

WINTER 2025 Connecting

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

A New Beginning Worth Fighting For

By William Shelton, Community Services & Transitional Age Youth Services Manager

Sean's story is the kind of story that reminds you why recovery services matter and why a true continuum of care can change the entire direction of someone's life.

When Sean arrived at L.A. CADA, he was entering under a court conditional release through Van Nuys Court. In other words, he was released into treatment with the expectation that he would complete substance use disorder treatment or a mental health diversion requirement. At that time, Sean was also experiencing homelessness and had already made two earlier attempts to "get it right." This time, he came in with something different: a real desire to turn his life around.

Sean committed to the full continuum of care at L.A. CADA, meaning he didn't just start treatment he followed through across multiple levels of support. He began at Allen House Residential Treatment and later stepped down into Casa Consuelo Recovery Bridge Housing. While continuing his recovery, he also participated in L.A. CADA's Transitional Aged Youth services through Outpatient Santa Fe Springs. Each level was a step forward, helping him build stability, confidence, and the tools needed to keep going.

During his time in Recovery Bridge Housing and outpatient treatment, Sean didn't just focus on sobriety he rebuilt his foundation. He developed a strong fellowship with peers in recovery, surrounded himself with positive influence, and



(l-r) Monique Garcia, TAY SUD Counselor, Sean H. client who graduated, Tanya Garay TAY SUD Counselor and Carlos Aguilar, TAY program coordinator

learned healthy coping strategies that helped him face challenges without returning to old patterns. He also gained parenting knowledge and took a deeper look at himself, identifying areas of growth and committing to meaningful change. Perhaps most importantly, he reconnected with his family and began rebuilding a support system that he could lean on outside of treatment. And Sean didn't stop there.

While still completing treatment, he took on the responsibility of employment and held two jobs at once. He worked at Five Below and also as a server at Norms Restau-

rant in Whittier. Eventually, he left Five Below and continued working at Norms, showing consistent progress and responsibility while staying focused on recovery. Over time, Sean was able to obtain housing on his own, renting a room and moving into a more stable situation something that can feel out of reach for many individuals who enter treatment without a home.

Sean also successfully completed his court obligations through Van Nuys Court, which is a major milestone for anyone navigating both recovery and the justice system. And one of the most powerful outcomes of all: he was able to close his DCFS case and regain custody of his baby. Today, Sean has

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

Behavioral Healthcare as Public Health and Safety

Behavioral health disorders never exist in isolation; they're found at the congested crossroads of community health, safety, and stability. In fact, there are few public challenges that don't implicate alcohol, drugs or mental health:

Health: 16.7% of L.A. County emergency room visits (one in six) and 33% of inpatient hospitalizations involved behavioral health disorders;

Crime: Alcohol, drug, and/or mental health was involved in 26% of all L.A. County arrests;

Accidents: 8.9% of all county motor vehicle collisions and about 30% of household accidents involved alcohol and/or drugs;

Homelessness: 49% of L.A. County residents experiencing chronic homelessness have a substance use disorder and 63% have a mental health disorder;

Domestic Violence: Substance use disorders co-occur in approximately 40% -60% of county domestic violence incidents;

Unemployment: Nearly 17% of unemployed individuals in L.A. County have a substance use disorder;

Welfare Dependence: About 20% of county TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients reported using illicit drugs in the last year;

School Failure: L.A. County students who drink and use are twice as likely to drop out of high school; and

Loss of Child Custody: Parental drug or alcohol abuse is associated with 35-41% of L.A. County children entering child protective services out-of-home care for abuse or neglect.

When behavioral health issues are entangled with so many community problems, the integration of behavioral health prevention and treatment services in community systems is non-negotiable. And it's a primary focus of L.A. CADA services.

In L.A. County, our staff work closely with community-based agencies and healthcare providers to get people into treatment and to coordinate access to needed supportive services during a patient's recovery. L.A. CADA works inside of the justice system, integrating our treatment staff into community collaborative courts and the jail healthcare system. We partner with government agencies to put our mobile multidisciplinary homeless outreach teams in L.A. County neighborhoods to deliver intervention and engagement services. To address homelessness, L.A. CADA has developed L.A. County's largest supply of recovery bridge housing beds to give folks a place to begin recovery. To reach students and families, we have embedded education and treatment services on school campuses. Most importantly, L.A. CADA services address whole person needs to foster personal empowerment, pride in recovery, and independent living.

I'm often asked how we measure the success of treatment services. My answer is always this: L.A. CADA's success depends entirely on the strength and quality of our community partnerships. We make it a priority to connect with our stakeholders on a daily basis to ensure that success – with funders, government offices, community agencies, healthcare providers, schools, community members, and the L.A. County recovery community. Thanks to our community partners, L.A. CADA is there to meet the growing need for integrated behavioral health services with compassion, integrity, and accountability.

Juan Navarro

A Milestone of Meaning: Our Recovery Celebration and Program Completion Ceremony

By Jo Bibera, L.A. CADA Connect Alumni Services

On the afternoon of January 4, 2026, LA CADA gathered in a spirit of reverence and celebration to honor graduates who completed their programs in 2025. The Recovery Celebration and Program Completion marked more than a milestone. It stood as living proof of lives reclaimed, dignity restored, and futures courageously rewritten.

Graduation reflects the culmination of deeply personal work. It represents early mornings of resolve, difficult conversations rooted in accountability, and the quiet discipline required to begin again. As graduates from Allen House, Alice's House, Outpatient and Recovery Bridge Housing, the Female Community Re Entry Program, and Safe Haven crossed the stage, each name carried a testament to resilience strengthened through community and compassionate care.

Leadership reflections and alumni induction anchored the ceremony in legacy and shared purpose. L.A. CADA Board President, Allen House alumnus, and Alumni Association Board Member Arthur Monreal reminded us that graduation is never an individual accomplishment alone. It belongs to every peer, every clinician, every counselor, and every leader committed to this mission. As he shared, "What we do is important. It has meaning. It is worth continuing to serve the community one life at a time."

This inaugural ceremony focused on graduates from the SPA 7 region, serving as a thoughtful pilot for what will become an enduring agency tradition. The engagement and pride that filled the room affirmed a powerful truth: this celebration will grow. Our next Recovery Celebration will unite participants from across more than 30 L.A. CADA programs throughout Los Angeles.

When one life is restored, communities rise.



Arthur Monreal, Board President and proud L.A. CADA alumnus, speaks at our inaugural graduation ceremony, honoring the resilience of our graduates.

A New Beginning Worth Fighting For

Continued

moved back to the San Fernando Valley area with a new chapter ahead of him one built on stability, accountability, and hard-earned progress. Sean's success reflects what's possible when someone is met with the right support at the right time and when services don't stop at one program or one level of care. L.A. CADA provides a full continuum of care that meets individuals where they are, from residential treatment to recovery bridge housing and outpatient services, including specialized support for transitional aged youth. This approach is not just about completing a program it's about rebuilding lives. Stories like Sean's are happening every day at L.A. CADA. They are reminders that with commitment, structure, and community, recovery is possible and so is a future that once felt out of reach.

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 does integrating mental health care with substance use treatment improve long term recovery outcomes, and why is a whole person approach so critical today?

— A Newly Sober Person

A: Integrating mental health care with substance use treatment—often called integrated or co-occurring care—significantly improves long-term recovery because it treats the real drivers of addiction rather than just the symptoms. A whole-person approach is especially critical today because the challenges people face are more complex, chronic, and interconnected. Many people with substance use disorders also live with depression, anxiety, PTSD, bipolar disorder, or chronic stress. If treatment focuses only on stopping substance use while ignoring mental health, symptoms remain untreated, relapse risk stays high, and recovery feels unsustainable. When mental health needs are met, cravings are easier to manage, emotional regulation improves, and people are more likely to stay engaged in care.

Typically, patients need to go to many different healthcare providers for various parts of their care (therapy, addiction treatment, medications). When these providers are not on the same page patients can get conflicting advice, receive unnecessary medications, and start treatments that are not a good fit. Underlying mental health issues may also be missed or undertreated, which leads to poorer outcomes for substance use disorders. Integrated care means that these scattered practitioners work together to build a unified recovery plan that fits each patient's

needs. The benefits of this system are clear: Studies consistently show that people in integrated programs: stay in treatment longer, have fewer relapses, are more consistent with taking medications for substance use and mental health, and experience better function overall.

When thinking about substance use disorders, many people may believe that recovery is simply abstinence. While stopping substance is a major goal of treatment, true recovery means being able to live, work, and connect meaningfully within one's community. Substance use disorders can worsen or destroy several aspects of a patient's life: broken relationships, job loss, unstable housing, worsened physical and mental health, and poor self-efficacy. Integrated care addresses this part of substance use disorders by including therapies and resources focused on developing healthy relationships, improving housing and financial insecurity, developing coping skills, building a healthier lifestyle, and developing an identity beyond "addiction."

People are not dealing with just one issue anymore, and individuals with substance use disorder are no exception. Many face trauma and chronic stress, social isolation, economic insecurity, and ongoing health conditions. We now understand that trauma is extremely common among people with substance use disorders. By focusing on healing rather than punishing the person beyond their substance use disorder, we avoid re-traumatization and build safety and trust. Addiction and mental health conditions are often chronic but manageable. Whole-person care supports long term recovery management, adapts as needs change over time, and emphasizes resilience, skills, and community support. Integrated, whole-person care works because it treats the full reality of people's lives, builds sustainable recovery, not short-term stabilization, and honors dignity, complexity, and long-term wellbeing.

Expanding Medication for Addiction Treatment at L.A. CADA Residential Programs

By Eva Yakel, Project Director, MAT Services

L.A. CADA remains committed to addressing the social determinants of health (SDOH) — the environmental conditions that impact access to quality healthcare, including transportation barriers, limited income, gaps in education, and lack of health coverage. For many individuals seeking Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment, these barriers can delay or prevent access to essential medical services. Through Incidental Medical Services (IMS) certification, L.A. CADA is reducing these barriers by allowing clients to receive medical care at the same location where they participate in residential SUD treatment. This integrated model minimizes long wait times for outside referrals and improves the overall healthcare experience for individuals who have often faced stigma, discrimination, or rejection within traditional healthcare systems. At the residential level, IMS enhances care coordination and provides tailored medical



Serenity House SUD Residential Treatment Center 1st Anniversary

interventions as clients prepare for the next step in their recovery journey. One key component of IMS is the ability to provide Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) services on-site. These services are overseen by licensed medical professionals and nursing staff to ensure

patient education, medication compliance, and overall safety.

L.A. CADA has recently IMS-certified its third Residential Treatment Program, Serenity House, which serves gender-identity- and gender-expression-fluid and diverse adults ages 18 and over. Serenity House is the first and only Medi-Cal funded residential treatment program specifically dedicated to serving transgender, intersex, and non-binary individuals. Corey Kwoka, Treatment Team Coordinator at Serenity House shared, “It is a privilege and an honor to provide Substance Use Disorder treatment services to any population, but being able to tailor our program to the specific experiences and challenges of the transgender, gender diverse, and intersex (TGI) community is a profound responsibility that our team undertakes with deep respect and commitment. Supporting our TGI patients with affirming, compassionate, and culturally responsive care is something we do not because it is popular. We do it because it is right — and it is working.”

Program Manager Dominic Azzariti added, “We are extremely excited to have Incidental Medical Services at our site, expanding the range of services available to better serve and support our TGI community.”

The expansion of IMS and MAT services reflects L.A. CADA's continued commitment to equitable, accessible, and affirming care. By integrating medical and behavioral health services within residential treatment settings, we are strengthening recovery outcomes and ensuring that every individual — regardless of background or identity — has access to comprehensive, compassionate support.



IMS Room at Serenity House

Where His Past Ended, A New Beginning Began

By Megan Chacon, Long Beach RBH Manager



Hector Pozuelos Peer Support Specialist

When Hector first walked into Compton Court, he carried more than paperwork and requirements. He carried uncertainty, weight, and the quiet hope that maybe, just maybe, this could be the turning point. From day one, he made a decision that would shape the rest of his life: he was going to see it through. And he did.

For over two years, Hector showed up. He stayed compliant. He completed every requirement asked of him. But more than that, he did the inner work, the kind that doesn't appear on court documents but shows up in character, discipline, and growth. Step by step, meeting by meeting, he chose accountability over avoidance. He chose change over comfort. As his Program Manager, it was evident that Hector's consistency was not performative, it was intentional. Even on difficult days, he remained committed to the process.

Then came the milestone.

After maintaining full compliance for over two years, Hector achieved what once felt impossible: all charges were discharged. Those words marked more than a legal outcome. They marked the closing of one chapter and the intentional beginning of another, one built on responsibility, stability, and hope. His journey reflects resilience. It reflects accountability. It reflects the courage it takes to rebuild. His accomplishment reflects the unwavering support of the Long Beach Outpatient treatment team and the Compton RBH team, but most importantly, it reflects Hector's determination to rise. And the story doesn't end there.

Hector didn't just complete the program. He embraced it. He stepped into alumni status, and then made an even bolder choice. He returned, not as a participant, but as staff at the RBH Compton site, the very place where he once chose change. There is something deeply meaningful about witnessing that full-circle moment. To walk back through the same doors where you once stood uncertain, and walk in with confidence. Not in need, but in purpose. Not seeking help, but offering it. Not defined by your past, but fueled by your growth. Hector's journey reflects what becomes possible when accountability and compassionate support come together. It represents what New Beginnings truly mean, not just a fresh start, but a sustained commitment to change.

Today, Hector stands not as someone defined by the system, but as someone guiding others who may be standing exactly where he once stood. Stories like his remind us that transformation is not abstract. It is lived. It is earned. It is supported. And it is possible. Your continued support helps create more stories like Hector's, where second chances become purpose. One decision at a time.

**If you or someone you know
is in need of mental health or substance use services,
please call us at (562) 906-2676.**

New Beginnings Through Community, Connection, and Care

By Priscilla Rodriguez, L.A. CADA Community Engagement Manager

The holiday season is often described as a time of joy and togetherness, but for many of the individuals and families we serve, it can also be one of the most challenging times of the year. That is why, year after year, L.A. CADA remains deeply committed to showing up for our community in meaningful ways, not just through our programs, but through the traditions, events, and partnerships that remind people they are seen, supported, and not alone. Each holiday season, we begin with our Turkey Drive, followed by the Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon, leading into our Toy Drive, and closing out with our Holiday Pancake Breakfast with Santa. These events are not just dates on a calendar, they are moments that matter.

For the children of our clients, these events create memories of joy, normalcy, and celebration during a time when their families may be navigating recovery, transition, or uncertainty. A toy under the tree, a warm meal, or a photo with Santa may seem small, but to a child, it represents stability, care, and hope. For our clients, these moments serve as reminders that their recovery journey is supported by a community that believes in them and their ability to begin again.

Beyond the families we serve, these events strengthen the relationships that hold our community together. They bring together donors, volunteers, service clubs, first responders, staff, and community partners, all united by a shared commitment to giving back. Our partnerships with the Norwalk / Santa Fe Springs Rotary, Kiwanis of La Mirada, Kiwanis of Downey, and other service organizations, along with collaborations with first responders and local community groups, are essential in making this work possible.

What often goes unseen is the ongoing relationship-building that sustains these efforts. These partnerships don't happen overnight. They require consistent communication, trust, mutual respect, and year-round engagement. They are nurtured through follow-up, gratitude, and showing up, not just when support is needed, but at every opportunity to strengthen connection.

These relationships allow L.A. CADA to continue hosting impactful events and providing meaningful support during the holidays and beyond. They are the reason we

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Breakfast with the First Responders



Suburban Water Systems/Senator Bob Archuleta distribute Turkeys



L.A. CADA's Annual Holiday Pancake Breakfast with Santa



L.A. CADA's Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon



L.A. CADA's Annual Holiday Pancake Breakfast with Santa



L.A. CADA's leadership team joined state partners in Sacramento to discuss advancing substance use treatment and reentry services.

Strengthening Reentry Across California: L.A. CADA at the 2026 Enhanced Alternative Custody Programs Summit

By Eva Yakel, Project Director, MAT Services

L.A. CADA was honored to participate in the 2026 Enhanced Alternative Custody Programs Summit hosted by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The summit brought together statewide partners committed to reducing barriers to reintegration and improving social determinants of health for justice-involved individuals.

For more than a decade, L.A. CADA has played a critical role in advancing community-based alternatives through the Female Community Reentry Program (FCRP). By equipping women with behavioral health services, life skills, and structured support, the program creates pathways to long-term stability beyond incarceration.

More recently, L.A. CADA expanded its impact through the Community Prisoner Mother Program (CPMP), a family-centered model that allows women to reunify with and care for their children while receiving treatment and support. This approach recognizes a powerful truth: sustainable reintegration strengthens not only individuals, but entire families and communities. Our presence at the summit reflects L.A. CADA's ongoing partnership with CDCR and our shared commitment to evidence-based, community-rooted solutions. When state agencies and

community providers collaborate, real reintegration becomes possible.

We extend special recognition to Liliana Rivas, Brenda Nickelson-Cain, Gloria, and Lupe Zermeno, whose leadership and daily dedication make this work transformative. Their compassion, persistence, and professionalism ensure that women are met with dignity, respect, and meaningful opportunity.

Reentry is not simply about release, it is about rebuilding lives. L.A. CADA remains proud to stand alongside our state partners in creating pathways to healing, accountability, and lasting change.

New Beginnings Through Community, Connection, and Care

Continued

can consistently create spaces of dignity, celebration, and belonging for the individuals and families we serve.

At its core, this work reflects what New Beginnings truly means. It's not just about starting over, it's about being supported along the way. It's about community coming together to ensure that no one has to face their journey alone. And it's about honoring the collective effort it takes to make healing, hope, and transformation possible.

To our donors, partners, volunteers, staff, and community members: thank you for continuing to show up, year after year. Your support helps create moments that matter and new beginnings that last.

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

When Healing Replaces Incarceration

By Monique Martinez, Peer Support Specialist

When most people think about incarceration, they think about punishment. What they don't often see is the possibility of restoration. The Female Community Reentry Program (FCRP), funded by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), allows eligible women serving four years or less to complete their sentence in a structured residential setting rather than a traditional prison. Participation is not automatic—women must meet strict eligibility criteria and demonstrate readiness for the program. It is an opportunity earned.

Locally, the program is operated by L.A. CADA, where participants receive counseling, life-skills development, education support, workforce readiness training, and daily therapeutic groups designed to prepare them for successful reentry. For Monique Martinez, FCRP became far more than a program—it became a turning point.

"I am deeply grateful for my journey with L.A. CADA FCRP, because before coming here, I truly did not believe I had a life outside of jail or prison. Trauma shaped every part of my identity. It taught me to survive, not to live."

Monique grew up surrounded by gang involvement, addiction, and abuse. Silence became survival and vulnerability felt dangerous. At just nine years old she entered juvenile hall, and by adulthood incarceration felt inevitable. "I didn't dream of a future—I prepared for a sentence. I truly believed I would spend my life behind bars." After initially facing a life sentence, she ultimately received three years and eight months, making her eligible for FCRP. "That blessing saved my life."

Through the program, Monique experienced a different kind of structure—one built on care, accountability, and consistency rather than punishment. "For the first time, structure wasn't used to break me—it was used to build me." Daily counseling and group sessions challenged her to speak openly and honestly, something that once felt impossible. "Sitting in a room and being asked to speak honestly was one of the hardest things I've ever done. But slowly, I learned how to trust, how to open up, and how to use my voice." Through that process, she learned one of the most powerful tools for growth: reflection.

Today, Monique proudly serves as a Peer Support Specialist



Photo of Monique Martinez, Peer Support Specialist

at L.A. CADA Grace's Place RBH, helping others rebuild their lives just as she once did. Her journey reflects a defining strength of L.A. CADA's model—many staff members bring lived experience to their work. Individuals like Joe Tarin, Darrell Garnaas, Raquel Olivarez, and Patricia Barajas represent a culture where healing becomes leadership and recovery becomes mentorship. "I no longer see a life behind bars. I see purpose. I see community. I see a future—and I know now that it belongs to me."

Programs like FCRP exist because use rehabilitation works. When structure is paired with compassion, lives change. Funded through CDCR and strengthened by community support, FCRP ensures that women are not simply released—they are restored. Monique's story is proof that when we invest in second chances, we invest in leaders, mentors, and change-makers.

When you support L.A. CADA, you are not simply funding a program—you are helping restore identity, rebuild confidence, and create futures where none once seemed possible.



(l-r) Norwalk councilmember, Ana Valencia, Los Angeles County Assessor, Jeff Prang and Development and Community Outreach Manager Joe Amaya.

We're Not Waiting for Change; We're Bringing It

By Joe Amaya Development and Community Outreach Manager

At L.A. CADA, we often say that recovery doesn't start at our front door; it starts in the community. Outreach is essentially the "front porch" of our mission. It's where we meet people in their own neighborhoods, on their own terms, and often at their most vulnerable or uncertain moments. For many, a "new beginning" isn't a grand ceremony; it's a quiet conversation at a resource table or

a flyer handed over at a local park. By being present, we remove the barriers of fear and stigma, replacing them with

a simple, human connection. "Showing up" in the community looks like more than just setting up a canopy and handing out brochures. It looks like visibility and consistency. Whether we are at a crowded pride festival or a local park, our presence sends a message: We are here, we are part of this community, and we are ready when you are. It's about creating a safe space in the middle of a public square where someone can ask a question they've been holding onto for years. We've seen these new beginnings take shape often over the last few



Celebrity Athletic Trainer Tony Martinez and client Erick C. at Allen House



Recruiting Specialist Priscilla Muñoz at Compton Job Fair

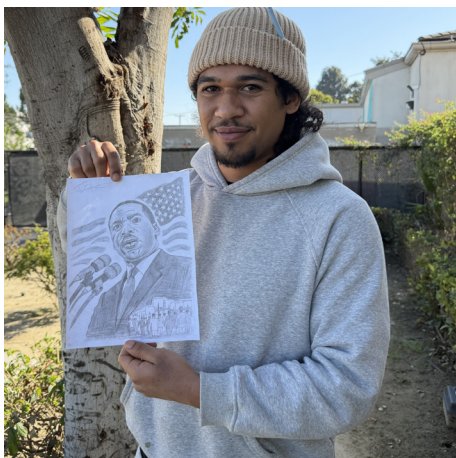
months. At Pomona Valley Pride and the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) at the Whittier LGBTQ+ Center, outreach was about more than health resources; it was about affirmation and belonging. For someone struggling with isolation, seeing an organization like L.A. CADA standing in solidarity can be the catalyst they need to finally seek support. These events remind us that the road to wellness often begins with the feeling of being seen and accepted for who you are.

The practical side of "new beginnings" was also on full display at our most recent winter events. We joined Los Angeles County Assessor Jeff Prang at the Homeowners' Resource Fair in Inglewood and stood with Forgotten

Children, Inc. at the Human Trafficking Awareness Community Festival in Lynwood Park. Most recently, we gathered at the LA Black History Month Festival at the La Brea Tar Pits. Under the theme "Celebrating Our Ancestors," we were able to connect with families through a shared sense of heritage and resilience.

Sometimes, showing up means bringing new energy directly to our participants. In late January, we were honored to host celebrity personal trainer Tony Martinez at one of our inpatient sites. Tony didn't just tour the facility; he led a "mini workout" focused on movement and functional health. For our residents, this was a powerful reminder that a new beginning involves the body as much as the mind. His visit sparked a conversation about wellness that continues to motivate our patients as they build their new lives.

Every hand we shake and every resource we share is an invitation to a better tomorrow. As we continue to expand our reach, our goal remains the same: to ensure that no one has to look too far to find their new beginning.



Drake B., Former Allen House Patient

Art, Recovery, and the Courage to Begin

By Daniel Martin, Activities Coordinator

Inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy," Drake B. submitted the winning artwork in honor of Martin Luther King Day. Their artwork reflects a personal stand for change, growth, and a new way forward, especially in recovery. Drake shared his story of resilience, honesty, and the courage it takes to stay sober one day at a time.

Recovery often begins in quiet, uncertain moments when comfort is stripped away and the real work starts. For Drake Beasley, who is in treatment for the first time, that moment found its voice through art. While speaking with Drake, I found his courage inspiring and moving. Drinking caused a pattern of losing control. Coincidentally, his family connected him to the Martin Luther King Community Hospital for Detox before ultimately arriving at LA CADA's Allen House for treatment.

Drake stated, "The hardest part is not minimizing my issues with alcohol. I didn't think I'd be here, a rehab, at the age of 27, but I'm trying to fight the perspective that I'm holding myself back. I owe it to my future self to be here right now. I want to be the best version of me. I want to do the work. Future me would be proud of me right now for giving myself this chance. In the past, I didn't give myself a chance. I'm doing the work now for my future."

Drake's treatment team is incredibly proud of the journey he is on. Drake is looking forward to Recovery Bridge Housing

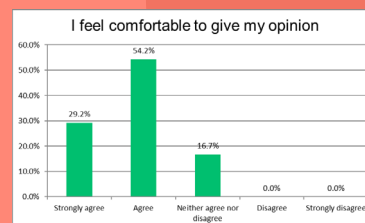
and taking advantage of the available resources within LA CADA's continuum of care. By choosing recovery and standing strong in the face of change, he proves that greatness is not inherited or given but builds one courageous decision at a time.

SAFE KIDS PROGRAM

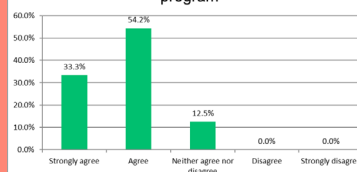
The Safe Kids program provides Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) to youth who have experienced trauma. TF-CBT is provided by mental health professionals certified to provide this evidence-based therapy. Program participants (youth age 12-18 years) responded to a satisfaction survey.

SURVEY RESULTS

Most participants reported feeling comfortable expressing their opinions.

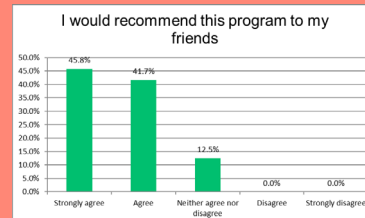


I feel I will use what I've learned from this program

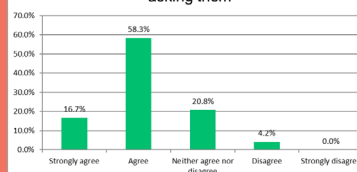


Most participants felt that they would use what they learned in the program.

Most participants would recommend the program to friends.

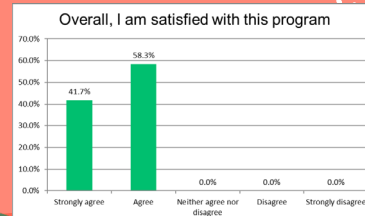


When I have questions, I feel comfortable asking them



Most participants reported feeling comfortable asking questions.

All participants were satisfied with the program.





John's Journey Through the Program

By Megan Chacon, LB-RBH Manager

John began his journey as a client at L.A. CADA's Long Beach Outpatient program, facing challenges many in our community know

too well. Like so many individuals who walk through our doors, he was searching for stability, direction, and hope during a time when the path forward felt uncertain. Through dedication and the support of the program, John chose to engage fully in his recovery, using the guidance and tools provided to rebuild his confidence and belief in his own potential.

Through the program, John completed his Peer Specialist class and successfully passed his certification exam. This milestone represented more than professional achievement, it marked a turning point in his life and a renewed sense of purpose.

What makes John's story especially powerful is his transition from client to staff member. Today, he is an official Certified Peer Support Specialist with the RBH Carson team, bringing his lived experience into his professional role. This full-circle moment allows John to support others navigating similar paths, offering empathy, insight, and hope that only someone who has truly been there can provide.

Interested in learning more about becoming a Certified Peer Support Specialist? L.A. CADA's Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Training Program offers education and support for individuals interested in this career pathway.

For more information, contact Greeig Rosales at rosales@lacada.com or (562) 777-7500 ext. 281, or visit our website www.lacada.com for up-to-date program details.

John's story reflects the core mission of our community programs: growth, resilience, and empowerment. Sharing journeys like his inspires current clients, strengthens staff understanding, and reminds the community that recovery and transformation are possible.

John's journey is a reminder that with the right support, a new chapter can begin—one defined by purpose, stability, and hope.



The Greater Whittier LGBTQ+ Community Resource Center staff at Board of Supervisors hall receiving award from Supervisor Janice Hahn and County Board of Supervisors team.

A Milestone of Recognition: Honoring the Greater Whittier LGBTQ Center's Impact and Promise

By Damante Watson, Director of Integrated Care

On December 16, 2025, during a Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Greater Whittier LGBTQ Center was formally recognized by Janice Hahn for its dedication to serving SPA 7, the City of Whittier, and surrounding communities.

This moment of recognition marked a powerful milestone for the Center, which opened its doors in September 2024 and has since become a trusted space for healing, affirmation, and connection. Supervisor Hahn acknowledged not only the Center's rapid growth and impact, but also the hundreds of lives that have been supported through its services in just over a year.

During the recognition, Supervisor Hahn highlighted the leadership of Damonté Watson, Director of Integrated Care at LA CADA, and emphasized the collective effort of staff, partners, and community members who made the Center possible. She also recognized the critical role of county and state leadership, including Lisa Calderon, whose support helped secure four point two million dollars in state funding to launch and sustain the Center. This acknowledgment reflected a shared

More Than A Game: Street Hockey at Allen House

By Daniel Martin, L.A. CADA Activities Coordinator



Allen House Patients enjoying a game of street hockey

As an Activities Coordinator, I value opportunities to connect meaningful activities to recovery. At Allen House, staff are encouraged to bring their passions to the forefront, empowering patients to engage more fully in their recovery journey. For me, that passion is roller hockey. I began playing hockey as a teenager. After graduating from treatment in 2019, I joined a local roller hockey league as part of rebuilding my own life in recovery. As an alumnus of the L.A. CADA Treatment Program, giving back to the current population holds deep meaning. I know what it feels like to rediscover former passions and how powerful that experience can be in sustaining recovery.

On Christmas Day, we transformed the back parking lot of Allen House into a street hockey rink. The afternoon was filled with laughter, movement, and friendly competition. Patients jumped in enthusiastically, some trying the sport for the first time.

"I didn't know how fun this is!" one shared. "This is a crazy workout!" another added. The energy was contagious. For that moment, everyone was fully present, focused, connected, and engaged. A few patients even expressed interest in continuing the sport as part of their own recovery routines.

Patients like Roary Gorbea, who finds physical activity essential to his recovery, gave it his all. Raven Chan felt empowered pushing herself competitively. Moments like these demonstrated how healthy, structured activities can build confidence, strengthen community, and help individuals rediscover joy.

Addiction often creates voids in identity, connection, and purpose. At Allen House, we intentionally fill those spaces with strengths-based programming that supports long-term recovery. Street hockey was more than recreation, it was an opportunity to practice teamwork, discipline, resilience, and connection in real time.

By encouraging staff to integrate lived experience and personal passions into programming, Allen House fosters innovative recovery in action. Sometimes giving back begins with sharing something you love and that simple act can help someone else build a new beginning.

A Milestone of Recognition: Honoring the Greater Whittier LGBTQ Center's Impact and Promise

Continued

commitment to equity, access, and inclusive care for LGBTQ+ individuals who have historically been underserved. The Greater Whittier LGBTQ Center represents new beginnings in action. For many community members, it is a first place of safety, belonging, and hope. Through integrated health services, community support, and affirming spaces, the Center continues to foster healing and empowerment while strengthening the broader Whittier community. This recognition affirms not only the work already accomplished, but the promise of what is still to come as the Center continues to grow, serve, and lead with compassion.

Hope and Building Change

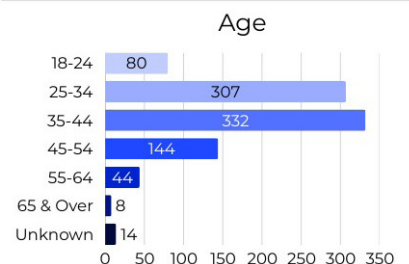
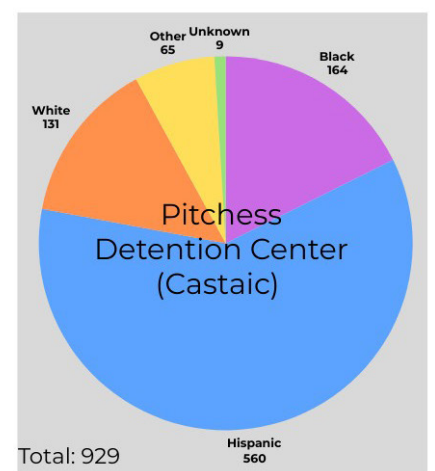
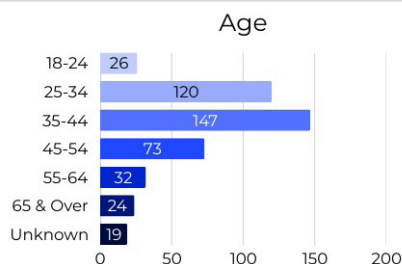
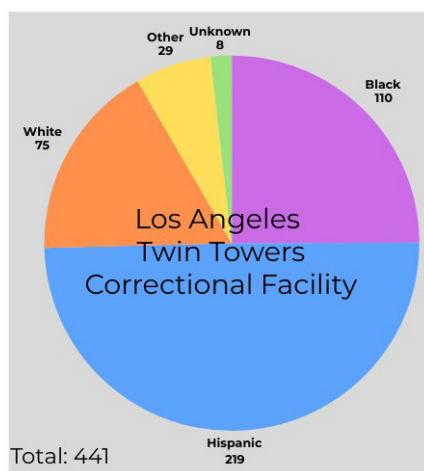
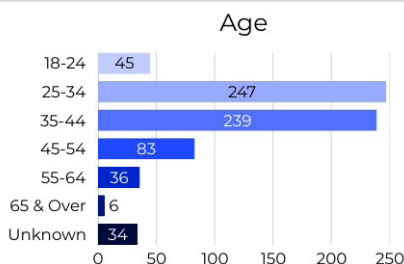
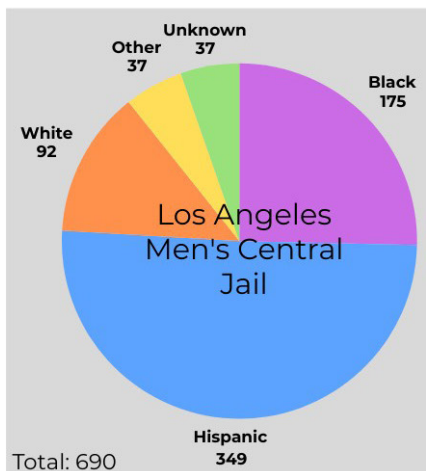
By John-Carlos Fabian, Director of In-Custody and Re-Entry Services

The highlight of the Substance Abuse and Re-entry Transition Program (S.T.A.R.T program) is the success stories that come directly from the clients' lived experiences. There is nothing more gratifying than seeing the progress that the in-justice population can make over the course of time. Although the program is 24 sessions in length, it takes more than just that. Consistent effort, a light of hope and commitment to the program are what open the gateway to rehabilitation and sobriety, leading to a transformed lifestyle post-release. Just as a client reveals, "START program has been my lifeline during my stay at MCJ."

As clients attend their first session, the light at the end of the tunnel is unseen or too distant to foresee; yet the S.T.A.R.T team is ready to provide skillful services with dignity and respect along with active listening and effective communication for clients. As one client emphasizes, "Some of us have never had anyone to talk to that is an active listener." This demonstrates that individual counseling, group sessions and re-entry services are making a positive impact. Additionally, the program includes an evidence base curriculum, client-centered continuum, trauma informed, a culturally appropriate approach and motivational interviewing. The team is committed to providing a program safe learning environment that opens the space for growth mindset and accountability. The entire team; director, administration, data specialists, care coordinators and SUD counselors all work collaboratively to equip the clients with the tools necessary to meet their SUD recovery needs.

Upon successful completion of the program, the S.T.A.R.T team takes great pride in celebrating their success with a graduation ceremony to honor their commitment in awarding them a certificate of completion. Not only do they exit the program with a certificate in their hands, but they also receive an after-care prevention plan. Is that all? The core of the program is the clients' light that becomes bright at the end of the tunnel. As they state, "Most of us come to the S.T.A.R.T program empty handed and finish the course with all the tools and resources for success." The clients' living experience reinforces the lives that have been impacted by the S.T.A.R.T program servicing the in-justice populations at three locations: MCJ, Twin Towers and Pitchess. In the near future, due to the demand of the services, the S.T.A.R.T team and CHS (Correctional Health Services) will work collaboratively to integrate parenting and domestic violence classes to support the program's participants' court requirement prior to their release.

Total participants served in fiscal year: July 2024-June2025



Brown Pride Melts Ice: A Mural Celebrating Youth Voice and Community Power

By Andrea Mesa, TTA program manager

Brown Pride Melts Ice is a powerful community mural created through a collaboration between East Side of the River—a collective of muralists—and youth from Torres High School. At the heart of this project is the vision and voice of young people, who played a central role in shaping the mural's concept to reflect their lived experiences, perspectives, and hopes for their community.

East Side of the River is a community-based collective of artists dedicated to advancing environmental justice, celebrating cultural identity, and challenging systems of oppression. Their work uplifts community pride while creating spaces where art becomes a tool for storytelling, healing, and advocacy.

The mural was brought to life through the artistic contributions of Juan Estrada, Arturo Gonzalez, Lilia Ramirez, Sonji Figueroa, Cassandra Ocampo, and Stephen Legaspi. Working alongside youth, these artists helped transform ideas into a vibrant visual statement that represents resilience, identity, and collective empowerment.

This project was made possible through funding from the Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) Grant provided by the Office of Violence Prevention. The TTA Grant supports grassroots, community-based organizations across Los Angeles County by building organizational capacity and promoting prevention and intervention efforts. Through this support, initiatives like Brown Pride Melts Ice foster artistic expression while strengthening community connections and contributing to violence prevention through engagement, creativity, and shared purpose.

Members of the TTA team attended the ribbon-cutting and blessing ceremony held last Sunday, celebrating the mural's completion alongside community members, artists, and youth. Located at 4500 E. Cesar Chavez Blvd, the mural now stands as a lasting symbol of community pride, cultural expression, and the impact of youth-driven initiatives.



Close up of the Mural Painted By East Side of the River



Kayla MAZIN admin assistant, Andrea Mesa TTA program manager, Arturo Gonzales executive Director of East side of the river Trinh Nguyen program coordinator Raymundo Zacarias program analyst office of violence prevention



Torres High School youth painting the mural

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Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
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

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