

### News from The OCAP

Due to the dynamic partnership between the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (CDSS/OCAP), Parents Anonymous® Inc. and the California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT), many California counties are finding new and exciting opportunities to work in Shared Leadership and more effectively accomplish our goals of preventing child abuse and neglect throughout the state. The CPLT is a key statewide organizational unit composed of diverse Parent



*Members of the California Parent Leadership Team*

Leaders, including mothers, fathers and grandparents from California counties, who have been role modeling Shared Leadership in policy and program decision-making for other parents throughout the state. These inspiring Parent Leaders were selected to serve on the CPLT because of their interest in developing their leadership skills, their experiences as consumers of family strengthening services and their commitment to help better the outcomes for children and families. CDSS/OCAP actively works with Parents Anonymous® Inc. to identify and link CPLT members to different planning and decision-making bodies at the state level. There are lots of parents, all throughout the state, who have similar interests in developing their leadership skills and wanting to “give back” to their communities just like the CPLT members do. However, it is vitally important that counties know how to identify these parents and successfully partner with them so that these parents can be effective in the planning and decision-making processes of child abuse prevention and family strengthening services at the local level.

As a beginning step, Ruben Robles, CDSS/OCAP Consultant, has been working closely with Parents Anonymous® Inc. and the Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance Center (CATT) to ensure a coordinated effort in promoting and implementing Shared Leadership in all Child Abuse Prevention Councils. Mr. Robles recently had the pleasure of meeting with all of the CPLT members at their May meeting held in Sacramento. He stated, “it was truly a privilege to meet

such a great group of Parent Leaders who are so committed to partnering with providers to help shape a better future for children and families in California.” As we have all learned through training and technical assistance from Parents Anonymous® Inc., one of the most effective ways to expand Shared Leadership opportunities is to provide training to Parent Leaders so they can be informed decision-makers. During the Team meeting, Mr. Robles presented an

overview on the regulations, expectations and functions of the county Child Abuse Prevention Councils (CAPC) along with a summary of the 3-year planning process. Particular emphasis was placed on the expectation that each county involve parents as voting members of their County Child Abuse Prevention Councils and that parents participate in the development of the 3-year plans. The Team members discussed the importance of including parents as members of the CAPC’s as they can provide expertise in identifying community needs, determining funding priorities and reviewing and approving funding applications. In addition, the Team members learned about their critical role in developing the 3-year plan and who they should contact in their county to become involved in the planning process.

With the new knowledge gained about Child Abuse Prevention Councils, CPLT members are eager to get more involved in their local CAPC activities and the important 3-year planning process. They also plan to assist other counties in identifying parents interested in partnering in the design of child abuse prevention and family strengthening services in their local communities. It is essential that parents are key partners in developing and maintaining effective services to prevent child abuse and neglect both locally and statewide. If your county would like help in identifying parents to serve in these important roles, contact Parents Anonymous® Inc. for training and technical assistance at (909) 621-6184 or visit [www.parentsanonymous.org](http://www.parentsanonymous.org).



## PARENT LEADER HONORED AT CAPC STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

For the first time ever, a Parent Leader was honored at the annual Child Abuse Prevention Council Statewide Conference held in Sacramento on

April 7, 2005. Hundreds of representatives from California Child Abuse Prevention Councils applauded when **Mike Carll**, a member of the California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT), was presented with the Outstanding Leadership Award by Parents Anonymous, Inc. and the Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance Center (CATT). Mike Carll was honored for his outstanding accomplishments as a Parent Leader in his work with Child Abuse Prevention Councils in making a positive difference in the lives of children and families by role modeling personal responsibility and the fostering of independence through Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership. Below is an excerpt of the presentation made to Mike.

“Today, we wish to recognize Mike Carll, a Parent Leader, for his outstanding contributions with the Child Abuse Prevention Council in Calaveras County and in many other leadership capacities at both the local and state levels. He was first identified as a strong Parent Leader through a major Parent Leadership initiative between CDSS/OCAP and Parents Anonymous® Inc. From the very beginnings of his involvement with this initiative, Mike has served as an excellent role model for other parents in local communities as they develop their Parent Leadership skills and increase their participation in Shared Leadership activities. Because of his strong leadership skills, and role modeling, many parents across the state have begun to successfully work in partnership with social service providers in the child abuse prevention and family support programs in their local communities.

Mike Carll initially became involved as a Parent Leader as the result of being a single father with two daughters who both have special needs. According to Mike, “My family and I wouldn’t have survived without the support of agencies. I became involved because I got help with my own problems and wanted to be able to help others.” Four years ago, Mike became a member of the Calaveras County Child Abuse Prevention Council and for the last two years has served as the Council’s co-chair. Mike also works part-time for the Children’s System of Care as a Community Services Parent Liaison. Mike stated that he wanted to help make changes in the system in order to strengthen families.

He reminds families and providers that when blame ends, healing can begin.

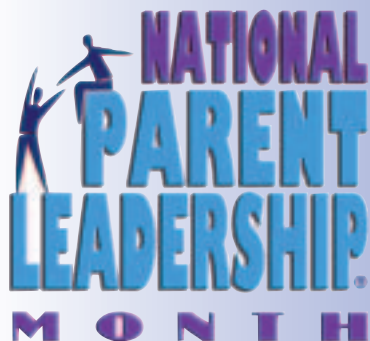
Mike is one of the original members nominated to the California Parent Leadership Team and has been extremely active with the Team for 3 years. Mike has served as a co-trainer with Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff providing Shared Leadership training in Amador County, Calaveras County, Tehama County and many others. In 2003, he was also asked to serve on the State Prevention Advisory Council developed through the Office of Child Abuse Prevention. Mike is also a member of the Calaveras Child Care Council, United Advocates for Children of California, his county’s multi-disciplinary team, and co-facilitates a parent support group in his community. As Calaveras County began working on the Child Welfare Redesign, Mike was right there and serves as a member of the Redesign Committee in his county. During this past year, Mike was one of two parents selected to be members of the California Citizen’s Review Panel.

Mike is a committed Parent Leader who serves as a role model to other parents and to agencies working to develop Shared Leadership. He has shown outstanding leadership in his community, within the state, and most importantly in his own family.”

### Standing Room Only at CAPC Shared Leadership Workshop

California Parent Leadership Team members, Gwen Watson and Mike Carll, along with Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff co-led a very successful workshop entitled “Engaging Parents and the Community in the Vital Work of CAPCs” at the Child Abuse Prevention Council Statewide Conference held on April 7, 2005. The topic was of such interest to CAPC staff and members that there was standing room only during the workshop. Providers left the workshop with increased understanding about:

- The importance of implementing Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership strategies within Child Abuse Prevention Councils
- The benefits of engaging parents and the community as members of Child Abuse Prevention Councils
- How to develop strategies to recruit, support and train parents and community members to partner in Shared Leadership



## GET ON BOARD:

### NATIONAL PARENT LEADERSHIP MONTH STATEWIDE COLLABORATIVE

Parents Anonymous® Inc. is now beginning to plan for the third annual National Parent Leadership Month celebration in February 2006. CDSS/OCAP is working with Parents Anonymous® Inc. and the California Parent Leadership Team over the next year to develop a statewide collaborative with child abuse prevention and family strengthening organizations and Parent Leaders to help plan and promote National Parent Leadership Month throughout the state. Two of the main objectives of this collaborative will be to advocate for a formal Proclamation from the Governor and to host an event in Sacramento to honor Parent Leaders.

Parents Anonymous® Inc. proclaimed February of each year to be National Parent Leadership Month in order to highlight the importance of Parent Leadership and its impact on strengthening families and preventing child abuse. This exciting initiative includes a series of national, state, and local activities to recognize, honor, and celebrate parents for their leadership roles in their homes and communities. Parents Anonymous® Inc. has developed a *Tool Kit* with extensive resources to plan and organize activities. Copies of this *Tool Kit* can be downloaded through the Parents Anonymous® Inc. Web site at [www.parentsanonymous.org](http://www.parentsanonymous.org). The purpose of National Parent Leadership Month is:

- To raise public awareness about the important roles parents play in shaping the lives of children and families
- Expand opportunities for Parent Leaders to participate in meaningful leadership activities

- Recognize individual Parent Leaders whose contributions make a positive difference to their families and communities
- Build successful partnerships between Parent Leaders and professionals to strengthen and support families and communities

Here are some ways that California child abuse prevention and family strengthening organizations can work with Parent Leaders to help promote National Parent Leadership in California:

- Posting information about National Parent Leadership Month on their Web site
- Publishing articles in newsletters highlighting feature stories that recognize Parent Leaders
- Honoring and recognizing Parent Leaders at conferences and other events
- Disseminating press releases to generate new coverage
- Talking with local radio and television stations about conducting interviews with Parent Leaders and staff to help bring this important issue to the attention of the public

If you are interested in joining the Planning Collaborative, please contact Meryl Levine, Parents Anonymous® Inc. at (909) 621-6184, ext. 220 or e-mail her at [mlevine@parentsanonymous.org](mailto:mlevine@parentsanonymous.org).

## KEEPING UP WITH THE CPLT:

### CPLT Parent Leader Presents at National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

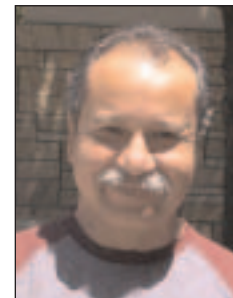
As a key partner with the U.S. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN), Parents Anonymous® Inc. served as a co-sponsor to help plan the largest Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in the nation. Thousands of providers in child welfare came together to forge new partnerships, exchange cutting-edge information and learn innovative techniques. The conference entitled, "Supporting Promising Practices & Positive Outcomes – A Shared Responsibility," was held in Boston, Massachusetts during the week of April 18 – 23, 2005. **Pamela Maxwell**, member of the California Parent Leadership Team, (Sacramento County), along with Parents Anonymous® Inc staff co-led a pre-conference seminar on "Strengthening Child Protection Systems through Parent Leadership" highlighting strategies to support parents as effective change agents within the child welfare system. Pamela shared the many ways parents can become involved and make improvements in services for children and families in their local communities. She talked about her role as a Parent Leader, her participation on the California Parent Leadership Team and how she has been involved in the redesign of the child welfare system in California both at the county and state levels.



Pamela first learned about Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership through her participation in a Parent Leadership Task Force in her local Child Protective Services system. Since that time, Pamela has helped to bring the expertise of parents to a wide variety of arenas that affect family strengthening programs, policies and practice.

### CPLT Parent Leader Demonstrates Leadership at National and Local Levels

At the national level, **Art Hernandez**, Riverside County, was recently appointed to the National Advisory Committee of the FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention because of his excellent skills as a Parent Leader. FRIENDS is a service of the federal Children's Bureau and its role is to build the capacity of Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grantees to meet the requirements of Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.



At the local level, Art spoke out to the media when he recently appeared on KTTV-TV's (Fox11) *Midday Sunday* public affairs program. He discussed Parent Leadership, its importance in preventing child abuse and strengthening families, and his role as a Parent Leader.

## JOIN THE CPLT

Are there parents in your county who have leadership skills and are committed to strengthening families in California? Nominate them to serve on the California Parent Leadership Team by contacting:

**Meryl Levine**  
**Parents Anonymous® Inc.**  
**(909) 621-6184, ext 220**  
**[mlevine@parentsanonymous.org](mailto:mlevine@parentsanonymous.org)**

## HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW CPLT MEMBERS

### Two New Dynamic Parent Leaders Join the CPLT

Parents Anonymous® Inc. would like to welcome the two newest members of the California Parent Leadership Team.

**Greg Colver, Kern County**, was nominated by the Kern County Department of Human Services (DHS). He has been a member of the DHS, Child Protective Services (CPS) Parent Leadership Task Force since its inception over a year ago. Greg and his family were involved with CPS in Kern County and had full wraparound services. Greg states, "The services have totally affected my life and my families'. I am clean, we are communicating as a family, and now I am giving back to CPS and the community."



Greg is a member of the Kern County Child Abuse Prevention Council and is now employed by CPS as a Parent Leader. In his work he is helping CPS set policy and practice, providing mentoring to other parents as they go through the system, and speaking to social workers and community-based agency staff about the importance of including parents as key decision-makers. When asked about his goals while on the Team, Greg says, "I want everyone to know about Parent Leadership. I encourage other agencies to climb on board. When they find a parent who has successfully completed their program, they should partner with that parent to help their program grow. I also believe in prevention and building family support for families before they need CPS."



**Terena Scott, Mendocino County**, was nominated by a Parent Leader who is presently a member of the Team. Terena is the parent of a young child with a disability and says she understands well what kind of pressures raising a child can create. Terena began to volunteer in order to learn all about systems and Parent Leadership. From there she began helping other parents negotiate the system. For the last 7 years, Terena has worked with parent support organizations as a volunteer, as well as a paid contractor. She has been a parent advocate for the Early Start Family Resource Center and at Easter Seals of Northern California. She is currently contracted with California Children's Services as a parent liaison, providing support and education to parents of medically fragile and special needs children. She has experience providing training to county personnel to help them improve their understanding of families' needs. She is a member of the Children's Regional Integrated Service System (CRISS), a state advisory committee for the improvement of medical care of California's children. "In my work, I often meet parents who are stressed and more prone to losing it with their child," states Terena. "I have worked with families who have been connected to community child abuse prevention services. I have also worked with providers to help them understand families' perspectives and needs. I am excited to join the California Parent Leadership Team because I want to learn more about empowering families and bring what I learn back to my own community. And personally, I look forward to meeting other people who are dedicated to helping families, sharing ideas and supporting each other."

## MOVING SHARED LEADERSHIP FORWARD:

As Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership activities increase throughout California, there are more and more opportunities to highlight the great work occurring in these counties. In this issue of the *Parent Leadership Express*, we are highlighting three counties – Kern, Sacramento and Tulare – and the different strategies they are using to effectively move forward with Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership.

### *Kern County*

The Network for Children has taken the lead in moving Shared Leadership forward in Kern County. The Network brought together parents and staff from community Family Resource Centers, child abuse prevention organizations and the Child Protective Services Department to participate in two Shared Leadership trainings. The first training was co-led by Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and **Greg Colver**, California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) member from Kern County. During this training, attendees learned about the concepts and benefits of Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership, gained an understanding about the essential elements of working in Shared Leadership, discussed the wide variety of leadership roles available for parents, and identified potential challenges and strategies to address them. Parent Leaders and staff from the Parent Leadership Task Force already created in the Kern County Child Protective Services Division enthusiastically shared information about their experiences in partnering together to create significant improvements in CPS services. Because of the hard work of this Task Force, the department has established several Parent Advocate positions to assist other parents in navigating the CPS system and has also created a telephone helpline for parents. At the conclusion of this first session, participants were eager to have a follow-up training session to assist them in developing similar opportunities for Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership in child abuse prevention organizations and systems throughout Kern County. A month later, Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and **Patty Enciso**, CPLT member, (Los Angeles), conducted a follow-up strategic planning



*Left to right: Meryl Levine, staff; Sheri Rosen, staff; Gwen Boyd and Kathy Dreyer, CPLT members*

session. After hearing about the successful outcomes from the Kern County CPS Parent Leadership Task Force activities, the participants decided to develop a plan to expand the existing CPS Shared Leadership structure. They identified potential parents and staff from child abuse prevention and family strengthening organizations to include as new representatives serving on this structure and then brainstormed potential roles and opportunities for newly recruited Parent Leaders. During this training, they also developed some innovative approaches for recruiting, training and supporting Parent Leaders. Expanding upon a well established Shared Leadership structure is proving to be a highly effective strategy for Kern County child abuse prevention service providers, parents and CPS to develop new Shared Leadership opportunities and strengthen their services and systems.

### *Tulare County*

The Child Abuse Prevention Council in Tulare County (Tulare CAPC) has been a vital force in promoting and implementing Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership throughout this county. Their success in creating increased awareness and commitment to engaging parents in leadership roles is evidenced by this county's use of its CBCAP funds to establish a 10-month Parent Leadership Program to assist parents in learning to become better advocates for their children. As these parents develop their leadership skills, they will begin to search for

## COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS



*Left to right: Greg Colver, Pamela Maxwell, Tammy Ghasvarian and Patty Encisco, CPLT members*

opportunities to work in Shared Leadership with child abuse prevention organizations. The Tulare CAPC requested that Parents Anonymous® Inc. assist them by providing training to CAPC members, representatives from community-based child abuse prevention and family strengthening organizations and parents in working effectively in Shared leadership. In response to this need, Parents Anonymous® Inc. and Parent Leaders from the California Parent Leadership Team conducted two intensive trainings for service providers, administrators and the 28 parents participating in the Parent Leadership Program. Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and **Greg Colver**, CPLT member, co-led the first training, "Shared Leadership: Partnering with Parents to Strengthen Tulare County Families," which focused on helping participants: (1) learn about the concepts and benefits of Shared Leadership and its positive outcomes in strengthening services to children and families; (2) work as a team to develop a strategic plan to ensure parent participation in the development of policy and service delivery for children and families; (3) identify, and develop leadership roles and opportunities for parents; and (4) develop strategies for recruiting and supporting parents in their leadership roles. During the second training, Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and CPLT member, **Tammy Ghasvarian**, (Nevada County), focused on building effective partnerships between parents and providers, increasing their communication skills, working as a team and learning how to bring issues to the table in a constructive way. Tulare County is well on its way to

working effectively in Shared Leadership using their Parent Leadership Program as a key strategy for recruiting and training new parents.

### *Sacramento County*

The Sacramento County Child Abuse Prevention Council is developing a Shared Leadership plan with its Birth & Beyond Programs in order to identify and engage young mothers as early as possible in order to build their leadership skills and prevent child abuse and neglect. Following an initial Shared Leadership Training with members of the Child Abuse Prevention Council and representatives from the Family Support Collaborative, Family Resource Centers, Birth & Beyond Programs and community family strengthening agencies, Sacramento County decided that they could have the greatest impact with Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership strategies in their eight Birth & Beyond Programs. Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and **Pamela Maxwell**, CPLT member, (Sacramento County), followed up with a strategic planning session with administrators, staff and parents from the Birth & Beyond Programs and Family Resource Center sites. During this session, participants brainstormed different Parent Leadership roles and Shared Leadership activities that could be developed both at the program sites and at the management level. Key steps that the group identified included: (1) conducting a meeting with parents and staff from each of the eight program sites to work together to identify Parent Leadership roles and opportunities; (2) strengthening the Parent Advisory Councils at each of the program sites in order to recruit and engage more parents in program decision-making processes; (3) building the leadership skills of parents through ongoing training and supports; (4) assisting staff to recognize the benefits of working in Shared Leadership and providing them with the needed training and supports to effectively partner with parents; and (5) identifying roles and opportunities for parents to work in Shared Leadership with staff by serving on various management committees and work groups. Sacramento County is clearly moving forward in developing many new Shared Leadership opportunities and creating a better child abuse prevention system within their county.

Learn about Shared Leadership Throughout the World



**RECRUIT 50 NEW  
MEMBERS AND  
WIN A PRIZE!**

If you are a Parent Leader and are interested in talking with others about leadership development and opportunities, this is the site for you!

If you are a professional interested in working with Parent Leaders, the *Parent Leadership Network* is an excellent resource for you to obtain input and learn new Shared Leadership strategies directly from Parent Leaders and other professionals in order to better meet the needs of families in your community.

Hosted by Parents Anonymous® Inc., the *Parent Leadership Network* is a new online community for parents and professionals to dialogue about meaningful Parent Leadership and Shared Leadership. Membership is free of charge. It's easy to join by completing the online registration form at [www.parentleadershipnetwork.org](http://www.parentleadershipnetwork.org).

Parents Anonymous® Inc. is sponsoring a contest with great prizes during the beginning stages of new member recruitment. The first 10 members who recruit at least 50 new members will receive a \$25.00 gift certificate from Wal-Mart. The first person to recruit 250 members will receive a free trip to the Parents Anonymous® Inc. National Training Institute in February 2006 in metropolitan Washington, DC. Be sure to tell potential members to write your name on the line for "Referred by" when they register online so we can give you credit for their registration.



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