

THE INDEPENDENT

Resources for Independence, Central Valley
3008 North Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93703

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The Independent

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Client Assistance Program (CAP)

This program informs persons with disabilities about procedures and services, and assists them in resolving difficulties that may arise while receiving Rehabilitation Act funded services.

If you need assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP), call 1-800-244-2274.

SRC Chair—Robert J. Hand

RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand was elected Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council. He has been elected chair for a term of 15 months, that can be extended by one year. Mr. Hand has been the vice chairman of the SRC since 2007. The SRC consists of a diverse membership, appointed by the Governor, who are interested in and representative of Californians with disabilities. The SRC, among other things, works in partnership with the California Department of Rehabilitation to review, evaluate and advise the Department regarding its specific and overall performance and effectiveness.



National Point In Time Survey

It was a foggy morning on January 26th, when RICV staff and volunteers assembled at the City Hall. Their task that day was to take part in the National Point in Time Homeless Survey.

As a whole, the numbers have increased dramatically from the last two counts, says RICV's Director of Special Projects, Tamala Fields. Fresno and Madera counties combined are estimated to have a total of 17,000 people who are homeless. The continued downward trend in the economy has resulted in an increase in the number of families that are homeless in the Fresno-Madera county area.

The Point in Time Survey conducted four years ago show around 1,500 homeless. The survey conducted two years showed nearly double the number. "Based on the trend we expected the count to go up even more this year," says Tamala. She was assisted by nearly 15 staff and volunteers from RICV in the survey. Interestingly, even though panhandling is banned in

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Make a difference by donating to Resources for Independence Central Valley

We are dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with disabilities. We partner with individuals and the community to encourage people with disabilities to be in control of their lives and to live more independently through a diverse range of choices and opportunities.

Send your donation to:
Resources for Independence, Central Valley
3008 North Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93703
1-800-244-2274

Point in Time Survey (Continued from page 1)

Fresno's neighboring town, Clovis, this city has seen an increase of the homeless. Four years ago, there were only five people who were homeless, and this year, the count showed as many as 39 homeless persons. The reason? They feel safer in Clovis, reports Homelessness Prevention and Outreach Specialist Hideki Yatabe.

The Clovis School District alone reported 127 homeless children. During our pre-survey search in the Clovis area, Hideki had identified at least 15 unaccompanied children. What made the survey different this year was the active participation of the Veterans Administration who shared the number of recent veterans who were homeless. In Madera, the Madera Community Hospital also joined the survey for the first time, counting who had been registered as homeless when admitted to the hospital.

The survey sought to identify the migration trends of the homeless in shelters



Independent Living Specialist Jennifer Kungu and intern Catherine Gonzales with homeless persons.

of the homeless in shelters and on the streets. In addition, efforts were made to identify homeless families, unaccompanied children and people with disabilities. Many of the families that were homeless were directly related to one of both parents losing their jobs owing to the economy, the survey

shows. Nationally, the Point in Time (PIT) count process is used as the primary data source for federal agencies to understand homelessness trends and track progress against the goals and objectives contained in *Opening Doors*, the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness.

If you like to be placed on the mailing list, please call us at 1-800-244-2274.

On Firm Ground At Last...

This is the first time that Helen Arias has found some stability in her life. Approaching 60, Arias has had a rollercoaster ride through her entire life. Brought up on the streets, becoming a single mother with eight children and in and out of the system, Arias' life was no fairytale.

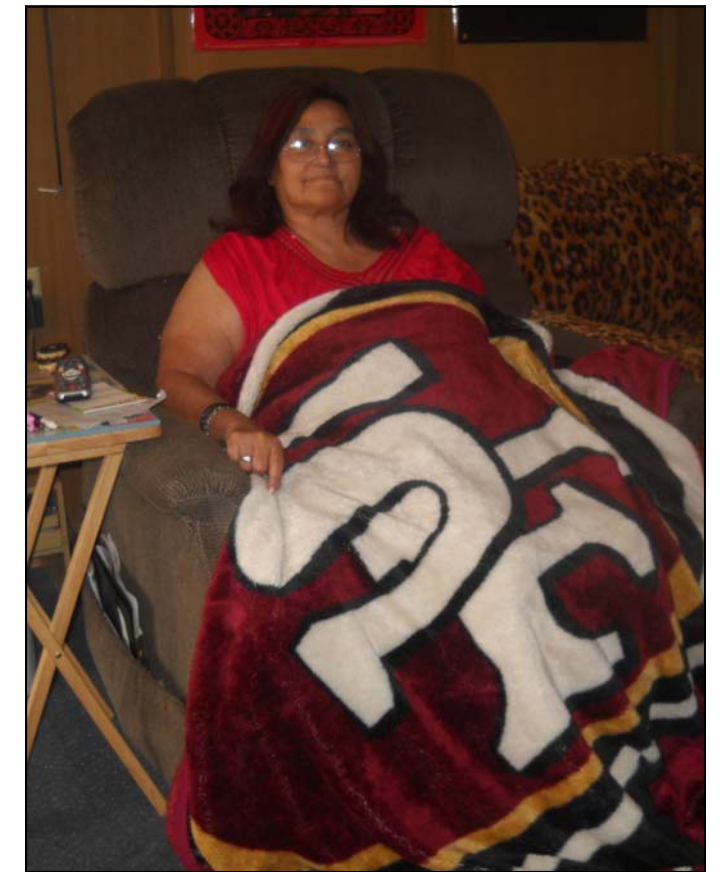
A stroke in 2008 forced her into a skilled nursing facility. She is completely paralyzed on her left side, leaving her dependent on the wheelchair for mobility. Used to being on her own all her life, Arias worked at making herself more independent in her personal needs.

When the social services coordinator at the facility shared the opportunity under the RICV California Community Transitions (CCT) Program for reintegration into the community, Arias saw a new turn in her life.

Immediately she contacted the RICV CCT Coordinator Vidal Medina who did her initial intake. Later, CCT staff, Reyes Sandoval and Vanessa Luna, worked closely with Arias to make

her dream come true. Roping in many different agencies, the RICV CCT staff identified a suitable apartment for Arias. In May 2010, Arias moved into the apartment. "We wanted to help her in every way possible" says Sandoval. They not only set up the apartment for her, but got her all the assistive technology required for her to live in the

community independently. Ensuring that she gets more Social Security benefits and reducing her overpayment in child support are other factors that the staff worked on. Going a step further, Reyes is now trying to help Arias re-establish her family ties with her children. For Arias, it is altogether a fresh start in life.



Helen Arias in her new apartment after being aided by RICV staff of the California Community Transitions (CCT) Program.

Meeting Transition Needs

RICV has seen a tremendous response for the California Community Transitions program that helps people with disabilities in relocating out of nursing homes.

As of now, we are working with 53 individuals. Ten consumers have already transitioned and as many as 20 are on the internal waiting list.

“The need is there and word spreads. Perhaps what make this project so popular is that we not only assess medical safety by take care of a broad aspect of facilitating the transition of moving the consumer to independent living. It includes working with their income for accessible housing, setting IHSS/IHO services through county and state agencies, finding a

care giver, resources to pay home essentials, and much more. It’s collaboration with numerous agencies that work together for this same goal,” says Edgar Guerrero, our CCT coordinator.

According to Vanessa Pulido, who is also a CCT coordinator, the success of the program can be attributed to the relationships we establish as well as working with consumer’s family, om-

budsmen, social workers and discharge planners to insure a safe and successful discharge. The program allows the CCT coordinator to follow up with the consumer after discharge for 24 month to ensure that the consumers remain independent. They feel safer with the close monitoring.



CCT team Edgar Guerrero and Vanessa Pulido

CCT Program



Are you currently living in a nursing home or assisted living facility? Do you want to live in the community in your own place of residence? The *California Community Transitions (CCT) Program* can help you with this. Call the office to speak with our CCT Coordinators, Vanessa Luna and Edgar Guerrero, or an IL Specialist to see if you meet the eligibility require-

Coming In From The Cold...

PEER SUPPORT GROUP

1st and 3rd
Wednesday of the
Month

2:00 pm-3:30 pm

RICV Conference
Room
2940 N. Fresno St.
Fresno, CA 93703

Everyone is welcome
and encouraged to
come.

For more Information
Call 221-2330

Facilitated by
Barney Morris

The joy of spending a night in a warm place at Madera Rescue Mission is only a short-term relief for the homeless. The homeless patrons of the Rescue Mission are required to leave the premises at 6am, and most of them have no where else to go in the freezing cold. They wander around, trying to keep warm until the Madera Behavioral Health Center opens at 8am. Many of the people who are homeless also have disabilities of some kind. Independent Living (IL) Specialist for RICV-Madera, Raymond Perry, points out that there are a lot of homeless people receiving SSI or SSDI benefits who can actually live in apart-



Raymond Perry says, “They simply do not know that assistance is available.” Raymond discovered this sad truth while making a presentation at the Madera Rescue Mission. He is now actively trying to assist those who are on state benefits to move out from the cold.

Named Most Spirited



Systems Change Advocate, Kellie Longo-Albarran (pictured 2nd from the left) was honored with the 2010 Northern Systems Change Network Spirit Award at the Systems Change Advocate meeting organized by CFILC at San Diego in the last week of January.

Notice Under the Americans with Disabilities Act

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the City of Fresno will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The City of Fresno does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: The City of Fresno will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the City's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The City of Fresno will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in the City's offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the City of Fresno, should contact the office of Elizabeth Kunz, ADA Coordinator during normal business hours at 559-621-8716 (tel), 559-621-8721 (TTY), 559-457-1051 (FAX) or elizabeth.kunz@fresno.gov, preferably five working days but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the City of Fresno to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

More information about the ADA can be found at the US Department of Justice website, www.ada.gov, or by calling their helpline at 800-514-0301 (voice), 800-514-0383 (TTY). Applicants or employees of the City of Fresno who would like to request a reasonable accommodation or have other disability-related concerns may contact Dan Turner, Risk/Safety Manager, at 559-621-6901 or dan.turner@fresno.gov. Concerns or complaints that a program, service, or activity of the City of Fresno not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Elizabeth Kunz, ADA Coordinator at 559-621-8716 (tel), 559-621-8721 (TTY), 559-457-1051 (FAX) or elizabeth.kunz@fresno.gov. The City of Fresno will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

In Protest Against Budget Cuts

The proposed budget cut for students with disability in the state, did not go unquestioned. Director of Systems Change Kellie Longo-Albarran organized a group of five consumers to participate in the rally on January 10. The rally was organized by Health and Human Services Network and had attracted nearly 40 representatives and their consumers from different non governmental agencies in Fresno. Also assisting Kellie at the rally was RICV Assistive Technology Advocate Reyes Sandoval. They gathered in front of the state building and held placards and participated in a press conference. RICV's Community Leadership Academy graduate Henry Garcia was one of the persons interviewed by news stations at the rally. The Community Leadership Academy, a RICV initiative was launched in 2010 and had the first batch of graduates complete the course. The CLA prepares persons with disabilities to become effective board and community members.

Finding Comfort In Canine Love..

At 21, Christine Henderson has found an outlet for her love for animals. She volunteers at the Valley Animal Center for two hours twice a week.

Developmentally disabled, Christine who always wanted to do something productive in her life, enjoys her time with the animals.

When she approached RICV, BRIDGES counselors worked with Christine to find an avenue to fulfill her desire.

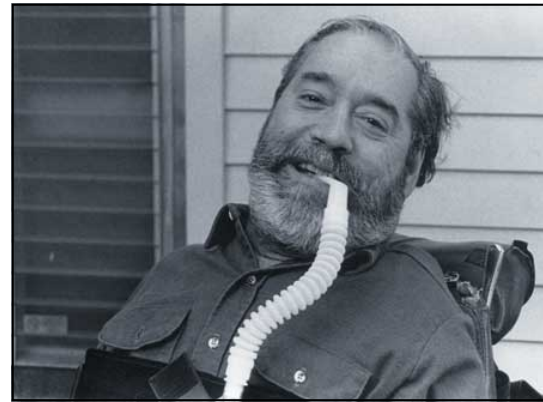
Accepted as a volunteer at the shelter, Christine grooms the dogs, takes them for walks and is very involved, according to BRIDGES Counselor Martha Guzman.

This is a no kill shelter and the animals receive care and attention from volunteers and staff alike. Encouraged by the positive response from the staff at the animal shelter, Christine is now thinking of continuing higher studies.



Remembering Ed Roberts

January 23 gained much significance with the observance of Ed Roberts Day by the residents of California this year. Last year, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed the Senate Bill 1256, recognizing Robert's contribution to the disability movement. Roberts helped guide the first independent living center, Center for Independent Living-Berkeley, which served as a model for hundreds of similar organizations to advocate for and provide living assistance to people with disabilities. He was appointed as the director of the State Department of Rehabilitation from 1975-1983, when he co-founded the World Institute on Disability.



Exploring Options In Higher Education

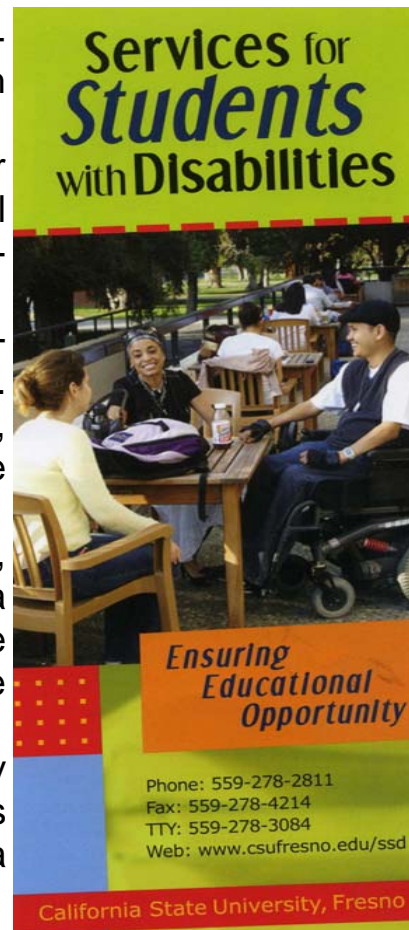
Students poised to enter the adult world, are all set to experience the different options available to them, through our BRIDGES program.

One of the main options focuses on higher education, says our BRIDGES counselor Martha Guzman. Around 25 students will be taken by the BRIDGES team to visit the California University of Fresno State campus in May.

The BRIDGES team is collaborating with the Services for Students with Disability, of CSUF to organize the campus visit. Students from Mount Vista Adult School, Apollo Adult School, and Liberty High School of Madera will be participating in the program.

Director of Services for Students with Disability Janice Brown, who is also a member of the RICV Board, will be making a presentation to the students on the services available at the campus. This will help the students case they want to pursue higher education.

"We also want the students to get an insight into the "Way Finders Program" on the campus, that helps eligible students experience campus life by actually staying on campus for a brief period," says Martha.



Courtesy: CSU, Fresno

Filing Taxes Made Easy

Filing income tax will be an easy process for RICV consumers and staff this year. RICV Community Resource Developer Darcy Pickens has roped in VITA Tax assistance, offered through a partnership with United Way of Fresno County. They offer free tax preparation for households making less than \$50,000/year. Their mobile unit will be stationed at our Fresno office, on March 8th to help RICV consumers file their taxes. Filing income tax has never been this easy!



Saying Goodbye

On January 28th, RICV staff bid farewell to two long-time staff members.

We bid farewell to our Office Manager, Tony Ko, who had served at RICV for 13 years.

Also leaving us was Director of Program Services, Jimmie Soto, who has served at RICV for 10 years. He has taken up the position of Assistant Executive Director with the Independent Living Center of Kern County. RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand will continue to lend management support as the interim Executive Director of ILCKC.



Tony Ko & Jimmie Soto

Fun On The 'Red Carpet '

Over a hundred couples ranging from ages 15-60 came together for this formal dance with a difference. This December, the Winter Formal was held at the American Legion Fresno Federal Post 509, organized by RICV and Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU). This is an event awaited eagerly every year.

What sets this formal dance apart is that it provides a platform for persons with and without disabilities to come together and enjoy an evening together. This years theme was "Red Carpet."

High school students, who are not comfortable attending formal dances with their peers owing to their disability, can enjoy a distress-free event at this formal dance. "High school students who have disabilities come here with their friends who do not have disabilities and all have an en-



BRIDGES Counselor/SOAR Liason) Ileana Perez with Alex Brown ,EPU SOAR Teen & Young Adult Group Member.

joyable evening together," says Ileana Perez, RICV BRIDGES Counselor who organized the event.

Admission to the dance cost \$10 per person, which also included hors d'oeuvres and a photograph taken at the

event. For girls, the excitement begins a month early, when they try on and walk away with formal dresses for the event. These dresses are collected by way of donation and are on display every year in November at EPU.

Up Close And Personal

It was an exhilarating experience for our iChallenge Leadership Group, when they came face to face with our new legislators in December.

BRIDGES Counselor Ileana Perez and Systems Change Advocate Kellie Longo-Albarran took a group of five youth to the Fresno City Hall. Apart from the new experience of entering the City Hall, the youth got to meet representatives from David Rubio, Henry Perea, and Barbara Boxer's office. They were given a tour of the office and apprised of the duties of the elected officials. The youth were in for a special treat when they ran into Assemblyman Perea in person, while getting into the elevator. Perea gamely posed with the youth and chatted with them, and making their day!



Transition Made Easy

Meet Amber Saar. A high school student from McLane High School, Amber is one of first high school student's to sign up for our Workability program. This program serves as a job placement initiative for high school students. Students opting for this program clock 80 hours on -the- job training. Amber is learning the basics of clerical work that ranges from using office equipment, working on computers, online research and making phone calls. Amber has been recently joined by Jenny Yang and Yee Vue. Jenny and Yee are also from McLane High School.

