



**GATEWAY
CENTER**
of Monterey County, Inc.

A New Day at GateWAY!

Pandemic waning as our Future Blossoms!



“Providing Adults with Developmental Disabilities the Best Environment to Live and Work at the Highest Level Possible.”

Our Mission

Is to provide a caring and stimulating environment where people with intellectual disabilities can achieve their individual goals, safely and with dignity.

Gateway Center’s core values are guided by the following principles that dictate everything we do: Rights, Choices and Opportunities for Growth for everyone we serve.

Who We Serve and What We Do:

Gateway Center of Monterey County serves over 60 adults with developmental disabilities in both day and residential programs. Many of the individuals we serve have been with Gateway for a quite a few years and are now older adults. Consequently, a number of them have multiple health issues.

Each of our consumers has an individualized, Person Centered Program Plan with specific goals that are regularly reviewed and revised by an interdisciplinary team. Our day programs provide a wide range of daily activity choices for each individual. All are designed to be fun and rewarding, while enhancing community integration, life skills and socialization at the same time. Our residential programs also include activities intended to enhance independence, community integration and the acquisition of daily living skills.

All our programs are designed around creating an maintaining a safe, caring, non-judgmental and supportive environment.

Executive Director’s Report

A New Day at GateWAY!

Wow, what a year and a half it has been! We feel like we are coming out of the darkness into the light! Happy summer! It is hard to believe that it has been a year and a half since COVID changed our organization and our community on almost every level. It has been an unimaginably difficult year plus in so many respects, but it is hard not to begin to see the light at the end of this long, dark tunnel. As I take my drive in “from the Redwoods to the Sea” I notice that summer is about new beginnings, emerging from the cold dark days of winter and the damp days of spring with a new perspective and renewed resolve. Baby chicks have hatched in our coup at home, I see Roses and Daylilies bloom and vegetable gardens providing bounty all around the area. We are getting ready for our offsite Day Program Clients to return to on site programming and our Residents are getting ready to return to home visits, offsite dining, shopping and field trips, we will do so with ongoing thought and evaluation.

I want to thank all the angels who supported us while we were sheltering in place, sponsoring food on Fridays, bbqing, and supporting our events. Special thanks to the Landmans, the Elstobs, the Parnhams, the Lubbens amongst others! We have a new Angel, former employee Jennifer Martingano who is sponsoring our next Food Truck Day and a San Jose Giants Field Trip!

Also, I want to point out that we didn’t sit on our hands during the pandemic. We have begun a new strategic planning process, we have a new mission statement and are completing a new vision statement you will hear more about in the upcoming months, we





A Message from the Director of Operations

First off, I'd like to thank each and every one of our Gateway participants, family members, friends and supporters for your patience, confidence, and support this past year. I can attest to the fact that every single employee of Gateway Center is one hundred percent invested in ensuring that our residents and participants are safe, happy and healthy. Now that we are slowly coming out of Covid mode, that same level of energy and care is now (finally!) able to be directed toward our main goal: to provide quality services that enhance the lives of individuals across all programs!

started a Family and Friends Monthly Meeting, our board members have been going through a year of training and our Senior Managers just completed "Gateway Leadership Academy". We have just added a new board member and are looking for more and are starting a more comprehensive Fund Development Plan. All to make Gateway Center the best agency it can be now and into the future.

It needs to be mentioned; the Pandemic did not come without a cost. Our personal protection supplies increased 8 fold, our cleaning fees were doubled, our insurance fees more than doubled, and our staffing cost increased substantially as we try to build a consistent, professional caring workforce. Most of these costs are our new baseline and not covered by MediCal and SARC funding, so we need to raise the rest. My request to you is to not only make a contribution you are comfortable with, but get other family and friends involved in the great work of Gateway Center and request that they too invest just a little. If every reader gave what they could and five of their family/friends did as well, we could meet our first quarter fundraising goals! As I always say "several small gifts add up to A LOT!"

I also want to give a huge thank you to the Community Foundation for Monterey County! CFMC provided us with two Covid Relief Grants and a Capacity Building Grant to support the cost of our Leadership Academy!

The Sun is out, the flowers are blooming, our participants are reuniting with family and friends, and our hearts are warm! Even as we take a deep breath of fresh, summer air, we take stock and prepare ourselves for what still lies ahead and ensuring that we are here for the individuals that need us every day!

Stay well... stay connected!

Robert
Robert Freiri,
Executive Director

To support that goal, our entire Management team participated in a 6-month Leadership Training, which allowed us to get to know each other's work style; how to work together as a cohesive team, and align ourselves with our shared values across the organization. This will serve us well as we move forward in envisioning where we'd like to see Gateway improve and expand in the coming years. This training will be replicated across all staff, so our entire organization is invested, trained, and focused on similar successes!

Looking ahead, we are very excited about the re-opening of our Day Programs in Pacific Grove and Salinas, and our Without Walls (WOW) Program in collaboration with Pacific Grove Adult School. Our programs will continue to offer "Alternative" off site programming, in addition to our on-site options. Because we've been mitigating Covid-19 all year, we are confident in our ability to open back up safely. Please note the re-opening date for our Salinas and Congress sites will be Monday, August 2nd and WOW Program will re-open on Monday, August 23rd. Our SLS and ILS Programs are expanding, and we are excited and prepared to support more individuals in living independently in Monterey County.





The ICF's continue to focus on resident care, utilizing person centered practices, and continually training staff on the ever changing needs of our residents as they age in place under our care.

We are excited to return to normalcy, while at the same time continuing to evolve and adapt to the needs of our participants throughout Monterey County. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime with feedback, questions, volunteer opportunities, or for more information about our programs and services at 831.372.2411 x236.

Amy

*Amy Wright,
Director of Operations*

A Message from the Board Chair

July, 2021

Dear Gateway Center Family and Friends,

At this time, with everyone vaccinated, we are hopefully looking at the tail end of the COVID crisis. I am happy to report that thanks to the amazing leadership of Executive Director Robert Freiri and Director of Operations, Amy Wright, we came through the lockdown with only one minor outbreak and without anyone in the Gateway Center community becoming seriously ill. We also owe a big shout-out and debt of gratitude to all our very hard working managers and their staff.

After having weathered the COVID storm, Gateway Center is a safer, better run organization. We learned a lot about how to keep our clients and staff healthy and safe. We also have a number of new policies in place to keep us focused on following best practices in all areas.

During the lockdown, thanks to creative managers and dedicated staff, we managed to continue serving many of our non-residential clients through remote, on-line programming. We are excited that we will soon begin to resume in-person services for non-resident day program clients. Staff gained a lot of new wisdom from providing remote programming and plan to continue offering a mix of on-line and in person services into the future.

We finally had a chance to catch up on a few long-overdue improvements at our Congress Ave facility. These include retrofitting the downstairs bathrooms, fixing a crumbling retaining wall, replacing a few exterior doors and refurbishing our



old elevator and walk-in refrigerator. Much of this work is already under way and is expected to be completed by the end of July.

At the present time, the board is down to 6 members. The good news is that we have 2 strong prospects with the skills we need to build back into a robust team. Our newest member, Brad Barbeau, is a professor of New Business Ventures at CSUMB, a serial entrepreneur and communications expert.

In all the many years I have served on the Gateway Board, I have never been more excited about what a bright future is in store for this great organization.

Sincerely,
Jim
Jim Landman, Board Chair



Danielle Dodson

Resident of Reindollar ARF.
Spreading joy in our community
one wave at a time!

Zoom a Miracle Program

Zooming into our Hearts

My sister, Tina Pappas, has attended The Gateway's Senior Day Program and utilized their services over the last 2 years. Prior to the pandemic, she thoroughly enjoyed each and every day she attended the center. She made meaningful connections with the wonderful support staff, and attended outings and activities on their campus.

When Covid-19 hit last year with the mandatory lockdowns, we understood the importance of the quarantine, but we feared the mental and emotional devastation this could cause a person with a developmental disability. During our ongoing quarantine, my beautiful, social and amazing sister Tina couldn't leave the house. We questioned; how could she ever have a happy day staying at home only connecting through facetime conversations? I didn't think it would be possible for her, as a disabled person, to be happy during this time and to continue to thrive. However, like a lifeline, the Gateway Center brought education, fun, friendship, mental

stimulation and most importantly love and kindness that I never thought technology could be a vehicle for.

Each morning Tina woke up excited to connect with her friends over a morning Zoom Coffee Meeting. The joy in her voice was beautiful as she said, "Good Morning Richard!" to the coffee club leader and bingo master Richard Holquin, a wonderful staff member at the Gateway.

The Zoom program was created on demand under the leadership of incredible Christina Hunt who has been a constant source of encouragement and strength to her clients, their families and her team. Christina makes sure clients have the schedules, materials and the correct Zoom meeting codes and connections. Christina even masks up and safely delivers supplies to our doorstep with a smile and a distant wave.

The staff at the Gateway Center doesn't just talk on the zoom meeting, the gateway center has created virtual programs that teach academics, art, exercise, play interactive games such as BINGO, name that Tune, trivia hunts and word searches. Part of the program involves a virtual interactive art class led by the staff member Ritika Kumar with all materials provided weekly. Tina loved her art program so much and would spend an additional hour completing a project long after the Zoom program has ended. Ritika also teaches a fun interactive yoga class and an academic class that includes hands-on science projects such as planting seeds and reading simple words. Her classes are full of thought and dedication.

The sign language class and bingo games are run by fantastic Rich Holquin. His enthusiasm and patience are truly amazing as all clients try to talk at once. The bingo supplies are provided and prizes are delivered in the form of Target gift cards for the winners. Tina has been very excited at her wins! The sign language includes fun interactions and meaningful ways to use sign language. Rich also has imaginative reading skills as he uses voice inflections to bring life to his stories.

The Without Walls staff which includes Kristin Guertin, Dan Lomel, and Sandra Dorantes creates fun Zoom programs to incorporate real life activities to socialize and engage more in their



communities. At Halloween last year, the Without Walls group had a costume contest for Halloween and created a “JibJab” video with the clients.

Further educating clients with discussion meetings on real life topics are Siauro Katoa and Sandy Mason, staff members from the Salinas division of The Gateway Center. They do a great job educating clients on real life issues such as proper eating, hand washing and travel. They engage the online clients with questions, comments and jokes.

Finally, I must mention Corinne Grossman, she has been like a light in the darkness. She not only ran Zoom meetings, but as a young person familiar with technology, she was a beacon that guided us through every technological storm. She answered the phone to Tina and taught Tina how to access her Zoom meetings independently. Not only that, but she answered the phone to every call of loneliness, boredom, and loved Tina through each day. Like many other staff at the Gateway, she went above and beyond her job requirements to serve and encourage her clients during the isolation of COVID quarantine.

I cannot thank the staff of Gateway enough for their love and unstoppable dedication to our disabled family members. Without you all we couldn't have made it through the lonely and unbearable days of isolation and sadness.

The Gateway proved that even in a pandemic and an unthinkable restrictive quarantine a small group of people who care can create a gateway of human connection and that is a beautiful thing. The Gateway Center has truly been a gateway to Tina's heart.

*Sincerely,
John and Helene Lubben (sister of Tina Pappas)*



Residents and staff had fun at the San Jose Giants Game

And Then Came WOW

I'd like to tell you why the Without Walls program has been life-altering for my daughter.

The program lives its acronym: WOW. How? “Let me count the ways...”

It is differentiated. The rhythm and content are geared towards the high-functioning: socially engaged and communicative, starved to learn worlds of information, and upward-and-outward aspiring. And yet the content is also modified, moment by moment, to all levels of ability and knowledge. Without Walls fills a previous void. There are no other such differentiated programs, yet there is a huge need (and right) for all clients to have the opportunity to learn, make friends, and blossom in an expansive environment tailored up to their capabilities and interests.

The program is located in our beautiful community and, importantly, nestled in an adult, educational setting. The director (Kristin) and teachers/guides (Dan, Sandra, Jeddy and Special Guest Star Ritika) are nothing short of dazzling, professionally and personally. With their TLC, dedication and smarts (and, work above and beyond duty and timesheets), they have created a purpose, a school, a place to belong and a second home for our “kids.” Kristin, Dan, Jeddy and Sandra – not “staff,” but rather specialized teachers and mentors – have created a warm, stimulating, enriching community.

Their qualities, expertise and wit comprise the fairy dust that imbues the program with sparkle. The clients are excited about their days, have gained self-confidence, have formed friendships, interact with respect, guide or mentor each other, share their lives and cares, laugh together – and learn and learn and learn and thrive. This upsized day program finally reaches up to their needs and interests, and constantly evolves.



The WOW teachers offer a dizzying array of classes and activities – all on Zoom for the past 16 months! A feat – that the now Zoom-expert clients choose from at scheduled times:

Every morning “coffee time” to chat and catch up on each other’s lives, then:

- Meditation & mindfulness; Yoga (by Ritika) and Qi Gong; Aerobics, stretching, weight-lifting
- **Current events:** learning, awareness, discussions
- Science, History, Technology, Geography, Wildlife
- **Health:** physical and mental well-being, and nutrition
- **Virtual World Adventures (and cultural discovery):** virtual visits to places across all continents
- **Languages:** Spanish, French, American Sign Language
- **Vocational:** career discovery, resume-writing, interview skills
- Men and Women’s groups
- **Reading aloud:** items and articles of interest
- **Writing:** letters, newsletter blurbs, things about themselves
- Safety and Emergency preparedness (in-home and out)
- **Culinary:** cooking together over Zoom or Googling and sharing recipes
- **Music:** exploration of different genres, listening to musicians (and Jeddy!), making playlists
- **Art in myriad forms:** history, exploration of, drawing, painting

Stimulating learning games, or games just for fun:

- quizzes on 100s of topics
- GeoGuesser, Uno, Bingo
- Mad Libs, Cahoot, Pictionary, Crosswords, Sudoku, Charades, scavenger hunts...
- Common Knowledge, America Says, People Puzzler...
- Freeze-dancing, Dancing for fun
- Or quiet activities, such as listening to Dan read or to an Audiobook.

And that is not all. At any time, the clients can bring up a topic that sparks their interest, that they’d like to share with the others, and the teachers make it happen.

Recently, my daughter gave a presentation on healthy vs unhealthy relationships, and the warning signs of bullying and abuse, digital and in-person. This inspired other clients to want to give presentations and hold open discussions on “hot” topics of their choice.

The WOW teachers also handle all computer emergencies and

difficulties on the spot. And, they “handle” the parents...with TLC, listening, patience and grace.

All WOW teachers deserve huge praise and recognition – and a huge raise...Please let us know how we, the parents, can make that happen. Sandra has left for a great new job. We want to keep the other teachers. They are precious lifelines who invest themselves in pulling our “kids” up, bringing them joy, and bettering their lives and futures.

*A sky-full of gratitude to Kristin, Dan, Jeddy (and Sandra)!
Thank you, Gateway! Thank you, Founders!*

Rock & Rod Festival

Two Days of Fun and Fundraising for Gateway Center

The Monterey Rock & Rod Festival-14, a major fundraiser and awareness event for Gateway Center of Monterey County Inc., took place June 18 and 19, 2021, after over a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

This year’s event had many obstacles to overcome. The long spell between events dried up the usual annual influx of fundraising dollars, and then there was the 11th hour notice that our Sock Hop could not be held at the General Stilwell Community Center in Seaside on Military property. We were fortunately able to move the event to the Monterey Room at the Monterey Fair and Event Center at the last minute.

This year’s Sock Hop kicked off with Pacific Grove’s favorite and new young artist, **The Katherine Lavin Band**, followed by the fabulous house band, the **Yard Dogs**. Once again, the ever-popular **Jeremy “Elvis” Pearce & The Memphis Sons** put on a great





performance. The Saturday headliner, **Brian Hyland**, was also in attendance and signed a guitar for the live auction while also singing a few of his hit songs with the Yard Dogs band. The Carmel Valley Kiwanis put on their fabulous Friday night BBQ, leaving everyone who indulged, satisfied. The outdoor Show and Shine added additional sparkle to the event.

On Saturday, the free to the public event moved to downtown Monterey into the Custom House Plaza. The weather was great, and the attendance was the biggest in the history of the event with approximately 5,000 plus enjoying all the great bands and ogling over the 150 beautiful classic cars and trucks. The all-day festival featured music headliner **Brian Hyland**. The event also showcased live entertainment by **Jeremy “Elvis” Pearce & The Memphis Sons**, the **Yard Dogs**, **Los High Tops**, **Tommy C & The Black Widow Grease Band**, **The Lost and Found Band**, and **DJ AL B**.

The custom and classic vehicles entered into the event were judged and were eligible to win one of many Merchant Awards, one of 15 Awards of Excellence, or the one Best of the West honor. And once again, handling the full bar with all their proceeds going to Gateway Center, was the Carmel Valley Kiwanis Club.

This fundraiser and awareness event for Gateway Center could not take place without all the great sponsors, and committee chairs that made it possible. The committee includes: Terry Wecker, *Chairman*, Angela Wecker, Bob Wecker, Sue Wecker, Mike Wecker, Cheryl Wecker, A. J. Wecker, Jim Chambers, Ronnie Usrey, Rhonda Chambers, Dan Aliotti, Joan Usrey, Kristina Olfson, James



Wayman, Kathy Jeal, Dave Ruccello, Patricia Payne, Mark Russo, Kim Russo, Bob Urquides, and Emery Russell.

Next year will be the 15th annual event and will be held on June 17 and 18, 2022. The Sock Hop will be lead off on Friday night at General Stilwell Ballroom in Seaside and the Rock and Rod show Saturday at the Custom House Plaza in downtown Monterey. Don't miss this great event!

Terry

Terry Wecker,

Gateway Center Board Member

Gateway Leadership Academy

“We know that the way to move information from your head to your heart is through your hands and that’s what Gateway is all about.”

Debra Machado, HR Director

For the past six months eleven Gateway Center Managers attended the Gateway Leadership Academy. While at these sessions we learned things about ourselves, our team and our style. We learned the five dysfunctions of a team and how to “Dare to Lead”. Learning each other’s strengths and weaknesses took courage from the whole team. We learned how to mine for conflict, but how to do it right. We even have people on our team that are not people who compromise at all, literally zero, but that’s not a bad thing. It’s just a thing. We grew to understand our dynamics. Learning to work as a team to benefit all of our employees is our long term goal.

As we, the Gateway’s management team gathered for the first time, we realized that we were very unfamiliar with each other and were very diverse. We’ve been working on the first issue and learning that the other is really a strength. Our team is full of members who have been working in the industry and with Gateway Center for over 30 years and others who had only been in the field for 4 months at the start of the Leadership Academy. Each individual has focused on fine tuning their strengths and we have seen so many people learn new skills and it was interesting to see what makes your fellow team members light up! Some have a passion for person-centered planning, ensuring the residents are able to be themselves and thrive where others have an intense passion for staff and making sure they are educated in appropriate ways to care for our individuals. Some have strength in programming and others in mentorship. Learning how to grow together has strengthened each of us individually. Michelle Slade, c4 Consulting, our Facilitator was really able to pull us together and empower us while presenting us with skills and understanding that we see slowly spreading across

the team. Hopefully the momentum we have of using specific language, effective communication, goal setting, strategic thinking and self care will continue to guide us for years to come and allow Gateway Center to be the space where families are thrilled to watch and participate in their loved ones' success. The Gateway Leadership Team would like to thank Michelle for taking us on this incredible journey and for the Community Foundation for Monterey County and the Landman Family for Sponsoring this very special Academy!



Debra & Liz
 Debra Machado, HR Director
 & Liz Tuttle, QIDP, ICF2



Thank you to our wonderful donors and sponsors! This list reflects donations made from January 1, 2021 - July 28, 2021. If there are any errors or omissions please contact us at info@gatewaycenter.org.

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Gateway Center

850 Congress Ave., Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Phone: 831.372.8002

info@gatewaycenter.org

Lic.#s: 270702589, 275201316, 270707828, 270702591