

2008-09

South Central Los Angeles Regional Center Annual Report



The 2009 J. Alfred Cannon
Meritorious Service Award

THE PAST

South Central Los Angeles Regional Center's roots lie deeply within our community; they grow out of the 1960s struggles for equity and equality.

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THE PRESENT

On November 20, 2009 South Central Los Angeles Regional Center celebrated 35 years of service!

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THE FUTURE

During the 2008-09 Fiscal Year, California legislators passed a budget that changed the regional center system significantly, irrevocably and forever.

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SCLARC Executive Director Dexter A. Henderson pictured with Department of Children & Adult Services administrative assistant Irma Escobar.



South Central L.A. Regional Center's Past

Prior to SCLARC's inception, South Los Angeles had the highest incidence of mental retardation while receiving the lowest level of services.

There was only one regional center serving all of Los Angeles County in the late 1960s. Moved to action by Dr. J. Alfred Cannon, concerned parents, professionals and community leaders formed the South Central Mental Retardation Association (SCMRA) in 1969. SCMRA's successes served to underscore the fact that the needs of our communities were still greater than the meager resources in place at the time. In July 1973, Central City Community Mental Health Center, also founded by Dr. J. Alfred Cannon, was awarded the contract to provide a regional center in South Los Angeles. With the contract, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center for Persons with Developmental Disabilities Inc. (SCLARC) was born and opened its doors in 1974. By June of 1975, there were 1,059 active consumers and approximately 25 staff members under the direction of Dr. Anna Smith. The budget that year was just over half a million dollars. *(At right, SCLARC consumers Aleta and renowned artist Milton Davis.)*



SCLARC board member and parent Guadalupe Barrera (pictured at left) and Family Resource Coordinator Gloria Leiva smile with SCLARC Executive Director Dexter A. Henderson at the 35th Anniversary Celebration Event.

South Central L.A. Regional Center's Present

Today, the agency has approximately 240 employees and serves 10,400 individuals in a service area that includes the cities of Paramount, Cudahy, Downey, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, South Gate, Compton and Carson, as well as the Los Angeles communities of Watts, the Crenshaw District, Leimert Park, View Park and Baldwin Hills.

SCLARC has certainly come a long way since its inception. We are proud to be in partnership with our stakeholder community that includes consumers, families, service providers, staff members, corporate and community partners as well as the Department of Developmental Services—all of whom have made empowerment, advocacy and education their hallmarks. We are most proud that SCLARC has proven its commitment to South Los Angeles and the surrounding communities we serve for more than three and a half decades.

But even as we celebrate 35 years of service, California continues to be in a dire financial economic recession and its revenues are insufficient to meet all of the State's commitments. This means that there is still not enough money coming into the state Treasury to support all of the programs and services on which our stakeholders have come to rely. What it has meant for South Central Los Angeles Regional Center and its consumers, families and service providers is deep cuts to programs and services.





South Central L.A. Regional Center's Future

The changes made to the Lanterman Act by Trailer Bill AB9 means that from this point forward regional centers have to do business differently.

The Legislature and the Governor had no choice but to make very deep, and painful budget reductions in California's 2008-09 fiscal year budget. Many of the state's departments and systems were cut, including a \$384 million cut to the regional center system. Despite the reductions, there remains a commitment from the state to maintain the fundamental principals of the Lanterman Act. Unfortunately, the failure to increase revenues through propositions voted upon in a special election held in Spring 2009 indicated clearly that Californians were unwilling to pay more in taxes in order raise the much needed revenue so that vital social programs and services could stay in tact.

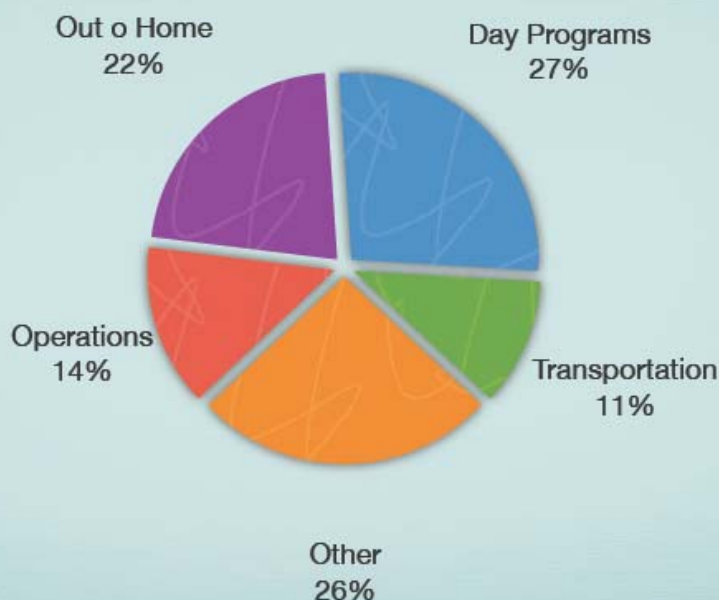
Nevertheless, SCLARC is calling on its stakeholders to work together now and in the years to come because failing to do so could put our entire system in jeopardy. It is only by working together that we will sustain the entitlement and the promise made to individuals diagnosed with developmental disabilities so long ago.

During FY 2008-09, the State of California experienced an unprecedented budget shortfall largely due to the severe national economic crisis. Every area of the state's government was impacted by this fiscal crisis, including the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). DDS is responsible, under the Lanterman Act, for ensuring that more than 240,000 California residents receive the services and supports needed to live independent and productive lives. These disabilities include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism and other similar conditions. Services are delivered directly through four state-operated developmental centers, two community facilities, and under contract with a statewide network of 21 nonprofit regional centers.

Each regional center contracts with DDS separately to coordinate services for individuals diagnosed with a developmental disability in its catchment area. SCLARC currently serves 10,400 consumers in the cities of Paramount, Cudahy, Downey, Bell Gardens, Huntington Park, South Gate, Compton and Carson, as well as the Los Angeles communities of Watts, the Crenshaw District, Leimert Park, View Park and Baldwin Hills.

In 2009, DDS developed and submitted to the Legislature two sets of savings proposals. The first set of proposals was submitted in April 2009 to achieve a General Fund savings target of \$100 million. The second set of proposals, submitted in June 2009, to achieve an additional General Fund savings of \$234 million. Together, the comprehensive action totaled \$334 million in General Fund savings. In past years, SCLARC has averaged an annual increase of approximately 400 consumers per year. In FY2008-09 consumer and caseload growth was cut nearly in half due to the drastic budget cuts. Below are South Central Los Angeles Regional Center's total expenditures for FY 08-09.

SCLARC Total Expenditures in FY 08-09



Total Budget \$144 Million

SCLARC Historical Expenditures

(in millions)



SCLARC Consumer and POS Growth



	FY 04-05	FY 05-06	FY 06-07	FY 07-08	FY 08-09
POS	\$95,085,079	\$99,241,610	\$108,772,017	\$116,381,896	\$124,443,622
Consumers	8,914	8,998	9,087	9,505	9,922

The support and resources that SCLARC has provided over the last 35 years has elevated, educated and empowered people diagnosed with developmental disabilities. Moreover, this support has shattered many preconceived notions held by those in the mainstream about persons with developmental disabilities.



Over the last 35 years, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center has formed a circle of support around our consumers and families. And in turn, our service providers and community partners have gathered around us in order to support the regional center's goals of providing the highest quality services possible. The impact of all of this support has had a rippling effect that has empowered SCLARC's consumers and families to find their own voices and to take action.

Part of society's unwritten social contract states that we are in fact our brother's keepers. As we uplift individuals diagnosed with a developmental disability, the community as a whole becomes a better place to live. For the last 35 years, SCLARC staff members and community partners have seen ourselves in the faces of those we serve. We know that if we are to continue to make a difference in the quality of life experienced by all who reside in South Los Angeles, we must lead by example.





Against what seems to be insurmountable odds, many of our consumers prevail showing the world that everyone has value and can contribute in ways that are priceless. Daily, through our work here at the regional center, SCLARC's staff members and service providers bear witness to our consumers' victories as they face and conquer life's obstacles.



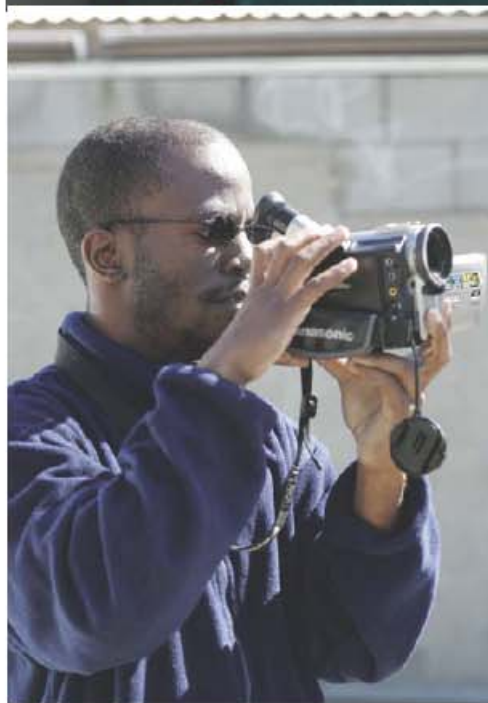
In many instances, our consumers have been written off as non-productive citizens whose voices are ignored. For 35 years, South Central Los Angeles Regional Center has celebrated those victories and the individuals whose "can do" spirits inspire us all to be better, to work harder and to fully embrace life—no matter what hurdles it may bring.



We are interconnected; it is as simple as that. It is with steadfast resolve that our consumers, families, service providers and staff members work and persevere—no matter how bleak the fiscal picture, no matter how daunting the task in front of us. We each look to the other for strength, hope and encouragement in times of adversity. And it's during times of hardship that our regional center and the entire service system has grown the most. We are committed to fulfilling the promise and hope of the Lanterman Act.

35 Years of Dedicated Service!

The Board of Directors for South Central Los Angeles Regional Center sincerely thank our stakeholders for their commitment and dedication. Your support and assistance is at the very heart of our service delivery system and we recognize and salute your efforts. Our combined efforts have created a legacy that we have been proud of for the last 35 years. We look forward to celebrating the next 35 years of advocacy, education and empowerment with all of you.



SCLARC STAKEHOLDER

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