



Functional Literacy Skills Improve by Almost 40 Percent for Pilot Class Participants

Tucked away in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, the La Pintoresca Branch of the Pasadena Public Library hosted a pilot, 20-week, functional literacy class conducted by the Association for Developmentally Disabled Armenians for three hours on Saturday mornings. The class was designed to improve the literacy skills of adult clients served by Lanterman Regional Center.

This new approach focused on improving functional literacy skills rather than using a traditional literacy instruction model based on phonics. The curriculum for the pilot class was developed by Barbara Del Monico, a literacy specialist with a background in reading instruction and special education, and was specifically tailored for adults with developmental disabilities.

"A number of years ago, when we first started the adult computer classes at Lanterman, Marty Sweeney, who was then director of the Assistive Technology Project, shared with me that many people with developmental disabilities are capable of learning to use the computer, but that learning the computer is literacy-based. He believed that many of our clients were capable of learning to read, but they did not learn how to in school or their reading comprehension was low. Marty proposed offering adult literacy classes. It was our good fortune that we connected with Barbara Del Monico, a special education reading specialist," shares Diane Anand, executive director. "When we look at what people with developmental disabilities want to be able to accomplish in the future – becoming more self-directed, making informed choices, accessing information, working more diverse jobs – being functionally literate in real world situations is fundamental to being successful."

Jack Darakjian of the Association for Developmentally Disabled Armenians and Modern Support Services shares, "As an independent living skills service provider, I've had firsthand experience of how important functional literacy can be for our clients, and when the opportunity to coordinate this pilot was presented I submitted an application and was delighted that the Association was chosen."

Darakjian hired Tom Peters, a professor at Santa Monica City College with a Ph.D. in business administration who also had considerable

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SAVE THE DATE!

Lanterman's Clients to Compete in the Get Fit! Games at the Home Depot Center

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Living On His Own in Burbank – Nick Klein Part II

Whoever said that a sequel couldn't be better than the original, has yet to read part two of Nick Klein's story that appeared in February in the spring 2006 edition of "Viewpoint."

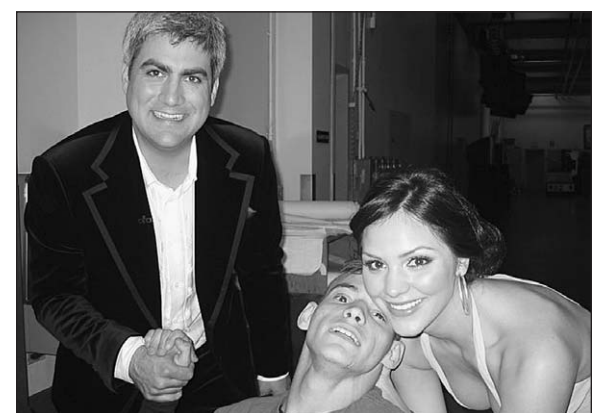
When we met Klein, he was living with his sister, Alydra Kelly, in a one-bedroom apartment accessible only by ascending a set of stairs, there was no elevator, and the space definitely wasn't designed to accommodate a wheelchair. He was actively attending Performing Arts Studio West, as well as attending the weekly Special Olympics program at the University of California, Los Angeles. He had recently landed a small part in "Failure to Launch," the film starring Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew McConaughey, and was eagerly anticipating his move into UCP's accessible apartments that were still under construction in Burbank.

Since we last wrote about Klein, he has been busy. In March, Klein, who is a member of the Achilles Track Club in Los Angeles, was pushed in a specially designed wheelchair by Rich, an Achilles Track Club volunteer, in the Los Angeles Marathon, finishing the race in 3 hours and 38 minutes. Achilles Track Club is a worldwide organization, represented in 60 countries, whose mission is to enable people with all types of disabilities to participate in mainstream athletics,

to promote personal achievement, enhance self-esteem, and lower barriers between people.

"Nick's part was cut from 'Failure to Launch,' but he was so excited about his upcoming move into UCP's Casa de la Providencia apartments in Burbank and the 2006 season of 'American Idol' that he didn't have much time to dwell on it," shares Kelly. On April 22, Klein moved out of his sister's apartment and into his own apartment. Not even a month after moving out on his own, Klein hosted the very first party in the apartment

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Nick Klein (center) poses with Taylor Hicks and Katharine McPhee during his visit to the "American Idol" set, where he met the top six finalists, Ryan Seacrest and Paula Abdul.

Employer Spotlight: Vons Is at the Forefront of Hiring Employees with Developmental Disabilities at Their Stores

You can learn a lot about a company from their Web site. You can read the company's history, find out if they have a diversity program, research what types of charitable contributions they make, locate your local store, and even do your shopping, all with the click of a mouse button. If you were to click on the "About Us" section of the Vons Web site, you would find a link to a "Diversity" section, and at the very top of the page is the following statement, "At Vons, we feel that our team should reflect the diversity of the people who shop in our stores. That is why we are pleased that Fortune magazine has recognized our dedication to hiring and promoting qualified people from all backgrounds. Our team brings

you the quality and service that you expect from Safeway every day."

The Diversity Web site is just one of many avenues that Vons, the Southern California arm of the Safeway family of stores, uses as part of its diversity initiative, which also includes diversity advisory boards, recruitment initiatives, leadership accountability, diversity education, network groups and mentoring. Safeway recognizes diversity as an integral part of their business, and their view of diversity is all inclusive and covers the many ways the company's employees are different, including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age and disability. For Safeway, diversity is more than a

corporate initiative, it is a living part of the company's culture, and the company is committed to providing an environment in which the individual is respected and supported, and teamwork is encouraged and enriched by including every person's contribution.

Safeway has received numerous awards and recognition from community and government organizations for their commitment to employ people with disabilities. Due to Vons' continued commitment to competitively employing a diverse team from all backgrounds, including people with developmental disabilities, Lanterman is recognizing them in our "Employer Spotlight" feature in "Viewpoint." In

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Legislative Impact Forums Raise Key Issues that the State Needs to Address Before the Vision of the Lanterman Act Turns to Dust

In January of this year, Lanterman Regional Center's board of directors adopted the position described in the paper, "Reaffirming the Lanterman Vision: A Decade of Reinvestment and Renewal," which can be read at www.lanterman.org. This paper set out an initiative intended to achieve funding for service providers and regional centers that reflects the actual cost of providing services. The initiative would require creation and implementation of a sustained program of education and active advocacy to be carried out locally and statewide. A key component of the implementation strategy focused on educating the various stakeholder groups – families, service providers, regional center staff and legislators – about the issues. Legislative impact forums are one way of educating stakeholders about the issues. Just recently, Lanterman held two legislative impact forums, one in Burbank and the other in Los Angeles, to discuss the ongoing effects of rate freezes and cost containment measures on service providers, as well as some of the state and federal legislative bills that Lanterman Regional Center is following.

The Burbank forum included a panel representing service providers, direct service professionals, clients and families. Sarah Saewert, an activity coordinator at AbilityFirst, represented direct service professionals. Saewert shared with the audience that she started working at AbilityFirst right out of high school. At that time, she was attending Pasadena City College part time, working at AbilityFirst part time, and also working at Jamba Juice and Sizzler. Her typical day started at 4:30 a.m. and ended at 10:30 p.m. She still recalls an experience that she had on her first day, "On my first day, a client ran up to me, hugged me and asked, 'Are you going to be here forever?'" While Saewert would like to be able to say yes, the answer is probably no. Not unless something is done to make the pay offered to direct support professionals a livable wage and reflective of increases in the cost of living.

Even after receiving a promotion at AbilityFirst and quitting her other part-time jobs, Saewert, who is attending the University of Phoenix, still struggles with the cost of living in California on a single income. "The expected quality and quantity of work that is required for the job I do does not equal the wages I receive," she adds. "The good staff leave because they know they can find a better job somewhere else. Their hearts are here, but they have bills to pay. When I receive my bachelor's degree, if I am still making the same wages as now, I will not be able to stay in this job. This is the only thing I have ever felt good at, so it breaks my heart." Saewert also commented on the cost and time invested by organizations in recruiting and hiring new employees, such as advertising; pre-screening, which includes fingerprinting, drug testing and health screening; and training. With many agencies reporting annual staff turnover rates of 55 percent and higher, the associated costs are enormous.

But Saewert also believes there is something that can be done about it. She says, "Become involved with what is going on around you. I am the first to admit that I don't always have a grasp on what laws are being passed and who they are affecting. It is my responsibility as a direct care professional to make sure I am in agreement with what is going on in the government."

Representatives for Assemblymembers Carol Liu and Dario Frommer attended, and assured the audience that both of them were aware of the problem and were doing their best to ensure that the proposed 3 percent rate increase for providers remained in the State's budget.

The Los Angeles forum focused on several bills that will have an effect on service providers. One

What is a legislative impact forum?

It's really easy to forget what the pioneers who lobbied for humane treatment of individuals with developmental disabilities had to overcome to get the Lanterman Act passed. Forty years later, the memories of those early years have faded into history. But the vision created by the passage of the Lanterman Act is threatened, and it is time for the Lanterman community to pick up and carry the torch lit so many years ago. Legislative impact forums are one way for us to let our collective voices be heard by the legislators that represent us. It's a two-way conversation between people with developmental disabilities, service providers and the regional center, and our legislators. They hear our issues and concerns, and we hear from them what they need from us to make the legislative process work. For most people served by Lanterman, community-based services are the norm, but that wasn't always the case. As attested to by some of the presenters at the recent legislative impact forums, the community-based system of support and care is threatened by hiring freezes, low wages and soaring operating costs. We all have the responsibility of letting our legislators know what the services and supports mean to us and what the impact of not having them will be.

bill, AB2836 (Karnette), would require homes for the elderly to install fire sprinkler systems, but would provide no funds for providers to purchase, install and maintain the systems. Lanterman Regional Center's board of directors has taken an "oppose" position on this bill and has sent a letter to the author explaining why.



Lanterman Director of Community Services, Karen Ingram, welcomes the various stakeholders, including clients and their families, service providers, and representatives for Assemblymembers Carol Liu and Dario Frommer, to the Burbank legislative impact forum at which the effects of rate freezes and cost containment measures on service providers were discussed.

Linda Jones, director of Client Services at United Cerebral Palsy, represented service providers at the Burbank forum. She shared, "As a result of funding cuts, unallocated budget reductions, and a continuing freeze on payment rates, the dreams that came true through the passage of the Lanterman Act are in jeopardy of turning to dust."

During her presentation, Jones detailed some of the differences between the cost of providing services today compared with costs of 20 years ago, when rates were set. During the last 20 years, the cost of gas has increased 200 percent, minimum wage is up 42 percent, worker's compensation costs have tripled, and health insurance costs have increased 50 plus percent.

Towards the end of her presentation, Jones posed several questions to the audience that really cut to the core of the issue: "This system of services was designed to assist people with developmental disabilities to build and lead full and dignified lives. How can this be accomplished without a steady and well-trained workforce? The lack of experienced and qualified staff contributes to the deterioration of the quality of programs and services. And what can agencies do when the amount of money they receive from their only paying customer, the state of California, is not enough to pay their bills, and they cannot recruit and maintain enough skilled employees to ensure the health and safety of the people they serve? They shut their doors. Homes close. People lose their homes. Programs close. People lose opportunities for community integration. Services disappear. People lose the assistance they require to participate as active community members. Numerous homes have closed already and many others are on the verge of closing. Many agencies providing other services including day programs, independent living services and supported living

services are unable to accept new participants because they are already operating at a loss. Agencies cannot continue to provide services under these circumstances. And so they leave.

And what of the people that this unique system was designed to serve? What of the Californians with developmental disabilities? California's residents with developmental disabilities are here to stay. The question is, who will be here to assist them?"

Jackie Knowles, whose son lives at Villa Esperanza, said: "If the services ultimately disappear because agencies like Villa can't stay afloat, many of these people who have no family could end up homeless. I think my son senses this precariousness. He frequently comments, 'I'm glad I'm not homeless.' Homelessness for these folks would be a costly outcome, indeed – not only in terms of human dignity and quality of life, but also in terms of costs to the State. Heaven knows, you no doubt are aware that the cost of services per homeless person can outstrip the corresponding cost for people with developmental disabilities. Another choice is institutionalization. But no one wants to go back to warehousing people. Costs are astronomical and the quality of life is grim. Thankfully, Assemblyman Frank Lanterman led us out of that. To continue to improve programs he pioneered, we must speak up loud and clear that services for the developmentally disabled need more money. Preventive medicine is cheaper than emergency services. I hope everyone here will take action toward convincing our lawmakers to make this happen."

Tips for Writing a Letter to Your Representative

Attendees at both forums were encouraged to participate in the legislative process by writing letters to their representatives.

There were letter writing stations set up at both forums and many participants wrote letters before they went home. Following are some of the letter writing tips that were shared:

- Hand-written letters get the most attention
- Include a picture of the client who would be affected by the legislation
- Be polite
- Keep the letter short, one page is best
- Introduce yourself and indicate which bill you're writing about
- Say why you support or oppose the bill
- Ask your representative to support or oppose the bill
- Ask them to keep you informed on the bill
- Thank them for their time
- Don't forget to put your address in the letter in case the envelope you sent it in gets lost

If you would like more information about the legislation that Lanterman is following, visit Lanterman's Web site at www.lanterman.org and click on "Legislative." To receive e-mail updates and action alerts, please subscribe to Lanterman's e-mail bulletin from the homepage of Lanterman's Web site. You can also contact Karen Ingram, director of Community Services, at **213.383.1300, x. 617**.



"And what of the people that this unique system was designed to serve? What of the Californians with developmental disabilities? California's residents with developmental disabilities are here to stay. The question is, who will be here to assist them?"

THE BUDGET UPDATE

Governor and Legislature Agree to State Budget Prior to Start of 2006-2007 Fiscal Year

For the first time in six years, a budget was delivered by the Legislature and signed by the Governor prior to July 1, the start of the State's fiscal year.

This budget is based on regional centers serving approximately 212,000 clients and families, an increase of 4.4 percent over the 203,000 currently being served. It calls for an increase in purchase of services from \$2.4 billion to nearly \$2.7 billion, or 10.8 percent; and an increase in regional center direct services and operations from \$456 million to \$488 million, or 7 percent. A 3 percent rate increase has been given to certain classes of service providers, primarily those affected by an ongoing rate freeze. In addition, small rate increases have been given to supported employment and some day program providers, provided they meet certain conditions relative to moving to more community-based, inclusive settings.

However, the cost of services, particularly purchased services, continues to grow at a rate much higher than the rate of client growth.

This budget gives the developmental services system some very modest relief. Although the State's fiscal outlook appears to be improving, it still has a significant deficit to be paid down. And there is continuing worry that the State's obligations outweigh its revenues.

This is a good point for us to pause and look at how far we have come as a system and to acknowledge some of the stresses that continue to have significant impact.

- In 2006, about 3,000 people with developmental disabilities continue to live in state hospitals – now called developmental centers – while more than 200,000 children and adults receive services in their home communities. The State is committed to further reducing the population in the state hospitals, and one of these institutions – Agnews Developmental Center – is scheduled for closure in 2008. Once Agnews closes, only four developmental centers will remain statewide, down from 11 in 1965.
- Services and supports offered through regional centers allow more than 98 percent of children with developmental disabilities to live in their home communities with their own or foster families.
- Nearly 20 percent of adults with developmental disabilities live on their own, either independently or with supports, in the community. An additional 50 percent of adults with developmental disabilities live with their families, and approximately 18 percent live primarily in small, homelike, community care facilities. The number of people living on their own is severely limited by the availability of affordable housing, particularly in high-cost areas such as Los Angeles and Orange counties and the San Francisco-Oakland region.
- More than 9,000 adults with developmental disabilities are employed with support in real jobs in regular work settings in the community. This number, however, has not increased in several years.
- Regional centers have proved to be a cost-effective alternative to state institutions. The average per capita expenditure by regional centers for clients served in the community is approximately \$11,000 per year. The corresponding per capita amount for developmental center residents is approximately \$230,000 per year. Many people with developmental disabilities living in the community have support needs as great as or greater than some residents of developmental centers. Individuals such as these obviously cannot be served at the \$11,000 per year level, but it continues to be challenging to find services to meet their needs within the State's existing rate structure for service providers.
- Approximately 85 percent of a regional center's budget is devoted to the purchase of client services. An additional 12 percent of the budget pays for direct client services, such as service coordination and direct family support provided by regional center staff members. Only 3 percent of the budget is devoted to regional center administration and operating expenses.

Current Challenges to the System

- Residential service providers have not received increases in reimbursement that reflect growth in the actual costs of doing business since 1986, when the current rate system was instituted, although some small increases, such as cost-of-living increases to Supplemental Security Income funds, provided by the federal government, have been passed through to providers in some years.
- During the early 1990s, in response to unprecedented budget deficits in California, regional centers were subject to "unallocated reductions" in funding and much of this lost funding has not been restored.
- In response to a \$38 billion shortfall in the state budget in 2002, 1) payment rates for the already underfunded community services were frozen, and 2) regional centers were prohibited from using purchase of service (POS) funding for new program start-ups. Although the state economy has made significant gains since that time, the rate freeze continues, although a 3 percent cost-of-living increase has been granted to certain classes of service providers. In addition, the approval for the use of POS funds for start-ups remains very limited.
- Currently, in the Lanterman Regional Center area, the average per hour wage for direct service professionals in all types of programs – the people who work directly with clients – ranges from approximately \$8 to approximately \$10. The last available statewide survey of wages in community care facilities (2001) documented hourly wages of just over \$10 per hour. The wage situation has resulted in very high vacancy and turnover rates among program staff, undermining the quality and availability of services. And even when small wage increases have been granted, there are still other costs that are unaccounted for, such as rent and insurance increases.
- In the past year, financial stresses have led to the closure of six licensed homes in the Lanterman area.
- Start-up funds for new programs have been restricted to programs serving people moving out of developmental centers. As a result, regional centers have been unable to develop programs and services critical for new and emerging populations, including young adults with autism, older adults and people involved with the criminal justice system. This situation has resulted in de facto waiting lists for services, which is contrary to the mandate of the Lanterman Act. The provision this year of allowing the use of \$3 million for start-up projects statewide is welcome but does not begin to meet the need.
- Despite an increase in the Consumer Price Index of more than 50 percent in the last decade, regional centers have received no cost-of-living wage increases for their staff, nor have they had increases in the amounts budgeted for insurance, equipment, supplies and other operating expenses.
- Implement rates for programs that reflect the real cost of doing business and provide a reasonable wage for direct support professionals. The approval of the 3 percent cost-of-living increase for regional center service providers is only a first step; a discontinuation of the service provider rate freeze and further, ongoing rate adjustments are necessary for the provision of quality services to clients and families.
- Allow the use of purchase of service funds for the development of badly needed new programs.
- Reimburse regional centers for the real cost of doing business, including hiring and retaining qualified staff, and increasing operational expenses such as rent, communications, and keeping abreast of new technologies to promote more efficient working practices.
- Increase availability of affordable housing in decent, safe neighborhoods by authorizing regional centers to use purchase of service funding for the development, purchase and rehabilitation of such housing.

The Director's VIEWPOINT

Searching for the Next Generation of Leaders...

In the last issue of "Viewpoint," I wrote about the need to re-commit to the vision embodied in the Lanterman Act – and the absolutely crucial necessity to identify and develop the next generation of leaders.

One of our core values at Lanterman is leadership, defined as "an act of service to the community as a whole. As an organization, and as individuals, we strive to be in the forefront – pioneering new ways to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities, their families and the community we share. We want to inspire the Center to reach its full potential and lead the way for others."



Executive Director Diane Anand

Many of the families we serve today were not even born when the valiant efforts of parent leaders helped bring the regional center system into being. They don't realize that the system was designed to be governed at the local level, not in Sacramento. It was a very important concept that Frank Lanterman called "home rule" – and it was built on a foundation of continuity, of the ongoing presence of experienced leadership.

Over the years, as families have benefited from the fruits of a system already in place and functioning, the concept of giving back – of actively contributing – has been replaced by a sense of entitlement. As the people we serve take our services and our existence more and more for granted, the regional center vision is in danger of being lost.

The leadership challenge looming before us is critical – and we must meet this challenge head on.

What kind of leaders do we need to take us into the next 40 years?

There is no single mold, no universal template, but certain qualities do come to mind: a deep-seated sense of service, an openness to learning, and a commitment to innovation.

Our new leaders will also need vision, tempered by pragmatism. They must be willing to take risks, but be equally willing to jettison a pilot or an experiment that doesn't work out, realizing that innovation is not always successful.

They must also be stewards in the broadest sense of the word, mindful of the needs of the entire community and prepared to weigh short-term gains against long-term sustainability. The unchanging reality is that the future will continue to be one of greater competition for fewer resources. We need leaders who understand that.

Recently, I was asked if I thought that we would ever fully realize the vision of the Lanterman Act. That's a significant question – with no simple answer. There's no doubt that we have made tremendous progress in realizing the vision of having each individual with a developmental disability be able to live a full, productive and satisfying life as a valued and included member of the community. But along the way, we have neglected to plan for succession, and it is time to take up the task.

In addition to parent leaders, adults with developmental disabilities and community members show good leadership potential. Adult clients have served in various capacities on our board, committees and self-advocacy groups. Many of them are well able to lead and should be encouraged and mentored to take up the mantle. The other is the broader community of individuals who have no formal connection with the world of developmental disabilities. They are a vital resource which we must engage and draw upon, particularly if we wish to preserve "home rule."

Whatever our future holds, one thing is quite clear – we must identify, nurture and mentor the next generation of leaders. That is the single most important thing we can do to ensure that the promise of the Lanterman Act is fulfilled.

How are we doing? – Read Lanterman’s Performance Report to Find Out

Every year for the last 40 years, the Department of Developmental Services has contracted with the regional centers in California to serve individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Beginning in 1995, the Department required regional centers, with input from their communities, to develop performance plans that then became part of their annual contract with the State. These plans included goals and measurable objectives in 10 program areas, such as employment, family support and community living options. Regional centers were pretty much free to decide what their goals and objectives would be, but they were then held accountable for achieving them.

Several years ago, DDS changed the model for performance plans. Rather than allowing regional centers to create their own plans, the Department created a standard set of goals that every center was required to adopt, which are discussed later in this article. Centers were still responsible for developing the specific objectives that described how they would achieve the goals and they could work with their communities to include additional goals. This new model was phased in over a period of years and Lanterman Regional Center adopted it for the calendar year 2005.

Every year, DDS looks at how well the regional centers are doing on these “Performance Plans” and makes the results public. The information that follows provides a summary of how Lanterman performed on its plan in 2005. Last year, Lanterman served about 6,800 clients and their families.

“At Lanterman, we want to improve every year, do better than the state average, and meet or exceed the DDS standard. As you can see in this

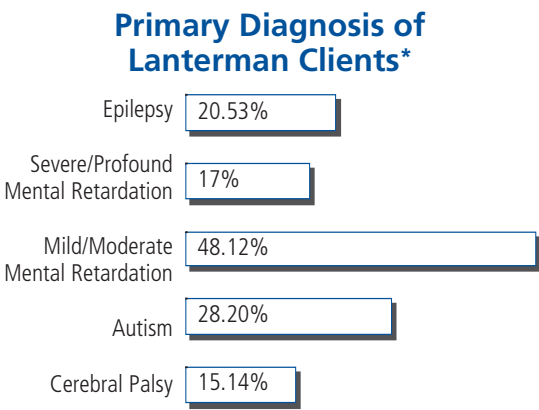
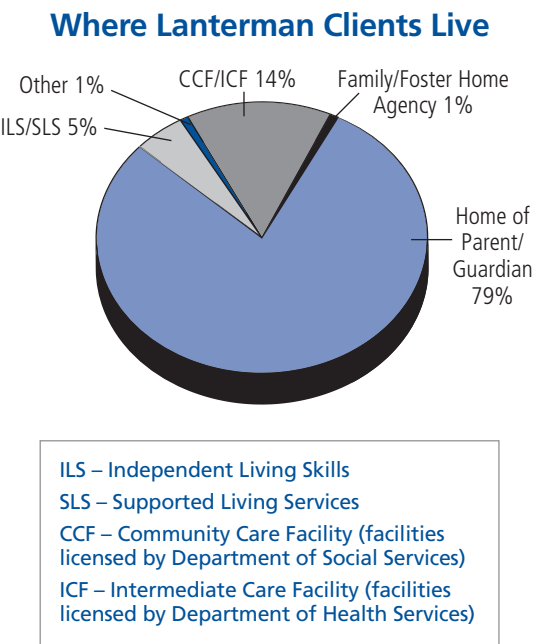
report, we did well in helping ensure that 99.08 percent of the children we serve live with their own or foster families, and that those few children who do live out of home live in small homelike settings, with fewer than six beds,” says Diane Anand, executive director. “We still need to improve in helping people move out of the developmental centers and ensuring that adults whom we serve live with their families, on their own, or in small homelike settings.”

There is a major state initiative to move people from state developmental centers into the community and Lanterman is actively involved in that initiative. Lanterman is also working very hard to reduce the number of adults who live in facilities serving more than six clients. “A major reason why a relatively high percentage of Lanterman clients live in larger facilities is that the Lanterman service area is home to a disproportionate number of skilled nursing facilities. Other regional centers place clients in these facilities and those people subsequently become Lanterman clients,” adds Anand. “About a year ago, we began carefully reviewing the health status and support needs of all adults living in SNFs in our area and are working diligently to help them move to more homelike, less restrictive residences.” Since the beginning of 2005, Lanterman has reduced the SNF population by more than 5 percent.

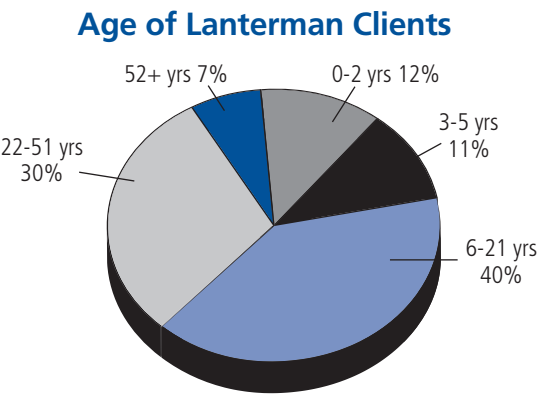
The charts in the summary below provide information about the clients we serve, as well as how well we are doing in meeting our goals and in fulfilling our contract with DDS. A detailed version of our Performance Report for the 2005 year can be downloaded on the homepage of Lanterman’s Web site at www.lanterman.org.

Who uses Lanterman?

These charts tell you about who Lanterman clients are and where they live.



**Please note that despite the fact that the term primary diagnosis suggests each person would have only one, this is not the way the State defines it – i.e., some people have more than one primary diagnosis, and that’s why the total is greater than 100 percent.*



How well is Lanterman performing?

The chart below tells you about five areas where DDS wants each regional center to keep improving.

The first column, labeled December 2004, tells you how Lanterman was doing at the beginning of 2005, and the second shows how we were doing at the end of 2005.

To see how we performed relative to the other regional centers in the State, compare our numbers to the state averages in the shaded columns.

Regional Center Goals (based on Lanterman Act)	December 2004		December 2005	
	State Average	Lanterman	State Average	Lanterman
Less clients live in developmental centers	1.78%	1.93%	1.48%	1.76%
More children live with families	97.57%	98.85%	97.65%	99.08%
More adults live in home settings**	69.52%	65.84%	70.11%	66.63%
Less children live in large facilities (more than 6 people)	0.26%	0.22%	0.21%	0.11%
Less adults live in large facilities (more than 6 people)	6.15%	16.27%	5.72%	15.08%

*** Home settings include: independent living, supported living, Adult Family Home Agency homes, and clients’ family homes.*

As you can see from this chart, the change in our performance relative to each of these goals was in the desired direction. For example, we reduced the percent of Lanterman clients living in a developmental center from 1.93 percent to 1.76 percent.

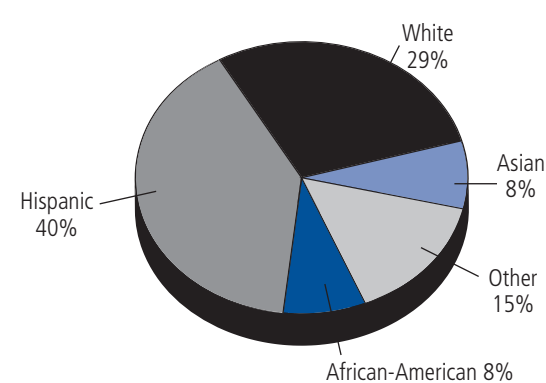
Did Lanterman meet DDS standards?

Read below to see how well we did in meeting DDS compliance standards.

Areas Measured	Last Period	Current Period
Passes independent audit	N/A	Yes
Passes DDS audit	N/A	Yes
Didn’t overspend operations budget	N/A	Yes
Participates in the federal waiver	N/A	Yes
Audits vendors as required	N/A	Met
CDERs are updated as required (CDER is the Client Development Evaluation Report with information about the client’s diagnosis)	93.50%	93.54%
IPP (Individual Program Plan) requirements met	N/A	93.56%
IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) requirements met	N/A	86.29%
Intake/Assessment timelines for clients age 3 or older met	96.32%	98.36%

As you can see, Lanterman successfully complied with the state requirements related to audits and fiscal controls. The data reflecting requirements for IPP and IFSP development are from record reviews conducted by the State in 2004. It should be noted that the data related to “IFSP requirements” are based on a review of only 13 cases. This result should, therefore, be interpreted with caution. Since the time of the 2004 review, we have implemented strategies that have enabled us to improve our performance significantly on these two indicators.

Ethnicity of Lanterman Clients



What about other performance areas?

In the future, we will measure how well we are doing in other areas, including:

- Increasing the number of clients who work,
- Getting better pay for clients who work,
- Making sure clients get medical and dental services, and
- Meeting Intake/Assessment and IFSP timelines for children birth to 3.

Lanterman Elects Two New Board Members at June Meeting

The beginning of summer is a very busy time for Lanterman – the start of a new fiscal year. And with this new fiscal year comes a new budget, new challenges and new additions to our board of directors. In June, two new board members were elected to Lanterman’s board, each bringing with them a wealth of knowledge in their respective fields. The Lanterman community is delighted to have Kelly Vencill Sanchez and Phyllis Kochavi as board members, and looks forward to the guidance and leadership these individuals will be providing during their terms on the board of directors. Following are bios that offer a look at both the personal and professional experiences of Sanchez and Kochavi.

Kelly Vencill Sanchez Contributes Firsthand Experience as a Parent, Social Worker and Freelance Writer to Lanterman’s Board

Although Kelly Vencill Sanchez was just recently elected as a member of Lanterman Regional Center’s board of directors, she has been involved with the regional center for several years, first as a social worker in maternity, labor and delivery, and the neonatal intensive care units at Good Samaritan and Huntington Hospitals, and then as a parent in Early Intervention when her son, Luke, was born prematurely in 2002. Luke, who is now 4, was later diagnosed with cerebral palsy and seizure disorder and is now a part of Lanterman’s Foothill School Age unit.

Vencill Sanchez has a bachelor’s degree in Spanish and literature from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a master’s degree in social work from California State University, Long Beach. She worked as a social worker with juveniles on probation and is currently a freelance writer and editor with Condé Nast Publications. She attended the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disorders (LEND) Program offered by the University of Southern California University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) from 2004 to 2005.

Committed to the full inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in school, extracurricular activities, work and life, Vencill Sanchez has volunteered to help out with the last two



Board Member Kelly Vencill Sanchez

Festivals. “Sometimes it seems like we have a long way to go before attitudes change about people with disabilities. Change is hard, inclusion can be complicated and messy, but the benefits are well worth the fight,” adds Vencill Sanchez, who is also a Lanterman Peer Support Partner.

Vencill Sanchez believes deeply in the ability of “ordinary” people to do extraordinary things and was moved and inspired by the grassroots efforts of parents 40 years ago who contributed to the founding of the regional centers. She says: “This is an especially challenging time for our clients and service providers, economically and politically, and I’m sorry that we do not have a champion like Frank Lanterman in the Legislature. But we do have clients, parents and others with knowledge, will and passion, and I believe that together our efforts can make a difference for those with developmental disabilities and their families. I have learned so much from those who have gone on this journey before us, and I have a lot more to learn, but I am in this battle for the long haul.”

Even though Vencill Sanchez is the parent of a young child, she is very much looking forward to learning about and understanding the challenges that face adults with developmental disabilities in the community, and advocating on behalf of Lanterman’s adult clients and those who provide services for them. “The board members of any regional center have a unique challenge in front of them in that they must be concerned with the diverse needs and issues relating to clients of all ages,” she adds.

In addition to Luke, Vencill Sanchez and her husband, Michael, have a 6-year-old son, Teo. As time permits, she enjoys traveling and anything to do with horses, particularly riding. Although she’ll go anywhere, her favorite destination is the American Southwest.

Phyllis Kochavi’s Accomplishments in the Health Services Field and Volunteer Experience in Education are an Asset for Lanterman’s Board

Even though she is new to Lanterman’s board, Kochavi and her family have been a part of the Regional Center for almost eight years. When he was 4, Kochavi’s son, Ari, who is almost 22, was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumor and needed imminent surgery to remove it if he was to have any chance to live. Kochavi and her husband, Doron, had to make a treatment decision that would impact the rest of their son’s life.



Board Member Phyllis Kochavi

Throughout the years, Kochavi has volunteered and participated in the board process with a number of education-related organizations.

She held several positions on the La Cañada Educational Foundation Board, including co-president and chair of the annual gala, and she served on the Community Advisory Committee for the La Cañada/Burbank/Glendale Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA), including two years as chair.

She enjoys working with people from all walks of life. “I feel I can learn something from almost everyone and I also like meeting people who I would not otherwise have had an opportunity to work with or to get to know. I also enjoy working for the betterment of an organization,” she explains.

Currently she serves on the board of The Frostig School in Pasadena where Ari attended for nine years. She is also a member of the Parent Association Advisory Council for George Washington University, where her 20-year-old daughter, Dani, will be a junior in the fall. “We meet three times per year in Washington, D.C., and represent the interests of undergraduate parents in those non-academic areas that affect the quality of student life,” says Kochavi. “Most recently we have been instrumental in eliminating smoking in the dorm rooms.”

Kochavi, herself a graduate of George Washington University, has a bachelor’s degree in English literature, and her master’s degree in public administration with a health services specialty from the University of Southern California. She has worked at both Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and at Northridge Hospital Medical Center. At Childrens, Kochavi coordinated the integration of the medical school program into the hospital, and at Northridge, she was the administrative director in charge of Volunteer Services and Community Outreach. “We had over 400 volunteers working throughout the hospital and we received several awards for innovative programs, such as utilizing volunteers in the Trauma department to work with the families of trauma victims brought into the emergency room,” she shares.

As one of Lanterman’s newest board members, Kochavi is very much looking forward to contributing her knowledge and skills. She adds: “I am open to serving in a capacity where I can add to the board. I’m very good at thinking of new ways to approach a problem and hopefully this skill will be of benefit.”

In her free time, Kochavi enjoys reading and learning about other cultures through literature. She also loves traveling, especially with her family.

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.

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 so you can be placed on the list of attendees. We look forward to your visit.

Help Raise Money, Use GoodSearch

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lanterman Celebrates 40 Years as Partners in Lifelong Support

Nestled along Hollywood Boulevard, across from Grauman's Chinese Theater and just up the street from the El Capitan Theatre, the recently-renovated historic Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel served as the backdrop for Lanterman's gala dinner celebrating 40 years as partners in lifelong support. Once in decline, the now trendy and popular hotel helped preserve some of the glamour that was once Hollywood, and for that one evening in March, the guests at Lanterman's gala dinner were made to feel like the stars of old.

Guests, who were treated to delectable appetizers in the hotel lobby, climbed Shirley Temple's tiled stairway to the upstairs mezzanine that encircles the lobby, to check out an exhibit dedicated to old Hollywood, while others just chose to sink into the plush oversized sofas that are part of the Library Bar to soak up the ambience and enjoy each other's company.

At exactly 10 minutes before 7:30 p.m., the doors to the Blossom Room, the site of the first ever Academy Awards, were thrown open and dinner guests streamed into the ballroom in search of their seats. The master of ceremonies for the evening was Elizabeth Espinosa, anchor and reporter for KTTV Fox 11 News. Espinosa has a brother with developmental disabilities and is an advocate for the special needs community.

The program for the evening's celebration eloquently summed up the event:

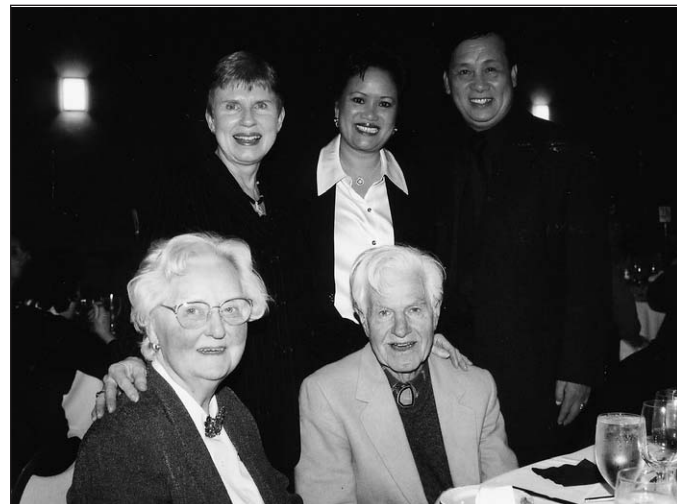
Today, a child born in California with a developmental disability faces a radically different future from a child born with the same disability 40 years ago. This evening we celebrate our accomplishments, reflecting on the progress we have made in changing lives and building community. We have been a partner and advocate for people with developmental disabilities and their families, developed and improved services, challenged perceptions, broadened perspectives, opened opportunities – and diligently worked toward our goal of a society in which people with developmental disabilities experience the understanding and inclusion that allow them to live full, productive and satisfying lives as active members of their communities.

Among those individuals who have contributed to the accomplishments of the last 40 years, there is one individual who particularly stands out – Al Marsella. Marsella, a founding member of the Los Angeles County Developmental Services Foundation, and past Lanterman board president and advisor, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years of dedicated and selfless service to the Lanterman community. (At right is a more in-depth article about Marsella and his contributions to Lanterman.)

With dinner finished and the memory of dessert still lingering, guests were treated to a presentation by the featured speaker of the evening, Emily Perl Kingsley. An Emmy Award-winning writer for "Sesame Street," Kingsley shared with the audience her initial struggles and ultimately her accomplishments with including children and adults with disabilities on "Sesame Street." The mother of an adult son with Down syndrome and a frequent lecturer on disability rights, Kingsley shared various clips from different "Sesame Street" episodes that had included people with disabilities.

The evening concluded with a rousing rendition of "Sing," the song originally written by The Carpenters, but made famous by "Sesame Street." The song, which was beautifully signed by Service Coordinator Christine Yuh, was opened up to audience participation. And while it brought back memories of our childhoods, it also served as a reminder of why we have dedicated our lives to serving people with developmental disabilities and not music careers.

Although no one from Lanterman saw the two ghosts rumored to haunt the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel – Actor Montgomery Clift haunts the ninth floor (suite 928), where he used to pace the halls back in 1953, memorizing his lines while making "From Here to Eternity," and Marilyn Monroe, whose image is said to occasionally appear in a full-length mirror which used to hang in her poolside suite and is now next to the elevator on the lower level – many did have the opportunity to catch a glimpse of Paris Hilton at the end of the evening who was attending an event hosted by Playboy at the hotel.



Above, from left: Lanterman's first Board President Katherine Nack, Executive Director Diane Anand, Dr. Richard Koch, Service Provider Ann Seisa and her husband, Loy



Above: Guests enjoy a glamorous evening in the Blossom Room, the site of the first ever Academy Awards.

At right: The featured speaker of the evening, Emily Perl Kingsley, an Emmy-award winning writer for "Sesame Street," shared footage from an episode during which her son, Jason, shares a scene with Ernie.



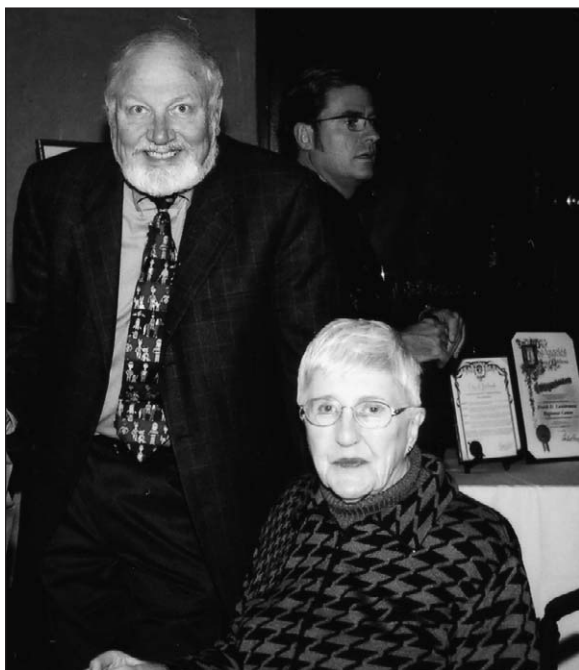
Above, from left: Former Board Member Jeff Richards, Chuck and Kristin Conder, who is also a board member, and Former Board Member Mariko Magami and her husband, Naoharu



Above: Lanterman Controller Barry Londer and his wife, Sarah



At right: Lanterman Board Member Stephani Piercey with her friend, Michael Rossi



San Diego Regional Center Executive Director, Raymond "Mac" Peterson, M.D., and former Lanterman staff, Betty Gralikher



At left: Guests partake in appetizers served in the lobby of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

Above: Long-time regional center Service Provider and President of the Society of Community Care Operators, O.V. Smith



Above, from left: Association of Regional Center Agencies Executive Director, Bob Baldo; Golden Gate Regional Center Executive Director, James Shorter; California Affordable Housing Institute Executive Director, Kris McCann; Regional Center of the East Bay Executive Director, James Burton; and Paul Carleton, former chief deputy director of the Department of Developmental Services



At left, from left: Down Syndrome Association of Los Angeles Executive Director, Gail Williamson; with Emily Kingsley, the featured speaker at Lanterman's 40th anniversary gala dinner. Kingsley was presented with the Perspectives Media Award for Lifetime Achievement.



Above, from left: Training and Development Executive Assistant, Ronna Kajikawa, with Elizabeth Espinosa, the evening's master of ceremonies.



Above: Lanterman Regional Center was presented with certificates from a number of local and state government agencies for our 40th anniversary.

Above, at right: Board Member Ervand Kestenian with Marlene Guerron



Above: Regional Center of Orange County Executive Director, William Bowman, with Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center Executive Director, Gloria Wong



At left, from left: Service Provider Jack Darakjian of Modern Support Services with Filmmaker Todd Cottam

Above, from left: Service Coordinator Abraham Estrada, Margie Perez, and her husband, Edward, who is Lanterman's family support specialist



Above: Guests relax and soak in the atmosphere in the Library Bar just off the lobby of the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

Al Marsella Honored at 40th Anniversary Gala Dinner for His Selfless Service, Dedication and Commitment to the Lanterman Community



Al Marsella accepts his Lifetime Achievement Award which was presented to him at the 40th anniversary gala dinner to recognize his many years of selfless service to the Lanterman community.

Al Marsella, a Hollywood CPA and business manager, served on the Program Policy Committee of the Regional Center at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, one of two pilot regional centers established in California. He went on to become a founding member of the Los Angeles County Developmental Services Foundation, the parent organization that was formed in 1979 when Lanterman Regional Center separated from Childrens Hospital.

Marsella is the father of Joseph and Mary, two adult children with autism, and considered his late wife, Beatrice, the source of his strength and inspiration for his dedication and commitment to Lanterman.

Over the years, he has remained actively involved with Lanterman, holding a number of positions, including several terms as president of the board, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. He has also served for many years on the Administrative Affairs Committee, including more than one term as chairman. During the periods that he was not on the board, Marsella acted as an advisor – a special position reserved for individuals who have provided extraordinary service both to the Center and the board of directors.

He served as the chair of the second Lanterman Leadership Forum planning committee, and has been instrumental in raising funds to help underwrite special projects and events, such as the *Perspectives*

International Film Festivals and Forums, The Roberta Happe Memorial Internship, and the Lanterman Leadership Forums. In the words of Executive Director Diane Anand, "Because of our complex budget, finances and significant fiduciary responsibilities, we have been privileged to have a financial and business person of Al's caliber and experience giving so generously of his time in service to the board and the Lanterman community."

He has been a tireless advocate, valued advisor and the ultimate volunteer. Whatever the task, Marsella has always stepped up to help in any way needed. For his selfless service, dedication and commitment to the Lanterman community, he was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 40th anniversary gala dinner held on Thursday, March 16, 2006 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.

Upon accepting the award, Marsella shared: "This award I accept in the name of and on behalf of all of you. It is as well your lifetime achievement award. Thank you for giving of yourselves in this "giving" ~ in this "loving" ~ in being here to speak for justice. We must be ever vigilant to keep this spirit alive, for the moment it ceases, indifference takes hold – and justice for all our sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, cousins and grandchildren is extinguished."

SAVE THE DATE!

Lanterman's Clients to Compete in the Get Fit! Games at the Home Depot Center

On Saturday, November 4, 2006 pack your oversized foam fingers, your hand painted signs and your team spirit, and make your way to the Home Depot Center to show your support for Lanterman's adult clients, as they compete in the *Get Fit!* Games against Harbor Regional Center's clients. The *Get Fit!* Games will cap the yearlong *Get Fit!* Program that was funded by a \$300,000 Wellness Initiative grant to Lanterman and Harbor Regional Centers from the Department of Developmental Services. The *Get Fit!* Program is a multi-faceted approach designed to improve the health status of adults with developmental disabilities by focusing on nutrition and exercise.

"We want the *Get Fit!* participants to feel confident about their new fitness levels, to stay motivated, and to continue their commitment to an active and healthy lifestyle," shares Margarita Blanco, project manager of Lanterman's *Get Fit!* Program. "We want our participants to feel like 'superstar athletes' and 'champions' by allowing them to display their new fitness skills and athletic abilities in a world-class venue like the Home Depot Center."

Clients participating in the Get Fit! Program at Goodwill Industries in Los Angeles test the accuracy of their new pedometers. Each of them has the final goal of walking 10,000 steps each day.

The *Get Fit!* Games will recognize participants in Harbor and Lanterman Regional Center's *Get Fit!* Programs for their hard work and effort towards improving their health and making better lifestyle choices. Endorsed by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, the *Get Fit!* Games are tentatively scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and will offer fun for the whole family. In a social and supportive atmosphere, Lanterman's clients will engage in friendly competition with their peers from Harbor in walking races, running relays, basketball, volleyball, tennis and many other activities. All participants will receive a medal, an official *Get Fit!* t-shirt and a free lunch.

Everyone is invited to participate in a Family Fun Walk. In addition, Harbor Regional Center will be hosting their annual health and resource fair during the morning. The event will also feature music, entertainment and demonstrations by professional athletes.

For more information about the *Get Fit!* Program and the *Get Fit!* Games, and to make a donation to support the *Get Fit!* Games, visit www.lanterman.org/getfit.



Interested in Helping Out with the Get Fit! Games?

We are looking for volunteers to help with everything from set-up and clean-up to directing traffic, staffing a table and participant registration. For more information about volunteer opportunities, visit www.lanterman.org/getfit. If you are interested in volunteering for the *Get Fit!* Games, you can also contact Lanterman *Get Fit!* Project Manager, Margarita Blanco, at margarita.blanco@lanterman.org or 213.383.1300, x. 747.

All Great Sporting Events Have Sponsors...

Would you like to be a sponsor for the *Get Fit!* Games? Do you know an organization that would? Sponsors are needed for the prizes, medals, breakfast, lunch, snacks, water and other refreshments, t-shirts and various other event-related supplies. For more information about sponsorship levels and opportunities, visit www.lanterman.org/getfit. If you are interested in sponsoring the *Get Fit!* Games, you can also contact Lanterman *Get Fit!* Project Manager, Margarita Blanco, at margarita.blanco@lanterman.org or 213.383.1300, x. 747.

Objectives of the Get Fit! Program

- To educate adult regional center clients about how to start and maintain a healthy lifestyle that emphasizes exercise and nutrition.
- To provide education on these same topics to independent living skills/supported living services (ILS/SLS), day program and residential staff to enable them to support and motivate clients to improve their health.
- To enable regional center service coordinators to help clients incorporate appropriate fitness-related objectives into their Individual Program Plans (IPPs).
- To engage clients in regular physical activity that can be sustained over time.
- To help clients learn how to select and prepare food to ensure a healthy diet.
- To produce a cookbook for clients that integrates healthy menus, budget conscious planning and shopping, and safe food handling and storage practices.
- To provide clients with ongoing support groups in which they may discuss personal goals, make decisions about their lifestyles, and share strategies for maintaining good habits over time.



Above: Participants in the Monday Get Fit! Program, which include Lanterman clients and their independent living skills workers, stretch after a body movement class at Pacific Community Center and Park in Glendale.

At right: While the Monday program is classroom-based, the Wednesday program is the physical activity component of the Get Fit! Program in Glendale. Participants practice their basketball game and hone their skills for the upcoming Get Fit! Games, which will be held in November.



Early Intervention Spanish-Speaking Support Group Celebrated Mother's Day Luau Style



In what is becoming an annual event, the Early Intervention Spanish-speaking Support Group celebrated Mother's Day with a fun-filled luau. As they arrived, floral leis were strung around their necks. The mothers were treated to tropical inspired food, including chicken, black beans and rice, and plantains. The mothers also received a presentation by Author Eduardo Cholulu.

Remembering Phyllis Ann Jackson

1941 TO 2006

Nine years ago, Phyllis Ann Jackson joined Lanterman as a nurse specialist in the Clinical Services unit. She had come to California to be closer to her son, Chris, and Lanterman was very privileged to have Jackson join our organization. “I’m a person that doesn’t believe in coincidences,” explains Gwen Jordan, director of Clinical Services, “and Phyllis came highly recommended just as we began recruiting for the vacant nurse consultant position.”

Born in Newfoundland on October 20, 1941, Jackson spent much of her life in Minnesota. Although she moved to California, she always said that her love remained with Minnesota, and she would return to visit her family and friends there as often as she could. Jackson became a nurse and served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. She was stationed in San Francisco nursing returning wounded soldiers.

Jackson eventually found her way into the field of developmental disabilities in Minnesota, providing for the health care needs of individuals with developmental disabilities that lived in community care homes, a responsibility she continued during her time at Lanterman. Jackson was a great resource for the staff that she worked closely with at the Intermediate Care Facilities and Skilled Nursing Facilities that serve Lanterman’s clients. She was teaching all the time, by example and in formal instructional settings, about a variety of health-related topics, such as giving medications.

Tillman Pink, executive director of Glen-Park Retirement Community, shares: “As a service provider who worked with Phyllis during the last five years, she supported us in keeping at least 35 regional center clients healthy. She was a registered nurse extraordinaire. We called her the ‘teacher,’ and whenever we met with her we made sure to bring a pad and pencil for we were sure to leave with new knowledge and wisdom. For example, she helped us develop a system for handling lab results that put pressure on the physician to interpret the results for us in a timely fashion. Like your favorite fifth grade teacher, we were never embarrassed to ask her a question for there was no such thing as a stupid question. At her memorial service, I ran into a lot of other providers that I have met over the last 16 years in this field, and no words can say any more than the presence of all these providers paying their last tribute to Phyllis. We know it’s selfish to want her back, but we providers know that her shoes cannot be filled – we are going to sorely miss our Florence Nightingale.”

Jackson was also a valuable resource for her co-workers in the Clinical Services unit and for Lanterman’s service coordinators. Ashley Hooks, a Lanterman service coordinator, says: “Phyllis was absolutely inspiring. She truly set a standard and exemplified the phrase, ‘Lead by example.’ She is one of the few people who really made me think and she truly had an impact on how I viewed people with developmental disabilities. Our clients were lucky to have had her as one of their advocates, and I am really fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with and spend time with her. She is truly missed.”

Dr. Avo Yetenekian, a psychologist with Lanterman for close to 30 years, adds: “In our lives, Phyllis became the ultimate professional and most accomplished colleague a professional dreams of having. Her education, training and years of experience as a nurse in medical, psychiatric and developmental specialties made her one of the cornerstones of our clinical team. She was a driving force not only to provide clients with the necessary care and services, but also to ensure their dignity, welfare, pride and well-being. She upheld the legal and ethical principles that our professions impose on us, valuing professional integrity above all. Her passion and commitment gave us the impetus to drive ourselves to keep pace with Phyllis. She was a leader among her junior colleagues in a variety of health disciplines, justifying the nickname that Dr. Wendy Leskiw and I affectionately called her, “Captain Phyllis.”

Committed to improving the overall quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities in community care homes, Jackson focused on more than just health-related needs. Leticia Reyes, Lanterman’s dental coordinator, shares: “When I first came to Lanterman in 2000, Phyllis approached me with much enthusiasm, telling me how excited she was about me joining the team, and sharing that the clients at the care facilities could really benefit from improved oral hygiene. She was a great advocate on behalf of the oral hygiene of our clients. As a newcomer, she took me to some of the most ‘urgent dental care needed’ facilities, and introduced me to the administrators and care providers. Later on, while Phyllis was at the facilities doing her work, I would get a call, ‘Leticia you need to teach dental hygiene

at this home right away.’ She truly understood the relationship between oral health and systemic health.”

Not only was Jackson incredibly knowledgeable about nursing in the field of developmental disabilities and willing to share that knowledge, she was a compassionate and caring person. Julianne Merriman, whose daughter, Nancy, lived at Villa Esperanza, met Jackson shortly after her daughter was diagnosed with colon cancer and had the opportunity to work with her on several occasions. She says: “When Nancy became very sick we had some pretty terrible experiences with different physicians, and Phyllis provided a great deal of support. I really felt confident in her competence as a nurse and trusted her opinion. She knew her trade, was really professional and really cared. She was a very realistic person and helped us understand Nancy’s situation and come up with solutions. I was very sorry to hear that we’d lost her because Phyllis was one of those people in the business of helping the helpless. She was a real lady and I appreciated everything that she did for my family.”

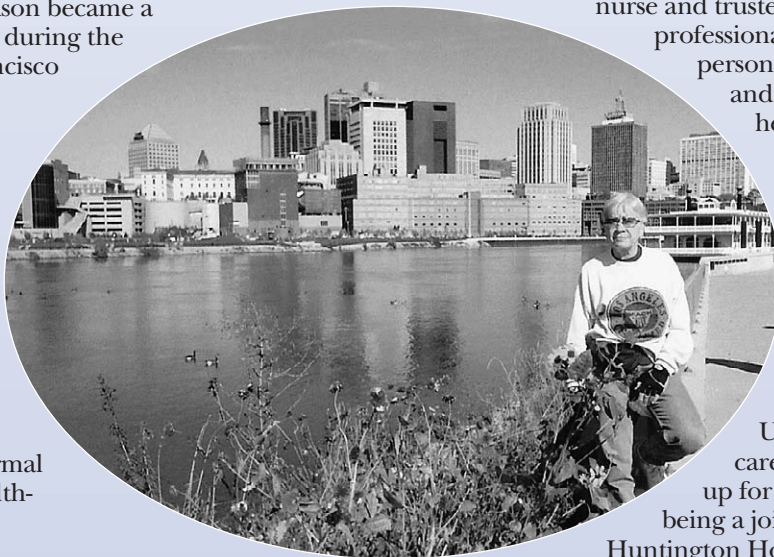
In addition to her primary responsibilities, Jackson was also a member of Lanterman’s Community Living Options Placement Committee; was instrumental in getting nurse representation from all around the United States for the development of nursing care guidelines for lay caregivers; and was always up for giving a presentation, her most recent one being a joint presentation with Jordan on bioethics at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena that focused on the end-of-life care recommendations for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Jackson was a long time member of the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association, recently serving as secretary of the organization’s national board from 2003 to 2005. From 2000 to 2003 she served as vice-president and president for the Southern California D.D.N.A. Network. Jackson was so committed to D.D.N.A. that prior to accepting a position with Lanterman she stipulated that she be allowed to attend D.D.N.A.’s annual educational conference so she could stay current on the latest diagnosis, treatment and care needs of people with developmental disabilities, and so she could share this new information with caregivers in the Lanterman community. Jackson was also a member of the American Nurses Association California.

Ann Seisa, owner of Vagthol’s Residential Care Center, Inc., herself a long-time member of D.D.N.A., shares: “The Southern California D.D.N.A. Network will never be the same without her. She was very passionate about developmental disabilities, and truly respected and had an understanding of what it takes to be an excellent nurse in this field. We all feel the loss of Phyllis and are going to miss her. Her commitment, energy, enthusiasm and leadership will be very hard to replace. She was a friend and a colleague, and I am privileged to have known Phyllis on so many levels.”

Nicknamed “Auntie Flash” by her nieces and nephews, Jackson lived life a mile a minute. A resident of Glendale, Jackson considered her dog, Topher, her second son. She was also known for the wonderful soups that she made. On almost all Fridays since 2002, Jackson has participated in the weekly Glendale Peace Vigil held at the corner of Brand Boulevard and Broadway. She walked the sidewalk at the main intersection in Downtown Glendale carrying a sign urging an end to the war in Iraq. In a Los Angeles Times article on November 10, 2003, Jackson made it clear why she participated in the weekly vigil, recalling her memories of nursing returning wounded soldiers: “And now it’s happening all over again. Somehow we don’t learn there are ways to solve things other than violence, which doesn’t solve problems, ever, ever, ever. If we can just make people stop and think and not just follow the rhetoric they hear – if I can affect one person to do that, than I think it’s a success.”

“Phyllis was the embodiment of greatness and humility, she was a teacher and a student, and these characteristics made her the ultimate person, mother, friend, nurse and colleague. I feel blessed for having the opportunity to know her and especially to have worked so closely with her,” adds Yetenekian. Jackson will be deeply missed by all who knew her – friends and family, co-workers, clients and their families, and service providers. However, as long as we all continue to carry on Jackson’s passionate drive to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and hold each other accountable to ensure they receive a high standard of health care then she will continue to live on in the work that we do.



Recruiting Participants to be Part of a Research Study Exploring Sibling Relationships in Families that have a Child with Special Needs

A doctoral student in special education at Teachers College, Columbia University, is conducting a research study on sibling relationships in families who have a child with special needs and an adult son or daughter who is not disabled.

The purpose of this study is to improve the understanding of how typically developing siblings perceive their relationship with a sibling with special needs, and also how their parents perceive those relationships.

The researcher is recruiting the following individuals:

- Caucasian parents having a child with special needs of any age and at

least one non-disabled child between 18 to 30 years of age

- Caucasian young adults between 18 and 30 who have a sibling with special needs and whose parents are still alive
- The study is focusing on both Korean and Anglo-American families.

Participants will be asked to complete several questionnaires, and in return, will receive \$10 in compensation.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Sun Young Ryu, the researcher, directly at syr4@columbia.edu or 718.672.2634.

A Perspective on *Perspectives* International

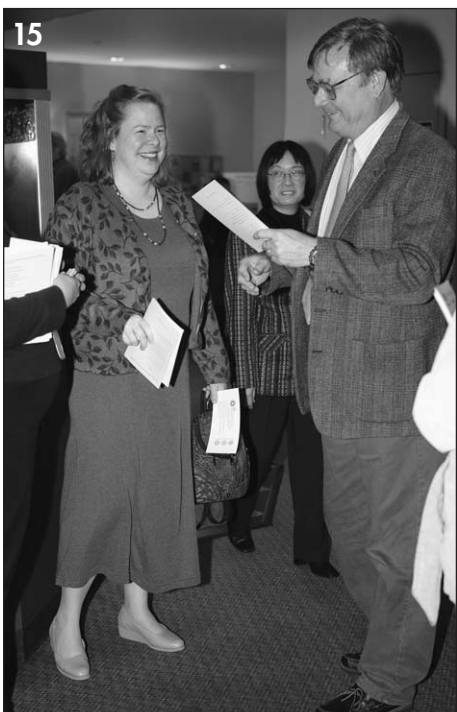
The third *Perspectives* International Film Festival and Forum took place on March 17 to 19, 2006 at the Laemmle Music Hall in Beverly Hills. The festival featured an exciting and diverse program of domestic and international features, documentaries, and short films that explored the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Most screenings were followed by lively and thought-provoking discussion between the filmmaker, a disabilities expert and the audience.

Perspectives opened with *little man*, Lanterman parent Nicole Conn's moving documentary about her micro-preemie son. Other films include the premiere of the *How's Your News? Special Election and Convention Coverage*, A Child is Waiting, John Cassavettes' last studio film with Judy Garland and Burt Lancaster; and Serbian Director Goran Paskaljevic's drama, *Midwinter Night's Dream*, featuring a young actress with autism.

This year's Forum addressed the issues surrounding humor and developmental disabilities, and we were delighted with the outcome. *The Ringer's* Eddie Barbanell, one of the lead actors; Director Barry Blaustein; Screenwriter Ricky Blitt; and Executive Producer Peter Farrelly; along with Los Angeles Times columnist Joel Stein, joined Moderator David Streit for a lively and informative discussion about comedy and disabilities. Following the panel, Filmmaker and Council of Advisors Member, Ted Braun, presented Blitt with the third *Perspectives* Media Award for his hilarious, yet always respectful, script for *The Ringer* and for his perseverance in getting the film made. The Kids of Widney High played a rousing show during the closing reception at the Friars of Beverly Hills.

Once again *Perspectives* drew people from across Los Angeles, providing insight into the lives of people with developmental disabilities and inspiring conversations that continued well beyond the theatre exit.

For more information about *Perspectives*, visit www.perspectives-iff.org.



ational Film Festival 2006



11



- 1 The Media Forum panel: Peter Farrelly, Barry Blaustein, Ricky Blitt, Eddie Barbanell and Joel Stein
- 2 Eddie Barbanell as Chief Littlefeather
- 3 The audience anticipates *little man* on opening night.
- 4 Executive Director Diane Anand with Olivia Raynor of the Tarjan Center at UCLA
- 5 Festival Director Marielle Farnan welcomes the audience.
- 6 Gail Williamson (third from left) and cast from *Return of the Muskrats* answer questions after the film.
- 7 *little man* Director Nicole Conn (center) with Kat Andrews (right) and friend
- 8 Council of Advisors member Gail Williamson (right) and friend
- 9 Ronna Kajikawa and Marty Sweeney take to the dance floor at the closing night reception.
- 10 DDS Communications Officer Paul Verke (center) and friends
- 11 Festivalgoers line up on opening night.
- 12 Macson Printing and Lithography's Ed Corcoran and his wife, Charlotte, chat with Vinita Anand.
- 13 Media Forum Moderator David Streit with Peter Farrelly
- 14 Familias First's Ruth Tello-DiLiva (left) with her husband and Filmmaker Joyce Brew



- 15 Board Member Kristin Conder and her husband, Chuck, are excited about the program.
- 16 Ted Braun presents the *Perspectives* Media Award to Ricky Blitt.
- 17 Audience members talk about issues raised following the Media Forum.
- 18 Moviegoers before the *Return of the Muskrats* screening.
- 19 Anne Dachs, Frank Lara and Gerson Rivera on opening night.
- 20 The Kids of Widney High perform at the closing night reception.
- 21 *Perspectives* Intern Christina Frenzel (left), Marielle Farnan and Scott Fears enjoy the opening reception.
- 22 Actors Bill Chott and Eddie Barbanell from *The Ringer*
- 23 Ellen Dumouchelle (left) and friends on closing night.

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A warm thank you to all of our volunteers who gave generously of their time and energies.

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Russians visit Lanterman to
Learn About California’s
Developmental Service System



In June, 10 individuals from Russia came to the United States through the USAID Community Connections Program, which is designed to promote public diplomacy through the exchange of cultural ideas and values between participants, U.S. families and local community host organizations. The International Visitors Council of Los Angeles coordinated the three-week trip for the visitors, all of whom work in various disability-related fields, and were here to look at the U.S. approach to disability issues, including developmental disabilities. Lanterman hosted the visitors for one day. Rose Chacana, assistant director of Family Support Services, and Sandy Riancho, resource and information associate, provided an overview of the developmental services system, focusing primarily on the regional centers. Visitors were treated to a screening of “We’re Here to Speak for Justice: Founding California’s Regional Centers” and each of them were given a copy of the “Guide to Lanterman Regional Center” to take back home.

Front row, seated, from left: Natalia Kozaeva, Larisa Mamitova, Khandzarifa Khabaeva, Irina Zakaeva and Sandy Riancho
Back row, standing, from left: Svetlana Romashkova (IVCLA Coordinator), Executive Director Diane Anand, Anna Sosnovski (IVCLA Interpreter), Inna Likhnenko, Alina Aidarova, Marina Abutalipova, Marat Besolov, Irina Gatieva, Rose Chacana and Rita Betrozova

Nick Klein Part II

Continued from page 1

complex's common space. Not surprisingly, it was an "American Idol" finale party. "I just needed to have a party," adds Klein.

Klein, who is now sporting a mohawk, had the opportunity to visit the "American Idol" set. He met Ryan Seacrest, Paula Abdul, and the top six finalists. "I have an autographed photo from my visit to American Idol out on display in my apartment," says Klein.

"It was a lot of fun for Nick to go shopping for furniture and decorations for his apartment. He went with a red theme for his living room and a blue theme, in honor of the Dodgers, for his bedroom. It was such a wonderful experience watching him try to figure out what he wanted in his apartment. He sat on every single couch in the store until he found the one he wanted," says Kelly. Other than a few posters, Klein is saving much of his wall space to display photographs. "I go and buy a picture frame every week," adds Klein, usually at the 99¢ Only Store.

"It's amazing the changes and experiences that can happen in a four-month period," shares Kelly. "I was worried that Nick would have a hard time adjusting to living on his own, but he's flourishing at the apartments. Every day he makes the rounds with the UCP coordinator who works at the apartments and tells me that he needs to be prepared in case they need another coordinator. I'll call him and ask him if he wants to do something and he tells me that he's busy or on his way out and that he'll have to call me back."

Klein has made friends with the other residents of the apartment building. He enjoys helping his neighbors whenever he can. "Doing something for others has really given Nick a sense of accomplishment and has boosted his self-esteem," notes Kelly. "It's the little things that an

accessible apartment has enabled Nick to do on his own that have had a huge impact, things like having a modified bathroom that enables Nick to wheel right in and brush his teeth at the sink or take a shower without fear of pulling off the towel rack. He used to have to adapt to his living environment but now it is adapted to him."

Kelly is definitely enjoying having her apartment back and being able to develop a relationship with Klein as his older sister rather than as his primary caregiver. "I like it more than when I was living with my sister, but I miss her sometimes. We try to hang out once a week when she's off work. I like living in Burbank and it's made me more independent living on my own," shares Klein. "Nick is very proud of himself and helping Nick become as independent as possible is also an accomplishment for me," adds Kelly.

Another nice thing that has come out of Klein moving into the apartments is that Kelly has been able to meet other families in similar situations. "You tend to think that your experience is unique, but then you meet other families with whom you can share support and trade ideas. Everyone has someone who loves them a lot, and it can be hard letting that person learn to care for themselves, but sharing Nick's story has helped other families see that there are other options available," says Kelly.

Kelly and Klein are both completely confident that they made the right choice. It was a difficult time for them both as they waited for the opportunity that the UCP apartments presented. "There were other opportunities that were presented to us, but



At left, from left: Nick Klein with his friend, Ray Drumheiser, at UCP's Casa de la Providencia in Burbank.

Above: Klein meets members of Good Charlotte at a local Hooters.

in retrospect, we are both glad that we waited and didn't jump at the others," shares Kelly. "I have every bit of faith that UCP cares about Nick and that waiting for the Burbank apartments was the absolute right thing to do, and that this is the absolute right place for him."

As for Klein, he is busy juggling a schedule that includes hanging out with his new friends, going out to dinner, seeing movies in Burbank, attending UCLA's Special Olympics Program, and grocery shopping down the street from his apartment. He may also be taking a trip to New York this November to participate in the 2006 ING New York City Marathon as part of the Achilles Track Club.

For more information about Achilles Track Club, visit www.achillestrackclub.org. For more about UCP of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, visit www.ucpla.com. For more information about the Special Olympics program at UCLA, visit www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/specialolympics. For more information about Performing Arts Studio West, visit www.pastudiowest.com.

To read the first story visit www.lanternman.org/news/Viewpoint/spring_2006.pdf.

UCP Celebrates Completion of Their 10th Accessible, Affordable Apartment Building, Casa de la Providencia, in Burbank

On a sunny and unusually warm day in March, United Cerebral Palsy of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties celebrated the completion of their 10th accessible, affordable apartment building with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Joining in the festivities were many of the new residents, their families, various local and state leaders in the field of developmental disabilities, and local, state and federal elected officials.

The 18-unit complex, known as Casa de la Providencia, is centrally located in Burbank and within walking distance of a variety of shopping, dining and entertainment options. Guests who had come to see the ribbon-cutting ceremony, were able to visit two of the already furnished apartments, explore the landscaped courtyard complete with fountain, and admire the entertainment capabilities of the large common area room.

Everyone was impressed with the accessibility, attractiveness and spaciousness of the apartments. Many even whispered that they wished they could live here. Built specifically for individuals with disabilities, including people who use wheelchairs, the apartments have wider doorways, automated door openers, accessible

electrical switches, lowered counters and sinks, an emergency pull cord in bedrooms and bathrooms, and a wheel-in shower with a handheld shower head. Coming from all corners of the building, however, were excited comments from the new residents about how they were going to decorate their apartments and what they were going to do once they moved in.

"This was a very big deal to the community as evidenced by the nearly 200 people that showed up today. To see the smiles on the faces of the tenants moving in and the heartfelt appreciation of their families makes the last seven years developing this project so well worth it," said Ronald S. Cohen, executive director of UCP.

It's no secret that the state of California is experiencing an affordable housing crisis and UCP's accomplishment building their fifth complex in as many years is significant. Funding for Casa de la Providencia was obtained through the combined efforts of a number of individuals and organizations. U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, along with U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein and state Assemblymember Dario Frommer wrote letters to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development officials in support of the project. HUD ultimately provided a major part of the funding. The Burbank Redevelopment Agency contributed about \$1.5 million to the project that cost a total of \$5.6 million to construct. The California Department of Housing and Community Development – Multifamily Housing Program and the Ahmanson Foundation also supported the project.

Schiff shared with guests: "UCP did a phenomenal job along with the city of Burbank in building another crown jewel. It's so hard to find affordable housing, hard for anyone in the best of circumstances to be able to



Guests were able to check out the accessible bathrooms that feature wheel-in showers, lowered sinks and tilted mirrors, along with other modifications.

afford rent, a mortgage, to buy a home, and for those with disabilities it's that much tougher." Frommer, who was also in attendance, said: "The need for projects like this is so great in our community where housing prices are high and rents are high. To see the community come together like this, UCP, the City, the State and the federal government, this is really amazing. This is going to give people the opportunity to live independently, to enjoy their lives and realize their potential, and it's a very important goal which we are celebrating today. This is a place where anyone would want to live, be happy to live."

With the paint barely dry and tenants still getting acquainted with Burbank, UCP is already moving on to their 11th affordable, accessible apartment building, which will be located about one mile away from the Burbank apartments, just inside the Glendale city limits. They are still raising funds and hope to break ground sometime in 2007. To learn more about UCP, visit www.ucpla.com.



UCP's Casa de la Providencia is a three-story complex that has 18 units, all of which are accessible.

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 April to June 2006, the following five individuals received service awards: Gina Ajayi for 10 years; and Anita Arcilla-Gutierrez, Anita Castillo, Karen Ingram and Lance Toyoshima for five years of service to Lanterman Regional Center and the community.

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



Anita Arcilla-Gutierrez

I have stayed at Lanterman for so long because I love helping my families. I also have a child with special needs and have been able to sympathize with families about what they go through. My memorable moments at Lanterman have been when families call me for advice or just to talk, even after I have transferred the case to another regional center or another service coordinator.

– Anita Castillo – 5 years, service coordinator, Los Angeles School Age Service Coordination unit



Karen Ingram

I’ve stayed at Lanterman for five years because of the difference we make in the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

– Karen Ingram – 5 years, director, Community Services unit



Gina Ajayi

I’ve stayed with Lanterman for 10 years because I love the work that I do and the population we serve. My most memorable moments here at Lanterman are the plays and themes that leadership puts on every year.

– Gina Ajayi – 10 years, executive assistant, Client and Family Services Division



Anita Castillo

Employer Spotlight

Continued from page 1

the process of writing this story, we decided to pick one Vons store in the local community to put a face on the story. We interviewed Jenn Alquitela, manager of the Vons in La Cañada, and Luana Radovich and Blake Tholmer from CITY Community Services who support three Lanterman clients that work there – Andy Spence, Angelo Brutocao and Katie Kirchner.

When Alquitela transferred to the La Cañada Vons store as a manager in November 2005, Spence, Brutocao and Kirchner were already working there. “While I was not here when Andy, Angelo or Katie were hired, I’ve had the opportunity at other Vons where I’ve worked to hire people with developmental disabilities,” she explains. “We hire competitively and all of our hiring is done from the Vons Web site where we pull off potential applications, and when we offer job interviews, we base our offer solely on what we see in the application.”



Katie Kirchner walks the sales floor at the La Cañada Vons checking to see if any customers need assistance or if any shelves need restocking.

Once a person with a developmental disability is referred to a supported employment agency, in this case CITY Community Services, the agency works with the client to determine what types of jobs they are interested in. Radovich says, “If the client is personable and enjoys working in a busy environment, we suggest that they consider working in some type of retail store, but especially at grocery markets since they offer flexible hours and part-time schedules, competitive pay, lots of natural supports, and medical and union

benefits.” CITY Community Services, which has been offering supported employment services since 1987, currently has about 20 clients working at Vons stores throughout the Greater Los Angeles area. Job developers from CITY help clients fill out and submit their applications and also go with them to the interview.

Alquitela shares: “Everyone has something special to offer. All of the individuals that I’ve worked with at Vons have had good customer interaction and have been very kind to the customers. Andy, who has been here since 1997, knows the names of all the regular customers, and they all call him Mr. Andy – it creates a great feeling of community at our store.”

Radovich says: “Some of the agencies that we work with are not as familiar with how supported employment works, but we’ve found that all of the managers we’ve worked with at Vons have been very understanding and supportive of including people with developmental disabilities. Our job coaches participate in the store training and orientation as well, so we can support our clients in providing the highest level of customer service possible.”

Spence, Brutocao and Kirchner all work as courtesy clerks and are responsible for bagging groceries and helping customers out to their cars, as well as taking care of the sales floor, which includes restocking shelves and sweeping the floor. “Andy, Katie and Angelo have a great deal of pride in the work that they do. They are loyal and long-term employees who truly enjoy their jobs as courtesy clerks,” says Alquitela. Tholmer adds, “Our clients are there to work. Their jobs mean more than just a paycheck to them.”

While employees are supportive and helpful to each other, there can be times, especially at the beginning when people get frustrated. Alquitela shares: “When an employee is new to Vons, it can sometimes take them a while longer to get to know their way around the store, and I know that at times the other employees get frustrated. No matter whom you are working with, whether they are a person with a disability or not, you have to have patience and you have to figure out the best way to work with that person. The best strategy to get to know a new employee is to work with him or her and their job coach to learn both

strengths and limitations, and how to work within that person’s abilities. Taking this direct approach can greatly reduce frustrations over the long term.”

All told, the benefits of employing people with developmental disabilities are several fold. Employers have a dedicated and dependable employee who is motivated and desires to do the job well. And companies also receive a tax credit. “Vons has been at the forefront of including people with developmental disabilities in their workforce and they should be commended for it,” shares Radovich.



Andy Spence assists with bagging a customer's groceries. Fondly referred to as Mr. Andy, he knows and is well-known by all of the regular customers.

For those of you that live in La Cañada and don’t already know “Mr. Andy,” Kirchner and Brutocao, stop by your local Vons at 635 West Foothill Boulevard and get to know them.

For more information about Vons, visit www.vons.com.

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 that is doing this, contact Vinita Anand at vinita.anand@lanterman.org or 213.383.1300, x. 753.

The Burbank/Glendale/Foothill Parent Resource Group Needs Your Input So They Can Meet Your Needs

Over three years ago, Carmen Alabat and Cheryl Francisco, service coordinators in Lanterman Regional Center's Foothill School Age unit, were looking for an additional opportunity to be able to connect with the Foothill communities that they work with as service coordinators. They volunteered to become facilitators for the Burbank/Glendale/Foothill Parent Resource Group. "We felt that this was a way that we could help parents who are new to the Regional Center, as well as those who have been with Lanterman and the school-age unit for a longer period of time, learn not only what resources are available once their child turns 3, but also what happens further down the line as their child grows up and becomes a teenager and young adult," says Francisco.

During the first couple of years that Alabat and Francisco facilitated the group, there was a core of experienced parents that would attend most of the monthly meetings that offer support, resources and information to parents of children birth to 15. Within the past year, however, many of these families have experienced schedule changes, moved to an adult service coordination unit at Lanterman, or even to other regional centers.

"We've noticed a change in the way our meeting is being utilized by Lanterman families in the

Foothill communities. We now see families that come once or twice, but not consistently," shares Alabat. "If we can be there for that one family, even just once, and that family is able to walk away more encouraged, then we've made a difference, but we also want to make sure that we are interesting and accessible to as many people as possible."

The two facilitators have been experimenting with different strategies. Alabat and Francisco recently began bringing in the occasional guest speaker, such as Dr. Leslie Richard who addressed issues relating to puberty and other teenage issues in children with special needs. They also hosted a successful presentation that helped parents see what their child's adult life could look like when the proper planning and supports were in place.

The group also hosted a special session to give parents of school-age children an opportunity to provide feedback during the development of "Your Child's School Years," the latest insert for the "Guide to Lanterman Regional Center."

Alabat and Francisco are open to new ideas in the way the Glendale/Burbank/Foothill Resource Group is offering support, resources and information, and would like the input of the communities the group serves. "We want to hear your voices so we know what topics are of interest to you, what we can do as one of the only Lanterman parent groups in the Foothill area to help you, as parents, become stronger advocates for your children," notes Francisco.

The group currently meets the first Wednesday of every other month from 10 a.m. to noon at Burbank First United Methodist Church located at 700 North Glenoaks Boulevard in Burbank. To sign up for the group's online mailing list to receive information about special presentations and to share your input about topics of interest, send an e-mail to cheryl.francisco@lanterman.org and carmen.alabat@lanterman.org. "We have enjoyed facilitating the group and being an additional avenue that parents can tap into for support, resources and information, and we look forward to hearing your input and suggestions," says Alabat.



From left: Service Coordinators Carmen Alabat and Cheryl Francisco work in Lanterman's Foothill School Age unit and are also support group facilitators for the Burbank/Glendale/Foothill Parent Resource Group that meets on the first Wednesday of every other month.

Mark Your Calendars to Attend the Burbank/Glendale/Foothill Parent Resource Group Meetings

First Wednesday of every other month from 10 a.m. to noon

Here's the group's upcoming meeting schedule:

SEPTEMBER 6, 2006

Leticia Reyes, dental coordinator at Lanterman, will be presenting about dental health and resources, and will be answering any of your dental-related questions.

NOVEMBER 8, 2006

Topic to be determined.

FEBRUARY 7, 2007

Resources and Chocolate: Come learn about resources during the group's first meeting of the new year, and to indulge in chocolate treats.



From left: Howard McBroom, Service Coordinator Marie McGinley, Lanterman Clinical Psychologist Jean Johnson and Cynthia Dresser speak at a special presentation offered by the Resource Group called "What will my adult life look like?"

KEEN LA's First Spring Festival a Fun-filled Success

On a mild spring afternoon, the Easter bunny, a bright yellow chicken, a group of volunteers, and children with special needs and their families converged on the Adaptive Recreation Center in Elysian Park for the first Spring Festival hosted by Kids Enjoy Exercise Now Los Angeles.



One of the activities offered at KEEN LA's first Spring Festival was a bubble maker.

Held on Sunday, March 5, 2006, the Spring Festival was a free event staffed by 65 volunteers from KEEN LA, including attorneys and staff from the law firm of Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal LLP, their families and friends, and students from the University of Southern California; and from the Rotary Club of Los Angeles, known as LA5. "It was two LA5 Rotarians that dressed up as the bunny and chicken. They definitely took 'Service Above Self,' the Rotary Club motto, to a new level," notes Marjorie Heller, executive director of KEEN LA.

Volunteers did everything from constructing the balloon arch over the KEEN banner hanging outside the Recreation Center to creating and staffing a "Games Zone," setting up, and manning the food and beverage stations. "The volunteers at the 'Gone Fishing' booth had to jealously guard the goldfish from the sushi lovers," says Heller.

In addition to the activities above, the Spring Festival featured face painting, a balloon show courtesy of Mr. Balloon, an Easter egg hunt, and a performance from a group of young hula dancers. Heller adds, "Our volunteer face painters created

such works of art that some of the children refused to wash their faces at the end of day."

Everyone indulged in the carnival-like food which included pizza, hot dogs and lots of delectable sweets.

All of the hard work and efforts of the volunteers paid off, and the 170 plus festivalgoers had a fun-filled spring afternoon. "Thank you with all of my heart to all of the KEEN volunteers," said one of the parents who was moved to tears by the efforts. "I'm sure she echoed the feelings of all the parents who attended, and as for the KEEN athletes and prospective athletes, the laughs and fun they had will be memories they will treasure for a long time," shares Heller. "Thank you again to all of the volunteers who brought much joy to the children with special challenges and their families at KEEN LA's first Spring Festival."

ABOUT KEEN LA

KEEN LA meets twice per month, usually on the first and third Sunday of the month from 11 a.m. to noon. KEEN LA is recruiting additional



Above, at left: An LA5 Rotarian delighted children as a bright yellow chicken.



Above, at right: Volunteers painted the children's faces while Mr. Balloon fashioned balloon creations that were carried around and worn as headdresses.



The Festival was a celebration of all that is spring and a fun time was had by all. KEEN LA is recruiting athletes, especially children with special needs that require one-on-one coaching for their successful participation in various athletic activities.

athletes, especially children whose special needs require one-on-one coaching for their successful participation in various athletic activities.

KEEN is an international, non-profit tax-exempt organization started in the United States in 1992 that is dedicated to providing specialized athletic programs in an open, unstructured environment for school-aged children and young adults with significant developmental disabilities. In many cases, the KEEN program frequently constitutes the only recreational and social activity for some athletes who are unable to participate in other programs. KEEN LA, now in its second year, complements programs in the Washington, D.C., Chicago, Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri metropolitan communities, as well as programs in England.

For more information about KEEN LA and to get a copy of the application for the KEEN LA program, call **213.892.2935** or e-mail info@keenlosangeles.org. Information about KEEN LA is also available at www.keenlosangeles.org. Information about KEEN USA is available at www.keenusa.org.

Functional Literacy

Continued from page 1

experience working with computers, to be the class instructor; however, Darakjian remained very involved in the weekly classes. Rosalin Matthewsian, an assistive technology specialist, was also present during most class sessions to assist the students with their computer needs, and Cynthia Cottier of Augmentative Communication Therapy also consulted for the pilot. Local volunteers, mainly from Pasadena City College, provided in-class assistance supporting the students as needed.

A number of potential student candidates were given an assessment test to determine their current literacy skills, and of these candidates, 13 initial students were selected to join the class. Three of the initial students dropped out along the way for a variety of reasons, but one of the students started bringing a friend along, so all told, 11 students graduated from the functional literacy class. "We wanted to make sure for the pilot that all of the students selected to participate were at a similar level, and at least knew the alphabet," explains Darakjian. On the first day, students were given a pre-test to establish a baseline from which progress could be measured during the next five months.

The class was broken down into three key curriculum sections: reading for information/living skills, reading for a job and reading for pleasure. The curriculum was goal driven and lessons were taught using audio tapes, visual props, interactive class activities and computer software. In addition to in-class instruction, students also had homework assignments.

Topics covered in the reading for information/living skills section included learning sight words, such as men, women, restrooms and exit; and learning how to read the newspaper, TV Guide, a driver's manual,

I like the class. I learned a lot about banking skills and community skills. The volunteers are very helpful to me. I met nice people in the class. I learned a lot about computers from Tom Peters. I learned how to fill out applications. I made a lot of friends at the computer class.

—James Knowles

I enjoyed and loved this class very much because it helps me to be more independent by exploring the Internet sites safer. I learned how to look up interesting fun art crafts shows, stores, and to look for new jobs that are more interesting to me on the computers. I learned about Area of Interest Skills that interest me. And, I also have more driving safety skills in driving education. We also learned more about money in shopping skills, we learned how to be appropriate during our doctor appointments. We learned about restaurant manners skills in Restaurant skills. I met a lot of new friends to hang out with and talk on the phone with. And, I hope this class continues next year because I got a lot out of it and I learned a lot out of it.

—Jihan Rabadi



Participants in the pilot, functional literacy skills class held at the La Pintesca Branch of the Pasadena Public Library improved their skills by almost 40 percent in the three key curriculum sections: reading for information/living skills, reading for a job and reading for pleasure.

manuals for appliances, medicine labels, classified ads, bus schedules, monthly bill and bank statements, and various commonly used forms, including library cards and postal mailing slips. During this section students also learned about grocery shopping and cooking, how to write a check, count money, make a budget, plan a trip, shop from a catalog, and create a personal calendar.

"For the first eight sessions, students had to clip newspaper articles of interest, write a grocery list and one recipe, clip a classified ad for a job that interested them, fill out an application for a checking account, write down a monthly budget, bring in a catalog of interest with a completed order form, apply for a library card, and create a personal calendar," says Darakjian.

The second section of the class, reading for a job, focused on making job-related choices, developing a résumé, filling out a job application, and writing a cover letter. Students were also taught some work-related skills, including following directions, how to take inventory, alphabetizing, sorting mail, filing,

taking messages, making copies and collating, and data entry. Homework assignments included writing their own résumé, filling out a job application, alphabetizing a list of something of interest, creating a filing system for their articles of interest, making copies of prior homework assignments, and following directions on a handout that was distributed.

No class would be complete without students having to do a report, and sure enough, in the third section, reading for pleasure, a book report was assigned as homework. In addition to reading a book, students also learned how to read a table of contents, indexes, newspapers, magazines, comic books, letters, cards and brochures; and how to surf the Internet.

As one of the final in-class projects, each of the students wrote a thank you letter to one of the library employees, including the librarians, the security guards and even the cleaning crew, for creating a welcoming and supportive environment. As part of another assignment, students were asked to write down their thoughts about the class and what they learned during class.

We made friends and we were being respected. We learned math problems. I will be a Mission Possible.

—Carson Wilk

At the very end of the class, students were given a post-test to see how their literacy skills had developed, and the average increase from pre-test to post-test was 39.4 percent. "The functional literacy class was a pilot and on the first day, we just didn't know how it was going to turn out, but within the first several sessions the class took on a life of its own, and it became clear that the class was going to be successful," notes Darakjian. He is hoping to be able to offer the functional literacy class once per year in the spring, over a 16-week period rather than 20 weeks.

Digital Histories Help Lanterman Clients Preserve Their Memories

One of the goals of a \$35,000 grant, awarded to Lanterman by the California Consumer Protection Foundation earlier this year, was to identify a network of community organizations that provide services related to assistive technology or computer skill development. Lanterman contracted with Computer Access Center to help us develop relationships with community technology centers, or CTCs. About this same time, the CTCs also received a grant from the California Consumer Protection Foundation, which had the goal of including individuals with developmental disabilities at their sites to complete a two-month, computer-based, autobiographical, digital storytelling project.

Graduates from the adult computer classes offered through Lanterman were recommended for inclusion in this special project, which offered an opportunity for people to gain digital media skills and to learn and use technology tools for creative self-expression and the preservation of personal, family and community history. Armen Frundzhyan and Robert Anderson attended the



Betsy Turcios and Rigoberto Gaona (right) with his ILS worker at Project T.E.C.H.'s screening of Gaona's digital story.

Little Tokyo Service Center's Discovery Center, David Jain and Ervand Kestenian enrolled in the Bresee Foundation, and Rigoberto Gaona joined Project T.E.C.H.

Christine Mayola, community inclusion specialist, shares, "Participants learned to use a video camera and computer to capture and record their own digital stories. They also learned how to edit footage, incorporate audio tracks and package their personal digital history to share with viewing audiences."

At the end of the two-month project, Project T.E.C.H. and the Discovery Center hosted screenings of the digital stories created during the classes. Frundzhyan's film, "This is My Life," and Anderson's "My Uncle's Legacy: A Journey Through Time" were screened during "Digital Histories 2006" on Tuesday, May 9, at the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy. The program, which featured short videos from the nine participants in the digital storytelling class, was included as part of VC FilmFest 2006, the 22nd Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival. Project T.E.C.H. hosted a special screening party, "Preserving Your Memories – Four Stories of Person, Family and Community," on May 19 at the Tom Bradley Youth and Family Center in Los Angeles for the four participants in their class, which included the digital story of Rigoberto Gaona.

Jerold Kress, Bresee Foundation's multimedia coordinator and digital storytelling instructor,

shares what he learned from the project: "I learned that both David and Ervand were unique people with interesting life stories. I learned that people with developmental disabilities have fulfilling lives and experience the same joys and frustrations that affect all of us. However, working with them was a challenge, especially getting them to tell their stories in a personal, creative way. I do not feel I have yet figured out the best technique to help them be creative using digital media. Also, they told me stories before and after our work sessions that were a lot more interesting and deep than what came out in their videos. I would like to help people with developmental disabilities tap into these more personal stories in their videos because I think the final project would be more interesting and involving."

Karen Wade from Project T.E.C.H. added: "We value the opportunity and experience gained from participating in this project. We gained a friend in Rigo, one of the most positive, friendly and inspirational individuals we've ever met, and we saw firsthand the determination and commitment of people with developmental disabilities to achieving goals and overcoming obstacles. This served as another step forward in our organization's efforts to be more inclusive, and to be able to model inclusion for other community groups. Our experiences working with Lanterman have always been great."



From left: Jerold Kress of the Bresee Foundation presents Ervand Kestenian with a certificate of completion at the end of the two-month project.



From left: Steve Wong of the Discovery Center, Armen Frundzhyan, Robert Anderson, and Jeff Liu, also of the Discovery Center, at "Digital Histories 2006."

CAC NEWS

Service Coordinator Marie McGinley to Serve as Assistant Staff Advisor for CAC

Several months ago, Service Coordinator Marie McGinley was asked to serve as an assistant staff advisor for the Consumer Advisory Committee. "I asked Marie to serve in this capacity since she has had a lot of experience working with adult clients both as a direct service provider and as a service coordinator in our Glendale Service Coordination unit," says MJ Kienast, assistant director and CAC staff advisor. McGinley will attend many of the CAC meetings, and in the event that Kienast is unable to attend, McGinley will be able to step into the advisory role. "Viewpoint" met with McGinley to find out why she accepted the position and what experience she brings to her new role as an advisor to the CAC.



Service Coordinator and CAC Assistant Staff Advisor Marie McGinley

A graduate of California State University, Northridge, McGinley first started working in social work in 1990 at a residential facility that worked with gang members. After a couple of years, she decided to change over to the field of developmental disabilities. "Although the work may be more challenging, it is far more satisfying to me," says McGinley. Her first job was with Work Training Programs, Inc., where she worked with adults with developmental disabilities to transition them to independent living. Although McGinley's focus was on independent living skills, she has a strong background in supported employment, including work as a job coach and as assistant manager at Lincoln Training Center, which offers a supported employment program.

After almost 13 years working as a direct service provider, McGinley joined Lanterman as a service coordinator three and one-half years ago. Currently, 23 clients on her caseload are living independently in the communities of Burbank, La Crescenta, Pasadena and Glendale. One requirement of service coordinators is that they visit their clients who are living independently more frequently than clients who are living with their families. "Once a client is living independently, the Regional Center's goal is to help them sustain their independence. It requires great attention to detail to ensure that all of the services that are put into place to help support the client are working together effectively," explains McGinley. "Additionally, I

assist my clients in asking questions and discussing their concerns with their direct service providers."

McGinley feels that the biggest challenge of her job can be working with a client and their family to get them to try out a new service or accept a new idea that could be beneficial. And while it may be challenging, the most rewarding part of her job is "putting it all together and watching them [her clients] bloom."

Earlier this year, McGinley, along with two of the adult clients on her caseload, presented at the Glendale/Burbank/Foothill

Parent Resource Group meeting to a group of parents whose children will be transitioning to adulthood about what expectations and challenges they can look forward to. "I really enjoy being able to share my experiences from before and from Lanterman with parents, and to show them shining examples of what can also happen for their children when the right services are put into place and when their children have really strong support," adds McGinley.

McGinley's firsthand experience working directly with adult clients and her interest in the issues Lanterman's adult clients face regarding advocacy, clients' rights, independent living and transportation, among others, makes her a great match for her role as assistant staff advisor to the CAC. "I'm very much looking forward to listening to the concerns of our clients and being part of the process of the CAC," shares McGinley.

McGinley's first major project with the CAC will be conducting a survey, similar to the one the CAC did regarding independent living skills workers, with adult clients who use Access Services. "We are hoping to use the survey to help clients figure out the best way to let Access Services know their grievances," adds McGinley.

McGinley shares her philosophy towards life: "Keep your sense of humor about yourself and take your work seriously...not the other way around. And try to remember that creative thinking is critical." In her free time, McGinley enjoys drawing and painting, going to the movies – her favorite movies are comedies, but she also enjoys the classics and suspense-filled movies – and she likes heading down to Venice Beach.



Which is it? – Consumer or Client

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

Contact the Consumer Advisory Committee at Lanterman

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

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

or call CAC Staff Advisor MJ Kienast at **213.383.1300, x. 606** or e-mail 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. The CAC meets on the second Monday of the month at 4:30 p.m. at Lanterman.

DDS LAUNCHES "CONSUMER CORNER"

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

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

Visit the "Consumer Corner" section of the DDS Web site at www.dds.ca.gov/Consumer/Consumer_Home.cfm.

Wanted and Needed: Life Experiences of Adults with Developmental Disabilities for a New Book

Kathie Snow, author of "Disability is Natural: Revolutionary Common Sense for Raising Successful Children with Disabilities," is writing a new book about the life experiences of adults with developmental disabilities. Snow is issuing a Request for Stories from adults with developmental disabilities who would like to share their experiences for the possible inclusion in her new book. She shares on her Web site, www.disabilityisnatural.com: "The wisdom and life experiences of adults with developmental disabilities have helped me become a better parent to my son who has a developmental disability. I want to continue learning, and I also want to share this wisdom with parents, teachers, service providers and others!"

If you're an adult with a developmental disability, age 18 and above, please share your life experiences. Your story can help educate parents, teachers, service providers, health care providers, and others, including people with disabilities, about what's really important for today's adults with developmental disabilities.

Stories can be about both the "good" and the "bad" experiences, since just as much can be learned from negative experiences as from positive ones. Snow would like to include real-life experiences that focus on any or all of the following topics:

- Experiences with your family
- How you felt about growing up with a disability
- Experiences with therapies, interventions and medical care
- Experiences in school
- Experiences in the community
- Experiences as a young adult
- Relationship experiences
- Experiences with assistive technology, supports, modifications and/or accommodations

Stories do not need to address all of the topics mentioned above, they are just topics that adults with disabilities may have had experience with. Stories can focus on any of the topics above, and also on experiences that are not described above.

Over the years, many books about parenting children with disabilities have been published. Most are written by professionals, and a few have been written by parents, but a book that includes the real-life childhood experiences of adults with developmental disabilities in their own voices will be a very valuable addition. Snow hopes to hear from adults with any and all types of developmental disabilities.

Download Snow's Request for Stories at www.disabilityisnatural.com. The request is available in PDF format and rich text format for screen readers.

WANTED

LIFE EXPERIENCES
OF ADULTS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

GO TO

www.disabilityisnatural.com
for more information

Meet the People Behind the Titles: Steve Garcia

As manager of the Client Revenue Management unit at Lanterman Regional Center, Steve Garcia is an integral member of our leadership team. We feel it's important for everyone in our community to have a better idea of the person behind the title and his responsibilities, so "Viewpoint" recently met with Garcia and asked about projects in the works, as well as the biggest challenges and most rewarding aspects of his job.

A graduate of the Keller Graduate School of Management with a master's in business administration, Steve Garcia found his way to Lanterman in August 2002 as the Center's manager of Client Revenue Management. Although he was new to the field of developmental disabilities, Garcia brought with him 10 years of experience working in private manufacturing where he worked his way up from an entry level position to become a manager.

"I believe that my experience of moving up through the corporate world has helped me see how each piece of the puzzle fits together, and I feel that broader understanding has benefited me in my current position at Lanterman," explains Garcia. "In looking back, I'm happy that I made the shift from a profit-driven environment to non-profit."

Garcia, whose team consists of himself and two client revenue coordinators, is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the unit, which include applying for state and federal government benefits for clients of Lanterman Regional Center, maintenance of benefits for the approximately 1,200 clients for whom the Center acts as representative payee, and coordinating the transfer of benefits when clients move so as to prevent an interruption in service. "We divide the responsibility for the maintenance of client's benefits alphabetically," adds Garcia, "making each of us responsible for about 400 clients." As a manager, Garcia is also part of Lanterman's



Client Revenue Management Manager Steve Garcia

learning the intricacies of the various public benefits systems from scratch, and translating bureaucratic jargon into regular every day English. Now that he has a firm grasp on the myriad of benefits available, he feels that the biggest challenges for himself and his team are making sure that the large amount of paperwork that passes through their unit gets processed on time, so that new clients begin receiving benefits as soon as possible and that existing clients don't lose their benefits. "Everyone expected that advances in information technology would make our work lives easier and eliminate paper, however, the paper is still around, and the expectation exists that we can now push paper faster," shares Garcia.

Given the complexities of the public benefit systems, it's no surprise that clients and families have difficulties with these systems. In most instances, service coordinators are able to help their families resolve any problems that arise, however, in those situations where service coordinators cannot, Garcia gladly assists. Garcia

Leadership team, which is responsible for steering the Center towards achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Center's five-year performance plan.

Initially, the biggest challenges for Garcia were

says, "One of the most rewarding aspects of my job is being able to assist a service coordinator who calls me on behalf of their client or family and needs help straightening out a situation that may have arisen with one of the public benefit systems."

Since coming to Lanterman, Garcia has diligently worked to make the Client Revenue Management unit more open and responsive – bridging the gap between service coordination and the unit.

Looking towards the future, Garcia doesn't see too much change in the direction of his unit, as long as the public benefit systems don't change. "I think the biggest change coming our way will be the ability to apply for benefits online. Initial attempts have been clunky so I'm not holding my breath," adds Garcia. A challenge that Garcia and his team have is that other public benefit agencies don't necessarily know what Lanterman does and why the payees themselves may not be calling, which is further complicated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, better known as HIPAA.

Garcia adds a business twist to the saying, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." He shares, "We all have customers, either internal or external, and if you provide good customer service, then one day, when you become a customer you will get treated well in return."

Garcia's favorite memories of his time at Lanterman center around the annual staff appreciation event held in December. "I enjoy seeing how much the staff appreciate the event, as well as how much the managers enjoy preparing and coordinating the annual event," he adds.

A native of New Mexico, Garcia now lives in Whittier with his wife, Sherri, and his 3-year-old daughter, Lily. He enjoys photography and spending as much time as he can with his family.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Lanterman Helps Its Youngest Clients Achieve Healthy Smiles by Getting an Early Start on Dental Health

Have you ever seen the following saying posted on your dentist's office wall while you are sitting there in "the chair" with shiny metal dental instruments all around you? – "You only need to brush the teeth that you want to keep."

The need for proper dental care is as true for all infants and young children as it is for adults. Even though young children lose their baby teeth, good oral hygiene habits that are instilled at a young age will carry over into teenage and adult years.

According to the First 5 Oral Health Web site, www.first5oralhealth.org, tooth decay is the single most prevalent disease of childhood. In California, it is estimated that one-third of preschool children have untreated tooth decay, and in children with severe tooth decay, it can cost anywhere between \$2,000 to \$5,000 to treat the child, and many of these children must be hospitalized for dental treatment. Left untreated, tooth decay can cause pain and infection that can lead to problems with nutrition, growth, school readiness and speech. Healthy baby teeth are crucial for nutrition, speech development, jaw development and self-esteem.

Recognizing the vital role that education plays in infant and toddler oral health, especially for children with special needs, the Pacific Center for Special Care at the University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry launched an Early Start Oral Health Demonstration Project

with the goal to prevent and minimize oral health problems through early assessment and intervention. The demonstration project was implemented in several regional centers with a handful of service coordinators from each of the participating Early Intervention units.

Approximately eight service coordinators from Lanterman received initial training from both the University of the Pacific and Lanterman's Dental Coordinator Leticia Reyes in order to participate in the pilot. Reyes also provided ongoing training to the participating service coordinators.

Service coordinators employed a simple oral health risk assessment form coupled with a specially designed brochure that was color

coded to correspond with the questions on the assessment form. As with any dental-related visit, the young clients and their siblings received a toothbrush. Reyes says: "Using this form out in the field enabled service coordinators to effectively educate families about early oral health and address some of their concerns. It also was used to determine whether the infant or toddler was at high-risk for oral health problems, and if the family required additional

support or intervention from the dental coordinator."

The risk assessment asks questions related to a number of areas that impact oral health, such as: "What do you use to clean your child's teeth and gums? Do you have a dentist for your child? Would you like assistance locating a dentist? Does your child use a bottle or sipper cup while sleeping at night or at naptime?"



From left: Service Coordinator Monica Mauriz entertains a young child while Leticia Reyes, dental coordinator, examines her as her mother looks on. The goal of the Early Start Oral Health Demonstration Project was to prevent and minimize oral health problems through early assessment and intervention.

In addition to educating the parents based on their existing knowledge of dental care, service coordinators also provided families with the option to include an oral health goal in their Individualized Family Service Plan, to be referred to the dental coordinator, and to have referrals made to a variety of health care services that impact oral health, including nutrition, transportation and behavioral services.

Service Coordinator Ameenah Francois shares: "For many of the families we serve, they are dealing with so many other areas of their child's development, from life-threatening conditions to significant behavioral challenges, that their focus is not on oral health. By providing a basic assessment and being able to offer information, as well as possibly making oral health a goal in the IFSP and referring families to a dentist who has experience working with children with special needs, we are able to give parents a hand with something they know is important, but may not be able to address on their own."

The Early Start Oral Health Demonstration Project was so well received by families and service coordinators that the remaining Early Intervention service coordinators at Lanterman will be receiving training in how to employ the oral health risk assessment with their families. For more information about "Getting an Early Start on Dental Health," contact Leticia Reyes at leticia.reyes@lanterman.org or 213.383.1300, x. 745.



From left: Early Intervention Service Coordinators Ameenah Francois and Monica Mauriz with Dental Coordinator Leticia Reyes and Donald Cuevas, also an Early Intervention service coordinator, at a dental health presentation for parents of young children with special needs in the Foothill area.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Soonthree Keaotamai,
Client Revenue Coordinator

In her 27 years at Lanterman, Soonthree Keaotamai has seen it all. She’s been through the worst of fiscal times and the not-so-bad of fiscal times. She’s seen the public benefits systems change over the years and she’s been a constant at the Center as many of her co-workers have come and gone.



Client Revenue Coordinator
Soonthree Keaotamai

Keaotamai, who grew up in Bangkok, Thailand, came to the United States in 1972 after finishing her bachelor’s degree. She shares: “My goal in coming was to continue my education and obtain a master’s degree from Emporia State University in Kansas and then return to Thailand to teach. Plan A fell through when I decided to stay in the States. I found a job as an assistant bookkeeper, and two years later, when my supervisor retired I took over.”

Shortly thereafter, Keaotamai met her husband and returned to Thailand to get married. Upon returning to the United States, Keaotamai joined Lanterman in October 1979 as a fiscal assistant in Accounting. She worked in Accounting for one year, and when the Center created the client revenue coordinator position, she applied for the position and has worked in it ever since. “I believe that my background as a bookkeeper has benefited me in my job, but I also credit my mentor and former supervisor, Charlotte Suzukamo, who is now Lanterman’s fiscal monitor, with teaching me much of what I have learned about revenue management,” she says.

As a client revenue coordinator, Keaotamai works with clients and their families whose last name falls within P to Z on the alphabet. She explains, “I am responsible for identifying the public benefits that our clients are entitled to receive, for getting them approved and activated, and for maintaining eligibility for those benefits for which Lanterman acts as representative payee.”

Staying on top of things and keeping everything current is what motivates Keaotamai. “When you’re working on the annual re-determinations, it’s rewarding to know that you have completed all the required paperwork and submitted it before the due date,” she shares. “It’s important to be able to prioritize when you receive a call from a client, parent or service provider, and to know which situations require you to act upon them first.”

Keaotamai has worked diligently to get everyone, including lawful permanent residents, also known as green card holders, made eligible for some type of benefit assistance, however, she’s concerned about the new law mandating United States citizenship as an eligibility requirement for public benefits, and the impact that it will have on individuals with disabilities who are not citizens.

“Every time I hear that a client I work with gets a job, starts living independently, learns how to use public transportation, or how to prepare their own meal, that is a memorable moment,” shares Keaotamai. One of her favorite memories of her time at Lanterman is when she attended an employment workshop held for clients several years ago, and had the opportunity to meet some of the families in person who she had only worked with over the phone.

Keaotamai has two grown children, a son who graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and a daughter who graduated from University of California, Irvine. Both are currently working, but plan to follow in their mother’s footsteps and pursue their master’s degrees. Keaotamai exercises almost every day, which she attributes to keeping her healthy. She also belongs to a meditation group that meets twice per week, and practices on her own every evening for 20 to 30 minutes before going to bed. She adds, “I believe that meditation keeps up our memory and brain function, and that helps me concentrate so that I am able to continue doing well.”

What is Client Revenue Management?

Many clients and their families, whether they know it or not, have benefited from the work of the three-person Client Revenue Management unit at Lanterman Regional Center.

Once a child or adult with a developmental disability becomes a client of Lanterman, the Client Revenue Management unit will then apply, if necessary, on behalf of the client or family for the various benefits offered by the government for individuals with disabilities, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medi-Cal, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or Medicare.

“Many people with developmental disabilities qualify for some type of benefit,” explains Steve Garcia, manager of the Client Revenue Management unit. “There is a standard set of applications that we fill out and people often get accepted into one or more of the programs.”

For about 1,200 Lanterman clients, many of whom reside in community care homes or independently, Lanterman becomes the representative payee for these benefits.

The payee is the person or organization who is responsible for managing the beneficiary’s benefits, making sure benefits are used for their personal care and well-being, reporting wages, and completing annual re-determinations.

If a client lives at a community residential facility, the SSI check will be supplemented by the Regional Center’s purchase of service funds to pay for the client’s residence. A portion of the SSI check will be sent to the client’s residence as the client’s personal and incidental money that the residential facility manages. Personal and incidental money is spending money that can be used by the client for clothing, entertainment, recreation and other things he or she may desire.

For those clients who live independently, Lanterman will work with the client and independent living skills workers to help budget the client’s monthly expenses.

In addition to applying for benefits for new clients to Lanterman and maintaining existing benefits for 1,200 clients, the Client Revenue Management team helps coordinate activities if a client transfers to a different regional center to prevent any interruption to the benefits. The team also helps Lanterman’s service coordinators troubleshoot the complex benefits systems that exist when families experience complications that the service coordinators themselves cannot resolve.

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Edwin Stewart, Client Revenue Coordinator

Just under 13 years ago, Edwin Stewart joined Lanterman. A former employee of Cal Fed, which is now Citibank, Stewart worked in Lanterman’s Accounting unit for eight years before transferring to the Client Revenue Management unit in 2001 to be a client revenue coordinator. He says, “Coming to Lanterman was a wonderful opportunity for me, and 13 years later, I can definitely say that I made the right decision.”

Getting the various public benefits activated for Lanterman’s clients is rewarding work for Stewart. “I enjoy assisting clients in getting their public benefits activated and making sure we’ve done the best possible job to ensure that our clients don’t experience any holdbacks in receiving the assistance they need,” he shares.

Stewart’s every day responsibilities include applying on behalf of the client or family for the various benefits offered by the government for individuals with disabilities, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medi-Cal, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Medicare, among other benefits the client may be eligible for. He is also responsible for maintaining the existing benefits for close to 400 clients and for coordinating the transfer of benefits between regional centers.

“I enjoy assisting clients in getting their public benefits activated and making sure we’ve done the best possible job to ensure that our clients don’t experience any holdbacks in receiving the assistance they need.”

– Edwin Stewart

“One of the biggest challenges of this job is working with the public benefit agencies. They are just bombarded with work and understaffed, which can make it a challenge when you have to troubleshoot an issue that may arise with one of our client’s accounts,” Stewart explains. He finds that attending the various trainings offered directly by staff from the different agencies helps improve the long-term working relationship.

If he could change one thing about his job, Stewart would greatly reduce the amount of paper and filing required. He jokes, “I can’t even imagine how many trees we go through in a week.”

Stewart’s most memorable moments of his time at Lanterman center around the annual staff appreciation party. “They have all been an experience, and the Halloween parties, when we used to have them were a hoot too,” he adds. His favorite memory is of celebrating his 10 year anniversary with Lanterman.

“The time I’ve spent at Lanterman has been great,” says Stewart. If it was possible, he would like to experience what it’s like to work in each of the other units at Lanterman so he can gain a more complete picture of how the Center works to meet the needs of the people with developmental disabilities that we serve.

Stewart grew up in Texas, and studied at both Texas Southern University and the University of Houston, but has been in California for 20 years. In his free time, Stewart, who currently lives in Palmdale, enjoys spending time with his family and reading. He is an avid fan of basketball, football, baseball and soccer, and enjoys participating as much as he does watching the games.



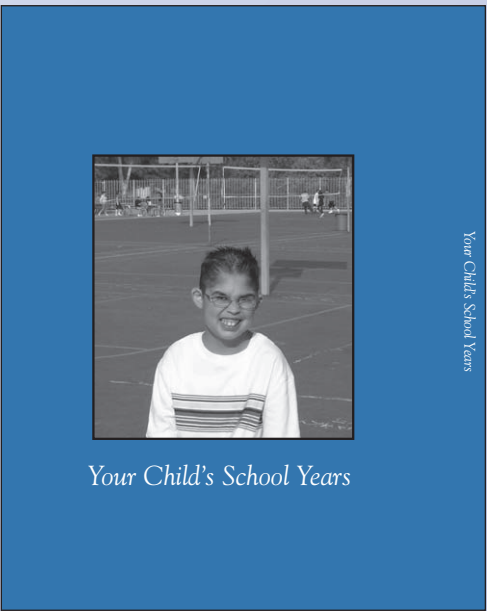
Client Revenue Coordinator
Edwin Stewart

Insert for School-Age Years Now Available for “Guide to Lanterman Regional Center”

In the works for over a year, the latest insert for the “Guide to Lanterman Regional Center” focuses on the all important school-age years, completing a critical gap in the information the Guide provides by complementing the “Early Intervention,” “Transition to Adulthood” and “Community Living Options” inserts.

“Your Child’s School Years” focuses on the very important transition that occurs when a child turns 3. It is at this time that responsibility for service coordination shifts from Lanterman Regional Center’s Early Intervention unit to a unit specializing in school-age children. This time is also a child’s entry into a new era of growth and discovery during which he or she will gain new skills and knowledge that will help the child take his or her place socially, emotionally and vocationally in the adult world.

This section of the “Guide to Lanterman Regional Center” was written especially for parents who have a school-age child, age 3 to 14. It begins with a brief review of the changes that occur when a child turns 3. A large part of the section is then devoted to a discussion of special education and how your child and family can make the most of the school years. The section also discusses the educational program that guides your child’s education, the Individualized Education Program, or IEP, including how it is developed, implemented and modified. It also addresses the rights and responsibilities that you have with regard to your child’s education, and what happens if you don’t sign the IEP, including how to prepare for a hearing.



Finally, this section presents some of the steps that you can take during your child’s school years to better prepare him or her to take on the responsibilities of adulthood, and to better prepare yourself to be an effective advocate for your child.

To get your copy of the latest insert to the Guide, “Your Child’s School Years,” contact your service coordinator or pick one up from the Koch ♦ Young Resource Center. If you are a new family joining Lanterman, the new school-age insert will be included in the Guide distributed to all new families as part of their welcome kit.

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

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



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

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



FRANK D. LANTERMAN
REGIONAL CENTER

3303 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Phone: 213.383.1300 • Fax: 213.383.6526

Viewpoint

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Editor:
Vinita Anand
RESOURCE AND INFORMATION SPECIALIST
KOCH♦YOUNG RESOURCE CENTER

Contributors:
Gina Ajayi, Carmen Alabat, Jenn Alquitela, Diane Anand, Lisa Anand, Vinita Anand, Anita Arcilla-Guiterrez, Patrick Aulicino, Margarita Blanco, Linda Brandli, Anita Castillo, Nicole Conn, Jack Darakjian, Marielle Farnan, Cheryl Francisco, Ameenah Francois, Steve Garcia, Marjorie Heller, Ashley Hooks, Karen Ingram, Diana Janas, Linda Jones, Gwen Jordan, Soonthree Keatamai, Alydra Kelly, MJ Kienast, Nick Klein, Jackie Knowles, Phyllis Kochavi, Jerold Kress, Frank Lara, Al Marsella, Christine Mayola, Marie McGinley, Julianne Merriman, Tillman Pink, Luana Radovich, Leticia Reyes, Sun Young Ryu, Sarah Saewert, Ann Seisa, Sharon Shueman, Melinda Sullivan, Kelly Vencill Sanchez, Edwin Stewart, Blake Tholmer, Karen Wade and Avo Yetenekian

Photo Contributors:
Anonymous, Diane Anand, Vinita Anand, Margarita Blanco, Denise Crew, Jack Darakjian, Cheryl Francisco, Marjorie Heller, Soonthree Keatamai, Alydra Kelly, Christine Mayola, Leticia Reyes, Blake Tholmer and Donna Zweig Photography

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