

# **Eldridge Press**

#### **Message from the Executive Director**

#### by James E. Rogers

want to thank the planning committee, numerous volunteers, non-profit organizations, businesses, and participants that supported the Second Annual Sonoma Valley Footrace and Festival

on June 21, 2008. The Parent Hospital Association and the Sonoma Developmental Center Women's Auxiliary provided financial support. Over 150 runners braved the sweltering heat, then were able to relax and enjoy the refreshments and entertainment during this very successful annual benefit. There are articles about this and other summer events/activities in this issue.

The self-advocacy program is picking up momentum. Joe Meadours and Robin Rhoades of People First were here in May to help start two self-advocacy groups. The two groups are using the ARO building for their weekly meetings, and are beginning to plan social events. I am looking forward to seeing where these groups take themselves!



Jim Rogers

Deborah Meeker, Deputy Director of the Department of Developmental Services announced the appointment of Bill Wilson as the new Executive Director of

Fairview Developmental Center in Costa Mesa, California. Bill is returning to work for the Department of Developmental Services from his most recent leadership position with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. He started work in early August. There will be more about Bill in the next issue of the *Eldridge Press*.

# The Wizard of Oz Coming in September and October!

he Performing Arts Company at Sonoma Developmental Center is pleased to announce this year's performance of *The Wizard of Oz*. The Performing Arts Company, a committee made up of Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) employees and cast members who live at Sonoma, was founded in 2005.

In 2005, the inaugural production was *Grease*; in 2006 it was *Best Of Broadway*, which featured a variety of Broadway hits; and in 2007 it was *The Music Man*. Jim Tallent, who took over as chairperson of the committee and director of the play says, "The play seems to be coming together. All the cast and support team members are working hard to learn lines and responsibilities. Taking on this



The Wizard of Oz cast rehearsing position at this late date is stressful, as you're not sure what has and hasn't been done ahead of you."

Open auditions for this year's play began in early spring, with rehearsals occurring throughout the summer months, and live performances scheduled on September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM at the gymnasium. The cast is comprised of approximately 40 singers, dancers, actors, and musicians.

Tallent goes on to say, "I feel we have a very good core of staff who have worked on these projects in the past, and hopefully I can call on them to again come to assist us so we can put on a performance that not only offers our population an entertaining evening, but lets the families

and the community watch how great it is to work with these talented individuals."

Tickets for this year's performances of *The Wizard of Oz* are already sold out, but volunteers are still needed to assist backstage, with rehearsals, props, costumes, and more. Anyone interested in helping out should contact Becky Zyskowski at (707) 938-6713.

# Have You Heard?

#### How Does Golden Gate Regional Center Find Such Great Community Providers?

by Lori Pretes, Social Worker, Golden Gate Regional Center ach fiscal year the Department of Developmental Services allots funds to each regional center for the development of new resources (i.e. behavioral day programs, specialized homes for clients with behavioral or nursing needs, etc.) to support individuals who move from developmental centers or who are at risk of entering a developmental center, but do not wish to live there. This is called the Community Placement Plan (CPP). Each

regional center, based on the needs of the individuals in their catchment area, determines what specific resources are to be developed in the upcoming year. The philosophy of the CPP is consistent with the 1999 Olmstead decision which determined that the state shall provide support and integration of



Almaden Home in San Mateo serving individuals with nursing needs [Photo provided by Lori Pretes]

persons with disabilities in community settings.

At the Golden Gate Regional Center (GGRC) this process begins with our Request for Proposal (RFP), which is sent out to current and prospective providers who may be interested in developing a new resource. Providers who are interested in submitting a proposal follow the required guidelines for submission. Often GGRC receives over 50 proposals from interested providers. Upon receipt of all proposals, GGRC creates a RFP committee whose purpose is to select the most qualified (based primarily on experience and organizational stability) individuals for each project. The RFP committee consists of GGRC employees and stakeholders, Area Board IV, consumers and families, Clients Rights Advocate, Sonoma Regional Project, and Sonoma Developmental Center administration. After all members of the committee review each proposal individually, the committee meets to select the providers that will be asked back for the interview process. In the interview, each provider is asked a series of questions developed by the committee. After hearing from all the providers, the committee reconvenes to select the providers who will be awarded the projects and the accompanying start-up grants. Each provider who is offered a project then signs a contract committing to the development of that resource within an agreed upon time frame. The end results of the RFP process are the exciting new living opportunities available for individuals.

As GGRC is continuously developing new resources

in the community, it offers the chance for individuals who have specialized needs the opportunity to live outside of a developmental center setting and be fully supported in a home in the community environment. GGRC is pleased to have a strong base of excellent service providers who bring tremendous experience and dedication to supporting the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities.

#### Dan Buscovich is Retiring!

an Buscovich, Coordinator of Education Services, is retiring from Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) after 33 years of state service. Buscovich started his career at Sonoma as a Graduate Student Assistant, and then for the next 15 years he worked as a Recreational Therapist. He also held other positions at the facility including Area Coordinator, Teacher, Program Assistant, and eventually became the Coordinator of Education Services.

As the Coordinator of Education Services, Buscovich coordinated the services for the under-age-22 students, managed Recreational Therapists and REACH (the facility's community center). He was a member of various committees throughout his career and most recently was the chairperson of his program's safety committee. He also led various trainings and broadcasted a morning informational report via the telephone, keeping all areas in his program updated with the current

happenings at Sonoma.

When asked what he loved most about his job, Buscovich said, "I had many fantastic groups of clients through the years that I have had the pleasure of working with. They made me laugh, made me cry, and made me proud to be their advocate. I loved the people I worked with. Through the years I have



had the opportunity to get to know many *Dan Buscovich* coworkers who now are my friends and will be my friends for a lifetime." What he will miss most about his job is the morning chaos and how each day falls together. "We are challenged and then we go to work with what we have. It is a wonderful thing when it all comes together, people moving from 'I' to 'we.""

When asked what some of his most memorable moments were, Buscovich says, "Far too many to mention. I can take a look at you and I could tell you a million moments I have shared with you. That is incredible because I forget everything, but I don't forget the people who have touched me. What ultimately makes or breaks you are the people that you work with."

# **Have You Heard?**

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Now that he is retiring he plans on working, "on my bride's honey-to-do list, to be better at golf, take more trips, and volunteer more for various community groups. I would like to write a book about my bright moments at Sonoma. I have been lucky enough to be surrounded with incredible and talented individuals. I thank those people because they have helped shape me into the person I am today."

Recently a dinner roast was held in his honor with over 150 family members, friends, as well as former and current co-workers and administrators attending from as far away as Texas.

### Pat St Clair Retires!

esidence Manager Pat St Clair has retired after 47<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years of state service. She started her career at Pacific State Hospital, now known as Lanterman Developmental Center, and for 45 years she worked at Sonoma Developmental Center. For the first 15 years, St Clair worked as a psychiatric technician. Then

she decided to go to nursing school and became a registered nurse. She eventually became a supervising registered nurse, worked as a health service specialist for three years, and for the last 29 years was a residence manager.

St Clair talks about seeing many things reinvented over time in the Department of Developmental Services system. She talks about loving everything about her job, "It was new every day because people always brought new



Pat St Clair

problems to be solved." She talks about one of her mentors, Pat Amman, who "helped the people who worked for her learn to give their best for the clients." St Clair goes on to say, "What I liked most about my job was that I never knew what would be waiting behind the office door when I opened it up in the mornings."

When asked about her retirement plans, St Clair said she intends to spend more time with her seven-year-old twin grandchildren and travel. "I will be taking a fourmonth-long nap. I will be redoing my house and my yard now that I will be home to enjoy them. I am still active in Girl Scouts and keep very busy with that, but I don't think I will be selling Girl Scout cookies!"

What she will miss most is, "Not the job, but the great people who taught me so much and those who allowed me to teach them. I wish I could stay and see how the story turns out, but when it's time to go, it's time to go!"

# Sondra Schofield Retired!

ecreation Therapist Sondra Scofield is retiring from Sonoma Developmental (Sonoma) after 33 years of state service. Scofield started her career at Porterville Developmental Center. Some of her past assignments there included a training and development assignment in the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Program; she was in charge of the client cheerleaders

(the Heronettes) for the client baseball team (the Blue Herons); she worked in the Behavior Adjustment Program and the Acute Hospital area and had seven units to "challenge my skills"; and worked part-time in Central Program Services, where she was in charge of the Girl Scout Troop for Porterville. Sondra came to Sonoma 24 years

ago and worked as a Recreation Thera-

pist at the Emparan A and B residences

and eventually was assigned to just



Sondra Schofield

Emparan A. Her next assignment was to start the Richardson recreation program. She organized the building to include the following areas: arts and crafts, cooking and baking, a sensory area, bowling, music, video and DVD viewing, bird watching, and outside plant growing and watering. Sondra said, "I am very proud of the program that I have helped Program 2 to achieve and my hope is that it will continue! The quarterly attendance for April, May and June 2008 was 1751 clients." (Meaning several clients attend regularly, for a total of 1751 appearances.)

When asked what she loved most about her job, Scofield said, "The individual clients and the wonderful staff that I have worked with over the years. It has truly been a pleasure to work with our clients and try to solve leisure problems. I have always liked the challenge of trying to help them with their special needs." What she will miss the most are "the clients and staff."

Scofield plans to move to Southern California and spend some quality time with her mother who will turn 92 in September. "She has good health and I hope to take her lots of places and do lots of things with her!" She hopes to spend more time studying genealogy, scrapbooking, reading, gardening, and walking by the beach. She concludes by saying, "I had the very best retirement party anyone could ever ask for! It was wonderful to see everyone! I will miss all of you dearly! I am so glad that I had the opportunity to work at Sonoma and enjoy these beautiful grounds and all the seasons."

# **Have You Heard?**

# Vickie Smith Retired too!

ickie Smith, Recreation Therapist, retired from Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) in July 2008 after almost 29 years of state service. Smith began working for the Department of Developmental Services at Porterville State Hospital in 1979, now Porterville Developmental Center. Eventually she moved to Sonoma and says, "It has been a wonderful and fulfilling experience."

During her 23 years at Sonoma, Smith provided leisure activities and experiences to many of the residents who

live at the facility. Smith spent 15 years working in one residence serving people with visual impairments, and spent the rest of her time at skilled nursing residences.

About her job she said, "I loved the clients and the freedom of taking them to alternate activity areas." She will miss all the clients she got to know over the years, as well as her coworkers. Some of her most memorable moments include,



Vickie Smith

"Taking clients to the Sonoma County Fair, Marine World, camping at Enchanted Hills, the ocean, and Camp Via, the facility's campsite which is adjacent to Jack London State Park."

Smith has moved to Oregon with her family. She plans on traveling, visiting with friends and family, and taking classes at the local junior college. She hopes to spend more time kayaking, hiking, painting and "having fun with my eight grandchildren."

In closing, Smith said, "I enjoyed working with all the clients and staff at Sonoma. What a variety of wonderful people to work with! Thank you all for the years of support and friendship. I couldn't ask for a better group of people or experiences for my work life. My memories are fond and long lasting, God bless you all, and I'll miss you!"

### **14th Annual Golf Tournament**

he annual Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) Golf Tournament took place on Friday, July 18, 2008, at the Oakmont Golf Course. The tournament is a fundraiser for the Employee Recognition Committee, which sponsors a variety of recognition programs such as Employee of the Month, Supervisor of Excellence, Service Group of Excellence, and the Sustained Achievement/ Superior Accomplishment Awards.

This year 17 teams, a total of 66 golfers, participated in the tournament wherein approximately \$6200 was raised. These golfers (and supporters) included Deborah Meeker, Deputy Director of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Norman Kramer, former Deputy Director of DDS and former Executive Director of Sonoma, and Timothy Meeker, former Executive Director of Sonoma.

Each year the tournament begins as a shotgun start,

meaning that each team starts at a different hole so that everyone completes the 18 holes at about the same time. The score is kept according to team, so that each team member tees off, then they decide who had the best



At the Golf Tournament

shot and they all hit their next ball from that location. The entire team shares one score.

During a dinner after the tournament, awards were given for the best men's team, women's team, and co-ed team. In addition to the team awards, there are a number of smaller contests that golfers pay to participate in, hoping to win a prize. These contests include a putting contest, a drive accuracy contest, a long drive contest, and the pot of gold. (On one of the holes, everyone whose drive lands on the green has their name put in a pot; during the awards dinner a name is drawn from the pot and s/he wins half the money paid to participate in the pot of gold.)

The Employee Recognition Committee wishes to thank all the volunteers and golfers that made this fundraiser such a fun and rewarding day!

#### **One-Woman Art Show**

fter a very successful showing at Sonoma Developmental Center's annual Art Show in April, Elaine from the Nelson B residence decided to have her own one-woman art show in the lobby of the Nelson Treatment Center. The show was held on June 4–6, 2008. Each of the three days, Elaine set up her worktable and visited with her guests as she continued to work on her



latest pieces. During the show she completed a large drawing of a woodland fairy and began a new piece. With a postcard of Yosemite's Half-Dome to use as reference, she meticulously began working on a poster size recreation of the photo. Elaine's preferred tools are colored markers and paper, but she has also done pieces on canvas and even small drums. Her collection is made

Elaine at her Art Show

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up of a variety of subjects and includes still lifes, animals, people, and intricate patterns of color. Elaine says, "I like using colors and I like to do it all the time." She uses fresh and dry markers to accomplish unique shading in many of her pieces.

Elaine's One-Woman Art Show was attended by many clients and staff at the center who love to admire her work. Elaine, congratulations on a terrific show!

# June Employee of the Month

he Employee of the Month for June is Jessamine Pelos, Accountant I from the Fiscal Department. She

came to the Department as an Office Technician and quickly learned the duties for which she was hired. Her nominator states, "Due to her exceptional work ethic, she received a promotion to Accountant I. She has on more than one occasion been the only one working in the Accounting Office and has not only completed her assignments on time, but also has completed the tasks of her co-workers in their absence."



Jessamine Pelos Jessamine is "a true professional with a positive attitude and is always taking on what is put before her, whether it's her own assignments or helping one of her coworkers." Her nominator cannot think of anyone who is more deserving of this award. Congratulations on your award, Jessamine!

### July Employee of the Month

Ita Quackenbush, Psychiatric Technician Instructor from McDougall, has been selected as the Em-Deployee of the Month for July. Her nominator says, "Alta has a challenging job as a liaison between the colleges, the students, and Sonoma Developmental Center. She manages to constantly bring a positive attitude that maintains and encourages cooperative and collaborative relationships with everyone she works with." She is also someone who demonstrates leadership. "Alta is an active participant in recruit-Alta Quackenbush



ment efforts, leads the sponsorship

#### (Sonoma) values: service to others and effective leadership.

Kudos

Kudos to Anya P. from Malone who assisted in conducting a tour of her residence so staff could continue their change of shift activities. Her hospitality demonstrated three of Sonoma's values: service to others, respectful communications and effective leadership.

Kudos to Patti Nett, Executive Secretary from the

Executive Office, who volunteered her time to create

the Sonoma Valley Footrace volunteer buttons for all

demonstrated two of Sonoma Developmenal Center's

volunteers to wear at the event. Her selfless action

- Kudos to Sunrise Industries for expanding the recvcling program to include CRV plastic and aluminum beverage containers. Their efforts to increase recycling on campus demonstrated two of Sonoma's values: service to others and responsible resource management.
- Kudos to Jim Tallent, Recreation Therapist from Central Program Services, who took over as Director for the Performing Arts Company production of The Wizard of Oz when the original director's family relocated. His willingness to take on this task demonstrated two of Sonoma's values: service to others and effective leadership.
- Kudos to Kris Culp who took time from her busy schedule managing Fundamentals (our activity supply center) to assist a client during his search for an apartment in Solano County. By helping her friend in this way, Kris demonstrated three of Sonoma's values: respectful relationships, service to others, and effective leadership.

# New Hires

June Hires Daniel Becker, Firefighter May Docena, Food Service Technician I Mallory Lee, Stationary Engineer Michael Loken, Radiology Technologist Normita Prestosa, Assistant Coordinator of Nursing Svcs. Sharon Williams, Office Technician

#### July Hires

Thomas Deely, Firefighter Faith Gaoiran, Psychiatric Technician Garrett Ripel, Office Technician Gwen Williams-Stanton, Individual Program Coordinator

committee, and counsels and mentors students. She has headed and managed the relocations of the Santa Rosa Junior College skills lab, classroom, and instructor offices. She has done so while maintaining respectful relationships, optimizing available resources, and demonstrating leadership." Way to go, Alta!

# **Community Happenings**

# Annual Horse Show

he Annual Horse Show for the people who reside at Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) took place on Tuesday June 3, 2008 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM and on Saturday June 7, 2008 from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM



at the Center's outdoor equestrian arena. There were approximately 80 participants, and all the riders won ribbons while their families and friends cheered. The individuals were judged on how well they mount the horse, as well as their equitation (the practice of riding a horse). However, the judge does take into consideration the developmental limitations of each rider.

Nancy Sessi-Tallent chats with a rider

Sonoma's Equestrian Program has existed since the early 1980s. The Equestrian Program coordinator, Nancy Sessi-Tallent, is also the coordinator of the Annual Horse Show. She teaches riders the skills that increase the student's confidence and pride, as well as

instilling a sense of accomplishment. The program teaches discipline, respect for oneself, kindness towards animals, and consideration for others. Students also learn horse care skills, such as grooming and feeding. Horsemanship frees the student to feel independent and provides



Saturday riders

a common ground for interpersonal relationships.

The program offers riding on Tuesday afternoons, Friday mornings, and Saturday mornings year round. Sonoma employees, referred to as riding instructors along



A Tuesday rider mounts

with volunteers, support the program. The riding instructors provide assistance with mounting, riding, exercising, and dismounting. All horses have been specially trained to be familiar with physical or emotional limitations, wheelchairs, special mounting ramps, and the ability to be mounted from either side. Only horses thoroughly tested for reliability are used for recreational riding.

For more information about the Equestrian Program, contact Nancy Sessi-Tallent at (707) 938-6806.

### **Beach Party**

he annual Beach Party took place at the REACH courtyard on the hot summer day of Friday, June

13, 2008. Many residents of Sonoma Developmental Center made their way to the water misters scattered throughout the courtyard. There was a photo booth set up with palm trees and Hawaiian leis, ready to capture that

perfect shot. Many residents chose to hit the dance floor and rock to the beats of the live music. There was a tattoo booth and a bowling ball squirt game with prizes. There



At the Beach Party Top: Selecting a temporary tattoo Bottom: The crowd listening to the band (left)

were also cold drinks, shaved ice treats, and snacks to add to the festive event. It was obvious a lot of hard work had gone into making the event a success, and from the looks on everyone's faces, the Beach Party was the place to be!

# I Scream, You Scream

e all scream for ice cream. On Tuesday June 17, 2008 the Central Program Services (CPS) Ice Cream Truck made its way through the grounds of the Center. Clients were treated to ice cream with all the fixings. The CPS recreational team took turns driving the



A crowd gathers around the ice cream truck outside Slater

colorfully decorated vehicle to various worksite locations and residential units. At each location, clients enjoyed ice cream on cones, or in bowls with a choice of strawberry or chocolate syrup. It was the perfect snack on a warm summer day.

# **Community Happenings**

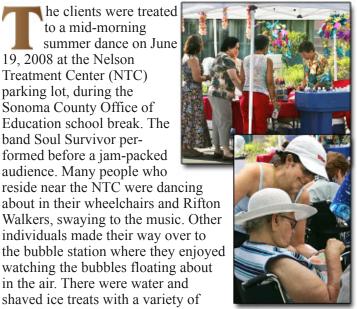
### Summer Dance

he clients were treated to a mid-morning summer dance on June 19, 2008 at the Nelson Treatment Center (NTC) parking lot, during the Sonoma County Office of Education school break. The band Soul Survivor performed before a jam-packed audience. Many people who reside near the NTC were dancing about in their wheelchairs and Rifton Walkers, swaying to the music. Other individuals made their way over to the bubble station where they enjoyed

in the air. There were water and

flavors to keep everyone cool.

Everyone had a great time.



Refreshments at the Summer Dance

beer and wine tasting

event included Sierra

Third Street Ale Works.

Bear Republic, Bonino

Estate Vineyards, Eric

Ross Winery, Gloria

Blackstone Winery,

Enkidu Winerv. and

Ferrer Winery,

Nevada, Lagunitas,

# Sonoma Valley Footrace & Festival

he Second Annual Sonoma Valley Footrace and Festival, held on the grounds of facility, was a huge success. The event included a footrace, game booths and carnival attractions, a classic car show, live music by Harvey and the Wallbangers, food vendors, and beer and wine tasting for those over 21. A souvenir event glass came with the purchase of beer/wine tasting tickets. The vendors for the



Start of footrace

other independent winemakers. Food vendors included hot dogs from Roy's Chicago Hot Dogs, BBQ lunches by Blazing Saddles, tacos from the Eldridge Taqueria, and sweet treats from Pinky's Old Fashioned Cotton Candy.

There were also opportunities to purchase raffle tickets for hotel packages, restaurant packages, gift baskets, and more. Residents from the facility, as well as many visitors

from the community, attended the event.

The day started at 9 AM with a 5k run/walk and an

advanced 10k run through the streets of Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma). There were over 150 runners and walkers participating in the footrace, which offered a scenic view of the Center's beautiful campus. Awards for the top three male and



female finishers for both 5k and 10k races included medals, running gear from Heart & Sole Sports, and for the adults, Racchus Chardonnay donated by Ty Caton Winery or Cabernet Sauvignon from Bonnino Estates. Race results are posted online at www.dds.ca.gov/svff. There was also a free kids' fun run at 11 AM with ribbons and goody bags given to all those who participated.

The event, a fundraiser for the Performing Arts



Company, was sponsored by the Parent Hospital Association and our Women's Auxiliary, with contributions from the Sonoma Valley Sun; radio station KSVY; North Bay Paper & Packaging; Mary's

Festival

Pizza Shack; Corrie C. Leisen, DDS; and Snickers Marathon Energy Bars. The money raised this year will help approximately 50 residents of the Center to enjoy a live theater experience as cast and crew of the Performing Arts Company's production of *The Wizard of Oz*, which they will perform in September and October, 2008.

Committee members of the Footrace and Festival,

made up of Center employees, are already planning the Third Annual Sonoma Valley Footrace and Festival for next year on June 20. 2009. Mark your calendars!



Wine and beer tasting

# More Community Happenings...

### 4<sup>th</sup> of July

onoma Developmental Center celebrated its annual Fourth of July festivities on Thursday, July 3, 2008.

Like most communities, the Center has been observing the Fourth of July for many years and it is one of the major events celebrated at the facility during the year.

The Independence Day festivities began in the morning at two campus locations. The Ordahl residence courtyard and Richardson lawn were decorated with



Dancing on the Sonoma House lawn [Photo by Karen Litzenberg]

colorful American flags with lots of red, white, and blue balloons. This location primarily served the more medi-



Crafts at the Ordahl courtyard [Photo by Karen Litzenberg]

cally fragile individuals. The Sonoma House lawn was also decorated with red, white, and blue décor. Both sites offered crafts, games, temporary tattoo booths, a photo booth, and refreshments.

Music by L'Attitude, a female barbershop quartet, could be heard making its way throughout the Ordahl/Richardson site and American Solid Air was heard playing over at the Sonoma House lawn.

The fun continued in the afternoon at the Sonoma

House lawn where residents came together to continue the celebration. Fresh fruit, flavorful shaved ice treats, and cold drinks were offered during the festivities. There were a variety of games to choose from including clown squirt, firecracker bowling, target tennis, and beach ball



Water game [Photo by Karen Litzenberg]

squirt; and everyone who played won a prize.

The afternoon and evening featured music by Soul Survivor and the Rocketeers. Many of the residents and staff were observed dancing and grooving to the music. Later that evening some of the residents attended a spectacular fireworks show in the town of Sonoma.

# Note:

Help us conserve paper! If you would like to receive the Eldridge Press electronically, please e-mail your request to Karen.Litzenberg@sonoma.dds.ca.gov.

# Submitting articles to the Eldridge Press:

The *Eldridge Press* gladly accepts submissions of articles about events at SDC, news about SDC's departments and programs, employee recognition, and other information of interest to SDC'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, September 15 is the deadline for the October/November issue).

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