

CDSA Inland Empire Caucus Legislative Breakfast 2015

A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS was the theme of the 11th Annual Legislative Breakfast by the Inland Empire Caucus, (OPARC CEO Andrea Erickson is the current chair) held on January 31st at the Ontario Doubletree Hotel. The event drew legislators, local government officials, funders, and service providers who learned more about the opportunities and challenges facing individuals with disabilities, their families and the programs that help them. Participants helped “mix” a great recipe using such key ingredients as choice, training and opportunity. The mix was “baked” in a giant oven, producing Success!

The featured speaker was advocate Carl London of the Department of Developmental Services.



Andrea Erickson, OPARC President/CEO, with Carol Fitzgibbons, Executive Director of Inland Regional Center



Carl London, Department of Developmental Services

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Thank You We Met Our Match

You may recall reading about a \$125,000 challenge grant that OPARC took on last spring from the Weingart Foundation. We received \$62,500 up front and needed to raise matching gifts within the next year to receive the remaining \$62,500 of the grant.

We are pleased to report that, with your support and dedication, OPARC met its match!

Thank you to the Weingart Foundation and all of you who made this match possible.



INFOZONE

NEXT SESSION: MARCH 21, 2015

Facts & Myths About Social Security / SSI Benefits

Does your family member receive SSI? Are you worried that they may lose their benefits if they become employed? Mr. Luis Luna from the Social Security Administration will lead us in an interactive session to answer questions about earnings, employment and benefits.

Why attend? Federal standards and California's Employment First Initiative state that competitive, minimum wage jobs have the highest priority for adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities. Learn how it's possible to earn money without losing SSI eligibility.

JOIN US

MARCH 21, 2015 AT 10 AM
FOR THIS FREE INFORMATIVE SESSION
RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY

TO R.S.V.P. CALL OR EMAIL

AMANDA WILLIS
(909) 985-3116 X155
AWILLIS@OPARC.ORG

Prime Healthcare Services
Proudly supports OPARC's 2nd Annual



Saturday, April 25, 2015 • 9 am - 1 pm
Ruben S. Ayala Park • Chino, CA

Come join us for OPARC's 2nd Annual fun day in the park! Fun Run, Walk or Roll in distances of 1K & 5K (not a timed event) - dogs are welcome, too!

- Carnival games, prizes, and face painting
- Vendor booths
- Health Fair
- Lunch, beverages, and dessert
- Opportunity drawings
- Entertainment

To register, visit www.oparc.org or contact Amanda Willis at
(909) 985-3116 x155 or awillis@oparc.org



@oparc_org #iHeartOparc2015

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The Face of Inspiration

Meet Junior, a participant in OPARC's Work Activity Program who recently earned his food handler certificate.

A Message from our
Chief Executive Officer

The economic outlook for the Inland Empire area has started to look up. Employment rates are recovering and more people are finding jobs. That's great news. However, for adults with disabilities, the prospect of finding employment does not improve with the local economy.

In this issue of Inspire you will read about one of OPARC's most successful programs, the Workforce Development Initiative. This program provides training, support and employment for over 335 adults with disabilities every year. It truly changes lives!

We introduce you to Mr. Buzz Cuccia, a longtime supporter and champion of OPARC. You will also meet Junior, an OPARC participant, who recently earned his food handlers certificate, opening up greater opportunities for employment. Additionally, we highlight one of our corporate partners, Wescom.

I want to thank each and every supporter of OPARC. It is your generosity that allows OPARC to provide the high quality programs and make a positive impact in so many lives. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Andrea Erickson
Andrea Erickson
Chief Executive Officer
aerickson@oparc.org

Friends That Inspire
Buzz Cuccia

Mr. Buzz Cuccia, owner of Vince's Spaghetti in Rancho Cucamonga, has employed OPARC participants to help clean and maintain his restaurant for the past fifteen years. He is continually impressed by the quality of work the OPARC participants produce, and enjoys providing an opportunity for them to earn a paycheck and gain some independence.

In addition to employing OPARC participants, Buzz regularly supports OPARC and enjoys participating in the special events. Most recently, Vince's Spaghetti donated food for OPARC's first annual Heart and Sole, Walk and Roll event. The pasta, meatballs and fresh bread were a big hit with the hungry walk and rollers!

Buzz opened Vince's Spaghetti in Rancho Cucamonga in 1984, almost forty years after his parents established the first Vince's Spaghetti in Ontario. His generosity continues a legacy of supporting OPARC that was established by his mother, Vicki Cuccia, over fifty years ago.

Buzz credits the on-site supervision and job-specific training provided by OPARC's Workforce Development Initiative as one reason OPARC employees perform such quality work.

OPARC is grateful to have Buzz as a long time supporter and friend of OPARC. Thank you Buzz and Vince's Spaghetti, for all your support and for providing OPARC participants with an opportunity to work. You are truly an inspiration.



Buzz Cuccia and his wife, Juli

The Face of Inspiration (continued from front)

OPARC transforms lives by providing job training, employment and support to adults with disabilities. One of the ways we measure the effectiveness of our programs is through the success of our participants. We celebrate and are inspired by seeing our participants lives improve as they learn new social skills, reduce behavioral incidents, and develop the capacity to work in and enjoy the local community.



One of our inspirations is Junior. In 2009 Junior started working in the OPARC café as a dishwasher but has since moved up to food prep and serving. Junior recently passed an exam to obtain his Food Handlers permit, qualifying him to work in the food industry outside of OPARC. He works the grill and prepares food for the OPARC participants and staff who eat at the OPARC café.

Employment transformed Junior's life by dramatically improving his communication and social skills. The Café Manager relies on Junior's ability to take direction and work independently.

His new opportunities have increased his confidence and he enjoys both his work and spending time with other OPARC participants.

Junior and all the participants of OPARC continue to inspire and encourage us as we work to support adults with disabilities to accomplish their goals and reach their dreams.



Andrea Erickson, OPARC President/CEO, with Shannon Rose



Wescom Employees at OPARC's Heart & Sole Walk & Roll



Wescom Employees at OPARC's Turkey Bowl

Corporate Partner Spotlight
Wescom Credit Union

OPARC is fortunate to have generous and supportive corporate partners. One such partner is Wescom Credit Union.

In 2012, after being nominated for consideration by Wescom employee Shannon Rose, OPARC was selected by the WeCare Foundation to receive charitable contributions for one full year.

Shannon first learned about OPARC when her sister became a participant in the Workforce Development Initiative. After witnessing first-hand the positive impact OPARC's programs have made in her sister's life, Shannon was excited to have OPARC selected.

Wescom employees continue to support OPARC by being active participants in OPARC events. The group participated in the annual Heart and Sole Walk and Roll event this past summer and most recently, had a blast looking like professional bowlers at the annual Turkey Bowl.

It is only through community partnerships that OPARC can provide the highest level of care and services to its participants. Thank you Wescom for your generous and ongoing support!

Program Spotlight
Workforce Development Initiative

OPARC's Workforce Development Initiative provides adults with developmental disabilities opportunities for paid employment, community integration, and social interaction. Employment Specialists work with participants to place them in jobs with community employers individually or in enclaves with support from a job coach. Each year, this initiative trains and places over 335 developmentally disabled adults in work activities.

OPARC operates two distinct employment programs within the Workforce Development Initiative:

Work Activity Program: More than 235 participants receive vocational skills training, paid work experience, individual case management services, and other services.

Supported Employment Program: Approximately 100 participants work in an integrated community environment and receive specialized services to overcome employment barriers. This program includes both individual placements and enclaves performing jobs such as cleaning stores, landscape maintenance, housekeeping, dishwashing, assembly services, or in local community businesses such as movie theaters.

The Workforce Development Initiative is one of OPARC's most successful and critical programs. Through employment, participants develop a sense of independence, increase their self-esteem, and experience community.

