



NEW BEGINNINGS

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New Beginnings Annual Benefit Gala 2026 Features Photo Exhibit at Art & Soul Gallery

Santa Barbara, CA – New Beginnings is excited to announce its [Annual Benefit Gala](#). In keeping with tradition for this annual event, the local nonprofit turns to the arts for telling compelling stories, connecting the community to their work, and bringing dignity, hope, and humanity to the stories of those it serves.

“New Beginnings changes lives,” said Executive Director Kristine Schwarz. “By providing integrated and accessible services to prevent homelessness and improve mental health, we truly help people create new beginnings.”

This year the benefit event highlights the significant need for affordable mental health services, and the organizers are excited to present ***The Willard Suitcases* photo exhibit by acclaimed photographer Jon Crispin** at **Art & Soul Gallery** in Santa Barbara from **November 4–8**. The gallery is open to the public Thursday through Sunday from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. During the week of the exhibit, the gallery will participate in the 1st Thursday Art Walk, a monthly tradition in downtown Santa Barbara.

The Willard Suitcases photo exhibit features the discovery, in 1995, of over 400 suitcases in the attic of The Willard Psychiatric Center in upstate New York, when the institution was being closed after 100 years. Jon Crispin’s photos of the contents of the residents’ suitcases reflect their stories and are emotionally powerful – some funny, some strange, some tragic, and all very, very human. The images have a significant resonance in today’s world.

Gala sponsors will enjoy a private event at the gallery and a luncheon on Sunday, November 8 at The Grand on State, Santa Barbara’s exciting new jazz club. With its vibrant atmosphere and live music, The Grand offers a memorable setting for supporters to gather, celebrate, and support the services that New Beginnings provides.



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At the luncheon, sponsors will also enjoy a special sneak peek of the *Willard Suitcases* musical that New Beginnings will present in fall 2027, including live performances of songs from the production.

Visit the [New Beginnings Gala website](#) for more information about sponsorship levels and benefits.

About Art & Soul Gallery

Art & Soul Gallery in Santa Barbara reimagines the modern art gallery as a space where community, collaboration, and creativity come together. Founded by Kim McIntyre and her daughter, Bella DiBernardo, the gallery opened its doors in 2023 with a mission to showcase both established and emerging artists. In 2025, the gallery found its new home in the heart of downtown Santa Barbara's ARTS District, next to the iconic Arlington Theatre. Here, thoughtfully curated exhibitions celebrate a diverse range of artistic voices, from striking coastal landscapes to bold contemporary works. Through monthly exhibits, artist talks, workshops and events, Art & Soul fosters meaningful connections between artists, collectors, and the community.

About New Beginnings

New Beginnings is a nonprofit organization that provides low-cost mental health counseling, housing assistance services to families and individuals, and supportive services to veterans and their families throughout Santa Barbara County. Through the Counseling Center, the Safe Parking Shelter and Rapid Rehousing Program, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program, and the Life Skills Parenting and Education Program, the nonprofit serves approximately 2,500 people each year. For more information and to support the organization, visit sbnbcc.org.

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Willard Suitcases photos: © Jon Crispin