Strengthening Mother & Child

Congratulations are in order for Epiphany Center’s very own Director of Children’s Services, Cheryl Sundheim, M.A., and Director of the Family Treatment Center, Linda Perez, Ph.D., whose groundbreaking work in developmental attachment, trauma, and infant psychoneurobiology has been published in the prestigious Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy. Last December, Cheryl and Dr. Perez presented their work at the 30th Zero to Three National Training held in Seattle.

“It was a good opportunity to hear about new research and perspectives from other professionals in the field, as well as share our own work on early relational trauma,” says Cheryl.

Epiphany Center is proud to have dedicated employees like Cheryl and Dr. Perez who make an impact in the mental health community not just at Epiphany, but beyond our doors. The pair, who have been working together for over four years, have been collaborating in the family mental health field for much longer. “Dr. Perez was my professor and graduate advisor at Mills College”, says Cheryl, who was a student in Mills’ Infant Mental Health Program.

Epiphany’s Parent-Child Center provides intervention services for children aged 0-3. Cheryl explains, “each child is unique; however babies prenatally exposed can be premature or low birth weight. They may exhibit withdrawal symptoms and need to be kept in the hospital for a period of time.” The Parent-Child Center does continuous assessments that look at physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development to become aware of any possible delays, and also develops an Individual Learning Plan for each child to support his or her development and relationship with the mother. Cheryl often refers clients to Dr. Perez at the Family Treatment Center, which provides individual mental health services to children. Dr. Perez says that many of the children she treats are “high risk due to stressful pregnancies that may include prenatal drug exposure, homelessness, domestic or community violence, and disrupted attachments”.

“It was a good opportunity to hear about new research and perspectives from other professionals in the field, as well as share our own work on early relational trauma.”

— Cheryl Sundheim
Dear Friends,

As you read this issue of the Focus I hope that you get a sense of the excitement and energy of the people who make our agency a vibrant and healing environment. Dr. Linda Perez has contributed years of wisdom and knowledge on infant mental health and helps us focus on relationship-based care. Each staff person brings compassion, caring, and creativity to the challenges faced by the women, children, and families we serve.

The dedication of our staff to finding creative solutions flows through each issue of our newsletters. As a team of caring, we build on the strengths of each individual. The Wellness Project has brought new excitement to all staff along with the new and creative ideas contributed by new members. Each person brings a blessing to the people we serve and to the agency.

Creativity in finding solutions extends to our Epiphany League members. As you see in the pages that follow, their fund raising event in March was a wonderful success. There was a great display of talent, fun, music, and laughter. The addition of hats to try on and keep, and strings of pearls to wear, and the beautiful rooms of The Family, made the evening very special. An inspirational high note came when the Epiphany graduate spoke of her past life, her struggles, her accomplishments, and her hope for the future. Her humility and grace spoke of the powerful impact that life-changing decisions have on women who persevere in their recovery.

We are so grateful that so many staff and League members have talent and creativity in abundance and share it so generously with us!

Blessings,

Sister Estela

Loving Creator, we grow closer to You as we use Your creative spirit to support those You call us to serve. May we always be filled with gratitude and peace!
The Nurturing Skills for Families class at Epiphany Center recently watched the classic Walt Disney film, Mary Poppins. After watching the Mary Poppins segments, clients discussed how different the children’s viewpoint was from the father’s as to what a “perfect nanny” looked like. One goal of the class is for clients to learn to see things from the child’s perspective so that parents can meet their children’s needs. Clients learn that children’s behaviors are their way of showing and telling us what they need, sometimes not so directly. To illustrate their new skills, clients wrote poems from their child’s perspective, on what they want and need from a caregiver.

“I want to be able to see things from my son’s perspective. I want to understand his experiences. Even though he is doing well now, I know that he will have challenges in the future and I want to be able to help him through it all. Learning about parenting here at Epiphany helps me feel more confident in my abilities to be a good mom.”

Sincerely,
Georgie

If YOU Want this Choice Position

Be happy, fair and funny.
Lay with me and be cuddly.
Read me stories with funny voices.
Feed me when I’m hungry and make sure it’s yummy.
Share smiles, talk to me and listen when I talk to you.
Protect me from all things scary.
Don’t leave me alone and be there when I need help.
Always show me you love me!

Please be nice and listen.
Be fun but protect me from harmful things that I may like to do.
Be kind and sweet. Be gentle and teach me things.
Be firm on things too, so I know play time from serious time.
But most of all love me!

Sincerely,
Kate
Epiphany Center made one dream a reality by securing an exciting 3-year federal grant from SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration) to implement the Epiphany Wellness Project. The dream is Epiphany’s vision of a holistically focused recovery model for the clients we serve. Recovery that is based in holistic wellness has a greater chance of addressing the root causes of addiction and the trauma that our courageous clients have faced. The grant gives us the opportunity to really hone in on every aspect of wellness, as an integral part of the recovery process.

Ramona Kavianian, the Wellness Coordinator, explains that the Project will enable clients “to improve all aspects of their health from physical and psychological to social and spiritual, which are equally as important to consider. We are currently focusing on educating clients on healthy eating, primarily to address the nutritional deficiencies caused by prolonged substance abuse. I am working individually with them to tailor design a Wellness Plan based on their unique needs. We have implemented physical exercise opportunities to naturally restore clients’ energy level and sense of wellbeing.” Expressive arts therapies (art and dance) encourage other means of self-expression. The Wellness team includes Wellness Counselors who work during the evening to create a positive, encouraging, supportive, and empowering environment for clients to learn and grow within. The Wellness Project utilizes 6 Domains of Wellness: Emotional, Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Occupational, and Social. Each of the 6 domains of wellness will enhance the recovery process by providing education and activities that promote healthy choices in every aspect of life.

“*It’s comprehensive healing*”, says Suzi Desmond, Adult Services Director, which means a higher chance of long lasting success, and a lower rate of recidivism.

Deborah Hodges and Toshia Webster, the residential Program Coordinators, are excited about the impact of the wellness activities. They believe that the women are accepting wellness as a part of their recovery process and are beginning to see the benefits. Feedback from the women states that they are feeling heard about their challenges around eating, how it relates to addiction, and to their culture. They are also very pleased with new opportunities for swimming and yoga.

---

**FOCUS feature**

**EPIPHANY**

Launches Wellness Project

---
After a successful 6 week series of Cooking Matters classes with Epiphany Center clients, Rebecca Murillo, Program Assistant for 18 Reasons, returned to Epiphany for a Resolution Potluck to kick off an inspiring new year. Cooking Matters is a national organization that partners with organizations like 18 Reasons to promote nutrition curriculum through cooking affordable, healthy, and delicious meals. 18 Reasons has partnered with Cooking Matters to empower people through cooking, with a sharp focus on community and building relationships. We know that the path to wellness begins with a wholesome, balanced diet, but it isn’t always easy in an expensive city like San Francisco. However, 18 Reasons believes that every person has the right to eat healthy meals every single day.

Rebecca looks for sites like Epiphany Center where the Cooking Matters curriculum could be implemented. 18 Reason’s mission is to empower people to shop for, cook and eat wholesome foods. Thus food inevitably brings people together, and that’s why sharing a meal is such a valuable way to build community. “We are continually motivated because we know the impact we make”, Rebecca says.

We can empower ourselves through cooking by being open to learn, and by being willing to get out of our comfort zones. It can be scary at first, but learning is one of 18 Reason’s Core Values, emphasizing that we are all teachers and yet, all learners. We are reminded of the old proverb, give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. 18 Reasons is empowering communities with the tools and knowledge for a lifetime of wellness. Cooking Matters classes will return to Epiphany Center in the Spring, and we couldn’t be more excited for the opportunity to continue an empowering food journey together. Rebecca had this to say about working with Epiphany clients, “the Resolution Potluck was one of the best classes I’ve taught. The volunteers were great, and everyone bonded quickly with Epiphany’s clients.” While cooking they discussed resolutions for the New Year. Rebecca adds, “I could tell all the women are very dedicated to living a healthier life, it was a perfect example of how food can break down barriers and bring people together.”

Ramona sums up the thoughts of the staff: “We feel excited and blessed to be a part of this amazing journey to a life of recovery, harmony, balance, and health for all our clients.”

“The consistent approach to a healthier lifestyle will have a ripple effect” explains Suzi, “because the women are immersed in ongoing wellness practices, the byproduct is healthier children, and a healthy community.”

Ramona sums up the thoughts of the staff: “We feel excited and blessed to be a part of this amazing journey to a life of recovery, harmony, balance, and health for all our clients.”
Friends and family of Epiphany Center gathered on Thursday, March 3, 2016 at private club, The Family, in San Francisco for the 19th Annual Benefit Party and Show: “Shh..It’s A Speakeasy!” Dressed up in their swanky 1920’s best with fedoras, feathers and fringes, guests enjoyed delicious hors d’oeuvres while perusing the silent auction to the sound of Speakeasy piano tunes by distinguished pianist Dwight Okamura. The silent auction was the bee’s knees, and included winery tours and tastings, gift certificates to superb San Francisco eateries, and even a signed basketball by Warriors all-star Steph Curry.

Guests were in for a real treat as Goorin Bros, hat company generously donated 200 ritzy hand-made hats for the Speakeasy’s hat shop. Guests delighted in trying on different hats and posing for photos. Guests had the privilege of hearing from a recent graduate of Epiphany’s Recovery Program speak about her transformational journey of hope and healing. Amidst tears and smiles of gratitude, Epiphany’s graduate touched the hearts of every guest with her courage, perseverance and humbled spirit. Guests were reminded of the true reason they had all dressed to impress and attended the event--to inspire lasting change and healthy futures.

The charming Don MacLean emceed the event’s Fund-A-Need live auction, which raised $20,000 for Epiphany Center’s new children’s play yard. Then guests were dazzled by a toe-tappin’ original show produced by Diane Blackman and performed by a phenomenal cast. Hats off to a stellar performance!

We celebrate the hard work and dedication of co-chairs Sheila Kelly and Joan Mittendorf, the Host Committee, the Epiphany League, and all of our sponsors, donors, guests, and volunteers who ensured the evening hit on all sixes. It is because of Y-O-U that we were able to raise over $60,000 to sustain Epiphany Center’s vital programs that empower at-risk women and strengthen family life.

Photos by Scott Wall Photography
Epiphany Center strengthens family life through programs faithful to the beliefs of the Catholic Church, rooted in Judeo-Christian values and the tradition of service of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

Epiphany Center provides client-centered care to a diverse population of women, children, and families, who are most vulnerable in our society. Our purpose is to strengthen family life and to enhance the physical, social-emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth of each person in our care.

Our vision is to create a safe environment that reflects the belief that each person is created by God, is endowed with unique gifts, and is worthy of respect. We believe that our care for individuals enriches their present and future lives, the lives of their families and, through them, the community in which we live.

MISSION STATEMENT

Epiphany Center strengthens family life through programs faithful to the beliefs of the Catholic Church, rooted in Judeo-Christian values and the tradition of service of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

Epiphany Center provides client-centered care to a diverse population of women, children, and families, who are most vulnerable in our society. Our purpose is to strengthen family life and to enhance the physical, social-emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth of each person in our care.

Our vision is to create a safe environment that reflects the belief that each person is created by God, is endowed with unique gifts, and is worthy of respect. We believe that our care for individuals enriches their present and future lives, the lives of their families and, through them, the community in which we live.

GOVERNING BOARD

CHAIR
Sister Carol Padilla, D.C.
VICE CHAIR
Mrs. Brenda MacLean
SECRETARY/TREASURER
Sister Frances Vista, D.C.
MEMBERS
Ms. Tina M. Ahn
Sister Betty Marie Dunkel, D.C.
Sister Margaret Ann Gainey, D.C.
Sister Trinitas Hernandez, D.C.
Ms. Victoria Jones
Deacon Eugene Smith
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Sister Estela Morales, D.C.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

On the Ice
For a Benefit
San Francisco Chronicle May 19, 1963

The ICE FOLLIES’ opening this year–on June 19 at Winterland–will be a benefit for the Mt. St. Joseph's Home for Girls.

So, naturally, an auxiliary had to be formed to take care of the important business of ticket-selling. On a recent afternoon, wives of the home’s lay advisory board members and other prominent Bay Area women got together over tea at Mt. St. Joseph’s, 1700 Newhall Street, to plan strategy with the home’s administrator, Sister Mary Thomas, D.C.

Tickets, ranging from $2 to $4 each, may be obtained from the home, Mission 8-6875.

Mrs. Nicholas Kavanaugh, Mrs. James T. Moore, Jr.
Home’s Advisory Board Chairman’s wife and a friend
The Epiphany League invites you to

Celebrating Mothers Luncheon

Wednesday, May 4, 2016
St. Francis Yacht Club

For more information, visit TheEpiphanyCenter.org or call (415) 351-4055