

CONNECTING

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A newsletter for the friends and supporters of L.A. CADA



(l-r) Ivan Sulic, Homeless & Housing Deputy L.A. County Supervisor Janice Hahn Fourth Supervisorial District, Linda Sanchez, Congresswoman, Juan Navarro, CEO, Priscilla Rodriguez, Community Manager, Nolan Ross Samé-Weil, Director of Development, Joe Amaya, Development and Logistics Manager.

Downey Pride 2026 Stronger Together

By : Priscilla Rodriguez, Community Engagement Manager

L.A. CADA celebrated the sixth annual Downey Pride Festival in August, bringing more than 7,000 community members together in Downtown Downey for an afternoon of celebration, connection, and community support. Held along Firestone Boulevard and Downey Avenue, this year's festival continued L.A. CADA's commitment to creating inclusive spaces where LGBTQIA+ community members, families, local organizations, and community partners can come together.

With the theme "Stronger Together," Downey Pride highlighted the importance of visibility, acceptance, and access to supportive resources. The festival featured live entertainment, local vendors, community organizations, resource booths, food and beverage partners, and activities designed to create opportunities for connection and engagement.

The event's continued growth reflects the collaboration of L.A. CADA staff, volunteers, community organizations, local businesses, and civic partners. Special recognition goes to Priscilla Rodriguez, Community Engagement Manager and Downey Pride Chair, whose leadership has helped guide the festival since its founding, along with the Downey Pride planning committee, staff, and volunteers who contributed to the event's successful execution. L.A. CADA also extends its appreciation to Downey Pride Co-Chair Nolan Ross Same-Weil, Director of Development; Joe Amaya Development and Logistics Manager, MC Joaquin Gutierrez, Tony Rocks, Publisticist



(l-r) Ivan Sulic, Homeless & Housing Deputy L.A. County and California State Senator Bob Archuleta.



L.A. CADA Development Department Nolan Same-Weil, Director of Development; Priscilla Rodriguez, Community Engagement Manager; Joe Amaya, Development and Logistics Manager; and Alejandro Godinez, Communication Coordinator.



A message from
JUAN NAVARRO
Chief Executive Officer, L.A. CADA

Empowering Change

When summer ends in Southern California, sometimes – just sometimes, a faint breath of fall drifts in on the evening breeze. It's a moment that makes me think about change. Change can be a loaded word and while we may dread it or run towards it, in the end, change is inevitable. Especially when it comes to behavioral health. When the old friends, the old neighborhood, and the old ways aren't working, change will come one way or another.

At L.A. CADA, we pursue positive, empowering change. Our patients work for it, one day at a time. Our staff show up to embody and facilitate it. And our community joins hands with us to build stronger, more connected pathways to the systems-level change needed to support recovery, improved health, and well-being.

Personally, I believe change starts with one person. Maybe it's someone brave enough to reach out for help. Or someone who reaches in to offer personal support. It can be a community member with an idea – that's how L.A. CADA happened 55 years ago. Other times, change happens through the slow process of challenging erroneous ways and untrue beliefs. President John F. Kennedy said, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." We like that.

Families are another pathway to positive change. As little "people factories", families can prevent and intervene in dysfunctional "operations". We don't have to reach a point of crisis to get help. Families can be proactive, asking for assistance through clinical screening and needs assessment, treatment planning, and participation in evidence-based therapy that has been shown to work. Community agencies like L.A. CADA are here for families.

Justice system involvement can also empower positive change. Legislation has increasingly shifted from a punitive model to one that prioritizes rehabilitation, mental health care, and substance use treatment. In fact, L.A. CADA has been incorporated within nine community collaborative courts in L.A. County to facilitate admission to treatment rather than incarceration for people with behavioral health disorders.

Schools have progressed beyond Red Ribbon Week as a source of empowerment. Today, agencies like L.A. CADA are on campus to provide timely intervention, youth counseling, and prevention education to address the drug and alcohol use and mental health disorders that disrupt learning.

Our government is yet another vehicle for change. Agencies like the California Department of Health Services and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration are changing systems of care through state-of-science research, support, and programming.

As a community, we have to continuously walk toward empowering change. L.A. CADA invites you to join us. We can always use another warrior.

Juan Navarro

Two Years of Serenity: Building the First of Its Kind

By : Corey Kwoka Program Coordinator, Serenity House

Two years ago, on August 8, 2024, Serenity House, an 18-bed Residential Treatment Facility catering solely to the Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming and Intersex community, opened its doors as the first program of its kind -- a vision that required courage, collaboration, and a deep belief in what was possible. Building something new is never easy. It meant creating systems from the ground up, bringing together the right people, learning as we went, and above all else, staying focused on the individuals we serve. It meant being willing to ask ourselves, "What if we did this differently?" and then exhibiting the bravery and determination to make it happen.

Two years later, Serenity House has grown into something even more meaningful than the program we imagined at the beginning. We have learned, adapted, strengthened our practices, and watched the impact reach far beyond our walls. Our ongoing effort to collaborate with community partners has positioned us squarely inside the social fabric of organizations created to support this traditionally underserved population -- a position we maintain with great pride. At a time when so many are shying away from supporting the TGI population, we believe it is imperative to be stronger, louder and more focused than ever on our continued success.

What sets the Serenity House team apart is its commitment to developing a culturally competent model for a community that rarely receives specialized attention and care. This is a team that leads with compassion, remains curious, embraces



Serenity House Property.

challenges, and genuinely believes in the potential of every person who walks through our doors.

One of the most rewarding changes over time has been seeing our graduates enter the field themselves. Several are now working at Serenity House, while others have joined our RBH, Outreach, and Intensive Outpatient teams. Their journeys are a powerful reminder that the work we do is not simply about supporting people in the present, it is about creating pathways to purpose, opportunity, and leadership. Seeing former participants become colleagues is one of the clearest signs that the model we have built is working.

Personally and professionally, celebrating our second anniversary represents pride, gratitude, and hope. I am proud of how far we have come, grateful for everyone who helped build Serenity House, and hopeful for what the future will bring. Most of all, I am honored to be part of a team that continues to prove that something new can become lasting, meaningful, and transformative.

Downey Pride 2026 Stronger Together

Continued

and Media Relations;; Downey City Councilmember and Downey Pride Founder Mario Trujillo; and L.A. CADA CEO Juan Navarro, with the many staff members and volunteers who supported planning, programming, logistics, marketing, media, hospitality, and day-of operations. Downey Pride would not be possible without the organizations and businesses that invested in the event and its mission. L.A. CADA gratefully recognizes its Rainbow Partners: *Supervisor Janice Hahn, Molina Healthcare, Reyes Coca-Cola Bottling, AHF, and JWCH; Platinum Sponsors: ViiV Healthcare, Muevelo Entertainment, CaliMed Corporation, and SoCalGas; Diamond Sponsor: Long Beach LGBTQ+; and Gold Sponsors: Athens and Water Replenishment District. Special thanks are also extended to the VIP Hospitality Partners who generously contributed food, sweets, and beverages: El Pascador, Bell Gardens, Mr. Menudo, Le Coco, Porto's Bakery, Water Replenishment District, and Reyes Bottling Company.*

Taylor's Journey at Allen House

By : Carlos Escobedo, Outreach Manager

On July 7, 2026, the Supplemental Cohort 3 Outreach Team helped client Taylor H. take an important step toward recovery by connecting him to substance use disorder residential treatment at LA CADA's Allen House.

The team received a referral from San Gabriel Valley Medical Center, where Taylor was having a cast removed following a previous injury. He was still using crutches and was seeking assistance with housing. After verifying his information, the team learned that Taylor had recently stayed at Soul Housing Recuperative Care. Staff at Soul Housing confirmed that Taylor could return and that a bed was available

for him. Initially, Taylor agreed to return because he no longer wanted to be on the street. However, as the team prepared to transport him, Taylor asked for something different. He pleaded with the team to help him enter treatment instead.

Taylor shared that he had come to Los Angeles from Florida years earlier in search of a better life, but his struggles with stimulant use had become a significant barrier. He told the team that he believed returning to his previous environment would put him at risk of relapse. What he wanted was a sober, supportive environment where he could focus on his recovery and begin building a healthier future.

Recognizing Taylor's desire for change, the Outreach Team immediately contacted LA CADA treatment staff to explore available options. Team members worked together to obtain the necessary documentation, including medical clearance and insurance verification. Within minutes, LA CADA's Treatment Team confirmed that a withdrawal management bed was available, with the opportunity for Taylor to transition into residential treatment. The Outreach Team transported Taylor directly to Allen House, where staff welcomed him and immediately began the intake process. The team completed a warm handoff to facility staff, ensuring that Taylor was connected to care rather than simply



(l-r) Micheal Chavez, Outreach Navigator, Taylor H., and Carlos Escobedo, Outreach Manager.

being given another referral.

The following day, team members returned to check on Taylor and deliver medication retrieved from his previous housing location. In only one day, they could already see a difference. Taylor had been able to shower, eat, rest, and feel safe in an environment where staff were there to support his recovery. He thanked the team again for helping him reach a place where he felt he had a genuine opportunity to succeed. During another visit on July 24, the transformation was even more visible. When the team first met

Taylor just over two weeks earlier, he was on crutches, visibly underweight, and

facing uncertainty about where he would go next. At Allen House, the team found him smiling, singing karaoke alongside staff and fellow clients, and excited to greet them with a warm embrace.

Most importantly, Taylor shared that he was sober, feeling healthier, and had not felt this good in a long time. Taylor is now looking forward to completing the Allen House program and continuing his recovery through LA CADA's Recovery Bridge Housing program, which provides structure and stability while helping clients move toward more permanent housing and greater independence. Taylor's story reflects this quarter's theme, Empowering Change. Empowerment can begin with something as simple as listening when a person says, "I want something different," and then helping that person turn that decision into action. Taylor made the choice to pursue recovery, and LA CADA's Outreach and Treatment teams worked together to make sure an opportunity for change was within reach.

The Supplemental Cohort 3 Outreach Team remains committed to walking alongside Taylor through each stage of his journey, helping him build on the progress he has already made and continue moving toward recovery, stability, and a healthier future.



Photos of James Mendez leading the workshop, printing on tee shirts and youth coloring their shirts.

Summer Wellness Program: Screen Printing

By Alejandro Godinez, Communications Coordinator

The Youth Department kicked off its first Summer Wellness Program in July, creating opportunities for youth to explore their creativity, build positive connections, and participate in meaningful activities throughout the summer. Made possible through the RYSE Fund, the program invited local creatives to the Youth Department to lead hands-on workshops for youth and families, providing opportunities to learn new skills while engaging in positive, substance-free activities. Following their therapy sessions and groups, youth participated in creative workshops designed to encourage self-expression, skill-building, positive peer engagement, and healthy outlets for their time away from school.



Youth heat setting their shirts.

with the message, "Your future is key, so stay drug free!"

Youth then learned how their designs could be transformed into wearable artwork. They were able to screen print their designs onto T-shirts and personalize their creations with their own colors and artistic touches. The week also included a parent-youth prosocial activity, where families worked together to create custom screen-printed tote bags using a silhouette printing technique. Youth and parents selected character shapes and incorporated them into their designs, learning how the negative space created by the cutout could become an important part of the final image. Families experimented with different designs, including silhouettes inspired by familiar characters such as Yogi Bear and Minnie Mouse. Week One was a successful

start to the Summer Wellness Program, bringing together creativity, prevention education, skill-building, and positive family engagement. The workshop gave youth an opportunity to explore a new creative skill while turning their ideas and messages into something they could proudly take home. Special thanks to James Mendez for sharing his time, creativity, and professional experience with our youth. For local freelance graphic design, screen-printing services, or creative workshops, James can be contacted through @iamjamesmendez on Instagram.

For Week One, the Youth Department welcomed local graphic designer and screen-printing artist James Mendez for an interactive workshop introducing youth to the art and process of screen printing. James shared his experience in graphic design and screen printing, drawing from his work as a freelancer, his experience developing his own clothing line, and his involvement in providing screen-printing workshops for nonprofit organizations. The workshop began with an introduction and fundamentals of screen printing before youth were given a prevention-focused creative prompt: develop a message that promotes positive choices and encourages a drug-free future. From there, youth were encouraged to take the concept in their own creative direction. Their ideas ultimately came together in a playful Garfield and Domo-inspired design depicting the characters stomping out cigarettes, paired



Family showing off their tote bags and raffle prize.

A Night at York Field Alice's House Families Find Community and Joy

By : Citlalilt Pastrana, Program Manager

One of the most special parts of Alice's House is seeing our moms and their children have the opportunity to grow, heal, and create happy memories together. Our recent evening at York Field was a beautiful reminder of just how meaningful those moments can be.

The idea behind taking our families to the concert was simple: we wanted them to enjoy a night together, surrounded by music, laughter, and community. It was a chance to get out, have fun, and simply enjoy being moms and kids. Watching the children smile, dance, and enjoy the music alongside their moms made the evening feel especially heartwarming.

At Alice's House, we know that recovery is not only about the individual, but also about the entire family. Outings like this give our moms opportunities to reconnect with their children, experience healthy family fun, and create memories they can carry with them long after their time with us.

There was something beautiful about seeing our families together that night. For a few hours, it wasn't about appointments, treatment plans, or daily responsibilities. It was about holding little hands, sharing smiles, dancing together, and enjoying the moment. These are the moments we love at Alice's House: families healing together, growing together, and discovering that recovery can be filled with connection, community, and joy.



Alice House patients at York Field.



Alice House patients and her child.

From Active Addiction to Advisory Committee: A Full Circle Commitment to Change

By William Tarkanian, Chief Strategy Officer

It's a true honor to be appointed to the Judicial Council's Collaborative Courts Advisory Committee. It has been a full circle journey from practicing attorney in my active addiction, to long-term recovery and Chief Strategy Officer for Los Angeles County's fastest growing nonprofit behavioral health provider, L.A. CADA. I feel as though my entire personal and professional collective experience has prepared me for this privilege.

50 years of a failed war on drugs, with SUD providers complicit with prosecutors, judicial officers, probation and parole officers, served no one outside the incarceration industrial complex, perverted the treatment field, disgraced otherwise well intended providers, and led to further traumatization through incarceration.

A decade ago, L.A. CADA made an organizational commitment to change a broken system. Today, we are the largest Collaborative Courts provider in the second largest county in America. We advocate for, engage and retain justice involved men and women through a full continuum of care, including supportive housing. Our success is premised upon grace filled, trauma, informed, recovery, oriented, integrated health services, and an uncompromising belief that treatment works, and that Jail is not a level of care. I can't wait to get to work!





(l-r) Mariah Ramirez, Homeless outreach navigator and Christian Rosales, Monitor in front of West Hollywood Park.

Ahead of the Goal: L.A. CADA's West Hollywood Outreach Team Delivers Early Wins

By: Mariah Ramirez, Homeless Outreach Navigator

In 2025, L.A. CADA's outreach efforts expanded into the City of West Hollywood. The vision was to create a new approach to outreach—one that would allow L.A. CADA to establish a consistent presence in West Hollywood by connecting community members to resources, treatment, and support. In their first year, the team has not only met but exceeded the goals established for the project ahead of schedule, but also remained committed to maintaining the quality, compassion, and integrity of the services being provided. The success of the project is measured not only by the numbers, but by the quality of the relationships built, the trust established, and the meaningful connections made with the individuals and community we serve.

At the center of the project is a simple philosophy: meet People Who Use Drugs (PWUD) where they are at and help them access the resources and support they need to move toward stability, wellness, and recovery. A primary focus of the program is connecting individuals to substance use disorder (SUD) services, outpatient treatment, contingency management, and detox services. One of the primary concerns at the beginning of the project was whether the team would be able to meet the goal of 24 placements into SUD, RBH, outpatient, detox, and/or contingency management services. Through the dedication, consistency, and advocacy of Mariah and Christian, the team not only met that goal but surpassed it—with two months remaining in the fiscal year. With the guidance, support, and experience of Leo Vasquez, John Walter, and Mikey Cativo, Mariah and Christian have made this new program a massive success for L.A. CADA.

Building Partnerships, Empowering Change

By: Darrell Garnaas, Program Manager

The Housing Navigation Quarterly Community Partner Luncheon brought together housing professionals, community partners, and service providers with a shared goal: strengthening the network of support that helps individuals and families move toward stable housing. The luncheon provided an opportunity to exchange resources, discuss common challenges, and learn more about services available throughout the community. Organizations in attendance included The Whole Child, Grandview Foundation, PAX House, Healthy Housing Foundation, BHS American Recovery, Masada FSP, Onliving, Masada, A New Day Transitional Housing Program, Loyola Marymount University, Haven/LoveFightsBack, Aspire, and the Santa Fe Springs Housing Navigation Team.

Effective housing navigation often depends on strong partnerships. By collaborating across programs and connecting clients with appropriate resources, service providers can help reduce barriers and create clearer pathways toward housing stability and independence. The event also highlighted the valuable work being done by our community partners and reinforced the importance of continued collaboration. Through ongoing communication, resource sharing, and partnership, we can strengthen the support available to the individuals and families we serve. If your organization would like to be a part of our next Housing Navigation Quarterly Community Partner Luncheon, please contact Arnulfo Rodarte arodarte@lacada.com



(l-r) Darrell Garnaas, RBH Program Manager; Arnulfo Rodarte, Housing Navigation Lead; Jacob Lozoya, Deanna Venegas, Jennifer Ibarra, Housing Navigators; Ingrid Soto, Director RBH/RH/Housing Navigation; Koji Sakugawa, Housing Navigator.



Allen House Alumni gathered to celebrate 35th anniversary with Richard Paige, Domestic Violence Program Coordinator and Art Monreal, President of the L.A. CADA Board of Directors and fellow Alumni.

Allen House Alumni Group Celebrates 35 Years of Recovery, Service, and Fellowship

By : Richard Paige, Domestic Violence Program Coordinator

On Saturday, August 1, 2026, the Allen House Alumni Group gathered to celebrate a remarkable milestone—the group’s 35th Anniversary. The celebration brought together dozens of alumni, friends, families, staff, and current Allen House patients to honor 35 years of recovery, fellowship, service, and the lasting impact of the Allen House Alumni Group.

The Allen House Alumni Group was founded in 1991 by alumnus and Allen House counselor Terry Druehl. For 35 years, the organization’s mission has been to connect individuals through shared experiences and to be of service to those seeking recovery at the Allen House. What began as an effort to support people in recovery has grown into a lasting community that continues to bring alumni, current patients, staff, families, and supporters together while promoting recovery, fellowship, encouragement, and service. This year’s anniversary celebration provided an opportunity for alumni to reconnect, share memories, celebrate their recovery journeys, and reflect on the positive changes that recovery has brought to their lives. The event was filled with food, fun, and fellowship, creating a welcoming atmosphere where alumni and their families could come together and celebrate the strength and resilience found in recovery.

The celebration was MC’d by Rich Paige and included a special “Gratitude” recognition honoring individuals who have made meaningful contributions to the Alumni Group and provided service to the Allen House community. The awards recognized the dedication, commitment, and continued involvement of individuals who have helped strengthen the recovery community throughout the years.

The honorees included Art Monreal, President of the L.A. CADA Board of Directors; Brenda Nickelson Caine, Director of FCRP and former Allen House Counselor; and alumni Leo Ruiz, Hope Harrison, Jessie Urias, and Anthony Ramos, who were recognized for their consistent engagement and service to the Allen House. The awards served as a meaningful acknowledgment of their contributions and demonstrated the importance of continued service to the recovery community.

The event also featured heartfelt personal testimonials from alumni, which helped set a tone of hope, gratitude, and connection throughout the celebration. Alumni shared reflections on their individual recovery journeys and the positive impact that recovery has had on their lives. Their stories provided encouragement and inspiration to current patients, alumni, families, and everyone in attendance.

One of the highlights of the celebration was a recovery countdown, recognizing both current Allen House participants and alumni who continue to maintain their recovery. The countdown served as a powerful reminder of the strength, hope, dedication, and perseverance involved in long-term recovery. It also provided encouragement to those beginning their recovery journey by demonstrating that continued recovery is possible and that the relationships developed through recovery can last a lifetime.

Families were an important part of the celebration as well. Children were included in the festivities through games and activities, allowing the entire family to participate and enjoy the day together. Guests were treated to shaved ice, popcorn, and a taco dinner, providing an opportunity for everyone to enjoy good food and fellowship. The event area was held under a canopy that had been beautifully decorated by Allen House patients, adding a personal touch to the celebration and highlighting the involvement and creativity of current patients.

The anniversary celebration also provided an opportunity to recognize and honor Terry Druehl, who founded the Allen House Alumni Group 35 years ago. In recognition of his vision, dedication, and many years of service to the recovery community, Terry was presented with a special appreciation award. His commitment helped establish an alumni group that has continued for more than three decades to connect people through shared experiences, promote recovery, provide support, and encourage service to those seeking a better life through recovery.

The celebration demonstrated the powerful impact that a group built on recovery and shared experience can have over generations. Alumni who once sought help at the Allen House have continued to remain connected, support one another, give back to the recovery community, and serve as examples of hope for those currently beginning their own recovery journeys. The 35-Year Allen House Alumni Group Anniversary Celebration was more than a celebration of a group. It was a celebration of recovery, resilience, gratitude, service, family, fellowship, community, and the many lives positively impacted over the past 35 years. From the heartfelt testimonials and recovery countdown to the awards, family activities, food, and fellowship, the event reflected the strength of a community built on shared experience and a commitment to helping others.

The gathering served as a powerful reminder that the connections formed through recovery can last a lifetime and that the strength, courage, and perseverance demonstrated through one person's recovery journey can inspire countless others. After 35 years, the Allen House Alumni Group continues to fulfill its mission of connecting through shared experience and being of service to those seeking recovery at the Allen House, carrying forward a legacy of hope, gratitude, fellowship, and service for generations to come.

Youth Department Celebrates Graduation and Youth Achievements

By Vanesa Paniagua, Certified SUD Counselor

On Thursday, May 28, 2026, L.A. CADA's Youth Department

hosted a graduation ceremony at the Santa Fe Springs campus celebrating three youth who successfully completed their support services and youth programs. The event honored their dedication, growth, and commitment to reaching their personal goals while recognizing the important steps they have taken toward their future.

Graduation ceremonies are a meaningful part of the Youth Department's work because they provide an opportunity to recognize the progress youth make throughout their journey. Through L.A. CADA's services, youth receive guidance, encouragement, and resources that support their well-being, personal development, and ability to navigate challenges. Completing a program represents not only an accomplishment but also the strength and perseverance shown by each young person. The celebration brought together graduates, family members, peers, and L.A. CADA staff to recognize the achievements of each youth.

A special tradition during L.A. CADA graduation ceremonies is the passing of graduation coins, where those in attendance share words of encouragement and well wishes for the graduate's next steps. Each youth received a certificate, a graduation coin, and an



Vanesa Paniagua, SUD Counselor With Youth Department Graduate.



Vanesa Paniagua, SUD Counselor With Youth Department Graduate.



Vanesa Paniagua, SUD Counselor With Youth Department Graduate.

Summer Wellness Week 2: Art Workshops - Creativity, Fun, and Self-Expression with Soulland lab

By Janet Landa Guzman, Prevention Coordinator



Mike Salas, and youth with their ceramics projects.

Summer Wellness Week 2 brought creativity, connection, and plenty of fun to our youth through three hands-on workshops hosted by Mike Salas, founder and artist of Soulland Lab. Each activity gave youth a chance to explore their interests, express themselves, and enjoy time with their peers in a welcoming environment.

The week began with acrylic sunset painting. Youth experimented with different colors and blending techniques to create vibrant sunset scenes. Each painting reflected their individual style, and youth enjoyed watching their ideas come to life as they mixed colors and added personal touches.

For the custom tote bag workshop, youth had the opportunity to make something that felt personal to them. They selected printed images featuring their favorite music artists or bands, loved ones, and even photos of themselves. Choosing images that represented the people and things they cared about created an opportunity to celebrate their identities and practice self-love. Youth also selected patches to add an extra touch of personality to their bags.

The final activity focused on ceramic painting, where youth chose between California state-shaped ceramics and Nintendo Switch-themed pieces. They explored different colors and designs while putting their own spin on each ceramic. The Nintendo Switch pieces added a playful gaming element that made the activity especially exciting for many participants.

Beyond the artwork, the workshops created opportunities for youth to laugh, connect, share ideas, and enjoy being together. The energy throughout the week showed how creative activities could bring people together while encouraging confidence and self-expression. By the end of Summer Wellness Week 2, youth had created colorful artwork, personalized keepsakes, and lasting memories. More importantly, they had a space to celebrate what they enjoyed, who they cared about, and what made them unique.



Youth painting cups and Nintendo Switch's and other pottery.

Empowering Change

By Brenda Nickelson-Cain, Program Director of FCRP-SFS

Change does not always begin with a dramatic moment. Sometimes, it begins with a simple question: How can we do this better? At FCRP Santa Fe Springs, that question has become part of how we approach our work. We understand that compliance establishes the standard, but meaningful change requires us to continually examine our practices, develop our staff, strengthen our systems, and improve the environment we create for the women we serve. For us, empowering change begins from the inside out.

One way we are creating change is through an increased focus on staff development. We want our staff to do more than receive information; we want them to know how to use it. Years ago, I coined the phrase "Take a LAP" — Learn, Apply, Practice. Staff learn new information, tools, and techniques; apply what they have learned in their daily interactions;

and practice those skills until they become more confident, effective, and intentional in their work. This approach strengthens communication, builds rapport, and enhances our ability to support participants through their transformation. Training is not the destination. Application is where learning becomes change.



Gloria Herrera, Clinical Manager, Mona Garcia, Counseling Supervisor, Kevita White-Leslie, Care Coordinator.

We have also strengthened the participant pathway through the addition of Care Coordinator Kevita White-Leslie. One of the most significant shifts is our understanding that discharge planning begins at intake. Kevita builds relationships in the community, identifies programs and opportunities, and brings valuable resources back to the team. This allows us to begin building a pathway for participants from their first steps into the program toward their eventual transition out, while identifying potential gaps earlier and connecting participants with resources that can support their continued progress. We are no longer waiting until discharge to begin thinking about what comes next.

We are also investing in the professional growth of our counseling team. Mona Garcia, Counseling Supervisor, and Gloria Herrera, Clinical Manager, provide individual supervision that gives counselors intentional space to examine strengths, discuss challenges, identify areas for growth, and work through situations where they may feel stuck. The purpose is not simply oversight. It is development. When we invest in the growth of the people doing the work, we strengthen their ability to support the people we serve. Our successful PREA audit and strong PAR results are meaningful accomplishments that reflect the commitment of our staff and leadership. However, we do not view success as the end of the journey. We view it as an opportunity to continue learning, strengthening our practices, and looking for ways to improve.

Ultimately, the purpose of this work is the women we serve. The work we do behind the scenes—sometimes work participants may never see—helps create an environment where meaningful change can happen. When our staff are equipped and supported, our systems are strengthened, resources are identified early, and our team has opportunities to grow, participants experience the difference. We cannot ask the women we serve to embrace change while remaining unwilling to examine and improve ourselves. At FCRP Santa Fe Springs, continuous improvement is not simply a project. It is a mindset. We learn. We apply. We practice. We grow. And when we strengthen our people, our processes, and our systems, we create a stronger foundation and a more intentional pathway for the women we serve to pursue meaningful change in their own lives. That is what it means to empower change—from the inside out.

Mayfair Graduation

By Natalie Gonzalez, SUD Counselor I

On Thursday afternoon, L.A. CADA's Youth Department celebrated the accomplishments of nine youth from Mayfair High School who successfully completed their program and reached an important milestone in their personal growth journey. This graduation recognized the dedication, commitment, and progress of youth who participated in L.A. CADA services through one of our many school-based locations. Through our partnership with Mayfair High School, L.A. CADA provides youth with access to prevention and substance use services designed to support their overall well-being. These programs create a safe and supportive space where youth can build coping skills, strengthen decision-making, learn about healthy choices, and receive guidance as they navigate challenges both in and outside of school.

The celebration also included an educational presentation from L.A. CADA clinician Dr. Cooper, who provided youth and families with important information on recognizing an overdose and how to administer Naloxone (Narcan). Guests had the opportunity to learn about this life-saving resource and receive Narcan kits to help promote safety and awareness within their communities. The graduation was a meaningful opportunity to recognize not only the completion of the program, but the growth and resilience demonstrated by each youth. Family members, guests, Mayfair staff, L.A. CADA team members, and Prevention Program Director Jazmin Davalos joined together to celebrate the students' achievements. Youth reflected on their experiences, sharing sentiments such as, "I've seen so much progress in all of us," "I made it," and "I learned so much in this program, I'm going to miss it." L.A. CADA is proud to continue partnering with schools like Mayfair High School to provide youth with prevention, education, and support services that help create healthier futures.



Mayfair youth after the graduation Ceremony.

Bellflower High-Middle School Celebrates Youth Achievement and Growth

By Carolina Correa, Youth Substance Abuse Counselor

L.A. CADA's Youth Department recently joined Bellflower High-Middle School in celebrating the accomplishments of five students who successfully completed their program. The graduation ceremony recognized the students' dedication, perseverance, and commitment to their personal growth while highlighting the importance of providing youth with the support and resources needed to overcome challenges and reach their goals. Through L.A. CADA's school-based services, youth receive guidance, education, and support focused on prevention, healthy decision-making, coping skills, and personal development. These programs provide a safe and supportive environment where students can build confidence, strengthen their resilience, and develop tools that help them navigate challenges both inside and outside of school.

The graduation served as an opportunity to recognize the progress made by each student and celebrate the steps they have taken toward a healthier future. Completing the program represents more than an accomplishment; it reflects the commitment, effort, and willingness of youth to grow and make positive changes in their lives. The event included encouragement and recognition from L.A. CADA staff, including the program therapist and Program Director, who helped honor each graduate's journey. Their presence reflected the continued support youth receive throughout their involvement with L.A. CADA programs. Each graduate was recognized with a celebration coin as a symbol of their achievement and the progress they made throughout the program. Family, staff, and supporters came together to celebrate the students and remind them that their journey does not end with graduation. The encouragement and connections built through these programs continue to support youth as they pursue their education, personal goals, and future aspirations.

L.A. CADA remains committed to partnering with schools like Bellflower High-Middle School to provide youth with meaningful services that promote wellness, recovery, leadership, and long-term success. By celebrating milestones like these, we continue to recognize the strength and potential of every young person we serve.



Bellflower Program graduates and Carolina Correa, SUD Counselor, after the Ceremony

Youth Department Celebrates Graduation and Youth Achievements

Continued

opportunity to reflect on their experience and share their journey. The event also created space for families and staff to connect, celebrate, and support the graduates as they continue moving forward. Guests enjoyed a meal together and shared moments of encouragement, laughter, and pride in the accomplishments being celebrated. L.A. CADA's Youth Department remains committed to creating supportive spaces where young people feel recognized, empowered, and encouraged to continue pursuing their goals. By celebrating milestones like graduation, we highlight the importance of community, connection, and the continued support youth need to build healthy and successful futures.

Check out...
the back cover for
upcoming L.A. CADA
events!



(l-r bottom): Alejandro Castillo from "Boots On the Ground Alliance", Julia Mijango from "Dreamcatcher", Maria Gilani and Tiffani Pe from "Youth-Led Antelope Valley Food Pantry", Dolly from "Neighborhood Youth Achievers", Darryl Gray from "BTROC", Maribel Orellano and Cinthya Carranza from "Rise in Color", Catherine Butler from "Pauly's Project" and standing Ray Zacharias from "OVP". (l-r middle) Dr Robert Montes from "Dreamcatcher", Giordan Williams from "Hope, Healing and Wellness", Fred Griffins from "Collaboration over Contradiction", TTA Program Manager Dr. Trinh Nguyen, Cassandra Ocampo from "East Side of the River", Ruben Vasquez from "Chubs", Dr Crystal Adams-Williams from "A New Beginning Resource Center", Edin from "Green Arrow Co-Lab", Tue Huynh from "Fear from Breakfast", TTA Project Coordinators Marlene Resendiz & Stanley Staco. (l-r top) Aaron Scholl from "Education is Forever", Duran Bowie from "I'm a Movement, not a Monument", Kevin Lee from "We all We got", Marcus Allen from "Neighborhood Youth Achievers", Terrel Bishop from "We All We Got", Kevin Orange from "APUU", Rey Liggins from "Stop the Violence Increase the Peace", Nigel Holly from "Future Leaders California" and Upumony Ama from "Community Youth Peacemakers."

Launching Cycle 5 "Empowering Grassroots Organizations for Lasting Change"

By : Marlene Resendiz, TTA Project Coordinator

On August 13, 2026, L.A. CADA's Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Department kicked off TTA Cycle 5 with a Meet & Greet that brought together 21 community-based organizations (CBOs) in collaboration with The Nonprofit Partnership (TNP), and the Office of ViolencePrevention (OVP).

The event was an opportunity for partners to connect, build relationships, and learn more about the support and resources available throughout the new cycle. TTA Cycle 5 focuses on helping organizations strengthen their capacity to better serve communities impacted by violence and trauma across Los Angeles County, including Westmont-West Athens, Florence-Firestone, Willowbrook, Unincorporated Compton, Hawaiian Gardens, Norwalk, Pomona, Puente Valley, East Los Angeles, and Antelope Valley. Through OVP funding, participating CBOs receive \$50,000 grants, individualized guidance from L.A. CADA, and monthly capacity-building sessions led by TNP.

Launch day began with a Meet & Greet designed to introduce partners, clarify available resources, and create a foundation for collaboration. The room was energized by thoughtful conversations, new connections, and a shared determination to strengthen services for young people and families.

Strong organizations create stronger communities. Through technical assistance, training, and ongoing support, L.A. CADA's TTA Department helps CBOs enhance their programs so they can continue providing high-quality services to those they serve. This work is especially important in communities that have experienced the lasting effects of violence, trauma, systemic inequities, and historical disinvestment. By investing in organizations already rooted in these neighborhoods, Cycle 5 strengthens trusted community institutions and expands their ability to deliver meaningful, youth-centered services. Over the coming months, L.A. CADA will continue working alongside CBOs, TNP, and OVP to provide guidance, support program goals, encourage collaboration, and help organizations increase their impact.

Ask Dr. Holmes...

Dr. Randy Holmes is Board Certified in Addiction Medicine and Family Medicine, and is on the staff at PIH Health. He also serves as Chair of the California Society of Addiction Medicine (CSAM),

and is a Public Policy Committee member of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM).

Questions may be emailed to administration@lacada.com.

Q: : How can incorporating peer support specialists, individuals with lived experience of recovery, empower clients to take a more active role in their own behavioral health treatment, and what should families look for when evaluating whether a program offers this kind of support?

—A Concerned Family Member

A: Dear Concerned,

Peer support specialists are people with “lived experience” who are trained to share their stories with people newly in recovery. They can make behavioral health treatment feel less like something being done to a client and more like something the client is actively participating in. Because they draw on their own experiences of recovery, they can offer a form of credibility and hope that clinical staff may not be able to provide in the same way. They can empower people to:

Builds hope and trust

Hearing from someone who has experienced behavioral health challenges and recovery can make improvement feel more realistic and attainable.

Encourages self-advocacy.

Peer specialists can help clients identify their own goals, prepare for appointments, understand treatment options, and speak up about what is or isn't working.

Promotes shared decision-making Rather than simply following a clinician's plan, clients can be encouraged to identify their priorities and participate in decisions about services and recovery goals.

Provides practical, lived-experience knowledge

Peer specialists can share strategies they've personally found useful for navigating treatment, relationships, employment, housing, crisis planning, and other recovery challenges—without presenting their experience as a substitute for professional care.



Reduces isolation and stigma

A supportive relationship with someone who has “been there” can help clients feel understood rather than judged.

Strengthens self-efficacy

The ultimate goal isn't dependence on the peer specialist; it is helping the client recognize their own strengths, make choices, and take increasing ownership of recovery.

Creates another source of feedback

A good peer program gives clients someone they can talk with about their experience of treatment and, when appropriate, help communicate concerns to the treatment team. Families evaluating a program should ask more than simply, “Do you have peer specialists?” The important question is how peers are integrated into care. Look for programs where:

1. Peer specialists have meaningful, defined roles rather than being used primarily for administrative or support tasks.
 2. Peers have appropriate training and supervision, including clear boundaries around what is peer support versus clinical treatment.
 3. The client's choices drive the relationship. Participation should be voluntary, and clients should have a meaningful say in what goals they work on.
 4. Peer support is integrated with the broader treatment team while maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the peer relationship's distinct role.
 5. The program emphasizes recovery and strengths, not merely symptom management or compliance.
 6. Clients can provide feedback about their peer support experience and have a way to request a different peer if the relationship isn't a good fit.
 7. The program can explain outcomes or quality measures, such as client engagement, satisfaction, recovery-oriented goals, or retention in services.
 8. Peers are treated as professionals and valued members of the team. High-quality programs typically demonstrate this through training, supervision, adequate staffing, and clear organizational support.
- Ultimately, the best peer-support programs don't position people with lived experience as replacements for therapists, psychiatrists, or other clinicians. They add a different kind of expertise—lived experience—to clinical expertise, helping clients move from being passive recipients of services toward being informed partners in their own recovery.



(l-r) Elena Lepe, SUD Counselor, and Tina Furmanski, Clinician.

Expanding Outreach and Crisis Support Across the San Gabriel Valley

By : Alejandro Godinez, Communications Coordinator

Over the past year, L.A. CADA's Homeless Outreach and Mobile Crisis teams have continued to meet individuals where they are, providing compassionate support, connecting people to services, and responding to behavioral health needs throughout the community. As L.A. CADA expands its outreach efforts across the San Gabriel Valley, the team is helping bring critical resources and connections to care closer to the people who need them.

From April 1, 2025, through April 1, 2026, L.A. CADA's Mobile Crisis teams in Monrovia and La Verne completed 883 client engagements, including 334 initial intakes and 549 follow-up contacts. These engagements represent ongoing efforts to connect individuals with appropriate resources and provide continued support beyond the initial point of contact. The teams also worked alongside community and system partners to provide a range of responses

based on each individual's circumstances. During the reporting period, staff completed 105 alternative responses, 65 secondary responses, and 164 co-responses, demonstrating the importance of collaboration when responding to individuals experiencing a behavioral health or other crisis in the community.

When a higher level of intervention was necessary, the teams initiated 56 involuntary holds, helping connect individuals experiencing a serious crisis with appropriate emergency care. However, the goal of Mobile Crisis is not simply to initiate a hold or institutionalize an individual experiencing a crisis. Each response is approached individually, with staff working to identify the most appropriate level of care based on the person's circumstances, immediate needs, strengths, and available supports.

When an individual does not meet the criteria for a higher level of intervention, the team can continue engagement through follow-up contacts and connections to appropriate community resources and support. This individualized approach allows Mobile Crisis to serve not only as a crisis-response program, but also as a preventative resource focused on addressing needs before they escalate further. By prioritizing appropriate care, continued engagement, and the strengths of each individual, the program works to reduce unnecessary institutionalization and help interrupt cycles of repeated crisis by connecting people with support that can promote greater stability in the community. The strength of L.A. CADA's La Verne Mobile Crisis program has also created an opportunity to expand services into neighboring communities. Building on the program's established presence and experience in La Verne, L.A. CADA expanded its Mobile Crisis Response services to Claremont beginning September 1, 2026. The expansion has already proven effective and demonstrates how the program's success in La Verne has directly increased L.A. CADA's capacity to serve neighboring communities. Together, these efforts reflect the growing role of L.A. CADA's outreach and crisis teams throughout the San Gabriel Valley. By providing immediate crisis response, continued follow-up, and connections to treatment and community resources, the teams are helping create pathways toward greater stability and recovery.

As L.A. CADA continues expanding its presence in the San Gabriel Valley, the organization remains committed to meeting people where they are, building connections, and helping individuals move toward stability, recovery, and healthier futures.

OUR Mission

is to save lives, unite families, inspire hope, and uplift communities through integrated health services that enhance the quality of life.

Please make it YOUR Mission by donating today.



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L.A. CADA's Online Store is more than a place to shop, it's a way to proudly show support for recovery and community healing.

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Community Resource Fair and Back-to-School Event Brings Families Together

*By: Janet Landa Guzman, Prevention Coordinator, and
Nikolas Rey Estrada, Youth Peer Advocate*

On August 13, 2026, L.A. CADA Youth and Family Services

hosted a Free Community Resource Fair and Back-to-School Event, bringing local youth and families together for a day filled with valuable resources, school supplies, food, and fun activities. The event provided families with an opportunity to prepare for the upcoming school year

while connecting with community organizations and learning about programs and services available to them.

Families received free backpacks filled with essential school supplies, including pencil cases, pens, markers, erasers, notebooks, binders, folders, and arts and crafts supplies for younger participants. The school supplies were made possible through the generosity of community donors, including those who supported a fundraiser hosted in partnership with La Michoacana de Tocumbo in Santa Fe Springs. Their contributions helped ensure families had the supplies and support they needed to prepare for the new school year. Community partners were also available throughout the event to provide information about local programs, services, and additional resources available to families.

Along with receiving school supplies and community resources, youth had the opportunity to participate in a variety of interactive activities. Stations included toy axe throwing, basketball, and backpack decorating, where participants could personalize their new backpacks with patches. Families were also invited to take part in a resource bingo hunt, encouraging participants to visit different resource tables and learn more about the organizations in attendance. After completing their bingo cards, participants were entered into a raffle featuring prizes such as art kits, toys, electronic accessories, and other fun items.

Families also enjoyed pizza and a variety of drinks while spending time together with program representatives and other members of the community. Free haircuts were provided with the support of Rafael Medina, community advocate, who connected us with local barbers Tony Guerrero and Dominic Valles, giving youth an opportunity to start the school year looking and feeling their best. The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank also provided free food boxes for families to take home and share with their loved ones, providing an additional source of support for families in the community.

As the event came to a close, final raffles were distributed as prizes to guests. Families left with backpacks filled with school supplies, food boxes, raffle prizes, and information about resources available in their community. Beyond the items they received, the event gave families an opportunity to make connections, learn about local services, and spend time together in a welcoming community environment.

The success of the event was made possible through the dedication of community partners, donors, volunteers, and organizers, including the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Soledad Enrichment Action, Alliant University, Helpline Youth Counseling, Rio Hondo College, Whittier LGBTQ Center, and the L.A. CADA Elite Warriors Basketball Team. Their support helped L.A. CADA Youth and Family Services provide families with valuable resources and activities while bringing the community together. More than a back-to-school giveaway, the event strengthened connections and reminded local youth that they have a community supporting them. L.A. CADA remains committed to creating opportunities that connect families to resources and support throughout the year.



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Give thanks by giving back. Donate a turkey supporting families in our program.



**One table,
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**Care for every
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Feeds 5 patients a
full holiday meal

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full holiday meal

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562.777.7500

Community Outreach Program

3675 Huntington Dr., Suite 101, Pasadena, CA 91107
626.314.2818

Downtown Outpatient and HIV Services Center

426 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles, CA 90013
213.626.6411

Downtown Outpatient

307 Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90013
213.372.5233

Hollywood HIV Services Center

6838 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028
323.461.3161 ext. 3818

L.A. CADA on Main Street

10924 S. Main St., Los Angeles, CA 90061
323.880.8159

Long Beach Outpatient and Community Services Center

5861 Cherry Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805
562.676.4259

WELLNESS CENTER:

1.844.804.WELL (9355) & QA
11015 Bloomfield Ave., Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
562.906.2676

Santa Fe Springs Outpatient and Community Services and CENS

11015 Bloomfield Ave., Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
562.906.2676
CENS Toll Free: 1.844.804.SPA7 (7727)

Valley Homeless Community Outreach

2826 Valley Blvd., Alhambra, CA 91280

Youth and Family Services

10210 Orr and Day Rd, Suite B, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
562.348.0083

4th Street Field-Based Outpatient

1401 E. Fourth St., Unit A, Long Beach, CA 90802
562.606.2664

The Whittier LGBTQ Center

7639 Painter Ave., Whittier, CA 90602
562.261.5611

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is to save lives, unite families, inspire hope, and uplift communities through integrated health services that enhance the quality of life.

OUR VISION

is a world where people achieve optimum health and wellness by having unrestricted access to healthcare and recovery services.

OUR VALUES

embrace the empowerment of people through compassion, perseverance and respect. We provide a wide range of services thanks to a collaborative approach compatible with healthy communities, dedicated partners, and unique foundation





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SEPTEMBER 16TH- NOVEMBER 9TH

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events@lacada.com for details

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Breakfast with
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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE EVENTS ABOVE, email Events@lacada.com