

The Art of Hillview

Love Knows No Color or Gender

Dr. Peggy Wilson-Jordan and her daughter Tiffany have participated in the annual Pasadena Chalk Festival for close to two decades. "We try to incorporate a political message," said Dr. Wilson-Jordan. Their submission to this year's virtual festival responded to a climate of intolerance with a message conveying their hope for "accepting people for who they are," she said.

Dr. Wilson-Jordan creates art in multiple media, including acrylic and watercolor painting as well as stained glass and jewelry. A registered art therapist, she has inspired incorporation of the arts at Hillview Mental Health Center. Hillview has offered a variety of art-related classes



including music, poetry, arts & crafts and performance. Dr. Wilson-Jordan said art therapy offers a nonthreatening way to reveal feelings. She has found it particularly effective with young adults. "Art is a good way to take what's inside and bring it outside. It's easier to talk about a picture than to talk about yourself."

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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Olympians Shine a Light on Mental Health

Athletes' Stories Underscore Need for Community Mental Health Services

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



he Games of the XXXII Olympiad held this summer in Tokyo unexpectedly reminded us of the value of community mental health services when gymnast Simone Biles pulled out of three events to protect her mental health. "At the end of the day, we're human, too, so we have to protect our mind and our body rather than just go out there and do what the world wants us to do," Biles said, as quoted in *The New York Times*.

Not long before that, tennis champion Naomi Osaka, who would later compete in the Tokyo Games, dropped out of the French Open, also to preserve her mental health. "It has become apparent to me that literally everyone either suffers from issues related to their mental health or knows someone who does," she wrote in an essay published afterwards in *Time Magazine*. "It's O.K. to not be O.K., and it's O.K. to talk about it," she stated. "There are people who can help, and there is usually light at the end of any tunnel."

Swimmer Michael Phelps, who won 28 Olympic medals across five Summer Games, has shared publicly that he lost his will to live after the games. He has become an advocate for mental health awareness, particularly in the field of sports.

These athletes' openness provides a great service, easing stigma and reminding the world that mental illness is a no-fault illness that can be effectively treated. The public increasingly understands that mental health is physical health. And that speaks to the importance and value of the community-based, accessible and professional care Hillview Mental Health Center provides.

Our clients suffer from the additional burdens of poverty, lack of resources and, often, physical ailments, all of which can exacerbate their underlying mental health challenges. Serving as a vital resource for the East San Fernando Valley, Hillview not only provides a full spectrum of care for seriously ill youths and adults but also offers education, prevention and early intervention services that prevent serious and chronic mental illness.

The pandemic has affected our ability to deliver services but our costs are unchanged. Your contributions are needed more than ever before.

Please join Hillview Mental Health Center in improving the lives of the vulnerable people we serve by making a generous tax-deductible contribution. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. You can also donate via our website at <https://hillviewmhc.org/support/>.



HELP US GROW GREEN

Hillview will be sending holiday greetings and other communications electronically. Please help us save paper. We are quick to respond to your inquiries when they are sent by email to info@hillviewmhc.org.

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Rachel's Story

A Hillview Village Resident Struggles to Get Her Life Back

By Robert Orona, Resident Manager



Rachel with Resident Manager Robert Orona

Rachel moved into Hillview Village on the first of February, 2019. I remember that as she signed the move-in lease, she talked about the opportunity of a new beginning.

She was grateful to be off the streets. Alcohol, drugs, abuse and homelessness had gotten the best of her. She told me how her children had been taken from her and that she was going to do the right things—get a home and a job and demonstrate to Child Protective Services that she could take care of her own kids.

As the months went by, when Rachel and I would talk, I heard from her that she was going regularly to her AA meetings and her Hillview group meetings. Rachel was a good

tenant at Hillview Village. She was always respectful to others. She paid her rent on time.

After she had been at the Village for about a year, she began to tell me about needing to find a place where she and her children could live and be together again. I would tell her, "Just keep doing what you're doing and it will come true for you."

Over the next few months, we talked about the progress she was making toward getting her kids back. Then, in the spring, she came to my office to tell me she was working with IHSS (In-Home Supportive Services) and putting in applications to get an apartment. She was so happy at the thought that she and her children might soon be together. I told her how pleased I was to hear her say these things. She admitted how hard it was to

stay on the right path but said that she was determined to make it.

In June, I got a call from an apartment manager who asked me to tell her about Rachel and about Rachel's time here at Hillview Village. She also sent me a tenant questionnaire regarding Rachel's tenancy here at Hillview. I was happy to answer the questions and fill out the form.

Later that month, Rachel came into my office with wonderful news. She said she had gotten the apartment and was getting her kids back. They would soon be together again.

I'm happy to report that Rachel moved out of Hillview Village on July 14 and now has her own new place with her children. Talk about a Hillview success story! It doesn't get any better than this!

VAX Clinic Protects Hillview Residents

Hillview Mental Health Center hosted a COVID-19 vaccination clinic on the grounds of Hillview Village. Some of our reluctant clients overcame their doubts about the vaccination and received it, encouraged by the convenience of the location of the clinic on Hillview Village grounds. Some even brought family members to be vaccinated.

We are deeply grateful to the Los Angeles County Department

of Public Health for staffing the vaccination clinic and providing the vaccine. We are, as well, grateful to the Public Health Department for the constant guidance Hillview has received, which has kept our staff and our clients safe and protected during this pandemic. Our 24-hour Adult Crisis Residential program also has operated safely throughout the COVID crisis because of the guidance we received.

Pandemic Challenges Clients, Case Managers



For those living with mental illness, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a perfect storm. Hillview clients have not only confronted the emotional stresses brought on by the pandemic but also faced obstacles to getting services—such as the closure of government offices and curtailment of programs at Hillview.

"Our case managers are frustrated because they can't serve our clients how they'd like, and clients are frustrated by the closures, isolation and loss of daily structure," said Nafisa Banoo, Psy.D., Clinical Coordinator for Hillview's Full Service Partnership (FSP) program, which serves those with severe mental illness. "This has intensified symptoms and caused

substance abuse relapses for many."

Government offices have been closed since the pandemic began, and the phone and web services they offer can pose challenges for clients, said FSP Community Mental Health Counselor Elisa Pelayo. "For example, clients can't stay on hold for long, so we place the call and connect them once a service provider is available."

Case managers speak with clients by phone to offer support, but calls are generally less effective than in-person interaction. And not all clients have phone service.

"We often meet our clients where they live, such as in assisted living facilities," said Lori Loebner, FSP Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialist. "COVID precautions prevent us from entering those facilities. But since it's important to observe our clients' facial expressions and body

language, we try to meet outdoors."

The pandemic has affected Hillview's ability to provide transportation as well, as safety requirements limit vehicle capacity to only the case manager and one client per van.

Some Hillview support groups have resumed meeting in person. At press time, the six small in-person groups included Anger Management, Relapse Prevention and Transition to the Community. Other groups are held remotely.

"The most important thing we can do is let our clients know they're not alone," said Loebner. "Case managers have faced pandemic-related challenges too, but we try to put our own needs second. We know that we are often the only support system our clients have."



Peggy Wilson-Jordan

Peggy Wilson-Jordan's 14 Years of Caring



The People of Hillview

As Peggy Wilson-Jordan, Ph.D., retires, her colleagues reflect on the selfless understanding she has shown during her years of service to Hillview Mental Health Center.

Dr. Wilson-Jordan began her career at Hillview in 2007 as Program Director of the Full Service Partnership (FSP) for Transitional Age Youth and the Independent Living residential program. She worked with young adults facing multiple life challenges.

"Peggy had great compassion," said Clinical Director Jack L. Avila. "In mental health, relationships are key. If clients feel cared for, they will invest themselves in the process. Peggy always made clients feel cared for."

Julie Jones, L.M.F.T., Executive Vice President of Hillview, agreed: "Peggy's

selflessness was apparent not only in the effective clinical interventions she provided clients but also in her relationships with the treatment team staff."

Dr. Wilson-Jordan went on to direct the overall FSP program, which treats clients ages 16 and up. Her job entailed program oversight, staff supervision, collaboration with L.A. County and crisis management.

"Peggy helped clients whenever and wherever they needed it," said President and CEO Eva McCraven. "They all knew how much she cared for them."

Nafisa Banoo, Psy.D., Clinical Coordinator for the FSP program, will assume Dr. Wilson-Jordan's position. "What I've learned from her is

to meet clients where they are with empathy and understanding," said Dr. Banoo. "She taught me that our first question should always be: How can we best serve the client?"

Dr. Wilson-Jordan said she enjoyed working with the wonderful Hillview staff and providing care to clients. "It's very rewarding to see the highest-need clients find stability and provide for themselves," she said. She looks forward to engaging in hobbies (gardening, painting and jewelry making) and, most of all, spending time with a new grandchild.

Dr. McCraven expressed the feelings of many at Hillview: "Peggy will be greatly missed by her clients and colleagues here and throughout the community."

