



TOWARD MAXIMUM INDEPENDENCE

TMI is an exemplary non-profit agency with a long standing and solid reputation for "Best Practices" in providing personalized assistance and support to children and adults with disabilities enabling them to live, work and participate in their communities by offering

Real Choices, Real Possibilities.

ISSUE #53

SPRING 2007

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

TMI Celebrates Excellence: 2006 Employees of the Year

In December 2006 TMI recognized the extraordinary efforts of three outstanding staff members.

Sandra LaCrue ~ Community Living Services Employee of the Year

Sandra has been with TMI for over two years. She works as a Community Support Facilitator with individuals who receive Independent Living Services. She brings her sensitivity and experience as the mother of a son with disabilities to her work. The people she supports, David, Lorelee and Rosemary would be the first to tell you about the significant improvements in the quality of their lives, which Sandra has helped them achieve. Sandra has focused on budgeting and saving money and that has made it possible for David and Lorelee to refurnish their home and take two vacations, one to Disneyland and one to Laughlin. She helped Rosemary to reconnect with her 17 year-old son, who she put up for adoption when he was an infant because she wanted him to have the best life possible. Though he lives in Texas, they are now able to write and call one another. Recently Sandra brought Rosemary to the office where she proudly shared her son's prom pictures. Sandra's positive attitude and cheerful demeanor make her a favorite among her colleagues. She truly cares a great deal about those she supports!



Nanae Murch ~ Community Employment Solutions Employee of the Year

Nanae has worked at TMI for the past four years and is dedicated to providing the best support possible to all the people she assists in the workplace. She has a very supportive relationship with the individuals both on and off the worksite, always treating them with the utmost dignity and respect. Employers say that Nanae really works well with TMI supported employees, coworkers and supervisors. Her flexibility and motivation to support individuals requires that she log hundreds of miles and is familiar with a variety of employers. Although Nanae resides in Carlsbad and primary assignments have been in North County, she has also supported people in downtown San Diego and Mira Mesa. She has become familiar with jobs at TJ Maxx, Target, Albertsons, VONS, HRSC Department of Defense, Job Options—Camp Pendleton, Home Depot, Weiser Security, and others. Nanae is always a team player and well respected by her colleagues!



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Laura Gonzalez ~ TMI's Administrative Employee of the Year

Laura has been at TMI for almost two years. She was first hired as a Coordinator in Community Living after moving to San Diego from Texas where she worked as a case manager for an agency, which ran group homes for persons with developmental disabilities. She was quick to adopt TMI's values and philosophy. Laura has a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and is working on her Master's Degree. In September 2006 Laura was promoted to Assistant Director of CLS. She has been a great addition to the department and the agency. She is professional, knowledgeable, and highly respected by her staff and peers as well as those she comes into contact with outside the agency. Laura manages to remain calm under pressure, especially when faced with controversial issues or difficult situations. She is an active member of TMI's Management team, facilitates the TMI Council of Persons Served and is a member of the People First Conference Committee.



Congratulations Sandra, Nanae and Laura! Your hard work, dedication and loyalty are an inspiration to us all!

TMI EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

Project SEARCH Update ~ Sharp HealthCare Hospitals

As reported in the last newsletter, Project SEARCH had established a relationship with Sharp HealthCare hospitals (internally referred to as entities) to place people with disabilities in competitive jobs. Project SEARCH is partially funded by a grant awarded by the CA State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Project Search Manager Brent Ramsey and CES Director Joseph Nacario have established recruitment protocols with Dan Dredla, Director of Business Development at Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center, Kathi Lencioni, CEO at Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital, and Connie Duquette, HR Director of Sharp Metropolitan Medical Campus, which includes Sharp Memorial Hospital and Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women. "Working with the Sharp HealthCare Executives has been a tremendous experience. They are very excited to place applicants with disabilities in hospital health care positions," says Joseph Nacario. Brent Ramsey has been working extensively with several departments at several entities and has conducted job/task analyses for sterilization technician, nutrition-diet aide, and transporter driver. Brent Ramsey says, "I am impressed with the overall operations with Sharp HealthCare. Meeting with their staff has been very valuable and a great experience. I am confident that Project SEARCH employees will have a great impact on employment for people with disabilities."

ARCA Conference "A New Day California 2007"

Joseph Nacario attended and presented at the Association for Regional Center Agencies State Conference on February 5th and 6th, 2007 in San Diego. Terri Delgadillo, Director of the CA Department of Developmental Services addressed the current state of the service delivery system and cited employment for people as one of the top priorities in our state as well as affordable housing, supported living, and addressing the needs for individuals with autism. Dr. Tom Pomeranz, President/CEO of Universal LifeStiles discussed transformation of facility programs to a community-based focus on employment. "The Hidden Workforce: Hiring People with Disabilities is Good Business Sense" was presented by Joseph in which supported employment agencies must consider sound business principles when seeking employment for people with disabilities. People with disabilities represent the highest unemployed demographic group in the United States and California ranks no. 38 in having people employed in the community, which came as a big surprise for regional center administrators in attendance.

TMI Supported Employees Comparison with National Rankings

Washington State is ranked Number 2 in placing people with developmental disabilities in the United States. Linda Rolfe, Director of WA Developmental Disabilities, Ray Jensen, Director of King County Developmental Divisions, Mary Stehlow, Program Manager of Clark County Disability Services, and Jane Boone, Manager of Thurston-Mason County Department of Developmental Disabilities also presented at the ARCA Conference. Their presentation “Getting Serious About Employment” challenged California to prioritize program transformation to focus on fully-integrated employment.

How does TMI and San Diego monthly wages compare to national rankings and with Washington State?

Category	San Diego	TMI	King County WA	National
*Individual Placement	* Combined \$288.24	Supported Employment \$708.50	\$1,022.88	\$241.46
* Group Supported	Not Available	Integrated Work \$326.67	\$383.54	\$187.79

TMI Employment Solutions staff Nick Pelosi, Brent Ramsey, and Joseph Nacario initiated networking with Washington colleagues nearly three years ago and have presented at the Ellensburg WA Employment Conference over the past two years.

Congratulations to these CES Division Managers and those they helped to find new jobs!

Taunya Bachellor

Megan B. – Albertsons
Dalla B. – Weiser Security
Bryce S. – Longs Drug Store

David May Jr.

Brandie H. – VONS
Noel P. – VONS

Deana Sanchez

Angelina P. – Wal Mart

Morena Sevenello

Israel C. – Job Options

Julie Hadley

Luke S. – Longs

Mary Barnhart

Anthony D. – Home Goods
Domini M. - Souplantation
Veronica O. - VONS
Thomas R. - COSTCO

Nick Pelosi

Ben W. – Best Friends Pets
Hoang N. – Dollar Tree
Jesse R. - VONS

Thank You Maureen Burris!

Tracy C. – Dave & Busters
Tim C. – Dave & Busters
James A. – Dave & Busters



FAREWELL FRIEND ~ BEST WISHES TO JOSEPH NACARIO

Joseph Nacario was bid a sad farewell on April 27th after nearly 8 years at TMI. He has accepted a position as Director of Employment and Day Program Services at Jay Nolan in Los Angeles. Joseph began his tenure at TMI in July of 1999 when he was hired as a Coordinator/Project Specialist in Community Employment Services. He was soon promoted to Associate Director and in 2002 became the Director of what is now called Community Employment Solutions. Joseph has had an amazing career at TMI. He has earned the love and respect of his staff, peers, and colleagues in the community. Remarkably, Joseph knows many of the 400 individuals receiving services in Employment Solutions by name and is always available to them to discuss issues and/or concerns or to celebrate their many accomplishments while working “on the job” in the community. Joseph has been very instrumental in securing non-traditional jobs for people with disabilities throughout San Diego County.



Thanks to Joseph’s leadership, TMI has earned a solid reputation for its business approach in the development of corporate partnerships with employers, which has led to numerous jobs in grocery store chains, like VONS and Ralphs. Most recently, Joseph helped to secure a program development fund grant from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities entitled “Project SEARCH” which targets employment opportunities in hospitals and medical centers, further reinforcing the impact he has had on the development of non-traditional employment for people with disabilities. Project SEARCH is a replication of a national program based out of Cincinnati.

We are all going to miss seeing Joseph in his Hawaiian shirts, wearing flip flops, playing his guitar and singing for all of us at every TMI event! We are sad to see him leave, but wish him the very best in his new position.

TMI STAFF AND COUNCIL HOLIDAY PARTIES



TMI Employees Taunya Bachellor, Jen O’Toole and Julian Herrera with Friends



TMI Employees David Strumsky and Cathena Ferrero



TMI Client Chuck and Julian Herrera



TMI Clients David & Lorelee and John & Anna

California Supported Living Network's 2007 Leadership Conference Is Coming!

The Network's Leadership Conference is once again coming to sunny San Diego, CA and is being held at the Kona Kai Resort and Spa on May 8th & 9th. It is a great opportunity for those interested in the continuing growth of quality Supported Living Services to gain new information, network with stakeholders in SLS from across the state and strive together for innovation in our field.

The conference provides information which is extremely helpful to veteran service providers, agency representatives or those hoping to provide SLS in their community. People who receive services, family members, Regional Center representatives and support staff have found previous conferences to be very valuable.

Each year the Network seeks out leaders in service provision throughout California, as well as nationally recognized speakers to offer dynamic sessions. A featured speaker at the 2007 Conference will be Colleen Wieck, Executive Director of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities for over 25 years. Again this year there will be a State of the State panel to give current information on services.

For more information on other exciting topics and speakers, visit www.supportedliving.com. Hope to see you there!

17th Annual People First Self-Advocacy Conference

The San Diego chapter of People First is busy planning another amazing Self-Advocacy Conference to be held May 12th and 13th. It is an opportunity for self-advocates, their staff, and families to share successes, concerns, and their commitment to the People First movement. This year's theme is 'Celebration of Life' and the different workshops will address important topics such as Healthy Lifestyles, Leadership, Transition & Change, and Abuse Prevention. David and Lorelee S. are some of the many speakers selected and will be holding a workshop on making a healthy lifestyle fun. Come out and support David and Lorelee, learn more about self-advocacy, and meet new friends. For more information about People First and the conference visit: www.sandiegopeoplefirst.com.

TMI Says a Sad Goodbye to a Valued Employee and Friend All Too Soon

Michael Wynne passed away on February 3rd in the home he shared with friend and roommate David May, TMI CES Division Manager. Michael had worked with TMI since 2004 as a job coach with persons who were deaf and hard of hearing. His ashes were scattered at sea by his two surviving sons Michael Jr. and Marlon, both of Austin, Texas. He is also survived by four sisters and one brother, all who live in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Michael will be greatly missed by all of us!



Mike at TMI's Holiday Party in December

Staff's Corner

New In Employment Solutions

Sonia Ghosn • Robert Hansen • Ursula Martinez • Christopher Mendez • Samerah Razzouki • Returning Sheila Sample • Division Manager Morena Sevenello • Barbara Smith • Carey Strazzulla • Celeste Urea • Jennifer Ware • Jonna Wolf

New In Family Support Services

•Social Worker Jillian Graham

New In Community Living

Coordinator Melania Abdessian • Christina Bailey • David Brown • William Howard • Gary Jellison • Delane Johnson • Kimberly Jordan • Nakisha Kelley • Joseph Kinkead • Christina LaScala • Eladio Melendez • Sharlene Ornelas • Alma Quiros • Kimberly Ragsdale

Welcome to all of you!

Community Living

News & Congratulations

Congratulations to CLS Facilitators Frank & Jessica Lujan on the birth of their new daughter.

David and Lorelee S. were chosen as workshop presenters for San Diego People First's Annual Conference. Way to go!

We welcome Adriana P. to the program and would like to congratulate her on the upcoming birth of her daughter.

Thanks to Delores C.'s CLS Facilitator, Cynthia Frear, she is getting out and about in the community again. Enjoy!

Congratulations to Renee Cook on making employee of the month at your new job!

We are so very proud of you Terri L. on the amazing progress you and your daughter have made over the past two months. Congratulations of being reunited with Rebecca!

Trinity F. received Section 8 assistance. Congratulations!

Sean S. found and moved into his own new apartment. All the best in your new home!

Betty W. has moved into a new, active senior community. We wish you all the best there!

McGinn M. started a new job at VIP World. Way to go!

Micheale T. finally had surgery on her foot. We wish you a speedy recovery.

Trinka S. received a raise at her job. Congratulations!

Get well wishes to Amy S. Good luck getting back on your feet!



Community Employment

News & Congratulations

Congratulations to Lead Facilitator Cecilia Ortega and Facilitator Artie Ortega on the arrival of your niece/grand daughter, Soila Isabella! She is beautiful!

Angelina P. started a new job at Walmart. Best of luck!

Claudia D., Jose L. and Mayra B. are volunteering at Sunrise Assisted Living in Bonita and have made many new friends. Keep up the good work!

Greg P., Joey C. and Russell M. are volunteering at the National City Library. They really enjoy the work they do and the staff appreciates all their help and support!

Larry M. celebrated his birthday at Disneyland and had a wonderful time!

Ryan T. had a great time in Las Vegas with his family!

Michael P. enjoyed spending time with family and friends in Arizona. We are so glad you had a good time!

Alan V. took a week off to relax at home and listen to The Beatles, his favorite musical artists.

Family Support

News & Congratulations

TMI FSS would like to welcome these new foster families to our agency: Jesus and Alexandra Calderon, John and Consolacion Shankula, Silvia Perez, Maria Oliva, Alicia Castillo and Emmanuel Madrid, Irma Sanchez and Denise Villagrana, Laura Lane, Esperanza Juarez, Kerry and Heather Rhodes, Richard and Blanca Hale, Hilario and Glorinda Ruelas, and Jose and Maria Alvarado.

Thank you for opening your hearts and homes for these beautiful children!

TMI FSS would also like to welcome these new foster children to the agency: Roxy, Barbara, Joseph, Trinnie, Terrence and America. We are dedicated to giving you our very best!

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TMI's Foster Families of the Quarter: Claudia Valle & Yorleny Gonzales

TMI Family Support Services would like to congratulate Claudia Valle and Yorleny Gonzales who have been recognized as "Foster Parents of the Quarter"! Claudia and Yorleny have been foster parents to Jose B. since 5/5/06. Since becoming foster parents, Claudia and Yorleny have experienced an array of obstacles with regard to meeting the unique needs of their foster child and have met each obstacle with creative and passionate efforts; each time putting their own personal lives on hold for the sake of Jose. Those who have served Jose have commended Claudia and Yorleny for being the most involved, creative, organized, and easy-going foster parents they have ever worked with. TMI Family Support Services would like to thank Claudia and Yorleny for all of their hard work, dedication, love, and commitment. Keep up the good work!!

TMI's Foster Parent of the Quarter: Ruth Abdelmoneim

TMI Family Support Services would like to congratulate Ruth Abdelmoneim who has been recognized as "Foster Parent of the Quarter!" Being a foster parent may be challenging at times, however, the effort and dedication put forth by all of our foster parents is greatly appreciated. Ruth has been a foster parent with TMI since February 2006. She has opened up her home to children in our program with an open mind and a strong positive attitude. From day one, Ruth has been a strong advocate for the children in her home. She has made a positive influence in many areas of these children's lives. It is through her love, support, and dedication that the children are able to say that they have a family to come home to. It is always great to see how flexible Ruth is and how she is always willing to try new things if it is in the best interest of the children. Her ability to work as part of a team with those who support the children in her home is to be commended. We appreciate how reliable Ruth is and how she is always willing to lend a hand to other foster parents in our program. We admire the ability with which she communicates with her children and how she is available during challenging times. TMI Family Support Services would like to thank Ruth for her commitment, support, and the love she provides. We look know Keshawn B. and Terrance L. will continue to thrive under Ruth's care.

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TMI FSS is also excited to welcome new additions to our dynamic team of Social Workers and Behavioral Consultants: Social Worker Jillian Graham and Behavioral Consultant: Jennifer Semmes. We look forward to an amazing journey ahead!

The FSS Picnic will be on June 16, 2007 from 12:00-3:00 pm at MacKenzie Creek Park, 2775 MacKenzie Creek Road, Chula Vista, 91914. There will be food, games, prizes, and even a clown!! We look forward to seeing you all there!

Congratulations and Good Luck to Jessica R. who recently turned 22 years old and has identified a supported living agency. Jessica is currently in the process of being assessed for supported living services and is hoping to move into her own apartment with a live-in roommate within the next few months. Jessica has been residing with June and Peter Si-Fuentes since 7/7/1999. Her foster family has played an integral part in helping Jessica to develop into the "diva" that she is today and we thank the Si-Fuentes family for providing Jessica with the support and direction she needs to make this transition a success.

Congratulations Nicholas!! TMI Family Support Services is proud to announce the upcoming graduation of Nicholas M. He recently turned 18 years old and will be graduating with a certificate of recognition from a San Diego High School this June 2007. Nicholas has been very active with his high school, participating with the ROTC program and marching in parades.

Nicholas has also held several jobs on his campus including working in the school cafeteria, as a custodian assistant, with the recycling program, newspaper collection, and helping in the library. Nicholas hopes to transition with his biological family after graduation where he may receive support to find a job and more independent living experience. TMI would like to offer special recognition to Nicholas's alternative parents, Joe and Bertha Morales for the years of outstanding love, care, and encouragement they have provided to Nicholas.

Save the Date ~ TMI Blood Drive

TMI's next blood drive will be held Tuesday, May 15, 2007 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at TMI. We continue to have terrific support, so help "Make a Difference in Life." Please join us! Call Gary at 858.467.0600 ext. 311 for an appointment.

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.

■ NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Contributing Journalists

Ginger Cohen
Connie Saverino
Tracy Guzman
Laura Gonzalez

Joseph Nacario
Sandra Wyspianski
Paola Osuna
Louanne Miller

Design Layout

Ginger Cohen

Editor

Connie Saverino



Main Office

4740 Murphy Canyon Rd., #300
San Diego, CA 92123

Ph: 858-467-0600 / Fax: 858-467-9059

North County Office

1900 Sunset Rd., Suite E
Escondido, CA 92025

Ph: 760-839-5255 / Fax: 760-839-5281

www.tmi-inc.org

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

