#ThisIsMI: Stories and Strengths of Community

#ThisIsMI was a talent showcase geared towards mental health awareness and community engagement. Spearheaded by one of CVC’s partners, Project Return Peer Support Network, it highlighted the different strengths, skills and talents of people in the name of solidarity for individuals who are “more than their mental illness.” The event had over 300 attendees — CVC residents and individuals from outside of the CVC community. A diverse group of children, teens, adults, veterans and civilians enjoyed hot dogs, shaved ice, popcorn, and the show.

Oftentimes, we can overlook what connects us with each other, such as our common ground of human experiences. We can tend to focus on what needs to change and what problems exist in our society. Instead, we should focus on what we can do together to rise above what challenges us as individuals and as a community. Through music and different means of expression, people’s vulnerability, strengths, and support for others echoed throughout the day and long after the event.

Tyheime Greenwood, who participates in the Oasis after-school program, danced on stage as Project Return’s Kris Toriz openly shared and rapped about substance abuse and keeping faith. It was evident that having an opportunity to share his gift had a lasting impact on Tyheime as he talked about being able to tell stories with his craft, his future plans at Job Corps and still pursuing his passion for dance.

Two CVC residents performed a song written about a recent issue that took place at the Social Hall. They sang “Cable Free (Thank You)” with Holy Smokes and beamed with excitement after the event. Suzan Newton says, “[Being honest and open] brings community together, lets people know you’re not alone in dealing with everyday issues, whether it is substance use, domestic violence, or people in your family with mental illness.”

Vanessa Jordan shares her experience about performing.

Cont. on back page, #ThisIsMI
**Q: What should we expect to see in the upcoming series?**
A: No spoiler alerts, but I hope the videos might put smiles or bring out some laughs about what it takes to be a good neighbor. I hope to reach people and try to put them at ease. I’m excited about the team that’s helping me, and I really, really hope this represents what CVC is all about.

**Q: What does it take to be a good neighbor at CVC?**
A: I would say, be friendly, follow the rules … don’t make any loud noises after hours … and if you’re fortunate to have a TV, phone line, or Internet, pay those on time. You don’t want to get behind and get a late notice. If you follow those guidelines, you can pretty much have some longevity at CVC.

**Q: Were you ever not a good neighbor?**
A: Well, I didn’t break a rule, but maybe I did … I went on a trip to visit my cousin and totally forgot to pay my rent, which was due on the 1st. I wasn’t back until the 8th, and I was really, really stressed out. I kinda thought they were gonna kick me out. But the nice team at the Property Office told me, ‘Hey, don’t worry about it, you’re here to pay the rent now and it’s going to be okay!’ They understood that people forget things.

**Q: Will examples of how that kind of thing might play out be included in the videos?**
A: Perhaps … but again, no spoilers! Just know there will be some things in the videos that will hopefully brighten everybody’s day.

**Q: Will there be guest appearances by partner programs and staff?**
A: Definitely! This is a community video, so we plan to have at least one or two reps from each program, and cameos from CVC employees.

**Q: Any final words for future fans?**
A: CVC is a happy place, and I really want people who live here to know that there are a lot of people here who can help you. It’s important to utilize those opportunities. Oh, and by the way, CVC offers many really great events. Please participate because they’re really, really a lot of fun.

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**“Mister Ransom” is a character created by CVC Case Manager, Sean Ransom, that parodies the TV series Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. The character is fictional, but the community-related content featured in the upcoming video series, Mister Ransom’s Neighborhood, is intended to be informative and educational. The Village Anchor sat down with Mister Ransom to get the inside scoop.**

**Q: Who is Mister Ransom?**
A: He’s a CVC resident who wants every day to be a happy day. For example, before a new resident moves in, CVC staff goes over the lease with them. This can take up to an hour!! The resident just wants to get their keys and move in. I thought it’d be a great idea to have a visual of what it takes to be a good neighbor at CVC. Something less stressful, and helps break the ice.

**Q: How long have you lived here?**
A: I’ve lived here eight years. I’ve seen lots of new things happening here, and I’m really happy to still be here.

**Q: What was your move-in day like for you?**
A: I was really anxious. I had so many questions … I felt bad for the Property Manager because I had her repeat everything, so the hour process was probably two hours for me. I really wanted to make sure that I knew all the rules, because I didn’t want to break them. As the years went along, I was like, ‘Wow, I am really, really happy to be here.’

**Q: Eight years later: how’s it going?**
A: There are lots of new programs that come about all the time. I ride my bike around the community. I try to talk to everyone I know, as well as people I don’t. I don’t think I know everything about all the programs, but I pretty much can inform them of the basics if they were to ask me.

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**Look Up High!**
**Scrolling Marquee Another Source for News**

*Welcome to the Villages at Cabrillo… It’s National Clean Your Room Day! Have you noticed the scrolling marquee as you enter CVC campus? It’s located right above the guard shack in bright, red letters.*

The entrance can sometimes have long lines, so what could be better than something to read while you’re waiting? Look up! The display could be the date and time, but sometimes, the message is something fun or informative. Tell the Truth Day, National Kiss Your Mother Day, National Doughnut Day... or your rent is due in 5 days, Movie Night Saturday, or Don’t Forget Bingo Night. These are just a few examples of what you might see. Oh, no, you exclaim, I didn’t see the whole message!! Don’t worry, there’s another marquee onsite under the bell tower near The Childrens Clinic. Stay in the loop and… look up!
Ray Mickens, CVC Resident Manager

“I learned to be part of a team early in life from playing soccer in jr. high, football in high school, winning basketball championships, and Marine Corps experience. I search for my role in an organization and stick to the strategies set in place.

What is a side hustle you say? Well, a side hustle is a way to make money outside of your 9 to 5 job, or whatever your source of income is. It’s that little extra boost that allows you to make more money that’ll give you the financial freedom to pursue your passions, buy things you need or want, and lower any financial worries.

“Never depend on single income. Make investments to create a second source” ~ Warren Buffett

Somewhere in Denver, there’s an HR Director who runs a thriving bakery from her kitchen. In LA, a Property Manager has a dog walking business that’s helping put money away to buy a home for her family. In Nevada, a full-time high school art teacher sells handmade backpacks to sponsor her classroom’s art supply and projects. A stay-at-home mom sells cat-themed t-shirts out of her garage and a Veteran teaches army strength workouts to individuals who are considering enlistment. The possibilities are endless, and this could be you…

“You can’t have a million-dollar dream with a minimum-wage work ethic.” ~ Stephen C. Hogan

A side hustle is not only a good way to make extra money, but it’s a great way to keep your brain stimulated to stay mentally alert and is a known risk reducer for dementia, per the Stanford Neuroscience Health Center. Thanks to other like-minded Americans who are tired of the “rat race,” we have some amazingly creative apps and ideas that share witty ways to make some extra cash. Check them out…

The Nielsen Computer and Mobile Panel App – Paid surveys
Swagbucks – Get paid to share your opinion
Survey Junkie – Cash for surveys
Opinion Outpost – Make money online with paid surveys
Ibotta – Pays you real cash money whenever, wherever you shop.
Inbox Dollars – Offers “welcome bonus”
Pine Cone Research – Potentially make anywhere from $12 – $18 dollars per hour completing surveys
Survey Savvy – You can take online surveys in exchange for cash and get paid by check
CVC’s Own – Volunteer to run peer support groups for Project Return Peer Support Network. Receive a stipend of $20/group (see Hacienda of Hope to learn more). Support groups are based on your skills — run a cooking, art, budgeting, or social group, etc. Volunteer work can be added to your resume.

Don’t knock the side hustle because the cost of everything is astronomical!

Maria Llanos, Oasis Youth and Family Services Coordinator

“Helping children and their families is the most rewarding job I can think of. Knowing that my job is to help children achieve their full potential and develop a positive self-esteem brings me joy.”

Carla Torres, Youth Leader, Oasis We Are Bold Program

“I enjoy working with the teens as I am able to grow alongside them and assist them in navigating resources and daily life triumphs and challenges.”

Myeshea Williams, Case Manager at Anchor Place

“I look forward to my great work ethics and compassion changing the lives of Veterans.”
Staff Awarded at AHMA

Every year, Affordable Housing Management Association (AHMA) announces the award winners for agents, property managers and related professionals who provide services or products to the affordable housing industry. These awards are bestowed upon industry professionals who have excelled in their individual fields and have shown outstanding service to their residents and communities.

In May of this year, two distinguished Century Villages staff members were nominated and awarded this very prestigious industry award at this year’s AHMA, Pacific Southwest Convention.

Cibeles Alcaraz - Property Manager of the Year for Family Housing
Sean Ransom - Resident Service Coordinator of the Year

We are extremely proud of them for this great accomplishment and for all the hard work and dedication they provide to our community. Please help us in congratulating them next time you see them.

This Place Saved My Life

Reggie stands about 6’4”. He has boyish grin that makes him look a lot younger than his 64 years. He’s a quiet guy and it’s obvious he doesn’t like to dwell on himself. He says he joined the Army in ’73 just after the Vietnam confrontation and spent some time in the National Guard. I ask him how he got started doing yoga here at The Villages at Cabrillo.

“My sister was having issues with anxiety and I was inviting her here as my guest. She went and it helped her out and then I got hooked. It helped me to lose some weight and actually begin to pursue some other things. Since my divorce, I was kinda down in the dumps. I left a pretty good job in Ohio working for Proctor and Gamble. When I came back, I couldn’t get back on my feet. I returned during the recession and there was nothing here. I was homeless, living in my sister’s patio and doing... dirtball bad.

“Now I’ve lost 29 pounds and I feel great. I’ve been involved with Hacienda of Hope and working with John Oppenheim (Mr. Yoga or the Yogavangelist) to bring Brain Fitness over to the Plaza. I also started with the Brain Fitness classes and my memory has really improved! I didn’t get it at first, all of these childish games on the computer, but then I started to notice that my comprehension and my memory were better. I’ve started to get involved with some things like getting the Veterans Tenant Council started again up there. Many of the guys tell me ‘Welcome to the burial ground.’ I tell them I didn’t come here to die. I came here because of the opportunity.

“This place has saved my life.”

To learn more about Pathways to Health or to sign up for the daily activity calendar, call (562) 299-5749.

H.O.P.E. Fest – Back to School Festival
August 22nd - Our annual back to school festival located on site at the Villages at Cabrillo is back! FREE food, games and activities. Open to all ages.

Continued from front page, #ThisIsMI

onstage. “There was something about the comradery, getting together with people, participating. It helped build your self-esteem.”

Another attendee notes, “from the time I’ve been here, I got to see people grow, including staff and residents. That’s where the mutuality comes in. I don’t know [all of their stories], but we’re all connected. I didn’t see a diagnosis, or a title. I saw spirituality and light.”

#ThisIsMI was a chance to convey connections in a way that uplifts rather than judges, whether it’s through sharing lived experiences, empathizing and learning from one another or even just enjoying the same performance. Sometimes we don’t know what can arise from the opportunities we take when we engage with others, such as a chance to feel less alone and to be heard. To make a connection. To make a difference.

Great leaders inspire hope and hold space for all to feel included in creating changes that support its people. Project Return’s Guyton Colantuouno shares on their Facebook page, “as the Executive Director of this amazing agency with the most caring, accepting and compassionate people I know, I need to step out of my comfort zone and share publicly that I live with mental illness...So, I guess my superpower is that I, like many other people that live with mental health struggles are successful, giving, contributing members of our society.”

Thank you to all partners, talent and attendees who stood in solidarity with us for mental health awareness.
**Occupational Therapy Groups**

Open to the Community  OT Office (562) 388-8080 ext. 1  /  email:ot4cvc@gmail.com

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**FREE activities near CVC**

**AT SHORELINE VILLAGE - 330 S. Pine Avenue**

**Summer Concert** (through Labor Day)
- Fridays  6–9pm
- Saturdays  2–5pm and 6–9pm
- Sundays  2–5pm

**Special July 4th Concert**  6–9pm

**FREE SWIM HOURS** at Cabrillo High School,
2001 Santa Fe Avenue
- Monday – Friday  12–2pm
- *9–9:30am Changing Spirits

**Summer Crossword**

**ACROSS**

3. School is out, it’s time for ____ Vacation.
6. Bring a ____ in case we get lost.
8. We might go ____ and sleep in a tent.
9. I love burgers cooked on the ____.
11. My dad is going to ____ the car for our road trip.

**DOWN**

1. My family packed a whole set of ____.
2. We build sandcastles on the ____.
4. I can’t wait to go ____ in the pool.
5. I love going on vacation with my ____.
7. I have to ____ my suitcase.
10. We are taking a family ____ trip.

*Answer on reverse side*

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**A Special Thanks**

to all of our Fruit Fest vendors

211 LA County
American Indian Changing Spirits
Anthem Blue Cross
California Conference For Equality and Justice
Century Villages Yoga
CityHeART
CSULB Low Vision Center
CSULB Nursing Community Health
CSULB Rec Student Service Project
Healthy Active Long Beach
Help Me Help You
Independence Service Dogs Foundation
Kinecta
Long Beach Alliance For Children with Asthma
Long Beach Public Library
PATH Ventures
Project Return Peer Support Network – Hacienda of Hope
The Children’s Clinic
The Guidance Center
U.S.VETS Long Beach
WIT Project

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**FREE activities near CVC**

Coming soon to CVC, RentCafe will be introduced as our new Resident Solution Center! Here, you will be able to:

- View your payment and billing transactions (Rent, Cable, Internet)
- Make secure online payments for all billing transactions (Rent, Cable, Internet)
- Confirm and update your information such as phone, email and car information
- Submit a maintenance work order request
- Send us your comments and feedback
- Stay informed with community news and events

Stop by the office to ensure we have your current email address and sign up for the new Resident Solution Center.
Are you looking for free summer activities? Look no further than here at the Villages at Cabrillo. Oasis, PATH, and CityHeART will all be offering free activities throughout the summer.

**OASIS SUMMER CAMP!**

This 5-week camp runs Monday – Thursday, 12 to 3pm. Camp begins Monday, July 8th and ends Thursday, August 8th. Children will enjoy fun and engaging weekly-themed activities such as Hawaiian Week, Under the Sea, and Circus Week. Campers will enjoy a nutritious lunch and special field trips. Open to children entering grades K-5 in the fall, registration is first come, first serve. Applications are now available at the Oasis Youth & Family Center located at 2291 W. Williams St. Door #4. For more information, contact Yeggi Watts at (562) 388-7601.

**PATH Explorers**

We are excited to be bringing back our 6-week summer program themed *Around the World*. As part of the program, campers will learn and discover cultures & regions around the globe through engagement in educational, physical and recreational activities. The program will run from June 24th to August 2nd and will meet from 12 to 3:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. For more information, contact Vincent Stevens at vincents@pathventures.org or visit the PATH office located at Family Commons.

**PATH Summer Teen Program**

We will be rolling out our new Summer Teen Program themed *The Game of Life*. Throughout the summer, we will be covering topics such as Budgeting, Higher Education, Time Management, Health & Wellness, Trip Planning, College visits, and Cooking. Teens will work together to enhance their skills and learn what it takes to live your best life. For more information, contact Vincent Stevens at vincents@pathventures.org or visit the PATH office located at Family Commons.

**Teen Valley Room**

Teen Valley is a safe place for teens to hang out, play video games, watch TV, or play board games. Teens must be participating in the “We Are B.O.L.D.” or “PATH” programs to register and parents must sign a use agreement. For more information, contact Izzy Matos at imatos@centuryvillages.org or Vincent Stevens at vincents@pathventures.org. Hours for Teen Valley Room are M-F 6 to 9pm; Sa/Su 1 to 9pm.

**CityHeART Summer Youth Program**

Does your little one love ART, MUSIC, & FUN?! Then they won’t want to miss CityHeART’s FREE 1-week summer youth program! Applications will be available June 1st at the CityHeART Resource Hub, 2291 Williams St, #2. The program will include five days of creativity, learning, and lots of fun. The deadline to apply is July 15th and the program will take place Monday–Friday, Aug. 12th to 16th. For kids K-5, the program will run from 9-11:30am and will include breakfast and lunch; for youth 12–18 years old, the program will be 2–5:30pm and will include lunch and dinner. This program will be offered exclusively to youth living at The Villages, and the week will end with a family art show and dinner. Questions? Call CityHeART: 562-704-9585, email love@ourcityheart.org, or visit us in the CityHeART Resource Hub for lunch on Wednesdays 11am–1pm and take a bag of fresh groceries home with you!

**Get Connected**

Don’t miss out! There are tons of activities happening all summer for everyone to enjoy: cooking classes, outings, yoga, meditation, music and much more. Would you like to receive a daily calendar? Send your e-mail address and/or mobile phone number to rcastro@centuryvillages.org or call (562) 299-5749.

**Crossword answers**

[Image of a crossword puzzle with answers filled in]

**Walking Group Around Del Puerto**

- Anchor Place

- Community Garden
  - 10 AM at Magic Garden, Willard and San Gel

- Music Appreciation w/ Revinson
  - 10 AM at Harbor of Hope

- Chat with a Chaplain, for Veterans
  - 11 AM-12 PM at WIP (Crossing 1050)

- Repetition w/ cada
  - 11 AM-12 PM at All Hands of Hope

- Let’s Break the Ice with
  - 1-2 PM at Incidents of Hope

- Family Breakfast
  - 10 AM at Family Room

- Village Java
  - 1-2 PM at Soto Hall

- Gentle Yoga
  - 9-9:35 PM