

CAIRS

newsletter

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Spring 2003

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

CAIRS Redesign Update

SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER (Winter 2003), the CAIRS Board has made great progress towards the redesign of CAIRS. In March we retained the services of Social Entrepreneurs, an organizational development consultant firm, to help us with the development of a strategic business plan.

We held our first work session on April 26, reviewing the mission and vision of CAIRS and discussing its

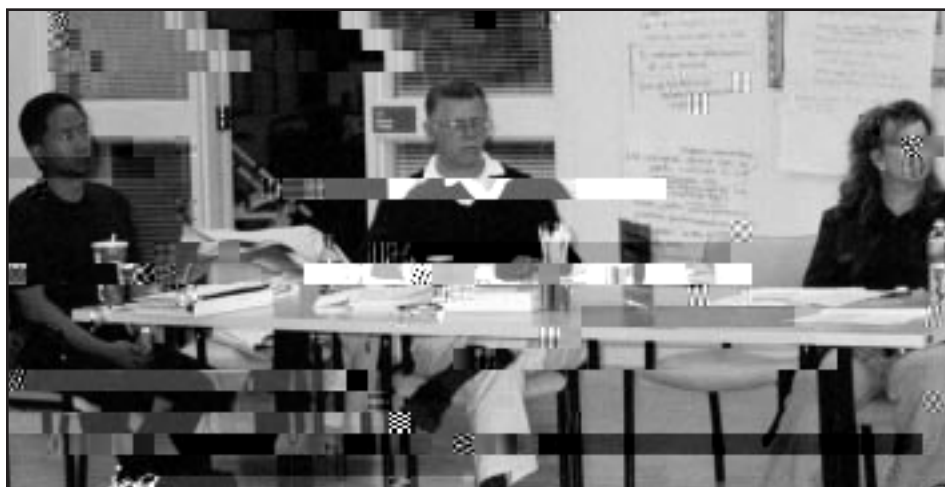
strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. At our next work session in June, the Board with the help of Social Entrepreneurs will tackle the questions of "Who are our customers?" and "What kinds of services should CAIRS offer?"

This is an exciting time for CAIRS, and the Board will do all that it can to ensure that CAIRS continues to provide the leadership for I&R organizations and professionals.

We will continue to keep you updated on our progress with CAIRS redesign, with the goal of having a presentation of the work at the annual conference in September. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact your CAIRS President. □



Leader:
Sarah Box, facilitator from Social Entrepreneurs, Inc.



(Left to right) Rick Sakamoto, CAIRS Board President from American Information; Wayne Everingham, CAIRS Board member from Infoline Sacramento; Lynn Pesely, CAIRS Board member and 2-1-1 California Coordinator.

NEW — Reach CAIRS via e-mail at
cairs@hotmail.org.

This issue:

CAIRS Redesign Update	1
Letter from the President	2
2-1-1 Update	3
Spotlight On...	4
Window on a Workshop	4
Board Roster	5
Membership Application	6

Letter from the President...



Dear CAIRS Members,

It was exciting to see the number of new I&R Specialists at our April 28th Regional Training in Redding. The sessions were well attended and I know everyone took away additional knowledge and skills required to assist those in our communities. We also want to thank PSA 1 & PSA 2 Area

Agencies on Aging for their assistance in the success of this training.

At the board meeting on April 27, the committee chairs updated us with the following information:

Conference Co-Chairs Amy Noakes and Ann Stundahl announced the Annual Conference will be hosted in Los Angeles, September 22, with new and exciting educational and training sessions for Managers and Executive Directors. These sessions include Intellectual Property (what legally belongs to your agency), Organizational Management (how to achieve your goals with fewer resources), Recognizing Harassment (and how to avoid it), and Telecommunication and IS information. Some of the standard I&R / I&A sessions will also be offered.

Amy Noakes, Membership Chair, reviewed the wonderful improvements to the new member process and the membership database. This committee will also begin to utilize e-mail to send out membership and survey information to help us serve you better.

Julie Plevanic, PR Chair, discussed the newsletter and requested that all CAIRS members help us improve the information we share with all our members. If you would like to see new topics / articles or would like to share your experience and knowledge, please contact Julie Plevanic at jplevanic@caa.org.

Sharon DeCray, 2-1-1 Chair, updated us on the excellent progress 2-1-1 has made in California since the February 13th news that the California Public Utilities Commission voted unanimously to adopt procedures for the establishment of a statewide 2-1-1 hotline. Some agencies have begun the application process while others are in their initial planning stages. We will keep you informed with the 2-1-1 updates and on-going presentations throughout the state.

CAIRS recognizes the economic and management challenges we all face the next couple of years. However, it is through these challenges that opportunities are created. McDonald's CEO, James Cantalupo, recognized this opportunity when he recently stated, "We tried to bet bigger while we should have gotten better." Let's all capitalize on this opportunity to "get better" and ensure continuity of quality service to our communities.

See you in September!

— Rick A. Sakamoto, President
CAIRS Board of Directors

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The CAIRS Newsletter is provided as a benefit to all CAIRS members. Please contact CAIRS if you wish to reprint any part of this newsletter.

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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.

CAIRS 2-1-1 Update

by Burt Wallrich and Lynn Pesely

"Fund 2-1-1 so our residents can know what services are still available."

— Texas House of Representatives Member Craig Eiland
in a House Appropriations Hearing

New California 2-1-1 Service Mark Soon Available by License

THE CAIRS BOARD DECIDED that the following entities will be allowed to use the 2-1-1 CA service mark:

- An I&R that is approved by the local Steering Committee to be a 2-1-1 service provider;
- A local 2-1-1 Steering Committee as a body (not individual members);
- 2-1-1 Applicants for which CAIRS submits a positive advice letter to the CPUC;
- I&R's that are designated as 2-1-1 service providers by the CPUC.

The license agreement will be available soon to agencies and groups interested in applying to use the 2-1-1 CA service mark.

Time to Submit 2-1-1 Service Provider Applications to the CPUC
Congratulations to INFO LINE of Los Angeles, the first I&R in CA to submit an application to the CPUC! Sixty-Six percent of the population in CA is scheduled to have access to 2-1-1 by the end of 2004. If you are one of the eleven agencies slated to implement service in 2004, now is time to work on your application and submit it to the CPUC.

2-1-1 Presented at Disaster Resistant California Conference
The 2-1-1 CA staff was invited to present a paper entitled: "2-1-1: A New Essential Link to Disaster Information" at the Disaster Resistant CA conference held in San Jose on April 21-23. Existing partnerships between I&Rs and emergency management agencies nationally and in CA were highlighted.

Examples of how essential 2-1-1 has been during disasters in areas that have it, and how it was needed in areas such as New York which did not have 2-1-1 service during a disas-

ter, strengthened the need to bring 2-1-1 to CA as an essential part of the disaster services system.

As a result of the great partnerships that I&R's in CA have and are developing with disaster service agencies, Dan Williams, the National 2-1-1 Director, has identified CA's I&R's as leaders in the nation in working with disaster services. As a result, Lynn Pesely has been invited to present on a panel for a workshop entitled: "2-1-1 and Homeland Security — Are you ready?"

2-1-1 California Staff Update
Burt Wallrich is back from his leave and will work on 2-1-1 until May 31, when he will retire. We thank him for his excellent leadership and work towards 2-1-1 in CA. He will be greatly missed but we wish him a fulfilling retirement.

Upon Burt's retirement, Lynn will become the Statewide 2-1-1 Coordinator and will expand her role of working with Northern CA to working with the entire state. □



Spotlight on:

INFORM RIVERSIDE

THE I&R ACTIVITY of the volunteer center of Riverside County will celebrate its 37th year of dedicated service in October. Originally called the Volunteer, Referral, & Information Bureau, Inform handles Crisis/HELPLINE and Volunteer

Connection calls, along with traditional Information and Referral inquiries. This combination of services provides synergistic strength, sensitivity, and responsiveness to Inform, as most crisis callers need I&R, some I&R callers are in crisis, volunteers frequently have needs that are not being met, and volunteering is a healthy way to satisfy personal needs.

Six full-time I&R Specialists, four of whom are bilingual, are crisis line-trained and I&R certified, and they respond to calls, e-mail inquiries, and walk-ins during the normal workweek. They have built an impressive active-listening and problem-solving skill level, as a result of the great diversity of contacts they receive. Volunteer HELPLINE counselors respond to crisis calls after hours. Inform has organized referral listings under the AIRS Taxonomy for a number of years, publishes a hard copy directory annually, and lists resources for the public on its website: www.informriverside.org. We respond to about 20,000 telephone calls yearly.

Postured to become the 2-1-1 provider for Riverside County, Inform is relying on its foundation of quality service to ramp up and respond to the enormous challenge of an expected quadrupling of calls from the 1.6 million citizens of the county, when 2-1-1 is fully implemented.

Our first major initiative, underway, is to upgrade our technology hardware and software to increase capability, improve user friendliness, and provide comprehensive feedback tools for data analysis. This effort will also embed volunteer, and disaster preparedness and response taxonomies and resources into the system. An added community event calendar will make our website a "must have" reference for the community and provide the capability to serve as the primary point for resource referral and volunteers in disaster and Homeland Defense.

Hand-in-hand with technology upgrade, we are facilitating the Riverside County 2-1-1 Steering Committee, which will serve as the long-term guardian for this public utility. In this capacity, we are defining the 2-1-1 system network to make sure it is robust and comprehensive. This effort is also deepening cooperative relationships and providing a mechanism to capture all community services across the county into the system and keep them updated.

Near completion of these two critical initiatives will enable us to articulate and demonstrate the huge capability of the system to the stakeholders and funding sources available in and out of the county.

The rest is our dream: We believe the demonstration of our capability will lead to the funding of additional staff and the facilities in which to house them. Marketing and quality service provided by our I&R Specialists will lead to increased contacts, which can further justify increased funding until the population is properly served. We especially value the association we have with our CAIRS brothers and sisters, whose teamwork and support are keeping us on the quality path. □

[Contact info: Glen R. Tanner, Director, Special Projects; Volunteer Center of Riverside County; (909) 686-4402.]

I&R Working During a Disaster

Window on a Workshop

EIGHTEEN CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS took part in a new workshop on disaster planning added to the CAIRS conference in Redding. With many valuable handouts, Wayne Evingham explained the different stages of a disaster and types of behavioral responses callers may demonstrate.

Although I&Rs may not be one of the initial responders to a disaster, they usually are most useful during the Relief/Recovery stages. The I&R agencies who prepare and train for disasters seem to handle a seamless service under such situations, and usually end up with better visibility and greater funding opportunities as a result.

In order for an I&R to be prepared, it should do frequent threat assessments of the organization, both internal and external, at least annually.

Training needs of staff can be identified and provided during this assessment. I&Rs should plan and organize an ICS (Incident Command System) and write a formal Operations Manual. They should not just collect information about local, state, and federal resources that can provide a disaster service to the community, but establish a collaborative and close relationships with them. Attend their meetings and invite them to yours whenever possible for visibility. Collaborate and enter into mutual aid agreements with disaster programs such as FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster), Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc. Participate with them at their meetings and exercise scenarios.

Disaster funding and reimbursement sources are available to I&Rs and should be sought and agreed upon prior to any disaster happening. Using 2-1-1 to respond to a crisis can be a big link for information and coordination of help between the public and emergency service organizations.

Wayne explained how InfoLine Sacramento's ongoing Senior Disaster Telephone Reassurance program worked and shared some actual stories of its activated use during a local flood period. Others joined in to tell of their local disaster stories and lessons learned. □

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Membership Application

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

- Agency membership \$100 (please enter two names for multiple memberships)
- Individual membership \$50
- Associate membership \$25
- I *will* permit my name to be placed on a mailing list that will be offered for sale.

Name: _____

Agency: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

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

E-mail _____ Referred by: _____

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

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Contact Amy Noakes at (916) 325-1690 X329, or anoakes@cfilc.org for any questions regarding CAIRS membership.



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