

## Thurber House Program Prepares for Work & Life

Mary Bennett began working in San Joaquin County's Thurber House at Redwood School in 1999. The program provided a functional skills approach for severely handicapped students of junior high and high school age that primarily had a diagnosis of autism. The focus was on building functional skills in a home-like setting. There have been some changes since that time and today the class serves high school and young adult students with a diagnosis of autism.

Individual academic programs and goals are very important to the students in this class. In addition there is a strong

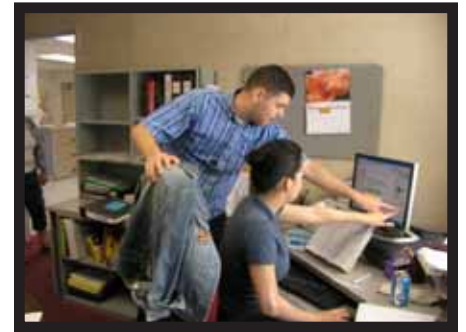
emphasis on prevocational and vocational training, adult life skills and WorkAbility I participation. All students go on community

outings in small natural groupings about twice monthly. The outings are related to a variety of individual learning goals. Students help choose the outings and develop a calendar of activities each month.

One student goes to a park regularly and walks two miles. Two groups bowl monthly. Some students go shopping for materials for classroom projects. Students often go to restaurants for lunch. Such outings enable them to practice the real-life skills they need to be successful adults.



*Vang is proud of his award*



*Erick helps Brittney prepare daily newsletter*

Matthew fills and boxes orders and delivers them to classrooms on campus or to the office to be distributed to classes at other sites.

Eric goes to the office to get the daily school newsletter and delivers it to all the classrooms each day. Students in Bennett's class also run a laundry service for four classes on site.



*Instructional assistant Sherry Bernard helps Matt recycle classroom waste*

Students in Mary Bennett's class grow in vocational skills by performing many jobs on campus. They collect classroom recyclables daily and a student takes them to the bin near the playground. Another job is filling supply orders for county program teachers. With some assistance



*Swinging helps Vang and Matt concentrate and learn*

## FROM OUR SELPA DIRECTOR

# Sandee Kludt

For those of us who have devoted our lives to education, it's all about teaching and learning, and not just for our students. This spring, and indeed all year, we provided an abundance of opportunities for parents and educators to share, to discuss and to learn new information and skills to keep abreast and ahead of the ever-changing face of special education. Our office held over 30 workshops on topics including autism, discipline, due process and threat assessment, among many. Over 1,000 participants attended these workshops. We are in the process of conducting a needs assessment to determine the topics to be offered in the future so we can continue to serve our parents, teachers, staff and administrators with up-to-date training and information.

On May 2, Karen Bruns, CAC chairperson, and I attended the state SELPA Administrator's "Legislation Day" in Sacramento. Karen welcomed the 150 participants to the full and informative day. We spent the day talking with local legislators. Our priority was urging them to support AB 850, to end the state's current practice of not funding cost of living adjustment on

federal funds, and AB 835, to calculate growth by district rather than by the SELPA as a whole.

On May 4, I was happy to attend the Association of California School Administrators Region 7 Conference and Awards presentation to help celebrate Debbi Hopman's selection as the ACSA Region 7 Special Education Administrator of the Year. Debbi, Director of Special Education in Jefferson School District, is so well-deserving of this award; it was a pleasure to be there to cheer for her! The following day Sharon Brenneise, Project Administrator at our SELPA, and I presented a workshop on the changes brought about by the new IDEA Regulations of 2006 and how we have addressed them in our SELPA. The topic generated good discussion and questions and it was well worth the time to share with other professionals meeting the same challenges.

Following our trip to Washington D.C. that you can read about in this issue, it was time for the Community Advisory Committee's annual Appreciation Dinner. We are so fortunate to have



*Sandee Kludt, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent / SELPA  
Director*

a core group of active, interested parents in the group. After 3 years as chair, Karen Bruns stepped down to be replaced by Jody Graham, parent representative from Lincoln Unified School District. Thanks to Karen for her great work on behalf of the CAC. I look forward to next year and continuing participation in the activities of the Community Advisory Committee.

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## Save the Date !

Autism Connection Meetings	August 22, 2007	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	ESC bldg	Emerson Room
	Sept 19, 2007	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	ESC bldg	Emerson Room
Community Advisory Committee	Sept 10, 2007	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	ESC bldg	Greenwood 3

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- For questions about this publication please contact Kimberly Andreasen at either (209)468-9283 or at kandreasen@sjcoe.net

# Asthma Symptoms - Control & Prevention

Allergy problems seem to be at a peak level right now with spring going out, and summer being ushered in. Of course, children with allergy induced asthma are really at risk for asthma attacks. Asthma is a life-long breathing problem, which is caused by inflammation (swelling) of the airways. Approximately 5 million children in the United States have asthma. Some children outgrow symptoms, but it is a life-long condition that rarely goes away.

Some symptoms of asthma include shortness of breath, coughing or wheezing, tightness in the chest, difficulty walking, talking or breathing, and the skin around the neck or chest area may have the appearance of being tightly-pulled. Parents can tell if their child's asthma is getting worse over time when the symptoms occur more often, need more medication to relieve symptoms, medicine doesn't seem to work, and missing more and more school because of asthma. If your child appears to be getting worse, please call his/her doctor.

## First Aid for Asthma

- Stay calm, and speak reassuringly to the child. He/she may need privacy, but do not leave them alone.
- Seat your child upright. Do not let him lie down.
- Use quick relief medication such as an inhaler or nebulizer
- If no improvement after 5 minutes, you may need to call 9-1-1
- Call 9-1-1 immediately if:
  - lips and/or nails are blue
  - skin is pulled tightly around neck or chest
  - child cannot walk or talk

Symptoms can be prevented and controlled by recognizing and avoiding triggers (dust mites, furry or feathered pets, cold air, cigarette smoke, pollens, chalk dust, to name a few), treating airway inflammation with prescribed medicine, making regular visits to a healthcare provider, and correctly using prescribed medicines. School staff

should be notified that a child has asthma. A Health Care Plan for Asthma is developed by school nurses in most schools.

Nursing staff at San Joaquin County Special Education Programs wish everyone a healthy and safe summer.

For more information please contact Mary Sumrall, R.N. at either [msumrall@sjcoe.net](mailto:msumrall@sjcoe.net) or 209-931-4047.



## County Young Adults' Success Stories

As this issue of the Special Edition is geared towards student success stories, I thought I would focus on the San Joaquin County programs for young adult programs. These programs are located in the Manteca and Stockton communities with the exception of one which is located on the Redwood campus. All provide services to 18 to 22 year old students with special needs. The programs provide functional curriculum, life skills and community experiences to advance each student toward the goal of being a productive, happy member of the community, however that vision appears for each individual student.

The majority of these students have spent their academic lives in classes on general education campuses completing courses of study that included functional skills, social interactions and academics to meet their specific needs. As they have progressed into young adulthood they have moved away from high school settings and into these young adult programs that allow them to gain and utilize skills that they will need to access and move about in their communities.

Each student who has achieved this level of independence by opting to attend a young adult program is a success story. Everyday in each one of these classrooms students learn skills that take them that much closer

to being independent. Learning to shop, cook and manage day to day life is an integral part of each program.

Let's look at one example of a typical outing for a student in a young adult class—shopping. Prior to the activity weekly ads are perused, lists are made and the excursion to the store is planned. Weather and various situations are talked about along with how much money will be needed for items on each student's list. These excursions may include using the public bus system, figuring out the routes, times, bus stops, etc. Sometimes these excursions involve planning a walking route or calling for a taxi and learning to give an address



# Psychological Services – Year-end Review

San Joaquin County Office of Education – Psychological Services has had a highly productive year for providing training and support to their colleagues, staff and families of the SJCOE-Special Education Local Plan Area and beyond.

Psychologists' training opportunities began in September with a national interactive audio conference regarding "Understanding RTI: What It Is and Why It Works". The

Psychologists' Roundtable drew a crowd of thirty plus professionals to listen to and discuss the national trend toward Response to Intervention as a model to provide support to our children even before labels are assigned to identify their needs. Also in September, Psychological Services began its Management of Assaultive Behavior (MAB) monthly trainings for the staff of SJCOE programs, local school districts, and Headstart. The MAB trainings are two consecutive days with a focus on intervention, analysis of the escalation cycle, and the proper method for providing physical interventions for students that may be a danger to self, others or property. MAB training is provided through collaboration between the SJCOE-SELPA and the Stockton Unified SELPA.

In October, SJCOE psychologists offered the second in a series of presentations on Response to Intervention. Psychologists Zenon Castillo, Chris Condon and Karen Reasoner, presented on "Response to Intervention for Learning Disability Eligibility Determination". During this month Vince Hernandez with committee members Chris Condon and Mike Sexton began work on the development of the Behavior Intervention Manual for the SJCOE-SELPA, which is now available



*Licensed Educational Psychologists meet for training at San Joaquin County of Education*

on the SJCOE website. Additionally in October, Psychological Services began collaboration with Early Childhood Education to provide evening parenting classes through a First 5 Commission grant. The topic areas were Positive Discipline, Four Reasons Children Tantrum, How to Communicate with Your Child – A Father's Perspective, Ages and Stages, and Aggressive Behavior. The Roots to Readiness parent trainings gave parents sometimes new information or affirmation of already developed skill building to promote easier transitions from infancy through early childhood. The parent offerings were presented in the Banta, Lammersville, New Jerusalem and Jefferson School Districts.

At the December Psychologists' Roundtable, Kris Rodriguez presented "A System for Linking Psycho-Educational Assessment & Interventions". The presentation and topic generated much discussion by the attendees and assisted in opening further collaboration between individual district psychologists.

Continuing the series on RTI in February, Vince Hernandez presented to the audience a "Response to Intervention: Advanced Professional Training" strand to share the successes and challenges

discovered from the Iowa and Florida models on implementing RTI. Many practical handouts were provided including survey forms, problem solving models, and data analysis formulas. In March, Vince Hernandez followed up with the topic "Response to Intervention & Assessment Standards: Ensuring a Reliable, Valid and Fair Process". By this time, representation at the Psychologists' Roundtables had spread beyond the typical SJCOE-SELPA districts' representatives to include participation by the Lodi SELPA and the Tuolumne SELPA.

In April, Karen Reasoner and Mike Sexton, SJCOE/SELPA Psychologists presented the final topic of the year, "Utilizing RTI for Designing Prevention, Intervention, Assessment, and Identification Strategies with Students Exhibiting Social and Emotional Difficulties in School".

The two-hour, monthly Psychological Roundtable trainings provide psychologists the opportunity to hear and discuss current trends in special education in a condensed version of topics. Psychological Services builds their trainings around the surveyed needs of the professionals in the field and continue to advance the cause of maintaining fidelity in providing proper support to our children.

# Educators Lobby Congress For Special Education

Dr. Sandee Kludt, SJ County Assistant Superintendent and SELPA Director, along with Karen Bruns, Community Advisory Committee chairperson, and a coalition of 16 California educators and parents, recently returned from 5 days in Washington D.C., where they met with members of Congress and their staffs and the Bush Administration on the urgent need to increase special education funding.

The group held over 30 meetings throughout the week with targeted members of Congress and their staffs who sit on the vital Education and Appropriations committees of both houses and with members of the U.S. Department of Education and the California Congressional delegation. Dr. Kludt stated that she thought the goal of continuing to educate our legislators about the needs in special education was achieved. "I think those who have been around a few years really 'get it' about IDEA, but we have a large contingent of

freshmen who need lots of education."

While the focus and #1 priority is always to get Congress to live up to the commitment made in 1973 to fund 40% of the cost of IDEA, other issues were also on the agenda, including Medicaid reimbursement and the rising cost of some services such as those associated with such programs as autism and Emotional Disturbance.

The coalition was told by members of Congress and staffers to keep up the pressure, to encourage educators and parents to let their local members of Congress know the importance of increased special education funding and to ask them to tell the chairs and members of Senate and House Appropriations Committees that increased special education funding is a top priority. "It really depended on who you were talking to," said Kludt. The immediate priorities of the two parties were reflected in their responses to us." As one coalition member put it, "Every year we go back and



we're told that money's tight, so there's no time like the present to start. We've been waiting for 32 years and it's time."

On May 17, Congress approved a budget resolution calling for a \$9.5 billion increase for education and workforce programs. While this is at least \$2 billion higher than original proposals and can be taken as a positive response to the work of the coalition, it is a non-binding document. The next hurdle is the Appropriations Committees. Congress is planning to conclude action on education funding by June 30th.

## County Young Adults' Success Stories *continued from Page 3*

and pay for the trip. Upon arriving at the destination, students are responsible for their list and shopping with support from their teacher and instructional assistants. They locate items on their list learning how store aisles are set up and where particular types of items are located. The student identifies, counts and pays for purchases learning these skills with support from staff in a fitting setting. Along with shopping, students are interacting with members of the community they encounter—a customer in an aisle, the clerk at the register and other interactions that come about through their natural involvement in the community. They are learning how to appropriately interact, communicate and

be safe while they are in the community. As you can see, the value of programs like this is huge in helping students to put functional skills they have learned in more traditional settings to use in their appropriate settings.

Young adult programs assist students in the transition process by exposing them to the community and a variety of activities so they become more familiar with their own likes and dislikes. Students who have had a broad range of experiences have a better understanding as to what they would like their lives to look like. When asked about their goals and vision during the transition process these students have a better idea of what they would like to do after they leave the school setting.

This school year we have 14 graduates from our San Joaquin County classes and young adult programs. These young men and women will be moving on with their transition from the school system into various community activities and programs. The time they have spent in the school system and the young adult programs has, hopefully, helped them to work toward their own personal potential. We wish each and every graduate success in whatever life holds for them!

For more information please contact Maragret St. George at either [mstgeorge@sjcoe.net](mailto:mstgeorge@sjcoe.net) or 209-468-4908

# Graduation 2007

San Joaquin County Special Education Programs graduated 16 students in a colorful and moving ceremony at the SJCOE Education Service Center Wednesday May 30, 2007. Well-attended by family, friends and staff, the students were recognized individually by their teachers and other staff members for their efforts, achievement and personal qualities. Program Administrator Brandi Bruni served as Mistress of Ceremonies. A favorite part of the ceremony is the photo montage produced by county special day class teacher Denise Vaughan, in which each student is featured in a series of pictures from home and school. Combined with appropriate musical background, the montage always brings tears and laughter to the audience. Musical selections by Jessica Ochoa added greatly to the celebration. Dr. Rick Wentworth, San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools, assisted by Kathy Skeels, Director, San Joaquin County Special Education Programs presented students with their certificates.



"I've known some of these students for over 10 years when I was a speech and language specialist. They are like a part of the family. Tonight is wonderful and exciting but also bittersweet." **Brandi Bruni, Program Administrator, SJCOE Special Education Programs**

This is my first time at the County Special Education Programs graduation. Over a period of years I have worked with many of the graduates. It's great to see what they have achieved." **Jirii Sikata, Valley Mountain Regional Center**



“This event is always a nice opportunity for staff, students and parents to celebrate. I look forward to it every year. These students have made real accomplishments.” **Dr Rick Wentworth, Superintendent, San Joaquin County Office of Education.**



“Sarah has lots of plans for where she’s going. I just hope the rest of us can keep up!” **Kathy Werner, parent of graduate**



This graduation is a wonderful experience. Matt and all the professionals over the years worked so hard and tonight we see it all come together. **Ann Ciremele, parent of graduate**

“It means a great deal to be here at this graduation. I have been a County Board member for over 15 years and I am extremely proud of the programs offered and the amazing progress of our students. The county office is thriving and growing every year to meet more areas of need for students.” **Gretchen Talley, San Joaquin County Board of Education**

*Photographs by Dave Bermann*

# Valley LINCS creates “Success Story”

By any measure, John Alstatt stands out in the San Joaquin County Office of Education’s Valley LINCS program. John stands out a few days each week because he proudly wears his Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps uniform. However, he stands out every day because of the fact that he is a Valley LINCS “success story”. John entered the Valley LINCS program as an eighth grader in the fall of 2005.

Valley LINCS is a program that provides education and support for students with emotional needs. The goal of the program is to enable students to make a successful transition back to their home district in a mainstream setting. John has met his goals and looks forward to returning to East Union High School in Manteca this August. John’s road to success has not been an easy one. At first, John, like most peers, had difficulty being held accountable for his behavior choices. However, there was one goal John remained focused upon—he wanted to join JROTC when he entered high school. Since Valley LINCS is on the site of the Sierra Middle School and Lincoln High School campuses in Stockton, John had ample opportunities to see Lincoln’s JROTC in action during middle school lunchtime. He told staff repeatedly, “I



*JROTC seaman, John Alstatt*

want to do that next year”. With support and encouragement from Valley LINCS staff members, and a great deal of self-determination, John began making positive choices and taking responsibility for his actions. This progress afforded him the opportunity to move closer toward achieving his goal of participating in JROTC. John enrolled in, and successfully completed, two mainstream classes at Sierra Middle School. He was rewarded for his hard work and perseverance with

an acceptance to the JROTC program for the 2006-2007 school year. John embraced the JROTC program with great enthusiasm. Lincoln High’s JROTC Director, Senior Chief Mark Williams (USN ret.), says that John is “one of his best students”, “a role model”, and “highly regarded by his fellow seamen.” John has excelled so much in his

first year that his achievements are that of what a seaman normally completes by the end of his or her second year in the program. John credits the highly structured environment of Valley LINCS and JROTC for his accomplishments. He also gives kudos to his grandparents, whom he lives with in Manteca, for the extra effort in transporting him to and from JROTC events during extra curricular hours. John has successfully completed the Valley LINCS Program and is eager to join his friends in East Union’s JROTC in August. John knows that his transition to a mainstream high school will not be perfectly smooth, but he has confidence that he will be successful. John looks forward to a military career after graduation from high school.

For more information please contact Sharon Brenneise at either sbrenneise@sjcoe.net or 209-468-9283.



*John Alstatt looking forward to a military career*



# Legislative Update

## **AB 32, as amended, Fuller - Career technical education: work certification program**

The governing board of a school district is permitted to authorize pupils, with parental permission, who would benefit from advanced scholastic or vocational work, to attend community college as special part-time students to undertake one or more courses of instruction at the community college level, in order to provide educational enrichment opportunities for a limited number of eligible pupils. This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to provide, within the public school system, work certification training options to pupils who are between the ages of 16 and 18 years, have passed the high school exit examination, and have the consent of their parents or guardians, with particular emphasis on job specific skilled labor and technical training. The bill would authorize a pupil enrolled in at least 3 high school courses to enroll also in a community college for the purpose of taking career and technical education classes leading to work certification if the class is not available at the pupil's high school of attendance or a regional occupational center or program in which the pupil is eligible to enroll and the pupil has parental permission.

SELPA position - Support with amendments



## **AB 359, as amended, Karnette. Student financial aid: Assumption Program of Loans for Education.**

Existing law establishes the Assumption Program of Loans for Education, under which an applicant enrolled in a participating institution of postsecondary education, or an applicant who agrees to participate in a teacher trainee or teacher internship program, and who further agrees to obtain a teaching credential in a subject matter area that is designated as a current or projected shortage area or to provide classroom instruction in a school that serves a large population of pupils from low-income families, has a high percentage of teachers holding emergency permits, or is a low-performing school, is eligible to enter into an agreement for loan assumption, to be redeemed upon becoming employed as a teacher. This bill would specify that persons who are pursuing service credentials utilized in special education, or who participate in speech-language pathologist trainee programs or become employed as speech-language pathologists

SELPA position - Support

## **AB 964, as introduced, Houston. Teachers: special education: incentive pay.**

Existing law requires a person employed by a school district in a position requiring certification qualifications, except a person employed in a position requiring administrative or supervisory credentials, to be classified on the salary schedule of the school district on the basis of uniform allowance for years of training and years of experience, except if a salary schedule based on criteria other than a uniform allowance for years of training and years of experience is negotiated through collective bargaining. Public school employers and exclusive representatives of credentialed teachers are encouraged to provide incentives to teachers to accept teaching assignments in areas of highest need. Programs providing additional, incentive pay to certain teachers are established under existing law, including, but not limited to, the Jack O'Connell Beginning-Teacher Salary Incentive Program. This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to provide teachers with incentives to choose to teach special education classes, in the form of supplemental pay.

SELPA position - Support

## **SB 123, as amended, Romero. High school exit examination.**

Existing law, until December 31, 2007, requires a school district or state special school to grant a high school diploma to a pupil with a disability who is scheduled to graduate from high school in 2007, has not passed the high school exit examination, has not received a high school exit examination waiver, and meets other specified criteria. This bill would require a school district or state special school to allow a pupil with an operative individualized education program or a plan adopted pursuant to specified federal law to satisfy the requirement to pass the high school exit examination by taking and passing the examination with accommodations or modifications, as specified in the individualized education program or the plan of the pupil, or by satisfactorily completing tasks specified in the individualized education program or the plan, as determined by a jury. The bill would require each school district or state special school to establish or otherwise provide for a process by which a pupil with an individualized education program or a plan may receive a juried assessment of tasks instead of passing one or both portions of the high school exit examination. The jury would be required to consist of a special education teacher, a high school principal, a parent of a special education pupil, a school psychologist, and a school counselor. The pupil would be authorized to appeal a decision of the jury that the pupil did not satisfactorily complete the tasks to the governing board of the school district. By requiring school districts to establish and convene juries and consider appeals of jury decisions, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program. The bill would delete the December 31, 2007, repeal date of the provision setting forth the criteria a pupil with a disability who does not pass the high school exit examination or receive a waiver of that examination requirement is required to satisfy to receive a high school diploma.

## **SB 196, as introduced, Machado. Teacher credentialing: district interns.**

Existing law authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, until January 1, 2008, to issue district intern credentials authorizing persons employed by any school district to provide classroom instruction to pupils with mild and moderate disabilities in special education classes. This bill would delete that termination date, thereby authorizing the commission to issue district intern credentials indefinitely.

# Community Advisory Committee - The Year in Review

This year was another great year for parent training that was presented through the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). This year included a training for parents on Social Security, another on Special Needs Trusts and Conservatorships, and a series on communication geared to parents of children with autism. Each training was well attended as were the CAC meetings



*Amber Machado, FRN & Jirii Sakata, VMRC*

this year and for their input for training topics for the coming year. Look for a list of trainings for the 2007/08 school year to be out in August.

The evening ended with a presentation by a music therapist.

CAC elections were held in April. Karen Bruns, our CAC chairperson for the past three years, opted not to run for re-election. Karen has brought renewed life and vigor to the CAC during her tenure as CAC chair.



Her leadership was inspired and her support and empathy for her fellow parents obvious. The evening was a great success and the CAC invites you to attend next year!



*Amber Machado, Family Resource Network & Sangita Patel, Jefferson parent representative*

We are looking forward to an exciting two years with a full CAC executive committee. Jodi Graham is the newly elected CAC chairperson. Jodi has been the Lincoln District CAC representative and is looking forward to her new role. She will bring all the wonderful attributes of a caring, knowledgeable parent to her role as CAC chairperson. Lilli Kizlin, of Manteca District is the new Vice Chair and Sangita Patel from Jefferson district is the new Secretary. We welcome everyone into their new roles.



*Karen Bruns welcomes guests to CAC dinner*

which either preceded or followed the trainings. The CAC parents and support team appreciate all the parent participation

The CAC hosted a wonderful CAC appreciation dinner on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The theme was Mama Mia. The 51 people in attendance began the evening with antipasto and Italian sodas. Children in attendance received sensory bags and were enthralled by the balloon twister, caricature artist and face painters. Dinner was an assortment of pasta balanced with tri-tip, salad and bread.



*Rob Robertson, "Mr. R." character artist*



*Robert & Tyler serve Italian sodas to guests*

# Thurber House *continued from the front page*

They regularly wash, dry, fold and sort the laundry and deliver it to the correct classrooms. With the assistance of the WorkAbilityI program, the staff at Redwood School is equipping a vocational training room on campus.

Here students learn and practice job-related skills such as sorting, shredding, and other tasks that they can use in future paid employment.

Matthew, who works at Wal-Mart through WorkAbilityI, demonstrated how the display board can be used to practice job skills.

Reward and recognition are a part of all the classes at Redwood School and

throughout SJ County special education programs.

At the year-end awards assembly each of the students in Mary Bennett's class was recognized for achievement during the year.

Achieving these goals is very important to them and to the staff and families. In the

words of a very wise parent, "It's amazing how far you can go with just small steps."



*Matt practices store display in vocational room*

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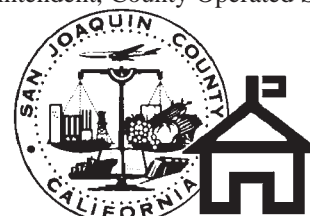
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# *In This Issue....*

Thurber House Program Prepares for Work & Life ..... p 1

Asthma Symptoms - Control & Prevention ..... p 3

Graduation 2007 ..... p 6 & 7

Valley LINCS creates “Success Story” ..... p 8

Community Advisory Committee - The Year in Review..... p 10



*Sandee Kludt, and Karen Bruns meet with Representative Dennis Cardoza (D-Merced) in Washington DC*



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