

T M I

TOWARD MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE

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

ISSUE #33

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***TMI Celebrates
20 Years***

Enclosed in this issue is the flyer for the upcoming 20 Year Celebration of TMI. The event is being held at the TMI grounds on May 5th and will be a day filled with food, drink, music and fun events for everyone. If for some reason you did not receive a flyer in your copy, you can call TMI and speak to Ginger Cohen at Ext. 301 for all the details.

Hope to see you there!



Musicline Rising

Thoughts of 20 By Mark Saverino

I usually shy away from producing articles for our newsletter, but after 20 years of TMI in my blood, I thought this would be as good a time as any to give it a go.

Even though, officially, I am the only staff who has been working at TMI for 20 years, it would be fair to say that, without Connie's assistance from the very beginning, there probably would not have been much to write about twenty years later.

How did it all start? Well, twenty years ago a family trusted me to provide independent living support for their daughter. That was an era where the notion of living independently in the community was still more of a scary idea than a good one. We held meetings in our living room, hired some experienced friends and accepted new referrals. Twenty years later we have over 150 staff and provide services to over 500 people! Believe it or not, we still provide a few hours of support for the same individual who we started with twenty years ago. My, what a difference twenty years makes!

Last year we were very fortunate to find a building that would give TMI a place to call home for a long time. Over the years we have tried hard to develop new ways to work with individuals with disabilities.

We have tried to be innovative; to be on the "cutting edge," and to provide only supports reflective of "best practices." We have had many successes and we have had a few failures as well. We try to learn from both.

It would be impossible to recall all the highlights of the last twenty years. One of the things I am most proud of is the fact that so many people have chosen to work with us for so long. We have over forty staff who have been with us for over five years. We have over 25 staff who have been with us for over ten years. This kind of loyalty is second only to the commitment staff have to those we support.

There isn't room to thank every individual who we've worked with, or to thank every staff member who has toiled on their behalf, but not a day goes by that I don't reflect on how truly grateful I am to be a part of

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Employer Highlight: **Job Options, Inc.** **U.S. Border Port of Entry and** **Naval Medical Centers** *By Joseph Nacario*

Did you know that several people supported by TMI are employed at the busiest border crossing between two countries in the entire world and also at the world's largest hospital?!? Yes, it's true! These individuals are employed by Job Options Incorporated, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide jobs for individuals with disabilities by contracting with various federal agencies. These jobs are located at the U.S. Port of Entry Border Crossing at San Ysidro and at Naval Medical Centers located at Balboa Naval Hospital, 32nd Street Medical Center and Miramar Medical Center. TMI supported persons are employed in janitorial positions earning an average of nearly \$9.00 per hour. These are not entry-level positions and have stringent performance criteria and expectations. Job Options employees are responsible for maintaining over two million square feet including outdoor areas, offices, hallways, public and staff restrooms, escalators, elevators, common areas and a children's daycare center. Eleven of these individuals work full-time with benefits, including retirement. Two individuals work part-time, at 20 hours per week.

Since 1989, TMI has placed over 400 individuals with disabilities throughout San Diego County in a variety of businesses and positions including retail, restaurants, movie theaters, hotels and resorts, grocery stores, colleges, the San Diego Zoo, and Sea World. Brent Ramsey, a TMI Coordinator for eight years comments, "It's great to place clients in diverse employment opportunities. Our clients employed by Job Options are in unique and interesting working environments with opportunities to learn and develop responsibilities which cannot be

experienced in the public sector."

Indeed, these individuals are fully integrated, working along side government employees throughout their work day. At the United States Port of Entry, this includes U.S. Customs, Border Patrol, Drug Enforcement Agents, Immigration Naturalization Service, and County Sheriffs, as well as the tourists and foreign visitors. We support persons employed at the Naval Medical Centers who work alongside military and civilian medical personnel, military corps, and many military family medical center visitors and patients.

TMI enjoys a good business relationship with Job Options Inc. which is a tremendous employer and advocate for individuals with disabilities. Job

Options Personnel Coordinator Valerie Seidl comments: "It is a pleasure to work with TMI. Their staff work and communicate well with our staff to ensure successful placements." Margaret Ann Pena, Job Options Program Manager at the U.S. Port of Entry, has worked extremely well with all TMI clients, job coaches, and Coordinators for almost two years.

"I greatly value the relationship which we have developed with TMI and feel it is a mutual benefit for the individuals with disabilities and for Job Options. I have worked with several agencies and trust our business relationship and appreciate the ongoing communication which we have." Naval Medical Center assignments are supervised by Roger Candolor of Job Options. He has been very supportive of individuals supported by TMI and their staff since the new project contract began this past December. Roger has been very helpful in assisting all of us in understanding military government expectations. "TMI supported persons are hard working employees. I enjoy seeing the progress that they are making."

So, what do people we support say about their jobs at Job Options:

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Program Updates

Program Updates

COMMUNITY LIVING

By Rebecca Treiber

This new year is the catalyst for many exhilarating changes in Community Living Services. In January, Gail Jacob returned to TMI in an effort to rouse creativity among the coordinators regarding the arrangement of individual supports. The group succeeded in identifying new configurations of support that include blurring the distinction between Independent Living and Supported Living. Several individuals are currently benefiting from our trials.

CLS has many new and valuable additions to the team. Kevin Farrar is the new program coordinator for Forensic Advocacy Services. Thank goodness he left his job at the county clerk's office to join our team; he is a wonderful addition. Andrea Cedillo is the new lead facilitator and she definitely knows how to jump right in and take charge of her job. Thank you so much! Rosie Maldonado will be a full time facilitator beginning March 19. We can't wait. We would also like to welcome George Sierra, a new facilitator, as well as Maria Mustacchio, a new facilitator in the North County.

There is a flurry of activity in Supported Living. We would like to congratulate Everette for moving into a wonderful home with roommate Janet Herriott in the Oceanside area. We would also like to welcome Tom Barrett who is Leroy's new roomie. CONGRATULATIONS to Clara who will enjoy life in retirement. Robert will get to take a vacation to Texas. We wish you a lot of fun! For those of you interested, Roy Valuet will begin a supported living advocacy group that will meet monthly in the TMI boardroom.

The group is scheduled to begin in May. Please feel free to contact Roy at extension 554 for further information.

Finally, some progress for TMI in working with the Housing Coalition! Jeff, is utilizing the coalition process to purchase his own home or condo. This resource is available to anyone who would like to own their own place! If you would like more information please ask your facilitator or feel free to contact your coordinator.



COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

By Louanne Miller

Supported Employment Services has enjoyed a steady increase in referrals over the past year which has lead us to hire two new coordinators, Mary Kay Pretto-Flagsted and Hugh Michaels. Both recently moved to California from the mid-west and are great additions to TMI. They, along with Brent Ramsey, Mary Brushaber, David May and Nick Pelosi have been working very hard transitioning cases and developing jobs for approximately 60 individuals. Coordinators and job coaches in Integrated Work have something to cheer about, too. A record number of individuals received support and training in the month of February which translates into a "win-win" situation for both the individuals and TMI. Thank you Bonnie Stanley, Janice Bartholomew, Quincy Youngkin and Cathi Hylock and their lead facilitators, Sheila Sample, Karen Castellanos and DJ Jensen. Cathi, who worked as a Job Coach for TMI, was recently promoted to Coordinator and is doing a great job! Thanks to all of TMI's dedicated job coaches who make a difference in

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CES Update - Continued

the lives of people with disabilities each day. Joseph Nacario was promoted in January to Associate Director of CES. Joseph worked as a coordinator in supported employment at TMI for two years and has over 20 years of experience in the field. He has developed a number of successful partnerships with area employers and enjoys sound working relationships with area professionals. Joseph will continue to focus his efforts on job development and marketing strategies by working directly with coordinators in both supported employment and integrated work, and will assist the Director of CES with administrative duties as well.

All of TMI, CES staff and, of course, Joseph and his family are anxiously awaiting the birth of their “triplets” who are due any day now! Joseph and Theresa extend a heartfelt thanks to friends at TMI, Community Options, and the Department of Rehabilitation who surprised him with a baby shower held at TMI on March 2nd. He was speechless! Mark Saverino videotaped the event so Joseph can share the special occasion with his wife who was unable to attend. We will keep you posted.

FAMILY SUPPORT

By Kim Trotter

Family Support Services is seeking foster parents for the Alternative Family Program. The program was developed in 1990 as a program development fund grant. The grant offered a means to better meet the needs of children in severe crises who were at risk of being institutionalized or already in large congregate settings and whose natural families were unable to adequately address their needs and challenges. The purpose of the program is to provide stable and supportive family homes to children who have severe disabilities. We provide ongoing support/training to families so that children placed remain in a nurturing family environment. Families also receive financial compensation

as well as 24 hour support from staff in Family Support Services. To become a part of this great program, contact Kim Trotter, FSS Director at (858) 467-0600, Ext. 307.

We would like to send warm thoughts to William and Maria Wong who have been with TMI for over three years now, and have done a wonderful job giving support and a loving home to Sandy. In the year that Sandy has been in their home, she is now feeding herself, going into the community on a daily basis and is playing with toys and with other children - things she was not doing a year ago. In November, the Wongs' graciously accepted Rachel into their home also and have already made a tremendous difference in her life as well. We appreciate all you do!

We would also like to welcome two new families. Norman and Alicia Faleano and Martin and Elise Rodriguez. We look forward to working with you to make a difference in the lives of the children we support. Thank you for your commitment.



Best wishes to Brian who will be moving back home with his mother in preparation for the family's move to Colorado. Brian has been living in the home of the So's since July 1995 and has made a lot of progress. Brian and his family will be supported in our Family Focused Supports program during this transition period. Good luck to Brian and his family!

NEW EMPLOYEES - By Roger Orstad

Community Employment Services:

Josephina Blank, Robert Brown, Apolonio Ceballos, Gail Gillette, Doris Ivory, Arely Limon, Thomas Manor, Maria Mustacchio, Brock Nelson, Chris Perkins, Kristi Robinson, Gladys Roth, Priscella Sanchez, George Sierra

Community/Supported Living Services

Thomas Barrett, Christopher Bates, Erika Johnson, Frank Lujan, Ryan Newby, Seletine Owino, Elizabeth Quinn, Carlos Smith

Family Support Services

Gretchyn Barbee

Administration

Kenneth Steele



THOUGHTFUL LIVING

By Simone Ferber

Greetings readers. Prepare yourself to be prepared! April is “Disaster Preparedness Month” and just as the Seattle earthquake reminds us that we live on the west coast (and in California to boot) it’s time to get started! All of the following is valuable information to staff and the people they support!

Are you and your “pack” ready if a major quake occurred? Here are a few questions you need to ask yourself:

- Does your family have an evacuation plan and an emergency contact person who lives out of state?
- Do you know where the nearest evacuation center is located? Do you have a plan for your animal companions? Do they have a collar, vaccination record and an ID tag if they become missing?
- If you are away from home when a disaster occurs, do you have any neighbors to make sure your pets are ok or have a place to go?
- Is your car prepared with water, flashlight and a useful radio.

Knowing my readers will want more information on how you and those around you can stay safe when the big one happens, I offer the following:

Establish a Personal Support Network. A personal support network is made up of individuals who will check with you in an emergency to ensure that you are O.K. and to give assistance if needed. This network can consist of friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, coworkers and neighbors. Some people rely on personal assistance services (attendants). This type of assistance may not be available after a major quake. If you employ a personal

agency or other type of in-home service, discuss with these people a plan for what you will do in case of an emergency. How will you get along in an emergency for as long as seven days? Do not depend on any one person. Identify a minimum of three people at each location where you regularly spend a significant part of your week (ie; job, home, school, volunteer site, etc.). You may find yourself in a shelter and needing to assemble help for immediate assistance. Think about what you will need and what kind of person you would select to help you.

Make Prior Arrangements. It is very important to arrange for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster and, if needed, offer assistance. Share copies of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans and emergency health information card. Agree and practice a communications system regarding how to contact each other in an emergency. Do not count on the telephones working. You and your personal support network should always notify each other when you are going out of town and when you will return. The relationship should be mutual. Learn about each other’s needs and how to help each other in an emergency. You could be responsible for food supplies and preparation.



Health Card. An emergency health information card communicates to rescuers what they need to know about you if they find you unconscious or incoherent, or if they need to quickly help evacuate you. An emergency health information card should contain information about medications, equipment you use, allergies and sensitivities, communication difficulties you may have, preferred treatment, medical providers, and important contact people. Make multiple copies of this card to keep in emergency supply kits, car, work, wallet (behind driver’s license or primary identification card), wheelchair pack, etc.

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Thoughtful Living - Continued

Emergency Documents (includes important information typically needed after a disaster). Store emergency documents in your home emergency supply kits. Copies of life saving information (i.e., specifications for adaptive equipment or medical devices) should be in all of your emergency kits. Medication lists should be on your health card and should also be stored in all of your emergency kits. Other emergency documents should be kept together with your home emergency pack (family records, wills, deeds, social security number, charge and bank accounts, etc.) for access in an emergency. These should be stored in sealed freezer bags with copy sent to out-of-state contacts.

Additional Tip Sheets are available to cover above topics in more detail.

Conduct an “Ability Self-Assessment.”

Evaluate your capabilities, limitations and needs, as well as your surroundings to determine what type of help you will need in an emergency. Assess the following: Will you be able to independently shut off the necessary utilities, such as gas, water, electricity? Do you know where shut-off valves are? Can you get to them? Can you find and use the right wrench to turn those handles? Can you operate a fire extinguisher? Have you practiced? Will extended handles make these items usable for you? Will you be able to carry your evacuation kit? If not, what do you need to do in order to carry it? How much of what you need do you carry regularly; or do you have duplicates of these items at other locations? Have you moved or secured large objects that might block your escape path? Write instructions, keep a copy with you and share a copy with your personal support network of the following:

a) How to operate and safely move your essential equipment; b) How to safely transport you if you need to be carried; c) How to provide personal assistance services; d) Make a map of where to find medications, aids and supplies; e) How will you evacuate?

Communication: Practice Assertiveness Skills.

move your mobility aids or how to move you safely and rapidly. Give clear, specific and concise instructions and directions to rescue personnel (ie; “take my oxygen tank,” “take my wheelchair,” “take my communication device from the desk”). Be prepared to request an accommodation from disaster personnel.

Carry-On/Carry-With-You Supplies to Keep with You at All Times

1. Emergency Health Information Card.
2. Instructions on needs and how to provide them.
3. Copy of Emergency Documents.
4. Essential medications/copies of prescriptions (at least a week’s supply).
5. Flashlight on key ring.
6. Signaling device (whistle, beeper, bell, screecher).

7. Small battery-operated radio and extra batteries

Do not expect shelters or first aid stations to meet your supply needs.

Emergency supplies will be limited. If you are unable to afford extra supplies, consider contacting one of the many

disability-specific organizations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, Arthritis Foundation, United Cerebral Palsy Association, etc. These organizations may be able to assist you in gathering extra low cost or no cost emergency supplies or medications.

Medication It is best if you are able to maintain at least a 7 to 14 day supply of essential medications (heart, blood pressure, diabetic, psychiatric, etc.) and keep this supply with you at all times. If this is not possible, even maintaining a 3 day supply would be extremely helpful. Work with your doctor(s) to obtain an extra supply of medications, as well as extra copies of prescriptions.

Equipment and Assistive Devices. Keep important equipment and assistive devices in a consistent, convenient and secured place, so you



Standing

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can quickly and easily locate them after the disaster. Keep hearing aid, eye glasses, etc. in a container by your bedside which is attached to a night stand or bed post using string or velcro. If wheelchair is by bedside, attach to wheelchair. This helps prevent them from falling, flying or rolling away during a disaster. If you use a laptop computer as a means of communication, consider purchasing a power converter. A power converter allows most laptops (12 volts or less) to run from a cigarette lighter on the dashboard of a vehicle.

Preparation may seem like a lot of work - and you're right, it is! Preparing does take time and effort. So do a little at a time. The important thing is to start. The more you do, the more confident you will be that you can protect yourself, your family, and your belongings.

Until next time . . .



Strong

Employer Highlight - Continued

Telly Balanos: "It's a good place to work for with great pay. I get paid for holidays!" *Blaise Donahue:* "It's a fine place to work at. I like working with the military...not everyone can!" *Bill Morton:* "It's a comfortable place to work. It's fun! The military people are friendly to me." *Justin Filley:* "It has a different atmosphere compared to my past jobs. I think it's a really cool place to work."

TMI Job Coaches assigned to Job Options sites include Bertha Taylor, Priscilla Sanchez, Pollo Ceballos, Doris Ivory, Robert Brown, Sheri Ameri, and Kelly Zimmerman. Their commitment in providing needed support is greatly valued and appreciated by TMI and Job Options.

TMI can look forward to continuing its relationship with Job Options which will begin a new contract with Camp Pendleton Marine Base in Food Service. We will work closely with Job Options Program Manager Robert Ingram on this project which will begin during April 2001.

SpotLight

Story by Bonnie Stanley

Lizabeth has been in Integrated Work for approximately three years and has made great strides since first volunteering at the Lakeside Community Center three years ago. Along with her coworkers, Liz's job is to get the main hall set-up for seniors to eat lunch. Using a cart, her tasks consist of placing flower vases on each table, along with place settings. When Liz started she required hand-over-hand assistance. Now she is able to do her tasks independently, requiring only an occasional signed prompt. Agency staff who have known Liz for years have complimented her on her independence at the volunteer site.

With a number of challenges which could have been a hinderance in the past, Liz has taught us that patience and perserverance are the keys to success - not just for Liz, but also for those of us who provide support. She reminds us that perserverance, not perfection, is the goal!

Thoughts of 20 - Continued

grateful I am to be a part of all that we do, even if it is the "oldest" part. I don't know how long my run will last - do any of us? Last month I was in an auto accident which I miraculously walked away from with only a bruise and a scratch. Thank goodness for seatbelts and air bags! God must have felt there was still a lot more for me to do. My goal is to work 50 years at TMI. So you can see, I have just gotten started. I hope you will celebrate our 20 years by coming to the Cinco de "Marco," as staff have dubbed it, celebration on May 5th. Happy 20th to all!!!

OUR MISSION

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 own homes, workplaces, schools, families and neighborhoods.

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