



The Guidance Center

A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

Providing child and family mental health services since 1946

Summer 2008

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

As President of the Board of Directors, it has been my pleasure to successfully steer The Guidance Center through a time of significant change, namely a transition in leadership from Dr. David Slay to Patricia Costales, LCSW.



After 17 years with The Guidance Center, David retired from his position as Executive Director on January 15, 2008. David began his career with our agency in 1991 as Chief Psychologist. With the sudden passing of Skip Hinchman in 2000, David assumed the role of Executive Director at a time when the agency very much needed his careful and experienced stewardship. David remained as Executive Director for nearly seven years, from June 2001 until his retirement in early 2008.

On January 25th, David was honored for his exemplary career in the field of mental health at a retirement party of the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach. It was a happy event, rightfully honoring David's transition

to retirement. Of course, David defines retirement more loosely than some, as he plans to remain available to The Guidance Center as a consultant when needed and is still very involved with the American Psychological Association.

A thoughtful and compassionate leader at The Guidance Center, David is also a beautiful writer and a master with the great complexities of our many contracts and grants. His commitment to the clients and staff of The Guidance Center was evident throughout his 17 years with the agency, and clearly demonstrated by his dedication to finding his own replacement for the very important position of Executive Director, which was successfully completed only weeks after David officially left the agency.

Our search committee included David and me, Paul Lance, Paul Forman, and all of TGC directors. I speak for the group when I say that the process really allowed us to get to know each other and provided a wide range of perspectives. All of the Board members left with a renewed appreciation of the talent and dedication of the directors.

After a thorough search that spanned five months and countless interviews, we appointed Patricia Costales, LCSW as the new Executive Director of The Guidance Center effective February 4th. A clinical social worker with more than 17 years in community mental health, Patricia brings experience, energy and vision to her new role. During the interview process, it was clear that Patricia would strive to bring our already successful agency into a period of thoughtful, sustainable growth. On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of The Guidance Center, I enthusiastically welcome her aboard. We look forward to great things for the agency and the community we serve.

Sincerely,

Timothy Sailor



THE GUIDANCE CENTER

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I would like to take this opportunity as the new Executive Director of The Guidance Center to introduce myself and to express my pleasure at being a part of this great organization. First and foremost, I am a clinical social worker. I have been in the arena of community mental health for nearly 18 years, and remain committed and passionate about the field. I began my career treating children and families with a history of child abuse and trauma, work I found inspiring and which remains of great interest to me. I recall friends and family asking me how I could tolerate my work, certain I must find it depressing. While it is true that I have heard stories of great sadness, I have also had the honor of gaining the trust of the families I saw, and the opportunity to watch them heal. At a very basic level, that is why I do this work.



Over time, my career transitioned to more supervisory and administrative roles, until six years ago when I moved fully into executive management positions. When I made the decision that I was ready to assume an Executive Director role, there were several key characteristics I was seeking in an agency. I wanted to be part of an organization that shared my core values about this important work that we do, with a commitment to serve the neediest segments of our communities, where people have limited or no resources without our care. I wanted to see services that were genuinely community-based, offered in schools, recreation centers and in the home. I was looking for an agency that provided ethical, quality and compassionate care, with a demonstrated willingness to train and to further the profession of mental health. I was interested in an organization that was financially sound, with the longevity to prove that it can withstand the vagaries of funding cycles and with a Board of Directors that was committed to engaging the agency in sustainable growth. I believe that I have found all of these things at The Guidance Center.

The Guidance Center has a 60 year history of providing quality mental health and family support services in communities of great need throughout the greater Long Beach area, including Catalina Island where we are literally the only service provider available for families who need help. The number of children, families, interns and trainees who have passed through our doors is a clear measure of our impact on the community. Despite significant growth enjoyed by The Guidance Center over the years, the agency has remained true to its original values and mission; to be a community-based organization that is responsive to the people and neighborhoods we serve. It is my intention to thoughtfully lead The Guidance Center in a way that honors this agency history, while strengthening and expanding our services where we are needed most.

I am very glad to be a part of The Guidance Center and look forward to great partnerships during my tenure here.

Sincerely,

Patricia Costales, LCSW

RELOCATION OF COMPTON-LYNWOOD SYSTEM OF CARE PROGRAM

After 10 years at its original location on Compton Boulevard, the Center's only Children's System of Care (CSOC) program has finally moved to a more spacious and accommodating site at 901 W. Victoria Street. Although still in the same 90220 ZIP code area of Compton, the new site is located south of the 91 Freeway, and west of Wilmington Ave. At the time of this writing,

workers were busy making extensive tenant improvements and the program and staff was expected to relocate during April 2008 which has now occurred. Watch for an announcement regarding an open house. This CSOC, which is a special interdepartmental collaborative designed to provide intensive clinic and field services to multi-problem families, was only the third of its kind to open in Los Angeles County in 1998. Last year the Compton-Lynwood CSOC was awarded funding to provide additional services to difficult to reach families under the Mental Health Services Act, passed as Proposition 63 in 2004.



NEW PROGRAM MANAGER AT CONNECTIONS

Shortly before the end of last year, **Evelyn Murtaugh**, LCSW, joined The Guidance Center as Program Manager for our Connections adolescent day program. Evelyn, who received her MSW from USC in 1993, comes with an extensive amount of relevant experience - as a clinical social worker, supervisor, and coordinator of an after school Intensive Day Treatment Program in south-central Los Angeles County. She also worked for five years with the Orange County Behavioral Health Department consulting and conducting assessments and treatment for children and adolescents qualified for special education services and with severe emotional disturbances.

Connections, which began in 1998 as a Los Angeles County DMH funded adolescent treatment program, is designed specifically to treat teens qualified for special education services who also have severe mental disorders.

Although now designated an "intensive outpatient program," with individually planned and followed treatment plans, the program retains many features of more traditional day treatment programs, including full day services Monday through Friday, and a classroom that provides both a public school education and a treatment milieu. Rather than being an after school treatment program, Connections incorporates a self-contained special education classroom with staff provided by the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). This ten year collaboration has provided many difficult to treat adolescent students with the psychoeducational support and guidance they need to graduate from high school. In many cases, teens served at Connections have been able to return to a regular LBUSD campus.



LETTER FROM CONNECTIONS PROGRAM MANAGER

The Guidance Center (TGC) and the special education department of the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) have teamed to create a unique program to serve special education students between the ages of 12 –18 who need the support of comprehensive and intensive mental health services.

Connections Adolescent Full-day Program is a specialized program that joins educational and mental health services together in a self-contained special education classroom. The students/clients are selected by a referral process that is largely generated by the school district. School psychologists and other service providers may consider Connections as an educational placement and treatment option for those special education students whose academic progress appears to be compromised by behavioral, emotional, psychological or other mental health issues. Once in the program, services that are provided include individual therapy, family therapy, group therapy, case management services, psychiatric services and psychological testing if needed. In addition, The Guidance Center staff work with the client and their family in their home and the community to facilitate the development of their strengths and skills. The family is viewed as an integral part of the treatment process. Program staff assists the parent and family with developing the skills necessary to maintain positive outcomes upon the client's exit from the program.

The goal of Connections is to build on the client and family's internal and external strengths and provide resources to assist them in developing necessary skills to successfully reintegrate clients back in to the traditional school setting. This is accomplished through a multi-disciplinary team approach consisting of a school psychologist, teacher, teacher's assistants, therapists, mental health rehabilitation specialist, behavior specialist and psychiatrist. Clients enrolled in the program benefit from milieu based therapy in a small group setting with a low student-to-staff ratio. Clients benefit from receiving therapy where skills designed to improve social, emotional and behavioral functioning can be taught and practiced as they occur in the moment.

Upon meeting treatment goals, Connections mental health and educational staff work with the client and their family to successfully transition the client back into the traditional school setting. It is the belief and vision of Connections staff that clients and their families have the potential to become creative, active and positive contributors to the community.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Murtaugh, LCSW

Evelyn Murtaugh, LCSW

A LETTER FROM PLEASED GRANDPARENTS

Many of the “parents” and guardians of the children we serve are actually grandparents who have accepted the responsibility of raising their children’s children or a grandchild. The following is the text from an appreciative pair:

We are grandparents and guardians of ——. We thank all of the staff of (The) Guidance Center for the counseling that helps so many troubled children. I was very impressed how the children react to their counselors. I especially saw the growth in our — because of (your) effort to help her. As we are older grandparents, we were not aware of the guidance given (to) so many children in need. May this service always be available to help our youth. God Bless all of you.

NEWS FLASH: ANOTHER FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE ECRS PROJECT

The Guidance Center recently received a generous grant from The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation for our Electronic Health Records Project. This grant will allow us to better track treatment outcomes and prevent audit exceptions, resulting in a more cost-effective system of quality care. TGC thanks The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation for their valuable support for this very important project.

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Patricia Costales, LCSW, Executive Director

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