

A New Home for the South Bay Stein Education Center Adult Services

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President-CEO / Board Chair Message

There are several reasons Vista Hill enjoyed another successful year of providing vitally needed mental/behavioral health, educational and social services to more than 25,000 individuals and families in San Diego County. Near the top of those critical factors are the various partnerships we've established over the years.

For example, we could not do our work without the help of our funding partners, such as the County of San Diego and the San Diego Regional Center. We also appreciate the supportive

foundation grants and the many donors—big and small—whose remarkable generosity allows us to greatly enhance or expand the services we provide.

There's no better illustration of how partnerships help Vista Hill than our PROMOTE! Program. This three-way partnership among Vista Hill, Escondido Union Elementary School District and the County of San Diego—Behavioral Health Services furthers the educational progress and well-being of school students

3 to 8 years of age that are at risk for developing problem behaviors and mental health conditions.

Just recently, we were able to expand this program thanks to a \$105,000 grant from the Prebys Foundation. Our school district partner provided a separate new grant, allowing us to expand the program from seven to 12 elementary schools in which we now serve more than 2,000 students.

Here's another great example of partnership: Rotary Club of Rancho Bernardo volunteers have a community project in which they regularly re-stock the pantry at our ParentCare East program with healthy food, household goods and emergency supplies from the San Diego Food Bank. This service is vital to our program participants and their families.

We will seek new partnerships in the coming year. We're currently working on a potential partnership with the University of California, San Francisco to help them implement California's new Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, a historic investment by the state to address the factors that contribute to the mental health and well-being of our children and youth. Our role will be to provide brief child and adolescent psychiatry e-consultations to San Diego pediatricians with privately insured patients. Our successful SmartCare Behavioral Health Consultation Services will continue offering in-depth consultation and training resources to pediatricians with their Medi-Cal patients.

We hope you enjoy our cover story on the new Chula Vista home for our Stein Education Center Adult Day Program. The purchase and renovation of the building in Chula Vista has created excitement and increased stability for 70 clients

with intellectual and developmental disabilities, while saving Vista Hill tens of thousands of dollars in rent we were previously paying.

We also offer our appreciation to Mark Chenven M.D., who served as Vista Hill's Medical Director for almost 25 years. To succeed Dr. Chenven, we welcome two outstanding child and adolescent psychiatrists—Dr. Charmi Patel Rao and Dr. Shawn Sidhu—who will serve as Co-Medical Directors (see story, page 7).

Finally, we want to express our deepest gratitude for the long and remarkable tenure of Mr. Cecil H. Steppe as a Vista Hill Board Member starting in 2000 and as Board Chairman since 2007. You'll read more about Mr. Steppe's dedicated service on page 7.

As we look forward to 2025, we know the foundation of another successful year will be—as it always has been—the work of our amazing and talented staff of professionals who deliver our myriad of services to thousands of people who benefit from their tireless dedication.



David F. Dunbar
Chair



Robert Dean
President & CEO

Combined Statement of Financial Position

At September 30, 2023 (in 000s)

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 10,543
Investments	25,178
Accounts Receivable, net	5,484
Lease and Other Current Assets	394
Total Current Assets	41,599
Property, Plant and Equipment, net	9,324
Endowment Investments	605
Lease and Other Noncurrent Assets	4,951
Total Assets	\$ 56,479

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ 947
Accrued Expenses	2,757
Lease and Other Current Liabilities	635
Total Current Liabilities	4,339
Mortgage and Notes Payable	1,322
Lease and Other Noncurrent Liabilities	4,747
Total Non-Current Liabilities	6,069
Total Liabilities	10,408
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	41,358
With Donor Restrictions	4,713
Total Net Assets	46,071

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$ 56,479

The financial information in this report represents a condensed version of fiscal year 2022-2023 audited financial statements. A complete set of audited financial statements, with accompanying notes is available from Vista Hill.

New Chula Vista Home For Stein Adult Services Enhances and Stabilizes Key Program

One of Vista Hill's most successful and effective programs just got even better thanks to the recent opening of a new building in Chula Vista to house the Stein Education Center's Golden Family Adult Services program.

"Everyone from our clients, their families and our staff are thrilled with our new state-of-the-art facility," says Senior Director Joanne Garcia.

"Having a permanent home that we actually own has increased our ability to provide additional and even more effective services to a clientele that relies so much on the lifeline we offer them."

The Adult Services program, which serves 70 South Bay residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities, works to improve the clients' quality of life by maximizing independence and advocating for community inclusion.

The new building ends a period in which the program had to adapt to lease termination at a National City location and forcing services to be

provided at community locations or through video streaming. With Vista Hill owning the building, tens of thousands of dollars will be saved in rent in the coming years.

With the full array of services solidly in place, the program is providing clients with meaningful, creative and engaging training opportunities on-site and in community integrated

settings; positive behavior intervention methods; pre-vocational training and volunteer opportunities; skill development to improve language, social interaction and independence; and group activities such as exercise, art and music classes.

"We feel the services we provide our clients are some

of the most important in the community," Garcia says. "Our clients are given the skills to create meaningful and productive lives. And their families benefit by being freed up for five hours a day so they can work or do errands."



Staff at the Chula Vista site enjoy helping the program participants do everyday activities and especially love celebrating seasonal events.

Family Cherishes Adult Services Program For Decades of Positive Impact on Son

If you want to understand the powerful impact Stein Education Center's Adult Services program has on lives, just spend a few minutes with Amparo and Nolito Laberinto.

The South Bay couple placed their son, Noel, in the program more than 20 years ago at a time when his severe developmental and intellectual disabilities made him angry and disruptive.



(L to R) Amparo, Noel and Nolito happily share their experience.

"Over the years, Noel has really become a different person and overcome so many challenges thanks to the training and education he has received from the program," his father, Nolito, says. "The communication and behavior skills they've given him have made him much calmer and able to interact with others. We also feel comfortable taking him out in the community."

The program has also made it possible for the couple to carry out family responsibilities while Noel is in the program.

"This program has really been a god-send," says his mother, Amparo. "We had no one else we could rely on, so the program has kept Noel safe and productive while letting us lead much more normal lives."

The couple could not be more grateful to the Adult Services staff.

"These wonderful staff have made all the difference in nurturing Noel to his best potential," Amparo says. "They are the most warm and caring people we have ever met, and we feel blessed for all they have done for our family."

Stein Education Center Adult Service Program Chula Vista Building Campaign Donors

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*In Memoriam

newvistas is published
once per year by the
**Friends of Vista
Hill Foundation,**
8910 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.,
San Diego, CA 92123.

Vista Hill is a 501(c)(3)
not-for-profit organization.

Some Vista Hill programs are
funded all or in part by the
County of San Diego, HHSA.

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Vista Hill Fashion Show 2024 brings “Happy Days” to San Diego Behavioral Health Community

Vista Hill’s 2024 Fashion Show Fundraiser, “Happy Days,” celebrated the 50th anniversary of the TV show, “Happy Days!” This far-out celebration was a resounding success by meeting the event’s fundraising goal of \$255,000 (255 is the number of Happy Days episodes that aired during its 11-year run).

The event exhibited the nifty styles of 50s greasers and the elegance and slim fits of the mid-century haute couture. The Fashion Show and Honorary Committees did a wonderful job of organizing the event and helping Vista Hill raise funds to support its many mental/behavioral health programs.

The event revisited 67 years of Vista Hill’s history with San Diego and highlighted the many programs Vista Hill has supported throughout the years in an effort to reduce homeless-

ness, respond to the growing substance use and mental health crises and care for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities. It was a wonderful day of catching up with old friends and making new ones, shopping at local boutiques and coming together to support Vista Hill program participants and the San Diego community.

“The fashion show was a fabulous event,” said one of the attendees. “I am so grateful.” A record of 85 new attendees was set at this year’s event!

After conquering the world of fashion, Friends of Vista Hill is ready to play a new game. Mark your calendars for our next venture, a brand-new game show, “Vista Hill Says,” on April 24, 2025. Please see the back cover for more details.



(L to R) Friends of Vista Hill (FVH) Executive Director Rachel Peniche, Claudia Prescott, Gigi Esguerra, and Ann Mound



Mistress of Ceremonies Misha DiBono (center) with Co-Chairs Carolyn Lennon (L) and Diane Zeps (R).



“Pink Lady” Barb Crew (Top Row Center) with just a few of her many gal pals.



FVH Board Member and event sponsor Patti Holmes (4th from left) and her friends saying farewell to the Fashion Show.



New FVH Board Member Anthony Bollotta (first row left) with his fashionable fellas.

Care Connect Helps Medi-Cal Patients Navigate Complex Health Care Environment

A new Vista Hill program is helping Medi-Cal patients navigate today's complex health care environment with a host of services ranging from finding the right physicians, to making appointments and providing transportation, to connecting them with community resources like food, clothing and housing.

Care Connect, which launched in fall of 2024, hopes to serve approximately 250 children, youth and families each year, according to Program Manager Kevin Richardson. The program is free to all those enrolled.

Using a strategy known as "Enhanced Care Management," each client is provided with a personalized health care plan customized to their specific health care needs. Among the other linked services are therapy, substance use disorder counseling, legal aid, rent and utility assistance and back-to-school supplies and other educational assistance.



Family sits down for an assessment with a Care Connect Lead Care Manager.

Richardson says Care Connect is critical to the community because it focuses on people who tend to be most in need—those experiencing homelessness, serious mental health or substance use disorders and people with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

"Care Connect helps our clients focus on what they feel their greatest needs are and advocate for them in ways that

were previously unavailable. Having someone to help walk you through resources, assist you in receiving what you qualify for and help stabilize your life during a perpetual state of crisis can make all the difference in the world."

Richardson adds, "Care Connect offers an opportunity for people who are struggling with their circumstances to avoid falling through the cracks, as they too often traditionally do. The entire community thrives when the people most in need can succeed and attain their health goals."

Angela Mickelson's Legacy Lives On

Vista Hill was deeply honored to receive a legacy gift of more than \$200,000 from the late Angela Mickelson's estate.

Angela spent all of her life in Southern California. She attended UCLA for both her bachelor's and law degrees.

Angela worked at Hooper, Lundy & Bookman, making partner. In 2002, Angela went out on her own, specializing in healthcare law. It was during this time that she served as a consultant for Vista Hill as the foundation reorganized. She immediately felt a deep appreciation for their mission and programs. Angela's brother Bill suffered from his own mental health challenges, which deepened her connection to Vista Hill.

In addition to her work, Angela also loved spending time with family and friends, mentoring, golfing, skiing and reading.

Billy, Angela's nephew, shared how Angela could best be described: "Angie was a remarkable woman whose kindness and strength touched everyone she met. She had a unique

ability to make each person feel special, always remembering the little things that mattered most to us. Her laughter was infectious, lighting up any room and turning ordinary moments into cherished memories. Angie loved crossword puzzles, conquering the challenge from LA Times every Sunday. Angie's legacy is one of warmth and generosity, and will live on with the love she shared."



Angela Mickelson August 9, 1953 — September 23, 2021

Angela passed away on September 23, 2021 at the age of 68. Vista Hill was the only non-profit beneficiary, receiving 10 percent of her estate. Angela's family requested that this generous gift go towards Vista Hill's most significant needs. We are beyond grateful for Angela's benevolence that will have a significant impact on many Vista Hill families.

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If you are interested in learning more about legacy giving, please contact Friends of Vista Hill Executive Director Rachel Peniche at rpeniche@vistahill.org or (858) 243-1570.



Council on Mental Health Brunch Focuses on Ways to Create Purpose at Every Stage of Life

This year's Vista Hill Council on Mental Health (VHCMH) Brunch featured an engaging interactive presentation by Dr. Christine Carter on embracing yourself, celebrating your uniqueness and creating purpose through activities and subjects that make you happy. Dr. Carter's topic of "Finding Purpose at Every Stage of Life" and discovering avenues to achieve fulfillment resonated with the more than 230 guests who attended the November 13 event at the JULEP venue. Dr. Carter, a sociologist and Senior Fellow at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, has authored several books combining scientific research and practical applications to find ways to cope with modern pressures and to thrive. These books provide its readers tips and strategies to make their life better, happier and easier.

The late Chuck Pretto was posthumously bestowed the 2024 Mental Health Advocate Award. Chuck served as the Honorary Chair for the Council on Mental Health event in 2022, and was instrumental in bringing more attention and focus to behavioral health challenges during his term as Rotary District Governor of District 5340.

A special thanks to the VHCMH Brunch Committee, Committee Co-Chairs Diane Stocker and Madeleine Pavel, and the Honorary Committee for all their help and support in producing such a successful event that raised nearly \$90,000 for program needs such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy and community outreach.



Molly's Angels Foundation's focus is on behavioral health for children and young adults.



(L to R) Past Mental Health Advocate Honorees: Barbara Brown, Laurie Black, Ellen Moxham, Ph.D., Fern Siegel, and Barb Crew.



Elaine Hall and Kristin Boyd participate in the interactive presentation.



Kimberly Pretto (middle) accepts the award on behalf of her family alongside CEO Robert Dean and Laura Mello.



Keynote speaker Dr. Christine Carter (middle) with event Co-Chairs Madeleine Pavel and Diane Stocker.

Long-time Board Chair Cecil H. Steppe Retires

Cecil H. Steppe, who became a Vista Hill Board member in 2000 and served as Board Chairman since 2007, retired in November. Although Mr. Steppe has retired from active board service, he will remain an Emeritus Director.

"We are immensely grateful to Mr. Steppe for his dedication and transformational impact on Vista Hill," said CEO Robert Dean, "In nearly 18 years as Chairman, Mr. Steppe exemplified excellence in governance leadership, combining procedural skills, ethics and open-mindedness with humor and a steep knowledge of social services in this county — all being very instrumental in helping us become one of the most innovative and effective behavioral health service organizations in San Diego."

Vista Hill's Board of Directors appointed David F. Dunbar as Chairman from his previous position as Vice Chairman. Dunbar joined the board in 1990 when he had his own law firm in San Diego. He has chaired multiple board committees and task forces and served as a board officer for several decades. Dean said Dunbar's steady leadership style and deep understanding of Vista Hill services has made for a smooth transition in Board leadership.



Emeritus Director Cecil H. Steppe

Two Distinguished Physicians named Co-Medical Directors, Succeeding Mark Chenven, M.D., after his 40 years of Remarkable Service to Vista Hill

Two nationally known physicians and behavioral health experts, Dr. Shawn Singh Sidhu and Dr. Charmi Patel Rao, have succeeded Mark Chenven, M.D., Vista Hill's long-time Executive Medical Director, who recently retired after four decades of providing Vista Hill clients with innovative and compassionate behavioral health care.

"Dr. Chenven's tireless dedication to improving the lives of Vista Hill clients has been remarkable, and his pioneering work in creating and guiding our programs have enabled us to provide some of the most effective behavioral health services in San Diego County," says Robert Dean, Vista Hill President and CEO. "Dr. Chenven has also shared his vast knowledge in mentoring countless physicians, nurses and other health professionals, including our two new Co-Medical Directors."

Dr. Sidhu, who oversees Vista Hill's Native American SmartCare Program and the Substance Use Programs at Vista Hill, is also a Professor of Psychiatry at the UC San Diego School of Medicine, where he serves as Director of Training for the UCSD Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship

Program. Dr. Sidhu serves the Kumeyaay Nation as well by working on reservation as a staff child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Southern Indian Health Council in Alpine.

Dr. Patel Rao, who oversees Vista Hill's Center for Child and Youth Psychiatry and the SmartCare Behavioral Consultation & Rural Programs, is a board-certified child and adolescent psychiatrist with an expertise in primary care collaborative care and early childhood mental health. She is also a Clinical Professor at UC San Diego and is current president of the regional San Diego Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry chapter, and lead chair for the San Diego County Critical Issues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health conference.

"Vista Hill is extremely fortunate that Dr. Sidhu and Dr. Patel Rao believe in Vista Hill's mission so much that they want to share their world-class skills and deep

experience to improve the lives of our clients," Dean says. "Their expertise and compassion have already had a major positive impact on the behavioral health of Vista Hill clients, and we're excited about how much more they will be able to accomplish in the years to come."



Dr. Mark Chenven (Center) with Dr. Charmi Patel Rao, who returns to Vista Hill after a stint at the County of San Diego, and Dr. Shawn Sidhu, who joined Vista Hill in 2021.



Friends of Vista Hill Foundation

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