



Fall 2005

Newsletter

FROM THE PDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Pacific Diversified Services has entered our 2005-2006 fiscal year with optimism and hope. Times have been tough, as we did not meet our fundraising goal for 2004-2005. We overearned a little in the 2003-2004 fiscal year and purposely saved that money in a reserve account just in case. Luckily we had this equity to draw from to balance our budget, but now we are really under the gun to raise funds, just to break even in 2005-2006. Being such a small agency, PDS does not employ a funds developer so my staff and I have all been pitching in this summer, to work on grant proposals and to reach out to individuals for contributions.

Often in grant proposals I am asked about Pacific Diversified Services' proudest accomplishments, and I rattle off our employment rate and other statistics which illustrate our success. I describe points of our philosophy such as "community based", "integration" and "direct hire paid jobs" with the sense that I sound like a broken record and that the reader doesn't get much more than the "gist" of our services and our client's worthiness of support. I am constantly trying to find more creative, heartfelt ways to convey my passion and to convince others to help this vulnerable, deserving group of people with developmental disabilities. After 15 years, I think I have learned some buzzwords to use and some jargon to avoid, but I still feel that my words sorely lack the effectiveness I strive for. I think people just have to spend time with our clients to really understand the plight of people with developmental disabilities and their fervent desire to be included in regular activities with regular people. I do less direct service with the clients now that I have a son of my own, so when I substitute for an absent staff member even I am surprisingly struck with emotion and am newly impressed by my clients.

I have asked one of my staff members **Katy St. Clair** to write an article to put into words what it is like to have the privilege to work with developmentally disabled people and to illustrate, from her perspective, how it feels to be a client of PDS. Katy is a talented writer who is able to put complex feelings into words with humor, empathy and compassion.

In this issue you will also find an article written by me about how we at PDS define our success. So for this newsletter we attempt to convey what makes Pacific Diversified Services "tick". We're hoping that our supporters will renew their enthusiasm and that and potential donors will be inspired to get involved.

Lisa Giraldi

HELLOS & GOODBYES

Nicole Freeman left PDS in June to work full time at the Arias House group home. We miss Nicole but are thrilled to have **Shikira Porter** on board in her place! Shikira is a recent graduate of Sonoma State University, with a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from the pre-credential program. In her second job she conducts Quality of Life Interviews for Area Board 4. Shikira has a professional, respectful way about her that makes her an excellent job coach and a well liked staff member.



Berta Barron & Shikira Porter

Welcome Shikira!

Sadly, PDS staffer, Terrence Garner also moved on, so we hired Lindsay Carlisle, a recent graduate of Rutgers University. Welcome Lindsay!

Longtime client **Bruce Mahood** moved on to new things and was replaced by **Marc Tucker**. Marc, who is 27 years old just moved here from Alameda so he has benefited from learning the ropes of getting out and about in Marin County and has quickly made friends. Marc had years of work experience so it did not take long for him to get a job at **Old Navy** as a stocker.



Marc Tucker

PDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are pleased to introduce two new board members: **Alison Falvey** and **Robin Sloan**.

Bruce Mahood resigned from our board and was replaced by another PDS client, **Robin Sloan**. **Lisa Giraldi** recommended Robin for the board because she has a good understanding of her rights and how to advocate for herself and others. She is employed by Banana Republic and has an excellent attitude toward work. She gets along with all other PDS clients and is very helpful and non-judgmental. Her family is also very supportive of PDS.

For 11 years, **Alison Falvey** was a Director of Casa Allegra Community Services, the program that provides residential services for many PDS clients. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Resources. Alison is now a stay at home mom and has remained friends with some PDS clients.

Our other board members are:

Nicholas Certo - President

- Professor & Chair, Department of Special Education
- San Francisco State University

Kathy Doering - Secretary

- Instructor/Supervisor in Severely Handicapped/Special Education Department
- San Francisco State University

Denise Mautz - Treasurer

- Consultant, Project Director
- San Francisco State University

Don Mangrubang

- Client Advocate, Pacific Diversified Services Individual with developmental disabilities

Stan Sollid

- Parent of client who receives services from PDS

Warren Wertheimer

- Harvard Law School graduate
- Non-practicing attorney



Robin Sloan on her cell phone with one of her many friends

FRIENDS OF PDS

Irma Rodriguez and her husband **Genaro** have been cleaning the PDS office (and Lisa's home and some of the clients homes) for several years. They are totally trustworthy and do an awesome job.

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Cell: (415) 272-6369

"SEE ME"

By **Katy St. Clair**

The night before I was to begin my first day at PDS, one of the worst things that can happen to a person happened to me. Well, relatively speaking. You see, the two worst things that we have to deal with in life, in my book, are Death and Rejection. In fact, rejection may even be worse, because it feels like a series of tiny deaths that take a long time to dissipate.

I had been dumped, over the phone, by my boyfriend, and had stayed up all night sobbing. I have been through enough of these episodes to know that I should dive into the feelings, stew a bit, and then gain some strength from somewhere else and move on. But those were steps that usually took months. In the first 24 hours of this pain, I was supposed to start my new job--my new career, really, after leaving journalism--working in Marin with developmentally disabled people. I had no idea what to expect, but I knew that there probably wasn't going to be any room for

my sadness. I also assumed that the clients I would be working with would be very self-focused (all mentally disabled people are, right?) and I would have to shut down my own personal crap and go through the motions of helping out those less fortunate than myself. Looking back, there is really nothing that brings up our selfish side more than the feeling of rejection. It's the unlikely mixture of narcissism and the idea that we truly are unlovable.

Shirley, another employee at PDS, was going to be training me on Community Support on my first day. We met at the office in San Rafael and she outlined what our busy day was going to be like as she quickly Xeroxed some papers and caught the phone when it rang.

I stood there a bit numb and started to cry. I told her what had happened and she was very sweet to me, then she said something interesting. "The group you are going to be with today is so wonderful, they will really help you feel better. Just let them know what's going on."

It never occurred to me that I could just tell the clients how I was doing

that day. My stereotype of people with developmental disabilities had passed its first roadblock.

We arrived at our first meeting point where we were to pick up a couple of the clients and then go to coffee. I got out of the car and was immediately met with a shortish, unique looking woman who sort of awkwardly walked over to me and got really close. Her head reached just about to my chest, and with one final, somewhat stiff movement she tilted her head back and looked up into my face. "Ooh," she said, as if she had come upon an interesting shell on the beach. "I like her." Then she turned her head to Shirley and said, with her index finger pointed at me, "I like her."

Her comment was unpackaged and genuine, and as strange as it sounds, this small event changed me right then and there and started a new chapter in my life. I didn't feel rejected anymore, I felt included, appreciated. Now, knowing the woman--**Robin**--as I do, I know that she was dead serious, too. She saw the real me that day. And boy did I need to be

"seen".

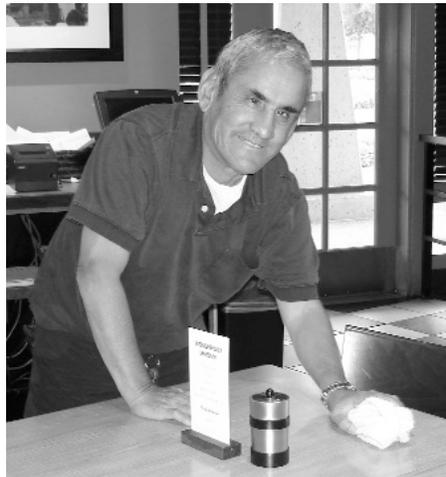
The rest of the day was equally as soothing. We took a group of clients to the billiard hall on 4th Street. It sounds simplistic, but they were so darn nice to each other, giving kudos for good shots and encouragement for bad ones. They laughed and talked about their childhoods together--some of our clients have known each other their entire lives. I was struck that such amazing people had lived across the bridge from me this whole time, and I had never met them. They cracked jokes and sang along to the jukebox. **Lisa**, a client who works at **Banana Republic** and the **Body Shop**, held my hand in between plays. She had first taken it in my car, after noticing that I teared up when a certain song came on the radio.

When we left the poolhall, the owner gave a few of the clients high-fives and said he was glad to see them again, that he had wondered when they were going to come back. I saw that this little acknowledgement puffed the clients up a bit, they beamed. It was like **Robin** telling me, "Ooh, I like her." Everyone needs to hear that.

I have been at PDS for a year now, and am constantly warmed to see the clients interact out in the community with kind strangers. In fact, our clients seemed so happy and secure, it took me awhile to notice the discrimination that they face on a daily basis. When it happens, it hits you like a jet engine, knocking you all out of sorts. Like the time that we entered a restaurant and were given the table over by the bathrooms, even though no one else was in the

establishment. **Lisa**, who is exceptionally kind and sweet, never forgetting a friend's anniversary or birthday, was given the worst table in the house!

Or the times that people have butted in line in front of the clients as if they weren't even there. Clients like **JR**, who has no family outside of PDS and has more than outlived his life expectancy and still greets each day with excitement.



Joe Argueta working hard at his new job at Pasta Pomodoro in Novato

Or waiters who address me instead of the people I am with who happen to have disabilities. Clients like **Joe** who have worked hard their entire lives and adore meeting new people, or **Kasie**, who is fiercely independent and really fun.

Or the times that sales people have snickered to themselves as we walk away, laughing at people who cannot talk well, walk well, or count out the right amount of money, and feel how very different they are from everyone else.

Our clients have dealt with this stuff

their entire lives, so much so that they have come to expect it. They live in constant stream of rejection, however small; several tiny deaths on a daily basis.

That's why when we walk into places like **Willie's** in Kentfield and are given a hearty "Hello!" by the people who work there it is so wonderful. "The usual?" they ask, as our weekly delivery of coffee and apple juice hits the table.

"She knows what I like!" smiles Robin.

"Wow, juice! How ya doin'?" exclaims our client **Cathy** to Shannon, the waitress.

Robin and Cathy look forward to going to Willie's every week, and Robin talks about Willie's all the time not just because of the great food but because the employees "see her". The same can be said for Bill at the **YMCA**, who helps our clients Eric and Don work out, Rosie at **Double Rainbow** in Novato, and everyone else who works with our clients in their jobs and takes the time to get to know them. All of these people "see" our clients, and they can never understand just how much of an impact this makes on their lives.



Lisa, Joe & JR having a great time at a restaurant

At Willies, Shannon refills Robins cup. "Oh, I like her," she says, taking a sip.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT By Eric Alonso

Eric Alonso has been a PDS client for 15 years. He works at **Costco** in Novato and is considered to be "a cool guy" by his peers. On Wednesday mornings, he goes to **Planet Juice** at Montecito Plaza in San Rafael with PDS friends and staff. This is what Eric had to say about his friend **Bill Kamaka** who manages Planet Juice.

Bill is a nice guy who works hard like I do. He's funny, and he has a nice personality. Bill is Hawaiian and wears cool Hawaiian shirts. He is always nice, not just to me and my PDS friends, but to everyone who comes into the store. Sometimes I go to Planet Juice early in the morning, and I help him out; I wipe the tables and set-up the chairs outside. I also help him with cups. He likes to joke around, and he hooks me up with bagels, juice and coffee. Bill is a nice

person.



PDS Clients Mihn Tien and Joe with Bill Kamaka at Planet Juice

in·teg·ri·ty (in teg ri te)

By Lisa Giraldi

n. 1. Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code

"Integrity is what we do, what we say, and what we say we do"

- Don Galer

There are 20 values that drive Pacific Diversified Services (see box) which we often refer to as the "PDS Philosophy". This moral code, if you will, is non-negotiable as far as I am concerned, and compromising any of these values, would be compromising the purpose of our entire program. I believe the secret to our success and the achievement for which I am most proud, is that fact that Pacific

PDS PHILOSOPHY

THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES

DEFINE OUR PROGRAM:

1. COMMUNITY-BASED INSTRUCTION
2. INTEGRATION
3. FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS
4. CHRONOLOGICALLY AGE-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES AND SKILLS
5. NATURAL PROPORTION
6. HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING
7. PARTIAL PARTICIPATION
8. INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION
9. INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATIONS
10. ZERO-EXCLUSION
11. NON-AUTHORITARIAN APPROACH
12. SELF-ADVOCACY/ADVOCACY
13. PERSON CENTERED PLANNING
14. SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION
15. FACILITATION OF INTERACTIONS
16. NATURAL SUPPORTS
17. REGARDING PEOPLE FROM THE GENERAL COMMUNITY AS "CUSTOMERS"
18. INDIVIDUAL/DIRECT HIRE EMPLOYMENT
19. AT LEAST MINIMUM WAGE PAYMENT
20. PARENT/CAREGIVER/"SIGNIFICANT OTHERS" INVOLVEMENT

WE OFFER JUSTIFICATION FOR WHY WE BELIEVE SO STRONGLY IN EACH OF THESE PRACTICES ON OUR WEB SITE AT PDSMARIN.ORG

Diversified Services has maintained our integrity, even when it has been costly, time consuming and labor intensive to do so.

One of the most important values that is the most difficult to carry out is the priority we place on our clients being employed in part-time jobs where they are directly hired and paid by the business. Although it would be perfectly legal for us to do so, we will not accept subcontracted jobs or less than minimum wage for our clients. Job developing for our clients who need ongoing job coaching, is a difficult task, but maintaining these jobs for them is even more challenging. Nevertheless 20 out of 21 of our clients have jobs. We recently added a new job site to our list of participating employers: **Old Navy** in Novato. Old Navy hired two of our clients, **Don Mangrubang** and **Marc Tucker**, to work as part of the stock team, cleaning up displays and showcasing the merchandise neatly and attractively. Don and Marc love the upbeat, colorful atmosphere at Old Navy where they get to listen to good music and score some great deals on fashionable clothes.



Don Mangrubang working at his new job at Old Navy

PDS is able to obtain and retain employment for our clients, only because we go above and beyond the call of duty to provide them with intensive support beyond what we are funded for. The state funding we receive just barely covers the cost of one staff person for every three clients. Because most employers are not willing or able to hire three clients



Shikira supports Marc as he learns to size shirts at Old Navy

and because many of our clients need more personalized job coaching, PDS supplements our personnel so that clients can be placed in jobs as individuals or in pairs. At Old Navy, for instance, Employment Facilitators **Shikira Porter** or **Shirley Chao** work side by side with **Don** and **Marc** to coach them on every aspect of every task, to make sure they are staying on track, working as quickly as possible and that the quality of their work is excellent. While Don and Marc are strong, capable and friendly fellows, they really need Shikira or Shirley there to lend moral support and ensure productivity.

PDS exceeds expectations from the state in other ways too. Because of our philosophy regarding the importance of full inclusion, we make sure that our clients are actively engaged in fun, stimulating activities in the community all day, every day. We strongly believe that in order for our clients to be welcomed and accepted in Marin, it is important that they participate as paying consumers as opposed to just visiting on field trips or loitering in parks or malls. Each client has an individually tailored schedule which outlines their daily and weekly activities such as working out at a local gym, eating in a restaurant for lunch, getting a manicure, going to the bank to cash and budget his or her paycheck, or taking an art class. Clients pay for these activities themselves, with the money they make at their jobs, but our agency covers the costs associated with supporting the clients to do these activities. PDS reimburses staff members for their admission costs, meals in

restaurants, and other expenses that the clients cannot quite afford with their earnings.

Lastly, even though we sacrifice extra revenue, our agency intentionally remains small. We purposely serve just 21 clients and do not have any plans to expand our services. In order to provide such personalized, attentive support to a variety of people with differing needs, it is vital that we do not become beauracatic or spread too thin. Furthermore, because our program is not site based, it is important that we are able to keep close tabs on where our staff and clients are at all times and to ensure that everyone is accountable to the goals and objectives set forth for our clients and the agency.

By remaining true to the values that drive our organization we have accomplished our mission. All of our clients now have jobs, friends and full, rich lives in which they get to enjoy aspects of daily life, that the rest of us take for granted.

Unfortunately, while our clients have become accustomed to working, and being able to buy their own snacks, go to the movies or enjoy a cup of coffee with a friend at a local cafe, the support required to maintain these lifestyles for them is very precarious. I fear my clients returning to the lives they had before PDS and losing the confidence, independence and dignity we have worked so hard to help them gain.

We're just hoping that if we continue to do what we believe is right, people will have faith in our integrity and will join us in our mission. According to one of our board members, Warren Wertheimer, "the universe always provides". So far he has been absolutely right.

TO OUR LOYAL SUPPORTERS

We need your help now more than ever. Please let your friends and family know that we would appreciate being part of their charitable giving plans and that every donation makes a big difference to our small program. Pacific Diversified Services, a non-profit corporation, can accept tax deductible donations either directly, through United Way payroll deduction programs (donor code: 82632) through memorial donations when loved ones pass on or through donations of vehicles or other material items.

Thank you to the following foundations, organizations, companies and individuals for your incredible generosity in donating to Pacific Diversified Services in the 2004 - 2005 fiscal year:

\$10,000 or More

Marin Community Foundation
Anonymous through MCF

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Fireman's Fund Foundation
Herbst Foundation

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Doering Family Foundation
Stuart Leeb
William Sloan

Up to \$999

Bank of Marin
Mr. and Mrs. Bernardini
Betty Burns
Costco Employees
Peggy Drew
Donna Franzblau
Lori Fromm
Golden Gate Bridge Employees
Ron and Jo Ella Hart
Ann Jessup

Ginger and David Koel
Levi Strauss Foundation
Lucasfilm Ltd.
Gloria Mattioli
Theresa Olsen
Connie Perry
Richard Reubin
Doris Sabraw
Sue Santa/Woodlands Market
Mr. and Mrs. Smiley

Bob Smith
Roccio and Carl Smith
Stan and Gail Sollid
Larry Toney
Tom Trombetta
Juanna Villacorte
Warren Wertheimer
Laura Wheeler
Katherine Wong
Hiroko Yamane

Generous Donors for 2005 - 2006 Fiscal Year

The following foundations, organizations, companies and individuals are recognized for their incredible generosity in donating to Pacific Diversified Services so far in this 2005 - 2006 fiscal year:

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Herbst Foundation

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Autodesk Inc.

Up to \$999

Levi Strauss Foundation

Theresa Olsen

William Sloan

Laura Wheeler

For more information about PDS or to make a contribution, please contact:

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