

## Why Can't You Just Stop?

*Desirée Crèvecoeur-MacPhail, Ph.D., Director of Quality Assurance & Utilization Management*

On February 28, 2019, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health sponsored and hosted the **2019 African American Mental Health Conference**. The theme of the conference was *"Engaging and Empowering Communities through Education, Advocacy, and Action."* The conference provided an opportunity to learn more about the mental health of the African American community, as well as other communities of color via the several workshops.

One of these workshops, **"Why Can't You Just Stop? The Science and Treatment of Addiction,"** was co-presented by **Antonne Moore, M.Ed., Keith Hermanstyne, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.H.P.M.,** and me: **Desirée Crèvecoeur-MacPhail, Ph.D.**

The purpose of this workshop was to present information concerning why it is so difficult for those battling substance use disorders (SUD) to stop using drugs and alcohol. We have all heard someone say (we may have even said or thought it ourselves), "Why can't you just stop..." drinking, smoking, using... Well, as it turns out, the reasons are multifaceted and complicated. The workshop addressed:

- The physiological and biological reasons for SUDs
- The historic and contemporary significance of stigma and the mistreatment of people of color by the medical community
- Data on symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment outcome disparities
- The breadth of treatment services available in Los Angeles County

Ms. Moore, who is Chief of the Marketing and Beneficiary Engagement Unit at the Strategic Network Development Branch, with

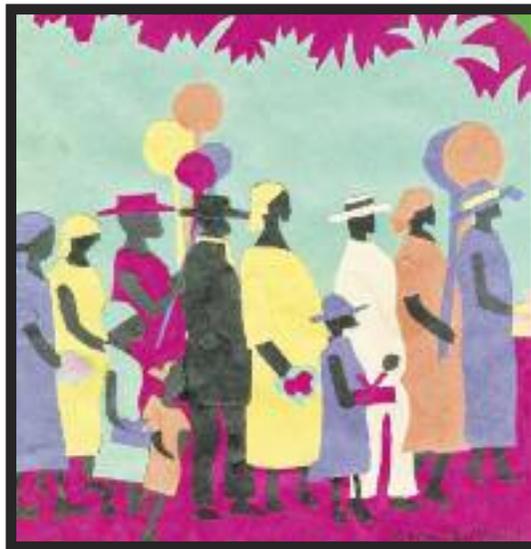
the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (LA DPH - SAPC), opened the workshop with a brief introduction and a video called "Nuggets." If you have not seen this five-minute video, please take a moment to watch [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUngLgGRJpo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUngLgGRJpo). It tugs on the heartstrings and reminds us that before there was an addict...before the anger, disappointment, resentment and betrayal...there was a person.

Interestingly, when Antonne asked the audience if they were mad at the kiwi bird in the video, everyone replied "No." And when she asked if we blamed the bird, again, everyone replied, "No." In fact, the audience understood why the bird did what it did, and they felt bad for the bird; some wanted to protect the bird. It was a powerful reminder of how SUDs conjure the emotions mentioned earlier in those with the SUD, but also in those close to them.

Dr. Hermanstyne, the Associate Medical Director for Treatment Services with the LA DPH – SAPC, presented the medical facts behind SUDs, including the neurotransmitters impacted (e.g., dopamine – the feel-good neurotransmitter) and the areas of the brain impacted by drug and alcohol use. Dr.

Hermanstyne stated that one reason why it is so difficult to stop is because of the dopamine spike that occurs when one smokes tobacco (2.5x normal), uses cocaine (4x normal) or methamphetamine (10x normal). The best meal you have ever had (150 "units" of dopamine), the most amazing sex (200 "units") simply cannot compare to drug use (225 – 1100 "units" of dopamine).

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*"Community Celebration" by Keris Jan Myrick, a leading mental health advocate and non-profit executive, known for her innovative and inclusive approach to mental health reform and the public disclosure of her personal story.*



**A message from  
Juan Navarro  
L.A. CADA Executive Director**

Dear Friends,

L.A. CADA was recently surveyed by **CARF International**, an independent, nonprofit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of the persons served.

Today, I'm pleased to report that L.A. CADA's Outpatient and Residential programs have been accredited for a period of three years, the maximum length of time that can be awarded. This is the second consecutive **CARF Three-Year Accreditation** we have received, and represents the highest level that can be given to an organization such as ours. It illustrates a substantial conformance to CARF standards, and demonstrates our commitment to provide programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality. I am so proud of everyone who played an integral part in obtaining this major award.

I also wish to share good news which involves L.A. CADA's commitment to **Recovery Housing**. After overcoming substance use, returning home is an overwhelming challenge for many individuals. Some do not have a home to return to, yet homelessness is not compatible with healthy recovery.

Recovery is not solely based on abstinence from drugs and alcohol; in the beginning, it can be a fragile process requiring a safe, healthy, and substance-free supportive environment. California licenses only 900 such facilities and the California Association for Addiction and Recovery Resources (CAARR) registers only about 250 sober living residences. While they vary widely in structure, these residences are centered on peer support and a connection to services and supports that promote long-term recovery. Unfortunately, there are just not enough.

Based on this, L.A. CADA stands firmly on the side of recovery housing and is currently on track to be Los Angeles County's largest Recovery Bridge Housing provider. We look forward to providing more safe, supportive residential environments for our communities.

Yours truly,

Juan Navarro



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## L.A. CADA Employees “IMPACT” Recipients as Named by Long Beach City Prosecutor

*Bill Tartanian, Director of Program Development*

On January 30, 2019, **Long Beach City Prosecutor Doug Haubert**, announced the **8th Annual IMPACT Awards**, given each year to those who made a positive impact in the City of Long Beach.

L.A. CADA's **Bill Tarkanian**, and the **L.A. CADA Court In-Reach** team, consisting of **David Carrillo, Crystal Ariza, Ingrid Soto, John Gray, and Amber Riggins-Perez**, were collectively honored for helping to initiate and administer Long Beach's **Priority Access Diversion** pilot program, connecting persons suffering from substance use and co-occurring disorders to treatment (residential, intensive outpatient and/or outpatient) as an alternative to incarceration in County Jail. The one-year old pilot program, now in year two, was an incredible success, with over 90 persons referred into treatment, and 90% of those participating in treatment.

In addition to the Long Beach City Prosecutor's Office and L.A. CADA, the other collaborative partners included **Cinthya Alcaraz, Court Liaison/Department of Mental Health**; the **Long Beach Public Defender's and Alternate Public Defender's Offices**; and several **Long Beach Superior Court judges**, including **Judge Debra Cole** (Dept. 8), **Judge Lori Behar** (Dept. 7), **Judge Christopher Frisco**, and **Judge Chet Taylor** (Dept. 5).

The awards ceremony was held in Downtown Long Beach on February 7, 2019. Several other L.A. CADA employees were in attendance in support of the L.A. CADA Court In-Reach team and their great work in collaboration with the City Prosecutor's office. Congratulations to Bill Tarkanian and the L.A. CADA Court In-Reach team for achieving this great honor, and their admirable work in furtherance of L.A. CADA's commitment to health and legal equity in the communities we serve.



*(l-r) John Gray, Bill Tarkanian, Doug Haubert, Crystal Araiza, David Carrillo, and Jesus Beltran.*

Fear less, hope more...eat less, chew more...whine less, breathe more...  
talk less, say more...hate less, love more...and good things will be yours.



### Jill Finds Her Way!

Janet Gonzalez, Community Services Manager  
L.A. CADA'S **Eden Manor** is a Community Care facility in South Gate, licensed by the **State of California Department of Social Services** to serve 45 clients, ages 18–59, with a primary diagnosis of mental illness.

Eden Manor provides 24/7 care and supervision to the mentally ill population which can benefit by living in an out-of-home residential facility. The facility provides an environment which will enable clients to re-learn skills needed to perform activities of daily life with the overall intent to enable them to transition into independent living.

**Jill B.** moved into Eden Manor on August 31, 2015. She quickly adapted and became friends with all the other residents. Her family was involved in her life, and her brother-in-law made payments on her behalf. One of Jill's goals was to become more independent so that she could pay her own way.

After two years, Jill gained independence, opened a bank account and now pays her way at Eden Manor. She attended counseling twice a week and made her doctor appointments a priority by taking public transportation. With a sense of freedom, she's decided to move out on her own. As one of her caregivers, I am proud of the progress Jill has made and confident she will do great with the support of her family, case manager, and Eden Manor Family!

## CCTRP-SFS Education Program

Lauren Spicer, Adult Education Teacher



Busy participants at work stations in the Education Lab.

The L.A. CADA CCTRP-SFS Education Program is dynamic and our Adult Education Teacher, **Lauren Spicer**, provides customized, multi-level support to help participants set and meet their academic goals. This is an exciting opportunity to highlight higher education and the accomplishments of our students, and the expansion of our program.

Currently, we have a number of students attending local colleges, including **Cerritos College** on campus full- and part-time, and **Rio Hondo College** on campus and online for Associate of Science and Art degrees. We also have a student who will attend **Cal State Fullerton University** in Fall 2019 to pursue her Bachelor's degree. She has met the competitive application process, which includes a detailed and rigorous academic assessment. We also have a student attending **Downey Adult School's Medical Assistant Program**.

Previously, students have attended online at **Bakersfield College** and **Coastline Community College** where one student completed her Associate of Science degree in Business Management. Five students successfully completed **Norwalk-La Mirada Adult School's Dental Program** on campus with the exceptional help of our Vocational Program Counselor, **Lisa Robledo**.

Upon participants' arrival at CCTRP, we prioritize completion of high school diplomas and equivalency certificates with immediate enrollment in our education program. After the completion of required phases resulting in significant investment in personal development and support from L.A. CADA's leaders, counselors, monitors, and correctional staff, the highly desirable time arrives for students' pursuit of higher education. Intense study occurs among our students, with excellent outcomes and overall grade point averages. We are always amazed at the flood of proposals to attend college as well as our students' successes and accomplishments!

## Celebrating Transition into Sobriety

Candice Guizar, Substance Abuse Counselor

Addiction experts recognize the benefit of tracking progress and noting it in a special way. Celebrations at treatment facilities offer a way to support patient progress, helping them to succeed in recovery and serving as an example of future sober events and the mental work of living sober.

On March 28, 2019, we celebrated the completion of our program by some of our most committed clients. They are the true definition of what commitment and hard work look like—a great example of the resiliency we all hold within us. We are pleased to acknowledge their dedication to living a life free of substance abuse and wish them well on their continued path of recovery.



(l-r) SUD Counselor Candice Guizar with Patrick Roybal, Louise Rivas, Darcia Johnson, Program Manager Liana Sanchez, and Julia Munoz with SUD Counselors William Shelton and Randall Gibson.



(l-r) Edward Coker with SUD Counselors Vanesa Paniagua and Edgar Salas. Duke Rivera with his wife and children, who were his primary source of motivation.

### "So What Makes You Happy?"

Answers from some of our clients and program participants:

**"Spending time with my family, and seeing my mom happy."**

--Lovell, Jovenes Prevention Program Santa Fe Springs

**"Being around people I care about."**

--Jatzin, Jovenes Prevention Program Santa Fe Springs

**"My family."**

--Karen, Jovenes Prevention Program Santa Fe Springs

**"Good People."**

--Daniel Gaustad, Eden Manor Resident

**"Janet, Lisa, and everyone at Eden Manor."**

--Ruben Duran, Eden Manor Resident



Melissa Dealmeida, Substance Abuse Counselor, with her friend and fellow L.A. CADA employee, Pam Dunnington.

## PAM DUNNINGTON

Richard Paige, Program Manager,  
Allen House

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of a beloved friend and dedicated employee of Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse: Pam Dunnington. Pam joined our L.A. CADA family as the Intake Coordinator for the Allen House in 2010. Over the past nine years, she showed dedication through her warm-hearted approach, allowing each patient to feel genuinely cared for.

Pam was the first person a patient would meet at the Allen House, and their first impression helped many see hope in their new journey to recovery. She often volunteered her time to show patients that they could experience fun in recovery.

Pam leaves behind two sons and three grandchildren who were the light of her life as anyone who knew her will attest. She would frequently travel to visit them in Ohio, and each time would jokingly claim she was not coming back, often lamenting that each trip was too short and not frequent enough. Pam was a fan of the Ohio State Buckeyes, which featured prominently in her decorations and conversations throughout her years at the Allen House. She will be missed by so many! L.A. CADA shares our condolences with her family during this difficult time.



## L.A. County: Homeless Capitol of the World

Lisa Berger, Principal, The Lisa Berger Group

Skid Row. It was where people went if they were down on their luck and homeless in L.A. County. Now, it's just the epicenter of a homelessness problem that radiates outward for more than 100 miles throughout Los Angeles County. In 2019, homeless people are just as likely to be found under the freeway we take to work every day. Or in a camper behind Ralph's where we pick up groceries. And in the neighborhood library we pass on the way home.

Half of all unsheltered homeless people in the United States live here in California, and the largest increase in homelessness has been in the suburbs. No matter where we live, from Bellflower to Beverly Hills to Lancaster, the despair and misery are on display in squalid tent cities, sprawling encampments, and lonely recesses of local neighborhoods. The LAHSA 2018 L.A. County Homeless Count logged almost 53,000 homeless people here. While New York City has more homeless, just five percent of the people who experience homelessness there are unsheltered. In Los Angeles County, unsheltered people make up 75 percent of our total homeless population. And it's getting worse. Between 2010 and 2018, the number of homeless people across Los Angeles County jumped from 38,700 to over 53,000—an increase of 37%!

Why? There are so many risk factors: poverty, crippling debt, unemployment, disabilities, public assistance, domestic violence, mental illness, trauma, lack of health insurance, and substance use disorders. But that's not us though, right? Not quite – others are at risk, too. In large metropolitan areas, anywhere between 2,500 and 3,000 more people would fall into homelessness with only a five percent average rent increase. A 2017 report by the California Housing Partnership (CHP) found that median rent in L.A. County has increased by 32% over the past two decades. People left behind by the economic recovery can't compete with young professionals who have bid up rents to record levels. In another era, the homeless found cheap refuge in our crumbling motels, tenements, or old apartments in high crime areas. But many of those buildings were lost in L.A. County's post-recession spree of building, evictions, and renovations.

And homelessness can very much be a death sentence: Californians in general have a life expectancy of 80 years, but for the L.A. County homeless population it's only 48. In fact, homeless people accounted for 16 percent of all L.A.'s homicide victims. Yet most homeless people will not die of murder—the streets will kill them. Homeless people are exposed to the elements and older people are the most vulnerable.

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## A FAMILY DYNAMIC

*Bianca Santoyo, Substance Abuse Navigator*

**Vincent O.** enrolled into L.A. CADA's Outpatient Program in October 2017, and his partner, **Patricia G.**, enrolled in November 2017. At the time, Vincent was residing in a sober living home for men. His substance use caused dysfunction in his home, which later led he and Patricia to losing custody of their children. With two **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** open cases, Vincent knew something had to change in order to regain custody of their kids.

While enrolled in the program, Vincent was able to utilize the tools he needed to remain sober by receiving substance use counseling, individual therapy, family therapy, aftercare services, and a 52-week domestic violence intervention course. He learned what he needed to do to reestablish a relationship with Patricia. His outpatient treatment included stress communication education, social skills training, and assertiveness and anger management techniques. It was then that he was able to understand and be accountable for his past actions. He's now gained healthy life skills to assist in his changed behaviors, developed nonviolent resolution skills, and an understanding of how his substance use disorder directly connected to several familial dysfunctions. He completed outpatient in January 2018, and aftercare in October 2018, and now has custody of all four of his children.

When Patricia first enrolled in the Outpatient Program, she had no stable living arrangement. She expressed that she was currently homeless and a victim of domestic violence and substance abuse. While enrolled in the program, she received substance use counseling, individual therapy, family therapy, aftercare services, and a 26-week domestic violence victim's course. She successfully completed her program in May 2018 and aftercare in October 2018, and gained custody of all four of her children.

L.A. CADA was able to provide this family with the psycho-educational services to complete the DCFS requirements, reunify their family, and make positive changes within their family dynamic. They proved that they were able to communicate effectively, express themselves without hesitation, and come to mutual agreements regarding their children. During this process, they both gained and maintained stable employment, allowing them to save enough money to rent an apartment where they currently reside. They are very grateful to be ALUMNI of L.A. CADA.



*Visiting the L.A. CADA Bloomfield Outpatient facility. "If I can do it, anyone can—just don't give up, because it's worth it in the end." –Vincent O.*

## L.A. County: Homeless Capitol of the World CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Last July, several homeless people died of heat stroke induced by 100-plus degree temperatures and dehydration. And when rain comes to Los Angeles County, homeless people's belongings are ruined and their health worsens. In 2017, the Los Angeles Coroner reported that "pneumonia, severe bacterial infections, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, cirrhosis, and other treatable conditions were all listed as causes of [homeless] deaths." The struggle to hang on is a daily battle. Between 2016 and 2017, we saw a 14% increase in the number of homeless people who were victims of traumatic crimes, including rape, robbery, aggravated assault, and accidents. In L.A. County, an estimated 27% of homeless people have serious mental illness, 15% have a substance use disorder, 6% are fleeing domestic violence, and 2% are living with HIV/AIDS. Of homeless youth, a shocking 40% are LGBTQ.

L.A. CADA programs not only provide assistance with behavioral health issues, we are experts in reducing homelessness for these vulnerable populations. Call us at 562.906.2676.

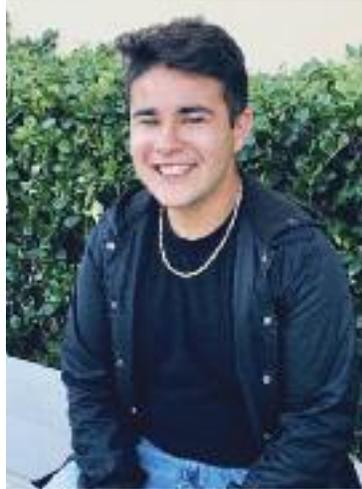
### LOS ANGELES CENTERS FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE FACILITIES

<b>Headquarters and Administrative Offices Center</b> 12070 Telegraph Rd., Suite 207 Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562.777.7500	<b>Santa Fe Springs Outpatient and HIV Services Center</b> 11015 Bloomfield Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562.906.2676	<b>Downtown Outpatient and HIV Services Center</b> 470 East 3rd St., Suites A & B Los Angeles, CA 90013 213.626.6411	<b>Hollywood HIV Services Center</b> 6838 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90028 323.461.3161 ext 3818	<b>Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program (CCTRP)</b> 11121 Bloomfield Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562.236.9390	<b>Allen House Residential Treatment Center</b> 10425 South Painter Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562.906.2685
<b>HOW House Residential Treatment Center</b> 14100 Glengyle Street Whittier, CA 90604 562.777.1222	<b>L.A. CADA at ART House Recovery Bridge Housing</b> 1646 North Fair Oaks Ave. Pasadena, CA 91103 626.314.3333	<b>Long Beach Outpatient Services Center</b> 5861 Cherry Ave. Long Beach, CA 90805 562.676.4259	<b>Orr and Day Youth Prevention/Supportive Services</b> 10210 Orr and Day Rd. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562.348.0083	<b>South Gate Eden Manor Board and Care</b> 8919 California Ave. South Gate, CA 90280 323.564.1800	

# Acceptance of Oneself Isn't Always Easy

*Ericka Logan, Youth Services Coordinator*

At 16, **Rafael D.** walked through L.A. CADA's doors in September 2018, convinced that he didn't belong in drug treatment. Upon first glance, professionals may have almost agreed with him; he was what any treatment provider would consider a "perfect client." Yet, despite nearly perfect attendance and great participation in groups, something was still holding him back from letting go of his drug use: acceptance of himself. As most individuals, Rafael believed that having high expectations and striving for success was a positive trait...until he became so consumed with being as close to "perfect" as possible and began resorting to drug use as a means of coping with his stress and anxiety. This was something that he had never imagined for himself, as just a year prior, he was a high school athlete and scholar with multiple honors and advance placement classes, receiving grade point averages of 3.4 and above.



Rafael reported that within months of his drug use his grades began to drop exponentially, he became distant and isolated from his close-knit family, and found himself with little to no motivation. "My family went from having high expectations of me to believing I was destined to end up a dead beat. With so many things going the wrong way, my mental health was at its worst. The only thing that kept me going was therapy."

When asked what happened for him to realize he needed help, he responded, "I knew I needed help when I was so overwhelmed with life that I didn't even want to get it back together. I just wanted to escape." Rafael explains that he couldn't have fought his addiction alone and that receiving therapy at L.A. CADA allowed him to, "finally feel like I was accepted for being my true self." He continued, "My counselor was caring, accepting and non-judgmental. She wanted what was best for me and for me to be safe, even if I had chosen to return to drug use."

When asked what at L.A. CADA made a difference for him, he responded, "Individual therapy made the most impact. I felt so out of

place at both school and in L.A. CADA groups, the only time I was able to find an outlet for my voice was when I had individual sessions with my therapist. We began making goals that led me to do better at school, but most importantly, they led to me accepting my voice. I suddenly began to see things more positively; instead of wanting

everything else in the world to change, I started becoming the change I wanted to see in the world." Rafael continued that it took a lot of energy for him to discuss uncomfortable personal matters with his therapist, yet he tried his best to keep an open mind.

When asked what advice he would give others who might consider entering treatment at L.A. CADA, he stated, "Just go for it and don't give up. L.A. CADA is a great environment for anyone with an open mind. It helps individuals not only fix their lives, but also accept themselves. I think once I accepted who I was, I was finally able to live in the present, instead of living in the

past." Rafael closed with, "It's crazy to look back and see how much I have changed. It makes me feel proud of who I have become in the last eight months...and hopeful that I can become a person to help others feel this way about themselves."

Rafael continues to receive ongoing maintenance support through L.A. CADA's recovery support services with his therapist. He has raised his grades, is currently enrolled in both a college course and the administrative justice academy, and is keeping busy with hobbies such as running and bike riding. He is beginning to write personal statements to submit with his college applications, with the hopes of majoring in psychology and creating a stable environment for himself and his future family. Rafael shares, "The best things about being sober are being able to focus on my school work without feeling the need to be perfect, having better communication with my family about my feelings and concerns, not having the stress of getting caught up, gaining back people's trust, and most importantly, being able to be present in every moment."

## LOS ANGELES CENTERS FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

serves the multicultural community of Santa Fe Springs, including cities throughout Los Angeles County.

### OUR MISSION

is saving lives, empowering individuals and families, and strengthening communities through innovative, client-centered, culturally sensitive substance use and behavioral health services.

### OUR VISION

is to enhance the educational and economic well-being of the people we serve by means of direct human services, advocacy, and referrals.

### OUR VALUES

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

## Boardmember Recognition



**Thanya Mercado**

Thanya Mercado is L.A. CADA's newest asset. She joined the L.A. CADA Board of Directors because "I believe a sense of purpose isn't what you have in life – it's what you do with it and who you help."

A former board member of Ronald McDonald House and the Ronald McDonald Trust, Mrs. Mercado is the kind of community member that L.A. CADA is lucky to have at our side, working to guide the agency's mission and services. Her particular interest is in removing the stigma attached to addictions and treatment. "I have been able to see our clients at graduation and in other settings, and I see how very important it is to make resources available to them during recovery and transition back into the community."

Thanya is married to husband Jerry and has an "awesome" son, Nikolas. A home loan specialist for 15 years, she works at Equinox Home Finance in Orange County and is the owner of Notaries R US, a mobile signing service. When Thanya isn't at work, being an active wife and mom, or helping L.A. CADA, she is planning for time to take six months off for a dream trip. "I would love to start in Africa and work my way up from there. But it has to include my mom, son, and husband!" A doer and a dreamer! We are very proud to welcome Thanya Mercado to the L.A. CADA family.



*Veronica Rocha feels inspired standing under the Kinship graphic at Homeboy Industries.*

## Working with the Largest Gang Intervention Program in the World!

*John Gray, Administrative Coordinator*

L.A. CADA is thrilled to partner with **Homeboy Industries** to provide substance abuse services to trainees and community clients. Homeboy industries is renowned for the services it provides to the community: tattoo removal, therapy, job placement, legal services, and more. This partnership will now provide individual and group counseling to those diagnosed with a substance use disorder, and offers group meetings to deal with mindfulness, relapse prevention, living in balance, and healthy relationships.

The newest member to the Homeboy Industries Team is **Veronica Rocha**, a registered substance abuse counselor who has been working in the field of addiction since August 2015. In May, she will graduate from **University of the West** in marriage and family therapy. Veronica is interested in working with individuals who have survived trauma in their childhoods, and likes to work with a narrative orientation form of therapy. Veronica believes the way a patient portrays their story is critical to understanding and growing from their experiences. She also believes in client-centered and mindfulness-based approaches, giving more power to the client for transformation. She says her passion is to work with young adults.

A native of Los Angeles, Veronica describes herself as a "nerd at heart" with past times such as watching comic book movies and re-reading Harry Potter books. She's a hiker, adores her cat, Bubba, and is a live music fan.

**Did you know...** that Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse is listed as a Charitable Organization on **Amazon Smile?**



**This means...** when placing an Amazon order through [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) L.A. CADA will benefit from a small percentage of your purchase. (and it won't cost you a penny more!) THANK YOU IN ADVANCE.

## FEELING A SENSE OF PURPOSE FEELS GOOD!

*Caryl Lark, Clinical Manager*

Giving back is an important aspect of active recovery. Fortunately, **Allen House** has a "giving back" partner in the form of the **City of Santa Fe Springs**. One of the many valuable services the City provides is **Family Services** at the **Santa Fe Springs Gus Velasco Neighborhood Center**. Their mission is to provide outreach, information, and services for youth and their families who live and work in the city. They recognize the importance of family unity and intergenerational focus.

Allen House is proud and grateful to be on the call list of the Neighborhood Center. When they need assistance, they are quick to contact us. Recently, they reached out with a request for volunteers to sort and fold donated clothes for their "**Community Closet**" event. Four of our residents participated in the sorting and folding on March 27, returned on April 16 to help set up the room, and again on April 24 to assist in the actual event.

According to the Allen House volunteers, they welcomed the opportunity to "be of service," "were excited to give back," "loved the friendly and appreciative welcome we got," "had a chance to bond with each other," and finally yet importantly, "loved to get out of the house and do something different!" Not verbalized, but certainly a part of the experience, is that when being recognized as responsible, trustworthy, and useful, the giver receives the gift. We thank the Santa Fe Springs Neighborhood Center for their support of our mutual efforts in the community.



(l-r) Allen House clients Jones T., Larry C., Thomas R., and Robert G.

<h1>Last Friday</h1>		
<p>of the Month L.A. CADA Professional Training Series</p>		
		<p>4 CEUs \$25</p>
<p><b>BLOOMFIELD WELLNESS CENTER 11015 Bloomfield Avenue, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670</b></p>		
<p>May 31 12:30– 4:30 pm</p>	<p><b>Bill Tarkanian, B.A., J.D., L.A.A.D.C.</b> Director of Program Development, L.A. CADA <b>Caryl Lark, MS, AMFT</b> Clinical Manager L.A. CADA Allen House Residential Facility</p>	<p>"Care Coordination"</p>
<p><b>Register Today!</b></p>		
<p>Online: <a href="http://www.lacada.com">www.lacada.com</a> Call: Rachel Carrillo at 562 906-2676 x109 or Email: <a href="mailto:rcarrillo@lacada.com">rcarrillo@lacada.com</a> Limited to 30 persons. Light snack served.</p>		

## A Big Hug from HOW House to LOVE Whittier Volunteers

*Ramona Hemphill, Monitor*

**HOW House** is a state-licensed, residential recovery facility for men age 18 and over in Whittier, CA and a part of L.A. CADA's Continuum of Care Program. The program is designed to assist individuals' transition from residential drug treatment programs to intensive outpatient services. It helps court-ordered individuals successfully address their underlying addiction issues, heal completely, and avoid relapse.

**LOVE Whittier** <https://www.lovehittier.org/> is a group of local people who love the city and want to see the community thrive. Every year, LOVE Whittier comes together for its annual **Serve Weekend**. The main goal is to attempt to meet tangible needs of neighbors, community, and city by conducting simultaneous service projects and events throughout Whittier.

HOW House was honored to be a recipient of this outreach and wishes to extend a special thank you to Love Whittier for coordinating the 30 volunteers who gave their time to work on our vegetable garden, tidy up plant, and beautify the property. In a show of gratitude, L.A. CADA staff **Ramona Hemphill**, ordered and served a warm meal to all of the volunteers upon completion of the project.

Volunteers **Chris and Caroline**, summed up it up: *"We enjoyed helping with the garden project at the HOW House during LOVE Whittier. We worked with fun people of all ages—kids to retirees. L.A. CADA's project leader had everything organized and provided a wonderful meal for us at the end of the morning."*

*LOVE Whittier volunteers included families with enthusiastic children who were delighted to share their time and talents with the HOW House residents.*



## Ask Dr. Holmes...



**Dr. Randy Holmes** is Board Certified in Addiction Medicine and Family Medicine, and on staff at **PIH Health**. He also serves as Chairperson of the **California Society of Addiction Medicine (CSAM)** Public Policy Committee, and is Co-Chair of the **American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)** Public Policy Committee.

Dr. Holmes has agreed to receive and answer questions, and post them for readers of this newsletter. Questions may be emailed to [administration@lacada.com](mailto:administration@lacada.com).



**Dear Dr. Holmes:**

*What are the affects addiction has on the brain?"*

*Sincerely,*

*Need to Know*



**Dear Need to Know:**

Addiction is now thought of as a chronic brain disease. What does that mean? Research tells us that people with alcoholism and addiction have had their brains changed by exposure to the substance of abuse. Brains that once functioned normally are not working as they should. Scientists are not yet certain why this happens but we know that once the brain has been changed by the drug or alcohol it never goes back to functioning normally. Not everybody's brain is changed by exposure to drugs or alcohol. Most people who drink alcohol do not develop alcoholism just as most who experiment with drugs do not become addicted. It depends on many factors such as your genetics (having a parent who is alcoholic makes you more likely to develop alcoholism) and the time in your life when your brain is exposed to alcohol/drugs. A teenager is more likely to have his brain altered by

alcohol or drugs than is someone who starts drinking or using in his 20's.

Different parts of the brain are affected by alcohol/drugs in different ways. The pleasure areas of your brain, called the dopamine pathways, get hijacked by drugs and you have more trouble experiencing pleasure without the drug. The parts of the brain that control memory are affected so that you cannot remember the unpleasant parts of drinking/drugging and you go back and repeat the same behavior. The area of your brain that controls your judgement, called executive function, is impaired and you make bad decisions over and over. All of these areas are affected to a greater or lesser extent in everyone with a substance use disorder. One hears the phrase "stinking thinking" in recovery meetings and they are not far off in their analysis of the problem.

Recovery from addiction involves removing the substance from your brain and allowing healing to occur. The brain has an amazing capacity to re-mold and correct the damaged pathways if given enough time. Part of what we do in working with people recovering from addiction is provide a safe environment for healing. Nutrition, proper rest, meditation, exercise, and counseling allow those with addictions the best chance of restoring their brains to proper functioning. Science has not yet developed a magic pill that fixes a brain hijacked by drugs but this is an area of exciting research. The old saying that you can't turn a pickle back into a cucumber is still true, in that the brain will always have some permanent changes made to it by long term drug or alcohol abuse. We hope, in treating people with substance use disorders, to facilitate healing and restore function to its highest level. We can give people back their lives. – *Dr. Holmes*

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### **Why Can't You Just Stop?** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For my part, I presented information on the disparities found in the reporting of symptoms, diagnoses, and treatment outcomes for African Americans using data (National Survey on Drug Use and Health) and published articles. The results are varied: in some areas, African Americans are doing well when compared to the national average (less past month and past year alcohol use and less prescription misuse, fewer symptoms of mental illness and less treatment for mental illness). While in other areas, African Americans are doing worse than the national average (more illicit drug use, more marijuana use, and more likely to have a substance use disorder). Although some information seems promising and is supported by published research, it does seem to be counterintuitive to the experiences of those who provide direct services.

As such, we also explored some reasons for these findings, including that African Americans may be faking "good" or not reporting the symptoms they are experiencing, that African Americans are less likely to see a doctor, less likely complete SUD treatment, and are more likely to discontinue services without consulting the doctor—amongst other negative outcomes. This may be the result of stigma or related to the historic use of African Americans in medical studies without their knowledge or informed consent. Solutions were also presented.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11

## PAYING IT FORWARD

*Susan Forrest, Care/Outreach Coordinator*

**Ghost** is a 34-year-old gay man who has been living with HIV for the past seven years. He came to us with a substance use disorder and has mental health issues. He became an **ART House** client in October 2018. People are more than the sum of their problems when they arrive. Everyone has skills, knowledge, and capabilities which may not be utilized when suffering with substance misuse, but can be accessed if the person has a safe space from which to operate.

Ghost had been homeless five times in the last three years, and hospitalized twice in the six months prior to enrolling as a client at ART House. While he had been using support hotlines regularly in lieu of accessing care, he was not working with his HIV provider or any other available resources. When he moved in, his only income was his general relief check.

Ghost now exercises and attends the gym daily. He has gone to his medical appointments regularly, and been adherent to his regimen of six different medications daily. While at ART House, he has obtained and retained HIV viral suppression—when anti-retroviral therapy (ART) reduces a person's viral load (HIV RNA) to an undetectable level. He has maintained sobriety since July 7, 2018, his mental health has stabilized, and he has put on some muscle weight.

While residing at the ART House, Ghost chose to work hard at ending his homelessness, and was determined not to wind up in another transitional situation. He signed up for the **SOURCES Career Development Program** through **Union Station Homeless Services**, eventually enrolling in an EMT program at **Pasadena Community College** that he would complete. According to his EMT program professor, Ghost maintained the highest grade in the class. In fact, he would maintain the highest grade in all his professor's years of teaching! Ghost later passed his state exam and is now an officially licensed EMT. Currently he has received two job offers.

Along with furthering his education, Ghost continued to search for housing. While residing at the ART House, he was entered into the **Coordinated Entry System**, scoring a 15 on his **Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)**. This was developed as a pre-screening tool for busy communities that do not have the time or resources to conduct a full SPDAT assessment for every client. He also applied for **The Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program Section 8** certificate, and submitted an application for a two-year HOPWA-funded **TRCF Program**. After completing his residency at the ART House, Ghost moved into this program where he would receive permanent supportive housing (PSH) at **Holly House** in Pasadena.

Ghost has been an inspiration to clients at ART House as well as staff. He's managed to deal with and take control of his physical, emotional, and mental health. He was pro-active and extremely vigilant about succeeding in school and obtaining his EMT license. He continued to attend outpatient treatment and go to as many 12-step meetings as he could.. And, despite being under enormous self-imposed pressure to achieve and figure everything out in 90 days, Ghost was open, friendly, available to his peers, and a sweet, calming presence at the House. On behalf of all of the L.A. CADA ART House staff, we could not be prouder to have been a small part of Ghost's move out of homelessness and problematic substance use.



*Ghost in his well-earned EMT uniform.*

**PLEASE DONATE TODAY!**

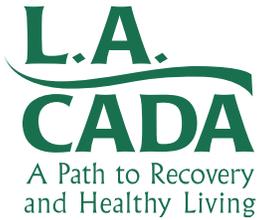
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### ***Why Can't You Just Stop?*** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Ms. Moore concluded the presentation with information on the resources available through the County-funded substance use disorder treatment system. Services such as outpatient treatment, intensive outpatient services, and residential treatment for SUDs can include medications such as methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone, and naloxone. In addition, Ms. Moore highlighted the other services available to those experiencing SUDs, including recovery bridge housing and peer support services.

This talk demonstrated the importance in discussing not just the problems, but the history behind the problems, as well as the solutions in order to best educate the audience and, hopefully, effect change.



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Your Spring 2019 edition of *Connecting*

Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse

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### PRESENTERS

- ◆ **Gary Tsai, M.D.** Medical Director and Science Officer for Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health  
*"ODS: Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Are Going"*
- ◆ **Randolph Holmes, M.D.**, FAAFP, FASAM, Medical Director, L.A. CADA
- ◆ **Desiree Crevecoeur-MacPhail, Ph.D.**, Director of Quality Improvement and Utilization Management, L.A. CADA  
*"Drugs vs. Medications: Problems, Solutions, and Implementation"*
- ◆ **Thomas Freese, Ph.D.** Director of Training, UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs  
*"The Other Epidemic: Stimulant Use Disorders"*
- ◆ **Neva Chaupette, Psy.D.**  
*"The Intersection of Substance Use/Co-Occurring Disorders and Sexual Health"*

For more information and to REGISTER go to [www.lacada.com](http://www.lacada.com)

**TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2019**

**The California Endowment Center**

1000 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

### PANEL DISCUSSION WITH L.A. CADA COMMUNITY PARTNERS

**MODERATOR: Bill Tarkanian, B.A., J.D., L.A.A.D.C.**

Director of Program Development, L.A. CADA

*"Adapting to Changing California Laws and Its Impact on Our Communities"*

**Jennifer Lopez**, Regional Administrator, Department of Children and Family Services, Santa Fe Springs

**Douglas Haubert, Esq.**, City Prosecutor, City of Long Beach

**Chief Jeff Piper**, Chief of Police, City of Whittier

**Cinthya Alcaraz, LCSW**, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health/Court Liaison

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