

David R. Hawkins M.D. PhD

“Make a gift of your life and lift all mankind by being kind, considerate, forgiving, and compassionate at all times, in all places, and under all conditions, with everyone as well as yourself. This is the greatest gift anyone can give.”

touch

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GARDEN TO TABLE BOUNTY

The staff at Idylwood Care Center is always looking for new ways to support the well-being of their residents. Recently, Dietary and Occupational Therapy staff and interns came together to design and launch the Garden to Table program. This program guides residents in the gardening of seasonal vegetables and herbs, provides education on plants, promotes physical activity, encourages healthful nutrition and supports emotional and mental well-being.

The daily schedule for the program begins with staff sharing with residents a variety of information on nutrition, food basics and overall health and well-being strategies. Next they demonstrate how-to gardening fundamentals such as weeding, watering, pruning and harvesting. In addition to working in the garden, residents are also encouraged to walk through the garden and get moderate sun exposure during sitting breaks. This gives them an opportunity to enjoy the garden, while increasing their Vitamin D levels through sun exposure, which helps with calcium absorption to improve bone density and maintain muscle and nerve function.

Residents are also involved from the beginning in the preparation of the garden by helping to choose what types of vegetables to plant such as peppers, basil and tomatoes. When it is time to harvest the vegetables and herbs, residents are able to help choose a favorite recipe to use them in, so they can enjoy first-hand the delicious benefit of what they have grown.



A resident watering the newly planted garden at Idylwood Care Center.



A resident taking a relaxing stroll through the beautiful garden.

The Garden to Table program has been successful in helping residents to increase their group participation and peer interaction; improve their overall well-being and fitness by increasing strength and dexterity; increase their moderate sun exposure time and Vitamin D levels; and improve their weight management and lab levels.

The facility plans to expand their Garden to Table program by having Dietary and Occupational Therapy interns and staff collaborate with residents to create new recipes for what they have grown and also donate a part of their garden produce to local community outreach programs. ***By sharing their garden bounty with the community, the hopes are that the residents will feel a sense of accomplishment and empowerment that they are making a difference in other people's lives.*** With all of these amazing benefits, the Garden to Table program is having an overall positive effect on the mind, body and spirit of the residents at Idylwood Care Center.

Contributed by: Sandy Narasimhan MS,RD,CSG and Rashmi Rajadhyax PD,OTR/L






the Green Machine

Leading the Way on Environmental Responsibility

Last year the California drought led to state mandates for businesses and households to cut back on water usage. While many California homes and workplaces made eco-friendly changes simply because of these mandates, Crestwood Healing Center Pleasant Hill had just launched a major environmental responsibility project, aimed at reducing water and energy usage, increasing sustainability and limiting general waste. Creating a facility team later dubbed the Green Machine, the project has, in less than a year, achieved much more than they could have ever hoped.



The environmental responsibility project developed out of recognition of the large amount of plastic cups that were being thrown away in the facility on a daily basis. But the first and biggest priority for the Green Machine became water conservation, though the intention from the onset was not simply a response to the drought. The team knew that to make real, sustainable change, it would be important to involve the entire facility community. The project kicked off on Earth Day 2015, with the Green Machine providing educational presentations, giving out reusable water bottles to be used instead of disposable cups and with staff and clients making specific pledges on how they would be more environmentally conscious.

For water conservation, part of the work to be done centered on general maintenance and repair around the building. The team identified leaks throughout the facility, and proceeded to replace and repair toilets and sinks, while also installing faucet aerators and water-efficient showerheads that were provided for free by the local water company. Other water conservation efforts included education and awareness on how to reduce water usage when showering, shaving and brushing teeth. One resident, James, who has helped lead the charge on water consciousness, said, ***“I try to conserve water by turning off the shower when soaping up and shampooing my hair.”*** Ultimately due to all these water conservation efforts, the facility cut its water usage by a whopping 45% in 2015, which is 20% more than the statewide mandate! A year after launching the environmental responsibility project, the facility has saved more than a million gallons of water and counting.

Additionally, the environmental responsibility project at the facility has focused on becoming more sustainable and reducing waste. The facility has accomplished this through a composting project and by fixing a failing recycling system, as well as by creating Dreamcatchers Empowerment Network positions for clients to work in both composting and recycling. The Green Machine also got clients involved in upcycling, a process in which materials that would otherwise be thrown out, such as plastic cups, are turned into new items, such as “flower” bouquets.



To reduce waste, the Green Machine decided that it must start with a new mindset around awareness on how much trash was being routinely created. Part of the fix was changing practices, such as cleaning with rags instead of paper towels, while also placing a huge emphasis on using reusable items, such as reusable water bottles and shopping bags instead of disposable ones.

Frances, a resident who is one of the biggest supporters of the project, said, *“I hang clothes in the window to dry so I don’t use electricity and I turn off the lights in my room and other rooms when no one is in there.”* The early results have included a \$1,200 reduction in energy costs and saving 25,500 plastic cups that were normally used one time for water when taking medications and then thrown away.

Education has been one of the greatest tools the Green Machine has used to make change, and in addition to regular environmental events in the facility, they have begun making more of a difference outside the building as well. One way is working alongside their partner organization, Putnam Clubhouse, a Contra Costa County community organization where adults with mental health issues go to build skills and make valuable connections. The Green Machine and Putnam Clubhouse members are working together on a monthly cleanup of the Berkeley shoreline and so far have had 51 people involved making a positive impact on the community.



The Green Machine team helping to clean-up the Berkeley shoreline.

As the environmental responsibility project at Crestwood Healing Center Pleasant Hill looks at next steps after a year of massive accomplishments, the Green Machine is aiming at expanding their environmental practices to continue reducing the facility’s impact on the Earth, while ultimately getting the facility certified as a green business. As the team celebrated the first year of the project on this year’s Earth Day on April 22nd, the Contra Costa Water District joined them in the festivities to recognize the huge successes in conservation. With a little education, effort and care for the planet, the Green Machine hopes its message can inspire others to make a similar impact in their community for the environment.

Contributed by: Travis Curran, Campus Administrator: Crestwood Healing Center Pleasant Hill and Chloe De Lancie, Project Coordinator: Crestwood Healing Center Pleasant Hill

the healing power of dogs



When he first stepped inside Crestwood San Diego he was thin, weak, and frightened.

He had patchy hair from malnourishment and poor hygiene. He had been abused and kept in a small space when he was younger, and he was later abandoned by his first family. He had been forced to live on the streets for some time before getting taken in by the “system.” He would sometimes get aggressive with others and he clearly was traumatized by his past in ways that gave him nightmares that made him toss and turn and cry at night. His legs were weakened and arthritic from being confined when he was young, and this caused him to struggle when walking. He was nervous when he first came to Crestwood San Diego, but he was quickly embraced by both the staff and clients. His name is Gifford and he is a six-year old Chow Chow/Golden Retriever mix dog.

Gifford was adopted with another rescued older Chow Chow/Golden Retriever mix, named Enzo, from a high-kill shelter in San Bernardino by two staff members, Meghan O'Barr, a Service Coordinator at Crestwood Chula Vista and Stephen O'Barr, Director of Nursing at Crestwood San Diego. Enzo's first owner was a man with mental illness who ended up hospitalized for a long period of time, which then left Enzo to fend for himself on the streets, until he was picked up by the shelter.



Gifford was so scared and traumatized that he didn't make eye contact at first, but he was ever so grateful for any petting he received. He required a lot of care, rehabilitation, and exercise before he stepped inside the facility as a therapy dog. He was shy at first, but as staff and clients opened up to him and showed him love, he quickly grew to like spending time at Crestwood San Diego and Crestwood Chula Vista. Like Gifford, Enzo had many trust issues. He would greet people, but also kept his distance for the first month. It took patience, consistency and compassion for Enzo to get past his trust issues, just like many of our Crestwood clients. Enzo is now the quintessential "Velcro" dog, always staying close to his family, yet with reassurance, is eager to meet new people and give them kisses.

Michael Bargagliotti, the former Administrator of both Crestwood Chula Vista and Crestwood San Diego, who is now the Administrator of the Crestwood Center San Jose campus, was highly supportive of incorporating pets as part of the therapeutic milieu. Since September 2015, Michael opened the door to allow several staff members to bring their dogs to both facilities, including Service Coordinator, Maida Ferraes, who brings her dog Rocco; Director of Nursing Services, Fabiola Evans, who brings her dog Riley; and Service Coordinator, Jana Cook, who brings her dog Sammy Thomas. All of these dogs were rescued from shelters, have experienced their own trauma and now love their new lives as the dogs of Crestwood.

The dogs add to the feeling of a warm and homelike atmosphere that Crestwood MHRCs strive to create with a living-room milieu. They don't just bring cuteness, fur and fun to the two programs; they have made connections with some of the clients who suffer from the worst paranoia and anxiety and who often push most people away. Studies have shown that pet therapy helps clients by lessening depression, decreasing feelings of isolation, encouraging communication, providing comfort, increasing socialization, lowering anxiety, and reducing loneliness. Gifford recently helped a client with suspected sexual abuse to feel safe and comfortable enough so that they could start opening up to the staff.

“pet therapy helps clients by lessening depression, decreasing feelings of isolation, encouraging communication, providing comfort, increasing socialization, lowering anxiety, and reducing loneliness.”

Gifford was also the mascot at the first San Diego vs Chula Vista kickball tournament, and he even makes appearances at IDT meetings so that clients can feel more comfortable in discussions that may be sometimes stressful.

One client coping with manic episodes at Crestwood Chula Vista refers to Rocco as “my boy” and their shared exuberance and energy makes them the best of friends. Rocco has been instrumental in reducing this client's symptoms with simple, every day dog activities, such as walks and games of fetch. Like Gifford, Rocco struggled with his relationship with other animals and underwent training with a behavioral therapist, an experience that many clients can relate to. Sammy Thomas, who one of the clients calls, “Jana's Lamb,” is a gentle boy, who like some of our clients, suffers from a severe medical condition. Sammy experiences seizures and takes medication daily. Jana and Meghan both use their dogs' medication needs to help normalize medication management and this helps many of their clients realize that Sammy and Enzo are just like them.

*Contributed by:
Meghan O'Barr, Service Coordinator
Crestwood Chula Vista
and Stephen O'Barr, Director of Nursing
Crestwood San Diego*



(Clockwise) Enzo, Gifford, Sammy, and Riley the amazing dogs of Crestwood.

Clients at Crestwood San Diego and Crestwood Chula Vista have watched with delight as love and care have transformed Gifford from a nervous, half-lame dog with patchy fur, into a big, friendly bear with a beautiful, thick coat. The message our clients get is that if Gifford can grow and change, then so can they. Just as the staff is deeply satisfied by their clients' growth and successes, the clients have taken great joy in seeing the recovery and resiliency of our Crestwood dogs and know that they are capable of recovery too. Several clients have grown very attached to the dogs and look forward to each of their visits. These amazing dogs have awakened empathy and affection in many of our clients through their unconditional love and presence. They both share a lot of trauma and suffering in their pasts. They also share a simple need, which is to be loved and to know that they are not alone and they can give each other that powerful, simple love that makes them both stronger and happier. That love, togetherness, and understanding are the mainstays of recovery, and are what makes Crestwood so special.

In life it's the journey,
not the destination. It's progress,
not perfection. It's the process,
rather than the product.

That we derive so many lessons,
so much joy, and from which
we gain such an amazing
sense of gratitude.

There are those moments
when the end is a beautiful thing,

The product shines and the
destination is very sweet.

The day Crestwood Behavioral Health opened the Kingsburg Healing Center was one of those beautiful moments of transformation. We spend much of our lives working with people and ourselves on transformation, it could be changing a small behavior or a big one, and it may mean adding an exercise routine, revising a Recovery Service Plan, or helping a person find a job. Transformation may also be seen in the developing of a new program, which was the central theme in the opening our Kingsburg Healing Center.

transformation.

one person, one program, one community at a time.

Transformation for Kingsburg Healing Center began with rehabilitating an old building that had been vacant and lifeless for decades, into a beautiful, warm, welcoming facility. It involved designing a new program that incorporates all of our recovery services such as Homelike Environments, Mind, Body, and Spirit Wellness, Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and Trauma-Informed Approaches. The development of the Kingsburg Healing Center also gave us a chance to get to know the neighbors and community leaders and to start becoming part of such a wonderful community.

Opening week for our Kingsburg Healing Center was very exciting and included an Open House on January 27, where community leaders and neighbors were welcomed in to tour the newly transformed facility and meet the staff. The event began by a warm blessing from Father Gregory, from the Holy Family Parish. Kingsburg Mayor, Bruce Blayney, then provided opening words and other local community leaders such as Kingsburg District Hospital Board Members Glenn Snyder, Robert Johnson and Arlie Rogers, as well as Kingsburg City Manager, Alex Henderson also added their own words of welcome. Dawan Utecht, Director of Fresno County Behavioral Health, shared her kind words with the group. Many other community leaders were also in attendance such as City Council Members Staci Smith and Michelle Roman; Chief of Police Neil Dadian; and Steve Safarjian, local broker/owner of RPS Real Estate.

The Open House was a great success with more than 200 community members attending. One Kingsburg citizen, Mrs. Johnson, commented, ***“Thank you so much for letting us tour the facility. Crestwood has done an amazing job transforming the old Hospital. My husband and I are excited to leave here and tell all our friends what the facility looks like and what we learned from the tour.”***

And another Kingsburg citizen, Mr. Lopez, said,

“Your staff was so nice and gave us a lot of great information about the facility during our tour. Thank you for giving the community a chance to see for ourselves all the hard work that has gone into the building and understanding what your company stands for.”

So one week later on February 1st, after two years of planning, challenges, hearings and a lot of hard work, the Kingsburg Healing Center was ready to open for clients! On that opening day it was a gift to have five clients who were warmly received in our welcome room; who sat watching our fish tank; who walked in our yard; who found a space for a quiet time in our serenity room; who shared in delicious homemade lasagna; and who slept on new beautiful, comfortable beds. These five people were now on a journey to start their own recovery transformation.

Kingsburg Healing Center is not only a transformation of an old building into a beautiful new program; it also is the beginning transformation in the lives of our clients and their families. ***“I want you to know that I think the Kingsburg Healing Center is such a loving and warm place. It is a wonderful place for my daughter. She is doing so much better now that she is here,”*** said one client's mother. No longer will clients in Fresno County have to travel hundreds of miles for mental health services and no longer will their families have to make long trips to visit them. ***“I wish this place had been here sooner, it would have been nice to have our son here sooner. Now that he is back in Fresno County we can see him anytime we want and we know it will help him get better,”*** said another client's parents. The transformations at Kingsburg Healing Center are just beginning.

*Contributed by: Patty Blum, PhD
Crestwood Vice President*

Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc.

Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc. is proud to be California's leading provider of mental health services, assisting thousands of clients from across the state. Our focus is on creating strong relationships with counties in which we both have a financial commitment, providing the services which are tailored to meet clients' specific needs, and reinforcing a common set of values that guide our practices and policies.



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spotlight

“I have felt so welcomed, appreciated, and supported here since day one. I feel privileged to work with such exciting and dynamic residents and staff on a daily basis.”

*Amanda Lord, OTR/L
Crestwood Treatment Center Fremont*



accreditation

Crestwood Behavioral Health Inc. is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), which requires a higher standard of care than the licensing standards in California. Crestwood believes this accreditation demonstrates our unwavering commitment to achieving and maintaining the highest level of care and rehabilitation.

