

BAY AREA PROJECT

COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING TEAM

FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2003

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM MEMBERS

Carol Risley	Department of Developmental Services
Craig Guinasso	Relative
Cynthia Fair	State Council on Developmental Disabilities
David White	Parent
Enid Emde	Parent
Francisco Valenzuela	San Andreas Regional Center
Howard Revels	Parent
John Guinasso	Parent
Melinda Gonser	Department of Developmental Services
Paul Verke	Department of Developmental Services
Adora De La Cruz	Agnews Developmental Center
Bill Stout	Agnews Developmental Center
Celestine Andrews	Agnews Developmental Center
Grace Liu	Agnews Developmental Center
Grace Menor	Agnews Developmental Center
Greg Hirota	Agnews Developmental Center
John Folck	Agnews Developmental Center
Kathleen Lee	Agnews Developmental Center
Ken Rubino	Agnews Developmental Center
Norma Prestosa	Agnews Developmental Center
Patricia Sutherland	Agnews Developmental Center
Paul Koflanovich	Agnews Developmental Center
Ron Giuffre	Agnews Developmental Center
Rosey Rubino	Agnews Developmental Center
Ruth Richey	Agnews Developmental Center
Thomas Kugler	Agnews Developmental Center
Timothy Mehalko	Agnews Developmental Center
Tom Kussell	Agnews Developmental Center

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM CHARGE

Design and implement strategies to assure consumers, families, staff, legislators and other stakeholders are kept informed, and have opportunities to provide input.

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Communications Team has been established to ensure wide dissemination of information to all interested parties regarding the development of a plan for services for individuals who live and work at Agnews Developmental Center. Communications plays a vital role in the success of any planning and development process. As we go forward we must be cognizant of the impact that the plan will have on the consumers, families, staff and other stakeholders. It is the responsibility of the Communications Team to keep interested parties apprised of our progress, knowledgeable on pertinent legislation, and to provide opportunities for input and feedback. By sharing information openly, we will ensure that the plan will have input from consumers, advocates, families, legislators and service providers. The outcome of our efforts will be instrumental in the success of a dynamic plan that provides a new and exciting array of service and support options for people with developmental disabilities.

Our charge is to design and implement strategies to assure consumers, families, staff, legislators and other stakeholders are kept informed and have opportunities to provide input.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To Provide Accurate and Timely Information

The team will ensure that all consumers, staff, parents and interested individuals have accurate information that will help them actively participate in the development of a plan for Agnews Developmental Center.

To Be Informed Spokespersons

Each member of the team will be knowledgeable of, and able to articulate to, those interested, the development of the plan, and its impact on the service delivery system.

To Gather Information From All Sources

There are many passionate views on the merits of changing the way Agnews Developmental Center provides services. The Communications Team will gather information from all sources and relay pertinent information to appropriate planning teams.

To Accept Without Judgment Other Perspectives

Consumers, parents, and interested individuals want to know that their opinions have been heard. We value the input and opinions of all who wish to express their suggestions, concerns, and ideas regardless of their views.

To End Rumors, Not Spread Them

By providing factual public relations, researching rumors, and addressing inaccurate information, the Communications Team will help all interested individuals understand the comprehensive planning process and the outcomes of that process.

SUMMARY OF TEAM PROCESS

The formation of the Communications Team in January 2003, was a proactive step to ensure a consistent and accurate source of information to the consumers, staff, and the public regarding the Governor's request to develop a plan leading to closure. The Communications Team, through bi-weekly meetings, assessed areas of need and developed core services that were determined to be important to maintaining a healthy dialog flow to and from the various teams. The Communications Team instituted a monthly newsletter, developed a speakers' bureau, initiated a rumor control system, participated in the development of a systemwide website, and has provided input to other groups and organizations about the planning process. Through discussion and feedback among team members, visits to service providers and presentations from guest speakers, the team has remained involved and active in collecting and disseminating timely information. All recommendations generated from the team have been developed through collective input and team critique.

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

1. Communications Team to remain active until closure is complete.
2. Systems in place to ensure timely response to changing information.
3. Team members to be more involved in providing information to the consumers, staff, and interested individuals.
4. Press packets continually updated to include current information. As information changes, new packets made available to the press.
5. Legislative staff continues to be updated on the progress of the development of the plan.
6. Communications Team works closely with the Department of Developmental Services to ensure continuity of information.

Outcomes

1. The Communications Team has provided consistent, timely, and accurate information to the consumers, staff, families, and interested individuals.
2. A monthly newsletter, "New Beginnings," has been published with the intent to keep all parties abreast of the latest information from work groups, relevant legislation, and rumors.
3. A website within the Department of Developmental Services' website at www.dds.ca.gov has been built with the help of the Department of Developmental Services. This site provides a statewide resource for persons looking for information on the Bay Area Project.
4. Team members have spoken to various state and community groups regarding the plan.
5. Team members continue to be the point of contact for press inquiries.

RECOMMEDATIONS' IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

#	Task Name	Start Date	Due Date	Who
1.	Develop informational newsletter, "New Beginnings."	2/01/2003	3/01/2003	Ruth Richey, ADC Kathleen Lee, ADC
2.	Build Bay Area Project specific website.	3/15/2003	5/01/2003	Melinda Gonser, DDS
3.	Establish Speakers' Bureau.	4/24/2003	5/22/2003	John Folck, ADC
4.	Develop consumer-friendly informational resources for Bay Area Project.	5/01/2003	6/01/2003	Carol Risley, DDS
5.	Hold informational meetings with local legislators.	8/01/2003	9/15/2003	Harold Pitchford, ADC Santi Rogers, SARC John Folck, ADC
6.	Meet quarterly with Department staff to ensure continuity of information.	9/15/2003	Ongoing	Paul Verke, DDS Melinda Gonser, DDS Communications Team

7.	Press releases to coincide with major milestones in Bay Area Project planning	10/15/2003	Ongoing	Paul Verke, DDS Ruth Richey, ADC
8.	Develop archival information resource on the closure process.	11/01/2003	Ongoing	Ruth Richey, ADC