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**CRCG**

# THE BRIDGE

*Newsletter of the* COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATION GROUPS *of Texas*  
*"Bridging the Service Gap for the Youth of Texas"*

## Our Children Deserve It !

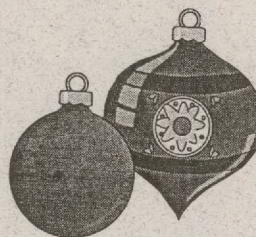
*by Liz Shelby, State CRCG Committee Member from the TxMHMR*

Most families in Texas who have children under the age of 18 with mental retardation or autism have two options for care-- maintain the children in the home with limited familial or personal support or place them in residential care. Further, services are limited or nonexistent depending on the area of the state. The lack of options and community based supports contributed to the following statistics about children with mental retardation or autism:

- 345 children live in state schools(November 1994);
- 51 children placed by school districts in residential care, with 99 identified to be at-risk for placement in the 1993-94 School Year;
- 87 children in conservatorship of the Children's Protective Services of the Texas Department of Regulatory and Protective Services (TDPRS) live in "institutions for the mentally retarded" (October, 1994);
- 236 children under 18 live in nursing homes (October, 1994);
- 359 children ages 12 and under live in community residential settings over 3 beds and 299 youth ages 13 to 17 live in community residential settings over 6 beds (1992 data).

A statewide shift in alternative community living practices for children is needed to promote the provision of more nurturing alternatives. Texas needs family living options which are supportive to birth families and flexible enough to each individual's situation. A philosophical shift must provide a context for community-based services that supports inclusion for the entire family.

*(continued on next page)*



## Christmas Came Early !

*by Rita Hughes, Case Mangement Supervisor, Texas Youth Commission, Harris County CRCG Chairperson*

Christmas came early for Harris County CRCG (HCCRCG). The local Community Management Team contributed \$ 50,000 to the HCCRCG. The CMT is a community based team of local service providers that operates under the auspices of the Texas Children's Mental Health Plan (TCMHP). The only stipulation was that these funds must be used for non-residential services for youth. The CMT and CRCG members recognize that if these funds were to be used for the purposes of residential services, one individual child or adolescent could feasibly exhaust the whole funding source. Therefore, HCCRCG has established a committee to develop guidelines for expending the funds so that there will be a broader range of impact.

The local Children's Mental Health Plan has also provided a staff person that will contribute 25% of their time to assist with coordination of the operational duties associated with the HCCRCG. This person is Isabel G. Lozano. In August the HCCRCG elected new officers. Rita Hughes, with the Texas Youth Commission, will serve as the chairperson and Mary Ann Whitfield, with Harris County Child Protective Services, will serve as vice-chairperson. Kudos to the Harris County CRCG and CMT, who are uniting forces for the kids in their community! For more information about the HCCRCG, contact Rita Hughes at (713) 942-4217. ☒



(continued from *Our Children...*)

The permanency planning movement in Texas promotes statewide implementation of a model developed by Michigan as a strategy for reintegrating children from institutions into the community. It provides for continuous reunification counseling with birth families as well as open relationships between alternative family living (support families) and the birth family.

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*The model is based on the belief that all children belong in families...*

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In some cases, such an arrangement is referred to as "shared parenting." Even when the birth family cannot maintain the child in the home, open adoptions can occur in which the parent's rights are relinquished allowing the child to be legally adopted by a support family who continues to maintain an open relationship with the birth family.

Based on values and principles that support the preservation of the family unit, the Permanency Planning model strives to keep the family at the center of their children's lives. The model is based on the belief that all children belong in families and need enduring relationships that support growth, development, and community integration. Since all family members need support as they live with and care for a family member with a disability,

the model supports family empowerment building on the strengths of the family.

It is anticipated that the number of children in residential care will be reduced as a result of this model. Permanency Planning is not a "program" but it provides a philosophical context for several programs that currently support families with children who have mental retardation or autism (e.g. Home and Community-Based Services, In-Home and Family Support, etc.).

The Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TxMHMR) has received a four-year grant from the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities to facilitate statewide training and technical assistance to implement Permanency Planning.

Initially, Permanency Planning implementation focuses on the relationship of a child with a nurturing, caring adult who will be the child's lifelong advocate - the type of relationship that usually only occurs in families between parents and children. It has clearly become a quality of life issue. While staff from all parts of the state have been trained, the beginning of year three of the grant yielded 15 implementation sites for permanency planning, which represent 53% of the general population of Texas. In some cases, local CRCGs have chosen to replicate a Colorado project in which local interagency teams use the permanency planning model to support children with disabilities remaining at home. For more information, contact Liz Shelby at (512) 323-3256. ☒

## Research Supports Community-Based Services for Kid and their Families

by Kimberly Hoagwood, Ph.D., Chief of  
Child & Adolescent Services Research  
Program, National Institute of Mental Health

Dr. Kimberly Hoagwood conducted a three year evaluation of the costs and outcomes of 114 children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance in Texas who had been placed by school districts in residential treatment facilities for educational purposes. Results indicated a total annual cost to the state of Texas in excess of \$5 million, or \$80,000 per youth per length of stay. Outcome analyses revealed that two-thirds of the youth (63%) had either made no progress, had been discharged with a negative outcome, or had run-away. In only 25% of the cases did the youth have a positive outcome, measured by their return to school, return home, or placement into a vocational training program. Another 11% were making substantial progress. No relationships were found between costs and outcome, nor between severity of functioning and outcome. Severity of functioning did not differentiate the positive from the negative outcome groups. However, positive outcomes were associated with shorter lengths of stay. The availability of community-based services for the student and family was the single most likely reason reported by special education directors for positive discharge status. For more information, please contact Dr. Hoagwood at (301) 443-4233. ☒





## DIARY OF A CRCG CHAIRPERSON

by *Silvester Guzman, Bastrop County  
Juvenile Services, Tri-County CRCG  
Chairperson*

It all started in 1993, when Patrick Waldron, approached me for assistance in forming a Community Management Team (CMT). I agreed to assist him in his role as a Youth Services Program Developer for the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. The CMT would serve Austin, Bastrop, Fayette, Lee, and Waller counties. As the local CRCG Chairperson for Bastrop County, I had the opportunity to attend the Dallas Regional CRCG Conference in June 1994. While attending several of the sessions, I started thinking of goals that could be accomplished with the CRCG process in my area. Some of these goals included developing staff to assist with the increasing workload of organizing meetings and tracking individual service plans. One solution was to hire a CRCG Coordinator.

My next step was to find a funding source. I began talking with Mary Margaret Salls, the Travis County CRCG Chairperson and member of the Bastrop County CRCG representing the Education Service Center. We discussed how Travis County CRCG secured the necessary funds to hire a coordinator. I attended another conference workshop and had the opportunity to see how another CMT acted as a funding source. At last, I

found my source, so Patrick and I discussed the possibilities.

Back in Bastrop, I immediately developed a proposal for a Bastrop County CRCG coordinator, using CMT funds. Considering that the five county CMT had not yet formed, I started developing a plan to gather support from the other prospective CMT members before the initial meeting. I found that I did not have to try too hard, people were eager to collaborate.

During one of our CRCG meetings, it was decided that Fayette and Lee counties would join our Bastrop group to more effectively serve our clients. We then explored all of the benefits of collaboration. We also found that our union was more time and outcome efficient; for example, several members found that they had fewer meetings to attend..

On June 23rd, the first five county CMT meeting was held. The meeting was facilitated by Patrick Waldron and Dr. Susan Colegrove, Director of Children and Youth Service, for Community Services for Austin State Hospital. The CMT agreed to expend most of the monies on a Family Preservation Program which would serve all five counties with the inclusion of a CRCG Coordinator position. Later, an ad hoc committee developed a job description and facilitated the hiring process. The CMT stressed that the ideal applicant would need to be energetic and highly motivated. They also wanted someone with knowledge of existing agencies and their functions. The CMT agreed to have the coordinator assist with CMT activities and to house the position with the Family Preservation Coordinators.

In September, an ad

hoc committee made up of CRCG and CMT members reviewed applications and completed extensive interviews. The great efforts of all parties yielded a new CRCG Coordinator, Susie Brown, for the newly formed Tri-County and the Austin/Waller CRCG. Susie joins the ever expanding field of pioneers who are promoting wrap-around services. In my opinion, she is a dream come true and an asset to both the CRCGs and the CMT she will represent.

In summary, I feel great about the many accomplishments that we were able to achieve. Not only did the CRCGs benefit by obtaining a coordinator, but we formed a great working relationship with the local CMT. The CMT's investment in the CRCG process today is sure to yield many dividends in the future. I encourage every CRCG in the State to examine your needs, set your goals and objectives, and explore the benefits of creating a vision. It's a magnificent experience! ❖

### CRCG Annual Report

The CRCG Annual Report was distributed to all local CRCG Chairpersons this past October. The report includes:

- 1993 and partial year 1994 staffing data;
- 1994 accomplishments;
- 1995 future planning; and
- future linkages for collaboration;

Any additional persons interested in receiving the report may obtain a copy from their local CRCG Chairperson or from Tim Hair with the State CRCG Office by calling (512) 502-3274. ❖



Remember this past years' regional CRCG conferences? Those who attended reported that the conferences provided an overwhelmingly positive opportunity to network and gain ideas in promoting interagency collaboration for kids.

Well, look out!! This year we're going statewide!

Mark Your Calendars!!!

**THE STATEWIDE CRCG  
CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD**

**APRIL 10<sup>TH</sup> - 12<sup>TH</sup> 1995**

*in*

**AUSTIN, TEXAS**

*at the*

**WYNDHAM HOTEL**

*Registration information will be forthcoming to all those who attended the '94 regional conferences and to all local CRCG Chairpersons for dissemination to their members.*

*Looking forward to seeing you there!*



**CRCG**

**COMMUNITY  
RESOURCE  
COORDINATION  
GROUPS of Texas**

CRCGs is a collaborative process serving the Youth of Texas.

*In Partnership with:*

Texas Commission for the Blind  
Texas Department of Mental  
Health & Mental Retardation

Texas Education Agency  
Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Early Childhood Intervention

Texas Department of Health  
Texas Department of Protective &  
Regulatory Service

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission  
Texas Youth Commission

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*The Bridge* is published by the State Office of CRCG  
Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Richard C. Ladd, Commissioner

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or call 512/502-3270 (voice or TDD)

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CRCG Logo by Randy Phinney, TRC & The Bridge Logo by Greg Patterson, TDH

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