

## **President's Report to the Board July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009**

It was the best of years; it was the worst of years. The twelve- month period from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 was full of challenges and success for the organization. Diligently pursuing the mission, the Arc of Kona brought services and supports to 287 individuals enrolled in various programs and touched the lives of nearly 1,000 people including family and friends of the individuals that received direct support.

The words that characterize this last year are: flexibility and adaptation. It was a year of budget cuts and job loss affecting the entire world and impacting the Arc of Kona. The groundwork that was laid over the past several years truly paid off this year as our team of Board, staff and engaged Participants along with their families shared concerns, adapted to change and emerged stronger as a result. I couldn't be more proud of the efforts of the people in this organization. Through adversity comes creativity and innovation.



In July, the house in Kau was getting the finishing touches to the catchment tanks that would allow for safe residency in the homes. We were planning the blessing for the opening of the project which didn't take place until the third week of September.



We worked at outreach and kept improving the premises trying varying formulas to attract residents. We worried about the future and it grew slowly. Miraculously by the end of the fiscal year, June '09, the house was full of residents and the Activity Center was up and running. This was a testament to the persistence with which the whole staff stayed true to the mission and promise to the donors to use it to offer services to people with disability.

It was also in July that we first started hearing rumors of the coming budget cuts. By August we were informed of the termination of the Partnerships in Community Living Program (PICL) and began pursuing the Adult Mental Health Division to make sure we got our bills paid before the axe really fell. Then we lost the Kona Village Resort Yard maintenance account so had to scramble to keep the crews viable.

In August we were doing well with Vocational Rehabilitation as Ed, Director of Vocational Services, had the highest caseload ever at one time with 38 people referred for work. Then by the end of the year we had to reduce his working hours due to the lack of referrals from the State VR agency. The downturn seemed to be hitting everywhere at once. We did successfully collect all the money owed us from the Adult Mental Health Division for the Transportation Program but then terminated the contract early as we saw the writing on the wall.

But good news was on its way. We received funding to expand and continue our Art Program with discretionary money from the District 7 County Council Member Brenda Ford. This program has been highly productive and by the end of the year we have had one Participant from the Hamakua area chosen to become a Hawaii Stars talent. This came with a \$1,000.00 scholarship to study Ukulele with Hoku Zudermeister and great exposure for the Participant and for the Arc of Kona.

Dental Health was a theme throughout the year as the Arc of Kona, represented by Gretchen Lawson, joined a dental health task force consisting of members, island wide, ranging from Early Childhood Providers, the Health Clinics, the Hygienist Association and Office of Social Ministries. The task force was formed to insure smooth transition of the mobile care program from Office of Social Ministries to the Community Health centers Ironically by the end of the year tragedy would strike close to home as a dental concern turned fatal. But the connections to the dental health professionals mean that the Arc is recognized as a leader in advocating for the needs of their population and in this fiscal year we are proposing a dental health fund to insure adequate access to preventative care.

Our calendar of events and fundraising continued beginning in July when the Arc of Kona and the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival produced a terrific concert staged at the Aloha Theatre. The performance was wonderful and it raised some

money for both programs. This summer concert had been planned to continue and grow each year, but it was a tough year because it was difficult to get an audience and everyone was suffering and staying home to save money. We are now evaluating whether or not to continue and I am in constant contact with their Executive Director. November the Bazaar was a success even though we got rained out early, December we were the first organization to participate in the Rotary Club of Kona's partnership with Denny's restaurant; 'Project Compassion'; we were the guinea pigs providing the testing ground for this event. If we do it again I am sure it will go more smoothly. March was the Bluegrass concert at with Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum, always a favorite; the Black and White Ball which is not fundraiser but a fabulous event for our Participants and then in May the Charity Walk.



In spite of the funding cuts, by March we had diminished our budget by a full 23%; the Arc of Kona finished out the year in good shape; we continue to be proactive and our stability means that we are now once again consolidated and concentrating on what we do best. So as I said at the beginning of the report, it was to worst of years, it was the best of years.