



# WARC NEWS

## We Are Really Cool !!!

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### Special points of interest:

Using "Person-First" language is an ideal way to show respect for people with disabilities. Referring to a person in "person first" language shows that we value each person as a person first, and that his/her disability is just an attribute of that person. To use "person first" language, always refer to the person first, and then the disability. For example:

- **Child with Down Syndrome** instead of Down Syndrome Child
- **Man with mental retardation or Man with a developmental disability** instead of mentally retarded man
- **Girl with a disability** instead of handicapped girl

*It takes some practice but using person first language is the right thing to do!*

### Inside this issue:

Legislative (continued)	2
Milestones	2
People on the Move	3
Supported Employment	3
Board of Directors	4
Legislative (continued)	4

## WARC takes leadership role in 2001 disability legislation

With the 2001 legislative session in full bloom, we have been busy with legislation that will effect the lives of people with disabilities in our community.

The state legislature has tried to address the needs of persons with developmental disabilities. During the 1999 session, the legislature granted all funds requested by the Department of Human Resources to eliminate the waiting lists. Two years later, despite many new placements, there is still a waiting list and the waiting lists are projected to grow.

The Disability/Advocacy community believes the reason for this is that there is a lack of comprehensive planning, study and consultation with the disability community and providers. Such collaboration would give a true picture of the state of the disability community's needs and services.

WARC and its involvement with the disability community, including Community Unity Coalition, Disability Forum, and the Nevada Association of Service Providers, agree that three things need to happen during the 2001 legislative session:

1. **OLMSTEAD PLANNING TASK FORCE:** We need to pass SB486, which would require a task force to study the needs and size of the disability community. This task force reflects the Olmstead Decision and the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, which have recommended this process to avoid further

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Meet Karel Rogers, new Pier 1 Manager

We are very happy to welcome Karel Rogers as the new manager of Pier 1. Karel has an extensive background in retail management and interior design. Karel plans to more fully develop the connection between Pier 1 and WARC through community involvement (Chamber of Commerce, telethons), business relationships (home designers,



gift certificate program) and many more innovative ideas. And, she is hiring people from WARC to work in the store.

*Be sure to stop by Pier 1, meet Karel, and see the great changes she's already made!*

(Continued from page 1)

- litigation and consent decrees. Without the information that will be generated, the legislature will continue to spend money, expecting to fix problems, only to find that it has been unsuccessful. This is clearly the first logical step.
2. **DISABILITY RATE COMMISSION:** We need to pass SB364. The majority of the contracted community service providers have not received any rate increase to provide services despite the rising cost of living and the increase in responsibilities required by the state.
  3. **IMMEDIATE PRIVATE PROVIDER RATE HIKE** of 7.5% for FY 2000-2001 and 5% for FY 2002-2003 to avoid a total collapse of the disability services in the state.

### **Explanations & Justifications:**

***Problem: In addition to the waiting lists, Nevada fails to serve many of the people who need services and qualify for services.***

*Nevada serves only 50 persons per 100,000. This is:*

- 100% less than Colorado and Utah
- 200% less than Montana
- 400% less than South Dakota
- 500% less than North Dakota

*Note: The states with the best services are the ones that have been forced to improve services through litigation.*

***Problem: Nevada, like other Western states, contracts with private providers to serve people with disabilities. What Nevada pays is well below***

### ***similar states in our region.***

*The results are:*

- *With inadequate compensation, services are inadequate, regardless of need.*
- *The state is exposed to law suits for not providing appropriate level of services, so;*
- *When forced to provide services, services are either the absolute minimum required by law, or individuals are pressured to accept services out of state (at a very high cost to the state).*

***Problem: The state has provided no rate increases for Supported Living Arrangement (SLA) services, Supported Employment services, or Day Training providers in 4 years!***

*While there have been no rate increases, there have been significant increases in responsibilities including:*

- *From adult day care to job/life skills training*
- *Community solicitation to secure contracts for real work opportunities*
- *Client programs – planning and documentation*
- *Community activities for Least Restrictive Environment requirements*
- *Clients' Rights training*
- *Case management*

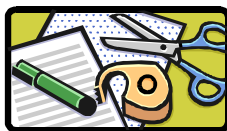
***Problem: Providers cannot hire and/or retain qualified people!***

- *The entry level pay (\$7.00-\$7.50/hr) is so low that prospective employees can make a better living in jobs without such great responsibilities*
- *Staff turnover is great and private providers often lose*

(Continued on page 4)

## Miscellaneous Milestones

- Thanks to WalMart for donating \$250 to WARC. This money will be used for art supplies for our Arts & Crafts Class, which is taught weekly by volunteer Sue Nowling.
- Thanks to the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Nevada Commission for National and Community Service for providing funding for WARC's recent "The Road to Independence" Workshop which provided five days of information about Person-Centered Supported Employment and



- Funding Options. The training was presented by nationally known trainer Paul Selby.
- The Nevada Public Health Foundation has extended WARC's Yoga grant! They funded the program for the first year and were so pleased with the results that they are expanding their support for another year! The \$5,200 grant will now include two teachers to accommodate the increasing number of people from WARC who attend the class each week at the Yoga Center.



## PEOPLE ON THE MOVE AT WARC

- We are thrilled to be offering a new class to interested people at WARC! Every Wednesday, about 10 people attend a martial arts class at Unity Martial Arts in Reno. Taught by Professor Cary, Martial Arts students are strengthening their bodies and their minds. The class was the idea of our new VISTA member, Jeani Brand, who is a martial arts student herself. The classes have been funded for the people at



Professor Cary works with Mike at Martial Arts Class



Doug proudly displays his Special Olympic medals

WARC by Painted Rock Resources, a foundation that funds activities that promote physical fitness in people with developmental disabilities.

- Congratulations to Doug Haase, Scott Lynn and Gari Etxeberri, who participated in a variety of ski events at this winter's Special Olympics.

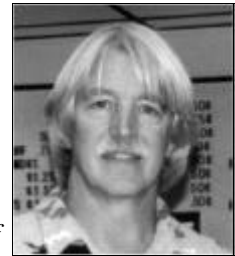
Way to go!  
• March 29

was another fun-filled ski day for people at WARC. Supervisor Scott Meyer and VISTA member Jeani Brand took five people to the Tahoe Adaptive Ski School. Free lessons and lift tickets were provided through scholarships donated by the Tahoe Adaptive Ski School.



Roya and her volunteer ski instructor enjoy the chair lift

## Brian's Notes



Brian Lahren,  
Exec. Director

*For the past 23 years Nevada has had the lowest rate of fiscal effort in the nation on behalf of people with developmental disabilities. During this 23 year period, WARC has helped organize state-wide advocacy, labored in the halls of the legislature, talked to key politicians, made numerous public presentations on the sorry state of affairs for our citizens with developmental disabilities. Despite this labor of love, we still are on the bottom of the disability funding heap.*

*Is this attributable to inadequate advocacy? Obviously not! Are Nevada citizens more uncaring than citizens in other states? We're good people like everyone else! So what is the difference?*

*The Braddock, et. al. report: "State of the States in Developmental Disabilities 2000" indicates that the single factor that differentiates well funded states from states like Nevada is the number of lawsuits filed on behalf of client care in the better funded states. Pick up a copy of the Braddock report at WARC if you're interested.*

*It's time for a vigorous public debate about how much longer Nevadans with disabilities must wait for adequate services, how much longer their providers must wait for adequate funding. WARC will facilitate this debate as part of it's longstanding leadership in developmental disabilities.*

## WARC to Test Supported Employment Program in "Own Backyard"

In getting ready to start our own Supported Employment program, it seems wise to start in our "own backyard". Our plan is to place WARC clients into each of our businesses as "regular" employees, making at least minimum wage. This process will help our new Supported Employment Program by teaching us the challenges that other businesses may encounter when they hire people with developmental disabilities. It will also serve as a good example if we practice what we preach.

Each of WARC's business managers (four thrift stores, Pier 1 and Moxie Java) will be involved. We don't expect that our new employees will perform

all of the job functions as our other employees right away or ever. That will depend on the employee we hire and the natural supports we are able to set up for him/her. What we will do is "carve" a job by looking at what responsibilities other employees do that we could delegate to the new employee, thus freeing up our other employees to do their more complicated or time-consuming job functions.

Moxie Java has taken the lead by hiring Courtney, who previously worked at Moxie in a client position. She has learned the job and is a great asset to the operation.

Look for our great new employees!



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- Executive Director**
- Brian Lahren, Ph.D.*

*(Continued from page 2)*

*employees to higher paying equivalent openings within state employment.*

In addition, WARC and the entire disability community supports AB353, which eliminates the death penalty for people with mental retardation. Currently, Thomas Nevius, who has mental retardation, sits on Death Row in Nevada. He was the unwitting accomplice in a crime that resulted in a death. The fact that he has mental retardation was never brought up to the jury, and he refuses to defend himself at the expense of his family members who involved him in the crime.

This bill has a lot of support. Even people who believe in the death penalty, believe it should be reserved for the most culpable of criminals. People with mental retardation generally are not crime leaders who plan and execute heinous crimes. When involved in crime, they most often are following the lead of another and are also not able to assist in their own defense.

The Nevada Pardons Board heard a request on April 11 to commute Thomas Nevius' sentence from death to life in prison without the possibility of parole. People from WARC went to the Capitol to demonstrate their support for commuting Nevius's death penalty sentence.



AB 353 would ensure that other people with mental retardation do not receive the death penalty in the future.

*Rory, Jeani, Kyri, and Derick demonstrate support outside the Pardon's Board hearing.*

To support any of these bills, contact your state legislator. For information on how to contact your legislator, call Mary Bryant at 333-8259.