



*Handicapped Resource Association*

## Profile - Handicapped Resource Association - HRA

The Handicapped Resource Association (HRA), formerly the Arlington Handicapped Association, is a private non-profit organization founded with the intent to promote independence and self-reliance for the members of the handicapped community.

HRA was formed in 1976 by a small group of handicapped individuals. They met once a week in their homes and began working with the city government, University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) and local, state and national organization to ascertain and address the needs of the handicapped.

In the first nine years, HRA was instrumental in forming Arlington's trend-setting policies on accessibility. The city started a para-transit service even though no public transportation exists, built a barrier-free multi-purpose facility which now houses HRA, built a multi-million dollar barrier-free park and enacted numerous city ordinances aimed at reducing physical barriers. UTA has become one of the most accessible campuses in the United States and the most accessible in the tri-state area.

HRA was able to begin and expand service delivery as funding was made available. The programs incorporated were the Day Enrichment Center (DEC), Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy (PT/OT) and the Shared Attendant Program (SAP), as well as information and referral, advocacy, peer counseling, public education, independent living skills training and wheelchair sports.

Funding for SAP was through the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS). HRA and DEC received funding for three years from the Ken Davis Foundation, a matching fund grant from the Community Trust, two small grants from Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC), private donations, dues and fund raisers.

HRA has expanded and enhanced services since 1986. Funds for a full-time PT/OT project were received through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) allowing clients access to daily PT/OT. DEC's name was changed to the Therapeutic Center for Mobility Impaired Adults (TCMIA). This new name better reflects the actual programming. SAP's name was changed to the Provence Center for Independent Living (PCIL) in honor of the founder of HRA. The Agency recently changed it's name from Arlington Handicapped Association to the Handicapped Resource Association to clarify the associations expansion of service area and programming.

HRA has organized and sponsored workshops regarding various handicapped issues. The Agency has worked with professional groups, such as Volunteers for Medical Engineers in Texas (VMET) and Uplift, for developing advanced individualized adaptive equipment, and JBK Development Corporation to develop an accessible apartment complex. The staff and clients have testified and participated in human rights rallies, DHS and congressional committee hearings.

HRA was selected by Arlington Cares in early 1988 to be the recipient of their annual fund raising monies. The PT/OT program and PCIL continue to be partially funded by government awards.

Small donations of money and items are made by various organizations such as: Delta Airlines; Fox Electric; Kiwanis; United Federal Campaign; Knights of Columbus; local churches. A small portion of the yearly budget continues to come from private donations, fund raisers and dues.

HRA has always been an equal opportunity employer. 100% of the Agency's executive and office staff is comprised of ethnic minorities, females and handicapped individuals. The combined accrued experience of the present agency staff is: eight years in governmental contract management; thirty years working with the disabled population; forty years of community education; ten years supervisory experience.

Since it's inception, HRA has been a consumer organization. The general membership is comprised of handicapped individuals and their families, community advocates, representatives of organizations and interested individuals. The membership directs the Board of Directors through voting privileges and regularly scheduled meetings. The board is comprised of individuals from the community, civic organizations, business leaders and advocates for the handicapped population. The board directs the policy and management of the association.

HRA is a multi-faceted organization that provides a welcome alternative to the isolation often experienced by those with a handicap.

Information and referral is provided to anyone requesting the service on a local state, and national level through phone calls, written correspondence, walk-ins and publications. This includes but is not limited to: social services and organizations; education; housing; transportation; personal care attendants; medical facilities and care; travel and lodging; equipment; employment; adaption and modification; governmental and regulatory issues; counseling; accessibility of facilities and events; sitters for handicapped children; parenting for the handicapped; publications; workshops; emergency services; sports and recreation; immigration services; insurance; volunteers; handicapped parking. HRA receives approximately 120 information and referral calls a month requesting various types of assistance.

Peer counseling is provided by matching a person with someone who has the same disability to discuss areas of concerns and find solutions to individual problems.

TCMIA, PCIL and PT/OT combine to facilitate independent living skills on an ongoing basis. This includes but is not limited to: attendant training and management; cooking and housekeeping skills; self-care information; health maintenance; money management; home safety; rape crisis and prevention; crime and fire prevention; adaptive equipment.

HRA plays an important role in advocacy by encouraging handicapped individuals to become self-advocates. Individuals and groups are informed of changes in government regulations, proper procedures in advocacy, organizational skills and names of groups or individuals to contact for specific issues. We also assist in voter registration.

On a limited basis, HRA provides ongoing training for personal care attendants that exceeds the state minimum standards and is more extensive than certified nurse's aide training.

The three in-house, hands-on programs currently made available through HRA are:

#### PHYSICAL THERAPY/OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (PT/OT)

PT/OT assists disabled individuals in achieving their optimum level of independence. These PT/OT services are provided by HRA after completion of formal rehabilitation. This program includes ILS, provides adaptive equipment, wheelchair maintenance and assessing home structural modifications.

#### PROVENCE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (PCIL)

PCIL is an intermediate care facility which assists disabled individuals in making the transition from family or institutional care to independence. PCIL provides personal attendant care to clients seven days a week. Clients live in their own apartments and are responsible for their own material needs and financial debts.

Limitations in funding set the criteria that clients on the PCIL program must be in college, vocational training or employed and be self-motivated towards independence.

THERAPEUTIC CENTER FOR MOBILITY IMPAIRED ADULTS (TCMIA)

TCMIA provides multi-faceted areas of specialized services including but not limited to: arts and crafts; music; independent living skills; health-maintenance and self-care; communication skills; self-advocacy skills; socialization opportunities; community interaction, and recreational activities.

TCMIA specializes in services for mobility impaired adults as this is an area of great need. A wide range of conditions restrict mobility from visual impairment to spinal cord injuries. While other agencies in Tarrant County, state and nationwide may offer similar services, most are restricted by age, disabilities, finances, accessibility or locale. TCMIA provides services to individuals who would otherwise fall outside of these guidelines. Through TCMIA, these individuals are reintroduced into the mainstream of productive society with a more positive self-image and a strong bond between themselves and other consumers with the common problem of mobility impairment.

TCMIA is a uniquely designed component of HRA that serves a multiplicity of disabilities. TCMIA is reluctant to pursue funding through government agencies or service organizations which might possibly restrict the type of people served and the quality, variety or length of services provided.

A recent Executive Director and past President of Coalition of Texans with Disabilities stated that HRA is unique and that it is the only agency in Texas that provides these services and that the Independent Living Program is the only true independent living program in the state.

A sound financial base will enable HRA to continue to be a productive, stable and expanding organization promoting independence and self-reliance in the handicapped community.