

Consumer Spotlight

Rachel Rives

Where most people might just see chunks of cardboard, scraps of colored paper, or an old neck tie — Rachel Rives sees artistic possibilities. An RCOC consumer who has autism, Rachel has a gift for creating beautiful and sometimes thought-provoking art pieces out of everyday objects.



Rachel holds two of her art pieces, both of which are done on cardboard fabric bolts.

In her hands, cardboard fabric bolts that would otherwise be discarded by the fabric store become canvases for oil pastel artworks bursting with vibrant color. Scraps of fabric are fused with parchment paper and other materials to become quilt blocks that are individual works of art. Even a simple hat is personalized with embroidery that makes it uniquely hers.

One of her art pieces, which was on display at a clubhouse she attends, was so good that another member of the clubhouse purchased it!

Now 31 years old, Rachel discovered her artistic gift in junior high school, when she started using colored pencils.

“I experimented with color and loved the look of it so much I was always coloring,” she said.

Looking at the abundance of art that fills her new apartment at Integrity Cottages (see related story on page 7), it is clear that Rachel still loves color and that her art is one of the most important parts of her life.

Instead of clothing, Rachel’s dresser drawers are filled with art supplies, including fabric pieces of various sizes, colors and textures — all neatly organized, with everything in its place. A cabinet nearby is stacked full of fabric bolt canvases. There are many completed artworks signed “Rachel Rose” the name she uses on her art, along with some works-in-progress, and empty canvases waiting for her artistic touch. On her desk is a portable sewing machine. It is the machine she learned to sew on, and which she has used to create quilts with her mother.

Rachel has a gift for creating beautiful and sometimes thought-provoking art pieces out of everyday objects.

Having the studio apartment all to herself is a first for Rachel who, until she moved into Integrity Cottages in April, had lived with her parents in La Habra and then in group homes in Anaheim.

“It’s my own space,” she said. “I’ve never had that before. I’ve never lived on my own.”

While living on her own is new for Rachel, she is not alone. Her sister Sarah visits often and the two enjoy hanging out together in the apartment. In addition, she gets support from her

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Dialogue

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Dialogue can also be read online at RCOC's Web site: www.rcocdd.com.

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2010 Board Meetings

June 3 • September 2 • November 4

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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Orange County Autism Regional Task Force

At the request of State Senator Lou Correa, a member of the Senate's Select Committee on Autism (ASD) & Related Disorders, the Orange County community is contributing its creative and cost-effective ideas for services and supports for people with autism. Orange County's is one of twelve Autism Regional Task Forces throughout the state that are advising members of the Select Committee in four key areas: early identification and intervention; insurance coverage by private health plans; transitional training, education and employment; and issues related to housing for those with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The goal of the task forces and the Select Committee, itself, is to promote policies and legislation to better assist individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and their families.

Orange County's is one of twelve Autism Regional Task Forces throughout the state.

Including a broad cross-section of Orange County's medical, professional and advocacy community, the group had its first meeting on February 26. At that meeting, Senator Correa welcomed the members and shared his vision for the group. The task force members were then divided into work groups, each charged with producing recommendations in one

of the four key areas. The work groups have met often, developing recommendations and identifying successful models to be brought to the full task force for approval. Initial recommendations have already been submitted to the Senate Select Committee with a final submission by November of this year.

Chairing the 70-member task force is RCOC's Chief Operating Officer Janis White, who is enthusiastic about the opportunities to improve services and supports for individuals with autism across California.

Initial recommendations have already been submitted to the Senate Select Committee with a final submission by November.

"We have an impressive roster of task force members, who are pioneering innovative strategies to address the needs of the future for people with autism," she said. "As the Legislature is being forced by the economic crisis to examine every item of the state budget, this task force can inform their decisions about how best to allocate scarce tax dollars to meet critical needs."

For more information about the statewide effort, visit the Select Committee's Web site at www.senate.ca.gov/autism. The site provides detailed background information about the Select Committee, as well as specifics about each of the regional task forces and their activities.

Executive Director's Report

Living Options in Orange County Are as Diverse as Our Community

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

The transition from spring to summer also brings a significant transition in the lives of many young adults that RCOC serves. Like their age-typical peers, many youth with developmental disabilities view completing high school as a natural time to begin living more independently. For some, this means leaving the family home for a place of their own or with roommates. For others, it might involve a more gradual process of preparation, including learning more skills for independence.



The range of housing choices – or “living options” – available through RCOC is as diverse as the individuals we serve. No matter how severe an individual’s disability, or how significant their service needs or medical challenges, there is a place in the community where that person can live safely and with dignity. Our

experience at RCOC is that almost anything is possible. In fact, many young adults’ desire for independence is so motivating to them that they often exceed even their parents’ expectations for them!

Many young adults’ desire for independence is so motivating to them that they often exceed even their parents’ expectations.

Among the resources that RCOC service coordinators reference when talking with families exploring community life is a guidebook entitled “It’s All About Options.” The options book, as we call it, includes detailed information about the dozen or so different types of living arrangements that are available through RCOC. These range from non-licensed settings such as independent living or supported living in a typical apartment, on through to highly-structured, one-on-one, 24-hour care for those with the most intensive needs. Importantly, the guide also includes questions and suggestions to help the person with disabilities come up with a vision of how, where and with whom they would like to live, and to make good choices about what is best for them.

As we continue to build-out RCOC’s Web site in the coming months, we will be making resources like the options book available to everyone online. One of the great advantages of this approach is the ability to keep these resources up-to-date, as circumstances change and new types of living options – such as the Integrity Cottages, featured in our Consumer Spotlight story – become available.

When the time comes for your family member to make the transition to a home of their own, RCOC will be there to help.

One constant, of course, is the support of your RCOC service coordinator. Whether or not this summer brings completion of high school for your son or daughter, know that when the time comes for your family member to make the transition to a home of their own, RCOC will be there to help.

Where people with developmental disabilities live is a major focus of the Lanterman Act.

While this transition can bring some anxieties, especially for parents, it is important for families to know that they can depend on RCOC to help them through the process of identifying and accessing an appropriate place to live. In fact, where people with developmental disabilities live is a major focus of the Lanterman Act, and facilitating inclusion in the community is one of the most important services that RCOC provides.

Budget Update

Thanks to the dedication of everyone in our community, it appears that RCOC will end this fiscal year with a balanced budget! In contrast, for the previous two fiscal years, our center operated at significant deficits. Combined with the state’s budget crisis, those deficits put us at risk of shutting down due to a lack of funds. While the coming year will bring continued fiscal challenges, we have demonstrated that together we have the discipline to live within our means when we stay sharply focused on meeting our community’s needs.

Consumer Advisory Team Update

Join CAT and Make Your Voice Heard

By Jay Connor, CAT Chairman

One of the main goals the Consumer Advisory Team has had since I was elected chairman has been to add more members. I am pleased to report that we have achieved that goal. More people than ever are attending the monthly CAT meetings, and we are a very diverse group. The Team includes men and women of all abilities and ages, from young adults to senior citizens. It also includes people from different ethnic backgrounds.

I wanted to share this information so all of RCOC's consumers know that the Team welcomes them! There is no cost to attend, and we always have fun while we discuss and learn about topics like advocacy, independence, health and safety. However, just as important as what the Team members learn at the



meetings is what RCOC learns from us.

Our meetings provide an opportunity for consumers to share their concerns with RCOC and to ask questions.

In fact, RCOC's Executive Director Larry Landauer attends almost every CAT meeting, along with several other staff members.

He often provides reports to us on things like the state budget and how it might affect services for people with developmental disabilities. He also asks us for input. For example, at the April meeting Larry asked the Team to share their thoughts about Living Options, which is how the regional center talks about services and supports that are related to people's residential needs.

We take it very seriously when Larry asks for the Team's input, because we know that he really listens to us, and what we say makes a difference in how things are done at RCOC.

If you are interested in joining

Upcoming CAT Meeting Dates

May 19

June 16

July 21

August 18

CAT meetings are from 10 a.m. to noon at RCOC's Santa Ana office, 801 Civic Center Drive West. Call Nancy Mata at (714) 796-5206 ahead of time to let her know you will be there.

the Team, or just attending a meeting to see what it is all about, please see the shaded box on this page. For some consumers like me who have jobs, it can be difficult to get the time off to go to the meetings, but I hope you will try. It is a great way to get to know other people with disabilities, learn some useful information, and make your voice heard.

We hope to see you soon!

Behavior Management Workshops for Parents

Regional Center of Orange County offers these workshops at no cost to parents. To gain the most value from them, parents are encouraged to attend all sessions in a series. The Behavior Management workshop covers 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 Social Skills Training workshop is focused on helping parents nurture social skills among children.

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 April S. Worsdell, Ph.D., BCBA-D and Jessica Korneder, M.A., BCBA, Parent Education Administrator

When: Tuesday evenings – July 13, July 20, July 27, August 3 and August 10
(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus of the last session of this workshop)

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 29, August 5, August 12, August 19 and August 26
(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus of the last session of this workshop)

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 Vietnamese by Julia C. Nguyen-Kim, B.A. and Thang C. Do, M.A., BCBA

When: Thursday evenings – Sept. 16, Sept. 23, Sept. 30, Oct. 7 and Oct. 14
(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus of the last session of this workshop)

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

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

Social Skills Training Workshop – Focus on Ages 12 through 18 years (6 sessions)

Presented in English by Erin Davis, M.A., Parent Training Consultant

When: Tuesday evenings – Sept. 14, Sept. 21, Sept. 28, Oct. 5., Oct. 12 and Oct. 19

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Location: RCOC Orange Office
3111 North Tustin Street, Suite 150

Behavior Management Workshop with Toilet Training (5 sessions)

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

When: Thursday evenings – Sept. 30, Oct. 7, Oct. 14, Oct. 21 and Oct. 28
(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus of the last session of this workshop)

Time: 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Location: RCOC Irvine Office
46 Discovery, Suite 200



Recreation Resource Guide Now Available Online

Just in time for summer, the Recreation Resource Guide produced by RCOC’s Comfort Connection Family Resource Center is now available online at www.rcocdd.com! Select the Family Resources tab on the home page, then click on Comfort Connection – the guide is in pdf format and can be viewed online or downloaded to your computer. Although the programs included are not funded by regional centers, the guide is a useful resource for both adults with disabilities and parents researching programs for children. It covers recreation, social opportunities, the arts, and contacts for city parks and recreation programs in Orange County. It also provides information and contacts for several camps that serve individuals with special needs.

Here are a couple of camps for families to consider:

Camp Paivika

(www.abilityfirst.org/camppaivika) in the San Bernardino National Forest offers year-round camp programs for children, teens and adults with all types of disabilities. One of the first fully-accessible camps in the United States, Camp Paivika is operated by AbilityFirst. Programs include all of the traditional activities of camping: horseback riding, archery, swimming, cookouts and campfires, arts and crafts, and nature hike and activities,

as well as fine arts. Some financial aid is available.

YMCA of Orange County

(www.ymcaoc.org) offers both day camp and residential camp programs for children and adults with disabilities. Camp Horizons day camps, with locations in Laguna Niguel and Orange, has 5-day sessions running from June through

August. Low camper to counselor ratios (5:1) help participants to build healthy and long lasting relationships with peers in a safe and structured atmosphere of acceptance. Camp Oakes, a resident camp near Big Bear Lake, is a week-long program (July 17-24) in which children ages 8-17 can take part in the full range of traditional camp activities.

Event Shares Opportunities for Outdoor Fun with RCOC Families



Organized by RCOC’s Comfort Connection Family Resource Center and Pathways to Adventure, and made possible by the generous support of numerous corporate sponsors, the 7th Annual Recreation Resource Fair & Adventure Day on March 13 drew nearly 500 RCOC children and parents, service providers and volunteers to Oak Canyon Lake in Orange. A highlight of this fun event, where families learned about a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, was the fish pond where participants were able to try to catch a fish.

“It was so relaxing and the kids got to hang out and try to fish for a couple of hours – not something I would have thought to let them try yet on my own!” said Ngan Ngo, an RCOC parent (pictured above, fishing with son Braeden Tran) who attended the event with her three sons and her sister.

Rachel Rives (continued from page 1)

RCOC service coordinator Ashley Yap and receives independent living services to help her learn to manage her household. This includes things like money management and budgeting, housecleaning, shopping for groceries and meal preparation.

One very important skill for independence that Rachel has already mastered is getting where she needs to go using public transportation, which is convenient to access near her apartment.

“I’ve been taking the bus since age 15,” Rachel said. “I can’t get lost in north Orange County!”

In addition to getting her where she needs to go, riding the bus has helped Rachel connect with others



Rachel makes beautiful quilts and even personalizes her own clothing with artistic embroidery using her sewing machine.

in the community. Once Rachel was trying to catch a bus when she noticed an older gentleman who was unable to get on the bus. Other passengers were just passing him by. Rather than simply getting on with

her bus trip, Rachel stopped to help the man get on the bus.

Rachel may have had some challenges in her life but right now she is enjoying the rediscovery of her artistic talents in her very own apartment!

Integrity Cottages in Anaheim

Opened earlier this year, Integrity Cottages in Anaheim is a new living option for adults with developmental disabilities. Consisting of 48 ground level studio apartments with kitchenettes around a central parking area, the property includes laundry facilities, a recreation room with kitchen and an outdoor pavilion gathering space for residents.

Formerly a motel, the property was purchased by the non-profit organization Anaheim Supportive Housing, which worked with real estate developer Gary Frazier of Acacia Housing to renovate and manage it on an ongoing basis. The City of Anaheim is a key partner in the project, supplying federally-funded Section 8 vouchers to qualifying residents – all of whom are adults with developmental disabilities, and most are RCOC consumers.

While residential apartment settings that are exclusively for individuals with disabilities fell out of favor some years ago, recently some RCOC consumers and families have begun to request this option as a way to combine living and social opportunities.



Rachel Rives enjoys the outdoor seating area and colorful landscaping outside her Integrity Cottages apartment.

RCOC Consumer Honored by Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce

Eric Anderson, an RCOC consumer who has cerebral palsy, was recently honored by the Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce with the chamber's Ambassador of the Year Award. A member of the chamber, motivational speaker, and owner of A Second Look (www.a2ndlook.org) –



a business that conducts seminars and workshops for businesses, schools and other organizations on how to better communicate and relate comfortably to a person with a disability — Eric was given the

award for his work during 2009. He received the award because of his diligence and perseverance during tough business times, and for volunteering his time for chamber fund raising and at chamber events such as mixers, breakfasts, ribbon-cuttings and any other event where his help is needed. In honoring him, the chamber said that Eric's energy and unflagging enthusiasm motivates and inspires the entire group!

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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