NISOD INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

KEYS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DISABILITY AWARENESS DAY

October is Disability Awareness Month. In recognition of this national event, the Disabled Student Resources Department on each of Pima Community College's five campuses sponsors a Disability Awareness Day, having students, staff, faculty, and administrators participate in various disability-related activities or challenges.

The keys to having a successful day include: selecting the best day, time, and place; selecting engaging disability-related activities; and, most important, inviting classes to participate by relating the activities to their academic subject matter and having the instructors encourage participation.

Best Day, Time, and Place

Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. seem to be the best days and times to sponsor the event. Setting up activities in high-traffic areas, such as student common areas or hallways leading to the cafeteria, attract more people than having the event in a separate large meeting room or gymnasium.

Disability-related Activities or Challenges

Choose five or 10 activities or challenges, depending on the size of the area and the number of people available to be in charge of each activity over a three- to four-hour period. Include an activity that involves a demonstration, such as how Handidogs assist people with disabilities, but primarily use activities that require active involvement.

Visual Impairment/Blind Challenges

• Orientation/Mobility Challenge: Arrange for three or four blind/visually impaired students, or trainers from your local association for the blind, to teach participants how to walk with a blind person. This activity can include how to lead/guide a blind person down an aisle and/or how to help her be seated. Handouts on "Common Eye Conditions and Effects on Vision" and/or "Community Resources for the Blind and Visually Impaired" should be available for participants who want more information.

• Braille Challenge: Arrange for two or three blind students, or trainers from your local association for the blind, to print the name of each participant in Braille on the bottom of a Braille alphabet card, and then take a minute or two to explain how to read the name. Have someone available to answer questions at a display of books, games, and other materials in Braille, along with various items used by the blind, such as a talking calculator.

• Color Enlarger Challenge: Ask one or two visually impaired students to demonstrate how they use the Color Enlarger to read various printed materials and take tests. If possible, have participants read and then write the answer to a multi-choice test question.

Hard of Hearing/Deaf Challenges

• Sign Language Challenge: Arrange for at least two people who know American Sign Language to teach participants how to sign their name, a phrase, or a concept. Provide a handout of the ASL alphabet and numbers 1 through 20.

• TTY (teletypewriter for the deaf) Challenge: Have a TTY and phone set up at a table at the event and another in the Disabled Student Resources Office. You will need a person to explain how to use the TTY at the event and a person to operate the one in the office. Also have a paper at the TTY Challenge which states TTY etiquette: GA=Go Ahead and SK=Stop Keying. Once you have placed a call from the event phone to the office phone, leave the line connected. Each participant can type in a sentence or two, and the person in the office can respond.

Physical Impairment Challenges

• Wheelchair Challenge: Have six to eight wheelchairs available for this activity, along with half sheets of paper directing the participants to go to one or more places on campus. These directions

can be as simple as: "You have just spilled a soft drink on your lap and need to go to the nearest restroom to get a paper towel." When participants return to the challenge table, you can increase awareness by asking them questions: "If the automatic door opener was not working to access the restroom, what would you do?" or "How did you feel having to use a wheelchair to get around the campus?"

- Arthritis Challenge: Arrange for your local Arthritis Foundation to sponsor this activity. A short, five-question true/false quiz, which has the answers on the reverse side, often leads to questions and/or a discussion about arthritis. Displaying some of the various devices/resources for people with arthritis and allowing participants to try using them also helps to increase awareness of this disability.

Learning Disability Challenge

Arrange for one or two people with a background in learning disabilities to be in charge of this challenge. Prepare a five-question true/false quiz about learning disabilities. Have the answers, with a brief explanation of each, on the back of the quiz; participants can correct their own. Also include websites where participants can get more information.

- Visual Motor Integration Challenge: Ask one or two people with a background in learning disabilities to be in charge of this challenge. You will need four small mirrors with stands, approximately 5 inches in diameter, pencils and copies of a five-pointed star, about 5 inches in diameter, with a second star drawn approximately one-fourth inch inside of the first star. Have participants place the copy of the stars directly in front of the mirror and then try to draw a line between the two stars while looking in the mirror. This activity will simulate having a Visual Motor Integration deficit.

General Disability Challenges

Celebrity Quiz Challenge: Create a handout with the names of 8 to 10 well-known people at the top of the page, followed by a short vignette about each, describing their accomplishments as well as their disabilities. Ask participants to match the personalities to the vignettes. Personalities can include politicians such as F.D. Roosevelt, scientists such as Albert Einstein, and movie stars such as Tom Cruise.

- Assistive Technology Challenge: Ask a student familiar with the Kurzweil 3000, or some other type of assistive technology, to demonstrate how it operates and briefly describe how he or she ben-

efits from using it. The student can demonstrate to several people at a time; and if time allows, participants operate the assistive technology.

- Handidog Challenge: Your local Handidog organization can sponsor this activity. Tell participants about the organization and how the Handidogs are trained. Have two dog owners with disabilities and their trained Handidogs demonstrate how their dogs assist them.
- Attitude Challenge: One or two people who have a disability can correct myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes about disabilities and help participants realize that one of the main social barriers for people with disabilities are other's attitudes.

Class Participation

This is the key to having a large number of students participate in the various disability-related activities. It is easy to relate any of the classes in the health field, such as nursing, to the activities, and students usually understand how they might benefit from participating in the activities. Other classes that easily can be related are sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, education, sign language, pharmacy technology, emergency medical technology, and veterinary technology. After the event, instructors often share what was said during class discussions and/or what was written in essays about Disability Awareness Day. Students often come into the Disabled Student Resources office for a week or two after the event and ask for some of the handouts, as they want to organize their own Disability Awareness Day for elementary/junior high/high school or after-school programs.

Florence Weeks, *DSR Specialist* (retired)
Jane Irey, *DSR Specialist*

For further information, contact Jane Irey at Pima Community College-East Campus, 8181 E. Irvington Road, Tucson, AZ 85709-4000.
e-mail: Jane.Irey@Pima.edu
http://www.pima.edu/admin/presentations/