



## WGOIYP: WHAT'S GOING ON? IN YOUR PROGRAM?



The Center for Disability Innovation at Fresno State  
is proud to announce the inaugural...

### Western Region Disability Conference

# OPENING DOORS, BUILDING BRIDGES

On September 26, the Center for Disability Innovation (CDI) at Fresno State hosted the first annual Western Region Disability Conference. The conference was held in downtown Fresno at the Fresno Convention Center. It was the first of its kind to be held in the Central Valley and featured nationally-recognized speakers in the fields of emergency preparedness, employment issues, multiculturalism, assistive technology, and

rehabilitation administration. Some 160 participants attended the various presentations and events. Casino Night, featuring the real Rain Man, Kim Peek, capped off the multi-day conference. Break the Barriers also performed to a more than enthusiastic audience.

Speakers for the conference included:

- Tony Sauer, Department of Rehabilitation;
- Courtland Lee, Professor of Multicultural Counseling;
- Ollie Cantos, Department of Justice.

#### CONFERENCE SPONSORS:



## Who Had Fun?



The first annual Casino Night Fundraiser was a success! Students, faculty, staff, friends and family of the program gathered to meet Kim Peek – the man who inspired the

Academy Award-winning movie "Rain Man." Guests also enjoyed great music and delicious hors d'oeuvres—all while trying to win as much fun money as possible to bid on fantastic prizes during the live auction. One lucky winner got to take home the still-hard-to-find Nintendo Wii! Guests are already looking forward to next year's fundraiser.



## What People Thought About the WRDC

In my 17 years in the rehabilitation field, I have attended many conferences and workshops (as have you). Many have not been very interesting, useful or both. In reflecting on last Friday's disability conference, I must say that I appreciated the efforts of the rehabilitation counseling program students and staff. Their planning efforts were obvious to me, as the presenters represented quite a range of experience and topics. They seemed both passionate about and interested in their subjects. The workshops were well organized, interesting and useful.

The workshop speakers that I personally observed were well-chosen

## Who Do You Know? Susan Edington Hosts the Real Rain Man



Hosting Kim and Fran Peek during the Western Region Disability Conference was both fascinating and humbling. My experience began on Friday morning at the airport. As I stood in the reception area, I anticipated the meeting of a lifetime with the most famous savant in the world. Once I spotted the Peeks, I noticed that everyone walking off

that flight appeared to be happy and smiling. Several people hugged Kim as they bid him goodbye. One man said, "you made my day Kim." This surprised me, as I wondered what that plane ride had been like.

After a few hours with the Peeks, it was clear to me what everyone was talking about. Not only is Kim extremely intelligent, he is funny and a blessing to all who meet him. When Fran prompts Kim to dazzle people with his ability to calculate information on birthdays and sports statistics, all are amazed. The most amazing thing about Kim Peek, however, is his pure and generous heart. Everywhere he goes, he blesses people with his presence. His greeting begins with an embrace. Then he looks the person up and down and finally speaks some verbal blessing to that person. Everyone loves him and is enthralled by his presence. People are drawn to this man who has no malice or spite.

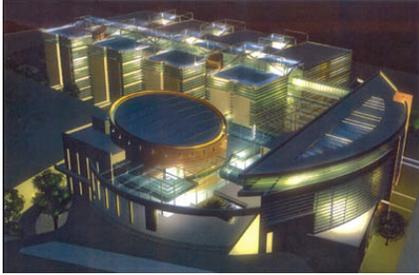
When the weekend was over and I dropped these two wonderful men at the airport for their journey home, I knew that I would miss them. Just knowing them made my life richer. Since their departure, I have found myself feeling a loss. In just two and a half days, this father-son team completely endeared themselves to me. The most important thing I gained was the understanding that I want to be like Kim when I grow up—blessing everyone I meet!

and knew their subject matter well (and not just academically, but also through personal experience). Dr. Harry Allen's, Scott Kupferman's, Michael Millington's and Dan Croteau's subjects were fairly diverse, but it was quite enjoyable sitting in their sessions. You and your staff adhered fairly well to the agenda, and the day flowed quite well. I, along with others, were disappointed that some presenters had to make last-minute cancellations, but that was certainly beyond anyone's control. I look forward to next year's conference.

Sincerely,  
Fred Cheung, MS, CRC  
Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor  
Department of Rehabilitation

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## When is it Going to Happen?



The official inauguration for the Center for Disability Innovation (CDI) took place on September 26 at the Fresno Convention Center. The ambitious project combines a vision of green building, accessibility, and a combination research, education, and direct services facility. Uniquely, the building will transform itself to the needs of its visitors.

During the event, Charles Arokiasamy described the innovative features of the building, along with its vision for serving people with disabilities. In attendance were members of the CDI Steering Committee, which included members from the Center for Independent Living (CIL), Agilent Technology, and Fresno Economic Development Corporation, among others. The Center is a specially designed cooperative of the CSU Fresno Rehabilitation Counseling Program, the Center for Independent Living, the Department of Rehabilitation.

## What's for Dinner? Who Cares!

The Center for Independent Living held its 32nd Annual Awards Dinner this year. Making it an even more special event than usual, it was held as part of the Western Regional Disability Conference! Attendees came from a wide range of agencies, including Fresno County Behavioral Health, Fresno/Madera Area Agency on Aging, The Whitney Foundation, and Exceptional Parents United, among others.

Winner of the Olegario D. Cantos VII Award, Tony Sauer, gave the keynote speech. Scott Kuperman, a 2007 graduate from Fresno State's Rehab program and current A.T. Specialist at CSU Sonoma, received the Alfred R. Thompson Award. Community Advocate Awards were given to Tony Miranda, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, and Manuel Hernandez from Fresno Parks and Recreation. Three CIL-Fresno consumers earned awards: Suzie Badillo, Robert Hoffman, and Olga Arredondo.

## Who's Hot?



Jennifer Stoddard was awarded the *2008-2009 Rehabilitation Service Administration's Commissioner's award*—the highest award for RSA scholars in the country. Jennifer received the award at the RSA/CSAVR/NCRE Awards luncheon in Washington DC on Nov 7.

At the same conference, Dottie Barnes, Erica Eastes, David Keoshey, Imelda Martinez, and Charles Arokiasamy presented their research—Combining education and service: Preliminary data on a promising practice. Congratulations!

## When in San Diego...



## Wow! Thank you!

Our most recent donors:

Sherry Gurrola  
Bonnie Rusko  
Maegan Dabb  
Sandra Kennedy  
Jennifer Stoddard  
Priscilla Villalobos  
Susan Edington  
Kevin Carr  
Hideki Yatobe  
Bob Hand  
Hide Yatabe  
Priscilla Guest  
Claudia Gutierrez  
Rosa Avalos  
Gloria Gomez  
Jennifer Kungu  
Anthony Ayodele  
Sara Gordon  
Natalie Hardy  
Yolanda Nunez  
Agni Fernandez  
Timothy & Lillian Fillpot  
Mai Nou Vang  
Carissa Harvey

## Who's Got Passion?



Fresh off the WRDC, Fresno State Rehab Counseling students traveled to San Diego for the NRCA conference. The Professional Development Symposium took place from October 2-4 and featured training from some of the top rehabilitation professionals and educators in the nation. Antony Ayodele, a third-semester student

recalls the unique experience:

"We were the only students at the conference. The experience will forever be embedded in my memory. It felt like we were one of them, as if we had been in the field practicing and were relating back our experience to others within our professional circle. Being the only students at the conference, I thought, meant we had to hold ourselves to strict discipline and order. Instead, I felt like we were welcomed as colleagues and treated with respect.

Being a part of this program and field continues to drive my passion to become the kind of rehab counselor that changes the face of human service."



Congrats to everyone who was a part of the NRCA San Diego Conference!

Bob Hand	Antony Ayodele
Agni Fernandez	Hide Yatabe
Jennifer Hughes	Nachi Silapachai
Jennifer Kungu	Jessica Vasquez
Sandy Kennedy	Angie Wright
Priscilla Villalobos	Tommy Monreal

## What's Up Natalie?

*Why did you attend the conference?*

CIL-Fresno, where I work, was a co-host to the conference, so I had the opportunity to get involved.

*What was most memorable to you?*

I really enjoyed Kim and Fran Peek and Ollie Cantos keynote addresses; they were very inspiring. Also casino night with Kim and Fran was a blast.

*Did you learn anything?*

I learned a lot, especially from the session about the transitioning process for students with disabilities from high school to college. Another lesson was realizing how many wonderful people there are locally and nationally that are willing to lend a hand. The presenters were all very friendly and available to talk to.

*Thanks Natalie!*

## Wow! Congratulations.



I want to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone who worked on the inaugural Western Region Disability Conference.

I valued how those who came from out of town to speak were taken care of. I overheard different speakers who were really touched by being "taken care of".

When you come from out of town to a conference, you often have to work at getting where you need to be and finding your way around. Those who were "hosts" were so valuable to the speakers. It was not just that they appreciated it, but I think they really felt honored by the thoughtfulness of it all.

I sensed that those who attended were energized by your students' participation as hosts, monitors, and speakers. One of the attendees even said that she was ready to come join the program!

—Dr. Carol Rankin, Rh.D.

## Who Brought You This Newsletter

*Editor:* Jesse Phimphila

*Co-editor:* Lynette Quinto

*Graphics:* Monica McFarland

*Editorial Staff:* Amy Guinn, Camille Gaston, Rosio Azua-Valdez

If you have any comments, questions, suggestions, please contact Jesse Phimphila at

[jphimphila@gmail.com](mailto:jphimphila@gmail.com)

*We are changing the face of  
human service.*