

Setting Sails



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

Spring 2014

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

Access to Independence: *Solutions for Families in Need*



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke,
Executive Director of SAILS

Many families throughout the United States experience challenges helping a loved one who has a disability remain as independent as possible, enjoy a quality life, and continue to live at home. I recently had a discussion with two wonderful people from 101 Mobility: Jill Taylor, the owner of the 101 Mobility San Antonio franchise in Boerne, Texas, and Mike Gardner, a Business Development Manager from 101 Mobility's corporate headquarters in Wilmington, North Carolina.

101 Mobility San Antonio provides support for local businesses, caregivers, and residents dealing with mobility challenges. 101 Mobility offers products to improve accessibility at home, in public settings, and on the go. Products include stair lifts, vehicle lifts, access ramp systems, porch lifts, outdoor lifts, patient lifts, power chairs, pool lifts, scooters, and rentals.

It's too often that families experience a loved one with a debilitating condition who need help maneuvering around their homes. How does someone begin the conversation that there is a need to transform their house into a safe and accessible environment? Companies like 101 Mobility perform personal

assessments of a consumer's challenges and special needs, making the process as natural as possible. Whether it's inside or outside, caregivers can use adaptive equipment to assist those patrons with their mobility and accessibility.

I learned that 101 Mobility also recently assisted a consumer from one of SAILS community partners, Project Mend. Cathy Valdez, Executive Director of Project Mend stated that they have been a great partner by providing her clients with vehicle lifts and portable ramps, as well as some car modifications. She was happy to comment "they have been so helpful in making sure that our clients get exactly what they need and whenever possible, they are able to assist the client financially by keeping the costs to our maximum allowable amount." I agree with Ms. Valdez when she says, "we hope to keep our partnership ongoing as 101 Mobility continues to play a major part in helping us to ensure our clients receive excellent service."

SAILS 2014 FIESTA Resource Fair

Saturday, April 19, 2014
11:00am - 8:00pm

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

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New Year, New Approach

By Arlene Gomez, I&R/Volunteer Coordinator



Guests at SAILS

As so many of us do with the start of a new year, we resolve to do things better -- to make improvements in our lives. IL staff is taking that same approach to our Disabilities and Family Members Support Group for 2014. We're resolving to provide our support group participants with great information and resources that can lead to improved lives.

To start the year off right, our first presentation for the support group was regarding Health and Fitness. Before we delved into the subject, SAILS Executive Director Kitty Brietzke welcomed the group and invited discussion about matters related to collection of funds for holiday parties, and other coordination concerns participants may have had. It was a productive exchange of ideas and resolved some concerns.

A Nurse Educator, Irene Lopez, from the Diabetes Institute presented helpful tips and guidelines for eating healthy, and led the group in easy to do exercises. She also shared information about the great services the Diabetes Institute offers for everyone, not just those with Diabetes. The information was well received by the group, and enthusiastic discussion continued upon completion of the presentation. We're optimistic that the new approach is a great start to the new year.

Gateway to Abilities Program

by Mary Blake, Program Coordinator



Mary Blake

The Gateway to Abilities Program (GAP) is a program funded through the City of San Antonio. SAILS received the contract in October 2013. This is the eighth year SAILS has administered services under the GAP program.

I receive several inquiries on a daily basis about the GAP program. The program offers basic needs assistance such as vouchers for nonfood items and a monthly bus pass from VIA Metropolitan Transit if the consumer meets eligibility requirements. The consumer must have a disability and be homeless. They also must have applied for their social security disability, attend two workshops each month, receive ongoing case management services and have a plan in place for success.

A new emphasis has been on referring interested GAP consumers to SAILS Independent Living Specials (funded under SAILS state grant, the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DARS) for an Independent Living Plan (ILP) that focuses upon assisting the consumer with challenges or concerns that are not related to the GAP program. This approach is meant to offer the GAP participant a greater chance of independent living in the community.

In closing, the GAP program has a strong emphasis on transitioning consumers from homelessness to transitional housing and ultimately to a place of their own. Please do not hesitate to call me at 210-281-1878, extension 116 if you have any questions.

Consumer Happy to Learn He Can Work and Not Lose His Medicare Benefits

By Albert Pulido, CWIC



Mr. Albert Pulido, CWIC

I find my job very rewarding when I am able to assist individuals like Mr. Stacy Bowers who is a person who is legally and statutory blind. Mr. Bowers was referred to me by DARS Division for Blind Services. He wanted me to provide him with details regarding how his full time employment would affect his benefits.

Specifically, Mr. Bowers wanted to know how much he can earn in wages without losing his Social Security benefits and how long he would be able to receive his Medicare benefits. I completed a "work incentive plan" and provided him with the dates of his trial work period and his extended period of eligibility under Social Security rules.

Mr. Bowers, who is employed at The San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind was so pleased to learn that he would be able to keep his Medicare benefits for 93 months! This allows him to work full time and truly be more independent!

If you know anyone who is seeking benefits counseling please contact Albert Pulido at 210-281-1878.

David Whitaker Celebrates 10 Years of Successful Work

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.



David Whitaker

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) is pleased to congratulate David Whitaker on his 10 years of providing janitorial and light maintenance services. It is no easy task for David to stay in one workplace for so long because he has a disability that can be very difficult to cope with at times. Although he does not appear to have any disability at all; he is a person with bipolar depression.

I recently spoke with David and he said, "I would give anything to be normal or well." He recognizes that he has an illness that is misunderstood and usually stigmatized. He feels that some people have no empathy for his plight to cope with the symptoms that sometimes tries to take over his daily life. But David arrives at the SAILS offices on a daily basis and works to keep up with the tasks of cleaning and maintaining all offices in our very large office building.

David has attempted to work at other places and the jobs never lasted. At SAILS, he keeps on striving and says, "this is the best place I have ever been!" I hope David makes it another 10 years. Congratulations again to David Whitaker from everyone at SAILS.

Current SAILS events can always be viewed on our Facebook page:

<http://facebook.com/sailstx.org>

Click To Like Us!

Honoring Past Board Chair

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.



Mr. Andy Galan

I wish to extend heartfelt gratitude to Andy Galan, SAILS former board chair on behalf of San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) staff and the entire Board of Directors and Emeritus Board. Andy Galan began his role as a SAILS board member in November 2005. Soon after in November 2007 he was voted in as the Vice Chair. In early January of 2012 he was chosen as SAILS Board Chair. After over 9 long years of dedicated service on the board of directors Andy will be retiring at the March 12, 2014 board meeting.

Andy has been very involved in the San Antonio community for many years. He also loves to go to the Commander's House for lunch and to socialize. Although he is a person who is legally blind he sure gets around town, especially to enjoy a great Spurs game! He also enjoys going out to eat delicious Mexican food too!

Everyone at SAILS wishes Andy Galan a wonderful retirement after being on the board of directors of SAILS. We all hope that he will take time to enjoy all his free time now. Best of luck to you Andy!

**You can sign up to volunteer,
to help people with disabilities,
SAILS consumers, on our website:
<http://sailstx.org>
Click link tab "Volunteer"**

SAILS Congratulates New Board Chair

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.



Ms. Patricia Byrd, Board Chair

Ms. Patricia (Patty) Byrd who recently joined SAILS board of directors was voted in as the new board chair at the January 12, 2014 meeting. Ms. Byrd works as an independent insurance agent representing over 35 health and life insurance companies. She specializes in the senior market providing services to persons over 65 years or older.

Ms. Byrd has been very active the past several months assisting the board members and the Executive Director of SAILS with strategies to fundraise for three upcoming events: SAILS Resource Fair, Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration and Diamonds and Denims Gala. It seemed a natural fit for her to be the new board chair because she absolutely loves fundraising! SAILS congratulates Patty Byrd as the new board chair.

**For additional information on the programs,
services that SAILS offers
for consumers in the communities we serve,
please visit our website
<http://sailstx.org>**

SAILS Is For Consumers



SAILS Outreach Booth and Fundraiser at Fish City Grill

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.



Mr. and Mrs. Gordon at SAILS Outreach Event

SAILS staff are always excited to set up a booth and meet and greet the customers at Fish City Grill. On February 4, 2014 staff shared information and our programs and services by providing brochures and newsletters to guests. Meanwhile, throughout the entire day and into the evening the guests who dined on some of the best seafood in San Antonio were able to help SAILS too.

Board members Patty Byrd, Jerry King, Evelyn Miles-Rivera, Dennis Wolf (Mr. T) dined to support our cause. Former board member Steven Gordon arrived in the evening with his wife Ashley (picture above). Steven really loves the oysters!

SAILS appreciates Fish City Grill and their generosity by donating 15% of the proceeds from their entire day's sales. This kind of community support is needed by so many nonprofits. I wish to extend a very special thank you to the manager, Carlos Hernandez for all his support to SAILS

Resources for People With Disabilities And Caregivers

Social Security Administration, Disability Benefits:

<http://www.ssa.gov/pgm/disability.htm>

US Government Website on Disabilities:

<https://www.disability.gov/>

Social Security Disability Benefit

Printable Document:

<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10029.pdf>

Benefits For People With Disabilities:

<http://www.ssa.gov/disability/>

Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans With Disabilities Act:

<http://www.ada.gov>

Section 508

<http://www.section508.gov/>

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/drs/cap.shtml>

Facts About the Americans with Disabilities Act:

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-ada.html>

Department of Labor on ADA:

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/disability/ada.htm>

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Disability Discrimination:

<http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability.cfm>

US Dept of Education, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research:

<https://adata.org/publication/americans-disabilities-act-faq>

National Organization On Disability:

<http://www.nod.org>

National Center for Learning Disability:

<http://www.nclld.org>

Paralyzed Veterans of America:

<http://www.pva.org/site/c.ajlRK9NJLcJ2E/b.6305401/k.BCBB/Home.htm>

Disability Right Texas:

<https://www.disabilityrightstx.org>

San Antonio Independent Living Services:

<http://sailstx.org>

Online Request For Services, SAILS Consumers:

<http://sailstx.org>

Click link tab "Contact",
and then "Request For Services"

February

- 4- SAILS Fundraiser and Outreach Booth at Fish City Grill
- 7- Go Red Day
- 10- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 11- SAILS Staff Meeting
- 13- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 14- In-Service Training for SAILS staff
- 18- 101 Mobility Tour
- 20- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 21- Second ADA Committee Planning Meeting hosted at Grande Communications
- 24- SAILS IL staff Outreach in Seguin
- 27- IL Skills Class at SAILS 1:30-3:30 - Topic: Developing Effective Spending Plans

March

- 1- Low Vision Expo
- 3- Meeting for Impact SA
- 4- SAILS staff meeting
- 7- First Friday at Morgan's Wonderland
- 7- Disabilities Support Group 1:30-3:00, Aurora Apartments (location subject to change)
- 11- Springhill Community Resource Fair, Spring Hill Apartments, 10:00-1:00
- 13- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 14- SAILS In-Service: CPR Training
- 21- Third ADA Committee Planning Meeting hosted by Deaf Interpreter Services
- 24- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 27- IL Skills Class at SAILS 1:30-3:30 - Topic: Self Advocacy
- 30-1- Texas Statewide IL Conference: Corpus Christi, Texas

April

- 4- Disabilities Support Group 1:30-3:00, Aurora Apartments (location subject to change)
- 7- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 10- VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
- 12- Any Baby Can Walk for Autism
- 19- SAILS Fiesta Resource Fair

SAVE THE DATE!

SAILS 2014 FIESTA

Resource Fair

Saturday, April 19, 2014

11:00am - 8:00pm

Commanche Park No. 2

2600 Rigsby Ave.

San Antonio, TX 78222

Vendors Contact:

kbrietzke@sailsadvocates.org

Exhibitors Contact:

kbrietzke@sailsadvocates.org

SAILS Is For Consumers



**Music Bands at
SAILS 2014 FIESTA Resource Fair
Saturday, April 19, 2014
11:00am - 8:00pm
Commanche Park No. 2
2600 Rigsby Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78222**



and more...

A Little Information Can Go A Long Way

By Arlene Gomez, I&R/Volunteer Coordinator



Mold condition at Mr. Paul Fox' apartment

When consumer Paul Fox first came to SAILS to inquire about services, he was at wits end with his current housing situation. A mold problem in his apartment was affecting the quality of his life and he was frustrated by a lack of corrective action on the landlord's part. He was intent on finding a new affordable apartment, so we opened up an Independent Living Plan with this goal in mind. I provided him with information about affordable housing and other resources pertinent to his needs.

With this information in hand he began his search for new housing. However, he faced a challenge that many face...a lack of available, affordable apartments. His focus now needed to shift to resolving the issues in his apartment. We stepped up our efforts to assess the extent of the mold damage to determine the most effective resource to help. We made a recommendation, and he called them. Unfortunately, they were unable to take his case, but referred him to another source. Paul followed up on the recommendation and fortunately, met with success. Utilizing their legal expertise the resource has initiated action with the landlord. While the issue has not yet been fully resolved, there is a plan of action in place.

The consumer has faithfully followed up on all resource information we have provided him with, and with us leading the way found additional support he needed.

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



OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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