



Dialogue

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Spotlight Award Honorees

On Friday, March 16 more than 500 people gathered at the Crowne Plaza Anaheim Resort for the 2012 Regional Center of Orange County Spotlight Awards dinner dance. Celebrating people and organizations that are role models and excel in their service to people with developmental disabilities in Orange County, the gala event was organized by the non-profit Integrity House which was awarded the contract to co-sponsor the event. The evening's festivities were underwritten entirely by ticket sales and corporate sponsorships.

“Everyone involved with RCOC can be proud of the Spotlight Award recipients.”

“Everyone involved with RCOC can be proud of the Spotlight Award recipients, as well as the many more people and organizations that were nominated,” said RCOC’s Board Chair Tresa Oliveri. “We are inspired by their efforts to make life better for people with developmental disabilities, and grateful for the work they do – it is vital to the regional center system of community care.”

Here are brief snapshots about the 11 honorees.



Spotlight honoree Jay Connor (front row - center) with brothers Ronnie (left) and Jeff (right)

Back row: Jay's brothers Andy and Dean, parents Chuck and Mary, brother Roger and sister-in-law Beth

Consumer Award: Jay Connor

The Consumer Award is given to an individual who has a developmental disability, and whose personal example and achievements inspire others and advance awareness about the gifts and talents of people with developmental disabilities. This year’s honoree, Jay Connor, is a familiar face to many in the Orange County community and especially to readers of *Dialogue*. A dedicated volunteer, Jay has been an active member of RCOC’s Board of Directors for many years, and currently serves as Vice Chair. He has also led the Consumer Advisory Team. Jay, who has cerebral palsy as well as intellectual and visual impairments, is employed by Goodwill of Orange County and is known for his strong leadership and advocacy on behalf of all people with disabilities. “Jay motivates so many people to go out and be better leaders,” wrote Sam Durbin, the consumer who nominated Jay for the award. “He encouraged all the consumers, showing them that they can do anything if they put their mind to it.”

Lifetime Achievement: Linda Smith

Linda Smith is Executive Director of the Family Support Network, which provides a broad range of services and resources that help children with special needs and those at-risk for disabilities, as well as parents and family members. She was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award for her more than two decades of service that has included, for example, the very popular Camp TLC (Teaching Loving Care). Through her advocacy,

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Linda Smith and son Michael Damos

Dialogue

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

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Fernando Peña
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Upcoming 2012 Board Meetings

No June meeting • July 12
August 2 • September 6 • October 4

The public is invited to attend RCOC board meetings. They begin at 6 p.m. and are held in the Regional Center Board Room at RCOC's headquarters in the Tustin Centre Tower complex, located at 1525 North Tustin Avenue in Santa Ana.

RCOC Administration

Larry Landauer, *Executive Director*
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Legislative Update

California Lawmakers Propose Person- Focused Language

There are two bills now making their way through the California Legislature that are being well-received by people in the developmental disabilities community. Both will provide formal recognition of the current terminology for describing certain developmental disabilities and, in the process, help to establish this more respectful language as the standard for everyday use. Orange County residents can be proud that one of them was authored by a member of our county's delegation.

The two bills are AB 2370 by Orange County Assemblyman Allan Mansoor, whose district includes Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, and Westminster, and SB 1381 by Senator Fran Pavley, whose district includes parts of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Both call for changing existing California statutes that reference "mental retardation" to instead use the term "intellectual disability" or "person with an intellectual disability," depending on the context. This includes, for example, laws relating to education, health, safety and social services, as well as probate, civil and criminal law.

Both bills have strong, bipartisan support and have passed unopposed in their respective houses of the Legislature. Since no legislators have voted against the bills and the bills

will not cost the state any money, it appears likely they will continue through the legislative process and be enacted into law. If that happens, it will be a victory for the many consumers and others who have advocated against "the R-word" for a number of years.

The term "mental retardation" was originally an objective clinical term, but in recent years it has taken on negative connotations. The preferred term for the condition — "intellectual disability" — replaced the old phrase some time ago among both individuals with developmental disabilities and professionals in the developmental services community because it is viewed as more respectful and person-focused.

*The term
"mental retardation"
was originally an objective
clinical term, but in
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negative connotations.*

It is important to note that nothing in either of the bills will affect services or supports for people with developmental disabilities. Both of these bills' authors have been careful to state that the legislation is aimed solely at changing terminology, not a person's right to services or eligibility for services and supports.

To learn more, go to www.leginfo.ca.gov and click on the "Bill Information" link. Enter the bill number — either AB 2370 or SB 1381 — and click "search" to go to a page with the status and history of the bill and a link to the text of the bill.

Executive Director's Report

“Dual Eligibles” Pilot Planned for Orange County

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

Of the nearly 17,000 consumers served by RCOC, almost 9,000 are adults with incomes low enough to make them eligible for Medi-Cal, which in Orange County is the responsibility of Cal-Optima, our county health system. Around 2,220 of these consumers, most of them seniors, also qualify for Medicare. These so-called “dual eligible” consumers are also served by Cal-Optima, through its OneCare program.

RCOC has for many years nurtured a strong and collaborative relationship with Cal-Optima.

Since health and medical well-being is an important part of every consumer's IPP (Individual Program Plan), RCOC has for many years nurtured a strong and collaborative relationship with Cal-Optima. Long ago, we anticipated the importance of regional centers marshaling multi-disciplinary teams to better meet the breadth of consumer and family needs. This led to the creation, for example, of the Special Needs Liaison, whereby a Cal-Optima staff member is stationed at RCOC's headquarters office to help consumers better access the medical care they

need. This is just one of many RCOC collaborations and reforms that have yielded better outcomes for consumers, as well as reduced costs for government-funded services.

“Dual Eligibles” Demonstration Project



In many parts of California, however, medical care and social services for low-income individuals with disabilities and seniors are more costly and not

well-coordinated. As part of the current year's budget plan, California has been planning for a four-county demonstration project (or pilot program) that aims to change that by shifting those who are “dual eligible” for Medi-Cal and Medicare from traditional fee-for-service plans into integrated, managed care type plans.

Orange, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Mateo counties were selected and there is a possibility that up to ten additional counties could be approved for the demonstration project. If the project receives all of the approvals required at the county, state and federal levels and moves forward according to the state's timeline, the plan will go into effect in January 2013.

IHSS Becomes Part of Managed Care

Since almost all of these “dual eligible” individuals in our area are already receiving managed healthcare through Cal-Optima, one might wonder why Orange County was among those selected. However, the demonstration

project also includes another major change – extending beyond healthcare — that will be new even to the Orange County system. It will test a new approach to providing certain social services, placing some of them – including IHSS (In-Home Supportive Services) — under the managed care umbrella.

While many details about how this will work are not yet finalized, it is important for RCOC consumers and families to understand that regional center services are explicitly excluded from the demonstration project. We want everyone we serve to know that they can be assured that their RCOC service coordinator will continue to be their partner and trusted advisor, and that the services and supports they receive through RCOC will continue to be governed by their IPP and our purchase-of-service (POS) guidelines.

Ensuring the Lanterman Promise Endures

In addition, we want our community to be assured that RCOC remains actively involved in representing and advocating for people with developmental disabilities. As this demonstration project and other efforts aimed at saving money proceed, we at RCOC recognize and embrace our responsibility to be a clear voice on behalf of those we serve.

We are committed to doing our part to ensure that the Lanterman Promise endures, as we collaborate with agencies and organizations at all levels of government to leverage RCOC's proven track record of stewardship — delivering quality services for consumers at an excellent value for taxpayers.

Consumer Advisory Team Update

Thank You for Thirteen Great Years

By Jay Connor, CAT Chairman

After serving for a total of thirteen years on RCOC's Board of Directors and as Chairman of the Consumer Advisory Team (CAT), I will be stepping down from these positions in June when my current term comes to an end. That means that this will be my last column in the *Dialogue*. The next CAT Update you read will be written by the new CAT Chairperson, who will be announced at the July board meeting and on the RCOC website, and who will begin chairing the group's meetings in July.

While I very much enjoy being involved with the regional center and serving our community, state law limits the amount of time any of us can serve on the Board to no more than seven years



at a time. I will miss the monthly meetings and the time spent with peers I respect a lot, but I think it is good that we have these kinds of rules – they encourage more consumers to make their voices heard and to get involved, and that is something I think is extremely important.

Looking back on my time as CAT Chairman, it is very gratifying to see how it has grown over the years. We regularly have as many as 60 to 70 consumers attend our meetings. There are both younger and older consumers, with all types of developmental disabilities. We have many differences, but we all come together to learn from each other and from our guest speakers about things like advocating for ourselves and becoming as independent as possible.

Along with the serious topics, though, we also have a lot of fun socializing together. I am very grateful to all of the consumers who have supported me and been

Upcoming CAT Meeting Dates

May 16
No Meeting in June
July 18
August 15
September 19

CAT meetings are from 10 a.m. to noon at RCOC's Santa Ana office, located at 1525 North Tustin Avenue. Call Nancy Mata at (714) 796-5217 ahead of time to let her know you will be there.

so loyal to me. I treasure the friendships I have made and want to thank everybody for all of their help.

I also want to encourage all of the CAT members to keep up their good work. Keep attending the meetings and keep speaking up and sharing your opinions. I am confident that the new CAT Chairperson will be an excellent leader for the group, but I also believe that no matter which of us is in charge, all consumers can and should speak up for themselves.

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 (5 sessions)

*Presented in Spanish by Ana Lorenz, Ph.D.
(Lorenz & Associates)*

When: Thursday evenings – May 17, May 24,
May 31, June 7 and June 14

*(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus
of the last session of this workshop)*

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Westminster Office
5555 Garden Grove Boulevard, Suite 100

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

Presented in English by Melissa Sweitzer, Ph.D., Inc.

When: Tuesday mornings – July 10, July 17,
July 24, July 31 and Aug. 7

*(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus
of the last session of this workshop)*

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Location: RCOC Santa Ana Office
1525 N. Tustin Ave.
Parking is located in the structure
across from the RCOC office building

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

*Presented in English by Tiffany Bauer, Dr. April
Worsdell and Dr. Len Levin (Coyné & Associates)*

When: Thursday evenings – Aug. 9, Aug. 16,
Aug. 23, Aug. 30 and Sept. 6

*(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus
of the last session of this workshop)*

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Santa Ana Office
1525 N. Tustin Avenue
Parking is located in the structure
across from the RCOC office building

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

*Presented in Spanish by Ana Lorenz, Ph.D.
(Lorenz & Associates)*

When: Tuesday evenings – Aug. 14, Aug. 21,
Aug. 28, Sept. 4 and Sept. 11

*(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus
of the last session of this workshop)*

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

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

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

*Presented in English by Erin Davis, M.A., Parent
Training Consultant (Melissa Sweitzer, Ph.D., Inc.)*

When: Tuesday evenings – Sept. 11, Sept. 18,
Sept. 25, Oct. 2, Oct. 9 and Oct. 16

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Santa Ana Office
1525 N. Tustin Ave.
Parking is located in the structure
across from the RCOC office building

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

*Presented in Vietnamese by Mr. Thang C. Do, M.A.,
BCBA and Julia C. Nguyen-Kim, B.A. (Footprints)*

When: Thursday evenings – Sept. 20, Sept. 27,
Oct. 4, Oct. 11 and Oct. 18.

*(NOTE: Toilet training is the focus
of the last session of this workshop)*

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Westminster Office
5555 Garden Grove Boulevard, Suite 100

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued from page 1)

outreach and grant writing, countless low-income parents have received needed items for their children with special needs and untold numbers of at-risk children have been helped by developmental screenings she has organized. A recipient of numerous awards for her work in the community, Linda has also been a foster parent for 29 children with disabilities.

**Professional Achievement:
Dr. Michael Muhonen**

A pediatric neurosurgeon, Dr. Michael Muhonen is Director of Neurosurgery and the Medical Director of the CHOC Neuroscience Institute. He received the Professional Achievement Spotlight Award for the exceptional care, compassion and understanding he offers the children with developmental disabilities he treats. Among his many accomplishments, he led the CHOC research effort on the baclofen pump which has benefited many consumers with cerebral palsy. The people who nominated him also lauded his bedside manner and his generosity. "He spends as much time as needed to help families understand their child's condition and how it can be treated," they wrote.



Dr. Michael Muhonen

Support Services Vendor: Creative Identity

Creative Identity is a music therapy and vocational arts day program for adults. Founded in 1996 by George Gilliam, a professional jazz guitarist and recording artist, the program is known both for meeting the needs of individual consumers and for enhancing appreciation for the artistic and creative abilities of people with developmental disabilities. The musically-



George Gilliam

gifted consumers served by Creative Identity perform concerts in the community, while others create original artworks that are exhibited, with the artists earning a commission on the sale of their artwork.

**Parent or Family Member:
Rebecca Baker**

An 18-year-old college freshman working toward a degree in psychology, Rebecca Baker is also the sister of a young man who has autism. She was honored for her efforts, started while she was still in elementary school, to help her older brother



Tresa Oliveri, Rebecca Baker and Paul Baker

Paul and many other young people with disabilities learn appropriate play and social skills. This has included volunteering at summer camps for children with developmental disabilities. Through her leadership of her school's Best Buddies program and other activities, Rebecca has also worked to include young people with disabilities in school events and community activities.

**Community Partnership:
Sheryl Beasley**

Sheryl Beasley, an attorney with the Orange County Public Defender and head of its Mental Health Unit, was honored both for her work safeguarding the rights of individuals with disabilities who become involved in the legal system, and for her efforts on behalf of those in conservatorship hearings. In those hearings, she works to ensure that consumers are well-represented and that their rights and interests are respected. The person who nominated Sheryl for the award also noted that she is a rich resource for newer attorneys who have not represented clients with a developmental disability.



Sheryl Beasley

Frontline: Christian Generakos

The Frontline Spotlight Award honors an individual who provides direct service to people with developmental disabilities. Christian Generakos, who received the award this year, works in the area of supported living. He was singled-out for his exceptional devotion and commitment to meeting the critical needs of those he serves, helping them to live more independently in their own homes and advocating on their behalf.



Christian Generakos

developmental disabilities for the past five years, and added a third consumer to their staff in 2010. The company encourages its workers with disabilities to interact with customers and holds them accountable for doing a good job, just like other employees.

Living Options Vendor: Modern Support Services

Modern Support Services was recognized for excellence in providing residential support to individuals with developmental disabilities. Known for helping people that other vendors have difficulty serving, Modern Support Services has helped several RCOC consumers transform their lives and overcome significant challenges. "More than any vendor I have ever encountered, Modern Support Services assists people with maximizing independence and enhancing personal dignity," wrote the person who nominated the company.



Jack Darakjian of Modern Support Services

Volunteer: Victoria Hersey

Victoria Hersey was honored for her dedication to helping parents of children with special needs. Herself the mother of an adult daughter with developmental disabilities, Victoria has been an extraordinary resource to others, sharing her personal experience and insights as a supported living parent vendor. In addition, she has served on a variety of volunteer committees for RCOC, and is active in helping other parents connect with their peers and other supported living advocates.



(front) Victoria Hersey and her daughter Melissa; (rear) Larry Landauer

RCOC Achievement: Suzanne Butler

Suzanne Butler, an RCOC Insurance and Benefits Specialist, was recognized for her exceptional efforts to help co-workers, vendors, and the families served by RCOC to understand the rules and requirements for programs such as Medi-Cal, Social Security and In-Home Supportive Services. These government-funded programs are vital for many people with developmental disabilities, and there have been many changes to them in recent years. Suzanne's expertise and willingness to help has ensured that many in the community receive needed services.



Suzanne Butler

Employer: Hi-Time Wine Cellars

Hi-Time Wine Cellars, a family-owned retailer of fine wine and spirits in Costa Mesa, was honored with the Employer award for providing integrated job opportunities to workers with disabilities. Hi-Time has employed two individuals with



Raymond Reymundo works at Hi-Time Wine Cellars

Save the Date for Summer Blast: *Saturday, July 28*

The past two years' Summer Blast events were such hits with consumers and families, we're doing it again! Details are still being finalized, but be sure to mark your calendar and make plans to attend this year's event. It will take place on **Sat., July 28 from 2-7 p.m.** at KiwanisLand in Garden Grove.

As with the past years' Summer Blast events, RCOC has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a vendor to organize what promises to be a fun day, full of games, entertainment and dancing, food and good times with friends and family!

Also, as in previous years, event costs will be covered entirely by ticket sales and outside sponsors. Taxpayer

funds will not be used. However, ticket prices are expected to be low enough to allow virtually all RCOC consumers and families to join in the fun.

More details about Summer Blast, including ticket information, will be posted on RCOC's website (www.rcocdd.com) after May 25. Those who do not have Internet access can contact their RCOC service coordinator for more information.

See you there!



Regional Center of Orange County Locations

Santa Ana Office

1525 N. Tustin Avenue
24-hr Phone: (714) 796-5100

Orange Office

3111 N. Tustin, Suite 150
24-hr Phone: (714) 796-3700

Westminster Office

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

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