

Watch Out!

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Region II People First Conference: It's About Us, By Us, For Us

By Shelly Anderson and Arlen Lowry

In the past, we have had a conference every two years. Far Northern always gave us money to put on the conference and for scholarships so that everyone could go. But, the budget got cut, and they couldn't help us this time. **People First of Yreka** thought we could do it ourselves. **Andre Economopoulos** thought it was the right thing to do. "We don't have to go to the State Capitol for everything we want," he said.

First we had to figure out where the money would come from. **Region 2 People First** voted to use half of their budget. All chapters voted to donate money. We had our first regional fundraiser and sold See's candy. And, we applied for a mini grant from the Area 2 board which we got! We decided this money should go for: 1. support staff registration. We didn't want our peers to miss the conference because their support staff couldn't pay for registration; 2. we also wanted to pay for a sign language interpreter, because we know we have a peer that would miss most of the conference without one.

We have planned conferences before, but this one was different. We had to make all of the decisions, do the work, and pay for it! The officers from each chapter formed a committee to do the work. It was hard, but we are all enjoying putting the bits and pieces of the conference together at our meetings.

We are keeping track of what we do, because after the conference we are going to put a book together. We want to share what we did, so other people can learn how to plan a conference.

People First of Paradise: Self-Advocate Award

By Troy Rathburn, Sarah Rathburn, Charles Horne-Nutt, and Teresa Mosier

The President of **People First of Paradise**, **Troy Rathburn**, explained that we were in charge of the Self-Advocate Award. "Each chapter is going to nominate a member that has made a difference," he said. Vice-President **Charles Horne-Nutt** added, "I called and made price comparisons for plaques so we could get the best deal. We agreed on Nor-Cal Trophy and Bowling Supply in Oroville. I even kept their number in my phone." *(Cont'd on back page)*

Chico People First: Keynote Speakers

By Teresa Oliver, Scott Winfield, Nancy Kitchen and John Riva

The first responsibility of the **Chico People First** chapter was to pick two keynote speakers. The first questions we asked ourselves was who did we want and who would volunteer their time to speak for free? In prior years, there had been more money in the budget to work with.

"Until I attended a Region 2 meeting, I had NO idea how much work it takes to put together a People First Conference, from the logo, to the menu, music that will be played and the décor," **Teresa Oliver** said. "The cost of everything is always something that is a concern so that it stays within the budget, but what I was impressed with most, was how well all the chapters were able to work really well together," she added.

President **Scott Winfield** agreed. "This has been a real learning experience between picking the speakers, miscommunications, taking care of all our responsibilities in regard to the keynote speakers, and working together to get the job done." Nancy Kitchen thought "It was challenging in arranging speakers due to miscommunications between one of the speakers and the Chico chapter."

More about the process: 1) We had an officers' meeting to come up with names that we thought would be good keynote speakers. 2) After we decided, Scott called **Andre Economopoulos** and **Joe Meadours** to see if they were available to speak. Both speakers said they would do it. 3) Then we confirmed it with the Redding office. 4) Then it came to the attention that we needed to pay for conference registration for one of our speakers and a helper. 5) We decided to ask our chapter to help. They agreed to pay \$200.00 to cover the cost of the speaker and helper. 6) We had overlooked the fact that the keynote speaker and helper may not want to room together and it was going to be another \$100.00 to cover these costs. Fortunately, Region 2 agreed to pay the extra cost.

Our second mission was to obtain raffle prizes for the conference. Teresa asked the Little Red Hen, and got a donation of \$15! **John Riva** decided "... to get more of the raffle prizes when the weather gets better."

"Even though we may not always agree with one another, we honor the group's decisions, work through the differences in opinion by listening to one another and learning to compromise and work together as a team," Teresa said. "It makes me proud to be an officer of Chico People First."



Officers of People First of Chico

Shasta County People First: Breakout Sessions and Menu

By Arlen Lowry, Rosie Johansen, Shelly Anderson, Ryan Duncanwood and Dan Copeland

The **Shasta County People First** chapter was asked to pick out the breakout sessions for the conference. There were 12 or 13 applications turned in. We were to choose 6 of them. The officers agreed on a date and time to meet to go over the applications. Committee members were **Dan Copeland**, **Rosie Johansen**, and **Shelly Anderson**. The applications submitted varied from topics such as marriage, safety, and finding a job. All of them sounded great and it was very hard to choose between them. Rosie said, "It was hard picking out the sessions, trying to decide what everyone would like."

There was one called "**Strong Love**" (which included a movie with the same title) that really caught their attention. It was decided to ask **Jon Shapiro** and **Holly James** (the stars of the movie) to be keynote speakers rather than do a break out session. Jon and Holly agreed. There were still six breakout sessions to pick.

"We thought about what people could use in their daily lives," according to Shelly Anderson. That in mind, they took a careful look at each application. All of the applications were compared with each other as to which would be most helpful. After awhile they finally got it down to six. The sessions chosen were *Healthy Sexuality*, *Let's Clean 'em Up*, *You and Your Bus Pass*, *Drug and Alcohol Team*, *Fire Safety at Home*, *Our Disability: What it Is and What It Isn't*. Picking out the sessions was both hard and fun. "I learned how to pick out sessions and about issues that concern my peers," Shelly Anderson explained. The committee worked well as a team. Rosie suggested that it would be helpful in the future for them to take notes during this process.

Shasta also had the privilege of choosing the menu for the conference. Dan noted, "Every year people try really hard to save for the conference." This was something that they considered while choosing meals that everyone would be eating. They wanted to be sure that people were offered healthy foods and still keep the costs down. The decision was made to have the meals sit-down style because the committee, Shelly, Rosie, and **Arlen Lowry**, felt this would be easier than buffet style for those who had difficulty getting around or that use canes, walkers, or wheelchairs. "I enjoyed helping with the menu very, very much," said Arlen.



Shasta County People First Officers

People First of Corning: Decorations

By Mindy Brunemen, Roger Pulliam, Robert Sambidini, and Leon Sides

Our job in **People First of Corning** was to put together the decorations for the conference. **Roger Pulliam**, member of the committee, said "We didn't do decorations last time, so we didn't know what to do." **Mindy Brunemer** added, "We liked planning to get the decorations all together. It was exciting, but it was hard." Before, we made all the decisions at our Region 2 meetings. We had more people to help us decide. We made the decisions and then reported to the Region 2 group what we were doing. We had to think about the money we were spending this time. **Leon Sides** said, "It felt like we were paying out of our own pocket, because the budget is so tight."



Officers of People First of Corning

We had a job to do, and it was our responsibility to make sure it got done. We just put all our heads together. "We are a small group, so we feel more like a family. I think that is why we work so well together," Roger added.

Whoever does the decorations next time should try to start early. We started by just thinking about what we wanted to do. Then we needed to find out how much money there was in the budget. While we were working on this stuff other groups were working on the theme and logo for the conference. "We had to know

that [theme, logo, and budget], before we could do anything," **Robert Sambidini** said. Then we drew pictures of what we were thinking about. Robert said, "You have to get estimates to find out how much everything will cost so you will know if you have enough money in the account for everything." Robert is treasurer of our chapter, so he is always thinking about the money needed to get the job done.

When we were done, we picked an arch of balloons over the stage to stay there the whole conference, a banner with the logo and theme, and we hired **Dyvone Washington** to make the center pieces for all of the tables. The last thing we had to do was to sign the contracts and order the stuff we picked out. This was a big job, but it felt awesome to be part of the conference planning team.

People First of Red Bluff: The Conference Logo

By Benaye Cooke, Michael Cooke, Jill Rossen, Angela Todd, Jeff Walker, and John Wilson

People First of Red Bluff was responsible for choosing the logo for this year's conference. The officers were excited and ready to create the logo until **Benaye Cooke** and **Angela Todd** reminded them that they were supposed to choose the logo not create it. The team worked on a flyer to send out to everyone encouraging them to submit their Region 2 conference logo.

"We were so excited to see what everyone would come up with," said **John Wilson**. It was exciting and hard to wait for all the entries to come in. At every meeting that's all we wanted to talk about. Finally, it was time to choose. "We had a few entries to choose from, so we had a meeting to sit down and discuss which one would best fit the theme of the conference," said Benaye. We wanted to really make sure that the theme, 'It's About Us, By Us, For Us,' was well represented in the logo.

After considering all of the entries, we took a vote and chose our winner. One of the entries by **David Bracewell** was exactly what we were looking for; it even included part of the People First logo. We were proud of our choice and the good job that David had done. It was a great thing to be able to choose the logo for the conference. "It was nice, and we learned to work as a team," noted **Jill Rossen**. "I got to learn something new," added John Wilson. Overall it was a wonderful responsibility.

We also felt that we had another huge responsibility for this conference. **Jeff Walker** added, "Another job we did was sold candy to help raise money to pay for the conference." We selected **Mike Cooke** to be responsible for this task. Mike said "It was hard because we were responsible for organizing the candy sale. It was hard to keep track of all the candy and the money, but we want to do it again!" For the most part, we felt like it was easy to fulfill our job because we worked together as a team very well. **John Wilson** said, "We helped each other, and so I think it was easy, and now I know how to do it for next time."

We did have a few suggestions that we thought might help. We all felt that we need to plan way more ahead of time. We also needed to order candy way sooner so that we can sell more and make lots more money for the conference. We all hope that we get to plan our own conference again because it felt good. Jeff said it best, "It was a good challenge and worth it."



Officers of People First of Red Bluff

Oroville and Peaches People First: Sales & Information Fair

By Steve Sharpe, Valerie Sharpe, Armand Appelman, Leeann Huston and Tim Benson

Oroville People First and **Peaches People First** are working together to set up the Sales and Information Fair for the conference. **Steve Sharpe** sent a letter to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger inviting him to come and be a part. No reply from him yet. Steve and **Valerie Sharpe** met with the Oroville guys, **Armand Appelman**, **Leeann Huston**, and **Tim Benson**, and talked about what they are supposed to do for the Sales and Information Fair. A list was made for the different businesses to call. Some of the businesses would be



Oroville and Peaches People First Officers

called by Oroville People First and some by Peaches People First. It is up to the group to make sure that there are tables set up, that there are flyers or businesses there with information. It will be up to everyone to make sure that the businesses will have everything they need.

"We feel good about it," Steve said about how they felt in planning their part of the conference. "There is not just one or two people doing it, ALL are going to help, that's the way it is." Leeann Huston added, "I think it's a good thing to do it. It was exciting to us,

we might learn more about how to run a good meeting. This will be my first time going to a conference."

Trying to get phone numbers and fax numbers was work. The group just had to get it done. If people didn't show up, there would be a sales and information fair with no people. Leeann has a book that lists helpful contacts, and that helped them get online and get information. "It's a lot of hard work," Armand said. The advice they would want to give is that it is hard work. Putting instructions together about how to create a conference would be helpful. Region 2 People First is working on a book that will tell people how to do it.

People First of Yreka: Theme and Music

By Andreas Economopoulos, Rebecca Wilson, Kenneth Harvey and Sadie Castle

People First of Yreka's job for this year's conference was choosing the theme and the music for the dance. "This is a big responsibility for us," **Andre Economopoulos** told the group.

During our meetings, we discussed many different topics, such as whether to have live music or a DJ and the type of music, such as Country or Blues. **Rebecca Wilson** suggested the Bad Boys, which eventually transformed into

People First of Yreka: Theme and Music (continued from page 6)

our "HIP-HOP" idea. After voting, we finalized with "HIP-HOP" as our theme. **Kenneth Harvey** agreed to this decision saying, "I like it, because I can feel the beat."



Officers of People First of Yreka

In order to find the proper music, **Sadie Castle** suggested doing some research on the computer in order to make sure there was no offensive material/language in any of the song choices.

The most challenging part of this assignment was being able to stay within our budget, finding the time to complete the necessary research, and then finalizing our music/song list. Thanks to the group's efforts, we were able to accomplish our goal. GREAT TEAMWORK!!

People First of Trinity County

By Mary Crowell, Diane Hale, Shane Hale Tim Hettinger, Jimmy Richards and Maureen Wilson

People First of Trinity County put the cover letter together for the registration and conference packets. When you do that you have to get information from the other groups about who is going to speak. **Jimmy Richards** said "It made us nervous to have to wait for the other groups to make their decisions, so we could get the information we needed for the letter." "That was a tough one," **Tim Hettinger** added. "Some of it we had to guess or use information from an old letter we had as an example."

Our helper sat with us at meetings, and we all talked about what we would need for the letter. He asked us lots of questions about conferences. "We wanted to put stuff in there so people would want to come," Tim said. We put the letter together and got it printed. Next we read through the letter and made a few changes. "We were relieved when we got it all done," Jimmy said with a sigh of relief. Tim added, "We were happy and proud when we saw our letter; when it came to everyone in the mail." **Maureen Wilson** and **Mary Crowell** were also happy to be part of the process of getting the letter ready. **Diane Hale** is new to the group, but is looking forward to helping with future conferences.

Shane Hale wanted to pass on a little advice, "If you make mistakes it is OK. You can go back and correct your mistakes." He ended by adding, "I think we would like to do the letter again, because now we know how to do it."



People First of Trinity County

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People First of Paradise: Self-Advocate Award (continued from page 1)

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Sarah Rathburn
Troy Rathburn
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John Riva
Jill Rossen
Robert Sambidini
Steve Sharpe
Valerie Sharpe
Leon Sides
Angela Todd
Jeff Walker
John Wilson
Maureen Wilson
Rebecca Wilson
Scott Winfield

"It was stressful calling all the places and checking prices, but at least it was accomplished."

Secretary **Teresa Mosier** said "I typed up and designed the flyers, and I went to Chico to do it."

The officers had a meeting to talk about what should be on the flyers they had to send out to the chapters. The flyer asked each chapter to pick a Self-Advocate they think is doing a good job, and how long they had been a member and why they were picked for the award. Then Teresa designed the flyer with help from one of the helpers. When the officers went to the Region II meeting, they passed out the flyers, and asked the Region II self-advocates to send their nominations back to Paradise. Once the flyers were out, the officers talked about where to get the trophies. Charles took charge of this and called around and found the best deal in Butte County. Then the officers decided what they wanted they trophies to say.

Troy and Charles will be taking turns reading the awards at the conference, and other officers will hand out the awards. They agreed the hardest part was getting the flyers back to Paradise. Next time the officers said they will do something differently, but they are not sure what.



Officers of People First of Paradise