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Handicapped Resource
Association of Texas
February/March 1997



What Clients say about HRA

Because HRA's purpose is to provide to its clients the care they *actually need* and not what an outside party deems appropriate, the agency recently sent out a Client Satisfaction Survey to all its end users. The idea of a satisfaction survey might be a bit threatening to many agencies, but HRA took the initiative, wanting to know, honestly, where it stood in terms of service. The results were positive and informative.

With an early 42% response rate, the survey revealed that:

77% of HRA's clients have been with the agency for over one year; 56% for more than two years. During their time with HRA, 60% of clients have had two or more attendants; 36% have had only one attendant.

100% of the respondents said "yes" to the question: "Without my Personal Attendant my life would be very different." -- 92% say that **without a Personal Attendant they would have to move out of their home or into a nursing home.**

Many of the comments made by HRA clients were touching; others kind. But all were telling:

"...I have Parkinsons Syndrome. I can't walk 5 feet in the yard to get into a car. I am so grateful for HRA services..."

"I don't want Bob in a nursing home again.... I don't know what I would do if it weren't for HRA..."

"Without HRA I would probably lose my job."

One respondent said that without her Personal Attendant she would "probably die from neglect."

HRA Executive Director Rosalie Wells expressed gratitude to those who responded. "We learned that in most areas we shouldn't change the procedures. Some good suggestions and comments will help us tweak the system to keep our quality high," she said.

Congratulations, Attendants and Staff! Your "customers" are pleased with you.

In My Opinion...

Rosalie Wells, Executive Director, HRA

The Texas Legislative Session is under way with hearings and bill filings that may affect us all. The major concern is always about levels of funding. No one expects large increases; rather the efforts are to keep levels as they are or make budget reductions do the least damage. Brace yourselves for at least some program cuts. Program changes that affect HRA could include: the way eligibility is determined; a voucher system for Attendant Services; and an overhaul of the Department of Human Services.

In all the debate about funding, other important positive steps can be overlooked. One of these steps - endorsed by the Arlington Committee on Aging & Disability and the Arlington Mayor's Council on Disability - is Representative Glen Maxey's House Bill 607. This would make it possible to loan and re-loan durable equipment and technology needed by people with disabilities. Currently there is no centralized mechanism for storing, documenting, repairing and distributing usable donated items for the Metroplex's people with disability. Maxey's bill could remedy that gap in resources.

On another topic: Housing. This year the HRA Board challenged itself to stimulate improved, accessible and affordable housing for people with disabilities. We aren't in the housing business, but so far, with gentle requests, collaboration and lots of information HRA has been able to impact architectural barrier removal, influence a community program to make ten homes accessible from the ground up, and put together a project that will build ramps and expose over 300 community leaders (Kiwanians) to the needs of people with disability. Soon an information blitz with builders should lead to more acceptance of the negligible cost to design with disability in mind. With information and understanding, people will do the right thing!

**New "Visitable" Homes
Project**

**HRA Consumer Survey
Results**

More Donor Benefits!

**DFW Classi Car Show
Update**

HRA has been offered a telephone system too large for its needs. A Dimension 100 with over 25 phones and a PBX board is available for the picking up. The system was used for eleven years and is in good working condition. For information call Gary McWilliams at (817) 552-2521 x222 in Vernon, Texas.



Te Cora Ballom

It is on rare occasions that a Board of Directors has the honor of having within its ranks a member with such distinguishing qualities as Dr. T.J. Ballom.

Dr. Ballom operates Neighborhood Medical Clinic in Fort Worth as a practicing Doctor of Osteopathy. While working daily with her patients she is also currently finishing a Masters of Public Health at the Medical College of Wisconsin. In addition, she is the clinical instructor for the medical school of the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth, and continues to serve as recruiter and reserve officer for the United States Public Health Service, where she was commissioned as Lt. Commander and formerly served as chief of staff at the Federal Institute in Fort Worth.

Her practice focuses on families, industry and urgent care and encourages active, inquisitive participation of the patient in his or her treatment. In addition to her work with HRA she is a member of numerous medical associations both locally and nationally.

Julia Bessler has been chosen as chairperson of the Arlington Committee on Aging and Disability, (part of the Arlington Human Service Providers Network) following outgoing chair Dr. Rosalie Wells of HRA. The group meets every fourth Tuesday at HRA. All are welcome.

Local Kiwanis Effort Means Access

Six local Kiwanis clubs have joined under James Long and the Six Flags Sunrise Kiwanis Club to build ramps for those who cannot afford to buy them. Typically these people are newly disabled, in general financial need, or whose existing ramps have deteriorated.

Last year HRA proposed the project (appropriately titled RAMPS) to the Tarrant County Housing Finance Corporation, received \$4000 and became fiduciary for the project. Details are now being worked out with the first ramps expected to be built this June.

Westlake's Arlington Hardware will donate storage space for ramps and the trucks to deliver them. The Junior League of Arlington has approved the program for the placement and training of their novices and will staff the project from an operations base at HRA in the summer of 1997.

The Richardson Kiwanis will provide advice and assistance to the six groups; it has a long history of building ramps for their area's people with disability. (They're fast, too - four Richardsonites can build a ramp in half a day!)

"Visitable" House Project on Ground Floor

Vision Arlington is building nine new homes on East New York Avenue for low to mid-income families. A recent decision has led to the changing of the design of all nine homes to incorporate the concept of "visitability" for people with disability. What's a visitable house? A house that, due to good planning from the design stage, can accommodate (with almost no later modifications), anyone with almost any disability. It is a house where friends with disabilities can visit without discomfort, difficulty or embarrassment. To make a home visitable, basic access elements like these will be incorporated:

- one no-step exterior entrance at the front, side, or back of the dwelling
- 32 inch minimum interior and entry doors
- reinforced bathroom walls to accommodate grab bars, if needed later
- all electrical outlets and environmental controls at reachable heights
- one-hand faucets and levered door handles throughout

These features were recommended by the AARP and will bring the properties closer to conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is estimated that the additional construction cost is only \$75 per home.

The Vision Arlington homes will enable everyone, including people with temporary or permanent mobility impairments, to live more safely and independently in their homes as well as visit the homes of others. There is also the potential for a young family to live into their senior years without needing to move because an aquired disability requires architectural accommodations. (A National Center on Health Statistics 1990 study indicated that at age 65, 41% of our remaining expected years of life will be spent with some disabling condition).

The change in design came about when the Arlington Committee on Aging and Disability (of the Arlington Human Service Providers Network) asked for consideration of the modifications.

(see page 4)

New donor program thinks up lots more reasons to give

To encourage more community support for HRA and get the public involved through first-hand knowledge of the agency, the Board of Directors has come up with a new benefit-based system of rewards to those who help HRA. A mailing will go to those who do not receive *TheResource*.

FRIEND:

\$50 contribution

Donor Receives:

Recognition lapel pin
Subscription to *The Resource*
Annual Report
Recognition in Annual Report and
Newsletter.

SUPPORTER:

\$120 contribution

Donor Receives:

All of the above, plus
Invitation to Annual December Winterfest
Recognition in CELEBRATION HRA! Program
2 tickets to Classic Wheels Car Show

PATRON:

\$240 contribution

Donor Receives:

All of the above, plus
4 tickets to the Classic Wheels Car Show
Invitation to Classic Wheels Car Show
Reception

GUARDIAN ANGEL:

\$1000 or more, or an equivalent in-kind donation from individuals or firms who go the extra mile with HRA.

Donor Receives:

All of the above, plus
Admission to the Hospitality Room at the
Classic Wheels Show
Two tickets to CELEBRATION! HRA

All donations are tax-deductible; HRA will provide letter confirming the donation for tax purposes. On the back of this newsletter you will find a new form with these changes in place. Consider signing up!

Monette Johnson is now an "official" employee at HRA after her stint as a Masters Program trainee. Monette has proven herself to be a valuable addition to HRA. Congratulations and welcome, Monette!

HRA is interested in learning from hearing impaired people about their experiences with translators. Call Rosalie Wells or Jamie McCartney at 817-469-1977.

David Gentry, ex-president of HRA's Board sends greetings to all. "I want you all to know that I miss you and would like to hear from you. The surgery and extensive physical therapy are yielding slow results," Says David.

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Tribute to Judge Dave Marshall Watson

The father of HRA's Dave Watson III passed away in late February after a long career as Terrell City Judge and a teacher in several area school districts.

Watson worked in the Dallas, Garland and Terrell schools for 34 years as science teacher, guidance counselor and finally as Assistant Principal at Burnett Elementary School, where he retired in 1989. A year after retirement he accepted his municipal bench appointment in Terrell.

He was a model to his community and will be missed. HRA sends its condolences to Dave III and to the rest of the Watson family: his wife, three sons, two daughters, two sisters, ten grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



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HRA, a member of the committee, was instrumental in recruiting loan applicants for a Vision Arlington home that would be built with these accommodations. The design modification of all the Vision Arlington homes was a natural extension and was readily embraced.

VISITABLE HOUSING PROJECTS SLOWLY TAKING HOLD IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY

Projects like the one mentioned above are not exclusive to Arlington; on the contrary. Some have seen great success in other parts of the country. Peachcrest Trace in Georgia is one such model for visitability development. 156 new single-family houses are situated here, on curving streets surrounded by woods. Every interior passage door at Peachcrest is 32-inches wide. About 125 of the houses (over 85%) have front entrances with no steps. Elsewhere in the country nearly all new houses as well as older ones, have steps at every entrance. Visitors with mobility impairments literally cannot knock on doors; can't enter or leave without team effort and major pre-planning. But Peachcrest is a place where non-disabled residents who develop a disability don't have to move out or do huge renovations. It's also a place where a kid can roll a trike into the house at the end of an afternoon, or where a family can roll in a 300 pound antique bookcase.

Visitability modifications are neither difficult nor

expensive; yet in many areas, and for different reasons, builders are not inclined to make them. The nearly universal access in the Peachcrest community came about because an administrator of the county Housing Authority, after much discussion, mandated that basic access be part of any architect's plan and any bidding builder's agreement. But other fights have been more difficult. Habitat for Humanity has embraced the idea of visitability and has now recommended that its 1000 affiliates across the country build every house with basic access. However, the real success of visitability design will lie in grass roots efforts for education of the public - and the builders.

Looking for a Million

Greg Smith, Todd Kimball, hosts, On A Roll Radio (cont. page 5)

We are conducting a research experiment to prove that there are at least one million regular users of the internet who have a disability or chronic health condition, or a direct and personal interest in disability issues. The purpose of the research is to justify to the major media, advertisers, content developers, legislators and others that we are a viable consumer market and a political force that cannot be ignored.

You are invited to visit <http://www.onarollradio.com> and be part of the



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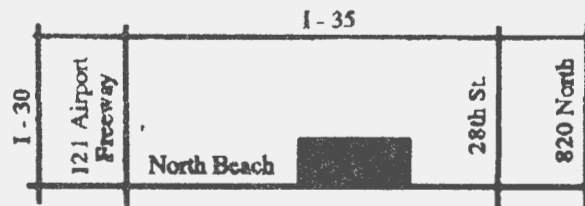
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•DFW CLASSIC SHOW UPDATE•

HELLO AGAIN!!!!...IT'S THE CAR GUY!!!

The work to produce this year's DFW CLASSIC WHEELS SHOW is well under way. We have been busy contacting all our previous entrants and inviting them to return. Also, car clubs are being visited and encouraged to "show as a club". Two weeks ago, I attended the Dallas Autorama at Market Hall, distributing flyers and entry forms, making contacts with car owners, the toy and collectible vendors, and possible sponsors for the show. I did it again last weekend at the Fort Worth Rod and Custom Show. It was very pleasing to see all the car owners displaying DFW CLASSIC trophies throughout these shows!!

-David Shuford, Show Director

Million (from page 4)

"Disability Pride - One in a Million" campaign. On a Roll is a live weekly talk show on disability issues that is gaining affiliates rapidly across the country. The research will be conducted until March 31, 1997.

You can help us by 1) forwarding this message to your e-mail buddies with disabilities and to news - groups of disability interest and 2) visiting us at our website above.

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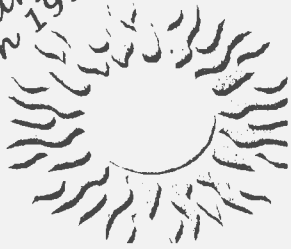
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Volunteering. Please call me.

FRIEND (\$50 contribution). Benefits: Recognition lapel pin, subscription to *The Resource*, Annual Report, Recognition in Annual Report and Newsletter.

SUPPORTER (\$120 contribution). Benefits: All of the above, plus an invitation to the annual December Winterfest, Recognition in the Celebration! HRA Program, and 2 tickets to the Classic Wheels Car Show.

PATRON (\$240 contribution). Benefits: All of the above, plus 4 tickets to the Classic Wheels Car Show and an invitation to the Classic Wheels Reception.

GUARDIAN ANGEL (\$1000+ contribution). Benefits: All of the above, plus admission to the Hospitality Room at the Classic Wheels Show and two tickets to CELEBRATION! HRA.

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