



Dialogue

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Spotlight Award Honorees

Hundreds of consumers, family members, service providers and other community members gathered at the Embassy Suites in Garden Grove on Friday, April 8 to honor ten extraordinary individuals for their service on behalf of people with developmental disabilities in Orange County. Among the highlights of the evening was a keynote address by Marty Omoto,



Keynote speaker
Marty Omoto
(right)

the Sacramento-based founder of the California Disability/Senior Community Action Network and the California Person Centered Advocacy Partnership, whose regular email reports to subscribers statewide help to keep advocates, consumers, and others informed about critical issues and legislation affecting developmental services.

Here are brief snapshots of the ten honorees.



Self-Advocate: Sam Durbin



Sam Durbin (left) with RCOC Board Vice Chair Tresa Oliveri

During the more than 20 years that Sam Durbin has been an RCOC consumer, he has been one of our community's most effective and passionate advocates for self-determination. He has served Orange County as a member of RCOC's Board of Directors and currently serves on the RCOC Consumer Advisory Committee, the Self-Determination Program Local Advisory Committee, the Spotlight Awards Planning Committee, and the Self-Advocacy group. A sought-after speaker on self-determination, Sam has participated in conferences throughout California and around the country, and has also served on the Department of Developmental Services' Consumer Advisory

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.

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Upcoming 2016 Board Meetings

June 2 • September 1 • November 3

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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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 (listed below in alphabetical order) who help to underwrite event costs and keep ticket prices low, so more consumers and families are able to attend.

Dr. and Mrs. Fred Alamshaw.

California Mentor, 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, 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.

Independent Options, a provider of residential, day service, independent and supported living, and foster 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.

Integrity House, a clubhouse where members – who are adults with developmental disabilities and brain injuries – have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of operating the clubhouse.

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.

MDH Network, a provider of residential services for adults with developmental disabilities.

My Day Counts/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-Mandel House, a provider of 24-hour residential care for adults with developmental disabilities.

United Cerebral Palsy-OC, which provides care for more than 3,700 children with disabilities and families each year, helping to close developmental gaps and empowering families to care for their child's special needs.

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

Executive Director's Report

RCOC's Approach to Developmental Center Transitions

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

At RCOC, we have been focusing a lot on transitions lately: the transition from Early Start to public school services, and the transition from public school to RCOC's adult services and supports. Now, with the Department of Developmental Services having submitted (on April 1, 2016) its formal transition plan for the closure of Fairview Developmental Center, the Regional Center's ongoing work of transitioning developmental center residents to more inclusive settings in the community has come to the forefront.

The individuals and issues surrounding each of these transitions are unique, but among the things they all have in common are significant change in the lives of persons with developmental disabilities and their families, and anxieties that can arise from the unknown. Parents, in particular, may be concerned about how their sons or daughters will respond to changes in their routines, and to new people and new service providers in their lives.

Another important thing these transitions have in common is the thoughtful, careful, and systematic approach that we at RCOC bring to each of them. It is an approach that we have found gives families the reassurance they need, and consumers

the confidence they need, to fully embrace the exciting opportunities that transitions bring.

Expert Resource Groups

Around 77 of the 239 consumers still residing at Fairview are expected to make their homes in Orange County by the time that developmental



center officially closes in 2021. Many of these remaining residents have significant challenges. Some, for example, are medically-fragile

while others have dual diagnoses, involving both developmental disabilities and mental health conditions.

Our resource groups and stakeholder meetings often reveal new and different consumer needs.

To help these consumers' planning teams address these very complex situations, RCOC has formed a special Fairview Resource Group. Bringing together RCOC's respected experts in diverse fields, including psychology, behavior analysis, and nursing, the Resource Group provides the support planning teams need to evaluate a consumer's options and make wise decisions.

Stakeholder Input

While RCOC has considerable professional expertise, we know

there's no substitute for direct input from parents, consumers and other stakeholders. To help ensure that we understand and are responsive to their concerns, RCOC meets regularly with Fairview Families & Friends, an organization that includes many people who have loved ones residing in Fairview. These meetings help us understand the totality of each consumer's life and history from the family's perspective.

Resource Development

Our resource groups and stakeholder meetings often reveal new and different consumer needs, and this is the case with some of those still waiting to transition from Fairview into the community. And though we have another five years to complete the transition process, RCOC approaches these challenges with a long-term perspective. Thus, we are already actively working to develop new residential resources, to include, for example, some that will serve medically-fragile consumers and those with behavioral needs. We couldn't be prouder of our Orange County vendor community, which is stepping up as they always do to serve consumers and families.

Two-Way Communication

Finally, with every new challenge – from the autism epidemic that arose some years ago to the Fairview transition today – RCOC seeks to foster honest, two-way communication with and among consumers, families, and service providers. We believe that communication is key to understanding and resolving issues, and to building the trust that leads to true collaboration and effective solutions.

Consumer Corner

Get Connected!

By Jess Corey,
RCOC Consumer Advocate

Get Connected was the theme of the 21st Annual California Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference that was held on May 6th and 7th in Sacramento. I enjoyed connecting with many people at the conference and learned a lot at the sessions I attended. It was great to see all the consumers who came and asked questions.



Jess Corey

a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, and the Self-Determination Project. The take home point was how important it is for us to learn how to take care of ourselves and that we have a voice that matters. We CAN change our own lives for the better!

We have a voice that matters.

Two of the sessions I attended were packed with people wanting to hear more about self-determination and public speaking. It's important to learn how to speak up for ourselves and it was exciting for me to watch people as they realized they have the power to make decisions about their lives! Public speaking is never easy, but that session helped people take that first step of publicly sharing their stories.

Among the special guests was advocate and activist Shawn Casey O'Brien, former Executive Director of the Unique People's Voting Project. He encouraged us to register to vote and exercise our right to have a voice regarding OUR future.

We also had several members of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) speak to us about the importance of always being connected, which was in line with this year's theme.

We CAN change our own lives for the better!

So many exciting things are on the horizon and I look forward to sharing more information with you in the future.

It was great to see all the consumers who came and asked questions.

This year, the hot topics were integrated competitive employment, the Achieving



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. 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 8-15 families.

Contact your service coordinator or Tracy Vaughan 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 English by Dr. Joyce Tu

When: Thursday evenings – Aug. 4, Aug. 11, Aug. 18, Aug. 25, Sept. 1

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

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Cypress Office
10803 Hope Street

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

Presented in Spanish by Footprints

When: Thursday evenings – Oct. 20, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 10, Nov. 17

(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

What is Integrated Employment?

What defines an employment situation as “integrated” is that the job is paid, it takes place in the community (rather than in a sheltered workshop or other site-based program), and the person with developmental disabilities works alongside other employees who do not have disabilities. Integrated employment may be part-time or full-time work, the job may be in any field or industry, and the consumer who has the job may or may not have ongoing support from a job coach. As such, there is an integrated employment situation to suit the talents and interests of almost any adult RCOC consumer.

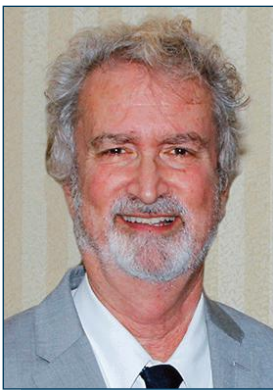
However, according to RCOC’s Employment and Day Program Services Manager Arturo Cazares, while integrated employment is easy to define, it can be challenging to achieve. He noted that relatively slow growth of the economy is one challenge faced by those with disabilities, as well as those in the typical population who are looking for work. In addition, some service providers are simply more skilled than others in developing jobs. With this in mind, he said that RCOC is working to establish connections between service providers so they can get technical assistance and share tips for success with one another.

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued from page 1)

Committee. Providing peer support as an employee of the Integrity House clubhouse since 1998, Sam has written about the fight for adults with disabilities to be treated equally, and not as children, in two books: *You're Not the Boss of Me*, which is in its third printing, and *Lifelines, How a Circle of Support Might Save Your Life*. In presenting the award, RCOC Executive Director Larry Landauer read a powerful poem written by Sam. Entitled "Dignity," the poem speaks about the fundamental rights of people with disabilities throughout the world to enjoy freedom and self-determination.

Lifetime Achievement: Steve Zivolich

Steve Zivolich has dedicated his career to a simple, but powerful, belief: everybody works. His early career included working as a special education teacher, program specialist, program coordinator, and facilitator with the Los Angeles City and County schools and the California Department of Education. He is, however, best known as founder of the Laguna Hills-based Integrated Resources Institute, which has facilitated more than 20,000 job placements for people with disabilities in the U.S. and Australia. Steve has also been instrumental in securing more than \$30 million in employment and inclusion initiatives and grants, and led Pizza Hut Jobs Plus™, TeamWorks, and Universal Access – the largest corporate employment initiatives in U.S. history.



Steve Zivolich

Elected Official: Senator Bob Huff

California State Senator Bob Huff's commitment to the Lanterman Promise has been significant over the years, as he has led efforts in Sacramento to increase funding for quality services and supports to meet consumers' needs. He has also had legislation passed and signed into law increasing funding for public education,

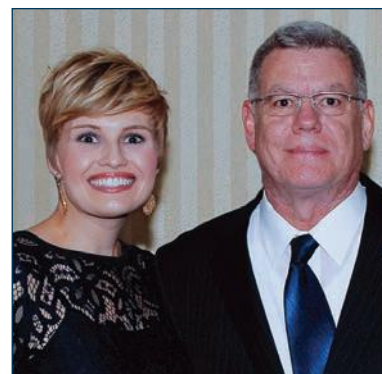


Senator Bob Huff with Tresa Oliveri

including for the training of school staff and volunteers to administer emergency medications to children suffering from an epilepsy seizure at school. He most recently helped lead efforts to pass Managed Care Organization (MCO) reform that brought millions in additional critically needed funding to the regional center system. Senator Huff consistently demonstrates genuine concern for those we serve, meeting with RCOC regularly to discuss our issues, and even taking the time to visit some of Orange County's residential and day programs.

Community Partner: Elise Flocken

Elise Flocken is a special education teacher at Northwood High School in Irvine. She was nominated by the parent of one of her students, who benefits greatly from the many extra-curricular activities



Elise Flocken with Larry Landauer

Elise organizes to encourage social interaction between students with special needs and typical youth. This includes the "Wolfpack" (Northwood's mascot is the timber wolf). Wolfpack members have lunch together regularly, and attend events together, including football games, pizza nights, and movie nights. In addition to enabling students with disabilities to improve their social skills in a safe and non-threatening environment, the group helps typical students learn to interact with those who are different from themselves and develop greater compassion and kindness.

Service Provider: Integrated Resources Institute

Integrated Resources Institute (IRI) has an extraordinary commitment to integrated, competitive employment for



Pictured (L-R) are IRI staff members Stacey Wirta, Linda Seppala, Jean Yoo, Roy Wilson, Kirsty Evaldez, and Joseph Nacario, with RCOC Executive Director Larry Landauer.

people with developmental disabilities and a strong record of success. In fact, IRI has the highest rate of employment at competitive wages of any RCOC vendor, with 100% of program time in the community and 93% of program time in integrated work settings. With a “no reject” policy, IRI will not decline referrals, regardless of the consumer’s needs. The organization also supports consumers at work at all hours of the day or night, and those who have not yet located suitable paid employment are provided with meaningful volunteer work that has the potential to become paid employment.

**Healthcare Professional:
Hoda Kaddis, M.D.**

Dr. Hoda Kaddis is a Board Certified pediatrician and medical director at California Children’s Services, where she has been a staunch advocate for children with special needs. She treats every child and his or her family with kindness and empathy, and works diligently to collaborate with other agencies, such as RCOC, to ensure children get the care they need. One area where her impact has been particularly strong is the transition period, when young adults approach the age of 21 and move from pediatric to adult care. Her efforts have helped ensure consumers continue to have needed medical equipment, medications and supplies as they become established with their new primary care physician. Dr. Kaddis is also a valuable resource for RCOC, generous with her time and freely sharing her knowledge and expertise to ensure the needs of children with disabilities are met.



Hoda Kaddis, M.D.

**Employer:
Chick-fil-A**

Chick-fil-A franchise operator Nick Jones has done far more than hire an RCOC consumer to work as a dining room attendant at his store at Bristol and MacArthur in Santa Ana. He has been so impressed with the work ethic of his



Nick Jones (right) with RCOC consumer Cris Perez, who works for him.

employee with developmental disabilities that he has helped open the doors to employment with other Chick-fil-A franchises in Huntington Beach and Buena Park, and other businesses. In fact, because of Nick’s advocacy, Chick-fil-A is becoming RCOC’s fastest-growing employer of adults with developmental disabilities.

**Direct Support Professional:
Sue Hewitt**

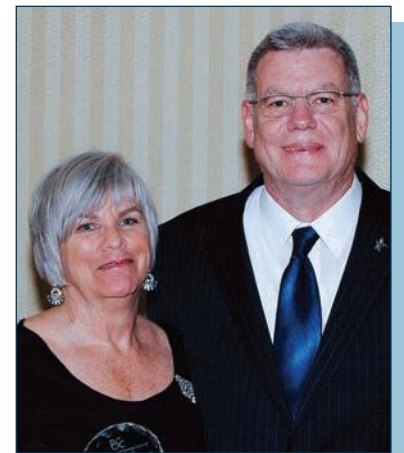
Employed by Costa Mesa-based Project Independence’s Independent Living Services program, Sue Hewitt works with 11 consumers, including one who was homeless and without any family involvement when she first started receiving RCOC services. With effective advocacy, Sue helped this consumer find a home and establish friendships and relationships within her local community. Sue also helped her achieve a lifelong dream of enrolling in community college, as well as to find employment with Project Independence, and participate in family-style activities. Most importantly, Sue has fostered this consumer’s confidence and security, knowing that she can be successful and that she does not have to live on the streets.



Sue Hewitt

**RCOC Achievement:
Mary Parpal, Ph.D.**

Mary Parpal is a psychologist and clinical administrator with RCOC, but the person who nominated her calls her an ambassador in the community and a problem solver for the disenfranchised. Her responsibilities at RCOC are diverse, but her top priority in everything she does is to advocate for what is best for the individual consumer. She is, for example, a fierce protector of consumers’ rights throughout the conservatorship process, and when



Mary Parpal, Ph.D. with Larry Landauer

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued on back)



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INSIDE

Spotlight Award Honorees 1
 Thank You to Our
 Spotlight Table Sponsors2
 Executive Director’s Report.....3
 Consumer Corner4
 Behavior Management
 Workshops for Parents5
 What is Integrated Employment?5

Regional Center of Orange County Locations

Santa Ana Office

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

Cypress Office

10803 Hope Street, Suite A
 24-hr Phone: (714) 796-2900

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued from page 7)

consumers become involved with law enforcement. Mary is also an excellent support to service coordinators, bringing a depth of expertise to planning team meetings that is comforting and helpful to families as they make difficult decisions on behalf of their loved ones.

Family Member: Cecilia Mercado

The mother of a child with special needs, Cecilia Mercado has made it her mission to help other families in Orange County. As the regional coordinator of Fiesta Educativa O.C. for the past 15 years, she has been a pioneer in bringing experts in education, benefits, recreation, and other topics to share information with families in Spanish. In addition to Fiesta Educativa, Cecilia coordinates Fiesta

Navideña at Christmas time, and Fiesta Familiar – a home-based family training program. Through numerous conferences, parent support groups, referral services, educational workshops, and other activities, Cecilia improves the lives of countless Orange County families.



Cecilia Mercado (fourth from left) with family members.