

Creative Support Alternatives

OCTOBER
NEWSLETTER
2013



Washington DC Bound!

After years of dreaming and months of saving and planning, Brenda, Tammy, and Kathy traveled to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., for the vacation of a lifetime last month. Each person picked one main event that they wanted to participate in while on the trip, and together created a fun-filled agenda for each day. The friends spent four nights and five days in the famous Mayflower hotel that was only minutes from the White House.

The group landed in D.C. on Thursday evening and were up early Friday morning to begin site seeing. The three-hour time difference did not keep the gang from being on the move! A double-decker tour bus drove around to the various sites and the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial were the first stops. Between taking in the sites and posing for photos, the group also did some shopping and ate at delicious local restaurants. Everyone ventured out in the rainy east-coast weather for more tour bus site-seeing on Saturday, and rode the Metro to the White House on Sunday when the sun was shining again.

A National's baseball game was the final event of the trip, and everyone cheered along in their gear and rode the Metro back to the hotel. After a flight and one quick stopover in North Carolina, the group returned back to San Diego, already eager to plan the next vacation.

Mary Ellen Sousa-Hiner
Director

Kristoffel van de Burgt
Associate Director

Samantha Elsea
Coordinator

Melissa Hough
Coordinator



Creative Support Alternatives believes that all individuals share the basic right to live in a real home, which reflects personal choice and control as to lease/ownership, location, and potential occupants, as well as to work at a real job in the community which offers meaningful work, fair compensation, and dignity. Central to the agency's core values are the themes of inclusion and interdependence. We believe that the quality of life experienced by the individual, as well as others in the community, is enhanced when support services are focused on the individual's active participation in community activities, events, and routines, including the building of personal social networks.

Good Luck Stefanie!



It is with a heavy heart that we announce that Stefanie has resigned from her position as Community Living Coordinator for Creative Support Alternatives. Stefanie has been part of the CSA family for the last nine years and will be greatly missed by the people she supported, families, and employees. She originally came to us as a recent college graduate wanting to contribute to making the world a better place for all.

Over the last nine years, we have been proud to see Stefanie grow personally and professionally. We have been there for her life celebrations, which included her graduation with a Master's Degree from USD, her wedding to her fantastic husband Jeremy, and the recent birth of her daughter, Juniper. We hope that the culture of CSA has influenced Stefanie as much as she has influenced everyone here. Thank you for everything you have done for the people we support and for CSA. You will always be a part of the CSA family!

Employee Recognition

Over the past nearly year and a half, it has been a pleasure to watch and support Jenny Mancilla grow in the field of supporting people with disabilities. She is constantly asking questions, applying what she is learning, and continuously going above and beyond when providing support. Recently, she assisted Kathy, Tammy, and Brenda on a dream trip to Washington DC. Jenny asks on a regular basis where she can be of assistance and how she can help. Thank you for all of your hard work, dedication, and consistency on Kathy's team, and CSA as a whole. We appreciate you, Jenny!



"Mr. Johnson": Keynote Speaker

On a blustery September day, Mike gave a well-prepared Keynote presentation at the Golden Gate Self-Advocacy Conference in San Francisco. Mike was honored to be selected as the featured Keynote speaker, sharing his life story with over 200 self-advocates and others. With support from Joy (Support Facilitator) and Mary Ellen, Mike developed a lively slide show presentation, complete with video clips. From life as a young boy in the mountains, to a misunderstood teenager, to a young adult on his own

for the first time, Mike informed and entertained the audience about his path toward increased confidence, independence, and courage.

Since early 2010, Mike has partnered with Creative Support Alternatives for his Independent Living Services. Mike talked about living on his own in the little Gold Rush town of Jackson, as well as working on the launching of his own micro-business, known as Mr. Johnson's Mobile ReCycling. (Mike uses his bicycle and trailer to recycle). Mike inspired people, met many new fans and friends, and even got to travel over the new Bay Bridge! A second presentation that same day, given by Mary Ellen and Joy, shared thoughts on the role Support Facilitators play in encouraging people to find their voice and go after their dreams.

Grant Success: Take Charge and Transition2Life

For the last year, Kristoffel and Melissa utilized a grant from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities/Area Board 13 to partner with graduate students from SDSU's Administration Rehabilitation and Post-secondary Education (ARPE) program to perform person-driven plans with transition-aged young adults with developmental disabilities. (While this grant project officially ended on September 30, 2013, we are already crossing our fingers for the possibility of receiving additional funding in the coming year).

Through the Take Charge grant, we influenced Transition professionals, teachers, parents, and students with disabilities about the importance of person-driven planning for people with disabilities. Take Charge performed 16 person-driven plans that can be used by the focus-person as a roadmap for their future. We also participated in 17 presentations and performed 5 trainings focused on person-driven planning. We would like to thank all of the participants and their families for allowing us to be part of their lives. In particular, both Luke and Carlos wanted to share their experiences and created presentations that can now be viewed on the Take Charge website. We would also like to thank Dr. Caren Sax for sponsoring and assisting with this project; Melissa for all of her energy and efforts; John from SDRC for all of the referrals; along with graduate students Jonathan, Aracely, Tayler, and Katrina for their significant roles in performing many of the plans. We have truly touched the lives of many individuals!

In our Northern region, the Transition2Life grant was funded through the State Council on Developmental Disabilities/Area Board 6. Led by Mary Ellen, this project impacted over 200 stakeholders across our 3 rural counties. T2L activities included the hiring of Peer Consultants Lily and Kevin, who partnered with Support Facilitators Linda, Anna, and Joy to research and collect their respective county's resources. That information was put onto templates, then compiled into a Transition2Life Resource Guide organized into detailed sections for each County: Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne. Two original person-centered planning tools (titled My Life Timeline and What I Want, What I Need) were also included in the T2L Guide.

Peer DVD Team Consultants Jerry, Kevan, and Jayme, with assistance from Consultant Dave, produced an original Transition-themed DVD. The DVD, complete with a rock tune written and performed by Jerry and local musicians, featured some of our mountain-county Transition-age young adults. Training sessions were then held for students in all 3 local Transition programs, along with high school students and community participants. In the sessions, participants viewed the T2L DVD, completed the person-centered planning tools for themselves, and received their own copy of the T2L Resource Guide, which they learned how to use to find resources that promote successful community living.

Finally, the grant culminated in a first-ever Transition2Life Expo, held centrally in Calaveras County. Over 180 people visited the T2L Expo and viewed the many display tables hosted by local organizations, programs, and services of interest to Transition-age young adults and others with developmental disabilities. As one Transition teacher said, "We need to do this every year"! And we agree...and we will! A final benefit: we are in the process of co-convening a new Transition Coalition, inviting stakeholders to come together to advance best practices and further support Transition-age young people and their families. Creative Support Alternatives wants to offer a very special thank-you to all of our Peer Consultants, Support Facilitators, Transition teachers Jim, Kim, and Kendra, and all who helped to make the Transition2Life project a huge success! We look forward to continuing our collaborations together!



Special Announcements

Welcome New Employees

Endhy Barajas

Upcoming Events

CSA Holiday Party

Friday, December 13, 2013
5pm-8pm

At: Interwork Institute
3590 Camino Del Rio N Suite 221
San Diego, CA 92108



Creative Support Alternatives functions as a small, grass-roots agency committed to empowering people to live full and included lives as members of their chosen communities.

We accomplish this by:

Developing unique patterns of support with people with developmental disabilities who live in homes of their own.

Promoting individual choice and control through person-centered planning.

Engaging resources available through SDSU's Center for Community Living/ Interwork Institute to research, demonstrate,

and evaluate support services that promote best practices in the field.

Facilitating the discovery and pursuit of people's dreams and visions for their future.

Supporting people to build positive reputations and become valued members of their communities.

Assisting people to develop and maintain relationships.

Standing with people throughout the challenges and celebrations of life.

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3590 CAMINO DEL RIO NORTH SUITE 121
SAN DIEGO, CA 92108