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Impact

on Vocational Opportunities

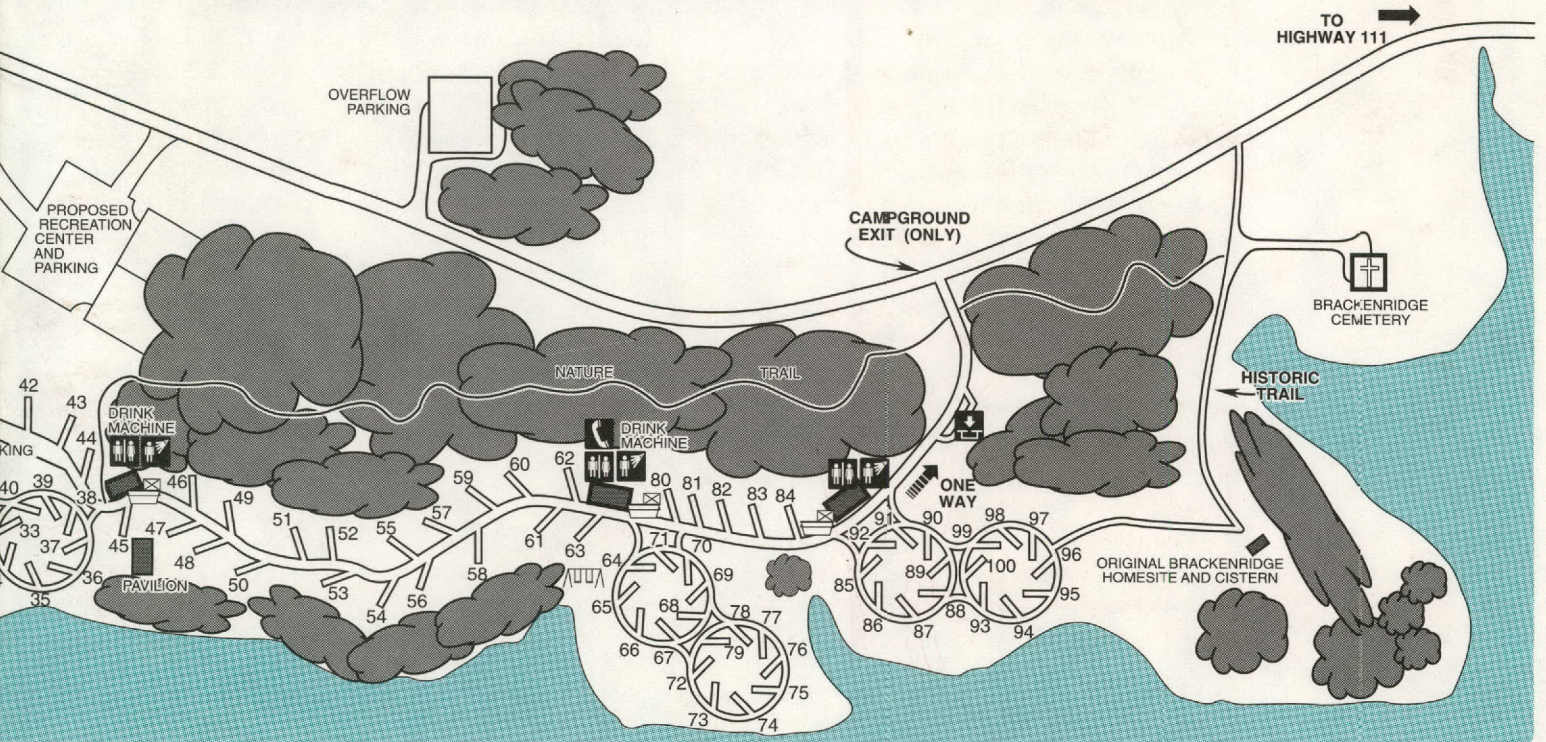
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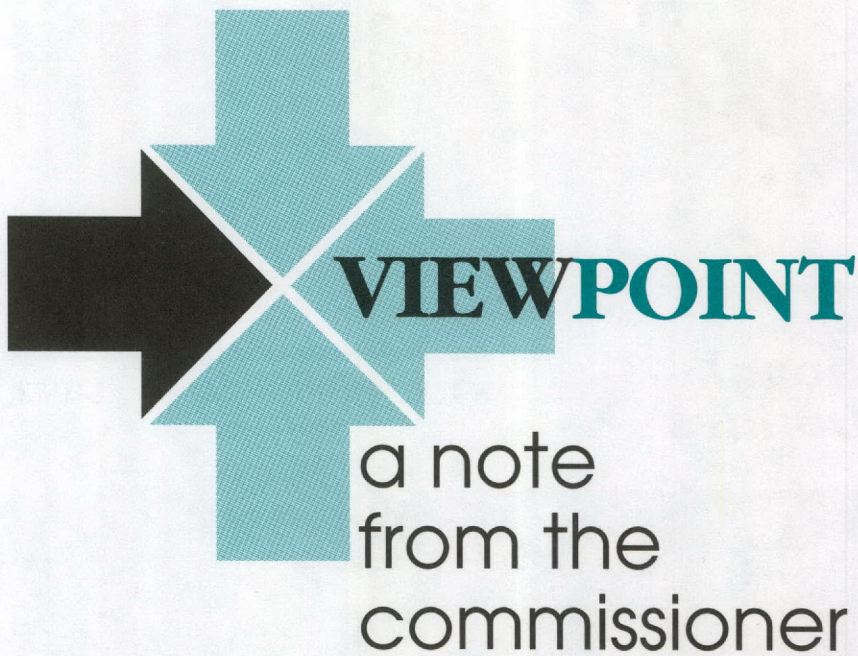
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VIEWPOINT

a note
from the
commissioner

This issue of *Impact* highlights the individuals served in MHMR vocational programs across the state, employers who benefit from hiring these individuals and family members who can recount firsthand the difference employment has made in the life of their loved one.

IMPACT

Cynthia Patton received the training she needed at Sabine Valley MHMR to grow from being a consumer to providing services to others.

IMPACT

Tammy Weeks of The Coffee Well Company in Austin found that individuals receiving services from Austin State School did such a good job of packaging coffee kits for her business that in 1991 Coffee Well contracted with the school as their sole packaging resource.

IMPACT

Velma Duncan reported that her grandson, Steven Duncan, has become more relaxed and likes to talk about his work since Lubbock Regional MHMR Center placed him in a job at a hardware store near the home he shares with her in Levelland.

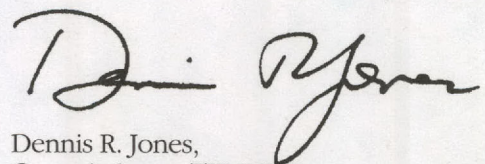
Vocational services, once viewed as a relatively small piece of the services we provide, are evolving into a central piece of our habilitation and rehabilitation ef-

forts. Clearly, as people move into the workforce and receive paychecks, opportunities open for housing, transportation, friendship and other advantages that come with improved self-esteem and financial independence.

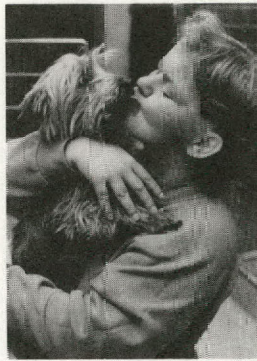
We are increasingly aware also that people need varying amounts of support. We must provide an array of service models ranging from job-readiness training to workshop-based employment, supported employment and assistance into competitive employment.

None of the models work, however, unless our MHMR professionals support the individuals, as does Job Coach Robert Marroquin of the Central Plains Center. Involvement and willingness to be flexible in dealing with the people we serve and employers (who are our customers, too) are vital to true integration.

As with all our efforts, we must strive to improve our vocational services. Last year the expert consultant in the *Lelsz* lawsuit recognized Fort Worth State School's vocational program as one of the best in the nation, noting that "the Vocational Services Department at Fort Worth State School made every effort to continue to improve and expand services provided." Fort Worth and other locations featured in this issue have created programs from which we can learn as we strive for excellent customer service in all our vocational areas. ❖



Dennis R. Jones,
Commissioner, TXMHMR



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On the cover:
Lucy Espinosa, right, points
out the Brackenridge
Plantation sites to Michelle
Swain. Photo by Bruce
Peterson

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Vocational Opportunities:

Work Provides More Than Paychecks

Twenty years ago, vocational opportunities for people with mental illnesses or mental retardation were limited. Today, opportunities have evolved and more opportunities are available.

The traditional crafts and work activities of the early '70s have slowly given way to programs which stress the needs of the individual. Now, instead of fitting a client into a program, a case-worker or job coach will find a program to wrap around a client. Employers in the community are also becoming more willing partners in efforts to integrate people with mental disabilities.

Zeek Harris, Director for Vocational Services, TXMHMR Mental Retardation Services, says evolution in vocational services means integration of people with disabilities. "One of the problems we have nowadays is that people don't know a lot about people with mental disabilities. That's because, until recently, people with mental disabilities weren't integrated into schools and the workplace. We've been evolving from the crafts and work activities, where the clients glued macaroni onto cigar boxes, to contract work, where they put the macaroni into bags (still under supervision of the workshop environment). Now we're evolving into the actual workplace, and they've become an employee of the macaroni factory. We're actually working in the macaroni factory."

Crafts and work activities are still available, but the focus is now shifted toward sheltered work and

supported work. Sheltered work may be in-house or community-based by a service provider. In both cases, the employees with mental disabilities are paid for their work. In-house sheltered work is often in the form of the contracts between the business world and the community centers and state facilities. Austin State School currently has a sheltered work contract with The Coffee Well Company for packaging coffee kits. (See the Coffee Well story on page 19.) Community-based sheltered work is exemplified in Mexia's Centex Community Programs, which houses the Centex Candy Factory. Workers make and sell peppermint sticks and peanut patties. (See the TIBH story for more information on the candy factory, page 20.)

Meanwhile, members of supported work programs are actually employees of a community business. They are paid directly by the business and they work among the non-disabled. In this scenario, the work force is not primarily individuals with severe disabilities. In San Antonio, Frances Zamora, who receives services from The Center for Health Care Services' Phoenix Psychosocial Program, works 20 hours a week busing tables at the local Pizza Hut. (See the vignette on page 7 for more.) In Levelland,

Steven Douglas, a member of the Supported Employment Program of Lubbock Regional MHMR Center, works full time as a warehouseman at the Western Auto-Ace Hardware store. (See the families vignette on page 22.)

Doug Rudd, Assistant Deputy Commissioner for the TXMHMR Mental Health Community Ser-

vices Division, says we have learned that through vocational programs, the health of our MH and MR clients is enhanced. "The programs help bring out people's healthier personalities and keep them out of the hospital. It is also important for them to get paid real money, to go from isolated settings to group settings and be with non-

disabled workers. That's the direction we are going. The psychosocial ideals and vocational opportunities have to go hand in hand. Without psychosocial, a person can't be successful. Without vocational, psychosocial wouldn't work either. We need to provide a full range of support as needed—from a little to a lot of support." Psycho-

Happy, Productive, Integrated Lives

Two Abilene State School Community Services recipients, Stacy Wells and Bobby Emerson, both enjoy their jobs at the Big Spring Wal-Mart. Wells' skills and work preferences were evaluated by the state school's Community Services group and Stacy was matched with a competitive job.

Wells had intensive assistance from a job coach who helped him fit into the work culture. Since that initial assistance, Wells works nearly independently and receives only minimal follow-up services from the job coach. His success on the job is proven by his length of service to Wal-Mart—over one year—and by the two excellent evaluations and two pay raises he has received.

"Earning money and new friends" are the rewards Wells receives from his work. He says he saves most of his money but "spends a little on gum." Laura Smith, a co-worker, says Wells is a hard worker and "carries his fair share of the workload." The Wal-Mart employees have accepted Wells as one of their own, Smith says. "It's been a real learning experience. Stacy has learned a lot and so have we. Customers also have learned people with disabilities can work."

Emerson has worked for Wal-Mart for over 18 months. He has come a long way from his release from Big Spring State Hospital and the sheltered workshop programs monitored by the Community Services staff at Abilene. He now shares an apartment with two other young men and is nearly independent at the job site.

With continuous coordination between the division's departments, Emerson and Wells are living happy, productive and integrated lives. ❖



Top: Stacy Wells with co-worker Laura Smith.
Above: Bobby Emerson.

photos by Claude Milton

social ideals address the special needs of the individual, providing support where needed, as opposed to the traditional medical model approach which is very controlled and not specialized.

The Community Services Department at Austin State Hospital offers a little to a lot of vocational services and opportunities for patients. Sheltered work is available, as well as contract temporary work. The ASH greenhouse is one nurturing employment environment where patients can grow their own plants and vegetables. Vocational assistance is available also. Individuals may be assisted in finding employment with the ASH-based furniture business, or help may be provided to those who are interested in transitional employment, supported employment, and even competitive employment.

The Problems of Unemployment

Sam Shore, Community Support Programs Coordinator in Mental Health, explains, "The work a person does impacts the way that person is viewed by others and by themselves. Social status and feelings of self-worth are linked very closely to this idea, while unemployment also has great impact on the individual and society as a whole. When everyone thinks about unemployment and its impact, it is important to realize that for persons with psychiatric disabilities, the problem of unemployment is extremely disproportionate. Experts estimate that unemployment for this group of people is 85 percent. In Texas, it is estimated that 31,800 people with psychiatric disabilities between the ages of 18 and 44 are in need of vocational rehabilitation services.

These are people in the prime age for launching and developing their vocational careers. This includes people who, due to the onset of mental illness, have never worked, or who just began careers only to have them interrupted by the illness. Others, who were well into meaningful careers, were devastated by the illness. These are people who wonder if they will ever be able to support themselves."

Vocational rehabilitation is an integral component of psychosocial rehabilitation, Shore says, and is often the last phase of psychosocial rehabilitation to be developed. "A combination of resources and skills is necessary. It is important that services be well coordinated, and federal and state funds be maximized, to ensure all phases of rehabilitation are effective and suffi-

cient. This is the only way to support people with psychiatric disabilities in becoming productive citizens. Psychosocial rehabilitation offers great promise to those with psychiatric disabilities."

According to Harris, "the system is in transition. There are ties with CQI [Continuous Quality Improvement]. We need to continually improve. We expect the system to get better and be a lot different in 20 years."

Supported Work, the Flagship Model

The supported work option, the flagship model, is a structured type of employment. A job coach works with an employer and an employee. The employee is trained for the job and the job coach even-

Contracts Provide Workshop Opportunities

William Knod, a sheltered workshop employee at San Antonio State Hospital, sews canvas patterns together to create the H-E-B shopping bags. See the feature on the bag contract, page 25, for more details.



photo by Steve Hughtes

tually fades from the scene unless more help is needed later. "Our consumers can do all sorts of jobs," comments Rudd. "The state realizes this and is beginning to provide good vocational opportunities. The focus now is toward developing integrated employment opportunities for persons with mental disabilities. The challenge for job developers and job coaches is to obtain and maintain employment in community settings, like in businesses or industries where the disabled person is a part of the work

force as opposed to being the whole work force in a segregated or sheltered environment. Research and literature show vocational opportunities in communities are the most effective means of employment for people served by MHMR."

"The Department's goal is to help individuals who are the most severely challenged with the dollars available. Additionally, the Department has a legislative mandate to provide adult services for students graduating from public schools. A major component of both mandates

is vocational opportunities," explains Jaylon Fincannon, Deputy Commissioner, TXMHMR Mental Retardation Services.

"The Department," he says, "is actively moving toward integrated vocational opportunities in the community for the individuals we serve. Just as we want people, regardless of the complexities of their disabilities, to have living environments that are small, home-like and in residential areas, we also want the same personalized, psychosocial environment for vocational opportunities.

The Buzzword Is Support

If life for one person with a disability can be improved with supported employment, perhaps many lives can be improved in the same manner. Frances Zamora, a 19-year-old San Antonian, is setting an example few thought would be possible. Despite her battle with mental illness each day, Zamora works 20 hours a week busing tables at Pizza Hut in the San Antonio area. In her spare time, she prepares for the last two tests required for her GED certification. "I am proud of myself and have accomplished a lot," she says.

The buzzword is support. Prior to Zamora landing her first job through The Center for Health Care Services' (TCHCS) Phoenix Psychosocial Program, she received support from TCHCS Children's Unit. Now she receives long-term support from Phoenix both on and off the job. Work has been a significant way for Zamora to become part of her community, to better herself through education, and to build her self-esteem so that she can become fully independent. The support of her parents, her supervisor, her co-workers, friends and her job coach all contribute in helping Zamora realize her abilities and overcome her disability.

The support of her parents, her supervisor, her co-workers, friends and her job coach all contribute in helping Zamora realize her abilities and overcome her disability.

Zamora attends Phoenix once a month for Job Holder's Club, a support group made up of employed consumers with psychiatric disabilities. The support group keeps her abreast of what her peers are doing, how they cope with mental illness, and how people can work together to solve common problems.

She has learned to deal with her illness, a schizophrenic disorder, by "taking one day at a time and not putting a lot of pressure" on herself. One would think that busing tables in a fast-paced restaurant would be a high-stress job in itself, but Zamora says, "It's a fun job, not a pressured job."

"Frances is really unique, very friendly, nice to be around, and no different from any other employee," says Gary Saldana, Zamora's supervisor and Store Manager at Pizza Hut. "She comes to work on time

and does a good job. We miss her when she's not here. We've all become real close."

A job coach visits Pizza Hut about two times a week to make sure Saldana is satisfied with Zamora's performance. "She could go to any restaurant, bus tables,

and do a good job," he reports. "One good thing about supported employment is that Frances is working in an environment where everyone else is working."

Pleased with the service Phoenix provides, Saldana recommends supported employment to other businesses. In his words, "Frances is definitely an asset." ❖

Contributed by Loren Smith-Ruiz, Marketing Specialist, The Center for Health Care Services Phoenix Psychosocial Program.

This means supported work opportunities in multiple kinds of businesses and industries, an individual or small number of individuals in a work setting, pay for work, and all the other benefits that non-disabled fellow employees receive from their employment. This also means services which support individuals in achieving their goals in an integrated setting, rather than services which confine an individual in a sheltered, segregated setting."

Supported work is an option for clients exiting the public school system or returning to their communities from facilities. Those who are receiving segregated services currently but would like an integrated option also may consider supported work. Harris says earning wages, making one's own purchases, and contributing to the community builds self-esteem. It also fosters independence, responsibility, and enhances perceptions of an individual's abilities by their families, employers and the community, he says. Community awareness of mental disabilities is heightened when clients are a part of community life.

An interesting example of community-based work is an award-winning recycling program from Oyster Creek Industries. Last year the Lower Colorado River Authority presented the workshop director with the Environmental Award for Matagorda County. Four days a week, six people with mental retardation work at the community recycling center. They have helped the city save natural resources and energy, besides making money for themselves and establishing their independence. During their first

nine-month period, 385,938 pounds of recyclables were processed. This program can boast such success because of the support it receives from the community. Donations from businesses and community members have enabled them to expand the project.

Fincannon notes that "individu-

als with mental disabilities, when matched to a job and provided the necessary support, learn they can be successful community employees. Through integrated community-based settings, misconceptions can be corrected, expectations can be raised, and negative self-fulfilling prophecies can be ended."

"I love to work. It drives me," says Mitchell Hanes, a Central Counties Center for MHMR Services consumer who works at Fort Hood under a janitorial contract between the Army base and the CCC. Hanes says the opportunity to work gives him independence and opens up other options for him. Recently, he fulfilled a dream when he purchased a house in Killeen.

Although diagnosed with schizophrenia, Hanes proved himself on the job after cleaning lobbies on three floors of the base for six months. His work was rewarded with a promotion to crew leader a year ago. In the past year, Hanes has successfully supervised the cleaning of 26 bathrooms and a dozen kitchens six evenings a week. Stanley Price, MHMR's Project Manager on the contract, says a crew leader has a high pressure job because the Army inspects the work daily. No member of the crew has ever been cited negatively by the Army, however.

Because of the crew's diligence and other contract successes at the base, the

center recently was awarded the National Industries for the Severely Handicapped 1991 Certificate of Achievement for work at Fort Hood. Four separate contracts contribute to the overall relationship between Fort Hood and CCC MHMR. Their total value is \$1.4 million.

Clarice Norman, Contract Manager, says the purpose of the program is not to "turn out mass janitors," but to teach interaction with peers, work behaviors and how to deal with supervisors. Ideally, she says, it is to help a consumer become as productive in society as possible.

Hanes says he does not see his crew or the other workers as disabled. "They do a good job. They're the best I've ever had. A good team," he says, smiling and giving a firm thumbs-up. ❖

*Contributed by Phil Washburn, Public Information Officer,
Central Counties Center for Mental Health & Mental Retardation Services.*

A Firm Thumbs- Up



Mitchell Hanes

photo by Phil Washburn

Support Comes from All Directions

An advantage of supported work is the on-the-job training provided. An individual is matched with a job and support is given on the basis of individual interests and needs. If the initial employment fails, the focus is on what caused the failure, not that the individual failed.

The job developer/job coach is not always on-site, but serves as a facilitator and provides information and training support before job placement and as needed during the assignment.

Lubbock Regional MHMR currently has three job developers and five job coaches in their supported employment program. They help

individuals develop skills needed for successful employment. Training is on-site and follow-up help is available when needed. Expansion of their services has been possible by grants awarded from the Developmental Disabilities Council and other sources. In addition, through Screen Print Enterprises, a silk screening and microfilm business,

Texas Panhandle Program Helps Instill Confidence, Responsibility

Moving From Staff-Directed to Consumer-Driven

For almost ten years, the Texas Panhandle Mental Health Authority has looked at how work affects people's lives. Now, the Vocational Department in Amarillo is trying something new. They are moving from a staff-directed program to a consumer-driven, crew-based janitorial operation. "By giving people control over their work environment, they begin to improve their self-esteem and begin a process of self-determination that can translate into any aspect of their lives," says Libby Cottrell, Vocational Coordinator, TPMHA.

For Gary Hernandez, positive change has already happened. A consumer crew captain, he credits the new program with expediting his ability to make the transition back into the community. He has been taking medication and attending the Amarillo psychosocial program for seven years but joined the work crew just six months ago. "I've benefited from the entire program, but until I began working on these crews and receiving the support and trust from staff that I've been getting, I was very hesitant for many reasons to even consider getting a job in the community," Hernandez says. "Now I've come to believe I can do it, and the staff are working to help me prepare to make that transition."

The idea of shifting to a consumer-driven model occurred to staff when they recognized that consum-

ers were not using the vocational program to their fullest advantage. "They weren't really learning," says Cottrell. "We were primarily filling contracts with workers and not fully developing consumers' skills or helping them prepare to enter the private sector. As a result, they felt little investment in the program and its relevance to their own rehabilitative process," she explains.

Staff now bring consumers into bidding for several contracts, assigning work schedules, supervising tasks and selecting rosters. Workers choose jobs they want as well as how many hours and days they will work, and they supervise one another. Consumers and staff meet monthly to discuss the details of each contract and plan strategies for best fulfilling it. Staff and consumers share responsibility for ensuring quality performance.

Staff member and Work Crew Supervisor Ed Jones says, "This program helps instill a sense of responsibility and, at the same time, gives consumers an idea of what to expect as they prepare to reenter the workforce. Many are at first sceptical, but as their time in the program increases, so does their confidence."

Vocational services will continue to improve at TPMHA. "The plan is to teach the consumers to negotiate the contracts themselves and for the work crews eventually to become independent of the agency," Cottrell says. ❖

Contributed by Richard Taylor, TPMHA consumer and Editor of the Polk Street Press, a consumer-run newsletter for the Amarillo psychosocial program.

the center placed six people with mental retardation.

Support by co-workers, family and friends is essential to integrating people with mental disabilities into the workplace. Fincannon says, "Employees with mental disabilities must become participants in interdependent relationships that occur in the natural environment. These interdependent relationships are with fellow workers, friends and neighbors, instead of interactions only with paid service providers. It is through interdependencies and interactions with fellow employees and community members that natural role models emerge. People respond to their environment and to others in that environment. It is more appropriate to learn work skills and acceptable behaviors in integrated natural environments from fellow employees as role models than in segregated environments where co-workers may not have mastered such skills and behaviors."

The active support of a client's family or guardian is one of the prerequisites to services provided to clients at the Metro Supported Employment Service in Dallas County MHMR. Their model has been designated an exemplary program in the area of supported employment services by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

Awareness is the key to more integrated employment. Employers' perceptions can and do change when they learn that people with mental disabilities can be successful employees.

(SEDL). They offer consumer and family orientations, transportation training, job development, placement and follow-up.

Another community-oriented model exists in Corpus Christi. As a way of measuring community perceptions, members of the South Texas Employment Program of the Community Services Division in Corpus Christi State School interview employers, co-workers, consumers and their families about their perceptions of people with disabilities and how those perceptions have changed since working with a person who has mental retardation. They find that community perception has improved and the MHMR client has become more independent and self-assured.

Another barrier is the stigma associated with being mentally disabled. An employer will usually hire a non-disabled person first. "We've got to compete with that," says Rudd. "We have marvelous people and employers must recognize that it's a partnership."

Awareness is the key to more integrated employment. Employers' perceptions can and do change when they learn that people with mental disabilities can be successful employees. Employment opportunities for people with mental disabilities continues to evolve, and as more MHMR consumers enter the workplace, employers and the community will become more willing partners. ♦

Metamorphosis:

From Consumer to Provider From Consumer to Provider From Consumer to Provider

Cynthia Patton knows firsthand that transformation from consumer to service provider can be difficult, but Sabine Valley Center's career ladder provides a way. The Sabine Valley Center is a community MHMR facility located in Longview. "The same center that I received services from provides me the opportunity for a fulfilling career," she says.

In 1987 Patton suffered her first psychotic break. At the time, she was a successful office manager for a large firm in Dallas. She was diagnosed with a bipolar mental illness with psychotic features. Her family brought her to Sabine Valley for treatment, where she was hospitalized. Since the first episode, she was in and out of the hospitalization phase and has settled into a program of employment at the community MHMR center.

"Like most other consumers in the program, at first I worked part-time. This allowed me to re-establish my work habits without too much stress.

"Later, as a peer counselor, I was able to be creative because there are not a lot of specific duties to that job. In this position, I discovered my potential to be a strong consumer advocate. As a result, I was elected by majority vote to the Board of Directors of Texas Mental Health Consumers, and recently Governor Richards appointed me to the People with Disabilities Committee," she explains.

The Sabine Valley career ladder is based on the premise that consumers who become providers are a powerful role model for other consumers. Additionally, the program helps break down barriers between

providers and consumers: consumer employees know from personal experience which services do and don't work and they are able to use their knowledge to effectively confront individuals who are failing to take appropriate responsibility for themselves. Consumer employees also actively seek ways to ensure that programs and services enhance human dignity.

Continuing up the career ladder, Patton was promoted from peer counselor to full-time staff member at Sabine Valley Center. Consumers who go the full length of the career ladder can obtain competitive employment positions at the Center. Currently, she is the Resident Manager of an apartment complex owned by Sabine Valley.

"At times, the loyalties I have to other consumers and the loyalties I have to my supervisors and fellow staff become blurred. I have to rely on my intuition and good judgment to make the right decisions," says Patton.

But she believes that the benefits of supporting consumers in becoming service providers outweigh the difficulties. "I feel respected for the knowledge I've gained from living with mental illness and that my experience is valuable." ❖

Contributed by Harrison Kinney, Program Director; James Sawyer, Homeless Outreach Worker; Cynthia Patton, Peer Counselor/Resident Manager; and J. T. Pharr, Coordinator of Peer Counseling, Sabine Valley MHMR Center.



She Cuddles & Coddles Critters

Sharon Dickerson scoops up another "heinz-57" variety pooch and they trade a sloppy smooch. The cuddling is the best part, but she also helps care for the dogs at the Fort Worth Humane Society.



photo by Mark Gail

Sharon Dickerson and a grateful pooch at the Fort Worth Humane Society

She walks, brushes and waters her four-legged friends and also cleans their kennels and spreads fresh newspapers for them. Sharon Dickerson has worked at the Fort Worth Humane Society since October 1990. She also sweeps and takes out the trash. Dickerson enjoys her job at the Humane Society because she likes petting animals, being outdoors and active, and earning money to buy personal items.

Dickerson's success at the Humane Society wasn't an accidental good fortune, but rather a result of the dogged determination of Fort Worth State School's Employment and Training staff. Her moderate mental retardation combined with bipolar disorder resulted in behavior problems ranging from short attention span to acts of aggression upon herself and others. In previous employment settings, these behaviors occurred daily. According to Catherine Neman, Director of Employment and Training, "Sharon had a number of unsuccessful job placements before we were finally able to find an area of interest to her. We observed her attraction to a dog that was a pet in one of our homes. She would frequently sneak away from her home to be with the dog. She also spent a great deal of time outside watching birds. We decided to use this interest and placed her at the Humane Society."

Now that she has a job that appeals to her, Dickerson's behavior has turned around. Although at home she seldom remains in an activity for more than five minutes, at work she stays focused on her tasks for as long as 30 minutes. Incidents of self-abusive behaviors and aggression toward others have dropped dramatically during the year-long assessment period. Now, she is a social person who initiates social contact on the job with others and is known and liked by her co-workers. She says "please" and "thank you," and no longer accuses co-workers of stealing from her.

Her employment skills continue to improve and expand, with the help of one-to-one training provided by her job coach. She's learning to improve the quality of her work and her ability to perform with less supervision as her job coach fades. In the future, she may have opportunities to work with the other types of animals at the Humane Society.

Dickerson's living skills are expanding as well. At present, she travels to work by bus under supervision of her trainer. In the future, she will learn to ride the bus independently after gaining skill in handling her own bus tokens and in identifying landmarks along the bus route. She will also be learning about eating appropriate foods during her breaks and lunch.

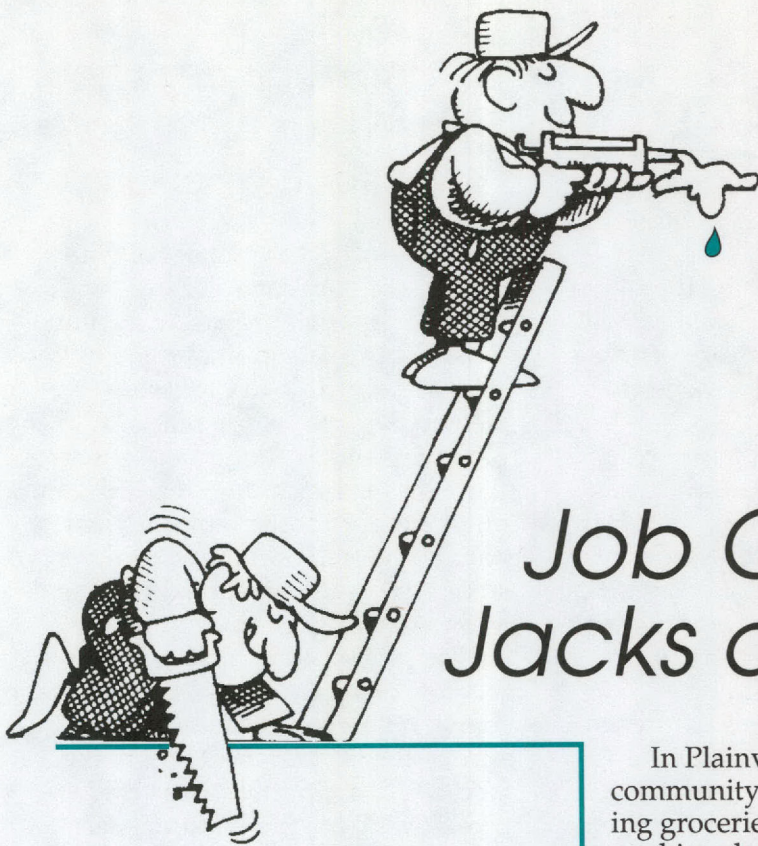
In the meantime, when asked if she likes going to work, Dickerson not only responds "yes," but she sometimes does her best to persuade the interviewer to adopt a dog! ❖

Ft. Worth State School Praised for Exceptional Vocational Services

Fort Worth State School operates an array of vocational services with the broad goal of providing meaningful services to all adults served by the school. According to Catherine Neman, Director of the school's Employment and Training Department, these services include competitive employment, supported employment, paid vocational training in campus positions and paid vocational employment involving contract work.

The range and quality of vocational services provided by the school has drawn favorable attention. Last spring, the expert consultant in the *Leslz* lawsuit reported to the US District Court that "the vocational services department at Fort Worth State School made every effort to continue to improve and expand services provided" and specifically commended the creation of off-campus vocational alternatives that give residents an opportunity to work in the community and to have paid employment.

In response to the expert consultant's report, Deputy Commissioner Jaylon Fincannon agreed that "Fort Worth State School has done an outstanding job of creating and implementing vocational programs." He related that the Vocational Services Department worked with the school's Occupational Therapy Department and the Texas A&M Engineering Department to improve productivity of physically challenged individuals, collaborated with a variety of public and private organizations to develop job sites and made significant strides in recruiting and training job coaches. "School staff have created programs that they can be proud of and that our other 12 state schools can use as models," Fincannon said. ❖



Job Coaches, the Jacks of All Trades

“The key is to provide the best service possible in a service-oriented environment.”

In Plainview on any given day, a resident of this small community might see Robert Marroquin diligently sacking groceries in the morning. In the afternoon, they might see him glass beading pistons in a machine shop. But wherever he is seen, he is generally seen working. Marroquin, who serves as a trainer, job placement specialist, job solicitor and job coach of Tommy Lewis Industries in Plainview, is using a little of the proverbial elbow grease to place the clients of the sheltered workshop. “The key is to provide the best service possible in a service-oriented environment,” he says. “If an employer sees that you are trying to make it work, they will try to make it work, too.”

The effort appears to be paying off. Of the ten clients in the workshop ready to work, seven are employed. One employer is waiting for another client to be available. Overall, the workshop has placed nine clients in its first two years.

United Supermarkets is becoming one of Marroquin’s best prospects. “Even though our first placement at United wasn’t successful, they’ve placed two people since then,” he says. “It’s all a part of selling the program.”

Marroquin uses the financial benefits of hiring through the workshop to initially sell the program. His business card notes in red ink, “Tax Credit” and “J. T. P. A.” Tax credit for an employer can be up to \$2,400 and the Job Training Partnership Act, a federally funded program, will pay up to half of the employee’s wages for one to six months. It seems to be a strong selling point, he says. “The trick is to get the word out about the advantages and put the individuals with mental disabilities in situations where they can do the job.” ♦

Contributed by Paul Herndon.

Volunteers:

A Vital Helping Hand in Vocational Programs

Volunteer programs are critical to the success of many vocational opportunities across the state.

These are just a few:

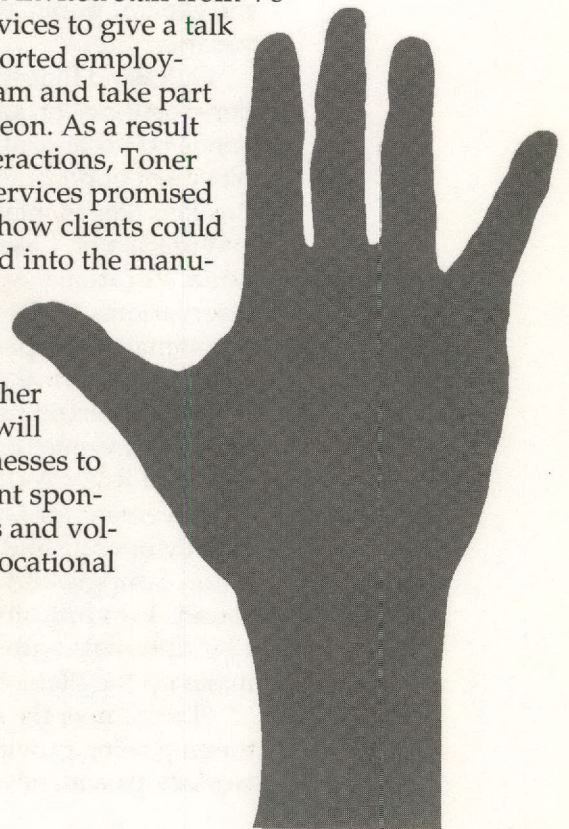
At **Wichita Falls State Hospital**, volunteers are a vital ingredient in vocational programs.

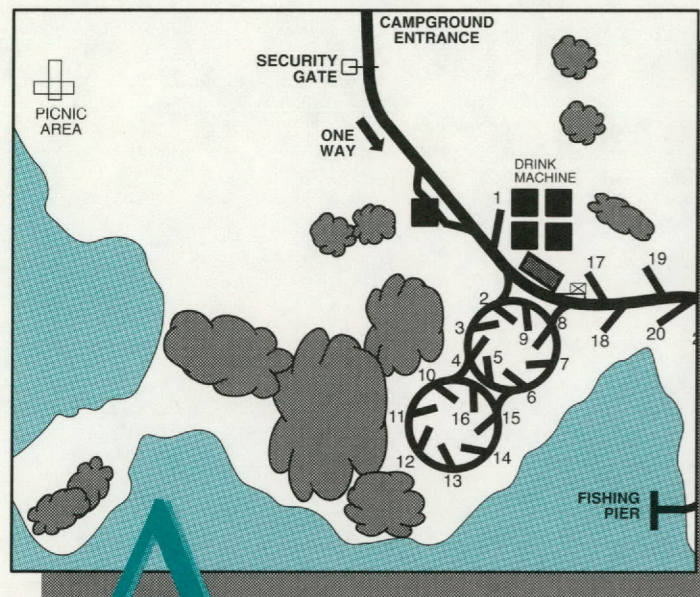
- Volunteer donations purchased a greenhouse for the Teen School which is used in vocational training and science classes. Teens experience plant propagation and care.
- Volunteers have also assisted in the Paper Recycling Workshop. Volunteer Services Council funds purchased a fork lift/pallet lifter for use in the workshop. One council board member was responsible for securing a \$1,000 Wichita Falls Clean Country award from Wal-Mart to purchase additional containers for collecting paper.
- A riding lawnmower was purchased with the help of a volunteer who set up contracts with several local businesses for lawn maintenance.
- Volunteers assembled a greenhouse which will provide vocational training and work opportunities for eight client workers. Plants will be grown for hospital needs, and future sales in the community are planned. ❖

At **Vernon State Hospital**, volunteer programs support vocational services through a gift shop program. The gift shop, located on campus, is run by volunteers who sell items made or grown by patients. Wooden novelties, plants, ceramic figurines, leather goods and upholstery work are some of the items found there. The gift shop has been operating since September 1991 and is open four hours a day. The money the program brings in goes back to the patients for supplies, taxes or into a trust fund account for them. ❖

At **Denton State School**, volunteers are raising money for the purchase of a new vocational workshop to be located off campus. The previous workshop was located in a residential area not suitable for commercial use. Over \$315,000 has already been raised for this project. ❖

The **Austin State School Volunteer Services** and **Vocational Services** groups are forming a joint **Business Advisory Council**. The council will be made up of business leaders and several professionals in the marketing and advertising fields and will provide expertise and consultation to both departments in marketing strategies. Both departments will share their contacts and actively advocate for each other's needs. Recently, Volunteer Services hosted a tour and luncheon for employees of Motorola and Toner Cartridge Services and invited staff from Vocational Services to give a talk on the supported employment program and take part in the luncheon. As a result of those interactions, Toner Cartridge Services promised to consider how clients could be integrated into the manufacturing process of their company. Together the groups will access businesses to become event sponsors, donors and volunteers in vocational projects. ❖





Amid 125 acres of campgrounds, nature trails and play areas which border over 10,000 acres of lake, Gulf Bend Industries operates a supported employment program for clients with mental disabilities. The clients keep the marina and campground running while the general public enjoys the tranquil vacation site.

Gulf Bend Industries provides vocational assessment, job skills training, hands-on vocational training and employment opportunities with the Brackenridge Plantation campground and marina on Lake Texana, outside of Edna. Vocational opportunities include reservations, sales, grounds work, boat maintenance, carpentry, plumbing, painting, electrical, welding, equipment maintenance and more. Since June 1990, Gulf Bend Center and the Lavaca Navidad River Authority entered into an agreement for Gulf Bend Industries to fully operate and maintain the Plantation campground and marina year round. Two full-time staff persons and 12 individuals with mental disabilities make up the Plantation staff.

"I remember the days of vocational training being provided only in sheltered workshops with nowhere to go. Gulf

Bend Industries projects such as Brackenridge enable us to take another step towards integration and normalization," says Joe T. Newman, Director of Gulf Bend Industries. "Our trainees at Brackenridge are in contact with more than 60,000 campers and visitors each year while performing a variety of skills, skills that are transferable to jobs in the community. Brackenridge is unique in that it, like Gulf Bend Industries, provides vocational training and placement for persons of all disabilities."

Wade Maresh, a client receiving training at Brackenridge, is diagnosed as hyperactive with autistic tendencies and minimal brain disfunction. Maresh has received encouragement from his family and teachers in the local school district, and last year the district referred Maresh to Gulf Bend for training and possible employment later on. Screening and assessments showed he might do well on the grounds maintenance crew. Maresh now operates riding mowers and weed-eaters and is also responsible for the daily maintenance of those tools.

Maresh's mother said of the effects of her son's work: "He has really blossomed since

Marina, Campgrounds, Nature Trails Provide Picturesque Setting for Employment



photo by Bruce Peterson

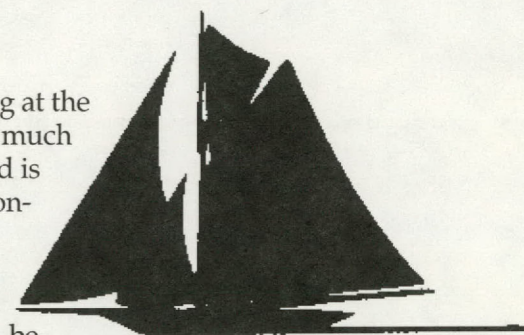
Bennie Wollam, Plantation Manager, helps new trainee Willie Zapalak secure a boat at the Brackenridge docks.

"This is what it's all about, giving these folks the opportunity to learn and use what's learned in their everyday lives . . . I wouldn't trade Brackenridge for anything."

he's been working at the park. He does so much more at home and is much more responsible about the things he does. The biggest reward is his smile, because I know he's happy with his work and that he's proud of what he is accomplishing out there and that's more important than anything."

Supported employment enables clients like Maresh to be more independent, learn new skills, prepare for a non-supported job, earn money and develop their self-esteem. "This is what it's all about, giving these folks the opportunity to learn and use what's learned in their everyday lives. I think it's great that Gulf Bend Industries not only provides vocational training but actually hires some of those who have the ability to become trainers themselves. I wouldn't trade Brackenridge for anything," says Bennie Wollam, Brackenridge Plantation Manager.

Another success story at Brackenridge is Michael Alvarez. Alvarez began his supported work in Victoria in another Gulf Bend program before transferring to the Plantation as an Assistant Supervisor Trainee this past March. Upon completion of his training, Alvarez will be eligible to apply for a regular full-time position as the Maintenance Supervisor at the campground and marina. ❖



Employers, whether they be facility-associated or independent community employers, are an integral aspect of the growth process for individuals with mental disabilities. Employers provide paying jobs and opportunities for growth in areas like self-esteem and independence.

One former Austin State Hospital patient, Francisco Galvan, is currently employed in Taylor at Intercrafts Inc. Galvan is a fabricator for the picture frame manufacturer. He assembles the frames and is doing well at his job, according to Human Resources Manager Mary Lou Marker.

In another part of Texas, John Bannon, owner of the Original Mexican Food Cafe in Galveston and volunteer Executive Director of the Sunshine Training Center, admits, "As a restaurant owner, I have a difficult time getting employees to be at work consistently and do a good job."

Employers:

A Link to the Communities

Bannon found a solution to his problem in Sergio Marines, a client of the Mainland Industries workshop of the Gulf Coast Center in Galveston. "I was looking for a bus person really interested in the job who would do it consistently well. Sergio was very consistent and enjoyed his job," he says.

"There is an unexpected benefit," John relates. "Sergio impresses not only me, but also the customers. They leave him tips!"

Bannon became aware of Gulf Coast's vocational program through Sunshine Training Center, which contracts with the community MHMR center. "I became interested in how I could modify jobs I have to meet the needs of Gulf Coast's consumers. I've done that with Sergio, but I don't want to stop there. I'd like to develop training opportunities and equipment customized to the clients and to the primary local industry, tourism.

"My feeling is that there are ways and opportunities to find suitable employment for most of the clients. What we need to do is take a good look at tourism here and think about how we can modify the environment to meet job needs," Bannon says.

Through membership in and presentations to the Galveston Hotel/Motel Association and the Galveston Rotary Club, Bannon is spreading his enthusiasm for hiring people with disabilities in his community. ♦

photo by Jan Quirk



Francisco Galvan wraps up a picture frame assembly.

Employers
are critical to
the successful
integration of
people with
mental
disabilities.
Paid
employment
means a lot
more than a
paycheck.



THE COFFEE WELL

1800 W. 6th
Austin, Texas 78703

January 31, 1992
Austin State School
Volunteer Services
PO Box 1269
Austin, Texas 78767

Ladies & Gentlemen:

My name is Tammy Weeks and I'm with The Coffee Well Company here in Austin. Coffee Well is an international distributor of coffee for hotels and military installations and has been in business here for two and one-half years. Since January of 1990, Coffee Well has contracted with various institutions employing handicapped people to package coffee kits. As of April 1991, we contracted with Austin State School as our exclusive packaging resource; not only for the convenience of having easy access to our product, but mainly because of the quality of the work. Since this time, VRC Industries has been able to employ an additional 120 clients solely for Coffee Well who otherwise would not have the opportunity to work. I anticipate increasing this number even more as the year progresses.

... Ken Petri and his staff have demonstrated over and over the kind of dedication for quality work and compassion for the clients it takes to successfully operate a facility of this type. ... I have personally worked closely with the trainers in this school and have seen only positive results come from it. It has been a beneficial experience for the business community as well as for the special people working here. This institution serves the State of Texas well.

Sincerely,

Tammy R. Weeks
The Coffee Well Company

photo by Larry Murphy



Three University of Texas mechanical engineering students observe the manual assembly of the Coffee Well packets. The students, as a class project, designed a machine to facilitate easier kit assembly by the clients. Pictured above: clients Carolyn Fann and Celeste Herman, and students Carolyn Young, Sandy Chao and Wahab.

We're Making Candy and Furniture and Gavels and . . .

"We're a business. Our business is people. When we're thinking of a new venture, we turn to empowerment."

Dozens of work centers around the state, in metropolitan areas and the far corners of Texas, provide rehabilitation programs under the umbrella organization of the Texas Industries for the Blind and Handicapped. TIBH administers the state-use program created to market the goods and services produced by consumers in sheltered and supported workshops. Businesses in the communities contract with TIBH and MHMR facilities, trading funds for the goods and services provided by the individuals served by MHMR.

From candy making to spice packaging, from furniture building to gavel lathing, Texas MHMR consumers may choose from a variety of workshop options across the state. In Mexia, the smell of peppermint draws many folks inside the East Main Street Centex Community Programs office. The group operates a candy factory on a contract with Mexia State School, producing peanut brittle, hard candies, peanut patties and peppermint sticks. The peppermint is hand-pulled by individuals receiving services from Mexia State School. They start with a 75-pound batch of raw peppermint-flavored

dough. Wearing cotton gloves, they roll, heat and form it into red and white twisted barber pole-style peppermint sticks. At Christmas time, a green stripe is added for a tri-color stick.

Meanwhile, in Devine, people served by MHMR receive vocational training by buying and repackaging spices for agency use. Bought in bulk, 35 different spices are packed and distributed to state agencies with food service programs. The spices are used by and for patients in those agencies. The work center is called TexSpice and is an affiliate of the Community Services Division of San Antonio State School.

One of the most unique programs of the many work centers across the state is affiliated with the Community Services Department at Austin State Hospital. This



photo by Dani Lance

Odessa Jones packages peanut patties at the Centex Candy Company. The candy factory is operated by East Main Street Centex Community Programs for Mexia State School clients.

site operates sheltered and supported work programs that range from contract work to member-run businesses, like ASHCO, the hospital's furniture factory. Office desks, credenzas and lateral filing cabinets are assembled to industry standards. The business is run by the patients. The Austin State Hospital-based programs, however, are co-joined with a clubhouse atmosphere, which adds a socialization and personal development aspect to the work they accomplish.

"We're a business," says Leon Oehlers, Director of Rehabilitation Services, ASH Community Services. "Our business is people. When we're thinking of a new venture, we turn to empowerment. I ask the clients if they're interested and they discuss it and decide if they're going through with it. We offer all the training. We take the risks together. It's all a part of finding a need and filling it."

The furniture factory was a gamble, Oehlers says, and is now "extremely successful. In 1990 we started production. We've had zero defects and zero lates."

Based at the hospital and operated by the Community Services Department, ASHCO works under contract agreement with TIBH. Beth Covey, Director of Community Services, says, "ASHCO personnel are extremely proud of the quality of our office furniture and their production record. Proceeds of our sales to organizations help support the expansion and quality of vocational training of persons in the mental health services. Our goal is real work for real people."

In creating work programs, Oehlers says, "we have to be very creative. We have to get them excited about life again. Once we do get a good program in place, it keeps the

staff motivated to do what's best for the people we serve, too. The clients are vested in the venture succeeding. The venture is their treatment."

Scheib Opportunity Center in San Marcos is provided with mental health services by the ASH Community Services group. At Scheib, consumers of MHMR services use lathes and other tools to build gavels for the Texas Senate, the House and for special contracts. The making of gavels requires highly technical and artistic skills and the craftspeople have gained a reputation for quality in handmade workmanship. Some famous folks, like the Queen of England, have been presented gavels made by the hands at Scheib. The wood-working products at Scheib also include benches, furniture, birdhouses, bed supports and a host of custom items.

The contract work the MHMR consumers do in these workshops helps them increase self-esteem. The money they make helps them become more independent of state facilities. They have purchasing power and with that purchasing power and confidence, they can begin walking down the path toward independence.❖



ASHCO workers Tim Halverson, Jacqueline Halton and Joe Zepeda (front to back) assemble a desk in the furniture factory.

photo by Leon Oehlers

Families:

A Critical Link in the Support Chain

Families are another aspect of the support given to individuals with mental disabilities. Some individuals receive family support while living at home; others reside in facilities or have places of their own. Whichever way familial support arrives, clients are buoyed by this special family support. Families of people with mental disabilities are often amazed at what their family member can accomplish on their own. Independence, work and support seem to evolve together and help all parties concerned.

Steven Duncan's work career as a warehouseman at the Levelland Western Auto-Ace Hardware store has had a positive effect on his life. The Supported Employment Program of Lubbock Regional MHMR Center continues to provide job support to Duncan in the competitive employment environment. His family is happy with his progress and continues to reassure him. At home, his grandmother, Velma Duncan, comments about the effect work has had on Duncan: "He is completely changed in his outlook



Steven Duncan and his grandmother, Velma Duncan.

on life. He is more relaxed and talks about his work."

Joanna Edwards, a resident of Austin State School, has substantial physical and mental disabilities. The fingers on her hands are practically non-existent and her hands are rounded and clubbed. Her physical disabilities and severe retardation are a result of a condition called Apert's Syndrome. Nevertheless, Edwards has f.g-

photo by Barbara Peters



Joanna Edwards assembles campaign buttons.

ured out how to put together campaign buttons. She is able to put the pins in approximately 600 buttons a day. She is also excellent at applying stick-on labels at a high rate of speed and accuracy.

The first time her father, Gordon Edwards, saw her engrossed in her work, he became very emotional. "I was amazed that she could do anything like this. When she was born, we didn't think she'd live and now look at her"

"I was amazed that she could do anything like this. When she was born, we didn't think she'd live and now look at her."

The staff at Austin State School who helped Edwards realize her goal were moved by her father's reaction. Working with individuals like Edwards day after day often desensitizes them to the unique nature of their jobs, but watching Gordon Edwards brought a new wave of realization to them, reminding them of the special rewards their work brings. ❖

Lubbock's Artificial Chicken

There's no
feathers,
cackling or
chicken feed,
but it does
produce eggs.

What do you get when you combine the desire of state school residents to be productive citizens, the ingenuity of Texas Tech engineering students and the determination of a devoted vocational services director?

The answer: an artificial chicken. And no ordinary artificial chicken, either. No feathers, cackling or chicken feed.

This artificial chicken is made of aluminum, is controlled by a computer and it lays about one million eggs a month. In the process, it provides meaningful and profitable work for nine Lubbock State School residents.

Using sophisticated electronic switches and other modifications that make it user-friendly for client workers, the artificial chicken can be controlled by the slightest movements of the hand or head. Denise Parker, 29, can scan a computer screen and then with a slight movement of her head, control the number of plastic eggs the

chicken lays in packing boxes. The eggs, which already have been stuffed with tiny toys by other state school workers, are then dispatched to Furr's and Bishop's caf-

eterias in Texas and other states. The cafeterias give the eggs as gifts to child patrons.

"There's no way we could have done the Furr's contract without this automated equipment," says Jack Kirkpatrick, Director of Vocational Services. It was Kirkpatrick's idea to approach the Texas Tech Mechanical Engineering Department to design and build adaptive equipment for the school's workshop.

"I had some things I wanted to build, but my people were so busy they didn't have the time to do the research and development," he says. Three Tech engineering professors agreed to assign their students senior projects on adaptive equipment at the state school. The result, as Kirkpatrick sees it, has been a win-win situation — a win for the school and a win for the engineering students.

In addition to the artificial chicken, Tech students have designed a conveyor system for a contract to bag gravel for road construction barricades. The system employs a gravel pit, a mini-elevator shaft that hoists small buckets of gravel and unloads them into bags. A conveyor belt carries the bags to a spot near the loading dock behind the workshop.

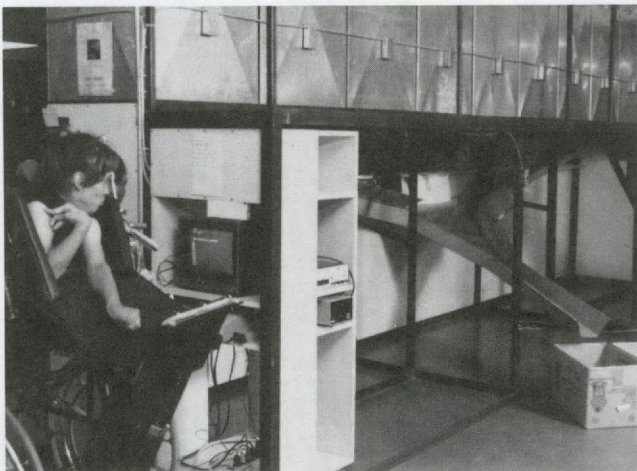
Every component of the bagging system is controlled by a computer, which in turn is operated by state school residents. A computer screen offers 450 yes/no options that can be selected with the tap of a hand control. State school residents like Ronnie Beck can turn the bagging apparatus on and off and issue instructions via electronic voice commands to workers on the conveyor system.

Adaptive equipment like the gravel bagger and the artificial chicken have earned the Lubbock State School vocational program a reputation as a reliable and quality contractor. Workers at the school and other workshops operated under Kirkpatrick's care fulfill 48 contracts a year. All totalled, more than 170 state school residents work in one of two workshops on the Lubbock campus.

"If a person can indicate a preference, they can enter a vocational program," Kirkpatrick says. "Our goal is to put everyone to work. That's where we'll be in ten years." ♦

Contributed by Sheila Allee, Director of TXMHMR Media Relations.

photo by John Thompson



Denise Parker can control the number of eggs the artificial chicken lays with a mere nod of her head.



Patients at the San Antonio State Hospital (SASH) New Start Sheltered Workshop have bagged a real trophy contract: production of 10,000 canvas bags for the H-E-B Grocery Company. The \$40,000 contract is the first major job for the workshop, which began in 1989 as a joint venture of The Hogg Foundation, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission and SASH. The program is designed to provide patients with vocational skills necessary to work in the community.

The bag contract puts the workshop to the test as it incorporates several production components. Twenty patients, supervised by three staff members, are responsible for the complete production, finishing, packaging and delivery of the bags.

Individual bag patterns are cut from bolts of canvas cloth and silk-screened, using non-caustic ink, and then sewn. A UPC code and a brochure, printed by the workshop, are the final additions. Each bag is pressed, folded and packed. The bags are then delivered to H-E-B's central warehouse in San Antonio for shipment to selected stores throughout South Texas.

"Seeing the results of their work outside the hospital is an immeasurable boost to the patients' self-esteem. The contribution that can make to a patient's rehabilitation is very significant," says Nancy Stout, Work-

shop Chief.

While the bag contract is the biggest single contract for the workshop, other contracts, large and small, keep the workers busy. Patients are involved in jobs like printing business cards, enlarging photographs, recycling plastics and producing picture frames. "Often an organization or club only requires a small number of items in their contract and

many commercial shops won't take a job that small, but we will," Stout says.

Steven B. Schnee, SASH Superintendent, is delighted with the workshop's success. "The workshop is an excellent example of a win-win situation. Businesses get a quality product at a competitive price. Workshop patients get real life experience," he says.

The workshop also helps bridge the community to the hospital. "Every positive effort that helps transition patients to the community leads to increased public awareness of mental illness," says Paula Strength, Director of Volunteer Services. "The Workshop demonstrates that patients can be productive and competitive in job skills, helping to reduce the stigma attached to mental illness." ❖

Contributed by Lorenzo Nastasi, Public Information Officer, San Antonio State Hospital.

H-E-B Contract Bagged

Challenging Old Molds, Redesigning Lives

Dana Bennett is a thoughtful, attractive woman in her early forties. Her cap of auburn hair highlights eyes that light up when she flashes a smile. About ten years ago, her family noticed some severe behavioral changes in her. Since then, she's been receiving help and during the last six months she's been a resident of Austin State Hospital.

Bennett has been diagnosed with paranoia and schizophrenia. She's heard voices and has had trouble holding down a job. During the past few months, she has been working in a vocational transitional employment program sponsored by ASH. She has a temporary position in MHMR's Central Office (CO).

"Right now I still live at ASH. It's very structured, a good place to be if you lose a part of your life." Bennett says she's about 85% recovered and is starting to reorganize her life. The thought of leaving ASH makes her feel anxious, though, and she says she's grateful for the transitional program which allows her to work at a pace she's capable of now and will help prepare her for life outside ASH. Clerical work is the main focus of her assignment in the Innovations and Technical Assistance area for MH in the TXMHMR Central Office building.

The temporary contract work Bennett and other ASH clients are involved in is one of several of ASH's vocational services, according to Sally Nelson, Employment Resources Supervisor for the ASH Vocational Service Department. The vocational group helps with employment resources and adjustment services to assist patients with their varying vocational needs and prepare them for work outside ASH when they are able.

"Some clients aren't able to resume the same work they've done in the past. We help them redesign their lives," explains Nelson of the program's goals. "They need jobs that provide transitional work. You can't go from the State Hospital to IBM and a three-piece suit and attache case. It's just not realistic. The advantage with temporary contract work like Dana's is we go out and get them the job. The pressure is off them. The job provides the client with self-confidence, paid wages and a normalizing experience."

No More Apologies

Vocational workers at ASH are continually selling transitional employment programs to employers both within state government and out. "We've gone into more of a business mentality," Nelson says. "We used to be like a charity. We no longer ask for an apology; we approach with a you-have-your-needs,-we-have-people-who-can-work attitude. We try to get across to potential employers that we've streamlined the hiring process to make it easy and desirable for them to hire individuals with mental disabilities and we're willing to do a tremendous amount to make it happen. We no longer ask for a charitable handout. We no longer approach employers in an apologetic fashion because we have become attuned to the needs of the

"For a client who may not have worked for months or years, going out on a job interview, using public transportation and wearing donated clothing while being ever aware of the prejudices surrounding mental illness is a stressful, if not terrifying, experience."

business community."

David Luna, TXMHMR Coordinator for Multicultural Services, says Bennett is doing quite well at her job in his area and several other former client workers have gone from CO temporary work into more permanent jobs out-

side the TXMHMR system. When news of a former client's success reaches Luna "it feels great to have been part of the process," he says. "Hopefully, the success we've seen here and in other parts of the CO will promote other job opportunities for clients interested in transitional work. We'd like to be a role model."

Client worker programs help the community as well as the clients. Luna says, "Many CO workers have never worked with clients; now they can see them as people, not stereotypes. It also keeps CO staff in touch with who our customers really are. The clients are our ultimate customers."

Ruth Seminara, an Administrative Technician in the Multicultural Services area, agrees with Luna: "When I first started working with the client workers, I was a little uncomfortable because I didn't know what to expect, but now I feel completely comfortable. The only contact I've ever had with people who have mental illness are the client workers. I think the stigma might fade if more CO people would have our clients work in their areas. They're just like us. They have their bad days, sure, but then so does everyone."

Promoting Self-Esteem

Both Nelson and Luna note that several other areas in Central Office currently have temporary help provided by the client worker program. Bennett says the program has promoted her self-esteem by providing her with her own responsibilities. "Many mentally ill people feel like no one understands whatever disease they have, but support like this program will help more people understand."

Helping people help themselves can be a big challenge, according to Nelson. It's easy for clients to become attached to the microcosm called ASH. "There's something about the state hospital that is so challenging. Many of the clients are indigent. They have no money, no clothes. It's a challenge to get them up to speed. There's a quality here of a time warp, a floating timelessness. For example, we don't have

money for clothes, so we rely on donated clothes and many of the donated clothes are old. The patients are not wearing the latest clothes and, too, some of their behavior may lack social finesse. They're in an environment that gives them permission to just be, be in a place with soft boundaries. There's a lack of social presence that's a consequence of being in a facility like this. For a client who may not have worked for months or years, going out on a job interview, using public transportation and wearing donated clothing while being ever aware of the prejudices surrounding mental illness is a stressful, if not terrifying, experience. Our support to them is extensive and begins long before the interview. When they're ready to work, we start working with them, so they'll be able to deal with everyday demands and time frames outside ASH."

All of the work done at ASH to prepare clients for transitional work and the opportunities from employers is part of a master plan to incorporate a psychosocial approach to treatment. The psychosocial approach, Nelson says, "addresses special needs holistically, while nurturing self reliance. The more traditional institutional model inhibits their control over themselves and their environment. The less control they have in their life, the more stress they experience. By attempting to de-stress the institutional experience, we're breaking new ground. We're challenging old molds."

Bennett and the Future

Since her transitional work has been such a positive experience, Bennett is looking forward to branching out in the world even more. "I've fallen in love with Austin, so I might stay here. I'd love to get an apartment on my own someday. My main goal is to be able to trust myself with relationships, trust my instincts. I need to trust myself again to handle my lifestyle the correct way." She also looks forward to going back to college and completing a fine arts degree from the University of Texas "no matter how long it takes me," she says. ❖

News *Briefs*

Judge Approves RAJ Settlement

TXMHMR mental health workers systemwide are hard at work putting into action the requirements of the settlement agreement in the *RAJ vs. Jones* lawsuit. US District Judge Barefoot Sanders approved the settlement after a hearing March 20 in his Dallas courtroom.

Already underway is a system of self-monitoring at the state's eight state hospitals for individuals with mental illness. Scoring teams will rate specific aspects of patient treatment.

The evaluation process at each hospital will be validated by a Quality System Oversight (QSO) team. The teams are made up of a department psychiatrist, a state hospital employee, a clinical professional (such as a nurse, social worker or psychologist), a representative from a statewide advocacy group, an independent consulting psychiatrist and a consulting administrator. Plans are in the making to add additional outside members to the team.

Hospitals will be scored in such areas as individualized treatment and patient rights, consent to treatment with psychoactive medications and others.

Each hospital will be dismissed from the lawsuit once it has reached established scoring requirements. When all hospitals have been cleared, then the lawsuit will be dismissed. Estimates are that it will take about two years for the first hospital to exit the lawsuit.

The Texas system is setting a standard for public mental health facilities nationwide. The scoring procedure is being emulated by at least seven other states. ♦

Rules Broaden Department's Investigative Powers over Private Psychiatric Hospitals

New rules broadening TXMHMR's investigative powers over private psychiatric hospitals were adopted February 7 by the TXMHMR Board. The rules, which include a Patient's Bill of Rights, were invoked on an emergency basis in December 1991 in response to widespread allegations of patient abuse in private psychiatric hospitals. With the Board's actions, the rules became a permanent part of the agency's operating procedures.

The rules empower TXMHMR to make unannounced visits to private

psychiatric hospitals to ensure that they are complying with state and federal laws and TXMHMR standards. Additionally, the new rules prohibit remuneration of any type for making or accepting illegal patient referrals. Also forbidden is coercion of voluntary patients to continue treatment.

Following the Board's decision, Commissioner Dennis Jones said, "Texas is moving in the right direction in the effort to make sure private psychiatric patients get what they sign up for—a safe and therapeutic environment."

After the emergency rules were implemented December 4, they were subject to public comment. The Department considered all comments before approving the final version of the rules. Language was clarified in several areas, including provisions concerning admission procedures.

Considerable feedback was received from psychiatrists and psychologists on the requirement that all admissions, whether voluntary or involuntary, be ordered and clinically justified by a physician. In response to their concerns, the Board affirmed the physician admission language but added an amendment requiring that within 72 hours before admission an in-person assessment must be conducted by a qualified mental health professional. Such professionals could include psychologists, psychiatrists and other professionals as specified in the hospital's medical staff bylaws.

The Department's authority to promulgate the rules was upheld by the Attorney General. The ruling was sought because of discrepancies between powers granted to the Department under the Health and Safety Code and under the Mental Health Code. ♦

Wichita Falls State Hospital Earns Highest Level of Accreditation

Wichita Falls State Hospital has been Accredited with Commendation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). This is the highest level of accreditation awarded by the Joint Commission, which is the nation's oldest and largest accrediting body. Of the 1,984 hospitals surveyed by the Joint Commission from January 1, 1991 to March 30, 1992, only six percent received Accreditation with Commendation.

Richard M. Bruner, Superintendent, received notice of the Accreditation with Commendation, which recognizes exemplary performance by a health care organization. Accreditation is awarded for three years following the survey, which was conducted August 5-7, 1991, by a five-member JCAHO team. The survey involved reviews of Adult Psychiatric Services, Children-Adolescent Services and the Substance Abuse Recovery Program. Every component of hospital operation was evaluated and compared to nationally recognized standards of quality and performance.

The same criteria are used for inspection of both private and public hospitals. Three years is the maximum period of accreditation granted any hospital.

"Receiving Accreditation with Commendation is a significant achievement, one that recognizes exemplary performance by Wichita Falls State Hospital," said Dennis S. O'Leary, MD, Joint Commission President. "The organization should be commended for its commitment to providing quality care to the people in its community."

"We are extremely pleased to have achieved this designation," said Bruner. "Pro-

viding quality treatment for persons with mental illness or substance abuse is the mission of Wichita Falls State Hospital. Receiving Accreditation with Commendation is a compliment to our staff and is an indication to the 52 counties served by this hospital that we strive to achieve the highest level of performance possible and to create an environment of continuous improvement. Each staff member at WFSH played a valuable role in working to meet the standards. While receiving Accreditation with Commendation is a milestone in efforts to provide quality treatment, we will continue efforts to improve." ❖

Ladd Named Health and Human Services Commissioner

Governor Ann Richards named Richard Ladd the state's first Commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission on May 19. He assumed his new duties June 15.

As former Assistant Director of the Oregon Department of Human Resources, Ladd brings to Texas what Richards described as "an impressive background in coordinating the activities of large state agencies that provide services as diverse as administering the food stamp program to providing measles shots to schoolchildren." Previously, he served on committees for the US Department of Health and Human Services, the National Association of State Units on Ag-

ing, the American Public Welfare Association, the American Association of Retired Persons and the National Governors' Association.

Ladd stated that he is "committed to the concept that health care and social services are basic human rights and that no person should be denied these services because of ability to pay." ❖



Caffey Appointed Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources

In February, the Texas Board of MHMR approved appointment of Margene Caffey to the position of Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources for TXMHMR. She is in charge of workforce recruitment, employee training and personnel matters for the agency.

For the past year, Caffey had performed the duties of her new position in an acting capacity. From 1984 to 1991, she was Director of Staff Development for TXMHMR. ❖

Fort Worth State School Welcomes Burbank

Fort Worth State School has a new superintendent, Russ Burbank, EdD, who began his duties June 1. Burbank was appointed on April 22. His previous assignments include a post as Superintendent of the Arkadelphia Human Development Center, a residential facility for individuals with mental retardation. Burbank also served in the TXMHMR system at Richmond, San Angelo and Denton State Schools. ❖

Clubhouse Workshops Held in Leander

A new group of mental health consumers and professionals called the Clubhouse Network met for two days in March at the Leander Rehabilitation Center to participate in workshops on clubhouses. Speakers included Sam Shore, Community Support Programs Coordinator for TXMHMR Mental Health Services, and R. Mike Harvey, Vice-Chair, Texas Mental Health Consumers. Small groups gathered to discuss and learn more about fund-raising, newsletters, advocacy, programs and other issues. Approximately 150 individuals attended.

According to Harvey, "Most left inspired and encouraged. Consumers really are putting their toes in the water toward empowerment."

He explained that the Clubhouse Network is a group of psychosocial clubhouses from across the state. The idea for the group belongs

to Ted Clevenger of Temple, Harvey said. "Ted's dream is one where strength in numbers will bring about the sharing of ideas and examples of what works." ❖

Stavinoha Named Point of Light

Fred Stavinoha, who has volunteered at Richmond State School since 1983, was named the 697th Point of Light on February 18, 1992, by President George Bush. Points of Light are named daily, except Sundays, by President Bush to honor those who successfully address the nation's most pressing social problems through direct and consequential acts of community service.

Stavinoha makes three-hour visits at least three times per week to about 20 individuals served by the school. Along with his friends at RSS, Stavinoha developed a "wheelchair train" in which he pushes one client, who pushes another and so on. The news release on Stavinoha included the statement that "President Bush salutes Fred Stavinoha for exemplifying his belief that 'From now on in America, any definition of a successful life must include serving others.'" Stavinoha is a retired businessman living in Rosenberg. ❖

★ ★ Celebrate

★ ★ '92

- ★ Community
- ★ Changes
- ★ Choices

**Third Annual Helen Farabee Conference,
Austin, Texas, November 2-3**

Commitment Made to Family Members

When the Department's 13 state school superintendents gathered for their first meeting after Mexia and Travis State Schools initially were recommended for closure by the Governor's Facility Review Task Force, one of their concerns was addressing the needs of affected family members.

According to Rick Campbell, Associate Deputy Commissioner for Mental Retardation Facilities, the superintendents discussed ways of addressing those needs. The outcome was eight promises to family members. Although Fort Worth State School was selected for closure rather than Mexia, these promises still apply:

- The Department will still be responsible for individuals now living in state schools.
- The Department will try to accommodate any request a family member has.
- If they cannot do so on their own, families will be assisted in visiting other state schools.
- Families will be put in contact with family

members at other locations so they can share information.

- The Department will establish a parent advisory group to provide feedback on how the closure process is progressing.

- A written plan will address family involvement in the closure process.

- All existing systems will be maintained or improved.

- Family members will receive individual attention.

The Department has established a toll-free line so families can ask questions easily: 1(800) 524-1346. The number will be staffed from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Barby Bowles, of TXMHMR Mental Retardation Services, has been designated the family liaison for the Department during the closure process. ❖

Hudson Cited as Volunteer of the Year

James Hudson, an employee of Richmond State School, was selected by the Texas Department of Human Services as Volunteer of the Year in Region 11.

Hudson works with aged and disabled individuals. He started a volunteer program through his church, which assists residents of an apartment complex that serves individuals with disabilities. Hudson volunteers an average of ten hours per week.

He was honored at a ceremony at DHS on February 18, where he was presented a plaque for Volunteer Achievement by DHS Board Chair Cassandra Carr. ❖

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Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
PO Box 12668
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Texas Department of
Mental Health and Mental Retardation
PO Box 12668, Austin, Texas 78711-2668
(512) 465-4540 or STS 824-4540

Address correction requested

Inside this issue, we focus on vocational opportunities and the integration of people with mental disabilities. Integration requires a symbiotic relationship between the community and persons with mental disabilities. The stories inside feature vocational programs in partnership with:

- **Employers**, a critical link to the communities, page 18
- **Families**, imperative support for the individuals we serve, page 22
- **Volunteers**, a vital helping hand, page 17

