



# HARBOR HAPPENINGS

A PUBLICATION OF HARBOR REGIONAL CENTER

FALL 2021

## A MOMENTOUS FIRST YEAR FOR PATRICK RUPPE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Patrick Ruppe joined the Harbor Regional Center family in late 2019 as the Director of Adult Services. In this capacity, Patrick had the responsibility for overseeing all aspects of service coordination for HRC clients over the age of 22.

In the fall of 2020, the Board of Trustees of Harbor Regional Center announced the appointment of Patrick Ruppe to the position of Executive Director, following the retirement of Patricia Del Monico who had served in this capacity with distinction for more than 40 years.



Prior to coming to Harbor, Patrick served the community of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in Orange County for over 22 years. Throughout his career, Patrick has worked in a variety of ways to be of service to people with intellectual and other developmental



*Executive Director Patrick Ruppe helps with the distribution of PPE.*

disabilities. He began his career working directly with school-aged children as an interventionist with an applied behavior analysis (ABA) service provider. Patrick then joined the Regional Center of Orange County where he served in many roles including service coordinator, middle and senior management, and finally as Associate Executive Director.

In the early months of 2020, while serving as Director of Adult Services, Patrick was a key member of HRC's COVID response team, as his staff checked in on clients, families, and their service providers. Patrick worked together with our full leadership team to prevent exposure and reduce spread of the

corona virus among our clients and their caregivers, as well as our staff, and to support them during this crisis. For clients and families in need, they worked with the clients and families to identify alternative services and supports during the stay-at-home order, and to ease the adjustment to new ways of participation. Patrick was directly involved in the distribution of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and gift cards to purchase basic food and supplies, for those in need.

Throughout the pandemic, Patrick observed, "I am proud of how our staff have managed to balance professional and personal challenges, while maintaining the end goal of always serving our community."

Patrick has taken over the duties of Executive Director during a very unique and eventful year, for Harbor Regional Center and the world around us. He noted as he looked back on the past year, "Our staff have worked diligently to adapt to new ways of using technology in providing services, to develop and strengthen relationships with our underserved communities, and to provide opportunities for our clients, families, service providers and staff to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine here at HRC, in a very friendly and supportive environment."

"I am looking forward to meeting the challenges of the policy changes that come with our new budget year, and the promising opportunities for development and enhancement to services, such as expansion of provisional service eligibility to three- and four-year-olds with developmental delays, improving services for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, expanding access to social recreational services, and more. This is an exciting time!"

We are excited and honored to have Patrick Ruppe as our Executive Director, leading Harbor Regional Center in continued service to the HRC community.

## WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS A Year in Review



# CHROMEBOOKS

It has been over one year since our world changed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. With all of the difficult times that we have all gone through, there have also been many friends along the way who have provided a silver lining for our clients, when food was scarce and days were filled with anxiety over so many uncertainties. So many HRC families, staff, and community members were eager to help!

Below are some of the highlights of how our friends helped us through those days and continue helping today.

Our Harbor Regional Center families are some of the most thoughtful and generous people when it comes to helping other families! Shortly after the Safer At Home restrictions became a reality, some special HRC families called and asked what they could do to help needy HRC families as quickly as possible. Realizing that many of our clients and their families would be in need of food and basic household items during this difficult time, they decided to purchase gift cards from Target and Ralphs and had them shipped directly to HRC for immediate distribution.

Inspired by these two families, HRC created the Food For Clients Campaign which continued throughout 2020 and 2021.

This campaign became the main focus during the 2020 holiday season, as a way that we could provide support to the many families in serious need. By the end of 2020, HRC families, providers, staff and many wonderful friends in our community raised approximately \$60,000 in donations.

Throughout the year, HRC hosted several drive-thru giveaways of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Diapers! In between these drive-thru events, HRC staff from all departments coordinated to identify clients and families in need, assemble PPE and other supplies, and schedule delivery by service coordinators or our transportation



# TRICK OR TREAT

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*With A Lot Of Help From Our Friends  
(continued from page 2)*

providers. We were also honored to be able to hold a very busy vaccination clinic at our office in Torrance along with Anchor/Oxford HealthCare – who helped HRC to facilitate almost 5000 vaccinations for our clients/families and community.

In early July, a very special HRC veteran nurse and her husband solicited food and monetary donations from their community to purchase food for our clients. They named their campaign, “LET’S CELEBRATE TGIF: Thank Goodness, It’s Food!” With boxes donated by Smart & Final, together they collected enough donations to fill over 20 boxes of food, which were delivered to our families!

Every August, the South Bay Sunrise Rotary Club has provided some type of support for our clients in preparation of the new school year. In 2020, with students suddenly required to access online learning, we found that many of our clients did not have access to a device other than a cell phone or a shared device with one or more siblings. The Rotary wanted to help, and with a grant as well as private donations, purchased 36 Chromebooks for our school-aged clients in need! One private donor, an HRC family whose child has an autism spectrum disorder, provided over \$7,000 to purchase 20 Chromebooks for needy clients on the autism spectrum. At the Halloween time drive-thru distribution event at Halloween time at HRC, volunteers, clients and families came in costume and enjoyed the Halloween decorations and goodie bags that added to the fun event!

The Speech and Language Pathologists did not let the pandemic keep them from hosting their annual Halloween Costume/Trick or Treat event with their Early Childhood clients! This year the event was a drive-thru with several costumed staff handing out treats to the adorable little ones.

Just before Thanksgiving, the Carson/Gardena/Dominguez Rotary Club invited us to again be the recipients of 20 Thanksgiving boxes through their



**MERRY BEARY**

*(continued on page 4)*

*With A Lot Of Help From Our Friends  
(continued from page 3)*



# BACKPACK/SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Operation Gobble program. We are always very grateful for this donation as it includes everything needed for the family to prepare a hearty Thanksgiving dinner. We also were invited to participate in Senator Bradford's Turkey Giveaway and we received 12 frozen turkeys! This was the first time that HRC had been included in this Giveaway and we hope that the offer will be extended to us for years to come!

The Early Childhood Department held a very successful toy donation drive and drive-thru Toy Giveaway in early December. Then in July of 2021, Early Childhood held an Early Start Graduation Ceremony, which included donations of Beanie Baby Kits for each graduate!

It was early December, and the Gardena Elks Club was determined to host their 6th Annual Merry Beary Christmas benefitting young HRC children in need, even though they did not receive their usual grant for the event, and it would be held as a drive-thru. The members of the Gardena Elks themselves, including one whose adult sister is served by HRC, donated 125 custom-selected Build-A-Bears for our clients! Santa Claus was there to wave to the kids, and volunteer elves included Gardena Elks, HRC Early Childhood staff, HRC's Kerry Ryerson, her son Sean, and two other adult friends served by HRC handed out jumbo sidewalk chalk and candy canes to all that participated in the drive-thru!

On December 13, Rock For Tots, a virtual fundraising concert, was held coordinated by an HRC parent and musician who was excited to support fellow HRC families in need! Throughout the concert, listeners were encouraged to donate to one of two highlighted charities, including HRC. The generous donation to HRC from this concert was over \$3,000.

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*With A Lot Of Help From Our Friends  
(continued from page 4)*

In addition to the Food for Clients campaign during the 2020 Holiday season, we did provide a small-scale version of the popular Adopt-A-Family program. Our loyal return sponsors, as well as some new ones, asked to be able to adopt one or more needy HRC families, preferred to have a more personal connection by adopting one or more families.

*For anyone wanting to help our neediest clients during the 2021 holiday season, we encourage you to donate to the Food For Clients/ Holidays Are For Sharing campaign.*

In the late summer of 2021 we held a Backpack and School Supplies giveaway, along with our friends from Aveanna Health Care, 24Hr Homecare, and Jack Nadel International. These wonderful organizations provided backpacks, school supplies, new shoes, and other fun items for 200 of our clients and their siblings. We were pleased to also share these contributions with the Carolyn Kordich, Southeast, and Long Beach Family Resource Centers, to share with families throughout our service area.

With continued concern about community spread due to the newest COVID-19 variant, all of us at Harbor Regional Center remain even more dedicated to supporting our clients and families. Our community has been extremely generous and has truly shown their concern throughout this very difficult time. Many, many heartfelt thanks to all of our friends in the community that donated so generously in every imaginable way to our clients and their families.



*HRC Partnered with Anchor/Oxford Healthcare, Ability First, and the City of Long Beach to assist our clients and families to obtain vaccinations in a friendly and supportive environment.*

# VACCINATIONS

## PASSING THE TORCH

This year, Harbor Regional Center has celebrated the retirement of several long-time staff who helped to shape the vision of HRC since its very early days, and who leave a valuable legacy for the future.

### **Patricia Del Monico *Executive Director***

There is no way we can fully capture in words how much Pat Del Monico has contributed to the creation and development, not just for Harbor Regional Center, but also for the Regional Center system in California. In the late sixties and early 70s, she worked with California pioneers in developmental services... like Dr. Richard Koch, the founding director of the USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental



*Regional Center Pioneers  
Pat Del Monico (left) and  
Dennis Amundson (right)*

Disabilities, and Dennis Amundson, who helped to write the Lanterman Act.

Pat was one of Harbor Regional Center's first few employees when in 1973, HRC opened its doors on the grounds of Harbor General Hospital. Five years later, she became our Executive Director. Pat guided HRC and was a leader in developmental services statewide, and together we evolved through the decades to support people with developmental disabilities become increasingly included, accomplished and valued members of our community. She was a champion in the development of ground-breaking programs in HRC's area to promote early childhood development, employment, college support, affordable housing and so much more.

Pat retired in October 2020, but remains a strong partner in the continuing development of quality services for our community.

### **Sri Moedjono, M.D. *Physician***

Dr. Sri Moedjono recently celebrated her 42nd anniversary as a Harbor Regional Center Physician. We knew that we were extremely fortunate when she joined our staff, to have not only a talented physician but also an expert geneticist on staff. Over the years, she has touched the lives of so very many of our clients and her clinical expertise has been invaluable.



Dr. Moedjono's contributions have gone beyond her duties as a Regional Center Physician. She has brought to HRC a close connection with the greater medical community as well as universities and the expertise of their medical, research, and academic staff. She served as an expert consultant to managed care organizations and primary care physicians who treat our clients, and helped to train medical residents who will be the physicians of the future.

Dr. Moedjono has been an icon at Harbor Regional Center. Countless HRC families' lives have been improved by her contributions, and as she retired in August of this year, we feel very privileged to honor her long and impressive career.

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### **Nancy Spiegel, Director of Information and Development**

In 1980, Nancy Spiegel joined the staff of Harbor Regional Center as a Service Coordinator, in what was then the Bellflower office. She had worked while



in college as a residential caregiver for children and teens with autism, and after graduating provided vocational assessments for adults. Over the years at

HRC, she has also served as Client Services Manager, Public Information Specialist, Director of Community Services, and as Director of Information and Development.

In her most recent role, Nancy helped to shape the public voice of HRC, overseeing the development of an extensive library of newsletters, booklets, videos, and managing our website, social media, and legislative relations. Through our electronic newsletter, Nancy and her staff strive to get vital and timely information out to our families and community. Nancy has overseen many special events for staff development, community outreach, and family fun. Nancy reflects that while keeping up with her varied responsibilities at HRC has been quite challenging at times, it has also afforded her the opportunity to contribute to our center and our community.

“I am very grateful to have had this opportunity to be a part of this community, carry out Harbor’s mission, to see the evolution of our services and our clients’ accomplishments over time, and with a dedicated team of colleagues here at HRC, do my very best to make a difference.”

Nancy will retire in January of 2022, but like so many of our former staff, she hopes to continue to contribute to the work of Harbor Regional Center.

### **Vel Roman, Intake Service Coordinator**

Vel Roman came to HRC on June 1, 1980 as a Community Assistant in Intake. Within a short time she was promoted, first to serve as a Service Coordinator with medically fragile children in the Harbor Area, and then as an Intake Coordinator. Over the years, Vel was very often one of the first faces that families got to know at HRC, offering them her knowledge, kindness, empathy and wisdom as she helped them to navigate an unfamiliar world. As part of the Prevention Program for children at risk of developmental delays, Vel coordinated assessments and provided information, support,

compassion and reassurance for families of infants and toddlers with developmental delays. As an Intake Coordinator, she welcomed our newest families with



heart, soul, and excellence for over 40 years. “It has been my greatest honor to be their companion on their journey, through their struggles and successes, knowing that HRC is in their corner offering support, information and choices. Relationship matters and it has been my quest to collaborate with families not as a service coordinator, intake coordinator, or prevention counselor, but as one human being to another. I may have some experience and expertise to offer, but I also readily appreciate and validate the gifts their family member brings to this world and I recognize and validate the strengths that each family brings to their situation.”

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*Passing the Torch (continued from pg. 7)*

**Pat Zalenski, R.N. Nurse**

Before joining our staff in 1983, Pat Zalenski had been actively involved with HRC in many ways. We first came to know Pat and her husband as HRC parents and volunteers. The two youngest of their eight children had medically complex special needs. Pat Hevessey, HRC nurse and Early Childhood Service Coordinator, visited the Zalenski home and provided assessments for the children. She and Executive Director Pat Del Monico encouraged Pat and her husband to become involved in a support group for parents of other children with complex medical needs. Sadly, one of their children passed away at age 7 and the other at age 8.



*Friends and co-workers Marcey Brabender (left) and Pat Zalenski (right)*

Later, the Zalenskis visited with a little boy named Christopher, who was in the hospital with no family, and decided to become licensed to care for medically fragile children in their home. They provided Chrissy with a loving home for his remaining time, before he passed away.

Pat remembers when HRC first formed a new Sibling Support group. “It was so meaningful that our children were able to understand the dynamics of having siblings with a disability so much more, after attending the meetings.” One of her children is now a nurse, one is the City of Torrance Program Coordinator for adaptive recreation and social programs, and one is currently the Vice Principal at Willenberg Career and Transition Center in San Pedro. Caring for others is a family tradition.

Her dedication to children and adults with specialized health care needs growing ever stronger, Pat served as a service provider for five years. In this capacity, she supported HRC families and service providers to care for individuals with special health care needs. When she joined our staff in the Department of Community Services, she expanded this consultation role even further, assisting service coordinators, providing technical assistance to licensed care homes, and working with community health care providers in identifying and meeting the specialized health care needs of the people we serve.

“The highlight of my many years as a nurse was the last 20+ spent at HRC as a nurse vendor and consultant. The opportunity to work with our exceptional staff, clients, families and service providers was simply an honor and a privilege.”



## **BUDGET UPDATE 2021-22**

### **The Biggest Investment Our System Has Seen In Many Years!**

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Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA)

This June, legislative leaders, members of the Senate and Assembly, and Governor Newsom agreed to a Budget that gives our system tremendous reason for hope.

As Rita Walker, Board President for the Association of Regional Center Agencies put it, “The new funds in this budget set the stage for enhancing the ability of regional centers and service coordinators to serve clients and address their individual and unique needs.”

The bottom line? A lot of money in the coming years to support a more modern, responsive system that can better meet individual and family needs.

Key points in the Budget Agreement are:

- A five-year phase-in of rate reform for service providers
- A total of nearly \$90 million a year for new regional center service coordinators, starting July 2022
- Modernized technology to both help families and people served by regional centers have more control over their data and support critical system infrastructure
- Creation of a training and certification program for direct support professionals, as well as extra funds for cultural competency and language access
- Restoration of social recreation and camp! (as well as educational services and non-medical therapies)
- A performance incentive pilot program for regional centers
- Additional funds for individuals seeking employment
- Expanded regional center service eligibility for certain 3- and 4-year-old children
- New support for reaching diverse communities
- Ending the Uniform Holiday Furlough Schedule
- Getting rid of the sunset on the 8% rate increase for service providers

ARCA’s Executive Director, Amy Westling, said it best:

“We are deeply grateful for the long-term commitment the Legislature and Governor have made to our community, and their collaborative work to secure this funding. As these funds come into our system, they will help ensure the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families, are front and center.”

# FAMILY *matters*

## EARLY START TRANSITION CEREMONY

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*Maria T. Rivas, MSW, Client Services Manager*

On July 23rd 2021, the Early Childhood Services Department at HRC hosted their third annual **Early Start Transition Ceremony** at the Torrance office. The transition ceremony was a celebration for children graduating from Early Start services at age 3.

During the event, families had an opportunity to hear from two speakers from the Long Beach Unified School District and the Head Start program regarding the successful transition to school-based services and the benefits of preschool.

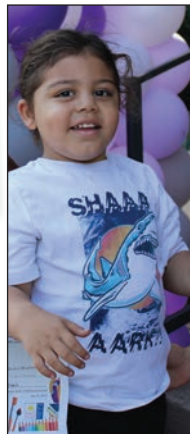
With their parent's assistance, children had an opportunity to walk across a stage for the first time to receive their certificate of completion from Early Start.

Families were able to visit the re-opening of the Family Resource Center, and stop by the various community resource tables. We were extremely grateful to be able to have this transition ceremony in person again, outdoors and with safety precautions in place, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Seeing the joy on the faces of our clients, families, community partners, and HRC staff members was priceless!



*(top) Betsy is a very happy Graduate!*

*(below) Looking good in his Graduation Cap with Certificate in hand!*



*Congratulations to all of our Early Start Graduates!*

# Client *focus*

## CREATING THE LONG BEACH CITY HERO SQUAD

*By Jen Coats, HRC Parent*

My son Nolan was diagnosed with autism at age two. I was a full-time mom for over seven years and his advocate and voice. My main goal was making sure he was getting the right services he needed to thrive and succeed.

When he turned four, it was time for him to go into kindergarten. His teachers at Buffum (Pre-K school for kids with special needs), recommended Cubberley for a Special Day Class (SDC). Instead of submitting a request for school of choice, we decided to sell our first home in Alamitos Beach and move to the East Side of Long Beach. This move was a major transition for him being in a new school with new teachers, and new friends. It was all too overwhelming for him that he started having severe anxiety and blackouts. Kindergarten was rough, adjusting to a new schedule and friends but his SDC teacher, pushed him and got him where he needed to be in order to be successful and independent, which led to him being full time mainstreamed during the 2nd quarter of first grade.

During his first grade year, I started sharing autism stories on Cubberley's Facebook page. A mom saw my post and reached out to me. She was a member of the Foundation team at Cubberley and encouraged me to start an autism awareness group. The Foundation team gave us a booth at their annual fall carnival so we can raise money for our group. Then they became our fiscal agent and organization to hold autism awareness week during April, which was encouraged and supported by our Principal, Cathleen Imbroane, the Student Council, Foundation, and PTA.



*LBC Hero Squad Founders Jen and Scotty Coats with their children.*

We started the LBC Hero Squad in 2016. In 2017 our first autism awareness week became an inaugural event which led to three autism awareness weeks. In October of 2018, Councilwoman Stacy Mungo and Mayor Robert Garcia invited us to City Hall to speak, where we received a proclamation for our autism efforts. Each year we would come up with a theme, motto, new tee shirt design, decorate the school in blue with mindful banners on campus, and creative ways to promote our small but mighty group. We were also invited to Stacy Mungo's Annual Giving Gala raising money for our squad among other nonprofits. We would provide literature about autism, books, videos, guest speakers, swag, and host activities about autism, mental health, and being kind to over 1,000 students, K-8 and 100 faculty and staff members. Every classroom would "light it up" blue while playing a song we chose to go with the theme. This would kick off our first day of autism awareness week. Also on the agenda were yoga day, free ice cream from Ice Cream

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*Creating the Long Beach City Hero Squad  
(continued from page 11)*

Ian, a post-it activity where kids would write what they've learned about autism week and post it in the schools office...just to name a few.

Our theme this year was, "Hey! What's Your Story?" (as everyone has a story to tell and tied into the school district's theme). Our motto and new Tee shirt design was, "Hey! You're Rad", designed by our friend Tyke Witness from AWR, NASA. Unfortunately, we had to postpone our autism awareness week in 2020 due to school closure caused by COVID-19. Because of our movement, we have been invited to speak at the LBUSD's CAC and Harbor Regional Center. A few schools in our district have started their own autism/acceptance week with the help and inspiration from our squad. Our goal as a squad is to become a community organization where we can help other schools start their own autism/acceptance week, create events and activities, and be a guide/resource for families.

My husband, Scotty Coats and I are the founders of the LBC Hero Squad. I specialize in merchandise marketing in apparel. I used to work for major design companies for over 12 years before becoming a full-time mom. I recently went back to work three years ago and got laid off due to COVID-19. I specialize in marketing and the creative side of the Hero Squad, meeting people in the community that we can help. We started off with no income and had to raise money in order to start our group/nonprofit.

When we held our first Autism Awareness Week, I relied on our friends and school to use their computers to print and make copies of the agenda and literature. We were a group of 3 that is now a group of 18. We are a family. Because my son is on the autism spectrum, he was perceived as different due to his behaviors and speech, and therefore being bullied. He had a split IEP so he was in a Special Day Class and mainstream classes. He became mainstreamed in first grade. One of the main reasons why we started the LBC Hero Squad, was to educate students and

staff about our kiddos with special abilities. Most importantly, to be kind to others by celebrating our differences. Again, we are a small team so every little bit of money helps us continue to spread autism awareness and acceptance. We volunteer our time and passion into this because every parent that is on our team has a child(ren) on the spectrum. We are constantly advocating for them so they can be accepted and be in an inclusive environment.

We all wear many hats and all share great ideas as a team. I am most proud of our team and all the hard work and heart they put into our squad every year, four months prior to autism week, two weeks prior, one week prior, and during as it is a lot of work, staging, organizing, and planning to make it successful. The most rewarding is to see the faculty, staff members, and kids come together spreading kindness. You can literally feel the positive energy and hope during that week. And when the kids talk to their parents about what they learned about autism, we know we have done our job, right.

I believe the LBC Hero Squad is special because we are all supportive and passionate parents making a difference not only for our child but for all kiddos with special abilities. We are the first school in the Long Beach Unified School District to implement a full week of literature, resources, and activities about autism in a school setting. We also get full support from our Principal, Foundation, PTA, Student Council, Teachers and Staff. Without our school's support, the CAC, and our community, we couldn't continue raising awareness and acceptance about our kiddos with special abilities. We have friends at Emerson Elementary that are affiliated with the squad and that we help out and support with their acceptance week. We are a squad that celebrates differences and thinks everyone can be a hero.

#lbcherosquad  
#lbcherosquadcelebratesdifferences  
#hibekind #heyyourerad  
#dontgetweirdudeitsjustautism

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## MEET THE MAGNIFICENT AUTHOR – DR. STACEY COHEN-MAITRE

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*By Maria Elena Walsh, M.A.  
Manager, HRC Resource and  
Technology Center*

Over the years, many of our clients, families and staff have become familiar with Dr. Stacey Cohen-Maitre. Dr. Cohen-Maitre has been providing psychological evaluations for our Early Childhood clients for years. She is known for her professionalism, kindness and ability to assess some of our youngest clients, which can provide its own special challenges! Many parents would express their gratitude to Dr. Cohen-Maitre for the way she was able to comfort both them and their child during the unfamiliar situation of having their child assessed. We have been very lucky to count Dr. Cohen-Maitre as part of the HRC family! We are now excited to promote a new endeavor of Dr. Cohen-Maitre's, as she has written a book about a journey that she and her son took up the California coast.

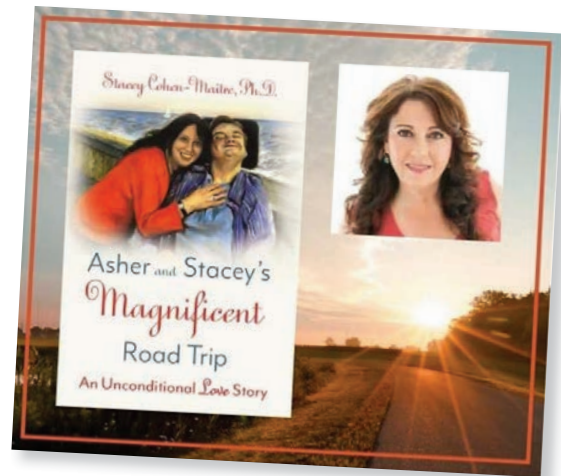
Dr. Cohen-Maitre did not set out to write a book about the incredible road trip she took with her son with a disability along the Pacific Coast of Southern California. But after looking through her journal, she realized there were many incredible anecdotes to share and lessons to pass on to other families facing similar challenges. And so, she has given us "*Asher and Stacey's Magnificent Road Trip: An Unconditional Love Story*", a heartwarming book about the bond between mother and son. This is a story about a mother and son on a road trip along the Pacific Coast of Southern California. Asher is a nineteen-year-old who is diagnosed with severe cerebral palsy, rendering him nonverbal, visually impaired, and using a wheelchair. Stacey is his devoted mother and a neuropsychologist who specializes in the assessment of

children with neurodevelopmental disabilities. Along the way, Asher and Stacey experience some unique challenges encompassing

physical, mental and spiritual realms, some of which are absolutely ridiculous and almost too hard to believe and some that are truly heart-wrenching. Asher and Stacey also

cross paths with a variety of characters, some of whom are completely clueless about how to be around someone with disabilities and others who are friendly, kind and share a piece of their bright spirit. Since Stacey is all alone with her son, who is twice her size, just getting Asher onto a hotel bed or showering him without the help of her husband turns into a comedy of errors in an "I Love Lucy" kind of way. Somehow, they each survive this quirky road trip in one piece but their love and understanding for each other evolves to the deepest level that a mother and son could ever aspire to. We strongly encourage you to pick this book up and enjoy all of the experiences it presents!

Along with having this book in the Resource Center, we hosted an evening with Dr. Cohen-Maitre where she read excerpts from her book read and answered questions. All in attendance found the event and the book to be an inspiration.



## CONGRATULATIONS LAURIE ZALESKI, HRC PARENT, AND PUBLISHED AUTHOR!



*Laurie stopped by HRC to donate several copies of her book.*

### *A Young Person's Field Guide to Finding Lost Shipwrecks*

Besides being a marine geologist and published author, Laurie Zaleski is also the parent of an adult son with a developmental disability who is served by HRC, and a volunteer on our Community Relations and Board Planning committees.

"I wrote *A Young Person's Field Guide to Finding Lost Shipwrecks* because of my love of science and the essential need for all children, especially girls, to find a connection to themselves through math and science. As a scientist, a mom and a grandmother I am a firm believer in keeping children engaged in math and science. This book is my small part of that mission."

Thank you Laurie for donating copies of your book for young adult clients and the HRC Resource and Assistive Technology Center!

## WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH SUPPORT GROUPS AT HRC, AND PRESENTING THE BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP!

One of the main purposes of a support group is to widen your circle of support and resources. Often, when we are caring for loved ones who have special needs we find ourselves losing touch with friends and some of our resources in the community due to lack of free time and energy. A support group offers you the chance to connect with others who can understand your life path. You may also find that sharing your common experiences with others helps you gain insight and new ideas regarding some of the challenges you face.

With the ongoing pandemic, support groups have become more popular and attended than ever! The first thing to know is that all of our support groups are currently offered on Zoom. You can stay in the comfort of your own home and still receive the same resources and support that you would if you were attending an in-person group. We have also found the stresses of daily life have become more difficult to deal with due to being at home, changes in the schools and some still being online, and just generally having our whole way of life turned upside down!

A good way to vent and relieve some of that stress is to connect with others through a support group. We are currently offering Parenting Connections, the Chinese Family Support Group, Club 21 South Bay's Monday Night Meeting (for families of children with Down syndrome), the Korean Family Support Group, Together, Not Alone (a support group for Korean Families who are newer to the regional center system) and the Black/African American Family Support Group.

The Black/African American Family Support Group is the newest support group to HRC and we are very excited to offer it! Our intention is to create an educational setting that offers support and community building to our African American families. This group offers the opportunity to hear speakers present on various topics that are of interest to our HRC families. For example, you might have someone speak about information regarding behavior services, what to expect as a family/client who is part of a regional center and what to expect when you attend an IEP. But this group offers more than just education, it offers the opportunity to meet and share resources with other families who may share some of your experiences. The hope is that those who attend will be able to create relationships that are long lasting and supportive. We also have a group of facilitators who were trained in support group facilitation and also participated in the creation of the group. We are happy to have the Black/African American Family Support Group run by a committed group of HRC staff who volunteer to have this opportunity.

We at Harbor Regional Center would like to extend an open invitation to you to take part in our Parent/Caregiver support groups. Harbor Regional Center recognizes that by supporting the families of our clients we are improving the quality of life for everyone involved. I sincerely hope that you will consider being a part of this program; it would be a privilege to have you participate in this resource. Please contact Maria Elena Walsh at [mariaelena.walsh@harborrc.org](mailto:mariaelena.walsh@harborrc.org) for more info.

## UN PRIMER AÑO TRASCENDENTAL PARA PATRICK RUPPE, DIRECTOR EJECUTIVO

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Patrick Ruppe se unió a la familia del Harbor Regional Center a finales de 2019 como director de Servicios para Adultos (Adult Services). En este puesto, Patrick tenía la responsabilidad de supervisar todos los aspectos de la coordinación de servicios para los clientes del HRC mayores de 22 años.

En otoño de 2020, el consejo de administración del Harbor Regional Center anunció el nombramiento de Patrick Ruppe para el cargo de director ejecutivo, tras la jubilación de Patricia del Monico, quien había desempeñado este cargo con distinción durante más de 40 años.

Antes de llegar al Harbor, Patrick sirvió a la comunidad de personas con discapacidad intelectual y otras discapacidades del desarrollo en el condado de Orange durante más de 22 años. A lo largo de su carrera, Patrick ha trabajado de diversas maneras para estar al servicio de las personas con discapacidad intelectual y otras discapacidades del desarrollo. Él comenzó su carrera trabajando directamente con niños en edad escolar como intervencionista con un proveedor de servicios de análisis aplicado del comportamiento (ABA). Posteriormente, Patrick se incorporó al centro regional del condado de Orange, donde desempeñó varias funciones, entre ellas, la de coordinador de servicios, la de dirección intermedia y superior y, por último, la de director ejecutivo adjunto.

En los primeros meses de 2020, mientras se desempeñaba como director de Servicios para Adultos, Patrick fue un miembro clave del equipo de respuesta ante el COVID del HRC, ya que su personal estuvo al pendiente de los clientes, las familias y sus proveedores de servicios. Patrick trabajó junto con todo nuestro equipo de liderazgo para prevenir la exposición y reducir la propagación del coronavirus entre nuestros clientes y sus cuidadores, así como nuestro personal, y para apoyarlos durante esta crisis. En el caso de los clientes y las familias que lo necesitaban, trabajaron con ellos para identificar servicios y apoyos alternativos durante la

orden de quedarse en casa, y para facilitar la adaptación a las nuevas formas de participación. Patrick participó directamente en la distribución de equipos de protección personal (PPE) y de tarjetas de regalo para comprar alimentos y suministros básicos para los necesitados.

En el transcurso de la pandemia, Patrick señaló: “Estoy orgulloso de cómo nuestro personal ha conseguido equilibrar los retos profesionales y personales, mientras mantiene el objetivo final de servir siempre a nuestra comunidad”.

Patrick ha asumido las funciones de director ejecutivo durante un año muy singular y lleno de acontecimientos, tanto para el Harbor Regional Center como para el mundo que nos rodea. Al recordar el año pasado, él señaló: “Nuestro personal ha trabajado con diligencia para adaptarse a las nuevas formas de utilizar la tecnología en la prestación de servicios, para desarrollar y fortalecer las relaciones con nuestras comunidades desatendidas y para ofrecer oportunidades a nuestros clientes, familias, proveedores de servicios y personal para obtener la vacuna contra el COVID-19 aquí en el HRC, en un entorno muy agradable y de apoyo”.

“Ansío enfrentarme a los retos de los cambios políticos que vienen con nuestro nuevo año presupuestario y a las prometedoras oportunidades de desarrollo y mejora de los servicios, como la ampliación de la elegibilidad de los servicios provisionales a los niños de tres y cuatro años con retrasos en el desarrollo, la mejora de los servicios para las personas sordas y con dificultades auditivas, la ampliación del acceso a los servicios de ocio social, y mucho más.

¡Este es un momento emocionante!”.

Estamos emocionados y honrados de tener a Patrick Ruppe como nuestro director ejecutivo para liderar el Harbor Regional Center en el servicio continuo a la comunidad del HRC.

## ES MOMENTO DE PASAR LA ESTAFETA

Este año, el Harbor Regional Center ha celebrado la jubilación de varios miembros del personal que han contribuido a dar forma a la visión del HRC desde sus primeros días y que dejan un valioso legado para el futuro.

### **Patricia del Monico, Directora ejecutiva**

No hay forma de expresar con palabras lo mucho que Pat del Monico ha contribuido a la creación y el desarrollo, no solo del Harbor Regional Center, sino también del sistema de centros regionales de California. A finales de los años sesenta y principios de los setenta, ella trabajó con los pioneros de California en prestar servicios del desarrollo..., como el Dr. Richard Koch, director fundador del Centro Universitario de Excelencia en Discapacidades del Desarrollo de la USC (USC University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities), y Dennis Amundson, que ayudó a redactar la Ley Lanterman (Lanterman Act).

Pat fue una de las primeras empleadas del Harbor Regional Center cuando, en 1973, el HRC abrió sus puertas en los terrenos del Harbor General Hospital. Cinco años después, ella se convirtió en nuestra directora ejecutiva. Pat guio al HRC y fue líder en la prestación de servicios del desarrollo en todo el estado, y juntos evolucionamos a lo largo de las décadas para apoyar a las personas con discapacidades de desarrollo a convertirse en miembros cada vez más incluidos, realizados y valorados de nuestra comunidad. Ella pugnó por el desarrollo de programas innovadores en el área del HRC para promover el desarrollo de la primera infancia, el empleo, el apoyo a la universidad, la vivienda asequible y mucho más.

Pat se jubiló en OCT/2020, pero sigue siendo un socio fuerte en el desarrollo continuo de servicios de calidad para nuestra comunidad.

### **Sri Moedjono, M.D., Médica**

La Dra. Sri Moedjono ha celebrado recientemente su 42 aniversario como médica del Harbor Regional Center. Sabíamos que éramos muy afortunados cuando se unió a nuestro personal, al contar no solo con una médica talentosa, sino también con una experta en genética. A lo largo de los años, ella ha influido en la vida de muchos de nuestros clientes y su pericia en el área médica ha sido inestimable.

Las contribuciones de la Dra. Moedjono han ido más allá de sus funciones como médica del Centro Regional. Ella ha aportado al HRC una estrecha relación con la comunidad médica en general, así como con las universidades y la experiencia de su personal médico, investigador y académico. Ella fue asesora experta de las organizaciones de administración de servicios y de los médicos de cuidado primario que tratan a nuestros clientes, y ayudó a formar a los médicos residentes que serán los médicos del futuro.

La Dr. Moedjono ha sido un ícono en el Harbor Regional Center. Las vidas de innumerables familias del HRC han mejorado gracias a sus contribuciones, y como se jubiló en agosto de este año, nos sentimos muy privilegiados de honrar su larga e impresionante carrera.

### **Nancy Spiegel, Directora de Información y Desarrollo**

En 1980, Nancy Spiegel se incorporó a la plantilla del Harbor Regional Center como coordinadora de servicios, en lo que entonces era la oficina de Bellflower. Mientras estaba en la universidad, ella había trabajado como cuidadora residencial de niños y adolescentes con autismo y, después de graduarse, proporcionó evaluaciones vocacionales para adultos. A lo largo de los años en el HRC, ella también ha desempeñado los cargos de directora de Servicios al Cliente, especialista en Información Pública, directora de Servicios Comunitarios y directora de Información y Desarrollo.

En su función más reciente, Nancy ayudó a dar forma a la voz pública del HRC, mediante la supervisión del desarrollo de una amplia biblioteca de boletines, folletos y videos, y la gestión de nuestro sitio web, las redes sociales y las relaciones legislativas. A través de nuestro boletín electrónico, Nancy y su personal se esfuerzan por hacer llegar información vital y oportuna a nuestras familias y a la comunidad. Nancy ha supervisado muchos eventos especiales para el desarrollo del personal, la extensión comunitaria y la diversión de la familia. Nancy reflexiona que, aunque mantenerse al día con sus variadas responsabilidades en el HRC a veces ha sido bastante difícil, también le ha dado la oportunidad de contribuir a nuestro centro y a nuestra comunidad.

“Estoy muy agradecida por haber tenido esta oportunidad de formar parte de esta comunidad, llevar a cabo la misión del Harbor, ver la evolución de nuestros servicios y los logros de nuestros clientes a lo largo del tiempo y, con un equipo de colegas dedicados aquí en el HRC, hacer lo mejor posible para marcar la diferencia.”

Nancy se jubilará en ENE/2022, pero, como muchos de nuestros antiguos empleados, espera seguir contribuyendo a la labor del Harbor Regional Center.

### **Vel Roman, Coordinadora de servicios de admisión**

Vel Roman llegó al HRC el 01/JUN/1980 como asistente comunitaria en la admisión. En poco tiempo, ella fue promovida, primero para servir como coordinadora de servicios con niños delicados de salud en el área de Harbor, y luego como coordinadora de admisión. A lo largo de los años, Vel fue muy a menudo una de las primeras

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*Es momento de pasar la estafeta (continúa de la página 16)*

caras que las familias conocieron en el HRC, y les compartía sus conocimientos, su amabilidad, su empatía y su sabiduría mientras les ayudaba a desenvolverse en un mundo desconocido. Como parte del programa de prevención para niños con riesgo de retraso en el desarrollo, Vel coordinó las evaluaciones y proporcionó información, apoyo, compasión y tranquilidad a las familias de bebés y niños pequeños con retraso en el desarrollo. Como coordinadora de admisiones, ella recibió a nuestras nuevas familias con el corazón, el alma y la excelencia durante más de 40 años.

“Ha sido un gran honor para mí ser su compañera de viaje, a través de sus luchas y éxitos, sabiendo que el HRC está en su esquina ofreciendo apoyo, información y opciones. Las relaciones son importantes y mi objetivo ha sido colaborar con las familias no como coordinadora de servicios, coordinadora de admisiones o consejera de prevención, sino como un ser humano con otro. Puede que tenga algo de experiencia y conocimientos que ofrecer, pero también aprecio y valido de buen grado los dones que su familiar aporta a este mundo y reconozco y valido los puntos fuertes que cada familia aporta a su situación.”

**Pat Zalenski, R.N., Enfermera**

Antes de unirse a nuestro personal en 1983, Pat Zalenski había participado activamente en el HRC de muchas maneras. Conocimos a Pat y a su esposo como padres y voluntarios del HRC. Los dos más pequeños de sus ocho hijos tenían necesidades especiales médicamente complejas. Pat Hevessey, enfermera del HRC y coordinadora de servicios para la primera infancia, visitó el hogar de los Zalenski y realizó evaluaciones de los niños. Ella y la directora ejecutiva Pat del Monico animaron a Pat y a su esposo a participar en un grupo de apoyo para padres de otros niños con necesidades médicas complejas. Lamentablemente, uno de sus hijos falleció a los 7 años y el otro, a los 8.

Más tarde, los Zalenski visitaron a un niño llamado Christopher, quien estaba en el hospital sin familia, y decidieron obtener la licencia para cuidar de niños delicados de salud en su casa. Ellos proporcionaron a Chrissy un hogar cariñoso durante el tiempo que le quedaba, antes de que falleciera.

Pat recuerda cuando el HRC formó por primera vez un nuevo grupo de apoyo a los hermanos. “Fue muy significativo que nuestros hijos fueran capaces de entender mucho más la dinámica de tener hermanos con una discapacidad después de asistir a las reuniones”. Una de sus hijas es ahora enfermera; otra es la coordinadora del programa de la ciudad de Torrance para programas sociales y de recreación adaptada, y otra es actualmente la vicedirectora del Centro de Transición y Carrera Willenberg (Willenberg Career and Transition Center) en San Pedro. Cuidar de los demás es una tradición familiar.

Su dedicación a los niños y adultos con necesidades de atención médica especializada es cada vez mayor, y Pat trabajó como proveedora de servicios durante cinco años. En este puesto, ella apoyó a las familias del HRC y a los proveedores de servicios en el cuidado de personas con necesidades de atención médica especial. Cuando se unió a nuestro personal en el Departamento de Servicios Comunitarios (Department of Community Services), ella amplió aún más esta función de consulta, y ayudó a los coordinadores de servicios, proporcionó asistencia técnica a los hogares de cuidados autorizados y trabajó con los proveedores de atención médica de la comunidad para identificar y satisfacer las necesidades de atención médica especializada de las personas a las que servimos.

“El punto culminante de mis muchos años como enfermera fueron los más de 20 que pasé en el HRC como enfermera proveedora y asesora. La oportunidad de trabajar con nuestro extraordinario personal, clientes, familias y proveedores de servicios fue simplemente un honor y un privilegio.”

## CON MUCHA AYUDA DE NUESTROS AMIGOS UN AÑO EN REVISIÓN

Ha pasado más de un año desde que el mundo cambió a causa de la pandemia de *COVID-19*. Con todos los momentos difíciles que hemos pasado, también ha habido muchos amigos en el camino que les han proporcionado un rayo de esperanza a nuestros clientes, cuando la comida escaseaba y los días estaban llenos de ansiedad por tantas incertidumbres. ¡Tantas familias, personal y miembros de la comunidad del HRC estuvieron deseosos de ayudar!

A continuación, se presentan algunos de los aspectos más destacados sobre cómo nuestros amigos nos ayudaron durante todos esos días y cómo siguen ayudando hoy.

¡Nuestras familias del Harbor Regional Center son algunas de las personas más consideradas y generosas cuando se trata de ayudar a otras familias! Poco después de que las restricciones de la orden de quedarse en casa (Safer At Home) se convirtieran en una realidad, algunas familias especiales del HRC llamaron y preguntaron qué podían hacer para ayudar a las familias necesitadas del HRC lo más rápido posible. Al darse cuenta de que muchos de nuestros clientes y sus familias necesitarían alimentos y artículos básicos para el hogar durante este momento difícil, decidieron comprar tarjetas de regalo para Target y Ralphs y enviarlas directamente al HRC para su distribución

*(continúa en la página 18)*

inmediata. Esas tarjetas de regalo se distribuyeron a las familias que estaban experimentando dificultades económicas extremas a causa de la pandemia.

Inspirado por estas dos familias, el HRC creó la campaña Alimento para los Clientes (Food for Clients), que siguió durante 2020 y 2021. Esta campaña se convirtió en el foco principal durante la temporada vacacional de 2020, como una forma de poder brindar apoyo a las muchas familias en necesidad extrema. Para finales de 2020, las familias, los proveedores, el personal del HRC y muchos amigos maravillosos de nuestra comunidad recaudaron aproximadamente \$ 60,000 en donaciones.

A lo largo del año, el HRC organizó varios regalos tipo autoservicio de equipos de protección personal (PPE) y pañales. Entre estos eventos de autoservicio, el personal del HRC de todos los departamentos se coordinó para identificar a los clientes y las familias necesitadas, reunir PPE y otros suministros, y programar la entrega por parte de los coordinadores de servicios o de nuestros proveedores de transporte. También tuvimos el honor de poder celebrar una clínica de vacunación muy concurrida en nuestra oficina de Torrance junto con Anchor/Oxford HealthCare, que ayudó al HRC a facilitar casi 5000 vacunas para nuestros clientes/familias y la comunidad.

A principios de julio, una enfermera veterana muy especial del HRC y su esposo solicitaron alimentos y donaciones monetarias de su comunidad para comprar alimentos para nuestros clientes. Ellos nombraron a su campaña "CELEBREMOS TGIF: ¡Gracias a Dios, es comida!" (LET'S CELEBRATE TGIF: Thank Goodness, It's Food!). Con cajas donadas por Smart & Final, recolectaron suficientes donaciones para llenar más de 20 cajas de alimentos, ¡que se entregaron a nuestras familias!

Cada mes de agosto, el South Bay Sunrise Rotary Club ha brindado algún tipo de apoyo a nuestros clientes en preparación para el nuevo ciclo escolar. En 2020, cuando los estudiantes de repente tuvieron que acceder al aprendizaje en línea, descubrimos que muchos de nuestros clientes no tenían acceso a un dispositivo que no fuera un teléfono celular o un dispositivo compartido con uno o más hermanos. El Rotary quería ayudar, y con un subsidio y donaciones privadas, ¡compró 36 Chromebooks para nuestros clientes en edad escolar que las necesitaban! Un donador privado, una familia del HRC cuyo hijo tiene un trastorno del espectro autista, proporcionó más de \$7,000 para comprar 20 Chromebooks para clientes necesitados con autismo. En el evento de distribución por autoservicio de Halloween de la época de Halloween en el HRC, ¡voluntarios, clientes y familias vinieron disfrazados y

disfrutaron de las decoraciones de Halloween y de las bolsas de regalos que se sumaron al divertido evento!

¡Los patólogos del habla y del lenguaje no dejaron que la pandemia les impidiera organizar su evento anual de disfraces / dulce o travesura de Halloween con sus clientes de la primera infancia (Early Childhood)! Este año, el evento fue tipo autoservicio con varios empleados disfrazados repartiendo golosinas a los adorables pequeños. ¡Se quedaron a salvo en sus autos mientras presumían sus disfraces y practicaban algunas habilidades lingüísticas con temática navideña!

Justo antes del Día de Acción de Gracias, el Carson/Gardena/Domínguez Rotary Club nos invitó a ser otra vez los destinatarios de 20 cajas de Acción de Gracias a través de su programa Operación Gobble. Se recibieron referencias de los coordinadores de servicios para sus clientes/familias que experimentaban incertidumbre alimenticia. Siempre agradecemos esta donación, pues incluye todo lo necesario para que la familia prepare una abundante cena de Acción de Gracias. ¡Ya se han puesto en contacto con nosotros para hacernos saber que la Operación Gobble se llevará a cabo en 2021! ¡También nos invitaron a participar en el Regalo de Pavo del Senador Bradford y recibimos 12 pavos congelados! ¡Esta fue la primera vez que incluyeron al HRC en este evento de regalos y esperamos que nos extiendan la invitación para los siguientes años!

A principios de diciembre, el Departamento de Early Childhood llevó a cabo una donación de juguetes en autos muy exitosa y un evento de regalos de juguetes tipo autoservicio. Luego, en JUL/2021, el Early Childhood llevó a cabo una ceremonia de graduación de Early Start, ¡que incluyó donaciones de kits de animalitos bebés de peluche Beanie para cada graduado!

Era principios de diciembre, y el Gardena Elks Club estaba decidido a organizar su 6.ª Annual Merry Beary Christmas en beneficio de los niños jóvenes necesitados del HRC, a pesar de que no recibieron su subsidio habitual para el evento, y se llevaría a cabo a modo de autoservicio. ¡Los propios miembros del Gardena Elks, incluido uno cuya hermana adulta recibe atención del HRC, donaron 125 osos Build-A-Bear personalizados para nuestros clientes!

Santa Claus estuvo allí para saludar a los niños, y entre los "elfos" voluntarios estuvieron Gardena Elks, el personal de Early Childhood del HRC, Kerry Ryerson del HRC, su hijo Sean y otros dos amigos adultos que atiende el HRC, ¡quienes repartieron gises jumbo para banquetas y bastones de caramelo a todos los que participaron en el autoservicio! Los planes para el evento de 2021 ya están en marcha.

*(continúa en la página 19)*

El 13/DIC, se llevó a cabo el Rock for Tots, un concierto virtual para recaudación de fondos, coordinado por un padre y músico del HRC, que estaba emocionado de apoyar a otras familias del HRC necesitadas. Durante todo el concierto, se exhortó a los oyentes a donar a una de las dos organizaciones benéficas destacadas, incluido el HRC. La generosa donación al HRC de este concierto fue de más de \$3,000.

Además de la campaña Alimento para los Clientes de la temporada navideña de 2020, proporcionamos una versión a pequeña escala del popular programa Adopte una Familia (Adopt-A-Family). Nuestros leales patrocinadores habituales, así como algunos nuevos, pidieron poder adoptar a una o más familias necesitadas del HRC. Ellos prefirieron tener una conexión más personal adoptando una o más familias. Para cualquiera que desee ayudar a nuestros clientes más necesitados durante la temporada navideña de 2021, lo exhortamos a donar a la campaña Alimento para los Clientes / Las Vacaciones son para Compartir (Food For Clients/ Holidays Are For Sharing). Todas las donaciones monetarias se destinarán a la compra de tarjetas de regalo para los clientes y las familias.

A finales del verano de 2021 llevamos a cabo un evento de regalos de mochilas y útiles

escolares, junto con nuestros amigos de Aveanna Health Care, 24Hr Homecare y Jack Nadel International. Estas maravillosas organizaciones proporcionaron mochilas, útiles escolares, zapatos nuevos y otros artículos divertidos para 200 de nuestros clientes y sus hermanos. Los coordinadores de servicios (SC) vinieron al evento para reunir suministros para entregar a sus clientes más necesitados. Nos dio gusto compartir también estas contribuciones con los Centros de Recursos para la Familia Carolyn Kordich, Southeast y Long Beach, para compartir con las familias en toda nuestra área de atención.

Con la continua preocupación por la propagación comunitaria debido a la variante más reciente del COVID-19, todos nosotros en el Harbor Regional Center seguimos aún más dedicados a apoyar a nuestros clientes y a las familias. Nuestra comunidad ha sido extremadamente generosa y realmente ha mostrado su preocupación durante todo este tiempo tan difícil. Muchas, muchas gracias de corazón a todos nuestros amigos en la comunidad que donaron tan generosamente de todas las maneras imaginables a nuestros clientes y a sus familias. No podríamos haber hecho nada de esto sin ustedes, y estamos muy orgullosos de saber que seguirán apoyando, en el futuro, a las personas y a las familias que atendemos. Les deseamos lo mejor a todos. ¡Cúidense mucho!

## ACTUALIZACIÓN DEL PRESUPUESTO 2021-22 ¡LA MAYOR INVERSIÓN QUE NUESTRO SISTEMA HA VISTO EN MUCHOS AÑOS!

Organización de Agencias de Centros Regionales (Association of Regional Center Agencies, ARCA)

Este mes de junio, los líderes legislativos, los miembros del Senado y de la Asamblea y el gobernador Newsom acordaron un presupuesto que da a nuestro sistema una enorme razón para tener esperanza.

En palabras de Rita Walker, presidente de la junta directiva de la Organización de Agencias de Centros Regionales, "los nuevos fondos de este presupuesto sientan las bases para mejorar la capacidad de los centros regionales y de los coordinadores de servicios para atender a los clientes y satisfacer sus necesidades individuales y únicas".

¿El resultado? Mucho dinero en los próximos años para apoyar un sistema más moderno y sensible que pueda satisfacer mejor las necesidades individuales y familiares.

Los puntos clave del acuerdo presupuestario son:

- una reforma tarifaria gradual de cinco años para los proveedores de servicios;
- un total de casi \$90 millones anuales para los nuevos coordinadores de servicios de los centros regionales, a partir de JUL/2022;
- tecnología modernizada para ayudar a las familias y a las personas atendidas por los centros regionales a tener

más control sobre sus datos y apoyar la infraestructura crítica del sistema;

- creación de un programa de capacitación y certificación para los profesionales de apoyo directo, así como fondos adicionales para la competencia cultural y el acceso al idioma;
- ¡reestablecimiento de la recreación social y el campamento! (así como servicios educativos y terapias no médicas);
- un programa piloto de incentivos al rendimiento para los centros regionales;
- fondos adicionales para personas que buscan empleo;
- ampliación de la elegibilidad para recibir los servicios del centro regional para determinados niños de 3 y 4 años;
- nuevo apoyo para llegar a comunidades diversas;
- finalización del calendario de permisos de días festivos;
- eliminación de la caducidad del aumento de tarifas del 8% para los proveedores de servicios; La directora ejecutiva de ARCA, Amy Westling, no pudo decirlo mejor.

"Estamos profundamente agradecidos por el compromiso a largo plazo que la Legislatura y el gobernador han asumido con nuestra comunidad, y por su trabajo de colaboración para garantizar este financiamiento. A medida que estos fondos lleguen a nuestro sistema, ayudarán a garantizar que las necesidades de las personas con discapacidades del desarrollo, y sus familias, estén en primer plano."



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### BOARD MEMBERS FY 2021-2022

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## BOARD MEETINGS

Meetings of the Board are held on the third Tuesday of the months of January, March, May, July, September and November. Meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome to attend. The meetings begin at 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. During the pandemic, meetings will be held on zoom until further notice. For questions please call the Executive Office (310) 543-0632.

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