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SERVICE

Handicapped Resource
Association of Texas
October/November 1997



THE RESOURCE

*Educating, advocating
and empowering adults with
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Newsletter sponsored by Westlake's Arlington Hardware

HRA Celebrates 20 Years in Gala Event

-Cynthia Brink

On October 17, the Arlington Hilton witnessed the third Annual Celebration HRA! honoring John Dycus as HRA's Man of The Year. As roving reporter I can tell you that everyone looked spiffy and enjoyed the entire gala, from the pre-Celebration cocktail hour straight through to the end of the evening.

TV personality **Scott Murray** made a superb emcee and flawlessly kept the program moving. Arlington Mayor **Elzie Odom** proclaimed October 17 "John Dycus Day" and related stories about the evening's honoree. Former UTA President **Dr. Wendell Nedderman** "roasted" John with personal anecdotes. HRA Interim Director **Dave Watson** and former UTA Director of Student Publications **Dorothy Estes** spun stories and testimonials to John's generosity, humor, diplomacy and dedication. Finally, performing artist/speaker **Andy Hickman** entertained everyone with his unique blend of humor, magic tricks and inspirational message.

Although John was the honored guest, his own remarks focused attention on all the "other" heroes of HRA; the ones who have shaped, and continue to shape, the organization.

One of the benefits of being newsletter editor is that you get to see all the behind-the-

scenes stuff. I was truly impressed this year at the number of people who helped put this third Celebration together.

Troops were led by Event Coordinator **Bobbie Heckathorn**, who did a spectacular job delegating, overseeing, requesting, organizing, prodding, pleading, and making sure everything came together. The event committee, **Jerry Hipple, Keith Aholt, Lynn Brink, Dee Burton, Justin and Mindy Carroll, Jennie Lee Dycus, Don Grandvold, Nellie Harrell, Vernon Hodo, Kay McGee, Kay McMillan, Beverly Salvant, Ken Terral and Dave Watson**, planned the event, obtained sponsors and tables and made scores of decisions over the past six months.

Working in the ranks on Friday night I saw **Linda and Amy Heckathorn, James Horn, Mindy Carroll, Lynn Brink, Nellie Harrell, Dave Watson, Jennie Lee Dycus** and a host of others who stayed until the very end.

Guests represented **The Arlington Star-Telegram, American Airlines, Westlake's Arlington Hardware, The Dallas Morning News, Aguirre Corporation, UTA, Arlington National Bank, R.J. Carroll Company, Harris Methodist, Southwestern Bell**, and lots of other organizations and groups of friends.

HRA sends special thanks to:

- **Ken Terral** of Aguirre Corporation who designed a fabulous program and posters illustrating John's ability to "break down barriers"

- **Mary Ann Anderson** who made place cards for all of the sponsored tables

- **Scott Murray**, the Great Emcee

- Our volunteers, sponsors, and everyone who joined us

Finally, thanks to you, **John Dycus**. You have made a difference for HRA.

Get your RAMPS here and now!

Six local Kiwanis clubs are ready to build access to your home or the home of someone you know!

Since HRA's RAMPS Project began in August, all the pieces are in place, including funding, volunteers and materials storage. However, HRA has only received a few applications so far, and there are funds to accommodate many more applicants!

If you live in Arlington or Mansfield and have a financial need, you may qualify to have a ramp built at your home. Call **Olivia Acosta** at (817) 469-1977 for details.

Along with Kiwanis, Westlake's Arlington Hardware and the Junior League of Arlington have volunteered to help with see this project to completion. Let them build a ramp for you!

Get Ready, Gift Wrappers...

HRA will be providing its annual gift wrapping services to Barnes & Noble customers again this year.

Please make plans to work a shift on Tuesday, December 9 from Noon to 4 p.m. at the Barnes & Noble on South Cooper in Arlington. (You may work for one hour, or all four hours).

HRA retains all donations made by customers during our shift. If we have sufficient response from volunteer wrappers, our hours can be extended, meaning more donations!

Please call Olivia Acosta (817) 469-1977 to sign up as soon as possible!

Winter Party on Horizon

HRA's Winter Party is coming again soon! Attendants and Board are encouraged to join us for lunch and a party on Wednesday, December 10, at noon at the Arlington office.

This is HRA's way of saying "thanks" to Attendants, who work throughout the year assisting our clients.

Lunch will be catered by local volunteer "chefs!" Please come!

Meet Coleen Shannon

Board Treasurer Dr. Coleen Shannon has taught Social Work at UTA for 27 years. Originally from Nederland, Texas (that's between Beaumont and Brownwood), Shannon came "on board," in 1996 through her relationship with former colleague and then Executive Director Rosalie Wells. Shannon holds degrees from TCU, Tulane and Texas Woman's University.

Shannon's vision for HRA is to see an expansion of services to be able to accommodate all potential clients who need assistance. She would also like to see an upgrade in the benefits provided to employees and Attendants.

"A lot of people don't know this agency or what it does," says Shannon. "Getting people to know us should be one of the Board's main responsibilities."

Thanks, Coleen Shannon, for your support, expertise and work.

Dycus Recounts Heroes of HRA

"I always thought HRA's story sold itself," said John Dycus modestly during his address to 250 guests at Celebration HRA!

Although John himself was the honored guest, his words, true to form, kept the emphasis himself and focused it on a chronology of people who have made HRA what it is today.

"Lately I have heard myself described as a hero," John said. "If you want to talk about heroes, I offer you the name of Sam Provence," referring to HRA's late founder, whose charisma still lingers in the organization.

John went on to list other names: Jim Hayes, who traveled from Austin to Arlington, pushing his own wheelchair, in less than a day; Gene Brown, the Personal Attendant, who cares for clients on a daily basis; Skip Lefler of Arlington National Bank, who helped HRA obtain a loan which kept it afloat during a particularly bad year; Sam Cole, Bobbie Heckathorn, and a list of others.

"May you never need HRA," said John. "But how grateful I am to Sam Provence and his family who did what they did to make sure HRA sticks around, in case you ever do."



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The federal government budgets millions to help Americans look for work or start businesses. Listed here are two of the best resources from over 15,000 federal and state programs recommended in Free Money To Change Your Life, the latest book by Matthew Lesko, whose specialty is getting free information from Washington:

- Small Business Investment Companies, now found in 283 locations, provide equity capital, long-term loans, debt-equity investments and management assistance to small businesses. For a free directory or more information, write to: Investment Division, U.S. Small Business

Administration, 409 Third St. S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20416; or check out www.sba.gov/inv on the Internet.

- One Stop Career Centers, now being set up in 33 states, will help you write a resume, search for job openings on the Internet, and even offer computer classes. Some employers hire directly from the centers. To find a center near you, write to: One-Stop Team, Employment & Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N4700, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210; or check out www.doleta.gov on the Internet.

December PAC Training

Training in Dallas:

Levels I and II will be held Saturday December 13

Training in Arlington:

Levels I, II, and III will be held Tuesday December 16.

HRA will contact you by memo for specific times and schedules.

Executive Director Search Still On



Informed sources say that the HRA board is still in its second round of an Executive Director search. The board hopes to have the position filled in November.

Whoops!

We forgot to mention some folks in the last newsletter. These generous donors helped HRA back in July!

- Steve Bakos
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Virtual Classes Becoming Reality

-from the Dallas Morning News

First, there were classes broadcast on public television. Then came computer network-based course work. Now, 'virtual' college is the next generation of long-distance learning.

Virtual colleges have no physical campus or full-time professors. They borrow faculty members from other institutions and enroll students without regard to geographic boundaries or available classroom space. Virtual colleges challenge traditional universities' geographic ties, their grading and credit systems and educational goals.

Most Americans have paid little attention to this burgeoning form of higher education. Nevertheless, options for students have multiplied:

- The University of Phoenix, with outposts around the U.S., has offered on-line graduate services since 1989.

- The Dallas County College District allows students to earn an associate of arts and sciences degree via distance learning. Students must register through an existing campus.

- The Colorado Electronic Community College is seeking accreditation to grant its own degrees.

The most ambitious new electronic college is Western Governors University. The university, incorporated in January, will operate as an independent, nonprofit school with faculty drawn from business and other educational

institutions.

Students won't receive grades or credit hours. Instead, they will be required to pass competency tests to show they have mastered the skills needed for a degree or certificate. Business leaders will strongly influence the school's curriculum and also provide non-degree corporate training.

Western Governors University's narrow focus makes it feel more like a vocational-technical center than a true university - which means it probably won't compete with liberal arts colleges for traditional students. Its administrators will have to struggle to balance student and public interests against those of the businesses that will help shape its curriculum.

Since more than a third of students enrolled in college courses today are not the traditional 18 to 22-year-old, Western Governors has tried to fill a gap in traditional higher education systems and encourage educational innovation.

If you're interested in participating in a "virtual class" locally, The Dallas County Community College District's LeCroy Center for Educational Technology produces broadcast-quality video courses, on-line courses and classes on one-way video with live call-in. This fall, it is offering 57 distance courses. More than 100,000 students enroll in these telecourses every year, making the LeCroy Center one of the most respected in its field.

JOHN DYCUS

A ROLE MODEL TO ALL!

Thanks!

-ALLAN SAXE



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