

The Art of Hillview

“Victorian Fantasy”

By Joe Belofsky



Joe produced this pen drawing, riffing on the style popular during the Victorian era, for a class at Santa Monica City College. He is currently pursuing a fine arts degree there. Although he drew frequently in his youth, he hadn't put ink to paper in more than two decades. Despite a lack of formal art training, Joe's talent previously earned him a gallery show on the East Coast.

Joe has struggled with depression throughout his life. The depression caused a problem that spurred him to lash out. As a result, he spent two years in prison. It was there that he started taking college classes via a correspondence program.

Before he was to be discharged last fall, Joe's probation officer put him in touch with Hillview Mental Health Center. This allowed Hillview staff to immediately connect Joe with vital services including case management, psychiatric care and housing.

Looking back on the experience, Joe says, "I literally would have had nowhere to go. The staff at Hillview has helped with every aspect of my life."

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



For the Homeless, Services Are As Important As Housing

Message from Eva S. McCraven
President and Chief Executive Officer

Homeless people must be able to receive services and still qualify for permanent housing. Right now, they are in a catch-22 situation: if they receive temporary shelter and stabilization while waiting for permanent housing, they no longer qualify as homeless.



You may remember that our last newsletter discussed the issue of homelessness and highlighted the Valley Home-

lessness Forum convened by Hillview Mental Health Center in March of this year. Since that time, there have been further developments at the local and state levels.

Locally, recently released figures show that the number of homeless in our area has increased for the fourth consecutive year. There has been an 11 percent increase in homelessness in the city of Los Angeles, and a 5.7 percent increase in Los Angeles County, where nearly 47,000 individuals lack a place to live. The Los Angeles Times has been bringing attention to the issue of homelessness and featured Hillview in a front-page article describing the difficulties of qualifying as homeless in order to receive housing assistance (<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-prioritizing-homeless-20160731-snap-story.html>).

The California legislature has passed a bond measure, No Place Like Home,

to dedicate \$2 billion of state Mental Health Services Act funds to construct housing for homeless people. The mental health community is gratified that resources will be available for housing construction but concerned that mental health services funds could be compromised. Mental health funds for supportive housing services must be allocated for the seriously mentally ill, to help both prepare them for permanent housing and maintain housing after move-in.

The Mental Health Services Act is a magnificent body of legislation that transformed California's mental health system. No Place Like Home will provide desperately needed housing. It does not, however, directly fund supportive housing services. This must be addressed to ensure that our vulnerable population maintains linkage with mental health, health and social services, all vital to maintaining stable housing. Our clients also need temporary housing and stabilization during the application process.

A new, major problem for the mentally ill homeless is the federal definition of chronic homelessness, which precludes the mentally ill in transitional and some "bridge housing" from qualifying for

housing certificates. This rule needs to be adjusted to meet the needs of people with mental illness who require stabilization, temporary housing and assistance with the permanent housing application process before they are permanently housed.

Also to be considered is the prospect of "NIMBYism," or "not in my backyard," which can be alleviated if there is a financial commitment to provide supportive housing services that will help our clients maintain community living standards. We need supportive housing services to help the members of our homeless mentally ill population establish their homes, maintain stability and function as responsible community members over the long term.

For over 40 years Hillview has developed both transitional and permanent housing with supportive housing services for our clients. We will continue to advocate for transitional and bridge housing and supportive services because we know they are effective and essential to helping the members of our most vulnerable population regain their health, their stability and their rightful places as members of our communities.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
12450 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 200
Pacifica, CA 91331

A nonprofit corporation serving the East San Fernando Valley since 1966

HILLVIEW
Mental Health Center, INC.



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U S POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 144
VAN NUYS, CA



In the Driver's Seat Hillview Empowers Clients to Find Fulfilling Employment



Manesha Smith turned to Hillview for help when the barriers to getting a job seemed overwhelming. "I was stressed, and I couldn't function," she says. "I was looking for jobs, but I didn't know how to do it."

Hillview staff helped Manesha by providing a variety of programs and services. First, they enrolled her in CalWORKs (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids), a state program for welfare recipients that provides financial assistance while encouraging personal responsibility and a transition to employment and self-sufficiency. Manesha also enrolled in IPS (Individual Placement and Support), a program specifically for CalWORKs participants.

"IPS is an evidence-based approach that integrates vocational and mental health programs," says Dr. Tatevik Abaryan, CalWORKs Program Director. "In addition to receiving mental health care, participants work with a dedicated job specialist who guides them through the job search process."

The job specialist takes participants through each step, from filling out applications to preparing for interviews. He or she meets with IPS participants at Hillview and in the community, and develops relationships with potential employers.

Manesha and other Hillview CalWORKs clients also receive mental health services, which can include clinical assessment; medication evaluation and management; individual or group therapy; addiction counseling; and case management.

For Manesha, a single mother with a son in high school, the assistance resulted in her securing a part-time job as a driver with Enterprise Rent-A-Car, delivering vehicles to rental offices, airports and service facilities.

"I love cars," says Manesha, who because of this job has sat behind the wheel of Porsches, Lamborghinis and Teslas. "This job lets me drive and not be closed in in an office."

At press time, Manesha was applying to transition to full time with Enterprise. She also intends to enroll in school part time to learn computer skills.

She credits Hillview with giving her the tools she needed to retake control of her life. "When I come here, I leave happy and feel better about myself."



Celebrating the Arts at Hillview



According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the arts can help reduce stress and anxiety, improve well-being and enhance the way we fight infection. Several small studies, the NIH notes, suggest that art therapy can help improve health status, quality of life and coping behaviors.

Hillview Mental Health Center has always emphasized the importance of the arts. This includes convening an Annual Art Showcase - held during National Mental Health Month in May - featuring

works by both clients and staff. This year's event yielded a gallery-worthy assembly of paintings, drawings, sculpture, writings and other creative works.

At the opening ceremony, a client named Diane discussed her painting, inspired by the song "Yellow" by Coldplay. "I come from a family of artists, but this is the first thing I've ever painted," she said. "It made me feel really good."

Another client, Johnny, created rain sticks by decorating gourds and filling them with dried rice and beans. Johnny is an AB 109 client who came to Hillview following discharge from prison.

"We had participants from all of our programs, from AB 109 to Transitional

Youth," said Randy Hatada, Program Coordinator.

Hillview President and CEO Dr. Eva McCraven noted that people unfamiliar with the condition might consider those with the condition as somehow different. "I wish everyone could see this exhibit," she said. "People would understand that the art here comes from the same heart and the same brain that everyone has."

Julie Jones, Vice President for Clinical Programs, inquired about interest in starting a music group at Hillview and got several positive responses. Stay tuned: Next year's ceremony just might feature a musical entry!

Shop for Hillview

As you do your regular grocery shopping at Ralphs and Food 4 Less, you can raise funds for Hillview Mental Health Center's vital programs and services.

To enroll, go to www.ralphs.com and/or www.food4less.com. Select "Community," then "Community Contributions," then "Enroll Now." If you don't have computer access, call 800-443-4438 to register or renew. For Ralphs only, if you registered prior to September 1 of this year, you will need to renew in order for Hillview to continue receiving benefits.



Hillview in the Community



Hillview Mental Health Center participated in several spring community events to promote our programs and services. Hilary Gordon, a social worker with our Prevention and Early Intervention programs, talked with attendees and connected with potential partner agencies at the Youth Summit at Los Angeles Mission College in Sylmar; the Senior Expo at Las Palmas Park in San Fernando; and Valley Interfaith Council's FIT Expo at Sunland Elementary School.



Hilary Gordon and U.S. Congressman Tony Cárdenas.

