

## **Coming this Summer 2016: The New Santa Maria Wisdom**



**Design by Vivek Harris Inc**



**T**he Santa Maria Wisdom Center is a progressive, state-of-the-art, comprehensive model of community-based aging/adult services (CBAS) that provides critical support for frail elderly and disabled individuals in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

**T**he Center serves up to 60 individuals daily, caring for people with a range of disabilities and health care challenges, such as Alzheimer's and other dementias, diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic heart disease, osteoporosis and age-related cancers. The closest facilities are in Oxnard, 114 miles south of Santa Maria and 220 south of San Jose.

**O**ver the years, the facility, which is located in Santa Maria, has slowly deteriorated.

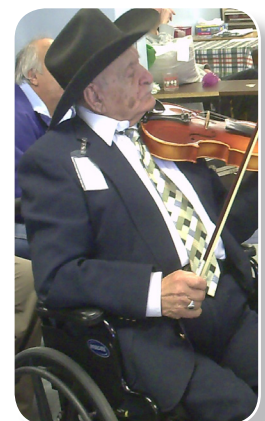
The neighborhood has changed. The building has not been maintained. We are at capacity. The neighborhood is infested with gangs and drug dealers. Shootings have occurred right outside the front of our building. We firmly believe that the building and the area that it is located in could be a great risk for our clients and employees.

**I**n response to this need, in 2014 Life Steps acquired land at 2255 S. Depot Street in the city of Santa Maria. With the purchase of this land, a larger Santa Maria Wisdom Center will be constructed to replace the present center. The new center will increase the current 60-client capacity to a 100-client capacity with the intent of increasing client care for the community, as the need will continue to grow. The groundbreaking ceremony will take place on April 2016.

## **A Santa Maria Wisdom Center Client Success Story!**

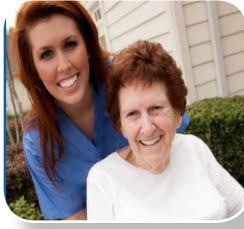
**I**n his early 90's, Abraham Magana often serenades the Santa Maria Wisdom Center staff and friends. A participant at the LSF SMWC, he is a self-taught musician who plays 11 instruments including the guitar, violin, cello, and accordion. Quite a talent in itself, but more so as he is totally blind. He attended just three years of school prior to picking cotton in Mexico. While still a teenager, he met his late wife Maria with whom he had a large family.

**M**r. Magana traveled back and forth to work in the fields of California and his wife supplemented their income as a seamstress. They moved to the United States permanently in 1975, a former member of a mariachi band called Los Costenos Del Valle. We look forward to many more years of beautiful music from Mr. Magana, our very own nonagenarian mariachi player!



## The New Dedicated Alzheimers Program at the SMWC

In 2015, a dedicated program for individuals with Alzheimer's disease began. A generalized social and recreational activities program does not appropriately address the needs of these participants especially as they progress through the middle stages of the disease.



This realization led us to do extensive research into the most effective recreational therapies being implemented to serve this population. Our research led us to the importance of music and art when working with this group. The SMWC staff was trained in two programs: "Music and Memories, and the Alzheimer's Association's "Memories in the Making" Art

Program.

Musical memory is profoundly linked to emotions. Those memories are stored deep in the brain. While Alzheimer's damages the ability to recall facts and details, it does not destroy these lasting connections between a song and memory of an important life event.

The Alzheimer's Association's "Memories in the Making" Art Program allows people with Alzheimer's disease to express themselves through art. The part of the brain responsible for creativity is one of the last to be affected by Alzheimer's.



### Pictures of Some of Our SMWC Participants



## LSF Santa Maria Wisdom Center: Participant of the Month

Our Participant of the Month is Ray Bernal. Ray was born 94 years ago in New Mexico. He served in the Air force during World War II from 1942-1945 and moved to San Jose where he and his wife of 65 years raised 4 children. He worked for the local school district for many years as well as having owned and operated the Fiesta Hall in San Jose. Ray loved to sing and dance and performed there as well as hosting mariachi bands, quinceanera parties, etc.

Sadly, he lost his son in the Vietnam War who has a park in San Jose dedicated to his service and memory...Raymond Bernal, JR Memorial Park. Ray has a habit of never wanting to wear his glasses or hearing aids. He uses them only to put in his seat as a "place holder" when he leaves

his chair for any reason...at least they serve some purpose!

Ray likes Steven Siegal and his action movies as well as visiting the Casino. He says that he was quite the fighter when he was young as he was small in stature and had to show the guys that he could more than hold his own. He currently lives with one of his daughters in Santa Maria.



## LSF CAFS: Reaching Our Dream



On January 31, 2016, LSF Children and Family Services held their first annual Reaching our Dream Fundraiser. State budget cuts have all but eliminated funds for crucial program such as ours.

The financial burden of providing these services are now dependent on the generous support of our friends, families, colleagues and community members.

We would like to thank all of you who joined us on this special event and for helping us be one step closer to our goal!

## LSF SoCal Adult Services

*A Client Success Story*

We are very proud of our client, Caroline! Our participant was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum disorder at a fairly young age. We met Caroline through the Harbor Regional Center. Our SoCal Adult Services staff has helped Caroline with Supported Living assistance. She is currently attending The University of Southern California where she is majoring in the Fine Arts. To learn more about Caroline's journey, please visit the Harbor Regional Center website: [www.harborrc.org](http://www.harborrc.org)



## LSF Social Dynamics: FUN RUN!

You're invited to Life Steps Foundation Social Dynamics Fun Run!

Registration: \$40

Pledge: \$10 per mile (Optional)

Date: June 11, 2016

Start Time: 8:00 am

Location: San Francisco 94132

\* Start line (Between Lake Merced Blvd & Sunset Blvd) \*Parking Available



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

At Life Steps Foundation, we help those with the greatest challenges. You have the power to make a difference in the life of someone living with a mental, developmental or physical disability! If you want to become a volunteer, we would really appreciate your help!

*Fundraisers*

*Fun Run (Burlingame, CA)*

*Interns*

*Special Events Community Outreach*

*Social Media Marketing*

*Volunteer Guest Speakers*



Please contact, Daisy Salinas through our website or, [development@lifestepsfoundation](mailto:development@lifestepsfoundation) for more information!

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[Facebook.com/LifeStepsFoundation](https://www.facebook.com/LifeStepsFoundation)

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5839 Green Valley Circle, Suite 204, Culver City, CA 90230

## STEPPING UP FOR CALIFORNIANS WHO LIVE WITH A DISABILITY

From time to time, all of us need help taking some of the more challenging steps in life. At Life Steps, we help those with the greatest challenges by giving them training, skills and confidence to achieve greater independence and realize their personal potentials. In today's economy, your support is more urgent than ever.

Please consider joining our Life Steps Community with a donation. Visit **[www.LifeSteps.org](http://www.LifeSteps.org)** and click the "Donate" button today! Your name will be recognized on our Life Changer list of donors. Thank you for your support.

## LIFE STEPS GROUP LOCATIONS

Life Steps Foundation (Corporate)  
5839 Green Valley Circle, Suite 204  
Culver City, CA 90230  
310-410-8190

LSF Southern California Adult Services  
(Affiliate)  
500 E. 4th Street  
Long Beach, CA 90802

LSF Central California Adult Services  
(Affiliate)  
1431 Pomeroy Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
805-549-0150

LSF Santa Maria Wisdom Center  
(Business Unit)  
1414 N. Broadway, Suite A  
Santa Maria, CA 93454  
805-354-5320

LSF Northern California Adult Services  
(Business Unit)  
828 C. Mahler Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
650-259-1808

LSF Children and Family Services  
(Affiliate)  
1930 Brea Canyon Road, Suite 265  
Diamond Bar, CA 91765  
562-699-4991

401 Santa Lucia Avenue  
Millbrae, CA 94030  
650-777-9182

632 West Avenue, H-8  
Lancaster, CA 93534  
661-266-0756

700 Rose Avenue  
San Gabriel, CA 91775  
626-614-9345

830 Rosita Road  
Pacifica, CA 94044  
650-777-9182



Life Steps Foundation, Inc. is a fiscally responsible, culturally competent CA 501 (c) (3) non-profit dedicated to meeting the health, psychological and socioeconomical challenges of people throughout their lifespan.