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.

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

Nick Klein is Living the Hollywood Dream

He 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, 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;
- 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 Laura 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

Lanterman Receives Assistive Technology Grant from California Consumer Protection Foundation

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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.

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.
Individualized Education Program meetings, helps families advocate for their
she has been a part of the community, and that I know what’s going on, and that makes for a better relationship.
Begin, who grew up in Atwater, and now lives in Montrose, believes that the fact
thinks that the field of developmental disabilities is a “people job,” a position in which she can make a differen
The last five years that I’ve spent working here at Lanterman has felt like Disneyworld 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.

– Lisa Percuccio – 5 years, quality assurance coordinator, 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 a refreshing and different happening for me. I have had the opportunity to work in nearly every department at Lanterman. I have opportunities that 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 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

I have stayed at Lanterman for five years because I’m happy being part of the Regional Center Community 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

The reason I have stayed at Lanterman for five years is to 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 Harttony, Bernadine Mager, Raena Puentez and Lisa Percuccio for five years. In recognition of this time frame, the Lanterman Regional Center and the community asked us to list the 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 here for 25 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 was of the wonderful time everyone had when some of the staff got together and held a holiday party for a large group of Lanterman’s adult clients who lived independently or in residential homes.

– Lisa Anand – 5 years, resource and information specialist, Kinship Young Resource Center

There have been more potential and grateful for the 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 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 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 was worth the time to them, effort and being soaked in the rain.

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

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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 an account 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 excited to do 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 the company was relatively seamless. By virtue of his role, he sees almost everyone here every day. Eli is friendly by nature and it was reasonable 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 Gensler’s Los Angeles office. Fattal 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 a team environment and strives to learn every day. Dennis-Abilla shares, “Eli came to us with a business sense already well developed. 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 people 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 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 candidates. 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 work a real job, and fulfilling some of the needs 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 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 or 213.383.1300, x. 753.

Nick Klein
Continued from page 1
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 speech. He also works on presentation skills, movement, and are used to limber the body, 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 participating make positive life choices and to become active members of their 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 speak up on his own, 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 his 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, Alyssa 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 fulfilling some of the jobs they don’t pay, the ones that do, help clients learn how to handle money.

Klein has auditioned for the TV shows “Still Standing” and is scheduled to start filming a video to help train emergency respondents. 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’d 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.”

For more information about Performing Arts Studio West, visit www.pastudowest.com.
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 SK Walk and Autism Community Resource Fair heightening public awareness and raising money to fund autism research. The Walk is just over three miles with food, vendors, a children’s area, and the Autism Community Resource Fair featuring 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. for those who choose to walk in the WALK NOW online at www.walknow.org for additional information and to register, or contact Care Autism Now at 888.8.AUTISM or 323.549.5000. 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.

SAVE THE DATE

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

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

In 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. Following that 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 child development and all 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.”

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 experimental 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/chid observation • referral and advocacy • early recognition • and the connotations 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; Elsin Pediatric and Family Medical Center in Los Angeles; Glendale Adventist Medical Center Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Care 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, 18 home visitors, seven pre-school teachers, four speech language pathologists, and 25 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 in the formation of the New Paths Project groups that were held in three different language. Christine Mayoia, Touchpoints project assistant and New Paths coordinator, shares, “The groups had the goal of improving the relationship 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.

Special Thanks to the Touchpoints Special Needs Project Training Team:

- Anshu Batra, MD
- Tina Chinakarn, MPH, Lanterman Regional Center
- M. Eileen Walsh Escare, PhD, MSN, MA
- Patricia Herrera, MS, Lanterman Regional Center
- Barbara Jonkey, MS, PT, Glendale Adventist Medical Center
- Alice Kuo, MD, PhD, M.Ed., UCLA Center for Healthier Communities
- Somi Lee, MD, Children’s Hospital of Orange County
- Stephanie Taylor-Dinwiddie, PhD, Elsin Pediatric and Family Medical Center
- Leslie Richard, MD, Lanterman Regional Center

Christine Mayoia will continue to work at the Koch Young Resource Center providing temporary coverage of the resource and information specialist position and filling the associate inpatient/supplemental care professional position where she will be responsible for facilitating the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities into targeted community resource 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.

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

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

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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 25 years, starting in 1950. While describing himself as a conservative, old-line 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 chair 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.” When he invited parents and advocates to join him for a “nightcap” in the Senator Hotel bar so they could continue their discussion.

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, 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 1976 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 Phoenix, Arizona.

Celebrating 40 Years and Looking to the Future

From Jeff Richards

President of Lanterman’s Board of Directors

The year 2006 marks the 40th anniversary of the regional center system in California. During the first 20 years of its 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 service 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 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. 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.

The year 2006 marks the 40th 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.

As envisioned in the Lanterman Act, the regional center system would “meet the needs…, 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.” Service providers maximized this 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 and complex 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 regional center system began a period of stagnation that continues to this day.

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 is clear that these 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 year 2006 marks the 40th anniversary of the regional center system in California. During the first 20 years of its 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 service 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 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. 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

The year 2006 marks the 40th 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.

As envisioned in the Lanterman Act, the regional center system would “meet the needs…, 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.” Service providers maximized this 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.

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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 KTV Fox 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 Marselle, 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 40th anniversary dinner celebration, contact Frank Lara at 213.383.1300, x. 665 or 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 with developmental disabilities 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 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. You can also contact Ronna Kajikawa at ronna.kajikawa@lanterman.org or 213.383.1300, x. 729 for additional information. The video is also available for borrowing through the Koch Young Resource Center.

A Decade of Reinvestment and Renewal

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’s 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 of 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 40th 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 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. With 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.

The Director’s VIEWPOINT

Renewing Our Commitment to the Lanterman Vision

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

There has been a lot of planning and reflection involved, and it has led me to remember the 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 Assembler 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 knew 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 education 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.
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 production,” says 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 plug people on December 22, 2005 at the Garden Pavilion in Hollywood. After the play ended, Constelación Teatral 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 27th 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 Amphitheater; however, dates are yet to be determined.

For more information or to sign-up for a table at the Social Recreational Forum, contact Cheryl Francisco at 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.

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 ha convertido en una terapia para niños con necesidades especiales. Por naturaleza de las reuniones semanales, los viernes por la tarde, el grupo ha funcionado como un grupo de apoyo familiar. “Hicimos 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 movimientom; 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 empezaron 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 diciembre porque implica la esencia del mensaje proclamado 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 309 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, comuníquese con Yolanda Hernandez al 562.869.4900. 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, 5 de mayo del 2006. También en junio se presentan en el Festival del Teatro Latino, y estarán presentando su obra en el Anticámara de Ford este verano, sin embargo, las fechas serán determinadas.
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 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 and drying them thoroughly is quintessential and 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 bar soap. Lather well.
• Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds, not merely 10.
• Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
• Rinse well.
• Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
• Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
• Tip: 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:

• Make sure the alcohol concentration is 60% or higher.
• Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces, 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 it is 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.
• After touching anything you might not want to put in your mouth.

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 prevent 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, including those 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 soiling and diapering areas are well separated.

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

I n 2004, when their daughter, Dominique, was hospitalized for appendicitis for 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 the year she had still been 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 wrote 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 Mahony 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, to get specific set of pillars, up the stairs and that there would be a better 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 so understandable, 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 Erie called them at the hotel, and before they knew it, he was on his way to meet Dominique.

“I was happy, smiling 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.

The Manning family visited the Vatican City everyday during their trip to Rome. De St. Peter’s Square, from left, Ray, Elian, Dominique and Annette Manning had a wonderful time in Italy.
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 – Stephan 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.

Looking for New Blood... with experience

As a multi-million dollar corporation, Lanterman is always interested in recruiting board and committee members who have background, personal and related areas. Should you or someone you know be interested in volunteering in such a capacity, contact Patrick Aulicino at 213.383.1300, x 690 or patrick.aulicino@lanterman.org

Looking at me or talking to me, I’d like them to be able to see me to help other people advocate for themselves, and get their voices and issues heard,” shares 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.”

AT Grant

Continued from page 1

Ervand Kestenian

Represents Clients’ Needs and Perspectives on Board

The 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 include 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 of representatives. Kestenian has been involved 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 in its executive committee, and Kestenian is serving this year as the board’s secretary. His responsibilities as secretary include approving the minutes of the meetings, sending out the votes, and accepting the final decision.

Kestenian lives in Glendale and works part-time as a host at Casey’s Crab Bozler. You can find him at Casey’s every Thursday evening a week answering questions, greeting customers, setting tables and taking to-go orders. When Kestenian is not volunteering or working he loves to bowl and highly recommends Jew City Bowl in Glendale. He also likes hanging out with friends at restaurants in Pasadena, Burbank, and of course, Glendale.

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.”
Meet the People Behind the Titles: El Mangers Rose Chacana and Debrah Murphy

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oth 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 the Infant unit 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 service 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. "I worked about a year before moving back to Early Intervention as a manager in 2002," Chacana adds. 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 her bachelor's degree in organizational studies and psychology. Chacana believes that it's a combination of her personal and professional experience that has benefited 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 background and personal 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 disability, but look at the heart and you’ll see the person, not the disability.

Prior to switching to the field of social work, Murphy had a background in fashion retail. She worked in a women’s 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’ kind of person, even though I enjoyed forecasting and projecting, I didn’t like the competitive, cut-throat world of business. My position at 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 back when, working with special needs children was in my life. I have loved the early intervention field since I was a child." Murphy 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 with autism.

Murphy and Chacana each have their own independent Early Intervention units, however, even though they are different they operate as one unit. "It’s very unique in how we work together and how our teams collaborate," explains Chacana. "We both work closely on the 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. "We work hand-in-hand on a weekly basis to meet our weekly Wednesdays,” Murphy states. "Together as a interdisciplinary team consisting of a psychologist, physician, and at times various related professionals, we meet to determine whether children are eligible. Each month approximately 50 children are made eligible for early intervention services through the 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 Coordinating 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 children 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, there are Early Intervention units serving between 900 to 1,000 infants, young children and their families. Over half of the children even being served are outside of the Early Start program, however, for children and families that continue being served by the Regional Center. Murphy and Chacana would like to see new and improved ways of easing the difficult transition that most families experience when they move from the Early Start Program and return to their 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. "We love being involved in watching the kids graduate and see that they are in a much better place than when they first arrive. 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 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 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 to children by dividing those services, move to the School Age units at 3 years of age, they would remain in Early Intervention. That approach seemed like a great service enhancement, but 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. In the end, the leadership team decided 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 and behavioral issues, we would like to be on the front lines in getting services for every child that needs them," Murphy says. "We want to be able to provide early education and therapy 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 about getting a child with autism to get every service that exists, but that they get the services that are appropriate for their child.”

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 change that would make a difference, Murphy replied, “It would be great to come in and actually get accomplished what’s on my to-do list for that day.” Murphy says, “It’s not an area that I hate, want to change, or get rid of, but it would be nice to have smaller caseloads and get a little more time each day to have some personal time.” Murphy adds, “You know, for your family, friends, and occasion every year. I have a great time working for my friends and family.”

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 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 with the team.”

In her free time, Murphy enjoys knitting. She lives in Studio City with her husband of 27 years, an artist who has two young 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 looks like her.

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 favorites because they will read anything and everything. Each evening, for at least one-half hour, she and her children read. Her whole family rides motorcycles, and she’s right behind them, but not on a motorcycle, just yet.

For the last 15 years, March has been designated as “Early Start Month” in the state of California. Visit www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart for more information about the Early Start program.
CAC NEWS:

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. (Floros 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 Frundhazy
E-mail mj.kienast@lanterman.org

or call CAC staff advisor, MJ Kienast, at 213.383.1500, x. 606 or e-mail mj.kienast@lanterman.org.

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.asilab.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.