



SPRING 2024

# WE SHARE THE JOURNEY



**No one should face a mental health challenge alone.**

It takes compassion, collaboration, and creativity to move forward with confidence. In this issue, we celebrate some of the ways TMHA has had a positive impact in our communities.

# REMARKABLE RESULTS, UNCERTAIN FUTURE

This year, the voters of California narrowly passed Proposition 1. The new legislation will convert the Mental Health Services Act into the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA). A two-fold focus drives this change: the direction of more funding towards housing, and the integration of Substance Use treatment into services.

TMHA fully supports these ideas. Housing is a critical piece of any person's recovery journey, and the combination of mental illness and substance use—known as Dual Diagnosis—is a reality we have dealt with for decades.

But here's the rub. To realize and finance this new initiative, the BHSA will move money away from successful mental health services that are less visible because they are less crisis-related. We are talking about preventive services, a program category that has long been one of TMHA's greatest strengths—but an area that may see close to 70% in funding reductions within two years.

Let's take a quick tour of some of these programs that are doing remarkable work, while facing an uncertain future.



## Growing Grounds Enterprises

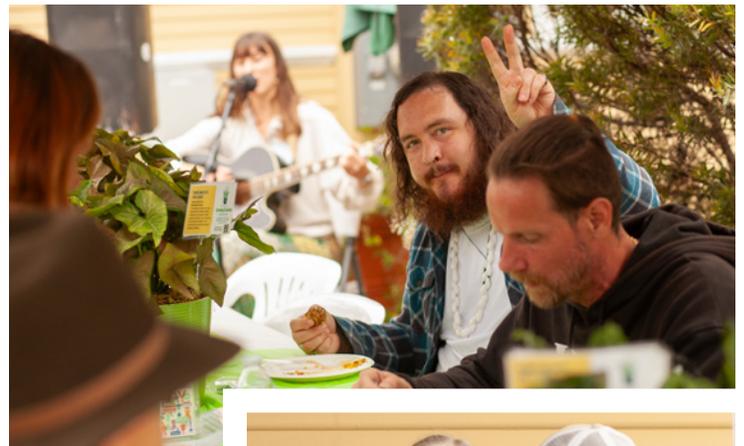
Our 40th Anniversary Celebration at the Growing Grounds Nursery was a joyful day that reinforced a remarkable fact: for four decades, our Nursery has provided paid employment and vocational training to over 2,000 people living with a mental illness. Now add Growing Grounds Downtown Store and Growing Grounds Santa Maria Farm, and the number rises to nearly 3,000! There is no mental health program along the Central Coast comparable to these social enterprises. 90% of adults living with a serious mental illness are unemployed, and Growing Grounds represents a significant first step for these folks to return to work, receive a paycheck, and discover a sense of purpose.

## Wellness Centers

Isolation and loneliness are common struggles among those living with any mental illness. Human connection is vital to wellbeing, and finding community can provide that critical sense of mutual support. TMHA operates five Wellness Centers in San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Arroyo Grande, Santa Maria, and Lompoc. The centers are designed to provide a safe, welcoming, and supportive meeting place where people with mental illness can engage in support groups, educational activities, and, above all, meaningful connection with their peers. In the past five years, our Wellness Centers have served an average of 1,200 people annually. May was Mental Health Awareness month, and each Center had the chance to open their doors to the public and celebrate the great sense of community that happens each week.



*Growing Grounds  
40th Anniversary*



*Wellness Center  
Open Houses*



## Outreach & Education

We have a talented trio heading into our local middle schools and high schools, providing an original mental health curriculum in Health classes, offering lesson plans to limited groups, and making numerous resources available to the new student wellness centers that have opened on our High School campuses. So far, over 2,000 students have been reached this year, learning how to support one another, how to initiate important conversations about mental health, and how easy it is to use the Central Coast Hotline texting feature.

## Family Services

We have said it many times before: if you have a loved one experiencing a mental health crisis, you go through it with them. Our Family Support Services are a free community resource available to everyone, with no requirements of an open case with Behavioral Health. For the fourth year in a row, this program will serve over 2,000 family members in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. Between one-on-one counseling, support groups, and family education classes, our Family Support Specialists do an incredible job, ensuring that no one feels they are alone on their journey.



**Today, we celebrate all that these programs accomplish. Tomorrow, we may be calling on each one of you to step forward and actively support these services, so they are always available to the vulnerable members of our community who need them.**



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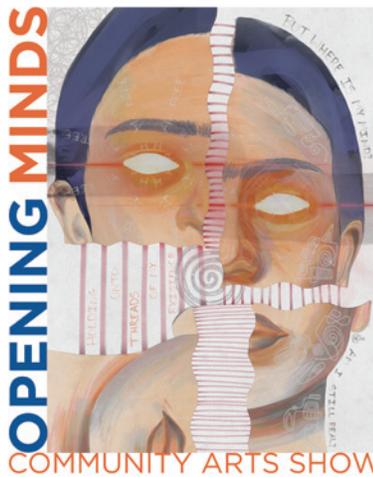


**Honored and Grateful**

Our heartfelt thanks to State Senator John Laird, who nominated our agency for California Nonprofit of the Year in our region. The Senator’s resolution is a bit too long to publish on the back page, but we particularly appreciated this line: *TMHA continues to guide the conversation around issues of mental health in San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties, while promoting hope, compassion, and equity within our communities.* Thank you to our amazing staff, who truly deserve this commendation.

**Rounding Into Form**

It has been a slow return from hibernation for TMHA’s Bowl-a-Thon, as we took a few years off during Covid. This March, our friends and supporters came back in high style, raising over \$38,000 for Central Coast Hotline and Northern Santa Barbara County programs. Most important of all, a great time was had by all!



**Opening Eyes**

One of the most unique art shows on the Central Coast returned for Mental Health Awareness Month. Opening Minds is an exhibition that celebrates mental wellness and champions the idea that we should not be defined in terms of our illness but by our strengths, gifts and the contributions we make to society. Hundreds of

people came to see over 35 inspiring, moving works, and many were purchased throughout the month. We are grateful to our partners at SLO County Arts Council and the Bunker SLO. See you next year!

