

Setting Sails



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

Fall 2009

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

Citywide Celebration of ADA Landmark Legislation

On July 26, 1990 President George W. Bush signed into law the most comprehensive piece of legislation ever written for persons with disabilities-The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is really civil rights legislation for families with disabilities. We must not forget the original intent of ending unjust segregation and exclusion of persons with disabilities from our "mainstream" society.

We should all remember and thank the thousands of people who made up the "disability rights movement" and whose efforts have helped to change the lives of thousands of persons with disabilities today. These historical "disability advocates" sought justice in our American courts and with Congress to ensure that people with disabilities would be included in all aspects of living. Many of these advocates told their own very compelling stories of discrimination to Congress during the ADA legislative process. They succeeded by way of their unwavering commitment to help people with disabilities receive the justice they deserved (Bush).

On Friday, July 31, 2009, San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) invited the community to attend the 19th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration. The ADA celebration began about 8:00a.m. with hundreds of excited folks gathering at the San Antonio's Mercado for the Unity Pride Stroll over to 401 Villita for the day's events. Employees and volunteers from various organizations carried banners along the march towards Villita where about 45 vendors were awaiting the arrival of hundreds of guests. Organizations such as the Alamo Service Connection (ASC), AmeriGroup Corporation, Gordon Hartman Family Foundation, Goodwill Industries, AnyBabyCan and San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind proudly showed their continuing support for the ADA.

After the celebration began at Villita Hall, SAILS presented AnyBabyCan's Executive Director, Dawn Dixon an award for Disability Organization of the Year. Next, our keynote speaker, State Representative Joe Farias provided words of inspiration and motivation to all to continue to advocate for "the rights of all persons with disabilities." The crowd applauded him for his dedicated service to the community. SAILS presented a plaque to him for Public Servant of the Year. Many other individuals and community organizations were also awarded plaques by SAILS Director of Programs and Resource Development, Gloria Banik and State Independent Living Council member, Randell Resneder. Randell flew in from Lubbock to join SAILS



Unity Pride Stroll celebrating ADA 2009

in the largest Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration in Texas! He stated that he really enjoyed the event and could not believe how big it was! (See enclosed ADA Event photos)



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SAILS Consumer Success Stories

Living Independently

by Sandie Flanagan

Our consumer Mary Lou Gomez has been coming to SAILS since November 2004. Her goal at that time was to take the necessary steps to become more independent. She started by participating in some of the support groups and other activities at SAILS. She was even able to locate a doctor that specializes in her disability to assist her with appropriate medications.

On May 8, 2008 I assisted her in completing the Pre Application for Section 8. She achieved her goal of getting her own apartment on May 29, 2009. When she came in to see me recently, she had a great big smile, she was so happy to be living independently in her own apartment "without parents treating me like I am a child". She now has furniture and as I were writing this success story she said "everything is falling into place".

SAILS will remain providing assistance to Mary to get the services she needs to continue her independent life of her own.



Mary Lou Gomez is now living indently in her own apartment

Lost and Found: Battery

SAILS has been keeping a battery for the disability equipment that somebody forgot at the Villita Hall on July 31. Please contact our office for proper identifying and pick it up.

Jarrell Kane: Success and Achievement

by Mary Blake

I am happy for the opportunity to recognize Jarrell Kane. Jarrell recently graduated from the San Antonio School for Inquiry and Creativity. This represents a major milestone in his life and goal in the Gateway to Abilities Program (GAP).

Jarrell credits GAP for giving him the support and consistent affirmation needed to achieve success. During a recent interview, he stated: "I have come a very long way in my struggle for independence. Ms. Blake has been very supportive because she gave me the direction and affirmation to finish school this year".

GAP has been a "life safer" for Jarrell who struggles with physical, emotional and learning disabilities. The workshops have served to motivate him especially the one on writing realistic goals. Jarrell said this class helped him to focus on one area to accomplish every objective until I reached my target.

Anger management has also been an issue for Mr. Kane. He proudly told me the session on this topic was useful "because I listened to the other people who have the same problems. I realized I could control my emotions and behavior. He wrote a goal on anger management and is meeting it on a daily basis.

SAILS provides a monthly bus pass making it possible for Jarrell to travel independently in the community. He now attends classes and is able to take public transportation to school, library and the movies. He continues to strive for self sufficiency.

We, at SAILS, extend our congratulations to Jarrell. He not only graduated from high school with honors, but is an outstanding GAP participant.



Jarrell Kane is achieving goals in his education and independent living



Achieving Independence through Assistive Equipment

by Lori Crownover

The first few months of 2009 have been busy for the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) at SAILS. The many presentations that staff have done to spread the word about STAP in the community have been very productive. STAP has received many new referrals for people needing equipment in San Antonio and the surrounding counties. STAP staff continue to visit consumers and provide presentations to the community.

STAP staff look forward to reaching many new consumers, but also are pleased when we are able to serve long-time consumers of SAILS like Jessie Rodriguez. Jessie began coming to SAILS in April of 2007 for braille instruction with Casey Hamilton. Jessie has also received services from Sandie Flanagan who referred him to STAP. I met with Jessie and his parents to complete a STAP application for a specialized telephone for Jessie. Jessie was a little apprehensive at first about applying for his new phone, however, now, Jessie reports that he has received his phone and is very pleased with it and the independence it provides him. Jessie continues to come to SAILS and works very hard every week during his sessions with SAILS staff.

Jessie's story is a perfect example of the importance of STAP and how, simply, having access to the telephone is a privilege that many of us take for granted. Being able to use the telephone provides people with their connection to the world and a sense of independence.

Jessie Rodriguez achieves independence by using assistive equipment that SAILS staff has helped him to obtain



Consumers attending a workshop at SAILS

SAILS' Technology Workshop

Benefits Consumers as well as Professionals

SAILS had a super "turnout" for our Assistive Technology Workshop on April 22, 2009. Consumers were provided with the most up-to-date information on technology covering a wide range of needs for persons with disabilities. Workshop participants learned about the latest video relay phone technology benefiting persons who are deaf from Robert Guintoli of Sorenson Video Relay.

Lori Crownover of SAILS, also spoke about SAILS' Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) which provides free phone equipment for Texas residents who have disabilities. Mr. Antonio Chavez, a workshop participant who is deaf, was happy to report that he just received his new Two Way Pager from SAILS' STAP. This has provided him with the technology to communicate via text messaging.

Other presenters were Margarita Vasquez and Sara Fillipone of Communications Services for the Deaf (CSD) which provides advocacy and resources for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Diana Rodriguez of the Lighthouse for the Blind spoke about her services as a Rehabilitation Specialist and described some of the latest advances to assist persons with visual impairments.

Linda Mueller from The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), also presented valuable information on their rehabilitation services separate from their vocational program. Although DARS does have a waiting list, once a person is selected from the waiting list, they are able to access equipment and services which help them gain greater independence.

Finally, Randi Hoo-Mook represented Project Mend which provides recycled medical equipment for those who cannot afford to purchase new equipment. Project Mend maintains an inventory of equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs and more for those in need.

The Assistive Technology Workshop was well received by consumers with many types of disabilities. It was also a great opportunity for professionals to network and, in turn, develop more efficient ways to assist consumers. Anyone needing more information on the agencies which participated in these workshops, can contact Lori Crownover at SAILS, 210.281.1878 ext. 22.



Calendar Dates for July, August and September

JULY 2009 NATIONAL RECREATION & PARKS MONTH AND NATIONAL ICE CREAM MONTH

- 2nd San Antonio Deaf Dance Company 13th Annual Performance at Warren High School at 7:00 pm
- 3rd SAILS closed in observance of Independence Day
- 9th GAP workshop at GI Forum
- 10th ADA Planning Final Meeting at SAILS 10:00 am
- 14th ADA Amendments update at the San Antonio Public Library
- 23rd GAP workshop at GI Forum
- 31st ADA Celebration starts at 8:30 am at El Mercado Program & Awards 10:00 am at Villita Assembly Building

July, 2009						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

AUGUST 2009 CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH AND SAFETY MONTH

- 4th Fish City Grill come & enjoy lunch and with SAILS
- 6th-8th Consumer/Family Support Group Conference at El Tropicano Hotel
- 7th CAC meeting at 1:00 pm
- 7th Support Group meeting at 2:00 pm
- 12th WISE meeting in Victoria Texas Workforce Center at 9:30 am
- 13th GAP workshop at GI Forum
- 15th Back to School Fair at Frank Garrett Center
- 15th Alazan Apache Courts 8th Annual Back to School Event inside the Valero Field 5pm to 8pm (Back Packs with school supplies for residents)
- 19th Young People's Support Group 1:30 pm
- 19th SAILS Board Meeting at 6:00 pm
- 23rd Dreams Fulfilled through Music Program at the Carver Academy
- 26th IL Skills Kitchen Safety and Cooking at Boston's Pizza
- 27th Life Skills Support Group at 2:00 pm
- 28th WISE meeting San Antonio South at 9:00 am

August, 2009						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

SEPTEMBER 2009 NATIONAL CHOLESTEROL EDUCATION MONTH

- 4th Support Group meeting at 2:00 pm
- 7th SAILS closed for Labor Day
- 10th GAP meeting
- 15th Fund Raising, Red Robin at the RIM 11:00am- 3:00pm and 5:00pm-9:00pm
- 16th WISE meeting in Carrizo Springs at 9:30 am
- 16th Young People's Support Group at 1:30 pm
- 24th GAP workshop at GI Forum
- 24th Life Skills Support Group at 2:00 pm

September, 2009						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10



“A Diamond in the Rough”

by Gloria Aguirre

Sometimes our consumers remind me of rough stones that need a little assisting and polishing up. Sarah Cates is an example. She is very quiet and speaks almost in a whisper. One day I spoke with Sarah about the several Support Groups for our consumers that meet at SAILS monthly. I was hoping Sarah would choose to participate.



Days passed, and to my surprise Sarah showed up for our Young People's Support Group. This was a big step for Sarah. Everyone welcomed her to the group. Sarah seemed to feel comfortable sharing her interests and hobbies with the group that day. She told the group that she really loves to crochet and even pulled out a beautiful piece she was working on.

The real success is that Sarah has found a place to come and enjoy being with others for support and fun activities. Rain or shine; Sarah has not missed a single support group meeting since she first showed up! Sarah also volunteers at SAILS to learn some clerical skills so I am quite sure that there is another success story around the corner for Sarah.

Jennifer Maintains Success on the Job

by Albert Pulido

Jennifer Martinez started receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits in 2002. When she started working part time at Target she was concerned she might lose her benefits. I explained all the rules and regulations that the Social Security Administration has pertaining to her working without losing her benefits. Jennifer wanted to increase her hours; I was able to discuss

several options with her, such as being flexible and working different shifts.

Jennifer's mother is her payee. Her mother was concerned too. After all, she knew Jennifer wanted to work and become as independent as possible. Overall, Jennifer's entire family wanted to be emotionally supportive of Jennifer's goals. In the end, Jennifer decided that her best bet was to remain at Target for a better chance for more hours and increased pay. SAILS staff congratulates Jennifer Martinez for her continuing success on the job. She achieved her success through dedication, hard work and family support.



SAILS Enjoys Fish City Grill and Raising Funds

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

SAILS Board and Staff had a great opportunity to participate in Fish City's "First Tuesday" fundraiser August 4, 2009. Staff and friends joined in on the delicious dining experience. At the end of the day, SAILS received 15% of the total proceeds. What a wonderful way to give back to the community! SAILS chose the Fish City Grill located at 18130 San Pedro Avenue in the Northwoods Shopping Center. Fish City Grill believes in giving back to those non-profit organizations that help others. SAILS staff wishes to extend a very special thanks to Brandon and Charlie and his wonderful cooks and servers for their service and smiling personalities!



Xavier Villarreal and his family attended SAILS fund raising event

Neither Rain, Sleet or...

by Gloria Banik

The rain felt like sleet...

SAILS' staff and other volunteers were drenched but they continued serving brisket, sausage, beans and potato salad to more than 300 participants at the Anglers on Wheels BBQ.

Everyone had plenty of hot food to eat, and a good time, we are already planning to attend next year's Anglers on Wheels event!



More than 300 people participated in the Anglers on Wheel event this year



2009 NCIL Conference

SAILS Joins Disability Advocates in Washington, D.C.
by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

Every year the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) hosts one of the largest conferences for our nation's disability advocates from centers of independent living (CIL) to gather, get educated and get empowered! This year's conference was held once again at the Hyatt in Washington, D.C. from June 5th until June 8th. The theme was Believe: We are Better. Reenergize, Reorganize, and Reauthorize!

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) proudly participates every year by sending staff to attend. This year, three staff attended, including myself. My granddaughter, Mia accompanied me. We each selected various workshops offered by NCIL.

Capitol tours were also part of our visit to D.C. My granddaughter and I visited the office of the Honorable Congressman Ciro Rodriguez the very next morning after arriving in D.C. Although he was not in town we both received warm greetings and were permitted to take some great pictures inside of his office too! We were able to talk to his aide and leave literature about NCIL and SAILS. Afterwards, we received a very special "staff guided" Capitol tour. It was amazing!

2009 NCIL Conference—Continued
by Gloria Banik and Sandie Flanagan

It was a great opportunity to learn new and innovation techniques that other IL centers share with the participants. Sandie was able to attend one workshop, "How Aging and Disabled are Coming Together to Create System Change". Sandie was able to share how SAILS is a partner with Alamo Area Council of Governments with the local Alamo Service Connection (ASC) project to provide comprehensive information to consumers. Another workshop was "Providing Recovery: Mental Health and how to Provide Recovery Oriented Services". I attended several good workshops including the "Eight Ingredients to Successful Grant Writing", "CILEbrity Squares" and the ADA Amendments. All of the workshops were informative and provided good resources.

My grandson, Maclyn chose to fly to Washington with me instead of Disney at Christmas. Sandie, Maclyn and I were guests of Representative Lamar Smith at his office. He was busy with legislative issues and an intern from Ingram, Texas conducted a tour for us. All three of us were impressed with the history of our country and in spite of different problems that America has endured, it has not only survived but thrived. We toured Washington at night with a wonderful guide that made all of the monuments and memorials come alive for us. Maclyn came back to Texas with a new awareness of the history and culture of our country; Sandie and I came back with new ideas and ready to share with staff and consumers.



Representatives of Independent Living Centers from Texas



Delegates of Independent Living Centers from different states



Kitty Brietzke, J.D., Executive Director of SAILS and her granddaughter, Mia, visit the office of US Representative Ciro Rodriguez



Event Photographer: Frank J. San Miguel

ADA Celebration



Participants are getting ready for the Unity Pride Stroll



AmeriGroup, leading sponsor, participated in the Unity Pride Stroll



Ft. Sam Houston Honor Guards leading the Unity Pride Stroll



Randell Resneder of Texas SILC presenting plaque to Melissa from HEB



SAILS presenting Public Servant of the Year award to Representative Joe Farias



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