



# trc today

*An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission*

*a New Year . . .  
a Fresh Start . . .  
a new chapter  
in TRC waiting  
to be written . . .*

# 1998

*If we advance confidently in the direction  
of our dreams and endeavor to live the life  
we have imagined, then we will meet with  
a success unexpected in common hours.*

*- Henry David Thoreau*



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Texas Rehabilitation  
Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, Texas 78751-2399  
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## Happy New Year ...

### TRC gears up for the new millennium

**T**here is no question about it: the days of TRC's relatively small organizational structure are over. TRC is in the transition toward a structure that offers increased emphasis on communication, analysis and service delivery.

On Jan. 5, Commissioner Arrell introduced modifications to TRC's organizational structure. These modifications will help us maintain the excellent record of service delivery that our clients have come to expect.

"We're gearing up for the new millennium," says Arrell. "In 1998, organizational changes, new faces and upgrades to automation will help us do that. They should improve our services to persons with disabilities and provide responsiveness to our legislative leadership and federal partners. Basically, we're putting staff and resources where most needed to face the challenges we see ahead of us."

These modifications to the TRC Central Office reporting structure will in no way interrupt client or claimant service delivery. Consumer relationships with counselors, disability examiners, and other TRC staff remain unchanged while the mission and the goals of the agency benefit from the new reporting relationships.

The following are highlights of the new relationships:

#### *New Organizational Relationships*

In Rehabilitation Services, the deputy commissioner for programs is now responsible for managing program operations at the Central Office while the deputy commissioner for field and external operations has oversight of field operations and maintains the agency's excellent external relations function.

With over 20 years of TRC experience (16 of those years were in the field), Mary Wolfe will assume the role of deputy commissioner for field/external relations.

"Much of TRC's reputation is built upon our relationships with the people we serve and those external to the agency's operations," Wolfe says. "TRC's reputation is everything. The field has consistently produced such fine work, and I see a tremendous opportunity to publicize and advocate on the wide range of excellent services that this agency provides. I am excited by the challenges and opportunities that face the agency

as we head toward the turn of the century."

TRC will also have newly formed management information systems and GIS units designed to give TRC a centralized location to gather statistical information. This will allow TRC to provide quick and consistent information to our state and federal partners. This new department will reside under Automated Services, which now reports directly to the chief of staff.

In DDS, a shift in responsibilities at the associate commissioner level will give both managers a wider scope and perspective of DDS operations. Associate Commissioner Liz Gregowicz will assume responsibilities for administrative services while Associate Commissioner Kay Chee takes the reins of program operations. Staff will not see immediate changes in day-to-day operations.

#### *Automation upgrades*

1998 will bring significant improvements to TRC's automated system. The year starts off with an electronic mail upgrade called "Outlook." Also,

new hardware will be installed in all field offices that will increase speed and power for many software applications.

Outlook is a powerful electronic mail system that will be easy to learn for those who are proficient in cc:Mail. Outlook has contacts, tasks, calendars and scheduling included, with some new features like notes. Separate software, such as Organizer, is no longer needed. Archives will be converted and archive folders will be easier to maintain than in cc:Mail.

HRD and selected trainers in the regions will provide basic Outlook training to staff on or near the day of installation. Computer Based Training (CBT) will be available and will allow folks to learn Outlook at their own pace and as a reference tool.

#### *A new face*

TRC welcomes Dr. Mark Race as our medical director, a position vacated 16 months ago when Dr. Payne retired. "It took us a long time, but we wanted the right person in here," said Commissioner Arrell. "With his background working in private practice and with our local VR staff in Tyler and his rehabilitation involvement nationally, we got a perfect fit."

Dr. Race received his M.D. from the University of Texas Medical School at Houston in 1982 and completed his internship and residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at the UT Health and Science Center, San Antonio. Since starting private practice as a physiatrist in

Tyler in 1985, Dr. Race has actively advocated for people with disabilities at national, state and local levels through his association with the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. He also served as program director of Day Neuro/Traumatic Brain



*TRC's new medical director, Dr. Mark Race.*

Injury Program at Tyler Rehabilitation Hospital and Medical Director and chief of the department of physical medicine & rehabilitation of East Texas Medical Center.

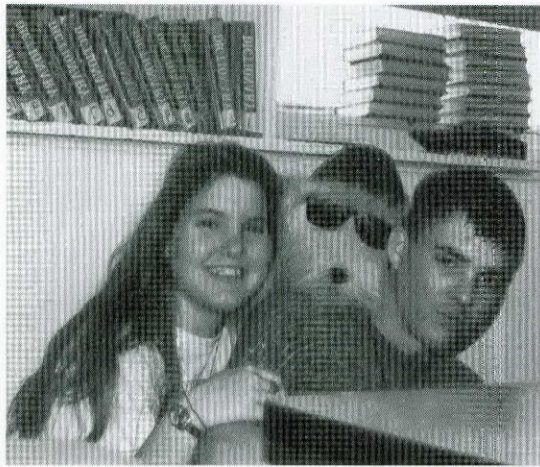
Dr. Race says there is a spectrum of needs and services from the ambulance to the job, and there is a huge gap between the acute care hospital and employment. He comes with a strong rehabilitation background besides just being in the trenches and dealing with people from ICU through vocational rehabilitation. "I have a unique perspective of how patients pass through the system and eventually become VR clients," says Race. "My goal is to smooth that pathway."

"Dr. Race will be an asset to Vocational Rehabilitation and Disability Determination Services for TRC," says Linda Loucks, director of BSSU.

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and resources where most  
needed to face the challenges  
we see ahead of us.*



# Something to Bark About!



Above: Kelly and Johnny Hammer get acquainted with "Beavis Bowser." Kelly and Johnny are students at Hallettsville High School. Below: Lynn Scheske tells students about TRC with help from puppet, "Beavis Bowser."



With "Beavis Bowser" snugly wrapped around her waist and wearing a Texas-sized smile, Lynn Scheske launches into her "cool" routine with the students at Hallettsville High School. Beavis, a stuffed dog puppet, wears sunglasses, moves his head and arms, talks, and even sings to get the kids' attention.

"I can't wait to do the Beavis show," says Lynn. "If I could just bark, watch out! Maybe it's the actress in me, but I love my job as a TRC counselor. I want to make a point with these kids that we are here to help. They can relate to the dog and remember what TRC means. And I like to make it fun for everyone, including me."

When Lynn learned that she would be

helping students at several high schools in her area, she wanted to do something unique. While on vacation with her family at Disney World, she saw a dog puppet and thought, "That's it!"

She made up a skit about Beavis Bowser – a dog with a disability, and before long, she and Beavis went on the road. "Whether you want to retain your present job or need training, TRC can help you reach your goals," says Beavis. Lynn and Beavis perform at several schools in south central Texas, explaining how TRC helped Beavis overcome his disability and launch his career as the lead in a band called the "Howlin' Harmonics."

Before moving to Texas from Florida in 1981, Lynn worked 13 years as an SSI claims representative for the Social Security Administration. Her plans to transfer to Social Security in Texas did not work out, so she went to work as a disability examiner at DDS, commuting from Gonzales to Austin every day. When a counselor position opened up at Warm Springs, she applied and got the job.

Lynn says she has had other jobs she liked, but the focus was on the process. But at TRC, it is different. "It's the results that count, not the process," says Lynn. "What I love most about working for TRC is that everyone is so supportive of each other. Brenda Gescheidle, my RST, is my main source of inspiration and motivation, and our supervisor (Ken Bowen) encourages cooperation and creativity. The end results are what we are all looking for, and being creative helps you get there faster."

## Employees who received 12 Maximizers during December

| DDS INDIVIDUALS    | DDS TEAMS |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Veronica Monsivais | Unit 4    |
| Cynthia Jaimes     | Unit 22   |
| Carolyn Matthews   | Unit 23   |
| Norma Gonzalez     | Unit 60   |

REGION 2  
Virginia Davis  
Bobbi Shell

REGION IV  
Sherrie Bonnette  
Paulette Davis  
Francis Drepaul  
Deanna Edwards  
Tenia Fluellen  
Beth Frank  
Larry Gladden  
Lonnie James  
Kathy Kelley  
Tammy Miller  
Rory Wechtenhiser  
Pat Wilson

MAXIMIZERS

## DDS braces for increased workloads in '98



September 1997 DE class graduates are: Front row (L-R) Mick Mickler, Judy Bywater, Lizz Cutney (trainer) Paula Bilton, Sandy Quarles, Martha Unland, Gene Kile; 2nd row - Jacintha Cowan, Ruth Harris, Elaine Mittell, Robbin Hosek, Paula Pfister (trainer), Nelda Whitelock, Ruben Cano, Sandra DeLeon, Jean Batot; Back row - Perry Watson (Staff Development manager), Jose Loera, Michael Arrendondo, Milton Powell, Wayne Bogan (trainer), Darryl Harris, Rob Graham (trainer). Not pictured: Sandra Herbst

New DE class graduates are expected to hit the ground running as DDS prepares for additional workloads in 1998. On Dec. 17, 1997, the Social Security Administration announced that 45,000 children nationwide who had their SSI disability benefits ceased under stricter eligibility provisions of the 1996 welfare reform law will have their cases reviewed. Additionally, families of children who lost benefits but did not appeal that decision will be given a second opportunity to do so.

This review will result in an additional workload for DDS, which is already expecting a large workload of Continuing Disability Review cases. Additional specialized units have been formed to handle the reviews and the CDR cases. Many of these cases will require disability hearings. These hearings will be conducted by recently selected DDS Hearing Officers who will be traveling throughout the state.



# TRC focuses on a decade of quality

*We don't remain good if we  
don't always strive to become better. – Gottfried Keller*

"Time flies" is a particularly relevant expression at TRC this month. TRC's Quality Task Force has been working since 1987 on defining, measuring, recognizing and improving quality rehabilitation services.

Today –10 years later–TRC management continues to instill the quality message, and the task force has kept its focus on continuous improvement. Through this important process we learned that quality is what our customers say it is – not what management theories define. TRC's efforts ensure that the quality message is heard across the agency.

"We have learned a lot in the past 10 years," says Commissioner Arrell. "I have no doubt that in the next 10 years we will con-

tinue to focus on the ever-changing needs of our customers, and we will direct the service-delivery system to meet those changing needs."

"Texas stands out nationally in the services we provide," says Terry Smith, chair of the Quality Task Force. "That comes down to one thing: quality people who do quality work. I am proud of TRC and what we do to provide the quality services our customers have come to expect."

To commemorate our 10-year history of quality, see the special online edition recognizing just a few of the efforts that TRC staff put forth to ensure our clients get the best services possible.

[www.trcnet/trctoday/online.html](http://www.trcnet/trctoday/online.html)

## RehabSys keeps getting better

**I**n addition to the new year organizational changes, TRC field staff are seeing changes in the automated RehabSys with the Jan. 12 release. The primary difference is the service record is no longer connected to the IWRP. "This simplifies the planning process with clients so counselors can focus more on the client and not so much on the system," said Jackie Feinberg, project manager. "What this means is that counselors can now write an IWRP for a client without having to create a service record first."

Because of this change, "counseling and guidance" will no longer be automatically included, so it will have to be entered just like any other service we provide. Also, counselors and RSTs will need to decide how to communicate the need to create service records for the services identified on the IWRP.

Another feature that field staff will like is that the window returned after generating a purchase order will provide the purchase order number as well as the caseload budget balance.

The shorter caseload action list this month is a result of Central Office clean up of 1.4

million transactions reducing them to 380,000 in the system. Actions for cases closed before Sept. 1, 1997, actions with completion dates and actions that don't result in another action were deleted from the system. Future actions with completion dates will be deleted every 30 days. Now that the list is more manageable, counselor/RST teams will want to take advantage of this system feature.

## Across the State

### Welcome Aboard

Brenda Angerstein, RST  
Francis Clason, counselor  
Karla Morris, counselor  
Douglas Smith, counselor  
Margie Scott, secretary  
Jesse Bailey, counselor  
Dennis Wicker, counselor  
Wanda Arredondo, counselor  
Deborah Soares, secretary  
Jesse James IV, administrative technician

### Retirements

Four employees in Central Office retired on December 31. They include: Richard Payson, system analyst who had over 27 years of state service; Milton Turnipseed, program administrator, with 25 years service; Lupe Ojeda, purchaser, who worked for the state for 31 years; and Lee Henderson, staff services officer, with 29 years of service.

Others who retired December 31 were: Elaine Coy, administrative technician in the Austin Regional Office, with 20 years of service; and Geneva King, counselor in the Houston Field Office Central, with 29 years.

### Congratulations

Doris Hickerson, area manager in Houston, moved to the Fort Worth Central Unit. Tim Spong was selected to fill the area manager position in the East Austin Field Office.

Shawn Saladin was selected as the area manager at the Houston East End Supervisory Unit.

### Deaths

Former ERS Counselor Stan Tidwell passed away. He had worked in the Wichita Falls Field Office for many years.

## Already we've seen results ...

*From June 2 through Nov. 30 an average of 929 daily users have:*

- added 35,856 new cases to the system
- completed 242,684 service requests
- recorded 28,000 IWRPs electronically
- acknowledged receipt of 232,778 goods and services
- recorded 1.2 million case actions
- retrieved 163,920 IntraNet reports



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## State Service Awards Jan. 1998

### 10 years

Alicia Benavidez  
Jay Cawthon  
Rhonda Detienne  
Cynthia Suarez  
Roberta Davies  
Carline Geiger

### 15 years

James Wilson  
Minerva Bertolino  
Jane Ann Hager  
Steven Heath

### 20 years

Lori Calihan  
Barbara Duve  
David Jourdan  
Jean Mize  
William Glenn  
William Smith

### 25 years

Ed Buffaloe  
Patrick Foster  
Donald Orgeron  
Linda Shaw

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