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# trc today

An Employee Newsletter for Texas Rehabilitation Commission

## The Wild West Returns



Twice a year, rural counselors in Region V get together to network and catch up on new business affecting people with disabilities in their areas. This time for fun, they got dressed up old west style as cowboys, pioneers, gun fighters and other riffraff to get a group photo taken. *In the photo, Region V rural counselors and administrative support staff who attended the conference.*

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Texas Rehabilitation  
Commission  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, Texas 78751-2399  
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## TRC Gets Maximized

One great way to start the new year is to recognize employees who do a good job. And that's what we're doing. All over the agency, employees are taking the time to recognize co-workers who do good work. The reasons vary but those high on the list include teamwork, high production, helping with special projects and having a positive attitude.

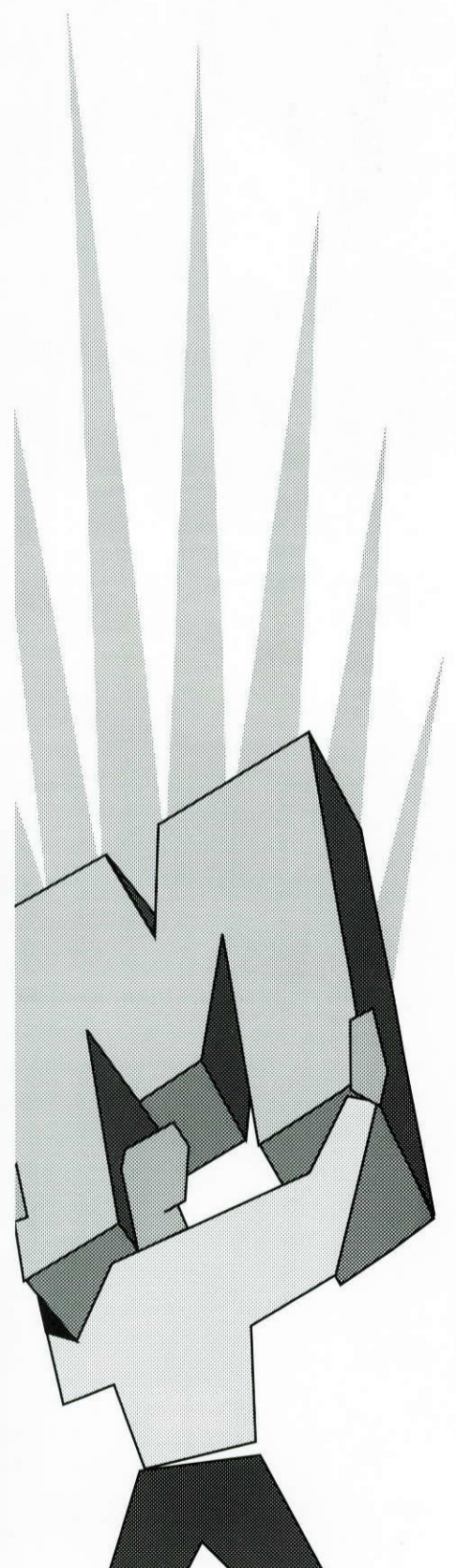
The Maximizer Program has been popular because it give employees a nice way to show appreciation to others for their contributions. Over the last couple of months, those who have garnered 12 or more maximizers have really accumulated ... so much so that you'll be seeing a lot of these in the upcoming issues. This month, we focus on Region IV and DDS employees. And in the next issue, who knows? It could even be you. Keep up the good work in 1996!



REACHING THE MAX...



Top to bottom left to right; Rosenda Garcia - Rosenberg Field Office, Debbie Sroka - Angleton Field Office, Carmen Pfitner - Houston East End Field Office, Mable Buford - Rosenberg Field Office, Adeline Kasper - Wharton Field Office, Mary Johnson - Houston East Field Office, Arlene Arauza - Houston Regional Office, Corena Terral - Houston Regional Office, Cindy Anderson - Rosenberg Field Office, Andrew Johnson - Rosenberg Field Office, Tammy Miller - Houston Regional Office, Sheila Lavallies - Houston Southwest Field Office, Karen Gaede - Houston Regional Office, Paulette Davis - Houston Regional office, Elizabeth Rhodes - Rosenberg Field Office, Unit 20 - Front row: Sylvia Gomez, Gloria Garcia, Verdell Williams, Amy Bloebaum. Middle row: Mary Lisa Selgado, Yolanda Rivera, Penny Artiechoufsky, Joyce Fielder, Mary Avila, Gina Fowler. Back row: Phyllis Spoor, Skip Frazier, Charles Segrest, Bruce Scarborough, Guy Fletcher, Gary Schaffer, Catherine Coffey. Unit 70 - Carmen Zuniga, Lorraine Scott, Hedi Goode, Deb Jenkinson, Joan Sandefur. Middle row: Cecilia Gonzalez, Lynda Garcia, Brenda Hoffman, Danielle Williams, Mary Sebesta, Mary Ann Rackley, Charlotte Duke. Back row: Julie Casner, Laurine Congor, Bruce Sweet, Phil Stoke, Jeff Robinson, Ferman Hoxie, Glenda Croom, Bill Mauer, Jim Parmar.



## Watson Named Executive Woman of the Year



**E**xecutive Women in Texas Government (EWTG) is a professional organization of executive women grades 18 and above from many different facets of state government. Each year, during their annual conference, an award is granted to one member who has demonstrated significant leadership abilities as well as a commitment to professional growth and life-long learning. This year, they named Frankie Watson as its 1995 Outstanding Executive Woman of the Year from a large field of nominees. For those of you who don't already know Frankie, she is Region IV's regional director.

"It's quite an honor and I am very humbled from having this award," says Watson in response to receiving the honor. "A number of women could have been recognized and there

are many women who contribute to my leadership abilities. I don't feel like I'm accepting it myself. There are talented, dedicated women in Houston who help me realize my dreams and I receive a lot of mentorship through TRC that has been invaluable."

Although she is thrilled with the honor, what Frankie is really excited about these days is becoming a big sister. She will be eventually assigned two children through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization in Houston and just got her first match. So ... the next time you see Frankie, ask her about her new seven year-old little sister Latavia Roquemore.

"It's fine to be who we are but we have got to give back to the children or else where will our future be," says Watson. "To me that's what it is all about. It's really not about me."

## TRC's Caption Center breaks new ground

**T**he idea was simple. TRC and other organizations needed quality captioning in a timely manner. We had clients who could be trained to do the job. Now, starting its second year, TRC's Caption Center is proving that the idea is a winning one.

Prissy Pense, video captioning coordinator, came up with the concept when she saw the demand for captioning services increase after ADA. She says her first challenges were researching what equipment was necessary to start the Center and to develop all the reports and the processes with no history of it being done before. A year later, the Center has three work stations and provides captioning services in closed and open, English and Spanish formats to 11 different organizations.

The Caption Center is also right in line with TRC's mission by establishing a program to provide on-going training to people with disabilities to do the captioning. "Training clients has probably been the biggest challenge of all," says Pense, "but I have a firm commitment to our mission. Some clients have been ideal for the job and some I've really had to work with. Our ultimate goal is for the clients we train to become so proficient that they can work independently from their homes."

The Center essentially runs like a small business within TRC on a cost-recovery basis. In its first year, it recovered 75 percent of its cost while captioning almost 1,400 minutes of video for 57 projects. So far, about half of its projects are internal to TRC and the other half is outside TRC in non-profit organizations and those who are set up to serve people with disabilities.

Pense says that, although overall business has been good, it varies month to month. Next year, she hopes to further expand her customer base. Here's where you can help. If you know of any private individuals, non-profit or publicly funded organizations, or government agencies that have a need to make its videos accessible, call Prissy Pense at (512) 483-4006 or CC:Mail her with the information.

### TRC's Caption Center Goals for '96

- to be the benchmark of quality captioning in this region of the country;
- to make government more self-sufficient through the TRC Caption Center cost-recovery center.



*Prissy Pense and TRC client Bob Smith working in the Caption Center.*

## Be a "child's voice"

A lot of us start the new year with thoughts of resolutions and how we can give back for the many blessings we receive. If you're one of these, read on.

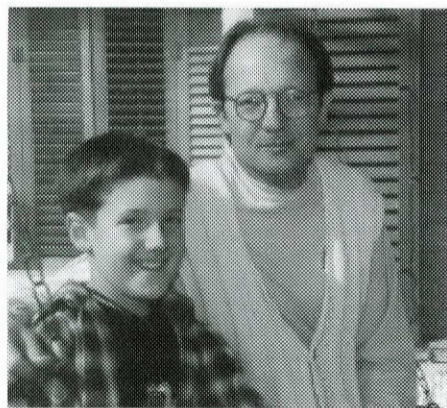
Bob Edwards, a program specialist with DDS, was recently featured in *Southwest* magazine for his work with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). A CASA volunteer is a child's "voice in court". All too often, social workers, foster parents, lawyers and even judges change while a child is involved in the court system. CASA volunteers are there to make sure that decisions made are in the best interest of the child and that they don't get lost in the system.

Edwards experience with CASA is unusual. His one "case" has lasted for the last 10 years whereas the average length of time for a case is one and a half to two years. Edward's CASA child was severely neglected and abused when picked up by police at the age of eight. He had cigarette burns all over his body and had also been sexually molested. When Edwards first met the child, he couldn't speak. He has seen him through three adoptive homes that didn't last and numerous case workers, foster homes, treatment centers, halfway houses, etc. Still, there has been incredible progress in the child which Edwards finds very rewarding.

"After several years of visiting, one day he asked me who I worked for," says Edwards. "I told him that I worked for him. And I hope that, in the long run, he will remember that someone — someone with no vested interest — took the time to care about him."

Statistics show that when a CASA volunteer is assigned to a case, the time the child spends in the court system is almost cut in half. But, Edwards says, the demand for volunteers is growing. "Unfortunately in Travis County alone, there were close to 1,000 kids who were put in foster care last year, compared to 280 five years ago," says Edwards, who now spends the majority of his volunteer time for CASA as a board member and spokesperson.

So, if you're looking for a way to contribute this year, consider CASA. If you live in Travis County, training takes place in February and you can call (512) 443-2272. Also, there are 40 CASA chapters across the state. Check to see if there's one in your community.



Bob Edwards with his son, Wesley.

## Across the State November 1995

### Welcome Aboard!

Irma Peguero, administrative technician  
 Ron Trull, program specialist  
 Elv Moreno, RST  
 Earnestine Frazier, secretary  
 Stephen Vanya, counselor  
 Dulce Argueta, RST  
 Joyce King, secretary  
 Robert Wainscott, counselor  
 Vickie Snyder, RST  
 Brent Gibson, counselor  
 Gary Winfree, counselor  
 Stacey Veazey, RST  
 Marion Newsome, RST  
 Toni Martindale, RST  
 Cassandra Thorn, RST  
 Richelle White, counselor  
 Linda Cossaboom, RST  
 Martha Hathorn, counselor  
 Jose Pena, counselor  
 Myrna Bazan, counselor  
 Michael Bryan, counselor  
 Lisa Fox, counselor  
 Neal Solomon, counselor  
 Larry Kirk, counselor

### Kudos

Judy Freeman is the new area manager in the Longview Field Office.

### Retirements

Evelyn Steckly  
 Joe C. Rodriguez

## Letters

Here is an excerpt of a letter Jean Duafala, area manager Odessa Field Office, received:

*"This is a letter of praise for your Big Spring office. I have been at the VA in Big Spring almost 20 years, and have seen several counselors come and go. None have shown the abilities and cooperative manner of Rick Turner (counselor in the Big Spring Field Office). I think he is a truly exceptional young man."*

Area Manager, Keith Fulp of the El Paso Central Field Office, received the following words of praise for Rosa Rosas, counselor at the University of Texas at El Paso Field Office:

*"I felt that I needed to write you a letter and tell you what a true professional and all around nice woman Rosa Rosas is."*

*"I walked into the TRC location at UTEP and Rosa greeted me so nicely. I told her about my situation and she said she would get on it right away — 3 weeks later I had a walker."*

*"Thank you for your organization! Thanks to Rosa for literally making a dream come true. I can walk anywhere now."*

DDS's Bill Mauer received a letter from a claimant's advocate: An excerpt follows:

*"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your valuable time you contributed to evaluate this case. You had no doubt, made determined efforts to locate medical reports in order to prepare this case for consideration."*

*"Once again I would like to thank you very much and hope that I will get the opportunity to work with you for my future cases."*

North Austin Field Office Area Manager Merry Straube received a letter regarding her staff. Here's an excerpt:

*"When I found I was in need of major surgery ... and then found you would consider helping me, it gave a certain support that was indeed needed."*

*"It was extraordinary to have you at my side. Your efforts are very significant and received with the greatest of appreciation. Again my thanks to you and your staff — especially a very special person — Hilda Lerma, who gently yet firmly helped lead me through my ordeal."*

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Address Correction Requested

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*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 inquires to Shayla Fleshman, Public Information Office, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 4900 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, Texas 78751-2399; or telephone (512) 483-4043.*

*Randy Jennings, Director of Public Information  
Shayla Fleshman, Editor  
Randy Phinney & Susan Antoniewicz, Design*

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### *State Service Awards-January*

#### *10 Years*

Joseph Miller  
Nancy Harp  
Joycelyn Harvey  
Kim Mason  
Candace Coleman  
Royce Robinson  
Barbara Berger  
Mary Taylor-Scherz  
Rita Purkhiser  
B. Therese Thorn  
Terria Frazier Robinson  
Kimberly Grona  
Irene Zapata  
Marie Ruiz

#### *15 Years*

Gail King  
Bill Dunn

#### *20 Years*

Judy Hoffman  
Gina Fowler

#### *25 Years*

Donald Grohman  
Norman Hummell  
Melba Ann Ellinger  
Lafon Eary  
Dorothy Kopecky

#### *30 Years*

Kay Sitton

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