



THE GAZETTE



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“When given options, people tend to choose those things that enhance their dignity and respect.” Tom Pomeranz, Phd

Determined Independence

By Melinda Tannan (MSS Staff) and Mary Abitia

Hi, my name is Melinda Tannan and I work for the Glendale office supporting Mary Abitia.

When I first started working with Mary she had many goals. The most important goal to Mary was to change jobs and work closer to her home. We both did a lot of job searching, created a resume and filled out applications within the city of her choice.

Mary found an opening at a day program for a Counselor’s Aide. I supported her by going with her to fill out the application, going to the job interview and when she was hired I also went with her to the orientation.

The goal Mary and I are currently working on is to lose weight which has been somewhat of a struggle for her. She has had a few set-backs, one of which when she was taken off some medications. This caused her to gain some weight.

However, Mary has lost 57 pounds and continues to eat healthy and exercises five days a week to maintain her weight. Mary wants to lose another 100 pounds and plans to achieve her goal in the near future.

Mary’s success to her independence is due to the fact that she is very determined and knows what she wants and works hard to maintain it.

My role in Mary’s independence consists of reminders on how far she has come, helping her by offering other ways to handle a situation, friendship, dedication, and leading her by example.

*Melinda Tannan is a MSS Staff Member
Mary Abitia is a MSS Consumer since 2004*



A Note from Mary: “I like having my own apartment and my freedom. For the first time I don’t have to rely on people just myself. I like to come and go without having to answer to other people. What keeps me independent is when my staff lets me know when I do or say things that are not in a appropriate manner.”

“Melinda is very committed, dedicated and most of all responsible and those are the things I follow in my life *and that’s what helps me in my independence.*”

Hoon’s Story

Hello! My name is Hoon, and I used to live in a group home. Let me tell you my story!

It was back in the latter half of the year 2005. These 3 people came to my group home and were taking turns interviewing different people in my group home about living on their own, then my turn came. I was just sitting there calm and collected until they told me "how would you feel if you lived on your own?" At first I thought they were joking until the look on their faces turned serious! I learned after that, that my life would take a drastic turn for the better, or at least I hoped it will.



Hoon Kim

I went outside of my group home and jumped around a bit and yelled "WAHOOOOOOOOO", I must've wore out my vocal cords that day!

About a couple days later, I began to pack up my things and start the moving experience as I was about to start a whole new life away from the group home setting. I knew that my day would come when I saw a bright shiny red Honda Civic pull up in the driveway,

I was loading my things into the car (took about 3 trips) and off we went to my new place (My own apartment), as soon as I got there I felt a sense of relief, like I was thankful to be away from the maddening problems that plagued me while I was in group homes.

It took me a while to get settled in and got familiar with my surroundings. I now found myself in heavenly bliss!

I later found out that those 3 people were the Modern Support Services! Thanks guys! Thank you all for making this possible!

Hoon is a MSS consumer since 2004

A Message from our Executive Director

By Jack Darakjian



At Modern Support Services, we are dedicated in providing excellent service to people with developmental disabilities who need support and training in their everyday lives. The individuals we support have strengths and challenges similar to all of us. Our goal is to help the individual identify the supports needed and to achieve a more fulfilling life.

At Modern Support Services, we believe that everyone is entitled to live a full, productive and meaningful life and to do so independently, given the respect and appropriate support they deserve.

In Addition, we want to help individuals identify the systems needed for supports outside of Modern Support Services as well as how to navigate through those systems. The common thread we find in all individuals we work with is their willingness and motivation to participate in our program and to excel in their new found independent lives.

Our staff are held to the highest levels of accountability, and are provided continuous education, support, guidance and feedback along with training materials and courses.

Some of the training's which we believe are important to our mission include, Universal Enhancement, emergency preparedness, and cultural sensitivity. The breath of this education ensures that the services we provide are always on the cutting edge of our industry.

In training our staff about the philosophy of Modern Support Services and California's Regional Center System, we ensure that the ideals of respect, care and inclusion are instilled in each and every team member.

It is also important to note that all new hires at Modern Support Services undergo a vigorous background check, including fingerprinting conducted by the Department of Justice, a 10 panel drug test, a DMV background check, and First Aid/CPR training.

We hope that our efforts clearly attest to the fact that we are an agency dedicated and committed to providing the best service, support and training to everyone we work with.

We recognize and respect the importance of community diversity and partnership and as such we achieve optimum program effectiveness.

To learn more about Modern Support Services and our various programs such as Supported Living Services and Independent Living Services, or to find out about the various Regional Centers with which we are vendored, please contact us directly or visit our website at www.modernsupportservices.org.



Money management with Rebecca Smitha and MSS staff member Lani Moore.

“We believe that everyone is entitled to live a full, productive and meaningful life.”

Dually Independent

By Anna Kiiveri



Modern Support Services' Role in Supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental Illness.

Modern Support Services' goal is to provide instruction that fosters independence and a life of meaning and value. Instructions and supports are provided to adults who have intellectual disabilities; however, the goal of leading an independent and value rich life is universal. There are individuals who greatly benefit from instruction in daily living skills and beyond so that independence may grow and be a source to fuel and fulfill individual goals. Although independent living skills are an essential ingredients in a life of value, so too is mental and emotional health.

There are many individuals dually diagnosed as having an intellectual disability as well as a mental illness. While there may be motivation to work toward greater independence and fulfillment, it can become increasingly frustrating for those individuals and their supporters when mental health and/or disability become obstacles in life. Assistance and support from community-based programs may be sought; however, traditional services in the fields of intellectual disabilities and mental health are not always prepared for people that have co-occurring diagnoses. Community-based services have traditionally focused on either developmental disabilities or mental illness. Although individuals may need to deal with both aspects in life, the service system tends to partially address the whole person, focusing on one diagnosis. Failing to address an important part of a person is missing an opportunity for growth and meaning and people tend to fall through the cracks. Knowing the

weakness of some service programs that genuinely intend to assist people and raise their quality of life, the focus must be on the individual holistically and in determining what actions can be taken to ensure that needs are being met regardless of what "field" the needs fall under. When the person takes precedence, disabilities and/or mental illnesses do not necessarily diminish, they become just a few of the many characteristics that make up the whole person. Indeed, research in dual diagnosis has shown that effectiveness in service delivery and individual participation in mental health services increases as individualization of services increases. When a plan of service is focused on the individual and not agency boundaries, real change and strides toward independence can be seen.

Modern Support Services speaks not only to a person's disability but also assists individuals in realizing their personal goals and creating a life of value.



MSS Consumer Eva Tice visiting Dr. Tad Fennar

Modern Support Services speaks not only to a person's disability but also assists individuals in realizing their personal goals and creating a life of value. Therefore, direct support staff needs to be aware and prepared to speak to all aspects of a person, whether instruction is in removing the potential barriers of a disability or in following mental health directives. Research states, "Cross training of personnel in mental health" and intellectual disability "are needed in traditionally single service agencies." Modern Support Services provides ongoing staff training and encourages the furthering of knowledge regarding specific mental health and disability related concerns. The search for relevant information does not end with a book, it is only the beginning as instruction focuses on individuals independently accessing appropriate mental health resources and maintaining them through continued support.

Once appropriate resources are accessed and multiple programs are to be maintained, continuity must be ensured within and across service fields through effective communication. Modern Support Services is committed to bridging the gaps in individual lives so all aspects are consistently addressed. As such, interagency communication is a continual goal so that individuals may retain consistency in services provided, whether they are in independent living skills or mental health services. Research shows that "collaboration with existing community resources" is encouraged "rather than creating

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For the second consecutive year, we are pleased to announce that Modern Support Services, LLC has been selected for the 2009 Best of Long Beach Award in the Mental Retardation & Disabled Services category by the U.S. Local Business Association (USLBA).

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resources in response to present limitations of single service agencies." Communication and collaboration are invaluable in assisting individuals to fully benefit from their service plans. Indeed without communication between programs, much planning and goals may be unintentionally undone. Through such relationship building, Modern Support Services strives for its mission of rapid and outreaching communication so that instruction may bolster recommended treatment and service plans.

Modern Support Services provides instruction and support to many people who have received co-occurring diagnoses of intellectual disability and mental illness. The universal goal of leading a life of meaning and value does not have limits or boundaries corresponding to different service fields. Everyone is unique regardless of diagnosis and services should continue to reflect and support that idea. For further information and resources pertaining to dual diagnosis, please visit The National Association for the Dually Diagnosed at www.thenadd.org. For additional information on Modern Support Services and its practice of Universal Enhancement, please visit www.modernsupportservices.org and www.universallifestyles.com.

Anna Kiiveri is a MSS staff member

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