



## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### *Help Yourself and Others Stay Healthy – Wash Your Hands Regularly*

Every child learns this infamous word when he or she goes off to elementary school – cooties. This word is echoed throughout playgrounds, whispered near the cubby shelves, and invariably, it's used to represent how girls feel about boys at this young age, and as a replacement name for germs. So, you may be asking yourself, how do you keep the "cooties" at bay from your children and yourself this winter and spring, and the answer is simple – wash your hands regularly.

Germs of all kinds live everywhere. While some germs are harmless, there are a number that can make you sick. Some of the infectious diseases commonly spread through hand-to-hand contact include the common cold, flu and several gastrointestinal disorders, such as infectious diarrhea. Inadequate hand hygiene also contributes to food-related illnesses, such as salmonella and E. coli infection.

Throughout the day you accumulate germs on your hands from a variety of sources, such as direct contact with people, contaminated surfaces, foods, even animals and animal waste. If you don't wash your hands frequently enough, you can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth. You can also spread these germs to others by touching them or by touching surfaces that they also touch, such as door handles.

However, despite the proven health benefits of hand washing, many people don't practice this habit as often as they should – even after using the bathroom.

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### Nick Klein is Living the Hollywood Dream

How many people can say that within less than a year of moving to Hollywood from the Midwest, that they've been in a movie with Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew McConaughey, have an agent, and the prospects for upcoming film roles? Not very many people can say that, but Nick Klein can.

Just over one year ago in November, Nick Klein's mother was diagnosed with cancer, and lost her battle against her illness after a short fourth months. With very little time to prepare, Klein found himself moving out to Hollywood, California to live with his sister, Alydra Kelly, nine years his senior. Klein, who utilizes a wheelchair to get around, was faced

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Nick Klein is achieving his dream of being an actor.

### The Manning Family has the Experience of a Lifetime Meeting the Pope

*See story on page 9*



*Dominique Manning is blessed by Pope Benedict XVI during her recent visit to the Vatican City.*

### Lanterman Receives Assistive Technology Grant from California Consumer Protection Foundation

The California Consumer Protection Foundation has awarded Lanterman Regional Center a \$35,000 one-year grant to increase the overall efficiency of Lanterman's Assistive Technology Project by improving internal processes and developing more community options for our clients in the area of technology.

There are four goals of this assistive technology grant:

- ◆ increase the efficiency of the identification, referral, assessment and provision of services processes;
- ◆ engage in staff training and development to improve collaboration between the Assistive Technology Project and service coordination staff, and ensure better integration of the Project into overall Lanterman operations;
- ◆ identify a network of community organizations that provide services related to assistive technology or computer skill development, conduct community development workshops, and develop formal agreements to ensure that clients have appropriate access to the full range of services;
- ◆ and establish a formal partnership with the University of Southern California University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Childrens Hospital of Los Angeles to provide Lanterman's Assistive Technology Project with additional expertise in multidisciplinary assessment and service planning.

"We are well on our way to achieving all of our goals and objectives," shares Lisa Anand, resource and information specialist at Lanterman. "We have already achieved our first and fourth goals in their entirety, and parts of our second goal. The remainder of our projects are progressing well, and with a community inclusion specialist coming on board, we are confident that this grant will enable us to better meet the wide range of technology needs demonstrated by our community."

Quarterly presentations with service coordination staff are being held to boost referrals and collaboration. "We're very excited about the creation of a Koch ♦ Young Resource

Center – Service Coordination Committee that has created a dynamic and regular means for service coordinators to provide feedback to the Resource Center staff on Assistive Technology Project services and many other Resource Center services," adds Anand.

In an effort to increase the number of technology options in the community, Lanterman has used part of the grant funding to contract with Computer Access Center to help us develop relationships with community technology centers, also known as CTCs, that we could ultimately have

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*At the Diskovery Center in Little Tokyo, Armen Frundzhyan and Robert Anderson, alongside other community members, are learning to use a video camera and computer to capture and tell their own digital stories.*

### PERSPECTIVES<sup>®</sup> 2006 March 17-19

Check out the *Perspectives* pullout insert for film descriptions, a film and event schedule, and for information about the opening and closing night receptions, and the Media Forum.



# Lanterman Community Saves 2005 Holidays are for Sharing Campaign

At the start of Lanterman's 2005 *Holidays are for Sharing* campaign, the prognosis looked pretty bleak for a successful year. All across the news were reports of how local organizations' campaigns were suffering because of the lack of donations, yet due to the remarkable efforts of Lanterman's community, we were able to meet the level of contributions from 2004, which was a record year for the Center.

"It was wonderful to see the Lanterman community come together to assist families and individuals who needed extra help during this holiday season," says Jackie Ashman, director of Human Resources and coordinator of the *Holidays are for Sharing* campaign. "We had a number of new organizations who contributed to this year's campaign, as well as many returning organizations."

Lanterman received approximately \$16,700 worth of cash contributions, and \$6,900 from Lanterman staff payroll deductions, the Lanterman staff lotto and recycling programs, and United Way donations. The Center also received \$1,100 worth of gift certificates from Nordstrom, K-Mart, Safeway, Target and Ralphs.

"While monetary donations were down by 8.5 percent, toy contributions from various organizations were up by over 10 percent, and food and holiday baskets were up by 31 percent from the previous year," adds Ashman. "Toys for Tots was able to increase their participation by 25 percent over the previous year, which was great, since their annual toy campaign got off to a slow start." The Alliance for Children's Rights, HOPE Worldwide and Giving Tree, who have made toy contributions in previous years, also were able to make toy contributions this year.

Some of the new organizations that participated in this year's *Holidays are for Sharing* campaign include Sparks of Love; Los Angeles Police Department; and Custom Building Products, which held a toy and food drive. Various Dodger-related items were also donated. Just over \$61,000 worth of toys for children of all ages was collected.

Close to 50 holiday baskets valued at \$5,500 were assembled, 32 by Temple Ahavat Shalom, five by the South Orange County Chamber Orchestra, and 10 by the Gamma Phi Delta Sorority, Inc. "Even though our Adopt-a-Family program was only able to serve half the number of families as last year, we



For the last four years, the Ruth Church McKay Foundation has made a generous donation to Lanterman's Early Intervention units to enable them to purchase toys and gifts for families being served by the units and that do not have the means to buy their children gifts for the holidays. This year, (from left) Early Intervention Service Coordinators Monica Mauriz and Kelly Price-Martinez, who have become masters at negotiating and obtaining the best prices for these toys, and Edward Perez, a former Early Intervention service coordinator, went shopping in the Downtown Los Angeles Toy District, loading two vehicles with about 20 large boxes.

were able to match last year's record-setting levels of contributions," shares Ashman. "The giving dynamic was different this year, but between the cash contributions, toy donations, food baskets and the families that were adopted, we estimate that the grand total for the 2005 *Holidays are for Sharing* campaign is just over \$95,400."



The Marines hosted a dinner on Thursday, January 12 in honor of all of the volunteers who donated more than eight hours of their time to fulfill orders as part of the 2005 Toys for Tots campaign. Pictured above are some of the Marines from the Pico Rivera, November Battery, which is the group of Marine Corp Reservists that coordinate the Toys for Tots campaign in Lanterman's area, along with many of the Lanterman volunteers who helped ensure that toys were provided to everyone who requested help from Lanterman this year.



The Early Intervention Spanish-Speaking Parent Support Group hosted a holiday party for parents and children that included a sampling of holiday treats, arts and crafts projects, and a visit from Santa complete with storytelling and presents.

## STAFF HIGHLIGHT Service Coordinator Specialist Zena Begin

Eight years ago, Zena Begin joined Lanterman as a service coordinator in the Early Intervention unit. She brought with her a strong educational background – an associate's degree in child development from Pasadena City College and a bachelor's degree in social work from California State University, Los Angeles – and almost eight years of experience in the field of developmental disabilities. Begin worked at Orange County Regional Center as a service coordinator, managed two adult homes for Casa Colina, and worked as an infant stimulation teacher.

During her first five years at Lanterman, Begin spent her time working with families whose children were between the ages of birth-to-three. In 2002, Lanterman created the Foothill School Age unit and a group of five service coordinators, including Begin, were asked to move to the new unit. "I was a little unsure at first," says Begin, "but I was able to take much of my Early Intervention caseload at the time, and now, I would have to say that this is one of the best parts of having moved to the School Age unit – many of the families I worked with when their children were very young in the neonatal intensive care unit are still with me, and they are celebrating their seventh birthdays." For Begin, this is the part of the job that makes the work that she does that much more rewarding. Begin's families have watched her son, Wesley, who is now 10 years old, grow up, and she in turn has enjoyed hearing about their children and seeing how many of the children on her caseload have proven the doctors wrong – they have walked and they have been included – which doctors said they would never do.

Begin currently carries a caseload of 70 clients and is responsible for providing support to the school-age children and their families. She attends Individualized Education Program meetings, helps families advocate for their children, researches community programs open to working with children with special needs, and also offers support and assistance to her co-workers. As a



Service Coordinator Specialist  
Zena Begin

service coordinator specialist, Begin carries some of the more involved cases and also fills in when her regional manager is on vacation, assisting with funding and basic manager responsibilities.

When asked what the biggest challenge of her job is, Begin replied, "I think that finding inclusive programs in the community for children with special needs is the most challenging aspect of my job. Parents want their children to be included like any child, and it's not always easy to do. However, many of the Foothill communities, especially Pasadena and Burbank, are open to including children with developmental disabilities."

Begin is often teased by her co-workers that she

is "the resource queen," a title which she has acquired by knowing what's going on in the community and what resources are out there for families with children with special needs. In addition to her responsibilities as a service coordinator specialist, Begin enjoys participating in various other activities. She participated in a Touchpoints Training group held with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, has spoken on behalf of the Regional Center, and participates with two community collaboration groups. "One of my favorite activities is the annual Social Recreational Forum hosted by the Foothill School Age unit that brings inclusive community programs together with parents," adds Begin.

After the 2006 Social Recreational Forum is held on April 7, Begin would like to turn her efforts to creating a resource guide that is similar to the Autism Power Pak, but is designed for families whose children have a variety of disabilities, not just autism. "If I could change just one thing, it would be to get rid of all of the filing I have to do for the charts since we really have a lot of paper and I hate filing. I'd be able to spend more time with the families and be able to do more research about different programs. I'd be willing to pay somebody to do my filing, if they did it right," says Begin.

For Begin, her most memorable moments from her time at Lanterman come from having the opportunity to be permitted into the neonatal intensive care units, talking with the families, and being around the babies, which she feels was just a wonderful experience. "Unless you actually worked in a hospital, working at the regional center is probably the only other job that would give you that experience," shares Begin. "Everything has been really good here. Lanterman gives their staff so many opportunities to grow and develop, and to bring ideas and projects to the table. It's definitely a cutting-edge Regional Center."

Begin who grew up in Atwater, and now lives in Montrose, believes that the fact that she lives in the same community as many of the families she works with, makes this job even more fulfilling. Begin says, "I run into families at the grocery store and at restaurants, and they know that I'm part of the community, and that I know what's going on, and that makes for a better relationship."

"This is the job that I always want to have – to be a part of the regional center system. I can't imagine getting out of this field and working with a different community," shares Begin. "The lesson that I've learned through all of this is that having families share their lives with you is really a gift. Where else would you get a chance to meet all of these amazing families who have learned how to laugh in the most overwhelming situations, how to turn those situations around, and to be the most determined people when it comes to their children." Begin's future aspirations include one day becoming a regional manager, either in Early Intervention or School Age. When she isn't working, Begin enjoys spending time with her son, gardening, snow skiing and camping at the beach, which they are doing a lot more of because Wesley is in the Boy Scouts.



# 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 March 2006, the following 10 individuals have received or will receive service awards: Silvia Flores and Gwen Jordan for 25 years; Julio Vicente for 15 years; Elaine Patten for 10 years; and Lisa Anand, Nolasco Baluyut, Tina Hartyon, Bernadine Mager, Raena Puentez and Lisa Pirruccello for five years of service to Lanterman Regional Center and the community.

**We asked the Lanterman staff that have received service awards why they stayed at Lanterman and what is their favorite memory from their time at Lanterman.**

The reason I have stayed at Lanterman for five years is because my work in quality assurance provides me with a great deal of satisfaction. Helping service providers improve the quality of service they provide to Lanterman’s clients is very rewarding. My favorite memory is of the wonderful time everyone had when some of the units here got together and held a holiday party for a large group of Lanterman’s adult clients who lived independently or in residential homes.

– **Lisa Pirruccello** – 5 years, quality assurance coordinator, Community Services unit

I think I have stayed so long at Lanterman because of the people – the families, community partners and team of co-workers – I have worked with. It has been a great experience getting to meet such an array of wonderful people, and those I have worked with closely have become like family to me. We have been through a lot in the time that I have been here, and I feel that Lanterman is a rare organization that fosters the growth and personal development of not only the people they provide service to, but also of its staff. I think that is part of what makes it such a successful organization.

– **Lisa Anand** – 5 years, resource and information specialist, Koch ♦ Young Resource Center

The reason I have stayed here for 25 years is because I really enjoy working with the families, as I have shared their struggles and experiences of having a family member with a disability. I have become more patient and grateful for the little things, both good and bad, that life brings our way. I believe this has made me a better person and has contributed to my desire to continue working at Lanterman, which has been a rewarding and life-changing experience. In my 25 years, I have had many memorable moments, but one of the most memorable moments that I can recall took place in the early 1980s. During the Christmas season, a company donated a truckload of groceries, turkeys and other goodies, to be distributed to the Regional Center’s families and clients. The interesting thing was that the day the “goodies” were delivered to Lanterman, it was raining. We only had an outdoor parking lot space available to work and arrange the baskets, and by the time we finished filling up the baskets we were soaking wet. But the day was not over yet, we still had to deliver the baskets. I still remember when the service coordinator and I arrived at a family’s home. Seeing the family’s expression of happiness and gratitude as the basket was being delivered to them was worth the time, effort and being soaked in the rain.

– **Silvia Flores** – 25 years, executive assistant, Clinical Services unit



Gwen Jordan (left) and Silvia Flores

I’ve stayed at Lanterman for five years because I’m happy being a part of the Lanterman Regional Center family. It is rewarding to be able to assist families with children who have special needs in our small accounting ways.

– **Nolasco Baluyut** – 5 years, accounting associate, Accounting unit



Julio Vicente and Lisa Pirruccello

The last five years that I’ve spent working here at Lanterman has felt like what I imagine working at Disneyland would be. It’s the greatest (and happiest) place to work. My most memorable moments of my time here are of the skits at the annual holiday parties. The best one was when some of the leadership team dressed up in drag for their performance. That’s something you’ll never forget.

– **Julio Vicente** – 15 years, resource specialist, Community Services unit

There are many reasons I’ve stayed at Lanterman for 25 years, but the one that most readily comes to mind is the fact that there has always been something new and different happening for me. I have had the opportunity to work in nearly every department at the Center and these opportunities have served to increase my knowledge of the Center and the system as a whole. During my time here, I’ve had lots of wonderful experiences and in many ways think of the Lanterman staff members much as extended family. Along with many other long-term staff members, we’ve raised our children here and shared our successes, struggles and occasionally, failures. I’d have to say that during my time here, some of my favorite memories are of participating in several of the Center’s innovative projects, as well as various social events, especially the annual staff appreciation party held during December.”

– **Gwen Jordan** – 25 years, director, Clinical Services unit



Nolasco Baluyut

## THE BUDGET UPDATE

### Governor Releases Proposed Budget for 2006-07, Budget Does Little to Address the Existing Financial Crisis in Community Service System

In the midst of a slightly improving fiscal picture in the state of California, Governor Schwarzenegger has released a proposed budget for the fiscal year that is to start July 1, 2006. The proposed budget includes a \$178 million (6.1 percent) increase for the regional center system, which brings the total allocation for regional centers to over \$3 billion for the first time in history. Of the increase, \$154 million is for purchase of services and the remaining \$23 million is for regional center direct services and operations. In the coming year, the regional center system is expected to serve approximately 214,000 clients and families.

The amount of increase for the coming year is approximately 5 percent less than the increase proposed last January for the current fiscal year. In addition, of the portion proposed for the purchase of services increase for 2006-07, more than 40 percent is earmarked for a 3 percent rate increase for specific service types. This leaves approximately \$80 million to cover growth in purchase of services for the entire system, or about 3.6 percent more than the total purchase of services budget for 2005-06. This is low compared to previous years.

Most of the proposed increase in operations is intended to cover staffing to serve the increased numbers of clients expected to enter the system next year. The remainder will fund two positions at each regional center that will focus specifically on services to children with autism.

As in the past, the Administration is proposing to require regional centers to reduce purchase of service expenditures by using the least costly vendor that will meet the client’s needs, using group rather than individual services where appropriate, clarifying a parent’s responsibility for purchasing services, setting cost limits on supported living services, and ensuring that regional centers establish a process to review all purchase of services authorizations. Most of these strategies have been in practice at regional centers for some time. Similar strategies have been proposed in the past but have not survived the legislative approval process.

While the 3 percent rate increase for certain categories of service providers is not unwelcome, it does nothing for other providers, and little overall for providers who have not had real, substantive rate adjustments in many years. In fact, in his proposal, the Governor acknowledges that the increase is being proposed because the current rate structure does not allow providers to offer quality services and meet regulatory requirements, and as a consequence, many are leaving the field. The rate freeze on most providers and the prohibition on the use of purchase of service funds to start new programs, adopted three years ago, will continue to remain in effect.

Of perhaps greatest interest is the fact that the budget document reports a reduction in the current year’s appropriation for regional centers by \$45 million, mostly in purchase of services. In other words, the Administration has taken back funds from our already under-resourced system because they estimate that the regional centers will not need these dollars to purchase services this year. We believe that the expected surplus is due primarily to the freeze on provider rates and the prohibition against using such funds to start new programs. To address purchase of services deficits that some centers, such as Lanterman, are expecting, the Department of Developmental Services will transfer to these centers funds from centers that are projecting surpluses for this fiscal year.

The budget being proposed for the coming year does little to address the financial crisis that currently exists in the community services system. We bring your attention to pages 6 and 7 in this newsletter where we address the situation in the community, and our proposal for mobilizing regional centers and their communities around the State in an effort to persuade the Legislature to reaffirm the vision of the Lanterman Act and reinvest in the community service system.



## EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

## Eli Fattal Helps Gensler Discover the Benefits of Employing People with Special Needs

For several years, Eli Fattal was on a mission – a mission to find a job. He volunteered at Lanterman to build up his résumé, opened his case with the Department of Rehabilitation, and attended workshops and forums. At one of the presentations, the head of the Department of Rehabilitation was speaking, and right in the middle of his presentation, Fattal stood up and started asking questions about employment and how to get a job. Shortly thereafter, Fattal’s service coordinator connected him with Best Buddies, an organization that offers supported employment services.

The beginning of 2004, Gensler, a global architecture, design, planning and strategic consulting firm that specializes in a wide range of buildings and facilities owned or used by businesses, institutions and public agencies, was contacted by Best Buddies of California through their outreach program. “We had not heard of Best Buddies prior to their initial contact, and when we learned about the organization’s mission, we were thrilled to begin interviewing candidates,” shares Christine Dennis-Abilla, a senior associate at Gensler, and director of Human Resources for the firm’s Southwest Region. “It was a learning experience for us too. We interviewed several candidates for different open positions. Eli was interviewed for an office services coordinator position. It was obvious he could handle the job requirements and he was truly interested in doing so. The decision to hire Eli was a no-brainer!”

Fattal joined Gensler Los Angeles’ Operations group in April 2004. He spent his first week at Gensler like every new employee – in a series of orientation meetings and training. Fattal was accompanied by a job coach for the first couple of days as he learned his way around Gensler’s Los Angeles office, which houses over 250 employees on one floor. The coach also assisted with establishing rapport and communication between Fattal and Gensler staff. “Although the

first day can seem daunting, after a few days, Eli no longer required a coach to be at work with him all the time,” says Dennis-Abilla. “Eli’s integration into our office was relatively seamless. By virtue of his role, he sees almost everyone here every day. Eli is friendly by nature and it was reasonably easy for him to meet his new co-workers and learn their names.”

Fattal is one of a three-person team that supports the operations needs for the 400 or so staff that work in the region, 250 of which work in the Los Angeles office. He is responsible for opening, sorting and distributing mail and packages within the office and the region. Fattal also supports the Facilities and IT groups with conference room set-ups for the daily, weekly and monthly meetings. Fattal also delivers architectural models as needed, along with a variety of other general office tasks. “Eli’s role has expanded since he joined us almost two years ago. As he has mastered his core job duties and daily responsibilities, he has taken on more responsibility, including data entry projects and electronic courier package tracking,” adds Dennis-Abilla.

Gensler’s work culture is one of collaboration and learning, and Fattal enjoys working in the team environment and strives to learn every day. Dennis-Abilla shares, “Eli came to us with a business sense already instilled. He’s diligent, thoughtful, task driven and he gets the job done.” When Fattal has a chance, he spends his time finding out as much as he can about the architecture and design aspects of the industry he works in – an area that personally fascinates him. He also enjoys sharing information about current events with his friends and co-workers.

When asked about any tips from Gensler’s experience that could help other businesses successfully employ individuals with developmental disabilities, they said, “Have an open mind! If you haven’t been contacted yet by an agency that helps to staff capable, challenged



Eli Fattal at work at Gensler Los Angeles’s office.

individuals, seek them out on your own. We believe it’s important to give back to the community, but we also want to hire the right candidate. We were pleasantly surprised to learn about some of the willing and able talent that is available and eager to work for the right company.”

Hiring Fattal to work for Gensler has been such a great experience for them that they also employed another candidate temporarily through Best Buddies to help fulfill some fiscal year-end administrative tasks for the Finance group. “Both experiences – long-term and temporary have proven to be beneficial,” adds Dennis-Abilla.

*The “Employer Spotlight” is a recurring “Viewpoint” feature and spotlights employers that are competitively employing individuals with developmental disabilities. One of Lanterman’s strategic initiatives is to help the individuals we serve find gainful employment and to support the organizations that are employing people with developmental disabilities. This feature asks employers why they made the decision to hire someone with a developmental disability, and what tips and strategies they have used to make that employment successful, in the hopes that other businesses will benefit from these ideas and also consider hiring someone with a disability. To recommend a business or employer for this feature, contact Vinita Anand at [vinita.anand@lanterman.org](mailto:vinita.anand@lanterman.org) or 213.383.1300, x. 753.*

## Nick Klein

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with several sets of stairs to negotiate in order to reach his sister’s one-bedroom apartment.

In addition to working a full-time job as a public defender in Compton, Kelly spent an equivalent amount of time putting together a “life” for her brother who had nothing out here. Kelly says, “Although Nick would have been accepted into a day program, both his service coordinator and I felt that he would not have been happy there. One of Nick’s friends from the Special Olympics program at UCLA was attending Performing Arts Studio West, and we got him enrolled, just in time too, since there’s now a waiting list.”

Klein has been attending Performing Arts Studio West since July 2005. He’s been learning various acting skills, such as improv, scene study, cold reading, on-camera techniques and voiceover techniques. In addition, he’s receiving instruction in music and voice, including voice music basics, ear and vocal training, and he’s working to develop his performance skills. He also works on dance and movement, which are used to limber the body,



On his way to Las Vegas, Nick Klein chats up Quentin Tarantino for about 20 minutes during a chance meeting at the airport.

improve muscle tone, and increase stamina and coordination. Klein has also been learning about the technical side of the industry, including the areas of lighting, sound, camera operation, computer programs and editing.

PASW also has a bi-monthly self-advocacy group that helps participants make positive life choices and to become active members of their home communities. “The Studio,” as it’s called by their clients, offers casting coordination services through their director of talent, and on-set support services. PASW regularly schedules guest speakers to share their knowledge of the entertainment industry. Directors, producers, writers, composers, actors and technical experts lecture, give workshops and host question and answer sessions. PASW also hosts field studies, which include frequent outings to plays, entertainment museums, studios and production facilities to give their clients exposure to different aspects of the business.

“This program has been great for Nick in a lot of ways. He’s learned relaxation techniques, how to calm himself down, presentation techniques and professionalism. The other students and faculty have provided a much needed core for Nick and it’s been a really great social network for him,” shares Kelly. “The families are also very involved in the program, attending the talent shows and plays that the clients put on.” Klein adds, “I have so much fun at the program. The dancing is my favorite.”

The program’s director of talent recently landed Klein a role on “Failure to Launch,” an upcoming film starring Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew McConaughey. Klein says, “I had three lines, ‘Excuse me,’ ‘Beep, beep,’ and ‘Hello.’ I was a little nervous, but it was exciting.” PASW’s director of talent and acting instructors work with clients on how to handle auditions, including the things you say and don’t. “We’ve been working with Nick to understand that he’s part could be cut from the film, so he knows what happens if you get cut. It has been character building for him to know that he could be rejected, but he’s learning



Nick Klein attends a local sporting event with his sister, Alydra Kelly.

that it’s part of life that you don’t always get what you want,” says Kelly. “PASW is working towards getting all of their clients eligible for the Screen Actors Guild, which will make them eligible for all of the benefits of being a member. PASW provides their clients with the opportunity to work a real job, and although some of the jobs don’t pay, the ones that do, help clients learn how to handle money.”

Klein has auditioned for the TV show “Still Standing” and is scheduled to start filming a video to help train emergency responders. Klein has had a long-standing interest in theater, having been around it when he was growing up, primarily through his sister’s involvement in high school and community productions. Klein is also moving into UCP’s new apartments in Burbank this spring. “I’ll definitely have my own television and DVD player,” says Klein, who enjoys watching movies. His favorite movie is “The Brooke Ellison Story” – the last film directed by Christopher Reeve.

“I’ll do whatever it takes to help Nick get the life that he wants,” says Kelly. “It’s definitely much better out here than Ohio, and not as cold,” adds Klein.

For more information about Performing Arts Studio West, visit [www.pastudiowest.com](http://www.pastudiowest.com).



## About Gensler

**G**ensler is a global architecture, design, planning and strategic consulting firm that specializes in a wide range of buildings and facilities owned or used by businesses, institutions and public agencies. Our services engage the full building cycle from initial planning through design, implementation and management. We focus on our clients, understand their goals and strategies, and seek to add substantial value to their enterprise through our work and services.

Gensler was founded in San Francisco in 1965. To ensure close interaction with its clients, the firm has grown from one office to a broad-based organization with 28 offices and a professional resource in excess of 2,000 people. Fast Company magazine has called Gensler “one of America’s most influential design firms.” For over two consecutive decades, Gensler has been recognized in independent surveys as the nation’s largest architectural firm (Building Design & Construction magazine) and largest interior design firm (Interior Design magazine). World Architecture magazine has named Gensler one of the world’s top five architectural firms. Gensler ranked number one in Interiors magazine’s “Top 40 Multinational Design Firms” survey.

Gensler received the Year 2000 Architecture Firm Award, the American Institute of Architect’s highest honor to a firm that has consistently produced distinguished architecture. Michael J. Stanton, FAIA, president of the AIA, said in his announcement, “Gensler is America’s foremost collaborative practice. The firm exemplifies how the creative mix of disciplines, all with ‘place’ as their focus, adds richness and value to buildings and their settings... Year 2000 is an appropriate time to honor a firm that has consistently pushed the boundaries of architecture.”

For more information about Gensler, visit [www.gensler.com](http://www.gensler.com).

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It’s very easy to subscribe to Lanterman’s e-mail bulletins. Simply visit [www.lanterman.org/subscribe](http://www.lanterman.org/subscribe) and 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 specific to a certain age, disability or area by providing us with additional information. No information collected will be given to anyone 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.



### SAVE THE DATE

## Walk One, Walk All in CAN’s WALK NOW 2006

Cure Autism Now’s Los Angeles WALK NOW event will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2006 at The Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Thousands of families and individuals participate in the 5K Walk and Autism Community Resource Fair heightening public awareness and raising money to fund autism research. The Walk is just over three miles with lots of water, food and fun along the route; and the Autism Community Resource Fair features information from the various organizations, services, supports and resources focusing on autism in the Greater Los Angeles area, including educational resources, therapists, schools and recreational organizations. While parents meet a variety of autism service providers, children of all ages can enjoy arts and crafts, and other fun activities. Walker registration and the Resource Fair start at 8 a.m., and the Walk begins at 9:30 a.m. There is no fee to walk in the 5K. Visit WALK NOW online at [www.walknow.org](http://www.walknow.org) for additional information and to register, or contact Cure Autism Now at **888.8.AUTISM** or **323.549.0500**. Proceeds from WALK NOW support Cure Autism Now’s efforts to find the causes, effective treatments, prevention and a cure for autism. For more information about Cure Autism Now, visit [www.cureautismnow.org](http://www.cureautismnow.org).

## The Three-Year Touchpoints Special Needs Project Comes to a Close

**I**n 2000, the groundwork was set for the three-year Touchpoints Special Needs Project when Lanterman Regional Center contracted the Brazelton Touchpoints Center in Boston to provide consultation for the adaptation of the Touchpoints Model to children with special needs. The following year, the model was adapted and in February 2003, First 5 LA awarded three years of grant funding to Lanterman for the Touchpoints Special Needs Project.

“The Touchpoints Special Needs Model is a skill-building curriculum designed to teach medical and allied health practitioners about child development and to enhance their capacity to communicate effectively with parents,” says Tina Chinakarn, project coordinator. “The model has been adapted to address the developmental, parenting and social challenges experienced by families raising a child with special needs with the ultimate goal of improving the health and developmental outcomes of the children by enhancing relationships between their parents and the practitioners who serve them.”



*Dr. Leslie Richard interacts with a mother and her child with special needs during a family encounter – one of the highlights of the Touchpoints Special Needs Training.*

of developmental delay and associated high-risk conditions that may lead to a developmental disability • developmental screening tools, strength-based approaches to familial stress and the child with special needs • and developmental intervention in multiple settings.

Throughout the three years of the Project, six trainings were held, not including the pilot at Lanterman. The following hospitals were Touchpoints Special Needs Training sites/partners: Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles; Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center in Los Angeles; Glendale Adventist Medical Center Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center; and the University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities.

All told, 183 individuals were trained, and the breakdown includes 51 medical health professionals, 33 neonatal intensive care unit staff nurses, 12 nurse practitioners, six psychologists, 10 social workers, seven therapists, 18 service coordinators, 12 home visitors, seven pre-school teachers, four speech language pathologists, and 23 other allied health professionals. “One of our primary long-term outcomes is to increase the number of timely/earlier referrals of children to early intervention services available through the Regional Center,” adds Chinakarn.

Another component of the Touchpoints Special Needs Project, was the formation of the New Paths Parent Groups that were held in three different languages. Christine Mayola, Touchpoints project assistant and New Paths coordinator, shares, “The groups had the goal of improving the health of parents and their children, building more collaborative parent-practitioner relationships, and reducing parental stress and increasing coping skills.” A total of 12 six-session professionally-facilitated groups were held serving 158 families, of which approximately 100 were Spanish-speaking and 12 were Korean-speaking. Groups were held throughout the Greater Los Angeles area.

Lanterman and Touchpoints Special Needs Project partners are currently exploring options for the continuation of the Project. For more information about the Touchpoints Special Needs Project, visit [www.tpspecialneeds.org](http://www.tpspecialneeds.org).



*The Touchpoints Special Needs Training was customized for each of the six training sites. Dr. Leslie Richard presents at the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center three-day training.*

Leslie Richard, MD, a consultant pediatrician on the eligibility team at Lanterman Regional Center, is the lead curriculum developer for the Touchpoints Special Needs Model. “Through her professional training and personal experience with special needs, she has created a true experiential training for medical and allied health professionals,” remarks Patricia Herrera, project director of the Touchpoints Special Needs Project and director of Family Support Services at Lanterman. Richard adapted 13 content areas to address special needs, including: the child with special needs • anticipatory guidance and the family with special needs • giving bad news • grief • creating empathic relationships • avoiding bias • creating an empathic community • parent/child observation • referral and advocacy • early recognition

### Special Thanks to the Touchpoints Special Needs Project Training Team:

- Anshu Batra, MD
- Tina Chinakarn, MPH, Lanterman Regional Center
- M. Eileen Walsh Escarce, Ph.D., MSN, MA
- Patricia Herrera, MS, Lanterman Regional Center
- Barbara Jonkey, MS, PT, Glendale Adventist Medical Center
- Alice Kuo, MD, Ph.D., M.Ed., UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities
- Christine Mayola, BA, Lanterman Regional Center
- Kathy Lynn Perkins, MD, Ph.D., Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- Leslie Richard, MD, Lanterman Regional Center
- Stephanie B. Taylor-Dinwiddie, Ph.D., Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center

### Here’s What the Touchpoints Project Staff are Doing After the Grant...



*From left: Tina Chinakarn is moving on to do research at the Foundation for Cardiovascular and Transplant Research at UCLA Medical Plaza. She will be the research associate to manage their clinical trials, such as post-operative heart transplant immunosuppressant drugs subject to Food and Drug Administration approval. She will miss Lanterman very much but looks forward to the next stage in her career.*

*Christine Mayola will continue to work at the Koch • Young Resource Center providing temporary coverage of the resource and information specialist position and filling the assistive technology grant-funded community inclusion specialist position where she will be responsible for facilitating the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities into targeted community technology centers in the Los Angeles area. She’s very excited at this new opportunity to work more directly with the special needs population. In addition, she is continuing her studies and hopes to enter a graduate program in physical therapy in the near future.*



# The Life and Work of Frank D. Lanterman

By Denny Amundson

Frank D. Lanterman represented the La Cañada area of Los Angeles County in the state Assembly for 28 years, starting in 1950. While describing himself as a conservative, old curmudgeon Republican, Lanterman was really known for his big heart and ferocious advocacy for people with disabilities.

Beginning in 1963, Lanterman was appointed to a newly formed Subcommittee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities and served as its chairman from the late 1960s through the 1970s.

During this period, he authored numerous bills to improve the lives and protect the rights of people with developmental disabilities.

These included the landmark Lanterman Mental Retardation Services Act of 1969, the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, the Master Plan for Special Education, the California Community Care Licensing Act, and scores of others that fostered greater independence and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities.

Known as "Uncle Frank" to his friends and colleagues in the State Capitol, Lanterman was a role model and mentor for legislators from both political parties. He was honest, straightforward and brilliant.

Lanterman was also a tireless worker who often chaired committee meetings well into the late evening hours. After a long and tedious hearing, he would invite parents and advocates to join him for a "nightcap" in the Senator Hotel bar so they could continue their discussion. Some of the most important amendments to the Lanterman Act came from handwritten notes on napkins from Lanterman's favorite corner of the bar.

Frank Lanterman never married, and lived with his bachelor older brother, Lloyd, in an historic La Cañada mansion, which is now a museum. He was an accomplished musician who bought the giant Wurlitzer organ that was housed in the beautiful Fox Theater in San Francisco until the building was torn down in the early 1970s.

Lanterman majored in music at USC and was honored to play the USC fight song during halftime ceremonies at one of the annual "big games" between USC and UCLA.

Frank Lanterman was truly one of a kind. He retired from the Legislature in 1978 and died in 1981. Others have aspired to wear his mantle, but none have achieved his stature.



*Denny Amundson is a long-time leader and advocate in the field of developmental disabilities. In 1968, he joined the staff of Assemblyman Frank Lanterman, and as the Assemblyman's chief of staff, drafted the original Lanterman Act. He was also founding director of North*

*Los Angeles County Regional Center when the Center incorporated in 1974, and in the late 1970s he worked as a management consultant in the human services area. Amundson was ultimately appointed director of the Department of Developmental Services in 1991, a position he held for approximately six years. He is presently a consultant in human services and lives in Peoria, Arizona.*



*Assemblyman  
Frank D. Lanterman*



## Celebrating 40 Years a

### Letter to the Community

From Jeff Richards

President of Lanterman's Board of Directors



*Board President  
Jeff Richards*

The year 2006 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the regional center system in California. During the first 20 years of our history, regional centers, enabled by full legislative and funding support from the State, created a community-based alternative to state institutions that became a model for the nation. Since the early 1990s, however, the community service system has experienced a protracted period of inadequate funding, during which many service providers have seen the real cost of doing business consistently outpace the increase in rates. The result has been an inability on the part of these providers to maintain and improve facilities and equipment, an inability to hire and retain experienced and qualified staff, and a high level of staff turnover. Increasingly, service providers are leaving the field.

We believe that the service system is in crisis, and without concerted action on the part of regional centers and their communities, the system as we know it will not be there for future generations of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Those of us who are currently served by regional centers are greatly indebted to the "pioneers" – those mothers and fathers whose only alternative for their children was a state institution, and whose sense of justice and concern for their sons and daughters combined to make them unyielding, potent, and ultimately, successful advocates for the Lanterman Act and the creation of the regional center system. Our challenge now is to develop a new generation of leaders to take up their mantle.

We are asking our community, other regional centers and their communities, service providers, and advocates to join in a period of activism and advocacy resulting in a reaffirmation of the vision of the Lanterman Act and a decade of reinvestment and renewal of the community service system. Elsewhere on this page, you will find excerpts from "Reaffirming the Lanterman Vision," outlining our position and asking for others to join us as we seek to build support. A complete version of this document can be found on our website at [www.lanterman.org](http://www.lanterman.org). If you are willing to join us in this effort, I encourage you to visit the Web site and read upcoming newsletters for what you can do to help.

Sincerely,

Jeff Richards

## REAFFIRMING THE LANTERMAN VISION:

*This piece is an excerpt of a formal document that can be found on the Lanterman Web site at [www.lanterman.org](http://www.lanterman.org)*

The year 2006 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the regional center system in California.

These 40 years have been a time of fundamental change and dramatic improvement in the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities in the State. From an almost total reliance on large institutions that kept their residents isolated from the community, the State has progressed to having a service system in which more than 98 percent of children and adults with developmental disabilities receive all needed services and supports in the community.

### The Lanterman Mental Retardation Services Act of 1969

The passage of the original Lanterman Act came after a successful demonstration of the regional center model by two pilot centers established in 1966. The Act embodied a promise to create an array of community-based services and supports, and a network of non-profit agencies providing fixed points of access – thereby creating a true system of services. At the time, more than 3,000 people with developmental disabilities were on waiting lists to enter one of the seven state hospitals, and the creation of the regional center system was an alternative to building additional institutions. It was also a response to demands by families who, at the time, had few if any services available to them for their sons and daughters outside of the state hospital.

As envisioned in the Lanterman Act, the regional center system would "meet the needs and choices of each person..., regardless of age or degree of disability, and at each stage of life..., to support their integration into the mainstream life of the community..., and to enable persons with developmental disabilities to approximate the pattern of everyday living available to people without disabilities of the same age." Services were to be innovative, cost-effective, and result in client growth and development or improved quality of life, and development of the service system was to be governed locally rather than centrally.

During the two decades following passage of the Act, the community offered an ever-widening array of services and supports to meet the needs and preferences of an increasingly diverse population. The service system's evolution was enabled by advances in knowledge and technology, and importantly, by adequate funding to support the changes. It was further supported by increasing recognition that people with disabilities have the right to be full participants in society. Beginning in the early 1990s, however, as the financial situation of the State worsened, the funding for the community service system began a period of stagnation that continues to this day.

### The Current Situation in the Community

While the community service system has continued to expand and diversify, funding required to adequately support these services – particularly those serving adults – has not kept pace. Residential service providers, for example, have not received increases in reimbursement reflecting real costs since 1986 when the current rate system was implemented.

Early in this period of retrenchment, regional centers and service providers were able to meet the funding challenges through increased efficiencies, innovation and utilization of technology. As the cost of doing business in California increased, however, organizations exhausted their capacity to compensate for inadequate funding.

In the fiscal year 2003-04, the State instituted a rate freeze and eliminated start-up funds for program development. This situation continues and has resulted in increasing desperation on the part of community service providers. With the recent release of the Governor's budget for fiscal year 2006-07, it has become apparent that passively waiting for the situation to change – for rates to improve and for program development funds to reappear – is a hopeless strategy.



## The Director's VIEWPOINT

### Renewing Our Commitment to the Lanterman Vision

The year 2006 is an historic one here at Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center. We are in the midst of preparations for our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, beginning with a gala dinner March 16, which will also kick off *Perspectives* 2006 International Film Festival. The year will culminate in a special one-day forum during which we will assess where we started, how far we've come, and what challenges remain for people with developmental disabilities.



Executive Director  
Diane Anand

There has been a lot of planning and reflection involved, and it has led me to remember the truly extraordinary circumstances that resulted in the founding of California's regional center system.

It was the era of the 1960s – a time when not just students, but people of all ages throughout the nation began to assume individual power and responsibility for effecting changes in our society. The atmosphere was charged with new ideas and new attitudes.

During this period of social and political ferment, a group of parents, professionals and legislators, led by pioneers like Vivian Walter, Asenath Young, Dr. Richard Koch and Assemblyman Frank Lanterman, among many others, took on the challenge of changing the archaic and dehumanizing treatment of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

In an unbelievable grassroots effort, people wrote letters, held meetings, made phone calls, and wore out their shoe leather on trips to Sacramento – confronting legislators in committee hearings and hotel elevators to voice their concerns directly.

And it worked. Looking at the regional center system today, with its array of creative programs and its drive to achieve true and full inclusion into our society, it's difficult to believe that there was a time when the answer to the diagnosis of developmental disability was to warehouse the person in an institution. Today, many individuals and families take our service system for granted because they think it has always been there and will continue to be there.

In 40 years there has been genuine progress. But along the way, the passion and commitment that once literally moved a State have waned. And we've lost something more important – the willingness and determination to do the hard work of ensuring that the vision begun four decades ago will endure.

There will certainly never be another Frank Lanterman. And in this time of term limits, the institutional memory of how far we've come passes with the loss of each pioneer. But we cannot forget. We must find and nurture the new generation of leaders, the champions who will carry forward the torch. And we must all participate. Forty years ago, our pioneers saw there was a need for change and they set out to meet the challenge. We must be willing – each of us in whatever way we can – to meet the challenges of our era and carry forward the Lanterman vision into the future.

In this special edition of "Viewpoint" you'll find a letter from our Board President Jeff Richards. He calls for our community "to join in a period of activism and advocacy resulting in a reaffirmation of the vision of the Lanterman Act and a decade of reinvestment and renewal of the community service system." I urge each of you to consider joining this effort.



Celebrating 40 years of changing lives  
and building community for people with  
developmental disabilities

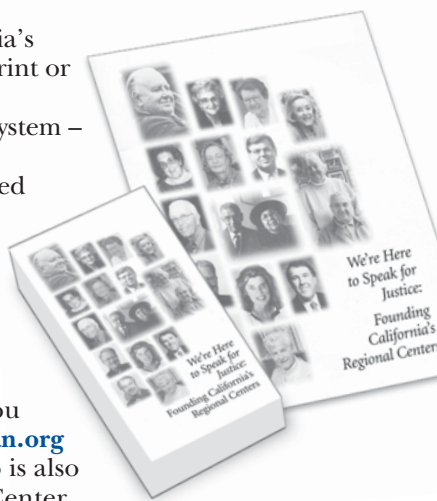
Partners in Lifelong Support for People  
with Developmental Disabilities Since 1966

Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center will be celebrating 40 years of changing lives and building community for people with developmental disabilities with a gala dinner on Thursday, March 16, 2006. The master of ceremonies will be Elizabeth Espinosa, anchor and reporter for KTTV Fox 11 News, and advocate for the special needs community; and the featured speaker is Emily Perl Kingsley, Emmy award-winning writer for "Sesame Street," mother of a son with Down syndrome, and disability rights advocate. Al Marsella, a founding member of the Los Angeles County Developmental Services Foundation, past Lanterman board president and advisor, will be presented with a lifetime achievement award for his many years of dedicated service on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The cost of the gala dinner is \$75 per person. Seating is limited. If you would like to attend the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner celebration, contact Frank Lara at **213.383.1300, x. 665** or [frank.lara@lanterman.org](mailto:frank.lara@lanterman.org) for event details before Friday, March 10.

### Copies of "We're Here to Speak for Justice: Founding California's Regional Centers" are Available for Rental and Purchase

"We're Here to Speak for Justice: Founding California's Regional Centers" captures for the first time, in print or moving images, the fascinating, challenging and dramatic story behind the development of the regional center system – told by the pioneers who lived it. It is a remarkable historical achievement that stands as a testament to the ability of committed individuals to effect social change. This documentary film was produced and directed by award-winning filmmaker Theodore Braun, senior lecturer at the University of Southern California's School of Cinema-Television.

For more information about the film and how to order your copy of the film and the companion booklet, visit [www.lanterman.org/AllAboutUs/About/Documentary.asp](http://www.lanterman.org/AllAboutUs/About/Documentary.asp). You can also contact Ronna Kajikawa at [ronna.kajikawa@lanterman.org](mailto:ronna.kajikawa@lanterman.org) or **213.383.1300, x. 720** for additional information. The video is also available for borrowing through the Koch ♦ Young Resource Center.



## A Decade of Reinvestment and Renewal

[lanterman.org](http://lanterman.org).

### The Plan to "Reform" the System

In 1998, in response to legislative mandates, the Department of Developmental Services initiated a "reform" effort intended to transition the community service system to a performance-based, consumer outcome model. One of the goals of the reform effort was to "propose a way to...link funding...to real improvement in the lives of consumers and their families, and...develop a method of paying providers to promote achievement of consumer and family outcomes." The Legislature recognized that changes could not be successful without a corresponding rate system that would adequately support the new model.

DDS began System Reform in 1998 with a comprehensive review of community services, based on the explicit understanding that the system had grown increasingly complex, that requirements for providers had grown in sophistication, and that expectations of community providers had become more rigorous due to advances in knowledge and technology. A draft report by the Committee was issued in May 2001, and in October of that same year, DDS announced that it was unable to continue the reform activity due to Governor Davis' executive order requiring all State departments to reduce their operating expenses and expenditures. While DDS indicated that they planned to continue working with small workgroups on the mandate regarding rates and issue a report in spring 2002, no such report was forthcoming, and the System Reform effort has been lying fallow since that time.

### The Consequences for Service Providers

The consequences for service providers of the prolonged and constant underfunding are apparent today. They include deferred maintenance and improvement in facilities and equipment, an inability to hire and retain experienced and qualified staff, and a high level of staff turnover. Some providers have left the field. Complicating the situation has been the deterioration of the generic service system in California, including public education, county

public health and mental health programs, and Medi-Cal.

### Renewing the Community Infrastructure

We believe that the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the regional center system is an appropriate time to reaffirm our commitment to the Lanterman Act vision of an organized network of services and supports that enables people with developmental disabilities to be full participants in their communities and in society. With this commitment must come a renewed investment in the community system that results in equal access to needed services and supports for all citizens with developmental disabilities, and enables growth and innovation through advances in knowledge and technology.

The State must complete the effort, begun as System Reform, to shift the paradigm guiding the delivery of community services in California. This initiative will require development of consensus on a set of values and principles, a movement of the service system from a focus on process to one that is increasingly outcome-based, and a funding strategy that will realistically support the new model into the future. It will also require willingness among all parties, including regional centers and service providers, to be accountable for providing services of enhanced quality that deliver desired outcomes to clients and families in a cost-effective manner. We believe it likely that there will never be total consensus on service models, but we also believe that there can be consensus on the critical major issues. The ultimate goal of this effort is to achieve funding for service providers and regional centers that reflects the actual cost of providing services to clients and families.

The budget is a state's most powerful public policy document, and it is California's budget that must ultimately fulfill the promise of the Lanterman Act. Without an adequate budget, the entitlement is no more than an empty promise to people with developmental disabilities and their families. A failure to adequately fund the community service system is also a betrayal of the vision of Frank D. Lanterman.



## Yolanda Hernandez Receives Community Service Award for Her Work with Teatro Ilusión

For nearly 13 years, Teatro Ilusión has offered more than just a theater experience for children with special needs. Because of the nature of the weekly meetings on Friday evenings, the group has also functioned as a family support group. “I started this group to give my daughter a social activity, but this has become a great way to offer family support – siblings participate side-by-side with their brother or sister with a disability in the weekly theater exercises and productions, and the parents also participate in everything,” shares Yolanda Hernandez, founder of Teatro Ilusión.

As part of their weekly sessions, the participants, who range from 2½ years old and up, learn relaxation, dance and movement; practice motor coordination, mimicking and control of body expressions; receive voice and music lessons; and build their self-esteem and confidence, which are all forms of therapy. Once all of the children are relaxed and warmed up, they start rehearsal for the current play they are working on. “We’ve had some children who didn’t speak a word when they started with Teatro Ilusión,” says Hernandez, “but with a lot of effort and patience, they gradually learned how to say ‘hi’, then their name, and eventually build up to saying a line in the play.”

The most recent play Teatro Ilusión performed was “La Pastorela,” a popular Mexican tradition that shares the essence of the story of the birth of Christ, the adoration of the Savior by the three Wise Men, and the ultimate fight between good and evil, which is often held during the month of December. The play was presented in Spanish in front of 300 plus people on December 22, 2005 at the Garden Pavilion in Hollywood. After the play ended, Constelación Theatrical Group, an organization created to provide dramatic arts opportunities to the Latino population, presented a 2005 “Estrella” award for community service to Hernandez for her 12 years of work with Teatro Ilusión.

Teatro Ilusión, a non-profit organization, holds its sessions at Shriners Hospital in Los Angeles from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. every Friday. For more information and to contribute to the efforts of Teatro Ilusión, contact Yolanda Hernandez at 562.869.4090. Hernandez is also looking for



someone who can help her with grant-writing so she can continue to enhance the therapeutic and acting opportunities available for children with special needs and their siblings through Teatro Ilusión. If you’d like to attend one of the acting group’s play performances, look for Teatro Ilusión at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Very Special Arts Festival held on the Plaza at the Music Center on Wednesday, May 3, 2006. The group will also be performing in June at the Latino Theater Festival, and this summer at the Ford Amphitheatre, however, dates are yet to be determined.



## Social and Recreational Opportunities Abound at the 2006 Social Recreational Forum



Mark Friday, April 7 on your calendar for the 2006 Social Recreational Forum hosted by Lanterman’s Foothill School Age unit. The Forum focuses on community resources that all families can access, and the theme of this year’s event is “art,” and artwork created by school-age clients will also be on display.

The Forum will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church located at 700 Glenoaks Boulevard, Burbank, CA 91502, behind Burbank High School.

For more information or to sign-up for a table at the Social Recreational Forum, contact Cheryl Francisco at [cheryl.francisco@lanterman.org](mailto:cheryl.francisco@lanterman.org) or 213.383.1300, x. 530. Tables will be provided for the display of promotional information about the various free or low-cost activities that your community organization offers on a weekly and/or monthly basis to all individuals, and must be reserved by Friday, March 3. Details on this event can also be found at [www.lanterman.org](http://www.lanterman.org).



“I started this group to give my daughter a social activity, but this has become a great way to offer family support – siblings participate side-by-side with their brother or sister with a disability in the weekly theater exercises and productions, and the parents also participate in everything.”

– Yolanda Hernandez,  
founder of Teatro Ilusión



## Yolanda Hernandez Recibe un Premio por su Trabajo Comunitario con el Teatro Ilusión

Por casi 13 años, Teatro Ilusión ha ofrecido más que el teatro. Se a creado una terapia para niños con necesidades especiales. Por naturaleza de las reuniones semanales, el viernes por la tarde, el grupo ha funcionado como un grupo de apoyo familiar. “Empecé este grupo para darle a mi hija una actividad social, y esto es una gran manera de ofrecer el apoyo familiar – hermanos participan con su hermano o hermana con discapacidad en los ejercicios semanales del teatro y de las producciones, y de la participación de los padres,” dice Yolanda Hernandez, fundadora de Teatro Ilusión.

Como parte de sus sesiones semanales, los participantes, que tienen 2½ años de edad en adelante, aprenden relajación, danza y movimiento; y practican coordinación motora, mimica y expresiones corporales; reciben clases de voz y música; y fortalecimiento de su autoestima y la confianza en sí mismos. Todo es forma de terapia. Una vez que los niños están relajados, ellos empiezan el ensayo para la obra actual en la cual ellos trabajan. “Hemos tenido algunos niños que no hablaban ni una palabra cuando ellos empiezan con el Teatro Ilusión,” dice Hernandez, “pero con mucho esfuerzo y paciencia, ellos aprenden gradualmente cómo decir ‘hola’, después su nombre, y finalmente a interpretar una línea de la obra.”

La obra más reciente realizada por el Teatro Ilusión es “La Pastorela,” una tradición popular arraigada entre los Mexicanos, es más que una representación escénica simple o espectáculo dicembrino porque encierra la esencia del mensaje prodigioso del nacimiento de Cristo, la adoración del Salvador a cargo de los Reyes Magos, y principalmente, la eterna lucha entre el bien y el mal. La obra se presentó en Español ante 300 personas el 22 de diciembre del 2005 en el Pabellón de Jardín en Hollywood. Después que la obra terminó, Constelación Teatral, una organización creada para poner las artes dramáticas al alcance de la población latina, presentaron a Hernandez un premio de “Estrella” del 2005 por sus 12 años de trabajo comunitario con el Teatro Ilusión.

Teatro Ilusión es una organización no lucrativa, que se localiza en el Hospital Shriners de Los Ángeles desde 6 p.m. a 8 p.m. todos los viernes. Para más información y para contribuir a sostener los esfuerzos del Teatro Ilusión, comunicarse con Yolanda Hernandez al 562.869.4090.

Hernandez busca ayuda con la escritura de becas para poder continuar y aumentar las oportunidades terapéuticas y de la actuación para niños con necesidades especiales y sus hermanos. Si usted desea

asistir alguna obra del grupo de actuación, puede participar en la Fiesta Anual de Artes Muy Especiales en la Plaza en el Centro de la Música, el miércoles, 3 de mayo del 2006. También en junio se presentarán en el Festival del Teatro Latino, y estarán presentando su obra en el Anfiteatro de Ford este verano, sin embargo, las fechas serán determinadas.





## The Manning Family has the Experience of a Lifetime Meeting the Pope

In 2004, when their daughter, Dominique, was hospitalized for approximately six weeks, Ray and Annette Manning made themselves a promise – if their daughter got well enough they would take her to Rome. Each year for her birthday, the Mannings have hosted a celebration mass and party for Dominique to celebrate that their daughter was still with them and had made it through another year.

When it came time to plan her birthday celebration in 2005, they decided on the spur of the moment that they would get their passports together and head off to Rome for a week, in time to celebrate Dominique's November birthday. Ray wrote letters to 10 different cardinals letting them know that they were going to be visiting, and requested an audience with the Pope. Along with his letter Ray also sent a picture of Dominique and a brief summary of her life story. At the same time as Ray was contacting cardinals in Italy, Annette's mother who is a member of the Sister's Council of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, sent a letter to Cardinal Roger Mahoney requesting an audience with the Pope on behalf of her granddaughter.

"It all happened at once," says Annette. "One hour before we left for LAX, my son picked up the phone and said he was talking to someone in Rome. I didn't actually believe him until I got on the phone and sure enough there was a gentleman speaking with a thick Italian accent who identified himself simply as someone who worked with the Secretary of State and that there was no need for names. He wanted to know if it was true that we were coming to Italy, and when I confirmed, he told me that once we arrived at the Vatican that we needed to go to a certain area, contact the Swiss Guards, go to a specific

set of pillars, up the stairs and that there would be a letter waiting for us."

As the Mannings were waiting for their flight at Los Angeles International Airport, Dominique started crying, which she hadn't done in months. Her crying, normally a sign of considerable distress, gave the Mannings pause as to whether they should proceed with their trip, but she calmed down and they were Italy-bound. Upon their arrival at their hotel, a fax was waiting from Mahoney's office saying they had tickets waiting for them at the Vatican. Shortly thereafter, they received calls from two of the Italian cardinals' offices making sure they arrived safely, along with a request for the family to visit their offices the next day. "The cardinals had arranged for a priest to give our family a private tour of the Vatican," shares Annette. "Everyone was so nice and gracious, and we had a wonderful experience."

The day before the Mannings' audience with the Pope, Father Walter Erbie called them at the hotel, and before they knew it, he was on his way to meet Dominique



*The Manning family visited the Vatican City everyday during their trip to Rome. In St. Peter's Square, from left, Ray, Elias, Dominique and Annette Manning had a wonderful time in Italy.*

in person. They raced down to meet him in the lobby of their hotel. Annette adds, "Father Erbie had said that the cardinals receive millions of pictures every year, but Ray's story and the photo touched them so much they wanted to meet Dominique in person. He gave my husband, my son and me rosaries blessed by Pope Benedict XVI, but he gave Dominique one of the last rosaries blessed by Pope John Paul II. He told us that Dominique had been proclaimed an angel. We've always thought of her as an angel and that we are just taking care of her, and when he told us that, it was confirmation of everything that we believe."

The day of their audience, the Mannings arrived promptly at 9 a.m. with their "Prima Fila" tickets in hand. They kept getting escorted further and further up, and when they got to the very top, they were separated – Annette and Dominique on one side, and Elias and Ray on the other. "We were crying tears of joy the whole time we were walking up," shares Annette. "It was such a spiritual and uplifting experience to see everyone, young and old, cheering as the Pope came out in his mobile. After he gave his eulogy, all of us in the front row were blessed by the Pope. For the duration that the Pope was present, Dominique was happy, smiling the whole time. It's a feeling that you just can't explain."

The Mannings visited the Vatican every day they were in Rome. They didn't have any expectations of getting to see the Pope, much less being blessed by him, and it was a thrilling experience that none of them will ever forget. "We're so thankful that it happened. We also love the Italian people and the food, and hope to someday be able to go back with the whole family," says Annette.

## Stay Healthy – Wash Your Hands Regularly

*Continued from page 1*

### DID YOU KNOW...

**That good hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of disease.**

### Proper Hand-Washing Techniques

Hand washing is a simple habit – one that requires minimal training and no special equipment – yet it's one of the best ways to avoid getting sick. This simple habit requires only soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, which is a cleanser that doesn't require water. These alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a great alternative to hand washing, particularly when soap and water aren't available. They're actually more effective than soap and water in killing bacteria and viruses that cause disease. Commercially prepared hand sanitizers contain ingredients that help prevent skin dryness and using these products can result in less skin dryness and irritation than hand washing, however, be aware that some hand sanitizers don't contain alcohol, which makes them rather ineffective.



Although anti-bacterial soap has become popular, for general use, regular soap is just as effective. The combination of scrubbing your hands with soap whether it's antibacterial or not, and rinsing them with water, loosens and removes bacteria from your hands.

### Proper hand washing with soap and water

**Follow these instructions for washing with soap and water:**

- Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid or clean bar soap. Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 seconds, but preferably 30 seconds.
- Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet and if possible, to open the door(s) as well.



### Proper use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

**To use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:**

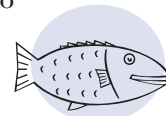
- Apply about ½ of a teaspoon of the product to the palm of your hand.
- Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces of your hands, until they're dry.
- If your hands are visibly dirty, however, wash with soap and water rather than a sanitizer.

### When is it time to wash your hands?

Germs are a fact of life, and there is no such thing as germ-free hands, even if you wear gloves, so when is it time to wash your hands so as to limit the transfer of bacteria, viruses and other types of microbes.

#### **Always wash your hands in the following situations:**

- After using the bathroom, whether at home or when using public restrooms
- After changing a diaper – wash the diaper-wearer's hands also
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Before and after preparing food, especially before and immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
- Before eating
- After blowing your nose
- After coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Before and after treating wounds or cuts
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- After handling garbage
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses



### Keep the Cooties at Bay and Your Children's Hands Clean Too

Every parent you talk to will say the same thing, if you have children in daycare, they are a magnet for germs and it's only a matter of time before you and other family members catch the next cold. But as a parent, you can help your children avoid getting sick by insisting that they wash their hands properly and frequently, and in turn you will be healthier as well.



#### **The key is to get children into the habit:**

- Teach by example.
- Wash your hands with your children and supervise their hand washing.
- Place hand-washing reminders at children's eye level, such as a chart by the bathroom sink for children to mark every time they wash their hands.
- Tell your children to wash their hands for as long as it takes them to sing their ABCs. This works especially well with younger children, who may rush when washing their hands.
- Older children and adolescents can also use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Younger children can use sanitizers with an adult's help, but just make sure the sanitizer has completely dried before your child touches anything, as this will avoid ingestion of alcohol from hand-to-mouth contact.

### Daycare Hygiene Guidelines

- Make sure the daycare provider promotes sound hygiene, including frequent hand washing and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Ask whether children and adults are required to wash their hands several times a day, not just before meals.
- And make sure the sink is accessible for children, individuals with physical limitations and other special needs. For example, make sure the sink is low enough or that it has a stool underneath so that children can reach it.
- Note whether diapering areas are cleaned after each use, and whether eating and diapering areas are well separated.





# Here's the Scoop on Lanterman's New Board Members

*This past summer the board of director's elected six new board members. Four new board members – Larry DeBoer, Armen Frundzhyan, Ray Lemus and Louis Mitchell – were highlighted in the Winter 2005 edition of "Viewpoint." Following are profiles of the remaining two board members – Stephani Piercey and Ervand Kestenian. The Lanterman community is delighted to have these two board members, with their varying personal experiences, represent the interests and issues of the Center's clients at the board meetings.*

## LIFE ACCORDING TO STEPHANI PIERCEY...

### Her Views on Work, Free Time, Disability and Being a Lanterman Board Member

**S**tephani Piercey lives life a mile a minute.

In 1988, a year after graduating from high school, Piercey moved from Michigan to California and took up residence at AbilityFirst's Crown House. She says, "My aunt and I had to find a place for me to live, however, my aunt was more scared for me than I was, when I moved into Crown House. I knew I had to find my niche, but I miss my family a lot."

She enjoys working at the AbilityFirst Work Center in Pasadena where she helps with a variety of different projects, including recycling, collating, and her admitted favorite – mailings. "Working makes me feel like I'm doing something with my life, but vacations are also nice," shares Piercey. "I want to be productive, and a small part of me wants to make money, since it is fun to spend and to be able to go shopping and buy nice things, but I also save it." What she is most excited about buying, however, is a new laptop computer, for which she has been saving up for a considerable amount of time.

In her free time, Piercey had been attending the adult computer class held at Lanterman, and is looking forward to the evening classes starting up in Pasadena shortly. "Thank goodness for e-mail and telephones," adds Piercey. "I love getting pictures e-mailed to me from my brother of my two nephews since they



Stephani Piercey

live out of state." Piercey also enjoys doing latch hook, watching movies both in the theater and at home, reading magazines and playing board games. She looks forward to going to camp for about a week every summer. Her favorite camping experiences have been at Camp Joan Mier, which was near the beach in Malibu, but closed after the summer 2005 camping season ended. Piercey hopes to one day make it back to Michigan to see her parents, just not during the winter, and to visit her brother and his family in Colorado.

She's passionate about her views on disability and has no trouble vocalizing how it makes her feel when someone stares at her or tries to ignore her. "It's fun to socialize and introduce people to disabilities and make them aware. Rather than being scared of me, and not looking at me or talking to me, I'd like them to know that it's OK to look at someone if they have braces and to ask questions," shares Piercey. "We all wish we could be tall, skinny and perfect when we wake up every morning, but that's not always possible."

And as far as being a board member, Piercey is still figuring out her role and responsibilities. "I really appreciate the opportunity to be more involved, meet new people and expand my horizons," says Piercey. She's hoping to help ensure that people with disabilities keep on receiving the services they need, so they can continue to become more independent and be contributing members of their communities. "I also hope serving as a board member enables me to help other people advocate for themselves, and get their voices and issues heard," adds Piercey. "I'm in the same boat and have some of the same issues, and I want others to know that we can figure it out together."

## 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 [patrick.aulicino@lanterman.org](mailto:patrick.aulicino@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 [frank.lara@lanterman.org](mailto:frank.lara@lanterman.org) so you can be placed on the list of attendees. We look forward to your visit.

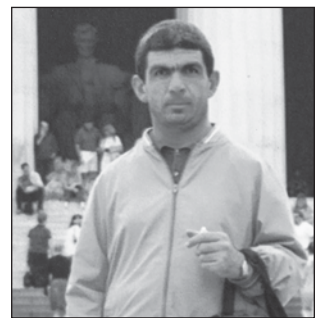
## Ervand Kestenian Represents Clients' Needs and Perspectives on Board

**T**he Lanterman community is made up of the clients, families, service providers, Regional Center staff and the broader community in our geographic area. All of our members are expected to share not only in the benefits of this community, but also in its obligations and challenges, which includes leadership. Lanterman's board of directors recognizes the importance of clients' active participation in leadership roles in the community and welcomes their participation on the board of directors and its committees.

In July of this year, Ervand Kestenian was nominated to the board of directors. Kestenian has been actively involved as a volunteer in the adult computer classes held at Lanterman in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District, Division of Adult and Career Education, Los Angeles Community Adult School. "After attending a board meeting earlier in the year, I decided that I was definitely interested in serving on Lanterman's board to represent the clients' needs and to advise on the future direction of the Center," says Kestenian. "I'm looking forward to being able to give the board input from the client's perspective." Kestenian's involvement with the computer classes helps him connect with a broad range of clients and to get a better idea of the needs of clients, including what areas of service may need improvement, such as transportation.

Additionally, the board of directors supports client representation on its executive committee, and Kestenian is serving this year as the board's secretary. His responsibilities as secretary include approving the minutes of the meeting, seconding the votes, and accepting the final decision.

Kestenian lives in Glendale and works part-time as a host at Clancy's Crab Broiler. You can find him at Clancy's most weekends and several evenings a week answering phones, greeting customers, rearranging tables and taking to-go orders. When Kestenian is not volunteering or working he loves to bowl and highly recommends Jewel City Bowl in Glendale. He also likes hanging out with friends at restaurants in Pasadena, Burbank, and of course, Glendale.



Lanterman Board Member Ervand Kestenian was selected to represent Lanterman Regional Center at the Alliance for Full Participation's Summit 2005 in Washington, D.C. "I really liked representing Lanterman at the Summit, and would have to say that Washington, D.C. is a great city," he adds.

## AT Grant

*Continued from page 1*

a memorandum of understanding with to include our clients on an on-going basis. "Our grant seeks to include a minimum of six clients at a minimum of four partner sites, and we have merged efforts with another grant funded by the California Consumer Protection Foundation in which the CTCs seek to include individuals with developmental disabilities at their sites to complete a two-month, computer-based, autobiographical, digital storytelling project," says Anand. "The digital storytelling project has turned into a bit of a kickoff event. It is an exciting project for our clients and the CTCs they are at, and we are hoping at its conclusion the CTCs will feel more comfortable with having our clients at their sites, and that we will be able to identify programs that Lanterman's clients will continue on in through September and beyond." Lanterman is currently working with Little Tokyo Diskovery Center, Bresee Foundation and Project T.E.C.H. Lanterman is also looking to develop partnerships with Sycamore Family Resource Center and Hearts of Los Angeles. "We are thrilled about the blooming partnerships we are

developing with the CTCs and are looking forward to enhancing our relationship with them in the years to come," adds Anand.

Lanterman is utilizing the other portion of its grant funding to hire a community inclusion specialist who will help act as a liaison between the CTCs, Lanterman's clients, and the Regional Center. Christine Mayola is in the process of being hired to fill this position, and will help problem solve issues as they arise at the CTC sites. Mayola will document any strategies, resources and ideas that are implemented, creating a lasting tool for the CTCs, and will also outline procedures for Lanterman to continue on-going referral of our clients to these sites. She will also formalize any remaining internal procedures at Lanterman and coordinate further staff training.

Anand says, "We are very appreciative to the California Consumer Protection Foundation for opening the door for our clients to receive improved and focused assistive technology services from Lanterman, and for enabling us to support our clients to participate in technology programs alongside their peers in the community."



From left, Seth Eklund, Bresee Foundation's outreach specialist for the Neighbor Action Program; David Jain; Jerold Kress, Bresee Foundation's multimedia coordinator and digital storytelling instructor; and Ervand Kestenian.



# Meet the People Behind the Titles:

## El Mangers Rose Chacana and Debrah Murphy

**As managers of the Early Intervention units at Lanterman Regional Center, Rose Chacana and Debrah Murphy are integral members of our leadership team. While there are two Early Intervention units at Lanterman, they essentially operate as one unit. Each of the manager's skill sets and areas of interest complement the other's, which offers the Early Intervention service coordinators a very well-rounded leadership team. As Chacana said, "We are each other's yin and yang." We feel it's important for everyone in our community to have a better idea of the two people behind the titles of Early Intervention manager and their responsibilities, so "Viewpoint" recently met with them and asked each of them about projects in the works, as well as the biggest challenges and most rewarding aspects of their jobs.**

Both Rose Chacana and Debrah Murphy started their careers at Lanterman as service coordinators. Murphy started in April 1998 and worked as a service coordinator for six months in the Early Intervention unit. "Towards the end of 1998, Lanterman decided that the need for early intervention services was growing and that there was a need for two managers, so I applied and became a manager," says Murphy. Chacana started a few months later in July, also as an Early Intervention service coordinator. Three years later she took on a resource developer position in Community Services for about a year before moving back to Early Intervention as a manager in 2002.

Murphy has a bachelor's degree in child development with a mental health emphasis from California State University, Northridge, and Chacana attended Pitzer College, one of the Claremont Colleges, where she obtained bachelor's degrees in both organizational studies and psychology. Chacana believes that it's a combination of her personal and professional experiences that has really helped her in her current role as Early Intervention manager. "I worked for the Department of Children and Family Services, which really helped with case management, but of all of my different roles, being a mother who had a baby in early intervention when it was first created a little over 10 years ago has had the greatest effect," shares Chacana. Murphy says, "I absolutely feel that my educational experience has greatly benefited me in my current role. When I was in college, my first internship was working directly with special needs children in an early intervention center, and that's where the light bulb went on." Murphy has always held the belief that you shouldn't look at the person, but look through to the heart and you'll see the person, not the disability.

Prior to switching to the field of social work, Chacana had started her own business – an active wear clothing store that franchised into five stores. She also worked as a buyer for Broadway. "I'm very statistically and analytically oriented. I'm a 'numbers nerd,' and even though I enjoyed forecasting and projecting, I didn't like the competitive, cut-throat world of business. My position as an Early Intervention manager is a perfect balance between all of these areas," adds Chacana. When Murphy was about 10 years old, she volunteered at a home for children with cerebral palsy near where she lived in Galveston, Texas. "Somewhere way back when, working with special needs children was meant to be. My love has always been in this area, which is reflected in the fact that all of my education-related experiences through internships were with special needs children, and that prior to Lanterman I directed a center-based program for children birth-to-three," says Murphy.

Murphy and Chacana each have their own independent Early Intervention units, however, even though they are divided, they operate as one unit. "It's very unique in how unified our two teams are. Service coordinators in my unit ask Debrah for help and vice versa, and there's a very nice balance between how we work together and how our teams collaborate," explains Chacana. "We work on the same goals and same outcomes for the year through our workplan. The way we share our responsibilities really works out well," adds Murphy. Of the two managers, Murphy is

the more outgoing of the two and Chacana enjoys working on the behind the scenes aspects. "Whenever we have any work that needs to be done on the computer, whether it's numbers, figures or PowerPoint presentations, Rose handles that. She'll put the presentation together and I'll give the presentation," says Murphy.

In addition to providing guidance to the service coordinators on their teams and supporting their staff's professional development, Murphy and Chacana are both heavily involved in determining whether birth-to-three children that apply for Regional Center services are eligible. Most Wednesdays, an interdisciplinary team comprised of a psychologist, physician, Murphy and at times various related professionals, meets to determine whether children are eligible. Each



*Early Intervention managers Rose Chacana (left) and Debrah Murphy*

month approximately 50 children are made eligible for early intervention services through this process. Chacana is primarily involved with the two early intervention clinics held on Tuesdays. One is a developmental clinic and the other is an autism clinic. "It's a positive experience to be able to have the families be an active part of the eligibility determination," shares Chacana. Both managers attend the Local Interagency Coordination Area meetings, Murphy attends the Early Identification and Intervention group, and Chacana attends Special Needs Advisory Project meetings.

When asked "What are the biggest challenges of your job?," Murphy replied, "One of the biggest challenges is understanding from a parent's perspective, and finding a balance between everything parents want for their child and the regulations that we have to abide by. Being a parent myself, I know that I'd do everything that I could think of to help my child." Chacana added, "I think that it's the timelines, regulations and tight procedures that we have to adhere to that create the most challenging aspects of my job. Our mandates are very clear and expectations are really high for the Early Start program. This job definitely also challenges you to think outside of the box and to be open-minded."

At any given time, the two Early Intervention units serve between 900 to 1,000 infants, young children and their families. Over half of the children being served graduate out of the Early Start program, however, for children and families that continue being served by the Regional Center, Murphy and Chacana would like to find new and improved ways of easing the difficult transition that most families experience when they move between the Early Start program and regular Regional Center services.

Early intervention is a passion for both managers and they believe in the difference that early intervention services can have on a child's development. "It's rewarding to watch the kids graduate and see that they are in a much better place than when they started. It's very humbling to be a part of these experiences. I also really love the environment that I work in and the people I work with who are so dedicated and hardworking. You want to get up in the morning and come here and be there for them," shares Chacana. For Murphy, the most rewarding part

For the last 15 years, March has been designated as "Early Start Month" in the state of California.

Visit [www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart](http://www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart) for more information about the Early Start program.

of her job, even though it can be challenging, is working with families, helping her service coordinators work with their families, and seeing the progress that the children make during their time in the Early Intervention units.

Several years ago, in response to requests from parents, the Regional Center tried a new approach to delivering services through the Early Intervention units. Rather than having the children who had graduated from the Early Start program, but who were still eligible for Regional Center services, move to the School Age units at 3 years of age, they would remain in Early Intervention until they were 5 years old. While this approach seemed like a great service enhancement, after a couple of years, it became evident that implementing the very different requirements for developing an Individual Family Service Plan versus an Individual Program Plan was not working. Murphy worked closely with other members of the leadership team to return to the prior approach of delivering early intervention services. Murphy adds, "This approach allows the School Age service coordinators the opportunity to meet with Early Intervention graduates and their families to work with them on developing an age-appropriate Individual Program Plan."

Chacana is also thankful and happy to be a part of the pioneering spirit exhibited at Lanterman. "We were one of the first regional centers to initiate the vendorization of community preschools for young children and really work towards full inclusion even at a very young age," she adds. Looking forward, Chacana feels that the next big initiative will be on infant mental health and collaborating with the Department of Mental Health. "With more children with special needs coming out of the child welfare system, especially with emotional problems, the focus will not only be on serving the developmental needs of these children but also on quality of life issues," she adds. In addition to helping families better understand and negotiate the transition process from Early Start to the school districts, Murphy would like to build a greater understanding of the services available for young children with autism. She adds, "It's important for parents to recognize that it's not always in the best interest of a child with autism to get every service that exists, but that they get the services that are appropriate for their unique needs at that time."

Both Murphy and Chacana love their jobs and can't see themselves working anywhere else, but when asked if there was one thing each that they could change that would make their jobs easier, Murphy replied, "It would be great to come in and actually get accomplished what's on my to-do list for that day," and Chacana said, "There's not an area that I hate, want to change, or get rid of, but it would be nice to have smaller caseloads and give our families more individual time."

During their time at Lanterman, the annual staff appreciation party held around the holidays has provided Chacana and Murphy some of their favorite memories. "I really enjoy spending time with the other members of the leadership team, planning and preparing for the event several months before, and then seeing it all come to happen," says Murphy. "I look forward to this occasion every year. I have a great time working on the event," adds Chacana.

In her free time, Murphy enjoys knitting. She lives in Studio City with her husband of 27 years, Michael. She has two children, two step-children and three step-grandchildren. If you think you see Murphy walking down the street, be sure to do a double take, because her twin sister also lives in the Valley.

Born in Santiago, Chile, Chacana came to California when she was 3. She spent a few years in New York, but is a "California gal" who lives in Santa Clarita with her husband, two sons, 10 and almost 8, and her dog, who she considers her other child. She loves to hike and read. Autobiographies are her favorite, but she will read anything and everything. Each evening, for at least one-half hour, she and her children read. Her whole family rides motorcross, and she's right behind them, but not on a motorcycle, just yet.





C A C   N E W S :

## CAC Works to Help Clients Use Access Services Successfully

The Lanterman Consumer Advisory Committee is currently looking into client-related transportation issues as they are aware that clients have many issues revolving around transportation. After some study and exploration the CAC decided to focus on Access Services, Inc. The CAC is very conscious of the problems with using Access Services as a means of transportation as several of the members on the CAC have themselves experienced these difficulties.

Among the issues Access riders have experienced that have come to the CAC’s attention are excessive hold times when calling in to set up a ride; having to schedule rides extremely early to assure a timely arrival; late pick-ups, with some clients reporting that they have had to wait two or more hours before being picked up for an appointment; and even the inability to schedule a ride at all.

The CAC wants to help clients use Access Services successfully. Here are some of the things the CAC is doing to better understand the Access Services system, so that they can provide information and advocacy:

- Attending the Flores Stakeholders meeting.  
(Flores is the name of one of the plaintiffs in the class action suit that was filed against Access Services for which there was a settlement agreement in 2004. The Stakeholders objective is to see that Access does what they promised to do as part of the settlement.)
- Informing service coordinators and clients about the complaint process, and making it easier for clients to use.
- Informing clients of any information that would make it easier to use Access Services.
- Coordinating Lanterman’s efforts with other Southern California regional centers’ efforts.

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 CAC, you can write the CAC at:

Lanterman Regional Center CAC  
Armen Frundzhyan  
c/o MJ Kienast  
3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700  
Los Angeles, CA 90010

or call CAC staff advisor, MJ Kienast,  
at **213.383.1300, x. 606** or  
e-mail [mj.kienast@lanterman.org](mailto:mj.kienast@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.**

## 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.

### 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/](http://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 II 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**.



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“Viewpoint” is a publication of Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center. It is produced for the benefit of all members of the Lanterman community.

Estimated Circulation: 7,500

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“Viewpoint” can be viewed online at [www.lanterman.org](http://www.lanterman.org). To contact the editor of “Viewpoint,” send an e-mail to [vinita.anand@lanterman.org](mailto:vinita.anand@lanterman.org) or call **213.383.1300, x. 753**.

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