

# ALTA CONNECTIONS

The Quarterly Client, Service Provider, and Staff Update Newsletter



*Learn more about our featured artist on page 13*

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*Executive Director Lori Banales*

Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) is growing!! I began working at ACRC in 1994. At that time, there were approximately 230 staff across the 10 counties we serve. Swing forward to today, ACRC has 855 (540 of which are service coordinators) covering Sacramento, Placer, Yolo, Yuba, Sutter, Colusa, El Dorado, Nevada, Alpine and Sierra counties. Our catchment area is 10,000 square miles spanning rural and metropolitan communities that each require services unique to their areas and their needs. Our Community Services (CS) Department works diligently to identify needed services and to assist vendor applicants through the vendorization process. Vendorization is a formal process where an organization or individual applies to become a provider of service. Depending upon the intended service, there will be varying requirements to meet. As our system grows, so too is the need to grow our vendored resources. Since 2023, the ACRC community services specialists have introduced 295 new service options when reviewing just 6 service categories that are highlighted at the end of this newsletter.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

ACRC is hosting our next quarterly Virtual community Meetings November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025- 11am-12pm

Please note: ACRC quarterly community meeting is intended to share updates across the organization and to engage with our community. This is not a space for client specific issues. Those discussions are welcomed at the Planning Team level or in a one-on-one conversation. Thank you for understanding the need to preserve client confidentiality. For additional information visit <https://www.altaregional.org/calendar> to get the link. No registration required.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - CONT.

There are many more service codes where development continues and the numbers in those areas also demonstrate the commitment of our teams to bring forward an array of resources. These resources are shared at the planning team by service coordinators based on assessed needs and desired outcomes expressed by the person who's served and/or their planning team. While 540 services coordinators are an impressive number, ACRC continues to recruit talented, caring professionals with a passion to serve people with developmental disabilities, to meet the needs of our growing community. ACRC is one of 21 regional centers in California, with the fourth largest client count. Recruiting new service coordinators is essential to support lower case load ratios, and we do so within a defined operations budget that is set at the beginning of each fiscal year. Over the past three months, we have welcomed 67 new employees, the majority of whom are service coordinators and management staff, to support new case management teams. The ACRC Human Resources team has expanded to support the agency's growth. There is focused effort and intention to attract job seekers and they are doing an outstanding job!

Hearing from our community is important. We would like to know what's working and what needs improvement. ACRC developed a Client/Family Satisfaction Survey that was provided after the completion of the Individual Program Plan (IPP). At the beginning of 2025, the Department of Developmental Services rolled out a statewide standardized IPP with a QR code linked to a satisfaction survey that is collected by the DDS to track satisfaction outcomes across each regional center. Having two survey options following the IPP created the impression of duplication and the survey completion across both options have been affected. ACRC has removed our internal link and is looking to develop an alternative survey that will not be associated with the IPP to receive feedback that will shape quality improvements at ACRC. We look forward to sharing the new option once it is ready for public posting.

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## DID YOU KNOW?



The Department of Developmental Services maintains an events calendar. Visit their calendar today to participate in upcoming stakeholder opportunities.

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/dds-events/>



# ACRC COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATES

We remain committed to meeting our community members where they are—offering interpretation services, translated materials, and a genuine openness to learn from those we serve. Over the past quarter, the Diversity Outreach Workgroup has actively participated in 19 outreach events across Sacramento, Yolo, and Placer counties. We're also proud to co-host listening and feedback sessions in partnership with local organizations. These collaborative efforts help us deepen relationships, foster trust, and enhance understanding of Regional Center services and the diverse needs of our communities.





# PROVIDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECEIVES UPDATE ON PAVE PILOT

On September 11, 2025, the Provider Advisory Committee (PAC) received a presentation by Dr. Julie Beadle-Brown regarding the PAVE project being piloted at ACRC beginning in Fall 2025.

The PAVE system helps people with disabilities and their families:

- ✓ Share important information with people who support them 🧑🧑
- ✓ Plan for the future and set goals 🎯
- ✓ Get information and training to make good choices 📖
- ✓ Check if services are working well ✅
- ✓ Share their experiences and feedback 💬
- ✓ Help improve services in California ⭐

The PAVE system also helps Service Providers and Regional Centers:

- ✓ Have up-to-date information about the people they support 📁
- ✓ Make good, person-centered plans 📝
- ✓ Get training and resources to do better 📚
- ✓ See how well they are doing 📊
- ✓ Find out what needs to be improved 🔧

**The PAC meets on the second Thursday of the month (except for August & December) from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

**To learn more please visit:  
<https://www.altaregional.org/provider-advisory-committee-pac>**



## MEETING OUR MISSION

At our board meetings, we highlight those activities that we feel truly meet the mission of the regional center. In July, Residential Client Services Manager (CSM), Rowena Lopez, and the family of client Forrest Dresslar, presented regarding his participation in the Self-Determination Program (SDP) and living in a licensed care home. Mrs. Lopez expressed appreciation to Forrest Dresslar and his family, Kyuss Meichtry's, Forrest's Service Coordinator (SC), and Ezra Estepa, one of the first residential providers to serve a client in SDP. Erica Dresslar, Forrest's sister, was happy to share their family's experience with SDP. To learn about SPD please contact your service coordinator and visit <https://www.altaregional.org/self-determination-program>.

Pictured: Sulma Ahumada (SC), Rowena Lopez (CSM), Mark Dresslar, Erica Dresslar, and Ezra Estepa.





## **JULY 2025 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

### **JASMINE HOLT**



We are pleased to announce that Jasmine Holt, Purchase of Service (POS) Analyst in our Accounting Department, has been selected as ACRC's Employee of the Month for July, 2025.

This recognition reflects Jasmine's remarkable achievements in her work and reflects her commitment to our employees and to those we serve. Jasmine is known for producing consistent, efficient, and flawless work. Many times, she silently solves problems to ensure each POS is submitted correctly. Jasmine offers education and feedback to anyone who requests support.

She is positive in her approach and readily makes herself available to answer questions. Jasmine works to enhance her understanding of the Self-Determination Program (SDP) and POS timelines. She is described as intelligent, resourceful, and kind. Her positive approach to partnering with employees across the agency has led her to her success. Congratulations, Jasmine!

## **AUGUST 2025 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

### **LUCIA HUTCHISON**

Lucia Hutchison has been a Service Coordinator at Alta for nearly 9 years! Lucia will go the extra mile to ensure her clients' needs are met; she does so while treating clients with kindness and respect. Lucia will complete the necessary tasks to manage her caseload, but she will also go the extra mile to ensure her clients are receiving the services they need.

Lucia's case files have been consistently audited, and it is noted that her client charts meet monitoring expectations each time. She understands agency core concepts and applies these concepts to assess client needs. Lucia consistently meets and exceeds agency standards. She routinely receives praise from our community sharing what a terrific service coordinator she is. Lucia has the respect of peers at the Woodland office. She both plans and participates in team activities.

Lucia is recognized by CSMs, Planning Teams Members and SCs for her professionalism and compassionate demeanor. Lucia can problem-solve issues needing very little direction, which lead to successful outcomes. She is thoughtful when considering the needs of clients and follows a person-centered approach. It is obvious that Lucia strives to support her clients and her peers. Lucia is an essential part of her unit and the agency as a whole. Congratulations, Lucia! Well deserved!



## SEPTEMBER 2025 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

### AMY MCCREARY, BCBA

Amy manages a specialized multidisciplinary team (e.g., dental coordinator, speech pathologist, nurses, behavior analysts) and has become fluent in services and service standards that she herself has not received formalized training in.



She champions a supportive work environment in which she provides guidance and expertise to her team. Her guidance is valued due to her deep agency knowledge, gained through many years of service across ACRC departments.

As a behavior analyst herself, Amy incorporates a client's individual needs and perspectives into her recommendations for services while guiding her team to do the same. She promotes an environment in which the focus is on individual service needs planning, promoting independence, and ensuring that dignity and respect of all individuals that ACRC serves is at the forefront of every planning team meeting, internal meeting, and committee.

Amy is a consummate professional who inspires confidence and makes her team proud to be part of such a great team. Congratulations, Amy!

## ACRC HOSTS DDS FIRST LOIS PUBLIC FORUM

The Life Outcomes Improvement System, or LOIS, will be a new, online system for case management and financial information. LOIS will be available to everyone to manage information about regional center services, communication, schedules, and provider payments. It will find new ways to serve you better. LOIS might be able to help you to do things like:

- Make it easier to talk with your regional center and the Department
- See your information any time, from anywhere
- Share updates and documents with your service coordinator
- Provide new tools to make support choices and improve life outcomes





## ACRC CELEBRATES DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION WEEK

In celebration of Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week, ACRC shared amazing stories about the hard working on our social media. Please follow us on social media for regular updates that are important to our developmental disability community.



In celebration of Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week, meet DSP Chris! Recently, Chris displayed heroic courage when he witnessed a house on fire while driving by. Without hesitation, he entered the burning home and carried a disabled child out to safety.

Read more <https://www.altaregional.org/post/chris>



In celebration of DSP Recognition Week, meet Nicole! She has worked at On My Own Independent Living Services since July 2020 as an ILS Skills Trainer. Nicole has a natural way of connecting with clients and is a strong advocate.

Read more: <https://www.altaregional.org/post/nicole-0>

## INTRODUCING NEW LEGAL SERVICES MANAGER JORDAN CODY

Jordan Cody is a graduate of McGeorge School of Law and California State University, Fresno. He served six years in the United States Marine Corps before beginning his career in public service. Prior to joining ACRC, Jordan worked at a nonprofit law firm providing legal services and advocacy for veterans, combining his legal training with his passion for service. Outside of work, he enjoys time with his wife and two children.



# SERVICE PROVIDERS: HIRE FASTER. HIRE QUALITY. GROW YOUR TEAM WITH THE DSP INTERNSHIP PROGRAM!

The Direct Support Professional (DSP) Internship Program is a meaningful statewide initiative all California service providers are encouraged to participate in! It's a great opportunity to hire and keep more DSPs! Each intern placed with a service provider is vetted and paid for up to three months.

Did we say PAID? Yes, each intern's salary is paid by the Internship Program for up to three months. You choose how to move forward with the option to hire interns at any time during the process. If hired, your new employee can earn a \$625 retention stipend for reaching 6-month and 12-month employment milestones. That's an extra \$1,250 of potential earnings to support quality staff!

What are participating service providers saying?

"Over the past year, partnering with DDS for the DSP Internship Program has been a game-changer." — Chris Martin, UCP of Stanislaus County

"We couldn't be happier with the program and recommend it to all. It's been an incredible resource for our company's growth." — Matt Baker, Shield of Dreams of Orange County

"In today's challenging hiring environment, this initiative has proven to be a valuable resource in identifying and onboarding quality entry-level candidates." — A Better Life Together, Inc., based in San Diego

For service providers that would like to know more about the program, we're prepared to guide you each step of the way.

Step 1: Email the DSP Internship Program staff to express interest in participating.

Step 2: All's Well will contact you directly, survey your program needs and work with you to execute a Provider Participation Agreement.

Step 3: You'll collaborate with All's Well team to make each intern placement.

There is no better time for service providers to join this program than now! The individuals we support face daily challenges as staffing shortages often force providers like you to have to turn away new referrals. Statewide, positive strides are already being made with nearly 300 interns placed with service providers over the past year, and 100 hired on as regular staff.



**DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP)**  
**INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

## **Job Seekers -**

*See next page for important information for those looking to start working in the disability support field.*





## DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP) INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



# DISCOVER A CAREER WITH HEART

**Intern with us!** Take your first step toward a community service career that can lead to a future with stable employment, benefits, and more!

**“This job is just amazing!”**

— Ailene Baron, Direct Support Professional, Dreams of America (Irvine, California)

## CALIFORNIA JOB SEEKERS

### DON'T MISS THIS PAID INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

- Receive on-the-job training working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Get paid for up to three months while you test out a career where every day is filled with meaning and giving back to your community.
- If hired, you'll receive an incentive stipend of \$625 after 6 and 12 months of employment, respectively.



### QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be 18 years or older
- Must have a High School Diploma (or equivalent) or a Certificate of Completion
- Must have a valid Identification Card
- Must pass a background check and other required health screenings

Learn more  
about DDS at:  
[www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)

**Your Future Starts Now**  
[dspinternship.allswell.com](http://dspinternship.allswell.com)



**Follow DDS on  
Social Media!**

Instagram: @CalDDS\_  
Facebook: @CaliforniaDDS  
LinkedIn: @DDSCareers



## ACRC HOSTING LISTENING SESSIONS

At ACRC, we deeply value the voices of our community. Building lasting, trusting relationships with local and community-based organizations, especially those serving individuals who face linguistic, cultural, or geographic barriers, is central to our mission. These partnerships help strengthen access to natural supports, community resources, and regional center services for those who need them most. We're especially grateful for the feedback shared during our annual Purchase of Service data meetings. As part of our ongoing commitment to listening and learning, we're expanding opportunities for dialogue through additional feedback sessions. These conversations help us grow together and deepen the connections we share with the communities we serve.

### **Listening and Feedback Sessions:**

In May, at La Familia Counseling Center, we discussed ACRC's intake process, qualifying conditions, and common misconceptions.

In August, two sessions were held at the LGBTQ Center. The group discussed how to address disparities, including learning what to expect from a SC, training for employees, and letting them know that they can be a path or a barrier to services.

On September 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, two sessions are scheduled at the Sac Youth Center as an opportunity to learn about developmental disabilities and resources offered through ACRC, and for the community to share their needs, concerns, and potential barriers to access.

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, at the State Council on Developmental Disabilities one session is scheduled for Black/African American families to discuss resources offered through ACRC, for families to share their needs, concerns, and experiences, and to identify barriers to access and opportunities for stronger support.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, individuals with Cerebral Palsy are invited to join a listening and feedback session to learn about what is working well and what service needs are difficult to obtain:  
[Listening Session - Alta California Regional Center](#)







## **CLINICAL CORNER COMPASSIONATE CARE TRAINING: BUILDING SKILLS WITH HEART AND PURPOSE**

ACRC's multidisciplinary Clinical Services Department often provides vendor and community training opportunities. Recently, ACRC's Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) hosted and provided a Compassionate Care Training for Direct Service Providers (DSPs) supporting residents being served across two Enhanced Behavior Support Homes (EBSH), one Community Crisis Home (CCH), and one Adult Residential Facilities for Persons with Special Health Care Needs (ARFPSHN). DSPs in these homes are tasked with implementing complex interventions and treatment plans to ensure the safety and well-being of the residents they support.

The Compassionate Care Training was developed to increase education and awareness, and to support DSPs who provide care in specialized homes, serving individuals with unique needs. With efforts to ensure a person-centered approach to care and support, this training integrates empathy, ethics, and evidence-based behavior analytic strategies into daily practice. Through scenarios, discussions, self-reflection, and behavioral skills training, DSPs explored how factors such as personal stress, trauma, and biases can shape interactions with clients and coworkers. This training focused on three core areas of opportunity to provide a more compassionate approach to care and support; understanding and defining compassion, identifying moments for compassionate action, and empowering staff to support one another.

In alignment with ACRC's vision, "A community where individuals with developmental disabilities are valued members who are treated with dignity and respect", hosting trainings and discussions about compassionate care emphasizes that treatment and care require not only technical skills but also the necessity for empathy, honoring dignity, and ensuring respect to support improving quality of life for all.

## **NOTICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF A SIGNED INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM PLAN**

ACRC is required by law to have a signed Individual Program Plan (IPP) before we can implement services and supports. The IPP is a collaborative document that outlines the goals, services, and supports identified by you and your planning team.

In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code 4646(g), ACRC cannot authorize or provide services until the IPP is signed. This step ensures that you have full participation in the planning process and that services are delivered according to your choices and needs. We encourage all clients and families to review and sign their IPP promptly so that services can begin without delay.



## UPDATE ON NEW VENDORIZATIONS

ACRC remains committed to resource development that meets the expressed needs of our stakeholders. We continue to expand our services throughout our ten counties. Though we are only approaching the completion of the third quarter of our calendar year, we are making excellent strides to vendor those services most requested by our community. This calendar year, with the implementation of the DDS Rate Study, we are now vendoring our Early Start Speech Therapy services under Service Code 116 - Early Start Specialized Therapeutic Services. We continue to expand this service area, as well as social recreation, residential care, Independent and Supported Living.

Service Code	Service Description	2023	2024	Year to Date 2025
915	Residential Staff Operated Adults	21	50	51
8	Sports Club	3	25	10
520	Independent Living Program	10	9	12
707	Early Start - Speech Pathologist	14	22	
116	Early Start Specialized Therapeutic Services		3	17
896	Supported Living Services	10	19	19

## WHO SHOULD YOU CALL WHEN YOU NEED ASSISTANCE?

Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) is dedicated to helping clients access the services and supports you need. Here is who to contact when you need immediate support.

Step 1: Call your Service Coordinator (SC).

Step 2: Call your SC's manager (Client Services Manager). Your SC's Manager's name and phone number is listed at the bottom of your SC's email signature line.

Step 3: Call one of ACRC's Directors of Client Services: Jennifer Bloom @ (916) 978-6572 or Mechelle Johnson @ (916) 978-6653

*\*Please note that our reception desk is ready to assist you in connecting with the person you need to reach. Please call: (916) 978-6400.\**

ACRC is committed to meeting your needs through excellent customer service.



## CELEBRATING A WELL-EARNED RETIREMENT



ACRC Client Russell Julien was recently able to retire from his job. During an interview, Russell said “I worked at McDonalds in El Dorado Hills for 27 years, I started in April of 1998. McDonalds threw me a retirement party on my last week at work. I enjoyed working and talking with my coworkers and the customers that came in. I enjoyed washing dishes and also talking about the news with the customers when I cleaned the dining room. In my retirement I am looking forward to creating art at MORE and making new friends.”



When he wasn't working, Russell enjoyed reading science fiction novels, watching old 80's movies, and drawing. He is very excited about getting more time to do them. Russell's Manager and SEP worker said that Russell was punctual, completed his job and was always ready to help where needed. He greeted everyone that walked through the doors with a smile. Russell is truly an inspiration to all and from everyone here at ACRC we hope that he enjoys his well-earned retirement. You can read more here: [https://www.mt democrat.com/prospecting/27-years-on-the-job-celebrating-a-well-earned-retirement/collection\\_d26811c7-0a9b-4277-b6d1-9355ec82dac0.html](https://www.mt democrat.com/prospecting/27-years-on-the-job-celebrating-a-well-earned-retirement/collection_d26811c7-0a9b-4277-b6d1-9355ec82dac0.html)



## FEATURED ARTIST DEANNE BRIDGES

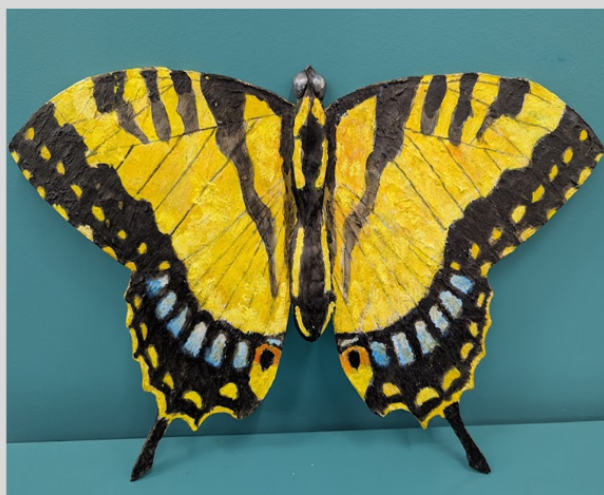


It is with great pleasure that we introduce Deanne Bridges, who attends Mother Lode Rehabilitation Services (MORE) in Placerville. Deanne draws inspiration from many different areas, with a specialty in 3D art. She focuses on perfecting her creations, which can sometimes take six months to a year to complete, with support from her instructors David and Janet. Her passion for art began with her mother, who was also an artist, and both of her brothers have been involved in creating art as well.

Deanne is a breast cancer survivor with a strong passion for sports. Over 36 years of competing in Special Olympics, she has earned an amazing 316 medals in events such as swimming, bowling, and bocce ball. She has also been inducted into Sacramento State's Sports Hall of Fame, another remarkable achievement.

Deanne showcases her 3D art at MORE's gallery and their yearly Art & Wine event. She plans to participate in future Microenterprise Fairs at ACRC and has already commissioned several pieces for community members. Featured in this spotlight are her Scrub Jay, Swallowtail Butterfly, Grizzly Bear, and American Bald Eagle.

If you are interested in purchasing Deanne's artwork or commissioning a piece, please contact MORE Executive Director, Kelli Nuttall, at (530) 622-4848 or [NuttallK@morerehab.org](mailto:NuttallK@morerehab.org)





**REAL INPUT.**



**REAL IMPACT.**

**Help shape the future of services and support for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) in California.**

The California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) is updating its five-year plan — and we want **input** from all Californians.

**Take the survey:**



<https://bit.ly/3JgTkgd>

**Get Involved:**

- Let us know what matters most to you, your family, and community
- Your **input** will shape SCDD's **impact** and priorities over the next five years

**Deadline: October 15, 2025**

**For more information:** <https://scdd.ca.gov/stateplandevlopment/>