



MEDIA CONTACT

Linda Blankenship
linda@lindablankenship.com
818.224.8221

Developmental Disabilities: Job Coach Helps Build Pride, Professionalism

*Regional Center of Orange County Honors Goodwill's Elizabeth Martinez,
National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week, Sept. 10-16, 2017*

Santa Ana and Anaheim, CA (Sept. 2017) – The kitchen in the café where Elizabeth Martinez serves as job coach for three young men with developmental disabilities is a showcase for true integration of people with disabilities into the work force. Alongside coworkers without disabilities, the men perform their duties with pride and professionalism. The support, encouragement and teaching they receive from Elizabeth has been key to their workplace success, as well as the personal growth they've experienced as a result of their employment.

"I love seeing them grow every day," says Elizabeth, an Anaheim resident who was the 2017 recipient of Regional Center of Orange County's (RCOC) Direct Support Professional Spotlight Award. "It's amazing to see them overcome their fears, and become more verbal and more confident. I know they can do anything they put their minds to!"



Elizabeth Martinez

Now in her third year as a job coach with Goodwill of Orange County, one of several agencies that RCOC pays to provide supported employment services, Elizabeth began college as a criminal justice major; after an internship in that field, however, she decided it wasn't the career for her and switched to sociology. Around the same time, a family member's baby was born with cerebral palsy and epilepsy; that personal experience convinced Elizabeth that helping people with disabilities to overcome their challenges would be her life's work and her passion.

“Professionals like Goodwill’s Elizabeth Martinez, who love their work and who go the extra mile every day to serve people with developmental disabilities, are vital to the success of California’s regional center system of community care,” says Larry Landauer, RCOC’s Executive Director. “We can’t thank them enough for the amazing and important work they do.”

About Regional Center of Orange County

Regional Center of Orange County is the private, nonprofit organization contracted by the State of California to coordinate life-long services and supports for more than 20,000 Orange County residents with developmental disabilities and their families. Developmental disabilities include intellectual disabilities, autism, epilepsy and cerebral palsy. Learn more at www.rcocdd.com.

About Direct Support Professional Recognition Week

[Direct Support Professional Recognition Week](#) is part of an American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) national advocacy campaign. Celebrated annually across the country, it honors the tens of thousands of workers who enable people with developmental and other significant disabilities and their families to live healthy lives in their communities.

About Goodwill of Orange County

Since 1924, Goodwill of Orange County has been in the business of helping people who are facing barriers to entering the workforce. Goodwill is most recognized for being the conduit where donated goods are sold in America’s favorite thrift stores to generate the revenue that provides the services to those who face employment challenges. However, the organization provides a comprehensive array of education, training, and employment services to assist individuals to overcome barriers to employment and to succeed at home, at work, or at school. Learn more at www.ocgoodwill.org.

#