



Summer 2004

Newsletter

FROM THE PDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

I am back from maternity leave, and PDS is still here, doing better than ever! Our Coordinator, **Dave Murphy**, did a fabulous job running the agency in my absence.

I had a baby boy on March 2, 2004. His name is Andre Patrick Thomas Giraldi. He weighed 8 pounds 1 ounce at birth and was 20 1/2 inches long. He's a really sweet, good-natured baby, and my husband and I are thrilled.

Being away from PDS clients and daily issues for four months gave me a fresh perspective upon my return, which has really made me appreciative of the unique and special job I have. The clients and staff made me feel missed while I was gone and welcomed me back warmly. The staff were incredibly supportive of me and tried to give my family as much space as we needed to establish ourselves, and yet, they kept me abreast of things through e-mail so I would not be out of the loop. The fundraising progress that we made, thanks to the generosity of our community, makes it possible for us to keep our agency thriving. In the fourteen years that I have been running Pacific Diversified Services, the clients have become like my family; at some points my job was so consuming that I never thought I could actually handle having children of my own. However, because of the team effort of our contributors, clients, their parents, my staff, as well as our board of directors and certain colleagues, I no longer feel as if the success of our services rests entirely on my shoulders.

Our clients continue to grow in many ways. I am so pleased to see them gaining confidence, self-esteem, and independence. Perhaps most importantly, the PDS clients, despite the severity of their disabilities and the frustrations of their limitations, are generally happy people who enjoy being included in all aspects of daily life in Marin County. I believe they have gone from feeling kind of like outsiders on a field trip "to the community" to just part of the community; they live here, work here, play here, and are everyday consumers here. I thank all of you who have helped make that possible, whether by parenting your children with developmental disabilities so lovingly, providing excellent residential support, social work or direct service, or by financially contributing to or otherwise getting involved with PDS by hiring our clients.

Maintaining the quality of life we all strive so hard to establish for these guys continues to be a challenge. With budget cuts threatened, the cost of living rising, and the daily issues of our clients' disabilities and limitations always present, our work is never easy and never finished. But the rewards of our efforts - seeing our clients work, learn, laugh, and so self-assuredly joke around with one another and interact with their community - is a privilege I am very thankful for. I'm glad I was able to step away to remind myself of that.

Lisa Giraldi

P.S. Illustrating my new and improved role with PDS I have delegated the writing of parts of this newsletter to **Stephen Yeh**, an enthusiastic staff member. Thanks Steve!

PDS CONTRIBUTORS

The following foundations, organizations, companies, and individuals are recognized for their incredible generosity in donating to Pacific Diversified Services in the 2003-2004 fiscal year:

\$10,000 or more

Marin Community Foundation
Anonymous through MCF
Fireman's Fund Foundation

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Freda B. Runyon Foundation
Herbst Foundation

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Autodesk
Doering Family Foundation
Charles Casillas
Stuart Leeb
William Sloan
Whole Foods Comm. Support Day

Up to \$999

Bank of Marin
Costco Employees
Golden Gate Bridge Employees
Levi Strauss Foundation
Woodlands Market
Karen Arnold
(continued on next page)

PDS Contributors Who Donated Up to \$999 (continued)

Elaine Bachelder
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Dorn Cranert
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Juana Villacorta
Laura M. Wheeler
Katherine Wong



*Minh Tien and Russ
at Lisa's Baby Shower*

SURPRISE BABY SHOWER:

PDS staff and clients as well as some parents and friends gathered to celebrate the upcoming birth of Andre at PDS board member, **Warren Wertheimer's** home. Not only was Lisa surprised when she arrived at Warren's for "a meeting to discuss board business" but what was really shocking was that she had never attended an event at someone's house before with that many clients and staff and have it turn out to be so nice. Everyone was very good about keeping the secret from Lisa and

respectful of Warren's home and hospitality. Many thanks to **Ginger Koel** (Don M.'s mom) and **Alison Falvey** (Lisa's friend), who organized the festivities, along with PDS staff, **Shirley Chao** and **Dave Murphy**. Last but not least, thanks to Warren Wertheimer, whom so graciously (and bravely!) offered to host the party at his house. Lisa received many nice gifts from everyone and was well prepared with lots of pajamas, toys, clothes, and blankets for Andre which all have extra sentimental value.

STAFF GOODBYES:

Chau Chung left PDS in May. Hopefully, she will be back to help us out from time to time. **Cristina Williams** left in June for graduate school at San Francisco State University where she will be earning a Master of Arts in Education. **John Siegel** moved to Washington DC to get his Master's in Social Work in the fall. **Russell Ellis** left for Hawaii with his wife who will be starting up a Center for Attitudinal Healing there. Russell Ellis worked for PDS for almost 5 years. All the staff and clients were sad to see him go. We held a big going-away party with all the staff and clients at Round Table Pizza on April 30th. Several clients and staff took turns giving Russ moving personal goodbye speeches. Russ also was given a framed collage of pictures of the clients.

STAFF NEWS:

Stephen Yeh was hired in January, to fill in for Lisa's maternity leave. In June, **Pattina Steele**, **Katy St. Clair**, and **Josh Satt** were hired to fill out the recent staff vacancies.

Stephen obtained a BA in physics from UC Berkeley and has surprised himself by taking on and enjoying a people-oriented job. He began at PDS in a part-time position and transitioned to full-time status in June. Steve is job coaching five days a week, with **JR** and **Eric** at Costco, with **Lupe** and **Donna** at **Target**, with **David** and **Cathy** and **Bruce** at **Border's Books and Music**, AND with **Joe** at **Fresh Choice!**

Pattina "Tina" Steele has a long history of work with the developmentally disabled in group homes and knows our client **Kelly** already from being

her co-worker at **Macy's**. She is job coaching at **Cost Plus** with **Betsy**, **Berta**, and **Kelly**.

Katy, a journalist, is supplementing her freelance work to do something meaningful and fun. Katy became interested in this field when she did an expose for the East Bay Express about the difficulties people with disabilities face when using the public transit system. Katy will be working 2 to 3 days a week facilitating community involvement, primarily with **Don M.**, **Lisa T.** and **Minh Tien**.

So far, **Josh** is working just one day a week to get his feet wet in this field. He currently works with some of our "macho" guys: **Don M.**, **Eric**, **JR**, **Kevin**, and **Mihn Tien**. They really enjoy his company, and he is a welcome addition to our team.

CLIENT NEWS:

Mary Krauss joined PDS in March 2004. She is a sweet endearing lady who has taken well to PDS clients and staff and is glad to have made new friendships. Mary works at **Whole Foods Market** in downtown San Rafael. Mary replaced our former client Amanda, in the position she resigned from.



Mary Krauss at Whole Foods Market

EMPLOYMENT NEWS:

Joe and Don S. celebrated their 10- and 5-year anniversaries respectively at their workplace, **Fresh Choice**. All the employees there were gathered in a circle to give them their awards. Joe has worked there longer than any other employees of Fresh Choice, including the managers. Don received a gift certificate and Joe got a watch that he picked out.

Border's Books and Music commemorated **Cathy and David's** 5-year anniversaries with certificates and 5-year lanyards for their nametags.

Robin and Lisa T. both received excellent annual reviews from **Banana Republic** and raises for their outstanding work. Robin has worked at Banana for over 6 years and Lisa just celebrated her 5-year anniversary with Banana.

Kevin received a raise at **Woodlands**, to eight dollars an hour!

He's been working at Woodland's for 7 years now.

Don M. received a raise at **Whole Foods Market**.

Dana was given more hours for the summer at **Meridian Club**.

In addition to all the work and holiday parties attended by clients, **Eric and JR** attended a Hawaiian party at **Costco**. They enjoyed a barbecue and a live band, and they both wore Hawaiian shirts along with their co-workers. Eric treated his co-workers to a hula dance in a grass skirt!

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS:

- 20 of our 21 clients are employed.
- 11 of our clients have worked at their jobs for 5 or more years
- 5 of those people have worked at the same jobs for 10 or more years.
- **Kelly, Berta and Betsy** have all worked at **Cost Plus** for 13 years!

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: EMILY MELVIN

Emily Melvin began work at PDS in September of 2003. After graduation from college last year in Wisconsin, she worked with teens with disabilities for a summer. Although she had spent her college years focusing on academic research--she studied monkeys in a lab as an undergraduate--she decided she wanted to work with people for a change. Her summer work was a success, and this brought her to PDS last year. "After interviewing with Lisa, I knew that PDS had the same philosophy about integration as I did, so I decided it was a good match for me," says Emily.

The clients have quickly welcomed Emily into the PDS extended family. She is friendly, responsible, dedicated and honest, and the clients appreciate this. "The most rewarding part of the job to me is when a client warms up to you, and you really feel like you're making their lives better by being there."

Emily is job coaching primarily at **Cost Plus**. "Job coaching is always

rewarding. It feels great to help clients become independent in their lives. It gives you some perspective. Most people complain about work, but most of our clients feel so happy to have a job and are proud of the contributions they make to their workplace."

"My favorite thing is when I get to see a client interact with someone in the community without me. When someone at [his or her] job site comes up and talks to them without trying to go through me. I feel like there's been progress. Or when we frequent a restaurant or coffee shop, and the [employees] start talking to the clients instead of me. That's rewarding."

When asked how she might feel about her work with PDS ten years from now, Emily replies, "I will always remember this experience as having taught me a lot about having patience and empathy for people. I will always remember how much fun I had with the clients and how they became friends who I genuinely cared for."

Emily contemplates pursuing a degree in law--perhaps Stanford Law School or Berkeley's Boalt School of Law--in the fall of 2005. When asked, "Why law?" Emily replies, "I like the versatility it offers. There are so many diverse directions [one] can go with a law degree. I also like that it combines my love for research and [analysis] with an ability to work with people."



Alex & Emily at the PDS Pizza Party

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: DON SMITH

We would like to introduce you to **Don Smith**. Don, who is of retirement age, but like Jack Benny, will never profess to be older than 39, is still a very hard worker in his position of silverware stocker at Fresh Choice Restaurant. Don has also worked at Golden Gate Transit in the past with support from PDS. Don really enjoys working; he picks up extra hours doing dishwashing when he can.

Don, a native of Kansas City, Missouri, moved to Marin when his mother passed away. Don had been his mom's companion and helper. They liked going to church together, and he helped her with her shopping. He had

been visiting his brother and sister-in-law in San Rafael since the 70's and was excited to move here in 1991. Don also enjoys spending time with his nephew Rob and his wife Tracy, and he is extremely proud of his little niece Taylor who is 2 this year. Sometimes Don's relatives take him to the horse races and on road trips to Portland Oregon. When asked what he likes about PDS, Don said "Working!" When asked what else is good about PDS he said, "Ball games with **Dave**, banking with **George**, and talking with **Corinne**". We like serving Don because of his sense of humor and great attitude. He always shows his appreciation for us when he tells us,

"Thank you for a lovely day."
Thank YOU Don!



Don Smith at Russ' Going-Away Party

COMMUNITY FUN:

So many events have taken place recently with PDS support that we cannot mention them all, but we wanted to acknowledge some of the staff who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, often after PDS hours, to help people enjoy some very special times. For example, **Dave Murphy** helped **Eric** and **Don M.** go to a big-time

wrestling show in San Jose and also accompanied **Don M.** to a hockey game. Recently he went with **Dana** and **Don S.** to a Giant's game. **Dave** and **Corinne Amare** accompanied **Don S.**, **Dana**, and **Bruce** to the KFOG KaBoom concert in San Francisco. **Emily** accompanied **Lisa T.** and **Kelly** to see Mama Mia in the city too. Emily also spent a very nice day shopping with **Betsy** who carefully picked out a

new purse. **Shirley Chao** also spends extra time with **Kasie** one on one when Kasie works extra hard at Petco. **Justin Burke** is helping **JR**, **Don M.** and **Minh Tien** learn to fish at a lake in Fairfax. We love it when our staff share their own interests and hobbies with the clients and encourage the friendships that are forged when they are having fun.

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Pacific
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Services

