

Spotlight Award Honorees

Hundreds of individuals served by RCOC, their families, service providers and other community members gathered at the Embassy Suites in Garden Grove on Friday, March 24 to honor nine extraordinary individuals and organizations for their service on behalf of people with developmental disabilities in Orange County. This year marked the 20th anniversary of the Regional Center of Orange County's Spotlight Awards and, as has been the case for the past few years, the dinner-dance event was organized by the team at Integrity House, a clubhouse directed by people with disabilities. A total of 16 table sponsors (listed on page 2) helped to underwrite the costs and keep ticket prices accessible to the people served by RCOC.



Here are brief snapshots of the nine honorees.

Self-Advocate: **Ashley Arambula**

The Self-Advocate Award goes to an individual who has a developmental disability and who has brought a greater awareness and recognition of the abilities of people with developmental disabilities in Orange County. This year's winner, Ashley Arambula, is very special because at age 13, she is the youngest person



Ashley Arambula (front) with (L-R) her brother Joseph Arambula, friend Daly Holman, father George Arambula, mother Monica Arambula, and Larry Landauer.



ever to receive a Spotlight Award. Ashley has cerebral palsy, and has not let the condition limit her. She is active in her community, volunteering her time alongside her parents and her brother, and her enthusiasm for life is infectious. Ashley's warm and genuine personality disarms the people she meets, opening the door for people of all ages to be more comfortable with individuals with special needs. Ashley is often asked to visit other classrooms at her school to talk about her experience living with a disability. Her message is simple. She tells the students that when they walk by a person with a disability, they don't need to be scared; they just need to say, "Hi!"

See **Spotlight Award Honorees** on page 6.

Dialogue

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Upcoming 2017 Board Meetings

May 4 • June 1

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

RCOC Administration

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Thank You to Our Spotlight Table Sponsors

The Spotlight Awards dinner-dance is a highlight of the year for many of the families and individuals RCOC serves. We want to express our deep appreciation for the generous sponsors listed below; several purchased multiple tables and made it possible to keep ticket prices low. We also want to thank the many dedicated volunteers and staff at Integrity House, who devoted countless hours organizing the event, creating centerpieces, and serving as ushers during the event. Below is a list of this year's table sponsors.

BHH Services, a provider of respite services to hundreds of clients throughout Orange County.

California Mentor, a human services agency providing a range of residential and day services and supports to help people with developmental disabilities throughout California build increasingly rich, independent lives.

Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled (CPAD), which provides culturally and linguistically relevant services to Chinese American families, including parent training, social activities, and educational and recreational opportunities for those with special needs.

Coyne & Associates, provides best practice, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) intervention services to young children with autism and other developmental delays 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.

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.

MDH Network, also known as Mercedes Diaz Homes, a provider of residential services for adults with developmental disabilities.

Mauro Company, an independent film partnership that produces short films including and advocating for people with disabilities. Among the partners are Liza and Stuart Krassner.

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.

Westview Services, a provider of day programs, community transition programs and employment services to people with developmental disabilities in Orange County, Los Angeles and the Inland Empire.

Thank you!

Executive Director's Report

RCOC's Commitment to Becoming a More Person Centered Organization

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

This Spotlight Awards issue of *Dialogue* is special because it lets us celebrate some of our community's most impressive role models, and I couldn't be more proud of each and every one of them. As I look at this year's honorees and reflect on those we've recognized during the two decades that RCOC has presented these awards, one of the overriding themes I see is a powerful hope for the future. The remarkable individuals and organizations we honor are dedicated and passionate – always looking to improve, and always looking for new and better ways to make life better for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

I'm excited to share our commitment to becoming a more person centered organization.

We at RCOC also strive for continuous improvement, and I'm excited to share our commitment to becoming a more person centered organization. This person centered focus is in keeping with the emphasis on person directed services and

informed choice we're seeing at the Federal and State level, but for us it is about far more than simply complying with government guidelines. It is about continuously examining our organization and approaches, and evolving to more fully live up to RCOC's vision that everyone we serve is a valued



member of the community and reaches his or her individual potential.

To help us to truly embed person centered practices into

RCOC's culture, we have retained Michael Smull, a nationally-recognized expert, to help us develop a year-long plan that includes Person Centered Thinking (PCT) Training for everyone on our staff, as well as Person Centered Organization work that will transform the organization. Eight RCOC staff will also become certified PCT trainers, capable of leading Person Centered Thinking workshops for others, including RCOC service providers who we hope will share our enthusiasm for the potential of person centered thinking to help us all do a better job.

Person centered thinking and person centered planning are not new terms. For some years now, we and others have referred to person centered planning as a way of developing an IPP (Individual Program Plan) that places the person with disabilities at the center of the process. This effort to make RCOC a more person centered organization does not aim to change that. Rather, this effort

amplifies what came before it – giving planning teams new tools and techniques to make person centered planning a reality for every person we serve, and encouraging new ways of thinking about how we can meet people's needs.

We'll be sharing much more about what we're learning and the progress we're making, but one thing I think is crucial to recognize is how person centered thinking helps us to listen to, and really hear, what is important to the person we are serving. And then gear our approaches to reflect that individual's values.

Eight RCOC staff will also become certified PCT trainers, capable of leading Person Centered Thinking workshops for others.

There is often a tendency to focus solely on the things that are **important for** a person's health and safety. But it's essential to balance that with what's **important to** a person so they can lead a happy, content and satisfying life. Those "important to" things are rooted in one's personal values, and could include things like choosing the people they want to be with, the places they want to go, and being supported in their self-identified daily routines.

Our journey is just beginning, but I'm already very excited about the promise that person centered thinking offers to help us truly respect the values of the individuals we serve, and help them have better lives.

Person to Person

Our Perspective: Person Centered Planning & Person Centered Thinking

By Sylvia Delgado, PAC
Chair and Jess Corey,
RCOC Peer Advocate

Greetings
everyone
and
Happy Spring!

One of the most exciting things happening at RCOC right now is the training we're doing in Person Centered Thinking. Everyone at RCOC is participating, along with some members of RCOC's Board of Directors (including Sylvia!) and our vendor community. The training is giving us important tools and techniques to help us understand how to serve you better. That includes making sure that when you meet with us, you have a say in what



Sylvia Delgado



Jess Corey

happens to you and that we really understand what you want to happen in your life.

A lot of people who receive services from RCOC already feel that they are in control and that their values and priorities are respected by us. That's fantastic! And we want to do everything we can to help everybody we serve to live the kind of life they want to live.

Since you are the person being served, you should never be afraid to let the people in your life know what you want. It's important that your RCOC service coordinator, family members, and service providers understand the kinds of things you want to do every day – whether that's working or going to school, hanging out with friends, or going to church, for example. They also should

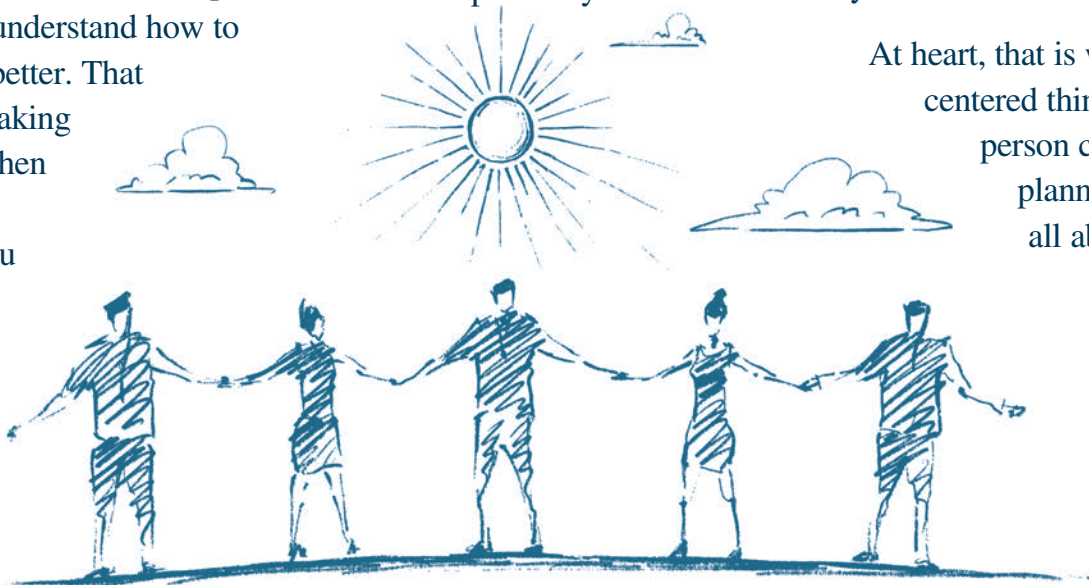
know who you want to be around, who you want to live with, and other things that are important to you.

You should never be afraid to let the people in your life know what you want.

One of the new tools that will help with that is a one-page description of the person served. This is used to create a positive picture of who the person is and how to best support him or her to have a great life!

The Regional Center has helped both of us to live our lives the way we want. We're excited about how Person Centered Thinking is going to help RCOC to better understand what makes you happy, and to make sure that the things that matter most to you go into your IPP.

At heart, that is what person centered thinking and person centered planning are all about.



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 Spanish by Footprints

When: Tuesday evenings – April 25, May 2, May 9, May 16 and May 23

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

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOG Cypress Office
10803 Hope Street, Suite A

Behavior Management Workshop (5 sessions)

Presented in English by Dr. Joyce Tu

When: Tuesday evenings – Aug. 1, Aug. 8, Aug. 15, Aug. 22 and Aug. 29

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

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOG Cypress Office
10803 Hope Street, Suite A

Transition Planning Workshop

Creating a Life Full of Possibilities!

In this rotating roundtable-style workshop, family members, individuals with disabilities and others will have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions about a host of topics related to the transition from public school to services and supports for adults. During the two-hour session, each participant will be able to participate in four 25-minute table talks on post-secondary education, independent living, employment, and more.

When: Thursday, May 18

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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

For more information and to register, contact Anita Kwon at akwon@rcocdd.com or (714) 796-5102.



Lifetime Achievement: Cayley McDonald

Cayley McDonald is a pediatric physical therapist who has spent nearly four decades helping countless children learn to sit, crawl and walk. At the same time, she has lent invaluable support to families, helping parents to overcome their understandable fears and uncertainties. After graduating USC with a Master's degree in Physical Therapy, she began her career at the Children's Hospital of Orange County High Risk Follow up Clinic. In 1979, after the birth of her first baby, Cayley met another mom in her pediatrician's office and walked away with a job as a consulting Pediatric Physical Therapist with the Early Intervention Program of Laguna Beach, where she continues to work. In 1982, she joined the founding director of the Intervention Center for Early Childhood (known as ICEC) to begin a parent participation developmental program for toddlers after they graduated from the infant program. With humor and wit, she has helped children reach their potential and brought hope and fresh perspectives to their parents.



Cayley McDonald with Alan Martin

Community Partner: Assistance League of Laguna Beach

For many years, beginning when there were few resources for families of children with special needs, the Assistance League of Laguna Beach has been dedicated to providing an array of services and supports to Orange County children, adults and families at no cost. Among its many high-quality programs are family-centered early intervention classes and specialized services for children who may be at risk or have known developmental delays. The organization also partners with Laguna Beach High School Special Education for the use of shared vocational training facilities and with the Shea Riding Academy in



(L-R) Assistance League of Laguna Beach's President Gayle Whitaker, Philanthropy Chairperson Catherine Hall, and EIP Coordinator Judy Sterns with Larry Landauer.

San Juan Capistrano where the Assistance League provides program scholarships and support for the care of Bliss, a therapeutic horse.

Healthcare Professional: John Van, DDS

Dr. John Van was honored for his unwavering devotion to meeting the dental health needs of the people RCOC serves. While in private practice in Stockton, he came to appreciate the unique challenges people with special needs face in obtaining quality dental care. In 2000, he went on to



John Van, DDS

receive specialized training on IV Sedation at UCLA and moved his practice to Garden Grove. Since then, Dr. Van has provided services solely to those with developmental disabilities, tailoring dental care to include the right type of sedation for each individual. Known in the community as being a kindhearted, fearless advocate for his patients, he also dedicates considerable time to community education about dental health.

Employer: First American Financial Corporation

First American Financial Corporation was honored for providing integrated job opportunities to workers with disabilities and setting an outstanding example for



First American Café's Executive Chef Dore Sommer (left), with Goodwill of Orange County's Elizabeth Martinez (center) and First American's Vice President of Operations Frank LaBlanc.

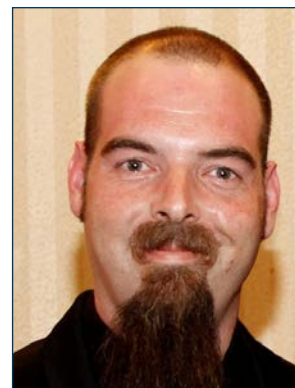
others in Orange County. Known best for its stellar reputation as a financial institution, First American has also embraced the developmental disabilities community for the better part of the last decade. With support from First American's Frank LaBlanc, one team handles highly confidential escrow and other financial documents by preparing the files, scanning documents, and distributing them to the appropriate departments. Another team works in the kitchen of Chef Dore Sommer, executive chef of First American's employee Café, which serves more than 1,000 people per day.

Direct Support Professional: Elizabeth Martinez

Employed by Goodwill of Orange County, Elizabeth Martinez demonstrates a strong passion for enhancing the lives of individuals served by RCOC. Currently the job coach for three men with developmental disabilities who work at First American Financial Corporation's employee Café in Santa Ana, Elizabeth is always willing to go above and beyond her assigned duties. She listens with compassion to the people she supports, and is a wonderful teacher and role model of how to support the true integration of people with disabilities into the work force. Through her coaching, this group of employees has experienced success and incredible personal growth.

RCOC Achievement: Randy Jones

The RCOC Achievement award recognizes outstanding performance by an RCOC employee. Often, the award goes to a service coordinator. However, the colleagues who nominated him for this honor called attention to the importance of individuals like Randy who make the organization run more smoothly, more efficiently, and who demonstrate a positive, "can do" attitude. In his role as Technical Assistant, Randy is involved in mail distribution, copying projects, meeting room set-up and myriad other tasks. Always sensitive and respectful in his dealings with those with developmental disabilities, he is a wonderful example of RCOC's mission, vision and values in action.



Randy Jones

Family Member: Mimi Chou

The mother of an adult child with special needs, Mimi Chou is a dedicated mother to her own child, and a tireless advocate for others in both Orange County and Los Angeles. She is one of the founders of the Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled (CPAD), a



Mimi Chou with Alan Martin

nonprofit organization dedicated to providing culturally and linguistically relevant services to Chinese American families, including parent training, social activities, and educational and recreational opportunities for those with special needs. In 2010, she single-handedly established the Orange County Chapter of CPAD and started its monthly informational seminars for local families. An outstanding mother and a community leader, Mimi is selfless and generous – always giving of her time, energy and resources to those in need.

Spotlight Award Honorees (continued on back)



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Dialogue Newsletter

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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)

Service Provider: Goodwill of Orange County

Since 1924, the people at Goodwill of Orange County have demonstrated a commitment to quality lives for people with diverse abilities. Providing a comprehensive range of education, training, and employment services, they help those with developmental disabilities succeed at home, at work and at school. Individuals the agency supports do a variety of jobs, such as packaging and assembly, custodial services, maintenance, retail sales, retail processing, document destruction and much more. In



(L-R) Goodwill of Orange County's Jodean Hudson, Manny Vallejo, Araceli Cruz, Richard Adams, Kathi Millett, Chris Stoner and Kathy Copeland, RCOC's Larry Landauer, and Goodwill's Priscilla Torres, Frank Talarico, and Diana Neverez.

addition, Goodwill of Orange County supports individuals who are employed by others, including several Chick-fil-A locations throughout the county and the Orange County Fire Authority.