

News & Views

JUNE 2007

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED

CAPITOL ACTION DAY



Back Row, L-R: Carrie Field, Alexa Johanson, Terri Slaughter, Deniz Keller
Front Row, L-R: Denise Hunter, Kent Mickelson

Dateline - May 23, 2007, Sacramento. CID participated in the Capitol Action Day, which was held this year on May 23rd. CID's contingent was lead by Kent Mickelson, CID's Executive Director, Deniz Keller, CID's Systems Change Advocate, Terri Slaughter, CID's new Program Manager, as well as other CID staffers and volunteers.

The vision of the Capitol Action Day this year was "Equal and Accessible Health Care". Over 1,600 people representing all disability groups spent the entire day voicing their rights to have affordable, equal and accessible healthcare. There were people with all kinds of disabilities, family members, friends, and workers all united in our common cause.

All 29 Independent Living Centers in California got their communities organized and came together for this annual event. This year's event had a couple of new additions and changes. The Independent Living Centers conducted the event in collaboration with the National Road to Freedom Tour and added a Disability Advocacy Resource Fair and an Educational Forum to the day's event.

In addition to the presence of the California Independent Living Centers were coalition organizations such as Protection and Advocacy, Inc., California Council of Community Mental Health Agencies, Disability Rights Legal Center, World Institute on Disability, Communities Actively Living Independent & Free, California Association of Public Authorities, and Californians for Disability Rights, Inc., etc.

The line of enthusiastic chanting people, with banners and signs, marched and rallied from the Sacramento Convention Center to the Sacramento Capitol North Steps. As the rally participants flowed over the steps, terraces, on the lawns, under the trees, everyone was united to celebrate and voice their needs. This powerful group of people then divided into small groups to visit their Legislators from their home districts explaining how the health care system affects thousands of people with disabilities and the desperate need for radical change. - Deniz Keller, Advocacy Coordinator (ext. 113)

From the Executive Director

The Director's Report

Kent Mickelson



The Center for Independence of the Disabled lost a valuable employee when Ray Pittsinger retired recently as Program Manager. Ray worked at CID for 17 years having first joined the staff in 1990. Ray was first hired to work in the Client Assistance Program as a CAP Advocate. He was promoted to CAP Coordinator and then to Program Manager.

Ray has been a big part of the history of CID. He started his work under Executive Director Eldon Luce and helped CID transition to current Director Kent Mickelson. He was acting Director for 5 months between the two directors. Ray also helped plan and execute CID's 20th and 25th anniversary celebrations.

Ray saw CID grow from a \$500,000 budget to the current budget of \$1,200,000. He worked hard during that time hiring and training new employees and supervising the service staff. Ray was also responsible for monthly and quarterly reports and compliance of grants and contracts. He was an excellent employee and supervisor and we will miss him at CID!

Prior to coming to CID Ray worked at the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County as an intake specialist. He also worked as a service representative at Social Security Administration and as an ESL Teacher at the San Mateo Adult School. He moved to San Mateo County in 1980 after living 6 years in Columbia.

Ray and his wife Jane plan to spend 4 months living in England

and then re-settle in the Southwestern United States or return to the Bay Area. Stay tuned for further details. We wish Ray and Jane the best of wishes for a successful retirement!



Ray & Jane Pittsinger at Ray's Retirement Party

ALL-HAZARDS EMERGENCY MESSAGES ON NOAA WEATHER RADIO

by Jim Stinehoff, Emergency Services Coordinator



For less than cost of a new pair of shoes, you can own a radio equipped to receive the same weather reports and emergency information that meteorologists and emergency responders use. This is important information that can save your life!

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards (NWR) broadcasts National Weather Service (NWS) warnings, watches, forecasts, and non-weather related hazard information 24 hours a day. NWR broadcasts warnings and post-event information for all types of hazards for natural weather such as floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, forest fires, and volcanic activity. NOAA Weather Radio also covers environmental incidents such as chemical releases, oil spills, nuclear power plant emergencies, national emergencies, terrorist attacks, and public safety alerts, AMBER alerts, and 911 Telephone outages.

NWS interrupt continuous broadcasts sending a special tone activating local weather radios. Weather radios equipped with a special alarm tone feature sound an alert to give you immediate information about a life-threatening situation. Persons with visual and hearing impairments can get the most comprehensive weather and information available to the public by connecting weather radios with alarm tones to attention-getting devices like strobe lights, pagers, bed-shakers, personal computers, and text printers.

All-Hazards Weather Radio receivers can be found at many retail outlets including electronics, department, sporting goods, and boat and marine accessory stores or ordered through their catalogues. They can also be purchased via the internet from online retailers or directly from manufacturers.

SIT AND BE FIT VIDEO

CID's Independent Living Skills coordinator, Lois Glover, participates with a Task Force on Fall Prevention. As part of the efforts of this group, a VHS Videotape and DVD have been produced to provide a full body workout to improve balance and prevent falls. There is a Beginning Level and an Advanced Level.

The "Sit And Be Fit" VHS Videotape or DVD is available in both English and Spanish. If you are interested in obtaining either a VHS Videotape or DVD, a contribution of \$5 is requested. Please call Lois Glover at 595-0783 for assistance in purchasing a VHS Videotape or DVD.

Need a Stair Lift?

Shopping for a stairlift? CID's Assistive Technology Department has a Lift Recycling Program designed to assist our consumers in obtaining lifts at a reduced cost. There are even potential funding options available if you require a new unit. For comparisons, new units generally cost about \$4500 installed. A reconditioned or used lift will range from approximately \$1500 to \$2500 depending upon its' condition.



If the stairs is not straight up and down you would then require a curved track unit. For this type you can count on paying at least \$11,000+ because it will have to be a new custom made unit. If you are shopping for a new home, it would be wise to try to avoid any stairs that have a landing mid-way up.

If you need to negotiate stairs in a wheelchair then you will be needing some type of elevator or a lift large enough to move the wheelchair with you on it. These can cost between \$15,000 - \$30,000. Many townhomes and condos will be too small to find a place to install one of these, so be very careful in your selection of a new home.

Most dealers do not want to deal in used units, so you might have problems in simply going through the Yellow Pages to try to find one. If you wish to pursue getting a used (or new) lift unit, please contact me and I will provide contact info for the dealers that can best assist you.
- Steve Freier, Assistive Technology Department.

TIPS FOR WRITING TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

by Deniz Keller, Advocacy Coordinator

Writing a personal letter is the most common way to contact a legislator. Your letter can bring a perspective or a clear, persuasive argument that can influence a legislator about an issue that is important to you and your community. A legislator may pay more attention to a legislative matter if they receive a large amount of mail.

Here are some tips:

- Address the Letter properly. Make sure you know your legislators address, full name and title are spelled correctly.
- Recommended Salutations: Dear Senator (Senators name).
- Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. (Representative's name)
- Be specific, brief and constructive. If you do not agree with an issue, explain what you believe to be the correct approach. You may also want to include articles, editorials or other supporting materials to help make your point. Illustrate how the issue has an impact on you, your family, community or state.
- When a letter pertains to a specific legislation, refer to it by number, title, and sponsor if possible.
- Avoid form letters or post cards if possible. A thoughtful, personal and factual letter with your own words will be more effective.
- Ask your legislator for a response in which his or her position or action is stated.
- Include your last name, return address and make sure your letter and signature is legible. It is important for the legislator to be able to identify who has written the letter.

Who will read your letter: Most letters to congressional offices are read by the member or by a key staff person who will brief the member on the issues and positions expressed in the constituent correspondence.

What if you do not receive a reply: Legislators have many restrictions on their time and are often unable to immediately respond to letters. As a rule however, senators and representatives always respond to their constituents. If you do not receive a reply, be persistent. Or if you receive only a brief acknowledgment, write again and request more specific information.

To find your state senator and assembly person, visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov and enter your address with zip code. Then click on the legislator's site for details.

CID Welcomes New Program Manager, Terri Slaughter, M.S.



On April 16, 2007, Terri Slaughter joined CID as our new Program Manager. She comes to us with a wealth of experience in working with people with disabilities and non-profit agencies. She was raised in Hawaii and moved to California almost 10 years ago.

She first became interested in the social services field first at the young age of twelve when her father acquired a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). As a teachers aide in high school she assisted with programs in the special education classes. Her passion for this field grew as she entered into college at the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

Following graduation, Terri became the program manager for the Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii, a program to teach youth to share the message of staying drug free. A few years later she moved on to Winners at Work, an agency that worked with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) in assisting consumers with preparing for, finding and maintaining competitive employment.

In 1997, Terri moved to California and began working with the Bill Wilson Center in Santa Clara as a Program Supervisor and Counselor mentorship program for youth. She returned to school at SFSU and in 2001 earned a Masters of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling. She also received a Certificate in Rehabilitation Engineering Assistive Technology and admits that assistive technology is a passion of hers.

Terri moved directly into an Assistive Technology Specialist position at the DOR with Ray Grott. She went on to develop and run the San Francisco Traumatic Brain Injury Network, assisting TBI survivors with successful community reintegration. She later worked with the Center for Neuro Skills as a Community Liaison in San Francisco.

Since joining CID, Terri has hit the ground running. She has some big shoes to fill following the retirement of the former Program Manager, Ray Pittsinger's 17 year stretch but welcomes the challenge. We are happy and excited to have such a valuable and enthusiastic person join the CID family.

CID GARDEN UPDATE

We made a late start, but the CID garden got a huge boost on May 15th due to the donation of a large bin of organic compost by BFI and the efforts of CID



staffers, family members, and a volunteer consumer who cleared the Fall garden and unloaded nearly an entire bin of compost. Now we're ready to plan our Spring/ Summer garden. We are always looking for volunteer consumers to work in the garden. For additional information contact David Mon at CID., 650-595-0783 ext. 127.

CID NEEDS VOLUNTEERS!

CID needs volunteers to help disabled individuals in San Mateo County with these two programs:

- o **SASH** serves people who are unable to leave their homes or unable to lift or carry groceries. Some people have diminished sight or a physical challenge and cannot lift heavy objects.
- o **VIMM** volunteers are trained to help individuals with basic money management; including help sorting and paying bills and organizing a simple bookkeeping system.

**Please give of your time;
Your efforts WILL be appreciated!**

To become a volunteer please contact **Sally Pierotti**, VIMM/SASH Coordinator at (650) 595-0783 ext.117.

Donate Your Old Car to CID!

Donate Your old car to CID and receive a tax write-off. Your donation will help CID! A HUGE THANKS goes out to the many of you who have already donated! CID is more prosperous because of you! It's really easy and fast. To donate, call Steve Freier at (650) 595-0783 ext. 115



The Client Assistance Program

The Client Assistance Program works with consumers that are having a problem with retraining through the Department of Rehabilitation to get back into the work force.

It is the job of the Client Assistance Program advocates to talk to the consumer and have the consumer sign an authorization of release of information to gain the records of the Department of Rehabilitation to find the problem and make sure the consumer and the Department of Rehabilitation are both following the California Code of Regulations and the Federal Regulations. At such time the Client Assistance Program will make a recommendation on how to resolve the problem; whether it's a change of counselor, office or if the consumer needs guidance on how to work with the Department of Rehabilitation.

The Client Assistance Program is by appointment only. If you have a problem with the Department of Rehabilitation and are in San Mateo, San Francisco, Santa Clara or San Benito County, give us a call and we will assist you. Contact Info: **Voice:** 1-800-427-1088, 650-591-0129 **Fax:** 650-595-0261

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