



# THE GAZETTE



A Publication of Modern Support Services, LLC  
Volume III, Summer 2010

**“When you bond with people, they are less likely to behave in a way to disappoint you.”™**

Tom Pomeranz, Phd

## MSS Client Spotlight

### Carlos Gutierrez

By Leslee Burton (MSS Staff)

*I had the pleasure of meeting Carlos with his Direct Support Professional (DSP), Yesenia Varela at our Glendale office as well as visiting him at his home in Glendale.*

Carlos has been receiving services from Modern Support Services for 7 years concurrent with living independently. Prior to having his own apartment, Carlos had lived in a group home for 5 years. He states that he is very happy living in his apartment, and with the rapport he shares with his DSP, Yesenia. “She helps me a lot with shopping and cooking. We have index cards to use for my grocery list”, he says.



Carlos also participates in Modern Support Services’ Money Management Training Program enabling his success in maintaining his apartment throughout his 7 years living independently. He’s established a positive rapport with his neighbors; his DSP has stated that “all his neighbors like him”.

He excitedly told me about his first Christmas tree. Two years ago his apartment manager bought him a Christmas tree with all the lights and ornaments. He takes very good care of it and proudly displays it each Christmas season.

He has a full time job at a recycling center in Glendale. While not working he keeps busy with maintaining his apartment, spending time with his cats, watching wrestling and playing music.

Carlos has two cats that he has raised from kittens, The Rock and Cena of which he happily introduced to me. He greatly enjoys everything about wrestling, hence the names of his cats after John Cena and “The Rock”. He watches every Pay-Per-View wrestling match he can! He has all kinds of wrestling collectables including the wrestling “dolls”, or action figures, and even has a miniature wrestling cage enclosing a wrestling ring and various stars from WWE.



Carlos is a musician. He plays drums, keyboard, bass and guitar; all of which he has set up in his bedroom. He’s been playing since he was a child; his mother and grandmother bought his 1st drum kit for him. All the instruments he currently has he bought and paid for on his own.

While visiting him, he played the drums for me and showed me all his musical instruments, and his collection of wrestling dolls, posters, pillows and blankets!

## DSP Spotlight

### News from our Long Beach Office

By Roberta Fowler



*Roberta Fowler is one of our first DSPs to work in the Harbor Regional Area. She is known by her commitment of always putting the needs of each individual for whom she provides services first and foremost, understanding that people are unique and special, deserving positive recognition and encouragement to actualize the highest level of independence and self-advocacy.*

*It is great pleasure to highlight her in this edition of the Gazette!*

I started working for Modern Support Services as of March 2005. I have worked since I was 12 years-old and I have never worked for a company that is as dedicated to a cause. I respect the integrity of MSS, which makes me proud to be a part of the team. I have witnessed genuine compassion for others from DSPs, Area Managers and all Personnel Staff. I have seen them go the “extra mile” a lot!

**“ I have never worked for a company that is as dedicated to a cause. I respect the integrity of MSS, which makes me proud to be a part of the team. ”**

Some of my favorite things about my job are working one on one with individuals who are seeking a better quality of life, or are perhaps are in need of motivation? I believe this is what I do best because I am motivated to improve my own life. It’s an on-going job, one that reaps so many valuable rewards. Its freedom! Its contentment! Its happiness! It’s comforting, and I’m so grateful. This does not come easy; it takes working on it everyday to be successful. The good news is it gets easier and easier as we go along. The more I practice a new behavior, the easier it gets! Being able to make my own schedule helps too; it allows me to meet the individuals’ needs better. The satisfaction of a job well done is so rewarding.

Every step is instruction (improvement). Fine-tuned and **ready to have the best life ever!** Whether or not I or the individual chooses to pick-up the **opportunity** (options) is entirely up to you. The knowing that people are constantly **changing** gives me permission to work on being someone better than before.

I’m very creative, and once tapped into it, anyone can be too! It’s best to always consult each other on the best course of action for a better fit. Two heads are better than one. . . In what way can change fit into your life? Take a look at some of the considerations you must think about - culture, beliefs, religion, goals, relationships, old habits, etc. With all things considered, can you make it fit?

# UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS UNIQUE LIVING ARRANGEMENT

## FRIENDS WHO HAVE BECOME “FAMILY”

In August of 2007 MSS Long Beach was introduced to a distinctive group of young adults and their parents with a new and exciting concept! Something ‘outside the box’ in living arrangement, that from our perspective, is ideal. From the day of the very first Intake to present, ‘the project’ and the individuals that comprise what we’ve fondly named **Roxanne House**, has been and continues to be, an educational and creative journey for everyone involved.

Six individuals, five of which are Modern Support Services clients, rent a house owned by one of the housemates’ parents. The parents have formed a Board which oversees that structure and accountability is maintained.

I recently had the opportunity to sit-in on a Parent Meeting; interview the housemates and two of the parents, Chris and Tammy one on one. . .

While talking to Tammy, she states, “It’s turned out far better than I imagined it could be. I don’t know how we would have done this without Modern Support Services. We could have done it but it wouldn’t have fostered their independence. Modern Support sees things that we as parents don’t always see”.

Tammy goes on to say, “Every DSP has been wonderful, and I know we can trust them. The DSP can get much farther in introducing and teaching new skills than we can. They’re creatively objective and compassionate.”

And, Chris expressed, “The very first meeting, at Danielle’s Intake, when Jim explained Modern Support Services’ philosophy I immediately knew it was going to be a good fit!

One of the great things about this is that some of the parents had never had any kind of respite. We, the parents, feel like we’re growing and fulfilling things in our lives we haven’t been able to in the past. It’s great, the parents are able to communicate and work with the DSPs, too.”

### THE CONCEPT

Four of the housemates, Tom, Danielle, Katrina and Melissa (the “Original Four”) have known each other throughout their high school experience. One of the many things they have in common is strong parental support thus enabling their parents to get to know one another as well. Their parents united to influence, and to keep aware of what was happening in the Special Ed Dept. and activities for their children. Through a desire for their children to live independently once they were adults, the concept evolved into reality.

Chris and Tammy, mothers of Tom and Danielle spear-headed the project by obtaining as much information as possible through Harbor Regional Center. They attended trainings and also researched and toured various Group Homes as it seemed at the time the structure they were looking for. Through the process much networking occurred and they soon realized that what they were envisioning was quite different than the structure of a group home as it would be too restrictive for ‘their young people’.

Once they developed the concepts of how they wanted their home to operate Chris and Tammy were able to present what they’d learned to the other parents and several parent meetings followed. The parents coordinated and came upon an agreement as to the structure and operational basics. Each parent contributed and continues to contribute their talents and expertise to the growth and development of Roxanne House.

And, there are a few house rules the housemates agreed upon as well:

1. To sit down together for dinner every night
2. Each housemate is responsible one night a week to cook dinner
3. A curfew of 11:00 PM
4. Never go out alone, always have one or two people with you for safety
5. Not to be alone in their bedroom with boyfriends

From the beginning the housemates recognized their need for accountability and structure. The dinner rule has proved to be an excellent way to develop relationship and support for one another as well as time to share the activities of their day. Throughout these, almost three years, they’ve maintained their dinner rule. They genuinely care about one another and desire to maintain the bond they’ve created.

They also developed, along with the parents, a ‘Communication Board’ on a dry-erase board located at the foot of the stairs, easy for all to see. Each housemate has a boxed section to use to communicate where they’ll be that

*“Unique Individuals...” continued on Next Page*

## UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS UNIQUE LIVING ARRANGEMENT

day, upcoming activities and anything else they want to communicate.

They have weekly house meetings which Chris leads, using her counseling skills, which has encouraged them to keep open communication and to work through any issues that arise. Chris states that “through the process of keeping the ‘dinner rule’ priority they have become a family”. She says, “They were directed to talk about their day and etc during dinner to keep connected. They’ve learned to appropriately express thoughts and concerns to one another . . . the family concept fits for them.”

### THE HOUSE

Danielle’s parents Jim and Tammy had, for several years, their eye on a house across the street from theirs with the idea that Danielle could eventually live in. The house came up for sale and they purchased it; however due to practicalities, the choice was made for Jim and Tammy to live in it instead and to rent their current house, the house Danielle grew up in, to Danielle and friends.

They realized they had room and financial need for two more house mates. Danielle, who is a vivacious out-going young woman, met Regan and Jamie at Cypress Community College, told them about how neat their living arrangement is and quickly got them and their parents, to meet everybody. Within a month the household was complete!

### THE HOUSEMATES

**Regan** – is a delightful, sparkly-eyed young woman. She told me that she met Danielle while attending Cypress College, and they became fast-friends. “Danielle asked me to move in with her”, she says. “She gave me their newsletter for me and my mom, and we went to a house meeting.” She states, “I was planning on going to Taft College in Bakersfield but I wasn’t really sure if I wanted to but once I went to the house meeting and saw the home, I wanted to live here. I wanted to live independently.”

When asked what she likes most about her home she says, “I like living here because I don’t have to live with parents . . . but we are checked-on by them, ‘the Board Members’. We’re trying to have the parents here less and less. I like having freedom away from parents, and my housemates are pretty cool.”

Regan shares the responsibility of planning and preparing one meal a week, her day to make dinner is Monday.

**Tom** – One of the *Original Four*, a very delightful, out-going young man and “the only guy living here with five female housemates”. He says, with his big smile, “Sometimes I need a break!”

As with the rest of his housemates, he lived with his parents prior to his current home. He told me that he was familiar with the concept of the living arrangement as his mom and Danielle’s mom had been talking about it since he was in high school.

His response when asked of his favorite thing about living there was that, “it’s cool” and “it’s nice to be independent from parents”.

Tom works at the Long Beach Museum of Art for “about five to six years” two days a week, Thursdays and Fridays. He takes great pride in his job working in Guest Customer Service and guarding the exhibits. I had the pleasure of visiting him there and he gave me a personal and informative tour! He’s also a participant in the Special Olympics in Track and Field.

Both he and Danielle have been guest speakers at various events on Adult Transition and Independent Living.

When asked about his experience with MSS he says, “My worker (DSP, Marika Kiiveri) helps me to cook and to learn more recipes; it’s fun; it’s cool, my dad named the chili I make ‘Tom’s Chili’. . . “And Marika helps me with meal planning, hygiene/shaving, and we sometimes go for walks”.

Tom says that, “if you get a good group of friends together, like us, a lot could happen for you. . . The help we get from our DSPs helps to make it all happen”.

**Katrina** – One of the ‘Original Four’, Katrina went to Millikan High School with Tom, Danielle and Melissa. She attended the Adult Transition Program at Cal State Long Beach completing the program in 2007. She’s been working part-time at a Ralph’s supermarket in Long Beach for about a year.

Katrina states that her mom was very supportive with her decision to live at Roxanne House. She states, “It’s fun living here! My favorite thing is that I can make my own decisions for myself. . . We’re like a family; we can trust each other. And I can trust my worker, Lani. Lani helps me a lot with money management, budgeting, and helping and encouraging me to lose weight, to exercise and with healthy food choices. Between my mom and Lani I get the help I need.”

*“Unique Individuals...” continued on Next Page*

## UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS UNIQUE LIVING ARRANGEMENT

**Danielle** – Another one of the *Original Four*, Danielle is an out-going, very positive young woman. For ten years she's been a swimmer on the Special Olympics Long Beach Swim Team. She currently attends Cypress College. When asked about her living arrangement, relationship with her housemates and Modern Support Services she expresses near endless praise!

"I don't know what we would have done without Modern Support Services. . . Modern Support Services gets to know you. My DSP, Sophie, comes and we talk about things important to me. And she listens. Parents listen too, but Sophie really does! And she relates to me. If there's a problem, which doesn't happen very often, she puts on the 'Referee mode' and helps us work through things. We get along with all the DSPs.

Do we have problems? Yes, we do. But what family doesn't? We have no secrets from each other. A lot of people thought I was crazy to want so many housemates. A lot of people, after high school, loose contact with one another but Tom, Melissa, Katrina and myself had been talking about it; our parents had been talking about our living arrangement since high school."

Danielle has expressed that what they have is very special and goes on to say, "We've learned a lot from each other. We sit down and talk through issues together. . . Everybody I talk to about our home wants what we have."

**Jamie** – An out-going, gregarious and vivacious young woman who loves living independently, told me that she had met Danielle the same time Regan met her as they were all attending Cypress College at the time. She stated that once she saw the house and met the people she knew she wanted to live here.

Jamie is a real 'people-person'. When I asked her what she likes most about the living arrangement, she replied all in one word, "Everything!"

"Everything?", I asked.

"Yes, everything!" she replied. "And not being with parents all the time."

Her smile and sparkly eyes expressed so much joy that it felt like the interview was complete!

"So, tell me", I asked, "How does your DSP help you?"

"This is my first time living independently; my DSP (Lani Moore) helps me to maintain my independence. I cook on Tuesday nights. She helps me with cooking, laundry and

housecleaning. Though I mostly do laundry by myself. . . They (the DSPs) help us learn more about things we don't know about".

She goes on to state quite firmly, "We're one big happy family!" And with that, her interview concluded.

Though she didn't say a lot, the energy and the happiness she exuded told me that she's very happy with her living arrangement and with the supports she receives from her housemates, her DSP and her parents, too.

**Melissa** – One of the *Original Four*, receives SLS services from another agency and was not interviewed at this time.

While spending time in their home with them individually and/or collectively it didn't take long to recognize that the energy and dynamics shared between them truly emulates that of a family; their bond is strong and very positive



From Top Left: Tom, Melissa, Katrina, Jamie, Danielle, Regan

**MODERN SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE OC!**

May 1st 2010 marked our one year anniversary of the opening of our first office in Orange County!

As many of you know, each Regional Center in California operates differently. Since Orange is one of the largest counties in Southern California, Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC) has four office locations.

MSS Orange County is located in the city of Orange on Chapman Ave., near Angel Stadium, close to RCOC's North and South offices.

We're currently providing Supportive Living Services to three individuals in Anaheim and Mission Viejo.

There are four DSPs providing services ranging from eight hours one time a week to three to five times a week and up to eight hours a day, seven days a week

In February 2010, at RCOC South, Modern Support Services hosted a training provided by Dr. Tom Pomeranz on Universal Enhancement. RCOC Service Coordinators and management, MSS staff from Long Beach and Orange County as well as other vendors were in attendance.

MSS Orange County has received very positive feedback and input from Service Coordinators, support recipients and their families regarding the supports and services we provide. A very positive beginning overall!

**The Eye of an Eagle**

I seek to be like a Sacred Eagle that sits  
high upon the mountain top, one that some day  
has courage, strength, will and wisdom to  
learn to soar straight up into the deep blue skies  
and spread my wings toward the heavens  
that lie high above the clouds that whisper  
a sweet song of freedom from all the pain and  
sorrow that drowns my tears that fall. Great Spirit  
help me to walk in the beauty to see the strength of  
my journey in my life. Help me to walk on a  
straight path that will teach me the wisdom and  
truth that will set me free.

- Written by Kenneth L. Vicks

"Dedicated to my Family  
and Friends who stood by  
me through it all by God's grace."

Amen

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*We encourage contributions to our newsletter  
from all of the individuals we support and staff  
on an on-going basis.*

*Currently the editors of the Gazette are  
compiling articles, poetry, interviews, ideas and  
etc for future editions. All contributions are  
welcome. You can send your contributions via  
email to [lloya@modrensupportservices.org](mailto:lloya@modrensupportservices.org) or  
submit them to Area Managers, Program  
Directors and/or DSPs.*

**QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEY**

In an effort for Modern Support Services to go green we have provided our Quality Assurance Survey on-line. Please visit our website, [www.modernsupportservices.org](http://www.modernsupportservices.org) to complete the Consumer Quality Assurance Survey.

If you don't have a computer, you can access one at your local library.

# Access to Healthcare 2010

The recently passed Health Care Reform Act includes several provisions that will affect people with disabilities and their families. Many details have yet to be worked out and numerous organizations are working to develop more authoritative information and a timeline for implementation of the various provisions of the Act, however, the TATRA Project developed the following list of provisions of interest to families of children and youth with disabilities.



- Insurance companies are prohibited from excluding coverage to children based on pre-existing conditions. Effective 6 months after enactment. Beginning in 2014, this prohibition would also apply to adults.
- Parents have the option of keeping adult children on their insurance plans until age 26. Effective 6 months after enactment.
- New plans may not charge co-payments for preventive services. Effective 6 months after enactment
- Medicare beneficiaries will not be charged co-payments for preventive services and preventive services are exempted from deductibles under the Medicare program. Effective January 1, 2011.
- Insurance companies cannot drop people from coverage when they get sick. Effective 6 months after enactment.
- A standardized annual out-of-pocket spending limit would be established so that no family would face bankruptcy due to medical expenses. Effective 6 months after enactment.
- Annual and lifetime caps cannot be required in private insurance policies. Effective 6 months after enactment.
- A temporary subsidized high-risk pool to provide insurance to Americans who are uninsured because of a pre-existing condition will be established. Effective in 2010.
- Increases funding for Community Health Centers to increase the number of patients they can serve. Effective beginning in fiscal year 2011

**Disability advocates also worked to have the provisions below included in the Act. However, major benefits of the law do not kick in until 2014.**

- Increase the federal share of Medicaid for personal attendant services; allowing states to cover these services under the state's optional service plan instead of through the waiver system
- Increase the federal share of Medicaid to increase the use of home and community based services (HCBS) by under-performing states
- Allow States to offer additional services under the 1915(i) Medicaid HCBS Waivers State Plan Option.
- Create a national long term services insurance program to assist eligible individuals and their families to meet long term needs without forcing them into poverty to receive Medicaid benefits; provide spousal impoverishment protections for HCBS Beneficiaries.
- Require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to collect data on the access to primary care services of beneficiaries with disabilities.

PACER's Family to Family Health Information Center will be providing updated information as it becomes available.

### The following online sources were consulted to compile this information:

- The Arc**  
[www.streetinsider.com/Press+Releases/The+Arc+Applauds+House+Passage+of+Health+Care+Reform+Legislation/5461255.html](http://www.streetinsider.com/Press+Releases/The+Arc+Applauds+House+Passage+of+Health+Care+Reform+Legislation/5461255.html)
- Autism Society**  
[www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=vote4autism\\_federallegislationpage](http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=vote4autism_federallegislationpage)
- Disability Scoop**  
[www.disabilityrightsoregon.org/the-dro-blog/health-care-reform-bill-passes](http://www.disabilityrightsoregon.org/the-dro-blog/health-care-reform-bill-passes)
- Kaiser Foundation**  
[www.kff.org/healthreform/8023.cfm](http://www.kff.org/healthreform/8023.cfm)
- Life Without Limits**  
[www.lifewithoutlimits.org/site/MessageViewer?em\\_id=18001.0](http://www.lifewithoutlimits.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=18001.0)
- whitehouse.gov**  
[www.whitehouse.gov/health-care-meeting/proposal](http://www.whitehouse.gov/health-care-meeting/proposal) & [www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform/immediate-benefits](http://www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform/immediate-benefits)
- Huffington Post**  
[www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/22/health-reform-bill-summary\\_n\\_508315.html?slideshow\\_rating=10&x=39&y=9#s75228](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/22/health-reform-bill-summary_n_508315.html?slideshow_rating=10&x=39&y=9#s75228)



For the second consecutive year, we are pleased to announce that Modern Support Services, LLC has been selected for the Best of Long Beach Award in the Mental Retardation & Disabled Services category by the U.S. Local Business Association (USLBA).

## THE GAZETTE

**The Gazette** is a publication of **Modern Support Services**. The Gazette wishes to thank the MSS staff and the individuals we support for sharing their stories.

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