



Valley Mountain Connection

Volume 1, Number 1

Summer 2015

Inside This Issue

Employment First policy approved by VMRC board at July meeting	2
San Joaquin organization awarded \$45,000 grant	2
Restoration of Early Start program increases referrals and introduces mobile technology	2
Meet Marilyn—office aide welcome addition	3
DDS Safety Net Tips	3
DDS Privacy Officers train VMRC staff and vendors	3
• From the Director	4
• Rouse displays art	4
• Newsletter Contest	4
CVTC Organic Garden Growers' Pasta Recipe	5
Upcoming Training and Informational Links	5
Special Olympics Torch Run in the Valley	6

Coming Events

Special Olympics World Games—July 25 through August 2 in Los Angeles. Televised on ESPN

Best Practices in the Education of Children with Down Syndrome Conference—September 17 & 18 at UOP, 901 Presidents Dr., DeRosa Bldg, Stockton; \$25 per day or \$40 for both days. For more info contact deltalflower@sbcglobal.net

"Special Day on the Farm"—Friday, October 2, 10am to 2pm. The Kiwanis Club of Stockton invites VMRC consumers and staff to participate in this event at the Dell'Osso Corn Maze. All attractions are FREE

Early Start Symposium—October 29, San Joaquin County Office of Education, Wentworth Education Center, 2707 Transworld Drive, Stockton. For more information click [here](#)

Micro-Business Fair—December 4 at VMRC, 702 N. Aurora, Stockton. Save the Date flyer goes out in October to all families and consumers, day programs, and care homes

Tuolumne man competing for USA in World Games

A Tuolumne County man is representing Team USA at this year's Special Olympics World Games July 25-Aug. 2 in Los Angeles.

Joe Delgado, 33, will be competing in individual and relay swimming events at the USC Aquatic Center. Joe will be one of 7,000 athletes representing 177 countries, competing in front of an estimated 500,000 spectators.

Joe joined the local Special Olympics program in 2009, and first competed in track and field events.

"I consider Special Olympics my therapy," he said. "I have made lots of friends. I have broken a lot of barriers."

The local program recently added the sport of swimming, which Joe had enjoyed in high school where he competed as a member of the school swim team. When Joe developed a seizure condition a few years ago, he failed to obtain the



Joe Delgado is shown at the Sonora Sports & Fitness Center

(Photo by Cindy Brewer)

necessary medical clearance to participate in Special Olympics. He became qualified to compete in the swimming events in 2013.

Joe has been working hard for the past year to prepare for the World Games, training daily at the Sonora Sport and Fitness Center with the local Masters

swimming program, and taking physical education classes at Columbia College. He is very excited and deeply honored to be representing not only his county and state, but his country.

We wish him success at the World Games in Los Angeles.

Go Joe!

Special Olympics July 25 in LA

When Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics in 1968, the organization's first Summer Games soon followed. Now, almost 50 years later, the renamed Special Olympics World Games will be the largest sporting event held in the United States this year (based on participants) and the biggest in Los Angeles since the 1984 Summer Olympics.

Here's a look at some numbers behind the event: 4,427,447 worldwide participants and 81,129 worldwide competitions. Since 2000, global athlete participation has increased 4.5 times.

All World Games athletic competitions are free to the public and are held in locations as varied as golf courses and bowling alleys. The opening and closing ceremonies, held at the USC Coliseum are ticketed events.

In all, more than 500,000 spectators are expected to attend the World Games. The Special Olympics World Games will begin Saturday, July 25 in Los Angeles.

ESPN and ABC will provide exclusive, extensive coverage of the Games starting Thursday, July 23 with an hour-long preview hosted by Robin Roberts (6 p.m., ESPN).

Coverage continues with Saturday's opening ceremony at the Coliseum, airing live on ESPN at 6 p.m. with a full three-hour re-air on ABC/4 at 9 p.m. PT) running 30 minutes Sunday-Thursday and 60 minutes Friday and Saturday.

Competition begins on July 26 and concludes August 1. Closing ceremonies will be held on August 2.

News briefs

Area Board 6 of the State Council is now known as **State Council on Developmental Disabilities /North Valley Hills Office**. The new name is a part of changes happening to the State Council throughout the state. Dena Hernandez is the Regional Manager.

Contact information—phone:209-473-6930; email: northvalleyhills@scdd.ca.gov website: scdd.ca.gov/northvalleyhills.htm

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy has moved. Leinani Walter, CRA and Christine Hager, ACRA are now located at their new address:

1321 I Street, Suite 3
Modesto, CA 95354
Tel: (209) 242-2127
Toll Free: (800) 390-7032; TTY: (877) 669-6023
Fax: (209) 462-7020

The Self-Determination Advisory Committee for VMRC's 5-county area met on June 30. The committee is comprised of parents, vendors, SCDD, DRC, and VMRC staff. For the latest information, access:

<http://www.dds.ca.gov/SDP/Index.cfm>

The VMRC Board welcomed four new members at their July 13 meeting. Board President Melinda Gonser announced the newest members to the board: Nancy Meier, Rick Moen, Rush Bailey, and Andrea Rueda.

VMRC board adopts Employment First Policy

The board of directors of the Valley Mountain Regional Center approved adoption of an agency Employment First Policy during its meeting July 13 in Stockton.

California's Employment First Policy for state residents with developmental disabilities was signed into law on Oct. 9, 2013 by Gov. Edmund G. Brown, Jr. The state of California was the 12th state to formally adopt an Employment First policy into law.

Integrated Competitive Employment (a job at a workplace among people with and without disabilities) is the first and preferred choice considered for every

working aged individual supported by VMRC.

The Individual Program Plan (IPP) process is the key to supporting an individual to learn, think, and decide if employment is right for them and if so, identify and offer the most cost effective and appropriate supports needed to gain meaningful work experiences and help them meet their goals.

Historically, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been consistently under-represented in the general workforce. In order to increase employment for regional center eligible consumers in integrated

settings within the community, a grassroots movement framed as Employment First gained momentum nationally and continues to gain momentum.

The general theme is that employment in the community is the first or primary service option.

The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) defines Employment First as "working in an integrated setting, where people with disabilities work alongside other employees who do not have disabilities and where they have the same opportunities, working for at least minimum wage or being self-employed.

Grant goes to San Joaquin group

The Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health recently awarded \$45,000 to a San Joaquin collaborative to improve local systems of care coordination for children with special health care needs.

Family Resource Network (FRN) staff will direct the project and First 5-San Joaquin will serve as fiscal lead. The goals of the grant are to create formal channels of information and service delivery while meeting the needs of identified children, as well as the health care providers, families and service organizations; to improve communication between all involved parties; to reduce repeat data gathering by service providers; and also to reduce duplication of tests and services.

All work will be performed from a family-centered framework. Multiple SJ agencies are involved in the collaborative which meets monthly in Stockton.

To learn more about this grant, contact Ann Cirimele, Executive Director, FRN at (209)472-3674 or Annfrn@aol.com

Criteria changes for Early Start

Effective January 1, 2015 the Eligibility Criteria for Early Start changed. Due to recent state legislation, children may now qualify for Early Start services due to a delay in their development, having an Established Risk factor (i.e., Down syndrome) and/or being at High Risk for a developmental delay. The Early Start program provides free assessments/evaluations of children birth up to age three. If the child is found eligible, then appropriate services are provided to the family to promote the child's development.

As of today, there are 1,673 children in Early Start from all 5 counties. According to Mary Sheehan, VMRC Clinical Director, this is about 250 more than a year ago. The addition of the high risk categories and the change in criteria to just a 1/3 delay in one area has brought in new referrals, and increased the percentage of children found eligible for Early Start. VMRC has added some staff and is using mobile technology to deal with the increased caseloads.

Sheehan indicates, "We have improved our "tools" to make staff as efficient as possible so they can have time to be responsive to the needs of the children and families on their caseloads. We are also developing more vendor resources to meet the increased number of children. Meeting Federal and State timelines remains a challenge, but we are using everything we have to be in compliance and be responsive to families".



Job coach: Working with Pipa ‘a blast’

Marilyn Pipa is one of the newest members of the clerical team in the Modesto Office.

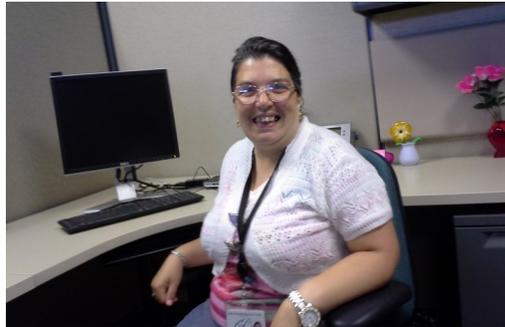
Marilyn came on board in October of 2014 in a supported employment position. She brings a positive attitude, good work ethic, and friendly personality to work with her each day.

Her job coach, Eva, states that she has never met any one who is as organized as Marilyn; stating she is a “blast to work with.”

Marilyn heard about the supported employment position at VMRC and was determined to apply. At the time, she was involved in a day program where she felt she was not being challenged. She talked to her service coordinator about changing programs and moved to UCP.

She worked with Ignacio Chavez, who Marilyn says is “super great;” to update her resume. Marilyn filled out the job application on her own and said she was not nervous about the interview because she had prepared thoroughly. Several excellent candidates applied for the job, and Marilyn was chosen.

Prior to working at VMRC, Marilyn had several other jobs. Her first job was a temporary job at UCP in 2005 on a cleaning crew. With help from UCP, she then found a job at Mervyn’s and worked there until the store closed in 2007. She then applied and was hired at Wal-Mart in Modesto, where she worked for almost five years. She continues to stay in touch with friends she made while working at her other jobs, particularly from Mervyn’s.



Marilyn Pipa in her Modesto cubicle— (Photo by Pam Kidroske)

Friends and family are important to Marilyn. She grew up in New Jersey and moved with her family across the country to San Jose, where she attended Independence High School before moving to Modesto. Marilyn has two brothers with whom she spends time and she has extended family in Portugal. She has traveled to Portugal twice to visit family, and hopes to take another trip in the future.

Always up for challenges, Marilyn says that she began her job knowing a “little” about computers, but has learned more. She is learning to type faster, and wants to learn to Skype with family and friends. In her spare time, Marilyn likes to cook Portuguese food and draw.

Marilyn says that she is grateful for the help she’s received at VMRC, and that she has “super great” co-workers. And her co-workers feel the same way about her.

Safe Water Tips

DO'S	DON'TS
Always swim with another person.	Never swim by yourself.
A responsible adult must supervise young children while playing or swimming. Adults should not be involved in any distracting activity while supervising.	Never leave children alone around water.
Swim in areas roped off for safety.	Never dive into water when you don't know how deep it is.
Swim only where a lifeguard is on duty or an experienced swimmer is supervising.	Never swim after drinking alcohol.
Wear US Coast-guard-approved lifejackets. Make sure they fit!	Don't rely on air inflated water wings, water noodles or other toys as flotation devices.
Keep reaching and throwing aids (poles and life preservers) at poolside.	Don't leave toys in the pool after swimming. Children may return to the pool while unsupervised to play with them.
Surround pools with a fence at least 5 feet high.	Don't walk, skate, or drive on ice covering a body of water in the winter.
Keep containers around the house and yard empty of water.	
Keep bathroom and laundry room latches out of the reach of children.	
Keep the seat cover down on the toilet and use a toilet seat lock if small children are in the house.	

DDS: Privacy and Security essential

VMRC staff and vendors received Privacy and Security training from the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) in May and June. DDS Privacy Officers provided state and federal law, and best practices for handling protected health information. They provided information and techniques that should be used to keep information secure in the course of conducting business by the regional center, as well as ways to protect personal information. Information on the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA) can be viewed on the DDS website. www.dds.ca.gov/



DDS Privacy Officers Nate Black, Beth Hibbert, and Bryan Johnson (not pictured) provide security training— (Photo by Pam Kidroske)

From the Director

DEDICATION TO SERVICE

In my 37 years as an employee of Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC), I have always been impressed



with the dedication our staff demonstrates daily to serving our consumers. In the late 1960's, the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Act was created to serve as a "Bill of Rights" for people with developmental disabilities. Regional Centers were established to implement the Lanterman Act.

Since its inception in June 1974, VMRC staff have provided quality diagnostic and case management services for eligible consumers in our five county area. In the beginning, having sufficient financial resources was not a problem. VMRC staff and vendors were given cost of living and rate increases every year and VMRC still had to give money back to the State, because we didn't need all we were allocated. VMRC staff were among the highest compensated in the local social services community.

Flashing forward to today, the system is in crisis and resources are insufficient to support the needs of our consumers. Vendors are in danger of going out of business and it has become increasingly difficult to recruit new ones because of the inadequate rates being paid. VMRC staff are now among the lowest compensated in the local social services community. Despite this change in circumstance, VMRC staff and vendors continue to focus on meeting the needs of our consumers. —Paul Billodeau

Modesto artist displays work



Anthony Rouse with VMRC staff Robin Dickinson and Dee Matthews (Photo by Elisabeth Johnson)

Anthony Rouse attends day program at Vocational Coaching & Development Institute (VCDI) in Modesto. Staff noticed his talent and encouraged his creativity. He enjoys drawing, sketching and painting. His inspiration comes from his great grandmother, Josephine who also painted. He had this to say about others interested in art, "Create art how you feel it should be and not how everyone else does it. Whatever you can imagine can be turned into reality". He hopes to continue his work by creating a comic book someday.

Anthony's six paintings will be on display in the VMRC Modesto lobby for four months. The display is part of a rotating schedule for aspiring artists in local day programs. If interested, contact smargarite@vmrc.net or (209)573-2131.

VMRC will provide canvasses for the project, an idea developed by VMRC's CFO, Claudia Reed and Facilities Director, Dee Matthews.

Valley Mountain Connection it is!



Nicole Weiss



Carol Hensel



Stacie Moniz

This first edition of the Valley Mountain Connection newsletter came about as a result of surveys conducted as part of VMRC's Strategic Planning process. Consumers, families, and vendors overwhelmingly supported the idea of developing a newsletter. The hope is that it will prove to be a good communication tool among all stakeholders. A contest to name the newsletter resulted in over 60 potential names. The three staff pictured above submitted the winning name—Valley Mountain Connection, the choice determined to best represent the mission of the newsletter. Two editions per year will be distributed via VMRC's website; hard copies will be available in all VMRC offices.

Upcoming Trainings:

Learn the Signs/Act Early—Webinar—7/30 at 10am. A program to improve the early identification of developmental delays in children. Sponsored by CDC and USC Children's Hospital. To register: <http://uscucedd.entertmeeting.com/m/BPBZTJWU>

White Paper Series: Sex Offenders with I/DD; Problems and Solutions from Around the Nation—Webinar—7/30 at 1:30-3:30pm EST, sponsored by The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice and Disability. Contact: NCCJDinfo@thearc.org

Benefits Training & Consulting—Michael Walling—8/1 and online workshops/webinars. Please consult: <http://www.benefits-training.com/>
Employment First/CalPromise—1-4pm at Salida Library on 8/12, provided by Liz Zastro, Lodi Unified School District. Please RSVP by 7/31 to Robin Dickinson—rdickinson@vmrc.net

Human Trafficking & Mind Control—Free Full Day Training on 8/12 at Modesto Centre Plaza. Sponsored by Community Services Agency and Without Permission— www.withoutpermission.org

Rights of Persons with Developmental Disabilities—Mandatory for all Residential Care Facility Licensees and Administrators
Date: 8/26 Time: 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm Place: San Andreas Public Library, 1299 Gold Hunter Rd, San Andreas
Cost: Free CEUs: 3 (*Must pass quiz*) To register contact Carrie Vasquez at cvasquez@vmrc.net

***Residential Orientation—Day 1—9/3, 9am to 1pm at VMRC Stockton Office, 702 N. Aurora. \$30 per person**

***Residential Orientation—Day 2—9/17, 9am to 1pm at VMRC Stockton Office, 702 N. Aurora. \$30 per person**

***Orientation—Final Day (Combined Residential & Day Program)—10/1, 9am to 4pm at VMRC Stockton Office. \$30 per person**

*You must have prior approval to attend VMRC's Residential & Day Program Orientation. See website <http://www.vmrc.net/> under Resource Development for VMRC's resource needs and complete a Letter of Intent form.

U.S. Dept. of Labor "Wage and Hour" —Vendor Training in Sept. at VMRC, date TBD, notices out in August for sign ups

Informational Links:

Valley Mountain Regional Center: <http://www.vmrc.net/>

CA Dept. of Developmental Services: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/>

Association of Regional Center Agencies: <http://arcanet.org/>

State Council on Developmental Disabilities/North Valley Hills Office: scdd.ca.gov/northvalleyhills.htm

Family Resource Network: frnfamilies@aol.com

CA Dept. of Education: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/>

CA Dept. of Rehabilitation: www.dor.ca.gov/

CA Disability Community Action Network: <http://www.cdcan.us/>



Macaroni Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 package of macaroni pasta
- 2 tablespoons of mayonnaise
- 2 sprouts of fresh basil leaves, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste.

Directions:

- Cook macaroni per package instructions.
- Mix the remaining ingredients in a bowl.
- Add cooled macaroni.
- Refrigerate for 1 hour.
- Enjoy!

CVTC Organic Garden in Full Bloom



John Hauben, Kathy Craddock, Bill Anderson and Joyce Payton share a recipe using fresh basil from the organic garden they created at Central Valley Training Center (CVTC)-Stockton. So simple and so good!

(Photo by Maria Burkes)

Torch bearer

3,000 participate in local events

The Special Olympics Torch Run was held in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties on July 16. Receptions were held in both Stockton and Modesto to welcome law enforcement officers and Special Olympic athletes. More than 3,000 officers participated, as did local dignitaries. Dan Kaufman, VMRC Service Coordinator stated, "The Torch Run in Stockton was a great event to witness. It was awesome to see so many law enforcement from places all over the world participate in the run (some coming from countries as far away as New Zealand and Barbados). It was also very encouraging to have so many of our local law enforcement participating in the event as well." From the Stockton Police Department officers of all ranks, ranging from cadets in training to Stockton's Chief of Police attended, as well as officers from CHP and San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office were present. Many city officials including Stockton's mayor attended and supported the event. Janelle Van Dyk, SC stated, "It was an amazing experience. It wasn't about winning or losing. It was inspiring to see the athletes all working together, supporting one another and enjoying the experience they have worked so hard to achieve." A wonderful event to bring much awareness to a worthy cause!



Austin Allan of Modesto carried the Special Olympic torch in the Northern California leg of the World Games Torch Run. He was all smiles for his 1/2 mile leg.



Stockton participants cheer the events of the day.



Modesto Torch Runners proudly display their flags.

Photos by
Dan Kaufman
Janelle VanDyk
Shelli Margarite
& Shannon Haskin



Stockton runners make their way to Weber Point.



Stockton law enforcement and other dignitaries at the local presentation.