

OPEN PATHS COUNSELING CENTER INSIGHTS

LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER

Next year Open Paths Counseling Center will celebrate its 40th Anniversary. What was a good idea to four people in 1975 – to provide the community with affordable mental health care while training pre-licensed Marriage and Family Therapists – turned out to be a model with staying power. Every year Open Paths' staff serve over 800 clients, as diverse in ethnicity as in age and with a range of issues that make their lives more difficult than they need to be. The concept is as relevant today, maybe even more so, as it was 40 years ago.

A greater challenge is to remain an intimate agency where new approaches (like groups for people with social anxiety) can come to fruition and be impactful quickly and easily. Where staff becomes collegial and friendships are cultivated as they learn and grow together. And the clients are our neighbors and the kids who go to our local schools and their teachers, our co-workers, friends, and relatives, they are me and they are you.

In the latest statistics on philanthropy in Los Angeles, human services organizations make up about 20 percent of all nonprofits and 70 percent of their clients live in and near poverty. These same organizations receive the least amount of private donations in the sector. That's right, the agencies that provide direct services to the community are lowest on the giving curve.

Open Paths receives no government money. Our budget is based on client fees, some foundation grants and donors like you...people who care about mental health services. From kids in the elementary school program to adults attending parenting skills classes, it all happens because of your support. Please join with us as we enter our 40th year of providing life-altering services by making a generous contribution and know that it can only happen with your support.

*Linda Wayne Goldman
Executive Director*

P.S. Calling all Amazon shoppers – please log into your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com and choose Open Paths Counseling Center as the organization you support. It's that easy and we'll receive 5% of your purchasing power!

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Between September 2013 and August 2014, Open Paths Counseling Center provided a total of 10,865 hours of service to over 800 clients throughout the year:

- ▶ 5,918 hours of individual, family, group counseling and parenting education were conducted. 857 of those hours were conducted in Spanish.
- ▶ 4,230 hours of domestic violence intervention through the Another Way Program to men and women were conducted. 418 of those were provided in Spanish.
- ▶ 457 hours of one-on-one counseling at the elementary school level and high school level were conducted during that time frame.
- ▶ Another 260 hours were provided to students at Venice High through the Ex/PRESS Creative Writing Project for at-risk youth..

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GO TO:

<http://openpaths.org/how-you-can-help/>

VIEW FROM A BOARD DIRECTOR

As a new board member at Open Paths, I am humbled by the exemplary work done every day by the therapists and staff of this organization. It is truly inspiring to consider that these doors have welcomed clients with open arms for literally decades. In a day and age when referring to your 'therapist' in conversation is almost as common as referring to a doctor or dentist, the stage has been set for the public to truly accept and appreciate how crucial a role mental health plays in our lives. But I'm also worried. Worried, not only because board members are supposed to worry, but because the gap between health care services available to the privileged and to those in need is still as wide as ever, and even the best PPOs do not cover mental health services the way they should. With each

passing day the news reminds us of what can happen when true mental illness is left untreated...but those are often the extreme cases. So many millions, including innumerable people in our own community, suffer from debilitating depression, anxiety and other conditions that affect their everyday lives. Meanwhile, the price of good therapy is usually far outside what many can afford. Open Paths is answering this call...and we need to answer the organization's call. Please help spread the word about the good work being done here, because only through the support of generous donors, at whatever level they are able, can Open Paths continue to offer this help to our community.

*Matt Rosen
Board Member*

CLINICAL UPDATE

About 8 months ago, I started working as the Clinical Director at Open Paths. It is exciting to be part of this wonderful 40-year tradition of caring mental health services and distinguished training for future therapists.

While maintaining this tradition, we are also expanding services to meet the needs of our changing community. We are establishing a program that will provide focused services to the LGBTQI community and specialized training for students that want to serve it. This effort was kicked-off with a very successful seminar on "Gender Transitions in Mid-Life", held on November 2nd. The workshop included a new documentary featuring an Open Paths trainee, Lisa Miller, and a discussion panel with Lisa and other experts on gender transition that was moderated by Kendall Evans.

We have also expanded our therapy groups and have started offering mental health consulting services to other non-profit organizations' staff, particularly those that serve and mentor youth. Again, it's a pleasure to part of this vibrant center and a participant in its exciting future.

*Joel McLafferty, LMFT
Clinical Director*

✧ WITH HEARTFELT GRATITUDE ✧

Open Paths Board of Directors bids farewell to its esteemed Board Member Marshall Cole who joined the Board in 1999. Over the years Marshall served as Treasurer, contributed his wisdom and has been an incredibly generous donor. Marshall's valuable input exceeded all expectations and he will be missed dearly. A sincere thank you to our elder statesman from all of us at Open Paths.

First Client and Second Chances

There it was - the name of my first client.

A little over a year before, I had gone back to school to change what I did professionally. For me it had been the next in a long line of "second chances". I'd had a lot of therapy myself over the years and it had helped me in every aspect of my life. So I'd left the work that left me feeling stuck and angry and frustrated to learn how to help others the way I'd been so profoundly helped myself. Now I'd completed the first year of school and was deemed ready to start my training.

There she was, my first client, someone who had every symptom of deep depression, a person who needed a second chance. I could see this, but when the hour was over I wasn't sure if I'd helped, even though I'd put my training to good use. Then, a week later, my first client came back. She looked better. She looked me in the eye, this time she was more upbeat. This week she had hope. And then I understood that simply being with her and willing to listen was powerful. And so, now a year and two months into a my latest second chance, I am honored to step again and again into rooms with people willing to do their work for their next second chance.

*Stephanie Hubbard
Marriage and Family Therapist Trainee*

Honoring the Image

As a student at Pacifica Graduate Institute and a trainee at Open Paths with a depth/Jungian orientation, I am fascinated by the mysterious unraveling that occurs in the process of engaging in psychotherapy, particularly the birthing of the image from the client's perspective. In casual conversation metaphors, similes or colloquialisms are often brushed over quickly, with a topical interpretation that bypasses the depth of the meaning. However, in the therapeutic container, statements such as "I felt like a ship alone in a storm" or "my relationship is a volcano waiting to erupt" starts to take on a special quality. The charged descriptions spoken by the client transform into germinating morsels of the imagination. These statements can act as a bridge towards repressed memories, longings, anxieties, and narratives, waiting to be unearthed. Frequently, emotional experiences are compared to the natural world, objects, or colors and show up as signals needing sensitivity and respect; there is hidden material in the client's personal life experiences that is yearning to be acknowledged by another person.

As a psychotherapist in training, I find the jewels of the psyche are imbedded in the image. When listening with an ear attuned to symbolism as a gift from the imaginal realm, there is an opportunity to explore unseen parts of the client's inner world with a genuine inquisitive care. The thread of the image can grow into a tapestry of intricate weavings if there is an un-presumptuous patience provided by the psychotherapist. Having the capacity to hold both an archetypal and personal connotation for the client, the image can come to life as a highly unique and universal experience. It is an honor to witness how the relationship toward an image changes as the client becomes more engaged with his/her process of self-discovery

*Dana Kline
Marriage and Family Therapist Trainee*

Open Paths extends an enthusiastic welcome to new Board members Daniel Rabiner and Matt Rosen. We also congratulate Open Paths' Board Chair Christina Strickland Knight and her husband Mike on the birth of their baby girl Vivienne Parker Knight born August 20th.

Open Paths would like to thank Janet Blum and Hans Delsoin for their service on the Board of Directors this past year. We wish Hans well as he attends his first year of Law School and best of luck to Janet who has moved to the Central Coast.

Many, many thanks to all of our supporters between November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014

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Interns and Trainees who have served our clientele throughout 2014

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(xlarge, large or medium).

LEVERAGING THE VITALITY OF COMMUNITIES

One day I was parking my car when I saw a woman on a bicycle, a Latin woman in her middle 40s. After securing her bike to one of the trees in the parking lot I walked towards her and she looked at me. After we exchanged greetings, we headed into Open Paths. I was surprised to learn that she had no transportation and had to ride a bicycle for over 40 minutes to attend one of our parenting classes. Most importantly, she made me realize that if it were not for organizations like Open Paths, she would not have access to low-income services.

I realized that she and I are part of a whole community and Open Paths is part of that community, making therapist services available for underserved people with limited resources. I am part of this community too, as an immigrant from Ecuador, completing my therapist training. It would not be possible for me to meet all the requirements for my graduation if it were not for Open Paths.

As a bilingual therapist trainee, I see people who are in need of low-cost counseling and would not be able to raise healthy children and become a functional family without this agency.

*Bismark "Alfonso" Torres
Marriage and Family Therapist Trainee*



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