The mission of Side by Side is to walk with youth impacted by adversity toward a future with connection and meaning.
LETTER FROM MARY

Dear friends,

I am so thrilled to unveil our new name and brand! For those of us on the inside, we’ve been bursting to share our secret for many months. We’re now Side by Side!

And I recognize some of you may be wondering, "What happened to Sunny Hills Services?"

We understand the attachment; after all, we’ve been around 123 years, much of it as Sunny Hills Services on Sunny Hills Drive. In recent years though, we’ve evolved significantly to meet the needs of young people in our communities, and we needed a name that would reflect our expansion beyond our “Sunny Hills” location and unite our diverse portfolio of programs. We also wanted a brand that evoked the collaborative nature of the work among clients, staff, and partners in the community. You can read more about our brand evolution on the following page.

We are grateful to our designer, Chris Inclenrock, who brought Side by Side to life with a bold, approachable, and cohesive visual identity system.

Today, with your help, Side by Side operates in four counties – Marin, Alameda, Sonoma, and Napa – reaching nearly 2,000 young people ages 5 to 26 and their families. We provide services that span behavioral and mental health, early intervention, LGBTQ, therapeutic housing, special education, youth justice, and – our newest program area – substance abuse recovery. See the center spread for more information on all of our programs.

We hope you enjoy the inaugural newsletter of Side by Side. And be sure to check out our new website at SideBySideYouth.org and while you’re there sign up for our email newsletter!

Thank you for walking side by side with us in this work – we truly couldn’t do it without you.

With gratitude,

Mary Denton, CEO
Our Commitment to Inclusivity

A strongly-held value at Side by Side is to honor and embrace the tremendous diversity of our clients and employees. We strive for our workplace to be a safe place where everyone is respected and valued for who they are, and we make conscious efforts to ensure that our culture and norms do not perpetuate oppressive practices.

One way we do this is to invite staff to share their personal pronouns, in introductions and email signatures, to allow them to avoid potentially being mis-gendered in conversation or other communications, and to acknowledge our respect for all staff, whether transgender, gender-non-conforming, or cisgender. Sharing pronouns is encouraged; however, not compulsory, with our intent to maintain a safe space for all. We hope this practice will encourage reflection on what it means to contribute to a workplace culture where our shared values of compassion and respect are extended to our trans and gender non-conforming colleagues and clients.

From 1895 to Side by Side

Founded in 1895 as an orphanage, we became known as “Sunny Hills” in the 1930s in reference to our idyllic San Anselmo campus (with our street, Sunny Hills Drive, subsequently named for us).

Though we’re still headquartered on that same campus in San Anselmo – and we still serve the most vulnerable youth in our community – our scope of services has expanded well beyond the Sunny Hills location, with a broad spectrum of programs across four counties. The name Sunny Hills no longer captured the depth of our work, nor did it speak to the essence of our relationship with young people.

In our search for a new name, we talked to staff and clients about their work together, and the phrase “side by side” came up again and again. The experience of our direct care staff is of walking with the young person through their journey – not leading or following but meeting them where they are without judgment or hierarchy. The onus is not on the client to do the work alone, nor is it on our staff to rescue. It’s about the process, not the destination. As a name, Side by Side encapsulated this simple, but most essential aspect of our work with young people. And, importantly, Side by Side describes our relationship with the partners and supporters in the community that make our work possible.

Side by Side Today

At Side by Side we walk with young people impacted by adversity on their unique journeys to heal from trauma, restore resilience, and embrace their own potential. We see our clients for the individuals they are, and how all aspects of their life experiences have impacted their behavior, emotions, and ability to learn. We provide critical and comprehensive services that honor the young person’s unique needs and strengths to prevent the escalation of dangerous conditions and behaviors and set them on a positive path. From therapeutic housing to substance abuse recovery to an LGBTQ drop-in center, we provide the safe space most have missed in their lives. When they feel seen for who they are today, we believe our youth can move with confidence toward a future with meaning and connection.

The History of Our Brand

1895 – Founded as San Francisco Presbyterian Orphanage & Farm by Mrs. P.D. Browne on 20 acres in San Anselmo
1899 – Kent Estate hosted the first Grape Festival, a beloved annual fundraiser that would continue for 105 years
1920 – Captain Robert Dollar donated additional 42 acres of land
1930s – Became informally known as “Sunny Hills”
1967 – Name legally changed to Sunny Hills Children’s Services
1999 – Merged with Children’s Garden of California
2005 – Name legally changed to Sunny Hills Services
2007 – Established office in Sonoma County
2008 – Merged with Bay Area Youth Centers (BAYC) and expanded services into Alameda County
2018 – Name changed to Side by Side
**Community Counseling** (Marin, Alameda, Sonoma, and Napa Counties)

Behavioral challenges, emotional difficulties, and mental health issues often reveal themselves in childhood and early adulthood and can impact a young person’s functioning at home, in school, and in the community. From short term, intensive crisis intervention to longer term case management and family support, Community Counseling clinical services are individualized and include home, classroom, and community-based support. Informed by a holistic understanding of the young person’s history and strengths, Community Counseling supports the development of coping skills and strategies to help the young person attain stability and a sense of personal agency. Community Counseling includes a spectrum of services – from individual and group therapy to crisis stabilization and medication management – based on the specific needs and diagnosis of the young person and their family.

**Esser House** (Alameda County)

Esser House provides a highly supportive, safe place to call home for especially vulnerable populations including commercially sexually exploited youth and LGBTQ identified youth, who are involved in the foster care and/or probation systems. Staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, Esser House is a co-ed, six-bed group home that serves youth ages 15-19. The primary goal of the Esser House program is to provide a safe and supportive environment for youth to begin to heal from trauma, practice daily living skills, and prepare for independent living. Esser House clients are supported with mental health services, stabilization, and case management. All of our treatment services are tailored to support each individual’s specific needs.

**Irene M. Hunt School** (Marin County)

Sometimes young students and older youth experience social, emotional, and/or behavioral challenges too acute for them to function in traditional schools. The Irene M. Hunt School (Hunt School) is a nonpublic, K - 12 day school that provides a therapeutic environment where students develop the capability to regulate their behavior, maintain focus and resilience, and form healthy, trusting relationships – all foundational elements for lifelong learning. We supplement our comprehensive state-adopted curriculum with a wide range of enrichment for students, including exposure to music and theater, all tailored to meet students’ specific needs. With our committed support, students address challenges and build on their core strengths, with the goal of ultimately returning to their neighborhood public school setting equipped with the skills to thrive socially and academically.

**Our Space** (Alameda County)

For many young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or questioning (LGBTQ), it can feel like no place is safe. LGBTQ youth experience significantly higher rates of bullying, harassment, and abuse at school, home, and in the world. Add to this poverty, homelessness, and/or involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems – categories in which LGBTQ youth have a disproportionate representation – and it’s not a surprise to also find increased risk factors like depression, school drop-out, and self-harm. Our Space provides the much-needed safe space where LGBTQ youth can express their authentic selves and feel seen, accepted, and celebrated. A vibrant community center with drop-in hours, mental health and case management services, Our Space supports young people in internalizing messages of resilience and fierce love for themselves and their community.

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“Our recent grant for Esser House to support young victims of commercial sexual exploitation was approved based on Side by Side’s long experience and commitment to helping vulnerable young people”

Yali Lincroft, Program Director, Walter S. Johnson Foundation
Real Alternatives (Alameda County)

Real Alternatives offers a continuum of transitional housing opportunities for current and former foster youth and/or those on probation ages 16 to 24. Real Alternatives provides an apartment for youth to call home and a safe environment for them to take responsibility in as many areas of their life as possible and develop goals for their future. Supported by our staff, youth learn to budget and pay bills, shop for groceries and cook, live with a roommate, resolve conflict, pursue an education, and secure and maintain employment. All Real Alternatives clients have access to mental health services and also are supported in building and/or repairing relationships, learning new coping skills, and managing any mental health symptoms that may get in their way.

ReFocus (Sonoma County)

Too many young people get stuck in the juvenile justice system because they don’t have access to mental health services and comprehensive treatment. Their psychiatric issues may be precursors to their criminal offenses, and, untreated, may impede their rehabilitation, too. ReFocus works to address the mental health needs of juvenile offenders ages 12-19 and their families, and facilitate restorative justice practices that benefit the young person and the community. In collaboration with the county mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems, we create comprehensive, individualized treatment programs that include support and counseling in the home, school, court, and community, and deliver timely progress reports to the courts. Ultimately, ReFocus ensures the youth receive the mental health services they need to restore wellbeing as individuals and a community.

ReStart (Marin County)

Substance abuse is a critical issue among teens in our community, yet there are few affordable places to get help. ReStart is a residential and after school program for youth ages 13 to 17 struggling with substance abuse and one of very few residential treatment facilities in Northern California that young people and their families can turn to, regardless of income. Led by a multidisciplinary team, ReStart’s unique approach blends recovery, mental health, and daily coping skills to help youth overcome their struggles with substance abuse. Treatment plans are customized and include individual and group counseling, family therapy, parent education, adventure therapy, and recreation. ReStart offers both a 10-bed residential program providing 30 to 60 day treatment, and an afterschool, 20 hours per week program, providing up to 90 days of treatment.

TAY Space (Marin County)

TAY Space is a community center for youth ages 16-25 (transitional age youth, or TAY) who struggle with mental, behavioral, and/or emotional disorders including bipolar, schizophrenia, anxiety, and depression. The transition from childhood into adulthood presents many challenges that are only exacerbated for young people with mental health diagnoses. Many TAY Space clients also navigate poverty, homelessness, and histories of foster care, incarceration, hospitalization, abandonment, and/or abuse. TAY Space is specifically designed to support this age group in managing their mental health with therapy and psychiatric services; connecting to resources for housing, education, and employment; and building on their strengths to forge a self-sufficient future. TAY Space also functions as a drop-in center with daily activities for any transitional age youth in need of a safe place and a community of peers.

YouThrive (Sonoma and Marin Counties)

Failing grades, truancy, acute behavior challenges, gang activity, or drug and alcohol abuse can start early. That’s why intervention must start early too, if we want to divert and prevent the escalation into more serious and dangerous behavior. YouThrive works with 11 to 18-year-olds who are on the precipice of troubling behavior, or already immersed in it, and engages them in high-impact workshops that support the development of the youth’s assets and resilience. Comprising 10-week sessions (fall and spring) the program includes weekly group meetings in the school setting; special workshops on topics like anger management; individual counseling and mentoring; and regular monitoring of grades and school attendance. Our goal is to equip young people with the mindset and coping skills to stay on a positive path through school and career, and to be contributing members of their family, school, and community.
Our Appreciation to the Sponsors and Participants of the 24th Annual Bank of Marin Golf Tournament

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The event raised over $125,000 for Side by Side – thanks for a great day on the links!

DONOR PROFILE

Lydia and Tony Cameron

This could be a profile of a standout board member, event sponsor, or a longtime volunteer and the Camerons would still fit the bill. Beyond their extraordinary generosity to Side by Side over the years, Lydia and Tony Cameron have consistently contributed their time and energy as well. Our longest running board member, Lydia served on the board for three sets of terms between 1972 and 2018 for a total of 28 years. Her husband Tony has been Side by Side’s champion as well through his affiliation with Wells Fargo Advisors and the Herbst Foundation, a lead sponsor of the Bank of Marin Golf Tournament for many years. We sat down with Lydia and Tony to learn a bit more about their personal history, what first drew them to Side by Side, and what they think about the rebrand.

SBS: Tell us about your early days as a couple.
Tony: We met at Washington College in Maryland, we married when I was a sophomore. I was 20, she was 19. We’ve been married almost 60 years. We both worked at Campbell’s Soup during college, me a brief stint as a chemist, Lydia in accounting. Then I went on to a career in finance – and we moved to California in ’62.

Lydia: I was always interested in helping kids. My mother was a psychiatric nurse and she lamented how few services were available for children. Tony and I were first introduced to what was then Sunny Hills Services through a friend in late 1967, and I quickly joined the Belvedere Guild in order to become more involved.

SBS: What made you first want to get involved with Side by Side?
Lydia: What’s your proudest moment with Sunny Hills/Side by Side?
SBS: What has made you stay involved over the years?
Lydia: Side by Side is never stuck in the mud. When times change, and the needs of children in our community change, we change to meet those needs.

SBS: What’s your proudest moment with Sunny Hills/Side by Side?
Lydia: Chairing the Grape Festival in 1972. And being the youngest president of the board, and, later, the oldest!

SBS: Tell us something that might surprise us to know about you.
Tony: We’ve been riding motorcycles since 1964, and we still ride with the Montgomery Street Motorcycle Club. In the early days Lydia rode sidesaddle, since ladies couldn’t wear pants. Twice we rode from Michigan to California. For many years we would ride every year to and from Death Valley. Lydia and I even helped put together a benefit ride for Sunny Hills a few years back.

SBS: What do you think about the new name and brand?
Lydia: Side by Side sends a message of working together, which has always been our approach. It’s who we’ve always been. Tony and I, together with the Herbst Foundation, are delighted to be one of the lead sponsors to fund the launch of our new brand.
WAYS TO GIVE: LEGACY GIVING

Legacy gifts – those made through estate planning and bequests – are crucial to securing the future of Side by Side and our ability to stand together with the Bay Area’s marginalized young people as they realize their potential.

If you’ve already included Side by Side in your will, please let us know so that we can acknowledge your generosity.

To learn more about adding Side by Side to your estate plan through bequests, IRAs, life insurance, or real estate: visit sidebysideyouth.org/legacy or contact Noelle Moss at (415) 457-3200 ext. 114 or nmoss@sidebysideyouth.org.

CLINICIAN & PROVIDER PROFILE

Timberlie and Shawneshia

When Shawneshia began working as Timberlie’s clinician, the hurdles were great. Timberlie had arrived at Side by Side a few years prior, seeking support and stability after numerous foster placements had failed her. Timberlie had continued battling homelessness and the justice system, and was told she wouldn’t graduate from high school. Since then, and with Shawneshia’s support, Timberlie graduated from high school, secured stable housing, enrolled in community college, and completed the Women Building the Bay construction work program, where today she’s engaged in an apprenticeship.

Here’s how they describe their relationship, to each other:

**Timberlie:** I have never felt judged by you, and appreciate that you are always there to listen when I need to vent. When we first started working together, I would get rowdy with you, and I thought it might affect our relationship. But you always proved me wrong. Now we have established a relationship where I feel extremely comfortable expressing myself to you, no filter needed. At the end of the day, I wouldn’t want any other person to be my therapist.

**Shawneshia:** I have witnessed your hurts, your challenges, your experiences with discrimination, heartbreaks, and even homelessness first hand. You had every reason under the sun to drop out of services but you never disengaged. And you still rise with the brightest smile on your face. You have taught me that it’s ok to laugh and be playful in session. But most importantly you have welcomed me into your world. You have always been the lead navigator of your treatment and I appreciate your ability to trust me in supporting you. It has been an honor to walk side by side with you on your journey.

You can see more of Shawneshia and Timberlie in our new video at sidebysideyouth.org.

Our rebranding effort was made possible by the following generous donors:

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