



# THE GAZETTE



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**“Every reason that you give why you don’t, is the justification for doing it.”**

Tom Pomeranz, Ed.D

## Client Spotlight

### Bryan Shull – “Motivated to be Independent”

By Leslee Burton (MSS Staff)



*When asked to feature a client for our newsletter several people came to mind. Since I could pick only one, it was really hard to choose, but I thought about Bryan and how throughout the past year he never gave up. With the support of his DSP, he kept his focus. Where others may have gotten too stressed-out and frustrated, he moved forward. He never quit, and complaining, if at all, was minimal. He did all he was required to do to establish himself in Long Beach. I recently visited him at his home . . .*

Upon meeting Bryan, one is at once impressed by his positive attitude and his manner of ease. Bryan lives in a beautiful apartment in Long Beach, which he is very grateful to have. If you did not know the ‘road-blocks’ he has faced in his life and the many financial ups and downs he has gone through, you would never guess, because Bryan, more often than not, has a smile on his face and light shining in his eyes.

Bryan began receiving SLS services with Modern Support Services in April 2009. Bryan has learned that being independent does not necessarily mean you do everything by yourself. He recognizes that asking for help is a sign of maturity and enhances one’s independence. It is one of the remarkable things about him. He highly values his independence. He was proud to say that he has been living independently since 2001 at the age of 20 and though he is faced many struggles along the way he has never gone back to live with his parents. He is determined to remain independent.

As we discussed his move from Orange County to Long Beach within the past year and upon reflection, he stated that, “Yeah that was a lot and sometimes I wasn’t sure everything would work out but it has and now I’ll be getting all the money I didn’t get for so long because now I’m getting SSDI”.

I reminded him how great it is that he was able to maintain his Section 8 status because the apartment he has is in a safe area, is beautifully maintained inside and outside and is really nice. He agreed by stating that he has been “very lucky”.

Things really are coming together for Bryan. His hard work and patience is paying off. He also was very excited to show me his newly acquired Medi-Cal card. He wasted no time in obtaining a Primary Care Physician. He was issued his Medi-Cal card on 12/9/09. He independently found his new doctor, has already had his first appointment and says he really likes her.

Bryan keeps himself busy by doing volunteer work and visiting friends. He is not one to sit around and do nothing with his free time. He absolutely loves Disneyland and Disney characters and has many beautifully framed Disney posters gracing the walls of his apartment. He has annual passes for both Disney and Knott’s Berry Farm, which he uses as much as possible!

He has recently been volunteering for Peter Matthews, who is running for Congress and for the campaign for Prop 8. He was in the Long Beach Gay Pride Parade last year and hopes to volunteer to help this year, “if I have the time because I’ll probably have a job by then! I hope I do”.

Always positive, eager to learn and grow. Bryan is a delightful person to know. His smile and the sparkle in his eyes, before I know it, as always put a smile on my face.

## Moving Over, Moving Up

### News from our Long Beach Office

By Jack Darakjian

As of September 2009 some exciting changes at our Long Beach office have occurred! MSS has a new Area Manager, Phill Morris and Leslee Burton has moved from being an Area Manager to fulfilling the newly created position of Community Resource Specialist.



Phill came to Modern Support Services having in his background 9 years experience working in gang prevention through the Los Angeles Unified School District with elementary through high school age youth.

Phill has a natural ability to put people at ease with his firm yet easy-going manner. As a Direct Support Professional (DSP), it was clear that he valued the process of building and establishing rapport with the individuals we support. This was demonstrated by his genuine sincerity, patience and firmness which has proven to be required to effectively provide the motivational encouragement and supports our clients need to obtain, sometimes even the very first knowledge of, self-advocacy and independence. These qualities made him an excellent DSP. It wasn't unusual for Phill to be directly requested by Regional Center Service Coordinators to take some of the most challenging cases. The observation skills he employed in his role as a DSP have easily transferred into his role of Area Manager and is increasingly becoming a valuable tool.

He states that at first he was hesitant to interview for the position of Area Manager because he "enjoys working one on one with clients and seeing the fruits of my labor". He's often expressed that he loves his job and the philosophy of Modern Support Services and now that he is an Area Manager his enthusiasm for his role at Modern Support Services has increased. Though he openly states that these first few months have been very challenging and often hectic, he looks forward to growing with the agency into higher levels of management.

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

Leslee has worked for MSS since November 2005. First as a DSP then an Area Manager for about two and a half years and currently is the Community Resource Specialist. This newly created position encompasses several areas such as quality assurance, event planning, community liaison, creating a volunteer resource guide, putting together our newsletter, doing a radio-stream on the MSS website, and the arduous task of compiling all the various resources into a data base for easier access for everyone.



Wearing many hats is not new for Leslee as she has about fifteen years experience working with all ages. From Special Education with elementary to high school age youth in public and non-public schools in California and Texas to working in treatment centers for emotionally disturbed adolescents. She also has several years experience as support and companion to the elderly. She states, "As a Para-Professional Educator, I was called upon to 'switch hats' throughout the structure of the school day. . . going from observing and evaluating to actually teaching a subject. I loved it! I love learning and I love the process of teaching and being present at that moment when a person finally 'gets it' and the joy that comes from expanding one's consciousness".

Working at Modern Support Services has been a delight for Leslee because of the agency's philosophy, the supports and training as well as the trust and freedom to creatively work with the individuals we support. The positive and forward thinking attitudes that are ever-present within all areas of MSS are enriching and motivating.

## Looking Ahead 2010

### Exciting Changes for the New Year

2010 promises to be an exciting year for Modern Support Services. We anticipate continued growth at our new office in Orange County as well as expansion of our office in Long Beach! Several projects are in the works including the creation of a radio pod stream, a volunteer resource guide and an easy-to-access community resource data base.



We currently have in place a cell phone recycling program that we want everyone to know about. The money generated by this program goes into a Renter's Assistance Program for Individuals who are not in any other assistance program and find themselves in need.

We encourage everyone to donate old cell phones to the donation centers at our offices. If you're unable to bring them you can give your used cell phone to your DSP and he/she will bring them in for you. Funding will only be provided when available, so please donate those old cell phones to this worthy cause!

And, we always want to encourage contributions from staff and clients for our next newsletter that will be published this coming summer!

## Gifted

“What does it mean to challenged?

Throughout your life, why do society

put labels on adults and children

of all kinds of cultures and nationalities?

we can say that their ignorant to your

gifts our talents our wants and needs

to succeed to become more successful  
than them.

they look as us like we

are the weakest link but in reality

we are the ones who gave them the

encouragement to move to a

higher position of power we

ourselves need to find encouragement

to move to a position of higher power

and say to yourself I know I can be

who I want to be if I work hard

at it I'll be what I want to be

The gift is yours.”

- Anonymous

## Quality Assurance Survey

In an effort for Modern Support Services to go green we have provided our Quality Assurance Survey on-line. Please visit our website, [www.modernsupportservices.org](http://www.modernsupportservices.org) to complete the Consumer Quality Assurance Survey.

If you don't have a computer, you can access one at your local library.



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).

### MSS 2009 Christmas Party

On December 19th in the late afternoon at a historical building, The Gage Mansion- one of the oldest buildings in Los Angeles county- we celebrated the holiday.

We ate, we laughed, some played pool, some made beaded ornaments and necklaces, we took fun and funny pictures, we ate some more (the desserts were yummy!). We enjoyed each other's company, and just about everyone explored the Mansion and read the various articles posted of it's rich history. . . *some were convinced it was haunted!*

In other words, a great time was had by all!!



## THE GAZETTE

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