



2022–2023

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY

5,686

Total Clients Served

4,376

San Luis Obispo
County

1,310

Northern Santa
Barbara County



2,316

Family Members
Supported



973

Clients Receiving
Homeless Services



313

Clients in
TMHA Housing



338

Clients Receiving
Paid Employment



1,067

Clients Visiting
TMHA's 5 Wellness
Centers



9,018

Hotline Calls
and Texts



15,862

Outreach & Education
Contacts

A Homegrown Pipeline

It is the simplest of equations. If you don't have service providers, you cannot provide excellent services.

A recent analysis of behavioral health programs in San Luis Obispo County, conducted by Capstone Solutions, highlighted several areas in need of strengthening—but one significant challenge dominated the landscape: the workforce shortage.

As an agency, TMHA is constantly seeking solutions to this problem as we look to recruit the best possible candidates for open positions. One of our “secret weapons” has been the Workforce Investment Grant, otherwise known as the WIG program.

Now in its second year, the program recruits cohorts of 5–10 behavioral health consumers and family members



I was in the very first WIG cohort and started at Safe Haven Wellness

Center, eventually being hired as a Center Support Aide. I feel so honored to now run the program that opened the door for me. It's very meaningful to provide the same wonderful learning opportunities to others and help develop their career pathways. The WIG interns that end up working for TMHA all share this incredible compassion—they want to use their lived experience to help others. That's the foundation of this internship, being able to create a sense of community by connecting with people over their experiences.



LINDSEY HAMILL

WIG Coordinator



from our local communities, and provides them with training and field experience, extended education for Peer Certification, and coaching on job skills from our Supported Employment staff. To date, we have received over \$1 million from the California Department of Healthcare Services to create a career path for living wage jobs.

The results have had an impressive impact on TMHA. In less than two years, WIG has had 32 participants, ten of whom are currently employed as interns. Out of the 22 participants who graduated from the program, **over half were hired to fill positions in our organization**. Seven of our current interns are going through the 80-hour training to receive Peer Certification from the State of California, which will qualify them for higher pay.

TMHA has been a trailblazer in hiring people who have lived experience with mental illness. “We believe that first-hand knowledge as a client or family member provides an instinctive understanding of what it takes to develop resilience and long-term wellness,” said Jill Bolster-White, Executive Director. “That connection is critical for someone in crisis or the early stages of the mental health journey, to accept the help they need.”

Room to Truly Grow

With anxiety and depression among teens at epidemic levels nationwide, how do we move the needle? At TMHA, we make progress one kid and one project at a time. We are so excited to have found a new home for our Youth Treatment Program (YTP).

YTP started up in the 1980s. It is a six-bed home serving teens who require 24-hour, therapeutic, mental health care. All the residents struggle with a wide variety of mental health diagnoses, learning disabilities, social adjustment issues, and other challenges that interfere with their progress.

All of these adolescents are dependents within the foster care system. Each has experienced some form of trauma in their life, including various types of abuse or neglect, struggles with stable housing, and issues with mental health. The majority of these teens and pre-teens come from low-income families. For many, YTP is their last chance to stay in the community: it is the only residential mental health treatment program for youth in SLO County.

The goal is to help these young folks achieve a permanent, life-long connection with a caring adult.



Executive Director Jill Bolster-White, Program Manager Alley Jensen, and Clinical Director Meghan Boaz-Alvarez at the new YTP location.



My hope is that having this new beautiful and bright home a little off the beaten path will create more safety and stability for the current kids and the incoming kids for decades to come. The bedrooms are all big and have beautiful natural light that pours through the large windows. There are so many more options at this location for staff to go with kids to provide support and, of course, we have George and Rob, the two African Sulcata Tortoises who came with the property. There's a swinging bench under a tree that looks into their enclosure; watching those two dinosaurs move around, while swaying and hearing the water fountain and birds chirping, is so calming and a little mesmerizing.

ALLEY JENSEN

YTP Program Manager



While living at YTP, they attend school, participate in group and individual therapy sessions, and take part in outdoor activities such as equine therapy.

For a number of years, TMHA has tried to move the program out of a house we own that has become too crowded.

After years of searching, **we've found a wonderful new home for these kids and our amazing program staff.** They will be moving just outside of the City of SLO, with plenty of square footage for critical private spaces (offices, therapy rooms) as well as ample land for great activities—including the care and stewardship of animals.

If you would like to make a donation to help us get this wonderful property ready for YTP, contact Michael Kaplan at (805) 540-6513.

Wellness For All

In the Behavioral Health field, the Hispanic/Latinx communities face a glaring inequity in access to services.

According to a 2020 SAMHSA survey, 35.1% of Hispanic/Latinx adults with mental illness receive treatment each year compared to the U.S. average of 46.2%.

There are reasons for this gap. The scarcity of culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services, compounded by mental health stigma, keeps many Hispanic/Latinx community members with mental illness from seeking services.

This inequity puts these communities at a higher risk. Without treatment, mental health conditions often worsen.

This year, TMHA launched a pair of new programs to bridge that gap.

Our agency and the Promotores Collaborative of San Luis Obispo began a strategic partnership through a City of San Luis Obispo High Impact Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) grant. Since January, the Promotores have provided invaluable countywide outreach among



ROBERTO CUEVA

Texting Coordinator-Central Coast Hotline

the Hispanic, Latinx and Mixtecan populations to raise awareness about mental illness and TMHA's free Family Services Program. **As of this writing, we have reached over 1,700 Spanish-speaking individuals through direct contact and social media engagement.**

At the same time, a wonderful opportunity opened up for the team that presents TMHA's High School Program on local campuses. Roberto Cueva, Texting Coordinator for Central Coast Hotline, was invited by Arroyo Grande High School to start a weekly Spanish-language support group for students.

"I am so excited," Cueva shared. "I want the students to have a space to be themselves, learn about what mental health means to them, and how they themselves can be a support for someone struggling with their mental health. As a facilitator that comes from a similar background and can speak the same language as the students, I believe I can be a major support for those participating. This class will lean heavily on peer support and embracing our Mexican/Hispanic heritage. I also plan on having the class act as a processing space for challenges that arise for Hispanic students navigating the education system."

Both of these programs are beginning to make an impact, one that TMHA hopes to deepen as we secure more funding and expand our efforts in the coming year.

A Dynamic Duo Provides Support

Many have said it takes a village, but sometimes it simply takes two extraordinary people.

TMHA's Family Services is based on the key understanding that when our loved one has a mental health challenge, we take that journey with them. Our team of Family Support Specialists creates a caring environment that empowers family and friends to better understand and cope with the realities of chronic and persistent mental illness.

In Northern Santa Barbara County, two team members cover the cities of Santa Maria and Lompoc all by themselves. **With the COVID pandemic doubling demand for services, Maria Perez and Zandra Alfaro-Olea have provided support to over 800 family members in Northern Santa Barbara County for three straight years.**



MARIA PEREZ
Family Support
Specialist

**ZANDRA
ALFARO-OLEA**
Family Support
Specialist



When asked about this impressive achievement, they both stressed the power of outreach. “I go to our weekly farmers’ market and community swap meet,” said Perez. “I find that going to the same events every week allows the community to put a face on services they may not have been aware of.”

Afaro-Olea agreed. “It’s a lot of networking and trying to build connections. Before COVID, we might sign up for events and work tables. Now I print out a bunch of flyers and just walk around Lompoc. Sometimes I hand out all my brochures, sometimes I talk to one person for thirty minutes.”

Inclusivity is a constant key. As Perez points out, “Zandra and I work with everybody. Adults, young—we talk and help as many people as possible, especially because we’re bilingual. I’ve personally been reaching a lot of monolingual Spanish-speaking individuals.”

Both women acknowledge that COVID changed things dramatically in their world. By putting support groups on Zoom, they reached far greater numbers than ever before. “So many agencies were not offering Zoom support,” said Afaro-Olea, “so we just ended up opening our doors to all of Santa Barbara County.”

In the process, they observed a noticeable uptick in youth cases. “When it comes to the adult world, it’s pretty much the same issues,” says Alfaro-Olea. “Once somebody turns 18 and they have control of their care, family members are really concerned about what they can do, how can they help them and, all too frequently, how can they get them to take their medication? COVID brought up some issues with anxiety and depression for them, but it really hit our youth. I used to mainly get referrals from the school district and counselors, but now it’s more and more family members reaching out.”

Perez quickly agreed. “I’ve gotten so many new young clients. The effect of COVID on these kids—having to go through it, and then go back to school. They’re wondering *Where do I start? Who are my friends still?*”

In addition to support groups, outreach, and direct work with families, both Maria and Zandra have become certified teachers for Triple P, including a “Stepping Stones” course that is specifically for parents of children with disabilities. TMHA’s dynamic duo of Northern Santa Barbara County continue to grow their skill set, and the community could not be more thankful.



HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES

A Great Idea That Continues to Grow

10 years ago, TMHA launched a housing program unlike any our community had seen before.

50Now began as a collaboration between TMHA, the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo, and the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Social Services. The goal was to identify the most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals in the County, place them in housing, and provide the case management and other services to help them stabilize and maintain that housing.

This unique program is based on a Housing First model, which means anyone experiencing homelessness is connected to a permanent home as quickly as possible, without such requirements as sobriety or absence of criminal history.

From the start, client outcomes were overwhelmingly positive: nearly a 100% reduction in incarceration, an 88% reduction in arrests, an 88% reduction in ER visits, and a 73% reduction in the number of bed days in the SLO County Psychiatric Health Facility. The Board of Supervisors has renewed and expanded the program multiple times, and **it now serves 80 clients—a growth of 60% since inception.**

“Every time we increased the number, we had to change the name,” Mark Lamore chuckles. “Eventually we settled on *Housing Now*.” Lamore noted that while Emergency Rooms, Law Enforcement Agencies, and the County Jail have all benefited from seeing these clients less often, there is a result he particularly values. “Most important of all, we have clients and family members who see the huge difference this program is making in their lives.”

Crystal Racicot has managed *Housing Now* for the last two years. She believes their success is tied to their wrap-around team approach. “We have a therapist, a nurse, a case manager, and a peer specialist. Having all those people come together, there will always be someone who can connect with a client, whatever their need. And then that person doesn’t feel like they’re alone.”

When asked how he manages to persuade so many local landlords to participate in the program, Mark Lamore has a ready response: “If we do our job right, the landlord gets a check every month and does not have to deal with the day-to-day operational issues, tenant concerns, and minor repairs. We take care of things ourselves and we take pride in the units. We try to instill pride with our clients so they take ownership with the program. It’s a system that has worked for ten years now.”



I was technically homeless for about 12 years. I wasn’t living outside the whole time, but for the last three years I didn’t really think I’d make it back to a normal life at all. Having you guys get me housed has been an absolute game-changer. It’s not just the idea of having a place to sleep, but having a home base, a place to be organized. I’ve been clean and sober for 90 days and I feel fantastic. My doctor is super impressed with me. My goal is to get a six pack at the age of 59 years-old. I’ve got a 4-pack right now, I’m real close.



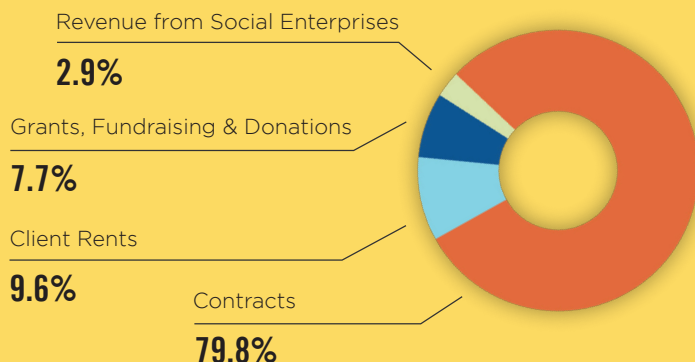
PETER

Housing Now Client

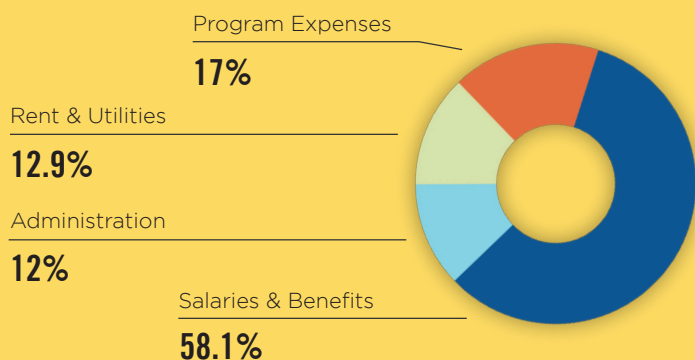
131 FULL-TIME STAFF **58** PART-TIME STAFF **62** TRANSITIONAL STAFF* **19** RELIEF STAFF **1,107** TMHA VOLUNTEERS

*Client Staff working for our agency via TMHA Employment Programs

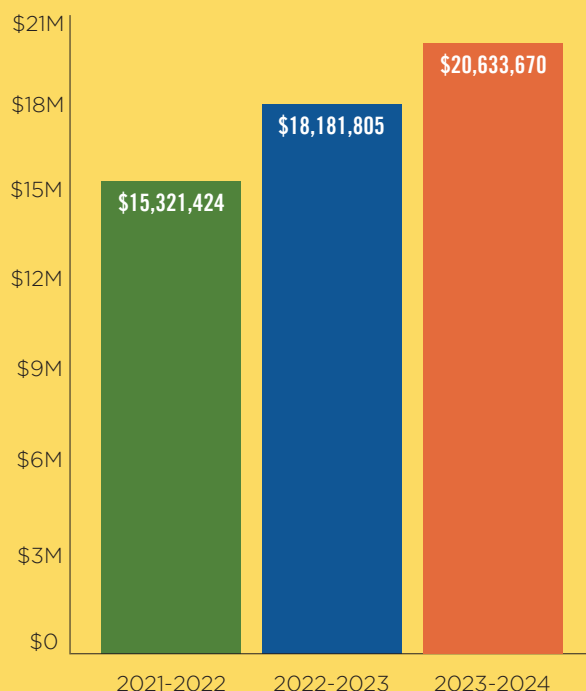
Revenue **\$18,181,805**



Expenses **\$17,498,612**



Agency Growth **Annual Budget**



20

PROPERTIES OWNED



81

PROPERTIES LEASED

TMHA pursues real estate for housing rather than a traditional endowment. This serves the dual purpose of providing the agency with valuable assets as well as buildings that we use in housing our clients. Consider donating your property as part of our Planned Giving program. Call our Community Engagement Team at (805)540-6513 or email mkaplan@t-mha.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP...

Volunteer! You can find opportunities to help at our fundraising events and such TMHA programs as Growing Grounds Enterprises and our five Wellness Centers. Contact Clara Cobb at (805)540-6564 or email ccobb@t-mha.org.

Donate! Private contributions give TMHA the ability to purchase housing and expand our programming in unique ways. Consider the possibilities of a choosing a particular program to support with a legacy gift. For more information on Planned Giving, please contact Michael Kaplan at (805)540-6513 or email mkaplan@t-mha.org.



TMHA receives funding from Proposition 63, California's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) through collaborations with the San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Department and the Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness.

