



Eldridge Press

Message from the Executive Director

by James E. Rogers

One of the fundamental elements of Sonoma's new Strategic Plan is the concept that all people should be afforded the right to advocate for themselves. As individuals we do this for ourselves throughout our lives. As professionals we serve as a powerful example to support others in learning by doing, gaining a sense of confidence, and increasingly advocating for themselves.

As part of our commitment to Advocacy, Rights, and Opportunities one of our five goals in the plan specifically states:

"Join with relatives and other partners to develop programs that promote self-awareness, self-determination, and empower people to be participating members of their community." A team was established that has been working diligently on the following related objective, "Establish a self-advocacy/governance program at Sonoma Developmental Center, and determine what support will be required to create and institute a successful self-advocacy organization". A comprehensive team, which includes clients, Sonoma and Regional Center staff, and the Clients' Rights Advocate has been moving forward and is making notable progress.

Although much has already been accomplished, it will take all of us joining together to encourage choice, independence, self-determination, and self-advocacy to truly achieve our goal.

I look forward to reporting further on this, as well as other elements of the Strategic Plan, in future issues of the *Eldridge Press*.



Client artwork

Tour of "962" Homes

In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Senate Bill (SB) 962, authored by then-Senator Wesley Chesbro, that authorizes the Department of Social Services and the Department of Developmental Services to jointly establish and administer a pilot project for licensing and regulating adult residential facilities for persons with special health care needs.

In early September, Cheryl White, Supervising Resource Developer, and other staff from Golden Gate Regional Center provided a tour of several SB 962 homes with Sonoma Developmental Center and Parent Hospital Association leaders. The tour group included Jim Rogers, Executive Director; Theresa Billeci, Administrative Services Director; Liz Stoddard, Sonoma Regional Project Director; and Mary O'Riordan, President of the Parent Hospital Association.

Among the sites visited was the first 962 home—St. Francis Home in San Bruno, which opened in April 2007. At another home, a mother was visiting with her son, who had formerly lived at Agnews Developmental Center. The mother expressed how pleased she is with her son's home and current situation. The transition into the new house affords her son his own room which he enjoys. He also likes relaxing in his own recliner and sharing the living room with a maximum of three other occupants.

Have You Heard?

Bill Wilson, Executive Director, Fairview Developmental Center

William (Bill) Wilson was appointed as Executive Director of Fairview Developmental Center (Fairview) effective August 4, 2008. No stranger to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Wilson has served in a variety of positions at several facilities.

His experiences include working as a Psychiatric Technician at Fairview in the early 1980s. He also worked as a Psychiatric Technician, Senior Psychiatric Technician, and Residence Manager at Stockton Developmental Center; and as Residence Manager and Acting Standards Compliance Coordinator at Camarillo State Hospital and Developmental Center. In the 1990s, Wilson worked at Porterville Developmental Center, holding positions as Residence Manager, Program Assistant, and Program Director. He later worked temporarily at both Sierra Vista and Canyon Springs Community Facilities to assist during their initial certification efforts.

After a short break to work for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as a Healthcare Administrator II and a Regional Healthcare Administrator, Wilson returns to the DDS in his current role at Fairview. Deborah Meeker, Deputy Director of the Developmental Centers Division, says Wilson is "...energetic and an approachable leader, a constructive problem solver, and a person with a solid and heartfelt commitment to the Department's mission and the consumers we serve."



Bill Wilson
[photo by
Sandy Gonzalez]

Marilou Ancheta joins Sonoma's Management Team

Effective August 1, 2008, Marilou Ancheta was appointed as Coordinator of Nursing Services (CNS) at Sonoma.

Ancheta received her BS degree in Nursing from Philippine Women's University and comes to Sonoma with 26 years of nursing experience with the Department of Developmental Services at Agnews and Porterville Developmental Centers. She has held positions as Registered Nurse, Health Services Specialist,



Marilou Ancheta

Assistant Coordinator of Nursing Services, Coordinator of Nursing Services, Program Director, and Assistant to the Medical Director. Ancheta also held a director position for Life Services Alternatives, Inc. in Santa Clara, where she was instrumental in developing several community care facilities.

Ancheta brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of developmental disabilities and will be an asset to Sonoma.

Sonoma Welcomes Mary Antone, Program Director

Mary Antone was recently appointed to the position of Program Director for Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma). Antone, who started on September 1, 2008, is the manager for Program Three, which is comprised of seven nursing facility residences.

Antone has over 26 years of service working for the State of California. She began her career as an Office Technician, and has held a variety of positions that provided increased responsibilities. Most recently, Antone held a leadership role as a Program Director for Agnews Developmental Center, where she had 24-hour responsibility for intermediate care and skilled nursing programs. She has also worked as a Program Assistant, Standards Compliance Coordinator, Associate Government Program Analyst, and Medical Records Director.

Her varied experience has given Antone a broad knowledge of developmental disabilities issues. Her impressive work history makes her well prepared for her new leadership role at Sonoma.



Mary Antone

Electronic Waste

Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) hosted an Electronic Waste Collection for Goodwill Industries of the Redwood Empire on Thursday, September 18, 2008. Electronic, or e-waste, is any electronic device with a power cord and plug and/or a circuit board. Examples include televisions and computer monitors; computer printers, towers, keyboards, mice, scanners, fax machines and other peripheral equipment; CD and DVD players; microwaves; boom



Collected e-waste
[photo by JJ Fernandez]

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Recognition

E-Waste, continued from previous page

boxes, stereo equipment and radios; telephones and cell phones.

Besides e-waste, Goodwill Industries also collected donations of household items such as clothing, bedding and blankets, kitchenware and household items, small furniture, children's games, toys, and bicycles. In addition to Sonoma employees who brought their donations from home, a number of people from the public who had read about the event in the local newspapers, stopped by to drop off items. Goodwill reports that they received 113 donations for a total of approximately 4,200 pounds!

August Employee of the Month

The August Employee of the Month is April Haddad, Psychiatric Technician on Malone. One of her nominators said, "April's competence and medical professionalism in handling an emergency was outstanding." It has also been observed on the residence that, "her creativity with creating novel activities for the clients has created more calm and enjoyment on the unit, as well as more unity." One of her nominators also said that she "portrays the following values of supporting others and building respectful relationships. It is a pleasure to acknowledge April for her dedication and contribution to the clients and staff on Malone." Congratulations on your award, April!



April Haddad

September Employee of the Month

The Employee of the Month for September is Matt Wales, Firefighter from the Office of Protective Services at Sonoma. His nominators said, "Matt demonstrates professionalism during client and employee code and injury situations." "He interacts professionally with outside emergency personnel, ensuring proper and appropriate communication to the entire code team. Matt has gone above and beyond the expectations of ensuring client and employee safety and appropriate treatment in collaboration with the Emergency Team. He demonstrates the values of serving others and building respectful relationships through his caring and committed actions." Way to go, Matt!



Matt Wales

Kudos

- Kudos to Steve Jeffries, Shift Lead from Brent, for touring a group from North Bay Regional Center at the last minute. His hospitality demonstrated three of Sonoma's values: service to others, respectful communications, and effective leadership.
- Kudos to Art Herrera, Office Technician from the Mailroom, who was observed helping the motor pool with office moves. His willingness to help out and positive attitude demonstrated two of Sonoma's values: service to others and effective leadership.
- Kudos to Robin German, Office Technician from Sonoma Regional Project, for her hospitality to all those visiting the ARO (Advocacy, Rights, Opportunities) building. Her interactions with others demonstrates Sonoma's values of service to others and respectful communications.
- Kudos to Sonoma's landscape department for reducing water usage during the warm summer months. Their effort demonstrates Sonoma's value of responsible resource management.

New Hires

August:

Marilou Ancheta, Coordinator of Nursing Services
Carol Cole, Individual Program Coordinator
Julie Grieves, Clinical Psychology Intern
Andrew Scherbarth, Clinical Psychology Intern
Ronald VonGober, Peace Officer I

September:

Mary Antone, Program Director
Charles Enlow, Electrician I

A Note From the Editors

Dear Readers,

In our continuing efforts to reduce our carbon imprint and better manage resources, the *Eldridge Press* will reduce the frequency of distribution from six to four times per year. To that end, the current issue is the first quarterly newsletter issued in lieu of a bi-monthly distribution. The *Eldridge Press* will continue to provide high-quality reports on Sonoma Developmental Center events and activities as well as other areas of interest. Thank you for your continued support.

Community Happenings

Wellness Faire

Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) held its annual Wellness Faire, sponsored by Sonoma's Wellness Committee, on August 1, 2008.



Picking up information at the Wellness Faire

The Wellness Committee, which is comprised of Sonoma employees, seeks to provide reliable resources for those interested in products and services that contribute to a healthy lifestyle, as well as to improve their health, prevent disease, manage health problems, and improve quality of life.

The Wellness Faire spanned the late morning to afternoon hours and was held inside the

facility gymnasium and on the lawn outside.

The event featured live music and informational booths such as the Sonoma County Water Agency, Integrated Waste Management, the US Fish & Wildlife Federation, and other public entities. In addition, environmentally friendly vendor booths offered organic and natural dyed clothing; soaps, oils, and potions; vitamins and healthy food products; and natural household products, as well as massage therapy. Over forty vendors were present with live demonstrations, including free massages.

Many staff and clients visited the faire and enjoyed all the offerings.



Free treatment at the Wellness Faire

Carousel Dance

A dance was held at the Sonoma Developmental Center carousel on August 15, 2008. The night was warm, and riding the carousel provided participants with a gentle breeze. Although the carousel usually runs with typical merry-go-round music, at a Carousel Dance the music is pop, rock and roll, and other music suitable for dancing. The carousel is wheelchair accessible and for those who don't care for riding the carousel animals, there is plenty of regular seating. A refreshing punch was served to the attendees as they enjoyed the evening festivities.



At the Carousel Dance

Celebrate Sonoma

Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) celebrated their diversity at the annual "Celebrate Sonoma" event in early September. The all-day event is held to honor the heritage of all those that live and work at

Sonoma.

Entertainment included music and dance demonstrations by Village Rhythms, Rhythm of the Islands, and Women Can Drum.

Activities at Celebrate Sonoma included a variety of games including Exec-Opolo, an interactive board



Enjoying African drumming

game with interesting and fun facts about the Executive Team. Everyone was treated to a variety of refreshments, including fresh fruit, ice cream, and flavored shaved ice treats and snow cones. There were decorative flags scattered throughout the venue, representing the countries of the world, as well as world maps where one could indicate their birthplace.

According to the maps, Sonoma's diversity includes people from throughout the United States as well as other parts of the world, for example Belarus, Columbia, El Salvador, England, Figi, Finland, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines, Turkey, and Tonga.

This was another great event presented by Central Program Services and the many volunteers from other programs and departments throughout Sonoma.

Remembrance Day

The California Memorial Project held its Sixth Annual Remembrance Day Ceremony at Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) on Monday, September 15, 2007.

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

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



Games at Celebrate Sonoma

Community Happenings

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and Developmental Centers and State Hospitals throughout California.

Over 80 people, including members of the public and clients and staff of Sonoma, attended the Sonoma event where speakers included Jim Rogers, Executive Director; Sharon Schmidt of Protection and Advocacy, Inc.; Father Patrick Leslie; Claire Newman of Interlink Self-Help Center; and Gordon and Debbie, who are residents at Sonoma.



Sharon Schmidt talks with Gordon B. at the Remembrance Day ceremonies

Music Therapists Deirdre Egan, Samantha Montgomery, and Melissa Preston, played a selection of songs during the event; and the area was decorated with paper doves that were hand-made by Sonoma clients. At all events held statewide, a simultaneous moment of silence was observed at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Afterwards, guests shared remembrances while enjoying refreshments.

Relay for Life

by Rebecca Amacher, RN,

Assistant Coordinator of Nursing Services (ACNS)

Everyone has been touched by cancer, either personally or professionally. When Janet Hippe, Registered Nurse (RN)/Health Services Specialist (HSS) and a long time Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma) employee, saw an advertisement for the Relay for Life in Santa Rosa eight years ago, she wanted to participate to honor her sister who was diagnosed with breast cancer. Janet participated as an individual walker that year and soon was organizing a team to participate each year in the relay. In 2008, the RN Professional Practice Group (RNPPG) was asked to sponsor a team for the Relay. The chairpersons Debby Murray RN/HSS and Vicki Crowe RN of the RNPPG enthusiastically agreed! Janet Hippe and Becky Amacher RN/ACNS served as co-captains of the relay team and asked the Sonoma Executive Committee for their support. Sonoma supplied canopies, tables and chairs for the participants. The event took place September 7, 2008 at Maria Carrillo High School in Santa Rosa.

The Relay for Life is a 24-hour event where participants walk around a track, keeping at least one team member on the track the entire 24 hours. Most teams bring a tent and stay the night. The walk begins with a survivor

lap where cancer survivors make a triumphant walk around the track clad in survivor purple tee shirts while being cheered on by friends, family, and co-workers. This is truly a moving and emotional experience when you realize how hard everyone, survivors and caregivers, have had to work to overcome cancer. After the first lap, the relay teams begin to walk and explore the various tables with "stuff" to be given away or sold. The Sonoma RNPPG sold tee shirts with the logo "Someone Does Care", which was brainchild of Jazmin Liansing RN/HSS (also a cancer survivor). We had giveaways of breast cancer awareness bands, stress reliever squeeze toys, and pins. The CB Fleet Company donated action figures and scrub tops that were very popular and went fast.

As the day wound down, the truest sense of fellowship could be felt between people surviving cancer and the people who love them. Luminaries (decorated paper bags) were collected throughout the day and personalized with individuals' names. Each luminary contained a candle, which when lit, makes a glowing tribute of light. These luminaries lined both sides of the track. As the skies darkened, participants filled the bleachers to witness a photo show honoring and remembering people in our lives with cancer. After the photo show, all participants made one more lap in total silence. We came away from the event honored to be able to participate.

Our team would like to thank Sonoma for providing tables, canopies and chairs. Thanks to the RNPPG for sponsoring us. Thanks to everyone who donated; we have collected over \$1500 dollars for the American Cancer Society (this is not the final total). Thanks to all the Sonoma people who came out to walk in the 100+ degree heat. Sincere and heart felt thanks go to those individuals who spent the night in a tent after a hot and rigorous day. You are hardy souls!!

Next year! We'll be there, come join in.



Jazmin Liansing (left) and Jan Bowen, both Health Services Specialists (Registered Nurses) and cancer survivors, at the Relay for Life

[photo by Rebecca Amacher]

Note:

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

More Community Happenings...

Sonoma Developmental Center Plays for Championship in Annual Co-Ed Softball Tournament

by John Litzenberg, Physical Therapist

The 32ND annual co-ed softball tournament for California state employees took place September 6–7, 2008 in Visalia, just south of Fresno. A total of 18 teams took part in the tournament, which was played under extremely warm conditions, with temperatures well into the 90s. Of the 18 squads, nine were from the host facility, Porterville Developmental Center. Other facilities participating included Metro, Patton, Coalinga, and Napa State Hospitals; Yountville Veterans' Home, Lanterman Developmental Center, and Sonoma Developmental Center (Sonoma). In the long history of the state tournament, a team from Sonoma has won the championship just once—in 2005.

On Saturday, Sonoma played each of the four other teams in their bracket, setting up the seeding for the finals on Sunday. The Sonoma team went 4–0 on the first day of action, beating teams from Yountville, Porterville, and Patton by more than 10 runs in each of the four contests. Following Saturday's games, a Home Run derby was held, with three of the 14 participants representing the Sonoma team. Later that night a party/dance was held for all the teams, at the host hotel.

On Sunday, Sonoma was one of the top seeds, and

played in the double elimination "Winner's Bracket." After winning the first two games handily, a match was set-up with an old rival, the defending champions from Porterville: PDC 4. As the sole remaining undefeated teams, a win meant an automatic trip to the championship game(s). With the time-limited game going just six innings, Sonoma scored the game winner with two outs in the bottom of the sixth, beating PDC 4 by the score of 10–9.

PDC 4 then won their way back to the championship, and after a two-hour wait by the Sonoma team, the final games were held. (Being the host facility, the partisan crowd heavily favored, and cheered, the team from Porterville). As the top team, with a record of 7–0, Sonoma had to win one out of two games to win the tournament, or be beaten twice for PDC 4 to win. In the first game, a combination of tightness, fatigue, and nerves seemed to have gotten to the Sonoma squad, and PDC 4 won easily 13–5. In the second game, with the tournament

on the line, the team battled hard, giving everything it had left. In the seventh and final inning, Sonoma was down 8–5, and loaded the bases with no outs. Unfortunately, the team was unable to score after an out at home on a tag-up, and PDC 4 won the championship. Sonoma finished second overall, with a record of 7–2, and though weary and a little bummed by the end result, the team felt pretty good about a strong second-place finish.



Front row, L to R: Megan Patterson, Erin Weaver, Karen Hall, Julie Ziliotto, and Heidi Winslow
Back row, L to R: Travis Peterson, Justin Weaver, Tracey Duggar, Mike Hall, Nick Crews, John Litzenberg and Deets Winslow [photo by René Tierney]

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, December 15 is the deadline for the January–March issue).

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