

FROM THE EDITOR

It is a pleasure, indeed, to introduce the community integration issue. Since the inception of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, we have had a number of excellent issues, but I believe few have rivaled the timeliness or sensitivity of the articles in this issue. There is little doubt in my mind that the guest editor of this issue, Al Condeluci, is one of the outstanding leaders in the disability field in the 1990s. Author of an excellent book titled *Interdependence* (Paul Deutsch Press), he has put his finger on the pulse of those cutting edge issues in the forefront of concern for people with severe disabilities. The articles in this issue reflect his passion for helping people who are disabled or disadvantaged, and even more than that, his sensitivity to their individual needs. This issue is must reading for all people in the field of disability, not only those who are involved in vocational rehabilitation.

When one thinks of community integration in human services, thoughts of involvement in community activities, friendship, and participation arise. However, community integration is more than this. Community integration is the right of all people to be accepted on an equal plane as others regardless of color, race, or disability. There are 43 million people in the United States with disabilities, or approximately 1 out of every 7. As Al Condeluci and his contributors point out,

we all need each other in society in order to be productive in the workplace, happy at home, and to feel independent. Getting around the community, we must depend on each other. As professionals in the field of disability, all too often we segment services and almost unknowingly "carve up" the individual client that we are supposed to help according to the service that we are knowledgeable about. In this issue a number of articles challenge this notion of carving people up into different segments and instead call for total inclusion.

The notion of community participation, integration, and total inclusion is not some remote sociological concept or phenomenon. This type of participation is what life in American society needs to be about. The leadership that those of us in the disability field are able to display by modifying our programs, language, ways of interacting with people with disabilities, and perhaps most importantly, by realigning our goals, will have a life-long impact on the very clientele that we serve. I believe that this particular issue of the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* takes an important first step in establishing the necessary benchmark for the thought process that needs to proceed in this regard.

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