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trc today

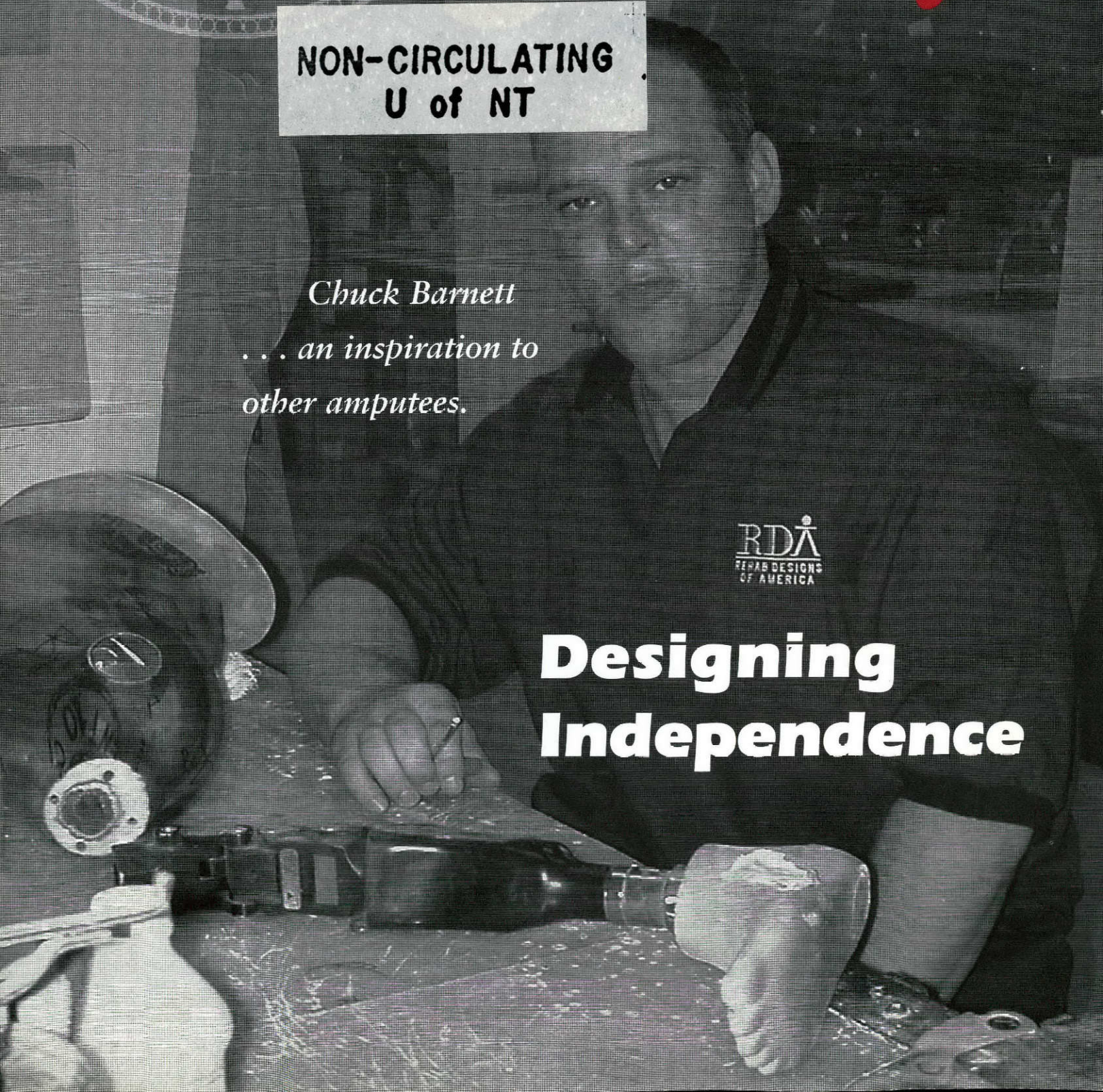
An Employee Newsletter for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission

NON-CIRCULATING
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*Chuck Barnett
... an inspiration to
other amputees.*

RDA
REHAB DESIGNS
OF AMERICA

Designing Independence



trc today

An Employee Newsletter for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Texas Rehabilitation
Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78751-2399
Vol. 23 No. 2 April/May 2000

Getting the Right Fit

Chuck Barnett's family and friends always called him Smiley because of his sense of humor. His happy-go-lucky attitude always made him the life of the party. But there was a time when it wasn't so easy for Chuck to smile. At the age of 24, a motorcycle accident turned Chuck's carefree lifestyle upside down. Over the next three years, Chuck had his right leg amputated, had eight surgeries, and his medical condition was touch and go.

From the time Chuck graduated high school, he had worked as a framer in the construction business with his dad and brothers. "I didn't think much about the future," recalled Chuck. "I lived for payday and partying with my friends. I worked all day and played at night. I didn't even have medical insurance." After the accident, Chuck's days and nights were filled with extensive medical treatments and laying in a hospital bed.

Chuck says that lying around all the time didn't make him happy. He didn't like it one bit. But he was helpless to do anything about it because of his medical condition. TRC helped him get a prosthesis for his leg so he could start to walk again, but Chuck knew that even with an artificial leg he couldn't go back to framing. This was where Chuck's attitude really made a difference.

"I realized that life does go on," said Chuck. "I could either cry about it or just realize that my leg was not going to grow back and move on with my life. However, I knew I needed some kind of a plan."



■ Chuck Barnett (above) keeps others laughing and has fun with his prosthesis. Left - Barnett with TRC counselor Sharon Corry.



As the prosthetist worked with Chuck to fit his new leg, he took an interest in how the prosthesis was made. As a builder, he was good with his hands. He began to think about

making artificial legs for a living. He talked to his counselor and the prosthetist that worked with him and for the first time in his life Chuck had a plan for his future.

Chuck started going into the shop at Rehab Designs of America to train with one of the prosthetic technicians. "He went in on a voluntary basis working half days at first," recalled Sharon Corry, Chuck's TRC counselor, who is now retired. "Then he started staying all day. He learned quickly and was good at it. When an opening came up, he moved right into it and started at a good salary at one of the largest providers of orthotics and prosthetics." Within nine months, Chuck was promoted, and he plans to go

back to school to get certified as a prosthetist. He has married, bought a new car and is getting ready to buy a new home.

Today, Chuck is smiling again. He really likes his life now and is often asked to talk to other amputees about keeping a positive attitude. "He is an inspiration to other amputees," said Corry,

"because he can relate and they love listening to his jokes. They also trust that Chuck knows what a huge difference the proper prosthetic device can make in someone's life and outlook. He is committed to helping them reach their rehabilitation goals and will assure that they get a quality designed product."

TRC Turnover Rate Less than State Average

Turnover in state government is a serious subject. It is costly to the state and can affect the quality of state services. The State Auditor's Office recently reported on the state turnover rate to the Texas Legislature. The good news is that the TRC's turnover rate is 15.93 percent, one of the lowest rates of the Health and Human Services agencies. Fifteen state agencies reported turnover rates greater than 30 percent. According to the state auditor, the average statewide turnover rate for full-time classified state employees for FY 1999 was 17.58 percent. Even though TRC's turnover rate is lower than the state average, Commissioner Arrell is committed to addressing the turnover rate by highlighting to the state legislature the real need for employee salary increases.

The state auditor estimated the overall cost of turnover to be between \$127 and \$254 million. Some of the costs involved in employee turnover rate include recruiting, retraining, salary and benefits during training and orientation, and lost productivity during the time the position is vacant and the time the new employee is learning the job.

Employee turnover rates remain high in both the public and private sector. Factors such as a good economy and significant industry trends have contributed to employees making career changes. In the Austin area, the state must continuously deal with the loss of experienced employees to the private sector due to a strong economy and competition for talent. Occupations such as information technology professionals often have the highest turnover in state employment due to the highly competitive market for those skills in the private sector.

Ironically, a major factor contributing to TRC's turnover rate is the fact that many of the agency's tenured employees are becoming eligible to retire. About 70 percent of TRC employees are over the age of 40. Approximately 11 percent of TRC's staff will be eligible for retirement next fall.

KEY FACTS AND FINDINGS*

- Generally, the lower the employees' salaries, the more likely they are to leave state employment.
- The types of jobs state employees leave most often are in the employment, social services, procedures and information, legal and medical/health fields.
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) non-exempt employees have significantly higher turnover rates than FLSA exempt employees.
- The turnover rate is highest for employees under 30 and over 60 years old. For employees over 60, this is largely due to retirement. Younger employees entering state service leave at twice the rate of all other state employees.

*Taken from State Auditor's Report

Across the State

Welcome Aboard

February-April 2000

Delores M. Aguirre
 Oluwatoyin A. Alaran
 Anna L. Allen
 Maria Alvear
 Kofi Mensah Amua-Sekyi
 James Allan Anderson
 Jennifer R. Ardouin
 Kevyn Clifford Arnold
 Lonnie Bennett
 Rebecca S. Berger
 Kathy Jo Blood
 Patty R. Branton
 Bridgette D. Burleson
 Valerie A. Brock
 Rod D. Burnett
 Miguel A. Bustamante, Jr.
 Kathy J. Card
 Maria Isabel Carranza
 Julie L. Casson
 Willie C. Clark
 Leslie A. Corbin
 Pamela A. Cox-Previte
 Camie L. Cushman
 Serena D. De Square
 Victoria Del Rio
 Michael Shame Dupler
 Mercedesita C. Dizon
 Kay Marie Edwards
 Annie S. Faison
 Geneva Elaine Garcia
 Maria Gonzalez
 Sylvia T. Gonzales
 Willie Harris
 Paula D. Harris
 Kevin Lee Harrod
 Pauline Nobuk Hashitsume
 Joann Hatch
 Tonia Sue Helton
 Cheryl Annette Hester
 Martha Jean Hill
 Tony J. Hurtado
 Armand J. Jackson
 Rosie Lee Jones
 Nancy L. Jones
 Mark Richard Kline
 Gloria A. Krites
 Sugi Y. Komarov
 Addie E. Latimer
 Rosaline Y. Lloyd
 Bevelina Grace Lugo
 Deborah A. Maldonado
 Kenneth Wade Marcantel
 Carlos Marquez
 America M. Martinez

Margarita D. Martinez
 Charlene Sue May
 Louise Angile Mayes
 David Sean McGrath
 Patricia Melendez
 Brent Lyle Miller
 Roosevelt Deshawn Moore
 Roy Moreno
 Wanda Maria Nelson
 Adela Nu'Man
 Tammey Kay Posey
 Phyllis L. Ray
 Suzanne Mary Redder
 Tab A. Rethman
 Norma C. Rowland
 Wanda Jean Saliagas
 Hugh D. Shelton
 Loria V. Singleton
 Ofilia V. Ramos
 Stephen Roger Smith
 Amanda M. Soisson
 Phillip Craig Sharp
 David Stanford
 Carol Ann Taylor
 Shannon Jo Vangunten
 Sue A. Watie
 Michael Weinberger
 Lee White
 Harold Wayne Whitfield
 Angela Denise Wilcher
 Olive F. Williams
 Deborah C. Williamson
 Don Kenneth Wilson
 Christina M. Zappa

Retirements

March 2000

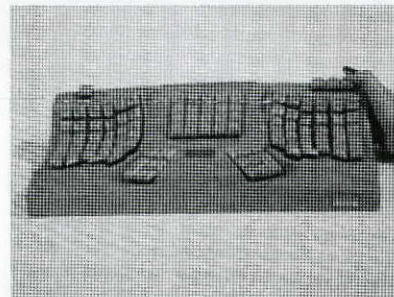
Carolyn J. Harper, 8 years
 Rudy Martinez, 29 years
 Hilda Faye Taylor, 22 years
 Mary A. Valentini, 26 years

April 2000

Juanita Sefuente Barnett, 12 years
 Patricia A. Bell, 24 years
 Tom Hudgens, 30 years
 Sharon L. Miller, 10 years
 John B. Morgan, 27 years

Let your mouse do the walking

Tour the Rehab Tech Lab... without leaving your desk



Some of the equipment available for TRC clients with details on the TRC Tech Lab site.

Counselors in offices all over the state can now sit down with clients and, with one or two mouse clicks, look at equipment available in the TRC Tech Lab. A new and exciting service added to the TRC Intranet web site allows you to take a virtual online tour of the Tech Lab and use this valuable tool to choose rehabilitative aids.

"Having the tech lab available on the intranet is great," says John Nichols, VR counselor in the East Austin Field Office. "It is an excellent tool that allows me to look at some of the products and see what they can or can't do for my clients. The clients can also look at it, so it is just what we needed."

The virtual tour is located on the TRC Net home site map at the bottom of the third column under *TRC Tech Lab* and on the Programs web page under *Program Information and Rehabilitation Technology*. It's easy to use the tour:

- Double click on Homepage for product categories
- Click on category
- Choose other category from drop down list
- Provider site link included for source research
- Click for sub-category drop down list
- View product drop down list to select item
- Click on *E-Mail* to request more information

Many of the items on the virtual tour are available to be checked out from the Tech Lab by a counselor for up to two weeks so a client can test the item to make sure it fills that person's needs.

"In the past the Lab has been inaccessible to those at some distance, such as El Paso," says Richard Hopkins, Director of Programs in Central Office, "now they can go on the tour with a click of their mouse."



December 1999 Disability Examiners Class

Participants of the December 1999 DE class completed their training on Mar. 14. New disability examiners are: Front row: Kelly Gorham, Lawanna Wedgeworth-Frederick, Wayne Bogan (Training Specialist), Luly De Loach, Wendy Galloway, Janet Shannon

Second row: Paula McNeese (Training Specialist), Deborah Polasek, Illiyana Hagens, Debbie Davis, Jenn Bell, Laurie Costello, Grace J. Loveless, Becca Mickler, Lizz Cutney (Training Specialist)

Back row: Rob Graham (Training Specialist), Eydee McCloud, Willard Hollowell, Tara Sneed, Brian Glenn, Bob Chavarria, Lin Sarver, Shelly Grammer, Perry Watson (Manager, Staff Development)

EOY

Reminder
 Don't forget to nominate
 a co-worker for
 Employee of the Year

DDS Reaps National Awards

All of the hard work being done by Disability Determination Services managers and staff is paying off in the form of well-deserved national recognition. Dave Ward, Deputy Commissioner for DDS, was recently presented a prestigious SSA Commissioner's Citation on behalf of the Texas DDS "... in recognition of continued exemplary performance and quality service provided to the citizens of Texas." Dan Eudy, Director of DDS System Operations, was also recognized with a Commissioner's Citation for "an outstanding work ethic and perseverance ... in the area of leadership and automation."



■ Dan Eudy stands next to a sign proclaiming individual Commissioner Citation honorees.

Both awards were presented at the annual DDS Management Forum held in Washington, D.C. in April. This marks the second time in three years the Texas DDS has been singled out as one of the most outstanding agencies in the country. Ward pointed out that "this recognizes the collective efforts of all DDS employees."

Eudy's recognition was the only individual honor in the Dallas five-state region. "This award really represents the excellence of the DDS System Operations staff," Eudy stated. "I was just fortunate to be their manager."

Earlier this year the Texas DDS was given the "Big 8" award which recognized top performance in fiscal year 1999 among the eight largest DDS's. It is the second straight year the Texas DDS earned this honor. Factors such as productivity, quality and processing time were used to determine the best overall performance, and the Texas DDS came out number one!

(Please see our online edition for more photos of DDS awards)

TRC employees prove charity begins at home

As hundreds of State of Texas employees gave their time and talents last fall to bring the message of giving to their co-workers and colleagues in the Statewide Employees Charitable Campaign (SECC), TRC staff was right in the heart of it.

"We had activities going on all over the state," says Sylvia Banda, TRC Statewide Volunteer Coordinator. "From chili cook-offs to book fairs, all of our coordinators made a huge effort to make TRC staff aware of the opportunity to donate to their favorite charity."

That effort paid off. TRC won the award for highest participation in an agency with 1000-5000 employees for the fourth year in a row. With 16 percent participation and an average donation of \$108.72 per person, TRC employees dug deep into their pockets and gave a whopping \$47,494. Compared to this year's total contributions for all State employees of \$5,546,995 with the average donation of \$19.41 per employee, TRC staff really gave from the heart.

The following are coordinators who worked on the SECC at TRC. Congratulations for your successes!

TRC Statewide SECC Coordinator is Sylvia Banda with Central Office HRM.

Barbara Franklin - Region I
Jesus Quiroga - Region II
Santiago Moncada - Region III
Karen Gaede Region - IV
Ivan Smith Region - V
Tom Henderson - DDS
Sylvia Banda - Central Office

Central Office coordinators who helped with activities in the Brown-Heatly building were:

Lydia Heard
Lydia Gamez
Stephen Hummell
Lori Hanna
Diane Miller
Abbie Cole
Cindy Lara
Yolanda Cabrera

THESE EMPLOYEES REACHED 12 MAXIMIZERS.

A CATALOG OF PRIZES IS AVAILABLE ONLINE.

FEBRUARY

Region II
Dulce Argueta
Agnes Aulbaugh
Bertha Benson
Barbara Bernhardt
Helen Brooks
Mary Lou Burris
Imelda Carrasco
Kathy Clements
Mary Cooksey
Jim Duff
Rhonda Dyer
David Freemyer
Theresa Gilbreath
Elida Gonzalez
Tom Hudgens
Clara Kemp
Becky Kientzle
Vianne King
Ruth Leacock
Joy Lombas

Terry Mayse
Ismael Melgoza
Joyce Monsey
R'Lene Mulkey
Rebecca Mulroy
Carroll Norton
Annette Salvo
Tetinia Savage
Melanie Savins
Pamela Schmitz
Greg Showman
Sandy Smith
Mary Springer
Eddie Starnater
Pat Sumpter
Marion Walkner
Sandra Whitmire
Region V
Rosie Chapa
Connie Navarro
Diana Quesada

DDS

Steve Ogunsanya
Delia Ramirez
Unit 70*

MARCH

Central Office
Rashna Bharucha
Region I
Dulce Argueta
Gloria Armento
Mary Culberson
Mary Jasso
Emily Ugarte
Region II
Agnes Aulbaugh
Bobby Benefield
Anne Bokalo
Jan Boyd
Pam Cox
Juanita Cron

Rani Davis

Jim Duff
Jane Fuld
Elaine Gregory
Cay Harper
Anita Herrera
Susan Judd
Donna Livingston
Bobby Moodley
Karla Morris
Lou Orr
Marlene Owens
Belinda Pascoe
Randall Pearson
Gloria Reynolds
Carolyn Shults
Kay Sitton
Marion Walkner
Virginia Witt

Region V

Yolanda How
Esperanza Salinas
Nelda Sanchez
Luana Warden
DDS
Susan Barnes
Linda Daniel
Pat Hamilton
Sue Henize
Margaret Law
Donald Martin
Jane Ramsey
Eva Rejonis
Patricia Sando
Jane Shi
Kathy Silberman
Steven Stump
Helen Taylor

Jan Zindler
Unit 13*

APRIL

Region IV
Sherrie Bonnette
Larry Gladden
Ruan Huddleston
Joan Johnson
Sadie Paben
Virginia Stewart
Rory Wechtenhiser
Pat Wilson
Region V
Delia Bazan
DDS
Napoleon Onyeje
Unit 23*
MAY
DDS
Evelyn Wilkerson
Beth Farias

* for a complete list of Unit staff, see our online edition.

MAXIMIZERS

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trc today

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State Service Awards - January, February, March, April 2000

10 Years

Jerry Allsup
Nelda Choate
Cathy Davis
Michael Ballard
Belma Garcia
Marc Garcia
Pamela Hodges
Janice Hoffman
Leshia Karras
Sandra Kenney
Suzanne Lawson
Pamela McKenzie
Jorge Morales
Sherry Morris
Randall Norris
Napoleon Onyeje
Donald Primm
Katherine Schultz
Orlando Smith
Charles Starnater
Frances Wester
Darlene Wolfe

15 Years

Sylvia Banda
Carolyn Carter
Virginia Costilla
Carolyn Dougherty

Janie Escobedo
Holly Houser
Tina Hutchison
Lisa Mcneely
Mary Partida
Martha Parker
Gloria Quintana
Judy Reynolds
Elizabeth Scott
Sandra Smith
Veda Sroka
Johnny Weddington
Loretta Zimbelman

20 Years

Roxanne Anguiano
Charlene Baker
Jasna Bolerjack
Lori Broccoli
Ronald Brown
Dora Cantu
Virginia Chance
Irma Falcon
Otilia Fraga
Thelma Garcia-Erwin
Velma Hadden
Meretta Hughes
Alice Jackson
Nila Jackson

Celia James
Karen Lafon
Anna Posey
Debbie Sheffield
Hilda Taylor
Otilia Walker

25 Years

Susan Barnes
Rita Coyne
Michael Davis
Jennifer Hall
Cynthia Howard
Darlene Link
Jack Mezzetti, Jr.
Maria Piton
Knobby Sanchez
Susan Scheel
Robert Snider, Jr.
Karen Stephenson
Jimmy Wilson

30 Years

Alice Gutierrez
Sandra McKinley

