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# Plugged In

November 2011 ● Vol. 18 No. 4

Connecting Santa Barbara County with Essential Developmental DisABILITY News



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Community since 1953.



Kyle Simpson



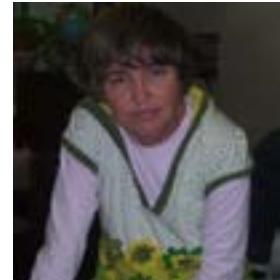
Jessica Simon

## FOLLOW US!

Our bi-weekly blog writers!



Paul Eriksen



Kim McDaniel



Mia Willson with  
daughter Mylie

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*Plugged In is a free publication that is distributed bimonthly from Alpha Resource Center.*

## FRONT AND CENTER - SOCIAL MEDIA

Alpha Takes the Social Media World by Storm! *by: Amy Buesker*

Alpha recently embarked on a new journey into the realm of extensive social media. In September Alpha's Facebook group was converted into a Facebook page and a Twitter account was launched. This was followed by the launch of our blog in mid-October! So you now have 3 more options to keep in touch with everything that is happening at Alpha. Want to see pictures from recent events? Check our facebook page ([www.facebook.com/alphasb](http://www.facebook.com/alphasb)). Interested in quick updates and links to posts on our blog? Follow us on Twitter @AlphaResourceSB. Curious to know more about Alpha and our participants? Read the stories on our blog – [www.alphasb.org/blog/](http://www.alphasb.org/blog/) If you're really tech savvy, follow us in all three places!

The blog is our newest, and, in my opinion, most exciting endeavor. We will be posting daily stories about various topics. Each week there will be a featured participant and staff member as well as a story about something that is happening at the center that week. In addition to this we will have regular posts from 5 contributors – Paul, one of the members of our Performing Arts Troupe; Kim – a talented artist from our Art Studio; Mia – a mother of 2 amazing children, one of whom just happens to have Down syndrome; Kyle – a participant in Katie's FUNd and an employee at the Kellogg Thrift Store; and Jessica - a self-advocate and Outreach Assistant at Alpha. Each of them brings a unique background and writing style to the blog and you're sure to enjoy every one. Don't be shy to leave comments on the blog; our writers love to get

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A Chapter of The Arc of the United States.



## FRONT AND CENTER

feedback! In addition to this you'll find information about all of the services we provide, "items of the day" from the thrift stores, and posts about upcoming events and workshops. Also be sure to let us know if there's a concept you'd like to see on the blog. We are still in the process of developing all the content and we want to provide you with the information and stories you desire.

All of these options are also a great way to share Alpha with others. If you have friends or family that live out of town and aren't able to visit Alpha, show them the blog or the Facebook page or tell them to follow us on Twitter so they can see what Alpha's all about. The pictures and personal stories that are shared on the blog and Facebook are a great way to introduce the wonderful work that Alpha does to those that may not be familiar with us. There is something for everyone! We are looking forward to this wonderful opportunity to share all of the great people and activities we experience daily at Alpha with the rest of the world.

- Capuchin Novices Volunteer Experience *by: Brother Chris George*

In September, the opportunity to volunteer at Alpha Resource Center was presented to our Novice class of Capuchin friars, a group of religious brothers studying to minister in the Catholic Church. Cory from Alpha came to our friary and told us about possibilities for those motivated to share any interests or talents. There are four of us who go to Alpha on Fridays. We each spend the morning with a different social group, and in the afternoons we go to the garden. Friday afternoons in the garden, together with several participants and staff, we have groomed or watered the garden, potted plants, played music, or just enjoyed socializing in a circle under the shade of a big locust tree.

The many different characters, personalities, and conditions coming together at Alpha shows me how my own abilities are unique to myself only; and the same for every other individual. More and more I have a sense of what I am capable of when it comes to relating to others, because at Alpha everyone is unique. One day in the garden, James was starting to doze off in the sun. I had never met James before and began to ask him if he would like to move into the shade. Then a staff member came and said that he is Deaf and I would have to speak with my hands. "Who knew?!" I had seen him interacting so fluidly before that it was a total surprise. It goes to show how simple our differences can be. In the light of experiences like this I feel myself becoming more comfortable with myself, because I know that if I am comfortable where I am, the participants will be more comfortable and respected for who they are.

For three of the four of us this was our first experience getting to know, and volunteering with, people who have a developmental disability. As religious brothers, studying for a future of community life and ministry, volunteering together at Alpha has been a key experience. The opportunity to plan for the garden and work together as a group with the Alpha participants has taught us in ways that put our classroom work in perspective. After this year, the four of us will have to move back to our home provinces when our time as Novices ends. My hope is that when we are gone other brothers from next year's class of Novitiate will have the opportunity to share and volunteer with the people of Alpha!



## FRONT AND CENTER

### Master Jang Receives an Imagine A World Award

by: Amy Buesker

The most recent recipient of our Imagine A World Award was Master Jang of Jang's Karate Center. Master Jang was nominated by Paul Johnson, a participant in Alpha's Adult Day Program. Paul began studying karate with Master Jang about a year ago and has made great strides since then. Master Jang, Paul, and Paul's mother have all noticed the changes which range from an increased level of concentration



to better muscle control and balance as well as greater motivation and willingness to participate in the classes. He has also increased his skill level, recently earning his orange belt. He has now memorized 3 different series of 22 sequential movements and is progressing on to more complicated combinations. When asked about Paul's progress, Master Jang stated "When we started I had to think about what he needed to do, what he might like to do, but now he initiates what he can do". Paul's mother, Sue, said "It has changed him as a person as well as physically. He takes it very seriously."

Paul attended a tournament in San Diego this summer. He was able to meet other students and masters, including one from South Korea. He earned a gold medal and wore it proudly. Paul trains once a week with Master Jang at his studio and is gaining more than just karate skills. He describes Master Jang as a "father-figure" who is teaching him valuable life lessons and helping him grow as a person.



An award presentation was held at Alpha where Paul presented the award to Master Jang in front of a crowd of about 30 Alpha participants and staff. In addition to presenting the award, Paul gave a brief demonstration of some of the moves he has learned in class as well as his meditation technique. The presentation was followed by a casual reception for everyone in attendance.

During the reception Paul pulled me aside to tell me "Master Jang influences my life. He never pushes me too hard. He understands exactly what routine needs to be done." Paul is very proud of his accomplishments and he is hopeful that Master Jang may be able to come lead a class at Alpha in the future. If you are interested in Master Jang's classes please call his studio at 962-6456. Thank you Master Jang for helping to create a world in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect!



If you know of a business or organization that is deserving of this award please contact us to make a nomination. We are always accepting nominations. The next award will be presented in December to UCSB's Arts & Lectures Program for their constant generosity of donated tickets and their respectful attitudes toward all audience members.



## MORE TO KNOW



AlphaFest was a hit! At 1:00 PM when the doors to Santa Barbara Jr. High opened, shoppers filled the hallways ready to buy beautiful ceramic dishes, stunning hand carved and painted walking sticks and wonderful wood items from the Adult Program's woodshop. Family and community members alike also walked circles around the Silent Auction tables and bid on amazing items such as brunch at the Biltmore, Stagecoach wine tasting, massages, and dinners at many favorite local restaurants. It was 2:00 PM when

the doors to the Marjorie Luke Theater opened and a crowd of close to 500 filled the theater's seats in anticipation of the Alpha Performing Arts Troupe performance of "Live and Let Dance". This year's show was a comic spy thriller/dance musical in which a retired secret agent, James Bind, stumbles upon a plot by the Evil Dr. Greenthumb to destroy the Queen of England (and other notables) if not paid \$10 billion. The show started off with the debut of the Teen Extreme dancers and throughout the performance the audience laughed out loud and sang along to hits like "Sweet Caroline". After the hour long performance, the audience filtered back into the halls of the Jr. High and had a second chance to buy craft items as well as put that last and final bid down on that choice Santa Ynez Inn room for a night's getaway! You could hear chatter among the crowd, "That play was the best yet" or "The auction gets bigger and better year after year!". The event was a wonderful success and ideas are already flying for next year's performance.



### ALPHA "SHOUT-OUT"

Thank you to these wonderful individuals and businesses who provided items and gift certificates to the Alphafest Silent Auction. For our readers, please shop or do business with these generous community members and thank them for their support of Alpha.

Beachside Bar Café	IHOP Restaurant	Santa Cruz Markets
Blenders In the Grass	Jaramillo, Alice	Santa Ynez Valley Marriott
Bridlewood Estate Winery	Jeannine's	Santa Ynez Inn
Bucatini Trattoria	Joe's of Santa Barbara	SEA Landing
Canary Hotel	Kahuna Grill (The Natural Café)	Serenity Skin Spa
Caron Miller	Kim Nails & Spa	Simpson House Inn
Chaucer's Bookstore	Los Arroyos Mexican Restaurant	Spalluto, Carol
Cody's Café	Lucky's	Star Drugs
Cutting Edge Hair & Body Salon	Magenheimer, Pam	Sundance Beach
Dahlia's Beauty Salon	Mesa Café	Sunstone Vineyards & Winery
Deep Sea Wine Tasting Room	Mira Bella Salon & Spa	Surf Country
Dodson Land Surveying	New Baja Grill (The Natural Café)	Taffy's Pizza
Elephant Bar Restaurant	Ocean Meadows Golf Course	The Ballard Inn & Restaurant
European Sun Tanning Salon	Ocean Nails & Spa	The Chocolate Gallery
Farmer Boy Restaurant	Olio e Limone Ristorante	The Natural Café
fit buddha	Paddle Sports of Santa Barbara	The Neighborhood Bar & Grill
Flavor of India	PCPA Theaterfest	The Upham Hotel & Country House
Four Seasons Resort	Peet's Coffee & Tea	Trattoria Grappolo
The Biltmore Santa Barbara	Pet House	UCSB Arts & Lectures
Fresco Café	Plaza Deli	Ware, Jean
Front Page	Ramada Limited	Wayne Kjar Cakes
Granada Theatre	Rincon Bohemio Mexican Food	West Beach Inn
Hadsten House	Rose Café #2	Women's Athletic Club
Hair Select	San Ysidro Ranch	Yarbrough, Kate
Hollister Brewing Company	Santa Barbara Car Wash Alliance	Ziegler, Betty
Honeysuckle Possums	Santa Barbara Family YMCA	Ziegler, Christine & Douglas
Hyatt Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara Yoga Center	Zodo's Bowling & Beyond

## CHILDREN, FAMILY & ADVOCACY SERVICES

*Aunt Penny brought her traditional holiday tapioca pudding tart and insisted everyone have a taste. When Lorraine stated that her daughter was lactose intolerant, Aunt Penny insisted that it was all just a 'fad' and that Lorraine shouldn't let her daughter be so picky. Grandpa Joe started sharing about how back in his day no one had any allergies and all these new things like "silly-acks" were all because of the Internet and kids not being outside enough these days. Ted tried to educate Grandpa and Auntie and the others at the holiday table, some who were in agreement and others who just wanted to get on with the family dinner. The more he explained, the more resistance he faced from his relatives. The kids, by now, could feel the tension and proceeded to push their food around on their plates, no longer hungry. Lorraine poured herself another glass of wine, suitably free from sulfites.*

Does looking forward to the holidays make you want to hunker down until well after the New Year arrives? For families who have children with special needs, making sure everyone enjoys the festivities of the season can take some extra planning. Whether or not a member of your family has food allergies/sensitivity, verbal challenges, sensory issues, or behaviors that are not typical, or maybe just doesn't do well with Uncle Sam's booming voice, it helps to do some advanced planning before the festivities begin. Just as each family is unique, each child will usually respond best to attention to his or her own special needs. And it doesn't hurt to recognize the needs of others as well - including your own! Here are some tips from others that may help you and your child reduce feeling overwhelmed during this most wonderful time of the year.

- Schedule activities that allow for some distance or down time between them.
- Talk with your children about what's coming up on the holiday schedule. Some families use calendars for planning and others develop simple social stories to help youngsters and individuals who have special needs prepare themselves.
- When possible have all family members be a part of the holiday planning. This will help to determine those activities that may have very high importance and those that can maybe be left off the schedule if it is necessary.
- If guests are visiting your home, ensure that your child has his/her own space or a room where s/he can go for quiet time or regrouping.
- If you are visiting the homes of others who may not be acquainted with your family, provide them with a little preparation as well. Is there a place where your child may take a break or have quiet time? Are there any safety issues that need to be addressed? Are there areas the homeowners would prefer to be off limits to the curious?
- If possible, find out what food and refreshments will be provided. You may find it proactive to bring your own food or arrive after the meal is completed to avoid challenges.
- If you are traveling, check with airlines or the train for special accommodations and security measures related to food and equipment.
- Arrange to pack a comfort pillow, blanket, or activity to keep some familiarity to home or to help with relaxation.
- Schedule 10-15 minutes per day to do something for yourself (yoga, meditation, read, or even just sit quietly). If you make a point of scheduling it into your day you will be more likely to actually do it.
- Remember to talk to other parents, friends and family members who may help you with ideas, support, and resources.
- Call us if we can help you find resources and recipes for those with food allergies or if you would like more help or discussion on how to prepare for the holidays.

## FUN & GAMES

Find the objects at the bottom of the page hidden in this picture below. Can you find them all??



Hidden Picture from All Kids Network: <http://www.allkidsnetwork.com/hidden-pictures/Detail.asp?fil=hidden-pictures-fall.jpg>

## UPDATE FROM ALPHA



Fall is here and so are many of our favorite events in Katie's FUNd as well as a new opportunity! In September participants from Teen Extreme and EXPO spent one afternoon a week practicing a dance number for their debut in Live and Let Dance at AlphaFest and it was a huge success! The audience clapped and danced along as the teens and young adults showed off their best dance moves to Lady Gaga's *Just Dance* and then quickly transitioned into secret agents creeping around the stage to the James Bond theme song. This first appearance by the Teen Extreme/EXPO group was extremely well-received by the audience and the dancers were all smiles at the end of the show as they got numerous compliments and handshakes. Next year's collaboration is already being discussed.

October brought with it many wonderful fall/Halloween activities. A group of us enjoyed some delicious grub and country line dancing at the Hoedown Dance sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association. At one of our Friday night events we were joined by Jennifer Vogel (a mom of a participant) who led us in a fun theater workshop. Then we held a Halloween craft event in conjunction with the Goleta Teen of the Year program through the Rotary Club. We rounded out the month with the annual Halloween Monster Ball Dance and Pumpkin Carving Party. All of the events were so much fun and we are very thankful to the Goleta Teens of the Year and the Circle K Club for all of their volunteer work with us! We're looking forward to more adventures in Nov and Dec.



Goleta Teens of the Year and Katie's FUNd participants working on Halloween crafts!



Austin (Dog, the Bounty Hunter) and Ben (Harry Potter) at the Monster Ball Dance



Gabe as The Joker!



Blair after participating in the mummy wrap game!

### (dis)Ability Awareness Goes to Local Schools

Local schools recognize the importance of bringing Ability Awareness to their campus communities. In the past year, Alpha Resource Center, in collaboration with local schools and community partners, has reached out to over 6000 students celebrating the rights and contributions of all individuals.

Alpha Resource Coordinator Jen Griffin took the job to heart when she volunteered to present at La Colina Jr High when her daughter Grace was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade there. While being welcomed by Principal David Ortiz and his staff, she admits to being a little nervous about her first presentation. But she was so impressed by the students, their questions, interest and interaction, she committed herself and Alpha to visiting all schools who were interested.

Jen's presentations vary with the audiences. She uses discussion, activities, and short video clips as time allows. During her first few presentations Jen took her son who has developmental disabilities. The kids were excited to meet both Jen and Theo and have the opportunity to learn how he and others with special needs are more alike than different.

Today Jen gets help from others. Bob Quackenbush from the Braille Institute shares information and resources about those with visual impairments, Alpha's Amy Buesker presents on deafness, Jessica Simon talks about her life as a self-advocate, and Sandra Villarreal shares her family's experience as a parent of a child with autism.

This is one more way students, parents, teachers, and community partners join together to build a stronger community where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

## HAPPENINGS



Holiday Poinsettia Fundraiser - supporting Challenger Little League teams for boys and girls with special needs. \$10 per 6 inch Florist Quality Red poinsettias delivered free to your home, office, neighbor or friends, (Carpinteria through Goleta), December 1st through 10th. Each come with a shiny Mylar pot cover and care instructions; Donation receipt and/or gift cards available upon request. Contact Retta @ 805/681-9165; or order online @ [www.dpllchallengers.eventbrite.com](http://www.dpllchallengers.eventbrite.com).



### Down Syndrome Association of SB County

3-2-1 Playhouse is a playgroup for families of preschoolers birth through 4 years old with Down syndrome and siblings of similar age. (Formerly called First Fridays). Meets the first Monday of each month, unless it is a holiday. In that case, they meet the following Monday. Enjoy the large grass and sand outdoor play area at Padaro Grill in Carpinteria, 11 - 12:30, when the weather is nice. An alternative location is used when it is too cold or raining. Hosted by DSASBC coordinator, Jamie Weitzman. Contact her at [jamieweitzman@yahoo.com](mailto:jamieweitzman@yahoo.com) or (805) 566-4753.

DSASBC Monthly Mixer: Meets the third Thursday of each month (except December), 6 - 7 pm @ the Santa Barbara Bank and Trust Community Conference building located at 15 E. Carrillo Street in SB. Call Melissa for more information: (805) 886-4411, or email her at [melissa@dsasbc.org](mailto:melissa@dsasbc.org). Supporting families in Santa Barbara County with Down syndrome.

Coming in Spring 2012.....

There's An App For That!  
with Shane Nurnberg, founder of [www.autismepicenter.org](http://www.autismepicenter.org)



Shane provides a fun & interactive presentation on apps available for Apple iDevices that can benefit **All Kids of All Ages with All Abilities**.

He shares his expertise as a Website Designer, Technology Manager, and more importantly as Dad to his 8 year old son who has autism. Shane recently presented at the OSEP conference in Washington DC and the CA statewide Family Resources & Supports Institute in San Francisco.

Participants say Shane's presentation is "Fun" "Hands-on" "Great, Very Realistic" "Informative & Practical"

Dates to be determined soon.  
Stay tuned for more details!

## HAPPENINGS

NEW DAY  
AND TIME!  
SPECIAL NEEDS  
NETWORK  
SUPPORT GROUP

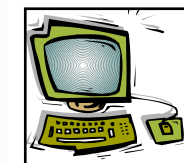


BOY  
meets

Second Tuesday of the month at noon  
AT CAFE NOIR (FORMERLY CAFE MINNET)  
1555 S. BROADWAY  
Just north of Battles next to Del Taco

Come meet with other parents and caregivers of children/persons with special needs and share ideas, challenges, needs, triumphs and resources. Learn about local programs, social events and educational opportunities. We're in this together!

For information please call  
Diana Gard 805-264-2434



### Alpha Resource Libraries

We have over 2000 books, magazines, fact sheets and DVDs. We also have internet access available and staff to help you locate the information you need.

Visit us at our 2 locations:

At Tri-Counties  
Regional Center,  
Santa Barbara

520 E. Montecito St  
SB, CA 93103  
805 957-9272

At Tri-Counties  
Regional Center,  
Santa Maria

1234 Fairway Drive, Ste A  
SM, CA 93455  
347-2775

Call to make an  
appointment to visit us or  
arrange a time for us to  
deliver materials to your  
home or work!



Challenger Season is Just around the Corner –  
Save the Date:

**Saturday February 25th** – Back to the  
Ball Fields Rally to Welcome NEW and  
Returning Ball Players ages 5 (as of May 1st,  
2012) through 22 years old with a physical,

developmental or intellectual challenge. Teams for ALL levels of play on competitive or NON-competitive teams; wheelchair users included. Community members and youth sports teams serve as buddies.

Challengers are always looking for new players to join our teams. Girls and Boys, experience or no experience are all welcomed. Information and 2012 Registration forms available on line at [www.GoChallengers.org](http://www.GoChallengers.org).

Donation based program – no child turned away!

For more information to see if this experience is right for your child – Call Retta Slay @ 805/681-9165; or Email [info@GoChallengers.org](mailto:info@GoChallengers.org).

Santa Barbara Special Needs Adaptive Programs - Something for everyone with special needs of all ages!

Check out all of the new and exciting opportunities online at [www.sbSNAP.org](http://www.sbSNAP.org) - including:

Surf lessons and Water Sports, Basketball, Yoga, Community Dances & Disco, Guppy Golf, Swim Lessons, Peer Buddies, Social Skills, Educational Workshops and More!

Your community website for resources, events, information and activities supporting individuals with special needs!

## MORE TO KNOW

### PLANNED GIVING

#### Fulfilling Your Heart's Desire

By Sean Mason, Esq.

You are passionate about the Alpha Resource Center. You've seen first hand the difference it makes in people's lives, especially your son, daughter, brother or sister. If you could, you'd give more generously of your money. However, times are tough and it's difficult to give as generously as your heart desires.

Although, if you had a way to give more generously, with little or no impact on your current financial situation, would you? I suspect your answer is, "Yes!" If that is your answer, then you're in luck.

There are two easy planned giving options you should know about. First, you can leave a gift in your will or living trust. If you have an estate valued at \$500,000 and you give 5% that would be \$25,000. 5% will have a minimal impact on your other gifts and, if you have children, consider what you are teaching them about your values—giving to a worthy non-profit is important. Perhaps one of the best parts of planned giving is more immediate; you get to have that good feeling, while you're alive, that you gave something substantial to a non-profit that has meant so much in your life.

The second option is just as rewarding with no impact on your current cash flow. If you have a life insurance policy, you can name Alpha Resource Center as a beneficiary of part of that policy. This is a simple and easy way to leave a significant amount of money without affecting your current financial situation. And again, you get that good feeling that you've contributed generously.

Regardless of which way you choose, if you are someone who values the good work that Alpha Resource Center does and want to see that it continues to do good work in the future, then these two options can help you fulfill your heart's desire.



Above: Ingelise in Live and Let Dance! Performing Arts is one of the many programs offered at Alpha



*Sean Mason, of Mason Law Group, is an attorney assisting clients in estate planning, trust administration, probate, elder law, and special needs trusts. He became a certified mediator while still in law school and strongly believes that the best solutions come through being cooperative not adversarial. His strong background in mediation and communication have made Sean uniquely qualified to help clients identify and address family relationship concerns that can undermine an otherwise well prepared estate plan.*

*Community involvement is very important to Sean. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Santa Barbara Family YMCA, Life Chronicles, and the American Youth Soccer Organization. He also volunteers for the Alliance for Living and Dying Well.*

*Sean is a member of the California Bar Association and Santa Barbara County Bar Association. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from University of California at Santa Barbara (1988), and a Juris Doctorate from Whittier Law School (1994). At Whittier Law School he founded the Whittier Law School Alternative Dispute Resolution Group. He is admitted to practice in law California (1994), and was certified as a mediator by the Los Angeles County Bar Association (1992).*

*He lives in Santa Barbara with his wife, Jeannie, his daughter, Roxanne, and their dogs, Buck, a 95 pound yellow lab, Quincy, a black toy poodle, and Foxy, a rescue from the pound.*

## ALPHA SPOTLIGHT

### Alpha is Beautiful Thanks to Goleta Valley Beautiful

There are few things in life that are more satisfying than watching the growth of a seedling that was planted by your own hand. Many people have fond memories of planting seeds in a window box as a child, carefully watering and checking first thing each morning and afternoon for that little green sprout to emerge from the soil. Although the tree project at Alpha may not be started from seedlings (thank goodness), the preparation, care and transformation over time is just as exhilarating. A tree is an investment in the landscape, just as a piece of heirloom-quality furniture is for the home. Both can last for generations, setting the overall tone and filling an important role in the entire outdoor or indoor "room."



Thanks to our friend Ken Knight, Executive Director of Goleta Valley Beautiful, Alpha has been receiving 1-2 new trees a month. On the day of a planting Ken drives into Alpha with his big box truck and as he emerges from the driver seat he is greeted by 5-6 eager Alpha participants. They stand ready for Ken to roll up the big door in the back so they can get the first glimpse of their new tree. Gloves, hats, shovels, and pick axes are handed out before the tree is gently lifted down from the bed of the truck. With anticipation of placing this fine young tree, Wayne, an Alpha participant, usually leads the group to the planting area and points at the spot where the first shovel should land. Sometimes the soil is soft but often it is hard and mixed with clay making the excavation especially challenging. But no challenge is too much for this planting gang and before you know it, the hole is dug, the tree is placed and water is gently pouring over its roots. Ahhhh what a wonderful place for a tree to thrive! Alpha Resource Center - where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.



Goleta Valley Beautiful is a nonprofit environmental, educational and community service organization with an emphasis on urban forestry for public areas. They have served the Goleta Valley and Santa Barbara County since 1974. Learn more about them and donate or volunteer for a tree planting project at [www.goletavalleybeautiful.org](http://www.goletavalleybeautiful.org).



Return Service Requested

## UP CLOSE - DARLA STURTEVANT AND FRANKY SINOWITZ



Darla and Franky (wearing the jacket of his favorite drag racing driver - John Force)

If you've ever visited Alpha, you've certainly had the pleasure of meeting Franky. Most days he can be found sitting in front of Alpha's lobby as our one-man welcoming committee. He loves to watch as people pull into the parking lot and climb out of their cars. He yells a greeting and waves to each and every person as they arrive. Franky is an integral part of the fabric of Alpha and mornings would not be the same without Franky's happy greetings!

Darla has been working at Alpha since 1999, but her history with Franky is much longer than that. She first met Franky when she was 3 years old and attending the preschool that was right next to his house. She remained in contact with him throughout elementary school and junior high, but they eventually lost touch. It was a wonderful surprise to her to see Franky again after many years when she applied for the job at Alpha. She and Franky have remained great friends ever since. They often take trips together and have been everywhere from Disneyland and Universal Studios to Rancho Oso and even a 5 day cruise to Baja! They also enjoy going to the race tracks in Pomona and Santa Maria. Franky is an avid car-lover! One of his favorite parts of these trips is the hotel stay, but not for the reason that most people enjoy staying in hotels. Franky loves to sit at the window of his hotel room and look out at the parking lot, directing traffic from his perch. It must make the hotel clerk's job easy. How many other people do you think request a room with a view of the parking lot?!?

Darla works in the Knights Social Center and can also often be found working in the kitchen. She is very involved in creating the props for the play that is a part of AlphaFest every year. When asked about her favorite part of working at Alpha, she responded, like so many other staff, "Hanging out with the participants". We are grateful to have both Darla and Franky as a part of the Alpha family and they look forward to many more adventures together in the future!