

January 1, 2009

## Client Highlight meet david

*From Lena Brown, Administrator, Longview Agency*

When I first met David he was about 14 yrs. old and he was very shy. He struggled in school as many of our young clients do. But, he liked to run and was good at it. Encouraged by a coach, David joined the cross county team when he was in Jr. High. School wasn't so bad after track. He was and is a dedicated runner. In fact David is a four-time regional qualifier.

Two days after a district championship, David went to Boston to accept the Yes I Can! Award in athletics from the Council for Exceptional Children. The council awards 27 students every year who excel despite their disabilities. David has Tuberous Sclerosis, which causes benign tumors to grow in the brain, on other vital organs, and skin.

When David was diagnosed at three months there was concern as to whether he would walk, let alone run. His mother, Laura said, "The doctor told us, 'He will be as disabled as you see him.' I think he wanted to plant a seed for us to be positive." Obviously the seed



David hard at work, building his own business.

The doctor said, "He will be as disabled as you see him."



grew and according to David, "Running is my first love."

David graduated May 30th of this year. He has completed 6 hours at Kilgore College and was selected to participate in a "customized employment" grant funded by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, which enabled him to open his own small business. The name of his business is "Buckner's ExtraMile Services" and his motto is "Going the Distance For You." He is providing lawn maintenance services to people in our community.

David's life is an inspiration to all of us. His parents are largely responsible for David's "can do" attitude because they never treated David as "disabled", expecting him to make a contribution in whatever way he could and what a contribution he has made!

For more information on the Center for Exceptional Children or to nominate a student for a Yes I can! award, visit [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org).

# Coping with Caregiving you matter, too!

CARE, TX January 1, 2009

*This is Part One in a series of articles dealing with the stresses that come along with caregiving.*

Oftentimes when caring for someone with a disability, a family member plays the primary role of caregiver. As a caregiver, it is common to find yourself overwhelmed by the tasks of caregiving and unable to tend to your own needs. You may tell yourself not to have needs, or that your needs come second to the needs of your loved one. This attitude can work in the short-term. But, when constant self-sacrifice continues over a period of months or years it can have a harmful effect on yourself and in turn on the care you give.

Maintaining your personal well-being is not a luxury. It is a necessity when dealing with the prolonged stresses of caregiving. The first step to mastering your stress is recognizing the signs of it. Take a look at the following list.

## Signs of Stress

- Loss of energy or zest for life
- Feeling out of control, exhibiting uncharacteristic emotions or actions
- Becoming increasingly isolated
- Marital and family problems
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Increased health problems – high blood pressure, ulcers, or difficulty digesting
- Appetite changes
- Problems with concentration or memory
- Increased irritability or impatience

Sound familiar? There are many causes for the symptoms above and naturally the next step to mastering your stress is to know those causes. It may be the multiple demands on your time, energy, and money. Or maybe it is dealing with conflicting expectations from your

family, boss, and self. Perhaps you are struggling with a lack of understanding of your loved one's disability. Or it could be the simple loss of freedom and feeling like others are not doing their share. For some it is having to watch the deterioration of a loved one. Then, to top it all off you have your own personal problems (children, marriage, employment, health, you name it!) separate from caregiving.



**Your personal well-being is not a luxury. It is a necessity.**

Whatever the causes, you need solutions. There are six common solutions to caregiver stress:

## Solutions to Stress

- Set realistic goals and expectations
- Establish your limits
- Ask for and accept help
- Take care of yourself – express your feelings, maintain your health, take time for yourself
- Involve other people – hold a family conference, get professional guidance, use community resources

In the following articles in this series we will address in depth each of these solutions. Hopefully, if you are suffering from caregiver stress, you will find some tools in these articles to help you cope.

# The Legislative Session

## expanding programs

CARE, TX January 1, 2009

This year our Legislature will be in session. They will be reviewing all state programs and making appropriation decisions. On the long term care side, they will look at whether Texas can continue to expand openings in the various long term care programs.

They will look at current rates of reimbursement for attendant care and skilled services. They will review a list of appropriation requests from the Department of Aging and Disability Services, all of which will be bolstered by thick, detailed reports from state agencies.

Our legislators need input from their constituents. They get lots of information from lobbyists, from special interest groups, from state employees and from their staff. But they want to hear from the people who vote for them.

If you don't know who your state senator or legislator is, use the following links locate them.

### Websites to locate your state senators and legislators:

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/Members.htm>

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome.php>

## DSSW in the Community charity cards

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. DSSW sent holiday greeting cards to our clients this year and we want to share with everyone the source of those cards.

For our DSA clients we sent cards designed by students of The Sunshine Cottage School for Deaf Children.

Our CDS clients received cards from Boundless Playgrounds, a non-profit dedicated to building accessible playgrounds in both the USA and abroad.

The proceeds from the greeting cards go directly to these non-profits. What a wonderful way to tell your family and friends you care by helping out a good cause!

If you are interested in sending your own charity greeting cards, you do not have to limit yourself to the holiday season. Many organizations offer cards for every occasion from birthdays and anniversaries to congratulations and Halloween.

One of DSSW's primary efforts will be aimed at educating legislators regarding the difference in reimbursement rates for long term Medicaid programs and traditional (acute care) Medicaid programs.

Currently a physical therapist is paid \$66.88 for a full hour of face to face therapy in long term care. Under the acute care side of Medicaid – that same service is paid at the rate of \$140.00 – for a visit, typically 30 minutes of face to face care. This difference in reimbursement means that many – perhaps even most – long term care recipients are not receiving services they need.

As a person with a disability, or a parent or guardian of someone with a disability, you have your own concerns about Texas long term care programs. We encourage you to educate your legislators about your concerns.

Here are some links to charities that offer cards, and remember that no order is too small to make a difference:

[www.cardsthatgive.org](http://www.cardsthatgive.org)  
[www.cardswithheart.org/Charities](http://www.cardswithheart.org/Charities)  
[www.childrenscancer.org](http://www.childrenscancer.org)  
[www.holidaycardcenter.org](http://www.holidaycardcenter.org)

We also recommend checking with your charity directly to see if they offer greeting cards.



Please email questions, comments, or concerns to:  
[caretx@dsswtx.org](mailto:caretx@dsswtx.org)

# Planes, Trains, and Automobiles how do you get around?

CARE, TX October 1, 2008

Do you:

**Need more transportation options?**

**Want to go to work, to college, or to other places, but can't get there?**

The PEAC (Paratransit Education and Advocacy Collaborative) invites the estimated 1.8 million working-age Texans who have disabilities to tell them about their transportation challenges.

They created an online, or by phone, survey that they hope will help identify opportunities for transportation improvements in Texas. We invite all of our working clients to take the survey.

The number is 1-877-542-5101.

On the web, for Texas residents (outside of Tarrant County):

(English) <http://peac.survey.sgizmo.com>

(Spanish) <http://peac.espanol.sgizmo.com>

For Tarrant County residents:

(English) <http://peac.tctransportationsurvey.sgizmo.com>

(Spanish) <http://peac.tcespanol.sgizmo.com>.

The PEAC also provides one-on-one technical assistance to people with disabilities who are experiencing public transportation difficulties. Call 1-877-542-5101 or on the web at [www.paratransittexas.org](http://www.paratransittexas.org) for assistance.

