



# Dialogue

Volume 19, No. 4  
Fall 2005

## *The Spotlight Awards Inspired Once Again*

For the ninth time, the Spotlight Awards event on September 16 was full of touching and inspiring moments as the award announcements were read. Twelve award recipients were chosen from more than 70 nominees. Read their stories starting on page 6. Here's the list of winners:

- ◆ Community Partnership:  
Lee Blumen
- ◆ Employer: Camp James
- ◆ Living Options Vendor:  
Susan B. Ashling,  
Ashling Residential Villas

- ◆ Support Services Vendor:  
Orange County ARC
- ◆ Frontline: Elizabeth Anderson
- ◆ Healthcare Professional:  
Ira T. Lott, M.D.
- ◆ Professional Achievement:  
Janna Moore
- ◆ RCOC Achievement:  
M.J. Delgado
- ◆ Volunteer: Bucky and Sara Kahl
- ◆ Parent: Kristi Golden
- ◆ Consumer: David Gray
- ◆ Lifetime Achievement:  
Arleen Downing, M.D.

In addition to the highlight of the awards ceremony itself, ably presented by Master of Ceremonies Derrick Dufresne, the evening in the elegant Irvine Marriott ballroom was accented by mellow jazz numbers courtesy of the George Gilliam Quartet, a gift basket raffle, a delicious dinner, and, of course, dancing!

Next year will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Spotlight Awards, so be on the look-out for the announcement of an extra-special program to mark the milestone event.

## **Alert: Emergency Service Magnet May Help You**

It is important that RCOC consumers know their rights and can immediately access help when involved with law enforcement personnel. Attached is a Regional Center of Orange County Emergency Service magnet for consumers, families and care providers. The intent of this tool is to alert consumers and their families that Regional Center can be of assistance and should be notified when a consumer is involved with the police. Please post the magnet on your refrigerator or another prominent place.

Please read the full article about the magnet on the back cover of this newsletter. If you have any questions about the magnet, please call and speak with your RCOC service coordinator.

**ALERT**

If you have any problem involving the police,



Call the On-Call Worker at  
Regional Center of Orange County  
for assistance at:

**(714) 796-5100**

Available 24 hours per day,  
7 days a week.

## Dialogue

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Chanté White, CalOptima Liaison

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2005-06 Board Meetings  
Jan. 5 • March 2 • May 4

The public is welcome to attend. Meetings start at 6:00 p.m. and are held in the Regional Center Board Room at 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana.

### RCOC Administration

Bill Bowman, Chief Executive Officer  
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## CEO's Corner

### Bringing a Vision to Life

By Bill Bowman, Chief Executive Officer

In late September, I was one of 2,500 people who met for the 2005 Summit of the Alliance for Full Participation in Washington,



D.C. The Alliance, a coalition of 11 national organizations that work in the field of developmental disabilities, formed in December of 2003 with a commitment to making full community inclusion of people with disabilities a reality. Attendees at the Summit included people with life-long disabilities, their family members and the people who work with them. The purpose was to gather many voices from all over the country and articulate a unified vision: "We want dignity and respect for all. We want full participation for all."

### Alliance Generates Action

That vision was given legs through a list of purpose statements. People with disabilities asserted their desire and expectation to share in the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship in local communities and work in worthwhile jobs. They made this strong declaration: "*We belong* in schools, neighborhoods, businesses, government and churches, synagogues and mosques." (emphasis added)

Leaders in the developmental services field enumerated the things that need to happen to make the vision a reality:

- √ a plan to close all state institutions within the next few years
- √ real jobs with real pay and real volunteer opportunities
- √ family support for all who need it to avoid poverty and isolation and achieve full and rich family lives
- √ participation of people with disabilities at all levels of program planning and implementation
- √ elimination of the term "mental retardation"
- √ control and direction of publicly funded services in the hands of people with disabilities and their family members or trusted friends

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***People with developmental disabilities made this declaration: "We belong in schools, neighborhoods, businesses, government and churches, synagogues and mosques."***

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- √ decent wages and benefits for those who provide direct services for people with disabilities
- √ protection of access to Medicaid by people with developmental disabilities
- √ unity of people with all types of disabilities so they work together toward the same ends

The organizers did not leave those statements on paper but dispatched teams that are working in each state to implement the vision and goals. If you are interested in learning more about the Alliance's work, go to [www.allianceforfullparticipation.org](http://www.allianceforfullparticipation.org).

**Continued next page**

## Highlights

By Tresa Oliveri, RCOC Board of Directors

Here's the latest on what's happening with legislative activities.



■ The state Legislature recessed for the year on September 9 and will not reconvene until January 4,

so pending legislation is not being worked on in Sacramento at this time.

■ During the summer, RCOC CEO Bill Bowman and members from the RCOC Board of Directors met with several of the freshman Assembly members to let them know who RCOC serves and educate them about concerns that people with developmental disabilities have. The team



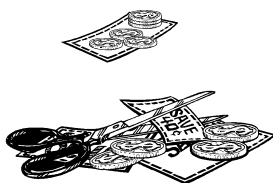
received a very favorable reception from those they met, which were Chuck Devore, Van Tran, Tom Umberg, and Mimi Walters. Periodically, RCOC staff and Board members meet with our state elected officials to build positive relationships and keep them apprised of issues that affect people with disabilities.

■ On the Medi-Cal reform front, which we reported in the last newsletter, at this time the governor has suspended his efforts to expand the use of managed care in other parts of the state.

## CEO's Corner (from page 2)

### State Spending

By the time you read this, we will know if Proposition 76, the State Spending and School Funding Limits initiative, has passed. If it has, we at RCOC will advocate with the governor and the Legislature to maintain full funding for services to the people we serve. Even if the measure did not pass, it's good to have a little background about it in case of future similar efforts.



Prop. 76 would give the governor expanded powers over state spending, including the authority – if a fiscal emergency were declared and the Legislature failed to act within 45 days – to make a mid-year reduction to the budgets of entitlement programs, such as the Department of Developmental Services. If that happened, it's possible that the dollars remaining would not cover all needed services for the rest of the

fiscal year. That is of great concern to us.

The whole premise of Prop. 76 is of great concern because the cost of services frequently grows faster than the number of consumers grows, for several reasons, including medical advances that save the lives of premature babies and the fact that people with disabilities are living longer. When the growth of the developmental services budget is limited to the overall growth of the state economy, the resources available to people with disabilities are severely limited.

### Next Fiscal Year Budget

On a broader plane, with January – and the governor's proposed budget – around the corner, it is clearly evident that the 2006-07 budget needs to provide fiscal relief from rate freezes and from prohibitions against developing innovative new programs. We need to be allowed to create new options for families of children with autism that meet their needs while being cost effective,

such as wraparound services that provide in-home and after school assistance. We need to be able to address the ongoing needs of single parents who need support. For adult consumers, we need to be able to help people live as independently as they want and are able, perhaps by providing rent subsidies in the face of high housing costs and extremely limited Section 8 federal rental assistance. We also want to find new ways to support people who want to work more by expanding the numbers of jobs, as well as their duration, quality and compensation. Obviously, with all such proposals, parameters must be set that may require new regulations or legislation.

As always, the challenges ahead are daunting, but our community is up to the task. We will keep you informed of the progress.





**Note: The Consumer Advisory Team Update and Safety Stu's Corner will return in the Winter 2006 issue of Dialogue.**

## Get Your Disneyland Discount Tickets Soon!

By Jacqui Kerze, FRC Supervisor

For those of you who love to visit "the happiest place on earth," Disneyland provides a wonderful opportunity for people with disabilities and their families to purchase tickets at a discounted rate. Disneyland's Community Involvement Program allows guests with disabilities to purchase one-day admission tickets to *either* Disneyland or Disney's California Adventure for \$23 per person (same price for all ages). Tickets are valid for one day admission to one park only, Sunday through Thursday only, on the following dates:

- √ February 12 – 16, 2006
- √ February 21 – 23, 2006

- √ February 26 – March 2, 2006
- √ March 5 – 9, 2006

Please note: discount tickets may *not* be used on February 19 and 20 because of the Presidents Weekend holiday.



Guests may purchase up to six passports for themselves and their immediate family or care giver. Each household or address is limited to one order (one to six tickets) on one ticket form. Children two and younger receive complimentary admission. Parking is free in the Mickey and Friends Parking Structure.

Comfort Connection Family Resource Center (FRC) will receive ticket order forms from Disneyland in mid-December. Consumers and families can obtain a ticket order form by contacting Lilly Sanchez in the FRC at (714) 554-5800 or in person at 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana.

The FRC will provide the ticket order form along with a letter of verification, required by Disneyland, stating that you or your child receives services from the Regional Center of Orange County. You will then need to mail the ticket order form, letter of verification and payment to Disneyland by the deadline date that will be indicated on the order form.

Be sure to take advantage of this limited-time chance to spend the day at Disneyland for a very low price!

## Moving On At 3... Transition

**Early Start** is the program that serves families of children from birth to three years of age who have or are at risk of having a developmental delay. **Transition** is the name given to the time period and the process of planning for changes.



**Moving On At 3** is a short workshop provided by RCOC free of charge to assist families with transition before, during and after a child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

The workshop helps families learn about the programs and other options that are available for them after their

child turns three, such as:

- Public School • Play Group
- Head Start • Church Group
- Pre-school • Parks & Recreation
- Mommy & Me Program

Following is the schedule of Moving On At 3 workshops for 2006. Please call Thelma Day at (714) 796-5223 to register for the workshop of your choice or for more information. Thelma can also give you the workshop location address and a map. For additional assistance regarding family support, please call Comfort Connection Family Resource Center at (714) 558-5400.

Wed. Jan. 6 • 6:30 – 8 p.m.  
RCOC North Office

Fri. March 24 • 9:30 – 11 a.m.  
RCOC South Office

Wed. May 24 • 6:30 – 8 p.m.  
RCOC East Office  
Spanish translation available

Fri. July 28 • 9:30 – 11 a.m.  
RCOC West Office  
Vietnamese translation available

Wed. Sept. 27 • 6:30 – 8 p.m.  
RCOC North Office

## Welcome to OneCare!

By Chanté White, CalOptima Liaison

### What is OneCare?

OneCare is a unique health plan that will provide a full range of health care services to individuals eligible for both the Medicare and Medi-Cal programs. Administered by CalOptima, OneCare will combine the benefits of Medicare and Medi-Cal into one plan. It's the first plan of its kind in Southern California and one of only two such plans in the entire state.



### What are the services provided by OneCare?

OneCare will offer a comprehensive package of health care benefits provided by Medicare and Medi-Cal. These services include physician visits, hospitalization and pharmacy benefits. OneCare will also coordinate other Medi-Cal services, such as long-term care, for members that qualify for those benefits.

### How does a patient meet the eligibility requirements for OneCare?

In order to be eligible for OneCare, a patient must be eligible for Medicare Part A, Medicare Part B, Medi-Cal, and reside in Orange County.

### How does a patient enroll in OneCare?

Members interested in enrolling with OneCare should call (877) 4-1CARE-4 or (877) 412-2734. Members with hearing impairments

can call our TTY line at (714) 246-8523.

### How many physician groups are participating with the OneCare plan?

OneCare has contracted with five physician groups: AMVI/Prospect Medical Group, Bristol Park Medical Group, Family Choice Medical Group, Monarch Healthcare, and Talbert Medical Group. Through these physician groups, our members will have access to more than 800 primary care physicians.

### What is passive enrollment and how does this impact enrollment into OneCare?

“Passive enrollment” means that eligible Medicare/Medi-Cal patients who do not choose one of the three health care options detailed below will be automatically enrolled in the OneCare plan as of January 1, 2006.

During October 2005, eligible Medicare/Medi-Cal patients received a form from CalOptima to select one of the following three options for obtaining their health care in 2006:

- ◆ OneCare that integrates Medicare Parts A and B, a Part D Drug Plan (PDP), and their Medi-Cal benefits under a single health plan, or
- ◆ Another Medicare Advantage health plan, or
- ◆ Traditional Medicare (also referred to as Fee for Service Medicare) and choose or be assigned a PDP. Note that, in order to receive pharmacy benefits, members who select Traditional Medicare MUST also be enrolled in a PDP on and after January 1, 2006.

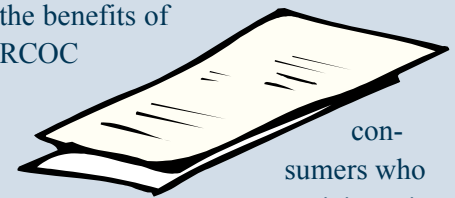
CalOptima members that are passively enrolled into OneCare will continue to receive services through CalOptima, an organization that is

familiar to them, as well as enjoy all of the great benefits OneCare has to offer.

For more information, please contact the OneCare Member Services Department at (877) 412-2734.

## Fact Sheet May Help Clarify Details of Medicare Prescription Coverage

The Medicare prescription drug coverage plan, called Part D, will soon become a reality. Because of the complexity of coordinating the benefits of RCOC



consumers who may participate in various benefit programs, RCOC has put together a fact sheet to help people single out the program rules that apply to their particular situation. The fact sheet is for people who receive Medicare only *and* those who receive both Medi-Cal and Medicare benefits. RCOC consumers who receive *only* Medi-Cal are not affected by the Medicare changes.

The fact sheet can be downloaded from RCOC's Web site at [www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com) or requested by contacting RCOC's benefits specialist, Suzanne Butler, at (714) 796-5253.

While CalOptima's new OneCare health plan will ensure that eligible Medi-Cal/Medicare-covered consumers, also referred to as “Medi-Medi,” receive needed health care and prescription drug coverage, the RCOC fact sheet may still be helpful in clarifying the rights and rules that apply to them.

# RCOC 2005 Spotlight Award Recipients

## Spotlight on Consumer: David Gray

“David is truly a role model for anyone who has been told, ‘You can’t achieve that.’” wrote David Gray’s RCOC service coordinator, Joslin Oliver, when she nominated him for the Spotlight Award. David is a Regional Center consumer with spastic cerebral palsy, which means that he uses a wheelchair and needs assistance with all his personal care needs because his limbs won’t do what he wants them to do.

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*“I learned that for me to succeed there would be many hurdles to overcome.”*

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Before reaching adulthood, David underwent 17 major surgeries. His physical disability was so severe that he was mistakenly considered mentally disabled by the school district. As he struggled to gain some control over his body through hard work and medical interventions, eventually he was able to talk and gained mastery of his eye muscles so that he could read. David now speaks several languages fluently. While he didn’t learn to read until fifth grade, that did not stop him from achieving his advanced educational goals. Earlier this year, at the age of 26, David earned a master’s degree from the University of Southern California School of Social Work.

Throughout his life, David has shown compassion to others who were also experiencing difficult circumstances, whether at the hospital where he was a frequent patient or



at convalescent homes where he visited senior citizens. He has encouraged people by example and words that despite struggles and setbacks, their lives still have value and meaning.

David wrote in an autobiographical statement, “Some of my adult friends [with physical challenges] would encourage me to always look at the bright side of things and to never allow the negatives to outweigh the positive events in my life. I learned that for me to succeed there would be many hurdles to overcome. However, if I succeeded, I believed I would become a role model to many other physically challenged children. This was where I first saw the world

David Gray, recipient of the RCOC Consumer Spotlight Award, with RCOC Board Chairman Steve Sherman and District Representative for Senator John Campbell, Sarah Franklin.

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from a different perspective and began to set my future goals in life. With my family working as a team to assist me, I have been able to accomplish many of my goals in life and to overcome the challenges associated with cerebral palsy.”

When he received the Spotlight Award, David said, “I want to thank my parents for all their support.” Lew and Cindy Gray have been their son’s cheerleaders and advocates, and David clearly inherited his optimism and determination from them.

# RCOC 2005 Spotlight Award Recipients

## Spotlight on Lifetime Achievement: Arleen Downing, M.D., F.A.A.P.

**A** pediatrician with a sub-specialty in developmental and neurological disabilities, Dr. Arleen Downing has devoted most of her career to serving children and adults with developmental disabilities. She came to the Regional Center of Orange County as Medical Director in 1986 after having spent several years as a physician at residential schools for children and adults with developmental disabilities in Washington State. Prior to that she was a pediatrician in private practice.

Dr. Downing is very hands-on in her work at RCOC, having provided countless medical assessments of consumers over the years. She always makes herself available to hospitals day or night when a consumer has a medical emergency. She also provides consultation to any RCOC employee, physician, consumer or family member whenever needed.

Bill Bowman, RCOC CEO, said, "Dr. Downing is committed to providing the highest degree of care to people with developmental disabilities. In her unobtrusive way, she has forged invaluable partnerships in the medical community and has built a first-rate clinical team at this Regional Center."

Dr. Downing represents RCOC on statewide and local committees, task forces and community boards. She was instrumental in the development of RCOC's collaboration with UCI Medical Center and Dr. Ira Lott, who received the Healthcare Professional Spotlight Award (story on page 9). At the Regional Center, Dr. Downing has brought together a group of health care professionals who provide excellent service to consumers and invaluable support to RCOC staff.



RCOC CEO Bill Bowman presented Dr. Arleen Downing, director of RCOC's Health Resources Group, with the Spotlight Award for Lifetime Achievement.

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## Spotlight on Community Partnership: Lee Blumen

**L**ee Blumen serves as the head of the Mental Health Unit of the Orange County Public Defender's office. He and his staff provide legal representation to the people who live in Fairview Developmental Center. In



his new role as supervising attorney, Lee has committed himself to learning all he can about people with developmental disabilities, the systems that serve them, and community living options. Lee and his staff, particularly attorney George Abbes who argues cases in court on behalf of Regional Center consumers, share RCOC's vision that consumers can live happy, productive lives in the community with appropriate supports.

According to Randy Laya, RCOC's developmental center manager, "Lee and George thoroughly review cases, call meetings to gather additional information, and meet with consumers to obtain all pertinent facts. Under Lee's leadership and commitment, the Orange County Public Defender's office has assisted RCOC in its mission to help consumers live in the least restrictive environment possible."

# RCOC 2005 Spotlight Award Recipients

## Spotlight on Parent: Kristi Golden

Parents of children with disabilities often spread joy and provide encouragement to other parents while seeking to improve life for their own children. That is certainly true of Kristi



Golden, a mentor to families with new babies that have Down syndrome. When one expectant mother

learned that she was carrying such a baby, she turned to the Down Syndrome Association for support. She was connected with Kristi, who has an 11-year-old son with Down syndrome. Kristi introduced the mom-to-be to her own son, who is mainstreamed in elementary school. She also took her to an early intervention program so she could see how well children with disabilities can do. By sharing her own life experience with this worried, expectant mother, she gave her hope for the future. The new mom welcomed her baby with joy because of Kristi.

## Spotlight on RCOC Achievement: M.J. Delgado

M.J. Delgado strives for excellence in her work as a training and standards coordinator at RCOC. However, it's what she does above and beyond her job duties that reveal her true dedication to the people she serves. She has spent countless hours over the past ten years recruiting volunteers and organizing job assignments for Camp TLC, a very special weekend for families of young children with disabilities.

Linda Smith, executive director of Family Support Network, which hosts Camp TLC, wrote, "Family Support Network has been so fortunate to have M.J.'s involvement with Camp TLC for the past 13 years. Her willingness to give of herself and collaborate with the community makes her a valuable asset to all individuals with disabilities in the county."

M.J. has also assisted with annual Christmas parties, developmental screenings, and the Alexander Graham Bell Conference for the deaf and hard of hearing. She recognizes that she represents the agency to the people she serves. But it's character and compassion that move her to spend much of her own time ministering to people with disabilities and their families.



## Spotlight on Support Services Vendor: Orange County ARC

Orange County ARC has gone from being a one-stop sheltered workshop to a provider that offers multiple, individualized day program options for approximately 700 people with developmental disabilities. The organization offers supported employment services for consumers who want to work in the community. Its site-based Consumer Choice Day Activity Program allows people to design their own program. They can work some or all of the time, go on community outings, and take classes that include life skills training, exercise, cooking, arts and crafts, music, and dancing. Orange County ARC is currently unveiling its most innovative program to date, called Life Unlimited, created for RCOC consumers with severe physical disabilities.

Joyce Hearn, Orange County ARC CEO said, "Everything about this facility and the program is geared toward providing a real life community-type experience for people whose access to the community is limited because of the severity of their medical condition."

From teaching independent living skills to developing community employment opportunities, Orange County ARC seeks to give people with developmental disabilities a variety of program options to meet their needs and desires.



# RCOC 2005 Spotlight Award Recipients

## Spotlight on Healthcare Professional: Ira T. Lott, M.D.

**D**r. Ira Lott is a physician at UC Irvine Medical Center and a professor at the UCI School of Medicine. His research to help people with autism, Down syndrome, and significant behavioral challenges is nationally known. Although his specialty is pediatric neurology, he provides medical care to people with developmental disabilities of all ages.



He participates in cutting edge clinical trials to find treatments for people with Down syndrome who have early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Lott also chairs the Science Advisory Board of the National Down Syndrome Society.

Dr. Arleen Downing, medical director at RCOC, said, "Dr. Lott cares about individuals with severe health problems and severe behavioral problems. He is concerned about how a child's health affects a family and asks parents about respite care and other support needs. Dr. Lott is equally adept at speaking eloquently at medical conferences and speaking in lay terms to make

information understandable to families, care givers and RCOC service coordinators."

Dr. Lott was instrumental in establishing a partnership between UCI and RCOC to open a neurodevelopmental behavior clinic to better coordinate medical care for RCOC consumers who take more than one medication for mental health or behavioral conditions. Since 1998 the clinic has provided evaluations and treatment recommendations for regional center consumers by a multidisciplinary team that includes a neurologist, psychologist and psychiatrist.

## Spotlight on Volunteers: Bucky and Sara Kahl

**A**fter moving to California from Tennessee, Bucky and Sara Kahl had discussions with the staff of several golf courses before finding someone willing to help start a Special Olympics golf program in Orange County. They finally found a willing and enthusiastic partner in Marty LaRoche, the head golf pro at Tijeras Creek Golf Club. Marty and his staff, as well as Saddleback College golf coach Bill Cunerty and some of his players, started providing lessons to the students with developmental disabilities, and the program just took off. After seven years, the group of golfers has increased from 15 to 40 athletes. Sara and Bucky have worked hard to make this a fun and satisfying endeavor for

everyone involved, including their 28-year-old twin boys who have Fragile X syndrome. The Kahls' leadership, coupled with the enthusiasm of the golf club staff, has made the program a rousing success. It even led to the Special Olympics National Tournament being held in California for the first time. That tournament drew 600 golfers from all over the United States. Most importantly, for all the parents involved in the local golf program, it's another great example of what their children CAN do!



# RCOC 2005 Spotlight Award Recipients

## Spotlight on Professional Achievement: Janna Moore

Janna Moore has a gift for seeing a need, finding a solution, and following through to make sure the job gets done, according to co-worker Jill Cabanillas. Janna combines superlative professional skills with warm and caring compassion. As director of programs and services for the Epilepsy Alliance of Orange



County, she has been tireless in seeking and obtaining additional resources for the county and providing support for hurting families. Since she also has a 10-year-old daughter with uncontrolled seizures, she knows first-hand what parents go through.

Jill said, "Janna is completely focused on helping people with epilepsy and devotes an incredible amount of time to this cause. She has a vision for expanding services to people with epilepsy and working for a cure for this life-altering condition.

Janna is the compassionate and knowledgeable voice on the end of the phone who helps newly diagnosed people get on the right track in managing their condition."

Services provided by the Epilepsy Alliance include information and referral, support groups in English and Spanish, social skills groups, assistance with education planning, and conferences. Due in great part to Janna's contributions, more children and adults in Orange County are attaining better seizure control and enjoying a better quality of life.

## Spotlight on Frontline: Elizabeth Anderson

The Frontline category recognizes a person who provides direct services to people with disabilities. Liz Anderson has de-



voted her professional life of nearly 30 years to her clients with developmental disabilities, both at

Fairview Developmental Center as a "psych tech," and in the community. As a community support specialist, she provides independent living services, but more importantly, she brings stability and continuity of

service to the lives of the people she works with. An example of her commitment is shown by her relationship with one consumer, "Joe," who was diagnosed with terminal cancer last year. Although the funding for her independent living services stopped when Joe had to move in with his mother due to his illness, Liz continued to visit him once or twice a week for several months, until he passed away. She still remains in touch with Joe's elderly mother to offer emotional support.

Another illustration of Liz's key role in consumers' lives involves "Norman," with whom Liz has worked for 23 years. Norman doesn't have any family, so he depends on Liz, who knows him better than

anyone, to advocate for him and provide crucial input to RCOC regarding his services and quality of life. He was recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, but with Liz's support and advocacy, he will continue to live in his own apartment with increased services.

The person who nominated Liz for the Spotlight Award wrote, "What makes Liz special is that she regularly goes above and beyond the call of duty to help people live – and in Joe's case, die – with dignity. She is a warm, caring individual. She manages to have close supportive bonds with the people she works with while at the same time maintaining professional and productive relationships."

# RCOC 2005 Spotlight Award Recipients

## Spotlight on Living Options Vendor: Susan Ashling, Ashling's Residential Villas

**S**usan Ashling places great importance on providing a real home for the people she serves,



according to Ron and Barbara Briles, parents of one of the home's residents. They say that Susan and her staff members treat the residents as beloved family members, with respect, care and lots of laughter. The

building boasts two-bedroom apartments with common living areas. The décor and landscaping are attractive and well-maintained. In fact, the backyard patio is furnished with attractive furniture as well as a built-in television and stereo to make the many barbecue parties more fun and comfortable. The residents of the home enjoy gathering there to play cards, eat and watch TV.

David Coté, who lives at Ashling's, said, "I'm happy because I live at the Ashling home. I met a lot of friends and a girlfriend. I'm glad that Susan won that award because she's the best care provider."

Susan and her staff help the residents develop good social relationships, work skills, and self-confidence. Another parent, whose son lives in the Ashling home, said he feels a sense of peace and harmony when he visits the home.



## Spotlight on Employer: Camp James

**T**he standout quality about Camp James as an employer is the approach the directors took in providing an integrated job opportunity to someone with a disability. Located in Irvine, Camp James is a summer day camp for children. Last summer, the camp staff invited a teenager with significant challenges to participate in their Counselor-in-Training program for 14 to 18-year-olds. Although the young man has cerebral palsy along with a mild intellectual disability, his responsibilities were no different than the other counselors.

Camp Director Theresa Collins said, "It was so great for all our staff to see him serve as a role model for other teens and young adults who might not have the best work ethic



Theresa Collins, director at Camp James.

yet. He showed them that even though he had physical challenges, he was willing to step up and help."

The young man was responsible for helping with set-up and clean-up for the various activities. He also assisted the children with remembering to use sunscreen and with moving from one activity to the next. The camp staff showed him respect and dignity by holding him to the same standards as the other counselors-in-training. They allowed this teenager to demonstrate that people with disabilities can be capable and contributing members of the community.

# Alert: Emergency Service Magnet May Help You

Attached to the front cover of this newsletter is a magnet reminding RCOC consumers to contact the Regional Center if they are involved with the police. That involvement could range from receiving a traffic ticket to being questioned by the police or even being arrested.



Although police officers receive some basic training about developmental disabilities, they may have limited experience being around people with disabilities. They don't

always understand the impact of a person's disability on the person's demeanor or behavior. That may lead police officers to mistakenly make assumptions about a person's actions if they unknowingly encounter someone with a developmental disability. For that reason, the members of RCOC's Criminal Justice Task Force created the attached Emergency Service magnet for consumers, family members and care providers to alert them that the Regional Center can be of assistance and should be notified when a consumer is involved

with law enforcement in any way.

The Criminal Justice Task Force includes RCOC staff, parents of people with developmental disabilities, and representatives from several local law enforcement agencies as well as other agencies in Orange County that advocate for and provide services to people with developmental disabilities. The task force meets regularly to discuss issues involving protection of the rights of people with developmental disabilities. Thanks to Project Get Safe for assisting with production of the magnet.

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

Santa Ana Office  
801 Civic Center Dr. West  
24-hour phone: (714) 796-5100

Orange Office  
3111 N. Tustin Street, Suite 150  
24-hour phone: (714) 685-5555

San Juan Capistrano Office  
26311 Junipero Serra Road, Ste. 180  
24-hour phone: (949) 234-8800

Westminster Office  
13950 Milton Ave., Suite 200  
24-hour phone: (714) 889-7200

**Inside**

Spotlight Awards Inspired ..... 1

Alert: Emergency Service Magnet ..... 1

Message from the CEO: Bringing A Vision to Life ..... 2

Legislative Update ..... 3

Comfort Connection Update: Disneyland Discount Tickets ... 4

Moving On At 3 Transition ..... 4

CalOptima: Welcome To OneCare ..... 5

Fact Sheet on Medicare Part D ..... 5

Spotlight Award Recipient Features ..... 6-11

*Dialogue Newsletter*

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