



Dialogue

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Consumer Spotlight Dat Nguyen Succeeds at Life

Dat Nguyen is a man of few words, but his actions speak volumes. He didn't receive much formal education in his native Vietnam, but at 36, he has learned invaluable lessons about life. Dat has a developmental disability due to moderate mental retardation, but that diagnosis has not prevented him from living a productive and satisfying life.

During eleven years of working at Goodwill Industries in Santa Ana, Dat has distinguished himself in several ways. With perseverance he has risen above the challenges of limited speech, difficulty understanding and retaining instructions, and shyness. After four to five months in the general assembly section, Dat was promoted to the processing area where he sorts, hangs and tags clothing. He also worked his way up from earning "piece rate" to earning the highest hourly wage paid to consumers working for Goodwill. Dat has

taken home the "Employee of the Month" award nine times and received the Perfect Attendance Award one year.

His Goodwill counselor, Boi Nguyen, (no relation) explains why Dat has done so well. "He has a good work attitude, he produces at a high level, following work directions accurately, and he interacts appropriately with his coworkers and supervisors. Dat is very reliable and punctual, always arriving on time from breaks and lunch. His work skills have improved dramatically over time."

Listening to his father's life story, one realizes where Dat gets his character. In the mid-1970s, when the communist North Vietnamese invaded the South and took over the country, Dat's father, who had spent his career in the South Vietnamese military, was imprisoned in an "Education Camp". He was released after six years, but could not find a job because of the stigma of his prior association. Added to that humiliation was the oppression of being kept

under surveillance wherever he went and having to report to the authorities every week.

In search of freedom and a better life for his wife and nine children, Nhan Nguyen risked his own life in a

Get Your Spotlight Awards Tickets Before they Sell Out

Spotlight Awards tickets are going fast and we've got room for only 800 people. The deadline for the discount price of \$36 has been extended to September 5, so buy your ticket now before it's too late! Last year we had to turn people away for the first time.

This will be the seventh year that the Orange County community has joined together to honor individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions on behalf of people with developmental disabilities. We are pleased to welcome actress Kellie Martin as our Master of Ceremonies this year. You may remember Kellie as the sister of Corky, played by Chris Burke who has Down syndrome, on the TV show *Life Goes On*. Kellie's most recent role was playing third-year medical student Lucy Knight on *ER*.

The event is scheduled for Friday, September 26 from 6:00 p.m. to midnight at the Irvine Marriott Hotel and includes a full dinner and dancing as well as the awards ceremony announcing the Spotlight Awards recipients. After September 5 the ticket price goes up to \$42. If you have any questions or need additional information, contact one of the Spotlight co-chairs: Jacqui Kerze at (714) 796-5299 or Karen Taylor at (714) 796-5208.



Left to right: RCOC Service Coordinator Phuc Bui joins Dat Nguyen, Nhan Nguyen and Goodwill Counselor Boi Nguyen in the lobby of Goodwill Industries in Santa Ana.

See 'Dat,' page 10

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RCOC Legislative Update

Assembly Bill 1393 – Is It Good for Consumers?

By Karen Chen,
RCOC Board of Directors

There appears to be misunderstanding about Assembly Bill 1393 and how it will affect consumers and their families.



Let me explain why I think this should matter to you. AB 1393 would create basic standards that prospective service providers must meet before they can become “vendored” by regional centers to provide services to people with developmental disabilities. The purpose is to ensure that service providers have the experience and qualifications necessary to provide quality programs.

Currently, for vendor categories that do not need some kind of license or certification, state regulations require only that interested parties complete an application in order to become eligible to contract with and receive referrals from the regional center. The exception is a relatively new category called Family Home Agencies, which does have qualifying standards, and AB 1393 simply duplicates those standards for the other vendor categories. Parents who vendor with regional centers to arrange services for their child as well as vendors that are not required to provide a program design for services — for example, hospitals and Target stores — are exempt from the requirements of the bill.

Assemblywoman Patricia Bates introduced AB 1393 in the state

See “AB 1393,” page 11

Research Provides Valuable Feedback to RCOC

By Bill Bowman

You may recall that two years ago the Regional Center of Orange County began participating in the National



Core Indicators (NCI) initiative. NCI is a research tool used by 24 states to assess the quality of services that people with developmental disabilities receive. Information is gathered through written surveys of parents and service providers and face-to-face interviews with a random sample of adult consumers. The Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) partnered with the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services in 1997 to launch NCI, known then as the Core Indicators Project.

The results so far are encouraging. We learned that the level of satisfaction families of adult consumers expressed with our staff and the quality of their work is higher than that of many states participating in the project (e.g., on survey questions: “Staff respect your choices and opinions,” RCOC had an 88 percent “yes” response whereas participating states averaged 80 percent; “Staff are respectful and courteous,” RCOC, 93 percent “yes”, other states, 88 percent; “Are RCOC staff generally effective,” RCOC, 78 percent yes, other states, 73 percent). Of the 2,843 surveys mailed the first year, 870 families completed the surveys, for a 31 percent response rate. That is extremely high for a mail survey

(average response rate is usually three percent). The second year data are still being analyzed.

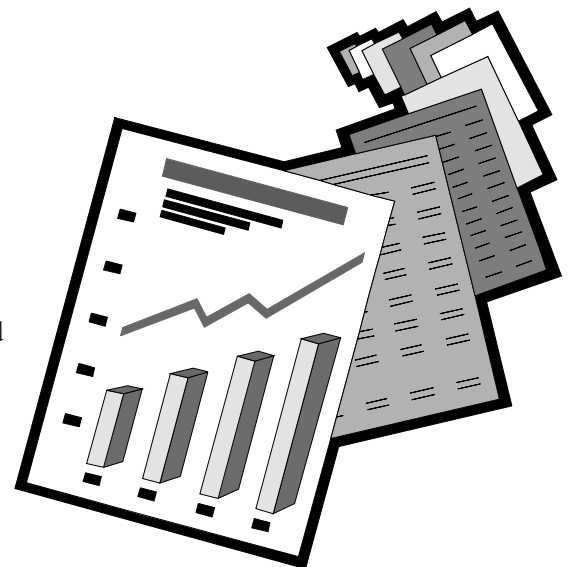
We are also pleased that we can obtain valuable feedback directly from people with developmental disabilities through personal interviews. In the first year of the study, 456 adult consumers were interviewed, which provided a scientifically valid sample for the number of people RCOC serves. We learned that 80 percent of the consumers surveyed said that their service coordinator helps them to get what they need, and 71 percent said that their service coordinator asked them what was important to them. Those responses were comparable with the states participating in the survey. RCOC results were higher than other participants when it came to consumers’ involvement in community activities and the number of personal and service-related choices they make.

While we at RCOC are heartened overall with the results of the data we’ve seen, especially as our numbers compare with the participating states, we did not embark on this endeavor to make ourselves look good. We did it to look for areas where we need to improve. And, as expected, we found some, particularly with regard to the satisfaction of families of children from birth to age 18. For instance, in response to the question, “Do RCOC staff respect your choices and opinions?” 74 percent of children’s parents responded “yes” versus 88 percent of adults’ parents. Likewise, the responses differed on “Are RCOC staff generally effective,” with 61 percent of children’s families saying “yes” compared to 78 percent of adults’ families.

As we continually work to

improve family support, the NCI data help direct our efforts. To obtain even more targeted information, this year we will split the children’s family survey into two separate questionnaires so that we can address Early Start issues for families of children birth to 36 months old. Also, by folding Comfort Connection Family Resource Center (FRC) into the RCOC organization (see article on page 8), we feel we have another opportunity to strengthen our family support activities. We want to expand the age range that the FRC serves beyond the current birth to three threshold. The FRC offers an inviting environment and great staff members who themselves are parents of children with disabilities. As we refine the survey process and glean more from the NCI research, we will incorporate your feedback into improved services and supports.

For a more in-depth look at the RCOC data and how RCOC compares with participating states, you can view the research reports on the Web site of the Human Services Research Institute, www.hsri.org. Look for the NCI link under “Featured Resources” on the left side of the Web page, and then click on “Reports & Results” on the NCI Web page. RCOC numbers are included in the Phase IV reports.



R.A.D.D. Review

Tele-Friend is a Way to Meet New People

If you're a Regional Center consumer, you might want to meet new friends who live near you by joining Tele-Friend. We suggest that you always meet in a public place and that you provide your own transportation.

To place an ad about yourself in the Tele-Friend list, call (714) 796-5270 for the form that you need.

If you would like to talk to any of the people listed here, call (714) 796-5270 for a Tele-Friend list. You must be a Regional Center consumer or parent to respond.

Felix of Buena Park ... "I like to go to the movies, dancing, camping and bike riding. I like to play basketball and baseball. I also like to chat on the phone and on the computer. I am 23 years old and live with my family. I speak both English and Spanish. I don't drink and drive."

Jason of Huntington Beach ... "I am 32 years old and work at Target. I like playing computer games and talking on the phone. I also enjoy gardening, listening to music, bowling, biking and roller-skating. I do not drive."

Lori of Mission Viejo ... "The things I like to do are

listening to music, watching movies, writing letters, visiting friends, shopping, bowling, and playing tennis. I am 43, work for Good Shepherd and live in my own apartment. I do not drive."

John of Santa Ana ... I enjoy playing chess, taking a walk, working out at the gym, gardening and fishing. I also like sun tanning at the pool or beach, short trips to Vegas, eating out and trying new foods. I am 34, work at High Hopes and live with an aide. I do not drive."

Brad of Tustin ... "I am a 35-year-old man who likes video games, riding my motorcycle, and watching movies. I collect die-cast cars and motorcycles. I work at Sears and live in a group home."

Gary of Yorba Linda ... "I like watching movies, talking on the phone, going to the park, swimming and picnics. I work for Polly's Pies and live with my family. I'm 55 and do not drive."

Announcing an Art Contest for Consumers

Do you like to draw? Do you like to paint pictures? If so, you can enter a poster contest. The contest is only for people with developmental disabilities. The theme of the contest is "Valued, Safe & Respected". Your art should show people with disabilities being safe at home or at work. It can also show people with disabilities being treated with respect. **The deadline to enter is September 30, 2003.** To get a contest form, contact the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. You can call (916) 322-8481 and ask for the contest form. Or you can send an e-mail to Council@scdd.ca.gov. You can also get the form at the Web site: www.scdd.ca.gov. You might want to ask someone you trust to help you.



Consumer Advisory Team (CAT) Update

At the July CAT meeting, the members worked on putting the RCOOC mission statement in “consumer-friendly” language. The members feel that it needs to be easy for everyone to understand. This is what they came up with:

The Regional Center of Orange County will follow the law that says we will help people with developmental disabilities and their families. This law is the Lanterman Act. We will help consumers live, work and learn in their communities. We will treat consumers with respect. We will help consumers choose

good services that meet their needs. We will have consumers and families help run the Regional Center.

CAT members also planned a thank you dinner for the sponsors who donated \$20 or more to help CAT members attend the statewide People First Conference that was in June in Sacramento. The thank you dinner was August 7 at Integrity House. The video that the team presented at the conference was shown at the dinner.



CAT Team Members

You are welcome to come to a Consumer Advisory Team meeting. They are held on the second Wednesday of the month. The meeting time is 10:00 a.m. to noon. The meeting place is the RCOOC East/Central office at 801 Civic Center Drive, Santa Ana. Please call Betty Bath at (714) 796-5263 ahead of time to let her know you will be there.

Safety Stu's Corner

Internet Safety

Hello Safety Friends:

I hope you all have been well and staying cool during this long, hot summer. In this issue's lesson will write about safety on the Internet. Since we have entered the “computer age,” more and more people are e-mailing each other and searching the “Web” (another name for the Internet). Since many of us use computers, we need to learn to be safe. The World Wide Web (www) is a very big place; that means you could be in contact with many people you do not know, possibly from all over the world.



It is pretty simple to be safe on the Internet as long as you follow some basic rules: 1) Never give out your personal information or that of a family member or friend. By personal information I mean: address, phone number, credit card number, social security number, or even birthdate. 2) If you meet a nice friend on the Internet, I suggest that you keep it a computer friendship, meaning don't meet that person face-to-face. If you do decide to meet that friend, **NEVER** go alone to meet your new friend. Also, always meet in a public place where there are lots of people. I know this sounds bad, but there are people out there that may want to hurt you or take your money. So, we should learn to make safe choices because as adults, we are in charge of our own safety. 3) Some Internet Providers, for example AOL or Earthlink, might ask you to fill out a

form on the computer giving your personal information and interests. This is called a profile. Do not feel that you need to fill this out. The less information that you give about yourself, the less that strangers will know about you. The bonus is that you will receive less junk e-mail; yes, we all hate junk e-mail.

As always, I am very proud of how great all of your safety skills are becoming. So if you have a friend who hasn't had the chance to yell “**Back off**” or talk about safety, please share your safety tips with them, so they will **GET SAFE™** like YOU! We still offer training classes, so keep an eye out for **GET SAFE™**, or if you want training, ask your service coordinator to contact us at info@getsafeusa.com.

Thanks for staying safe,
Safety Stu



Nine Resources for Facilitating Disability Awareness

Some parents have expressed a desire for disability awareness resources. Here is a list that may help you start a disability awareness program at your child's school. This information is from NICHCY, the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities. The Web site for NICHCY is www.nichcy.org and the toll-free telephone number is (800) 695-0285.

You will need to contact the publishing company to find out the cost for these items.

Count Me In Disability Awareness Manual (2001)

Age: Unspecified

Available from: PACER Center, Inc., 8161 Normandale Blvd. Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044.

Phone: (888) 248-0822 (toll free)

E-mail: pacer@pacer.org

Web: www.pacer.org.

This manual is designed for teachers, parents or volunteer puppeteers. It includes information about many disabilities and suggested activities for increasing disability awareness.

Disability Awareness in the Classroom: A Resource Tool for Teachers and Students (1999)

Age: Unspecified

Available from: Charles C. Thomas Publishers, 2600 S. First Street, Springfield, IL 62704

Phone: (800) 258-8980

E-mail: books@ccthomas.com

Web: www.ccthomas.com

These materials are intended to prepare all students for inclusive classrooms. They explore inclusion and disability awareness and provide many ideas for classroom activities and discussions.

Friends Who Care (1990)

Age: Elementary school

Available from: Easter Seals, Na-

tional Office, Communication Dept., 230 W. Monroe St., Ste. 1800 Chicago, IL 60606

Phone: (800) 221-6827

Web: www.easter-seals.org

This curriculum is a "starting point [for] helping teachers, parents, and young people develop a better understanding of what it means to have a disability."

Including All of Us: An Early Childhood Curriculum About Disability (1984)

Age: Early childhood

Available from: Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., 100 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10011

Phone: (212) 243-1110

E-mail: information@edequity.org

Web: www.edequity.org

Activities in this guide are grouped into three areas: same/different (hearing impairment), body parts (visual impairment), and transportation (mobility impairment).

The Kids on the Block Programs

Age: Unspecified

Available from: The Kids on the Block, Inc., 9385-C Gerwig Lane, Columbia, MD 21046. Phone: (800) 368-5437, E-mail: kob@kotb.com,

Web: www.kotb.com

The Kids on the Block curricula use live puppet theater to enlighten children on the issues of disability awareness, medical-educational differences, and social concerns.

Lessons for Understanding: An Elementary School Curriculum on Perspective-Taking (1997)

Age: Grades K-5

Available: See below

This K-5 curriculum promotes understanding and appreciation of different perspectives, leading to respect for diversity and support for truly inclusive school communities.

Lessons for Understanding: A Junior High and High School Curriculum on Perspective-Taking (1999)

Age: Grades 6-12

Available: See below

The 20 lessons are based on the idea that, in order to attain sustained change of behavior, one must be aware of and willing to examine the paradigms underlying behavior, as well as understand the paradigms underlying the behavior of others.

Available: Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 102 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive, S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455.

Phone: (612) 624-4512, E-mail:

publications@icimail.education.umn.edu,

Web: www.ici.umn.edu/default.html

Sensitivity and Awareness: A Guide for Developing Understanding Among Children

Age: Elementary and middle school

Available from: Jason & Nordic Publishers, P.O. Box 441,

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648. Phone:

(814) 696-2920, E-mail:

turtlebooks@jasonandnordic.com,

Web: turtlebooks.altoona-pa.com/index.html

This curriculum includes background materials, lesson plans, and activities to help children understand and interact with children who have disabilities.

Some Ways the Same, Some Ways Different

Age: Elementary school

Available from: The Children's Museum, Museum Kits Program, 300 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210. Phone: (617) 426-8855,

Web: www.bostonkids.org

This curriculum provides a foundation for children learning about disabilities and the exploration of more extreme differences.

What's The IDEA?

Behavior Supports In the IEP

By Juda Carter, M.A.
RCOC Education Training and
Standards Coordinator

In the last issue of *Dialogue* I explained "Related Services in the IEP." This time we'll explore "Behavior Supports in the IEP."



Behavior support can be a critical piece of a student's special education services. IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) has specific mandates regarding behavior supports for special education students. In order to understand these mandates, we need to understand the basic principles of special education. Special education is a service and not a place. Supports should always be

provided in the least restrictive environment. Behavior supports should be utilized to allow teachers to focus resources on teaching and learning rather than behavior management.

Behavior support for a particular student may be addressed any time a special education student's behavior is impeding his own learning and/or the learning of any other student. The regulations allow for different levels of behavior support. The first level involves strategies and supports for at-risk behaviors. These might be specific strategies for the teaching team that are developed in the student's IEP to address problematic behaviors. The next level is a Behavior Support Plan. This is a specific plan that is developed by the IEP team. It is detailed and provides a consistent plan for the student. The most intense level of behavior support is a Functional Analysis Behavior Intervention Plan. This is a detailed document that addresses the

function of the behavior and designs interventions to prevent that behavior from occurring. This type of Behavior Intervention Plan is usually developed to deal with serious behavior such as physical aggression or property destruction. All plans should be developed as positive behavior interventions. Positive behavior intervention encourages and reinforces appropriate behavior rather than punishing inappropriate behavior.

All behavior support is developed by the IEP team, in which the parents participate equally with school providers. Remember these points when working on behavior support: placement change should not occur only as a result of behavior problems, and sending the student home early is not a behavior support plan. As always, be proactive with your school team to develop supports for your child.

Coming next issue: "What is Transition to Adult services?"

Parent Support Update

By Nancy McGovern, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
RCOC Parent Support Coordinator

Thank you for your responses to the RCOC Family Support Survey (Winter 2003 *Dialogue*). Because your needs as family members are diverse, we at RCOC are planning a variety of ways to help you obtain the information and support you have requested. Following are some of the planned activities:

Resource Coffees: These are new informal drop-in events designed for you to meet community resource providers and RCOC family support staff. Join us for the next Resource Coffees at the East/Central Area Office on Tuesday, September 23 from 9 a.m. to noon in Board Room C or at the West Area Office on Tuesday October 14 at 9:00 a.m.

Meet other parents, check out books and videos, and obtain the latest information about community resources. Check the monthly RCOC Community Calendar that you receive in the mail (also available online at www.rcocdd.com) for more dates and locations.

Support Groups: Ongoing and planned support groups during daytime and evening hours: Call the Family Resource Center at (714) 558-5400 or me at (714) 796-5396 for details and watch your RCOC Community Calendar. A new group for parents of children under one year old will be starting in October. Working together with Comfort Connection Family Resource staff and community agencies,



we can help you connect with other parents, find a support group, or start a group to meet your own specific needs.

Individual and family consultation or referral: We can provide confidential help with problem solving, addressing caregiver burnout, or obtaining individual or family counseling referrals. Please feel free to call me with your concerns. If I don't have the answer, I will help you connect with a resource that does. Developing a team and building relationships can often reduce those exhausting problems to more approachable challenges.

I welcome your calls with ideas or requests for help. If you have not received a call in response to your survey request, please call me at (714) 796-5396 or ask your service coordinator to contact me.



Comfort Connection Becomes Part of RCOC

Comfort Connection Family Resource Center (FRC) is now officially part of the Regional Center of Orange County organization, although the change will be fairly invisible since the FRC is in the same location with the same staff. FRC has always been funded through RCOC with Early Start grant funds but previously existed as a stand-alone nonprofit agency.

According to RCOC Executive Director Bill Bowman, "Having the FRC under the Regional Center umbrella gives us greater flexibility in providing parent-to-parent support.

We want to reach out to families of children at every age [instead of limiting FRC services to birth to three years old] and this simplifies the process. It's very important to our Board of Directors to support families in every way possible, and this provides another avenue to do that."

FRC Supervisor Hedy Hansen says, "We're excited about the possibilities this change brings. The FRC will still have the same responsibilities for our birth-to-three crowd, such as parent-to-parent support, working with our community partners to coordinate services, and identifying

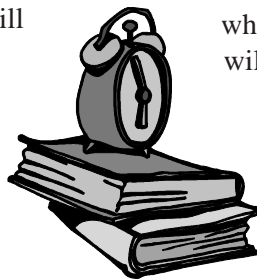
children who need services through outreach activities. But this opens up a broader realm of support and resources that we can offer."

Feel free to stop by Comfort Connection Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to browse the book and video library or consult with a knowledgeable staff member about questions you may have concerning your child's development. All the staff members are parents of children with developmental disabilities. The FRC is located next to the lobby at RCOC, 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana. The phone number is (714) 558-5400.

Five Tips to Prepare for Fall

The longer days of summer are quickly getting shorter, and many of you are gearing up for back-to-school or back-to-therapy-program. Here are five common sense steps you can take to make the transition for you and your child a little smoother.

1. Establish a sleeping/waking schedule now that will correspond with school or program hours. If your schedule is more relaxed during the summer, it can be a challenge to suddenly change the routine once school starts. Starting a new school year is stressful enough without the added difficulty of changing sleeping habits.
2. Start working with your child now to prepare for the coming school or program year. What educational or developmental goals was your child working on last year? Were there areas where s/he had particular diffi-



culty? Take 15 to 30 minutes each day to address those items, whether it's reading, math, concentration or gross motor skills. Try to make it fun and offer your child a reward for cooperating. Check the Comfort Connection library for some resources that may give you creative ideas.

3. Meet your child's teacher before school starts. If you know who your child's new teacher will be, make it a point to drop by the classroom the week before school starts and introduce yourself and your child. Teachers normally start setting up their classrooms at that time. This is an opportunity to spend a few minutes getting acquainted without the distractions the school year brings.
4. Schedule "touch base" meetings at regular intervals during the school year with the teacher or IEP team if your child will be going through a major transition. Establish-

ing good communication and building relationships is often a key to success for program changes.

5. Read a book or watch a video that will fortify your knowledge about special education and working on your child's goals. Some good books to consider are: *I Need Help With School*, *Modifying Schoolwork*, *The Win/Win IEP*, and *Your Child and Special Education*. Or try these videotapes: *How to Help Your Child Succeed in School* or *Andrew's Plan*. All of these resources can be checked out from the Family Resource Center. You can also check into the disability awareness resources listed on page 6 or look at Protection & Advocacy's online publication called Special Education Rights and Responsibilities available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages at www.pai-ca.org.

By putting some or all of these suggestions into practice, you and your child can start the school year feeling positive and prepared.

Consumers with Diabetes Require Special Care

By Arleen Downing, M.D., F.A.A.P.
RCOC Medical Director

Diabetes is a health condition in which the body cannot process sugars properly. Diabetes can affect every part of the body, including the eyes, kidneys and heart. It also slows healing of skin wounds.

For that reason, when a Regional Center consumer is diagnosed with diabetes, some special procedures must be followed in order for the person to be placed or continue living in a group home (community care facility/CCF), independent or supported living situation. Since maintaining the health of a consumer with diabetes is so important, these procedures are required by state law for CCFs. If a group home or independent/supported living provider cannot or will not fulfill certain requirements, the consumer with diabetes must move to a health care facility such as an Intermediate Care Facility that provides nursing care (ICF/DD-N).

The first step is to have a nursing assessment arranged by the Regional Center. A contracted nurse develops a Health Care Plan that identifies each health care issue and the plan of action that the residential care provider and other service providers must follow. The RCOC nurse consultant then reviews the Health Care Plan. The service coordinator schedules a Planning Team Meeting where the consumer, appropriate family members, residential care provider, day program provider, service coordinator, and RCOC nurse discuss the health needs and lifestyle of the consumer. This meeting allows the team to refine the Health Care Plan for the consumer in order to anticipate and avoid any possible problem areas. The Health Care Plan is then incorporated into the consumer's Individual Program Plan.

The Health Care Plan contains several important items. These are a few:

- ◆ detailed documentation of the consumer's medical condition by the doctor,
- ◆ specific doctor's orders and services needed,
- ◆ the consumer's ability to perform the necessary procedures (such as monitoring his blood sugar or giving himself insulin shots),
- ◆ a back-up plan for providing the consumer's health procedures if s/he cannot or will not perform them, and
- ◆ names and contact information for all the consumer's physicians.

Before a consumer with diabetes can be placed in a community care facility, state law requires that all staff members who will perform specialized health care for the consumer complete certified hands-on training with a licensed professional (registered nurse or medical doctor). In addition, the residential provider is responsible for documenting and managing the consumer's health needs in several areas, such as dietary restrictions, blood sugar levels, foot and skin care, dental care, vision checkups, and exercise program.

If you know of a consumer with a recent diagnosis of diabetes, or if you provide residential care for such a consumer, please call his/her Regional Center service coordinator right away if you haven't already done so. The service coordinator will start the process of making sure that needed health safeguards are put in place. If you operate a group home, you also need to contact Community Care Licensing when a consumer in your care has diabetes.

Diabetes is a serious health condition, but with proper management of diet, exercise and health care monitoring, people with diabetes can live long and healthy lives.

Diabetes: Dental Tips

Tell your dentist if you have diabetes and ask him or her to show you how to keep your teeth and gums healthy.



- People with diabetes get gum disease more often than people who do not have diabetes. Gum infections can make it hard to control blood sugar. Once a gum infection starts, it can take a long time to heal. If the infection is severe, teeth can loosen or even fall out. Good blood sugar control can prevent gum problems.
- Keeping your own teeth is important for healthy eating. Natural teeth help you chew foods better and easier than you can with dentures. Because infections can make gums sore and uneven, dentures may not fit right. Be sure to tell your dentist if your dentures hurt.

Have a dental checkup at least every 6 months.

- Take good care of your teeth and gums. At least twice a day, brush your teeth with a soft-bristle toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Use dental floss everyday to clean between your teeth.
- If your gums bleed while you are brushing your teeth or eating, or if a bad taste stays in your mouth, go to the dentist. Tell your dentist about any other changes you see, such as white patches in your mouth.

For more information on the oral complications of diabetes, contact the National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse:

1 NOHIC Way

Bethesda, MD 20892-3500

Voice: (301) 402-7364

Fax: (301) 907-8830

E-mail: nidr@aerie.com

Internet: www.aerie.com/nohicweb/

Information from National Oral Health Information Clearinghouse (NOHIC), a service of the National Institute of Dental Research, National Institutes of Health.

Consumer Spotlight

Dat (from page 1)

small boat on the open seas until reaching Thailand after 25 days. There he spent two years in a refugee camp before he could immigrate to the United States. Upon arriving in the U.S. in 1984 at almost 60 years of age, Nhan worked in a restaurant bussing tables and saving his money until he could send for his family. Several years later, after spending \$20,000 in sponsoring expenses, he had brought his now multi-generational brood to the U.S. in six separate groups. Dat and his mother were among the first arrivals in 1991.

The family heard about Regional Center services from some friends,

and Dat was made eligible in 1992. He started working for Goodwill Industries that same year.

At home, Dat can take care of himself quite independently and completes simple household tasks with minimal supervision. His favorite activity is helping his father with the gardening.

“Dat receives a lot of support and encouragement from his family,” says Phuc Bui, who has been his service coordinator for the entire 11 years that Dat has received RCOC services. “His father has set an example for all his children.”

Nhan says that he explained to all his children when they first came to the U.S. that they were new to this society, and if they wanted to be

successful, they needed to work hard, have a good attitude and be very organized. He is proud of Dat’s self-discipline and work ethic.

Although Nhan misses the family closeness of life in Vietnam – often three to five generations live under the same roof – he appreciates the great opportunities and freedom that the United States has provided to his family. His son Dat, who had very limited prospects in their native land, has a good job, takes English as a Second Language classes at Goodwill, and enjoys fishing and playing soccer with friends. Nhan’s years of sacrifice have brought him and his family riches that no money could buy.

Accessing Special Services

Making Sense of SSI

Situation: Most adult consumers of RCOC receive cash assistance from the government called Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI is a program of the federal government that pays monthly cash benefits to people with disabilities who have limited income and resources. Both children and adults with disabilities can be eligible for SSI.

Issue: Many families do not realize that an adult consumer can live in the family home and still receive SSI. If he pays his fair share of living expenses (rent, utilities and food), he is considered to be living independently for SSI purposes. Even if the consumer cannot afford to pay what would be considered his “fair share” of the living expenses, he can still receive SSI at the lower rate called “living in the household of another.”

A Family’s Story: RCOC’s Benefits Advocate Rosalee McEntyre recalls the lessons learned by a family that had an adult child who was an RCOC consumer, living at home

and receiving SSI at the higher independent living rate. The family attended an annual review meeting at the Social Security office, answered several questions, then later received a letter from Social Security advising them that they owed more than \$4,000 in overpayments to SSI. Based on the information the parents had provided in the meeting, their child was considered to be “living in the household of another” rather than “living independently” and so had been overpaid for several years.

The parents called their child’s RCOC service coordinator who consulted Rosalee.

Resolution: Rosalee spoke to the parents to find out what had happened at the meeting and realized that they hadn’t understood some of the questions that had been asked. She advised them to file for a “reconsideration” meeting, which was held at the SSI offices. The family took records showing all the household expenses for the past two years and what portion the consumer had paid in order to demonstrate that their child had paid his fair share. SSI then

agreed that the consumer was living independently and entitled to SSI payments at the higher rate.

Recommendations: 1) If you have an adult child living at home and receiving SSI at the independent living rate, make sure that you document your child’s contribution toward the household expenses.

- To calculate your child’s “fair share,” divide the total monthly living expenses (rent/mortgage, food, utilities, homeowner’s insurance and property taxes, if applicable) by the number of people living in the home (including minor children). For example, if the amount of your basic living expenses is \$2,400 per month, and four people live in your home, the fair share amount is \$600.
- Consider having a simple rental agreement for your child that indicates the amount she is responsible to pay you each month. You can find standard rental agreement forms at office supply stores or make your own.
- Never co-mingle the consumer’s SSI funds with your own money.

See “SSI,” next page

Important Things to Know...

The City of Irvine will host “Experience Works: Senior Job Fair” on Saturday, **September 6** from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Lakeview Senior Center, 20 Lake Road, Irvine. More than 15 companies will take applications and conduct interviews for a variety of employment opportunities. Applicants are encouraged to dress professionally, bring a resume or a list of paid and volunteer experience, plus three references in order to complete employment applications. There is no cost to attend. For more information, call (949) 724-6740, extension 7, or visit www.irvineseniors.org.

The City of Irvine invites nominations for its **Disability-Friendly Business Award** to recognize Irvine-based businesses that are “disability friendly”. **Deadline for nominations**

is **September 22**. For details, visit www.irvinedisabilityservices.org or call (949) 724-6633.

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities announces its second Poster Art Contest open only to people with developmental disabilities. The theme this year is “Valued, Safe & Respected”. Artwork submitted by people with developmental disabilities should show that people with disabilities are to be valued, safe, free from exploitation, and respected in their communities. **The entry deadline is September 30, 2003**. For more information and to request an entry form, contact the State Council by phone (916) 322-8481, fax (916) 443-4957, e-mail Council@scdd.ca.gov, or visit the Council’s Web site at www.scdd.ca.gov.

Several of Orange County’s community colleges provide disabled student services to assist students with disabilities who wish to attend college classes. Some of the colleges have learning centers in cities besides the main college campus. Contact the following for more information if you are interested: Coastline Community College, Fountain Valley, (714) 241-6214; Cypress College, (714) 484-7057; Irvine Valley College, (949) 451-5630; Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, (714) 432-5807; Saddleback College, Mission Viejo, (949) 582-4500, Santa Ana College (714) 564-6273 (Developmentally Delayed Learners) or (714) 564-6295 (Physical Disabilities Center); Santiago Canyon College, Orange, (714) 628-4860 (this is a new number as of Sept. 5).

AB 1393 (from page 2)

legislature earlier this year. The Orange County and San Diego Regional Centers as well as the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) are sponsors of the bill, and it is also strongly supported by the ARCA Consumer Advisory Team. AB 1393 was passed by unanimous vote in the Assembly in June. It then went to a state Senate committee, which held the bill for the next legislative session in January.

AB 1393 will protect consumers’

rights and safety and increase their satisfaction with the services and supports they receive. There is nothing in the bill that would limit consumer’s rights or choices under the Lanterman Act, nor would it restrict vendorization of qualified providers. In fact, this bill preserves the intent of the Lanterman Act, which is for quality services to be delivered by competent providers in the community. This bill has been made even stronger through recent amendments that address the con-

cerns of some vendor groups while maintaining the focus on consumer rights and protection.

You can read the text of the bill for yourself on the Assembly Web site at www.assembly.ca.gov. Click on the “Legislation” link and look up AB 1393. If you don’t have access to the Internet, you can request a copy of AB 1393 by calling Karen Taylor at (714) 796-5208.

When January draws closer, we will let you know if any action is needed to show support of this bill.

SSI (from page 10)

Keep a separate savings or checking account for your child. Have her write you a check each month for the living expenses.

- Ask an SSI representative if this is an acceptable way to keep your records.

2) If you request a reconsideration meeting and the benefit is still denied at that meeting, you can appeal to have a fair hearing before an administrative law judge.

To find answers to more of your questions about SSI, look online at www.ssa.gov. Information is avail-

able in several languages. Also remember that if you receive a letter from SSI that you don’t understand, or you don’t agree with a decision made, you can always contact your RCOC service coordinator to request assistance.

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*The board of directors meets at 6:00 p.m. at 801 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana.
The public is welcome.*

The Regional Center of Orange County has four locations to serve you:

Orange Office

3111 N. Tustin Street, Suite 150
24-hour phone no.: (714) 685-5555
TDD: (714) 685-5575

San Juan Capistrano Office

26311 Junipero Serra Road, Ste. 180
24-hour phone no.: (949) 234-8800
TDD: (949) 488-3399

Santa Ana Office

801 Civic Center Dr. West
24-hour phone no.: (714) 796-5100
TDD: (714) 667-6021

Westminster Office

13950 Milton Ave., Suite 200
24-hour phone no.: (714) 889-7200
TDD: (714) 889-7234

RCOC Web site: www.rcocdd.com

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Editor: Karen Taylor, ktaylor@rcocdd.com.*

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*The Regional Center of
Orange County is a nonprofit,
private agency that contracts with
the California Department of
Developmental Services to provide
services to individuals with
developmental disabilities.*

Look for Tele-Friends on page 4!
R.A.D.D. Review

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Regional Center of Orange County
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