

SAINT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

ONE80

REAL PEOPLE. REAL CHANGE.

William Porter for President

If he is any indication,
there's hope for the future.

Wide Open Walls

Explore Sacramento's
artistic transformation.

Waking up

from Maren's Nightmare



Red Door Stories

A series of real life
stories from the
women and children
of Saint John's.





**Saint John's
provides the tools
needed to achieve
self-sustainability,
and to leave poverty
and dependence
behind, once and
for all.**

CONTENTS

05

UP CLOSE

Words of wisdom and perspective from media legend Gregory Favre.

08

RED DOOR STORIES

Alicia's inspiring story of redemption and reunification.

10

WAKING UP FROM MAREN'S NIGHTMARE

A painful, yet inspiring story of overcoming life's most devastating curveballs.

16

OH WHAT A NIGHT!

Party for Change 2018

18

A SISTER'S STORY

By April Underwood,
sister of Saint John's client Jenifer

20

MEALS WITH A MEANING

Saint John's clients soar with help from our Employment Training Program.

22

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Saint John's Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program (CCTRP) celebrates its first year in operation.

24

WIDE OPEN WALLS

Sacramento's famous murals empower, inspire and transform lives.

26

WILLIAM PORTER FOR PRESIDENT

From the eyes of a teen on the road to greatness.

DEPARTMENTS

04 A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

07 A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

30 ONGOING NEEDS

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



The Long and Winding Road.

Welcome to our second edition of ONE80 magazine. As an organization, Saint John's has been faced with substantial hurdles this past year and the very fact that we are able to continue providing this publication is a solid testament to the hard work of our staff, their passionate dedication, and an ongoing commitment to realize lasting results in the lives of others.

It is our intent that this magazine provides you with clarity and insight behind the scenes at Saint John's and a deeper understanding of what the organization accomplishes each day. More than that, however, as an organization built around the concept of "Real Change" we want to provide inspirational stories and articles that reach further, touching all of Sacramento. This magazine is about change... how it affects each one of us, shifting the direction of our lives, how we face it, navigate it, and struggle to move forward. It's about overcoming great personal challenges. It's about victory and the unquenchable spirit of those who, facing seemingly insurmountable odds, somehow found a way through. It is a message of hope.

Change is seldom easy. But when others travel the road before us, their stories might just provide a glimpse of success and the inspiration that, we too...can change.

David M. Flanagan
Editor-in-Chief



saint john's
PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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SAINT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

ONE80
REAL PEOPLE. REAL CHANGE.

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ONE80 Magazine is a bi-annual publication produced by Saint John's Program for Real Change, featuring stories of real people – friends, family, neighbors, business owners and of course, the women and children of Saint John's – who have experienced dramatic change in their lives. For more information, advertising rates and deadlines, contact Sasha Wirth at swirth@saintjohnsprogram.org or Bethany Knudsen, bknudsen@saintjohnsprogram.org.

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WITH MEDIA LEGEND GREGORY FAVRE

With more than 70 years in the business (he got his start folding newspapers by hand at age eight), Gregory Favre has seen it all, done most of it all, and he's still hard at it. Now serving as the PolitiFact California Editor for Cap Radio and as a board member for CALmatters, Favre's illustrious career includes serving as executive editor of The Sacramento Bee (1984-1998), vice president of news for The McClatchy Company (1989-2001), founding editor of CALmatters (2015), and as president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. He has been recognized with numerous awards and accolades over the years, including the National Association of Minority Media Executives Catalyst Award for leadership in advocating and advancing diversity in the news industry, an award of significant meaning to him.

He and his wife are donors with ties to a number of organizations including their church, the B Street Theater and Habitat for Humanity to name a few. Their knowledge of Saint John's deeply expanded 15 years ago when they chose St. John's Lutheran Church in Sacramento as their spiritual home, the 1985 birthplace of what is now Saint John's Program for Real Change. Since then, Favre has volunteered his time to help in church-directed projects for Saint John's, and has lent his editing skills for collateral material, web content and OpEd pieces.

"Pope Francis talks about indifference," observes Favre. "We are falling into indifference in that we've become used to the suffering of others. To me, what Saint John's is doing is directly addressing that feeling of indifference. It opens its doors to people in need. It's the right thing to do. The humane thing to do."

"When Katrina hit, when the Paradise fires erupted, people came from all over to help," he continues. "Nobody asked them what their religion was, whether they were straight or gay, rich or poor, what they believed, what they didn't believe. Nobody asked. This has made an incredible impression on me. Neighbors helping neighbors, no questions asked. We have to find a way to respond like this on a daily basis, not just when there's a natural disaster. That's what Saint John's delivers, every day."

"Saint John's provides a journey filled with faith and community and courage, guided by a clear sense of purpose and vision that has benefited thousands of women and children," adds Favre. "It has been said that we can live for days without food and water, but only one second without hope. Saint John's provides that hope."



**WE OFTEN SEE
A SINGLE
COMMON
DENOMINATOR**

TRUE, SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS
COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.
BUT THEY ALL SHARE THE SAME
LOOK WHEN TREATED LIKE FAMILY.

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A LETTER FROM PHIL TELGENHOFF

Change is in the Air

Indeed, change is in the air here at Saint John's! As many of you already know, we recently transitioned to new leadership with the April departure of Michele Steeb, our CEO for the past 12 years. While we are deeply saddened to see her go, we fully support her commitment to her family as they relocate to Lucas, Texas, where Michele's husband Jim has accepted a new job. Thanks to Michele's tireless efforts and the many ripples of change she created during her tenure, we are well-positioned to continue to meet the growing needs of the women and children we serve.

Saint John's has transformed from a 30-day emergency shelter to an up-to-18-month continuum of care providing women with the tools they need to address the root causes of their homelessness, including addiction, mental health, lack of employment skills and employment history, domestic violence, criminal history, lack of education and more. Our commitment to this focus has continued under the leadership of Marc Cawdrey, our COO and now Interim CEO, and Vice President and Chief Development Officer Sasha Wirth.

At Saint John's, we know that high expectations are the framework through which high achievements are possible. With supporters like you by our side, Saint John's has continued to provide a hand up, not a handout, to the now more than 220 women and children we currently serve each day, yet we still have 50 empty beds waiting to be funded.

We are fortunate to have a robust and vibrant community of supporters who, like you, believe in the power of our mission and in the potential of our women to become the primary providers and positive role models for their families. Please continue to show your support for our clients who bravely chose to leave devastating circumstances, acting on faith that Saint John's can support them in transforming their lives. Your engagement is so appreciated and vitally important in helping Saint John's continue to grow and flourish.

We thank you, profoundly, for standing by our side, then and now. Together, we are making a difference, one woman and one child at a time.

With much appreciation,

Phil Telgenhoff
Board Chair
Saint John's Program for Real Change
Field Senior Vice President, California, Allstate Insurance Company

P.S. For additional ways to help, please explore this magazine and visit us at www.saintjohnsprogram.org.



Sasha Wirth, Vice President and Chief Development Officer and Marc Cawdrey, Interim CEO, Saint John's Program for Real Change

**"I ALONE CANNOT
CHANGE THE
WORLD, BUT I CAN
CAST A STONE
ACROSS THE
WATERS TO CREATE
MANY RIPPLES."**

- MOTHER TERESA

THE RED DOOR STORIES

REUNITED



An innocent, newborn baby...what, exactly, did Mikhayla do to deserve the cruel life she was given? Why did she have to endure a world of such pain few of us can fathom, from the day she was born? The ninth child in a hopelessly broken family, the cold, cruel answer is...nothing. Nothing at all. Like all children, her lot in life was not of her own choosing. Her innocence became irrelevant in the face of her mother's severe drug addiction. Child Protective Services stepped in and separated her from a mother she knew for only a brief moment.

An endless circle of pain, this story however, started long before Mikhayla was conceived. Her mother, Alicia, was also born into a very frighteningly similar world of drugs, abuse and shattered confusion. Repeatedly molested at nine years of age (by her mother's boyfriend), it wasn't until her younger sister was also raped that she was able to gain the attention of a wary teacher who brought in the authorities. While this ended the physical abuse, her mother became convinced Alicia had lied, concocting her wild story only to gain attention. Ultimately, she turned her back completely on Alicia and shut the door behind her. Taken by Child Protective Services, Alicia was thrust into a whole new chapter of foster care and a dark, bottomless well of despair.

"It crushed the person I was," admits Alicia. "I never smiled. I couldn't laugh. I was just broken inside."

By the time she turned thirteen, Alicia became pregnant. After an abortion, barely thirteen years old, she was considered one of the many hopeless cases and sent to a children's receiving home to await whatever the State dictated was in her best interest. There was nothing for her. By the time she turned twenty she had already been married three times, given birth to two children, and decided against another. Alcohol and methamphetamines became a daily diet, openly injecting herself in front of her children. Then, after a particularly severe beating by

her drug-crazed husband, he was arrested and deported, leaving Alicia suddenly alone to feed and care for several children, with no roof over their head.

"MOST OF MY LIFE, I FELT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING WAS TRYING TO KILL ME ... I HAVE THESE DREAMS OF THE DEVIL, TYING ME UP, LAUGHING..."

The rain continued to fall. Eight children later, her dark life accelerated, the addictions becoming hopelessly severe. With no education, no social, work or life skills, and no place to call home, Alicia spiraled out of control. While living on the streets by day, sleeping in shelters by night, it felt as though this burden could not possibly get any heavier...when Mikhayla was born. With no feasible means of caring for her, the authorities immediately whisked the baby away. Beyond devastation, Alicia crashed. Like a dead light bulb, life was over. She was finally finished.

Alone and broken, Alicia entered Saint John's 18-month program. It was the first step that would turn her entire world around and begin to provide her with tools she had never known. Life tools to help rebuild her world from the ground up. Counseling, schooling, training and job skills that, for the very first time, gave her the foundation and the strength to stand confidently on her own two feet. Best of all, due to the structure and success of the program around her, she was able to reunite with her daughter, Mikhayla.

After graduating from Saint John's, Alicia persisted. She fought to maintain her growing accomplishments. More than seven years clean, sober and strong now, she has held down the same steady job, rewarded twice with promotions. She pays her own rent. She pays taxes. And something

she never before could have imagined, she faithfully contributes to her own 401k. Steadily, brick by brick, Alicia has continued to build a new life. And that life now includes a real home...a warm, stable and loving place where young Mikhayla and sister Hillary are safe, nurtured and loved. The seemingly endless and desperate cycle of pain, one that would surely have destroyed them all...has been broken. Finally, now reunited with all nine of her children, they all are rebuilding their relationships, their family, and their lives.

When a child is separated from a mother, the whole world shatters.

In putting the pieces back together again... a miracle gently unfolds.

Visit SaintJohnsProgram.org and read more stories of real lives and real change.



BY DAVID M. FLANAGAN

Waking up from Maren's Nightmare

“You’re a total idiot”, her sister chided. “Guys like this are what every girl dreams about. You’ve got one, literally begging you to go out with him, and you said... no?”

IT WAS TRUE, according to Maren, all signs pointed to Dennis Conrad, a very alluring man she had recently met, potentially being the man of her dreams. But, seriously, it was all a little too good to be true. She was, after all, just a simple bartender. He was a successful VP at Morgan Stanley. She was a starving artist. He was a wealthy financier. Salt and pepper, the two did not appear to fit. “Charming, rich, good looking, and so sweet,” she recalls, “of all the people on earth, why would he be even remotely interested in me?” And yet, he was...

One simple dinner date rolled rather rapidly into the sound of wedding bells and a classic fairytale romance that exploded like apple blossoms in spring. A storybook ceremony at the Alhambra Palace in Granada, Andalusia, Spain was followed by a feast set for kings in a classic Flamenco cave. Add an exquisite Italian honeymoon and Maren’s world suddenly became a bit unbelievable. An unexpected gift. A grateful miracle. Then, when it couldn’t possibly get any better, a touch of frosting on her cake, Hunter, an angelic baby boy entered the picture, creating a whole new level of utter sublime bliss.

Oh, how things can change with just a few ticks of the clock...





“So one day, I thought... I don’t have to do this anymore,” she says. “I walked out the door with Hunter and just left it all behind.”

Dennis, Maren and Hunter, the three became almost inseparable. “Every day at 5:30, baby Hunter and I would sit on the front porch of our beautiful home”, Maren recalls, a tear in her eye, “waiting for Daddy to come home.” But this life, as incredible as it had become, was not to last. Suddenly, just as quickly as it began, the dream was over.

Running late for their daily homecoming, Maren noticed the garage door was wide open. Stranger still, Dennis’ car was not in the driveway either. Numerous warning signs, as loud as they were, became clouded and ignored, including the bright red drops of blood lining the kitchen floor. Then, turning the corner into the living room, Maren was met with the unimaginable sight of her husband, bullet holes covering his back, lying face down in a massive pool of his own blood.

Hunter still strapped in the car outside, she ran for the phone to dial 911, but it was nowhere to be found. Only then did she begin to notice the entire house had been ransacked. In the blink of an eye, turned completely upside down, some crazed burglar had destroyed her world.

Finding another phone, she managed to call 911, returning immediately to her husband, administering mouth-to-mouth; a natural instinct, but futile effort. Dennis was gone. The police found Maren in shock, her face and clothes covered in blood. The fear, anguish, and utter humiliation that followed were, as Maren recalls, surreal. “They took hundreds of pictures of me,” she says. “I can understand now, just doing their job, they thought I might have done it.”

Luckily, having stolen their car, authorities were able to track the license plate and apprehend the killer in only a few hours — a seemingly random burglar, strung out on meth, with no understanding or concern for the beautiful family he had just ended.

The trial lasted for three long years. An unremorseful James Shanrock appeared to be a total stranger seeking to support his habit. In a drug-induced frenzy, he actually emptied an

entire bullet clip, then took the time to reload and just kept shooting Dennis...in the back. Eleven times. Maren was asked if she wanted to pursue the death sentence, an almost impossible question for a 25-year old and as much as she wished this man the same pain he had caused, she couldn’t go as far. When he was given six life sentences without the possibility of parole, Maren simply closed her eyes and wept.

It was her husband’s best friend who stood by her through the whole traumatic experience. As it turned out, however, Maren’s nightmare was far from over, and his intentions were anything but honorable. In her state of emotional weakness, he wooed her, seduced her, conned her, and convinced her to marry him. In doing so, she unwittingly handed over the keys of the kingdom to a veritable sociopath.

Anything but a friend, her new husband very calculatingly funded his own growing drug addiction, systematically selling all that she owned, draining savings accounts, trust fund accounts, life insurance settlements, even her son’s college fund. Then, adding insult to injury, he racked up a line of credit on her house well over \$600,000. “He took everything I had left and then some,” says Maren. The financial loss was nothing though, compared to the physical and verbal abuse that increasingly mounted, both to her and Hunter. “He would beat us both and I didn’t know how to make it stop.”

What kind of person could act this way? Who steps in on behalf of his murdered best friend, and destroys what is left? It is beyond comprehension. “So one day, I thought... I don’t have to do this anymore,” she says. “I walked out the door with Hunter and just left it all behind.”

With absolutely no idea how she would survive or put food on the table, Maren searched for odd jobs, teaching art at a few local schools, creating an occasional painting on commission, anything she could to manage. One of these pieces caught the attention of Elliot Fouts, owner of a Sacramento gallery, who asked if he might represent her. And just like that, once again, the clouds began to clear, the sun still there to shine down upon her.

Then, in a twist of fate nobody could have predicted, the impossible happened. One particular painting, O Street Persimmon, was purchased by an admirer as a gift to his wife. “The persimmon,” as Maren explains it, “is an intense, bright orange fruit, often covered in a layer of frost, brought forth in the freezing dead of winter.” She had created this unique piece as a personal symbol of the incredible beauty often born only from intense pain. Captured only by the image, the man who purchased the piece knew nothing of its deeper meaning nor had any prior knowledge of the painter who created it. His wife, on the other hand, now that was a different story altogether.

O Street Persimmon, gracing the wall of their home, was seen by a visitor who took note, casually mentioning, “Oh, that’s a Maren Conrad piece. What an incredible story she has...” Making no connection still, the visitor was pressed to reveal the underlying story of

wound, yet somehow healing the pain, she gained a new and rather unexpected friend in the process. Shanrock, this soulless shell of a man, had shattered both of their lives. Some would consider this all a rather bizarre series of random coincidences. Others, like Maren, who don’t believe in such coincidence... a very rare and precious miracle.

Since that time, Maren’s life as a painter has catapulted forward. There has been no looking back. Her acclaim and status as a celebrated artist have skyrocketed. “My work is hanging in galleries across the country now,” she says in complete surprise. “In the Aerena Gallery, I’m actually hanging right next to Annie Leibovitz.” And indeed, Maren’s name has achieved rising notoriety. Many here in Sacramento have become increasingly familiar with her and the striking caliber of her work. Few know, however, in the dead of winter, the ice covered road she traveled to get here.

Married once again to an incredible man, Geoff Jernigan, who Maren lovingly refers to as Captain America, she holds tightly to the only thing she really values; hope. “Nobody can ever take that from me. Ever,” she says, eyes filled with light. “No matter what happens, Hunter and me... we will always come out on the other side. As for tomorrow, I have no goals,” Maren offered, rather matter-of-factly. “Goals

are things people put in place in an effort to live tomorrow. I’m perfectly happy right where I am, simply living today.”

Then, as the conversation drew to an end, Maren offered one more small insight that seemed to sum up her entire story. “My life is a painting,” she said. “I love the actual process of painting itself, not the end product. If I have to worry about how a painting will end up, how it will turn out, that’s way too scary. I would never even start. I’m not attached to outcomes anymore. I just paint. Then I paint some more.”

David Flanagan serves on the board of directors of Saint John’s. He is the co-owner of Misfit, a California-based brand/marketing agency. dflanagan@agencymisfit.com

“The persimmon,” as Maren explains it, “is an intense, bright orange fruit, often covered in a layer of frost, brought forth in the freezing dead of winter.” She had created this unique piece as a personal symbol of the incredible beauty often born only from intense pain.

Maren’s shocking past, the murder, the trial, and suddenly... it all hit home. The woman to whom the painting had been given was none other than Sharon Chamisa, the public defense attorney who represented the cold-blooded killer of Maren’s husband.

Ms. Chamisa immediately wrote Maren a long letter of abject apology, offering to return the painting. In her letter, she continued to explain that having to defend Shanrock was one of the most painful experiences of her entire life and resulted ultimately, in the choice to end her career as a trial lawyer. It had, in fact, completely devastated her.

Upon receiving the letter, Maren broke into tears and picked up the phone. Reopening the





PARTY FOR CHANGE DAZZLES SACRAMENTO!

Our 4th Annual Party for Change was truly the event of the season! Held at the brand new Mather Jet Center on November 3, 2018, and attended by nearly 600 of Sacramento's finest, this elegant black tie soiree raised more than \$500,000 in support of homeless families in crisis, helping them to move from homelessness to self-sustainability.



Our emcees Kellie DeMarco of KCRA and Rob Stewart of KVIE flawlessly orchestrated the evening's presentation from dancing to singing, from video to awards, ending the evening with a cell phone-flashlight lit, spiritually-charged group sing-along of "This Little Light of Mine," led by the angelic pipes of Saint John's alumnae, current clients, and choir members from Bayside Midtown. The event featured contemporary American cuisine by Chef

Brad Cecchi of popular East Sacramento restaurant Canon, music by Las Vegas DJ E-Noc, dance and aerialist performances by the Sacramento Contemporary Dance Theatre and a live auction with auctioneer David Sobon. Sacramento City Councilwoman Angelique Ashby and Sierra Health Foundation President and CEO, and outgoing Saint John's Board President Chet Hewitt, were honored as our 2018 Champions of Change.

**SAVE THE DATE!
PARTY FOR CHANGE, NOVEMBER 2, 2019**



April Underwood surprises her sister Jenifer, a Saint John's client, on stage after Jenifer's performance at 2018's Party for Change. April flew in from the Philippines for the big surprise!

If you've ever been in a support-person role (and most of us have), you know how difficult it is to navigate the obstacles, emotions, logistics and, in most cases, unfavorable circumstances associated with the person you are trying to help. Add to that the frustration and heartbreak of doing everything you know to be physically, financially and emotionally possible, and still your loved one flounders. The family and friends of our clients have suffered mightily through our clients' journeys, and in turn, experience immense relief when Real Change occurs. Here are a few reflections from a client's sister:

When my sister Jenifer was 12 and I was 30, our father passed away suddenly. While I lived in California, Jenifer was with our dad in Florida as he took his last breath. Fast forward 20 years, and Jenifer has been through all manners of challenges. From having money, to being broke and homeless. From building a promising career to a mother of three dealing with substance abuse. And rock bottom; her precious children in and out of foster care. One of the biggest changes that I have seen in my sister is that she no longer blames others for her challenges. It's only when we stop blaming others for the obstacles that we face, can we begin to take the positive steps towards change and personal growth. As long as we place blame on others for our circumstances we cannot take personal responsibility for our decisions and make a commitment to changing our future outcomes.

Becoming a functioning, successful member of society requires more than giving a homeless mom and her children food and a place to sleep. Saint John's has given Jenifer peer support, friendship of other women facing the same challenges, help with getting her children back, job training, and the opportunity to work and feel productive in society. My sister has benefited greatly from the therapy she receives as well as the accountability related to staying drug free through the entire process. Yes, there are challenges. However, my sister has gone from feeling abandoned and unloved by her family members to experiencing faith and gratitude for every part of her healing process.

April Underwood
Sister of Saint John's client Jenifer Underwood



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MEALS WITH A MEANING.



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Plates Café and Catering and Plates Midtown are home to two of our three vocational training programs, which provide our clients with critical job readiness and employment training. From the 200-person Plates Café, home to our popular Guest Chef Dinners and Plates Catering, to the charming boutique-like Plates Midtown and its popular outdoor patio, the women of Saint John's receive up to 560 hours of job training from food prep, presentation, and dishwashing to hostessing, serving, and cashier. Volunteer Learners are an integral part of our catering business, serving parties both large (like Wilton Rancheria's Annual Holiday Dinner for 700) and small (a baby shower for 25), both onsite and off-site. During November and December alone, Plates catered 43 events in addition to hosting regular patrons and holiday celebrations at our restaurants.

"The clients love to work catering events," comments Plates Catering Manager Erin Landreth. "Along with

their enthusiasm and the skills they have learned in our Employment Training Program, we successfully execute events as large as 800 people. When the girls excel in a new skill, it makes me so proud, and you can see how happy it makes them. It's why I so love being a part of this program."

"They are learning about customer service, about working as a team, about executing a task from start to finish, about striving for excellence and not settling for mediocrity," adds Plates Culinary Program Director Dwayne Scott. "In fact, most of our clients are hired by organizations that are not restaurants, although some clients do get excited about the culinary industry and have continued down that path."

Headed up by Scott, a former instructor from the San Francisco Culinary Academy, Catering Manager Erin Landreth, Kitchen Manager Courtney Marx and Floor Manager Soraya Gardizi, Volunteer Learners graduate

from the Employment Training Program once they've completed at least 400 hours and up to 560 hours of hands-on training, and they have secured and maintained employment for a minimum of 30 days.

By eating at Plates Cafe, Plates Midtown and using Plates to cater your event, you are providing vital training opportunities for women who are working hard to become self-sustaining, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty and dependence, one family at a time. At your place or ours, our goal is to deliver great service, incredible food and a meaningful cause. We train our clients to provide professional service and make attractive and delicious food using the freshest local produce and seasonal ingredients.

For catering needs, please contact Erin Landreth, elandreth@eatatplates.com, or call 916-381-2233.

ROASTED PORK LOIN



ROASTED PORK LOIN
1 lb. Pork Loin

PORK MARINADE

½ cup fish sauce
2 Tbsp honey
4 Tbsp sugar
2 tsp pepper
8 each scallions (green onion)
1 Tbsp garlic- minced

MASHED POTATOES

4 large red skin potatoes
1 clove garlic
1 Tbsp butter
½ cup of milk
pinch of salt
pinch of pepper

APRICOT HORSE RADISH GLAZE

1/2cup apricot preserve
1 Tbsp prepared horseradish

SAUTÉED SPINACH

8 oz fresh spinach
½ oz olive oil
1 clove garlic- minced
1 tsp lemon juice

01 Boil potatoes until done. Heat milk, butter and garlic in separate pot. When potatoes are done mash with milk butter and garlic. Season with salt and pepper.

02 Marinate pork for at least one hour and up to 24 hours. In a preheated 350 degree oven, roast pork until internal temperature reaches 145 degrees.

03 Mix apricot preserve and horseradish

04 Heat small amount of olive oil (enough to coat pan) in sauté pan. Lightly sauté garlic, add spinach, toss a few times then add lemon juice. The fresh spinach cooks quickly. Season with salt and pepper.

Serves two.



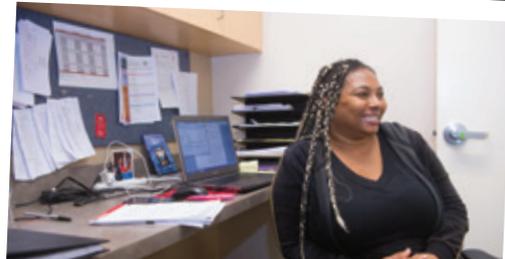
A Day in the Life...

By Scot Sorensen
Director, CCTRP

SAINT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE is about creating REAL CHANGE in the lives of women and their children. That REAL CHANGE is the reason the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) engaged Saint John's to run its Sacramento-based Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program (CCTRP). With more than 5,000 female inmates now in custody throughout the state, CDCR launched its first of five CCTRPs across the state four years ago to help women in custody successfully reintegrate into society as employed and productive members. While it's still early, the results are incredibly promising—recidivism is just 2.2% statewide for those who have graduated from CCTRP, compared to a staggering 37% recidivism rate for women in custody within the general population. Within our first year of operation, Saint John's CCTRP facility has thus far served 101 women, with 34 successfully paroling and currently 49 within the facility.

CDCR now operates five CCTRPs throughout the state, located in San Diego, Santa Fe Springs, Bakersfield, Stockton and Sacramento. The goal of this innovative and evidence-based reentry program is to reduce recidivism by equipping female felony offenders with 45 days to two-and-a-half years left on their sentence with the life and employment skills to help them reenter society as productive and empowered contributors. It is no accident that the skills that are required to help Saint John's clients move from homelessness to self-sustainability are the same skills needed for women in custody to successfully reenter their communities. Addressing issues of substance abuse, mental health stability, domestic violence, trauma, money management, as well as vocational skills are all part of Saint John's Program and have been adopted into the CCTRP curriculum as well.

Daily life at CCTRP looks like this: Early in the morning, April (not her real name) awoke to her release date. For the past 12 months, April has been a Saint John's CCTRP client. Over the past year she has: 1) completed over 20 separate classes; 2) been clean and sober; 3) obtained permanent employment that continues after her release; 4) secured safe and permanent sober living housing; 5) made significant progress in paying off her restitution; and 5) walked away with thousands of dollars in her savings account.



This 12-month journey was not without its ups and downs, including several big victories and several significant set-backs. But, surrounded by skillful and caring staff, each challenge was met with support, guidance and encouragement... just like the unconditional acceptance, truth-telling and accountability that clients at Saint John's experience.

None of this would have happened without the support of the CCTRP community, the guidance of Saint John's counselors and staff, and the framework of Saint John's mission, vision and core values, a mantra that each and every CCTRP client is required to memorize and recite, which outline guiding principles that are referenced literally on a daily basis.

We have a couple of traditions when a client is ready to parole, and April availed herself of both. One is that they leave their handprint beside the red-door of our garden shed. Because, indeed, each and every one has left their mark on the community. The second tradition is that they get to share a YouTube song with the house on the day before they leave. April chose "I'm Movin' On" by Rascal Flatts. Some of the lyrics include these lines:

**"I've dealt with my ghosts
and faced all my demons**

Finally content with a past I regret

**I've found you find strength in your
moments of weakness**

For once I'm at peace with myself

**I've been burdened with blame,
trapped in the past for too long**

I'm movin' on..."

Indeed, April is 'movin' on' in the best sense of the word.

On the same day that April paroled out of the program, Isabella (not her real name) was getting ready to leave Folsom Women's Prison. Upon arriving at CCTRP, Isabella was greeted not only by staff, but by her "big sister," a client who serves as her guide throughout her time in the house – and the Clothing Closet volunteer. The Clothing Closet is a small closet where all new arrivals can choose two regular clothes outfits (no grey prison garb) as

well as new undergarments. Changing out of prison clothes to regular clothes is the first of many steps on this road to reentry, and speaks volumes to the client's journey in rediscovering and recapturing their identity as a soon-to-be-free citizen.

At her first meal, Isabella is a bit surprised, as everyone is, that there are no plastic sporks, but regular silverware. And the food is not mass produced, but rather made with care for the 50 clients in residence. Community time at meals is a very real part of this reentry recovery and regaining a new sense of normal.

Over the next few weeks, Isabella will begin the journey that April has just completed. She will attend classes. She will get in the rhythm of daily chores. As a newcomer she will start work in the kitchen, as all new clients do. And besides the routine of daily chores required here and at Saint John's, whereby the floors are mopped daily, bathrooms scrubbed twice a day, and windows cleaned – there is also the practice of Sunday morning double-scrub, a two-hour, Sunday morning hyper-active time where the house is scrubbed top to bottom each and every week. These chores are more than keeping the house clean, they are an integral part of the daily discipline, like making beds and cleaning rooms that put order back into their lives.

Providing inmates with the tools they need to address the root causes of the circumstances that led to their incarceration rather than just releasing them to the community cold-turkey is certainly paying off. With the recidivism rates so drastically reduced, the CCTRP program is a model not only for California's inmate-to-community population, but a proven model for tackling the issue of homelessness. Both populations face the same hurdles: lack of education and job skills, addiction, domestic abuse, poverty, lack of life skills and mental health issues. Since its founding in 1985, Saint John's has helped more than 30,000 women and children transition from poverty and dependence to confidence and self-sustainability, moving them from welfare recipients to tax paying citizens and productive members of our community. Human beings who have fallen down don't have to stay down if they are lifted up in a manner that allows them to stand on their own.



W I D E

“Art is an integral part of the human experience and can empower, inspire, and transform lives.”

O P E N

By Sue Cawdrey
Grants & Communications Manager

W A I L S

In photo:
David Sobon

The idea of bringing a mural festival to Sacramento came to David Sobon while he and his wife Anna were walking their dog Dexter through the alleys of Midtown one afternoon in 2015. What inspiration this would bring, he imagined – an art activation that would engage, inspire and unite our growing community. Initially coming to fruition as the Sacramento Mural Festival, a joint project with the Friends of the Arts Commission born in 2016, the project transformed to become what is now known as “Wide Open Walls” in 2017, when David recruited renowned curator Warren Brand to collaborate on the project. Wide Open Walls brings underserved neighborhoods public art that encourages a sense of pride and identity, provides community gathering spaces, generates impactful, measurable economic growth for the Sacramento region and promotes greater cultural understanding and appreciation among diverse groups. In just a few years, the event has quickly become the largest mural festival on the West Coast.

A tireless advocate for the arts and for the city of Sacramento, David’s high energy and enthusiasm make him one of Sacramento’s most prolific movers and shakers. His motivation is his desire to showcase the diverse, innovative and rapidly evolving cultural landscape of Sacramento, while promoting the excitement and accessibility of street art.

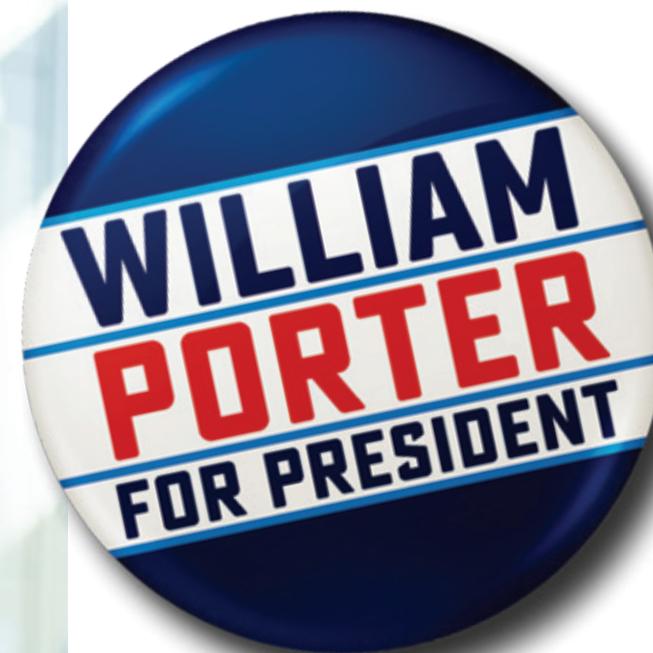
“Wide Open Walls is about transformation – it transforms the artists who participate, as well as the neighborhoods where art is installed,” comments Sobon. “We actually pay our artists, and we pay them more than any other mural festival in the country. We raise these funds through local businesses, building owners, foundations and art lovers. Most artists dream of making a living with their art; our event not only pays them for their work, but provides them with the international exposure they so desperately need to promote their craft. Our 87 permanent and 250 temporary installations have gained a tremendous amount of media attention, and are visited by thousands of tourists each year.

“The murals have boosted Sacramento’s ‘cool factor’ as well,” adds Sobon. “At the same time, they have transformed areas within our community that were formerly considered run down, undesirable and even dangerous, into neighborhoods to be proud of, where tourists now visit and people gather and take photographs.”

An advocate for and long-time supporter of Saint John’s, Sobon has served on event planning committees, collected and delivered in-kind donations, served as auctioneer for many of Saint John’s fundraising events, and was the driving force to bring the Polo for Change event to Saint John’s in 2017. He likens the transformations created by Wide Open Walls to the transformations being made by the women and children in the program.

“At Saint John’s, real and transformative change is happening, every day,” observes Sobon. “Change affects all of us – personally, I’ve recently moved from the hustle and bustle of Midtown to a rural area, which has changed my life dramatically; I now appreciate the time I have to slow down, to breathe, to exercise, to enjoy nature and to be close to my family. It has been a life-changing, and so very positive transformation.”

This year’s Wide Open Walls, scheduled for August 8–19, 2019, will feature some 40 select artists live-painting in the streets of Sacramento throughout the 12-day extravaganza, with gallery openings, mural tours, artist panels, and a Street Art Concert to be held in Capital Mall on August 17. For more information about Wide Open Walls, visit wow916.com



By
David
Flanagan

After a long conversation with Bill Porter, I found myself wondering what Abraham Lincoln must have been like when he was a senior in high school. It doesn't take two minutes to realize, this young man is special. He is going to have a really powerful impact on our world.

A recent graduate of Jesuit High School, at an impressive 6'4" tall, Bill likely could have been the entire first string of their football team had it not been for a concussion incurred during his second year, taking him out of the game, so to speak. No worries, though. Not for a bulldozer like Bill. He simply turned the football switch off and clicked a few other knobs on, focusing his thoughts, time and energy on shotput, track and field, student council and of course, the in-depth study of economics.

OK...

Just a theory, but I'll bet Abraham Lincoln didn't study economics when he was 17. Unlike Bill, I'm pretty sure he hadn't achieved the rank of Eagle Scout either. As part of an Immersion Program or Independent Study, when most kids his age were enjoying the swimming pool, Bill instead signed up for a summer of community service. He aspired to something slightly higher, to become involved with helping the underserved, the "marginalized members of our society," as he so aptly referred to it. Jesuit has a slogan, Men for Others, and apparently this young man took that to heart.

After a good deal of research, naturally, Bill became intrigued with what was taking place at Saint John's Program for Real Change. "For some reason, it appealed to me," he said, not a hint of arrogance in the admission. "I didn't really know what to expect, but being able to work with kids...that sounded rewarding."

When pressed for details, asked if such a step-out was intimidating, frightening perhaps, he smiled. I took that as a yes, even if he did not want to admit it. As tall and confident as he is, I knew after all, he was still only seventeen. There's a little boy still lurking in there somewhere. There has to be. He changed the subject, noting instead his pleasant surprise at the home-like environment Saint John's had created. "All the women and children, it's like home. Everybody has their own (sponsored) rooms," he said. "It's neat to see how many good people support them all. People really care..."

But it was the kids that really affected him most. "I suddenly had to figure out how to talk to them, sort of like in a different language," he laughed. "Leading a pack of Boy Scouts is a whole lot easier than trying to communicate with a three-year old."

After a few days of this odd interaction, he became more comfortable. It was then that he took notice of one small boy in particular; Tsani. Slightly older than some of the others, five years old, Tasani was severely cross-eyed. It was more than evident that this impaired him in almost everything, especially the small tasks we all take for granted that require a more visual effort. "So, I just helped him," Bill offered. "I paid attention to him, pushed him around on a bike..."

Evidently, this extra attention did something to Tsani. Like a new, smaller shadow, he began following Bill around wherever he went. He refused

“Behind every issue, homelessness, addictions, abuse...it's not just statistics we are dealing with. It's real stories. Real people...”

to take his daily nap, unless “Beel” were there to pat him on the back. Even then it was not in an effort to go to sleep, merely a five-year old's trick to get Bill to stay with him, time so treasured now, he simply was not about to sleep through it.

But, Bill was once a little kid, too. And not all that long ago. He knew all about childish tricks to manipulate grown-ups. “What do you want most when you grow up?” Bill asked him, trying to get his mind off and dreaming. “A big, black car,” was the quick response, something Bill had not entirely anticipated. Not a squirt gun, not a muscle-bound action figure, not an atomic rocket launcher...but a big, black car.

Interesting dream.

Bill didn't question it, however, but reached into his pocket and, withdrawing his own car keys, handed them to Tsani, patting his back, and promised, “If you go to sleep now, it will help you to grow big. As you grow, your brain will grow big, too. If you have a big brain, you will do better in sports, get to go to college, and then get a really good job. If you get a good job, you can make lots and lots of money... and then...then you can buy any big, black car you want.” With that, bam, lights out. Still holding onto the keys, Tsani closed his eyes hard and fell asleep.

(Nicely done, Mr. Porter. Now, that's how you talk to a five-year old.)

The following day, Bill arrived to find Tsani and his band of raving fans waiting for him. Bill had taken the time to stop by Ace Hardware and pick up a bunch of random keys, handing one to each child in the group. Tsani was beyond thrilled, shouting, “I'm gonna get a black car! I'm gonna get a black car!” Bill was a bit surprised by the response. A simple little key brought so much joy to these kids. “It had an impact I never could have imagined,” he admits.

(Yeah, that's called insight, Bill.)

Later in the day, Bill's influence and the impact he had upon Tsani became even more wonderfully evident. When he announced that it was time for his nap, Tsani's entire face lit up. He didn't even need to have his back patted before he was ready to get as much sleep as he possibly could, his brain dramatically increasing in size every minute.



As the days passed, Bill watched Tsani emerge from the shadows. He became more independent. He would try and work things out on his own, not needing help. (Pretty cool story, if you ask me.) The question, however, is...who's story is it? Tsani's or Bill's? Who was affected most by the other? Who saw real change in their life by meeting each other? “A lot of change happens just by stepping up, getting involved,” Bill says. “Something little, as simple as patting someone's back, can have a huge impact.”

His summer experience too soon over, Bill is now a cadet studying at West Point, preparing for the next big adventure waiting just ahead. Already more than sure of the answer, in a school as difficult and rigorous as Jesuit and now the hallowed halls of West Point, I asked him if he got good grades. “Pretty good, I guess,” he shrugged, refusing to divulge more detail. “OK, what's your grade point average,” I pressed. “What's pretty good?” He smiled, slightly embarrassed by his own achievements. “I don't know... 4.5.”

Holy hairy Einstein!

OK, I don't know about you, but in my day, I didn't even know you could get a 4.5 average. That's just plain amazing. Sorry Harvard, you lost out on this one. Good grades aside, in talking with him further, it was obvious his destiny held something truly special, not just for himself, but for all those with whom he will come in contact. As young as he is now, Bill is clearly a compassionate, changer of people.

Through his experience at Saint John's his eyes were opened a little wider, bringing a certain new awareness and the realization, as he put it, “Behind

every issue, homelessness, addictions, abuse...it's not just statistics we are dealing with. It's real stories. Real people...”

A bit overwhelmed at this point, I was done with our conversation. I could fill an entire book with the insights he had served up. How could someone so young have already gained such wisdom? But, Bill wasn't quite finished with me yet. I had dared to open the floodgate.

For Tsani,” Bill continued, “well, he is just five years old. He didn't ask for his troubles in life. He is innocent. He was just born into it. But he could just as easily have been me. I could have been him. Either way, you never know who will come along, who you will meet, who will help...and who will change everything. At the end of the day, God created all of us. He loves us all.”

He sat for a moment more, quiet and reflective. “We all have a soul,” he added, one last super nugget. “We all live. We all die. Despite what it looks like on the surface, we are not all that different...”

Indeed.

God bless you, Mr. William Porter, Jr. It is more than evident, you are a Man for Others... In the coming election, sir... you have my vote.

David Flanagan serves on the board of directors of Saint John's. He is the co-owner of Misfit, a California-based brand/marketing agency, dflanagan@agencymisfit.com

Our needs. Your help.

Did you know we have an Amazon Wish List? Want to satisfy a need we have here at Saint John's? Let Amazon do the work for you! Simply go to our wish list, choose your item (i.e. four slice toaster, daily planners, folding table for childcare, diapers, wipes and so much more!) and Amazon will ship directly to Saint John's! Please just be sure to leave a comment on your order so we know who you are :)

Whether its clothes for school or a job interview, diapers and wipes or feminine hygiene products, a donation could make an enormous impact on a woman or child's life.

One more thing, please don't forget to select Amazon Smile and Saint John's Program for Real Change. Thank you!

www.saintjohnsprogram.org/amazon

Swimsuits, towels, sunscreen and all things warm weather to help our kiddos enjoy the sunshine!



Two at a time, Saint John's goes through more than **3,000 pairs of shoes** a year.

Education is a major priority when it comes to pointing a life in the right direction. We need **backpacks and school supplies** for all of our women and children.



saint john's
PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

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- Twin mattress covers
- Pillows
- New twin sheet sets (fitted & flat), comforters, & blankets
- New bath towel sets
- Plastic storage tubs with lids
- Gift cards for Walmart, Target, local grocery stores, etc.

BABIES & TODDLERS

- New/gently used clothing
- Baby formula
- Pull-ups, diapers size 4,5,6, baby wipes
- Pacifiers, sippy cups, bottles, bibs
- New strollers, high chairs
- New underwear
- Play-Dough
- Finger paints
- Costumes/dress up clothes
- Legos

KIDS & TEENS

- New/gently used clothing
- New underwear
- Board games, art sets
- Dolls
- New school backpacks, school supplies
- Basketballs, footballs
- Bathing suits, pool towels
- New backpacks, school supplies

WOMEN

- New/gently used clothing
- Tampons, maxi pads
- Toothpaste, dental floss
- New underwear, socks
- Bus/RT passes
- Body wash/soap
- Shampoos/conditioners
- Face cleansers
- Combs/brushes, hair ties/clips
- Rubber flip flops

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING NEEDS

- Black pants, black non-slip shoes of all sizes
- USB drives for career training & education
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Enjoy an afternoon of action-packed polo, incredible food and fare, live music, shopping and an exclusive silent auction. Join your friends for a one-of-a-kind hat contest, a traditional Champagne Divot Stomp and a day that will long be remembered!

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