Building Bridges

I, Joanne Arcangel, writer of this article, am a peer with lived experience — meaning I identify with mental health recovery. At the Hacienda of Hope and through our organization, Project Return Peer Support Network, we utilize these experiences to connect with and help others in their journey. It has been amazing to be surrounded by a community that comes together to guide its members in building a stronger foundation - a positive reinforcement of values, relationships, health and life skills.

I recently attended a training on mental health called “Doing the Hard Work of Recovery: Building a Bridge from a River of Suffering to Connectedness in the Community.” The training addressed how we can guide the “people in our communities who may have drifted away for many reasons and need our help to recover and return: healed, reconnected and functioning.” It was facilitated by Dr. Mark Ragins, Medical Director at Mental Health America Village Integrated Service Agency here in Long Beach. At MHA, an agency that the Hacienda of Hope often collaborates with, they use a person-centered approach and focus on strength-building and collective efforts, just as we do here at CVC.

During this training, I thought of the Century Villages at Cabrillo’s “River Avenue.” I thought about how we are all in the same community, regardless of our job titles, what organization, age group or culture we belong to, whether or not we are a resident or employee or both, or how long we’ve been here. Each part of CVC and each person here contributes to what it is today.

I am fortunate to have a platform to highlight some of those parts and a few of those extraordinary people through this article.

Social Enterprise Blooms at Changing Spirits

American Indian Changing Spirits (AICS) has a long history of collaboration with CVC and Cal State Long Beach. As a service provider here at CVC and working with the American Indian Student Council at CSULB, it seemed a natural fit for AICS to join with the CSULB Saturday MBA program to work on a Social Enterprise project that could benefit AICS and the MBA students. The MBA Sustainability class also has a long history with CVC, having done many projects on campus, including business plans for the Village Canteen, feasibility studies for the solar carport, community gardens and other projects. Raul Garcia, Director of the AICS program commented, “I really had no idea what to expect, and certainly had no idea the project would spawn such an impactful outcome.”

To kick off the project, Raul and others from AICS had several meetings with students. Through those meetings, the students were immersed in American Indian culture and learned much more than how to produce a business plan. The students gained a cultural appreciation of Native American traditions, native arts and crafts, as well as the spiritual aspects of the sweat lodge ceremony, an integral aspect of the drug and alcohol treatment program run by AICS.

However, being a MBA program, attention soon shifted to the idea of creating a business opportunity, a Social Enterprise, around Native American arts and crafts to support the individual client’s house fund. The AICS program was already designating Native American art and craft times for the residents within their daily schedule. These are times that the residents create bead work, medicine wheels, paintings, silversmith, or leather work. Each tribe’s art is specific to that tribe. Some only create items for their sacred ceremonies, while others may raffle their items at local Pow Wow’s or other Native American community functions. From the very first meetings, the MBA students loved the idea of creating revenue with items made locally by the residents, and the development of a sustainable business plan was set in motion.

The exchange of ideas and knowledge between the students and residents at AICS was inspiring to all involved. The students were given an insight to native arts such as Dreamcatchers. Raul explained the significance, teachings and traditions...
Your Opinion Matters

This summer, we completed our 5th Annual Resident Survey. Almost 200 residents were asked a few key questions about their community and experiences. Century Villages at Cabrillo (CVC) relies on this valuable input to plan the activities, make improvements, and keep our residents happy to be living here and to feel safe. Your opinion matters and is rewarded! Just ask these lucky residents who won brand new tablets for taking the time to complete the survey. Congratulations Damon Ellis (VIP) and Margie McKenzie (Family Commons) who were this year’s survey raffle winners.

Stay tuned for details about upcoming focus groups and community forums in the next few weeks to further discuss safety and other concerns that were indicated in the survey results. Make your voices heard, come out and participate in making this a better community for everyone.

Building Bridges (continued from front page)

During the summer, a couple of the Occupational Therapy students interning at CVC facilitated a cooking group at the Hacienda of Hope once a week. In one of the group sessions, the OT students were able to connect with a veteran who was staying at the Hacienda of Hope, referred to us by U.S. Vets.

They made squash muffins, baked from scratch using squash grown from CVC’s very own garden. The OT students also facilitate the gardening group which encourages restoration through education, patience and social wellness. In the group, participants not only get to plant fruits and vegetables, but are able to plant seeds of hope as well. Here, they find time to smell the roses – time to relax and reflect on one’s own growth and healing process. Mental health recovery is also deeply rooted in this process.

What is mental health? Sometimes it’s not about someone’s diagnosis or state of mind. Sometimes mental health is not about the river of suffering, but about building strong bridges. Sometimes it’s about the smile from a friendly cashier reminding someone that they’re not alone. It’s about a veteran connecting with a young man by playing chess in the afternoon. It’s about a nurse assisting a maintenance staff member that could have been injured. Sometimes it’s about a student learning about herself through being of service to others. Mental health is not about someone’s problem to be treated, but about goals and connections we all make in a community as a whole.

EDITOR’S NOTE: We are very pleased to publish this story of personal journey and observation and thank Joanna Arcangel for sharing this beautiful representation of all that is good at CVC.

Social Enterprise Blooms at AICS (continued from front page)

behind this Native craft. Dreamcatchers are made by residents using only natural materials and occasionally bead work is incorporated to include bright colors. The Dreamcatcher is culturally significant to the Central Western and Plains tribes as a spiritual item of protection, similar to the medicine bag.

The most popular item to make and use among the residents of AICS is the Medicine bag. Also referred to as the Medicine pouch, it too is seen as an item of protection. The Plains tribes carry meaningful personal or sacred items in each pouch and keep them close by hanging the bags from their necks like a necklace.

Everyone involved in this project were winners as everyone gained knowledge and helped develop community here at CVC. The students of CSULB learned so much about the Native American culture and belief systems. They personally invested their time and energies as they took to the local Native community and attended the CSULB Pow Wow, to gain more insight. The AICS residents in turn were introduced to an effective business plan as a way of expanding their efforts making art and raising funds. The items were photographed for the website, by the students and priced by the residents of AICS. Dreamcatchers and Medicine bags, along with a collaborative t-shirt design, were the first to be introduced to the American Indian Changing Spirits online store. The store will soon be accessible at the AICS website: americanindianchangingspirits.org. Check it out and help this fledgling Social Enterprise grow!
Dear CVC

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the wondrous and incredible time I was able to spend here the last 6 months. I arrived at CVC as a hopeful doctoral student and came out a confident occupational therapist and I credit this to every resident and staff member I had the honor of meeting. However brief our interaction may have been, know that you made a difference in not only how I view the world, but how I view myself.

I had the opportunity to write about the garden in the last newsletter and in it, I talked about what Ann Raver, an author for the New York Times, once said, “Gardens...are the first sign of commitment to a community. When people plant corn they are saying, let’s stay here. And by their connection to the land, they are connected to one another.”

Well, there’s wild corn growing in the garden. It has become a symbol to me of the commitment to community that residents and staff have expressed in growing Century Villages to what it is today.

I leave CVC with a sad heart but with so many amazing memories.

I do not believe in goodbyes, but someone once said, “How lucky I am to have known someone who was so hard to say goodbye to.” In my case, it was not someone, but some place. Thank you, CVC.

Sincerely,

Shawn
Occupational Therapy Program, USC Doctoral Resident

Big Thank You To Our Partners!

CVC hosted its 6th Annual Partner Appreciation Luncheon and Awards Ceremony on June 29th. On this beautiful warm day, the Grand Lawn was transformed into a beach providing the perfect backdrop to thank our partners, including the over 30 agencies we work with on and off site, as well as our volunteers and donors who support the Villages at Cabrillo every day. The event was attended by more than 160 of our partners, volunteers, and donors.

Each year we accept nominations for those staff persons, partners, and volunteers that go above and beyond to embrace and enhance the collaborative spirit at the Villages at Cabrillo. This year we received over a dozen nominations and were pleased to honor three very deserving awardees.

John Oppenheim received the Volunteer of the Year Award for his work on developing a yoga wellness project across the entire campus. Shari Weaver of Harbor Interfaith Services received the Staff Person of the Year Award for her work with Harbor Interfaith Services (HIS), not only for the supportive services she provides to HIS residents on campus but also for her assistance in securing move in funding for the majority of residents now residing in the Cabrillo Gateway development. We also honored the VA Healthcare System of Long Beach as the Partner of the Year for their exemplary efforts in collaboration with CVC and our other service provider partners in ending Veterans Homelessness in Long Beach this past year. Long Beach City Councilman Roberto Uranga spoke and presented Certificates of Recognition to our award winners, as well.
FREE YOUTH PROGRAMS AT CVC
PATH EXPLORER’S AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Join us for a program filled with activities like building shooting rockets, explosive science experiments, cuisine cooking classes, mellow movie days and interactive field trips!
When: Starts September 6th
Time: Monday–Friday, 3pm–6pm
Who: Youth*, ages 5-13
*Youth must be residents of Family Commons at CVC. For more information please contact Vincent, 562.299.5730, or stop by the Valley Room B.

OASIS YOUTH AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Join us for a program filled with homework help, arts & crafts, active games, nutrition and much more.
When: Starts September 6th
Time: Monday–Friday, 3pm–6pm
Who: Open to youth entering K–5th grade
For more information please contact Kaitlyn Taylor, 562.388.8067.

BE B.O.L.D. AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
Join us for Be B.O.L.D. teen programming including cooking, sports, outdoor activities, and arts.
When: Starts September 6th
Time: Monday–Friday, 3:30pm–5:30pm
Who: Youth entering 6th–12th grade
For more information please contact, Cherisse Goodman, 562.388.8080 ext. 3

FREE WORKSHOPS AT CVC (OPEN TO ALL RESIDENTS)
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
When: Tuesday, October 4th—Thursday, October 6th and Tuesday, October 11th—Thursday, October 13th, 1:00pm–3:00pm
Where: Oasis at Cabrillo Gateway (Resident Services lobby)
Offered by Cambodian Association of America. Healthy Relationships class will cover topics such as conflict resolution and communication. To register call 562-988-1863.

HEALTHY PARENTING
When: Starts Tuesday, October 11th, 10:00am–12:30pm
Where: Oasis at Cabrillo Gateway (Resident Services lobby)
Offered by The Children’s Clinic. 6 week course meets DCFS requirements and participants who attend all 6 weeks will receive a certificate of completion. To register call 562-264-2806.

FREE OR LOW COST EVENTS
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS
Freeman E. Fairfield/Westside Center. 1835 West Willard Street (across from Cabrillo High School), Long Beach, CA 90810
When: August 2016 – May 2017
Time: 2:00pm – 6:00pm
Who: Youths, ages 5-18
Cost: $15 one time membership fee
For more information please call 562.435.1621.
Download application: www.bgclublb.org.

FIRST FRIDAYS – BIXBY KNOLLS
First Friday of every month, 6:30pm–9:30pm. Atlantic Ave. from Bixby Rd. to San Antonio Dr. Local art, music, games and animals. FREE.

LONG BEACH ZOMBIE FEST
October 14th-Oct 16th (times differ)
Rainbow Lagoon. Tickets are $13 for one day admission. Children under 12 are free with paid adult. Join hordes of rotting revelers for Long Beach’s annual zombie outbreak. http://longbeachzombiefest.com/

DOWNIE DIA DE LOS MUERTOS
October 30th, 11:00am-6:00pm.

20TH ANNUAL LONG BEACH VETERAN’S DAY PARADE
Saturday, November 5th, 10:00am. Parade set-up on Atlantic Ave. between Artesia and Harding. Step-off is at Atlantic and Harding at 10am. The Parade proceeds south on Atlantic to 56th Street, then returns north on Atlantic back to Harding. FREE.

BELMONT SHORE CHRISTMAS PARADE
Saturday, December 3rd. 2nd Street Belmont Shore at 6:00pm. www.belmontshore.org/christmas-parade. FREE.

DAISY AVENUE CHRISTMAS TREE LANE
Visit http://www.longbeach.gov/district7/community/projects/daisy-avenue-holiday-events/ for more information. Date TBD. FREE.

NAPLES BOAT PARADE
December 17th, 7:00pm.
Visit http://www.naplesca.com/ for more information. FREE.

Suggestions or submissions? Call (562) 388–8065 or email villageanchor@centuryvillages.org.

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Thanks to “A New Way of Life Re-entry Project,” 123 residents recently became registered to vote for the 2016 Presidential Election on November 8th. October 24th is the deadline to register to vote in this important election. Look for the “A New Way of Life” table in the courtyard for assistance between September 20th and October 6th. Tuesdays and Thursdays (11:30am -5:30pm). You can also register online at http://registertovote.ca.gov. The Villages at Cabrillo will be an official polling place on November 8th.
Once again CVC teamed up with the H.O.P.E Foundation to host our 4th annual HOPEFEST, a back to school themed resource fair and summer festival attended by over 300 residents. On a hot summer day, hundreds of residents, both veterans and families, explored the many resource tables set-up throughout the courtyard.

It was amazing to see all of the fun energy on and around the Grand Lawn.

The combination of water slides, games, interactive booths, resources, hands on demonstrations, and fun activities made for a perfect summer day.

We couldn’t have done it without the support of over 25 community partners who hosted a table/activity or helped by providing volunteers and school supplies. Thanks especially to our sponsors Tesoro Corporation, the Port of Long Beach, Turn Kindness On, School on Wheels, and The H.O.P.E. Foundation, all who helped underwrite the costs and organize this resource fair. With their help we were able to provide community information to our residents, offer fun family friendly games, school supplies and backpacks for the children and of course, lunch and snacks free of charge to our residents. These community gatherings provide a casual way for neighbors to come together and share the day while having fun with each other, ultimately strengthening our community. A big thanks also goes out to our awesome volunteers from The H.O.P.E. Foundation and Turn Kindness On who helped make the event a success. And to our resident volunteers from American Indian Changing Spirits, CVC Occupational Therapy interns and staff volunteers from CVC and our partners CCD, School of Wheels, and PATH Ventures.

Stay tuned for details about our next community event, our Halloween Festival on October 26th!

The Village Jam

The Villages at Cabrillo is home to The Rock Club’s newest band “The Village Jam.” Founder, Frank McIlquham led the Rock For Vets Band and Gold Star Manor Choir on Saturday, August 27th as they showcased their talent to 150 residents and staff on the Grand Lawn.

U.S.VETS served dinner from the Community Kitchen as residents enjoyed music featuring songs like The Doors’ “Come on Baby Light My Fire” and Eurythmics’ “Sweet Dreams.” Several residents won raffle prizes donated by CVC, U.S.VETS and The Rock Club. Check out Century Villages Facebook page to see short videos of the concert.

The Village Jam practices began Friday, September 9th and are held weekly in the Valley Room from 9:45am-noon. Head Coach, Charles Fearing, is a professional musician who has played with musical legends from Herb Albert, Kenny Rogers, Tina Turner, Celine Dion, and recently, Barry Manilow. It is not too late to sign up. For more information, inquire at the property office or call 866-597-1116.

Generous donations from Century Housing, Walton Construction and The Rock Club have made the purchase of new professional grade instruments and equipment possible for THE VILLAGE JAM to get started.
Thanks to our Adopt-A-Camper donors, CVC staff, and the 74 Occupational Therapy students that helped out this summer CVC’s Oasis team was able to offer the youth on-site great summer options.

**Oasis Summer Camp** was for children ages 5-11 living at CVC that included daily circle time, games and activities as well as outdoor play all themed around the ecosystem. The children also participated in a family day fundraiser where they provided games and crafts for the community and enjoyed their last day of program at Medieval Times.

The teens had their own camp called **Be B.O.L.D** which presented a unique opportunity to work with multiple occupational therapy students in a brand new space on campus. The camp was open to all youth entering 6th-12th grade and focused on communication skills, conflict negotiation, goal setting, and giving back to the community all taught through the use of a variety of techniques including games, service projects, cooking, sports, share circles, just to name a few.

And finally this summer marked the start of the Teen Clubhouse, using a vacant space on site. From its conception Occupation Therapy (OT) students worked with the youth onsite conducting focus groups with the teens to determine what they envisioned for the clubhouse. The OT students met with the teens for five weeks prior to the Clubhouse opening to prepare for the clubhouse activities. They made inspirational signs, sensory items for use in the quiet room and a beanbag game that involved sanding, painting and assembling. The teens also participated in fundraising activities initiated by the Be Bold program teens. The Clubhouse opened on July 5 with 11 teenagers in attendance. There were only three basic rules that we felt covered all of the challenges that might arise: Respect Yourself, Respect Others, and Respect the Place. The programming was developed using input from the teen focus groups and ideas from the occupational therapy students. Each week there was a different theme—Carnival, Hawaiian Luau, Mexican Fiesta, and Camping. We also wanted to encourage healthy eating habits. The teens volunteered to cook the snacks each day. Our attendance varied from day to day depending on the schedules and needs of the teens—we averaged about 11 teens a day.

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**Taking Care of Our Neighborhood**

Do you think of CVC as YOUR neighborhood, your home? Do you like the campus-like setting and the activities and festivals? Then it is ALSO up to you to treat the entire neighborhood like it is YOURS. Everyone wants to feel safe and to enjoy where they live. Everyone wants a clean campus, free from trash and litter. But, it takes everyone to make it so. Please report all suspected criminal or suspicious activity when it is observed. Pick up after yourself, don’t leave cigarette butts on the ground or dump trash in the parking lot. Don’t look the other way, don’t ignore it. Pick it up or report it.

But who do you call?

First, when it is a health, safety or criminal issue, immediately call 911. This number is routed to the Law Enforcement dispatch. They will filter all calls and determine what level of response is required and will prioritize based on the nature of the activity observed or heard.

Second, report all suspicious activities to the Property Office. Incident reports are preferred, but even a call to the security guard will be passed on.

Security’s number is **562-388-8061** from a cell phone or non-CVC line, extension 8061 on-site.

Remember, CVC is your home. We all play a part in protecting ourselves from those wanting to do harm. Let’s make CVC a safer place, where unwanted activity is actively discouraged.

Please make the effort to keep our neighborhood safe and clean!