

Molly's Makers Studio Dedication

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MOLLY'S MAKERS STUDIO

In Memory of
Molly Belinsky
Loving it Forward
Molly's Angels Foundation



inside

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President-CEO Message

Looking back over the past year, we're pleased to report that Vista Hill successfully dealt with a number of challenges, created several exciting new programs and ended up as strong and stable as ever in providing mental and behavioral health services to more than 20,000 individuals and families across San Diego County.

After emerging from the pandemic on solid footing a few years ago, Vista Hill and the social services non-profit community have gone through a turbulent period over the past 12 months, facing issues mostly beyond our control. Especially challenging were unexpected funding cutbacks due largely to implementation of Medi-Cal service reimbursement and California's Proposition 1 that impacted public sector mental health providers and forced the closure of a few of our own programs.

Fortunately, the Vista Hill Board of Directors and Executive Team members use a dynamic real-time strategy development process that enables Vista Hill

not only to address today's growing uncertainty and unpredictability, but actually discover opportunities to expand our outreach to the community. At the same time, our incredible staff of 400 employees have never worked harder to ensure our program participants receive the same high level of services to which they are accustomed.

Some of those opportunities have enabled us to add several new programs that will expand our impact in the community and allow us to help more people. ChildNET provides early mental health treatment to young children and their families. We're partnering with the Escondido School District and other partners in North County to provide early access to evidence-based methods and mental health services to our community's youngest children who might not otherwise be able to receive support through traditional clinical-based services.

Vista Hill has also become one of the key partner agencies in the ELEVATE Behavioral Health Workforce Fund, a County of San Diego program that uses state mental health funds to address the critical shortage of behavioral health professionals in San Diego County. There is currently a shortage of 8,000 professionals across the region, and Vista Hill will help close that gap by providing training and internships to professionals in the early stages of their careers.

We hope you enjoy our cover story on the amazing Sheila Weinstock, one of Vista Hill's most energetic volunteers and donors. Sheila turned the heartbreaking tragedy of losing her daughter into the creation of a wonderful foundation called Molly's Angels, which has made Vista Hill one of its primary philanthropic beneficiaries.

We bid a fond farewell to Chayo Chavez, who retired as the Stein Education Center's Director after a 40-year career with Vista Hill, including 16 years of passionate and resourceful service in this leadership role. We can't thank Chayo enough for her compassion and dedication on behalf of Stein Education Center's students. Succeeding Chayo will be Dr. Kenneth Hurst, who has had an illustrious 30-year career in education, having served as a teacher, principal and superintendent at schools in San Diego County, San Francisco Bay area and Washington state. He is a professional educator well suited to carry on the tradition of transforming the lives of our special education students.

Speaking of farewells, this will be Rob's last message as President and CEO, as he will retire from Vista Hill in July after more than 50 years of dedicated service to our organization. No one has been more important to Vista Hill's remarkable growth and outstanding reputation than Rob, and he will be sorely missed. You can read more about Rob's remarkable career on page 4.



David F. Dunbar
Chair



Robert Dean
President & CEO

Combined Statement of Financial Position

At September 30, 2025 (in 000s)

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 14,955
Investments	34,558
Accounts Receivable, net	5,156
Lease and Other Current Assets	499
Total Current Assets	55,168
Property, Plant and Equipment, net	8,943
Endowment Investments	632
Lease and Other Noncurrent Assets	4,555
Total Assets	\$ 69,298

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ 645
Accrued Expenses	3,511
Lease and Other Current Liabilities	750
Total Current Liabilities	4,906
Mortgage and Notes Payable	1,199
Lease and Other Noncurrent Liabilities	4,331
Total Non-Current Liabilities	5,530
Total Liabilities	10,436
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	54,887
With Donor Restrictions	3,975
Total Net Assets	58,862

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$ 69,298

The financial information in this report represents a condensed version of fiscal year 2024-2025 audited financial statements. An Independent Audit report with audited financial statements is available.

Vista Hill Donor Sheila Weinstock Honored with Dedication of Molly's Makers Studio

Vista Hill is fortunate to have many generous supporters, but few have demonstrated the enduring enthusiasm of Sheila Weinstock. For nearly two decades, Sheila has given her time, talent and significant financial support to an organization she proudly calls “family.”

On January 28, in a heartfelt and emotional ceremony, Vista Hill dedicated Molly's Makers Studio in honor of Sheila and Molly's Angels, the foundation she created to celebrate the life of her daughter, Molly, who tragically passed away from an accidental heroin overdose in 2019 at the age of 28.

Molly's Makers Studio is located at Vista Hill's Donald K. Allen ParentCare Family Recovery Center in La Mesa, an intensive outpatient program serving mothers working to overcome substance use disorders. The studio provides a creative and healing space where art becomes part of the recovery journey.

“We were so pleased to honor Sheila and the memory of Molly with the dedication of this beautiful, creative space at ParentCare,” said Rachel Peniche, Executive Director of Friends of Vista Hill. “A stunning mural was created for the room, inspired by Molly's own artistic gifts. We are thrilled that Molly's Makers Studio will energize and inspire ParentCare participants during their art engagement sessions for years to come.”

During the ceremony, Sheila presented Vista Hill with a \$25,000 gift from Molly's Angels, along with an additional \$10,000 donation from her mother, Esther Belinsky, a long-time Vista Hill supporter who attended the event. Over the years, Molly's Angels and the Belinsky family have contributed more than \$500,000 to Vista Hill's programs.

Sheila's connection to Vista Hill began 17 years ago when Molly, then a teenager, was ordered by juvenile court to participate in a substance use disorder program. Sheila found support through one of Vista Hill's many substance use dis-

order programs, which assisted both Molly and her family. That positive experience inspired her to begin volunteering in ParentCare's childcare center, supporting the children of mothers in recovery.

Her involvement continued to grow. Sheila joined the Friends of Vista Hill Board and became a dedicated supporter and sponsor of both their spring and fall fundraising events.

After Molly's passing and the creation of Molly's Angels, Sheila selected Vista Hill as one of the foundation's key community partners.

“I cherish my relationship with Vista Hill because we share the same mission of helping people in real need,” Sheila said. “Vista Hill has helped me turn something so tragic and heartbreaking into something positive that has inspired and transformed my own life and is doing the same for so many others. I'm proud that Vista Hill is not only one of my favorite community partners — they're family.”

“Sheila is more than a remarkable volunteer and donor — she is a true friend of Vista Hill,” Peniche said. “It is rare to find donors so deeply engaged in behavioral health causes. Through Sheila's generosity, her compassion, and her unwavering belief in our work, she embodies Molly's Angels' mission to ‘Love it Forward.’”

In addition to all the wonderful donations Molly's Angels and the Belinsky Family have made over the years, Sheila has planned a meaningful legacy gift that will ensure Vista Hill's mission will positively impact lives for generations to come. She invites others who share her vision to consider including the Vista Hill Foundation in their estate plans.

If you are inspired to “Love it Forward” please use the QR code to donate in Molly's honor. For more information on Molly's Angels community partnership with Vista Hill, please use the QR code below.



(L to R) Esther, Sheila and Molly at the “The Art of Recovery” Vista Hill Gala in 2013.



(L to R) Elizabeth Tobias whose creative vision helped Molly's Makers Studio become a reality with her cousin, Sheila, and Katy Yeaw, the mural's artist.



(L to R) Molly's Angels Board members and supporters: Candi Newton, Dana Massey, Sheila Weinstock, and Patty Ochendusko



(Standing) Rachel Peniche, Friends of Vista Hill Executive Director with President and CEO, Robert Dean accepting Esther Belinsky's generous check.



For donations



Molly's Angels

Robert Dean to Retire as President and CEO After Half Century of Serving Vista Hill

President and Chief Executive Officer, Robert Dean, who started as a 16-year-old dishwasher at Mesa Vista Hospital and then devoted more than five decades of his life building Vista Hill Foundation into one of San Diego's most indispensable behavioral health and social services organizations, has announced his retirement effective this coming summer.

"Since Rob took over as President and CEO over two decades ago, he has been one of the most steadfast and experienced leaders in San Diego's non-profit community and his contributions have been incalculable," says David F. Dunbar, Chair of Vista Hill's Board of Directors. "Being a service leader has positively influenced Vista Hill's many outstanding programs and improved the lives of tens of thousands of San Diego County individuals and their families."

Dean's career with the organization began when he was hired as a dishwasher at the same Vista Hill psychiatric hospital that had treated his father three years earlier. The early work experience with people from all walks of life, and excellent supervisors, instilled strong work ethics and values, as well as a compassion for others suffering with mental disorders and substance issues. By the time he finished high school he knew that a career in mental health and recovery services was in his future. He went on to San Diego State University, receiving a bachelor's degree in recreational administration and earned a master's degree in business management at National University in 1988.

Over the years, Dean served in over a dozen positions at Vista Hill, including several non-clinical, clinical and administrative positions with Mesa Vista Hospital, Chief Operating Officer of Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital, Vice President for Human Resources and Senior Vice President of Operations for Vista Hill. He was named President and CEO in 2004.

In the early 2000s, Dean led the organization by starting a long rebuilding period, at times with more than 500 employees that created and operated some of the most innovative programs in the county to help those confronting the challenges of mental illness, substance use disorder or intellectual and developmental disabilities. Today, Vista Hill is

one of the 25 largest non-profit agencies in San Diego County, serving more than 20,000 individuals and families annually with a budget of more than \$40 million.

Beyond the programs themselves, among Dean's proudest achievements are the strong relationships Vista Hill has established with service partners and other funding agencies, and the solid financial footing he helped the organization achieve. Thanks to Dean's vision, support of the governing board, Friends of Vista Hill and loyal donors, Vista Hill now owns most of the buildings housing its programs, saving several million dollars in leasing costs.

Dean says he feels fortunate to have had such a rich and rewarding career at Vista Hill. He is thankful for having mentors that pushed him along, excellent people serving as executives and senior directors, and most importantly, the devoted corps of clinical and support staff doing the heavy lifting of delivering client and student services every day.

"Vista Hill has never been in better shape. I think this is the most appropriate time for me to turn the reins over to someone else," Dean says. "It's difficult to express how much gratitude I have for what Vista Hill has meant to me. It was always much more than a job because every day I have loved what I do. For me it was a real calling to work in a profession whose primary goal was helping people."

When I started as a teenager, I had no concept of what the future would hold for me at Vista Hill. But thanks to the help of so many talented colleagues, dedicated board members and our wonderful and generous donors, we were able to build an organization that I'm proud to say really is making a meaningful difference in the daily lives of our program participants."

"Rob is truly irreplaceable, and we feel grateful to have had the benefit of his incredible service," Dunbar said. "On behalf of Vista Hill's countless clients, donors and staff, we want to thank Rob for his remarkable contribution to our organization and by extension to the entire community. Rob's legacy will be everlasting. We wish him and his family the best in his next chapter."



(L to R) Friends of Vista Hill Board members Faith Stagg and Susan Straub with Robert at a donor event in 2014. Susan hired Robert as a dishwasher at Mesa Vista Hospital in December of 1969.



Donald Allen and Robert cooking at a medical staff BBQ.



Robert clowning around at a staff event.

Shankar Vedantam Explores Modern Mental Health Challenges at 2025 Council on Mental Health Luncheon

Vista Hill Council on Mental Health (VHCMH) welcomed 300 guests on November 20 for an inspiring and thought-provoking moderated conversation with Shankar Vedantam, host of the widely acclaimed podcast *Hidden Brain*.

In discussion with Vista Hill Medical Director Dr. Charmi Patel-Rao and Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist Sandra Maas, Vedantam explored some of today's most pressing mental health challenges, including aging, loneliness, stress, well-being and the powerful role that hope and optimism play in countering rising cynicism.

Guests described the program as "marvelous, positive and healing," with many long-time *Hidden Brain* listeners especially thrilled to meet Vedantam in person. One attendee shared, "Very informative and motivating. Great job to the organizers — and what a coup to get Shankar Vedantam."

Since its launch with NPR in 2015, *Hidden Brain* has grown to millions of weekly downloads and is consistently ranked among the world's top podcasts. Vedantam is also the author of *The Hidden Brain: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, Wage Wars, and Save Our Lives* and co-author of the 2021 book *Useful Delusions: The Power and Paradox of the Self-Deceiving Brain*. His work examines the unseen patterns that shape human behavior and offers profound insight into the complexities of the mind.

The event marked a significant increase in attendance from the previous year and raised an impressive \$86,000 in support of Vista Hill's mental and behavioral health programs.

Special thanks to the VHCMH Honorary Committee for their leadership and dedication in producing such a successful and impactful event.



(L to R) Event Chair Lynn Nelles with gal pals, Esther Poon, Betsy Gustafson, Kristine Doan, Ginger Hazen, and Meredith Flavin



(L to R) Lindsay Kadowaki, Sara Kadowaki, Linda Coale, Barb Crew, Charley Crew, Didi Saks and Gary Saks



(L to R) Dr. Ed Canada, Ann Mound, and Claudia Prescott were delighted to attend.



(L to R) Vista Hill Medical Director, Charmi Patel Rao, MD, DFAACAP with Shankar Vedantam and Sandra Maas.

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Survey says: Vista Hill's Inaugural Game Show Hits the Jackpot — Raising \$295,000!

Lights. Buzzers. Scoreboards. And one very enthusiastic crowd.

Vista Hill rolled the dice on a bold new concept in 2025 — transforming our traditional annual fundraiser into a high-energy, fast-paced Game Show Fundraiser — and the results were a winning combination. Our inaugural Vista Hill “SAYS” leveled up the excitement and scored a record-breaking \$295,000 to support our vital programs and services.

Inspired by the popular show “America Says,” four powerhouse teams went head-to-head in a friendly but fierce showdown. With buzzers ready and competitive spirits switched on, teams answered rapid-fire questions, racked up points, climbed the leaderboard and rallied donors to boost their totals. The ultimate goal? To outplay the competition and raise the most funds for Vista Hill. Each team championed one of our four mission-critical focus areas:

- Mental Health
- Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
- Substance Use Recovery
- Prevention & Early Intervention

We set a bold target of \$50,000 per team — but once the competition kicked off, our players quickly shifted into high

gear. The scoreboard lit up as donations poured in. Every team crushed its goal, and our top point-scorer, Team Mental Health, took the grand prize by raising an incredible \$115,000 on its own.

Produced by Bollotta Entertainment and masterfully emceed by the celebrated Clint Bell, the event delivered all the glitz and game-day thrills. The audience didn't just watch — they played along. Guests cheered for their favorite teams, competed in interactive table challenges, won prizes, and helped tip the scales with additional contributions.

As one guest shared, “I really liked the new format! It was super fun and different, and the audience seemed really engaged throughout.” Another exclaimed, “Your game show sizzled! High fives!”

When the final scores were locked in, one thing was clear: this wasn't just a game — it was a game changer. Thanks to the teamwork, strategy, sportsmanship and generosity of our sponsors, players and guests, Vista Hill proved once again that when our community plays together, everyone wins.

Please save the date, rally your team, and get ready to hit the buzzer! Join us for more game-time excitement on Thursday, April 30, 2026.



(L to R) Winning Team Mental Health — Chris Theodor, Steve Cairncross, Patti Holmes, Liz Copley, and Brad Sund



(L to R) Team Prevention and Intervention — Linette Draper, Shayna Davis-Schreiber, Araceli, Ann Mound, Ben Schenk, and Emily Griffiths



(L to R) Team Substance Use Recovery — Danielle Schmidt, Peggy Baxter, Kimberly Brady-Rubidoux, Dangiolo Bonilla, René Hitt, and Danielle Delosa



(L to R) Team Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities — Heidi Dorman, Diane Mushet, Marc Gallo, Sandra Shapiro, and Kim Gallo



Human Slot Machine with Vista Hill employees Lynn, Nick and Jayne!



Game Show Host, Clint Bell leading the exciting game of Vista Hill SAYS!



Back Row, (L to R) Merrilee Neal, Magda Remillard, Susan Spoto, Claudia Chan-Shaffer, Charlotte Perry
Front Row, Katie Hunter, Christine Pierce, Annalisa Barrett, with table host Lynne Rossman

Outstanding Career Educator named New Director of Stein Education Center Special Education Campus

Dr. Kenneth “Chris” Hurst, who first began teaching as a Marine drill instructor and went on to an illustrious career as principal, school superintendent and university lecturer, has been named the new Director of the Stein Education Center Special Education Campus. He succeeds Chayo Chavez, who retired in December.

“We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Hurst to the Vista Hill family,” says President and CEO Robert Dean. “His vast experience and expertise at all levels of education, combined with his passion for helping students with unique challenges, makes him the best choice to lead our special education school.”

To understand why Dr. Hurst is such an ideal fit you have to go back to his early upbringing in the deep south. He was one of two African Americans at a mostly white school and found himself on the outside looking in.

“No one took an interest in me and no counselor provided me with a path for the future,” Dr. Hurst recalls. “I was a child with real needs, and I was ignored and marginalized. That experience helped motivate me to become an educator because I had a passion for helping students facing the greatest challenges.”

Dr. Hurst fell in love with teaching when he served as a drill instructor during his 11-year career with the U.S. Marines. After an honorable discharge he furthered his education with a bachelor’s degree from California State University San Marcos and an Ed.D. from USC. He then launched a varied and illustrious 30-year career as an educator. Among his positions, he served as assistant principal in Poway, principal at several San Diego schools, and principal and associate superintendent at Oceanside High School. Most recently, he was superintendent of West Contra Costa Unified School District in Richmond, Calif., overseeing 56 schools with 26,000 students and 3,200 teachers.



Dr. Kenneth “Chris” Hurst joined the Stein Education Center Campus in December 2025.

Since becoming Director in December, Dr. Hurst has hit the ground running. Among his most important goals is increasing support for the teachers and therapists so they can do an even better job of educating and serving their students.

“Stein Education Center is one of the most amazing schools I’ve ever worked at,” Dr. Hurst says. “The teachers, specialists and therapists we have here are some of the most skilled educators and clinicians I’ve ever met. To work with the developmentally disabled, who face such tremendous behavioral and intellectual challenges, requires skilled teachers and staff who are both incredibly patient and compassionate. I’m truly honored to work with them as colleagues.”

The result of the teams’ effort is that the Stein Education Center Special Education Campus has become the non-public school to which 17 different school districts around the county refer their most challenged students for their education.

“The districts tell us we’re doing a great job and they’re extremely appreciative because they just simply don’t have the resources to properly educate and care for these students with these kinds of challenges,” Dr. Hurst says. “At our campus, we not only educate these students, we have an on-site speech and language department and occupational therapy both integrated into their individual education plans. We’re transforming their lives by preparing them for a productive life after they leave here, and that’s a huge benefit to their families and our community.”

I can’t tell you how rewarding it is to see students make such remarkable progress thanks to the work of our incredible staff. And the positive impact extends to the families of our students who tell us their own lives have been greatly enhanced by the improved behavior of their children. Stein Education Center is truly the right place for me as someone who’s invested in helping students achieve their greatest potential.”



For more than 40 years, Chayo Chavez has dedicated her career to serving children, families, and individuals with compassion, skill, and heart. She began her journey in 1984 as a teacher’s aide at what was then Los Niños Education Center, bringing with her an “extreme interest in children” that would define her life’s work. Over the decades, Chayo grew into her role as Senior Operations Director at Stein Education Center, taking on countless responsibilities along the way—from supervisor and director to CPR/first aid trainer, school counselor, therapeutic horseback riding instructor, and even occasional janitor and van driver.

No task was ever too small, and every role was met with humility, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to those she served. Chayo’s deep knowledge and genuine care have left a lasting mark on colleagues, families, and the broader community.

We thank Chayo for four decades of remarkable service and wish her all the best in her well-earned retirement.



Friends of Vista Hill Foundation

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