



# HARBOR HAPPENINGS

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## HRC PROMOTES INDEPENDENCE WITH “CELEBRATING YOU” EVENT



*HRC counselor, Claudia Menendez and client Susan Meats (above) and Robert Levy (below) enjoy “Celebrating You.”*



Harbor Regional Center’s Adult East team, the HRC Resource Center, Social Vocational Services and Lifesteps, Inc. recently conceived a unique and innovative way to promote client health, well-being and involvement in their community. The “Celebrating You” event in June gave HRC clients the opportunity to be pampered while also providing education. Many were excited to learn how to apply make-up, try a new recipe, and even do yoga. A few received haircuts and learned basic grooming techniques. The smiles on faces were priceless as many were proud to show off their new look.

Program Manager Steve Hankow described the event as, “Something that clients could actually look forward to attending that helped them to feel better about themselves, boost their self-esteem, and promote their independence. It was not just an imparting of information. It was a hands-on experience and one that was FUN!!”

HRC Adult East clients were informed about the event through a direct mailing, their Counselors and vendors. “Celebrating You” would not have been possible without the many people who volunteered their time and services. Harbor Regional Center thanks the following for their generous support during the event and for offering follow-up supports for our clients in the future.

Bask’n Beauty Hair Salon  
Junipero Barber & Beauty Salon  
J.W. Goodson’s  
Magic Nails  
Spiros Hair Styling  
El Camino Cosmetology

## THE NEW MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT: ITS EFFECT ON REGIONAL CENTER CLIENTS

The federal government has passed a law expanding the Medicare program to include a prescription drug benefit. This new benefit, called Medicare Part D, will take effect January 1, 2006. How you qualify for this benefit and how much it will cost you differ depending upon whether you are covered by both Medicare and Medi-Cal (called “dual eligible”) or just by Medicare.

There are several things that you need to know about the upcoming changes.

1. **Enrolling.** If you are covered by both Medicare and Medi-Cal, you will automatically be enrolled in Medicare Part D, and Medicare rather than Medi-Cal will pay for most of your medications. People covered by Medicare only must apply for the benefit between November 15, 2005 and May 15, 2006. If you want your benefit to start right away on January 1, 2006, you must sign up by December 31, 2005. If you sign up after May 15, 2006, the benefit may cost you more.

2. **Low-income subsidy.** If you are covered by Medicare only, there will be a monthly premium, fairly substantial co-payments and other costs associated with this new drug benefit. Depending on your income, however, you may be eligible for a Limited Income Subsidy that may cover most of these costs. You must apply for this subsidy.

If you are a regional center client receiving both Medi-Cal and Medicare, you will automatically receive the Limited Income Subsidy to help you pay the costs that Medicare-only beneficiaries must pay for prescription drugs. You will still be required to make co-pay-

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ments, but the amounts of these co-payments will be small. For example, your co-payments will most likely be \$1 or \$3 for a prescription.

**3. Letter of notification.** In June, all who are considered dual-eligible should have received a letter from Medicare telling them that they will be getting the Limited Income Subsidy. **If you received such a letter of notification you do not have to reply to it.** As a regional center client you should notify your Counselor when you get this letter.

**4. Picking a prescription drug plan.** A number of different companies have signed agreements with the government to provide medications under Medicare Part D. In order to receive coverage, you will have to sign up with one of these companies. (They are called “prescription drug plans.”) It is important for you to look at the different plans and see which one is best for you. Different plans will offer different medications, so all the medications you take may not be covered by some plans. **For this reason it is very important that you try to find a plan that covers all the drugs you are currently taking.** Harbor Regional Center will help to ensure that our clients have access to the medications they need.

In the fall of 2005, all eligible beneficiaries will receive a letter inviting them to choose the prescription drug plan that they want to join. If you are a dual eligible person and do not choose a plan by December 31, 2005, the government will select one for you so that your benefits will begin on January 1, 2006. Please be sure to make a choice so you will be enrolled in the plan that best meets your needs.

At the moment, we do not have information about what prescription drug plans will be available to our clients or what will be covered by these plans. Be assured that as we move closer to the fall we will be receiving more information. ■



## California's Background Check for Child Care

As parents of children with special needs, you may frequently find the need to utilize the services of an in-home provider. Often times you wonder – is this person someone I can trust in my home? Can I truly allow this person to interact with my child? So, you interview each provider carefully and call each person listed as a reference hoping they will help you make an informed decision. Yet most times you end up evaluating the provider's character using intuition and your own good judgment.

Now, with one simple call you can access providers who are dedicated to ensuring the safety and health of your children. The California Department of Social Services along with the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network has a tool called TrustLine. TrustLine allows parents access to a background check for any individual who is providing care or supervision for their children. Individuals registered on TrustLine have cleared a fingerprint check of records housed at the California Department of Justice. They are clear of criminal convictions and substantiated child abuse reports.

Parents can ask their current provider whether they have registered with the TrustLine. Service providers are encouraged to register, and to use this service to screen direct care staff.

As a provider, your only chance to assure a parent you are trustworthy is through an interview and reference check. TrustLine offers added reassurance and demonstrates to parents you are serious about your profession.

With TrustLine, HRC families can now feel at ease with providers who are caring for our children. For more information regarding TrustLine call 1-800-822-8490 or visit the Web site [www.TrustLine.org](http://www.TrustLine.org) ■

## BOB IRLLEN

### Long-Time Volunteer and Invaluable Part of the HRC Family

One of the strongest elements of our Harbor Regional Center community is the support, commitment and tireless work of our volunteers, particularly the members of our Board.

And one of the other hallmarks of the Harbor family is that once an individual commits to being involved, he or she stays involved. That gives us an invaluable wellspring of people who have been with us over many years and provide experience, wise counsel and a sense of perspective.

And that's a description of Bob Irlen.

He got involved the way people often do, through his son who is a Harbor Regional Center client. His wife volunteered him for the Board, he explains with a ready laugh. "So they came to me. I said OK, and I've more or less been there ever since."

That was in 1982. Over these last 23 years, he's served as Board member, Chair of the Consumer Services Committee, Board President, and delegate to the Association of Regional Center Agencies.

"We know we can count on him. Whenever we call him, whether it's to visit a legislator or help acclimate our Board members to statewide issues, Bob is always there to help," notes Harbor Executive Director Pat Del Monico. "And he does it with such energy and with such a wonderful sense of humor."

What's kept him engaged all these years? "The people, at Harbor particularly, and really throughout the regional center system," he says. He recounts that early on in his Board service, he and several fellow members formed a dinner group that still meets regularly.

"It's also being able to do something above and beyond my profession. I think the most satisfying thing has been seeing our ability to help people, and the fact that I personally feel appreciated."

Today, Bob serves as a special advisor to the Board, continuing to share his experience and knowledge of the regional center system.

An attorney and an electrical engineer, Bob worked in aerospace as a program manager. His son, David has been a client of regional centers for the past 26 years. At the age of 33, David lives at home and leads a full life working as a teacher's assistant in a preschool, taking karate classes and participating in special Olympics. Daughter Sandra is 29, has a doctorate in Educational Psychology, and works for a market research firm in LA.

Bob's wife, Helen, is founder and executive director of the Irlen Institute. With clinics worldwide, her patented process that uses colored overlays and glasses to reduce or eliminate visual perception problems has helped over 100,000 children and adults, many with autism. Ms. Irlen's work has received international acclaim and been included in professional journals, textbooks, and on television shows such as *60 Minutes* and *Good Morning America*.

Recently retired from Northrop Grumman, Bob looks forward to creating a new life with lots of room for tennis, skiing and continuing to be active in the Irlen Institute. But you can be certain he'll never be far from Harbor Regional Center – and we're very happy for that. ■



# Client focus

## ANTOINETTE GARCIA HONORED AS LONG BEACH YOUTH LEADER



*Antoinette with her mother Debbie and some of her many awards.*

Many of you may remember our 30th Anniversary Calendar and our star for the month of August, Antoinette Garcia. At the time we described her many activities and accomplishments.

“Combining a large, supportive family with Harbor Regional Center ingenuity has made

all the difference for Antoinette Garcia. And she’s blossomed in the process. Like any typical student at Millikan High School in Long Beach, she’s involved in a number of activities including job training, Special Olympics basketball and Best Buddies. She’s also acted in a play. But one of her favorite activities is going to dances sponsored by PALS. ‘She loves going to the dances,’ enthuses her mom.”

In the past two years, Antoinette’s continued to blossom, most recently receiving third place in the Long Beach City Youth Leadership Award program.

The Long Beach Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities, which advises the mayor and city council on the issues affecting people with disabilities in the community, has partnered with the Long Beach Unified School (LBUSD) district to create an annual recognition program for

students with disabilities. Students apply for the program and for the opportunity to attend five days of leadership training with other students from around the state.

Achieving this honor entailed answering a questionnaire and writing four short essays. Antoinette was among the top three candidates chosen from all the LBUSD students who applied. For the final selection, Antoinette had to be interviewed by both city and school district personnel. As a result, she was awarded third place at a banquet where city officials presented her with a certificate and scholarship, as her very proud family looked on.

The story of Antoinette’s life is one of possibilities, of doing things, never saying can’t and forging ahead – whether it’s Special Olympics, playing basketball and softball, participating in volunteer activities such as International Coastal Cleanup Day, or acting on the stage.

Her awards, medals and certificates would fill a trophy case. And to top it off, she received the Medal of Merit at Millikan High School’s Senior Recognition Ceremony.

Standing by her side and encouraging her all the way has been her mother, Debbie Droste. She’s raised Antoinette to feel she can do whatever she sets her mind to accomplish. Her advice to other parents of Children with Down syndrome – or any developmental disability – “Your children can do things. Don’t limit them, encourage them to try.”

And her daughter echoes. “Tell them to calm down and take a deep breath.”

And what’s next for Antoinette? She’s looking ahead to attending Long Beach City College, where you can be sure she’ll shine as well. ■



## JAMES SWAN TELLS HIS STORY

James Swan is an inspiration to everyone who knows him. He has endured the hardships of life with an enthusiastic spirit. James' life story reflects a poignant chapter in the history of care for individuals with developmental disabilities, from a time of institutionalization to the current world of opportunities in the community. Feeling compelled to tell his life story, James got busy putting all of his feelings on paper. *The James Swan Story* is about his life and includes the experience of dealing with a disability and coming to terms with life.



Thirty-seven years ago, when James was 10, his parents could no longer adequately care for his needs, and he moved to Fairview State Hospital. This transition was difficult as he left the only family he had ever known. James recalls, "This really surprised me. I did not understand why they moved me away from my home." At the age of 16, James left Fairview and moved to the Hylond Home in Santa Ana. There he had the opportunity to attend the United Cerebral Palsy day program. The day program provided an education and gave him a chance to interact with his peers. James describes, "I used to like to go there because I had my own desk and office equipment. I thought I was a businessman. I punched the time clock every day. This made me feel real important."

Because James is diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and spastic quadriplegia his life has been very challenging. After living in a variety of larger health care settings, he now lives in a Harbor Health Care home, where the staff works hard to keep the lines of communication open and provide assistance with his daily self-care needs. He uses a communication device to converse with others and a motorized wheel chair to move around the community. He enjoys being in the community and attends church regularly.

He also enjoys listening to music and spending time with his friends at the ABLÉ day program. James writes letters to friends whom he is not able to visit.

Although it's been quite a challenge, James has found opportunities to communicate with others and express himself freely. James was assistant editor of a resident newspaper and states, "My favorite contribution, and everybody else's too, was a fantasy I wrote for the Christmas edition called *The Perfect Christmas*." His book has allowed him to motivate others and make a contribution to the world. He explains, "My wish for the world in the future is that all people learn to understand and accept disabled children and adults. I hope we can all live together with love, respect and dignity; and we can all laugh and learn from our mistakes."

Today, at the age of 47, James is in charge of his life and hopes his book will be an inspiration to others. He sold over 100 copies when it was first released, and he continues to update it as he has new experiences in life.

You may check out a copy of *The James Swan Story* at the HRC Resource Center. ■

## HRC COLLABORATES WITH WHITTIER LAW SCHOOL



*Lillian Meredith (Attorney) and Vicki Girgis (Children's Counselor) discuss an upcoming IEP.*

Realizing that many families of school-aged children can use extra support in working with the school system, Harbor Regional Center has partnered with the Whittier Law School Center for Children's Rights to provide educational information and advocacy.

At times, staff and family members may need extra assistance with understanding

the intricacies of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and California law as it pertains to providing a free and appropriate education. In addition, there have been changes in the federal laws during the past year, which govern how schools must address the educational needs of children with disabilities. HRC developed this support resource, therefore, as a tool to help parents work collaboratively with local school districts

*"Not only was I able to understand her and follow the recommended steps to take...she cited federal codes to refer to and gave me names/Web sites of additional resources. Her style was professional but made me feel comfortable. She listened."*

to obtain needed resources for your school-aged children (3-22 years).

We are pleased to make this Special Education Legal Clinic available for our families. It is designed to provide consultation, advocacy, and support in working with the schools, while also giving law student interns an opportunity to gain valuable experience advocating for children with disabilities. Interns are chosen

based on their having completed classes in special education law and having demonstrated concern for the interests of others. Interns are available to support families by attending IEPs, drafting letters or complaints, and by helping with the mediation process.

There are several ways to access services from the clinic, including a conference with HRC's Special Education Attorney Consultant, Lillian M.

Meredith. Ms. Meredith has assisted HRC clients since 2002. She received her Political Science and Spanish undergraduate degrees from Brigham Young University. She received a Master's of Business Administration and Juris Doctorate from Pepperdine University. Ms. Meredith began her child advocacy experience as a child's advocate with the Children's Justice Center. Since 1999 she has represented disabled children at IEP meetings and administrative proceedings as a law student and as an attorney. Sheila Merrill, Harbor Regional Center parent states, "Not only was I able to understand her and follow the recommended steps to take...she cited federal codes to refer to and gave me names/Web sites of additional resources. Her style was professional but made me feel comfortable. She listened."

If your child is attending or transitioning to a public school program and you need assistance with an education issue, you can access the support of the Special Education Legal Clinic. Contact your HRC Counselor. ■

### SAVE THE DATE

**A Parent's Guide to Working with the Schools:** The Harbor Regional Center Training Series about Special Education: designed specifically with the school-aged child's family in mind.

#### Three Consecutive Thursdays:

October 6, 13, and 20, 2005 – 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
Harbor Regional Center, Long Beach Training Center  
1155 E. San Antonio Dr., Long Beach

- The basics of Special Education law including IDEA and least Restrictive Environment
- Assessments
- Parent's rights, responsibilities and tools for active participation in the education planning process

For more information, please contact Kathleen Richards at 310.543.0696 or Sandra Fortino 310.543.0696. Cost: \$20.00 payable at first session. Contact your HRC Counselor if a scholarship is needed.

## MEET *GET FIT! NOT FAT!* PROJECT'S KERRY RYERSON

HRC is pleased to announce the inception of our new *Get Fit! Not Fat!* program and welcome Kerry Ryerson to the project team. Kerry comes to the project manager position with a considerable amount of experience in developmental disabilities. She has two children, daughter Ajda who is 21 and attending California State University and son Sean, who is 19. Sean has Down syndrome and has inspired Ryerson to remain dedicated to helping those with developmental disabilities.

A few years after her son was born, Kerry started working in the field of developmental disabilities. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Speech and Language Pathology, while raising her children as a single mother and working in the school system as a special education aide. She later worked as a speech and language specialist and as a special day class teacher. For the last three years, Kerry was the program director at Easter Seals in Redondo Beach where she ran adult activity services and a supported employment program. "I cannot imagine doing any other kind of work," she notes.

Kerry says, "I am confident that my previous experience as a program director will be very beneficial in my new position." She is very familiar with HRC's services and supports, and knows many of the service providers in Harbor's service area. She states, "My eyes and my mind are always taking in information because I need to constantly learn as much as possible. Remember, I have a vested interest in the 'business' – my son."

In addition to her professional experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities, she has also dedicated much of her free time to volunteering with Special Olympics. Her valuable contributions to Special Olympics have included participation on leadership, school and community committees, and coordination of fund-raising activities. "Eleven years ago, when my son was old

enough to compete in various sports, I started volunteering and my enthusiasm, as well as my commitment and involvement, have grown with every passing year," she shares.

Kerry is actively involved in the special education system and has served as a Special Education Mediator for the Alternative Dispute Resolution Design Team, Board member for the Southwest Special Education Local Planning Area's Community Advisory Committee, and lobbyist for special education funding.



When asked about what she would like to see accomplished with this project, Kerry shared that she would like to see the participants make and maintain positive changes to their daily nutrition and their level of fitness."

She is ecstatic about working on the *Get Fit! Not Fat!* project and can't wait to get started. "When I first found out about this Project, I envisioned the terrific results that could be achieved. I know how desperately this type of nutritional and fitness information needs to be incorporated into the lives of people with developmental disabilities," she says. ■

### ***GET FIT! NOT FAT!* PROJECT UPDATE**

*Get Fit! Not Fat!* is a program aimed at improving the health status of adult clients of Harbor Regional Center and Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center by focusing on nutrition and exercise. It is being funded by a \$300,000 Wellness Initiative grant from the California Department of Developmental Services. The program is a multi-faceted approach to improving health and will emphasize the importance of equipping staff and clients with knowledge and strategies. It offers encouragement to start and maintain positive behaviors related to exercise and good eating habits. Each regional center will have a dedicated project manager. Kerry Ryerson will be HRC's project manager and our own Margarita Blanco has left her position as Counselor at HRC, to take on the challenge of project management for Lanterman. Ryerson and Blanco will be working closely together to roll out the *Get Fit! Not Fat!* project over the next 18 months.

## A SUMMARY OF IDEA CHANGES FOR 2005

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the federal law that governs how children with disabilities are educated. This law was originally passed in 1975 (as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) and was last amended in 2004. These most recent amendments contain provisions that will affect regional center clients – some modestly and some more significantly. The changes are effective as of July 1, 2005, but implementing regulations have not yet been published. In addition, once regulations are published, states may choose to implement policies and procedures that vary somewhat from IDEA's "minimum requirements." (They may add to, but not do less than, the minimum requirements.) For both these reasons, we do not know with any certainty how the changes will actually affect individual children and the educational process in California. We must wait and see.

While we anticipate it taking quite a few months until we do know how special education in California will change under IDEA 2004, we have taken this opportunity to explain the changes as we understand them so far. Below we describe the major categories of changes and describe what they will mean, to the best of our knowledge. This information was extracted from information available on two Web sites: [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org) the site of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, and [www.fape.org](http://www.fape.org). (Note: Words and phrases in quotation marks are extracted from the law.)

### IEP PROCESS

**Short-term objectives.** Prior to IDEA 2004, IEPs were required to contain measurable long-term goals and shorter term objectives. Under the new rules, short-term objectives will only be required for children who take alternate assessments "aligned to alternate achievement standards as defined under the No Child Left Behind Act." These are children with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

While this group constitutes only about 1% of students with disabilities, it represents a much larger percentage of regional center clients. So, for many of our clients, this change will have no effect. If a child is affected, the parent may still request that short-term objectives be written to make it easier to evaluate the child's progress.

**Assessments.** Previously, assessments conducted as part of the child's evaluation for eligibility or programming had to include functional and developmental information. Under IDEA 2004, all assessments must also consider the child's academic (or pre-academic) readiness or achievement.

**IEP progress reports.** The progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals must be reported, but the report must no longer address – as in the past – "the extent to which the progress is sufficient to attain the goal by the end of the year."

**Transition information in IEP.** The amendments clarify that the transition process for a student with a disability now begins at age 16 rather than age 14. At that time, the IEP must include "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and...independent living skills." The law has eliminated the requirement for "a statement of the interagency responsibilities for any needed linkages."

**IEP attendance and participation.** New provisions allow IEP team members to be excused from attendance if their area is not being discussed at the meeting or to attend by "alternate means" such as conference calls. These things may only happen, however, if the parents give written consent.

**Pilot program for multi-year IEPs.** Under a pilot program, the federal government is allowing as many as 15 states to offer, with parental consent, a multi-year IEP,

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*A Summary Of IDEA Changes For 2005  
(continued from page 8)*

not to exceed three years. California has asked to be included as one of the fifteen pilot states. This would generally mean no comprehensive annual review of the IEP, less specificity in goals (i.e., the plan could include three-year goals), and less rigorous requirements for progress reports, accommodations, supplementary aids, and services goals.

**IEP team transition.** Parents of a child transitioning from Part C (early intervention) to Part B (school-based) services may request that representatives of the Part C system be invited to the initial IEP meeting to facilitate the transition into school. This provision does not, however, require such attendance.

**Transfers between school districts.**

Services comparable to those described in the IEP in effect before a child's transfer must be provided by the new school district until the previous IEP is adopted, or until a new IEP is developed, adopted and implemented (in the case of a transfer in the same state), or until a new IEP is developed (when the transfer is to another state).

**DUE PROCESS**

**Procedural safeguards notice.** Under the new provisions, the notice concerning procedural safeguards (due process) will be distributed routinely only once a year. Exceptions include when a child is initially referred for special education or when a parent requests an evaluation, files a due process complaint, or requests a copy of the notice.

**Statute of limitations.** Parents now have two years in which to exercise their due process rights after they knew or "should have known" that an IDEA violation may have occurred.

**Due process complaint notice.** A new provision provides that the school district must file a response to a parent's complaint notice within 10 days unless the district within 15 days notifies the state hearing officer that it is challenging the

sufficiency of the parent's due process complaint notice. The state hearing officer has five additional days to make a finding.

**Resolution session.** Parents and the school district must engage in a mandatory "resolution session" before due process occurs. (This is required unless both the parents and the school district agree in writing to waive the requirement.) The resolution session must occur within 15 days of the complaint being filed, and the school district has an additional 15 days to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the parents. If a resolution is not achieved within the 30-day period, the due process hearing must occur. The school district may not engage an attorney for the resolution session unless the parents also engage an attorney. The parents' attorney fees for this session are not reimbursed regardless of the outcome of the due process action.

**Mediation.** There is still a provision that the school district and the parents may agree to mediation and this may occur any time after the complaint is filed.

**Attorney's fees.** Parents' attorneys may be required to pay the school system attorney's fees if a cause of action in a due process hearing or court action is determined to be "frivolous, unreasonable or without foundation." Further, parents may be responsible for the school system's attorney fees if a cause of action was presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay.

**Qualifications for hearing officers.**

For the first time there are explicit qualifications for people to serve as hearing officers.

**DISCIPLINE**

**Stay put.** Under the previous rules, the right to "stay put" in the current educational placement could be denied only to students with disabilities who were involved in drugs, weapons, or other dangerous behavior or activity. Under the new rules, the right may also be

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denied for a student with a disability who is alleged to have violated a school code that may result in a removal from the student's current educational placement for more than 10 days.

**Manifestation determination review.**

IDEA 2004 places the burden on the parents to prove that the behavior that may warrant removal from the current school placement was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship, to the child's disability. Previously, the school was required to prove that the behavior was not a manifestation of the child's disability before being allowed to apply the same disciplinary procedures used for non-disabled children.

**Special circumstances.** Since 1997, IDEA had expressly authorized schools to remove a child to an interim alternative educational setting for as long as 45 calendar days for an offense involving drugs and weapons – even if the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability. Although school authorities have

always had the authority to respond to an emergency and to unilaterally remove any student with or without a disability who is causing serious bodily injury to another, now schools can also unilaterally remove children for 45 days for "inflicting serious bodily injury." The new statute also no longer requires the hearing officer to consider whether the school has made reasonable efforts to minimize the risk of harm, including the use of supplementary aids and services.

**Forty-five day limit.** The 45 calendar day limit on the removal for offenses described above has been changed to 45 school days.

**Case-by-case determination.** A paragraph has been added to the discipline provisions, which states that school personnel can consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to change the placement of a child with a disability who violates a school code of conduct.

As more definitive information becomes available, families will be able to find it on the HRC Web site. ■

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## HRC WEB SITE LINKED TO BARNES AND NOBLE

Harbor Regional Center has recently partnered with Barnes and Noble to allow you to purchase many of the books that we have for loan in the Resource Center online. The great news is for every book purchased in this way, Harbor Regional Center will receive a portion of the sale as a donation.

You can find books available for purchase in a couple of places on the HRC Web site. For example, each month we feature a *Book of the Month*. This book might be about the latest research, on the best-seller list or a heart-warming story. Either way, it's worth checking out. The book

of the month section also offers a review of the material by one of our very own resource center parents. Books from previous months can be found in the *reviews of popular materials* section of the Web site. You can also find books for purchase on our *selected bibliographies* section. In this section, we have a list of recommended materials on subjects ranging from autism, speech and language, behavior management, parenting, social skills, and more!

To purchase a book all you have to do is click on the picture of the book, or the book title which will link you to the Barnes and Noble Web site. So, if you are thinking of adding one of these great books to your personal collection, click on our Web site and help HRC! ■

## HRC NEEDS YOUR HELP TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS SPECIAL FOR OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED

At no other time of the year do families feel the grip of poverty more than during the holidays. And that's especially true for some of our Harbor Regional Center families.

Did you know that of the approximately 6,400 children with disabilities we serve, more than 1800 live in families whose incomes are at or below poverty levels? Many of these children are from single-family households. That's why Harbor Regional Center needs your help to make this holiday season special for these children and families.

### There are many ways you can help:

#### Provide a Thanksgiving Dinner –

Many families will not be able to afford Thanksgiving dinner. You may purchase the ingredients for a dinner, buy a dinner already prepared, or give a gift certificate for food.

**Adopt a family** – Adopt-a-Family is a rewarding program which pairs an HRC family in need with a special person or group of people who want to help. You or your organization can specify the size of the family and area where they reside such as Torrance or Long Beach. You'll then receive information on the ages, sizes and toy preferences of "your" family. And you can help provide toys and/or clothing; needed household items such as blankets, space heaters, and cooking utensils; or food or food gift certificates.

**Donate a new toy** – Every year Harbor Regional Center delivers toys to hundreds of needy kids. You can help by donating a new and unwrapped toy.



**Give to the Harbor Help Fund** – This fund is dedicated to helping families who are in need of medical services, emergency items and necessities. This year we would like to raise \$30,000.00 to assist families with gift certificates for food. All checks should be made out to The Harbor Help Fund.

With both the Adopt-a-Family program and the Thanksgiving Dinner, you may choose to deliver the items to your family. If you prefer, a representative of Harbor Regional Center will deliver on your behalf.

Your contribution directly impacts a child and family at this important time of year. So please make a difference and put a smile on the face of a child or family in need. Your generosity will be appreciated and remembered for a long time to come.

To participate or get more information, please contact Michele Broussard of HRC directly at (310) 543-0686 or e-mail [michele.broussard@harborrc.org](mailto:michele.broussard@harborrc.org)

# FAMILY *matters*

## ORAL HEALTH GETS AN EARLY START 0 TO 3 YEARS OF AGE



HRC's Dental Coordinator Marcey Brabender, working with The Pacific Center for Special Care, will facilitate an important pilot project. Through a grant from Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB) in collaboration with Delta Dental, the project will promote and expand access to affordable quality oral health care for infants and toddlers with special needs. The program will use existing case management services to improve oral health for children with developmental disabilities, and to provide a model where a dental school collaborates with and established state program.

Seven HRC Early Intervention Counselors have volunteered to conduct special screenings to identify the infants and toddlers who are at risk for oral health problems. They will provide guidance to parents and refer them to the Dental Coordinator as needed. The Dental Coordinator will be available to provide relevant information to caregivers in person, by phone, group training, or by giving referral assistance. We are looking forward to providing this wonderful opportunity to HRC families and know it will make an impact on oral health. The following is a checklist of information about keeping those baby teeth in tip-top shape.

### Why do we baby those baby teeth?

- Children with special needs are at greater risk for dental disease and have greater difficulty accessing dental care.

- One in every three toddlers has tooth decay.
- Tooth decay is the most common, chronic, infectious disease of U.S. children. It's five times more prevalent than asthma and seven times more prevalent than hay fever.
- California was rated a "C" for oral health overall, and a "C" in prevention in The Oral Health America National Grading Project.
- Baby (Primary) teeth are very important for nutrition, speech, and a child's self-esteem.
- Children with cavities in primary teeth are more likely to have cavities in permanent teeth.

### How do we baby those baby teeth?

- You should start brushing when you see the first tooth and visit the dentist six months after the eruption of the first tooth.
- Never share anything with your child that has been in your mouth such as spoons, food or water bottles.
- Do not put baby to bed with a bottle or sipper cup.
- Start flossing when two teeth touch each other.
- Eat a healthy diet. A diet high in sugar and/or sticky food (pureed, peanut butter) increases the incidence of cavities.
- If you have questions regarding oral health, Harbor Regional Center's Dental Hygienist, Marcey Brabender, provides oral health prevention to HRC's clients, Counselors and service providers.
- Research the following Web sites for additional information:
  - Pacific Center for Special Care  
[www.pacificspecialcare.org](http://www.pacificspecialcare.org)  
[www.dental.pacific.edu/resource](http://www.dental.pacific.edu/resource)
  - Academy of Dentistry for Person with Disabilities  
[www.foscod.org/aapd.htm](http://www.foscod.org/aapd.htm)
  - American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
[www.aapd.org](http://www.aapd.org)
  - Special Care Dentistry  
[www.scdonline.org](http://www.scdonline.org)

HRC thanks our Counselors for volunteering their support for this project!

**Brook McReynolds**  
**Sandra Gonzalez**  
**Suzi Oh**  
**Vickie Girgis**  
**Pat Moore**  
**Zenaida Meza**  
**Cathy Benavides**



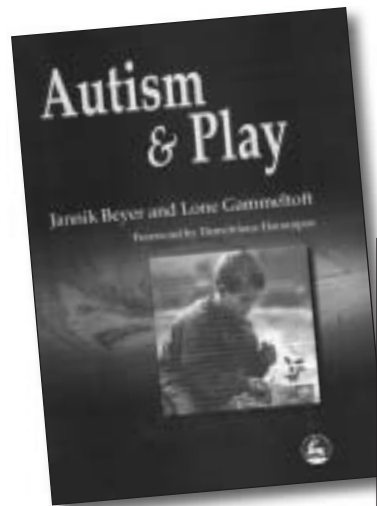
## TOY TALK: It's All About Learning

By Barbara del Monico  
HRC Resource  
Center Manager

*We are pleased to announce that HRC's Resource Center has a Toy Lending Library which includes many developmental and adapted toys available for checkout.*

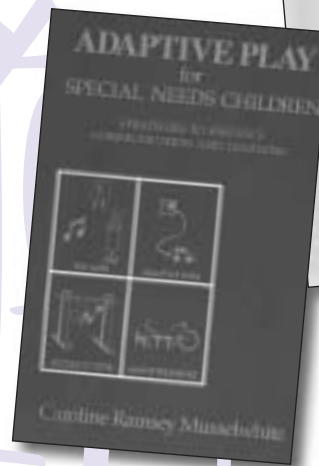
Kids love to play. They can devote hours to play, make believe and following their vivid imaginations. However, the critical relationship between learning and play is often overlooked. Play is ultimately about learning. Learning can be great fun and can be accomplished while you are playing with your child. The years from birth to age three are a time when children can learn critical concepts and skills such as cause and effect, object permanence, attention/tracking, fine motor, matching/sorting and sequencing. One of the greatest benefits of play which is directed by a parent is the acquisition of language. There are many ways to expand a child's ability to learn through play with toys that are manufactured and even homemade.

The feature which makes the Toy Lending program so unique is that each toy includes a Toy Dialogue. A toy dialogue helps parents teach basic language, physical and/or cognitive skills by suggesting language to use in introducing the toy to their child. In addition, each dialogue identifies the concepts which can be emphasized while playing with the toy. The concept of the toy dialogue is based upon the book, *The Language of Toys* by Sue Schwartz, PhD which is available for check-out from the Resource Center.



The Resource Center also has the most current information including books, videos, computer software and Web sites designed to meet the needs of children with varying disabilities. The most recent additions to the Toy Lending Library are the simple switches which are attached to toys and can be activated by a child who has a disability. These adapted toys with switches may provide initial training of skills later needed in the use of electronic communication devices.

A visit to the Resource Center to check out toys to introduce to your child will bring about a rewarding experience for you both. ■



## SUPPORT OTHERS WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE: Become A Parent Mentor

Finding out about a new diagnosis can be devastating. Harbor Regional Center Parent Lynn Carlin describes her experience, "On February 3, 2005 we were told our beautiful three-year-old son Jack has autism. I have to say the very first thought in my heart shouted 'NO!' The tears just streamed down my face. The road suddenly appeared very narrow for our family, full of fear and disillusion. Yet, immediately after my heart rejected this information, I took it all in at once.

I knew the road wasn't narrow at all. Having spent the last 3+ years listening to some family, friends and even strangers freely give unsolicited parenting advice for me and my 'spoiled' child, the diagnosis cleared the way for us. We, as a family, were destined for a different plan in this life. A plan none of those family members, friends or strangers mentioned. At that moment, I knew I could not remain angry."

*If my experience  
can help them  
on their journey,  
even if it's just letting  
them know that  
there is light...*

Like Lynn, many parents go through a grieving process and feel totally overwhelmed. Even family and friends often don't understand and can't provide the support needed at such a difficult time. That's why HRC facilitates a Parent Mentor Program. Parent Mentor Dominique DeBorba, who has been a mentor for 11 years relates, "Being a parent mentor can be extremely rewarding. As the parent of an 18-year-old daughter with Cerebral Palsy, I have experienced all the emotions our new families are feeling. If my experience can help them on their journey, even if it's just letting them know that there is light at the end of the tunnel, and that things will be okay, then I feel like I've made a difference."

Your expertise can make all the difference to new parents during one of the most difficult times in life. The HRC Resource Center is looking for mentors to match with families and would love an opportunity to give you more information on this very special program. We invite you to support other parents in situations similar to your own. Please see the accompanying information on the next training class to introduce the Parent Mentor Program. ■

### BECOME A PARENT MENTOR: ASSIST OTHERS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

*Presented by the Harbor Regional Center Resource Center*

Wednesday, October 5 & October 12, 2005 – 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Harbor Regional Center, Torrance  
Conference Room A21 Building A, Second Floor

This introductory class will cover topics such as active listening skills, confidentiality and the responsibilities inherent to volunteering and offering peer support.

Explore your strengths and how you can best use them to support other parents of HRC clients!

For more information call the HRC Resource Center at (310) 543-0691.  
For child care registration call Gail Parker at (310) 543-0643.

## EL NUEVO BENEFICIO DE RECETAS MÉDICAS DE MEDICARE: SU EFECTO EN CLIENTES DE EL CENTRO REGIONAL DE HARBOR

El gobierno federal ha pasado una ley la cual expande el programa de Medicare al incluir el beneficio de recetas médicas de Medicare. Este Nuevo beneficio llamado Medicare Part D, seá efectivo a partir del 1ero de Enero del 2006. Cómo calificar para este beneficio y cuánto le costará varía dependiendo si usted está cubierto por ambos Medicare and Medi-Cal (llamado doble elegibilidad) or solamente por Medicare.

Hay varias cosas que usted debe de saber acerca de los cambios que se avecinan.

1. Incripción. Si usted está cubierto por los ambos Medicare y Medi-Cal, usted estará automáticamente inscrito en el programa Medicare Part D, y Medicare en vez de Medi-Cal pagará por la mayoría de sus medicamentos. Las personas cubiertas únicamente por Medicare deberán de aplicar por el beneficio entre el 15 de noviembre del 2005 y el 15 de mayo del 2006. Si usted desea que sus beneficios comiencen a partir del 1ero de enero del 2006, deberá estar inscrito a más tardar el 31 de diciembre del 2005. Si se inscribe después del 15 de mayo, puede que este beneficio le sea mas costoso.
2. Subsidios para personas de bajos ingresos: Si usted está cubierto por Medicare solamente, usted deberá pagar una tarifa mensual, aparte de pagos parciales algo substanciosos y otros costos asociados con este nuevo beneficio de medicamentos. Sin embargo, dependiendo de sus ingresos, usted puede ser elegible para un subsidio (ó ayuda) de ingreso limitado que puede cubrir la mayoría de esos costos. Usted deberá aplicar por este subsidio.
3. Si usted es cliente del Centro Regional recibiendo ambos Medi-Cal y Medicare, automáticamente recibirá el subsidio de Ingresos Limitados para ayudarle a pagar los costos que los beneficiarios de solo Medicare deben de pagar por recetas médicas. Usted siempre tendrá que hacer pagos parciales pero no serán tan costosos. Por ejemplo, sus pagos parciales serán de \$1.00 or \$3.00 por cada receta médica.
4. Carta de Notificación. En Junio, todos los que sean considerados de doble elegibilidad deberán de haber recibido una carta de Medicare informándoles que estarán recibiendo

el subsidio de ingresos limitados. Si usted ha recibido esta carta, no tendrá que contestarla. Cuando reciba esta carta, y como cliente del Centro Regional, usted deberá notificárselo a su consejero.

5. Escogiendo un plan para recetas médicas. Cierta cantidad de diferentes compañías has firmado acuerdos con el gobierno para proveer medicamentos bajo el programa de Medicare Part D. Para poder recibir cobertura, usted deberá escoger una de esas compañías (llamadas Plan de Recetas Médicas). Es muy importante que usted estudie los diferentes planes y escoga el que mayor le convenga. Los diferentes planes ofrecerán diferentes medicamentos por lo que es posible que todos los medicamentos que usted toma puede que no sean cubiertos por algunos planes. Por esta razón, es muy importante que usted trate de encontrar un plan el cual tenga todos los medicamentos que usted usa actualmente. El Centro Regional de Harbor cooperará para que todos sus clientes tengan acceso a los medicamentos que necesitan.

Por ahora no tenemos información acerca de los Planes de Recetas Médicas que habrá disponibles para nuestros clientes, ó que será cubierto bajo esos planes. Sin embargo, estamos seguros de que podremos brindarle información al aproximarse el Otoño. Los consejeros del Centro Regional estarán disponibles para ayudar a nuestros clientes y a sus familias a evaluar los diferentes planes y decidir cual es el más conveniente para ellos.

### UNA GUÍA PARA FAMILIAS EN COMO TRABAJAR CON LAS ESCUELAS: Un entrenamiento del Harbor Regional Center Acerca de la Educación Especial.

Jueves, 27 de Octubre, 2005, de 6:30 p.m. a 8:30 p.m.  
Presentado en HRC, Long Beach Centro de Entrenamientos  
1155 E. San Antonio Drive, Suite B, Long Beach

- Este entrenamiento está diseñado específicamente para familias con niños de edad escolar, cubriendo lo básico de las leyes de educación especial y los derechos y responsabilidades con respecto a la ley.
- Para mas información por favor de ponerse en contacto con su Consejero del HRC, o con Sandra Fortino al (310) 543-0696.
- El costo por familia será de \$10.00, pagaderos en la primera sesion. Habrá Becas disponibles para cualquier familia con necesidades financieras. Por favor de ponerse en contacto con su consejero del HRC si una beca necesaria.

Habrá cuidado de niños disponible con previa reservación. Por favor De llamar a su consejero del HRC, o a Gail Parker al (310) 543-0643 Para pedir cuidado de niños.

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- Patricia Del Monico  
*Executive Director*

**BOARD MEETINGS**

September 20, 2005 – 8:00 a.m.  
 October 18, 2005 – 6:30 p.m.  
 November 15, 2005 – 8:00 a.m.

The Board of Trustees of the Harbor Developmental Disabilities Foundation, Inc. meets regularly once a month on the THIRD Tuesday of the month.

All regularly scheduled business meetings of the Board are open to the public and visitors are welcome to attend both morning and evening meetings of the Board. The meetings are held in Conference Room A1 & A2 at Harbor Regional Center. ■

**Harbor Happenings** is a publication of Harbor Regional Center, a program of the Harbor Developmental Disabilities Foundation, Inc.

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**DRAFT PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006**

Harbor Regional Center will present our 2006 Performance Plan, during a public meeting of the HRC Board of Trustees Tuesday, October 18th, 2005, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Conference Room A 1, Building A, First Floor Harbor Regional Center 21231 Torrance Blvd., Torrance, CA



HARBOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FOUNDATION, INC.  
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