

In the Spotlight

Melissa Bateman

If you have the opportunity to meet 51-year-old Melissa Bateman, one of the first things you'll probably notice about her is how open she is to new experiences and to trying new things. In fact, "yes" could very well be her favorite word!

"She's very friendly and sociable," said Tiffany Sanchez, Melissa's Regional Center of Orange County Service Coordinator. "She doesn't let her challenges keep her from getting out in the community."

"She doesn't let her challenges keep her from getting out in the community."

That includes working as a dining room attendant for the Claim Jumper restaurant in Buena Park, a job she has held for more than 20 years with job coaching support from Westview Services. It also includes her embrace of RCOC's *Healthy Life, Happy Life* pilot program, which is aimed at educating and empowering the adults RCOC serves to make changes to live a healthier lifestyle.

Melissa, who has a mild intellectual disability, was one of several dozen

adults receiving either supported living (SLS) or independent living (ILS) services who were selected to participate in the first phase of the pilot that began early in 2018 and concluded in June. The story on page two of this newsletter details the 13-week wellness curriculum she and the other participants completed.

Participating in Healthy Life, Happy Life has motivated her to find more opportunities to walk.

Melissa said she has learned about eating healthy, and now likes eating more fruits and vegetables. However, her favorite part of the wellness program was the physical activity it encourages. She has always been somewhat active, since she has to walk to and from the bus stop for her commute to work, but participating in *Healthy Life, Happy Life* has motivated her to find more opportunities to walk.

She especially enjoys walking around the Downtown Disney shopping center with her friend Lori, and



Melissa Bateman

seeing all of the Disney characters and souvenir shops. And, while the program only asks participants to do 150 minutes of physical activity each week, Melissa regularly logs 200 minutes or more. She uses the timer on her phone to keep track of her time and then writes down her activity in the exercise log she received when she began the program.

"Exercise is good for managing your stress, and helps you lose weight,"

See **Melissa Bateman** 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 website: www.rcocdd.com.

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Upcoming Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Board Meetings

Sept. 6 • Nov. 1 • Jan. 10
March 7 • May 2 • June 6

The public is invited to attend RCOC board meetings. The meetings begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Regional Center Board Room at RCOC's headquarters, located at 1525 North Tustin Avenue in Santa Ana.

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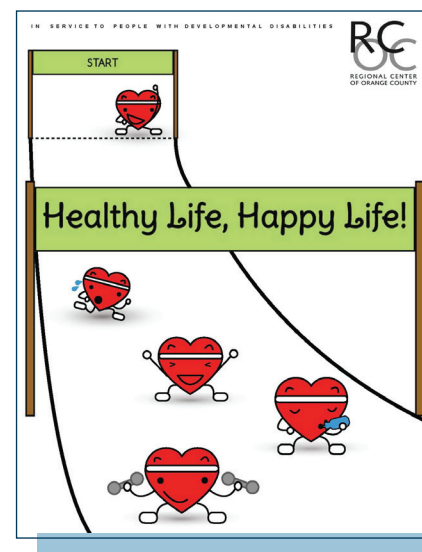
What is *Healthy Life, Happy Life*?

H*ealthy Life, Happy Life* is a pilot program aimed at helping to improve the overall wellness of adults served by Regional Center of Orange County. The 13-week curriculum, which is still being tested and modified, was developed by the RCOC Health and Wellness Advisory Council – a collaboration of physicians, pharmacists, psychologists, nurses, peer advocates, service providers, and academia partners.

Each Healthy Life, Happy Life lesson includes educational material on a specific nutrition or wellness topic, hands-on activities to enhance learning, and exercise goals for the week.

Designed to inform, educate, and empower people with developmental disabilities to live a healthier lifestyle, each *Healthy Life, Happy Life* lesson includes educational material on a specific nutrition or wellness topic, hands-on activities to enhance learning, and exercise goals for the week.

The program begins with an overview, where participants learn about and calculate their own Body Mass Index (BMI) to see if they are at a healthy weight. That is followed by nutrition-focused lessons covering grocery shopping, the five food groups, reading food labels, preparing meals at home, and choosing healthier food and drink options. There are also health-focused lessons about blood pressure, diabetes,



cholesterol, and stress management, along with the importance of good sleep.

Another key part of the program encourages participants to increase their physical activity, both to burn calories and to improve overall wellness. At the outset, participants are asked to engage in brisk walking or jogging for at least 150 minutes a week. This is based on current physical activity guidelines for adults, and can be broken down however works best for each individual. For instance, one person might do 30 minutes a day, five days a week while another does 50 minutes a day, 3 days a week.

Participants are asked to engage in brisk walking or jogging for at least 150 minutes a week.

The program concludes with a wrap up lesson, where participants review their progress and discuss how to maintain the lifestyle changes they've made throughout the program.

Executive Director's Report

RCOC's Wellness Pilot Program Gets Underway

By Larry Landauer, Executive Director

This past June, several of the adults RCOC serves participated in a fun and different kind of graduation ceremony, when they came together to receive their Certificates of Recognition for completing our 13-week *Healthy Life, Happy Life* pilot program. It was a festive event, where we also had the opportunity to thank the Western University students who are helping to collect and analyze data, and the seven service providers (Creative Support; Independent Endeavor; Independent Options; L.I.F.E.; Michele V. Miller; Project Independence; and RIO) that graciously agreed to help us test this exciting new approach to improving the health and wellness of those we serve.

Most of the adults receiving services from RCOC have a Body Mass Index (BMI) that classifies them as overweight or obese.

Our launch of this pilot program, which is now entering its second phase and is expected to be completed at year's end, is in response to National Core Indicators (NCI)

data that shows most of the adults receiving services from RCOC have a Body Mass Index (BMI) that classifies them as overweight or



obese; a majority also do not engage in the recommended amount of moderate physical activity. While the chart on this page shows that

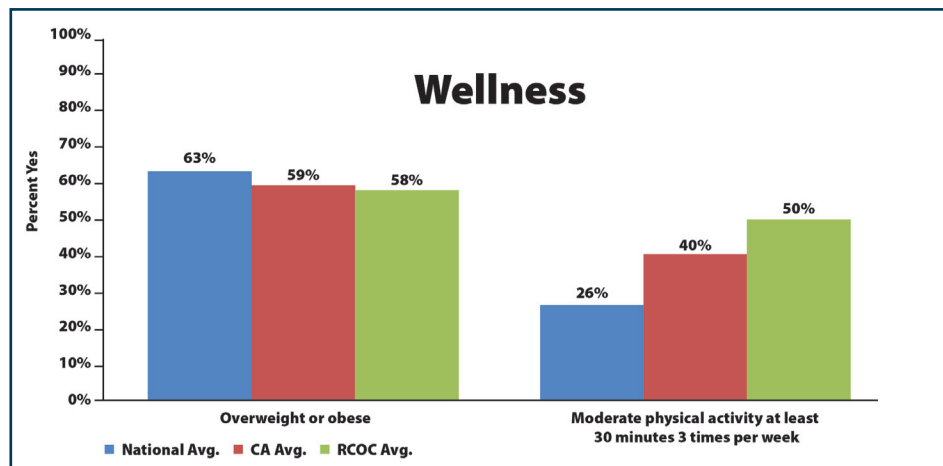
Orange County compares favorably to both statewide and national averages, the figures do not reflect the high level of health and wellness we would like for those we serve.

That's why I'm so excited to report that initial indications are that we are on the right track with *Healthy Life, Happy Life*. Much of the data had not been fully tabulated by the time this newsletter went to print. However, we do know that most of the participants who began the program showed the dedication and commitment to complete it. Most have also provided very positive feedback to us about how the program made them feel about themselves and their ability to make good choices.

In addition, many of the participants lost weight. The data we have at this time indicates that the average weight loss was 11.4 pounds, but several people lost 30 pounds or more, and one person succeeded in shedding an amazing 37 pounds.

That is certainly positive news, but it's important to emphasize that weight loss is only a piece of the wellness puzzle. Our goals with *Healthy Life, Happy Life* are much broader, seeking to educate and empower participants to make changes that foster a healthier lifestyle (see story on page 2). With so many low-cost, but high-calorie options available, that can be a challenge for all of us. But whether it's making healthy food choices, getting into a regular exercise routine, or learning to better manage stress, it's all about creating new habits that can make life better.

As we proceed to the second phase of the pilot program, we are looking forward to seeing how the adjustments we're making now will make it easier for service providers to implement the program on a larger scale. And we're enthusiastic about the potential in the future for making *Healthy Life, Happy Life* available to everyone who would like to participate.



Person to Person

Reflections on Our Personal Wellness Journeys

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

The *Healthy Life, Happy Life* program aims to improve the health of all the people RCOC serves. While the pilot is still underway, the two of us have already had positive experiences with it.

Sylvia really enjoyed participating, and was pleased that the focus was not only on losing weight, but on educating people about things like setting goals, portion control, and looking at food labels, as well as health concerns like blood pressure and how to prevent diabetes. She especially enjoyed the activity portion, writing down in her exercise log how she fit in 150 minutes of exercise each week.

*Wellness is not a diet,
it's a lifestyle change.*

We know what you're thinking: "150 minutes! That's a lot!" It's only two and a half hours per week, but you might still think: "That's not for me."



Sylvia Delgado



Jess Corey

From personal experience, Sylvia knows that much exercise can seem harder than it really is. She emphasizes that is a total, and that it can be done in any combination that works for you – taking a 15 minute walk, 25 minutes of dancing, or maybe a 30 minute fitness class.

One of the keys for her was to ask her ILS coordinator about group activities. Sylvia now looks forward to her weekly bootcamp class, and she now knows that wellness is not a diet, it's a lifestyle change.

Though Jess isn't a participant in the pilot, just being on the program's advisory council

has benefitted him. He found some easy ways to improve his health, like drinking plenty of water. He was surprised to learn that even small changes like that can make a difference: during a recent doctor visit, he discovered that all of his levels (cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure) were very good!

*Even small changes
can make a difference.*

Though each of us has different limitations, both of us believe it's important to keep trying and doing what you can, even if you don't see a change right away – not because somebody else wants you to do it, but because being healthy makes it easier for you to get out and do what YOU want to do.



L-R: Jenny Ha, Patrick Huddleston, Debbie Hicks, Sylvia Delgado, Robert Lipps and James Redwine

Behavior Management Workshops for Parents

These workshops are free for parents, and cover 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. To gain the most value from the experience, parents are encouraged to attend all sessions in a series, though toilet training is the focus of the last session. Advance reservations are required and group size is typically limited to 8-15 families. Contact your RCOC Service Coordinator or Tracy Vaughan at (714) 796-5223 for additional information, and to register.

NOTE: *Child care is not provided, so please do not bring children to the workshops.*

Presented in English by Advanced Behavioral Health

When: Thursday evenings – Aug. 16, Aug. 23, Aug. 30, Sept. 6 and Sept. 13

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Cypress Office
10803 Hope Street, Suite A

Presented in Spanish by Footprints

When: Tuesday evenings – Oct. 16, Oct. 23, Oct. 30, Nov. 6 and Nov. 13

Time: 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: RCOC Santa Ana Office
1525 N. Tustin Avenue
Free parking in the structure across from the RCOC office building.

Everyday Wellness Tip: Brush Your Tongue

You probably know how important it is to brush your teeth at least twice a day, but did you know that it's also important to brush your tongue at the same time? Like teeth, your tongue can harbor a lot of bacteria that can cause cavities and gum disease, so be sure to brush it thoroughly. In addition to keeping your mouth healthier, brushing your tongue will make your breath fresher! And remember to replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months, or sooner if the bristles become frayed. Frayed bristles aren't as effective for cleaning your teeth.



2018 AutFest Film Festival Review

By Liza Krassner, RCOC Board Member

There's a changing narrative on the views of disability in Hollywood. On Apr. 28-29, the Autism Society of America hosted its Second Annual AutFest Film Festival in a sensory-friendly environment at the Writer's Guild Theater in Beverly Hills. This year's selections included *Roman J. Israel, ESQ* starring Denzel Washington, the television hit *The Good Doctor* starring Freddy Highmore, and Netflix's *Atypical* starring Kier Gilchrist, all backed by SONY Pictures Entertainment which received the visionary award for its commitment to supporting projects that portray autism in a positive light.

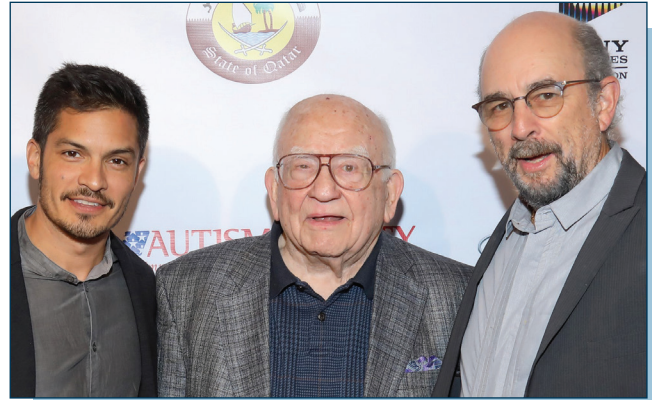
Neurodiversity is a concept developed in the 90's that asserts that neurological differences should be recognized like any other human variation.

Full disclosure: I'm a fan of *Atypical*. The writer in me appreciates compelling characters, well researched content, relatable stories, and fine writing. The show's Creator and Producer Robia Rashid said "*Atypical* tries to shift the narrative towards neurodiversity." Neurodiversity is a concept developed in the 90's that asserts that neurological differences should be recognized like any other human variation. In this case, Sam, the main character, is portrayed as different, but not lacking.

The first season follows the journey of Sam, a young teen with autism who struggles socially in his quest to find a girlfriend. His decisions and journey affect everyone in the family. His mother so fears that Sam's social deficits in dealing with the complexities of a relationship could end in disaster that she wants to shield him from heartbreak. His father patiently holds it together while struggling to provide guidance to his son on how to deal with the opposite sex. Meanwhile, his protective sister feels such a great responsibility to look after her brother that her own personal relationships and interests are put on hold. For a family that's adjusted to living with autism a certain way for years, Sam's emerging desire to be more independent turns the family upside down. Sound familiar?

It's a slow process, but I think Hollywood is listening.

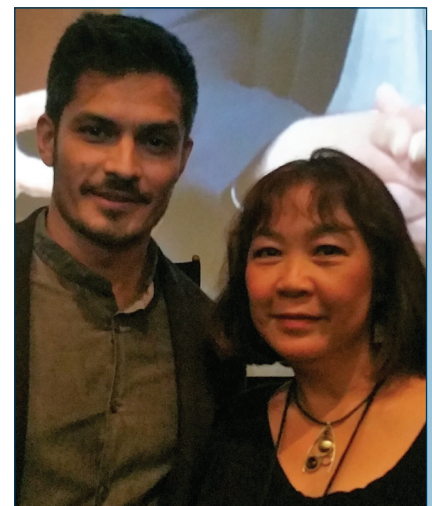
As a parent, I'm drawn back to the notion of person-centered thinking when it comes to transitioning a loved one with special needs to independent living. After all, it's really the entire family that's transitioning and dealing with a full range of decisions relating to the individual's vision for their life – from where to live, and needed support services, to securing fundamental needs such as financial



Actor Ed Asner (center) with Nicholas Gonzalez (left) and Richard Schiff (right) from TV's *The Good Doctor*

resources, and how to advocate for it all. Quite frankly, it's a daunting task.

Atypical's producers announced that season two will focus on Sam looking for more independence as he leaves high school. Two new actors, Layla Weiner and Nikki Gutman, both of whom are on the autism spectrum, will join the cast as Sam's new friends. This was due, in part, to viewer comments that criticized the show for not employing actors who are in the spectrum. And this criticism applies as well to all areas in the entertainment industry. It's a slow process, but I think Hollywood is listening. After all, some of the finest stories come from art imitating life.



Nicholas Gonzalez and Liza Krassner

Melissa Bateman
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she said, noting that she also enjoys the weekly boot camp fitness class recently organized by RIO (Rehabilitation Institute of Southern California), her independent living service provider. Along with other adults served by RIO, Melissa does exercises like push-ups, sit-ups, and jumping jacks. She said the class makes exercise more fun, because she is friends with the other group members and it's also a social activity for them. In addition to a variety of exercises, she said they sometimes walk or jog at a nearby park. They also do stretches to help prevent muscle cramps and activities to improve their balance, like standing on one foot.

“Exercise is good for managing your stress, and helps you lose weight.”

“I love the class a lot!” she said.

Melissa’s RIO Case Manager Rosie Ramirez emphasized that boot camp participants slowly build up their endurance and fitness, and that many activities are modified to accommodate different individuals’ physical conditions and limitations.

Boot camp participants slowly build up their endurance and fitness.

In addition to working with Melissa to complete the *Healthy Life, Happy Life* curriculum, Rosie has worked

L-R: James Redwine, Samuel Cohen, Sylvia Delgado, Melissa Bateman, Debbie Hicks and Crescenza Rotondi at a bootcamp fitness class organized by RIO

with her for the past year on a variety of independent living skills, such as money management and getting to doctor appointments. Though she lives in the home of the family that has cared for her since she was removed from her biological family home at the age of ten, Melissa and the people she considers family believe it is important for her to continue to develop more skills for independence.

“I like being independent,” she said.

Melissa is also active in her church, where she enjoys singing in the choir. She even sang in a talent show staged by RIO last year, receiving a Certificate of Participation.



Melissa visited Universal Studios last year

Melissa is also active in her church, where she enjoys singing in the choir.

“Melissa is one of those people who doesn’t have to be asked twice about anything,” said Rosie. “She’s always seeking new opportunities and wanting to do everything, but she’s also very communicative about her likes and dislikes, which is important.”



Melissa loves to sing, and participated in RIO's talent show last year



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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

Self-Determination Program Gets Federal Approval

In early June, another milestone was reached for California's long-awaited Self Determination Program, when the state received approval of its application to have services provided through the Program qualify for matching funds through the federal government's Medicaid program.

This was an essential step, since the legislation signed into law by Governor Brown makes the Self Determination Program contingent upon approval of federal funding.

Now that federal approval has been received, the Department of Developmental Services will proceed

to finalize a multitude of implementation details. Their goal is to complete selection of the initial program participants by Oct. 1, 2018. However, if you are interested in the program and have not yet enrolled, you can still be added to the list.

To learn more, contact Cathy Furukawa at cfurukawa@rcocdd.com or (714) 796-5181. For the latest Program information, visit the DDS website at www.dds.ca.gov/SDP/.



Events and Activities in the Vietnamese Community

Regional Center of Orange County has prepared this insert especially for the individuals and families we serve who are most comfortable communicating in the Vietnamese language. These events, programs and activities are presented in Vietnamese and/or are geared specifically for those in Orange County's Vietnamese community. However, some are not funded or endorsed by RCOC and this information is provided as a courtesy. If you know of other opportunities you would like to share with others in the Vietnamese community, please contact RCOC Cultural Specialist Kaitlynn Truong at (714) 558-5405 or ktuong@rcocdd.com.

New Parent Orientation

New to RCOC? Attend this new parent orientation and learn more about the services and supports available to you through RCOC, how to contact your RCOC Service Coordinator, and how to work together to ensure your child's needs are met. This workshop is designed for Vietnamese parents whose children were recently found eligible for RCOC services, but all parents are welcome to attend. Light refreshments will be served, so please RSVP to Kaitlynn Truong at (714) 558-5405 or ktuong@rcocdd.com.

Saturday, Sept. 15
10:00 a.m. – Noon

Orange County Community Services Center
15496 Magnolia Street, Suite 111 in Westminster

CPR and First Aid Workshop

Attend this free workshop hosted by RCOC Comfort Connection Family Resource Center and learn how to administer CPR and first aid to infants and toddlers in emergency situations. Vietnamese interpreter is available upon request. For more information and to RSVP, contact Kaitlynn Truong at (714) 558-5405 or ktuong@rcocdd.com.

Thursday, Oct. 18
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

RCOC's Santa Ana Office at 1525 N. Tustin Avenue

NOTE: If it is important for you to receive an actual certificate for completing the course, please feel free to contact Steve Hoa Pham at (714) 462-7939. There will be a charge for the certificate track.

Back to School Day for Low-Income Families

Through the generosity of 24Hr HomeCare and BPSOS, free backpacks and school supplies will be given to low-income children served by RCOC and their siblings, ages 5-22. Supplies are limited, so if you would like to participate, you must call Kaitlynn Truong at (714) 558-5405 to pre-register. The event will take place Saturday, Aug. 25 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Orange County Community Services Center, 15496 Magnolia Street, Suite 111 in Westminster.

Community Living Classes

Attend these weekly classes and learn how to improve your quality of life and that of your loved ones. Each class will cover a different topic, including healthy relationships, independent living skills, stress management, community programs, navigating transportation options, and how to access needed services, including behavioral health services through OC Links. Classes take place every Monday from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at the Orange County Community Services Center, 15496 Magnolia Street, Suite 111 in Westminster. For more information, contact Christine Nguyen, Mental Health Specialist at (714) 372-3618.

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Parenting Classes

Offered by Olive Crest to all Orange County parents and caregivers, these six-week parenting classes can help you build strong, healthy relationships with your children, address your child's problem behavior, minimize problems that disrupt family life, and help you to raise responsible, caring children. Classes are available at different locations throughout the year. For more information, contact Phuong Nguyen at (714) 361-4374.

Free Developmental Screening

The Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders will host a Free Developmental Screening Day for Vietnamese-speaking families with children ages 16 months through five years. The screening will cover communication, emotional regulation, motor skills, behavior, adaptive functioning, and social skills. Parents and caregivers will learn about their child's development, identify any delays or concerns early, and connect to

resources to support their child's needs. Preregistration is required. For more information and to register, call (949) 267-0499 or email centertraining1@uci.edu.

Sunday, Aug. 19

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Parent Support Group

Dr. Xuyen Matsuda from South Land Integrated Services hosts an ongoing support group for Vietnamese-speaking parents who want to improve their relationships with their children, get support and input from other parents, and improve their own psychological health and well-being. For more information, call (714) 620-7000.

Second and last Wednesday of the month
(Aug. 8, Aug. 29, Sept. 12, Sept. 26, Oct. 10,
Oct. 31, Nov. 14, Nov. 28 and Dec. 12)

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

1618 W. First Street in Santa Ana

Living Options for Adults

A little over half of the people RCOC serves are adults, but the overwhelming majority of them still live in the family home. Living with parents can have advantages, especially when a young person isn't sure about what they want to do after graduating from high school. However, it's important for families to know that RCOC can help with a variety of services and supports that enable adults with developmental disabilities to live safely and independently in the community. And, the severity of a person's disabilities is never a barrier since RCOC can help find a suitable home where any individual's needs can be met.

Of the more than 3,700 adults RCOC serves who live outside the family home, around 1,650 live in group homes that typically serve up to

six adults with similar needs, while around 1,325 receive supported living services (SLS) or independent living services (ILS). Though SLS and ILS are increasingly preferred, all of these living options nurture a person's life skills and independence. This growing independence is a natural progression for adults with disabilities, and can be important for the person as his or her parents grow older and ultimately pass away.

The severity of a person's disabilities is never a barrier.

When a person with disabilities chooses a supported living or independent living arrangement, their RCOC-funded service provider works one-on-one with them to help them perform, or learn to perform,

important daily life activities, such as grocery shopping, house cleaning, and meal preparation. When the person with disabilities also has physical challenges, they may also qualify for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) which funds personal assistance for things like using the bathroom, bathing, and getting dressed. The services provided all depend on the individual's needs. Since most adults with developmental disabilities have low incomes and usually can't afford the high cost of rent in Orange County, RCOC can also help them to access federal financial assistance for housing.

If you'd like to learn more about living options for adults, or think your family member might benefit from these services, be sure to contact your RCOC Service Coordinator.



Events and Activities in the Hispanic Community

Regional Center of Orange County has prepared this insert especially for the individuals and families we serve who are most comfortable communicating in Spanish. These events, programs and activities are presented in Spanish and/or are geared specifically for those in Orange County's Hispanic community. However, some are not funded or endorsed by RCOC and this information is provided as a courtesy. If you know of other opportunities you would like to share with other Spanish speakers, please contact RCOC Community Outreach Coordinator Reina Hernandez at (714) 558-5406 or rhernandez@rcocdd.com.

Technical Support Clinic

Being able to receive news and information digitally will allow you to be better connected to your RCOC Service Coordinator and to the Comfort Connection Family Resource Center. We can help! Please call RCOC Community Outreach Coordinator Reina Hernandez at (714) 558-5406 to make your appointment today. She can help you create your email address, and teach you how to send and receive email messages.

RCOC New Parent Orientation

New to RCOC? Attend this informative orientation session to receive an overview of the services and supports available to you through RCOC, and learn how to work more effectively with your Service Coordinator to ensure your child's needs are met.

Thursday, Oct. 25
6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

RCOC's Santa Ana Office at 1525 N. Tustin Avenue



Newhope Library Learning Center

Newhope Learning Center offers the use of iPads that are loaded with educational applications suitable for children up to eighth grade. To access the iPads, children must be accompanied by an adult. The Center is located at 122 N. Newhope Street in Santa Ana.

Free ESL Classes

Santa Ana College School of Continuing Education is now enrolling adult students in free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. All classes are open entry/open exit, offering students greater control over their learning schedules. Class completion may take a semester or longer. Classes take place at the Centennial Education Center, 2900 W. Edinger Avenue in Santa Ana, and at nearly 40 other locations throughout the community, including the Santa Ana College campus. Classes are scheduled at convenient times throughout the day and evening from Monday-Saturday. For more information, visit the website at www.sac.edu/ContinuingEducation/ESL.

MY BEST Youth Transition Group

Mentoring Best Youth Transition (MY BEST) is a monthly group for youth ages 14-22 with all types of disabilities, who want to learn skills for independence.

The group is operated by the Dayle McIntosh Center, Anaheim Accessibility Center at 100 S. Atchison in Anaheim. For more information, call (714) 621-3300.

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Events at the Santa Ana Public Library

26 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana

For more information on the activities below, call the Library at (714) 647-5258 or a Youth Outreach Coordinator at (714) 621-3300.

Live Out Loud Youth Peer Day

Taking place the first Saturday of every month, this group is for youth ages 14-24 who want to “live out loud.” Activities include movies, games, karaoke, and more.

Library Learning Centers

Free bilingual homework help and tutoring is available for students in grades K-12 who have a valid library card.

Santa Ana Public E-Readers

Check out an e-reader at the Santa Ana Public Library and access a sampling of the Library’s digital downloads. Their e-readers come preloaded with apps and content so you can discover the joy of anytime anywhere access to digital content at the Library.

Living Options for Adults

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