Reflections on the Past Year

October is a great time of year. I started my tenure as the new Executive Director at the Disability Community Resource Center (DCRC) last October and it’s been an awe-some ride so far! The DCRC is on a solid path to new and exciting opportunities for growth and engagement with our community and I could not be prouder of our professional Board, incredible staff, energetic Community Advisory Council and supportive members who have all contributed to the Center’s success.

Our biggest item of news is the approval by LA City Council to move forward with a joint venture with the DCRC to redevelop our current site to bring the country’s first 100% accessible permanent supportive housing to Mar Vista to serve both people with disabilities and seniors on the same site as a new state-of-the-art universally designed headquarters! This project will serve as a model for how to create intentional communities where people with disabilities and seniors can thrive, age in place and live with dignity. The DCRC has joined with other homeless housing advocates to address the social and moral crisis facing our community by raising awareness of the life and death impact homelessness has on our most vulnerable populations. Stay tuned for more updates as this project moves forward in the year ahead!

October is also National Disability Employment Awareness Month! I can’t think of a better way to recognize the important work of Independent Living Centers like DCRC.
Our employment services are among the best in the state because our job developers take the time to really work with job seekers to identify careers not just jobs. Meaningful and fulfilling careers are critical to maintaining independence because work life is tied to both economic stability and personal well-being. DCRC is committed to demonstrating that people with disabilities represent a capable talent pool in a diverse workforce – so make your business stronger and hire us!

Finally, I want to acknowledge our Board of Directors who have been planning our fun fundraiser on October 30th – Drag Queen Bingo at Hamburger Mary’s in West Hollywood! Please come out for this pre-Halloween bash! You can also join our Kroger Co. Family of Stores Community Rewards Program by supporting the Disability Community Resource Center (ID: CQ054) as your community non-profit. Or donate through Amazon Smile while doing your online shopping. If you can’t make our fundraiser, please make a single or monthly PayPal donation. Thanks for making my first year at DCRC such a success! Please continue to support our work – for details go to www.dcrc.co/donate/.
Everyone has their own story. One event can change drastically that story and your life. One thing can happen and you can lose everything. This is what happened with Kim Harary, Peer Specialist Training (PST) Class graduate and current Job Developer for DCRC.

Previously, Kim worked as an administrative assistant in hospital reception. But one fall changed her life. “I fell and broke my shoulder outside the office” remarks Kim. “I lost my job and all my income.” In addition to dealing with her injury, she also had to deal with the mental stress and depression that came with her struggles. On the verge of homelessness and in debt, she dug into all her savings. She got assistance where she could, including help with housing. Searching for resources, she eventually came to DCRC. DCRC connected her with the Department of Rehabilitation and help her with her job search. In order to better understand what she was experiencing, she chose to register for the Fall 2018 session of the PST Class.

Kim feels that the class taught her about the different organizations within the disability community. Rosy Tellez, DCRC’s PSEP Coordinator, was the instructor for the PST Class. Rosy says that Kim “was diligent, persistent, and proactive in researching different programs that could benefit people in her situation and her fellow classmates.” As part of the class, she attended different meetings, including Department of Mental Health (DMH) and National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) meetings. She shared her experiences in dealing with these and other disability related organizations with other peers, believing in the need for people with disabilities to advocate for each other.

After the class, Kim wanted to move into something that would allow her to utilize the skills that she acquired. She worked with Benita, DCRC’s Employment Services Manager, and Colleen Dragovich, a Job Developer at DCRC. They were knowledgeable and helped her to navigate her situation. They kept her on point as she searched for employment. Eventually, a job opening presented itself at DCRC. Thinking she might be a good fit, they encouraged her to apply for the position. Kim applied for the position, and was hired as a Job Developer. Now as part of DCRC, Kim reflected on
her overall experience: “I think DCRC does valuable work. It always advocates for the community and its members in their various stages of disability. Being a Job Developer allows me to complement their story, and help them to help themselves, because ultimately it is their life and journey.” She encourages others to apply for the PST Class, as a valuable tool in self advocacy.

Kim is looking forward to the upcoming expansion of DCRC. She hopes that the redevelopment of DCRC’s current site into a new site with accessible permanent supportive housing allows DCRC to be “a beacon for the community.”

We are glad to have you here as part of DCRC’s story, Kim!
The Right Talent, Right Now and Workplace Accommodations

by Marielle Kriesel

DCRC is participating in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. This year’s theme is “The Right Talent, Right Now”

“Every day, individuals with disabilities add significant value and talent to our workforce and economy,” said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. “Individuals with disabilities offer employers diverse perspectives on how to tackle challenges and achieve success. Individuals with disabilities have the right talent, right now.”

One aspect of your employment may be to request a workplace accommodation. It is important to know you have this right. Under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability. This means engaging in interactive process with you, the employee, to make the workplace readily accessible and useable so you are able to perform the essential functions of the job you were hired to do.

For example, an employment accommodation may include but is not limited to job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquiring or modifying equipment, appropriate adjustment to or modification to exams, trainings or policies, providing qualified interpreters and other similar accommodations. It is your right under the ADA to make a request for a reasonable accommodation and expect your employer to work with you in achieving
an inclusive workplace as long as the reasonable accommodation is not an undue burden for your employer. Providing reasonable accommodations is essential to investing in an inclusive workplace where everyone is able to contribute their talents and achieve!
App of the Month: Evernote

by Jay Aquino

Evernote is a note taking app that allows the user to access information they input exactly when they need it. Although there is a default note taking app available for smart devices, this is a more robust option that can assist people with memory loss or learning disabilities. Whether the user chooses to type the notes or scan handwritten notes, you can also add to-do’s, web pages, audio, images, photos, etc. And this information is searchable instantly. Evernote allows the user to synchronize across devices and organize the notes as needed.

Here are the app’s main features:
• All thoughts and ideas can be captured as notes, notebooks, checklists, and to-do lists that are instantly searchable.
• The notes can be created in different formats, including sketches, texts, photos, screenshots, audio, web pages, image files, etc.
• The app’s camera can scan and digitize documents, handwritten notes, business cards, whiteboards, drawings, and more so they can be organized.
• Synchronization is possible across computers, phones, and tablets by creating an account with Evernote or using a Google account. This allows the user to work across multiple devices.
• There is an option to add a passcode lock to the app for additional privacy.
• The user can share and discuss with the people who they work with also using the app.
• The user can create agendas, memos, presentations, and more for business.

Screenshot of some templates in Evernote
The documents can be annotated and shared. There are additional options available with Evernote Premium.

Evernote offers solutions for diligent note takers and people with disabilities as an assistive technology. The additional features give the user the option to save and create searchable notes with additional information beyond text. It can be used at work, at school, or even in everyday life.

This app is available in the iTunes App Store and the Google Play Store.
Upcoming Events

Domestic Violence and Sexual Awareness Event

When: Friday October 18th
Time: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Where: DCRC Community Room

Silence hides violence; break the silence. Together we can end the violence!

- Guest Speaker
- Share your story
- Resources
- Wear your denim

Halloween Drag Queen Bingo

When: Wednesday October 30th
Time: 7:00 pm
Where: Hamburger Mary’s at 8288 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046

The night before Halloween just got interesting! The DCRC is partnering with Bingo Boy for a night of the world-famous DRAG QUEEN BINGO at Hamburger Mary’s in West Hollywood. So save the night of October 30th for costumes, bingo, prizes, an auction and drag queens! There will be celebrity guests and, if that wasn’t enough, a COSTUME CONTEST! Throw on your craziest costume, grab your friends and come out on OCTOBER 30TH for a night of laughs, fun, bingo, camaraderie and drag queens all to help raise money for the work of the DCRC!

DCRC’s Halloween Celebration

When: Thursday October 31st
Time: 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
Where: DCRC Community Room

DCRC is having its annual Halloween Celebration. We will be having a potluck. Bring your favorite dish to share with the community.

We will also be having a contest to see who has the most creative costume and creepiest food.

It will be a spooktakular event!
### Mondays

10:00 am
**Men’s Group**
Support with the stress and frustration of everyday living and other issues affecting one’s well-being.

2:30 pm
**Arts & Crafts**
Express yourself through creative activities and discussion.

3:00-5:00 pm
**Disability Advocacy Training**
*Beginning Sept. 9 - Oct. 28*
- Expand your knowledge of disability rights including the ADA and relevant laws
- Develop a political disability identity and learn advocacy skills
- Achieve your personal and professional advocacy goals to make a contribution.

### Tuesdays

9:30 am
**Grupo de Ayuda Mutua en Español en DCRC**
This is a peer support group specially for Spanish speakers. Come join:
Nuestro grupo de ayuda mutual en español esta aquí para compartir, conocer, crear y vivir las experiencias personales de sus integrantes, atrevés de la motivación y su desarrollo individual para reforzar su propia identidad.

10:00 am
**Walking Group**
Let’s walk to relieve stress! Just 30 minutes of walking a day can improve your aerobic system, digestive system, and sleep.

### Wednesdays

11:00 am
**Women’s Group**
This group provides a judgement-free environment where you can receive support for the many challenges you face as a woman.

2:00 pm
**Recovery International**
A group where members gain skills to lead a more peaceful and productive life in recovery.

### Thursdays

9:00 am
**Violin Lessons**
Free Violin Lessons for beginners by Shawn.

12:30 pm
**Computer Class**
Learn basic personal computer operation and software. To register, please call (310) 390-3611.

4:00 pm
**Writing Group**
A group where members pick a topic or feeling to write about for 30 minutes. The remaining time is used to reflect on insights gained.

5:30 pm
**Recovery International**
A group where members gain skills to lead a more peaceful and productive life in recovery.

### Fridays

10:00 am
**Housing Workshop**
2nd/4th Fridays
Learn about your legal rights as a tenant with disability or an older adult tenant, types of low-income housing and their eligibility criteria, and helpful resources for conducting a housing search. Pre-registration required.

10:30 am and 1:00 pm
**Spanish Class**
Beginner’s class every week to help you increase your skills in conversational Spanish.

11:00 am
**Mindfulness**
Learn how to be present in the moment without regretting the past or worrying about the future.

### Fridays (cont’d)

1:00 pm
**Book Club**
DCRC members pick a book to read and discuss over a period of time. To sign up for the club, please send an email to: naveedhasan2013@gmail.com

3:00 pm
**UpCyCLing Workshop**
Fix and decorate, reinvent Upcycling with Master Creator Theda! Choose projects to keep or donate to organizations such as schools or non-profits. Fun for all ages and skill levels, with friendly competitions/prizes. Pre-Registration Required: please email ureknew@gmail.com