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NON-CIRCULATING



Success for SHIRLEY

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

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INSIDE

FROM ADEW
to VERSA 2

PRINT SHOPS
Consolidate 3

RETURN
TO WORK 4

Shirley Bradford is a great example of how TRC, local communities and employers can work successfully together to help a person obtain independence and a quality of life that everyone should be entitled to. Bradford has been a TRC client for almost two years. Before becoming a client, Shirley, who is mentally retarded, worked in a sheltered workshop for 15 years and lived in the State School for 20 years.

Now, she is an employee with Hastings Video. Working 20 hours a week, Shirley performs various duties, among which is helping organize videos in alphabetical order. She also goes to school twice a week and expects to have her G.E.D. soon.

Her co-workers and managers enjoy her presence and say she's a very motivated worker. Shirley says the people she works with make her feel comfortable and welcome and that she hopes to have the job a long time.

"Shirley has shown a lot of progress in the last two years," says Kathy Kelley, her counselor. "At first she was very unsure and nervous. Now she's doing presentations for the Lions Club." Kelley credits a lot of her progress to her job coaches Kristine Treadaway and Stella Ebizie, who work at Gulf Coast Works. Funding for the job coaches came from Supported Employment funds.

Continued on page 8

From ADEW to VERSA

Last year, many in DDS felt the rug was pulled from under their feet after SSA withdrew funding for the highly successful ADEW project. Well, TRC never gave up the fight for automation and now, after some intense discussion, it's going to happen — this time in the form of VERSA.

VERSA will allow DDS to automate before SSA develops its Modernized Disability System (MDS) which is expected to take place sometime within the next five years. "With the funding of the VERSA proposal, DDS

can finally begin the process of full automation within the DDS —something we have been working on since the late 1980s," says Dave Ward, DDS associate commissioner.

Ward relays that staff from DDS Information Management Services came up with VERSA as a contingency possibility when ADEW fell through. And the planning paid off. When management saw a window of opportunity for the funding of automation, they were ready to ask for it. Now, it's a matter of going

through the steps of testing and implementing the new system. And the end result will be a PC on almost every DDS employee's desk.

"We are excited to finally be able to give our employees the automation tools they need to do the job," says Ken Vogel, deputy commissioner for DDS. "With this and the move into our new building, DDS employees can anticipate some very positive changes by the end of 1995."

Automation takes a step forward at DDS.



Margery Mackey (left) and her supervisor Linda Monk.

Walk of the Roses

Margery Mackey, examiner in Unit 50, organized a team and participated in the Third Annual Walk of the Roses for the Austin State Hospital. This marks TRC's first time to participate and, in less than three days, we raised over \$500.

Since 1965, Mackey has consistently donated her time with Austin State Hospital and has served on the Public Responsibility Committee, serving clients and hearing client complaints since 1990.

"Thanks for going the extra mile," wrote Commissioner Arrell to her in a letter. "People with special needs are better off because you spend your time on their behalf."

Liberty Jubilee

TRC was well represented at the Annual Liberty Jubilee. Our first year to participate, TRC shared a booth with Hearing and Service Dogs Inc., a non-profit organization that adopts suitable dogs from local animal shelters and trains them to be used in a working capacity for Texans with hearing or mobility impairments. The dogs are provided to recipients totally free of charge. For more information on this organization, call the Houston Office at (713) 530-1522 or in Austin at (512) 891-9090.

Left to right: Greg Jamison, counselor in the Liberty Field Office, Mike Knight, counselor in the Humble Field Office, George Brenner, who owns one of the dogs, Kathy Hudson, dog trainer for the company and dogs Rosa and Smasher.



TRC Print Shop to be consolidated

It is now official. On September 1, the TRC Print Shop will be consolidated into a larger, full service print shop that will print for all Health and Human Service agencies.

It all began on December 17, 1993 with a decision by the Council on Competitive Government to require that the 33 state agency print shops in Travis County merge into fewer, larger and more cost effective printing operations under the oversight of the General Services Commission. This decision sent a shock wave through the printing community in Austin and talk about reinventing government became a sudden reality.

In response, TRC entered into a business plan with the print shops of the Health and Human Services Commission to consolidate our printing resources into a large operation which will operate on a complete cost recovery basis and be competitive with print

shops in the private sector. The net result is TRC will be purchasing printing from the consolidated shop at a cost below the operation of our own print shop. TRC printing customers will still use the TRC print request form and work through a printing coordinator to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Of the nine GSC approved print shops, only HHSC had a comprehensive business plan, owing to the work done by HHS printers in a restructuring effort during the past year.

"I know that this is a major disruption in the way we do business, but we have handled it well," says Commissioner Arrell. "I am proud of our print shop employees and confident they will be a vital part of the consolidated print shop. And ... actually we will still be relying upon them to get our printing done."

We hope to make the transition a seamless process.

*Randy Jennings,
director of PIO*

When can I return to work?

An injury on the job can happen at any time. For Joann Allen, it was a simple walk to the cafeteria with her friends. A fall resulted in a hip and knee injury and later knee surgery. It affected her ability to work.

Allen works for U.T. Health Science Center in San Antonio. Since 1990, they have worked with TRC's Return to Work Program and are very satisfied with the results.

Employees feel good about working for a place where they feel valued and where they can get help in hard times.

Having 15 years of experience with the Center, Allen clearly shows the benefits of this program.

Luana Warden, TRC employment specialist, inspected Allen's work area to see what accommodations she would need before coming back to work after knee surgery. There was also a joint meeting with Warden, Allen, her immediate supervisor and the human resources special-



Left to right: Barbara Bates, U.T. Health Science human resources specialist, Joann Allen (sitting), Marilyn Padgett, area manager, and Luana Warden.

ist to discuss options for Allen. They decided to reduce Allen's hours and increase them incrementally with other work modifications.

"Anytime we can keep an employee, we're ahead and so is the employee," says Brett Morris, U.T. Health Science associate director for Human Resources. "It's work bringing back an employee but it is definitely a cost savings when you think about retraining another person. More important though, we feel our company has a moral obligation to try to take care of our employees."

Warden says it's a real morale booster because word spreads and employees feel good about working for a place where they feel valued and where they will get help in hard times.

The San Antonio Return to Work Program Staff works with about 20

different employers in assisting their injured employees back to work. Since 1990, U.T. Health Science has referred 33 injured employees.

Twenty-one were accommodated, like Joann Allen, back into their same jobs. And the Center attempts to find employment for others who can't go back to their old jobs somewhere else on campus.

Teamwork is what everyone in the loop says is the key to success in returning injured employees back to work. "We see ourselves as a hub on the wheel where we work with a number of different people to achieve a safe return to work," says Warden. "It's our role to ensure there is no lack of communication or support that keeps a person from going back to work."



Cause for Applause

The following are excerpts from letters received by the Public Information Office:

A letter to Beverly Floro, counselor in the South Austin Field Office, from a client:

I received your letter showing me as "rehabilitated" in your files. I AM rehabilitated and how good it is!

When I wandered into Steve Schoen's office many months ago I was in a bad place to say the least. Near suicide from depression, unable to find or maintain a job and totally hopeless.

His help, and later on, yours resulted in my life literally being saved. I will always be grateful to TRC's help in getting back on track. I never in my wildest dreams thought I would need help but thank God it was there when I most desperately needed it.

Everyone in your office made me feel like I was important enough to be cared about. Chryse (Hill), with boundless energy and cheerfulness made me feel special.

I could not have gotten the job if I had not received the computer training you furnished me. Most of all you showed me love. Thanks, thanks and more thanks.

A letter to Larry Hughes, counselor in the Plano Field Office, from a client:

I apologize for not keeping in touch with you. Currently I'm in the Army. I'm stationed in the Army's Intelligence Center and school. This program is teaching me skills that I can take and use in life after the military. In addition, I have applied for officer candidate school and for foreign language school. I'm trying to get all the training and leadership skills I can because the Army is getting all they can out of me.

All these things could not have been a reality for me if it were not for TRC and especially you, Larry. I was at a really rough time in my life and you and TRC helped me out so much!!!

End-of-Year Reporting

Joellen Flores Simmons, (right) deputy commissioner for Rehabilitation Services, giving a token of appreciation to Bertha Hinojosa, Region II operations director, who chaired the End-Of-Year Reporting Format Committee. Through the committee's effort, TRC will now have a consistent and uniform way to measure performance through the regions.



Regional Notes



April 1994 Service Awards

Region I

20 years

Don Jones, Jr.

Region III

15 years

Jennetta Whitehead

30 years

Robert E. Rankin

Region V

10 years

Maria Isabel

Sepulveda

15 years

Ronald E. Lowe

Emma Ochoa

DDS

10 years

Michele Prant

15 years

Michelle Hillman

Robert Burgess

20 years

Dave Ward

Central Office

10 years

Pete Medina

Floyd Noel

20 years

Tracey Schlatter

25 years

Sellie Moore

30 years

Virginia Taylor

Region I

Cynthia Collins, counselor in the La Marque Field Office, transferred to the Wichita Falls Field Office.

Paula Hedrick is the new management support specialist in the Lubbock South Field Office.

Anna Shrock, counselor in the La Marque Field Office, was selected as the regional transition specialist in the Lubbock Regional Office.

Gary Gill is the new program specialist in the Lubbock Regional Office.

Charles Stevens, counselor in the Plano Field Office, was selected as the facility specialist in Region I.

Alicia Zuniga, RST in the El Paso Central Field Office, retired in May after 21 years of service.

The El Paso East Field Office welcomed Counselor Bill Cahalan to their unit. Cahalan was an intern in Lubbock.

Minnie Moses, RST in the Wichita Falls Field Office, retired April 30 after 24 years of TRC service.

Region II

Ronda Isaacs joined the Irving Unit as a counselor. Isaacs had been working in the Austin East Field Office as an intern.

Marie Morin also joined the Irving Unit as the management support specialist. Morin transferred from the Dallas Southwest Field Office.

Gena Swett was selected as region program specialist. As a counselor, Swett brings much experience working with individuals with varied disabilities and has achieved the Circle of Excellence for 1992 and 1993.

Region III

Rod L. Sturman is the new transition program specialist for the Austin Regional Office. Sturman has 20 plus

years as a VR counselor and also has several years of experience working with various school programs.

Ben King returned as counselor to the Waco Field Office.

Region IV

Mike Schepperly is the new program specialist for the Houston Regional Office. Schepperly was the area manager in the Houston West Field Office prior to accepting his new position.

The new regional transition specialist for Region IV is Lisbeth Frank. Frank transferred from the Houston South Field Office.

Retiree Larry Gladden returned to TRC as a counselor in the La Marque Field Office. Gladden has 28 years of agency experience.

Region V

Counselor Eliseo Smith III will retire in June. Smith has 23 years of TRC service.

Alan Craig was selected as counselor at the San Antonio Central Field Office. Craig transferred from the Pasadena Field Office.

The new transition specialist for the San Antonio Regional Office is Benny Garcia. Garcia has been involved in the transitional effort for over 21 years.

DDS

Mario Garcia was selected as administrator for the DDS HRM Office. Garcia comes to us from the Texas Youth Commission and has an extensive background in Human Resources Management.

Central Office

Dah-Som Im is TRC's new library assistant.

Tracy Damon was selected as records clerk in HRM.

Partnership in Management

On April 26, Region IV managers and Administrative Services staff met in Houston to discuss administrative support for Region IV employees. Leon Holland, deputy commissioner for Administrative Services, lived up to his C³ slogan of communication, cooperation and coordination. "We're here to actively support the work of field staff," said Holland. "We want to share with you ways we can help make your jobs easier and more efficient. We also want feedback on ways we could improve our services to you."



Left: Mike Schepperly, program specialist, and Frankie Watson, Region IV director, take time during the meeting to give Deborah Anderson (center) her 15 year service pin.

Below left to right: Attendees Kathy Streblo and Versie Blackmon ham it up for the camera.



Eyeball Aerobics

Working at a computer terminal for long periods can bring on headaches, blurred vision, eyestrain, and even depression. To take care of your eyes, try these simple relaxation exercises.

- ✓ Periodically gaze at some distant object, at least 20 feet away, for up to a minute. Changing your field of vision will force your eyes to adjust, relieving stiffness and tension.
- ✓ Slowly roll your eyes clockwise three or four times — then reverse the direction.
- ✓ Blink deliberately and frequently. This helps moisten and clean your eyes, minimizing the itchiness of tired, dry eyes.

more shirley

Continued from page 1



Shirley Bradford with her counselor, Kathy Kelley.

Community support also made a big difference in helping Shirley be independent. Living at a private home for persons with disabilities called HRA Village, Shirley lives in an apartment and is able to cook her meals on occasion and do her own washing. Funding for the property, building, and its operation comes solely through private donations and community fund-raising activities such as an annual barbeque, and yard and craft sales. The idea started in 1982 when parents of persons with mental retardation and other disabilities realized that they would not always be able to care for their children.

"It's what this job is all about," says Kelley. "Shirley is one of my favorite success stories. From living in a state school for 20 years to now working in competitive employment, she shows what a person can do given a chance."



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