

Annual Giving Newsletter



Changing Lives Gala Success!

New Beginnings' Annual Changing Lives Gala proved to be a successful evening full of celebration!

New Beginnings was proud to honor community champions, Hon. Susan Rose and Allan Ghitterman for their continuous dedication to New Beginnings' programs and services, as well as their tireless work for justice, fairness, and equality for all in the Santa Barbara community. Guests were invited to enjoy gourmet food and fine wine at the enchanting El Encanto Hotel on the gorgeous Santa Barbara Riviera. The entire evening was filled with delightful music beginning with a Special Pre-event Reception accompanied by pianist, David Grossman, and guitarist, Michael Holland. Henry Garrett and Jan Ingram,

of A la Carte, performed Broadway tunes throughout the program, including a very special tribute song to Susan and Allan, written by Anne Towbes. Guests learned more about the organization's five programs from New Beginnings' Board President, Diane Pannkuk, Executive Director, Kristine Schwarz, and staff member, Lesley Wilson. Community partners including Supervisor Salud Carbajal, Assemblymember Das Williams, Congresswoman Lois Capps, and Laura Capps offered their kind words of gratitude to the honorees, and friends and family shared their appreciation through a heartfelt tribute video. A formal ask, presented by New Beginnings' board member, Jay Carlander, was greatly successful with the first five donors receiving a

hand-made "Love Rock" created by clients of the Safe Parking program and sponsored by Lalla Brutoco. The event concluded with Sara Miller McCune's presentation of the Community Champions Award to Hon. Susan Rose and Allan Ghitterman. Susan and Allan then spoke of their fond memories in collaborating with New Beginnings and the importance of the organization to the Santa Barbara community. New Beginnings offers its sincerest thank you to all of the generous sponsors and donors, as well as to Susan and Allan for their continuous commitment to the work of New Beginnings.

*– Erika Brittain,
Community Engagement Coordinator*



Holiday Greetings from Executive Director, Kristine Schwarz

Dear Friends of New Beginnings,

The holiday season is a time when we remember the successes of the past year and look forward with eager anticipation to the new opportunities that await us. The season's spirit of sharing, renewal, and reflection is also an ideal time to pause to give thanks for the many volunteers, friends, and supporters who allow us to continue our mission and provide so many with the ability to lead healthy and productive lives. At this time of year, our thoughts go out to those most vulnerable in our community who are without housing, struggling with mental health issues, or without loved ones with whom to share the holiday season.

This is also a time of year when we find those quiet moments to think about what we have done to create something that positively impacts others. Your support of New Beginnings helps us to make vital services accessible to all. Every day we are inspired by your support and endorsement of our work in the community, and the resulting changes we see in our clients.

2015 has been an extremely busy and amazing year for New Beginnings. Our 2015 milestones include serving over 2000 people county-wide and providing more than \$215,000 in temporary financial assistance to help house or prevent from eviction over 200 veterans, individuals, and families. Your support helps us to work throughout the year to provide this level of assistance, and we pledge to work even more closely with all of you in the New Year to continue to make a difference. We are grateful for your enthusiasm and humbled by your passion for helping our clients to grow as individuals and become better mothers, fathers, partners, friends, and family members. This year would not have been as rewarding for so many without you, and from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you.

Please accept our best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season and a New Year that is filled with peace, joy, productivity, and prosperity –

Kristine

We Need You

Accessible, low cost counseling services and homelessness support services are essential for those without financial means, private insurance, or government aid. The services provided at New Beginnings respond to an urgent and unequivocal need for shelter and emotional support for residents in our community who might not otherwise have access to care. New Beginnings partners with key agencies and organizations to provide evidence-based services and support to Santa Barbara's most vulnerable residents at a fraction of the cost.

BUT WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

In order to continue this essential work in the community, we must ensure two critical factors. First, we must recruit and retain a stellar roster of counselors and clinical supervisors, thus guaranteeing the high caliber of our



We reach
more than
300
people
every week

programming. Second, we must remain accessible to everyone who needs our support and help, regardless of their financial circumstance.

Achieving these goals requires community support. That is why we are asking you to volunteer your time as a counselor or clinical supervisor, or to make a gift today. Whether it is a dollar or a million dollars, **what you do here matters.**

To make a gift, please mail your donation in the enclosed envelope to **New Beginnings at 324 E. Carrillo St., Suite C, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, visit sbnbcc.org, or call 805-963-7777 ext. 112.**



Wish I Were a Turtle

By Joseph Mastroianni
Lot Monitor Safe Parking Program

Wish I were a turtle Turtles never can be homeless
Wouldn't it be grand to always

have a home to shield you from the rain and cold
If I were a turtle I could find a wholesome meal
almost anywhere

Wouldn't it be just dandy to never worry about
finding something to eat

If I were a turtle I could have real privacy any time
I wanted

Wouldn't it be nice to hide from peering eyes not
to hear unthoughtful words

If I were a turtle, I'd have no holes in my shoes or
patches in my clothes

I'd be able to bathe whenever I wanted

I could get where I'm going and go where I'm
getting at my own pace

But I'm not a turtle

I didn't have a safe place to sleep

I couldn't always get a meal. I had no place to hide
from peering eyes and unthoughtful words

I could not

I was a homeless person a hungry person
a smelly person

with dirty finger nails holes in my shoes patches
in my clothes

I was a person looking for a new beginning
who found the New Beginnings Safe parking
program for wannabe turtles

They didn't turn me away they gave me hope

They gave me help gave me dignity

New Beginnings reached out and touched
To remind me

I was a valued person

With no need to be a turtle

Praise and Gratitude

By Anonymous
Client of Counseling Clinic

I have only praise and gratitude for the work of New Beginnings Counseling Center in Santa Barbara. The Center has given me a serious opportunity to reflect deeply on who I am and how – in this beautiful world – I got to where I find myself right now. The services offered have truly been invaluable to me. I am treated with respect, kindness and professionalism from the staff and the individual counselor with whom I have been working for the better part of a year.

A number of years ago, anxiety gripped me so profoundly that I was riddled with fear, guilt, and complete uncertainty. Severe OCD, followed by seemingly endless bouts of depression, precipitated the end of my 18-year marriage. Alcohol and prescription drugs then took me to another level of despair and ultimately led to a year-long stay at an inpatient rehabilitation center. Fines, fees, court-mandated classes, and a criminal record then kept me from significantly moving forward. Ultimately, however, what really blocked me from accepting my place and role on my own stage was the inordinate level of resentment I felt about my situation.

This issue of resentment was what motivated me to first seek counseling more than a year ago. However, in the past year, I have learned so much more about myself and have gained the means to have a viable path to improved mental health.



All I Want For Christmas

Giving an extra special holiday experience

Last night, when I spoke to my niece, she gave me the inside scoop on what she and her two sisters wanted for Christmas.

“Noel wants a pony.”

“Oh yeah, a pony? What does Ashlyn want?”

“A pony!”

“She wants a pony too? And what do you want Lyla?”

“Lots of ponies!” she squealed. And there it was; the most perfect answer a three year old could give when asked what everyone wants for Christmas.

As I began my online shopping for My Little Pony dolls, hoping she would think them as exciting as a real pony, I remembered a different time I asked a young child that hugely open ended question of “what do you want for Christmas?” and was met with a much less excited answer. The boy I asked did not want a pony or a bicycle, he wanted “shoes that fit.”

Last year, a former case manager and I worked with a family through the Supportive Service department of the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara, a program staffed by New Beginnings Counseling Center for the past 7 years. This family was referred to Supportive Services because they were having a hard time paying the utility bills, and were facing disconnection of services. When talking with the head of household, we learned that as a single mom to 6 kids, all with their own special set of abilities and disabilities, she sometimes had to pick and choose what bills got paid just to make sure

... he wanted “shoes that fit.”

there was enough food for at least one meal each day.

I am not sure I will ever forget the moment my coworker came back to the office, near tears, and told me about the scene she just witnessed

in this client’s house. She had arrived before school started, when all the kids were still home. She remarked that they were all polite young kids, but she noticed how much smaller they were than her own sons of similar age. My coworker told me that after she had been there for a few minutes, one young boy and his twin brother came up to their mother and asked for \$2 each so they could partake in the class holiday activity that day. My heart broke as my coworker described the look on the mother’s face as she told her sons that she did not have enough money for them to participate.

But what was harder to witness, my coworker shared, was when the boys consoled their own mother, and offered to use the money they saved by selling the candy they got in a goody bag at a friend’s birthday party to kids at school. My coworker described fighting tears as these little boys dumped their piggy bank, and she, along with the mom and her twins counted enough pennies for the siblings so they could participate in the school holiday activity and not feel left out.

For this family, as well as many of the families and individuals we work with, the holidays are often a tricky time of year. In the Supportive Service program, we serve an extremely low income and vulnerable population. Not all of our clients have the means to buy gifts for their children, and some of our clients will spend the



season alone. It's an inspiring feeling to be able to do something special for our clients during this time of year, even if it is as simple as wishing them a happy holiday or spending a little extra time with them.

In the case of this family, they were offered an extra special holiday experience because of the community support NBCC was able to connect them to. Seeing a family that needed more resources than we were able to offer on our own, New Beginnings sent out a request for help to our community and supporters and you all generously responded to the call. As a community, you donated clothes, shoes, school supplies, home goods, and gift cards, and through these generous donations, each member of that family got what they needed on their Christmas list. Though most kids, my nieces included, do not get everything they ask for, it was wonderful and humbling to see the greater New Beginnings community come together to get this family what they truly needed.

As someone whom works directly with those who New Beginnings serves, I want to extend the gratitude our clients express and thank you for making a difference in our community. Happy Holidays!

– Lesley Wilson, MA, LMFT
Supportive Services Case Manager



Safe Parking Halloween fun!

The New Beginnings Safe Parking Program's Halloween party event was a haunting success!

The Church of the Beatitudes brought scary fun to the women of the Safe Parking Program by providing costumes, a large food spread, Halloween trick or treat bags and a fun art activity. A huge thank you to the Church of the Beatitudes for all their love, generosity, and hard work they do for the Safe Parking Program. We look forward to hosting our Christmas party and are always looking for community sponsors who feel inspired to help.

– Amanda Staples, Case Manager Safe Parking Program

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Counseling Center

Life Skills Parenting Education Program

Safe Parking Program

**Supportive Services Program for the Housing Authority
of the City of Santa Barbara**

Supportive Services Program for Veterans and Their Families



A Place to Feel Held

New Beginnings' Life Skills Parenting Education Program strives to teach critical hands-on parenting skills, mindfulness strategies, and overall life skills to low-income families to help them maintain stability in their home environments. Many of these families are dealing with stressors such as homelessness, unemployment, and a general need for education and tools to move through stressful periods in their families' lives.

One such client was a young mother who was seeking support and parenting education in raising her three children. She recently had lost her home and job, as well as separated from her partner, whom was also the father of her children. She was stricken with grief, shame, and intense hardship, while also struggling to raise her three children. This mother was feeling vulnerable and often broke down in tears during group sessions as she struggled through this difficult patch in her life.

Upon the end of the six week group, she shared with us that she had been applying the concepts of positive parenting from Daniel Siegel's Whole Brain Child, and

shared that it had been really helpful for her in understanding her children's emotional needs, as well her own. She was grateful to the group for offering support to her family and motivating her to keep pushing on even when she felt there was not much left to give. She shared that not only were the concepts and topics very applicable but the group served as a space for her to feel held in the emotionally difficult and challenging period in her life.

With the education and support of the group, the mother was able to move forward and had been accepted into a new home that would better support her family. Her sense of relief was overwhelming as she began to see that her life, along with her children's, was improving. Ultimately, this is the goal of this program: to educate families and give tools and strategies that will support good parenting and life skills, as well as offer a space for emotional relief, connection, and a community to be heard and seen in a place of darkness.

– Melissa Axel, MA
Life Skills Program Coordinator

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NBCC Offers Veteran Focused Group

New Beginnings' Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program (SSVF) has become further involved in Veterans' affairs through their active involvement in Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) in Santa Barbara County. Developed by Justice for Vets, VTC provides a structured approach to issues veterans often face when returning home from their military service, including combat related mental illness and substance abuse issues, leading to involvement in the criminal justice system. VTC is an approach that gives veterans the tools they need to avoid incarceration and readjust to life outside of the military.

Tracie Gunderson, Case Manager and Outreach Worker for New Beginnings' SSVF program, serves as part of the Veterans Treatment Court team in Santa Barbara County. Through Ms. Gunderson's involvement in VTC she realized there was a major gap in therapeutic services in the city of Santa Barbara. There was a low number of "Veteran Specific" support groups that VTC clients could attend as part of their court-mandated treatment plan. Veterans were often forced to take public transportation to the Vet Center in Ventura to fulfill their therapy obligations.

As a result, Ms. Gunderson paired her extensive knowledge of military culture with her understanding of Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) to create an interactive and unique group experience for Veterans. DBT is a research-based, cognitive-behavioral

treatment for complex and challenging disorders that involve emotional dysregulation, such as dual diagnoses, bipolar disorders, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It focuses on skills to enhance mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness, and is a therapeutic approach that Ms. Gunderson believed would be beneficial for Veterans struggling to cope with symptoms associated with PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

The Veterans' DBT Group at New Beginnings Counseling Center has become a place of refuge for Veterans to share their experiences and learn new and effective skills to cope with their symptoms in a more productive

"... it is a safe environment and has made a very real difference in my life."

manner than self-medicating with alcohol, drugs, or pursuing other risk-taking behaviors. One of the participants, an OIF Marine Combat Vet, recently told us, "The group is particularly effective in helping me, personally, to cope with stressors and be a more self-actualized and responsible individual. Learning how to detect negative emotions was a huge problem for me in the past and my way of coping involved anger and alcohol. Now, with the skill sets we are putting together I am able to more fully recognize if and when I am heading down a dangerous path of



emotions." Another justice involved Veteran that is participating in this group states, "At first, I was very skeptical about this group. The last thing I wanted to do was share anything about my personal struggles. I didn't want to appear weak.

I quickly learned that this group was different – it is a safe environment and has made a very real difference in my life."

SSVF looks forward to expanding the group to increase services for Veterans in our community and increase the level of collaboration between New Beginnings Counseling Center and the Veterans Treatment Court Team.

– Tracie Gunderson, MA
Case Manager and Outreach Worker
Supportive Services for Veteran
Families Program



To learn more about our Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program
visit us at www.sbnbcc.org or call (805) 963-7777, ext. 107



NEW BEGINNINGS
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New Beginnings Counseling Center

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Living in the Shadows



NEW BEGINNINGS
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The Safe Parking Program offers this Santa Barbara homeless youth and her family a sense of security and hope while living in their van. She does the best she can to better her future and get a good education by studying under a streetlamp.

With Your Help New Beginnings is Changing Lives and Strengthening Families One Person at a Time