



SHARED VISIONS

WINTER 2018

2018 – THE YEAR AHEAD FOR VISTA CENTER

As we turn the calendar to January, as individuals and as an agency, we tend to look back briefly for turning points in the past year and also set priorities for the year ahead. 2017 brought many exciting and landmark changes for our agency and the clients we serve.

- **Palo Alto Moves to Permanent New Home at 2500 El Camino Real**

In May, we finally moved into our brand new building and are located on the ground floor in a state of the art below-market-rent housing community. We worked with our architect and contractors to create an accessible ground floor space that meets the needs of our clients, volunteers, staff and community. We held a series of open house gatherings in our open and spacious facility which were enjoyed by staff, clients and donors. New signage is prominently located at the front and rear entrances and we are thrilled to be back in the midst of California Avenue and all that it offers to us. If you have not yet visited our new facility, please come and check out our new home.

- **Santa Cruz Builds Community in New Location**

In November of 2016, our Santa Cruz team moved into our new location at 3315 Mission Drive, Suite B, Santa Cruz. Christy Tall was hired as the new Branch Manager and she is assisted by a dynamic team of paid and volunteer staff. The team is working hard to build community connections and the Access Technology Program is robust. One significant goal for the team is to increase clients served by 30%, and the outreach efforts are contributing to the achievement of this goal. The team has developed the Santa Cruz version of our agency recreation program, titled Shared Paths. In Santa Cruz and Palo Alto, our clients get together for hikes, audio-described live theater, kayaking adventures and opera outings. This program will continue to grow in 2018. Vista Center Santa Cruz is rapidly becoming the go-to place for blind and visually impaired community members in Santa Cruz County.

- **Pending Merger with the Santa Clara Valley Blind Center**

An exciting development is coming to fruition in 2018; the merger of Santa Clara Valley Blind Center, located on Bascom Avenue in San Jose, to become the third branch of Vista Center.

SCVBC programs are primarily social/recreational and an excellent fit with Vista Center's broad array of rehabilitation services. In addition to our similar missions, Blind Center staff share our organizational values and dedication to meeting the needs of clients. The final details are almost complete and we anticipate the process to be fully completed soon. All three of the Vista Center branches will offer the same array of programs and services and the building

located in San Jose will provide us with an expanded opportunity to host events and offer recreation programs. This is an exciting development for all of the clients we serve in Santa Clara County, as well as our San Mateo County clients. In the next issue of Shared Visions, we will introduce you to the terrific team from the San Jose Branch.

- **Priorities for 2018**

Looking ahead, we have several priorities that are designed to help us continue our mission of serving existing and potential clients. Listed below are several of the highlights for our priorities:

By June 2018 Vista Center will have three smoothly functioning and fully integrated branches in Palo Alto, Santa Cruz and San Jose. We will have plans in place for achieving financial sustainability while expanding programs/services in San Jose, in particular, increasing our visibility, encouraging the professional development of all staff and establishing collaborative relationships throughout our service area.

Continue innovations in our Technology Program. We have a very robust technology program in all three locations and this will continue to be a priority for our agency. The Access Tech teams in all three branches will continue to work together and share best practices for bringing access technology to the lives of the clients we serve.

We will expand Technology for Youth in the classroom and with our new program Vision for Our Youth Tomorrow in Santa Cruz.

We will continue to Expand Social/Recreation in all three locations via Shared Path program.

We will replicate Palo Alto services in San Jose, including The Store and Choices & Changes, a series of classes to help individuals adjust to vision loss.

We plan to add our inventory list from the Store to our website. Existing clients, potential clients and family members will be able to view a list of items sold at The Store to make it easier to learn about available products.

The year ahead will bring new opportunities and challenges to Vista Center. We are committed to using the best practices in providing our core services, while strongly encouraging innovation, creativity and enhanced or updated methods for providing ongoing services. We will develop fresh new programs/services to meet the changing lifestyles and interests of consumers. We look forward to the exciting year ahead!

SHARED PATHS RECREATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Shared Paths, Palo Alto

Winter Walks

Vista Center will continue our ever popular Shared Paths program of monthly hikes in the hills on the mid-peninsula. Weather permitting, we will venture out on the second Friday of each month to walk and talk with one another in the beauty of nature. For more information, please contact David Emanuel at demanuel@vistacenter.org or call 650-858-0202 extension 133.

Theatre Events

Vista Center will be attending an audio described TheatreWorks productions at 8:00 PM, Friday, March 30th, 2018 in Palo Alto – ‘Skeleton Crew,’ a regional premiere described as a funny, tough, and tender American drama. There are only 10 seats available for each performance at \$20.00 per ticket. There is a possible pre-show dinner at a nearby restaurant if enough people are interested. Please contact David Emanuel at demanuel@vistacenter.org or call 650- 858-0202 extension 133.

Adaptive Yoga in Palo Alto

Vista Center is thrilled to offer a monthly yoga class in our Palo Alto office on El Camino Real specifically designed for low vision and blind students. The instructor, Nancy Jamello, has taught yoga for decades and she has led a class specifically for blind and low vision students for years. The monthly classes will begin on the third Friday in March from 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM. Wear comfortable clothes and mats will be provided. Space is limited. A \$10 donation per monthly session is requested. To register, please contact Alice Turner at aturner@vistacenter.org or call 650 858-0202 extension 130.

Nordic Ski Adventure

Vista Center is teaming up once again with Environmental Traveling Companions (ETC) for a winter adventure. From the ETC winter cabin in the Sierras, we will learn cross-country ski techniques on well-groomed trails at the Bear Valley Ski Resort.

In addition to our outdoor adventures, there will be plenty of time for socializing by the cozy fire in the winter cabin.

The dates for this adventure are Friday, March 16th thru Sunday, March 18th (2 night stay in a cabin near Arnold, CA). The minimum group size for this trip to be a 'go' is 10. The trip cost is \$135 per person which includes all gear and instruction. Here is the link to the ETC Winter webpage: <http://www.etctrips.org/adventures/skiing>. For more information or to sign up, please contact David Emanuel demanuel@vistacenter.org or call 650-858-0202 ext. 133.

Shared Paths, Santa Cruz

Vista Center Santa Cruz prepares and sends a monthly newsletter to local clients and friends of Vista Center to announce classes, recreational outings and peer support groups. To be added to the email list for this monthly update, please contact Christy Tall, Branch Manager at ctall@vistacenter.org or call 831-458-9766.

WHAT'S NEW IN SOCIAL SERVICES AT VISTA CENTER

Here are updates from the Social Services team at Vista Center:

Choices and Changes – Adjustment to Vision Loss class in Palo Alto is open to adults with visual impairment and their family members (if the client is enrolled) and is led by Vista Center's Social Services staff. This class introduces clients to services, equipment, and resources available to help in adjusting to vision loss, and increases understanding of the adjustment process. The next series of classes will be offered beginning in March at our Palo Alto office, and in the Spring in the Santa Cruz office. If you are interested in learning more, or to enroll, please call Kristin Green for Palo

Alto classes at 650-858-0202 ext. 115. For Santa Cruz, please call Ana Bedingfeld at 831-458-9766.

Support groups are a great way to connect with others who are visually impaired to share tips, concerns and strategies as well as emotional support and to build a community of like-minded people. Vista Center offers many support groups to meet our clients' needs. Support groups are conducted in our office in Palo Alto, and also in several community locations in the Palo Alto service area. We also offer support groups in Spanish in Santa Cruz and Palo Alto. To learn what support group meets your needs, please contact Kristin Green, LCSW for Palo Alto at 650 858-0202 ext. 115 or Ana Bedingfeld in Santa Cruz at 831-458-9766.

DO YOU NEED FREE ADVICE FROM EXPERTS ABOUT MEDICARE OPTIONS?

HICAP (the Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program) provides free and objective information and counseling about Medicare. Volunteer counselors can help you understand your specific rights and health care options. HICAP also offers free educational presentations to groups of Medicare beneficiaries, their families and/or providers on a variety of Medicare and other health insurance related topics.

HICAP is run through the *California Department on Aging*, which also manages their 1-800-434-0222 hotline. Here are the phone numbers to call based on the County of your residence: San Mateo County 650- 627-9350, Santa Clara County 408-350-3200, and Santa Cruz County 831-462-5510.



for the blind and visually impaired

**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND
OR HANDICAPPED**

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