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www.ChildGuidance.org

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 2

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2011

SUPPORTING CHILDREN • STRENGTHENING FAMILIES • EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES • CHANGING LIVES

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“This Is All I Have,”

A 17-year-old student said intent on dropping out of school if it were not for our 2nd Annual Northpoint School Talent Show.

Two years ago, four students learned the *Star Spangled Banner* and asked, Milieu Treatment Coordinator Mary Becker and School Therapist Meredith Sheldon, if they could sing the national anthem for everyone at Northpoint School. Instantly a light



bulb came on, both Mary and Meredith immediately thought of coordinating a talent show! Five months later, after several auditions and rehearsals, the 1st Northpoint School Talent Show commenced with

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The Center of Care in the Antelope Valley

Did you know there are more than 27,000 children in foster care living in Los Angeles? Approximately one-third of children entering foster care are in need of mental health services. For more than 10 years, the Center has been one of the largest providers of mental health care for foster children in the Antelope Valley. In addition to multiple challenges foster children experience, such as, exposure to abuse, neglect, and/or trauma, they also are often displaced from their families, friends, and homes. The Antelope Valley, an area that spans 2,200 square miles, is the largest foster care service area in Los Angeles County. The City of Palmdale, located within the Antelope Valley, is one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. and has one of the highest poverty rates in Los Angeles County.

Given that foster children are at high risk to poverty, substance abuse, and violence, services such as individual and group therapy, parenting education, medication support, and school-based programs are vital. We treat more than 250 foster children annually at our Palmdale location. “Some of our foster families have been with us for more than 20 years,” says

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THIS IS ALL I HAVE...CONTINUED FROM PG.1

students reciting poetry, showing musical talent, and proving brute strength. "We didn't expect a simple idea of a talent show to have a profound therapeutic impact," said Mary Becker after receiving many requests for another talent show by enthusiastic students.



On Thursday, April 14, 2011, the 2nd Annual Northpoint School Talent Show had doubled in eager participants. This year's show allowed students to dedicate their performances to someone meaningful in their lives. Each dedication proved significant when parents, teachers, siblings, and others received personal dedications. "We received a large amount of parental and peer support which uplifted and improved the self esteem of our students who struggle with social and emotional challenges," said Meredith Sheldon.

In order to qualify to participate in the talent show students were required to attend school and complete all academic assignments. Introducing creative arts proved to foster communal support and improved academic performance for Northpoint School students. "The talent show gave our students a tremendous burst of pride, self confidence, and a notable sense of belonging," said Mary Becker.



THE CENTER OF CARE...CONTINUED FROM PG.1

Joelle Hunnewell, director of the Antelope Valley region. "Last week I spoke with a parent who's been a foster parent since the early 90's who said 'I bring all my foster children here,' I hear that a lot."

To find out how you can help support our programs and services for foster children in the Antelope Valley please contact Diane Montano at 818-739-5319; or donate today at www.childguidance.org.

COMMUNITY EVENT

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CHILDREN'S DAY

September 17, 2011

6335 Woodley Ave
Van Nuys, CA 91406

FIND US ON FACEBOOK



A Message from our Board Chair

Our 2010-2011 fiscal year has come to an end. I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to our staff and Board of Directors for their achievements. We have expanded services and extended our reach thanks to the dedication and hard work of our Behavior Specialists, Case Managers, Clinical Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Psychiatric Nurse, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Special Education Teachers, Speech, Art and Recreation Therapists, as well as, our administrative and support personnel. If it were not for these highly skilled employees and our passionate board members the Child and Family Guidance Center would not be able to successfully fulfill our mission.

As we embark on this 2011-2012 fiscal year, I encourage everyone to continue to help change the life of a child, a family, and a community. You can help raise awareness of our important work and show your support by finding us on Facebook.

Best wishes,



Sari Scheer
Board Chair



50th Anniversary Celebration

In 2012 we will celebrate our 50th Anniversary and want to make sure that you are included on our mailing list. To receive up-to-date information about our events, activities, and volunteer opportunities please sign up for our newsletter at www.childguidance.org. If you would like to join our 50th Anniversary Committee please contact Diane Montano at 818-739-5319 or email us at development@childguidance.org.



President's Message

I am pleased to announce that Sylvia V. Henry has agreed to join our team as our new Director of Development. Sylvia brings more than 20 years of experience in fundraising. She specializes in the cultivation and management of donor relations, event planning, solicitation of major gifts and planned giving, and development of auxiliary and volunteer programs. Having worked for major medical centers, Sylvia is an expert in healthcare related donor acquisition and relations.

In these fiscally challenging times, it is most important that we develop and increase our fundraising efforts to ensure the Child and Family Guidance Center remains a leader in providing high quality services. Soliciting donations from individuals, corporations, and community groups is more important than ever, it is vital that we hire a professional fund developer to steward that activity and position us to raise major funds for the Center.

Sylvia will work to develop a fundraising strategy aimed at identifying, cultivating, and acquiring major donations and gifts. Her mission based fundraising philosophy is founded on: building relationships with potential benefactors, applying best practices in the industry, seeking team support, diversifying a funding stream aimed at sustainability, and remaining strategic in nature.

In preparation for our 50th Anniversary Year in 2012, I look forward to our continued success in supporting children, strengthening families, empowering communities, and changing lives.

Sincerely,



Roy Marshall
President, CEO



Congratulations Graduates!



Completing 25 hours of community service with local parks, libraries, and community organizations are just a few of the achievements Northpoint School seniors exhibited in support of others as they prepared for college.

Friday, June 24, 2011, four of six Northpoint School seniors completed their rite of passage and became high

school graduates. Those seniors who did not graduate in the spring are working towards getting their diploma's by the end of the summer.

Many of our graduated seniors achieved success by overcoming obstacles in school and their personal lives. Enrolling in Northpoint at age 12, one student became the first in her family to graduate high school. Despite significant learning disabilities in reading and math she successfully passed California's High School Exit Exam while navigating family difficulties that often caused extended absences from school. Another senior transferred to Northpoint School from a residential treatment program and graduated with a 3.0 grade point average.



All of our graduates are attending college due to their hard work and the Center's Community Resource Services Division (CRS). CRS specialists assisted each graduating student in completing their college applications and course enrollment through their college offices of disabilities, and searching for grants and tuition assistance.

"It's been an amazing year! We have smart boards in every classroom, more students than ever before are achieving over a 3.0 grade point average, two students are prepared to successfully return to public school, and by the end of the summer, all of Northpoint School's senior class will have graduated high school," says Kathy Le Breton, educational director.



Next year one of Northpoint's goals is to offer a foreign language program so students can apply to a four-year college and obtain financial aid.

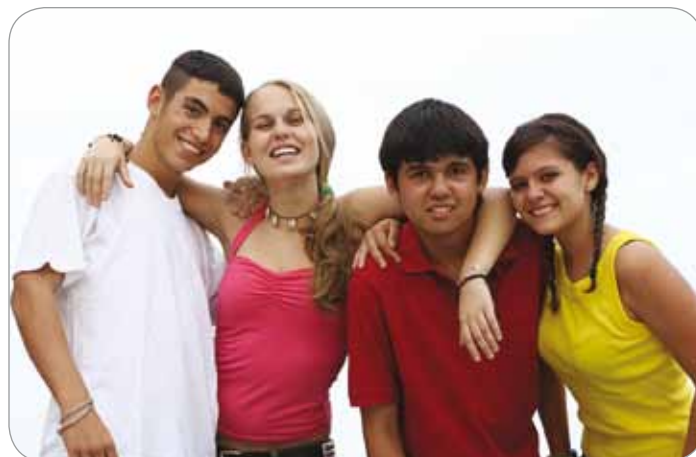
Welcome to the Center



Sylvia V. Henry has joined the Child and Family Guidance Center as our new Director of Development.



If you are interested in funding Northpoint School's foreign language program please contact Diane Montano at 818-739-5319 or send an email to development@childguidance.org.



Seeking Safety is a First Step Towards Recovery

Often times when thinking of life as a teenager one may remember how awkward puberty may have been or have fond memories of adventures with friends. For some these years may prove to be a severely difficult period of time. Teens who experience abuse, trauma, and other negative influences may choose high-risk behaviors such as cutting themselves, substance abuse, suicide gestures, homicidal thoughts, and/or aggression as a means of coping.

Seeking Safety is a form of therapy that helps youth cope more adaptively so they do not continue to experience a cycle of trauma and stress. Our Seeking Safety program, a Department of Mental Health approved Evidence Based Practice, counsels 13 to 18 year-old teens to overcome a history of trauma and/or substance abuse. The therapeutic program encourages teenagers to self identify safe coping skills that allow them to learn and practice those that work best for them. "Seeking Safety empowers teenagers to practice safe alternatives to negative coping habits on their terms," says Jennifer Vargas-Carmona, director of training and crisis coordinator. "Our therapists evaluate what works and what doesn't work for each teen so that new skills can be developed that more appropriately fit each individual." Teenagers who complete the program are better able to function in a healthy manner when facing life challenges.

Our CalWORKs Mental Health Supportive Services Program uses Seeking Safety to counsel adults receiving California State financial assistance. The program aids parents who struggle with substance abuse and/or trauma to achieve their goal of long-term self-sufficiency and health. "Sometimes a parent may abuse substances to escape from domestic violence or past traumatic experiences," says Amber Keating, assistant division manager. Many of our CalWORKs parents have social anxiety and find it difficult to be around others. Through group therapy, Seeking Safety offers an environment that encourages communal support. Parents learn from each other and practice safe coping skills that establish a social connection they have never experienced.

“As a community resource
we are a safe place for
many families”

Midways through our Seeking Safety program parents are able to break through social anxiety barriers and join the work force with success. When the program is complete parents leave equipped with positive coping skills to manage their day-to-day stress and better provide for their children. As a community resource, we are a safe place to seek help for many families. Helping teenagers and parents overcome traumatic experiences and substance abuse fosters healthier and safer children, families and communities. To support programs like Seeking Safety, please visit our website at www.childguidance.org and click donate now.



Mental Health Topic: Trauma

According to helpguide.org, what you may not know about trauma is that childhood trauma increases the risk of future trauma. A significant number of children who have endured traumatic events also experience emotional and behavioral symptoms that continue to present themselves into adolescence and adulthood. Common symptoms include: fear, depression, anger, mood changes, and avoidance of trauma reminders. Trauma events have the potential to change a child's brain functioning and contribute to maintaining trauma symptoms. When a child's trauma goes untreated some children develop ineffective habits, such as substance abuse and violence, to try to cope with their symptoms.

Our staff therapists treat children who have various traumas related to exposure to unstable or unsafe environments, separation from parents, serious illness, domestic violence, neglect, bullying, and sexual, physical or verbal abuse. If you notice your child has symptoms of emotional and psychological trauma, the best thing to do is help your child feel supported and understood. You should consult with others involved with your child, such as their teacher, and find out about their functioning in other environments. You can seek support from a mental health practitioner to initiate your family's participation toward supporting your child's development of positive coping skills.

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- 1 2011 Winnetka March for Kids to Prevent Gang Violence
- 2 CFGC's Staff Host a Booth at March for Kids
(Left to Right: Jessica Law, Scott Callejas, and Hugo Ramirez)
- 3 Councilman Dennis P. Zine Supports CFGC as a March for Kids Sponsor
- 4 Kids March to Prevent Gang Violence
- 5 CFGC's Booth at March for Kids
- 6 March for Kids Volunteer Mounted Patrol
- 7 Families March to Prevent Gang Violence



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8 CFGC's Community Family Center Teens Enjoy a LA Lakers Game

9 10 CFGC's Staff Run at the 2011 Victory for Victims Run/Walk in Encino, CA
(Left to Right: Irma Peralta - volunteer, Cynthia Peralta, Marlene Rios; Jennifer Perez and Francisco Araiza)

11 CFGC's Staff Host a Booth for the 2011 Victory for Victims Run/Walk
(Left to Right: Hiran Amerasinghe, Evy Lowe, Diane Studna)

12 13 14 CFGC's Staff Host a Booth at Thunder on the Lot in Lancaster, CA
(Joelle Hunnewell; Randi Halpin; Rocio Cabrales)

Board of Directors Installation

Thursday, August 18, 2011, the Child and Family Guidance Center will install eighteen 2011-2012 Board of Directors as governing officers. Eric M. Book generously coordinated the use of Braemar Country Club for this year's tradition. The installation will include adding new board members and electing board members as officers into new posts.



Board Members: Stephen J. Howard, Deborah Neal, Myles M. Mattenson, Karineh Moradian, and Eric M. Book



Board Members: Joyce Barkin (middle) and Linda Drescher (right)

MENTAL HEALTH TOPIC...CONTINUED FROM PG.5

The best way you can help your child learn how to cope with trauma is to educate yourself on the specific nature of trauma your child has experienced, support your child when he or she shares their feelings and thoughts about their traumatic experience, and help your child develop effective ways to cope with specific symptoms your child is experiencing.

There are circumstances in which children endure very stressful events but are able to adjust well with the support and guidance from their caregivers. You can help your child overcome the effects of trauma. For more information about supportive services please visit us at www.childguidance.org.

Challenge Grant: Our Children Need Your Support

We have an exciting opportunity! Dr. Linda and Frank Damon generously pledged the Child and Family Guidance Center up to \$10,000 as a challenge grant. Dr. Linda Damon, a long time therapist and supporter of the Center, is devoted to ending child abuse and both Dr. Linda and Frank Damon have been very generous donors towards prevention, treatment and recovery services over the years.

Our North Hills location provides extensive psychotherapeutic services to children through the age of 18 and their families with a specific focus on child abuse and trauma intervention. Treatment services are provided to a culturally diverse population in which physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence or other trauma has taken place, or where there is a risk of abuse and/or neglect. A portion of the funds raised will be designated for our North Hills programs and services.

We thank everyone who contributed to this important cause. Currently we have raised \$5,230 and need \$4,770 to complete the challenge. You can help us reach our goal of \$10,000 today. Your donation will go a long way towards changing the lives of children who are victims of abuse.

To make a donation and help us reach our goal:

- Go to our website www.ChildGuidance.org, select Donate Now, and choose Challenge Grant or
- Call Diane Montano, 818.379.5319, in our Development Department.

\$10,000 Goal

\$4,770 Needed

**\$5,230 Raised
(June 2011)**

Our Staff: Dr. Jennifer Vargas-Carmona, Director of Training North Hills and Coordinator of Crisis Program

"When I was a kid I wanted to be a pediatrician; I always



knew I wanted to work with kids and teens," says Jennifer Vargas-Carmona, director of training and coordinator of crisis program. Today Dr. Vargas-Carmona serves as the Center's Agency Wide Administrator for Seeking Safety, an evidence based program that aims to address substance abuse and behavior aggression with teens. Dr. Vargas-

**“Work is very challenging, however,
extremely meaningful,
I know I am making a difference.”**

Carmona started working with us in 1993 while working towards attaining her Ph.D. She credits her experience as a teacher, in the Los Angeles Unified School District, for the opportunity to work with children in a non-therapeutic environment, which developed her counseling approach. "I always believed in preventative and intervention services for children who are victims of abuse and trauma, I love what the Center does to focus on a very at-risk population." In 1997 Dr. Vargas-Carmona developed a crisis program to manage children and teens that need stabilization before receiving outpatient services. The program focuses on providing psychiatry, resources, and intensive services for children who have an acute trauma, or attempted suicide. "Work is very challenging, however, extremely meaningful, I know I am making a difference." In her spare time Dr. Vargas-Carmona enjoys spending time with her family, remodeling and redecorating homes, and sports.

Recognizing Staff Accomplishments

Congratulations for achieving your license

Rosemary Flores, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Bonnie Large, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Mayra Lorenzo, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Karla Zambrano, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

A National Council Psychiatric Leader

Congratulations!

Dr. Alpa Patel, director of psychiatric services, is one of eight psychiatrists chosen this year for National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare's Psychiatric Leadership Program. The program's mission is to inspire and mentor leaders dedicated to



improving the quality of care for people with mental illness and addictions. Dr. Patel will partake in learning from a curriculum that focuses on further developing and nurturing many types of leadership skills. Upon completion of the program Dr. Patel will be better able to inform public policy on behalf of the Center and the behavioral health system.

In Appreciation of A Job Well Done

After more than 30 years of dedicated service, Dr. Jessica Card has moved on from her position as Director of Child Abuse Prevention, Trauma and Early Intervention to resume her private practice and enjoy more time with her family. In her career, Dr. Card has served in many capacities and has always remained passionate about her clinical work. She established and championed our well-respected abuse reactive treatment program and has led a multitude of therapeutic treatment groups over the years.

Dr. Card's perceptiveness, insight, and depth of clinical knowledge with regard to the treatment of childhood trauma are unparalleled. She has mentored and supervised many of our current and former staff and trainees. Her commitment to meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable and mistreated children has guided her work as an administrator, director, manager, and supervisor. Dr. Card's impact and influence on the quality of our services will be enduring.

Five Years of Success: Our Partnership with Rancho San Antonio

We are excited to have been a partner with Rancho San Antonio (Rancho), a multi-service residential agency serving court-ordered adolescent boys, for the last 5 years. The Center provides psychologists to assist Rancho in their mission of providing a caring and therapeutic environment where young men can successfully develop the skills, values, and personal responsibility needed to rejoin their family and the community. We look forward to many more years of collaboration bringing mental health care to youth in need of support, strength, and empowerment towards positive change.

Announcing a New Program: Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS)

Children who suffer from severe mental health disorders need supportive services in their daily life to learn how to function in various environs. We are excited to launch a new program that provides children and families, who have experienced residential treatment and/or psychiatric hospitalization, a Behavioral Support Specialist for 90 days. Each specialist is able to meet with a child and their family, in their home, school, and community, to assist in behavior therapy and parent coaching that inspires improved family relations. If you know anyone that can benefit from TBS please call (818) 739-5250.

Staff Host Northpoint School's 2011 "Las Vegas" Theme Prom

A special thanks to Northpoint School staff for their creativity and efforts in coordinating this year's prom for our students.



Front Row: John Hawkins
Middle Row: Lauren Healy, Dr. Shiva Kahani, Kathy Le Breton
Back Row: Mary Becker, Meredith Sheldon, James Overall, Matthew Speak, Dr. Rick Hunnewell

Donor Recognition

We gratefully acknowledge and thank the following individuals, foundations, corporations and community organizations for their contributions from July 1, 2010 through to June 30, 2011.



\$10,000 - \$24,000

Mary Bazar and Paula Bazar
Kaiser Permanente - Corp. Sponsor



KAISER PERMANENTE

\$5,000 - \$9,000

Granada Hills Women's Club
Kids Charities of the Antelope Valley
Sherman Oaks Women's Club
Wells Fargo Insurance Services

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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\$100 - \$249

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Mission

The Child and Family Guidance Center serves vulnerable and at-risk children, as well as their families. We provide a continuum of quality mental healthcare, supportive social services and links to needed resources. The Center embraces a family-strengthening philosophy aimed at helping clients to become empowered, overcome challenges and flourish within the community.

The Center is committed to remaining responsive to the ever-changing needs of our families, developing

innovative programs and training professional staff members to work in a community setting.



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