

Advocacy Report

January 2025 - June 2025

All names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

BENEFITS – IHSS

Samuel Gets 222 Hours Per Month of IHSS.

Samuel's mother contacted OCRA to get help to qualify Samuel for protective supervision through the IHSS program. She had filed an appeal when the county denied protective supervision. OCRA helped Samuel's mother ask for a conditional withdrawal of the appeal, allowing the county to conduct a reassessment. OCRA gathered regional center, school, and medical records. OCRA also met with Samuel's mother to prepare her for the reassessment. OCRA went to the home reassessment to ensure the county social worker asked appropriate questions and Samuel's mother understood the process. Following the reassessment, the county granted Samuel a total of 222 hours per month of IHSS, as he requires protective supervision to remain safely at home. Samuel's mother also received retroactive payments totaling \$41,757. Samuel now has the support he needs to stay safely at home.

Ken Keeps 283 Hours Per Month of IHSS.

Ken's mother contacted OCRA when the county proposed to reduce his IHSS hours from 283 to 108 hours per month, ending protective supervision. Ken had been getting 283 IHSS hours per month, including protective supervision, for the past 15 years. His condition had not changed. OCRA worked with Ken's mother to get medical and regional center records documenting Ken's needs. The records showed that, contrary to the county's allegation, Ken had not improved, and he still needs constant supervision. Ken filed for hearing and OCRA agreed to represent him. OCRA negotiated with the county's appeal specialist who agreed the county social worker should do another home assessment. Two advocates from OCRA went to the reassessment, one in person and one virtually. After that reassessment, the IHSS social worker issued a new notice restoring Ken's 283 IHSS hours per month.

Brandon and Michael Keep the Maximum IHSS Hours.

Brandon and Michael, two young brothers, received the maximum number of IHSS hours for personal care and protective supervision. When they moved with their single mother to a new county, the new county assessed them to need 0 IHSS hours despite their multiple disabilities and significant medical needs. The county's termination of all IHSS hours placed both boys at significant risk of out-of-home placement. OCRA agreed to represent the brothers at an IHSS hearing. OCRA reviewed medical, school, and regional center records, in addition to preparing their mother for the hearing. OCRA also prepared and submitted briefs, detailing each area of need for the brothers and providing supporting documentation. At the hearing, the social worker admitted that she asked no questions during her assessment of the children. She also admitted to finding both boys eligible in two categories, but that she "zeroed out" the hours because the county wanted to deny IHSS. At the hearing, the county admitted that they could not meet their burden of proving a change of circumstance and agreed to provide the maximum 283 hours per month, including protective supervision, for both children. Brandon and Michael got to keep the IHSS hours they both need to live at home with their family.

BENEFITS – MEDI-CAL

Samuel Gets To Keep His Nursing Hours.

Samuel needs nursing services and support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Samuel's parent called OCRA because Medi-Cal wanted to reduce his nursing hours. Medi-Cal told Samuel's parent they are reducing his nursing hours without giving a written notice or the chance to appeal. OCRA gave Samuel's parent information on filing an appeal based on constructive notice since there was no actual notice. OCRA researched hearing decisions about regional centers funding nursing hours when there was a Medi-Cal change. OCRA gave Samuel's parent clear feedback on earlier judge's rulings and realistic expectations about the ability to get regional center to fund as many nursing hours as possible. Taking OCRA's advice, Samuel's parent spoke with Medi-Cal directly and explained his need for all the hours. The nursing agency agreed to continue funding over 600 nursing hours a month to Samuel.

OCRA Eliminates \$10,000 Debt for Medi-Cal Services.

Carmen's family contacted OCRA after getting a bill of over \$10,000 for her behavioral services she got through Medi-Cal managed care. Carmen's behavioral services provider continued services through age 24, even though Medi-Cal only covers behavioral services through age 21. The provider sent many bills and letters threatening to send Carmen to debt collection for the \$10,000 bill. OCRA first tried contacting the provider to resolve the issue informally by explaining Carmen cannot be billed for any Medi-Cal services under balance billing rules. That provider stopped communicating with OCRA. OCRA then filed a Medi-Cal managed care grievance against the provider agency. In the grievance, OCRA explained Carmen was never notified by the provider agency she would be ineligible for ABA services after age 21. OCRA explained it is illegal for the behavioral services provider to bill Carmen because no Medi-Cal recipient can be balance-billed for medical care. After filing the grievance, OCRA communicated extensively with the Medi-Cal managed care company's legal department. They eventually eliminated Carmen's bills from the provider. Carmen and her family are relieved they no longer have the \$10,000 medical debt.

Tina Can Finally Get Medical Care.

Tina's Medi-Cal stopped years ago. Tina always had a job and did not understand why her Medi-Cal suddenly stopped. She did not know how to get her Medi-Cal back. Tina asked OCRA to help her apply for Medi-Cal. OCRA helped Tina get documents and submit them online. But, her Medi-Cal application was wrongly denied. OCRA agreed to represent Tina and appeal the denial. OCRA appealed timely and negotiated with the county to identify the correct Medi-Cal program for Tina. OCRA submitted more documents and explained which Medi-Cal program should be considered since she works. As a result, Tina was found eligible for Medi-Cal under the correct program – the 250% Working Disabled program. Tina happily found a new doctor and is receiving overdue medical care.

Grant Gets Access to Affordable Healthcare.

Grant's mother contacted OCRA for help with a large Medi-Cal share of cost. The county sent a notice saying Grant had a share of cost each month that he had to pay before he could use his Medi-Cal. The reason he had a share of cost is because Grant gets derivative family Social Security benefits through his father. Although he is a minor and is on a waiver where his parent's income does not count, Medi-Cal counts his own Social Security benefits as income for Medi-Cal. The share of cost effectively meant he could not use his Medi-Cal. It prevented him from accessing critical supports, including ABA therapy. OCRA represented Grant and filed a state hearing request. OCRA advocated with the county appeals specialist and identified necessary supplemental insurance coverage. If Grant purchases insurance, his countable income is reduced by the insurance premium amount. These changes allowed Grant's Medi-Cal eligibility to be recalculated and put his monthly income under the Medi-Cal limit, removing the share of cost. Grant can now receive critical supports through Medi-Cal for free that would allow him to thrive at home, in the community, and in school.

BENEFITS – SSDI

Client Receives Critical SSDI Payments While OCRA Appeals.

Jeffrey gets SSDI and works at a grocery store. He has supported employment services through the regional center. Jeffrey lives independently and relies on his SSDI benefits to pay his rent and bills. Jeffrey called OCRA for help when his SSDI benefits stopped and he got a notice from Social Security saying he owed over \$38,000. Social Security said Jeffrey earned too much money at work, and they no longer considered him disabled or eligible for SSDI benefits. Without SSDI, Jeffrey could lose his housing. OCRA helped Jeffrey file a Request for Reconsideration appeal and represented him. OCRA gathered information about his supported employment services to show he had a "work subsidy" which means not all his income should be counted for SSDI eligibility. After trying to work with the local Social Security office for months without resolution, OCRA contacted the regional Area Work Incentives Coordinator at Social Security. After explaining Jeffrey's situation and his risk of becoming unhoused, Social Security put "critical payments" in place so

Jeffrey could get his SSDI benefits while waiting for the appeal to be resolved. Social Security eventually issued a favorable appeal decision for Jeffrey. They reinstated his monthly SSDI benefit, eliminated his \$38,000 overpayment, and gave a back payment of over \$15,000. Jeffrey was relieved his SSDI benefits were reinstated. He maintained his housing during the appeal because of the critical payments.

Ethan's Mother Gets Help Preparing for a Social Security Hearing.

Ethan's mother contacted OCRA because Social Security denied Ethan Disabled Adult Child benefits. Social Security alleged he does not qualify because he earned too much money and was therefore not disabled. OCRA reviewed Ethan's earnings and found that Social Security miscalculated his earnings. OCRA gave Ethan's mother the rules, arguments, and created a spreadsheet she can use with the proper calculation of the earnings that she could present at hearing. OCRA advised Ethan's mother to develop evidence of subsidies to reflect the job supports Ethan got at work and gave her the specific forms she needed. Armed with this information and supporting documents, Ethan's mother felt prepared to challenge Social Security's decision at hearing.

BENEFITS – SSI

OCRA Helps Client Get Child Benefits Reinstated and SSI Increased.

Charlie is 18 and lives with his mother. Charlie's mother also has a disability and gets SSI benefits. Charlie takes part in a special education transition program, which will continue through age 22 because he is on the certificate of completion track through his IEP. When Charlie turned 18 and became an adult, Social Security terminated his childhood benefits. OCRA helped Charlie file a Request for Reconsideration appeal since students in special education transition programs can continue getting childhood benefits while they are in school. While reviewing Charlie's case, OCRA also noticed Charlie's SSI benefits were reduced due to In-Kind Support and Maintenance rules. Since Charlie's mother is also on SSI benefits, they are considered a "public assistance household" for SSI purposes and Charlie should get the maximum benefit amount. OCRA helped Charlie file a second appeal about his SSI benefits. OCRA contacted Social Security by phone, fax, and in-person many times, but never got a decision on

Charlie's 2 appeals. After 6 months with no resolution, OCRA helped Charlie contact his local congressperson's office to file a congressional inquiry about the appeals. Charlie's childhood benefits were reinstated soon after he filed the congressional inquiry. Charlie's SSI benefits were increased right away, and he got a retroactive SSI payment right before the winter holidays.

Hanna Gets a Favorable Decision at Her SSI Overpayment Hearing.

Hanna's mother contacted OCRA about a \$9000 SSI overpayment. Social Security said they overpaid Hanna, a child, for more than a year and a half. They also stopped Hanna's benefits. Before contacting OCRA, Hanna's mother submitted a request for reconsideration appeal and went to an informal meeting. Social Security denied the appeal. OCRA agreed to help Hanna's mother prepare for a hearing with a judge. OCRA did research and advised Hanna's mother on the law. OCRA reviewed documents Hanna's mother prepared and suggested ways to clearly state their position. Hanna's mother felt comfortable going to the hearing after OCRA's preparation. After the hearing, Hanna got a favorable decision. The judge agreed that Hanna was only over the resource limit for one month, which is what Hanna's mother tried to say at the earlier appeal stages. As a result, her overpayment was significantly reduced. This decision confirmed to Hanna's mother that she was correctly managing her daughter's benefits.

Vanna Receives a Favorable SSI Hearing Decision.

Vanna received SSI as a child. When Hanna turned 18, Social Security evaluated her under the adult SSI rules and terminated her SSI benefits. Vanna's mother appealed and appeared at an administrative hearing with her. The judge postponed the hearing and told them to find an attorney. Vanna could not find a lawyer to help her. Vanna's mother, who only spoke Spanish, contacted OCRA for help. OCRA gathered regional center, school, and medical records, and agreed to represent her. OCRA prepared direct testimony with Hanna's mother and sister-in-law, and cross-examination questions to ask Social Security's Vocational Expert and Medical Expert at the hearing. After the hearing, Vanna received a fully favorable hearing decision restoring her SSI benefits.

CIVIL RIGHTS

OCRA Helps Lucinda Get a Reasonable Accommodation for Court.

Lucinda had to attend a court-ordered mediation for her custody and visitation case. At first, the court denied her request to have a support person attend the mediation with her. Lucinda contacted OCRA for help because she did not know why the court denied her request. She felt she could not attend the mediation without the support of her Independent Living Skills worker. This worker helps her with communication and other tasks related to her disability. OCRA gave Lucinda the contact information for the Court ADA Compliance Office and the proper MC-410 form to use when making a reasonable accommodation request. Lucinda submitted the form, and the court granted her reasonable accommodation request. Lucinda felt supported and empowered to attend the mediation with her ILS worker.

OUTREACH AND TRAINING

Business Before Coffee: Students Learn about Microenterprise.

In January 2025, Senior Attorney Bebo Saab and Peer Advocate Scott Barron presented an updated microenterprise training to 20 students at La Sierra/La Vista High School in Fullerton, a program for transition-age youth with disabilities. To prepare students for the topic, everyone shared their hobbies, likes, and dislikes. A pair of students said they would like to start a dance club. The teacher shared the school has its own microenterprise, a coffee shop on campus where they deliver orders to fellow students and teachers. The students discussed what problems bother them and how to solve them. Using these two ideas, the students began to discuss how to create a business plan that includes their goals and strategies. Bebo and Scott discussed good business practices like being patient and cautious, not taking too much on at once, and being responsible and courageous. The students talked about how to avoid possible mistakes like not having a clear business plan and trying to do everything yourself. The students learned how the Department of Rehabilitation and regional centers can help them start a microenterprise. The students provided feedback and were engaged. After the training, the teacher invited OCRA to the coffee shop for a Spanish Latte, their number one selling coffee on campus.

REGIONAL CENTER – COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

Mark is On Track to Moving to the Right Place in the Community.

Mark called OCRA to help him with a confusing living situation. Mark received conflicting information from his group home administrator and the regional center on where he should be living. OCRA spoke with people on Mark's IPP team to help sort it out. OCRA learned what happened and helped explain it to Mark. Mark's landlord and the regional center had made a series of errors, which led to Mark moving into the wrong house. The regional center issued a Corrective Action Plan for the home to help Mark get to the right place. Following these discussions, Mark understood the steps needed to make sure he is living in the right place in the community.

Mary Returns Home.

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) contacted OCRA to help Mary. The skilled nursing facility where Mary was staying refused to discharge her back to her home. OCRA visited Mary multiple times. OCRA worked alongside the regional center to make sure Mary got medical equipment in place for her discharge. OCRA made sure the skilled nursing facility completed discharge planning and paperwork. After intervention from OCRA and the regional center, the facility cooperated with their discharge requirements and Mary returned home.

REGIONAL CENTER – ELIGIBILITY

Evan Gets Regional Center Eligibility.

Evan's sister contacted OCRA for help after the regional center denied him eligibility. Evan had been denied eligibility because, while the regional center agreed he has autism, they did not agree he is "substantially" disabled by it. Evan and his sister had already appealed the decision. The only supporting documents he had is the evaluation which had been completed by the regional center's own expert, a recent diagnosis of autism, and a past IEP from over ten years ago. OCRA reviewed these records and wrote a position statement that highlighted how the regional center's own evaluation showed Evan is substantially disabled in at least

three major life areas. OCRA represented Evan at the informal meeting. The day after the informal meeting, the regional center decided he is eligible for services. Evan is now on the way to developing his first IPP to get the services that he needs.

Jackson Gets Regional Center Services.

Jackson is a middle-aged adult who had cancer as a baby. His life-saving treatment resulted in a developmental disability. Jackson received special education services when he was in school for his disability. Jackson applied for regional center services several times as an adult and was denied because the regional center said he was not substantially disabled by a developmental disability. OCRA requested and reviewed Jackson's regional center file, including his regional center evaluation. OCRA also consulted with a licensed psychologist to review his records and provide their professional opinion about Jackson's eligibility. The consultant wrote a letter to the regional center stating that based on the regional center's own evaluation, Jackson should be found eligible. OCRA helped Jackson re-apply for regional center services with the consultant's letter. The regional center completed a new intake and decided Jackson is eligible for regional center services. He is now attending a day program and getting other services he needs to thrive.

REGIONAL CENTER – SERVICES

OCRA Eliminates Debt to Group Home, Restores P&I Money, and Helps Client Reapply for SSI.

Rachel's sister contacted OCRA because she was concerned that Rachel, who lives in a group home and receives Social Security benefits, was not receiving her personal and incidental (P&I) money. The group home also told Rachel she owed them money for room and board. After reviewing Social Security notices and regional center records, OCRA learned the regional center helped Rachel apply for SSI benefits in the past, but she was denied. OCRA reviewed her previous income and resources and determined she would not have been eligible for SSI when the regional center helped her apply. The regional center had set up her rental agreement with the group home under the assumption that she would get SSI. Because she was not getting SSI, she was accruing a debt. OCRA

went to an IPP meeting with the client and advocated for the regional center to cover all the past costs related to room, board, and her P&I money, because she was not eligible for SSI at the time they helped her apply. OCRA helped Rachel apply for SSI, since she is now eligible. Rachel and her sister were grateful that she no longer owes money to the group home and that she will get her P&I money to spend on small items. She will start getting SSI benefits soon.

Marisol Is on Track to Go to a Day Program.

Marisol and her mother called OCRA to help connect with the regional center to get Marisol into a day program. Marisol did not have a service coordinator assigned to her. Marisol's mother had called the regional center but had not received a call back for more than a month. OCRA contacted the regional center to ask for them to assign Marisol a service coordinator and hold an IPP meeting to discuss a day program. OCRA went to the IPP meeting with Marisol and her mother. At the IPP meeting, the regional center and Marisol agreed on a day program she would like to attend. Marisol is on track to make friends and learn new skills.

Jordana Keeps Her Speech and Occupational Therapy When Regional Center Grants Exemption in the Self-Determination Program.

Jordana is a minor child who got speech and occupational therapy services from the regional center when the services were not available anywhere else. This is often called a lack of generic services. The regional center paid for these services for over a year under the traditional service model. When Jordana's father wanted to go into the Self-Determination Program (SDP) model, their independent facilitator said Jordana could no longer get these therapies from the regional center. Jordana's parents called OCRA for help. OCRA reviewed Jordana's proposed spending plan and then contacted the regional center. The regional center said that SDP service definitions prevented them from funding Jordana's therapies. OCRA asked the regional center to fund the service outside of the SDP program to prevent Jordana from losing her therapies. The regional center agreed to provide an exemption. Jordana's family continued with their transition to the SDP program while Jordana kept her speech and occupational therapy services.

Justin Gets Food and Habitable Housing.

Justin called OCRA because he ran out of food benefits, had only one dollar left of SSI, and the rats in his temporary placement were eating through the only bread and peanut butter he had. He and his crisis support coordinator tried to reach the regional center and a vendor who recently did an assessment for independent living services, but no one called back. OCRA filed a complaint about the rats with the county health department and located food pantries within walking distance. Justin said he couldn't figure out how to get there himself because of his disability. His crisis support coordinator does not provide direct services, so could not take him. OCRA contacted the regional center, which said the independent living skills vendor decided not serve Justin. The regional center was trying to find a new home or another vendor. The next day, the regional center got food to Justin through a group home vendor that also took him in a few days later as a resident.

Larry Gets to Go to a New Day Program.

Larry lives with his parents and likes to go into the community and spend time with other people. Larry wanted to join a day program so he could spend time with other people, but he had a hard time finding a program with staff that could support his needs. He did not have a day program for 6 months. OCRA went to an IPP meeting with Larry to discuss his needs and desire for a day program. The regional center agreed to help him enter a new day program, and Larry started the following week. Larry has now started his new day program and is enjoying being back in the community spending time with other people.

Oliver Can Keep Swimming.

Oliver started swimming lessons in July 2023 to help increase his community integration and socialization. Before swimming lessons, Oliver was uncomfortable being in public or around anyone other than his parents. Oliver's parents recognized that he loved playing in the water and asked the regional center for social recreation funding to support daily swimming lessons to increase Oliver's socialization, provide exercise opportunities, and help him get vital skills to thrive in his community. Oliver's swimming lessons were approved. Because of his consistent practice, Oliver has

attended family gatherings without distress. Two years later, the regional center abruptly issued a Notice of Action terminating swimming lessons. The family appealed and contacted OCRA. OCRA represented Oliver in his appeal at the informal meeting and mediation with regional center. At mediation, the family eloquently described how beneficial these lessons have been for their son while OCRA legally rebutted each regional center excuse to terminate them. Ultimately, the regional center agreed to continue funding the swimming lessons. Oliver will keep swimming and becoming more comfortable in his community among his peers.

Mary Self-Advocates and Files Complaint Against Mistreatment.

Mary is a fierce, strong-willed self-advocate with cerebral palsy who receives supported living services through her regional center. She reported many times where her primary caretaker behaved in ways that were unprofessional, careless, and denied her right to be treated with dignity and respect. Mary's regional center said they knew about some conflict between Mary and her staff, but there were few providers in her area. Given Mary's intensive support needs, the regional center did not think it was possible to remove Mary's vendored supported living agency while still providing the essential services in her IPP. Mary didn't buy that. With OCRA's help, Mary submitted a complaint outlining the timeline and examples of mistreatment she experienced with a particular staff member. After several anxious weeks, the regional center confirmed the violations of Mary's rights outlined her complaint. They also ordered training for the supported living agency staff and confirmed changes in Mary's support schedule to reassign the problematic staff member. Mary is still working with her regional center and the agency to coordinate the staffing change. Her case demonstrates that people can use the law to stand up against mistreatment and advocate for their rights.

Kate will Attend the Camp of her Choice this Summer.

Kate is a teenager with autism enrolled in the Self-Determination Program. Kate's mother called OCRA asking for help after the regional center refused to fund Kate's choice of a social recreation camp. Kate was disappointed as she had been looking forward to attending that camp, which served clients from several regional centers. OCRA filed for a fair hearing, advocating for her right to take part in the camp and highlighting

her right to choose her camp as a self-determination enrollee. The regional center gave one reason in its notice, but a different reason at the informal meeting. After the informal meeting, the regional center gave a new reason in its letter. OCRA and Kate's family engaged in a mediation process with the regional center. After responding to several different arguments, OCRA and the regional center reached a favorable settlement. Kate now has the chance to go to the camp she chose.

Brittany Gets Dental Services Reimbursement From Regional Center.

Brittany is an adult with a medical condition that greatly affects her teeth. Brittany's parents contacted OCRA because the regional center would not pay for restoration treatment for her teeth. Brittany's disability caused her tooth enamel to weaken, which then caused her teeth to deteriorate. This led to Brittany getting a severe jaw infection. The regional center agreed to pay only for the removal of the deteriorated teeth and to put crowns on the remaining 2 teeth. Brittany's parents did not want Brittany to live with only 2 teeth. They decided instead to pay for the restoration treatment at a cost of \$25,000. The regional center first denied Brittany's parents' request for reimbursement. Brittany's parents then filed for a fair hearing. OCRA agreed to represent Brittany throughout the hearing process. After 4 hours of mediation, Brittany and the regional center, with OCRA's help, reached an agreement. The regional center agreed to reimburse Brittany's parents \$15,000 of the total \$25,000 they paid for Brittany's dental services. Brittany's parents were satisfied with this resolution because it guaranteed some reimbursement, saved them time and stress of a fair hearing, and allowed them to focus on Brittany's ongoing health needs. Brittany has had no more infections in her mouth and has used her restored teeth to eat and drink without issue.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Lily Gets Advice About Feeding Help Through the IEP Process.

Lily's parents contacted OCRA for help with getting their daughter fed at school. Lily has cerebral palsy. The school said they would no longer feed Lily at school but invited her parents to come to school and feed her themselves. Lily's parents questioned if the school could refuse to feed Lily when her IEP already included feeding support. OCRA reviewed Lily's IEP

and discovered it included no feeding instructions. The parents sent several documents to show that Lily needed feeding support. In those materials, OCRA found a doctor's note stating that Lily needs help with feeding due to her disability. OCRA recommended that her parents ask for an IEP meeting and an amendment that includes the doctor's note and detailed feeding instructions. OCRA explained that once the IEP includes feeding support, the school must follow it. OCRA also gave the parents information on how to file a compliance complaint with the California Department of Education if the school fails to follow the IEP.

Travis Gets Supports at New School after IEP Meeting.

Travis' mother contacted OCRA because he had not gone to school for several months due to emotional trauma from bullying. OCRA attended a two-part IEP meeting which led to the school district offering a new school for Travis to attend. During the meeting, OCRA spoke directly in Spanish with Travis' mother to fully explain the school district's offerings and options. The district also agreed to provide bus transportation, a new service, to Travis. OCRA also got the school to authorize two socio-emotional and behavioral evaluations to determine what other support Travis can benefit from. Travis is now on his way to returning to school and receiving the education he is entitled to.

Kramer Successfully Attends a Full Day of School.

Kramer was struggling with behavioral challenges that interfered with his education. His school district responded by putting him on a shortened day schedule. Kramer's mother contacted OCRA because the school district was denying her request for support services for Kramer, so he could go to a full day of school. The school district kept calling Kramer's mother to pick him up early, which prevented her from keeping her job. OCRA attended Kramer's IEP meeting and advocated for a 1:1 aide, behavioral services, and the creation of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) for Kramer. The school district agreed to the BIP, 1:1 aide, and behavioral services. Kramer can now go to school for the full day, including after-school care, and his mother has gone back to work full-time. Kramer's behaviors have gone down and now he is making strides in his academics and social interactions.

Red Gets a Better School Placement with Transportation Services.

Red was struggling at school and had challenging behaviors such as running away and being physically aggressive. Instead of providing supports to properly address Red's behaviors, the school was making Red's mother go to class with him. For over 2 months, Red's mother took him to class, acted as his aide, and tried to integrate him into his class. Despite mother's attempts, Red was failing. OCRA represented Red at 2 IEP meetings. The school district finally agreed to move Red to a new school that could better meet his needs. They also agreed to provide Red with transportation to the new school. The school district has also agreed to complete an Independent Educational Evaluation for a Functional Behavior Assessment. Since changing schools, Red has been thriving in his new class. Red loves his new school and no longer has the same behavioral challenges.

OCRA Helps Student Receive Specialized Educational Supports.

Francisco's mother asked for 1:1 support from the school district and received a written denial letter. Francisco's mother contacted OCRA for help in getting 1:1 support in the classroom. Francisco's mother also wanted the school district to provide a lift in the classroom and train the staff. OCRA represented Francisco at 3 IEP team meetings. The school district agreed to give Francisco 1:1 support. OCRA identified several more areas where Francisco needed help to access his education. After the 3 meetings, the school district agreed to give Francisco Augmentative and Alternative Communication, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, Adapted physical education, and nursing services. They also agreed to provide 60 minutes per month of vision services. The school district also confirmed there is a lift in the classroom and all staff will be trained in how to use it.

Guillermo Returns to School.

Guillermo was the target of bullying at school. He was also accused of distributing drugs and was suspended from school. He refused to return to school because of the bullying. OCRA represented Guillermo at an IEP meeting. OCRA advocated for a modified schedule, more related services, and behavior assessments to address his educational needs. OCRA also

got the school to admit that Guillermo had a first aid kit, not illegal drugs, and that another student took ibuprofen out of his first aid kit when Guillermo told him not to. Guillermo returned to school with a modified schedule, will have a behavioral assessment, and will go to summer school.

Katie is Empowered at Her IEP Meeting and Gets to Try Online Classes.

Katie's mother contacted OCRA to help Katie to go back to school. Katie refused to step into her classroom. Since Katie is almost 18, OCRA spoke with her about what she wanted. OCRA represented Katie at an IEP meeting to help her say what she wanted from her education. During the meeting, Katie and her mother disagreed with the next steps. Katie's mother wanted her to go to school in person with placement in a special day class, while Katie strongly preferred to try online classes. The IEP team and Katie's mother discussed placement. Katie participated in the conversation and repeatedly expressed her desire to attend online classes. OCRA spoke with Katie's mother and explained the online classes option. OCRA also explained that the team could revisit the issue if online learning did not work, or if any other changes had to be made. Katie's mother ultimately agreed she should try out the online classes. Katie is now empowered to advocate for herself and be a contributing member at her IEP meetings.