

FALL 2005 | VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 2

PORTALS pathways

turning lives around since 1955



PORTALS Unveils Master Development Plans for Its Mariposa Clubhouse Facility

Proposed Mixed-Use Recovery and Wellness Center to Include 61 Units of Transitional and Permanent Housing

After 18 months of planning, PORTALS has announced a proposed new master development project that will expand the agency's current Mariposa Clubhouse social rehabilitation program. Designed to emphasize recovery, wellness and housing, this project represents the single largest construction endeavor for PORTALS in its 50-year history. The goal is to replace PORTALS' existing buildings at Third and Mariposa streets in Los Angeles with a new, comprehensive multi-use Recovery and Wellness Center that includes 61 units of transitional and permanent affordable supportive housing.

"The design for the new Mariposa Recovery and Wellness Center builds on the best of PORTALS' industry-recognized, accredited psychosocial rehabilitation programs, and embodies our vision for transforming and expanding our current Clubhouse services in line with the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)," said Jim Balla, PORTALS President and CEO.

PORTALS' Director of Facilities Conn Flatley added, "This property is located in

Service Planning Area 4 — one of the most densely populated and ethnically diverse sections of the city, with perhaps the greatest need for community mental health services. By building a new Recovery and Wellness Center at this PORTALS-owned site, we will be able to expand access and accommodations for individuals representing the multiple cultures and ethnicity of this community."

'Clubhouse of the Future'

The proposed new mixed-use 65,000 square foot Craftsman-style Recovery and Wellness Center, fronting onto Third and Mariposa streets, will feature a three-level Clubhouse structure, an interior landscaped courtyard, and a six-level apartment complex that includes 16 transitional housing units and 45 permanent housing units. This spacious and efficient campus will include 120 spaces of underground parking.

"By combining three core activities — social rehabilitation services, employment development, and housing — at one location, PORTALS' 'Clubhouse of the Future' will

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PORTALS Stresses 'Housing First'

Ensuring Continuity of Care and Supporting Recovery from Mental Illness

Housing. To most of us it means much more than a shelter. It translates into clean, safe and comfortable surroundings which we call "home." At PORTALS, developing housing options for our Members is all about providing clean, safe, affordable places where they can live with dignity.

However, access to safe and affordable housing in Los Angeles County has become a formidable problem for agencies like PORTALS that provide supportive housing. According to recent reports referencing affordable housing for "special needs" populations in Los Angeles, the availability of units is far below the growing demand. And the number of new units in development falls far short of the number needed to adequately address the city's homelessness problem.

"Housing first!" has been at the forefront of PORTALS' service delivery system for more than three decades. And, despite the current challenges of an under-developed supply, PORTALS will continue to place major emphasis on providing safe, affordable, permanent supportive housing options for its members.

"Our members require safe, affordable housing to support their recovery and reintegration back into the community. This, coupled with flexible, individualized supportive services and case management, helps to insure that our members can sustain their housing and help support their personal recovery from mental illness."

— Jim Balla
PORTALS President and CEO

"We are aggressively pursuing strategies and applying available resources to expand, where possible, PORTALS' transitional and permanent housing opportunities for our members," Jim continued.

PORTALS has unveiled plans for a proposed comprehensive Recovery and Wellness Cen-

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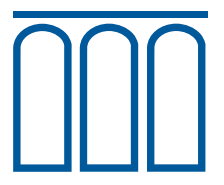
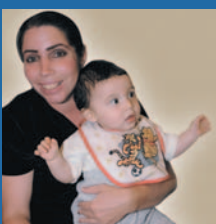
CELEBRATING

50

YEARS' COMMITMENT TO QUALITY MENTAL HEALTHCARE

1955-2005

turn a life around



PORTALS
Turn a life around.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO, JIM BALLA 'Housing is Key in Mental Health Recovery'



As I've shared with you previously, affordable, supportive housing is the true cornerstone, and arguably the first critical component, in the continuum of care for mentally ill individuals—many of whom are homeless with co-occurring substance abuse problems.

According to a recent statewide survey of AB2034 programs conducted by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, individuals who obtain supportive, permanent housing do better in reaching their recovery and wellness goals.

The 2005 homeless count, conducted by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), showed that on any given night, Los Angeles County has approximately 91,000 homeless individuals. Of this number, nearly 35,000 are estimated to be chronically homeless; more than 28,000 are severely mentally ill; and nearly 40,000 are chronic substance abusers. The need to provide safe, affordable, permanent housing

for our mentally-ill members has never been greater. And, it is clear that providing safe living environments for adults, families with children, and young adults emancipating from foster care must remain among the highest priorities for serving the mentally ill.

However, the challenge is in the development of affordable housing units. According to the Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty in L.A., published in a report by *The L.A. Economic Roundtable* — **"between 4,728 to 8,895 affordable housing units for families are needed annually in LA County" and "the cost to end homelessness in the most optimistic scenario ranges from \$1 to \$1.5 billion a year."** These are staggering numbers and illustrate the tremendous challenges to end homelessness.

Sharing the commitment to end homelessness for the chronically mentally ill, PORTALS is doing its part. Our lead story on page 1

describes PORTALS' proposed master facilities plan for the Mariposa Clubhouse, which includes 61 units of additional housing: 16 units of transitional and 45 units of affordable supportive housing. We are also proud to announce the re-opening of the No-Fail transitional residential program in South Los Angeles, which will offer 20 transitional beds specifically for the homeless mentally ill. The No-Fail facility is the newest of three PORTALS transitional residential programs, which cumulatively provide transitional housing for approximately 65 members at any given time. And, in our "Insights" column on page 7, mental health leaders endorse and reflect on PORTALS' housing philosophy — "Housing First."

Separately, we remain enthusiastic with the opportunities presented in California's new Mental Health Services Act. Toward this end, we will be sharing in the next issue of PATHWAYS our vision and plans as we

position PORTALS for what appears to be a promising future in mental health care. Paraphrasing comments made by Dr. Marvin Southard, Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, at our 50th Annual Meeting, "PORTALS has always been one of those organizations that put things together in a way that anticipated the future."

As we continue to celebrate our 50th Anniversary Year, "Housing First" will certainly remain, as it has in the past, a top priority in PORTALS' social rehabilitation services.

Thank you.

Mariposa Clubhouse (continued from page 1)

greatly add to the current continuum of care offered to our members," said Jim Balla.

A key member of the project development planning team is Russel Tyner, A.I.A., of Houston/Tyner, a Professional Architectural Corporation.

"The design incorporates the need for flexibility so we can accommodate change and growth over time and re-configure with minimum cost."

— Russel Tyner, A.I.A.
Houston/Tyner

Interiors of the three-level Clubhouse will include open spaces that allow for multiple uses — member group meetings for example. Offices for PORTALS staff will be located on the third floor, along with Workforce Unlimited and other social enterprise operations.

Home to Job Services

More than 6,000 square feet of Clubhouse space will house PORTALS' successful member employment programs, including office services and technology training; building maintenance and landscaping; and food services and catering. Specifically to support the Clubhouse food services program, a large commercial kitchen and an expanded dining area will be developed to provide meal services for members and community group meetings.

To capture the warm home-like atmosphere of the current Mariposa Clubhouse, the reception area will have a comfortable "living room" feel, with a stone fireplace and a handsome open wood staircase leading up to the second floor.

Moreover, the new Recovery and Wellness Center will further expand member programs to include a "drop-in" center, peer support programs, call-in "warm" lines, family involvement, and parent/family education.

With the growing need for supportive, permanent housing, the new Center will feature a six-story residential structure offering 45 affordable studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments. In addition, 16 units will be designated for transitional housing.

Life Skills Training

The transitional residential facility will provide a shared communal kitchen and dining area, plus a model training apartment, where members can participate in PORTALS' recognized Life Skills program. In this program, Members learn to secure and sustain housing in the general community, and develop day-to-day skills such as how to plan meals, shop, cook, and clean their apartment.

To help fund this mixed-use site development project, a major capital campaign will be announced in the coming months. For more information, please call our development office at 213/639-2579.

PORTALS' 'Housing First' (continued from page 1)

ter that will offer rehabilitation programs integrated with on-site transitional and permanent supportive housing. The planned new 65,000 square foot Center will replace and expand current PORTALS Mariposa Clubhouse facilities at Third and Mariposa streets in the Wilshire Center area (see accompanying story.)

New 'No Fail' Units

In addition, this October, PORTALS will make 20 new units of transitional housing available to members at its Jesse A. Brewer No-Fail Community Center/Community Connections Clubhouse in South Los Angeles. And, in early 2006, through a partnership with affordable housing developer, A Community of Friends, PORTALS members who graduate from transitional housing will have access to 36 single-occupancy affordable permanent housing units at the new Santos Plaza Apartment Complex.

These new development projects are examples of PORTALS' long-standing commitment to housing, and the agency's emphasis on a recovery philosophy which recognizes housing as an integral part of mental health services.

Transitional Age Youth Housing

For emancipated foster youth aged 18 to 25, transitional and supportive permanent housing is critical to engaging them in mental health services.

"Without access to affordable hous-

ing, these young people cannot focus on acquiring and developing the most important life, educational and vocational skills required to promote their individual recovery and wellness, and to support independent living in the community," said Jana Plasters, PORTALS' Clinical Director. "All of us at PORTALS are particularly proud to know that our 'housing first' philosophy is embedded in the landmark Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)," she added.

To help these young members deal effectively with their mental illnesses and learn the important skills necessary to live independently, PORTALS has operated, for nearly five years, a transitional campus-style community-living residence in Hollywood. At this facility, more than 250 TAY members so far have received housing and life-skills services.

At PORTALS 50th Annual Meeting this June, the Director of the L.A. County Department of Mental Health, Dr. Marvin Southard, said "Housing will be a requirement of any agency that applies for MHSA funding. If we are giving people psychotherapy and medication, and they are still living under a freeway bridge, it is not likely that their lives will improve."

Acknowledging PORTALS' focus on housing and its vital role in recovery from mental illness, Dr. Southard smiled and said, "The Mental Health Services Act requires that PORTALS just keep on being PORTALS, and do the things you've always done!"

Leading the Way for 50 Years

PORTALS Leadership Stages Historic 50th Annual Meeting

Achieving 50 Years of continuous service to the community is a hallmark for any organization – profit or non-profit. And a fitting tribute was certainly made on June 24 when PORTALS' friends, supporters, board members, and staff came together for the agency's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting.

"Continuing the Legacy – Advancing the Principles of Recovery and Wellness" was the unifying theme of the event, held on the expansive rooftop terrace of the PORTALS Los Angeles headquarters.

"Fifty years!" exclaimed keynote speaker Dr. Marvin Southard, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. "That's a real accomplishment for any organization." Then, in a reference to the powerful theme of "Blink" a current best-selling book by Malcolm Gladwell, describing how experts can instantly assess organizations and situations by focusing on the meaning of "thin slices" of behavior, Dr. Southard added, "I've been acquainted with PORTALS for about half its lifetime. And I knew, even back in the 1980s, that you were one of those agencies that put things together in a way that anticipated the future."

"PORTALS, you may be 50 years old, but on the other hand, you're brand new. You're right on the cutting edge of mental health services in the nation going forward."

— Dr. Marvin Southard

Captivating Annual Meeting guests with their personal success stories, PORTALS members Ricky Starr and Amanda Ruiz agreed that an important key to their progress has been the unfailing support provided by PORTALS staffers.

A graduate of the PORTALS Twin Peaks dual-diagnosis residential program, Ricky said, "PORTALS people never gave up on me! And that's the thing that I love most about them. There's always a helping hand available to you, *wherever* you are in your recovery process."

Amanda is a member of the PORTALS Transitional Age Youth (TAY) program. She said, "The wonderful staff provided me with a safe, secure place to live. They went out of their way to help me get my medical benefits, and to make sure I fulfilled my probation requirements."

Mental Health Deputy David Ryu was on hand to represent L.A.

County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke. David told the audience that "the Supervisor is very aware that her district includes one of the highest need areas of the County, and she is very grateful to PORTALS for providing services in her district that are recovery-focused."

The Annual Meeting also serves as the platform for the election and installation of the members of the PORTALS Board of Directors. Barbara Kekich, outgoing Chair, complimented Rich Dominquez, the new Board Chair, for his long history of exemplary past service to PORTALS, and expressed her confidence that "the momentum we've achieved will not only be maintained, but accelerated under Rich's capable leadership."

Focused on the new fiscal year, Rich announced as a key goal the effort to develop and strengthen relationships with community leaders, fellow mental health advocates, and the corporate business community.

Concluding the meeting, PORTALS President and CEO Jim Balla presented the agency's Annual Report, highlighting major organizational successes and goals for the coming year.

Enhanced delivery of evidence-based services was a key initiative last year, Jim said, coupled with improved tracking and reporting of member outcomes. Among many other



Barbara Kekich (left), outgoing Chair of the PORTALS Board of Directors, and Rich Dominquez, incoming Chair, gratefully acknowledge the Annual Meeting participation of David Ryu (right), Mental Health Deputy to L.A. County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke. David officially thanked PORTALS on behalf of the Supervisor for providing recovery-based services in "one of the highest needs areas in the County."

achievements, Jim noted that a major staff training and leadership program was launched; PORTALS' new "Turn a Life Around" brand was introduced; and the agency's master facilities plan was expanded to include the Mariposa Clubhouse and the No-Fail Community Center redevelopment projects. "Envisioning the agency's future, I see even greater commitment to teamwork, as we plan for an enhanced recovery and wellness-based delivery system at PORTALS," Jim said.

And, in a fitting conclusion to the history-making 50th PORTALS Annual Meeting, Jim acknowledged the dedication of the PORTALS staff and the Board.

"Please join me in recognizing PORTALS volunteer leadership, the senior management team, our program managers and support staff. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to the recovery and wellness of our members, and the continued success of this organization."



Dr. Marvin Southard, Director, L.A. County Department of Mental Health

Key provisions of the new legislation stress housing and employment needs of the seriously mentally ill population. Dr. Southard said, "Housing comes first. We provide people with a safe place to be, and then we provide all the supportive services to keep them healthy."

Concluding his remarks Dr. Southard stated, "The Mental Health Services Act is requiring, in many ways, that PORTALS be PORTALS, and to do the things that you have always done. Congratulations on your 50 years of leadership and pioneering service."

IN FOCUS: California's New Mental Health Services Act

As director of the L.A. County Department of Mental Health, Dr. Marvin Southard leads the largest public mental health system in America. In his keynote address at the PORTALS 50th Annual Meeting in June, he shared his perspectives on California's groundbreaking new Mental Health Services Act.

"As it has always been with PORTALS, and is now with the Mental Health Services Act, the focus is *not* on psychotherapy alone, but on helping people really live better lives," Dr. Southard said. "Many years ago, PORTALS did a lot of things that came to be recognized in the AB2034 program, which was the genesis of Proposition 63, which has evolved into the Mental Health Services Act."

The MHSA planning and implementation process views mental health services in ways that differ from the past. The Act requires, for example, that all stakeholder groups are represented in the process, not just mental health professionals. And, importantly, MHSA stipulates that all providers systematically address, as PORTALS always has, the substance abuse problems of their clients, according to Dr. Southard.

Esteemed At-Risk Youth Educator, Dr. Andrew Manley, Elected to Serve on the PORTALS Board of Directors

At graduation exercises for 25 of his students this June, Dr. Andrew Manley took understandable pride in the dedication he has manifested in serving a group of seriously at-risk teens as they achieved their key educational goals. Thirteen years ago, when he founded the state-commissioned New West Technical Academy in South Los Angeles, Dr. Manley, the school's president, was firmly convinced that at-risk boys and girls require a very special approach to education. Since its founding, New West Technical Academy has graduated more than 150 students, preparing them for life outside the negative influences of gangs, drugs and crime within the inner city.

"To succeed in school and in life," Dr. Manley said, "Children need a safe, secure environment, with zero-tolerance for distractions and disruptions... a place where they can focus their energies on learning, and get personalized help when they need it."

Dr. Manley is one of the newest members of the PORTALS Board of Directors. Jim Balla, PORTALS' President and CEO, said, "Dr. Manley is an accomplished business leader, civic and volunteer board steward and an academic administrator. His life's mission personifies ethical entrepreneurship, and he indeed serves as a trusted role model for the many young lives he touches everyday at New West Technical Academy."

Commenting on his longstanding mutually-respectful working relationship with Jim, Dr. Manley said, "Jim is assuredly one of a kind. He's entirely committed to striving for excellence in everything he does, while ensuring the highest level of business ethics and personal integrity. Two words that personify Jim are 'genuinely caring' as he gives unselfishly of his time, personal resources and talents to so many others. Moreover, Jim is well known and respected for his sensitivity and

understanding of cultural diversity. It has been a real privilege to share both a professional and personal relationship with Jim, which now spans nearly three decades."

Among his many accomplishments, Dr. Manley is an ordained minister and devoted community leader. He has served as Council Deputy for L.A.'s Eighth Council District, and Special Assistant to Councilman Robert Farrell. He is the recipient of the Councilman Gilbert Lindsay Award and the City of Los Angeles Mayoral Award for Community Service. Currently, Dr. Manley is a member of the executive board of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, and serves as a reserve deputy probation officer.

His past board memberships include the Los Angeles Chapter of the Red Cross; Family Services of Los Angeles; and the Bob Hope Hollywood USO. Formerly, Dr. Manley headed



Andrew Manley, PhD, founder and president, New West Technical Academy for at-risk youth.

the North American Beverage Company, and served in key executive and management roles at General Mills.

PORTALS Welcomes New Director of Assets and Facilities

Conn Flatley, recently appointed Director of Assets and Facilities, brings to PORTALS more than 30 years of management experience in hospital operations, facilities planning and construction.

At PORTALS, he is charged to oversee the "environment of care" throughout the organization. Conn's duties range from providing safety and security systems to property and asset management, facility and equipment repair and maintenance, and major remodeling and construction projects. And the physical environments supported by Conn and his team are diverse — from PORTALS' Headquarters executive offices in Wilshire Center to the Jesse A. Brewer No-Fail Transitional Recovery Residence in South Los Angeles. In total, PORTALS operates a comprehensive network of member service programs and administrative support facilities at six locations in the Mental Health Department's Service Planning Areas 4, 5 and 6.

Conn began his involvement with PORTALS as a consultant, leading

Conn Flatley, Director of Assets and Facilities

the current tenant improvement remodeling process at the agency's 2500 Wilshire service facility. He officially became a member of the PORTALS management team this past April.

Before joining PORTALS, Conn was involved with his own hotel and restaurant business, and served as a facilities consultant to healthcare organizations. Previously, he held the position of director of facilities development and support services at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. Conn has also held key facilities-related positions at multiple community-based organizations and university medical centers in Pennsylvania and Illinois. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern University, and a master's degree in management from the J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern.



Specialized Staff Training – A Commitment to Continuous Learning

As part of PORTALS' commitment to staff development, a year-round training and professional development program was launched in July, featuring customized curriculum tracks for the agency's directors, managers, supervisors, clinical and para-clinical professionals, and administrative assistants.

Focused on ensuring service excellence, quality of work life and workforce effectiveness, "The executive management team at PORTALS is committed to education and training to help our staff expand their professional, clinical, managerial and leadership capabilities," said Jim Balla, PORTALS President and CEO. PORTALS' overall strategic plan calls for the agency to devote resources to staff development on a sustained and systematic basis, Jim explained. "Ultimately, our members will be the key beneficiaries of this process."

The comprehensive program offers

specialized "High Performing Director" training, "High Performing Manager" training, as well as "Highly Effective Administrative Assistant" coursework. With workshop titles including "Managing Change and Growth," "Building Teams and Teamwork," "Workplace Safety" and "Managing Emotions in the Workplace," the current PORTALS professional development program is "an investment in the most important asset any service agency has — its employees," said Michael Nanko, PORTALS COO.

Professional trainers and experts in their respective disciplines have been recruited to lead the several different tracks of customized classes and group workshops.

Featured above, Joyce Kersey of Two K Consulting helps training session attendees understand the dynamics of change at the workplace, and suggests ways they can gain and grow from these experiences.

Teamwork and Star Players

PORTALS Salutes Members' Stellar Achievements

Staged to celebrate the growth and courage of PORTALS members in the past year, the Annual "Rising Stars" Member Recognition Luncheon in June was an event that clearly inspired everyone there.

At the festive luncheon, held at St. Anne's Conference Center in Los Angeles, special guest Susan Kerr, Chief Deputy Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, recognized PORTALS for the incredible work being done to help members recover and achieve a quality of life that supports their independence.

She praised everyone who received awards that day, and was especially grateful for the inspiration members provide to mental health professionals.

More than 100 members stepped forward individually to accept congratulations and cheers for their success in setting, pursuing and achieving goals.

In the education award category, 20 members were recognized for completing a course, degree or a certificate program. In the employment and volunteerism categories, 28 received commendations for being fully engaged in paid community jobs, or donating their time in volunteer positions.

Seventeen members, free from alcohol or drugs for at least six months, received sobriety awards, while 18 were recognized for living independently and maintaining their own apartments. And 10 received recognition in special categories that included Workforce Unlimited participation, Peer Support, Service

Plan Goals Attainment, and All-Around Growth.

Heading up the "Rising Stars" line-up was a group of nine members singled out by their peers to receive Leadership Awards. To qualify, awardees must stand out as role models, lead busy and productive lives themselves, and inspire others to accomplish the same.

Representing PORTALS programs that ranged from AB2034 to Transitional Age Youth (TAY), the 2005 Leadership Award winners were: Donald Brandon, Pinina Kelly, Alfred Magallon, Gary Nollins, Amanda Ruiz, Anthony Thomas, Eduardo Tiffer, Esther Watkins, and Chuck Woodruff (who also served as the event MC!)



All-Staff Appreciation Picnic – It's All About Team-Building

The scene was beautiful Elysian Park. The weather was warm, the BBQ was bountiful, the prizes made everybody's "most wanted" list, and the team sports were, in a word, spectacular.

It all added up to a great, relaxing, team-building time for more than 130 PORTALS employees who turned out on Friday, Aug. 12 to participate in the All-Staff Picnic and Appreciation Day. "This special staff event is our way to say thank you for all of your dedicated work, and to recognize the tremendous contributions that you make individually and collectively within your programs and departments to support the journey of our members' recovery and well-

ness," said Jim Balla, PORTALS President and CEO. "As we share this time together, as one PORTALS Team, let's take a moment to acknowledge and embrace the diversity of our staff and the values we share. It's the synergy of our team that makes PORTALS great."

Both Jim and Michael Nanko, PORTALS Chief Operating Officer, commended the Human Resources staff and the event planning committee for their exceptional effort on the picnic event. Committee members included Veronica Raef, chairperson; Shontell Carter, planning; Tanya Lindsley, co-chair/T-shirts; Toie Williams, planning; and Yasmin Parra, planning.



PORTALS members happily display their awards for outstanding individual achievement in categories including education, sobriety and budgeting skills. Posing from left at the "Rising Stars" Member Recognition Luncheon are Phyllis Dees McKnight, Kevin Walters, Paula Flowers, and Dru Kim.



All-Staff Picnic Chairperson Veronica Raef (left), of the PORTALS HR Department, presents a prize to very happy winning-ticket holder, Miriam Bayas, ACT program staffer.

Thank You for Caring

We are deeply grateful to our donors whose support is essential to our success in serving our members.

May 16 to August 31, 2005

INDIVIDUALS

Mr. James J. Balla
 Mr. and Mrs. Herman Berman
 Mr. Lester Bise
 Mr. Roberto S. Consebido
 Ms. Betty Dahlquist
 Mr. P.J. Dinneny
 Ms. Kathleen Drummy
 Ms. Betty Freeman
 Mr. Maury Gentile
 Ms. Jeanne K. Gerson
 Mr. Richard F. Gray
 Mr. Stan Mazin
 Mr. Andrew A. Perris
 Ms. Jana V. Plasters
 Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell H. Salter
 Mr. Bruce Louis Saltzer
 Ms. Carol G. Siegel
 Mr. Alan Sieroty
 Albert and Janey Sweet

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IN-KIND

Ms. Flor Gonzalez
 Mr. Barry D. Kellman, Esq.
 Mr. Michael Nanko
 Sierra Sign Images
 Mr. Marvin Weinstein

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TRIBUTE GIFTS

Mr. James J. Balla
In memory of June Mabel Halas
 Mrs. Mimi Feldman
In tribute to Jill Steinbaum
 Mr. Michael Nanko
In memory of John Nanko

(If we have inadvertently omitted your name, we deeply apologize. Please let us know and we will include your name in our next newsletter. Thank you.)

No-Fail Center and Transitional Age Youth Residential Programs to Benefit from Recent Grants and Donations

PORTALS gratefully acknowledges The Emergency Housing and Assistance Program (EHAP) of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a \$30,000 grant and Northrop Grumman for a \$10,000 grant to help fund \$100,000 in matching funds from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to support transitional housing at PORTALS' No-Fail Community Center. Nearly half of Los Angeles County's estimated 90,000 homeless individuals are concentrated in the Metro and South Los

Angeles regions. It is estimated that more than 28,000 of these individuals suffer from severe mental illnesses, 18,000 of whom are dually diagnosed with mental illness and substance abuse disorders. We gratefully acknowledge EHAP and Northrop for their continued support.

A grant of \$20,000 from the Henry L. Guenther Foundation and a \$5,000 donation from First Federal Bank in response to PORTALS' Spring "Comfort of Care" campaign will benefit PORTALS' Transitional Age Youth

(TAY) program serving mentally ill young adults by providing housing, employment and educational services.

Also, a very special "thank you" to Shelter Partnership for their continuing support of PORTALS' mentally ill members. The organization made possible in-kind gifts of domestic "comforts" — ranging from bedding to infant items — valued at approximately \$7,960.00. These special in-kind gifts will be used by PORTALS members throughout all of our programs.

PORTALS' Comfort of Care – We Continue to Wish

The Comfort of Care Campaign begun in our last newsletter brought a tremendous response from our donors and will continue through the end of the year. Please take time to read the wish list below for which we will gratefully receive cash donations or in-kind donations of new or lightly used items. If you wish to donate something very special or unusual that you know would create a sense of comfort and well-being, please call Ivan Rodriguez at (213) 639-2577. When it comes to making a donation, we thank you for thinking of PORTALS.

Education

School Books
 Computer Supplies
 Tuition Fees
 Backpacks

Beautification

Gardening Supplies
 Flowering plants
 Indoor & Outdoor Paint
 Outdoor Furniture

Member Dreams

Passes for Movies
 Sporting Events
 Theme Parks
 Public Transit Passes
 Exercise Equipment
 Gym Memberships

Creativity

Art Supplies
 Sewing & Craft Supplies
 Canvases and Easels
 Sculpting Tools

Celebrations

2 Kettle Barbecues
 Colorful Mitts & Aprons
 Pots, Pans & Utensils
 Party Decorations

Happy Home

Area Rugs
 Framed Paintings & Prints
 Decorative Pillows
 Furniture Accessories
 Bedding
 China & Glassware

PORTALS' Receives \$150,000 Grant from The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF)

The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF) has awarded PORTALS' Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Program \$150,000 in core operating support to provide a range of mental health treatment and supportive services to youth who are exiting the child social services system of Los Angeles County. The grant, which will provide \$50,000 a year for three years, will allow PORTALS to enhance the treatment of mentally ill young adults with a comprehensive range of "wraparound" services such as employment training, housing support, transportation, educational supplies and incentives that enable members to overcome barriers to treatment, actively address their mental illness and remain in the program as they pursue their life goals. TCWF funding also recognizes the importance of those working "behind the scenes" to enable PORTALS to fulfill its mission, such as the Departments of Finance, Development, and Informational Services. The grant will partially support the implementation of a comprehensive fund development effort that, in turn, is essential for the long-term growth of the TAY Program.

Editor's Note: The TAY Program is funded in part by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). Created in 1992 as an independent, private foundation, TCWF's mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention programs.

PORTALS' Camerford Residence – A Safe Haven for Transitional Age Youth

There is a great need for safe, secure housing for young men and women with mental illness emancipating from foster care or coming off the streets with no resources. PORTALS' Camerford Residence offers a safe haven for these young adults.

Our Camerford property needs four new combination air condition-

ing/heating units, as well as attractive appointments and decorative household items for the residents to personalize their individual rooms.

(Please note the above "Comfort of Care" Wish List.)



TAY Resident Counselor Joel Acala, left, and Ti Rainey, TAY member.

From Our Team to Yours!

A Special Thank You from PORTALS' Workforce Unlimited Team...



...to the Wilshire Center Business Improvement District Team

Executive Director	Gary Russell, G. L. Russell & Associates
President	Gary Miecke, Surachi & Company
Vice President	Linda Hedden, Paramount Plaza
Secretary	Paul Kim, Wilshire Business Center at Central Plaza
Treasurer	Debra Leathers, Southwestern University School of Law
	Eileen O'Brien, Archdiocese of Los Angeles
	Mike Sarebanha, Seligman Western Enterprises, LTD

...for renewing and extending our Wilshire Center Sidewalk Contract!

PORTALS' Member Success Stories— —Ricky and Amanda



PORTALS members Ricky Starr, left, and Amanda Ruiz, second from right, presented their inspiring personal recovery stories at the June Annual Meeting. Here, outgoing Board Chair Barbara Kekich, and guest MC Warren Riley (right) commend the pair for their life-changing achievements.

After graduating from the PORTALS Twin Peaks transitional housing program, Ricky Starr moved to an apartment, gradually stopped taking the medications prescribed for his mental illness, and drifted back into drug abuse.

Every day, sometimes two or three times a day, Ricky's phone would ring and the caller was always Jason Grebasch, Service Coordinator at the PORTALS Twin Peaks facility. And Jason's question to Ricky never varied, "Are you ready to get help now?" One memorable day, the answer was "Yes!" and the rest is a true PORTALS member success story.

Ricky decided that a sober living facility should be his first stop, after a

short hospital stay. Today he has a job as a mortgage loan officer; manages the Serenity Connection sober living facility in Reseda; and is vice

“PORTALS never gave up on me! And that's the thing that I love most about them. There's always a helping hand available to you.”

— Ricky Starr
PORTALS member

president of the men's fellowship at his church. To maintain his current mental health status, "Ricky has taken the lead to meet with his mental health worker and outpatient service coordinator several times each week," Jason said, adding that Ricky also offers peer support to res-

idents of his sober living facility, and shares his experience with dual-diagnosis recovery.

The story that PORTALS Member Amanda Ruiz tells of her own road to recovery is equally compelling. Amanda is a member of the PORTALS Transitional Age Youth Program. Before coming to PORTALS, Amanda recalled, "My life revolved around drug abuse, and eventually I was arrested. I asked my parole officer if PORTALS could be my rehabilitation provider, and PORTALS took over my case management."

Amanda moved into the PORTALS Camerford residence in Hollywood, a six-bed transitional housing facility. "PORTALS provided me with a safe, secure place to live, food, clothing, and mental health services. The wonderful staff helped me secure the medical benefits I was entitled to, and made sure I fulfilled my probation requirements," she said

Amanda has since moved into a sober living facility. She has been accepted for permanent housing at the Santos Plaza apartment complex in South Los Angeles — PORTALS' newest collaboration with affordable housing developer, A Community of Friends. There Amanda will rent and maintain her own apartment, and continue to receive supportive services from PORTALS. At the June 8 PORTALS Member Recognition Luncheon, Amanda was honored with a special Leadership Award. Her PORTALS friends, members and staffers alike all agree that the future holds great things for Amanda.

INSIGHTS

Supportive Housing Is First Priority

"In Los Angeles today, thousands of suffering people are homeless because they are afflicted with untreated mental illness."

USC Keck School of Medicine,
Community Health Division



"People with mental illnesses consistently report that they prefer an approach that stresses housing first... support services are also needed to sustain individuals in their housing."

The President's New Freedom
Commission on Mental Health



"Non-profit providers have demonstrated success in helping homeless mentally ill adults enter treatment and move into permanent housing."

Conrad H. Hilton Foundation

NIMH Awards \$3 Million Research Grant to PORTALS and USC School of Social Work

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has approved a new \$3 million multi-year grant aimed at increasing the effectiveness of community mental health rehabilitation by rapidly moving research findings into active care settings. PORTALS will partner with investigators from USC and UCLA on the project, entitled,

“This grant-funded project is a tremendous opportunity for PORTALS as we continue to inform our practice through research involvement.”

— Jim Balla
PORTALS President and CEO

“Biosocial Factors in Rehabilitation of Schizophrenia.”

Dr. John Brekke is the research partnership's principal investigator. He is the Frances G. Larson Professor of Social Work Research, and Director of the Hamovitch Center for Science in the Human Services at the USC School of Social Work. Working with Dr. Brekke as a co-principal investigator is Robert Kern, PhD, Associate Research Psychologist at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute. The PORTALS co-principal investigators are Clinical Director Jana Plasters, MFT, and Laura Pancake, LCSW.

PORTALS began working with Dr. Brekke in 1989, when he, his re-

search staff, and PORTALS professional program staff looked at how the PORTALS psychosocial rehabilitation model for service delivery affected its members with schizophrenia. This most recent study will change PORTALS' role from a recruitment site for study participants to a community research partner with USC and UCLA.

The goals of this new NIMH grant partnership will be to build a shared research infrastructure, and to expedite “research to practice” efforts by providing study discoveries to consumers and service providers administering programs in typical community rehabilitation settings.

Mariposa Clubhouse Fair Features Member Groups

Balloons, refreshments, colorful table-top displays, music and interested guests filled the auditorium at the Second Annual Member Group Fair on June 9 this year. Staged at PORTALS' Mariposa Clubhouse in central Los Angeles, the event celebrates (and informs visitors about) the many different PORTALS member groups that regularly meet there.

Each group, which typically gets together for an hour every week, has a specific life-skills focus. Topics range from "Anger Management," "Healthy Eating Habits," "Dual-Diagnosis," and "Health and Hygiene" to "Budgeting Skills" and "Job Readiness." There's also a special group for women, and one that meets to produce the Mariposa Times newsletter.

Participation in these activities gives members the chance to learn the skills they need to live independently, and to work toward true quality of life. PORTALS professional staffers lead the groups, and the members greatly enrich the experience by providing peer support to each other.



PORTALS member Kathy Klein welcomes visitors to the Anger Management Group's display at the Mariposa Clubhouse Member Group Fair. The event showcased the range of life-skills learning groups that meet regularly at MCH.

COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 10:
International Mental
Illness Awareness Day



OCTOBER 20:
Association of Community
Human Services Agencies
Awards Luncheon (PORTALS
members will be recognized.)

OCTOBER 21:
PORTALS All-Staff
Meeting & Recognition
Luncheon:
Theme: "Teamwork in Action"



NOVEMBER 15:
Open House at New
No-Fail Transitional
Housing Center



DECEMBER 16:
Board of Directors
Meeting & Annual
Holiday Luncheon



MAY 18, 2006:
50th Anniversary Gala
Skirball Cultural Center

Quick Facts on Homelessness in Los Angeles

The Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty has issued the results of a major new research project that looked at the needs of Los Angeles County's huge homeless population.

Following are key findings from the Institute's report, published by the

LA Economic Roundtable.

- It will cost from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion a year to end homelessness in Los Angeles.
- Between 4,728 and 8,895 affordable housing units for families are needed annually in LA County.
- 135,000 individuals and 119,100 family members are homeless each year in LA County.
- 20 percent of LA's homeless individuals are in need of substance abuse treatment, and 25 percent need mental health services.

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CELEBRATING

50

YEARS'
COMMITMENT
TO QUALITY
MENTAL
HEALTHCARE

1955-2005

