

Semi- Annual Advocacy Report
January 2015 – June 2015

ADA

Student Obtains Reasonable Accommodation to Join Swim Class with His Friends.

D.M. enjoys swimming and began his freshman year of high school taking the swim class offered as part of the general education curriculum. After two weeks, school personnel determined he could no longer participate in this class. They reasoned that because D.M. has epilepsy, the risk of him having a seizure in the water was too great.

OCRA researched D.M.'s right to a reasonable accommodation to be able to participate in swim class in public school and advised D.M.'s mother of his rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. OCRA also provided D.M.'s mother with a roadmap about how to make the request for a reasonable accommodation, including the documentation needed to support the request. The district agreed to allow D.M. to rejoin his swim class and to have someone supervise him while he is in the pool. The district also amended D.M.'s IEP to include this accommodation. Leinani Walter, CRA, Christine Hager, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Kaiser Resumes R.V.'s Dialysis Treatment.

R.V.'s regional center clinical director contacted OCRA regarding Kaiser Permanente's decision to suddenly discontinue R.V.'s dialysis treatment. Kaiser stated the treatment was terminated because of safety concerns when R.V.'s recent behaviors during his treatment put both R.V. and the Kaiser staff's health and safety at risk. OCRA worked closely with R.V., representatives from the regional center's clinical department, and Kaiser's management to develop a comprehensive behavior plan. This team identified strategies to help R.V. learn new techniques to cope during each two-hour dialysis treatment session. Since the implementation of the detailed behavior plan, R.V.'s much-needed dialysis has resumed without incident. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Carlos Mora, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

BENEFITS

CASH ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANTS (CAPI)

J.C. Obtains CAPI Eligibility with Retroactive Payments.

J.C. is a 19-year-old with an intellectual disability. He had applied for CAPI benefits in Los Angeles County over a year ago, but was not granted CAPI benefits. After the family moved to the central valley, J.C.'s father tried to apply again for CAPI benefits and J.C. was denied. OCRA advised J.C.'s father about his right to, and eligibility for, CAPI and retroactive benefits. OCRA helped J.C.'s father file a hearing request and helped him prepare for the hearing. Shortly before the hearing, the county approved CAPI benefits for J.C. The county also approved one year of retroactive CAPI benefits, after admitting that the initial application had not been properly transferred to the central valley. David Weafer, Temporary CRA, Maricruz Magdaleno, Assistant CRA, Kay Spencer, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Central Valley Regional Center.

IN-HOME SUPPORTIVE SERVICES (IHSS)

F.M. Wins IHSS Protective Supervision.

F.M.'s mother contacted OCRA after the county denied her request for IHSS protective supervision. OCRA worked with F.M.'s mother to negotiate an agreement with the county to reassess F.M.'s need for protective supervision if F.M.'s mother conditionally withdrew from the hearing. The county also agreed to send a Spanish-speaking social worker to perform the reassessment, since F.M.'s mother does not speak English and F.M. has limited communication skills. OCRA attended the reassessment at the family's home and assisted F.M.'s mother during the interview with the social worker. OCRA ensured that F.M.'s mother provided all the information the social worker would need in order to make a decision about protective supervision. After the reassessment, the county granted F.M. protective supervision at 195 hours per month. The county also awarded retroactive benefits of more than \$10,000. Asa Marie Standfeldt, CRA, Ramona Landeros, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Alta California Regional Center.

J.C. Receives 195 Hours of Protective Supervision from IHSS.

J.C. is a 6-year-old boy who is blind and has an intellectual disability. J.C., through his grandmother, applied for IHSS and was granted only 18 hours per month. J.C.'s grandmother appealed the IHSS determination by requesting a hearing. The county appeals specialist contacted J.C.'s grandmother to offer a new in-home assessment if she would sign a form conditionally withdrawing from the hearing. OCRA reviewed the language on the conditional withdrawal form to ensure it would be retroactive to J.C.'s application date. OCRA also agreed to represent J.C. at the in-home assessment. At the assessment, the two county social workers stated that protective supervision could not be granted to J.C. due to his blindness. OCRA explained that J.C.'s need for protective supervision was not due to his blindness but rather his intellectual disability, which prevented him from keeping himself safe. OCRA provided the social workers with documentation that supported the need for protective supervision. Subsequently, J.C.'s grandmother received a new written notice from IHSS granting 195 hours of protective supervision, in addition to the 18 hours that had previously been granted. The 195 hours of protective supervision were paid back to the date that J.C. first applied for IHSS and totaled \$16,146.00. Mario Espinoza, CRA, Alejandra Madero, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Kern Regional Center.

County Grants Protective Supervision after Refusing to Assess.

A.D., through her mother, applied for IHSS, but the county social worker refused to assess A.D. for protective supervision. The county granted 30 hours per month of IHSS. OCRA met with 10-year-old A.D. and her mother, a monolingual Spanish-speaker. Because she has intellectual disability, cerebral palsy and blindness, A.D. needs constant supervision. OCRA assisted the family to appeal the hours and contacted the hearings representative to arrange a pre-hearing meeting. The county sent three staff members to the meeting. OCRA, a regional center representative, A.D., and her mother also attended. At the conclusion of the meeting, the county agreed that A.D. was entitled to more monthly care hours than the 30 that had previously been granted. The county also agreed to conduct a protective supervision evaluation, to include contacting A.D.'s doctors. OCRA agreed to a conditional withdrawal of the hearing request. OCRA wrote a letter to A.D.'s doctors and sent information about protective supervision and some of examples which demonstrated A.D.'s significant deficits in memory, orientation and judgement. The county ultimately

granted A.D. the maximum of 283 hours monthly of IHSS, including protective supervision. Kimberlee Candela, CRA, Lorie Atamian, Associate CRA, Katie Hornberger, OCRA Director, Far Northern Regional Center.

N.L. Gets Protective Supervision and \$8,750.00 in Retroactive Payments.

N.L. is a 14-year-old with autism. His parents contacted OCRA for help with applying for IHSS and protective supervision. OCRA advised N.L.'s parents about the eligibility criteria for the IHSS program. OCRA reviewed N.L.'s documents and helped draft a form to submit to IHSS, which highlighted N.L.'s need for protective supervision so that he could remain safely at home. OCRA met with N.L.'s parents many times in order to help them prepare, review, finalize and submit their documentation to IHSS. IHSS then granted N.L. 195 hours per month of IHSS and a retroactive payment of \$8,750.00. Mary Melendrez, CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

MEDI-CAL

OCRA Helps P.C. Get His Medi-Cal Reinstated.

P.C. was erroneously reported as deceased to the Social Security Administration last year. Because of this error, his SSI and Medi-Cal benefits were terminated, leaving him with no income and no health insurance. His representative payee contacted OCRA for help. OCRA met with P.C. and his payee and obtained consent to request his records from Medi-Cal and the regional center. OCRA also reviewed P.C.'s Social Security records, including letters that confirmed reinstatement of his SSI. Since Medi-Cal eligibility is automatic when a person receives SSI, it was odd that his SSI had been reinstated several months before, yet he still had no Medi-Cal. OCRA contacted the liaison for the local Medi-Cal field office. After a series of emails, the office director connected OCRA to the appropriate Medi-Cal liaison, who then contacted the state to reinstate P.C.'s Medi-Cal benefits. Thanks to OCRA's assistance, P.C.'s Medi-Cal benefits have been fully restored. Jackie Dai, CRA, Lucy Garcia, Assistant CRA, Adam Trott, Temporary CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center.

N.A. Gets a New Wheelchair after Waiting More than Four Months.

N.A. is a young woman with cerebral palsy who wants a job and a wheelchair to help her become more independent. However, she postponed her employment and personal goals because she did not have a wheelchair that fit her body measurements. At one point, N.A. wanted to set up a job interview, but had no suitable wheelchair to use to get to the interview. N.A. sought help from Medi-Cal and the regional center and became depressed after an occupational therapist told her that it would take six months for her to receive her new wheelchair. The regional center rented a wheelchair but it was not N.A.'s size so she was unable to use it. N.A. could not leave her house and her depression worsened. After three months of waiting, N.A. and her mother contacted OCRA. OCRA contacted the regional center and the wheelchair supplier to ask for details about their request to Medi-Cal for N.A.'s wheelchair. Medi-Cal approved the chair and N.A. set up an appointment for delivery. N.A. can now move forward with her employment and personal goals. Irene Padilla, CRA, Luisa Delgadillo, Assistant CRA, Katie Meyer, Supervising CRA, Westside Regional Center.

J.A. Retains Special Member Status from His Managed Care Plan.

J.A.'s mother contacted OCRA after he was terminated from "special member status" by his Medi-Cal managed care plan. Special member status allows J.A. to see his specialists without visiting his primary care physician every time he needs an appointment, a lengthy process that could delay J.A. from getting the treatment he needs. OCRA assisted J.A. to appeal the managed care plan's denial and worked with J.A.'s primary care physician and specialists to obtain letters of support. As a result, the managed care plan granted J.A.'s appeal. J.A. continues to see his medical specialists without delay. Yulahia Hernandez, CRA, Annie Breuer, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

After a Long Struggle, C.M. Obtains Dental Services.

C.M.'s dentist told her that she needed to have a root canal and other dental work. The dentist also determined that C.M. required sedation during the work because of behaviors related to her disability if she were not sedated. Her dentist was not able to provide anesthesia in his office and he did not have hospital privileges in order to complete the work. For

over a year, C.M.'s mother tried to find a dentist with hospital privileges that could perform the necessary dental work while C.M. was under anesthesia. Medi-Cal told C.M.'s mother that there were no available surgeons to perform the work and refused to approve the medical lab work necessary for an out-of-network dentist to perform the work. C.M.'s mother tirelessly tried to get the lab work done and searched for a dentist. She reached out to OCRA for assistance. OCRA contacted the regional center nurse who has knowledge of anesthesia dentistry and learned there is a shortage of dentists with hospital privileges. C.M.'s parent, the regional center, and OCRA worked together and eventually got the lab work completed, found a dentist, and secured the funding necessary to complete the work. Jacqueline Miller, CRA, Stephanie Barrera, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, Regional Center of Orange County.

SOCIAL SECURITY

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

OCRA Helps to Clear a \$16,900 SSI Overpayment.

S.H.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance with an SSI overpayment. After reviewing the case, OCRA agreed to represent S.H. and negotiate with SSA. OCRA attended the informal conference, where S.H. received a partially favorable decision. The SSA representative explained that SSA had erroneously deemed S.H.'s parent's IHSS income and a cafeteria plan used to pay for health benefits. SSA removed all of those amounts as income, which removed the overpayment for some of the months in question. However, even after the corrections were made, the family income was above the limits for some months, which left an overpayment of \$8,793.23. OCRA drafted a request for waiver of overpayment recovery. As a result, SSA waived \$8,145.91 of S.H.'s overpayment and recovered the remaining balance of the overpayment from an underpayment which was owed to S.H. S.H.'s overpayment balance is now zero. Veronica Cervantes, CRA, Jazmin Romero, Assistant CRA, Katie Meyer, Supervising CRA, Inland Regional Center.

OCRA Helps J.J. Recover SSI Funds after an Overpayment.

J.J. is a former foster youth whose foster mother became his Family Home Agency provider when he became an adult. J.J. incurred a \$480 SSI overpayment after he began working. OCRA investigated and discovered

that SSA had actually charged J.J. \$7281.00 in overpayments and had taken 10% of his SSI benefit for the past two years. OCRA reviewed notices that stated J.J. lived in his “own home” and SSA had thus given him too much in State Supplementary Payments. To the contrary, J.J. has always lived with support and should always have received the increased payment from the state. OCRA contacted the branch manager of J.J.’s local SSA office and explained the error. OCRA asked SSA to re-determine his living arrangement retroactively and waive the \$480 overpayment. The branch manager adjusted J.J.’s account and now J.J. will receive \$3400.00 in retroactive benefits. Katie Spielman, CRA, Christine Tarrant, Assistant CRA, Katie Meyer, Supervising CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

EMPLOYMENT

A.E. Gets His Job Back after OCRA Intervention.

A.E. was fired from his job at an agency which provides services to regional center consumers. A.E. had worked as a janitor for this agency for nine years and earned a competitive wage. Because he lives independently, he was concerned about how he would pay his rent. A.E. believed that the agency was discriminating against him due to his sexual orientation. After discussing the matter with the regional center, OCRA agreed to request a meeting with the agency and represent A.E. at the meeting to discuss his termination.

During the meeting, management explained the reasons for deciding to terminate A.E.’s employment. They worried that A.E. would try to have a relationship with a client of the agency, based on a comment A.E. had made. OCRA then explained A.E.’s commitment to his work during the last nine years and his desire and willingness to follow all company policies, including not dating clients. OCRA also pointed out that while A.E. made a comment he did not actually violate any company policy. OCRA asked that the agency reconsider and reinstate A.E.’s employment and give him a chance to demonstrate his willingness to follow the policies. OCRA also requested that the agency staff routinely review and remind staff who are regional center consumers about company policy. A few days after the meeting, the agency reinstated A.E.’s employment, effective immediately. Veronica Cervantes, CRA, Jazmin Romero, Assistant CRA, Katie Meyer, Supervising CRA, Inland Regional Center.

HOUSING

D.C. Receives Housing Extension.

D.C.'s landlord served him with a 90-day termination of tenancy. Day 90 was quickly approaching, and D.C. had been unable to find suitable housing. He was at risk of being homeless in only a few days. OCRA reviewed correspondence from the local housing authority, spoke with D.C., and spoke with the housing vendor assisting D.C. with his search. OCRA then drafted two reasonable accommodation request letters for D.C. to send to both his landlord and the housing authority. The letters requested the housing authority to approve a higher rent payment to allow him to remain in his current apartment, or in the alternative, for an extension of time to remain in his current apartment to allow him to continue his search for a suitable new place. D.C.'s landlord agreed to extend D.C.'s tenancy for an additional month, and the housing authority agreed to continue the housing assistance payment during that period to allow D.C. more time to locate a new apartment. Katie Spielman, CRA, Christine Tarrant, Assistant CRA, Katie Meyer, Supervising CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

J.A.'s Family Obtains a 3-Bedroom Housing Choice Voucher as a Reasonable Accommodation.

12-year-old J.A.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance when the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) denied her request for a 3-bedroom voucher through the Housing Choice Voucher program. J.A.'s mother made the request because J.A. has behaviors related to his disability that require him to need his own space to relax and de-escalate. Because the family only had a 2-bedroom voucher, in order for J.A. to have his own room, either his mother or his 4-year-old sister would have to sleep in the living room. OCRA drafted a reasonable accommodation request for J.A.'s family to submit to SHRA, which included documentation supporting the request from J.A.'s doctor, school staff, and regional center service coordinator. SHRA denied the request. OCRA assisted J.A.'s mother to appeal SHRA's denial and they were successful. J.A. and his family received their 3-bedroom voucher and look forward to moving to a larger home where J.A. will have his own room. Asa Marie Standfeldt, CRA, Ramona Landeros, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Alta California Regional Center.

OUTREACH AND TRAINING

OCRA Presents Training to the Public Defender's Office.

OCRA was invited to conduct a training for the Law Office of the Los Angeles County Public Defender. OCRA presented two trainings, one on "What is OCRA," and the other on, "Changes in the Law for Admissions to Developmental Centers and Institutions for Mental Disease." OCRA shared its knowledge on the rights of people with disabilities, least restrictive environments, regional center services and supports, and the legal process for admissions to locked facilities. Most importantly, OCRA encouraged public defenders to use OCRA as a resource to protect the rights of our mutual clients. The training was a success. OCRA received very positive feedback from the deputy public defenders and has subsequently provided technical assistance in many cases. Jennifer Alfaro, CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA.

PERSONAL AUTONOMY

W.C. Is Empowered to Advocate at her LPS Conservatorship Hearing.

W.C. lives in a locked facility. OCRA received and reviewed W.C.'s comprehensive assessment and attended her IPP meeting with her permission. W.C. was unhappy with her LPS conservator because of the conservator's lack of involvement in her life. She stated the LPS conservator did not attend IPP meetings, rarely checked-in, prevented implementation of a recommended transition goal, and prevented family visits. W.C. also felt that the conservator was making decisions that affected her without understanding that she was making good progress. W.C. knew she had an upcoming court hearing, but until OCRA informed her, she was unaware that it was for the renewal of her LPS Conservatorship. OCRA empowered W.C. to advocate on her own behalf. OCRA discussed the issues with W.C. and taught her that she had a right to express her concerns about her conservator to the judge, public defender, and court. At the LPS conservatorship hearing, W.C. clearly stated her concerns regarding her conservator to the judge. The judge listened and ordered an investigation into the appropriateness of her LPS conservator. Jennifer Alfaro, CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA.

REGIONAL CENTER

COMMUNITY PLACEMENT

M.J. Moves from Sonoma Developmental Center to the Community.

M.J. has resided in locked facilities for almost 60 years, most recently at Sonoma Developmental Center. As mandated by the law, the regional center notified OCRA after completing a comprehensive assessment that identified potential services and supports that could help M.J. transition to living in the community. OCRA reviewed the assessment and met with M.J. at the developmental center on multiple occasions. The assessment resulted in a recommendation that M.J. reside in a community placement rather than the developmental center. OCRA worked with the regional center to ensure M.J. received information about community placement options. When visiting one particular community care facility, M.J. went directly to a bed and laid down, indicating how comfortable he was at this home. Soon after the visit, M.J. moved out of the developmental center and is enjoying his new home. Yulahlia Hernandez, CRA, Annie Breuer, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

B.A. Receives Comprehensive Supports and Moves Out of an IMD.

B.A. was placed in an Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) a type of locked facility in 2012. OCRA first became involved with B.A. in the summer of 2013, when his mother was desperately trying to find someone to advocate to keep him out of Fairview Developmental Center. OCRA sent a demand letter to the regional center and met with the Associate Director in order to find alternative placements for B.A. Over the next year and a half, the Institute for Applied Behavior Analysis worked closely with B.A. to craft an individualized combination supported living and behavioral program, so that he could move safely back into his parents' home. After extensive preparation and staff training, B.A. moved out of the IMD and back home. The regional center provides B.A. with funding for 24-hour staff with a ratio of 2:1 during the day and 1:1 overnight. B.A. has an individualized home day program and a highly structured routine with activities that B.A. chooses himself. B.A. is doing well at home. Hannah Liddell, CRA, Ada Hamer, Associate CRA, Kendra McWright, Supervising CRA, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center.

I.W. Avoids Institutionalization and Remains in the Community.

I.W.'s community placement was at risk of failing because his SLS provider decided it could no longer meet his needs. In response, I.W.'s regional center asked DDS if it could place him in the acute crisis unit at a nearby developmental center while it located alternatives. OCRA learned about this request, met with I.W., and learned that I.W. had lived at this developmental center in the past and did not want to go back. OCRA immediately requested an emergency IPP to discuss his situation, including the supports he needs to keep living in the community. Following the IPP, the regional center agreed to find a new SLS provider and fund an array of services to help with the immediate crisis. With these supports, the crisis was averted, and I.W. remains living in the home of his choice today. Pilar Gonzalez, CRA, Annie Breuer, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

K.K. Moves from a Developmental Center to the Community.

K.K. was at a locked IMD and then was transferred to a developmental center for an acute crisis placement. Because of her behaviors, she had been through several failed placements in group homes. The regional center notified OCRA of K.K.'s placements, as required by law. OCRA attended several monthly meetings and advocated for appropriate community placement for K.K., as well as for necessary assessments and interventions for K.K. to help her prepare for community placement. The team working with K.K. discovered her strengths and interests, experimented with different approaches to help her communicate without aggression, and helped her feel safe, which greatly decreased her problematic behaviors.

The regional center worked with a vendor to develop a new group home for K.K. and other women moving out of highly restrictive settings. The team learned that if K.K. feels unsafe or insecure, she acts out, so the vendor's staff got to know K.K. to ensure that she feels safe and comfortable with them. K.K. immediately felt comfortable with the behavior specialist. On her first visit to the new group home, K.K. made herself right at home, entering the room that would be hers, and lounging on the bed. K.K. later shared a relaxed lunch with staff. K.K. moved into her new home in March 2015. The vendor agency's staff are committed to working with her challenging behaviors. She is helping with household chores, going on daily community outings, using signs for some words, expressing her

emotions more freely, and getting along well with her housemates. Megan Chambers, CRA, Susan Alvarado, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

ELIGIBILITY

A.G. is Found Eligible for Regional Center Services.

A.G.'s mother contacted OCRA for help with obtaining regional center eligibility for her son. A.G. was referred to the regional center for eligibility based on a previous diagnosis of autism and brain trauma. A.G. had also been diagnosed with mental health conditions. The regional center denied A.G., stating that his condition was solely psychiatric. Prior to her call with OCRA, A.G.'s mother had filed for hearing and was seeking information and advice on the hearing process. OCRA explained the elements of regional center eligibility, including the exclusion for conditions which are solely psychiatric. OCRA reviewed A.G.'s documents, recommended an independent assessment, and explained the hearing process in detail. A.G. had an independent assessment. A.G.'s mother provided the assessment to the regional center, attended informal meetings, and attended a mediation. Eventually, the regional center found A.G. eligible for services. Kendra McWright, CRA, Gina Gheno, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Tri-Counties Regional Center.

SERVICES

Teen Program Continues to Provide Much-Needed Support.

S.P. has been part of a teen social skills program which has helped him to navigate his high school social interactions. S.P. received a notice from the regional center terminating funding for this program. S.P. and his family believed strongly that he still had goals to meet and that he continued to need this program. They timely appealed the termination. OCRA met with S.P.'s father to prepare him for the mediation. At the mediation, S.P.'s father and the regional center were able to reach a resolution for S.P.'s continued participation in the program. Aimee Delgado, CRA, Marisol Cruz, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center.

Regional Center Authorizes 8 Hours per Week of Personal Assistance Services so E.G. Can Continue His Cancer Treatment.

E.G. required treatment at the hospital for leukemia. Because E.G. could not take his apartment stairs by himself, E.G.'s mother had been carrying him up and down the stairs so he could get out to the hospital for his treatments. E.G.'s mother could no longer carry him up and down the stairs, so she asked the regional center to fund a personal attendant to help him. Without this additional support, E.G. could not leave his home or access his weekly cancer treatments. The regional center denied funding. OCRA provided documentation to the regional center from E.G.'s doctors regarding the effects of his chemotherapy on his mobility. As a result of OCRA's intervention, the regional center agreed to fund 8 hours per week of personal assistance services so E.G. can continue his cancer treatment despite his difficulty using the stairs independently. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Carlos Mora, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

A.M. Learns About Supported Employment Services.

A.M. is a 45-year-old man whose father contacted OCRA regarding employment and the regional center's lack of available programs that can meet A.M.'s needs. A.M.'s father was also concerned because he and his wife are getting older and A.M. needs to be able to support himself when they are no longer around. OCRA agreed to represent A.M. at an IPP meeting with the regional center. Prior to the IPP meeting, OCRA met with A.M. to discuss his employment options and interests. OCRA explained to him what supported employment is and the role of a job coach. A.M. showed little interest in a job coach. His main concern was the stigma he might receive from his coworkers. Through discussion, A.M. agreed to speak to a job coach to learn how supported employment services could assist him. At A.M.'s IPP meeting, the team agreed to set up a meeting with a supported employment agency and to provide supported employment services. A.M. met with the supported employment program developer to discuss options to assist A.M. to find gainful competitive employment. The program developer later reported that A.M.'s interview went well and A.M. was receptive to supported employment services. The program developer will open his case with the Department of Rehabilitation for job development services. A.M. is now getting supported employment services and hopes to have a job soon. Scott Barron, Peer Advocate, Eva Casas-Sarmiento, CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

R.R. Asserts Her Right to Choose Where She Wants to Live.

R.R. is an unconserved adult consumer who has two small children who are also consumers of regional center services. The regional center is R.R.'s SSI representative payee and funds SLS to help her manage her household and parent her children. Unfortunately, R.R. had a disagreement with her SLS provider and did not want to continue services with them. In addition to problems with her SLS provider, R.R. also had problems with her landlord and was evicted from her apartment. She was forced to live with friends and family while she searched for a new apartment.

Without a place to live, R.R. did not have to pay monthly rent, and so the regional center held R.R.'s SSI funds to pay for a new apartment. The regional center wanted the SLS provider to help R.R. find a new apartment before it would release any of her SSI funds. R.R. did not want to work with the SLS provider because she felt that the SLS provider was not letting her make her own decisions about where to live. OCRA represented R.R. at an IPP meeting to help her assert her right to make her own decisions about where to live. OCRA informed the regional center that disbursement of R.R.'s SSI funds could not be conditioned on her acceptance of SLS. Consequently, the regional center disbursed the SSI funds it had been holding. R.R. was able to pay the deposit, move into the apartment of her choice, purchase the appliances that she needed, and pay for other living expenses. Eva Casas-Sarmiento, CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

S.B. Receives Funding for Community-Based Educational Services through Age 23.

S.B. had been served by several different school districts over the years, because he had lived in several different placements. S.B.'s school districts had been providing him with less than one hour of school services per day for the past several years. When S.B. voluntarily moved to a new school district after age 18, he continued to receive less than one hour of school per day. S.B. subsequently moved to yet another school district so he could live in his own home with supported living staff funded by his regional center. When S.B. tried to enroll in the new local school district, he received a letter by both the new local school district and his previous

school district that only his *parents'* school district could provide him with educational services. Since his parents' school district was several hundred miles away, it would be impossible for him to continue his education without moving.

OCRA agreed to represent S.B. at a special education hearing and seek compensatory services, including funding for a community-based integration program. After filing numerous motions and briefs to the court and hiring and preparing experts to testify at hearing, the parents' school district and S.B.'s previous local school district agreed to settle the case. S.B. will receive six hours per school day of educational services for the next two years. He will also have two behavioral staff people to assist him in improving his adaptive and social skills in the community. The settlement also mandates the district to provide funding for S.B. to receive assistive technology and other related services. James Stoepler, CRA, Lynne Page, CRA, Vanessa Ochoa-Alcaraz, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

S.H. Asserts His Right to Stay-Put and Averts Expulsion.

S.H. is a 17-year-old student who was facing expulsion proceedings for behavior problems in school and alleged use of illegal drugs. His mother came to OCRA for help the day before his IEP meeting. Although OCRA could not represent S.H. at his IEP meeting due to a schedule conflict, OCRA provided extensive counsel and advice to help S.H. and his mother prepare for the IEP meeting the following day. OCRA explained S.H.'s right to stay-put in his current school placement and a manifestation determination meeting prior to expulsion to determine if his behavior was related to his disability. The next day, S.H. and his mother successfully challenged the expulsion. The district honored S.H.'s stay-put rights and he remained in his current placement. S.H. was later able to get private legal representation for the manifestation determination meeting and the school decided not to expel him. Now, S.H. is receiving additional behavior support services and counseling. Eva Casas-Sarmiento, CRA, Cynthia Salomon-Ponce, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

O.B. Obtains Modifications and 1:1 Support at School.

Shortly after transitioning to high school, O.B. started to have problems in the classroom and her grades began to fall, particularly in mathematics.

O.B. had also taken to running out of the classroom and hiding in the bushes throughout the school day. O.B. had an accommodation to wear noise-reducing headphones, but her teachers would not allow her to wear them. OCRA agreed to represent O.B. at an IEP meeting and gave substantial technical assistance to her mother for a second meeting. After two IEP meetings, the district agreed to modify O.B.'s behavioral support plan, remove O.B. from the math class that O.B. and her mother objected to, and provide O.B. with a 1:1 aide to support her throughout the school day. The district also agreed to reassess O.B.'s academic functioning to ensure that she was being taught to her ability level. Kendra McWright, CRA, Gina Gheno, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Tri-Counties Regional Center.

P.W. Enters an Adult Transition Program.

19-year-old P.W. was in his fifth year at his rural high school. The school had not informed him or his grandmother of any other educational programs for his transition years, ages 18-22. P.W. felt that he did not fit in anymore, as he had been a senior the year before and yet was still in the same classroom. The school had promised job training and other enrichment, but did not provide these services. P.W. had very low motivation to keep attending school. The school psychologist believed that the regional center should be serving P.W. with a day or vocational program (rather than the transitional educational program to which P.W. is entitled). P.W.'s regional center service coordinator urged P.W. and his grandmother to contact OCRA. OCRA began by contacting the school psychologist to establish a dialogue. The school district agreed to invite the teacher from the sole transition program in the region to P.W.'s IEP meeting. P.W. toured the program and said that not only did the program look really interesting to him, but also that some friends of his were already in the program. P.W.'s IEP team agreed with P.W. that the program would be a good fit for him. Ultimately, he was accepted into the program, funded by the school district. Kimberlee Candela, CRA, Lorie Atamian, Associate CRA, Katie Hornberger, OCRA Director, Far Northern Regional Center.

OCRA Ends a Student's Unnecessary Restraint during her Bus Ride.

J.T. is a student with autism. She began to injure herself and kick other people while on her 90-minute bus ride to and from school. She was placed in a safety harness and wrist restraints. J.T.'s parent requested a 1:1 aide instead of wrist restraints and a behavior assessment and plan to

help her improve her behavior. The school district agreed to this. However, the district continued to use the wrist restraints and failed to implement J.T.'s IEP. OCRA represented J.T. at an IEP meeting to discuss the inappropriate restraint. The district immediately put the 1:1 aide in place and stopped using the wrist restraints. OCRA also secured a new placement in a much closer non-public school, an augmentative communication device, and OT sensory supports to calm J.T. The 1:1 aide now rides with J.T. on her short trip to her new school and J.T. has had no more problems on the bus. Rita Defilippis, CRA, Filomena Alomar, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.

X.Y. Gets an Appropriate Teacher and Related Services.

X.Y., a 14-year old with autism, was in a classroom taught by a series of substitute teachers. One of these substitute teachers called campus police to address a behavioral incident with X.Y. that she did not know how to handle. The officers handcuffed X.Y., pinned her to the floor of the classroom, and placed a bag over her face to prevent her from spitting. OCRA agreed to attend an IEP meeting to secure appropriate supports for X.Y. in order to prevent further incidents. At this meeting, the school district agreed to provide X.Y. with a credentialed teacher, provide a 1:1 support person trained in ABA, coordinate the classroom program with X.Y.'s in-home ABA program, and conduct an early triennial assessment. The district continues to work with X.Y. and her family to support her needs in the classroom. Arthur Lipscomb CRA, Celeste Palmer, Associate CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

K.S. Obtains ASL Aide for the Entire School Day.

K.S. is a 16-year-old high school student with multiple disabilities including deafness. His IEP states that he is to have a full-time aide proficient in American Sign Language (ASL). His mother called OCRA because the school was not providing the aide full-time. She reported that this prevented K.S. from receiving the full benefit from his education and was contributing to some behavioral problems. OCRA drafted a compliance complaint letter for the mother to sign and send to the state. Rather than filing that complaint with the California Department of Education, K.S.'s mother decided to call for another IEP meeting in a final attempt to resolve the aide issue. OCRA represented K.S. at the IEP meeting, where K.S.'s mother presented the information in the complaint. During the meeting, the

school district agreed to hire a full-time ASL aide for K.S. Lynne Page, CRA, Vanessa Ochoa-Alcaraz, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.