

Spotlight Award Honorees

A crowd of 580 consumers, family members, service providers and other community members joined together on Friday, March 20 to honor ten extraordinary individuals for their service on behalf of people with developmental disabilities in Orange County. The Regional Center of Orange County (RCOC) Spotlight Awards dinner-dance was organized by members and volunteers from Integrity House, a non-profit clubhouse for people with disabilities, and made possible by both corporate sponsors (see page 2) and ticket sales.

Special guest Santi Rogers, Director of California's Department of Developmental Services (DDS), opened the evening with well-received remarks about the history of the Lanterman Act and how a dedicated group of parents were able to make such an enormous difference



Sean Sullivan (left) with DDS Director Santi Rogers

for people with developmental disabilities through their efforts to get the Act passed.

Here are brief snapshots of the ten honorees.

Self-Advocate: Sean Sullivan

Sean Sullivan was honored with the Self-Advocate award because he is a role model for others, and because his example increases awareness about the gifts and talents of people with developmental disabilities. Sean, who has autism, is active in the community as a volunteer at a social development program and an education and therapy program for children on the autism spectrum. At both organizations, he mentors children and teens and encourages them to rise above their disability and not be defined by it. He also strives to help parents find hope for their children with autism, and has worked hard to become an effective advocate. This has included participating in Toastmasters, where


See **Spotlight Award Honorees** on page 6



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 website: www.rcocdd.com.

Copyright © 2015  

Board of Directors

Alan Martin, *Chairman*
Tresa Oliveri, *Vice Chair*
Sylvia Delgado, *Secretary*
Robert Costello, *Treasurer*
Cristina Alba
Clifford Amsden
Mark Antenucci
Meena Chockalingam
Luke Franck
Peter Kuo
Kathy McCrystal
Hilda Mendez
Tam Nguyen
Fernando Peña
Palak Shah
Hilda Sramek

Upcoming 2015 Board Meetings

June 4 • September 3 • November 5

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, *Chief Clinical Officer*
Peter Hember, M.D., *Chief Medical Officer*
Pat Glancy, *Intake Manager*
Cheryl Kilcullen, *North Area Manager*
Keli Radford, *West Area Manager*
Patrick Ruppe, *Central Area Manager*

Thank You to Our Spotlight Table Sponsors

Producing the Spotlight Awards dinner-dance is an enormous undertaking. In addition to the dedicated consumers and staff at Integrity House, who organize the event, the gala is supported by numerous sponsors. We appreciate the support of these sponsors, who help to underwrite event costs and keep ticket prices low, so more consumers and families are able to attend.

Abilities Unlimited, a day program that provides positive behavioral support strategies for adults with autism and other consumers with behavioral challenges.

Dr. and Mrs. Freddy Alamshaw. Dr. Alamshaw is a primary care doctor at Kaiser.

Anaheim Adult Day Care, which provides self-care, self-advocacy, community integration and pre-vocational/vocational training to adults with developmental disabilities.

BHH Services, a provider of respite services to families in Orange County.

California Mentor – The Mentor Network, a family home agency providing residential services to people with developmental disabilities throughout California.

Coyne & Associates, a provider of ABA-based treatment and education programs for children with autism and related disorders in Orange, San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Easter Seals of Southern California, which provides a broad range of services and supports to help both children and adults with disabilities participate fully in the community.

Goodwill of Orange County, which has been helping people with disabilities find employment, become independent and support themselves and their families since 1924.

GSG Support Services, which provides in-home respite services to families throughout Orange County.

Independent Options, a provider of residential, independent and supported living, and adult family supports to people with developmental disabilities.

Integrity Cottages, a former motel in Anaheim that has been converted into 48 affordable rental units for adults with developmental disabilities.

Jewish Federation & Family Services, which offers programs, services, grants, and opportunities for community engagement to people of all faiths, ethnicities and ages in Orange County and in Israel.

KIDA Academy, which provides autism therapy and education.

Maxim Companion Services, which offers a variety of services including in-home companion care to assist seniors, new and expectant parents, and others who need extra help around the house.

Mercedes Diaz Homes, a provider of residential services for adults with developmental disabilities.

Orange County Adult Achievement Center, which provides an array of training, employment and other programs to enhance the quality of life for adults with developmental disabilities.

Rosie Hall Family Home, a provider of 24-hour residential care for adults with developmental disabilities.

Westview Vocational Services, a provider of day programs, and employment services to consumers in Orange County, Los Angeles and the Inland Empire.

Executive Director's Report

Opening New Channels for Consumer Input

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

Regional centers perform thousands of crucial tasks and functions on behalf of the State of California for consumers and families. But whether it's helping a family select a service provider, developing a new type of support, paying a bill, or something else entirely, everything we do comes back to meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities. It's the reason we exist.

Everything we do comes back to meeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

In fact, a big part of my role as executive director is to ensure that all of the dedicated professionals who work at RCOC keep consumer needs front and center at all times. And, meeting consumer needs begins with understanding those needs.

RCOC has been a leader in going above and beyond the requirements of the Lanterman Act to solicit consumer input by, for example, our pioneering use of National Core Indicators (NCI) data which is now a state standard. But we can always do more and we can always do better. That's why I'm

so pleased to announce that our Board of Directors has acted to expand the opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to provide their input and perspective on what RCOC does, as well as policies and initiatives being considered by the Board.



The Board has established a new standing committee – the Consumer Advisory

Committee (CAC). The CAC will be chaired by a consumer member of RCOC's Board and will include RCOC's Consumer Advocate (currently Jesse Corey) and several others appointed by RCOC's Board Chair Alan Martin. The committee's membership will also be balanced to ensure members represent the full range of disabilities served by Regional Center.

Our Board of Directors has acted to expand the opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to provide their input and perspective.

The committee's meeting dates and times will be set after the members have been appointed. We expect they will probably take place in the evenings, since part of the Board's rationale in creating the committee was to ensure we're receiving input from a broader range of consumers

– especially those who work during the day and may not be able to attend daytime meetings and events.

Over the years, we have made similar accommodations for the Board of Directors, changing Board and committee meetings from daytime to evening to enable participation by more working people. So, it makes sense to offer similar accommodations to include more consumers who have jobs.

In addition to providing feedback to the Board and recommendations about policies and strategic directions, the committee will work together to organize events and trainings for RCOC's adult consumers to expand their knowledge and advocacy skills.

The Board has established a new standing committee, the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC), which will be chaired by a consumer member of RCOC's Board.

I'm also pleased to report that we'll be integrating the new committee's activities with that of the existing Consumer Advisory Team (CAT). The CAT group will now be called the Consumer *Advocacy* Team and will continue to meet during the daytime to accommodate those consumers' schedules, but meetings will now take place quarterly. The group will continue to focus on self-advocacy and will have ample opportunity to provide input to the new Consumer Advisory Committee.

Consumer Advisory Team Update

Thank You for Letting Me Serve!

By Sylvia Delgado, CAT Chair

If you've read Larry Landauer's Executive Director's Report on page 2, you already know about the exciting changes underway at RCOC to enable more consumers to take an active role in shaping the future of services and supports we receive from the Regional Center. I'm really excited about these changes, because it's always been important to me to help my fellow consumers have a voice and share their opinions.

I'm proud of everything that we've accomplished together, and excited about the road ahead!

At the same time, this column is bittersweet for me. In July, I will be reaching the end of my second term as an RCOC board member, so this will be my last *Dialogue* column. It has, however,

been a wonderful seven years serving on the Board, and I have been honored to serve as CAT Chair the past three years.



When I first became CAT Chair, one of my goals was to get the Consumer Advisory Team more

involved in the community. Looking back, I think we've succeeded in doing so.

For example, by collecting recyclable pop tabs, the Team has raised a lot of money for the Ronald McDonald House at Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC), helping to support the families of sick children getting care at CHOC.

We can also be very proud of our efforts in 2012 to help ensure the passage of AB 2370 (authored by our own Orange County Assemblyman Allan Mansoor) and SB 1381 (authored by Senator Fran Pavley). These bills are now California law, and they required the "R-word" to be removed from our state's

Upcoming CAT Meeting Dates

September 16

December 16

CAT meetings are from 10 a.m. to noon at RCOC's Santa Ana office, located at 1525 North Tustin Avenue. Call Jennifer Casteel at (714) 796-5330 ahead of time to let her know you will be there.

laws and regulations. Now, laws that had used the words "mental retardation" instead use "intellectual disability" to describe the condition.

We've also raised awareness among adult consumers about the importance of voting.

I want to thank the RCOC Board of Directors for allowing me to serve. I also want to thank all of my fellow consumers and CAT members for giving me the opportunity to be part of this journey. I'm proud of everything that we've accomplished together, and excited about the road ahead!

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. Parents are actively involved, and invited to discuss the specific behavioral challenges they are confronting. Advance reservations are required and group size is typically 8-15 families.

Contact your service coordinator or Julieann Garcia 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 Dr. Lorenz

When: Tuesday evenings – June 2, June 9,
June 16, June 23, June 30

**(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 Blvd., Ste. 100

Social Skills Training (6 sessions, focused on ages 12-19)

Presented in English by Victoria Taylor

When: Thursday evenings – Aug. 6, Aug. 13,
Aug. 20, Aug. 27, Sept. 3, Sept. 10

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Orange Office
3111 N. Tustin St., Ste. 150

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

Presented in English by Footprints

When: Tuesday evenings – Sept. 15, Sept. 22,
Sept. 29, Oct. 6, Oct. 13

**(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 St., Ste. 150

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

Presented in Spanish by Footprints

When: Tuesday evenings – Oct. 13, Oct. 20,
Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 10

**(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 Ave.

*Parking is located in the structure across
from the RCOC office building*

Travel Tips for Families

Going through airport security can be especially challenging for those traveling with family members who have special needs. To help make the process easier, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) can provide a Passenger Support Specialist. Families concerned about the check point process or who need special accommodation can ask a TSA officer or supervisor for help from a Passenger Support Specialist. Parents may also call the TSA Cares hotline at 1-855-787-2227 ahead of time to ensure a Passenger Support Specialist can be onsite when needed. The agency's TSA Kids website (www.tsa.gov/tsa-kids) also features a cartoon video to help children understand the airport screening process.

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued from page 1)

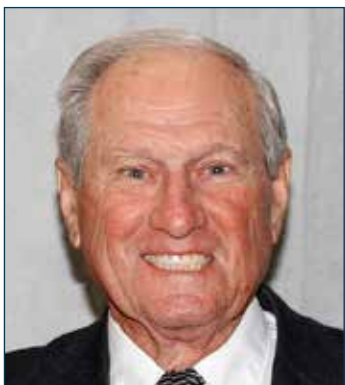
he has received awards for his speaking talents, as well as delivering presentations to various organizations to educate their staff on autism.

When accepting his award, Sean delivered an acceptance speech that drew a fantastic response and a long, standing ovation from the crowd. Speaking about the philosophy he shares with those he mentors, Sean said “Success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. Anything easy is not worth anything.” He ended his speech with words of encouragement to other consumers, paraphrasing famous comments by Winston Churchill. “Never give up. Never surrender. Never give in to difficult situations,” he said.

Lifetime Achievement: Don Greene

Known by many as the “father of special education” in Orange County, Don Greene has devoted almost six decades to advancing the rights and quality of life for students with developmental disabilities in Orange County.

Currently an educational analyst for RCOC, he started his career as a teacher and then principal in the LaHabra School District. However, his biggest impact on special education began in 1975 when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed and he was chosen to lead Orange County’s efforts to integrate children with disabilities into typical classrooms.



Don Greene

After more than two decades of tireless work on behalf of students with disabilities, Don retired from education in 1999 and came to work part-time for RCOC where he continues his advocacy by providing special education guidance to both RCOC staff and the families the agency serves.

Special Recognition: Santi Rogers

Director of the Department of Developmental Services Santi Rogers (pictured on front cover) was presented with a special Spotlight Award in recognition of his many years of service to people with disabilities and his strong

leadership and advocacy in his current position. Santi began his career working for DDS in the 1960s, holding various positions including executive director. He has also had the unique experience of having served as both a regional center executive director, as well as director of two different developmental centers, giving him a comprehensive understanding of all facets of California’s developmental services system.

Community Partner: Linda O’Neal

Linda O’Neal is a transition specialist with the Irvine Unified School District. Although her primary focus has been on Irvine students with disabilities, including grant-writing that’s brought in approximately \$2 million to support job preparation and post-secondary training and evaluation, Linda has worked tirelessly to help students in all Orange County school districts that serve high school age students. To help these school districts share



Linda O’Neal (right) with RCOC Board Chair Alan Martin

their successes and collaborate on challenges, she formed and chairs the monthly meetings of the Orange County Adult Transition Task Force which involves virtually every agency and organization involved in the lives of transition-age students. She has also been a key member of RCOC’s Employment Community Advisory Committee and played a pivotal role in implementing the Employment First initiative in Orange County.

Service Provider: Intervention Center for Early Childhood (ICEC)

ICEC staff members Lise Busby and Jeannie Wronski accepted the award on behalf of the Intervention Center for Early Childhood. Honored for extraordinary commitment to helping people with developmental disabilities reach their full potential, ICEC serves children from birth to six years of age who have developmental delays. Their services include comprehensive group and individual early intervention therapies, involving both parent participation groups and individual programs, depending on the child’s



Jeannie Wronski (left) and Lise Busby (right) with RCOC Executive Director Larry Landauer

needs. The organization was nominated by the parents of a child who receives both group and individual services at ICEC and has seen dramatic positive changes in the course of just a few months of therapy.

**Healthcare Professional:
Dr. Anne Tournay**

A pediatric neurologist and clinical professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at UCI, Dr. Anne Tournay has dedicated her life to working with people with developmental disabilities and runs the adult and children’s Down Syndrome



Dr. Anne Tournay

clinics at Children’s Hospital of Orange County. She also regularly sees RCOC consumers in their homes, providing medical evaluations to those who might otherwise not receive medical care because they would not go to the clinic. A great teacher and clinician who is much appreciated by the families served by RCOC, Dr. Tournay has educated many hundreds of professionals about developmental disabilities, including medical students and residents who she encourages to be comfortable working with people with disabilities. *Note: Dr. Tournay was unable to attend the Spotlight Awards event, so RCOC’s Medical Director Dr. Peter Hember accepted the award on her behalf.*

Employer: Albertsons-Vons

Mark Beasley, Store Director of the Albertsons Orange location, accepted the Spotlight award on behalf of the Albertsons-Vons chain of grocery stores. Honored for

providing integrated job opportunities to workers with disabilities and setting an outstanding example for others in Orange County, Albertsons-Vons employs 164 individuals with developmental disabilities in its Vons, Albertsons and Pavilions stores throughout Orange County.



Mark Beasley (right) and Alan Martin

**Direct Support Professional:
Anthony Nguyen**

This award recognizes a person who provides direct services to people with disabilities in Orange County. Anthony Nguyen, a vocational specialist with the School of Continuing Education at Cypress College, was nominated by the parents of a young woman with developmental



Anthony Nguyen

disabilities he partnered with to find employment. The woman is now successfully interning at a dog grooming company, a job she loves and where she is integrated into the mainstream workforce. By working to locate suitable positions, and help clients prepare for interviews and other employment situations, Anthony supports the aspirations of people with developmental disabilities to live happier and more fulfilled lives in the community.

**RCOC
Achievement:
Kelly Merrell**

This award recognizes outstanding performance by an RCOC employee. Kelly Merrell is a service coordinator, who was nominated by the mother of an RCOC consumer who faces significant challenges.



Kelly Merrell (right) and Larry Landauer

Spotlight Award Honorees continued on back page



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

Dialogue Newsletter  

INSIDE

Spotlight Award Honorees..... 1
 Thank You to Our
 Spotlight Table Sponsors2
 Executive Director’s Report.....3
 Consumer Advisory Team Update.....4
 Behavior Management
 Workshops for Parents.....5
 Travel Tips for Families5

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

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued from page 7)

Kelly has been the consumer’s service coordinator for the past nine years and the mother credits Kelly’s hard work and dedication for the family’s ability to deal with her son’s difficulties and keep him in the family home.

Family Member: Cheryl Cohen

An exceptional parent and individual, Cheryl Cohen has a son and a daughter with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Over the years, she has advocated for her children to receive the quality education and training they need to succeed as adults. Since graduating from high school, her daughter has successfully completed several community college classes and is currently employed at Walmart, while her son – currently involved with the Medtronic Project SEARCH

program – also has excellent prospects for full time, competitive employment. The success stories of Cheryl’s children are a direct result of her unwavering support and commitment to their futures. They are also inspiring to other parents of children with disabilities, encouraging them to have higher expectations and hopes for their children to live happy and self-sufficient lives in the community.



Cheryl Cohen (right) and Alan Martin