



COUNSELING • HOUSING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

BILL WILSON CENTER NEWS



SUMMER 2007

Letter from Sparky

Today is the beginning of a new adventure for Bill Wilson Center. We have closed escrow on a 28-unit apartment building in the City of Santa Clara that will be rehabilitated to provide affordable housing for youth (ages 18-24) at risk of becoming

chronically homeless without our support. The youth chosen for this project will not only receive our wrap-

around case management and independent living skills training but will be mentored by the nine low-income counseling staff of the Bill Wilson Center who will live in the complex. We are creating a small community where young people will find and develop long lasting connections to help them throughout their lives.

After our youth and young parents learn and use the skills to maintain long term self sufficiency they will move on but they will always have a place with us that they can come visit. We are building into the program life-long connections for our young people who have no one else to turn to for support. We plan to have community space for shared meals and activities and for just hanging out.

Of course, the existing apartment complex is old and run-down and will need extensive rehabilitation. There

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Jose Reyes Receives Roberto Navarro Award



Jose Reyes

Bill Wilson Center is pleased to announce that its Roberto Navarro Community Service Award was presented this year to José Reyes. Jose received the award because he exemplifies the spirit and dedication of Roberto Navarro by demonstrating a commitment to improving the lives of youth by serving as a mentor and role model. José is a San José City College student, and has volunteered with youth at the Washington United Youth Center for over five years, as well as at Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Rudy J. Rodriguez, who nominated José Reyes, spoke of Reyes' commitment to the community and the impact he has had on youth in the Washington neighborhood. He notes that Reyes "has demonstrated a genuine love for his community and the people in it. He is an asset to the community."

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Strategic Planning Leads to New Vision

This past year, Bill Wilson Center went through an intensive strategic planning process. We looked at the needs of the community, the gaps in services, and the report "Connected by 25: Improving the Life Chances of the Country's Most Vulnerable 14-24 Year Olds". Connected by 25 validated what we knew from our years of helping youth.

Out of the planning process came our new vision for Bill Wilson Center: Ending poverty in Santa Clara County by helping youth develop meaningful connections to the community by early adulthood. This outcome will come as a result of increasing our work with vulnerable youth and youth transitioning to adulthood.

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Letter from Sparky *(continued from page 1)*

is no community room so that will have to be built also. But behind the peeling paint and leaking pipes I see the potential for this new home of the Bill Wilson Center. I see a vibrant, new way of life that will keep our most vulnerable youth safe and will lead them on a path to success.

We are eternally grateful to the City of Santa Clara for having the vision to provide us with the finances to purchase the site. As a requirement of the city, we must gain the commitments to fund the rehabilitation and new community room construction by June 2008. We need to raise \$3 million before our dream will become a reality – all while maintaining our current levels of support for our current work.

If you would like to be part of this exciting new venture please drop me an email. We will be reaching out to many of you in the next year. I hope you will help us make the world a better place for our most needy young people.

Yours truly,

Sparky Harlan

Sparky Harlan

Medi-Cal

After a long process, Bill Wilson Center opened our Medi-Cal Clinic on April 1. We will provide medication, counseling and case management services for 100 youth (ages 21 and under) who meet the criteria for those who need counseling services. Many of our youth require mental health services; yet do not access current County mental health programs. By offering these services through BWC in a setting our clients are comfortable with, we will be closing the gap between their needs and services available to them.

Of course, Bill Wilson Center has always provided counseling services for youth and families. In the last few years, we have noted that we are seeing more youth with mental illness. These youth sometimes need medication and more intensive treatment. By becoming a Medi-Cal agency, Bill Wilson Center will have the resources to provide both the counseling, psychiatric treatment and medical interventions.

Historically, Bill Wilson Center has taken the philosophical approach that individuals (youth, families, adults) need to be provided services in the least restrictive setting. The concept of being a Medi-Cal provider had not been considered an option due to the use of medications and adapting to the “medical necessity” model of care. However, as we reviewed the needs of our youth, we realized that by becoming a Medi-Cal mental health provider, we could provide services needed by mentally ill youth in the least restrictive setting – Bill Wilson Center.

By providing mental health services in a familiar location and having staff who are known to the youth provide the bridge to mental health services, we are better able to provide youth with the help they need – in a caring, supportive environment.

Jose Reyes Receives Roberto Navarro Award

(continued from page 1)

Omar Torres, President of the Washington Neighborhood Association has known Jose Reyes since childhood. He shared that Reyes is a leader in the community and volunteers in ways that will help youth succeed.

The Award is given annually in memory of Roberto Navarro, a former Associate Director for Bill Wilson Center. Navarro died suddenly at age 36, leaving behind a legacy of improved services for homeless youth. Navarro was an expert in building bridges between diverse groups with divergent views. He advocated on behalf of youth and families, especially those most in need, and served on community task forces, commissions, and boards including the Human Relations Commission, the Chicano Mental Health Association, the Child Advocacy and Delinquency Prevention Commission, and the California Child, Youth, and Family Coalition.

To honor his work at Bill Wilson Center and in our community, the Board of Directors of Bill Wilson Center created the Roberto Navarro Community Service Award. This award is given to an individual who reflects Navarro’s work in the community on behalf of under-served populations. Since 1997, the award has been presented to a young adult who shows leadership, mentorship, and a desire to help other people.

Safe Place Community Outreach ‘Youth for Youth’ Fashion Show

Safe Place Community Outreach (SPCO) in collaboration with Coalition Against Teen Tobacco (CATT) produced a creative youth fashion show, to educate youth, families, the business community, and the community in general about safety resources for youth in Santa Clara County.

Organized by the youth, the fashion show was developed to help the community know where youth in crisis can get help. Over 100 youth, families and community members attended the show. The money raised will help support youth services here at Bill Wilson Center.



SPCO Program Director Deryk Clark with Guest Speaker Rasheed Salaam from the African American Community Service Agency

SPCO, a component of Safe Place, provides leadership activities to prevent involvement in high-risk behaviors and improve academic performance. Involvement in risk-behaviors, such as substance abuse, increases the chances that teens will participate in other risk behaviors, fail academically, and become involved in criminal activities.

Safe Place, a national safety network in over 500 communities, provides children and youth with immediate safety and a link to service providers. Bill Wilson Center’s 341 Safe Place sites in San José are public locations such as community centers, libraries, firehouses, schools, teen centers, and local businesses. In addition, all VTA vehicles are Safe Place sites. Youth in crisis can enter a site and ask for help from site employees who are trained to respond to Safe Place requests. Response is provided by Bill Wilson Center 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Strategic Planning Leads to New Vision

(continued from page 1)

Santa Clara County statistical information that we considered included:

- One in five youth in Santa Clara County are at risk before age 25.
- Youth with juvenile justice involvement: 2800 juveniles were arrested for felonies in 2005.
- Youth in foster care: 300 youth ages 16-18 are preparing for emancipation and 600 young adults (19-24) still need support.
- Young, unmarried parents: 1400-1500 teens (15-19) give birth each year.
- Runaway and homeless youth: 1050 youth are homeless on any given day.

- High school drop outs: 2800 7th-12th graders dropped out of school in 2004-05.

The target groups that we have defined include: transitional age youth, youth who have been in foster care, youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system, at-risk youth, status offenders (runaways), homeless youth, youth with mental illness, youth who have dropped out of high school, parenting youth and their children, grieving individuals and families, working poor.

Our programmatic goals are:

1. Every youth will have the skills to become a self-sufficient adult.

2. Every youth who leaves an institution, a system, or the streets will have a safe, stable place to live.
3. Every client will become emotionally healthy and have the skills to solve their own problems.

To accomplish this we will need to partner with others, as we can’t do this all ourselves. The plan also set out four areas of internal strategic focus: 1. Increasing our community presence, 2. Improving quality and outcomes, 3. Develop organization and staff, and 4. Build financial stability.

The complete strategic plan is available on our website, www.billwilsoncenter.org.

SPCO Fashion Show Sponsors

- Santa Clara County Youth Task Force
- NVIDIA
- AFFC
- Loft Bar and Bistro
- EB Games
- Tengu Sushi
- Lexar Media Inc.
- Hotel Avante
- Camera Cinemas



Yeni Nguyen from SPCO and Jenesis Tolbert from Silver Creek High School work the runway

Volunteers

We have had a 48% increase in the number of Bill Wilson Center volunteers in the last year. With 185 volunteers, the estimated amount of total volunteer hours for Bill Wilson Center in 2006 was 17,209. With volunteer hours currently valued at \$18.77 an hour, our volunteers donated \$323,008 worth of volunteer time! Of course, we know that our volunteers are truly priceless – ask any youth, or anyone who calls Contact Cares or turns to the Centre for Living with Dying. Thank you volunteers!!

In June we will start a new daytime training for Contact Cares volunteers, and in August we'll be training volunteers for our youth programs. If you think you might like to volunteer for Bill Wilson Center, please call or email our Volunteer Manager, Erica Werpetinski, and plan to attend a Volunteer Orientation.

Upcoming Volunteer Orientations

Thursday, May 10th: 6:30-7:30pm
Tuesday, May 22nd: 10am-11am
Tuesday, May 22nd: 6:30-7:30pm

RSVP to Erica Werpetinski
(408) 850 6138 or Volunteers@bwcmail.org
You must RSVP in advance to attend the orientation.

VOLUNTEER!

BECOME A CRISIS LINE COUNSELOR!

Contact Cares, a program of Bill Wilson Center, is a 24-hour multi-purpose help line that provides objective listening, crisis intervention, and referrals to community resources. Contact Cares' services are free, confidential and non-judgmental.

- Gain experience in the field of counseling
- Help people in crisis
- Develop outstanding listening skills
- Earn letters of recommendation for employers
- Flexible schedule

I enjoy contributing to my community and knowing I make a difference to our callers!

Volunteering with Contact Cares makes me feel good about helping others, and it fits in my schedule so easily!

Contact Cares Volunteer Training Series
Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
(All dates are mandatory)
June 19 and 21
June 26 and 28
July 10 and 12
July 17
For more information, contact the Volunteer Manager
408-850-6138 or Volunteers@billwilsoncenter.org

Volunteer for Contact Cares!!!

Volunteer Profile – Mark Clark



ILP volunteer Mark Clark

We would also like to give special thanks to one of our ILP volunteers, Mark Clark. Mark, a Loan Servicing Officer in Greater Bay SBA Lending, has been involved in the California Connected by 25 Initiative (<http://cc25.sccgov.org>) in Santa Clara County. This initiative is part of the Family to Family Initiative developed in 1992 to address the growing challenges in the nation's child welfare and foster care system. CC25I was developed to create a comprehensive continuum of services supporting positive youth development and successful foster youth transition to adulthood.

Mark coaches foster care youth (ages 14 to 24) educating them on the basics of financial literacy and wealth building. He was also asked to lead the “train the trainers” program once his sub-committee curriculum is finalized. Mark made a three-year commitment to the program and will be contributing about 115 hours annually to the financial education of Santa Clara County foster youth.

Mark's involvement in CCby25I came as a result of his weekly volunteer involvement at Bill Wilson Center's Independent Living Skills Program (ILP). Mark facilitates workshops and seminars on Life Building skills and Financial Fitness. Mark has created and facilitated Common Sense/Uncommon Wisdom, Bank to Basics, Financial Stress – Urge to Splurge, You Care – Auto Aware, Money Institute 4 Life and the ongoing Financial Fitness Forum.

“I became involved in foster youth education more than six years ago because I wanted to do something that was not only bigger than me, but something outside myself,” explained Mark. “Teenagers, especially foster teenagers, need this education that they don't normally receive at home or school.”

2006 International Foster Youth Poetry Contest

Congratulations to Annette B. for being named a Grand Prize winner in the 2006 Soul Water Rising Foster Youth Poetry Contest! Annette's poem was selected from 100 entries! The contest asked poets to share their vision of what foster youth can teach the world. Grand prize winners received \$100 cash prizes, and will have their poems published in an anthology of poetry by foster youth. Congratulations Annette!! Access to all the grand prize winning poetry is at www.soulwater.org/fosteryouthpoetry.html

Don't worry

Poem by Annette B.

My father was occupied An endless night An open tomb Decaying memories I'm alone	But I survived it all I can rest, believe and dream Now and again I wish My father, my mother back to life
In my search for god I began to hate them No one prayed Water Bread Good health	I want too much But can only carry so little I believe now more then ever A connection to the world I can be who I want to be
No one moved Aware of nothing To doze, to rest, to dream To death	Know matter what has happened to me A foster child, an open tomb A connection to life From the deep darkness I feel just like you
We could stand it no longer Flames everywhere Snow, icy wind	But more pain
Through the blue-tinged Sunlight I could see darkness Gradually Fading	Don't worry I survived it all and so will you

You are invited!

You've heard about our programs, you've seen the annual reports, but if you want to see the front lines of Bill Wilson Center's programs come to our Transitional Housing Program's Open House.

Meet and hear from Bill Wilson Center Executive Director, Sparky Harlan. Enjoy refreshments while you tour one of our transitional homes. Learn more about how we work with youth and help get them into permanent housing.

Join Us!
Wednesday, August 29th from 5:00-7:00 pm

The Open House will be held in Santa Clara. For more information regarding location details or to RSVP contact 408-850-6178 or email ksheehy@billwilsoncenter.org.

AIDS Coalition
Silicon Valley –
Unmask the Mysteries

A Masquerade Gala and
Benefit Night!

AIDS Coalition Silicon Valley provides support for local HIV/AIDS service organizations through its annual Unmask the Mysteries Gala and the Walk for AIDS Silicon Valley, the largest AIDS fundraising events in the South Bay. Bill Wilson Center is one of the benefiting agencies of these events. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to www.unmaskthemysteries.com.

When and Where:

Saturday June 9th, 2007
Triton Museum of Art
1505 Warburton Avenue, Santa Clara
Tickets: \$125 per person

UNMASK THE MYSTERIES

- BUY TICKETS
- Sponsors
- Sponsor Kit
- Event Highlights
- Event Information
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MASQUERADE GALA AND BENEFIT NIGHT!
TRITON MUSEUM OF ART
SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA
SATURDAY, JUNE 9TH, 2007
AIDS COALITION SILICON VALLEY

PRESENTING SPONSOR XILINX

UTM MASK COLLECTION REGISTER YOURS NOW!

MEDIA SPONSOR NBCII

ACSV

HERE IS NOT ENOUGH APATHY IN THE WORLD... TO STOP A SINGLE ACT OF HOPE!

Executive Director Sparky Harlan
Receives National Award

We are very pleased to announce that Bill Wilson Center’s Executive Director, Sparky Harlan, was recently recognized for her leadership in youth services. The National Network for Youth presented Sparky with the Executive Leadership Award of Excellence at its Annual Symposium.

Over her 30+ years in youth services, Sparky has extended her influence beyond her work here at Bill Wilson Center. Sparky served on the board of the California Child, Youth, and Family Coalition for six years, and as board president for two

of those years. She was the Chair of the Public Policy and Advocacy Committee and was a board member of the National Network for Youth where she testified to Congress on the need for funding transitional housing services for homeless youth. She also served on the Advisory Board to California State Legislature, Little Hoover Commission on Juvenile Justice.



Sparky Harlan with National Network For Youth's Chief Executive Officer Vicki Wagner

Brief of last homeless count

In 2004, Santa Clara County (SCC) conducted a homeless census and survey to try to establish a number from which to benchmark progress in reaching the County and City’s Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. The plan incorporates mechanisms for measuring and publishing success and for garnering the financial resources. The plan includes strategies which acknowledge that success in ending long-term homelessness requires the participation of all of the community. Business, labor, philanthropy, government, non-profits, faith-based organizations, unhoused people, neighborhood associations, housing developers, funders, citizens and real estate associations -- all have a role to play. Supervisor Don Gage is spearheading a Blue Ribbon Commission of Silicon Valley leaders to ensure the Ten Year Plan to end Chronic Homelessness and the 20 year Plan to Address the Affordable Housing Crisis have the community support and resources behind them to meet the aggressive challenge of these plans.

In order to measure success and progress in achieving goals SCC is using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS will facilitate the collection and sharing of information between agencies, to identify needs and the missing links in delivering services to unhoused and at-risk residents of our community. HMIS will allow service providers computerized access to real-time information about bed accessibility, as well as basic information about the clients seeking services. Clients will no longer

need to repeat the basic information about their needs and requirements. “Bill Wilson Center was one of the first programs to help pilot the HMIS system in its development phase. It has taken the cooperation of literally hundreds of programs working together in the community to get this effort up and running. This is no small feat,” Said Ray Allen, Executive Director of Community Technology Alliance who developed and manages the HMIS system locally.

On Monday, January 29 and Tuesday, January 30, 2007 from 4:30 A.M. to approximately 10:00 A.M. the County held a second count. Bill Wilson Center staff, clients, and volunteers assisted with the count. Youth/Client volunteers not only helped with the count but also did peer surveys to obtain more detailed information on the demographics and needs of homeless youth as a part of the homeless population.

In order to take a street count, there must be a physical census of the streets, by each census tract in each city. Volunteers walked and drove down the streets in each census tract looking for people sleeping on the streets, in cars or in other hidden places. Volunteers do not disturb the homeless and take a visual count. It is often difficult to tell the difference between men and women, or even adults and youth, when people are covered up and/or bundled for the night. For this reason we believe the census has significantly under counted youth. Despite the potential for significant undercount youth still represent about 11% of the sheltered population and 3% of the homeless street population.



According to the 2004 Santa Clara County Homeless Census and Survey there were an estimated 20,338 homeless people in SCC

“As the County’s Homeless Coordinator, I am often presented with challenges which would be impossible to accomplish by myself. The County’s Homeless Street and Shelter Count is such a challenge. Only with the cooperation of agencies like the Bill Wilson Center were we able to cover the entire County in two days. Everyone, agencies’ staff and volunteers, clients and homeless individuals, pitched in to make this last count very thorough and successful. We now await the results.”

- Margaret Gregg, Homeless Concerns Coordinator, Office of Affordable Housing.

Connect by 25 ~ THP plus

State budget reflects need for transitional-age youth housing

The news of the 2007-2008 California state Budget came at an important time as communities all over the state gear up to fulfill the mission of the Foster Care Work Group’s “Connected by 25” report. The report lists finding stable housing as a key factor in a youth’s ability to connect into the workforce and the social sphere before age 25. Officials in Sacramento may have heeded these calls. This year’s state budget begins to reflect some of the most significant factors presented in the report, including the need for housing for transitional-age youth.

Santa Clara County has become one of five California counties to receive funding from the California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) to provide the types of services described in the report. In Santa Clara County, the funds will be focused on two areas: housing and employment. Bill Wilson Center has been funded to providing 13 units of transitional housing for emancipated foster youth.

“The timing of all these events has given us an excellent opportunity to close a pathway to homelessness,” says Sparky Harlan. “By providing supportive, stable housing for transitional-age youth who often fall through the cracks we can make great strides towards ending poverty and homelessness in Santa Clara County.”

Santa Clara County is one of the most expensive housing markets in the nation. Fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,302 per month in 2005. A minimum-wage earner would have to work 148 hours per week to comfortably afford these housing costs. Young adults with supportive families can often count on help with an initial deposit, a co-signer, or even an emergency loan if circumstances prevent them from making a rent payment. Without any financial support or guidance, finding and securing a safe apartment can be close to impossible for many foster youth.

Transitional Housing Programs have a two-fold effect: they reduce incidences of homelessness and they help connect youth to services well before they reach the threshold age of 25.

The benefits of transitional housing are substantial. Estimates show that it costs over \$61,000 per year in tax dollars to pay for the emergency room services and incarceration needed by one chronically homeless person. It costs only \$16,000 to pay for permanent supportive housing that includes treatment and care. It would cost even less to prevent adult homeless altogether by providing transitional-age youth with supportive housing.

Fatherhood Works!!



Recently, Bill Wilson Center received a federal grant to help parenting young adults, with a focus on fathers, stabilize their lives and find employment. While the program kicked off just a few months ago, we’ve assisted with transportation, employment counseling/ referrals, employment maintenance support (work clothes, shoes, haircuts), and additional services which include

weekly workshops and support groups, job readiness group, financial education workshops, and individual case management.

This program concentrates on financial stability and employment. Focused on parenting youth aged 18-25 who have a significant relationship with a child, this program is a great resource. Most of our current Fatherhood Works clients are young fathers in their early 20s and are facing issues around substance use/rehabilitation/recovery, prior misdemeanors/felonies, homelessness, unemployment, and parenting issues. Despite the program’s name, services are also available to young moms.

We continue to seek entry-level employment for youth. If you own or work for a business that might be willing to help a young parent learn how to succeed in the work world, contact Malaya. These young adults need a place to start – your help could make a difference.

Free Access To...

- New work clothes/shoes
- Monthly bus passes & tokens
- Haircuts
- Gas vouchers
- Gift cards
- Ged testing fee assistance
- Referrals
- Job assistance and support
- Food, showers, laundry
- Daily drop-in center services
- Assistance with id, birth certificate and other vital documents

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Awards Reflect CenterBeam's Philanthropy

This past year CenterBeam received recognition for "Best Corporate Social Responsibility Program" from the 2006 International Business Awards. In addition, CEO Kevin Francis was recognized as Best Turnaround Executive. In 2004, the Entrepreneurs Foundation awarded CenterBeam its "Company of the Year" award for its exemplary community efforts and noted its executive leadership's integration of community into its business practices.

"A critical success factor for CenterBeam is not only how well we do in business—but that we do business well," said Kirstin Burke, CenterBeam's director of marketing communications. "We place a focus on corporate philanthropy as a cornerstone for the development of successful professionals."

One of CenterBeam's key community partnerships is with Bill Wilson Center. One of the reasons the partnership has been effective is that we share common values, and a desire to invest in the development of our young people, making sure they have access to the variety of services needed to grow to be healthy and self-sufficient adults.

At Bill Wilson Center, CenterBeam has conducted clothing drives, wrapped presents, taught youth how to apply make-up, and is now spearheading volunteer support for our newly expanded employment program. CenterBeam employees will be trained to do mock interviews with youth who are seeking employment. The feedback each youth receives will help them put their best foot forward as they go into the work world.



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