

**The Art of Hillview**

**A Hillview Client Moves Beyond Darkness**

For a class project challenging students to draw themselves into an old master's painting, Joseph Belofsky chose Picasso's *The Old Guitarist*. "This work is from Picasso's early period. It was a difficult time as he had just lost his best friend to suicide and was living in poverty," said Joseph. "I'm fascinated by the experiences of artists going through dark, depressive phases, because I can relate to that personally."

While the work highlights a dark time in Picasso's life, it doesn't reflect Joseph's current state. "I'm in a great place," said Joseph, who is pursuing his Bachelor of Arts degree at Cal State Long Beach. "Returning to school was one of the best decisions I ever made."



**President & CEO:**  
Eva S. McCraven, Ph.D.

**Director of Community & Public Relations:**  
Sande Weiss

The mission of Hillview Mental Health Center is to provide comprehensive, compassionate and culturally sensitive mental health services to adults and youths in the East San Fernando Valley. Along with challenges of mental illness and substance abuse disorders, our clients suffer the burdens of poverty. Hillview's approach addresses all of these concerns: We offer a full range of outpatient behavioral health and substance use disorder services while working with government and community agencies to meet practical needs such as housing, employment and transportation. We help our clients assess their needs, goals and strengths to empower them to live as independently as possible as 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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**Heartfelt Thanks to Beth Meltzer**

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



At Hillview Mental Health Center, we believe in a team approach. Every member of the team brings skills and knowledge to contribute to our mission, and every member is equally valued.

I learned this approach while earning my master's in health administration from California State University Northridge. There I met fellow student Beth Meltzer. Beth asked to intern at Hillview and never left. She joined our team in 1985 and quickly became an integral member. She has held a broad range of responsibilities during her 36-year tenure.

Beth helped Hillview through the complicated process of incorporating as a separate entity from our parent hospital in 1985. When the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health unexpectedly cut funding, forcing us to reduce our staff and threatening our operations, Beth stepped up to manage multiple departments.

Today, Beth oversees our dietary, maintenance, human resources and financial operations. She keeps us in compliance with legal requirements and contractual responsibilities at the federal, state and county levels. She manages bureaucratic intricacies while



*Beth Meltzer*

understanding their broader context. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she has ensured that Hillview complies with the constantly changing regulations and guidelines, enabling us to continue operating without missing a beat.

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Beth is both well respected for her knowledge and well liked for her kindness and understanding. She works with people of varied skill levels to bring out the best in each of them.

In June, we will bid Beth a bitter-sweet farewell as she retires from her position as Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, and Director of Administrative and Financial Services. Ever the team player, Beth gave us ample notice and has

helped us plan for her departure. Other members of our management team will absorb some of Beth's responsibilities.

Because of her bond with Hillview and her valuable knowledge of highly technical issues, Beth will consult as needed. Her years of caring will remain a reminder of how much we can do and what that effort can mean to the people we serve. We thank and wish all the best to Beth Meltzer.

**Increased Need for Community Support**

While Hillview has adapted to many of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we still face difficulties serving our clients. Your support can help.

For example, we have had to limit transportation services for safety reasons. Our clients depend on us for transport to the doctor's office, to social service or housing authority offices, and even for essential shopping excursions. Expanded funding could help us acquire additional vans properly outfitted to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

We also need funding to purchase more electronic equipment for telehealth services. Even as in-person appointments resume, we hope to continue offering telehealth as an option for clients who have special circumstances that make it difficult to visit the campus.

Our clients need us, and we're committed to serving them. Please help with a contribution, which you can make quickly on our website, <https://hillviewmhc.org/support/> or mail a check to Development Office, Hillview Mental Health Center, Inc., 12450 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 200, Pacoima, CA 91331.

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A nonprofit corporation serving the  
East San Fernando Valley since 1966

**HILLVIEW**  
Mental Health Center, INC.



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## Prevention and Early Intervention Services Provide Mental Health Support



Hillview provides direct assistance to individuals in need.

**D**ealing with mental health issues when the first symptoms appear can prevent more serious problems down the road. This is the principle behind Hillview's Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) program. "PEI is an evidence-based program that addresses symptoms and stressors. We take on mental health issues before they become severe," said Aileen Garibyan, Psy.D., Assistant Director of Clinical Program Administration and PEI Program Director. "People who benefit from PEI services may be facing a re-

cent divorce or loss of a loved one, experiencing symptoms of anxiety or depression, or coping with stress. They don't need intensive mental health treatment but can use some mental health support." The PEI program has two components: outreach and services. Outreach involves providing businesses, schools, churches and other community groups with information on mental health symptoms and stressors, how to cope with them, and how and where to access services. Community agencies can refer individuals to Hillview, and Hillview also partners with some of these organizations to offer educational workshops on mental health topics.

With the service component of PEI, Hillview provides direct assistance to individuals in need. Program participants receive weekly therapy for up to 18 months. If appropriate, they also receive medication evaluation and treatment as well as case management, which links them to additional community resources. "People may experience stress and not realize they can get long-term, individualized help from trained professionals, especially given the stigma around mental health," said Ziesha Waters-Carrico, PEI Program Manager. "It's wonderful that Los Angeles County has created specific funding for PEI because there's a great need for it."

## Hillview Rises to the Pandemic Challenge



**M**ental health treatment relies on in-person contact, closeness that allows for establishing rapport, demonstrating concern and observing body language. For this reason, the measures required to combat COVID-19 pose a particular challenge. But Hillview staff has adapted and continues to serve clients during the pandemic. Last spring, Hillview began providing medication management and support groups by phone and video-

conferencing via a secure telehealth portal. More recently, with a grant from Cedars-Sinai, a new telehealth system has been installed for individual online therapy and assessments. While most services continue via telehealth, Hillview restarted in-person groups in March, 2021, for Village residents and others for whom Hillview is legally required to provide in-person services. "COVID forced us to find new strategies for reaching our clients," said Julie Jones, Executive Vice

President. "Now, to ease the transportation burden for some clients, we are considering maintaining the telehealth portal even after in-person services resume in full." "The cessation of in-person group therapy meetings has been a big loss for clients who depend on therapeutic services and socialization with friends," Jones added. "Right now our clients need us more than ever. We're committed to serving them through all means available."

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## Five Ways to Tame Stress

Stress is something that everyone faces in life — even in non-pandemic times. And since stress can cause both physical and mental harm, learning to reduce it can be a valuable skill. Ziesha Waters-Carrico, Prevention and Early Intervention Program Manager, offers five strategies to help decrease stress.

- 1. Recognize it.** "If you avoid or block your feelings, they keep building up," said Waters-Carrico. "Instead, acknowledge them and ask yourself what's in your power to improve within the constraints you're facing."
- 2. Take care of yourself.** "We tend to neglect healthy habits when we're under stress. But you'll be better able to face challenges when you eat healthy foods, move your body and get enough sleep," she

- suggested. "Physical activity can help relieve stress because it releases brain chemicals that boost feelings of well-being." Using drugs or alcohol to mask feelings often leads to additional stress.
- 3. Harness humor and music.** Watch a favorite comedy or play some tunes. Waters-Carrico noted that laughing lowers cortisol, the body's stress hormone, while boosting endorphins, which enhance mood. Listening to music can lower blood pressure, heart rate and anxiety.
  - 4. Calm your mind.** "Techniques that help you focus on your senses can ease tension," she said. "Examples include muscle relaxation, deep breathing and meditation." Videos and smart phone apps can guide these practices.



- 5. Reach out.** "Rather than turning inward, connect with family members or friends who can provide support. Volunteering can help focus your mind outward as well," advised Waters-Carrico. She also suggested keeping a gratitude journal to maintain a focus on the positive. "If stress becomes overwhelming, it may be time for more help," said Waters-Carrico. "If stress starts interfering with your day-to-day activities, reach out to a mental health professional."



## The People of Hillview: Rosario Sandoval Ends 22 Years as Chef Manager



Rosario Sandoval

In June, Hillview Mental Health Center will say goodbye to Rosario Sandoval, our Chef Manager for 22 years. Sandoval came to Hillview from Monty's Steak House in Westwood, where he was Head Chef for 18 years. Sandoval cooks weekday lunches and dinners for clients in Hillview's residential treatment program and prepares additional lunches for residents of Hillview Village and (during non-COVID times) participants taking part in Club House activities.

"Rosario is flexible and dependable and goes above and beyond for our clients," said Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Beth Meltzer. Throughout the pandemic, for example, he has delivered meals to clients in quarantine due to possible exposure to COVID-19. For the annual Thanksgiving Luncheon — a highlight of the year at Hillview — Sandoval and his crew typically spent three days preparing a feast of a dozen turkeys, eight hams, traditional side dishes and

desserts. "I like seeing the happy faces of our clients enjoying Thanksgiving," said Sandoval. "He's a wonderful cook and person," said Maintenance Manager Sam Stone. "Rosario deals comfortably with clients and is always ready to accommodate people who have special dietary needs." Sandoval leaves the Hillview kitchen in good hands, as the new Dietary Manager will be Rocio Sandoval Perez, his daughter. She has worked with him in the kitchen for the past seven years.