

# Setting Sails



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

Summer 2013

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

### Her Home - Not a Nursing Home



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke,  
Executive Director of SAILS

This is the first Mother's Day that my sisters and my brother and I won't be able to celebrate with our mom. Our mother, Dorothy, passed away this past February from Parkinson's disease. It was a long journey with managing her care and trying to provide her with the best decisions to maintain optimal health and prolong her life.

Over the past few years my sisters and my brother and I enjoyed our visits with our mom and all the functions together with other family members. When our mom began to show evident signs of declining health such as trouble walking or falling we decided to use the services of a caregiver. This was both difficult and a blessing. It was difficult because our mother really did not believe she needed a caregiver. It turned out to be a blessing because we were very fortunate to be provided some very caring and professional caregivers who were not only trained for their jobs but seemed to understand our mother and cooperate with her needs and requests. One big request from mom was that she wanted to stay in her home.

There came a point when we made a decision to place mom in a "rapid-recovery" section of a nursing facility about six months before she passed away. She had

been in the facility before and actually recovered and went back to her home as planned. However, this time we noticed that mom was not recovering. In fact, there seemed to be a rapid decline. I found her on the floor of the facility a couple of times. She had lost significant weight and was not eating. I decided last September to call an ambulance and remove her from the nursing facility. She was taken to a hospital because I thought she was dying. Our mother ultimately ended up having a feeding tube inserted which helped her "rally" enough for us to take her home. My siblings and I were not sure she was going to make it.

Our mom did live another four months with the love and care of her family and a wonderful caregiver, Mildred who stayed until the end. I share this story because my brother, two sisters, family members and I learned how important it was to mom to pass away in her own home and not a nursing home. It was mom's choice to stay in her home and we did everything to respect her choice right down to the last breath she took.

## SAVE THE DATE!

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
23rd Anniversary Celebration**

**Education and Employment for  
People with Disabilities**

**Saturday - July 27, 2013  
8:30 am - 1:00 pm**

**UTSA Downtown Campus  
Bill Miller Plaza  
501 West Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.  
San Antonio, Texas 78207  
Join Us For The Rally at 8:30 am**

## Peer Support Group Helps Sylvia Cortez

by Gloria Aguirre



Sylvia Cortez

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) offers consumer Sylvia Cortez an opportunity to learn how to improve her well-being. Sylvia is dedicated to attending the monthly SAILS Peer Support Groups meetings. She always brings her three sons along too!

Sylvia understands the benefits of peer support and enjoys the exchange of information and ideas during the meetings. She views herself as an advocate for her children and by attending the monthly support groups she is able to learn how to improve her knowledge and obtain the skills to assist her with being a successful mother to her three sons.

SAILS staff recognizes that it is important to support the entire family involved with caring for a person with a disability. SAILS recognizes Sylvia Cortez for her faithful and loving support of her children. We salute her for continuing to be a faithful member of the SAILS Peer Support Group too!

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## Celebration for Seniors!

by Marie Herrera and Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

On Saturday, April 13, 2013 Texas Public Radio and the Health Science Center of San Antonio hosted the third annual Silver Solution Resource Fair. The fair was free to the public focusing on information and resources for seniors, their family members and caretakers. This wonderful community-wide event provided numerous vendors equipped to assist seniors with information about how to age gracefully and to learn how to maintain good physical and mental health.

There were more than 70 exhibitors and the fair included an "Ask the Experts" area where several specialists in audiology, geriatric medicine and cardiology answered questions. SAILS employees, Gloria Aguirre and Marie Herrera were on hand to provide information to seniors and their family members who might seek help to live more independently.

Emeritus Board member, Frann Wright joined SAILS Executive Director in meeting all the exhibitors. Everyone enjoyed a very fulfilling day with so much to learn about gracefully aging!



SAILS staff Marie Herrera and Gloria Aguirre are on hand to provide information to seniors and their family members at Silver Solution Resource Fair

## Project Walk Austin: Spinal Cord Injury Recovery and Hope

Report by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.  
Photographs by Daniel Setiawan

Imagine someone you dearly love suddenly becoming paralyzed because of a spinal cord injury (SCI), losing complete mobility and independence. Doctors sentence them to life in a wheelchair, but you are searching for hope of a better life. What is the next step after traditional rehabilitation when it comes to spinal cord injury recovery?

In 2000, Keith-Ann Wagner was a great soccer player and a junior at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth, Texas. On July 4th, she celebrated Independence Day with her family. By the end of the evening, her independence was taken away in a car accident. Her spinal cord was damaged at C 6/7 level. She spent three months in the hospital and was told that she would live the remainder of her life in a wheelchair.

Five years later, she discovered Project Walk® and spent three years at their California facilities. "My goal was to be able to go to the bathroom by myself. By the end of my program, I was walking across the room on crutches. I wanted to bring the program back to Texas," says Steed. Since her accident, she received her Bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from TCU, earned her CPA license, got married, and gave birth to a daughter, Rylan Hope - now three, and a son, Boston Duke - six months. She works full time as a tax manager for Glass & Company, CPAs and serves as Executive Director for Project Walk - Austin.

Project Walk Austin helps people with spinal cord injuries (SCI) regain their lives on their feet and out of their wheelchairs through an exercise-based recovery. Naturally they do not offer miracle cures; they offer hope. Their spinal cord injury recovery program is based on the Dardzinski Method™ which targets each individual's weaknesses and retrains the nervous system to respond appropriately.

Project Walk-Austin, a Certified Provider of Project Walk®, since 2008, has become a nonprofit organization in order to achieve three goals: (1) make recovery-based training the standard, (2) make



Keith-Ann Steed, CPA, serves as Executive Director for Project Walk-Austin

training program more accessible, and (3) change the perception of SCI recovery—that recovery is possible.

The cornerstone of their program is Active Nervous System Recruitment (ANSR), which helps maintain muscle mass, build range of motion, and find/strengthen the controlled movements in the legs. Weight-bearing, nutritional counseling, gait training, and most importantly hard work are at the center of every recovery program.

Having been trained in the Dardzinski Method, Keith-Ann Steed has observed amazing progress with Project Walk-Austin's clients. For some, it means driving independently and for others, it means walking out the door.

Consumers in South and Central Texas with disabilities due to a spinal cord injury can get more information on Project Walk - Austin by visiting their website at [www.projectwalkaustin.org](http://www.projectwalkaustin.org) or calling the facility directly at 512-719-4300. The facility is located at 1905B Kramer Lane, Suite 850, Austin, Texas 78758.

# SAILS Is For Consumers

## 2013 SAILS Fiesta Resource Fair

(photos by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.)



Volunteers are ready



AHIA



Primerica



Grande Communications



Deaf Interpreter Services



Clowning around

# SAILS Is For Consumers

## 2013 SAILS Fiesta Resource Fair

(photos by F.J. San Miguel)



Best Decorated Fiesta Booth-St. Benedict's



Guests Enjoying the Fiesta Resource Fair



The Bongo Katz



Pamela Allen and the Biscuit Rollers



Ruben V and his band entertain the guests



Bongo Katz Entertainers

## April

- April 5 Support Group Meeting
- April 13 The Silver Solutions Senior Fair
- April 17 Last day for VITA at SAILS
- April 19 ADA Planning Meeting at Grande Communications
- April 20 SAILS Fiesta Resource Fair at Comanche 2
- April 22 Center for Healthcare Meeting
- April 23 Health Fair in Seguin
- April 24 Administrative Assistant's Day!
- April 25 Senior Fiesta Fair at Wonderland **Mall**

## May

- May 2/3 DARS Training in Austin, TX
- May 7 Staff Meeting
- May 9 Health & Community Resource Fair : Held at the San Antonio State Hospital
- May 10 Support Group Meeting: Held at Rosemount at Highland Park Apt
- May 11 What's Next Symposium Resource and Fair: Held at Harlandale ISD Boggess Center located at 12121 S.E. Loop 410
- May 12 Mother Day
- May 16 Workshop - San Antonio Water System - Affordability Programs
- May 17 ADA Meeting
- May 20 Mental Health Task Force Meeting
- May 27 Memorial Day

## June

- June 3 /6 35th I & R Annual Training and Education Conference "Blazing the Trail in I & R" Held: in Portland, OR
- June 12 Office of Injured Employee Council Conference (OIEC): Held at The Dury Plaza Hotel . SAILS will be Guest Speaker's
- June 14 Support Group Meeting: Held at Rosemount at Highland Park Apt
- June 18 Medicaid and CHIP Regional Advisory Committee Meeting
- June 20 Dress For Success
- June 24/26 ILRU Conference (Expanding CIL Capacity Through Community-Based Services Programs) : Held in Houston, TX

**Special Thanks To Our 2013 SAILS Fiesta Resource Fair Sponsors:  
HEB, Valero, VIA, Cano Family**



## Consumers Happy with Adaptive Telephone

by Irma Medrano



Irma Medrano, STAP Specialist of SAILS, providing information at RSVP Senior Fiesta

Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) offers assistance to Texans with a mental or physical disability that interferes with using the telephone. If they are in need of an assistive device, amplified or large button home telephone they can call SAILS. SAILS is an outreach site and Irma Medrano is a DHHS approved STAP Specialist that will assist them with the application.

One of our previous consumers, Lucia Hernandez is so happy with her big button telephone that she brought her sisters Susie Villegas and Frances Huerta to the SAILS booth at the RSVP Senior Fiesta held in Crossroads Mall so that Irma Medrano, SAILS STAP Specialist can explain the benefits of the program to them.

This is a FREE program that does not depend on income or age.

Call Irma Medrano at (210) 281-1878, ext. 122 or e-mail at [stap@sailstx.org](mailto:stap@sailstx.org) to schedule a presentation for your group, schedule a home visit or if you have additional questions.

## Relocation Back into the Community Possible for Many Residents in Nursing Facilities

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

San Antonio Independent Services (SAILS) is just one of the many Texas centers for independent living services (CILS) that provides advocacy and assistance to persons who reside in a nursing home but want to transition back into their own home or apartment.

In 2010, the Kaiser Family Foundation reported over 91,000 residents in certified Texas nursing homes. Many of these residents are people who would like to get out of the nursing facility and live as independently as possible in their own home. SAILS is here to help these residents who want to move into a home in their community.

It is important SAILS to inform everyone that it is a person's right to live as independently as possible and in the "most integrated setting" as possible according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is the law! We have staff on hand to advocate for your rights.

Please call SAILS at 210-281-1878 for help relocating someone from a nursing facility back into a home in the community. Our services are 100% free to the public. You may also contact your local long-term care ombudsman who will also assist you in the process.

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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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(800) 474-0295 [www.sailstx.org](http://www.sailstx.org)

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