



# Eldridge Press

## Message from the Executive Director

by Karen Faria

I can hardly believe that I have been at SDC for over one year. There is nothing like constant work to make the time go by quickly. But, what I really can't believe is how much change has occurred since my return on April 1, 2013. I have witnessed incredible energy, willingness and dedication to the implementation of needed changes, in all of our three levels of care facilities; GAC, NF and ICF. Obviously, ICF has been the most visible, but staff also has been working very hard in GAC, NF and Administration to improve our services as well. Below are the statements I made in my first Town Hall and Eldridge Press "Message from the ED" followed by my current comments (*in italics*) to demonstrate how far we have come.



Karen Faria

- We have to improve our hiring process, and hire more qualified staff to fill the vacant positions in order to create a well-rounded and consistent team. *613 applications have been processed since 4.1.13. The TB test process has been reduced to one blood test and from 10 days down to 4 days. Even though many of the applicants may not have qualified, we have increased in the number of filled positions including many more RNs; we have more Office Technicians, Psychologists, Respiratory Therapists, Office Assistants and the direct Level of Care staff vacancy rate is less than three percent. We have increased our advertisements from just the state process to include Craig's List, Indeed.com, and specialty publications and websites. We are still working to improve this process, but many thanks goes to the Human Resources department for their long, long extra hours of work to make this happen!*
- We need to train and retrain and even re-retrain ourselves, so that everyone individually and all of us collectively feel completely confident that we have the right knowledge to do the right job absolutely correctly. *It is almost impossible to tally the number of training hours that have been provided since April 2013, but we can estimate that between the formal classroom training, NEO, Block training, program and department training, residential training and one-on-one staff training, SDC has provided over 15,000 hours of training. Additionally an entire new Two-Year Training Plan has been developed and almost all curricula have been updated. This could not have been achieved without the dedication and work of the training staff, the Quality Assurance (QA) department, the leadership of the QA Director and many individual staff who contributed their expertise to the curriculum. SDC has made a major step forward in our knowledge base and skills level. Much more can still be achieved.*
- We need to repair, clean and maintain the best state of our environment and our equipment. This demonstrates our respect for the dignity of those who live here. *Our NF fire safety sprinkler project is completed, along with some painting and the provision of new window treatments in the NF homes. All the common areas of the ICF homes have been painted. New indoor and outdoor furniture has arrived for various SDC campus areas. Old furniture has been repaired or discarded, and many new environmental enhancements have been made. We will be getting new medication carts for NF, and the bedrooms for all the ICF homes will be painted based on input from the people occupying the bedrooms. Even though not often seen, Plant Operations staff have spent many long days and nights here repairing the internal systems that keep SDC functioning. We are an old facility and without the staff of Plant Operations, their skills and their dedication, SDC would not continue to operate as successfully as it does.*

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# More Message from the Executive Director

*Message from the Executive Director, continued from previous page*

- We need to provide premium health services from all primary and ancillary health care staff. It is the foundation for all other programming. *New Clinical Registered Nurses have been added to all the ICF homes under the guidance of our Coordinator of Nursing Services. We have increased the ratio of licensed staff to unlicensed staff; we have a new and permanent Medical Director; we have increased our neurology and other specialty health providers; we have added two new respiratory therapists; we have increased medical competency training to licensed staff and we have improved our pharmacy services. We will be adding more Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapy staff soon as well as increasing our Psychiatry services. SDC is making great strides for constant quality improvement to achieve premium medical care for each person living at SDC.*
- We need to increase the number of opportunities that our citizens have for growth—socially, recreationally, vocationally and emotionally. We have to provide more jobs, more outings, and more training for the people who live here. *SDC has more than quadrupled the number of field trips per month, has expanded the opportunities and use of our on-campus REACH recreational programming. We have increased the number of men and women living at SDC with paid employment by 10%, increased the number of people receiving minimum wage over production wage and have greatly increased the number of hours our people can choose to work. We have also provided more therapy and social groups for personal growth. Our dining programs and food preparation learning programs have been extended into advocacy groups, recreational experiences and mealtime experiences. Next will be our outreach to the local community for more work opportunities. We will also expand family- or cafeteria-style dining wherever possible. We certainly appreciate the work of the Day Program staff and the Nutritional Services for their accomplishments.*
- We need to improve how we document all that we do, not just because it is a licensing mandate, but because it is the key instrument for providing every single person who works at SDC with the critical and timely information about the people we serve. It is the information that enables us to do our jobs more appropriately, more accurately and much more professionally. *We are almost completely finished with the restructuring and purging of the clinical record across NF and ICF, a monumental task for the Clinical Records staff. We have improved our dictation process. The IT staff has worked very hard and many weekends and nights to upgrade our computer technology so that electronic communication of critical information and documents can be shared, including email accounts for every staff member and expanded group and special computer drives. We have trained staff on better documentation methods. We still have more work to be done as we make better use of our existing technologies for documentation.*
- We need to change our approach from “caring” to “enabling.” Everything we do, every word we say, every decision we make must be about enabling the people who live here to grow as individuals in order to make their lives worth living. *We have completely restructured the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Active Treatment process in ICF to a Person-Centered-Planning process which focuses all training and supports for each person on achieving more independence, more self-determination and more skill development. A whole new philosophy of how we interact and support the people in ICF has been implemented to provide respect and to enable people to exercise their rights as citizens of the US, California and SDC. NF staff have increased positioning and stimulation classes and increased attendance at recreational events. As good as this is, it is a never-ending improvement process. More training and more opportunities will be provided for staff and for the people of SDC. We have opened a new ICF home and we greatly decreased client populations in the other ICF homes, which in turn has increased the quality of their lives.*
- Finally, each of us has to take complete responsibility and accountability for our own professional work performance and behavior. Everyone one of us needs to work every moment of every day at the highest standards of our jobs. *I will say again what I said at the beginning: the energy, willingness and dedication our staff is evident not just to me, but to many of the dignitaries and legislators who have visited SDC. Our reputation has increased in the press, with families and with those who review us. Staff have taken responsibility, but none more than the Unit Supervisors, who along with Program Management have rededicated themselves to making the needed and continuous improvement to SDC.*

If all of us do these eight things, then we don't have to worry about re-certification, licensing, surveys or the press, because certification and our reputation will be re-

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# Did You Know?

*Message from the Executive Director, continued from previous page*  
stored as the natural consequence of our hard and state-of-the-art work. *We have improved and we are continuing to improve. Our certification and recertification surveys are just around the corner and we look forward to demonstrating all those improvements. Because of the improvements, I wish to thank every staff member of SDC. You have made this one of the most productive years in SDC's history. I am so looking forward to the improvements in 2014!*

## Historical: SDC Cemetery

Ground burials at the SDC cemetery began in 1892 and were discontinued in 1939. After 1939 individuals were cremated and placed in a vault at the same cemetery location. There are 500 cremated remains in the SDC vault. Remains were placed there from 1940 to 1962; after 1962, all remains were sent to Mountain Cemetery in the town of Sonoma. There are 1416 people buried in the cemetery, two of which were employees. In 1995, a family member and the facility placed



*Entrance to SDC's cemetery.  
A sign on the pillar at left says,  
"Cemetery  
Sonoma State Home  
1889-1962"*



*Angel statue in the  
SDC cemetery*

a plaque, a bench, an angel statue and a birdbath at the cemetery. All three clergy at the center participated in a ceremony to re-consecrate the cemetery.

The California Memorial Project hosts an Annual Remembrance Day on the third Monday in September to honor people who have lived and died at state institutions with a moment of

silence at 1:55 PM. The event is open to the public and features remembrances, poems, songs, and refreshments.

This year SDC will host the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Remembrance Day on September 15, 2014.



*Flowers and a bow  
placed on the cemetery gates  
on Remembrance Day*

## Positive Behavior Supports

Positive Behavior Supports is a two day class from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and offers 16 hours of continuing education for Nursing and Recreation Therapists. This class focuses on improving quality of life for the residents by reviewing positive strategies to prevent unwanted behavior and effective ways to teach a variety of skills that will enhance their day. The instructors are Abraham Hill, Psychiatric Technician Instructor I and Ellen Faryna, PhD. The next classes are scheduled for:



- Friday, May 9 and Monday, May 12
- Tuesday, May 27 and Wednesday, May 28

## New Hires

Beneth Almenteros, Registered Nurse  
Patricia Bianchi, Psychiatric Technician  
Eric Chat, Pre-Licensed Psychiatric Technician  
Mark Damsten, Psychiatric Technician (Retired Annuitant)  
Virginia Freitas, Registered Nurse  
Marianne Gamboa, Psychiatric Technician  
Lawrence Gitonga, Pre-Licensed Psychiatric Technician  
Sommer Hart, Registered Nurse  
Maricris Hermans, Registered Nurse  
Tyler Isaksson, Painter I  
Manpreet Kaur, Registered Nurse  
Vincent Kreger, Mason I  
Kelly McGrew, Health Records Technician III  
Sophearoath Price, Individual Program Coordinator  
Randi Thompson, Personnel Specialist  
Johnny Velono, Custodian  
Gerardina Vetter, Custodian



*Executive Director Karen Faria  
(left) speaks to new hires at  
New Employee Orientation  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]*

## Note:

If you would like to receive the *Eldridge Press* electronically, please e-mail your request to [Jorge.Fernandez@sonoma.dds.ca.gov](mailto:Jorge.Fernandez@sonoma.dds.ca.gov).

# Recognition

## December Employee of the Month

The December 2013 Employee of the Month is Celia Dominguez, Psychiatric Technician from Central Program Services. Celia is described as someone who, “is always positive and has a can-do attitude. All the residents love her and coworkers seek her out for advice.” Celia can do it all, from working at Sunrise, working on a residence, working the Eldridge Farm and Equestrian Program and most recently, being a part of the Advocacy Program as a helper for one of the groups. She demonstrates the SDC values of service to others, effective leadership and respectful relationships. “It is great to see someone so focused on the positive and helping all those in her care, achieving their potential!” Congratulations, Celia!



*Celia Dominguez*

## January Employee of the Month

The Employee of the Month for January 2014 is Brenmar Aquino, Psychiatric Technician, who works in the Cohen Residence. Known as Joyce by the residents and her coworkers, she is described as, “A professional who is always willing to help, is soft spoken and is kind with everyone she encounters.” Her team values her work ethic and she demonstrates the SDC values of service to others, effective leadership and respectful relationships. Her nominator goes on to say, “She has a global vision on the residence and always plans ahead. She laughs and smiles a lot and never complains, although I would listen. Joyce is the best!” Congratulations on your award, Joyce!



*Joyce Aquino*  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]

## February Employee of the Month

The February 2014 Employee of the Month is Stacy Hyma, Rehabilitation Therapist (RT) from Central Program Services. Stacy completed her internship at the Center. “Stacy is a wonderful RT and is always great to work with. She is always positive and has an upbeat attitude. She embraces the SDC values of service to others and respectful relationships.” She is described as



*Stacy Hyma*

someone with a can-do attitude that is infectious and is a much appreciated addition to REACH, the facility’s community center. Her nominator goes on to say, “Stacey has worked on various residences and no matter where she is working, she gets to know all the residents, offers them choices on preferred activities and empowers them.” Way to go, Stacy!

## March Employee of the Month

Claro Calzado, Custodian in the Smith Residence, is the Employee of the Month for March 2014.

His nominators state, “He is a great time manager—asserting time and energies into floor care as well as meeting all his assigned tasks in Smith and role modeling time management as a peer trainer, to his fellow custodial crew.” He is described as someone who interacts wonderfully with the residents, staff and all departments. “Claro is highly respected by all housekeeping staff and helps assist with training new employees. He communicates well and has a very positive demeanor all the time and is very friendly. He models the SDC values of respectful relationships, managing resources and service to others.” Great job, Claro!



*Claro Calzado*  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]

## April Employee of the Month

The April 2014 Employee of the Month is Katherine Minthorne, Registered Nurse at General Acute Care (GAC). Her nominators say, “Katherine has great

organizational skills, gets done what is asked of her, takes initiative and is always willing to help out and take on additional responsibilities.” Over the last couple of years, she has taken on the position of AM shift lead, stepped up to a limited term assignment as Public Health Nurse, assisted with the temporary move of GAC to another location and back and taken on a limited term as discharge planner, and much more. “She demonstrates the values of effective leadership, respectful relationships and service to others. We appreciate her good humor and quick smile.” Congratulations, Katherine!



*Katherine Minthorne*  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]



## Supervisor of Excellence

**B**eth Maciel, Supervising Registered Nurse for the Johnson B residence has been selected as Supervisor of Excellence for April 2014.

Her nominator says, "I would like to nominate Beth for her incredible work ethic, dedication to the residents, understanding and compassion for the staff, and her relentless pursuit of the best medical care for everyone at SDC." Beth is described as the type of supervisor who unifies all the staff by teaching and mentoring them. "Her leadership is not punitive. She reminds all of her staff that everyone can improve and she consistently educates them on ways to refine their skills by giving appropriate and positive feedback. It is an honor to work with Beth. Her dedication to provide the very best care for the residents is a daily inspiration. She deserves recognition for her compassion, high standards, leadership and work ethic." Way to go, Beth!



Beth Maciel  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]

## Take Pride Moments at SDC

- To Frank Deleon, Senior Psychiatric Technician, who is doing an extraordinary job as a dining coach in the Stoneman residence. Way to go!
- Margaret Jones, Psychiatric Technician from Cohen, who did an excellent job supporting a person during a visit to a potential community home. Great work!
- Rolando Manansala, Psychiatric Technician Assistant, who is doing a great job during dining at Bentley and is ensuring everyone received attention and training. Nice!
- Joyce Aquino, Psychiatric Technician from Cohen was talking to an individual in a respectful, engaging manner, and providing her with multiple opportunities to make choices. Way to go!
- Zena Roxas, from Nelson B residence, for being consistent with training in the use of an electric toothbrush with a person, making it positive and fun. Way to show your pride!
- During weekend rounds individuals from



Frank Deleon  
at Casino Night  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]



the Bentley home were engaged in sampling the various toothpaste flavors to determine their favorites. Great teamwork!

- Thank you to Phillip Lewis, Senior Psychiatric Technician, for stepping up as an Acting Unit Supervisor so that the permanent Unit Supervisor could focus on opening a new residence. Way to go!
- Beth Maciel, Supervising Registered Nurse for covering two residences while teaching staff new skills, problem solving and establishing systems to assure continuity of care.
- Joann Alex, Dental Hygienist, for working positively with an individual from Regamey, making it a positive experience. The individual was smiling and happy during the entire interaction!! Congratulations!
- To the Poppe team for their work with an individual, assisting him to increase his skills and decrease challenges which have resulted in him being happier and having more options. Way to show your pride!
- To the NF Social Workers for supporting individuals' needs during a peer's absence. Great teamwork!
- To Dr. Tibbets-Kleeber, Psychologist, for the excellent coffee group at Lux. Great work!
- To Dr. Heidorn, Psychologist, for his hands-on approach at Lathrop. He's a great role model for staff and colleagues. Congratulations!
- To Judy Columbo and the Clothing Center, for creating a new sensory item for people living at Poppe. Way to show your pride!



Phillip Lewis



Lura Tibbets-Kleber



Heidi Winslow

• Heidi Winslow, Rehabilitation Therapist, for organizing a wonderful memorial service for an individual who resided in Bemis. Thanks for all you do!

• To Plant Operations for fixing all of the lights outside of the Nelson Building. Way to show your pride!

• To Rosenda Toussant, Psychiatric Techni-

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# Recognition

*Take Pride Moments, continued from previous page*

- Tim Choyce, Psychiatric Technician Assistant, for consistently coaching and supporting staff assigned to the day program. Nice job!
- To the Registered Dieticians who were acknowledged for their dedication and commitment, including increasing choices and preferences during meal times, creating a colorful special occasion food order menu and newsletter. Great teamwork!
- To Claro Calzado, Custodian in the Smith Residence, who was acknowledged by licensing on how nice and clean the residence was, especially how great the floors looked. Way to go!
- To Cyndi Cunningham, Unit Supervisor, for ensuring that transportation is planned for people to attend REACH throughout the week. Thanks for all you do!



*Cyndi Cunningham at Casino Night  
[photo by JJ Fernandez]*

- Sharon Riddell, Teacher, for her wonderful job coordinating and helping with translocation at Lux day program. Your pride shows!
- The Nelson D residential team, for having all individuals ready to go in the early morning to prepare for the NF electrical upgrade. Now that shows teamwork!
- Peggy Carroll, Napa Valley College Psychiatric Technician Instructor, who commented that the homes and day programs have dramatically improved since the last semester. Way to show your pride SDC!
- Ginger Stewart, Acting Unit Supervisor in Brent, for her work on installing switch boxes to increase access for individuals to restricted areas. Way to go!
- Kevin Dillon, Teaching Assistant in NF Services, for his positive, professional attitude. Thanks for all you do!
- Nora Guadron, Psychiatric Technician Assistant at the Staffing Office, for her positive, kind demeanor daily, under stressful staffing conditions. Way to show your pride!



*Peggy Carroll at NVC psych tech graduation*



- Tim Choyce, Psychiatric Technician Assistant at Parmelee Day Program, for his positive support to the staff and students while implementing a new work readiness program. Way to go!



*Tim Choyce at 4th of July party*

- Fiona Day-Cofer, Psychiatric Technician at Lux Day Program, a new CPS employee who came in with a positive, can-do attitude and implementing active treatment techniques. Way to show your pride!

- To Karrie Hubbenette and her team, for the excellent job in supporting the homes! Way to go!



*Karrie Hubbenette*

- Smith Residence was the first home to complete the Active Treatment Stars program for all AM and PM staff and were rewarded with a party. Way to go!
- To Tavia Morales, clerk for the Bemis Home, for her work in improving the environment in Bemis with a can-do attitude. Thanks for all you do!
- Dr. Russell for taking the time to visit an individual living in the Bentley home while in the hospital. Great job!

- Cheryl Dowell from the Main Kitchen who sets up all the catering events, even when asked at the last minute! Everything always looks go great. Way to go!



*Cheryl Dowell at Remembrance Day*

- Joan Nelson, Unit Supervisor, and the Nelson D team for their work with an individual who had a JJ feeding tube and assisting him to return to eating by mouth. Way to go!
- To Housekeeping staff for noticing gloves flying out of the garbage truck near Johnson and running to get them so they would not pose a danger to others. Way to show your pride!
- Karen Bolles, CPS Psychiatric Technician, for taking the time with a an individual who became ill during

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# Recognition

*Take Pride, continued from previous page*

her class, to support her and to communicate to staff, and for taking the time out of her day to do this. Way to go!

- Stoneman's Lia Landrum, Psychiatric Technician, for calmly and professionally supporting an individual on Stoneman in a difficult situation. Thank you!

- To Ray Gilbert, Motor Pool, who while arriving to Bentley to pick



*Ray Gilbert*

up a group, noticed an individual exiting the building and heading towards the ramp. Ray ran to assist her, thus decreasing the likelihood of a potential fall. Way to show your pride!

- Joe Evangelista, Psychiatric Technician Assistant from the Roadruck residence, who floated to Poppe and shared suggestions for improvement plan for Poppe dining room!

- To the Cohen Team, for working with an individual to successfully and independently go to the offsite. Congratulations on your accomplishment!
- To the Ordahl B staff and all the Level of Care staff for a job well done. Dr. Wang, urologist from a community hospital, made a comment that whenever residents from SDC come to the hospital, their staff always note and comment about the great care that is given to the SDC residents. Way to show your pride SDC!
- To Dr. Lori Pandolfo, Psychologist, and Opie for providing Animal Assisted Activities in the Stoneman Residence. Specifically to the individual with a terminal illness which Opie spent an extra amount of time interacting with, to the delight of the resident! Clearly demonstrating that Animal Assisted Therapy has many clinical benefits. Way to go, Opie and Dr. Pandolfo!



*Karen Bolles at Holiday Tree Lighting*



*Dr. Lori Pandolfo and Opie at the Halloween Parade*

oral care for the Poppe residents. She has an excellent work ethic and takes time to provide gentle and thorough oral care for everyone in her group. Way to show your pride!

- To Brian Kabaker, Psychiatric Technician in Bentley Residence, who demonstrated excellent Active Treatment while researching and writing an informative and moving walk through the 1960s and 1970s set to music popular at the time. Those in attendance were actively and thoroughly engaged! Nice job!



*Brian Kabaker*

- To Jaime Moreno, Psychiatric Technician Assistant from Roadruck, who displays so much respect and genuine concern for the people living in Roadruck. His overall concern for oral care was also very evident. Way to show your pride!

- Scott Colburn, Carpenter, who saved the life of a frantic bird that was caught between two window panes. He was called and within five minutes removed the air conditioner and was able to rescue the bird. You are a rock star!

- To the Landscaping Department, which makes the campus look so good. Way to show your pride, guys!

- Maria Martinez, Custodian in the Johnson C residence, who was recognized for being very thorough and detailed in her work. "She tends to any needs of the residence immediately, which ensures the health of the residents with a clean living environment." Way to show your pride!



*Landscapers at the Staff Appreciation Picnic [photo by JJ Fernandez]*

## Take Pride Spotlight!

*by Wendy Reid, Community Program Specialist, Sonoma Regional Project*

**T**rang Nguyen (pronounced Chang Win) is a petite Vietnamese woman who was one of the last residents who moved from Agnews Developmental Center to Sonoma Developmental Center in June 2008. The Nguyen family had hoped their daughter could stay in

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# Advocacy

*Take Pride Spotlight, continued from previous page*

the area, but with no other options, Trang was admitted to the Stoneman Cottage at SDC.

Trang had self-injurious behavior that required highly restrictive interventions.

The interdisciplinary team explored and tried various alternative modalities in hopes of reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive interventions, and over the course of time required 1:1, 24/7 staffing for supervision and intervention.

The San Andreas Regional Center had been looking for a community home capable of providing for Trang's complex medical and behavioral needs.

In early 2013, a specialized residential home was identified; the owners, Kenny and Rowena Caling, both speak Vietnamese. The home is called Helping Hands.



*Trang Nguyen*  
[photo by  
Wendy Reid]

Interdisciplinary Team members partnered with the assistance of consultants and a transitional plan was developed for Trang to move to the community. Creative approaches and techniques were explored and with some apprehension and caution, a trial period began.

With the guidance of key team members, the Helping Hands administrators worked with Trang, implementing their behavioral plan utilizing a 2:1 staffing approach, an oversized soft "boppy-type" pillow and the Vietnamese language. Trang positively responded to all interventions.

The plan proved to be successful and a move date was set.

Trang moved from SDC to the Milpitas home in January 2014. She continues to receive 2:1 staffing and her lead staff is a Vietnamese woman that converses primarily in Vietnamese. Trang is adjusting to her new life, having new discoveries and adventures. Her mother visits weekly and we've been told that Trang cries and voices, "Happy" when she sees her mother.

Thank you to the team members who passionately worked and supported Trang to successfully move to the community!!!



*Wendy Reid*  
[photo by Ross Abaya]



## Advocacy Poster for April



## Human Rights Committee

*by Dr. Ellen Faryna*

Hello SDC!

How are you all doing? With blooming flowers and trees, the allergy season has started. Some people are feeling uncomfortable with itchy eyes and runny noses, so send them positive thoughts to help them feel better.

The Human Rights Committee (HRC) met on March 24<sup>th</sup> and had a table full of members.

Resident members included David, Jimmy, Marcia, Anya, Myra, Cheryl, and James. They each did a great job expressing their ideas and concerns. Thank you for being such amazing HRC members!

The big discussion at the March meeting was about court. There had been seven residents coming to court each month. That is, until the April 11<sup>th</sup> court, when 13 residents came to be seen and heard! You set a new record. Thank you to Scott Shepherd who communicates with our legal helpers, Judge Marcoida and Public Defender Hess! Also thanks to other social workers and the staff, who help people get to this important event.

At HRC, Dr. Backstrom went around the table asking everyone their ideas about court. What do you think about going to court? Do you like going to court? Do you have to wait long to talk with the judge? Should we try to keep court at SDC or should people go to the formal court in Santa Rosa? How would we do that? Lots of people thought getting out in the community is a good idea. Several people thought that outings should be more fun than going to court.

Then I reported on what I saw when I went to court



*Dr. Ellen Faryna*

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*Human Rights Committee, continued from previous page*  
in March. (Scott suggested I check it out.) Osborne was a good place for people to live for many years. Court is being held in the dining room which has a wall with an arch in the middle. This makes it hard for people to see what is going on and does not leave enough room for everyone to be seen by the judge when they go up front. We would like to have a place with more light, room, and good air conditioning. The judge gets very hot in her court robe!

Because we had lots of different ideas and opinions, a work group was set up to make recommendations. They reported at the next HRC meeting which was held April 28, 2014 at 10:00 AM in the PAB Conference Room. I'll let you know what was recommended in a future *Eldridge Press*. Whatever is decided, I want us to be successful. What do you think?

If you have any questions about anything—these or other things—let me know, please! I can answer here in the *Eldridge Press*, as well as bring it to the Human Rights Committee. The more we talk and listen with each other, the happier and prouder we can each feel.

## Newest NF Advocacy Group Member!

The NF Advocacy Group has a new member!

Her name is Sami, a Maltipoo, who was rescued and received her Good Canine Citizen Award through the American Canine Kennel Club.

Sami belongs to Chris Gephart, Coordinator of Nursing Services. The Advocacy Group Members from seven NF residences look forward to her weekly visits.

Sami approaches the residents in a calm demeanor and awaits their acknowledgment and acceptance before approaching. With assistance from the co-helpers of the group, the Advocacy Members are able to pet Sami, to the excitement of all.

In time a voice-activated AbleNet switch will be utilized to increase communication from the members, by recording commands for Sami to do as an incentive. The members in the group will use the voice-generating switch to call her over and/or ask her to sit. When she completes the command, she will be praised and/or given a treat.

It is obvious from the smiles and laughter from the residents that they are pleased with the addition to the group. Sami has been approved to be at the Center according to facility policy.



*Sami and Chris Gephart at the*

*NF Advocacy Group*

## Why Your Active Treatment, Engagement and Activities Are So Important to Me:

- You provide me with Person Centered Planning by knowing what is important to me and for me. You listen and watch me to find out what I like and do not like and help me to learn so I can be independent. By understanding how important it is for me to be heard, to participate in my community, to make decisions in my life and acknowledge that I have things to offer, you have opened up a world of possibilities for me. By coaching, teaching and mentoring me and helping me to follow my training and behavioral plans, I can thrive. My possibilities are endless. You don't give up on me, because I matter to you, and for that I am grateful. Know, that I know you care.



*Applebottom Fest*



*Hoe Down*

- I live my existence through your eyes and where you take me. You sense my needs by looking into my eyes and feeling what I feel, and by acknowledging my sounds and knowing what they mean. You look forward to the excitement in my expression when I first see you and the calmness in my demeanor when you approach. Because of you helping me to go outside, I've learned to appreciate the sun, the smell of the rain, the birds flying freely through the sky, and the many other beautiful things in this world that exist naturally and without much effort. I depend on you in many ways to exist in this world and am appreciative for the assistance you provide me.



*Horse Show*



*Mardi Gras*

*continued next page*



# Community Happenings

*Why Your Active Treatment... continued from previous page*  
back each day, and try to help me understand and to have a better day. You encourage me when I am doing well and following my plans. You acknowledge my efforts when I am able to stop, breathe and think, and not react in the moment. Your goal is to protect me and others around me from harm, and to help me try to do better, when I fail. Thank you for not giving up on me, for believing in me.

## Casino Night *photos by JJ Fernandez, Becky Zyskowski and/or Desiree Northrup*

Casino Night returned to Sonoma on March 18, 2014. Residents and staff were treated to a fun-filled evening in the Gymnasium. Chips were handed out to each of the guests as they arrived. There were plenty of games to choose from including black jack tables, a dice table, a horse race table and a roulette table. There were cocktail waitresses taking orders from the patrons at the gaming tables as well as those sitting in the sitting area.



*Playing a game at Casino Night*



*Selecting a prize at Casino Night*



*Left and below: Playing games at Casino Night*



## Choir and Bell Ensemble

On Wednesday April 9, 2014 the Sonoma Developmental Center Choir and Bell Ensemble performed at the Gazebo before a live audience. Everyone was entertained by the songs from Elvis Presley. I asked Tracy Whitten, Music Therapist, how the decision for Elvis Presley songs came about and she said, "Usually when starting a new concert, we present a couple of possible themes for our next concert to the choir members. We choose several songs to go with each theme and play them during rehearsals for several weeks. The choir members then vote to choose the theme of the next concert. Elvis performed and made many songs very popular during his career; it was no wonder the choir members chose Elvis for the theme of our last concert. So one of the songs Elvis made famous was 'Return to Sender.' The choir made envelopes to go with each song in the concert and inside we put interesting facts about the songs. Audience members were asked to deliver their letters before each song to the front of the stage, where they were opened and we learned interesting tidbits about the song that the Choir would perform next."



*Tracy Whitten*

The next performance will occur in late August and will be a tribute to the late, great Pete Seeger.



*Above and below: The Choir and Bell Ensemble perform at the Gazebo [photos by JJ Fernandez]*





# Community Happenings...

## Spring Fling!

The Spring Fling occurred at the amphitheater on Saturday, April 19. There were cupcakes, brownies and other refreshments for all to enjoy. There was an Easter egg hunt with prizes, a tattoo booth and the ever popular band Tudo Bem performed during the two-hour event. The bunnies from the Eldridge Farm came by for a visit and the Easter Bunny made its way through the crowd for photo opportunities. The annual Easter American Legion train rides also occurred during the event to the delight of all.



*The Easter Bunny (Kris Culp) greets a friend*



*Tracy Whitten offers a craft project*

The Society of 40 Men and 8 Horses is an invitation-only group within the American Legion, which creates fairly realistic-looking trains on truck bodies. The intent is to honor the French troop trains that ferried men and horses to the front in World War I. Each train car ("voiture") could hold 40 men and eight horses,

hence the name. The American Legion "voitures" are used to give rides to people, both as entertainment and to educate them about the important role of the French troop trains of WWI.



*Becky Zyskowski with a bunny from the Eldridge Farm*

Farm and back around the back soccer fields. They rode around Butler Pool, the Farrell, Turner, and Van Horn Buildings, around Judah and Powers and back down towards the other side of campus, all the time blowing the train horns and whistles. They drove towards the baseball field and up behind the Administration Building, exiting out by the Firehouse. They continued on around Slater and Walnut and made their way over towards Nelson Treatment Center and behind the Emparans and Regameys and back to the Spring Fling.



*Picking up Easter eggs*



*Voiture from Solano County*



*Voiture from Lake County*



*The Solano voiture with its trailer for people using wheelchairs*

## 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, May 15 is the deadline for the June 2014 issue).

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