

Lanterman Launches Network of Care Site Featuring Integrated Community Resources

EACH OF US HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP children and adults with developmental disabilities become fully-included and accepted members of our communities. One of the things we can do is to seek out generic community resources to include people with developmental disabilities and start changing people's perceptions and facilitating inclusion and acceptance at a grassroots level.

"Over the years, we have implemented many strategies to help adults with developmental disabilities and families with children with special needs increase their knowledge about generic community resources that offer fully-integrated programs, and we are pleased to launch our newest tool – Lanterman Regional Center's Network of Care," shares Diane Anand, executive director.

On Lanterman's Network of Care site you will find a listing of community-based resources for children and adults that are close to where you live. The resources on the site are searchable by several criteria, including by category of the resource, and location/area. The initial groups of resources we are making available primarily focus on social/recreational, preschool and day care options. As the site continues to grow we will be adding additional resources in other categories, such as medical, dental and transportation.

This site is designed to only include resources that integrate children and adults with developmental disabilities into regular programming and activities with their non-disabled peers. Specialized programs

FRANK D. LANTERMAN REGIONAL CENTER
NETWORK OF CARE
for Developmental Disabilities

serving only people with developmental disabilities are not listed. The Center's objective is to maximize the information about community resources used by the general public so that our clients and families can make informed choices. At the same time, we encourage you to discuss your needs and the potential resources with your service coordinator. He or she can help you evaluate whether these resources will help you meet the goals and objectives written in your person-centered plan.

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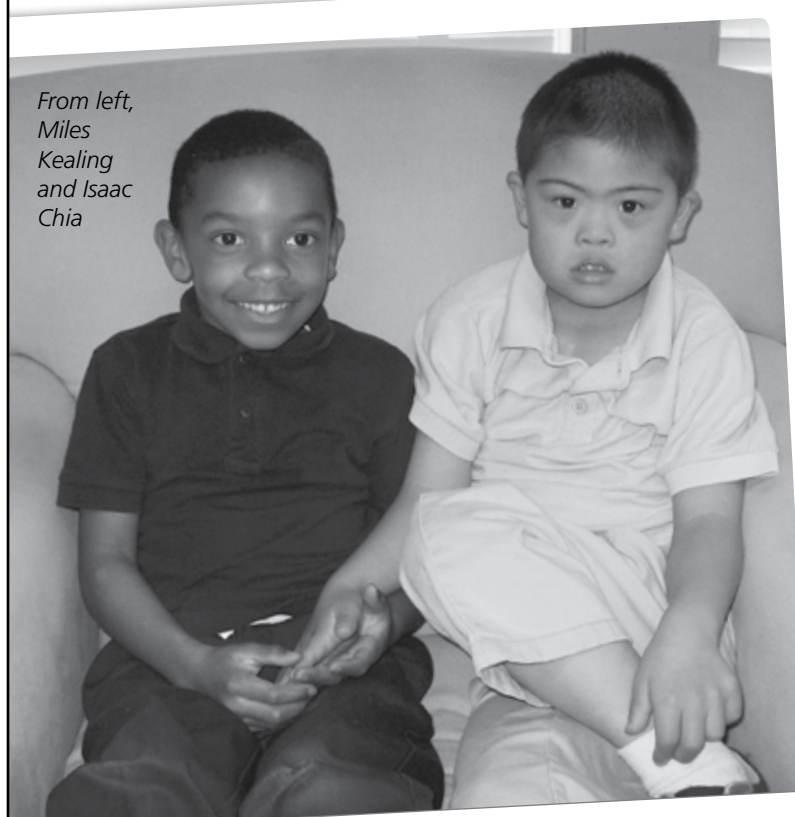
Help UCP Wheels for Humanity Change Lives Around the World

UCP Wheels for Humanity's mission is to provide increased self-sufficiency and mobility to people with disabilities worldwide by delivering and individually fitting wheelchairs and ambulatory aid equipment.



See story on page 5

Early Childhood Inclusion Offers Many Benefits



While early childhood inclusion offers numerous benefits for both children with and without disabilities, there is no cookie cutter solution for ensuring that it is successful. Each child has unique needs and each environment offers different challenges that must all be taken into consideration to ensure a positive outcome.

So when Lanterman received an e-mail from Marian Chen, the mother of one of our clients, sharing with us an e-mail that the mother of a student in her son Isaac's class had sent (see e-mail on page 6), we decided to find out the story behind the e-mail.

See story on pages 6 – 7

Joey Travolta's Inclusion Films' Practical Filmmaking Workshop Will Offer Hands-on Vocational Experience in the Film Industry

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE DREAM ABOUT WHAT it would be like to work in Hollywood and be a part of the film industry, not just as an actor, but as a filmmaker, an editor, a sound mixer, lighting technician, or even a set designer. Many people succeed, but many people don't, and what can make the difference between success and failure is a person's past experiences. But as a person with a developmental disability, getting that experience can be even harder – until now.

If you're a person with a developmental disability 18 years and older and have always wondered if you'd like working in the film industry and if it's really for you, you now have the opportunity to gain experience in all aspects of making a film through Joey Travolta's Practical Filmmaking Workshop. The initial session of the Practical Filmmaking Workshop will be starting on Monday, May 14. The workshop will be a 24-week program of half-day sessions that will take participants through the process of making a feature-length film, from pre- to post-production, using a working film production as the lesson plan.

And if you're wondering how Travolta became interested in offering vocational training in the film industry for people with developmental disabilities, it all started four years ago, when Travolta's daughter Rachel approached him to sponsor Chaminade High School's inaugural film festival. "I told her that I'd also donate some Entertainment Experience acting and filmmaking summer camp sessions and get her some publicity for the event," recalls Travolta. The local weekly newspaper, The Acorn, ran a story about the film festival, and in it mentioned that Travolta had a background in special education.

Shortly after the story appeared, Travolta received calls from a couple of parents who have children with autism, wanting to know if he would consider including children with special needs in his classes. Kerri Bowers, one of the callers, wanted to know if the festival would be open to screening a film about what it's like to be a child with autism from the child's

"We're hopeful that this experience will provide people with the background and tools they need to pursue employment possibilities in the film industry."

—DIANE ANAND



Joey Travolta shares information with guests at a recent open house showcasing Inclusion Films' Practical Filmmaking Workshop, which will be starting on Monday, May 14.

perspective. The primary criteria for festival inclusion was that the filmmaker be in high school, so her child could definitely submit a film. "As it turns out, Bowers' son Taylor Cross hadn't made the film yet nor did he know how to make a film. With donated time and equipment from Bluth Enterprises, we helped Taylor make a 10-minute film that allowed viewers to see what it's like to live in the world with autism through the eyes of those who have it," says Travolta.

Travolta also interested "California Connected," a collaborative show of four PBS stations, to do a documentary on the making of Cross' film, "Normal People Scare Me." Travolta adds, "Although they had

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The Director’s Viewpoint Choice, Self-Direction and Life After School

IT’S AN INESCAPABLE fact of life that we all age. In the 40-plus years of the regional center system, the population we serve has not only grown, but also is now aging. Those who came to us as infants when our system began are now into middle adulthood, and some, into retirement.



Executive Director Diane Anand

As we have grown and changed over these four decades, we have made tremendous progress in ensuring that the children we serve receive the services and supports they need to participate as fully-included students in their local schools. But once they have left the school setting, their opportunities are often limited.

Yet the Regional Center mission is to help individuals with developmental disabilities to live full, active and satisfying lives. The word satisfying carries with it the sense of spending one’s days in meaningful activities that add to the quality of life. Whether school, employment, a day program – or a combination of all these – one of our goals is to make certain that adults with developmental disabilities have options to fill their days with activities of their own choosing.

Recognizing this, the state Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 1270, which directs the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to bring together a group of interested and involved people to gather information and prepare a report with ideas for different and expanded work, social, recreational and school opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

This group, called the SB1270 Workgroup, is composed of individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, advocates and service providers, as well as legislative and agency representatives.

The Legislature has requested recommendations in the following areas: expanding opportunities in social, recreational and volunteer activities; expanding work opportunities in the community, including public sector jobs; increasing the use of creative ideas like vouchers and self-directed services; looking at successful models in California and other states; and finding ways to overcome barriers by making changes to regulations and funding.

The workgroup met in January and set four overarching goals for their task:

1. That opportunities for integrated employment and community participation are discussed at all Individual Program Plan meetings.
2. That there be a Cooperative Transition and Employment Unit located in the Department of Developmental Services with funding to help people with developmental disabilities and their families determine what to do after high school. This includes not only employment, but also opportunities to pursue postsecondary education for individuals who wish to do so.
3. That the State Council will announce a five-year employment initiative for Californians with developmental disabilities.
4. That there be a statewide system for collecting and reporting information about integrated employment and community participation to measure success and plan for needed changes.

The workgroup is charged with submitting their report to the governor and the Legislature by May 2007. From there it’s a matter of setting priorities and moving forward to make good on our promise and our mandate to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities have ever-expanding opportunities and support to pursue activities meaningful to them throughout their lives.

Here at Lanterman, we await this report with interest and a commitment to ensuring that the people we serve will have choices about community participation and relationships that reflect their lifestyle, as well as their personal, cultural and spiritual preferences.

“Special Needs Mama” Column Opens Dialogue Between Parents of Children with Special Needs and Parents of Neurotypical Children

AT SOME POINT, MANY OF US WILL FIND OURSELVES STRUGGLING TO EXPLAIN WHAT SOMETHING in our lives is like to someone who may never share that same experience, but are nonetheless curious about what it’s like. Parents of children with special needs can now turn to the “Special Needs Mama” columns written by Vicki Forman and featured on the Web site “Literary Mama: Reading for the Maternally Inclined” as a place to start their own journey of sharing and helping others understand their experiences as parents of children with special needs.

Several years ago, Forman was shopping around a proposal to write a book about special needs parenting in the general publishing marketplace, and while there was a lot of positive response, she never got a book deal and eventually shelved the proposal. She started work on several other projects, including an anthology of stories written by parents of children with special needs, as well as a full-length book about her family’s experience during the first year of Evan’s life and the loss of his twin sister Ellie who died when she was 4 days old.

In the course of her other work, Forman become acquainted with some of the editors at “Literary Mama” and eventually approached them about writing a column explaining the world of special needs parenting to typical parents in the hopes of creating a dialogue. “I had an experience at the swings at my local park. This mom pushing her son on the swings next to Evan really wanted to know what it was like inside the world of parenting a child with special needs, but she just didn’t know how to approach asking her questions,” shares Forman. “I left feeling like I had to do something. I realized that being a mother is being a mother, and I wanted to talk about what connects us since I think that a lot of the time special needs parents and typical parents don’t know where to start.” And as a professional writer, Forman turned to the media that she knows best – writing.

In December 2006, Forman’s first posting in the “Special Needs Mama” recurring monthly column appeared on “Literary Mama” and was called “The Mother at the Swings.” The column’s tagline sums up the purpose of the column: “Special Needs Mama” is written for the mothers at the swings, those with open hearts and kind smiles who want to know what it’s like inside the world of parenting a child with special needs. Forman has now posted four columns, each of which have averaged over 5,000 readers per month.

Forman says, “What I’ve found to be interesting and overwhelming is how many special needs parents are finding this column. ‘Literary Mama’s’ primary audience is parents of neurotypical children; however, a lot of feedback about the columns has come from special needs parents. Mothers at dramatically different stages of acceptance of their child’s disability have written to say they don’t feel so alone because the columns are saying the things that they know and feel; people are using the columns to educate their own family members and to open a dialogue with their family and friends.”

Forman has personally derived a lot of strength from writing her columns. She’s more comfortable with people staring at her when she’s out with Evan, and she’ll answer any questions about her experiences, even if it’s still an emotionally-wrought conversation for her. She feels very strongly that parents of children with special needs need to talk about their experiences. “Compared to 40 years ago, parents in our generation are very fortunate to have the benefit of being able to care for our children with disabilities and not be shamed by society for raising them ourselves. Along with this wonderful opportunity come some real challenges though – we have to learn to take pride, and show that being a mother is being a mother, this is my kid, I don’t have to hide, but rather assume the responsibility of helping others understand,” adds Forman. “It really is true that our children do share pleasures that are universal, and if we can acknowledge and accept the similarities, then we can really start talking about the differences. I have the responsibility to take the time to explain what it’s like, share how it feels to do this every day, and also let people know what they can do to help, and what I’d like them to say, and what it’s not alright to say. We have to create a dialogue so we can ultimately achieve awareness, understanding and acceptance for our children with special needs.”

In many respects, the Internet has made it easier than ever for parents of children with special needs to create a dialogue and share their experiences. Parents of children with special needs have their own Web sites, blogs, message boards, chat rooms, podcasts, online support groups, and thousands of other online resources just a click away. More and more parents of children with special needs are joining the online community and networking. “I’ve met so many parents through these new non-traditional media. The Internet makes communication more accessible. You can reach out to your audience as there is no one between you and your audience. Politically and economically there is no one in the way of being able to share what comes from your heart, making the online experience really grassroots,” explains Forman.

And in case you’re wondering after you’ve read Forman’s columns, she has never again seen the mother at the swings who inspired her to start writing her “Special Needs Mama” column. Forman shares, “I hope one day that I do meet her again because she helped me realize that if I wanted to have a dialogue that I was going to have to start the conversation.”

You can read Forman’s “Special Needs Mama” columns at www.literarymama.com/columns/specialneeds mama. To see what else Forman is working on and to read her blog “Speak Softly,” visit www.vickiforman.com.

Vicki Forman teaches creative writing at the University of Southern California. Her work has been nominated for a Pushcart and has appeared in Seneca Review and Santa Monica Review, plus the anthologies “This Day: Diaries from American Women,” “The Spirit of Pregnancy: An Interactive Anthology for Your Journey to Motherhood,” and “Literary Mama: Reading for the Maternally Inclined.” She lives in Southern California with her husband and two children, 9-year-old Josie and 6-year-old Evan. You can contact her at vlforman@gmail.com. ■



Vicki Forman with her son Evan.

“Along with this wonderful opportunity come some real challenges though – we have to learn to take pride, and show that being a mother is being a mother, this is my kid, I don’t have to hide, but rather assume the responsibility of helping others understand.”

—VICKI FORMAN

“Mr. Blue Sky” Explores Romantic Relationships and Challenges Filmgoers to Examine Their Own Views and Preconceptions

ON A DAY THAT THE AUDIENCE WOULD COME TO know as a “Mr. Blue Sky” day, the film by the same name, premiered in the Zanuck Theater on the back lot of the Fox Studios in Century City. The screening, hosted by the Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles, was held in the 400-plus seat theater to a sold-out crowd.

“We were delighted with the interest and excitement that the premiere of this film generated,” says Gail Williamson, executive director of the Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles. “We had to turn away over 200 interested filmgoers.”

Prior to the screening, a reception was hosted by Perspectives International Film Festival in the Fox Studios Commissary, affording audience members a chance to mingle with the cast and crew of “Mr. Blue Sky.” The film, a Blue Sky Magic Production in association with Blue Cactus Pictures, stars Chaney Kley, Richard Karn, Mary Kate Schellhardt, Nancy Rita Wolfe and Ashley Ara Wolfe.

“Mr. Blue Sky” explores the romantic relationship of a woman with Down syndrome and a “typical” male. The film attempts to break down societal barriers, much like the film “Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?” did in the 1960s for interracial



Filmgoers enjoy a reception hosted by Perspectives International Film Festival prior to the screening of “Mr. Blue Sky.”

marriages, as it aims to “change lives” through “changing minds.” The film, shot on location in Ventura, tells the story of an unconventional love triangle between three childhood buddies – two girls, one with Down syndrome, and a boy – “who all grow up fighting who they are inside, how they are perceived by society as a whole, and who they ultimately strive to become as individuals through the obstacles that are inherently present.”

“Mr. Blue Sky” challenges filmgoers to examine their own views and perceptions about romantic relationships between people with developmental disabilities and those without, just as the characters in the film are forced to explore these issues. “While the film portrays communitywide acceptance of the relationship at its conclusion, our society on the whole is not yet able to readily accept a situation like this. We still have a lot of preconceptions, but the hope is that this film will ultimately help change the way society views all people as ‘individuals’ first and foremost, regardless of ability,” adds Williamson.

The screening concluded with a question and answer session with several members of the cast, as well as the film’s director, Sarah Gurfield, and with the writer

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—GAIL WILLIAMSON



Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles Executive Director Gail Williamson (far left) and Diane Anand (far right) with members of the “Mr. Blue Sky” cast and crew.

and executive producer, Tom Paddy Lee. Audience members questioned the panel about where they found the inspiration to make the film, whether they themselves thought that the situation portrayed in the film was realistic, if the good-looking male lead Chaney Kley would marry Ashley Wolfe in real life, and what their experience was with casting real people with developmental disabilities, rather than actors without disabilities portraying them.

For those of you still wondering, the title is derived from the hope and love that the characters receive through the sun and “Mr. Blue Sky.” Although, they also come to appreciate the character that clouds can bring to an otherwise blue sky. For more information about “Mr. Blue Sky,” visit www.mrblueskymovie.com. ■

Lanterman Launches Network of Care

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In addition to helping users find the right resource at the right time, the Network of Care site also features:

- A library that contains more than 30,000 articles, fact sheets and reports produced by leading experts and organizations in the fields of aging and disability.
- A searchable assistive devices database that lists more than 21,000 currently available products from more than 3,000 companies that is updated every three months, and offers information on non-commercial prototypes, customized and one-of-a-kind products, and do-it-yourself designs.
- Lists of local, state and national Web sites that make it easy for you to find online information about government programs and non-profit organizations that specialize in developmental disabilities, as well as lists of organizations that provide assistance, support, information and advocacy.
- A “Legislate” section that is a regularly updated list of state and federal bills from the current legislative session that could affect people with developmental disabilities, so users can follow amendments and votes, form their own opinions on the legislation, and then communicate their views directly with lawmakers by using the fast and easy e-mail system.
- “My Folder,” which is a place to keep important information about resources you are interested in, health-related information, community support services, and more. “My Folder” is stored on a secure server and

requires you to create a username and password. All of the information that you store in the section can be shared with whomever you authorize – another family member, your health provider, and even your service coordinator.

- Daily news articles from around the nation concerning developmental disabilities, and a community calendar.

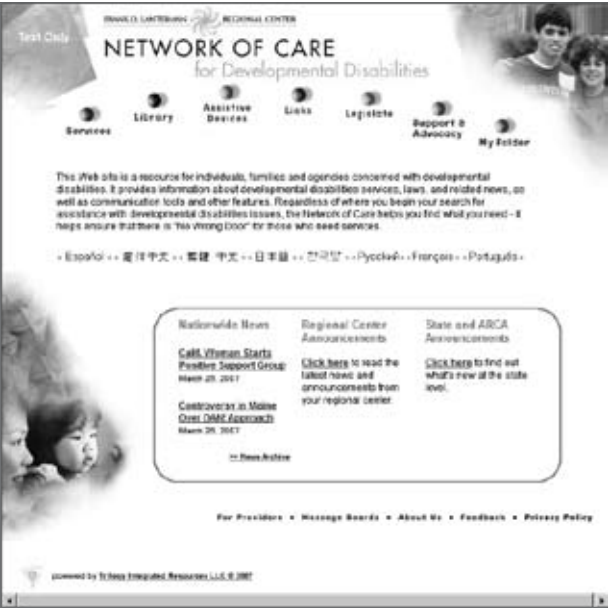
To increase accessibility and accommodate Network of Care users, the site’s innovative technology provides near-universal access, regardless of literacy level, to Web-based services through a text-only version of the site and other adaptive technologies. The site is fully ADA-compliant and Bobby-approved, and is also available in multiple languages, including Spanish and Korean.

There is also a special section for service providers where they can share challenges and ideas, as well as create powerful new mechanisms to better serve people with developmental disabilities by embracing Network of Care’s communication tools, such as message boards and community calendars. Service providers can even build their own free Web sites in the “For Providers” section.

Lanterman’s Network of Care site was created and developed by Trilogy Integrated Resources LLC of San Rafael, California. They will also continue to maintain this site. For more information about Trilogy,

visit www.trilogyr.com. To access the other Network of Care sites that Trilogy has created for aging, mental health, children and others, visit www.networkofcare.org.

This Network of Care site is one aspect of Lanterman Regional Center’s online presence. For more information about Lanterman Regional Center and the types of services and supports we offer, and to see upcoming events and activities in the Lanterman community, sign up for e-mail bulletins, and browse other resources, we encourage you to visit Lanterman’s Web site at www.lanterman.org. ■



To start using Lanterman’s Network of Care site go to www.lanterman.networkofcare.org

Share Your Resources

Lanterman’s Network of Care site is only as good as the quality of the information listed on the site, and we need your help to keep these resources as current and accurate as possible. Lanterman does not have the staff resources to ensure that the listings included in this Network of Care are 100 percent accurate. Phone numbers change, programs move to new locations, or an organization can close its doors. If you should discover this, please use the “Add or Correct Info” option that is part of the site to provide us with feedback so this site continues to be a viable resource now and in the future for people with developmental disabilities and their families in their search for integrated community-based resources.

Also, if you have suggestions for new integrated resources for us to add to Lanterman’s Network of Care site, please use the “Add or Correct Info” option and submit your suggestion to be reviewed for inclusion on the site. Resources are reviewed by a committee to determine appropriateness for inclusion on this site.

DDS Director Terri Delgadillo Visits Lanterman Regional Center

SINCE HER APPOINTMENT IN SEPTEMBER 2006, Department of Developmental Services Director Terri Delgadillo has been on a mission – to improve the relationship between the Department and the 21 regional centers, and to start a dialogue between the Department, regional centers, developmental centers, and people with developmental disabilities that they serve. Lanterman Regional Center is the 15th regional center that Delgadillo has visited since arriving at the Department in February 2006 as she familiarizes herself with the unique environment in which each regional center operates.

Delgadillo started her visit with the Lanterman community by taking a tour of a large residential facility in Glendale that serves over 100 clients; followed by a visit to Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center in downtown Los Angeles. From there she joined Lanterman’s leadership staff to discuss both regional center and general system concerns over a bite of lunch. She also met with Lanterman’s new assistive technology service provider, Assistive Technology Exchange Center, which is a Division of Goodwill of Orange County, and toured the Koch ♦ Young Resource Center. Delgadillo also visited the Koch-Vagthol’s Metabolic Residential Center where former developmental center residents with untreated PKU (phenylketonuria) receive specialized services, and ended her tour at UCP’s apartment complex in Burbank.

She concluded her visit by attending Lanterman’s board of directors meeting, where she addressed the board and other Lanterman community leaders. Some of what Delgadillo shared were her short-term and long-term goals for the Department, as well as the future direction of the developmental services system and the biggest challenges facing the system as a whole and people with developmental disabilities.

One key point that Delgadillo reminded everyone of, was that “we all work as a team – advocates, clients,

providers, regional centers and the Department – and while that doesn’t mean we will always agree or that there aren’t philosophical differences, the important thing to focus on is that we are all coming together, and working and communicating as a team.”

Getting out and about has shown Delgadillo firsthand not only the successes of the last four decades and the many wonderful programs that have been developed, but also the main challenges facing the developmental services system. She explains, “In any given month, up to 60 percent of newly diagnosed individuals in the state of California receive a diagnosis of autism, and our system and communities are not prepared for this. We need to look at where the gaps are in services, and what we can do to take this wonderful system and evolve it to meet these new needs while still preserving the quality and benefits of the services.”

Another area that the Department will be looking at is the kind of work and day opportunities that are offered to people with developmental disabilities. Delgadillo adds, “We need to look at what we need to do differently to expand employment opportunities, including competitive employment, supported employment, and also offering work activities through day programs. And we need to start at the state level and figure out how we can employ more people with developmental disabilities.”

Additionally, Delgadillo will be looking closely at self-directed services. “The question we have to ask ourselves when we look at self-directed services is whether it will work for clients. For example, will clients want to be their own employer? Based on feedback from clients, I think that a lot of clients if they had to be their own employer would choose not to be in self-directed services. So we need to ask ourselves what is our end goal, what are we trying to accomplish, and whether it will work for our clients,” she explains.



DDS Director Terri Delgadillo visited four Lanterman service providers during her visit, including the Koch-Vagthol’s Metabolic Residential Center. From left: DDS Deputy Director Rita Walker; Ann Seisa, owner of Vagthol’s Residential Care, Inc.; Dr. Richard Koch; Delgadillo; and Loy Seisa.

As with the majority of California’s population, housing remains a critical need for people with developmental disabilities. Delgadillo shares, “We need to get smart as a system and work to develop community resources and programs to ensure that housing is available in perpetuity. On average there is about a five-year turnover in residential providers, and rather than investing in housing via the provider, we need to invest in housing as a system so that when a provider leaves, the home doesn’t go with them, and the client isn’t forced to relocate.”

Hurricane Katrina served as a wake-up call for every person in the nation to take emergency preparedness seriously. “Communication between the state, the Department, the regional centers, the developmental centers, and local emergency services and public health



Gregory Mathes, manager of the Assistive Technology Exchange Center, explains some of the various assistive technology devices and their uses to Koch ♦ Young Resource Center Assistant Director Rose Chacana and to DDS Director Terri Delgadillo.

systems is the most critical issue we need to address, but there are a lot of other hurdles to overcome – food, extra medication, and paratransit access,” adds Delgadillo.

While the budget situation in the state is improving, there continues to be a deficit in the state’s general fund, which is primarily used by three systems – education, corrections, and health and human services. Funding for the education system is protected by Proposition 98, and with high prisoner populations, the correctional system budget is also protected, leaving health and human services as the only major discretionary user, of which the Department of Developmental Services is a part. “In the face of a continued budget situation, the ability of our Department to do many things is constrained, however, this doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be working and talking through issues, and doing things better and more efficiently,” shares Delgadillo.

Other issues that were raised during Delgadillo’s visit included the funding of regional center’s operations budgets, adjusting salaries to reflect rise in inflation, and raising the rates for service providers.

Delgadillo was appointed as interim director and chief deputy director of the Department of Developmental Services in February 2006. From 2004 to 2006, she served as deputy secretary of program and fiscal affairs at the California Health and Human Services Agency. Delgadillo was deputy director for the Department of Health Services from 2000 to 2004. From 1997 to 2000, she served in the California Youth and Correctional Agency as acting undersecretary and deputy secretary. Delgadillo was also legislative and policy director for United States senators John Seymour and Paul Coverdell from 1991 to 1997. In addition, from 1986 to 1991, she served as chief legislative consultant for the California State Senate Select Committee on Drug and Alcohol Abuse and early in her career worked in special education. Delgadillo holds a master’s degree in social work from California State University, Sacramento and a bachelor’s degree in social science from California State University, Stanislaus. ■

2006 Holidays are for Sharing Campaign Successfully Helps Families Celebrate Holiday Traditions

THIS PAST YEAR, LANTERMAN RECEIVED THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF requests ever from the families and clients that we serve for assistance during the 2006 holiday season. “While some families requested toys for their children, many of the gift requests were for basic necessities, such as assistance with food for holiday celebrations and clothes for the winter season,” shares Karem Chacana, director of Human Resources and coordinator of the *Holidays are for Sharing* program.

As with all types of charitable campaigns, each year brings about a change in the composition of donors. In past years, *Holidays are for Sharing* received large donations of toys from Toys for Tots, and other organizations, however, this year, many of these organizations were absent from the mix. Instead, the campaign had a decidedly grassroots feel.

Over 160 individuals and businesses contributed more than \$25,000, which was used to purchase toys, food cards, and gift cards for clients and their families. Lanterman staff, through automatic payroll deductions, contributed over \$7000 to *Holidays are for Sharing*, and also raised over \$1400 through the Center’s lotto and recycling program, a staff craft sale, and raffles for Lakers tickets and Godiva baskets.

Lanterman service providers, staff and community members also adopted 31

clients and their families through the Adopt-a-Family program with an average of about \$230 spent per family on food, gifts and other related holiday goods. Additionally, 118 clients were adopted through Westlake Lutheran Church’s Christmas Angels program that Karen Ingram, director of Community Services, coordinates at her church. The Center also received donations of 38 holiday baskets valued at \$3,800, primarily from the congregation at Temple Ahavat Shalom, of which Lanterman’s controller, Barry Londer, is a member.

“Although the grand total of this year’s contributions was considerably less than last year, we were still able to assist all of the families that requested help during the holidays,” says Chacana. “During the season of sharing, it is always wonderful to see the Lanterman community come together to help the clients and their families who need extra help during the holiday season.”

It’s not too early to starting thinking about the 2007 *Holidays are for Sharing* campaign. If you are interested in assisting with this year’s campaign, including fundraising, collecting toys and other donations, or know of organizations that Lanterman can approach for assistance, contact Karem Chacana at 213.383.1300, x. 684 or kchacana@lanterman.org.



Lanterman Community Can Help UCP Wheels for Humanity Make a Difference in the Lives of People with Disabilities around the World

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT TO DO WITH a wheelchair that a user has outgrown, or that pair of crutches stored in the corner of a closet from the time you broke your ankle in a sports accident, or even that piece of mobility equipment that became damaged?

Well, not only can you make a difference in the life of a child or adult with a disability in any number of countries around the world, you can also do your part to save the environment. Ten years ago, David Richard founded Wheels for Humanity, and since its beginning, the organization has provided wheelchairs to about 35,000 underserved children and adults in 66 countries, including Mexico, Vietnam, Uganda, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Mongolia, Thailand, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

In December 2006, Wheels for Humanity's board of directors voted to merge its global operations under the umbrella of United Cerebral Palsy of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. "Joining the UCP of Los Angeles family of organizations will enable UCP Wheels for Humanity, as it's now known, to increase its capacity to deliver more equipment, serve more children and adults with disabilities, and change more lives around the world," shares Dr. Ronald Cohen, the CEO of UCP of Los Angeles and the new UCP Wheels for Humanity.

"Joining the UCP of Los Angeles family of organizations will enable UCP Wheels for Humanity, as it's now known, to increase its capacity to deliver more equipment, serve more children and adults with disabilities, and change more lives around the world."

—DR. RONALD COHEN



UCP Wheels for Humanity's mission is to provide increased self-sufficiency and mobility to people with disabilities throughout the world, without regard to political affiliation, religious belief or ethnic identity. The goal for 2007 is to deliver and individually fit over 4,000 wheelchairs and hundreds of pieces of ambulatory aid equipment to people in need worldwide, helping them gain increased mobility and dignity. Just in the first two months of 2007, the UCP Wheels for Humanity's volunteer teams of occupational therapists, physical therapists and certified rehabilitation technology specialists (CRTS) working with local in-country partners delivered and custom fit approximately 1,000 wheelchairs in the countries of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Vietnam and Thailand.

"In addition to meeting and hopefully exceeding our goal of providing 4,000 wheelchairs this year, UCP Wheels for Humanity is also exploring developing cerebral palsy clinics, dental clinics, and physical and occupational therapy education in the developing countries that we visit during our in-country operations," says Cohen.

For more information about UCP Wheels for Humanity, visit www.wheelsforhumanity.org or call 818.255.0100. ■



Here's How You Can Help Support UCP Wheels for Humanity

► Become a Trip Volunteer

Are you an occupational therapist, physical therapist or certified rehabilitation technology specialist looking for a rewarding experience? Donate your time to help custom fit mobility equipment for children and adults in need during an in-country trip.

► Donate a Wheelchair or Other Ambulatory Equipment

All of the wheelchairs and other ambulatory equipment, including crutches, walkers and motorized scooters are donated. They come from individuals, manufacturers and other donors throughout California. The equipment can be brand new or require a little TLC. Even relatively damaged equipment can be dismantled and the parts can be reused during the refurbishment of other wheelchairs and equipment. UCP Wheels for Humanity is in the early stages of exploring the creation of a nationwide coordinated collection system, so if you have family or friends that live in another state and want to make a donation, be sure to contact UCP Wheels for Humanity to explore the viability of the donation.

► Make a Charitable Contribution

UCP Wheels for Humanity tries to secure as much free shipping and transportation as they can, but there is usually a gap that needs to be made up. Monetary donations help bridge the gap and ensure that the equipment gets to where it can make a difference.

► Be a Volunteer Driver

When donors are unable to bring wheelchairs to the warehouse in North Hollywood, UCP Wheels for Humanity goes to them. Many volunteer drivers have their own vehicles that are used to pick up donations. At this time, volunteer drivers work only in California collecting wheelchairs in their area.

► Volunteer in the Warehouse

UCP Wheels for Humanity has an approximately 11,000-square-foot warehouse in North Hollywood. This is where UCP Wheels for Humanity receives donated wheelchairs and other ambulatory equipment on a daily basis from individuals, hospitals, medical supply companies and other organizations. They depend on volunteers to organize parts, and refurbish wheelchairs; as well as packing, loading and labeling the newly refurbished wheelchairs for the children and adults waiting for them in developing countries. UCP Wheels for Humanity provides training, guidance, tools and support to all the volunteers who work on wheelchairs. On average, a wheelchair takes about two hours to clean, repair and refurbish to industry standards. In addition to working in the warehouse, there are also many other volunteer opportunities in their office.

Assemblyman Frank D. Lanterman's Vision Continues

By Maria Tapia-Montes

ASSEMBLYMAN FRANK D. LANTERMAN'S DREAM OF 40 YEARS ago is embodied in the vision of Lanterman Regional Center: "to enable people with developmental disabilities to live full, productive and satisfying lives as active members of their communities." His dream is increasingly a reality in this community, with the evidence seen everyday in the lives of our clients and their families.

Mr. Lanterman's dream is brought to life at Lanterman through the effort of a team – a team that includes, not only our clients and families, but also all of us who work in the Regional Center. We carry his ideals in all that we do. Further, just as our clients have personal goals, so too do we staff members have goals for our personal and professional development.

While our clients and families may not always be aware of it, we constantly challenge ourselves to increase our knowledge of services and supports and to be more effective team members so we can better assist and advocate for our clients. As we achieve our goals, we are better able to help our clients achieve theirs. We are helped to develop professionally by a Regional Center that is committed to educating and supporting its employees. The Center is also committed to involving its staff in periodically reassessing its mission and value statements and ensuring that the outcomes that we seek for our clients and families truly reflect those statements.

As I look back on my 13 years in the Regional Center, both as a service coordinator and now as an intake specialist, I realize how my perspective has changed, partly as a result of new knowledge but more so from my experiences with clients and families. I have worked with clients of all ages, in all geographic areas, and in all living arrangements. My experience in Intake, particularly, has given me a sense of awe when I see parents who don't let a diagnosis be a label for their child or limit the expectations they have for the child to live a happy, productive life as an active member of the community. These parents truly share the Lanterman vision, and as I work with them, the Lanterman vision becomes more meaningful for me.



Intake Specialist Maria Tapia-Montes

Early Childhood Inclusion Offers Benefits for Children With and Without Disabilities

ISAAC CHIA STARTED KINDERGARTEN AT DANIEL

Webster Elementary School in Pasadena in September 2005, spending his mornings in general education and his afternoons in a special day class. “Isaac is dually diagnosed with Down syndrome and autism, and while social interaction has always been difficult for him, he has always been a ‘magnet’ to his peers,” shares Isaac’s mother, Marian Chen. “It seems that there was always a swarm of kids eager to play with him, but he was always running away from them.”

The first six months were particularly challenging as Marian, Isaac’s general education one-on-one aide Tracey Willard, and his special day teacher Louis Brinker worked to figure out an approach that would enable Isaac, who is now 7 years old, to be successfully included in general education. With Willard’s and Brinker’s input, they settled on creating a “best buddy” program for Isaac; and with the school principal’s okay and support, Willard and Brinker giving up their time during break periods, and Marian volunteering at the school almost every day the first year, they began implementing the “best buddy” program. They also introduced a small-sized lunchtime “play group.”

Willard explains about the “best buddy” program, “We decided to select two students alphabetically from the roster for every two days, one to be Isaac’s special friend and the other to be a helper for one day, and then they would swap roles for the second day, giving them a chance to interact, promote teamwork, and together focus on Isaac.” Marian adds, “This gave everyone in Isaac’s general education kinder class the ability to play with him, without Isaac being overwhelmed by all of the attention.”

The Chia family decided to have Isaac repeat kindergarten for a second time during the 2006-07 school year where he continues to spend mornings in general education and afternoons in special day to enable him to further develop his social skills and become more comfortable in a general education setting. One of Isaac’s special friends from this year’s general education kinder class is 5-year-old Miles Kealing, who shared, “I like helping Isaac. Helping him learn to read, helping him learn how to talk more and say many more words. We play Duck, Duck, Goose and tag, and he learns how to play music with all of us. When play time is over, Miss Tracey gives us stickers. I enjoy coming to school more because I have Isaac as a friend.”

Miles’ mother Felita Kealing shares, “I remember when Miles first started kindergarten, he didn’t share any details from his school day, but on his first day as Isaac’s special friend, during the whole car ride home, he couldn’t stop talking about what he did with Isaac and when they did it. Miles is very dominant in most

of his environments – he likes to take charge and manage the people around him – but with Isaac, he is very compassionate and understanding. He often mentions how Isaac is the same but different, and he knows that being his friend is important.”

Felita firmly believes that words have power and that if you see something that is having a positive impact on your child, you should share that information. She adds, “So often we talk about the negative things, that when I saw what a positive impact this friendship was having on my son, I felt there was a need to share with the school the depth and value I feel this experience has added to Miles’ education, so I sent a quick e-mail.”

In the spring of last year, Isaac’s home Floortime specialist, Susan Reedy, became involved in the “play groups,” intermittently visiting the campus to play and model to Willard and the typical children, improving upon the “play group” concept that Marian and Willard had already started. The “play groups” are held during lunch recess, and include between three to five kindergarteners participating with Isaac in activities that are designed to develop social skills and foster playtime relationships. Willard shares, “I took a six-week Floortime workshop that complemented my background and interest in play and social development so I could better facilitate the ‘play groups.’ And working with Isaac’s home Floortime specialist, we identified Isaac’s interests, and then built a play kit around these interests. We also focus on goals that are going to enrich Isaac’s development and that compliment his academic goals. The biggest challenge is finding a balance between what sparks Isaac’s enthusiasm and motivates him at a given time, and matching it with the interests of the children in the ‘play group,’ so that each ‘play group’ is an enriching experience for all the kids, including Isaac to connect with each other and bond.”

The “play groups” were very popular with Isaac’s homeroom kinder class, and were reintroduced at the start of the 2006-07 school year with Isaac’s new kindergarten classmates. Marian says, “The ‘play groups’ generated so much excitement during the fall semester among the other two kinder classes on campus that we recently started including students from the other classes in the groups. It’s invaluable to be able to give all these typical kids an opportunity to have this experience and learn about this aspect of life, and to tap into that part of himself or herself where they want to embrace all that is different and become more sensitive. These are the kinds of moments that you want to create, since this is really the underlying principle of inclusion.” Willard adds, “To me, getting to know Isaac seems to have allowed the children to be more honest about the things they don’t understand, and to ask questions, and to take

more time to understand with empathy about people who are different than them. They really want to show that they have a sense of understanding and an interest in who Isaac is.”

Also, towards the end of last year, an inclusion team was put in place to help facilitate Isaac’s inclusion. The team includes Sue Kilber, on-site inclusion specialist; Julia Shaull, consulting behavioral specialist; Susan Reedy, consulting Floortime specialist; and Kathy Holliman, consulting classroom specialist, who assists with curriculum modification.

So, how has Isaac benefited from the enthusiasm of his peers, the “best buddy” program, “play groups,” and overall from being included in a general education setting? He participates in regular morning recess with all three of the kinder classes, and also regularly approaches the first graders who were his classmates last year to play. And in September 2007, Isaac will be starting first grade as the school’s second fully-included student.

Willard says, “When I initially started working with Isaac, he was very quiet, kept to himself and was very timid about trying new things, but the interaction with his typical peers has helped bring Isaac out. He’s become much more expressive, and shows more of his potential, as well as his intelligence, understanding, caring, awareness and physicality. He has more enthusiasm, and is more open to trying new things.”

Sharon Lefler, principal at Daniel Webster Elementary School, notes, “The benefits of inclusion for Isaac include modeling what he observes his typically-developing classmates doing, exposure to core curriculum as is appropriate for his age level, and exposure to situations in which he can increase his social skills related to peer interaction.” Brinker, Isaac’s special day teacher, has also noticed many gains in Isaac as a result of his inclusion in general education. He shares, “Spontaneous play is emerging as Isaac becomes more acclimated to his typically-developing peers. He also has more spontaneous speech, and will laugh with peers related to the specific context of the situation. He will also take the initiative to make comments during conversations, make more eye contact, and independently transition between activities utilizing a visual schedule. His reading is improving as is his comprehension evidenced through his ability to match pictures to words.”

“The skills and experiences that Isaac has gained from being included with his peers carries over from the school environment into his home and out in the community,” shares Marian. “He now has the confidence to reach out to people, including his younger brother at home. He’s becoming more spontaneous, and as he’s developed the skills and becomes more capable, he seeks out opportunities to be more engaged in his environment.”

Even though the inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood educational settings with their typical peers clearly results in a win-win outcome for everyone, it is challenging to come up with a program that works for the student with special needs and their parents, the other typical students, the teachers and also the school. Lefler adds, “One of the challenges to inclusion is guiding all students, staff and parents involved to accept an included child into their worlds. This global acceptance on our campus is absolutely the foundation for Isaac’s success here.” There is also a reverse mainstreaming program at Webster Elementary School, where volunteers in grades three through six spend time in the special day classrooms. Marian says, “Throughout the school, conversations can be heard between these volunteers and their peers about what funny thing one child did today, or what amazing thing another child accomplished in their special day class. The volunteers are required to do extra homework for the time they miss in their own classes. And the parents of these children regularly speak of their children’s compassion and efforts with pride.”

Although the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates Least Restrictive Environment, the concept and benefits of inclusion are not something that can be achieved only through legal mandate. Marian explains, “There has to be willingness, creativity and understanding by the professionals – the teachers, the support staff, the school administration, the therapists – and constant support from the parents. This is a relationship that does not work under force or coercion, but is one that requires continual patience and nurture, and most importantly,

Greetings Mrs. Lefler,

This is a message I should have written so long ago.

Our son Miles Kealing, Mr. Stubbs Room 109 has been so excited on the days he gets the opportunity to be a Special Buddy to his friend Isaac. I had no idea that Isaac was even a part of his class until Miles' first day as his buddy.

During our first couple of weeks at Webster School, he was very nonchalant about his days or what really went on in the classroom or on the playground. He would mostly mention he played with his friends. But on the day he was Isaac's special buddy, when he got in the car, he was so excited to share with me details about his day and what they did together. How he helped Isaac play on the equipment and on and on. That was the first sign of true excitement about school he shared with me.

Since that time, he has shared countless experiences about Isaac. Miles is an aspiring artist who loves to draw. He took the time to draw Isaac a picture to put in his lunch box. He often encourages me to contact Marian (Isaac's mother) for a play date so Isaac could meet our other son, Preston. We were finally able to facilitate that.

Miles is a very bright, responsible and often competitive child. Sometimes his competitiveness can be mean and crass when dealing with his contemporaries, but with Isaac he is always sensitive and gentle. It really brings out another side of him. Miss Tracey says that Miles has a great gift when dealing with Isaac.

I said all of this because I see great benefits with Miles working beside Isaac. Very often children with special needs are ostracized by other families who are fearful of children different than their own. I feel that Isaac being a part of the mainstreaming classroom has been beneficial in Miles' experience.

Thank you again for your time.

Felita Kealing

Without Special Needs

“The skills and experiences that Isaac has gained from being included with his peers carries over from the school environment into his home and out in the community. He now has the confidence to reach out to people, including his younger brother at home. He’s becoming more spontaneous, and as he’s developed the skills and becomes more capable, he seeks out opportunities to be more engaged in his environment.”

—MARIAN CHEN

communication between everyone involved. As a parent who has advocated for the inclusion of her child, it’s important to first know and relate to each person who will have any part in your child’s education. You need to establish a relationship and trust, and let them see why inclusion is important to you and for your child. Then you need to be there every step of the way – to support and help problem-solve. And although inclusion is your right under the law, it is not yet the cultural norm, so be sure to show everyone involved your appreciation and gratitude because anyone taking it on is courageous, compassionate and a pioneer.”

Marian also shared another important thing that parents can do, and that is to step outside of the micro-community of special education and gain some exposure to everything else taking place on campus. She says, “We need to become a part of the total school community, and help everyone see us as equal members of the community. As parents of children with special needs, we often cocoon ourselves in the world of special needs. There is so much we have to contend with and maneuver through the world of special needs that it is all we can do to survive. But we end up isolating ourselves and we keep the community from knowing and understanding us. We need to make an effort to include ourselves, such as being involved with the PTA and being friends with parents without children with special needs, if we want to achieve inclusion for our children. I have found so many wonderful and supportive parents and teachers at Webster Elementary School who have welcomed Isaac and our family into their lives and into their hearts.”

Lefler adds, “Isaac’s parents are knowledgeable, caring, involved in the school in many ways, and always willing to lend a hand when needed. Other parents need to do what Marian has done/is doing. She works with the principal, other parents of students with special needs, special education staff on site and at the district level, and with community members to make the value and need for inclusion understood. Isaac’s family helped create a climate of nurturing, caring, responsive people – both of his teachers, his aide, and the other staff and support providers – all of whom want success for Isaac, and are dedicated to making Isaac’s schooling experience be the best possible for him.”

Felita shares, “I know that sometimes people are fearful of things that are different, but if I had a child with special needs, I know that I would want support from other parents with typical children, and I would want them to understand and to teach their children that the world is filled with all different types of people, and that we are all global citizens.”

It’s a long road, but one little step at a time, through inclusion, it is possible to change perception and culture, and help people young and old embrace someone who may be different from them, and see that person simply for who they are. ■

Lanterman Introduces ATEC as New Assistive Technology Service Provider

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS CAN RANGE FROM THE simple to the complex, but they all have one thing in common – they assist people with a wide range of disabilities and impairments to overcome their limitations and achieve greater independence. Given that each solution is individualized to meet the user’s unique needs, it can take both time and an equipment trial period to find the appropriate solution that offers the most benefit. However, this process can be greatly enhanced by individual consultation and training.

“We’ve had a long-term commitment to meeting the technology needs of our clients,” says Diane Anand, executive director, “however, as it became apparent that assistive technology was beneficial to a broad range of people with developmental disabilities, the need for support and education in this area quickly outpaced our capacity to meet the need. We’ve piloted several different approaches to delivering assistive technology services, learning much along the way, and we are very pleased to introduce the Assistive Technology Exchange Center (ATEC) as our new provider.”

ATEC is a division of Goodwill of Orange County. Established in 1996, ATEC is one of only a few comprehensive assistive technology centers in California, and provides a wide array of assistive technology services to people with disabilities.

Services that will be available to Lanterman’s clients through ATEC will include quarterly assistive technology workshops, weekly assistive technology labs, individualized assistive technology consultations/evaluations and training. ATEC clinicians will also develop individualized assistive technology service plans and follow-up with contacts to determine the success of the services. They will also offer ongoing technical support in the following areas: low vision and blindness aids and technology, adapted computer access, augmentative and alternative communication, environmental control units, and educational aids and technology.

“Since its inception, ATEC has performed approximately 3,600 clinical AT evaluations and countless one-time consultations,” shares Gregory Mathes, ATEC’s manager. “All of our clinical staff have between 3 to 13 years of experience working with people with disabilities and are either health care licensed and/or certified in the field of assistive technology.”

ATEC has a formal referral procedure that helps its staff and clinicians determine if a referral is appropriate for a single-session consultation or a multi-session assessment and follow-up. As part of the procedure, a referral packet must be submitted wherein extensive questions are asked to collect relevant information that will help make the services provided successful. Also requested are medical, educational, and/or rehabilitation reports.

Mathes adds, “Once the referral packet is completed and submitted by a service coordinator, an ATEC services assistant will follow-up to schedule a session. Typically, the first session will be held at Lanterman in the assistive technology lab so that the multi-disciplinary team from ATEC has access to all the available assistive technology solutions. After the first session, if additional sessions are necessary, ATEC prefers to conduct them in the environment in which the client desires to utilize his or her assistive technology.”

Equipment trials are a key part of finding a successful technology solution. “Between ATEC’s assistive technology lending program and Lanterman’s technology lending library, we’ll be able to let clients try recommended solutions prior to having to purchase anything so they can determine if the solution will work for them and their ‘circle of support,’” explains Mathes. Trials usually last between one to two months, and a final assessment is conducted prior to any final recommendations being given on what product to purchase.

Another critical component in finding the right solution is to ensure that the client and his or her “circle of support” are properly trained and supported in the use of the technology. “ATEC’s role will be to ensure that the client has the appropriate trained support in the use of the particular technology at home, in their day program, at work, or another similar location,” adds Mathes.

ATEC also utilizes a two-part follow-up procedure to determine if the services were successfully completed. Additionally, ATEC helps users and their “circle of support” plan for potential changes in technology needs as personal needs change throughout their lives. Some of the educational opportunities to help users stay informed and plan for the future include an annual assistive technology conference, as well as monthly user groups and open lab hours.

If you are interested in learning more about assistive technology and how it may be of benefit to you, contact your service coordinator. All referrals for services through ATEC must be made through your service coordinator.



The Japanese-Speaking Parents Association of Children with Challenges Has Built a Worldwide Network of Information and Support

THIRTEEN YEARS AGO, MARIKO MAGAMI

completed a 10-month intensive Partners in Policymaking course designed to provide participants with the tools and knowledge they would need to return to their community and start some type of advocacy activity. She shares, "At that time, there was a small group of parents who had children with special needs participating in a professionally-led group at the Little Tokyo Service Center that was not very active. I had this idea to start a parent-led group, and while doing research, kept hearing the name Michiko Wilkins from other Japanese-speaking parents, so I called her, shared my idea with her, asked her if she would be interested helping, and she replied 'definitely.'"

Out of this desire to make a difference in their community the Japanese-Speaking Parents Association of Children with Challenges (JSPACC) was born. Since its inception, the group has not only grown in size, but also in the scale and scope of what it does.

"This is the main support group for Japanese-speaking families in the Greater Los Angeles area, and parents come from as far away as San Diego and Santa Barbara to attend the monthly meetings," says Michiko Wilkins, the group's co-facilitator. "The main similarity between parents is their language, so participation varies depending on the topic, but on average there are between 25 to 35 parents that attend." Monthly topics range from disability-specific, to educational, such as the IEP; and have also focused on developmentally and age-appropriate topics, such as transition, sexuality or aging. Public benefits, such as housing or in-home supportive services, and other generic resources are also popular topics. There are also regional committee advisers that represent the interests of members in their respective regions and help make determinations about topics of interest.



Members of the Japanese-Speaking Parents Association of Children with Challenges listen to a speaker during the group's monthly meeting.

The monthly meetings are held at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Little Tokyo on the third Saturday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to noon. "When we first started the meetings, we discovered that child care was a serious issue that we had to address. Many parents wanted to come, but partially because of cultural reasons that make it more difficult for mothers to leave their children in someone else's care, our parents would not take advantage of respite, so we started providing child care," explains Magami. The JSPACC has recruited trained volunteers to offer child care and only charges \$3 per child for the duration of the meeting.

Not only does the JSPACC provide support and education at its monthly meetings, they have also created a worldwide online information and support network of parents and professionals. A lot of disability-related information in Japanese is available on the group's Web site free of charge, including their newsletter, age-related information, special projects, a glossary of terms, special education rights and responsibilities, a resource library, and much more. Also, JSPACC published the first-ever guide to the regional center in 1998, which inspired the creation of the English version of the "Guide to Lanterman Regional Center." However, rather than continuing with paper translations, the group now maintains the same information contained in the printed version of Lanterman's guide in an online format on their Web site.

JSPACC charges a yearly \$30 membership fee to access the members-only section that includes the ability to write to the group's global e-mail list, and network with parents and professionals across the United States, Europe and in Japan. There are approximately 30 active members in Japan that are very interested in special education and the regional center system. "The Internet has really increased our reach and ability to share information and resources. For example, we get a lot of requests from professionals in Japan for information about the latest therapies and treatments available, and since we have a wide range of members, we are able to make the necessary connections and match people with the information they need," adds Magami.

Wilkins says, "We've seen a lot of parents come and go during the last 13 years, but I believe that this group has helped empower all of these parents by educating them and supporting them to bring about change. There is a cultural component that parents have to overcome before they can become good advocates for their children and this group has helped them do that."



Michiko Wilkins (left) and Mariko Magami founded the Japanese-Speaking Parents Association of Children with Challenges 13 years ago to provide education and support to Japanese-speaking parents, and in the process built a worldwide network of information and support.

"This is the main support group for Japanese-speaking families in the Greater Los Angeles area, and parents come from as far away as San Diego and Santa Barbara to attend the monthly meetings."

—MICHIKO WILKINS

The JSPACC is also participating in two grants. One grant from The California Endowment has brought together 10 community-based groups to help minority populations in Los Angeles learn how to advocate for themselves and open doors and possibilities. The other grant that the JSPACC is participating in is through LA Care, and they are looking at how health care education and advocacy can improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

In addition to serving as co-facilitators of this group since 1994, both Magami and Wilkins have been involved in other leadership roles within the Lanterman community. Magami served on Lanterman's board of directors for three terms; and Wilkins has served on Lanterman's Programs and Services committee, and has been a peer support partner since 1994.

For more information about the Japanese-Speaking Parents Association of Children with Challenges, visit www.jspacc.org. You can also reach Mariko Magami at 818.249.1726 and Michiko Wilkins at 818.557.0728. ■

Travolta's Practical Filmmaking Workshop

Continued from page 1

all the footage, the 'California Connected' segment didn't go anywhere until about three weeks before the film was to screen at Chaminade's second film festival in 2004. The Daily News featured an article about the screening of Cross' film at the upcoming festival and received such an overwhelming response that they ran a follow-up article. 'California Connected' also jumped back on board. Before the publicity, only 100 people were expected to attend the screening, but close to 500 people attended." Travolta also helped Cross and Bowers produce a feature-length documentary sharing first-person accounts of life and living with autism, also called "Normal People Scare Me."

"It was this experience that got the ball rolling on everything that followed," explains Travolta. He started doing summer inclusion camps that were evenly split between children with and without special needs. Parents who wanted their children with special needs to attend began asking him to think about vendoring the acting and filmmaking summer program. In talking with Lanterman Regional Center staff, the idea for the Practical Filmmaking Workshop came about.

"We're really excited about the skills and knowledge that participants will gain from attending this Practical Filmmaking Workshop. It will be held in a real studio setting, with participants working on a real film project with experts in the film industry.

We're hopeful that this experience will provide people with developmental disabilities the background and tools they need to pursue employment possibilities in the film industry," says Diane Anand, executive director.

Travolta shares, "Participants will go as the film goes. The very first day they'll get the script, which is the lesson plan, and they'll start learning the terminology. The program will cover everything from preparation through production and post-production, and participants will get a hands-on experience with everything from grip and electric to camera, photography, budgeting and scheduling." The goal of this program is to provide people with developmental disabilities the educational and vocational opportunity to not only see if they have a desire, but also the ability, to work in the film industry. "This will be a safe place to get a real-world learning experience and the hope is that with some basic knowledge and skills under their belt, participants will be able to take part in the diversity programs offered through the different studios," notes Travolta.

Travolta's company, Inclusion Films, recently moved into a space inside Valcom Studios just off the 5 Freeway in Burbank. "I wanted to be in a place that has everything you need to make a film as it will be very conducive to exposing workshop participants to all areas of the film industry," adds Travolta. NBC and Warner Brothers Studios regularly use the live



Joey Travolta (center) with a guest and Lanterman Executive Director Diane Anand at Inclusion Films' open house. The first 24-week session of the Practical Filmmaking Workshop is starting Monday, May 14, and will provide participants with the educational and vocational opportunity to determine if they have the desire and ability to work in the film industry.

audience stages, which are also used to film music videos, commercials and for other types of television programming.

Inclusion Film's workshop is vendored, so if you are interested in scheduling an interview to join the Practical Filmmaking Workshop, contact your service coordinator. For more information about the workshop visit www.joeytee.com, e-mail inclusionfilms@aol.com or call 818.848.5800. For more information about "Normal People Scare Me" visit www.normalfilms.com. ■

CAC Administers Access Services Questionnaire at UCP Burbank Apartments Support Group



MEMBERS OF LANTERMAN’S CAC RECENTLY paid a visit to the UCP Burbank Apartments Support Group to administer an Access Services transportation questionnaire they had developed. About 25 Access users attended the first of a number of such meetings. Also attending were some family members, primary caregivers, independent living skills workers and other support providers.

The questionnaire asked the riders to rate their overall experience with Access Services. Questions addressed how riders felt about sharing a ride, whether rides were on time, what was the longest wait time, and how they rated the drivers and the operators. There were also questions that addressed making a reservation, as well as the complaint system. CAC members along with UCP and Lanterman staff were available to assist the group with filling out the 15 questions.

“We are going to compile the answers that we receive and share this feedback with Access Services,” shares MJ Kienast, assistant director of Client and Family Services at Lanterman and staff advisor to the CAC. “Access Services is under a court order to track the number of complaints and improve the quality of their service, and this is one avenue that we are using to provide them with hard data and challenge them to do a better job of meeting the needs of users of their transportation service.”

One of the questions that elicited a laugh from the room was, “What was your best experience with Access?” One comment from a participant was that if they had anything good to say about Access there wouldn’t be a need for this meeting or for anyone to be here. In the end, two people out of the group were able to share a positive experience.

While many riders had difficulty recalling any positive experiences, most of them quickly recalled fairly recent negative experiences. Issues riders have experienced include not receiving all trip booklets that they had paid for and having to pay for the booklets again; problems with transferring between counties; poor pick-up locations; being late or completely missing classes due to delays or no-shows by Access; sharing a ride with someone who lived 60 miles away in the opposite direction; and even having their service hours reduced and being told that they can only utilize Access when they can’t use the bus even



The UCP Burbank Apartments Support Group hosted a session specifically for Access Services users to fill out a transportation questionnaire designed to rate their overall experience with Access.

though they use a motorized wheelchair. Some even had difficulty getting to the meeting on time because of Access Service delays.

“We all know that Access Services has a long way to go to be a better service, and that’s why it’s so important that you make a complaint if you have a problem with Access. You can call them, write them, or go online and make the complaint, but how ever you do it, make sure you file that complaint, otherwise, Access Services looks like they are doing a better job than they are,” adds Kienast. “Their complaint system is a little difficult, and we are working on trying to change that, but get help from a friend, family member or aide, and make that complaint.”

One rider also shared the following tip: It’s imperative that when you call Access Services to make a reservation that you get the person’s name and your confirmation number, and that way, if Access tries to give you a hard time when you call them because they haven’t picked you up, you have this information to share with them so they can’t say that they are not going to come back and pick you up.

Look for the final results of the questionnaires from the meeting at the UCP Burbank Apartments and the other groups to be printed in the next edition of “Viewpoint” this summer. ■



Members of the CAC helped administer the Access Services transportation questionnaire. In addition to filling out the questionnaire, participants were also afforded the opportunity to verbally share their experiences.

Which is it? –

Consumer or Client

A number of years ago, the Lanterman Act was amended from “client” to “consumer,” changing how the Act refers to individuals with developmental disabilities served by regional centers. While people with developmental disabilities resist labels and want to be referred to as individuals, they report not liking the term “consumer” and would rather be called “clients,” so Lanterman Regional Center has made the decision to use the term “client” whenever possible in referring to the individuals with developmental disabilities that we serve.

Join the UCP Burbank Apartments Support Group

Are you interested in participating in a support group for adults with disabilities that coordinates fun social recreational activities and also focuses on advocacy issues?

If so, the UCP Burbank Apartments Support Group is the group for you. It was established in October 2006 and meets at UCP’s apartment complex located at 600 South San Fernando Boulevard, Burbank, CA 91502. The group meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Both the support group leader, Ray Drumheiser, and one of the two support group facilitators, Lanterman Service Coordinator Michelle Johnson, have participated in a three-hour adult support group facilitator training to be better able to support the future growth and development of the group.

The first advocacy-related issue that the group took part in was to assist the CAC with their data gathering of feedback about Access Services.

If you have any questions or need more information about the group, contact Ray Drumheiser, support group leader, at **818.841.8254**. The support group facilitators can be reached at **213.383.1300**. Michelle Johnson’s extension is 533 and Marie McGinley’s extension is 540. ■

Access Services Rider Information

TIPS FOR MAKING AN APPOINTMENT
If an Access user attempts to make an appointment for a pick-up and the only times available are much too early or too late, a strategy that may work is to hang-up and call back. The phone reservationists are given a certain number of slots to fill and if they fill them, they cannot accommodate any more trips at that time. By calling back, the caller has an opportunity to get a different reservationist, who may have the desired time or a shorter wait time. Always be sure to record your confirmation number and the name of the reservationist.

TIPS FOR FILING A COMPLAINT
If you are an Access user and have a complaint, it is very important that you fill out a complaint form. The number of complaints received is one way that Access Services is being graded on how well they are meeting the requirements outlined in the settlement agreement. If you don’t file a complaint, Access Services is unaware of your problem and cannot be held accountable. If you do not have an independent living skills worker, family member or friend that can help you file a complaint, then you should ask your service coordinator for assistance. You need to have your Access ID number handy as it is required to file a complaint.

- THERE ARE THREE WAYS OF FILING A COMPLAINT:**
1. You can file your complaint online. To find the complaint form, which Access Services calls a comment form, go to www.asila.org/contact/. If you look at the bottom of the screen it states, “If you would like to use our online comment form [English: Click Here | Spanish: Click Here].” Click on either English or Spanish and follow the prompts to fill in the form.
 2. Complaints or comments may also be sent in writing to: Access Services, P.O. Box 71684, Los Angeles, CA 90071-0684
**Be sure to include your name and Access ID number*
 3. Complaints or comments may be made over the phone by calling **1.800.883.0829** or TDD **1.800.827.1359**. ■

DDS Web site Features “Consumer Corner”

For more information about the Consumer Advisory Committee, visit the Department of Developmental Services Web site at www.dds.ca.gov and select the “Consumer Corner” option to access information that includes:

- Information about the CAC
- Materials developed by DDS and CAC committees for clients, families and professionals
- Advocacy resources to help clients ensure their rights are protected
- Links to other resources available to individuals with developmental disabilities

Contact the Consumer Advisory Committee at Lanterman

If you are a client of Lanterman Regional Center and have an issue or idea that you think other clients would be interested in, and would like to share it with the Consumer Advisory Committee, you can write the CAC at:

Lanterman Regional Center CAC
Armen Frundzhyan
c/o MJ Kienast
3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90010
or call CAC Staff Advisor MJ Kienast at **213.383.1300, x. 606** or e-mail mkienast@lanterman.org.

The Consumer Advisory Committee reports to Lanterman’s board of directors and is charged with providing input and advice on the policies, services and programs offered by the Regional Center for clients and their families. The CAC meets on the second Monday of the month at 4:30 p.m. at Lanterman.

Help Us Raise Money,
Use GoodSearch

Did you know that performing your good deed of the day could be as simple as searching the Internet using GoodSearch? Simply by searching the Internet at www.goodsearch.com you can raise money for Lanterman Regional Center.

You use www.goodsearch.com like any other search engine – the site is powered by Yahoo! – but each time you do, money is generated for Lanterman. Here’s how it works:

1. Go to www.goodsearch.com
2. Type Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center into the “I support” box and click on “verify”
3. Search the Internet just like you would with any search engine

Since GoodSearch shares its advertising revenue with charities and schools, every time you search the Internet at GoodSearch, you’ll be earning money for Lanterman.

GoodSearch also has a toolbar you can download from the homepage so that you can search right from the top of your browser.

You can keep track of Lanterman’s estimated earnings by clicking on “amount raised” once you designate Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center as your organization of choice. The more people who use the site, the more money we’ll earn, so please spread the word. All money earned through GoodSearch will be designated for Lanterman Regional Center’s Help Fund, which is the fund that gives all year long by providing assistance with emergency food, clothing, shelter and other necessities for Lanterman clients and their families.

Looking for New Blood ...
with experience

As a multi-million dollar corporation, Lanterman is always interested in recruiting board and committee members who have backgrounds in finance, personnel and related areas. Should you or someone you know be interested in volunteering in such a capacity, contact Patrick Aulicino at [213.383.1300](tel:213.383.1300), x. 690 or paulicino@lanterman.org.

Board Welcomes Your
Attendance at its
Meetings

Please be aware that anyone in the community is welcome to attend Lanterman’s board of directors meeting, which is conducted on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m. Meetings are held at Lanterman Regional Center. Contact Frank Lara in advance at [213.383.1300](tel:213.383.1300), x. 665 or flara@lanterman.org so you can be placed on the list of attendees. We look forward to your visit.

Meet the People Behind the Titles
Haleh Hashemzadeh, Assistant Director,
Client and Family Services

As one of three assistant directors in the Client and Family Services division at Lanterman Regional Center, Haleh Hashemzadeh is an integral member of our leadership team. We feel it’s important for everyone in our community to have a better idea of the person behind the title and her responsibilities, so “Viewpoint” recently met with Hashemzadeh and asked about her educational background, past professional experiences, as well as projects in the works and the biggest challenges and most rewarding aspects of her job.

WHILE HALEH HASHEMZADEH’S FIRST DAY AT Lanterman was less than two months ago, she is a veteran of the regional center system. In 2000, she joined North Los Angeles County Regional Center as a service coordinator working with clients with a dual diagnosis of mental health and developmental disability, eventually moving to Tri-Counties Regional Center to become a branch manager where she provided leadership and direction to 16 service coordinators in the Intake department, Early Start, and children and adult programs. While working at Tri-Counties, Hashemzadeh also pursued an internship as a behavioral counselor with Specialized Health Services – VISTAS Social and Work where she provided counseling and case management services to dual-diagnosed and behaviorally-challenged persons.



Client and Family Services Assistant
Director Haleh Hashemzadeh

Hashemzadeh’s background is in psychology. She has her doctorate in psychology from the American Behavioral Studies Institute where she graduated in 2002 with a degree in clinical psychology with an emphasis on marriage and family. She also obtained a master’s degree in psychology from Pepperdine University and a

bachelor’s degree in psychology with a minor in sociology from California State University, Northridge.

“My educational background and past professional experiences have afforded me the opportunity to develop a better understanding of people from different backgrounds and cultures, and has also provided me with valuable tools for working with a variety of different people,” explains Hashemzadeh.

Hashemzadeh will provide direction to the three school-age teams working closely with the teams’ managers. She will also be focusing her efforts on

With the steady increase in the number of clients served by Lanterman, the Center has been implementing an organizational restructuring of our Client and Family Services division so we can continue to provide a high quality of service and support to clients and their families. First with the addition of a third school-age unit that you may have read about in the fall/winter 2006 edition of “Viewpoint,” and now we have added a second assistant director position to work specifically with service coordination teams.

facilitating greater inclusion of school-age children in general education settings and community after school programs, and further developing Lanterman’s relationships with the various school districts in our service area in order to bring a more cohesive approach to the area of education.

Additionally, Hashemzadeh will be enhancing Lanterman’s working relationship with other community agencies that serve children with special needs, such as the Department of Children and Family Services, to promote greater collaboration, especially during the adolescent years. She will also be exploring what Lanterman can do to ensure that all children with special needs are able to live with their families, including parent education, placing supports in the home, and making sure that service coordinators are proactive.

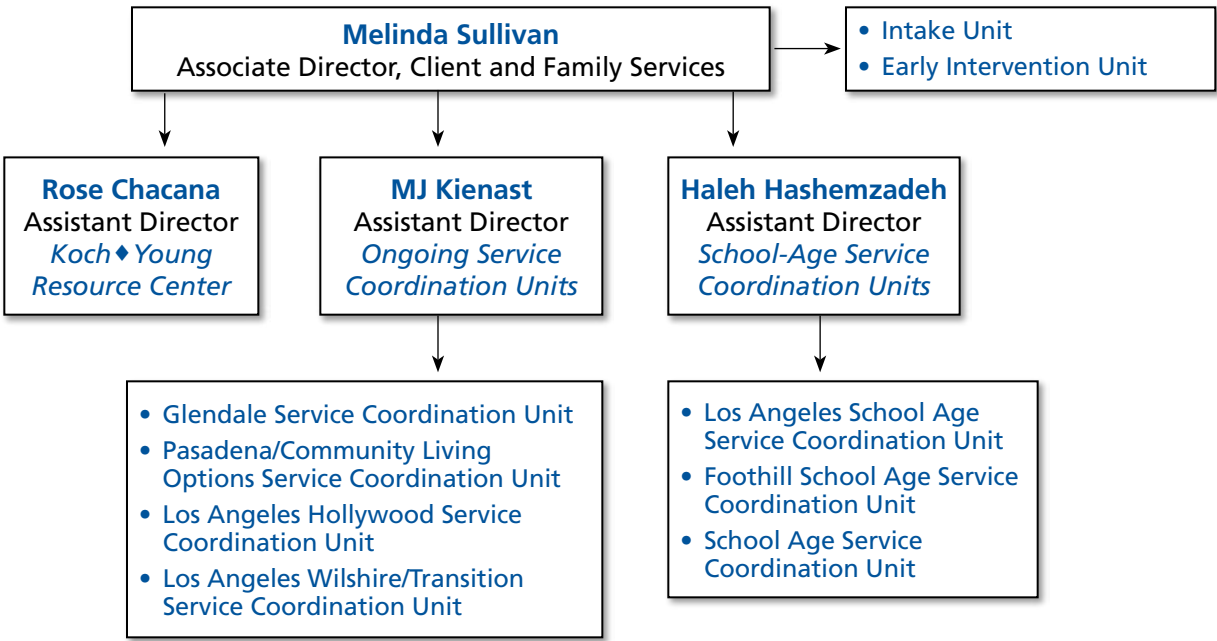
Hashemzadeh considers her three strongest personal values to be responsibility, accessibility and accountability, and approaches all of her daily interactions through these values. When asked what she thought would be a challenge for her, she replied, “The biggest challenge is to balance being person-centered and task-oriented, and creating a better quality of life for people with developmental disabilities where they can achieve greater control and influence over their own lives.”

She adds, “I would also like to be involved with the Center’s strategic planning and preparing for the future in an ever-evolving services system. I also admire this Center’s focus on the health and well-being of the people we serve and the commitment to person-centered planning.”

Hashemzadeh was born in Long Beach, but moved to Tehran, Iran when she was 2. She returned to California when she was 10 and since then has continuously lived in some part of the Valley. She currently lives in Woodland Hills with her husband of five years, Charles Ornelas, who she met while working at North Los Angeles County Regional Center. She enjoys spending as much time as she can with her family and friends and taking shorts trips up the coast in her free time. ■

An Organizational Snapshot of Client and Family Services

Here’s a snapshot of how the Client and Family Services division is organized so you have a better idea of how the newest addition to Lanterman’s leadership team, Haleh Hashemzadeh, fits into the overall structure of this division.



Lanterman Regional Center Presents Staff with Service Awards

IN A JOB MARKETPLACE WHERE COMPANIES OFTEN see relatively high turnover of their employees, it becomes important to acknowledge those individuals that stay on five, 10, 15 or even 20 plus years. Years ago, the Lanterman board of directors implemented service awards to recognize the service and commitment of our own veteran employees to the Center and the Lanterman community. Service awards are presented to employees during the month in which they reach their milestone year of service – five, 10, 15, 20 and more years.

“Lanterman staff that reach these milestones do so by embodying the Center’s commitment to delivering a high quality of service. Regional Center work is very challenging, and staff often find themselves working with limited resources and high expectations to achieve results. It takes a special kind of person to succeed,” says Diane Anand, executive director.

During the period from January to April 2007, the following individuals received service awards for their years of service to Lanterman Regional Center and the community: Liliana Avalos and Janine Meneses for five years, Ronna Kajikawa for 10 years, and Reyna Paredes for 20 years.

We asked all of the Lanterman staff that have received service awards why they stayed at Lanterman and what is their favorite memory during their time here.



Ronna Kajikawa
executive assistant, Training and Development

I’ve stayed at Lanterman for 10 years because of the people I work with, especially Maureen Wilson, the director of Training and Development; and also for the opportunity I have to learn new information and to make a positive difference. My favorite memory during the last 10 years is of working on the premiere of “We’re Here to Speak for Justice” and having the opportunity to correspond with and meet the pioneers of the regional center system.

—RONNA KAJIKAWA



Reyna Paredes
receptionist/operations assistant,
Operations Management

Everyday I get to see the positive impact Lanterman Regional Center makes in the life of each family. I enjoy the social interaction with all the families, staff and my peers. I have made many wonderful friendships throughout the 20 years I have been here. I look forward to working many more years in this supportive, caring environment.

—REYNA PAREDES



Liliana Avalos
service coordinator, Pasadena Community
Living Options Service Coordination Unit

I have stayed at Lanterman for the past five years because I enjoy what I do and the people I work with. I work with great families who share their gratitude about the services the Regional Center provides and the work I do on their behalves. It is fulfilling for me to know that my work has such a positive impact on the lives of clients. I also have a good group of peers and a comfortable work environment. It is difficult for me to pinpoint one memorable moment here at Lanterman because what most stands out for me are the people I have met and the relationships that I have built along the way.

—LILIANA AVALOS

Regional Center Pioneer Dr. Richard Koch Featured in “Over Here” – His Story is Just One in a Compilation of Stories About How the G.I. Bill Changed Lives

PUBLISHED IN 2006, EDWARD HUMES BOOK “OVER HERE: HOW THE G.I. Bill Transformed the American Dream” shares the stories of some of the men and women whose lives changed because of the G.I. Bill, and how this country changed because of them.

The G.I. Bill of Rights, formally known as the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, was designed to provide a little help for the sixteen million returning World War II soldiers – men and women who bravely served their country. The bill more than provided a little help, it opened up a world of opportunities for these returning service members – college, professional degrees, homeownership – opportunities that they otherwise may not have had.

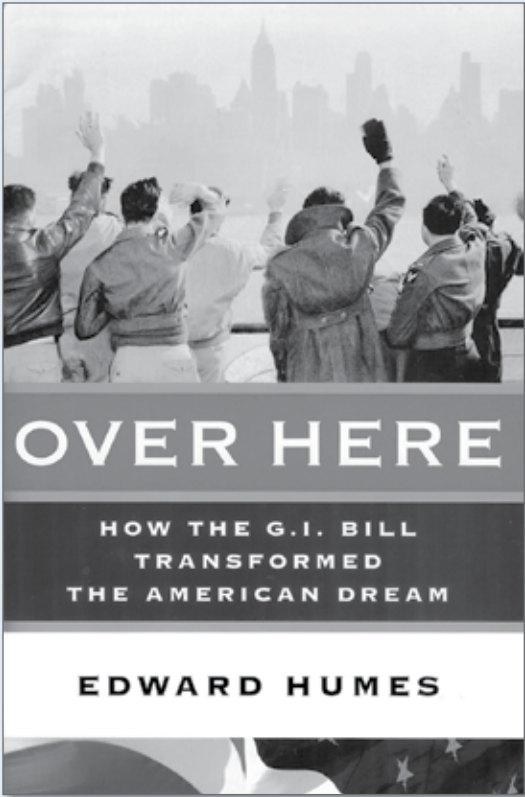
These individuals would come to be known as the “Greatest Generation” – the generation that built the America we know today. And one member of this generation is Dr. Richard Koch. Koch’s story is entitled “Out of the Blue: Medical Miracles.” In it, he shares his reasons for joining the Army Air Corps, his marriage to his wife Jean, his experiences as a bombardier flying missions over Germany, and the fateful day in 1944 when the plane he was flying on was so badly damaged that he and other crew members were forced to jump and parachute into enemy territory.

The story also gives insight into Koch’s decision to become a doctor during the year-plus that he spent in a German prison camp, how the G.I. Bill enabled Koch to attend the University of California, Berkeley by covering his tuition and expenses, and how Koch then went on to attend the University of Rochester’s medical school. The story also chronicles Koch’s return to California for a pediatric internship at Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles, including his initial decision to turn down an offer made by the hospital’s chief of medicine to head a new one-of-a-kind child development unit focusing on patients with

developmental disabilities, and his ultimate decision to accept the position.

Additionally, the story also shares Koch’s involvement in the early years of the regional center system as the first director of the Clinic for the Study of Mental Retardation at Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles where he started a traveling clinic program in 1955 that supported parents who chose to keep their children with special needs at home instead of warehousing them in large institutions. It was these clinics that became a model for the regional center concept. And in 1966, the first two pilot regional centers opened. Koch, along with other pioneer parents and professionals secured the passage of legislation that ultimately created California’s 21 regional centers.

The story concludes with a look at Koch’s efforts at preventing developmental disabilities, and his focus on metabolic disorders, specifically on phenylketonuria (PKU), an area of medicine where he has become an internationally-recognized expert. Koch is now in his mid-80s, and it still actively involved in medicine and research.



LA Care Grant to Fund Pilot Dental Care Program for Residents of Intermediate Care Facilities

A WEALTH OF RECENT RESEARCH HAS demonstrated that improving a person’s oral health usually has a positive cascading impact, including an improvement of overall health and ultimately quality of life. But just as with the other types of health care people with developmental disabilities receive, there exists significant disparity in the quality of oral health care.

“We’ve been very successful in addressing the oral health concerns of children, including those with special needs, and ensuring that there are services and benefits to support them,” shares Leticia Reyes, Lanterman’s dental coordinator, “so when we had the opportunity to apply for a grant with LA Care, we decided to focus on a group of individuals that are typically underserved – people with developmental disabilities that reside in long-term care facilities.”

Residents of these types of care facilities usually have significant disabilities and require the greatest amount of assistance in completing their personal dental hygiene. Most see a dentist only once per year and many require general anesthesia. Many are also missing a large percentage of their permanent teeth and cannot tolerate dentures. Additionally, literature



“...when we had the opportunity to apply for a grant with LA Care, we decided to focus on a group of individuals that are typically underserved – people with developmental disabilities that reside in long-term care facilities.”

—LETICIA REYES

supports the theory that poor oral hygiene can contribute to other health issues, such as bacterial endocarditis, aspiration pneumonia and complications with diabetes. Reyes will oversee the one-year grant that is expected to start sometime in April or May. The grant will enable Lanterman to hire a registered dental hygienist who specializes in alternative care. It will also allow the Center to develop protocols, tools and resources for preventive oral health practices; and work with and train direct care staff at the pilot facility in the appropriate techniques utilizing the most current community standard of care to provide ongoing preventive care.

“We are looking forward to the project and are appreciative of LA Care for extending this opportunity to implement this innovative approach to improving the oral health of this underserved population,” says Gwen Jordan, director of Clinical Services at Lanterman. ■

Be the First to Know – Subscribe to Lanterman’s E-mail Bulletins

It’s very easy to subscribe to Lanterman’s e-mail bulletins. Simply visit www.lanterman.org and click on “Subscribe” to provide us with your e-mail address. You will automatically be signed up to receive e-mail bulletins about information related to Lanterman Regional Center’s general activities and events.

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

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



3303 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Phone: 213.383.1300
Fax: 213.383.6526
www.lanterman.org

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EDITOR:
Vinita Anand
Resource and Information Specialist
Koch♦Young Resource Center

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTORS: Diane Anand, Vinita Anand, Liliana Avalos, Zena Begin, Louis Brinker, Karem Chacana, Rose Chacana, Marian Chen, Isaac Chia, Ronald Cohen, Terri Delgadillo, Silvia Flores, Vicki Forman, Haleh Hashemzadeh, Liz Huntington, Karen Ingram, Diana Janas, Gwen Jordan, Ronna Kajikawa, Felita Kealing, Miles Kealing, M.J. Kienast, Candice Lamere, Frank Lara, Sharon Lefler, Mariko Magami, Gregory Mathes, Brian Miller, Reyna Paredes, Edward Perez, Leticia Reyes, Simee Schiffman, Sharon Shueman, Kathy Sterbenc, Melinda Sullivan, Maria Tapia-Montes, Joey Travolta, Michiko Wilkins, Tracey Willard and Gail Williamson

PHOTO CONTRIBUTORS: Vinita Anand, Ronald Cohen, Vicki Forman, Frank Lara, Gregory Mathes, Joey Travolta, Gail Williamson and Ruth Zuniga

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