

The Art of Hillview  
**“Raymond”**

By Richard Barrett



Hillview client Richard Barrett loved to draw as a child, and created reams of likenesses of comic book figures such as Spiderman and the X-Men characters. As he got older, his drawings became more abstract.

Dealing with mental illness interrupted his creative

endeavors, and it is only in the last year that Richard returned to drawing and painting. He lives in Hillview Village and attends Los Angeles Mission College in Sylmar, where he is majoring in natural sciences. Last semester, he enrolled in a drawing class for fun.

One assignment called for adapting the style of Henri Matisse. Richard melded the style of “Portrait of Madame Matisse” with the likeness of one of his classmates, giving it a slightly more abstract feel. The piece was created with oil and pastel.

**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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**Hillview** Plays a  
 Leading Role in Formation of  
 the Northeast Valley Health  
 Neighborhood Coalition

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

**M**ental health does not occur in a silo. It affects and is affected by both physical health and substance abuse. In addition, successful treatment depends upon effective, accessible social services and community support.

Unfortunately, most health systems treat mental health separately from physical health. There are no mechanisms for communication between mental and physical health providers, even if they are treating the same patient. This lack of communication and coordination extends to social service providers and other entities serving individuals with mental health issues.

Hillview Mental Health Center has taken a leadership role in an effort to improve this situation in the Northeast San Fernando Valley.

In March of this year, Hillview, along with Valley Nonprofit Resources and Valley Care Community Consortium, convened a gathering of more than 40

leaders of behavioral health, primary care and other nonprofit providers serving poor, minority and disadvantaged people in our area. Our goal was to begin integrating services in a convenient, user-friendly manner that will better support our clients' recovery and wellness.

Participating agencies have come together as the Northeast Valley Health Neighborhood Coalition and have since met three times, most recently on November 5. Members include the Department of Mental Health Service Area 2, hospitals, federally funded health care centers, substance abuse agencies and housing agencies. We are working together to determine what our clients need, identify which agencies can meet those needs, create a mechanism for referring clients to a specific person at the appropriate agencies and establish means of ensuring that clients receive needed services.

As a first step, we are in the process of compiling a comprehensive directory of provider resources in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. Eventu-

**Sunair Children's  
 Foundation**

**Supports Transitional  
 Age Clients**



Since 2010, Hillview Mental Health Center has benefited from the generosity of the Sunair Children's Foundation,

which has annually awarded a \$15,000 grant to enhance our Transitional Age Youth Services Program. This program assists young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 who have mental illness or co-occurring disorders as they transition out of foster care or the juvenile justice system. Living semi-independently in housing provided by Hillview, participants receive psychiatric care, basic life skills training, employment counseling, educational assistance and linkage to appropriate county social services.

“These funds help us provide our transitional age clients with necessities that are not covered by the county,” says Peggy Wilson-Jordan, Ph.D., LMFT, program director for Hillview's Transitional Age Youth programs. “We are able to purchase clothing for school or job interviews, school books, computers and other essential items. Sometimes the funds pay for medical care if insurance benefits haven't kicked in.”

“These items can provide a real boost to our clients,” adds Dr. Wil-

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A nonprofit corporation serving the  
 East San Fernando Valley since 1966

**HILLVIEW**  
 Mental Health Center, INC.



## Hillview Plays a Leading Role in Formation of the Northeast Valley Health Neighborhood Coalition

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ally, we hope to make this information available via an electronic portal.

These efforts align with the health neighborhood concept articulated in the Affordable Care Act, which calls for collaboration between health and substance use providers to achieve long-term, sustainable solutions to health problems which have been exacerbated by lack of collaboration between providers. The Coalition will also address the need for collaboration between health providers and all social services, employment, housing and other organizations utilized by our clients and patients to meet basic necessities of living.

Needs are especially keen in the East San Fernando Valley, where a disproportionately high percentage of the population lives at or below the poverty level. Here in Pacoima, about 17 percent of families live at or below the poverty level. Also, households headed by single mothers—a factor strongly correlating with poverty—have increased by 53 percent between 2000 and 2009.

Collaboration between mental health, medical care and support services is crucial because mental illness has a dramatic impact on health and lifespan. Serious mental illness is associated with a staggering 25-year decrease in life expectancy. Not only do individuals with mental illness have higher tendencies for suicide and high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, they are also more likely to experience such physical health problems as metabolic disorders, respiratory diseases, sexual disorders, cardiovascular diseases and pregnancy complications.

We believe that the Northeast Valley Health Neighborhood Coalition will be a catalyst for bringing about better integration of care for our clients here in the East San Fernando Valley. Our hope is to spur improved access to quality care, enhance care coordination, decrease unnecessary costs, and increase the quality of life of our clients.

## Sunair Children's Foundation Supports Transitional Age Clients

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son-Jordan. "They feel more confident when they can look presentable and afford some of the kinds of items their peers have."

The Sunair Children's Foundation developed from the Sunair Home for Asthmatic Children in Tujunga. Founded in 1937, the 39-bed home provided live-in rehabilitation for children with asthma. In addition to receiving medical treatment, children learned how to manage their asthma with medication, breath-

ing exercises and other strategies. While residential care ceased in the mid-1980s, Sunair continues to support entities that address the medical needs of children.

"Hillview's program is a bit outside of our focus, but we know this population faces many challenges," said Eva Goetz, executive director. "Our Board felt that it was in keeping with our mission to help."



**Megan Lawson, LMFT**  
Program Director,  
Full Service Partnership Program  
for Adults and Older Adults (FSP)

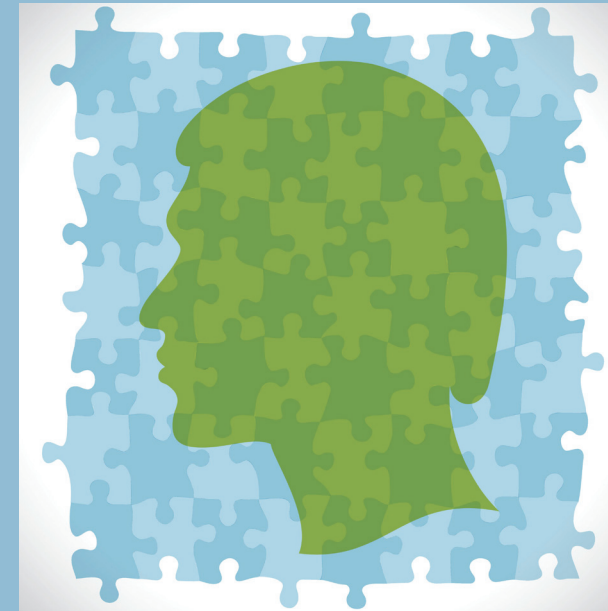
FSP provides intensive mental health services and support to adults with serious mental illnesses including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and major depressive disorder. Ms. Lawson supervises a staff of five who provide case management to clients wherever they are in the community.

*"Most of our clients have an extensive history in the mental health system and are at risk of returning to the hospital or jail without our support," she says.*

Ms. Lawson has been working with the FSP program since she came to Hillview in 2008. She has held positions including case manager, therapist and program coordinator, some while earning her degree at Pepperdine University.

*"It's very gratifying when a client comes in who's barely functioning, and after a year of support, starts to get his or her life back," she says. "It's amazing to see that process."*

Born in Colorado, Ms. Lawson seeks out a variety of experiences for growth including spending two years in Africa with the Peace Corps, learning flying trapeze and climbing Mount Whitney.



## Introducing Our New Clinical Management Team

Hillview Mental Health Center has recently promoted three professionals who have been part of the clinical team into management positions. "While the traditional business model calls for separating the business side from the clinical side, we

believe that managers need both perspectives to make decisions that are best for the institution as a whole," says President and CEO Eva McCraven, Ph.D. These three individuals are well qualified to do just that.



**Melissa Cervantes, Psy.D.**  
Program Director,  
Field Capable Clinical Services  
(FCCS) for Adults and Older Adults

In her role as program director, Dr. Cervantes supervises 10 case managers and one psychologist who work with Hillview's acute clients wherever they are in the community. She also oversees the Club House, which offers groups, activities and lunches to this population.

Dr. Cervantes started at Hillview as a therapist for CalWORKs while completing her post-doctoral training.

*"Our goal is to move our clients to the highest level of independence they can manage on their own," she says. "Sometimes, they just need someone who believes in them and encourages them."*

While putting herself through college and graduate school, Dr. Cervantes managed restaurants, bars and nightclubs. She says those experiences helped prepare her for Hillview because they were fast-paced and unpredictable, and required strong customer service skills.

Dr. Cervantes is a Southern California native and enjoys hiking, backpacking and other outdoor activities.



**Sarah Schwartz, Ph.D.**  
Program Director,  
Prevention and Early  
Intervention Services (PEI)

A practicing psychologist, Dr. Schwartz supervises a relatively new program at Hillview that serves people who have mild to moderate mental illness. The emphasis is therapy-focused rather than medication-focused, with the goal of addressing

problems early. "We see a wide range of clients, and work on problem solving and other strategies to help get our clients back to work or school, or improve their relationships."

Dr. Schwartz started at Hillview about two years ago. She was brought on board to help establish the PEI program, and initially served as the program's only psychologist. Now, she supervises a staff of three therapists.

*"My favorite part of the job is working with new therapists to develop their skills," she says. "I also like that in my job I am constantly learning."*

A native of Florida, Dr. Schwartz is known for her impressive shoe collection.