



TMI

TOWARD MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE

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

ISSUE #43

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

TMI Recognized by San Diego Business Journal

On Thursday February 5, 2004 several members of TMI's staff attended a breakfast and awards ceremony at the Sheraton 4 Points Hotel on Aero Drive. The "Best Companies to Work For" event was sponsored by the *San Diego Business Journal* and was designed as a salute to local companies or organizations that have worked hard to create environments where their employees love to go to work everyday. TMI was among 50 semifinalists, and though we didn't win top honors, we were amazed to be listed along side for-profits like Gateway, Pardee Homes, or Deloitte or non-profits like Children, Youth and Family Network, Sharp Healthcare or the YMCA of San Diego County.



According to a follow-up article in the *San Diego Business Journal* they "wanted to spotlight organizations that

are innovative thinkers working outside the box". The emphasis was on organizations which were "dedicated to developing positive, productive, committed working environments for their employees." TMI, like others attending the event, tries to create an environment where employees can be proud of themselves, the companies they represent and the work that they do. According to the *Journal*, Best Companies are those where people "strive to make a difference, not only for the organization, but also for the common good. These are companies where everyone is treated with respect and everyone is a winner."

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PROGRAM NEWS

Community Living

News & Congratulations

David B. is a proud new father. Congrats!

Ricky G., Clay N., Alan P. and Ester S. all got new jobs. We wish them all the best in their new positions!

Daniel E. and Wilma L. received Section 8 Vouchers. Steffie E., Michelle H. and Laverne B. all moved into their own apartments. Congratulations!

Everyone at TMI wishes Ollie R. will be well soon and able to return to his home.

Fred H., Martin M., Russell M. and Steffie E. are all new with Supported Living.

Yolanda D. went to Louisiana. Michelle H. went on vacation to Texas.

Pat L., Laverne B., Susan Q., Ricki G., Elmo D., Willie L., and Caryn S. all went to Casino Day at Barona.

Employment Solutions

News & Congratulations

Helen L. has a new job at Ace Hardware in Hillcrest, Lesley F. is now working at the UCSD Bookstore, and Las Villas Del Norte has hired Trinity F. Congrats!

Crystal S. and Derek T. are now working at Target. Anthony G. has been hired by Walmart. Congratulations!

Linda G. has been hired by Mytee Products in Poway, Target has hired Willie B., and Jonathan B. has been hired as a gardener at the Grossmont Gardens in La Mesa. Way to go!

James A., Jason W. and Omar O. are volunteering at Villa Del Rey Convalescent Home and the Escondido Humane Society with Bob Steen as their Facilitator. Way to go!



James, Jason and Omar at the Gym

Alexander D., Mike E., Casey M., Bryan L. and Wilfredo G. started work at Elite Show Services. Damon B., Esther S., Charlie B., Lee O., Alissa B., Beulah B., Greg P., Joey C., Monica S., Carmen A. and Jason T. all have begun working at Longs Drugs. Best of luck!

Juan R. and Seneca B. have been hired by Aramark at PETCO Park and Comquest has hired Ivonne and Marilyn. Congrats!

Joe F. passed his three month evaluation at Target in Mission Valley. Great work!

Job Options, North Inland Naval Station has hired Connie C., Jose V. is now working at Jop Options in Chula Vista, Monet H. is working with Job Options in San Ysidro and Angela R. has been hired by Job Options, 32nd Street Commissary. Congrats!



GET READY TO PARTY AT TMI'S SUMMER SPLASH FUNDRAISER

Friday, June 4, 2004
5:00 -10:00 PM At TMI

TMI IS RAFFLING OFF A
2004 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER
OR \$10,000.00 IN CASH!

*All Taxes, License/
Applicable
Fees for Prizes
Awarded are
Winner's Respon-
sibility*



*Proceeds go
to people with
disabilities and
the Julie Casey
Scholarship fund*

Ticket Cost is \$50.00

** Winner Need Not Be Present To Win **

LIMITED TIX SALES - ONLY 500 TICKETS BEING SOLD!!

Many More Valuable Prizes to Win!

\$100 Day Spa Certificate

Hotel Stay at the Sheraton, Harbor Island + Dinner for 2

Chili's \$100 Certificate

(4) Vons \$100 Certificates

AND OTHER GREAT PRIZES!

**Join us for food, entertainment
and an "all out" great time!**

Hosted by TMI

4740 Murphy Canyon Road #300

San Diego, C A 92123

For more info, call Gary Miller at 858-467-0600, X 311



Interview With Sandra Wyspianski
By Paola Osuna

Please meet Sandra Wyspianski, Manager of Information Systems at TMI. She is the one behind the scenes of TMI's Information Technology. She is a truly unique individual, dearly loved and appreciated by colleagues at TMI.

Hi Sandra, thank you for allowing our readers to get to know you. You've been an extremely important part of TMI for 13 years, how did it all begin?

I started in 1990 as an administrative assistant, when TMI was a much smaller agency. A few years later I was promoted to Office Manager where I restructured the agency's administrative support system. At the same time I was in charge of TMI's computer based network. Four years ago, when TMI moved into this building, the Information Systems Department was created allowing me to work solely in this area. We hired Ginger Cohen who I trained to take over my job as Office Manager.

What is Information Technology and how do you incorporate that at TMI?

I am responsible for the agencies information technologies, which includes all electronic communications ie; email, website, fileserver, and local computers. I manage about 50 computers in a unique, all Apple, network environment.

How did you gain so much knowledge in computers and Information Technology?

I had experience working with computers at previous jobs and just knew a bit more about troubleshooting than the "average joe." Five years ago I established a relationship with Todd Davidson of Macintosh Guru, who has become a good friend and is currently my mentor (I like to bow with my hands in prayer as I call him "Guru.") He is brilliant! He teaches me much of what I apply at TMI. That's macintoshguru.com (shameless promotion). Oh ya – a call out to Jordan – wha's up dude!! He works with Todd and is also very cool. The three of us like to hang and get all "techy." People find us amusing, but also a bit scary – very fun!

We all know you're amazing at work, but can you tell us a little about your personal life?

I am very blessed to have a large group of dear friends and family. We're very social and always getting together doing lots of great stuff! I've been married for 22 years and have a 20-year-old daughter, Holly. I have a great dog, Tia and Ian is my 16-year-old cockatiel. When I'm not spending time with my friends and family, I really enjoy shopping, decorating, gardening and working out with the best personal trainer ever; Kathy Sorenson. Wow – another "shameless promo." I'm on a roll!

Sandra, what are your goals and ambitions that you look forward to?

First and foremost a healthy, meaningful life in which to grow old. As far as career goals, I would like to eventually receive certification in a "specialty area" of information technology, which I have yet to decide.

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Employment SOLUTIONS!

Solutions To Meeting Workforce Needs Through Diversity

There are 54 million Americans with disabilities, yet according to the latest Census Bureau data, two out of three people with disabilities who are capable of working are unemployed, making this the demographic group with the highest unemployment rate. HR Solutions Magazine, Dec. '02.

The employment of people with disabilities is a benefit to employers. TMI has recently formed partnerships with Elite Show Services, University of California San Diego, and Town & Country Hotel where HR Representatives have interviewed TMI applicants on location at our corporate office. They also provided seminars on employment, tips on interviewing, and employee responsibilities. As a result, a total of six people have started work! Thanks to Debra Moser (Elite), Janet Loomis and Rosie Mendez (UCSD), and Alma Gonzalez (T & C) who have all expressed their support and recognize diversity as a means of meeting their recruitment needs.

Longs Drug Stores in San Diego County has recently hired 14 TMI applicants in meeting their workforce needs. Mr. Ralph Ramsey, District Manager at Longs Drug Stores, has worked closely with TMI Job Placement Manager Teri Patterson to inform store units of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities including motivated and reliable employees, reduced turnover, onsite TMI support, and tax credit support. Thanks Mr. Ramsey!!

Solutions To Our Economy

The employment of people with disabilities is a definite benefit to our economy! TMI Employment Solutions provided support to over 190 people during 2002-2003. "I am always impressed and greatly respect our

have a goal to ultimately 'get off' of Social Security benefits," says Joseph Nacario, TMI Employment Solutions Director. TMI supported 193 individuals in their jobs last year. If these individuals were unemployed, their Social Security benefits collectively would be approximately \$1.9 million dollars. However, TMI supported employees collectively earned \$950,000 and as a result, paid approximately \$210,000 income taxes. Social Security recipients will have their benefits reduced when employed. As a result of being employed, there was approximately a reduction of \$385,000 in Social Security benefits collectively. Generally, as people earn more wages, their ability to purchase goods increases. It is not determined how many dollars in sales taxes were paid by TMI supported employees. The tax benefit to our economy for the 193 TMI supported employees was nearly \$600,000!!!

What about the 54 million unemployed people with disabilities? There would be a tremendous impact on the economy for any increase of employment for people with dis-

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I would also like the opportunity to do more designing. I have had the privilege of designing the agency's website and new marketing materials. Design work is awesome and absolutely my favorite thing to do because I sit in my office, crank up my music up and get totally into it – like hours. It's insanely sic!

Is there anything else that you would like to share with us Sandra?

TMI has been a great experience over the years. It's intense to have a job you love, a tight office, and incredible people to see and work with every day and a long-term relationship with two pretty cool bosses! It's like, bloody brilliant, man!

WELCOME HOME, LOU!

In our December 2002 issue of the newsletter we offered a sad farewell to Louanne Miller who had been with TMI for thirteen years as the Director of Employment Services. Since certain news travels at the speed of sound (if not



light) the enlightened reader is no doubt already aware that Louanne has returned to TMI. It seems we only “loaned” her to Community Options after all! Many colleagues, upon hearing the news, called to “get the scoop,” only to learn that there is no “scoop” to be had. Sometimes opportunities present themselves and we take them and sometimes we pass. Louanne took an opportunity with a newly created position and ultimately decided after a year and half that it wasn’t right for her. Truth be told: She missed her friends and colleagues at TMI tremendously and learned a lesson many of us have faced at one time or another. In her own words, “Sometimes you don’t appreciate what you have until it’s gone.”

She really has her work cut out for her at TMI. As the Director of Family Support Services, Louanne is facing many brand new challenges. She has found herself immersed, one might say “drowning”, in Titles 17 and 22 but determined to whip things into shape. In no time at all she will work her organizational magic on not only the Alternative Parent program, and Family Focused Supports but also on agency-wide quality assurance systems!

We can hardly contain our excitement around here. Welcome home, Lou!

BECOME A FOSTER PARENT!!!

Foster care is the placement of children with families or individuals outside of their own homes. Inviting a foster care child into your home is a huge commitment but the rewards and sense of accomplishment are worth it. TMI foster parents and the Inter-disciplinary Team work to reunite biological families when it is in the best interest of the child.

- Children and TMI foster families are provided ongoing support and assistance. This support includes ongoing and frequent contact with social workers, referrals to parent support groups, foster parent trainings, assistance at IEP and IPP meetings, behavioral services by a licensed psychologist in the home, and 24 hour emergency support.
- TMI foster parents also receive a monthly stipend based on the needs of the child.

- If you have any questions or want more information about becoming a TMI foster parent, please contact Louanne Miller at (858) 467-0600 Ext. 316 or email her at louannem@tmi-inc.org.



Staff's Corner



New Staff

New To Administration:

Louanne Miller has returned to TMI as Director of Family Support Services. Welcome back Lou!

Mark Gardner has joined the administrative team as a Forensics Specialist in Forensic Advocacy Services. He is a welcome addition!

Anna Frichtel and Madona Thorne have come on board as Lead Facilitators in Employment Solutions. Good to have you here!

New To Employment Solutions:

Erin Brychel, Christopher Cessna, Leesa Descoteau, Natalie James, Zandra Norton, Cynthia Reed, Felicia Rogers, Cassidy Sorrell, David Strumsky, Breeana Wendleton, and Alexis Zurita have joined the Employment Solutions team.

New To Community Living:

New to the Community Living team are: Sami Banarji, Violetta Cisneros-Zamarripa, Bati Guracha, Susan Hendrix, Melissa Jones, Afaf Marougi, and Carolyn Polk.

Welcome to all of TMI's new staff!

TMI Council will hold a Movie Night at TMI on April 23rd. For more info, please contact Andrea Cedillo at 858-467-0600 Ext. 332

Employment Solutions Staff News

Tara Johnson, a Lead Facilitator with CES, is newly engaged. Congrats!

Community Living Staff News

Amy Becker was just married!

• Congratulations to the new Mrs. Andrews!

• Rene Gonzales and his wife had a baby girl. We wish you all the best!

• David Cieslak celebrated his 30th Birthday!

• Ben Mbewa has been promoted to a Lead Facilitator. Way to go!

• Habitat for Humanity will be helping Lori Bellante to rebuild her home. Great news!

• Andrea Cedillo is taking a trip to Vegas. Have fun!!

• *Continued from page 1 - SDBJ*

• The San Diego Business Journal developed criteria for establishing "The Best Companies Program." They looked at the work environment, leadership, communication, shared vision, employee satisfaction, as well as benefits, many of which are quite rare in the non-profit arena. Winners were selected in three categories representing small, medium, and large organizations which were determined by annual budget and number of employees. TMI may never be able to offer three weeks of vacation to first year employees, provide on-site day care at low or no cost to staff, or reimburse employees fully for tuition, but there are many things we can do to provide a positive working environment, encourage professional growth and foster open communication. We think that staff who feel appreciated and respected are more likely to treat the

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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