



Eldridge Press

Message from the Executive Director

by James E. Rogers

As we enter 2009, I am reminded of how often the effort of people with a commonality of purpose and values has overcome what appeared to be insurmountable challenges. The outstanding services and supports that exist today for Californians with developmental disabilities are an example of such an effort on the part of service providers, family members, advocates, and friends. We are all aware that we are presently in the midst of a serious, and possibly worsening, economic situation that impacts each of us in some way. I am confident that as we approach the coming year while exercising that same commonality of values and purpose, we will certainly be a part of the solution to any challenges that must be confronted. As always, I am inspired and appreciative of your dedication and resolve.

Theresa Billeci Goes to Sacramento!

Theresa Billeci, Administrative Services Director for Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma), has been appointed as Assistant Deputy Director of Administrative Operations for the Developmental Centers Division of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) in Sacramento.

During her career of over 30 years with the State of California, Billeci has had the opportunity to serve successfully in a wide variety of key managerial assignments. She held the position of Chief of Forensic Services at the Department of Mental Health Headquarters in Sacramento, as well as other significant assignments with the DDS at Agnews Developmental Center in San Jose, Sierra Vista Community Facility in Yuba City, and at Sonoma. Those jobs included stints as Community Facilities Director, Program Director, Program Assistant, Labor Relations Officer, Chief of Central Program Services, Supervisor of Client Employment Services, and Rehabilitation Therapist. She was even a camp counselor at Sonoma's Camp Via, located near Jack London State Park.



Theresa Billeci

In her most recent position at Sonoma, Billeci supervised the Assistant Administrative Services Director, clerical staff and department heads such as the Chief of Plant Operations III, Director of Dietetics, Health and Safety Officers, Staff Information Systems Analyst, and two Staff Services Managers. She was a member of the Executive Committee and a member of the Governing Body, which includes the Executive Director, the Clinical Director, and the Medical Director.

Billeci has a Masters Degree in the area of Health Services Administration/Public Policy, a Bachelors Degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies and an Associate Arts Degree.

Staff Town Hall Meeting

A Town Hall meeting was held on November 19, 2008 in the Multipurpose Room at ARO (Advocacy, Rights, Opportunity). Executive Director Jim Rogers discussed the Governor's budget proposals released earlier in November. He and Dawn Percy, Clinical Director; Theresa Billeci, Administrative Services Director; and Dr. Judith Bjorndal, Medical Director, responded to staff questions on the following topics: budget impacts for Sonoma, the availability of the gymnasium, the facility's preparedness for digital television, Medicare and MediCal funding, staffing for Central Program Services and REACH specifically, anesthesia services, and availability of electronic forms when computers are down. For future meeting dates, contact the Public Information Officer at (707) 938-6703.



Waiting for the Town Meeting to begin [photo by Karen Litzenberg]

Have You Heard?

Elwyn NC 962 Homes

Elwyn is a non-profit human services organization internationally recognized as being experts in the education and care of individuals with special challenges and disadvantages. Founded in 1852 to care for children with mental retardation, today's Elwyn provides services for people with special needs of all ages. They've recently formed a new, wholly owned subsidiary, Elwyn NC, to help meet the needs of people in Northern California with intensive medical frailties and will operate up to 17 homes. These homes, called 962 homes because they are being developed as a result of Senate Bill 962, have been built or retrofitted with specialized equipment, such as ceiling mounted lifts, wheelchair ramps, etc. to make the home more easily accessible for its residents.



*An Elwyn home in the East Bay
[photo provided by Cynthia Hill]*

On November 6, 2008, Executive Director Jim Rogers, Administrative Services Director Theresa Billeci, Sonoma Regional Project Director Liz Stoddard, Assistant to the Executive Director Karen Litzenberg, Parent Hospital Association (PHA) President Mary O'Riordan, and PHA Board Member Pat Walter visited some of the Elwyn NC homes in Union City and Fremont. It was a pleasure to see the residents of one home engaged in activities with the staff. At another home, which had not yet opened, we were able to browse through the rooms and admire the large closets and state-of-the-art features throughout the home, including a remote-controlled fireplace in the family room, and a recently renovated custom kitchen. The homes had beautifully landscaped yards with attention to details that allow people who use wheelchairs to safely access even the most remote corners of their environments.

Glen A. Barawed Retires from Sierra Vista

In October 2008, after more than 30 years working for the State of California, Glen Barawed, former Director of Sierra Vista Community Facility, has retired. Barawed's career began while he was on the waiting list to enter a nursing program at a local junior college, when he instead chose to enroll in the psychiatric technician program. That decision led to his employment at Stockton Developmental Center, where he states, "I was hooked and have never looked back." For the last six years, he worked at Sierra Vista, about which he said, "It has been my extreme pleasure to have worked with and to have supervised so many dedicated employees."



*Glen A. Barawed
[photo provided by
Sierra Vista]*

Sierra Vista Community Facility Gets New Director

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) announced on December 1st that effective immediately Bill Amor takes the lead as Community Facilities Director of Sierra Vista in Yuba City. The facility houses up to 55 clients and employs approximately 123 staff. Amor has worked as the Business Manager at Sierra Vista since October 1999, when the facility opened. During most of 2008, he fulfilled that role while concurrently working as the Acting Manager of the Fiscal and Program Support Branch at DDS headquarters. Amor has worked for the DDS for 13 years and his prior assignments included Warehouse Manager and General Services Administrator at Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma), as well as a stint at Camarillo State Hospital. When asked about his employment experiences, Amor said of Sonoma, "The staff were great and the facility is beautiful," but he enjoys Sierra Vista too. "The staff are great and the clients are wonderful. I love the challenges given to us every day."



*Bill Amor
[photo provided
by Sierra Vista]*

Governor Appoints Scott Carney

On October 29, 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced the appointment of Scott Carney as Associate Secretary of Legislative Affairs for the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). Since 2007, Carney has served as Deputy Director of Fiscal Services for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. From 2004 to 2007, he was Assistant Secretary of Program and Fiscal Affairs for the HHS and, from 2000 to 2004, he worked as an Assistant Program Budget Manager for the Department of Finance. Carney was a Research Program Specialist and Policy Analyst for the Department of Social Services from 1998 to 2000 and was a Contracts Manager for the Contra Costa County Department of Social Services in 1998. From 1992 to 1996, he was a Special Project Coordinator at Families First, Inc. Carney's first job working for the state was a stint as a student intern at Agnews Developmental Center, where Jim Rogers was his supervisor.

Howard Lee Revels Remembered

Sonoma Developmental Center shares in the sorrow over the loss of Howard Lee Revels who passed away on December 4, 2008, at the age of 85. As a parent of a child with developmental disabilities, Revels was well known throughout California as an advocate and volunteer at such facilities as Porterville State Hospital and Agnews Developmental Center. He was also among the founding members of Keep Our Families Together (KOFT). Services for Mr. Revels were held at the Sacred Heart Catholic Chapel at Agnews on December 9th.

Have You Heard?

Psychiatric Technician Graduations

Employees from Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) graduated from the Napa Valley College Psychiatric Technician Program on December 16, 2008 and from the Santa Rosa Junior College Psychiatric Technician Program on December 19, 2008.

Twenty-seven students, nine of whom were employees sponsored by Sonoma, graduated from the Napa Valley College Psychiatric Technician Program during an evening ceremony held in the Little Theatre at the college. A catered reception in the cafeteria followed the ceremony.

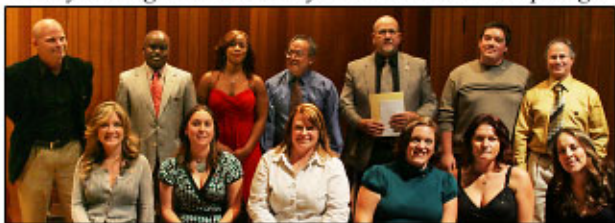
At Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), 13 students graduated from the Psychiatric Technician Program. Sonoma sponsored nine employees to attend the program for which an afternoon ceremony was held at Newman Auditorium on the SRJC Campus. The SRJC Psychiatric Technician program has offered classes at Sonoma Developmental Center since September 2004 and offers students the unique opportunity for hands-on experience while attending the course.

The students enroll in an eighteen-month program that teaches them pertinent skills that are used in the care, treatment, and rehabilitation of mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, or developmentally disabled individuals. Upon graduation the students are eligible to take the state board exam and become psychiatric technicians licensed by the State of California.

Sonoma Developmental Center would like to acknowledge the following employees for their accomplishment: Amelia Baio, Karen Bolles, Isaiah Cronk, Juliet Delacruz, Chester John DeLeon, Heidi Everhart, Eligio Floresca, Marlee Gradias, Margie Gulan, Rayna Gull, Gladys Karani, Howard Leyton, Thomas Miller, Rita Pauletich, John Rerai, Elisa Tongol, Marc Wickwire, and Jason Winslow.



Graduating Psychiatric Technician students from Napa Valley College recite the Psychiatric Technician pledge



SRJC graduating Psychiatric Technicians

Annual Giving Campaign

by Rita Jones, State Campaign Advisor

This year Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) officially kicked off their annual giving campaign, held in conjunction with the California State Employees' Charitable Campaign, with a brunch and meeting held on October 2, 2008. The speakers included Sandra Costello of Sonoma Vintage House; Rob Read from United Way; and Dawn Percy, Sonoma's Clinical Director. As this year's loaned representative from Sonoma, I was honored to have the opportunity to also attend all the campaign events.

Over the years, Sonoma employees have made a huge impact in their community through their generous contributions to charitable organizations. On October 28, a special luncheon sponsored by members of the facility's Governing Body was held in honor of staff that contributed last year at the Bear and Pillar levels (\$600 and \$1,000 respectively). Many staff generously volunteered their time, talents and resources to beautifully decorate the room, prepare and serve the gourmet meal, and provide lovely entertainment. Enthusiastic speeches were given by Eric Harrison, Vice President of Resource Development from United Way; Dr. Judith Bjorndal, Medical Director; and Jim Rogers, Executive Director. The honorees, campaign committee members, and volunteers were recognized during the event.

On November 4, our third annual benefit pasta feed and raffle, generously underwritten by the Parent Hospital Association, was held in McDougall's Blue Room. Attendees enjoyed a delicious spaghetti lunch catered by the Pasta King, and the opportunity to talk with several non-profit agency representatives. Many great raffle prizes, donated by committee members, were awarded. Congratulations to all the winners! Thanks to the generosity of those who volunteered and contributed, everyone had a good time and a total of \$2,500 was raised to benefit Friends in Sonoma Helping (F.I.S.H.).

A big *thank you* to all the people who made Sonoma's 2008 giving campaign a success!



Serving at the Pasta Feed



Pillars & Bears luncheon

Have You Heard?

Before Recycling Was Recycling

by Doug Rice, Sunrise Director

In the 60s Sunrise Industries began its recycling career. This was long before the term “recycling” came to mean something special—or better yet, a notion that recycling is not just something that you can make money doing but that it is your civic responsibility to actively participate in. No, Sunrise was recycling long before then.

Sunrise started recycling because it created work for the individuals that lived and worked at the Center. It was one of the first true partnerships to develop with a community-based business. The local garbage hauler, Sonoma Garbage, came to Sunrise Industries with an idea they thought would not only benefit the community, but also his business and the clients that live at Sonoma Developmental Center.

Sonoma Garbage ended up supplying Sunrise Workshop with a baler and in turn brought cardboard from community businesses. Sonoma Garbage helped companies such as Sebastiani Winery with all of the excess cardboard that they produced by supplying them with bins for cardboard only and hauling this mountain of cardboard with trucks to Sunrise Industries for baling.

This was not the only item that Sunrise Industries diverted away from landfill. Sunrise also took #10 food cans, washed and rinsed them, punched holes in the bottom, coated them with a thin blackish tar substance and sold them to local nurseries as planters. After exhausting all of the cans that were produced here at the Center, we joined in partnership with Vacaville State Prison where they kept all of their cans in a holding area. Sunrise would send its delivery truck over once a week and fill it from top to bottom and front to back.

Even though both of these endeavors diverted enormous amounts of waste from landfill, they were just the tip of the iceberg of recycling that Sunrise would become involved in. Since that time, Sunrise has been incredibly successful in diverting from landfill nearly 100% of all cardboard and paper produced by the Center. We have not only met the mandatory state laws requiring diversion from landfill but have succeeded beyond the mandates and beyond our greatest expectations.

We have just started a new program to capture all of



Cardboard recycling at Sunrise Industries

the CRV (California Redemption Value) drink containers. We have over 20 CRV blue bins all over the Sonoma campus to make it as easy as possible for any individual to discard their drink containers.

All of these recycling efforts have paid off in numerous ways including an award of recognition for our recycling efforts presented to us by then State Senator Wes Chesbro. This award recognizes our efforts and steps that Sunrise and the Center have taken to insure that all of the valuable resources that at one time or another were discarded into an overused and abused system known as landfill are now being recycled. These materials are now reborn again in a whole host of products produced with recycled material. Sunrise has given recycling top priority and in turn this has created meaningful job opportunities for over 200 individuals that live and work here. Sunrise has been “working today for a better tomorrow” for more than four decades and plans on continuing to do the same.

Program 7 Launches Sunrise Catering

by Sarita Nichols, Occupational Therapist, Program 7

Self-advocacy is promoted in many ways at Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma). Client Town Hall meetings give clients an opportunity to come together with members of the Executive Team to discuss their issues. Besides sharing their thoughts at Town Hall meetings, members of the Sonoma community can socialize over refreshments. Out of expanding participation at Town Hall meetings, Sunrise Catering was launched. Once a month an off-residence work site prepares refreshments for the meeting. While at work, willing individuals learn to use infection control precautions, follow recipe sequences, measure, share in participating, and demonstrate patience. After preparing the food items the day before, Sunrise Caterers transport the refreshments to the Town Hall meeting and serve them to attendees. During the November and December meetings 10 residents have had this experience, all while being paid to perform work. Program Seven hopes to rotate catering opportunities to many work sites. Come enjoy the refreshments as well as the monthly meeting.



Sunrise Catering at a recent Town Hall meeting for residents

Have You Heard?

New Hires

October

Ruby Alick, Pharmacy Technician
Denise Black, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Chester Deleon, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Gladys Karani, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Michael MacCallum, Electrician I
Bernadeth Maramba, Licensed Vocational Nurse
Wallace Mueller, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Rita Pauletich, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Barbara Ready, Office Technician
Fazal Rehman, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Sara Tickel, Psychiatric Technician Trainee

November

Gerard Aguiluz, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Simon Bundang, Psychiatric Technician
Ron Giuffre, Individual Program Coordinator
Junie Kangleon, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Marijane Lua, Office Technician
Julieta Manas, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Debra Martin, Psychiatric Technician
Joel Morales, Electrician I
Elvis Neal De Stanton, Individual Program Coordinator
Geraldine Neal De Stanton, Individual Program Coordinator
Florence Palaganas, Psychiatric Technician Trainee
Alphonso Singleton, Psychiatric Technician Trainee

December

Patricia Amador, Office Technician
Haydee Echavez, Psychiatric Technician Assistant
David Hiett, Staff Services Analyst
Joanna Morat, Clinical Social Worker
Musu Sandy, Psychiatric Technician
Ruby Stiplin, Psychiatric Technician Instructor
Amy Fong, Clinical Lab Technician (Retired Annuitant)

Kudos

- Kudos to Pat McIntosh and Ritta Vesterinen from the Sonoma County Office of Education Johnson classroom who were the glue that directed both Johnson B and C in regards to completing costumes and keeping both Unit Managers on task, resulting in receiving second place in the Halloween Parade. Their positive attitude and willingness to take on this task demonstrates two of Sonoma's values: service to others and effective leadership.

Note: If you would like to receive the *Eldridge Press* electronically, please e-mail your request to Karen.Litzenberg@sonoma.dds.ca.gov.

Holiday Open House

It has become a tradition: The Sonoma Developmental Center Executive Committee hosts an annual Open House each year in early December. Previously held at Sonoma House, this year's event took place at the ARO Multipurpose Room (formerly the King dining room) on the afternoon of December 4, 2008. The Executive Committee takes this opportunity each year to kick off the season of holiday parties and to show appreciation to staff by working the kitchen for this facility party where all the hors d'oeuvres, drinks and desserts are purchased with their own private funds. All staff were invited to attend the open house where holiday music played softly from a CD player and festive decorations created a joyful mood. Tasty offerings included a variety of cheeses, crackers, veggies, chips, dips, mini quiches, jalapeno poppers, pizza bagel bites, meatballs, bourbon chicken, and other warm snacks. Sweet treats included cake, mini cream puffs, mini éclairs, cookies, mini cheesecakes, and candies. Coffee, tea, water, and Teresa Murphy's famous berry punch were also offered. The only thing missing from this jovial gathering was our Executive Director, Jim Rogers, who was regrettably summoned for jury duty just a half hour before the party began.



At the Holiday Open House

Holiday Decorating Contest

The annual Holiday Decorating Contest at Sonoma Developmental Center was held on December 16, 2008. The judges this year included Theresa Billeci, Administrative Services Director; Teresa Murphy, Assistant Administrative Services Director; and Tony Schapero, Acting Program Director. There were a total of eight entries with the *Grand Prize for Best Decorated* going to Johnson B Sonoma County of Education Class. *Most Creative* went to Smith. Acorn School was awarded *Most Traditional*. *Most Humorous* went to Brent and *Best Theme* was awarded to Johnson B. *Honorable Mention* went to Emparan B, Poppe, and Bemis. Trophies, cookies, apple and pumpkin pies were handed out to all the winners and everyone who entered received a photo collage.



Reindeer made of footprints in Pat McIntosh's SCOE class on Johnson B

Sustained Superior Achievement Awards...

Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) was proud to honor staff who have demonstrated sustained, superior achievement during a luncheon hosted by Sonoma's Employee Recognition Committee on October 16, 2008. The Sustained Superior Achievement Awards are given to staff that have shown an outstanding commitment to the values of the facility over at least a two-year period. We also honored staff that earned awards for heroism and safety, as well as bestowing our highest honor, the Centennial Award.



Roy Johnson & Teresa Murphy



Jana Bauerson, Jim Tallent & Bill Killinger

In addition to presenting the awards and a gourmet luncheon under the trees in front of Sonoma House, honorees were treated to a hilarious musical comedy written by Assistant Administrative Services Director Teresa Murphy, entitled *No News Is Good News*. Murphy invented a failing local newspaper called "The Sun-o-ma Dumocrat," headed by an editor desperate to find something shocking going on at Sonoma. In addition to writing a very funny plotline, Murphy wrote new lyrics to well-known songs, which gave us the opportunity to enjoy the fine singing voices of some of our staff, most notably Christopher Zombres, Jana Bauerson and Jim Tallent. We were also entertained by cast members Bill Killinger, Joanne Bender and Karen Litzenberg. The play's "sets" were skillfully painted scenes by Mike Doyel on old sheets. Thanks are also due to Judy D'Amico for directing the play, Deirdre Egan for her keyboard skills, and Teresa Murphy and Roy Johnson for emceeding the event.

AWARD FOR HEROISM: A Certificate of Heroism signed by the Director of the Department of Developmental Services, Terri Delgadillo; the Deputy Director, Debbie Meeker; and Executive Director Jim Rogers was presented to MATT SOLOPEK, JOHN LOFTUS AND SCOTT COBURN of Sonoma Developmental Center. Due to their quick actions, they saved the life of a co-worker.



Larry Herrin (accepting for John Loftus), Scott Coburn & Matt Solopek

SAFETY AWARD to Unit Supervisor ARLENE SALLEE and Teacher MEKIELE PERKINS. On May 23, 2007, while driving a van of Sonoma Developmental Center students to school, Perkins smelled smoke. Not only did the two safely evacuate the van and call for emergency help, Sallee rushed to a nearby garden hose and extinguished the fire.



Mekiele Perkins & Arlene Sallee

The first of the Sustained Superior Achievement Awards went to the CARPENTER SHOP (SCOTT COBURN, KYLE HALE, LARRY HERRIN, JOHN LOFTUS, FRANK NICKELL, SILVIO PASQUINI, and MATT SOLOPER) for their excellent customer service and superior craftsmanship.



Larry Herrin, Kyle Hale, Scott Coburn, Matthew Solopek, & Frank Nickell (not pictured: John Loftus & Silvio Pasquini)

BARBARA SIMBULAN, Director of Training, is a model of a supportive and knowledgeable leader. She is an excellent communicator and role model. She has been an instrumental player in developing training for the ER 2000 and Psychiatric Technician Assistant Competency, as well as assuring the Medical Education program accreditation. Clinical Director Dawn Percy stated that Simbulan has selflessly earned this recognition for her outstanding contribution to the facility.



Barbara Simbulan



Karen Robidoux

Program 7 Unit Supervisor KAREN ROBIDOUX has been in a leadership role in many capacities. Most recently she has been acting Program Assistant where she was instrumental in assuring that the educational staff provides current and complete educational assessments. In Program 7 she spent two years as the Unit Supervisor who managed Sunrise

continued next page

...Sustained Superior Achievement Awards

Karen Robidoux, continued from previous page
Industries, which employees 100 clients on and off grounds. Her positive leadership provides an inspiration to level of care staff.

A group award for work that has been ongoing for 12 years was given to the Sonoma Developmental Center Bell Choir. The staff currently supporting the talent of the choir are founder TEKLA CARTMELL-CORONADO, ALLISON MILLER, TRACY WHITTEN, NATALIE MITTMAN and veteran supporter, SHERRILL PETERSEN. Originally the bell choir was a Program 6 ensemble, but with the transition of clients to different living areas and levels of care, the therapists worked together to re-name the Bell Choir to the Sonoma Developmental Center Bell Choir. The talents of this group have enchanted audiences over the years in Glen Ellen, at Parent Hospital Association events, and in the Porter Administration Building lobby. This is a true success story in music therapy.



*Bell Choir Music Therapists and Recreation Therapists,
L to R: Tracy Whitten, Tekla Cartmell-Coronado,
Sherrill Petersen, Natalie Mittman & Allison Miller*

RANA STEELE was a Psychiatric Technician in Program 6 before her recent move out of state. Her can-do attitude as acting Senior Psychiatric Technician enabled the transitions during Program 6 moves to be smoother and easier on all. She designed and rearranged living rooms, worked extra shifts, volunteered to be acting shift supervisor for the night shift, and was intimately knowledgeable of the clients' likes, preferences, and needs.



Rana Steele

DAMASO PIZANO, Psychiatric Technician Assistant in Program 4, is a nine-year employee of Sonoma and has spent the last five years supporting the individuals that live at Bemis. An example of his leadership came about when two new clients were introduced to Bemis. Pizano quickly developed therapeutic relationships with the two and as a result, these clients were able to



Damaso Pizano

successfully integrate into their new living environment. Pizano was a key player in this developmental process which has set the standard for future admissions.

MARK DAMSTEN, Psychiatric Technician in Program 4:



Mark Damsten

They say that Damsten's trademark of the service value is a phrase he often uses: "Can I help you?" He is first to volunteer for training when staff from other facilities offer to give insight on client transfers. He immediately develops a positive relationship with staff and new clients. Damsten makes people feel comfortable and at ease with his friendly attitude.

TOM STEVENSON, Psychiatric Technician, Program 4: If a new Psych Tech were to ask Stevenson what would be the best approach with clients, he would undoubtedly say, "Consistency and follow through." Through this strategy, Stevenson has had success with special communication and relaxation programs for those who live at Roadruck. He spent a great deal of consistent time with one individual and assisted in reducing the need for interventions.

*Sorry,
no
photo
available*

DEIRDRE EGAN, Music Therapist: In a recent talent show, this Music Therapist created a moment that will be etched in the minds of the audience. Egan sang the famous Lennon ballad, *Imagine*, and was accompanied by a client with extremely limited physical ability, who played the harmonica. These moments are what demonstrate the service value in its most sensitive way. As a Music Therapist, Egan ensures her clients are involved in the annual Performing Arts Company production, creates Valentines surprise celebrity guests, and is terrific at using music to create growth and development.



Deirdre Egan



*Cast of No News
Is Good News:
Chris Zombres,
Jana Bauerson,
Bill Killinger,
Joanne Bender,
Jim Tallent &
Karen Litzenberg*

Sustained Superior Achievement Awards...

KATRINA BLANKENSHIP, Nursing Coordinator in Program 2 is a 23-year employee of Sonoma Developmental Center. Her



Trina Blankenship

outstanding knowledge and medical expertise make her a natural role model and excellent mentor. There are a few stories about Blankenship that show her calm professional manner and quick thinking. In 2005 she personally assisted rescuers when an employee at an off-site fell and broke her knee. She has also stepped into action during a medical crisis and was seen directing employees to assist fire personnel while she got the medical cart with oxygen and brought it to the scene. Unit Supervisor Robin Widoff stated that her "direction/instruction has given me a very positive sense of job satisfaction."

BECKY CHIURCO, Office Technician in Program 2, is the spirit of positive thinking at Sonoma.

Without fail she addresses those she meets with an enthusiastic hello. She is an expert at her job, but she is also a leader in respectful relationships and service to others. Whether she volunteers to help an employee in need or works the Wellness Fair or assists in a client event, Chiurco is the first to step forward. She is also instrumental in coaching and training staff throughout the program in computers; and with the increasing move toward electronic record-keeping, she will be a greater asset in the days to come.



Becky Chiurco

JOCELYN TOM, from Program 1, has developed leadership skills as a Senior Psychiatric Technician on Poppe. She has



Jocelyn Tom

been instrumental and supportive of the Psychiatric Technician students during each semester. Her patience in training her own staff has assisted them in learning better coaching skills for the students. The result is a student with excellent and practical skills as they go through the program. Tom faces change with great enthusiasm. An example of this occurred when staffing changed on Poppe and she re-organized the service delivery to assure excellent client supervision. Staff come to her for advice and she offers her thoughts in a thoughtful manner.

ROBIN ROSHOLT from Program 1 is a Social Worker that gives 100% to her caseload. She has been known for her sensitivity in working with clients and their families and shows a superior commitment to high standards in the area of advocacy.

*Sorry,
no
photo
available*

ADELIA LUXAMANA, Food Services Tech II, is always vigilant about her diet orders and takes prompt action to assure clients receive appropriate, tasteful nourishments. During the 2008 client moves, her presence was important as she was instrumental in assuring that no disruption in quality of services occurred in the dining room. She is a regular volunteer for special events and has been Nutrition Services Employee of the Month.



Adelia Luxamana

MARIA CROSSLAND of Nutrition Services is a role model for resource management. Her judicious staffing strategies have resulted in a 63% reduction in overtime in her area since November 2007. She triages, she re-organizes, she synchronizes, and she recognizes the best people and best practices. Assistant Director of Dietetics Idalia Sullivan has called her a "role model for our department and Sonoma Developmental Center for her compassion and competency."



Maria Crossland

DIANE HINMAN, Occupational Therapist and MOVE Site Trainer, Central Program Services. Diane leads two lives at Sonoma Developmental Center: one as an Occupational Therapist and the other as a MOVE Trainer. She is currently the only certified MOVE International Trainer in the Western United States and is currently studying to become one of the first certified Adult MOVE Trainers. In the MOVE program, she manages a caseload of 34 clients, where she develops programs, sets up training for level-of-care staff and Psychiatric Technician students, and buys equipment. She



Diane Hinman

continued next page

...More Awards

Diane Hinman, continued from previous page

is resourceful and a model in the promotion of MOVE principles. As an Occupational Therapist, she uses her inquisitive mind and excellent problem-solving skills to assist the clients. She can also be seen at recruitment job fairs and helping out at the Performing Arts Company productions.

KIM ELLIOTT, Staff Services Analyst in Human Resources, oversees all document packets for hiring, transfers, promotions, or any other movement of staff. She does this with great professionalism and accuracy. Elliott also assists Nursing Coordinators with the Psychiatric Technician sponsorship program and helps the Recruitment Committee. She is relentless in her pursuit of perfection and passionate about the integrity of the hiring process. She is a true asset to Human Resources.



Kim Elliott

Centennial Award

Jan Dold is a Senior Psychiatric Technician in the Outpatient Services. Dr. Mason has worked with Dold for 19 years in providing podiatry services and calls her a “catalyst that keeps the clinic cohesive.” Dold exudes confidence and competence and is an excellent presenter when tours visit the clinics. Her care for the facility and the clients is noted by all who meet her. She is a former two-time Employee of the Month (2000 and 2003) who began her career as a hospital worker in 1975. She earned her Psych Tech license in 1979. In 2004 she was promoted to Senior Psychiatric Technician. Sonoma Developmental Center is honored to name Jan Dold as Centennial Award recipient for 2008.



Jan Dold



The awards luncheon

October Employee of the Month

The October Employee of the Month is Phil Hosey, Senior Psychiatric Technician on Corcoran residence. His nominators say “Phil is confident and skilled in all phases of his job. He works harmoniously and effectively with the staff he supervises, building strong working relationships.” He displays a strong personal commitment to successfully completing all projects. “Phil makes every effort to bring out the best in every employee he supervises, promoting relationships of trust and respect. Phil exemplifies the Sonoma values of respectful relationships, serving others, and effective leadership.” Congratulations, Phil!



Phil Hosey

November Employee of the Month

The Employee of the Month for November is Doug Timoney, Senior Psychiatric Technician from Program 7. His nominators said, “Doug creates a positive working environment for clients and staff. He is consistent and maintains a calm and upbeat demeanor while setting a positive example for all.” Doug is described as someone who often notices the hard work of others and takes the time to express his appreciation to all. “Doug is respectful to all he comes in contact with and he exemplifies the Sonoma values of respectful relationships and serving others. He is a valued employee and shows a sense of commitment to all he works with.” Way to go, Doug!



Doug Timoney

December Employee of the Month

Jim Tallent, Recreational Therapist from Central Program Services, has been selected the Employee of the Month for December. His nominators said, “Jim demonstrates effective leadership at all levels. Most recently he demonstrated this by taking on the role as chairperson of Sonoma’s Performing Arts Company and director of the play, *The Wizard of Oz*.” Jim teaches Positive Approaches and Strategies/Management of Assaultive Behavior at the facility, is involved with the Equestrian Program, and is a huge part of all the large, facility-wide events. “He is a role model for many others, including myself, because even during tough times, Jim makes sure the job gets done and gets done right.” Great job, Jim!



Jim Tallent

Community Happenings...

The Wizard of Oz

The Sonoma Developmental Center Performing Arts Company presented four sold-out performances of *The Wizard of Oz* in late September and early October. The story closely followed the movie version, although it was condensed to fit into just nine scenes. The cast of 34 actors, singers and dancers, along with their 16 on-stage coaches did a fine job entertaining the crowd. They were supported by a band, consisting of Sherrill Peterson on keyboard and Deirdre Egan on the harp, as well as five residents providing percussion, and five staff providing back-up singing. The vocalists were Jana Bauerson, Paul Nieuwenhuijs, Sherrill Peterson, Deirdre Egan and Samantha Montgomery.

The on-stage coaches were Mika Belcher, Karen Bolles, Craig Brown, Robin Cohn, Laura Farwell-Burricelli, JJ Fernandez, Marlee Gradias, Dana Grantham, Diane Hinman, Cathie Irwin, Allison Miller, Patti Nett, Evelyn Nickell, Carol Price, Joy Schoffer, Lino Vicente, Heidi Winslow, and Jane Witkowski.

Sets were very cleverly done, although on a shoe-string, and for that we thank the very talented Mike Doyel, Wes Caswell, Sue Oncea and Jim Tallent.

Jim Tallent also served as the play's director, after the original director moved out of state. Taking over suddenly was difficult and everyone was impressed with Tallent's ability to just pick up where the former director left off.

About a week after the last performance, there was a cast party featuring both still photos and video of the performances, so the cast could see themselves in action. The still photographer was Nancy Flack and the lead videographer and video editor was Jennifer Honig.

The committee for *The Wizard of Oz* did a fine job: Jana Bauerson, Wes Caswell, Holly Charlton, Kris Culp, Deirdre Egan, Laura Farwell-Burricelli, JJ Fernandez, Samantha Montgomery, Paul Nieuwenhuijs, Sue Oncea, Sherrill Peterson, Joy Schoffer, Jim Tallent, and Becky Zyskowski.

All four performances were exciting and very well done. It would be hard to say whether it was the cast, the crew, or the audience that had the most fun. Kudos to all involved!



Left: Dorothy arrives in Munchkinland. Right: Dorothy meets the Scarecrow.



Halloween

Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) began its Halloween festivities on Tuesday, October 16, 2008, with the opening of the annual Spook Hall at the gymnasium. The Spook Hall has been offered annually since the 1970s and has evolved from a one-room sensory spook house to the large maze it is today. Under the leadership of Rehabilitation Therapist Paul Nieuwenhuijs



Nelson A's "Finding Nemo"

and former Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion Project Director Paul Belcher, the gymnasium was transformed into an interactive maze of adventure. The Spook Hall was open to the public and because switches, motion, or sound activated most attractions, the Spook Hall could be enjoyed by people of all ages and physical abilities.



Executive Secretary Patti Nett helps with Emparan A & B's "Rock the Vote"

On October 31st, Sonoma hosted its annual Halloween Parade, which is also open to the public. The parade, which has been a tradition for over 40 years, began at 10 AM and featured floats as well as ambulatory entries. Rehabilitation Therapist Jim Tallent, who also served as the announcer, organized the event. Parade entry was open to all who live or work at the Center and the residences generally entered as themed groups. All entries were judged in various categories and awards were given during a party later that day. The Halloween Carnival, normally held on the lawn outside the gymnasium, was replaced by an indoor party this year, due to the rainy weather. During the party, which featured refreshments and a live band, winners from the parade entries were announced and trophies were awarded to the participants.

The parade results were as follows: *Grand Prize* was Nelson A with "Finding Nemo"; *Best Marching Entry* went to "Dancing Pumpkins" by Crothall (1st Place) and "MOVE is Magic" by the MOVE Program (2nd Place);

continued next page

...Community Happenings

Halloween, continued from previous page

Most Monstrous Entry went to “Haunted Solar Sunrise” by Judah and Sunrise (1st Place) and “Dracula” by Steven Hart (2nd Place); *Best Stationary Entry* went to “Avenue Of The Stars” by Regamey A/B and Empanan A/B (1st Place) and “Team Johnson” by Johnson B/C (2nd Place); *Best Decorated Entry* went to “Mardi Gras Madness” by Stoneman, Poppe, Lux and James (1st Place) and “Awesome Autumn” by Brent (2nd Place); *Best Float Entry* went to “Pirates Of The Caribbean” by Cedars (1st Place) and “Rock the Vote” by Empanan A/B (2nd Place); *Best Participation Entry* went to “The Greatest Show on Earth” by Bentley, Cohen, Smith and Lathrop (1st Place) and “Brazilian Carnival” by Thompson (2nd Place); *Most Humorous Entry* went to “Luchadores” by Corcoran (1st Place) and “Road Wreck” by Roadruck (2nd Place); *Most Creative Entry* went to “A Splash Of Color” by Malone (1st Place) and “Hawaiian Retreat” by Acorn School (2nd Place). *Special Awards* were given to Thompson’s stationary “Brazilian Carnival”; Norma Lou Peeples as Charlie Chaplin; “Lady Man Bugs” by Nelson C; “Fire Engines” by the Eldridge Fire Department; Cromwell’s “Halloweenies”; “Piggy Patrol” by the Office of Planning and Communications; the Clover Sound Truck; Nelson B’s “Being Green”; and Ordahl A’s “Teddy Bear Picnic.”



Both photos: Spook Hall

Horton Hears a Who

In early November, Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) was contacted by Monica Conway who inquired if her daughter’s sixth grade class could perform a play for the residents. Only too happy to oblige, Sonoma arranged for the students to use an empty space in the Farrell building as their performance venue for *Horton Hears a Who* on November 19, 2008.

According to Julianne Rothan-Centers, sixth grade teacher at Live Oak Charter School in Petaluma, the annual play is part of the school’s Waldorf curriculum. The students do everything from choosing the subject of the play, to writing the script, to making the sets and costumes. This year, the students decided to do a musical and wrote all original songs to *Horton Hears a Who*. The ambitious class didn’t stop there. Dissatisfied with putting in all that

work for only two performances (in front of the rest of their school and again for the parents), this class decided to take their show on the road to retirement homes, libraries, and hospitals. With the help of parent chauffeurs, the class performed before two other audiences on the morning of the 19th before arriving at Sonoma. After a lunch break at the Eldridge Farm, they quickly set up their stage and sound equipment. With Ms Rothan-Centers directing from the back of the room, the students entertained an audience of over 30 Sonoma clients and staff. After one particularly lively number, a member of the audience, who is a SDC Performing Arts Company alum, was overheard saying, “I really enjoyed that.” His exclamation sums up the reaction of the entire audience as many people were observed swaying in their seats during the musical numbers. The finale included audience participation as the children drove home their message that regardless of size or appearance, everyone deserves to be heard. The Sonoma audience clearly agreed. Thank you, Live Oak, for a wonderfully entertaining afternoon!



Horton Hears a Who [photo by Karen Litzenberg]

Holiday Craft Fair

Sonoma Developmental Center held its annual Holiday Craft Fair on December 3 and 4, 2008 at REACH, the facility’s community center. Sonoma has held a craft fair for approximately 20 years to raise funds for client activities that are not funded by the state.



Holiday Craft Fair

Items available for purchase included quilts, pottery, jewelry, handmade toys, potholders, jams and jellies, candles, one-of-a-kind gifts, and more.

A raffle was held hourly, with items donated by the vendors. Many employees and individuals from the community made their way through the Craft Fair seeking out those one-of-a-kind gifts for that special someone. The vendors and customers all seemed pleased with the two-day event and look forward to next year’s

Holiday Craft Fair.

More Community Happenings...

Tree Lighting Ceremony

Twenty-two residents from Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) and their support staff attended the 77th annual State Capital Tree Lighting Ceremony on the west steps of the State Capitol on Tuesday, December 9, 2008.

Across the state, individuals with developmental disabilities, including those at Sonoma and other developmental centers, handcrafted approximately 1,500 of the ornaments that adorn the tree.

Sonoma has participated in creating ornaments for the State tree for more than 20 years. This year Sonoma

Residents made 100 ornaments for the tree. The ornaments included colored pinecones, glittery stars, snowflakes, decorated records, handmade strings of lights, spinning ornaments, and glittery pine cones.

As in previous years, a child with developmental disabilities placed an ornament on the tree with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and pressed the switch to light up the 6,500 ultra-low wattage LED lights that decorate 50-foot silver tip tree.

The Sonoma residents and over 2,000 other spectators were treated to an evening of dance performances and music. The event was hosted by television personality Mario Lopez and included musical performances by Varsity Fan Club and Rick Springfield.



*Governor Schwarzenegger and 8-year-old Michaela Tritch push the button to light the tree
[photo by JJ Fernandez]*

Black & White Ball

The annual Black and White Ball was held in the gymnasium on December 10 and 11, 2008. As the guests arrived at the event, a valet was on hand to assist in escorting the individuals out of their vehicles. Upon entering the gala, the partygoers were greeted by a coat checker and escorted to their seat by an usher. From the twinkling white lights dangling from the ceiling and all around, to the classy black tablecloths with lit up candle displays and shiny silver stars as centerpieces, it was evident this was the place to be in the town of Eldridge. There was a photo booth, waiters on hand to take orders, and food servers ready to serve up the requests. A live band played as people danced into the night.



Scenes from the Black & White Ball



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 our 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, March 15 is the deadline for the April-June issue).

Eldridge Press
Volume 4, Number 1, © January 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