



# TriLine

A Publication of Tri-Counties Regional Center | Winter 2010

## Words from a Parent Advocate

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*Gerri Lynn & Mary*

Gerri Lynn Ayala was born 34 years ago. At three pounds, she had a short stay at the hospital. When she was released from intensive care, hospital staff offered "why don't you just leave her here with us. We will take good care of her, we can learn from her." When her mother Mary hesitated they continued "She is never going to talk, she is never going to sing to you and she will never laugh. She may even be blind." With a curt "No, thank you," Mary took her little girl home.

Gerri Lynn speaks, laughs and sings. . .and bowls. She loves to talk on her speaker phone. Spend five minutes with her and you are sure to hear laughter, even more so if a sibling is visiting. Gerri recently sang "You Light up My Life" at a wedding. She enjoys bowling regularly with her league and has placed first in the Special Olympics. Gerri is a lively and cherished member of her family. Her sister Tricia wrote a story about Gerri and the duo were selected as one of four poster children on the State of California employees' United Way campaign. *continued on pg 10*

**Vision:** Persons with developmental disabilities live fully and safely as active and independent members of their community.

**Mission:** TCRC provides person and family centered planning, services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize opportunities and choices for living, working, learning and recreating in the community.



## From the Executive Director

by Omar Noorzad, Ph.D.

year in June, 2011, we are not certain that they will. And, mid-year cuts may become an unpleasant reality as the state contends with another multi-billion dollar deficit.

The historic delay in the budget also created another cash flow crisis and sent many schools, cities, counties, regional centers and other organizations dependent on state funding scrambling to pay their bills. In the interim, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) was able to access certain funds such as the Medi-Cal Interim Payment Fund to make some partial payments to regional centers. This, in addition to accessing a line of credit approved through Union Bank, allowed TCRC to continue most business as usual, including paying TCRC service providers, staff and other bills until the end of October, 2010. Interest costs incurred for using lines of credit are not reimbursed. Our regional center incurred a total of \$79,068 in interest fees. As a system, regional centers incurred a total of \$1,064,433 interest costs in order to keep their doors open and services uninterrupted.

Most regional centers must now also manage a second level of cuts to the POS budget based on a new Allocation Methodology that DDS has decided to utilize. The new methodology is based on funding a regional center relative to the statewide average per capita cost versus the historic costs at each regional center. Any regional center with a per capita cost above the average statewide per capita cost had their first POS allocation pro-rated anywhere from 90%-100% of what each regional center projected would be needed for the regional center to meet its POS financial obligations for the fiscal year. Expenditures for residential costs will be exempted from this new allocation methodology. As a result of this new approach, the Association of Regional Centers' (ARCA) analysis shows that collectively the 21 regional centers may be receiving approximately \$88.5 million less in POS funding than under the previous allocation methodology based

on historical costs. TCRC is slated to receive approximately \$8-\$10 million less in funding. TCRC has requested technical assistance from DDS to determine where and how to make these additional reductions.

Although the budget news is consistently troubling, we stay true to our mission. TCRC staff have pursued our strategic performance goals, ensured that we met performance contract goals and made substantial progress in the expansion of our capacity for person centered practices. Additionally, we fully implemented Trailer Bill Language of July 2009, creating POS savings of approximately \$5 million. We have never strayed from our focus on quality – this year we administered our twelfth annual Services and Supports Satisfaction Survey, as well as a second survey regarding satisfaction with Autism services.

I'm very pleased that the generous grant from the Weingart Foundation three years ago has resulted in the advancement of Person Centered Practices – including the third California Gathering that occurred in Buellton this past October. Over one hundred stakeholders came together to discuss person centered practices. The enthusiasm around this initiative and the benefit to persons served, their families and our service providers offers welcome relief from worries about fiscal issues – we can ensure increased quality of life through these practices in a way that budget reductions cannot affect.

Enjoy reading about the California Gathering, Alpha Resource Center's new orchard, recent research about the benefits of seeking commonalities among developmental disorders, and stories about parent advocates. I look forward to celebrating the New Year with you in solidarity to continue our efforts to sustain funding for persons with developmental disabilities under the promise of California's Lanterman Developmental Services Act.

## Whistleblower Policies - How to Report Improper Activity

Both Tri-Counties Association for Developmental Disabilities (TCADD) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) have "whistleblower" policies. These policies ensure that violations of laws or regulations, fraud, misuse of government property and other serious illegal or unethical concerns can be reported without fear of retaliation. Review TCADD's policy online at [www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org) and click on the "Complaints & Concerns" link on the home page. The DDS policy is posted at [www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov).

## TCRC Hosts 2010 California Gathering for Person Centered Practices



The third annual California Gathering for Person Centered Practices was held on October 13 and 14 2010 in Buellton and attended by people representing regional centers, service providers and individuals and families who receive services. The California Gathering provides an opportunity for people who have been trained in person centered practices to come together to learn how to work in partnership to apply ideas and concepts learned through training.



The focus of the California Gathering, an event sanctioned by the international Learning Community for Person Centered Practices, is to share information and learning about how person centered thinking can help to gather meaningful information and deliver good planning and support for someone who has a developmental disability. Ultimately,

person centered practices help the person retain more control of their planning, their supports and their life.

Break out sessions and informal learning marketplace conversations touched on a variety of topics including a person centered approach to:

- School reviews
- Healthcare
- End of life decisions
- Supervision
- Balancing perspectives on risk
- Organizational change
- Supporting intimate relationships
- Planning from the family's perspective

Participants were exposed to new ideas and tools and gained new partnerships for continuing this work. One participant commented, "I walked away from this Gathering with so many new ideas and new enthusiasm to implement them in my work!"

The California Gathering was funded by a grant from the Weingart Foundation and implemented by a partnership of Tri-Counties Regional Center, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center, PathPoint, Genesis Developmental Services, People Creating Success, Inc., and Channel Islands Social Services. Check the TCRC web site for information about Person Centered Thinking training in your community.

[www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org)

## Announcing New Features on the TCRC Website

Visit our website for an enhanced user experience now and in the months ahead. A searchable directory of TCRC service providers is currently available. New content is being developed in the topics of Healthcare, Family Services and Autism. The site includes an automatic translation feature as well as the capacity to rate and comment on articles.

[www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org)

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### Recurring Topics

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## Tis the Season - Some Tips on Volunteering

With reduced funding to social services and fewer people capable of making donations, nonprofit agencies are struggling. If your budget is strapped—but you still want to help—don't forget the gift of donating your time. Charity Navigator, an independent charity evaluator, has information about giving of your time and talents, including these guidelines for volunteering: Identify charities that match your charitable interests, examine their financial health, evaluate their programs, quantify and qualify what you can offer, make a commitment. Search for local charities at [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org). Happy Helping!

## Community Fruit

### Alpha Resource Center Wins National Online Orchard Contest

After a dedicated campaign in which participants from around the world voted daily for two months, Alpha Resource Center won an orchard of 102 fruit trees to be planted at their Cathedral Oaks campus.

Dreyer's Fruit Corporation and the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation collaborated in the Communities Take Root program, which for 2010 will plant 25 orchards across the US. Alpha ultimately ranked #4

in the nation, in many cases competing against entire cities.

Larry Saltzman, founder of the Santa Barbara Permaculture Guild, directed Alpha to the online competition. "The application was quite extensive and detailed," said Cory Woodruff, Alpha's Director of Development and Finance. "Larry had the knowledge and was instrumental in answering many of the specific questions. Without him, I don't know if I would have been able to complete it."



*Young trees find a home*



*Carl Nolt helps prep the ground*



*A new tree is ready to plant*

The County of Santa Barbara inadvertently aided the group's eligibility. A few years ago they extended the long-term lease for Alpha's location, which qualified Alpha for the contest, as the trees must be kept in perpetuity. But it was Alpha's broad database of supporters that publicized (and won) the contest. Responses were received from as far as Switzerland, where connections of community members were voting daily. Alpha's Facebook announcements were well shared for an effective viral social media campaign. Local TV station KEYT ran two short pieces about the contest, and several local newspapers mentioned the effort as well.

Ground was broken on Saturday, June 12, 2010 and Alpha's excited volunteers and staff were there, shovels in hand. The strong community that supported the project and won the contest was also



*Rico Montenegro & Kimberly Olson, Executive Director of Alpha Resource Center, survey the trees*

represented, and everyone who came got Dreyer's frozen fruit bars.

Rico Montenegro, the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation's arborist, oversaw the planting. "It was a great event and a great diverse group, of all ages and abilities. These things don't happen by themselves. It's this community that made it happen."

Eric and Ilene Hancey, a local Santa Barbara family who participate in Alpha's Family First program, were avid supporters during the two-month voting period. Eric echoed the sentiments of many of Alpha's online voters, "I love the concept of supporting local produce, especially when excess can be donated to organizations providing food for the hungry in Santa Barbara. I also love any program that benefits our community of adults with special needs."

The incredible outpouring of community support moved Kim Olson, Executive Director at Alpha Resource Center. "What was so amazing was how our inner circle rippled out and expanded during this period. We received so many congratulations from folks we didn't know were voting, the Coastal Quilters Guild, Santa Barbara Food not Lawns, ARC of California,



*Robby Moore unloads the soil*

and many others. They were contacted by people who know Alpha, or through the media who spread the word. We are so thankful for our tight knit community who promoted Alpha throughout the US, and look forward to sharing further news and the bounty of our crops!"

Volunteer coordinator Marisa Bourke added, "The excitement generated as a result of the planting has been great fun here on our campus. We've also been able to make connections with other organizations growing and providing food so that we'll be ready to share the bounty with the community. Many people who had only peripheral knowledge of Alpha and our programs were able to 'get their hands dirty' in a very literal way, and expand their knowledge of Alpha's programs."

"The orchard increases the community's participation with us," Marisa continued, "enhancing awareness of the abilities of our folks, and appreciation for their work ethic, joy, and contribution. Many we serve want employment. This orchard provides an additional program where we can consistently employ our own participants." Alpha Resource Center of Santa Barbara

is committed to empowering individuals with developmental disabilities, supporting families, and fostering a community that values the contribution of all people. Alpha has an organic vegetable garden that provides fresh produce for over thirty lunches served daily, including for some participants their only access to fruits and vegetables. Their participants provide over 100 hours of volunteer service every month in Santa Barbara.

The Fruit Tree Planting Foundation (FTPF) is an award-winning international nonprofit charity dedicated to planting fruitful trees and plants to alleviate world hunger, combat global warming, strengthen communities, and improve the surrounding air, soil, and water. Their programs strategically donate orchards where the harvest will best serve communities for generations.

<http://www.communitiestakeroot.com/Bring another Fruit Tree Orchard! The CommunitiesTakeRoot.com program donates all plant materials, helps install the orchard, and trains caretakers through free workshops. FTPF is accepting the first 125 qualified applications for the next round of the program. Download an application at www.ftpf.org.>

## National Yes I Can! Award

won by Arroyo Grande student James Neal

The Yes I Can! Awards were established by the national Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), to honor children and youth with disabilities who have excelled. Thousands of children and youth have been recognized since the program's inception in 1982. Each year, CEC selects approximately 27 winners for their outstanding achievements in one of nine categories: Academics, Arts, Athletics, Community Service, Employment, Extracurricular Activities, Independent Living Skills, Self-Advocacy, and Technology.

"I was really excited to win that award," James commented. "I still have it: the trophy's right in the living room. I'm really proud of myself. It took hard work and courage to get that."



James displays award

This year, 19-year-old James Neal received this prestigious award for academic progress, after his Arroyo Grande High School teacher, Brittney Keller, nominated him. James had made great strides academically. Though he has autism and an emotional disturbance, he blossomed in the inclusive education program at Arroyo Grande High School, and maintained a "B" average. James passed the California High School Exit Exam, and completed the 20 hours of community service required to graduate.

James and his family were flown to Nashville, Tennessee to receive the award. "I was really excited when I got there. There was a little buffet the day after, and I had two dishes; they were really delicious. It was awesome food. My family was all there."

James received his High School diploma on June 10th, 2010. Now he works at Achievement House on the Pismo Crew, cleaning up around Pismo Beach. "It's a never-ending battle," he said, still proud, "there's always something to clean up."

*The "Yes I Can" award meant a great deal to me, because it reminds me of all goals I've accomplished to get this award. The goals were to get my schoolwork done, bring my grades up and work hard at it. I also had a fun time in Nashville receiving it.*

*My teacher Mrs. Keller and her two aids, Mrs. Summer and Trina, helped me with some of my schoolwork. They supported me and helped me to get in to five mainstream classes and one special education class. Mrs. Keller nominated me. In the beginning she tutored me, after I got kicked out of Mipomo High School for inappropriate behaviors. She believed that I had so much more potential, and helped me pass the California High School Exit Exam. This year I had a hard time passing it, so Mrs. Keller worked with me, and I finally passed it after five times!*

*She believed in me. Mrs. Summer and Trina also helped with my schoolwork. My mom never stopped believing in me my whole life, also, and I appreciate that. The five mainstream classes that I have are Skills for Success, Ceramics, Social Studies Concepts and Vocational Exploration Concepts. When I was holding the statue I felt honored.*

*My Dad has provided me with a good home, taught me how to use the computer, and encouraged me to do my homework. My mom has always believed in me and has never stopped! She's been very involved in my life, and is my biggest fan. Thank you for considering my story, and I hope it helps others.*

*James Neal*

## Calendar of Events

### ALPHA RESOURCE CENTER - FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

email: [info@alphasb.org](mailto:info@alphasb.org) / [www.alphasb.org](http://www.alphasb.org)

Santa Maria Office 805.347.2775	Santa Barbara Office 877.414.6227 805.683.2145
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Alpha Resource Center offers a wide variety of services and supports to encompass the needs of individuals with disabilities of all ages and at all stages of life.

**Children & Family Services** ~ Family First assists parents of children with special needs to gain the knowledge and skills to enable their children to be all they can be. Parent-to-parent and family support, parent-professional collaboration, resource meetings and workshops, information & referral, transition, future planning, and much more!

**Resource Libraries** ~ offer over 2000 titles on developmental and other disabilities. Located at Tri-Counties Regional Center offices in Santa Maria and Santa Barbara. Mobile library services are available. Call for hours or specialized assistance.

**Katie's FUNd™** ~ provides social and recreational opportunities for teens and young adults with developmental disabilities. Contact: Amy Buesker at 683-2145 x127 or [abuesker@alphasb.org](mailto:abuesker@alphasb.org).

**Alpha Adult Services** ~ provides a broad spectrum of services for adults with developmental disabilities. Each participant assists in the development of individualized services tailored to achieve his or her personal goals. 805.964.3547

### CLUB DIVERSITY

First Friday of each month, 7pm-10pm - Jodi House, 625 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara. All ages welcomed in this alcohol-free, inclusive event. Club Diversity is about meeting new friends, having fun and working together to eliminate barriers between able bodied individuals and those with disabilities. \$3 cover, \$1 refreshments. DJ & Live Sound, DJ of Ability, Chris Benedict 805.729.1512, email: [djofability@gmail.com](mailto:djofability@gmail.com) Web site: [djofability.com](http://djofability.com)

### SANTA BARBARA SPECIAL NEEDS ADAPTIVE PROGRAMS WEBSITE

A new parent run website that includes a variety of community resources, events and information supporting our area special needs agencies. Find more camps and activities posted on the website. [www.sbsnap.org](http://www.sbsnap.org)

### PARENT-TO-PARENT SUPPORT

Sponsored by Special Needs Network. Meets third Thursday of every month, 9:00 am at Coffee Diem, 505 S. McClelland Street in Santa Maria. Contact: Diana 805.937.8756.

### CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Check out what they have to offer. Contact: Adapted Programs 805.564.5421.

### FAMILY FIRST AT ALPHA RESOURCE CONNECTIONS

A family resource center and parent network. Provides parent-to-parent and family support, parent-professional collaboration, parent and family workshops, and information and referral. Contact: North County 805.347.2775/South County 805.683.2145.

### SOMETHING FOR THE SIBLINGS

The Special Needs Network is a new club for the siblings of individuals with disabilities. The club will consist of several fun activities for the siblings and will also be a chance to get away and relax with others who also have siblings with disabilities. Contact: Laura King, 805.344.1403.

### SANTA MARIA SPECIAL EDUCATION & SUPPORT INFORMATION

Kathy Rowley hosts a Yahoo Group for parents of children with special needs who live in Santa Maria. Join at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/santamariasupport>.

### AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA - SANTA BARBARA CHAPTER (ASASB)

Contact: Marcia or Sandy at 805.560.3762 or [info@asasb.org](mailto:info@asasb.org), [www.asasb.org](http://www.asasb.org).

### SANTA MARIA AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

Has an online support group for parents of children diagnosed with autism. There is also a weekly playgroup that meets at a local park. Contact: 805.714.1187 or email [begeasykr@yahoo.com](mailto:begeasykr@yahoo.com).

### LOMPOC AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP

A support group for parents and other caregivers of children diagnosed with autism. Contact: Polly Bleavins 805.347.2775 or email [pollyb@alphasb.org](mailto:pollyb@alphasb.org).

### ALPHA PARENT GROUP

A parent support group that meets the second Tuesday of every month from 9:30-11:30 am at the Alpha Resource Connections library at TCRC. For more information contact Jennifer Griffin at [jgriffin@alphasb.org](mailto:jgriffin@alphasb.org) or call Alpha at 805.683.2145.

### TALK ABOUT CURING AUTISM (TACA)

Meets 3rd Saturday of the Month, 11:00 am -1:00 pm at Ocean Hills Ministry Center "The Loft" 821 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA (above Sur La Table in Paseo Nuevo). This is a support group meeting for caretakers for those with special needs. Contact Kathleen\_reish@tacanow.org, [www.tacanow.org](http://www.tacanow.org).

### SBATA@YAHOOGROUPS.COM

Online group for parents of special needs children, email [hosseini58@cox.net](mailto:hosseini58@cox.net).

### FIRST FRIDAYS SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children with Down syndrome aged 0-4. Meets first Friday of the month, September through June, from 9:30-11 am in the Children's Indoor play area of Calvary Chapel in Santa Barbara. Childcare provided. Siblings welcome. Contact: Jamie Weitzman 805.566.4753, [Jamieweitzman@yahoo.com](mailto:Jamieweitzman@yahoo.com).

### PEANUT BUTTER & YOGA

November 5th to June 24th, 2011, from 11am to 12pm at Source Yoga Studio, 1911 De la Vina, Santa Barbara. Contact Katie Liljedahl 805-722-0950, [katielilj@gmail.com](mailto:katielilj@gmail.com).

### PLAY BALL

January 10-March 14, 2011 Mondays from 3:45 - 4:45pm. Baseball, Basketball, Dodge ball & Flag Football will be rotated or run simultaneously every Monday. Volunteers and Equipment needed. [www.sbSNAP.org](http://www.sbSNAP.org), or contact Retta Slay at 805-681-9165.

### TOOLS FOR THE JOURNEY CONFERENCE WITH GUEST PATRICK SCHWARZ, PH.D

January 29, 2011 all day - Fuller Seminary - Pasadena, California Organized by Club Twenty-one, Pasadena. [www.sbSNAP.org](http://www.sbSNAP.org)

### VALENTINES SWEETHEART DANCE

February 5, 2011, 5pm to 9pm. Bring your favorite sweethearts with special needs for an evening of music, dance, games, activities & fun! Committee volunteers sought to make this a stellar annual event! Purchase tickets online at [www.sbSNAP.org](http://www.sbSNAP.org).

### JOIN THE NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY

#### FOR THE BUDDY WALK® ON WASHINGTON



February 7, 2011 to February 8, 2011 - In Washington DC. The Buddy Walk on Washington will be a powerful way for you to join with the Down syndrome community to connect with other advocates from around the country Learn new strategies for successful advocacy. [www.sbSNAP.org](http://www.sbSNAP.org), or contact Retta Slay at 805-681-9165.

### CHALLENGER LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL 2011

Teams for ALL levels of Play - March 5 - May 21, 2011 at 9:30 to 10:45am - Girsh Park in Goleta, El Carro Park in Carpinteria - for boys and girls ages 5 (as of May 1st, 2011) up to 22 years old OR still in High School. Nearly 100 players involved through Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Baseball drills, skills and games adapted to players needs. Parties, Activities and Social events throughout the year. Registration opens in December <http://www.GoChallengers.org> or call 805-452-9039.

### LINDAMOOD-BELL'S 17TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Sensory-Language Connection for Learning: Dyslexia, Hyperlexia, Autism March 10, - 12, 2011 9am to 4pm, Location: Disney's California Grand Hotel & Spa, Anaheim, CA. This conference will offer research sessions in the latest information in brain research, cognition, decoding, language comprehension, vocabulary, dyslexia, hyperlexia, and autism. For more information or to register today, please call 1-800-233-1819.

### SOCIAL SKILLS DROP-IN PROGRAM, GOLETA BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Each Tuesday that goleta schools are in session, from 3:30 to 4:30pm. Location: Goleta Boys & Girls Club, 5701 Hollister Avenue, Goleta, CA 93117 For Students with Autism or Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Grades 1-6. Social Skills: Cooperation. Objectives: Participating in a group. Activities: Games, parties & social practice. Contact Hellen Bird [hbird@goleta.k12.ca.us](mailto:hbird@goleta.k12.ca.us), 805.681.1200 x220

### BASKETBALL SKILL CLINIC

April 5 - May 10, 2011 from 3:45pm to 5pm - Page Youth Center - Santa Barbara Afterschool basketball skills, drills & thrills for boys & girls ages 5-18 with special needs. Meets six Tuesdays at the Page Youth Center. Cost: \$20.00 - check payable to PYC or register with credit card online.



### DSASBC BUDDY WALK & FESTIVAL

Saturday, June 18th from 11am-4pm. Chase Palm Park near the Stage and Playground. Join Us for our Annual Celebration for Friends, Families, Professionals and Community Supporters of Loved ones and Individuals with Down syndrome. Be a part of the planning. Contact Melissa Fitch 805-886-4411 or <http://www.dsasbc.org>.

### NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS CONFERENCE

San Antonio, Texas, August 5 - August 8, 2011 from 8am to 4pm - San Antonio, Texas. Each year, thousands of people from across the globe attend the National Down Syndrome Congress annual convention. The 2011 NDS Convention will take place at the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa. For more information go to <http://www.ndscenter.org>.

### "LOSE THE TRAINING WHEELS" BIKE CAMP

June, 2011, at the Page Youth Center. Children, teens and adults with special needs will learn to ride a traditional two wheeled bike without training wheels. Check [www.sbSNAP.org](http://www.sbSNAP.org) for details or contact Retta Slay at 805.681.9165.

**PARENTS HELPING PARENTS - FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

email: php@ucp-slo.org / www.phpslo.org

San Luis Obispo Office  
800.456.4153 x3277  
805.543.3277Atascadero Office  
805.461.7415**PARENTS HELPING PARENTS FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

PHP serves families of children with special needs throughout San Luis Obispo County. Two lending libraries, which cover a wide variety of special needs topics, are equipped with toys, games and a place for children to play while their parents browse. PHP has a network of experienced staff and parents available for mentoring and support. A reliable source of current information, referrals, and training, PHP regularly e-mails a Calendar of Upcoming Events to interested families. Contact: 805.543.3277 (SLO) or 805.461.7415 (Atascadero) or php@ucp-slo.org

**PHP SPONSORED EVENTS****CREATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS SERIES**

Parents Helping Parents is presenting a series of monthly programs to bring you the information you need to provide quality housing for your adult children with developmental disabilities. Our award-winning series, Creative Housing Options, will begin again in 2011. There have been many requests to repeat several of the most popular sessions, such as Social Security, Special Needs Trusts, and Conservatorships. New topics will include In-Home Health Services, Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo, Tri-Counties Regional Center, Levels of Residential Services, and Employment Support. To be placed on the interest list for the series, please call Parents Helping Parents at 805.543.3277.

**KICK OFF FOR THE RANCH**

Save the date, Wednesday, January 12, 2011, from 6-8 pm at the PG&E Community Education Center in Avila Beach for "The Ranch Kick Off!" The Ranch, a non-profit entity, will operate as a day program accommodating individuals with special needs and will also be a fun "go to" destination for the general public. This facility will teach fundamental job skills and will have seasonal public outlets for produce and products grown and raised by the participants. Check us out at "The Ranch" on Facebook and at our website at www.ucp-slo.org. Call PHP at 805.543.3277 to RSVP and be placed on the interest list.

**GET CONNECTED AT PARENTS HELPING PARENTS**

For parents of children 0-5 years old. Come in to Parents Helping Parents Family Resource Center to meet other parents and PHP's resource specialists!

**PHP Atascadero:**

Thursday, January 20, 2011, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
Moresco Plaza, 7305 Morro Road, Atascadero  
Please RSVP to Parents Helping Parents, 805.543.3277

**PHP San Luis Obispo:**

Thursday, February 10, 2011, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
3450 Broad Street, Suite 111, San Luis Obispo  
Please RSVP to Parents Helping Parents, 805.543.3277

**UCP EVENTS****SIBSHOPS & TEENTALK**

Sibshops are fun-filled workshops just for brothers and sisters of children with special needs. This is a great opportunity for kids to meet other siblings, play games, do crafts, share experiences and have A LOT of fun! Sibshops now include TeenTalk, a discussion group that focuses on the unique concerns of teenage siblings. For upcoming Sibshop dates, please contact PHP at 543.3277 or Emily Dugan at 703.3761 or centralcoastsibshop@yahoo.com

**UCP KIDS CLUB FOR 6 – 12 YEAR OLDS &****UCP TEEN CLUB FOR 13–17 YEAR OLDS**

Community recreation activities and socialization opportunities for kids and teens with special needs, including transportation and supervision. For events beginning in January 2011, please contact Samantha at 543.7102 or youthservices@ucp-slo.org.

**UCP COMMUNITY INTERACTION PROGRAM: TOURS FOR ADULTS**

Community Interaction Program tours are supervised vacations for adults with special needs. Tour prices include transportation, lodging, meals, support staff, and all activities. For information on tours in 2011, please contact Kristine at 543.2039 or kristine@ucp-slo.org.

**UCP LEISURE CLUB LOCAL OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS**

Saturday afternoon activities and outings for adults with special needs. For events beginning in January 2011, please contact Kristine at 543.2039 or kristine@ucp-slo.org.

**LOCAL EVENTS****PARENT SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOP**

**Effective Strategies for Positive Behavior: How to Help Our Children Succeed**  
Presented by Loretta Butterfield, SELPA Program Specialist. Childcare provided.  
Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., San Luis Obispo  
Cost: \$5.00 donation  
For reservations, call Debbie Stone at 782.7302 or email dstone@sloselpa.org.

**ONGOING****ADULT SOCIAL CLUB**

For parents and young adult children ages 18-35 who are challenged with high functioning autism, Asperger's or PDD-NOS.  
Contact Victoria or Greg at 460.9389 to learn of upcoming social club events.

**NORTH COUNTY AUTISM SPECTRUM PARENT SUPPORT GROUP**

3rd Friday of every other month (odd-numbered months), 7-9:00 pm, Paso Robles.  
Contact: Becky, 471.1354 or nocosupport@autismspectrumcenter.com

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRAINING**

Including: Aquatics, Power Soccer (Motorized Wheelchair), Golf, Gymnastics, Bocce, Track & Field. Contact: 544.6444

**SPECIAL NEEDS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS**

Are you a parent of a special needs child who would like to attend church but are unable to find a Sunday school class appropriate for your child? Atascadero Bible Church (www.abcchurch.org) is starting a "pilot" Special Needs Sunday School class for children ages 5-18 years. Sundays, 9:00a.m.  
Contact: Kyle Zimmerman, Children's Ministry Director at kyle@abcchurch.org.

**SOUTH COUNTY AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP**

3rd Wednesday of each month, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Grover Beach. Contact: Leslie Barton, 904.9212

**AUTISM CONFERENCES OF AMERICA - FEBRUARY 4TH & 5TH 2011**

5th Annual "All Ages & Abilities" Autism/Asperger's Conference  
February 4th & 5th, 2011 - University of California Irvine CA

# San Luis Obispo County

With each issue of the TriLine, we provide information on some of the resources available to families within the Tri-Counties area. Please call to confirm dates and times of events. Check with your Service Coordinator for information on other resources available to you in your area.



## RAINBOW CONNECTION - FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

email: rainbow@tri-counties.org

Oxnard Office  
800.332.3679  
805.485.9643

Simi Valley Office  
800.517.2524 x2325  
805.823.2325

5th "ALL AGES & ABILITIES"  
AUTISM/ASPERGER'S CONFERENCE  
Feb 4-5, UC Irvine  
www.autism-conferences.com  
480.831.2047

Website: <http://rainbowconnectionfrc.weebly.com>

or find us at Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/RainbowConnectionFRC>

Rainbow Connection provides support, information, training and activities for families. Here is a list of on-going support groups:

### ACTIVITIES

#### SOCIAL TIME FOR ADULTS RECEIVING SERVICES FROM TCRC (BILINGUAL)

First Saturday of the month in Santa Paula. Come, bring a friend or just come meet new people, for conversation, playing games or for refreshments and some fresh air.

**TEDDY BEAR BRIGADE** Third Saturday of the month (except for summer) 1:00-3:00pm, Thousand Oaks For children 3 -18 years old with special needs and their siblings. It includes stories, sensory themes, crafts and music. Visit [www.bearsandcompany.com](http://www.bearsandcompany.com) to register. Parents meet separately for social and networking time.

### TRAININGS

**HEALTH CARE NOTEBOOKS** Do you have a hard time keeping track of your health care information? Create your own personal notebook with the assistance of a Rainbow resource parent. Call us to set up an appointment. For persons receiving services from TCRC.

**ALL ABOUT ME** Create your child's (or adult served by TCRC) Personal Profile. This is a great way to share valuable information. Simply give a copy of the Personal Profile to the people who will be interacting and working with your child – the teacher, aides, therapists, etc. Give us a call and we'll help you put together your child's very own Personal Profile. Individual Appointments can be scheduled upon request. For persons receiving services from TCRC.

#### WHAT'S NEXT AFTER EARLY START? FOR YOUR CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Will your child be turning 3 years old and transitioning out of the Early Start Program? Changes can be confusing. Come meet with one of our resource parents to discuss what you can expect and how to make transition a little easier. You will receive a free booklet that has been helpful to other parents. Individual appointments can be scheduled upon request. For persons receiving services by TCRC.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

#### AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) PARENT SUPPORT GROUP (ENGLISH)

Meets second Wednesday of the month at Rainbow Connection, 7:00 – 8:30pm, Oxnard. Families meet to share the experiences they've had with their children with special needs and learn about resources.

**AUTISMO SUPPORT GROUP (SPANISH)** Third Thursday of the month, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, Oxnard. Families have discussions on issues related to raising children with autism.

#### CEREBRAL PALSY SUPPORT GROUP (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

Third Monday of the month, 9:30 - 11:00 am. Groups meet separately in English and Spanish. Join other parents to talk about issues related to raising children with cerebral palsy and share resources and information.

#### G-TUBE/J-TUBE/NG-TUBE NETWORKING (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

Third Thursday of the month, 6:30 - 8:00 pm, Oxnard. Does your child have a G-tube, J-tube, or NG-tube? Has it been suggested that your child get a tube? We look forward to sharing our stories of frustrations, fears, and successes (large and small).

#### DOWN SYNDROME SUPPORT GROUP (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

Groups meet separately in English and Spanish. Last Thursday of the month, 7:00 -8:30 pm, Oxnard. Families have open discussions about raising children with Down syndrome.

**EPILEPSY SUPPORT GROUP** First Wednesday of every month from 7:00 – 8:30 pm in Oxnard. Families meet to share the experiences and learn about resources.

**EARLY START SUPPORT GROUP (SPANISH)** Third Monday of the month 10:30am – 12pm, Oxnard. Families with children in the Early Start Program meet to share the experiences and resources.

**"APRENDIENDO JUNTOS" SUPPORT GROUP (OF CHILDREN 0 – 3 YRS OLD)- SPANISH** Simi 5:30 – 7:30pm Meets 1st Wednesday of the month, Oxnard 5:30 – 7:30pm Meets last Monday of the month. Group has presentations on a variety of topics followed by pot-luck and social time. Child care is provided.

#### NBVC (NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY) SPECIAL PARENTS NETWORK

Parents Helping Parents Support Group for active and retired military families with children with special needs. Meets 3rd Wednesday of the Month 1800 – 1930. For information and to RSVP contact Rainbow or email us at [nbvc\\_spn@yahoo.com](mailto:nbvc_spn@yahoo.com)

**PARENTS CONNECTION (SPANISH)** Fourth Monday of the month 10am – 11am, Fillmore. Families of children with special needs meet at Burger King to connect and share information.

#### SANTA PAULA SUPPORT GROUP (SPANISH)

First Monday of the month 5:30 - 7:00 pm. Families meet to share experiences they've had with their children with special needs and learn about resources.

#### SANTA CLARA SUPPORT GROUP - FILLMORE, PIRU AREA (SPANISH)

Third Monday of the month 5:30 - 7:00 pm. Families meet to share the experiences they've had with their children with special needs and learn about resources.

**SANTA PAULA SUPPORT GROUP (ENGLISH)** Fourth Monday of the month 5:30 - 7:00 pm. Families meet to share experiences they've had with their children with special needs and learn about resources.

**SPECIAL FAMILIES SUPPORT GROUP (SPANISH)** First Friday of the month 6:30pm – 8pm, Oxnard. Families meet to share the experiences and resources.

#### SPECIAL PARENTS NETWORK (ENGLISH)

Third Wednesday of the month, 10am – 11:30am, Oxnard. Third Thursday of the month, 9:30 - 11:00 am, Simi. Come and join us for a cup of coffee, learn about our resources and talk about issues related to raising children with special needs.

#### SPECIAL PARENTS VENTURA COUNTY NETWORKING GROUP - ONLINE

Special Parents is an online forum where parents of children with special needs can offer and receive support, referrals and information. This networking group provides families with a comfortable and convenient environment for exchanging ideas and resources on everything from medical visits to IEP's. Simply activate a free YAHOO user ID and Password account to log into this forum at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SpecialParentsVenturaCounty>.

#### SIBCLUB

First Friday of the month, 6:30 - 8:00 pm. in Oxnard. Games, Fun, Activities, for 5 - 14 year old siblings of children with developmental disabilities.

#### NICU CLASS - MY BABY IS IN THE NICU NOW WHAT? (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

First Monday of the month 10:00 -11:00 am in Oxnard. Information & Resources for families & parents of current & NICU grad's.

#### NICU SUPPORT GROUP (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

Third Wednesday of the month, 6:30 - 8:00 pm, Oxnard. Groups meet separately in English & Spanish. Meet other families and share ideas of coping, photos, info, joy and triumphs.

#### RAINBOW MOMS CONNECTING - OXNARD (SPANISH)

Third Friday of the month, Oxnard. Come and enjoy time with other mothers of children with special needs and have a relaxing time. For more information or to RSVP please call Rainbow..

#### RAINBOW MOMS CONNECTING - VENTURA COUNTY (ENGLISH)

Meeting dates and times vary. Come and enjoy a night out with other mothers of children with special needs.

### OTHER COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

#### BRANDON'S BUDDIES (ENGLISH)

First Saturday of the month, Calabasas. A free play date for children of all abilities. To RSVP call Dina Kaplan 818.222.8118 or [brandonsbuddies@pacbell.net](mailto:brandonsbuddies@pacbell.net).

#### HAPPY FRIENDS CLUB

First and third Thursdays, 6:30 - 8:00 pm, Camarillo. Support group for adults & teens with mental/physical challenges. Speakers, games, arts & crafts, round table discussions, occasional community outings. Contact: Jean McGuire 805.816.2319 or email: [bobbyjean2@mac.com](mailto:bobbyjean2@mac.com).

#### MOM'S NIGHT OUT THOUSAND OAKS (ENGLISH)

Third Tuesday of the month. For contact information call Rainbow.

#### DAD'S NIGHT OUT THOUSAND OAKS (ENGLISH)

Fourth Tuesday of the month. For contact information call Rainbow.

#### ASAP: ASPERGER'S SUPPORT GROUP FOR ADOLESCENTS PLUS! (ENGLISH)

A social support group for teens & young adults with Asperger's or high functioning Autism. For more info log on to [www.vcasap.org](http://www.vcasap.org)

#### SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS OF KIDS WITH AUTISM

Last Monday of the month, 6:30 pm. We provide child care. Location: 2697 Lavery Ct., Suite 17 Newbury Park. Contact Leila Silva at 805.480.9039 or 805.341.3089.

#### VENTURA COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY (ENGLISH)

For more information call Ventura County Autism Society at 805.496.1632.

#### DOWN SYNDROME PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Parents of children with Down Syndrome come together to discuss issues and activities of mutual interest. Ever 1st Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. Call 805 650-6290 to RSVP.

#### TULIPAS & TRIUMPHS SUPPORT GROUP

For parents of children with Down Syndrome. Monthly support group "meetings/nights out", dates vary each month. Please RSVP to Cheryl at 805-791-0254 or [Landazuri98@hotmail.com](mailto:Landazuri98@hotmail.com) for date/time and location.

**Words from a Parent Advocate** *continued from page 1*  
by Heather Wennergren, Media & Training Coordinator

When it comes to being the sole caretaker of a person with cerebral palsy (CP), Mary emphasizes the importance of adapting with the disability. "With CP, a lot of things change and you have to change too. Gerri Lynn used to use small crayons pretty well, but now she struggles. I switched to large crayons and markers, which are easier for her to use. I never give up. I am always adjusting; I just find a new method."

Mary urges other parents to learn about their child's condition and any drugs that may be suggested. "I looked at everything and I didn't like what I saw. I didn't like what I read." She recommends looking into the side effects of a drug after taking it for six months or a year, and being mindful of liver health. When Gerri was young, she was referred to an ophthalmologist. Mary took her for a check up, but learned she had been scheduled for a

strives to follow through with what she says she is going to do. She adds that managing expectations is important. If priorities change, she takes the time to explain why a daily routine may be disrupted. If raising multiple children, she suggests getting everyone involved in the care of their sibling. Mary has created a family culture of advocacy. Her family members are there for her, especially on tough days when Gerri has experienced a seizure.

Gerri Lynn goes to the gym twice a week, bowling once a week and accompanies her mom on errands. Mary believes in teaching her daughter appropriate behavior for various settings. Gerri knows to eat politely at restaurants and not to disturb the business transactions at the bank. Through these regular visits into the community, Mary is also helping others to learn wheel chair etiquette. "I love the idea that even at my age I am still teaching.



*Gerri Lynn with sister Tricia*

pre-operative appointment for surgery. Mary wanted a second opinion. After calling several ophthalmologists, she finally found one who would see her child. One pair of glasses later, Gerri's vision normalized.

Mary and her daughter are clearly both happy and healthy. When asked how she manages she answers "Perseverance and courage. Enjoy the highs because the lows will come." Mary talks about the importance of being patient and letting things go. "You have to be patient because your child may not be aware of her own feelings...I have learned a lot about people like Gerri, sometimes it is hard to know what she may be processing or thinking." Mary



At age 70, Mary lives with Gerri Lynn in Ojai, mother to 16 children, grandmother to 25, and great grandmother to 3.

## The 'Agony and Ecstasy' of Disability and Job-Seeking

by Jennifer Dwyer, Supervisor of Peer Advocacy

I have never been one to turn away from a challenge. As a person with a developmental disability, the words 'struggle' and 'challenging' seem to be as imbedded into my DNA as my mother's natural curly hair or my father's famously muscular shoulders.

But, as this article describes, some of the hardships that I have personally faced in seeking full-time employment are also indicative of the larger struggle for equality that is faced by the disabled community at large.

Twenty years after the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted, most people with disabilities continue to encounter barriers to becoming employed. For many it can, at times, even feel like a futile exercise to search for employment. It is definitely one that requires both the fortitude to withstand the agony of rejection and, if you are lucky enough to rebound and persevere, the unabashed ecstasy that comes with finally proving successful.

That is, if you are one of those lucky few... I know. Until recently, I was not among them.

Like most people today, I have struggled to survive in the competitive economy. But, unlike the average job-seeker, as a person with a disability, I have had many an above-average-size roadblock placed in my path. These varied speedbumps have included the misperception that persons with disabilities cannot be capable members of the workforce. Largely created by factors outside of the control of persons with disabilities, misconceptions persist and contribute to ongoing economic and social problems.

No one can deny that, in the face of the current economic climate, the number of available jobs has dwindled. But, members of the disabled community are often faced with another invisible challenge: assuaging and overcoming the fear of potential employers. And for those seeking and finding employment, acclimating to a new, often scary environment includes the work of easing the mind of a sometimes-leery colleague about his or her capabilities.

Facing discrimination of any kind is overwhelming and in the case of opportunities for employment for individuals with disabilities, potentially unnecessary, if the tenants of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) can be honored. Unlike other minorities, the disabled community has the ADA in our toolbox to help bring about real and lasting change.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, a civil-rights bill, was enacted in July 1992 as a way to make public facilities more accessible to persons with physical disabilities. Unfortunately this effort to create precedents around physical access, has inadvertently created more "walls" or barriers to change.

"The number of persons classified under the law as disabled [has] mushroomed," according to the Heartland Institute web site. "The U.S. Census Bureau puts 51 million Americans on the disabled list--about one in six Americans." The language of the ADA does specify what the requirements for prospective employers to modify their environments are minimally required to be.

However, at the same time, unfortunate manipulations of the law have contributed to more barriers being placed in front of persons with disabilities trying to navigate occasionally contentious environments.



In this past decade, one individual actually brought lawsuits against over 250 California businesses claiming non-ADA compliance. These lawsuits forced some companies to close their doors. This use of the ADA for monetary advantage does not support the intent of the legislation – to improve accessibility and increase the likelihood of gainful employment for those with physical disabilities.

The law says that a reasonable accommodation is "any modification or adjustment to a job or work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions."

In my opinion, the definition of 'reasonable accommodation' needs to be updated. As it currently stands, this definition strives to remove all physical barriers from the path of all people with disabilities--including those with unobvious, temporary, or non-debilitating conditions.

It does nothing to address the attitudinal barriers that still persist—and are often more hindering to finding employment than anything else. Far more vital than the tools needed to do one's work is unconditional acceptance and understanding from colleagues; without it, working any job will, literally, not be possible for people with disabilities.

If the language of the ADA was refined to require a certain number of employees with a disability—and a more stringent definition of what constitutes a disability for all potential employers to adhere to—I think abuse of the law would be greatly curtailed and we might finally be on our way to being a society that is fully inclusive.



## Oxidative Stress & Neuroinflammation: Recognizing Commonalities in Developmental Disorders

by James O'Hanlon, Ph.D., Psychopharmacologist

Aberrant behaviors, impaired social relationships and deficient communication skills are superficial manifestations of autism. These symptoms are by no means unique to autism. They are not only seen in Asperger's Disorder, which may simply be a mild form of the same disorder, but also in very different developmental disorders; e.g. Fragile X, Rett

and Down Syndromes. Even schizophrenia before the onset of frank psychosis resembles autism in that the afflicted become increasingly illogical, socially withdrawn, emotionally detached and uncommunicative. This does not mean that these disorders have a common cause: clearly they do not. But it may mean that their pathologies overlap.

Instead of defining differences between developmental disorders, the thrust of recent research has been to identify commonalities among them. The interrelated processes of oxidative stress and neuroinflammation have emerged as top contenders. Oxidative stress is caused by the excessive production of charged molecules, called free radicals, that react destructively with structural lipids, proteins and nucleic acids (e.g., DNA). Free radicals are a natural byproduct of metabolism in every cell in the body. Most originate from ubiquitous mitochondria that oxidize nutrients in a process leading to the storage of usable energy in adenosine triphosphate (ATP). In this process, electrons from the breakdown of nutrients flow through a chain of enzymes ending with the one producing ATP. Energy-depleted electrons emerge at the terminal point where they are accepted by molecular oxygen. Should oxygen accept four electrons, which is nearly always the case, the ionized molecule simply combines with hydrogen ions to form water. Yet sometimes oxygen accepts only one or two electrons to become free radicals that would destroy mitochondria if nothing were done to prevent it. Fortunately, animals have developed a complex antioxidant system comprising both small molecules that

neutralize free radicals and enzymes that convert them to harmless products. So long as the balance between free radical formation and elimination is maintained no harm is done. However, tissue damage can occur when excess free radicals exist.

Tissue damage in the central nervous system activates resident communities of immune cells, most notably microglia. Normally quiescent, activated microglia proliferate, change shape, and migrate to the damaged area where they promote neuroinflammation through the release of numerous chemical mediators. This system is also tightly regulated but when control is lost as in a variety of autoimmune, infectious and neurodegenerative diseases, the neuroinflammatory reaction worsens tissue damage. It is not known whether oxidative stress alone can cause neuroinflammation but signs of both have been found in Autism, Fragile X, Rett and Down Syndromes and Schizophrenia.

Recognition of oxidative stress and neuroinflammation in so many brain disorders has revolutionized concepts of how they develop and how to treat them. No authority doubts that nearly all developmental disorders have a genetic origin. But defective genes may not be the sole cause the every developmental disorder. Those that evolve from the interaction of multiple abnormal genes, like autism and schizophrenia, may require an environmental trigger to launch the cascade of pathological events. If abnormal genes compromise the antioxidant system, then any environmental factor that increases oxidative stress could be the trigger. Factors identified so far include certain drugs, heavy metals, pesticides and herbicides, flame retardants, solvents and even some plastics. Other factors, such as viral infections may sensitize the immune system causing it to react violently to oxidative tissue damage and thereby increase oxidative stress. This concept can be expected to encourage proponents of the environmental theory of developmental disorders, particularly autism. Indeed, the theory seems more plausible then before. Yet, so many known and presumably unknown factors increase oxidative stress that if one or several were to be removed from the environment there would still be many left to trigger disorders in genetically susceptible individuals. Moreover, toxins and infections are not the only factors that trigger developmental disorders. Acute stress experienced by women who survived hurricanes while more than 5 months pregnant was identified as the major factor responsible for an elevated (3.8 x) incidence of autism among children they delivered thereafter.

In theory, oxidative stress and neuroinflammation can be minimized by a combination of conventional and alternative medical treatments. If applied before the occurrence of significant tissue damage, widely available antioxidants, such as Vitamins C and E and melatonin, might be helpful. So should N-acetylcysteine (NAC), a precursor of glutathione, the most abundant antioxidant in the brain. Oxidative damage to cell membranes might be reversed by dietary supplements of the essential lipids needed for repair; e.g., omega-3 fatty acids. None of these measures has been rigorously tested in any developmental disorder that begins in early childhood. However, all have been tested in schizo-

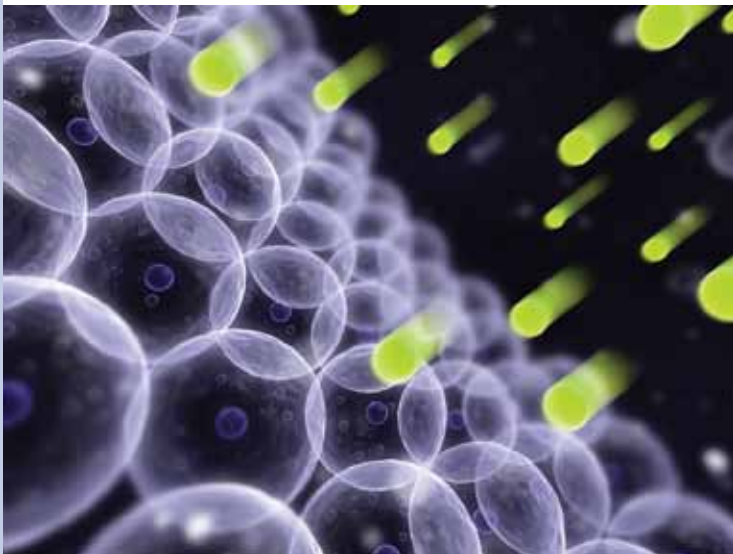


Illustration of free radicals bombarding cells

phrenia. The combination of antioxidants and conventional antipsychotic drugs has been more beneficial than the latter alone, particularly when applied soon after the appearance of symptoms. Neuroinflammation can also be treated. Most anti-inflammatory drugs are either too weak to reverse neuroinflammation (NSAIDs) or so strong that they suppress the entire immune system (corticosteroids). Needed is a drug that suppresses innate immune reaction in the brain but not elsewhere. Minocycline, an older antibiotic, does exactly that by inhibiting microglial activation. Recently the drug was reported to have beneficial neurologic and behavioral effects in a mouse model of Fragile X Syndrome (FXS). Aware of this, parents of children with FXS have obtained prescriptions for treating them with minocycline.

Researchers at the M.I.N.D. Institute (UC Davis) who are presently conducting a controlled study of minocycline in FXS, got wind of the parents' initiative and conducted a survey of its results. The parents reported improvements in their children's language (54%), attention-span (50%), social interactions (44%) and anxiety (30%). Side effects were also reported but none serious. It is important to note that these novel treatments are aimed at the pathogenesis rather than the symptoms of developmental disorders.

Recognizing commonalities is helping researchers understand the cause of many diseases, which increases the chance of preventing or reversing them.



*Alison connects with adopted Border Collie, Sadie*

## The Power of Pets

*by Heather Wennergren, Media & Training Coordinator*

It is easy to get lost in the daily details of managing care for a child with special needs. We may be advocating for the best therapies or highest standards of care, or working overtime to get the social calendar filled. In keeping up with the tasks and demands, some of the simple pleasures in life get overlooked.

Having the right pet can be deeply enriching. They aren't called "Man's Best Friend" for nothing; we work with them, sleep with them and play with them. In return, they help us in many ways. Having an animal to pet or curl up with can be deeply satisfying, perhaps more so for individuals with developmental disabilities. Assisting with feeding or grooming results in a sense of

personal responsibility. The very act of caring for another being may be therapeutic.

Our pets don't judge us... in fact, most of them think we can do no wrong. Interaction with pets is simple, perhaps providing a reprieve from the more demanding communications required by humans. They don't get frustrated if speech was a bit labored or something was not perfectly stated.

The bond between person and pet goes deep... Some dogs may even have the ability to sense a seizure just before it occurs. Diane LaDouceur was aware of this potential when she decided to

## The Power of Pets *continued from page 13*

adopt a Border Collie for her daughter Alison. In time, she learned that Sadie was not a seizure dog. However, her pet did have the right temperament to be a therapy dog. Diane trained her accordingly, and takes her to work in care centers for the elderly and with people with disabilities. Alison, 11 years old, is learning to serve in her community alongside her canine companion. Diane reflects on her daughter's relationship with Sadie, "Adopting Sadie has changed Alison's life. Being an only child, it gives her a connection."

Diane, Alison and Sadie also attend local events. Sadie enjoys her work and people love her. According to Diane "kids lay all over her, they just love her." The trio make



*Sadie becomes a pillow*

themselves available for visits to Day at the Park, birthday parties, or any other event where kids with disabilities might benefit from meeting Sadie. By facilitating Alison and Sadie's ventures into the community, Diane is creating opportunities for her daughter to learn skills that may one day help her in a career. "My goal as a parent is to help my daughter learn some great life and work skills." She adds, "Working with Sadie has really boosted Alison's self confidence."



*Wendy Guerrero Photography*

*Alison & Sadie visit program offered by City of Oxnard*

Diane LaDouceur began her pet search at Petfinder.com. "The best way to find the right animal is to learn about its' personality," suggests Diane. Petfinder.com connected her with Border Collies in Need, where she found Sadie. Sadie was once abused, but with the right care and training has become a perfect therapy dog. Diane explains, "I only adopt rescue dogs. The personality profile from Sadie's foster mom was a big help." Diane believes in doing research before getting a pet. This is one way to select an animal that can be properly cared for and is the right fit for the pet owner and the family or residence.

If you live near Simi Valley and would like for Sadie to visit your event, contact Diane at 805-331-9899.



Pet overpopulation is a widespread problem in the United States. The Humane Society estimates that three to four million animals die in shelters each year. This is primarily due to lack of adoptive homes. Many of these animals are purebred. Petfinder.com connects homeless animals with the right people via the internet. It has a search feature that allows prospective adopters to search a database of available pets by location, breed, age, size and gender. There are all types of animals up for adoption, including barnyard animals and reptiles. The list of various breeds is extensive. Learn more at [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com).

## TCRC Staff News

The Spirit of Excellence award program acknowledges employees who demonstrate teamwork, good citizenship, service to the people we serve, morale building, quest for quality, and above and beyond dedication to their work. Employees are nominated by their colleagues and quarterly winners are also selected by a panel of their peers. Nominees receive a recognition certificate and \$20 gift card. Quarterly winners receive temporary possession of the stone Dolphin Award and an opportunity to be chosen as one of the eight annual nominees. Two annual winners receive the stone Dolphin Award and \$300.

### SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

#### 1st Quarter 2010

**BRUCE POWERS**  
Clinical Psychologist, Atascadero  
**DONDRA SHEPHARD**  
Resource Developer, SB and Oxnard  
**ELIZABETH CASTRO**  
Services & Supports Receptionist,  
Oxnard  
**TRACY JACKSON**  
Lead QA Specialist, Santa Barbara

**MATT LORDEN**  
HR Payroll Associate, Santa Barbara  
**REGINA KENTNER**  
Clinical Psychologist, San Luis Obispo  
**SONYA MEJIA**  
Secretary, Santa Maria  
**KARLA FLORES**  
Service Coordinator, Simi Valley

### SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

#### 2nd Quarter 2010

**DEE RITTENHOUSE**  
Service Coordinator, Atascadero  
**MEREDITH ROSE**  
Service Coordinator, Oxnard  
**ANNE VOORHIES**  
Resource Developer, Oxnard  
**MARGARITA MORENO**  
Service Coordinator, Santa Barbara

**AMY DROWN**  
SIR & Benefits Specialist, Santa Barbara  
**JOE HOEFELICH**  
Manager, Services and Supports, SLO  
**CRISTINA SMITH**  
Service Coordinator, Santa Maria  
**DANIELLE GONZALEZ**  
Secretary, Simi Valley

### SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

#### 3rd Quarter 2010

**ANDREA ECHEVERIA**  
Secretary, Atascadero  
**ARTURO VELARDER**  
Service Coordinator, Oxnard  
**CANDACE BUCK**  
Trust Fiscal Assistant, Santa Barbara  
**SOYLA CEJA**  
Service Coordinator, Oxnard

**ANOUSHKA DALSEME**  
Manager, Services and Supports, SB  
**HEATHER AGRUSA**  
Service Coordinator, San Luis Obispo  
**CINDY GRAYUM**  
Service Coordinator, Santa Maria  
**DEENA BERNABE**  
Manager, Services and Supports, SV

### Promotions

**EULALIA APOLINAR**  
Service Coordinator II to Manager,  
Services and Supports  
**SHILOH LEE**  
from Service Coordinator I to Service  
Coordinator II

**KARLA FLORES**  
from Service Coordinator I to Service  
Coordinator II w/masters  
**REBECCA LUDEN**  
from Service Coordinator II to Service  
Coordinator II w/masters

### New Hires



Erin Grote, HR Associate II  
Kathryn Arceneaux, SC II w/masters  
Caili Wilk, SC I  
Kimberly Powell, Resource Developer



Jacquelynn Baca, Secretary III  
Brenda Ennenga-Cohen, SC II  
Sandra Barrios, Secretary III  
Allison Locke, SC II w/masters  
Cinda Chatfield, SC II

### Not Pictured

Glenela Rajpaul, Secretary III  
Dwight Norman, SC II w/masters

### SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

#### Atascadero

7305 Morro Road, Suite 101  
Atascadero, CA 93422  
805.461.7402  
FAX 805.461.9479

#### San Luis Obispo

3450 Broad Street, Suite 111  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-  
7102

805.543.2833  
800.456.4153  
FAX 805.543.8725

### SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

#### Santa Barbara

520 East Montecito Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93103-  
3278

805.962.7881  
800.322.6994  
FAX 805.884.7229

#### Santa Maria

1234 Fairway Dr.  
Santa Maria, CA 93455  
805.922.4640  
800.266.9071  
FAX 805.922.4350

### VENTURA COUNTY Oxnard

2401 East Gonzales Road  
Suite 100

Oxnard, CA 93030-2119  
805.485.3177  
800.664.3177  
FAX 805.988.9521

#### Simi Valley

1900 E. Los Angeles Ave.  
Simi Valley, CA 93065  
805.522.8030  
800.517.2524  
FAX 805.522.8142

## Share Your Ideas about Advocacy

The TCADD Government and Community Relations Committee works to consider opportunities for advocacy that may benefit individuals served by Tri-Counties Regional Center. In an effort to consider the many great ideas of TCRC's stakeholders, a form has been established on the TCRC web site. Go to [www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org), click on "News" and then "Submit Advocacy Ideas" to share your ideas with board members. Information about upcoming events is also welcome.



## Greetings from the President

by Bob Cobbs, TCADD Board Director

As I conclude the first year in my responsibilities as TCADD Board President, I am very concerned about the depth and breadth of the budgetary challenges facing this regional center and our developmental services system. Our system is fatigued by a historically delayed annual budget for California resulting in unfunded line of credit interest costs and deeper cuts to both Operations and Purchase of Services budgets for the regional centers and service providers. Although we are still uncertain of the effects of new allocation strategies from the State resulting in less funding to the majority of the regional centers and the possibility of the continuation of the 4.25% cuts for Purchase of Services and Operations budgets beyond the June 30, 2011 sunset date, we can work together creatively to advocate against this continued erosion of the entitlement of services to persons with developmental disabilities. We must individually and together communicate with government officials to influence their vote and increase awareness of the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. Writing letters, sending emails,

making phone calls and office visits to our legislators are some good ways for us to communicate our message of concern and advocate on behalf of those we are here to serve. I encourage you to regularly visit the news section of the TCRC website to keep up to date on the latest news and activities impacting our regional center and system.

While we must step up our advocacy activities in the new year, we also need to continue to meet strategic performance goals and increase capacity for person centered practices in order to maintain quality of services. I'm so pleased that despite our financial environment, TCRC has forged ahead with real progress around the Focus Areas of the 2010-2012 Strategic Performance Plan. Look for the results in the 2010 Annual Report section of the Spring 2011 TriLine. Throughout the development of this plan, it was clear that stakeholders need more information. The regional center has developed processes of determining where the gaps in information exist and how to fill them. Topic areas of particular focus include Healthcare, Family Services, and Autism/Behavior Services. Staff have been working to develop new content for the TCRC web site to communicate relevant information to all stakeholders. For example, in the Family Services area,

information is being developed around transition age challenges for Early Start to school years and for high school to adult services. This is a big project – so look for web site enhancements in the coming year.

The TCADD Board continues to seek education and increased capacity around person centered practices. After learning about Positive and Productive meetings, we are incorporating these practices into our committee meetings. We find it exciting to begin to experience some of the practices that TCRC staff have been telling us about over the last few years – and are especially pleased about the impact of person centered practices on the lives of people served. I urge those who are looking for an opportunity to participate in addressing the current challenges for our system to consider board membership -- join us in our efforts to serve and support people with developmental disabilities.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide leadership to the TCADD Board – and for this coming year, will look forward to seeing you at Board meetings and working with you to ensure the continued viability of our system in the face of historic budgetary challenges.

### Call for Volunteers for the TCADD Board

Potential members have business management, public relations, education or other business or non-profit experience. Family members of persons served by TCRC are encouraged to apply. Make a rewarding contribution to TCADD and help improve the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities. Please contact Nancy Kavın at [nkavin@mwdh2o.com](mailto:nkavin@mwdh2o.com) for more information, or visit our website, [www.tri-counties.org](http://www.tri-counties.org), select TCADD Board of Directors, then Membership / Role.

### Tri-Counties Regional Center Headquarters

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### Tri-Counties Association for the Developmentally Disabled Inc. (TCADD) Board of Directors

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### Upcoming Board Meetings

Feb 4..... 6:00 pm (SB)  
Mar 12..... 9:00 am (SB)  
May 6..... 6:00 pm (SB)  
June 4..... 10:00 am (Oxnard)

### Upcoming Town Hall Meetings

Jan 19..... San Luis Obispo  
Mar 16..... Santa Barbara  
May 18..... Simi Valley  
July 20..... Santa Maria