

Link2Care

Winter 2007



A Publication of the Stanislaus County **Public Authority**

Help with Housing Costs

Santa may bring more than fruitcake and candy canes to some of our Recipients this year. Financial assistance is available from the State of

Up to \$472.60 for **Homeowners** and \$250.00 for **Renters is available!** California for homeowners and renters who meet the eligibility requirements of the Homeowner/ Renters Assistance

program. This program allows for a once per year payment towards housing costs.

There are different requirements for homeowners

and renters, as well as different benefit amounts. In order to claim your benefits, you must complete the appropriate paperwork and submit your claim.

If you are a homeowner, you may be eligible if you are a United States citizen, designated alien, or qualified alien when you file your claim, and you met the following criteria on Dec. 31, 2006:

- You were 62 years of age or older, OR
- You were blind or disabled, AND

(Continued on page 3)

Each holiday season, community organizations open their doors to those in need. If you are able to donate some time, or a gift, or lend a special talent to one of these organizations, you can help make someone else's holiday brighter -and probably your own as well. If you are the one in



need this season, here are some resources to help you and your family have a happy holiday.

The Modesto Gospel Mission will provide a free hot meal and gifts to men, women and children at noon

on Saturday, December 22nd. There will also be a live nativity scene that day from 11am-3pm. The Mission is located at 1400 Yosemite Blvd. in Modesto. Call 529-8259 for more information.

Giving in the Community

The local chapter of the American Red Cross has a blanket program available to all members of the community. Blankets, many of them handmade, are available for free at 1230 6th St. in Modesto. Drop by their office during business hours, or call them at 523-6451.

United Samaritans has services for Modesto, Turlock and Hughson residents. They offer a free lunch each day at various locations, and every other month a box with three days of food can be obtained for free on the last Tuesday and Friday of the month. Contact United Samaritans at 668-4853 if you live in one of these areas.

A Commodity Supplemental Food Program takes place the 2nd Thursday of each month in Turlock at the United Samaritans office. This program is for seniors age 60 and older, and provides free nutritional food to seniors.



Message from the Director

How can I make a difference in the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program? How can I make my voice heard? In early January many of you will get a chance to do just that; you may receive a survey in the mail. The survey is from

the In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee (IHSSAC). As part of the IHSSAC's mandate, the Committee seeks input from IHSS Consumers and Providers on the IHSS Program and how to improve the program services.

Why was I chosen and why was my friend not? Randomization is the answer; randomization is a technique to ensure that every unit (IHSS Consumer or Provider) has an equal opportunity to be chosen. Randomization allow us to reduce the time, effort and cost of conducting the survey and gives results that are almost exactly the same as surveying the whole population. In order to obtain a statistically valid sample, which means the results from the few surveyed apply to the whole of the survey group, we need approximately 400 completed surveys from IHSS Consumers and 400 from IHSS Providers.

If you get a survey please complete it, it is your way to have input into the program. Even if you have received the survey in a previous year please complete it again. The survey will come to you with a cover sheet, the survey and a return envelope so that you don't need a stamp to send the response.

Be assured that the survey is anonymous and your response will not adversely affect your IHSS services. We just want information about how we in the IHSS Program are doing.

Each year the results of the survey are displayed in the In-Home Supportive Advisory Committee's "Report to the Community" which is viewable on the Committee's website and is mailed to all IHSS Consumers and Providers. The Committee's website address is www.stancounty.com/IHSS.

Previously respondents have stated great Overall Satisfaction with the program, Quality of Service, and the Professional Quality of the IHSS staff. Consumers have stated overwhelmingly that They Feel Safer at Home because of the IHSS Program. Providers stated satisfaction with Knowing Who to Call with Questions and Receiving Paychecks within 10 Days. Based on your feedback we have worked to improve communication, increase wages and benefits and advocate for improvements in the program.

So if you receive a survey this year don't let this important opportunity pass. Make your voice heard, and tell us what you think, good or bad. Remember, your fellow IHSS Consumers and Providers are depending upon you to make a difference.

Jeffrey M. Lambaren

Executive Director

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Help with Housing (cont.)

- You owned and lived in your own home, AND
- You had a total household income of \$42,770 or less.

If you are a renter, you qualify if you met the following criteria on Dec. 31, 2006:

- You were 62 years of age or older, OR
- You were blind or disabled, AND
- You paid \$50.00 or more per month in rent, AND
- You had a total household income of \$42,770 or less.



The program will pay up to \$472.60 for homeowners, and up to \$250.00 for renters that qualify. The assistance is based on the amount of property taxes on the residence, so eligible persons should complete the paperwork to see how much they qualify for. You can request these forms by calling 1-800-868-4171, or visiting http://www.ftb.ca.gov/individuals/hra/index.shtml.

If you or someone you know qualifies for this program, be sure to let them know! If you are not comfortable completing the required forms on your own, assistance is available during tax season. Watch our next newsletter for information on where to receive free tax preparation assistance, and be sure to let your tax preparer know you would like to submit a claim.

Call 1-800-868-4171 to make sure you can submit claims through the tax year.

Another program available is the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). HEAP will provide one payment per year to utility companies for low-income persons. That can certainly make the holidays brighter! Contact the HEAP at 537-5743 for more information about this program.

Amazing Phones!

Imagine a phone that turns up the volume, allows for hands-free operation, flashes when there's an incoming call, displays phone conversations in text, remembers phone numbers, and does even more! Now imagine it's FREE. Sound like a dream? Not for Californians! The California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) offers free phones for individuals who have difficulty hearing, seeing, remembering, moving or speaking.



If you are one of these individuals, you may qualify for a free phone regardless of income. There is no cost and no obligation, so if you or someone you know might benefit, give CTAP a call at 1-800-806-1191 or visit them at www.ddtp.org/CTAP.

CTAP is also responsible for the California Relay Service, which provides Speech to Speech (STS) relay services. By dialing 711, people who have a speech disability can communicate with other people by using an operator to repeat your words to the person you are calling. A non-speech disabled person can also use this service to call someone with a speech disability. A speech disabled caller may ask the Relay Operator to voice everything that is said, or remain silent until asked for assistance. The speech-disabled caller controls the extent of the operator's involvement. There is no charge for using STS services, you pay only for the cost of the call, if any.



Caregiver's Corner



Cooler weather, caps and coats everywhere, Christmas lights and hot cocoa. Ahhh... the sights and sounds of winter. Taking care of another person can be very rewarding, but it can sometimes be hard to find time for yourself in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the season. Remind yourself to take some time out to relax. Take a deep breath, enjoy a cup of cocoa or apple cider, and enjoy the time you

are able to spend with those you love. This edition of Caregiver's Corner give you some tips on what to say when someone has an illness they may not recover from, how to decipher the deductions on your timecard, and how to deal with a Recipient who may not be following "the rules". We hope you enjoy this edition, and have a safe and happy winter season!

Living on Borrowed Time

Tips on talking with someone who has a terminal illness

It's going to be fine. *See you tomorrow.* Get well soon! Culture dictates that we be cheerful and encouraging when talking to someone with an illness. We want to make the ill person feel better, and let them know we care about them. However, some of the terms that might apply while visiting a friend recovering from hip surgery or getting over the latest flu bug doesn't work when talking to someone near the end of life. Here are some tips taken from the *Handbook for Mortals: Guidance for People Facing Serious Illness*:

When you think you want to say:	Try this instead:
You're going to be just fine.	Are there some things you worry about?
Don't talk like that! You can beat this!	It must be hard to come to terms with all this.
I can't see how anyone can help.	We will be there for you, always.
I just can't talk about this.	I am feeling a little overwhelmed right now. Can we take this up later tonight?
What do the doctors know? You might live forever.	Do you think the doctors are right? How does it seem to you?
Please don't give up. I need you here.	I need you here. I will miss you terribly. But we will get through somehow.
There has to be something more to do.	Let's be sure we get the best of medical treatments, but let's be together when we've done all we can.
Don't be glum. You'll get well.	It must be hard. Can I just sit with you awhile?

Maria's

Are you in a Tug-of-War?

One of our providers called the other day to say she felt like she was caught in a tug-of-war. The Recipient she cares for in the morning was calling her at her afternoon job asking that she take her to a doctor appointment. The provider was upset because she cares about both of her Recipients and feels a loyalty and responsibility to both, yet she could not be in two places at one time. She asked me what she was supposed to do. I advised her to remind her morning Recipient that she has a job in the afternoons and the Recipient needs to schedule her doctor appointments in the mornings. For this appointment, I advised her to call her morning Recipient to see if she might arrange for a family member or a friend to take her this time.

My advice to our providers is to make it clear at the hiring interview that you are only available at specific times and remind your Recipients to make appointments at a time when you are available. This will help keep you from being caught in a tug-of-war.

Maria Osuna-Baldwin, Registry Specialist





Making Sense of Your Timecard



We often hear from IHSS Providers who wonder what the deductions and taxes on their timecards are for. Below is a sample and explanation of deductions:

FICA: FICA is Social Security. This is taken out automatically according to your gross wages. (Unless you are a parent or spouse provider, or a child provider under the age of 21.)

SDI: This is State Disability. This is taken out automatically according to your gross wages. (Unless you are a parent or spouse provider, or a child provider under the age of 21. These providers can elect to have SDI deducted - contact payroll for more information.)

FIT: Federal Income Tax. Uncle Sam wants his cut, and this is taken according to the deductions you have declared on your W-2.

SIT: State Income Tax. Uncle Schwarzenegger wants his cut too, and this is also taken according to the deductions you have declared on your W-2.

Dues: These are union dues. Dues are paid to the United Domestic Workers, the IHSS Provider union. Questions regarding this deduction should be directed to them at 526-5274.

Health Ins: This is only taken from IHSS Providers who have enrolled in the health insurance program. The deduction is currently \$20, once per month. If you have questions regarding this deduction, call Link2Care at 558-4488.

If you need to request a W-4 or other form, or if you have further questions regarding your deductions, you can contact the payroll department at 558-3976. Payroll is open Monday-Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Even if you aren't a Boy Scout, Be Prepared!



Wildfires in Southern California, earthquakes in the Bay Area, and an unseasonably warm year leading into winter... is Stanislaus County next? We

frequently talk about emergency preparedness in our newsletter, and that's because in an emergency, many times special accommodations for those with disabilities is limited.

Link2Care recently received a report from the Public Authority in San Bernardino regarding the conditions of the shelter set up for those affected by the fires in Southern California. While praise was given for the way this disaster was handled, those with special needs had more difficulty receiving services. The report stated that after two days, showers were brought to the shelters, but they all had stairs. Recipients were unable to reach their providers, because they were dealing with the loss of their own homes, or were at other shelter locations. Some recipients received hotel vouchers, but they had no vehicle to transport themselves in their wheelchairs, and they were uncertain how they would receive help from a caregiver once they reached a hotel.

When Red Cross and FEMA arrived, they relied heavily upon the local agencies and resources for help. If a wheelchair or oxygen tank had been left behind, there was not always replacement medical equipment available. There was an area set up for keeping medicines (especially those needing to be refrigerated), but only the medicines that recipients brought were held (prescriptions were not distributed). If a recipient forgot to bring medications, or did not have enough for at least three days, finding medication for these recipients was very difficult. For those who left their home without an ID, they could not sign up for aid, since no one could verify if they were truly residents of the affected areas, and whether they qualified for assistance.

This experience was an eye opening event for the agencies in Southern California. The common belief is that once Red Cross or FEMA arrive, they bring everything that is needed. A recent presentation by a Red Cross representative from the Bay Area revealed that the Red Cross has a warehouse that stores food, water, clothing and shelter. They "partner" with community programs to provide other services. What this means is that only the most basic of health needs are met by these agencies. For recipients who need more than the basics, it is very important that they follow the three Actions for Emergency Preparedness. These are:

- 1. *Make a plan* with your care provider or family members on what would happen in an emergency. Who would care for you? How long can you be without a provider? Would special transportation be needed? Would special equipment be needed if you were not at home? Do you have battery back up for oxygen or other necessary medical equipment?
- 2. *Get a kit* with all the items you require. Many times shelters are not available for at least 24 hours, so you will need to have food, water, medicines, communication devices (phone access, radio, etc.), clothing, sanitary supplies, and personal items like glasses, hearing aids, etc. readily accessible. Keeping these items in the kit may not be possible, (if you don't have a second pair of glasses, for example) but keep a list handy so nothing is forgotten if you must evacuate quickly. Be sure to bring an ID with your current address!
- 3. Finally, *be informed*. Make sure your providers know what to do if faced with a critical care situation. Free CPR and first aid classes are available through Link2Care for IHSS providers. Learn more about being prepared at www.prepare.org.

Expect W-2 Tax Forms to Arrive in February

The State has until January 31st to mail out W-2's. W-2's CANNOT be picked up by Providers, since the county does not distribute these. Here are some things you can do to make sure you receive your paperwork on time:

If you have moved or plan to move, call IHSS Payroll or your Supportive Service Coordinator (SSC) with your updated address, preferably by the first week of December in order for the address to be in the system before the W-2's begin to be mailed. Providing your correct address in a timely manner ensures there will not be delays with your W-2 and also helps to ensure your W-2 does not get lost.

Undeliverable W-2s begin to be received in Stanislaus County from the US Postal Service around the second week in February. IHSS Payroll will mail the W-2's to the Caregiver <u>if a new address has been provided</u>.

Once you receive your W-2's look over the information for accuracy. If you find errors, contact your SSC or IHSS Payroll for a Corrected W-2 as soon as possible! It can take the State 4 to 8 weeks to process duplicate requests for W-2's.

If W-2's need to be replaced due to being lost or destroyed call payroll <u>as soon as possible</u>. Requests for duplicates will be sent to the State immediately, but can take 4 to 8 weeks to reach you.

Contact IHSS Payroll by calling 558-3976, Monday - Friday, from 8:30am-4:30pm.

Registry Caregiver Class Schedules

Link2Care offers orientation classes for anyone wishing to work for additional recipients on the IHSS program. At the orientation class, you will completed an application and learn about the background check, training and fingerprinting requirements. There is no charge for these classes, so if you would like additional work, please call our office at 558-4881 to register.

Registry Orientation Classes Call 558-4881 for class times and registration January 3rd and 23rd February 5th and 20th March 4th and 18th Classes are held at the Link2Care office at 305 Downey Avenue in Modesto.

Link2Care offers FREE CPR classes for IHSS Providers once per quarter.

These classes are not limited to registry participants, but are open to <u>all</u> IHSS Providers. CPR classes for 2008 have been scheduled for:

Friday, February 22nd Saturday, May 10th Friday, August 22nd Saturday, October 18th (Spanish Class)

Please call Link2Care at 558-4787 if you would like to registry for a community CPR course!

Coping with the Molidays

By Teri Crilly, ACSW, LCSW, Director of Social Services at Community Hospice

For many of us, an empty chair represents the emptiness we feel as we approach the winter season without someone we cherish.

The empty chair reminds us of what is supposed to be: "at this time of the year, she was supposed to be baking pumpkin pie; he was supposed to be carving the turkey."

The empty chair reminds us of the traditions: "We walk together on Christmas Tree Lane, we watch football together, and we share the first kiss at New Year's."



And now there is an empty chair.

Since we can not do what we want (bring them back to be right here where they "belong") and we can't make things the way they were, then what can we do? We can stop trying to recreate what can not be recreated.

Many people look for things to feel "normal" without realizing that it will not be "normal" because that special person isn't here. Eventually, we will need to find a new normal; a "normal" that incorporates special memories and traditions, despite the absence. In the meantime, we need to do several things:

We need to grieve: we need to honor the sadness, the loneliness, the tears and anger. We need to accept these emotions because grief is real.

We need to continue some old traditions, though perhaps with some modifications. This might mean changing the location of the holiday dinner, starting the day looking at scrapbooks or photo albums, having a buffet meal rather than a sit-down dinner.

We need to start some new traditions. This might include going to the cemetery, putting flowers by your loved one's picture, putting a candle in their favorite coffee mug and placing it on the table.

Remember, there are no "musts" when it comes to celebrating the holidays. Give yourself permission to do what seems right and comfortable this year. Be patient with yourself, your family and others. Just know that with each year, it will become a little less painful, a little easier and eventually you will find a new way to celebrate the holidays...a new "normal!"

Community Hospice offers a number of support groups and individual support to community members who have suffered a loss. Those interested can contact Community Hospice's Bereavement Specialist at (209) 578-6378.

Since 1979, Community Hospice has provided compassionate care, comfort and support to terminally ill patients and their families in the Central Valley. Today, Community Hospice provides care to over 200 patients every day in private homes, skilled nursing facilities and at the sixteen-room Alexander Cohen Hospice House. For more information, please call 209.578.6300 or visit www.hospiceheart.org.

Spotlight on Caregivers:

Written by: Maria Osuna-Baldwin

Caregivers are a special group of people who deserve our praise!

No Loss for Words...

Elizabeth could not say enough about her wonderful caregiver!

Elizabeth LaCross called to tell us what a great caregiver Betty Gann is, and that she "loves her to pieces." Elizabeth was not at a loss for words about her caregiver, and told us "Betty has a special warmth and glow about her. She is very loving and kind, has an uplifting personality and has brought me closer to God. She helped me believe in myself again through prayer. She is fun to be with, has a good sense of humor, and does not think bad of anyone. Betty has been working for me for over a year now, and a 20 year old could not keep up with her. My family loves her and is always complimenting her on how nice the house looks."

When asked if Betty had done something really special for her, Elizabeth said when she was very ill Betty stayed the night to care for her. "She is always there when I need her."

A typical day for them is hectic, but runs smoothly. Elizabeth states, "There's a lot of laughter, and there are a lot of projects in progress."

Betty says that Elizabeth is a great person to work for and has a "positive attitude." "Elizabeth is very sick, but has a lot of get-up-and-go. We've become real close friends, and I believe that God has put me in Elizabeth's life to help her."

Smaller Body, Bigger Friendship!

Virginia Gunderson was really excited to tell us about her caregiver, Deborah Meyer. She says, "She saved my life! The first day she came to work for me I could barely walk across the front room floor. At 4'11" in height I weighed 287 pounds!"

As weight decreases, friendship increases!

Deborah took Virginia to all her pre-surgery appointments in San Francisco to get gastric bypass surgery, and went with Virginia to get the surgery done. Deborah brought her home, did menu planning, and kept her on her diet. Virginia stated she does not even remember the first 2 weeks after the surgery, but she knows she was a very difficult patient! Deborah never complained.

Deborah saved Virginia's life again when her leg swelled suddenly. Not wanting to scare her, Deborah didn't say she thought Virginia had a blood clot. "You just need to get it checked out," Deborah told her. The emergency room confirmed it was a blood clot and that saved her life again. Deborah is now a live-in caregiver and they have become really good friends.

When I asked Deborah about her care giving experience, she was very modest about her contributions. All she would say was "We had a goal in mind to get

Virginia back to good health." She then joked about putting duct tape on Virginia's mouth to keep her from continuing her praise! The good natured friendship of these two shows the value of a good caregiver/recipient relationship.



The Water Cooler



A place to hear about current events, local news, and other issues ...

Local Events

Modesto Tree Lighting Ceremony

The City of Modesto will be having their tree lighting ceremony directly in front of the Modesto City Plaza (by the Doubletree Hotel) at 5:30pm on Thursday, November 29th. Santa, the mayor and other city officials will be present. Join in the fun that officially kicks off the holiday season in Modesto!

City of Modesto Annual Celebration of Lights Parade & Downtown Extravaganza

The City of Modesto will hold a Downtown Extravaganza from 9am to 10pm on December 1st. The extravaganza includes a Farmer's Market and Dickens Faire from 9am to 4pm on 15th street between I & J, as well as a Holiday Craft Fair and a Dodge Ridge Show in the Modesto Centre Plaza parking lot from 2-10pm.

After touring the events, grab a chair and coat and grab a seat for the annual Celebration of Lights Holiday Parade. The parade begins at 5:30pm on the corner of 15th & I Street. This year's theme is "Storybook Holiday". Grab a thermos of hot cocoa and enjoy the view!

Web Sites

Caregiver Resources

It is easy for caregivers to go about their duties day in and day out, and forget that there are millions of others just like them. Do you ever feel alone? Do you just need someone to understand your frustrations? Do you wish you could talk about the stress that comes right along side the joy in caring for someone? You aren't looking to complain, just to connect with someone who truly understands. There are many websites devoted to the caregiver, and the unique issues that you face. At www.strengthforcaring.com, you can find some of the support you need. This website offers support in dealing with feelings of guilt, offers advice on how to take care of yourself, and helps connect you to resources you may need. Check it out!

Recipient Resources

Recipients need support too! There are groups available for people dealing with disabilities and life changes brought on by health issues. Some of these groups include support for stroke victims, persons with disabilities trying to achieve independence, amputee support, cerebral palsy and more. Find a listing of these groups at http://www.stancounty.com/bhrs/pdf/Friends_Directory_07.pdf.

IHSS Advisory Committee

You may have recently received a postcard informing you about the IHSS Advisory Committee. This committee makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the In-Home Supportive Services program. The committee is looking for more IHSS Providers and Recipients to get involved by joining. Members attend a meeting once per month, and transportation is available. Please call 558-4787 if you are interested in participating.

Tickle Your

Funny Bone

trucker.

motorcycles".

They say laughter is the best medicine... these quips are sure to make you feel better!

A man is talking to the family doctor. "Doc, I think my wife's going deaf."

The doctor answers, "Well, here's something you can try on her to test her hearing. Stand some distance away from her and ask her a question. If she doesn't answer, move a little closer and ask again. Keep repeating this until she answers. Then you'll be able to tell just how hard of hearing she really is."

The man goes home and tries it out. He walks in the door and says, "Honey, what's for dinner?"

He doesn't hear an answer, so he moves closer to her. "Honey, what's for dinner?" Still no answer. He repeats this several times, until he's standing just a few feet away from her.

Finally, she answers, "For the eleventh time, I said we're having MEATLOAF!"

A guy walks into work, and both of his ears are all bandaged up. The boss says, "What happened to your ears?"

He says, "Yesterday I was ironing a shirt when the phone rang and I accidentally answered the iron."

The boss says, "Well, that explains one ear, but what happened to your other ear?"

He says, "Well, jeez, I had to call the doctor!"

Thank you to CleanJoke.com for the laughs!

An elderly man had serious hearing problems for many years. He went to the doctor and

the doctor was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed him to hear 100%.

The elderly man went back in a month to the doctor and the doctor diagnosed, "Your hearing is perfect! Your family must be very pleased."

To which the elderly man said, "Oh, I haven't told them yet. I just sit and listen to their conversations. I've already changed my will three times!"

One day a trucker stopped at a diner for

lunch. After he got his order a biker gang

The trucker didn't do anything. He just got

bikers went to the man at the cash register

"No," said the cashier, "Ain't much of a driver

either. He just backed over twelve of your

up, paid for his meal and left. One of the

and said "Not much of a man is he?"

came in and started making fun of the

Three doctors are waiting in line to get into the pearly gates. St. Peter

> "What have you done to enter Heaven?"

> "I am a pediatrician and have brought thousands of the Lord's babies into the world."

"Good enough to enter the gates," replied St.

The same question is asked of the second doctor. "I am a general

practitioner and go to Third World countries three times a year to cure the poor." St. Peter is impressed and allows him through the gates.

The third doctor steps up in line and knowing the question, blurts out, "I 'm a director of a HMO."

St. Peter meditates on this for a while and then says, "Fine, you can enter Heaven...but only for three days and two nights."

walks out and asks the first one,

Peter and in he goes.

Questions Need Answers

Here are some common issues IHSS participants need help with, and the person who can help:

Provider Issues:
I don't have timecards
My check is latePayroll
I need a new recipientLink2Care
I was injured while working for IHSS SSC
I want insurance information Link2Care
I have a friend who needs IHSS IHSS Intake
I need a CPR classLink2Care
My paycheck is wrong, or I don't
understand my deductionsPayroll or SSC
I need a hire packetHave Recipient request
one from their Social Worker or SSC.

Recipient Issues:		
I hired someone new and need the paperwork		
SSC or Social Worker(SW)		
I am going to the hospitalSW		
I need more IHSS authorized hoursSW		
I have questions about my Share of CostSW		
I was just released from the hospitalSW		
I need a new providerSSC or SW		
I have a friend who needs IHSS IHSS Intake		

Link2Care: 558-4787
Payroll: 558-3976
IHSS Intake: 558-2637

If you don't know who your SSC or Social Worker is, call 558-3976 and they will help you.

Cut out and save the above for easy reference!



PO Box 42 Modesto, CA 95353