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# ACCESS

*Newsletter*

**INLAND REGIONAL CENTER**



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# Meet the Community Engagement Team



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**Gregory Harrison**

*Consumer Advocate*



**George Gonzalez**

*Consumer Support Technician IV (CST IV)*

# Meet the Community Engagement Team



**Ismeth Estrada**

*Consumer Support Technician II (CST II)*



**Steven Serrano Yopez**

*Community Relations Specialist*



**Lesley Benitez**

*IRC Parent Ambassador*

# Meet the Service Access Equity Team



**Ruth Armstead**

*Manager - Service Access and Equity*



**Martín Morales**

*Language Access and Cultural Competency (LACC) Specialist*



**Maria Isabel (Mari) Rodriguez**

*Cultural Specialist*



**Estefania (Fania) Pena**

*Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Cultural Specialist*

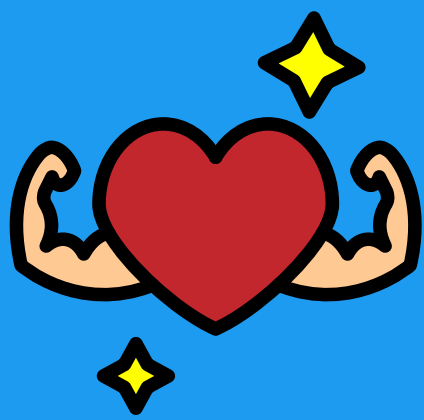
# Meet the Service Access Equity Team



**Mitzi Gomez**  
ASL Facilitator



**Janera Valdez**  
*LACC Bi-Lingual Consumer Service Technician (CST) III*



# Editor's Note:

## A Season of Connection and Community


### By Community Engagement

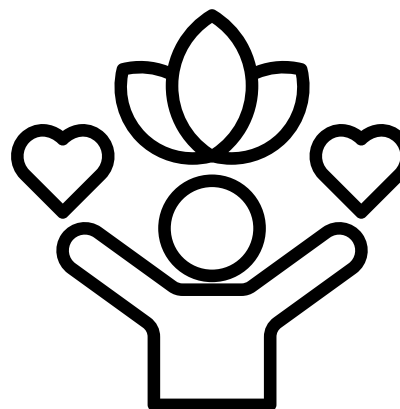
As we welcome January 2026, we step into a new year filled with possibility, renewal, and intention. This month offers a natural moment to reset, reflect, and recommit to caring for ourselves and one another. After the pace of the holidays, January invites us to slow down, listen to our bodies, and focus on habits that support long-term health and wellness.

Health and wellness look different for everyone. For some, it may mean becoming more active—taking daily walks, stretching, or finding movement that feels joyful and accessible. For others, it may involve nourishing the body with balanced meals, staying hydrated, or building routines that support rest and mental well-being. Every small step matters, and progress is built through consistency, not perfection.

At IRC, we believe wellness is holistic. It includes physical health, emotional balance, and the support systems that help individuals thrive. Being active, eating well, and prioritizing self-care are not just personal goals—they are community values that strengthen our collective well-being. When we support one another in making healthier choices, we create a culture of encouragement and empowerment.

January is also a time to set realistic, meaningful goals. Whether you're starting fresh or continuing a journey already in motion, remember to move at your own pace and honor what works best for you. Celebrate small victories, be kind to yourself, and don't hesitate to seek support when needed. As we begin this new year together, let's focus on building healthy routines, staying connected, and supporting one another along the way. Your well-being matters, and you are never alone on this journey.

We're here for you—today and throughout the year. 





## **Resource Development and Transportation Unit Presents All Abilities Crafts and Cheer**

**By Amanda McGuire- RDTU Program Manager**

For those who aren't familiar IRC's Resource Development and Transportation Unit (RDTU) under is responsible for developing all services provided to the individuals IRC serves, authorizes, and oversees all transportation services, oversees employment services, and creates DDS funded projects annually for unmet and ever growing disparity needs of our individuals. Many members of the unit have come from a background in this industry that involved more direct service with our consumers. However the nature of this unit means less direct contact with consumers, something the Program Manager of this unit especially misses.

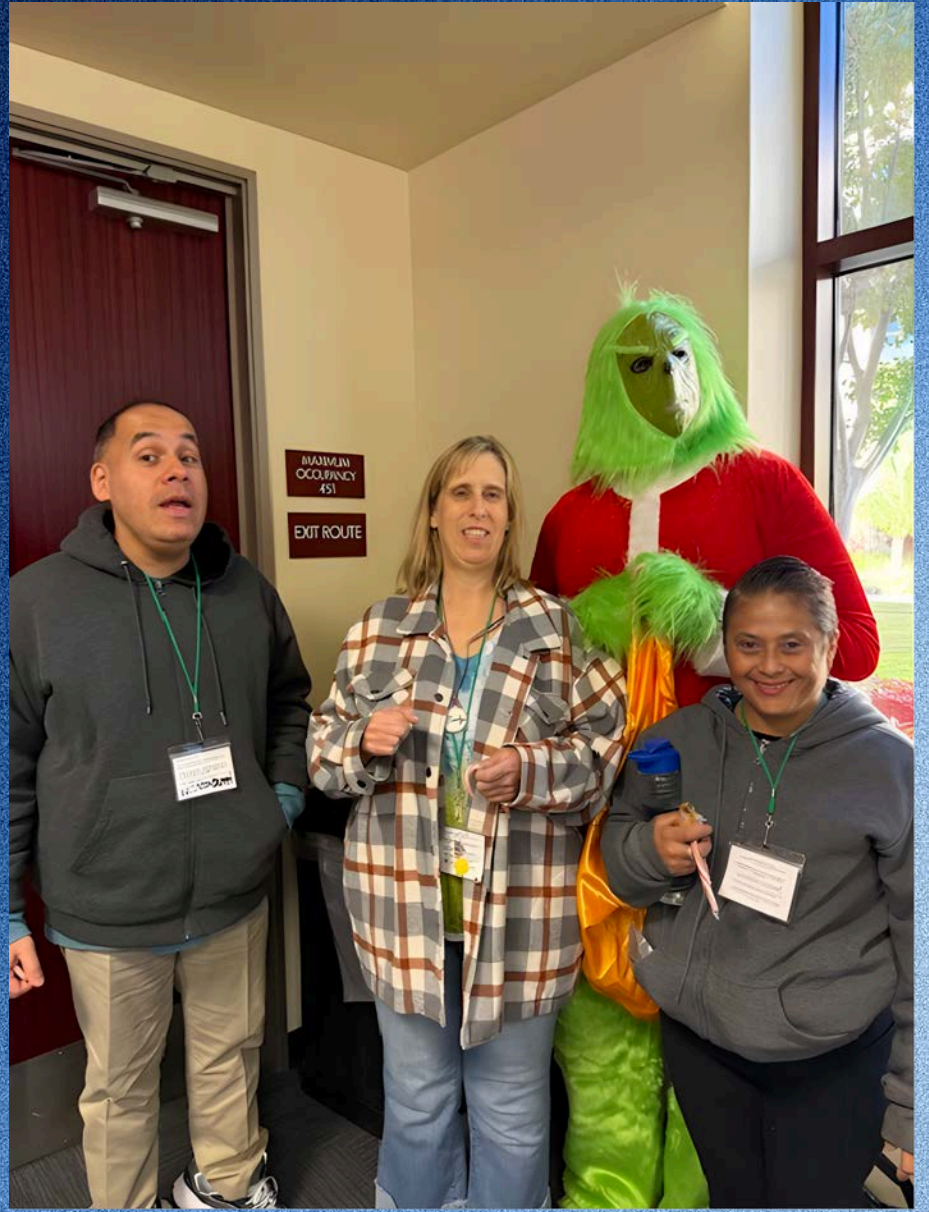
However, as this unit works very closely with our vendors, for the last two years they have been able to give a little back to the vendors and spend time with the consumers we miss interacting with on a regular basis. It started in 2024 with a visit to a day program, spending a day doing holiday crafts. Then after working closely with Sofia Benitez from 24 Hour Home Care, in her capacity as the Vendor Advisory Committee Chair, RDTU Program Manager chose to take the 2024 activity and create it on a larger scale. Sofia and 24 Hour Home Care collaborated with RDTU in creating the All Abilities Crafts and Cheer event on December 4, 2025. This event was hosted for IRC's adult consumers as a fun outing with their day program and in total 143 consumers participated in the event, along with their staff. In addition to RDTU staff, more than 40 IRC staff volunteered their time to make this event a success.



he event would not have been complete without a very special guest appearance. In addition to the Grinch, two additional beloved characters joined the celebration—Buddy the Elf and Santa Claus himself. A special thank you is extended to Josue Aravelo and Nguyen Vu, whose efforts made these memorable moments possible.

In summary, this was a meaningful and well-attended event that would not have been possible without the dedication and support of many partners and volunteers. We sincerely thank the RDTU staff, Sofia Benitez and 24 Hour Home Care, Chasing Seven Dreams, Creating a Legacy, CJ Cook, the McGuire family, Nguyen Vu, the Benitez-Arevalo family, and our IRC staff volunteers. Their commitment and collaboration were instrumental to the success of this event. RDTU and all of Santa's Helpers look forward to returning in 2026 for the 2nd Annual All Abilities Craft and Cheer.

Community members interested in becoming a service provider for Inland Regional Center (IRC) clients are encouraged to learn more by visiting <https://www.inlandrc.org/vendorization/>. For additional information, please contact IRC's Resource Development and Transportation Unit (RDTU) by calling (909) 890-3000, press 0, and ask for the RDTU Duty Officer, or by emailing [resource@inlandrc.org](mailto:resource@inlandrc.org).







## **The Intermediate Care Facilities Holiday Breakfast – A Joyful 2025 Celebration**

**By Brooke Chambers ICF Program Manager**

In December 2025, Inland Regional Center (IRC) proudly continued a beloved tradition with the annual **Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) Holiday Breakfast**. This festive gathering once again brought together ICF consumers, staff, and community partners for a morning filled with warmth, celebration, and holiday cheer.

This year's event welcomed **23 ICF vendors** and **175 ICF consumers**, who attended alongside dedicated staff members. With everyone combined, total attendance reached **just under 300 guests**, creating a lively and joyful atmosphere throughout the celebration.

IRC extends heartfelt appreciation to the ICF Unit and In-Roads staff, who generously volunteered their time to ensure the event ran smoothly. A special thank-you also goes to our volunteer Santa Claus, Adrian Rivera, whose cheerful presence brought smiles to faces young and old alike.

We are especially grateful to our sponsor, Sharon Barton, for her continued support and commitment to making this event possible.



### **A Festive Morning to Remember**

The 2025 ICF Holiday Breakfast captured the true spirit of the season, offering an inclusive and welcoming space where clients could celebrate, connect, and create joyful memories.

Highlights of the event included:

- **Photos with Santa:** A favorite tradition that gave attendees the chance to capture special holiday moments
- **Photo Booth Fun:** Guests enjoyed posing with festive props and backdrops
- **Face Painting:** Adding color, creativity, and excitement to the day
- **Arts and Crafts:** Hands-on activities that encouraged self-expression and creativity
- **Delicious Food:** A shared meal that brought everyone together
- **Dancing and Music:** The highlight of the celebration, filling the room with energy, laughter, and joy

The combination of activities ensured there was something for everyone to enjoy, making the morning truly unforgettable.



## **A Community Effort**

The success of the ICF Holiday Breakfast reflects the dedication and teamwork of IRC staff, volunteers, and community partners. Their collaboration created a welcoming environment where clients felt celebrated and valued.

Events like this underscore IRC's commitment to fostering meaningful connections and enriching the lives of those we serve.

## **Celebrating the Season Together**

The 2025 ICF Holiday Breakfast was more than a holiday gathering—it was a reminder of the power of community, inclusion, and shared joy. IRC thanks everyone who contributed their time, energy, and support to make this celebration a success.

Wishing all our ICF consumers, families, partners, and supporters a joyful and memorable holiday season.

If you want to learn more about the Intermediate Care Facilities visit:

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/icf/>



## **Holiday Community Celebration Featuring the California State Capitol Tree**

**By: Monica G. Munguia, M.A.—  
Community Engagement Program Manager**

*“This was certainly a Night of Inclusion, Resilience, and Community Giving”*

Each holiday season, the California State Capitol becomes a place where tradition, community, and inclusion shine brightly together. On **Wednesday, December 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.**, families, community members, and visitors gathered on the **West Lawn of the State Capitol** for a meaningful and festive evening celebrating the **94th Annual California State Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony**—a beloved tradition that reflects the heart of California’s values.

This year’s celebration was especially powerful, highlighting resilience, community connection, and the enduring importance of supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



### **A Tradition Rooted in Inclusion**

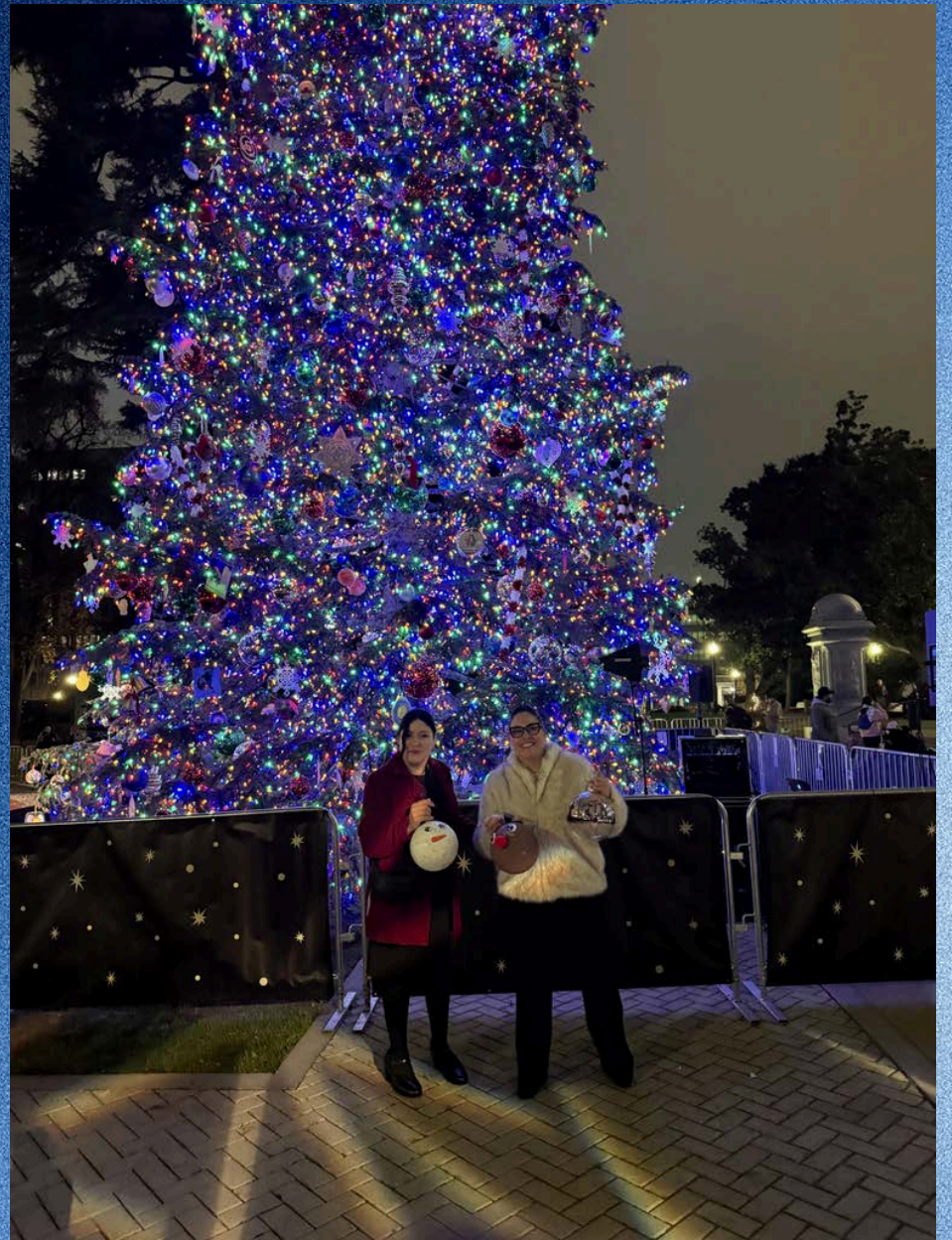
Since **1983**, the Capitol Tree has been displayed outdoors and decorated with handcrafted ornaments created by **Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities**. Each ornament represents creativity, pride, and the voices of individuals whose contributions are central to our communities.

For the **third consecutive year**, all **21 of California's nonprofit regional centers** participated by displaying their own **six-foot holiday trees**, adding to the warmth, beauty, and inclusivity of the celebration. Together, these trees served as a visible reminder of California's statewide commitment to supporting more than **480,000 children and adults** who receive services through the regional center system under the **Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act**.

### **Honoring Jude and Rebecca Kessler: A Story of Hope and Resilience**

This year's tree lighting ceremony featured **Jude and Rebecca Kessler**, five-year-old twins from **Altadena**, who joined **Governor Gavin Newsom** and **First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom** to light the Capitol Tree.

Selected by the **San Gabriel/Pomona Regional Center (SG/PRC)**, Jude and Rebecca represented not only children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, but also the strength of families who persevere through extraordinary challenges.



Diagnosed with **autism**, the twins began receiving **Early Intervention Services** through their regional center at the age of two. Earlier this year, their family experienced a devastating loss when their home was destroyed in the **Eaton Fire**. Throughout this crisis, SG/PRC provided ongoing support to help maintain stability, routine, and continued developmental progress for the twins.

Jude is known for his love of drawing, music, and trains—often proudly wearing his conductor’s hat at home. Rebecca is rarely without her favorite Santa hat and carries a stuffed reindeer year-round. Their joyful presence at the Capitol Tree Lighting underscored the importance of **community-based supports**, particularly during emergencies, and highlighted how regional centers are prepared to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and their families.

As **Pete Cervinka, Director of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**, shared: “Jude and Rebecca embody the heart and hope of the holiday season. Despite facing challenges no child should encounter, their enthusiasm and curiosity shine through. We are proud to have them represent Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities at this year’s Tree Lighting Ceremony.”



## A Holiday Celebration for the Whole Community

In addition to the tree lighting, the evening featured a **Holiday Community Celebration and Food Drive**, welcoming the public from **7:00 to 9:00 p.m.** Families enjoyed a festive atmosphere filled with activities designed to bring people together, including:

- A **holiday train** for children
- A **cookie station** for families to enjoy
- **Music from a local DJ**, leading a joyful countdown to the tree lighting

These elements created a welcoming, family-friendly environment that reflected the spirit of the season.

## Giving Back Through the Holiday Food Drive

New this year, the celebration also included a **Holiday Food Drive** hosted by the **Governor's Office of Community Service and Engagement (GO-Serve)** in partnership with **Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services**.

Community members were encouraged to donate much-needed food items, including:

- Peanut butter
- Canned tuna or chicken
- Beans
- Soups and stews
- Canned vegetables
- Canned fruit

Every contribution—large or small—helped support local families and reinforced the message that the holidays are a time for compassion, generosity, and collective care.

## Sharing the Celebration Statewide

To ensure access for all, the **Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony** was **live streamed** on the **Governor's Office YouTube and Facebook channels**, allowing families and community members across California to take part in the celebration.



## **A Lasting Message of Unity**

The Holiday Community Celebration featuring the California State Capitol Tree was more than a seasonal event—it was a reflection of California’s commitment to inclusion, resilience, and service. From the handcrafted ornaments to the stories of strength and recovery, the evening reminded us that when communities come together, we create spaces where everyone belongs.

As we move through the holiday season, may this celebration continue to inspire connection, generosity, and hope throughout the year.

**Link to the Governor Newsom, First Partner Host 94th Annual Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony:**

<https://www.youtube.com/live/fBDkD9rQ8A8>

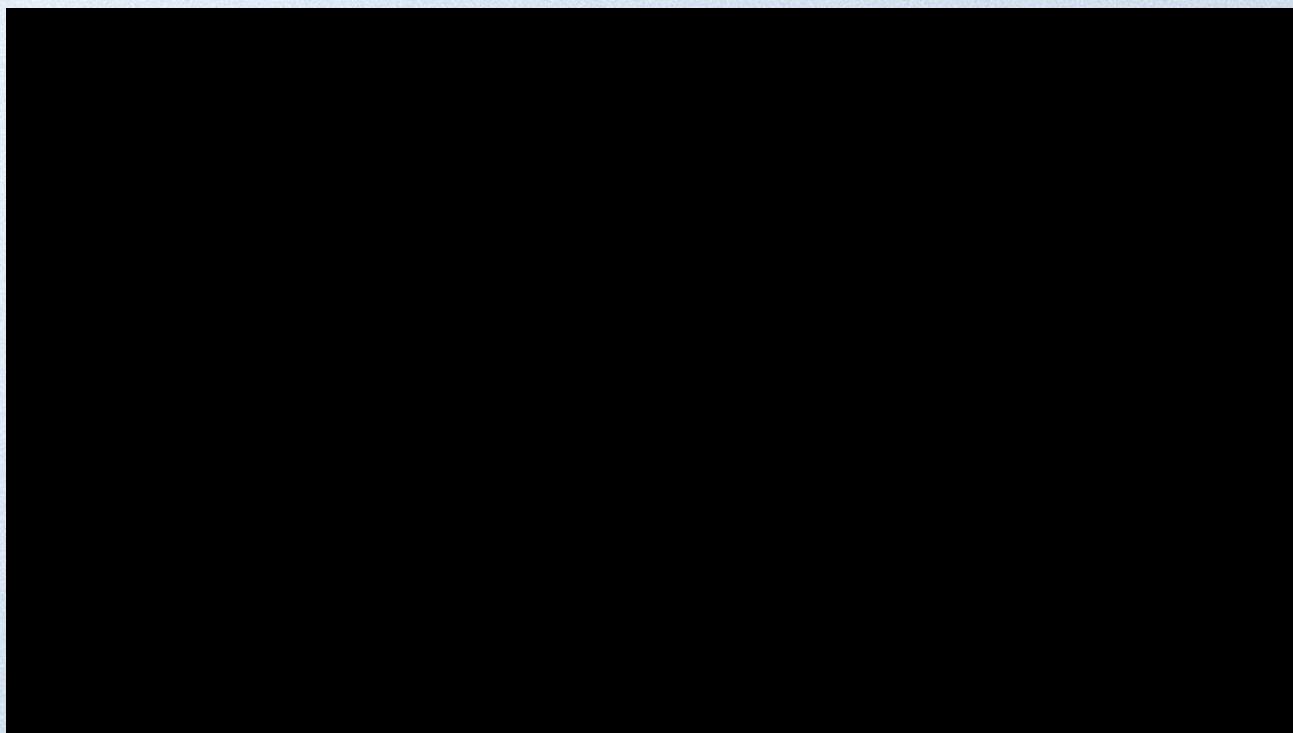


# A Season of Giving: Celebrating 25 Years of the Another Way Toy Drive

**By Andrea Gonzalez, Another Way Coordinator**

For more than 25 years, the **Another Way Toy Drive** has been a beloved Inland Regional Center (IRC) tradition—one that brings joy, dignity, and holiday magic to hundreds of children and families across San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

Each year, the Toy Drive reflects the power of community, compassion, and collaboration, reminding us that together, we truly can make a difference.





### **From Wishes to Reality: How the Toy Drive Begins**

The planning begins early—long before the holiday season is in full swing. In September, the “elves” of Another Way get to work, coordinating referrals from Consumer Service Coordinators. Families must meet HUD’s low-income guidelines to participate, ensuring support reaches those who need it most. Once the list is finalized, the much-anticipated **Giving Tree** appears in Building 2’s lounge the Monday after Halloween. Each ornament holds the holiday wishes of Inland Regional Center consumers and their siblings—simple requests filled with big dreams.

### **Community Partners Make the Magic Possible**

IRC staff, along with generous partners such as **Maulin Home Care** and **Ingram Micro**, step in to fulfill these wishes. This year alone, **205 consumers and their siblings** were served. The most popular requests from Santa included monster trucks, art kits, and K-POP Demon Hunter dolls.

All of this preparation leads up to the Toy Drive Event, traditionally hosted on the **second Wednesday in December**.



### **A Magical Day to Remember**

This year's celebration was hosted at **Couture Events**, which graciously donated their beautifully decorated venue. The event was free for all attending families—made possible through the generosity of Another Way's sponsors, including:

- Inland Respite, Inc.
- In-Roads Creative Programs, Inc.
- Pathway, Inc.
- The Law Offices of Phillip Sparks, APC
- Creating a Legacy
- Maulin Home Care Services
- Cambrian
- Ingram Micro
- Shella Care
- 24 Hour Home Care
- Laura Gonzales

Families enjoyed a spaghetti dinner, festive desserts, music, reindeer games, a bubble show, photos with the Clauses, and—most importantly—gifts thoughtfully selected for each child.

Accessibility and inclusion are always a priority. Gifts are chosen with each child's abilities in mind, avoiding blinking lights when necessary, and ensuring wide, wheelchair-friendly pathways throughout the venue. Dedicated volunteers play a critical role in bringing this vision to life.

## **Impact That Lasts All Year Long**

This year's Toy Drive raised an incredible **\$28,000**. These funds not only supported the event itself but also contributed to **Another Way's Safety-Net and Health & Wellness Programs**, which serve consumers throughout the year.

Another Way is deeply grateful for the volunteers, sponsors, and donors whose generosity makes this outreach possible. The Toy Drive is more than a holiday event—it's a reminder of what our community can achieve together.

## **Who Are We?**

Founded in **1986**, **Another Way** is an Inland Regional Center program that provides **emergency assistance** to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in **San Bernardino and Riverside Counties**. Funded entirely through **donations, fundraising, and grants**, Another Way offers critical support such as rent assistance, food, utilities, and health-related services—helping where traditional systems cannot.

Its impact is made possible by IRC staff, volunteers, sponsors, and community members who give back through events like food and toy drives.

For those inspired to help, the program overview includes an **Another Way Payroll Deduction Form**, allowing employees to contribute through payroll—monthly, per paycheck, or as a one-time annual donation. Contributions roll over annually unless changed in writing, making it an easy and sustainable way to support families who rely on Another Way's vital services.

## **Get Involved**

To learn more or get involved, visit [www.anotherway.org](http://www.anotherway.org) or contact **Andrea Gonzales** at **(909) 890-3045** or [amgonzales@inlandrc.org](mailto:amgonzales@inlandrc.org).

## **👉 Donate to Another Way**

Your generosity helps fund emergency assistance, health and wellness programs, and community events like the Toy Drive.

**Donate now:** <https://anotherway.org/donate-now/>

Wishing everyone a **Happy New Year** filled with hope, generosity, and community.



# Winter Wonderland Christmas Resource Fair

**By Mari Rodriguez, IRC Cultural Specialist**

On Friday, December 12, Inland Regional Center hosted its Winter Wonderland Christmas Resource Fair, welcoming over 100 attendees for an evening of community, connection, and holiday cheer.

This event was an LACC Project funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and is planned to continue as an annual Service Access & Equity (SAE) Team event. Designed to engage families with little to no Purchase of Services (POS), Winter Wonderland provided a warm, inclusive space for families to connect with IRC and community resources.

Families enjoyed dinner, children's crafts, and an ASL story time, while 20 community partners, including SAE grantee community-based organizations, shared resources and support. The event was made possible through collaboration with 24HR, Inroads, Chasing 7 Dreams, the Community Engagement Team, and other community partners.

“I wanted to express my gratitude for the invitation to your event last Friday. The feedback from families and parents was overwhelmingly positive, and one of our trainers had an excellent experience it was her first time attending.”

— Jamyne Randolph, Community Partner

Winter Wonderland highlighted IRC's continued commitment to reducing disparities, strengthening partnerships, and expanding equitable access for the families we serve.







## **IRC CAC Winter Gala Celebrates Community, Style, and Joy**

**By Greg Harrison, Client Advocate**

On December 15, 2025, Inland Regional Center proudly hosted the **IRC CAC Winter Gala**, a memorable evening filled with community, connection, and celebration. The event brought together IRC consumers, families, advocates, and partners for a night that truly honored joy, inclusion, and togetherness.

We extend our sincere gratitude to **Keith Nelson of Vistem Solutions, Inc.**, whose generous sponsorship made the evening especially meaningful. Thanks to his support, attendees enjoyed a delicious spread featuring pies, pizza, and fresh homemade spaghetti prepared with care and love. The warmth of the meal reflected the heart of the event itself.



We would also like to thank our continued sponsors, **24-Hour Home Care** and **In-Roads Creative Program, Inc.**, for their ongoing commitment to the IRC community. Both organizations not only sponsored the gala but also had staff members volunteer their time, helping ensure the event ran smoothly and that every guest felt welcomed and supported.

Guests arrived **dressed to impress**, stepping onto a red carpet that transformed the evening into a true Hollywood moment. As clients made their entrance, paparazzi-style photos captured smiles, confidence, and excitement.

*“It felt like a Hollywood premiere — from the red carpet to the flashing cameras, our clients truly had their moment to shine,”* shared attendees as they walked the carpet.

The evening continued with an engaging presentation from Andrea Gonzales, Another Way Coordinator, whose message resonated deeply with attendees. We thank Andrea for sharing her time, insight, and dedication to the community.

After the presentation, the celebration moved to the dance floor, where clients proudly showed off their dance moves, laughed with friends, and enjoyed their meals while networking and socializing.



**Gregory Harrison, IRC Client Advocate**, shared his enthusiasm for the evening:

*“I believe the food was amazing, and you could feel the happiness in the room. Everyone was enjoying themselves, connecting, and just having a great time.”*

**Ismeth Estrada, Consumer Support Technician I • Community Engagement**, reflected on the joy she witnessed throughout the night:

*“I was able to take so many pictures, and every single one captured pure happiness. Seeing our clients dancing, smiling, and celebrating together made this night incredibly special.”*

The IRC CAC Winter Gala was a true testament to what can happen when community partners, advocates, and consumers come together with a shared purpose.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to **everyone who attended**, our generous sponsors, volunteers, presenters, and especially the **IRC Community Engagement Team** and **SAE (Service Access & Equity) Team** for their dedication and teamwork in making this event a success.

Together, we continue to build moments that uplift, empower, and celebrate our IRC community.



# IRC For The Culture

**By Mari Rodriguez, IRC Cultural Specialist**

Inland Regional Center (IRC) proudly hosted IRC for the Culture – Black/African American Community Celebration on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at the Cottonwood Golf Center in Moreno Valley. The event was a tremendous success, bringing together families, community partners, and IRC staff for a day centered on cultural connection, learning, and equitable access to services.

Designed with intention, IRC for the Culture focused on uplifting Black/African American families, particularly those experiencing disparities in service access, including families with little to no Purchase of Service (POS). Through thoughtful outreach and collaboration across teams, the event created a welcoming and supportive space where families felt informed, valued, and empowered.



## Engaging Presentations That Strengthened Impact

A major contributor to the success of the event was the high-quality presentations delivered by IRC leadership and training staff. CJ Cook, Program Administrator for Community Service, presented on the Blue Envelope initiative, reinforcing IRC's commitment to community safety and awareness. Robin Ferguson, Program Manager for Early Start in San Bernardino Southwest, shared important information on Early Start services, helping families better understand early supports available for young children.

Families also benefited from insights shared by Liliana Garnica, Program Manager for Enhanced Service Coordination, who highlighted pathways to individualized services and supports. In addition, Travis Gaddishaw-Grant, Senior Training Specialist from the IEP & Training Unit, provided valuable training and development information that further strengthened family understanding and engagement.





### **Community-Centered Outreach and Engagement**

IRC for the Culture was made possible through strong internal collaboration and personalized outreach efforts by Program Managers and Service Coordinators. Using data-informed strategies, staff personally invited families who would benefit most from attending, helping ensure strong participation and meaningful engagement. This individualized approach played a key role in creating an inclusive environment where families felt welcomed and supported.

Throughout the day, families enjoyed cultural activities, music, interactive resource booths, and opportunities to connect directly with IRC staff and community-based organizations. The event balanced celebration with education, ensuring families left with both positive experiences and valuable information.



## Looking Ahead

IRC for the Culture reflects Inland Regional Center's ongoing commitment to service access, equity, and community partnership. The success of this event underscores the importance of culturally responsive engagement and intentional outreach in reducing disparities and strengthening trust with the communities we serve.

IRC extends its sincere appreciation to the families who attended, the presenters who shared their expertise, The Legacy Bridges Foundation, Inc., and the staff and community partners whose dedication made this event possible. We look forward to continuing this important work together — for the culture, for the community, and for our families.





# Meet our IRC Client Advocate

## By Gregory Harrison, Client Advocate

Gregory Harrison first started with Inland Regional Center (IRC) as a client, but now he works for IRC as a Client Advocate. His duties as Client Advocate include visiting clients at Day Programs and bringing up their concerns to IRC, advocating for clients of IRC in Sacramento, and assists in planning IRC Events, Activities, and Outreaches. He is a member of the Consumer Advisor Committee (CAC), a social advocacy group for IRC clients ages 16 and older, and an avid advocate for clients' rights all throughout the Inland Empire.

Greg is an active member of the Kiwanis Club of San Bernardino, where he volunteers his time to serve the community around him. He is also a member of the Client Advocate Committee for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) where he advocates on behalf of clients of the entire State. Finally, Gregory is on the Self-Determination Program (SDP) and he Co-Trains the Orientation on SDP for interested Parents and Clients with the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD).

Greg empowers others by sharing his story along with the struggles and triumphs he has encountered living with his disability. Greg was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at a young age; however, he has not allowed for his diagnosis to define who he is. He lets his personality shine through his jokes and personal stories, making anyone who meets him instantly feel like they have known him for years. Gregory is married to his lovely wife, Jocelyn, with whom he has a very precocious son, Jacob.





# **The Importance of Libraries in Our Communities: A Lifeline for Learning, Connection, and Growth**

**By Steven Serrano Yopez, IRC Community Relations Specialist**

In an era where digital media and online platforms dominate how we access information, the value of public libraries remains profound and irreplaceable. Libraries are more than just buildings with books; they are community anchors that empower individuals, enrich families, and strengthen neighborhoods. For clients and families served by regional centers—including those with developmental disabilities—public libraries offer inclusive, accessible, and transformative spaces that support lifelong learning, social connection, and personal growth.

## **Libraries as Inclusive Community Hubs**

Public libraries serve people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. They are free and open to everyone, creating equitable access to knowledge and resources that might otherwise be inaccessible. Whether someone is seeking early literacy support for a child, a safe environment to study, resources to assist in job searches, or simply a quiet space to read, libraries provide these opportunities without cost.

For families within the regional center network, libraries can be especially meaningful. Many libraries offer sensory-friendly programming, adaptive technologies, and tailored learning materials that support diverse needs. These services help individuals with developmental disabilities build confidence, explore new interests, and participate in community life. Some of the things to check with your district include:

## Promoting Literacy and Lifelong Learning

One of the core missions of any library is to promote literacy. Reading is foundational—not only for academic success, but also for critical thinking, communication, empathy, and civic engagement. Early access to books and reading programs builds strong language and cognitive skills in children. Storytimes, summer reading challenges, and family literacy events create opportunities for parents and caregivers to engage in meaningful learning experiences with their children.

For adults, libraries provide access to books, audiobooks, and digital resources that support continuing education, personal enrichment, and professional development. Whether someone is brushing up on work-related skills, exploring new hobbies, or simply enjoying literature, libraries foster a culture of lifelong learning.

## Bridging the Digital Divide

While the digital age has brought many conveniences, it has also highlighted disparities in access to technology. Many individuals and families do not have reliable internet service or devices at home. Libraries help bridge this digital divide by offering free internet access, public computers, and technology assistance. This access is vital for job applications, school assignments, health information, and communication with family and social networks.

Libraries also offer technology classes and one-on-one support, helping community members navigate digital tools with confidence. Such support is integral for individuals with varying learning styles and abilities, ensuring that everyone can participate in an increasingly digital world.

## A Place for Community Connection

Loneliness and social isolation affect people of all ages, but they can be particularly challenging for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Libraries provide welcoming spaces where people can connect, socialize, and participate in group activities. Regular programming—such as book clubs, arts and crafts, music sessions, and cultural events—creates opportunities for social interaction and community engagement.

For caregivers and parents, libraries also serve as supportive environments where they can meet others facing similar experiences, exchange resources, and build community networks. These social connections are crucial for wellbeing and resilience



## **Supporting Regional Center Clients and Families**

For families connected to regional centers, libraries can be a significant extension of support services. Many libraries collaborate with community organizations to offer programs tailored to individuals with special needs, including adaptive storytimes, sensory-friendly events, and workshops on topics like health, wellness, and independent living.

In addition, libraries often provide resources that complement individualized education plan (IEP) goals and personal development plans. From educational materials to assistive technology resources, libraries empower families to continue learning and growing outside of formal services.

### **Finding Your Local Library**

San Bernardino and Riverside Counties both offer extensive library systems with multiple locations, ensuring that residents have access to the resources and services they need.

- To locate a library in San Bernardino County, visit the library location directory here: <https://library.sbcounty.gov/library-locations/>
- To find a library in Riverside County, see available locations here: <https://www.rivlib.net/locations>

These links make it easy to find the nearest branch, explore hours of operation, and discover upcoming events and programs.

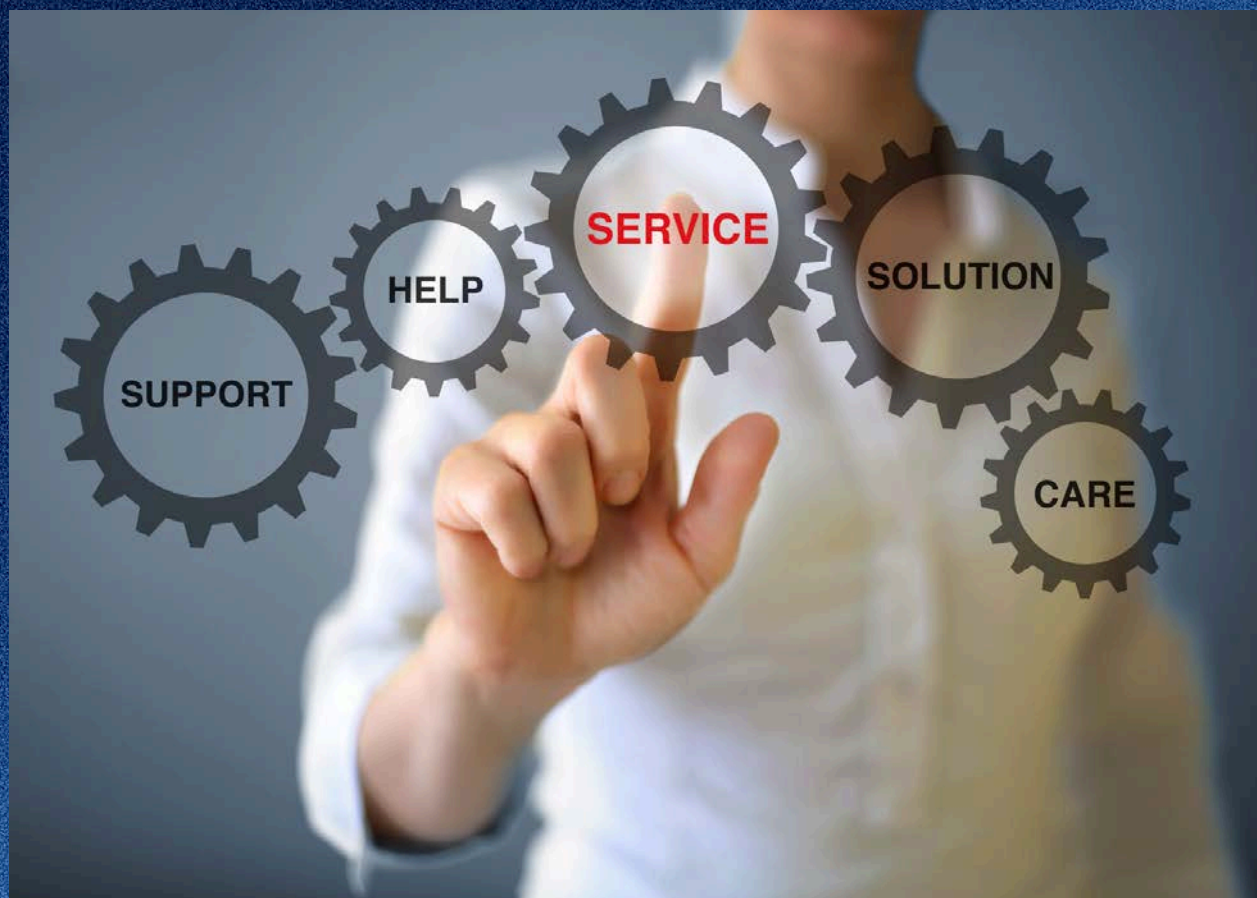
### **Libraries as Lifelong Partners in Growth**

In today's fast-paced world, public libraries remain steadfast and essential. They offer more than books—they provide opportunity, belonging, and empowerment. For our regional center community, libraries are safe, inclusive places where curiosity is welcomed, differences are respected, and learning is a shared journey.

By supporting public libraries and encouraging their use, we invest in a future where every person—regardless of age, ability, income, or background—has access to the knowledge, skills, and connections needed to thrive. Libraries truly are one of our community's greatest assets, fostering growth and wellbeing for all who walk through their doors.

Let us continue to celebrate, support, and utilize our local libraries as places of discovery, connection, and endless possibility.





# **The Importance of Social Services in Our Community**

**By Steven Serrano Yopez, IRC Community Relations Specialist**

## **Supporting Stability and Basic Needs**

Social service agencies play a vital role in helping individuals and families meet essential needs such as food assistance, healthcare access, housing support, and employment services. These programs provide stability during challenging times and help families remain safe, healthy, and secure.

## **Empowering Regional Center Clients and Families**

For regional center clients and their families, social services often work alongside disability supports to address broader life needs. Access to public benefits and family support programs allows individuals with developmental disabilities to focus on independence, wellness, and long-term goals while reducing stress on caregivers.

## **Promoting Equity and Dignity**

Social services are designed to ensure that assistance is accessible, respectful, and inclusive. Programs often prioritize support for children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and families facing economic hardship—helping create equitable opportunities across communities.



## **Connecting Communities to Resources**

Beyond direct assistance, social service departments help individuals navigate complex systems and connect to vital community resources. Whether responding to emergencies or supporting families through life transitions, these agencies provide guidance and reliable pathways to support.

## **Find Social Services in Your County**

Residents can explore available programs and services through their local county agencies:

- San Bernardino County Human Services: <https://wp.sbcounty.gov/hs/>
- Riverside County Department of Public Social Services: <https://rivcodpss.org/>

## **Building Stronger, Healthier Communities**

Social services are a cornerstone of community well-being. By supporting individuals and families in meeting basic needs and accessing resources, these programs help build stronger, more resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Do you have a public event, conference, or resource you wish to reach a broader audience?

Send it our way and it may be featured in our digital calendar of events!



## Check Out Our **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1

### Requests by outside agencies must be relevant to IRC

IRC's digital communications' primary function is to promote IRC's mission, message, and brand. Events or resources must be deemed relevant by IRC's Web Team and have approval from the Community Engagement Manager.

2

### Send requests 30 days prior to the event

To ensure sufficient time for review, approval, and distribution, we only accept requests at least 30 days prior to the event's date.

3

### Requests must be sent to [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org) only

We only accept post requests through our Community Engagement Unit's email contact. Any requests sent through social media channels will not be accepted.

4

### Make sure to include all details of the event/conference

Please make sure to include all relevant details of the event such as date, time, location, and contact information.

5

### Send graphic/flyers in both English and Spanish

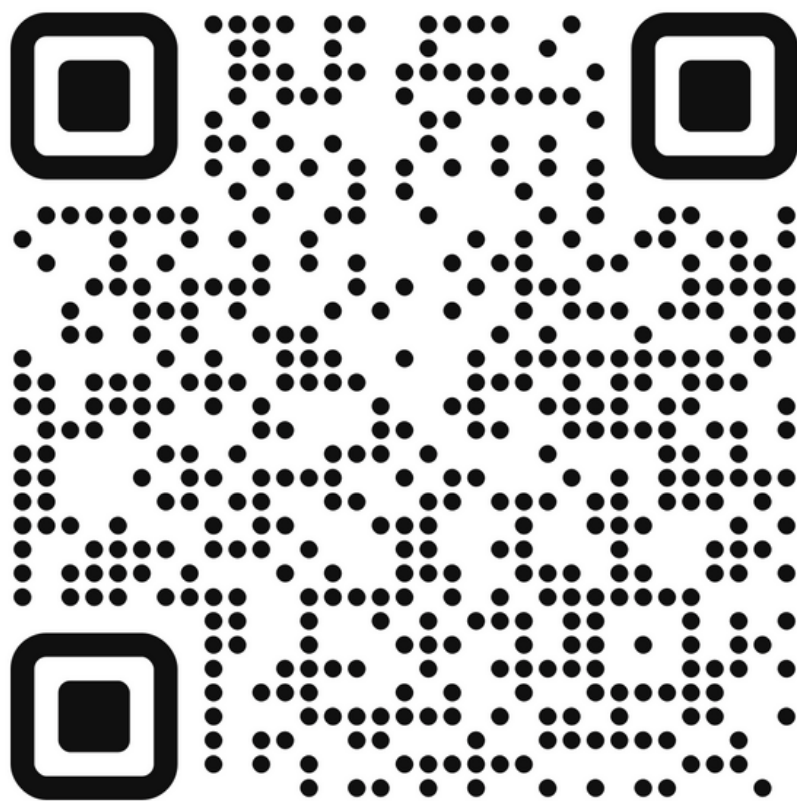
We ask for Spanish and English materials. All marketing material should be culturally sensitive and must promote inclusion of all ethnicities, race, and gender.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUR DIGITAL COMMUNICATION POLICY AT:**

<https://www.inlandrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/IRC-Digital-Communications-Policy-Update-2023.pdf>



# UPCOMING EVENTS



**SCAN ME**

DO YOU WANT TO STAY INFORMED ABOUT  
**UPCOMING EVENTS?**

CHECK OUR DIGITAL CALENDAR!

[www.inlandrc.org/calendar](http://www.inlandrc.org/calendar)



# Social Media Disclaimer for Inland Regional Center

To ensure a positive and respectful online community, it's important to be aware of our Social Media Disclaimer. Visit [inlandrc.org/accountability](http://inlandrc.org/accountability) to learn more about our guidelines and how you can contribute to a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.



- **Respectful Interaction**
- **Privacy and Confidentiality**
- **Relevant and Constructive Contributions**
- **Prohibited Content**
- **Moderation**
- **Legal Disclaimer**
- **Reporting Issues**
- **Terms and Conditions**



# EXPLORE IRC Linktree

LEARN MORE ABOUT RESOURCES  
AND EVENTS



RESOURCE HUB



EVENT AND PROGRAM ACCESS



CONTACT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT THE LINK BELOW:

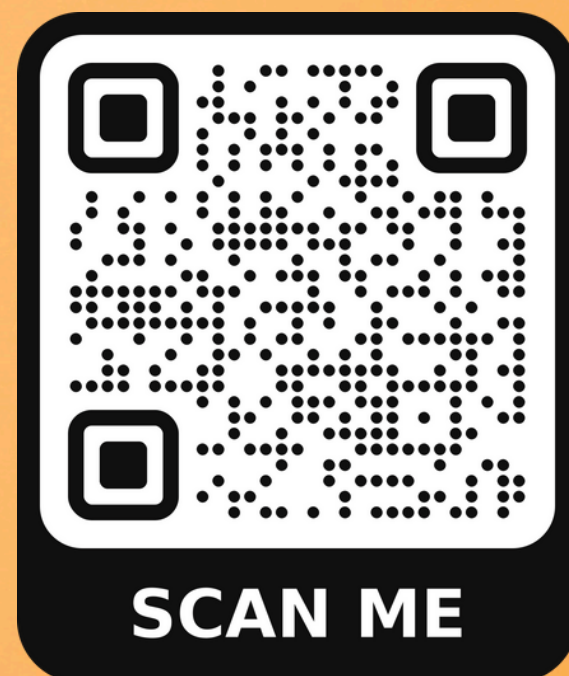


[HTTPS://LINKTR.EE/INLANDREGIONALCENTER](https://linktr.ee/inlandregionalcenter)





# Resources for All Californians



California provides services to all residents, including immigrants, under the Lanterman Act. As of February 2025, using these services typically does not affect immigration status. Non-citizens with concerns should review the guide and seek legal advice. More resources are available on the Resources for ALL Californians webpage.





# **COFFEE & CHATS BREWING CONNECTIONS 2026**

**Hybrid Sessions : Join Us Onsite or Online**

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026  
Alternatives to  
Conservatorship**

**April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026  
Autism Acceptance  
Month Panel**

**July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
IHSS & Protective  
Supervision**

**October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Healthy  
Relationships &  
Boundaries**

**JOIN OUR VIRTUAL OPTION,  
SCAN THE QR CODE**



**Time: 9:30 AM -11:30AM  
Location: 1425 S Waterman Ave,  
San Bernardino, CA 92408**



**Reasonable accommodations are available if requested 14 days in advance. For more information contact us at [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org)**

# Let your voice be heard!



## FAMILY SURVEYS

NATIONAL CORE INDICATORS (NCI)

Let your regional center and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) know what you think about your services!

Surveys are confidential, and evaluate the services and supports you and your family member receive through your regional center and service providers.

Surveys are mailed directly to you from the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD). You may fill it out on paper, or online with the code in your letter.

Email [QAProject@SCDD.ca.gov](mailto:QAProject@SCDD.ca.gov) to participate in the survey.  
Email [NCIHelp@dds.ca.gov](mailto:NCIHelp@dds.ca.gov) for general questions about NCI.

**DDS** Department of  
Developmental  
Services



**UC DAVIS**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



**Inland  
Regional  
Center**



# IRC PARENT ORIENTATION

Join us for an informative session tailored to families eligible for Regional Center Services. Whether you're new to IRC or seeking a refresher, this training is designed to empower you with essential knowledge.

Please register by scanning the QR Code or entering the Zoom Meeting information at [Zoom.com](https://Zoom.com).



**23**

**FEBRUARY 2026**

**5PM-7PM**



For questions or accommodations, email [IRCTraining@inlandrc.org](mailto:IRCTraining@inlandrc.org) at least 14 days in advance.



**Zoom Meeting ID:  
822 9851 9052  
Passcode: 820665**

# Connecting Families



## Through ASL

### American Sign Language Classes for IRC Parents Weekly gas cards provided to each family

#### **CODIE**

1737 Atlanta Ave, H3A  
Riverside, CA 92507

**Tuesdays 5:00-6:30 PM**

**Level 1: January 27 - March 3**

**Level 2: March 10 - April 28**

#### **In-Roads Creative Programs**

26900 Cherry Hill Blvd  
Menifee, CA 92596

**Fridays 9:30-11:00 AM**

**Level 1: January 30 - March 13**

**Level 2: March 20 - May 1**



Register by January 20, 2026

Scan QR code or visit:

[inlandrc.org/ASLclass](http://inlandrc.org/ASLclass)



These classes are sponsored by Language Access and Cultural Competency funds from DDS.

Questions? Email [espena@inlandrc.org](mailto:espena@inlandrc.org)

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

## **PURCHASE OF SERVICE - HOW IRC SPENDS MONEY ON PROGRAMS**

Tell us about your experience with IRC services.

Help us meet the needs of our clients and their families!

Share your input, suggestions, and ideas with us!

## **February 12, 2026**

**Morning Session**

10:30 AM

**Afternoon Session**

5:30 PM



**IRC Conference Center**  
**1425 South Waterman Avenue**  
**San Bernardino, CA 92408**



**Interpretation will be offered in Spanish and American Sign Language**

**Vietnamese, Tagalog, Arabic, Chinese interpretation available upon request 14 days prior to the event.**

Presented by the Inland Regional Center Community Engagement  
and Service, Access, and Equity Teams

# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS and Active Shooter Training



**February 17, 2026**  
**5:30 - 8:30 PM**

**IRC Conference Center**  
**1425 S Waterman Avenue**  
**San Bernardino, CA 92408**

**Visit [www.inlandrc.org/training2-17](http://www.inlandrc.org/training2-17)**  
**or scan the QR code to register**



**Disaster Bag Provided Upon Completion. Client must be present.**

**This training is open to IRC Clients age 18 years and older**  
**who currently do not live in a Board and Care facility.**



**IRC★CAC**

**DDS**

**24hour**  
home care

**In-Roads**  
Creative Programs, Inc.



**Spanish translation and ASL interpretation services available upon request.**





# Community Spotlight

Discover IRC's Community Spotlight!



Celebrate inspiring stories, exciting events, and the amazing people—clients, staff, and partners—who make our community shine. Want to share your story? We'd love to hear from you! Email us at [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org)

Check it out at [inlandrc.org/community-spotlight](https://inlandrc.org/community-spotlight).





# COORDINATED FAMILY SUPPORT (CFS)



Unlock valuable resources and insights today by exploring the CFS Pilot Program on our website! Visit [www.inlandrc.org/cfs](http://www.inlandrc.org/cfs) for informative fact sheets, helpful links, engaging videos, and more.



Questions?  
Email: [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org)



[www.inlandrc.org/clientsfamilies/#cfs](http://www.inlandrc.org/clientsfamilies/#cfs)

# SAVE THE DATE: DEAFPLUS EVENTS

These events are sponsored by Language Access and Cultural Competency Funds.



## Paint and Sign

**Age Group: Ages 13+ IRC Clients, their families & Deaf Community Members**

Join us for Paint & Sign—a voice-off evening of creativity and connection through painting and ASL. Whether you're fluent or just learning, all are welcome in this inclusive, hands-on space.



## The Animal Experience

**Age Group: IRC Clients, Their Families & Deaf Community Members of All Ages**

Get ready for Animal Experience—a unique event where you'll connect with the natural world and discover fascinating facts about incredible creatures. This educational and family-friendly event is open to everyone. ASL interpreters will be provided.



## ASL Fest: Celebrating National ASL Day

**Age Group: IRC Clients, Their Families & Deaf Community Members**

Celebrate National ASL Day with us—honoring the beauty of ASL and the power of connection. Enjoy games, community resources, and meet new people in a welcoming, signing-friendly space. All are welcome!



## Field Day

**Age Group: IRC Clients, Their Families & Deaf Community Members of All Ages**

Celebrate spring at Field Day! Enjoy fun, inclusive activities that encourage movement, play, and connection. Whether you're running, rolling, or cheering, there's something for all ages and abilities. Come join the fun and good vibes!





# IRC★CAC

## *SAVE THE DATE*

### *2026*

FEBRUARY ↘  
**2** IRC CAC VOTERS  
TRAINING NIGHT



FEBRUARY ↘  
**9** IRC CAC ELECTION OF  
REPRESENTATIVES



MARCH ↘  
**16** ST. PATRICK'S  
COFFEE NIGHT



MAY ↘  
**18** MOVIE NIGHT



JULY ↘  
**17** BINGORAMA





# IRC★CAC

## SAVE THE DATE 2026

SEPTEMBER ▾  
**21**

**RECESS & ICE  
CREAM DAY**



DECEMBER ▾  
**14**

**WINTER DANCE**



**THE CLIENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) IS A SOCIAL AND ADVOCACY GROUP FOR IRC CLIENTS AGES 16 AND OLDER.**



**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE  
EMAIL US AT :**

**COMMUNITY@INLANDRC.ORG**



[@InlandRegionalCenter](https://www.facebook.com/InlandRegionalCenter)



[@InlandRegionalCenter](https://www.instagram.com/InlandRegionalCenter)



[@InlandRegional](https://www.x.com/InlandRegional)

**LEARN MORE  
BY VISITING  
OUR CALENDAR**



**[WWW.INLANDRC.ORG/CALENDAR/](http://WWW.INLANDRC.ORG/CALENDAR/)**



**DO YOU HAVE STORIES  
TO SHARE WITH US?**

Contact us at [community@inlandrc.org](mailto:community@inlandrc.org)

INLAND REGIONAL CENTER, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

 **WHAT'S  
YOUR  
STORY?**



**Inland Regional Center**

[www.inlandrc.org](http://www.inlandrc.org)

Let's Get Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



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[@InlandRegional](https://twitter.com/InlandRegional)



[@company/inland-regional-center](https://www.linkedin.com/company/inland-regional-center)



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**Inland  
Regional  
Center**

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SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92408

[www.inlandrc.org](http://www.inlandrc.org)