

Setting Sails



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

Spring 2011

Message from SAILS' Executive Director:

Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

How Will Government Budget Cuts Impact Services to People with Disabilities?



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke,
Executive Director of SAILS

All levels of government are tasked with making some tough decisions about budget cuts in an attempt to balance the budget. If you work for a nonprofit organization, if you are a teacher or a caseworker; you should be concerned about the far-reaching cuts. Everyone should be concerned about the government's proposed cuts because at some point everyone will be impacted.

I stated in the last issue of this newsletter that San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) maintained a financially strong fiscal year 2009/2010 through continuation of federal and state grants. I stated that 2011 promises to be even better. However, since SAILS receives volumes of funding from both the state through the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and from the federal government through the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) funds, it is quite evident that that families with disabilities who depend on SAILS programs that are funded

through this government money will certainly suffer the most.

Just how will proposed cuts impact people with disabilities? For example, if there are cuts to Medicaid then people who need durable medical equipment such as walkers, accessible bathroom equipment, and mobility devices may not be able to receive the assistance they need. What about the impact to people who are aged and disabled and still live in their homes? They depend on community-based programs so they can live a quality life in their home of choice without being forced into institutional care. People who have a need for vision and hearing services will be impacted too. But, all this is the tip of the iceberg! I know we all need to do our part to "tighten our belts" but let's not forget that many of these programs and expenditures are funded to prevent even more government expense in the future. For example, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provides much needed dental care to children. Children who receive dental care regularly under this program will have less cavities and better overall dental health. Without CHIP what will really be the cost to society? Aren't we just going back to an emergency room mentality?

In closing, SAILS depends on funding from our state DARS and from RSA to provide services to people with disabilities to assist them with leading an independent and productive life. We will continue to ask the members of our local, state and federal government to not cut the center for independent living programs. SAILS will continue to advocate for no cuts that impact our people with disabilities. SAILS will also strive to diversify funding and seek those generous donors who are interested in helping people with disabilities to live more independently and self-sufficiently, turning disabilities into abilities.

**This issue of Setting SAILS is dedicated to
the memory of two disability advocates:
Tito Villalobos Moreno from Pride and
Larry Gardner from the Department of Assistive
and Rehabilitation Services.**



SAILS Consumer Success Stories

Elsa Combs Returns to Work Full Time

By Albert Pulido



Elsa Combs

In 1999, Mrs. Maria Elsa Combs, suffered a serious heart attack and had open heart surgery. This led to severe depression. In 2006 she started Certified Nursing Training (CNA). In October 2010 she contacted SAILS to discuss with me how returning to work would affect her social security benefits.

Mrs. Combs was very excited to learn that she could work and still retain her benefits! Since November 24, 2010 she has been employed at Retama Manor South in Pleasanton, Texas working as a CNA at \$9.25hr and working 32 hours per week. Mrs. Combs is very happy to be a productive employee again.

Kendall Christian Is Back In Business

By Bruce Orey

Kendall Christian did not feel he had the same chance as others because of his hearing impairment. In the past he was teased, and withdrew into himself as a defense. Kendall said, "I knew I needed to get out of the corner and socialize and not feel sorry for myself. The teasing I got from my family actually became an asset. I began to laugh at myself when other people teased me."

Kendall began working odd jobs with his brother Randall. The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services helped him with hearing aids and getting the tools he needed to get back in business. He received benefits counseling from me and I reassured him that he would not lose his benefits. Mr. Christian is currently working, and he knows that being an air-conditioning and heating technician is the direction he wants for his life.

Kendall Christian



SAILS Extends Special Thanks to WellMed,
Presenting Sponsor of our 2010 Gala



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SAILS Consumer Success Stories



No Complaints- Hearing Better Than Ever!

by Lori Crowover



Joseph Burrows

Mr. Joseph Burrows has been dealing with the frustration of his hearing impairment for quite some time. His hearing loss was a result of loud noise exposure when he worked for a commercial airline. Recently, he has been unable to hear on the telephone, even though, he had received an amplified phone in the past from the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP). His hearing impairment had worsened and the amplification on the phone was not adequate.

In addition to problems with the phone, he was using an old hearing aid that no longer worked for him. Lori advocated for him to receive another phone with more amplification due to his change in disability. She, also, referred him to the "Hear Now" program to assist him in purchasing a new hearing aid.

2011 is going to be a good year for Mr. Burrows. He has two new "state of the art", digital hearing aids and a new telephone! He reported to Lori that he had a good experience with the "Hear Now" program and is thrilled that STAP approved his new phone. He expressed much gratitude to SAILS for assisting him with both needs. He says that he is hearing things he never heard before, although, there is some drawback to that. He said his screen door is squeaking and he never knew his truck rattled so much!

Patricia Atkinson Goes To College!

by Mary Blake

Patricia Atkinson

Patricia Atkinson has learned she is a unique person with talents. She participates in SAILS Gateway to Abilities Program (GAP) attending classes twice each month to learn about resources and ways to improve her life.

Patricia explained that the monthly bus pass she receives in the GAP "not only helps me to travel from place to place, but it also has helped me to fulfill my goal of a higher education." Patricia has certainly reached that goal since she is now attending San Antonio College. SAILS extends congratulations to Patricia!



Jessica Is An Unstoppable Go-Getter

By Gloria Aguirre



Jessica

Jessica was referred to SAILS by Department of Rehabilitative Services (DARS) for assistance. Jessica is an "extra-ordinary" 29-year-old young woman who has Cerebral Palsy. She has not allowed her disability to be a barrier to her in any way. She received

her bachelor's degree in Arts in 2008 and compiled a "to do" list of things she wants to accomplish. She has checked off her "to do" list the following items, driving and living independently. She is actively seeking employment while volunteering weekly at SAILS. She is currently the secretary/assistant for the SAILS Young People's Support Group. Jessica is living the dream of being an "Unstoppable Go-Getter!"

Jessica states, "Independence is something that people always work toward regardless of ability as everyone needs to make their own little place in this world!"



SAILS Calendar of Events Jan, Feb and March

January

- 1 Happy New Year
- 7 Music Festival Committee Meeting - Town Hall Meeting - Lighthouse
CAC and Support Group Meetings
- 8 Board Retreat-Lion's Field
- 12 Board Meeting—SAILS
- 13 Victoria Office open
- 17 SAILS closed—Martin Luther King Day
- 21 ADA Planning Meeting—SAILS 10:00 to 11:00
- 24 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 25 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 27 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
GAP Workshops—American GI Forum 1:00 pm
Victoria Office open
- 28 VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00

February

- 1 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
Workshop—SCHI opportunities—SAILS 2:00 to 4:00
- 4 Support Groups—Lighthouse 1:00 pm
VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am
- 5 Caring for Persons with Disabilities—Christus Santa Rosa Hospital 8:00 am
- 6 Wounded Warriors Golf Tournament—Woodlake Golf Club 9:00 am
- 7 Disability Coalition Mtg. at DARS,
Victoria 11:30 am
VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 9 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
Veterans Job Club-Victoria
- 10 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
Victoria office open
- 11 WIPA Meeting-San Marcos
- 12 SUPER SATURDAY—VITA
Claude Black Center 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Transition Fair—Frank Garrett Center
- 13 Valentine Dance—Morgan's Wonderland
- 14 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 15 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 16 Health & Human Services Meeting - AACOG 2pm
Deaf Services Panel - San Antonio College 6:30 pm
- 17 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 18 VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am
Goodwill 2011 Meeting
- 21 SAILS closed—President's Day
- 22 ADA planning meeting - Deaf Interpreter's Office - 10:00 am
VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 24 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
GAP workshops - American GI Forum - 1:00 pm
Victoria office open
- 25 VITA - SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am

SAILS Calendar of Events Jan, Feb and March



March

- 1 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 3 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 4 Support Groups—Lighthouse—1:00 pm
VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am
- 5 Low Vision Expo—Colonial Hills UMC - 9:00 am
- 6 SILC Meeting—Austin—March 6, 7 & 8th
- 7 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 8 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 10 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
Victoria office open
2nd Annual Community Night - Jackson Middle School 6 pm
- 11 VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am
- 14 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
SAILS Fundraiser, Rampage at Boston's Gourmet Pizza
- 15 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 17 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 18 VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am
- 21 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 22 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 24 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
Victoria office open
GAP workshops—American GI Forum - 1:00 pm
SAILS Fundraiser: California Pizza Kitchen, Huebner Oaks
- 25 VITA—SAILS 8:00 to 11:00 am
- 28 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 29 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00
- 31 VITA—SAILS 9:00 to 3:00

MARK YOUR CALENDARS—FUTURE EVENTS

April 3, 4 & 5th: Texas Statewide IL Conference - Austin, Texas - stipends available

April 10th: SAILS picnic at Mission County Park - 10:00am-2:00pm

July 13, 14,&15: NCIL conference—Washington, D.C.

July 29: ADA CELEBRATION at La Villita

October 2: SAILS Music Festival—Morgan's Wonderland 2:00pm-8:00pm

SAILS Consumers at a meeting with representative from Methodist Mission Home



A Visit from Methodist Mission Home

By Gloria Aguirre

Young adults and their parents recently learned about the benefits of independent living programs offered by Methodist Mission Home and the Southwest Center for Higher Independence (SCHL). On February 1, 2011 SAILS welcomed Terry Gutierrez, Admission Director of SCHL as she presented information about life, social and job skills available in their programs.



SAILS Community Events

Former Board Chair of SAILS Helps Interns

By Sandie Flanagan



Donna McBee

Donna McBee, is a person who is blind. However, she defines herself by what she can bring to her community. Although she retired from San Antonio Independent Living Services as Board Chair years ago, she continues to volunteer and mentor at SAILS. She regularly assists our interns at SAILS. The interns come to SAILS from different Universities to fulfill their educational requirements. Donna provides braille lessons for consumers who need one-on-one training.

Donna likes to stay active. She currently serves on the City Access Committee to work on making the city more accessible for people with disabilities. I think Donna is a role model to people with disabilities and to the volunteer community!

SAILS with the City and Claude Black for VITA Super Saturday

By Sandie Flanagan

The City of San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives (DCI) and San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) hosted the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance Super Saturday event at the Claude Black Community Center on February 12, 2011.

Several community partners and vendors were set up throughout the building to share information about programs and services. Deaf Interpreters Services were on site to provide interpreters for more than a dozen people who were deaf or hard of hearing. Over one hundred attendees were present to receive free income tax assistance.

There was also a raffle with food for everyone present. It was a great way to bring the community together for free tax assistance.

VITA Super Saturday



Annual Fiesta Picnic

Mission County Park
on Padre Drive

Sunday - April 10, 2011
from 10:00a.m. until 3:00p.m.

Save the Date
Sunday - April 10, 2011

SAILS Community Outreach



Town Hall Offers Opportunity for Input

Gloria Banik

The Consumer Advisory Committee and Support Group members had the opportunity to offer information regarding services available and additional services needed in the San Antonio community. Paula Margerson, State Independent Living Council representative and Rehabilitation Committee member asked members the same questions that are being asked around the State of Texas in other Town Hall meetings. Ms. Margerson recorded the meeting so the answers could be tabulated and compared to find similar concerns and the differences between areas in Texas.

Terry Smith, Regional Director of Division of Blind Services (DBS); Reuben Garcia, Area Manager of Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); and Linda Mueller, DARS IL Counselor and SAILS Liaison were present to listen to consumer concerns and answer questions as needed.

The members participated by answering the questions and adding information about problems in finding employment, shortage of affordable housing and accessing transportation.



Town hall meeting offers opportunity for input from communities regarding to the independent living services

SAILS Partnership with DEAFLINK

Gloria Banik

SAILS innovative partnership with DEAFLINK is now scheduled to open and ready for business. Due to staff scheduling, furniture delays and other technicalities the opening was postponed.

Beginning Monday, February 28th from 8:30 until 4:30 Gloria Aguirre will be in the office each Monday offering on-site advocacy, information and referrals, peer support and independent living skills assistance at the Deaf Link offices located at 500 N. Loop 1604 E., San Antonio, 78232.

Wednesday mornings will be dedicated to assisting persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind by appointments.

The first Friday of each month from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm Lori Crownover will be available for specialized telecommunication equipment information and application assistance.

The third Friday of each month from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm a Social Security Community Work Incentive Coordinator (CWIC) will be available for social security planning.

For more information, contact Gloria Aguirre at 281-1878.



SAILS Partnership with DEAFLINK

San Antonio Independent Living Services
1028 S. Alamo Street
San Antonio, TX 78210

OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS)

1028 S. Alamo Street, San Antonio, TX 78210
V/TDD (210) 281-1878 , Fax (210) 281-1759
(800) 474-0295 www.sailstx.org

SAILS Staff

Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D. **Executive Director**

Gloria T. Banik	Director of Programs & Resource Development
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
		Irma Medrano	Receptionist

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However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the DOE or the DARS and you should not assume endorsement by local, state, or federal government.

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