



Cal-TASH Board of Directors

Highlights of the 26th Annual Cal-TASH Conference

Close to 300 folks from all over the state of California and beyond gathered at the SFO Marriott in Burlingame, California for the 26th Annual Cal-TASH Conference: *Strengthening and Sustaining Inclusive Communities* on February 1st and 2nd of 2008.

This year there were forty-nine sessions with more than half of the presenters being people with disabilities or family members. Some sessions offered strategies for inclusion in school, work, and play. Other sessions offered a platform for challenging discussion on, “why not” inclusion for all?”

We had three motivating and thought-provoking keynote addresses. During Friday’s lunch four students from local San Francisco Bay Area High Schools shared their experiences as included students. These students explained what being included has meant in their lives and shared their accomplishments.

On Saturday at lunch Dr. Paul Longmore, a historian and the Director of the Institute on Disability at San Francisco State University, presented, “Revolutions in Consciousness”. Dr. Longmore shared many interesting facts about disability throughout history.

The closing keynote on Saturday was presented by James Shorter, Executive Director of Golden Gate Regional Center. “The Devil and Dr. Risk: The Zen

of Inertia”, was the title of the presentation about the importance of being a risk-taker during difficult times.

Each year Cal-TASH recognizes several Californian’s who provide leadership and work hard to promote the values of Cal-TASH. The 2008 recipients of the following awards were:

The Bill Rosenberg Memorial Award was presented to Blair Roger

The Robert Gaylord-Ross Memorial Scholarship Award was presented to Ann Halvorsen

The Mary Falvey Outstanding Young Person Award was presented to Rebecca Kennedy

The Diane J. Lipton Memorial Cal-TASH Award was presented to Tammy Ratto

Congratulations!

On Friday evening Cal-TASH has a tradition of getting everyone together to “Meet the Board,” which includes a complimentary taco bar and entertainment. This year we were fortunate to be entertained by Michael Valcour, a singer from Sacramento, California. Michael had the crowd singing along and did a great rendition of “Sandy,” from the play “Grease”. All who attended enjoyed his performance.

We also had an unbelievable raffle, with close to 75 prizes if not more, which included books, photographs, wine, t-shirts, picture frames and even an I-Pod Nano. Many conference participants were pleasantly surprised when their names were called to collect their raffle prize.



Eileen & Matthew Medina

This year we had two musicians play during some transition periods. All enjoyed the music of Alexander “Sandy” Ross (violin) and Jordan Kamnitzer (keyboard). In addition, the Cal-TASH Board of Directors purchased “cool” tote bags for each conference participant with the Cal-TASH logo. We also had a “Dream Wall” where conference participants could write their dreams. As one conference participant said, “The Dream Wall is a wonderful chance for us to express our thoughts and hear those of others. What a perfect idea for the conference.” Check out the Cal-TASH web site in the near future to read all the dreams posted.

I’m always amazed that the Annual Cal-TASH Conference is put together entirely by volunteers from our Board of Directors and membership. I think Margaret Mead sums it up best, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” I’m proud and honored to be a part of Cal-TASH.

- Shirley A. Rodriguez, President