

# REPORT



TEXAS COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

314 W. 11th St., Austin, Texas 78711 • 512/475-6036

Vol. II, No. 4

December 1985

## COMMISSION REPORTS ON SERVICE DELIVERY

With training and assistance offered by the Texas Commission for the Blind, a total of 806 agency clients went to work in the competitive labor market during the 1985 fiscal year. This number includes 333 blind persons who secured jobs at an average weekly salary of \$220. These year-end statistics reflect record accomplishments for the agency.

During this reporting period, 10,160 individuals received services through the Commission's vocational rehabilitation program, compared with 9,736 persons in FY 1984 and 9,264 in FY 1983. More than 2,100 persons completed training and received services that were necessary to place them in the category defined as "rehabilitated." Of this number, 1,206 were blind at acceptance.

The continued demand on the Commission's service delivery system is not unique to the VR sector. During 1985, 6,810 children were served through the agency's Visually Handicapped Children's Program. This compares with 6,526 in 1984. Approximately 66% of these children had no residual vision disability upon completion of their services.

During the year 169 blind and visually disabled persons attended the regular evaluation and training program offered through the agency's Criss Cole Rehabilitation

Center in Austin. In addition, more than 1,100 clients were served through the Independent Living Rehabilitation/Older Blind Services Program.

"We are extremely pleased with the results in all service programs of the agency for the fiscal year," says Executive Director John Wilson

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MARGARET FULKERSON, VR teacher in Lubbock, receives the 1985 Texas Commission for the Blind Employee of the Year award from Executive Director John Wilson. A member of the Commission's staff for more than 28 years, FULKERSON also received a special acknowledgement from Governor Mark White which was presented to her by State Representative Ron Givens of Lubbock. Numerous agency employees and Lubbock dignitaries were on hand for the award presentation and the official opening of the new Lubbock District Office.

# A Word From The Director

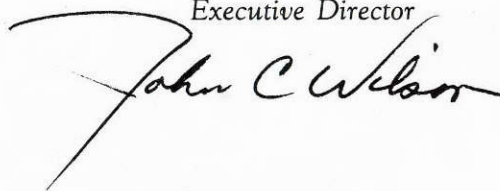
Federal funding support for rehabilitation in the current year has not yet been finalized at this writing. The agency has been operating on a series of continuing resolutions since the beginning of the federal fiscal year based on 1985 funding levels.

Senate and House congressional conferees have met and have agreed on budget recommendations which include an 8.8% increase in Section 110 funding for vocational rehabilitation services, and for the first time approved limited funding (\$5 million nationwide) for Title VII, Part C, Services for Older Blind. These funds will be available to states on a competitive basis to provide independent living training to elderly visually impaired citizens. The Texas Commission for the Blind will aggressively pursue and apply for grants under this Part C program if it does become available.

The current continuing resolution expires December 12. It is anticipated that Congress will take action, either in the form of passing another continuing resolution or passing an appropriations bill based on the results of the conference committee.

I know you join me in thanking members of Congress, advocates, individuals, and organizations for the hard work that has produced the positive budget recommendations. I also want to take this opportunity to wish all our readers the happiest of holiday seasons and a very prosperous new year!

John C. Wilson  
Executive Director



Each year an estimated 500,000 Americans are told by their physicians that they have diabetes. This chronic disease interferes with the body's ability to derive energy from glucose, a type of sugar and an important product of digested food . . . Most people with diabetes have another form of the disease that begins in adulthood and that, over the years, can insidiously and progressively damage the heart, eyes, kidneys, and nervous system.

Hope for the future lies in research. In recent years, scientists have laid the groundwork for an eventual cure for diabetes . . . This research, along with efforts to transmit the most up-to-the-minute knowledge to health practitioners and to individuals who might be affected by diabetes, is helping to preserve the health of its potential victims.

---From a Presidential proclamation declaring the month of November 1985 as National Diabetes Month.

A person who is severely impaired never knows his hidden sources of strength until he is treated like a normal human being and encouraged to shape his own life. —Helen Keller

**Toll-Free Telephone Number  
1-800-252-5204**

The Texas Commission for the Blind does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, national origin, race, sex, or type of disability.

## BOARD NAMES TOP EMPLOYERS

Meeting in Tyler for their regularly scheduled quarterly session, the Texas Commission for the Blind's governing board named the recipients of the 1985 Employer of the Year awards. Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio was selected as the winner in the Federal Employer category. The State Employer award goes to The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Mart, Inc., a contract company for building construction in Austin, was chosen as the recipient of the Private Industry award. Formal presentation of the awards will be made by Board members Walter Musler of San Antonio and Robert Peters, Ph.D., of Tyler during December. "A total of 18 organizations were nominated for this year's awards," says Executive Director John Wilson, "and we congratulate each one for their admirable efforts in the development of career opportunities for blind and visually impaired citizens."



## TEXAS HOSTS JAPANESE HERO

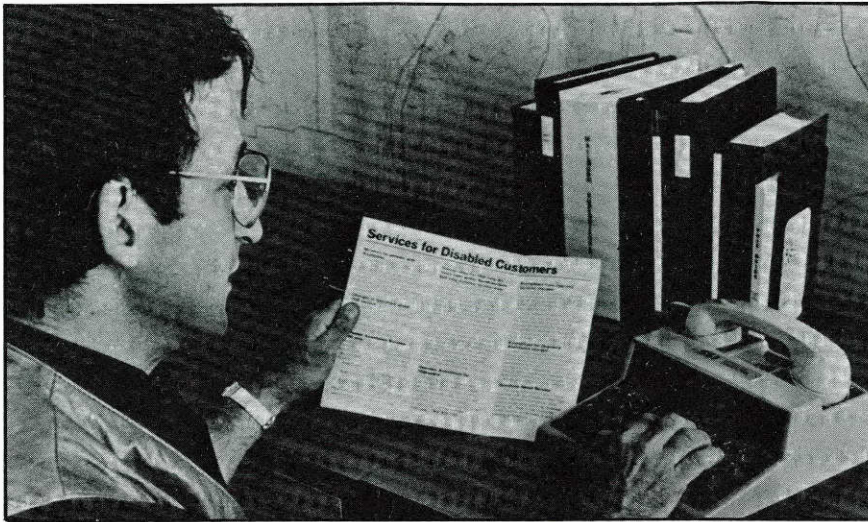
Japan has a new national hero. Unlike most national heroes, this one is a guide dog. Her name is Serve. She hails from the small Japanese town of Komaki and has been serving Mr. Michio Kameyama for more than five years.

On the morning of January 25, 1982, while guiding her master along a mountainous road, tragedy hit. A wrecklessly driven car struck both dog and master, but Serve saved Mr. Kameyama's life by thrusting herself between him and the car. The canine was thrown some 30 feet away from her owner and the impact resulted in the amputation of one of her front legs. Her master, however, suffered only a minor injury from the accident.

Once word of Serve's heroics spread throughout the country, Japanese national concern and interest grew rapidly. In September, Prime Minister Y. Nakasone bestowed the medal of the Order of Merit upon Serve for her "selfless bravery." A statue has been erected in honor of Serve in Nagoya, Japan.

Here in Texas, word of Serve's gallantry and prowess so impressed some citizens and Governor Mark White that the Governor issued a proclamation declaring Serve an "Honorary Texas Canine." On November 14, Serve, Mr. Kameyama, and officials from the Chubu Guide Dogs Association Foundation met with Governor White and later were the guests of honor at a reception hosted by the Commission at the agency's Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. Several Commission staff and representatives from various organizations were on hand to greet the Japanese delegation and, yes, admire Japan's national hero, Serve.





Various services for disabled customers are available through the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. Article and photo courtesy of SWB.

## REACHING OUT: MA BELL STYLE

Realizing the need to help disabled customers understand who provides which services in the wake of the AT&T break-up, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company offers a brochure, "Services for Disabled Customers." The publication is available in both English and Spanish from SWB's Telephone Customer Assistance Bureaus.

The broadest distinction made in the brochure is that equipment such as telecommunications devices for speech and hearing-impaired people is offered by AT&T, not Southwestern Bell. As the local operating company, Southwestern Bell offers a variety of services relating to connecting the special equipment. For example, SWB offers special rates to TDD users. TDD units in residences can qualify for reduced rates on long distance calls to telephone numbers within the customer's long distance service area. The customer's need for a TDD must be verified by a physician, audiologist, speech pathologist or representative of an appropriate state agency.

Customers with physical impairments which prevent them from dialing calls can have operators place calls for them without charge. Customers whose impairments prevent them from looking up numbers in the directory can be exempted from charges on calls to directory assistance operators. Again, verification of the customer's need must be submitted by an appropriate source.

TDD users can call TDD/TTY Operator Services at 1-800-855-1155 any time they need assistance in making local, long distance, collect, credit card, or third number calls. A TDD user may have a listing in the phone directory that indicates whether the telephone is answered by a TDD only.

In area codes 214 and 817, more information about the services SWB provides disabled customers is available by calling 1-800-442-7023. In area codes 409 and 713, telephone 1-800-392-2011, and in area codes 512, 806, and 915, 1-800-292-7272. To receive a copy of the brochure on special services for disabled people, send your name and address to "Services for Disabled Customers," Brochure, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, P.O. Box 225265, Dallas, TX 75212. Information about equipment available to the disabled is furnished by the National Special Needs Center in New Jersey which can be reached toll-free 1-800-233-1222 or 1-800-833-3232 (TDD).

- International Rehabilitation Week (April 6-9, 1986) will feature an exposition at which American and foreign companies will exhibit the latest developments in aids and appliances for disabled persons. International leaders from the fields of science, rehabilitation, education, medicine, and technology will gather in New York City for a world conference that will address methods of accelerating the restoration of persons with disabilities and their reintegration into active life in society.

- The Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee held a quarterly meeting in October in Austin. Members had an opportunity to learn about the Commission's budget operations and to receive a thorough orientation to the services offered through the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center. Other items on the agenda included a presentation about the Client Assistance Program by Executive Director Dayle Bybee of Advocacy, Inc.; a discussion about the Commission's ILR program; and an overview of the Commission's public information/education activities. The next CAC meeting will be held in early 1986.

- DAVID ZARAZUA has been selected as the Commission's new regional supervisor in El Paso. He has worked with the Commission for more than eight years and has extensive experience in the vocational rehabilitation field. In his new position ZARAZUA will supervise agency operations in El Paso and Odessa.

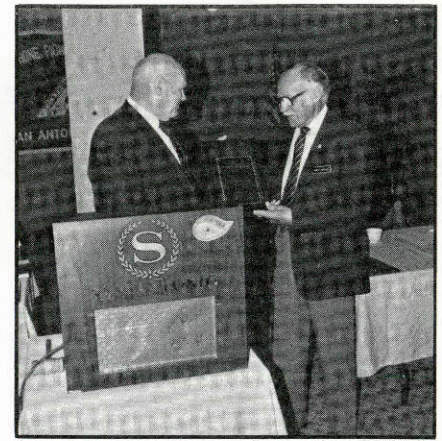
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- Two national conferences covering issues in transition, employment assistance, and career development are slated for 1986 through the R&T Center on Blindness and Low Vision in Mississippi. On March 12-14 a session on career development for visually impaired persons will be held in Jackson, Mississippi. Issues relating to employment assistance for blind persons will be addressed during a conference scheduled for May 28-30 in Atlanta, Georgia. Additional information on these meetings is available through Scott Bowman, Manager of Staff Development for the Commission. He can be reached at 512/454-0375.



Former Commission member Sam D. Millsap of San Antonio (l.) presents a special plaque to John F. DePaolo, Chairman, Telephone Pioneers of America Talking Book Repair Shop in San Antonio. The Pioneers were honored by the Commission for their outstanding volunteer efforts on behalf of blind and visually impaired Texans. Millsap was asked by the Commission's board to present the award to the Pioneers on behalf of the Agency during a meeting of the San Antonio Council of the Pioneers. He later posed for a picture with his wife, Ruth, DePaolo, and a local Pioneer.



- Seventeen scholarships totalling more than \$25,000 will be awarded by the American Council for the Blind to outstanding blind and visually impaired students in 1986. The awards will range from \$1,000 to \$3,000 each. All legally blind persons admitted to academic, vocational, technical or professional training programs at the post-secondary level for the 1986-87 school year are eligible to apply. Applications are available from the ACB national office located at 1010 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. All completed applications and supporting documents are due no later than April 1, 1986.

- December 1985 marks ten years since the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law provides numerous civil rights guarantees to disabled children and their parents. Here in Texas, Governor Mark White declared December 3 as "Special Education Day" and a birthday celebration on the grounds of the state Capitol was held by Advocacy, Inc.

- The National Federation of the Blind offers a wide array of scholarships for blind persons pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time post-secondary course of training or study. All scholarships awarded by NFB are awarded on the basis of academic excellence, service to the community, and financial need. For more information and an application form contact Peggy Pinder, Chairman, NFB Scholarship Committee, Grinnell State Bank Bldg., Second Floor, 814-4th Ave., Grinnell, Iowa 50112.

- **EXPECTATIONS**, the Braille Institute's annual anthology of children's literature, is now available without charge to blind school children in grades three through six. The book is also distributed to schools, agencies, libraries, and teachers. For more information, write the Braille Institute, 741 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90029-3594.

## DID YOU KNOW...

Five of the leading causes of blindness in the U.S. today are senile macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, and optic nerve atrophy. Four of these are directly attributed to age.

**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 512/475-3245. This newsletter is available on tape upon request. Toll-free number is 1-800-252-5204.

William C. Conner, Chairman  
John C. Wilson, Executive Director  
Rolando Garza, Editor  
Jean Wakefield, Editorial Assistant



## A MESSAGE OF JOY AND PEACE

I am writing to you to let you know how much I appreciate your services and especially how well our counselor, Margaret Reeder, has devoted her expertise toward my son and his needs. Being a senior citizen over 65-years-old and a widow raising a blind student now 17-years-old is not the easiest job or to say 'not like eating a piece of cake.' At this stage of the game I feel as though I was staggering around in left field simply because the modern times have changed so rapidly, especially in raising teenagers!

Just writing these words on this paper does not totally express the wonderful joy and peace in my heart and my son's heart that she has so freely and sweetly given to our desperate needs . . . .

(Excerpts from a letter written by the parent of an agency client to Sy Smeltzer, Regional Supervisor in Austin. Margaret Reeder is a vocational rehabilitation counselor in Austin.)



Commission staff from Fort Worth, Texarkana, and San Angelo take time from their busy schedule to pose for a photograph. Bill Agnell, Assistant Director of Client Services, presented the staff with a special plaque in recognition of the outstanding accomplishments of the Fort Worth region during the past fiscal year. In a similar ceremony in Lubbock, staff from Amarillo, Abilene, and Lubbock were recognized for their fine efforts in the delivery of services to blind and visually disabled Texans during the past year by Bob Packard, Assistant Director of Client Services.



Bud Taylor (l.), head of Audit/Evaluation, didn't know what to expect when he was summoned immediately to Executive Director John Wilson's office recently. Upon his arrival he discovered that the "emergency" meeting was really an opportunity for Wilson to present him with the traditional five-year pin and certificate in recognition of his service with the Commission. Elated over the surprise, Taylor joined other co-workers for an impromptu celebration of the occasion.

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