

Setting Sails



A Quarterly Publication For Friends And Consumers of San Antonio Independent Living Services

Winter 2009

Message from SAILS' Executive Director: Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is "Disability Employment Awareness Month" and communities should promote and encourage employers to hire persons with disabilities. According to the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), this effort to educate Americans about various issues related people with disabilities and employment actually began in 1945 when Congress declared and enacted a law that the first week in October each year be recognized as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." The word "physically" was

removed in 1962 and in 1988 the week was expanded to a month and named National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau,(The Survey of Income and Program Participation, June-September 2005) fewer than half of people with a disability between ages 21 and 64 are employed. Of this same group, or about 13.3 million people with disabilities found it difficult to obtain or retain employment. Moreover, people with severe disabilities were far less likely to be employed. Employment also varied due to disability type.

In 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau reported over 54 million people reported some level of disability. Most of these people want to go to work just as people without disabilities. With this stated, doesn't it make sense for employers to take a proactive role in hiring people with disabilities? Doesn't it make sense for all of us to help promote awareness and employment for people with disabilities?



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In Memory of Casey Hamilton

This Winter 2009 issue of Setting SAILS is devoted to the memory of Casey Hamilton who recently passed away. Casey worked at SAILS as a Peer Mentoring Specialist helping consumers who are visually impaired.

Casey was a warm and friendly person. She was also a wonderful employee.



She is missed by all of us.



SAILS Consumer Success Stories

Self-Esteem and Working

Bruce Orey



Crystal Roberts has been receiving disability benefits since November 2005.

She called San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) for work incentive counseling with Bruce A. Orey in March of this year, 2009.

She had this to say about her experience: "Mr. Orey, you have gone above and beyond the call of duty in helping me. I appreciate your explaining in detail to me how my disability benefits would be affected by my working. The experience of working has been wonderful. I got my independence back. I even lost weight. Your referrals to other agencies helped me deal with other issues as well. My disability kept me isolated. It hurt my sense of worth. I could hardly pay my bills. For five years I could not even find an appropriate dress to wear to church. Now I'm going back to church. I got my self-esteem back."

Darrell Ream Achieves Goals

Sandie Flanagan



Darrell Ream became a consumer at SAILS in March 2008. Darrell's goal is to go back to work, but first he needed to update his skills so he will be qualified for employment. SAILS referred him to Department of Assistive and

Rehabilitative Services for assistance.

He has graduated from Savant Achievement Center with perfect attendance and an A+ grade. He graduated on July 24th. SAILS was there to celebrate his achievement. He is currently working with DARS for vocational placement. Darrell states that since his involvement with SAILS, he hasn't had much time to do anything but school work. He is also waiting to get a call form SAHA to become eligible for Section 8. Darrell has all kinds of new beginnings in his life "He stated that he is becoming more focused on things he needs to accomplish to remain independent". Darrell's final goal was to lose weight. He did- 20 pounds!

SAILS Staff Advocates for Accessible Transportation

Sandie Flanagan and Bruce Orey

Gerardo Reyes visited SAILS in November of 2008. He is disabled and attending college. Recently he applied to VIA for their accessible VIA Trans services but was denied the service because his doctor's documentation was not specific enough for him to qualify for VIA Trans. SAILS staff assisted Mr. Reyes by through advocacy efforts with VIA. Staff assisted him in obtaining the right documentation and now he has the accessible services he very much needed!



Services and Benefits for Consumers



SAILS Support Groups

Young People's Group: This support group is for young people with disABILITIES who meet on the 1st Friday of each month from 1 – 3 pm.

People with disABILITIES: This group meets on the 1st Friday of each month from 1 – 3 pm. The participants are very active. They are involved in, but not limited to picnics at the park, enjoying the Harlequin Dinner Theater, participation in the King William's Fiesta Day, as well as other SAILS activities. The group features guest speakers, movies, discussion groups, and other topics of interest related to disABILITIES.

Family Members Support Group: This group meets on the 1st Friday of each month from 1 – 3 pm. Friends, family, and caregivers are welcome.

Life Skills for Successful Living: This group is sponsored by SAILS. The group meets on the 4th Thursdays of each month from 1 – 3 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Groups will start meeting in January of 2010
At the San Antonio Parks & Recreation
Lincoln TR Community Center
2915 E. Commerce St.
San Antonio, TX 78203

Contact Sandie Flanagan or Gloria Aguirre:
(210) 281-1878 or (800) 474-0295
SAILS Support Group meeting

AcessFest, October 2009

On October 11 SAILS staff participated in the AccessAbility Fest at the Institute of Texan Cultures. The event had exhibitors from the community who provide services to individuals with various disabilities.

The event gave SAILS staff the opportunity to raise awareness of the services available from the agency to many people in the community as well as to other provider agencies.



The public stopped by the booth for information relating to SAILS services

The TAIRS Conference Gloria Aguirre

I was very pleased to have the opportunity to attend the conference of the Texas Alliance of Information and Referral Services (TAIRS) that was held on October 14-16, 2009 in Corpus Christi, Texas. The theme was "Set Sail for Success." The purpose of TAIRS is to teach Referral Specialists how to provide the most current information and referrals to consumers.

After the conference I took the exam; I was so nervous about the test. Low and behold- I passed and received my certification too!

Gloria Aguirre is now a Certified Information and Referral Specialist





Calendar Dates for Oct, Nov and Dec

OCTOBER 2009 NATIONAL DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH.

NATIONAL DWARFISM AWARENESS MONTH, NATIONAL BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH, FAMILY HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH.

- 2 All Support Groups Annual Picnic—Comanche Park #3
- 9-12 Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living Conference in Fajardo, Puerto Rico
- 14-16 Gateway to Abilities (GAP) Meeting—American GI Forum
Texas Alliance of Information & Referral Services Conference in Corpus Christi, TX
- 20 Boston Gourmet Pizza Fundraiser
- 22 Achieving and Living Regardless of Ability—Central
Library Panel about
Independent Living and Disability 6pm to 8 pm
- 23 Haven for Hope Meeting 9 am
- 23 Social Security WISE meeting—Texas Workforce, 6723
S. Flores
- 31 BOARD RETREAT—Lions Field

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NOVEMBER 2009 NATIONAL ALZHEIMERS DISEASE/AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

- 1 Daylight Saving Time ends
- 6 Volunteer Luncheon
- 11 Veterans Day—American GI Forum Opening at Haven
for Hope
- 11 BOARD Meeting
- 13 SAILS Open House—6 to 7:30 pm
- 18 SILC meeting/SPIL Development—Laredo
- 26-27 THANKSGIVING—SAILS closed

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29	30					

DECEMBER 2009

- 4 Staff Christmas Luncheon
- 10 GAP Participant's Christmas Meeting
- 11 Support Groups Christmas Party at Lincoln Senior Center
1 to 3:30 pm
- 12 Country Christmas Party-Door in the Wall at Villita
Assembly Bldg
- Dec. 17 to Jan. 3 SAILS closed

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SAILS News and Donors



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SAILS Board of Directors Attending Annual Retreat

Kitty Brietzke, J.D.

On Saturday, October 31, 2009 San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) Board of Directors gathered at the Lions Field Clubhouse for annual training and fellowship with staff. Everyone met and welcomed the newest Board member, Rosanne Hernandez from United San Antonio Federal Community Credit Union.

Everyone enjoyed the meeting sessions and the board members look forward to next year's retreat!

Board Directors' Retreat





SAILS Hosts 5th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

By Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D

SAILS volunteers and their guests arrived at The Barn Door Restaurant Friday, November 6, 2009 around 11:30a.m. to enjoy a wonderful gathering at our 5th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. SAILS Volunteer Coordinator, Sandie Flanagan worked very hard with staff and planned so that more than 120 volunteers could be treated to a special meal which included either The Barn Door's special chicken-fried ribeye, chicken or delicious trout.

The guests received a warm welcome and sponsors special thanks. Sandie wasted no time announcing the winners of the Volunteer Organization of the Year-San Antonio's YouthBuild. This is a group of youth who work hard volunteering throughout the community and at SAILS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration and social gatherings. Patricia Hartley could not have been more surprised and humbled by the announcement that she had won SAILS Volunteer of the Year award. Patricia spends countless hours on a weekly basis helping out at SAILS with consumers and administrative support functions.

Finally, the cost of the meals and incidentals were graciously sponsored by our key sponsor Frost Bank, David Massey's Allstate, Julian Alvarez from Remodeling by Julian, Dr. Charlene Haynes, Manuel Gonzalez, the Council Family, and Mr. Lon Oakley Jr. and his wife Janine. SAILS depends on the generous help of corporate community and many individuals to host these types of events. We feel it is important to thank our volunteers who unselfishly give up their time, talent and money to help our cause. On behalf of our SAILS Board of Directors and staff I extend warmest gratitude to all our 2009 volunteers!

I also want to extend special thanks to Sandi Cavasos who represented our major donor Frost Bank, Le Paul who provided entertainment, Xavier Villarreal and family, SAILS staff and Jean and Steve from the Barn Door along with their staff. Lastly, special thanks to our volunteer Photographer, Donna Franklin from Keller Williams.



SAILS Volunteers enjoy luncheon



Patricia Hartley (center) receives Volunteer of the Year Award Sandie Flanagan (left) and Sandi Cavasos (right)



YouthBuild of San Antonio receives Volunteer Organization of the Year Award

SAILS Community Activities



SAILS appreciates sponsors: Sandi Cavasos for Frost Bank, Larry Saenz for NuStar Energy and David Massey for Allstate



The Shoup family enjoys the luncheon



Volunteers Michelle Wood, Donna Franklin and Rita Brogdon

Boston's Gourmet Pizza Supports SAILS and People with Disabilities

By Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D

Susan Stoval is the owner of Boston's Gourmet Pizza. She is committed to maintaining a diverse and customer-service oriented team of employees. It is obvious she cares about her community too.

I approached Susan a few months ago and asked her if SAILS could have fundraiser at Boston's. She did not hesitate to help out. On Tuesday, October 20, 2009, SAILS held an all day fundraiser encouraging people to come dine at the restaurant and enjoy their delicious food. Everyone had a great time, including SAILS staff. SAILS received a portion of the day's proceeds for bringing in so many extra guests!

I hope to see everyone at Boston's Gourmet Pizza in January 2010 for our next fundraiser. In the meantime, stop by and say hello to their staff and enjoy the fine food. By the way, they don't just serve pizza!



Boston's staff members hold a cooking and kitchen safety class for SAILS consumers



SAILS supporters attended the Fundraiser day



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OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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Mallika Rangarajan	Executive Administrative & HR Manager
Ricardo V. Rivas, EA	Accountant

Gloria Aguirre	IL/Outreach Specialist	Mary E. Blake	IL Skills Coordinator
Sandie Flanagan	I&R/ Volunteer Coordinator	Bruce Orey	CWIC
Albert Pulido	CWIC	Lori Crownover	IL/STAP Specialist

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