

Setting Sails



A Quarterly Publication For Friends And Consumers of San Antonio Independent Living Services

Summer 2011

**Message from
SAILS' Executive Director:
Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.
A 21st Year Celebration for the ADA**



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke,
Executive Director of SAILS

On July 26, 1990 President George W. Bush signed into law the most comprehensive piece of legislation ever written for persons with disabilities-The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA acts as civil rights legislation for families with disabilities. We must not forget the original intent of ending unjust segregation and exclusion of persons with disabilities from our "mainstream" society.

Our gratitude goes out to the thousands of people who made up the 'disability rights movement' and whose efforts have helped to change the lives of thousands of persons with disabilities today. These historical "disability advocates" sought justice in our American courts and with Congress to ensure that people with disabilities would be included in all aspects of living. Many of these advocates told their own very compelling stories of discrimination to Congress during the ADA legislative process. They succeeded by way of their unwavering commitment to help people with disabilities receive the justice they deserved (Bush).



Unity Pride Stroll celebrating ADA

On Friday, July 29, 2011 San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) will host the 21st Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration. The celebration will start at about 8:30a.m.with several hundred excited supporters who will gather at San Antonio's Mercado for the Unity Pride Stroll and then over to 401 Villita for the day's events. Strollers will carry company banners along the march towards Villita where nearly 50 vendors will await their arrival. Many organizations such as our friends at AmeriGroup Corporation, Alamo Service Connection (ASC), the ARC, Deaf Interpreter Services, Gordon Hartman Family Foundation, Morgan's Wonderland, Haven for Hope, Pride and San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind will provide free resources for all.

The keynote speaker for this year's 21st ADA celebration is Jason Pipoly who will share his inspirational story with everyone. SAILS will also honor the selected Disability Organization of the Year and Public Servant of the Year. Many other individuals and organizations will be recognized too. SAILS staff encourages everyone to save the date for this wonderful community event. This is the largest ADA celebration in Texas! If anyone is interested in participating as a vendor please contact Gloria Banik at 210-281-1878 or gbanik@sailstx.org.

**Friday, July 29:
21st Annual ADA Celebration**



SAILS Consumer Success Stories

Joe Works As A Truck Driver Again

By Bruce Orey



Joe Camarillo

Joe Camarillo spoke with me, his concerns were about returning to work. He was primarily concerned about losing his social security disability benefits. His wife, who is also disabled was concerned about what might happen if Joe returned to work. I provided Joe with a clear explanation of the Ticket to Work program and assured

him that it applied to situations just like his. Joe now feels much more confident about asking his former boss for his previous job back. He was a driver for 18 years and always loved the job. Joe proudly informed me that one of his previous supervisors took a look back at his work record with the company and told him that he had not asked for time off since 1996 – a new record! Joe feels much better after receiving medical treatment for a heart condition. He is ready to get back into “trucking again.” He said, “even if I lose my disability benefits, I feel confident that I will be able to earn enough to pay my bills and cover the costs of living. After all, my disability check is not enough to do that.”

“I am thankful to Mr. Orey of San Antonio Independent Living Services for helping me understand how my working will effect my benefits with the work incentives that apply to me. I was stressful before by the financial pressure of having bills that I could not pay. Now, when I return to work, I feel that things will be much better!”

Paul Ybarra Works And Keeps Benefits

By Albert Pulido



Paul Ybarra

Paul L. Ybarra had been confused with information on how to keep Social Security Benefits if he decided to return to work. He met with me so I could provide the information he needed to assist him in his decision.

We spoke at length about his Social Security Disability Benefits and his Medicare premiums and how he could work and keep all or part of his benefits. We discussed the advantages and disadvantages of working full time and part time. He was worried that since he had not worked much since 2001, he could not get a job unless he was retrained. I explained that DARS would help with the retraining and SSA would continue to issue checks and Medicare cards.

At Refief Enterprises, he earned \$7.25 an hour and averaged 25 hours per week. He was concerned because his employer wanted him to work more hours and he was afraid he would lose his benefits. We discussed his case and determined that his Trial Work Period ended 01/31/2011 and his Extended Period of Eligibility started 02/01/2011 and would end 01/31/2014. For that period he could earn up to \$1,000.00 per month and still keep his SSA benefits!

Mr. Ybarra was very pleased to learn he could earn up to \$1,768 disposable income, combining both SSA benefits and maximum wages, and still keep his Medicare benefits. He was available to work up to 34-35 hours per week and be even more productive worker for his employer.

Mr. Ybarra's new goal is to be a full time worker and eventually be able to get off of Social Security benefits but retain Medicare benefits for a few more years.

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Support Group Is For Kathryn Alvarez

by Sandie Flanagan



Kathryn Alvarez

Kathryn started coming to SAILS in 2005. She was just getting over the death of both her parents. They passed away within two weeks of each other. Kathryn had trouble with money management and living in her house alone. She also had little self-esteem.

When she came to SAILS, she met with me about locating employment. So, we completed the intake process and she asked about joining the SAILS support group. After that, Kathryn started regularly attending support group meetings, as well as working with SAILS staff on her goals of budgeting and money management. She was also referred to the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Kathryn also shared that she had a lot of trouble getting her doctor to listen to her concerns about her medical exams. With SAILS help she was able to explain to the doctor about the Hoyer Lift and how the device will lift her up easily on the examining table so the medical staff will not have to manually lift her.

Kathryn is now socially active as a volunteer for SAILS and active member of our Support Group. She beams, "SAILS has been a good support to me. The Support Group helps keep me focused. Staff help me in my quest of independent living." Kathryn is learning to be more independent as she lives on her own and is employed two days a week. Go Kathryn!

Young Chong Is Always Positive

by Gloria Aguirre



Young Chong

Many people are being affected by the current economic situation. Most of SAILS consumers live on a fixed income. Some of them feel depressed and helpless.

However, there is a woman that I admire for never giving up and always looking for positive answers! Ms. Young Chong has severe physical disabilities and chronic pain but she always searches for solutions to problems.

She came to SAILS looking for utility assistance. I provided her with information of the Bexar County Utility Assistance Program and assisted her in completing the application. Ms. Young Chong fully understood that the approval of her application would be decided by Bexar County. SAILS is only advocating for her on her behalf.

Ms. Chong was not discouraged with this explanation and said "Gloria what happens I will accept it", smiled and remained positive. She said if she was not given the assistance, she will find another way.

I am happy to report that Ms. Chong's application was approved! Ms. Chong's positive attitude itself is a tremendously helpful part of her independent living.



SAILS Calendar of Events April, May and June

APRIL

- 1 Support Group Workshop—Assistive Technology
Lighthouse - 1:00 pm
- 2 Recreation & Support Resource Fair
Morgan's Wonderland - 10:00 am
- 4 Texas Statewide IL Conference-Austin, TX
Medicaid Buy In Conference-South Padre Island
- 8 ADA Meeting
Methodist Mission Home - 10:00 am
- 10 SAILS Picnic
Mission County Park - 10:00 am
- 13 WISE event - TX Workforce—Uvalde, TX
Senior Fiesta-Wonderland of Americas Mall-9:00 am
Town Hall Meeting-SAC-6:00 pm
- 16 King William Fair
SAILS Closed
- 21 Alamo Area Disability Alliance Spring Fair
SA Central Public Library - 9:30 am
AccessAbility Fest Meeting - Texas Public Radio - 4:30 pm
- 22 SAILS Closed
- 27 GAP Bus Pass Distribution
- 28 GAP Workshops - American GI Forum
- 29 CPR Staff Training - SAILS Closed

MAY

- 1 Disability Coalition Meeting - Victoria, TX
- 4 2nd City Wide Public Hearing
- 6 Support Group Meeting
- 7 SAILS "RAV4" at Walgreens 281 and Evans
- 9 SAILS Planning Committee Meeting at Egg and I
- 11 Southside Senior Fair
- 14 COSTCO Children's Miracle Network - Sonterra
SAILS "RAV4" at Boston's Gourmet Pizza Restaurant 1604 and 281
- 15 Silver Solutions Fair - TRI Point -11:00 am
- 17 Emergency Management Meeting - Brooke City Base
- 18 SAILS Workshop - Housing - Safety in Your Home -1:00 pm
- 19 WISE meeting - Eagle Pass, TX
- 21-22 SAILS Supports Anglers on Wheels - Port Aransas
- 23-24 TACIL meeting - Dallas, TX
- 26 GAP Workshop - American GI Forum
- 27 ADA Meeting - DARS Office - 10303 Nacogdoches - 10:00 am
- 30 Memorial Day - SAILS closed
- 31 GAP Bus Pass Distribution

JUNE

- 3 Support Group Meeting - Workshop Consumer
Directed Services - Lighthouse
- 12-15 Texas Conference on Aging-Sheraton Gunter Hotel



Support Group Is Very Beneficial

by Sandie Flanagan



Participants enjoy support group meetings

All four SAILS support groups for independent living are growing tremendously. The Life Skills group meets at SAILS on the 4th Thursdays from 1 to 3pm. The volunteer facilitator is Quinto Sanchez. He also facilitates the Young People's group that meets at the Lighthouse for the Blind on the first Friday from 1 to 3pm. Members share discussions on topics pertaining to their goals. It is also a place for group members to share common struggles and successes .

The family members and the people with disabilities groups meet at the Lighthouse Senior Center on the first Fridays from 1 to 3pm. At their March 4, 2011 meeting a guest speaker Ms. Luz Mirra, from the Food Bank, give a presentation on Heart Healthy Eating. She distributed free information handouts, and each participant received a recipe and a sample of a heart healthy plate called Couscous Salad with dried cranberries. After her presentation the two groups had their separate monthly meetings. They are anxiously looking forward to the next meeting.

LaKecia Massey Is Productive Again

by Mary Blake



LaKecia Massey

I recently received a call from Lakecia Massey. She was excited because she just discovered that she was approved for SSI benefits "Now, I can be a successful woman", she exclaimed with a smile in her voice.

LaKecia Massey is presently homeless and a member of Haven for Hope, a transitional residence in San Antonio. She is also a consumer in and said, "GAP (Gateway to Abilities Program) has been the best program of my Life", she declared.

LaKecia continued to give me the reasons for her praise. She said that the Case management services, a major component of GAP, have given her new hope. "Most important, my case manager has constantly encouraged me to stay sober after many months of rehabilitation and at last, I can have my own apartment and begin college". She also had kind words for the GAP classes and she shared "they have given me the information needed to receive other services". The monthly bus passes have allowed her to travel around the city while the vouchers have provided necessary non food items.

Recently, LaKecia decided to move to Victoria to be with her family. She promised to work on her vocational goals to become a useful and productive citizen and achieve further success in meeting her goals!



SAILS Community Events

SAILS Staff Host Annual Fiesta Picnic: Southside Fun!

By Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) staff and volunteers worked very hard to host yet another successful Fiesta Picnic at Southside's Mission County Park. First of all, SAILS is extremely thankful to our sponsors such as AmeriGroup Corporation, Pride, and Cano & Co. who helped to defray costs for the event. About twenty-five vendors such as Costco, BBVA Compass Bank, San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, HomeTown Heroes, Dreams Fulfilled Through Music and many more set up to provide their community information and resources for everyone.

The day started off with SAILS staff and Sandie's volunteers doing a fine job setting up the kitchen. Gloria Banik's son, Troy ensured that all guests received a delicious plate of BBQ with ample "fixins." The food was so good that we ran completely out!

Volunteers also worked the Moonbounce, face-painting table, bean-bag toss and fishing pond booths. The children had a great time! Of course, the "big kids" had a wonderful time too. So many people enjoyed this year's Silent Auction. In the end, the picnic wrapped up with three entertainment groups: Le Paul, The Harris Power Trio, featuring Mia, and Dreams Fulfilled Through Music. What a way to wrap up our "Southside fun!"



BBVA Compass Bank representatives



Mia and Harris power Trio Band

Morgan's Wonderland Rally March 1st, 2011

SAILS staff persons, Gloria Aguirre and Bruce A. Orey, attended a gathering of more than 1,000 people who met at Morgan's Wonderland to rally against proposed cuts to services for those with intellectual developmental disabilities. Speakers at the rally included Eva Longoria, Gordon Hartman, and San Antonio city councilman John Chapman. Many attendees in the crowd were persons with disabilities along with their caregivers and families. After the rally four buses carried participants to Austin, where they were to spend an afternoon rallying on the State Capitol steps. Many of the attendees planned on meeting with legislators to emphasize their opposition to the State cuts.



Crowd at the Morgan's Wonderland rally

SAILS Community Outreach



Costco Representatives meet the public



Pride Health Care



Buster of VIA enjoys the picnic scenes



Velme Jo Greene and Linda Knolton, Mary Kay Ladies



Members of Dreams Fulfilled Through Music



Volunteers from Target

San Antonio Independent Living Services
1028 S. Alamo Street
San Antonio, TX 78210



OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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