In Step
Life Steps Foundation
Spring 2026 Newsletter

LSF Central Coast Adult Services: A Journey Back to Santa Cruz

For one individual supported by Life Steps Foundation, a recent birthday trip to Santa Cruz became much more than a vacation—it was the achievement of a long-term personal goal. Having grown up in Santa Cruz, he had often spoken about returning to visit the place that held so many meaningful memories. Because he lived on a limited income and managed ongoing mental health challenges, such a trip required careful planning, budgeting, and commitment.

With support from Life Steps Foundation staff, he developed a person-centered goal focused on saving money, managing his budget, and maintaining his health so he could safely travel. Over the course of nearly a year, he consistently set aside money, attended medical appointments, and worked through obstacles that arose along the way. Staff also helped identify a trusted support person who could accompany him on the trip, providing reassurance and stability throughout the experience.

In 2025, he successfully achieved his goal and enjoyed a three-day birthday trip to Santa Cruz. He visited favorite local spots, explored thrift stores in search of old clocks and radios, and celebrated with a special meal at Pizza My Heart. One of the most memorable moments occurred when he visited his grandparents' former home and met the current homeowners, who remembered both the family and the home's history. The unexpected encounter created a powerful sense of connection, belonging, and reflection.

This journey demonstrates the impact of person-centered planning, persistence, and meaningful support. Through patience, trust, and dedication, a dream of returning home became a reality and created memories that will last a lifetime.



A special birthday trip back to the place he once called home.

LSF Southern California Children and Family Services: Ming Finds His Voice

Ming was referred to Life Steps Foundation at 28 months old due to concerns about his language development. At home, he was exposed to Chinese, while English was spoken at his daycare. When services began, Ming made very little eye contact and preferred to play alone. To encourage interaction, his Early Interventionist worked with his mother to create a small table-and-chair play routine that allowed them to engage at eye level during play activities. Over time, Ming began making eye contact and participating more actively during sessions. Another important goal was learning to clean up toys. Although this was challenging at first, consistent support from his mother and Early Interventionist helped him learn the routine, and he eventually responded independently to the clean-up song. Ming also began imitating single English words, including letters of the alphabet, fruits, and animals, and his social interactions improved significantly. Within just six months, he made remarkable progress in both communication and social development, expanding his vocabulary and enjoying pretend play with his mother.

Reflecting on his growth, Ming's mother shared,
"I wish we could continue the service with you. Ming always plays well with you, and he is willing to imitate words with you only."

LSF Northern California Children and Family Services We Play We Learn: A Year of Creativity, Learning, and Celebration

The children and staff at We Play We Learn enjoyed a fun-filled year of creativity, learning, and community. One of the year's highlights was the creation of a colorful mural in the breezeway, designed and painted together by the children and teachers to reflect their creativity and sense of belonging. In February, the children celebrated Valentine's Day with cookie decorating, festive parties, and exchanging valentines with friends. In May, they explored the traditions of Cinco de Mayo by making their own tacos and tasting delicious conchas. These hands-on activities provided meaningful opportunities to learn about different cultures while having fun. We are proud of the many memories made throughout the year and look forward to more exciting experiences ahead.





LSF Northern California Adult Services: HCBS Workshop Promotes Self-Advocacy

On February 24, 2026, four Social Dynamics participants attended an in-person Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) workshop hosted by Alo Consultation at the new Golden Gate Regional Center office in San Mateo. The workshop focused on HCBS rights, the HCBS Final Rule, and the importance of self-advocacy. Participants learned how these rights support independence, personal choice, and community inclusion. One of the highlights was the Vision Board activity, where individuals created personalized boards reflecting their goals, relationships, interests, and preferred activities. Participants enjoyed expressing themselves creatively and took their completed Vision Boards home. The workshop provided valuable information and practical tools, making it an engaging and meaningful experience for both participants and staff.



LSF SoCal Adult Services: A Generous Gift for Seaside Learning Center

Life Steps Foundation and the participants of Seaside Learning Center extend their sincere gratitude to Bob Smith, Executive Director of the Greater Los Angeles New Car Dealers Association (GLANCDA), and Ian Andrews of Thomas Acura for their generous $5,000 donation presented on March 3, 2026.



This contribution helps Life Steps Foundation continue providing services that empower individuals with developmental disabilities to live more independently and actively participate in their communities. We greatly appreciate your support and partnership in making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. Thank you for helping make these opportunities possible.

LIFE STEPS FOUNDATION®

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Life Steps Foundation was launched in 1983 and has successfully improved the lives of thousands of children and adults diagnosed with delays or developmental disabilities. The purpose of our programs and services is to enhance participants' lives, empower them to achieve life goals, foster self-advocacy, and ensure they can live as independently as possible as adults. We accomplish this by enhancing their abilities and providing aid in the areas of communication, money management, household upkeep, mobility, socialization, and making healthy life choices. In addition, we provide in-home assistance to frail seniors who desire to remain living in their own homes. Please consider joining our Life Steps community with a donation. All donations support of our work to brighten the lives of the children, adults, seniors, and families we assist. We accept donations in the form of stocks, bequests, and vehicles. Visit www.lifesteps.org and click the 'Donate' button today!

www.lifestepsfoundation.org

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