

# ALTA CONNECTIONS

The Quarterly Client, Service Provider, and Staff Update Newsletter



More on our **featured artist**  
**Jemel Williams** pg. 8

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*Executive Director Lori Banales*

Fall is in the air and with the change of seasons, there is a renewed sense of energy and focused commitment to move many of our agencies initiatives to the next phase. We have developed several planned activities that are intentionally linked to objectives in our Strategic Plan, Performance Contract and soon to be revealed, statewide Performance Incentive Measures. Our community shared what was important to them and ACRC has incorporated many of those suggestions. We are thankful to have stakeholders who are engaged in the process and contribute to our future planning. Over the next two months, ACRC will provide a summary update on the Performance Contract activities identified in the previous year and ask for our community to offer additional feedback to consider as we develop new activities to support better outcomes across the policy measures that are identified by the state. We have a designated email to accept input: [performancecontractfeedback@altaregional.org](mailto:performancecontractfeedback@altaregional.org). The draft plan will be shared at the November, 2022 Board of Directors Meeting. Public notice will be provided.

Continued pg. 2

### WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- MESSAGE FROM ED
- CLIENT SPOTLIGHT
- ALL STAFF MEETING
- CLIENT CORNER
- SANTA DAY 2022
- SERVICE PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT
- RESOURCE UPDATES
- ACRC BY THE NUMBERS
- FEATURED ARTIST PROFILE

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE - CONT.

*Executive Director - Lori Banales*

While the initiatives that drive quality-improvement are critical to ACRC, so too is the connection between the renewal of energy and focused commitment for our staff. In August, we were to come together at our first, in person All Staff Meeting since May, 2019. The day was magical! We enjoyed reuniting with colleagues we haven't seen in months or even years, while also embracing the opportunity to meet many employees who were hired since March, 2020. We celebrated years of service, spotlighted clients who amazed us all with their talents and even snuck in a couple training moments. We ended the meeting with lunch and continued fellowship. Coming together in person promoted the importance of relationships and the power of our work community. There has been an added layer of excitement in the air that can be attributed to more than the change of seasons.

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT - HEROES COME IN ALL SIZES

*Placerville Office Service Coordinator - Diane Morris*

It was just another night in the family home when 5-year old Matthias, an Alta client with autism, saw that his grandmother "Gaga" was coughing loudly and having trouble breathing. He jumped into action and called 911 and then went to wake up his mother to tell her that Gaga was not able to breath and that he had called for help. Paramedics soon arrived and found that Gaga, who has diabetes, had a blood sugar level of over 800 and that in another 30 minutes would have gone into a coma if help had not arrived. Gaga was rushed to the hospital ICU and was in the hospital for 4 days.

Matthias cried when they took his grandmother away and the fireman came over and praised him for what he had done and gave him a sticker that said that he was a Junior Firefighter now. Gaga was able to return home and the family is in awe of what Matthias did and how he was able to react in an emergency. Matthias' mother commented that Matthias clearly knows more than he is able to express and she credits the ABA services that he has had over the years as helping to develop his skills and knowledge, in addition to all the dedicated work and support that his family has provided him. Another shining moment in the life of one of our clients. A reflection of the strengths and possibilities in all of us.





Alta California  
Regional Center

# All Staff Meeting

## Celebrating Anniversaries



### Making Memories



### Learning More



August 2022





## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

### MATT HARMETZ

Hello Everyone, my name is Matt Gareth Harmetz. I am 30 years old and for the past few months, I have been in the process of writing a book on my experiences with neurodiversity, Dyspraxia, and Autism. I have always been inspired and motivated by self-help books. I just finished reading two books written by Author Devon Price: "Laziness Does Not Exist," and "Discovering the New Faces of Neurodiversity Unmaking Autism." These two books in particular inspired me to choose "a path less traveled" and become my own advocate and an advocate for others.

After graduating from UC Berkeley, I worked for a large hotel/casino in Las Vegas in their management training program. The job was very overwhelming because the most ministerial tasks were extraordinarily difficult for me because of Autism and Dyspraxia. I became very depressed and was not a client of the regional center at the time—and did not know where to go for help.

Eventually, I became acquainted with the Mind Institute and that changed my life. I volunteered for the Fly Brave Foundation and taught public speaking and was a life coach for fellow peers. My most notable speaking engagement was speaking at the UCD MIND Summer Institute on Neurodevelopmental Disabilities in 2019. In 2020, I received services from a regional center vendor, Developmental Disabilities Service Organization (DDSO), and they suggested I look for more volunteer opportunities in advocacy work. This led to me inquiring about a volunteer position at Meristem, but rather than just volunteer, I was offered a paid position working for Meristem as a work skills instructor and Transformative Autism Program (TAP) trainer. In addition to working with Meristem, I worked for the California State Treasurer's Office as an analyst for the CalABLE team, a program that offers taxed advantaged savings and investment options for the disabled population.

My best advice for someone who wants to write a book or become a public speaker is to "start." Getting started can be challenging. Once you write down the first sentence, your ideas and thoughts will take off! In my spare time, I enjoy playing the card game "Magic: The Gathering" and watching Anime. To learn more about my upcoming book and journey, please follow my social media featuring blogs on Autism related topics including motivation.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Matt-Harmetz - Actually-Autistic-and-Neurodivergent-106206468837539/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mattharmetz/> - Website: <https://www.mattharmetz.com/>

## WE HAVE TO SHARE

ACRC was happy to have the Dream Achievers, an award winning group of performance artists with Autism, provide entertainment for our All-Staff Meeting. They are high energy and our staff really enjoyed them. Pictured with ACRC executive staff are Dream Achievers - Alice, Lawrence, and Gregory. Please check out their Facebook page, which includes booking information.

<https://www.facebook.com/dreamachieversband>



## CLIENT CORNER



The Client Advisory Committee (CAC) is committed to supporting Alta California Regional Centers (ACRC) Strategic Plan, specifically in the focus area of Housing. The CAC is creating a short video to illustrate, “life in my own home.” The video will showcase clients who receive independent living services, supportive living services and clients who receive generic resources and support to live safely in their own home. The goal of this project is to 1) increase awareness of housing options and 2) increase the number of clients living in their preferred living arrangement. The CAC met on July 12th and August 24th. They are receiving support from Hester Wagner, Director of Futures Explored-Film and Media Services. The video will be shared in conjunction with ACRC’s Coordinated Future Planning training for Service Coordinator’s on October 31st.

For additional information about ACRC's CAC and a list of upcoming meeting dates, please visit our website:

<https://www.altaregional.org/client-advisory-committee-cac>.

## ACRC STAFF IN ACTION



*ACRC staff volunteered to prepare bags of COVID-19 rapid tests and PPE to deliver to residential care homes.*

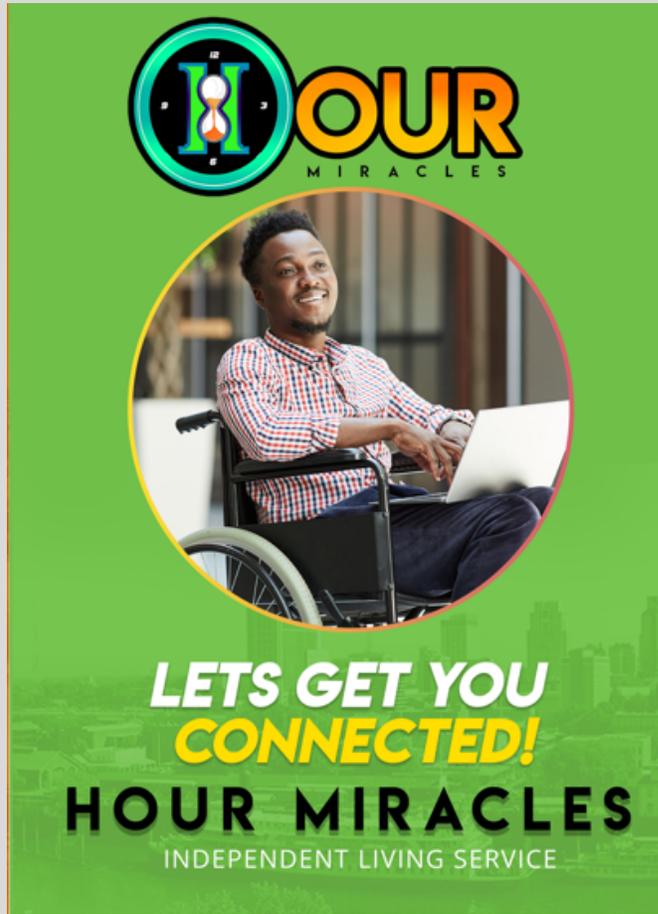
**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**SANTA DAY - FRIDAY DECEMBER 9TH  
BIGGER, BETTER, AND INCLUSIVE**

ACRC staff are currently planning this year's event. Please stay tuned for more information from ACRC's social media.



# SERVICE PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT - HOUR MIRACLES



*In 2021, ACRC awarded Dejena Watkins and Denzell Green Community Resource Development Plan grant funds to start up **Hour Miracles ILS** to increase access to technology for clients. We're happy to share this information about their program.*

Our Mission is to introduce and uncover opportunities that will allow family and our neighbors with disabilities to be included within their community and to teach the community strategies to maintain those social connections. Through one-on-one technological training and support, learning centers that offer classes/training from local organizations, and mentorship that improves independent living skills, we work to ensure digital inclusion by providing quality services that aim to increase independence, self-determination, and functional skills.

We loan quality technology/equipment that includes laptops, tablets, data software and service, adaptive equipment and provide support and training for the use of this equipment.

There are four main elements that make our approach effective and sustainable, and they include: A Four Step Loaner Tech Process, our "Miracle Tech Crew," Empowerment, and our "Miracle Tech hub.

## CORE VALUES

**INTEGRITY, INCLUSION, RESPONSIBILITY,  
RESPECT, DIVERSITY, GROWTH, COMMUNITY,  
EQUALITY, EDUCATION, WELLBEING, AND FAMILY**



Participants can expect to be educated in data security, browsing etiquette, and will be directed to resources to where they can purchase or obtain their own devices. By registering for a membership with us, they will also have access to a variety of online services provided by Hour Miracles tech hub that will aim to get them connected to local events, activities, and programs.

Miracles Tech Workers are key components in our approach to push digital inclusion. They help participants feel empowered by teaching them the benefits of using the internet and guiding them on how to do simple tasks online i.e., email/zoom setup up, password protection, etc. They come as mentors, job coaches, volunteers, family and friends. Creativity and a strong understanding for the need of digital skills drive their passion to help.

Using a Person-Centered approach, Miracles Tech Workers meet people at their point of ability and use personal interest along with a Tech Access Plan (T.A.P) to help navigate the best way to provide support. Patience, great communication skills, creativity, organization and openness are all essential skills that drive success when providing support along with awareness and sensitivity to each individuals' circumstance. (916) 671-6181 or email [info@hourmiraclesils.com](mailto:info@hourmiraclesils.com)

# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Resource changes over the last quarter

## New Service Providers

### **SOCIAL RECREATION/ SPORTS CLUB**

Achieve Tahoe

### **PERSON CENTERED PLANNING PROVIDER**

Starpointe Consulting (PCP)

### **MUSIC THERAPIST**

Music to Grow On

### **GERIATRIC FACILITY**

The Cottage

### **INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY TRAINING**

Level Up Norcal

### **SPEECH PATHOLOGY**

Speechgeek Inc

Pathways Speech, Language, and Cognitive Therapy

Sarah Gray, SLP

### **CAMPS**

UCP Camp

TRS County of Sac Dept of Regional Parks

### **TRANSPORTATION COMPANY**

Veasey Non-Emergency Transportation

### **OTHER MEDICAL SERVICES**

Ridgeline Pediatric - Auburn

### **SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES**

Upendo Care Services

Destined 4 Dignity

### **RESIDENTIAL - CHILDREN**

Peniel Care

### **RESIDENTIAL - ADULTS**

Sonrise CareHome, Inc.

Emerald Home

## **REINVENTING DAY PROGRAMS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES WORKSHOP FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS**

As service providers prepare for the end of Alternative Services billing on January 1, 2023, numerous questions have come up about how programs can be modified to meet the changing needs of our community. On October 12, 2022, ACRC will host a workshop for day program and employment services providers to share ideas, discuss program addendum requirements, HCBS Final Rule considerations, and new ways to use Tailored Day Services. The Disability Thrive Initiative (<https://scdd.ca.gov/iddthrive>) has agreed to join the workshop to provide resources to ACRC providers.



## Closed Service Providers

### **SPEECH PATHOLOGY**

Brandi Lungren - Vendor Request

### **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

Easter Seals Society Therapy - Sold Property with Pool

### **RESIDENTIAL**

Anderson Adult Residential - Quality Assurance Issues, License closed.

## ACRC BY THE NUMBERS

*Did you know that ACRC is growing by approximately 1000 clients annually?*

**Here is who we serve as of September 15, 2022:**

Early Start - 2293

Lanternman Clients - 25,418

Total = 27,711

## FEATURED ARTIST PROFILE



My name is Jemel Shante Williams; I have been a mixed media artist for over 20 years. Most of my inspiration comes from the colors of nature, and I am motivated by other artists, both in museums, research, and my peers. I work a lot with jewelry- I enjoy making bracelets, necklaces, and earrings. I incorporate styles of all types, such as natural stone, sea glass, as well as glimmery bling. I also enjoy painting with acrylic on canvas; I love painting landscapes, animals, and holiday themed work. Mixing and blending the colors is my favorite part, and seeing the light gleam on the canvas. I like getting my hands dirty in ceramics, and molding the clay into recognizable objects. Some of my favorite ceramic pieces are my ocean-themed, seashell fountain with running water through a pump, as well as my birdbath covered in colorful butterflies, dragonflies, and flowers. Making art helps me express myself- if I'm feeling happy I use warm, light tones, and if I'm feeling down I use neutral and dark tones. I create artwork as an extension of myself; I want to put a piece of myself in every art piece I make.

**How can we buy your work?** People can certainly email me [jemelwilliams84@gmail.com](mailto:jemelwilliams84@gmail.com) or they may reach me through the Southside Unlimited Work of Art gallery directors. - <https://www.woastudios.com/southsac>

