



Los Angeles
Child Guidance
Clinic

in touch

“Established Pattern of Practice Excellence”

Life Learning Program Earns National Accreditation

When the dozen or so youth reached the entrance of Los Angeles’ famed Staples Center, their laughter and eager exclamations could be heard over the noise of the crowds. For most of them, it was their first trip to the arena, and the first time they would get to watch a Lakers game in person. They were excited, and the trip would not disappoint – that night’s Lakers game against the Phoenix Suns went into triple overtime, culminating in a thrilling Los Angeles victory. What to many teenagers would have been just another exciting night out in L.A. was, for these youth, a part of a life-changing Clinic program called Life Learning (LLP).

Excursions such as the one to the Staples Center are only part of what LLP offers its adolescent and young adult clients, all of whom have significant mental health illnesses. With the guidance of LLP staff, clients gain the essential skills and social experiences necessary to transition successfully to independent community life. Funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and the Department of Rehab and partially underwritten by the Clinic’s board, LLP offers employment services, rehabilitation, case management, and medication services. Special recreational and cultural enrichment activities – such as the memorable outing to the Lakers games – are designed to expose these young adults to opportunities outside their daily life experiences.

The Clinic’s Life Learning Program is



Life Learning Team from left to right: Rachel Dixie, Consumer Partner; Liliana Alamillo, Family Advocate; Gerald Franklin, Employment Specialist; Susie Davis, Ph.D., Director of Life Learning Programs; Moon Hwang, Administrative Assistant; Elena Judd, Ph.D., Vice-President of Programs; and Dorothy Jones, Family Advocate

nationally distinguished, having recently received a renewal of its accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). In its survey report, CARF lauds the Clinic as “a venerable mental health service provider” with “a strong leadership structure.” Furthermore, in a letter from CARF’s President/CEO, the Clinic is described as having “services, personnel, and documentation [that] clearly indicate an established pattern of practice excellence.”

For Clinic staff, this praise is a welcome validation of their hard work. “LLP works with CARF as a team to ensure that we are providing quality services to our clients, and being accredited is an honor,” says Susie Davis, Ph.D., Director of the Life Learning Program, “My appreciation goes out to the Life Learning Program staff members who bring their skill and compassion to improving the well-being of our young clients.”



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Message from the Clinic's Chairperson

Welcome to our Summer 2011 In Touch! In this issue, we focus on two important aspects of the Clinic's mission – Access and Outreach. Below, you will read about the Clinic's commitment to quality services, and to ensuring through active outreach that community residents are able to access the services they need.

May was National Mental Health Awareness Month – always a perfect opportunity for us to get the word out about the importance of mental health for children and youth. This year's efforts included our highly successful annual Family FunFest, Los Angeles City Council declaring Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, and our "Praise a Child Today" campaign with the Figueroa Corridor Partnership, our local business improvement district.

The goal of our outreach efforts is to create access, so one of our featured programs this issue is the Clinic's Access Center, a key port of entry for those seeking services.

Finally, we are proud to announce that two of our programs have received recognition from highly respected evaluation agencies. The Clinic's Life Learning Program received a three year renewal of its accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and the Clinic's Functional Family Therapy team received its Phase III certification from the National Center of Functional Family Therapy. From all of us at the Clinic, we hope you enjoy this issue of In Touch, and, as always, thank you for your support.



Carlos Perez, Chairperson

Sincerely,
Carlos Perez, Chairperson

Manual Arts Students Promote Mental Health Awareness

On June 7th, over a dozen students at Manual Arts High School staffed four tables in the busy campus quad during their lunch hour. Their mission: to raise awareness on the dangers of stress, and provide information on what students can do to maintain their mental well-being.

Throughout the lunch hour at the high school, curious students – attracted by the lively music and crowds – were drawn to the event tables, where they could make stress balls out of rice and balloons imprinted with the slogan "Stress Free is the Way to Be." Student volunteers at the tables handed out literature on teen mental health tips and invited students to write their suggestions for healthy ways to deal with stress. Ruby Chevreuil, a Clinic intern through the Public Allies program, worked with the group of students to plan the event. "The students had a huge part in this," says Ms. Chevreuil, "It was their idea to make the stress balls, and they were the ones who came up with the slogan. Once they were able to familiarize themselves with the importance of mental health awareness, they really became passionate about sharing the message with their peers."





Capital Campaign Increases Access and Safety for Clinic Staff and Clients

The Clinic’s VP of Finance and Administration Steve Talavera and his Facilities staff members Ana Tinoco, Julio Espinoza, and Damon McCauley, take great pride in the beautiful, newly renovated kitchen at the flagship Exposition Park site at 3787 S. Vermont Avenue. As well they should – Mr. Talavera’s team designed and implemented the Access and Safety Capital Improvements Campaign, the goal of which is to improve safety and functionality while increasing client access and enhancing service quality. Thanks to generous donations from the S. Mark Taper Foundation, the Weingart Foundation, and the Ahmanson Foundation, the Clinic has been able to make several significant upgrades—including repairing a formerly inoperable door; re-painting and re-carpeting the multi-purpose room; and remodeling to increase security on the first floor lobby.

Left to right: Steve Talavera, Vice President of Administration and Finance; Ana Tinoco, Administrative Assistant for Facilities/Transportation; Julio Espinoza, Facility/Transportation Coordinator; and Damon McCauley, Lead Custodian

To donate to the Clinic:

Online (via PayPal): www.lacgc.org
By phone: Please call the Advancement Office at (323) 766-2360, ext. 3360
By mail: Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, 3031 S. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90007
Greater Los Angeles Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) ID: 88064



FunFest volunteers, from left to right: Thomas Rebamontan, Alicia Hernandez, Dominik Hernandez, Rose Rebamontan, and Annessa Duran

13th Annual Family FunFest Promotes Mental Health – and Fun!

The Clinic’s annual mental health outreach event – Family FunFest – drew over 700 children and their families for a free day of pony rides, balloon animals, snacks and games. Our thanks to over 80 volunteers who made sno-cones and popcorn, conducted potato sack races and other games, and ensured the day ran smoothly. FunFest also featured 11 community organizations who were on hand to provide families with medical screenings and valuable resources, such as enrollment for Medi-Cal and WIC. The Clinic’s own outreach booth staff provided consumer resources and on-site mental health screenings.





Access Center Team, standing, from left to right: Paco Retana, Director of Outpatient Services; Jennefer Pinela, Access Family Advocate; Belinda Beltran, Family Advocate; Vickie Moreno, Access Therapist; Christina Park, Acting Access Coordinator; Geselle Jimenez, Early Intervention Access Therapist; Andrew Kurtz, Access Therapist
Sitting, from left to right: Anet Khechoumian, Access Therapist; Laura Jimenez, Access Family Advocate; Amanda de Loera, Access Therapist

Access Center Upholds Clinic’s Mission

For 87 years, the Clinic has not wavered in its mission to “provide quality mental health services to communities in great need by ensuring easy access and early intervention.” The Access Center, funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and by the Atlas Family Foundation, directly responds to this mandate by providing no-fee, no-appointment, walk-in services. As a friendly and welcoming port of entry, its purposes are multi-fold: to reduce stigma; to increase access to services; and to provide risk assessment, crisis intervention, screenings and service linkages. In the spirit of easy access, the Center is open Monday through Friday, and free childcare is available to siblings while clients and parents are being seen.

Since its inception 17 years ago, the Access Center has been an integral part of Clinic services. “We’ve seen over 700 clients in the last five months alone,” says Christina Park, Acting Access Coordinator. “Of all the clients who walk in, about 75% are opened for cases that very day.” With a staff that includes three family advocates and five therapists, the Access Center is tight-knit team equipped to handle a variety of situations. Families visiting the Clinic for the first time are greeted by a friendly, bilingual receptionist. Family advocates provide the initial screening. Many of the families who walk in are in crisis, and family advocates are trained to calm, to soothe, and most of all, to instill a sense of hope in often troubling situations.

“I find the Access Staff so admirable because they have to be constantly present and ready to help – at any time, a family in an emergency situation can walk through the door,” says Paco Retana, the Clinic’s Exposition Park Director of Outpatient Services. “Staff are very team-oriented – they have to be, to provide empathic, timely services to make sure that all families who walk-in receive the care they need.”

At the initial screening, most families are identified for a Clinic program based on individual need, or provided linkages to community resources as appropriate. Common issues that bring families and individuals to the walk-in center include depression, mood disorders, self-harm, anxiety, and trauma. No matter what each family is facing, however, they can count on one thing – as Mr. Retana explains: “Our staff treats all families – regardless of the situation – with professionalism, understanding, and above all, compassion.”



Did You Know?

Located at 3787 S. Vermont Avenue and open from 8 AM to 12 PM Monday through Friday, the Access Center embodies the idea of continuity in services. Many families are referred to the Center through:

- Local schools, where teachers may notice a child with behavioral or emotional issues
- Department of Children and Family Services, which refers foster children who have experienced trauma
- Word of mouth – family members and friends often refer those they feel can benefit from services
- Hospitals, which refer discharges to the Clinic if the client is in need of further outpatient care.

At our Family FunFest in May, our Access Center team conducted on-site Walk-In hours. Families were able to speak to family advocates, receive free screenings, and apply for Clinic services.

Functional Family Therapy Team Achieves Phase III Certification

The Clinic recently celebrated an exciting accomplishment by its Functional Family Therapy Team. Since July of 2008, program staff has undergone intensive training in three one-year phases. The long-term training culminated in the highest level of achievement – a Functional Family Therapy Phase III Certification. This designation signifies that the Clinic has successfully completed all clinical training, and has demonstrated adherence to the national model.

Functional Family Training is a family treatment model based on the concept that each family member has developed certain behaviors with the intent of serving a positive function for the family. In some situations, however, these behaviors may actually generate a negative impact. That is where FFT comes in – to help family members see each other from a positive perspective, and to help them achieve their goals without the detrimental effects. Most families complete FFT treatment in under six months.

The training required for Phase III of certification is extensive and challenging, with a target population that includes youth on probation and those who have been acting out in school or community. Not many sites reach the final stage of certification, making the accomplishment all the more significant. More importantly, with the implementation of the Functional Family Therapy model, Clinic staff members have seen evidence-supported success with clients.

Of the certification, Adam Sternberg, PsyD., the Clinic’s Evidence-Based Practices Coordinator, says, “It is an honor to be certified and I am extremely proud of our staff. After our certification, the National Functional Family Therapy Director shared with me personally that she was impressed with our team, as they have consistently demonstrated clear conceptualization of the model, as well as exceptional clinical skills.”

FFT is an evidence-based practice funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health.



Functional Family Therapy Team from left to right: Adam Sternberg, PsyD., Evidence Based Practice Coordinator; Kelie Anderson, Associate Clinical Social Worker; Michelle Zavala, Associate Clinical Social Worker

L.A. City Declares Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day



On May 20th, Councilmember Bernard Parks led the Los Angeles City Council in honoring the Clinic and declaring “Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day in the City of Los Angeles” for the third year in a row. This year, the focus is on building resilience in children dealing with trauma. “For too many of our city’s youth, trauma leads to serious psychological problems in childhood and in adulthood,” said Councilmember Parks. “Left undiagnosed and untreated, trauma leaves our youth more vulnerable to substance abuse and depression. However, we know they can recover with the support of positive, caring adults who recognize early signs of trauma and seek assistance from community resources. Today we call on all Los Angeles to join the effort to build social and emotional well-being in our children and youth.”



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Visit our Website www.lacgc.org
to learn more about Clinic programs and activities.

Figueroa Corridor Partnership Joins “Praise a Child Today” Campaign

Grab a bite at a local eatery or pick up some groceries in the Figueroa Corridor, and chances are you’ll want to “Praise a Child Today.” Thanks to the Figueroa Corridor Partnership, our local Business Improvement District, over 70 bright, cheerful posters placed throughout the community are encouraging local employees, shoppers and residents to build self-esteem and mental wellness in youth through positive messages. The posters also promote free magnets in English and Spanish listing “100 Ways to Praise a Child” at www.lachild.org.

“Figueroa Corridor businesses are essential to neighborhood success, and we are proud to partner with our Business Improvement District to help our community’s children succeed,” says Betsy Pfromm, Clinic President and CEO. “Through this campaign we are all building the resilience and emotional well-being children and youth need to succeed in life.”

Campaign posters will remain posted in local businesses. Near the close of the year, businesses will be given the opportunity to participate in a toy drive benefiting the Clinic’s youngest clients. To get involved or suggest a business that would like to be part of the campaign, contact Carolyn Wang at (323) 373-2400 x 3360 or cwang@lacgc.org.



Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic
Established 1924

- Affiliate of USC Keck School of Medicine, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Accredited by CARF - The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission for Job Development and Placement Services
- A Short-Doyle Contractor of the County of Los Angeles

Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic empowers South and Central L.A.’s children and young adults to get on track to success – to reach goals in school, build healthy relationships, and enjoy emotional well-being. Our team of compassionate professionals offers behavioral counseling and support to individuals and families.

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