



50 YEARS
CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

CHILD AND FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER™

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VOLUME 3: ISSUE 1

NEWSLETTER

Winter/Spring 2013

SUPPORTING CHILDREN • STRENGTHENING FAMILIES • EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES • CHANGING LIVES

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Champions for Children: Celebrating 50 Years of Providing Mental Health Care to Children and Families in North Los Angeles County

For half a century, the Child and Family Guidance Center has championed the needs of children in Los Angeles County. We have been at the forefront of providing mental health services that enable families to heal and thrive.

The Center was born from the dedicated work of a small group of volunteers who joined together in the late 1950s to address a growing need for children's mental health services in the San Fernando Valley. It was a time when emotional and behavioral issues were not talked about openly. Families with children who struggled with emotional challenges only whispered about it among their closest allies and rarely sought help from outside professionals. But the volunteers worked tirelessly with experts to conduct studies on community mental health needs. Then, they approached community leaders to raise the funds necessary



Please join us as we celebrate

50
years

of empowering children and families

Thursday | April 25, 2013 | 6:00 PM

With
Celebrity Emcee
Nancy Lee Grahn
Emmy Award-Winning Actor
.....
Honoring
Councilmember Mitchell Englander
Los Angeles City Council | District 12
.....
Kaiser Permanente
Karineh Moradian & Bonnie Weissman
.....
Revolution Foods
Founders | Kristin Groos Richmond &
Kirsten Saenz Tobey
.....
Erick Rodriguez
Urban Designer
.....
Reggie & Joe Scheer
Former Board Chairs
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Valerie Vanaman
Partner | Newman, Aaronson, Vanaman
Special Education Attorney & Advocate
.....
Cocktails, Hors d'oeuvres & Dinner
Live Entertainment | Opportunity Drawing |
.....
Sheraton Universal Hotel
The Starview Room
333 Universal Hollywood Drive
Universal City

You can
purchase your
50th anniversary
tickets
inside!

CONTINUED FROM PG.1

to create an innovative agency that would bring these much needed services to our community.

They used the money raised to hire three clinical staff and rent a small office in Sherman Oaks under the name San Fernando Valley Child Guidance Clinic. Upon the agency's opening, more than 300 families sought help from the Center. As the agency grew, its Day Treatment Program served as an alternative to hospitalization, keeping families together instead of forcing parents to place their children in residential settings. Today, the Center touches the lives of more than 10,000 children and families annually in a variety of settings -- including schools and home-based services. It is one of Southern California's brightest stars—internationally known as a leader in providing innovative mental health and social services.

We invite you to celebrate the success and longevity of the Center at our "Champions for Children" 50th Anniversary Gala on Thursday, April 25, 2013 at 6pm in the Starview Room at the Universal Sheraton Hotel in Universal City. Guests at our "Champions for Children" Gala will be treated to cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, a delicious dinner, live entertainment and a chance to win big at the opportunity drawing.

"At the Center, we are proud to have served as a reliable source of quality care for so long. We are also excited about continuing to provide innovative and accessible services to the community in the next half century."

**Board Chair
Eric M. Book**

Cheers,



Eric M. Book
Board Chair



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"After serving the community for 50 years, it is clear that making mental healthcare accessible to all is more important today than ever before."

**President and CEO
Roy Marshall.**

The special guest emcee is Emmy Award-winning actress Nancy Lee Grahn, who plays Alexis Davis on the daytime drama, "General Hospital." Special honorees will be recognized for their contributions to bettering the lives of children and families. They include:

- Mitchell Englander, Los Angeles City Councilmember;
- Kristin Groos Richmond and Kirsten Saenz Tobey, founders of Revolution Foods;
- Erick Rodriguez, Urban Designer and former Child and Family Guidance Center client;
- Reggie and Joe Scheer, Center Board Chairs and longtime supporters;
- Valerie Vanaman, Partner, Newman, Aaronson, Vanaman – Special Education Advocates and Attorneys.

The cost to attend the event is \$200.00. Proceeds will benefit the programs and services of the Child and Family Guidance Center. For tickets and information, please contact Cecily Lerner at clerner@childguidance.org or 818-739-5319.

Regards,



Roy Marshall
President, CEO



Supporting Children

Ernie's Story: A Child's Journey to a Healthy Adult Life

When Ernie Diaz started hearing voices in his head and seeing pictures move at age 5, he thought they were ghosts. He was terrified. When he told his mother, she told him to ignore it and not tell other people. She didn't know that her son was experiencing the first signs of serious emotional issues, and she had no idea how scared and alone Ernie felt.

“I felt crazy...I was different, and I didn't belong.”

As Ernie grew older, he had trouble functioning in school. He was withdrawn and bullied by other children. He felt he couldn't trust anyone. At night, his sleep was interrupted by terrifying dreams. Soon, his thoughts turned darker. He was tormented by thoughts of harming himself or other people. He felt ashamed and hid his thoughts from his mother, fearing that she would be angry with him.

After years of struggling with the symptoms of mental health challenges, Ernie's high-school counselor referred him to the Child and Family Guidance Center, where he began working with a team composed of Therapist Karen Geier, Case Manager Marle Verding and Psychiatrist Ashima Sharma. Ernie learned that his frightening symptoms were due to a thought disorder.

The most common thought disorders affect about one percent of Americans and may be chronic, severe, or even disabling. People with thought disorders may hallucinate and hear voices other people don't hear, or they may believe that others are reading their minds, controlling their thoughts, or plotting to harm them. These experiences are terrifying and can cause withdrawal or extreme agitation. Sometimes, people with thought disorders may not make sense when they talk, may sit for hours without moving or talking much, or may seem perfectly fine until they talk about what they are really thinking. Fortunately, many people with thought disorders who seek treatment can control their symptoms and lead full and happy lives.

“When I came to the Center, I wanted to better myself and get the help that I needed,” Ernie said. “I didn't want to think about hurting myself or other people. I wanted to change.”

Geier and Verdin have worked with Ernie for two years. In spite of his parents' initial denial of his severe symptoms, Ernie was eager to undergo treatment and was willing to put in the work

necessary to change his life. At the Center, he received proper medication to control his symptoms; found a safe place to talk about his feelings; and benefitted from educational advocacy.

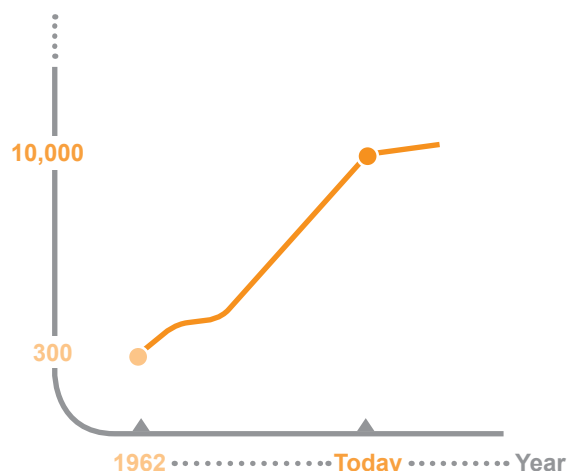
Today, Ernie is a teen who feels like a new person. The frightening thoughts are gone, and in their place are celebrations of successes and milestones. Once barely able to function in high school, he has now graduated and applied to college. A creative person, Ernie hopes to become a tattoo artist or have a career in music. Unwelcome thoughts and fears no longer interfere with his daily life, and he looks forward to all that lies ahead. “Onward to better horizons...,” says Ernie.

“I am in awe of Ernie's willingness to put in the work necessary to regain his ability to function,” said Karen. “Today, we hear too many stories of young people who don't get the mental health care they need before turning to tragic behavior. The truth is, with proper intervention and access to the care they need, young people in trouble have the opportunity to turn their lives around.” And, Ernie is grateful that the care he needed was available for him at the Child and Family Guidance Center.

“Having someone to talk to that won't judge me for what I say is a good release, and it helps me to not hold my feelings in,” he said. “I would never have expressed myself to my parents, because I was afraid they would get mad at me. But, I had to find somewhere to talk because I was tired of always feeling so depressed and sad. It's always scary to change. But the people at the Center helped me, and I'm so happy to have made the effort that resulted in a whole new life.”

The Center – Then and Now

Annual Families Served



Strengthening Families

The Sanchez Family's Story: The Power of Rebuilding Family Bonds

Thirteen-year-old Danny Sanchez met regularly with a therapist at the Center. But, he was still losing hope. To Danny, it seemed that seeing a therapist alone could never really make a difference in what he experienced at home. Arguments with his step-father, Mike, were nearly constant. When the arguing stopped, the tension between the two was so intense that they practically never spoke. Danny's mother, Lupita, was busy with his 2-year-old brother, Isaac and 8-month-old sister, Sue.

She didn't know what to do to make things better between her husband and son, and she was feeling the tension as much as they were. She counted on Danny to help with the younger kids, and she felt even more pressure when he resisted. Meanwhile, Danny was becoming more withdrawn and depressed in spite of seeing a counselor at the Center.

It became clear to the Center staff, that in order for Danny to make progress, the whole Sanchez family needed treatment. Mike and Lupita were referred to the Center's 10-week parenting class to get to the root of the issues at home.

“The Child and Family Guidance Center has made our home a great place to be,” said Lupita. “There are far less arguments and a lot more praise and appreciation. I’d recommend the Center to any family.”

Although Danny wasn't required to attend the sessions with Lupita and Mike, he chose to. “Sometimes, when a child is having trouble at home, it is best to get the whole family involved in treatment,” said Center Therapist Dinora Guzman. “And, in Danny's case, he and his whole family went above and beyond to make all their lives better.” One of the most important things Lupita learned in the parenting class was to praise her children. At the Center, she learned to recognize Danny's positive qualities, as well as the importance of telling Danny how much his help is appreciated.

She also realized that, at 13, Danny was starting to become a man and was ready to gain more independence and responsibility in their home. Danny soon felt that his help at home was important and valued, which led to fewer arguments and overall better communication between mother and son. Now

that he knows his help around the house is appreciated, he often offers to help with the dishes without being asked or volunteers to help in caring for his little brother and sister.

“It's such a simple thing, but it is amazing how much difference it makes when you praise a child or say ‘thank you,’” said Lupita. “It can totally change the relationship.”

In the Center's parenting class, the Sanchez family learned to hold family meetings every two weeks. In the meetings, they always used “I speak” – addressing issues from their personal experience instead of blaming other family members for how they were feeling. And, they always began the meetings by saying something positive about each other. They also organized household chores on a chart, signed up to take responsibility and shared the work equally. This allowed Danny to only take on child care responsibilities that he could handle. The class also taught Lupita that she was a better mother when she gave herself a break between chores. So she began taking an hour to watch TV or do yoga.

Perhaps best of all, the tension between Mike and Danny began to ease. As Mike progressed through the class, he learned more about his role as Danny's stepfather. Soon, Danny told Mike how much he enjoyed it when they spent stepfather-son time together. Once Mike and Danny began communicating directly, Lupita stopped feeling “trapped in the middle,” and tension eased throughout the house. Now, Mike and Danny bond over X-Box games, spend one-on-one time together, laugh and kid each other.

After the Center's 10-week program, the Sanchez family has transformed. They are a loving family, share accountability for keeping their home running smoothly, and they've learned healthy ways to communicate with each other. Together, they have created a happy place for Danny, Isaac and Sue to grow up.

* Actual Client Names Are Not Used

American Psychological Association Awards the Center Full Approval

The American Psychological Association's Commission on Accreditation has honored the Center with a seven-year accreditation for its psychology internship program – the maximum a training site can receive!

The rarely-seen level of accreditation came after an extensive review process that was conducted by a commissioned team that visited the Center's program.

During the next seven years, the Center's internship program will be listed among accredited programs of professional psychology in the publication “American Psychologist.” We are proud to provide excellence in training mental health professionals to serve our community!

Thank You for Your Support

Round Meadow Elementary School Makes the Season Bright at the Child and Family Guidance Center

The Child and Family Guidance Center offers a sincere “thank you” to the students of Round Meadow Elementary School in Calabasas. Round Meadow’s community outreach program adopts families in need during the holiday season and provides them with gifts and food to ensure that the families enjoy the cheer of the season. This year, 52 families served by the Child and Family Guidance Center’s Outpatient Programs were the recipients of the Round Meadow students’ generosity.

— THANK YOU —

Each Round Meadow classroom adopted between one and four families. The families then made holiday “wish lists,” indicating items they wanted and needed most, clothing sizes and family members’ gender and ages. Then, the Round Meadow students and their parents did their best to make each wish come true. The Center’s families also receive supermarket gift cards to cover the cost of a festive holiday meal.

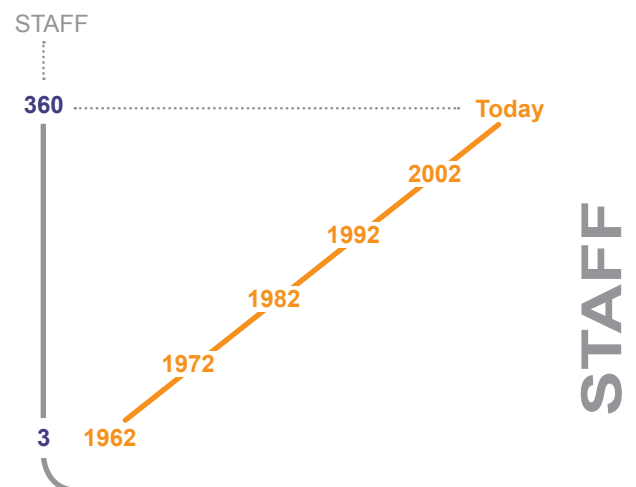
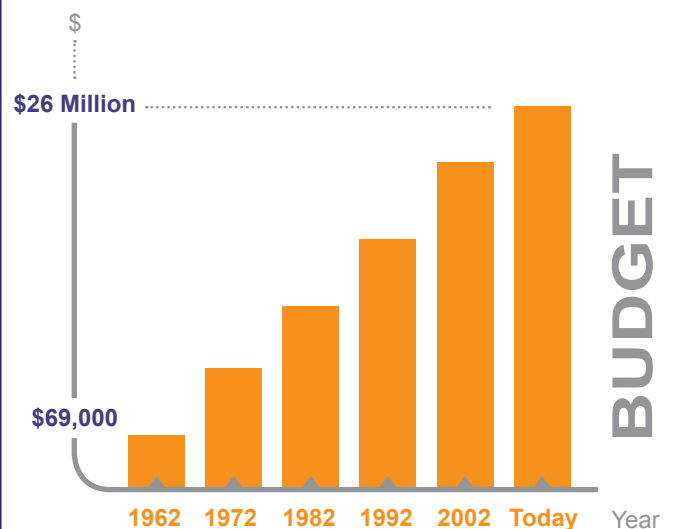
“Every child deserves to experience joy and family celebration during the holidays,” said Sheryl Lesner-Kramer, the Center’s Clinical Administrative Manager whose children attend Round Meadow Elementary School. “The children at Round Meadow made that possible for their peers who receive services at the Child and Family Guidance Center.”



R Rex Perris Law Makes the Holidays Sparkle for Children in the Antelope Valley

Each year, there are hundreds of children in need in the Antelope Valley who don’t have a single present to unwrap during the holidays. The Child and Family Guidance Center offers a big “thank you” to R Rex Parris Law Office for “adopting” Christmas lists from 50 special-needs kids served by the Center’s Antelope Valley office. The gifts were a monumental part of the children’s holiday season, and that brought joy to them and their whole families. Thank you, R Rex Perris Law, for offering us an example of the true meaning of giving!

The Center – Then and Now



Empowering Communities

Building Healthy Kids and Thriving Communities in the West Valley

Hot weather was no deterrent on September 8th when more than 1,000 community members gathered at Lanark Park in Canoga Park to attend "Children's Day: A Salute to Kids." Their goal was to reduce gang activity and bring resources to their community. Cristal Crandall, the program manager for the Center's United Solutions - Gang Reduction Youth Development Program (GRYD) played a lead role in making the event possible.

"People view the West San Fernando Valley as a wealthy area that doesn't have problems with gangs," Cristal said. "The truth is this area is home to children who live in poverty. Salute to Kids offered West Valley families the resources they need to keep their kids safe and thriving."

“Salute to Kids’ is for the community...our goal is to give a well established event to the community...”

Cristal and our United Solutions - GRYD team worked with the Los Angeles Police Department and other organizations that make up the Coalition On Gangs. Together, they created a resource fair that brought in more than 30 agencies that

provide services to community members. The coalition also organized a march around

Lanark Park to show community support for reduction of gang violence and offering kids alternatives to drugs and crime. The day included live performances, a raffle, visits from Ronald McDonald and Darth Vader, as well as refreshments.

Cristal's role in organizing Salute to Kids was recognized by Los Angeles Chief of Police, Charlie Beck. In a letter to the Child and Family Center, Beck says,

"I wanted to personally thank Cristal for her coordination skills, dedication to duty and professionalism. She is a true professional and a positive reflection of the type of professionals you have working for your organization."

This year's Salute to Kids event promises to be even better, as Cristal and our United Solutions - GRYD team work to involve more community businesses and encourage community leaders to take on more of a leadership role in the event's development.

"Salute to Kids' is for the community," said Cristal. "We will always support it, but ultimately, our goal is to give a well-established event to the community and enable them to make it their own."

**CONTRIBUTE
TO YOUR
COMMUNITY
TODAY**



www.childguidance.org

Keep Our Garden Growing – Support Our Northpoint School's Teaching Garden

Planting seedlings and watching them is a happy, healthy learning experience for all children. Our special-education Teaching Garden helps students ages 6 to 18 experience the joy and discovery that comes from planting a garden. The Center's Northpoint School provides a hands-on learning experience rooted in offering nutritional choices.

The garden is a real-life laboratory where students learn how to plant seeds, nurture the growing plants, harvest the food and, ultimately, understand the connection between the environment and their health. Please donate to support Northpoint School's Teaching Garden and keep it growing for kids!

**To watch a video of our students' Teaching Garden visit:
www.childguidance.org**

Please make a donation today in the envelope provided. Thank you!

Impact Report

Meagan's Story: Freedom from Anxiety Opens the Door to the World

Meagan Price is a college freshman living on campus at UC Riverside and studying comparative literature and foreign languages. She hopes to study abroad in Japan. It's hard to believe that this young woman, with aspirations to know the world on a first-hand basis, once lived in a world that was very small. But, a few years ago, when Meagan was in the ninth grade, she suffered from anxiety and panic attacks so severe that she was afraid to even leave her house.

Meagan experienced her first panic attack in her seventh grade PE class. Suddenly, Meagan felt shaky, her heart raced and her hands became sweaty. She was overcome with intense nervousness, fear and a sense of loneliness. After that, Meagan's panic attacks became more frequent. When she told her mother, Meagan was met with little understanding. Her mother did not know how to help and became upset with Meagan when she complained.

In addition, Meagan faced a troubled home life. Meagan's brother sought out constant arguments with everyone at home; he often yelled, teased and sometimes hit Meagan and her other siblings. This stress increased Meagan's anxiety and made it difficult for her to focus on anything else. Soon, Meagan was ditching classes or missing school altogether, because she feared that she would have a panic attack in school again. Her grades dropped, and she lost all interest in school. That's when Meagan's school counselor referred her to the Child and Family Guidance Center.

When Meagan first came to the Center, she had lost all contact with her friends. Anything that required walking outside her house – even just taking out the trash -- scared her so much that it proved impossible. It was at the Center that Meagan first learned that her symptoms were due to treatable conditions --anxiety and panic attacks.

“I finally felt understood!” said Meagan. “It was amazing to learn that there was hope.”

Meagan learned coping skills like relaxation and distraction techniques that helped her manage her anxiety. Our therapist, Dulce Gomez, met with Meagan at her home twice a week for “exposure therapy,” which gradually re-exposed Meagan to the outside world until she was confident enough to leave her home on her own.

Her first breakthrough came when she was finally able to ride the bus alone and walk to and from school. Eventually, Meagan began taking medication to control her symptoms. Meagan was initially hesitant toward medication because she feared that it would change her personality. But, once she agreed to take it she discovered she was still herself, only less anxious. “You realize you can do things that you never thought you could,” she said.

“Without the Center, I would never be where I am today.”

Finally, a few months before Meagan turned 18, Samantha Cavero, a transitional youth specialist at the Center assisted Meagan with college preparation needs: filling out applications, applying for financial aid and linkage to adult mental health services on campus at her university. Now, the young woman who once couldn't leave her home has opened the door to the whole world through her studies.

“The Child and Family Guidance Center is not just a ‘business,’” said Meagan. “The therapists there really get to know you and care about who you are. Without the Center, I would never be where I am today.”

If your teen has symptoms similar to those Meagan experienced give us a call today at **818.739.5250** or **661.265.8627**.

For healthcare facts and tips like us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/childfamilyguidance.

* Actual Client Names Are Not Used

Children Can Heal Through the Power of Music – Please give to our Music is Power Program

Introducing music in therapy gives children who have experienced trauma a chance to regain confidence and overcome emotional barriers. The Center's Music is Power therapy group teaches teens how to rewrite the verses of songs to make them more positive and create verses of their own.

Local artists volunteer to perform songs for our children to analyse, compare their own emotions and develop healthy coping skills. Please make a contribution to this program today online or in the enclosed envelope.

You can listen to our Music is Power song co-written by our children at:

www.childguidance.org

Center Update

The Center's New Electronic Prescription Solution Makes Life Better for Doctors and Their Patients

The Child and Family Guidance Center has improved its services by implementing electronic prescribing for our children who take medication. The new system provides a complete medication list for each child, helps doctors select the most effective and safe medications, prints prescriptions, electronically transmits them to pharmacies and conducts all safety checks regarding the medications prescribed, including drug interactions, allergy concerns and warnings.

The new system reduces doctors' time spent on phone calls to pharmacies and writing prescriptions. This allows them more time to spend directly treating patients. And, patient safety is enhanced because all medication information is stored in one convenient place, nearly eliminating the possibility of adverse medication interaction errors.

"By implementing this new electronic prescription system, we are giving doctors more time and resources to do their most important work – treating patients with mental and emotional difficulties," said Jeff Adler, the Center's director of operations. "That's the ultimate purpose of all new technology at the Center, and this new system is making the Center's quality of care even better."

Help Children Thrive Through Art – Contribute to the CITY ART PLAY Program

Volunteer Erick Rodriguez, a former child client of the Center's Community Family Center at Park Parthenia Apartments, is all grown up and giving back to help more kids learn to appreciate art and urban design. Now holding a university degree in architecture, Erick returned to the Center to start a "CITY ART PLAY" Program that offers today's children a chance to learn, play and grow through a series of art workshops that encourage them to think of art and their community as one entity.

Children gain confidence when their art is exhibited to the community with the hope that their projects will become permanent fixtures in their neighborhoods. To donate, just visit www.childguidance.org, or send in your donation in the enclosed envelope. Thank you!

You can view our
CITY ART PLAY portfolio at:

www.childguidance.org



A Friend We'll Miss ... The Center Honors the Life of Sylvia Lipton

Sylvia Lipton, one of three dedicated community volunteers who developed the initial idea to create the Child and Family Guidance Center in the late 1950s, passed away on February 16, 2013 at the age of 98. In 1962, Sylvia helped organize the Founder's Board of Directors at the Center (Then known as the San Fernando Valley Child Guidance Clinic) and raised funds to hire the agency's very first Director. She remained active as a Board member and volunteer throughout her lifetime, and her work was instrumental in making the Center a leading provider of mental health services for children and families.

"Sylvia's enthusiasm for improving children's lives and her endless support for the Center's growth were vital to making our agency what it is today," said Roy Marshall, the Center's president and CEO. "Thousands of children and families are able to access mental health services at the Center today because of the dedication, hard work and generosity of Sylvia Lipton. We are so grateful for her kindness and determination. She will be greatly missed."

Our Staff

Center Adds Director of Professional Development so Therapists Can Continue to Lead the Way in Providing Care



The Center has assigned Joelle Hunnewell to the newly created position of Director of Professional Development. Joelle's work will help the Center's therapists and support staff to remain on the cutting edge of their professions. As soon as Joelle accepted the position in early January, she began interviewing Center staff about how they believe they need and want to grow within their professions.

“This position is exciting because it allows me to directly impact the future of the...people we serve.”

Eventually, Joelle will compile the results of her interviews to determine the types of trainings and professional development classes that will best support the staff in achieving their ultimate goal – to provide the very best in mental health care to children and families. Joelle comes to her new position with a veteran's knowledge of the Center and the services it provides. She was the Center's Director of Antelope Valley Services for 14 years.

“As our staff constantly strives for the next level of excellence in their professions, the Center will remain a leader in providing innovative and effective programs and services for children and families.”

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www.childguidance.org**

Changing Lives

Buy Cards and Stationery from Phoenix Trading USA Ltd and be a Part of a Company that Has Supported the Center Since 2008

Gaynor Grubbs, an associate of Phoenix Trading USA Ltd, was a vendor at the Center's Holiday Boutique Fundraiser in 2008. As she sold high-quality greeting cards and stationery to Center supporters at the boutique, she also had the opportunity to get a first-hand look at how the Center works with children and families.

“The Center was obviously making a difference in the local community,” Gaynor said. “I wanted to see if, through Phoenix Trading Company, I could help even more.” And, she did. Since that time, a portion of the proceeds from Phoenix Trading Company's sales have benefited the Center's programs and services. In addition, the Center's logo frequently appears in the company's catalogue, raising the agency's visibility and informing Phoenix Trading customers about the important work the Center does.

The Center and the children and families we serve offer our ‘thanks’ to Gaynor and the Phoenix Trading Company. When businesses partner with the Center in this way, they are making a direct impact and bettering the lives of kids in their local communities.



This spring, Phoenix Trading Company will donate 40% of the proceeds from the sale of pre-packaged sets of greeting cards that offer the perfect message for every occasion.

WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATE OUR GENEROUS DONORS

July 1, 2012 through to January 15, 2013



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Thank You!



The Child and Family Guidance Center's Annual Holiday Toy and Food Drive provided families in need with food baskets and gifts for the children.

We are thankful to all the organizations, individuals or community groups who made a donation or helped to organize and collect toys for the Center. Your time and energy made a difference in so many people's lives.

We apologize for any errors or omissions. If we have inadvertently omitted your name, please contact Diane Montano at 818.739.5379.



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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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