



Sunny Hills
SERVICESSM

Better and Brighter Futures

Fall 2017



New ReStart Program Provides Affordable Care for Substance Use Disorders

Sunny Hills Services recently opened the doors of "ReStart," an exceptional and much-needed program designed for 13-18 year old youth who struggle with substance use disorders. The program is up to 60 days long, and is located on a beautiful campus in San Anselmo.

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CEO MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

As CEO of Sunny Hills Services, one of my most important duties is to look forward. My charge is not only our current success, but also insuring that we will be here in the future to meet the critical and ever-changing needs of children, youth, and families in our community—as we have for more than 120 years.

For the first time in my tenure as CEO, I have to question the stability of our core funding, given the shifting winds in our political environment. Many of the safety net services that we provide—for young people with some of the most serious and acute challenges—are being threatened. For our work to heal traumatized youth with serious mental health challenges, or to provide housing for youth aging out of foster care, or to provide therapeutic education for children with severe emotional problems—we can no longer take for granted that funding will be there from our long-standing county partners. If the dramatic funding cuts at the federal level actually take place, state and county general funds will be squeezed to pay for services that we as a society have considered essential. And even if those decisions are deferred, the current uncertainty that it might happen is tightening purse strings.

But children and youth still need our help today. Failing them now, when they have a chance to bounce back and regain hope and fulfilling lives, would be cruel. Failing them now means many more of them will end up on the streets, mentally ill, destitute, and desperate.

We hope that these dire scenarios don't happen. We also know that our fundraising efforts remain key to our success and must become more robust as a hedge against our worst case scenarios. You can help Sunny Hills and the children and youth we serve by remaining informed, by supporting the work of organizations that you believe in, by supporting legislators and leaders that you believe in, and by adding your voice to the conversation. As you impact the process, so you impact the ability of Sunny Hills to chart a successful course to the future.

Thank you,

Mary Denton
CEO

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According to the most recent data from the California Healthy Kids Survey, almost half of all Marin 11th graders and more than a quarter of ninth graders drink or use drugs, while a third of all 11th graders and 10 percent of ninth graders qualify as heavy drug users. Matt Willis, Marin's chief of public health said, "This is an ongoing crisis for us. Our numbers for teen drug and alcohol use are way higher in Marin than the state average."

When addicted youth are finally ready and willing to seek help, finances are often a barrier to getting desperately needed care. "Steven" started using drugs and alcohol at age 12. By 17, his life was out of control, and after years of resisting his mothers' pleas to get help, he was ready and willing. In fact he wanted treatment badly. He was turned away from private treatment centers because his insurance didn't pay for residential care and his mother did not have the means for private payment.

Though Steven had been attending a local alternative high school, he ended up spending his final two months of high school in juvenile hall, and did not graduate. Since then, all attempts to reach him have met with a dead end. He is assumed to be living on the street, trapped in his debilitating addictive behaviors. ReStart could very well have changed the outcome of this all-to-common scenario.

Unlike private residential rehabilitation facilities, ReStart is affordable and accessible to most youth through Medi-Cal or Kaiser. "ReStart is here for those adolescents who have not been able to receive appropriate clinical services for substance abuse and mental health issues, who have been ready and willing to get help, but didn't have anywhere to turn," said Gary Federoff, Director of ReStart Programs, Marin. "In our program, clients get extensive clinical support and therapy, peer recovery support, and evidenced based therapeutic practices."

Sunny Hills will soon open a second, highly structured afternoon and evening substance use day program for adolescents who do not require a residential stay, but who lack the support to remain substance free.

ReStart's goal is that every teen who goes through the program will learn how to build healthy connections with their family, peers, school and ultimately with themselves.

» For more information please call 415.526.8097 or email restartmarin@sunnyhillsservices.org





Sunny Hills Reach for the Stars Fundraiser is October 7th!

Please join us to make better and brighter futures a reality for Sunny Hills Services youth by attending our 3rd Annual Reach for the Stars fundraiser—an extraordinary evening filled with divine food and friendship.

With a Queen Anne Victorian backdrop, nestled in a beautiful hillside in the Dominican neighborhood of San Rafael, come and enjoy hosted cocktails, an elegant dinner, live music and dancing.

Stroll through our boutique marketplace, featuring bespoke jewelry designers, custom handbags, fine cigars, and artisanal bourbon tastings.

» Join us and help make a difference in young lives! For more information: SunnyHillsServices.org/events Events@SunnyHillsServices.org 415.457.3200 ext. 118

Navigating a Better Life, One Wave at a Time

YouThrive is a Sunny Hills program in Sonoma county designed to stop youth ages 10-18 from becoming involved in gangs, by increasing their involvement in their education, personal development, and community.

As part of the program, YouThrive offers day trips and overnight recreational activities — such as camping and whitewater rafting — which youth earn through active participation in group counseling sessions, improved school attendance, and better grades.



YouThrive recently brought five young men on a camping and rafting trip to the American River in Sonoma County. Teamwork was a vital component of the trip, especially during rafting, which was fun, but unfamiliar, and at times frightening and physically challenging. The youth were taught the importance of paddling in unison and holding each other accountable for their share of the work at the campground and on the river. Their determination and teamwork helped them conquer Class III rapids – something none of them could have imagined was possible!

YouThrive staff also addressed the importance of education. During late night sessions by the campfire, they discussed ways to improve academically and behaviorally and raised questions for the young men to consider— things like “What have I done to make this experience possible for myself?” “What do I want to see change this summer?” “What can I commit to do to support reaching my academic goals?”

Another topic was “changing the way we think.” This included explaining to the youth how romanticizing and glorifying negatives such as fights at school, gang related activities or their past negative experiences which supposedly give them “street cred” is detrimental to their growth as a productive member of society and their community. The young men understood and were encouraged to start thinking and communicating about their new positive experiences, accomplishments, and goals.

When the youth expressed their thanks to the YouThrive staff for all they had experienced during the weekend, they were challenged to express their gratitude through words, and by actively working on the topics covered and to hold themselves and the group accountable for their actions, both now and in the future.

» For detailed information on our programs and services, visit sunnyhillsservices.org



The San Rafael Pacifics are a Huge Hit at Sunny Hills

Sunny Hills Services has been a sponsor of the San Rafael Pacifics Baseball Club for the past three seasons. Pacifics games are really fun – they’re held at Albert Park in San Rafael and at every home game, the bleachers are filled with fans snacking on hotdogs and ice cream while cheering on the home team. In between innings, the crowd is treated to entertainment and activities designed to engage everyone in the ballpark.

The Pacifics make a priority of being involved in the community, and for the second season, several of the players came to Sunny Hills Irene M. Hunt School during a school day to conduct a baseball clinic for students and staff. It was a huge hit!

According to Jolene Yee, principal of the Irene M. Hunt School, “We were so happy to have the Pacifics back this year. Both students and staff were impressed and enjoyed the opportunity to interact with the players, who were friendly and patient as we worked on our baseball skills. It was literally one of the highlights of our summer session!”



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Sunny Hills earned the
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Gold Seal of Approval
For Behavioral Health

Check out page 3!
Sunny Hills brought my
favorite baseball hero to me!



Your support can help dramatically change 1800 young lives this year alone!

Please consider Sunny Hills when you give.
We really appreciate it.

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