

DISABILITY RIGHTS CALIFORNIA
OUTREACH NEWSLETTER
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Agency wide Highlights

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY PEER/SELF ADVOCACY UNIT

Participants network and raised funds for The Buddy Walk

On September 26, 2009, the Developmental Disability Peer/Self Advocacy Unit (DDPSAU) participated in the Buddy walk, sponsored by the Down Syndrome Association of Hemet. The event started as walk ended at the Weston Park, where exhibitors showcased agency information. Exhibitors were asked to bring a game for participants to play. DDPSA staff provided a game to occupy the children, while talking to the parents about disability rights services. Parents networked and gathered information from exhibitors. Approximately 500 families, children and friends attended the event. Disability Rights California displayed brochures, publications, and fact sheets. Everyone enjoyed the food, games and activities and had fun while raising money for a worthy cause.

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PEER SELF ADVOCACY UNIT

A Day to Remember

The 7th Annual Remembrance Day in California was held on September 21, 2009. Ceremonies were held to honor individuals who lived and died in state hospitals and Developmental Centers. Over 700 community members, advocates, family, friends, and previous residents gathered for ceremonies in Santa Clara, Ukiah, Stockton, Patton, Porterville, Norwalk, Manteca, Sonoma and Napa. Each year the event is held to advance the California Memorial Project's goal of restoring dignity to the individuals who were buried in unmarked and often mass graves. Throughout the day participants recited poems, speakers, music and personal stories were shared by the previous residents. The California Memorial Project is working to ensure that all sites where individuals from California state institutions are buried have meaningful monuments. No one should be laid to rest without recognition because of a disability.

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SAN DIEGO REGIONAL OFFICE

Educating Spanish-speaking families on Individual Education Program (IEP)

The San Diego Regional office and the Office of Client's Rights Advocacy staff participated in the Fiesta Educativa of Orange County. San Diego staff member, Griselda Delgadillo presented to 25 Spanish-speaking parents on "How to have an Effective IEP Meeting," while others visited the booths to pick up brochures and information. Several organizations were invited to provide information to the families, including Ability First, Alzheimer's Association, Area Board XI, Casa de La Familia, Dayle McIntosh Center, Down Syndrome Association of Orange County and Disability Rights California.

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Reaching out to Orange County Advocates

The San Diego and Sacramento regional office staff met with Executive Director Dolores Kollmer of Dayle McIntosh Center to discuss and promote the Orange county Advocacy Training. During the discussion Dolores Kollmer offered their agency's conference room and any technical support to accommodate the project.

On November 4, 2009, Special Education "Yes You Can" was presented to community advocates from Early Start, Dayle McIntosh Center, Vietnamese Parents with Disability Children Association, Comfort Connections, Child Care and Respite Services, Western Youth Services, United Cerebral Palsy and Team Advocates for Special Kids. These 21 advocates work with the Asian Pacific Islander communities. The training began with a welcome and introduction by Leilani Pfeifer, Multicultural Affairs Coordinator. After the introduction, Lauren Giardina, staff attorney, conducted the first part of the training on evaluation and assessment. Later that afternoon transition and

behavior discipline. Griselda Delgadillo, Multicultural Affairs Advocate presented on IEP, and complaint process. Throughout the day, community advocates asked many questions. During the afternoon, advocates were divided into two teams. Provided with instructions and a case scenario to review, each team developed a strategy on how to advocate for the client. Each team had members with various levels of advocacy skills. Many felt very comfortable in their role, while others took notes and asked questions at the end. The training was a success. It allowed Disability Rights staff to network and develop new relationships.

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LOS ANGELES REGIONAL OFFICE

California Endowment hosts Fiesta Educativa

Once again Fiesta Educativa held its largest event in Los Angeles. The conference has grown tremendously since its inception and several counties now have their own conferences. This year on September 21, 2009 the conference was held at the California Endowment in Los Angeles. Approximately 300 families participated. Los Angeles regional staff conducted legal clinics and special education training. Families also stopped at the booth to pick up brochures and sign up for publications. The families are always grateful when Disability Rights California is at the Conference.

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NATIVE AMERICAN UNIT

The Gathering at the State Capitol

Native American Advocate Phyllis Preston, attended the annual Native American Day. The celebration took place on the south steps of the State Capitol building in Sacramento. This gathering of California tribal leaders, state department representatives, and community officials offered a variety of resources for those attending. The celebration was opened with a welcome blessing by a Miwok tribal elder. Traditional drums and singing accompanied the Native American veterans posting the flags. Comanche sign language interpreted the song “God Bless America.” Disability Rights California’s staff participated at the event by providing information about our services and disseminating brochures and publications. Disability Rights California staff provided intakes assistance for consumers and families at the event. This was an opportunity to network with other agencies. As a result, California Indian Legal Services offered to work with Disability Rights California on future trainings about disability law.

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SACRAMENTO REGIONAL OFFICE

Sacramento Regional office conducts trainings and participates at community events

This quarter, the Sacramento regional office conducted 26 trainings and participated in 15 events throughout its catchment area. Staff provided information about Disability Rights California's services, disseminated brochures and publications. Some of these events include:

- The annual Tech Fair in Sonoma county where vendors came to share new information and display assistive technology equipment;
- Autism Walk Now reached out to over 7,000 families in Sacramento. The successful event took place at Raley Field in West Sacramento;
- Disability Awareness Fair in Stockton where over 100 consumers came to the event to obtain resources and;
- Binational Health Fairs in Sacramento and Stockton impacted hundreds of Latino families

In addition, approximately 19 training on In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and Regional Center Services Budget Cut- trainings were scheduled with the assistance from community partners. These partners included: United Cerebral Palsy serving the San Joaquin and Stanislaus county areas, Independent Living Centers serving Santa Rosa, Fairfield and Humboldt; Warmline serving the Sacramento area; Parent CAN from Napa which assists migrant farm workers; SEIU serving the San Joaquin and Stanislaus county areas, and many more. As part of the regional office plan, staff implemented a process to handle the large volume of calls in order to assist consumer's families who had questions about IHSS.

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FRESNO OFFICE

Celebrating Culture in Fresno

The 11th Annual Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueno was held in Fresno on September 27, 2009. Approximately 1800 Families from Oaxaca, Mexico came to this celebration to obtain information about community resources, view the entertainment of its rich customary dances, and enjoy traditional food. Various agencies displayed information, while other vendors sold hats, huaraches (sandals), herbal medicines, and art work native to Oaxaca. Many who attended the event spoke in languages such as Mixteco, Zapoteca and Triqui.

During the event a family stopped by our booth to talk to Lisa Navarro, Multicultural Affairs Advocate, about services for their children with disabilities. The mother was unaware of Disability Rights California and has gone for years without any assistance. This was an opportunity to educate and provide information about their children's rights.

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OFFICE OF CLIENT'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY

The Importance of Self Advocacy

On September 28, 2009, Jackie Chiang, Client's Rights Advocate, and Guadalupe Marquez, Bilingual Assistant Client's Rights Advocate presented a training on Self Advocacy and Voting Rights to 13 regional center consumers at the Goodwill Industries headquarters work site. Jackie and Guadalupe explained the importance of self advocacy and voting rights to consumers. Throughout the training, consumers were asked to share examples of times when they had stood up for their own rights. The group was lively and interactive. Many of them had great stories to share with one another and the self advocacy training was a success. Goodwill invited Jackie and Guadalupe back for its monthly assembly and future trainings.

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Providing Information and Resources at the Annual Resource Fair

The Office of Client's Rights Advocacy staff attended the Special Education Multicultural Advisory Committee's Annual Resource Fair in South Los Angeles. Christine Armand, Associate Client's Rights Advocate, and Anastasia Bacigalupo Client's Rights Advocate, provided information to families on various topics, including resources and programs available at city, county and state level.

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Office of Client's Right Advocacy Educates Parents About the Changes to the Early Start Laws

Office of Client's Right Advocacy (OCRA) held an important training about the changes to the Early Start laws for families at the Southeast Family Resource Center in the Los Angeles area on September 23, 2009. OCRA presented a training in English and Spanish. This training was particularly important as many of the families in attendance had already received notices of action indicating that some or all of their Early Start services would be reduced or terminated.

The training reviewed the changes to the law, including eligibility. Katie Hornberger, Clients' Rights Advocate, and Abigail Perez, Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate, for Harbor Regional Center consumers also discussed the new Prevention Program and what would be provided under that program. They also reviewed the appeal process, discussed how to complete hearing request forms and request aid paid pending to secure continuing services. OCRA also presented some of the changes to services for children over age 3 and In-Home Support Services.

Everyone took notes so they could pass along the information to others not in attendance. It was a fun hour and half and

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BAY AREA REGIONAL OFFICE

Making a Difference at Sur de la Bahia Conference

Yesenia Roman Multicultural Affairs Advocate and Office of Client's Rights Advocate, Rita Defilippis, staffed an informational booth at the 2009 Fiesta Educativa Sur de la Bahia Conference. Stephen Rosenbaum, staff attorney, presented to parents on "How to Obtain High Quality Education Services for Your Child." The conference, attended by 250 individuals was held at the National Hispanic University in San Jose. There were families from San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Alameda counties. The purpose of the conference was to provide community resources and the latest information for families with children with disabilities. Yesenia Roman and Rita Defilippis greeted the families as they stopped by the booth. The attendees demonstrated great interest in Yikes! My Child with a Disability is being considered for Expulsion, Eek! My Child with a Disability Keeps getting Suspended and 18 Tips for getting a Quality IEP." The conference allowed staff to share with families about information on disability rights, especially to those who were not familiar with our services.

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AGENCY WIDE HIGHLIGHTS

For this quarter Disability Rights California staff worked diligently to develop fact sheets on the regional center cuts services. Strategies were developed as an organization to deliver this important information to the community. Adam Borokoff, Publication Coordinator made sure Fact Sheets were translated into Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese while Ruth Ordas, Webmaster, posted the information on Disability Rights website. This agency wide effort took place in order to provide information to the community partners and advocates so families know about the changes. In addition to these fact sheets, 80 trainings on IHSS, regional center service changes were provided to individuals with disabilities from language, ethnic distinct communities. Conference calls were coordinated by various offices for English and Spanish-speaking families. These calls provided family members, consumers and advocates information and opportunity to ask questions about the cuts.

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