



# TMI

TOWARD MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE

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

ISSUE #41

OCTOBER 2003

## IN THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Program News
- ◆ Spotlight: An Intimate Interview
- ◆ Staff's Corner
- ◆ Legislative Update
- ◆ In Remembrance of Jason Steinat

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by **Connie Saverino**

AB 649 (Wiggins) would drastically alter the service delivery system for persons with developmental disabilities in California. Under the proposal thousands of direct support staff who currently work for hundreds of community agencies across the state would be required to work for a new employer--one of thirteen new Workforce Service Centers (WSC). Workers who refuse to transfer would be laid off. It is estimated that this new bureaucracy would cost the state over \$150 million. Community agencies would no longer employ support staff directly, fundamentally changing the relationship between agencies and employees by utilizing a lease-back arrangement similar to that used in hiring temporary employers.

Choice would be undermined both for staff who have no choice about working for a WSC and for individuals receiving services who would have no role in selecting, approving, or firing support staff. While there is need for change in the system, this proposal raises more issues than it answers. Almost all major provider and consumer organizations oppose AB649 which will be heard in January. ARC CA, California Rehabilitation Association (CRA), UCP's of California, CAL-TASH, the San Diego Regional Center Vendor Advisory Committee, and San Diego Vendor Coalition, as well as many other Provider Advisory Groups and Regional Center Boards have taken an oppose position. AB649 threatens the basic stability of community services and shifts control of services and supports from the people who rely on or utilize these services to the Workforce Service Center. More info: go to [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov) -- Bill Information.

*This newsletter is published quarterly for program participants, family, friends and colleagues of TMI, a non-profit organization.*



# IN REMEMBRANCE OF JASON STEINAT

## by Colleen Thornton

For the last ten years, I have had the wonderful opportunity to work with an incredible young man by the name of Jason Steinat. When I first met Jason he was receiving TMI's Independent Living services. After a couple of strokes, he went into our Supported Living program. Jason was someone who many people thought could never live alone. But, if you knew Jason, you would know that he always did much more than people ever thought he could. He was legally blind and deaf, though this never got in his way. He lived in his own apartment with his cat Miss Kitty. As his paid neighbor, I lived down the street from him. Jason also worked. His last job was at Bennigan's Restaurant. He loved working. He wanted to do everything for himself, so it was our job to figure out how he could be as independent as possible. I used a lot of "Puff Paint" around Jason's house. It was on the microwave, the heater, the VCR, and his stereo. It helped him locate and identify things. He had a special alarm clock, watch, etc. There wasn't anything he wouldn't rather do for himself. Besides being such a strong willed, self determined person, Jason was also one of the nicest people you could ever meet. He always remembered everyone's birthdays, anniversaries or special holidays. He sent cards and gifts to everyone. He also had a great sense of humor. He was one of the funniest people I had ever met. My life, and the lives of everyone who knew Jason, are so much richer for having had him as a friend.



On August 30, 2003 Jason had a massive stroke at home. He died later in the hospital. Jason was only 36 years old. He was an inspiration to all who knew him and he will be missed more than words can express. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his family and friends.



## FAMILY SUPPORT UPDATE

Since we have said our good byes to Glenda Chesire this summer, Mark Saverino, our CFO has again taken over as Acting Director of the Family Support Services program. He has had a lot of help from staff, consultants and graduate interns during this transitional period.

We just said farewell to Lisa Jensen, Ph.D. one of our behavioral specialist who had been with us for over three years. Thank you Lisa for all of your great work with the children and their families.

We still have two excellent Behavioral Specialists, Joe Schmidt, Ph.D. and Cathy Hammond, Ph.D. who are covering all of the families who need their services.

In addition to the behavior specialist we also have a great team of social workers utilizing all of their skills and experience in working with both components of our Family Support Program. Leslie Brown continues to be the main social worker in our Family Focused Support program where we provide support to biological families learning to deal with the challenges of having a child with a developmental disability. Denise Kulowitch, Julie Hammond, Jillian Durst, and Ophelia Blue all work with the foster parents and their foster children and all have contributed greatly to assisting and supporting both.

This fall we were also lucky to receive two graduate students from San Diego State University. Jennifer Hanauer and Jennifer Rollins have already made significant contributions to the entire program though they have just started their internships. We just had a great turnout at our Foster Parent Open House. Thanks to all of the staff and families who participated in the event, especially Ana Fuentes, a veteran foster parent who spoke as our "resident expert".

We hope to be gaining a significant number of new foster parents because of our recruitment efforts.

Thanks also to Gary Miller Director of Recruitment and Training for taking over the certification and recertification process, as well as promoting the Open House event.

We are trying to place several new foster children in our program, which is always a great challenge but even a greater reward when a child can be successfully matched with a foster family. We are accepting referrals for all potential foster children for all of San Diego County and even have some foster parents available in the North County. We continue to accept referrals for our Family Focused Support Program.

And finally thanks to our foster-parents: Billie & Robert Carter, Christy and Joe De la Cruz, Kathy Burrington and Monica Johnson, Manuel and Ana Fuentes, Joe and Bertha Morales, Amy Schaffner and Fernando Diaz, June and Peter Sifuentes, William and Maria Wong, Jose and Griselda Ortega, Norman and Alicia Faleono, and Ana Darrah. You are the backbone of our program. Your love, concern and patience are appreciated by us each and every day!

*Thanks for all of your great efforts!*





**Interview With Sandy Holthaus**  
**By Sandy Burke**

For this issue of our Newsletter I have chosen to "Spotlight" our one and only Sandy Holthaus. Sandy works at TMI, and most of you have probably seen her around the office. Sandy is also one of the wonderful people I support, and we enjoy our time together immensely. I spend ten hours a month, as well as one weekend a month at Sandy's home, and we have lots of fun cooking, playing games (which she sometimes beats me at), and just talking. She has a lovely roommate named Sarah, and two adorable kittens. If you haven't had the pleasure of making Sandy's acquaintance, then I hope you enjoy getting to know more about her.

*Q: How long have you been receiving support from TMI, Sandy?*

A: I have been with TMI over nine years.

*Q: You also work at TMI as well, what do you do?*

A: I love my job! I work with my Job Coach Cecilia. When I get to work, I first sign in, then I work on time sheets on the computer, I clean up the offices, I make copies, use the shredding machine, do collating, put information and flyers in everyone's mailbox, and do all kinds of necessary things.

*Q: What do you do when you are not working at TMI?*

A: I work in the community. I help kids--some in wheelchairs--get off the buses, as well as help with serving and feeding the children. I get them to their classrooms. I also help them with their homework, their reading, going to the bathroom--all kinds of stuff. I love working with kids.

*Q: What do you do in your spare time?*

A: I like going swimming at the YMCA, I bowl for the Special Olympics, I like walking, going to the movies, and eating out.

*Q: What's your favorite food?*

A: I just lovvvvve spaghetti or macaroni with red sauce. I hate lima beans, and hate the word "diet!" I like eating and drinking what I like.

*Q: What are your favorite TV shows?*

A: My favorites are "The Brady Bunch", different cartoons, and a show called "TGIF".

*Q: What else do you like to do?*

A: I lovvvvve to dance and listen to my favorite music on 92.5. My favorite groups are the Bee Gees and Xavier & The X-Men. I like learning and singing folk songs.



*Continued on page 7*

## Community Employment Update TMI Employment Solutions

### ANNUAL STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS

Toward Maximum Independence values the feedback of its customers and is an agency that will continue to evolve with input from the community. In a continuous effort to improve program quality, each stakeholder group in Community Employment Services (CES) is surveyed annually on program satisfaction, with 10-14 critical indicators in various service areas specific to each stakeholder. The CES stakeholders surveyed annually include TMI Participants, Employers, Parents/Careproviders, Regional Center Service Coordinators, and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.

The following is a summary of the surveys.  
Participants: Very Satisfied? – Yes 93%  
Employers: Satisfied? – Yes 100%  
Parents/Careproviders: Very Satisfied?  
– Agree 95%  
SDRC: Satisfied? – Agree 96%  
Voc Rehab: Overall Satisfied? – Yes 100%

Although we were pleased with the overall satisfaction results of our customer/stakeholders surveys, continuous effort to improve services will be an ongoing goal. Job development and placement were most cited on survey comments.

The CES team understands that job placement for people with disabilities is the most critical area that will have a positive impact on the quality of life for each individual. Throughout the USA there are 54 million people with disabilities, 2 out of 3 who are not employed, representing the nation's largest unemployed demographic group (*HR Solutions Magazine*– Dec. 2002). During what has been identified as the worst recession since WWII, dating back to the Sept-

ember 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy, job development has been the greatest challenge, not only to TMI, but also for other agencies.

Teri Patterson is our TMI Job Placement Manager who has established and expanded our prospective employer base. Teri has an uncompromised work ethic and works with each Division Manager to maximize employment opportunities for our participants. Teri's emphasis and goal is to get the TMI name out in the community. She is also marketing our other great service programs in Community Living, Family Support Services, and Forensic Advocacy Services.

TMI CES has also developed new marketing materials under our new name, **TMI Employment Solutions**, which will emphasize a strong business and marketing approach to hiring people with disabilities. Recently, our team placed 24 individuals in jobs during the fiscal 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (July, August, and September). We are very optimistic and are committed to the employment of people with disabilities within their community.

## State Budget

We may have a new Governor-Elect in California but the huge budget deficit remains. It hardly seems possible that January is fast approaching and Governor Schwarzenegger will need to submit a budget for the next fiscal year to the legislature. All state departments have been requested to submit a budget outlining a 20 percent reduction in expenditures. For our system that represents \$600 million. Some say this is a customary drill. Last year, thanks to a strong stakeholder stand, we were able to dodge a proposed \$100 million cut in services. Once again we need to prepare to advocate for critical services and the quality of life of those we support.

# PROGRAM NEWS

## Community Employment

### *News & Congratulations*

A total of 24 TMI participants were placed in great jobs throughout San Diego recently:

Chris A.	VONS
Daniel A.	Job Options-Camp Pendleton
Joe S.	McDonald's
Eric B.	TJ Maxx
Glen S.	Job Options-Balboa Medical Center
Christina V.	Wal Mart
Jesse S.	Elite Services
Seneca B.	Job Alliance
Chris W.	Wal Mart
Kierson K.	Ross Stores
Rudy M.	Wal Mart
Sabrina R.	Marshalls
Verna S.	Toys R Us
Javier S.	Stater Bros.
Eva T.	Home Town Buffet
Jose G.	Job Options-US Border
Jose V.	Job Options-US Border
Karen B.	Longs Drug Stores
Claudia D.	Longs Drug Stores
Dale W.	Bennigan's
Chris C.	Chili's
Diedrion L.	Chili's
Norma R.	Chili's
Jeremiah C.	Securitas

Thanks to CEF's Amel Bahur, Dennis Moran, Bertha Taylor and Roxanne Wall for providing referrals that led to placement!

### **Top Job Developer 2002/03:**

Quincy Youngkin - Integrated Work  
Brent Ramsey - Vocational Rehabilitation

## Community Living

### *News & Congratulations*

- Congratulations to Amy Becker on her engagement and upcoming wedding.
- Donette Trospen, CLS Coordinator, is in the pink with a new baby girl!
- Sandra Burke has a new grandbaby to brag about!
- Rebecca Treiber climbed to the top of Mt. Whitney. Way to go, Rebecca.
- TMI welcomes Susan Q. who is new to Supported Living and has an apartment in Hillcrest.
- Darrel C. is enjoying his new apartment in Poway.
- Robert F. likes his new roommate very much!!
- Skip got a new apartment, as well as Paul and Cathy S. and David B. We wish you all the best in your new homes!
- James K. got a new wheelchair.
- Leroy T. moved to North County.
- Darrel C., Ricky G. and Caryn S. all went to Las Vegas. Ricky G. also got a new service puppy!!
- Larry and Sarah H. took a train to go to Disneyland for three days!
- Congrats to Kathy B., Keith S., and Margaret H. who all got new jobs!
- Patricia L. and Laverne B. went to Sycuan Casino.



*Continued from page 7 - Program News*

## **Family Support Services**

### ***News & Congratulations***

Sandy is now walking independently and getting out into the community.

Lamont has been successfully included in his neighborhood school: Rancho Del Rey.

Alex is enjoying a successful 2nd year at Bonita Vista Middle School.

John enjoyed going to Disneyland with his alternative family.

Anthony has just celebrated one year with his alternative family!

Jessica has become more independent in caring for herself.

Treyvon is becoming a handsome boy. He is demonstrating good hygiene skills and learning to read.

### ***Congratulations and Best Wishes to all of you!***

*Continued from page 4 - Spotlight*

*Q: I repeat, you sure do sound like you have a busy life. But what about your dreams and goals?*

*A: Well, first I would like to take a vacation for a week and go to Michigan to see my family. I also wish I had more money in my life, so I could be loaded!*

*Q: If you were "loaded" what would you buy?*

*A: Whatever I want...clothes, you know...stuff. I would also buy a Denny's or McDonald's.*

*Q: A Denny's or McDonald's???????*

*A: Sure, then I would make even more money...hahahahaha.*



### **New Staff**

#### **New To Administration**

- In CES, Cara Thompson has been promoted to Division Manager and Ania Swiniarska has been promoted to Lead Facilitator.
- Congrats!

#### **New To Community Employment**

- Carlos Alvarez, Cheryle Charlonne, Beverly Edwards, Alma Garcia, Tina Johnson, Tara Johnson, Steven Levinson, Megan Pless, Denise Smith, Bob Steen and Johnathan White have all come on board in CES.

#### **New To Community Living**

- Georgianna Barley, Terry McAughey, Laura Quintana, Faapio Valaile and Sandra Walton have joined the CLS team.

*Welcome to all of you!*

### **Staff Update**

- Erin Tully, formerly a Division Manager in Supported Employment, has moved to Seattle, WA. We wish her all the best and she will be missed by everyone at TMI!

- Congrats to Sue Buechel, a former CLS Coordinator, on starting her own agency. Sue is awesome and we wish her all the best!



# 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.

## ■ TMI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Colligan, *Chair*  
John Larson, *Vice Chair/Treasurer*  
Pat Campbell, *Secretary*  
Ana Fuentes, *Director*  
Jim Timlin, *Director*  
Karen Mitrovich-Dotson, *Director*  
Lindsey Roberge, *CLS Staff Representative*  
Maureen Burris, *CES Staff Representative*

## ■ NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

### Contributing Journalists

Colleen Thornton	Sandy Burke
Connie Saverino	Ginger Cohen
Joseph Nacario	Rebecca Treiber

### Design Layout

Ginger Cohen

### Editor

Connie Saverino

---

Toward Maximum Independence  
4740 Murphy Canyon Road #300  
San Diego, CA 92123

