

Semi- Annual Advocacy Report January 2014 – June 2014

ADA

M.N. Permitted to Keep Emotional Support Animal in Apartment.

M.N. had a history of being homeless but is currently residing in a hotel that was converted into apartments. M.N.'s psychologist recommended that M.N. obtain a small dog as an emotional support animal to help alleviate M.N.'s anxiety. The psychologist sent a letter to M.N.'s landlord to notify him that M.N. planned to adopt a dog pursuant to the psychologist's recommendation and that the landlord would therefore need to make an exception to the apartments' policy that did not permit pets. The landlord wrote back that no exception to the pet policy would be made, the apartment building was not subject to service or emotional support animal laws, and M.N. would be evicted if he allowed the dog in his apartment. OCRA agreed to represent M.N. in challenging the landlord's denial of permitting the emotional support animal in M.N.'s apartment. OCRA wrote a demand letter to the landlord explaining that both federal and state law required the landlord to accept the dog with no costs incurred to M.N. In a follow up call to the demand letter, the landlord changed his mind and allowed M.N. to have the emotional support animal. Jim Stoepler, CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising Clients' Rights Advocate, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

High School Becomes More Accessible for T.D.

T.D. is a high school student who uses a wheelchair. For the past two years, his parents had been advocating, without much success, for his small, rural high school campus to become more physically accessible. At the recommendation of the regional center, T.D.'s mother contacted OCRA. OCRA agreed to advocate at the upcoming IEP meeting. Prior to the meeting, OCRA communicated with both the district superintendent and the SELPA director, and toured the school grounds with the facilities manager. At the IEP, the school district committed to a number of improvements. These included: the lowering of a counter in the cafeteria to allow T.D. and other students using wheelchairs to serve themselves food; the purchase of multiple rubber and/or aluminum thresholds to provide access to the classrooms and other campus rooms; and reconstruction of the door frames to eliminate the lip. In addition, accessible seating in the gym will

be built by the beginning of the next school year. Allowing those who use wheelchairs to be safely seated in the spectator section (currently there is no place for those who use wheelchairs to observe basketball or volleyball games). The district committed to no longer holding school pictures or conducting concessions stands on the gym stage (which is not currently accessible). A construction project will also improve the spectator section of the athletic field (which is used for football games, as well as graduation ceremonies). A new spectator section will be built to provide accessible seating for those in wheelchairs and others who cannot easily climb the current stairs, with sufficient space for family and friends to sit with them. T.D. is looking forward to the next year! Kimberlee Candela, CRA, Lorie Atamian, Associate CRA, Katie Hornberger, Director, Far Northern Regional Center.

BENEFITS

IN-HOME SUPPORT SERVICES (IHSS)

OCRA Helps E.S. Obtain IHSS Benefits.

E.S. is a 15-year-old regional center client who was denied eligibility for IHSS by the county. E.S.'s parent, a monolingual Korean-speaker, contacted OCRA for representation at hearing to appeal the denial. The county's reason for denial was that the parent had access to money or other assets that exceeded the resource limit for IHSS eligibility.

OCRA agreed to provide E.S.'s parent with legal assistance to try to resolve the matter without a hearing. After further investigation, the CRA discovered that E.S. was on the Home and Community Based Services Developmental Disability Waiver (DD Waiver). Under the DD Waiver, the county is not permitted to consider resources when making an IHSS eligibility determination. After the CRA notified the county that E.S. met this resource exemption under the IHSS program, the county agreed to reevaluate E.S. under the DD Waiver eligibility code. The county reassessed and E.S. was made eligible. Hannah Liddell, CRA, Ada Hamer, Associate CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center.

S.M. Maintains Most of His IHSS Hours.

S.M. is a 13-year-old boy with autism. His younger brother also has autism. Both boys were receiving 195 hours a month of protective supervision

each. S.M. received a Notice of Action (NOA) from IHSS that his hours would be reduced to 158 due to “available alternative resources.” OCRA reviewed the NOA with S.M.’s mother, as well as the NOA (which had the same reduction) for his brother, and advised the boys’ mother to file a request for hearing immediately and request aid paid pending, which she did. OCRA explain to the boys’ mother how to interpret the NOA’s and how to obtain the actual underlying needs assessments from IHSS. With this information S.M.’s mother contacted IHSS, obtained the original needs assessment, and was able to prove that the boys had separate needs that could not entirely be met in common. She then negotiated a decrease of only 10 hours a month instead of 40 during the school year and retained the original 195 hours during the summer months. Margaret Oppel, CRA, Maricruz Magdaleno, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Central Valley Regional Center.

J.C. Determined Eligible for IHSS Services and Receives Retroactive Benefits.

OCRA was contacted by J.C.’s mother, a monolingual Spanish-speaker, for help in obtaining IHSS for J.C. Mother reported that she applied for IHSS for J.C. several months ago and was never contacted by the county for an in-home eligibility assessment. OCRA agreed to represent J.C. at his initial IHSS home assessment and gather all the necessary records to document his need for IHSS. As a result of OCRA’s advocacy, the county determined that J.C. was eligible for IHSS and authorized to receive over 240 hours per month in services, including payment for all months that passed since J.C.’s initial request for IHSS totaling over \$14,300. Ada Hamer, Associate CRA, Hannah Liddell, CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center.

MEDI-CAL

C.D. Determined Eligible for Medi-Cal.

C.D. contacted OCRA after being denied eligibility for Medi-Cal. Medi-Cal denied C.D.’s eligibility because they determined that C.D. was over the limit of allowed financial resources based on the fact that C.D. was the beneficiary of a special needs trust established by her mother. The CRA assisted C.D. in filing for a hearing with Medi-Cal. Prior to the hearing date, Medi-Cal’s hearing representative told the CRA that C.D. was denied Medi-Cal eligibility because the trust did not have a “pay-back” provision

requiring that any assets remaining in the trust on C.D.'s death be paid back to the State to reimburse for all Medi-Cal benefits received. The CRA explained that such a trust provision was not required in a special needs trust established by a third party. After the CRA presented the Medi-Cal representative with statements from two trust experts supporting C.D.'s position, Medi-Cal agreed that C.D.'s special needs trust was exempt as a financial resource for purposes of Medi-Cal eligibility. As a result, C.D. was found to be eligible to receive Medi-Cal coverage without the necessity of a hearing. Lynne Page, CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

P.A. Obtains Needed Mental Health Support Services.

P.A. is a regional center client with a developmental and a psychiatric disability. P.A.'s mother contacted OCRA seeking assistance with obtaining needed mental health counselling and medication services. P.A. had previously been referred to various mental health clinics and been placed on long waiting lists or turned away and told to go to the regional center. She had already been without her psychiatric medications for several months and her regional center service coordinator had been unsuccessful in getting her an appropriate referral. OCRA asked the regional center to hold a mental health staffing to review P.A.'s situation and assist with coordinating her care with the local mental health providers. As a result, the regional center psychiatrist was able to intervene and identify and secure needed mental health counselling and medication support services for P.A. by connecting with the liaisons from county mental health and the Medi-Cal health plan. Coordinating care from multiple agencies is not an easy task so the intervention from OCRA and the regional center was important in helping P.A. deal with her Medi-Cal managed care plan and the county mental health providers. Eva Casas-Sarmiento, CRA, Cynthia Salomon, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

MEDICARE

Client Receives Medicare Part B Without Paying the Premium.

J.H. is a regional center client who recently became eligible for Medicare but did not apply because he did not understand the benefits of having Medicare. He refused Medicare Part B because he did not want to pay the monthly premiums. When J.H. met with OCRA about some related issues,

the CRA learned of his decision to decline Medicare. The CRA explained that J.H.'s low income amount would qualify him as a Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) and that the state would pay his Medicare Part B premiums. Once J.H. understood the program, he applied for Medicare and was approved under the SLMB program. Lynne Page, CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE (SSDI)

CRA Helps 18-Year-Old Client Receive SSDI Benefits.

B.W. is an 18-year-old regional center client whose father retired in 2013. In early 2014, B.W. applied for Social Security childhood disability benefits (SSDI) based on the earnings record of his retired father. B.W.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance shortly thereafter when B.W. received a notice that his benefits would terminate in June 2014, because in that month he would be 18-years-old, not disabled and not a full-time elementary or secondary level school student. The Social Security Administration (SSA) had apparently found B.W. eligible for benefits under his father's work history as a minor child with no disability.

To avoid the pending termination, OCRA provided technical assistance to B.W. and his mother to gather and submit evidence to the SSA Disability Determination Service Division (SSA/DDSD) regarding B.W.'s disabilities and continued special education enrollment through age 21. OCRA staff assisted B.W. and his mother with preparation, review and finalizing the evidence/records for submission to SSA/DDSD.

The SSA/DDSD arranged medical, ophthalmology and psychological assessments for B.W. The medical and ophthalmology assessments were completed, however, the psychological assessment was cancelled by SSA/DDS upon receipt of the evidence B.W. submitted. SSA agreed that B.W. was eligible for SSDI and continued his benefits without interruption. Mary Melendrez, CRA, Christine Armand, Associate CRA, Katherine Mottarella Supervising CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

Y.C. Receives SSI, with approximately \$11,000 in Retroactive Benefits, following OCRA Representation at Hearing.

Y.C.'s mother, who is a monolingual Spanish speaker, contacted OCRA seeking assistance with appealing the Social Security Administration's (SSA) determination that Y.C. was not eligible to receive SSI benefits. OCRA agreed to represent Y.C. at the SSA hearing to appeal the eligibility determination. In a fully favorable decision, the judge ruled that Y.C. was disabled under the childhood disability rules and was entitled to retroactive benefits going back several months, totaling approximately \$11,000. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Carlos Mora, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

SSI Overpayment Waived and Underpayment Discovered.

S.M. and D.M.'s mother received notices of overpayments in the amount of \$1,522.80 for each child. Their mother, who is a monolingual Spanish speaker, did not understand the notices because they were written in English and did not explain the reason for the overpayment. She contacted OCRA for assistance. S.M. and D.M.'s mother informed the CRA that she had attempted many times to get clarification as to the reason for the overpayment but the workers at the Social Security Administration (SSA) never explained why there was an overpayment. They just told her she had to pay the overpayment.

The CRA accompanied the parent to the local SSA office to obtain clarification as to the cause of the overpayment. At the meeting the SSA worker informed the CRA and parent that their system showed that S.M. and D.M.'s parent owned an additional bank account containing \$8,000 that was being counted as a resource for the children. This bank account made the children ineligible for SSI as they were over the resource limits for the program.

After further investigation, it was discovered that the bank account belonged to someone else. The CRA assisted the parent in requesting a letter from the bank that confirmed that neither the parent nor S.M. or D.M. were the legal owners of the account in question. She then filed a request for reconsideration and requested an informal conference.

At the informal conference, OCRA presented the supporting documentation to the SSA worker. The SSA worker waived the overpayments and determined that S.M. and D.M. were underpaid \$521.22 each. At the meeting the CRA also secured agreement from SSA that all future notices

be in Spanish. Aimee Delgado, CRA, Marisol Cruz, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center.

L.H. Receives Higher SSI Rate and Retroactive Award.

L.H. is a young woman with multiple disabilities including blindness. When she was a child, she received SSI benefits at the higher rate for persons who are blind. However, the Social Security Administration (SSA) stopped paying her the blind rate and her parent did not appeal. Several years later, L.H. sought to have the blind rate reinstated, but SSA refused, claiming to need new documentation of her blindness, even though her condition had not changed. L.H. had a hard time obtaining new documentation because her other disabilities made it impossible for an optometrist to accurately assess her vision.

OCRA assisted L.H. by requesting a new letter from her neurologist regarding her cortical blindness. OCRA then submitted this new documentation to SSA. SSA reinstated the higher SSI rate effective 2009, when L.H. turned 18 and first started asking that SSA restore her benefits at the higher rate. L.H. received a retroactive award of \$3933 and receives a larger check each month. Megan Chambers, CRA, Susan Alvarado, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

HOUSING

J.R. Secures Subsidized Housing.

J.R. needed to move due to ongoing harassment from her neighbors. Her move was stalled because of her difficulty obtaining subsidizing housing due to her neighbor's frivolous allegations of a crime. These charges were dismissed in court, but still showed up when the apartment complex conducted a background check. OCRA agreed to evaluate and assess J.R.'s right to obtain subsidized housing.

OCRA gathered and reviewed J.R.'s records, communicated with the public defender's office, gathered letters of support, consulted with attorneys who specialize in housing rights and advised J.R. of her continued right to subsidized housing despite the dismissed charges. OCRA assisted J.R. and her services providers in understanding her right to appeal if she were denied housing again. J.R. applied for another apartment and was found eligible. J.R. has moved and is enjoying her new subsidized apartment.

Yulahlia Hernandez, CRA, Annie Breuer, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

Tenant's HUD Voucher Reinstated after OCRA's Representation at Hearing.

J.D. received a 30-day notice that his Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 voucher was being terminated by the county's Housing Authority. The notice alleged J.D. had allowed unauthorized people to reside in his apartment, something that he had been warned about previously. J.D. claimed that no one else was living in his apartment. J.D. explained that he did allow friends who are homeless to stay overnight on occasion and to use his answering machine. He also admitted that he allowed his friends to use his mailbox to receive their mail, a direct violation of HUD rules.

OCRA advocated on J.D.s behalf at the hearing, arguing that J.D. was allowed to have overnight guests and that he never violated the rule that they not stay more than two weeks at a time. Also, although J.D. admitted to allowing his friends to use his mailbox, he did not realize that was a violation of HUD rules and he agreed to never do so again.

The County Housing Authority agreed to reinstate J.D.'s HUD voucher and J.D. agreed to follow all rules and regulations in the future. Lorie Atamian, Associate CRA, Kimberlee Candela, CRA, Katie Hornberger, Director, Far Northern Regional Center.

OTHER

A.C. Obtains Supported Employment Services from the Department of Rehabilitation.

A.C. contacted OCRA after completing numerous employment assessments through the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) over the course of a year, but was never offered a permanent placement with a supported employment agency. His goal was to find supported employment services and secure a job. OCRA scheduled a meeting with DOR and A.C.'s regional center and advocated for his right to supported employment services.

At the meeting OCRA discussed A.C.'s unmet needs, which made it hard for him to secure a supported employment program. A.C. did not have

access to transportation services and he needed support from his mother to remember appointments. However, his mother is a monolingual Spanish speaker and only received information from his service providers in English. After the meeting DOR agreed to fund a supported employment program for A.C. and the regional center agreed to fund transportation services. Additionally, A.C.'s service providers now communicate with his mother in Spanish. A.C. has been working at his employment program for a month and he is well on his way to a job. Yulahlia Hernandez, CRA, Annie Breuer, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

OUTREACH AND TRAINING

OCRA and Regional Center Offer Seminar about Changes to Medi-Cal Managed Care.

OCRA and the North Los Angeles County Regional Center presented a training to consumers and their families regarding changes on how Medi-Cal beneficiaries will access their health care and long-term services and supports (LTSS). The training focused on the impact of the new requirement that most people who receive Medi-Cal must enroll in a Medi-Cal managed care plan. Information was also provided regarding when certain LTSS, such as In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), would be administered through the Medi-Cal managed care plan. Over 40 people attended this informational evening. This training was also presented in Spanish and was part of a successful series of OCRA trainings sponsored by the regional center covering topics such as IHSS, alternatives to conservatorship, and challenging regional center denials. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Carlos Mora, Assistant CRA, Ada Hamer, Associate CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

PERSONAL AUTONOMY

A.W. Gets Back to Living More Independently.

A.W. who has Prader-Willi syndrome was conserved under a general conservatorship by one of her parents with whom she did not get along with well. She had been happily living in her own rent-subsidized unit with Supportive Living Services (SLS) staff. She was active in peer support groups and in her day program. However, when A.W.'s parent lost a home due to foreclosure, A.W. allowed the parent to move in with her because she didn't think she had a choice. Before long, A.W.'s parent became

excessively controlling of her life, restricting her social contacts and isolating her from other family members. A.W.'s parent also constantly criticized her weight, scrutinized the foods she ate, and subjected her to humiliating daily weigh-ins. The parent also threatened to remove A.W. from the day program she had been attending for more than a decade, and which had become her only regular daily activity outside the home.

OCRA represented A.W. at her IPP meeting to help advocate for A.W. to return to her previous living situation. In the meantime, the emotional and verbal abuse and isolation A.W. was suffering at home prompted OCRA, with A.W.'s permission, to involve Adult Protective Services (APS). OCRA appeared at a conservatorship hearing to raise the issues reported to APS and requested that A.W. be appointed counsel. OCRA represented A.W. at a follow-up IPP meeting – with A.W.'s parent in attendance – at A.W.'s home. At this meeting, the parent agreed to move out of A.W.'s home so A.W. could return to living independently in her own home with SLS.

After A.W.'s parent moved out of her home A.W.'s SLS staff, who she knows and trusts, returned to assist her. She has also been able to reconnect with her family and her peer advocacy group. A.W.'s life is full again. Asa Marie Standfeldt, CRA, Ramona Landeros, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Alta California Regional Center.

Probate Court Judge Terminates Conservatorship.

M.A.'s conservators had medical issues that prevented them from serving in that capacity. Therefore, they wanted to terminate the conservatorship. OCRA met with M.A. and his IPP team which included the regional center, care home director, and day program manager to confirm M.A.'s current IPP goals are being met and that M.A.'s conservatorship was no longer necessary. OCRA coordinated an IPP team effort to write letters of support that would demonstrate how M.A.'s personal care, clinical and medical needs are being met and how well M.A. is doing in his community care placement. OCRA also coordinated with M.A.'s court appointed counsel and the conservators to file a petition to terminate the conservatorship. The Court terminated the conservatorship at the first hearing based on the relevant evidence presented. M.A. is now making all of his own decisions and living well in the community. Leinani Walter, CRA, Christine Hager, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

REGIONAL CENTER

COMMUNITY PLACEMENT

D.C. Moves into His Own Apartment.

D.C. was living in an Institute for Mental Disease (IMD). He had been there for about a year and really wanted to live in the community again. The public guardian's office, was D.C.'s conservator and had the power to place him into a facility or the community. OCRA attended two meetings at the IMD. OCRA advocated for D.C. to live in the least restrictive environment, which after much discussion, was his own home with Supported Living Services (SLS). The conservator was hesitant to try this option, since D.C. had always been in group homes and facilities and had never lived in his own apartment. The regional center service coordinator was supportive of this option and found an SLS agency to provide staff to help D.C. get an apartment, live independently, and begin working. OCRA attended D.C.'s first IPP meeting at his new apartment with his service coordinator and SLS staff. D.C. has been successfully living in his new apartment with a roommate and SLS for the past six months. Katie Meyer, CRA, Luisa Delgadillo, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Westside Regional Center.

B.E. Avoids Placement at College Hospital.

B.E. moved into a group home shortly after his 18th birthday. It was his first time living outside of his family home. On his first day in the new house B.E. got water on the cast that he was wearing on his foot, and needed the cast to be repaired at a hospital. The staff at B.E.'s group home took him to the hospital, but after the doctors applied a new cast the group home refused to take him back. With nowhere to live, B.E. remained at the hospital for several weeks waiting for a new placement. OCRA was alerted to B.E.'s case by Adult Protective Services. OCRA went to the hospital to meet with B.E. and learned that the regional center filed a petition to commit B.E. under Welfare & Institutions Code section 6500. The regional center was seeking to place B.E. at College Hospital, a locked facility hundreds of miles away from B.E.'s home community and family within the week. OCRA agreed to appear at the 6500 hearing and provide technical assistance to B.E.'s public defender to contest the proposed placement at College Hospital.

OCRA provided B.E.'s public defender with information explaining the Lanterman Act and the judicial commitment statutes that protect B.E.'s right to live in the least restrictive and most integrated placement appropriate for his needs in his home community. OCRA appeared at B.E.'s 6500 commitment hearing and supported the public defender's argument that College Hospital was not an appropriate placement for B.E. The court issued an order that the regional center would not be permitted to move B.E. to College Hospital as it had intended. The court also ordered the regional center to demonstrate to the court that it had thoroughly explored and exhausted all community-based placement options in B.E.'s home community before the court would consider approving a transfer to College Hospital. Since that time, B.E. has moved out of the hospital and is now living in a small crisis home in his home county while he awaits a permanent placement. Katie Spielman, CRA, Christine Tarrant, Assistant CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

ELIGIBILITY

P.H. is Determined Eligible for Regional Center Services.

P.H. contacted OCRA seeking representation to appeal the regional center's determination that P.H. did not qualify for regional center services. OCRA agreed to represent P.H. at an administrative hearing to challenge the eligibility denial. At hearing, the regional center argued that P.H.'s history of childhood trauma and varying psychiatric diagnoses, including childhood schizophrenia, was the cause of P.H.'s inability to care for herself as an adult. The psychologist retained by OCRA testified that schizophrenia in children is extremely rare, and the diagnosis did not fit our client then or now. OCRA asserted that the underlying issue was a developmental disability rather than a psychiatric one. After a two day hearing, the judge agreed and ruled that P.H. was eligible to receive regional center services as an individual requiring treatment similar to a person with an intellectual disability. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Hannah Liddell, CRA, Carlos Mora, Assistant CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

SERVICES

O.V. Gets Appropriate Equipment To Remain In the Family Home.

O.V. is an adult who requires equipment and accommodations to continue living in his family home. O.V. obtained a wheelchair-accessible ramp

funded by Medi-Cal. However, O.V. could not use the ramp because he and his family needed help with the installation of the ramp. OCRA contacted the regional center, which agreed to assist. As a result, the wheelchair ramp company sent someone to the home to install the ramp. O.V. now uses the ramp daily, which helps him to remain living in his family home. Veronica Cervantes, CRA, Jazmin Romero, Assistant CRA, Katie Meyer, Supervising CRA, Inland Regional Center.

A.R. Receives Funding to Obtain Early Intervention Services at a Child Development Center and Travel Reimbursement for Related Costs.

A.R. is a two-year-old child who is eligible to receive early intervention services from the regional center. A.R.'s parent received a notice of action from the regional center stating that A.R.'s tuition at the child development center, and mileage reimbursement to access the center's services, were being terminated. The regional center's written notice incorrectly stated that the local education agency was responsible for funding these services. OCRA agreed to represent A.R. and filed for hearing against the regional center. Soon after the hearing began, the regional center agreed to enter into a settlement agreement. The regional center agreed to fund the child development center tuition, hire an early intervention specialist for A.R. at the center site, and reimburse the parent the full cost of mileage to transport the child to the center site and her weekly appointments with her occupational therapist and physical therapists. Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Brigitte Ammons, Los Angeles Regional Office, Mario Espinoza, CRA, Valerie Geary, Assistant CRA, Kern Regional Center.

OCRA Assists L.B. in Obtaining More Appropriate Behavior Services.

L.B. is a 19-year-old man who was receiving individualized behavioral services funded by the regional center to assist him in becoming more independent. L.B. had a history of aggression that interfered with his ability to self-direct himself at home and in the community. Regional center planned to terminate the behavioral services through Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA) because L.B.'s parent was not implementing the behavioral approaches at home that were suggested by the behavioral supports provider.

OCRA agreed to represent L.B. to keep and revise his behavioral services at home and in the community. In a meeting with the regional center staff, the CHLA social worker, and CHLA psychologist, OCRA helped convince

the regional center to not only continue the behavior services but also improve upon the behavior plan to more effectively address L.B.'s safety. The behavioral plan was also altered so that L.B. would be the primary party responsible for complying with the implementation of the plan, rather than the parent. Hannah Liddell, CRA, Ada Hamer, Associate CRA, Timothy Poe, Supervising CRA, Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center.

T.R. Retains Her Independence and Her Home.

T.R. is a 50 year-old woman with intellectual disabilities. She lives in her own apartment. She is afraid of outside contact and people entering her living space. During the day she goes for long walks in her community and is known as a pleasant, if reserved, person.

T.R.'s apartment was becoming increasingly dirty and cluttered, to the point where it presented a safety situation. Her landlord called OCRA deeply concerned, because they didn't want to evict her but felt they had no choice if the situation continued to deteriorate without signs of progress. T.R. had no family she felt could assist her, and was reluctant to seek any assistance in the form of temporary housing or support. OCRA reached out to the regional center after consulting with T.R. to discuss getting Supportive Living Services (SLS) to clean the apartment and help T.R. develop the skills needed to maintain her living quarters. Just a few days before eviction, the SLS started and the landlord agreed to drop the proceedings. T.R. is safely living where she is most comfortable. David Weafer, Temporary CRA, Lucy Garcia Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

OCRA Helps Student Receive Appropriate School Services.

N.D.'s mother contacted OCRA because the school district was not complying with his IEP. The district had failed to provide him with an agreed upon FM System (to amplify the teacher's voice), 1:1 aide, touch screen device and projector, OT and APE services and they checked the "agree" box on the IEP when the mother had not in fact agreed. OCRA provided direct representation at N.D.'s next IEP and the district agreed to fund several Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs). Following the IEEs, the district drafted new IEP goals and is now in compliance with N.D.'s IEP. The district also agreed to increase N.D.'s speech and vision

services. At the last IEP team meeting, the district agreed to purchase a laptop with typing and organizational software for use in the classroom and academic assignments at home in addition to his other assistive technology. Arthur Lipscomb CRA, Celeste Palmer, Associate CRA, William Leiner, Supervising CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

C.L. Retains his Special Education Eligibility.

C.L.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance following the termination of his special education eligibility. C.L. is a 14-year-old boy diagnosed with autism. C.L. has traditionally done very well in school but requires related services to support him with his social skill development. At the IEP meeting discussing C.L.'s transition to high school, C.L.'s mother was told that he no longer required special education and related services. She disagreed. The school district did not have a completed IEP form but at the District's request C.L.'s mother reluctantly signed the page indicating her attendance. A few days later C.L. brought home an exit IEP with the signature the district obtained from mother attached as her agreement with the IEP in its entirety. OCRA drafted a letter for C.L.'s mother to send to the district rescinding her agreement to the IEP and requesting Independent Educational Evaluations. C.L.'s mother turned in the letter and a short time later received a call from the school district that they had reconsidered and continued to find C.L. eligible for special education under the qualifying diagnosis of autism. C.L.'s related services were also reinstated and he has the services to assist in his transition into high school. Kendra McWright, CRA, Gina Gheno, Assistant CRA, Katherine Mottarella, Supervising CRA, Tri-Counties Regional Center.

OCRA Secures Physical Therapy and Eye Gaze Communication Device for Student with Rare Genetic Disability.

C.R. is a student with a genetic condition which causes low core body strength and motor spasticity and seizures. C.R. spent much of the school day on the floor to navigate the classroom. OCRA requested an assessment to determine if C.R. was receiving appropriate occupational therapy (OT) services and if he needed physical therapy (PT) services. OCRA requested an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) by a physical therapist, after disagreeing with the district's assessment finding no further OT or PT needs. The IEE assessor concluded that C.R. had the ability to be an independent walker. OCRA advocacy resulted in C.R. getting appropriate equipment, direct PT services and staff training by a PT

to assist C.R. to see himself as a walker and begin walking. IEP goals were developed to increase C.R.'s ability to navigate the classroom and campus safely and more independently.

OCRA also requested an augmentative communication assessment which concluded that C.R. would not benefit from communication devices. OCRA then advocated for trial of eye gaze technology to rule out C.R.'s motor problems as impacting the results of the assessment. The school district agreed, which resulted in the purchase of eye gaze communication devices for C.R. A 1:1 aide was also secured to ride the bus with C.R. to administer medication in the event of a seizure. C.R. now has increased participation in his school day. Rita Defilippis, CRA, Filomena Alomar, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.

A.B.'s Enrollment in Preschool Special Education.

A.B. moved into a new school district. A.B.'s mother, who is a monolingual Spanish speaker, attempted to enroll A.B. in the local preschool special education program. As requested by the school, A.B.'s mother submitted the enrollment application and the documents required by the district. For over a month, she repeatedly contacted the school to obtain the status of A.B.'s enrollment. The school secretary and administrator advised her that they did not know where the enrollment packet was. She was told that it went to the school psychologist for placement review, and the psychologist was unavailable. When A.B.'s mother went back to the school to request the status of enrollment, the secretary drew her a map and told her to go to a different school. However, A.B.'s mother was unable to find the school. She continued to receive inaccurate information from the school secretary. After two months of attempting to enroll A.B., she contacted OCRA.

The Assistant CRA contacted the school secretary and the secretary to the Director of Special Education informing them of the unreasonable wait time to enroll A.B. and asking for an expedient resolution to this issue. Within one hour, the school secretary contacted the Assistant CRA to inform her that A.B. was enrolled and ready to start the next day with transportation. Patricia Martin, Assistant CRA, Jacqueline Miller, CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, Regional Center of Orange County.

OCRA Advocacy Results in Reading and Assistive Technology Interventions.

J.G. is a student with autism who had not made any reading progress in 16 years. Despite this lack of progress, no interventions targeting reading had been developed by the school district. OCRA requested an assessment to determine if J.G. had a reading disability and an assistive technology assessment to determine any technology J.G. may need to access his curriculum. Both of the school district's assessments were inadequate. OCRA then requested Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs). The IEEs resulted in the school district hiring a reading specialist to provide 50 hours of 1:1 reading instruction during the summer using a curriculum designed for students lacking the reading prerequisites. The school district also purchased an appropriate reading program to begin in the fall for J.G. and other struggling readers. The assistive technology IEE resulted in the school district purchasing a computer, scanner, and software for J.G. to use at home and school that will allow him to have his tests and worksheets read to him and to allow him to orally answer his worksheets and tests. Software was also purchased to assist J.G. with organizing his written responses. The school district also agreed to get all textbooks in digital format and subscribed J.G. in a digital book share service to access books in auditory format for home and school. Training for staff and family on the assistive technology was also provided throughout the year. This combination of services and devices is making a tremendous difference for him. Rita Defilippis, CRA, Filomena Alomar, Assistant CRA, Irma Wagster, Supervising CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.