

ADVOCACY REPORT

OFFICE OF CLIENTS' RIGHTS ADVOCACY

Spring 2006

BENEFITS

Client Awarded SSDI.

S.H. had worked as a courtesy clerk for Ralph's for eleven years when she called OCRA seeking assistance in appealing the Social Security Administration's (SSA) recent denial of Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits. SSA claimed that S.H. was not disabled because she had engaged in substantial gainful activity (SGA). OCRA represented S.H. at the appeal, where the judge noted that, although S.H. met one of the disability criteria under federal law, her earnings did put her over the SGA limit. The Clients' Rights Advocate (CRA) requested that the record be kept open for two weeks so the CRA could provide additional evidence.

The CRA visited S.H.'s place of work and interviewed her supervisor and a cashier who has known S.H. for eleven years, both of whom provided declarations stating that S.H. could not do all of her work without help, and that her job was really a sheltered work environment. After giving the declarations to the judge, he made a fully favorable decision, giving S.H. SSDI benefits back to July of 2002. Matt Pope, CRA, Lucy Garcia, Assistant CRA, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center.

Consumer's SSI and Medi-Cal Is Reinstated.

B.H. received a notice in December, 2004, stating that he had an SSI overpayment of \$21,905. Because there was no appeal or waiver, B.H.'s Medi-Cal benefits were terminated. The regional center service coordinator contacted OCRA for assistance. OCRA contacted Medi-Cal and assisted the service coordinator in reapplying for Medi-Cal benefits for B.H.

OCRA contacted B.H.'s representative payee to find out why the overpayment was never appealed. The representative payee had been informed by the SSA that B.H. had a joint account with his mother in Utah

in the amount of \$6,136. The representative payee tried to contact B.H.'s mother, but was unable to do so.

OCRA and B.H. had a meeting with the SSA. The claims representative agreed to reinstate B.H.'s SSI benefits if he could prove he did not have access to the bank account in Utah. OCRA contacted the bank in Utah. The bank informed OCRA that the account was a custodial account and that B.H. never had access to the money. The claims representative confirmed this with the bank and agreed to reinstate B.H.'s SSI monies. Maria Bryant-Pollard, CRA, Jacqueline Gallegos, Assistant CRA, Alta California Regional Center.

Consumer Awarded SSI.

K. L., an 18-year-old, was denied eligibility for both Supplemental Social Security (SSI) and SSDI. K.L.'s mother called OCRA and asked for help in appealing the denial. The Assistant CRA reviewed the SSA and regional center files, noting information about K.L.'s disability that could be used to ask the SSA to reconsider the denial. The Assistant CRA then met with K.L. and her mother to explain the differences between SSI and SSDI. The Assistant CRA also helped K.L. and her mother fill out and file the forms, including the new information, asking SSA to reconsider its decision. As a result, K.L. was awarded SSI benefits. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

OCRA Assists Client In Obtaining SSI.

D.F., an 18-year-old, was denied SSI. His mother called OCRA asking for help in appealing the denial. The CRA guided the mother through the appeal process and provided D.F.'s doctor with advice about a letter of support to the SSA. The CRA also advised D.F.'s mother on which documents to submit to the SSA. OCRA was informed by D.F.'s service coordinator that D.F. was awarded \$870 per month in SSI, including retroactive benefits to his initial date of application. Arthur Lipscomb, CRA, Gloria Torres, Assistant CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.

Consumer Maintains Social Security Benefits.

D.M. is a recipient of Disabled Adult Child Social Security (DAC) benefits. D.M. received a letter from the SSA requesting information about his

employment within ten days and stating that failure to provide any additional evidence would result in a finding that D.M. had been engaged in substantial gainful activity since January, 1995. SSA explained that D.M.'s earnings were high enough to presume that D.M. was no longer disabled because he was capable of substantial work. This finding would result in termination of D.M.'s DAC benefits.

Although the SSA's request for additional information was timely referred to the service coordinator, the time period for responding lapsed. D.M. was notified that his DAC benefits would be discontinued. D.M.'s service coordinator contacted OCRA and asked whether D.M. should appeal the decision or let it lapse and receive SSI only. OCRA explained to the service coordinator that the result in a loss of D.M.'s DAC benefits meant D.M. would also lose Medicare and have overpayment liability.

OCRA explained to the service coordinator that the SSA made an adverse decision on D.M.'s case because the SSA did not get any info about D.M.'s work history. OCRA reviewed D.M.'s regional center file and identified supporting documentation, such as supported employment reports and evidence of an unsuccessful work attempt. OCRA recommended that the regional center file a request for reconsideration along with the supporting documentation. Based on OCRA recommendations, the SSA reconsidered and reversed D.M.'s DAC termination. Brian Capra, CRA, Westside Regional Center.

Consumer Keeps Her Specialty Mental Health Services.

A.M. is a 16-year old female diagnosed with autism and anxiety disorder. In 2002, A.M. began receiving specialty mental health services at her group home. Last summer at A.M.'s mental health annual assessment, the county determined that A.M. no longer had a psychiatric diagnosis. Santa Barbara County Mental Health then terminated A.M.'s specialty mental health services and day rehabilitation services. A.M. appealed. OCRA agreed to represent A.M. at the administrative hearing.

A.M. obtained an independent psychiatric evaluation. Based on this evaluation and the treating psychologist's diagnosis, OCRA argued that A.M. had a psychiatric disorder in addition to her autism. The administrative law judge (ALJ) determined that the county's experts did not work with A.M. other than at the annual assessments. Further, the ALJ

determined that A.M.'s experts had been working with her for a longer period of time. The ALJ noted in his decision that, "The opinions of treating physicians are entitled to greater weight than 'one-shot consultants....'" The ALJ concluded that A.M. has a psychiatric disorder so A.M.'s specialty mental health services were to continue. Katherine Mottarella, CRA, Jacqueline Phan, Assistant CRA, Tri-Counties Regional Center.

Social Security Administration Waives Overpayment Of \$95,000.

T.R.'s mother called OCRA saying that the SSA would soon begin withholding from the wages of T.R. because he had been overpaid \$95,000 in SSI benefits for the past 14 years. This happened in spite of T.R. reporting monthly to the SSA that he was working at a grocery store.

OCRA, after investigating and researching federal law, discovered that the SSA was wrong in asking T.R. to repay the money. OCRA then helped T.R. ask that the overpayment be waived and also helped him file an appeal for hearing. Soon after, T.R. received a notice that he did not have to repay any of the \$95,000. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

Medi-Cal Pays for New Wheelchair.

E.G. had been attempting to get a new wheelchair for almost five years. E.G. noticed that her wheelchair was not working for her as soon as she got it and the wheelchair company had attempted on many occasions to fix it. The wheelchair was not safe. It was fitted improperly and caused her tremendous discomfort. The company finally admitted that there were no more repairs or adaptations that could be made on the wheelchair. Despite this, Medi-Cal refused to approve a new wheelchair for E.G. Due to her discomfort and the fact that the wheelchair was unsafe, E.G. had gone from an independent traveler to requiring an aide whenever she left her home.

OCRA gathered reports from E.G.'s doctor which specified the exact requirements of a wheelchair that would be safe and maintain E.G.'s health, obtained a new wheelchair evaluation, spoke with the physical therapist and technician who evaluated her, and spoke with her aides and supervisor at work. OCRA went to hearing and presented this evidence to the judge. E.G.'s supported living worker and E.G. gave testimony. Medi-Cal argued

that even if E.G. prevailed at this hearing, they would authorize a less expensive model with fewer modifications.

The ALJ found for E.G. She stated that Medi-Cal had provided no evidence supporting its claim that E.G. did not require the wheelchair specified by the doctor and physical therapist and that E.G. had used due diligence in attempting to have her old wheelchair repaired and modified. Medi-Cal was ordered to approve a TAR for the exact wheelchair and modifications requested by her provider. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

IHSS Hours Restored One Day Prior to Hearing.

P.G. needs help with all his self-care. He cannot speak. While living with his brother in Fresno County, P.G. received 238.3 hours of IHSS hours, which included protective supervision. P.G. was removed from his brother's care and placed with his sister in Merced County. His IHSS hours were cut to 42.2 hours a month. OCRA was contacted.

OCRA worked diligently on behalf of P.G. and prepared for hearing. Due to the CRA's efforts, P.G.'s hours and protective supervision were restored to 234.3 without going to hearing. Kay Spencer, CRA, Enid Perez, CRA, Central Valley Regional Center.

SSI Eligibility Granted.

E.T. is a young woman who has both cognitive and psychiatric impairments. She applied for SSI but would become anxious and fearful when she was supposed to appear for an interview. She would not go to the SSA office. She had been denied benefits several times when OCRA was contacted.

With the cooperation of E.T.'s regional center social worker, OCRA collected all of the documentation available and sent it with a hearing request to SSA. OCRA additionally requested a "record review" so that E.T. would not have to appear at an in-person hearing. OCRA believed that the record was strong enough to support E.T.'s claim that she was unable to work due to her disability.

Several months went by and nothing was heard from the SSA. OCRA called the office and was told that the ALJ was in the process of reviewing the

case. Shortly after that, E.T. received a fully favorable decision. E.T. will receive benefits and is entitled to approximately two years of retroactive benefits. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

OCRA Assists Family in Maintaining IHSS Hours.

J.E. is an adult living in his family home. His family was receiving 272 hours a month of IHSS hours. The hours were provided mainly by his mother who quit her full-time job in order to care for J.E.

J.E.'s family received a notice that IHSS hours were to be reduced by 40 hours a month. J.E. had started a day program. IHSS asserted that J.E. was not receiving care during those hours and was not entitled to continue receiving the entire 272 hours. IHSS wanted to cut the hours without speaking to the family.

OCRA investigated the issue and found that the day program was taking place in home and whenever J.E. went out to the community, a parent had to accompany him because of health and safety risks. OCRA advised the family to explain to IHSS that the day program was not the usual type and that the family was still required to give care to J.E.

OCRA spoke to IHSS which agreed to maintain the current level of hours. Yulahlia Hernandez CRA, Maricris Dela Cruz-Britton, Assistant CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

Medi-Cal Grants Eligibility.

P.G. had been waiting for a Notice of Action from Medi-Cal for over a year when P.G.'s mother called OCRA for assistance, complaining that Medi-Cal was ignoring her request for a decision on her son's application. OCRA agreed to investigate and, after establishing that P.G. met the Medi-Cal eligibility requirements, contacted Medi-Cal. After two months of negotiation and providing Medi-Cal with additional information, P.G. was granted eligibility, including retroactive benefits. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

OCRA Assists Minor in Obtaining Needed Benefits.

S.S. is a 15-year-old who receives IHSS through Los Angeles County. Years ago, when S.S. was receiving SSI, her mother was the parent provider for IHSS. When S.S.'s mother began to earn more money, S.S. was terminated from SSI but retained Medi-Cal and IHSS through institutional deeming under the DDS Waiver. Once enrolled onto the DDS Waiver, S.S.'s mother was not allowed to be S.S.'s IHSS provider. The rule changed on August 1, 2004, when the State obtained a federal waiver. This waiver, called the IHSS Independence Plus Waiver, allows DDS Waiver children to have parent providers. Another change that came about is that protective supervision was now available.

S.S.'s mother asked the county if she could go back to being the parent provider for S.S. S.S.'s grandmother had been the IHSS provider. However, because of S.S.'s grandmother's health limitations and S.S.'s increased care needs, S.S.'s mother needed to become the provider. The county told S.S.'s mother that S.S. would have to disenroll from the DDS Waiver in order for the mother to become the provider but that if S.S. disenrolled, she would not be eligible for IHSS due to S.S.'s mother's income. The regional center referred S.S.'s mother to OCRA for assistance in establishing parent provider status under the IHSS Independence Plus Waiver.

OCRA drafted a detailed opinion letter explaining the recent changes to the IHSS program for S.S.'s mother to present to the county. While reviewing S.S.'s file, OCRA identified S.S. as also being eligible for protective supervision. OCRA attached relevant documentation to the opinion letter, including a regional center report requested by OCRA documenting S.S.'s current protective supervision needs. OCRA also instructed S.S.'s mother to complete a self-assessment detailing S.S.'s IHSS needs.

The county employee conducting the in-home need assessment was not cooperative. S.S.'s mother received the Notice of Action stating that S.S.'s hours would only be increased from 190 to 197 per month. There was no indication that the request to be parent provider was granted nor was there authorization for protective supervision.

Ultimately, intervention through the Los Angeles County IHSS Director's office was required. The initial county employee was replaced with a new

worker and a new in-home need assessment was performed. This time, S.S. was awarded 281.7 hours per month, including protective supervision, with S.S.'s mother as the provider. The county's explanation for not awarding the 283 maximum was inadequate, but S.S.'s mother was satisfied with the outcome. Additionally, due to the three months it took to achieve this authorization, S.S. obtained retroactive compensation of \$2,500. Brian Capra, CRA, Westside Regional Center.

OCRA Defends against Mandatory Medi-Cal Managed Care Enrollment.

S.T. is a young girl with autism who lives with her parents. S.T. has been on the DDS Waiver for many years and has always had zero share-of-cost Medi-Cal. Until recently, S.T. was also an SSI recipient and received her Medi-Cal through SSI. An increase in S.T.'s parents' earnings caused S.T.'s SSI to terminate.

After Los Angeles County placed S.T. under a different Medi-Cal program, S.T.'s mother received an enrollment packet from Health Care Options (HCO), the agency contracted with the Department of Managed Care (DMC) to enroll Medi-Cal beneficiaries in managed care health plans. S.T.'s mother contacted HCO and was informed that S.T. was mandatorily enrolled in managed care and that S.T.'s mother had to select a health plan or else one would be assigned to S.T. Enrollment in managed care would result in S.T. having to change her doctors, which would be a problem given the significant amount of time it took for the doctors to obtain S.T.'s trust. S.T.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance.

OCRA advised S.T.'s mother to request a fair hearing. OCRA further advised S.T.'s mother to contact the DMC's Ombudsman's Office. The Ombudsman allowed for a temporary disenrollment pending the outcome of the fair hearing but supported HCO's decision to enroll S.T. in a managed care health plan. When OCRA contacted the Ombudsman for clarification, OCRA was informed that S.T. had been assigned an Aid Code of "82," which required enrollment unless she could obtain an exemption. The Aid Code "82" is assigned to Medi-Cal recipients who are medically indigent and not identified in the system as having a disability. S.T. was not indigent because her countable income after deeming from her parents was high enough to cause her SSI benefits to stop. The Ombudsman stated that any change in eligibility had to be done through the county.

OCRA contacted the county's Medi-Cal eligibility worker assigned to S.T.'s case. In addition to avoiding mandatory enrollment in managed care, it was also important to ensure S.T. was identified in the system as a person with a disability or else she would have to undergo another disability evaluation after twelve months of being off of SSI. Unfortunately, the eligibility worker was not cooperative and advised S.T.'s mother to continue her appeal.

OCRA attended the fair hearing with S.T.'s mother against DMC. The parties entered into a stipulation providing for an exemption from mandatory managed care for one year. Meanwhile, OCRA contacted the State Department of Health Services. OCRA explained that S.T. has been a DDS Waiver client for many years and the DD Waiver Aid Code assignment would have been more appropriate. Alternatively, OCRA explained that S.T. could have been placed under the Aged and Disabled Federal Poverty Level (A & D FPL) Program. The state agreed and ordered the county to place S.T. in the A & D FPL Program. Brian Capra, CRA, Meriah Harwood, Assistant CRA, Westside Regional Center.

Client Found Not to Have Engaged in Substantial Gainful Activity.

W.J. is a 46-year-old man with two small children who lives independently with his wife in their own home. W.J. qualifies for regional center services based on his cerebral palsy and epilepsy which result in significant developmental delays.

OCRA was initially contacted by W.J.'s case worker who reported that W.J. had recently received a notice from the SSA indicating that his SSDI benefits would be terminated because of the SSA's determination that W.J. was no longer disabled as of December, 2002, as he had been engaged in substantial gainful activity. An overpayment of \$20,767 had accrued to W.J. beginning in March, 2003. W.J.'s children's benefits were also affected by their father's termination of eligibility with the SSA claiming that an overpayment had also occurred for each of W.J.'s children in excess of \$10,000.

OCRA determined that SSA had failed to consider the special conditions of W.J.'s employment. W.J. was receiving a job coach funded through the Department of Rehabilitation. The SSA immediately deducted the hourly wage of the job coach paid by the Department of Rehabilitation from W.J.'s

gross earnings. The SSA concluded that the revised calculations of W.J.'s earned income revealed that he was paid more than the actual value of the services he performed which did not constitute substantial gainful activity. The SSA agreed that no overpayment had occurred and the benefits of W.J. and his children were reinstated including retroactive benefits. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Ada Quintero, Assistant CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

IHSS Grants Protective Supervision and 195 Hours of Care.

V.C. is a young child with autism and severe behaviors who was receiving only 22 hours of IHSS from Los Angeles County. V.C.'s mother called OCRA for assistance. OCRA met V.C. in her home and helped V.C.'s mother complete the self-assessment packet. OCRA then prepared a declaration for V.C.'s mother to sign regarding V.C.'s need for protective supervision and attended the IHSS reassessment at V.C.'s home. The CRA provided the IHSS worker with the self-assessment, declaration and other documents supporting V.C.'s need. Thereafter, IHSS granted V.C. 195 hours of IHSS including protective supervision. Anastasia Bacigalupo, CRA, Christine Armand, Associate CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

M.R. Gains Greater Mobility and Financial Support.

OCRA previously assisted M.R. to secure a new wheelchair and a higher rate of foster care payment. OCRA was still working on securing retroactive payment at the higher foster care rate. OCRA has now negotiated with the Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCSF) and obtained \$5,977. in retroactive foster care for M.R.'s family. This represents the higher F-4 rate that the family should have received since M.R.'s initial placement in the home over 2 years ago. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Tabare Depab, Volunteer Attorney, Harbor Regional Center.

E.M. Receives the Appropriate Amount of IHSS.

E.M. is a 5-year-old regional center consumer. E.M. is exceptionally active and requires constant attention and care. E.M.'s mother applied for IHSS after attending a training by OCRA. The mother was discouraged by IHSS for applying, so she contacted OCRA for assistance. OCRA reviewed with

the mother what to say in Spanish to the IHSS worker. The mother was able to obtain IHSS services but only in the amount of 32.1 hours per month.

OCRA filed for hearing. Prior to hearing, the appeals worker contacted OCRA and asked if the county could re-assess E.M. OCRA agreed and submitted additional documentation including IEP's, IPP's and a nursing assessment. The re-assessment resulted in an increase to 51.2 hours per month of IHSS. OCRA requested a hearing.

At the hearing, the mother testified as to E.M.'s needs. The ALJ awarded 71.4 hours per month, more than double what had initially been assessed by the county. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Harbor Regional Center, Maria Ortega, Office Manager, OCRA.

CONSUMER FINANCE

Collection Agency Forgives Debt.

B.K. has always lived with his family and requires support in many aspects of his life. On several occasions, individuals in B.K.'s neighborhood demanded that B.K. sign for credit cards or make large purchases for them. B.K. had no income with which to pay these bills. A large debt was incurred and sent to a collection agency. The family contacted OCRA for assistance.

OCRA wrote the collection agency several letters outlining the facts of the case and the applicable statutory and case law regarding the collection of debt from individuals with developmental disabilities. The family heard nothing for nine months and then began receiving letters and phone calls again. OCRA called the collection agency and spoke with a representative. The agency agreed that if OCRA could provide evidence that B.K. was diagnosed with mental retardation and had been coerced into signing for the credit cards, the agency would forgive the debt.

With the consent of B.K., OCRA obtained a letter from B.K.'s doctor and the regional center to document B.K.'s diagnosis. The CRA also obtained a letter from B.K.'s mother explaining the circumstances. OCRA sent this information to the agency representative and followed up with a phone call. The representative forgave the debt and confirmed this with a letter. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

R.S. to Meet with the Head of the Texas Rangers.

R.S. has lived most of his 80 years in his family home, which is now a part of the modest Special Needs Trust (SNT) his relatives administer. With money from the trust, R.S. has been able to travel in California and Oregon, keep the family home in good shape, and have money for small expenditures separate from his food and housing needs. But the trustees had balked at R.S.'s most recent request, which was money for travel to the Texas Rangers Museum in Waco and then to Houston to visit the head of the Texas Rangers. R.S. took a great interest in the Texas Rangers, had corresponded with the director and wanted to meet him before he retired. The trustees vetoed the request so R.S. contacted OCRA.

OCRA visited with R.S. and helped him and his staff work through alternatives for his trip. The group arrived at decisions about travel – flying to Texas and renting a wheelchair accessible van, rather than driving all the way from California. It made a list of estimated travel costs. OCRA recommended that the revised budget be presented to the trustees. R.S. arranged for a meeting with the trustees and presented his plan. The trustees' concerns about a cross-county drive were eased, and they agreed to fund R.S.'s trip to Texas. Marsha Siegel, CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

Family Able to Purchase Headstone.

V.C., once an IRC client, had moved to another catchment area before passing away. Although his family could afford to bury V.C., the family could not afford to buy a headstone. The previous regional center, using V.C.'s SSI funds, had bought V.C. a burial plot in San Bernardino under a contract with a cemetery. The family wanted to sell the burial plot to pay for V.C.'s headstone, but would need the two regional centers and the cemetery to agree to release any interest in the burial plot and transfer it to the family. The CRA was able to get everyone involved to agree. The plot was transferred to the family, who sold it and bought V.C.'s headstone. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Client Avoids Prison.

R.V., already in jail for a year for violating parole, was facing 32 months in state prison because the parole violation was a third strike. OCRA and R.V.'s public defender, who had previously worked together to get R.V. regional center eligibility, met with the local deputy district attorney (D.A.) to discuss a possible removal of the third strike and release from jail. The D.A., who was reluctant to recommend R.V.'s release, wanted to know whether there would be any support in the community if R.V. was released.

The CRA explained to the D.A. the services that R.V. would be able to get as a regional center client, including supported living and supported employment. At a hearing the following week, the D.A. reported that R.V. would be able to get appropriate services and recommended waiving the third strike and prison time. The judge placed R.V. on one year parole and four years probation. R.V. was released from jail the next day. Matt Pope, CRA, Lucy Garcia, Assistant CRA, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center.

DEPENDENCY

Department of Human Services Withdraws Petition to Terminate Grandmother's Guardianship.

S.W.'s grandmother was facing obstacles in securing services for S.W. S.W. was difficult to manage and required assistance in communicating with others. S.W.'s grandmother's inability to secure services caused the Department of Human Services (DHS) to file a petition to terminate her guardianship of S.W. After OCRA intervened, DHS was persuaded to withdraw its petition to terminate guardianship. The regional center also agreed to seek additional services for S.W. Eulalio Castellanos, CRA, Kern Regional Center, Valerie Geary, Assistant CRA, Kern Regional Center.

OCRA Secures Parent Representation at Adoption Hearing.

B.H. was in danger of losing her parental rights over her son. The petitioner for the adoption proceedings informed B.H. that her son was already adopted and told B.H. not to appear for the adoption proceedings. OCRA appeared

with B.H. at the adoption proceedings and discovered that the petitioner had misinformed B.H. about the status of the proceedings. OCRA was able to continue the adoption proceedings. OCRA also persuaded the court to appoint legal counsel for B.H. to represent her in the adoption proceedings. Legal counsel was also appointed for B.H.'s son. Eulalio Castellanos, CRA, Valerie Geary, Assistant CRA, Kern Regional Center.

INSURANCE

Medically-Fragile Consumer Receives Adequate Home Health Care.

J.T. is a 24-year-old medically fragile consumer who lives with her mother. J.T. is dependent on a ventilator and requires constant suctioning of her tracheostomy. Before J.T. turned 21, she received 24 hours of home health care coverage by her private insurance through her father's employment, with the Medi-Cal EPSDT Program supplementing the care costs. When J.T. turned 21, EPSDT funds were no longer available and the state transferred J.T. to the Medi-Cal Adult Subacute Waiver to help pay for her home health care. While the Subacute Waiver provides Medi-Cal payment of home health care for adults, it is subject to a cost cap that must be equal or less than the cost of care that would be provided to the beneficiary if she were in an institution.

When the father's private insurance reached its lifetime maximum benefit under the plan, J.T.'s home health care benefits through the insurance policy terminated. This caused a gap in home health care coverage for J.T. because the Subacute Waiver would only fund up to 16 hours of skilled nursing per day. Although J.T.'s mother also has private insurance through her employer, her group plan only covers 100 visits per calendar year, the bare minimum required under California law. Additionally, the insurance pays only \$110 per visit, barely enough to fund three hours of skilled nursing at the private pay rate. The insurance's funding limitations resulted in J.T.'s mother having to provide care to J.T. for 16 hours daily on the weekends and 10 hours on Friday, up from four hours previously. J.T.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance.

OCRA attended several conference calls with J.T.'s mother, the regional center, and agents from J.T.'s mother's private insurance. OCRA assisted J.T.'s mother in requesting a benefits exchange with the private insurance

that would provide for more home health care coverage in lieu of skilled nursing facility coverage under her plan. OCRA reasoned that, given J.T.'s intensive level of care needs, skilled nursing facility coverage would be more expensive than home health care if it were utilized. The private insurance company rejected the benefits exchange proposal. OCRA then asked the private insurance to help clarify what facility options are appropriate and available to J.T. that the plan offers. OCRA reminded the private insurance agents that medical transportation capable of safely transferring J.T. and the equipment she is dependent upon would be required. There would need to be a standing admission order in place in the event that J.T. required immediate placement due to caretaker illness or sleep deprivation. The facility would need to permit J.T. to bring her own bedding to reduce transfer trauma.

The private insurance company identified three local facilities that it purports can meet J.T.'s needs. J.T.'s mother and the regional center will be visiting these facilities to see if any are appropriate for J.T. In the event they are not appropriate, OCRA has agreed to file a grievance with the private insurance company requesting reconsideration of the benefits exchange proposal. Meanwhile, OCRA secured 120 hours of nursing respite per month from the regional center so that J.T.'s mother can go back to providing a manageable four hours of care daily for J.T. Brian Capra, CRA, Westside Regional Center.

HOUSING

OCRA Assists Client to Keep Service Dog at Home.

B.M.J. contacted OCRA regarding her landlord's refusal to provide her with a reasonable accommodation by modifying the "no pets" policy and allowing her to keep her support dog, Princess. B.M.J. had lived at her current residence with Princess since approximately 1993 without any objection from the apartment management or other residents. However, B.M.J. reported to OCRA that the landlord had recently started to make verbal requests to get rid of the dog because of alleged "barking." B.M.J. reported that she has not received any complaints from her neighbors about the dog's barking. Subsequently, the landlord reportedly entered the apartment to remove the dog and "offered" to drive B.M.J. to the animal shelter to drop off Princess. Fearing eviction and retaliation from her

landlord, B.M.J. accompanied the landlord to the animal shelter. OCRA worked with B.M.J.'s regional center service coordinator and the animal shelter to get the shelter fees waived and the dog returned to B.M.J.

OCRA then drafted a letter to B.M.J.'s landlord advising him that removal of Princess from B.M.J.'s residence was contrary to state and federal anti-discrimination, tort, and landlord-tenant laws that protect individuals with disabilities who live with a service or companion animal from being denied housing because of policies that prohibit pets. Several days later, OCRA received a call from B.M.J.'s landlord, who agreed to allow the dog to remain in the apartment. In addition, OCRA requested that any future concerns regarding the animal should be presented in writing to accommodate B.M.J.'s cognitive disabilities. The landlord agreed to these requests. Ibrahim Saab, CRA, Ada Quintero, Assistant CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

Eviction Halted for Family of Ten.

S.A. is a regional center consumer and mother of nine children. The father of several of her children moved in with the family. The rent was not paid for several months and S.A. received an eviction notice. The regional center case manager and S.A.'s ILS worker contacted OCRA. S.A. was living in subsidized housing. The housing authority was refusing to negotiate with S.A.

OCRA contacted the housing authority and explained that the regional center was willing to become the representative payee of S.A.'s benefits and would pay the rent directly to the housing authority. The ILS worker contacted a local church which agreed to contribute some of the back rent. OCRA negotiated with the regional center and it agreed to contribute the remaining dollars from an emergency fund.

As soon as the back rent was paid, the housing authority received a letter from the regional center stating that it was the representative payee and would be responsible for the rent payment. The eviction notice was rescinded. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

OCRA Advocates for Consumer to Remain in Her Own Home.

Two days prior to New Years, D.D., a 63-year-old woman living in her own apartment with supported living services, was taken to a hospital by D.D.'s care provider with flu like symptoms. When the hospital discharged her the following day, the care provider terminated services because it did not have staff to provide D.D. services in her own home. On New Years Eve, D.D. was told she could never return to the apartment she had lived in for over 10 years.

A family member contacted OCRA after the family had been told by the regional center that the family should pack D.D.'s possessions as D.D. was to be taken by ambulance to a skilled nursing facility in a different county. OCRA was informed by the regional center that D.D.'s health had deteriorated so much in the previous six months that she required an ICF-DDN, but none was available. Upon further investigation, OCRA learned that Adult Protective Services (APS) had substantiated allegations of abuse on three occasions in the previous six months due to failure of the care provider to assist with personal hygiene, provide medical care, provide food, and protect from sexual assault. However, the care provider believed that D.D. could stay in her apartment with the proper supported living staff. The CRA also learned that the care provider, acting as representative payee, was not providing staff sufficient funds to purchase food for D.D. on a regular basis.

OCRA represented D.D. at a meeting with the regional center and successfully advocated that D.D.'s health had not deteriorated as reported in the regional center's nursing assessment and latest IPP. OCRA also presented a vendor willing and able to accept D.D. as a client. As a result of the meeting, D.D. has returned to her own apartment with enough properly trained staff to provide supported living services for D.D. Jacqueline Miller, CRA, Sara Soria, Temporary Assistant CRA, Regional Center of Orange County.

PERSONAL AUTONOMY

Facilitated Meeting Makes Things Happen for Consumer.

T.G. and J.G. are roommates who are both diagnosed with cerebral palsy and require 24-hour supported living and nursing care. They have lived

independently for several years with a myriad of supports. Due to nursing problems and scheduling and IHSS support concerns, the consumers felt as if their choice of placement was in jeopardy and requested OCRA advocacy at their next IPP meeting.

OCRA advocated at the IPP meeting held in the consumers' home. Seventeen people attended the meeting with the goal of ensuring that T.G. and J.G. remain in their home. Nursing care, lifting and transfers, medical equipment, occupational therapy services and the quality of supported living services were reviewed. T.G. and J.G.'s choice of living arrangement was preserved with necessary clarification of roles of each service provider. Leinani Neves, CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Help in Terminating Unnecessary Conservatorship.

R.C., conserved by order of a Minnesota court, recently became homeless and asked her conservator for financial help. When the conservator refused, R.C.'s Service Coordinator, who believes R.C. does not need to be conserved, called OCRA for assistance. The CRA drafted a declaration for the service coordinator to provide to the Minnesota court as well as a standard form the Minnesota courts use to terminate conservatorships. Jim Stoepler, CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

REGIONAL CENTER

A.K. Gets Her Wheelchair Fixed.

OCRA was contacted by A.K. because her wheelchair vendor refused to perform the modifications the vendor was paid to make. Without the modifications, A.K.'s wheelchair was inoperable and unsafe. The wheelchair vendor performed some modifications for A.K. but they were not to A.K.'s satisfaction. A.K. filed a complaint with the Better Business Bureau and with her health insurance company. Both agencies sided with the wheelchair vendor.

OCRA contacted the wheelchair vendor. The wheelchair vendor stated that the modifications that A.K. wanted were not covered by her insurance.

OCRA negotiated with the wheelchair vendor to modify A.K.'s wheelchair to her satisfaction and the regional center agreed to fund the modifications. Maria Bryant-Pollard, CRA, Jacqueline Gallegos, Assistant CRA, Alta California Regional Center.

Funds Continue for Transportation to Medical Appointments.

D.V. has multiple medical needs and frequently visits a team of specialists at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The regional center had been providing funding for transportation services to the hospital. The regional center terminated transportation to medical appointments on the basis that D.V.'s mother owned a vehicle and could transport D.V. in the vehicle. However, the mother did not own a vehicle. D.V.'s mother called OCRA for assistance.

OCRA provided technical assistance. D.V.'s mother filed for hearing and attended the informal meeting. At the meeting, D.V.'s mother explained that she did not own a vehicle. The regional center designee later verbally told D.V.'s mother she would fax a letter to her noting a resolution was reached because she did not own a vehicle. A week went by and D.V.'s mother did not receive a letter from the designee and the mediation date was approaching. D.V.'s mother finally received a fax, but it was just a blank notice of resolution form asking her to sign and return. OCRA recommended that she write a letter confirming that the funding would continue. D.V.'s mother did not receive a response and so she attended the scheduled mediation. At mediation, D.V.'s mother explained that she did not own a vehicle. She also explained that she had requested aid paid pending a hearing. The regional center had failed to provide continued funding so the mother had incurred out of pocket transportation costs. At mediation, the regional center agreed to reimburse D.V.'s mother for the expenses she had incurred and agreed to provide future funding for transportation to doctor appointments at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. Aimee Delgado, CRA, Nadia Villafana, Assistant CRA, San Gabriel Pomona Regional Center.

Following 3 Denials, S.H. Found Eligible Under 5th Category.

S.H. is an adolescent who is dually diagnosed with mental retardation and bipolar disorder, as well as attention deficit hyperactivity. S.H. was born prematurely with brain damage and early developmental delays. She

attended special education programs throughout her life and had documented learning disabilities. S.H. had received mental health treatment and medication therapy since she was 7-years-old.

S.H.'s mother applied for regional center services three times and was denied each time on the basis that S.H.'s condition was solely psychiatric. OCRA appealed the denial of regional center services on the basis that S.H. was mentally retarded or had a condition similar to mental retardation or required treatment similar to an individual with mental retardation.

OCRA prepared three expert witnesses for hearing: S.H.'s treating psychiatrist, her current special education teacher from her severely handicapped class, and a neuropsychologist. The day before the fair hearing was to begin, the regional center agreed to settle the case and find S.H. eligible under the 5th category as a person with a condition similar to mental retardation and requiring treatment similar to those with mental retardation. Leinani Neves, CRA, Filomena Alomar, Assistant CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Regional Center to Continue Funding Services.

After funding social recreation and respite services for several years for S.W., the regional center moved to terminate the services. The regional center claimed that it could not pay for the services because S.W.'s foster care payments should be used. S.W.'s guardian disagreed with the regional center's decision to terminate the funding, filed for an administrative hearing, and called OCRA for assistance. The CRA researched federal law and decided that OCRA would represent S.W. at the hearing. The judge agreed with OCRA's position and ordered the regional center to continue paying for the services. Veronica Cervantes, CRA, Beatriz A. Reyes, Assistant CRA, Inland Regional Center.

Two-Year-Old Receives Retroactive Early Start Services.

C.N.'s mother reported that, although the family had moved to the new regional center catchment area from Orange County three months earlier, the regional center had not yet begun to provide C.N. with her Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) services. OCRA helped C.N.'s mother file an Early Start Compliance Complaint, which requested that the IFSP services be provided, including retroactive benefits. Two weeks after filing the

complaint, C.N.'s mother called OCRA and said that the regional center would begin delivering the services, including retroactive services. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

M.H. Receives Assistive Walking Device.

M.H. needs an Ankle Foot Orthotics (AFO) to allow her to walk. M.H.'s insurance company paid for half the cost of the AFO, and the regional center denied M.H.'s mother request that the regional center fund the balance. M.H.'s mother contacted OCRA seeking assistance with due process procedures. The CRA agreed to provide the mother with technical assistance regarding the appeal process. The CRA helped the mother assemble the documents that would make up the evidence packet and develop arguments to be used at the administrative hearing. The night before the mother was to meet with the regional center to try to informally resolve the matter, the regional center said that after reviewing the submitted records, the regional center would reimburse the family. Veronica Cervantes, CRA, Beatriz A. Reyes, Assistant CRA, Inland Regional Center.

Regional Center Eligibility Case Settles Prior to Hearing.

T.E. was denied eligibility for regional center services despite tests scores indicating mild mental retardation. OCRA retained an expert to evaluate T.E., interviewed an array of witnesses, observed T.E. at school and ultimately agreed to represent at a fair hearing. After exchanging evidence with the regional center's attorney, the regional center decided to settle and found T.E. eligible for services. C. Noelle Ferdon, CRA, Far Northern Regional Center.

A.S. Found Eligible for Regional Center Services.

ORCA was contacted by the Children's Law Center to represent a dependant of the court in a regional center eligibility case. OCRA agreed to evaluate and determine the merits of the case. On the strength of an expert evaluation, OCRA was able to negotiate with the regional center which found the client eligible for services. Emma Hambright, CRA, Lanterman Regional Center.

D.M. Becomes Eligible for Regional Center Services.

D.M. is a 27-year-old residing in a residential care facility. D.M. had always had problems learning while growing up and had been in special education classes. After moving to California a few years ago and having more and more problems, D.M. applied for regional center services. D.M. was denied on the grounds that the problems she was having were solely psychiatric. D.M.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance with the appeal.

OCRA reviewed the documents and met with D.M.'s mother to help her prepare for the informal meeting with regional center. OCRA developed a chart demonstrating through past documents how D.M. met the criteria for eligibility and how her psychiatric disability was not her only disability.

D.M. and her mother attended the informal meeting and regional center agreed to re-assess her. Following the re-assessment, the regional center made D.M. eligible under the 5th category. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

RIGHTS IN FACILITIES

Residential Facility Provides Required Notice.

R.M. received from her adult residential facility what was supposed to be a 30-day notice terminating her residency. R.M.'s mother called OCRA and, although agreeing that the facility was not appropriate for R.M., complained that the facility had not, in fact, given her thirty days notice. The mother worried that without an appropriate amount of time to move, R.M. might become agitated.

OCRA investigated and discovered that the facility had given R.M. a backdated notice that actually only gave her 21 days notice. The CRA requested an emergency IPP meeting. At the meeting, the facility agreed to provide an appropriate notice and the regional center agreed to create a transition plan to ease R.M.'s move to the new facility. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

Consumer's Rights Enforced.

E.B. called OCRA complaining that the residential facility staff would not let her see her friends, attend church, go to the library, participate in San Diego's Special Olympics, go to a gym, or ride the bus independently. OCRA participated in an IPP meeting, advocating on E.B.'s behalf. As a result, the IPP team agreed that E.B. would visit with her friends at the facility on Sundays, would be transported by staff to and from church every Sunday, and would start going to the library once a week. The Service Coordinator agreed to arrange E.B.'s enrollment in the Special Olympics and to talk to E.B.'s doctor for a recommendation on an appropriate gym activity. E.B. was also happy to hear that her sisters agreed to transport her to and from the facility so she can visit them every Saturday. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, Alba Gomez, Assistant CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

M.H. Receives Services from the School District.

The school district agreed to assess M.H., an 8-year-old, to determine if she needed Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Her father called OCRA complaining that, when he reviewed the assessment results, there was no mention of ABA. The district ignored OCRA's attempts to resolve the dispute informally, resulting in the CRA filing a compliance complaint with the California Department of Education (CDE). The CDE directed the district to conduct another assessment for ABA services, which resulted in M.H. receiving the services.

M.H.'s father had also requested a 1:1 aide for M.H. and a sensory vest, both of which the district refused to provide. Upon OCRA intervening and advocating for these requests, they were provided. Arthur Lipscomb, CRA, Gloria Torres, Assistant CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.

OCRA Advocates for 1:1 Aide.

According to his father, M.P. needed a 1:1 aide to prevent M.P. from injury from his seizures. Because the school district initially denied the request, the Assistant CRA initiated an IEP at which the district agreed to provide the aide temporarily until a teacher was hired and trained in safety protocol.

After the temporary aide was provided for a period, the family asked that the aide be made permanent, as M.P. had been injury-free with the aide. At the next IEP, the Assistant CRA advocated for the family and the district agreed to provide the aide on a permanent basis. Arthur Lipscomb, CRA, Gloria Torres, Assistant CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.

Termination of Interdistrict Agreement Reversed.

J.M. is a junior high student. J.M. started the school year under an inter-district transfer agreement. Because J.M. has always had behavior problems, the parents agreed to a provision in the agreement that it could be terminated if behavior problems arose. After several incidents of acting out, the school notified the parents in writing that the inter-district transfer was revoked based on the behavior problems. The letter gave no appeal rights. The parents much preferred the school of attendance to the home district, and sought assistance from OCRA.

OCRA determined that termination of the inter-district transfer based on a known factor in the consumer's disability was discriminatory. J.M.'s parents were advised to respond with a request for information regarding appeal rights at the district level prior to exercising appeal rights through the county office of education.

The school district responded by re-convening the IEP team. OCRA attended the IEP, which addressed additional support needs, maintaining educational progress, and gradual re-entry to the classroom setting. The parents agreed to the revised IEP. Doug Harris, CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

J.L. Remains at His Neighborhood School.

Without the parent's permission, the school district changed J.L.'s placement to a school an hour from the family's home. The district argued that J.L.'s school of residence was not an appropriate placement. J.L. is in the 5th grade and has attended this school since kindergarten. J.L. has two brothers who both attend the school, along with many of his cousins. J.L. has autism and is non-verbal and benefits from the security of seeing his family members around school.

The school had not done an assessment to determine if the new placement was appropriate. A hearing was filed and a stay-put order was requested for J.L. to remain in his original school. The district agreed at the first mediation to retain a behaviorist to evaluate J.L. The behaviorist determined that J.L. could remain safely at his neighborhood school with the support of a 1:1 aide. At the second mediation, the district agreed to hire a 1:1 aide as recommended by the behaviorist. The school also agreed that the aide would be trained by the behaviorist and become certified as a specialist in autism. The district agreed to keep this plan in place for a minimum of two years, to be reviewed periodically. C. Noelle Ferdon, CRA, Far Northern Regional Center.

Consumer Obtains Post-secondary Program from School District.

D.W. attends high school in the San Jose area. D.W.'s father asked for help in resolving several issues he was having with his son's school district, the most important being D.W.'s attending a post-secondary program. The CRA attended numerous IEP meetings and attempted to resolve issues at the meetings with no success. OCRA filed for a due process hearing and also filed a compliance complaint for failure to hold an IEP meeting within 30 days. After a favorable decision from the compliance complaint, D.W. is in a post-secondary program. Arthur Lipscomb, CRA, Gloria Torres, Assistant CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.

L.V. Obtains 1:1 Aide.

L.V. is a 16-year-old student who has cerebral palsy and needs a 1:1 aide in the classroom and on the school bus due to her self-injurious behaviors. L.V.'s mother had tried to enroll L.V. in high school in February. L.V. was not in school more than one year later because the district had not provided L.V. with an aide. L.V.'s mother contacted OCRA after L.V. was in school. OCRA filed a compliance complaint against the district for failure to implement L.V.'s IEP. The CDE found the district had failed to implement L.V.'s IEP and ordered the district to provide compensatory services. Anastasia Bacigalupo, CRA, Christine Armand, Associate CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

E.M. Receives Individualized Education Plans in Spanish.

OCRA was representing E.M. on an IHSS matter (see **E.M. Receives the Appropriate Amount of In Home Support Services.**) when it was discovered that E.M.'s family was not receiving translated copies of the IEPs. The district was providing an interpreter at the meetings but was giving the family documents in English. The family never realized that it was entitled to documents in Spanish.

OCRA filed a compliance complaint against the district seeking translation of the past IEP documents. The district immediately contacted OCRA and offered to translate the documents and all future ones if OCRA would withdraw the complaint. OCRA agreed to withdraw the complaint if the documents were received within the week and the district agreed to draft a policy related to translation of IEP's.

The district sent the entire translated prior IEP documents home in E.M.'s backpack within the week and instituted a policy of translating all requested IEPs. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

3-Year-Old Maintains ABA Services while Parents and School District Agree on a Preschool Program.

E.X., who had been diagnosed with autism at age two, was making good progress with his Early Start program of speech and occupational therapy and 25 hours of ABA services each week. His parents and Asian Community Mental Health Services case manager grew concerned, however, as E.X.'s third birthday approached and the school district showed reluctance to offer comparable services in preschool. Two weeks before E.X. turned three, the parents contacted OCRA for help.

Because time was short and E.X.'s school district refused to continue the IFSP services without a due process appeal, OCRA dictated a hearing request to the parents over the phone and also a motion that E.X.'s IFSP program continue until the dispute was resolved.

After receiving OCRA's memo with the federal regulation and hearing office order, the school district changed its position and agreed to continue E.X.'s ABA and other Early Start services until the district and

his parents agreed to an appropriate preschool program. Marsha Siegel, CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

Compliance Complaint Filed.

Although N.D-T., a 7-year-old, has an IEP that recommends physical therapy and speech therapy, the therapy has not been provided at all during the school year. The school district claims it cannot find qualified therapists to provide the services. OCRA filed a compliance complaint with the CDE asking for the IEP to be implemented and for N.D-T. to receive compensatory services. Jim Stoepler, CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

V.C. Placed in a Private School's Specialized Autism Class.

Eight-year-old V.C.'s parents had long thought that V.C. would make more progress if he got applied behavior analysis (ABA) services, perhaps in a non-public school. After attending an outreach training on IEP advocacy, his parents sought out OCRA's help. They wanted V.C. in an autism class the parents had visited at a non-public school.

A preliminary review of V.C.'s school records indicated that the public school was providing the services the district's assessments recommended. V.C. was not receiving ABA, but that had been recommended only in a short regional center report. Closer analysis confirmed his parents' concerns. V.C.'s IEP goals and objectives had remained almost identical from 2002 to 2005. His "baselines" showed slippage. Where he had responded to instructions with gestural prompting in 2004, the 2005 IEP showed a total need for hand-over-hand instruction. He had likewise declined in written expression – going from forming lines independently to scribbling and constantly mouthing crayons. Rather than focus on classroom activities, V.C. engaged in self-stimulation. V.C.'s third-grade teacher reported that safety was a grave concern, since if not carefully watched, V.C. might run off in an instant.

When OCRA shared the results of the records review and classroom observation with the district's special education director, it was clear that V.C. was not benefiting from his public school program. OCRA then conferred with the non-public school's director and made sure the

parents visited again so as to feel certain of their choice. After a short meeting at which the new IEP was signed, V.C. began attending an autism class at the non-public school. Celeste Palmer, Associate CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

OCRA Advocates for Advanced Speech Device.

E.A.'s mother is a monolingual Spanish speaker who had been trying to get the school to provide E.A. with a speech device. E.A. has speech that is difficult for people to understand. Although E.A. is capable of learning sign language, E.A. prefers to speak. Rather than commit to providing a speech device, the school wrote in the IEP that it would, "continue to research alternative communication systems." After more than a year, E.A.'s mother contacted OCRA. At an IEP meeting attended by the Assistant CRA, the school made an offer to provide a very simplistic speech device to E.A. OCRA requested the school do an assistive technology assessment that would include a more advanced speech device. The assessment resulted in the school providing E.A. with the more sophisticated assistive technology device. Lorie Atamian, Assistant CRA, Far Northern Regional Center.

OUTREACH AND TRAINING

OCRA Remains Committed to Providing Targeted Outreach, Self-Advocacy Training, and Substantive Sessions for Providers.

During the months of January, February, and March, 2006, OCRA continued to provide much needed information to underrepresented groups. OCRA staff and supervisors for consumers at NBRC met with Spanish speaking parents and staff at a parent-infant program funded by NBRC in Napa. Information about the early start process and the IFSP were shared with parents and many important questions were asked and answered.

OCRA also continued, during these months, to provide self-advocacy training. One such training was provided by the CRA for consumers at VMRC and was held at the ARC Calaveras Day Program in San Andreas, CA. One consumer noted, "I really liked what the CRA said about standing up for my rights."

Many other outreach and training events occur each month and every quarter at OCRA. Some additional events for this quarter included a substantive training on criminal justice issues to GGRC staff, a clients' rights training to residential service providers in Stockton, a training for the Spanish speaking EPU support group in Fresno, a general introduction to OCRA for the Corcoran Prison pre-release program in Corcoran, CA, and a training on autism and disability awareness to GLAD in Madera, CA.

These are just a few of the training and outreach events provided by OCRA on a continuous basis.

OCRA Educates Regional Center Vendors on Clients' Rights.

Emma Hambright, CRA for Lanterman Regional Center consumers and Katie Hornberger, CRA for Harbor Regional Center, responded to the training needs of the Lanterman community by providing a clients' rights training for approximately 100 vendors including day and residential program providers.