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SERVICE

Handicapped Resource
Association of Texas
June/July 1998



*Educating, advocating
and empowering adults with
disabilities*

A newsletter sponsored by Westlake's
Arlington Hardware

HRA Shines at Leadership Conference

HRA Director Dave Watson recently attended the 9th Annual Leadership Conference for the Texas Association of Mayors' Committees for People with Disabilities. The three day Conference was designed around workshops on living, learning and leadership, with the goal of exploring new ideas to increase full participation for Texans with disabilities.

The conference was dedicated to the memory of former HRA Director Glynda Mims, who was a "driving force" behind the establishment of the Arlington Mayors' Committee for People with Disabilities.

HRA's Dave Watson served on a panel called "Successful Programs" as the representative of one of four area organizations showcased for leadership in services and advocacy for those with disabilities.

About 100 people from the Metroplex Mayors' Committees as well as from those in other areas of the state were in attendance.

The Conference kickoff was performed by Texas State Supreme Court Judge Greg Abbott, who was partially paralyzed in 1984 when a falling tree struck him while jogging.

The Conference also discussed fair and equal housing, education, getting back to work, and accessible transportation.

Get Ahead with HRA's new 401(K) Plan

from Director Dave Watson

On June 1, 1998 HRA started a 401(K) plan for all employees with one year of service. HRA is matching \$.25 on every dollar up to 6%. We all know it is difficult to save after paying those monthly bills. So why not pay yourself first each month into a tax-deferred 401(K) plan?

With the 401(K), your contributions are deducted from your paycheck before taxes are deducted. Since your current taxable income is reduced, you pay less in taxes than you would if you had to pay the tax first and then try to save. Also your earnings grow tax-deferred until you withdraw your money. Tax-deferred compounding allows your money to grow much faster, because all of your earnings are reinvested without being reduced by current income taxes. When you add up the tax advantages, the overall result is more money in your pocket at retirement.

But before you get started, it's a good idea to take stock of where you are and where you want to go. Even though retirement may seem a lifetime away, don't be tempted to put off saving. Each year it becomes more and more difficult to make up for lost time.

MS 150 "Bike to the Brazos IV"

Feel like riding 150 clicks in a weekend? Join the MS 150 and ride all the way to Cleburne and back to support research into the cause and cure of Multiple Sclerosis.

(What's a few rear-end bruises when you're working for a good cause?)

The event is sponsored by Harris Methodist, KXAS-TV, Ryder, UPS, Wells Fargo, Subway and Kawasaki, takes place Saturday and Sunday, September 19 and 20.

The route begins at Harris Methodist Southwest, along Lake Benbrook, through Granbury, past Dinosaur Valley to Camp Arrowhead in Cleburne. Riders will return via the rolling hills of Somervell and Johnson Counties and the

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EEK! It's Almost Here! Celebration HRA!

Once again we anticipate the coming of HRA's greatest fun-raiser, Celebration HRA. Location has been moved to Marriott Arlington, with Anabella Winters as this year's illustrious Chairperson.

Keep your eyes peeled for more details.

BIG TEX AWAITS

Want a free day at the fair this year? It's as easy as a snake's belly on greased linoeum. Just call Olivia Acosta at HRA (817-469-1977) and put your name on the "VIP" list. She will get you and a companion 2 free tickets to the fair for Wednesday, September 30, 1998. Sorry, you must have a disability to be eligible. Corny dogs are sold separately. Deadline for getting on the list is **July 24**.



INFOResources:

Hiring, recruiting, finding a job, keeping a job, starting a business...

The President's Committee on People with Disabilities provides resources to help employers and job seekers.

The JAN (Job Accommodation Network) is a toll-free information service on workplace accommodation and employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Anyone may call JAN at 1-800-232-9675 (V/TDD) or 1-800-526-7234. The JAN website also contains information and links to other sites related to disability and employment issues. (www.jan.wvu.edu/english/homeus.htm). JAN is for employers, persons with disabilities, service providers, counselors or anyone helping a person with a disability find or retain a job.

The President's Committee's website (www.pcepd.gov) provides direct access to Committee publications, speeches and press releases, as well as statistical data, workplace laws, job accommodations, interviewing, hiring and communicating with people with disabilities. a "Job Links" page takes job seekers to lists of job openings at companies seeking to hire people with disabilities.

Want to start a business?

The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities Promoting Small Business and Self-Employed Opportunities Project identifies, on a national level, appropriate resources for planning, training, technical assistance and capital development for individuals with disabilities who wish to start or expand their own businesses. Call 202-376-6200 (V) or 202-376-6205 (TDD); or write to info@pcepd.gov.

Yahoo Search Engine on Small Business Start-up Opportunities:
www.yahoo.com/Business-and-Economy-Small-Business-Information

This site features a nationwide service listing over 138 business start-up websites.

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town of Godley.

To register for sponsorship information, call the NMSS office at 817 877-1222, ext. 61 or 1-800-FIGHT-MS. Registration begins at 6:30 a.m.; the ride kicks off promptly at 8 a.m.

OTHER NEWS

DISABILITY RADIO

"On a Roll Radio" is straightforward talk about the life experiences of people with disabilities. Hosts Greg Smith

and Todd Kimball present resources, information and attitude designed to empower people with disabilities to take full responsibility for their lives. The hosts are both full-time wheelchair users.

You can listen on Sundays at 6:05 p.m. on TALK 1190 AM.

DID YOU KNOW?

The following drug companies have programs providing newsletters, free information and personal patient assistance. The programs are available to you even if you do not use their products.

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BIOGEN (Avonex) 1-800-456-
2255.

ARE YOU AWARE?

...that 670 pharmaceutical companies provide free medication to qualified people? The most frequent recipients are low income families who have no health insurance and who are ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare. However, requirements vary and people who earn as much as \$40,000 annually may qualify. Have your physician contact the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association (PMA) Indigent Program at 1-800-762-4636 for more information. the PMA will only respond to physicians' requests.

RAMPS Update

Remember reading about HRA's RAMPS project? The one where Sunrise Kiwanis Club members build ramps for those with difficulty affording them?

Well, back in February Robert Myers became the first lucky recipient of a custom-made ramp from RAMPS.

Robert suffers from a genetic disease called porphyria, which makes walking excruciatingly painful. He used to get out to his mailbox once a day; twice would have put him in bed for two days. Now, his mobile home is equipped to get him out and about. "Anything that will get him out and doing more is a good thing," says Myers' daughter Susan Sweaney. "if he sits around too much, he starts dealing with depression. We've seen that before."

Now, Robert will be able to go to the mailbox as he wishes, and even take his dog Sandy for a stroll.

HRA secured a \$4000 grant from Tarrant County Housing Finance Corporation last year, and together with designers and builders from Kiwanis, plans to build at least four ramps for needy recipients.

wheelchair access is a problem, determine alternate shelter routes.

3. Prepare a supplies kit. Put together flashlights, portable radio, extra batteries, bottled water (1 gallon per person per day), blankets, nonperishable food, matches, candles, and a Swiss Army knife with can opener. Then add the special things you need. A cellular phone with additional charged batteries is a plus. Daily medications, insulin, backup wheelchair batteries, extra oxygen tank, catheters, a list of style and serial numbers of devices such as pacemakers, food for service dogs, extra eye-glasses, clothing and shoes, extra keys, etc. Replace water and medications every six months.



Do you know what you'd do in the event of a natural disaster?

We all tend to blow off preparation for such an event, but if you're disabled and don't have an emergency plan, it may be too late once disaster strikes.

If you're from the "It can't happen here, and if it does, I'll videotape it for the 6 o'clock news" school of disaster planning, listen up.

Are you prepared to take care of yourself or someone else with a disability?

1. Call your local Red Cross and fire department. Ask about disaster plans. Is any specific help available? Should you register with them or the local emergency management office in order for help to be provided? Ask your employer about emergency plans at work, especially in buildings with elevators. Ask teachers and caregivers about plans for your disabled child. Does your personal caregiving agency have special provisions?

2. Create a plan. Meet with household members, personal attendants or a special neighbor and discuss problems that you foresee. Determine what your team will do for each type of emergency. If

4. Contract with a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if immobilized, or become a member of Medic Alert. Call 1-800-432-5378; a \$12 fee registers your condition, medications and physicians. You can also have a bracelet or necklace with vital information made.

5. Write a personal emergency checklist. Know what to do in power outages and personal injuries. Know how to connect a backup power supply unit for essential medical equipment. Post emergency phone numbers near phones. Oxygen users should clearly mark the shut-off switch. Pick one local and one out of town contact to call if separated by a disaster.

6. Hold a mock emergency drill twice a year. Teach those who may assist you how to operate necessary equipment.

-From an article by Alexandria Berger of the *Virginian-Pilot*

Sandra Carroll

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