



# TMI

TOWARD MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE

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

ISSUE #44

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

## WE OFFER CONGRATS TO LUCKY WINNERS!

On June 4th TMI held a party at our office in the parking lot to celebrate its first-ever major raffle with proceeds going to the Julie Casey Fund. Fewer than 500 ticket stubs were entered to win a 2004 PT Cruiser and several other prizes.

The celebration was filled with music by Dutch, Inc. and DJ, Cliff Hollander. Thanks to staff member Lindsey Roberge for the referral! Over 120 people came to enjoy the food and fun. Our very own Laura Barrios belted out a few tunes aided by an impressive team of back up dancers on staff. There was basketball and ping pong for the competitive types!



The excitement and anticipation were high as the raffle drawing grew near. The first ticket drawn was for the 2004 PT Cruiser. Thanks to Carl Burger Dodge for helping us make this happen. The winning ticket stub was placed inside the Cruiser until after all other prizes were awarded. This was done to assure that all tickets had the same chance to win the big prize. Finally, when we couldn't take another moment of suspense or anticipation, Mark Saverino read the name on the winning ticket. Congratulations to Isabelle Perez of LCSA, a tenant in TMI's building, who is now the proud owner of the 2004 silver PT Cruiser!

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## OTHER LUCKY WINNERS...

TMI would like to thank all of the companies who generously donated prizes for TMI's Summer Splash Fundraiser.

San Diego Wild Animal Park donated a Photo Caravan Tour for two, a retail value of \$319.00. The lucky winner was Adiel Garcia. Have fun!

Beth Ritter was the winner of a one night stay for two at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina, as well as dinner for two at Alfieri Mediterranean Bistro at the Sheraton. Enjoy!



*Beth Ritter, Winner of Stay at the Sheraton*

Trudy Osborne is now the proud owner of a 27 Inch Panasonic Color TV donated by Target in the Grossmont Center.



*Laura Barrios with Staff Back-Up Dancers*

WalMart on Dennery Road donated a RCA 5 CD Compact Stereo won by Brent Ramsey, TMI's Employment Solution's Division Manager in North County.



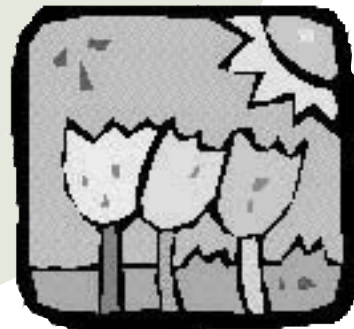
*Brent Ramsey, Lucky Winner of a New Stereo*

Benjamin Ray and Madona Thorne won a \$100 Avia Salon & Day Spa Gift Certificate.

Christy De La Cruz, Bobby Fisher, Tiffany Bennett, and Artie Ortega were all the lucky winners of \$100 VONS Gift Cards.

Jordan Hammond won four \$25 gift certificates which were donated by Bennigan's Restaurant.

Christy De La Cruz was also the winner of dinner for two donated by Chili's Bar & Grill.



## Forensic Advocacy Services: First Quality Assurance Review

Forensic Advocacy Services is a program designed to address the needs of people with developmental disabilities who are involved in the criminal justice system.

The core purpose of TMI's Forensic Advocacy Service (FAS) is to support individuals by "assuring fair and equal treatment by leveling the playing field of the criminal justice system." Individuals supported by FAS can be defendants, witnesses or victims of crimes.

The week of June 21<sup>st</sup>, TMI's Forensic Advocacy Services was abuzz with activity not experienced in the history of the program. It was the first internal Quality Services Review conducted by TMI staff working in programs other than FAS. Joseph Nacario, Director of Community Employment Solutions (CES), headed the team. Members of the team included: Connie Saverino, CEO; Roger Orstad, Director of Human Resources; David Cieslak, CLS Coordinator; Paola Osuna, Cara Thompson and Nick Pelosi, CES Division Managers.

Team members interviewed SDRC Service Coordinators, Public Defenders, and individuals supported in the FAS program both past and present. They even spent time in court observing FAS Advocates, Kevin Farrar and Mark Gardner, working within the criminal justice system advocating for the individuals we support.

The survey summary stated that FAS "...has strengths in many areas. FAS Legal Advocates are generally viewed as dedicated, knowledgeable, and thorough professionals. The FAS team is to be commended for their commitment and outcomes with the services provided for FAS clients, parents

and care providers, SDRC Service Coordinators and Public Defenders, before, during and following complicated legal issues." The full report will be published with this year's FAS annual report.

"An Internal Quality Review by your TMI peers demonstrates the organizations' commitment to quality services," said Gary Miller. "Pointing out the program strengths coupled with areas that need improvement will help the FAS staff continue to provide a quality program."

Members of the FAS team would like to offer a sincere thanks to all the members of the review team who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the review. Thanks also to the many individuals interviewed during the review process. Their participation was vital in compiling the results for this report.

The report concluded by stating: "TMI Forensic Advocacy Services are unique and valuable and seem to meet growing needs at a high standard for people with disabilities throughout San Diego." Keep up the good work!



*Summer*



## ***Interview With Rachelle Gibson-Benson***

***By Paola Osuna***

Please meet Rachelle Gibson, Division Manager in Central San Diego for TMI's Employment Solutions. Rachelle has been part of the TMI team for approximately six months. This may not seem long, but her work and dedication has greatly impacted the individuals supported by TMI.

***Hello Rachelle, I know that you, like most people at TMI, are always on the go, so thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn about you. Can you share about your professional experience prior to TMI?***

I attended Cal Poly Pomona and National University for my undergraduate education. I have received a B.A. in Behavioral Science and a Master of Arts in Business and Human Resource Management. I first began working with people with disabilities with Community Options. I was a job coach and later a job developer. Then I worked with the ARC of San Diego where I was doing job development and supervising case managers. Next, I worked with Maximus where I focused on the welfare population. At first I was responsible for job development and marketing. My last position there was Operations Manager, in which I directed the Southbay Region Welfare to Work Program. Prior to coming to TMI I made some changes in my life and through those changes I was able to return to work with people with disabilities-where my passion is.

***So what does Rachelle, a.k.a. "Twin B", like to do during her spare time?***

Well, I love to play basketball. I was on my college team at Cal Poly Pomona. I love to fish. The biggest fish I've ever caught was in Tomball, Texas. It was a ten-pound catfish. I really enjoy spending time with my beautiful ten-year old daughter and with my husband, whom I just recently married in May.

***Can you tell us unique things that we do not know about you?***

I am a poet and seven poems of mine have been published. In 1988 I received the Golden Poet Award for a poem I wrote called *Weep Not My Widow*. I wrote that poem in memory of my late aunt to her late husband. This poem is published in the 1988 American Anthology of Contemporary Poets. Another interesting experience is that when I was little, I was in commercials on television. I was in the California First Bank (now known as Union Bank) commercial. When I was seven years old, I starred in a Nestle Crunch commercial after "Twin A" was rejected for having crooked teeth, which have now been adjusted through modern dentistry and the use of braces.

***You have a good sense of humor, but you have never taken advantage of your "twinhood" right? Or have you?***

Well, when we were in high school my twin and I traded Spanish classes because she was so much better in Spanish than I was. The teacher never caught us but the students knew. There was also this one time when we were freshmen in high school and we were dating a set of twin brothers and we would switch boyfriends when convenient. We dumped them because we outgrew them over the summer. And here's a weird one: my twin sister and I went into labor the same day, our daughters are only 18 hours apart.

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## PROGRAM NEWS

### Community Living

#### *Condolences*

Fred H., who was with TMI's Supported Living program, has passed away. He enjoyed going on walks and loved watching "The Price is Right." Our prayers are with his family, we are sorry for their loss. He will be missed.

#### *News & Congratulations*

Andrea Cedillo, CLS Coordinator, is newly engaged. Congratulations!

CLS Coordinator Erin Morris will be moving to Colorado to go back to school. We wish her the best of luck and she will be missed!

Martin M. moved into his new house. Enjoy your new home!

Teresa P. has a new dog. Have fun!

Mike and Melanie E. bought a new car. Way to go!

### Employment Solutions

#### *News & Congratulations*

Paula L. and Tabitha P. are new to TMI's Integrated Work program. Welcome!

Carolina S., Ricky R. and Janine B. graduated from the public schools TRACE program into Integrated Work.

Michael S., who currently works at the La Jolla Vons, successfully assisted a "Secret Shopper" and was recognized by the management staff at VONS.

Peter K. was hired in June by the La Jolla VONS to be a courtesy clerk.

## TMI Employment Solutions

### Better Economy Means More Jobs!

According to recent news, more jobs were created this past quarter than in the past decade! This has also been good news for **Employment Solutions** participants as 30 people were placed in great jobs this past quarter throughout San Diego County. Congratulations to:

**Trina – Feast On This**

**Kathleen – Carl's Jr.**

**Aaron – Elite Show Services**

**Jeffrey – Hamburger Factory**

**Alan – Miramar Medical Center**

**Jarrold – Sea World**

**Lupe – Job Options**

**Michael - Manpower**

**Brian – Wal Mart**

**Michael - VONS**

**Rodolfo – Job Options**

**Cynthia – Clairemont Friendship Center**

**Shaun – HMS Host Lindbergh Field**

**Pam – Albertsons**

**Shannon – Sea World**

**Zachary – Einstein Academy**

**Laurel – VONS**

**Benny – HMS Host**

**Jerry – 32<sup>nd</sup> St. Commissary**

**Charles – Wal Mart**

**Vielka – Albertsons**

**Mike – Home Goods**

**Peter – VONS**

**Paul – HMS Host**

**Frances – Manpower**

**Cynthia – ROSS Stores**

**Norma – ACE Hardware**

**Connie – US Customs Job Options**

**Elijah – Job Options**

**Kaycee – Barona Casino**

The combined dedicated hard work of Division Managers David May Jr., Julie Hadley, Cara Thompson, Nick Pelosi, Paola Osuna, Rachelle Gibson, Bridget Palmer, and Brent Ramsey is to be commended.

## FAS AWARDED GRANT

by Gary Miller

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) announced in May the agencies and programs that had been selected to receive Community Program Development Grants (Cycle 27). TMI's Forensic Advocacy Services was one of ten awards granted by the SCDD!

As announced on their website ([www.scdd.ca.gov](http://www.scdd.ca.gov)) TMI was awarded \$269,715.16 over a two-year period. This proposal, the Forensic Follow-up Coordination Project "will utilize collaboration with existing community programs and other generic resources to ensure a seamless transition and integration into community life for up to 30 individuals released from Porterville Developmental Center, prisons or other criminal justice facilities in and around San Diego County. This proposal will provide the following services: direct assistance to secure appropriate housing and reasonable employment; assistance in complying with probation or parole stipulations; assistance in assessing mental health services; referrals to relevant generic community resources; and other services and supports necessary to reduce recidivism."

Year two of the grant will provide an opportunity for TMI's FAS services to provide regional trainings throughout California for other Regional Centers and agencies interested in replicating TMI's unique Forensic Advocacy Services. At grant end TMI will plan and conduct a one-day statewide conference featuring experts in the field of forensic advocacy for people with developmental disabilities demonstrating state of the art advocacy efforts.

## 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 Interdisciplin-
- ary Team work to reunite biological families
- when it is in the best interest of the child.
- 
- Children and TMI foster families are pro-
- vided ongoing support and assistance. This
- support includes 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 par-
- ents 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 fos-
- ter parent, please contact Louanne Miller
- at (858) 467-0600 Ext. 316 or email her at
- [louannem@tmi-inc.org](mailto:louannem@tmi-inc.org).



# Staff's Corner

## New To Employment Solutions

Richard Szakalski has come on board with TMI as a CES Lead Facilitator. He is a welcome addition!

Michele Aldama, Enshurah Baca, Derek Cameron, Laurie Cohen, Sara Davis, Kendra Fletcher, Elijah Fuentes, Darla Hurlbut, Maria Johnson, Andrew Palasciano, Ivan Perez-Medina, Isaias Rivera, Raymond Sinsay, Margaret Whaley and Michael Wynne have all joined the CES team.

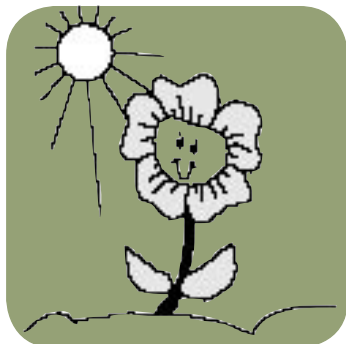
## New To Community Living

Walker DeWitt and Mayra Munoz have joined the Community Living team as a Coordinators. It is good to have you here!

Jeremy Stearns was promoted to a CLS Coordinator. Way to go!

Marina Asaro, Guracha Bati, Shelly Dickerson, Barbara Hamilton, Teresa Heath, Regina Heusser, Traci Hicks, Maxine Kibble, Walter Moore, Rachelle Patterson, Marsha Plummer, Brandise Reed, and Davian Thompson are all new to CLS.

Welcome to all of TMI's new staff!



## Farewell

It is off to Boulder, Colorado for Rebecca Treiber, TMI's energetic Director of Community Living Services. In just over two years as Director, Rebecca made phenomenal progress in increased program organization, improved staff training, setting clear and concise expectations and improved quality of services. She is commended for her strong work ethic, her openness to new ideas and commitment to people we serve. She was a very "hands on" Director who led by example. We will miss her, but know she will be amazing at whatever she does. Best Wishes, Rebecca!



*Spotlight - Continued from page 4*

- I knew you would be interesting to interview. Now on a serious note, what are some of your goals and ambitions?***
- I look forward to a long and happy life with my husband. I also look forward to operating a faith-based non-profit program that will assist churches to reach out to the community. They'll do so by introducing the community to resources such as health services, housing, employment, and domestic violence information.
- Rachelle, I am positive that you will continue to make an impact on the lives of many individuals. Thanks again for allowing us to get to know you on a more personal level.***

# 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

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Karen Mitrovich-Dotson, *Director*  
Lindsey Roberge, *CLS Staff Representative*  
Maureen Burris, *CES Staff Representative*

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