

SUMMER 2019

SidebySideYouth.org



FORMERLY SUNNY HILLS SERVICES/BAYC

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



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LETTER FROM MARY

Dear friends,

I'm excited to share that both the Irene M. Hunt School and Real Alternatives programs are growing to serve more youth with our unique and critical services. See more on the following page.

Also, this past spring we put on two great parties in Sonoma and Alameda counties to get better acquainted with our regional friends, peers, and supporters – and to update everyone on our efforts in their community. Thanks to those who came and we look forward to continuing regional events in the years ahead.

On a less happy note, since our last newsletter we've had to shut the doors to ReStart, our substance abuse recovery program for teens.

ReStart opened in summer 2017 to offer a 10-bed residential as well as afterschool treatment for teens struggling with substance use. We were one of very few programs in Northern California to accept Medi-Cal as well as private insurance, making our services available to families of all income levels.

Unfortunately, ReStart did not achieve the client levels necessary to be financially sustainable. The effort was not in vain. In ReStart's nearly two years, we helped over 100 young people overcome their substance use challenges and reengage with their schools, families, and peer groups in a healthy way.

We will evaluate the possibility of reopening ReStart after a thorough assessment. In the meantime, we continue to provide substance abuse recovery support for many of our clients, as the issue is pervasive among young people throughout our programs.

It is during these times of transition that I am especially grateful for our loyal supporters.

One of the most fun ways to support Side by Side is by joining us at the *Reach for the Stars* Gala, our biggest fundraiser of the year. This year's event is on September 21 and promises to be the best yet, with a bohemian bluegrass theme and music by Nobody from Nashville. Get your tickets today!

With gratitude,

Mary Denton, CEO

AGENCY NEWS

ReStart closure: As of April 30, 2019, ReStart, Side by Side's substance abuse recovery program for teens, has closed. We are evaluating whether the program might reopen at a later date.

Irene M. Hunt School further expansion: Building on the expansion this past spring from 40 to 48 students, the Hunt School anticipates opening an additional classroom at the San Anselmo campus to accommodate an additional 8-10 high school students as there is need in our community. The school will serve 56-60 students total across grades K-12.

Esser House transition: Esser House will shift from being a 24-hour staffed group home to serving minor dependents in our Real Alternatives program. Real Alternatives is the only program serving minor dependents in Alameda County and this expansion allows us six additional beds (for a total of 13) available for 16-17 year old foster youth in need.



OUR SERVICES AREAS AND PROGRAMS

BEHAVIORAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Community Counseling (Marin, Alameda, Sonoma, Napa): Spectrum of community-based clinical services based on the specific needs and diagnosis of the young person. Includes everything from individual and group therapy to crisis stabilization and medication management.

TAY Space (Marin): Drop-in center and full service support for youth ages 16 -25 (transitional age youth, or TAY) who struggle with severe mental, behavioral, and/or emotional disorders – compounded for some by homelessness – while navigating towards a self-sufficient adulthood.

EARLY INTERVENTION

YouThrive (Sonoma and Marin): School-based early intervention program for 11-18 year olds to prevent and divert the escalation of troubling behaviors such as failing grades, truancy, gang activity, and drug and alcohol abuse.

LGBTQ SUPPORT

Our Space (Alameda): Comprehensive resource for LGBTQ identified youth ages 11-23 – many of whom live in poverty, are homeless, or are impacted by the child welfare or juvenile justice systems – offering peer support groups, trainings for providers, as well as a community center with drop-in hours.

Community Events to Support Side by Side

Shop or dine with the following community supporters and a percentage of your purchase will benefit Side by Side.

For details about each event, visit:

SidebySideYouth.org/community-events

JULY 27

"Day for Night" art show and cocktail party in San Francisco featuring works by John Mayberry. 20% of all sales donated to Side by Side

JULY 31

Swirl (San Anselmo) and Swirl Time Yogurt Bar (Rohnert Park)

AUG 8

Marin Brewing Co (Larkspur)

SEPT 3

Iron Springs Pub & Brewery (San Rafael)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Irene M. Hunt School (Marin): K-12 day school for students with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges that cannot be met in the public school system, providing a therapeutic environment that equips students to thrive academically and socially.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Real Alternatives (Alameda): Continuum of transitional housing opportunities and wraparound services for current and former foster youth and/or those on probation ages 16- 24, providing a safe, supportive environment for them to learn to live independently.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: YOUTHRIVE

YouThrive is a school-based early intervention program for 11-18 year old middle and high school students designed to prevent the escalation of failing grades, truancy, gang activity, and drug and alcohol abuse. The 10-week sessions (during fall and spring semesters) include mentoring, counseling, family support, and workshops on topics such as anger management and responding to peer pressure.

One of the most innovative aspects of the YouThrive model is the culminating trips that students can earn with improved grades and behavior. In addition to providing powerful incentives and facilitating group bonding and connection, the multi-day excursions (such as snowboarding in Tahoe or camping and rafting on the American River) are most students' first immersive wilderness or outdoor experience and provide powerful opportunities to strengthen the skills they've learned all semester: collaboration, tenacity, responsible leadership, empathy, self-control, and problem-solving.

YouThrive also provides opportunities for high school students to start to envision life after school. To demonstrate the distinct paths that lie before them, YouThrive leads students on tours of local community colleges as well as San Quentin prison, where current inmates de-romanticize criminal behavior.

"Last year, San Rafael High had recurring conflicts between gang-affiliated groups of students – problems that were not easily fixed with suspension or calling parents. The situation was intractable and we needed to do something different. We believe that peer pressure is stronger than school expectations or rules. And that's where YouThrive comes in."

- Glenn Dennis, Principal, San Rafael High School

YouThrive continues to evolve based on specific needs in the communities it serves. For example, at Healdsburg Junior High School, YouThrive facilitated parent workshops to complement the sixth-grade sessions. In other parts of Sonoma County, YouThrive launched a pilot project to destigmatize mental health services among Latinx adolescents, and based on its success, the project will roll out to four high schools this fall. In Marin, YouThrive was recently brought in to San Rafael High School to intervene in a critical conflict between two rival groups, and program director Adrian Maldonado successfully brought the two groups together for a soccer game where tensions were put aside and replaced by fun and laughter.

Currently YouThrive serves students in ten middle schools and high schools throughout Sonoma and Marin counties, and is working to develop a summer session.

YouThrive Funders

Side by Side gratefully thanks all the following funders who support the YouThrive program.

Active 20-30 Club Redwood Empire	Heffernan Foundation
Bank of America Foundation	Jonas Family Foundation
BioMarin	Junior League of Napa-Sonoma
Dino J. Ghilotti Foundation	Marin Community Service Fund
Exchange Bank	Safeway Foundation
GGS Foundation	Sonoma Vintner's Foundation
Healdsburg Forever	Speedway Children's Charities
Heck Foundation	Westamerica Bank



FUNDER PROFILE

Healdsburg Forever

Funded by Healdsburg Forever since 2016, YouThrive's current grant from the fund supports services for at-risk middle school youth at Healdsburg Junior High School. In addition to student sessions, the YouThrive team partnered with the school psychologist and held teacher workshops on de-escalation techniques and disciplinary options in the classroom to address challenging student behavior at the outset. YouThrive also recruited a bilingual aide to improve communications between teachers and monolingual parents.

"We like to fund programs with a preventative aspect," says Dave Ring, the fund's Grants Co-Chair. "Helping at-risk students get back on track may mean fewer demands for safety net services later in their lives."

Ring added, "YouThrive works with the most problematic kids in the junior high school. At our site visit we learned that the YouThrive participants were no longer being referred to the dean for disciplinary action. This is one indication that the program is helping these students make positive behavior changes."

Ring moved to Healdsburg after a career in Silicon Valley and learned about the powerful role community foundations play through his long support for LGBT equality. He started his work with Healdsburg Forever as a grants committee member and now serves as the committee co-chair with Lynn Woznicki. As an affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County, the Healdsburg Forever Fund has grown to over \$1.5 million and has granted more than \$1 million to date to over 56 local nonprofits.



CLIENT & PROVIDER PROFILE

Side by Side with Adrian and Aidan, YouThrive

As program manager for YouThrive, Adrian has been facilitating sessions in classrooms throughout Sonoma and Marin counties for more than four years. Adrian met Aidan when the program was brought to San Rafael High School in spring 2018. At the time of print, Aidan has just graduated from high school. Here are some excerpts from our conversation:

Side by Side: Adrian, how did you start working with Aidan and what were your first impressions?

Adrian: San Rafael High School was dealing with increased gang activity and tensions across the campus, and the principal asked us to bring the program to the school and form relationships with both the rival groups. That's when I first met Aidan. What stood out was his maturity, his calm demeanor - and he was very authentic and true to himself. From the very beginning, he was my go-to guy. If the group was ever getting out of hand, he would help because he bought in to the program and he would help the other young people buy in, too. We made a connection right away and I saw myself in him.

SBS: What had brought Aidan to YouThrive?

Adrian: He was just hanging out with a certain crowd - he wasn't participating in the fighting, but hanging out with these guys. He was brought in to the group to help sway the rest of them - he was identified as a leader by the administration. He carried a lot of social capital and could influence the younger guys. He was also struggling with his grades and schoolwork.

SBS: What changes did you start to perceive in Aidan since he began participating in the program?

Aidan: I always saw him as very mature and respectful, with strong values and wanting to be a better man. And little by little I saw him start to trust enough to share this with the group. At first he was more of the observer and even when I asked him questions, he would refrain from answering. And then he started to build confidence and speak his mind even about topics that were controversial. Also there was a big change in his grades as he started to realize the importance of graduating and what it meant for himself and his family and the people who have vouched for him.

SBS: Aidan, how do you perceive the change in you since starting in the program?

Aidan: When I first started the program, I was hardheaded, being a tough guy - and after I started to work with Adrian, I realized it was all for nothing and I needed to change. I would always tell myself I was going to do my homework, but I would get home and just watch TV - and then one day I decided I would just try to do my homework - and I did it and it felt so good, everything changed and I kept on doing it. One day my teacher was collecting homework and she skipped me because she didn't think I would have it. I stopped her and showed her my work - and it felt pretty good.

SBS: It sounds like your own growth has had a positive influence on your peers as well - how do you think you came to be such a leader?

Aidan: I'm the youngest of five in my family and I always wanted a younger brother to show how to do things, but I never got the chance. The guys at school are like my little brothers. And I'll be honest, before I wanted them to do bad stuff with me, but then when I realized that wasn't the correct way of living, now I want them to do good - go to class, do their homework.

SBS: What influence has Adrian had on you?

Aidan: If Adrian wasn't here and this program wasn't here, I wouldn't even be in high school right now - I would've dropped out. He came in when everything was rough, everything was falling apart in the school and nobody was there to help us. There were so many fights, and kids were getting in trouble.

SBS: Aidan, what are your plans for after graduation?

Aidan: I might go to college but first I'm going to work with my brothers. They own a tree service so I'm going to work with them for a few months and then decide if I want to go back to school. My brothers always wanted me to do better. When I was in middle school we were living in the Canal and we were poor and I didn't want to be home seeing my parents struggle, so I would just be out in the streets. My brothers were all doing good but I was always the one that would do bad.

SBS: What do you both see for Aidan's future?

Adrian: I always saw so much potential in Aidan and I knew if he started changing some of the negative patterns little by little the world would open up for him. He has natural leadership skills and empathy - even with the rival peer group. I see him as a mentor.

Aidan: I just want to help others. Since I was a little kid, in my class there was a girl that had a disability and I want to help people like her. And someday I want to buy my mom the house she wants.



SUMMER ADVENTURING WITH SIDE BY SIDE YOUTH

Summer's here and with it comes greater access to the outdoors.

The concept of adventure therapy became prominent in the 1960s with the introduction of Outward Bound and since then plenty of research has amassed to substantiate its therapeutic effectiveness, especially for children and adolescents.

Physical challenges and new experiences combine to challenge and possibly transform disruptive or unproductive beliefs and views.

Additionally, participants are often required to forge alliances with other youth to complete tasks. By doing this, young people can develop greater self-confidence, communication skills, cooperative skills, and trust.

Elements of adventure therapy weave through all of Side by Side's summer programming. For example:

- As noted in the program spotlight, river rafting and backpacking trips are a culminating, hard-earned reward for the middle and high school students in **YouThrive** and cement the skills they've learned.
- **TAY Space** incorporates a whole calendar full of activities and day trips for our transitional age youth who struggle with mental, behavioral, and/or emotional disorders. TAY Space summer highlights include a full moon hike in Muir Woods, art museum tours, and a visit to a recording studio, where the talented young people can lay down their own original music tracks.
- Foster youth and those on probation in the **Real Alternatives** transitional housing program embark on a river rafting trip every summer, providing the young people with a much-needed reprieve from their jobs, schooling, and efforts to secure long-term housing.
- The **Irene M. Hunt School** offers an array of specialty camps for students with a ton of field trips and excursions built in, as well as swimming in the campus pool. In addition to fun, summer sessions provide an opportunity to address year-round the behavioral and emotional challenges that face Hunt students.

These critical experiences provide our young people with the self-esteem, connection, and sense of accomplishment that leads to positive choices and productive lives.

ANOTHER EASY WAY TO SUPPORT SIDE BY SIDE

Scrip Donations are an easy way for you to donate to Side by Side through your everyday purchases. Once you sign up, there's nothing left for you to do but shop. The retailer does the rest – giving Side by Side a percentage from each of your purchases.

Questions about any of these programs or want to request a Scrip Donation card?
Contact Patty Lufrano at
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development@sidebysideyouth.org

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Call Side by Side and we'll send you a scrip card to present to the cashier at time of your purchases. It's already activated.

Call Side by Side and we'll send you a scrip card to present to the cashier at time of your purchases. You will need to register your card online at scrip.nuggetmarket.com to activate it first.

Register at the Store. Ask to sign up for e-scrip. Check the recipient list of schools and non-profits. If Side by Side (may still say Sunny Hills) is not listed, you can write it in. Otherwise, check the Side by Side box. You will receive a loyalty card to scan each time you shop (associate your phone to the card, so if you forget the card, you can give the cashier your phone #).

Go to smile.amazon.com and designate Sunny Hills Services as the beneficiary of your purchases. Then, any time you shop at Amazon, make sure to type in smile.amazon.com (not the regular amazon.com) and your purchase will benefit Side by Side.



Shelley & Jay Cahan

Shelley and Jay Cahan have a history with Side by Side dating back almost a decade. From serving on the board to chairing the *Reach for the Stars* Gala, the two continue to give their all to Side by Side.

Side by Side: Tell me about your first introduction to our organization.

Jay: I joined the board of Side by Side (then Sunny Hills) back in 2009 – I was drawn to the wide range of programs and young people being served.

SBS: What has been most inspiring for you during your tenure?

Jay: I continue to be awed by the quality of the staff that Side by Side attracts and their focus on positive outcomes for the kids. These are people that really believe in what they do and evolve the programs in new and innovative ways that always have the clients' interests at heart.

SBS: Shelley, you've been intimately involved with the gala committee for many years. What keeps you engaged?

Shelley: I love being able to work with a wonderful group of local women. I enjoy bringing new people to the organization and supporting children who absolutely need our help. And I love planning a great party!

SBS: The Bank of Marin Golf Tournament keeps drawing Jay back year after year and you both were co-chairs of the 2017 *Reach for the Stars* Gala. What would you tell folks about why they should join us at our events?

Shelley: The events help us elevate awareness of Side by Side among our friends and the larger community. We've never met a single person working with Side by Side whose heart wasn't in the right place, and we believe the agency deserves our collective support.

SBS: What aspect of the work do you find the most meaningful?

Shelley: Raising our own kids in such an affluent county with so many opportunities, we are especially conscious of our larger sense of responsibility to help kids who don't have the same opportunities. If we can help – why wouldn't we?

Jay: From foster youth with no support to kids who have challenges that their families can't meet on their own, Side by Side is there for all these young people.

SBS: What are your hopes for Side by Side's future?

Jay: I want to see awareness of Side by Side's mission and programs continue to grow in all the counties that we serve to engage more funders and community support.

Shelley: I hope that Side by Side continues to attract amazing board members who have the vision and integrity to help keep the organization going strong. I also want to see our community get on board with the work that the agency does on a daily basis with kids who – without Side by Side – don't stand a chance.



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2019

2019 Honorary Gala Chairs
Julie & Chris Dolan

2019 Gala Chairs
Lisa Bakamis, Byrd Baldwin, Deanna Brock

JOIN US!

Southern-inspired food and libations,
including bourbon from Tuthilltown Spirits

Bluegrass music by Nobody from Nashville

A bohemian gathering on a private Dominican estate

TICKETS & TABLES

SidebySideYouth.org/reach_for_the_stars

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- THANKS FOR A GREAT DAY ON THE LINKS!**