

Advocacy Report - July 2022 through December 2022

All names have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

These stories show OCRA's range of services to clients. In some cases, OCRA provides advice and advocacy tools for clients to help themselves. In others, OCRA provides legal advocacy and represents clients directly at a meeting or hearing. These stories show both "lay" and "legal" advocacy.

BENEFITS – IHSS

Lily's IHSS Hours Are Restored After Hearing.

Lily's mother contacted OCRA after the county terminated Lily's IHSS protective supervision hours. Lily, now 15 years old, had been receiving protective supervision for 7 years before the county decided she was no longer eligible. Lily's mother said Lily still needed protective supervision to remain safely in her home. Lily's mother wanted to appeal, but found the process daunting, especially since her primary language is Spanish. OCRA gathered and reviewed documents about Lily from many sources. OCRA agreed to provide representation at the administrative hearing. Representation was important because this particular county terminates regional center clients' protective supervision more than other counties. The hearing took place over 3 days. After the hearing, the administrative law judge wrote a decision in favor of Lily. The judge ordered the county to continue funding Lily's 195 hours of IHSS protective supervision per month.

Corey Remains Safely at Home with Protective Supervision.

Corey received 100 hours of IHSS per month with no protective supervision services. As Corey got older, his mother noticed he required more help to keep him safe from injury. Without constant supervision, Corey would ingest raw meats, climb on furniture, and run out the door. Corey's mother requested protective supervision from IHSS, but the county told her many times he did not need that level of service. OCRA helped Corey's mother through the IHSS appeal process. OCRA reviewed Corey's SOC 821 protective supervision form and timely appealed the notice of action. OCRA explained how to negotiate a conditional withdrawal with the county appeals worker to get a reassessment. OCRA represented Corey

at his reassessment. Afterward, Corey received the maximum 283 IHSS hours per month.

BENEFITS – MEDI-CAL

OCRA Settles Case Before Hearing and Gets No Share-of-Cost Medi-Cal for Client.

Ramon was eligible for Medi-Cal, but only with a share of cost. This was a burden to Ramon's family, and he could not continue seeing some of his healthcare specialists. OCRA evaluated Ramon's case and found that he qualified for a different Medi-Cal program without a share of cost. OCRA helped Ramon's family request eligibility for that Medi-Cal program. The county said they could not make a decision about his request, because the COVID-19 emergency meant they could not make adverse decisions for people on Medi-Cal. OCRA contacted Medi-Cal to explain that putting Ramon into a free Medi-Cal program would not be an "adverse decision." Instead, it would be a beneficial decision, which they were allowed to make. The county did not respond, so OCRA filed for hearing on Ramon's behalf. OCRA negotiated with the county appeals specialist. The county agreed to put Ramon into a no share-of-cost Medi-Cal program without going to hearing. Ramon's family can now afford his healthcare services and he can continue seeing his healthcare specialists.

Isabella Obtains No-Cost Health Coverage Through Plan-To-Plan Partnership.

Isabella's mother contacted OCRA for help with her high-cost private insurance copayments. Isabella has Kaiser Permanente private insurance through her parent's employer and Alameda Alliance for Health as her Medi-Cal managed care plan. Isabella has \$100 to \$200 in copays each month from medical appointments and medication costs not covered under her Kaiser private insurance. Isabella's parent was not receiving help from the other parent to equally cover health care costs. It was becoming too difficult to pay these high healthcare costs every month. OCRA contacted Alameda Alliance for Health and requested that they enroll Isabella with their Plan-to-Plan partner, Kaiser Permanente, for her Medi-Cal coverage as well. Kaiser accepted Isabella as a Medi-Cal beneficiary and will now administer both the private insurance and Medi-Cal coverage. This coordination of care will eliminate additional costs for Isabella's healthcare needs.

BENEFITS – MEDICARE

Janine Gets Back Her Medicare.

Janine contacted OCRA because Social Security stopped her disability benefits, saying she could work. In reviewing her concerns, OCRA noticed that Janine left herself little time to appeal by the deadline to receive continued Medicare benefits, which she needed for doctor's appointments and medications. Janine could reach no one at Social Security by phone. She could not drive, and her mother was not available. OCRA drove back and forth to Janine's home to pick up the Social Security notice, complete the correct appeal form, get her signature, and fax the form to Social Security a few hours before the midnight deadline. Janine later called OCRA, saying her Medicare had stopped. OCRA faxed a letter to Social Security and called to explain why Janine's Medicare should continue based on her timely appeal. Social Security agreed to restart Janine's Medicare back to when it wrongly ended.

BENEFITS – SSDI

OCRA Intervenes to Get Benefits and Remove \$41,000 Overpayment.

Samuel works as a janitor at a school. He gets job coaching for all work hours through a supported employment agency. Samuel contacted OCRA because his SSDI benefits stopped, and he had a \$41,000 overpayment. Social Security had reviewed Samuel's case and decided he was no longer disabled. They issued an overpayment notice saying Samuel had been overpaid SSDI benefits for many years. Samuel's representative payee filed an appeal, but did not know what to do when Social Security asked for more information about Samuel's supported employment services. OCRA contacted Samuel's supported employment agency and reviewed his pay information. OCRA learned Samuel had a work subsidy because of all the support he gets on the job. Samuel also received a large disbursement from a health and welfare savings account from his employer, which Social Security incorrectly counted as income. They should have considered that money to be unearned income, which typically does not count for people on SSDI. OCRA provided the work subsidy and unearned income information to Social Security. Social Security reinstated Samuel's monthly SSDI benefits, and the \$41,000 overpayment was removed.

Jeremy Gets Social Security Backpay and No Longer Owes an Overpayment.

Social Security stopped Jeremy's SSDI benefits and owed an overpayment of \$57,353. Jeremy did not get his benefits for over a year and was at risk of losing his housing. OCRA helped Jeremy file a request for reconsideration appeal. After gathering Jeremy's evidence, OCRA wrote a letter to Social Security asking that it correct its calculations, remove Jeremy's overpayment, reinstate his benefits, and award backpay. OCRA supplied evidence showing that Jeremy did not earn substantial gainful activity because he had job supports. Social Security escalated the matter and agreed they made a mistake. A few months later, Jeremy had his benefits reinstated, his \$57,535 overpayment removed, and got \$11,507 in backpay.

Victoria Gets \$18,571 SSDI Benefits Back from Social Security.

Victoria and her father called OCRA for help communicating with Social Security. For months, Victoria's father tried to get Social Security to correct a mistake and return a \$18,571 payment to Victoria. OCRA previously helped Victoria apply for SSDI and get a \$47,172 back-payment. Victoria's representative payee accidentally gave part of Victoria's underpayment (\$18,571) back to Social Security instead of giving it to Victoria and her father to put into a special needs trust. Victoria's father went around in circles communicating with Social Security representatives, who claimed they had no record of where that money could be. OCRA called three field offices with Victoria's father to discuss the issue, find out where the money was, and advocate for its return. Finally, Social Security agreed to work with their payment center and reissue the back-payment. When Social Security returned the \$18,571 back-payment, Victoria's father put it into a special needs trust for Victoria's future to be more secure.

BENEFITS – SSI

David Is No Longer Considered Dead with Help from OCRA.

David contacted OCRA for help after Social Security mistakenly declared he was dead, mixing him up with his deceased twin. Believing David was no longer living, Social Security stopped his benefits and said David owed them an overpayment of \$92,370. OCRA opened a case to ask the California Department of Public Health to issue amended records. OCRA also contacted David's local congressperson's office about these concerns. OCRA worked with the local congressional office to resolve

David's issues and help David complete necessary forms. After several months of back-and-forth, Social Security corrected the record and recognized that David is alive. They removed the \$92,370 overpayment and reinstated his monthly SSI benefits.

Judge Finds Sam is Not Liable for an SSI Overpayment.

Sam's father contacted OCRA when Sam was due to go to hearing. Social Security said Sam owed them nearly \$22,000 of SSI payments he already received. Social Security said the overpayment happened because of a joint account Sam held with his father. Even after an informal conference to show Sam did not have that money, Social Security did not remove the overpayment. OCRA interviewed Sam and his father, reviewed financial statements, and interviewed witnesses. OCRA also researched the law, gathered new evidence, drafted declarations, wrote a brief with supporting exhibits, and prepared Sam and his father for his hearing. During the hearing, OCRA explained to the judge why Sam is not legally responsible for the overpayment. The judge agreed, and less than a month later, issued a favorable decision finding Sam does not have to pay back the overpayment.

Jade Gets Her SSI Back Plus a \$13,782 SSI Payment.

In 2020, Social Security stopped Jade's SSI benefits because she received COVID-19 unemployment benefits. However, in 2021, Social Security changed their policy to exclude COVID-19 unemployment benefits from its eligibility calculations. Jade contacted Social Security and they said they will reinstate her SSI and send Jade a retroactive payment for the months she should have received SSI benefits. Jade waited patiently for 9 months, but Social Security had done nothing. Due to the delay, Jade went into debt and was about to lose her housing. Jade called OCRA, which took on her case. OCRA called Social Security to explain Jade's precarious situation and request immediate reinstatement. Two weeks after OCRA made this request, Social Security reinstated Jade's benefits and sent her a retroactive payment of \$13,782. With this payment, Jade paid off her debts and was able to stay in her home.

Sebastian Avoids a \$3,000 Overpayment and Gets \$10,000 Back-pay.

Sebastian's mother contacted OCRA because Social Security sent her a notice saying he was not eligible for SSI benefits going back several months. They claimed the family was over the \$5,000 resource limit for 2 parents with a child on SSI. OCRA reviewed the notice and timely

appealed on Sebastian's behalf. In that appeal, OCRA explained that some of the bank account balance was a large tax refund, which does not count as a resource for 9 months. OCRA also explained that some of the bank account balance included COVID-19-related economic impact payments, which do not count as a resource. OCRA also explained that the family no longer has their second car, so it should not count as a resource. Several months later, Social Security sent a notice reversing their decision and paying Sebastian back for all the months of benefits he missed.

Yvonne Gets \$27,500 of SSI Back-pay.

Social Security stopped Yvonne's benefits for over a year due to an overpayment. OCRA investigated and found that Social Security did not give a notice for the overpayment. OCRA called Social Security and discovered there was no overpayment on record. Instead, their payment center made an error. OCRA asked them to reinstate Yvonne's benefits. Social Security escalated the matter by directing the payment center to pay Yvonne's benefits again. The next month, Social Security paid Yvonne's SSI benefits and issued a \$27,500 back-payment for all the months she should have been getting her SSI.

David is Granted SSI Eligibility After Age-18 Redetermination.

David had been eligible for SSI during his childhood. His mother originally contacted OCRA for help reviewing forms she received from the agency that handles Social Security's disability determinations. When the agency said David was not disabled under the adult rules for SSI, OCRA agreed to help David with several issues related to his disability redetermination. OCRA reviewed, translated, and filled out forms and documents. OCRA also contacted the agency on David's behalf and submitted records for his disability hearing when they said he did not have a disability now that he was 18. OCRA helped David and his mother prepare for the disability hearing. After his hearing, David received a favorable eligibility decision and will keep his SSI as an adult.

HOUSING

Janet Can Keep Her Emotional Support Animal.

Janet has an emotional support animal she loves. Janet's mother was concerned with keeping a pet in the home after receiving a notice from their apartment complex saying no pets allowed. Janet's mother contacted

OCRA for help. Janet had grown to love her pet and was more at ease around the animal. Janet's mother wanted to help Janet keep her animal. OCRA helped Janet's mother draft a reasonable accommodation request, saying that legally, the animal was an accommodation and not a pet. Janet's mother sent the accommodation letter to the building manager and the request was approved. Janet can now have her emotional support animal at home to feel safe and supported.

OUTREACH AND TRAINING

Advocates Learn the Importance of Storytelling to the Disability Rights Movement.

Individual stories can be the spark for change. In September 2022, members of the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network gathered to learn how stories can help the disability rights movement. Outreach Supervising Attorney Ibrahim Saab and Peer Advocate Scott Barron used news footage and interviews to show how stories helped convince lawmakers to pass landmark disability rights laws like Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Lanterman Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Participants watched news coverage of the 26-day sit-in at the federal building in San Francisco, where people demanded 504 be signed into law. The training included interviews with family members who lobbied legislators for community-based services instead of institutions for their loved ones. Presenters included an interview with Justin Dart, the "Father of the ADA," who gathered testimony from people with disabilities to justify the need for a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. The training also included an interview with activist Jennifer Keelan who crawled up the Capitol steps to highlight the inaccessibility of buildings. Attendees learned that the protection and advocacy system was created after Geraldo Rivera's undercover investigation into the abuse and neglect of people with developmental disabilities at Willowbrook State Hospital in New York. They watched clips from Geraldo's report to see the severe neglect. Participants learned they can share their own story when requesting services from the regional center, their doctor, and service providers. Scott shared his personal experiences with discrimination. He provided tips on how to use self-advocacy tools in these difficult situations. The audience enjoyed learning from each other.

PERSONAL AUTONOMY

Max Retains Right to Social Visits in a Community Placement.

Max lives in a restrictive group home community placement. The staff who worked at Max's home wanted to restrict his ability to have visitors, both social and romantic, at his home to protect his safety. OCRA worked with the group home and the regional center to develop a plan for visits that would let Max exercise his right to having guests visit him while also getting crucial support for his safety. Since this arrangement, Max has successfully gone on dates and is nurturing his social relationships while he is in the community.

Jacinta Gets Help with Medical Decisions.

Jacinta needed help making medical decisions. In a past emergency, Jacinta feared consenting to needed health treatments and relied on her family to help her understand what she needed. To avoid similar situations, Jacinta's family wanted to support her without pursuing a conservatorship, but they didn't know exactly how. OCRA visited Jacinta and her family in their home. OCRA helped Jacinta complete an advance healthcare directive, including appointing a trusted family member as a healthcare agent. Now, Jacinta will have the help she needs to make informed medical decisions.

Eliza is Empowered to Make Her Own Decisions.

Eliza is turning 18 soon. She is worried about what it means to be an adult. She is used to her family making decisions for her, and she thought she needed a conservatorship. Her family did not want to conserve her. She wanted to learn more about how her family can help her make important decisions. OCRA met with Eliza and her father to talk about alternatives to conservatorship. OCRA explained that Eliza has the right to make her own decisions and why that is important. OCRA empowered Eliza by explaining how she can use her circle of support to help her. Eliza now feels more comfortable turning 18 and directing her own life.

REGIONAL CENTER – COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

Freddy Walks His Path from Porterville Developmental Center to the Community.

Freddy, a man with a mild intellectual disability, entered Porterville Developmental Center (PDC) in 2014 through the usual route. Freddy was

accused of crimes, declared incompetent to stand trial, and did 2 years of competency training. After those 2 years, he had to stay at PDC under a civil commitment for people with developmental disabilities. In 2019, the search for community placement began. Unfortunately for Freddy, and for many other people at PDC, community providers did not accept Freddy straight from PDC. The stigma of incorrectly associating PDC with jail has prevented many otherwise stable people from living in their least restrictive placement. Fortunately for Freddy, with help from OCRA, he convinced his team to suggest a transfer to the much less restrictive Canyon Springs Community Facility. At Canyon Springs, Freddy got the chance to prove every day he was ready to live in the community. He worked on the coveted landscaping team and enjoyed daily community outings. These were privileges he did not have at PDC. Soon enough, providers saw him with different eyes. Freddy now lives in a community care group home. He enjoys fishing, hiking, and all things related to outdoor, country living.

Sierra Comes Home from an Out-of-State Placement.

Sierra had to move out of California to go to a residential treatment center for school. After experiencing a crisis, the out-of-state residential treatment center admitted her to a psychiatric hospital. Sierra and her family wanted her to return to California. Sierra's family requested that the regional center start the 4418.7 process. This meant the Regional Project would assess Sierra to see what community services and supports can meet her needs. The regional center did not respond to the family's request. OCRA stepped in and advocated for the regional center to refer Sierra for the 4418.7 assessment so she can leave the out-of-state psychiatric hospital and receive services and supports closer to home. The regional center finally started the 4418.7 process. Sierra returned to California and settled into her new home. She is excited to see her family for the first time in many months.

Tim Blossoms in His Group Home.

Tim, an adult in his late 20s, had not left his home in several years. He was not getting any medical care. Tim lived with his parents, who were not sure how to support him. Tim engaged in daily violence, self-harm, and property destruction. The regional center had offered placements, but Tim's parents, who were also his conservators, had always been reluctant to have Tim live outside of their home. Tim didn't know what to expect, since he had always lived at home. The family agreed to have crisis services in their home. The crisis services agency referred the family to

OCRA. Over many months, as OCRA and the family worked together on legal and advocacy issues not related to the crisis, OCRA also gently advocated with Tim and his parents for a new living situation. With OCRA's support and advocacy, the regional center completed an assessment and offered Tim a spot in a brand-new Community Crisis Home. As the time for the move drew closer, Tim's parents grew hesitant about this big change. The regional center asked OCRA to step in again and speak with the family. OCRA did and Tim moved into his new home, where he is doing well. He is getting treatment for his mental health disability and has medication which helps him feel better. Tim has engaged in little violence, self-harm, or property destruction since the move. He gets out into the community every day, after years of not leaving his home. Tim enjoys browsing in stores, getting food at a drive-through, and going to parks and lakes. On a recent outing, Tim and his staff came across a fire truck. Tim engaged with the firefighters, who showed him around the truck and let him sit in the driver's seat.

REGIONAL CENTER – ELIGIBILITY

Sierra Remains Eligible for Regional Center Services.

Sierra has received intense services from her school, insurance, and the regional center for years. She made steady progress in developing her skills and displayed some success in the general education classroom. Her eligibility for regional center services came under scrutiny. OCRA reviewed Sierra's records and asked an independent psychologist to complete a psychological assessment to determine needs and recommend whether Sierra continued to meet regional center eligibility requirements. Sierra's mother submitted the updated comprehensive assessment to the regional center for review. As a result, Sierra will remain eligible for regional center services.

George Gains Provisional Eligibility for Regional Center.

George had Early Start services through the regional center for delays caused by his autism. When George turned 3, the regional center said George was not eligible for services after age 3, without considering provisional eligibility. George's family filed a request for fair hearing and asked OCRA for help. OCRA negotiated with regional center to have George evaluated for provisional eligibility. The regional center agreed to review George's case and George became provisionally eligible for regional center services.

Rose is Eligible for Regional Center Services After Many Denials.

Rose received early intervention services from the regional center until she turned 3. Rose was now a teenager, and her mother applied for regional center services for her. She applied several times; each time being denied. Rose and her family moved to a different regional center catchment area and contacted OCRA for help. OCRA represented Rose in her application for eligibility. OCRA collected and submitted more records. OCRA asked the regional center to evaluate Rose within 60 days for her health and safety. When OCRA asked the regional center for an update at the 30-day mark, the regional center reported they lost Rose's application. The regional center did not complete the process within 60 days, or the 120 days required by law if there are no health and safety concerns. OCRA continued to follow up with the regional center and advocated for Rose's rights. The regional center re-evaluated Rose and found Rose eligible for services. OCRA helped Rose and her family prepare for her first IPP meeting.

REGIONAL CENTER – SERVICES

Julie Gets an Increase of Respite Hours.

Julie's mother asked the regional center for an increase of respite hours, but they denied it. She appealed, and during the informal meeting, the regional center again denied the increase in respite. Julie's mother contacted OCRA for advice to prepare for mediation and hearing. During mediation, she used OCRA's advice, but the regional center did not agree to the increase and instead opted to move ahead with a hearing. Two days later, the regional center called Julie's mother and they both agreed to an increase of 12 more respite hours without going to hearing.

John Gets Supported Living in His Self-Determination Program Budget.

John spent more than a year trying to get the regional center to approve supported living services and include the services in his Self-Determination Program budget. OCRA agreed to contact the regional center on John's behalf and advocate for forward movement getting his budget developed. The regional center then coordinated an emergency meeting with John and his family and committed to finally complete the budget. The regional center approved 16 hours of supported living services a week, which was incorporated into the budget. John and his family are now happy he will get the services he needs through self-determination. NLA

Charlie Gets a Transfer and Some Regional Center Services.

Charlie's mother contacted OCRA for help getting specific services to help Charlie live independently and to transfer Charlie's case to a new regional center. The transfer process had stalled. OCRA spoke with Charlie and his mother about services regional center can provide. OCRA provided direct representation at an IPP meeting. OCRA helped to move the case transfer forward and requested new housing. Following the IPP meeting, Charlie started receiving supported living services and is now living in a new house.

Marcos Is on Track to Enroll in the Self-Determination Program.

Marcos's mother contacted OCRA for help enrolling in the Self-Determination Program. They had started the process but heard nothing back from the regional center in over a year. OCRA went to an IPP meeting with Marcos and his mother. After the meeting, Marcos's mother and service coordinator developed a plan to enroll Marcos in the Self-Determination Program without further delay. Marcos and his family look forward to having more freedom, control, and responsibility in choosing the services and supports he needs.

Ana Gets Vital Care to Remain at Home.

Ana lives with her 80-year-old mother. Ana has seizures and needs 24-hour care. Ana's mother needed to go to another country to take care of family matters and could not take Ana with her. Ana's mother requested respite services to cover her absence. The regional center denied the request for these respite hours. OCRA reviewed the regional center's notice of action denying in-home respite services, advised Ana to appeal, and communicated with the regional center about options to meet Ana's needs. The regional center offered alternative services to keep Ana safe at home. Ana's mother withdrew the fair hearing request. Ana's routine did not need to be disrupted and she can continue to live at home while her mother takes this important trip.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

OCRA Helps Get Retroactive School Services After District Fails to Evaluate Student for Special Education Eligibility.

Maria's mother contacted OCRA because the school district ignored her many requests for Maria to be assessed for special education eligibility. She made verbal requests for the district to assess Maria and

followed up with a handwritten letter. During this time, Maria was struggling at school. Maria was not getting help to go to the bathroom or eat while at school. Maria's sibling noticed she was hiding under a desk at school, since she did not have the disability supports needed. OCRA started by contacting the school district to discuss the right to an assessment plan within 15 days of Maria's mother's request. The school district did not respond to OCRA's calls or emails. OCRA filed a special education compliance complaint with the California Department of Education on Maria's behalf. The complaint included a copy of the mother's handwritten letter requesting Maria be assessed for special education eligibility. Right after the compliance complaint was filed, the school district created a special education assessment plan for Maria. She is finally being evaluated for special education eligibility. The California Department of Education issued a decision, which ordered the district to provide compensatory special education services back to the date of Maria's mother's letter requesting an assessment.

Anthony Gets Temporary Alternative School Setting.

OCRA represented 8-year-old Anthony at a manifestation determination meeting. Anthony's IEP team decided that the school could not expel Anthony because his behaviors manifested from his disability. However, the school alleged Anthony injured a classroom aide. The school placed Anthony on an interim alternative educational setting for 45 days. The school sent a prior written notice insisting that the interim setting would be Anthony's home. Anthony could not make progress on his IEP goal of socialization with peers if the interim setting was at his home. OCRA helped Anthony's father draft a response to the prior written notice and represented Anthony at an IEP team meeting. Within a week, the school offered a different interim educational setting at an off-site school location. This allowed Anthony to participate in the general education curriculum and make progress on his IEP goals.

Jacob Gets the Supports He Needs to Access In-Person Learning.

Jacob is a 16-year-old living in a specialized group home. His school district refused to provide him with a 1:1 aid until a special assessment was done. Without this support, Jacob could not return to in-person learning and the assessment could take up to 60 days to complete. Returning to in-person learning was important to Jacob, but without the 1:1 support, it was not safe for him to return. Jacob and his family asked the regional center to help fund support until the assessment could be completed. However, the

school district told Jacob's family they would not allow anyone that is not a school district employee to support him at school. OCRA represented Jacob at two IEP meetings. The IEP team agreed to place Jacob in a program during the school day that would provide him extra support until the assessment is done. As a result, Jacob was able to do in-person learning with the supports he needs.

Neon Gains Help Preparing for an IEP and Self-Advocacy Skills.

Neon needed speech and language services to meet his educational goals and requested these services from school. Neon's school responded by starting a speech and language assessment. The school asked his family to complete a questionnaire as part of the assessment. Neon lives with his father and grandmother. Neon's father has an intellectual disability, and Neon's grandmother is partially blind. They said they could not complete the questionnaire because of their disabilities. OCRA met with Neon's father and grandmother to review and complete the questionnaire based on their responses. OCRA explained this questionnaire is part of the school's assessment process which leads to an IEP to discuss the results and needed services. OCRA helped Neon's family prepare for the IEP meeting by reviewing Neon's school documents and telling them about their rights in the IEP process. Neon's family reported they felt prepared to advocate for Neon at the upcoming IEP meeting to discuss Neon's speech and language needs.

Beth Wins Stay-Put Order to Remain in Her Transition Program.

Beth goes to an adult transition program through her school district. The school district transferred Beth to a new transition program class in another location without her consent. Beth's teacher explained Beth was transferred to another classroom program because she needed more help. OCRA helped Beth and her mother file a due process hearing request with a stay-put order to keep Beth in her current transition program. The Office of Administrative Hearings agreed and ordered Beth stay in her current program. Beth will remain in her current transition program class throughout the hearing process and will not be transferred to the new classroom.

Victor is Cleared for Another Year of Home & Hospital Instruction.

OCRA represented Victor at 2 IEP meetings during the last school year. Victor's diagnoses make him especially vulnerable to contagious diseases and unable to wear a mask. During the IEP meetings, the district agreed to provide home & hospital instruction and compensatory education

hours to make up for all the school Victor missed while the district delayed placement. This school year, Victor's school demanded that he return to in-person instruction, even though threats to his health remained. Victor's treating physicians refused to write letters supporting his home & hospital placement. OCRA advised Victor's mother to ask the regional center to provide a doctor's note. A regional center doctor cleared Victor to continue to receive special education in a home & hospital setting.

Bobby Receives a 1:1 Aide and Speech Device.

Bobby's mother contacted OCRA for advocacy during Bobby's IEP meeting. Bobby is 6 years old. The district denied Bobby a 1:1 aide and a speech device that his mother requested. Bobby is non-verbal and needed the 1:1 aide to help him in the classroom and the speech device to help him communicate. OCRA advised his mother to request a Special Circumstance Instructional Assistance (SCIA) assessment, which she did. Shortly after the assessment, OCRA represented Bobby at his IEP meeting. OCRA advocated for assistive technology to enable Bobby's communication in the classroom. The school district is assessing Bobby for a speech device. After discussing the SCIA assessment, the school district agreed to provide Bobby with a 1:1 aide.