



TRC TODAY a newsletter for employees of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Vol. 12 No. 6 June 1990

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funding boost	

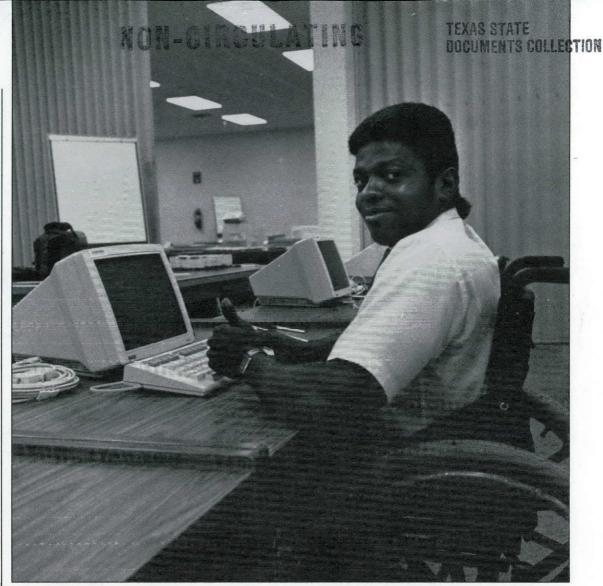
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MEDIA 10 award winners



Drewy counts on the Census Bureau for employment

Paul Drewy has good reason to smile.

Since coming to Austin, things have started looking up for Paul. TRCsponsored training in data entry paid off when he landed a job with the U.S. Census Bureau in Austin.

Paul Drewy's skill at data entry and a friendly smile help him fit in on his first job--at the Census Bureau.

An automobile accident at age 4 left him in a wheelchair with severely limited opportunities. Referral to TRC as a high school student in Tyler has changed that.

Drewy recently began work as a data entry clerk for the Census Bureau. He enters responses to census questionnaires into the government's mainframe computer bank.

Although Drewy's job will last only a year (a drawback for all Census Bureau workers), Roxanne Wheelis, Drewy's TRC counselor in the Austin East Field Office, isn't concerned for his future.

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Whatever happens, we'll have a record-breaking year...

DDS gets a midyear funding boost

SSA reallocates funds for six states

A midyear reallocation of federal funds may enable Disability Determination Services to clear (process) as many as 6,000 more claims before the end of FY 1990 if projected figures hold up.

On March 7, the Social Security Administration released reallocated funds to six states around the country. At midfiscal year, the six states including Texas, had received more claims for disability benefits than were projected at first.

In Texas, case receipts were running 6 percent above projected figures for the first two quarters of FY 90.

Four steps to eliminate eye strain

After a day at work, do your eyes burn? Your head ache? According to the folks at *Suburban News*, Philadelphia Suburban Water Company, your eyestrain may be caused from gazing at your computer screen. They offer these at-your desk remedies:

- 1. Look at an object outside a window or across the room, then focus on the tip of your nose. Switch back and forth quickly, several times. 2. Slowly blink your eyes for a few seconds, then close them tightly.
- **3.** Open and blink again for a few seconds before returning to work. **4.** Close your eyes and think about something soothing.

SSA simultaneously lifted the hiring freeze imposed last November (see December "News & Views").

"SSA was looking at who was spending their budgeted funds and who wasn't," says Dave Ward, assistant deputy commissioner for administrative management services in DDS.

"This is the first time we've gotten funds reallocated at midyear," he says.

Usually, reallocated federal funds are turned back to selected states at the end of the fiscal cycle, according to Ward, too late to address staffing needs.

The reallocation (\$632,859 in all) allows DDS to concentrate on the immediate staffing needs along with increasing funds for consultative examinations (CEs) and medical evidence of record (MERs).

In fact, DDS has formed another disability examiner class (22 newly-hired DEs), which started May 14.

DDS officials worked for months with the regional SSA office on a plan to free up midyear reallocation monies. This groundwork, along with Commissioner Arrell's February trip to Baltimore (with TRC Board Chairman Jerry Kane and Board Member Ray Wilkerson) to visit with SSA Commissioner Gwendolyn King, created the right climate to release the funds.

"We still have needs, especially in medical services; they have been expressed, and we hope they will be met," says Ward

"By having more staff, we can better handle the increased workload in a timely manner," he says.

"Whatever happens, we'll have a record-breaking year ... no doubt about it," says Ward.

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TEXAS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

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Board chairman wants more for people with disabilities

He was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia. In 1948, at the age of two, Jerry Kane, TRC Board chairman, immigrated to the U.S. with his family.

They settled in Corpus Christi where Kane's father, Sam, leased a meat counter in a corner grocery before establishing Sam Kane Beef Processors, Inc. It has since become a major processor of beef in the U.S. with markets worldwide.

Kane worked in the business all the way through school. He graduated from the honors program at the University of Texas school of business administration.

Kane's plans for law school fell through when circumstances required his help with the family business right after graduation.

He now serves as president of the innovative family enterprise, one of the top 10 processors of grain-fed beef in the country.

"Our business has enjoyed favorable growth because we live with it and have invested and continue to invest in technological advances," says Kane. "If you don't keep up with current technology, you find yourself competing at an economic disadvantage."

From his experience in the beef industry, Kane brings to the Board an understanding of budget and fiscal matters. In turn, he receives a deeper insight into vocational and employment issues facing people with disabilities.

Kane finds TRC's management style to be a departure from most other state agencies. "Thanks to Commissioner Arrell, this agency isn't run like a bureaucracy, it's run like a business enterprise," says Kane.



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Jerry Kane has served as TRC Board chairman for six years. "We have one of the finest Boards in state government," he says.

Equally as strong as Kane's commitment to business is his commitment to improving opportunities for Texans with disabilities.

His interest in disabilities stems from an experience with a close family member born with a disabling condition.

When the opportunity came in 1982, Kane eagerly accepted the governor's appointment to the TRC Board. He has served as chairman since 1984.

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Cost of employer health care benefits continues to escalate

The cost of employer-provided health care benefits reached a record high in 1989, according to a newly released national survey. The cost of employer medical plans rose 20.4%, from \$2,160 per employee in 1988 to \$2,600 per employee in 1989.

Furthermore, the survey expects the situation to get worse before it gets better. It estimates the average cost of total health benefits will surpass \$3,200 per employee in 1990.

Employers surveyed pointed to medical price inflation as the most significant factor in the sharp rise in cost. Other reasons given included catastrophic claims, outpatient services costs, AIDS, and mental/health/substance abuse benefits costs.

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TRA returns to sunny Corpus Christi

The Texas Rehabilitation Association will hold its annual conference July 8 - 11 at the Wyndham Hotel in Corpus Christi.

The conference theme this year is "The Spirit of Freedom in Rehabilitation," and several noteworthy figures in rehabilitation will make presentations.

The keynote speaker on Monday July 9 is Nell Carney, commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, speaking about rehabilitation programs in the '90s.

In addition, Joe Owens, executive director of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, will be on hand for the TRC staff meeting from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. July 10.

Other speakers include Bill Brownfield, president of the National Rehabilitation Association, and Dr. Jack Greeson, member of the TRC Medical Advisory Committee.

According to Pat Alba, TRC counselor and chairman of the conference entertainment committee, the conference will include the usual array of recreational activities highlighted by a Monday afternoon volleyball tournament.

"We have planned a great entertainment package along with an exciting conference, so we hope all TRA members and their families come to Corpus and enjoy themselves," says Alba.

Pre-registration deadline for the conference is June 25. For more information on hotel accommodations, call the Wyndham Corpus Christi Hotel, 900 N. Shoreline Blvd., Corpus Christi, Texas 78401. Telephone: 1-800-822-4200.



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Vernon Dement......Editor Susan Antoniewicz....Illustrator Printing Services.....Printing Randy Jennings....Director Kaye Beneke...Assistant Deputy Commissioner

Flood waters destroy Brownwood office

Thunderstorms swept through North Central Texas April 26 dumping up to 15 inches of rain and flooding TRC's Brownwood Field Office.

Flood waters rose to almost four feet in the office destroying virtually all furniture and equipment including computers, phones, filing cabinets, the copier, and the FAX machine.

A TRC emergency command post was set up in the local office of the Texas Employment Commission so that on site reports could be relayed to Central Office.

Charles Tarver, director of lease administration; Russ Howard, Region II administrative officer; and John Stowe, area manager in the Abilene Field Office, surveyed the damage when waters receded on Monday April 30. They immediately pronounced the office totally destroyed.

One of their primary concerns was saving the large number of client files containing records and reports that would be difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct. A representative of Blackmon-Mooring Steamatic was on hand to begin the document restoration process.

By Tuesday, Tarver had secured temporary lease space for the Brownwood office with a nine-month emergency contract.

That morning, Curtis Behrends and Danny Delvige, drivers from the TRC warehouse, left Austin in a truck loaded with office supplies, furniture and equipment bound for the temporary Brownwood Field Office at 2222 Highway 377 South, Unit 3, Brownwood, Texas 76801. Telephone: (915) 646-9518 (same number).

On Wednesday, Don Jones, counselor, opened the office for business again.

During the entire emergency, the Brownwood office phone was forwarded

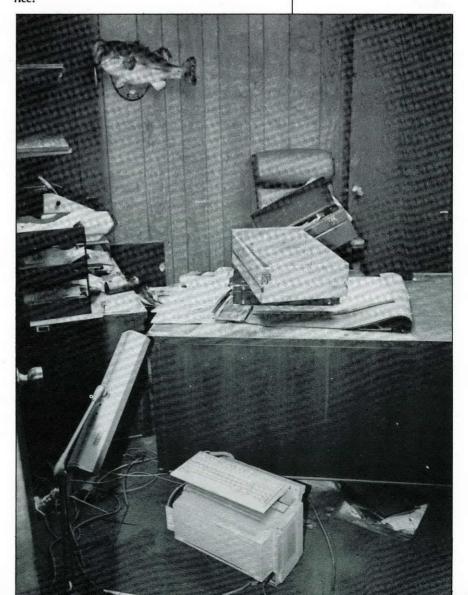
to the home of Wanda Connaway, stenographer in the Brownwood office, so no client calls would go unattended.

Within 10 days after the emergency, the office phone system at the new location was restored.

Ray Minyard, assistant deputy commissioner for administration, congratulated the recovery operations team on their work throughout the ordeal.

"I'm glad we've got the word 'team' in our name; you folks sure have acted like one," he said.

At the height of the Brownwood flood, water rose to four feet in the TRC office. Waters receded leaving case files ruined, furniture and equipment in disarray and a coat of mud and silt throughout the office. Waters
rose to
almost
four feet
in the
office





Editor's Note: If you have items of interest in the various TRC regions (including DDS and Central Office), such as local awards, press coverage, conferences, meetings or other TRC related activities which could appear in Regional Notes, please submit them for consideration to "TRC Today" c/o the Public Information Office

Region I

Joe Rodriguez, counselor in the Eagle Pass Field Office, recently recorded some radio and television public service messages on behalf of the Eagle Pass Independent School District. Our hats off to Joe for using his distinctive and clear voice in such a public-spirited way!

At its quarterly board meeting in El Paso May 11, the Texas Rehabilitation Association chose Lubbock as the site of its 1993 annual conference. The 1991 site is El Paso and the 1992 conference location is Houston.

Region II

TRC staff volunteers were on hand for the Fort Worth Mayor's Committee Job Fair April 24 in Fort Worth. Approximately 310 people with disabilities attended along with 43 employers who were there to screen applicants. Most of the attendees were TRC clients referred by the Commission. Walter Dawes, counselor in the Fort Worth West Field Office, is a familiar face around mayor's committee job fairs. He has helped the committee to organize its job fairs for several years.

Region III

Sherry Poe became the new counselor for the Gonzales Warm Springs Field Office May 14. Poe has a wide range of rehabilitation experience including work with TRC as a private job readiness trainer. She replaces Jerome Duderstadt who transferred to the Texas A & M University Field Office.

Darlene Clemmons, counselor in the Austin East Field Office, left the Commission in April after more than 12 years with TRC.

Region IV

Mario Abraham, counselor in the Clear Lake Field Office, retired in April after 20 years of service with the Commission.

Q.D. Van Orsdell, rehabilitation services technician in the Houston Central Field Office, retired in April after 21 years of TRC service.

Eileen Danabar was selected for the transitional counselor position in the Pasadena Field Office serving students in local school districts.

Region V

The 61st Texas Hospital Association Annual Convention and Exhibit will be held June 3 - 5 at the San Antonio Convention Center. Martin Luker, medical

Second annual Opp



The Second Annual Opportunity Fair for People with Disab drew twice as many employers (40) as last year. Above, a r Texas Employment Commission discusses employment opp job seeker.

professional relations officer, will be on hand at the TRC/DDS exhibit along with TRC field staff in San Antonio.

Region VI

Reuben Taniguchi, former ERS program manager in the Fort Worth West Field Office, was selected to become area manager in the Dallas Northeast Field Office.

The Dallas Southwest Field Office held an open house May 21 to introduce their new location at 1050 N. Westmoreland, Suite 457, Dallas, Texas. Telephone: (214) 339-1895. The new office is at the corner of Westmoreland and Fort Worth Avenue.

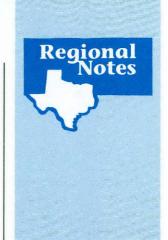
Cindy Suarez, counselor in the Dallas Southeast Field Office, has been reassigned to the Duncanville Field Office. Les Austin, counselor in the Duncanville Field Office, was reassigned to the Dallas Southeast Field Office.

A job fair for people with disabilities was held April 21 at Navarro College in Waxahachie. Bill Davis, counselor in the Corsicana Field Office, represented the Commission at the fair with information on services to employers.

DDS

Since November 1988, Operations Unit 09 has had the highest Program Evaluation Services accuracy rates in DDS. Unit members were recognized for their con-

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ortunity Fair held in Austin



ties May 23 in Austin resentative of the rtunities with a job fair

Almost 1,000 people with disabilities attended the Second Annual Opportunity Fair for People with Disabilities May 23 at the Palmer Auditorium in Austin.

People with all types of disabilities attended the fair to interview for jobs with prospective employers, participate in practice interviews, view adaptive equipment to improve function on the job and increase their knowledge of services available to them.

Over 40 employers were available for interviews and more than 90 vendors, service providers and educational community representatives manned information booths during the fair.

"Last year's fair was an exciting start to get people with disabilities together with prospective employers," says Roxanne Wheelis, job fair chairperson and TRC counselor in the Austin East Field Office. "This year, it wasn't just a job fair; it was an educational opportunity also," she explained.

The event drew support from the YMCA, the Austin, Jaycees, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, the Texas Employment Commission, the Texas Commission for the Blind, the Texas School for the Deaf and numerous other organizations.

Each year, similar events in communities around the state (many sponsored by TRC and many others sponsored by local mayor's committees) help employers learn the advantages of hiring workers with disabilities.

This year,
it wasn't
just a
job fair;
it was an
educational
opportunity.



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tinuations to the group's achievements
April 12. Deputy Commissioner Les
Albrecht, Assistant Deputy Commissioner
for Appellate Operations Carlos Valdez,
and Operations Director Fred Olson
presented certificates to Billye Austin,
Marlene Davis, Linda Deason, Anita
Edwards, Bob Garza, Susan Gaudichon,
Donna Goodenough, LaVonne Hummel,
Sandy Kloesel, Lisa Luera, Mark Mays,
Michelle Prant, Wanda Schmidt, Brad
Scott, Steve Stump, Connie Thomas, Carol
Wallace, Perry Watson, and Kay Chee.

DDS, along with vocational rehabilitation field staff, manned a TRC exhibit booth at the Texas Medical Association Annual Conference May 10 - 12 in Corpus Christi.

Gail Karwoski, disability examiner in Unit 02, continues to coordinate donations of greeting cards to the Travis State School Volunteer Services Council benefitting people with mental retardation. For more information, contact Karwoski at 445-8549.

Four aluminum can recycling containers have been placed in the DDS building at 118 E. Riverside Dr. Representatives of the Austin Ben Hur Shrine will collect and recycle the cans to benefit children at the Shriners Burns Institute in Galveston. Containers are located in the large first floor breakroom, the second floor south break area, the second floor near the elevators and in Staff Development on the third floor.

Central Office

D.L. Fugler, program director of legislative and program development, was recently selected for the newly-created project management director position in the Central Office.

Jerry D. Cooper of Duncanville was designated by Governor Clements as the chairman of the Governor Committee for Disabled Persons to replace A. Kent Waldrep, Jr. who now serves on the TRC Board.

Tip of the Month

With more and more machines answering your calls, pause to consider ways to leave an effective message:

Be prepared.

 Always realize that you may have to leave a message, so know what you're going to say and how you want to say it.

Be polite.

Always make a good impression.

Get to the point.

 Always leave your name and phone number.

Grab the listener's attention.

• Point out the advantages of returning your call.

Kane

Continued from page 3

Kane's goal for his Board tenure is to maximize services to people with disabilities through increasing resources.

Among his biggest frustrations, however, Kane lists the bureaucratic laws creating disincentives for people to go back to work. "I get frustrated by not being able to change them over night," he says.

As if guiding a successful business through rough economic waters and helping map out policy for a human service agency weren't enough, Kane also serves as member of the Health and Human Services Coordinating Council where he recently accepted the chairmanship of its Data and Information Committee.

One might expect so much responsibility to weigh heavily on Kane. "The only things I lose sleep over are the things I can control," he says.

Commissioner's Message Box

I applaud your efforts to establish a health/fitness program within our agency. What would also be nice to see is an employer supported day care located within our agency. Studies have shown that this is an excellent plan because of the benefits that both sides, employer and employee, gain. Since monies being spent on health/fitness can only help some, maybe a day care can benefit more.

There are many ways to address the issues of child care and elder care in an organization. We are forming an intra-agency advisory committee to assess the options and feasibility of establishing a dependent care benefit within TRC. The advisory committee will be made up of volunteer

employees from Central Office, DDS, and from each of the regions. TRC employees already have access to one method of assistance to families with children in day care--the Dependent Care Account in TexFlex. Options used by other organizations include day care centers (which offer several ways to go), accommodations for sick children, direct payment to existing day care facilities (voucher method), referral and information, and more. All options must be investigated, researched and studied in order to determine the optimal approach for TRC in this area. As is always the case, any program involving expenditure of funds for this purpose must be designed in the most efficient way possible. Child care and elder care are definitely areas of importance to TRC. You will be hearing more on this subject in the near future.

Commission adopts new electronic mail system

Submitted by Randee Malmsten, systems analyst in automated services

TRC is taking another step in reducing paper-based communications and postage costs with the release of a new statewide electronic mail system.

June 11, Arrow Mail will be introduced to TRC staff. Arrow Mail will eventually replace MEMO, the E-Mail system that has been used for the past 10 years.

Like MEMO, Arrow Mail is a way to send messages and documents in a matter of seconds to any employee with a PC or terminal.

Arrow Mail is easier to use than MEMO.

Major benefits of the Arrow Mail system are:

- the ability to send mail to people instead of mailboxes
- a display telling you that the mail you sent was received

 the ability to send a document to multiple addressees in a single transmission

For a few weeks, both MEMO and Arrow Mail will be available. During this time, Arrow Mail will be used for product previews and training.

MEMO remains the "official" E-Mail system until its retirement on August 10th.

Training for VR field office employees will be arranged by regional systems support officers and management support specialists. The customer informatio center staff will provide training for Central Office and Disability Determination Services employees.

For more information on the transition from MEMO system to Arrow Mail, contact the customer information center at the Central Office at (512) 483-4540



Awards

TRC Service

Region II

10 years:

Rebecca Petronella

15 years:

Robert Dann

20 years:

Tom Hudgens Roxie Lumpkin

Region V

10 years:

Euwanna McCarty

20 years:

Ed L. White Joseph Mosel

Region VI

10 years:

Gary L. Kirby Eunice R. Johnson Darla M. King Marcia L. Haley

DDS

15 years:

Wanda G. Guidry

20 years:

Mary Burkett

Central Office

10 years

Suzanne Diffen

15 vears

Cynthia D. Howard Sue Ellen Royal

20 years:

Charles Tarver Tommy Williams



Gordon Blocker (left) and Bob Lukeman won a Barbara Jordan Media Award for "Journey from Flanders," a sequel to Broken Rhymes," winner of a 1985 Barbara Jordan Award. The sequel chronicles the current activities of four young men with head injuries who were introduced in "Broken Rhymes."

> Entry forms for the 1990-91 Barbara Jordan Media Awards are available from GCDP at (512) 483-4384. The deadline is September 30.

Barbara Jordan Media Awards Winners for 1990 TV News Feature Janice Miles, KENS-TV 5, San Antonio Print - Feature Article Barbara Boughton, The Houston Post Audio-Visual Lukeman-Blocker Productions Gordon Blocker and Bob Lukeman Public Relations Texas Department of Human Services John Kerr Special Contributions - Organization

Texas Commission for the Blind

GCDP names media award winners

Five new winners of the Barbara Jordan Media Awards were announced at a reception May 24 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Antonio.

The awards program, begun seven years ago by the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons, recognizes media professionals for their contributions toward eliminating social, attitudinal and physical barriers and encouraging equal opportunities for quality of life for people with disabilities.

Categories range from television to print media to radio, among others, with a special category for outstanding contributions which may not fit into other categories.

Approximately 16 judges are chosen each year from professionals in the communications, public relations and disability-related fields.

According to Cindy Counts, information specialist for GCDP, awards are not always given in all 17 categories. "The judges are sensitive enough to know what we're after; they won't give an award if it's not quality," she says.

Often, winners of media awards go on to become judges in the program.

Janice Miles, previous judge and 1990 award winner from KENS-TV 5 in San Antonio, sums up her feelings about the award:

"Working in television has helped me increase the impact of a message I've tried to carry all my life. Awareness is the key which will unlock doors which have been closed to people with disabilities.

"It is my fervent hope that my stories may raise the consciousness of people to barriers in their communities, and help dispel negative connotations about people with disabilities in our language and in our minds."

Judging for the 1990 awards was over last January, but the nominations process began in January 1989. "The Barbara Jordan Awards is a year-round process," says Counts.

"Next year will be critical for the Barbara Jordan Awards because of interest in the Americans with Disabilities Act," says Counts." Here is a letter from client Paul Guiollotte to Bill Brown and Polly Walton, counselors in the Beaumont Field Office:

"As I was talking with some friends over the weekend and telling them all about what TRC and you had done for me, I realized I never took the time to really say thank you. This letter is just to let you and TRC know how much I really appreciate all that you have done for me. Not only for the financial support, but mostly the words of encouragement and for putting up with me over the years. You have helped me through some of my most difficult moments. You have given me much more than I could ever hope to return."

Following is a portion of a letter written to Commissioner Arrell from Paul Richeson, employee assistance counselor at Southern Pacific Transportation Company in El Paso:

"For the past several years, the El Paso, Texas, office of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, and the Southern Pacific Railroad Employee Assistance Program have been working jointly with troubled/disabled employees assisting them in getting back to work and dealing with numerous problems associated with long-term recovery. Mr. Keith Fulp, of the El Paso TRC staff, has bent every effort to accommodate our clients in their rehabilitation efforts. Although the entire TRC staff has been helpful and supportive, I especially want to mention Ms. Luie Tirres, the TRC counselor assigned to work with me and Southern Pacific disabled employees. Her tireless, dedicated efforts lend great credence and success to TRC and my company's goal of returning safe and healthy employees to the work place."

Marcelino Rodriguez, counselor, and Jackie Miller, rehabilitation services technician, received this letter from one of their clients:

"I feel that if it weren't for you and your help, I wouldn't have this great job now. I really hope that I can do you justice by smiling every day and remembering what wonderful people you are. Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart."



Continued from page 1

"He's a positive thinking guy," says Wheelis. "He won't have any problem at all finding another job. All he needs are the skills he already has and a chance."

Drewy would like to go back to Tyler to work. But he's not sure. Job opportunities are limited in his home town.

For now, Drewy likes his job. His coworkers like him. Rolling through the long hallways, Paul is often hailed by friends.

At quitting time, Drewy usually draws a crowd at the curb next to the parking lot. They come to see him jump the curb with his wheelchair, just like a skate boarder, on his way to his car. There is a ramp, but he'd rather do it his way.

The Census Bureau has several thousand employees at their Austin headquarters. Paul feels very fortunate to work there.

"This place is very accessible," he says, "Everyone has been very helpful. I just rolled in and went to work."



"I just rolled in and went to work."



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The Annual Coalition of Texans with Disabilities Fun Run was held April 29 in Memorial Stadium on the University of Texas campus in Austin. Two hundred and thirty-two entrants ran laps for pledges from over 1,500 sponsors this year. The Fun Run drew wide support from TRC employees in-cluding Commissioner Arrell. He endured the near 100-degree heat inside the stadium to complete 20 laps for the cause. Above, Commissioner Arrell stops for a "breather" with Patty Anderson, executive director of United Cerebral Palsy (standing) and Judy Westbrook, TRC counselor in the Austin North Field Office.



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