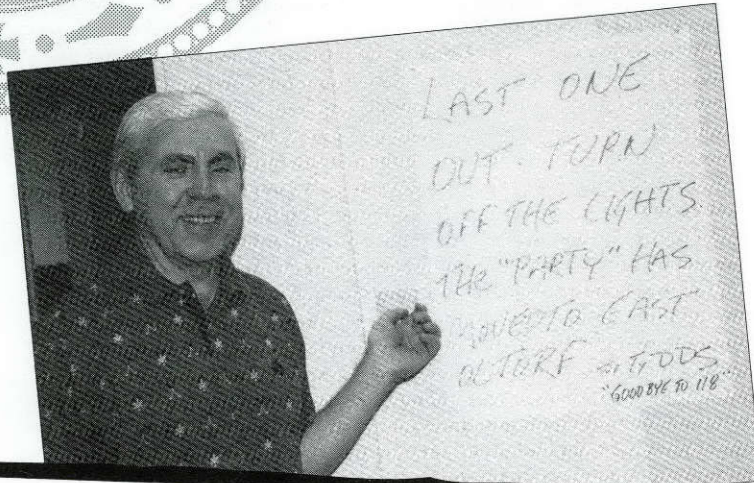


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trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission



Goodbye to 118 East Riverside

In the photo, Chuck Andrian, director of DDS Facility Planning, has the honors of being the last one to "turn off the lights" of the 118 East Riverside Building. After working thirteen weekends and countless other hours coordinating DDS's move, Andrian took some much needed time off.

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Texas Rehabilitation
Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78751-2399
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The party's moved ...

You know the old adage, "if these walls could talk." In 1977, when TRC moved into the 118 East Riverside Building, Jess Irwin was commissioner. His deputy commissioners were W.K. Harvey, Doyle Wheeler and Vernon M. Arrell.

For about 18 years, the 118 E. Riverside building was TRC's home. For 11 years, Central Office staff resided there with DDS personnel, and when the Brown-Heatly Building was completed in 1989, 118 E. Riverside became the main DDS building.

Well, a lot has changed since those early days. For some time now, 118 Riverside has been a building we've outgrown. "Those last few years, the building had deteriorated but we did all we could to temporarily make it nicer for employees," says Ken Vogel, deputy commissioner for DDS. "Where we're at now is so dramatically improved that I don't think employees will miss it a bit."

It took 13 weekends but DDS's move to the new building is now complete. From Nov. 4 to Jan. 20, four units and bits of support staff moved each week and the move into the new building went very smoothly. "You can't overemphasize how much planning went on with this move and it made the difference," says Tom Cagley, facility planning officer.

"We had key people who brought vast experience and when unexpected things happened, we were able to adapt so it looked seamless," says Dave Ward, DDS associate commissioner for AMS. "We also had some very good vendors who brought their experience. And, there was great follow-up. Crews came in to help employees rearrange offices so they weren't just out there on their own."

"It was really just incredible when you consider that 100 employees' work stations were moved each weekend and when they came into work Monday morning at their new location, every computer and every phone was working," adds Cagley. "Support staff who worked weekends in areas such as Facility Management Services and Information Management Services deserve a big pat on the back in this."

With all Austin DDS units together in one location, we are now ready to settle into 6101 East Oltorf and create new memories. "We've been living with this project for a long time," says Ward. "Now it's time to focus on how we can make this facility work for us."

118 East Riverside Remembered ...

Although an overwhelming majority of us are glad to say good riddance to 118 E. Riverside, here's one who still harbors fond memories of a less than perfect building in an almost perfect time ...

You ask how I miss it? How do you miss a building with twice as many people as parking spots? I began my work day at 7 a.m. just to be able to park within sight of the building. How do you miss a building which constantly changed with a maze of temporary walls and constantly changing office configurations? Each promotion to an exempt position brought another clever way of redefining workspace.

How do you miss a building which allowed a commissioner with a "management by walking around" technique the opportunity to reach anyone in the building within 10 minutes? Closed doors were like a magnet which drew an entry from the commissioner with the ever familiar question "Who called this meeting?"... requiring no answer.

How do you miss a building which saw the first non-smoking policy that banished smokers to out of the way break rooms and the bitter cold of the winter wind?

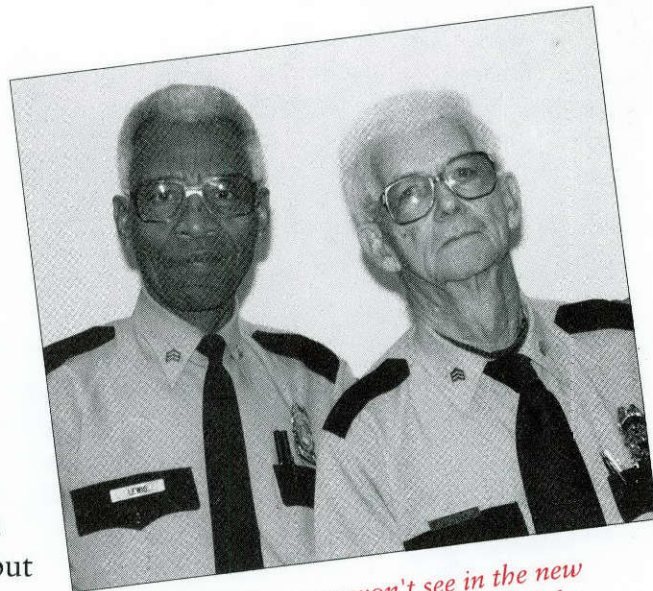
Would I really miss a building like that? You bet! It was my office home.

Where else could I walk 100 yards and say *hi* to hundreds of people I had known for years?

Where else could you have a Halloween costume contest with hundreds of people jammed into a lobby comfortable for only 50 and thoroughly enjoy watching a Tina Turner act-a-like and a whole unit from DDS dance as the California Raisins?

Where else could you have a Christmas sing-a-long with music provided by a small group of TRC retirees?

Those were the days of TRC family. Long before OOLs entered our vocabulary and overcrowding was an expressed concern, we felt fortunate to have that building. You can turn out the lights, but the memories will live on.



Some familiar faces we won't see in the new building. We'll all miss security guards John Lewis and Joel Payton.



--by Randy Jennings

Focus on Quality *beyond numbers*

A while back we reported on the excellent feedback we received from our customers in the 1995 Quality Survey. With rates of overall satisfaction higher than ever, it's not surprising to find out that more than a few counselors across the state achieved perfect ratings of 4.0.

This month, we thought we would follow-up with a few calls to "perfect" scorers to find out what they think makes the difference between good and excellent. Here are their responses:

Francine Todar Peters, Stephenville — "I think clients need to feel better and know there are options for them when they leave the first appointment. If you don't spend enough time with them at first, you lose them. I also think you have got to have a good RST. The RST is the first person they talk to when they call or come into the office. That first impression is so important."

Elliott Boyles, Athens — "I am available to the clients. I make them feel I have time for them and I always return phone calls. The main thing is to be sensitive to their situation and act like you care. It's also important to let them understand the process and know what they can expect."

Norma Saenz, Harlingen — "It's a team effort. My RST makes a difference. I try to be here when they need me and try to always return calls. If not, my RST is here to talk to them. Sometimes, other employees tell me I make people cry, but I think it is because I really listen to them and allow them to open up. And, we look for other services that can help clients."

Anne Williams, Wichita Falls — "Courtesy and really listening to what they say is very important. It all comes down to respect."

"Each month we look at numbers but it's good to get beyond that," says Kay Sitton of the Quality Committee. "What it boils down to is being in a partnership with your clients and keeping promises. It's the way we like to be treated so it stands to reason it's the way our customers want to be treated."

One in a million

Many month's ago, Rick Sanchez an examiner in Unit 02, along with many other DDS employees, volunteered to become a possible bone marrow donor in order to help co-worker Leo Fragoso's son, who has leukemia. Now, it turns out he has the opportunity to save the life of a stranger.

Close to a year after becoming registered as a possible donor, Rick received an unexpected phone call. Rick was told that a match had been found and was asked if he would still be interested in becoming a donor. "I hesitated for a little bit", explained Rick, "but when you realize someone is going to die it doesn't make it a tough choice." The only information Rick has concerning the recipient is that he is from another country, 39, male, and has a family.

Rick was surprised to find out that the chances of finding an accurate match are only one in a million. For individuals desperately in need of such treatment, finding a suitable donor becomes life's lottery. Out of two million registered donors only 15 percent are minorities. Such low percentages radically reduce the likelihood of finding a match for prospective minority recipients.

At the end of this month, Rick, along with his wife and daughter, will be flown to Houston. While the surgical removal of bone marrow can result in some temporary back pain, it is a low risk procedure. And statistics show that this particular transplant has an estimated 75 percent chance of succeeding.

Still, no suitable donor has been found for Leo's son. Minorities are strongly encouraged to call their local blood bank to find out how to become registered as a possible donor.



Rick Sanchez

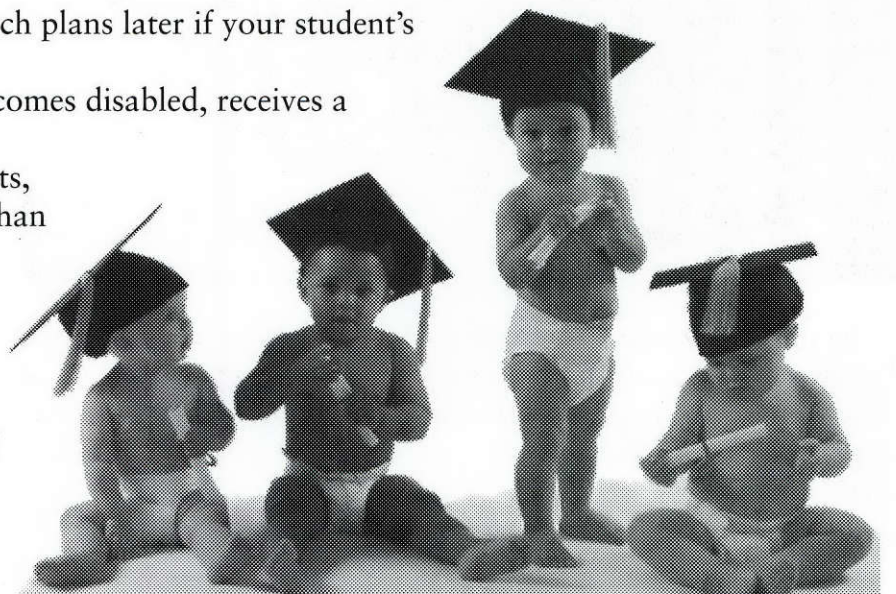
Tomorrow's education at today's prices

How many of us talk about starting that college savings plan for our children but have yet to get around to it? Well, now there's real incentive to take action by using a program that can save parents big bucks when it comes to financing college tuition.

The TEXAS TOMORROW FUND, a new pre-paid tuition program, makes it possible to pay for tomorrow's education at today's prices. Tuition and fees are rising almost 8 percent a year — more than twice the rate of increase in the average family's household income. This program offers very attractive options for financing and planning your child's education.

- The Fund pays for tuition and any fees that are required as a condition of enrollment. It does **not** pay for room and board, books, transportation or optional fees.
- It offers a variety of plans and payment options and you can switch plans later if your student's needs or your own financial situation changes.
- Refunds may be made to the purchaser if the beneficiary dies, becomes disabled, receives a scholarship or chooses not to attend college.
- Almost anyone may purchase a prepaid tuition contract — parents, grandparents, friends, etc., but the beneficiary must be younger than 18 years of age, a Texas resident at the time of enrollment or a non-resident child of a Texas resident when the parent is a purchaser.
- Benefits may be transferred to another qualified beneficiary or to an out-of-state college or university.

To enroll in this program, you must sign up before March 31, 1996 and your first payment is due on May 1. State employees have the option of payroll deduction but the details on this are still being worked out. For more information or for enrollment forms, contact your HRM officer.



The right match

On the surface, it looks like TRC client Daniel Plata was at the right place at the right time. He arrived back in town after a long trip in early March. Less than two weeks later, he had a new job at Mailing Systems of Texas. But, when you look farther, you realize it was more than just good luck.

Corpus Christi area manager Javier Leal received a phone call from owner Tom Castillo of Mailing Systems of Texas looking for someone reliable whom they could train. Castillo said he had called other employment agencies but didn't feel that any who had been sent could do the job. When Counselor Stella Finley researched her files, she saw that Daniel had previous postal experience and was "a beautiful match" to what Castillo was looking for.

"A lot of times, counselors feel the pressure to send to an employer lots of applicants with the hopes one will get hired," says Leal. "Here, what worked was researching who was qualified for the job and sending that person to apply. Stella went and got a job description from Mailing Systems and then researched her caseload. Also, she was very upfront with the employer and gave the employer a lot of information."

Even though Daniel was very qualified, Castillo still had his doubts about hiring him because of his back injury. Says Castillo: "At first I wasn't excited about Dan because of his injury. There are often times when we lift 30 to 40 pound bags. But, Dan did an excellent job of selling himself and it seemed that he really wanted the job and was the most qualified. We took a chance on him and we are very, very happy we did."

TRC helped by providing on-site job training and buying Daniel a belt for his back, good work shoes and dollies for lifting. "For a small businessman like myself, it can be expensive and TRC really helped out. Daniel came ready to start," adds Castillo.

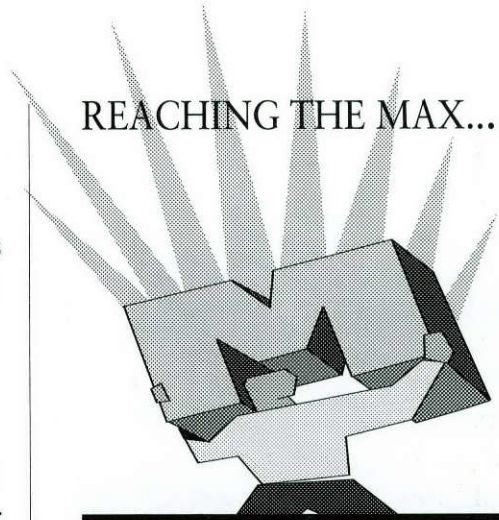
Since, Plata has received two pay raises and a promotion. "The luckiest day of my life was when I got this job," he says. "Two weeks after I started, I got my own company car. The benefits are great. It is a dream come true."

And the dream keeps getting better. Castillo recently announced to his staff that if they reach their goal for next year, the whole company goes to the Bahamas to celebrate. Good luck, Daniel!

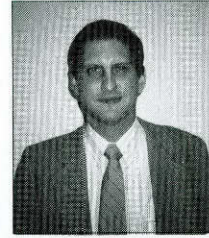


In the photo: Daniel Plata with Tom Castillo and Stella Finley. Daniel asked when this story was to be printed and he had good reason: "I want to send some copies of this article to some employers that didn't hire me. One of them even told me I would never work again because of my back condition." — *Actually, it looks like they were the ones who missed out.*

REACHING THE MAX...



MAXIMIZER



Top two rows (left to right): Arlington Field Office employees Ken Dye, Gena Swett, Jan Colston and Jana Weiss.

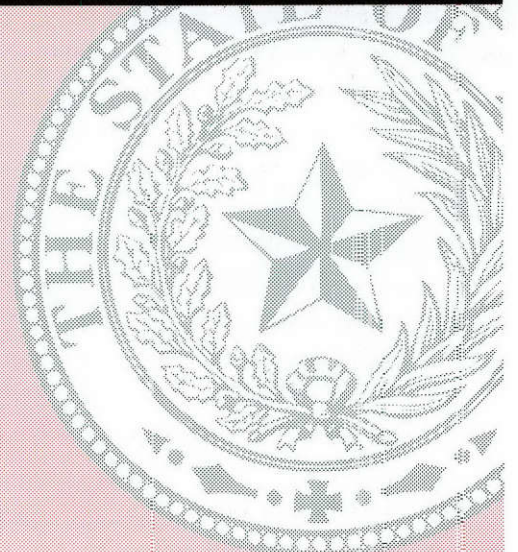
Third row (left to right): East Austin counselor/RST team Janie Escobedo and Lisa Allen. South Austin Field Office employees Dwight Lindsley and Chryse Hill.

Bottom Row (left to right): Unit 13, front row: Wynona Warren, Kay Munoz, Anne Monnig, Teri Portillo, Maria Dominguez, Gary Mcbley. Secon Row: Susan England, Julie Biechlin, Ben Chan, Jay Ackerman, Jodie Johnson, Debbie Wilks, Lizz Cutney. Back row: James Carter, Ron Gray, Steven Heath, Deborah Agueze, Gean Heidmann, Kimberly Kenney, Cathy Tieman. Not pictured: Meg Holt, Lydia Robertson.

Across the State February 1996

Welcome Aboard!

Sondria Shaw, RST
 Karen Mitchell, secretary
 Ester Rael, RST
 Melissa Herndon, RST
 Mona Smith, RST
 Carole Carsey, counselor
 Joyce Burchfield, counselor
 Connie Ellison, RST
 Joseph Dally, RST
 Alice James, counselor
 Maria Thomas, RST
 Marilyn Bage, RST
 Mary Santiago, RST
 Helen Rimini, RST
 Karen West, counselor
 Maria Reyes, RST



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February 1996

10 Years

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15 Years

Bob Rundell

Curtis Behrends

Bill Vardell

Bobby Moodley

Gregory Jamison

Ampario Longoria

20 Years

Ann Ohlson

25 Years

Charlotte West

Harry Amon

Paul Baganz

Patricia Renick

Cecile Mourie

Irma Mancinelli

Gloria Cortez

30 Years

Sharon Sattler