

Toward Maximum Independence

A non-profit agency assisting people with disabilities
to live, work and participate in their communities.

ISSUE NUMBER 17

APRIL 1994 NEWSLETTER

Much Loved Newsletter Makes a Comeback

By Sandra Wyspianski, Editor

I realize it's been a while since you've seen this ol' rag (slang term in the paper biz for great and loved newspaper or, in our case, newsletter) and you've probably missed all those exciting, compelling stories from our hard-working, roving reporters who risk life and limb just to bring you a story worthy of . . . *HEY - WAIT JUST A MINUTE - WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE NEW YORK TIMES HERE! ARE WE?* Well, maybe not, but this band of roving reporters and wanna-be journalists love bringing this newsletter to you on a quarterly basis. We have been on temporary hiatus due to some cut-backs in the agency. We have all had to shoulder some of the burden and, like any team, we take responsibility in sharing the good times and bad.

We're back though, with a re-defined, sleek and trim new look. OK - so this was one of our major cut-backs to save costs but, hey - the team pulled together . . . gathered late into the night, sitting around the table - the sweat of our brow gleaming in the low glow of a single hurricane lamp, pitchers of hot coffee our only source of replenishment - we worked tirelessly - brainstorming to find ideas that would work - that would help our paper stay alive, to . . . Oh! . . . Gee, I'm sorry . . . I do get a bit carried away at times.

Anyway, this committee is proud to say we will continue bringing the newsletter to your door. We will go from 2-color to 1-color and from 8 pages to 4 pages. By doing so, we have cut costs considerably and we are very happy about that. I will end my little dedication to the committee and the paper's new look by printing our Newsletter Committee Purpose Statement that we all worked so hard on . . . late into the night . . . huddled around a fire for warmth; the howling wind sounding like screaming banshees . . . the snow blowing so hard it threatened to knock down the walls of the tiny bungalow we were gathered in, not knowing if we would survive the night . . . there I go again!!!

Enjoy - and we're glad to be back!

Purpose Statement

Legislative Issues

In February, TMI sponsored a letter writing campaign in support of Health Care Reform. Hundreds of letters to representatives and senators were generated by staff, family members and people we support. As an incentive, TMI offered a breakfast at the next team meeting for the most prolific team. East County's



Helen Smith

Integrated Work Program A Success

By Brent Ramsey

This Quarter's employer interview comes from the Target retail store located on Sports Arena Boulevard in San Diego. Helen Smith is the manager at Target and has been employed at the store for 6-1/2 years. Her track record speaks for itself - a total of 33 years in the retail business. I recently had the pleasure of meeting Helen and when our interview was over, I came away with the feeling that her experience with TMI's Integrated Work Program has been nothing but success.

When first approached with the idea of hiring individuals from the agency's I.W. program, she gladly accepted. Helen had never worked with a program like this before, and was anxious to give it a go. She approached the hiring like any other and began training the individuals as well as the facilitator. The rest is history. Helen is highly appreciative of the hard work that Andy Fuentes and Mark Henderson provide Target, and is impressed with the professionalism of their job coach, Dave Munos. She believes the key to the group's success is the determination they provide that allows for on the job satisfaction. The working relationship between the group and the other Target employees is highly successful. Recently, Andy was nominated for Employee of the Month - way to go, Andy! Helen is very happy with the program. This is yet another example of how TMI's I.W. component provides nothing but success in the work environment.

Even "Monsters" Need Love

By Tracy Bingham

"Hi, I'm Eddie Monster!" Eddie exclaimed as he disappeared just as quickly as he had appeared to meet us. That's how Eddie pictured himself and that's how everyone (F.C. family, social worker, psychiatrist, teacher, etc) who had anything to do with Eddie described him. His referral looked like a convicted felon's rap sheet. His behavior was physical, violent, destructive, hyperactive, out of control and AWOL. He set fires and even set his brother's bed on fire (with him in it). He had already been kicked out of school. The family reported that unless at least two adults were with Eddie, he couldn't go anywhere, his behavior was so uncontrollable. His foster care placement history was long and had changed regularly every few months.

The referral was considered an emergency placement because the family had already requested he move. A state-wide search had been conducted by the social worker with no other placements to be found. After we met Eddie, we considered it an emergency situation. The county home and family he was living with was less than desirable. Eddie met Mary and her family that Friday and has lived with them nearly 3 years. Mary was the first person to inquire into TMI's Alternative Family program, so it was fitting that Eddie be the first child to move in with an alternative family. Eddie is in his 3rd year of school in 2nd grade. Eddie says "he likes school now." His teacher agrees and reports he usually does his work, tries really hard and earns a green card on some days.

I Need A Vacation

By Rhonda Birich

What's your dream vacation? A nine day bicycle tour in Oregon? A week cruise along the Mexican Riviera? Or how about a weekend in Las Vegas? They all sound good, but how can you arrange the trip? Who can you go with? How can you save for it?

These and other travel questions can be answered

by the New Directions Travel Agency, a non-profit corporation promoting (in their own words) "integration through travel and educational exchange." Based in Santa Barbara, the agency works with people with developmental disabilities by helping to arrange quality tours with minimal supports, depending on your needs (counselors on these tours can give anywhere from one-on-one support, to one counselor for six travelers).

A plan is also available where you can prepay the vacation of your dreams in installments without violating the government's \$2,000 savings limit. If this sounds like a service that you can use, you can contact New Directions at (805) 964-7344, or write:

New Directions
5276 Hollister Avenue #207
Santa Barbara, CA 93111

In Memory

*I love planet earth,
God's children,
and the thunder
of Granny's love
in me*

*I am peace
and friendship
being here
like a team
of strong hearts*

- Thomas Hastings Daniel

Thomas Daniel died on October 28th 1993 of heart failure at the age of 27. He was the President of the Clairemont Self-Advocacy Group. He will be remembered by all of those whose lives he touched.

On Sunday, December 26, 1993 Roger Cain died of complications from the AIDS virus. He was 35 years old. Roger spent a great deal of time helping others with AIDS. He was a very thoughtful and intelligent man and those of us who worked with him will miss his positive attitude. Roger never gave up on life and, in the end, his spirit out-lived his body. On a personal note, working with Roger showed me what AIDS is really about - he showed me how to persevere in the face of adversity. Roger will be greatly missed.

April is Earthquake Preparedness Month

By Simone Ferber & Cathy Cosner

With the L.A. earthquake abruptly reminding us how unprepared all of us really are, we might want to think about a few things that might happen if a large earthquake hit the San Diego area. Will you be prepared?

Many things we take for granted will be interrupted or down for approximately 24 hours to, perhaps, 1 week.

Phone Lines: Most phone lines will be down for at least 24 hours. Do you and your family have a contact person to call (out of town or state) to inform worried significant others as to your well being?

Waterlines: These will most likely break, so it is imperative you have a supply of water kept for this kind of emergency (one gallon per person for at least 3 days). Fill up the bathtub immediately after a quake hits! Don't forget, your pets need water too!

Power Sources: All power will be down - no cooking! Non perishable items (canned foods) are important to have on hand! Remember, eat all you perishable items first!

First Aid Kit: This is a must because you and your pets might be injured by falling objects or broken glass. A good idea is to keep a pair of shoes next to your bed to avoid cuts.

911: Emergency systems will be slow, if not completely tied up - you might be on your own.

Bank ATM's: These may be unavailable for up to 1 week, so think about keeping emergency cash in a safe place for needed supplies.

Stores & Pharmacies: These may be closed for a few days. It's always a good idea to keep an extra months supply of medication on hand. Remember, never let any important medication run too low.

Emergency Checklist: Finally, keep one of these taped to your kitchen cabinet to help you remember how to stay safe and healthy during and after an earthquake.

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TMI's Programs & Services

Community Living Services:

Offering Independent Living and Supported Living. Support may range from only a few hours per month up to the assistance available through a full time, paid, live-in roommate who has access to back-up relief staff.

Community Employment Services

Comprised of three programs providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to achieve paid employment, as well as increased presence, participation, independence and self-reliance in their neighborhoods and communities.

Family Support Services

Based on a fundamental belief that "all children belong in families." Through a variety of support

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ***Newsletter Reporter Wanted***

We are looking for a person who receives services from TMI to write for our newsletter. If you're outgoing, interested in writing and have always dreamed of having your own talk show (OK - you'll

Toward Maximum Independence, Inc.

It is the mission of TMI to support the value, right and responsibilities of all people with the support of their advocates to make informed choices regarding how they live, work and express their membership in community. We accomplish this by providing personalized supports to people in their homes, workplaces, schools, families and neighborhoods.

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