

Setting Sails



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

Summer 2010

Message from SAILS' Executive Director: Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

A 20th Year Celebration for the ADA

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 should be given 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).

On Friday, July 30, 2010, San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) invites San Antonio citizens to attend our 20th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) celebration. This milestone celebration starts about 8:00a.m. with several hundred excited supporters who will gather at San Antonio's Mercado for the Unity Pride Stroll over to 401 Villita for the day's events. Employees and volunteers from various organizations will carry company banners along the march towards Villita where nearly 50 vendors where they will wait for the guests to arrive. Many organizations such as our friends at AmeriGroup Corporation, Alamo Service Connection (ASC), Gordon Hartman Family Foundation, Superior Healthcare, Molina Healthcare, Pressing On, and San

Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind will provide free information and resources.

SAILS is proud to announce our keynote speakers for this year's ADA-The Gridiron Heroes! (see special insert) Jack Mintor, Executive Director is scheduled to receive a very special recognition for Disability Organization of the Year. SAILS will also be honoring the Public Servant of the Year and many more recipients who help people and their families with disabilities live more independently. Please join us on this very special day for a Unity Pride Stroll over to Villita Hall for free fun, food, entertainment and recognition to those who deserve our thanks.

Contact Gloria Banik at 210-281-1878, extension 24 if you would like to be a vendor or bring your banner.

Fort Sam Houston Honor Guards leading the stroll
in the ADA Celebration



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SAILS Consumer Success Stories

Isaac Ortiz' Success in Living Independently

by Sandie Flanagan

Isaac Ortiz became a SAILS consumer in August, 2009. He had several issues including health problems. His most important concern was to continue to live in the community and remain independent. He did not want to be forced back in a nursing home or become homeless. SAILS directed Isaac towards the steps for housing and transportation. SAILS also helped him obtain financial assistance to insure that he would not get evicted for non-payment of rent prior to his obtaining his Section 8 active voucher.

Since Isaac's disabilities have become more severe, SAILS is currently assisting him to locate an accessible apartment with grab bars.

Isaac said, "SAILS has taken a lot of pressure off me. SAILS has helped me get transportation services, legal services, and teaches techniques on how to be my own advocate. SAILS has explained my rights as a person with a disability. SAILS staff is fantastic."



Isaac Ortiz



Lydia Anderson

Success Story: Lydia Anderson

by Bruce A. Orey

"When I became disabled by arthritis, I had been a nurse for fifteen years. When my husband became disabled and lost his job, our lives were turned upside down. Now that I am back at work, I am helping to turn things around again," said Lydia Anderson. "I successfully completed the Texas Board of Nursing refresher course, completed a two week preceptorship in trauma, and found a job doing nursing that accommodates the limitations of my arthritis. I managed to find the perfect job. It is with a wellness company, and I am helping people put together plans so that they can avoid sickness and injury and recover. I am doing very well now."

"Mr. Orey not only explained the procedures and how the Ticket to Work program operates, but gave me encouragement. Beyond that, the thing that stood out for me was his sincerity. I just knew that when I got the job, I wanted to call him and let him know it. And I knew that he would greet the news I gave him with enthusiasm. And I was not disappointed." I would like to provide my special thanks to SAILS and Bruce Orey.



Mr. David Sosa of AmericaGroup presenting \$5,000 award

AmericaGroup Community Care Awards \$5,000 to SAILS

Executive Director Kitty Brietzke said, "SAILS graciously accepts this generous contribution of \$5,000 to help us provide our consumers who have disabilities with much-needed medical, dental and other emergency needs."

SAILS received the \$5,000 from AmeriGroup representatives at the Sponsor Appreciation Breakfast on February 26th.

Dr. Ann Meyers from Haven for Hope helps SAILS make announcement at SAILS sponsor breakfast.

The Rain Stops for Annual SAILS Fiesta Picnic

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

It was meant to be-perfect weather for a perfect picnic! I was beginning to wonder about our Annual Picnic Fundraiser with all the rain we have been deluged with lately. However, our hopes and prayers were answered. The rain stopped Sunday, April 18, 2010 so SAILS staff and volunteers could host a perfect day of BBQ and fun for all! Children loved the fishing game and the big Moonbounce! The adults scouted out the auction items. Many went home with a real deal.

SAILS entertainment was donated again by the musicians from Dreams Fulfilled Through Music and The Harris Power Trio, featuring Mia Romero. Guests dined on generous helpings of delicious BBQ cooked by Xavier and Elaine Villarreal and smoked sausage prepared by YRC volunteers, Andy Reusewald, Donald "Duckie" Cloman and Freddie Brietzke, Jr. again this year. Troy Banik coordinated the kitchen volunteers from Target so things would roll smoothly when everyone was ready to eat.

Our special thanks, of course, goes to our friends of SAILS who supported this picnic: AmeriGroup Community Care, David Massey's Allstate, Al Cano, Stephen Rohrbough, Pure Party Ice, Republic Plastics, Costco, CJ at United San Antonio FCU, all our vendors and my entire staff!
Children enjoy fishing game (left) and The Harris Trio Band and Mia provided entertainment at the picnic





Calendar Dates for April, May and June

APRIL

- 1 VITA
- 2 SAILS closed
- 5 VITA
- 8 VITA
GAP participants Fiesta Party
Board meeting
- 9 ADA meeting, Deaf Interpreter Services office
Support Groups attend Lincoln Center Dance
VITA
- 10 New Frontier Charter School presentation
Morgan's Wonderland Grand Opening
- 13 VITA
- 15 VITA
Transition Workshop at SAILS 1 pm to 3 pm
- 16 SAILS closed for SAILS staff training
- 18 SAILS PICNIC at Mission County Park
- 19 Disability Awareness Week
- 21 Prosumer Presentation
Senior Fiesta Presentation
- 22 Life Skills Support Group
GAP Workshop
- 23 SAILS Closed
Kinetic Kids at Morgan's Wonderland
- 24 King William Fair—SAILS booth (Jerk Burgers)
- 26 Day of Hiring for People w/Disabilities,
Federal hiring
www.USAJOB.S.gov/DisabilityHiringEvent.asp

MAY - Older Americans Month

- 7 Support Groups
Consumer Advisory Committee Meeting
- 12 DARS West Field Office presentation
- 13 GAP workshop
- 14 Special Breakfast for SAILS Sponsors
Announcement: Flame the Band
- 15 Costco presentation at 1604 Location
15 & 16 Anglers On Wheels—Port Aransas
- 20 Internet Workshop
- 21 Breakfast for Sponsors
- 27 GAP Workshop
Life Skills Support Group

31 SAILS Closed

JUNE

- 4 Support Groups/CAC
- 5 Mosaic Walk
- 10 GAP Workshop
- 10, 11 State Independent Living Council Meeting,
Austin
- 12 2010 Fiesta Texas Deaf Awareness Day
- 17 Transportation Workshop
- 22 WISE meeting—Kerrville
- 24 Life Skills Support Group/GAP workshop



Dr. Brietzke, Vice President of the Community Action Advisory Board and fellow members, is featured receiving a special proclamation from Commisioner's Court

**20th ADA Anniversary
Celebration Friday July 30, 2010**

Serving Our Communities

Martha and Frank Appreciate the Gateway to Abilities Program

by Mary Blake

Martha Scott and Frank Almanza have many nice words to say about the Gateway to Abilities Program (GAP). GAP is a basic financial assistance program for persons with disabilities, who are unable to work, have no income and waiting for SSI or other benefits. Martha and Frank participate in the program and receive much needed benefits.

During a recent interview they made many favorable comments. "We have been helped in so many ways. SAILS helped us to obtain housing and GAP has been assisting us with utilities payment. Now we have a home and can concentrate on vocational training and future employment". Frank said that, although they are waiting for SSI, they want to move beyond these benefits as soon as possible.

Martha expressed her thanks for the vouchers for hygiene products and cleaning supplies. "Now we can keep our home clean and we feel good about ourselves". Frank added: "the bus passes help us to keep our appointments and live independently. We don't have to depend on others for transportation".

Both consumers agreed that the classes, an integral part of GAP provided information "we never knew before". "We are now able to access agencies and programs we never thought existed".



Martha and Frank

Connecting Agencies to Consumers in Need!

by Gloria Aguirre

Early one morning I received a call from a doctor of a local hospital asking if I knew of any services that were available to assist a young family. The father had recently incurred a debilitating disability that prohibited him from working as a truck driver. Another road block the family was facing was the father's English was limited. Mrs. Chacon had been a "stay at home" mother with two young children and Mr. Chacon was the primary family provider. As Mr. Chacon's illness got worse his wife became their advocate as well as the provider for the family.

After meeting with the family and understanding the situation, I contacted one of our partners. SAILS currently works with Bexar County in a program to assist consumers with disabilities. If a consumer meets the required criteria and the application is approved; the consumer can be eligible to get assistance for their electric bill once a year. The Chacon's were very happy and grateful for the quick assistance they received. They said, "we cannot thank SAILS enough!"

I also asked Mrs. Chacon if the family was in need of any other services as I knew they were going through a tough situation. She shyly replied that the food situation was one of their main concerns, especially, because of their children. So, I referred her to the Food Bank program.

The Chacon family is doing well today and Mr. Chacon is taking it one day at a time. This is what my job is all about at SAILS- connecting people in need to the resources the need!



Chacon family

Services and Benefits for Consumers



SAILS Support Group Meetings

by Gloria Aguirre

I hope everyone is getting adjusted to the recent time change. I know that SAILS support groups have! The Support groups are doing well and still standing strong in our monthly meetings. General Support Group-Young People with Disabilities Support Group, as well as, Family Members and Caregivers Support Groups, meet on the 1st Friday of each month at San Antonio Parks and Recreation Center located at Lincoln TR Community Center, 2915 E. Commerce St., San Antonio, Texas 78203. Support groups have been busy with different activities and various presentations. For the month of March, the group had a speaker come from OASIS to make a presentation on the different services that are provided for senior citizens in the San Antonio Area.

Life Skills Support Group meets on the 4th Thursday of every month at SAILS . The Life Skills group have been “busy bees” during Fiesta.

If this is something that peaks your interest and you would like to join one of the groups, please contact us today at (210)-281-1878 and ask to speak to Sandie Flanagan or Gloria Aguirre.



Support Group meeting

VITA "Super Saturday" Event

by Gloria Banik

SAILS for many years has served as an “totally accessible” site for the City of San Antonio VITA program. SAILS schedules appointments for persons seeking service so that person who are wheelchair users can plan on using VIA Trans and not have to wait and hopefully be finished before VIA arrives to provide transportation home. Interpreters for persons who are hearing impaired, deaf and deaf/blind and readers for visually impaired are provided when a person makes an appointment.

SAILS, the City of San Antonio’s Community Action Advisory Board, other community agencies and VITA offered tax preparation services, community information, a vaccination clinic and free lunch at the “Super Saturday” event. Super Saturday was held at the Claude Black Center on Saturday, February 20th.

Dr. Kitty Brietzke, SAILS’ Executive Director, also serves as a CAAB member was pleased with the number of services provided on Super Saturday.



VITA Super Saturday at Claude Black Community Center

SAILS Community Activities



SAILS Hosting a Sponsor Breakfast



Dr. Ann H. Meyers of H4H at the March 2010 sponsor breakfast hosted by SAILS



AmericaGroup Community Care with SAILS Board Members



SAILS Community Sponsors

Boston's Gourmet Pizza Supports SAILS In Time of Need

by Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D.

Susan Stoval (Susan) is the owner of Boston's Gourmet Pizza. She is committed to maintaining a diverse and customer-service oriented team of employees. SAILS has been very fortunate to be able to have a couple of fundraisers at Boston's in the past, but Susan really stepped up to help us out when she learned SAILS had a series of unfortunate events causing unplanned losses to our revenues.

On Thursday, March 24, 2010, through the generosity of Susan from Boston's Gourmet Pizza and our own San Antonio Rampage hockey team, SAILS was once again the recipient of much needed funds. Four Rampage team members volunteered to wait on the guests who dined for dinner. Susan Stoval, stated, "all the tips the hockey players receive will be provided to SAILS along with my donation of 10% of the proceeds Boston's receives during the event."

It is not everyday that a small nonprofit such as SAILS meets a dedicated and caring entrepreneur like Susan Stoval who "thinks out of the box" when it comes to helping out. Our special thanks goes out to her and certainly to the four wonderful and talented Rampage Hockey Players-doubling as waiters that day!



Rampage Hockey Team Players, Dr. K. Brietzke, Executive Director of SAILS (center), Ms. Susan Stoval (third from right), owner of Boston's Gourmet Restaurant, at a fundraiser event

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OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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