



# Dialogue

Volume 22 No. 2  
Spring 2008

## Consumer Spotlight

### Team OCFA

Many little boys and girls dream of working for the fire department when they grow up. Three Regional Center of Orange County consumers are actually living that dream.

Tom Christian, Tim Johnson and Kevin Yunker are full-time employees of the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA). Each plays a vital role in supporting the firefighters and other personnel who safeguard the OCFA's 22 member cities and the unincorporated areas of Orange County.

The three men work at OCFA headquarters in Irvine, with support from Tracy Haysom, their Goodwill of Orange County job coach. Tom, with 18 years on the job, has been with OCFA the longest. He is responsible for sorting both incoming and outgoing mail for all 63 of the fire stations, as well as twice daily mail pick-up and delivery throughout the headquarters facility. Kevin, who has been with OCFA for 16 years, works in the warehouse. He assists with recycling and is responsible for compiling and packaging orders for the supplies that keep the fire stations operating. Tim, who joined the team three years ago, does custodial work



(left to right) Consumers Tom Christian, Kevin Yunker and Tim Johnson and OCFA Chief Chip Prather are proud that the OCFA was honored with Irvine's 2005 Disability Friendly Business Award.

that keeps the headquarters spotless. He also helps set-up for special events at the facility.

In addition to their wages, the men have paid time off for illness and vacation, a retirement plan, and access to the fire authority's health plan. Like other OCFA employees, they also have access to the on-premise gym with its full range of exercise equipment. And, like most OFCA employees, Kevin, Tim and Tom wear official uniforms while on the job. They present a professional image in their black shoes, olive green trousers and khaki shirts. In addition to a patch above their breast pocket that shows their name, each proudly wears a patch depicting the

See **Team OCFA** page 10

## Save the Date for Spotlight

Be sure to mark your calendar, and save the date for this year's Spotlight Awards dinner dance. The gala event will take place **Friday, September 12** at the Hyatt Regency Irvine. It is also time to submit nominations, so if you know someone who deserves a Spotlight Award, be sure to get your nomination postmarked by the **July 25 nomination deadline**. A complete nomination package is included with this issue of *Dialogue*.

*Note for consumers: If you would like help filling out the nomination form, please contact your RCOC service coordinator.*

## 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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### 2008 Board Meetings

July 10 • September 4 • November 6

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

### Senate Bill 1175 Helps Address Community's Housing Needs

By Tresa Oliveri, Vice Chair, RCOC Board of Directors

Earlier this Spring, RCOC's Chief Executive Officer Bill Bowman and I participated in Grassroots Day for ARCA (Association of Regional Center Agencies). On that day, we and representatives from regional centers across California traveled to Sacramento to meet with state senators and members of the assembly.

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*Affordable housing is one of the most pressing needs now facing Californians with developmental disabilities.*

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One of our main goals for our meetings with Orange County's elected representatives was to share the positions that RCOC's Board of Directors has taken on various bills being considered during this legislative season.

One of the most important bills we discussed was SB 1175. This bill, authored by Senator Darrell Steinberg, has been endorsed by RCOC's Board of Directors because it helps to address affordable housing — one of the most pressing needs now facing Californians with developmental disabilities.

RCOC is proud to be a leader in helping the people we serve access effective, high quality services and supports. However, the lack of affordable housing in Orange County

presents significant challenges to our ability to help adults with developmental disabilities live as independently as possible. This situation will become more urgent as children now living at home with their families approach

adulthood, and wish to build their own lives in the community. We are also mindful of the many adult consumers who now reside with aging parents — many of them are also likely to turn to regional center in the future for help accessing quality, affordable housing.

There are two ways that SB 1175 helps ensure that there will continue to be safe, affordable housing options for adults. First, it adds residences for people with developmental disabilities to the list of housing project categories that can be financed by the California Health Facilities Financing Authority (CHFFA). Second, it makes provisions to allow all of California's 21 regional centers to submit housing proposals to the Department of Developmental Services in order to be considered for financing by the CHFFA.

We are pleased to report that both Republican and Democratic legislators have been supportive of SB 1175, and are hopeful that it will become law soon.



## May Revise Points to Need for Statewide System Reform

By Bill Bowman, Chief Executive Officer

If you have been reading the news about the state budget situation, you know that California's fiscal crisis has worsened in recent months. The budget shortfall that in January was estimated at \$14.5 billion is now estimated at more than \$17 billion. We have weathered difficult economic times in the past in California, but we have never seen a budget shortfall of this magnitude.

Acknowledging the bleak financial news, the updated budget proposal for fiscal 2008-09 that the Governor issued in May (the "May Revise") maintains the permanent rate freezes and other budget reduction measures that RCOC found so troubling when they were proposed this past January. These measures, unlike a simple cut to the amount of dollars for services and supports, represent major changes to the system that will undermine key Lanterman principles.

This is sobering news for people with developmental disabilities and their families, service providers, advocates and regional centers.



In addition, many in Sacramento believe that there are more budget cuts and more budget reduction measures to come. The Legislature – mindful that the public will not tolerate massive tax increases to bridge the budget gap – may very well implement further cuts. Developmental services, and other programs directly affecting people with developmental disabilities, are unlikely to be spared.

New cuts, on top of the rate freezes and other budget reduction measures, would rapidly erode regional centers' capacity to respond to consumer and family needs. In addition to it being morally unacceptable for critical needs to go unmet, we know that this approach represents a false economy.

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### *The Legislature may very well implement further cuts.*

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Challenges facing people with developmental disabilities and their families will worsen if they cannot receive the services they need when they need them. Whether that is because the state does not provide funding, or because inadequate funding causes resources in the community to dry up, the result is the same. Without timely intervention, a toddler with behavioral challenges becomes much more difficult to manage as he or she grows older and bigger. Without adequate respite and other supports when they are in crisis, families disintegrate from the pressures of raising a child with autism.

Critical services and supports cannot be put on-hold while the state's budget problems are resolved. Similarly,

regional centers, service providers, advocates and families cannot deny the very real need for significant reform. To be a viable safety net for people with developmental disabilities, now and in the future, the community care system needs to work better for all Californians with developmental disabilities, and more efficiently for the taxpayers who fund it.

Accomplishing meaningful statewide reform, without compromising the Lanterman Act, will not be easy. However, we cannot afford to be complacent. We must recognize the serious, long-term consequences of actions already taken by the Legislature to contain service costs.

RCOC is now leading an effort to bring our community together in a united coalition. The coalition will seek to renew the state's commitment to the Lanterman Promise, while building consensus around a series of common sense system reforms that will secure the future of community care in California. When consumers and families, service providers and advocates come together with the regional center to speak with one voice to legislators, our voice will be much more powerful in Sacramento than when we speak as individual interest groups.

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### *Critical services and supports cannot be put on-hold while the state's budget problems are resolved.*

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We look forward to keeping you posted, in this column, and on the RCOC Web site ([www.rcocdd.com](http://www.rcocdd.com)), about the coalition's progress.

## Consumer Advisory Team Update

### OCTA Bus Training Increases Consumer Independence

By Jay Connor, CAT Chairman

Being able to get to work and to go other places in the community is a big part of living independently. So, when Gracie Davis from the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) talked to the Consumer Advisory Team about OCTA's bus training program, I thought it would be good to share that information in my column.

The bus training program is called "ADA...The Bus Stops Here."

While many consumers use ACCESS buses for most of their transportation needs, some of



them could have greater mobility and independence if they could ride regular, fixed-route buses for some of their trips. The OCTA bus training program covers topics like trip planning and bus safety. These are the kinds of things that

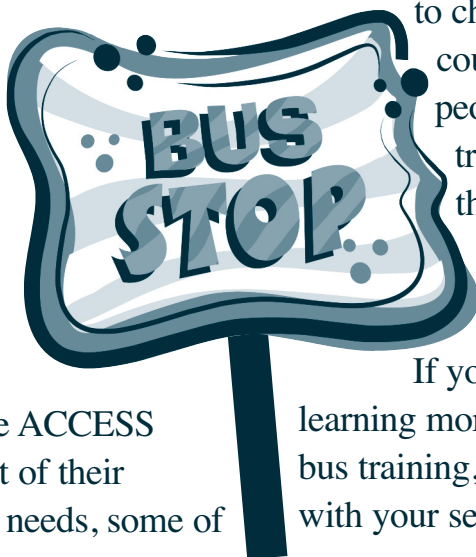
people need to know about to use the fixed-route bus system (sometimes called "the big bus").

Since the program started a few years ago,

hundreds of people have participated in OCTA's bus training. With the training, some people find they are able to use fixed-route buses for trips they take frequently, such as to and from programs or school. Others might only take trips that do not require them

to change buses. Of course, there are also people who attend training and decide that riding the fixed route bus is not for them.

If you are interested in learning more about OCTA's bus training, be sure to talk with your service coordinator.



### Upcoming CAT Meeting Dates

June 18

July 16

August 20

September 17

October 15

CAT meetings are from 10 a.m. to noon at RCOC's Santa Ana office, 801 Civic Center Drive West. Call Betty Bath at (714) 796-5316 ahead of time to let her know you will be there.

Your service coordinator will be able to help determine whether you are eligible for the training, and will put you in touch with the right people at OCTA.

**The Consumer Advisory Team (CAT) is a group of consumers that meets once a month. The group discusses issues that are important to RCOC consumers, like advocacy and independence. The CAT chairman advises the RCOC board of directors about the group's concerns.**

## Preventing Identity Theft, Part 2

### Keeping Safe on the Internet

In our last column, we shared some tips to help you prevent identity theft when you use a bank ATM. Now, we want to talk about keeping your identity safe when you use a computer to surf the Internet.

Do you remember what we mean by identity theft? Identity theft is when someone uses your personal information for illegal activities. Personal information can include your name, birth date, or social security number, as well as bank account numbers, passwords or PINs (personal identification numbers).

Whether you use the Internet for work, for school, or just for fun, here are some tips to help keep you safe:

**When visiting Web sites that ask you if you want them to “remember” you for the next time you visit, just say no!** This is absolutely necessary when using public computers.



**When using a public computer, such as in a library or internet café, avoid visiting Web sites that use your personal information.**

This would include credit card company sites, bank account sites, or any site where you might be purchasing something that would require you to enter personal information.

**Create usernames and email addresses that do not have your name or any other personal information in them.** Consider using different usernames on different Web sites. This makes sense because if someone is able to find out that you use “CatLuvr99” on one site, it would be easy to track you down on other

sites if you use the same username.

**Never enter your social security number at any Web site.** Avoid sites that ask for any of your personal information. There are very few real reasons for you to share your personal information on Web sites.

Always remember that while there are a lot of cool sites to visit on the Internet, you need to be as careful in those “places” as you are everywhere else.

*Until we talk again,  
The Safety Team!*

*Safety Stu, Stevie, Jessie,  
Beary Safe and Roy*

### West Area Office Moves

RCOC's West County office, previously located on Milton Avenue in Westminster, has moved. The new address is:

**5555 Garden Grove Blvd.  
Suite 100  
Westminster, CA 92683**

The office's phone number has not changed. The 24-hour telephone number is still **(714) 796-2900**.



## RCOC Families Enjoy Recreation Resource Fair & Adventure Day

More than 600 children, parents, friends, service providers and volunteers gathered at Oak Canyon Lake in Orange on March 15 for the 5th Annual Recreation Resource Fair & Adventure Day. Presented by RCOC, Comfort Connection Family Resource Center, and Pathways to Adventure, the event was a wonderful opportunity for children with developmental disabilities and their families to spend time together participating in a wide range of fun activities while learning about the many camping, fishing and general recreation opportunities in Orange County.

There were demonstrations on the basics of family camping, including how to set up a tent and the proper way to roll up a sleeping bag. Parents and children were also able to learn a lot about fishing. Experts shared tips on how to bait a hook, tie knots and cast the line, as well as good places for family fishing trips. Steve Miller of Pathways to Adventure stocked the fish pond, so everyone who wanted to was able to try to catch a fish!



Steven Silva (left) tries his luck at fishing with his dad Richard Silva (center) and friend Johnny Camarena.

**RCOC Families** (continued on page 7)



The Chick-fil-A Cow with some new friends, Paul Kim (left) and Isaac Kim (right).



It looks like pals Tyler Maynard (left) and Paul Tarlton (right) have caught a lake record as they pose with a giant pillow fish.

## Thanks to Our Sponsors

We want to thank the dozens of service providers and RCOC employees who volunteered their time, and express our appreciation to these companies and organizations whose contributions made the event a success!

Advertch	Lowrance
Balance Bar	Mimi's Café in Tustin
Chick-fil-A	Mustad
City of Santa Ana	Patriot Environmental Services
Flambeau Outdoors	Photography by Don
Fred Hall Associates	REI
James Event Productions	San Bernardino County
Jay's Catering	Recreation & Parks
Kelty	Wentzel
Kidz4kidz.net	

## Report Health Care Fraud

**H**ealth care fraud hurts all of us. You can help stop fraud by reporting it to CalOptima immediately.

If a person uses someone else's CalOptima ID card, that is health care fraud. There are a number of other things a health care provider might do that would also be fraud. For example, it is fraud when a CalOptima member gets a bill for services that are covered by CalOptima.



It is also fraud for a provider to:

- bill for services you did not get;
- bill for more services than were given;
- charge a higher co-pay or deductible than is allowed;
- bill for services without your written consent; or
- bill both CalOptima and another payer without the both payers' knowledge.

To report suspected fraud, call CalOptima's toll-free Fraud Hotline at 1-877-837-4416. You do not have to give your name.

### RCOC Families (continued from page 6)

A number of businesses and organizations from throughout the community joined with RCOC and Pathways to Adventure to support the event, which was free to RCOC consumers and families. Among this year's sponsors were REI, the City of Santa Ana and Chick-fil-A stores in the Tustin Marketplace, The District and Irvine's Woodbury, which provided food and beverages to attendees at no cost. See the shaded box for a list of all of those that made the event possible through their support.



Brandon (left) and Lucien Ives (right) enjoy a father-son moment at the camping exhibit.

## Microenterprises Expand Options for RCOG Consumers

The Matthew James Company, a document destruction company, opened for business in February with a logo, business cards, a brochure, and even a clever slogan: *We shred the competition.* Importantly, the company also had a solid business plan and a hard-working, motivated business owner who has good organizational skills and a passion for making his small business a success.

This new entrepreneur, 23-year-old Matthew James Morreale of Irvine, also happens to be an RCOG consumer who has autism. He is at the forefront of a new approach to employment for adults with developmental disabilities called “microenterprise.” Microenterprise development involves services and support from a “business coach” to help an adult consumer start and operate his or her own small business.

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***He is at the forefront of a new approach to employment for adults with developmental disabilities called “microenterprise.”***

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To help get his business up and running, Matthew worked with Goodwill of Orange County’s Cassandra Novak, business development manager for Goodwill’s

Future Business Owners Program. Cassandra assisted Matthew with each step. They worked together to write a business plan, do a feasibility study, create marketing materials, purchase the portable shredder needed for his business, and identify potential customers.



Matthew Morreale enjoys his shredding work.

Matthew’s business launch was part of a pilot program funded by a grant from the Department of Developmental Services to RCOG for work-related projects. Goodwill responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP) and was awarded start-up funding to develop a consumer owned and operated document destruction business. Easter Seals received a similar funding award from RCOG to create the tools necessary to support microenterprise development for other RCOG consumers.

Consumers who think they may want to start their own businesses will go through a three-step process – The 3 D’s. This may take several weeks or several months. It begins with Discovery. In this initial stage, the business coach gets to know the consumers, their circles of support, interests, and what motivates them.

Together, they can then generate business ideas and arrange visits to similar or related businesses. In addition to allowing a consumer to learn more about the nuts and bolts of a business, Cassandra said this process may reveal a piece of a larger business, or niche, that presents good opportunities for a consumer.

After Discovery comes the Development phase, during which the business coach helps a consumer prepare to open the business. It includes things like securing a business license and opening a checking account for the business, setting up record-keeping, and purchasing equipment or inventory.

Deployment, the last step in the program, is the first step for the business. That is when the consumer’s business actually opens and starts serving customers.

For Matthew’s business, Deployment was initiated with an open house at the Atria Woodbridge senior community, his first customer. The event was attended by Irvine Mayor Beth Krom.

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***Consumers who think they may want to start their own businesses will go through a three-step process – The 3 D’s.***

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Matthew has fun doing his shredding work and likes both the people he meets and the fact that he gets to choose what days and what times of the day he works. He is also excited

**Microenterprises Expand Options**  
*(continued on back page)*



## Behavior Management Workshops for Parents

**B**ehavior Management Workshops are being offered in the coming months by Regional Center of Orange County. These activities are offered at no cost to parents. To gain the most value from the workshops, parents are encouraged to attend all sessions in a series.

The five-session workshops (Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training) cover essential principles of positive behavior management, with a practical focus on helping parents of children with developmental disabilities change their own behavior and that of their children. The focus of the fifth session is toilet training. The seven-session “Social Skills Training” workshop is focused on helping parents nurture social skills among children. This particular session focuses on children 13-18 years old.

In all of the workshops, parents are actively involved, and invited to discuss the specific behavioral challenges they are confronting. Advance reservations are required and group size is typically limited to 40-45 families. Contact your service coordinator or Thelma Day at (714) 796-5223 for additional information regarding dates, times and locations, and to register.

*NOTE: Child care is not provided, so please do not bring children to the workshops.*

### Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

*Presented in English by Len Levin, Ph.D and Jessica Korneder, M.A., BCBA*

**When:** Tuesday evenings – July 8, July 15, July 22, July 29 and August 5

**Time:** 6:30 – 9 p.m.

**Location:** RCOC Irvine Office  
46 Discovery, Suite 200

### Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

*Presented in Spanish by Ana Lorenz, Ph.D*

**When:** Thursday evenings – July 10, July 17, July 24, July 31 and August 7

**Time:** 6:30 – 9 p.m.

**Location:** RCOC Westminster Office  
5555 Garden Grove Blvd., Suite 100

### Social Skills Training Workshop – Focus on Ages 13 through 18 years (7 sessions)

*Presented in English by the Behavioral Support Partnership*

**When:** Tuesday evenings– Sept. 9, Sept. 16, Sept. 23, Sept. 30, Oct. 7, Oct. 14 and Nov. 4

**Time:** 6:30 – 9 p.m.

**Location:** RCOC Orange Office  
3111 N. Tustin, Suite 150

### Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

*Presented in Vietnamese by Quynh T. Nguyen, M.A., BCBA*

**When:** Thursday evenings – Sept. 4, Sept. 11, Sept. 18, Sept. 25 and Oct. 2

**Time:** 6:30 – 9 p.m.

**Location:** RCOC Westminster Office  
5555 Garden Grove Blvd., Suite 100

### Behavior Management Workshop (4 sessions)

*Presented in Spanish by Jose Rios, M.S., BCBA*

**When:** Thursday evenings – Oct. 16, Oct. 23, Oct. 30 and Nov. 6

**Time:** 6:30 – 9 p.m.

**Location:** RCOC Santa Ana Office  
801 Civic Center Drive West

### Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

*Presented in English by Joyce Tu, Ed.D, BCBA*

**When:** Tuesday evenings – Oct. 14, Oct. 21, Oct. 28, Nov. 4 and Nov. 11

**Time:** 6:30 – 9 p.m.

**Location:** RCOC Irvine Office  
46 Discovery, Suite 200

*There will be no workshops offered during December.*

**Team OCFA**

*(continued from page 1)*

official OCFA seal on their left sleeve – the same seal worn by every firefighter and even the Fire Chief himself.



Tim Johnson

Each of the men also carries a walkie-talkie at all times. This way, they are able to keep in constant touch with Tracy even when they are in different parts of the large OCFA facility. They can easily call her if they have questions or need help, and she can call them to let them know about new tasks that need to be done.

The Orange County Fire Authority has received several awards for its long-time commitment to employing people with disabilities. The agency was among those honored at the 2007 Walter Knott Awards Luncheon – a major fundraising event for Goodwill that recognizes inspiring individuals and organizations. The City of Irvine also honored the agency with its 2005 Disability Friendly Business Award.

In his acceptance remarks at the Irvine City Council meeting, Fire Chief Chip Prather expressed appreciation for the work the consumers do, and recognized each of their individual contributions to the organization. He called special attention to the team members' good character, positive attitude, dedication and loyalty.

“Oftentimes, people say to me: Aren't they lucky to be working at the OCFA? That's not what we feel,” he said. “We feel it's our good fortune to have these people as members of our OCFA.”

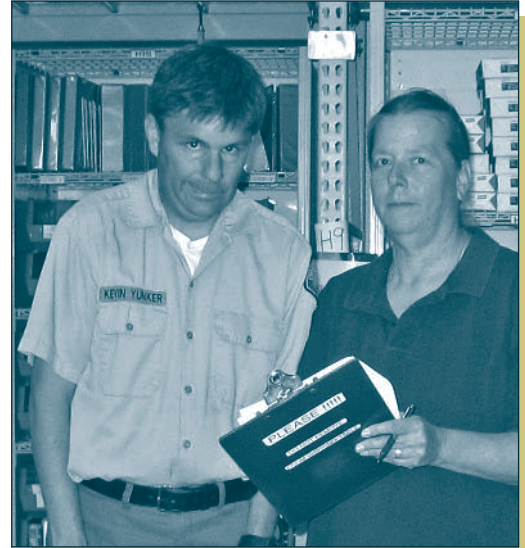
As much as the team members enjoy their jobs and like their co-workers, they also look forward to their time off. Each of them has a very full and independent life in the community.



Tom Christian

Kevin, who is 42 years old and lives in his own apartment in Orange, enjoys attending church on Tuesday

evenings. He goes to the First Presbyterian Church in Orange. He also likes going out with friends, and frequently participates in outings with RIO (Rehabilitation Institute of Southern California). He has attended Angels games with them, and has traveled to the Pechanga Resort & Casino where he likes to play the slot machines.



Kevin Yunker (left) and job coach Tracy Haysom

Tim, who is 25, lives in Irvine. He likes to travel and has plans to go to camp in June and spend a week in London this coming November. His previous travels have included trips to Las Vegas and Laughlin, Nevada as well as Cleveland, Ohio to visit family. He is also active in the Knights of Columbus, a volunteer Catholic service organization, and plays basketball and floor hockey in the Special Olympics.

Tom is 44 years old and lives on his own in Orange. He also enjoys traveling and has been to Jamaica. His favorite way to travel, though, is on a cruise. He has taken cruises to the Mexican Riviera a couple of



(left to right) Tom, Tim and Kevin love working for the OCFA.

times, and last year went on two cruises – one to the Caribbean and another, shorter trip to Ensenada, Mexico.

“I like to meet new people and make new friends,” he said, noting that he has kept in touch with many of the people he has met while cruising.



## Remembering Jeanine Latshaw

No story about the team of RCOC consumers working for the Orange County Fire Authority would be complete without mentioning Jeanine Latshaw. A 15-year employee of the OCFA, Jeanine recently passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. The team and her other co-workers at the OCFA miss her very much.

## Collaboration Helps Keep RCOC Family Going Places

While their son Mark (“Marky”) was a little boy, the 1988 van that Theresa and Mark Mott, Sr. own was ideal for getting him and his motorized wheelchair from place to place. But as the boy, who has cerebral palsy, grew to the height and weight of a young man, it was clear that something new was needed.

Wanting to keep the van – it was strong and safe and ran well — Theresa did research to see if it could be modified to meet Marky’s changing needs before discussing the situation with RCOC Service Coordinator Maribel Garcia. RCOC’s Purchase of Service guidelines would allow the agency to purchase a new wheelchair lift for Marky. What could not be covered by RCOC, however, were the van modifications, so Maribel worked to identify other funding resources to help the Motts.

“She really went the extra mile to figure out how to get this done,” said Theresa, explaining that Maribel helped them to apply for grants to pay for the Ability Center to raise the roof of the van to accommodate Marky’s adult

height in his chair. The Family Support Network accepted the grant request, which was funded by its partner, the Change a Life Foundation.

Theresa said the new equipment has made a world of difference in the family’s life. Before, the difficulty he had getting in and out of the van and the uncomfortable ride made Marky unenthusiastic about going out. Now, she said, he is always ready to go!



Marky Mott rides comfortably in his wheelchair since his family’s van was modified to accommodate a new wheelchair lift.

**Microenterprises Expand Options**

*(continued from page 8)*

about the prospects for his business to grow.

“Each time someone learns what I am doing, they go talk to their work or church and tell me they want me to help shred their papers,” he said.

Matthew also encourages other RCOE consumers to consider business ownership. “You shouldn’t be afraid,” he said. “You might really enjoy it.”

As their pilot project funding expires, both Goodwill and Easter Seals –

who have collaborated extensively during the past year – are now gearing up to offer these services to more adults with developmental disabilities in Orange County.

“We’re going to see a lot of successes,” said Easter Seals Director of Employment Services Lisa Murillo.

Both Lisa and Cassandra noted that business ownership can be the answer for people who have not been successful in traditional employment. However, both cautioned that it is not for everyone.

“It takes a lot of responsibility, and needs to be something a person really wants to do because it takes a lot of work,” said Lisa.

***“We’re going to see a lot of successes.”***

If you think that you or a family member might be a good candidate for small business ownership, be sure to speak with your service coordinator about microenterprise opportunities.

## 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	5555 Garden Grove Blvd., Suite 100 24-hr Phone: (714) 796-2900

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**Dialogue Newsletter**

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