

PORTALS  
pathways  
turning lives around since 1955

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## Merger With Pacific Clinics Begins a New Chapter for Portals

**O**n July 1, 2007, a new chapter began for Portals and Pacific Clinics when the governing boards of both agencies signed a merger agreement. Following an extensive due diligence process that required more than two years, two great agencies — with a combined 133 years of service — became one.

The idea of combining two strong, well-managed and well-regarded Southern California mental health services agencies was first conceived in discussions between Portals President and CEO, Jim Balla, and Pacific Clinics President and CEO, Susan Mandel, Ph.D, nearly three years ago. As they anticipated funding from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and other developments within the mental health field, their vision was based on five key elements: service synergy, client/member satisfaction, employee opportunity, operating efficiencies, and impact on public policy. They saw the exciting possibilities of bringing two successful organizations together to complement each other in a “win-win” situation for all stakeholders.

As Dr. Mandel explained, “By merging with Portals, a pioneer in psychosocial rehabilitation services — a critical component in 21<sup>st</sup> century behavioral healthcare — our two agencies will combine



Left to right: Richard Dominguez, former Chair, Portals' Board of Directors, Jim Balla and Susan Mandel of Pacific Clinics, and Lary J. Mielke, Chair of Pacific Clinics' Board of Directors.

extensive expertise to provide our clients with the greatest potential for recovery.”

The prominence of Portals' housing and employment programs and its nationally recognized psychosocial rehabilitation programs were attractive to Pacific Clinics in the MHSA era. Pacific Clinics' success in providing services to older adults, specific ethnic populations, and youth, combined with its commitment to staff training and development through its Pacific Clinics Training Institute, contributed to the rationale for combining the agencies.

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## Portals Launches Full Service Partnership Programs Will Offer Increased Services to Youth, Adults and Older Adults

**T**hree years after the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) was passed by California's voters, Portals has launched its first Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs. Fully implemented, they will serve as many as 225 new members of all ages. With an annual budget of \$1.6 million in MHSA funds for direct service staff, FSP programs promise to become a valuable part of Portals' services for its members.

In the FSP approach, each member is assigned a staff Service Coordinator. The two work together to form a coordinated care plan with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency and permanent housing within 24 months. Members receive recovery treatment and are linked to appropriate community resources to facilitate legal identification, public transportation, and healthcare. No service is outside the scope of FSP Programs — Portals and its Service Coordinators are guided by a commitment to do “whatever it takes” to help members develop self-determination and reintegrate successfully into the community.

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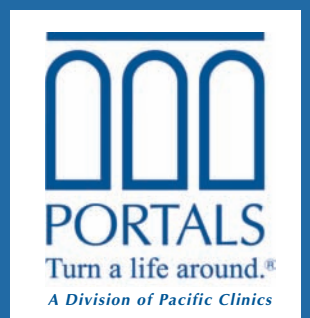
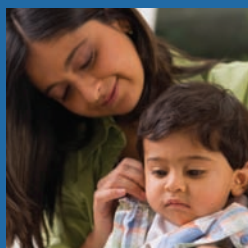
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recovery • wellness • reintegration





Jim Balla

## A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

recent successes build on Portals' five decades of leadership in providing recovery-based and wellness services for persons with severe and persistent mental illness.

Three years ago, in early discussions with Susan Mandel, Ph.D., President and CEO of Pacific Clinics, we shared a common vision of the potential benefits of a merger to our members, our staff, and, ultimately, our community. Towards this end, the merger process was supported actively and professionally throughout by our respective Boards of Directors and senior management teams – each contributing significantly to a rigorous and comprehensive due diligence process that led to the final merger decision and the merger which became effective July 1, 2007. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the agency's governing boards and our joint agency merger integration management teams for their support and hard work throughout the process.

Since bringing our two agencies together, we have come to witness the anticipated programmatic and organizational synergies as envisioned during the early phases of the joint due diligence process. Specifically, our members/clients are receiving the benefit of the combined agency's blended services and supports. Staff are gaining from the expanded professional development resources of a larger agency, including the new courses and behavioral healthcare seminar series available through the Pacific Clinics Training Institute. (See story on page 4.)

In addition, our staffs are sharing experiences and best practices, and growing in the skills required to work with our greatly expanded and significantly more culturally and ethnically diverse member/client populations. Finally, operating efficiencies are being realized, with cost savings redirected back into direct services for our members.

The merger has started a new era for Portals; an era that we hope will be punctuated by continued organizational growth and program success. Towards this end, I am pleased to introduce Gil Abdalian who has accepted the challenge of leading the Portals Division of Pacific Clinics. Gil brings more than 20 years of direct community mental health experience, most of it in Los Angeles County. (See story on page 3.)

I invite you to enjoy this edition of Pathways, and to read about other exciting updates at Portals. As we usher in a new and exciting era for Portals, we remain dedicated to our brand: "Turn a life around!" We thank you for your continued support of our ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for all of our members.

Thank You.

James J. Balla, MBA  
Executive Vice President and  
Chief Operating Officer

**A**s this edition of Pathways conveys, significant and exciting changes have been occurring at Portals including: our recent merger with Pacific Clinics; the successful implementation of MHA Full Service Partnership Programs; new staff leadership to advance Portals as a division of Pacific Clinics; expansion of our programs and facilities in South Los Angeles; and the growing support of loyal donors and funders. The successes realized would not be possible without the support of Portals' talented management team and dedicated direct service and support staff. Most assuredly, the agency's

## A Successful Merger, continued from page 1



In addition, both agency leaders envisioned the extraordinary opportunity to share human resources and provide career growth opportunities in a combined organization. "Together, our two distinguished agencies can build a better future for our consumers and offer continued professional growth for our staff," commented Mr. Balla.

The process of evaluating the merger's potential was intense and time-consuming. To guide the due diligence process, members of the Boards of Directors of both agencies formed a task force, meeting frequently to review reports and discuss issues and opportunities. Lary Mielke, Chair of the Pacific Clinics Board of Directors, comments: "Due diligence is always lengthy, and often tedious. But with the extraordinary cooperation between representatives of both agencies, as well as the thoughtful guidance of Dr. Mandel and Mr. Balla, we were able to complete this procedure thoroughly and enthusiastically." Final approval came from the Los Angeles County Department of

Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, both of which strongly supported the merger proposal.

In the months since the merger's completion, the senior management team of the new organization has tackled the myriad issues that must be addressed to ensure a smooth transition.

Their commitment to this vision – and to positive outcomes for all stakeholders – has demonstrated enormous professionalism and promise for the future. (For *Fast Facts* on Pacific Clinics, see page 8.)

While many things at Portals remain the same – programs, staff, sites – the operation is now a division of Pacific Clinics. The New Hampshire Avenue headquarters is still abuzz with activity, as important program management, quality assurance, human resources, data entry and finance functions, among others, continue.

Gil Abdalian has joined the organization as the newly appointed Director of the Portals Division. He brings with him years of leadership in the mental health services field, and has assumed responsibilities quickly and effectively. (For an introduction to Gil Abdalian, see page 3.)

Portals' mental health clients/members may not initially realize that an organizational change has occurred, but they will eventually be served by a Portals program staffer that is more highly trained, better supported in career opportunities, and more broadly versed in treatment modalities. The most compelling rationale for merging organizations was and will continue to be the potential benefits for Portals' service population. As stated by Richard Dominguez, former President of Portals' Board of Directors and member of the Portals Foundation Board of Trustees: "For (more than) a year prior to the completed merger, the boards of Portals and Pacific Clinics worked diligently to review all merger aspects and determined that, over time, both organizations would benefit the populations they currently serve."

The new chapter is now six months old, and the early returns are positive and encouraging. With each passing month and year, the legacy built by staff and board of Portals over the agency's distinguished 52-year history is being preserved and extended. Portals – now "A Division of Pacific Clinics" – will continue to "turn lives around" for thousands of men, women, and families every year well into the future.

## Portals' CalWORKs Program Recognized by DMH for Best Practices

**O**n December 17, 2007, at the St. Anne's Conference Center, Portals' CalWORKs program was recognized by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) for achievement in "best practices" – providing services that are proven most effective in producing desired outcomes for members. Victoria Onwualu, MBA, MSW, LCSW, Director of the Wilshire Center Recovery and Wellness Center – who also oversees CalWORKs – accepted the honor on Portals' behalf.

Portals CalWORKs was recognized for overall program performance, and was singled out in the areas of client services, uniqueness of program design/delivery, and effectiveness of program management.

In accepting the award, Victoria attributed Portals' success to the program's psychosocial model and its over-arching goal of empowering members to take ownership of their lives, as well as the employment, housing, and vocational services that CalWORKs provides.

## Gil Abdalian Named Portals' Divisional Director

*Mental Health Veteran Comes With More Than Twenty Years of Experience*

**P**ortals, now a division of Pacific Clinics, did not require a long-distance search to find a replacement for its former President and CEO Jim Balla, as he transitioned into his new leadership position at Pacific Clinics. Portals found the person they were looking for at Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center in Echo Park; an individual who knows how to effectively administer mental health services to individuals and communities.

Gil Abdalian, MS, MBA, MFT, came aboard as Divisional Director of Portals in August 2007, providing oversight to Portals' clinical programs and administrative teams, and leading the implementation of its Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs.

Gil comes to Portals after twenty distinguished years at Gateways, most recently serving as Vice President of the Forensic Mental Health Division. He managed a \$7.5 million division of mental health programs that included community care

licensed residential programs, Medi-Cal-certified outpatient clinics and a sheltered vocational workshop.



*Gil Abdalian, MS, MBA, MFT*

It was the merger of Pacific Clinics and Portals, and the unique opportunities the merged organization provides, that motivated Gil to make Portals his next career choice. "I have been familiar with the good work of Portals and Pacific Clinics for many years," recalled Gil. "When the

opportunity was presented to be part of this transition, it was a unique and compelling set of challenges within the merged organization that attracted me."

Gil feels strongly that Portals will flourish and thrive as a result of the merger. "Expanded internal resources in the areas of training, clinical supervision, program management, clinical consultation and business management will enhance Portals' abilities to provide psychosocial rehabilitation to the thousands of clients we serve each year."

Gil's experience includes clinical and administrative aspects of bio-psychosocial/relapse prevention models in mental health and substance abuse programs. He began administering forensic mental health programs for Gateways Hospital and Mental Health Center in 1986. In 1990, Gil was appointed as the "Community Program Director" by the California DMH administering the Los Angeles County Conditional Release

Program (CONREP) for patients found incompetent to stand trial or not guilty by reason of insanity. He has served as an expert witness in state and federal courts on mental illness and the justice system, and has been closely involved with "Recovery Model Practices" that move penal code clients from state hospitals into the community.

Gil is a past President of the Forensic Mental Health Association of California and has provided testimony to the California State Legislature on involuntary treatment laws. He was appointed by the L.A. County Board of Supervisors to the Mentally Ill Offenders Crime Reduction Committee, and served five years on the UCLA School of Medicine Institutional Review Board.

Gil attended Cal State Los Angeles and USC. He is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and is nationally certified in Rehabilitation Counseling.

## Program Directors – the Core of Portals' Mission



**Victoria Onwualu, MBA, MSW, LCSW**  
**Director, Wilshire Recovery and Wellness Center**

Victoria joined Portals in 2002 as a Program Manager for ACT. In 2004, she was appointed AB2034 and ACT Director, and in 2005, the Community Living Program was added to her charges. In the past year, Victoria has become infinitely valuable to Portals, serving as Director of the Wilshire Recovery and Wellness Center, including the ACT, AB2034, CalWORKs, Community Living and Transitional Age Youth (TAY) programs. Recently, she has managed implementation of Portals' FSP programs for adults and TAY in Service Area 4.

Victoria began her career as a Child Behavior Specialist at Dubnoff Center for Child Development. She later worked with L.A. Child Guidance Clinic, the Inner Circle Foster Family Agency, and Kedren Community Mental Health Center. Victoria is a graduate of the University of Nigeria with a BS degree in Education Biology and an MBA in Management. She completed her MS degree in Guidance and Counseling at the University of Benin, Nigeria, before relocating to the United States. Victoria also has an MSW from USC and is a licensed clinical social worker.



**Jessica Orenstein Hunter, MA, Psy.D.**  
**Director, Mariposa Clubhouse**

In April 2007, Jessica was named Director of Portals' Mariposa Clubhouse. She also recently began managing the launch of Portals' FSP program for Older Adults in Service Area 4.

Jessica has several years of experience working with chronically mentally ill adults. Prior to joining Portals, Jessica was involved in program management for six years as a therapist, team supervisor and program director at one of Pacific Clinics' Assertive Community Treatment programs. Jessica's Portals career began in 2006 as an independent contractor before joining the agency full-time as a mental health supervisor.

Jessica has been a state of California-licensed clinical psychologist since 2004. She earned a master's degree in Applied Psychology from Boston University and her doctorate from George Washington University. In addition to her busy professional life, Jessica was married in June 2007 and finds time to enjoy traveling, reading, dancing, photography and art.



**Edna Mercorios, Psy.D.**  
**Interim Director, Community Connections Clubhouse**

Edna became Interim Director for Community Connections in April 2007, while continuing to serve as its clinical supervisor. She now manages Portals' FSP programs for Adults and Older Adults in Service Area 6. Edna has been with Portals since 2003, starting as a licensed service coordinator and clinician for the AB2034 program. Two years later, she began overseeing both AB2034 and Community Connections.

Edna has spent the past 17 years working with mentally ill individuals, including five years at Pacific Clinics' PARTNERS (now ACT) program in Pasadena as a registered psychologist and clinician, working with young-to-middle aged, ethnically diverse clients, conducting individual therapy and skill-building sessions to help effect recovery.

Edna has been a licensed clinical psychologist since 2000. She has a bachelor's degree in Psychology from UC Riverside, and master's and doctorate degrees emphasizing Multicultural Community and Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine. Edna enjoys traveling and photography in her spare time.



**Robert "Bink" Fiese, MFT**  
**Director, Dual Diagnosis Transitional Residential Services**

"Bink" (as he likes to be called) brings more than 31 years of experience in the mental health field and currently oversees the Rampart, Twin Peaks and No-Fail transitional residential programs. He joined Portals in 2001 after 16 years at Verdugo Mental Health Center, where he ran the Arden House Day Treatment Program. Prior to his residential program duties, Bink served as an AB2034 program manager and Director of Portals' Community Connections clubhouse.

In addition to overseeing clinical services and operations for the transitional residential facilities, Bink assists with clinical supervision for Portals' licensed and waived staff and interns. He has a background in blending clinical and psychosocial approaches in treatment interventions.

Bink has been licensed as a marriage and family therapist (MFT) in California since 1991. He received his master's degree in Community-Clinical Psychology from California State University, Northridge. Bink's hobbies include bicycling, cooking and collecting antique sports memorabilia.



## Pacific Clinics Training Institute Represents a Valuable Resource for Portals Employees

**P**acific Clinics Training Institute (PCTI) was established in 1996 to meet the agency's continuing staff training needs and to advance the knowledge of behavioral healthcare in the community. In its eleven-year history, PCTI has effectively fulfilled its mission – to enhance and improve recovery and quality of life for people of all ages with severe psychiatric disabilities. In educating consumers and families, training professionals, and implementing and improving treatment programs and systems, the Institute's impressive achievements have led to its prominence in the behavioral healthcare learning marketplace.

For program and administrative staff at Portals, the Institute represents an opportunity to sharpen and refine professional skills in a high-quality program among their peers. Jim Balla, Executive Vice President and COO of Pacific Clinics, commented that “The Training Institute has introduced a valuable resource to Portals employees, one that will help in their professional development and deepen their understanding of the behavioral and mental healthcare systems.”

The current catalog of courses scheduled by PCTI for the Winter/Spring 2008 term lists staff trainings in topics such as multiculturalism (Psychosocial Recovery in Ethnically Diverse Communities), wellness-based recovery (WRAP), evidence-based practices (Parent-Child Interaction Training), and coaching (Mentoring New Employees). The Institute also offers courses open to clients/members and

their families (How to Help Obtain Benefits for Clients and Families).

These classroom-based workshops, however, are only the tip of the iceberg for PCTI. It has recently expanded its services to include online seminars and courses. The Institute offers more than thirty courses with continuing education credit for treatment staff as well as courses for non-treatment staff.

“The 21<sup>st</sup> Century of E-Learning has started!” proclaimed Craig Weiss, PCTI's Corporate Director. “Our launch of web-based seminars (a.k.a., webinars) offers endless possibilities without the cost and lost productivity associated with travel.” Weiss believes that webinars offer enormous potential for staff, consumers and families. “Think of having a presenter in Riverside providing a seminar to agency staff in various online rooms, at the same time, on various topics.” With consumers, Weiss envisions learning rooms with consumers at one agency communicating and sharing ideas with consumers at another agency. “Think virtual clubhouse,” said Weiss.

But PCTI provides more than virtual webinars. The Institute has formed a partnership – based on the successful model initiated by Portals several years ago – with Essential Learning, the leading learning management platform provider in the behavioral healthcare market, to offer virtual learning. The new E-Learning is set to launch in February 2008.

## FSP Programs, continued from page 1



Portals' longtime approach to mental health – including best practices in individualization, flexibility, and, most significant, a philosophy of recovery and wellness – has been credited with paving the way for the AB2034 and Assertive Community Treatment programs – the models for today's

FSPs. “FSP programming is new but the concept has been utilized in other systems for years,” said Gil Abdalian, Divisional Director of Portals. “In many ways, FSP programming is similar to California's lauded Forensic Conditional Release Program (CONREP),” added Abdalian. “There is strong reliance on a multi-disciplinary teamwork approach with strong collaborations between agencies and other stakeholders. Unlike the CONREP system, in FSP programming, courts do not mandate aggressive and intrusive interventions by clinicians; however, FSPs aggressively engage the client, stakeholders and multiple systems in efforts to guide the client toward mental health rehabilitation/recovery.”

Transitional age youth and older adults are especially likely to benefit from Portals' FSP programs. FSPs can help youth make sound decisions in career training, housing and life skills development, along with continuing mental health care. MHA funding will allow Portals to create a comprehensive Recovery and Wellness Center exclusively for transitional age youth, similar to Portals' three adult Centers. “And, our FSP Older Adult Program will provide an array of services to the older adults in our communities who have been unserved or underserved,” says Jessica Orenstein Hunter, Program Director for the Older Adult FSP Program in Service Area 4. “When seniors are treated along with other adults, their treatment may not include the specific practices essential to services for that population. The FSP Program gives us an incredible opportunity to work with them and begin to provide services specific to their needs.”

The FSP Older Adult Program represents a major initiative, although with developmental and organizational hurdles to overcome. “Starting up this program has been challenging in that the system and process are all being developed while we begin to serve new members,” adds Orenstein Hunter. “The real challenge has been acquiring staff motivated and qualified to work with this population and who remain dedicated to the team throughout the process of team-building.”

Gil Abdalian believes that another challenge is maintaining members' ongoing voluntary engagement in long-term services. “Missed appointments often lead to inefficient use of staff time, creating lost billings and subsequently lost revenues to the program,” notes Abdalian. “Position vacancies have also negatively impacted our penetration rate into this targeted service population. Moreover, for the first time in several years, agencies in the local mental health system are experiencing difficulties hiring staff that are familiar with both social rehabilitation services and Medi-Cal charting/billing requirements. Combined, these issues have slowed the launch of our FSP Program, but we are picking up steam.”

### **Our members need special people like you!**

At Portals, we consider our employees to be one of our most valuable resources. Through the efforts of our staff, Portals has become a premier mental health agency with an excellent reputation for quality care and service. Now a division of Pacific Clinics, we welcome you to be part of our ever-growing team.

- \* Therapists/Clinicians
- \* Case Workers/Managers
- \* Licensed Psychiatric Technicians/Vocational Nurses
- \* Administrative/Support Staff

To learn more about career opportunities with Portals and Pacific Clinics, please visit [www.pacificclinics.org](http://www.pacificclinics.org)

## Coming Together: “Two Teams Working as One” was the Theme for Divisional All-Staff Meeting



Pacific Clinics' Lindy Russell, left, awards Victoria Onwualu (far right) for another correct answer in the All-Staff version of "Jeopardy." With help from staff in the audience, Victoria beat her fellow program directors.

The beginning of a new chapter in mental health rehabilitation services – and the union of two stellar agencies – was the theme of Portals' first divisional all-staff meeting since its merger with Pacific Clinics. Held at the St. Anne's Conference Center on October 31, 2007, Portals honored its hard-working staff with awards of service and recognition, reported on the division's current standing, and officially introduced Pacific Clinics as its new partner. Both agencies now share their commitment to mental health and behavioral healthcare services, turning around the lives of its members in the process. For the employees of Pacific Clinics and Portals, the commitment is beginning with getting to know each other and understanding how the two will function as one entity.

After a short introduction by Monique Poche, Portals' Administrative Services Manager, the 150 staff members were greeted with a special message by Jim Balla, now Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Pacific Clinics. Having served as Portals' President and CEO for the eight years prior to the merger, Balla provided his audience with a four-month progress report in which he laid out the merged organization's vision for the future. These goals included: service synergy, member satisfaction, new employee opportunities, operating efficiency and the combined agency's impact on public policy. Balla stated that these goals could be achieved with a combination of "teamwork, striving for continuous operational improvement, and constructive feedback and communication from staff."

Jim Balla then introduced Gil Abdalian, Portals' first Divisional Director, who made his inaugural address to the staff. Sharing Balla's outlook for the future, Abdalian stressed the "teamwork" concept that "both agencies need to live by in order to function as one well-oiled machine." He also acknowledged Dr. Gordy St. Mary, Pacific Clinics' Vice President of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, for the amazing job he did as Interim Divisional Director for Portals.

Gil Abdalian praised his program directors – Robert "Bink" Fiese, Sharareh Ghedari, Jessica Orenstein Hunter, Edna Mercorios, and Victoria Onwualu who each shared a program update and outlook for the remainder of the year and beyond (see page 3 for Program Director profiles).

The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of service and special recognition awards. 65 employees were recognized for one, three, five and ten years of service. Special recognition was given in the form of five Employee Choice Awards (one per Portals program site) and one Star of Excellence Award.

The second half of the All-Staff Meeting began with an in-service presentation by the staff of Pacific Clinics. Sue Shearer, Senior Vice President of Pacific Clinics, moderated the presentation, which included introductions and short presentations by key Pacific Clinics administrative and divisional staff. To make the presentation fun and easy to remember, Shearer and Nancy Hochstein, Pacific Clinics' Corporate Director of Public Affairs, invited Portals' program directors to take part as contestants in "Jumbled Jeopardy".



Herb White (left) was presented with the Star of Excellence Award by Residential Director Bink Fiese.

Modeled after the classic TV game show, participants were quizzed on various categories of Pacific Clinics' services, staff, and mental healthcare regulations. Contestants were allowed to defer to their colleagues in the audience for assistance in answering the questions. In the end, Victoria Onwualu emerged as the runaway winner.

By the end of the meeting, Portals' staff had become both informed and enthusiastic about the merger, and all are looking forward to working with their new colleagues at Pacific Clinics.



Sue Shearer, Senior Vice President of Pacific Clinics, explains the rules of "Jumbled Jeopardy" to Portals' program directors, who served as contestants.

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



## Brenda Takes Pride in Preparing Caring Meals

Every Wednesday, Brenda James produces a healthy and expansive banquet at Mariposa Clubhouse, the centerpiece of a socialization night that Portals members find essential in lives often isolated and restricted. A few years ago, Brenda faced challenges in her own life. Alone after divorce, her mental illness began to surface. "It was during a routine visit to the bank that I suddenly broke down in tears," Brenda said. "I suddenly felt so lonely. I was so used to catering to everyone, trying to be the perfect wife and the perfect mother, being all things to all people."

Returning to her apartment, Brenda swallowed a handful of pills, and then called a girlfriend. "I told her that I was going away. She asked me where I was moving to. I told her heaven or hell, wherever they would have me." Brenda's friend called 911 and saved her life. Brenda was placed in the Augustus Hawkins Comprehensive Mental Health Center before moving to Portals' No-Fail Transitional Residence at Community Connections Clubhouse (CCN). "I did not take to the situation at all," she says. "Used to living on my own, I had to share living space with sixteen other women."

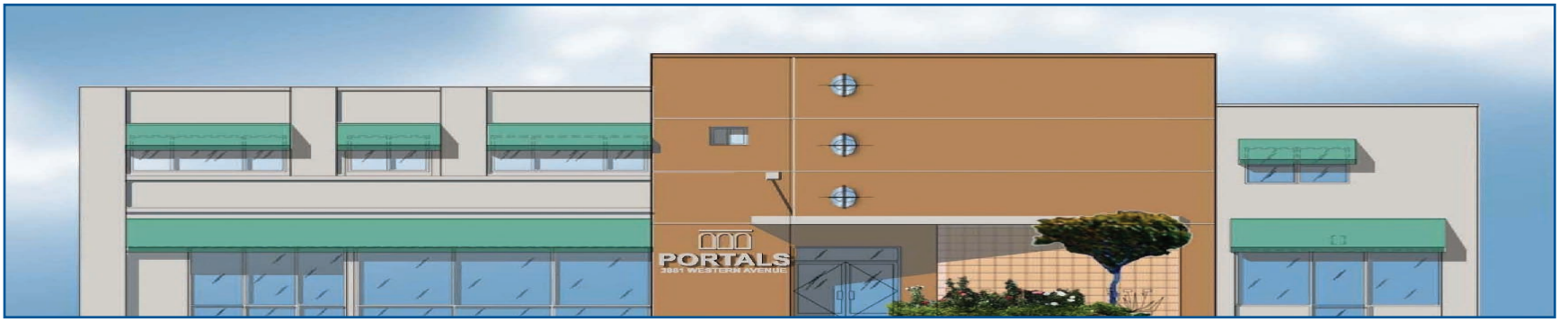
Working with counselors at the AB2034 Program at Western Avenue and service coordinators Jeannine George and Gregory Allen, Brenda decided she needed her own space and something to do. "I had not been participating in anything. To keep me from feeling isolated, the staff asked me to come in to answer the phones, and it was then I found my niche as a volunteer." She became a CCN favorite volunteer, coordinating barbecues and assisting with shopping. Soon after Brenda moved into her own apartment, Mariposa Clubhouse hired her as a cook.

Brenda has taken on her kitchen tasks enthusiastically, planning the daily meals and the Wednesday evening socialization activities, plus holiday and other special events. A celebration of Black History Month allows members to enjoy authentic soul food. The Valentine's Day dance features great finger food and heart-healthy treats. There is corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day and tamale pie on Cinco de Mayo. "I was really proud of our Thanksgiving Dinner this past year. It was a formal sit-down affair, and my kitchen staff wore black and white. Everyone was treated like a VIP."

Brenda has begun teaching cooking, with the goal of establishing an in-house catering service. "I can build a team to provide food service for Board and Committee meetings at headquarters, and for the weekly program directors meetings as well. The food service industry is a significant provider for entry-level jobs, and I feel that Portals can make important contributions in this area."

Brenda stands secure in knowing that what she does makes a difference in the lives of Portals' members, and appreciates the restorative feedback she's received. Though she takes medication for depression, Brenda credits large doses of counseling and employment for her happiness and security. "I love what I do," Brenda states proudly. "If you enjoy your work, it isn't work."

'Thank you' for making a difference in the lives of our members.



Artist's rendering of proposed \$2.3M renovation of Portals' Recovery and Wellness Center in South Los Angeles.

## Capital Campaign for Western Avenue Renovation Project Kicks Off With Major Government and Foundation Support

**T**he renovation of Portals' programs on Western Avenue in South Los Angeles advanced towards becoming a reality thanks to major grants from the state's Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and three local funders: Weingart, Ralph M. Parsons, and Chapman & Associates Charitable Foundations. All together, over \$1.1 million – representing more than half of the project's anticipated total cost – has already been raised.

The remaining funds for the renovation will be developed through a capital campaign led by Richard Dominguez, former Chair of Portals' Board of Directors. Joining him is Wayne-Kent Bradshaw, Southwest Region President of Washington Mutual, as honorary chair. Richard will be actively supported by his colleagues on the Portals Foundation Board of Trustees in developing funding from foundations, corporations and individuals, including those who have ties or a presence in the South Los Angeles community served by the program facilities. Additionally, members of the Board of Directors of Pacific Clinics will participate in the campaign.

The goal is to begin construction on the renovation project by September 1, 2008, with a completion time estimated as one year.

The Western Avenue Renovation Project addresses the growing need for mental health services in South Los Angeles. It focuses on increasing program space and creating a comprehensive Recovery and Wellness Center that offers an array of mental health support services (socialization, housing, education, and employment) for adults and older adults. The renovation project will also increase the number of transitional housing beds to support clients as they prepare to move into more independent living situations in the community.



### Portals Receives Three-Year Basic Needs Grant From United Way of Greater Los Angeles

United Way of Greater Los Angeles has awarded Portals \$225,000 in core operating support as part of its *Creating Pathways Out Of Poverty* partnerships. United Way received nearly 500 proposals and selected Portals as one of approximately 150 agencies county-wide.

The grant, which will provide \$75,000 a year for three years, will support Portals' comprehensive mental health and supportive services to adults, older adults and transitional age youth with severe and persistent mental illness. Correlating with United Way's Ten-Year Action Plan, Portals' services will assist members with the housing, education and employment support they need to escape poverty and achieve self-sufficiency.

United Way funding recognizes the importance of "Basic Needs" services in helping individuals achieve greater economic independence. Portals will adhere to this goal and is proud to continue its collaborative partnership with United Way to help meet the basic needs of Los Angeles' most vulnerable populations.

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

May 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007

### INDIVIDUALS

Mr. James J. Balla, MBA  
Mr. Mike Cazares  
Mr. Russell W. Chung  
Mr. Michael J. Dunn  
Mr. Murray Lugash  
Mr. Sherman McClellan  
Mr. John Miles  
Ms. Katharine Monishi  
Ms. Diane Schultheis  
Ms. Teresa Sims  
Sidney Stern Memorial Trust

### BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Joell Partners  
United Way of Greater Los Angeles

### FOUNDATIONS

Chapman & Associates Charitable Foundation  
Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
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### IN-KIND

Aerospace Corporation  
Mr. James J. Balla, MBA  
DeNovo Software  
Houston/Tyner  
Ms. Accalia Jones  
Los Angeles Dodgers  
Ms. Tracia Reynolds  
Ms. Julia Saldana  
Shelter Partnership, Inc.

### TRIBUTE GIFTS

**In Honor of Norman Beck's 85<sup>th</sup> Birthday**  
Ms. Donna Ellman Garber

**In Memory of Bernard Taran**  
Mr. Edward Taran

**In Honor of Melinda Delp's Birthday**  
Ms. Diane Weinstein

*(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.)*



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## Portals' Recovery and Wellness Centers – A New Model of Service Delivery

**A** central element of Portals' newly implemented Full Service Partnership (FSP) programs (see related article on page 1), is the establishment of the agency's Recovery and Wellness Centers. The Centers offer comprehensive, fully integrated services within a single site, including: mental health, residential/housing, social rehabilitation, health and wellness, and employment and education services.

Recovery and Wellness Centers are designed to reduce treatment fragmentation and failures by coordinating services, with oversight by a team of psychiatrists, clinicians, para-professional staff, and consumers. Each Portals Recovery and Wellness Center serves as a single fixed point of responsibility for service delivery and coordination. Center locations include Mariposa and Wilshire in Metro Los Angeles and No-Fail in South Los Angeles. Centers are open seven days a week, with extended hours offered.

This new model of service delivery is built on the idea of full community integration (as depicted in the diagram above) that gives clients the chance to choose the services they will receive, to include family members in recovery and maintenance processes, to receive services wherever they choose, to measure progress towards recovery with a variety of benchmarks, and to receive enhanced and auxiliary wellness services.

Recovery and Wellness Center mental health services include individual and group counseling, interpersonal skills training, family counseling, independ-

ent living skills training, and crisis intervention services. Also offered are ongoing service coordination and advocacy services, including assistance with linkage to community services such as a primary care physician, benefit entitlements, transportation, and housing. Mental health services are administered by professional and paraprofessional staff directly supervised by licensed professionals.

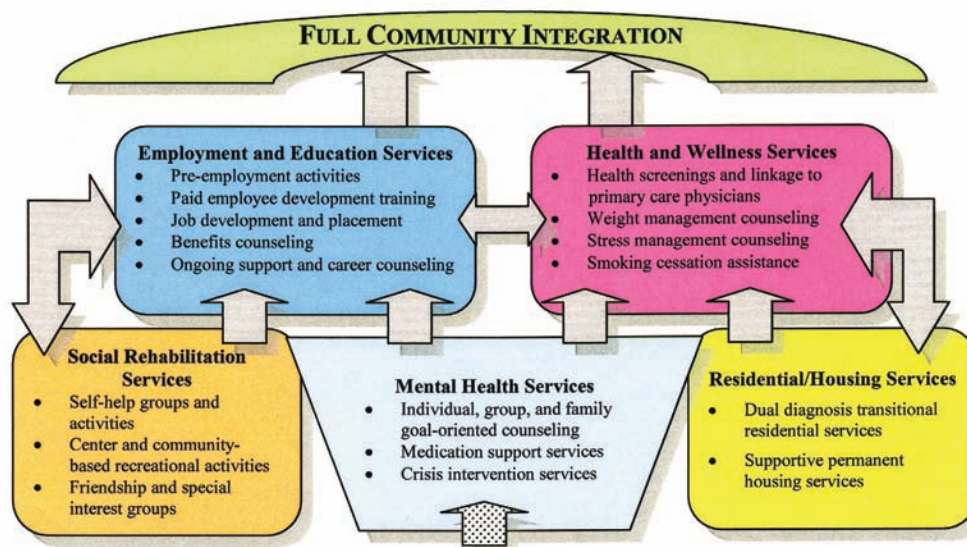
recovery, are able to explore the world of work and begin setting goals that will eventually lead to a more meaningful life.

The Recovery and Wellness Center model of health and wellness services includes an extensive array of services and supports, including a psychiatrist and nurse to address both medication issues and physical health issues. The Centers also promote prevention strategies for members in hope of improving long-term health.

Augmenting core services is a complete continuum of residential/housing services. Portals' dual diagnosis transitional residential program offers members opportunities to address their co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse while working to gain independent living skills. Transitional housing services focus on members needing case management and mental health services, with support provided on-site or through

regular visits from service coordinators. Portals will provide assistance to members who need minimal living skills support in acquiring and maintaining permanent housing through its long-standing collaboration with A Community of Friends, a non-profit housing developer in Los Angeles.

With the transformation of its mental health system of care – through the launch of the Recovery and Wellness Centers model – Portals is moving rapidly towards achieving its vision of a comprehensive mental health system of care focused on recovery and wellness.



Social rehabilitation services are the heart of Portals' redesigned service delivery model, offering members the opportunity to develop or strengthen their social support system through a variety of activities (social, civic, and recreational) provided seven days per week, 365 days per year. The program is designed to cultivate leadership and assertiveness skills as well as establish natural supports through relationship building with peers.

By providing a complete range of employment and education services at each Center, Portals ensures that members, no matter where they may be in their

## Socialization Activities Play Pivotal Role in Member Recovery



AB2034 staff and members took part in the United Way HomeWalk 2007 on November 17 at Exposition Park in Los Angeles.

**F**or Portals members, the road to wellness and recovery isn't all about counseling sessions, educational training and medical appointments. It also involves having fun by way of structured group activities in which members cultivate friendships and gradually learn to be part of the

everyday world they lost sight of because of their mental illness.

At Portals' Mariposa and Community Connections Clubhouses – two of the agency's Recovery and Wellness Centers – it is the goal of the socialization staff to expose members to a diverse and enjoyable set of activities. The hope is that these experiences will assist the clients reintegrating into the community as independently functioning members of society.

In recent months, Portals members took part in some of Los Angeles' premier recreational pastimes, including Los Angeles Dodgers baseball and the Los Angeles County Fair. They also participated in advocacy events such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness' (NAMI) Walk for the Mind of America and United Way's inaugural HomeWalk 2007. In addition, the clubhouses have held holiday-themed activities on their premises, including dinners, dances, talent shows and karaoke contests.

Detris Davis, Socialization Coordinator for Portals' Mariposa Clubhouse, sees to it that members who participate in the Clubhouse model are offered every opportunity to take part in activities. "Socialization is a crucial component in a member's treatment and recovery," says Davis. "Every member who participates expresses how much they enjoy the activities."

Edna Mercorios, interim director of Portals' Community Connections Clubhouse, says that members are strongly encouraged to actively participate and "take ownership in both the decisions that are made and activities conducted to embody the true essence of psychosocial rehabilitation."

Activities already slated for 2008 include trips to the Getty Museum and Disneyland, a fashion show in which members will showcase their taste in clothing, and a return to Dodger Stadium to see major league baseball at Chavez Ravine.

If you have any suggestions for a socialization activity for Portals' members or would like to donate services, please contact Detris Davis at (213) 639-2678.

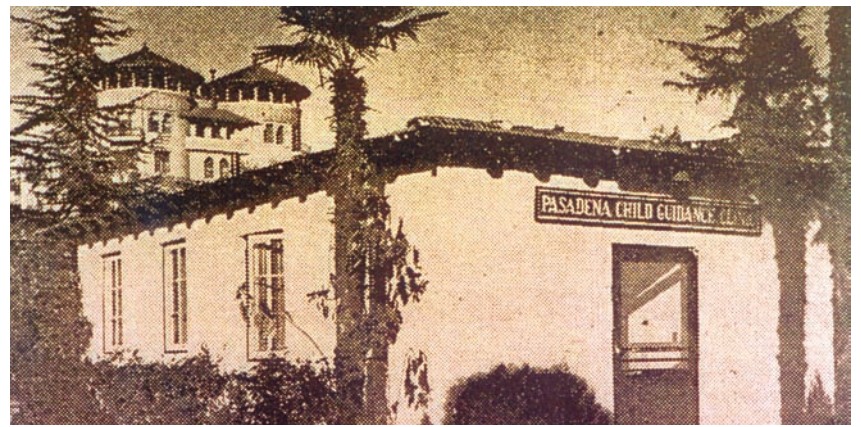
# Two Agencies Building a Better Future for Our Consumers

## Pacific Clinics *Fast Facts*

**T**hroughout its 82-year history, Pacific Clinics has provided outpatient behavioral healthcare services for children, adults and older adults with additional support for their families. The agency incorporates family-, strengths- and evidence-based best practices in its culturally diverse services.

Pacific Clinics is proud that its wide array of programs has now been greatly enhanced by Portals' expertise in psychosocial rehabilitation, supportive housing and employment services. Here are some Fast Facts on Pacific Clinics:

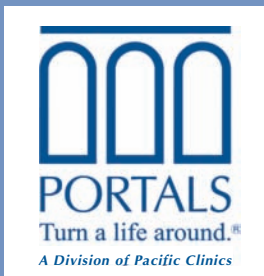
- **ESTABLISHED** 1926 (as the Pasadena Child Guidance Clinic)
- **AGENCY LEADERSHIP:**
  - Chair, Board of Directors: Lary J. Mielke
  - President and CEO: Susan Mandel, Ph.D.
- **OPERATING BUDGET:** \$97 million
- **NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** Over 1,200 full- and part-time staff
- **NUMBER OF PROGRAM SITES:** 78
- **COUNTIES SERVED:** Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura
- **POPULATIONS SERVED:** Children, adolescents, adults, older adults, homeless
- **SERVICES PROVIDED:**
  - Child and family outpatient services
  - Older adult home visits and community care
  - Partial day treatment for children and adolescents
  - Field-based services in schools and homes where needed
  - Mental health and co-occurring substance abuse services
  - Multicultural programs



Pacific Clinics in 1926 (top) and at its current corporate headquarters in Arcadia (bottom).

## Portals' Mission Statement

The mission of Portals is to enable people with psychiatric disabilities to recognize individual strengths and diversity, to live independently in the community and improve the quality of their lives through a process that promotes self-determination, productive activity, interdependence and self-help.



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