



It's Play Time!

On a bright and sunny Saturday, Courtney and Lauren play in the Lucky Star Chaser Rocket Ship during a play date at Shane's Inspiration in Griffith Park.

Story on Page 11

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 that is 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 diagnoses 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, fecal 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 nurse consultant at Lanterman. "We need to eat more fruits and vegetables, regular exercise is essential, and healthy eating is a lifetime change." Most dieticians also agree that the occasional indulgence is perfectly OK.

"Currently there is no formal health and wellness initiative at Lanterman that focuses solely on diet and nutrition," notes Jordan, "but it's such an important aspect of the care of individuals in our community, particularly for our service providers, that we hold trainings as well as in-services, and also work

one-on-one with providers to implement new diets." Lanterman also encourages service providers and families to attend classes on nutrition and diabetes prevention. Kaiser Permanente on Sunset Blvd. offers free sessions to the general public held over the course of two Saturdays from 8 a.m. to noon. "Most large medical centers including Huntington and Cedars Sinai offer similar classes for a nominal fee," notes 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 fatty refined foods and sweets, 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.

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Lanterman Raises the Roof with First Ever Consumer Christmas Party

It was the morning of the consumer Christmas party, and all through the building, Lanterman staff were stirring. They hung decorations from the ceiling with care, in the hopes that the consumers would soon be there. The consumers were festive, dressed up in their finest, as visions of a party danced in their heads.

On December 5, about 300 adult consumer partygoers, their caregivers, and Lanterman staff descended on the second floor conference room for the first ever consumer Christmas party. "They came alone, in groups, by bus, and in vans," shares Jeannette Orlando, one of Lanterman's service coordinators and a party committee member. "We can't thank the parking and security staff enough for their assistance and the building for discounting the parking fee to \$1 for the event," adds Adrienne Jacobson, another organizer of the party and service coordinator.

Jacobson and Orlando, who both have adult residential case loads, wanted to do something for their consumers so that they could experience the festivities of the holidays. Their idea was to organize an event in keeping with the annual "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 Jefferis, Janet Fang, Henry Sams, Mercedes Shamlo, Migdalia Sanchez, Nilda Lopapa, Reyna Paredes, Orlando, and Jacobson.

Once the committee was in place, they sent e-mails to Lanterman staff asking for donations, and committee members approached various community merchants for donations. "We weren't sure how this was going to turn out,

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FATHER'S CORNER

daDA: Return of the Grand Slam Breakfast Special

by Martin Sweeney

We like the sure thing. We count on it. It reassures us. What do we do when our deepest hopes slip through our fingers? When all our expectations turn inside-out? We do what we do — awkwardly, step-by-step, one day at a time, slowly.

These thoughts come to mind when I think about fathers' support and the experience I've been fortunate to share with other dads over the last 20 years. I am the father of a daughter who happens



to have cerebral palsy. Today, she is a young woman self-defined by many personal traits: some I cherish, some I frankly don't understand. Her disability is not her most defining characteristic, but it certainly is a significant part of her life, as well as mine. As much as I once despaired in the fantasy that my daughter's disability might simply disappear, a very different reality has come to shape these past two decades. I look back and wonder how I got from there to here.

I'll spare you most of those details but will share one very important and valuable resource: other dads. Long story

Left, Sweeney with his daughter Eva.

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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.

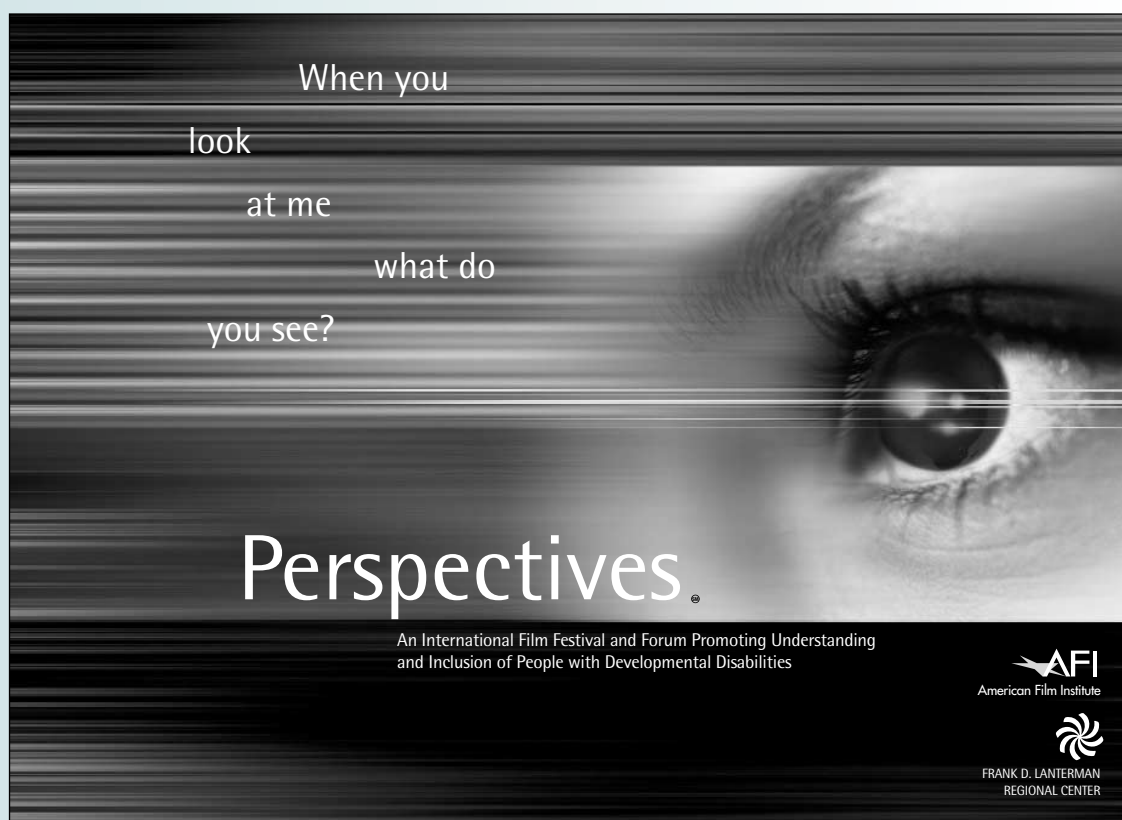
The paper includes a set of recommendations for changes to the system that we believe will result in an equitable and cost-effective entitlement program under the Lanterman Act, and also one that is sustainable for future generations of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The recommendations 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!



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 items of significant interest relative to the regional centers:

- The state proposes to save \$100 million in purchase of service dollars by developing statewide service standards. 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 200 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 our 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_homepage.jsp. The legislative analyst’s analysis and recommendations can be found at www.lao.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 is necessary to balance the budget, but 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.

SAVE THE DATE!

Let Your Voices Be Heard to Preserve and Protect

What: Grassroots Day

Theme: Preserve and Protect

When: April 9, 2003

Where: State Capitol, Sacramento, California

Activities: 10:30 a.m. – March around the capital
11:30 a.m. – Rally on the capital steps
Ongoing throughout the day – Legislative visits

How: Anyone interested in participating at Grassroots Day, or in local legislative visits throughout April and May, should contact Karen Ingram, director of community services, by March 21, 2003 at 213.383.1300 x. 509 or karen.ingram@lanterman.org. There will be an orientation two weeks before the event to discuss the issues the Lanterman community will be focusing on during legislative visits.

The Director’s Viewpoint



Diane Anand

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 plays 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.

Last Minute Donations Save 2002 “Holidays are for Sharing” Campaign

At the annual Armenian Christmas party, children were able to open brand new presents; the Early Intervention team was able to wheel and deal with the toy factories south of Olympic Blvd., and fill up their conference room with gifts for their families; and there were enough gifts and food certificates to meet each and every request from service coordinators for their families with toys to spare for the 2003 year.

“This past year started out rather dismally, but ended up being a wonderful year,” shares Jackie Ashman, director of human resources and campaign coordinator. “The variety and the number of children, families and adults we were able to provide for was really neat. We were even able to provide gifts for many of the siblings.”

Lanterman received monetary contributions from hundreds of individuals totaling over \$24,000, with a third of that amount from staff alone. The Center also received gift donations from a variety of individuals and three key organizations — The Alliance for Children’s Rights, the California Highway Patrol, and Toys for Tots. Over 55 Lanterman families were adopted through the adopt-a-family program and nearly 50 families were provided with holiday food baskets through Temple Ahavat Shalom and Food from the Hood. A large number of adult consumers were able to partake in holiday festivities through the 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.

“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 annual campaign to word of mouth, and especially to the help of Lanterman’s staff who actively promote the campaign. Looking towards the coming years, Ashman hopes to continue to increase the scope and scale of the “Holidays are for Sharing” campaign.

“Mitzvah Day” Projects Make Thanksgiving Celebrations Possible

Kindergartners 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.

“Since this was our first year doing the Thanksgiving project, we had modest expectations, and hoped to produce about a dozen baskets. There was so much participation, however, that we collected enough food, and scrip to purchase food, to complete over 30 baskets,” shares Londer. Students of all ages and volunteers decorated box after box with one kindergarten class alone decorating three boxes. The baskets were then stuffed with all the Thanksgiving trimmings including sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, gravy, stuffing, soup, vegetables, and all the ingredients to make pumpkin pie.

“There 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 handcrafted 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.



Above: Food baskets await their turkeys.

At left: Jackie Ashman and Barry Londer carry one of the Thanksgiving food baskets decorated by kindergartners for their “Mitzvah Day” projects.

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 essentials 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 regional center is their only family member,” explains Flores.

The team worked with service coordinators to identify appropriate individuals and compiled a list of names and genders. With list in hand, the team divided the responsibilities into four main categories: purchasing the gifts, putting together the gift bags, distributing the gifts, and not 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 men we added cologne, a fanny pack, and sunglasses,” adds Flores.

The presents were ready the first week of December, and were delivered to recipients shortly thereafter. “It was really nice to see how willing and happy everyone in the unit is to give,” shares Flores. “It was definitely an effort on everyone’s part to make this ‘Holidays are for Sharing’ initiative come true.”



The Clinical Services team after preparing the gift bags.

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 Diane 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.

The leadership team pauses for a moment from their luncheon duties to take a picture.

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 maitre’d, Patrick Aulicino, associate director of administrative services. A live trio of string musicians featuring Mercede 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 bruscetta, empanadas, kebabs, and a variety of turnovers including garlic shrimp scampi; entrées 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 Londer, 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. Perhaps 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,” adds 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 Longs Drugs in West Los Angeles; poinsettias 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 Carolers accompanied by the musical stylings of Mercede Shamlo on viola and Christine Yuh on violin. They sang a medley of holiday tunes, and were often joined by partygoers 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



effort.” “And not to worry about all the sweets that were served, a dentist donated 12-dozen toothbrushes, and staff member Migdalia 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 Londer, Lanterman’s controller, who had volunteered to be Santa graciously stepped aside when Orlando received a call from consumer Ken Pirkovitsch’s ILS (independent living support) instructor who shared with her that it was always Pirkovitsch’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 Jefferis 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 raved about the party — sugar high and all.

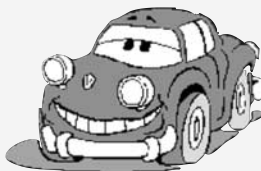
Both service coordinators look forward to the possibility for next year because it gives the regional center staff the opportunity to work together and have a hands-on experience of providing a direct service. The party definitely reinforced for the two of them why they are in this field. The only catch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



Partygoers waiting in line to take a picture with Santa.

Lanterman Receives Check from Cars 4 Causes Donation Program

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 Kelly 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 \(2273\)](tel:800.766.CARE) 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.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT: Infant Stim-Mobile

Assistive Technology & Early Childhood Development

Sergio Gonzales 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 Minus-P 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 Koch ♦ 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 Childrens 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 a 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

opportunity 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. Almost immediately, 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 having fun the entire time? The joy and animation of his face and body said it all.

The use of an infant mobile to stimulate 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



opportunities, please contact the Assistive Technology Project at [213.383.1300](tel:213.383.1300) x. 722, or martin.sweeney@lanterman.org.

The adapted Infant Stim-Mobile (Graphic Mobile #202) is available at:
Enabling Devices
Toys for Special Children
385 Warhurton Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706
[800.832.8697](tel:800.832.8697)
www.enablingdevices.com

The Cordless Big Red Switch and Cordless Receiver are available at:
AbleNet
1081 Tenth Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414-1312
[800.322.0956](tel:800.322.0956)
www.ablenetinc.com

Coming Next issue, "Viewpoint" will bring you an in-depth look at the Tech for Tots™ program

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 piece of assistive technology for the first time.

With support from a grant from the Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation, the Assistive Technology Project (ATP) is launching its Mentors & Technology (MAT) program. The program will match mentors 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 mentors 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 experience," explains Martin Sweeney, director of the ATP. "Assistive technology can

only be meaningful on a practical level if it becomes part of one's daily routine, and the key determining factor is often a helping hand from someone with a little experience. That helping hand is what this mentorship project is all about."

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 minimal amount of support via telephone or e-mail access, while 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 technology 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](tel:213.383.1300) x. 722 or martin.sweeney@lanterman.org.



Homer Martinez pictured with his mentor, Jeff.

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 effect 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 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](tel:888.8.AUTISM).

Cure Autism Now
**WALK
NOW**

Resource Packets Have Pockets Stuffed With Helpful Resources and Information

They come in one shape and one color, but many different sizes. Some are only a quarter inch thick, but others are filled with over an inch of helpful resources and information. “At Lanterman, the word ‘packet’ is synonymous with both resources and information,” explains Ralph Bingener, a consumer of Lanterman and the consumer support assistant for the Family Resource Center (FRC), who is also responsible for the assembly and internal distribution of the resource packets.

“The resource packet initiative is one of the first projects implemented by the FRC shortly after its opening in March 1994,” adds Patricia Herrera, director of family support services. “We wanted to centralize and standardize all the basic resource information that Lanterman distributed to families.” 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 information for the packets from a variety of sources including local, state, and national



Jessica Jameau and Ralph Bingener display resource packet materials.

resources. Information on resources is obtained from families that have first-hand experience with specific community programs, from information fairs, other organizations in the field of disabilities, different state organizations such as the Department of Social Services (DSS), 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

“We wanted to centralize and standardize all the basic resource information that Lanterman distributed to families.”

— Patricia Herrera

service coordinator. “This packet focuses on generic issues such as how to choose a preschool, and how to establish services and support from the public school 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 just to 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 “sightless sculpture” of course.

“This is one of the children’s favorite activities at Sibshops,” shares Olivia Hinojosa, a family support specialist and Sibshop facilitator. The activity, which takes three children, specifies that one child be a model, the second be a lump of clay, and the third to be blindfolded, and then use their sense of touch to mold their clay to resemble the model. “We talk about what it might be like for a person who is visually impaired. This activity helps them imagine if they couldn’t see how they would use their sense of touch to get around.”

A little over a year ago, Lanterman reintroduced the concept of sibling support with a two-day Sibshops Workshop featuring Donald Meyer, leader of the national Sibling Support Project. The workshop was very well received by the community members who attended, prompting the Center to establish two sibling support groups for children ages six to 12, one in Los Angeles and the other in Pasadena.

Of the seven Sibshop facilitators who were initially trained, six are still active including Mandy Moradi, a psychologist at Lanterman, Anita Arcilla-Gutierrez, a nurse consultant,



Children participate in a group activity at the Los Angeles Sibshops.

Lourdes Tabullo, Maribel Ortiz, Anita 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 Anita Castillo, a service coordinator in the Los Angeles School Age

Following are some of the responses that we received from siblings participating in Sibshops on a monthly basis, when we asked the question: “Why do you like coming to the Sibshops?”

Anthony Molina: “I like the snacks, the things we get to share with each other, and playing games with the new friends I have met here.”

Cristina Martinez: “The sibshops are helpful because it helps me understand my feelings about having a sister with a disability, as well as knowing that other people have the same feelings as I do.”

Gladys Baires: “I like sibshops because we get to express our feelings with each other and we get to play fun games.”

Joselyn Barrera: “I like the games we play at sibshops, and I like that I get to meet new friends.”

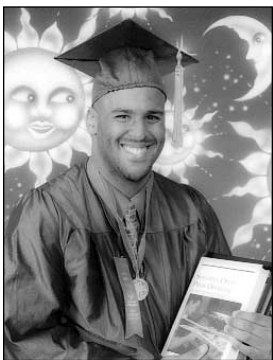
Marlon Mejia-Ferman: “I like the sibshops because we get to play games, and have snacks.”

Continued on Page 12

Health and Wellness

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.



For Harold Levingston the Key is Trying New Things

What made you lose weight?

Levingston: I began exercising. I jog every day, and use the stairs more. I changed my eating

habits also. I eat fewer carbohydrates, drink more water, and make sure that I don't snack between the three meals I have per day. I was able to give up some of the foods I enjoy such as doughnuts and sausage.

How have diet and exercise improved your life?

Levingston: Diet and exercise has helped me to become more motivated. I have more energy to get things done in the community and at work. It has also helped me to save money by watching which foods I buy.

How have you kept the weight off?

Levingston: Keeping to diet and exercise on a daily basis.

How much weight did you lose?

Levingston: I lost 110 lbs. My waist was a size 46, now it is down between a size 38-40. My goal is to reach a size 36.

Are you still losing weight?

Levingston: Yes!

Who has helped you lose the weight?

Levingston: I get help from my mother, and from my basketball coaches. My mom helps me to choose the right foods, and my basketball coaches help me exercise.

Can you give any recommendations to people who want to lose weight?

Levingston: Try new things!

Walking and Watching Diet Help Vincent Pennington Improve Health

Meet Vincent Pennington — In 2000, Pennington was diagnosed with diabetes, and weighed about 330 pounds. "He had a difficult time initially adjusting to the diabetic diet and also increasing his exercise," notes Mercede Shamlo, his service coordinator, "but with the support of his home, family and us, he has since been able to lose over 30 pounds and adhere to his diet."



Pennington has started walking more, eating healthier, and has overall been more compliant with the healthcare precautions recommended to keep his diabetes in check. "It's a lifelong commitment that an individual needs to make to eating appropriately and exercising once they have been diagnosed with diabetes," explains Phyllis Jackson, nurse consultant. "We are even looking into starting him in a gym program very soon, and expect that he will lose more weight," adds Shamlo. Pennington also indicated in his interview that he was very interested in joining a gym because he would like to get into an exercise program to keep losing weight, and begin lifting weights to create muscle tone.

What made you lose weight?

Pennington: Going for outside walks in Pasadena, watching what I eat.

How have diet and exercise improved your life?

Pennington: Diet and exercise helps a lot. I am more active, and I feel better about myself.

How have you kept the weight off?

Pennington: Going for outside walks in Pasadena, watching what I eat.

How much weight did you lose?

Pennington was not able to answer this question, but Shamlo informed us that he lost 31 pounds between May 2002 and September 2002.

Are you still losing weight?

Pennington: YES!

Can you give any recommendations to others wanting to lose weight?

Pennington: No.



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, beige and brown just don't cut it these days," adds Jordan.

When asked for some tips about how to achieve this colorful plate, Jordan and Jackson successively rattled off a host 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 sodas. 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 product labels, 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 over 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 differs in the individuals they serve, every provider needs to actively involve consumers in the meal planning process. "We regularly hear from consumers who are able to verbalize their feelings that they don't necessarily like the food being served," notes Jackson. There are many reasons why certain foods are prepared in facilities including: It is the type of food that the staff eats, or what they know how to cook.

Poor nutrition also affects many consumers who live independently or in supported living situations. "The key in all these situations is to make eating healthy as easy and straightforward as possible," argues Jordan. "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 donning 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 Jackson.

"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," concludes Jordan. "It's up to each and every one of us to make a commitment to eat healthier or provide a proper diet to the individuals in our care."

If you have additional questions, or for more information, contact Phyllis Jackson at 213.383.1300 x. 713 or phyllis.jackson@lanterman.org. You can also visit the Family Resource Center for a variety of resources on nutrition, diet and exercise.



Crispy Baked Chicken

Serves Four

First no one wanted to fry chicken because it was such a mess to clean up. Then it wasn't considered healthy to fry 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, lightly spray foil 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.

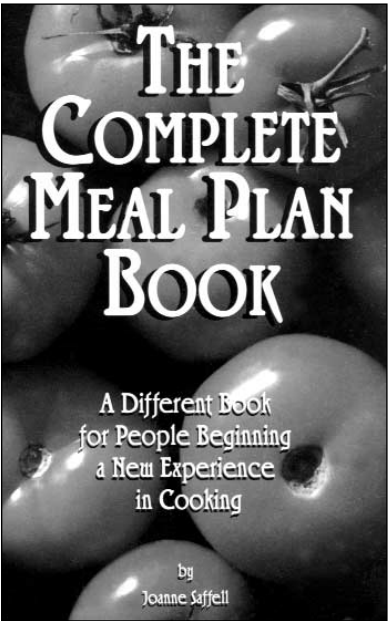
Resources In The FRC Library

The following resources in the Koch•Young Family Resource Center library collection focus on the health and wellness theme in this edition of "Viewpoint," including diet, nutrition and exercise. Whether you are a parent or professional, please visit us in person or online at www.lanternman.org to check out these resources as well as many other resources that focus on the issues of healthy living and other similar issues.

The Complete Meal Plan Book: A Different Book for People Beginning a New Experience in Cooking

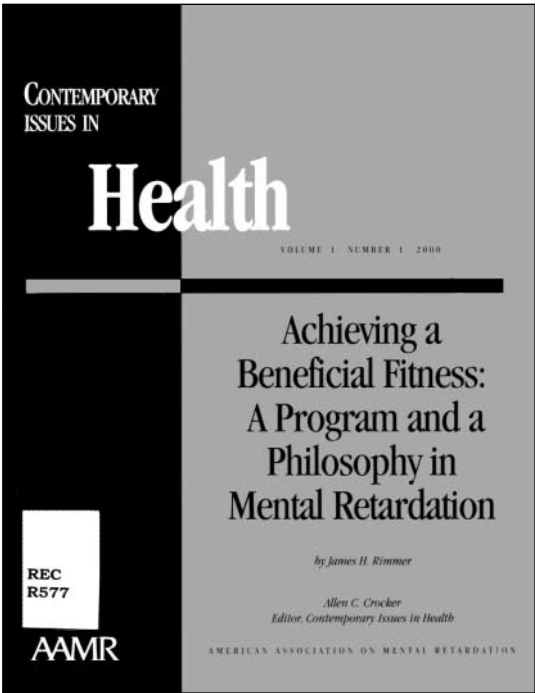
By: Joanne Saffell

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 make a particular meal easy to cook. When there are at least 10 recipes if not 100 for virtually every type of food from appetizers to entrées, this can 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 "Environmental Nutrition: The Newsletter of Food, Nutrition & Health," the official newsletter of licensed nutritionists.



Achieving a Beneficial Fitness: A Program and a Philosophy in Mental Retardation

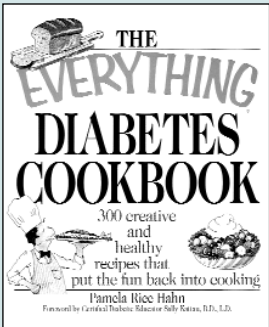
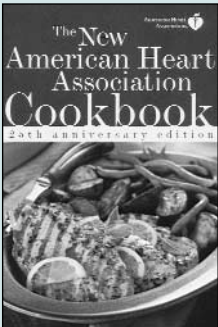
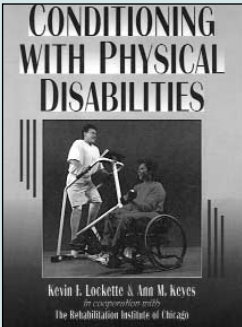
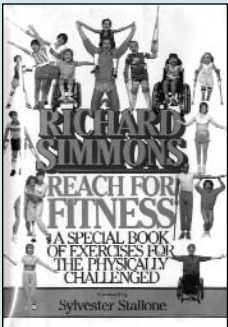
By: James H. Rimmer

As as we all know, it's not just about eating right. Since the very beginning, the FRC has had a recreation section that features a variety of different books that encourage physical activity. Following is a profile that appeared in a 2000 publication of Contemporary Issues in Health published by the American Association on Mental Retardation. Written by James H.

Rimmer, "Achieving a Beneficial Fitness: A Program and Philosophy in Mental Retardation" addresses the greater need for fitness for individuals with developmental disabilities. The book also focuses on the benefits of good fitness, and stresses that without good health, quality of life is often compromised. The book also highlights key aspects of the health and fitness research in the field of mental retardation, and provides guidelines to develop a fitness program for people with mental retardation. The appendix also contains details about implementing group fitness activities that include multifitness, muscle strength, and cardiovascular activities.

Some of the other popular books on physical fitness are Richard Simmons "Reach for Fitness: A Special Book of Exercises for the Physically Challenged," and "Conditioning with Physical Disabilities" by Kevin F. Lockette and Ann M. Keyes. There are also books on gardening with disabilities and physical activities for children.

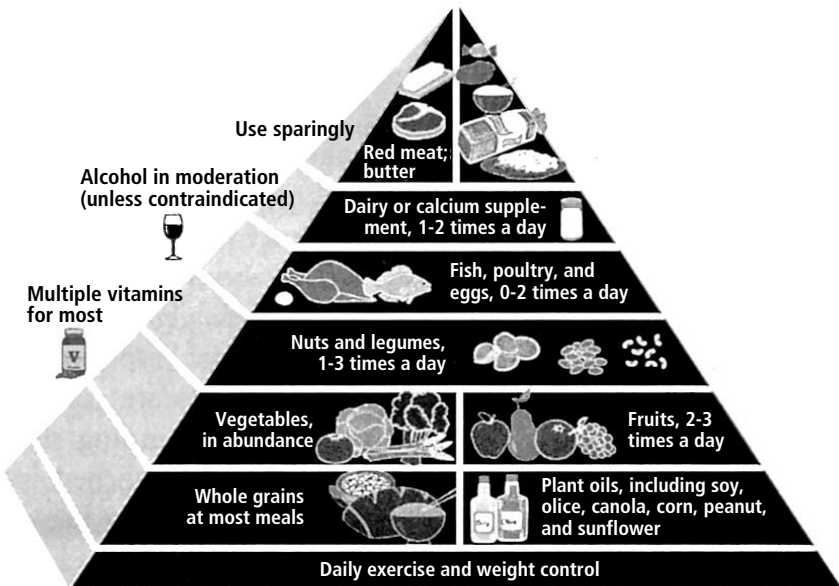
Other FRC Health Resources...



Comparing Pyramids

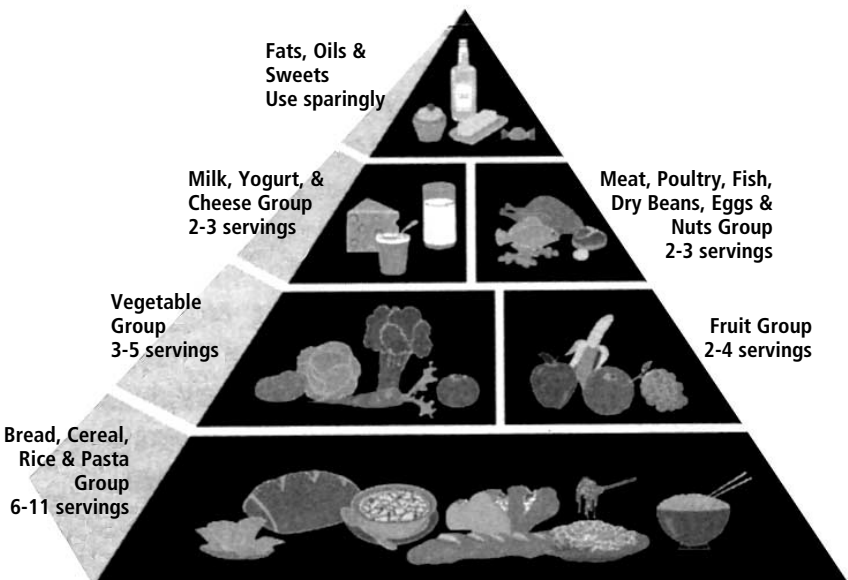
As you compare these two pyramids, you'll notice that one of the most significant differences has nothing to do with food at all. The foundation of the Healthy Eating Pyramid is exercise. Dr. Willett notes that regular physical activity is critically important and — other than not smoking — is the single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

Healthy Eating Pyramid



Adapted from *Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating* by Walter Willett, M.D. (Simon & Schuster, 2001)

USDA Food Guide Pyramid



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Meet the People Behind the Titles: *Gwen Jordan*



One always has to remember that along with patience one must know how to listen to people. We need to listen with our eyes as well as with our ears...listen and apply empathy.

— Gwen Jordan,
Director of Clinical Services

“Viewpoint” recently met with Gwen Jordan, director of clinical services at Lanterman Regional Center. As an integral member of the leadership team we feel that it is important for everyone in the community to have a better idea of the woman behind the title and to understand what are some of her responsibilities. We also asked Jordan about her plans for the future direction of Clinical Services, and a variety of other questions

including the biggest challenges and most rewarding aspects of her job.

Where did you grow up and where do you live now?
I was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, but have lived in Los Angeles.

Are you married and do you have any children?
My husband, Bill, and I have two sons and one daughter. Chris who is 28 and Wendi who is 24 and then Spenser who is 13 and was named after a famous poet, Edmund Spenser. (Spenser, who lived during the second half of the 16th century, was known to his contemporaries as 'the prince of poets', as great in English as Virgil in Latin. He left behind him masterful essays in every genre of poetry, from pastoral and elegy to epithalamion and epic.) My children, especially my two younger ones have been raised while I was right here at Lanterman.

Where did you go to college?
I received my undergraduate degree from UCLA, did some graduate work at California State University Northridge, and went to nursing school at UCLA.

When did you start working at Lanterman Regional Center?
I started at Lanterman on January 6, 1981. I only planned to stay for five years to get the experience and then move on. Well, move on I didn't do, get experience I did.

What positions have you held at Lanterman since you have been here and how have these other positions benefited you in your current position as the Director of Clinical Services?

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 the way it has, but I have to say 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 center, 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. Under that comes the review and follow-up of special incident reports as well as hospitalized individuals in both acute and psychiatric care. Members of the Clinical Services team attend annual reviews, IPPs, 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 – could 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 any job that you put them in. This is playing out 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 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 biggest challenge I would have to say is just getting through the day-to-day things — the nuts and bolts that need to be done such as paperwork, but are sometimes hard to find the time to complete. If we didn't have them though, no one would ever know how we were doing, and what we were spending our time doing.

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Hearts Abound with Surprise Teddy Bear Donation



Ten days before Valentine's Day, Jackie Ashman, Lanterman's director of human resources, received a call from The Alliance for Children's Rights. "It was an unexpected but wonderful surprise," shares Ashman. "They were calling to say that they had an entire truckload of Valentine's Day stuffed animals to donate."

All throughout the afternoon on February 4, the Operations staff could be seen distributing the

teddy bears to the different teams at Lanterman that work with children. "Many of the tables in the Family Resource Center were covered with teddy bears to be handed out as children passed by the area," adds Ashman. "We also gave them to our Intake, Clinical Services, and Early Intervention teams."

Located just down the street from Lanterman's offices on Wilshire Blvd., The Alliance for Children's Rights is Los Angeles County's only non-profit free legal services, information clearinghouse, and social services referral organization devoted solely to helping children living in poverty and foster care get the help and support they need to grow into healthy and productive adults. The Alliance helps children who need adoptive families; are in the foster care system or about to leave foster care as young adults; need health care coverage and services; have learning or developmental disabilities; are mentally ill or have behavioral disorders; and are homeless or runaways. For more information about The Alliance visit <http://www.kids-alliance.org/>.

"On behalf of everyone at Lanterman, I'd like to express our gratitude to The Alliance for always remembering our families," comments Ashman.

By Women, For Women — The Women's Peer Advocacy Group is all About Women



Mary Flynn and Alice Dalva
after a recent meeting of the group.

What do socializing, advocacy and support all have in common? They are all part of the vision behind the women's peer advocacy group.

Beginning in the winter of 2000, a group of female consumers was

trained to help teach classes on reproductive health and self-advocacy to their peers in the community as part of the Lanterman-UCLA peer advocacy for reproductive health project. Shortly after the completion of this project in August 2002, five of the peer advocates involved

in the project expressed a desire to continue meeting to discuss various other women's issues. Out of this interest was born the concept for the women's peer advocacy group.

"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, but not just an advocacy group," explains Alice Dalva, a health educator and advisor to the group. Over the last several months the founders delineated their vision: The women's peer advocacy group is a place where female consumers can discuss issues that are important to them, meet other female consumers in the community, and receive help with advocacy and support.

Group members decide what the topic of the monthly meetings will be. "For example, one topic of particular importance to many of the women in the group was the impact of marriage to their SSI benefits," notes Mary Flynn, consumer advocate and facilitator 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 getting together and talking, but this format lends itself well to brainstorming ideas regarding the topics, and also to the socialization component of the women's peer advocacy group." The group is open to all adult women that would like 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; just 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 213.383.1300 x. 753 or mary.flynn@lanterman.org for more information. The women's peer advocacy group meets monthly on the third Tuesday from 2 p.m. to 3:30 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 Lanterman community. For more information call [818.752.5676](tel:818.752.5676).

Universally Accessible Play Dates Filled with Friends, Fun and Treats



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.

For children of all abilities, a play date is the greatest thing. A play date at the park is even better. 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.

The 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. Seventy percent of the playground equipment is independently playable for children with disabilities while in their support apparatus, and at the same time is fun and challenging for able-bodied children. While the play date is designed for children, it also gives parents an opportunity to share experiences and advice.

As part of the play date, children are provided with goodie bags and treats. Parents need to remember to bring a sack lunch for their children to keep up their energy so they can play from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Shane’s Club also provides a fun planned group activity as part of the play date.

Free accessible transportation from a designated pick-up point is available for children with disabilities and their families to and from the playground. RSVPs must be received by the Monday prior to the play date to ensure there are enough goodie bags, and to reserve a space on the bus if accessible transportation is required. For more information or to make reservations call [818.752.5676](tel:818.752.5676) or marci@shanesinspiration.org, or visit www.shanesinspiration.org.



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,” exclaims 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.

After making several phone calls, Vega contacted Jan Bartolo, the deputy director of park services for the City of Burbank Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department. Bartolo mentioned that the department would have to meet and discuss the viability of the request and that Vega should periodically check back on the status.

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.

“It’s 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 playgroup equipment at 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.

Grand Slam Breakfast

continued from front page

short, I was dragged to my first fathers support group at a time when I could barely speak about her birth. It was part of a group organized by the UCLA Early Intervention Program for Children with Disabilities, and I wanted no part of it. Resistance, that was my beginning. Barely could I understand what was going on inside, let alone share it with strangers. I couldn't find the words, and didn't know where to turn. I was lucky, I somehow found a fathers' support group.

It was pretty basic stuff: twice a month, once together with our children on Saturday mornings, and once at night just with other dads. "Hello... my kid's got... how about you?" We sort of winged it, and over time got to know one another and our kids. No magic, just dads talking about their sons and daughters.

Later, the group reformed for a couple of years in different living rooms throughout Los Angeles carrying on our conversations and comparing notes as our children went from early intervention to preschools, and then on to elementary schools. We got older, wider, slower, and grayer. Some of us moved, some got divorced, some just stopped coming.

A few years more slipped by and the group resurfaced again, this time as the daDA Regional Support Network for Fathers of Children with Special Needs. The mythology

of the group includes the explanation that "daDA" stands for Dads Against Dumb Acronyms. The group found new blood (and energy) with support from the Regional Center, Patricia Herrera, and the Koch♦Young Family Resource Center.

Every support group winds through its own cycle though, and after a good run of almost five years daDA sputtered and simply ran out of gas. Sometimes, however, these odd collectives find new life, and just this past summer daDA resurrected itself yet again.

This new reincarnation has a whole new look: new faces, new energy, and monthly evening meetings held in a back room at Denny's in Los Angeles just off San Fernando Road. How's that for cool? The group is just finding itself as we try to remember each other's names, and listen to the stories and back-stories about our sons and daughters. This is not your typical Denny's Grand Slam Breakfast Special! We laugh at all the wrong punch lines, and chuckle in recognition of the very different patterns of our lives. The subtext can be like screeching chalk against a blackboard.

Why fathers' support? Because it continues to make a difference in my life as a father, and as a man. I can't even put it sensibly into words. There's really nothing fancy to it, sometimes at the end of a long day, frankly, it's even a little tiring. And yet there is something extraordinary about the experience. Honestly, men are generally not terrific when it comes to the whole

notion of support (and I'm not talking about the rent). We like control, we like to speak with authority, we know what's on the menu, and by god, we're ready to order. But there's something else about fathers of children with special needs: we need to find some comfort in telling and retelling our stories — stories not easily shared with friends or even family members.

This experience has helped me listen to other stories about other fathers who happen to share similar lives — good, bad, glorious and unimaginable. These stories have helped me better understand my life as well as the relationship I share with my daughter. Fathers' support has truly made me a better father. This is a long way from that frightful first meeting 20 years ago.

Martin Sweeney currently works as the director of the Assistive Technology Project at Lanterman Regional Center.

Fathers' Corner will be an ongoing regular "Viewpoint" feature. If you are a father and would like to write a column for an edition of Father's Corner in an upcoming "Viewpoint," please contact Vinita Anand at 213.383.1300 x. 715 or vinita.anand@lanterman.org. The daDA Fathers' Support Group is currently meeting on the second Monday of every month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Denny's located at 3060 San Fernando Road in Los Angeles (off Fletcher Street, exit off I-5 or near the Glendale Freeway). If you would like more information, please call Aaron Hinojosa at 626.296.1556 or Germán Barrero 626.840.9842.

Sibshops

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unit. "I feel it benefits the children because they have a chance to say how they feel and to have fun. They are able to voice their feelings and I am able to share with them how I felt, how it gets better and how in time you learn to appreciate the disabled sibling."

"As has been shown time and again, the power of the sibling support group is that the siblings know they are with other siblings and share that common bond," notes Hinojosa. "It's quite similar to the ideas behind parent-to-parent support." In addition, the Sibshop groups offer both a place and a time that siblings can call their own. "Many children feel that their family spends a lot of time taking their sibling with a disability to appointments," adds Hinojosa "and Sibshops become a time that is all theirs."

In the two hours that the groups meet each month, siblings spend about 90 percent of their time doing fun activities like "sightless sculpture" or "pushpin soccer," which matches two teams against each other and awards points for each balloon that is popped by a team's goalie. Meetings always start with the children making nametags. "This normally takes about 15 minutes," notes Hinojosa. "We get creative with making the nametags. For example, we might have the children draw pictures on their tags that tie back to a topic they might be talking about such as what they want to be when they grow up and what they want or hope their sibling will be when they grow up."

Directly following the nametag project, the facilitators start the discussion activity, which references topic areas around how the children feel about being a brother or sister of a person with special needs. "The children's all time favorite discussion activity is responding to 'Dear Aunt Blabby' letters," comments Hinojosa. The facilitator may read the following letter from a child:

*Dear Aunt Blabby,
When I walk in the mall with my brother,
people always stare and it makes me really mad.
What are they looking at anyways? Should I
keep walking, should I say something?
"Speechless"*

After hearing the letter, as a group discussion, the children say how they might answer speechless. "The hope is that children may recall the advice they hear from their peers if they ever find themselves in a similar situation," explains Hinojosa. "I've seen how throughout the span of meeting, some of the children have even built friendships with the others," adds Castillo.

The remainder of the session includes a snack break, and then two games one high-energy, and the second one a low-energy activity to wind them down. "While many of the activities in Sibshops are designed to let siblings express their opinions and concerns and gain an understanding of what it would be like to be in their siblings' shoes, Sibshops is in no way therapy," stresses Hinojosa. "Although the results may be therapeutic for some children because they know they have a safe place



Sibshops Pasadena

where they can be respected and understood, the facilitators are not therapists."

"The kids share with us that they love coming to the Sibshops and wish it was every week," exclaims Castillo.

Sibshops meet in Los Angeles and Pasadena from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on the third Friday of every month. The current groups serve children ages six to 12 and cost \$5 per session. The Los Angeles Sibshop group would like to thank Shriners Hospital for hosting the group for the first year and as the second year gets underway welcome families to the new location at Lanterman. The Pasadena group would like to thank Villa Esperanza for their generosity and use of their space and look forward to continuing the partnership for 2003 in the Foothill community. If you are interested in joining Sibshops please contact Olivia Hinojosa at 213.383.1300 x. 705 or olivia.hinojosa@lanterman.org. Lanterman is also looking to establish similar opportunities for siblings of all ages including adolescents and adults. Please contact Olivia Hinojosa if you would be interested in participating in a group.

Gwen Jordan

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What are some of the rewards of your job?

It is so rewarding to be able to see that you have made a difference in somebody's life whether an individual or a whole family. Those are the biggest rewards.

What do you consider as some of your accomplishments?

One of the biggest accomplishments and one that I am the most proud of is the development of two fully staffed, concurrently functional eligibility teams — one for Early Intervention and one for age three and older. The eligibility teams actually sit down and review and discuss information in a group setting. So much more insight is gained and we are able to make better decisions by meeting together as a multidisciplinary group, which generally includes a physician, a psychologist, a member of case management staff, and a manager. The whole idea is to unite people with expertise, and I truly believe this is the most effective way to determine Regional Center eligibility.

What are some of the key focuses for the Clinical Services team currently?

We are currently looking at the issue of diabetes and how we can prevent future incidence of the disease within our community. We are also looking at how we can help those individuals already diagnosed with Type II diabetes to stay off insulin and only rely on oral anti-diabetic agents as well as how to dispel the misconception that you can eat what you want to if you take medicine. We are starting an education process and creating an informational pamphlet that promotes a sensible diet and exercise regime.

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 saying 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 we are fulfilling our role for our consumers in accomplishing the best health that they are able to be in.

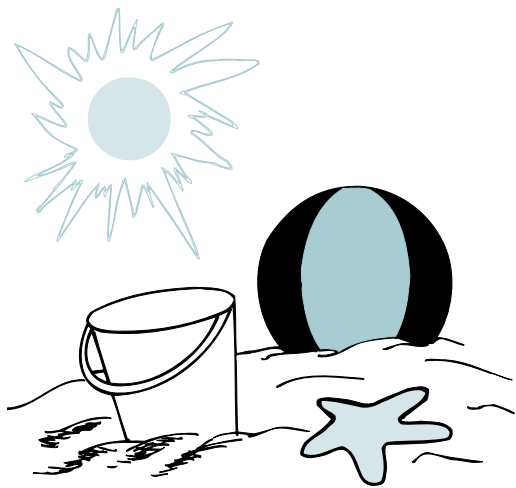
Are there any take home or important life lessons that you have learned and would like to share?

One thing that this job has taught me and continues to teach me is to be flexible and patient. I come in with a plan on how I am going to spend my day, but one has to modify the plan as the day goes on. People do not fit into neat little boxes, none of us do, and you just never know what the day is going to bring. One always has to remember that along with patience one must know how to listen to people. We need to listen with our eyes as well as with our ears...listen and apply empathy.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

I feel fortunate to be a part of an agency that considers health and well-being a very important part of the whole person.

Summer Recreation Opportunities



The summer months are creeping up and soon enough, we'll be looking for outdoor leisure activities. Some of the following resources are vendored programs that specialize in working with people with developmental disabilities; 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 213.383.1300 x. 716 or wendy.weyenberg@lanterman.org.

GENERIC RESOURCES

AYSO is a national youth soccer program. AYSO has a VIP program that provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults with disabilities. Practice and games are held at Balboa Park in Encino. For more information call Steve Poretzky at 818.907.6880 or e-mail Poretzky@aol.com.

Boy Scouts of America offers inclusion in scouting. For more information, please contact Pierre Landry at 323.255.0354 or at Landry@aol.com.

Boys & Girls Club of Pasadena, located at 3230 E. Del Mar Blvd., mainstreams individuals on a case-by-case basis into their camps, crafts and sports programs. For a schedule of activities, you can call 626.449.1953.

Eagle Rock Little League has been including young children in the T-ball division. Practices are held at Yosemite playground. For more information call Joel Zimmerle at 323.258.6536.

Hollywood YMCA offers a variety of services including a weight room, gym and pool. They are located near Sunset and Wilcox. They can be reached at 323.467.4161 for specific details.

Jewish Big Brothers Association offers residential summer camps for Jewish boys and girls with disabilities, ages five to 12 years of age. For more information, please call 323.761.8675.

Jewish Programs for the Disabled (Chaverim) offers activities throughout the Los Angeles area for Jewish adults with developmental disabilities. Activities include bowling, miniature golf, music, dances, and seasonal dinners. Call 818.884.1092 for more information.

New Directions provides vacation travel plans for people with developmental disabilities. They coordinate day trips and overnight trips. Call 805.967.2841 to be put on their mailing list.

Pickwick Recreation Center, located in Burbank, offers a variety of recreation activities, including bowling and equestrian training. Call 818.845.5300 for further details.

Plaza de la Raza offers art and cultural experiences, including music, dance and visual arts. They are located at 3540 N. Mission Road and can be reached at 323.223.2475.

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 800.400.9994.

Shane's Inspiration is a spacious 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 statewide track and field meet will be held in June in Long Beach; call 323.242.1780 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 626.449.5661, and ask for Amanda Donahue, to get more information.

Adaptive Recreation Program of Pasadena 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 McCambridge Park on Glen 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.

Club Maple offers social recreation opportunities every Thursday evening, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Maple Park Apartments. Club Maple also coordinates one outing a month with the Glendale Parks and Recreation Department. Call 818.548.2788 to be put on a 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 818.409.8306 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. Call 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, located near Dodger Stadium, 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 323.226.1402 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 Seely. Call the main office at 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 leisure opportunities 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 818.398.6317.

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 teenagers. 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 760.737.3990 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 818.361.6400 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

- What:** Eighth Annual Social Recreation Forum
- When:** May 6, 2003 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Where:** Lanterman Regional Center, Los Angeles, California — 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.

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 webpage that is accessible via our website: www.lanterman.org.

If you are a parent or consumer in the Lanterman Regional Center service area and are interested in attending a training opportunity outside the Regional Center, contact your service coordinator. For consideration, your request must be received by Training and Development three weeks prior to the posted conference deadline. We welcome your suggestions for future training topics and information on upcoming educational events that we can share 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)

English – Last Monday of every month
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Lanterman Regional Center, FRC
Presenters: LRC staff

For additional information call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

FAMILIAS DE INTERVENCIÓN TEMPRANA (NACIMIENTO A 3 AÑOS)

Español – Último lunes de cada mes
10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Lanterman Regional Center, FRC
Presenters: LRC staff

Para mas información 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

For additional information call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

PARA NIÑOS TRES AÑOS Y MAYOR

Español – 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 información llame al 213.383.1300 x. 730.

TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL ORIENTATION MEETING

For families with children two years of age.
English & Español
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 training is a 10-hour course for Lanterman families to better enable them to advocate for and assist their family member with a disability.

For reservations call 213.383.1300 x. 730.

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

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 half-days 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 consumer, 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. Inquire 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

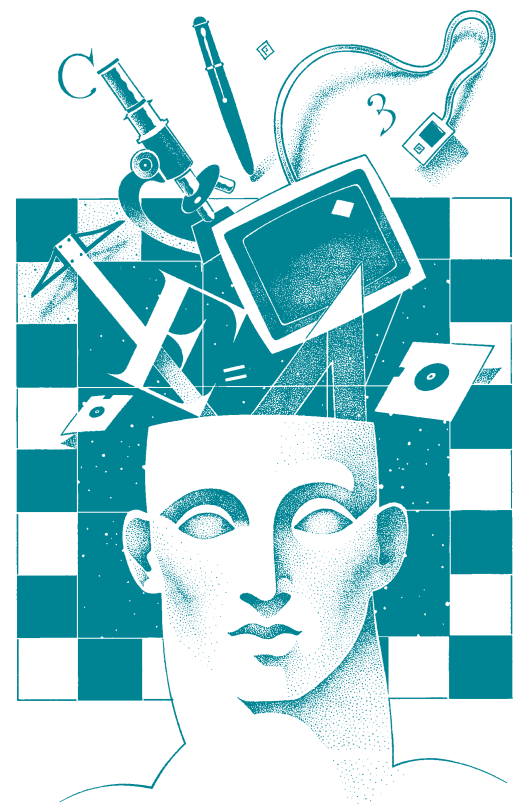
FOR ADULTS (INTERMEDIATE) — ENGLISH

April 24, 2003 - June 26, 2003
Thursday Mornings, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
10 Consecutive Weeks
Lanterman Regional Center
Presenters: LAUSD

ESPAÑOL — 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 preventative 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 1CME 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 323.671.3830 or Cbujold@chla.usc.edu.



ADULT SIBLING SUPPORT GROUP

Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Olivia Hinojosa 213.383.1300 x. 705

ARMENIAN PARENT GROUP

Quarterly meetings — Glendale area
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Rima Shahoian 818.548.4349
Sona Topjian 213.383.1300 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 Shahoian 818.548.4349
Sona Topjian 213.383.1300 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 Kreysler 626.447.3452

DE MI FAMILIA A SU FAMILIA

(Grupo para familias con niños con autismo.)
Lanterman Regional Center
Primer miercoles de cada mes
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Contact: Romi Castillo 323.463.3678

DOWN SYNDROME SAN GABRIEL VALLEY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP 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 Hinojosa 213.383.1300 x. 705
Ian & Terry West 818.952.2629

FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

St. Dominic's Community Center
2002 Merton Avenue; Eagle Rock
Monthly — First Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Contact: Emma Guanlao 323.259.8332
Sandy Riancho 323.344.9355

FILIPINO AMERICAN SPECIAL SERVICE GROUP FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Alice Gubatan 213.384.2340

FOOTHILL AUTISM ALLIANCE — NETWORK RESOURCE MEETINGS

BCR-230 E. Amherst Drive; Burbank
Monthly — Second Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Contact: Sue Brooks 818.66.AUTISM (818.662.8847)

FRAGILE X PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Call for dates, location and details.
Monthly — 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. Glenoaks Blvd.; Burbank
Monthly — First Wednesday, 10:00 a.m.
Contact: Jennifer Wyre 213.383.1300 x. 537

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA FAMILIAS DE INTERVENCION TEMPRANA

Lanterman Regional Center
Seguendo miercoles de cada mes, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Contact: Augustina Mellin 213.365.2138
Monica Mauriz 213.383.1300 x. 519
Edward Perez 213.383.1300 x. 522

GRUPO PARA FAMILIAS CON NIÑOS CON PRADER-WILLI

Shriner's Hospital
3160 Geneva Street (Virgil and Third); Los Angeles
Ultimo viernes 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: Jessye 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 213.383.1300 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.
Contact: Mariko 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: Suki Chang 213.999.3981
Christine Yuh 213.383.1300 x. 552

LA ESPERANZA

(Grupo semanal en Español)
Lanterman Regional Center
Lunes, 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Ana Ripoll 213.389.8329
Maria Cibrian 323.666.1601
Nilda Lopapa 213.383.1300 x. 554

PADRES UNIDOS LANTERMAN

(Grupo en Español)
Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles (Vermont and Sunset)
Conference Room "D"
Segundo martes de cada mes, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Irma Cruz 323.461.9307
Yadira Bautista 323.460.4794

RETT SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP

Quarterly meetings — Pasadena area
Call for dates, location and details.
Contact: Marie Hyland 626.790.4836
Pep Stenberg 626.355.5334

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. 553

TEATRO ILUSIÓN

(Grupo semanal en Español)
Shriner's Hospital
3160 Geneva Street (Virgil and Third); Los Angeles
Cada viernes, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Contact: Yolanda Hernandez 562.928.5324

NEW GROUPS

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK

AbilityFirst
40 North Altadena Drive; Pasadena
Monthly — Second Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Olivia Hinojosa 213.383.1300 x. 705

daDA FATHERS REGIONAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Denny's Restaurant
3060 San Fernando Road; Los Angeles
Monthly — Second Monday, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Aaron Hinojosa 626.296.1556
Germán Barrero 626.840.9842

GRUPO DE APOYO PARA EL MANEJO DE LA CONDUCTA

Shriner's Hospital
3160 Geneva Street (Virgil and Third); Los Angeles
Ultimo martes de cada mes, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Alfredo Kertzman 714.328.491

MOMMY & DADDY & ME — EARLY INTERVENTION PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Call for details.
Contact: Olivia Hinojosa 213.383.1300 x. 705

SIBSHOPS

For siblings ages six-12.
Los Angeles and Pasadena areas
Monthly — Third Friday, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Contact: Olivia Hinojosa 213.383.1300 x. 705

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 Hinojosa, 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 Hinojosa. 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 half.

If you have a child birth-to-three, the facilitators would love to hear from you. Please contact Olivia Hinojosa at **213.383.1300 x. 705** or olivia.hinojosa@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

Lanterman Self-Advocacy Groups

MID-WILSHIRE SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP

Lanterman Regional Center
Monthly — First Monday, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Contact: Armen Frundzhyan 323.462.7300

PASADENA SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP

529 N. Hill Avenue; Pasadena
Call for dates and times.
Contact: Ara Bezjian 626.793.1989
bezara@visto.com

THE ACHIEVERS

Burger King in Glendale
(corner of Colorado and Chevy Chase)
Monthly — Third Monday, 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Contact: Jack Riggle 818.848.1246

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

Be All You Can Be – Become a Peer Support Partner

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,” notes Hinojosa, “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.”

“The range and scope of the peer support program varies greatly, and is always guided by the families’ needs.”

— Olivia Hinojosa

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.

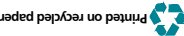
The offer of being contacted by the FRC is also presented to families during the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). “The majority of referrals come from service coordinator referrals,” comments Hinojosa. Once a request for contact has been submitted, the family receives a welcome call from a 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 have the capability of being more. “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 213.383.1300 x. 705 or olivia.hinojosa@lanterman.org. The next peer support program training dates are June 10 and 17, 2003.



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IN THIS ISSUE

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