SAILS Hosted 25th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Celebration at Downtown UTSA

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) proudly hosted the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration at the University of Texas at San Antonio downtown campus located at 501 West Cesar E. Chavez on July 25, 2015. The theme for this wonderful commemorative 25th Anniversary of the ADA was Access and Inclusion for Life!

A pep rally kicked-off the celebration with guests chanting "ADA All the Way!" Guests were provided very special 25th ADA t-shirts sponsored by AmeriGroup RealSolutions. San Antonio's oldest VFW Post 76 provided Honor Guards to commemorate the event.

Emma Rudkin, Miss San Antonio was SAILS honored Keynote Speaker. Ms. Rudkin shared her inspirational story growing up as a deaf girl and how her continued dedication and faith helped her to be who she is today. Ms. Rudkin was very kind to stay after her speech to visit with the attendees and take photos.

San Antonio’s Honorable District Attorney, Nico LaHood was honored as Public Servant of the Year. Chief Juanita Gardner accepted the award on his behalf after providing a touching and moving speech written by Nico LaHood.

SAILS had 50 community exhibitors who provided valuable information and services for the hundreds of guests attending the 25th Anniversary of the ADA celebration. There were a dozen community awards presented in various categories and drawings for prizes throughout the celebration. And everyone was treated to a boxed lunch sponsored by HEB!
Tina McCarty Is Living Independently
by Lynn Cruz, IL Specialist & Volunteer Coordinator

Tina McCarty is a consumer with San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS). When Tina first became a consumer with a Independent Living Coordinator she was staying at Safe Haven and was beginning the steps towards her independent living. This included applying for Social Security and San Antonio Housing Authority. Instead of waiting for these services, she continued to take positive steps towards her future. Tina became a client with the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to seek out employment. She also wanted to improve her computer skills to enhance her job training so with the help of IL staff sought out extra computer training. Tina’s next big step was that she was also able to move out of the shelter and into an apartment. I look forward to continuing to see the advances that Tina will make towards her bright future.

A Journey To Independence
by Gloria Aguirre, IL Specialist

Many of us think that living independently is easy. However, if you happen to be a person who has a disability or is raising a child with a disability it can be very difficult. You might find yourself needing some extra help or guidance.

Mrs. Castro who is the mother of four children found herself needing help as she is faced with many obstacles while raising her family. She has two young adult sons with disabilities. She shares, “if I as their mother don’t give them a voice, then who will?” Although she wanted to give up many times she has not permitted her obstacles to stop her from learning how to advocate for her family.

After coming to San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS), Mrs. Castro learned she could get support and resources to help her family. Today, Mrs. Castro is on her journey to independence. She is happy to see her sons grow and flourish. One of her sons will soon be attending a day workshop with the other one next to follow.

SAILS plays a major role in assisting persons with all types of disabilities to live a more independent life by providing advocacy, independent living skills, peer support and information and referrals. Please call 210-281-1878 if you know a person with a disability needed SAILS services.

Follow Calendar of Events of SAILS Throughout The Year And “Like” Us On Facebook:
http://facebook.com/sailstx.org
15th Annual Bexar County Consumer and Family Support Conference
by Gloria Aguirre, IL Specialist

Reducing Stigma Through Empowerment and Education was this year's title of the 15th Annual Bexar County Consumer and Family Support Conference hosted by the Center for Health Care. The conference was held at The Wyndham River Walk Hotel on August 28th and 29th. Since San Antonio Independent Living Services partners with the Center for Health Care I had the privilege to attend and I really enjoyed it. The topics were great and all the vendors were informative and provided valuable resources.

I thoroughly enjoyed the workshops this year. One workshop in particular, stood out to me. It was presented by Ms. Michelle Mata entitled "Dance as a Personal Medicine." I'm glad I got there early as the room filled quickly to capacity. Ms. Mata explained that she uses dance as a form of therapy. To my delight, all the participants lined up and followed Ms. Mata in various dances; everything from boot scoot boogy to the electric slide!

In general this is a great annual conference that focuses upon mental well being. I learned that it is "okay" for people to have a mental illness such as schizophrenia or Bipolar Depression. I am also very glad that the Center for Health Care is trying to help remove the stigma associated with people who have mental illness. It would be a better world if that goal could be accomplished! The Center for Health Care can be reached at 210-261-1000 or at www.chcbc.org
SAILS Hosted 25th ADA Anniversary Celebration
Photos by Frank San Miguel

The Unicorn Steppers perform

Guests Enjoying the ADA Celebration

TY Beck GM of Alamo Mobility

McGruff Checks Out the ADA

Amerigroup RealSolutions Booth

VIA Metropolitan Transit Exhibit
SAILS Hosted 25th ADA Anniversary Celebration

Photos by Frank San Miguel

WellMed Exhibits at ADA

CAAG Exhibits Adaptive Devices

Geoffrey Elkins from Grande Communications

Guests Visit the ADA Exhibitors

ADA Guest Registration

Larry Smith Received Advocacy Award
Calendar of Events

August

4-  SAILS Fundraiser and Outreach Booth at Fish City Grill
7-  Support Group / Any Baby Can
10-11  State Independent Living Council Meeting / Dallas
12-  SAILS Board Meeting & Planning Meeting
13-  VITA Mobile Team at SAILS
16-18  Transportation Summit in Lubbock, Texas & SILC Meeting
26-  Project Mend’s Annual Toast of the Town
27-  Support Group / Alamo Service Connection

September

1-  Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke’s 12th SAILS Anniversary
4-  First Friday Networking Meeting
4-  Support Group
8-  Staff Meeting & Dr. Brietzke’s Birthday
19-  Free to Soar GALA at Morgan’s Wonderland
22-  Staff Meeting
24-  Support Group / The Arc of San Antonio
26-  SAILS Booth at Buddy Walk
29-  IL Staff Outreach in Uvalde
30-  IL Staff Outreach in Medina County

October

1-  Frann Wright, Executive Administrative Assistant’s Birthday
2-  First Friday Networking
2-  Support Group / Elder Resource Group
6-  Staff Meeting
7-  SAILS Board Planning Meeting
16-  SAILS Starlight Casino Night & Boss Day
20-  Staff Meeting
22-  Goodwill Industries Annual Meeting
29-  Support Group / Catholic Charities

Welcome New S.A.I.L.S. Staff Member

Frann Wright
Executive Administrative Assistant

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

Current SAILS events can always be viewed on our Facebook page:
http://facebook.com/sailstx.org
Click To Like Us!
SAILS Staff Attended 2015 NCIL Conference in Washington, D.C.

by Lynn Cruz, Michelene Brown, IL Specialist, and Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke

SAILS staff attended the Annual National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) Conference in Washington, D.C. on July 27-30, 2015. The NCIL Conference was held during the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There was much excitement around this important anniversary and the annual march to the White House grounds was much larger than ever.

Michelene Brown and myself, Lynn Cruz enjoyed a workshop titled, "The Past, Present, and Future of IL." The main speaker was Lex Frieden, a long time educator and advocate for people with disabilities. During his presentation he shared a short video footage from 1978, "Independent Living: Six Model Programs" which related programs to increase independent living. It was interesting to see that these concepts are still being used 37 years later. Frieden also mentioned the importance of the Centers for Independent Living to look beyond government funds to provide services to persons with disabilities. Another video he shared can be found at www.ilru.org/21st-century-ideas-for-independent-living-centers.

Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke enjoyed attending a workshop presented in part by the head of the Japan Council of IL Centers. It was a real learning experience for the interactive workshop participants because the various staff from IL Centers throughout the United States were able to ask the Japanese questions about how what they did at their centers and what challenges they have in their various areas, especially with accessibility. The Japanese mentioned how they wanted to enact their own "ADA law." There were about 100 participants in the workshop. The closing remarks were provided by Yoshiko Dart, wife of the late Justin Dart. "Lead on, Lead on."
OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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