



BUILDING CONNECTIONS

BILL WILSON CENTER NEWS

COUNSELING • HOUSING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY



SUMMER 2008

Letter from Sparky

Dear Friends,

When two youth shelters closed their doors last October, Bill Wilson Center became the only runaway and homeless youth shelter in Santa Clara County. How would homeless

teens receive the help needed when the number of emergency beds in Santa Clara County dropped from 34 to 16 beds overnight? Suddenly, we had no choice – Bill Wilson



Center had to step up to serve the kids. We were not going to let one troubled kid slip through the cracks and end up sleeping on the streets.

We took immediate action, first expanding our State licensed shelter capacity from 16 to 20 beds. Next, we applied to take over Casa SAY, the closed shelter serving north county. Thanks to the support of the City of Mountain View, we will soon own Casa SAY. However, it will take time and financial resources to be able to reopen it as a runaway shelter.

The closure of these two youth shelters was a wake-up call for me -- not every nonprofit agency is as well run financially or programmatically as Bill Wilson Center. After little warning on the closure of these shelters, we did not want to put the lives of troubled kids in the hands

Building Dreams

When over 700 people filled the room at our Building Dreams lunch in late April, they heard from youth who had been helped by our services and from our Executive Director, Sparky Harlan.

We appreciate the courage of **Erik Haston** and **David White** in standing up before so many people and telling their stories. They are both wonderful examples of life changes that can happen with a little help from Bill Wilson Center (or in Erik's case, Future Families). Two other youth shared their experiences on a video that was shown.



Sparky shared a story of a teen who came to our shelter after years on the streets and occasional overnights in an unlicensed shelter. He's doing so well now and sees a future ahead of him. Sparky energized the audience to support Bill Wilson Center so that we can support more youth in need.

Cindy O'Leary asked the audience to join in our work by making a donation, but first she

shared her experience as a foster parent, and the lessons she learned from her long-term connection with her foster daughter.

If you missed Building Dreams this year, mark Thursday May 7, 2009 on your calendar. This one-hour lunch is an experience you don't want to miss.

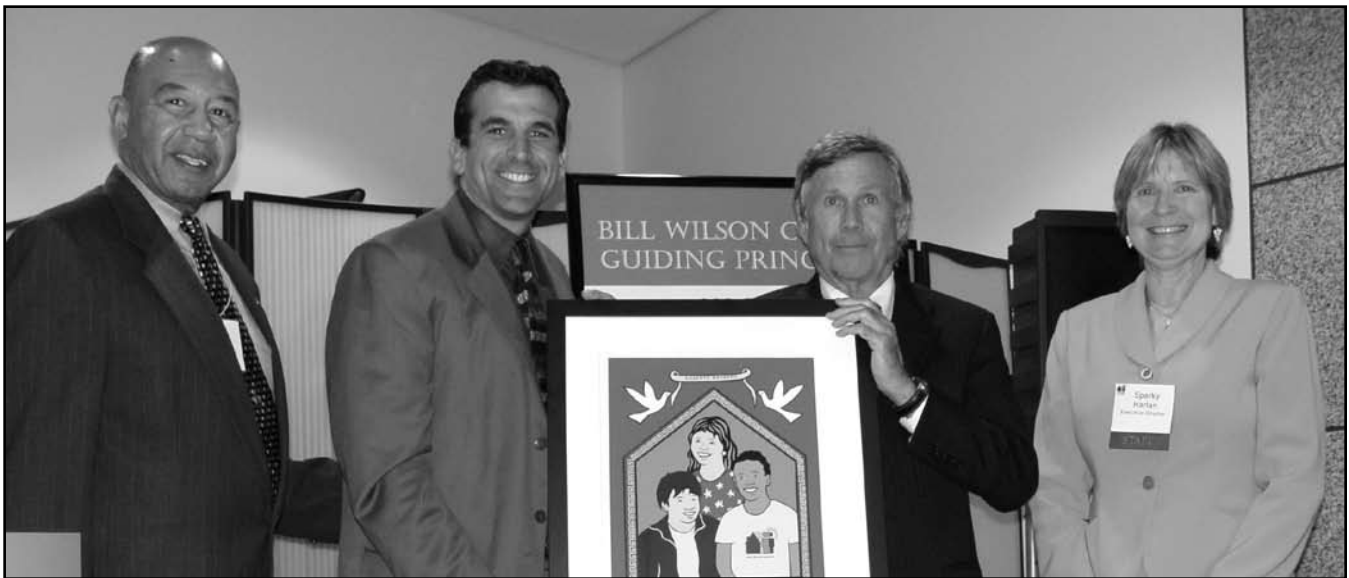
If you are part of an organization that would like to have a speaker and view the video, please call Judy Whittier at (408) 850-6132.

Roberto Navarro Award

On February 27th Bill Wilson Center honored two extraordinary individuals at the Roberto Navarro Community Service Award Ceremony. Every year Roberto Navarro's memory is commemorated with an award given to an exceptional individual who exemplifies the giving spirit of the past Associate Director. Generally, one youth is chosen to receive this award along with a

company should be. "We are all part of this community and each piece, businesses and non profits alike, is necessary for this community to function as a whole."

The **Roberto Navarro Community Service Award** was presented to **Vanessa Banh**. Vanessa exemplifies the spirit and dedication of Roberto Navarro by demonstrating a commitment to improving the lives of youth. She has



San Jose Councilmembers Forrest Williams and Sam Liccardo, Peter Hero, and Sparky Harlan

\$500 scholarship. This year, we were especially thrilled as Roberto Navarro's family matched the \$500 making a total of \$1,000 for the award recipient.

Unique this year was a special award given to a remarkable adult. **Peter Hero**, past CEO of the Community Foundation Silicon Valley, was honored for his dedication to community and philanthropy. While accepting his award he spoke of giving back to the people who need it most and respecting non profits as any other

helped in many ways. Vanessa organized a project to distribute bag lunches to homeless people, an Ice Cream Social for veterans at Palo Alto Hospital, and a Senior Prom for the elderly.

Vanessa has organized Safe Place Community Outreach's (SPCO) fashion show to raise funds for a youth scholarship. As a youth captain, Vanessa received the SPCO leadership award presented to an outstanding individual who has shown exceptional leadership. She has been a mentor to high achievers as well as dropouts.

Vanessa is Vice-President of the California Scholarship Federation Club (CSF) at Andrew Hill High School. CSF is both a community service and academic club that helps students get on track towards college. Vanessa also volunteered in a certified nursing assistant program at Mission College and took care of elderly residents.

Bill Wilson Center is pleased to honor the memory of Roberto Navarro by recognizing Peter Hero and Vanessa Banh.



Vanessa Banh and Safe Place Program Manager Deryk Clark

Letter from Sparky

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of another provider with little or no experience in serving you that might step in to fill the void.

We had just merged with Future Families and had 70 foster homes; why couldn't Bill Wilson Center always have a bed available for homeless youth anywhere in Santa Clara County through short-term placement with foster parents? It is clearly more cost-effective, and we can assure quality control of services if we move to fill the need by expanding our shelter capacity through added foster homes.

To plan for the future, we are launching a campaign, Always a Bed, to ensure that no homeless or runaway teen will be turned away. Our goal in this campaign will be to raise ongoing support and an endowment where the interest would support the on-going costs of ensuring that kids will be safe.

Our primary goal is to reunite kids with their families and provide aftercare support to keep families together. When the family is not an option, we look for a relative or family friend to help. When no one is available, we work with foster care to find a supportive home. No youth leaves Bill Wilson Center's shelter without a safe place to go.

Best Regards,



Sparky Harlan
Executive Director

Valle Monte League Supports BWC's Healing Hearts Program

Imagine how you would feel if you were 10 years old and a parent, sibling, or maybe even a favorite aunt died. Would you understand what was happening? Might you think it was somehow your fault? Would you know how to talk with others about how you felt? Would you feel alone?

The Healing Heart program helps children, teens and their families to deal with all of these feelings. Often the children don't have the vocabulary of grief – and just as often the adults in their lives are trying to handle their own feelings so they may try to hide their own grief or be so devastated that they are unable to deal with anything.

In the Healing Hearts program, children are separated into age groups (littles, middles, and teens) and the adults in their lives are in their own group. Working together on their grief helps the whole family to heal. They express their thoughts and feeling through artwork, poetry, and lots of talking and sharing.

The Healing Heart program would not exist without the Valle Monte League.

Established in 1950, Valle Monte League, Inc. is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that supports mental health agencies in Silicon Valley. The enthusiastic women of Valle Monte League are dedicated to the mission "to help provide and promote better mental health within the community through licensed agencies."

Annually, Valle Monte League produces Christmas Tree Elegance®, a week-long celebration of the holidays that includes a Champagne Brunch, an evening Holiday Office Party, two morning coffees, two afternoon teas, and a Children's Party for youngsters 3 to 10 years old. The week comes to an elegant close at The Grand Ball.

A fashion show by Macy's is incorporated in most of the events, as is the raffle of exquisite professionally decorated trees, each of which includes gifts valued in the thousands of dollars. They're beautiful!

The best part is that all of this is produced by an amazing group of volunteers. Valle Monte League has no paid staff, which ensures that the benefiting agencies receive all the profits from this week-long extravaganza. Bill Wilson Center is one of the beneficiaries with the funds designated for our Centre for Living with Dying's Healing Heart program.

As Cathy De Maria, Valle Monte League 2008 President, notes, "Valle Monte League, Inc. has supported the centre for Living with Dying since 1972. The specially trained staff at the Centre enable the clients to find solace, feel comfort and gain consoling support. This difficult part of their life's journey thus receives respect, understanding, recognition and kind acceptance. We in Valle Monte League are proud of our mission to raise monies for the Healing Heart Program through our Christmas Tree Elegance fundraiser because we are grounded in the belief that our efforts are indeed helping others receive a secure and gently nurtured healing that will endure."

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Check out our website where you can donate, find information on becoming a volunteer or a foster parent, and read our wish list. Join us in preventing poverty by building connections for youth and families.



Always a Bed

Rarely is Something so Important so Achievable

Every two years the County organizes volunteers to go out onto the streets in the very early hours of the morning to count the number of homeless people they find. The number is staggering:

On any given night, 1,800 children and young adults under the age of 25 are homeless in Santa Clara County – the number grows larger when you add the children and youth who are staying with friends because they can't go home.

When Casa SAY in Mountain View and a youth shelter in San Jose closed this fall, Bill Wilson Center felt we had to respond. As the only youth shelter in the County, we are committed to saying “Yes, there is always a bed here at Bill Wilson Center” to any young person who needs help.

We took three steps to accomplish this pledge:

- Increased our existing shelter's capacity from 16 to 20 beds.
- Took over and reopen Casa SAY youth shelter.
- Increased foster family placements to take in kids if our shelters are full.

We will continue to offer the only licensed shelter in the County - being licensed means that we have met certain standards of care. We offer 24 hour shelter and a continuum

of services for the kids right in the shelter. Providing these services means that we can get a teen home again, or into other stable housing.

BWC will soon take over Casa SAY, an 8-bed shelter in Mountain View that previously provided shelter and services to runaway and homeless teens, but was closed in last fall. With the help of the City of Mountain View, we expect to offer shelter and services in the northern part of the County within the next few months.

And, as a way to provide even more beds, we are seeking individuals and families who are willing to become foster parents on a temporary basis if our shelters are full. BWC will certify up to 10 emergency foster homes. BWC's recent merger with Future Families, a foster care agency, gives us the capacity to add foster families throughout the County. If you'd like more information about becoming a foster family, please contact (888) 922-KIDS or email inquiries@bwcmail.org.

These are the actions that we've taken to ensure that we can say “yes” to homeless and runaway kids. Yet, we need to go farther. We are fundraising to support the increased capacity, and board and staff are developing ways that our community can join us in supporting Always A Bed. We know that we need a thoughtful and sustainable plan. We will keep you informed about our progress as we move forward.

If you have ideas for Always A Bed, please feel free to contact Lisa Breen Strickland at lbreenstrickland@bwcmail.org or (408) 278-2527.

Honoring a Life Well Lived

You can continue to give to Bill Wilson Center

None of us likes to think about, let alone prepare for life to continue without us. And, yet the head-in-the-sand strategy often causes additional heartache and headaches for our loved ones.

If you have been a part of the Bill Wilson Center family of supporters, we would like you to consider continuing this legacy after you're gone. Beyond helping others, there are definite tax advantages to making a bequest.

Here are some examples of how simple this can be:

Simple Bequests

Donors who have supported Bill Wilson Center during their lifetime may continue their generosity in perpetuity. A simple bequest will assure that our community will benefit from your life's work. Simply ask your attorney to add to your will a statement to designate either a specific amount or a percentage of your estate for **Bill Wilson Center**. It is important to have our legal name correct.

The sentence might read: "I give, devise, and bequeath 10% (or a specific dollar amount) of my Estate, after taxes and debts have been satisfied, to Bill Wilson Center, a California nonprofit corporation, located in Santa Clara, CA."

Bequests of IRA or Other Retirement Funds

Whatever remains in one's retirement plan may be subject to both income and estate taxes before passing to one's heirs, sometimes leaving heirs with only 20 cents on the dollar. Instead of losing 80% to taxes, donors can give 100% to a charity they care about; a tax-smart gift for benefactors and a good example to their heirs.

As with any estate planning, it pays to consult a professional before making changes or establishing a plan. Please consult your estate planning professional.

For more information on this important subject, please contact Lisa Breen Strickland at (408) 278-2527 or lbreenstrickland@bwcmail.org

On August 3, 2007, **Vanley Batchelor** passed away at her home. Vanley was a long time volunteer for Contact Cares. Vanley worked the early morning shift at Contact Cares and then would go to Church of the Valley to help out there. Because of Vanley, we hold many of our volunteer trainings at Church of the Valley.

In September Bill Wilson Center was notified that Vanley had left us in her will. We were surprised – she had never mentioned anything to us. She restricted her gift to youth programs and restricted our use of the funds to the interest from her bequest. The interest from her bequest will exceed the generous monthly donations that Vanley had given in her life.

Vanley made this gift to Bill Wilson Center years before Contact Cares merged with Bill Wilson Center. She had known of our work and wanted to ensure that we would be able to continue to help kids.

We didn't know that Vanley had left Bill Wilson Center in her will, so we weren't able to thank her. I hope that somehow she knows how appreciative we are.

If you're thinking of including a gift to Bill Wilson Center in your will, please let us know. We'd like to be able to thank you!

Kids Coming Home

BWC's Foster Care Program provides stable, caring, temporary homes for children in the foster care system who are infants through 18 years of age. These children were removed from their birth families because of neglect or abuse, and have experienced trauma, grief, and loss. The Program's primary goal is to prepare the child for permanency, which means either their return to appropriate birth family members, placement into an adoptive family, or adoption by the foster family, if they wish to be considered. Comprehensive, culturally appropriate foster care services and generous financial stipends are provided to help support foster families through their entire foster care experience. The Foster Care Program needs many types of families, including emergency placement homes, short and long-term foster homes, and Intensive Therapeutic Foster Care (ITFC) homes.

If you are able to provide love, understanding, and stability, please call (888) 922-KIDS or email inquiries@bwcmail.org to learn more about becoming a foster family.

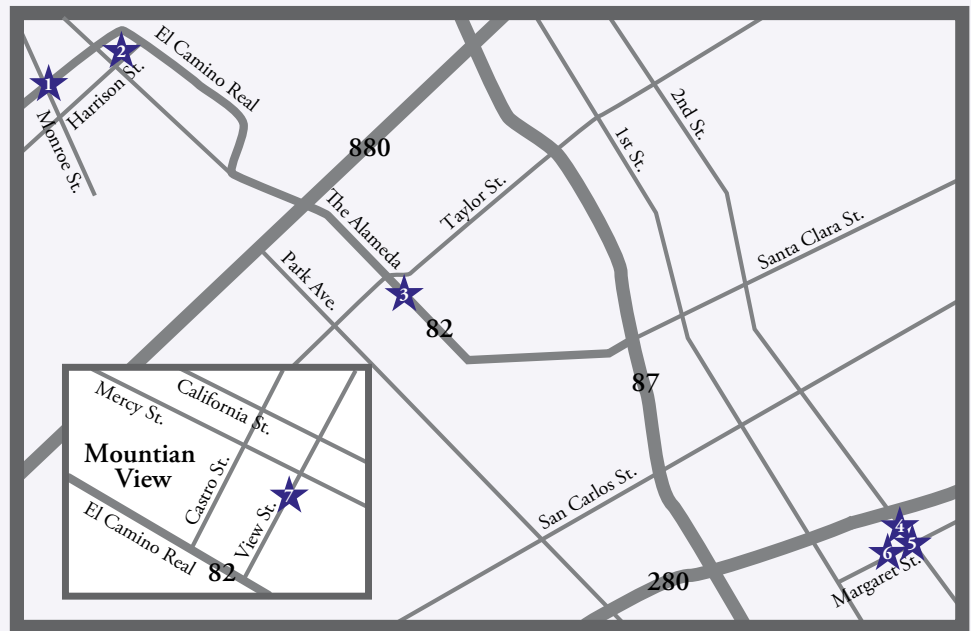
Program Locations

1. 1265 El Camino Real
Santa Clara, CA
 - Centre for Living with Dying
 - Counseling Services
2. 3490 The Alameda
Santa Clara, CA
 - Shelter
 - Counseling
 - Administrative Support
3. 1671 The Alameda
San Jose, CA
 - Foster Care Services
 - Counseling Services
 - Safe Place
 - Safe Place Community Outreach
 - Parent Child Interaction Therapy
 - Adoption Services
 - Restorative Justice
4. 691 S. 2nd Street
San Jose, CA
 - Independent Living Skills
5. 693 S. 2nd Street
San Jose, CA
 - Drop-In Center
 - Transitional Housing Offices
6. 10 Margaret Street
San Jose, CA
 - Mental Health Clinic
7. 509 View Street
Mountain View, CA
 - Quetzal House
 - Shelter

Not shown

- Contact Cares
- Volunteer Case Aide Program
- School Outreach Counseling
- Transitional Housing Sites

For information about programs and intake procedures please contact (408) 243-0222 or visit www.billwilsoncenter.org.



Counseling Center provides low-cost, professional counseling services to individuals and families in the Santa Clara Valley. *Counseling is available on a sliding fee scale and is provided to all ages, Monday-Saturday. Call the Intake Counselor at (408) 850-6145.*

Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter provides comprehensive services for runaway, homeless and other troubled youth, ages 11 through 17. *Call the Intake Counselor at (408) 850-6151. Youth may walk in for shelter 24/7.*

Drop In Center provides services to street youth ages 12 - 24. The program's goal is to improve the health and well being by reducing high-risk behaviors such as drug use, and involvement in survival sex. The ultimate goal is to help youth exit the streets. *Homeless and at-risk youth access this program by walking in seven days a week at varying hours.*

Transitional Housing Program provides housing and support services for homeless youth ages 18 – 24, and parenting youth and their infants/toddlers. *Transitional housing sites are located in San Jose, Santa Clara, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale. Call THP at (408) 925-0232.*

Centre for Living with Dying provides individual and small group grief support for adults, children, and families experiencing life-threatening illness, or death of a loved one. *Call (408) 553-6950 to access the Centre's programs.*

Contact Cares is a crisis line for youth and adults. Adults should call the crisis line at (408) 850-6126. Youth should call the 24/7 Line at (888) 247-7717. *People who are HIV+ and the people who care about them should call the Centre Cares line at (408) 279-0111.*

Independent Living Skills Program teaches youth in foster care life skills such as how to get and keep a job, balance a checkbook, shop and keep house, utilize community resources, get along with neighbors and co-workers. *This program is open to youth in foster care ages 16+. Call ILP at (408) 993-9211.*

Quetzal House is a six-bed, short-term group home for youth who are chronic runaways from the foster care system. *Quetzal House is located in Mountain View. Youth can only be referred through the foster care system. County social workers may call (408) 850-6146 to refer a youth.*

Restorative Justice Program provides status offenders (first time offenders) an alternative to incarceration and/or citation. *Youth must be referred by Probation. Probation staff should call (408) 289-5833 to refer a youth.*

Safe Place and Safe Place Community Outreach reaches thousands of children and youth in the community, providing them with information on how to access Safe Place sites. *Businesses interested in being a site, or youth interested in joining SPCO should call (408) 850-8466.*

“Service is the rent we pay for our time on this earth.”



George Mageles

Spotlight on: George Mageles

George Mageles has been a volunteer for Contact Cares, our 24-hour hotline, for eleven years. After spotting a flyer on the West Valley College campus, George came to an orientation and started yet another chapter in his already busy life. With his degree in Psychology from the University of Maine he wanted the opportunity to speak with people at their most vulnerable time of need. After training, George signed on for eight hours a month of telephone support at Contact Cares.

Two years before the merger of Contact Cares and Bill Wilson Center, George joined the Contact Cares Board of Directors. Since the merger four years ago, he has remained a Telephone Counselor (TC) and when he received his Master's in Counseling Psychology from University San Francisco, he became an intern for Bill Wilson Center. George provides drug and alcohol groups for the kids in our shelter, individual and family counseling through outpatient services, and grief counseling at the Centre for Living with Dying.

Being a TC is never easy. Volunteers handle calls from people needing support and help with abuse, rape, suicide, and mental health issues. Knowing that you only have that one opportunity to help the caller can be extremely difficult. George says that staying in the moment is incredibly important. “We don't try to give advice, but rather we listen,” says George. “Most often they already have the answer and we just try to help them see that themselves.”

George's Top Three Things a person should do when in crisis

1. Call and ask for help
2. Provide for your own safety
3. Reflect on your past. How you got through difficult situations before and can you adapt that to this situation?

We are so appreciative of George's commitment to Bill Wilson Center and the youth and families we serve. For more information about how you can volunteer, check out our website www.billwilsoncenter.org or call our volunteer manager at (408) 850-6138.

Volunteer!!

There are always new opportunities to volunteer with Bill Wilson Center. Contact Volunteer Manager Amanda Freeman to find out more details.

(408) 850-6138 or Volunteers@bwcmail.org

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Bill Wilson Center
3490 The Alameda
Santa Clara, CA 95050
phone: (408) 243-0222
fax: (408) 246-5752

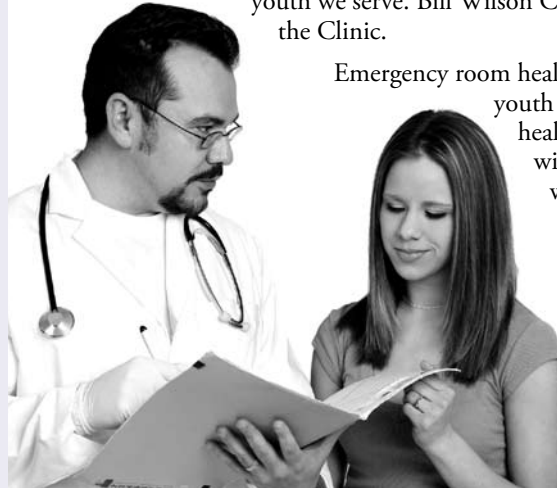
BWCmail@billwilsoncenter.org
www.billwilsoncenter.org

Valley Medical Center Opens Clinic at Bill Wilson Center

What happens when a youth needs medical attention? For several years, Valley Medical Center has provided health services by bringing their van to our Drop-In Center once a week. This has helped, but wasn't enough. We are very pleased to announce that Valley Med is now on-site at Bill Wilson Center's downtown San Jose site two days a week.

Valley Med's Medical Clinic at our Drop-In Center is serving transition age youth (ages 16 to 24). Here they can access services from a doctor, nurse or psychiatrist, and no insurance or payment is required. They are able to receive physicals, prescriptions and get checked for STDs.

This collaboration between Valley Medical Center and Bill Wilson Center provides a critically needed service for our kids. We are very appreciative of Valley Med as this medical care is being provided at no cost to either Bill Wilson Center or the youth we serve. Bill Wilson Center is providing the space for the Clinic.



Emergency room health care is not health care. Our youth can now have regular, preventative health care as well as treatment. This will contribute to their long-term well-being, and help them to maintain good health.

Are you a dentist? Our kids need dental care. If you could provide dental care at no cost for even one or two youth, please call Steven Nordseth at (408) 925-0234.



Bill Wilson Center
3490 The Alameda, Santa Clara, CA 95050
P.O. Box 210 A, Santa Clara, CA 95052

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