

Watch Out!

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

Citizen's Award Given to Redding Heroes

Drop and Roll By Shelly Anderson

On May 7, 2008, I went to a staff recognition ceremony at the Shasta County Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's office also gave two citizen awards to **Daniel Trogden** and **Ryan Hoag** who saved their dad's life.

Daniel and Ryan were at their dad's house when he was burning brush in the backyard. He had a can of gasoline sitting nearby which he used to start the fire. He took the lid off the can, and the gas fumes caught on fire. When he tried to move the can, the gas splashed, and his shirt caught on fire. He tried to take it off, and Daniel tried patting the fire to put it out. Finally Daniel told him "drop and roll, dad, drop and roll." Daniel got burns on his hands from trying to put the fire out.

Ryan called 911 and got help for his dad. He also put cold wet towels on his dad's burns. Ryan went with his dad to the hospital while Daniel stayed and waited for their mom. Daniel got the water hose, and put out the rest of the fire.

I asked Daniel where he learned "drop and roll," and he said he learned it at school. His mom said he practices it all the time. I asked Ryan what he learned from everything, and he said "NEVER PUT GAS ON A FIRE." There is no doubt that Ryan and Daniel saved their dad's life. I think these guys are heroes!



Daniel Trogden, Shasta County Sheriff

Client Councils

YES Council By Andre Economopoulos



The Y.E.S. Council, in Yreka, was started in February of this year. They have three elected officers: Dan, President; Chris, Vice-president; and Shelly, Treasurer. They are thinking about adding a sergeant of arms. Their terms are for six months, and they don't have bylaws yet. (*continued on page 4*)

*Y.E.S. Office Council,
Siskiyou County Opportunity Center, Yreka*

A Message from the Editors

By Shelly Anderson, Sherri Douglas, Glen Pollock, Meghean Skinner, and Cory Smith

In this issue of Watch Out! we take a look at **client councils** in day programs and care homes. We hope that when people read these stories, they will say, "Wow, look at this!" and start a client council of their own or reorganize the one they have.

We learned a lot about what makes a good client council, and also, why some councils don't work so well. When a council works, people feel respected and heard. They are more positive and feel connected to each other, *not just at the meetings*, but in other program activities as well. We learned that a client council can make a positive difference in the company or organization that they are a part of, and the best organizations listen to the advice of their councils.

What makes a good council: The most successful councils are attended and run by the clients and not staff. Everyone has an equal say and can express their feelings. A good council is well organized with either elected officers or volunteer leaders to run the meetings. And, we believe that councils that earn their own money for activities seem to have stronger goals and are more successful.

AXIS Dance Company Comes to Chico

Movements from the Heart By Sherri Douglas and Glen Pollock

The AXIS Dance Company came to Chico to perform several shows in April. AXIS has dancers with and without disabilities who travel all over the United States and the world. There are some dancers who have no visible disability, others who use wheelchairs, and one dancer who had her legs removed when she was younger.

After the show, the audience was given the chance to ask questions from the dancers. There were eight dancers who shared their history and some of the challenges they had while they were becoming the dancers that they are today.

The best part for many children was not the performance, but a special dance class offered on April 9. Three of the dancers gave a fun-filled class that really showed how we can use our bodies in different ways to express ourselves. Twelve children shook, shimmied, and danced around the room smiling and laughing the entire time. The dancers worked together and alone to create movements that came from their heart, not worrying about what anyone else thought. It was a wonderful chance to see how dancing is for everyone, at any age, and all abilities.



Rebecca does a "mirror" exercise with a dancer



Allison watches the class

Fires in Paradise

Humboldt Fire By Glen Pollock

The Humboldt fire started on Wednesday, June 11, and by Thursday, it was so bad that people had to leave their homes to be safe. When it was over, 74 homes burned, 9 people were injured, and 1 person died.

FNRC staff were there to help. Some consumers were evacuated to the Neighborhood Church in Paradise. The problem was that there were only 61 cots available and more than 100 people to fill them.

They contacted the Trinity Methodist Church to see if they could help. Pastor Dave had some room to share, and 14 consumers moved to the church. Many businesses donated emergency supplies so even though it wasn't home, everyone was comfortable: Walmart (air mattresses), Costco (water), ARC (blankets), and the Boy Scouts (sleeping bags). The Work Training Center sent out 44 buses to help in the evacuation, but only 3 made it to Paradise. Chico Pharmacy was contacted so that consumers would have at least five days of emergency medication if needed. Laura Larson, FNRC Executive Director, brought food for everyone.

"We learned from the fire that we must work with consumers so that they can help each other when a fire or flood arrives." Laura said. "We will be hiring consumers to teach their peers how to prepare for an emergency and come out a winner. The fire was very scary, but I am so proud of the FNRC staff and service providers who came together to shelter and protect our community."



...And They Said it Would Never Happen!

I Made It!! | By Michelle Phillips

Hi my name is Michelle Phillips. I graduated from high school in 1999 and went straight into college. I just graduated from Butte College. I took no more than three classes at a time. I had a D in one of my classes, but the rest of my classes I got A, B, or C.

I had to take the bus back and forth to school. I live an hour away from my school. I would get to the bus stop in Orland at 6:00 a.m., and I wouldn't get home until around 4:00 p.m.

I majored in early childhood education. It has always been a dream of mine to work with young children. My family and teachers were a big help in my education. One of my sisters has the same major, so she took the same classes that I took. If I had any questions or needed help, she was there to help me. So was my mom.

I really enjoyed my college experience. Everyone is very proud of my accomplishments. I am thinking about going on in my education.



Michelle at her graduation

Client Councils: Does Your Day Progra

Peer Meeting is for People to Hear You! By Toni Bradford and Jaramie Bodenham



Peer Meeting, ALIVE Program, Quincy

Here in Plumas County, we decided a long time ago how important it is for people with disabilities to tell their service providers and community what matters most to us. People with disabilities have the right, and the ability, to make decisions on what we want. We decided to have a meeting every Wednesday with our peers to discuss any issues we may face and to make the changes we want. Weekly we choose one of us to run the meeting. This person organizes the meeting by writing topics and names of people who want to discuss issues or concerns.

All of us who attend this meeting have the opportunity to speak our minds and vote on changes we may want in our services and community. We discuss what we want and how it concerns us in subjects like: trips, events, activities, community rules, public transportation, attitudes, and relationship issues. Life changes every day, and we have found that meeting weekly helps us share our ideas on these changes. If you don't say what you feel, no one will hear you!

YES continued from front page...

The council makes decisions about how to use the money they earn from special projects. This includes not just spending the money, but also raising it. One of the ways they earn money is with candy boxes.

These candy boxes can be found in the break rooms of 36 Yreka businesses. The council chooses what goes into the boxes, and the boxes are distributed by the clients. The money earned from candy sales goes to the council treasury.

The group meets once a month. They have an agenda that includes old business, new business, and open discussion. The candy business and recycling is discussed at the meetings. According to Dan, they also talk about "future activities, Christmas gifts, and meals." They plan to go for pizza soon with the money they have earned. The next thing they hope to save for is a DVD player.

Everyone at the Y.E.S. office is welcomed to attend the council meetings. Donna attends and really likes "voting." Shelly said that she likes writing the checks, balancing the register, and knowing how much money they have. Shawn is also on the account and helps with buying candy for the boxes. Dan's favorite part is saying "this meeting is adjourned."

Client Council or Residential Facility Have One?

The Voices of our Client Council By Cheryl Anderson, Jason Furmancki, Renee Gomez, Jeff Horton, Anna Huston, Tim Ryan, Sue Vaughn, Tammy Walton, and Barry Wilson

Our program has had a client council for over 25 years. Every two years we elect new members to represent over 300 clients from ten different branches of our program. CC Member Cheryl says, "I have learned about voting, elections, how to read council minutes, and what they mean."

At our monthly meetings we talk about our rights and responsibilities, so we can voice our needs and opinions to the company. CC member, Tammy says that "client council is a way to support your crew." Self-advocacy is important to the council, and it can change company policies. Barry, the council's chairperson, says that "it makes me feel good to have that kind of power."

A couple of years ago, we said that clients should have direct deposit just like other employees, and now we do. Also, landscape and recycling crews requested T-shirts with their logo on it, and now we have them. Jeff, a CC member, says "I enjoy expressing my opinion" and another member, Sue, says "I have learned a lot of things (about people and programs) that I didn't know before." The Client council is always talking about important issues that affect our programs. Client Council is fun; we help plan the annual client picnic, assist at the annual turkey dinner, and we get involved in community events.



*Client Council,
Work Training Center, Oroville*

House Communication Meetings By Sherri Douglas and Glen Pollock

We went to a care home in Paradise. Instead of a Client Council with elected officers, this group held "House Communication Meetings" with no officers.

Most of the residents regularly go to the meetings. There are no officers, so they are all equal at the table.

The group voices their opinion by having weekly meetings and talking about things like what they want for lunch and dinner and where they want to go on outings. There is also time for them to talk about their needs and solve problems that come up. They have time to share good things that have happened to them too. They have a lot of fun. It's clear they

respect and like each other. One of the residents said it best, "Laughter is a good thing to have in our house."

House members can also meet alone with staff if their problem is personal.



*House Communication Meeting,
College Hill Guest Home, Paradise*

Client Councils, Continued



The Client Council at Quest

Quest By Shelly Anderson

I got to observe a client council meeting at a day program. There were about 35 people at the meeting. They talked about things they have done like a softball tournament. They also got certificates for winning the tournament, and they gave a "Client of the Month" award. Right now they are trying to raise money for a picnic. They also plan other fundraisers such as a carwash, bake sale, and a hotdog sale. They voted for new officers at this meeting.

I talked to one of the past presidents of the council. His name is Stephen Lazur. He told me how their meetings are run. He explained which officers get elected, and how they are elected. They elect a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. They choose new officers every three months.

This council has been running for the last 5 or 6 years, Stephen said. The meetings are run by the clients, but staff are there in case they have questions. The group meets every week, and everyone who goes to the program attends the meetings. They talk about what they will be doing for the next few weeks like outings and activities. Stephen is really proud of a garage sale fundraiser that raised enough money that they could have a BBQ, and everyone split the rest.

I enjoyed going to the meeting. It was nice seeing the clients run their meeting. Hopefully more programs will have client council meetings run by the clients.

Paradise Starts New D.O.G.F.I.T.E Chapter

D.O.G.F.I.T.E. By Cory Smith and Meghean Skinner

Are you a member of the Paradise/Ridge community and looking for a group you can belong to that will look after your best interests and help empower you to stand up for equal rights? If so then the D.O.G.F.I.T.E. chapter of Paradise is for you.



On May 19th, the chapter met to elect new officers: Glen Pollock was voted as president; Troy Rathburn as vice president; and Bill McGee as secretary. The president then decided upon two regional representatives who will represent the group at leadership conferences held in both Redding and Sacramento. Ted Hess and Raleigh Garcia accepted these positions.

The next meeting will be held on July 14 from 5-7 p.m. at the Round Table Pizza conference room in Paradise. For more information: Sor Lo at 893-8574.

Region II People First Conference

May Region II People First Conference By Scott Winfield

Today I would like to share my view on the May 2008 People First Conference. The Region 2 People First chapters took two years to plan the region conference which was held in Redding at Red Lion Inn. The Region 2 group had to plan the food, entertainment, breakout sessions, keynote speakers, activities, and much more. Each People First chapter was given things to do for the conference, and it required patience and hard work to get it all done in time. During the planning sessions we decided to invite Chris Burke, John and Joe Demasi, and Jordon Kamnitzer.



*Michael Cooke, outgoing
FNCA President*

On Friday night, Jordon played some music and shared his life story with us. I



Scott Winfield, PFCA President Elect

opened the Region 2 Conference on Saturday morning. Afterwards, we had our first keynote speaker who was our Executive Director of People First of California, Joe Meadours. He gave a Power-Point presentation on how we need to stand strong.

After Joe Meadours' keynote presentation, we got ready for the breakout sessions. There were some excellent topics and some really good speakers: the advocates from PAI, Susan and Ted Hess, SAY, April Perrault and Eddie Lucero, Pathfinders, Ella Slem, Adventures in Business, and myself.

In the evening Chris Burke and his band sang, and Chris also did some acting for us. We had a really fun time with them. Chris Burke was the young man with Down Syndrome who performed in the T.V. show "Life Goes On." After their performance we held a 50's dance, and Chris joined us for that fun activity which everyone enjoyed.

On Sunday morning I gave the keynote presentation on "Changing Our Country's Future." Following that presentation, President Michael Cooke gave his farewell speech to Region 2 Conference members. To close the conference there was a raffle with some great prizes. There was also an awesome slide show of everyone who came to the conference.

The 2008 Region 2 Conference was a total success. I look forward to seeing you at the next Region 2 Conference in 2010!



*Joe Meadours, PFCA
Executive Director*

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Consumer Abuse Awareness Team Invited to Jackson

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By Shelly Anderson, Sherri Douglas, Rosie Johansen, and Glen Pollock

In March, the Consumer Abuse Awareness Team (CAAT) went to Jackson to give a presentation on abuse prevention. We talked to professionals and staff about how they can help people with disabilities prevent abuse. This is the second year we were invited to speak.

We were invited by Operation Care, a non-profit group that provides domestic violence and sexual assault support services and education in Amador County.

We spoke to both consumers and staff about abuse and the steps they can take to prevent it. There were about 60 people there for the presentation. After we gave our talk, some of the people in the audience shared their personal stories with everyone. Some people reported that they remembered how to say "NO" because we taught them the year before!

We all had a wonderful time being with everybody. We think that if we are able to help just one person to stay safe and prevent abuse, then the trip is a success for all of us.



Members of CAAT: Shelly, Sherri, Glen, and Rosie