

# The Independent

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## Preparing Future Leaders



***From left: Director Core Services Kellie Longo Albarran, Executive Director Robert J. Hand, CLA graduate Glen Stewart, DOR District Administrator Paula Kinsel and Center Coordinator Nachi Kinsel.***

Persons with disabilities in Visalia had an opportunity to participate in the Community Leadership Academy (CLA) course conducted by RICV in March this year.

The CLA prepares persons with disabilities to become community leaders and take active part in boards and committees. The Visalia CLA began on March 15 and had eleven participants.

Guest speakers at the Academy were Executive director of United Way Tulare County Ernie Hernandez, and Stuart Anderson, field

representative, Assembly member Connie Conway's office.

A brain child of Director Core Services Kellie Longo Albarran, the CLA has been popular since its inception in June last year. The first CLA was held in Fresno.

Nearly 14 participants graduated from the academy. Some of them are already serving in boards and committees.

Sky Ntxwj and Anthony Gracian, CLA graduates, are now serving on the RICV board.

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# Accessibility

## Save the date! RICV Annual Dinner



The 35th Annual Dinner of Resources for Independence Central Valley will be held on September 30. The event will be held at the Piccadilly Inn University on Shaw and Cedar. The evening begins at 5.30 pm with registration. Awards, raffle, silent auction. Consumers and persons in the field of disability who have made significant achievement in the field and are an inspiration will be honored at the event. Registration is \$35 per person including dinner. To register call 559 221 2330 or e mail [agajaraj@ricv.org](mailto:agajaraj@ricv.org).

### Did you know?

During the month of March, nearly 1,000 people visited the RICV website. These visitors came from 15 different countries, 22 different states within the United States, and 52 different cities within California.

## Web Accessibility

By Scott Kupferman

RICV has been selected as one of 16 community based organizations to participate in a web accessibility demonstration project.

This project, sponsored by the California Department of Rehabilitation, includes online webinars, discussion forums, and technical support aimed at enhancing the accessibility of the RICV website ([www.ricv.org](http://www.ricv.org)).

Web accessibility refers to the practice of making websites usable by people of all abilities and disabilities. A common example is a text description of an image, which is used by a person who is blind. Additional information about web accessibility may be found at: <http://webaim.org/intro/>.

Reyes Sandoval, RICV Assistive Technology Advocate, and Scott Kupferman, RICV Webmaster, are representing RICV for this project.

## Youth Transition Conference 2011

RICV will be hosting the 2nd Youth Transition Conference on November 3<sup>rd</sup> this year.

Registration begins at 8 am at the Clovis Memorial Veteran's District.

Areas of focus are youth with disabilities, parents and teachers.

Interactive workshops in-

clude coping skills, SSI benefits, job skills, assistive technology, increasing self esteem and leadership, and building your community.

Last year, the conference drew 280 participants. Of these, 140 were youth with disabilities.

For information contact Ileana Perez at [iperez@ricv.org](mailto:iperez@ricv.org).

## Job Placement Seminars Conclude

The sixth in the series of Job placement improvement seminars was completed successfully in Sacramento on April 4.

The trainings, facilitated by CARF managing director Paul Andrew and CSACO consultant John Byrnes drew more than 40 participants at each location.

Other trainings were held in Fresno, Bakersfield, San Diego, Los Angeles and Rancho Cucamonga. Participants included staff from the Department of Rehabilitation,



**Participants at the seminar in Sacramento**

non-profit organizations, employment development department and other government departments.

The training is part of the Return on Investment program commissioned by RICV.

### 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

## Disability Capitol Action Day



Join RICV systems change advocate Sara Martinez on a free day trip to Sacramento on May 25 to participate in the Disability Capitol Action Day. You will enjoy legislative visits, a march, resource fair and education rally. A bus has been arranged by RICV from Fresno. Lunch is provided. Contact [semartinez@ricv.org](mailto:semartinez@ricv.org) (559)221 2330

### AT Update

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) has developed a free downloadable application (app) to assist the blind and visually impaired denominate US currency. The app is called EyeNote(tm). The app is called Eye-Note(tm). EyeNote(tm) is a mobile device app designed for Apple iPhone (3G, 3Gs, 4). [www.eyenote.gov](http://www.eyenote.gov)



## All about embracing diversity

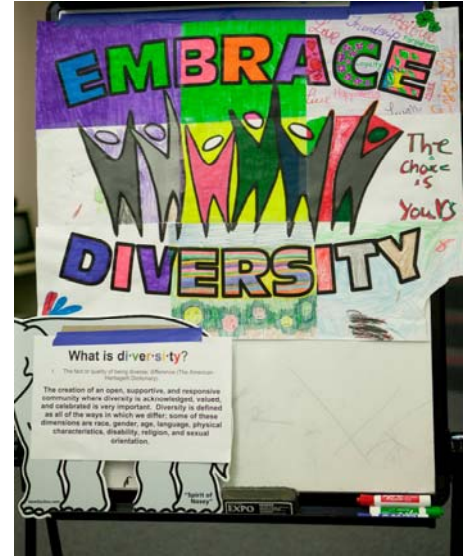


understand diversity. Activities that focused on sharing and understanding individual preferences underlined the importance of working together through the differences.



*Pizzas and fun at the staff training.*

**Pictures: Hideki Yatabe**



That diversity is limitless was the underlying message that everyone took home that day. Apart from that, group discussions brought out the individualities of the staff that were able to share their own views and personal experiences with others.



## Power of Coalition

When RICV decided to dispose of partitions that make up office cubicles, all it took was a e-mail! Responses were received, inspection made and the partitions were out the door in exactly two business days!

These partitions that took up a large storage area, had not been used for at least five years. When the time came for its disposal, all it took was an e mail to the members of the Central Valley Coalition for Human Services.

Within the end of the day, we received responses from other non-governmental agencies. Inspection of the partitions happened the very next day. Within an hour, Reading and Beyond had agreed to take the partitions for its use.

It was a win-win situation, with RICV gaining by freeing up large storage space and the Reading and Beyond saving its dollars on buying new partitions!



This is one of the several ways that the coalition works. Members meet every month to exchange service related information. They have management trainings and presentations to disseminate information of service related issues. The coalition also helps get word out among partners regarding job openings, space requirements, equipment available for sale or donation among other things.

Founded by RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand in 2009, CVCHS brings together different agencies under one platform to share and exchange information. Currently, there are over 40 agencies that have become members of the coalition. These include, state and city agencies, educational institutions and non-governmental agencies.

Learn all about the Community Leadership Academy, log on to [www.nationalcla.org](http://www.nationalcla.org).

## RICV Board of Directors

### President

Paul McElwee  
(Consultant)

### Vice President

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Sky Ntxwj  
(Student, California State University Fresno)

Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor  
(Professor Emeritus, California State University Fresno)

Selina Escobar  
(HealthNet)



## Of Pregnant Horses & Blurred Vision

By Suzanna Gamez



***BRIDGES counselors Martha Guzman, Suzanna Gamez and Workability student Yee Vue with children at the workshop.***

**I**t was time to learn about the world of disabilities for Brownie Scout girls at Malloch Elementary School.

With activities like wearing glasses that blurred their vision, the children, ranging from second to fourth grade, learned what it meant to have disabilities. Going further, they learnt how the activity could be modified to aid a person having a particular disability.

Videos of Richard Devylder, born without

### **Disability as they see it!**

**"The horse helps and keeps working even when it is pregnant"**

arms and legs, and who is now the Senior Advisor for Accessible Transportation U.S. Department of Transportation and a boy with disabilities performing stunts was of particular interest to them.

"They wanted to know everything," says Martha Guzman, BRIDGES counselor. They wanted to know how

Richard carried out his day to day activities.

Put together by the BRIDGES team Suzanna Gamez and Martha Guzman, the enjoyable presentation on "Disability awareness", included poster designing.

The children came up with interesting posters on what disability meant to them including one that showed a pregnant horse. "The horse helps and keeps working even when it is pregnant", they said by way of explanation!

The BRIDGES team was assisted by McLane high school workability student, Yee Vue.



***Creative time: Children create posters on disability.***

# Youth

## Employment Preparation For The Youth

By BRIDGES Counselors



Enthusiastic youth streamed into the conference hall of RICV. They were here to prepare for the big step into the adult world of employment. They developed a personal resume, filled out a references worksheet and

master application. They also learned a little about the importance of time management, transportation, appearance and interview techniques, such as how to make your body language and voice exemplify confidence. Organized by the BRIDGES team, the workshop was aimed at helping youth prepare for the Mayors youth job fair on April 9 at Fresno.

The students were also given ten copies each of resumes and other necessary material. The workshop held on April 7, drew eight high school students and six young adults. Six BRIDGES consumers attended the Mayors Youth Job fair and filled out applica-



**Above: Laura Lehr fills out a job application at the Mayors youth job fair.**

tions and submitted resumes they prepared at the prep workshop. They did need some assistance but for the most part they seemed fairly confident about talking to potential employers.



**Right: Nick Rosas hands his resume.**



**Left: BRIDGES consumers Domingo Cerna, Wesley Kershner, Laura Lehr and Christine Henderson at the Mayor's youth job fair.**



## Training In Leadership



**RICV Executive Director  
Robert J. Hand**

**R**ICV Board president Paula McElwee and Executive Director Robert J. Hand were chosen as two of four “content experts” for a two day leadership training for ILC Directors.

The event was sponsored by the State Independent Living

Council (SILC) and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR).

The two day training “Advancing Leadership in Independent Living:

Envisioning the Future of Independent Living in Califor-



**RICV Board President  
Paula McElwee**

nia” was held in Sacramento on May 5 and 6.

Participants had an opportunity to collaborate on an approach for launching a state plan for independent

living, to develop effective organizational change models to meet future needs, and employ communication techniques to advance each other’s role. The program incorporates real world scenarios to create a solid base for discussions.

Paula covered “Change Management” & Robert “Innovation/Strategic Planning”.

### **ECHO**

Join Employment Centered Hiring Organization (ECHO) - a group of employers who serve as an advisory committee to our job developers in order to understand the business environment from an employer's perspective.

Contact -  
RICV 559 221 2330



**A**n interesting mural at the newly opened Ed Roberts Center at the University of Berkeley.

Director Core Services Kellie Longo Albarran and Systems Change Advocate Sara E, Martinez were at the campus in March to participate in the monthly Northern regional advocates meeting.



## Accessible Telephones



Are you in need of accessible telephones? Do you need accessible telephones at no cost?

The California Telephone Access Program (CTAP), provides specialized telephone equipment for resident with disabilities in California.

It does not matter what kind of disability a person possesses, CTAP has phones for persons with hearing, vision, speech, cognitive disabilities and mobility impairments.

To qualify for the program, there are a few important criteria. Applicants must be residents of California, have telephone service in their homes and have a doctor or other qualified agent certify that the disability makes using standard phones difficult. For more information contact CTAP at 1 800 806 1191 (Voice) or 1 800 806 4474 (TTY).

## On Board With RICV



RICV is honored to have Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor, Professor Emeritus, California State University Fresno and Selina Escobar, Senior Public Health Administrator of HealthNet, join us on our Board. They were both elected to the board in February and March respectively.

RICV bids adieu to board member Carlos Duarte, Para transit specialist, City of Fresno who served on the board till recently.

## Client Speak

*"I would like to tell you how wonderful Ellissa has been in helping me to secure permanent housing under the HA Section 8 and PGE services. I could not have had this if it were not for Ellissa's quick response, attention, courtesy and her willingness to help me as her client. I call her my angel. I wanted you to know how outstanding her work was with me. 'Ellissa, Thank you for all your hard work"- Gloria Walker.*

**Note:** *Ellissa Anaya is our Homelessness Prevention Specialist.*

## Contribute to "The Independent"

Do you have disability related news that you would like to share? Write to us with photographs. Send your stories to Anuradha Gajaraj, Resources for Independence Central Valley, 3008 North Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93703.

## Arbor Court— Making accessibility affordable

**W**ith a focus on accessibility and affordability, the low income housing complex for persons with disabilities - Arbor Court was thrown open to the public on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Located on East Laurel Avenue, near North Chestnut and East Ventura, the housing complex is ADA compliant. That means persons with disability no longer need to worry about inaccessible doorways and bathrooms.

Designed to allow easy access by wheelchair, the apartments feature roll-in showers, grab rails, low sinks and counters as well as lowered light switches in each apartment. Developed by EAH housing, the complex is meant specifically for person with



***RICV Independent Living Specialist Vidal Medina with Mary Murtagh, President and CEO EAH Housing.***

disabilities, the complex is a gated community giving further security to its residents. RICV executive director Robert and Independent living specialist Vidal Medina were at the opening to lend support to the project.

“Access to housing is one of

the most significant obstacles that people with disabilities face when trying to attain independent living. The work that was done at Arbor court is really exemplary, “says Vidal.

There are 20 one and two bedroom units in the complex in all.

For more details log on to [www.eahhousing.org](http://www.eahhousing.org)

### **Access to Hire**

*(A RICV initiative)*

*Access to Hire, a consortium of job development professionals, provides a broad spectrum of services and resources aimed at streamlining the hiring process and maximizing the workforce for employers. Log on to [www.accesstohire.org](http://www.accesstohire.org)*

## CCT Program

**A**re 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 Pulido and Edgar Guerrero, or an IL Specialist to see if you meet the eligibility requirements and receive help with finding affordable and accessible housing.





## Cutting Across State Borders

By Jennifer Kungu

When Kenneth Gensen was referred to RICV, by the Community Sub Acute Center, RICV staff set about the task of helping him become independent. Work for Jennifer Kungu, Vanessa Pulido, Reyes Sandoval did not stop at helping Kenneth towards his goal of independent living. Interactions with him revealed his heart's desire. Kenneth who is terminally ill, wanted to return to his family in Ohio. This meant, that RICV staff had to work across state borders to help this consumer.

It took the joint efforts of Kenneth's family in Toledo, Ohio, staff of the Community Sub-Acute Center and RICV, to see his dream of going home come true. What helped was Kenneth's 'never say no' attitude. After his second amputation and stroke left him wheel chair bound, Kenneth always

held a strong belief that he would one day walk on his own. He does now, with the help of prosthetics.

Life had been very different for Kenneth. Twenty years ago, when he moved to Fresno, he had it



**Kenneth Gensen at the Fresno Airport**

all. Because of his declining health and wrong "choices" as Kenneth himself terms it, he lost everything that was important to him. His health took a turn to the worse, and Kenneth succumbed to two strokes and an amputation which made him wheelchair bound. Alone, and after a long hospital stay, Kenneth's dream was now to be at least reunited with

his sisters in Ohio.

Little by little he saved money from his SSI check. RICV was able to give him further assistance through the California Community Transition Program (CCT). They were able to purchase some luggage and clothing items, while the Assistive Technology (AT) Department 'loaned' him a scooter to ease mobility. Staff at Community Sub-Acute assisted with the medical aspects of Kenneth's health, coordination, as well as giving him moral support which was much needed.

It was on March 18 that Kenneth finally left Fresno for Ohio. His foresight in putting away some of his SSI check, helped pay for plane ticket. All arrangements for his safe travel and transition were made by RICV and the Community Sub Acute Center, and Kenneth is now back in Ohio.

"Do not make bad choices. Illegal drugs can ruin lives," Kenneth warns.

## THE INDEPENDENT

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

*RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED*

(559) 221-2330 VOICE  
(800) 244-2274 TOLL FREE  
(559) 221-2340 FAX  
(559) 221-2342 TTY



### Missed our last issue?

Check out our newsletter archives at our website:

[www.ricv.org](http://www.ricv.org)

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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.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE! Donate 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**