ROUGH EDITED COPY

ASSOCIATION OF PROGRAMS FOR RURAL INDEPENDENT LIVING

IL Conversation

COMMUNITY PROJECT: BEST PRACTICES IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER 4, 2014.

\* \* \* \* \*

THIS IS BEING PROVIDED IN A ROUGH‑DRAFT FORMAT. COMMUNICATION ACCESS REALTIME TRANSLATION (CART) IS PROVIDED IN ORDER TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY AND MAY NOT BE A TOTALLY VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

\* \* \* \* \*

>> GREAT. OKAY, WE'RE GOING TO GO AHEAD AND GET STARTED. HELLO, EVERY ONE, THIS IS ELISSA ELLIS WITH APRIL, I'D LIKE TO WELCOME EVERY ONE TO THE CALL. THIS IL CONVERSATION IS PRESENTED BY THE IL NET, A NATIONAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF ILRU. IT IS A NEW COMMUNITIES OPPORTUNITY, A NATIONAL TRAINING TECHNICAL AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF ILRU AND WAS ORGANIZED AND IS FACILITATED BY APRIL. WE'RE HAPPY YOU COULD JOIN US TODAY AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A LIVELY DISCUSSION. WE HAVE A HOUR AND A HALF SO WE'LL START OUT WITH AN INTRODUCTION OF OUR SPEAKER AND THEN WE WILL OPEN IT UP AT THE END FOR Q AND A. WE WANT TO MAKE THIS CONVERSATIONAL AS POSSIBLE, YOU KNOW QUESTIONS WILL COME UP THROUGHOUT AND WE WILL OPEN IT UP AT THE END SO WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU GUYS.

 A LITTLE HOUSEKEEPING BEFORE WE START. FIRST THE APRIL WEBSITE WWW.APRIL‑RURAL.ORG, PRINT DOCUMENTS AND LINKS ARE THERE. THE LINK TO THE CART IS UP AND THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE CALL WILL BE UP SHORTLY AFTER THE CALL FINISHES. WE ARE PROVIDING CART CAPTIONING SERVICES TODAY AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THEM ON THE APRIL WEBSITE. NOTICE THE HIGHLIGHTED LINK AND YOU WILL FIND A LINK TO THE CART SO IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS YOU CAN SUBMIT THEM THERE AND I WILL GET THEM IN WHEN THERE'S A BREAK. I'D LIKE TO ASK EVERY ONE TO PUT YOUR PHONES ON MUTE USING STAR 6 ONCE WE BEGIN THE PRESENTATION.

 SINCE THIS IS A BRIDGELINE, IT'S PRETTY SENSITIVE TO ANY BACKGROUND NOISE AND WILL EVEN PICK UP PAPER SHUFFLING, SO IF YOU WOULD, PLEASE ... \*6

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR CALL ON HOLD!!IF YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF ANSWERING SYSTEM, THIS WILL DISRUPT THE ENTIRE CALL AND WE WILL HEAR YOUR ANSWERING LOOP UNTIL YOU PICK THE PHONE BACK UP, SO, NO CALLS ON HOLE. I ALSO WANT TO REMIND FOLKS THAT CELL PHONES AND SPEAKER PHONES TEND TO CAUSE QUITE A BIT OF DISTORTION ON THE LINE, IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A LAND LINE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU WOULD USE THAT. I UNDERSTAND THAT NOT EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO A LAND LINE.

 ONCE WE GET TO THE Q AND A PART I WILL TRY TO MODERATE THE DISCUSSION BUT IF EVERY ONE WILL BE COURTEOUS AS POSSIBLE, AND NOT TALK OVER EACH OTHER, THAT WOULD BE GREAT. NOW I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU A LITTLE ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS TODAY.

 MOLLY GOSLINE IS IN HER 11TH YEAR AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FLORIDA INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC. ("FILC"). MS. GOSLINE GRADUATED SUMMA CUM LAUDE FROM FLORIDA'S ST. LEO UNIVERSITY, WITH DEGREES IN CRIMINOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY.IN ADDITION TO THOSE RESPONSIBILITIES SHE CURRENTLY SERVES ON THE NCIL REHABILITATION. FLORIDA'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, WAS APPOINTED TO THE FLORIDA'S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TRANSITION TASK FORCE AND MOST RECENTLY SHE WAS ELECTED TO BE THE SILC REPRESENTATIVE.

>> THIS IS APRIL.

>> HELLO, APRIL. WE ALSO HAVE SIERRA ROYSTER WHO WORKS AT THE ALLIANCE OF DISABILITY ADVOCATES CIL IN RALEIGH AS THE YOUTH ADVOCACY AND OUT REACH SPECIALIST. SIERRA, WITH HER EXPERIENCE AS A PERSON WITH A SYSTEMIC DISABILITY AND EDUCATION IN RECREATIONAL THERAPY COORDINATES A YOUTH LEAD PROGRAM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 30 AND BELOW.SHE IS A BOARD MEMBER OF APRIL.

 RENE CUMMINS IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ALLIANCE OF DISABILITIES IN RALEIGH THAT SERVES FIVE COUNTIES. PRIOR TO BECOMING THE ED OF ALLIANCE, RENE WAS THE ACCESS SPECIALIST AT THE NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE ON DISABILITY AND HEALTH AND SERVED AS A CONSULTANT ON ALL OF THE PROJECTS THROUGH THAT OFFICE. SHE EARNED A BACHELOR IN PSYCHOLOGY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST FROM NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY TO REINFORCE HER PASSION FOR ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING ON BEHALF OF THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY.

 OUR FINAL TWO SPEAKERS TODAY WILL BE JIM BAKER AND JESS TOURTELLOTTE, I HOPE I'M SAYING THAT CORRECTLY. JIM BAKER IS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RESOURCE SERVICES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA WITH OVER 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN NONPROFIT HUMAN SERVICES MANAGEMENT. VARIOUS POSITIONS HAVE INCLUDED TEACHER, CASE MANAGER, DIRECTOR OF HEAD START, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF VARIOUS RESIDENTIAL AND VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY AND SUPPORTED LIVING PROGRAMS. SCRS WITH TWO CENTERS AND VARIOUS EXTENSION SERVICES, OPERATES THE LARGEST YOUTH PROGRAM IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AND LARGEST EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM THROUGH VOC REHAB IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA. JIM HAS TWO STRONG PASSIONS, OBSERVING WITHIN THE LGBTQ AND THE DISABILITY COMMUNITIES, DISCRIMINATION AND DISREGARD FOR LGBTQ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. HE HAS BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR OUT REACH AND INCLUSION FROM BOTH SIDES. ALSO ENGAGING AND MENTORING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS, THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT TO BECOME STRONG ADVOCATES AND LEADERS IN SCRS.

 JESS IS A YOUTH ADVOCATE FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RESOURCE SERVICES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING. JESS ENJOYS EVERY SECOND OF HER JOB. AFTER 20 PLUS YEARS SHE BELIEVES SHE HAS FINALLY FOUND HER NICHE THANKS TO JIM. ALSO CO‑FACILITATES THE CENTER'S LGBTQ‑D SOCIAL NETWORK. SHE HAS BEEN A LIFETIME ACTIVIST AND ADVOCATE IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY AND FOUND HER PLACE WITHIN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT WHEN SHE WAS A POLICY INTERN FOR NCIL. SHE RECEIVED HER BACHELOR OF ARTS FROM THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE IN HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE WRITING. SHE ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO AND IS CURRENTLY FINISHING HER MASTER'S OF SCIENCE IN DISABILITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.WE ARE GOING TO GET STARTED, I AM GOING TO TURN THE CALL OVER TO MOLLY GOSLINE TO GET IS STARTED OFF.

>> THANK YOU, GOOD AFTERNOON, YOU GUYS. I HOPE YOU ARE ENJOYING THE LAST OF THE SUMMER AND BEGINNING OF FALL HERE NEXT WEEK, I THINK. AND I DO REALIZE THAT I AM NOW GOING TO HAVE TO CHANGE MY BIO BECAUSE THE OTHER INDIVIDUALS WERE JUST TOO COOL. THANK YOU FOR THAT. AGAIN MY NAME IS MOLLY GOSLINE, I WANT TO LET YOU KNOW I MAY HAVE SEVERAL OF OUR YOUTH MEMBERS ON THE CALL AS WELL, SO WHAT WHENEVER I MESS UP I HOPE THEY WILL FIX AT THE END OF THIS. TO GIVE YOU A LITTLE BACKGROUND, THE FLORIDA INDEPENDENT COUNCIL IS A NOT FOR PROFIT 501C 3 CORPORATION ESTABLISHED IN 1999 BY FLORIDA STATUTE. 413 IN CASE ANYBODY CARES, IT'S ATE FEDERALLY MANDATED CONSUMER CONTROL.

 WE ARE NOT ESTABLISHED WITH ANY STATE AGENCY INCLUDING OUR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT NOW OR SOON TO BE CALLED DESIGNATED STATE ENTITY AND WE ARE ‑‑ DO HAVE A FORMAL RELATIONSHIP THROUGH A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH THE DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND BLIND SERVICES WITH THE COUNCIL TO BE ABLE TO OPERATE AS THE FLORIDA SILC. JUST TO START IN, IN 2008, THE STATE WIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL IN FLORIDA ALONG WITH A NETWORK OF CENTERS HELD ITS FIRST YOUTH SENATE IN TALLAHASSEE, WHICH IS FLORIDA'S CAPITAL FOR YOUTH BETWEEN 15 AND 27 YEARS OLD. THESE YOUTH WERE CHOSEN BY EACH OF THOSE 17 FLORIDA CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING HERE IN FLORIDA BY UTILIZING A REVIEW PROCESS WITH GETTING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THEIR CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING TO COME TO TALLAHASSEE FOR THE TWO DAY EVENT.

 THE GOAL IN 2008 WAS TO TRAIN FUTURE LEADERS, ADVOCATES AND PUBLIC SPEAKERS REGARDING PUBLIC ISSUES IN FLORIDA AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

THE SENATE WAS ALSO BASED ON THE MODEL OF ED ROBERTS AND THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MODEL TO TEACH THEM ABOUT INDEPENDENT LIVING HISTORY. THE YOUTH SENATE FOCUSED AT THE TIME ON HOW QUOTE, UNQUOTE, HOW TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE WHICH THE GROUP CAME TO TALLAHASSEE WITH A PROFESSIONAL FACILITATOR, WAS TRAINED IN TOPICS SUCH AS HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW, HOW THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WORKS, HOW TO TALK TO THE LEGISLATOR AND AT THAT POINT THEY WERE ‑‑ THEY CHOSE THREE TOPICS FOR PENDING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD AFFECT YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. THEY THEN PRACTICED WITH EACH OTHER AND WITH COUNCIL MEMBERS ABOUT HOW TO SPEAK TO LEGISLATORS ABOUT A PARTICULAR TOPIC OF INTEREST THAT WAS CURRENT AND, AGAIN, POSSIBLE LEGISLATION TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK TO AND/OR AGAINST IT.

 THE YOUTH MADE THEIR OWN APPOINTMENTS, VISITED THEIR LOCAL LEGISLATORS AT THE CAPITOL DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION. THEN WERE ACCOMPANIED BY STAFF AS WELL AS COUNCIL MEMBERS AND THE EVENT WAS A BIG SUCCESS. THE SECOND YOUTH SENATE WAS HELD IN 2010, WE UTILIZED THE PREVIOUS ATTENDEES THAT CAME IN 2008 AS MENTORS FOR THE NEWBIES. THE SAME PROGRAM WAS PRETTY MUCH UTILIZED AND PROVED TO BE PRETTY SUCCESSFUL. OVERALL DURING THOSE TWO YOUTH SENATES, 50 YOUTH PARTICIPATED AND WERE TRAINED IN THESE SESSIONS WHICH WAS A PERIOD OF FIVE DAYS. IN BETWEEN THEM THEY WERE ALSO GIVEN ASSIGNMENTS TO WORK ON IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES AND TO BE ABLE TO COME BACK, AT LEAST THE MENTORS WERE. THEN IN 2011 THE REHABILITATIVE SERVICES ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS RSA PERFORMED A SITE VISIT HERE AT FLORIDA SILC.

 AMONG OTHER ISSUES FLORIDA WAS REPRIMANDED FOR PROVIDING ANY TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE YOUTH. IT WAS STATED WE WERE NO LONGER ABLE TO USE FEDERAL DOLLARS TO HOLD ANOTHER YOUTH SENATE OR TECHNICAL SERVICES AND, UNFORTUNATELY THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION IN THE STATED TO CONFORM WITH THE RSA'S DECISION. THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WAS IN DISPUTE. I'M SORRY, OKAY, THAT IS NOT US. [PHONE RINGING] THE COUNCIL GOT TOGETHER AND DURING THE WRITING OF OUR STATE PLAN BETWEEN THE NETWORK OF CENTERS, THE CVR AND SILC STARTED TO BRAINSTORM AND THINK WHAT IS ANOTHER WAY THAT WE CAN KEEP THESE GUYS ENGAGED, TRAIN FUTURE LEADERS, CONTINUE TO DO WHAT WE STARTED DOING WITH THESE YOUTH SENATES. SO WE DECIDED TO WRITE INTO THE 2011‑2013 PLAN A YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, THAT THEY WOULD BE ESTABLISHED IN ORDER TO ADVICE THE COUNCIL ABOUT YOUTH TRANSITION THAT WOULD BE INCLUDED. WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY IDEA IF THIS APPROACH WOULD WORK, ALTHOUGH WE ACTUALLY REALLY BELIEVED THAT IT WOULD NOT, BUT THE SILC WAS ACCEPTED BY RSA AND THE YAC WAS CREATED.

 INSTEAD OF HOLDING A SEPARATE MEETING THE YOUTH WILL ATTEND SILC, ATTENDING AT LEAST TWO MEETINGS A YEAR. IT WAS MIND BLOWING THAT IT WENT INTO IT AND RSA ACCEPTED IT ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD NOT LET US TRAIN THE SAME YOUTH TO BE ABLE TO COME TO A CONFERENCE ONCE A YEAR. SO WE JUST DECIDED WE WOULD HAVE THEM COME TO MANY OF OUR MEETINGS. THE NETWORK OF CENTERS ‑‑ I'M SORRY, SO SORRY. THE LANGUAGE THAT WE USED, IN CASE YOU ARE INTERESTED, WE CALLED IT, I'M SURE EVERYBODY IS WONDERING ABOUT WHAT DID WE PUT INTO THE CIL. WE CALLED THE NAME YOUTH TRANSITION AND THEN THE GOAL DESCRIPTION WAS TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY INTEGRATION VIA YOUTH TRANSITION AND OUR OBJECTIVE WAS TO INCREASE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH IN THE DISABILITY INDEPENDENT LIVING OVER 5% OVER THE STATE PLAN AS COMBINED BY THE 704 REPORT OF THE CENTERS.

 THEN WE DEVELOPED A STRATEGY TO ESTABLISH A SILC YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ASSIST IN THE EVALUATION OF THE STATE PLANNED GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES REGARDING TRANSITION ACTIVITIES DURING AT LEAST TWO MEETINGS ANNUALLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR FULL COUNCIL MEETING. SO, AFTER THE CIL WAS APPROVED IT WAS CREATED. THEN WE DECIDED, OKAY, WOW, WE DID THIS SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE, HOW DO WE DO THIS? AT THIS POINT IT'S STILL THE COUNCIL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO MANEUVER THIS. AT THIS POINT WE STILL DIDN'T REAL IDEAS THE YOUTH HAD A HUGE SAY IN HOW THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN, BUT I'M JUST GIVING YOU A LITTLE HISTORY LESSON HERE. SILC REVISITED THE YOUTH THAT WERE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PREVIOUS YOUTH SENATE IN THE 2008 AND 2010 ONES I TALKED ABOUT EARLIER AND WERE ACTIVE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND IN THEIR CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING AND SCHOOLS AND WHO STILL WANTED AND HAD A STRONG DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP A SYSTEM CHANGE IN FLORIDA.

 12 YOUTH WERE CHOSEN BASED UPON THE CRITERIA FROM THEIR PAST PERFORMANCE, COUNCIL AND CENTER RECOMMENDATIONS. THE YACS, I'M GOING TO QUIT CALLING THEM YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE, YACS HAVE MET IN CONJUNCTION AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR SINCE 2011. ISSUES THEY'VE WORKED ON AND I'M SO PROUD OF THIS IS THEY HAVE MADE REVISIONS TO THE NATIONAL GENERAL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA TESTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OUT SOURCES TO PRIVATE COMPANIES. WHO HAD NO REAL UNDERSTANDING OF ACCOMMODATING A YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY AND IN FLORIDA WERE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN A PROCESS OF DENYING TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MANY YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. THE YACS WORKED WITH DISABILITY RIGHTS FLORIDA AND THE COUNCIL TO IMPLEMENT CHANGES. SEVERAL YOUTH WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY DENIED AN APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION TO TAKE, LET ALONE PASS THEIR GED WERE ALLOWED ACCOMMODATIONS AND PASSED, TWO WERE YACS. THERE'S A CLASS ACTION IN THE WORKS TO CEASE THE DISREGARD OF ACCOMMODATIONS.

 THE YOUTH WORKED WITH DAVIS HUMAN I OF YOU KNOW TO WRITE HISTORY WEEK TO BE TAUGHT DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER AND ALTHOUGH IT HAS NOT PASSED IT GETS CLOSER EVERY YEAR TO BECOMING LAW. LAST YEAR IT DIED ON THE LAST DAY OF SESSION BUT WE ALREADY HAVE THE SPONSORS AND THE YACS WILL BE CONTINUING TO WORK ON ELEMENTARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO BE ABLE TO HAVE A DISABILITY HISTORY WEEK, JUST LIKE THEY HAVE OTHER WEEKS PROMOTING VARIOUS PEOPLE. WE ARE REAL PROUD OF THAT. THEY WORK CLOSELY WITH THE FLORIDA'S ADA AND SAFETY COORDINATOR FOR DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION REGARDING LACK OF ACCESSIBILITY OF MANY FLORIDA STATE PARKS. AS A RESULT YACS WERE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DRIVE AN ALL‑TERRAIN VEHICLE THAT PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO USE TO ENJOY THE TRAILS IN OUR PARKS. WE HAVE WONDERFUL PICTURES OF THAT, BY THE WAY.

 THE YAC WERE INVITED TO BE PART OF A RADIO STATE WIDE BROADCAST CALLED TEEN 411 TO DISCUSS BULLYING ISSUES AS WELL AS THE DISABILITY WEEK ‑‑ DISABILITY HISTORY TOPIC WEEK IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT BE TAUGHT TO ESPECIALLY ELEMENTARY AGED CHILDREN. THE YACS HAVE DEVELOPED THEIR OWN APPLICATIONS, SCORING SHEETS, BYLAWS, MISSION STATEMENTS AND THEIR OWN GOALS. THEN IT GOT TO THE POINT WHERE THE COUNCIL WAS STILL KIND OF STEERING THE BOAT FOR THE YACS AND BECAUSE OF MY INVOLVEMENT IN APRIL AND BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN SUCH SUCCESS IN THE PEER TO PEER YOUTH MENTORING THEY HAVE DONE, THEY TRAVELED AND DID THE FIRST YOUTH TRAINING SYSTEM TO ENCOURAGE THE COUNCIL TO BACK AWAY, LET THE YOUTH TAKE OVER AND LET THE YACS DEVELOP A TRAIN THE TRAINER APPROACH AND SAID THE YACS COULD TAKE THEIR MESSAGE TO THEIR LOCAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES.

 THE YACS HAVE TAKEN THE MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE APRIL YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM AND PRACTICED WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED ON THE COUNCIL, IN FACT DURING OUR LAST MEETING, AND PRIOR TO GOING OUT INTO THE SCHOOLS. THE YACS PROVIDE A REPORT TO SILC AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON TRANSITION ISSUES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. THESE RECOMMENDATIONS AS PUT FORTH FROM YAC ARE THEN CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL AND THEN PUT INTO A PLAN OF ACTION. THE YACS ARE ALSO LEARNING ABOUT ROBERTS RULES, FLORIDA SUNSHINE LAW WHICH IS A WHOLE SEPARATE ISSUE. MANY OF YOU IN OTHER STATES DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT. MEETING REQUIREMENTS AND ARE DEVELOPING THEIR SKILLS IN ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.

 ANOTHER GOAL FOR SILC IS MOVING THESE MEMBERS OF YAC TO BE A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE STATE WIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL AND ONTO THEIR OWN CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING BOARD OF DIRECTORS. TODAY WE HAVE FOUR YACS TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING. DURING THE MONTH OF AUGUST THE 1ST EVER YAC FUND RAISER WAS HELD JUST LAST MONTH. SEVERAL VETERANS GROUPS COORDINATED A POKER RUN, OVER 125 MOTORCYCLES RAISED UNRESTRICTED DOLLARS FOR THE YOUTH. THE EVENT WAS SO SUCCESSFUL THERE IS ALREADY PLANS BY THE ROLLING THUNDER, AMERICAN WOUNDED SOLDIERS TO HOLD ANOTHER. A PRIORITY FOR OUR YACS WILL BE TRANSITIONING TO NURSING HOMES, A NEW LAW IT IS A CORE SERVICE THAT IS NOW MANDATED BY LAW AND THIS WILL BE THE FOCUS. THEY HAVE HELD A STRONG BELIEF THAT THERE ARE OVER 6,000 YOUTH UNDER THE AGE OF 25 RESIDING IN NURSING HOMES AND INSTITUTIONS HERE IN FLORIDA.

 THEY SEEM TO BE COMMITTED TO ASSISTING THE CENTERS IN REDUCING THOSE NUMBERS GREATLY. I'M EXTREMELY PROUD TO WORK FOR A SILC THAT UNDERSTANDS THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING OUR FUTURE LEADERS AND HAVE BEEN WILLING TO BUCK THE SYSTEM AND NOT GIVE UP WHEN THEY WERE TOLD TO DO SO BY THE DSU AND RSA. I'M PROUD OF OUR YACS FOR TAKING THE INITIATIVE AND THE TRAINING THAT THEY HAVE LEARNED THROUGH THE APRIL PEER YOUTH PROGRAM AND TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORNS AND RUNNING WITH IT. IT'S BEEN QUITE AN EXPERIENCE FOR ME AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ISSUES AS WELL ALONG THE WAY, MANY PROBLEMS ALONG THE WAY, BUT WE ARE GETTING STRONGER AND WE ARE ACCEPTING IN THE PROCESS OF ACCEPTING AND EXPANDING THE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROGRAM HERE IN FLORIDA NOW THAT THE SILC IS ABLE TO FUND RAISE BY LAW.

 SO, I DON'T KNOW IF I GAVE MY 15 MINUTES, BUT I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR LISTENING TODAY, I'D BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY OF YOUR QUESTIONS AND PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION, SO, IF YOU GUYS WOULD LIKE COPIES OF THE SILC LANGUAGE OR BYLAWS OR MATERIAL THEY HAVE DEVELOPED, YOU ARE MORE THAN WELCOME TO THEM. WE DON'T BELIEVE IN REINVENTING THE WHEEL. BUT IF YOU WANT THAT, MAKE SURE YOU SENT ME AN E‑MAIL. MY E‑MAIL ADDRESS IS MG@POLARIS.NET. IF YOU WOULD LIKE ANY OF THESE MATERIALS OR ANY OF THE LANGUAGE THAT WAS SPECIFIC TO GET RSA TO AGREE TO LETTING SILC HAVING SUCH A PROGRAM, I'D BE HAPPY TO SEND IT TO YOU. AND JUST AS A PLUG FOR THE APRIL CONFERENCE THAT IS COMING UP, WE ‑‑ ACTUALLY THE YACS, "WE" I STILL HAVE THE MOTHER HEN THING GOING ON, THE YACS WILL GIVE A PRESENTATION HOW FAR THEY HAVE COME, SOME PROBLEMS THEY'VE ENCOUNTERED, NOT JUST IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITY BUT WITHIN THE COUNCIL AND HOW THEY HAVE OVERCOME SOME OF THE BARRIERS AND SOME OF THE RESISTANCE DURING THE APRIL CONFERENCE HERE IN OCTOBER.

>> WONDERFUL. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

>> THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

>> AND, NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO TURN IT OVER TO SIERRA AND RENE AT THE ADA CIL IN RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA.

>> GOOD AFTERNOON, THIS IS RENE, I'M GOING TO START OFF AND THEN HAND IT OFF TO SIERRA. SO, WE STARTED OUR PROGRAM HERE WHEN I HIRED SIERRA WHICH WAS DECEMBER 1,2009, AND I BROUGHT SIERRA ONTO CREATE THE PROGRAM, I JUST PROPOSED IT TO HER AND SAID I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUTH ADVOCACY AND OUT REACH PROGRAM ALLIANCE AND I HAD OUTLINED AT THAT TIME TWO BASIC THINGS I WANTED TO SEE SHE COULD ACCOMPLISH AND SET UP FOR OUR CENTER. ONE OF THOSE WAS TO PROVIDE A MONTHLY SKILL‑BASED GROUP FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS TO MEET HERE AT THE CENTER BUT NOT JUST AS A TYPICAL SUPPORT GROUP OR FOR SOCIALIZATION BUT CENTERED ON SPECIFIC SKILLS THAT THEY COULD BE BUILDING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. AND WITH SIERRA'S BACKGROUND IN RECREATION THERAPY, THIS WAS A VERY GOOD MATCH. SHE WAS VERY ATTUNED TO WHAT I WAS ASKING TO CREATE.

 THE OTHER THING I WANTED TO DO, A LOT BASED ON MY OWN EXPERIENCE OF HAVING BEEN A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY AND NOT HAVING ANY ROLE MODELS AND NOT HAVING INFORMATION THAT WOULD HAVE MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE, I WANTED TO SEE US CREATE A CURRICULUM FOR GOING INTO THE HIGH SCHOOLS AND WE HAVE LOTS OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN OUR FIVE COUNTY SERVICE AREA. THIS AREA IS THE HIGHEST POPULATION OF A SERVICE CENTER IN NORTH CAROLINA AND IT IS GROWING FAST DAY BY DAY. I WANTED TO SEE A CURRICULUM TO GO INTO HIGH SCHOOL TO LEARN THE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT AND KNOWING THEY HAD A HISTORY AND ALL OF THESE SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION AND THINGS THAT WOULD REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS WELL AS HAVING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE ROLE MODELS COME INTO THE SCHOOLS, YOUNG ROLE MODELS, PEOPLE THAT WERE NOT THAT FAR BEYOND THEIR OWN HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE TO JUST BE ABLE TO INTERACT WITH THEM AND GIVE THEM IDEAS AND ENCOURAGEMENT HAVING GONE THROUGH THE SAME EXPERIENCES.

 AND, SO, ADDED TO THAT WAS THE FACT THAT AT THE END OF JANUARY I WAS SERVING ON THE STATE‑WIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL AT THE TIME AND AT THE END OF JANUARY WHEN WE HAD OUR QUARTERLY MEETING, I TOOK SIERRA TO THE COUNCIL MEETING WITH ME. AND AT THAT TIME I HAD BEEN ONE OF THE PROPONENTS OF TRYING TO GET A NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM INTO THE STATE PLAN SO WE COULD START A WHILE AFTER THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA AND AT THAT MEETING WE FOUND THAT THE YOUNG PERSON WHO WAS ON THE COUNCIL HAD RESIGNED AND THEIR COMMITTEE HAD MADE NO PROGRESS TOWARDS PLANNING THAT YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM THAT WAS SCHEDULED TO BE PROVIDED THAT SUMMER, SO I ASKED SIERRA IF SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD TAKE IT ON AND SHE AGREED. SO WE BECAME ALLIANCE BECAME THE CONTRACTOR FOR THAT EVENT AND SIERRA HAS REMAIN AS THE COORDINATOR AND THAT'S ALSO AN IMPORTANT EVENT THAT I FELT STRONGLY IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE IN NORTH CAROLINA SO THAT WE COULD BUILD ON THE EXPERIENCES OF THE CENTERS WORKING WITH YOUTH BUT ALSO TO PROVIDE SOME OF THOSE SAME EXPERIENCES THAT I, MYSELF, FOUND LACKING WHEN I WAS A YOUNG PERSON GROWING UP WITH MY DISABILITY.

 WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL SYSTEMS AS A COLLABORATOR AMONG THE NETWORK TO CARRY OUT THAT LAW BECAUSE ONCE YOU GET A LAW ON THE BOOKS, AS EVERYBODY KNOWS, YOU HAVE THE WHOLE ISSUE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT LAW, SO WE HAVE PROVIDED AN OFFER TO COLLABORATE WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL K‑12 TEACHERS ON COMING IN IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER AND HELPING THEM CARRY OUT THE LAW THAT IS NOW ON THE BOOKS FOR NORTH CAROLINA. THAT'S HOW WE GOT STARTED NOT FIVE YEARS AGO. I'M GOING TO TURN IT OVER TO SIERRA TO FAST FORWARD WHERE THE PROGRAMS HAVE GONE AND WHERE WE ARE NOW.

>> HELLO. SO, WHEN I CAME IN WE HAD A YOUTH GROUP THAT WAS JUST ‑‑ IT HAD BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE AND WHAT WE DID IS WE ENDED UP LETTING THE YOUTH SET THE SCHEDULE FOR THE VERY FIRST MEETING AND FROM THERE THEY HAVE JUST TAKEN OFF. SO WE HAVE A YOUTH GROUP THAT MEETS ONCE A MONTH, SOMETIMES A COUPLE TIMES A MONTH DEPENDING ON WHAT THE FOCUS OF THAT MONTH IS. SO, IN OCTOBER THEY ARE GOING TO A CORN MAZE AND THEN TO THE STATE FAIR ALTOGETHER USING THE BUS LINE FOR THOSE ACTIVITIES. BUT THEY PLAN THEIR SCHEDULE AND THEN WE JUST HELP CARRY IT OUT.

 SO, THEY DO ANY FUNDRAISING THAT IS NEEDED OR THEY DO ‑‑ THEY PLAN FOR WHAT FOOD IS GOING TO BE SERVED FOR THE GROUP, WHAT ‑‑ WHERE SHOULD WE HAVE THE GROUP. YOU KNOW, HOW SHOULD WE MAKE THE INVITATION TO THE GROUP? SHOULD IT BE AN E‑MAIL OR PUT IT ON FACEBOOK AND THEY PRETTY MUCH LEAD IT EACH MONTH. THAT HAS REALLY TAKEN OFF, EVERY YEAR IS A DIFFERENT FOCUS. TWO YEARS AGO THEY HAD HAD A HUGE SELF‑ADVOCACY FOCUS, THEY WANTED TO LEARN SELF‑ADVOCACY SKILLS ONE MONTH, ONE MONTH THEY JUST WANTED TO HAVE DISABILITY SHARING DAY OF LET'S SHARE ABOUT OUR DISABILITIES AND OUR PATH AND BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT IT FREELY AND OPEN AND THEN THE NEXT MONTH THEY HAD HOW TO TALK WITH PARENTS AND HOW TO REALIZE THAT WE ARE AN ADULT TOO AND WE ARE TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD AND WANT CONTROL OVER OUR LIVES AND THIS YEAR WE HAVE HAD A SOCIAL FOCUS. WE'VE GONE TO A BASEBALL GAME, WE ARE GOING TO GO SWIMMING. LIKE I MENTIONED BEFORE, THE CORN MAZE, ALL THOSE SORTS OF THINGS.

 AND THEY, THROUGH THE SOCIAL EVENTS, THOUGH, THEY LEARN SKILLS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE TIME SO WE HAVE ONE GENTLEMAN THAT IS A PART OF OUR GROUP THAT HAS BEEN COMING FOR LONGER THAN I HAVE BEEN WORKING HERE REALLY. AND HE HAS TO WORK ON BUDGETING HIS MONEY AND HOW MUCH MONEY AM I GOING TO BE TAKING TO THE BASEBALL GAME BECAUSE I'M GOING TO WANT TO BUY DISTRIBUTION AND MAYBE A SOUVENIR AND WORK ON BUDGETING THAT. TAKE THE PUBLIC BUS EVERYWHERE WE GO AND IF WE WENT SOMEWHERE THAT IS ON THE PUBLIC BUS LINE, WE WORK ON TRAVELING SKILLS, HOW TO READ YOUR MAP TO GET ON, HOW TO PULL THE STRING OR BUTTON TO GET OFF, HOW TO PUT YOUR MONEY ON, HOW TO BE INDEPENDENT ON THE BUS. THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE DONE WITH OUR GROUP, IT'S GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY AND WHAT OUR FOCUS IS EVERY MONTH AND ALSO THE INTERDEPENDENCE THAT HAS GROWN INSIDE THE GROUP. IT IS A CROSS DISABILITY GROUP FOR PEOPLE 30 YEARS AND YOUNGER SO WE HAVE DIFFERENT DISABILITIES AND DIFFERENT AGES, DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, DIFFERENT BACKGROUND, EVERYTHING, AND WITH THAT IT'S ALLOWED THEM TO KIND OF SUPPORT EACH OTHER, SO IF I CAN OPEN YOUR DRINK, CAN YOU SPELL THE WORD WE'RE WORKING ON NOW?

 WORKING TOGETHER AND IT'S GROWN INTO A GREAT GROUP. PART OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO SUSTAIN OUR PROGRAM, IT STARTED OFF WITH JUST ME BUT IT REALLY GROWN. WE NOW HAVE ONE PERSON ON EXTRA THAT SHE DOES YOUTH GROUPS, SHE IS ABLE TO SPEND MORE ONE ON ONE TIME, SHE WORKS WITH THEM AS ONE ON ONE CONSUMERS SO SHE KNOWS THEIR INDIVIDUAL GOALS AND CAN HIT HOME WITH THEM WORKING IN GROUPS AND MAKE SURE THEY ARE WORKING ON THAT GOAL. A LOT OF TIMES THESE ARE GOALS THEY ARE IN NEED OF DURING THEIR GROUP SOCIALIZATION, THAT KIND OF STUFF. ANOTHER AREA RENE MENTIONED ARE SCHOOLS AND, SO, WE DO GO INTO SCHOOLS. WE STARTED OFF WITH FIVE HIGH SCHOOLS THE FIRST YEAR, DID A PILOT YEAR AND WE SPENT A WHOLE YEAR IN FIVE SCHOOLS, ONCE A WEEK WE GO INTO ONE OF THESE FIVE SCHOOLS TEACHING EVERYTHING FROM DISABILITY HISTORY, SELF‑ADVOCACY, COMMUNICATION, DISABILITY IDENTITY AND RESOURCES, COMMUNICATION AND THEN KIND OF HOW TO WRAP ALL THOSE THINGS TOGETHER TO REALLY NETWORK AND GET TO REACH YOUR GOALS. AND, SO, THAT HAS GROWN NOW TO 23 HIGH SCHOOLS WHICH WE COVER FIVE COUNTIES BUT THE COUNTY WHERE OUR CENTER IS LOCATED HAS 35 HIGH SCHOOLS JUST HERE IN THIS ONE COUNTY.

 IT'S HARD TO FIT INTO THAT SCHEDULE. BUT WE DO OUR BEST AND NOW IT'S AN EIGHT WEEK CLASS SO WE CAN FIT IN 20 SCHOOLS A YEAR. WHAT TYPICALLY HAPPENS IS WE HAVE MORE CLASSES IN A DAY JUST BECAUSE WE'RE AT ONE SCHOOL, WE MAY DO FOUR CLASSES. SO, FOR EXAMPLE ON TUESDAYS RIGHT NOW WE ARE DOING ‑‑ WE SEE 75 STUDENTS ON EVERY TUESDAY THAT WE ARE TEACHING CLASS FOR THE NEXT EIGHT WEEKS. SO WE ARE TEACHING FOUR CLASSES EVERY DAY. WE ARE ABLE TO REACH OUT TO A LOT OF STUDENTS. WE GO OUT INTO THE FIELD IN DISABILITY PROGRAMS, MILD AND MODERATE, THEY BREAK THEM UP IN OUR STATE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY DO IN OTHER STATES. THAT IS MORE CONCRETE IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT THEY LIKE AND DON'T LIKE AND USING THEIR VOICE AND UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES, WE DO IT IN A MUCH MORE CONCRETE WAY AND DO EVERYTHING THROUGH INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES NO MATTER WHAT CLASS WE ARE TEACHING.

 I THINK IT WAS MENTIONED I'M AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST SO I DEFINITELY THINK EVERYTHING SHOULD BE TAUGHT THROUGH AN ACTIVITY AND WE GO INTO THE CURRICULAR ACTIVITY, IT'S LIKE A STUDY HALL BUT JUST FOR STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES THAT HAVE IEPs AND THEY ARE BASICALLY SPENDING EXTRA TIME WORKING ON ANY CORE CLASS WORK THEY HAVE SO WE GO INTO THOSE CLASSES AND WE GO INTO OUR VOCATIONAL TRAINING CLASSROOMS WHICH IS OUR OCCUPATIONAL COURSE OF STUDY PROGRAM WHICH IS WHAT THEY CALL IT HERE. WE HAVE CONTINUED TO GROW THAT PROGRAM BUT ONE THING THAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL IS NOW I SIT ON OUR COUNTY'S SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL AND I ALSO SIT ON THE COUNTY I'M IN INTERAGENCY TRANSITION TEAM LIKE A LOT OF ACRONYMS, LIKE WITT, BUT I SIT ON THOSE TO MAKE SURE THE YOUTH HAVE A VOICE, I'M ON BOTH COUNCILS. THEY HAVE PARENTS ON THERE, TEACHERS ON THERE, MAKING SURE THE YOUTH HAVE A VOICE IN THEIR OWN SCHOOL SYSTEM.

 THIS IS WHAT WORKS, THIS IS WHAT DOESN'T WORK AND MAKING SURE THE STUDENT ARE DEFINITELY THERE SITTING AT THE TABLE AND IF THEY ARE NOT I'M BEING THAT VOICE, A LOT OF TIMES THIS WAS MY EXPERIENCE. TYPICALLY I'M THE YOUNGEST PERSON SITTING AROUND THE TABLE SO THAT KIND OF WORKS OUT. AND SINCE I'M IN THE SCHOOLS SO MUCH I'M WORKING WITH THE STUDENTS, I KNOW WHAT IS WORKING AND I'M ABLE TO SIT WITH THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT AND SAYING, NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT THEY ARE GETTING AT THIS LEVEL. THAT'S GREAT THEY HAVE A BULLYING POSTER UP BUT HOW ARE THEY GETTING THE BULLYING MESSAGE BESIDES THE POSTER, BRINGING IT HOME WHERE STUDENTS ARE ABLE TO GRASP A LOT OF THAT. SO, THAT IS ONE OF OUR MOST FAST GROWING GROUPS AND I THINK WE GO TO THE SCHOOLS, LIKE I SAID, EIGHT WEEKS AT A TIME AND I THINK WHAT HAS BEEN REALLY KIND OF COOL ABOUT THAT PROGRAM, SOME STUDENT WE HAD BEFORE, WE SAW THEM AS SOPHOMORES, THEY GET SOME OF THE SAME MATERIAL BUT WE TEACH DIFFERENTLY, EACH SECTION HAS ABOUT 20 DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES OR TOPICS THAT CAN BE DISCUSSED WITHIN THAT ONE OVERALL SUBJECT, SO WE ARE ABLE TO REALLY PERSONALIZE AND INDIVIDUALIZE THE CLASSES WE DO.

 WITH THAT WE HAVE ONE CLASS THIS PAST YEAR THAT WAS LEARNING ABOUT DISABILITY HISTORY AND JUST GOT REALLY FIRED UP ABOUT THIS IS SO IMPORTANT, WHY ARE YOU TEACHING IT TO US? WE ARE THE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. WHY AREN'T YOU TEACHING IT TO EVERYBODY ELSE? I UNDERSTAND WE NEED TO KNOW OUR HISTORY BUT THEY NEED TO KNOW OUR HISTORY AS WELL. SO THE GOAL THEY SET FOR THEIR CLASS, THEY LEARNED DISABILITY HISTORY AND WENT OUT TO THE HISTORY CLASSES IN THE SCHOOL AND THEY TAUGHT DISABILITY HISTORY TO THEIR PEERS IN THEIR OWN CLASSES, IN THEIR OWN GRADES, AND, SO, THEY WERE OPEN ENOUGH TO SHARE THEIR DISABILITIES AND SOME OF THEIR EXPERIENCES ON HOW THEY WERE BULLIED AND HOW THEY ARE STILL BULLIED AND HOW PEOPLE TREAT THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE IN A CERTAIN CLASSROOM OR HAVE THE DISABILITY LABEL PER SE.

 SO, THAT'S KIND OF BEEN AN OUTCOME IS THE TEACHERS HAVE REALLY RALLIED AROUND A LOT OF WHAT IS TAUGHT AND KIND OF EXPANDED THAT INTO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE SCHOOLS. I KNOW THAT SOME SCHOOLS HAVE ACTUALLY DONE A ASSEMBLIES ON DISABILITY AWARENESS AFTER WE HAVE LEFT AND MAKING SURE THAT ALL THE SCHOOL UNDERSTANDS AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT, NOT JUST THEIR STUDENTS AND IN EXPLAINING HOW THAT WORKS FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, HOW IT WORKS FOR YOUR JOB WHEN YOU GET INTO A WORK FIELD, EVERYBODY NEEDS TO KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T BE DISCRIMINATORY TOWARD PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SO THEY HAVE REALLY EXPANDED THAT. AND, SO, THAT'S REALLY KIND OF NICE.

 AND ONE THING ABOUT CONNECTING THE SCHOOL WITH OUR CENTER IS THAT WE HAD ONE GROUP THAT WAS DOING SOME TRAVEL TRAINING, THEY'VE WORKED WITH OUR TRAVEL TRAINER WE HAVE ON STAFF AND TALKED ABOUT HOW TO TAKE THE BUS ROUTE TO OUR CENTER SO WHEN THEY GRADUATE OR WHILE THEY ARE IN SCHOOL OR COME TO A YOUTH GROUP THEY KNOW HOW TO GET ON THE BUS SYSTEM, GET HERE AND BACK TO SCHOOL OR THEIR HOUSE DEPENDING ON WHERE THEY ARE COMING FROM. THAT WAY THEY ARE ABLE TO GIVE THEM THE NEXT STEP, WE ALWAYS TALK WITH THE STUDENTS, YOUR TEACHER IS WATCHING OUT FOR YOU NOW, HOPEFULLY, BUT WHAT HAPPENS THE DAY YOU CROSS THE STAGE? THEY DON'T GO WITH YOU.

 PARENTS SAY IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD BYE, GOOD LUCK, WHAT DO YOU DO NOW? WE PRESENT IT THE CENTER CAN BE THE NEXT STEP, WE CAN WORK WITH YOU THROUGH THE NEXT STEP UNTIL YOU ARE READY, WE'LL BE THERE KIND OF THING. THAT INFORMATION REFERRAL PIECE, THAT PEER MENTORING AND SUPPORT THAT IS PROVIDED JUST BY BEING IN OUR CENTER, A LOT OF TIMES THEY LIKE TO COME IN AND VOLUNTEER ANYWAYS, SO THAT HAS WORKED OUT VERY WELL. AND COMING TO OUR CENTER AND CONNECTING WITH PROGRAMS AND IF THEY ARE IN THE CENTER THEY AUTOMATICALLY LEARN THE PRIDE PIECE, SINCE EVERY ONE IN OUR CENTER IS ROLLING OR WALKING OR STRUGGLING WITH PAIN ONE DAY OR WHATEVER IT MAY BE, THEY LEARN TO BE PROUD OF WHATEVER THEY HAVE GOT GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE OR HOW EVER THEIR DISABILITY MANIFESTS OR DOES WHATEVER IT DOES IN THEIR BODY. SO, IT REALLY BRINGS AN EMPOWERMENT.

 ANOTHER THING THAT WE'VE STARTED DOING IS OUR HEART CLASS, HEART IS JUST A GREAT ACRONYM TO FIT IN DIFFERENT WORDS BUT IT'S HEALTHY EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY RELATIONSHIP TRAINING. SO, YES, WE CAME UP WITH "HEART" FIRST AND THEN MADE THE WORDS FIT. BUT THAT'S ACTUALLY A RELATIONSHIP CLASS THAT WE TEACH HERE. WE TEACH IT ONCE A YEAR TYPICALLY, IT'S ABOUT FOUR TO FIVE WEEKS, WE TEACH IT IN THE MONTH OF LOVE, SO WE TEACH IT IN FEBRUARY. AND WE WORK ON WHAT IS A RELATIONSHIP, WHO CAN BE IN A RELATIONSHIP, HOW TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE SAFE AND HEALTHY IN RELATIONSHIPS. CONTRACEPTIVES, DIFFERENT THINGS WITH REGARDS TO BEING WITH SOMEBODY, SEX, DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEX AND THEN WE GO INTO STIS, PREGNANCY, ALL OF THOSE TYPE THINGS.

 WE ACTUALLY WORK WITH SEVERAL DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS TO PUT ON THAT CLASS. WE WORK WITH OUR LOCAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTER, THEY COME IN AND TALK ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WHAT IS A HEALTHY AND SAFE RELATIONSHIP AND THEN WE ALSO WORK WITH PLANNED PARENTHOOD EDUCATORS WHO COME IN AND TALK ABOUT PREGNANCY, ADOPTION AND ABORTION. WE BELIEVE IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO EDUCATE THEM ON THEIR RIGHTS AS A PERSON AND NOT THAT WE DON'T PUSH OR ADVOCATE FOR ONE THING OR ANOTHER BUT THEY NEED TO KNOW, THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO AT LEAST CHOOSE AND BE EDUCATED ABOUT THEIR CHOICES. THEN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS COME IN BEFORE AND TALKED ABOUT STIS, CONTRACEPTIVES AND BIRTH CONTROL. SO, THAT'S BEEN VERY, VERY SUCCESSFUL. A GREAT NEED AND USUALLY IT'S MORE PARENTS SENDING US YOUNG PEOPLE GOING WE DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THIS WITH OUR CHILD, YOU DO IT. WHICH SOMETIMES BACKFIRES ON THEM, THEN THEY REALIZE NOW THEY WILL LEARN ABOUT SEX AND MAYBE THAT'S NOT WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND.

 SO WE DEFINITELY HAVE CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS, THIS PAST YEAR WE DID A LOT OF PARENT PRESENTATIONS AND EDUCATION INTO THE COMMUNITY WHAT OUR PROGRAM IS AND HOW PARENTS CAN START THE PROCESS AT A YOUNGER AGE AND NOT WAIT UNTIL THEY ARE 20 OR 30 TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS. ABUSE COULD HAVE HAPPENED, JUST BECAUSE THEIR CHILD HAS A DISABILITY IT DOESN'T CHANGE THEIR VIEW ON RELATIONSHIPS. WE ARE EXPANDING THAT THIS YEAR, WE ARE GOING TO BE WORKING WITH A RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY CENTER SO WE ARE GOING TO BE GOING INTO A RESIDENTIAL FACILITY AND TEACHING RELATIONSHIPS AND ALL THE THINGS THAT GO ALONG WITH THAT AS THEY ARE TRANSITIONING OUT. SO, THAT IS GOING TO BE SOMETHING NEW AND EXCITING THAT WE WILL BE ENTERING INTO.

 AND THEN THE LAST THING WITH THIS KIND OF NOT A LAST THING BUT IT'S THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM. AS RENE MENTIONED WE DO COORDINATE THAT. I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT I COORDINATE BUT THE YOUTH PRETTY MUCH MANY. WE HAVE ‑‑ THE PLANNING COMMITTEE IS MADE UP OF FIVE STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES BETWEEN THE 8TH OF 15 AND 30, THEY PUT TOGETHER THE SCHEDULE, THEY PUT TOGETHER THE ACCOMMODATION NEEDS, THEY PUT TOGETHER APPLICATIONS, FLIERS, BROCHURES, ALL OF IT AND THEN WE KIND OF CARRY IT OUT, WE DO DOTTING THE I'S, CROSSING THE T'S, FUN PART, MAKING SURE PEOPLE GET PAID. WHAT IT DOES IS ALLOWS YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE AND TAKE CHARGE OF SOMETHING. IN CASE I DON'T KNOW WHAT A YOUTH FORUM IS IT'S A WEEK WHERE STUDENT WITH DISABILITY COME LIVE ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS FOR A WEEK, THEY STAY ON THE COLLEGE CAMPUS AND LEARN ABOUT DISABILITY HISTORY, DISABILITY AWARENESS AND CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS, THAT WAY THEY CAN GO BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY AND BE EFFECTIVE CHANGE AGENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITY AND WORK ON INCLUSION IN THEIR COMMUNITY AND MAKING SURE THEIR COMMUNITY PROGRAMS HAVE ACCESS THAT IS SUCCESSFUL FOR EVERYBODY AND EVERYBODY IN THE PUBLIC IS KNOWING, KNOWS WHAT DISABILITY GROUPS THEY ARE IN NEED OF.

 WE NEED RAMPS, YOU MAY NEED LARGE PRINT, YOU MAY NEED SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS, THE YOUTH LEARN IT DURING THE WEEK AND THEN PLANNING IT ALLOWS THEM TO REALLY SEE HOW EFFECTIVE THE CHANGE PART HAS TO BE. MOLLY MENTIONED THE YOUTH CONFERENCE AT THE APRIL CONFERENCE, THAT'S ONE THING WE ALWAYS PICK FOUR MENTORS AT THE END OF THE WEEK THAT REALLY WERE OUTSTANDING MENTORS AND THEY ARE VOTED IN BY THE COMMITTEE AND WE TRY TO TAKE THEM TO THE APRIL CONFERENCE, WE USUALLY ALWAYS HAVE TWO IF NOT MORE. BUT WE BRING TWO YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THAT PLANNING COMMITTEE TO KIND OF SEE WHAT YOUTH PLANNING LOOKS LIKE ON A NATIONAL LEVEL TO KNOW IT'S NOT JUST ‑‑ YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN YOUR RURAL COMMUNITY WHICH SOMETIMES THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL AND THERE'S A BIGGER PICTURE IN OUR STATE, THERE'S A BIGGER PICTURE NATIONALLY. TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THAT CONNECTION AND NETWORK ACROSS THE STATE AND COUNTRY.

 SO, THAT IS OUR YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM WHICH IS NOT REALLY GIVING IT JUST IS FOR HOW MUCH IT DOES, I MEAN HOW MUCH THEY DO, BUT IT'S DEFINITELY A BIG PIECE OF WHAT WE DO HERE. I THINK THAT IS ABOUT IT AND I DON'T KNOW IF I TOOK UP TOO MUCH TIME.

>> NO, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU, SIERRA AND RENE. I'M GOING TO TURN IT OVER TO JIM AND JESS IN CALIFORNIA.

>> I WANTED TO TELL YOU A LITTLE WHERE WE ARE AT. WE ARE IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY IS OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD IN WE ARE ABOUT THE SIZE OF DELAWARE. WE HAVE OCEAN, WE HAVE VALLEYS, WE HAVE MOUNTAINS, WE HAVE URBAN AND RURAL AREAS, BUT OUR DIFFERENCE IS WE HAVE ABOUT 11.5 MILLION PEOPLE. WE ARE THE LARGEST COUNTY IN THE NATION AS FAR AS POPULATION GOES AND SIZE. WE ARE ALSO, IF WE WERE A STATE WE WOULD BE THE 7TH LARGEST STATE IN THE COUNTRY. WE HAVE REALLY POOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, WHETHER YOU ARE IN A PRIVATE CAR OR BUS, 10 MILES COULD BE A TWO HOUR COMMUTE. WE HAVE SIX CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND WE HAVE A DIVERSE POPULATION.

 OUR PRIMARY GROUPS WE HAVE TO FOCUS IN ON BECAUSE THEY ARE SO LARGE ARE HISPANIC COMMUNITY, WE HAVE A LARGE CHINESE AND OTHER ASIAN CULTURES, AFRICAN‑AMERICAN, OF COURSE OUR CAUCASIAN. SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RESOURCE SERVICES INDEPENDENT SERVES 41 CITIES IN EAST EARN AND SOUTHERN LOS ANGELES COUNTY. WE HAVE OFFICES IN BOTH DOWNY AND ALHAMBRA COUNTY CLOSE TO PASADENA. WE WORK WITH PEOPLE IN OTHER LOCATIONS. WE'VE HAD LOTS OF UPS AND DOWNS, YOU FIGURE YOU HAVE IT FIGURED OUT AND THEN LISTEN TO A CALL LIKE THIS AND YOU REALIZE YOU HAVE SO MUCH TO DO. WE PROVIDE VOCATIONAL SERVICES IN FOUR COUNTIES, WORKING IN 20 DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION THROUGH VOC REHAB. WE HAVE A LARGE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND THESE ALL OVERLAP WITH OUR YOUTH SERVICES, OUR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM, WE WRITE GRANTS ON BEHALF OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO OBTAIN AT EQUIPMENT AND HOME MODIFICATIONS AND WE USUALLY RAISE ABOUT $100,000 PER YEAR ON BEHALF OF INDIVIDUALS TO GET THEM WHAT THEY NEED.

 WE ALSO MANAGE TWO HOME MODIFICATION PROGRAMS FOR TWO CITIES WITHIN OUR SERVICE AREA. WE HAVE SUPPORT GROUPS AND NETWORK GROUPS, WE HAVE A WOMEN'S GROUP, MEN GROUP, WE HAVE A LGBTQ WITH DISABILITY GROUP, WE HAVE OUR YOUTH GROUP, WE HAVE A DRUMMING CIRCLE, WE HAVE SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND WE HAVE A YOGA PROGRAM. WE HOLD WORKSHOPS ON INDEPENDENT LIVING TWICE A MONTH, WE ARE A MEMBER OF AN ORGANIZATION CALLED LILAC WHICH IS LIVING INDEPENDENTLY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY WHICH IS SIX SERVICES FORMING AN ASSOCIATION. WE ARE CONNECTED WITH THE ARDC WHICH IS ‑‑ IN LOS ANGELES WE CALL IT THE L.A. WAY, IT'S THE AGING AND DISABILITY CONNECTIONS, WE ARE NOT A FORMAL ARDC BECAUSE WE ARE TOO LARGE AND THEY CAN'T FUND US. BUT WE DEFINITELY HAVE A CONNECTION OF COMPARING RESOURCES WITH EACH OTHER. I ARRIVED HERE AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR A LITTLE OVER THREE YEARS AGO AND IN OUR PROGRAM WE HAD YOUTH SERVICES WERE STARTED, THEY HAD FUNDS TO HIRE A PAR TIME PERSON TO COME IN AND TRY TO COORDINATE YOUTH SERVICES AND THERE WASN'T ‑‑ AND DURING THAT TIME THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RETIRED, THERE WAS NOBODY FOR ABOUT A YEAR, OUR INTERIM PEOPLE, SO SHE DIDN'T GET A LOT OF SUPPORT BUT SHE DID A GOOD JOB TRYING TO DO THE PROGRAM.

 THERE WAS NO PLAN IN PLACE OF HOW TO REPLACE FUNDING ONCE THE FUND WERE GONE AND, SO, THAT WAS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I HAD TO LOOK AT WAS, OKAY, HOW ARE WE GOING TO KEEP THIS PROGRAM GOING? IS IT WORTH KEEPING GOING AND REALLY MADE A DECISION TO SUPPORT YOUTH SERVICES AT THAT POINT. OUR STAFF PERSON WAS IN HER LATE 20s, SHE HAD A SPINAL CORD INJURY AND HAD A LOT OF CONNECTIONS WITH ‑‑ WE HAVE A CONNECTION WITH THE REHAB HOSPITAL ACROSS THE STREET FROM OUR DOWNY LOCATION, AND THIS IS HISTORICALLY HAS BEEN A VERY LARGE HOSPITAL AND RESIDENTIAL SETTING, PEOPLE WITH SPINAL CORD INJURIES BUT IT'S EXPANDED MUCH BEYOND THAT NOW. THE HALO THAT WAS USED BACK IN THE 1950s FOR PEOPLE WITH BROKEN NEXT AND THINGS WAS INVENTED AT THAT HOSPITAL.

 SO WE HAVE A STRONG CONNECTION WITH THEM AND SHE RUNS A YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE AT THAT HOSPITAL FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE WHO ARE INJURED AND THAT HAS BEEN ONE OF OUR EARLY DAY REAL SUCCESSFUL WAYS OF GETTING PEOPLE, YOUNGER PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH HEALTH SERVICES. ALSO, SHE HAD HAD BEEN MAKING SOME CONNECTIONS WITH SOME SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS, BUT YOU CAN IMAGINE WITH THE SIZE OF OUR POPULATION WE HAVE A LOT OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO WORK WITH AND A LOT OF SCHOOLS WITHIN THOSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS, SO WE'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL AT GETTING INTO SOME OF THEM BUT HAVE NOT EVEN MADE EFFORT IN OTHERS JUST BECAUSE OF TIME CONSTRAINTS. TWO YEARS AGO I MOVED HER FROM PART‑TIME TO FULL‑TIME AND THAT WAS ABOUT THE TIME WE HAD TO MAKE A COMMITMENT OF WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH THIS PROGRAM? AND AT THAT TIME I ALSO DECIDED THAT AS WE WERE DOING THE BUDGET THAT WE WERE GOING TO SET ASIDE MONEY OUT OF THE BUDGET EVEN IF IT COST OTHER SERVICES, THAT WE WERE GOING TO COMMIT TO YOUTH SERVICES.

 AND I THINK THAT'S WHERE IT ALL STARTS IS COMMITMENT TO REALLY MAKING THIS WORK BECAUSE THERE WILL BE TIMES YOU FEEL LIKE THROWING YOUR HAND UP AND SAYING IT'S NOT WORTH IT, BUT MAKING THAT COMMITMENT IS ‑‑ ONCE YOU'VE DONE THAT, YOU WORK THROUGH ALL THOSE THINGS AS YOU GO. OVER TIME WE HAD INCREASED SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS AND TO LEADERSHIP, SPOKE AT SCHOOL RALLIES, GOT INVITED TO INDIVIDUALS SCHOOL ROOMS. OUR YOUTH GROUP GREW WELL OVER 100 ATTENDING OUR ACTIVITIES. RECENTLY WE ADDED A SECOND FULL‑TIME STAFF PERSON BECAUSE WE HAVE THE TWO LOCATIONS AND IT WAS JUST GETTING REALLY DIFFICULT TO HANDLE THE WHOLE AREA WITH JUST ONE PERSON, SO WE HAVE TWO FULL‑TIME STAFF NOW, WE ALSO HAVE A REGULAR COLLEGE STUDENT WHO VOLUNTEERS, HE'S BEEN HERE LONGER THAN I HAVE AND HE STARTED OUT WITH THE PROGRAM AND HE'S BEEN LIKE AN EMPLOYEE, IN FACT THERE ARE TIMES THAT WE FOR OUR SUMMER PROGRAM WE DO HIRE HIM ON A TEMPORARY BASIS TO HELP OUT.

 WE ALSO THREE YEARS AGO STARTED OUR LEADERSHIP WEEK, AND THAT IS WITH ONE LOCATION AND THEN WE SPREAD TO FIVE LOCATIONS LAST SUMMER, THIS SUMMER WE DID THREE LOCATIONS. WE GOT AN ADDITIONAL RSA GRANT TO TAKE OVER ‑‑ THERE HAD BEEN SEVEN CENTERS HERE, ONE WAS CLOSED BY RSA AND WE APPLIED FOR THAT GRANT AND GOT THE EAST L.A. AREA, AND WE HAVE SOME OF THE POOREST AREAS IN THE COUNTRY AND SOME OF THE MOST DANGEROUS AREAS. WHEN YOU HEAR ABOUT CRIME IN LOS ANGELES, THIS IS THE AREA YOU DON'T WANT TO BE AT NIGHT. ONE OF THE THINGS WE WERE EXPANDING AND GROWING OUR PROGRAM WITH THAT EXTENSION, IT WASN'T PLANNED BUT IT JUST KIND OF HAPPENED AND I DIDN'T REALIZE THIS UNTIL RECENTLY, I WAS WRITING A GRANT AND OUT OF 38 EMPLOYEES, 12 OF OUR EMPLOYEES ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 35 AND I THINK THAT IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I REALIZED THAT THAT IS PART OF OUR COMMITMENT, NOT ONLY WILL WE, YOU KNOW, PROMOTE YOUTH SERVICES BUT WE ARE ALSO, WE NEED YOUTH WORKING IN OUR PROGRAM AND WE NEED YOUTH BUILDING THE IL MOVEMENT.

 THERE ARE SOME ADVANTAGES, WE ‑‑ ADVANTAGES THEY CAN RELATE TO YOUNGER PEOPLE, THEY HAVE REALLY GOOD COMPUTER SKILLS WHICH I DON'T. THEY HAVE ‑‑ THEY ARE VERY TRAINABLE AND MY APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT IS THERE ARE VERY FEW MISTAKES THAT CAN'T BE FIXED. THERE ARE SOME THAT CAN'T GO FIXED BUT THAT'S USUALLY WHEN I INTERVENE BUT PEOPLE LEARN FROM MAKING MISTAKES AND I USUALLY TELL THEM GO FOR IT, FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO IT AND JUST LET ME KNOW, KEEP ME INFORMED. VERY HIGH ENERGY AND ONE OF THE OTHER THINGS THAT I REALIZED A COUPLE YEARS AGO, I WAS AT THE DINNER AND WE WANTED TO GET TO KNOW THE OTHER CENTERS, THERE WERE PROBABLY 25 TO 30 PEOPLE AT THE RESTAURANT THAT NIGHT, I WALKED IN AND A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE ALREADY THERE AND I NOTICED THE WAY THE TABLES WERE SET UP, THAT THEY WERE KIND OF DIFFERENT GROUPS AND I NOTICED THE GROWN UP TABLE WHICH I'M A GROWN UP, I KNOW THAT, I'VE BEEN THAT FOR YEARS, I'M NOT OLD, JUST GETTING THERE.

 ANYWAY, I NOTICED THE GROWN UP TABLE AND THEY WERE SO SERIOUS TALKING ABOUT SO MANY STRESSFUL THINGS AND I THOUGHT I DON'T WANT TO SIT AT THAT TABLE. AND I LOOKED AT ANOTHER AREA AND THERE WERE OTHER GROUPS AND THEN I NOTICED THAT THE YOUNGER PEOPLE WERE SITTING IN AN AREA AND THERE WAS STILL AN OPENING AT THEIR TABLE SO I SAT WITH THEM. WE HAD THE BEST TIME AND IN LISTENING TO THEM TALK I CAUGHT MYSELF SAYING, OH, NO, YOU CAN'T DO THAT BECAUSE WE TRIED THAT AND IT DIDN'T WORK AND THIS IS WHY IT DIDN'T WORK. AND I DID THAT ABOUT THREE TIMES AND THEN I CAUGHT MYSELF AND I THOUGHT JUST BECAUSE IT DIDN'T WORK FOR ME OR MY GROUP YEARS AGO DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT WON'T WORK FOR THEM TODAY. SO I APOLOGIZED AND I SAID I'M REALLY SORRY, YOU GUYS, THAT I DO NOT WANT TO KILL YOUR ENERGY OR KILL YOUR IDEAS, I WANT TO BE VERY SUPPORTIVE OF WHAT YOU DO AND IF YOU GO FOR THIS STUFF, I WILL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP YOU. I ALSO WANT TO POINT OUT THERE ARE SOME DISADVANTAGE TO HAVING THE YOUTHFUL STAFF. A LOT OF TIMES THEY DON'T HAVE THAT EXPERIENCE AND THEY DO MAKE MISTAKES.

 WE ALSO HAVE HAD EIGHT BABIES BORN IN THE LAST THREE YEARS. ON THE UPSIDE WE CELEBRATED A LOT OF BIRTHS, WEDDINGS, A LOT OF GRADUATIONS AND OVERALL WE HAVE A GOOD GROUP OF YOUTH IN OUR PROGRAM. I'M GOING TO TURN IT OVER TO JESS TO TALK A LITTLE ABOUT THE YOUTH PROGRAM AND SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WE DO AND ESPECIALLY OUR SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM.

>> HI, EVERY ONE. I WANT TO TAKE A MOMENT TO ACKNOWLEDGE MY OTHER HALF WHO COULDN'T BE HERE, DESERIE BECAUSE SHE BUILT THE FOUNDATION OF THIS PROGRAM. I'VE BEEN WITH THE PROGRAM SINCE FOUR OR FIVE MONTHS AGO. BEFORE THAT I HAD 10 YEARS WORKING WITH NONDISABLED YOUTH IN DISADVANTAGED OR FROM THE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM SO IT SEEMED LIKE A NATURAL TRANSITION FOR ME TO GO INTO THE YOUTH PROGRAM. WHAT WE DO, NOW WE HAVE THE TWO LOCATIONS, WE MEET ‑‑ WE MEET TWICE A MONTH.

>> IT WOULD HELP IF YOU PUT THAT PHONE ON MUTE

>> WE ARE GETTING A LOT OF FEEDBACK. EVERYBODY PUT THEIR PHONE ON MUTE.

>> PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE SO THE SPEAKERS CAN BE HEARD.

>> ALLOWING THE YOUTH TO HAVE INDEPENDENT LIVING. WE HAVE A SHARED GOAL WE WANT IT TO BE ABOUT YOUTH BEING EMPOWERED. SOME OF THE THINGS WE DO [INAUDIBLE] LEGISLATORS ABOUT ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT AND ‑‑

>> WITH CAN HE HAVE SOMEBODY MUTE AND HAVE THE SPEAKER START OVER. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO HEAR A SINGLE THING SHE'S SAID.

>> CAN YOU HEAR ME BETTER?

>> YES.

>> OKAY. SO, I WAS ‑‑ I GUESS WHAT I WANTED TO SAY IS DESERIE WHO IS MY OTHER HALF, SHE BUILT THE FOUNDATION FOR THIS PROGRAM AND I CAME IN FIVE MONTHS AGO WITH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH YOUTH WITHOUT DISABILITIES AND BEING A YOUTH GROWING UP WITH A DISABILITY IT SEEMED SUCH A NATURAL THING FOR ME TO GO INTO THIS PROGRAM. THERE ARE SEVERAL COMPONENTS, ONE IS WE HAVE THE YOUTH GROUP THAT MEETS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE YEAR. WE DO HAVE A LOCATION IN DOWNY, ALSO A LOCATION IN ALHAMBRA. OUR GOAL ISN'T TO BE ABOUT A GROUP THAT COMES TOGETHER AND MEETS OUT, WHILE THAT IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT THAT WE RECOGNIZE, WE WANT IT TO BE A GROUP TO HAVE A LOT OF PURPOSE AND EMPOWERMENT AND ADVOCACY.

 SOMETHING WE HAVE DONE IS WE HAVE GONE TO CAPITOL ACTION DAY AND HAD THEM TALK TO LEGISLATORS ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THEM. THE YOUTH HAVE TAKEN A BIG INITIATIVE DURING THE HOLIDAYS THEY DO A FUND RAISER BY DOING BAKE SALES AND THEN THEY SELL THOSE GOODS AND BRING MONEY INTO THE GROUP. AND THEN THEY ALSO ‑‑ DESERIE AND I CREATE THE WORKSHOPS. WE BRING IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORKSHOPS AND SPEAKERS THEY WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM AND SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTED IS ABOUT SSI, THEY HAVE THEIR PARENT HANDLE THE MONEY, THEY WANT TO KNOW HOW DO I HANDLE THE MONEY, WHAT IS IT ABOUT AND HOW CAN I USE IT TO IMPACT MY LIFE AND TRANSITION INTO A PLACE OF MY OWN. WE ALSO HAVE HAD HAD FINANCIAL AID COME AND TALK TO THEM AND SOMETHING THAT WE DO, WE HELP TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL INTO COLLEGE ATMOSPHERE. WHAT WE WILL DO IS ACTUALLY GO TO THE COLLEGE AND HELP INTRODUCE THEM TO THE DISABILITY SERVICES AND WE WILL HELP THEM TAKE THEIR COURSES, WRITE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION, FIND OUT WHAT ARE THE ACCOMMODATIONS I NEED FOR THE CLASS AND HOW DO I EXPRESS TO NOT ONLY TO MY SCHOOL BUT THE ACTUAL PROFESSORS AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MY DISABILITY AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN.

 WE ALSO ‑‑ WE ALSO GO INTO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM FOR THE DISABILITY HISTORY WEEK IN OCTOBER AND WE HAVE GONE INTO INDIVIDUAL CLASSROOMS, WE HAVE ALSO GONE ON TO NOT ONLY TALK TO STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES BUT TALKING TO STUDENT WITHOUT DISABILITIES AND THEIR TEACHER AND TALKING ABOUT DISABILITY AWARENESS. AND, SO ‑‑ IT ALSO BRINGS THE MESSAGE OF DISABILITIES, THAT THEY HAVE A PLACE TO GO AND BE ACCEPTED AND GROW AND THEY COME TO REALIZE I'M NOT ALONE. I THINK THE BIGGEST THING WE DO IS THE SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM. AND EVERY YEAR WE HAVE BEEN DOING IT FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS, EVERY YEAR WE HAVE DONE IT IT HAS GROWN EXPONENTIALLY.

>> IF YOU ARE COMPEL TO HAVE A CONVERSATION THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CONFERENCE.

>> PLEASE HANG UP.

>> GUYS, I DON'T THINK ‑‑

>> THERE'S A GENTLEMAN WHO CONTINUES TO SPEAK.

>> I DON'T THINK IT ONE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS, I THINK IT'S CROSS TALK ON THE LINE. I THINK THE ONLY WAY WE WILL ‑‑

>> I CAN'T HEAR WHAT THE PRESENTER IS HEARING.

>> NOBODY CAN HEAR ANYTHING.

>> CAN WE ALL HANG UP AND CALL BACK IN?

>> NO.

>> I DON'T KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE CROSS TALK. IT'S SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE THEIR PHONE ON MUTE.

>> WELL, I'M HEARING AN ECHO FROM THE SPEAKER AS WELL, SO THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE LINE ITSELF.

>> YES, WE ENCOUNTERED THAT WHEN FOLKS USE CELL PHONES. THERE TEND TO BE AN ECHO FEEDBACK. BUT THE GENTLEMAN WHO IS TALKING ABOUT GREEN BAY AND SO FORTH, THAT MOST LIKELY IS SOMEONE WHO HAS NOT PUT THEIR PHONE ON MUTE. LET'S GO AHEAD, JESS, AND WE WILL TRY TO CONTINUE THIS. PLEASE USE STAR 6 TO PUT YOUR PHONES ON MUTE.

>> ALL RIGHT, THANK YOU. SO, ONE OF THE BIGGEST COMPONENTS WE HAVE IS OUR SUMMER YOUTH LEADERSHIP WEEK WE DO EVERY SINGLE YEAR, WE'VE DONE IT FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS AND EVERY YEAR WE KIND OF LOOK AT AND EVALUATE WHAT AREA IS GOING TO SERVE THE POPULATION BEST THIS YEAR. AND, SO, FOR THIS LAST YEAR WE DID THREE DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, WE DID DOWNY, WE DID EAST L.A. AND WE DID ALHAMBRA, FOR EACH OF THOSE WEEKS WE HAD A NEW GROUP OF YOUTH CAME IN, TOTAL WE SERVED 25 YOUTH.

 AND, SO, FOR EVERY ONE OF THOSE DAYS OF THE WEEK WE FOCUS ON A DIFFERENT TOPIC THAT IS CRUCIAL TOWARD DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS. ONE OF THEM IS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, SO WE HAVE SOMEONE WHO COMES IN FROM COUNTY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, COMES IN AND SPEAKS TO OUR YOUTH ABOUT ALL THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISASTERS THEY WANT TO BE PREPARED FOR. AT THE SAME TIME, DURING THE PRESENTATION WE PROVIDE OUR YOUTH WITH EMERGENCY TRAVEL KITS, SO WE AS A CENTER ACTUALLY SUPPLY THEM WITH. WE GIVE THEM EMERGENCY FOOD NOBODY WANT TO EAT AND EMERGENCY BLANKETS AS WELL AS NONBATTERY NEEDED FLASHLIGHT AND THEN THIS LASTS FOR THREE DAYS, AND, SO, THEY GET AT THE END OF THE DAY THEY ALL GET TO TAKE A KIT HOME AND IT'S A BEAUTIFUL BRIGHT RED KIT THAT LOOKS LIKE A LUNCH PAIL, THEY GET TO TAKE THEM HOME AND DISCUSS WITH THEIR PARENTS WHAT THEY LEARNED REGARDING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS. ACTUALLY FOLLOWING THAT PRESENTATION THEY GET, WE THEN GO DOWN TO THE FIRE STATION AND THEY GET TO DO A HANDS ON TOUR OF THE FIRE STATION AND THAT IS REALLY AN AMAZING THING FOR THEM.

 JUST THEIR WHOLE FACES LIGHT UP AND THEY JUST HAVE SUCH A FANTASTIC TIME AND THEY ARE BEGGING TO COME BACK AGAIN AND WE REALLY FEEL A STRONG CONNECTION WITH THE FIRE STATIONS IN OUR COUNTY, THEY JUST GO ALL OUT, THEY LET US USE THE FIRE HOSES, LET US GET INSIDE THE TRUCKS SO IT'S REALLY AMAZING THE KIND OF CONNECTIONS WE'VE BUILT WITHIN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AS WELL AND NOT JUST BEING ABOUT THE YOUTH. WE ALSO FOCUS ON TRANSPORTATION, WE HAVE OUR METRO SYSTEM COME OUT AND TALK TO US ABOUT SAFETY AND HOW TO RIDE THE BUS AND THEY WILL USUALLY GIVE US SOME FREE PASSES FOR THE YOUTH TO BE ABLE TO RIDE THE BUS FOR FREE. AND THEN WE ALSO DO VOTING SO WE HAVE HAD OUR MAYOR, OUR LOCAL MAYOR ON STAFF AND LEGISLATIVE AIDE TO COME OUT, WE HAVE ACTUALLY MET WITH THE YOUTH DIRECTLY AND TALKED TO THEM ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY AND VOTING AND IMPORTANCE OF BEING ABLE TO UTILIZE YOUR VOICE AND HOW THE GOVERNMENT IS INVOLVED IN ISSUES THAT ARE RELEVANT TO YOUTH SUCH AS EDUCATION OR SPORTS DEPARTMENT, AND THEN AT THE END OF IT THEY GET LITTLE CERTIFICATES ACTUALLY FROM THE ASSEMBLY MEMBER GIVING THEM VALIDATION FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE YOUTH PROGRAM.

 ONE OF THE MAIN PROPONENTS OF OUR YOUTH WEEK IS WE GIVE THEM A $20 A DAY STIPEND THAT GOES INTO PAYING FOR THEIR LUNCH AND GOES INTO PAYING FOR THEIR TRANSPORTATION OR GOES INTO PAYING FOR THEIR ENTRANCE FEES FOR THE MOVIE THEATERS OR FOR FESTIVALS OR WHATEVER WE MAY BE DOING FOR THEM AND THEN WHATEVER MONEY THEY HAVE SAVED EACH DAY, AT THE END OF THE WEEK THEY GET TO TAKE HOME. SO THERE IS A LITTLE BIT INCENTIVE. AND, SO, IT ALSO HELPS THEM, WE CAN BREAK THOSE CATEGORIES DOWN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK AND EVERY PART OF THE DAY, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY THEY DO THEIR SHEET AND CALCULATE HOW MUCH THEY WANT TO SAVE AND AT THE END OF THE DAY THEY GO BACK AND SHOW WHAT DID I USE THE MONEY ON AND WHAT CATEGORY. THEY REAL I'D, A, I DIDN'T SAVE ANY MONEY AND THAT HAS HAPPENED OR, B, THIS IS HOW MUCH I DID SAVE. EVERY SINGLE DAY WE WORK ON BUDGETING.

 ON FRIDAYS USUALLY THEY GET TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT TO DO. WE USUALLY DON'T HAVE GUEST SPEAKERS JUST BECAUSE WE ALLOW THEM TO HAVE THE ONE FUN DAY. ONE THING THAT I DID WANT TO MENTION IS THAT, YOU KNOW, AS A DO INTAKES WITH THESE YOUTH TO HAVE THEM PARTICIPATE IN OUR SUMMER PROGRAM, I GET TO KNOW THEM REALLY, REALLY WELL AND ONE 60 THE THINGS THAT I'M GOING TO START DOING WITH OUR ACTUAL YOUTH DURING THE YEAR IS HAVING THESE YOUTH COME IN AND TEACH THE OTHER YOUTH A PARTICULAR TALENT THAT THEY HAVE. SO IT'S REALLY ALLOWING THEM TO STEP INTO A LEADERSHIP ROLE THAT MAYBE WE DIDN'T THINK THEY COULD DO OR WAS POSSIBLE BUT THEY GET TO DO IT THROUGH THEIR TALENTS AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. TO BE ABLE TO HAVE THE MENTORSHIP PIECE COME INTO PLAY.

 AND THEN ONE OF THE BENEFITS IS BECAUSE ALL THESE YOUTH ARE BRAND NEW INTO THE YOUTH, SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM, BRINGS IN MORE YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR YEAR LONG PROGRAM AND A LOT OF OUR YOUTH COME IN TO DO VOLUNTEER WORK THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, SO IT'S JUST A REALLY POWERFUL THING TO SEE THEM, IT JUST AWESOME. I'LL HAND IT BACK TO JIM NOW.

>> ONE OF THE THINGS WE STARTED THIS SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM THREE YEARS AGO, WE WANTED TO HAVE A FUN WAY FOR THE YOUTH TO LEARN AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT WENT THROUGH IT THAT FIRST YEAR WANTED TO COME BACK THE SECOND YEAR AND WE HAD TO SAY NO. YOU'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH IT, YOU NEED TO LEAVE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOMEBODY ELSE TO GO THROUGH IT. WE USUALLY TRY TO FIND SPONSORS OR GRANTS FOR THE $20 A DAY STIPEND WITH FEDERAL OR STATE MONEY, WE CAN'T PURCHASE FOOD OR, YOU KNOW THAT WHOLE STORY, WE HAVE TO BE SO CAREFUL HOW WE SPEND THAT MONEY BUT BY DOING A STIPEND AND GETTING SOMEBODY TO SPONSOR THAT, IT TAKES CARE OF THE NEED FOR THAT. ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE ARE DOING IN THE FUTURE, WE ARE WORKING ON OVER THE NEXT YEAR IS TRYING TO TAKE OUR EXPERTISE AND OUR VOCATIONAL SERVICES AND BRING IT INTO THE YOUTH PROGRAM.

 ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS COME UP OVER AND OVER IN OUR YOUTH ACTIVITIES IS THAT NOT EVERYBODY WANTS TO GO TO COLLEGE AND SOME OF THEM JUST WANT TO GET JOBS. SO WE ARE ACTIVELY DEVELOPING A PROGRAM ON THAT AND MAYBE NEXT YEAR WE WILL BE ABLE TO TELL YOU HOW THAT WORKS OUT. BUT I THINK WE HAVE COME A LONG WAYS, WE STILL HAVE A LONG WAYS TO GO WITH THE NEW TRANSITION REQUIREMENT, WE ARE ALREADY DOING IT BUT WE SEE SO MANY AREAS WE CAN IMPROVE ON AND, OF COURSE, THE BIGGEST HINDRANCE. HERE'S AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE APRIL CONFERENCE, WE WILL BE DOING A MORE IN‑DEPTH CONFERENCE ON THE YOUTH PROGRAM, WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US.

>> I WANT TO THANK THE OTHER PEOPLE, IT'S AMAZING TO HEAR ALL THE WORK DONE IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, TO KNOW WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES IN LOS ANGELES. THANK YOU.

>> GREAT. THANK YOU GUYS SO MUCH. AND NOW WE ARE GOING TO OPEN IT UP FOR Q AND A AND IF YOU COULD JUST BE AS RESPECTFUL AS POSSIBLE AND WE WILL GET QUESTIONS IN ONE AT A TIME AND OBVIOUSLY WE ARE PUSHING TIME, BUT THEY ARE HERE SO LET'S HAVE AT IT.

>> I HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA FIELD. DO YOU CHARGE THE SCHOOLS OR ANY OTHER ENTITY, DO A FEE FOR SERVICE TO PAY FOR THE PROGRAM, PARTICULARLY THE ONE WHERE YOU GO INTO THE SCHOOLS OR IS IT STRICTLY STATE FUNDING, GRANT BASED AND THE SCHOOLS DO NOT PAY.

>> SIERRA OR RENE.

>> SORRY, WE WERE ON MUTE, I FORGOT TO PRESS STAR 6, I WAS TALKING, THOUGH. WE DO NOT CHARGE FOR OUR YOUTH PROGRAM IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OR ANY OF THE YOUTH STUFF THAT WE DO. WE JUST USE IT OUT OF OUR FEDERAL FUND FOR STAFF TIME AND TRAVEL TIME.

THE PROGRAM ITSELF DOESN'T REALLY TAKE A LOT OF MONEY, THE MOST MONEY IT TAKES IS MORE TRAVEL TIME AND THEN I WOULD SAY ABOUT 40 BUCKS A SCHOOL AND THAT INCLUDES IF YOU WANT TO GET REALLY CRAZY WITH SOME CANDY, DUCT TAPE, STRING AND THEN EGGS, WE DO SOMETHING WITH EGGS, THAT'S HIGH END. I WOULD SAY MAYBE 20 BUCKS A SCHOOL. SO IT REALLY DOESN'T COST A LOT BESIDES STAFF TIME AND TRAVEL.

>> HELLO. RENE, SIERRA, WHICH CURRICULUM DO YOU USE.

>> ACTUALLY IT'S A COMBINATION OF SEVERAL DIFFERENT THINGS. WE PUT TOGETHER MATERIAL THAT WE'VE GOTTEN FROM OTHER CENTERS THAT HAVE USED STUFF AND THEN I'VE CREATED A LOT OF MATERIAL HERE AT OUR CENTER USING RECREATIONAL THERAPY ACTIVITIES.

WE CALL IT TEEN FOR ADVOCACY THROUGH INDEPENDENT LIVING, TATIL. IT'S MATERIAL WE HAVE BROUGHT TOGETHER TO TEACH THE CLASS.

>> DO YOU SHARE THAT WITH OTHER CILS?

>> YES, WE HAVEN'T ‑‑ IT HASN'T BEEN REQUESTED THAT BEFORE BUT I KNOW THAT IS ONE THING WHEN GOING THROUGH A PEER TO PEER TRAINING, THOSE ARE SOME OF THE MATERIALS MOLLY WAS REFERRING TO A LOT OF THAT AS WELL. JUST GIVE US AN E‑MAIL.

>> THANK YOU.

>> I HAVE A QUESTION. FIRST A COMMENT. I WAS ACTUALLY GLAD TO ‑‑ THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE INFORMATION. I'M SO HAPPY TO BE LISTENING. BUT I WAS A LITTLE BIT STRANGE THAT CALIFORNIA, THAT YOU GUYS DON'T USE VOCATIONAL WITH THE YOUTH CENTER WHO ARE INTERESTED IN JOBS. I'M THE A CENTER HERE IN ILLINOIS UNDER EMPLOYMENT ADVOCATE AND WE ARE ABOUT TO START A YOUTH TRANSITION PROGRAM AND I WAS GLAD TO HEAR THAT YOU HAVE A VOCATIONAL COMPONENT TO YOUR PROGRAM. THAT'S A COMMENT. BUT THE QUESTION IS HOW DO YOU REACH THE YOUTH.

>> FOR US IN CALIFORNIA THE YOUTH FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES WOULD BE REFERRAL THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION, AND BECAUSE WE HAVE STAFF THAT ACTUALLY THEY ARE STATIONED IN THOSE OFFICES, IN THOSE 20 OFFICES AND THEY HAVE ACCESS AND THEY KNOW THE COUNSELORS REAL WELL, WE WORK WITH ABOUT 147 DIFFERENT COUNSELORS AND THEY KNOW OUR STAFF REAL WELL AND THEY HAVE THE RAPPORT AND RELATIONSHIP, SO GETTING INTO THE YOUTH SERVICES, WE WORK WITH SOME BUT IT NOT OUR SPECIALTY AREA. WE ARE GOING TO TAKE WHAT WE DO AND MODIFY IT TO WORK WITH THE YOUTH.

 ONE OF THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN CALIFORNIA IS THAT WE HAVE AN EARLY RELEASE PROGRAM FROM THE PRISONS AND THE PRISONS ARE FULL OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEY ARE COMING INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB TO FIND EMPLOYMENT AND IT REALLY HARD TO PLACE THEM AND SOMETIMES THEY ARE THERE BECAUSE THEY HAVE TO BE THERE OR DON'T HAVE SKILLS AND ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WE ARE LOOKING AT AS A REAL ADVANTAGE WITH THE YOUTH IS THEY WANT THE JOBS, THEY WANT TO BE THERE, THEY ARE REALLY TRAINABLE AND WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE A REAL BONUS TO OUR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM BUT ALSO TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB TO MAKE THEM VALUE INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS AND THOSE OF US THAT DO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. I'M NOT SURE IN CALIFORNIA, THERE ARE 28 CENTERS HERE AND I'M NOT SURE HOW MANY DO EMPLOYMENT BUT I THINK IT'S PROBABLY ABOUT A FOURTH OR A THIRD OF THEM THROUGHOUT THE STATE HAVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND I THINK FROM THE VERY EARLY DAYS WHEN ED ROBERTS WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE REHABILITATION, THE INDEPENDENT CENTERS WERE INVOLVED IN THAT AND GOT OUR FOOT IN THE DOOR. IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TODAY TO START UP THE PROGRAM WE HAVE, ESPECIALLY AT THE SIZE IT IS, BUT WE WILL REPORT OUT HOW IT WORKS AND WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOU AS WELL, HOW YOUR PROGRAM GOES.

>> COOL, THAT WOULD BE GREAT. THANK YOU.

>> THIS IS GREG FROM THE ACCESS CENTER IN DAYTON. I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR SIERRA. WHEN YOU WERE IN THE SCHOOLS AND YOU ARE TEACHING ABOUT ADVOCACY AND THOSE TYPES OF THINGS, DO THE STUDENTS GET CREDIT FOR IT? AND IF THEY DO, DO THEY ‑‑ WHAT IS THE CRITERIA FOR WHO TEACHES THE CLASS?

>> THE FIRST PART, DO THEY GET CREDIT FOR IT. THE OCCUPATIONAL COURSES STUDY WHICH IS OUR VOCATIONAL TRAINING, A LOT OF OUR MATERIALS ARE AIMED AT TARGETING THINGS THEY HAVE TO TEACH, SO A LOT OF TIMES, EVEN WITH IEPS, YOU HAVE TO HAVE SOME SORT OF TRANSITION PLAN IN PLACE AND SOME OF THAT INCLUDE INDEPENDENT LIVING, SO, INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS FALL INTO THAT AND WITH OUR VOCATIONAL TRAINING, NOT SAYING THAT IT'S GREAT, BUT IT WHAT WE'VE GOT SO WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT, BUT THEY DON'T HAVE LIKE REGULAR MATH CLASSES, THEY HAVE HOW TO BUDGET YOUR MONEY AND HOW TO FILL OUT A JOB APPLICATION AS YOUR ENGLISH CLASS. SO WHAT WE DO IS WE USE A LOT OF THAT FOCUS ESPECIALLY FOR THAT TRACK BECAUSE TEACHERS ARE REQUIRED TO TEACH SELF‑ADVOCACY, THEY ARE REQUIRED TO TEACH INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS.

 AS RENE MENTIONED OUR STATE IS REQUIRED TO TEACH DISABILITY HISTORY. SO WHAT WE KIND OF DO IS IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO PRESENT IT IN A WAY OF LET ME TAKE SOMETHING OFF YOUR PLATE BECAUSE A LOT OF OUR TEACHERS DON'T HAVE RESOURCES TO TEACH THOSE TYPE THINGS, WE COME IN AND SAY WE ARE A CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING, WE ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE 51% OF OUR STAFF WITH DISABILITY BUT OUR YOUTH STAFF, ALL ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND WE ARE YOUNGER, SO THAT PEER MENTORING TAKES IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL VERSUS WHAT A TEACHER CAN DO.

 SO AS FAR AS IN THE CLASS, THEY USE SOME OF THE MATERIAL WE TALK ABOUT AND PUT IT TOWARDS A PROJECT THEY MAY BE WORKING ON OR THEY HAVE TO DO RESEARCH IN CERTAIN AREAS AFTER WE LEAVE. THE PRESENTATION THAT WAS DONE WHERE THE STUDENTS ACTUALLY DID THE PRESENTATIONS ON DISABILITY HISTORY, THAT WAS PART OF A BULLYING PRESENTATION THEY HAD HAD TO DO, SO THEY GOT CREDIT FOR THAT BUT IT DOES COUNT AS A CREDIT CLASS AND THE CURRICULAR ASSISTANCE CLASS, THEY ARE NOT HAVING TO TEACH IT, BUT THE TEACHERS KNOW US AFTER SO MANY YEARS, THEY ARE LIKE WE HAVE TO HAVE THIS FOR OUR STUDENTS, THEY KNOW THE STUDENTS HAVE TO HAVE A NEED FOR IT SO THEY MAKE IT PART OF THE CURRICULAR CLASS WHICH IS LIKE THEIR STUDY HALL. I DON'T REMEMBER THE SECOND PART.

>> THE SECOND PART WAS IF THEY ARE GETTING CREDIT FOR IT, WHAT TYPE OF CREDENTIALS DOES THE TEACHERS HAVE TO HAVE SO THEY GET CREDIT.

>> SO WHAT THEY DO IS WE SIGN UP WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AS A VOLUNTEER AND THEN WE DON'T ACTUALLY HAVE TO HAVE ANY CREDENTIALS, THEY LABEL US AS A GUEST SPEAKER, WE ARE A CONTINUED GUEST SPEAKER FOR EIGHT WEEKS BUT THEY DON'T EVER ‑‑ I THINK THE PIER MENTORING TRUMPS THAT, WE ARE PEERS, THAT'S A LOT OF WHAT WE FOCUS OUR CONVERSATION AROUND. I HAVE A DEGREE AND ANOTHER YOUTH STAFF HAS A DOUBLE MASTERS, I THINK, BUT WE DEFINITELY USE THOSE SKILLS BUT NOT WHAT MAKES THEIR CREDENTIALS FOR THE ACTUAL FACILITATION FOR THE CLASS.

>> DO WE HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS.

>> I HAVE A QUESTION.

>> OKAY, GO AHEAD.

>> THIS IS SALLY ENGLISH FROM THE BOSTON CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING. I WONDERED WHAT YOU OFFERED SCHOOLS WHEN YOU INITIALLY TRIED TO MAKE CONTACT TO DEVELOP THAT RELATIONSHIP SO YOU COULD START DOING THESE CLASSES AND WORKING WITH THEM REGULARLY.

>> SO, THIS IS SIERRA, WHEN I FIRST MADE THE CONTACT WITH THE SCHOOL SYSTEM I ACTUALLY, WHAT ALWAYS WORKS BEST IS USING PEOPLE YOU KNOW.

I CONTACTED MY TEACHERS THAT I HAD IN HIGH SCHOOL AND SAID, HEY, CAN YOU GET US INTO THESE CLASSROOMS BEFORE YOU RETIRE? AND THEY GOT US CONNECTED WITH THAT AND THEN I WOULD ASK THAT TEACHER WHEN I WAS TEACHING IN THAT CLASS DO YOU KNOW ANY OTHER SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN THIS PROGRAM OR WE WOULD GO OFF OF THE WEBSITE AND SEND MASS E‑MAILS OUT TO ANYBODY THAT HAD SPECIAL EDUCATION NEXT TO THEIR TITLE.

 A TEACHER ASSISTANT, A DEPARTMENT CHAIR, THE PRINCIPALS AND THE ACTUAL TEACHERS OF THE CLASSROOMS AND WE WOULD SEND OUT MASS E‑MAILS TO ALL OF OUR HIGH SCHOOLS IN OUR COUNTY AND COUNTIES WE SERVE AND WE WOULD KIND OF GIVE THEM, WE HAVE LIKE A TEACHER GOAL SHEET OR WHATEVER THE CLASS, HOW IT'S BROKEN DOWN IN THE SIX SECTIONS, WHAT IT COVERS, THE GOALS AND OUTCOME OF THE CLASS AND THAT KIND OF THING. THAT'S HOW WE SENT IT OUT AND GOT ON THE RADAR, MOSTLY THE MOST SUCCESS WE'VE HAD IS WORD OF MOUTH AND GETTING TO WHOEVER I KNOW AND MAKING THAT CONNECTION TO THE NEXT PERSON.

>> I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW ‑‑

>> THAT'S ALSO BEEN OUR EXPERIENCE IN CALIFORNIA, WHEN DESERIE STARTED OUT SHE USED HER OWN TEACHERS, GOT HER FOOT IN THE DOOR AND REFERRED THEM TO OTHER PEOPLE. OUR FRIEND IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS. AND IT WAS ALL WORD OF MOUTH.

>> OKAY, I'M SORRY, GO AHEAD, SOMEBODY HAD A QUESTION.

> YES, I HAVE A QUESTION. I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF I CAN GET THE E‑MAIL ADDRESS FOR MOLLY.

>> YES, MG@POLARIS.NET. AND THAT'S FOR MOLLY GOSLINE.

>> THANK YOU.

>> ANY OTHER QUESTIONS.

>> THANK YOU.

>> OKAY, DO WE HAVE ANYBODY WHO WE MISSED? ANY OTHER QUESTIONS? OKAY, HEARING NONE, WE ARE GOING TO GO AHEAD AND CLOSE THE CALL. I WANT TO THANK EVERYBODY FOR BEING HERE TODAY AND BEING PATIENT WHILE WE WORK THROUGH TECHNOLOGY ISSUES AND THANKS TO OUR CART FOLKS WHO ARE PROVIDING CART. AND OUR FRIEND AT SKIL IN KANSAS FOR RECORDING THE CALL, THE CART TRANSCRIPTION AND RECORDING OF THE CALL WILL BE ON THE APRIL WEBSITE AND I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO THE WEBSITE WHERE THEY ARE AVAILABLE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS YOU CAN CONTRACT ME AT:

APRIL‑ELISSA@SBCGLOBAL.NET

"THIS IL CONVERSATION IS PRESENTED BY NEW COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES, A NATIONAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF INDEPENDENT LIVING RESEARCH UTILIZATION (ILRU), AND WAS ORGANIZED AND FACILITATED BY APRIL.

"SUPPORT FOR THIS PRESENTATION WAS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION UNDER GRANT #H400B100003. NO OFFICIAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHOULD BE INFERRED."THANKS SO MUCH, EVERYBODY. BYE‑BYE.