

CAIRS

newsletter

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Fall 2001

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

San Diego Conference Wrap-Up

by Elise Levine, Conference Chair

Under the most extraordinary circumstances, the 2001 Conference was held September 13-15, 2001 in San Diego.

In spite of airport closures and concern over travel, we still had more than 70 attendees from both the north and the south join us for a variety of workshops, panel discussions, great speakers and good food and networking opportunities.

Workshops

A HUGE thank you goes out to all of our speakers who provided useful information on new topics as well as information on the old standards. In light of the events that week, only two speakers were unable to attend and we were still able to offer at least two (and in most cases, three) topics per session. A HUGE thank you to all of the attendees who were flexible and understood the nature of our situation, between changing meeting rooms and adding chairs at the last minute to other rooms.



CIRS/CRS Test

This year we had 39 people take the CIRS test! By now, most of you should have received the results of your tests. The look of relief as many of you left the Ohana (Testing) Room to receive your lei was priceless! We look forward to having you join the ranks of CIRS/CRS credentialed specialists!



Keynote Speaker

Friday's lunch packed the room with attendees who were probably unprepared for the incomparable Cath Arlett, Special Projects Manager from the California

Department of Aging. Cath's spirit moved the room and filled us with a sense of purpose. Cath's unique style and humor helped add levity to a week in which it was not so easy to laugh. Furthermore, she helped convey the message of recognizing the work we do and the special people who are in the field of I and R. Thank you, Cath!

Raffle

Our yearly tradition, the CAIRS raffle was another smashing success. Wonderful gifts donated by our board members from throughout the state were given away to a number of lucky attendees. In addition, we gave away a few extra prizes to those who made it to the conference through difficult obstacles. We had one person who actually got on one of the first flights out of Northern California. We had one person who totalled her car on the way down, rented a new car and continued on her way from Tulare to San Diego in time to take the CIRS test. We had a few people who drove nine, ten and eleven hours to be with us. THANK YOU!



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Letter from the President...



Dear CAIRS Members,

On September 11 the CAIRS Board was scheduled to travel to San Diego for its pre-conference meeting. Like all of you, we awoke to a changed world. In the midst of trying to grasp the unfolding situation, we also had decisions to make about the meeting and the Annual Conference, which was scheduled to begin on the 13th.

Many phone calls and e-mails later, the Board reached consensus: we chose to postpone most of our board meeting, but continue the conference as planned.

We had no idea how many registrants would be able to attend, but we felt strongly that continuing with the Conference was our best way of responding to this terrorist act. Although we were all uncertain about the future, we knew that one of the most important tools in combating anxiety and fear is clear and accurate knowledge. CAIRS affirmed its commitment to provide professional education so that our members could return to serve their communities with enhanced skills and knowledge.

We want to salute and express our appreciation to the many registrants who shared that goal, overcame transportation and other obstacles, and joined us for a meaningful series of workshops. On September 14, the conference attendees joined the nation in a moment of remembrance. Kimberly Kwon offered an invocation followed by a moment of silence. Many people have asked for a copy of that invocation. If you would like a copy, please e-mail her at Kimberly@infoline-la.org.

For those of you who were unable to attend, we have organized a Northern California Regional Conference for January 14, 2002, in Sacramento. The Sierra Health Foundation will be assisting CAIRS in this regional. We will be giving the CIRS and CRS testing. Save the date and watch your mail for registration materials.

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Letters to the Editor

Synergy Software Technologies wishes to express our regret that the awful events of September 11 made it impossible for us to participate in the recent San Diego conference. We were really looking forward to visiting with all of you, including our many California based Beacon I&R customers. We hope you enjoyed a

successful conference and we look forward to seeing you in the future.

Thanks.

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As always, the Board of Directors is looking for your input. You can provide yours by contacting the Editor, Rick Sakamoto [contact information in next column and on page 7].

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Please contact CAIRS if you wish to reprint any part of this newsletter.

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A Big Step Forward for 2-1-1

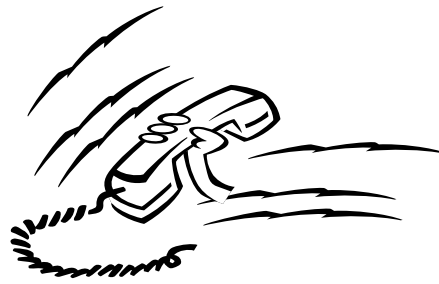
by Burt Wallrich

On August 30th, CAIRS and members of the 2-1-1 Statewide Steering Committee (SCC) submitted the 2-1-1 Petition to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). This is a major step towards implementation of 2-1-1 service.

The Petition asks the CPUC to issue regulations governing the standards for 2-1-1 service in the State and to establish a procedure by which an agency can apply to be designated as the 2-1-1 service provider in its local area. While there is no guarantee that the CPUC will approve the Petition exactly as it is worded, we do not expect that there will be fundamental changes to what we have submitted. As a CPUC Administrative Law Judge told us in a meeting last February, they recognize that we are the experts in the field of I&R.

It took a real commitment to cooperation for everyone to work through all the issues and agree on language that the CAIRS Board could support unanimously, that the 2-1-1 Statewide Steering Committee members could support without dissent (some SSC member agencies are still processing the request for support), and that the lawyers who are working with us think will pass muster with the CPUC. The Petition is posted on the CAIRS website so you can see exactly what we are proposing to the CPUC. There are a number of other important documents on the website that you should check out.

We have been moving ahead on a



number of other fronts, also. The Technology Advisory Group, which advises both CAIRS and the SCC on technology issues, put out an RFP for development of the next phase of technology design. Healy and Company, who developed design alternatives for us in August, submitted a very strong proposal and we will contract with them as soon as we have the funds to do so.

We are about to issue another RFP, this one for design of 2-1-1 outreach materials and development of an outreach strategy. The strategy will need to be phased in county by county, as 2-1-1 service is implemented, and focus on vulnerable and underserved populations. We have the funding in The California Endowment grant to proceed with this contract once we choose a firm.

Finally, Lynn Pesely, whom many of you know from her work at Community Services Planning Council in Sacramento, has been hired as Northern California Coordinator for 2-1-1. In that position she will provide staff services to the Northern California Partners in The California Endowment grant, seek additional funding, and work with agencies and coalitions in other northern California counties to help them prepare for implementation of 2-1-1. □

Share the Knowledge

by Rick Sakamoto

With the successful conclusion of the conference, our industry continues to move forward — and we need your help! We have all gained valuable knowledge through our past and present experiences. However, such experience is considered valuable only if it is shared and others benefit. If knowledge is repressed, progress and growth cease to exist.

Therefore, we are asking for CAIRS members to share their knowledge and experience by answering this call for new presentations for next year's conference. Please send all suggestions (with presenter's name) to Elise.Levine@blueshield-ca.com.

Remember, we are wise to learn from our experiences. We are wiser to learn from the experience of others. □

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and

stay connected

with other

California

I and R's.

To sign up

send an email

to CAIRS—

subscribe@yahogroups.com

CAIRS

Vision Statement

CAIRS believes all individuals should have barrier-free access to human services to enhance their quality of life.

Mission Statement

The Membership of CAIRS provides leadership and support in the changing world of access to human services information. CAIRS promotes the right of individuals to accurate, barrier-free information.

Goals

In order to achieve the Mission and Vision, the following goals have been established:

To *provide* training and support to enhance professional skills;

To *facilitate* the exchange of information among the membership and others within the helping professions;

To *promote* awareness of Information and Referral services;

To *advocate* for the interests of the profession and the public it serves.

Announcements

JT Simkins wins Award for Excellence

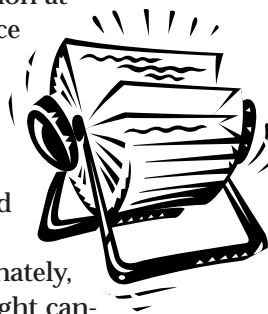
The Award for Excellence for 2000-2001 was given to JT Simkins. JT is the Associate Director of United Way of San Diego's Resource Center I & R Services. He received the award due to his leadership capabilities and I&R knowledge. The I&R industry is proud to have JT as a shining example of professional excellence and achievement. The Board of Directors and the general membership all congratulate JT on receiving this award.



Now is the time to start thinking about the 2001-2002 Award for Excellence. Hopefully we will be able to offer an award for the best agency, as well as the best I&R specialist.

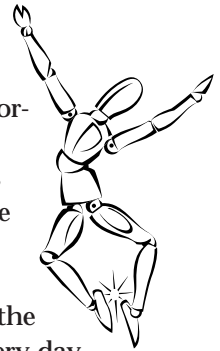
Resource Directory

The CAIRD was ready for mailing and distribution at the conference in San Diego when the tragic events occurred in New York and Washington, DC. Unfortunately, due to the flight cancellations, we were unable to get them from San Francisco to San Diego. By the time you read this, you should have received your copy of the CAIRD. If you have not received a copy, please contact Brandon at brandonobrien@hotmail.com.



Be Proud to Be in I & R

The need and importance of the I & R industry continues to grow, and we are proud of all the agencies and individuals who serve the needs of others every day. The CAIRS Board is also proud to continue its leadership and support in promoting the rights of individuals to have access to accurate, barrier-free information.



However, ***we need your talents and skills to continue our mission.***

Please consider being a part of the CAIRS Board, as we will have open positions this year. You will be receiving a letter and nomination form in the next couple of weeks, for you to complete if you are interested, or to give to another interested professional.

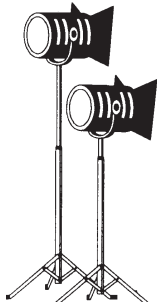
Come join our team and be an impact player for the industry and the people you serve!!

Delinquent Members

We can no longer send the *Newsletter* to individuals or agencies that have not renewed membership for the current year. All renewals were due by July 1, 2001. If the mailing label on this newsletter is highlighted in yellow, we have not received your renewal. If you believe this is in error, please contact Brandon at brandonobrien@hotmail.com.



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Spotlight on:

Santa Clara County Has Directory of Health and Human Services Online

By Carol Hoshizaki

HELPSCC is a searchable directory of health and human service providers in Santa Clara County, launched in June, 2000. HELPSCC resides on the World Wide Web site www.HELPSCC.org. The directory can be searched by "Quick Search" buttons, keywords (including full or partial name of agency), city or region, or the "Taxonomy of Human Services" AIRS classifications.

HELPSCC is a collaboration of Community Technology Alliance (CTA) and several health and human services collaborators: City of Palo Alto's Family Resource Center, Community Health Partnership, CONTACT Cares of Silicon Valley, Information & Referral Services, Inc., Integrated Services Committee at Chamberlain's Mental Health, Santa Clara County (Alcohol & Drug Services, Ambulatory and Community Care Clinics, Department of Pretrial Services, District Attorney's Office, Mental Health, Public Defender's Office, Public Health, Social Services Agency, Sheriff's Department), Veterans Affairs Information & Referral Services.

Almost 1400 directory entries are provided by the health and human services providers, including information about eligibility, application procedures, fees, languages spoken, and wheelchair accessibility. CTA provides the technical services and expertise necessary to create and maintain the web site, the database structure, and other technical aspects that allows this information to appear on the World Wide Web.

The goal of HELPSCC is to create an up-to-date directory of health and human services in Santa Clara County available on the World Wide Web.

HELPSCC is:

- User friendly;
- Searchable;
- Comprehensive;
- Continuously updated;
- Centralized;
- Linked to other valuable web pages.

Because the directory is on the Web, it is available to anyone with access to the Internet, whether through

home, school, workplace, shelter, or library. The directory can be used by anyone seeking information or assistance for him/herself or a family member, a client, an employee, or anyone in need. In addition, the directory provides an overall view of the services and programs available in Santa Clara County so that overlaps or needs can be seen more readily.

A Training and Outreach Coordinator, funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, provides training for agencies that need to use the "Taxonomy of Human Services" search in HELPSCC for information & referral. The Coordinator also attends information fairs to publicize HELPSCC, provides "train the trainer" sessions and materials, and identifies new collaborators to expand and improve HELPSCC's entries.

Community Technology Alliance was founded in 1991 to provide information technology tools to link and network agencies in the region so that they can deliver services more effectively to at-risk populations. Among its many services, CTA provides voicemail for the homeless and is the lead agency for a \$1.3 million grant provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to fund Project BAHA, a nine-county collaborative in the San Francisco Bay Area. HELPSCC is an expansion of the Santa Clara County part of Project BAHA.

For more information, please visit CTA's web site at www.CTAGroup.org, or call the HELPSCC Training and Outreach Coordinator at 408-451-0734. □

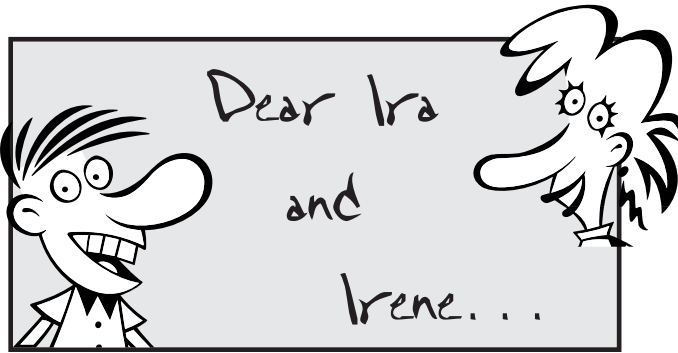
The CAIRS web page includes an on-line version of this newsletter.

The web address is: www.CAIRS.org

Add it to your bookmarks!



Join the CAIRS listserv and stay connected with other California I and R's. To sign up send an email to CAIRS—subscribe@yahoo.com.



Dear Ira and Irene:

I was unable to attend the CAIRS conference and wanted to know if there will be another opportunity to take the CIRS and CRS tests?

— Sara from Sonoma

Dear Sara:

We are sorry you were unable to attend the recent conference, as it was a huge success. However, in our continued efforts to provide training and support, CAIRS will be offering the CIRS and CRS tests on January 14, 2002 in Northern California. Further information will be posted on the CAIRS web site as plans are confirmed. We look forward to seeing you there. □

Conference Wrap-Up...

continued from page 1

Unforeseen Events

Based on the conference evaluations, any areas that we had shortcomings in were directly related to the events of September 11 (lack of hot topics, lack of tables in the session rooms, lack of vendors). We thank Advanced Text Data for coming and being our sole vendor. (Our other vendors were unable to attend due to flight interruptions.) Overall, the conference was a success, and I want to thank my fellow board members for pulling together during a difficult time and helping make the conference a success.

Planning for 2002

As you know, the CAIRS board is a voluntary board, made up of the general membership. We count on you, as members, to help us, the board, plan next year's conference. Because the 2001 conference was held in Southern California, the 2002 conference will be held in Northern California (location to be determined). If you have any suggestions, questions, concerns or ideas

about the conference, please feel free to contact me at:

Elise Levine, Neighborhood Connections
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tel: 1-800-804-7420 x 2663; e-mail:
elise.levine@blueshieldca.com. □

President's Letter...

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You have also just received a request for nominations to the CAIRS Board. This is the most challenging and exciting period for Information and Referral/Assistance in California in many years. Becoming a member of the CAIRS Board now offers you the opportunity to participate in the development of the statewide 2-1-1 system. This new social utility will reshape our profession and the entire community-service delivery system in the state. These changes will affect you and your agency, and now is a chance for you to raise your hand and say that you want to be a part. Ours is a working board. We put in considerable time and effort to accomplish our numerous projects. If you have the interest and the commitment, please respond and express your desire to run for election. If you want to know more about the experience of being a CAIRS Board member, call or e-mail any of the current members. We would be pleased to talk with you.

Best regards,
Sharon DeCray, President

Announcements...

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The CAIRS Website Is Updating Its look!

In an effort to promote your organization and the services you provide, CAIRS will be listing all of its member agencies' contact information under "Agency List" on the website. If you would like a brief description of the services you offer included, please email to: anoakes@cflc.org with a synopsis of 35 words or fewer. Also, if you have a website, we would love to include a hyperlink with your information, so that others can find you!

If you are an individual member, and would like to see your agency posted, contact Amy Noakes at: anoakes@cflc.org, or 916-325-1690 [or see address on page 7]. □

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Contact Brandon O'Brien at (714) 639-0105 for any questions regarding CAIRS membership.

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Mail this form along with your check (payable to CAIRS) to:

E-mail _____ Referred by: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Address: _____

Agency: _____ Title: _____

Name: _____

- I will permit my name to be placed on a mailing list that will be offered for sale.
- associate membership \$25
- single membership \$45
- multiple membership \$90 (please enter two names for multiple memberships)

YES! I want to be a CAIRS member. Please sign me up.

CAIRS Membership Application



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Address Correction Requested