

***New Project Director - MARTHA GARBER***

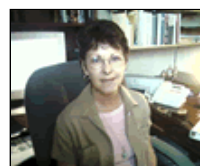


Well, it's not quite news anymore, but we're still happy about it! Martha Garber, formerly of the Rehabilitation Services Administration Regional Office in Dallas, Texas, was named Project Director. She joined the Region VI CRP-RCEP in May 2006 as Co-Director and assumed the duties of Director in February 2007. She's been hard at work continuing to build on the strong partnerships the Region VI CRP-RCEP has established. Martha brings a wealth of experience from both the public and private sector. She believes in strong collaborative efforts among consumers, people significant to consumers, agencies and providers that create better and fuller futures. For the past several months, she has been meeting with our stakeholders including the Advisory Committee, traveling to various training sites and conferences, and conducting a few training courses herself.

Former Region VI CRP-RCEP Director Linda Holloway is still working as our Principal Investigator and Program Advisor in addition to her duties as Associate Dean and Faculty Member in the College of Public Affairs and Community Service.

***Meet Yvonne Raffini***

We are delighted to announce the addition of Yvonne Raffini, Ed.D., NCC, LPC, our newest Organizational Consultant. Yvonne comes to us straight from the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) where she worked as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for one-and-one-half years specializing in the Division of Blind Services. Prior to that she lived & worked in Wisconsin at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, in mental health as a case manager at Children and Family Services, and as a Guidance Counselor (District AODA Coordinator), and Project Director/ Instructor at Benito Martinez Alternative Middle School.



She will be training on Supported Employment: Basic Skills Clinic and Job Coaching. With her impressive credentials, we believe Yvonne will make an excellent addition to our already talented staff. We hope you think so too!

Yvonne can be reached at our offices in Denton, Texas (940) 369-7477 or via email at [yraffini@pacs.unt.edu](mailto:yraffini@pacs.unt.edu).

***Training Schedule***

July 31 - August 1, 2007: [Supported Employment: Basic Skills Clinic](#), Houston, Texas

August 21-22, 2007: [Supported Employment: Basic Skills Clinic](#), Baton Rouge, Louisiana

September 5-6, 2007: [Job Coaching Strategies](#), Covington, Louisiana

September 18-19, 2007: [Building Employer Relationships: Marketing & Job Development](#), Albuquerque, New Mexico

September 27-28, 2007: [Individualized Assessment](#), San Antonio, Texas

October 3-4, 2007: [Job Coaching Strategies](#), Little Rock, Arkansas

October 16-18, 2007: [Certificate in Employment Services Session I](#), Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Session II: November 27-29)

October 30-31, 2007: [Supported Employment Basic Skills Clinic](#), Dallas, Texas

November 7-8, 2007: [Job Coaching Strategies](#), Austin, Texas

## Supported Information Interview



**Tool to Understand Needs of Employers:** An information interview is a way to begin to understand the employer's needs. The job seeker can be present at the time the personal representative meets with the employer to ask the employer key questions. The personal representative can discuss general concerns about work tasks and disability-related issues without specific reference to the job seeker he or she has in mind. Employers are generally willing to meet when the goal is to learn about the business. An informational interview is not selling the employer, it sets the stage for potential negotiations that may occur later. The personal representative and job seeker can maintain an agenda related to information gathering. There is no reason to screen the person for consideration of employment. If the job seeker is present, they both need to be prepared to talk about strengths and contributions that this person would like to make to the workplace. Also, prepare to provide examples of successes the job seeker has had in the past when using supports.

### Questions to Consider Asking in an Informational Interview

- What is your business most proud of? (It never hurts to give the employer a chance to brag about what they do.)
- How are you different from [name of competitor]?
- Are there specific hiring procedures?
- How does work get done?
- Are there challenges to getting work done?
- Is there a particular area where you need more help?
- Can you show me how to do [task]?

Kate Lorenz, Editor from Career Builder.com (6/2007) also suggests asking:

- What is your typical day like?
- What emerging trends do you see affecting your job or industry in the next five years?
- What skill sets and abilities will I need to be successful in this line of work?

### Summary

Whether the job seeker is present or not, it would be helpful to present the employer with a fact sheet about general disability information. Approach disclosing a disability with a positive attitude. Focus on the "win-win" situation that will occur if the individual is offered a position with long term supports.

### Additional Resources

Here are some resources on Informational Interviews you might also find helpful in your

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### Customized Employment Success Story

A large department store hired Scott, a job seeker with a disability, after several informational visits by his personal representative, Shaina, who negotiated a new way for the store to handle merchandise delivery. Originally, store clerks unloaded and repackaged new merchandise. Shaina suggested that the job seeker perform this task. This customized job freed the clerks to spend more time serving customers. As a result, sales increased.

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### Have You Heard?

New minimum wage increase from \$5.85 an hour to \$7.25 an hour by 2009. Find out



how this wage increase impacts benefits and other issues for individuals with disabilities at:

[www.communityinclusion.org](http://www.communityinclusion.org)

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### Here are some previews of what to look for in future issues of e-News

- Transitioning Youth
- Autism
- Substance Abuse

work.

- [www.t-tap.org](http://www.t-tap.org)
- [www.employmentforall.org/](http://www.employmentforall.org/)
- [ruralinstitute.umn.edu/training](http://ruralinstitute.umn.edu/training)
- [www.t-tap.org/training/online-seminars/callahan/callahan\\_discovery.htm](http://www.t-tap.org/training/online-seminars/callahan/callahan_discovery.htm)
- [www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/custom/index.htm](http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/custom/index.htm)
- [www.onestops.info/category.php?cat\\_id=9](http://www.onestops.info/category.php?cat_id=9)

## ***Next Month: Mental Health & Employment***

We receive inquiries frequently on the topic of mental health & employment, which is why we've chosen it as next month's Hot Topic! Since the Mental Health & Employment Conference we held a few years ago in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we have refined our knowledge base in this area and recently presented our latest findings to a group in Louisiana. We'll share those same ideas with you, and a few new ones, in our next issue of Region VI CRP-RCEP e-News Bulletin.

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