



Dialogue

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Consumer Spotlight

Laveral Kirkendall

When they reach Laveral Kirkendall's age, a lot of people have already been retired for 20 years or more. But quitting work and slowing down is the last thing on the mind of this 90-year-old. Proud of her firm handshake, and very independent, she only recently started using a walker to get around.

"She doesn't need physical assistance, and she doesn't want it," said Hai Nguyen, the program instructor who works with Laveral at OCARC. He noted that when someone steps in to try to help her up or to help carry her bags, she always turns them down.

Slowing down is the last thing on the mind of this 90-year-old.

Laveral has been with OCARC in Anaheim since 1992, and still works five days a week in a Work Activity Program where she does a variety of assembly and packaging jobs. Hai said she is particularly good at labeling and packaging.

"Once she gets the information, she can retain it," he said. "She's one of our best workers."

More than 300 people with developmental disabilities attend OCARC programs, around 100 of whom are, like Laveral, in the Consumer Choice Day Activity Program (CC DAP). Some do paid work at the OCARC facility or in the community, while others do volunteer work in the community or take part in classroom learning activities.



Laveral Kirkendall

Though she can choose whatever type of activity she would like to do each day, OCARC's Program Director William Larson, who has known Laveral since 1993, said he has never known her to choose anything other than paid work. And while the program enables consumers to work at their own pace, Laveral is very competitive. She always wants to be the best and the fastest at anything she does.

"She loves paid work, and works really hard," Hai said.

Laveral's RCOC Service Coordinator Joanna Ochoa agrees: "She's very proud of earning her paycheck."

"She's one of our best workers."

In July, to mark Laveral's 90th birthday, OCARC organized a birthday celebration at the workshop. They brought in a big birthday cake with candles, and took lots of pictures. Laveral, who is Mormon, said that her favorite birthday present was a big Bible she received with a picture of Jesus on it. She said that one of her favorite things to do is to read about Jesus in her new Bible.

Born in 1918, during World War I, Laveral was raised on a farm in Idaho with her three sisters: Irene, Thelma and Shirley. The farm had horses, cows, pigs and chickens on it. The family even cultivated honeybees! Laveral's favorites, though, were the horses. Growing up, she liked to ride them and pet them.

Some of her family is still in Idaho, and she has travelled on an airplane by herself to visit them. Other relatives — including a sister, niece and her niece's children — now live in Utah. They come to Orange

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Dialogue

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2009 Board Meetings

April 2 • May 7 • June 4 • July 9
August 6 • September 3 • October 1
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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.

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Budget Update

Budget Plan Includes Major Cuts to Regional Center Services

In late February, California enacted a budget package to deal with the state's projected \$42 billion budget deficit. The budget agreement came just in time to prevent an interruption of services to consumers and families throughout the state. Until then, there was a very real concern that the lack of action to deal with the budget deficit might cause California to run out of money and be unable to maintain its payments to Regional Center of Orange County. That, in turn, threatened to cut off services to the people with developmental disabilities that we serve.

The Orange County community's active efforts to make their voices heard played a role in preventing that crisis. However, while the prospect of a cash-flow crisis is behind us, California's economic problems remain. The budget plan to deal with these problems includes significant spending cuts for developmental services for the current fiscal year that ends June 30, 2009. It also includes what will be even larger reductions for the 2009-10 fiscal year. These cuts are on top of the hundreds of millions

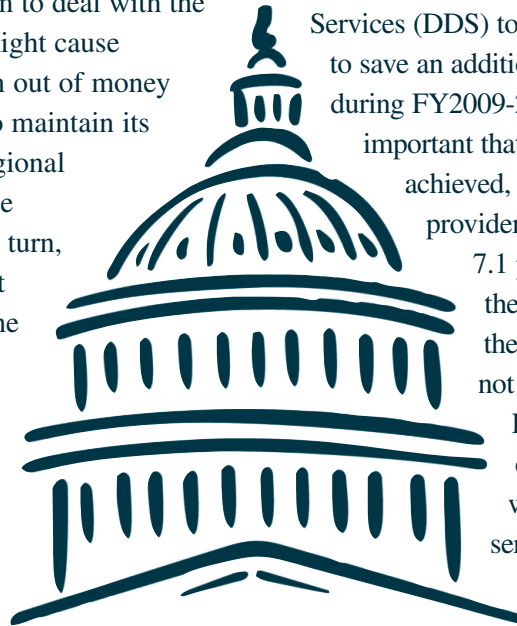
of dollars in permanent cost-containment measures for developmental services that were enacted in September 2008.

These reductions will be very challenging for service providers, many of whom are already struggling to deal with prolonged rate freezes and other reductions over the past several years. With the passage of the budget agreement, they received an immediate three percent cut. Regional Center Operations budgets also received a three percent cut.

In addition, the budget plan calls on the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to submit proposals to save an additional \$100 million during FY2009-2010. It is important that these savings are achieved, because service providers face an additional 7.1 percent cut (beyond the three percent) if the DDS proposals do not succeed.

Recognizing that cuts this large would cause some service providers to simply go out of business, RCOC and many others in the Orange County community and across California have submitted ideas to DDS for saving money, without compromising the Lanterman Promise.

It is expected that the DDS proposal will be shared in the coming months. When the details become available, RCOC will post them on the Web site, along with ongoing updates on budget matters, at www.rcocdd.com.



Executive Director's Report

Meeting Needs Remains RCOC's Priority During Tough Times

By Janis White, Interim Executive Director

Looking over this issue of *Dialogue*, you have probably noticed some changes. We have reduced the newsletter from 12 pages to eight, and we have cut back from two colors of ink to just one. You probably also noticed that we did not produce a Winter issue. We understand how important it is to maintain communications with families during difficult times and we are committed to keep those lines of communication open via the *Dialogue* and our Web site. The changes to the size and look of the publication are just a few of the more visible ways that RCOC is working to achieve cost savings.



We are being challenged to examine every line item in our budgets and look for more ways that we can save money.

After many months of inaction and uncertainty, the Governor and State Legislature finally came together and

agreed upon a budget plan to deal with the budget deficit projected at \$42 billion through the 2009-2010 fiscal year. However, as the Budget Update column on Page 2 describes, this budget deal presents very significant challenges to regional centers.

To put the challenge in perspective:

RCOC, alone, anticipates posting a \$42-50 million deficit by the time we finish the 2008-2009 fiscal year at the end of June. This deficit is the result of the growing number of people receiving services through RCOC, and increases in the costs of those services for them. Other regional centers are also

reporting large deficits, with the regional center system statewide expecting to need an estimated \$200 million more than it was budgeted to receive this year.

This change is just one of the more visible ways that RCOC is working to achieve cost savings.

In this environment, regional centers are being called on to review how we do business, focusing on needs that can be objectively identified and quantified. We are being challenged to examine every line item in our budgets – both Operations and Purchase of Service – and look for more ways that we can save money, with minimal impact on the individuals and families

we serve. I would like to invite members of our community to join this effort and come forward to share their cost-savings ideas.

Our guide, as always, should be the Lanterman Act.

Our guide, as always, should be the Lanterman Act. The Lanterman Act places great emphasis on self-determination and choice. It is equally clear in its mandate for good stewardship of taxpayer dollars, emphasizing meeting needs, not wants. As we work together to ensure that the Lanterman Promise endures during the most serious financial crisis in California's history, we hope that families will partner with us and think carefully about the services they are receiving. By carefully considering our spending, we can assure that every dollar goes as far as possible for all of our families.

It is certain that these challenging economic times will be with us for some time. However, I want to assure all of those who rely on RCOC for critical services and supports that our commitment to you is unwavering. No matter what happens at the state level, the people at Regional Center of Orange County will continue to remain focused on our Lanterman responsibility for meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.



Consumer Advisory Team Update

CAT Team Enjoys Holiday Cheer

By Jay Connor, CAT Chairman

While many of our CAT team meetings are focused on serious topics for people with developmental disabilities, we also think it is important sometimes just to get together for social time. That is exactly what we did at our meeting this past December. We celebrated the



holidays with a festive luncheon, which has become an annual tradition for our group. This year, the event again took place at the HomeTown Buffet.

Here are some pictures from the luncheon. As you can see, we have members of all ages and backgrounds, and we like to have fun!

Upcoming CAT Meeting Dates

April 15

May 20

June 17

July 15

CAT meetings are from 10 a.m. to noon at RCOC's Santa Ana office, 801 Civic Center Drive West. Call Linda Salazar at (714) 796-5263 ahead of time to let her know you will be there.

Top Photo: (Left to right) Randy Laya, Sylvia Delgado and Christopher Parker

Center Photo: Celeste Whipple (front), Bridget Muller and Robert Provencher

Bottom Photo: Todd Henderson

Meet RCOC's Consumer Advocate

Have you ever had a question about the regional center or a problem with a service provider, but were not certain who to talk to about it? Are you interested in learning more about self-determination or self-advocacy? If so, you might want to call Brian Story, RCOC's consumer advocate. Brian works at RCOC and his main job is to respond to inquiries from people with developmental disabilities, and provide information on whatever topics concern them. He loves to help people, so if you think Brian might be able to help you, give him a call at RCOC. His phone number is 714-796-5365.

Behavior Management Workshops for Parents

Behavior 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 (last) session in this workshop series is toilet training.

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 Joyce Tu, Ed.D, BCBA

When: Tuesday evenings – April 7, April 14, April 21, April 28 and May 5

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

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

Behavior Management Workshop (4 sessions)

Presented in Spanish by Ana Lorenz, Ph.D.

When: Thursday evenings – May 5, May 14, May 21 and May 28

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

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

Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

Presented in Vietnamese by Casandra Nguyen, M.S., BCBA

When: Tuesday evenings – May 12, May 19, May 26, June 2 and June 9

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 English by Michael Messina, Psy.D., Parent Training Consultant

When: Tuesday mornings – June 9, June 16, June 23, June 30 and July 7

Time: 9:30 a.m. – Noon

Location: RCOC Santa Ana Office
801 Civic Center Drive West

Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

Presented in English by Len Levin, Ph.D.

When: Tuesday evenings – July 7, July 14, July 21, July 28 and August 4

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 9, July 16, July 23, July 30 and August 6

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

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

Futures Planning Assures the Senior Years are Golden for RCOC Consumers

With advances in medicine and healthcare and vastly-improved services and supports, people with disabilities can expect to live longer and healthier than ever before. This wonderful news also poses special challenges, both for aging consumers and elderly parents. At this time of life, as in childhood and younger adulthood, RCOC is here to provide support and resources to help families make important decisions now that can relieve many of the worries they might have about the future.

People with disabilities can expect to live longer and healthier than ever before.

Larry Landauer, RCOC's Interim Chief Operating Officer, recommends that families begin futures planning – sometimes called “permanency planning” – when their adult children with disabilities enter their 40s, if not before. At that point, he said, the parents are probably entering their senior years and may soon begin to have their own health issues or other problems. If their adult child has always lived at home, or they have been responsible for much of their child's care, it becomes doubly

important to make plans about things like where they will live and how they will spend their days. It is also essential to identify someone in the family's circle of support who will step in to take responsibility when parents are ill or in need of help to provide their family member continued care.



Peter Chavez and Rosemary Espinoza attend Project Independence's Harmony program for seniors.

For some older adult consumers who have always lived with their now-elderly parents, there may be a need to explore other living options or to learn independent living skills like cooking, shopping and doing laundry. It will also be important for them to be able to dial 911 in an emergency, such as if a parent has a fall or becomes very ill.

“It is always going to be a traumatic experience [for the person with developmental disabilities] when a parent passes away,” said Larry, who estimated that at least two thousand of those RCOC serves are aged 45 or

older, 500 of whom live in their family homes with their parents. “Futures planning can help by reducing the unknowns.”

Service coordinators working with families who are planning for the future are able to consult with a variety of specialists on staff at

RCOC. These include specialists in adult and senior resources, such as work activity programs suitable for older consumers and day programs at senior centers, as well as low-income housing and group homes for seniors. There is also a benefits specialist who is an expert on Medicare and MediCal, and how government benefits change as a person with developmental disabilities ages. RCOC can also help families locate an easy-to-understand Advance Directive online — an Advance Directive is a written,

legal document that states a person's wishes about end-of-life medical care. RCOC's gerontology specialist recently conducted a training session for staff on aging issues and a new futures planning objective for the Individual Program Plan (IPP).

Futures planning can help by reducing the unknowns.

If you have questions about futures planning or services and supports for seniors and their elderly parents, contact your RCOC service coordinator.

Laveral Kirkendall
(continued from page 1)

County to visit her, oftentimes during the holiday season, and call her on the phone to stay in touch.



Hai Nguyen (left) and Laveral Kirkendall

Laveral carries photographs with her everywhere in her handbag, and likes to share them with visitors. Many are photos taken during her visits with family, as well as from her recent birthday celebration.

Laveral carries photographs with her everywhere.

Joanna, who has been Laveral's service coordinator for the past year, said that one of the things she likes best about her is her sense of humor.

"She's always happy when I see her," said Joanna. "It's nice how she's always smiling. She's always fun!"

Anyone who spends even a short time with Laveral quickly learns that she has a mischievous side, and likes to joke with people.

"You'll flip!" she often says, when making a joke about something funny or naughty that she might do.

A big fan of the police, she has a badge from the California Organization of Police & Sheriffs (COPS) that indicates she is a citizen member. She also often wears on her hat a badge that reads "Sheriff." The badge is the perfect accessory for someone who is such a stickler for making sure that rules are followed, both in the work place and out in the community.

William said he thinks that Laveral is typical of many seniors with developmental disabilities who do not want to retire and switch from work to leisure time activities during the day. While some may cut back on the number of hours they work, many continue to find a job enriching and stimulating well into their Golden Years.



Laveral (left) and William Larson

Laveral is typical of many seniors with developmental disabilities who do not want to retire.

"The label 'senior' can lead to underestimating people," he said. "As you can see from Laveral – she's 90, but she isn't defined by her age."

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Help Those in Need by Contributing to Brian's Fund

Many Orange County residents with developmental disabilities and their families are feeling the effects of the recession. Some parents have lost their jobs. Meanwhile, state-funded programs that many adults with disabilities rely upon have been cut back. All of this means that requests to *Brian's Fund* are outpacing contributions. You can help by making a donation today.

Supported entirely by private donors, *Brian's Fund* pays for emergency and

special needs for people in Orange County with developmental disabilities – needs that cannot be funded by RCOC or any other public source. As a result of contributions to *Brian's Fund*, many individuals and families served by RCOC have been helped through a financial crisis or had other critical needs met when there was no one else to whom they could turn.

Brian's Fund is named for Brian Flotho, a young man with a developmental disability who spent his 28-year life advocating for the

service, civil and legal rights of his peers. The Fund continues Brian's personal commitment to friends in need, paying for things such as emergency rent, food, clothing, special equipment or dental care.

Brian's Fund is administered by RCOC, a nonprofit organization, so your contributions are tax deductible.

If you can help, please make your check payable to "Brian's Fund" and mail it to: Brian's Fund, Regional Center of Orange County, P.O. Box 22010, Santa Ana, CA 92702-2010.

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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