

# THE JOURNEY

## TELLING OUR STORIES

Interviews with Our Staff and Clients



**Transitions-Mental Health Association**

Inspiring hope, growth, recovery,  
and wellness in our communities.

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# HOUSING

## ONE STEP AT A TIME

Jackie Andrews has been with TMHA for 9 years. She described what progress often looks like within her program.

I like to see the journey of our residents. When people come off the street, they have to transition and learn how to be comfortable with being housed. I had a woman who slept on a couch for the longest time, because she was couch surfing for so long that to be in a bedroom in a bed, she couldn't do that right away. And so she had to be on the couch and we had to start there: Okay, let's make this a goal. Until she finally got comfortable being in a bedroom. And then it's being around other people. And then it's to have a case manager who's coming around and wanting to make sure you're okay. And then once we can get comfortable being in a house and in a room and in a bed...what goal can we look at now? To see somebody come into the program maybe very angry or very hurt or very traumatized and then to watch them grow and to start feeling more comfortable and safe, so now they can engage in life in a different way than when they were on the streets. That's a rewarding thing to see.

—Jackie Andrews

ASSISTANT PROGRAM MANAGER,  
HOMELESS SERVICES



## A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

One of Jackie's clients recalls how far she went to help him through a rough time.

In about 2009 I started losing my eyesight. I was totally unprepared, and soon was living on the street and then a shelter. I went to Prado Day Center and met a wonderful woman who helped me find a spot in the Transitional Housing Program. I'm a diabetic. Two years ago, I got a very bad foot infection. And I called Jackie Andrews about 2 o'clock in the afternoon on a Friday. She came and got me, she took me up to Twin Cities. And she sat there in the emergency room with me until the doctor came. And the doctor decided to do an MRI and she sat there with me through

the MRI. Then I had to wait for them to figure out what was going to happen next and she stayed with me the whole time. And after my surgery, she took me home. She took me to every doctor's appointment. She took me shopping. She took me to get my meds from Rite Aid. She did everything. She was amazing, I don't know what the hell I would've done without her.

—David Ward

CLIENT, HOUSING

## AN UPDATE ON BISHOP STREET STUDIOS

Bishop Street Studios remains on schedule, and the original building is undergoing a spectacular renovation. The roof, floors and walls have all been removed and steel beams installed for seismic strengthening. We look forward to having the whole project ready for our clients in Summer 2019.

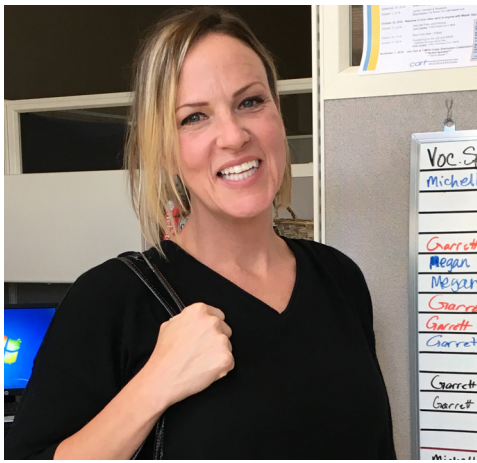
299

clients housed in SLO and  
Santa Barbara Counties

44

total units of TMHA housing  
to be added in 2019





# EMPLOYMENT



## BACK IN THE GAME

What does it feel like to return to the work force?

I had experienced incarceration for 18 months, and upon release I noticed that I had a lot of issues trying to integrate back into society, a lot of mental health issues. It had been a long time since anyone had treated me like a human being. And I just noticed how friendly and kind and helpful and patient everyone at TMHA was. At first it kind of took me back a little bit, cause I got used to everyone having an angle or speaking down to me. To be treated with kindness and respect reminded me that I'm worth it. That I deserve to have a good life. And moments when I feel I'm taking steps back, TMHA and the services through Supported Employment help me to remain focused and remind myself that I can get a good job, get a good career, and I can get my life back together again. Slowly but surely I'm climbing up that hill.

—Teresa Doss  
CLIENT, SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

## THE LONG VIEW

Frank Ricceri recently celebrated his 30th Anniversary with TMHA. Every step of the way, he's been involved with our Growing Grounds Social Enterprises.

I came on board as a Farm Assistant at our San Luis Obispo farm in 1988. We grew lettuce and sold it right to the restaurants. I used to enjoy cutting a head of lettuce and going into the kitchen and showing the chef what we had and seeing their excitement. Probably in our biggest year we sold \$50,000 of produce. Then in 2001, I took a Director position and moved to start the farm in Northern Santa Barbara County. The farmland in Santa Maria was just a bunch of sand with concrete chunks from an old World War II landing strip. We cleared it, put some compost on it, and grew an acre

of flowers...which ended up sitting in the field because we had no real market for it! We decided at that point to grow a diverse mix of vegetables and we started a little dinky farm stand, selling produce out of our cooler. That went on until the Santa Barbara Foundation helped us build our beautiful farm stand. 3 decades later, I'm back overseeing the San Luis Obispo Nursery. It feels like coming home, only now a great year is selling \$300,000 in nursery stock!

—Frank Ricceri  
DIVISION DIRECTOR, VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

## JAILS TO JOBS

This year, TMHA's Supported Employment Program expanded its community impact with funding from San Luis Obispo County Jail. Jails to Jobs is a six-session class designed to provide employment preparation and practical skills to inmates with a mental health diagnosis. Program facilitators help participants write resumes, practice for interviews, and find a job once they are released. In 2017-18 we had 52 participants.

# FAMILY



## HOUSE RULES

Our new Program Manager discusses the heart and soul of Family Services.

I worked with somebody who kept thinking I don't want to make my son upset, I don't want to be the bad guy. So we established different house rules and tried to get the buy-in. I met with both of them to say, "Mom really needs to get some structure. I think it's going to help you, I think it will help her." We talked about a contract: mom will do this, if you do this. Empowering mom, empowering self-care, empowering her to say, "I do have the right to some limitations." That's huge in developing a more healthy relationship, and it's made a big difference in their getting along because she's not placating and there's more mutual respect. I mean, just because you have a mental illness does not mean you don't want to have a loving relationship with your family. Seeing that take place: I feel good about what we do.

—**Shawn Ison**  
PROGRAM MANAGER, FAMILY SERVICES

## A FRIEND FOR THE AGES

On Nov. 18, Gabrielle Hubbard turned 100 years old. Ms. Hubbard has been a TMHA supporter for nearly 30 years. We asked her daughter, Jennifer, about Gabrielle's connection to TMHA.



Many years ago, mom and dad began to attend holiday events where the TMHA programs were discussed, and the

conversations were very informative. My sister has a mental illness and my mom experienced hostility and discrimination. It has always been important to her that there are resources available. TMHA sees each individual as a whole person, not someone in parts. It's the human side of it. When the basic needs of life are met, from there on they can become stronger people. Mom sees TMHA as being very supportive and loving, with a holistic approach to life. She has a particular appreciation for the Growing Grounds Nursery and store and all your day programs.

—**Jennifer Hubbard**  
FAMILY MEMBER

## THE RIGHT WORDS

Patty Ramirez has been in North San Luis Obispo County for 9 years, with a deep understanding of the community she serves.

In the Latino culture if you say maybe you should see a consejero or a therapist, they say "Yo no estoy loco." If at any point they feel like you're judging them, they'd rather do without your services. Because they're very vulnerable when they come to you. So the way I present it when I do talk to them, is "I'm not saying you're crazy--you are so overwhelmed with what you are going through and you have every right to be



depressed, every right to struggle, but you also need somebody to talk to. To let go of that burden. Whatever it is, it's good to talk because a counselor will guide you to think differently or to change something." When I present it that way, they say oh yeah, that could help. That could help.

—**Patty Ramirez**  
YOUTH FAMILY PARTNER, NORTH COUNTY  
SAN LUIS OBISPO

# 985

family members served in San  
Luis Obispo County

# 335

family members served in  
Northern Santa Barbara County

# 14,560

hours a year are dedicated to supporting  
loved ones in both counties.





## HIDDEN STRENGTHS

After a stroke, the challenge of returning to work provided Milton Washington insight into the members he sees each day.

Each person that comes to Helping Hands is unique. But one of the things that remains the same is people are looking for hope. Either they're tired of the lifestyle they had before, or they're looking for a better future. And they just need to develop the skills and pick up some hope that they can carry with them. So many people are in need of help but are not capable of receiving it at the time they arrive. They've been traumatized, they've been tricked, coerced during their recovery walk. And they become untrusting. And you've got to really work with them to gain that trust and build the rapport. It takes time to really get to know them. What are their needs, what are they looking for? What skills and abilities do they have? If we can identify a person's strength we have a better way of reaching out to them than if we pounded out their weakness.

—Milton Washington

ASSISTANT PROGRAM SUPERVISOR,  
HELPING HANDS OF LOMPOC RECOVERY  
LEARNING COMMUNITY

# COMMUNITY

## NORTHWARD HO!

We are happy to announce a new TMHA office is open for services in Paso Robles. Located on Riverside Avenue, services will include Wellness Center classes, Family Services and Support, Homeless Outreach, Supported Employment, and Full Service Partnership.

## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Trista Ochoa oversees 5 programs staffed by individuals with a lived experience of mental illness. She shares her thoughts on where those programs might go next.

People want somebody that will spend an hour or two with them a week and just talk about *What Next?* They're starting to feel stable on medications or meditation or whatever the treatment plan is, and now they want to know: *Do I get a job? Do I wait?* To me, it's like baking a cake. You can read a recipe, but oftentimes the best thing you can do is watch someone and actually ask them, hey, do you use heavy whipping cream for the frosting or do you use powdered sugar and milk? Often our fondest memories are doing things with our parents one on one, and them sitting with us and teaching us. And we still want that as we get older. That's why we have friends, that's why we have mentors, that's why mentorship became such a big thing in the 90's. It's because we still want that relationship. I'd like to see us grow that role here, where we



teach people how to live in recovery and how to progress towards higher marks.

—Trista Ochoa

PROGRAM MANAGER, ADVOCACY &  
EDUCATION

# 9,044

community members reached through  
presentations & educational events

# 9,318

calls were received by the SLO  
Hotline over the past year

# HOMELESS & FORENSICS SERVICES



## OUT OF THE VORTEX

TMHA Forensics serves clients transitioning from jail to mental health treatment. Mollie Field describes how tangled the system can be.

The courtroom is a cycle once you're in it. And if you don't have the ability to track your appointments and appear when they say and pay when they say, you end up in this vortex. I had a client who got an infraction for riding his bike after dusk

without a helmet. And it rolled into a failure to appear and a failure to pay, each of which compounded the fees by \$300. And he was so ill, that everywhere he went in the community, he was being dinged with another infraction. And he ended up with 39 different cases and \$15,000 in debt, and they froze his driver's license. And there's no way out. How is a person who makes \$889 a month supposed to pay that off ever? But I found this saintly woman at the courthouse to help me, and I filed six petitions and the commissioner was willing to make a deal. Wiped it away. It's like the biggest road block ever was lifted. And those moments are practically sacred. They are frozen in your mind, and that's when you feel privileged to do the work.

—Mollie Field  
PERSONAL SERVICE SPECIALIST  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT COURT

## A TURNING POINT

Wayne Tyo currently works at Growing Grounds Nursery. He shares a chapter of his journey that first brought him to TMHA.

I was totally isolated for 4 years where I didn't speak to anybody and I was in a camp and I only came out at night to forage in garbage cans. I was found in a dumpster by a park ranger who saw that I was in need and he gave me a card for the Homeless Outreach Program. Took me a month to decide to follow through on that, and I called this case worker and said "I need help." And he said okay, and came down. And I said, "I want to get well." And he assured me that whatever services they don't have within TMHA, he will go outside the organization and get them. And he was true to his word.

—Wayne Tyo  
GROWING GROUNDS NURSERY ASSISTANT



## 60 IS THE NEW 50

We are pleased to announce that our 50Now program, which provides housing and support to the most vulnerable, chronically homeless individuals in San Luis Obispo County, has been extended and expanded. We will be adding 10 more clients in the coming year!



# POWER OF PERSISTENCE

Jenna Reyes reflects on the elusive and surprising nature of progress.



I'm very much oriented to relationships, so I see progress as connection. There might be an individual we're struggling to get into some sort of stable housing, or another co-occurring individual who has refused detox a hundred times, and I tell myself all the time you never know if today might be the day. We might feel discouraged because we hear *No* a lot from our clients, but I continue to encourage. Some of us were feeling really discouraged with one particular individual we kept trying to offer resources to, and one day he suddenly said *Yes*. And he endured the detox and went to sober living and it was just a stretch of time where we all went *Wow—this is the power of our work*. This is the power of the connection and relationships you develop with the client, to really trust the process.

—Jenna Reyes

TEAM LEADER, SANTA MARIA  
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

# CLINICAL SERVICES



## A MOTHER & DAUGHTER STORY

Earlier this year, Li graduated from the Youth Treatment Program. This is a family's perspective on that experience.

### A Mother's Side

I first heard about the Youth Treatment Program when Atascadero High School connected us to TMHA. Li had been in and out of the hospital for mental health. It started around 7th grade and happened again in 9th. So we met with Anna Yeackle and everybody. I got a good vibe from all the staff. They were like family. Li was there for 13 months. She went in real dark and came out real bright, cause she smiles and everything again. I mean, it was kind of the same for me. I went through so much with her going in and out of the hospital. The changes were gradual, but our relationship got better and better and better. I think it's a great program.

—Karen

FAMILY MEMBER

### A Daughter's Experience

I was scared when I first got there, I didn't want to be there. But getting to know the staff and the kids changed my mind. Within the second or third month I was close to a few staff, and then I liked everybody new that came in. And they really helped with my depression. On August 30, I had a graduation from the program. At graduation we sit around in a circle and everyone in the room shares. And everyone gets a scrapbook. I have my scrapbook in my room. I started crying and my mom started crying because Anna was crying. It was the whole staff and my mom and my grandmother, my cousin and my pastor. Now I'm back at Atascadero High, I'm a Junior in the TLC (Therapeutic Learning Center) class.

—Li

CLIENT, YOUTH TREATMENT PROGRAM

# 363

clients served by TMHA clinical  
services programs

# 19

clinical staff and interns are working  
toward their licensure

# INSPIRING HOPE, GROWTH, RECOVERY AND WELLNESS IN OUR COMMUNITIES FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP...

Donations and in-kind services are both appreciated and vital. Please consider including TMHA in your year-end tax planning.

Volunteers are always welcome in our programs and fundraising events. One or two hours of your time can make a significant difference.



TMHA receives funding from Proposition 63, California's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) through collaborations with the San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness.

