



# Dialogue

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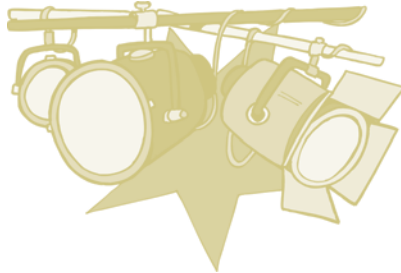
## Spotlight Awards

### Gala Honors Orange County Role Models

More than 700 people attended the 11th Annual Spotlight Awards dinner dance at the Hyatt Regency Irvine on Oct. 5. Established to recognize outstanding individuals, organizations and programs that demonstrate excellence in enhancing quality of life and expanding opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities in Orange County, the Spotlight Awards have grown each year both in prestige and in attendance.

This year, thirteen honorees were chosen from a field of 77 nominations. Nominations were evaluated by a panel of judges composed of past Spotlight Award recipients.

“Both honorees and nominees are role models, and we are proud of the standard of



performance they set,” said RCOC CEO Bill Bowman. “Their service inspires us as we strive together to advance the Lanterman Act promise of a fully inclusive community.”

Those attending the gala enjoyed performances by pianist Joel Scott during the pre-dinner reception and jazz music by the George Gilliam Quartet during dinner. Popular television news personality and Orange County resident Henry DiCarlo, meteorologist for CBS 2 and KCAL 9, was master of ceremonies for the awards presentation.



Liz Lyons (left) and Hallie Long (right)

After the awards were presented, there was dancing until midnight with music by Barry C. Minniefield.

“Although the event is organized and hosted by RCOC, it is a true community effort made possible because of the deep and widespread support of consumers, families, service providers, volunteers, and so many others who believe it is important to honor role models in our community,” said RCOC Board Chairman Jud Robert.

The awards gala is supported by numerous sponsors, along with dozens of volunteers. Their contributions help to keep ticket prices low, and provide large numbers of “scholarship” tickets for consumers and families who might otherwise be unable to attend.

For more information on this year’s recipients, see the honoree profiles on pages 4 through 10.



(top) Behrad Tehranchi, (above) Jody Hedlund and Charles Quinones, (left) Jeff Barnes

## Dialogue

*Dialogue* is published four times per year by the Regional Center of Orange County for people with developmental disabilities, their families and service providers.

*Dialogue* can also be read online at RCOC's Web site: [www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com).

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### 2007-2008 Board Meetings

January 10 • March 6 • May 1

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

### RCOC Administration

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## Legislative Update

### A Report on This Season's Bills

By Wendel Starkey,  
RCOC Board of Directors

When the legislative season comes to a close, we watch with great interest to see which of the bills that made their way through the Assembly and the

Senate will be signed into law by the Governor and which will be vetoed.

In the course of just a few days, right up until the Sunday, Oct. 14 deadline, Governor Schwarzenegger took action on hundreds of bills.

Because of their potential to affect RCOC consumers, their families and community-based services, some of those bills have been discussed in *Dialogue*. Now that this legislative season is over, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you the outcome of some of those bills.

**AB 1192** would have created a Developmental Services Consumer Abuse Registry, similar to one that is already in place for child care workers. In addition to the current routine background checks, the Registry was intended as another tool to help screen out prospective workers who might abuse people with developmental disabilities. The Governor vetoed AB 1192, citing



cost issues. However, in his veto message, the Governor directed the Health and Human Services Agency to work with stakeholders to identify other ways California can enhance protections for people with developmental disabilities.

**AB 1427** would have created a Developmental Services Workforce Training Pilot program. The Governor vetoed the bill, which was controversial among many consumers, families and service providers. In his veto message, the Governor said:

"The pilot program established by this bill would provide rate increases to a select group of providers during a time when continued fiscal constraints require that we continue important statewide cost containment measures."

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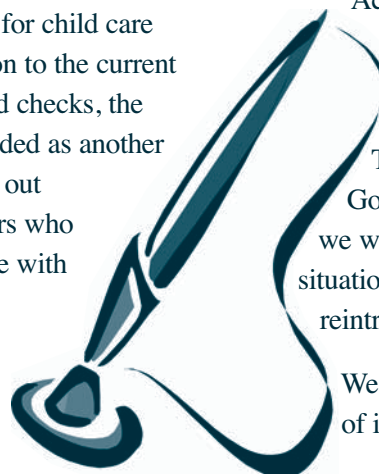
*In the course  
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Finally, there was one other bill, **AB 1128**, that we had been following. That bill would create a Lanterman Act Blue Ribbon Commission to review and make recommendations to amend the Lanterman Act. The bill never made it to the Governor's desk. However, we will continue to monitor the situation in the event that it is reintroduced in the coming season.

We will report on other bills of interest in future issues.



## Autism Groups Help Lead Improvements for All RCOC Families

By Bill Bowman, Chief Executive Officer

In several previous columns, I have talked about various sources RCOC consults to help identify and develop solutions to issues facing consumers and families. In this column, I would like to discuss the valuable contributions made by those



involved with some of our area's most prominent autism organizations — specifically, Lisa Ackerman, co-founder and executive director of Talk About Curing Autism (TACA) and Robert Blitz of Autism Speaks.

It makes sense that RCOC would pay particular attention to the concerns voiced by families affected by autism. While just nine percent of RCOC consumers age 19 and older have an autism diagnosis, the figures are quite different for those age 18 and under. In the 3-5 year old age group, 41 percent of consumers have autism and among those ages 6-10, the number is even higher at around 45 percent\*.

Beyond the numbers, however, is the fact that many of the important issues raised by Lisa and Robert in our meetings with them are echoed by RCOC's own research. Concerns they are expressing on behalf of parents of

children with autism, are also relevant to RCOC families with a child who has mental retardation, epilepsy or cerebral palsy.

The major family support initiatives that RCOC launched in 2006, and expanded dramatically this year, are benefitting all families. Our Center's commitment to family support and belief in the value and need for these programs is reflected in RCOC's funding allocation requests to the State of California which are significantly higher than in past years.

There are, however, a number of challenges RCOC is still working to overcome in our efforts to help families stay intact. For example, the first family counseling service provider vendored by RCOC was an individual identified by TACA. Since then we have met with two licensed providers who are prepared to begin group counseling. We also used this opportunity to brainstorm a variety of ways to keep families together. However, we continue to see a need for many more providers, and the developmental services system in California is not yet equipped to make such non-traditional supports widely available to at-risk families.

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***In the 3-5 year old age group, 41 percent of consumers have autism.***

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Thus, as we change the way we approach family support, we are breaking new ground. We are finding that some of the approaches we want to pursue may require RCOC to secure waivers to allow us to change the way we structure service

coordination for some families. Others involve RCOC obtaining approvals at the state level to purchase new kinds of services on behalf of families, and creating new policies, procedures and standards to govern those purchases.

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***We are grateful for the role that individuals such as Lisa Ackerman and Robert Blitz have played.***

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These major system changes take more time than we would like. Still, RCOC is convinced that family stability is in the best interest both of the child with disabilities and the taxpayers who fund services. The short-term cost of helping families stay together is more than offset by the long-term benefits of having children with developmental disabilities raised in healthy homes.

RCOC is dedicated to meeting these family needs. And we are grateful for the role that individuals such as Lisa Ackerman and Robert Blitz have played by sharing their creative ideas as well as insights drawn from their daily experiences with families. They are part of the leadership that is shaping the future of services and supports in Orange County.

\* Figures as of May 31, 2007

TACA ([www.tacanow.org](http://www.tacanow.org)), which is based in Orange County, was founded in 2000 as a means for families affected by autism to connect with one another and share information. It now involves more than 2,300 families in eight locations around California. Autism Speaks ([www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)) is a newer, international organization that funds research and public awareness about autism.



## Spotlight on Consumer: Kevin Guice



CBS 2 Meteorologist Henry DiCarlo (left) and RCOG CEO Bill Bowman (right) with Spotlight honoree Kevin Guice (center)

**A** young man of excellent character, Kevin Guice's leadership qualities, good citizenship and commitment to community service are also the traits of a person who has achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, which he has. Only about five percent of all Boy Scouts advance to that level, so that is an impressive accomplishment on its own. It is, however, just the beginning for Kevin, who has cerebral palsy.

Kevin is a ham radio enthusiast, and he combines his interest in radio with his interests in Scouting, volunteering, and helping others. For example, his channel is the place to tune-in on Saturday nights to learn what is happening in scouting. He is also a volunteer examiner for ham radio, and has classes in his home to help others learn how to get their ham radio licenses, as well as learn other important skills like First Aid and CPR.

As a volunteer for the Red Cross, Kevin mans his ham radio during emergencies such as the recent wildfires. Using his radio, he passes messages along for families who have no other way to get word to their loved ones, and he communicates with Red Cross headquarters to let them know when one of their shelters needs more food or supplies.

He also serves on the Children's Hospital of Orange County Youth Advisory Council, raising money to care for children being treated at the hospital. In addition, he has done many presentations with his service dog, Nina, educating people about the role and value of service dogs, as well as "service dog etiquette."

Kevin attributes much of the successes he has enjoyed to his loving family.

"I have a very supportive family," he said, noting that his parents, sisters and other family members all help

facilitate his activities and volunteer work. "My family has never treated me like I was disabled. They treated me like any other kid."

While Kevin is just 19 years old, the Spotlight Award is not the first honor he has received. At 17, he was a semi-finalist in the Volvo automobile company's "Volvo for life" awards program honoring everyday heroes around the nation.

While Kevin enjoyed everything about the Spotlight awards, he was especially delighted with the event's Master of Ceremonies, TV's Henry DiCarlo: "It was special for me that Henry DiCarlo was the M.C. because I've always been interested in weather and hope to study meteorology in college," he said.



Kevin Guice

Kevin believes that community involvement is a key to living a full and happy life. "Keep a positive attitude," he said. "Find something you enjoy doing, and find ways to get involved with those activities. Do everything you can do to be involved in the community."

## Spotlight on Family Member: Amanda and Victoria Baker

**T**hough twin sisters Amanda and Victoria Baker are just 18 years old, they have already contributed more to individuals with developmental disabilities than most people will in a lifetime.

The two began their service to individuals with developmental disabilities while still in elementary school, when they became peer tutors and therapist trainers when their younger brother was diagnosed with autism. While in middle school, they began attending I.E.P.s as peer advocates and worked to cultivate participation by special education students in the school's student government.

While in high school, the sisters spent their summers volunteering

at various camps for children with developmental disabilities. In their junior

year, they created a pilot program for AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) where typical high school students who aspire to attend college work with special education students – both inside and outside of class – to help mainstream them into the high school society.

The mother who nominated Amanda and Victoria (not their own mother) says that from third grade to graduation, they have been there for her son and for countless other children. Her admiration for them was expressed eloquently in her



Victoria Baker (left), Amanda Baker (center) and RCOB Board Chairman Jud Robert (right)

nomination: “The love and concern they have for their brother does not stop with him, but spreads to the youth and young adults with developmental disabilities that they come in contact with all over Orange County...I’ve watched these two grow from toothless defenders of their little brother at the bus stop, to graceful young women speaking persuasively and passionately alongside him at school board meetings and at educational conferences.”



Elizabeth Santos

**E**lizabeth Santos of Elizabeth Homes, the recipient of the Spotlight Award for Living Options Vendor, has been providing excellent care for people with developmental disabilities for more than 15 years.

## Spotlight on Living Options Vendor: Elizabeth Homes

The person who nominated Elizabeth Homes wrote that the organization is a stand-out in many ways, but perhaps most significantly in the area of staffing: “In an industry where high turnover is the norm, Elizabeth Santos has managed to hire and retain excellent staff, which provides continuity and stability for consumers.”

Now operating 41 facilities in Orange County, Elizabeth Homes is able to meet the needs of a broad range of adults with disabilities, including those with intense medical needs

and those with behavioral challenges. There are also homes able to successfully accommodate individuals transitioning out of the developmental center, as well as some that respond to families in crisis who need a placement for their loved one.

“She provides a continuum of care such that consumers can remain with her organization if their behaviors change, if their health declines, or they age out of their current facility,” noted the person who nominated her. “Consumers are treated with kindness and respect in her homes.”

## Spotlight on Volunteer: Gloria and Jose Luis Hernandez

As founders of the Spanish-language autism support group “Angeles,” Gloria and Jose Luis Hernandez have helped hundreds of Spanish-speaking families across Orange County cope with the challenges of raising a child with autism. For their tireless efforts over the years, the couple was honored with a Spotlight Award in the Volunteer category.

RCOC received several nominations for the couple. While the number of nominations received is not a factor in the judges’ selection process, each nominator was passionate about the couple’s dedication to serving others in the community.

“The organization [Angeles] gives us the knowledge and strategies to

be strong, and to have a voice for our kids,” wrote one parent in the nomination. “They have given us the tools we need to give our kids a better quality of life.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez are always there for parents who are concerned for the well-being of our children,” wrote another parent.

Gloria and Jose Luis began working to help other parents nine years ago after their own son, Edson, was diagnosed with autism.

Their caring and availability to parents seeking information or support, and their willingness to jump in and help families find solutions to what sometimes seem



Jose Luis Hernandez (left) with son Edson (center) and Bill Bowman (right)

like insurmountable challenges, have earned them tremendous respect and admiration. Parents also say they appreciate and benefit from the parent support and discussion meetings that Gloria and Jose Luis organize, as well as conferences with expert speakers in the field of autism.

Gloria was unable to attend the Spotlight event, but it was a special treat when Edson joined his father at the podium to accept the award.

## Spotlight on Frontline: K Loper-Leddy

K Loper-Leddy is an independence facilitator (a position sometimes called instructional assistant or instructional aide) whose faithfulness to students extends well beyond the classroom and the regular school year.

The parent who nominated her is grateful for K’s generosity, which she shows not just in the classroom but also by helping in the Best Buddies program, by driving her son to after-school activities such as Special Olympics, and by going with her son to activities with typical peers that she recruits. K even keeps in touch during the summer, encouraging one student to write creatively and developing

projects to prepare him for the next school year.

While K has worked at San Clemente High School for four years, she has been an independence facilitator for ten years. Her path to this line of work had its origins in her own school experiences. Though a bright child, K says she had a difficult time staying focused in school. Seeing that her own teachers lacked the time to do what was necessary to keep all of the children in a class engaged, K was drawn to hands-on teaching.

“I wanted to make other children’s education experience a successful



Spotlight honoree K Loper-Leddy (center) with student Paul Baker (left) and Jud Robert (right)

one,” she said, pointing to her internship experience with special education students as a deciding factor in her career decision. “You feel that you make such a difference.”

The parents and students K has worked with would definitely agree.





Dr. Margaret Anne Inman (left) and Bill Bowman (right)

**T**he Lifetime Achievement award honors someone whose contributions, over a long period of time, have been exceptional. Dr. Margaret Anne Inman, the 2007 honoree, is, indeed, exceptional. Some might even call her an Orange County legend for her work on behalf of people with speech and hearing impairments.

## Spotlight on Lifetime Achievement: Dr. Margaret Anne Inman

The legend began more than 40 years ago when Dr. Margaret Anne Inman, a speech pathologist, began a project to evaluate children referred through staff physicians in a small room at St. Joseph's Hospital – at that time, the hospital had a children's unit.

Dr. Inman soon recognized the need for more comprehensive services for a much greater number of children. Before long, with the backing of several caring and concerned citizens who provided funding, Providence Speech and Hearing Center was opened.

Over the years, the Center grew tremendously under Dr. Inman's leadership. The Center added a host

of new services, including services for adults. It also earned accreditation by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Since its inception, Providence Speech and Hearing Center has provided services to more than 500,000 individuals and now serves more than 12,000 people each year.

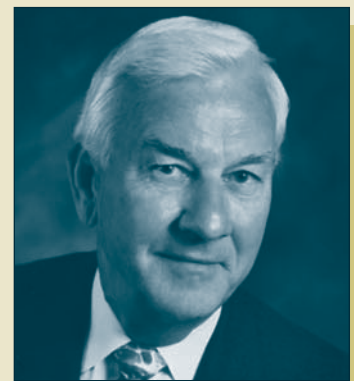
One thing that has never changed, however, is Dr. Inman's dedication to preserving human interaction and human relationships through communication. People throughout Southern California continue to be inspired by her commitment to helping anyone, regardless of age or financial situation, to reach their potential as better communicators.

## Spotlight on E. Kurt Yeager Servant Leadership Award: Stanley Pawlowski

**T**he E. Kurt Yeager Servant Leadership award is a special honor that recognizes the contributions of a person who has served in a volunteer leadership position in an organization that serves people with developmental disabilities. Stanley Pawlowski, this year's honoree, has a long history of service in the Orange County community. For the past 15 years, he has worked to ensure the availability of critical speech and hearing services for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

One of Orange County's most successful and respected banking

executives, Stan is a member of the Board of Directors for the Providence Speech and Hearing Center. In this role, he has worked closely with this year's Lifetime Achievement honoree, Dr. Margaret Anne Inman. Through prudent financial management practices and effective fundraising efforts, he has helped to secure the longevity of this important nonprofit speech and hearing center. He also led initiatives to attract and retain outstanding professional staff for Providence, and has followed up to make sure these professionals have the tools they need to provide excellent services.



Stanley Pawlowski

Recently, when the clinical staff identified a new technology for testing newborns for hearing loss, Stan quickly raised the funds needed to purchase the equipment. This one action will mean that hundreds of children a year will receive early and accurate diagnoses, helping to minimize additional delays caused by undiagnosed hearing loss.

## Spotlight on Employer: Logomark, Inc.

Honored with the Employer award for providing integrated job opportunities to people with developmental disabilities, Logomark employs six individuals with disabilities – all of whom have been able to improve their job skills and increase their self-confidence in a workplace where their contributions are valued.

Based in Tustin, Logomark is a promotional goods company that has been in business since 1992. It has 350 employees overall and first began hiring individuals with developmental disabilities in early 2006. The six consumers who currently work there do their jobs at the beginning of the company's production process, preparing items

such as pens to be engraved or decorated.

On Logomark's receiving the Spotlight Award, Production Director Errol De Charmoi Boucher commented: "It was an absolute honor. If you look at the previous recipients, you see they're household names." The Monday after receiving the award, the company celebrated by bringing in a special cake for all of the employees and presenting each of the six consumers with their own special award to commemorate the occasion.

When asked what advice she might give to other Orange County



Quinton Irving (left) and Errol De Charmoi Boucher (center) from Logomark with Bill Bowman (right)

employers, the company's human resources manager Margarita Arciniega said: "It's really a no-brainer. We're very fortunate that STEP-IABA [the supported employment service provider] takes the time to make sure the right person is in your organization. They love being here and we love having them here."

## Spotlight on Professional Achievement: Judy Ray

Judy Ray is a special education teacher whose impact goes well beyond the hundreds of students whose lives she has touched through her creative teaching skills and engaging instructional techniques. She also changes parents' lives for the better, working with them in a cooperative way to create the best individualized programs for their children.

The parent who nominated her says that Judy, who teaches a social skills elective class for students with autism or Asperger's Syndrome at San Clemente High School, also changed her thinking about the term

"social skills." In her nomination, the mother wrote: "I am becoming more aware of how hard it must be for him [my son] to make sense of what I take for granted, and to appreciate the gift that she not only gives to my son, but to others in Orange County with developmental disabilities."

One of the ways Judy does this is by encouraging parents to visit and participate in the class. As part of the annual parent meetings she organizes, students are asked to explain to their parents various concepts they learn in class, such as: the notion of expected and

unexpected behaviors; the idea of having a "flexible brain;" and the technique of "whole body" listening.

An indication of the benefits students gain from her class is the fact that more than half of those currently enrolled are repeating the course.

"As they progress, they pass their experience on to the other kids," Judy said.

Editor's Note: Judy Ray was unable to attend the Spotlight Awards event to accept the award in person, so we regret there is no photo to accompany this story.



## Spotlight on Support Services Vendor: E.C.E. 4 Autism

Irene Bellot, director and founder of E.C.E. 4 Autism, has turned her home into an inviting and comfortable haven for children with autism. A provider of early childhood education and behavior rehabilitation, as well as respite and day care services, Irene was honored with the Spotlight Award in the Support Services Vendor category. However, the support she provides goes well beyond these services.

She frequently meets with families, after hours in their homes, to discuss ways to deal with their issues. Each year, she even hosts a “summer camp” for children in her program.

In years past, she invited the children to stay at a cabin near Big Bear. This year, she rented a house on Balboa Island and the children got to enjoy a week of beach-going, swimming, barbecues, and even karaoke! The “camp” is a wonderful learning and growing experience for the children, as well as a respite or vacation opportunity for their parents.

Irene has worked with children who have autism for more than 40 years. She has been a special education teacher. She opened and ran a therapeutic preschool for the Long Beach Mental Health Department. And, before opening E.C.E. 4



Irene Bellot (left) and Bill Bowman (right)

Autism ten years ago, she did in-home therapy.

Her approach to supporting children with autism is marked by love, care and understanding. The parent who recommended Irene for the Spotlight award wrote in her nomination: “She has a very special gift that she so generously shares.”



Kathy Kirtz (left) with Jud Robert (right)

Barcelona Hills Elementary School, located in Mission Viejo, was honored with the Community Partnership award because it has done an outstanding job of creating linkages between its typical students and those with special needs. The school’s “collaborative” program, which started five years ago, provides the right amount of support

## Spotlight on Community Partnership: Barcelona Hills Elementary School

to ensure a seamless classroom in which both regular education students and special education students learn.

“Research shows that all children grow, in terms of academics, and benefit from a program like this,” said Principal Kathy Kirtz, who accepted the Spotlight Award on behalf of the school.

In addition to its model classrooms, Barcelona Hills Elementary has also expanded greatly the opportunities for children with disabilities to participate more fully in community life. For example, the school is involved with the Orange County Marathon – of the 26 or so runners who participated this past year, around ten were children

with special needs. In addition, the campus environment fosters an appreciation for individual differences and challenges with its “Take My Hand” school assembly – at these assemblies, students are given the opportunity to learn about disabilities from adults with disabilities.

Kathy Kirtz credits the passion and commitment of everyone on the team – teachers, instructional aides, students and parents – for the school’s success. “Without everyone working together, we would not be receiving this kind of recognition,” she said. “This is a huge honor and I’m so proud of them.”

## Spotlight on Healthcare Professional: Mark Klem

**T**he mother who nominated Mark Klem would probably call him a miracle worker for his accomplishments with her 12-year-old son. That is because Mark, a specialist in pediatric physical therapy, not only took on the challenge of helping the boy walk normally without leg braces – something others had declined to pursue – he also provided insights into the boy’s self-abusive behaviors, helping far above and beyond what the parent would normally expect of a physical therapist.

Mark has been in physical therapy for 15 years. For the last five years, he has been a solo practitioner,

working with 15-20 children at a time, at all levels of cognition and function. While some receive therapy at his Irvine facility, The Function Junction, Mark works with many youngsters in their homes or at school.

“Children are often more comfortable in their homes,” he said. “And the environment often provides clues to what is happening in their lives.” In addition to helping him address special challenges a child may face in the home, home-based therapy enables Mark to demonstrate how parents can sometimes employ or modify everyday items around the home to do therapy.



Bill Bowman (left) and Mark Klem (right)

“It’s rewarding and humbling to be acknowledged in this way,” Mark said, sharing his admiration for many others who had been nominated and who had received the honor previously. “The challenge now is to live up to that, and to take it to the next level.”



Loriessa Randle

**W**hen it comes to helping consumers achieve their dreams of living independently in the community, Loriessa Randle is both a role model and an inspiration to her co-workers.

“Consumers, families and vendors rave about her professionalism, integrity and compassion for the people we serve,” wrote the person

## Spotlight on RCOC Achievement: Loriessa Randle

who nominated Loriessa for the Spotlight award in the RCOC Achievement category.

Helping consumers access affordable housing is a major priority for RCOC. As Supported and Independent Living Resource Group Coordinator, Loriessa’s efforts embody that focus. She has worked to increase awareness among consumers and families about the option of supported and independent living and has assisted vendors in securing rate increases. Importantly, due to her work on RCOC’s innovative Rental Assistance Program, more than 30 consumers who are on federal waiting lists for housing assistance have been able to move into their own apartments and

fulfill their desire to live on their own in the community.

“I get an opportunity to sit down with consumers and families, and really listen to their needs and how we can help them live in the community,” Loriessa said, noting that her favorite part of the job is the time she spends in planning team meetings interacting with the people she is helping.

Prior to joining RCOC as service coordinator six years ago, Loriessa had been a social worker but had no experience working with people with developmental disabilities. Those who have had the opportunity to work with her would say that she has definitely found her niche!

### It's CalOptima Open Enrollment Time

**D**uring CalOptima's Open Enrollment period, you can change your health network for any reason. To change your health

network, call CalOptima at 1-888-587-8088 and ask for a Health Network Selection Form. Fill out the form and return it to CalOptima by December 14, 2007 and you will be enrolled in your new health network on January 1, 2008.



If you want to keep your current health network, you do not need to do anything.

### Special Sitters Program Meets Many Families' Babysitting Needs

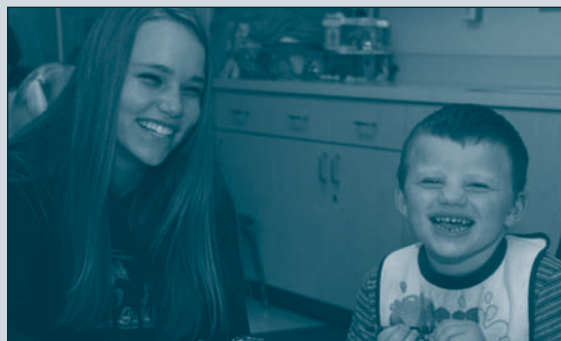
**U**CP of Orange County and Camp Fire USA of Orange County have collaborated on an innovative program called "Special Sitters" that helps parents locate babysitters with the understanding and sensitivity to look after children with developmental disabilities.

Becoming a Special Sitter is also an excellent opportunity for typically developing teens in RCOC families. These siblings can be excellent Special Sitters for other families because they already have experience with developmental disabilities.

Camp Fire recruits and trains the Special Sitters, while UCP puts families in touch with prospective sitters. The 12 hours of training covers CPR and First Aid, along with disability awareness, communication skills, responsive play and behavior management.

According to UCP's Kathleen McFarlin, families employ a Special

Sitter just as they would a teen in their neighborhood. They are not employees of UCP or Camp Fire and are not RCOC-vendored for respite.



*Photo courtesy of United Cerebral Palsy of Orange County.*

Families interested in hiring Special Sitters are first screened by UCP, since the Sitters are not equipped to work with children over age 12, or who have seizures, complex medical conditions, or injurious behaviors. Parents who pay a \$20 registration fee (which can be waived) are provided with a list of several Sitters in their area.

As with any other babysitter, it is up to parents to interview the prospective Sitters and negotiate their wages, availability, transportation and references.

Once a family is enrolled with Special Sitters, they may participate in Saturday Club, which is a type of "day camp" that takes place eight times a year, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at an Irvine preschool.

Suitable for children age 8 and younger, it includes both children with special needs and their nondisabled siblings. With Saturday Club, there is one Special Sitter assigned to each family. One adult from UCP and one adult from Camp Fire are on-site supervisors.

The cost is \$35 for first child and \$15 for each additional child, though grant funds are available for scholarships if families are unable to pay.

To hire a Special Sitter, contact UCP's Kathleen McFarlin at (714) 200-2613. If your teen is interested in becoming a Special Sitter, call Marilyn Bauer of Camp Fire at (714) 547-5200, ext. 41.



# RCOC Helps Mobilize Rapid Response During Fires

Quick action by RCOC staff, vendors, partner organizations and consumer volunteers were key to ensuring the safety, well-being and continuation of services for people with developmental disabilities who were displaced by the recent wildfires. Our community rallied to help both Orange County residents and evacuees from hard-hit San Diego.

At the request of Regional Center of San Diego, RCOC worked with Community Care Licensing (CCL)

to identify temporary housing at Orange County residential care facilities for up to 100 San Diego consumers who might need to evacuate. RCOC also obtained the necessary waivers from CCL and made tentative staffing arrangements.

Robert Blitz of Autism Speaks and Lisa Ackerman of TACA provided valuable assistance to evacuating San Diego families, including making arrangements for those with children who have autism to stay with families in Orange County.

Special Kudos to RCOC 2007 Consumer Spotlight honoree Kevin Guice and RCOC Board member Cheryl Day for their volunteer efforts for the Red Cross, greeting arriving families at the El Modena High School evacuation center and providing ham radio communications support. Also invaluable to fire fighters' efforts, keeping equipment and uniforms organized and ready, were consumers Kevin Yunker, Tim Johnson and Tom Christian, who, along with Jeanine Latchaw, are full-time employees of the Orange County Fire Authority.

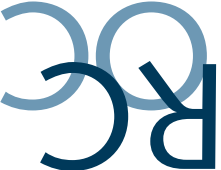
## Regional Center of Orange County Locations

Santa Ana Office	Orange Office	Irvine Office	Westminster Office
801 Civic Center Dr. West 24-hr Phone: (714) 796-5100	3111 N. Tustin, Suite 150 24-hr Phone: (714) 796-3700	46 Discovery, Suite 200 24-hr Phone: (714) 796-4060	13950 Milton Ave., Suite 200 24-hr Phone: (714) 796-2900

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