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The Art of Hillview

“Eastern Phoebe”

By Jesus Ruiz

Jesus Ruiz used an Internet image to create this pencil drawing of an eastern phoebe bird, one of many studies he’s done to hone his skills as an artist.

“I really feel like I captured the bird,” he says. “It’s more realistic than any other bird drawing I’ve done.”

Jesus, 24, has been creating art since childhood. In addition to drawing, he uses acrylic paints, watercolors and colored pencils, and favors realism, impressionism and abstract styles. He works daily toward his mission of becoming a leading artist.

Jesus notes that his caseworker, Jennifer Roth, went to art school, and he appreciates that she relates to his work and encourages him. He also values the acceptance and understanding he’s found at Hillview Mental Health Center.

“Most of the people around me aren’t knowledgeable or even interested in art,” he says. “When I go to Hillview, I don’t feel so alone.”



HILLVIEW

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.

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East San Fernando Valley since 1966
A nonprofit corporation serving the

HILLVIEW
Mental Health Center, INC.



HILLVIEW

SPRING 2017



50 Years of Need, 50 Years of Service

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

Hillview Mental Health Center recently marked 50 years of providing comprehensive mental health services to individuals in need. Our success stems from remembering our origins and preserving the ideals upon which we were founded.



At the time of our founding, communities remained racially segregated. An engineer recruited from the East Coast to work

at Lockheed, Carl McCraven, Hillview’s eventual CEO, found that Pacoima was one of the only valley communities that welcomed African American residents.

In addition to being racially segregated, the East San Fernando Valley lacked many services. Only after a plane crashed into the schoolyard in 1957 did the area get a hospital, Pacoima Memorial Lutheran Hospital. Hillview began as a part of the hospital.

Two decades later, when it became evident that the hospital – then called Lake View Medical Center – was going to close, Carl McCraven successfully separated the mental health facility, allowing us to continue to offer our crucial services as a stand-alone organization.

Many people don’t realize that today the East San Fernando Valley is home to the largest population of people living in poverty in Los Angeles. Many residents struggle with poor education, high unemployment, substandard housing, and lack of easy access to resources for health care and mental illness.

Hillview has always remained sensitive to the special needs of this at-risk group. We’re proud of our accomplishments over the past 50 years. Hillview was the first mental health agency in the valley to develop permanent low-income supportive housing for adults with mental illness when we opened Hillview Village in 1994 on the clinic grounds. We were also the first adult mental health agency to develop community housing and services for transition-age youth on campus.

Hillview has taken a lead in serving forensic populations, individuals coming out of jail or prison who suffer from mental health conditions, often in combination with substance abuse. We look forward to increasing our capacity to assist this vulnerable population. We also remain active in advocating for more housing with supportive services for homeless individuals with mental illness.

In years past, federal grants required the provision of a full spectrum of services – including coordination of medical care, housing, employment, substance abuse services and education

– to individuals needing mental health services. This integrated approach made the most sense and produced the best results but diminished as funding sources dried up. Today, there is little communication between the various agencies serving the same client. To begin to remedy this, Hillview spearheaded the formation of the Northeast Valley Health Neighborhood Coalition, an alliance of

behavioral health, primary care and other social service providers serving poor, minority and disadvantaged people in our area.

The Department of

Mental Health has embraced a similar initiative countywide, called the Health Neighborhood, and looks to our coalition for leadership in the Northeast Valley.

Hillview today serves nearly 2,000 clients per year, and we expect that need for our services in the Northeast San Fernando Valley will continue to grow. We remain committed to serving this community for decades to come by meeting the increasing need for mental health care that is integrated with housing, health and social services.

Hillview today serves more than 1,800 clients, and we expect that need for our services in the Northeast San Fernando Valley will continue to grow.

Getting to Know Hillview's Staff Psychiatrists



Jack Rothberg, M.D.

Dr. Jack Rothberg came to Hillview upon completing his residency in psychiatry, expecting to be here only briefly. That was in 1980.

He credits his longevity to the collegial working atmosphere at Hillview and to long-term relationships with his clients. "I've been seeing some patients for 10 or even 20-plus years," he notes.

During his nearly four decades here, Dr. Rothberg has held a variety of positions, including inpatient psychiatrist for the long-term residential and adolescent residential programs, and head psychiatrist for the mentally ill offender program.

His private practice focuses on forensic (relating to criminology) psychiatry. He also works with many



Maria Longhitano, M.D.

Dr. Maria Longhitano has been providing psychiatric care to Hillview clients for 24 years.

"What's kept me here are the clients," she says. She values working with those suffering from severe mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression. "I find it very rewarding to help clients, especially in crisis, and see them get better. I feel that I'm part of their lives when I treat them for their mental health."

Dr. Longhitano also appreciates the relationships and teamwork she shares with Hillview staff: "There's a lot of collaboration, which is important for the welfare of our clients."

Born and raised in Sicily, Dr. Longhitano received her medical degree and completed her residency in Italy. She became an anesthesiologist

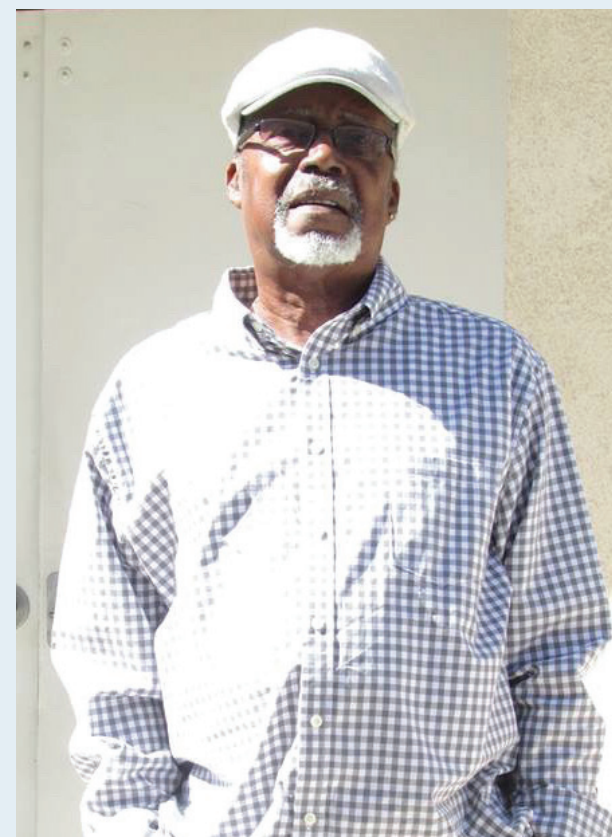
but found the work unsatisfying because it didn't allow for forming relationships with her patients. After coming to the United States, she switched to psychiatry and completed her psychiatry residency at USC.

In addition to her work at Hillview, Dr. Longhitano also served for 10 years as president of the Student Counseling Center at both CSUN and USC.

When not working, Dr. Longhitano and her husband of 27 years can often be found on their farm in the San Diego area, where they grow a variety of fruits, including grapes, oranges and pomegranates. They also actively support Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission, a faith-based ministry providing a range of services to the homeless.

Look for additional profiles of our psychiatric staff in the next issue of HillViews.

IN MEMORIAM Clifton T. Cox



We mourn the loss of Hillview Village Resident Manager

Clifton T. Cox, a valued member of our staff since February 2009. Born in West Virginia, Cliff had a diverse series of careers – including psychiatric technician, military policeman and Pinkerton detective – which all enhanced his ability to work with Hillview Village's 49 residents.

As Resident Manager, Cliff did so much more than maintain Hillview's buildings. He kept an eye on all the residents and always knew what was going on with each of them, whether they were low on money (in which case he'd suddenly find some food or a gift

card), had lost a loved one or needed support from a case manager. "He was strict about certain things, but he was a teddy bear," said Sande Weiss, Director of Community and Public Relations. "Everybody liked him."

"Cliff had a depth of understanding of the human condition," said CEO Eva McCraven. "His efforts successfully kept people in housing for many years who might not have otherwise been able to live in the community."

Although Cliff's funeral took place in West Virginia, Hillview also held a memorial service, which was attended by two of Cliff's sisters and one of his brothers. Participants wrote notes about how much Cliff meant to them. He will be greatly missed.

Holiday Baskets



At the Hillview Village holiday party in December, David Green, pictured, and

his fellow residents dined on a festive lunch and received Target gift cards along with baskets full of practical – and fun – goodies, including blankets, hygiene items and games.

Please think of Hillview if you have items that might be appropriate to include in our baskets or wish to help underwrite the cost of this event.

