

ADVOCACY REPORT

OFFICE OF CLIENTS' RIGHTS ADVOCACY

SPRING, 2004

BENEFITS

OCRA Successfully Appeals Denial of Eligibility by California Children's Services.

L.E. is a 5-year-old girl with cerebral palsy. L.E. was in need of a wheelchair and other medical equipment, medical services, and physical and occupational therapy. L.E. did not qualify for full scope Medi-Cal. The school district has refused to provide therapy services stating they were not educationally-related. L.E.'s parents initially applied to CCS in January, 2003. California Children's Services (CCS) denied medical services, stating the consumer did not meet medical eligibility. CCS also failed to provide the consumer with adequate written notice of the denial.

OCRA agreed to provide direct representation and appeal the CCS determination. OCRA sent the first-level written appeal to the County Department of Health Services, and argued the merits of the case with both the administrative director and the medical director of County CCS. County CCS agreed to withdraw the denial and have the consumer evaluated by a different CCS-paneled physician. Following the new evaluation, the CCS medical director again denied that L.E. was medically eligible.

Following the second denial, OCRA submitted a new written appeal with additional medical information that addressed each of the physician's medical findings. Although CCS again denied eligibility, it granted eligibility following OCRA's filing for a hearing request. CCS is now providing therapies and medical equipment to L.E. Tim Poe, CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

OCRA Fair Hearing Request Prompts Approval of Special Bed.

M.G. is a young boy with spastic quadriplegia, a seizure disorder, severe visual impairment and other conditions. Violent involuntary movements of his muscles frequently throw M.G. from his bed. Over 2 years ago, his guardians requested that CCS provide a Vail bed to keep M.G. Safe. A Vail bed has side railings and a tent-like top. The guardian's request was denied. The CRA filed a "first-level" hearing request on M.G.'s behalf, receiving another denial based on the conclusion that the bed was "not medically necessary to treat or ameliorate the...neuromuscular condition." The denial suggested some alternative devices that the guardians had already tried unsuccessfully. The CRA filed a request for a fair hearing but before the hearing was scheduled, CCS reversed its position and granted the request for the bed. Lynne Page, CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center.

SSI Waives an Overpayment Allegedly Caused by an Award from a Class Action Lawsuit.

The mother of J.L. called the OCRA office stating that she had received notice of an overpayment from Social Security. The notification indicated that J.L. was being charged for an overpayment resulting from an award of In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) back wages. J.L. had received an award of \$2,000 plus interest from an IHSS class action case in 2001. Three years later, when determining SSI benefits, the Social Security office was counting the interest from the award as income.

OCRA gathered and reviewed all available records, researched the applicable law, and consulted with the attorney of the class action case. OCRA subsequently filed for a waiver and request for reconsideration and attended the reconsideration meeting. At the meeting, OCRA argued detrimental reliance, hardship, and fairness principles, and the overpayment was waived. Bernadette Bautista, CRA, San Diego Regional Center.

C.M. Obtains Necessary IHSS.

C.M. is a 4-year-old girl who was verbally denied IHSS twice, due to her age. After attending an OCRA training, C.M.'s mother called IHSS over the phone to apply again. When she was denied for the third time, the mother contacted OCRA. OCRA contacted the IHSS ombudsman and was given the contact information for a worker that would take her application over the

phone. OCRA helped the mother complete the self-assessment packet and prepare for potential questions from the IHSS worker during the assessment. After the assessment, C.M. was awarded 71 hours of IHSS per month. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Harbor Regional Center

Child Receives Needed Rate of Adoption Assistance Payment.

D.M. is a young boy who has been diagnosed as having autism and mental retardation. D.M. has severe behaviors that make it difficult to care for him. D.M. has lived with his legal guardian since he was an infant. D.M. was removed by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) from his biological mother because of neglect. D.M. is categorized as a “dual agency” child as he receives service from both the regional center and the Department of Social Services (DSS).

Foster parents of “dual agency” children are entitled to the regional center rate for placement rather than the standard foster care rate. D.M.’s legal guardian was getting the standard foster care rate for caring for D.M. D.M. was assessed by the regional center to require a 4d level of care. D.M.’s guardians sent the notice of the assessed rate to DSS and it refused to implement the regional center rate. D.M.’s parents filed for a hearing.

OCRA represented the family and negotiated with the county appeals worker. D.M.’s family was granted the regional center rate retroactive to the date of placement. The increase in the monthly payments is \$1,921 per month. He also received a retroactive award in the amount of \$111,500. This money will enable the family to secure all of the services and supports that D.M. needs to overcome his early hardships. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Harbor Regional Center.

Consumers Appeal Improper Medi-Cal Share of Cost.

M.N. and R.C. each live in their own apartments. To pay their living expenses, each relies on Disabled Adult Child (DAC) Benefits on the Social Security wage records of a parent. Because their DAC benefits are more than \$810 per month, neither receives SSI or SSI-linked Medi-Cal. Each needs Medi-Cal, however, to cover Medicare co-pays and medical services their Medicare does not cover. When Alameda County assigned them a Medi-Cal share of cost, M.N. and R.C. were faced with the choice of paying for medical expenses with income

budgeted for other things, or else going without needed medical care.

Because of an OCRA training, M.N.'s independent living skills agency and R.C.'s supported living agency knew that certain DAC recipients had a legal right to receive Medi-Cal without a share of cost. The service providers contacted OCRA to confirm that because both M.N. and R.C. had lost SSI because of an increase in their DAC benefits, they were entitled to Medi-Cal without a share of cost. The providers helped M.N. and R.C. appeal the improper share of cost determinations, using forms and the legal authority OCRA had distributed at the training. Both appeals were successful and both consumers continue to receive Medi-Cal without a share of cost. Marsha Siegel, CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

Department of Rehabilitation Funds \$7,000 of Auxiliary Equipment.

E.Y. is diagnosed with cerebral palsy, epilepsy and a visual impairment. E.Y. is a college student at Delta Community College pursuing a degree in broadcast communication in radio and television. E.Y. qualified for Department of Rehabilitation (DR) services and requested auxiliary equipment in order to study and complete his homework at home. DR approved all of the specialized equipment which included a DELL computer with zoom technology, color printer, talking calculator, Parrot Organizer and a closed-caption TV with a zoom lens to enlarge prints of any document.

Although DR approved the auxiliary equipment a year ago, E.Y. had not received any of the equipment. E.Y. attempted several times to advocate for himself but received no response to his messages. E.Y. contacted OCRA for advocacy assistance. The Assistant CRA contacted DR. The DR counselor apologized for the delay and stated it was due to staff changes and lack of follow through. Although the authorization process had to be restarted, the DR counselor guaranteed the order would be authorized as soon as possible. The DR counselor called the following day and advised that items requested has been approved and ordered and the equipment would be delivered and installed in two weeks. Filomena Alomar, Assistant CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

5-Year-Old Awarded Significant Increase in IHSS Benefits.

A.O. is a 5-year old girl diagnosed with moderate mental retardation, epilepsy and leukemia. A.O., who previously received 122 hours of IHSS, requires constant supervision due to self-injurious behaviors and her fragile medical conditions.

OCRA provided technical assistance to A.O.'s parent in preparing for the assessment by IHSS. This assistance included discussing the case with the consumer's physician and drafting an IHSS letter for the physician to sign. Following the new assessment, IHSS awarded A.O. an additional 161 hours, giving the consumer a total of 283 IHSS hours per month. Tim Poe, CRA, Ada Quintero, Assistant CRA, North Los Angeles County Regional Center.

OCRA Representation at IHSS Hearing Preserves Entitlement to Protective Supervision.

J.M. is a pleasant, mild-mannered young man who sometimes gets so frustrated at not being able to communicate his thoughts that he will bite himself. Because of this potential for self-injury, and because he has little safety awareness, he received protective supervision as one of his IHSS services. Contra Costa County proposed eliminating the protective supervision. J.M.'s mother contacted OCRA for help.

OCRA provided J.M.'s mother with PAI's IHSS Fair Hearing and Self-Assessment Packet. Because J.M. had originally been approved for protective supervision without its having been explained, OCRA worked with his mother to clarify what purpose protective supervision served, and what factors indicated it was needed. OCRA represented J.M. at his hearing. The administrative law judge's decision granted the claim and restored J.M.'s protective supervision. Marsha Siegel, CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

CRIMINAL LAW

OCRA Provides Technical Assistance.

OCRA received a call from E.W.'s social worker who had just been notified that E.W. had been arrested for drunk and disorderly conduct. E.W., who

had recently become eligible for regional center services, had a court hearing at the end of the week.

E.W. has a history of homelessness, substance abuse, and petty crimes. With regional center support, E.W. moved into a supported living apartment through a local agency. He had only been in the apartment for one day when he was arrested.

The staff from his SLS program was contacted. They thought that the charges were not important and were going to accompany E.W. to court. OCRA accompanied E.W. to his arraignment. The court showed a video explaining the legal and procedural rights of those accused of crimes. At the end of the video, E.W. asked if this was criminal court. He did not understand any of the video.

OCRA assisted E.W. in requesting a continuance and a public defender. E.W. qualified for defender services and will work collaboratively with OCRA to have the charges dropped or to create an acceptable diversion plan. Katy Lussion, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

Consumer Arrested under Patriot Act Obtains Federal Pre-trial Diversion in Texas.

J.P. is a 47-year-old man with mild mental retardation, bipolar disorder and a heart condition. J.P. likes to travel to new places and has taken cross-country trips without a plan or money on several occasions. In early April, J.P. disappeared and his group home filed a missing person report. Soon after, J.P. called his service coordinator from a mental health facility in Florida complaining that he had not eaten in three days. The regional center contacted J.P.'s mother, who sent money for J.P. to travel back to California by bus. When the bus stopped in Texas, J.P. refused to get back on the bus. J.P. called police and claimed there was a bomb on the bus. Police traced the call and arrested J.P. at the bus station.

J.P. was charged in state court for making terrorist threats, interfering with public transportation and making a false police report. The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives also opened an investigation. The regional center helped a Texas court advocate to get a public defender appointed for J.P. It initially appeared that J.P. could possibly return to California under conditions of probation in Texas. Then

the federal government decided to take jurisdiction and charged J.P. with violations of the Patriot Act. The regional center contacted OCRA for assistance.

OCRA obtained a copy of J.P.'s file and learned that he had been in and out of the regional center system throughout his life. OCRA discovered documentation from 1981, where a similar incident had occurred in California, at which time, J.P. was admitted to a developmental center in lieu of incarceration. OCRA noticed J.P.'s latest psychological assessment did not assign a mental retardation diagnosis, despite all other reports identifying J.P. as having this disability. OCRA had the regional center write a record review summary explaining the discrepancy as a documentation error. OCRA also learned that J.P. had recently stopped taking his anti-psychotic medications because his mother believed the medications were sedating J.P. OCRA contacted the Federal Public Defender's Office in San Antonio and forwarded over this documentation. Further, OCRA contacted Texas' Protection and Advocacy system and requested that a staff person visit J.P. at the jail, ensure that he was getting his medications for his heart and mental health, and become involved in advocating for a less restrictive setting for J.P. pending his court hearing. With the information acquired from OCRA and the regional center, the Federal Public Defender was successful in getting the Patriot Act charges dismissed in exchange for a pre-trial diversion requiring J.P. to admit himself into a state hospital in Texas. Brian Capra, CRA, Westside Regional Center.

FAMILY LAW

Consumer Received Visitation with Her Child.

T.M. is a 24-year old consumer with mild mental retardation. The CRA was approached by T.M.'s social worker to represent T.M. in a domestic violence restraining order against her mother. According to T.M., her mother has physically, verbally, and financially exploited her for many years. T.M. reported being coerced by her mother to give up T.M.'s parental rights over her daughter through a guardianship. T.M. has not seen her daughter in over a year.

T.M. was married in January, 2003, and had a child with her husband. Problems with her mother escalated at that point. It took a lot of courage for T.M. and her husband to stand up to T.M.'s mother, but they did so with support from many relatives, friends, and professionals from the regional center.

OCRA agreed to represent at a hearing on the TRO that was filed by T.M. to prevent abuse by her mother. The courtroom was full of family members on both sides; nineteen people. After some contentious moments, the mother agreed to the restraining order. Also, court ordered mediation was ordered for T.M. and her parents to schedule visitation with her daughter. Enid Perez, CRA, Central Valley Regional Center.

HOUSING

OCRA Assists Consumer in Eviction Matter.

J.A. has mild mental retardation, a mental health diagnosis, and blindness. J.A. is a former developmental center resident now living in San Diego County under a supportive living services (SLS) program. J.A.'s SLS plan requires an overnight attendant. J.A. and a former SLS worker signed a lease, but the SLS worker transferred to another client and a new SLS worker from the same agency began serving J.A. In late February, J.A. and the former SLS worker were served with a 3-day notice to perform covenants or quit. J.A. and the new SLS worker met with the property manager, who informed J.A. that he was violating the lease because the new SLS worker was staying overnight 3 consecutive days and was not on the lease. J.A. and the new SLS worker agreed to remove the former SLS worker's name from the lease and add the new SLS worker's name. The property manager told J.A. and the new SLS worker to disregard the 3-day notice. When J.A. attempted to pay rent days later, his money was rejected and he and the former SLS worker were served with an unlawful retainer complaint. J.A.'s service coordinator contacted OCRA for assistance.

OCRA contacted the Legal Aid Society of San Diego and arranged for J.A. and his new SLS worker to obtain assistance in filing an answer to the complaint. OCRA advised the regional center to forward to the legal aid attorney the case ID notes documenting J.A. and the SLS worker's efforts to

comply with the property manager's request. J.A.'s attorney negotiated with the property management's attorney to have J.A. remain at the premises for 30 days, with the 24-hour support of the new SLS worker, until J.A. could find alternative housing. The eviction was rescinded and will not go on J.A.'s credit report. Brian Capra, CRA, Westside Regional Center.

PERSONAL AUTONOMY

Right to Refuse Medical Treatment Preserved.

E.C. is diagnosed with mental retardation, type II diabetes, a moderate hearing impairment and multiple orthopedic medical conditions. E.C. resides at a nursing facility. E.C. recently endured a hip replacement whereby the first operation resulted in an infection and a second surgery was required within a two-week period. E.C. suffered unbearable pain as a result. When the regional center and medical staff approached the consumer again to do more diagnostic testing to determine the reason for the chronic hip problems, E.C. refused any further medical treatment or diagnostic tests. The regional center was considering a temporary limited conservatorship to have diagnostic testing done against E.C.'s will.

OCRA investigated the case. During the interview, E.C. was lucid and had a basic understanding of her medical concerns but was adamant about not wanting further testing or surgeries. The team reviewed her doctor's recommendations with her but she still declined any further tests. E.C. was willing to get more treatment if it were a "life or death" situation but, since it was not, E.C. was exercising her right to refuse medical treatment. E.C. was capable of making her own medical decisions. The CRA agreed to advise the regional center nurse manager of E.C.'s personal choice to refuse further medical treatment at the present time.

The CRA represented E.C. in the regional center's medical clinic to advocate that E.C. made an informed choice to refuse medical treatment. The team recognized that the consumer was lonely and most likely the etiology of the refusal to accept medical treatment was from

the trauma she experienced during post-operation medical treatment (e.g. multiple hip surgeries, bone scans, x-rays and knee infection).

The CRA suggested connecting E.C. with a companion or support person. RC agreed to fund a residential care home visit three-to-five times per week for a few hours. This person could come to the nursing facility to visit and provide social activities to help E.C. The team is hopeful that this companion home visit plan will renew E.C.'s desire to be more independent and productive again rather than frustrated and confined to her hospital bed all day.

E.C.'s right to refuse medical treatment was supported by finding a creative accommodation of supports and by not pursuing a temporary conservatorship. Leinani Neves, CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

OCRA Assists Client in Challenging His Conservatorship.

B.K. is a young adult male with mild mental retardation. Two years ago, B.K.'s father petitioned for, and obtained, a limited conservatorship over B.K. The conservatorship included the right to fix B.K.'s residency and to contract on B.K.'s behalf. After the conservatorship was granted, B.K. worked at a department store for a year and was going to be offered a full time position. He learned to balance his checkbook with a calculator. He improved his health and lost weight. He developed a circle of friends and went to church with his best friend. He showed interest in further building his social network by asking to attend summer camp. He expressed interest in getting his driver's license and living independently.

B.K.'s father had different opinions about how B.K.'s life should be. B.K.'s father made B.K. stop attending church with his friend because B.K.'s family was raised with a different religion. B.K.'s father ignored B.K.'s money management skills and, as representative payee, kept all of B.K.'s earned income and SSI benefits. Among other items, B.K. needed money to purchase a belt after he lost weight and to ride the bus. B.K.'s father disregarded B.K.'s desire to live independently. When B.K.'s group home administrator and regional center service coordinator advocated for B.K. to live independently, B.K.'s father made complaints against them and had a new service coordinator assigned. B.K. and his group home administrator called OCRA for assistance in terminating his conservatorship.

OCRA contacted the regional center and apprised it of B.K.'s wish to terminate his conservatorship. The regional center discovered that it was not notified of the first conservatorship. The regional center contacted the probate investigator, who agreed, after meeting B.K., that termination proceedings should be pursued. The Probate Volunteer Panel (PVP) attorney assigned to B.K.'s case was the same PVP attorney who represented B.K. during the first conservatorship. The PVP attorney wanted a report from the regional center as a condition for representing B.K. in the termination proceeding. OCRA requested that the regional center obtain a report from its psychologist establishing B.K.'s capacity to make his own decisions. With this report, the PVP attorney agreed to assist B.K. in terminating his conservatorship. Brian Capra, CRA, Meriah Harwood, Assistant CRA, Westside Regional Center.

Consumer Makes Difficult Decisions.

Y.S.'s regional center social worker contacted the OCRA office about Y.S., a 30-year old woman who has a dual diagnosis of mental retardation and schizophrenia. She is currently in a residential and day program and doing quite well. Before that, she had been living with her mother and grandmother in another county.

The mother had been investigated for fraud relating to Y.S.'s SSI checks. The grandmother and mother reside in different counties and both were pressuring Y.S. to leave her program and live with one of them. Mother, especially, was pressuring Y.S., and was also calling her residence and leaving threatening messages for the staff.

OCRA visited Y.S. at her day program. She said that she was very happy at work and home and did not want to leave but felt that she had to listen to her mother. She also said that she had not seen her mother for quite some time and missed her. We asked her if she would like to visit her mom and she became quite excited.

OCRA worked with the regional center and the residential provider to arrange a visit between Y.S. and her mother. The residential program was willing to transport Y.S. The visit was arranged for a long weekend. However, before the visit actually happened, Y.S.'s mother made several more threatening calls to both the regional center and the residential

provider, indicating that if Y.S. came to see her, she would not let her leave. The CRA again went to see Y.S. and explained the situation, and asked her what she wanted. She said that she wanted to see her mother, but she did not want to leave her programs.

OCRA assisted Y.S. in writing a letter to her mother, telling her that she was not going to travel to see her, and inviting her mother up to visit her. Y.S. seemed content with this resolution, as she was very worried about traveling to her mother's home and not being allowed to leave. Her mother has responded that she will visit Y.S. in the near future. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

O.L. Learns Self-Advocacy Skills And The Importance Of Standing Up For His Rights.

O.L. is a 19-year old bilingual man who loves to play his keyboard and care for his pet parakeet. O.L. had the goal of living in a group home, away from his parents. After repeated attempts and finally securing placement, he was continuously removed from his new group home without his consent by his parents.

The lack of control over his environment and the instability affected his moods and made O.L. depressed. This caused him to act violently, which eventually landed him in the crisis center. Finally O.L. had enough and approached OCRA for help. OCRA assisted O.L. to communicate his need for independence to his parents.

OCRA assisted O.L. in drafting a contract that outlined when and under what conditions O.L. would accept his parents as visitors to his home. O.L. also wanted to include in his contract the consequences that his parents would have to pay if his wishes were not respected. After a long and difficult meeting, O.L.'s parents began to understand that their son was growing up and needed more independence and discretion over his own life. They promised to respect his wishes and hoped that their relationship would improve over time. Yulahlia Hernandez, CRA, Cristina Bravo Olmo, Assistant CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

OCRA Advises Client on Social Security Benefits.

K.E.'s primary source of income was \$790 in SSI benefits. Previously, K.E. had been paying \$560 in rent and when she moved into another apartment, her rent increased to \$675. Both of K.E.'s parents have been deceased for years and the father, who died recently, set up a special needs trust (SNT) for K.E. prior to his death. The SNT is managed by K.E.'s cousin. K.E.'s independent living skills (ILS) worker contacted OCRA, upon request of K.E.'s cousin, to determine how much money K.E. could receive from the SNT and still be eligible for SSI and Medi-Cal. Their concern was that with the raise in K.E.'s rent, K.E. had very little to live on after bill payments and her quality of life would diminish.

OCRA informed K.E.'s ILS worker and K.E.'s cousin that the SNT income is unearned income and would count against K.E.'s SSI payments dollar for dollar after the first \$20 received each month. OCRA advised K.E. to apply for Social Security benefits under the Dependent Adult Child (DAC) program, which, depending on the benefit amount, could replace the SSI. More importantly, the DAC benefit disregards income so more SNT money could be disbursed to K.E. for her to live on after paying rent and her bills. K.E. applied and was granted eligibility for DAC benefits of \$781 per month. The DAC benefit, when combined with K.E.'s earnings from her supported employment program, replaces her SSI payments. This will allow for over \$200 from the SNT to help supplement K.E.'s monthly income and still keep K.E. eligible for zero share of cost Medi-Cal. Brian Capra, CRA, Westside Regional Center.

OCRA Helps Consumer Get New Clothes.

J.T. is a 47-year-old consumer with mental retardation. He approached OCRA at an outreach presentation and asked for help in getting new clothes. OCRA contacted the regional center. After speaking with the program manager at the regional center, OCRA found out that J.T. had between \$400 and \$500 in his P & I account. The regional center agreed to take J.T. shopping for new clothes. Nadia Villafana, Assistant CRA, Inland Regional Center.

REGIONAL CENTER

N.V. Is Eligible for Regional Center Services.

N. V. is a 4-year-old girl who received services from the regional center as part of the Early Start program. At age three, N.V.'s parents were informed that N.V. would no longer be eligible to receive regional center services because she did not have autism. N.V.'s parents disagreed, claiming that the regional center failed to consider documentation of the severity of N.V.'s disability. OCRA agreed to investigate.

Upon review of N.V.'s case file, including recent psychological assessments, OCRA concluded that N.V. was a strong candidate for regional center eligibility. OCRA discussed N.V.'s service needs and diagnosis with her parents, and prepared them for the informal appeals process. N.V.'s parents attended the informal meeting with the regional center. At the meeting, they argued that N.V. did meet the criteria for substantial disability under the Lanterman Act. N.V. was found eligible for regional center services. Emma Hambright, CRA, Lanterman Regional Center.

Adoptive Mother Learns Advocacy Skills and Gets Regional Center to Pay for Respite and Summer Camp.

D.S. loves to spend time with his friends and outdoors. After many years of being shifted around from foster families to group homes, D.S. found a new home with his loving adoptive family. Due to D.S.'s exceptional needs, his adopted mother receives assistance for his care through the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP).

As D.S. began his life as a teenager, his behavior became increasingly more difficult to handle and his single mother needed more time to rest. It was crucial that his mother receive help from the regional center's respite programs to keep D.S. in his home and out of an institution. D.S.'s mother repeatedly requested respite but the regional center refused the mother's request on the grounds that AAP should pay for respite.

With help from OCRA, D.S.'s mother realized that AAP funds do not need to be used as a funding source for things for which the regional center should pay. OCRA attended a meeting with the regional center. OCRA

agreed to attend the meeting as a teaching opportunity for D.S.'s mother to learn advocacy strategies.

By the end of the meeting, the regional center not only agreed to pay for respite, but to also pay for D.S. to attend a summer camp designed for children with developmental disabilities for a week this summer near the Santa Cruz mountains. D.S.'s mother was excited to have learned advocacy skills that she will be able to use in the future. Yulahlia Hernandez, CRA, Cristina Bravo Olmo, Assistant CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

Case Settles Before Hearing.

W.D. is a teenager with Prader-Willi Syndrome. His parents had applied for regional center eligibility for W.D. several years ago. The regional center denied eligibility because W.D. was not mentally retarded. His parents wanted to apply again as they were quite worried about what would happen to W.D. when he became an adult.

OCRA assisted W.D.'s parents in obtaining the assessments and letters of support that would be beneficial in the process of becoming eligible for regional center services. W.D.'s parents wrote a narrative about his behavioral and adaptive functioning. OCRA assisted the parents in putting a file together to present to the regional center.

W.D.'s mother had been to the regional center for one evaluation and felt that the regional center did not consider how severely Prader-Willi impairs W.D., despite his high IQ. She asked if OCRA would contact the psychologist before her next meeting. OCRA agreed to do this.

OCRA contacted the psychologist and made an argument based upon W.D. needing services similar to a person with mental retardation. Because of the behavioral and adaptive deficits associated with Prader-Willi and because Prader-Willi clients are almost always served through the regional center system, OCRA argued that even with his high IQ, W.D. would never be able to live and function independently. Furthermore, except for his IQ, W.D.'s condition was similar to that of a person with mental retardation and his treatment needs were exactly the same as people with Prader-Willi Syndrome who were mentally retarded.

The mother and W.D. returned for a second assessment. The mother reported that this meeting was far more successful than the first meeting. W.D. was been found eligible for regional center services. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

OCRA Secures Emergency Nursing Hours.

Medi-Cal abruptly cut M.B.'s nursing hours down from 116 to 40 per week. M.B., who requires around the clock care of a nurse, was unable to attend school because of the reduced hours, and M.B.'s mother had to stay home from work. In addition, M.B.'s mother and father had to take turns staying up throughout the night to monitor M.B. for choking and medication administration.

This was creating an unbearable hardship for M.B.'s family and created a substantial risk of institutionalization. M.B.'s parents called upon OCRA for help. OCRA asked for an emergency meeting with the regional center to assess M.B.'s need for emergency nursing. The day following the meeting, the regional center had a nurse at M.B.'s home assessing his need for nursing services.

The report came back in support of M.B.'s need for 24-hour nursing care. The regional center had a nurse secured for M.B. within a few days. Yulahlia Hernandez, CRA, Cristina Bravo Olmo, Assistant CRA, North Bay Regional Center.

Regional Center Funds Lift Chair.

L.F. is a 54-year-old woman who sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and several other physical injuries from a car accident some years ago. L.F. is diagnosed with mental retardation and severe osteoarthritis. L.F. has difficulty transferring from a sitting position to standing and as a result has re-injured herself multiple times. L.F.'s doctor prescribed a lift chair for home use to regain physical health while using the medical equipment to relieve the stress of the transfers. Medi-Care only agreed to pay 20% of the chair. L.F. then requested the regional center fund the remaining balance. The regional center denied L.F.'s request for medical equipment based on the fact that it considered the request to be for furniture which the regional

center claimed it did not fund. Moreover, the regional center did not believe that the lift chair was a medical necessity.

L.F. contacted OCRA for assistance in filing the appeal. The CRA submitted a timely request for an appeal and requested an informal meeting. The CRA followed-up three weeks later, and the informal meeting still had not been scheduled. The CRA then contacted the regional center executive director, who responded by immediately agreeing to fund the lift chair because the appeal was never scheduled, which was a procedural violation. Noelle Ferdon, CRA, Far Northern Regional Center.

Parent Successfully Mediates Regional Center Funding of Autism Assessment.

The regional center agreed to fund an autism assessment at UC Davis to determine if M.N. has autism. The assessment was included in M.N.'s Early Start Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). After waiting several weeks for the referral, M.N.'s mother decided to explore other autism clinics to complete the early start assessment in a timely manner. Mother felt that with each passing week, invaluable clinical behavior treatment was being lost. Mother considered UC San Francisco (UCSF) and discussed this with her service coordinator, who agreed to attend the appointment, if necessary. UCSF completed its assessment and found M.N. to be autistic and the regional center found M.N. eligible for services.

After the mother submitted the bill for reimbursement, the regional center refused to pay for the assessment stating that it did not agree to pay for a UCSF autism assessment in writing in the IFSP. The mother felt she received a mixed message since the service coordinator offered to help and knew that the family intended to utilize the UCSF rather than the UC Davis referral because of the significant delays. The mother appealed the denial and contacted OCRA for technical assistance with the mediation.

The mother was fully prepared for the mediation and offered her legal arguments. The regional center recognized these arguments and advised the mother to make certain that any services she would like for

her son in the future should be written into the IFSP. Mom agreed and the regional center agreed to fully fund the assessment. Leinani Neves, CRA, Valley Mountain Regional Center.

Regional Center Listens to Consumer.

T.H. is a 55-year-old male who lives in his own apartment. T.H. was having problems with his supported living agency workers. On several occasions, he reported these problems to his service coordinator but no action was ever taken. T.H. contacted OCRA for assistance in obtaining a new service coordinator. T. H. also mentioned that both his manual and electric wheelchairs needed repairs.

OCRA staff assisted T.H. in writing a letter to the regional center to request a new service coordinator and an IPP meeting. OCRA agreed to represent T.H. at the IPP meeting. Prior to the IPP meeting, OCRA staff assisted T.H. in developing his self advocacy skills. After listening to T.H., the regional center agreed to change his service coordinator, change the supported living agency and to repair both of his wheelchairs. T.H remarked that this was the first time he felt like someone had listened to him and that it felt good. Aimee Delgado, CRA, Rita Snykers, Assistant CRA, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center.

Regional Center Agrees to Fund Partial Cost of a Summer Socialization Program.

H.B. is a young boy with autism. The parents called OCRA for assistance in preparing for a fair hearing because the regional center denied funding for H.B.'s summer, "extended enrichment program". The regional center denied the request on the basis that the programs were day care and the responsibility of the parents.

OCRA agreed to assist H.B.'s mother to prepare for mediation and hearing. The Assistant CRA helped the mother prepare the fair hearing exhibit packets. OCRA staff met with the mother prior to the mediation. The mother was told that she had to explain each part of the unique enrichment program and how it would meet H.B.'s socialization needs. At mediation, the mother accepted the regional center's offer to fund \$600.00 towards the

cost of the program. Aimee Delgado, CRA, Rita Snykers, Assistant CRA, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center.

OCRA Gets Automatic Door Opener for Consumer.

J.G. lives alone in his own apartment. He has cerebral palsy and uses a power wheelchair. He has services from an independent living agency worker for only 5 hours per day. The worker assists him with various activities of daily living such as dressing, bathing, cooking, and cleaning. For the remainder of the day, J.G. must find ways to provide for his own needs.

J.G. needed an automatic door opener to be able to continue to live safely in his apartment and maintain his independence. J.G.'s poor muscle strength, use of a wheelchair, and the configuration of his apartment front door and entry hallway made it difficult for him to maneuver his wheelchair in order to open and close his front door. Without the automatic door opener, J.G.'s ability to independently go out into the community for activities such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and leisure was seriously compromised. His safety was also seriously compromised without the automatic door opener. In the event of an emergency, such as fire or earthquake, J.G. would be seriously at risk of injury if he were not able to get out of his apartment quickly.

OCRA asked the regional center to fund the automatic door opener but the regional center refused after an occupational therapist recommended against it. The regional center denied the request on the grounds that it was not a cost-effective use of resources and not medically necessary. OCRA contracted with a different occupational therapist, who agreed with J.G.'s doctor that the door opener was medically necessary. OCRA presented the independent evaluation along with pictures of J.G. attempting to open the door and written statements from J.G.'s independent living worker. OCRA staff conducted a search of companies that would be able to sell and install the device for J.G. A mediation conference was held and the regional center retracted its initial denial and approved the automatic door opener. Eva Casas-Sarmiento, CRA, Guadalupe Moriel, Assistant CRA, Regional Center of Orange County.

OCRA Helps Parents Get Retroactive Respite Payments.

W.M. and B.M. are young twins who were receiving 48 hours of respite from the regional center. The regional center issued a notice of action informing the parents that respite services would be discontinued within 30 days. The parents filed a timely appeal and asked for 48 hours of respite to continue pending the appeal. The regional center refused to continue to fund the 48 hours of respite pending a final hearing on the issue. For various reasons, dates for the hearing kept getting postponed. Almost one year later, a hearing on the issue of respite had not been held. The family had gone without respite during the entire pendency of the appeal.

OCRA met with the parents and reviewed their records. OCRA prepared an opinion letter for the parents citing relevant Lanterman Act laws pertaining to aid paid pending an appeal along with an analysis of the local regional center purchase of service guidelines and how they applied to this particular request for respite.

With the opinion letter as a guide, the parents proceeded to hearing. The hearing officer found that the regional center had wrongly denied respite during the pendency of the appeal proceedings and ordered that retroactive payments be issued to the family. Eva Casas-Sarmiento, CRA, Guadalupe Moriel, Assistant CRA, Regional Center of Orange County.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Compliance Complaint Secures IEP Meeting, a Change of Placement, and Compensatory Services.

G.R.'s mother and the child's La Familia case manager came to OCRA for help in getting the school district to convene an IEP meeting at which it had promised to review recommendations of the Regional Center of the East Bay's Autism Clinic. Not only had the school district been unresponsive to G.R.'s mother's requests, but G.R. had begun complaining about being hit in the classroom. He became so afraid of the classroom and his teacher that G.R.'s mother started keeping him home from school. Shortly after that, a school truancy officer contacted the family to warn his mother that she might be subject to prosecution.

To document the situation, OCRA advised G.R.'s mother to submit a written request for an emergency IEP meeting and to explain the reason why she was keeping G.R. home from school. Next, and because the district had already failed to meet its commitment for the regular IEP and had not yet begun its promised assessments, OCRA filed a compliance complaint with the California Department of Education. Shortly after the complaint had been filed, the school district began its assessment of G.R. After the allegations in the complaint were sustained, the promised IEP meeting took place. G.R.'s diagnosis of autism was confirmed on his IEP, his placement was changed, and related services confirmed. The IEP also provided for the following compensatory services: intensified speech and language therapy for two-and-a-half months, and three months of ABA training for classroom staff from a non-public agency. It was also agreed that G.R. would be permitted to transfer to one of the district's autism classes in the fall if his mother, after visiting the classes, decided the autism class would be more appropriate for him. Celeste Palmer, Assistant CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

Full-Inclusion Case Settled at the IEP Meeting.

A.R. has been fully included in his local elementary school. Because of a medication change, A.R.'s behavior problems escalated in the 4th grade. The district then recommended that A.R. be placed in a neighboring school district's special day class for students with autism. The parents did not agree with the recommendation and did not sign the IEP. The district filed for a due process hearing against the parents and would not agree to mediate. OCRA agreed to represent A.R. at hearing. OCRA hired an expert to observe A.R. for an entire school day and write a report. The expert noted that the morning classroom aide was much less effective than the afternoon aide and actually provoked A.R.'s inappropriate behaviors. Concurrently, the district curtailed its pursuit of a due process hearing. OCRA provided the district with the expert's report. An IEP was subsequently held to plan for A.R.'s promotion to a full inclusion classroom in the 6th grade. After the family signed the IEP, the district withdrew its request for a due process hearing. Matt Pope, CRA, East Los Angeles Regional Center.

Consumer Obtains the Services of an Independent Inclusion Specialist.

Z.L. is diagnosed with autism. When he was first placed in a regular education classroom, his mother requested the services of a full inclusion specialist. The school district denied the mother's request. OCRA agreed to assist the mother in obtaining the services of a full inclusion specialist for Z.L. at school. OCRA hired a full inclusion specialist to assess the child's needs, but the school district denied the request to have this specialist assess Z.L.'s school program. OCRA filed a request for an administrative hearing on behalf of Z.L.

The case was settled before hearing and the district agreed to allow an independent inclusion specialist into the classroom to observe Z.L. OCRA then wrote a letter to the district requesting that many of the goals and objectives in the IEP be revised and that the district provide Z.L. with the services of an inclusion specialist. At Z.L.'s most recent IEP meeting, the district agreed to all of the requested IEP revisions and hired an independent inclusion specialist to provide consultation to Z.L. and all of the other full inclusion students at his school. Katherine Mottarella, CRA, Jacqueline Phan, Assistant CRA, Tri-Counties Regional Center.

Student Receives Services Beyond Those Designated In IEP.

K.S. is a young student with a traumatic brain injury. In April, 2004, her family relocated to a new district in a new county. Several months prior to the move, the family contacted the new school to notify it of the family's intention to enroll K.S. and to provide them with information about her, including her current IEP. K.S. was placed in a special day class similar to the one in the old district but the new district did not implement essential portions of her IEP. K.S. did not receive OT or PT services, speech and language therapy or the time designated for her to be included with her non-disabled peers. K.S.'s mother tried repeatedly to have the IEP implemented but the district responded that they did not believe the services were educational and, in the case of the PT, the school did not have a therapist on staff. After 30 days the district had not conducted an IEP meeting and the parent called the OCRA office for assistance.

OCRA filed a compliance complaint with the California Department of Education on behalf of K.S. After the compliance complaint was filed, the school district agreed to contract with a private OT, to pay related

transportation costs, to provide speech therapy, and to include K.S. in a regular second grade classroom. The district further agreed to compensate for the services lost and to provide for extra minutes of service to compensate for the regression K.S. was experiencing.

The school district will issue a county-wide letter notifying schools of their responsibility to conduct an IEP meeting within 30 days of an administrative placement. Kay Spencer, Assistant CRA, Central Valley Regional Center.

Youngster Successfully Transitions from Early Start to School.

OCRA was contacted by S.V.'s mother when S.V. was about to turn 3. S.V. has Rhett Syndrome and has cognitive and orthopedic disabilities. S.V. also has severely delayed speech and language skills. Mother contacted OCRA to make sure that S.V. had a smooth transition from Early Start to school.

Mother met with the IEP transition team and S.V. was offered a placement in a school that entailed a 40-minute bus ride. This offer was not acceptable. OCRA assisted in filing an appeal.

Counsel for the school district contacted OCRA and negotiated for several weeks regarding a more appropriate placement. OCRA requested letters from S.V.'s physician and occupational therapist stating that the ride would be deleterious to S.V.'s health. OCRA also requested a letter from the speech therapist saying that a bi-lingual language program would not meet S.V.'s needs, as her language acquisition was severely delayed and she needed to be in a program that was English-language enhanced. These letters were sent to the school district for consideration.

After many days of negotiating with the district, it agreed to place S.V. in a program close to S.V.'s home that has all of the appropriate services. Katy Lusson, CRA, Golden Gate Regional Center.

Student Included In Washington D.C. Trip.

C.C. is 13-years-old and in the 8th grade. During his annual IEP meeting in September, 2003, C.C.'s IEP team discussed participation in extra curricular activities including the 8th grade trip to Washington D.C. At the conclusion of the meeting, his teacher asked the regional center representative to assist in funding a portion of the trip. After consideration, the regional center

notified the parent that it would fund \$1,000 of the \$1,400 cost of the trip. C.C. signed up for the trip. At that time, the trip was full and he was placed on the waiting list.

Throughout the year, the district reported to the parent that the trip was full. Eight weeks prior to the trip, the parent learned that there were unfilled spaces. The school district did not return the mother's calls. She was ultimately told by a district representative that her child was a liability and "no one wants to be responsible for C.C." The parent requested an emergency IEP meeting and contacted the OCRA office for representation.

OCRA met with the parent and, prior to the meeting, contacted the superintendent. The superintendent directed his staff to determine if it could add C.C. and to work to include him. OCRA represented at the IEP meeting. The district apologized to the parent and stated that it was working to take C. C. on the trip. In the district's view, C.C. needed 1:1 assistance.

The school district offered to pay for the parent's trip to serve as C.C.'s attendant. The details have been worked out. C.C., his mother, and his friends are looking forward to the trip. The district met internally to look at its procedures and to insure that in the future, all students are included. Kay Spencer, Assistant CRA, Central Valley Regional Center.

CRA Helps Grandmother Continue Advocacy For Her Grandson.

R.D. is a 4-year-old autistic boy who receives special education. His grandmother, who is his primary caregiver, contacted OCRA for advocacy assistance. R.D. resides with his grandmother.

Due to his employment responsibilities, R.D.'s father is unable to attend most of R.D.'s IEP's and, therefore, had signed a power of attorney giving R.D.'s grandmother authority to make school decisions. The school district was questioning R.D.'s grandmother's presence at the IEP's. They also were refusing to accept the power of attorney as valid.

The CRA attended R.D.'s IEP to discuss the issue of the power of attorney. The CRA explained the importance of R.D.'s grandmother attending and at times signing the IEP on the father's behalf. The school district reviewed the Power of Attorney and accepted it as valid. This allows R.D.'s

grandmother to continue to advocate for her grandson. Veronica Cervantes, CRA, Inland Regional Center.

IEP Meetings Restores 1:1 Aide and Obtains Related Services and Transition Plan.

K.M.'s parents contacted OCRA for help after their 20-year-old son had been suspended from school for pulling an aide's hair. His parents knew that K.M. was not a violent person, but because K.M. was non-verbal, he would use physical contact as the only way he could attract someone's attention. K.M.'s parents felt that if he were provided the 1:1 aide promised on his IEP, he would be better behaved and more likely to benefit from his schooling. OCRA's review of school records disclosed a series of problems: 1:1 assistance had been curtailed as of the most recent IEP; behavioral concerns had not led to a functional behavioral assessment or positive behavior intervention plan; related services were reduced without assessments or explanation; and while IEP meeting notes registered the parents' desire that K.M. have more opportunities for inclusion, nothing had been done to insure inclusion.

OCRA explained to K.M.'s parents their child's rights and the inadequacies in his education program. Over four IEP meetings, OCRA and K.M.'s parents successfully advocated for a functional assessment and positive behavior intervention plan; a 1:1 aide; an occupational therapy assessment that resulted in services and equipment; community integration and training activities; and, despite an assistive technology (AT) assessment that found him "not ready" to use AT, a 3-month trial period with AT devices, so as to determine whether the devices can assist K.M. in learning and communicating with other people. Celeste Palmer, Assistant CRA, Regional Center of the East Bay.

School District Provides Student with a Laptop Mounted on His Wheelchair.

J.C., an 11-year-old diagnosed with cerebral palsy, was not benefiting from the special education services provided by his school district. OCRA obtained an independent assessment outlining J.C.'s special education needs. The assessment outlined the need for a laptop mounted on J.C.'s wheelchair to allow him to access and progress in the general curriculum. After several

discussions, school officials agreed to provide the mounted laptop computer. Eulalio Castellanos, CRA, Kern Regional Center.

School District Agrees in IEP to Necessary Staffing for Transfers.

L.A. is a teen-ager with severe CP and mental retardation. She and her parents speak only Spanish. Her mother requested OCRA's help at an IEP to assure adequate staffing at transfer points between services as L.A. uses a wheel chair. After initial hesitation at the IEP meeting, the school district agreed to 2 to 1 staffing at all transfer points in the IEP and to provide an activity log for the parents' use.

L.A.'s mother requested the IEP be translated to Spanish prior to signing. After two weeks, no translation was provided. Upon inquiring about the translation, OCRA learned the district had forgotten to provide it to the parents and a Spanish translation was finally provided. Doug Harris, Associate CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center, Lake County.

Proposed Termination of Behavior Support in School Reversed.

M.G. is a 10-year-old regional center consumer with mental retardation and CP. Behaviors, including scratching and poking other students, have interfered with M.G.'s educational progress and led to suspensions. M.G. and her family speak only Spanish.

M.G.'s mother contacted OCRA when she learned that the school district special education program recommended phasing out the 1:1 behavior aide already in place, even though M.G. had just been suspended for scratching another student's eye. OCRA contacted the school and learned that a behavior analysis was pending and, without the IEP team's agreement, the special education director had ordered the behavior consultant to develop a fade plan for the behavior aide. The behavior consultant did not agree with this goal, however.

OCRA went to the IEP with the parents and, with the support of the behavior consultant, advocated for continuation of the aide provided by the school, and inclusion of a behavior aide in the behavior plan developed through a current behavior analysis. Doug Harris, Associate CRA, Redwood Coast Regional Center, Lake County.

School District Reverses Expulsion Recommendation and Permits Student to Participate in Graduation Ceremonies.

B.G. is a 14-year-old diagnosed with mental retardation. She was suspended from school with a recommendation for expulsion. B.G. was also being denied participation in her graduation ceremonies. B.G. was accused of theft because she used a forged check to buy a book at a book sale. However, B.G. was under the impression that her mother had given her permission to take the check to buy the book. B.G., because of her disabilities, did not understand that only her mother could sign the check. B.G.'s mother confirmed that she gave B.G. permission to buy the book and intended to write a check. School officials were not swayed by B.G. or her mother's explanation. OCRA provided counsel and advice to B.G.'s mother about which points to bring out during her meeting with school officials in regards to the suspension and recommendation for expulsion. B.G.'s mother met with school officials and the school district reversed its decision. B.G. was readmitted into school and allowed to participate in her graduation ceremonies. Eulalio Castellanos, CRA, Kern Regional Center.

Client Obtains Appropriate School Placement.

C.M. is a 17-year-old, African-American male who has seizures, blindness, and a severe sensory-neural hearing loss. C.M. attended a Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Special Education Center but had been absent for extended periods of time due to his disabilities. Additionally, C.M. was the only blind-deaf student on campus and C.M.'s mother was concerned that in this placement, C.M. could not fully participate in his school program. C.M.'s mother attended an IEP meeting to discuss her concerns that the school could not provide appropriate services for C.M. While the IEP team agreed that C.M.'s multiple disabilities were unique to the campus, the district was not convinced that a placement change was necessary. C.M.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance in placing C.M. at a school that would meet his needs. C.M.'s mother also expressed a desire to develop more advocacy skills to help her son.

OCRA met with C.M.'s mother to review C.M.'s previous IEPs and discuss C.M.'s special education rights. OCRA referred C.M.'s mother to the Foundation for the Junior Blind, a local non-public school that serves blind-deaf students. OCRA suggested she contact the school, arrange for a tour, meet with the administration to discuss C.M.'s educational needs, and

request another IEP meeting if she was satisfied with what the foundation had to offer. OCRA provided her a sample interview checklist to use to evaluate the school program and keep notes for the upcoming IEP meeting. The mother liked the foundation and the program being offered for her son, and arranged for the foundation's special education director to attend C.M.'s IEP meeting.

OCRA staff continued to work with the parent to prepare for the IEP meeting. At the meeting, C.M.'s mother was an impressive advocate for her son and the IEP team ultimately agreed that a change of placement was warranted. C.M. now attends a specially designed school and instructional setting with facilities and equipment that enable him maximum learning opportunities. Christine Armand, Assistant CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

OCRA Helps To Maintain Speech Therapy For Client.

A.J. has mental retardation and epilepsy. At his last IEP meeting, the school told A.J.'s mother that continuing to provide speech therapy to A.J. was a "lost cause" and that he would never be able to speak. A.J.'s mother contacted OCRA for assistance in defending against the school's proposed termination of speech therapy services.

OCRA assisted the parent with obtaining an assessment of A.J. by the school's speech and language professionals through its assistive technology program. The professionals assessed A.J. and concluded that he would benefit from continued speech therapy based on his verbal abilities. Given the results of the assessment, the district not only reinstated speech therapy, but also increased it by 30 minutes a week, as well as giving compensatory time for the lapse in the service. OCRA further negotiated training for mother with the speech therapist on new techniques and materials to be used at school and home. Anastasia Bacigalupo, CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

OCRA Provides Dispute Resolution on Behalf of Parents Against School District.

E.A. is a 3-year-old boy diagnosed with autism. At the last IEP meeting, the district informed E.A.'s parents that E.A.'s occupational therapy would be eliminated and that his speech therapy would be reduced due to the limited

progress he was making. E.A.'s parents protested both moves by the district. Additionally, E.A.'s parents had not been able to have E.A. in school for over two months due to a paperwork issue regarding E.A.'s Temporary Support Assistant (TSA). E.A.'s parents contacted OCRA for counsel as to what their rights were.

OCRA agreed to negotiate with the district on E.A.'s behalf. Through an informal conference, OCRA was able to achieve all three of his parents' goals. First, occupational therapy was reinstated and increased to twice a month. Second, speech therapy was increased to twice a month, with one session allocated for individual instruction as E.A.'s parents had requested. Lastly, the attendance issue was resolved and E.A. was allowed to start school the following Monday with an aide. Anastasia Bacigalupo, CRA, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center.

CDE Finds School District Out of Compliance.

S.W. was not receiving speech therapy as required under her IEP. OCRA filed a compliance complaint on her behalf against the school district to compel the delivery of S.W.'s speech therapy. The California Department of Education (CDE) investigated and concluded that the district had failed to provide speech therapy. CDE ordered the district to provide S.W. with compensatory speech therapy. Eulalio Castellanos, CRA, Kern Regional Center.

TRANSPORTION

Bus Driver That Was Harassing Clients Is Removed.

J.R. and O.R., both diagnosed with mental retardation, were transported to and from work by shuttle bus. The shuttle bus driver verbally harassed and rushed the clients to leave work early. The service coordinator for J.R. and O.R. complained to the bus company, with no success. OCRA intervened and the bus driver was replaced. Eulalio Castellanos, CRA, Kern Regional Center, Valerie Geary, ACRA, Kern Regional Center.

OUTREACH

IPP Training to the Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled.

OCRA was invited to give a presentation about IPPs on June 26th to the Chinese Parents Association for the Disabled (CPAD). This group contains parents and consumers from the Orange County to San Gabriel catchment areas. There are representatives of Lanterman Regional Center, Harbor Regional Center, Regional Center of Orange County, San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center, and Inland Regional Center. This was an exciting opportunity to outreach to a community that has not been reached by OCRA in the recent past.

The training was all day and included traditional dancing and watercolor art. In the evening, OCRA presented information about the IPP process, Lanterman Act rights and then took questions from the audience. OCRA staff was invited to join the group for dinner and visit with the families of CPAD. Staff was invited to come back anytime! It was a successful outreach and OCRA has already received calls from the CPAD members. Katie Casada Hornberger, CRA, Harbor Regional Center, Emma Hambright, CRA, Lanterman Regional Center.

Bi-lingual Trainings Are Effective and Popular.

Starting in August, 2003, the CRA and Assistant CRA from OCRA's San Andreas Regional Center Office, conducted several outreach sessions to consumers and families in the area. These outreach events and training were scheduled in order to provide educational information and to introduce OCRA to the surrounding communities. Outreach and training was provided in both English and Spanish and included more than 11 trainings. The outreach and trainings throughout the year were extremely positive and fun for all involved. OCRA looks forward to meeting more SARC consumers and families in the year to come. Marvin Velastegui, CRA, Gloria Torres, Assistant CRA, San Andreas Regional Center.