

Setting Sails



A Quarterly Publication For Friends And Consumers

Summer 2009



Unity Pride Stroll celebrating ADA

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

ADA, Landmark Legislation and Citywide Celebration

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 a legislation of civil rights. 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.

On Friday, July 31, 2009, San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) and our disability partner, AnyBaby Can, invite the general public, people with and without disabilities to attend our 19th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration. State Representative Joe Farias is scheduled to be our keynote speaker this year. SAILS staff asks everyone in San Antonio to join in special support of our families who assist persons with disabilities on a daily basis.

The celebration starts at 8:30a.m. at the Mercado, 524 W. Commerce with a Unity Pride Stroll over to 401 Villita for the program. Please bring your organizational banners, signs or flags to wave along the stroll. Please contact Sandie Flanagan at SAILS office if you are interested also in being one of our many volunteers. For further information call us at 210-281-1878 Monday through Friday during our regular office hours, 8:00AM - 05:00PM.



Contents

Consumer Success Stories: Working Full Time at \$18/hour Happy and Independent with STAP	Page 2
SAILS Services to Consumers, Benefits SSA Jobs and Hiring Support Groups	Page 3
Calendar Dates for May, June and July	Page 4
SAILS Is for Consumers Workshops and Councils	Page 5
SAILS News SAILS at King William Fair CAAB Board Members sworn in Music and Foods at Mayfest Picnic	Page 6
2009 SAILS Mayfest Picnic Thanks to our Donors Sponsors	Page 7



SAILS Consumer Success Stories

Working Full Time

Albert Pulido

On March 6, 2007 Mary Ann Mathis was referred by the Department of Assistive Rehabilitation services (DARS) to the San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) office. She just started working part-time earning \$1040 per month. She was afraid that she would lose her Social Security benefits and Medicare benefits. I explained the changes to the Social Security laws, the new Trial Work Period (TWP), the Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE), Income Related Work Expenses (IRWE) and the Ticket to Work (TTW) rules.

By September 25, 2008 after several employers and one Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint, Mary Ann was finally working full time, working 40 hours per week at \$18.00 an hour as a "Medical Outpatient Coder". As of April, 2009 she is still a full time employee, she no longer needs Social Security benefits (but still keeps her Medicare part A benefits until Sept 2015) and is secure in her job.

Mary Ann Mathis is truly a "SUCCESS STORY" and is an inspiration to all Social Security beneficiaries who want to get off of SSA and become a successful member of the working family!



Mary Ann Mathis is now working full time at \$18.00 an hour



Jessie Rodriguez is happy and independent now with his new STAP phone

Achieving Independence through STAP

Lori Crowover

The first few months of 2009 have been busy for the Specialized Telecommunications 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. Lori Crowover of STAP 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 that it provides him. Jessie continues to come to SAILS and works very hard every week during his sessions with Casey.

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.



SAILS Enters Partnership to Help Pay Utilities

SAILS' staff will assist eligible consumers residing in Bexar County to complete applications for utility assistance. Consumers must provide income documentation, proof of identification and utility bill to be considered for eligibility. Staff will provide the application and documentation to Bexar County Community Investment who will review the application and determine if the consumer meets all of the requirements. Funding is limited. If you have questions about your family being eligible for this service, please contact Sandie Flanagan or Gloria Aguirre at 210-281-1878.

SSA Hiring Initiative: Free Teleconference

Ticket to Work Colleagues and Partners

The Social Security Administration recently received funding to hire a significant number of employees throughout the country. This hiring initiative offers a unique opportunity for individuals with disabilities who may want to get a job with SSA. These jobs will be at various skill levels including a number of entry-level positions.

SSA was holding a national teleconference on this issue specifically for Employment Networks, State Vocational Rehabilitation Staff and others who help people with disabilities go to work on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 from 1:00 to 2:30 PM EST. This session was built upon an earlier Webinar and provide more details regarding the initiative. A guest speaker from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission also discussed the Schedule A Hiring Authority. Please visit www.cessi.net/ttw <<http://www.cessi.net/ttw>> for additional information about the teleconference.

What kinds of jobs is SSA offering? SSA is recruiting employees to work in field offices and teleservice centers where they will assist the public by phone and in person with a wide variety of program related activities such as filing claims, applying for new or replacement Social Security cards and other types of inquiries. SSA also is recruiting employees to work in Program Service Centers where they will process claims and to work in hearings offices in legal and paralegal positions.

Where are these jobs located? All across the United States; for example, some are in the 1,300 local SSA field offices or SSA hearings offices, some in the 37 teleservice centers nationwide, some in SSA's 6 program service centers and some at SSA headquarters in the Baltimore area.

How will SSA recruit? SSA will use a variety of avenues to recruit

and hire people with disabilities. In particular, the Agency is reaching out to Ticket to Work Ticket Holders who are trying to return to work, veterans with disabilities through programs such as the Wounded Warrior transitional program, and students with disabilities. Many individuals with disabilities will qualify for consideration under a special placement authority called "Schedule A."

How can I tell if an individual is eligible for Schedule A? A person is Schedule A eligible if s/he has documentation establishing both a disability and "job readiness."

Who can provide this documentation? Proof of a disability can be provided by a licensed medical professional or any Federal agency, state agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a US territory that issues or provides disability benefits. A recent benefit status letter is acceptable from a Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income disability beneficiary.

Proof of job readiness can be provided by a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist working with a State Vocational Rehabilitation agency or an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work program.

What is the next step? To register for the teleconference, please visit www.cessi.net/ttw <<http://www.cessi.net/ttw>> and select the "SSA Hiring" icon.

For more information and resources about this hiring opportunity, please visit www.cessi.net/ttw/SSAHires/index.html <<http://www.cessi.net/ttw/SSAHires/index.html>>

Please send resumes and documentation for Schedule A eligibility to Selective.Placement.Applications@ssa.gov

Support Groups

Support Groups update:

People with disabilities support group has been working on topics the group selects: April the group watched a DVD on first aid. After reviewing the DVD the group expressed interest in more training. At the May meeting the support group's guest speaker was from the Epilepsy Foundation, Mr. Eloy Delacruz, Education Coordinator presented a DVD on Epilepsy and gave out handouts. On July 10, for support group members only, there will be a CPR and First Aid certification training provided.



Calendar Dates for May, June and July

May: Family Wellness Month *National Physical Fitness & Sports Month *Women's Health Care Month *American Stroke Month *National High Blood Pressure Education Month *Better Sleep Month *National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month

- 1 Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting 1-2
Support Groups: People with Disabilities & Family Members Groups 2-4 pm
- 3 SAILS' Picnic Mission County Park 10 am to 3 pm
- 6 Presentation—Collier Elementary
- 13 ADA Meeting-Lighthouse Senior Center 1 pm to 2 pm
Presentation—Post Polio Group
- 14 GAP meeting
- 16, 17 Anglers on Wheels—Port Aransas
- 18 ASC Spring Fling
- 20 Young People's Support Group
- 23 Presentation—SAISD Special Education
- 25 MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY—SAILS CLOSED
- 28 Housing Workshop
GAP meeting
Life Skills Group
- 28, 29 SILC Quarterly Meeting—Victoria

May, 2009						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
26	27	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

June: *Great Outdoors Month *

- 4-8 National Council on Independent Living Conference—Washington, D.C.
- 5 People w/Disabilities & Family Members Support Groups 2-4 pm
- 6 Deaf Day at Six Flags Fiesta
- 8 Presentation—University Hospital
- 11 GAP meeting
- 17 Workshop—Internet 101
Young People's Support Group
- 19 ADA Meeting
- 24 WISE Meeting—Victoria
- 25 GAP Meeting
Life Skills Group

June, 2009						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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	11

July: *National Recreation & Parks Month

- 3 HOLIDAY—SAILS closed
- 4 Independence Day
- 8 Workshop-ADA
- 9 GAP Meeting
- 10 People w/Disabilities & Family Members Support Groups 2-4 pm
- 13 Young People's Support Group 1:30-3:30 pm
- 14 ADA Updates—ADARR—Public Library 9-11 am
- 17 ADA Meeting
- 23 GAP Meeting
Life Skills Group
- 31 ADA CELEBRATION

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



Workshops and Councils

Gloria Banik

Support Group Provides Speaker About Eye Health Concerns:

The People with disABILITIES (PWD) support group had a meeting on March 6th 2009. During the meeting Vince Boyd, a staff member from the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, came to give a presentation to the members. Vince discussed the services that the Lighthouse provides and various eye problems that occur and gave out an impaired vision simulator. Afterwards the support group broke into smaller groups and discussed topics such as their best Valentines Day as well as the Rodeo. Announcements of SAILS events were made and the group enjoyed refreshments and snacks. If interested in joining the PWD group please contact Sandie Flanagan.

SAILS Thanks Joe Hudson and Seeks New Facilitator: The Family Members Support Group meets at the same time as the People with disAbilities (PWD) group. SAILS would like to thank Joe Hudson for taking time for facilitating the Family Members Support Group and wishes him the best of luck at his new job. Due to this recent change, the group has not had a facilitator and therefore has been integrated into the PWD group. SAILS is looking for a volunteer who would be interested in facilitating the Family Members group so it can be separate from the PWD group. The person selected as the volunteer would be able to watch movies, schedule presenters, and host discussions related to various disabilities. It would be an added bonus if the volunteer has experience with either working with people who are disabled or have family or friends who are disabled. If interested please contact Sandie Flanagan.

Life Skills Support Group Helps with Goals and Self Esteem: The Life Skills for Successful Living support group meets on the fourth Thursday of each month. SAILS would like to thank Terry Bates for facilitating this support group; his expertise in this subject is greatly appreciated. Some of the topics that are discussed in this group are how to set goals and keep them, what self-esteem is, free things to do in San Antonio, and how to build self-esteem. Some information that was given was definitions of low and high self-esteem, consequences of low self-esteem, and various tips such as rewarding oneself when goals are reached. If interested in joining this support group contact Sandie Flanagan.

Interns Help SAILS Consumers: SAILS offers internship opportunities for those who are interested. Jessica Walker is a recent intern at SAILS who has participated in this program. She is a senior at UTSA (the University of Texas at San Antonio) who is majoring in psychology. She has interned for four months and has done various activities at SAILS. Some of the tasks include assistance with the



Different workshops are conducted by SAILS staff and volunteers for the benefits of consumers

facilitation of the People with disabilities and the Young People's support groups, co-presenting the Transition Services workshop, participating in the VITA tax program, and various other information and referral services. Two other interns from San Antonio College majoring in Deaf Support Specialist program are Andy Silva and Valene Luster. The interns assist with communication facilitation for consumers who are deaf, especially the VITA program at SAILS. If interested in participating in an internship program at SAILS please contact Sandie Flanagan.

Workshops: SAILS is presenting workshops of various topics related to disability. The first workshop that happened was one on transportation. Various companies that provide transportation services came to educate the participants on how to sign up for their services, who qualifies for their services, and the cost of their services. SAILS would like to thank all the companies who came to the workshop. The next workshop that was provided was on transition services. Various organizations came to discuss the services they provide that related to transitioning. A definition of transition and various examples of transitioning was also related such as, transitioning from unemployment to employment.

SAILS would like to thank all the presenters who came to the workshops. Other workshop topics that will be held in the future are adaptive technology, housing, internet 101, ADA update, and Alamo Service resources. If interested in coming to one of the workshops contact the SAILS receptionist and you will get a flyer.



BBQ line at 2009 SAILS Mayfest Picnic



Mia and the Harris Power Trio band at 2009 SAILS Mayfest Picnic



Volunteers at SAILS booth, King William Fair

SAILS Board of Directors & Staff at King William Fair

Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, the SAILS Board of Directors, along with staff, friends and volunteers participated in the Annual King William Fair and fundraiser. The day began with a delightful parade enjoyed by all. After the parade the vendors were set to serve their "Fiesta cuisine." Even the booths were decorated with a "Fiesta flair." SAILS volunteers served delicious hamburgers to guests who visited the booth throughout the day and into the early evening. The weather was perfect and everyone had a great time! SAILS Board of Directors extends special thanks to all volunteers who made the fundraiser a success. See ya'll next year!



Dr. Brietzke, Member of Community Action Advisory Board

On May 7, 2009, Dr. Brietzke joined fellow Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) members at San Antonio's City Hall for the official swearing in ceremony by the Mayor (Councilman Clamp representing Mayor Phil Hardberger) and City Council. Members were recognized with a certificate signed by the Mayor and a City pin. The CAAB performs an important role for the City of San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives (DCI) by providing assistance with oversight and funding recommendations for some monies that DCI receives for the underserved consumers in San Antonio.

SAILS 2009 Mayfest Picnic



Special Thanks

Special Thanks to the following Donors
to SAILS 2009 Picnic

First of All, Thanks to our Big Corporate Sponsor
AmeriGroup Corporation.

Individuals:

John & Troy Banik
Freddie Brietzke, J.R.
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Jerry Cowan
Bill Flanagan
Dee Hernandez
Duane & Mai Long
Bob & Roxanna Muzny
Stephen Rohrbough
The Ruesewald Family
Frank & Robin San Miguel
The Xavier Villarreal Family

SAILS Staff:

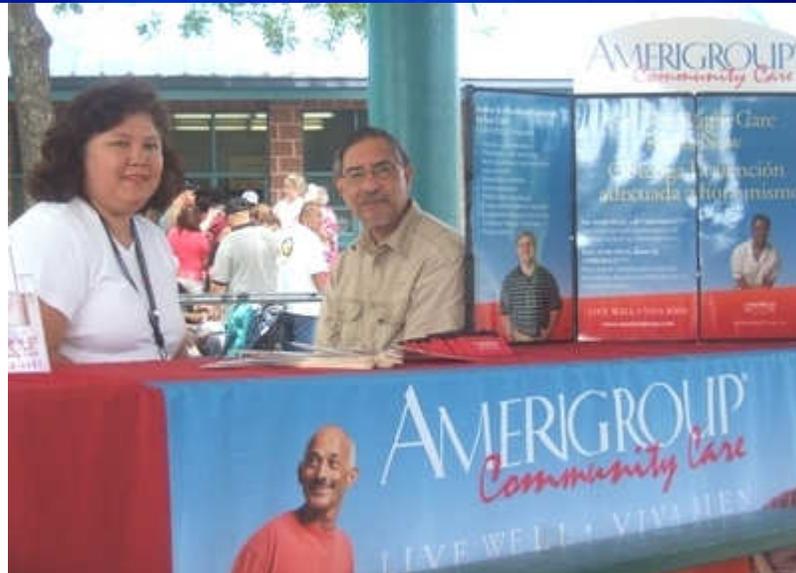
Gloria Aguirre
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Andrew Galan
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Amerigroup, our largest donor for Mayfest Picnic 2009

SAILS Staff Host 6th Picnic, 2009 Mayfest!

Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) staff worked very hard to feature SAILS' 6th Annual Picnic Mayfest Fundraiser. This wonderful community gathering was a success in large part because of our lead sponsor, AmeriGroup Corporation. Carol Villarreal and David Sosa are true friends of SAILS. They both set up a resource table for the consumers who stopped by for BBQ, socializing and fun! United SA Federal Credit Union, Habitat for Humanity, Superior and Advocacy. Inc. were also present as resource vendors.

The day started off with some drizzle that thankfully, turned into sunshine. Sandie's volunteers did a fine job setting up the kitchen. Gloria Banik's son, Troy ensured that all guests received a delicious plate of BBQ with ample "fixins." Volunteers also worked the Moonbounce, face-painting, bean-bag toss and fishing pond booths. The children had a great time!

Of course, the "big kids" had a wonderful time too. Several people participated in this year's Silent Auction receiving items such as gift certificates, a clock and giftware. The picnic wrapped up with three entertainment groups: The Harris Power Trio, featuring Mia, Dreams Fulfilled Through Music, and Fascinating Rhythms. SAILS staff thanks everyone involved.



USAA Federal Credit Union's booth

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

OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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Sandie Flanagan	I&R/ Volunteer Coordinator	Bruce Orey	CWIC
Casey Hamilton	IL Peer Support Specialist	Lori Crownover	IL/STAP Specialist
Albert Pulido	CWIC		

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