San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) hosted a fun-filled "Diamonds & Denims" Gala fundraiser at the Marriott Rivercenter on Friday, October 24, 2014. Guests enjoyed a four-course meal with featured entertainment provided by San Antonio's well-known Rick Cavender Band. Guests donned their Western wear with their fashionable "bling" to top off the evening's theme.

Mr. Gordon Hartman was the evening's special guest speaker and complimented SAILS services to people with special needs. He stated that he looks forward to continuing his partnership with SAILS. The GALA included a special silent auction that was a great success due to the generosity of so many local businesses and board members who donated for a good cause.


SAILS Board of Directors, Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG), Health South and Professional Contract Services, Inc. SAILS extends a warm thanks to those individuals who purchased seats to attend the Diamonds and Denims Gala. We cannot do it without each and everyone of you! Thank you very much! I look forward to seeing everyone next year!
Consumer Learns that Advocacy Works
by Gloria Aguirre, IL Specialist

Ms. Diana Castro is a consumer of San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) who learned the value of advocacy. Ms. Castro has two adult sons who have disabilities. She learned quickly that she needed to be their advocate to locate resources and services. She admits that it is challenging at times because some agencies inform her that her sons must make the contact with various agencies since they are adults.

Ms. Castro says that she has been successful advocating on behalf of her sons for counseling services and obtaining their medications but it is hard to locate free or low-income assistance. She says, "There are still some setbacks but I don't let that stop me. I continue to move forward to keep helping my two sons to help them reach their full potential."

Cindy's Brain Injury Leads to Better Choices
by Micheline Brown, IL Specialist

Cynthia (Cindy) Robalin was married with four children. She divorced and had to find a way to support herself and her children. She started an ironing service and provided massage therapy until her children were grown up. During Cindy’s life she admits that she made poor choices in choosing her friends and relationships.

After a serious brain injury in October of 2012 Cindy struggled to recover and to regain a sense of herself. Although she lost her house she says, "since my brain injury I have come to realize that I actually have more choices in life. I did not think that this was true before."

Cindy is starting over again and looking for a place to live independently on her own. After all the hardship she has had in her life she maintains a positive outlook and says, "I really feel like I have the support that I need at SAILS!"
S.A.I.L.S. Welcomes Our New Member of Board Of Directors

Rodney Harris

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) board of directors and staff would like to welcome Mr. Rodney Harris as a new board member. Mr. Harris was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. At five years old he was taught to read music and play the trumpet and later in middle school he learned to play the guitar. Mr. Harris is an ordained minister, and also working on to become a licensed Financial Planner. He recently retired after working at Yellow Roadway Corporation for 35 years.

Mr. Harris is no stranger to SAILS because he has been volunteering at our events since 2005. He says, "he is honored to be able to be a board member now and ready to do even more for SAILS!" Welcome Rodney Harris!

2014 Volunteers Appreciation Luncheon

By Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

On November 14, 2014 SAILS hosted our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at The Barn Door Restaurant located at 8400 N. New Braunfels Street. Approximately 80 excited volunteers joined us in a wonderful meal and program recognizing our "Volunteer of the Year" and everyone who volunteered at SAILS during the year. SAILS has over 250 volunteers who annually help out with various events and projects. SAILS deeply appreciates the caring and compassion from all our volunteers and we recognize how valuable each of them truly are in helping us meet our mission to serve persons with disabilities. We also congratulate Mr. Joe Creasy for being selected as our 2014 "Volunteer of the Year!"

Mr. Joe Creasy accepts 2014 SAILS Volunteer Of The Year Award.

Save The Date

2015 Fiesta Resource Fair
April 25, 2015
2014 Diamonds and Denims Gala, SAILS 33rd Anniversary Celebration
Photographs by Frank J. San Miguel

2014 SAILS Diamonds and Denims Gala Poster

Board Chair, Patty Byrd and husband Phil

Alamo Mobility's guests enjoying the Gala

Robbie Callis, Cheryle Iggehart and Dr. Brietzke

Auction items for bidding

Special Guest Speaker Gordon Hartman
2014 Diamonds and Denims Gala, SAILS 33rd Anniversary Celebration

Photographs by Frank J. San Miguel

Rodney Harris blesses the Gala

Shopping for Auction items

Rick Cavender "strumming and singing" Country

Gala Guests

Jerri Ann Jones and guest

Susan and Sydney Stoval display Americus Diamond necklace
SAILS Staff Attends 20th Annual National Conference on Rural Independent Living
Living held on July 28-31, 2014

By Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

The Legacy continues: With Great Power, Comes Great Responsibility was the theme this year at the 20th Annual National Conference on Rural Independent Living held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on October 17-20, 2014. Three SAILS staff attended the conference to gain more professional education and training for independent living services.

The conference keynote speaker was Mr. Aaron Bishop who is the current Commissioner for the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) at the Administration for Community Living at within the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Workshops included training for a quality and compliant RSA audit, a presentation on how to support consumer engagement in decision-making at CILs, higher education and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), youth peer-to-peer mentoring programs and outreach to rural communities and more.

There are many challenges for persons with disabilities who live in a rural community, such as transportation and affordable and accessible housing. The conference covered ways to remotely access people residing in extremely rural settings using Google maps (2014 APRIL Conference agenda).

Staff appreciated the opportunity to learn from the experts in the disability field from all across America!
Welcome New S.A.I.L.S. Staff

Lynn Cruz
Independent Living IR Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator

SAILS welcomes Lynn Cruz, Independent Living Information Referral Specialist and Volunteer Coordinator, as the most recent addition to staff.

Lynn is a graduate of Baylor University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

For the past 13 years Lynn has assisted individuals with disabilities in many areas, including case management, child care, young adult programs and employment. Previously, Lynn had been with the Arc of San Antonio, Community Options and Palo Alto College.

Lynn looks forward to assisting individuals in their independent living skills, and she is excited about working with volunteers and helping support mission of SAILS.

SAILS Partners with Goodwill And Bjorn's

By Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

Goodwill employees and volunteers at "Stuff The Truck", a SAILS fundraiser event in partnership with Goodwill and Bjorn's.

Goodwill Industries makes a good community partner for nonprofits like SAILS. Goodwill's Partners for Good Program is one way to raise awareness and raise funds. On September 14, 2014 SAILS organized and gathered together large bulky items, clothing, toys and may more items at Bjorn's on highway 281 to be donated to Goodwill Industries. SAILS tagged this fundraiser our "Stuff the Goodwill Truck!"

If an organization is approved to participate in Goodwill's Partners for Good Program they can earn much needed dollars for each Goodwill Industries truck that is filled with donated items. It was certainly a success for SAILS and Goodwill Industries too! Thanks Goodwill Industries and thanks Bjorn's for partnering with SAILS for a great cause!

Follow Calendar of Events of SAILS Throughout The Year And "Like" Us On Facebook:

http://facebook.com/sailstx.org

Online Request For Services, SAILS Consumers:
http://sailstx.org
Click link tab "Contact", and then "Request For Services"