

Connections

NEWS FOR THE CAMINAR COMMUNITY – SERVING SAN MATEO, SOLANO, BUTTE, AND SAN FRANCISCO COUNTIES

SUMMER 2014

Caminar's UC Berkeley Graduate



Juan with his UC Berkeley Diploma

As an exceptional student majoring in political science at UC Berkeley, Juan suddenly started hearing voices. Just as his life was hitting rock bottom, Juan reached out to Caminar for help. Originally from El Salvador, Juan and his family immigrated to the U.S. when he was 5 years old. He has always been a great student, getting As throughout high school and college and leading peer study groups. Right after high school Juan was accepted into UC Berkeley where he excelled as a political science major and spent his free time tutoring Stanford students.

(Continued on page 2)

 Caminar
for Mental Health

Helping people with mental
illness become independent



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CELEBRATION**

Saving lives for fifty years,
from crisis to independence

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Caminar's UC Berkeley Graduate (Continued from page 1)

After successfully completing three years at UC Berkeley, Juan began hearing voices. Afraid of being stigmatized and not knowing anything about schizophrenia, Juan tried to ignore the relentless voices and cope with the symptoms himself. Eventually the symptoms forced Juan to quit school. He moved back in with his mother and three younger sisters, none of whom knew anything about living with a family member who has schizophrenia. Having nowhere or no one to turn to, Juan began self-medicating with alcohol to quiet the voices in his head and as a result Juan's relationship with his mother deteriorated. She kicked him out of the home and filed a restraining order against him. Unknowingly Juan violated the restraining order and was put in jail. Without a home to return to, Juan was released from jail. At that time, he did not know of any shelters or resources for help.

Homeless and hearing voices, Juan was referred to Caminar's Full Service Partnership program, an intensive case management and supported housing program for adults with severe and persistent mental illness. Caminar helped Juan to find a temporary place to live, a board and care

facility, and begin the Mills Peninsula Outpatient treatment program. After successfully finishing the treatment program, Juan courageously decided he was ready to return to UC Berkeley to complete his Bachelor's degree. With the help, support and encouragement of his Caminar case manager, Juan reapplied to Berkeley, signed up for his last few classes and graduated with a Bachelor's degree!

Juan has recently moved into his own apartment in Redwood City with the help and support of his Caminar case manager. Juan is moving on to the next venture of his life despite being diagnosed with schizophrenia. Caminar's supported employment program (Jobs Plus) has helped Juan to find a job, earn an income and be a contributing member of his community. Juan aspires to be an ESL teacher or a case manager in the future and is currently working with Jobs Plus to reach this vocational goal. Juan's relationship

with his mother has improved and they are now very close. Juan is forever grateful for Caminar's help in getting him back on his feet. At such a young age, Juan has accomplished a lot and has much to be proud of!

"With the help, support and encouragement of his Caminar case manager, Juan reapplied to Berkeley, signed up for his last few classes and graduated with a Bachelor's degree!"

Savings Lives for Fifty Years

On July 13, 1964, a group of caring, compassionate family members, friends and clinicians filed the Letter of Incorporation with the State of California under the name of Caminar. Soon afterwards, a home in Belmont on El Camino Real was rented for the purpose of transitioning patients

coming out of the county hospital psychiatric ward.

Thus, Caminar was born, and offered a homelike setting and atmosphere with the focus of community reintegration to those with serious mental illness.

Fifty years later, Caminar has grown into a non-profit organization making significant impact – with offices and facilities in four counties, services in five counties, an annual operating budget of \$18 million, serving almost 2,500 (unduplicated) clients and employing over 300 passionate and committed staff. Over the past 50 years, Caminar programs have saved lives and have supported clients from crisis to independence.

Even prior to the 2010 passage of the Affordable Care Act, Caminar was at the forefront of implementing

changes, already putting in place increased accountability for the services we provide. The mandate from our government funders, distilled down in the simplest of terms, states that entities providing mental health services will need to demonstrate "value" in their services in order to be considered for funding. In the context of health care reform, "value" is defined as providing the most effective services at the least cost in a manner resulting in a highly satisfactory experience for persons served. The three elements together – cost, effectiveness, and client experience – are referred to in quality improvement circles as the *Triple Aim*. The ability for organizations to demonstrate quality performance under the *Triple Aim* will determine relative standing in what has already become an increasingly competitive marketplace. By placing emphasis on increased accountability prior to the mandate, Caminar has placed itself in good standing to succeed.

This newsletter highlights a very important service we provide to our clients: Supported Education. Featured on the front cover of our newsletter is

the incredible story of Juan, a graduate of UC Berkeley. Juan had the assistance of his case manager Claudia Vargas-Cardenas to help him achieve this great accomplishment.

Another article features the students of our Peer Counseling program at College of San Mateo. These graduates will now move onto additional college degree opportunities and employment. Recovery happens every day!

Caminar has recently added some new faces to its Board of Directors, including: sportscaster and voice of the San Francisco 49ers, Ted Robinson, recent Past-President of San Mateo County Association of Realtors (SAMCAR), Suzan Getchell-Wallace, real estate attorney, Michelle Leu Zaccone, and management consultant, Betsy Pace.

I hope you will join us September 25th to celebrate our 50 year anniversary of saving lives, by helping our clients move from crisis to independence.

Warmly,



Charles "Chip" Huggins, JD
Chief Executive Officer, Caminar



Caminar Expands into San Francisco



Above: Jobs Plus clients (l-r) Rudy S.F., Donna R. and Estella M. Below: Cynaka H., Rodney J., James R., Steven M. and Rochelle B.

Caminar Jobs Plus officially started doing business in San Francisco in July of 2013 after being awarded a contract with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to provide employment services for DOR clients. This became the fifth county, after San Mateo, Butte, Santa Clara and Solano to which Jobs Plus now provides services. Michael Schocket, Program Director of Jobs Plus, is very excited about this opportunity and believes “San Francisco is a fertile environment for the work we do. It is a progressive city and businesses are very open to giving jobs to people with disabilities.”

Jobs Plus’ first year in San Francisco has been devoted to laying a solid foundation in order to establish a long term commitment to the region and ensure future success and growth. Office doors opened to the public in November of 2013 at One Hallidie Plaza, near the heart of Union Square. In a short period of time, there have been a host of talented clients who have entrusted us with helping them realize their vocational goals. Countless stories buoy the spirit and remind us all about the importance of this work.

Thanks to the innovative approach of Glenda Glass, a job developer based in the San Francisco office, clients have been placed in jobs that truly celebrate their strengths and exemplify work not just as a financial need, but also as an extension of one’s self and a vital, meaningful part of life.

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A former Iraqi war veteran came to us discouraged and hopeless. His diagnosis of PTSD coupled with his struggle with addiction had ended his career in nursing. He had lost his sense of self-worth and direction in the world and was dubious and scared about his future. With a wife and young child to support, his need for full time work and benefits was very real and urgent.

Glenda says, “coming from a family with a strong U.S. military legacy, helping this client reintegrate back into the community via vocational rehabilitation went beyond just doing my job, for me it was very personal.” Through her unwavering support and vision, this client soon saw tangible possibilities for himself and his career. Within just a few months of enrolling in Jobs Plus, he landed a job as a case manager at Sutter Health.

This client wanted to find a new profession where he could leverage his medical background, but also take the difficult experiences and challenges he had endured and use them in service of others. His new job allows him to do just that.

Caminar Jobs Plus’ mission is to find jobs for our clients where they will thrive. We are dedicated to our clients and the San Francisco community and look forward to playing an important role in helping people with disabilities regain dignity and find wellness through work.



A New Caminar Access Plus Employee



Above: Sensible Cyclery employees (l-r) Michael Francisco, Michael Wright and client Rachel. Right: Corey R. with Maureen Watkins, Access Plus Program Coordinator.

In April of 2013 Corey interviewed for and was subsequently hired by Sensible Cyclery, Caminar's social enterprise that provides hands-on training for clients to prepare for a job. At 18 years old, Corey was homeless and receiving support from Butte County Behavioral Health. During her interview, Corey presented as a shy, introverted young woman who appeared excited by the idea of having a job.

After the first few months of employment with Sensible Cyclery, a social enterprise created in partnership with Butte County Behavioral Health, Corey had overcome her shyness, learned to control her anxiety, made friends at work and was excelling at interacting with the public. In June 2013, Corey qualified for a housing grant due in part to her proven work ethic, and she now lives in her own apartment in Chico, California.

Corey expressed a desire to work with Adults with Intellectual Disabilities while working at Sensible Cyclery. When a position became available with Caminar's Access Plus program (which serves adults with intellectual and other disabilities), Corey applied and was hired as a Direct Support Worker. Corey is now working three days a week, attending Butte College and living in her own apartment- quite a transformation from being homeless and receiving

financial government support!

"Access Plus allows me to help teach others self-independence," Corey said, "and I learned that through working at Sensible Cyclery."

"Corey's experience demonstrates the great partnership between multiple agencies in Butte County. Corey was able to take advantage of an employment program that involves Butte County Behavioral Health, 6th Street Drop-In Center, Caminar, and Department of Rehabilitation," said Michele Brousseau, Employment and Housing Supervisor at Butte County Behavioral Health Department. "Each agency was able to work together in a collaborative manner to give Corey a well-rounded employment experience. All agencies were able to communicate and provide quality services to meet Corey's individual employment goal. Corey represents a success story that she made possible with the help of supportive services."



Cammie Awards

On Friday, May 23, 2014 Caminar invited the public to join in honoring the recipients of the third annual Cammie Awards at the Foley Cultural Center in Vallejo.

The Cammie Awards presentation is designed to celebrate Caminar clients' transformation and recovery from mental illness. The Spanish word "caminar" means "to move forward," and each of these courageous individuals has made significant strides toward empowerment and independence. Recipients were recognized for reaching major milestones in their recovery, from maintaining independent housing, education, and employment, to achieving healthy, clean and sober lifestyles.

Rachel Ford, Consumer Affairs Liaison of the Wellness Recovery Unit for the Solano County Health and Social Services Mental Health Department was the Mistress of Ceremonies. Caminar CEO, Chip Huggins, opened the ceremony by speaking about the importance of stigma reduction. Other speakers included Dr. Kristine Girard, Caminar FSP Psychiatrist; Erin Hannigan, Solano County Supervisor; Glenda Lingenfelter, Senior Administrator of Solano County Mental Health; and Barbara Pisching Wright, Solano County Local Mental Health Board Member.

Top: Trasolind C. receiving an award from Tranine Chisom, the Director of Supported Housing. Bottom: Genaro and Lani Martinez, landlords of the Wellness and Recovery Center with Parivash Mottaghian, Interim Executive Director of Solano Region.





CAMINAR STUDENT AWARDS

Spring at the College of San Mateo (CSM) means warmer weather, cherry blossoms, and graduation. One particular graduation event means quite a lot to its students – the celebration of completing the Peer Counseling program at CSM taught by Caminar staff. The Peer Counseling program is a collaboration between Caminar and the College of San Mateo where teachers aim to prepare students for a successful start or return to college. Additionally, the program offers an entry level program of study that can lead to employment in the helping profession. Most importantly, this program offers a life-changing experience of community, growth, and accomplishment to its participants. The students who received recognition awards on the 20th of May have much to be proud of. They expressed great excitement upon receiving the recognition from friends, family, and staff that they justly deserve.

One student in particular, Nick, will be starting employment with Caminar as a

Community Support Worker at Redwood House, overseeing the food pantry. Thanks to the generosity from partners *Hurlbut-Johnson Charitable Trusts* and *Silicon Valley Community Foundation*, the food pantry provides essential food support to more than 2,000 clients each year; these clients will surely benefit from Nick's new Peer Counseling knowledge, enthusiasm, good cheer and dedication.

In the fall, another group at CSM will be starting school, perhaps tentatively wondering if they can succeed or if they can fit-in and be accepted on campus. Come next May, these same students will be basking in the glow of their accomplishments and receiving justly -deserved recognition.



Above: top row (l-r): William D., Margaret H., Nick K., Andrey D. and Armando M. Second row: Rubeena K., Edrena P., Diana R., Lakiesha B. and Jasmine S. Left: Nick K., Peer Counseling Graduate and Community Support Worker at Redwood House.



Above, top row (l-r): Kristin McCormick, Albert Pignataro, Elizabeth Cornejo, YAIL client Edgardo T., Dyane Randle, Sue Rulli, Jerome Hill, Lori Kandels, Tranine Chisom and daughter Kyla, Marilyn Walker, Wellness and Recovery Center client Paul H., and Julie Engles. Second row: Dan Jaquish, Anni Kelley-Day, Debbie Barrow, Dionne Brooks, Kenneth Langill and Victoria Lane. Right: Becky B., Wellness and Recovery Center client.

San Francisco NAMI Walk

On May 31st Caminar participated in and was a sponsor for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) awareness walk at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Joined by 3,000 others, Caminar employees and clients walked to raise awareness and funds for people affected by mental illness.



A Story of Survival

Dawn is a true survivor. When Dawn first came into Caminar's R.E.A.C.H. (Recovery, Empowerment and Community Housing) case management program, she was struggling to keep herself alive and safe. She came to our program because she was not engaged in treatment, had made multiple suicide attempts, and experienced several near-death overdoses. Initially, Dawn refused to take her psychiatric medications

or see her psychiatrist for over a year. She often became verbally abusive and sometimes physically abusive to her Caminar case manager, Nosa Obaseki, when he attempted to intervene. Dawn had also been also consuming illegal substances on a daily basis to help numb her pain.

When referred to our program in 2008, Dawn was living in a trailer without running water or electricity and a leaky roof – essentially uninhabitable living conditions. Despite feeling suspicious of

people, she eventually began to trust her case manager, Nosa. Although she would not go into the community with Nosa to purchase food, Nosa began to purchase and deliver food to Dawn in hopes that she would eat. Her inability to attend to her personal hygiene was evident. Dawn would go months without showering. Nosa also recalls one winter where he had to purchase a tarp and help cover Dawn's roof in the pouring rain to keep the water from leaking inside.

With intensive support and guidance, Dawn began her process of recovery. She had a goal to live in a 1-bedroom apartment. Her treatment team believed in her and referred her to Caminar's sponsor-based housing program. She interviewed and was accepted

into an apartment and has now begun consistently taking her medications as prescribed. She also now attends all medical and psychiatric appointments, pays her own bills, meets with her case manager regularly, helps babysit family members, takes care of three cats, and has not been hospitalized in years. Dawn reports, "I am no longer attempting suicide from my drug use."

Today, her apartment is clean and tidy and passes every housing inspection. The Director of Supportive Housing described Dawn as a "true success story." With all of Dawn's successes, she is being considered for graduating to a lower level of care since she has clearly acquired the skills to live independently in the community.

Solano Staff Appreciation Luncheon

On Tuesday, April 15th Caminar Solano hosted its annual staff appreciation luncheon at Zio Fraedos in Vallejo. The luncheon is a time for the organization's leaders to thank staff for all their hard work and recognize the high quality services they provide to our clients. CEO Chip Huggins, former Solano Regional Executive Director James Wagner, and Mary Roy, a representative from Solano County Mental Health, directly thanked staff and acknowledged all

their efforts. At the luncheon, a client told her story of recovery and the role staff played in helping her find wellness in her life. Awards were given to all staff who have worked at Caminar for ten years or more. The event was well attended by the region's staff and many gave positive feedback on how much they enjoyed the day.



Above: Solano Administrative Team Joha Thomas and Sue Rulli
Right: Wellness & Recovery Center's Kenneth Langill with client Barbara T.



San Mateo Staff Appreciation Brunch

Caminar's San Mateo Region held their annual staff appreciation event on Wednesday, April 16th at the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center in Menlo Park. This brunch included employee awards for most impactful intervention, best client recovery story, most innovative program and many more. The enjoyable brunch concluded with raffle prizes and speeches from former Regional Director Lori Kandels, Jobs Plus Program Director Michael Schocket and CEO Chip Huggins thanking all employees for their dedication and hard work.



Top: (l-r) R.E.A.C.H.'s Psychiatrist Dr. Braganza, Administrative Coordinator Jill Vaughn, and Case Managers Derek Krause and Tamiem Ansari. Inset: (l-r) Eucalyptus House's Mateus Porter, Albert Pignataro, Victoria Lane, Kim Robinson and Anthony Gracia



Under the Sea Dance

In June 2014, Friendship Circle in Butte Region held its first dance with the theme of "Under the Sea." Clients were excited at the announcement of the dance and many hoped this would become a frequent event on the calendar.

Friendship Circle staff decorated the venue to resemble an underwater playground. The fish food station served refreshments which consisted of snack foods (goldfish crackers, Swedish fish and gummy turtles), pizza and soda. On the other side of the room clients were able to take part in a photo booth where they could have their picture taken behind a cut-out of a shark, octopus or crab. Other props such as hats, over-sized glasses and feather boas also brought much fun and laughter to the event.

The event had a great turnout! About 30 clients attended and some of them even brought a friend. Everyone danced to music, socialized, and enjoyed the refreshments. This event provided an opportunity for people to renew acquaintances with peers they hadn't seen in a while and to meet the Regional Director Calleene Egan and Friendship Circle Program Coordinator Maureen Watkins. Consumers seemed pleased to put a face to the new Friendship Circle management team and converse with them in a relaxed setting.

Friendship Circle staff and consumers said after the dance that everyone had a fantastic time, and they asked when another similar event might be planned. Each month now has a themed event where Friendship Circle clients can assist with event planning so that it truly acts as a vehicle for their independence in socialization.

Above: (l-r) Friendship Circle clients Susan H., Ted H., and Charley N.

Silicon Valley Gives!

On May 6th nearly 15,000 donors gave for Silicon Valley region's first-ever online giving day. Numerous nonprofits were recipients of almost \$8 million dollars in donations. Thanks to the spirit of giving and support from the Bernard A. Newcomb Foundation's matching grant and Caminar's close friends, Caminar raised \$33,487! Thank you to our supporters!



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Join Our Team!

Help us spread the word about Caminar, the best community-based nonprofit in your community. We are actively adding fans, friends, followers, and fundraisers and we want you to join us.

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Visit these sites today for the latest news about Caminar and mental health issues. Participating helps us move toward overcoming the stigma of mental illness. And be sure to tell your family and friends to join our team.

Donate your used car. Visit
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John Ward Event

Pictured above, Caminar's CEO, Chip Huggins, thanks John Ward, a previous Board Supervisor for San Mateo County. John holds an annual garden show at his home in Burlingame as a fundraiser for local worthy nonprofits. This year, Caminar was thrilled to participate in this event and was honored to be chosen as the beneficiary. More than 300 people attended on June 29th and made donations to the organization totaling over \$4,000. Thank you, attendees and donors, for your support! The attendees, many of whom come every year to see John's garden, thoroughly enjoyed the wide plant palette with unusual perennials, annuals, vines, container gardening and antique ironwork. John works tirelessly to maintain and improve his beautiful garden throughout the year and our thanks goes to him, his girlfriend May, and Caminar volunteers for all the hard work that went into making this event a success!

