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 serving only people with developmental disabilities are not listed. The Center's objective is to maximize serving only people with developmental disabilities and families with children with special needs increase their knowledge about generic community resources that offer fully-integrated programs.

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.

UCP Wheels for Humanity feels the need to expand their product line to include a full range of wheelchair accessories and mobility aids, while continuing to increase their donation of wheelchairs. We are seeking new funding for this expansion project, which will enable us to reach more people around the world. If you or your company are interested in helping us reach this goal, please contact us at 1-888-828-5558 or by email at giveback@ucpwheelsonline.com.

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Early Childhood Inclusion Offers Many Benefits

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.

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.

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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 Boxer, 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 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, Boxer’s 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 is also now aging. Those who came to us as infants when our system began are now into middle adulthood, and some into retirement.

As we have grown and changed over these four decades, we’ve learned the importance of 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 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 many over-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.

“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 what I’m going through. 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 we can do to help, and what I’d like them to say, and what’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 in 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. “Along with the wonderful opportunity comes 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

You can read Forman’s “Special Needs Mama” columns on www.literarymama.com/columns/specialneedsmama. 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 vforman@gmail.com.
“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 Selchardt, 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 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 inherent to 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 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.mrbluesky.com.

“‘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’”

—GAIL WILLIAMSON

Lanterman Launches Network of Care

Continued from page 1

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.trilogyir.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.

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.
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 uracil-5’-kinase deficiency (phenylketonuria) receive specialized services, and ended her tour at UCP’s apartment complex in downtown Los Angeles. She concluded her visit by attending Lanterman’s board of directors meeting, where she addressed the board and the 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 at 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 is to focus on how 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 the 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.

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. “Consequently, I’ve evoluted the state, the Department, the regional centers, the developmental centers, and local emergency services and public health 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 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 underseretary and deputy director. 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 Kareem 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, coordinated 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 commander, Barry Londer, is a member.

“At 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 start 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 Kareem 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.

“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.

“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

**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.
Early Childhood Inclusion Offers Benefits for Children With and Without Special Needs

ISACA 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 autism and severe emotional disturbance," and while social interaction has always been difficult for him, he has always been a "magnet to his peers," shares Isaac's mother, Marian. "It seems that there has always been 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 and Brinker's input, they settled on creating a "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 "buddy" program. They also introduced a small-sized lunchtime "play group." Willard explains about the "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 kinder 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." His mother Felita Kealing shares, "I remember when Miles first started kindergarten, he didn't share any details from his day school, but on his first day as Isaac's special friend, during the whole car ride home, he could not stop talking about what he did with Isaac. He said "I learn so much when I played with Isaac." 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 I continue to have a negative thing that 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 kindergartners participating with Isaac in activities that are designed to develop social skills and foster playtime relationships. Willard shares, "I took a six-week Floortime program to understand my background and interest in play and social development so I could better facilitate the "play groups." And with help from 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 complement 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 hometown 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 empathetic. 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 is Isaac." Also, towards the end of last year, an inclusion team was formed in place to 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 Hollaman, 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 progress being made in general education settings? He participates in regular morning recess with all of the third 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, creativity, and more spontaneous speech, and will laugh with peers related to the specific context of the situation. He will also take the initiative to make 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. "I believe that 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 our success." She also has a reverse mainstreaming program at Webster Elementary School, where volunteers in grades three through six spend one hour in the classroom daily and classroom teacher Marian, "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 during play time. 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,
Early Childhood Inclusion Offers Benefits for Children With and 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

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 WIDE 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 MATHE, ATEC’S MANAGER. “ALL OF OUR CLINICAL STAFF HAVE BETWEEN 3 TO 13 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ARE EITHER MEDICAL LICENSING 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.”

Equiptment 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 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 Lanterman 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 in fact, a whole group of parents who have overcome before they can become good advocates for their children and this group has helped them do that.”

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

**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 be screened 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 were able to attend the workshop, but also those who wanted to work in the school setting. The hope is that with some basic knowledge about disabilities the background and tools they need to pursue employment and 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 understanding 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. “It was really cool 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 clinic to provide support to the JSPACC and parents from the Greater Los Angeles area.

The JSPACC is also participating in two grants. One 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 Magami at 818.249.1726 and Michiko Wilkins at 818.557.0728.}

*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 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.

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 haven’t picked up, you have this information 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’s headquarters and the other groups to be printed in the next edition of “Viewpoint” this summer.

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 may be missing classes due to delays or no-shows by Access; it is 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 bad job than they are.”

“Your 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.

TIPS FOR 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/.
2. Complaints or comments may also be sent in writing to: Access Services, P.O. Box 71684, Los Angeles, CA 90071-0684
3. Complaints or comments may be made over the phone by calling 1.800.883.0829 or TDD 1.800.827.1359.

Viewpoint

Which is it? – Consumer or Client

A few 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.

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
Arlen Frundzhyan
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.

DDDS Web site Features “Consumer Corner”

For more information about the Consumer Advisory Committees, please 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
• Advocacy resources to help clients ensure their rights are protected
• Links to other resources available to individuals with developmental disabilities

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 Drumhiser, 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 to be better able to support the future growth and development of the group.

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Meeting 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 – VSTAS. Social and Work where she provided counseling and case management services to dual-diagnosed and behaviorally-challenged persons.

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 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.

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 x. 665 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 x. 665 or flara@lanterman.org so you can be placed on the list of attendees. We look forward to your visit.
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.

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

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 behalfs. 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.

—RONNA KAJKAWA

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 – 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 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.

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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 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 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 with work 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.

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

...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

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

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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.

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