

# CENTER NOTES

*Moving Lives Forward*

Vol. 33, No. 2



## Notes from the President

**Ian Hunter, Ph.D.**  
**President/CEO**

All good things must end. It is with a mixture of sadness and anticipation that I announce my retirement from my position as President/CEO effective August 1, 2018.

The sadness reflects the fact that I will be leaving all of my contacts in the mental health world in Los Angeles County, and, indeed, in the State. It has been such an honor and privilege to serve alongside the diligent management staff at the County DMH, my colleagues at ACHSA and CCCMHA, and, of course, the Center's excellent volunteer Board of Directors. Most of all, I will miss the daily contact with our outstanding, highly dedicated management team, line service staff, and, of course, our brave and heroic clients who struggle daily to "move their lives forward" while dealing with the tragedy of mental illness.

The anticipation is for my new found freedom to pursue the wide variety of interests and projects which have lain on the shelf for far too long ... List of interests such as: writing a novel; teaching

*Continued on Page 2*

## 15th Annual CAC Awards Luncheon *"Recovery in Action"*

The Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), a client-governed council that is empowered to recommend policy changes to the Center, hosted its 15th Annual luncheon on May 23. The luncheon was a great success and was carefully planned with the vision of the consumer (client) members. The theme they selected for this year's luncheon was "Recovery in Action" which signified where CAC members stood in their personal journey to recovery.

The theme also played off of a strategic plan developed in 2016 and then implemented in 2017. Throughout the luncheon program, each member of the CAC highlighted the Council's strategic plan initiatives and how they were executed throughout the year.

CAC representatives talked about their fundraising initiative, which resulted in carrying out two carwashes and generating \$1,500 in revenue. Some of these funds were disbursed to fund health/hygiene kits for the Client Run Center's Health Fair, while the remainder of the funds would later benefit another CAC initiative - the holiday "Giving Back" campaign. During the holidays, the committee granted a total of \$800 to 10 deserving clients. Program staff nominated clients with a significant need and the CAC committee members voted on who would receive the grants. Two recipients from the Center for Family Living and Milestones programs each received \$200. Eight additional clients received \$50 gift cards.

Another CAC representative made a presentation on the strategic initiative to plan a CAC Resource Fair. This event was designed to educate Center consumers about services and programs through the Center that they would not otherwise know about and could potentially utilize. Consumers from all Center programs were invited to attend.

Lastly, another consumer shared details about the strategic initiative to expand the Center's Recovery Panel. The panel is made up of several inspirational consumers, some of whom are part of the CAC. They speak openly about their personal struggles and road to recovery. With a focus on the four basic principles of recovery - hope, personal responsibility, empowerment, and meaningful roles - the intent is to provide a forum that educates and inspires students, mental



*Continued on Page 2*

health providers (including Center management staff), and peers.

The luncheon also honored two of the Center's dedicated volunteers - Tammy Dayton and Courtney Vujcich, two local businesses and community leaders. **Flair Cleaners** was honored for providing free dry cleaning to consumers who are going on job interviews as well as donating clothing for Valley Employment Services Program closet. **Los Angeles Trial Lawyers**



L-R, Lisa Zanville, LATLC; Sam Woolf, Program Coordinator, CRC

**Charities** was honored for providing donations and grants that helped the Client Run Center expand its food bank.

Lastly, and most importantly, four exemplary Center clients were honored for success not only in their own recovery, but also for being a role model and inspiring other consumers, helping them on their road to recovery.

Award recipients were also presented with Certificates of Appreciation from the following Legislative offices: Senator Bob Hertzberg, Councilmember David Ryu, and Congressman Tony Cardenas.

This luncheon would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors and donors. Their contributions helped the Consumer Advisory Council's fundraising efforts, sponsored tickets for our consumer guests and defrayed the cost of the luncheon.



L-R, Gary Futterman, Flair Cleaners; Vivian Akomah, Program Manager, Valley Employment Services

## CAC LUNCHEON SPONSORS

### Table Sponsors:

AAA T.L.C. Health Care, Inc.,  
Enterprise Fleet Management,  
LDI Color Toolbox, Stone Tapert ,  
Sutton Associates,  
George & Martin Titizian

### Ticket Sponsors:

Nancy Berry, Zita Kass,  
Alan Priven, Jean Sinatra

a class; traveling to far off lands and cultures; playing more tennis, golf, and basketball; working out at the health club; taking courses unrelated to mental health — economics, history, astronomy, etc.; and, spending much more quality time with friends and family.

During my 37 years with the Center, I have witnessed many changes in our national approach to the public sector treatment of severe mental illness — from the traditional 50 minute hour once or twice a month to the incorporation of our clients into all decisions regarding their treatment; to the elevation of clients to the role of partners with mental health professionals; but, mostly, to the development of comprehensive models of care. At the Center, we endorse and offer a wide range of services to wrap around and support our clients as they move towards independent living in their communities. This includes: traditional services such as case management, psychotherapy, and medication; but also housing assistance and placement; employment training and placement, and client run centers to encourage socialization and the development of lasting friendships

to combat isolation and decompensation.

I am extremely proud of the tremendous growth and development that has taken place in the Center during the past 37 years, growth that provides a tightly knit continuum of services for all age ranges and for all levels of disability. Following are just a few of the ways the Center has expanded during my tenure:

- Grew the Center from three programs to our current 40 programs;
- Grew the annual budget from \$2.5 million to our current \$50 million;
- Expanded Center facilities from three to our current 22 facilities;
- Currently 10,000-15,000 clients served annually in Center programs;
- Currently 500 interdisciplinary staff;
- Pioneered many innovative programs including: AB109 (early prison release), VA, substance use, child abuse, Wraparound services, Older Adult FSP, Bullying Advocacy, Youth Contact school-based services,

Family Preservation, Client Run and Wellness Centers, Valley Employment Services, Street to Home and court diversion.

As for me, I am very proud of all of our accomplishments over the years, and am certain that the Center, under the guidance and support of the new President/CEO Tim Ryder, M.B.A., will continue to grow and develop new services, which will fill the gap in current services, and offer a more comprehensive continuum and range for a larger, more diverse client population.



Dr. Hunter receives commendation from LA County Board Supervisor Sheila Kuehl

# May is Mental Health Month

Every year, during May, there's a national effort to raise awareness about mental health. One in five individuals deals with the reality of living with a mental illness. The Center's programs offer events during the month of May. Here's a sampling of some of the activities that took place at our Center.



**Milestones/AB 109** program held a bowling event. They rented out multiple lanes, had snacks available to consumers, and the consumers were able to pick their teams with staff. This was a great opportunity for the consumers to enjoy themselves, not feel judged or stigmatized for being in a mental health program specific to the reentry population, have a place where they could get any aggression out and learn healthy coping skills for the future. Everyone had fun and was truly appreciative of the opportunity for the outing.

**CalWORKs Mental Health & Domestic Violence Services** held its

4th Annual Wellness and Well Being Fair. A special thank you to **Pavilions Burbank** for donating 60 outstanding lunches. The Fair provided educational information on Anger Management, Healthy Relationships, Book of Life, and offered Experiential Relaxation and Meditation Basics. There were also prize giveaways including gift cards, gifts baskets and more.

**Center for Family Living, Transition Age Youth (TAY) Outpatient, TAY Field Capable Clinical Services and Full Service Partnership** hosted an annual BBQ. A hearty lunch was

served in a festive setting with music. Clients brought family members and enjoyed the BBQ with program staff in a relaxed, social environment. More than 120 participants were in attendance. Guests were additionally treated to singing performances by a couple of TAY clients. A good time was had by all.

**Older Adult Services** held an "Express Yourself" event. Clients had the opportunity to show their talent or creativity with arts and crafts and music. Peer counselors emceed the event, shared stories and told jokes. Clients sang songs in English, Spanish and Irish and some played guitar.

**Victory Wellness Center** hosted its annual Spring Art Fair. Consumers sold all types of arts and crafts. Many of the consumers utilize the program's art room as a way to work through their mental health symptoms and externalize feelings that they would have otherwise had difficulty expressing. They also use their art to share all the progress, hope and happiness they have gained through their recovery process. It was a very successful arts fair and consumers were very proud to display their art work.

**The Client Run Center and the Victory Wellness Center** facilitated the annual Mental Health Awareness Walk and BBQ at Sherman Oaks Park. Approximately 60 consumers "stepped toward hope and wellness," the theme of the 2.5 mile walk. The Creative Celebrations Committee joined forces to create signs with slogans for the walk that were carried by staff and consumers on the walk to raise awareness and urge the community to eliminate the stigma too often associated with having a mental illness. Signs were carried proudly and garnered quite a few honks in solidarity by passing vehicles. Hamburgers, hotdogs and watermelon, among other snacks, were prepared by program staff, peer counseling

## Community Partners Supported the Center During May

**AAA TLC Health Care** held a drive for the Center's homeless programs for backpacks and sleeping bags. A special thank you to Jody Sherman.

Thank you to Nwaka Onwusa with the **Grammy Museum** for donating 25 tickets so that clients from the Cornerstone program could attend the Grammy Museum in Downtown LA.



**National Alliance for the Mentally Ill California (NAMI)** provided monies for the Client Run Center and Valley Employment Services program to purchase 200 canvas bags for clients from these programs who receive goods from our food bank.

The bags included information about our Center, budgeting tools, a cookbook for low income families, disability and other benefits information, and information on seeking employment.

The bag can be reused for many trips to the food bank and has the phone numbers of the Client Run Center for easy reference.

**Northridge Women's Club (NWC)** provided the Center with a grant for its homeless programs. NWC has been a long-time supporter of the Center through events as well as cash and in-kind donations.

*Continued on Page 4*



**East Valley Youth and Family Center** held several consumer events — movie night for the children and their families featuring “Inside Out.” Popcorn and other treats were served. There was also a presentation for the parents on the topic of drugs. They discussed warning signs and learned about different classes of drugs commonly abused by teens.

## Family Links North Valley Youth & Family Center/Multi-disciplinary

**Assessment Team** honored 50 clients and their families by engaging them in a Groot event, based on the Marvel comic character. The purpose of the Groot activity was to spread awareness and to destigmatize mental health within the community. This created an opportunity for clients and their families to reflect on and identify how mental health services have positively impacted their lives. Clients expressed their thoughts and feelings by utilizing their hands as a symbol of life, unity, and self-actualization. Clients created artwork, drawings, writings and paintings to express themselves. Groot was placed in the lobby and clients were able to display their art work under the tree. It was a

great opportunity to see the artwork of other clients. The activity was a great success as it provided an opportunity for our clients and their families to feel empowered, accomplished, seen, and part of a community. It also allowed clients to know they are not alone, and with support, their lives are moving forward.

**Valley Employment Services'** consumers and staff attended a "Meet and Greet an Employer Day." They spent the day interacting with potential employers at the Burbank Media Center Mall.

The Victory Wellness and Client Run Centers jointly held its 3rd Annual Health Fair for clients throughout the Center. Community vendors who provide services ranging from HIV testing and dental services had display booths. Hearing screenings and blood pressure testing was offered. Program staff also provided information on healthy eating with healthy snacks. Each consumer who attended received a shopping tote with pamphlets, flyers and resources from each vendor. Center Health Navigators provided each client with an emergency medical information card that included their doctor and medication information.

Thank you to all of our participants – Los Angeles County Public Health Department, Samuel Dixon Family Health Center, Walgreens, Healthline Medical Group, Dr. Regina Espinoza, DDS, Family Dentistry and Orthodontics and Tarzana Treatment Center.

The **Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Charities (LATLC)** provided two grants to the Client Run Center (CRC) for use in their kitchen and food bank. The grant allowed the program to purchase much needed supplies for the kitchen, which provides a daily lunch to approximately 60 clients each day. The supplies included pots and pans, a Panini press for sandwiches, aprons, knives, and a new stove. The kitchen is now much better positioned to keep up with its increasing demands. It functions better and provides safer, healthier, and a better quality meal for the clients. The grant also helped to stock the workers hygienic, safe and professional



The Center is grateful to partner with the LATLC and we look forward to many future projects and their continued support of our mission!

## Albertson's Executives Recognized for Their Contributions to the Center



**Albertson's** stores have been providing toys and holiday meals to hundreds of clients each year at the Center for more than a decade. In March, the Center recognized Rick Crandall, District Manager, and Store Directors Kevin Scott Thill, Northridge; Carlton Hurst, Reseda; and, Stacy Sholbrok, Tujunga for their unwavering support of our Center. Congressman Sherman provided commendations for each individual as well.

## Ways You Can Help!

- Designate our Center as the beneficiary of your purchases through **Amazon Smile. Go to: [smile.amazon.com/ch/95-6194487](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-6194487)**
- Hold a toy or gift drive during the holidays to benefit our clients.

**For more information, call 818-901-4830 or email [info@sfvcmhc.org](mailto:info@sfvcmhc.org)**

## In Memory Of Dr. Robert Saray

It's with much sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Robert Saray. Dr. Saray was a psychiatrist for the Central Valley, East Valley, Youth Contact, and Children's FCCS programs since June 2000. His compassion left an indelible mark on our Center and the many clients he served.

Dr. Saray dedicated his career to helping young people overcome challenges and realize their full potential. He was extremely dedicated to each child and family he served at our Center. He took a lot of time to consult with each staff person regarding their clients.

Staff knew him as extremely generous and thoughtful. He spent time making chocolates for his coworkers and even individualized these gifts for each staff member.

He loved to participate in all Center activities – the annual holiday party, potlucks and celebrations at each clinic, etc.

Dr. Saray will be missed tremendously.

## Rena Duncan Retires

Rena Duncan retired from the Center in April. In her position as Director of Administrative Services, she wore many hats. She was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Center covering Centerwide Services, safety/training, insurance coverage, facility management, IT, purchasing, fleet leasing, equipment leasing, HIPAA issues related to clients, and other issues related to Center opera-



tions. She also served as the Center's primary Security Officer, Corporate Compliance Officer and ADA Coordinator.

Ms. Duncan worked for the Center from 1980-1983 and then returned in 2001. We are grateful to her for her service,

dedication and kindness to the Center and its staff for all of these years!

## Positively Impact Someone's Life and Volunteer!



Volunteers make an enormous difference throughout our Center! Currently, we have 30 volunteers at nine of our programs.

Volunteers offer personal undivided, non-judgmental attention to our clients. The impact on clients and relationships being built is extraordinary. They forge friendships and serve as tutors, mentors and role models, teach life skills groups and help with front office tasks. The result is a richer service experience to clients.

Volunteers come to our Center through a variety of sources — colleges, VolunteerMatch.com and Center staff or on their own initiative. Visit [www.MovingLivesForward.org](http://www.MovingLivesForward.org) for more information on how you can help.

**Thank you to all of our volunteers. We appreciate all you do.**



## Congratulations to our Management Staff on the Rise!

**Reggie Gallardo** has been promoted to Director of Administrative Services for the Center. He has been holding the position of Interim Director since April. Reggie has been with the Center for 21 years. In his new position, he oversees all of the Center's Administrative Services as well as HIPAA compliance.

**Katie Phillips, Psy.D., LMFT** has been promoted to Director of Homeless, Reentry & Substance Abuse Services. Katie has been working for the Center for 10 years beginning at the Adult FSP program. She has played a key role in the development and oversight of the Center's re-entry and justice programs which include: AB109, Diversion 50, Milestones, and the Pitchess in-custody treatment program at the Pitchess Detention Center. In her new role, she will also take on the responsibility of overseeing the Cornerstone Homeless programs, SAPC/substance use contracts, and the Center's Drug/Medical Outpatient Treatment Program.

**Diana Gutierrez**, Program Manager, Children's FSP

**Amber Rose**, Program Coordinator, TAY FSP & SEIPS

**Juan Carlos Quinteros**, Program Coordinator, Children's FSP

**Brenda Lira**, Program Coordinator, Family Links/North Valley Youth and Family Center

**Anna Rubin**, Program Manager, SUD Pitchess

Ian Hunter, Ph.D., President/CEO

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

James E. Fitzgerald, Chairperson  
Paula Grace Watkins, 1st Vice Chairperson  
Sahel Esa, 2nd Vice President  
Seymour J. DeMatoff, CPA, Treasurer  
Frank Muniz, MPA, Secretary

Nancy Berry  
Nereida Garcia, M.S.  
Robert F. Green  
John Hisserich, MPH, Dr.PH  
Zita D. Kass, M.A.  
Tracey Pomerance-Poirier  
Trevor Richmond  
Alexandra Roses  
John A. Sherman  
Peter Weinberger  
Dennis Zine

**Emeritus Board**

Elizabeth Kaufman, J.D.

**ADVISORY BOARD**

State Assemblyman Bob Blumenfeld  
Patrick I. Butler, M.A.  
Congressman Tony Cardenas  
Fritz Coleman  
LA City Councilman Mitch Englander  
Marsha Hunt  
LA City Councilman Paul Koretz  
LA City Councilman Paul Krekorian  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Congressman Brad Sherman  
State Senator Henry Stern

**PROGRAMS**

ADULT FULL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP  
CALWORKS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
CALWORKS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
CAPIT  
CAPPS  
CENS  
CENTER FOR FAMILY LIVING OUTPATIENT & FCCS  
CARING FOR KIDS (CHAT AND BULLYING & SCHOOL VIOLENCE ADVOCACY)  
CHILDREN'S FCCS  
CHILDREN'S FULL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP  
CLIENT RUN CENTER  
CORNERSTONE FCCS  
CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES (PITCHES)  
DHS INTERIM HOUSING  
DIVERSION 50  
E-6 HOMELESS OUTREACH & MOBILE ENGAGEMENT  
FAMILY PRESERVATION  
HAMLIN FCCS  
HOMEBOUND OLDER ADULT FCCS  
INTENSIVE FCCS  
JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS/CAMPS  
MACDONALD CAREY EAST VALLEY MHC  
MILESTONES (AB109)  
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM  
MULTI-SYSTEMIC THERAPY PROGRAM  
NEW DIRECTIONS EARLY INTERVENTION & DIVERSION PROGRAM  
OLDER ADULT COPE  
OLDER ADULT FULL SERVICE PARTNERSHIP  
PATH-MIT  
SEIPS  
STEPPING STONES  
THERAPEUTIC BEHAVIORAL SERVICES  
TRANSITION AGE YOUTH FSP & FCCS  
TRANSITION AGE YOUTH OUTPATIENT  
TURNING POINT (WRAPAROUND)  
VALLEY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
VICTORY WELLNESS CENTER  
YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTERS - CENTRAL,  
EAST & FAMILY LINKS/NORTH VALLEY  
YOUTH CONTACT SCHOOL BASED SERVICES FCCS

Marci Kass, Editor and Layout Design

**CENTER NOTES** is published by the San Fernando  
Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc.,  
16360 Roscoe Blvd., 2nd Floor, Van Nuys, CA 91406  
[www.MovingLivesForward.org](http://www.MovingLivesForward.org)

Telephone: (818) 901-4830



San Fernando Valley  
Community Mental Health Center, Inc.  
16360 Roscoe Blvd., 2nd Floor  
Van Nuys, CA 91406  
Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Van Nuys, CA  
Permit No. 1328

**TIME DATED MATERIAL**

**Making a Direct Difference  
In the Lives of Our Consumers**

As you may know, the Center receives the majority of its funding from governmental sources. What you may not know is that funding does not cover all of the needs of our consumers.

This makes it difficult for us to provide the essential resources that our consumers deserve. Everyone deserves food to eat, clothes to wear and a warm place to sleep. **Nearly 94% of every dollar donated goes towards the Center's programs and services.** Even though we know how to stretch a dollar, we are in need of funding to provide such essentials to our consumers.

Any gift you make to us, large or small is a great help.

Did you know that there are several ways you can donate? We, of course, accept cash, but we also accept credit card and stock donations. We are also in need of in-kind (non-cash) donations for our programs such as clothes, housewares and toiletries. These can be donated either in new or gently used condition.

Your generosity helps us to provide services to more than 15,000 consumers annually. Your donation does make a direct difference in the lives of our consumers.

Go to [www.MovingLivesForward.org/donate](http://www.MovingLivesForward.org/donate) or if you have questions, please call the Development Department at (818) 901-4830.

