



Open House: it's the best and worst of times

By Brian Wiersema

Mountain Shadows held its 9th annual Open House for visiting professionals in the developmental services industry on Feb. 20 in the Olive House.

It proved an inspiring contrast of moods. Staff morale, it seemed to me, has never been higher. And at the same time, providers like Mountain Shadows have never been in a worse financial jam. Both these moods came through the 2-hour meeting loud and clear.

Already reeling from significant increases in liability and workers' comp insurance and frozen reimbursement rates, providers were also looking at proposed 15% Medi-Cal cuts within the state budget shortfall crisis.

So, Open House this year was the tale of two situations. In terms of our staff pulling together, it is the best of times. Financially, with some providers already going out of business, it is the worst of time. And real improvements may be two years away.

Dennis Mattson was sitting next me, and before the meeting began he called the black cloud over developmental services "the perfect storm"--meaning in nearly 20 years he's never seen so many destructive events coming together. "Providers are maxed out on their credit," he told me. "We're cutting back and hanging on."

Mattson is vice president of Mountain Shadows Support Group Inc. board of directors. (Also attending were board president Dick Marrs, and directors Carol Haskin, Ted Jackman, and Wade Wilde.) Mattson is also president of the Developmental Services Network, the trade association for ICF-DD H & N providers.

A parent whose child lives in another residential setting elsewhere introduced himself. He said his daughter's home was downsizing "so we're looking for another place to put her."

Somber stuff, for sure. But shortly after that, the level of enthusiasm rose and then went up some more. Even in the face of industry concerns voiced by Executive Dir. Wilde and former CEO Doug Cook.

Together they described the tight window of opportunity that our recent Oct. 1, 2002, restructuring to nonprofit status slipped through.

"Within 60 days after Oct. 1 the opportunity to go nonprofit shut," said Cook. "The finances of this business changed that rapidly. And now no body signed on for the crisis that we're facing. This is the worse we've ever faced in the industry."

Check out our website

Biographies of our distinguished MSSG board members are available on the Internet at <http://www.mountainshadows.ws>. Plus, you will find regular updates on what's new. Check us out, and keep current on what's happening or look at back issues of this newsletter. And while you're visiting, be sure to give us your email address and comments.

Fund drive rolled out

Cook, voluntary chairman of the MSSG Fundraising Committee, introduced an ambitious multi-tiered plan to bolster fund raising. It includes a contribution Support Program (with Friendship pledges ranging from Friend at \$25 to Angel at \$5,000. There are provisions, too, for donations and tax writeoffs.

Additionally, his plans call for volunteer time, and an Adopt-a-House where community can assist from landscape beautification to skilled labor donation. **[Please see story p. 2]**

Wilde, in his presentation, warned that "we continue to make tough decisions and cutbacks. These will position us to survive the crisis." And he also produced some chuckles in recalling that his first desk here was located in the laundry room."

Stacey Kendall, director of operations, reported that the new Residential Coordinator (RC) program--where a tier of new positions now go from QMRP, to RC, to Team Leaders--is enjoying great success. **[Please see story p. 5]** "This change is just 41 days old," Kendall said. "And yet it has already proven to offer more efficient administration *and* increased hands-on care to residents."

With reorganization to nonprofit status, Mountain Shadows had envisioned expanding programs. But since the state budget woes, more grandiose ideas have found their way to the back burner. "The budget crunch defers our expansion plans," said Wilde.

Then the bad news vanished as QMRP/Admins. introduced their Residential Coordinator and the drumbeat of close teamwork and staff dedication rolled on. There was just so much sparkle in the Q's eyes, and in the pride taken in the new RCs.

Denise Kadar introduced a trio of the Mtn. Shadows Sewing Circle. These include Betty Kadar, Denise's mother; Pat Reamer (Betty's mother and Denise's grandmother), and their driver Frank Kadar, Denise's father. In a nutshell, the Circle repairs and adds missing buttons to residents' clothing--and generates donations of hundreds of pieces of additional wear. **[Please see story p. 4]**

Friends meeting is May 17

Friends of Mountain Shadows meet quarterly on the third Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. in the MSCH Office. Our next meeting is scheduled for May 17. Hope to see you there



Multi-tiered fundraiser program unveiled by Cook

Doug Cook rolled out the most ambitious MSSG fundraising program ever at the February meeting of the *Friends of Mountain Shadows*.

His program is multi-tiered and ongoing. It asks family and community to pledge into the Family of Support program. His plan also expands volunteer time and scope, provisions an Adopt-a-House feature, and looks at raising a multi-million dollar endowment over the next five to ten years--within its own nonprofit foundation.

Cook, the former CEO of Mtn. Shadows Inc. bowed out after making Mountain Shadows Community Homes one of the most respected residential programs of its type. He's taken his post as volunteer chairman of the MSSG Fundraising Committee to a new level.

Stimulus for this beefed up fundraising is a combination of Mountain Shadows' commitment to "ensure the highest qualities of life and care for our residents"--and a proposed 15% cut in Medi-Cal rate reimbursement. Mountain Shadows is almost 100% Medi-Cal funded.

"We believe that our industry leaders and the public will convince Governor Davis to exclude our provider type from this draconian cut this year," Cook said. "However, we still have at least two years of fiscal struggle ahead. I want to be prepared for the long haul."

In the past, privately funded support programs have provided many extras for residents. These include clothing, scholarships, air fare for resident travel, social events, entertainment, computers, and adaptive equipment. Mountain Shadows' major annual events such as the golf tourney are funded via existing voluntary support.

Cook stressed the vital role these discretionary funds sometimes play. For example, the yearly Golf Tourney to date has pumped \$120,000 into contingency coffers--and this cash was used to fund bonds and make the transition to nonprofit status possible.

Within the Family of Support Program are six strategic areas. One provides for pledges from \$25 Friend to a \$5,000 Angel. In-between are Helper (\$50), Good Samaritan (\$100), Supporter (\$500), and Benefactor (\$2,000).

A second tier calls for players, volunteers, and corporate sponsors to join the Golf Classic tourney.

A third tier asks donations of volunteer time. These include assisting residents in outings, reading and visiting residents, hosting a party for a House, and for efforts in maintenance and landscaping.

DONATIONS ACCEPTED HERE

Mountain Shadows Support Group, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. We are authorized to accept donations of cash, boats, furniture, computers, cars--you name it. And you can write-off your gift as an IRS tax deduction. We win. You win. Think about us, and give what you can.

Fourth tier urges supporters to Adopt-a-House. This measure calls for commitment to beautification and repair. It seeks volunteers who are contractors or skilled workers.

A fifth level taps into Cars 4 Causes, an organization that brokers donations of big-ticket items (cars, boats, RVs) and pays out in cash back to the nonprofit organization. Persons may contact Cars 4 Causes directly at 1 800-766-2273. Level six calls for setting up a foundation and endowment fund.

"We are taking this to the community," said Cook. "Let me know if you know of a club or group we might talk to for support. This isn't one drive. It's an ongoing program that operates year round." Have some good business contacts? Cook would like to meet them.

"We have a speaker program for service clubs, churches, and volunteer groups," Cook said. "And we would like to share our Family of Support program with as many organizations as possible. Please give us a referral or send us the organization's roster with addresses, if that is allowed." Contact Cook via Mtn. Shadows Family of Support, 2067 W. El Norte Pkwy., Escondido CA 92026, MSICEO@aol.com, or (760) 747-3289.

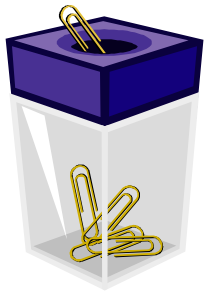
Knights of Columbus check

Since the early 1990s, the Knights of Columbus have donated a total of nearly \$40,000 to Mountain Shadows. Annually, in concert with resident helpers under the guidance of FOMS member Mary Lou Swarner, the K of C conducts an October Tootsie Roll drive and all proceeds are funneled into our residential setting for quality of life enhancement.

This year, the Knights made another strong showing, presenting a check for \$4,200 to Swarner and *Friends* president Carol Haskin. Some one dozen residents who participated were on hand and cheered mightily. In return, *Friends* gave the Knights a large bouquet of yellow roses, to say thanks.

"We really do appreciate what you folks do here," said ret. Marine Col. Lou Silva, who chaired the Knights Tootsie drive. It was his second year in the job. Last year his leadership helped bring in \$4,100.

"That's why we run the annual charity," Silva said. "It's always a pleasure to work two weekends to help you accomplish your mission." Also attending were K of C reps Bill Vergeer, Grand Knight Gene Buehl, and Paul Van Bergen.



Notes from the Executive Director's desk

By Wade Wilde

SOME WORDS OF THANKS

We are especially thankful to the Knights of Columbus for their support. A story on page two outlines their most recent generous show of support--a check to *Friends* for \$4,200. But the truth is that our cause has been their charity for 10 years. And rather than tailing off, their support increases annually.

Their October fund drive for us has grown innovative and creative, with dinners and raffles boosting the bottom line. And their opening the doors of their Hall for our Halloween Dance launched a new big-event era in resident socialization. Hats off to Col. Lou Silva, Grand Knight Gene Buehl, and Bill Vergeer. Vergeer's daughter Christie worked two years as staff here, and bootstrapped that experience into a Registered Nurse degree.

Congratulations to Stacy Kendall and her senior staff for introducing the largest and most successful innovation ever at Mountain Shadows. In January, the new Residential Coordinator restructuring was in place, and its sound and efficient management system is winning praise from Q's to parents... Thanks to our winners of special honors, presented at our Open House on Feb. 20. Singled out for their efforts and dedication were Dick Marrs, the insurance consultant to the Developmental Services Network and our board president. Also honored were Jeff Mohnhaupt, our computer consultant who has put our systems on the cutting edge of electronics. He's another supporter extraordinary. Doug and Linda Cook were also honored for their "dedication" to residents and employees.

STACY BIBB AND HIS "TTK"

Portia Bibb is one of our inspirational parents--a bulwark of support for many years. Not too surprisingly, son Stacy is cut from the same striving mold. Stacey, 28, has severe athetoid cerebral palsy, meaning he can't move his head. His tongue is his window to the world.

Portia in 1991 heard of a new communications device developed by New Abilities in Palo Alto. Called the Tongue Touch Keypad (TTK), it's essentially a retainer that slips onto his upper jaw.

Inside its square inch center are nine buttons--like pinheads. Plugged into software electronics, his TTK is like a mouse and a keyboard. When someone says "it's on the tip of Stacy's tongue," they mean it literally.

Stacy was the *first* user of the TTK. For a long time he was New Abilities' can-do poster boy. Still, Stacy and his TTK are pretty amazing. He operates his computer and electric wheel chair using only the TTK. The device has given him voice and freedom.

Meanwhile, a diligent Stacy earns his extra spending money by studying on weekends. If he does all of the academics assigned by Mom, he can clear \$30.

Not too surprising, Portia and dad Gary are big on education. Gary has been a special ed teacher at Asetline School for 20 years. Portia is a former high school teacher for nonreaders in St. Louis. She currently is the Director of Special Events and Alumni Relations Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies at UCSD.

SWEETHEARTS DINNER

Our intrepid reporter (and Receptionist) Melanie Chorak reports: On the evening of Feb. 14, 17 resident couples gathered in the main office to elegantly dine on a lovely Valentine's candlelight dinner served by Activities Dir. Donna Ponomarenko. The fare was lasagna, Caesar salad, and cheesecake desert.

Nurse Stacy Miller served as *matre'd*. "The residents had a ball!" said Ponomarenko. Sheri McKinney (with her guy Travis Groff) said she enjoyed the atmosphere and the music: "It was a fun night." Wayne Miller passed his lady friend Julie Hayden candy hearts throughout the meal.

Other couples: Karen Trogdon & Adrian Hurley; Fernando Rodriguez & Amanda Bittner; Betsy Christensen & Brian Cook; Bob Gable & Shawna Kick; Gary Whitehair & Renee Storbakken.

Also Bill Merritt & Linda Thomas; Larry Gammon & Sandra DeFelice; Tony Mosley & Shavonda McDowell; Mark Campbell & Vickie Elerick; Donnie Sinyard & Cathy Arom; Chris Groves & Patricia Gregory; Kenny Lewis & Diane Barcus; Joyce Kanno & Frank Lane; Henry Riant & Vivian Ling; Jerry Gamboni & Joanne Vurgason.



Meet the Sewing Ladies of Mountain Shadows

At the February Open House, QMRP/Admin. Denise Kadar introduced her family: Dad Frank (the driver) and the Sewing Ladies of Mountain Shadows. They are Mom Betty Kadar and Betty's mother Pat Reamer.

We hadn't met the Sewing Ladies, so we plunged in with greetings and questions after the meeting. Our best description is that they are already a paradigm model for the fundraising committee's Adopt-a-House program.

The Ladies have adopted Mountain Shadows and Denise's three Houses specifically, Pine-Cedar-Ash. Since May, meeting once a month here to do sewing repairs on clothes, bedding, and even furniture, they've compiled an outstanding record of accomplishment.

The Ladies also include Betty's longtime friend Lynn Marlow (not able to attend the Open House). She is a one-time professional seamstress and an instructor in business and computers at San Diego Community College. (Betty retired from teaching there in 2002.) Grandmother Pat does hand sewing and replaces buttons and has become known as The Button Lady.

Sewing is their direct volunteer service here. The women are equally skilled at generating donated clothing, and at last count they have brought in 1,000 highly usable pieces of attire--which of course they sew up to look like new, as necessary. Betty will frequently go to a garage sale, hand over a \$20, and come back loaded with shirts, pants, and jackets. Her record is 40 for \$20.

All material expenses come out of the Ladies' pockets. They are currently raising money to purchase new clothing and quilts. And they have their own support group in the Friends of the Sewing Ladies, including members of their church, Solana Beach Presbyterian. The ladies, in a word, are unbelievable.

There's more. The trio (with an occasional assist from Lynn's daughter Rayanne) have generated a cornucopia into Mtn. Shadows that spills out with donated flower vases, children's books, afghans, fleece lap robes, flannel pajamas and slippers, one recliner for Oak House, curtains, one-piece jump suits, and fancy bibs from towels. Betty figures she can save \$70 on a new jump suit by sewing it up from scratch.

Their efforts began modestly enough: Lynn and Betty last spring sewed up a dozen patriotic vests for residents on July 4. From there, *Friends of Mtn. Shadows* president Carol Haskin said the real need was for mending. And the ladies haven't lost a stitch in time since.

Betty's working with disabled persons began over a half century ago. Denise tells the story:

"My mother's concern started with Aunt Irene in Ohio. Born in 1916 with Down Syndrome, Irene was taken care of by family on a kind of rotating basis among Ohio, Michigan, and Tennessee. This was at a time when people with visible disabilities were removed from their homes and put in institutions. These people received little to no medical care. They did not receive nutritious or balanced meals. In fact, most people with disabilities had a life expectancy of 20 years in those horrible places.

"My family privately took care of Aunt Irene for 70 years, until she passed on. Four generations got to know her as a sweet, wonderful, gentle woman."

When Denise first got into the field of developmental services, Mom was there to help. Betty started with donating food to a group home in San Diego--no small thing since the cupboard always went bare before the end of the month. "She's been helping out wherever I have worked," said Denise.

The Ladies bring their equipment to Mtn. Shadows on the second Friday of each month. They are no-nonsense workers who get a lot done in the Office conference room retooled as voluntary sweat shop. Stand back! "You find out what needs to be done, and you go do it," Betty told us.

In the works are 50 beanie babies for prizes on Circus Day (June 7 this year). Additionally, they're crafting soft Christmas tree ornaments for safety. And Rayanne is fashioning a green Christmas-tree shaped quilt for one House. It will hang from the wall and serve as their December tree annually.

So, if you've got some closeted items (especially jackets) that need liberation to Mtn. Shadows, call Denise through the switchboard (760 743-3714) and arrange your donation. Betty, meanwhile, remains even in retirement one busy lady. That's her nature. Thirty years ago she started teaching people how to work "so that they could get off welfare" (in her words). And she hasn't slowed down much since.

Activities: dance, flowers

Activities Dir. Donna Ponomarenko is keeping our residents busy with exciting new action. Some 48 residents attended the High Hopes Dance sponsored by the Resurrection Catholic Church on Feb. 8. Q Denise Kadar assisted with transportation help... Residents and Donna every Saturday join for flower arranging so that all houses have fresh blooms for the next week. Betsy Riley (James' mother) donates the flowers.



Residential Coordinator program a hit with parents

Since Jan. 1, Mountain Shadows Community Homes has been thriving under a major and highly successful staff reorganization. You may know it as the Residential Coordinator program.

The restructuring impacts residents and their families in three beneficial ways: (1) It allows for an estimated 20% increase in resident hands-on care from staff. (2) Provides better management support and oversight. (3) Improves staff coordination, communication, and morale.

For parents, the biggest change is in the elimination of the House Manager positions. They have been replaced by experienced Team Leaders. The position of Residential Coordinator is also new. RCs assist QMRPs and supervise Team Leaders. They are the layer of needed management between Houses and Q's. And RCs directly assist the QMRP/Admins. Like Q's, there is one RC for every tri-plex house--or its equivalent division (e.g. Olive).

In the new organizational chart, Stacy Kendall is atop as Residential Program Director. Under her are two Residential Program Administrators. (They are: James Arp for CM, Birch, Willow, Apple, Plum, and Maple. And Fred Lindahl for Olive, Lemon, Tangelo, Orange, Pine, Cedar, Ash.)

In further descending order on the chart are the QMRPs, and then their Residential Coordinator (RC), and Team Leaders, and finally Direct Care Staff.

So, who does a parent now call when her child's socks are missing or there's a suspected issue? This article and its companion pieces seek to clarify who's who in the line of contact. As a guideline, a parent should contact the person most directly responsible--and work up the command structure as needed from there.

"Each house has a full-time Team Leader to follow through with the day-to-day running of the houses," said James Arp. "These Team Leaders make sure that diets are followed, programs are being run, clients are getting to various activities, and that houses are clean."

Biggest change is that under the old system, House Managers and QMRPs were stretched thin in their many job duties. Within the new system, Team Leaders do hands-on care duties, and their RC takes over the House administrative functions. Likewise, the RCs also absorb some delegated QMRP duties.

The RC reorganization was discussed in some detail at both the February *Friends* meeting and the annual professional Open House here. In both, the RC shift played to enthusiastic reviews. *Friends* President Carol Haskin said: "There's so much new excitement generated by the RC program. Everyone from direct

care to QMRP is finding new ideas and the kind of support that alleviates a lot of stress or pressure. It's a sound management system that takes better care of our children." Here's a look at the revamp on a house-by-house basis:

Job duties of QMRPs, RCs, and Team Leaders

The combined job descriptions of QMRPs, Residential Coordinators, and Team Leaders is eight pages long. So all we can do here is briefly summarize the duties of each. Use this information to help you decide who to contact. A good rule of thumb: Start with the Team Leader.

FUNCTIONS OF TEAM LEADERS

The Team Leader provides direction to a House's direct care staff and monitors individualized services to residents. These team leaders:

- Provide and ensure support and assistance to consumers in areas such as toileting, feeding, dressing, and personal needs.
- Implement and monitor active treatment programs.

Additionally, Team Leaders ensure and maintain cleanliness of the house and make sure residents received medications as prescribed. They accurately complete documentation regarding client health care, and maintain appropriate communications with family, conservators, outside agencies (day programs), and staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES: RESIDENTIAL COORDINATORS

The RC supervises House staff(s) and Team Leaders. In turn, RCs are monitored by and are responsible to their QMRP. Each RC has oversight of one or more facilities serving 12 to 18 clients. RCs also:

- Insure quality of all services to their assigned residents.
- Supervise and train house staff and coordinate medical, leisure, and recreation activities.
- Assure that residents have adequate personal items such as clothing, shoes, toiletries.

Team Leaders, additionally, maintain and order house supplies. They complete staff performance evaluations and time sheet audits for payroll and track weekly house.

JOB DUTIES FOR QMRP/ADMINS.

QMRPs report directly to the Residential Program Administrator. Their primary function is to monitor all their assigned facilities to ensure state and federal compliance. Q's are responsible for the health and welfare of his or her residents. They develop IPPs, coordinate the development of resident programs with professional consultants. They admit, discharge, and screen residents. They are the conduit to facility management. ###



Who's who in the new RC program

[Note: On Jan. 1, 2003, Mountain Shadows Community Homes underwent staff reorganization. "It marked the biggest single change in the history of how we provide care at Mtn. Shadows," said Executive Director Wade Wilde.

The shift, created as qualitative innovation by senior team managers, restructured leadership positions at the House level. The position of "House Manager" was eliminated and replaced by Team Leader(s). Additionally, seven new positions were created as "Residential Coordinators"--each assigned to one QMRP (and up to 18 residents) to direct managerial House functions. "The benefits," said Stacy Kendall, Residential Program Dir., "are more direct care contact hours and better oversight."]

TEAM APPLE, PLUM, MAPLE

QMRP is Tamara Degner. RC is Lupe Sierra.

Lupe Sierra has been with Mtn. Shadows for almost 4 years. She worked as DCS in Apple and Plum initially, then as the Relief HM between Apple and Plum until she took the full time HM position in Plum. Lupe was the Plum HM for 3 years before being promoted to RC in January.

QMRP Degner said:

"The houses are very fortunate to have an RC like Lupe. She has done a remarkable job as HM and knows all the residents in her 3 houses. Lupe has also established good relationships with the parents during her time here. And residents really enjoy Lupe. She does a fabulous job in making sure they are happy and that their needs continue to be met."

Team Leader for Plum House in Denise Garcia. She has worked at Mtn. Shadows for over a year and has been a tremendous help in making Plum run successfully. Previously, Denise was Relief House Manager in Plum.

Robert Brevick is Team Leader in Maple. He has been at Mountain Shadows for almost 4 years, with all of that time spent in Maple House. Robert served as Maple Relief House Manager for 2 years previously. The residents of Maple House adore Robert, and he has been a very caring and reliable staff for our Maple ladies.

Team Leader in Apple is Nancy Goodlow. She has over 4 years experience working in the field and has been employed at Mtn. Shadows for one year. Nancy serves as a very efficient Team Leader and ensures that the needs of the residents are always met.

TEAM OAK, ELM, AND SPRUCE

QMRP is James Arp. RC is Sherri Buck.

Sherri Buck, the Residential Coordinator, started her career at MSCH three years ago as a part-time 4-8 DCS and moved to a fulltime position. She has since served as both part-time and fulltime House Manager in Elm. She has great rapport with staff and is dedicated to all 18 residents.

James Arp on the reasons behind the RC-staff revitalization:

"The secret behind the RC Staff revitalization is that the RCs are all very positive people, positive personalities. They've been working with the population for a number of years, and they understand the structure much better than before (when they were each house managers). Having an RC for each QMRP helps take some of the pressure off of the QMRP. Now the QMRPs have someone to trouble shoot with on issues in all three houses (or 2 or even 1 house). Administration-wise, having a QMRP and an RC give continuous care to the residents and continuous oversight to staff."

Team Leaders - Each house has a fulltime Team Leader to follow through with the day-to-day running of the houses. These are the people who make sure that diets are being followed, programs are being run, residents are getting to various activities and that the houses are being maintained.

Team Leader in Oak is Ahwa Ong. She has 4 years of experience at MSCH and is a very seasoned staff member. Team Leader in Elm is Sophie Perez. She has worked in Elm for 1 year and is familiar with the routines in Elm and can easily step in and continue the high level of care.

Spruce Team Leaders are Todd Antrim and Mike Main. Both have a combined 25 years of experience at MSCH, and thus transition to the RC program was seamless for Spruce residents.

TEAM PALM AND JACARANDA

QMRP is long-time veteran Fred Lindahl. RC is Christina Davidson. Team leaders are Sharon Mead and Maria Bermudez (Palm); Vanessa Gradilla and Maricela Rodriguez (Jacaranda).

Lindahl on the success of the RC reorganization program:

"The RCs were the house managers previously, so they better understand the needs of the staff, consumers, and the flow of the houses. Now the RCs are positioned and have the ability to make changes and improvements. They've become more enlightened to the 'Big Picture', and they've been given an effective voice. After all, they are fresh from the 'frontlines' of doing direct care and they know what needs improvement and what works well. I believe that all the folks working at MSCH have enthusiasm. It's just up to management to find out how to tap into it."

Lindahl on his team: "Our RC Christina Davidson has more than two years experience at Mtn. Shadows and was most recently the



Who's who in our staff reorganization

(Continued from page 6)

House Manager for Jacaranda. Christina is hard working and caring, and she is a wealth of ideas and has catchy enthusiasm.

In Palm, Team Leaders Sharon Fabian and Maria Bermudez have eagerly stepped up to take on the added responsibilities of this position and have been quick to share new ideas. They each bring a willingness to learn and that alone strongly benefits the folks who live here.

"In Jacaranda, Team Leaders Venessa Gradilla and Maricela Rodriguez are familiar with the routines in Jacaranda and can easily step in and continue the high level of care that the families of Jacaranda have grown to expect. Both bring a great deal of knowledge and understanding to the table," said Lindahl.

TEAM LEMON, ORANGE, TANGELO

QMRP is Lale Laubach. RC is Cheryl Mitchell.

"Cheryl Mitchell is an extremely organized, dedicated person," said Laubach. "She has been extremely thorough in assuring that scheduling, outings, menu books, etc. are organized, up to date, and easy to understand for staff."

Cheryl has worked at Mtn. Shadows for 3 years. She has one year experience as House Manager in Palm House and one year experience as House Manager in Crepe Myrtle. "Cheryl is very caring towards the individuals," said Laubach.

Cheryl's experience as RC is a little unique due to the fact that she had no knowledge of Lemon, Tangelo, or Orange houses prior to taking the position. All of the other RCs knew at least one of their houses. "She has made the transition well, and I am very pleased to have her as part of our team," Laubach said.

"Now, with an RC to team with, it's so much easier for me to concentrate on the QMRP duties. Scheduling is one area where the RC brings time relief. I never had realized how much time scheduling took away from the other duties that I have to complete.

"The other benefits have been having that one person--the RC--to communicate with. It seems that communication to the staff in all three houses has improved, which is really a key element to meeting the vast needs of our residents."

Lemon House Team Leader is Geri Ross. Geri has worked in Lemon for over five years and was House Manager there prior to

becoming our Team Leader. "She is very caring and dedicated to the gentlemen who reside there," said Laubach.

Tangelo House Team Leader is Sharon Fabian. Sharon had worked as the House Manager in Tangelo for many years and has been a MSCH employee for over 16 years. "She has been a steady and strong manager and team leader," said Laubach. "And she continues to add extra special touches each day that make Tangelo a wonderful home to live in."

Orange House Team Leader is Chrystal Allen. "Chrystal has over a year and a half of experience in the field and is very dedicated to the woman in Orange House," said Laubach. Chrystal had been Relief Team Leader between Lemon and Orange before taking the fulltime Team Leader slot."

TEAM ASH, PINE, CEDAR

QMRP is Denise Kadar. RC is Lisa Love.

Lisa Love was born in Washington D.C. and was raised in Louisiana. She was a military brat. Lisa worked for Pacific State Hospital (now Lanterman State Hospital) and nursing homes for about six years total. She worked in the electronics industry for 10 years, but missed working in the healthcare field. In 1996, she spotted the MSCH logo in the want ads and decided to try us.

Lisa worked in Olive for two years, then became a NOC charge. Eventually, she took over as House Manager for Cedar.

The transition to the new management structure has created a partnership between RCs and Qs, said Kadar. This partnership allows two people to use "tag team" management. The RC can concentrate on fine tuning one house while the Q can make sure that the rest of the houses continue to run smoothly. It has given each QMRP a wonderful opportunity to work as a team with a knowledgeable, experienced and enthusiastic person.

"We are only just beginning to find creative new ways to improve the lives of those who live here. It's an honor to work with Lisa Love. She inspires me," said Kadar.

Ash - Jesse Villarreal is our new Team Leader in Ash. He has only been at Mtn. Shadows for 8 months, but he has over 6 years of experience in the healthcare field. "He has eagerly stepped up to take on the added responsibilities," said Kadar. "Jesse is quick to share ideas and brings a strong willingness to learn."

Cedar - Bev Duncan is our Team Leader in Cedar. She has worked in Cedar for 9 years. Bev is familiar with the routines in Cedar and has easily stepped in and continued the high level of care that the families of Cedar have grown to expect. Bev brings extensive knowledge and understanding of the Cedar ladies to the position.

Pine - Celia Prentice is our Specialist/Team Leader in Pine. She has worked as the Relief House Manager in Cedar and Pine for quite some time and was the House Manager for Pine for the last few months. Celia has also frequently worked in Ash. She is currently running Pine, but she can provide leadership knowledge



Who's who in Mountain Shadows' reorganization

[Continued from p. 7] and experience to the position. "Celia is an invaluable asset to all three houses," said Kadar.

TEAM OLIVE

QMRP is Heather Cross. RC is Rosie Mata.

"The transition from House Manager to RC in Olive House has gone very smoothly," said Cross. "Not much has changed here. We retain the same leadership, with Rosie going from House Manager to Residential Coordinator. The part I really like is that Rosie generally works the same hours that I do, so if I need her she's right here, under the same roof."

Rosie just celebrated her 12th anniversary working at MSCH. She has been in Olive the entire time, and knows the residents extremely well.

"Rosie is familiar to our residents; she is Olive's Mom," said Cross. "Even staff in the past have called her 'Mama Rosie'. She is a wonderful asset to Olive House and to MSCH. I can't imagine Olive House without her. She makes my job a pleasure."

Team Leader is Alain Bissainthe. Alain had the title of a Specialist at MSCH. This means that he has extensive experience in working with the population and is very knowledgeable.

"Alain is fun to have around Olive House," said Cross. "He has a light-hearted demeanor with the residents and an excellent bedside manner. And he is a very good, responsible staff member. Alain is currently submitting applications to medical academic programs in hopes that it will help in his dream of getting into med school and becoming a physician. He would make an excellent doctor," said Cross.

TEAM BIRCH, CREPE MYRTLE, WILLOW

QMRP is Dan Myer. RC is Rachael Duenas.

Rachel has worked at Mtn. Shadows for 5 years. "She started as NOC and was not planning on staying very long," said Myer. "Luckily for me she did. First Rachael was Relief House Manager for Birch and Crepe Myrtle. Then she took a leave of absence but came back as the House Manager for Birch. She started that job in April 2002 and when we changed over to having Residential Coordinators, Rachel proved herself qualified and capable. She is doing an outstanding job."

Mercedes Nieto is the Team Leader in Crepe Myrtle.

Mercedes was formerly the House Manager of Willow; she has worked at Mtn. Shadows for 3 years. "Mercedes works very well with the residents," said Myer. "She goes the extra mile to ensure that they are well taken care of."

Brookes Nua is the Team Leader in Birch.

Brookes served as a Senior House Manager for Mtn Shadows. She has worked here for 15 years, and is of course an experienced care veteran. "Brookes has probably forgotten more information about how to run a house than most people learn in their careers," said Myer. "She is a great asset to have in Birch House."

Tarci Gonzales is a Team Leader in Willow.

Tarci was at times the Relief House Manager of Willow. She has worked at Mtn. Shadows for 3 years. "Tarci works hard to ensure that all the residents are happy and well taken care of," Myer said. "She cooks them special meals on some weekends. Indeed, Tarci takes the responsibility of Team Leader very seriously and has done a very good job."



No

Medi-Cal cuts yet

From our correspondent with the Developmental Services Network in Sacramento:

You may have read in your local paper that the State Assembly has approved more than \$3 billion in budget cuts proposed by the Governor in his mid-year revision to the State Budget. It is somewhat of a challenge to find what is included in this number as the cuts are in several different pieces of legislation.

The cuts, at this time, do not include any reductions to ICF DDH or DDN rates. The Assembly will not vote on any reductions until after the May Revision to the budget is received from the Governor, which means any vote would be late May at the earliest.

We must keep in mind, however, that DHS can, with federal approval, retroactively cut rates, as long as they file a state plan amendment prior to the last day of the calendar quarter in which they want to accomplish the reductions.

We continue to work with a broad coalition of Medi-Cal providers to defeat the Governor's proposed reductions. In addition, the leadership of DSN is arranging meetings with key legislators to present our rather unique situation of being virtually 100% dependent on Medi-Cal for reimbursement. We recently met once again with Medi-Cal rate setting staff to push our case for more rather than less in reimbursement.



The magic elixir: group socialization

Why levels of residents' activities are important

By Wade Wilde

With military precision, all 117 of our residents were bused and vanned from Mountain Shadows Care Center to the Knights of Columbus hall--across town in Escondido, California. All wore costumes to this major-event Halloween Dance.

It took six vehicles, six drivers, and two or three round trips each to deliver 92 residents in wheelchairs and 25 ambulatory residents to their biggest off-campus bash ever. And under the watchful, clipboarded guidance of QMRP Denise Kadar, the precious cargo was delivered in just over half an hour.

Over the years at Mountain Shadows, a community of 18 homes for persons with developmental disabilities, recreational socialization has played a big part in the habilitation of our residents. And it continue to play an innovative part of their lives. It's great spiritual tonic and brings our residents out of their shells and into self-esteem.

Though our residents range in age from 20 to 70, many come to us young. Like Betsy, or Shawna. Each lived with parents at home until age 21. But they craved independence and a social life. And they found it here and blossomed. Both women at home--despite loving care--lacked sufficient social outlet. Consequently their moods ran bored, irritable, and discontented. Today, Betsy and Shawna sparkle.

Shawna found the limelight. Betsy grew into adulthood--and found a boy friend. Each has discovered the nuggets of self esteem and personal identity. They've found consensus, the underpinning of community culture. Credit our staff and a small army of our indefatigable volunteers.

I'm going to outline our activities program, citing beneficial outcomes, and how they help us to better bridge with community. The aim is to draw up a paradigm, a model, that may inspire others.

Until fall last year, I served as financial executive at Mountain Shadows--a challenging post but one that can't claim direct operational results. The credit for the foundation and development of our ongoing socialization activities goes to former CEO Doug Cook. He stepped aside when we reorganized under nonprofit status in October 2002.

You know what socialization is: people getting together, communicating, sharing like interests. As a result they feel more upbeat, buoyant. Stimulated, they find mutual support, and develop crystalline, positive outlooks. Too, there's significant carry-over from enhanced group activities. It filters into and becomes a strong part of their *individual* lives; it sparks friendships, unites, bonds.

At the micro level: Kristen and Debbie are roommates. But Kristen is non-verbal, so Debbie helps her communicate, translates Kristen's needs to staff. Kristen's mom, an artist, returns the favor, bringing Debbie into art projects at her home some weekends. Each resident aids the other. Together they're better equipped to find their own styles and comfort zones.

We encourage Kristen-Debbie partnerships. They're bedrock to and bottom-like of socialization. Within them, people's lives take on definition, meaning. Call this a trickle down from the tempo of campus-wide events. Or, see this as a percolation up to larger group activities. It goes both ways, and it works for us: Active, involved residents are happy people--and that in itself cleanses frustration and disruption.

At the micro level, Mountain Shadows holds big events bimonthly: Mother-daughter tea, Easter party, summer Luau and Dance, Circus Day (on campus), Halloween Dance, and Christmas party. In between, there are daily activities--from Bible study to horseback riding.

Even with bare-bones budgets, we find a way to accomplish worthy projects, such as sending John home to Idaho in December to see his retired parents. Or Sheri to SeaWorld to swim with dolphins or to the Star Wars convention in Indianapolis.

All big activities rely on community volunteers. Our Circus Day alone in 2002 brought in 160 volunteers from churches, the Marines, Girl Scouts, Kiwanis, Hope Worldwide, and the Knights of Columbus. The K of C also donate their hall for our dances and proceeds (\$4,200 in 2002) from their annual Tootsie Roll drive. A sizeable number of these volunteers are community leaders. And as they get familiar with us so too does the greater community come to understand our mission.

[Continued on page 10]



Why levels of residents' activities are important

[Continued from page 9]

Our socialization habilitation works because of snow-ball effect. You know, roll a fist full of ice in the snow and it enlarges. Roll out our events, and individuals grow. Residents find social bonding. They stretch their abilities--and horizons. And with that comes some sense of triumph over adversity.

Last summer, we started a summer camp on campus. Nothing fancy, just residents doing crafts and cooking up strange stuff like a "bug jello" of gummy worms. Taking field trips, producing a play, reading story time, splashing in water play, creating puppets and puppet shows.

Jake, a paraplegic resident, served as an assistant and caring big brother to the "campers". He brought Ivan out of "yes" and "no"

conversation and into full peer membership. Ivan, who is blind and utilizes a wheelchair, was actually initiating conversations before the four-week camp concluded.

Socialization "ladders up". House tri-plexes hold frequent get-togethers, like barbecues or season-themed parties. Parents at home get involved.

One of our mothers, Portia Bibb with her son Stacy hold quarterly parties for a dozen of Stacy's friends--all of whom are residents. Staff provide bus transportation and stay, of course, for the festivities. The group homes offer train trips, visits to Las Vegas and Disneyland, and concerts closer to home. They push *participation*, because find that shared quality inherently curative.

(Wade Wilde is the Executive Director of Mountain Shadows Support Group, a nonprofit corporation. He may be reached at wwilde@mountainshadows.ws.)

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