



**Sunny Hills**  
**SERVICES**<sup>SM</sup>  
*Better and Brighter Futures*

Spring 2017



## Celebrating Success, One Young Life at a Time

**M**arin Transition Age Youth (TAY) is a Sunny Hills program based in downtown San Rafael, designed to help youth ages 16 – 25 who face huge challenges, including mental illness and substance use, as well as family estrangement and homelessness. The program includes a drop-in center, where youth have access to caring and professional on-site case managers, life skills programs, computers, a kitchen with healthy snacks, and more.

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## CEO MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

The best descriptor I've read about the proposed Federal budget released in mid-March: "...the Administration's 'skinny budget' looks like a starvation diet for our sector and the tens of millions of people we serve," said Mario Marino, nonprofit leader and author on performance and social impact. Funding for Health and Human Services is slashed by 16%, and Education by 14%.

As others in our field, we are trying to figure out how the policy changes imbedded in the budget and implicit in the Affordable Care Act repeal/replacement proposals will impact our ability to help our clients heal and thrive, and to keep our communities healthy. At least, the American Health Care Act is off the table for the time being. What is clear is that these proposals threaten the vital safety nets depended on by millions of Americans and Californians.

The major impacts of these proposals as they impact our clients and our work include:

- Roll-back of Medicaid (Medi-Cal) expansion, resulting in loss of insurance coverage to an estimated 14 million (nationally)
- Conversion of Medicaid funding to a per capita cap, resulting in significant stress to the California general fund to cover service entitlements to children, and/or cuts in provider pay
- Cuts to educational programs including student aid programs for low-income students, which are critical to help foster youth attend college
- Cuts in workforce training for low-income youth and adults through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which passed Congress with "overwhelming" bipartisan support in 2014

These and other cuts mean the loss of services for children, youth and families living in extreme poverty, which will have negative developmental impacts on this generation of young people. They will suffer life-long negative consequences, as will their families and our communities. This is not belt-tightening; it is a tragic disinvestment in our future.

Stay informed, be an advocate and support the organizations that you believe in, like Sunny Hills.

*Mary Denton*  
Mary Denton  
CEO

## NEW PROGRAMS WILL HELP YOUTH WHO STRUGGLE WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

IN MARIN COUNTY, A DESTRUCTIVE WAR RAGES ON—THE FIGHT AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE—WHICH HAS MANY OF MARIN'S YOUTH IN ITS GRASP.

According to Matt Willis, Marin's chief of public health, "This is an ongoing health crisis for us. Our numbers for teen drug and alcohol use are way higher in Marin than the state average."

There are many root causes of substance abuse, including stress or trauma. Whatever the cause, increasing numbers of Marin's young people are in life-threatening situations. "Over the past 15 years, drug-related ER visits and drug-related deaths in Marin more than tripled. "We had one accidental overdose death every two weeks from 2012 to 2013; that's about three times as many accidental overdose deaths as car vehicles deaths," said Willis.

In response to the overwhelming need for services and in keeping with Sunny Hills' commitment to providing a continuum of care, the agency will launch two programs in the coming months that will provide substance abuse services for teens on Sunny Hills' San Anselmo campus.

- **A 10-bed residential substance abuse treatment program for youth ages 13 to 18, for up to a 60-day stay in which families will be closely involved in treatment.** The goal is to support each youth in becoming emotionally stable, developing coping skills and helping to create new, positive behaviors in a safe and structured environment. Facilitated counseling groups and activities will help youth examine issues including the social and family impact of substance use, anger management, recovery thinking, positive self-care and coping with triggers.
- **A "partial hospitalization" program for youth ages 13 to 18.** Attendees will participate in activities like those offered in the residential program, but they will do so while continuing to attend local schools and living with their families/caregivers. The program will operate Tuesday through Friday in afternoon/evening hours and half day on Saturday.

"These programs will allow Sunny Hills to extend care to young people in urgent need. We hope that through these and other Marin County programs, substance use among Marin teens will no longer be the norm, and substance abuse disorders will be treated as the health condition they are, with the focus on healing and recovery," said Jeanne Scott, LMFT, Sunny Hills' Executive Director, Marin Programs.

» To learn more about the new programs, please email Jeanne at [jscott@sunnyhillsservices.org](mailto:jscott@sunnyhillsservices.org)



## MIDORI INSPIRES AT SUNNY HILLS PERFORMANCE

A FEW MONTHS AGO, STUDENTS, TEACHERS, STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS AT SUNNY HILLS RECEIVED A ONCE IN A LIFETIME GIFT. Midori, the world-renowned violinist, performed a free 30-minute concert in the Sunny Hills gym. Guests had the unique experience of witnessing Midori perform spectacular classics in a close and personal setting.

Midori was in San Rafael as part of a residency program with the Marin Symphony Youth Orchestra, which culminated in a performance with the Marin Symphony Orchestra. While in Marin, she visited several schools and non-profits that serve children and vulnerable youth.

Midori is committed to community collaboration and outreach. In the 1990s she founded Midori & Friends, a non-profit in New York City that brings music education programs to underserved schoolchildren. She also runs and participates in Orchestra Residencies Program, which offers week long residencies with American youth orchestras, where she shares her talent and love for music.

As is customary following a classical music performance, Sunny Hills gave Midori a standing ovation and presented her with flowers and chocolates, which she graciously accepted.



*Continued from front cover»*

For many of the youth at Marin TAY, difficult moments can feel like a lifetime. Depression, sadness, doubt, guilt, shame, lethargy, anxiety, loss of interest in hobbies, or isolation are the norm. Simple actions like setting a bed-time alarm, falling asleep, showering and dressing, making a meal, eating, socializing, concentrating, showing up for work or school, grocery shopping, washing clothes, or brushing teeth are completely overwhelming.

Christopher, a Marin TAY client, was one such youth. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was 16, and struggled every day with the stigma and challenges of a serious mental health diagnosis, often feeling like an outcast and a failure.

However, after 3 years of consistent counseling, teaching skills, coaching and therapy with the Marin TAY staff, Christopher is growing, healing, and experiencing more productive and motivated moments where he is showing up for his life and enjoying it!

Recently Christopher moved out of his mother's chaotic and unhealthy home and now lives independently in a Marin TAY apartment. With his case manager's guidance, he found a stable part time job that he enjoys. He participates 2-3 days each week at the Marin TAY drop-in center, where he takes mindfulness, art and cooking classes (he enjoys using the crock-pot) and goes on Marin TAY outings like bowling and hikes.

Christopher is socializing more and isolating less, he is sleeping well and using new coping skills to maintain his daily hygiene, manage his money, and he has become an amazing support for his Marin TAY peers. Christopher is proud of himself and we couldn't be prouder of him.



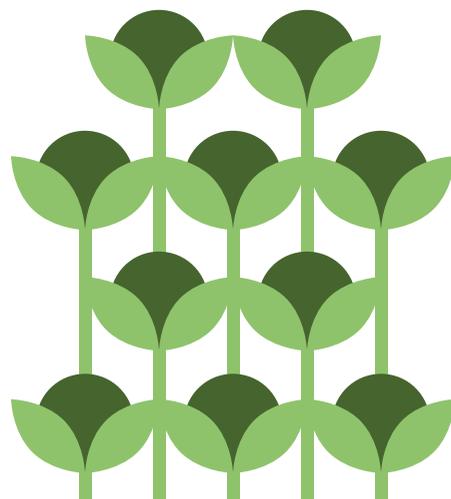
## A PLACE TO CALL HOME

SOME OF THE YOUTH IN OUR REAL ALTERNATIVES FOR ADOLESCENTS (RAFA) TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT PROGRAM IN HAYWARD WILL SOON HAVE A NEW PLACE TO CALL HOME. In April seven youth will move into an apartment building owned and maintained by Sunny Hills Services.

Housing costs in the Bay Area have become prohibitive for many, and nearly impossible for young people trying to gain their independence. "This building presents a practical solution to escalating rents in the East Bay," said Alex Volpe, the East Bay Regional Executive Director for Sunny Hills Services. "This pilot project allows Sunny Hills to take control of the affordable housing shortage and allows youth to have a secure, clean and well-maintained place to live."

Since 2003, RAFA has offered a safe environment for foster and probation youth ages 16-24 who are transitioning out of the foster care system. The program has grown from 5 to 50 youth over the past 14 years. Youth share an apartment and partner with their RAFA Clinical Case Manager and Youth Development Specialist to learn basic independent living skills, including money management, cooking, and housekeeping. These skills are necessary to successfully transition to independent living as an adult. The youth also create personal goals in the areas of relationships and mental health, as well as education and employment. The resident youth in this Hayward fourplex will have 24-hour access to program and clinical staff and will also have an On Site Residential Community Manager.

» To learn more about Marin TAY and other Sunny Hills' programs, go to [sunnyhillsservices.org](http://sunnyhillsservices.org)



» For detailed information on our programs and services, visit [sunnyhillsservices.org](http://sunnyhillsservices.org)



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Sunny Hills Services  
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www.sunnyhillsservices.org

The mission of Sunny Hills Services is to help vulnerable children, youth and their families use their strengths to develop healthy relationships and fulfilling lives.

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Sunny Hills earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Behavioral Health



### **Swing for the Kids!**

**On June 19th, join us for the 23rd Annual Bank of Marin / Sunny Hills Services Golf Tournament, at Meadow Club in Fairfax.**

For information & to buy tickets:  
Visit [sunnyhillsservices.org](http://sunnyhillsservices.org)  
Email [events@sunnyhillsservices.org](mailto:events@sunnyhillsservices.org)  
Or call 415-457-3200 ext. 118

### **WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!**

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#### **SHOP LOCAL AND USE ESCRIP AT THESE STORES**

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#### **Questions?**

Email [contactus@sunnyhillsservices.org](mailto:contactus@sunnyhillsservices.org)  
or call 415.457.3200 x118