



Disability
Rights
California



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2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Disability Rights California Board of Directors

Board Members: Allison Brightman-President, Izetta Jackson-Chair, Amy Kalivas-Chief Financial Officer, Jose Flores-Secretary, Connie Cha, Billy Hall, Diana Honig, Lily Lambert, Marijit Singh, Kathryn Janet Trevino, Angela Van Ostran, Eduardo Vega, Guy Wallace, Eric Ybarra.

Public Members by Committee: Legislative-Laura Rasey Miller, Brendan Peacock; Diversity and Program-Ben Jauregui; PAIMI Council-Terri Bercasio, Lisle Boomer, Linda F. Drattell, Leslie Napper; Finance-Diana Nelson.

A majority of the Board have a disability or are family of people with disabilities. The Board reflects California's ethnic and language communities.

Board Profile: Allison Brightman

Allison is an entertainment attorney who lives in Los Angeles with her family, including three children. She has served on our board for four years as part of her overall community activism, using her legal and advocacy skills to improve opportunities for children and adults with disabilities.

Allison believes in strength in numbers when it comes to disability advocacy, a strategy she has successfully applied when advocating for her two daughters. Further, while she knows that physical accessibility is a formidable challenge, she is also concerned that people with developmental disabilities face invisible barriers such as low expectations and ridicule, which can be just as daunting.



Fast Facts: 2010

- Over the last year, we provided direct assistance to 26,681 requests, an increase of 5.8% over 2009.
- It is due to our dedicated staff that we could handle the rising demand caused mainly by budget cuts.
- Our training also increased, reaching 43,000 people, up from 33,400 in 2009.
- The top requests were help with regional centers, education, privacy and autonomy, health, abuse and income maintenance.
- Last year, help with regional centers was the top request; education was our top issue for decades.
- Budget cuts seem to be driving the steep demand for help with income maintenance, health services and regional centers.
- Services to our clients with developmental disabilities also rose to 12,073, an increase of 4%
- Assistance in the area of mental health rose, covering 10,414 requests
- An additional 4195 services were provided through grants covering people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities, and those needing assistive technology or help with social security work issues.
- Our class action suits impacted an additional 393,000 Californians last year and stories about a few of these lawsuits appear on pages 4, 5, 8 and 15.

The ADA: our best tool to fight discrimination

—*Catherine Blakemore, executive director*

2010 marked the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Upon its passage, Senator Ted Kennedy said: “The act has the potential to become one of the great civil rights laws of our generation...This legislation is a bill of rights for the disabled, and America will be a better and fairer nation because of it.” Twenty years later the ADA has changed the way society perceives individuals with disabilities, increased employment opportunities, provided better access to public and commercial buildings and ensured that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to move from institutions to the community. Our work this year is framed by the realization that while much has been accomplished, we have much more to do if all Californians with disabilities are to be included in every aspect of society.

This year, we continued to help Californians with disabilities move from institutions to the community, continued to fight for community services in challenging budget times and continued our efforts to end the unspeakable abuse we investigated

in nursing homes. Our success in helping people move from a state institution to the community, preserving critical community based mental health services for thousands of individuals with psychiatric disabilities and stopping the most devastating budget cuts shows the power of the ADA.

Because of the ADA we are also better able to challenge the attitudes and stereotypes that stigmatize disability. From the mid-1880s to the 1960s, more than 45,000 individuals died while residents of state institutions and were buried in numbered or unmarked graves. Now,

they will be honored every third Monday of September, thanks to an Assembly resolution authored by Assemblymember Wesley Chesbro—a reminder to each of us that the lives of Californians with disabilities matter.

In tight budget times, we must make sure that California does not slip backwards: we must preserve services that help people with disabilities live successfully in the community. We hope that you will join us.



photo by ricardo jauregui

Cover (top to bottom): Mark Chambers, named plaintiff in our Laguna Honda Hospital case that settled in 2009, making a speech about the advantages of living in the community to the estimated 2000 participants in the 2010 Capitol Action Day rally in Sacramento (photo by Merle Levy); Attorney Henry Su, formerly of Howrey LLP, who has devoted hours of his pro bono work in support of the Americans with Disabilities Act, together with classical musician Nathaniel Ayers, whose voluntary journey from the streets to supported housing was the subject of a book and film, both called *The Soloist* (photo by Virginia Knowlton); and Angelica Rodriguez, an individual with a psychiatric disability who took a stand and complained about a skilled nursing facility that applied restraints to her with violent force (photo by Ricardo Jauregui).

Our class action suit preserves outpatient mental health services



Shown in the photo are Leslie Napper, Stuart Seaborn and Margaret Bronick-Abilla and Amy Nash (at left and at right) representing Cooley LLP, the law firm providing pro bono services in the Napper case. The occasion was our Board's award in September to Leslie Napper, recognizing her for taking on the role of the lead plaintiff in the case and the valuable assistance provided by the Cooley attorneys.

photo by leonard alfaro

"In my early 30s when I was first diagnosed with a mental health disorder, I was in disbelief, it just knocked me over." Leslie Napper, 41, said "it was hard to accept having this disability, and I bounced back and forth between different hospitals and facilities." Feeling depressed and discouraged, she thought about killing herself.

After bad experiences with health care providers who offered heavy medications as the sole treatment, a few years ago she found the Northgate Point Regional Support Team in Sacramento. The Northgate outpatient clinic approach offers more: psychotherapy and groups to help manage medications and side effects and to avoid self-defeating behavior. Plus, as Leslie points out, "Consistency of providers—I know them and they know me."

Leslie is fully responsible for maintaining a home with her elderly father who needs assistance with mobility. "My father depends on me... With access to my usual providers, I'm confident that I can stay on an even keel and avoid my previous need for inpatient services... If I fall apart and end up in the hospital, what might happen to him?"

In July, Federal District Judge John Mendez granted a preliminary injunction stopping the County from implementing its plan until the court determines that mental health recipients will continue to receive integrated services to avoid institutionalization. In November, we reached an interim agreement that keeps the current outpatient services in place at least through June 30, 2011 while an outside expert reviews best practices.

Stuart Seaborn, managing attorney, stated "We are pleased that the Court stopped the cuts and that the County has now agreed to continue services which are critical to preserving the mental health and safety of 5,000 individuals with psychiatric disabilities."

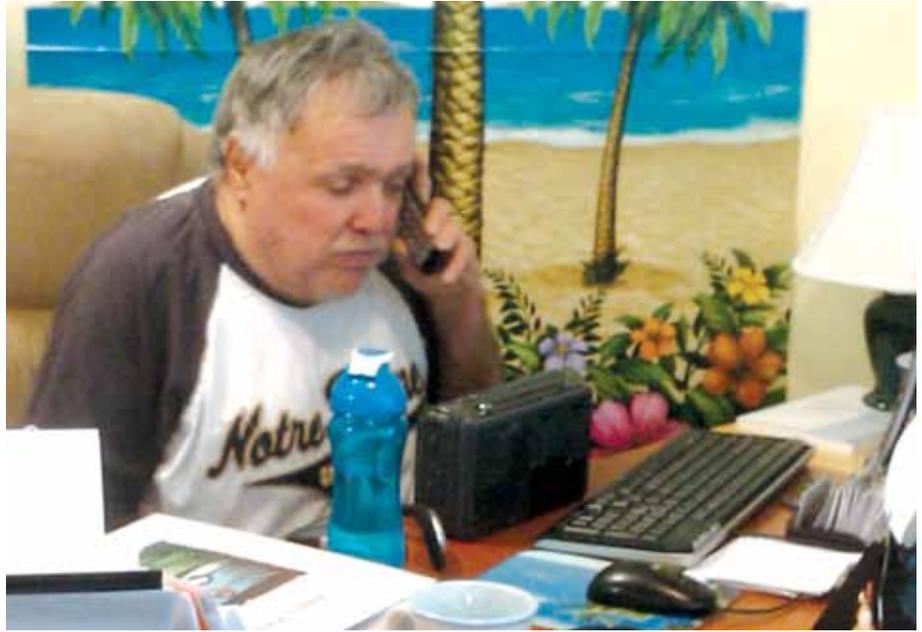
In the spring of 2010, rumors were flying that Sacramento County planned to close its outpatient mental health clinics. Leslie Napper and other clients became alarmed and asked us for help. We learned that to save money, the successful nonprofit clinics were to be closed on June 30 and reopened on July 1 with new services run by County staff.

After unsatisfactory meetings with the County, we and our co-counsel filed suit and a request for an injunction to stop the cuts. The U.S. Department of Justice filed a brief in support of our clients' motion stating that, under the County's proposed plan, they would experience a significant reduction in services and be at risk of being placed in hospitals and psychiatric inpatient facilities, in violation of the ADA's integration mandate.

"In my early 30s when I was first diagnosed

Jim White, 69, moves into the community at last, thanks to our case

Jim White is the last of the 16 named plaintiffs of the Capitol People First case to move into the community. Filed by Disability Rights California and other advocacy groups to protect the civil rights of people with developmental disabilities, the case settled in 2009. The case settlement requires that Jim and nearly 7000 other Californians living in institutions and large facilities be informed about and helped to implement their right to choose where to live.



White at work. photo by m. dearing

Jim White now lives in his own place in Lakeport, a resort town in Lake County. For a long time, he lived at the Sonoma Developmental Center, located a few miles away. Jim was first placed in an institution when he was 13 and in 2010, at age 69, he moved out.

Today, he lives in a small bungalow with staff. They provide support for his new life, so he can shop for food and arrive on time for his job. Jim works part time answering the phone at an office in Lakeport.

Jim likes his job and is very happy with his new home in the community. If asked, he is adamant that he is “never going back to that hospital.”

According to Barbara Dickey, senior attorney involved in monitoring progress in the settlement, “Jim was the last one of the 16 to move because no one thought he could make the transition; there just seemed to be too many challenges. But once the support team committed themselves to this goal, they made it happen. After Jim settled into his new home, he changed, dropping some behavior and habits. He’s loving his new life: he rode in the local 4th of July parade in Lakeport, attends local events and is learning to play golf. He sits on his own porch and enjoys being out in the world.”

The changes Jim made are not unique. A 2009 newsletter of the Sonoma Developmental Center quoted a staff member, Liz Stoddard, who had visited a former resident in his new place. “When he lived here, he was a hoarder and his room was a mess...now, he is very neat and even points at staff, telling them to clean up if they are messy in his apartment.” The June 2010 final report by the University of California at Davis, about how former residents of Agnews Developmental Center are now faring outside of the institution, confirms that some people can improve their health, functions and quality of life in community settings. (www.dds.ca.gov/LivingArrang/docs/962FinalReport.pdf)

Disability Rights California investigation reveals abuse of nursing home residents and triggers prosecution



photo by ricardo jauregui

We investigated 12 cases of alarming abuse of nursing home residents and issued a report, *Victimized Twice: Abuse of Nursing Home Residents, No Criminal Accountability*, in April, 2010. After receiving our report, the Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse investigated and prosecuted one of the cases cited. We are working on legislation requiring that abuse and neglect in nursing homes be reported both to law enforcement and long term care ombudsmen.

Catherine Roberts, 61, has a disability and was sexually assaulted in her bed up to 30 times over 60 days by her nursing assistant. He was too heavy for her to push away and she was too humiliated to say anything. Finally, someone witnessed him lying on top of her and reported it.

Lester Walters, 56, has physical and intellectual disabilities. For months, a few of the staff at his nursing home made Walters take cold showers while they hit him on the head with a soap bottle, and paraded him naked in front of others.

Clare Trudeau, 84, and Harriet Thorton, 97, need wheelchairs for mobility. A female staff member was seen pushing the women's wheelchairs forcefully at high speed, then letting them crash into walls.

Roger Marmont's skin was "like wet tissue paper," yet a staff member decided to give him a lengthy whirlpool bath that tore his skin "from his armpit to his wrist."

These names are pseudonyms for just five of the 12 cases we investigated. The other cases also involved physical injuries or ongoing physical, sexual and emotional abuse perpetrated by staff.

The report asks state agencies and law enforcement to step up efforts to pursue, prosecute and track abusers. "There are too many weak links in this chain," stated Leslie Morrison of the Investigations Unit. "The victims are afraid to make complaints about staff. If complaints are made, administrators either don't believe the victims or fail to report these crimes to the police. If the abuse is treated as a crime, the abusers are allowed to plead to misdemeanors, pay small fines and serve short sentences."

Successes with the legislature

Budget battles: persistent advocacy holds IHSS cuts to minimum



Attorney Will Leiner (at left) talks with Joaquin Carson, who lives in a state-operated institution with 412 residents, about how to find a home of his own in the community. photo by diana pastora carson

As California's deficit deepened in 2010, the budget battles became more adversarial. With a goal of reducing state spending on In Home Supportive Services by 50%, Gov. Schwarzenegger portrayed the program as riddled with fraud. We helped focus news reports on the small amount of fraud found, and on local stories about people with disabilities who needed IHSS to stay in their homes. And our advocates worked hard with the legislature to keep new restrictions on home care providers to a minimum. In early October, the budget was finally adopted. Due

to successful advocacy, smaller cuts of 3.6% in IHSS hours were agreed to, and the right of consumers to choose their own service providers was preserved.

Many other cuts affecting people with disabilities were rejected due to strong advocacy by Disability Rights California working in coalitions. The final budget includes the closure of the Lanterman Developmental Center, which will mean the transition of its residents into the community. One of our staff attorneys, Will Leiner, gave impassioned testimony in favor of its closure, drawing on his own experiences with a sibling who moved into the community some years ago.

We were also successful in getting budget language adopted requiring regional centers to inform people with disabilities and their families about exceptions to the new service limits in the Lanterman Act and how to apply for them.

Legislative success story: supporting parents with disabilities

After the divorce, 12 year old Sondra split her time 50-50 between her mother and father. Then her father petitioned the court for full custody on the basis that her mother was too disabled to care for her. This and many similar situations prompted Fathers and Families, Disability Rights California, and American Retirees Association to sponsor SB 1188, adding a section to the Family Code prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability in custody and visitation matters. An opinion piece in favor of the bill, by Glenn Sachs of Fathers and Families and Margaret Johnson, our advocacy director, was featured in the Los Angeles Daily News. The bill was signed into law in August.

Securing community services—success throughout the state

Governor cuts mental health services for students: we take action

For decades, California’s county mental health departments have served special education students who need mental health support to stay in school. Called “AB 3632 services,” they include crisis counseling, case and medication management and residential placement. On October 8, the governor vetoed funding for AB 3632, leaving many students with disabilities without services. For example, Andrew was stuck in juvenile hall without critical services. At 17, he has been hospitalized a few times, most recently for suicide attempts. Adopted out of the foster care system, he has had a rocky adolescence. Services were lined up through Los Angeles County Mental Health, but because of the veto, Andrew couldn’t use them. On October 21 Disability Rights California and co-counsel filed a class action lawsuit to preserve mental health services for an estimated 20,000 students. On October 29 the California Department of Education agreed to provide enough funds to continue these critical services by county mental health departments for a short period. By mid-day Los Angeles County agreed to restart services. We are working with our allies in government and the mental health field to find a solution for students who need these services.

County IHSS office terminates services, violating court order

Dominic Gutierrez found out he had lost his services when his In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) provider told him. He appealed, and as suggested by an independent living center advocate, came to us for help to prepare for the hearing. We informed the County office that Dominic had not received adequate notice of termination. We asked the County to confirm if Dominic was a class member of our lawsuit, *V.L. v Wagner*, which has temporarily stopped the State’s proposed IHSS reductions based on functional indexes (FI). FI are rankings of clients’ capacity to do a task, with or without help. He was a member of the class. Thus the court order had been violated; Dominic was covered as a member of the class action court suit, so his services were immediately restarted.

School district now offers door to door delivery for students who need it

One of our staff got a complaint that special education students in a district were given door to door transport if they lived in houses, but not if they lived in apartments. This policy was endangering a client who is medically fragile and uses a wheelchair, but who could not get himself home from his bus stop. We verified the policy with families in the district and then filed a compliance complaint on behalf of special education students living in apartments. In response, the California Department of Education is requiring the district to offer all special education students these services if they need them.

Preventing discrimination—success throughout the state

Young man wants to live with people his own age

Sam Herald is an adult with cerebral palsy who uses a wheelchair for mobility and sign language to communicate. Sam and his mother contacted OCRA to explore how he could leave the nursing facility with older residents and find housing with residents closer to his age. The Clients' Rights Advocate contacted Sam's regional center and now, together with Sam's parents, a discharge plan has been drafted. The plan is first to transition into a less restrictive Intermediate Care Facility and ultimately, to a group home that offers the type of nursing care that Sam needs.

Kaiser health facilities change service dog policies statewide

Service animals help people with disabilities more easily navigate their communities and, for some, provide needed emotional support. Katherine Michalek has physical and mental disabilities, and uses a service dog, Shannon, to assist her. While an in-patient at Kaiser Hospital in San Diego, in the middle of the night, Michalek and her husband were woken up by staff and Shannon was ejected from the hospital. We filed suit alleging discrimination based on state and federal law and reached a settlement which benefits thousands of Californians with disabilities statewide. Under the settlement, Kaiser agreed to develop a new policy that allows service dogs to accompany the individual to all areas of the facility except where the animal could pose a threat to the health and safety of others.



85 year old apartment owner granted permission to make her entryway safer

Louise Kim, a Central Valley senior citizen with mobility and balance limitations, wanted to add a handrail to her apartment entry, at her own expense. Because her landlord ignored her requests for this simple addition, she came to us for help. Our Fresno staff made a reasonable modification request on her behalf, which was soon granted by the apartment complex manager.

Para-transit operator required to reinstate blind client

Due to low-income and mobility and vision disabilities, Olga Barraza is dependent on para-transit to get around her community. So, she was quite upset to be suspended from use of the service for reported "no shows" and came to our Los Angeles staff for help. We were able to clarify that the problem was primarily a communications breakdown; that Olga had requested audio service notices as reasonable accommodation for her blindness. Her services have been reinstated and she will receive audio notices.



Protection of rights

Reasonable accommodations for a future teacher

Ken Ishida, 43, is a regional center client who has taken the California Basic Educational Skills Test (C-BEST) several times in his quest to become a teacher. His education is being funded through the Social Security PASS program, but time was running out for him to complete his studies.

Because of his disability, Ken uses the adapted computer programs, “Math Talk,” and “Dragon Dictate” in his school work and for taking tests. When the C-Best administrators refused to let him use the software as an accommodation to finish the test on time, he contacted the Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA). OCRA staff challenged the denial and helped Ken to successfully advocate for himself. He was awarded the accommodation and is pursuing his dream to become a teacher.

Protecting rights in state hospitals and the community

Our California Office of Patients’ Rights (COPR) was successful this year in preventing the denial of rights of residents in state hospitals. It assisted the Department of Mental Health in implementing least restrictive measures and in preserving residents’ rights to retaining personal property.

One example is that in several of the state hospitals, personal computers have been removed from residents as part of criminal investigations. However, in addition to removing the computers, staff often removed all electronic devices and accessories that were not necessary to the criminal investigations. Our on-site Patients’ Rights staff successfully advocated for the return of these extra items to their owners.

Outcry about chicken coops used for board and care “housing”

In late September 2009, our Investigations Unit responded to complaints that elderly clients with disabilities in San Bernardino were being housed in converted chicken coops, surrounded by razor wire and metal fencing. Reportedly, meals were served outside the barracks regardless of weather, and bathroom facilities were primitive. Shortly after, the facility owner was arrested for suspected elder and dependent adult abuse at several unlicensed board and care homes in San Bernadino. The unlicensed facilities were shut down. Ultimately, the case was not prosecuted for various reasons, but we have continued to monitor the conditions at the two remaining rooming houses owned by this provider. We are working with the San Bernadino County Mental Health and County Patients’ Rights offices to ensure that any new board and care abuse cases are referred to us.

Training helps people understand their rights

Training in residential facilities reveals obstacles to independence

One consumer reported to us: “I was told I can’t move out of here into the community until I lose 25 lbs.” Another resident reported: “I can’t move back in with my husband until he finds a better place for us than the trailer.”

These are just a couple of the misconceptions people with developmental or mental health disabilities revealed during a 2010 training about options to move from their residential facilities into the community. Pilot trainings were organized in Fresno and Stockton by the Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA), as part of the settlement of our class action case to reduce the number of people in institutions. The settlement calls for the OCRA to provide training to residents of large facilities and institutions about their rights to choose where they live. OCRA director Jeanne Molineaux said that, “Although some consumers believed they had few choices, they were happy to learn they could, in fact, get support to move out, even if they or the preferred home weren’t in perfect physical condition! We had help in the trainings from our Developmental Disabilities Peer Self-Advocacy Unit, and several participants have already moved to where they want to be.”

Voting rights training for Hmong

A Disability Rights California training on voting rights was provided by Sacramento based staff to a group of Hmong Americans with developmental disabilities. The training covered the right to vote; how to ask for help to register; and how to ensure the voting process and poll site is accessible. The emphasis was on why it is important to vote, what information was needed to register and examples of what kind of poll site assistance could be requested.



Poster illustrates community living

We have been disseminating information about community living to 7000 Californians with developmental disabilities who are still in state institutions. The poster at left explains community living through consumer-friendly drawings of daily life choices.

created by Will Leiner, attorney, and Hizuru Cruz, design student

Celebrating the Americans with Disabilities Act

2000 stream into Sacramento for spirited Disability Capitol Action Day

Organized by the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), with support from Disability Rights California, the 2010 event celebrated history: with pioneer Mary Lou Breslin's insights about the grand scale strategies and grassroots tactics needed to pass the ADA in 1990. This was the largest, youngest, and most diverse Capitol Action Day yet. Also recognized was "Yo, Disabled and Proud", CFILC's youth division, for getting Disability History Week and Ed Roberts Day adopted by the legislature this year. Roberts, a native Californian, was a founder of the disability rights and independent living movement. We supported both of these initiatives.



photo by hizuru cruz

Robyn Gantsweg of our Peer Self-Advocacy Program worked with local media to publicize the Camarillo event, which featured personal stories of former residents, family members, advocates and friends. Robyn said, "This event is the only honor that will ever be given to many people with developmental or psychiatric disabilities who died in these places, and we're here to recognize that their lives mattered."

California State University one of nine sites for 2010 Remembrance Day to honor those who died in state institutions

On September 20, about 100 people gathered for the twilight ceremony to remember people who died at Camarillo State Hospital, 1936-1997. The former hospital is now part of the California State University, Channel Islands campus and this was the first time a Remembrance Ceremony was held there. Ceremonies were held simultaneously at 9 sites of current or former state institutions for people with developmental or psychiatric disabilities.



Stockton ceremony. photo by margaret johnson

Remembrance Day is part of the California Memorial Project, which places plaques or monuments at the sites and collects oral histories from former residents, many of whom were involuntarily committed to an institution. People First of California and the California Network of Mental Health Clients work with us on this project.

Awards to our staff

Two of our staff were named “Attorney of the Year” for their outstanding mental health advocacy: Melinda Bird of the Los Angeles regional office, was named by the California Mental Health Advocates for Children and Youth, recognizing “a brilliant legal career expanding child and family-centered services”; and Dan Brzovic of our Bay Area office, was selected by the California Association of Mental Health Patients’ Rights Advocates, who applauded his talents, skills and dedication. Executive Director Catherine Blakemore was chosen for a Champion award by the 2010 California Mental Health Advisory Conference for “making a difference in people’s lives through mental health advocacy.”

Andy Holcombe of the Chico Office of Clients’ Rights Advocacy (OCRA) received the 2010 award from the Butte County Coordinating Council for his dedication to serving people with developmental disabilities.



Aimee Delgado, a Clients’ Rights Advocate, received a Spirit Award from Possibilities Unlimited International for her outstanding support of consumers in the San Gabriel/Pomona area. The organization also recognized OCRA for its overall effectiveness in its work with people with developmental disabilities.

Attorneys Sujatha Branch and Jonathan Elson of the Sacramento office were given awards by Capitol People First in memory of Bob Rosenberg, in appreciation of ongoing advice and support.



(Above) Ted Hess at left, Far Northern Regional Center consumer, and Andy Holcombe, Clients’ Rights Advocate. (Below) Senator Ellen Corbett is shown together with the recipients of her 2010 awards for disability advocacy: (left to right), Teresa Favuzzi of the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), Margaret Johnson of Disability Rights California and Laurel Mildred of CFILC. photo by Senate Photographer

State of Activities for Fiscal Year 2010

Revenue and Support

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	\$	7,890,136
State of California Department of Developmental Services	\$	5,190,533
U.S. Department of Education	\$	2,566,968
The California State Bar	\$	2,382,954
Program Income/Attorney Fees	\$	585,947
State of California Department of Mental Health	\$	1,234,204
U.S. Social Security Administration	\$	368,744
Miscellaneous Income/Other Contracts/Interest Income	\$	296,942
Donations	\$	14,359
Total Revenues	\$	<u>20,530,787</u>

Expenses

Program Services	\$	17,706,851
General and Administrative	\$	2,411,566
Total Expenses	\$	<u>20,118,417</u>

Change in Net Assets

\$	<u>412,370</u>
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Providing cost effective services

DRC receives its core funding from 7 federal grants and 4 state contracts. In 2010 we assisted 26,681 individuals, a 5.8% increase from the prior year. Our operating costs are low, 12% allowing us to spend 88% of our funding on program services. Above are our revenue and expenses.

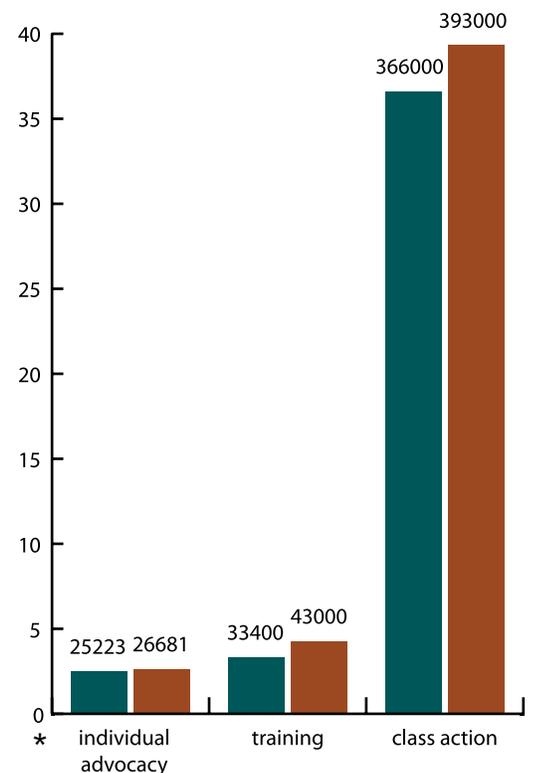
Meeting increased demand

Our core services are: individual advocacy assistance, training and class action litigation. The chart at left shows the number of individuals impacted in each of these areas in 2009 and 2010.

Please support us

For more than 30 years Disability Rights California has been helping Californians with disabilities obtain the services they need in order to live independent and productive lives. As DRC's core funding decreases, it is difficult to meet the increased demand for services. Please consider making a donation so we can continue this important work. You may donate at www.disabilityrightsca.org/about/donate.htm.

Individuals assisted by Disability Rights California



Disability Rights California is funded by the federal and state contracts listed above. Opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of our funders.

KEY

2009

2010

* x10,000

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Harry Cota dies, after fighting to save Adult Day Health Services (ADHC)



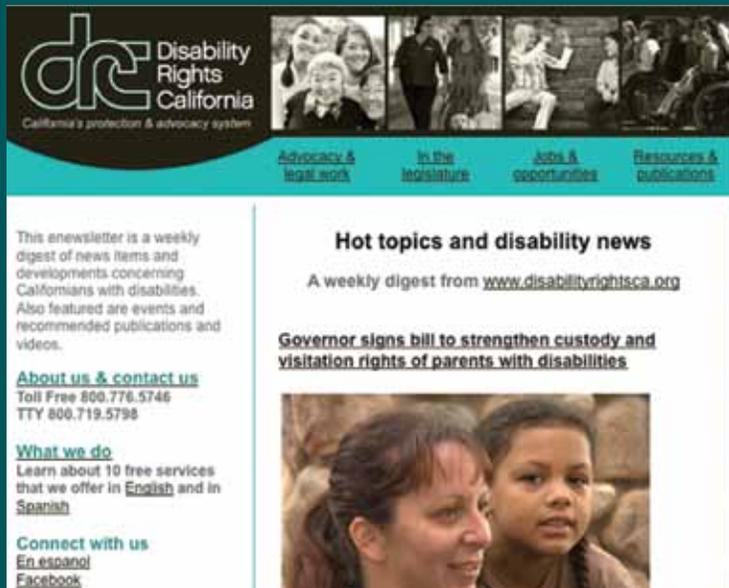
photo by leonard alfaró

In 2009 the state significantly reduced ADHC services, placing thousands of Californians with disabilities and seniors at risk of being hospitalized or institutionalized. Disability Rights California filed a class action lawsuit to stop the cuts. Until his death on March 7, 2011, Harry Cota lived independently in the community with the support of ADHC.

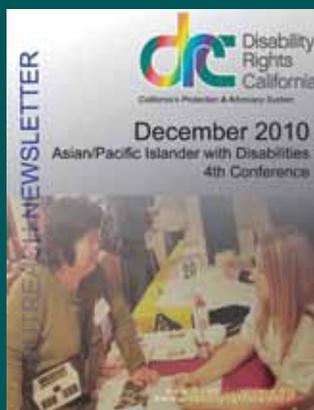
After the death of Lillie Brantley, the original named plaintiff in our ADHC case, Harry agreed to take her place. In 2009 the court issued an injunction stopping the cuts. Harry contributed many hours advocating against these cuts, including traveling from Hayward to Sacramento to testify about the importance of the services to maintaining health and independence.

In 2010 the DRC Board gave an award to recognize Harry Cota's passionate advocacy on behalf of his fellow Californians with disabilities who need these services. In the photo, Harry receives his award from former Board President Dianne Millner, together with one of the lead attorneys for the ADHC case, Elizabeth Zirker.

Updating our image



Weekly newsletter launched 2010



December '10 Outreach newsletter



Most popular publications CD



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California

Statewide Toll-Free
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TTY (800) 719-5798
www.disabilityrightsca.org

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Volunteer attorneys

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Jesus Gonzalez

Suge Lee



In June, Disability Rights California held a dinner to honor exemplary pro bono contributions to our lawsuits that have concentrated on implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act. Then California Supreme Court Justice Carlos R. Moreno (second from left) was the key speaker and gave an award to Attorney Henry Su, formerly of Howrey LLP, (second from right), who has contributed countless hours to our class action suits. Also shown are Dara Schur, our director of litigation (left) and Dianne Millner, then board president.
photo by ricardo jauregui