

# Setting Sails



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

Spring 2013

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

President's fiscal year 2014. All and all, we must all support NCIL's and the Texas State Independent Living Council efforts to advocate for increased funding to support Independent Living for all persons with disabilities.

## Centers for Independent Living (CILS) Received Much Needed Increased Federal Funds



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke,  
Executive Director of SAILS

Centers for Independent Living Services throughout Texas and throughout the United States who have been receiving funds from the Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) were pleasantly surprised they learned there was an increase in funds, at least temporarily. San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) is among the recipients who received an increase.

Long have the many centers prepared for decreases in funds and remained pleased when the funds at least remained the same as the previous year. However, last October 2012, the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) reported to their members that the House and Senate had passed Continuing Resolution (CR)(H J Res 117) which included the CILs (NCIL's Advocacy Monitor).

NCIL promises to rally all of us members to make the case for increased funds in Congress and in the

## SAVE THE DATE!

### 2013 FIESTA Resource Fair

Saturday, April 20, 2013  
11:00am - 9:00pm

Commanche Park No. 2  
2600 Rigsby Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78222

Vendors Contact:  
[vendor@sailsadvocates.org](mailto:vendor@sailsadvocates.org)

Exhibitors Contact:  
[exhibitor@sailsadvocates.org](mailto:exhibitor@sailsadvocates.org)

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## Fee For Services Agreement With DARS

by Albert Pulido

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) has a fee for services contract with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to assist consumers who are interested in returning to work without losing their social security disability income benefits. I am very pleased to be working closely with DARS staff and receive their referrals to help consumers learn about return to work rules such as the Ticket to Work rules, Trial Work Period, and information regarding continuation of Medicare and Medicaid.

Under this contract with DARS I also work with several Federal and State programs, such as the SSA Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) program and Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE) and more. The state of Texas has many programs, such as the "Medicaid Buy In" program, Energy Assistance, Individual Development Account, HIV program, kidney program and others that could affect consumers Social Security benefits or Supplemental Security Income benefits directly or indirectly.

Please contact me at 210-281-1878 so I can coordinate with DARS to help you if you are in need of my benefits counseling services. DARS counselors are available to refer you to me for help.

**Send Your SSI/SSDI  
Referrals For Benefits Planning!  
Use It Or Loose It!!!**

## ELVIS Sighting at Deaf Interpreter Services

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke was a honored guest at Deaf Interpreter Services (DIS) to receive the Award of Public Services for People With Disabilities

Marilyn and John Weber, owners of Deaf Interpreter Services (DIS) hosted a holiday party December 15, 2012 with their staff and friends. I was very pleased when they asked me to be their honored guest. Little did I know that a "big surprise" lay in store for me. ELVIS suddenly appeared at the party all decked out in his rhinestones!

For those people who didn't know that I am a huge ELVIS fan-you do now. I must have blushed twenty times with the serenades and fun antics. I also discovered that Marilyn is a big ELVIS fan too!

I extend special thanks to Marilyn and John Weber for the special award that they presented to me (along with Elvis) for dedication and service to people with disabilities. I truly felt humbled and accepted the award on behalf of SAILS.

## Braille Awareness Day in San Antonio

by Larry P. Johnson

Once upon a time, all blind people were illiterate.

A very few were taught to read printed raised letters. But they had no system for writing.

Then, 200 years ago, something happened — a 3-year-old boy in a small town in France was playing in his father's saddle shop and accidentally injured his eye with one of the sharp tools. It became infected and spread to the other eye and within a short time he became completely blind.

That same boy, at the age of 15, invented a system of raised dots that would change how blind people could read and write and thus communicate with each other and with the sighted world.

His name was Louis Braille, and the six raised dot system that he invented is called, "Braille."

Listening is not learning. Braille allows blind people not only to read information, but also to write it. Braille improves one's literacy by revealing how to spell new words or foreign names.

The convenience of Braille is that it can be read without electricity or batteries in the dark, on the beach, riding on a bus, waiting in the dentist's office, or while singing with the church choir.

In the beginning, producing Braille was slow and costly, with the embossing done by hand on zinc plates. Now, however, computerized embossers can turn out over 600 Brailled pages an hour. Today, Braille is used by millions of blind people and is produced in scores of languages all over the world.

I personally have been a Braille user for more than 70 years and depend on it for both personal and business activities. I revel in the knowledge that there



Larry P. Johnson is an author, motivational speaker and advocate for persons with disabilities

are now hundreds of magazines and books produced in Braille each year by libraries, organizations and volunteer groups in the United States and many other countries around the world. I am thrilled that today, Braille can be found on elevators, ATM machines, hotel guestrooms, restaurant menus, restrooms, airline in-flight information cards, business cards, greeting cards, soft drink vending machines, signs in museums, airports, parks, historical monuments, federal buildings and more.

Being able to read and write in Braille can make a dramatic difference in the life of a blind or visually impaired child or adult.

Luis Braille's invention made it possible for blind people to leave behind a world of isolation and become active and productive members of society.

Luis Braille was born on Jan. 4, 1809. On Saturday, January 5th, at the Barnes and Noble store across from North Star Mall, from 1-3 p.m. San Antonio honored the genius of Louis Braille with a special Braille Awareness Day event.

## Emergency Utility Assistance Helps Consumer Get Going Again

by Gloria Aguirre

SAILS has been working with the Bexar County Utility Assistance Applications for several years. This program has been a significant help to so many of our consumers who have fallen upon hard economic times for various reasons and find that they simply do not have enough funds to pay their utility bills.

Mr. Lee Camarillo found himself in a financial predicament where he simply needed help to "get going again." Mr. Camarillo is a person with a disability who was unemployed at the time I met with him for emergency utility assistance. He was at risk of having his utilities turned off during the cold winter months. He also related that he has to support a 14-year old son and buy food and clothing.

In the end SAILS was able to assist Mr. Camarillo with receiving emergency utility funds. He was very pleased with that we were able to help.

## The VITA Program at SAILS

Marie Herrera

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) is proud to announce that the City of San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives (DCI), SAILS and numerous other organizations have partnered once again to provide free tax preparations through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for eligible persons. Last year the VITA program served more consumers than any other city with the exception of New York City.

SAILS is now taking appointments for our consumers with disabilities and all eligible persons. DCI volunteer tax preparers will be at SAILS offices on Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00a.m. until 3:00p.m. Please feel free to call 210-281-1878 and ask for Cindy Contreras or Marie Herrera to schedule an appointment. If you require an ASL interpreter please arrange in advance with us.

Finally, all VITA tax preparers require each person to bring the following items to their appointment: 1.) a valid identification with a picture, 2.) all W-2 forms and 1099.

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Every year at tax filing season, consumers in San Antonio area use the benefits of VITA program offered at SAILS location

# Calendar of Events

## Calendar of Events January, February and March

### Jan:

- 1-New Year's Day-Holiday
- 4-Support Group Meeting
- 8- SAILS Staff Meeting/Training
- 11-STAP Presentation Dist. 2 Senior Center
- 12-SAILS Board Meeting/Board Retreat at Lions Field
- 21-Martin Luther King Parade
- 22- Staff Meeting
- 25-SAILS ADA Planning Meeting
- 28-VITA begins at SAILS
- 28 - Mental Health Task Force of Bexar County
- 30- VITA Kickoff Fair with Mayor Julian Castro

### Feb:

- 1-Annual Goodwill Meeting
- 5-STAP Presentation at Pecan Hill Apts.
- 8- Support Group Meeting
- 12-Blindness Summit
- 15-Staff In-Service Advocacy Training
- 19- Caregiver Coalition meeting held at AACOG
- 22-SAILS ADA Planning Meeting
- 23- 6th Annual City Manager's 5K Run
- 26-Staff Meeting

### March:

- 3-5-Texas Statewide Independent Living Conference (SILC); Austin, Texas and MMM Rally "March & Rally"
- 5- SAILS Fundraiser at Fish City Grill
- 8-Worker's Compensation Seminar
- 8- Support Group Meeting
- 9-SA Low Vision Expo
- 12- Staff Meeting
- 13-SAILS Board Meeting
- 13-STAP Presentation at City NE Senior Center
- 21- SAILS ADA Planning Meeting
- 25- Mental health Task Force of Bexar County
- 29- SAILS Holiday

## Music Bands at SAILS 2013 FIESTA Resource Fair Saturday, April 20, 2013

11:00am - 9:00pm

Comanche Park No. 2  
2600 Rigsby Ave.  
San Antonio, TX 78222



and more...

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## The Gateway to Abilities Program (GAP)

by Mary Blake

The Gateway to Abilities Program (GAP) was originally awarded to S.A.I.L.S in 2005. HUD, through the City of San Antonio, continues to fund this successful program designed to provide basic assistance to persons with permanent disabilities, reside in metropolitan San Antonio, have no income and awaiting Social Security benefits. GAP attempts to fill the void in needed services and aims to increase self determination through life skills development leading to future employment or other meaningful activities.

To continue, all GAP consumers are encouraged to achieve self sufficiency through case management, education and goal compliance. Services include: assistance in the process of attaining Social Security benefits, a network of agencies that provide education, information, referrals and other support systems. The direct benefits are a monthly bus pass, vouchers for clothes or non food items and limited utilities payments through the City of San Antonio.

In return, the participants are required to attend all scheduled workshops, have an active goal and see the Coordinator every quarter for a review of their personal goals and plan of action.

Over the years, GAP has assisted many persons to become productive citizens. If you or someone you know is eligible for and would benefit from GAP, don't hesitate to call me at 210-281-1878 #116. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

## Welcome New S.A.I.L.S. Staff Members

**Judy Rosen**  
**Executive Administrative Assistant**



Judy Rosen is SAILS new Executive Administrative Assistant. She will provide administrative support for Dr. Brietzke, the Executive Director. Judy is originally from Louisiana but transferred to San Antonio because her father was in the military. Judy claims that she is now a "Texas Gal." She loves working with people and is very excited to be a part of SAILS!

**Krisselda Perez**  
**Independent Living  
and Deaf Support Specialist**



Krisselda A. Perez is SAILS new IL Consumers Deaf Support Specialist. Krisselda was raised in a small country town called Zapata. She attended The University of Texas Pan-American where she received a degree in Rehabilitation- Deaf Concentration. She adds that loves the game of volleyball! She recently moved to San Antonio and is very eager and excited to begin her career here at SAILS.

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)**

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V/TDD (210) 281-1878 , Fax (210) 281-1759  
(800) 474-0295 [www.sailstx.org](http://www.sailstx.org)

#### **SAILS Staff**

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

Charles Villarreal	Accountant
Judy Rosen	Executive Administrative Assistant
Cynthia Contreras	Receptionist

Gloria Aguirre	IL/Outreach Specialist	Mary E. Blake	IL Skills Coordinator
Marie Herrera	I&R/ Volunteer Coordinator	Irma Medrano	STAP Specialist
Albert Pulido	CWIC	Krisselda Perez	ILS/Consumer & Deaf Support Specialist

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