



Eldridge Press

Message from the Executive Director

by James E. Rogers

Only weeks from now we will enter a new decade. The current decade passes with an array of memorable dates that are common to most of us, along with experiences or milestones remembered by individuals, families, friends, and coworkers. We collectively experienced the turn of the century celebration and the “Y2K” predictions, the events of September 11, 2001, natural disasters, international conflicts, elections, global economic events, and so on.

To many, the period beginning around Thanksgiving and culminating around the early days of the New Year are a time to join with others to delight and be thankful for many things. I can’t think of a time in my life when that has been more poignant than now, in light of current fiscal realities that reach all of us.

Whatever is beautiful, meaningful, or brings you happiness, may that be yours during this holiday season and throughout 2010.

Wellness Faire

Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) held its annual Wellness Faire on Wednesday, August 5, 2009 inside the facility gymnasium and on the lawn area outside.

The event, sponsored by the Wellness Committee, a committee made up of Sonoma employees, featured live music, a dance performance, and informational booths by the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Sonoma Marin Mosquito and Vector Control, 511 Ride Share, and other public entities. In addition, environmentally friendly vendor booths offered organic and natural dyed clothing, soaps, oils and potions, vitamins and healthy food products, massage therapy, and natural household products. Over forty vendors were present with live demonstrations.



Katie Ruthroff gives a massage at the Wellness Faire

The Wellness Committee proudly continues to seek and provide reliable resources for those interested in obtaining information for products and services that may assist them in continuing to make healthy lifestyle choices and changes in their lives, as well as to improve their health, prevent disease, manage health problems, and improve quality of life.

Faire goers had the opportunity to learn about water conservation, utility rebate programs, recycling, land conservation, and the many things they can do to tread a little lighter on Mother Earth. The committee also sold a “healthy choices” lunch of salads and sandwiches at the event.

Emergency Preparedness Event

On September 17, 2009, the Emergency Preparedness Committee sponsored “Emergency Preparedness Day,” with several informational booths in front of the Porter Administration Building. Representatives from PG&E did demonstrations on how to turn off the natural gas supply at residential meters; Nutrition Services provided food safety information and displayed samples of emergency ration dehydrated meal packets; Nursing Services provided information on infection control and the H1N1 flu; the Eldridge Fire Department provided information on various fire alarms at the Center; and the Health and Safety Office provided information from the Red Cross, including a sample “Go Kit” so employees would know what to pack and have ready to grab and go in an emergency.



Emergency Preparedness Event

Recognition

July Employee of the Month

The Employee of the Month for July is Cliff Lee, Social Worker from Program One. His nominator states, "Since he started just over a year ago, he has become very involved in the lives of the clients. He volunteers for unit and facility-wide events." Cliff helped the James unit develop a *Client Alert* communication board system, so that staff would know about important client-related issues during change of shift. He is also the first Social Worker in the program to cover social sexual behavior issues in his annual assessments. His nominator goes on to say, "I also appreciate his willingness to look for better ways of doing things that support the clients and teams he serves." Way to go, Cliff!



Cliff Lee

August Employee of the Month

The August Employee of the Month is Dan Phillips, Pharmacist I from the Pharmacy Department. His coworkers describe him as someone who is dedicated and kind and always conscientious towards everyone. His nominator says, "He gives 500 percent, literally doing the work of more than one employee." Others describe him as the kind of person that goes out of his way to help others and to make you feel welcomed. His nominator goes on to say that, "He consistently follows through with all requests in an extraordinarily timely manner and offers all of this with the most gracious persona." Congratulations on your award, Dan!



Dan Phillips

September Employee of the Month

Jodi Duffy, Psychiatric Technician from Program Seven is the Employee of the Month for September. "Jody is a self-directed employee and a stellar provider of client-centered service. She has developed meaningful, functional training programs for her clients, which benefit a whole group of other clients. She is a strong advocate and is extremely conscientious of client needs." Her nominator goes on to say, "Jodi's approach has exhibited outstanding guidance to the individuals she works with. She consistently demonstrates the Sonoma values of building respectful relationships, managing resources, and providing effective leadership." Nice job, Jodi!

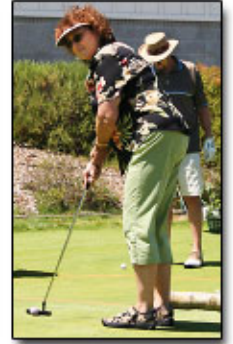


Jodi Duffy

Golf Tournament

by Joanne Bender

July 31, 2009 marked another successful event: Sonoma Developmental Center's 15th Annual Golf Tournament. This year we had 63 golfers, 13 sponsors, and many raffle prize donors, in addition to several volunteers and the committee of nine that made this tournament a success. We were able to raise a little over \$5,000 this year. It is only the participation of businesses and individuals that make this tournament so successful.



Joanne Bender at the putting contest [photo by Susan Jones]

Our annual golf tournament raises funds to support our Employee Recognition Program. All the funds generated by this event are used to reward Sonoma staff that deserve to be recognized for the exemplary services they provide to our clients and for their excellent job performance. These individuals are our role models, our mentors, and they set the standards for all who work here at Sonoma.

This year, we also funded the Staff Appreciation Barbecue on July 28th at Sonoma House, as another way to say, "Thanks" to all our great staff.

The Golf Committee thanks everyone who was involved in this year's Golf Tournament.

Independence Day

Sonoma Developmental Center's Independence Day celebration started on July 1 with a colorful display of "Safe and Sane" fireworks at the Gazebo. The evening festivities included live music by The Rocketeers, and refreshments.

Daytime activities continued the celebration on Friday July 3, 2009 at two locations in the morning, and a large centralized event was held later in the afternoon. The event locations were decorated in red, white, and blue, with live music throughout the day.

At each event location, there were photo booths with Fourth of July themed backgrounds, an arts and crafts booth, and a temporary tattoo booth. Game booths such as the clown squirt, firecracker bowling, target tennis, and beach ball squirt offered prizes to participants. The celebration continued in the afternoon with live music, servings of fresh fruit, shaved ice treats, and other



Games at the 4th of July festivities

continued on next page

Community Happenings

continued from bottom of previous page refreshments.

Paul Nieuwenhuijs, a Recreation Therapist, coordinates the event and describes it, "It's a team effort that includes the residential programs and many other departments. It takes a whole lot of employees to make these events occur. We all work together to make this happen for the residents who live here."

Live music was performed throughout the day and included PDQ, (a barbershop quartet), Shannon Jones, and Solid Air.

Sonoma County Fair

One of the events outside of Sonoma Developmental Center that both the residents and staff look forward to every year is the Sonoma County Fair. This year was no exception. The fair ran from July 28th through August 9th and was attended almost every day by those residing at the Center, with support staff from a variety of disciplines.

Whether it was the excitement of winning a prize at one of the game booths, riding the ferris wheel, feeding the farm animals, buying some freshly-made fudge, or enjoying the abundance of savory fair food, it was obvious from the smiles and laughter that everyone was sure to have a good time.

We, with hundreds of other patrons, made our way through the exhibit halls, looking at submitted pieces of art work and ceramics, to the flower show, which is the largest themed flower show in the United States and includes a stunning showcase of the region's best garden designers, both professional and amateur.

This year, Sonoma residents entered both ceramics and paintings, and won ribbons for their work. One of the residential programs at Sonoma, Program Six, entered the flower show with an exhibit entitled "Mesozoic Marsh" and won second place for their beautiful entry. Congratulations, Program Six!

Celebrate Sonoma

On Thursday, September 10, 2009, staff and residents of the Sonoma Developmental Center celebrated their diversity at the annual "Celebrate Sonoma" event. The decades-old event began with a Hawaiian luau-style employee picnic that has grown over the years to include Sonoma clients as well. As the popularity of the event grew, the Center broadened the focus to other ethnicities and backgrounds. Today, the event is held

Eldridge Press

to honor the heritage of all those who live and work at the Center. Paul Nieuwenhuijs, a Rehabilitation Therapist who has helped coordinate the event since 1990, says that Celebrate Sonoma is a social event to "Share our roots and cultural heritage." Nieuwenhuijs spoke at the event about appreciating our differences and similarities.

The event theme for 2009 was "Music: One Language, One World" and entertainment had a Hawaiian or Irish influence. Featured performers included Shannon Jones and Soul Survivor, and Sean Carscadden.

The food served at Celebrate Sonoma was donated by local organizations and preparations for the event began the preceding Tuesday evening with the Eldridge Fire Department supervising a ceremonial burning of oak logs in a pit in the ground. Later that evening, Sonoma staff roasted two large pigs and 10 turkeys in the Hawaiian tradition. On Thursday morning, the meat was shredded to serve at the event along with rice and fruit. Hawaiian shaved ice was also available.

The outdoor venue was decorated with flags of the world and individuals who live or work at the Center were invited to set up booths to display memorabilia, photos, artifacts, and general information about a variety of cultures. Activities included a photo booth, temporary tattoo booth, and an assortment of games.

Remembrance Day

The California Memorial Project (CMP) presented the 7th Annual Remembrance Day Ceremony at Sonoma Developmental Center at the Butler Gazebo on Monday September 21, 2009.

The California Memorial Project is a collaboration of the California Network of Mental Health Clients, People First of California, and Disability Rights California, to honor people who have lived and died at state institutions.

The third Monday in September was established as Remembrance Day by the California Memorial Project, which hosted simultaneous events in Ukiah, Stockton, and

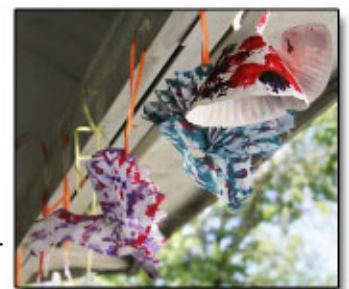
continued on next page



Enjoying the food and music at Celebrate Sonoma



Program 6's entry at the Sonoma County Fair flower show
[photo by JJ Fernandez]



Remembrance Day doves made by people living at Sonoma

More Community Happenings...

continued from previous page

Manteca, as well as events at Developmental Centers and State Hospitals throughout California.

Each event is open to the public and featured remembrances, poems, songs, and refreshments. Those in attendance observe a moment of silence at 1:55 PM to show respect for people with developmental or mental disabilities who have died.

Speakers at the Sonoma event included James E. Rogers, Executive Director of Sonoma Developmental Center; Sharon Schmidt of Disability Rights California; and the facility's Catholic Chaplain, Father Patrick Leslie. Patricia Flannery, Deputy Director of the Department of Developmental Services, also attended. Many of the residents at the Center created a colorful array of paper doves that were on display during the ceremony.

Camping Trip *by Sherrill Peterson*

What do you think of when you think of summer vacation? I know that I think of going camping, something I did every summer growing up. Most of the people who live at Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) haven't had the chance to experience camping trips off campus (they go to Camp Via on grounds). However, for two residents of Smith Cottage, that's no longer true. They've had the opportunity to attend a residential summer camp specifically for persons with developmental disabilities. The camp program, called Camp ReCreation, was founded in 1983 by Sonoma's chaplain, Father Patrick Leslie, and some like-minded friends who were interested in developing a camp for people with special needs. The camp is held every year at Camp Ronald McDonald on Eagle Lake, in the northeastern part of California. Every camper has his/her own volunteer counselor, who is with the camper all the time (most of these volunteers have returned year after year). In addition, there are a

number of counselors who lead the various group activities, provide the meals, and generally take care of everything (we even have our own camp clown!). I've been lucky enough to be able to accompany my friends Patrick and Kim from Smith, and help them enjoy camp. Patrick just completed his fifth year at camp, and has had a wonderful time every year. This year marked Kim's second year at camp, and he again had a great time.

Camp activities are many and varied: Each day starts with camp songs around the flagpole, then breakfast and a rundown of the schedule. The morning is divided into three activity sessions, including Bible stories (where everyone has the opportunity to act out the story of the day), archery, arts and crafts, sports, canoeing, hiking, and waterfront activities. At noon, we break for lunch, after which it's time for a rest period. By mid-afternoon, everyone's back up and ready to go to outdoor Mass (Fr. Pat is at camp with us!). After Mass, everyone goes down to the beach to swim, canoe, and frolic in the sand. Next, it's time to head back up to the cabins to get ready for dinner.

Every evening there's something different going on. One night there's a campfire, with each cabin providing entertainment; on a different night there will be a carnival, or an evening of team games, a movie night, a talent show (this is a favorite of many of the campers), and, of course, a dress-up dinner and dance.

Patrick and Kim have had a wonderful time each year. I think Patrick's favorite activities include canoeing and dancing, while Kim is a huge fan of sitting on the beach. They both have had the opportunity to make new friends among both the counselors and campers, and I know they enjoy seeing familiar faces and greeting old friends when they arrive at camp. I'm very happy to have had the chance to go to camp with them.



Kim (front) with his counselor & a friend



Patrick (R) with his counselor
[photos by Sherrill Peterson]

Submitting articles to the Eldridge Press:

The *Eldridge Press* gladly accepts submissions of articles about events at Sonoma Developmental Center, news about the Center's departments and programs, employee recognition, and other information of interest to the Center's employees, consumers and other stakeholders. Articles may be edited for grammar, punctuation, and clarity. To submit your article, send it to the Office of Planning and Communications, Room 102, Sonoma Developmental Center, P.O. Box 1493, Eldridge, CA 95431. Deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to the publication date (for instance, December 15 is the deadline for the 1st Quarter 2010 issue).

Eldridge Press
Volume 4, Number 4, © October 2009

Published by:
Sonoma Developmental Center
P.O. Box 1493
Eldridge, CA 95431

Edited by: Office of Planning & Communications:
Jorge (JJ) Fernandez
Karen Litzenberg

Photography & layout: Nancy Flack, Central Program Services