

MOVING FORWARD

Garrett Freeberg, EBI Intern

Integration, activity, and resourcefulness fuel EBI's Community Day Support (CDS) program. Monday through Friday, you can find CDS program participants immersed in community life. From delivering meals to low-income seniors, to taking part in yoga, dance, and cooking classes, to visiting museums, etc., young adults with cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities in the CDS program eagerly engage in the activities they choose.



What makes this community-integrated program work so well? In addition to the determination and energy of the individuals served, most of whom need support with mobility, communication, and/or self-care, CDS Community Living Assistants (CLAs) make it possible for each

participant to access a wide range of Bay Area resources. These conscientious CLAs routinely assist each individual with various daily activities -- communicating, eating, and traveling around the East Bay on public transit, etc. The strong relationships CDS staff build with consumers enable them to understand their needs and preferences. Because most participants communicate non-verbally, this personal relationship plays a vital role in making sure they are never in discomfort and that their input is recognized. Staff engage in activities together with consumers, creating safe environments in the community with opportunities to embrace new, challenging experiences.

To picture the uniqueness of CDS, imagine the World Dance Class, taught at the Ed Roberts Campus in Berkeley, where participants and assistants dance freely -- and exuberantly -- to different musical genres, from Latin to jazz. This class welcomes all, and individuals are free to dance at their own pace, in their own style. Visualize CDS participants stretching on yoga mats in a cozy room alongside members of La Pena Cultural Center, a community where diversity and intercultural understanding is encouraged. Or, imagine CDS consumers and staff, in pairs, delivering Meals on Wheels to homebound elders who greatly appreciate not only the meals they're receiving, but their regular connection with the individuals bringing their food, as well.

What strikes me most about the CDS program is how truly attainable its goal of community integration is. There are people around the world -- with and without disabilities -- who have the desire to be part of the life of their community. For a small group of individuals in Alameda County, California with significant disabilities and complex support needs, the CDS program makes this possible.

Tom Heinz, EBI's Director, adds: At the same time that we see, every day, the powerful impact of community integration on the lives of individuals with disabilities, today we're faced with a threat of reduced Medicaid funding for community-based services. Assistive technology, transportation, and in-home services are just a few of the resources that could be effected if existing Federal/State Medicaid partnership dollars are reduced and shifted to block grants, to be borne entirely by the State.

The historic disability rights movement fought long and hard so that individuals with significant disabilities, not unlike those of our CDS participants, would have the services they need to live in the community and not routinely be placed in institutions. EBI is committed to moving forward, despite unpredictable times ahead, to ensure that community-based resources are available to individuals with disabilities.

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Frank Inami

in the Army, he was denied readmission to Berkeley and completed his education in Chicago. Again serving during the Korean War, Frank retired from the Army in 1974.

In 1953, Frank and his wife, Setsuko, had their daughter, Cindy, who has for many years received Supported Living Services through EBI. Frank was married for more than 50 years, during which he had a successful career as an engineer at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Finally, in 2009, with the launch of the California Nisei College Diploma Project, Frank received an honorary degree from the University of California. One year later, Frank was honored with the first Livermore Hero Award, established to “pay tribute to those individuals who have shown exceptional courage, have overcome significant obstacles, or through exceptional acts of kindness, have made a difference in the lives of others in the community.”

He will be missed.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE UPDATE

As a result of several management trainings and discussions on cultural humility, EBI's Diversity Committee was formed in 2015 with a shared vision to strengthen diversity at EBI - from the board of directors to the people we serve and our dedicated staff. The goal is to have all aspects of the agency reflect the diversity of our community, which includes awareness and sensitivity to diverse cultures, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, spiritual beliefs and gender identities.

Although there is an unending amount of work to be accomplished, the committee has been able to successfully carry out several initiatives. To set the standard, a brochure on Cultural Competency is now distributed

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Dana Poplin



Having just finished college with a major in Sociology, Dana was working at a local restaurant when her friend told her about his job in Employment Services. He referred her to EBI and during her interview she liked what she heard about the people she'd be working with and the mission and values of the agency. Today, working as an Independent Living Skills Specialist, she describes her job as exceeding even the very high expectations she had after her first interview.

When asked what she likes best about her job, Dana quickly responds. "Everything!" she says, and then describes the impact

consumers have had on her life as she works with them to develop skills that increase independence. As for challenges, Dana understands the importance of being "culturally competent" with people from all communities, and she credits EBI with incorporating this goal in the work environment.

Dana recently completed EBI's Career Advancement Training, an intensive 30 hour program designed to prepare direct support professionals for supervisory roles. She left the training with a strong desire to assume the responsibilities of a supervisory position at EBI. Her biggest "takeaway" from the training? How critical it is for a supervisor to be "in the trenches with the team." In her words, "You're only as good as your team."

How would the consumers she works with describe her? She gets things done, isn't judgmental, makes herself available, and values being part of a helping community, through her church and her job.

A few fun facts about Dana.... She was born in Japan and lived there for two weeks before moving to the United States. She loves to go to concerts and plays guitar, bass, drums, and piano. You might see Dana at one of the many sporting events she goes to or at a poetry slam. She's been writing poems since middle school!

Thank you, Dana, for the work you do!

THANK YOU!

To the many individuals who so generously support EBI with monthly and periodic gifts, annual contributions, car donations, workplace giving, etc.

THANK YOU!

To the funders and foundations that are making our work possible.

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DIVERSITY COMMITTEE UPDATE CONTINUED



to and discussed with newly hired staff during orientation. Monthly bulletins emailed to all staff feature relevant resources. In the last few months, the Career Advancement Training program was implemented, providing an opportunity for direct staff to train for and potentially advance to managerial positions in the agency. On a community level, the Diversity Committee participates in the Regional Center of the East Bay's Diversity and Equity Committee monthly meetings, addressing ways to expand services to communities underutilizing services and planning cultural competency trainings.

EBI's Diversity Committee recently sent a survey to all staff designed, as reported by Nicole Manzana, Diversity Committee chair, to assess their attitudes, behaviors and perspectives about diversity and how it can impact the quality of their work. The findings of the survey will be critical in determining actions going forward.

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1994, East Bay Innovations (EBI) today supports more than 450 individuals with disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own homes, to be successfully employed, and to feel a sense of membership in their community.



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EAST BAY INNOVATIONS INSIGHTs

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ANOTHER WAY TO GIVE

As you make, or update, your financial plans, would you like to support EBI at the same time? Do you have to annually take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from an IRA?

If your answer is YES to both, consider this. You might be able to donate the RMD from your IRA, tax-free, to EBI.

Please contact Carole Shein at cshein@eastbayinnovations.org for information about creating a legacy for EBI.



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