

June Outreach Newsletter 2017



39TH ANNUAL CHINESE NEW YEAR IN SAN JOAQUIN

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Photo Cover: Raymond Kwong, Leilani Pfeifer, Stockton Mayor Michael Tubbs, Leinani Walters and Christine Hager from Disability Rights California

Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy

Year of the Rooster, 39th Annual Chinese New Year in San Joaquin



Disability Rights California staff provided information and resources about benefits, education, and regional center services to families and community members who attended the 39th Annual Chinese New Year in San Joaquin on March 5, 2017. The event was attended by over 300 participants from the Asian Pacific Islander and other diverse communities, who enjoyed the live performances, children's activities, food and exhibitors. Clients' Rights Advocate, Leinani Walters and Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate, Christine Hager from the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy along with DRC's Statewide Multicultural Affairs Coordinator, Leilani Pfeifer, and Multicultural Affairs Advocate for San Diego, Raymond Kwong shared information with attendees, including the Mayor of Stockton, Michael Tubbs. All materials were provided in Chinese and English.



Educating Parents About Their Rights to Information in Their Native Language

Disability Rights California attorney Elyse Dayrit, and Multicultural Affairs Advocate Lisa Navarro, Clients' Rights Advocates Eva Casas-Sarmiento, Marsha Johnson and Assistant Clients' Rights Advocate Cynthia Solomon-Ponce, conducted a language access training on November 19, 2016 to the Japanese Speaking Parents Association of Children with Challenges (JSPACC) in Los Angeles. The training provided parents with resources and information about agencies that could assist their children with disabilities.



DRC staff empowered and educated the parents to be more active participants at Regional Center stakeholder meetings to address service disparities. Another topic covered during the training included the rights of families to receive important documents, such as the Individual Program Plan (IPP), and Notices of Action (NOA), in the family's native language. DRC also provided information about a person's right to file a complaint with regional centers and DDS if the agencies were not complying with the law or providing the services agreed to in the IPP. Participants expressed appreciation for the information regarding their rights and left with information about how to contact DRC if they need individualized assistance.

A Day Dedicated to Vietnamese Regional Center Consumers and Their Families

On April 1, 2017, the Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy (OCRA) attended the Vietnamese Community Fair in San Jose. OCRA staff met with consumers and families and distributed Vietnamese and English informational publications. The Fair, hosted by San Andreas Regional Center (SARC), took place at the Mayfair Community Center and was bubbling with conversation, games, and food.



The Fair included breakout groups and presentations from State Senator Jim Beall and SARC staff, as well as an entertaining marriage and family therapist who had everyone laughing and batting a beach ball throughout the crowd. Shannon Cogan, Clients' Rights Advocate, introduced herself and OCRA's services to dozens of Fair participants. Many people took OCRA brochures for future reference.

Consumers Living at Sonoma Developmental Center Learn about Community Placement Options

Stephen Zollman, Clients' Rights Advocate, serving consumers who live in restrictive settings in northern California. In addition to direct advocacy work, Stephen provides trainings to consumers living in developmental centers. Stephen and another Clients' Rights Advocate, Pilar Gonzalez, presented "Where to Live" a self-advocacy training on June 7, 2016 at Sunrise day program on-site at Sonoma Developmental Center. Stephen and Pilar presented options on the different living arrangements in the community that consumers can choose from as they prepare to leave the developmental center. As part of the training, consumers described their plans to move into a community placement of their own choice. Consumers left the training with a greater understanding of their options to live in more integrated living settings.

Just a few weeks after the training at Sunrise, Stephen conducted another "Where to Live" self-advocacy training. Consumers' faces lit up as they

listened to their community living options. In order to continue building relationships and spreading the word about community living options.

Voting

Red, White, Voting Rights and You

On Saturday, June 25, 2016, Office of Clients' Rights Advocacy staff Scott Barron and Disability Rights California's Voting Rights Advocate, Gabriel Taylor, trained and prepared a Chinese youth group for the upcoming presidential election in November. The Chinese SAGE group is a self-advocacy group of young adult Chinese regional center



consumers from the Los Angeles area. Fifteen young people were in attendance and the members were eager to learn about the election and voting rights. Because of the received grant they were able to hire a facilitator who is fluent in both English and Chinese and who is not a parent so they can have greater autonomy in their choice to vote.

The Vice President of Chinese SAGE and author of the grant wrote the following statement: "We have spent time getting to know each other, attending trainings, and social events. We think it is important for Chinese SAGE members to become citizens in our community. Our project idea is to help train Chinese SAGE members to vote." Many of the members did not know what it means to vote and DRC was there to provide them with that information. As a result, additional trainings will be scheduled in the future - one for SAGE members and another to discuss voting experiences. OCRA looks forward to building this ongoing relationship with Chinese SAGE and helping them become stronger self-advocates.

Work Incentives

Students Learn about Social Security at Survive or Thrive Support Group Workshop

On December 17, 2016, the support group Survive or Thrive held its 10th workshop in Los Angeles. Raymond Kwong, Multicultural Affairs Advocate in the San Diego Regional office, along with Jerri Ward, Advocate in the Los Angeles Regional office provided a training on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to the workshop participants.



Survive or Thrive is an experience-based, support group founded by and for individuals with disabilities. The purpose of the group is to guide youths with disabilities and their parents through the transition from high school to higher education and employment, and in developing independent living skills. The group hosts two workshops during the year, each workshop provides participants with information on a variety of topics. Survive or Thrive also provides a mentoring program for students. The mentoring program keeps students on track with their desired goals.

Merced Hmong New Year Celebration 2016-2017

The Hmong community of Merced held its annual Hmong New Year celebration on December 16 –18, 2016. DRC's Multicultural Affairs Advocate staff Mai Chee Lor, attended the event which brought hundreds of Hmong community members from all over the Central Valley together to send off the old year and welcome the New Year with blessings and good luck. People dressed in traditional Hmong clothes enjoyed the food and festivities, including traditional Hmong singing and dancing. Mai Chee was on hand to provide information in Hmong to these families and informed participants about DRC and passed out materials about benefits, education, and employment rights at the event.



DRC Leads the Employment Forum in Fresno at Deaf and Hard of Hearing Legal Clinic



DRC Multicultural Affairs Advocate Callie Frye presented to the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Service Center, Inc. (DHHSC) in Fresno to share information about DRC services, including the Client Assistance Program (CAP). The staff at the Center let her know that the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) was not providing effective services to some Deaf clients and asked for legal rights training.

As a result of the initial outreach provided by Callie, DRC presented an employment-focused day-long forum on March 11, 2017 to Deaf clients. DRC's Outreach Unit including Supervising Attorney Tho Vinh Banh, Statewide Coordinator Leilani Pfeifer, and Multicultural Affairs Advocates Callie Frye, Raymond Kwong, Jesse Vella, and Mai Chee Lor, in collaboration with Supervising Attorney Sarah Isaacs, Senior Advocate Michael Thomas and Advocates Lisa Navarro and Ivan Guillen attended and coordinated the event. Michael Thomas, Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) Advocate, provided two workshops, one on how work affects Social Security benefits, and the other on the DOR eligibility process. Throughout the training, DRC conducted intakes for those in attendance who wanted to speak to an attorney individually about their legal issues. DRC staff gathered over 15 intakes that day.





Also near the end of employment forum, DHHSC held a town hall forum that allowed Deaf individuals to share their experiences related to DOR services. It was streamed live on Facebook and received a over 500+ views! The event was a success and the Deaf community members in attendance appreciated the trainings and assistance they received from DRC. Following the training DRC

advocacy staff contacted DOR about the concerns and scheduled a meeting to resolve client issues.

Benefits/Community Integration



Project Homeless Connect East County

Disability Rights California (DRC) staff Yi Jen Lee, participated at the Project Homeless Connect East County on October 13, 2016 at Antioch County Fairgrounds in Antioch. About 300 homeless individuals came to seek services from various organizations providing health and wellness checks, dental care, legal services and housing. About 50 participants stopped by the DRC booth to pick up materials on

benefits, employment, and housing. Materials distributed included: Employment Rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Employment Supports/Work Incentive Programs under Title XVI-SSI, Reasonable Accommodations under Section 8, and SSI& SSDI at a Glance. DRC also provided participants with brochures in English and in other languages.

Claude Battaglia, Independent Living Specialist from Independent Living Resources of Solano and Contra Costa Counties, expressed his appreciation for the good work that DRC has done, both for him and for the community.

Mental Health

Training on the Rights of Deaf Individuals in Correctional Settings to Bay Area Deaf Advocates

Aracelia Aguilar, Empowerment Director of DeafHope, reached out to Callie Frye, Multicultural Affairs Advocate for individuals with Sensory Disability from the San Diego Regional Office about a training on the rights of Deaf individuals in correctional settings, an issue they see often in the Deaf community. Callie Frye contacted Anne Hadreas, Supervising Attorney and Aaron Fischer, Senior Counsel, both from the Mental Health Practice group, to provide a training to Deaf advocates on this topic.

On September 27, 2016, both attorneys presented about the rights of Deaf individuals in detention settings and explained federal laws that protect Deaf inmates. The attorney trainers highlighted the rights of



Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in different situations and settings, including during interactions with police, while being held in prisons and jails, while on parole and probation, and during court proceedings. They emphasized that equal access for Deaf people in prisons and jails means being able to participate in all programs, services, and activities.

The training was well received and there was a full discussion of traumatic experiences in the context of individual legal rights. The attorneys were invited to provide additional training for Deaf advocates.

Youth



Parents Learn about Their Children's Educational Rights at Tri-Cities Head Start in Cudahy

Disability Specialist, Nancy Uribe, who coordinates monthly parent group trainings, reached out to DRC for a Special Education training in Spanish for her families. On December 13, 2016

Lisa Navarro, Multicultural Affairs Advocate, and Mayra Arreguin, Bilingual Legal Secretary, presented the information to parents who have children between the ages of 3-5. Parents were not aware of resources for their children with disabilities and appreciated information about such services.

The parents also learned about the Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the training and had many questions about the process, including what services they could ask for and what their rights were to request an assessment from the school district. DRC staff let the parents know about their rights and encouraged them to contact DRC to get individual assistance.



Peer Self-Advocacy Program

DRC Attends Empowering Black Families and Resiliency, Restoration and Reconnection Conference



Peer Self Advocacy Program staff celebrated Black History Month with the African-American - Diaspora Mental Health Community. On February 9, 2017, the event "Empowering Black Families & Community Through Resiliency, Restoration and

Reconnection Conference” was hosted by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Peer Self-Advocacy Coordinator Leslie Napper, in collaboration with Short-term Assistance Advocate Suzi Bernais, staffed a resource table to provide information and resources about Disability Rights California’s (DRC) services which included services offered by our Peer Self-Advocacy Unit (PSA). There were over 50 vendors from other health-related organizations, as well as those offering goods and services to the conferences’ 1000 participants. DRC was approached by a few hundred people throughout the day asking questions about our services, mostly pertaining to special accommodations in housing, work, and education. Psychiatric service and emotional support animals were also hot topics.

Attendees included people who have received mental health services, as well as providers in the mental health system from throughout southern California. All who approached our table were happy to receive the resources we provided and were interested in learning more about DRC and PSA.