

# Enabled Voices



An advocacy publication of Tri-County Independent Living

Volume I, Number 11

May 23, 2007

## Taking to the Streets in Sacramento



*Disability Capitol Action Day attendees make their voices heard in the state capitol.*

Close to 2,000 people with disabilities from throughout California gathered in Sacramento for Disability Capitol Action Day on May 23. The annual event was organized by the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers.

Action Day featured educational speakers, a Resource Fair with 24 booths, entertainment, and the welcome presence of the Road to Freedom bus tour, featuring displays on the achievements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

However, the real highlight of the event was ***Continued next page***

## Meeting with Legislators

Four staff members from Tri-County Independent Living attended Disability Capitol Action Day, along with local disability rights activist, Jene L. McCovey of Arcata.

The group had a meeting with Assembly Member Patty Berg to discuss disability issues and current legislation such as bills directly affecting In-Home Support Service (IHSS) care providers as well as the difficulty in attracting people to this type of work due to low wages and no benefits in Humboldt County. We also talked about the need for increased public transportation services for people with disabilities in our area, as well as the negative effects on the disability community posed by Gover-



*Left to right: Assembly Member Patty Berg; Glenn Reed, TCIL; Jene L. McCovey; Cindy Calderon, TCIL.*

nor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget.

Unfortunately, Senator Pat Wiggins did not attend a scheduled meeting with us. We did manage to speak with one of her aides, who listened carefully to our issues.

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### ***Sacramento continued***

the march of the attendees from the Convention Center to the State Capitol. Most wearing bright red shirts, they made their way under sunny skies to the front steps for a rally and speeches on issues and current legislation that affect the community of people with disabilities. A lot of attention was paid to supporting SB 840, the universal health care coverage bill, as well as AB 423, which is a mental health parity bill. An impassioned Senator Darrell Steinberg, criticized efforts to divert Proposition 63 money away from its intended purpose, which is to support mental health services, while Assembly Member Jim Beall, who introduced AB 423, also weighed in on the consequences of cutting mental health program funds.

“The last thing you want to cut are programs for homeless, mentally ill people,” said Beall. “If you don’t fund mental health, you’ll have more people in the emergency rooms and county jails and it’ll be harder for these people to heal.”

During the afternoon festivities, attendees also visited with legislators inside of the state capitol in order to discuss those issues/legis-

lation with their elected officials. Once again, the Action Day sent a loud message to those in Sacramento who are making decisions that affect you, and reminded them that people with disabilities need to be heard!

### ***Governor’s Proposed Freeze on IHSS Wages Thawed by Legislators***

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s attempts to freeze In-Home Support Service care provider wages/benefits in his revised budget were given thumbs-down by legislators last week. Also axed were his attempts to freeze disability benefits by not allowing a cost-of-living increase.

### ***Mental Health Parity Bill***

AB 423 would expand health care coverage to ensure that contracts and insurance cover the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. The bill is currently stalled in the Appropriations Committee. Contact your legislators to let them know your feelings on this bill.

**Tri-County Independent Living: (707) 445-8404. For questions on this publication, call Glenn Reed.**