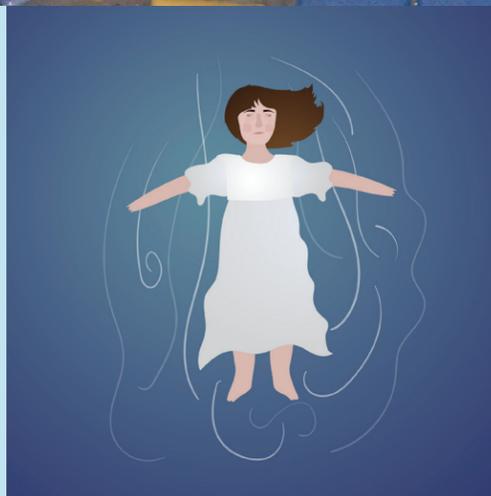


The Art of Hillview
“Floating”

by **Cristine Karapetyan**



Hillview client Cristine Karapetyan can count painting, drawing, illustration and web design among her many talents. Currently, she is a project manager for web and graphic design projects. In the future, she hopes to establish a successful graphic arts company.

“Floating” is a digital illustration based on a photo from her childhood. “It makes me feel innocent and peaceful, like childhood,” she says.

“When I came to Hillview, I was in a really bad spot,” Cristine explains. “The people here have made a world of difference.

Their enormous compassion has meant so much to me.”

To see more samples of Cristine’s work, or to contact her regarding graphics projects, visit her website at www.cristinekdesign.com.

President/CEO:
 Eva S. McCraven, Ph.D.

Director of Community & Public Relations:
 Sande Weiss

The mission of Hillview Mental Health Center, Inc. is to assist in empowering individuals and families affected by mental illness to assess their needs, strengths and goals, and work collaboratively with mental health professionals and other staff to plan services that are person-centered, culturally competent, and effective in promoting recovery and the ability to live as fully participating members of the community.

Hillview Mental Health Center, Inc., is a nonprofit corporation that serves as a gateway to recovery, independence and health for nearly 2,000 East San Fernando Valley residents each year.

website: www.hillviewmhc.org
 phone: 818.896.1161
 e-mail: info@hillviewmhc.org



An Integrated Approach to Treating Co-Occurring Disorders

*Message from Eva S. McCraven
 President and Chief Executive Officer*

Mental health problems and substance abuse often go hand in hand. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), individuals diagnosed with mood or anxiety disorders such as depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD and schizophrenia are twice as likely to suffer from drug abuse or dependence as the general population. We’re seeing an even higher correlation here at Hillview Mental Health Center, where about 70 percent of our client population suffers from co-occurring disorders.

One of the reasons for this link is that individuals with mental health disorders often use alcohol or drugs to self-medicate. Ironically, while substance abuse may initially numb symptoms, it ultimately worsens them. Substance abuse can exacerbate mental illness symptoms, prompt new ones and lessen the

effectiveness of psychiatric medications.

That’s why it is crucial to treat both conditions simultaneously and in an integrated manner. As an NIDA research report on this topic stated, “Correct diagnosis is critical to ensuring appropriate and effective treatment. Ignorance of or failure to treat a comorbid disorder can jeopardize a patient’s chance of recovery.”

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Unfortunately, the majority of those with co-occurring conditions do not receive proper treatment. The 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that only 7.9 percent of the 8.4 million adults in the United States with co-occurring disorders received treatment for both conditions. Nearly 54 percent received no treatment at all.

We’re proud that Hillview formally integrated services for clients with co-occurring disorders more than a decade ago. Staff members at every level are trained to understand that clients are vulner-

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Afinety Rocks for Hillview



By day, they provide information technology services to law firms and other clients, including Hillview. But by night, Afinety employees Doug Hafford, Kevin McCarthy, Paul Brantley and Mike Sweaney jam as the Integrators rock band.

On March 6, the Integrators competed in a battle of the bands concert at the Whisky A Go Go in Hollywood. The concert was presented by Law Rocks, which organizes similar competitions worldwide to benefit charitable organizations. Afinety chose Hillview Mental Health Center as its beneficiary.

Afinety, which provides IT services to Hillview, has “a great appreciation for the organization and its leadership,” said Vice President of Consulting Services and lead singer Doug Hafford. He added that this was Afinety’s first time participating in Law Rocks and that the company had an easy time selecting an agency to support.

At the concert, Hillview’s David Richards, MSW, manager of the AB 109 program, introduced the band, which played a rousing set that opened with The Doors’ “Road House Blues.” Hillview CEO Eva McCraven, CFO Beth Meltzer and Dr. Peggy Wilson-Jordan were among those rockin’ out in the crowd.

Hillview employees appreciated both the funds generated and the quality of the entertainment provided by Law Rocks. “The concert was great, the music was very good, energy level was high and there was a lot of talent on the stage,” said one staffer afterwards. Added another, “What a great night! It was more fun than I expected. And seeing my boss and co-workers enjoy classic rock music was priceless.”

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An Integrated Approach to Treating Co-Occurring Disorders

continued from front cover

able to substance abuse, and we strive to create an environment in which clients feel comfortable sharing this information.

Any client who is identified as having a substance abuse problem is referred for individual assessment to Maria Stone, Program Manager for Integrated Mental Health and Substance Use Services, and a certified drug and alcohol counselor. They may begin one-on-one weekly counseling with Stone or may participate in one of three peer support groups.

Our staff members use an evidence-based approach to treatment, which encompasses identifying where clients fall along the spectrum of recovery and working with them to develop a plan of action, identify obstacles, learn coping mechanisms, and take actions to achieve and maintain sobriety. We also provide support to help prevent relapse.

For clients in need of residential detox services, we work closely with agencies that provide this service, and resume helping the clients upon completion of the program.

Our approach has always been to coordinate all issues relating to a client's care needs, whether they involve substance abuse or other medical issues. We try to ensure that our clients are receiving primary care services. Our goal is to collaborate with their medical provider team to coordinate care.



For example, we would want to make sure that any medication prescribed to a client for mental health purposes would not be contraindicated by medication being taken for other medical conditions.

We've established high levels of trust with our clients, who stay in touch with staff. They are urged to contact us if they feel they are in danger of relapsing. We also work with the AB 109 population, nonviolent offenders removed from state prisons and entrusted to county probation and sheriff's departments for local support. David Richards, MSW, our program manager, has established close relationships with the courts and probation officers with whom we work to engage clients who need mental health care services at Hillview.

Hillview remains committed to pursuing an integrated approach to co-occurring disorders. Simply put, without addressing substance use, we cannot effectively treat mental health issues.

Recognizing Decades of Service

Julius Jones

In 1976, "Rocky" was the top-grossing film, gas cost 59 cents per gallon, and an Army retiree was hired as the Executive Administrative Assistant for Hillview Mental Health Center.

The new employee, Julius Jones, would spend the next 38 years there, becoming one of Hillview's most valued and treasured staff.

Jones retired in January of this year, and about 80 people gathered at a celebration to thank him for his decades of service.

As the Assistant to the CEO, Jones served under Carl McCraven and later Dr. Eva McCraven, working tirelessly to keep the organization running smoothly. He interacted with outside mental health agencies, vendors, staff and clients, showing respect and efficiency in all of his dealings.

"He had an incredible memory for numbers, for people, and for how agencies operate," said Dr. McCraven. "He had to respond to an endless array of bureaucratic systems and requirements from multiple levels of government and he mastered all of it."

Jones developed a reputation for his formal style, a product of his years in the military. "No one was addressed by first name. It was always *ma'am* or *sir*," said Dr. McCraven. "He always took professional pride in responding with focus on the purpose of his interactions - there was no extraneous conversation."

Hillview Mental Health Center is grateful to Jones for his dedication and pleased that he will continue to be involved with the agency in his role as a member of the Board of Directors.



Giving Thanks at Holiday Time

"From the bottom of my heart: Thank y'all," said one client. Another read a poem of gratitude.

Both were expressing appreciation for Hillview Mental Health Center's annual Thanksgiving dinner. For the past 18 years, Hillview staff members have purchased and prepared a sumptuous feast shared by clients and staff alike.

"This is a way to have our staff deliver service to our clients in a different fashion," says Julie Jones, Vice President of Clinical Administration and the principal organizer of the event. "We know we're feeding people who might not otherwise enjoy a hot meal at holiday time."

Community Relations and Development Director Sande Weiss

Photo Left to Right:

Melissa Cevantes, Jason Sibrian, Gina Jensen, Claudia Gonzales, Hazel Westbrook, Sande Weiss, Mary Mardorossia (all staff)

started the tradition almost two decades ago with the help of two other staff members. This year, 50 Hillview employees helped make the feast possible. Staff cook Rosario Sandoval roasted 16 turkeys and six hams, while staff members prepared mashed potatoes, yams, dressing, corn bread, salad and cranberries.

The event attracts a variety of guests. "Some people bring family, some are people who used to live here, some people come off the street," says Weiss. "For some of them this is the only Thanksgiving they have."

Guests expressed their thankfulness, not only for the food itself but also for what Hillview means to them.

"I don't know many places where staff work so hard for their clients," said Roxanne, a resident of Hillview Village. "It's heartwarming to see so many people in need who are grateful for what the staff does." Her neighbor Cathy agreed, saying, "A lot of people here don't have a family. This becomes your family."