

## Consumer Spotlight

### Paul Florreich

Paul Florreich and his father, Ed, have the kind of relationship many parents hope for as they raise their children and see them grow to adulthood, eventually moving out to live on their own. When Paul – an RCOC consumer who has Down syndrome – was a boy, his family lived in La Cañada, where he attended special education classes and participated in Special Olympics, winning gold medals in the softball throw and swimming.

---

---

#### *Paul has fond memories of annual family camping trips to Yosemite.*

---

---

Paul has fond memories of annual family camping trips to Yosemite's beautiful Tuolumne Meadows. One time they took an RV road trip to visit an aunt in Idaho, where they camped and had fun fishing. Paul also likes to talk about the time Ed, who worked for a division of McDonnell Douglas for many years, had a business meeting in St. Louis and took him along. He got to go up in the famous St. Louis Arch to enjoy the view.

Now that Paul is in his mid-50s, father and son have slowed down.



Paul Florreich (right) with his dad Ed Florreich (left).

But the very strong bonds the men formed over the years – when Paul was “Little Wolf” and Ed was “Big Wolf” in their YMCA Indian Guide program (now called Y-Adventure Guides) – have endured. Now living in Playa del Rey, Ed drives to Paul’s apartment in Anaheim every weekend and takes him to lunch.

---

---

#### *Ed drives to Paul’s apartment in Anaheim every weekend and takes him to lunch.*

---

---

Ed is the only member of Paul’s family who lives nearby. However, he is not the only person who cares for him. In addition to Sean Carroll, who has been Paul’s RCOC service

coordinator for the past eight years, Paul receives Supported Living Services (SLS) from Project Independence. During the week, he also receives physical therapy and occupational therapy from RIO (The Rehabilitation Institute of Southern California) through CalOptima’s OneCare managed health care plan for people who qualify for both Medicare and Medi-Cal (sometimes referred to as “dual eligible”).

The support of this multi-disciplinary team gives Ed peace of mind. Some time ago, he recognized that he was not able to do as much for Paul as he would like, and shared his concerns with RCOC. “I worried about who would take care of Paul if something happened to me,” he said. Soon after,

See **Paul Florreich** on page 7

## 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).

Copyright © 2012

### Board of Directors

Tresa Oliveri, *Chairperson*  
Clifford Amsden, *Vice Chairman*  
Sylvia Delgado, *Secretary*  
Robert Costello, *Treasurer*  
Mark Antenucci  
Meena Chockalingam  
Joseph DeCarlo  
Luke Franck  
Christopher Jenkins  
Peter Kuo  
Kathy McCrystal  
Thomasina Parker  
Martha Patarroyo  
Fernando Peña  
Palak Shah  
Hilda Sramek

### Upcoming 2012 -2013 Board Meetings

September 6 • October 4 • November 1  
January 3 • February 7

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*  
Janis White, *Chief Operating Officer*  
Bette Baber, *Chief Financial Officer*  
LeeAnn Christian, *Director,  
Organizational Effectiveness*  
Peter Himber, M.D., *Chief Medical Officer*  
Pat Glancy, *Intake Manager*  
Rosalinda Lopez, *Central Area Manager*  
Keli Radford, *West Area Manager*  
Patrick Ruppe, *North Area Manager*

## Board Update

### Two Consumers Elected to RCOC's Board

At the July meeting, Regional Center of Orange County's (RCOC) Board of Directors elected Peter Kuo and Palak Shah to serve as members of the organization's board of directors for one-year terms through June 2013. Both have developmental disabilities and receive services from the Regional Center.

"The addition of Palak and Peter to our Board supports our responsibility to have a board that is diverse and reflects a variety of perspectives and experiences," said RCOC Board Chair Tresa Oliveri. "We are particularly enthusiastic about the help and insights they will bring to the Board's efforts to expand opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to obtain paid employment."



Peter Kuo

was born in Vietnam and came to the United States as a child in 1980. Peter, who has cerebral palsy, is a resident of Irvine. At Northrop Grumman, he has been active with

Peter Kuo, who has worked as an engineer/scientist for Northrop Grumman for the past 15 years,

the company's disability awareness committee, providing input for training other employees to work effectively with co-workers who have disabilities. Peter's goals for his time on the board include helping consumers to get more help with housing as well as employment.



Palak Shah

his family from India, where he did not receive help of any kind for his disabilities. It is Palak's gratitude for the services he has received here that inspired him to serve on the Board and give back to the community. A resident of Placentia, Palak has been an RCOC consumer since 2000. He has always enjoyed helping others with disabilities. While in junior high, he helped out in the special education class, and provided assistance to visually impaired students when he attended Fullerton Community College.

RCOC's board of directors is composed entirely of volunteers. At the same meeting that Palak and Peter were elected to the Board, Cheryl Day – a long-time Board member whose term ends in August – was honored for her service. Sylvia Delgado, another consumer board member, was also elected Board Secretary.

Palak Shah, whose disabilities include spina bifida, came to the United States with

## Executive Director's Report

# RCOC Pioneered National Core Indicators to Improve Quality

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

**H**ow do we know if RCOC is fulfilling its mission? How do we know where we need to improve? At RCOC, some of the answers to those questions are found in the data we get from the National Core Indicators (NCI) project. On a regular basis, a representative sample of individuals and families we serve are asked to complete NCI surveys. The results provide us with an objective measure of how we are doing in key areas, including rights, service planning, community inclusion, choice, and health and safety. They also provide RCOC with information about how our performance compares to other developmental disabilities service systems.

---

---

***RCOC is proud to have pioneered the use of NCI data in California.***

---

---

RCOC is proud to have pioneered the use of NCI data in California when we joined the project in 2000. The objective data NCI surveys provide has been invaluable in helping guide us as we work to meet evolving consumer and family needs. For example, when surveys showed that a large majority of consumers wanted a paid job, RCOC's

Board of Directors revised the guiding principle on work to reflect a preference for paid employment. And, in response to their change, the regional center launched a series of employment initiatives aimed at facilitating that option for consumers and measuring how many of the adults



we serve are engaged in paid work.

While our employment-related initiatives provide a dramatic example, we

also use NCI data in many simple, straightforward situations. When families reported that service coordinators were not providing them with adequate information about their child's developmental trajectory, we acted by providing training to service coordinators in this area.

## California Joins NCI

Since RCOC's experience with NCI has been so valuable in identifying and addressing consumer and family needs, we were delighted when the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) established California's membership with NCI in 2009. The state's participation with NCI ensures a single, nationally validated means to evaluate the quality and performance of all 21 regional centers over time. To read more about California's statewide participation in NCI, click on the Quality Assessment link on the DDS website ([www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)).

We are looking forward to DDS releasing the first California statewide

report of Consumer Survey results, so we can see how we compare to other regional centers and to the state overall. It always helps to look at our own results in the context of the broader service system. However, RCOC has always believed that NCI's greatest value is for purposes of self-improvement. That is because each state – and each regional center — faces different circumstances and challenges, which can make direct comparisons difficult.

## Sharing NCI Results in the Community

Like other regional centers, RCOC received preliminary NCI Consumer Survey results from DDS in January 2012. While our staff have been reviewing and analyzing the results, this year RCOC and its Board of Directors have gone a step further. At their July meeting, the Board approved the creation of an Ad Hoc NCI Advisory Council. The Council, which will include members that provide a range of perspectives and experience, will collaborate with the Board's Policies and Outcomes Committee. The group will help us to analyze the Consumer Survey results and, based on those results, will make recommendations for how to improve RCOC.

Another way that we are working to enable consumers and families to learn about and provide input on the surveys is by devoting a portion of our August 15 Performance Contract Public Meeting to talking about NCI. And, as always, we will be posting the results and analysis on our website so please check the site regularly for the latest information.



## Consumer Advisory Team Update

### Meet the New RCOC CAT Chair

By Sylvia Delgado, CAT Chair

I am honored that RCOC's Board of Directors has chosen me to be the new chair of the Consumer Advisory Team (CAT). The last CAT Chair, Jay Connor, did a great job and I hope I will be as good a leader as he was.

In future columns, I will talk more about our group's activities, but I thought I should begin by sharing a little bit about myself and my goals for CAT.

I have been involved with RCOC for a long time. I started attending CAT meetings more than ten years ago, and have been a member of RCOC's Board of Directors – where I hold the position of Board Secretary – since 2008. I like volunteering, helping teens with disabilities and teaching Sunday school at my church. I also work and go to college.



I am a teacher's aide for the RIO (Rehabilitation Institute of Southern California) Early Learning Center and I am taking classes at Santa Ana College so I can become a substitute teacher for the Center.

One of the things I want to accomplish with the CAT group this year is to have more meetings

spotlighting people with developmental disabilities who have accomplished big things. Those of us who receive services through RCOC are blessed to have that help, but we don't necessarily rely on those services every day and I think we can learn a lot from role models. They can talk about their experiences and share tips that have helped make them successful.

I also think it would be great for the group to become involved in community service activities, like the Ronald McDonald House's Walk for Kids that a group of consumers did this past April. These are great opportunities, not just for exercise, but to

## Upcoming CAT Meeting Dates

September 19  
October 17  
November 21  
December 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.

help others in need. Plus, it's a lot of fun!

While I have these new ideas, I also want to make sure we continue to involve CAT members in RCOC's meetings with our elected officials. It is important for legislators to hear from us, and for consumers to know that our voices count.

If you have never attended a CAT meeting, or haven't been to one for a while, I hope that you look at the meeting schedule on this page and plan to join us. We are looking forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the team!

## Early Start and Recreation Resource Fair

Nearly 400 RCOC families, service providers and volunteers participated in the Early Start and Recreation Resource Fair on April 28 at the Santa Ana Zoo. Families enjoyed free admission to the zoo, snacks and drinks, and a variety of games and activities as they gained information from 30 different early intervention service providers and recreation vendors – ranging from horseback riding to a swim school and Challenger Little League. The fun family outing was sponsored by RCOC and its Comfort Connection Family Resource Center.



Claudio Rogue and Roxy Kirkham



Cheerleaders (left to right) Emilee Beers, Selah Ferrell (in wheelchair) and Mia Ramon

## Plan Now to Support RCOC's Holiday Wish Tree

It's still hot outside, but it's not too early to start thinking about the holidays and supporting people with significant needs through RCOC's Wish Tree program. Each year, Wish Tree helps brighten the holiday season for more than a thousand Orange County consumers.

The Wish Tree begins when service coordinators identify low-income, needy individuals and families served by RCOC and fill out cards with their holiday gift requests. These wishes – ranging from children's toys and clothes, to store gift cards – are fulfilled when Wish Tree supporters purchase and wrap the requested items and deliver them to RCOC. Volunteers then make sure that they are delivered in time for the holidays.

Individuals can participate, but there are also many companies, volunteer organizations and church groups that make Wish Tree a group project for the holiday season.

Those who may not have time to purchase gifts can still participate. Financial contributions are used by volunteer shoppers to fulfill specific wishes from Wish Tree. If you would like to make a donation, checks should be made out to "Brian's Fund," and mailed to Regional Center of Orange County, P.O. Box 22010, Santa Ana, CA 92702-2010. Donations to Brian's Fund help people in need throughout the year.

If you have questions about donating to the Wish Tree program, contact Kelly Rico at 714-796-5330.

## 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 RCOC's Health Resources Coordinator 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:** 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

### 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

### 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 English by Joyce Tu, Ed.D., BCBA*

**When:** Thursday evenings – Oct. 11, Oct. 18,  
Oct. 25, Nov. 1 and Nov. 8  
*(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



## ABA Now Covered by Health Insurance

Thanks to SB 946, a new law that went into effect on July 1, private health insurance plans in California are now required to cover behavioral health services like Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for people with autism. Along with other regional centers, RCOC has been actively working with families and our local insurance providers to implement the law, which is expected to save the state about \$80 million a year. If you have questions about how the new law affects you or your family, please contact your RCOC service coordinator.



**Paul Florreich** (continued from page 1)

Paul moved into a group home and, later, into his own apartment.

A few years ago, the team’s support would prove vital when Paul – who has a history of medical problems with his left leg and hip – experienced some serious health challenges that required him to be hospitalized and then to spend a month in a rehabilitation facility. At that very same time, Ed was unable to be there since he, too, was in the hospital – having suffered a heart attack.

---

---

***“I worried about who would take care of Paul if something happened to me.”***

---

---

That experience led the team to put in place what Josh Neal, a medical social worker with RIO, calls an “early warning system” that augments regularly-scheduled meetings such as the annual IPP. “That close monitoring, and the open communication we have,



Paul (right) with his physical therapist Gary Young.

helps us all do an even better job for Paul,” he said.

Though he uses a walker to get around his apartment and sometimes uses a wheelchair, Paul has not let his hip and leg problems keep him from bowling. “I’ve won trophies for bowling,” he says proudly.

He is also proud of the weight he has lost in the past few months. Marcus Reyes, an area manager for Project Independence who first got to know Paul five years ago when he was his direct support staff, said Paul has dropped 14 pounds due to the exercise therapy he is doing at RIO and help from his SLS worker who is diligent about preparing healthful meals for him.

Since people with Down syndrome often experience health problems associated with much older people, it is very important for Paul to be physically active, and for his medical conditions to be watched closely. In fact, when he was a child, Paul’s parents enrolled him in a longitudinal research study to help scientists better understand Down syndrome; and currently, he participates in a UC Irvine Alzheimer’s research project studying older adults with Down syndrome.



Paul with some of his Titanic memorabilia.

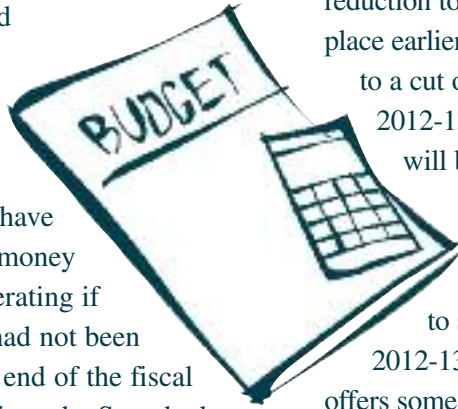
So far, Paul is not showing any signs of Alzheimer’s and is doing very well.

While he has SLS support to help with daily activities and things like meal preparation, shopping, laundry and banking, the décor of Paul’s apartment is entirely his own creation. It reflects his passion for anything related to the Titanic. However, unlike some others who first became interested in the Titanic after the 1997 movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Paul’s interest was sparked much earlier. He likes to watch classic movies on television, and became a fan after seeing the 1958 movie “A Night to Remember” that recounted the Titanic disaster.

Now, he collects everything he can about the Titanic and uses the computers at RIO, the public library and at his apartment complex to research articles about the ship. He even has a framed cover story from the St. Louis Post Dispatch newspaper about the ship’s sinking. It was a birthday gift to him from his sister.

# Budget News

In late June, Governor Brown signed the budget bill for the 2012-2013 fiscal year that began on July 1. This was good news for those served by regional centers since many centers, including RCOC, would have had to borrow money to continue operating if an agreement had not been reached by the end of the fiscal year. As it is, since the State had



cash flow problems, RCOC had already borrowed nearly \$7 million.

The budget continues the mid-year reduction to regional centers that took place earlier this year. This amounts to a cut of \$200 million for fiscal 2012-13. It is expected that this will be achieved through cost-savings measures already in place, and a 1.25% cut in payments to service providers for 2012-13. This 1.25% cut actually offers some relief because it replaces

the current 4.25% cut in payments that service providers have been struggling with this past year.

The budget relies on voters approving tax increases that will be on the ballot in November. If voters don't agree to raise taxes, there will be more cuts to many areas of state government in January 2013, including a cut of \$50 million to regional centers. To read the main budget bill, AB 1464, go to [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov) and enter the bill number or go to the Budget Update on RCOC's website for a link.

## 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

Consumer Spotlight: Paul Florreich .....1  
Board Update .....2  
Executive Director's Report.....3  
Consumer Advisory Team Update .....4  
Early Start and Recreation Resource Fair .....5  
Plan Now to Support RCOC's Holiday Wish Tree.....5  
Behavior Management Workshops for Parents.....6  
ABA Now Covered by Health Insurance .....6

### INSIDE

## Dialogue Newsletter

Regional Center of Orange County  
P.O. Box 22010  
Santa Ana, CA 92702-2010



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SANTA ANA, CA  
PERMIT NO. 1285