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TRC TODAY

TRC TODAY is a newsletter for the employees of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

Vol. 15 No. 12
December 1993

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RUSSIA

AN INSIDE VIEW

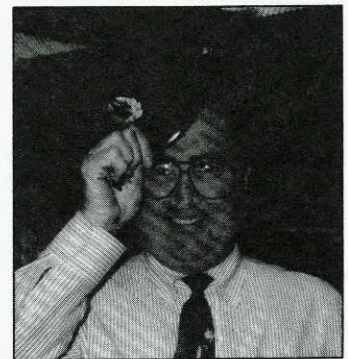
Delvin Sparks just returned from a second trip to Russia. He isn't the typical tourist, however. His trips are humanitarian efforts in which he works with Russian and Ukrainian government officials to deliver supplies to two orphanages and a children's hospital.

"The first thing you notice in Russia is that everything is broken and their technology is 50 years behind us," says Sparks. "And there is such a great need in Russia for everyday things we take for granted — toothbrushes, combs, medicines."

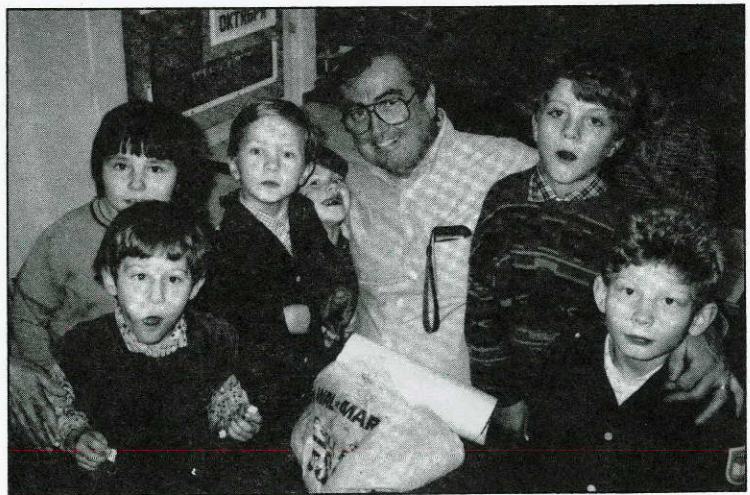
"Once you get beyond that, you see how friendly the people are. Even though there were terrific needs in the orphanages, the people caring for the children were very loving. One teacher had been there 40 years and I felt privileged to visit with her."

"It was also great to share our knowledge. It reminded me of how far persons with disabilities have come in this country. In comparison, our agency is a space shuttle where as they are on still on horseback."

Sparks is currently gathering items and medical supplies to send over. If anyone knows of available medical suppliers who might wish to contribute, they can reach him at 512/483-4141.



A lot of items are for sale in Russia these days. Delvin Sparks bought this Russian officer's cap for \$4 on the street



Sparks with children in one of the orphanages.

Good news for DDS

The month of November brought glad tidings to the folks at DDS. First, the whereabouts of DDS's new office building was decided and then, DDS received word that the hiring freeze was over.

"This good news is well deserved," says Kenneth Vogel, deputy commissioner for DDS. "Last year we set a new record at 226,000 cases cleared. That would not have happened without the dedication and hard work of our employees."

New digs

Out of bids, the winner was a 34-acre lot on the corner of Ben White and Montopolis, submitted by the Brock Consulting Group, Inc. DDS's 'chunk' will be 12-15 acres, depending on the final design of the building.

It is a "build-to-suit" project which means DDS will be involved from the

ground up. In the next month, DDS will be working with the bidder and architect to develop a general building design. Although specifics are not known at this point, we do know that the new building will be 184,000 net usable square feet, which is almost 20,000 more square feet than the building plans that fell through last year.

The targeted move-in date is still sometime between April 1995 and April 1996. We'll keep you posted on further developments.

New employees

It is anticipated that 60 full-time positions will be added by March 1994. Of these positions, 43 will be in the operations units and the remaining 17 in Administrative Management Services. Vogel hopes that bringing all units up to their authorized levels will have long-term beneficial results.

Overtime will again be available to employees who wish to take advantage of it, although at a reduced budget than that of last year. Even with the reduction in overtime monies, there will be a significant number of overtime weekends available.

Although SSA increased staff, they also increased workload expectations to go with it. The workload expectation for FY 94 is 230,679 —approximately 6,000 more produced than in FY 93.

"These expectations will pose a challenge for all of us," says Vogel. "Recently, the functional job descriptions for examiners were published and they do not currently match the production expectation from SSA. We plan to stick with the current job descriptions, however, since they were made in good faith. Utilizing overtime by those who choose and achieving 'extra protection' from those exceeding their expectations will help make up the difference."



Ideas travel by long distance

On Nov. 22, disability advocates across the country took advantage of teleconferencing in a big way to discuss President Clinton's Health Care Reform Plan. Sponsored by the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 131 sites were on-line at one time. The Brown-Heatly Building's Public Hearing Room was one of them, where over 50 people attended from different advocacy groups and other organizations. Estimations were that about 6,000 people listened in on the event.

The teleconference was an opportunity for disability community leaders to hear and discuss, in-depth, the merits and short-comings of the Clinton Health Care Plan. Its format was like a live radio show with Justin Dart as host and a panel of experts from the Administration and the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities. After a description of the Plan's consequences for people with disabilities, questions were taken from 20 pre-selected sites, Austin being one of the sites.

1993 Top Employees of the Year

This year, the two top Employee of the Year honors went to Deborah Canchola, RST in the Lubbock West Field Office and Ted Thayer, program specialist in Central Office. The winners received \$1,000 in savings bonds and other prizes. "There were terrific fundraising efforts that allowed us to give great prizes this year," says Deeanne Barnett, one of the event coordinators. "It was great to see all the support."



Mary Valentini, Region I director, with Debbie Canchola.

Deborah Canchola, RST, Lubbock West Field Office

Debbie's will always go that "extra mile" to serve clients. Her enthusiasm is contagious, both to clients and staff alike and she can always be counted on to give 100 percent. She'll stop by a doctor's office to pick up or deliver medical records, go to vendors' sites to train and resolve problems — meeting clients there to ensure they get the right equipment.



Max Arrell, commissioner, and Ted Thayer.

Ted Thayer Program Specialist, Central Office

Ted's devotion to his job as program specialist, his careful guidance and mentoring of less experienced staff and his willingness to travel almost 50 percent of the time has helped untold thousands of TRC clients with the severest of disabilities cope effectively with the demands of life and work.

Ted retired in September but, even after retirement, he scored big as Employee of the Year.

REGIONAL WINNERS

GROUP I

Deborah Canchola
Lubbock West FO

Barbara Pharo
Arlington FO

Shirley Koehler
Austin RO

Judy Zwahr
Rosenburg FO

Brenda Gescheidle
Gonzales FO

Barbara Graves
Sherman FO

Carmen T. Vasquez
Unit 23

Ann Woods
Administrative Services

REGION I

REGION II

REGION III

REGION IV

REGION V

REGION VI

DDS

CO

GROUP II

Deborah Peterson
El Paso Central FO

Anne Williams
Wichita Falls FO

Dwight Lindsley
South Austin FO

Ruan Moreno
La Marque FO

Kenneth Bowen
Victoria FO

Bertha Hinojosa
Dallas RO

Mike F. Jones
Unit 20

Ted Thayer
Programs



Region I

Patricia Flores was selected as AST in the El Paso East Field Office.

Kevin Hutchins was selected as counselor in the Lubbock South Field Office.

Elizabeth Morris was selected as RST in the Odessa Field Office.

Suzie Gallegos was selected as RST in the El Paso Central Field Office.

Region II

Jerry Hickman, area manager in the Wichita Falls Field Office, received an award recognizing his contributions to the TexSES Supported Employment Project at the Helen Farabee Conference on Nov. 8. Good Work, Jerry!

Region III

Janice Tucker and Laura Ladd were selected as RSTs and Robert Wilson was selected as counselor in the Killeen Field Office.

Virma Patterson-Johnson was selected as RST at the Project Chance Office in Austin.

Gwen Beckley was selected as RST for the Crockett Field Office.

Shirley Bell was selected as RST for the new TRC/DHS Airport Field Office in Austin.

Region IV

Emma Adair was selected as RST for the Houston West Field Office.

Region V

Eugene Aguilar was selected as counselor in the San Antonio South Field Office.

Region VI

Nancy Roberts was selected as counselor for the School Program in the Metrocrest Field Office. She comes to us from the Dallas Epilepsy Association where she was the employment training specialist in their Supported Employment Program.

Mary Lou Burris was selected as MSS in the Dallas Southwest Field Office, transferring from the Dallas Northwest Field Office.

DDS

Elizabeth Gregowicz was selected as associate commissioner for Operations. She will assume her new duties Jan. 1. Gregowicz is coming to us from the Arizona DDS, where she was branch manager in Tucson. There, she was responsible for program operations, budget preparation, enactment and oversight. Prior to this, she served as unit supervisor for 10 years and examiner for seven years.

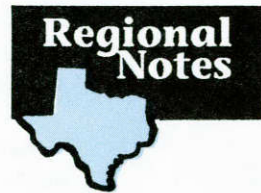
The following were selected as examiners for DDS: Lyle Schafer, Jack Pfister, Katheryn Rogers Graves, Rosario Silguero, Virginia Aldridge, Jenena Kurtz, Mimi Tran, Jose Fernandez, Muluallem Gebrewold, Valerie King, Lynn Scheske, Marjie Swofford, Edna Rhambo, Marilee Ritter, Donald Martin, Jody Miclette, Mark Dean, Cecilia Gonzalez, Debra Jenkinson, Angela Jennings and Jeffrey Gigliotti.

Amie Mosley and Rose Williams were selected as disability services technicians. Latonya Brown was selected as a medical services technician.

Central Office

Frank Perdue was selected as program specialist for New Facility Development. Returning from retirement, Perdue will again provide technical assistance to new Community Rehabilitation Programs.

Andrea Sargent-Fambles left TRC to become assistant chief, Transportation Division at the Attorney General's Office. This will place her in charge of the day-to-day operations of a large unit of attorneys and other staff. Congratulations, Andrea!



November 1993 Service Awards

Region I
20 years
Randy Jacobs

Region II
10 years
Elayne Halkias
Billie Van Buren
20 years
Laura Rettig
25 years
Barby McCarley

Region III
20 years
Clifford Hughes

Region V
20 years
Jaime de los Santos

Region VI
20 years
Carolyn Cassell

DDS
10 years
Charles Crain
Gloria Rodriguez
15 years
Shirley McKamie
25 years

Commissioner's Message Box

Q: I think Audix is a wonderful system, it is useful in a lot of ways but the requirement of a real person in the call path before Audix renders the system useless is frustrating to me and others I have talked to. I think most people are used to machines and prefer to use them as a second choice. Advantages of using Audix without a third party:

- No missed messages;
- No misinterpreted messages;
- The calling party can leave a long message with many details that would be very difficult for a person to capture;
- Very efficient and saves lots of time for the caller; and

- Frees time for the person who would have to take the message.

A: Thank you for your message on the advantages of Audix. Audix is a tool, like any other, and when properly used, can make us all more effective in our jobs. In the Brown-Heatly Building we have been fortunate to have many automated functions for our convenience, of which Audix is one.

Our clients, consumers and disability advocates, on the other hand, are far removed from these automated advantages. They tell me they would prefer to have a person answer the phone rather than a machine. We are in the people business and it stands to

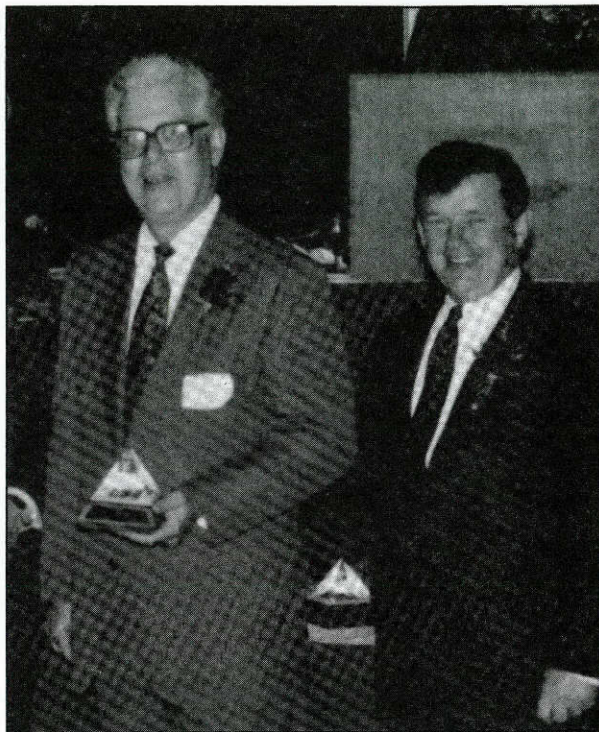
reason that we need to keep a personal touch in our manner of doing business and serving clients. I would be very disappointed if we allowed a personal convenience to become a source of agitation for those we work with and those we serve.

But, I think there is some middle ground here. Once an added person is in the path of the caller, that person can offer the caller the option of leaving a message on Audix (or getting a message from Audix). This places the caller in the position of choosing the advantages of automation rather than being forced to accept it.

I would appreciate your helping me to keep as much personal communication and appropriate technology in our daily activities as possible.



If we don't hire our own clients, how can we expect anyone else to? They're qualified and they deserve it!



Bob Marx and Jerry Cooper, former chair, Texas Governor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities.

Walking your talk

Region VI was awarded "Public Employer of the Year" by the Dallas Mayor's Committee. Bob Marx, regional director, accepted the award, which is a beautiful glass pyramid.

"I'm really proud of the Region VI staff, and I'm proud that we are hiring our own clients," says Marx. "If we don't hire our own clients, how can we expect anyone else to? They're qualified and they deserve it!"

TODAY

TRC Today is published by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for distribution to its employees and retirees throughout the state. We welcome submissions for publication, but reserve the right to edit or screen materials according to newsletter policy. Address submissions or inquiries to Randy Jennings, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 4900 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2399; or telephone (512) 483-4421.

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