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TO: Katie Hornberger, Director
FROM: Paula Sandoval, OCRA Outreach Coordinator (South)
Christine Hager, OCRA Outreach Coordinator (North)
RE: Annual OCRA Outreach Report July 2018 – June 2019
DATE: August 19, 2019

OCRA has committed to increase awareness of OCRA services among organizations, regional center consumers, parent support groups, hospital physicians, social workers, and other professionals working with consumers. OCRA strives to network and build relationships with underrepresented target communities in an attempt to reach parity with the communities served by the regional center. This report is about the outreach efforts OCRA completed between July 2018 and June 2019. During the fiscal year, OCRA staff conducted 614 outreach activities and trainings. These presentations were provided to 19,121 attendees. This is a 22.31% increase from the same reporting period between July 2017 and June 2018. We are excited about the increase in the number of outreach activities and trainings and the increase of community participation in the activities. The following are examples of the experiences our advocates have created throughout the year by facilitating self-advocacy trainings directly with consumers, trainings to the general community, and trainings to target communities.

Self-Advocacy Trainings

Each OCRA office conducts at least one self-advocacy training per contract year. Self-advocacy topics include: emergency preparedness, self-advocacy, client's rights, rights to money management, voting rights, community living options, and employment rights and options.

Participants Learn About Rights Through Bingo Game.

In June 2019 in Santa Rosa, the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) and about 20 consumers from North Bay Regional Center engaged in a presentation and bingo game about rights at Dungarvin Day Program. Yulahlia Hernandez, Clients' Rights Advocate, and Annie Breuer, Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate, led a short presentation about the rights of people who have developmental disabilities and rights in facilities. After the presentation, OCRA facilitated an interactive game of Clients' Rights Bingo. Consumers participated in the bingo game by looking at images depicting rights and shouting out what they meant, while marking their bingo cards. Some of the rights covered in the bingo game include the right to pick out the clothes you wear, practice a religion, and have relationships. OCRA passed out fun prizes to bingo winners, which everyone enjoyed. When asked what she thought of the bingo game, Angelina said, "Everything was awesome!" Another participant said, "I learned! Thanks for coming! Please come back!" After the training, Dungarvin Day Program staff thanked OCRA and described how the smiling faces of participants showed how much everyone enjoyed the training. Staff said the bingo game was not only enjoyable by day program participants, but a great refresher for staff about clients' rights. Photo below shows Alan and Angelina with bingo cards.



General Outreach

OCRA Builds New Relationships with the Mental Health Community to Identify Dually-Diagnosed Clients Who Need OCRA Assistance.

OCRA's Community Integration Team (CIT) was excited to present and participate in the Patients' Rights Annual Training (PRAT) in Sacramento. It was CIT's first time attending as a team to network with the advocates in the mental health community. OCRA understands the power of outreach to form new relationships with stakeholders who can identify regional center clients who need OCRA's assistance. PRAT is an advocacy training for the County Title 9 Patients' Rights Advocates (PRAs). PRAs who attended the session had experience working with regional center clients. They expressed their concerns with an increase in regional center clients' admissions to mental health facilities and hospitals. They also expressed concerns with regional centers' lack of involvement and support in these cases. OCRA discussed the rights of people with developmental disabilities to receive regional center services and supports and ways OCRA and PRA can collaborate to identify dually diagnosed regional center clients who need advocacy to be successful in the community. OCRA looks forward to fostering the relationships initiated at the training to build a new network in the mental health community.



Photo above shows OCRA's Community Integration Team from left to right: Cristina Kinsella, Tijuana Barnes, Jennifer Alfaro, Jens Sorensen, and Eva Casas-Sarmiento

Target Outreach

OCRA's target communities include: the Latino community; the Asian community including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, Filipino, and Polynesian; the African-American community; and the Native American community.

Participants Learn about Transition at a Statewide Conference Hosted by Asians and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities of California (APIDC).

During two days in March 2019, clients and families attended the APIDC Statewide Conference at the beautiful Grand Californian Hotel at the Disneyland Resort. The theme of this year's conference was "Transitions." Clients and families were eager to learn how they could better navigate the daunting phase of transition from childhood to adulthood. DRC's Legal Advocacy Unit and OCRA had a big presence at the conference, with many staff tabling and presenting the breakout sessions.

OCRA had several southern California offices present to speak with the clients and families who stopped by the OCRA table. Jacqueline Miller, CRA for Regional Center of Orange County, spoke with clients and families about ABLÉ accounts. Antonia Sereseres, Assistant CRA for San Diego Regional Center, listened to parents' concerns about transitioning out of school district services. The table was covered with OCRA goodies and publications on issues ranging from Public Benefits for People with Disabilities to Supported Employment Services.

OCRA's presence at the APIDC conference was an excellent opportunity to show its commitment in working with the Asian and Pacific Islander community. Clients and families took OCRA brochures for future reference. OCRA staff cannot wait to be part of next year's conference!

Photos below show Debra Marcia, Clients' Rights Advocate for Westside Regional Center consumers and Antonia Sereseres, Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate for consumers of San Diego Regional Center. Also shown below is a conference handout.



OCRA Reaches Culturally Diverse Communities.

OCRA staff were excited for the chance to present to several Asian- and Spanish-speaking parent groups connected with the Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center family resource center. Culturally, members of both of these communities may be reluctant to reach out to third parties for assistance. It is incredibly rewarding when there is a full room of participants. The participants include parents and families of consumers of the regional center. Each outreach event had had an average of 15 participants who were ready with questions and eager to hear the information. Participants were interested in learning about OCRA and grateful for the opportunity to ask questions to an attorney. Outreach events to the local Asian and Hispanic disability communities are a great opportunity to remind consumers and their circles of support that there are many resources for them. All participants took OCRA brochures and our business cards. So far, each outreach event has been a success.

Stone Soup Staff Learn About Early Start and Regional Center Eligibility.

Stone Soup is an organization that provides supports and services to families in the El Dorado neighborhood, the Southeast Asian community, and Fresno County at large. OCRA attended a Stone Soup staff meeting in January 2019 and presented on Early Start and regional center eligibility. Participants were excited to learn about these services, stating that they did not previously know about regional center services. Some staff were eager to ask questions, stating that they could already think of some families that may be eligible for these services. OCRA was pleased to answer questions and provide real life examples to further contextualize the legal concepts discussed in the training. Stone Soup staff expressed that the presentation was very helpful and they would like to have OCRA back to present directly to parents of potential regional center consumers. OCRA is thrilled to report they will return and present to parents of Stone Soup consumers ages 0-3 on the topic of Early Start eligibility and transition.



Photo above shows Maitria Moua, Clients' Rights Advocate, OCRA, and Jose Mendoza, Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate, OCRA, along with Jesse Lara, Multi-Cultural Advocate, Legal Advocacy Unit, pictured here with staff members of Stone Soup.

OCRA Joins in the Fun at the 5th Annual Vietnamese Conference.

OCRA had an information booth at the San Andreas Regional Center's 5th Annual Vietnamese Conference in March 2019 in San Jose, California. OCRA talked to people in the Vietnamese community and other agencies that support people with developmental disabilities in the area. OCRA also gave out information in both English and Vietnamese about OCRA and regional center services. OCRA enjoyed being a part of this annual celebration that included singing, a photo booth and traditional Vietnamese food.



Photo above shows a conference session in progress.

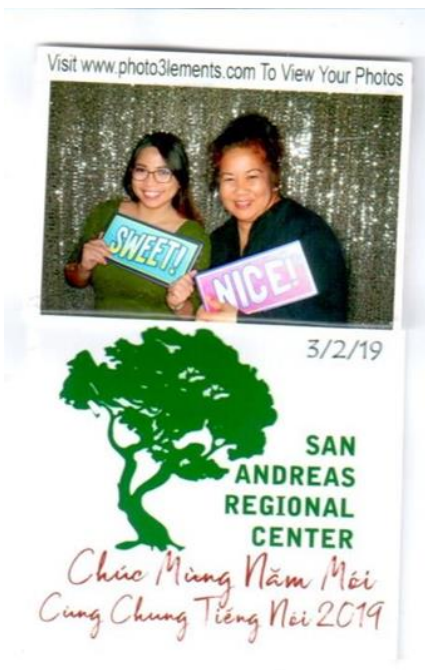


Photo above shows Cherri Alcantara, Clients' Rights Advocate and Filomena Alomar, Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate, who serve clients of the San Andreas Regional Center, posing in a conference photo booth.

Conclusion

Each OCRA office is starting a new two-year outreach plan for the years of 2019-2021 and has identified the underrepresented target community that requires specialized focus for service. OCRA is creating an Outreach Unit with the objective to increase the coordination and resources available to conduct outreach activities and trainings. OCRA staff will receive training with a focus on strategies to build new relationships with underserved communities. We look forward to building many new relationships within our target communities in the upcoming outreach years and sharing additional stories.