



Dialogue

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Fall 2002

From the Executive Director

It's Time for Consistent Contact with State Lawmakers

By Bill Bowman

Regional Center of Orange County is now in the midst of putting together an Expenditure Plan to let the Department of



Developmental Services know where we think we can cut \$3.2 million from our Purchase of Services allocation for 2002-03. The reality is that there will likely be even more cuts this fiscal year because the state revenues are less than what was estimated, according to the Department of Finance. The developmental services system is feeling the pain of budget cuts and will continue to do so for the next few years unless the economy recovers immediately. That makes it imperative that we all let our elected officials know how critical services are to people with developmental disabilities.

Someone recently asked me, "What has RCOC done to help alleviate this situation?" We have had more face-to-face meetings with state legislators this year than ever before to make our case, both in their district offices and in Sacramento. Regional Center consumers and family members have been represented at the meetings. I appreciate the efforts of those people to take the

time to discuss their concerns with their Assembly member or State Senator. If others of you are willing to participate in this way, please call and let me know.

Face-to-face meetings are important, but they are not enough. Nothing that the Regional Center does by itself is enough, either. It takes concerned and vocal citizens – the constituents who vote for these people – writing letters and making phone calls to let them know how necessary services and supports are to the lives of their loved ones. Due to term limits, many legislators do not understand the promise of the Lanterman Act. They are unaware that this entitlement program serves as the foundation of care for thousands of people with disabilities and their families. We must educate them to this promise, and to how critical its funding is to their lives.

We at the Regional Center are doing everything we can to deliver quality services within our constraints while advocating for continued support. All of us need to realize that it's our collective responsibility to work together and see that people with developmental disabilities continue to receive the services to which they are entitled by the Lanterman Act. The time to contact the governor and legislature is today and tomorrow and the next day. It will take an organized, unflagging endeavor to accomplish this.

We have put together some resources as a guide for these grass root efforts. We are compiling an e-mail list to inform interested individuals of pending legislation that

affects people with developmental disabilities so they can weigh in with their legislators by phone or letter. We have various links at our Web site, www.rcocdd.com, to help people learn and stay abreast of state government activities. One is the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA), which posts an exhaustive list of bills that affect people with disabilities. Another is www.leginfo.ca.gov by which you can contact your state legislators and learn more about the governing process. We have also posted on our Web site a sample letter to an elected official as an example of formatting and content. If you are interested in receiving e-mail updates about state bills being considered, call or send an e-mail to RCOC's communications coordinator, Karen Taylor, (714) 796-5208 or ktaylor@rcocdd.com.

Let's work together in our efforts to maintain the important services that enable our loved ones to live rich and purposeful lives as members of our communities.

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Protect the Legislation that Protects Us

By Karen Chen,
RCOC Board of Directors

The state budget crisis received most of the publicity from Sacramento over the last few months, but did you know that a bill was recently signed into law regarding special education? Or that a bill in support of group homes was vetoed?



AB 1895, now one of California's newest laws, prohibits an employee of a school district, special education local plan area or county office of education official from attempting to influence an employee who assists parents or guardians of children with exceptional needs in obtaining services or accommodations for those children. As we all know, the special education process is complex and

parents and guardians would greatly benefit from the assistance of teachers and other employees with issues such as identification and referral, assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and review.

Unfortunately, AB 2380, a bill that would have enabled work experience obtained at a community care facility with a licensed capacity of six or more to satisfy any regulatory requirement of a group home administrator, was vetoed. Had this bill garnered enough support to become law, it would have provided support to smaller homes by increasing the pool of group home administrators available with the necessary experience to work with individuals who are developmentally disabled.

There are many similar bills that affect RCOC consumers. We need to speak to our legislators in Sacramento, and let our voices be heard on issues that affect the treatment of our children with disabilities. We know how busy everyone's lives are. It is our intention to make the contact brief and your way to reach Sacramento easy, but effective.

As part of that effort we are developing a Legislative Outreach Program that hopes to bring you relevant information about proposed legislation from Sacramento and to a lesser extent Washington, DC. In order to do this, we need to build a database of those consumers and their families who are interested in having their voices heard. If you'd like to receive updates and action calls about what's happening in Sacramento, please give us permission to contact you by e-mail (our first choice) or by fax. Please send your contact information to Karen Taylor at ktaylor@rcocdd.com or call (714) 796-5208.

This is not about partisan politics; we would just like to give you an opportunity to let those in Sacramento know how we feel about the legislative choices they have. By being active in protecting the legislation that benefits those with disabilities, you are not only protecting your family but also the thousands of families with developmental disabilities across the state. Help those who can't help themselves. Help us help you.

2002 Spotlight Awards Offered Festivity and Recognition

Once again, the Spotlight Awards banquet, held September 20 at the Irvine Marriott Hotel, was a popular event attended by 750 people. Thanks to all who showed support for the nominees by attending this festive evening.

Twelve organizations or individuals received awards. You can read their inspiring stories on pages 10-14.

Here is the list of the recipients.

- ◆ **Community Partnership:** City of Irvine, Disability Services
- ◆ **Consumer:** Sam Durbin
- ◆ **Employer:** Teacher Created Materials

- ◆ **Lifetime Achievement:** Millie Gluth
- ◆ **Living Options Vendor:** Diane Hall, Hall Family Home
- ◆ **Parent:** Susan Baker
- ◆ **Professional Achievement:** Vickie Reynolds, School Resource Specialist
- ◆ **RCOC Achievement:** Patricia Glancy, Intake Area Manager
- ◆ **Support Services Vendor:** Project Get Safe, Stuart Haskin
- ◆ **Volunteer:** Janice Morain
- ◆ **E. Kurt Yeager Servant Leadership:** Richard Peterson
- ◆ **New award – Nick Garrett Award:** O'Connor Mortuary



Kelly Gibeaut and her care provider, Cheryl Hunt, enjoyed the fun evening.

R.A.D.D. Review

Join Tele-Friend to Meet Someone New!

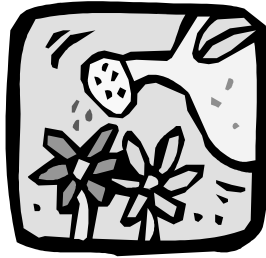
If you're a Regional Center consumer, you might want to try Tele-Friend to meet new friends who live near you. We suggest that you always meet in a public place and that you provide your own transportation.

To place an ad in Tele-Friend, call (714) 796-5270 for the form that you need.

If you would like to talk to any of the people listed here, call (714) 796-5270 for a Tele-Friend list. You must be a Regional Center consumer or parent to respond. Request the Tele-Friend list to find out about other people who might live in your town.

Bill of Anaheim ... Likes music, renting videos, talking on the phone, going to Knott's Berry Farm, Disneyland, the movies, dances and plays.

FayeAnne of Anaheim Hills ... I like listening to music, gardening, watching movies, taking care of my two cats, tae kwan do, dancing, concerts, water slides and cooking. I am a 30-year-old



woman; I work as a general office clerk, and I live with my family.

Peter of Villa Park ... I like listening to music, watching movies, shopping, and going to amusement parks. I'm 24 and I live with my family.

Rick of Anaheim ... I like listening to Christian and country music, playing video games, watching video movies, bowling, and attending church. I would like to meet friends in my age group – I'm 46 years old and I live on my own.



Recreation Opportunities for Adults with Disabilities

In the Summer 2002 Dialogue survey we were asked to provide more information about recreation opportunities for adults in the north part of Orange County. In future issues of Dialogue we will include activities offered in different areas of the county.

Regional Center offers a Recreation Resource Guide that contains a variety of things to do in all parts of the county. (See page 15 for how to get a copy.)

For example, Special Olympics offers 15 sports all around Orange County. Call (714) 564-8374 to get details.

The Oak Canyon Nature Center in Anaheim is a 60-acre natural parkland with walking trails. Admission is free. The phone number is (714) 998-8380.

Movin' On & Good Times is a social/recreational program for teens and adults with developmental disabilities offered by the City of Fullerton. Call Faviola Herrera at (714) 738-6546 for details.

Consumer Advisory Team Update

By Sam Durbin, president

Since the last issue of Dialogue came out, the CAT members have been active. Instead of holding our regular meeting in August, we had a luau. Forty-six people came! Cathy DeMello, executive director of Integrity House, was nice enough to let us have the party at her house. Member John Kuricaj barbecued hot dogs and hamburgers for us. He is a good cook! We had fun swimming, eating, bobbing for apples, and dancing.

At our meeting in September it was back to business. Larry Landauer, RCOC's director of consumer and

community resources, came to the meeting and asked us for suggestions and ideas for RCOC's 2003 Performance Contract. That is the Regional Center's list of goals for new services or resources for the year. Our members had some good ideas, like putting together a list of camps for adult consumers and holding workshops for adult consumers on things like work options and relationships.

CAT future plans include a Christmas party/talent show, another candy bar fundraiser to make money for

conferences, and hopefully another self-determination conference for consumers and parents in 2003.

The next CAT meeting will be December 11 at RCOC's Santa Ana office, 801 Civic Center Drive, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Be sure to call Betty Bath at (714) 796-5263 to make sure the date hasn't changed if you would like to join us. CAT meetings are on the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.



CAT Team Members

RCOC Has A New Consumer Advocate for You

Brian Story started his job as consumer advocate at Regional Center on August 5, 2002. He is here for you if you have a hard time speaking up for yourself. If you have a problem with your day program or independent living provider or you just want to talk to another consumer about a situation that involves Regional Center, you can call Brian at (714) 796-5365. If he is not at his desk, please leave a message and he will call you back.

Brian is a Regional Center consumer who has spina bifida and hydrocephalus (that means fluid on the brain). He uses a wheelchair and crutches. He said he feels he can use his life experiences in this job. He said, "I've always had people speaking for me; now I can start advocating for myself and others. I have always wanted to help people out."

With the help of Section 8 housing (also called HUD housing) and independent

living services, Brian lives in his own apartment. He also gets support from friends at his church. Brian is 32 years old. Before he got his job at RCOC, Brian worked at Blockbuster Music for about five years doing customer service. He also worked as a door greeter at Babies 'R' Us.

Brian is here to advocate for you and to help you find solutions to your service challenges. Feel free to call on him. Again, his phone number is (714) 796-5365.

Parent/Support Groups *Grupos para Padres*

For meeting times and locations, see the monthly RCOC Community Calendar that comes in the mail to you, or call the group contact or Jacqui Kerze at RCOC, (714) 796-5299.

- ❖ **A Touch of Love** - For limb deficient children and their families. (800) 493-5462. Hablamos español.
- ❖ **Aging Parents Support Group** - For parents who have older adult consumers of RCOC. Contact Joan Abrams, (714) 796-5312.
- ❖ **Ain't Misbehavin'** - A support network of parents interested in exchanging information on behavioral issues. Group is currently on hold. Assistance needed to plan and organize meetings. If you are interested in helping, call Anna Larson at (714) 889-7221.
- ❖ **Asperger Syndrome** - Contact Caroline Wilson, (562) 425-2292 or South County call Dr. Kyle Pontius, (949) 862-6006.
- ❖ **Autism Support Groups** - Huntington Beach area, contact Leaza Howe, (714) 841-6766; North County, contact Paula Peterson, (714) 288-9005; South County, contact Beverly Lee, (949) 249-9277; Newly diagnosed autism, contact Claire Miller, (310) 543-0662.
- ❖ **Cerebral Palsy** - For info. & support, meetings & groups, contact Family Support Services at UCPA, (714) 557-1291.
- ❖ **Chinese Parent Support Group** - For mandarin speaking parents of RCOC consumers. Contact Kitty Tsan at (949) 588-0123.
- ❖ **Circle of Support** - A monthly meeting for consumers, parents and assistants. Contact Gary and Claudia Eien, (714) 648-4185.
- ❖ **CLASP (California League of Angelman Syndrome Parents)** - Contact Katie Hendren, (714) 962-4152.
- ❖ **Compassionate Friends** - For parents who have experienced the loss of a child. Call Roy Redman, (714) 993-6708.
- ❖ **DADS' Group** - For fathers of children with autism and related disorders. Call Norm Booth, (714) 961-1315, e-mail dads@adsi.net.
- ❖ **Epilepsy Family Support (See Parents of Kids with Epilepsy)**
- ❖ **Epilepsy Social Support Group** - To help fulfill the needs of those with epilepsy. Call Pat Porter, (949) 631-4333 for meeting info.
- ❖ **Family Visions** - For parents of visually impaired children. Contact Karin Crilly, (714) 573-8880, ext. 109.
- ❖ **Fathers Support Network** - For fathers of children with special needs. Call Jeff Braun, Family Support Network, (714) 543-7600.
- ❖ **First Evangelical Free Church Disabilities Ministry** - Numerous programs. Contact Connie Hutchinson, (714) 529-5544.
- ❖ **Fragile X Group** - For parents or family members of people with Fragile X. Contact Sali Farber at (714) 544-9551.
- ❖ **Friendship Ministries** - Christian group at Orange County Worship Center for teenagers and adults with developmental disabilities; call the church at (714) 547-9631.
- ❖ **Guys and Gals Group** - An educational/recreational group for adult consumers. Contact Lena Lynch, (714) 246-8878.
- ❖ **Hearts United Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (HUG)** - Contact Irene Kontz, (714) 636-5430.
- ❖ **Mitochondrial Disease Group** - For parents & family members. Contact Lissa Mirand, (562) 920-9981.
- ❖ **Mom's Group** - A networking group for moms in North Orange County. Contact Jill Riley, (714) 288-1566.
- ❖ **Mommy Network** - South County (Dads are welcome). Call Julie McLain, (949) 888-1820 or Tina Muller, (949) 454-8573.
- ❖ **Moving on at 3 Parent Group** - To support and educate parents of children transitioning from Early Start services. Contact RCOC's John Zeimantz at (714) 796-5339.
- ❖ **Non-Ketotic Hyperglycinemia (NKH) Family Support Group** - For more information, contact Tammy L. Hanna (714) 444-4454.
- ❖ **One In A Million Kids** - For parents of children with rare or undiagnosed disorders. Call Georgia or Gary Freedman-Harvey, (310) 588-2562.
- ❖ **Orange County Parents of Disabled Multiples** - For parents of twins, triplets, etc. Contact Bree Dennis at (909) 734-3616.
- ❖ **Parent Connection** - To connect with other parents of RCOC consumers (Eng., Spanish & Vietnamese), call (888) FRC-BABY.
- ❖ **Parents of Kids with Epilepsy** - A support group. Contact Mary Repp at (949) 582-8404.
- ❖ **P.R.O.U.D. - Parents Regional Outreach for Understanding Downs** - Support for parents of children with Down syndrome. (714) 547-2895.
- ❖ **Rett Syndrome Group** - Contact Rebecca Craft, (949) 856-9320 or Susan McLaughlin, (949) 858-8411.
- ❖ **Sibshop** - Workshop for siblings ages 8-13 of children with special needs. Call Kathleen McFarlin, (714) 557-1291.
- ❖ **Single Parent Group** - For single parents of children with special needs. Contact Jacqui Kerze, (714) 796-5299.
- ❖ **Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)** - Educational assistance and support for parents. Call (714) 533-TASK (8275).
- ❖ **Tuberous Sclerosis** - Support group for families. Contact Lee Ann Addison for more information, (949) 495-7126.
- ❖ **Vietnamese Parent Support Group** - Contact Queenie Hoang at (714) 557-1291; pager number (714) 664-6899.
- ❖ **Williams Syndrome** - Support for families of people with Williams Syndrome. Call Darlene Ginnett, (562) 598-5559.
- ❖ **Welcome Orientation** - Informational tour of Comfort Connection Family Resource Center. Call Naomi Hall, (714) 558-5402 or Jacqui Kerze, (714) 796-5299.

Grupos En Español

- ❖ **Grupo de Autismo Angeles** - Para más información llame a Gloria y Jose Hernandez, (714) 995-1955
 - ❖ **Grupo Arcoiris Síndrome de Down** - Para más información llame a Maria Piceno, (714) 558-5400
 - ❖ **Hacia Los 3 Años...Transición** - Un grupo de padres con niños recibiendo Servicios de Intervencion Temprana Para Educacion y Apoyo durante el proceso de transición. Para más información llame a Consuela Morales (714) 685-5514
 - ❖ **Noche de las Madres** - Para más información llame a Barbara Dominguez (714) 998-4912
 - ❖ **Nuevos Horizontes** - Para más información llame a Barbara Dominguez, (714) 998-4912
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What's The IDEA?

Defining LRE

By Juda Carter, M.A.
RCOC Education Training and
Standards Coordinator

Last month we talked about the IEP or the Individualized Education Plan. This month I will discuss another acronym —



LRE. LRE stands for Least Restrictive Environment. This is a very important concept in the provision of Special Education services and one of two main tenets in the law. IDEA says that each child in Special Education is entitled to receive his/her education in the "Least Restrictive Environment". The "least restrictive environment" is defined as follows: Children with disabilities will be provided education services with maximum exposure to typically developing peers. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal occurs only when it has been demonstrated that the child has failed to make educational progress in the least restrictive environment with appropriate services and supports. [Emphasis added.]

What this means is that children do not have to earn their way into the least restrictive setting. The least

restrictive setting is generally defined as their neighborhood school in the age appropriate class. But parents become confused because they realize that their child cannot do work at a 3rd grade level, even though he is eight years old. How can he be in the neighborhood school? Doesn't he have to go somewhere with other students like himself? Not necessarily. That is where the "appropriate services and supports" become important. What supports and services can be developed by the student's IEP team to ensure he continues to make academic progress in his neighborhood school? How can the curriculum be modified to his level? What adaptations can be made to his classroom (such as visual supports) to help him be successful? All of these services and supports can be developed by the IEP team.

Regional Center staff is here to help parents understand your child rights under IDEA and to help you be an active participant in your child's IEP. One of our guiding principles here at Regional Center of Orange County is, "Consumers have the opportunity to be educated with their non-disabled peers in classrooms at their neighborhood schools." We believe in the Least Restrictive Environment and we support working with your school district to ensure your child's success.

Coming next issue: Let's talk about assessment!

After-School Care Survey Results

The Spring/Summer 2001 issue of *Dialogue* included a survey requesting information from families about after-school care needs and resources. The goal of the survey was to collect resource information that could be posted on RCOC's Web site. The total number of surveys mailed was 14,363 in three languages — 12,020 English, 1,790 Spanish and 553 Vietnamese. Ninety-eight surveys were returned — 72 English, 16 Spanish and 10 Vietnamese. The responses included 20 recommendations of after-school child care providers.

The information on those after-school care resources is available on RCOC's Web site at www.rcocdd.com. If you do not have access to the Internet and would like the information, please contact RCOC Family Support Coordinator Jacqui Kerze at (714) 796-5299 for a hard copy.

Here are the survey results.

1. Do you currently use after-school care for your family member who receives RCOC services?

Yes – 17 No – 81

2. Do you need after-school care?

Yes – 60 No – 38

Age range of family member receiving RCOC services:

3-7 years old (47)

8-12 years old (27)

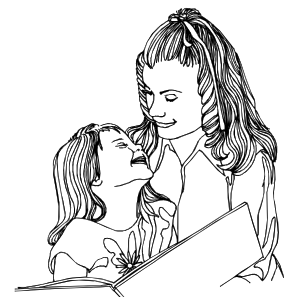
13-17 years old (26)

Note: one survey accounted for three consumers.

New Support Group for Mandarin Chinese Families

A support group for families who speak mandarin Chinese meets monthly at 3:00 p.m. at Cerritos Regional Park to celebrate birthdays and exchange information and re-

sources relating to their children with developmental disabilities. Everybody is welcome. For more information, call Mr. Chia Sun at (714) 636-2999.



RCOC's Jeanette Horcasitas Receives OCTA Award

For 18 years, Jeanette Horcasitas has worked largely behind the scenes at Regional Center of Orange County, coordinating transportation for an ever growing number of people with developmental disabilities.



resolving their transportation-related problems if they hit a snag in the system. Jeanette always has a smile and a kind word as she helps people with this vital service that connects them with their jobs

and enables them to be as independent as possible. Now, this worker of "small miracles" has been exposed: RCOC's Transportation Coordinator received an Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Transportation Partnership Award on September 30, 2002 for her role in making sure that 1,300 RCOC consumers receive their bus passes on a monthly basis.

Two RCOC service providers also received OCTA Transportation Partnership Awards this year. Goodwill Industries received an award in the Transportation Communications category for educating its clients on how to effectively use transportation. In the Ideas and Advocacy category, Easter Seals Southern California received an award for developing services and training to bridge the transit gap for the disability community.

The award Jeanette received was in the Transportation Demand Management category. According to the award program, "Winners in this category have demonstrated their commitment to maximizing the existing transportation network to serve the growing demand for transportation in the region." Along with her able assistant, Wilma Hoffman, Jeanette also assists consumers in

Congratulations to Jeanette, Goodwill and Easter Seals for this recognition of your hard work and dedication to serving people with disabilities.

New Support Group Addresses the Needs of 'Mature' Parents

The Aging Parents Support Group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at noon at the Dayle McIntosh Center, 12372 Garden Grove Boulevard, Garden Grove. Currently, 12 to 15 parents come together to share their needs and concerns for their adult children.

Parents with adult children in group homes as well as parents with adult children living at home are well represented. One mother whose daughter is severely handicapped and lives in

an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF-DDN) would deeply appreciate talking with a parent who has a grown child in similar circumstances.

At the November meeting, a guest speaker from Regional Center's Quality Assurance work group discussed requirement issues for group homes.

Please call Joan Abrams, RCOC's gerontology specialist, at (714) 796-5312 for additional information or comments.

Results of Dialogue Readership Survey

The Summer 2002 issue of *Dialogue* included a questionnaire to assess readers' satisfaction with the newsletter. *Dialogue* is mailed to approximately 14,000 people. A total of 16 surveys were returned, eight in English, none in Spanish and eight in Vietnamese. Thanks to those of you who took the time to respond. Here are the survey results.

Overall, I find the articles in *Dialogue* to be informative. Strongly agree/Agree: 15; Strongly disagree: 1

Overall, the articles in *Dialogue* are easy to understand. Strongly agree/Agree: 16

The information in *Dialogue* is timely. Strongly agree/Agree: 14; Disagree: 1; No response: 1

The appearance of *Dialogue* is attractive. Strongly agree/Agree: 15; Disagree: 1

Compared to other newsletters I receive, the overall quality of *Dialogue* is good. Strongly agree/Agree: 15; No opinion: 1

The survey asked, "Other information or topics I would like to see in *Dialogue*." Responses included: More young adult activities in the northern part of Orange County.

- [Information] relevant to people who are affected physically but not intellectually, socially, per se. Daily living, health, employment, entertainment.

- Health-related topics.
- Latest news regarding consumers' rights.

Under "Other comments," was "We would like to have important meetings held in morning hours or working hours on weekdays, if possible: 10 a.m., Noon, 2 p.m., or 4 p.m."

Parent Vendor Orientation

Presented By Regional Center of Orange County

Are you considering becoming or are you already parent-vendored with Regional Center of Orange County? In order to complete the vendorization process, you are required to attend one of the following orientation meetings. If you are currently a parent vendor, it is beneficial to attend an orientation so you can understand your record-keeping responsibilities.

You will learn what it means to be a parent vendor as well as the necessary records that you must keep. Title 17 requires Regional Center to audit vendors to ensure compliance. This orientation will assist you in understanding your responsibilities.

Please RSVP to (714) 796-5314 to reserve your space at one of the following orientations. The information on that phone line will be announced first in English, then Spanish, then Vietnamese. If you have additional questions, please contact Jacqui Kerze at (714) 796-5299 or your service coordinator.

2002

December 12	South Area Office	3 to 5 p.m.
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2003

January 23	East Area Office	6 to 8 p.m.
February 20	North Area Office	6 to 8 p.m.
March 27	West Area Office	12 to 2 p.m.*
April 17	South Area Office	3 to 5 p.m.
May 15	East Area Office	6 to 8 p.m. **
June 19	North Area Office	3 to 5 p.m.
July 17	West Area Office	9 to 11 a.m.
August 21	South Area Office	3 to 5 p.m.

* Vietnamese translation available

** Spanish translation available

Please see back page for addresses of RCOC's area offices.

Spotlight Award Recipients

On the next five pages are the stories of this year's Spotlight Award recipients. The descriptions of their contributions are drawn in large part from the nomination forms that were submitted. Thanks to those who took the time to write those tributes.

Spotlight Award: Community Partnership

In the words of the nominator, the city of Irvine "has made a long-term commitment to improving access to employment, education, transportation, housing, social/recreational and cultural activities for persons with disabilities. As a parent of a developmentally disabled young man, I am so pleased that we have a city that cares and supports such a variety of programs for people like our son. He has gained self-confidence, friends, improved his social skills, and is able to participate in so many programs that just do not exist in other cities."

The city has an Office of Disability Services and a 16-member Disabilities Advisory Board. The Disability Services office provides a wealth of

information, services and referrals to various resources. It sponsors weekly social/recreational activities for young adults with disabilities and offers a speakers bureau to address various disability issues.

Some of the disabilities-oriented programs the city offers include an Access Reporting Policy to eliminate accessibility barriers, TRIPS paratransit services within the city that provides more than 2,100 rides per month, a home lunch program that delivers two meals a day to residents who need meal-preparation assistance, and an adult transition program that offers students with developmental disabilities the opportunity to develop independent living and working skills.

The City of Irvine is a model for other cities with its ongoing fiscal and staff commitment to serve the disability community in innovative ways. Kudos to the staff members of the city of Irvine Disability Services, Community Services and Community Development Departments for making these wonderful services a reality: Marsha Burgess, Stacey Reilly, Julie Holson, Mary Rawlings, and Eric Tolles.



Disability Services Superintendent Marsha Burgess accepted the award on behalf of the Office of Disability Services

Consumer Spotlight

Spotlight Award: Consumer

With a combination of energy, enthusiasm, public speaking ability, and compassion, Sam Durbin advocates for people with developmental disabilities to be treated as equal members of society. As a result, people look to Sam for leadership. As chairperson of the RCOC Consumer Advisory Team for the past two years, Sam has been instrumental in bringing a number of great programs to the team. These include personal safety training, People First of California chapter formation, and information on various resources such as CalOPTIMA and



Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA). She has also spearheaded fund raising events for the team that enabled several team members to attend the 2002 People First Conference in Sacramento.

Sam has also volunteered her time to speak about consumer rights at numerous events. She has given

presentations to special education students in Orange County on self-determination and self-advocacy. She has spoken at California State University, Fullerton, University of Southern California (USC) and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) to students in social work, nursing and occupational therapy. Sam was also a featured speaker at the 2002 California People First conference in Sacramento. Her presentation was so well received that she was invited to be the keynote speaker at the 2004 National People First conference that will be held in Anaheim.

Sam Durbin works to improve her own life and others' through her belief in self-determination and accepting personal responsibility.

Spotlight Award: Employer

Teacher Created Materials (TCM) publishes supplementary educational materials for all subjects in the school curriculum. TCM has a philosophy that those with developmental disabilities can make significant contributions to a company as part of the workplace, which in turn allows them to contribute to the larger society. Long ago TCM made the commitment to hire at least one worker with a developmental disability each year. These employees work in various departments including product development, warehouse, customer service and administrative support.



Rachelle Cracciolo accepted the award for TCM

TCM believes not just in hiring people with developmental disabilities, but in teaching new skills to them. Tasks are taught in an individualized way, and employee reviews include goals for personal and social skills as well as work skills. This investment in teaching time results in both good workers and quality products. TCM also accommodates employee needs with flexible working hours for those who use public transportation.

While TCM provides accommodation, it tries not to overcompensate for special needs. This allows employees with developmental disabilities to feel as capable as those without disabilities. And of course, workers with developmental disabilities are included in all company functions, from walk-a-thons to social activities. This allows them to participate in their community and allows people without disabilities to develop friendships with them.

Spotlight Award: Lifetime Achievement

When Millie Gluth and her husband Jim learned 37 years ago that the child they adopted had autism, Millie devoted her life to learning more about autism and advocating for needed support and services. Millie and Jim established the Autistic Society of Orange County, participating on the local and national levels. Millie is extremely knowledgeable about what is happening nationwide with respect to autism, legal rights and public policy affecting the lives of people with developmental disabilities. She has a broad-based understanding of issues and the



positive effects that public policy changes can have on people's lives. Whenever she has attended important meetings or public hearings, Millie has been prepared and well-informed. Her leadership and interest have made her a respected source of information and advocacy support for many families of people with developmental disabilities.

Millie has bridged the gap between families of children with developmental disabilities and public officials in order to identify and fill unmet needs for services. Millie has been responsible for countless positive changes within the developmental services system. Her suggestions and willingness to participate in resolving issues have always been taken seriously and have resulted in improved services for those she has dedicated her life to serve.

Spotlight Award: Living Options Vendor



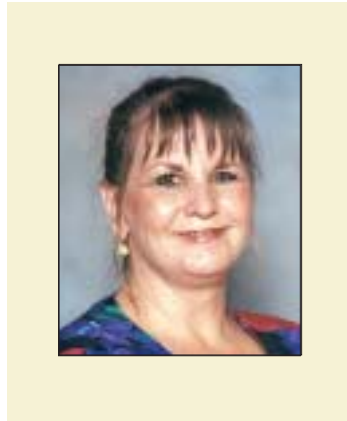
Diane Hall has devoted much of her life to helping people with developmental disabilities by providing a home in which their integrity and dignity are respected. Some of the people who live in her home have severe or profound mental retardation and disruptive behavior challenges. She has consistently motivated consumers to progress to their fullest potential by providing a pleasant and hospitable environment for them.

Diane has also been a strong advocate for the people she serves. With a personable and open style, she asserts herself on behalf of people with disabilities without being adversarial. Diane strives to provide a more productive, dignified and happy life for people with developmental disabilities in Orange County. Although she is modest and doesn't seek recognition, it is evident that that she believes that what she is doing is important and worth doing well. Diane has been willing to care for many consumers who have been rejected by other residential providers. She has demonstrated well that, "There are no problem individuals; there are only individuals with problems."

Spotlight Award: Parent

Susan Baker is one busy woman. She has four children between the ages of nine and fourteen, one of whom has autism. In addition to helping her son to be included in a regular education classroom in school, Susan shares the information and knowledge she has gained with many other parents and has guided her three daughters to volunteer as peer tutors for other children with autism at the Boys and Girls Club.

Susan has demonstrated leadership and creativity by initiating a variety of programs and activities. She has opened her home as a training center for therapists, founded a support group for parents of children with autism, and organized a social skills



program with peer tutors at the San Clemente Boys and Girls Club. She was involved in forming ACCESS (Autism Coalition for Creative Educational and Social Services), a group of families, professionals and others that works to develop and deliver intensive educational services to children with autism. She piloted a charter school for students with autism. Susan has also led public forums and round table discussions to raise awareness of key issues and gather public support. The bottom line is that Susan Baker has worked tirelessly to help her own son achieve as productive and independent a life as possible as well as provide personal and public support to other parents of children with autism by listening and sharing resources.

Spotlight Award: RCOC Achievement

Patricia Glancy is RCOC's Intake Area Manager. Her work group is the one that meets families as they come through the door at Regional Center. Pat has been described as professional and compassionate, and she believes it is vital that families feel supported and be introduced to Regional Center in the most positive manner possible. Because of that, she has revitalized the Intake process at RCOC. She was instrumental in developing a service model whereby families meet with their ongoing service coordinator as well as their Intake service coordinator as their family service plan is developed. This allows each family to experience continuity and additional support as they enter an arena that is sometimes overwhelming.

Pat also championed the creation of a "developmental team" at RCOC. The team consists of specialists such as speech, physical and occupational therapists who conduct assessments of young children's development. Coordinating these activities within Regional Center rather than relying on outside consultants has streamlined the Intake process.

Pat does not keep her efforts on behalf of people with developmental disabilities within the walls of Regional Center. She often volunteers at community and charitable events. Pat Glancy exemplifies RCOC Achievement through her caring compassion for families and their children with special needs as well as her commitment to excellence in her job.



Spotlight Award: Support Services Vendor

Being safe in our homes and communities is important to all of us. Through various means, we learn basic safety principles such as locking the doors and windows of our homes, being aware of our surroundings when we are out alone and even self-defense techniques. Project GET SAFE provides safety awareness training to people with developmental disabilities in an engaging and interactive manner. Classes have been conducted at numerous settings, such as day programs, worksites and RCOG offices. Project GET SAFE also provides safety training to special education students at local schools. The founder and executive director of Project GET SAFE is Stuart Haskin. Stu's lively teaching methods involve consumers at every level of the training

process, through humor, skits and role playing. This makes the training more effective and memorable.

Project GET SAFE has also assisted in crisis situations by providing support to consumers who have been victims of crimes. On the other side of the coin, Stu meets regularly with law enforcement officers in Orange County to educate them to the increased personal safety risks of people who have developmental disabilities. Project GET SAFE provides a unique and much-needed service to consumers in Orange County that assists them to protect themselves and live more independent lives.



Stuart Haskin

Spotlight Award: Professional Achievement

Vickie Reynolds is a resource specialist at an elementary school. She has worked with students with developmental disabilities for more than 20 years, and continues to exhibit boundless energy and enthusiasm for her work. She stays abreast of the latest information concerning new therapies, educational tools and approaches to learning that best suit the needs of her students. Her creative and interesting approaches to teaching are fun and motivate the children to learn. She does not apply a "one size fits all" strategy to teaching, but educates herself regarding the individual needs of her students. She always finds a way to obtain educational aids best suited to each child – even if that

means purchasing or making them herself.

Vickie always has a ready smile and positive attitude, even when her students experience setbacks. She has helped countless parents to deal with such setbacks and has been a source of much-needed strength and support during those times. She also provides parental support by serving as a communication link with the school, a point person to whom parents can turn with all their concerns and questions. She maintains consistent contact with parents and may call just to let parents know what a great day their child had. In short, Vickie Reynolds goes beyond the expected to achieve the extraordinary in the lives of her students with developmental disabilities.

Spotlight Award: Volunteer

Janice Morain is an outstanding example of true volunteerism that comes from the heart. She works as a bus dispatcher for Capistrano



Unified School District. For a number of years, Janice has personally enriched the lives of students in the adult transition program through the simple, but so important, gift of friendship. One student says, "She doesn't hurt anybody's feelings and treats everybody like her own kids. She's caring and kind and helps kids go to normal activities like baseball games and other stuff."

Whether it's taking someone out for a birthday dinner or just talking on the phone, Janice makes her friends feel special. In the words of one of her young friends, "She is one of my favorite friends and I really like her. She has taken me out for many activities ... she was even at my graduation cheering me on." To the person who nominated her for a Spotlight Award, Janice is a living model of the Scripture verse, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."



Spotlight Award: E. Kurt Yeager Servant Leadership

Richard Peterson is somewhat unusual among Spotlight Award recipients in that he does not have a family member with a developmental disability and he has

not worked directly in the developmental services field. Yet, serving on the Regional Center board of directors, he showed such leadership and dedication to improving the quality of

life of people with disabilities that he quickly gained the respect and admiration of his fellow board members. They elected him to serve three consecutive terms as board president.



Richard Peterson, second from left, is joined by RCOC Executive Director Bill Bowman, RCOC Board President Holly Nogales, and Master of Ceremonies Laurel Erickson, of NBC News.

Spotlight Award: Nick Garrett Award

This year a new award was posthumously inaugurated and named in honor of RCOC consumer Nick Garrett. Nick passed away in an automobile accident this year. In the absence of family members to make funeral arrangements for him, the people at O'Connor Mortuary in Laguna Hills responded with remarkable generosity. When they learned of the circumstances from Regional Center staff members, they kindly offered to provide an honorable and dignified funeral service and burial. Those who loved and cared for Nick – his residential provider, Vocational Visions staff and Regional Center service coordinators

– were able to attend and honor Nick.

In addition to that compassionate and charitable gift, the people at O'Connor Mortuary, including Neil O'Connor, Joseph Fitzgerald and Patricia Kolstad, went even further and hosted an insightful grief-counseling seminar to help the community and Regional Center staff better understand and help with these situations in the future.

The Nick Garrett Award will be bestowed on people and organizations that have no previous personal or professional connection to the developmental disabilities community, but who nonetheless step forward to extend themselves through remarkable acts of generosity and compassion toward those with developmental disabilities.



Joseph Fitzgerald and Patricia Kolstad accepted the Spotlight Award on behalf of O'Connor Mortuary.

Important Things to Know...

New hope for children with cerebral palsy-related spasticity. A study is available at Miller Children's Hospital at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. This treatment may provide an increase in mobility and independence while decreasing pain and delaying or even preventing surgery. There is no cost to participate. Your child will be seen by a multi-disciplinary team six times during a four month period. Upon completion, your child will receive \$100.

The study uses Myobloc, which is FDA approved for use in adults with cervical dystonia, but has not yet been approved for pediatric cerebral palsy.

If your child is between 7 and 18 years old with a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, has spasticity, but is able to walk using braces or a walker and has never been treated using botox injections, he or she may be eligible to participate. For more information, please contact or have your child's physician contact Linda Towne, R.N., (562) 933-8832 or e-mail to ltowne@memorialcare.org.

Moving On at 3...Transition, presented by the Regional Center of Orange County.

This meeting will educate and support parents of young children soon to turn three years old during the transition from the Early Start program to other resources. Where do you go after Early Start? Public school, play group, pre-school, Mommy & Me program, Head Start, church group, parks and recreation are among the options available. Meeting dates: all meetings are held from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Friday, December 13, 2002, RCOC South Area office; Friday, January 24, 2003, RCOC North Area office. For

more information or to RSVP, please contact RCOC's John Zeimantz, (714) 796-5339.

Operation Housecall pairs second-year medical students from University of California, Irvine (UCI) with families of children with special needs. The students will spend time in the families' homes to help sensitize the students to the unique challenges families of children with disabilities face. If you would like to participate or obtain more information, please call Area Board XI at (714) 558-4404.

A workshop, Fair Hearings from the Perspective of the Administrative Law Judge Hearing Officer will be offered by Area Board XI on Thursday, January 30, 2003 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Costa Mesa Community Center, 1845 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa. There is no charge for the workshop, but please contact Area Board at (714) 558-4404 by January 15 to RSVP and to let them know if special accommodations are needed.

Recreation Resource Guide. This handy resource that contains information about numerous social and recreational opportunities in all areas of Orange County for children and adults with developmental disabilities is available from Comfort Connection Family Resource Center, (714) 558-5400, 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana. A \$3.00 donation is requested but not required. The guide is available in English, Spanish or Vietnamese.

Information on CalOPTIMA benefits is available through Comfort Connection Family Resource

Center. Among the resources available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese are the CalOPTIMA Member Handbook and several brochures: Wheelchair Seating Clinic, CalOPTIMA Pharmacy Program, CalOPTIMA Vision Care Program, General Information About CalOPTIMA, and General Information About CalOPTIMA's Community Liaison Program. To obtain any of this literature, visit Comfort Connection at 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, or call (714) 558-5400.

A note on 2002 income tax filing. The new year is just around the corner, and it will soon be time to file your income tax return for 2002. As one of California's long-term caregivers, you may be eligible to reduce state income taxes by \$500 for each individual under your care. There are several stipulations, so refer to form FTB 3504, Long-Term Care Credit or consult your tax professional for details. Earned income tax credit (EIC) is a special credit for low- to moderate-income workers that can reduce federal income taxes. There are several rules governing EIC, so consult with your tax professional or carefully follow the guidelines in IRS Publication 596, available by calling the IRS at (800) 829-3676 or online at www.irs.gov.

Please note that the RCOC board of directors schedule has changed. The full board will meet every other month on the first Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana. See the back page of this newsletter for the dates.

Board of Directors 2002 - 2003

Holly Nogales, President ❖ Steve Sherman, Vice President
C. Terrence Fletke, Treasurer ❖ Stephen Brees, Secretary
Vicki Amantea ❖ Karen Chen ❖ Nancy Creelman ❖ Patricia Daley
Christian Dubia, Jr. ❖ Sam Durbin ❖ Joyce Hearn ❖ John Kuricaj
Tresa Oliveri ❖ Richard Peterson ❖ Joe Preston ❖ Jud Robert
Steven Tanner ❖ Kim Vuong

2002-2003 Board Meetings:

Jan.9 ❖ March 6 ❖ May 1

*The board of directors meets at 6:00 p.m. at 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana.
The public is welcome.*

The Regional Center of Orange County has four locations to serve you:

Orange Office

3111 N. Tustin Street, Suite 150
24-hour phone no.: (714) 685-5555
TDD: (714) 685-5575

San Juan Capistrano Office

26311 Junipero Serra Road, Ste. 180
24-hour phone no.: (949) 234-8800
TDD: (949) 488-3399

Santa Ana Office

801 Civic Center Dr. West
24-hour phone no.: (714) 796-5100
TDD: (714) 667-6021

Westminster Office

13950 Milton Ave., Suite 200
24-hour phone no.: (714) 889-7200
TDD: (714) 889-7234

RCOC Web site: www.rcocdd.com

*Dialogue is normally published four times per year for consumers, families, service providers, and members of the community by the Regional Center of Orange County. We welcome your ideas, contributions and suggestions. Please send all correspondence to: **Karen Taylor**, Dialogue Editor, Regional Center of Orange County, P.O. Box 22010, Santa Ana, CA 92702 or call her at (714) 796-5208.*

Regional Center of Orange County Administration

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Bette Baber, Administrative Director
John Abernatha, H.R. Director
Cinda Bottorff, Developmental
Resources Director
Arleen Downing, MD, Medical Dir.
Larry Landauer, Consumer and
Community Resources Director
Ed Scherer, Information Services Dir.
Tandy Tipps, Outcomes Director
Patricia Glancy, Intake Manager
Adam Gottdank, North Area Manager
Rosalinda Lopez, East-Central Area
Manager
Keli Radford, West Area Manager
Amy Williams, South Area Manager

*The Regional Center of
Orange County is a nonprofit,
private agency that contracts with
the California Department of
Developmental Services to provide
services to individuals with
developmental disabilities.*

Look for Tele-Friends on page 4!

R.A.D.D. Review

Dialogue Newsletter

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