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Afflicted children sue company

MATAMOROS, Mexico (AP) — At 16, Francisco Javier Zavala still isn't able to speak. He can't dress or feed himself, and the prospects that he'll ever be able to do so are bleak.

His mother, Irma Duenes, gave up her job at a Matamoros maquiladora years ago to give him the extra care and attention he requires.

"I have to feed him," Ms. Duenes said recently. "He doesn't say when he has to go to the bathroom. He wears diapers day and night."

She said her son is a victim of chemicals she was exposed to during her pregnancy when she worked at a Matamoros electron-

Parents say chemicals caused birth defects, miscarriages

ics plant owned and operated by Mallory Capacitors Co. in the 1960s and '70s.

Now Ms. Duenes and other former Mallory employees who say their children suffered from birth defects because of the chemicals want assurances that they'll be compensated, and that their children will be cared for in the future.

Some 40 families from Matamoros and Brownsville, Texas, filed suit Monday in state district court in Brownsville against Mal-

lory. They seek unspecified damages.

However, it's not clear who would be liable for any damages that may result from the lawsuit since Mallory has been sold at least twice since the plant shut down and neither its current nor former owners claim to have assumed the liabilities.

The lawsuit charges that the company was negligent in not warning employees about potential dangers posed by the chemicals and by failing to provide ade-

quate safety equipment or ven-

tion. According to the lawsuit, women who were pregnant while working at the plant subsequently either experienced miscarriages, stillbirths. Some babies died shortly after birth or suffered from extensive physical and mental defects, the lawsuit says.

More than 50 afflicted children are listed as plaintiffs in the suit.

Ms. Duenes and another former Mallory employee, Eva Orde Rivas, said they had normal children before working at the plant. They said their lives have been turned upside down by the need to care for their afflicted sons.

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Agency head fails to transfer funds, grants to AIDS groups

DALLAS (AP) — The director of an AIDS funding agency has apologized for a failure to pass along tens of thousands of dollars to various AIDS groups, saying his organization had mismanagement problems he didn't diagnose as he should have.

Buck Buckingham, executive director of the AIDS Arms Network, said he will resign at the end of October. His agency was supposed to funnel up to \$170,000 in state and federal grants to 18 Dallas groups to assist AIDS victims.

He said Wednesday that he thought the network ended the past fiscal year in the black but that a former employee had covered up a deficit of more than \$75,000.

When his agency failed to raise money privately to make up for the deficit, the agency made up for it by using money intended for some of the other AIDS service agencies, Buckingham said.

He said money will be distributed within a week and that no agencies will have to cut their staffs or service.

"We expect to get \$105,000 from a Texas Department of Health grant within the week, and it will all go to the contractors," Buckingham said.

Center helps students develop study skills

Continued from page 2

them that they need to study harder," Dyer said. "They think they study hard, but they study the wrong things."

"One of the things I talk with them about is what studies have shown that very good students do," Dyer said. "Sometimes we'll take the student's textbook and look at what they could be doing in order to get through this text in a more efficient way and getting what they need out of it."

As part of that teaching strategy, Dyer said she buys used textbooks to see what previous students have marked or highlighted and, she added, she can tell from what has been marked that the student had sometimes not really focused on the right information.

Then she tries to incorporate what she has learned from the used text in the individualized sessions.

"There are a lot of things that students can do themselves to make their situations better, but they might not know how to go about it," Dyer said.

One component of the CAE is the new Writing Resource Center, which offers developmental writing classes as well as academic development classes, and tutoring and help with any kind of writing assignment.

"I can also work with students who currently aren't involved in any kind of writing course but who just want to improve their writing skills," said Lisa Golding, coordinator of the Writing Resource Center.

"We're in the developmental stage right now, just starting up an academic services program and developing classes that will complement and support the regular classes," Golding said. "Because we're just starting, we have a lot of flexibility in what we offer right now."

Golding said she likes to ask her students what type of classes they'd most like to see, and then tries to plan classes around their requests.

"This spring, I'm planning to offer some classes in spelling and proofreading," Golding said.

Golding, previously a graduate assistant and then a lecturer in the Department of English, said she enjoys helping students sharp-

en their writing skills. She enjoys watching their progress the more and likes the more individualized approach she is able to offer.

"I think that all writing classes ought to be taught in a workshop kind of format, because you get work with a student and his or her paper, and the student gets to see what he's having a problem with and not what some other student is having a problem with," Golding said.

The CAE also offers, in conjunction with the University of Texas at Austin, a program called University Outreach, aimed specifically at students still in grade school.

"The goal of the University Outreach program is to increase the enrollment rate of black and Hispanic students, and the students who are traditionally the most under represented in college," Sturdivant said.

He said University Outreach staff members work in the school with the administrators and counselors to identify the students who would best benefit from the Outreach program.

"We basically keep them motivated and help them stay focused throughout high school on the college career," Sturdivant said. "We help them visit other college campuses and give them the opportunity to investigate academic areas which they may be interested in. The program began in 1980 so our oldest students are now seniors in high school."

University Outreach also helps the students become aware of the financial aid opportunities available to them, and during certain times of the year they also help students prepare for PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams.

"If one goes from high school on to any college, we consider that a success," Sturdivant said. "The overriding goal is to increase the college-going rate."

Sturdivant said the CAE will continue to develop and offer courses to A&M students as resources permit.

Students, however, must register for any courses they are interested in taking at the CAE offices in the Blocker Building. Courses offered by the center are free. CAE is in 241 Blocker and can be contacted at 845-2724.



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