

PORTALS pathways

turning lives around since 1955

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Councilmember Eric Garcetti – Keynote Speaker at Portals 50th Holiday Board Meeting

At Portals' 50th Holiday Board Meeting on December 16, 2005 the Board of Directors and honored guests were privileged to special comments offered by Councilmember Eric Garcetti, representing City Council District

13. (*Portals' Mariposa Clubhouse Wellness and Recovery Center, Twin Peaks Dual Diagnosis Transitional Residential Program, Transitional Age Youth Program, and Assertive Community Treatment Program, and a growing number of other Portals programs all operate within the borders of District 13.*) In his district, Councilmember Garcetti has focused on bringing government and local services closer to the neighborhoods he serves. As Chair of the Housing, Community, and Economic Development Committee, he has promoted affordable housing, youth intervention programs, and community and senior centers, while also overseeing the expansion of after school programs. He also co-authored legislation that created and funded year-round homeless shelters in Los Angeles.

"I am a big supporter of what I call YIMBY: Yes In My Back Yard," Councilmember Garcetti began. "We are a whole community. We have neighborhoods and neighbors, many of whom are homeless. District 13 is

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Councilmember Eric Garcetti presents a 50th Anniversary commendation to Portals Board Chair Richard Dominguez, left, and President & CEO Jim Balla at the 50th Holiday Board meeting.



Farzaneh Johartchi, right, receives a special commendation from the County Board of Supervisors, presented by David Ryu, Mental Health Deputy for Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke.

Portals Board Member Farzaneh Johartchi Honored

by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors at the Holiday Board Meeting

One of the many highlights of the 50th Annual Holiday Board meeting was the presentation to Farzaneh Johartchi of a special commendation for her service to Portals and the community. The commendation was signed by all five members of the Board of Supervisors and presented to Farzaneh by David Ryu, Mental Health Deputy for Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite-Burke.

Farzaneh joined Portals' Board of Directors in 1997. Prior to joining the Board, Farzaneh served on the Finance Committee from 1993, maintaining that position until 2000. She served on the Resource Development Committee from March 2004 to April 2005. Although having recently moved to Palm Desert, Farzaneh continues to serve on Portals' 50th Anniversary Event Steering Committee. Until recently, Farzaneh served for eighteen years as a Vice President of First Federal Bank of California where she provided extensive experience building relationships with local businesses and developing sales strategies. At First Federal she was consistently recognized for sales, service and management excellence. Deeply committed to community service, Farzaneh has also volunteered for Operation Hope and is a former Board member of Wise Senior Services.

A Promising Future For Portals Announced at the Holiday Board Meeting

By Richard Dominguez, Portals' Board Chair

Richard Dominguez, Chair of Portals' Board of Directors, opened Portals' 50th Holiday Board meeting at the Radisson Mid-Wilshire Hotel on December 16th in his upbeat fashion.

"A bright and promising future for Portals is envisioned, in part, because of the relationships we have formed with our community partners and the support we receive from many generous individuals." Richard continued by recognizing the mutually respected partnerships with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Rehabilitation. In addition he shared the

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Portals' Clinical Director Jana Plasters underscored Richard Dominguez's "bright future" in presenting Portals' new Wellness and Recovery Program model at the Holiday Board Meeting.

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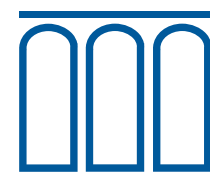
CELEBRATING

50

YEARS COMMITMENT TO QUALITY MENTAL HEALTHCARE

1955-2005

turn a life around



PORTALS Turn a life around.

Fifty Years of Turning Lives Around

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Jim Balla

For over fifty years, Portals has been a pioneer in social recovery mental health services. By introducing innovation through model programs – including supportive housing and employment – Portals has helped thousands of men and women stabilize their lives and rejoin the community as independent working adults. Among the first in the nation to offer psychosocial rehabilitation services using a “Clubhouse” approach, Portals has been recognized as a leader in providing recovery-based services.

Now, as it begins its 51st year, Portals is committed to continuing a leadership position in the new era of community-based care under the Mental Health Services Act in California. The agency will continue to offer its nationally-recognized social rehabilitation “psychosocial” programs which emphasize recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

2006 represents a very exciting year for Portals and the Members we serve. The following are some of the many planned activities for the coming year:

- A new Clubhouse Recovery and Wellness Center Model will be implemented with the goal of enriching the lives of members by Increasing Program Service Capacity. The model represents a trans-

formation in service delivery to fully integrate all Portals’ programs. With the new model, three sites will serve as single fixed points of responsibility for service delivery and coordination of services with other providers.

- A rich blend of best practices in social rehabilitation and mental health services, employment and education services, and dual diagnosis residential and housing services is available for members as they develop and control their recovery plans.
- Outreach efforts will be increased to reach underserved and/or unserved ethnically-diverse communities.
- Staff skills and commitment will be further enhanced through professional development programs and training that ensures high quality, “whatever it takes” services and supports for Portals’ members on their journeys to recovery.

At the heart of Portals’ past and future success is our dedicated staff; over two hundred men and women who share a tremendous sense of pride and professional satisfaction in what they have done and are doing in helping to turn lives around: turning lives of despair into lives of hope, turning lives without possibilities into lives of opportunity, and turning lives of mental illness into lives of wellness. This is the tradition at Portals.

We invite you to join us – as collaborators, advocates, volunteers, and supporters – as we move into our next 50 years of service to the community. With your help, Portals will continue its rich history of providing members with an array of services and supports as they progress in their personal journeys of recovery and wellness. Again, please join us for the next 50 years of turning lives around.

Thank you.

Mayor Villaraigosa Announces 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count



On hand to join Mayor Villaraigosa at 39 West include (from left): Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, and from LAHSA, Commissioner Dave Mirrell, Chair Owen Newcomer and Executive Director Mitchell Netburn.

On January 12, 2006, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa led a press conference at the 39 West Apartments in South Los Angeles to share information on the 2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count sponsored by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). Among the troubling statistics presented in the report is the fact that there are hundreds of households in Los Angeles that are just one crisis away from homelessness. According to the LAHSA survey, there are over 82,000 poverty-stricken homeless people in Los Angeles County.

“These are staggering numbers when you think about it,” Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa told reporters, residents and Portals staff who participated in the event. The Mayor conveyed his profound belief that it is time to stop talking about the homeless crisis and make a plan to take action. Such conviction is evidenced by his dauntless efforts to keep the issue of homelessness at the center of public attention. The 39 West residents were visibly honored by the Mayor’s presence and impressed by his caring attitude when he took the time to speak to Portals members and staff.

Editor’s Note: The 39 West Apartments are an Affordable Housing Project for formerly homeless people suffering from mental illnesses, operated by A Community of Friends (ACOF).

No-Fail 20-Bed Residential Facility Hosts a Community Open House

On Tuesday, November 15, a Community Open House was held at the Jesse A. Brewer No-Fail Center introducing Portals newest transitional residential dual diagnosis program for men and women with severe mental illness and a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. The 20-bed facility was introduced to invited guests through tours hosted by the member residents. The renovated facility, made possible by generous funding from Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), offers comfortable living accommodations, contiguous program space and a resident community room. Guests were treated to a delicious array of refreshments in the bright and spacious kitchen area shared by the residents, followed by a special lunch in the courtyard, hosted by Portals’ Members and Staff.

Portals’ President and CEO, Jim Balla, welcomed the many guests that filled the main area of Community Connections Clubhouse - an integrated service component of the Jesse A. Brewer No-Fail Community Center. In attendance were Dr. Maria Funk, Mental Health Clinical District Chief, ASOC



Special Open House guest Susan Mandel, Ph.D., President and CEO of Pacific Clinics tours the No-Fail residential facility.

Countrywide Programs, LADMH, Reina Turner, Mental Health Services Coordinator, LADMH, Sandra Thomas, District Chief (Children) Service Area 6, Rene Woodruff, District Chief (Adults) Service Area 6, Susan Mandel, Ph.D., President and CEO of Pacific Clinics, Ara Artinian, Vice President Operations, Pacific Clinics, and Robin Pointer, Contract Specialist with LAHSA, among others.

“This remarkable undertaking, four years in the planning and implementation, was realized on November 1st when the first of the current fourteen residents moved in,” Balla shared. “The Jesse A. Brewer No-Fail Center is truly a comprehensive site which offers a continuum of mental health services, employment and educational services, and, equally important, transitional housing. The success of this program is measured by members who graduate and move into permanent housing options in the community.” Recognizing members in attendance, Jim humbly stated, “Members make it happen. We offer professional services and support, but truly it’s the Portals members who deserve all of the credit for their individual successes.”

Program Director Laurel Freeman shared special comments at the ceremonial opening, stating, “A unique feature of the program is that there is a graduate apartment available to residents who are near graduation from the program and preparing to move into permanent housing.” Laurel also emphasized that the new Transitional Residence Dual Diagnosis Program was specifically designed to offer a fresh start for homeless, mentally-ill members. This program mirrors Portals’ other successful transitional residential programs,



A Portals member welcomes guests as they arrive at the Open House for the No-Fail Transitional Residential Program.

including Rampart and Twin Peaks - each offering 15 transitional beds.

The Members who shared in the presentation were the highlight of the community open house celebration. New resident Theresa stated, “I was in a woman’s institution before coming to Portals. My journey has been extremely difficult. However, working with my service coordinator has helped me so much to focus on my strengths.” Theresa announced that she plans to launch her own business, *Theresa’s Cleaning Service*.

A *Certificate of Appreciation* was presented to resident and host Bill Williams, recognizing him as the first “official” resident of the new program. Bill commented, “Portals gave me something to work with. They help me to build something that I want to do for myself. I have dreams. I have hopes for myself. Now I have the help I need to make My dreams come true.”

New Fitness Center Planned For Mariposa Clubhouse

Recent studies have shown that incorporating physical fitness and diet counseling into mental health treatment and recovery programs promotes wellness. When involved in exercise programs and diet counseling, consumers are more likely to maintain the discipline required to treat all aspects of their well being. Such programs also encourage socialization and the confidence that comes with being part of a team, sharing goals and the mutual encouragement to take successful steps toward those goals.

Recognizing the importance of “treating the whole person,” Portals has plans to develop three Wellness Cen-

ters at Portals’ locations in Metro, Central and South Los Angeles. Initiating the project, a new Fitness Center is currently under development at the Mariposa clubhouse. Space has been cleared in the basement of the main Clubhouse building, and preparations are in place to purchase equipment and seek out instructors. “The Fitness Center Project is part of a larger capacity building schedule with the goal of providing Health Management and Wellness services to our members,” shared Sandy Escobar, Ph.D., Mariposa Clubhouse Director. The services offered at the Fitness Center - and which are to be offered at each of Portals’ Wellness and Recovery Centers - include:

- Health Screenings
- Weight Management Counseling
- Nutrition Education
- Stress Management Counseling
- Smoking Cessation Assistance
- Pain and Chronic Disease Management
- Yoga, Tai Chi and Dance Instruction
- Complementary Therapies
- Exercise Activities
- Medication Support

Development of Recover and Wellness Centers

Over the past eight months Portals reorganized its services to better meet the needs of members; to embody the best practices that have emerged over the past decade; and, to better align

each program with the priorities of California’s Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63). The new model consists of three Clubhouse Recovery and Wellness Centers – Mariposa, Wilshire, and No-Fail, located in Central and South Los Angeles – and two Divisions: Dual Diagnosis Residential and Housing Services and Youth and Family Services. Each of the Clubhouse Recovery and Wellness Centers now offers comprehensive and fully integrated services within a single site to members diagnosed with mental illness, many of whom also struggle with issues of substance abuse.

The services to be encompassed within each Center include Social Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Employment and Education, and Health Management and Wellness. Portals has a long history of integrating social rehabilitation, mental health, employment and education services. However, the concept of “wellness” and a holistic approach to mental health that includes all aspects of physical well-being have yet to be integrated. With relatively high rates of chronic diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS, Diabetes) and limited access to primary care, our members are in great need of culturally competent services to help them overcome barriers to care and maintain their physical health – which is intractably linked to their mental health.

The Center will also promote preven-

tion strategies for members in hopes of improving their health conditions – including diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, and other chronic illnesses – over the long-term. Specialized attention and services will be available to older adult members to reflect their life stage, including assisting them in collaborating with their primary care physicians.

In order to realize a fully integrated Health Management and Wellness component to Portals’ continuum of care the program is currently seeking to add the following:

Director of Health Management and Wellness: Preferably a Nurse Practitioner with a background in mental health, this new full-time position would oversee all facets of this effort, designing the range of services for each Center, training Center staff, and reaching out to clinics and physicians to provide training and ongoing cultural competency resources.

At each Center, dedicated staff members will promote wellness by: 1) ensuring all members are linked to appropriate health services; 2) helping members overcome barriers to health access through advocacy, transportation, cultural/language or other assistance; 3) coordinating and promoting Center-wide health and fitness activities. Volunteer instructors and counselors will conduct the exercise, nutrition and smoking cessation classes.



Thursday Morning Tennis – A Wellness Activity

On Thursday morning we all look forward to our weekly tennis class. We all show up slowly but surely. It’s Anthony and Beverly showing up early, here comes Byron and Rita getting off the bus, there’s Daryl walking up. I can see Addie and Truthie pulling in, there’s Tyana on the sidelines, Phyllis and Jose part of our bunch. I see Selene; everybody wants to hit it like Selene. Joyce sitting on the bench, Jorge with the daily news. Jacques and Onika come by and Detris, our Service Coordinator, is always there to check on a client are two.

There are some faces with names we don’t see regularly, we all pray they’ll come back this way someday.

Hey, and there’s coach. Faithful to stay and play even without the pay.



Tennis Coach Roach Williams, center, congratulates Portals teammates Addie and Anthony on a game well-played.

Coach has his car loaded down with equipment, all to teach us to play this wonderful game called tennis.

Coach Ralph always greets us with a smile, a hug and individual time he shares with each and everyone. Everyone is excited, some have already started jogging around the court, some jumping jacks, and some stretching then you’ll hear coach say line up! We start with our warm up stretches arms up & out to the side, forward 25, backward 25, jumping jacks 25, from back court to the net on our heels, from the net to the back of the court backwards, wide and slow step stretches, deep breaths in and out. After that Coach is teaching and we’re practicing serving, volleys, back hands, continental grips, practicing steps side to side, tossing the ball just right, holding the racket where you want the ball to go, center court, back court, drill after drill with each drill there’s anticipation for the next. With each lesson we encourage each other by clapping hands, giving high fives, cheering each other on giving props to one another.

If the world could see our “Thursday

“I enjoy playing tennis every week because it is not only good exercise, but I’ve lost 30 pounds and lowered my cholesterol level dramatically since starting the program. I welcome the challenge of learning a new skill and getting good at it. As a diabetic, activities such as tennis have helped keep it under control.”

— Anthony



Team Portals and Coach Williams share refreshments and good cheer after an afternoon of fun and camaraderie.

Morning Tennis,” our tennis family, coach Ralph the father and Carmen the founding mother, if they only knew from where we all come from, how much tennis has changed our lives, losing weight, getting physically in shape, breathing fresh air, self esteem growing, interacting with others on and off the court, re-building our lives.

Imagine a ball hit off the court onto 39th Street or Western Avenue, the park or the parking lot, a tennis net that we’ve all tried to hang so we could play, bottles of water, sometimes some snacks, or all kinds of equipment lined up on the sideline and a tennis family of all sizes, colors, ages only related through the wonderful game of tennis taught by Coach Ralph Williams who really truly is giving

back to his fellow brothers and sisters.

Coach as you helped rebuild our lives with hope and pray that in the days to come we will not only give back to others what you’ve taught us about the game of tennis but the lessons also that one person giving and sacrificing can change the life of so many like you, just one day a few hours one day a week.

We will always be grateful to you and thankful that our lives crossed paths with your life’s journey through the wonderful game of tennis.

Forever Grateful,
Thursday Morning Tennis Class

P.S. Thank you United States Tennis Assn. (Southern Calif. Dist) for your sponsorship.

Many Ways to Give Back

Michael J. Dunn Brings Leadership and Expertise to the Foundation Board of Trustees

Mike Dunn first became aware of Portals and the outstanding services the organization provides while serving as vice president of the Wilshire Chamber of Commerce in the 1990's. In 2003 he joined Portals Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPARC) for the purpose of providing his business experience and knowledge of the Metro and South Los Angeles communities of Los Angeles. SPARC was created to provide a strategic seven year development plan for Portals as it approached its 50th anniversary year.



Michael J. Dunn

A real estate specialist in investment, sales and leasing, land selection and landlord and tenant representation, Mike joined Portals Facilities Committee in 2001. During his tenure, Mike has been invaluable to Portals by scouting potential properties, overseeing and negotiating lease and licensing requirements, and expertly guiding Portals with regard to commercial and residential building code compliances. Recently Mike joined Portals Foundation Board of Trustees, whose purpose is to develop philanthropic and grant revenue to sustain operations, promote program development, as well as public awareness of the importance of mental health rehabilitation.

"When I realized what an amazing difference Portals made in saving the lives of many of our less fortunate citizens suffering with severe mental illness, I wanted to make a meaningful contribution."

Mike is President and Chief Executive Officer of Dunn Property Group, a firm he founded in 2005 that provides brokerage and asset management services to clients throughout Southern California. "It's wonderful to once again be involved with clients and their requirements on a daily basis," Dunn said.

A graduate of Gonzaga University with a bachelor of business administration degree, and a sixth-generation Californian whose family has been involved in the real estate business for decades, Mike joined the Charles Dunn Company in 1996 and was responsible for that company's Los Angeles and San Fernando Valley brokerage offices from 1997 to mid 2005 where he led a successful brokerage team of 35 brokers.

A devoted family man, Mike lives in Pasadena with his wife Kelly and their three children, Brigid, Maggie and Jack. He is an AYSO Soccer coach and serves as a volunteer for Huntington Hospital and Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

Portals ACT Staff Shares the Bounty of the Holiday Season

On Christmas Day, December 25, 2005, Program Director Victoria Onwualu, and Service Coordinators Kimjoy Wheaton and Jacqueline Bloom opened up the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) office to members who were without family or other resources and support, granting members the opportunity to interrelate with others who were in the same situation. By making holiday festivities available the members had an opportunity to see that they were not alone during the holiday season, either in their physical circumstances or their emotional condition. Victoria, Kimjoy and Jacqueline wanted them to know they were not alone.

Members were entertained and interacted with one another while Victoria and Kimjoy went about setting up the meal they had carefully prepared, consisting of lamb, chicken, rice, macaroni salad and greens. Jacqueline assisted with picking up members that lack transportation skills. They sang carols, assisted with the meal preparation and service and watched Christmas videos. In addition to the serving of a meal, members were also given gifts of new shoes – sneakers or slip-ons, depending on the condition of their feet – or, if they preferred, a T-shirt.

The Members responded positively to this activity, evidenced by many heartfelt expressions of appreciation that Portals cared enough to share the generosity of the holiday season with them.

Editor's note: Story submitted by ACT staff member Kimjoy Wheaton. The ACT Staff worked very hard to make this celebration something memorable and fun for the members.



ACT Members enjoy their holiday party hosted by Victoria, Kimjoy and Jacqueline.

ACHSA Annual Luncheon Honors Doris Andrews

On October 20, 2005 at the landmark Millennium Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, Doris Andrews received the prestigious Inspiration Award of the Association of Human Service Agencies (ACHSA). Doris was selected for this award from among dozens of nominations from human service agencies throughout Los Angeles County. Her journey to recovery was judged most inspirational among all the candidates. In his remarks introducing Doris, Bruce Saltzer, ACHSA Executive Director, shared, "Doris Andrews clearly exemplifies all of the qualities befitting the recipient of ACHSA's Inspiration Award – hard work, character, courage, optimism, and success, all while overcoming tremendous odds."

Doris Andrews' life story is certainly an inspirational one, reflecting tremendous accomplishment in the face of extreme adversity and the challenge of overcoming her mental illness and alcoholism.

Devastated by the loss of her mother, Doris fell into depression and began to drink, eventually living her life, as Doris puts it, "at the bottom of a bottle." She stopped eating and neglected her body so badly that she was unable to walk. Doris had given up on life and she explained how difficult it

"If I have forgotten to thank anyone here today, blame it on my head... for while the head sometimes forgets, the heart never does."

— Doris Andrews
ACHSA Inspiration Award Recipient

was as her family and friends were watching her destroy herself. Little did she know at the time that her addiction to alcohol was linked to her mental illness. It was at that point in her life that she had the good fortune to become linked to Portals, an ACHSA member agency, where her life would be changed forever.

"I entered the Dual Diagnosis program at Twin Peaks with a willingness and a mindset to turn my life around. The Twin Peaks program had everything – and then some – of what would be required to bring stability back into my life and keep it there. The staff at Twin Peaks taught me to not only deal with my co-occurring mental illness and alcoholism, but how to recapture and maintain my confidence. I had lost all sense of who I was."

While residing at Portals' Twin Peaks program, Doris quickly became a household leader, escorting other members to their various appoint-

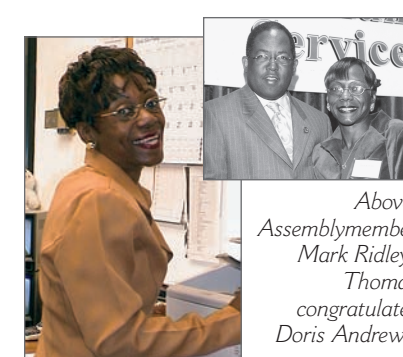
ments, helping them with their chores, and giving continual encouragement where needed. Upon graduation from the program, Doris slowly integrated back into the work force, first by volunteering and then with part-time work. Her dependability and work ethic eventually earned Doris full time employment at Portals. She sings in the choir at her church and is a frequent speaker and facilitator at support meetings. Doris also sponsors members in Alcoholics Anonymous. Doris expresses pride in her own determination.

"The little girl inside me crying out for help had found it, and realized that she was no different from anyone else. We all have problems. I am who I am with a dual diagnosis, and Portals has successfully treated me and taught me that I can accomplish anything and be productive with hard work." Doris also thanked her significant other of sixteen years, Mr. P. "He stood behind me one hundred percent with love and support, and was always there for me to lean on. I can't thank him enough for standing by me today, through everyday life experiences."

Doris drew laughter from the audience when she focused her attention on Portals President and CEO, Jim Balla. "Among the many highlights of my work day is when Jim Balla and I talk

about sports. Jim doesn't know it yet, but he's Pat Riley in disguise. I'm talking about the ex-coach of the Lakers. Just like Pat, Jim is unique, well-dressed, and always talks about our Lakers with that Pat Riley smile. It's great to be around a CEO who is not only dedicated to his work, but shows a sincere interest in the members as well as his employees. Most importantly, he doesn't judge me by any means. In fact all of my co-workers treat me with the respect, as a person, not someone with a dual diagnosis. Jim, thank you for the opportunity to be a member and an employee of PORTALS."

Doris concluded, "It is through a personal willingness and determination to turn your life around that miracles happen... every day. So if you're willing to turn your life around, get over to Portals ASAP!"



Doris Andrews

Above, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas congratulates Doris Andrews.

LAUSD & the California Council for Adult Education Pays Special Tribute to Portals' Member Kathy Klein

On February 28, 2006, Kathy Klein and her fellow member contestants were honored at a special awards ceremony at the Mariposa Clubhouse. Portals' Members at the Clubhouse Learning Center recently participated in an essay contest sponsored by the California Council for Adult Education (West Chapter). The topic was "How Has Adult Education Changed My Life". The project was conducted by Nancy Lord, a teacher with the Los Angeles Community Adult School of the Los Angeles Unified School District. The topic was "How Adult Education Changed My Life." There were eight submissions in the Adults with Disabilities category, and Mariposa member and student Kathy Klein won First Prize for her outstanding essay.

Class Instructor Nancy Doyle of the Los Angeles Community Adult School welcomed the audience and expressed her pride in what her (Portals) students had achieved. She exclaimed, "In my class the members are always in charge of making their own decisions. I am very impressed with their efforts and the path Kathy has taken with regard to pursuing her educational goals."

Special guest Jana Plasters, Portals Director of Programs and Clinical Director, was on hand to offer a congratulatory message on behalf of President and CEO Jim Balla and the Executive Management Team to Kathy as well as all of the participating Portals' members. "We all know how important education is, and members gathered here today are so very fortunate to have Nancy Lord and the wonderful educational opportunities she provides. You all have the enviable chance to continue to grow personally, and, like Kathy, consider giving back meaningfully to the community. Education should be an on-going pursuit for all of us." Jana concluded her personal comments by thanking Dr. Sandy Escobar and the wonderful program staff at Mariposa for encouraging the members to succeed in achieving the individual goals they set for themselves.



LAUSD Instructor Nancy Lord, left, congratulated student and Portals Member Kathy Klein on receiving the Grand Prize of \$100 from the Essay Contest sponsored by the Los Angeles Community Adult School (LACAS).

Brian Boyle, President of the West Chapter and officially representing the California Council for Adult Education - an organization that promotes adult education in Sacramento - congratulated Kathy and all the members received certificates. "We all have a story to tell," Brian began, "and telling that story



Member participants in the LACAS Essay Contest are congratulated by a proud Portals staff: (l to r) Robert McPhetridge, Shannon Washington, Kathy Klein, Instructor Nancy Lord, Lynda Beggs, Mariposa Clubhouse Program Director Dr. Sandy Escobar, Ron Bolling and Clinical Director Jana Plasters. Members Huitt Carter and Rachel Kim could not attend due to employment.

often helps us going through transitions in our lives." Inviting Kathy Klein to come forward to read her prize winning composition, he acknowledged that she was someone who truly respects Portals' mission by turning her life around.

Upon completing her reading, Kathy shared the following comments - as eloquently as she composed her award-winning essay.

"I came to Portals with a heavy suitcase and a heavy heart after many years of living in unstable surroundings and estranged from my family due to personal trauma. I began coming to meetings at the Mariposa Clubhouse. Before long I felt I was part of a family again, volunteering in the kitchen, participating in the Annual Group Fair and, most especially, attending Nancy Lord's class. I was soon able to move into my own apartment and reconnect with my family. As a proud grandmother I once again enjoy a happy relationship with my daughter and grandson. I am especially proud of the fact that my daughter Lori Klein is here with me today." (Lori was affectionately greeted with a round of applause.)

Kathy acknowledged everyone present as well as her fellow members from whom she draws strength and inspiration. Kathy also paid a special tribute to Bill Hester, staff member at the Mariposa Club House for his personal care and unending support.

"I enjoy coming home to Mariposa where the encouragement, cheers and spirit of my PORTALS team continue to inspire me. I'm looking forward to achieving my next goal to return to school and become a teacher or counselor so I, too, can help others. I think I would really enjoy working with children." Brian then presented Kathy with her First Place certificate and a check for \$100.

Portals' 50th Board Meeting (continued from page 1)

our neighborhood, and whatever our circumstances and the circumstances of those around us, we are all treated with respect. Dostoevsky once said, 'It is easy to love all of humanity; the hard part is to love one's neighbor.'"

Councilmember Garcetti emphasized that a crucial first step to solving the homeless crisis is providing safe, affordable housing that offers programs and services which address the various needs of the thousands of men, women, and children living on the street. The Mayor, the City Council and Portals all share a common vision of working resourcefully to provide affordable permanent supportive housing to the homeless and mentally ill. The Mayor has committed \$50 million towards this end. Councilmember Garcetti noted that decentralizing homeless services and encouraging permanent supportive housing in our communities are key, as well as the need to build consensus in those communities that oppose housing and services for the homeless. "The only way to counteract that fear is to show the human face of homelessness." In concluding his remarks, Councilmember Garcetti recog-

nized Portals for 50 years of distinguished services to the community.

"In 1955, the year Portals was founded, City Hall was the tallest building in the city, and just like our city, Portals has grown significantly over the past 50 years. We think of Los Angeles as a young city, but back in 1781, while our founding fathers were writing our Constitution, our pueblo was founded with as diverse a population as is in this room, and diverse as the population Portals serves. In 1955 there was no such thing as a homeless person. They were known as 'vagrants' or 'worthless transients.' But many of them were veterans who had valiantly served their country in two world wars. Portals knew they could be helped, leading the way in showing true respect for the homeless and mentally ill by providing treatment, housing, job training and employment. Such neighborly respect has resulted in thousands of success stories and thousands of productive neighbors. I look forward to continuing to serve outstanding neighborhood organizations like Portals, and I wish you another 50 years of success."

Councilmember Garcetti concluded by presenting a Commendation from the City Council congratulating Portals on 50 years of outstanding service to the community.

A Promising Future (continued from page 1)

many collaborations with other community-based organizations, such as the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, A Community of Friends, LA's HOPE, and the University of Southern California, just to name a few. "We are grateful for our solid and productive working relationships with each of these organizations." Richard also acknowledged the Board of Directors for their stewardship roles in helping to further Portals' respected reputation as a leader in providing innovative recovery and wellness-centered mental health services, emphasizing supportive housing and employment. Toward this end, Portals has helped thousands of men, women, and youth stabilize their lives and rejoin their communities.

Most importantly, the 50th Anniver-

sary Year celebration heralds Portals' Master Development Plan to rebuild Portals' Mariposa Clubhouse and Twin Peaks facilities with a mixed-use comprehensive recovery and wellness center adding 54 units of affordable permanent housing.

"The genesis of this project was the vision of Portals President & CEO Jim Balla, with meaningful contributions from staff and members of Portals' Mariposa Clubhouse and Twin Peaks, and the volunteer leadership of Portals' Facilities Committee - Chair Russel Tyner, Jayme Check, Cindy Jones, Russ Chung and Mike Dunn. Richard emphasized that the project's focus is bold and visionary. Adding a quote from an unknown author, "There is nothing more empowering than an idea whose time has come." With the financial commitment from the public and private sectors, this project's success will be assured."

Nancy Lord Turns Many Lives Around

"If Nancy had been my teacher when I was younger, I would have learned more."

"I'll do whatever it takes to give my students the confidence and motivation to succeed."

— Nancy Lord

Nancy has been a most valued asset of Mariposa for eight years and has found the experience to be very rewarding. Many students credit Nancy's class with saving their lives, giving them confidence to deal with the demands they face every day in the community. Nancy's goal is to provide her students with independent living skills and she does this by covering a myriad of subjects. For example, adult and career education includes such topics as resume writing, job education and financial budgeting.

Many Thanks And Many Opportunities

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

September 1, 2005 to February 28, 2006

INDIVIDUALS

Ms. Tizebt Taye Alemayehu
Mrs. Frances G. Ames
Ms. Sally V. Angel
Mr. Richie W. Annenberg
Mr. James J. Balla, MBA
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Baron
Mr. and Mrs. Norman Beck
Mr. William F. Cobert
William and Rita Collins
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Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Steinbaum
In honor of Bunny and Jerry Steinbaum
Mr. & Mrs. Keith Steinbaum
In honor of Jill Steinbaum
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Wallerstein, Jr.
In honor of Bunny Steinbaum

(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.)

The Importance of In-Kind Giving for the Revitalization of the Mariposa Clubhouse

With the creation of the new Fitness Center at the Mariposa Clubhouse and the decorative renovations that have been planned, Portals is in need of new or gently used items to provide an atmosphere of comfort and well being as an important part of Portals' "total wellness" approach to treatment and recovery.

Please consider donating the following items:

- Treadmill
- Light Weights
- Yoga Mats
- Exercise Bikes
- Stairmaster
- Tennis balls, rackets, shoes & gear
- Bicycles for Member transportation
- Books for the Mariposa Classroom
- Artwork to decorate the offices and recreational rooms
- China and Flatware to conserve disposable waste and expenditures on paper and plastic utensils
- Comfortable furnishings

Looking for additional suggestions or recommendations? Call Ivan Rodriguez at (213) 639-2577.

Chapman Grant of \$25,000 to Support Portals' No-Fail Transitional Residential Program

The Chapman and Associates charitable Foundation has awarded Portals a \$25,000 grant to be applied toward a LAHSA matching grant of \$90,000 for Portals No-Fail Transitional Residential Program.

"Chapman and Associates enjoys our long term relationship with Portals for a number of reasons. For starters, the amazing work they provide to the mentally ill in Los Angeles is critical and needed. In addition, the professionalism of the management team is outstanding. It is a joy to work with such a professional organization. Our Foundation looks for agencies like Portals that can put the donation to work without a lot of bureaucracy."

— Greg Chapman, Board Member

Support Portals by Spending a Nostalgic and Memorable Evening Celebrating 50 Years of Turning Lives Around

On Thursday evening, May 18, 2006, Portals will hold its 50th Anniversary Golden Bell Gala at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. The event will mark a milestone in Portals' history and a renewed commitment to raising private contributed income. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has agreed to serve as Honorary Chair and literary and entertainment icon Sidney Sheldon has assumed the role and responsibilities of Event Chair. The gala will recognize the talented and philanthropic individuals who have made a real difference in the lives of the homeless and mentally ill. Individual tickets are \$250 and can be purchased by calling Greg Richardson at (310) 650-5517. Sponsorship packages are also available.

Editor's Note: As part of Portals 50th Anniversary celebration in 2006, a major capital campaign will be launched to raise monies for the new Mariposa Recovery and Wellness Center complex.



Washington Mutual

Portals is deeply grateful to Washington Mutual for agreeing to be a Presenting Sponsor for Portals' 50th Anniversary Golden Bell Awards Gala. Housing is a vital component of the Portals' Wellness and Recovery Programs and through their support of affordable housing, Washington Mutual shares Portals' vision.

Success Through Teamwork

Teamwork In Action: Theme for Portals' October 2005 All Staff Meeting

At the October 2005 Portals All Staff Meeting, the theme of "Teamwork in Action" was evident in the program's staff recognition and in-service presentation on Portals' service and delivery system transformation.

"The nature of change is ever present," and "history reveals that we must find ways to deal with change and the inevitable uncertainty it brings," shared President and CEO Jim Balla in his opening comments. "Toward this end, management is committed to provide a workplace that is conducive to learning, to support the work all staff performs each day in providing services to Portals' members," Balla added.

Jana Plasters, Portals' Clinical Director, shared the progress of Portals' program transformation – transitioning individual programs to combining services at three primary comprehensive recovery and wellness centers. The emphasis of this transformation is to better meet the needs of the unserved, underserved and inappropriately served ethnic populations. This will be accomplished by provid-

ing whatever it takes to provide a continuum of full access services at Portals' three Clubhouse Recovery Wellness Centers. "We have embarked on a system transformation of care," Jana stated with confidence and sincerity.



In-Service Training
Presenter Earl Atlas

Integrated services are vital to Portals' future success. Consumers will now be able to access an array of mental health services at each of Portals' three primary service sites. There will be extended weekday and weekend hours as well." Jana was especially gratified that Portals will be adding services to children and families as well as individual members working to reconnect with their families, stating, "Family unity and support is vital to successful recovery and social reintegration."

Embracing Change -

To underscore the inevitability of change and the positive aspects of embracing it, Portals invited Earl Atlas of Atlas & Associates - an expert at helping business leaders and managers keep up with the competition, their industry, and the inevitability of change - to provide insight to all staff as the in-service trainer. For more than 20 years, Atlas has helped organizations and business units re-design their strategy, structure, work processes, and jobs to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing environment.

"What do these things have in common?," Mr. Atlas began, pointing to a list containing such milestones as the Magna Carta, the printing press and atomic technology. "These are all things that have changed our lives. And change is never ending, motivated by three essential elements – people, technology and information." Mr. Atlas emphasized that the fund of information available to us doubles every five years with more people and more technology. "The amount of change we are dealing with is just a 'dress rehearsal' for the future."

"The change we face is four-fold - change we expect and want such as a job promotion; change we expect and don't want such as major surgery; change we don't expect but want such as winning the lottery; and change we don't expect and don't want such as a natural disaster or personal loss." Mr. Atlas emphasized that it is the way with which we deal with change in our personal and professional lives that is key to success. Change can produce stress, a sense of loss and resistance. On the other hand it can be seen as a new opportunity for growth and improvement. "You can fight or deny change, or you can face it, analyze and work with it realistically. Once you accept that change is constant you can prepare for it by looking for opportunities, learning experiences, being aware of trends, striving for balance, and, most importantly, understanding that work alone – as important as it is – is not the full meaning of life."

The participation of the in-service speakers like Earl Atlas at the All Staff Meeting is part of Portals' commitment to staff training and development through continuous learning.

PORTALS' Member Annie McMillen is a Featured Model at the "Dress for Success" Show – Second Annual LA's HOPE "Tools for Success" Conference

On November 29, 2005, the LA's HOPE Collaborative held the second annual LA's HOPE Day "Tools for Success" Conference. One of the outstanding participants was Portals' member Annie McMillan. Annie, always well dressed and coiffed, was a featured model in the "Dress for Success" Fashion Show presented during the lunch hour, with fashions provided by Goodwill. Annie's smiles and graceful moves added beautifully to the success of what was a very productive and enlightening time for the participants, and Annie eagerly attended all of the workshops scheduled that day.



Portals AB2034 member Annie McMillen, one of twelve Portals participants in LA's HOPE.

The Conference Workshops focused on living skills management and the topics included – "Road to Employment," "Benefits Planning and Money Management," "Time Management & Community Integration," and "Health & Wellness." The day opened with a greeting from Ruth Schwartz, Executive Director of Shelter Partnerships, who reminded everyone that LA's HOPE was one of only five similar programs in the country dedicated to improving the lives of the homeless. Councilmember Jan Perry of District 9, (who was responsible - along with Coun-

cilmember Eric Garcetti for opening the homeless shelters year-round) in her opening remarks to the Conference participants stated, "I am so impressed with all of your accomplishments, I am pleased to bask in your light. Everyone deserves a chance to recover, so don't stop enjoying the success you have earned. I am grateful for what you have taught us." Annie McMillen's story continues to teach us that, with support and guidance, formerly homeless individuals can become valuable and productive citizens.

Annie has been involved with Portals' AB 2034 program at Western for six months. Recently hired as a receptionist at Portals' Community Con-

nections Clubhouse, Annie has discovered a whole new array of talents she never knew she had. "I found I can fly. I found that I could bring more to the table than serve salad on a plate," she said with a broad infectious grin, referring to her past employment in the food services industry.

"I found that the clerical field has opened doors for me, and provided me with great support from Portals and LA's HOPE. Now every day presents an exciting new challenge." Annie is presently looking at two career choices with the assignment of her service coordinator Monica Velasquez: One is to enroll in computer training classes at Goodwill and the second choice includes two clerical positions with on-the-job computer training; one at Portals AB2034 Western and an agency downtown.

"AB2034, Portals, Goodwill are like a network that saved my life," Annie

graciously affirms. "I would not be here without them and the support of people like Monica Velasquez and Gillian Marcus."

The City of Los Angeles Community Development Department, representing the Workforce Investment Board, and the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles have recently received a \$3.6 million federal grant for an initiative to provide housing and employment to the chronically homeless of Los Angeles County. Los Angeles Homeless Opportunity Providing Employment (LA's HOPE) involves the collaboration of Goodwill Southern California, Inc., Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, Portals House, Inc., San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center, Inc. (SFVCMHC), Shelter Partnership, Inc., and South Central Health and Rehabilitation Program (SCHARP).

"Portals has an established tradition of excellence in its work with the psychiatrically disabled. Through its broad range of employment and independent living programs, many thousands of mentally ill citizens in Los Angeles County have achieved an improved quality of life and have successfully regained their status as productive citizens in the community."

— Thomas Reitz,
Deputy Director, California Department of Mental Health

Looking Forward

Save the Date • Thursday, May 18, 2006

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TO QUALITY
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