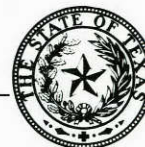
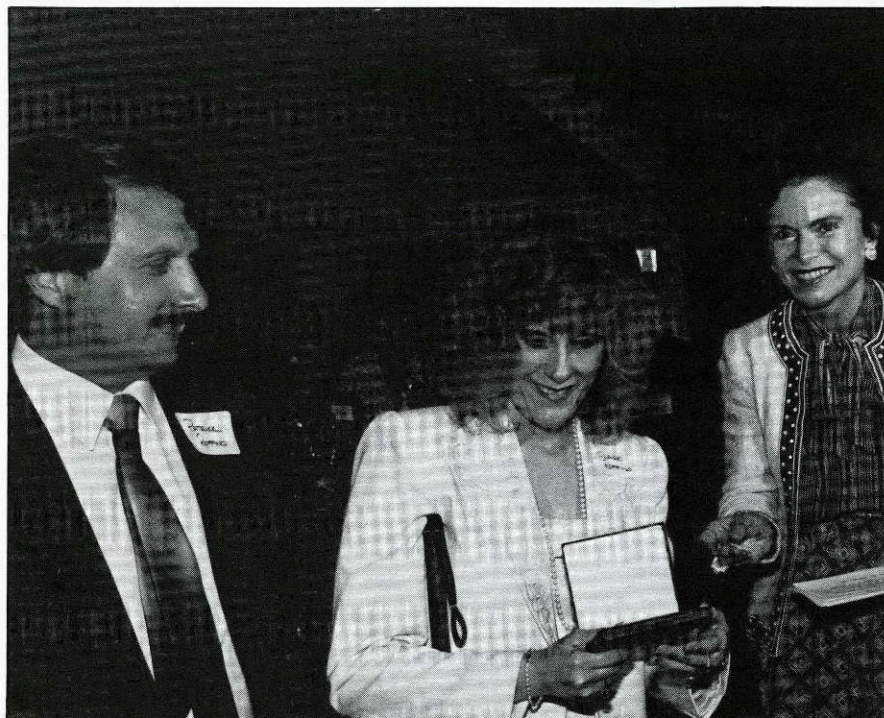


REPORT



TEXAS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
4800 North Lamar, Austin, Texas 78756 512/459-2500

Vol. V, No. 2 June 1988



ROFFINO RECEIVES BARBARA JORDAN AWARD

Claire Barlow Roffino, a member of the Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee has received a Barbara Jordan Award from the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons. Claire who was recently appointed to the GCDP by Governor William P. Clements, Jr., produces a bi-monthly microwave cooking magazine in braille called "The Microwave Times." The magazine, which is also available on a tone-indexed cassette, features an average of 45 pre-tested recipes per issue and tips and techniques of microwave cooking. "The need for the braille and the cassette versions of 'Microwave Times' merited an award," says Roffino, "because of the great void that exists on the availability of publications of this nature." Pictured above is Claire as she receives her award from Mrs. Rita Clements while Mr. Roffino looks on during the presentations held at the Governor's Mansion. The awards are presented annually by the GCDP to individuals and organizations in the communications media for their part in increasing public understanding of the potential of individuals with disabilities as well as the problems they face.

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BOOKLET FOCUSES ON DOG GUIDES

The Commission has developed a pocket-size booklet that outlines the rights and responsibilities of dog guide users in the State of Texas. "Any Place You Take Your Eyes, I Can Take My Dog Guide" is being made available to numerous businesses and governmental and civic organizations throughout the state. Designed as a public information service by the Commission, this publication was produced largely in response to inquiries from consumers and other citizens concerned over the lack of information surrounding the use of dog guides by persons who are blind. Anyone interested in receiving a free copy of this booklet may contact the agency's Public Information Office at 512/459-2612.

A Word from the Director

At the time when most state workers are planning summer vacations, many of our employees are gearing up for their busiest time of the year. Having just attended a portion of our first summer activity at Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center for high school juniors and seniors and their parents, I am excited about what we have planned for young people in our various summer programs. The weekend seminar entitled "From School to Work" brought from 25 to 30 families to the Center, not to be told what to do, but to learn techniques that will aid high school students and their parents to function as family units during the next few years as these students with visual impairments transition from school to work or further training. During the week-end, one staff member was approached by a parent who expressed eloquently what the program is about: "We came feeling that we were drowning, but now feel that we have been thrown a life raft."

During the two and one-half years I have been director, we have aggressively attacked the problems blind and visually impaired students have historically had in making the transition from the educational setting to the work world. In addition to the week-end seminar, we will also be working again with several more students this summer in what we smilingly refer to as our S.W.E.A.T. program (Summer Work Experience, Austin, Texas). This program was so successful last year that we started receiving inquiries early in the year about its availability again. This cooperative program provides great work experience for a few young people in Austin with visual disabilities who find the summer job market a difficult egg to crack. We hope to expand it statewide if sufficient funds become available.

Our new technology loaner program provides selected students with high tech equipment in their homes so that they can boost their studying and homework techniques during the school year. This equipment stays in their homes through the summer and will allow young blind people to continue improving on their computer skills during the summer months.

These and other programs designed specifically over the past two years for young people with visual disabilities are particularly rewarding, not only when we see the increased level of confidence with which they approach life, but also when we see a better prepared young adult entering the work world.

We will be including a request for adequate resources in the next appropriation cycle to continue these summer programs as well as expand them so that more young people can benefit from earlier intervention by the Commission, thereby making their roads to independent lifestyles considerably shorter than in the past.

Sincerely,



Pat D. Westbrook
Executive Director

COMMISSION SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT

The Commission's governing board will hold their annual public hearing August 15 at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin. Each year, the Commission reserves this meeting for the purpose of hearing from concerned citizens regarding the services and programs offered through the agency. Anyone wishing to address the Board is encouraged to attend the hearing which is slated to start at 10:00 a.m. The Board is also interested in hearing comments regarding the need for new or expanded services so as to include such input in the formulation of the agency's appropriations request to the Texas Legislature. For those persons unable to attend the hearing, written comments are encouraged, including braille. Address all correspondence to the Chairman, Texas Commission for the Blind, P.O. Box 12866, Austin, Texas 78711. For more information regarding this public forum contact the Commission via the toll-free number 1-800-252-5204.

NOTICE

If you wish to continue receiving the **REPORT**, Texas law requires that you notify us in writing. Your name will be removed from the mailing list if you do not do so. To remain on the mailing list merely clip your mailing address label and return it to our Public Information Office. Thank you for your cooperation.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

- **ARNOLDO VERA** is the new regional supervisor in the Commission's San Antonio District Office. A member of the Commission's staff since 1971, VERA served as the agency's regional supervisor in Harlingen prior to his transfer to San Antonio. He will also be responsible for field operations out of the Victoria District Office.
- **RALPH RANGEL**, a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Harlingen, has been promoted to the regional supervisor slot in South Texas. He will be responsible for field operations in Laredo, Corpus Christi and Harlingen. Rangel joined the agency in 1986.
- **ANN BARRON** is the new regional supervisor in Tyler. Formerly a regional supervisor in Dallas, BARRON has been with the Commission since 1977. She will be responsible for agency field offices in Lufkin, Texarkana, Huntsville and Tyler.
- **CAROLYN WILMOT** and **RANDY FEILLE** have been selected as the recipients of the Commission's 1988 Employee of the Year awards. WILMOT, an accounting clerk, has been with the agency since 1984. FEILLE is the agency's Coordinator of Deaf-Blind Services and has been with the Commission since 1978. Both employees were presented with special plaques by Executive Director Pat Westbrook during a recent staff meeting in Austin.
- Forty clients are participating in this year's College Prep Program offered at the agency's Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin during the summer. The program, which has been offered since 1972, gives high school graduates from across the state an opportunity to prepare themselves for the challenges of college or university life. This year's participants will be taking classes at Austin Community College. Special classes in assertiveness training, sexuality and advanced braille are taught at the Center. The annual summer program concludes with the traditional tubing trip down the San Marcos River.
- **JORGE GARCIA**, a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Corpus Christi, has been awarded the 1988 Aubrey Boyd Tipps Award. Presented annually by the Texas Association of Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired, the honor acknowledges outstanding work in the area of employment assistance services. GARCIA has been with the Commission since 1971.

Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week

June 26-July 2

DEAF-BLIND AWARENESS

**“Say
hello
to a
person
who is
deaf
and
blind”**

....is the theme for this year's Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week (June 26-July 2). This year's theme focuses on communication as a necessary first step in breaking down barriers and creating better understanding of this segment of our population. According to Stephen S. Barrett, Director of the Helen Keller National Center. "This week also draws national attention to the need for continued rehabilitation training services, access to housing and employment alternatives and recreation and socialization opportunities within the community."

Here in Texas, the Texas Commission for the Blind is joining other members of the Interagency Task Force for Future Services to the Deaf-Blind in creating greater public awareness of this observation. Members of the Task Force will be securing proclamations from the Governor's Office as well as from mayors in numerous Texas cities. Exhibits, speeches, workshops and other events will be held throughout the state to draw attention to this week.

IN BRIEF

- **Very Special Arts/San Antonio (VSA/SA)** is developing a network of artists who are disabled. VSA/SA is conducting a survey of disabled artists and other interested persons. The group is also conducting a survey of museums, galleries and art supply sources to identify ones that are accessible to persons with disabilities. For more information, contact VSA/SA, 2205 N. Presa, Suite B-201, San Antonio, TX 78205.
- **"Authentic Cajun Cooking"** is the nation's first Cajun cookbook that is available in braille and large print. The Lighthouse for the Blind in New Orleans has received permission to produce Chef Paul Prudhomme's recipes and the book will be sold as a fund raiser. For more information, contact Suzete Watson at 504/899-4501, Ext. 130 or write the Lighthouse at 123 State St., New Orleans, LA 70118.
- **The "RP Messenger,"** the official bi-annual newsletter of the Texas Association of Retinitis Pigmentosa, Inc. (TARP), is now available in braille. This publication is available in "sight-saving" 12 point print, bold print and on cassette. For more information, contact Dorothy Stiefel, P.O. Box 8388, Corpus Christi, TX 78468-0388.
- Wisconsin state senators have approved a measure allowing people who are blind to hunt deer and other game if accompanied by a sighted hunter. The bill extends eligibility for a special permit to people who present medical evidence that they are unable to hunt alone because of a permanent physical disability, including blindness.

DEAF COMMISSION HAS NEW PROGRAM

The Texas Commission for the Deaf is implementing a new statewide program which provides a safety measure for drivers who are deaf or hearing impaired and for law enforcement officers. The Safety Communication Sticker Program for Drivers who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired is a voluntary program authorized by the Legislature. Drivers can purchase a special sticker to display on their vehicles so that law enforcement and emergency response personnel can immediately identify them and know that special communication may be needed. Additional information regarding this program is available by contacting Sherry Lee, Program Specialist, TDC, P.O. Box 12904, Austin, Texas 78711, 512/469-9891.

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

"Since coming to the State Commission for the Blind Ms. Sylvia Smith has done an outstanding job in her position as VHC Caseworker. Her overall performance exceeds her job requirement. Ms. Smith has been helpful, informative, friendly and professional in every way. Her assistance in helping my daughter is greatly appreciated. She has devoted much time and energy in helping my 13-year-old daughter cope and adjust to her visual loss."

(Comments from a parent in Houston.)

"Thanks for the Keynote. I like it very much. I use it very often in school."

(A short note to Executive Director Pat Westbrook from a client in the agency's Visually Handicapped Children's Program.)

"...you were so kind to try to help my brother. Your ideas of widening his scope of communication were well thought out. Your efforts were not ignored by us. You and your 'cohort' visiting him in the hospital were just above and beyond the call of duty."

(Comments from a family member to Tyler OBS/ILR Teacher Donna Kachlic.)

"God bless you everyone for all you have done for me and for the love and patience that is such a way of life there. I have been very busy since I came home...I do most of the cooking and a great deal of cleaning. I use methods every day that you showed at CCRC..."

(Excerpts from a letter to staff at the agency's Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center in Austin.)

REPORT is an official publication of the Texas Commission for the Blind. It is available free of charge to any individual requesting to be placed on the mailing list. News articles should be forwarded to the Public Information Office, P.O. Box 12866, Austin, Texas 78711 or call 512/459-2612. This newsletter is available on tape upon request. Toll-free number is 1-800-252-5204.

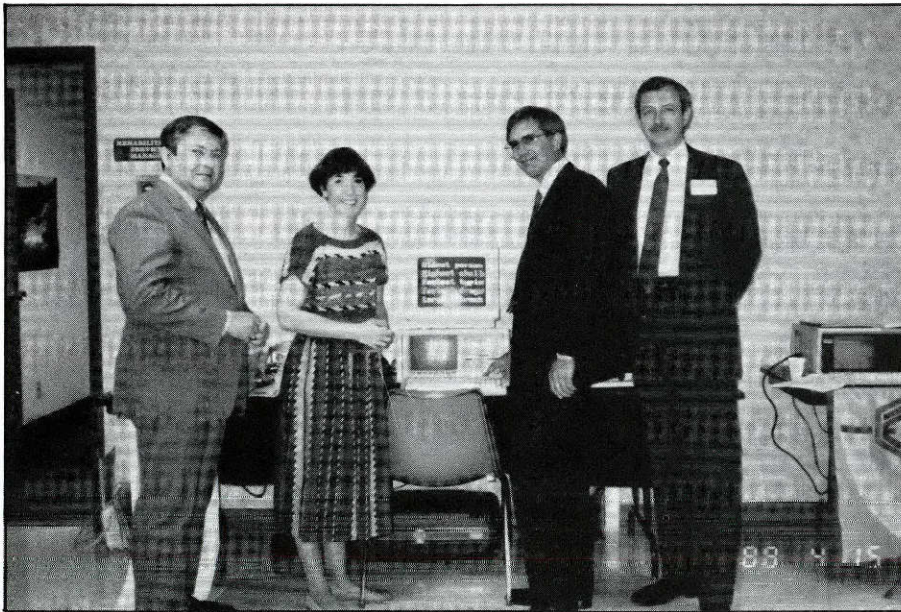
Lewis R. Timberlake, Chairman
Pat D. Westbrook, Executive Director
Rolando Garza, Editor
Jean Wakefield, Editorial Assistant



DART WILL CHAIR NATIONAL TASK FORCE

As Chairman of the newly formed Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans With Disabilities, Justin W. Dart, Jr. is traveling across the nation to meet with consumers, their families, advocates and service providers. The Task Force is seeking citizen input in such areas as discrimination against persons with disabilities and proposals for additional short- and long-range public and private sector activities which will be necessary to enhance the rights and empowerment of Americans with disabilities. The Task Force will be making periodic reports to Congress based on the input from these public forums. Dart will be in Austin on July 12 and 13 to garner support for passage of the recently introduced American With Disabilities Act of 1988. This historic legislation would extend full, enforceable civil rights protection for all citizens with disabilities.

Dart, a Texas noted for his role in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, was recently named as the 1988 Handicapped American of the Year by the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. In making the announcement Committee Chairman Harold Russell acknowledged Dart's "dedication to the democratic process and his zeal for improving the lives of others." Dart has been involved in the human and disability rights movement for more than 30 years.



Commission staff in San Antonio joined the San Antonio Association for the Blind in an employer symposium held in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act. More than 30 local employers participated in the gathering which included a tour of the Association's rehabilitation program and manufacturing operations. Demonstrations of new technology available to help employees who are blind and a presentation by Career Development Unit Specialist Jerry Elliott on the employment assistance efforts of the Commission and the benefits of employing persons who are blind were also part of the program. Pictured above are (l.-r.) Bob Plunkett, Association President, State Senator Cindi Taylor Krier, John Porter, Manufacturing Representative for Tele-Sensory, Inc. and Elliott.

SWEAT II

Ten agency clients are participating in a summer employment project that will provide them with valuable work experience. The Summer Work Experience in Austin, Texas (SWEAT) uses monies allocated through the Commission and the Joint Training Partnership Act and involves local employers who have hired the students to work approximately 32 hours per week at minimum wage.

Now in its second year, SWEAT has proven to be a successful means of introducing young persons who are blind to the responsibilities and challenges that a job poses. Most of the clients involved in the program are high school age students without any previous work experience. The initial phase of the program centers on orientation and training in such areas as personal skills management, travel training and job readiness skills activities. Housing for the students will be provided at the Texas School for the Blind.

This year's trainees will be working at such locations as recreation centers, the Texas Department of Human Services, the Coalition of Texans With Disabilities, Goodwill Industries, Austin Community College and the Texas Commission for the Blind.

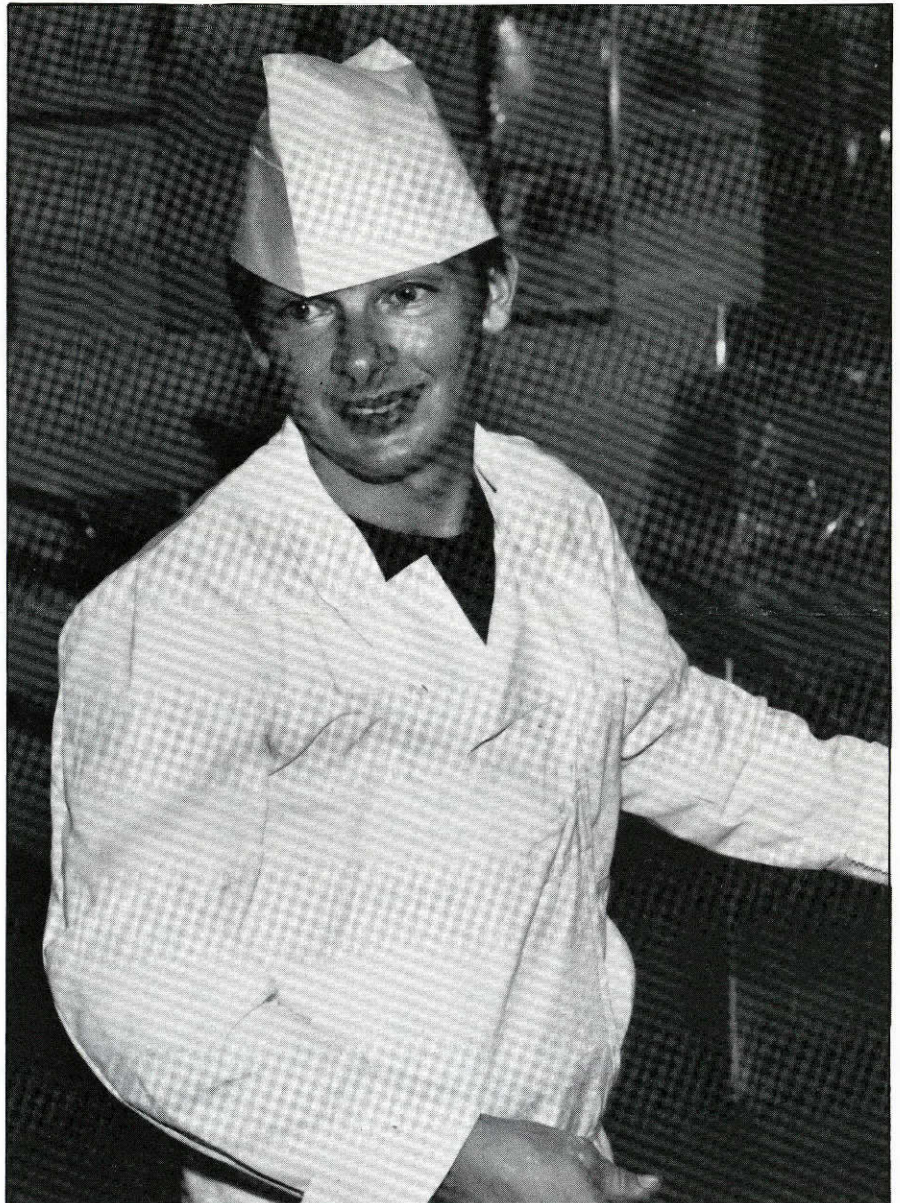
**TOLL-FREE
TELEPHONE
NUMBER**

1-800-252-5204

A FIRST FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Stacey Pamuk, the first client to get a job through the Supported Employment program offered through The Lighthouse of Houston, is working as a pizza maker at one of Marriott's corporate food service accounts. Pamuk, 25, is developmentally disabled and legally blind. In 1986 he was honored as the "Worker of the Year" at the Lighthouse's Work Center where he gained experience in several jobs, including packaging, material handling, shrink wrapping and assembly.

The Lighthouse of Houston is one of three organizations recently awarded grants by the Texas Commission for the Blind for supported employment services. The purpose of each contract is to expand job options for severely disabled clients for whom competitive employment traditionally has not been a viable option. Supported employment services include the use of job coaches who are available at job sites to help clients learn how to adequately perform their jobs. The job coach works side by side with the client and also acts as a liaison between the client and the employer.



Stacey Pamuk

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