



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2020

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TMHA Executive Director Celebrates 30 Years With Same Nonprofit

San Luis Obispo, CA – Jill Bolster-White, Executive Director of Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA), celebrates her 30th year with the nonprofit agency in January. Beginning as a volunteer for SLO Hotline, Jill ran a South County Day Rehabilitation Center (now Wellness Center), eventually rising to the role of Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of San Luis Obispo. When the agency merged with SLO Transitions in 1985, Jill was selected by both boards to oversee the newly formed entity and spearhead the complex merger process.

Under the guidance of Jill Bolster-White, TMHA has experienced dramatic, tireless growth. The agency currently operates over 40 programs, provides housing to over 325 clients each year, employment opportunities to over 500 adults, and services to more than 4,500 unique clients and/or family members in San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties. Last year, TMHA celebrated the opening of Bishop Street Studios, an innovative supported housing project developed in partnership with the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO)

With the advent of the Mental Health Services Act in 2005, Bolster-White spearheaded an anti-stigma campaign, *SLOtheStigma.org*, which helped our community understand mental health and that mental illnesses are treatable and can be stabilized into complete recovery. Every year TMHA facilitates educational forums, an art show, mental health trainings, and family advocacy presentations that work towards dispelling this stigma of mental illness. All of this is vital community work, but it also has direct ramifications on the way our state provides answers and best practices to the rest of the country with regard to mental health.

The field of mental health has constantly shifted over the past two decades, with a growing emphasis on consumer and family determination. Jill Bolster-White has been particularly proactive about expanding the agency into exciting new areas. TMHA's Growing Grounds Farm in San Luis Obispo launched 35 years ago, and has long been recognized as one of California's most compassionate, proactive forms of treatment for adults grappling with the challenge of mental illness. A combination of vocational training and therapeutic horticulture, the farm provides a disenfranchised population with true employment

opportunities while maintaining a supportive environment. Growing Grounds Farm proved to be such a successful program that TMHA established a second farm in Santa Maria in 2000. In 2005, we added Growing Grounds Downtown, a retail outlet in the commercial section of San Luis Obispo.

As housing and homeless services have become a pressing community concern, Jill has overseen the expansion of new projects like 70Now, the Community Action Team, Homeless Outreach at San Luis Obispo's downtown library, and ongoing collaborations with the County Jail,

In addition to her outstanding work with TMHA, Jill has served as a Board Member for Sierra Vista Hospital, the San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens, United Way, Rotary Club of San Luis Obispo, and currently serves on the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

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