

The Independent

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RICV To Develop Plan For Universally Accessible Park

Resources for Independence Central Valley working with community partners, will be developing a plan for a Universally Accessible Park.

An MOU was signed on January 12th between RICV and the City of Fresno to that effect.

The park, to be located on Polk and West Gettysburg is geared towards maximum accessibility features.

Under the agreement, RICV will help raise funds,

establish partners and develop an operational plan for the park.

garden, sensory wall, — all designed for complete accessibility.



Incidentally, this will be the first park in the country to have all features universally accessible including a inspiration designed children 's play area!

Donations for establishing the park are welcome. Contact Robert J. Hand at

bhand@ricv.org or call 559.221.2330.

RICV is also vested with the establishment of an advisory council.

Spread over eight acres, the proposed park will have many features. These include a wheelchair accessible dog park, basketball courts, sensory

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RICV Presents Emergency Planning At SILC

RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand made a presentation on Emergency Preparedness at the State Independent Living Centers' quarterly meeting.

The three day meeting was held from December 5th at San

Diego.

Bob stressed the need to be prepared for emergencies and also gave some examples of best practices.

He focused on the state level issues and steps

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Rallying Forces Against The Budget!



Members of the Visalia and Fresno Disability Advocacy Teams with RICV staff.

A poignant speech by RICV consumer Rebecca Donabed on how IHSS budget cuts would affect her independence, set the stage for the Budget Rally at a State building on Mariposa Mall on January 10.

It was part of the state wide rallies on the original date of Governor Brown's state budget proposal



RICV Disability Advocacy Team members & staff from Visalia and Fresno join together to prepare signs for the rally.

release in the cities of Fresno, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Nearly 80 persons from six partner organizations joined

Resources for Independence Central Valley at the Fresno rally. Thirteen were RICV consumers.

RICV Systems Change Advocate Anna Maria Havens and Community Organizer Joanna Zamora organized the rally in collaboration with six partner

organizations. They educated the RICV rally participants of the California 2012-2013 triggers cuts to social service programs. Budget fact



Jim Cox, Rebecca Cox, Mark Oda march ..

sheets and overviews from state-based organizations Health Access, the Legislative Analyst Office, and CFILC explaining the financial effect for social service programs in



RICV consumer Rebecca Donabed from Tulare speaks to media along with Kevin Hamilton of Clinica Sierra Vista.

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IChallenge Youth Group Nominated For Award



Packages all ready for distribution

The RICV Youth IChallenge group has been nominated for “Hands Across the Valley” volunteer of the year awards.

Erica Cuellar, of the Community Food Bank, informed BRIDGES Counselor Ileana Perez of the nomination.

Erica said in the email, “I just want to congratulate your group because the Ichallenge group has been nominated for ‘Hands across the Valley’, volunteer of the year awards.” We have really enjoyed having your help in many of our events”.

RICV BRIDGES department has been involved in many volunteering activities.

“We have volunteered at the San Joaquin Convalescent Hospital, Fresno Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament, Viking Elementary School for food distribution, Feed the need days, sorting food and produce at the warehouse of the Community food bank food,” says Ileana.

At the Viking Elementary School, the Ichallenge leadership group distributed potatoes, oranges,



Sorting cans at the Community Food Bank

Appointed

RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand has been appointed as a member of the Olmstead Advisory Committee.

The committee provides input to the California Health and Human Services Agency on the efforts to implement the California Olmstead Plan, recommending actions to improve long term services and support systems and to identify opportunities to support people with disabilities in the community.

sour cream, juices, whole chickens to low income families.

Volunteers who are youth with disabilities, pre sort, pack and bag the items.

Youth learned how to count and sort food. Each bag contained ten potatoes, twenty oranges, two tubs of sour cream.

It was a learning experience on how a production line runs. In addition the youth learned new job skills and multi tasking.

Free Trainings, Peer Mentoring et al...

By Darcy Pickens

When RICV announced the second mid management training, there was such an overwhelming response that RICV had to cut off the registration at 50.

The free mid management trainings are being offered under the Central Valley Coalition for Human Services, a group started by RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand.

Trainings are offered on topics like Non profit financial management and grant writing.

This has been made possible through a \$21,000 grant for the Infrastructure Building Project from Whitney Foundation and Fresno Regional Foundation.

The project is designed to build the capacity of CVCHS affiliate organizations through direct training and support.

The first training on non profit financing drew 25 participants from 17 different non profits.

Guest trainers at the workshop were Joanne Lee, Director of Financial consulting and Lori

Campbell, financial management consultant from Northern California Community Loan Fund.

Consultant Mary Gonzalez provided the training on Grant writing.

Peer mentoring sessions will be based on the actual experiences of the organizations that attended the mid management trainings and how the training affected their service, explains Program Specialist Joseph Cody.

Apart from this four local CBOs have been awarded training contracts through the project. This will fund individualized board and executive director training in the areas of resource development.

CVCHS brings together private non profit, government and education organizations, to provide more effective and efficient human services in the Central Valley.

Monthly meetings promote networking among the members for collaborative grant applications, marketing and

outreach.

Membership is free. Interested organizations may send their information including contact persons name, agency name, logo and contact information along with a brief mission statement to Darcy Pickens dpickens@ricv.org.

CVCHS Schedule

April 19th

Peer Mentoring Session 1

May 17th

Peer Mentoring Session 2

June 21st

Peer Mentoring Session 3

July 19th

Peer Mentoring Session 4

August 16th

Mid-Management Training

Note:

Board/ED workshops will be held in March, April, May and June. Dates will be announced.

For more information call Darcy Pickens at 559.221.2330 or log on to www.centralvalleychs.org

Save the date

May 30, 2012, Disability Capitol Action Day
Contact Anna Maria
amaria@ricv.org

Is Your Building ADA Compliant?



Is your building ADA compliant? Regulations require that architectural and

communication barriers in existing facilities must be removed in public areas, if they are easily achievable.

Sometimes it is as simple as removing large furniture, moving them around, putting up signs.

We can help you find out. RICV is offering ADA compliance evaluations for private establishments and businesses.

These evaluations are based on stipulations on public accessibility for buildings under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

A small fee will be charged for the evaluations.

RICV AT Advocate Reyes Sandoval recently performed an evaluation for Innovations, a commercial flooring company.

Recommendations on ADA compliance was made by Reyes, that were

implemented by Innovations owner Vickie Goudreau,

Earlier, Reyes had evaluated the Marjorie Mason Center for ADA compliance, on their request.

The RICV AT department also routinely conducts housing evaluations for consumers transitioning into the community from skilled nursing homes.

Evaluations can be requested in depth or on the basic guidelines of the Act, based on the needs of the establishment.

They can take anywhere between one hour to a few hours depending on the needs of the establishment.

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Contribute to The Independent

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

Establishments that need to be ADA Compliant

Establishments that need to be ADA complaint are: hotels, restaurants, theaters, museums, retail stores, private schools, banks, doctors' offices and other places that serve the public.

People who own, lease, lease out, or operate places of public accommodation in existing buildings are responsible for complying with the barrier removal requirement.

For more information check <http://www.ada.gov/racheck.pdf>.

Face To Face With Representatives



Shannon Major, Jane Metcalf, Nia Sibley, Susana Guevara

Nearly 30 RICV consumers participated in a forum where state legislative representatives answered their questions on the state budget.

The RICV Disability Advocacy Teams,

along with members of the public gathered together on February 8 for a Legislative Forum at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center in



Fresno. Field representatives from the offices of State Senators Berryhill and

Rubio, as well as, State Assemblymen Valadao and Perea were on the panel. They responded to questions on budget and its affect on programs.

Questions were mainly on programs that affect persons with disabilities.

IHSS and Medi Cal were prominent issues, while education was also covered.

RICV On AIR



RICV went on air on January 12, dispelling myths on disability.

Community Organizer Joanna Zamora and Fresno Disability Advocacy Team member, Jim Cox were interviewed on KSEE 24's local talk show, Central Valley Today. They answered questions on the common misconceptions society has about people with disabilities, posed by Host Alex Delgado.

Client Speak

Dear Chandra and RICV staff thank you for helping me get a job, first at KFC and then at Wal-Mart. I feel I have learned new skills that will help me to find and keep a job. In addition, I have also improved on some of my old skills.

I cannot say enough about all the help that you have given me in my long and hard job hunting and in all the hard times at my jobs. I know that I would have never gotten to where I am without all your help.

—Mathew Peterson.

Deliberating On Transit Issues



Visalia Advocacy team deliberates on transit problems.

Friday, strives at having an informed community about resources and services which are available to/for individuals with disabilities.

The Fresno team aims to create a positive perception of people with disabilities. It meets every 3rd Friday of the month.

They gather every month, and deliberate on issues connected with disability.

For Visalia, the theme is transportation and each month, they bring valuable inputs to the table.

Meet the Advocacy Teams organized by RICV. These three teams based in Fresno, Merced and Visalia are run for and by the consumers.

The Visalia team meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month and tackles an issue pertinent to the disability community, while learning about advocacy, disability legislation, and other efforts to participate in.

The Merced team that meets every 2nd

In addition to working as a group toward their goals, the meetings also serve as a way to stay informed and up-to-date on disability issues.

Community Organizer Joanna Zamora and Advocacy Team Leader Agustina Lopez spearhead the teams.

The teams are run based on a one-year community organizing grant that is set to end by July of this year.

For more details contact Joanna Zamora at jzamora@ricv.org.

Board of Directors

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Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor (Professor Emeritus, CSUF)

Susan Thompson (Graduate, CSUF)

Alicia Coates (News Anchor, CBS47)

Violet Green (Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist, VA Central California Health Care System)

Frances Reyes Acosta (Consultant)

Arthur M. Lopez (Retired Deputy Director, Department of Rehabilitation)

Join Us At RICV For

Advocacy Team Meetings

Fresno Advocacy Team meets at
RICV, 2940 N. Fresno St. Fresno, CA.
Every 3rd Friday of the month from 2pm-4pm.

Merced Advocacy Team meets at
United Way, 658 West Main St. Merced, CA.
Every 2nd Friday of the month from 2pm-4pm

Visalia Advocacy Team meets at
RICV, 220 Santa Fe Avenue, Visalia, CA.
Every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 2pm-4pm

Community Organizer Joanna Zamora
[jzamora@ricv.org]

Consumer Job Search Workshop

Once a month. For date and time contact
Job Developer Diann Perez [dperez@ricv.org]

Peer Support Group

1st and 3rd Wednesday of the Month
[2:00 pm-3:30 pm]
Facilitated by Independent Living Specialist Barney
Morris [bmorris@ricv.org]

All Fresno events/workshops listed above are
held at

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

For more Information
Call 559 221-2330

CVCHS

Central Valley Coalition for
Human Services, meets
every third Thursday of the
month at 3 pm at
Central Valley Business
Incubator

1630 East Shaw Avenue #163
Fresno, CA 93710

Learn more about CVCHS
and how to join the coalition
on www.centralvalleychs.org

www.centralvalleychs.org

BOWLING

Bowling for youth with
disabilities at California State
University Fresno once a
month. For dates and time
contact BRIDGES Counselor
Suzanna Gamez
[sgamez@ricv.org]

www.Nationalcla.org

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A 15 hour-five week
module that helps participants
hone their skills on becoming
effective members of boards
and trusts. The training
modules are developed to
increase leadership and civic
engagement among people
with disabilities. For
information on the next CLA
contact Systems Change
Advocate Anna Maria Havens

Travelling On FAX Buses

By Vidal Medina

RICV offers the riders of the Para-Transit (Handy Ride) service an unique opportunity to receive training on how to use the Fresno Area Express Fix Route Bus system.

RICV provides information on how to use the Fixed route bus, as well as individual training.

As part of this service, a brochure was created to share the unique program being offered, and the advantages to Riders of the Fix Route Bus system.

The collaboration between Fresno Area Express and RICV, has enable Riders of both services an opportunity to use Fresno Public Transportation in accomplishing the goal of independence.

The RICV Travel Training program also includes wheelchair tethering which creates a tie down strap to assist bus drivers in securing motility devices in both types of buses.

Currently the RICV Travel Training and Wheelchair Tethering



program is being offered to eligible Riders of the Para-Transit service.

As RICV looks toward the opportunity of providing Travel Training services to anyone wanting Independence into their communities appears to be possible with community support.

National Conference

RICV Director of Special Projects Tamala Fields participated in the National Alliance to End Homelessness's Conference.

It was held in Los Angeles on February 7 and 8th.

The conference explored the critical roles public housing authorities can play in the collective efforts to end homelessness. Tamala was on the panel discussion on case studies.

Rallying Forces Against The Budget

Continued from Page 2

California was also distributed.

Consumers and staff from Health Access, California Partnership, SEIU-UHW, HHS, Parent Voices, Clinica Sierra Vista, and Fresno Metro Ministry participated in the rally. RICV staff Independent living specialist Nalor See and Advocacy team leader Agustina Lopez assisted Anna Maria and Joanna at the rally. The rally was

covered by KSEE24, Univision 21, and the Fresno Bee.

Donate Now!

Our third annual Youth Transition Conference will be held in November this year. It is your donations that made our 2nd conference last year.

Over 200 youth and participants attend the event.

To make this event a success call Ileana Perez 559 221 2330 or email iperez@ricv.org.

Breaking Mental Barriers: Synda Burney

Volunteering at the Tulare County Department of Mental Health, Synda Burney's dedication to work and intelligence did not go unnoticed.

The department made many offers to hire her, but Synda was too worried to take up employment.

Her main concern? Losing her Medicare and SSDI.

When her friend told her about a presentation by RICV Community Work Incentive Coordinator Erik Merriman, Synda was intrigued.

Erik had made a presentation at ETAC-a transitional housing program at Visalia.



Synda approached Erik soon after. After the routine intake and consultation, Erik was able to explain to Synda that

she could take up the job offer AND keep her benefits.

"It took just that one consultation to open up a world of opportunities for Synda.

Under Erik's guidance, Synda agreed to take up a part time job with the Tulare County Department of Mental Health.

Ensuring that her pay remained below \$1000.00 per month, enabled Synda to maintain her SSDI and MediCare as well.

That is not all. Synda is currently working towards a degree in social work at California State University Fresno.

Once the hiring freeze is over, Synda is possibly looking at becoming a full time employee with the Tulare Department of Health Services at over \$40,000 a year!

There is more for Synda. Under her PASS plan, she bought a used car and has enough money left over to pay for insurance and gas as well!

[As narrated by Erik Merriman]

Note: WIPA Coordinators can help answer questions on SSA and SSDI.

RICV Presents On Emergency Planning

Continued from Page 1

to be taken by ILCs in the state.

Meanwhile, the Fresno team that attended the FEMA national conference on Emergency planning, have continued implementing practices and goals.

The team comprises

of RICV Executive Director Robert J. Hand, DDHSC Executive Director Michelle Bronson, City of Fresno Sean Johnson and Fresno City ADA Coordinator Shannon Simonelli.

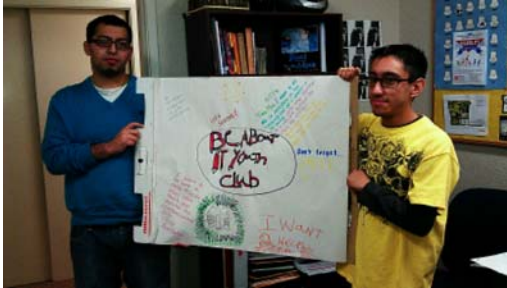
Among many of the goals that are being implemented is developing a quick reference guide for

the community. They team is also setting up a local interpreter strike team. These will act as disaster response sign language interpreters.

In addition, a Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST) team will be set up in the county.

Youth

Youth Leader In The Making...



Nick Rosas at his first meeting

Nick Rosas is a very familiar figure around RICV. A consumer with learning disability and then a volunteer at RICV, Nick has been a gratifying experience of how service can change lives.

Nick came to RICV in 2009. Before long, with the help of BRIDGES counselor Suzanna Gamez he had completed his high school diploma.

Soon, he was volunteering with RICV and taking an active part in all the organization activities. It was during these activities that Suzanna noticed that Nick has great leadership skills. She helped him apply for a grant from California Federation of Independent Living Centers. His application was accepted and Nick is now receiving stipend from them.

In addition to that, Nick was a presenter at the RICV Youth Conference on the subject of bullying. Suzanna then encouraged Nick to form his own peer support group.

Every step of the way, from conceptualizing the group to booking the conference room to spreading the word, Nick did it all.

His group comprising of six youth between the ages of 15 to 22 met for the first time on February 3. The group meets every month to set goals, both personal and vocational. It also comes up with ideas for fund raising and volunteering to give back to the community. Once a member reaches the age 26, his membership ends to give place for new members.

Making Candles For Fun And Money

When the youth gathered at the Candle Making workshop, it was not all about just making candles.

The candle making workshops organized by the BRIDGES Counselor Ileana Perez drew around 20 participants.

The volunteers taught the youth how to make soy candles from scratch. They learnt that they could actually market their product and start



Catherine Blanco, I Challenge Youth Leadership team

their own business. Parents who dropped off the youth for the workshop had an opportunity to enjoy their night out.

“The encouraging factor is that one of the youth has already purchased a candle making kit and is planning to start his own candle making business,” says Ileana.

Parents were appreciative of the workshop.

THE INDEPENDENT

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