

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 #54

HOLIDAY ISSUE

DECEMBER 2007

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



IN
THIS
ISSUE

- TMI Goes Country
- Caught In The Act
- Holiday Message: What Makes Us Happy
- Program News
- Save The Dates
- Staff Corner
- Spotlight Interview
- TMI Picnic Highlights

What Makes Us H A P P Y! By Sandra Wyspianski

Sing along with me.....c'mon - everyone!



It's the most wonderful time of the year. There'll be much mistletoeing and hearts will be glowing, when loved ones are near . . . It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Ahhh....the holidays! I abide a great love for this time of the year and I can thank my parents for this. My childhood....so many memories! Decorating the house, holiday music playing from the stereo, my dad teaching me to wrap gifts that, once done, looked like packages worthy of sitting under Heaven's own tree! We would go caroling in our neighborhood. Can you imagine? Caroling - do people do that anymore? Visiting with friends, house parties, neighbors stopping by to deliver a gift of goodies, freshly baked with love from recipes passed down within their family for generations.

I'll give myself away here - I don't mind. That, dear readers, was my life in the 60's. It really was an amazing time. Yes - Vietnam was raging and the cultural wars that we still fight today were exploding all around us. Even so, those years (much like the decades preceding them) were what I believe the "last years of our innocence." It was an amazing time in which to grow up!

While it's always good to let yourself be taken away for a trip down memory lane, reality always snaps us back to the present. The world has certainly changed in forty years. Every year seems to gain speed. Even friends of mine in their "20's" comment on how quickly the time seems to fly. When I think long and hard on this, I think we can give the credit to technology. Think about it. In today's world each and every one of us can garner information within seconds because of the Internet and Google!

Continued . . . page 2

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

What Make Us Happy . . . continued

Instantaneous information! Apart from speeding our lives up (which I'm not sure is all that great) we can learn so much about so many great things. We can now reach out beyond our hometown newspaper to see what's happening in other parts of the world anytime we like thanks to the Internet. We can choose a worthy cause by giving to people in other cities or continents. Look at our own San Diego . . . the recent fires ravaged our county just four years after the last fire did so much damage and what did we see? We saw people coming together to form one big community. This is what San Diego natives refer to as "the big, small town city."

As the world watched from their computers and televisions they witnessed that which makes our community what it is. Who needs FEMA anyway! We had each other - all of us pulling together alongside our local political leaders and organizations giving aid to those in need. And - we did so in a heartbeat. Qualcomm Stadium was set up and operational in hours - not days - running so smoothly it would have made a seasoned core man proud. As San Diegans' braced themselves those first few nights, people came out of the woodwork offering support, a place to stay, room for livestock, food, supplies - whatever was needed - the entire community gave with hearts wide open! I was simply in awe at the sight! Did the government learn from their mistakes surrounding Katrina and the people of New Orleans? I would hope so; but I think this community showed the world how it's done!

My point through all of this is - Community! Our backyards have grown over the past few decades, that's for sure! While we still keep them pretty and clean, some with white picket fences, some with stone pavers, we're no longer content to just stroll outside and take a nap in our hammock under our favorite Maple tree. Every once in a while it's nice to open up the gate and take a stroll beyond our yard, beyond our block, outside of our neighborhood and into the world where we can see new things, learn new cultures, talk to people with different mind-sets and visions. In doing so, we grow as human beings. Remembering it's not "all about us" helps us to respect and honor other opinions and acknowledge the meaning of "it's OK to disagree."

And finally, to believe undoubtedly in oneself and in the goodness of others is a noble quality. Knowledge is power they say - I don't know - maybe I'm just not into power. I think knowledge helps temper our souls; helps gives us a better view from outside our box. Knowledge "seasons" us.

Coming back full circle, it's the end of yet another year and despite how quickly it "flew by," I decided I was happy with the year on a whole. I feel blessed and fortunate for my life. I decided to check in with my co-workers and ask them just what makes them happy and here's what they had to say!

knowing I have great relationships; my husband and daughter; chocolate; knowing that my family loves me and we have each other; my mother makes me happy; flowers; traveling to new places and then coming home; bouncy balls; a beautiful day; money; when everything is going right!; a beautiful day on the golf course; vacation, wine; my job and the people I work with; getting up in the morning and starting a new day; having a good run with no pain; when I'm with my friends and family; really good dips; when my boyfriend makes me laugh; my family loves me and we have each other; miles's fuzzy-wuzzy kisses; the sunshine; when I see others' happy; relaxing with a good book.

S a v e T h e D a t e s

T M I C o u n c i l P a r t y - D e c e m b e r 7 t h

Being held at the Santa Clara Recreation Center. Flyers were sent out and RSVP's are due by November 30th. See Sally Wiese at TMI Reception to RSVP and for any additional information you may need.

S t a f f H o l i d a y P a r t y - D e c e m b e r 1 4 t h

Being held at the Admiral Kidd Club. Invitations are in your staff mailboxes and also available in the front office reception area. RSVP IS REQUIRED by December 3rd for you and a guest. See Sally Wiese to RSVP and for any additional information you may need.

Program News

Checking In With Family Support Services

The FSS Crew would like to welcome all the new foster families who have joined our dynamic team over the past year:

Laura Lane
Richard and Blanca Hale
Hilario and Glorinda Ruelas
Jose and Maria Alvarado
Isaac and Cynthia Jimenez
Ricardo and Blanca Lora
Joel and Elizabeth Castro
Maria Garcia and Miguel Moya
Ivan Gonzalez and Adriana Calderon
Carlos and Marisol Velazquez
Erendira Avila
Francisco Martinez and Leticia Ramirez
Benjamin and Maria Arias
Flordeliza Brand
Miguel and Patricia Cortez
Juan and Ursula Gandara
Norma Rojas and Alejandro Rodriguez

Thank you for opening your hearts and homes!

We also want to welcome the foster children who have joined our family over the past year:

David, America, Jackie, Terrence, Richard, Max, Justin, Manny, Samantha, Felix, Pricilla, Jesse, Stephan, Akida, Shane, Trayvon, Ashley, Michael, Jordan, Brandon.

Working Overtime With Employment Solutions

Congratulations on your new jobs!

Terry Peterson was recently hired at Sharp Hospital in Chula Vista as a Pharmacy runner.

Delores West was recently hired as a Security Guard for Elite Show Services.

Christine Lingo and Theodore Klinman are now working for Vons as Courtesy Clerks.

Bianca Clements is working at Weiser as a Security Tagger.

James Catalao completed 90 day probation successfully at CVS – Rancho Bernardo!!

Evangelina Cruz successfully completed 90 days of probation at CVS – Escondido!!

Zeke Stern aced the interview and started working at HomeGoods – Encinitas!!

Byron Stewart and Diana Diaz got their very first jobs with Weiser in Escondido and San Marcos respectively.

Linda Ramirez got a job at Big Lots in College Grove!

Eyerusalem Tsega got a job as a Utility Worker in Food and Beverage Service at the San Diego International Airport.

Lawrence Tran got a job as Stock Worker at MCAS.

April Murray got a job as Stock Clerk at Biglots in Clairemont. She loves her job.

Niaman-Marcus in Fashion Valley congratulated Ana Lowe who has worked for five years as dishwasher.

All of the Employment Facilitators on the North County team - thank you for the genuine and caring support you provide to our clients, to each other and to me!! You are the reason we are so successful!!

Congratulations to Penelope Lewis who competed 9/16/07 in 3 swim meets in the Senior Olympics. She won the Gold in the 50 yard, took the Gold in the 100 yard and swam away with the silver in the 200 yard!

Living Large With Community Living

Don Gaskin traveled with our very own David May November 3rd to the Mata Expo in Ontario. He saw many friends and looked at many exhibition booths. There were over 9,000 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in attendance.



STAFF'S CORNER

Congratulations

FSS Social Worker, Jillian Graham and her husband Bob on the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Charlotte - born 11/9/07 weighing in at 8 lbs, 8 oz & 20" long!

Congratulations to Cecelia and Artie Ortega on the arrival of their new nephew and grandson, Sergio Ortega, Jr. He's a cutie!

Promotions & Congrats!

The following Management Staff were recently promoted:

Ginger Cohen,
Director of Finance & Facilities;
Sandra Wyspianski,
Director of Information Services;
Laura Gonzalez,
Director of Community Living;
Gary Miller,
Director of Employment Solutions;
Brent Ramsey,
Assoc. Director of Employment Solutions

TMI Blood Drive

The Blood Drive went very well. 17 people were able to donate, which was a wonderful turnout. We were "shy" 6 people, but were grateful to those who made it! We will be having another Blood Drive this spring, most likely in May, although the date has not been set. Thanks again for all the donations.

New Management Staff

Dawna Morse - IW Division Manager
Ruben Vega - FSS Social Worker
Angela Pagan - CLS Coordinator
Chu Tang - CLS Coordinator
Lisa Green - SE Lead Facilitator

Hired in Employment Services

Widget Kidd-McClure
Sandra Barnett
Fanny Alonso
Melissa Cobas
Abraham Dominquez

Angela Fanning
Marco Calvillo
Denise Love
Ann Ferrier
Crystal Finley
Sheri Coffee
Amy Catale

Hired in Community Living Services

Kevin Peterson
Lirly Ramirez
Anna Cousins
Lynn Norman-Lopez
Esther Kang
Maria Miranda
Sylvia Valencia
Rumiana Abouni
Christina Fong
Tom Ruffino
Alejandra Torres
Gyda Johnson

Rosa Valencia
Brenna Garhartt
Paul Guimond
Vanessa Rodriguez
Argentina Penhos
Sylvia Wanyama
Brian Howard
Atemkeng Nven
Rose Mary Tovar
Summer Connery
Vanessa Baca
Laura Betanco
Dianna Fisher
Joyce Kuklis-Valencia
Rochelle Ward

T M I G o e s C o u n t r y !

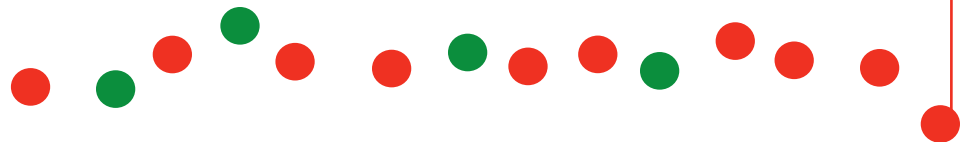
By Gary Miller, Director of Employment Solutions

TMI applied for and was awarded start-up funds to expand our Integrated Work Program, (ADC) to Lake County California. Lake County is located in Northern California near the wine country of Sonoma and Napa Valleys. This is our first expansion effort outside of San Diego County.

The application process was intense. First, came the proposal, which included a program design describing our services. The top five proposals were chosen for the next step in the process; a lengthy interview with Redwood Coast Regional Center Staff. This past spring, TMI was notified that we had been awarded the funds to start our project! These services will begin in June this coming year.

The next step for TMI Community Employment Staff will be to find suitable office space. Our probable location will be in Lakeport, a small town located right on the shores of beautiful Clear Lake. Clear Lake is the largest natural lake in California. Lake Tahoe, which is larger, is also located in Nevada.

This is an exciting opportunity for TMI. It provides us with the chance to support individuals who live outside of San Diego County and the challenge of developing a new program from the ground up. Could there be job sites in the wineries and vineyards of Lake County? Stay tuned!



C a u g h t I n T h e A c t !

By Laura Gonzalez

A new feature to the newsletter gives us an opportunity to recognize some of the exceptional things we have "caught" TMI staff doing.

Kim Jordan, CLS Facilitator - saw a need for adaptive equipment and assisted the person she supports to find those resources.

Jan Mertens, CLS Roommate - opened up her home to someone supported by TMI and her two staff during the October wildfires.

Tom & Christina LaScala, CLS Roommate & Relief - Great job with a creative evacuation plan during the wildfires.

Jon Coleman, CLS Roommate - Showing great flexibility as support needs change and actively pursuing enrichment opportunities for the individual he supports.

Rekha Mehta and her Integrated Work crew did volunteer work at Qualcomm Stadium during the recent fires. What an awesome way to get involved in community.

Great Job! Who knows who we will catch next.



Spotlight Interview

By Paola Osuna

Many of us are not fond of change. We see challenges as obstacles and not succeeding the first time around most likely influences us not to try again. Fortunately, not everyone has this mindset. I have had the honor of working with a young man, Fred J., for the past couple years. I invite you to read the following interview, which reminded me of the importance of acceptance, perseverance, will-power, and true desire to succeed.

Good afternoon Fred! It's been a long road of ups and downs for the Fred I sit with today, compared to the Fred I met almost 3 years ago when you first came to Family Support Services as a foster child.

Itsurehas... Lifewas sooverwhelmingformeattimes. Ihavegonethroughs muchthroughthelastcoupleofyears. I knowIhavedonethingsthatIwishIhadnot, butitisthroughthatwhichIwasabletolearnmylessonsandlearnmore about the person that I am and want to become.

I know we all make decisions that we regret, but how were you able to switch gears and go from the "kid" that maybe showed up to 1 class per day in high school and whose life was getting consumed by drugs, alcohol, and bad choices to the man that is making great choices today?

Well, when I was placed with my first TMI foster family I felt so welcomed and cared for, but I had a lot of difficulty accepting help that was being offered to me. After many bad choices I had not only let down those who supported me but I had let myself down. I had always talked about receiving a high school diploma, mastering my guitar and skateboarding skills, and having a good job. It wasn't until I accepted the fact that I needed help and support that I was able to change my path. I'm really grateful to my current foster family, especially my foster father because he pushed me to keep going when things got challenging. I have a lot of trust in my foster father and value his guidance. I successfully completed a rehabilitation program, I continue to attend community support meetings, I lead an alcohol and drug free life, and this summer I received my high school diploma. I like the feeling of success. The moment I reach one goal, I'm thinking of the next thing I want to accomplish. I also feel that I have a guardian angel. But it wasn't until I took the time to look for him deep inside me that I was able to succeed.

So you have accomplished great goals thus far. Many of us are so proud of you. However, I'm excited to hear about what you are working on now and new goals that you have set for yourself.

Believe it or not, I enrolled in adult school. I know school has never been easy for me, but I know that I need a good education to get a good job. I'm currently taking classes in building maintenance. I'll be able to transfer these credits to a junior college where I want to get an Associate Degree in Music. I have an ongoing daily goal of staying off drugs and alcohol. It has not been easy but I am proud to say that I AM going to keep it up. My next big goal is getting a job. I want to save money in order to get my own apartment. I feel that I will be able to reach all these goals because I believe in myself and I have a lot of support around me.

Fred, I can only imagine the will power and inner strength that you have. What has been your main source of motivation?

It's taken me a long time to realize that I have made mistakes and most likely I will make more mistakes in life. I think the key for me has been that I finally accept myself- this includes my strengths, weaknesses, past, and what I want for myself. I have been lucky to have so many people around me that not only care about me but have supported me even at my lowest and most difficult times. I guess I now really do believe in myself.

What helpful tips can you share with those going through some challenging or difficult times?

I think I would tell them not to let others lose faith in them, but most importantly to never lose faith in them. Many people have told me a lot of negative things about me and my choices, but the things that stood out the most were those that expressed high expectations of me and a lot of faith in me. In other words, just DON'T give up. I didn't accomplish all my goals the first time around. Some things I've had to work harder for than others. But all these things have only made me stronger. I guess it helps to keep in mind that it's not easy but you'll get there.

Fred, thank you for taking the time to share your experience with us. Know that we are proud of your accomplishments and look forward to seeing your ongoing success. Keep making us proud of you!!!

A n n u a l P i c n i c H i g h l i g h t s

TMI held its' annual consumer "Picnic at the Bay" on October 19th. This year the planning committee decided to host the event from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in hopes of drawing more people to the event and draw we did!! We had a great turnout and the weather couldn't have been nicer. Our theme centered on Halloween and included many fun activities including a Halloween costume contest, cakewalk, volleyball games, horseshoes and, of course, walks along the beach. Staff and consumers had a wonderful time and are already looking forward to our next celebration...our annual Client Holiday Party, which will be held on December 7th.



Brent Ramsey - Master Griller shows off a sample of how a burger is "done right!"



Howard Brauer and Vanessa Baca came in costume looking awesome! Howard won "Scariest" costume and Vanessa received an award for one of the best costumes.



Martha Contreras, Deana Sanchez and Pat Medlock checking it all out!

Great Picnic! Thanks To Everyone Who Participated!



Renee Morneau and Brandon Bauer are smiling pretty for the camera - great costumes!

O U R M I S S I O N

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.

T M I B O A R D O F D I R E C T O R S

- Chair - Jim Timlin
- Vice Chair/Treasurer - Pat Campbell
- Secretary - Tom Colligan
- Directors - Deb Blackson, Jim Fruehan, Alexandra Calderon
- Council Representative - Howard Brauer
- Staff Representative - Cathy Cosner

N E W S L E T T E R C O M M I T T E E

- Design Layout - Sandra Wyspianski
- Editor - Ginger Cohen
- Contributing Journalists - Mary Barnhart, Laura Gonzalez, Rachel Herriott, David May, Pat Medlock, Gary Miller, Louanne Miller, Paola Osuna, Brent Ramsey, Deana Sanchez, Sandra Wyspianski

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

