

Watch Out!

THIS NEWSLETTER IS WRITTEN, BY AND FOR CONSUMERS, WITH A GRANT FROM FAR NORTHERN REGIONAL CENTER. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY IT.

Yes, We Will Have A Conference!

By Andre Economopoulos

Last summer Tammy was taking the officers of People First of Yreka to the PFCA conference in Sacramento. We were excited and asked about our conference in Region 2. That is when Tammy said we were not having a conference in 2010, because of budget cuts there was no money in the budget.

I wasn't going to settle for that! I just wouldn't hear it. I told her "Oh, yes we are." I said, "we don't have to have the most expensive of everything. We can still have a conference, it will just look different." Right away Sadie, Rebecca, Kenneth and I came up with several ways to save money: 1) we could be our own DJ for our dance; 2) we would have cheaper decorations; 3) we could have it at a different (cheaper) hotel; 4) we don't need to hire speakers from other areas because we have several people right here in Region 2 that would be great speakers; and, 5) no scholarships this time.

WE can pay for our own way!

We knew we couldn't make the decision by ourselves, so we took our idea to People First of Region 2. Every one was ready for it. We knew we could do it. We came up with more ideas. Every chapter committed to donate at least \$100.00 from their own chapter funds. As a group we decided to donate ½ of our Region 2 funds. We still have more work to do, but it is happening.

We feel good and proud of what we are doing. Anybody can open their mouth and say anything, but not everyone puts their words into action, "**WE ARE!**" We don't always need to go to the State Capitol to get the money we need, forget that. We will take care of it ourselves.



Andre Economopoulos, Kenneth Harvey, Sadie Castle, and Tammy Torum

News From People First of California

By Scott Winfield

People First of California (PFCA) is asking all chapters to become certified. The reason is that we believe it will help bring chapters together and let them know that they are a part of a bigger group. *The story continues on the back page.*

Peggy Englert, 1950–2009



This issue of Watch Out! is dedicated to **Peggy Englert** who passed away on August 18 in Redding.

Peggy was a strong self-advocate, a friend to all, sweet, funny, and she had a smile that would brighten any day. She was a long-time member of People First, a member of the Abuse Prevention Team, and she owned a small but successful business, "Peggy's Things." Peggy will be missed by all who knew her.

My New Job as a Transportation Coordinator

By Michael Harding

Hi all, I have a question. Does anyone receive transportation services from FNRC? If you do, I am one of the people who help you get where you need to go. My name is **Michael Harding**, and I am the regional center's new transportation broker. I work with Service Coordinators and transportation providers like RABA and B-Line to help get rides for regional center clients. I not only help set up rides for people, I also mail out the bus passes and keep track of who uses what bus system.



Michael Harding at work

Oh, by the way did I mention that I receive regional center services too? That's right, I am just a small town kid with Cerebral Palsy. I lived in Lewiston most of my life. It was just my mother, sister, brother and me. My mother raised me to work hard and never to think of myself as crippled or defective. I went to junior college at Shasta College in Redding for five years. In 2003, I graduated from Chico State University with a BA in Psychology.

After graduating, I tutored a variety of subjects at Shasta College to help others with disabilities. For the past two years I have been working for We Care a Lot Foundation. We Care provides self-empowerment programs for people with disabilities.

I like to think that it is my hard work and determination that lead We Care to give me this opportunity. I look forward to helping folks get the transportation they need. So, you can see if you work hard and don't give up dreams can come true.

The Power is Yours Poster Contest

And the winner is. . . Kim Bui!

Earlier this year, FNRC held a poster contest for artists with disabilities. The theme was "My Dream Home," and over 100 artists from our area participated. **Kim Bui** won the Best of Show prize with her watercolor, "My Home in the Sun." Her painting was printed into a big poster calendar and given to day programs and care homes. You can get one free at the FNRC offices in Chico and Redding.

Other awards were given to: **Margie Lavis** and **Thomas Nichols**, Award of Excellence; and **Wendy Rogers**, **David Eshelman**, and **Kelly Fleming**, Award of Merit. Winners had their artwork professionally framed and also received prizes including art supplies and gift certificates.



Winning Poster



Best of Show Winner, Kim Bui



Excellence Award: Margie Lavis



Excellence Award: Thomas Nichols

Feeling Safe, Being Safe Training

By Shelly Anderson and Rosie Johansen

We want to help our peers to feel safe, but to *feel safe* you have to *be safe*. That is the theme of our presentation. We divided our presentation into two phases. In phase one, we show a video about a person putting a "Go Bag" together. We talk about the Feeling Safe, Being Safe packet and guide our audience through it so they will know how to fill out their own information. We also point out how to help pets in an emergency. When we are done, we invite people to come and look at our "Go Bag" and ask us questions. Hopefully, they will be able to go home and put their own bag together.

In phase two we also start with the video. We bring a "Go Bag" and a "No Bag" with us. We play a game and have the audience tell us which of the things should go in which bag. We really want people to understand, so we made phase two a "hands-on" experience. We do these presentations so people will be ready if an emergency happens. If someone comes to their door and tells them to evacuate (leave now!) they will be ready and not be scared.

How I Get By In Tough Times By Michelle Rhyne

I used to have a gym membership, but it got cut. I went to a kick boxing class two times a week. Now I get my exercise by doing yoga and a hip hop workout at my day program. I also try and walk more, rather than riding in the van. I recommend that you try and exercise on your own, but encourage a friend to do it with you.

My counseling also got cut. I used to go every two weeks, and I felt it was helping. I was upset when I found out because I had been going for two to three years. When I told my staff, they said I could talk with them whenever I needed to. I feel that has helped a lot. I say, try and find a support system like your church, family, or go to a day program for support.

I am more aware of trying to brush my teeth more, like three times a day, because it will be harder to get in to the dentist now.

It makes me feel really good to work. I work two hours a week as a receptionist. I put the money aside in my account to let it grow.

Before I go shopping, I plan ahead by making a list. I stay within my budget by using a calculator. I weigh the produce and cross off items that cost too much and that I don't really need, like waffles.

Even though the budget cuts have affected me, I try and stay positive.



Michelle Rhyne at work

The High Cost of Living By Margot Madson

There is a good side and the ok side to the high cost of living. With all the budget cuts, our money isn't going as far as it use to, so we have to do some cut-backs ourselves. Like I don't buy junk food because it's expensive, and I can lose weight. I have lost 50 pounds, and I am still going to lose more.

Don't spend money on things you don't really need, save it for a special item that you really want like a trip. I have started putting extra money in a jar each month and watching it grow. After a year you can count it and see how much you have saved. At the end of this year, I want to take a trip to Holland to see my Uncle. I am determined to make that trip!



Margot Madson

Cuts to Medi-Cal Hurt By Ella Slemp and Pam Crane

The cuts to Medi-Cal have affected a lot of people with disabilities. They have taken four things from us: Independent Living Services hours, dental services, chiropractic care and eye exams. (**See note below about dental services**)

I don't like the cuts. I can't go to the dentist so I can get my teeth fixed. I cannot afford to pay money because I am on a fixed income. I haven't been to the dentist for a year. I can't get my teeth fixed or my eyes examined.

Pam doesn't like the cuts either. She has lost the Medi-Cal support that helped her with going to the dentist, chiropractor and eye doctor. She has more to pay out of her own pocket, and she is low income. If she did not have to pay these things, she would have more money for food, general household expenses and personal items for her kids and herself. She does not have enough money to pay for dental care, chiropractic care, or eye exams.



Ella Slemp and Pam Crane

Concerns about losing dental services: Many people are concerned about losing their dental services. It's true that some dental services are no longer provided by Medi-Cal, but Far Northern has arranged for dental exams from a number of dentists in your area. If you need dental services, call your Service Coordinator now!

I'm Thinking on the Bright Side By Michelle Phillips

Hi, my name is Michelle. I lost my gym membership because of the budget. I really enjoyed going to the gym, and I miss working out. It was a good chance to get together and visit with friends while we exercised and got healthy. I noticed I was losing some weight too. I would go once or twice a week. I would go swimming.



Michelle Phillips

What I plan to do now is to start walking together with my sister and go swimming in my uncle's pool in the summer.

But I am hoping to get my gym privilege back.

The 5th Annual FOCUS Film Festival

By Cory Smith

The FOCUS Film Festival is an annual event which showcases movies aimed to expand our awareness of people with disabilities. The Festival started off on Tuesday night with a bang with *Where's Molly?* a documentary that told the story of a brother's search for his missing sister.

More great films followed on Wednesday including, *Crossing Tahoe*, the story of Karen Gaffney's nine-mile swim across Lake Tahoe; *Strong Love*, the story of two individuals with Down syndrome who found true love and marriage; and an amazing documentary, *Living with Fragile X*. Perhaps the most thrilling of all was the Festival's final film, *Under Our Skin*, which told the horrific story of Lyme disease. Each film also featured a Q & A session with the director and others associated with the film which added valuable insight and discussion.

The Short Film Competition featured the six winning films including *Beyond Borders* which won the Best of Festival and Audience Pick awards. As one of the judges, I especially looked forward to this portion of the program. Four filmmakers came from San Francisco to receive their award. Their film, *Independence*, did an outstanding job in helping us, the viewers, to know that each of us can make a difference if we believe in ourselves.



Karen Gaffney signs photos for her fans

Getting Ready for an Emergency

By Glen Pollock

In August, there was an Emergency Preparedness Fair at Shasta College that was planned by service providers in Shasta County. They were there to teach people what to do in case of any type of emergency and to show people the different types of help that are available to them in case of an emergency.

There were 14 booths at the fair to help people learn about getting ready for an emergency. They had real fire trucks, police cars, and ambulances. Anyone could climb into the trucks and cars and see exactly what the officers do when they are in the trucks and cars. You could turn on the sirens and lights and really have fun doing things that most of us only dream of doing.

Getting Ready for an Emergency (continued from page 6)

They had some dogs that are used for search and rescue of people who have been lost or hurt. They also had a display that helped to teach people electricity awareness or being safer around all types of electricity. They had safety games and people who taught others what to do in case there was a fire: *stop, drop and roll*. They had some people who were there to tell you what you needed to have in your emergency kit. The **Theater in the Now** troupe was there to give a live performance of the play called "Ready or Not."

People from all over the area were there to get more information about how to be prepared in any type of emergency. The whole day was just a wonderful learning experience for everyone who attended.

Self-Advocates Meet with Dave Hingsburger

By Glen Pollock and Sherri Douglas

In October, self-advocates from our area met with **Dave Hingsburger** to get his advice and training ideas about teaching self-esteem and personal power to people with disabilities in this area.

The **Abuse Prevention Team**, the **Consumer Abuse Awareness Team** and the **Respect Yourself** teams all met with Dave to ask questions and



Dave Hingsburger

get his response on issues like bullying: "When someone is bullying you, it is not because of your disability. It is their behavior and the choices that they make," he said. He gave us *The Pledge of Personal Power* to share in their presentations. (*Note: there's a copy of the Pledge of Personal Power, written by Dave Hingsburger, on the backside of the Region II People First Conference flyer*).

After working with Dave, we all have a better idea on how to answer any questions about bullying that we might be asked during our presentations. Dave was also able to help us with our speeches. He told us a lot of different stories that made it easier for all of us to understand the meaning of abuse and sexuality in the disabled community. In his new book he will be having even more of these stories.

The day we spent with Dave helped all of us to better understand not only his teachings but also the ideas of other people. There are many people who want to help us to be better and stronger people in the world.

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News from People First of California (continued from front page)

This big group has strength that ties people with developmental disabilities together from around the world. People First's name will add power to your group as you unite and link to an organization of worldwide leaders. These leaders can help make positive changes for the people they represent.

There are five principles of this certification that chapters should do when they want to become certified: they should be speaking up for themselves, give back to their communities, know their rights and responsibilities, chapters should be run for and by people with developmental disabilities, and they should solve problems and make decisions for themselves.

Speaking up for ourselves is important because it lets people know what our wants and needs are. It's important that we give back to our communities because when we give back we show appreciation for what our communities have done for us, and it shows our community that we are the same as anyone else and we can do anything anyone else can. Knowing our rights and responsibilities means we are held responsible to each other, our communities and to ourselves. When chapters are run for and by people with disabilities it helps us build trust, friendship, and we all can work together to show our communities that we can do things that they may think we can't. It's also important that chapters know how to solve problems and make decisions for themselves, because the members are the voice of these groups, we get things done, we learn team work, it helps people to feel good inside when they offer good ideas and the group listens and grows together.

For more information about PFCA, see the website: www.peoplefirstca.org



*Scott Winfield,
President of PFCA*