudes and perceptions is the media.

We are delighted to have found such a highly respected partner in this initiative — The American Film Institute (AFI) — in bringing the issues of inclusion and acceptance of individuals with developmental disabilities to the forefront within the community at large and within the entertainment industry. Together we will produce an annual film festival for the general public, and also host an invitational forum for people in the industry to promote these values. Stay tuned to our website and our summer edition of “Viewpoint” for in-depth coverage of “Perspectives.”

In closing, I would like to stress that when people of good will work together, much can be accomplished despite limited resources, and I urge you all to get involved.
“Mitzvah Day” Projects Make Thanksgiving Celebrations Possible

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indergartners decorate boxes with paper turkeys, adults ply the supermarket aisles for all the Thanksgiving Day trimmings, a Hebrew school class raises money — these are the many activities surrounding one of the November 2002 “Mitzvah Day” projects of Temple Ahavat Shalom congregation in Northridge.

“Mitzvah Day” is a day where members of a temple perform a variety of good deeds that benefit individuals from the local community that may be in need. Barry Londer, Lanterman’s controller, who participated on the Temple Ahavat Shalom’s ‘Mitzvah Day’ committee with his wife Sarah, oversaw the Thanksgiving food basket project.

“This was only one problem, which in the end wasn’t a problem — we didn’t have any turkeys," explains Londer. Londer consulted with Jackie Ashman, Lanterman’s director of human resources, and arranged for Lanterman’s leadership staff to personally donate money to purchase some of the turkeys. Londer also approached the Temple’s board for additional funds, and along with one Hebrew school class, raised enough additional funds to purchase the turkeys. With money in hand, Henry Sams, Lanterman’s operations manager, was able to arrange special pricing with Vons supermarket in Santa Monica, and purchase 39 turkeys, some weighing over 20 pounds. Sams personally delivered all of the turkeys back to the Center. The turkeys were precariously balanced atop food baskets that were brimming over, and the final touch of a handwritten greeting card was added. As the final details of the project were being worked out, Ashman contacted the various regional managers to identify Lanterman families that would not otherwise be able to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. Upon completion, individual service coordinators delivered the Thanksgiving baskets to the families at their homes.

“This was a real community effort,” adds Londer. “We are grateful for the efforts of all the students and ‘Mitzvah Day’ volunteers at Temple Ahavat Shalom who gave so generously of their time and resources, and to the leadership at the Center, who came to the rescue and helped us see the Thanksgiving project through. We are looking forward to next year and hope the spirit of this activity will continue to grow in the coming years.” Congregation members also planted trees, filled and distributed toiletry bags for the Jewish Home for the Aged and AIDS Project Los Angeles; and made caps for children with cancer as part of their 2002 “Mitzvah Day” activities.

Clinical Services Makes Holiday Memories Possible

“In keeping with the spirit of the annual ‘Holidays are for Sharing’ campaign, the Clinical Services team delights in the opportunity to share during the holidays, and does something different for Lanterman’s consumers every year," shares Silvia Flores, executive assistant. In 2001 they adopted two families and provided them with all the prepacked fare for a holiday celebration including food and gifts. “We realized that there was a lack of gifts for adults, so we decided that for this past season we were going to adopt adult consumers for whom the recipient is their only family member,” explains Flores.

The team worked with service coordinators to identify appropriate individuals and compiled a list of names. With this list in hand, the team divided the responsibilities into four main categories: purchasing the gifts, putting together the gift bags, distributing the gifts, and to be forgotten — keeping the office running. “Whatever our responsibility, it was nice to see that everyone participated with the same enthusiastic spirit," comments Flores.

“Everybody who we adopted received one gift bag," notes Flores, “but the bags were filled to the brim with all the necessary winter accessories and a few other little extras." All the bags had a scarf, a pair of gloves, a hat, socks, and body lotion. The women also received nail polish, a holiday pin and bracelet, a handbag, perfume, and a small stuffed animal. “We tried to keep the bags more or less the same, so for the preteen and teen groups,” adds Ashman.

It’s really amazing to see how much ‘Holidays are for Sharing’ has grown over the years,” comments Ashman. “When it first started, the campaign raised somewhere between $4,000 and $6,000, but as more people learn about who we are and what we do, ‘Holidays are for Sharing’ has mushroomed.” Ashman attributes much of the continuing success of the campaigns to the help of Lanterman’s staff and the clinical team’s effort and the adult’s and preteen and teen groups,” adds Ashman. “The Clinical team’s effort and the adult’s consumer holiday party as well. All told, the grand total for the value of this year’s ‘Holidays are for Sharing’ campaign is $56,000.

Generally in the past, the types of gifts that have been donated to ‘Holidays are for Sharing’ target the younger children. “This year there was more of a focus on providing for the adult community, including the Clinical team’s effort and the adult’s consumer holiday party, but we’ve always had a problem with donations for the preteen and teen groups,” adds Ashman.

At left: Jackie Ashman and Barry Londer carry one of the Thanksgiving food baskets to families of the ‘Mitzvah Day’ project.

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Chez Lanterman Holiday Luncheon Hosted by Lanterman Leadership Carries on Staff Appreciation Tradition

For as far back as almost everyone who works at Lanterman today can remember, the leadership team has hosted an annual holiday appreciation luncheon for the entire staff, and 2002 was no exception. This past year did however bring a few new changes to the style of the party, but one thing stayed the same — the leadership team’s desire to thank the staff for their hard work and commitment.

Instead of hosting the lunch at an offsite location, the leadership team decided to use the building’s second floor conference room as their stage. “We also changed the style of the luncheon from one filled with antics and silly skits to a French café/Italian bistro motif,” shares Henry Sams, Lanterman’s operations manager.

“We had orchestrated a buffet style luncheon for many previous years,” explains Dwayne Anand, Lanterman’s executive director, “and had that down to a science. It was a nice change from the old, but definitely a learning and team building experience for all of leadership to pull off a restaurant style luncheon.” But that’s exactly what they did on Friday, the 13th of December.

Sharply at 11 a.m. Chez Lanterman opened its doors to welcome guests to its festive yet elegantly decorated main dining room. Guests were seated by the hostess with the mostess, Melinda Sullivan, associate director of consumer and family services, under the watchful supervision of the restaurant’s maître d’, Patrick Audicino, associate director of administrative services. A live trio of string musicians featuring Mercedes Shamlo, a service coordinator, played classical music and holiday tunes throughout the event.

On the menu was an assortment of appetizers from around the world including bruschetta, empanadas, kebabs, and a variety of turnovers including garlic shrimp scampi, entreés featuring traditional holiday fare such as turkey, ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, and sweet potatoes, for the non-meat eaters or those simply preferring lighter food was vegetarian lasagna; and of course, a dessert spread.

The luncheon, primarily organized by the following managers from Administrative Services — Charlotte Suzakamo, Steve Garcia, Henry Sams, Barry Louder, and Jerry Sunada — was executed by everyone on the leadership team. “Some of us helped with setup, some with cleanup, almost all of us prepared food, and each and every one of us contributed a significant amount of money to make the luncheon possible,” notes Sams.

Several months in the planning, the luncheon was enjoyed by all, so much so, that the leadership team is going to keep the same style for next year, “It will be The Lanterman Cantina or The Center Eatery.”

Consumer Christmas Party continued from front page

but let me just tell you how great the Regional Center staff is,” exclaims Orlando. “The first donation we got a couple days after our initial planning meeting in October was a $100 donation from two anonymous service coordinators in support of the party.” “The minute we got that, we knew it was going to be fine,” says Jacobson. “It really gave us momentum.”

The committee received many donations including food from Trader Joe’s and Wild Oats, gift certificates from Tokyo Angels Restaurant, Target, and Walgreen’s, baseball caps from Big 5, 288 stockings and glitter glue from the building’s second floor conference room, poineettas from a local florist; and Polaroid film from Lanterman’s office supplier, Corporate Express. “We were able to ensure that everybody received a stocking that they could write their name on, and also take a picture with Santa,” notes Jacobson.

The parents of a Lanterman consumer donated their DJ services. “It was definitely quite a sight to see everyone out there dancing on the makeshift dance floor,” shares Jacobson. Another highlight of the party was the Regional Center Caravans accompanied by the musical stylings of Mercedes Shamlo on violin and Christine Yih on violin. They sang a medley of holiday tunes, and were often joined by partycgoers who sang the chorus, but also by some who sang a few solos.

“We collected about $320 in cash donations,” explains Jacobson, “which we used to purchase the decorations and approximately 75 door prizes. This party definitely wouldn’t have been possible without all the various donations received from staff including cash, food, door prizes, and just their time and energy.” “And not to worry about all the sweets that were served, a dentist donated 12-dozen toothbrushes, and a team member Maghalia Sanchez donated 300 small tubes of toothpaste,” notes Orlando. Anita Arcilla-Gutierrez, a nurse at Lanterman, made 14 centerpieces that consumers’ care providers were able to take home after the party.

Barry Louder, Lanterman’s controller, who had volunteered to be Santa graciously stepped aside when Orlando received a call from consumer Ken Pirkovits’s ILS (independent living support) instructor who shared with her that it was always Pirkovits’s dream to be a Santa. “There was a slight delay in the arrival of our Santa due to a transportation glitch, and we can’t thank Michael Green enough for stepping up to perform Santa duties until Ken arrived,” comments Orlando. “Once he arrived, Ken had a wonderful time, and we gave him a gift bag with lots of goodies thanking him for volunteering his time.”

Orlando and Jacobson both agree that the party was really a team effort with the majority of staff contributing to the event, and that this is what it’s all about — being a part of a team, that is. “On the day of the party, the staff really gave of their time by helping with seating guests, serving food, and carrying the trash out, but most of all with cleanup,” shares Jacobson.

They would also like to give special thanks to Ken Abbott and Amanda Jefferin who stepped up to the plate and transformed the second floor conference room into a winter wonderland; and to Janet Fang and Marty Sweeney who created the invitation flier. “It was nice to see everyone get into the spirit of the whole thing,” concluded Jacobson and Orlando.

Care providers and consumers alike both rated the party a night to remember and high and all.

Both service coordinators look forward to the possibility for next year because it gives the regional center staff the opportunity to work together and have a hands-on experience of providing a direct service. The party definitely reinforced for the two of them why they are in this field. The only catch — a bigger location needs to be found for free because every chair, table and inch of space was used this year.

Late on a Tuesday afternoon in February, Jackie Ashman, director of human resources, was going through her mail and came upon a letter from Cars 4 Causes. “Apparently someone had donated their car to this charity, and asked that whatever money the organization received for the car to be donated to Lanterman,” shares Ashman.

The check totaled $450. “This was an incredibly nice thing that the anonymous donor did, and we’d just like to thank them for remembering us,” adds Ashman.

Cars 4 Causes has streamlined the donation process into four easy steps. In the first step, the donor submits a donation form that provides general information on the vehicle that will be donated, and selects the charity of their choice. Cars 4 Causes accepts most intact vehicles whether they are running or not, and does not require a SMOG certificate. The organization also tows all vehicles at no charge to the donor, completes all DMV paperwork, and prepares the vehicle for sale by completing minor repairs, maintenance, and detailing.

Cars 4 Causes provides donors with a Kelley Blue Book evaluation to aid in the determination of the fair market value of the vehicle as well as a donation receipt to be used for tax purposes. The organization then sells the vehicles through advertisements, retail lots, eBay, and live auctions in order to bring the highest possible price. Once the vehicle is sold, Cars 4 Causes distributes the revenue to the chosen charities. Established in 1997, Cars 4 Causes is the California non-profit that raises money on behalf of other charities helping to simplify the process of fundraising for worthy organizations. Cars 4 Causes can be reached at 800.766.CARE (2273) or http://www.cars4causes.net/Default.htm.

“Knowing that a program like this exists, gets you thinking about what you can do with your old car,” notes Ashman.
**RESOURCES HIGHLIGHT:** Infant Stim-Mobile

**Assistive Technology & Early Childhood Development**

Sergio Gonzalez is one-and-a-half-years old. He is a handsome little guy with deep, dark brown eyes that search. Born with a rare disability known as Four Minute Syndrome, Sergio has a range of needs that have required multiple surgeries and ongoing therapies. He faces daily challenges that most children never encounter, and his parents have struggled for information that might support their son’s early childhood development.

Part of Sergio’s story includes support from the Regional Center, the Rodel Young Family Resource Center, and the Assistive Technology Project (ATP). At the end of last year, Sergio and his family were part of a pilot program with the Assistive Technology Project and Tech for Tots™.

Tech for Tots™ is an interdisciplinary training model developed by the USC/UAP at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles that focuses upon the use of assistive technology to support early childhood development. For Sergio, access to his surroundings is limited by his disabilities; he cannot easily communicate, interact, control or explore his environment. Such limitations can pose significant risks for a child’s ongoing health and development. How might the use of assistive technology provide greater access to typical developmental opportunities? What equipment and strategies might be used for a child like Sergio? How can these efforts be shared and referenced among a team of professionals and family?

The ATP/Tech for Tots™ partnership set out to address some of these questions. A small part of this exploration was the Infant Stim-Mobile. This mobile reflects more than forty years of research on infant vision, and provides a wide range of simple and complex graphics that give a baby unlimited opportunities to study the places where dark and light meet. Designed by a scientist-mom, this unique mobile encourages visual activity such as scanning, focusing, tracking and orienting as well as pre-reaching movement. It includes twenty vertical and horizontal graphic cards that a baby can see from any angle. The cards are reversible and can be easily changed from single to more complex patterns to accommodate infant development.

This toy supports typical early childhood development, and was not designed with disability in mind. So where Sergio might not have traditional access (i.e., the ability to roll, balance and reach), the mobile has been adapted by Enabling Devices to provide easy switch access. Activated by a Cordless Big Red Switch, Sergio was able to rotate the mobile slowly while listening to a gentle, soothing melody. Already, Sergio was able to demonstrate appropriate cause-and-effect skill development. He explored the switch, recognized the switch’s relationship to the mobile, and proceeded to explore multiple ways he could access the switch and control the activity. Oh, did I mention he was just two years old the entire time? The joy and animation of his face and body said it all.

The use of an infant mobile to stimulate early childhood development is neither new nor particularly groundbreaking; however, the creative application and adaptation of traditional toys has significant implications for children like Sergio and their development.

The use of assistive technology can be a powerful tool and intervention toward improved assessment, support, and ongoing early childhood development.

For more information regarding battery-adapted toys, assistive technology, and hands-on VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: ATP Launches Mentorship & Technology Effort.

Are you looking for a way to make a difference? Are you interested in the extraordinary? Are you ready for the unknown? If so, then you might consider becoming a Tech Mentor for someone who is just learning how to use a computer, write an e-mail, surf the Internet, or even explore a telephone or e-mail access, while others may have traditional access (i.e., the ability to roll, balance and reach), the mobile has been adapted by Enabling Devices to provide easy switch access. Activated by a Cordless Big Red Switch, Sergio was able to rotate the mobile slowly while listening to a gentle, soothing melody. Already, Sergio was able to demonstrate appropriate cause-and-effect skill development. He explored the switch, recognized the switch’s relationship to the mobile, and proceeded to explore multiple ways he could access the switch and control the activity. Oh, did I mention he was just two years old the entire time? The joy and animation of his face and body said it all.

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The use of assistive technology can be a powerful tool and intervention toward improved assessment, support, and ongoing early childhood development.

For more information regarding battery-adapted toys, assistive technology, and hands-on technology, to foster greater independence for individuals with developmental disabilities, expand their life opportunities, and improve their quality of life.

For so many of our consumers and families, technology is a new and intimidating piece of assistive technology for the first time. With support from a grant from the Capital Group Companies, the Assistive Technology Project (ATP) is launching its Mentors & Technology (MAT) project to select mentors who will match with consumers and family members who are just beginning to learn how to access technology as a developmental support.

The primary goals and objectives of the MAT project include the recruitment and training of 20 mentor consumers who will be matched with 20 Lanterman consumers. The mentorships will be for a minimum of one year and are designed, through the use of assistive technology, to foster greater independence for individuals with developmental disabilities, expand their life opportunities and improve the overall quality of their lives.

“For so many of our consumers and families, technology is a new and intimidating piece of assistive technology, to foster greater independence for individuals with developmental disabilities, expand their life opportunities and improve the overall quality of their lives.”

“A mentor’s commitment will vary depending upon time availability as well as the needs of the consumer. Some individuals will benefit from just a minimum amount of support via telephone or e-mail access, whereas others may require a far greater degree of time and expertise based upon more complex needs.

The Mentorship & Technology project creates volunteer opportunities in a less traditional context. Many of us already have basic knowledge and computer skills, even if we don’t consider ourselves particularly experienced or skilled,” notes Sweeney. “The mentorship program will create ‘virtual’ opportunities to assist new users. A simple telephone call or e-mail can be the difference between someone succeeding or becoming stuck. A Tech Mentor will be the equivalent of an electronic curb cut providing the beginning user full access.”

The MAT project will carefully consider time, experience and expertise to best ensure a successful match. Training will include information about developmental disabilities, mentorships, and computer and assistive technology. If you are interested in becoming either a Tech Mentor or someone who would like a mentor, please contact the Assistive Technology Project by calling 213.383.1300 x. 722 or martinsweeney@lanterman.org.

We’re Walking, We’re Walking - Cure Autism Now Foundation Presents WALK NOW.

Do you want to help find a cure for autism? Do you want to further treatment of autism through funding of research? Are you looking to affect change, build community, and teach your family about the power of giving? Are you looking to gain valuable information about autism resources and support in your community?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then WALK NOW, a 5K (3.2 miles) Family Walk and Community Resource Fair benefiting the Cure Autism Now (CAN) Foundation is just what you are looking for. Not only will participants be personally involved in finding a cure and funding research, they will leave WALK NOW with a sense of empowerment and hope.

WALK NOW will be held April 5, 2003 at Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Avenue; Los Angeles, CA 90012. Registration and check-in for the walk will start at 8 a.m. and go until 9:45 a.m., with the walk beginning at 10 a.m.

All walkers and volunteers must register by March 22, 2003 to help CAN reduce costs, project attendance, and maximize their fundraising efforts. Once you are registered, you can begin your fundraising. CAN asks that each walker set a minimum fundraising goal of $100. Walkers that meet or exceed the $100 goal will receive an official WALK NOW t-shirt and one ticket to the Reunion Baseball Game at Dodger Stadium on Sunday, May 18, 2003.

Directly following the walk, participants will be able to get connected at the Community Resource Fair. Families will have the opportunity to meet local autism service providers including therapists and program providers, as well as gather and view a variety of resources. Children meanwhile will be entertained in the carnival-like atmosphere that will feature moon bounces, arts and crafts, and other fun activities.

For more information, to register for the walk, and for fundraising ideas visit www.cureautismnow.org and click on the “Walk Now” logo or call 888.8.AUTISM.
**Resource Packets Have Pockets Stuffed With Helpful Resources and Information**

**Continued on Page 12**

They come in one shape and one color, but many different sizes. Some are only a quarter inch thick, but others are filled with enough information to stand an inch of helpful resources and information. “At Lanterman, the word ‘packet’ is synonymous with both resources and information,” explains Ralph Bingener, a support assistant for the Family Resource Center (FRC), who is also responsible for compiling these packets. Nearly eight years later, the scope and detail of the project has evolved to include several different kinds of packets such as resource packets for newly eligible families, transition to preschool packets, age appropriate and disability-specific packets, and public relations packets.

“We are constantly searching for both new and updated information to include in the various packets,” shares Wendy Weyenberg, FRC resource and information associate. Weyenberg is responsible for compiling the information for the packets from a variety of sources including local, state, and national resources. Information on resources is obtained from families that have first-hand experience with specific community programs, from the information fairs, other organizations in the field of disabilities, different state organizations such as the Department of Social Services (DNS), and also from Lanterman service coordinators.

All information included in the resource packets is housed in the very appropriately dubbed “packet room.” The room, which measures approximately six feet by 12 feet, is stacked from floor to ceiling with information divided into the following nine categories: general information, early intervention (birth to 2.5 years), preschool transition (2.5 to five years), elementary school age (six to nine years), preteen school age (nine to 12 years), teen-adult transition (13 to 16 years), young adult and transition (17 years), and adults (18+ years).

“Every individual or family that becomes eligible for regional center services at Lanterman receives an initial resource packet along with ‘The Guide to Lanterman,’” notes Bingener. The packet that a new consumer or family receives includes information on all types of services available in the community as well as age appropriate and disability-specific information.

Bingener assembles resource packets based on the consumer’s age, language, disability, school district, and other relevant information necessary to create the individualized packet. “Information and resources are available in both English and Spanish, and we also have specific information on child care, health, local school districts, and specific school related information,” comments Weyenberg.

Rain or shine, Bingener, along with the help of a volunteer, Jessica Jameau, compiles 15-plus packets a week for distribution. “Autism packets by far are the largest number of packets that we create,” adds Bingener. Once the packets are assembled, the service coordinators are then responsible for distributing the resource packets, and generally do so at scheduled meetings with the individual or family.

All families who have children being served by Lanterman that are between the ages of 2.5 and five years automatically receive the preschool transition packet through their service coordinator. “This packet focuses on generic issues such as how to choose a preschool, and how to establish services and support from the early childhood system, but also contains school district specific Individual Education Plan (IEP) information,” explains Herrera.

While requests for the initial and the transition to preschool packets are automatically generated by Lanterman’s data tracking system, packets for the other age ranges need to be requested. Requests for these packets are made from a variety of different sources including the individuals themselves, families, and service coordinators. Public relations packets are typically provided upon request to various field-related organizations, Lanterman’s partners, or other community members that require a general and/or historical perspective of the Center.

Starting in 2003, all resource packets will also include an evaluation form that can be used to provide feedback to the FRC on the usefulness of the resources and information included in the packet. The resource packet evaluation also provides an opportunity to let the FRC know about additional resources or information that you would like to see included in the packets, but also those resources that are currently included that you may have not found useful. To request a resource packet, or to just let us know what you think of the packets, please call us at 213.383.1300 x. 730, or e-mail us at frc@lanterman.org.

**Sibshops are in Full Swing, Going Strong, and Supporting On**

One might wonder what on earth children in pairs of three are doing pretending to be a model, a lump of clay, and an artist. Well the answer is playing Sibshops. Children participate in a group activity at the Los Angeles Sibshops.

Lourdes Tabullo, Maribel Ortiz, Ana Castillo, and Lance Toyoshima who are service coordinators at Lanterman. Two new individuals from the Family Resource Center have joined the team of facilitators — Wendy Weyenberg, resource and information associate, and Karen Diaz, volunteer. Both Castillo and Diaz are adult siblings of individuals with disabilities. “I decided to become a facilitator because I know how hard it was growing up with a sibling with a disability. Looking back, I wish I had some kind of support group like this to voice some of my feelings,” shares Ana Castillo, a service coordinator in the Los Angeles School Age

Continued on Page 12

“Working with the children, I see how they’re naturally empathetic and understanding,” says Castillo. “It is really amazing to watch them grow and develop.”

If you would like more information about Sibshops or any other services offered by the FRC, feel free to contact us by phone at 213.383.1300 x. 730, or by e-mail at frc@lanterman.org.

**Continued on Page 12**
Two Individuals Provide Inspiration to Lose Weight and Eat Healthier

What better way to illustrate the importance of diet and exercise in the lifestyles of all members of the Lanterman community than to interview two individuals from the community to see what inspired them to get healthy, change their diet, lose weight, and/or start exercising. So we asked service coordinators if they knew of anyone they worked with who had modified their diet for health reasons, lost a significant amount of weight, or started exercising. Following are interviews that we conducted with Harold Levingston and Vincent Pennington in which they share in their own words, their methods and strategies for losing weight.

Harold Levingston and Vincent Pennington in

Lanterman community than to interview two

The Fashion of Diet
continued from front page

Reds and greens, yellows and oranges, baked or boiled, but not fried, and lots of vegetables are all en vogue and here to stay. “A plate needs to be colorful. It feels good but don’t cut it these days,” adds Jordan.

When asked for some tips about how to achieve this colorful plate, Jordan and Jackson successively ranked a list of tips. Broil your chicken. Eliminate gravy and sauces. Bacon is not a lot of bang for your buck, use lean ham instead and get filled faster with a smaller amount. Use fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks — there’s no excuse in California. Stay away from canned foods. Serve water with lemon instead of juice and soda. Substitute whole wheat for white bread. Buy white meat, while more expensive, it is much healthier than dark meat. Read labels, and if you can’t read most of the words on the product label, it has too much of something that is not good for you. The first five ingredients on the label are the ones you have the most of. If sugar is the second thing on the list put it back on the shelf. Eat in moderation. Cut down on potatoes. Choose sorbet instead of ice cream. And always remember to treat yourself once in a while.

“We do recognize that community care facilities are required by licensing to provide specific amounts of certain foods, but it’s the quality and how it’s prepared that makes the difference,” explains Jordan. While each residential facility has its own cooking standards, they serve, every provider needs to actively involve consumers in the meal planning process. “We regularly hear back from consumers who are able to verbalize their feelings that they don’t necessarily like the food being served,” notes Jackson.

“While individuals can be taught how to eat healthy, parents need to instill healthy eating habits in their children when they are young so these habits become second nature.”

“There is no doubt about it, that eating healthy takes commitment,” adds Jackson, “but the net results are well worth it.”

Eating healthy is not the only component to being healthy. Exercise is the other main component. “Most all of us have excuses about why we didn’t exercise — it’s too cold. I’m tired, it’s raining. I’m too busy, but in reality exercise can be incorporated into overall daily activities,” comments Jordan. Exercising doesn’t have to mean going to the gym or running. Exercise can simply involve walking for 30 minutes a day. “It doesn’t even have to be all at one time, 10 minutes here and there suffices,” adds Jackson. There are a variety of ways to get exercise without ever getting into running workout clothes including mall walking, using the stairs instead of the elevator, or parking in the spot furthest away. “We all need to make a conscious effort to get up off the couch and move our bodies,” stresses Jordan.

“There are a lot of factors that we can’t control in this world, but we are the only ones who control what we put in our mouths.”

March is “National Nutrition Month™

Recipe pulled from “The New American Heart Association Cookbook.” This recipe can easily be increased to serve a larger number of people.

Crispy Baked Chicken
Serves Four

First no one wanted to fry chicken because it was such a mess to clean up. “On top of it it wasn’t considered healthy to fry fresh chicken, but everyone liked the taste.” Well, following is a recipe that addresses both of these issues. There is no pan to wash, and the chef ends up with a really moist low-fat “fried” chicken.

Ingredients:

Vegetable oil spray
1 cup fat-free milk
1 cup cornflake crumbs (3 cups cornflakes)
1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
1/2 teaspoon pepper
4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves

Preheat oven to 400° F. Line a 13x9x2-inch baking pan with aluminum foil, thoroughly spray with vegetable oil spray. Pour milk into shallow bowl. Combine cornflake crumbs, rosemary, and pepper in another shallow bowl. Rinse chicken, remove fat, and pat dry with paper towels. Dip chicken pieces into milk, then into crumb mixture. Allow to stand for 5 to 10 minutes so coating will adhere. Arrange chicken in baking pan so that pieces don’t touch. Bake boneless breasts for about 30 minutes or until done and crumbs form a crisp “skin.”

Recipe pulled from “The New American Heart Association Cookbook.” This recipe can easily be increased to serve a larger number of people.
As all of us who learned how to cook know, cooking is an art, at times difficult and at times not. The one catch is selecting the recipe that will become quite confusing.

Recognizing the challenges that this poses for first-time cooks, author Joanne Saffell wrote the “Complete Meal Plan Book: A Different Book for People Beginning a New Experience in Cooking.” The book provides four weeks of complete meal plans. The meals are planned for good health, variety, and to fit one’s food budget. Each weekly plan has a shopping list with the items that need to be bought as well as simple, easy to follow recipes. The book also features a kitchen safety section, and has information about using appliances, food supplies and food preparation. The book is approved by a licensed nutritionist.

Some of the other nutrition resources that we have in the Family Resource Center (FRC) collection include two cookbooks — “The New American Heart Association Cookbook,” which features recipes as well as general nutritional guidelines, and “The Everything Diabetes Cookbook: 300 creative and healthy recipes that put the fun back into cooking” by Pamela Rice Hahn, which provides recipes that meet the needs of individuals with diabetes and tips on how to manage diabetes. The FRC also subscribes to “The Newsletter of Food, Nutrition & Health,” the official newsletter of licensed nutritionists.

Comparing Pyramids

As you compare these two pyramids, you’ll notice that one of the most significant differences has nothing to do with food at all. The foundation of the Healthy Eating Pyramid is exercise. Dr. Willett notes that regular physical activity is critically important and — other than not smoking — is the single most important thing you can do to get healthy and stay healthy.
Meet the People Behind the Titles: Gwen Jordan

I’ve worked in every unit at Lanterman except for Administration and the Family Resource Center. I never designed my regional center career to go that way, but I am so glad that the other positions provided me with an overall knowledge and understanding that allows me to look at the bigger picture and hopefully enables me to do my job a little better.

What are the responsibilities of your current position as Director of Clinical Services?

My responsibilities involve coordinating and monitoring the overall activities that take place in the Clinical Services Department. Lanterman partners with numerous institutions of higher learning on a variety of different health and wellness projects. For example, we currently have a dental project with the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry. One of my primary goals is to secure funding for the innovative projects that we develop. I firmly believe in community partnerships as a way of achieving these goals and objectives. I often say that the regional centers are a well-kept secret. Unless someone has been employed by, or has a family member who is part of the regional centers, people generally haven’t heard of us, and we need to continue to market ourselves in the community.

Another major responsibility is to monitor the health of all the individuals served by Lanterman. Underneath that is a review and follow-up of special incident reports as well as hospitalized individuals. Finally, I have a major responsibility in psychiatric care. Members of the Clinical Services team attend annual reviews, IPRs, and provide support to the various other units, including Intake and Service Coordination for individuals who have health-related issues.

Members from Clinical Services also participate in eligibility determination.

I know you mentioned that you are a nurse first and foremost — would you please elaborate?

I feel strongly about the fact that I am a nurse, and I feel strongly about the profession of nursing as a whole. This may be very biased, and admittedly so, but nurses can do anything that you put them in. They are playing in the regional centers, and many centers now have large Early Intervention units that use nurses for their case managers. There are a lot of skills and knowledge that come from nursing. You learn about documentation and develop the necessary people skills. I feel that it is a very rewarding profession, and I have never once felt that it is secondary to that of a physician, but rather a partner with the physician.

What are the biggest challenges of your job?

The five original members, which met for the first time in September of last year, wanted the group to be more than a support group. We wanted the group to be part of the women’s peer advocacy group. Additional issues explored thus far include safety issues such as bus safety and sexual abuse.

The group structure is rather informal,” comments Dalva. “Essentially, it is women coming together and talking, but this format lends itself well to brainstorming ideas regarding the group to be more than just a socialization component of the women’s peer advocacy group.”

The group is open to all adult female consumers that wish to attend, and it is also the only group at Lanterman organized by women for women.

If you are a female consumer interested in women’s well-being, I need a comfortable forum to talk about sensitive issues; or simply want to get to know other women in the community, and build your social circle, contact Mary Flynn at 213.385.1300 x. 753 or mary.flynn@lantenman.org for more information.

The women’s peer advocacy group meets monthly on the third Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Lanterman Regional Center.
Shane's Inspiration is Looking for Professionals to Sit on Professional Advisory Board

Shane's Inspiration is creating a Professional Advisory Board to support their ongoing mission to serve and enhance the play experience for children with special needs. The organization's goal is to build a team of professionals that will share their knowledge and understanding of the therapeutic and social needs for children with disabilities. This will ultimately be reflected in the Universally Accessible Playground designs.

Shane’s Inspiration is the brainchild of Catherine and Scott Williams, and the realization of a dream that emerged from tragedy. Shane Alexander Williams was born in Los Angeles in 1997 with spinal muscular atrophy. Within two weeks of his birth, Shane died. Knowing the life that their son would have led if he had lived, the Williams soon realized that there was no public playground in Los Angeles where Shane could have played. Giving his brief life special meaning, the Williams’ devoted themselves to creating a playground where children of all abilities could play together.

With the help of many supporters, Catherine Curry-Williams and Co-Founder Tiffany Harris raised funds and partnered with the City of Los Angeles. The City allocated two acres of land in Griffith Park — a central location frequented by many — to create the first extraordinary playground, Shane’s Inspiration, which opened to the public on September 21, 2000.

This mission yielded a second playground, Aidan’s Place, in Westwood, which opened in December 2001. Shane’s Inspiration currently has 20 playground projects in development. In addition, they receive daily requests from municipalities and families asking for their help to build a Universally Accessible Playground in their communities.

The expertise of professionals serving the needs of children with disabilities is essential to the design development of these playgrounds. Shane’s Inspiration held their first Professional Advisory Board meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2003 at Shane’s Inspiration, 12345 Addison Street; Valley Village, CA 91607 but continues to welcome participation from professionals in the Lanternman area.

For more information call 818.752.5676.

Universally Accessible Play Dates Filled with Friends, Fun and Treats

A play date at the park with goodie bags and treats just can’t be beat. That’s exactly what Shane’s Club, a free club created by Shane’s Inspiration offers. Every month, on or about the last Saturday, the club meets for a play date at one of the two Shane’s Inspiration Universally Accessible Playgrounds — Shane’s Inspiration or Aidan’s Place.

Shane’s Inspiration tagline says it all — “When children play, boundaries slip away!” It is in this spirit that the club provides children with disabilities the opportunity to play with other children of all abilities and make new friends.

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<thead>
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<th>The play date schedule for 2003 is:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SHANE'S INSPIRATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Griffith Park</strong></td>
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<td>(park in merry-go-round lot #3)</td>
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<td><strong>January 25</strong></td>
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<td><strong>May 31</strong></td>
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<td><strong>July 26</strong></td>
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An Afternoon at the Park: Accessible Swing Installed at McCambridge Park in Burbank

Have you ever wondered if just one person can make a difference? The answer is — yes they can.

“He loves swinging,” explains Patricia Vega about her 10-year-old son, Matthew. Matthew has certain physical limitations due to cerebral palsy that impact his balance as well as fine and gross motor skills. “When it comes to a regular swing he can’t hold on really tight and runs the risk of falling off and being seriously injured,” adds Vega.

Matthew and his mom make the drive from their home in Burbank to Shane’s Inspiration, an accessible playground located in Griffith Park whenever they can. “Between work and school it’s not convenient,” explains Vega. “Wouldn’t it be great if there was an accessible swing installed at the park near my house,” thought Vega to herself.

Eventually, she got the answer she wanted — the City was going to replace one of the regular swings at McCambridge Park with an accessible swing. “The swing was installed on a trial basis and if the response is positive, the city will leave the swing installed,” comments Vega. “Directly across the street is Burbank Center for the Retarded (BCR), which will also benefit from the addition of the swing to the park.”

“I’ve taken a lot of patience, effort and time. It’s definitely not an overnight process, but it’s well worth it to see my son enjoying one of his favorite activities.”

Spread the word about the swing and the importance of advocating for accessible playground equipment in all parks. If you live in Burbank, and have the opportunity, please share your comments and support with Jan Bartolo care of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department, 301 East Olive Avenue; Burbank, CA 91502. For other areas, please contact your local department of parks and recreation to encourage them to install accessible playground equipment in your area.

At left: Children play on the airplane structure at Aidan’s Place in Westwood during a Shane’s Club play date.

Below: A panoramic overview of Shane’s Inspiration located in Griffith Park.
Sibshops

continued from page 7

can be heard, and especially the voices of the younger siblings. Their opinions and concerns are vitally important and integral to the functioning of the Sibshop, and their input is respected and appreciated by all. They can be facilitators of events and look forward to meeting new people. They can be

What are some of the key focuses for the Clinical Services team currently?
We are currently looking at the issue of Type II diabetes and how we can prevent future incidence of the disease within our community. We are looking at how we can help those individuals already diagnosed with Type II diabetes stay on their diet, continue to take their insulin and only rely on oral anti-diabetic agents as well as how to dispel the misconception that you can eat what you want if you are on diabetes medicine. We are starting an education process and creating an informational pamphlet that promotes a sensible diet and understanding of the disease. The pamphlet will be ready to be released soon.

Where do you see the unit being in the next several years?
I would like to see the team eventually do more proactive kinds of support including educating the community rather than follow-up. As the old adage goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and I hope to be able to focus more attention on prevention in the coming years. We can’t be the first line advocates for everybody. The team will continue to work to clarify issues and empower family members, advocates, and consumers themselves to take charge of their own health and well-being. If we can do this then our role as consumers in accomplishing the best health that they are able to be in.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?
I feel fortunate to be a part of an agency that considers health an integral part of our mission. It is a very important part of the whole person.
**Summer Recreation Opportunities**

The summer months are creeping up and those who are ready to enjoy outdoor leisure activities are recommended to browse through the available resources. Some of the following resources are vendors that cater to working with people with developmental disabilities, and other programs are generic, and work with the community at large, but include people with disabilities in their programs. For more information on these resources, or to find out about additional social recreation opportunities available, please view Lanterman’s Electronic Resource Directory at www.lanterman.org. (The directory also contains medical resources.) If you have a resource you would like to recommend, please contact Wendy Weyenberg at 213.383.1590 x. 715 or wendy.weyenberg@lanterman.org.

**Prader-Willi California Foundation** offers a variety of summer camps for children with Prader-Willi Syndrome. Please call the Prader-Willi California Foundation for more information 880.460.9994.

**Shane’s Inspiration** is a spastic playground found in Griffith Park not far from the carousel near Riverside Drive. The swings are large and designed to support children who have physical needs. The towers and forts are connected by wheelchair ramps. This playground is a nice addition to Griffith Park and a no-cost way to enjoy a nice summer day. Pack your picnic basket and enjoy!

**Special Olympics** is a year-round program focusing on a variety of sport activities. The special track and field meet will be held in June in Long Beach; call 323.337.1780 for the greater Los Angeles area and 310.458.8300 for the West Los Angeles area, to learn about seasonal activities.

**FOOTHILL/PASADENA AREA**

AbilityFirst, LL Frank Center, offers a day camp in Pasadena. Call 626.489.5601, and ask for Amanda Donahue, to get more information.

**Adaptive Recreation Program** sponsors a variety of recreational activities year round. They offer a variety of camps and art programs as well as community social events all year long. Events and programs target all age groups and range of need. Please call Jackie Scott at 626.744.7257 for a schedule.

**BCR** hosts a dance the second Friday of each month at McCarthey Centre on Gen Oaks Blvd. in Burbank. The dances are geared for those 18 years of age or older, and cost only $5.00. Call BCR at 818.843.4907 to get on their mailing list.

**Clare Morgan Recreation Center** offers both day and residential camp opportunities in the San Bernardino Mountains. For details call 310.204.3300, and ask for Brian Rumbo.

**Camp Paivika** hosts a dance the second Friday of each month at McCarthey Centre on Gen Oaks Blvd. in Burbank. The dances are geared for those 18 years of age or older, and cost only $5.00. Call BCR at 818.843.4907 to get on their mailing list.

**Glendale Adventist Medical Center-Pediatric Therapy Center** offers a wide range of group and camp programs year round that are taught by occupational, physical, or speech therapists. Please call 818.499.8306 for more information on these programs.

**Glendale Parks and Recreation** offers a summer day camp at three different locations for children six-15 years of age. Call 818.548.2788 for more information.

**High Spirits Dance Program** is a dance class for people with developmental disabilities, their siblings, and other family members, as well as community members. Classes are held at the Altadena Community Church. For more information please contact Lynnette Adams at 626.398.6317.

**South Pasadena YMCA** offers special swimming lessons. Contact them at 626.799.9119.

**LOS ANGELES AREA**

**Braille Institute** offers youth-oriented activities such as after-school programs, camps and special events for children six-19 years of age with visual impairments. The Youth Center at Braille Institute at 323.663.1111 for more information.

**Etta Israel’s Camp Moshe** is located in Los Angeles and provides day camp opportunities for children with special needs. Please call 310.285.0909 x. 247 for more information.

**Elysian Park** hosts a dance the second Friday of each month at McCarthey Centre on Gen Oaks Blvd. in Burbank. The dances are geared for those 18 years of age or older, and cost only $5.00. Call BCR at 818.843.4907 to get on their mailing list.

**Griffith Park** provides day camp opportunities for children and young adults, six-17 years of age. Activities include field trips, nature walks, theme weeks, arts and crafts, and sports. You can reach them at 323.226.1492 for further information.

**Jeffrey Foundation in Los Angeles** offers day camp opportunities for school age individuals.

For details, call 323.965.7536, and ask to speak with Roxy.

**Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks** offer a variety of services throughout the city as well as several camping facilities: Camp Valcrest, Decker Canyon Camp, Camp High Sierra, and Camp Seeno. For main office call 213.847.9218 or visit www.cityofla.org for more detailed information.

**L.A. Goal** is located in Culver City and provides a variety of services to people for adults. For a schedule of their events, call 310.838.5274.

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AREA**

**Ahead with Horses, Inc.** is a developmental therapy program for children with special needs that utilizes horses. For more information call 818.598.6317.

**Camp Joan Mier and Camp Paivika** are both sponsored by AbilityFirst and offer a variety of camping experiences for children ages seven-12, as well as to adults. For a schedule of camp dates, call 626.396.1010 x. 324 (Brenda), or x. 320 (Wendy).

**Easter Seals** offers a residential camp program at various camps in San Diego County for people with developmental disabilities. Call 760.777.3990 for more information.

**Exceptional Children’s Foundation** offers residential camp opportunities in the San Bernardino Mountains. For details call 310.204.3300, and ask for Brian Rumbo.

**Jay Nolan** offers both day and residential camp opportunities. Call David Gary at 818.361.6800 x. 119 for details.

**Special People’s Foundation** provides travel and camping services for people with developmental disabilities. Call 310.618.1833 for more information.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Find Out About This Season’s Hottest Social Recreation Opportunities

**When:**
- Eighth Annual Social Recreation Forum
  - May 6, 2003 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Lanterman Regional Center, Los Angeles — 2nd floor conference room

**Activities:** The overall focus of the forum will be on integrated social recreation resources and programs for children. This year’s forum will feature parents sharing how they have approached social and church groups about getting their child accepted and integrated into the groups. The forum will also feature a “how to” on organizing a play date with neighborhood children, as well as representatives from various integrated programs who will share their positive experiences including Lanterman’s children in their groups.

How: Anyone interested in participating in the Eighth Annual Social Recreation Forum, or looking for more information should contact Sam Suzuki, regional manager for the Los Angeles school age team, at 213.383.1300 x. 559 or sam.suzuki@lanterman.org, or Zena Begin, service coordinator in the Foothill school age team at x. 525 or zena.begin@lanterman.org.

**FOOTBALL/OCENIO**

**West Hollywood, Inc.** is a developmental therapy program for children with special needs that utilizes horses. For more information call 818.598.6317.
Training & Events

The Training and Development unit provides information on training opportunities that focus on developmental disabilities and related topics. The unit staff coordinates training events that are conducted by Lanterman Regional Center. Staff also coordinate registration arrangements for consumers, family members, staff, board members, and service providers in the Lanterman community to attend external educational events of special interest.

The Center also publishes a training and events schedule that can be shared with others. You may send comments, or request to be on the mailing list, by one of the following options:

BY MAIL: Training and Development
Lanterman Regional Center
3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90010

BY FAX: 213.639.1157

BY E-MAIL: Maureen S. Wilson, director
maureen.wilson@lanterman.org
Ronna Kajikawa, executive assistant
ronna.kajikawa@lanterman.org

Lanterman Regional Center Family & Consumer Training

The following are training opportunities that focus on developmental disabilities and related topics and are conducted or sponsored by Lanterman Regional Center for consumers, family members and board members in the Lanterman community.

NEW FAMILY ORIENTATION
Lanterman Regional Center provides orientation meetings to welcome new consumers and families to the Center. These meetings provide an introduction to the Lanterman service delivery system, and are conducted monthly.

For a schedule of monthly orientation meetings call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

EARLY INTERVENTION FAMILIES (BIRTH TO 3 YEARS)
Lanterman Regional Center, FRC
Presenters: LRC staff
For additional information call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

FAMILIARIZACIÓN EN INTERVENCION TEMPRANA (NAICIMIENTO A 3 AÑOS)
Spanish – Ultimo lunes de cada mes 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Lanterman Regional Center, FRC
Presenters: LRC staff
Para mas informacion llame al 213.383.1300 x. 730.

CHILDREN THREE YEARS OLD AND UP
English – March 28, May 30, July 25, Sept. 26, Nov. 21 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Lanterman Regional Center, FRC
Presenters: LRC staff
Para mas informacion llame al 213.383.1300 x. 730.

PARA NIÑOS TRES AÑOS Y MAYOR
Spanish – April 25, June 27, Aug. 29, Oct. 31 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Lanterman Regional Center, FRC
Presenters: LRC staff
Para mas informacion llame al 213.383.1300 x. 730.

TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL ORIENTATION MEETING
For children with two years of age.
English & Espanol
Presenters: LRC staff
For information and dates call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS
This six-session course introduces the basic principles, concepts, and practical applications of behavior management. The classes focus on managing and controlling challenging behaviors, and using positive reinforcement to replace inappropriate behaviors. Please note: This workshop requires referral from your service coordinator. Contact your service coordinator to register, or call the Family Resource Center at 800.546.3676.

SERVICE COORDINATION AND ADVOCACY TRAINING
This 10-hour course for Lanterman families to better enable them to advocate for and assist their family member with a disability.

ENGLISH
May 1, 2003 - May 29, 2003
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
BCR
230 E. Amherst Dr., Burbank
Presenters: SCAT faculty

ESPAÑOL
September 16, 2003 - October 14, 2003
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenters: SCAT faculty

ENGLISH
October 2, 2003 - October 30, 2003
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Located in Glendale, TBA
Presenters: SCAT faculty

The address for Lanterman Regional Center is:
3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700,
Los Angeles, CA 90010

PARENTING THE CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
This is an exciting five-week course that addresses issues faced by families who have children from birth to age six with special needs.

For information and dates call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

SEXUALITY & SOCIALIZATION TRAINING
Lanterman Regional Center offers several options for sexuality and socialization training.

Please note: All of the sexuality and socialization trainings require a referral from your service coordinator. Contact your service coordinator to register.

ABILITIES
Abilities is a sexual abuse and exploitation risk-reduction program for adults with developmental disabilities. This three-week training includes topics such as: definitions of sexual abuse, assertiveness training, self-esteem and communication, personal safety training, and what to do if a person is ever sexually abused or assaulted.

GET SAFE
The Get Safe program is a personal safety program for people with developmental disabilities. Topics covered include assertiveness training, safety awareness, defining boundaries, and creating healthy relationships.

WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND SELF-ADVOCACY TRAINING (RHSA)
RHSA is a peer advocacy-based training program for women with developmental disabilities. The four session training is co-taught by a health educator and a female counselor, and includes topics such as: basic anatomy, menstruation, menopause, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, the importance of women's health exams, and using self-advocacy to communicate with your doctor.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY COMPUTER CLASSES
The Adult Education and Career division of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), in partnership with the Assistive Technology Project of Lanterman Regional Center, have established these classes to assist Lanterman consumers and their families. These classes are an introduction to computers and software. Include about classes in other languages, independent study options, and open lab hours. Space is limited. For registration and further information call 800.546.3676 or 213.383.1300 x. 730.

The next quarter of computer classes begin the third week of April and finish the last week of June:

FOR ADULTS (BEGINNER) — ENGLISH
April 22, 2003 - June 24, 2003
Tuesday Mornings, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
10 consecutive weeks
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenters: LAUSD

FOR ADULTS (INTERMEDIATE) — ENGLISH
April 24, 2003 - June 26, 2003
Thursday Mornings, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
10 consecutive weeks
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenters: LAUSD

ESPANOL — ADULTO (BASICA)
Dates TBA
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenters: LAUSD

The address for Lanterman Regional Center is:
3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700,
Los Angeles, CA 90010

Training & Development Opportunities
For Service Providers

PSYCHOTROPIC CONSENTS
April 8, 2003
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenter: FDLRC staff
213.383.1300, x. 720
Cost: $5.00 pre-registration, $10.00 at door
Parking not validated.

P & I
May 13, 2003
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenter: Charlotte Suzukamo
213.383.1300, x. 720
Cost: $5.00 pre-registration, $10.00 at door
Parking not validated.

Now Available to California’s Physicians – A Continuing Education CD-ROM That Focuses on Developmental Disabilities

The USC University Affiliated Program, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, has developed a multimedia continuing education product that addresses early identification and preventive care for children with developmental disabilities. This comprehensive, multi-topic educational training package offers a multi-disciplinary approach to improve the quality of, and access to, preventive, primary and secondary medical care for individuals ages zero to 21 with developmental disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, autism, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation. Emphasis is on commonly overlooked areas of care — oral health, nutrition, mental health, and communication/sensorimotor development. The convenient CD-ROM format enables physicians to achieve up to four hours of category I CME credit at their home or office. This project was funded in part by the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities. For more information contact Cary Bujold Kreutzer, community education director: USC, University Affiliated Program at 323.671.3850 or CBujold@chla.usc.edu.
ADULT SIBLING SUPPORT GROUP
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Olivia Hinajosa 213.238.1300 x. 705

ARMENIAN PARENT GROUP
Quarterly meetings — Glendale area
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Rima Shahnian 818.548.4349
Sona Topjian 213.238.1300 x. 677

ARMENIAN PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
Monthly meetings at group members’ homes in the Glendale area.
Monthly – Last Friday 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Contact: Rima Shahnian 818.548.4349
Sona Topjian 213.238.1300 x. 677

AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA
San Gabriel Valley Chapter Support Group
1167 N. Reeder Avenue; Covina
Monthly – First Wednesday, 7:30 p.m.
Contact: Patricia Kreyssler 626.447.3452

BEZARAS
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Ara Bezjian 626.793.1989
bezara@visto.com

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN WITH JAPANESE-SPEAKING PARENTS
Contact: Sam Suzuki 213.383.1300 x. 559
Call for next meeting.

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
St. Dominic’s Community Center
2002 Moreton Avenue; Eagle Rock
Monthly – First Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Contact: Emma Guardino 223.259.8322
Sandy Rancho 323.344.9355

DOWN SYNDROME SAN GABRIEL VALLEY PARENT SUPPORT WITH CHILDREN UNDER SEVEN
Church of the Brethren
1041 N. Altadena Drive; Pasadena
Monthly – Second Thursday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Olivia Hinajosa 213.238.1300 x. 705
Ian & Terry West 818.952.2629

FILIPINO AMERICAN SPECIAL SERVICE GROUP FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Alice Gubatan 213.238.2340

FOOTBALL AUTISM ALLIANCE — NETWORK RESOURCE MEETINGS
BGR-230 E. Amherst Drive; Burbank
Monthly – Second Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Contact: Sun Brooks 818.866.AUTOISM (818.662.8847)

FRAGILE X PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
Call for dates, location and details.
Monthly – Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
Contact: 818.754.4227 (voicemail)

GAY AND LESBIAN ADULT SUPPORT GROUP
Lanterman Regional Center
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Family Resource Center 213.383.1300 x. 730

GLendale/ Burbank/ FootHill PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
Burbank First United Methodist Church
700 N. Glencoe Blvd.; Burbank
Monthly – First Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Jennifer Wyre 213.382.1300 x. 537

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA FAMILIAS DE INTERVENCIÓN TEMPRANA
Lanterman Regional Center
Segundo miércoles de cada mes, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Contact: Augustina Melin 213.238.2138
Monica Mauri 213.383.1300 x. 519
Edward Perez 213.383.1300 x. 522

GRUPO PARA FAMILIAS CON NIÑOS CON PRADER-WILLI
Shriners’ Hospital
3160 Geneva Street (Vingil and Third); Los Angeles
Ultimo martes de cada mes, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Angeles y Jesus Lopez 323.644.3319

HOLLYWOOD/WILSHIRE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
Lanterman Regional Center
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Jesse Davis 213.383.1300 x. 549

INCLUSION IN REGULAR CLASSES SUPPORT NETWORK
Dates, locations and times vary each month.
Call for next meeting.
Contact: Sam Suzuki 213.238.1300 x. 559

JAPANESE-SPEAKING PARENTS ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGES
Little Tokyo Service Center
231 East Third Street, Suite G-104; Los Angeles
Monthly – Third Saturday, 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Contact: Manako Magami 818.249.1726
Michiko Wilkins 818.557.0728

KOREAN PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
Asian Advocate for Special People
Lanterman Regional Center
Monthly – Second Monday, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Contact: Suk Ji Chang 213.999.3891
Christine Wu 213.383.1300 x. 532

LA ESPERANZA
(Grupo semanal en Español)
Lanterman Regional Center
Lunes, 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Ana Ropil 213.383.8329
María Cebrian 323.366.1001
Nilda Lapopa 213.383.1300 x. 554

PADRES UNIDOS LANTERMAN
(Grupo en Español)
Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles (Vermont and Sunset)
Conference Room “O”
Segundo martes de cada mes, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Irma Cruz 323.481.3007
Yadira Bautista 323.400.4794

RETT SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP
Quarterly meetings — Pasadena area
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Marie Hyland 626.790.4836

SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
(Grupo semanal en Español)
Salvin Special Education Center
1925 S. Budlong Avenue; Los Angeles
Llame para los fechas, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Contact: Gloria Perez 213.383.1300 x. 533

TEATRO ILLUSION
(Grupo semanal en Español)
Shriners’ Hospital
3160 Geneva Street (Vingil and Third); Los Angeles
Cada viernes, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Contact: Yolanda Hernandez 562.928.5324

ANDERSON FAMILY NETWORK
Quarterly meetings at group members’ homes
Call for details.
Contact: Jack Riggle 818.848.1246

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK
AbilityFirst
40 North Altadena Drive; Pasadena
Monthly — Second Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Olivia Hinajosa 213.238.1300 x. 705

BDA FATHERS REGIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK
Denny’s Restaurant
1060 San Fernando Road; Los Angeles
Monthly — Second Monday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Aaron Hinajosa 626.296.1556
German Barrero 626.640.4362

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA EL MANEJO DE LA CONDUCTA
Shriners’ Hospital
3160 Geneva Street (Vingil and Third); Los Angeles
Ultimo martes de cada mes, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Alfredo Kertzman 714.328.481

MOMMY & DADDY & ME — EARLY INTERVENTION PARENT SUPPORT GROUP
Call for dates.
Contact: Olivia Hinajosa 213.238.1300 x. 705

SIBSHOPS
For siblings ages six-12.
Los Angeles and Pasadena areas
Monthly — Third Friday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Olivia Hinajosa 213.238.1300 x. 705

NEW GROUPS

WANTED! Mommies, Daddies, and Their Little Ones
Calling all mommies, daddies, and their little ones to help plan the future direction and design of the Mommy, Daddy & Me support group so it meets your needs and those of the general community. The group, which was started in the spring of last year, targets early intervention families with children birth-to-three.

“We initially modeled the group after the Mommy & Me concept, but wanted a group that welcomed moms, dads, and caregivers,” shares Olivia Hinajosa, a group facilitator and family support specialist. “While the first year was successful, with six service coordinators actively involved with facilitation, there have been some recent changes that have taken place, and we are looking for feedback and comments from families about how the group can better serve their current needs.”

The group met from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Center for Developing Kids (CDK) in Pasadena. “We are trying to meet the needs of our families, and would like to determine what time of day would be most appropriate for families with babies and young children,” comments Hinajosa. The facilitators would also like to know what topics would be of interest, what format should the group adopt, and the best length of time for the group to meet. Most of the sessions during the last year featured a speaker in the first hour and then an informal opportunity to share information and strategies in the second hour.

If you have a child birth-to-three, the facilitators would love to hear from you. Please contact Olivia Hinajosa at 213.383.1300 x. 705 or olivia.hinajosa@lanterman.org to provide you comments, feedback and suggestions.

If you are interested in starting a support group but don’t know how to take the first step, call The Koch-Young Family Resource Center for information:
800.546.3676
As a new parent of a child with a disability, or perhaps a parent of a child that is transitioning out of school, the most important thing is information. There are a million and one questions that are running through your head, and you need answers. It’s one thing to read tips and strategies from a book, but in many cases parents want something more. They want to be able to talk to someone who is in the same situation as them, and peer support offers just that.

"Peer support is a program that ripples throughout the community with parents touching parents in an ever-growing cycle of help, advice and understanding," explains Olivia Hinojosa, family support specialist. Peer support partners offer one-to-one emotional and informational support to individuals who have a family member with special needs. The partner shares their experiences of having a family member with a developmental disability, and is able to provide a unique form of support, as only a person who has "been there" can do.

Unofficially started in 1989, the program as it stands today was established in 1993 to include a training program as a key aspect of the support program. This type of support is part of a much larger effort both nationally and internationally, that is often known as parent-to-parent support. "We chose the name peer support to encompass all family members and caregivers that might need support, and that could be trained as a partner and matched with their peer including grandparents, siblings, and parents," shares Hinojosa.

"The range and scope of the peer support program varies greatly, and is always guided by the families’ needs." Sometimes families only speak with a peer support partner once, and in other instances, families may form long-term friendships with their peer support partner. "Whether the need arises during the birth-to-three period, the transition into the school system, or the transition to adulthood, we match individuals with the appropriate peer support partner," adds Hinojosa. "It is an open door program that has the ability to rematch families with other support partners as situations change."

In the resource packets all new families receive a request form where they are able to identify items that they would like more information on, specific to the Family Resource Center (FRC). "One of the items on the list is to have the opportunity to speak with other individuals in similar situations," shares Hinojosa.

The offer of being contacted by the FRC is also presented to families during the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). "The majority of referrals come from service coordinator referrals," comments Hinojosa. Once a request for contact has been submitted, the family receives a welcome call from a peer support partner. "The partners help answer any questions the family may have, follow up to make sure that needed connections have been made with orientation meetings, service coordinators, and also promote the opportunity to be matched with a peer support partner with more things in common," shares Hinojosa.

The welcome calls are typically specific to the language and geographical area of the family, whereas the peer support match request is generally around the subject of diagnosis, but also includes health concerns, specific transitions in a child’s life, and support on educational matters. "Once a request for a peer support match has been made, the partner contacts me to complete the arrangement," adds Hinojosa. The majority of contacts involve a one-time phone call, but in many cases parents want more things in common. "It’s up to the discretion of the two parties involved as to what level of contact they want, and they can always be rematched with other families based on other issues," explains Hinojosa. "There have definitely been many friendships that have been formed from this program."

Peer support partners participate in a six-hour training before they can be matched with a family. As part of their training, peer support partners are instructed in how to assist families with advocacy as well as other more traditional forms of support. "The success of the program is based on individuals who benefit from a peer match ultimately themselves becoming a peer support partner," comments Hinojosa.

To find out more about the peer support program or to become a peer support partner, contact Olivia Hinojosa at 213.385.1300 x 705 or olivia.hinojosa@lanterman.org. The next peer support program training dates are June 10 and 17, 2003.