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SCLARC CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER



The Legacy Project: A New Location for SCLARC

by Desiree L. Boykin

SCLARC staff, SCLARC consumers as well as Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) members and friends – Lee Black, Desiree Boykin, Deanna Corbin, John Harris, Dexter Henderson, Alan McDowell, Terrance Payne, Sr., Diana Ugalde-Lara, Domonique Young—attended the August 9, 2012 Los Angeles City Council meeting to support the proposed new headquarters for SCLARC at 2500 S. Western Avenue, located behind the historic Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company building. The group's purpose was clear: to express enthusiasm for a new home for SCLARC.

This new location is promising. Space will certainly not be a problem, for this new 70,000-plus square foot building can house comfortably

all of SCLARC's administrative, clinical, and program staff. What SCLARC staff and supporters like best, though, is that the services will still be provided nearby. That passion came through as the group addressed the City Council. Here is the speech of CAC member Diana Ugalde-Lara:

“Since 1989, I have been a consumer of SCLARC. Since then I have felt protected by this organization. If regional center did not exist, I would not be standing. SCLARC makes it happen! It bought my power wheelchair and communication device for me. These two pieces of equipment represent my independence. However, SCLARC has not only purchased needed

(Legacy-cont.)

devices, it provides residential services which gives me peace of mind. Therefore, thanks to SCLARC, I am able to have a safe home, to go out into the community by myself, and to have a voice to speak on behalf of others who cannot do so. I am a vivid example of what regional centers can do and the kind of doors they would open for people with developmental disabilities. Having my equipment enabled me to finish high school, go on to college, and graduate with highest honors. To show my gratitude, I have been working as a volunteer for the past seven years at the SCLARC Family Resource Center. There, I do data entry and sometimes help design the advertisement for the monthly parents' newsletter.

Others chimed in, too. Domonique Young, former consumer advocate at SCLARC, stated, "SCLARC needs a permanent home."

Alan McDowell, president of the CAC, added: "A SCLARC office close to Adams Boulevard is better for the community at large." Parent Terrance Payne, Sr. shared his voice also. "My son has benefited greatly from his participation in SCLARC. I feel that SCLARC's location in the community helps the organization serve the community better."

The City Council approved the project with the stipulation that the site has less than the 314 parking spaces and that tentative classification for building is removed. A final hearing on the project will be scheduled.

Self-Advocacy Conferences –By Desiree Boykin



This year, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center (SCLARC) consumers participated in two self-advocacy conferences: the 17th Annual Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference, June 8-9, in Sacramento, sponsored by the Supported Life Institute, and the Statewide Gathering in Bakersfield, June 8-10, sponsored by the People First of California.

Attended by over 500 consumers, the Sacramento self-advocacy conference addressed a gamut of topics—"Living with Cerebral Palsy"; "Youth Organized/Disabled and Proud"; "Got to Save the Lanterman Act";

"Making Your Own Choices"; "In Search of Independence"; "Finding a Job"; "Beating Diabetes with Exercise and Weight Loss"; "Becoming Your Own Health Advocate"; and "Being Calm and Relaxed" among other topics. This conference fulfilled the mission of the Supported Life Institute: "To offer educational and training opportunities to assist individuals and organizations in the work of improving the quality of life for people with disabilities".

Representing SCLARC in Sacramento were CAC members Trevone Gordon and Alan McDowell. Beyond the camaraderie with other consumers,

both found the conference both informative and inspirational. “It was so much fun being at the conference and meeting new friends,” Alan said. “I learned a lot of things that will help me.”

The Statewide Gathering in Bakersfield reflected the mission of People First of California, Inc.: “To train, inform, and support all people with developmental disabilities; to help our peers learn to speak up for themselves; know our rights and responsibilities; make decisions and solve problems; and stand together in unity to take our rightful place in the world.” During this conference, topics included “How to Make the Most of Your Spare Time,” “How to Become Empowered,” and “How to Start Your Own Business.” SCLARC CAC members who attended included Quinshay Gradley, Deandre Williams, **(pictured above)** and Desiree Boykin. As usual, the “StatewideGathering” was animated and educational. All participants left

Relationships: A Happy and Loving One is Best to Have-By Desiree Boykin



motivated. Attending her first “Statewide Gathering”, Quinshay said, “The conference reminded me that I am somebody and that I can be somebody in life. My eyes are open to a bright future,” she says. She attended the workshop on starting your own business and enjoyed learning about the multiple career opportunities available.

Like Quinshay, Deandre also attended his first conference. “Everything was great,” he says. “I especially enjoyed learning how important voting is in getting laws passed that help us in the disabled community to reach our dreams.”

Both conferences taught our SCLARC attendees the importance of knowing their rights, standing up for themselves, and participating in the changes that will help them to live their most productive life.

The CAC presented a workshop on July 12, 2012, at Ideal Rehabilitation Adult Day Care Program in Los Angeles, on Relationships: “A Happy and Loving One is Best to Have.” The presenters were Alan McDowell and Desiree Boykin with the support of SCLARC consultant Phyllis McClean. The goal was to encourage participants to develop healthy relationships and to understand challenges involved in those relationships. The PowerPoint representation emphasized several areas.

Participants, for example, were informed of the three stages to a romantic relationship: friendship, dating, and marriage. Additionally, participants were reminded that, no matter if one has a temporary disability, an intellectual disability, or permanent physical challenge, socializing is one of our basic needs and helps

fight depression. Without relationships, a person feels empty and lonely.

Participants were instructed that they can meet a real friend or sentimental partner through family members, current friends, co-workers or

classmates. They were told of places where friendships could occur—work, church, activities or events, or the day program.

Participants were made aware, though, of the challenges of meeting new friends.



(Relationships-cont.)

They were given some warnings. If it is a first meeting, for instance, meet in a public place. Try to establish a pleasant conversation by talking and listening. At the same time, participants were encouraged to be safe by being ready for an emergency: having enough money for their meal and/or for a taxi, telling someone where they are going, and having a cellular phone with them or asking an employee to make a call for them, if needed.

Furthermore, participants were told to be on the look out for negative, as well as positive, signs. Among the positive signs were being caring, cheerful, friendly, possessing good communication skills, being happy and helpful, being a good listener, being loving, sharing, and supportive. Among the negative signs were appearing angry, controlling, demanding, being depressed, lonely, sad, and/or stressed.

Other topics covered during the presentation were difficulties in communication, issues related to online dating, avoiding being taken advantage of, knowing your partner, and marriage.

Throughout the presentation, the participants were engaged and willing to share what they already knew about relationships. Each participant was presented a certificate at the end of the session. In the future, CAC members at SCLARC plan other similar presentations.