

SAINT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

FALL/WINTER 2020

ONE:80

REAL PEOPLE. REAL CHANGE.

**The nonprofit
arena is always
ready to punt**

Ed Goldman

**The gift of
Girl Scouts**

Kellie DeMarco



Red Door Stories

RISING FROM THE ASHES

**“Saint John’s provides a safe,
nurturing environment for
women and children to heal
and to create Real Change in
their lives, once and for all.”**



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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Wasted Money or Return on Investment

In December of 2018, Saint John's received unexpected criticism for a television commercial it aired during the holidays. Several negative responses chastised the "waste" of money, suggesting that any available funds should have been applied more directly to the feeding of the very homeless women and children we serve. From a certain perspective, that appears to make sense. In a more recent example, this publication itself has been attacked as "overly glossy" and again, a clear misuse of funds. In both cases the accusations implied, not-so-subtly, that if Saint John's has "money to burn," clearly we do not need any additional financial support.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Regardless of the fact that (my company) Misfit donated 100% of the television production, and Comcast in turn donated 100% of the airtime, making the effort entirely free of charge, there remained a faction who staunchly believed that nonprofit organizations should not spend time or money on something so frivolous as advertising.

So, let's look at it from another perspective.
One of good, old-fashioned business.

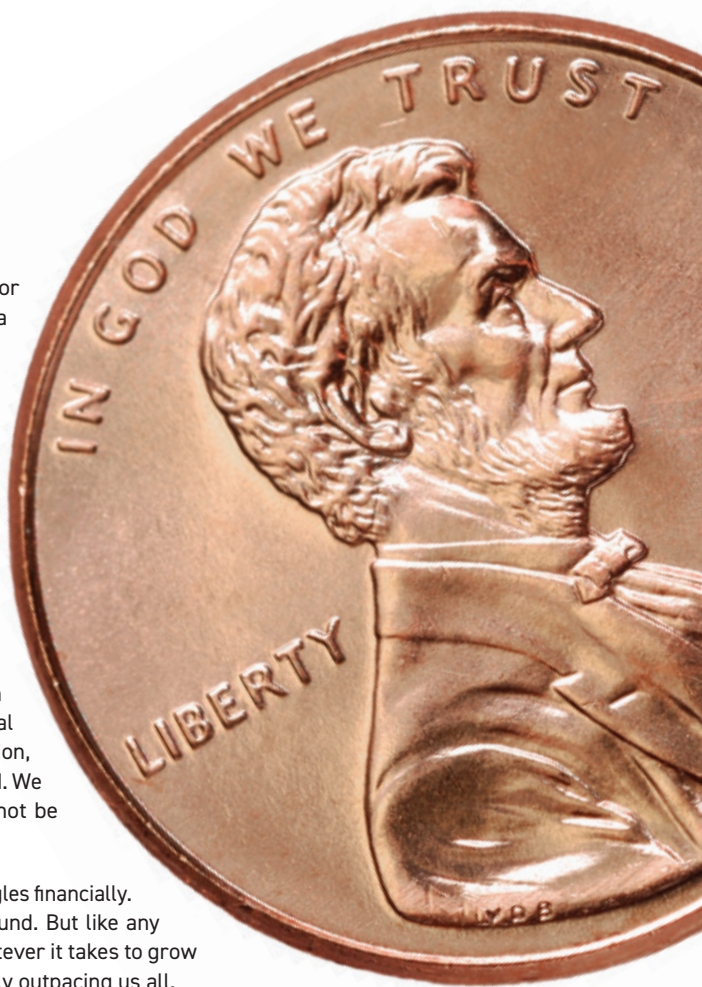
In the "for-profit" sector, smart companies would never dream of spending a single nickel on advertising or marketing if there were not some hope of a return on investment. Clearly, the opposite would be a gross waste of hard-earned money. Shareholders would scream for the CEO's head on a plate. Yet, in the realm of "nonprofits," that is precisely how marketing is often viewed. Why is that, exactly? Supposedly, because it could be used elsewhere and more directly toward the cause itself.

Marketing is not a waste. Successful or not, it is a strategic investment toward a conscious goal.

This is exactly the case with Saint John's. With operating funds spread frighteningly thin, why would an organization of truly caring people, deeply committed to helping women and their children, spend one copper penny on producing a magazine? Simply stated, we believe in growth. We NEED growth. The very lives of the people we serve depend on growth. Marketing, real marketing, through high quality publications and other professional outreach vehicles are a strategic decision, an investment, with a single goal in mind. We need to do more...for more... and cannot be effective by doing the bare minimum.

Saint John's, like many nonprofits, struggles financially. There's never enough money to go around. But like any good business, we believe in doing whatever it takes to grow in an effort to meet a need that is quickly outpacing us all.

We are all 100% committed. And we are all in this together.



David M. Flanagan serves on the board with Saint John's.
He is a co-owner of Misfit, a California brand/marketing agency.
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LETTER FROM JULIE



One Challenge at a time, one moment at a time.

There has perhaps never been a time in recent history where we all, as a global community, continuously evaluate and re-evaluate next steps together. Moment by moment we thoughtfully navigate the potential effects of an unfamiliar global pandemic. Yet, this moment and every moment is a gift, and it will also be gone in just a moment.

These days are different and precious. We're spending more time on personal care, distancing ourselves and being careful. We're traveling less, visiting less and for many things we're just doing less. For me, I'm personally and professionally challenged. So I ask myself the question-what makes this precious? It's different. And, I'm adjusting every moment, with an open mind and open heart.

I am grateful beyond measure to continue the incredible work as CEO for our region's largest residential program for homeless families at Saint John's. In the face of unpredictable and challenging times for everyone, especially homeless families, some ask, "why take this on now, at this moment in time?" The answer is simple: these services to the individuals, families and community are needed now more than ever. And I've landed exactly where I'm supposed to be. I am home.

Thank you for your support, for being part of the Saint John's family and for all you do for our women and children. Together, with you by our side, we've got this. Let's continue to change lives forever.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Hirota". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "J" and a stylized "H".

Julie Hirota Chief Executive Officer
Saint John's Program for Real Change



saint john's
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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Julie Hirota

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ONE80 Magazine is a 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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Interested in advertising in One80?

Contact us at info@saintjohnsprogram.org

SAINT JOHN'S PROGRAM FOR REAL CHANGE

ONE80

REAL PEOPLE. REAL CHANGE.

THE NONPROFIT ARENA IS ALWAYS READY TO PUNT

EVEN WHEN IT FEELS LIKE
FOURTH-DOWN-AND-GOAL-IS-IFFY

BY ED GOLDMAN

If you donate regularly to nonprofits, 2020 may feel like The Year of Giving Dangerously.

The Covid-19 pandemic has slapped away or merely stayed the normally open hand of countless companies and individuals. They may want to give their time, energy and dollars to causes they embrace but are either barred from entering the grounds of where they volunteer their time—like Saint John's Program for Real Change—or they're uncertain if the beneficiaries of their largesse are going to still be in service or business when the smoke clears.

But the best nonprofits have always known how to punt, even when it feels like it's fourth down and goal-to-go is iffy, at best.



**“...taking away
someone’s venue
for giving...
can deliver a
devastating blow.”**

I've been writing about Saint John's Program for Real Change for years—through draconian fund cutoffs to leadership changes; from the first chef's dinner to the organization's name-and-branding metamorphosis—and as a modest donor but immodest fan, I've found it gratifying how this place has remained as resilient as the women whose lives it's helped reboot.

I've interviewed young women who went from daily drug habits and estrangement from their children to responsible jobs and family reunification. I've interviewed two of Saint John's dynamic executive directors: the tireless Michele Brown Steeb and her 2020 successor, Julie Hirota. They share not only a heart-driven desire to make a

difference in one small but significant portion of our population but also the business acumen and strategic thinking that blend idealism with reality, one of the most potent admixtures a nonprofit manager must have.

Which is not to say that at this moment, doing the fiscal numbers may not cause you physical harm.

Since the onslaught of this pandemic, Saint John's has had to cancel such reliable revenue raisers as those marvelous chef dinners, rescheduled the November Party for Change which turned airplane hangars into ballrooms (it will return on May 1, 2021), swiveled to a virtual Polo for Change on October 11, 2020, and simply engaging for change (and cash) by being able to bring donors to tour the facilities, meet some of the clients, hear some of the stories and decide they can make a difference in their own small, mid-sized or magnificent ways. Covid-19 has also shuttered Plates Café and Catering at the onetime Army Depot and the Plates Midtown eatery.. These days, even Saint John's indispensable corps of 450 donors each month has been rendered momentarily dispensable by the shutdown's parameters. When you're in the people business, the people who pitch in receive sincere thanks from the organization but, more tellingly, from knowing that the time they gave helped give others time—to reclaim and straighten out their lives.

One can feel sorry for the loss that people out of work in this terrible climate endure; but in some ways, taking away someone's venue for giving not only of themselves but also to a cause in which they believe, can deliver a devastating blow. The professionals who work at Saint John's may be its lifeblood but the volunteers provide a daily glimmer of its soul.

In the years I've been visiting and writing about Saint John's Program for Real Change, under its current and former names, I've always admired its willingness to be a political lightning rod even though that was never its intent.

In August 2019, I was invited to appear on KVIE-TV's talk show, "Studio Sacramento," by its congenial (and well informed) host, Scott Syphax. Ostensibly, I had agreed to go on in the hope of promoting my latest book, "Don't Cry for Me, Ardent Reader," a collection of my daily columns from the Sacramento Business Journal, which published this and my two previous books. Yet it didn't take long before Syphax turned the discussion to current local issues, presumably because he thought a

working journalist, even one like me who writes mainly lighthearted pieces, might offer a slightly different take on the news.

Within a moment I was on a rant—a civilized, tasteful public television rant—about how too many politicians in California, and especially Sacramento, treated homelessness as a cosmetics problem, rather than the heart-breaking, crazy-making social and mental health dilemma it was. The approach of too many other programs was to simply get homeless people into permanent shelter without ensuring they transform themselves into productive citizens.

To me, it was more about doing an address change than a life change.

But Saint John's, I went on, demands much more from the homeless, often battered, often drug- or alcohol-dependent women it accepts into the program. There's a pledge and there's enforcement that a new client here will undergo therapy, learn a skill and come out of the experience as the people they might have intended to be so many years ago—but were sidetracked from becoming by the sometimes ugly realities of life.

I'm not sure many other programs make such demands. When it finds housing for homeless people, it is, to be sure, valuable and likely, life-saving. But it happens principally to remove an unpleasant optic from the streets and curbs and riverbanks and freeway underpasses.

Saint John's has always been about optimism, not optics. It's why I love this place, its mission and its people—the helpers and the clients. And I feel confident that as this pandemic loses some of its strength, you'll see a leaner, even smarter organization than ever: one that learned to punt long before the game got iffy. 🍷



Ed Goldman
Photo by Dennis McCoy
Sacramento Business Journal

Ed Goldman's syndicated online column, *The Goldman State*, is distributed for free, currently in seven states: goldmanstate.com

RISING FROM THE ASHES

BY DAVID M. FLANAGAN

When one considers those who become homeless, all too often, it is accompanied by an assumption that drugs and alcohol are likely at the root of the cause. In Amanda's case, like so many others, it stemmed directly from the deep wounds of physical and emotional abuse.

A man whom others trusted, Amanda's uncle, began sexually abusing her as early as nine years old. It wasn't until she was thirteen that it finally surfaced, all taking place under the roof and supposed safety of a strict Baptist, church-going family. Even then, however, when she finally found the courage to reveal the ugly truth, she was called a liar by her aunt. The torture and emotional damage she endured for so many years was turned around and used against her. Her mother blamed her, calling her nothing more than "a slut." Then, with no place to turn, secret threats from her uncle, both physical and emotional, became an ongoing manipulative tool for his crimes to continue. For Amanda, life became a dark and confusing world.

"I always felt so dirty," Amanda says, recalling the nightmare. "No matter what I did, I couldn't wash it away."

Sexual abuse was not the only damage she endured. Her mother talked openly about suicide, continually making threats and somehow blaming Amanda for it all. On more than one occasion in which she actually attempted to kill herself, still just a child, Amanda repeatedly tried to stop her, only to receive violent retaliation from her mother. Narrowly escaping a swinging a kitchen knife, she received a broken nose at the end of her mother's fist.

Amanda learned to use her pain, channeling it into a razor-sharp focus in school, rising in her academic achievements. Her schoolwork became her only means of survival and, as a result, she was named Valedictorian of her graduating high school class. The way out then, she imagined, of this cruel life of torment, was now the doorway of college.

A man whom others trusted, Amanda's uncle, began sexually abusing her as early as nine years old.

But the damage had been done. By the time she was ready to begin college and lead her own life, a deep psychological pattern had become so ingrained within her, that her choices became a direct reflection of it. She became involved with an extremely abusive man, and despite her worst fears, agreed to marry him. There was no honeymoon period as life quickly shifted gears into physical violence and ongoing abuse. He beat her. He threatened her life. And when he, too, raped her, forcing himself on her despite everything she could do to stop him... the system finally stepped up—this time, sending her assailant to jail.

The chance at living a life of freedom now, instead became one of an unimaginable and dark depression. Like her mother before her, suicide became her only thought on how she might escape. In this state of mind, despite that there were now two young children of her own in the picture, she overdosed on Vicodin and Codeine, landing her in the hospital with the mandatory court-appointed therapy that comes with it.





When a man she met online, convinced her that he was her knight in shining armor and would save her from it all, confused and empty, she was easily lured into packing up everything she owned, a tiny car towing a small U-haul packed with suitcases and cardboard boxes, along with her two small boys, and drive all the way across the country to California. The man wooed her as intended. Then, however, a mere two weeks after she'd arrived, the mask came off when he bluntly told her it was over and that she had to leave.

With no place to go and nobody to whom she could turn, Amanda found herself all the way across the country and in a complete state of panic; sleeping in a Walmart parking lot, two boys in the back seat of the car, and her in the front. That became home.

Through the miracle of a phone call to an old friend, Carrie, she was directed to contact a distant cousin, Ryan, thinking that perhaps he could help. Naturally Ryan was more than suspicious. He found it in his heart, however, to allow the struggling family to stay in a barn on his property. It was to be a temporary solution only, until Amanda could find work. At least they would have a real roof over their heads. As it turned out, Ryan also had a friend who suggested Amanda might find help in a place some called "The Red Door" — Saint John's Program for Real Change.

Miracles do happen.

"When I read the words on their website," recalls Amanda, "I just broke out crying. I knew they were written for me and that this was the place I was meant to be."

As she entered the arduous program at Saint John's, her life immediately began to shift on its axis. The counseling she received was like no

counseling she'd ever experienced before. With a pension towards applying herself in school, she jumped in with both feet, taking classes on even the little things that had somehow escaped her before; self-control, self-care, exercise, even how to properly use a fork. But it was the classes on abuse that finally began to crack the shell and set her free.

"Saint John's saved my life," she says. "I never knew anything like this could exist."

Through it all, eighteen long months, Ryan, the man Amanda had called out of the blue, who had stepped forward and done what he could do... became a constant advocate for her success. He helped in other ways, too, taking her boys fishing and began to assume the role of both friend and father. In addition, despite Amanda never wanting anything to do with a man ever again, he began falling in love with her.

"Please, just give me a chance," he begged her one day. "Let me prove to you that I love you."

Despite all the former abuse and hurt that had been dealt to her in the past, Amanda found a way to try once more. A new sense of confidence, developed in her time at Saint John's, gave her just the hint of courage that she'd never had before. In February of 2019, she agreed to a single dinner date. It went well. They were married in August.

Today, one year later, Amanda is employed full-time in a very successful medical field. She and Ryan purchased a beautiful home in West Virginia. They packed up their car and a U-Haul trailer, two boys, eleven dogs, and three cats...and made their way back across the entire country one more time. Only this time, Amanda's pain was left behind her. In front of her now, she sees only a man who genuinely loves her, a family that she cherishes, and a bright future filled with hope. ♡

Hope & Reflection

IN ANTICIPATION OF GATHERING AGAIN!

Having to cancel or postpone our popular fundraising events as a result of the pandemic in 2020 has been a devastating blow to Saint John's, but thanks to our amazing community of supporters, and like so many of the women we serve, we have persevered! We miss seeing you all deeply, and look forward to the time when we are able to gather again safely! We have made the very difficult decision to reschedule our popular Party for Change black tie gala from November 7, 2020 to May 15, 2021.

REFLECTION - PARTY FOR CHANGE 2019 DAZZLES!

On November 2, 2019, more than 650 attendees enjoyed the spectacular 6th Annual Party for Change event, presented by the Allstate Foundation at the Mather Jet Center. Your support made this event an amazing success raising over \$580,000 in support of the women and children at Saint John's! It was our pleasure to honor the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation and Chef Santana Díaz of UC Davis Health as our 2019 Champions for Change. We enjoyed an evening of dance, song, philanthropy and a shared purpose. Thank you to our event sponsors and to all who attended in support of our families at Saint John's! ♡

Thank You!

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POLO FOR

CHANGE

2020

100% VIRTUAL

When we rescheduled our June 8, 2020 Polo for Change event to October 11, 2020, we thought we were in a "safety zone" in terms of our timing, but as COVID-19 restrictions remained in effect, we transitioned to a 100% virtual event, to be live-streamed on YouTube from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Be sure to view our virtual event at <https://www.polo4change.org>

REFLECTION - POLO FOR CHANGE 2019 GALLOPS TO NEW HEIGHTS!

More than 1,000 supporters gathered at the River Ranch Polo Fields in Wilton on June 8, 2019 to witness an exciting polo match, nosh on delicious fare prepared by Plates Café and Catering, sample an array of specialty beverages and wine varietals, participate in the traditional champagne divot stomp, bid on live and silent auction items and compete for a Golden Ticket adventure extraordinaire! We were also pleased to honor our 2019 Community Mother of the Year, Maria Eichert! Thanks to our amazing supporters who showed up in their fabulous hats and to our many sponsors! 100% of the \$340,000 raised at the 3rd Annual Polo for Change event was invested into helping the 534 women and children served in 2019. ♥

Thank You!

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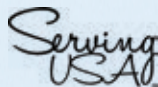
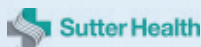


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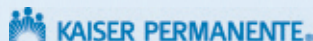


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FOLLOWING YOUR PATH

Catching Up with Julie Hirota

BY DAVID M. FLANAGAN

For a person to come to the realization that they were “meant” to travel a certain path in life is never easy and of no small significance. For those fortunate enough to find that place, however, the real difficulty lies in actually deciding to take that path. When Julie Hirota first considered leaving her position as chief operations officer in the *Biomedical Engineering Department of UC Davis*... it was terrifying. Warned by more than a few, she was told point blank, “You’re crazy.”

The crazy part wasn’t just in her leaving a perfectly decent job, financial security, and a certain prestige – people do move on in their careers after all – no, the insane part was leaving all this to become the CEO of a nonprofit organization like *Saint John’s*. Even though Julie sensed in her heart that it was the right decision, many tried to appeal to her head and more rational thinking. In fact, just about everyone, including her own parents, were convinced she was probably making a huge mistake.

“Except my husband,” Julie says with a grin. “He immediately saw something different happening in me and knew...whatever it was... it was well worth pursuing.” What he saw was a bright light go on in Julie’s eyes. Evidently, she couldn’t stop talking about it. Like an ember, it began smoldering inside her and refused to go out. She had found the entrance to her own path and he saw it all too clearly in her. “That made all the difference,” she says. “That was my green light – not in his permission...but in his perspective.”

Born in Syracuse, New York, Julie moved to California at the age of six. Raised alongside a younger brother and sister, she was the pride and hope of what a successful young woman could and should become in life. She chose a career in Mechanical Engineering and she was good at it. With an impressive gift for math, in the larger picture, what did it matter that she didn’t really enjoy any of it? For twelve long years, she allowed the image of “what she should be” to keep her from who she really was. Even then, the road that lay in front of her would continue to prove long and winding.

A person's true path is never easy to find. And if you are fortunate enough to discover it, more often than not, it's protected by those guardians who would try to convince you it's the wrong path. At least for you.

"There's a strange sense of guilt that can creep in and haunt you," explains Julie. "in the letting down of others, their expectations of you, their dreams and hopes. We often come to identify ourselves in the reflection of how others try to define us."

The insane part was leaving all this to become the CEO of a radical, non-profit organization like Saint John's...

Ironically, she has now already seen that same sneaky sense of guilt in many of the women whom she serves at *Saint John's*. Most are racked with feelings of failure over the things they do not have, things they "should" have – a traditional relationship with a mother or father, a proper education, or even job skills – many struggle with this sense of failure as if it is their fault, even in situations where those things simply were impossible to achieve. It's a very human thing. "In my own experience," Julie points out, "I have learned that regardless of all these supposed shortcomings, we all have what it takes inside ourselves. If we can just slow down for a moment, and with a little self-compassion, begin to take a step in a new direction..... that's where great things can happen."

Julie recounts a seemingly simple, but monumental moment in her life in which she took to heart the words of best-selling author Sharon Salzberg. Her advice, when looking in a mirror, is to remind yourself, saying aloud... "I'm O.K."

That's it. Two simple words. Nothing more.





So, Julie did just that. “In a single moment, a huge weight lifted from my shoulders,” she recalls, “and everything changed in the way I look at life.” The result was a refreshing sense of freedom and genuine gratefulness.

“...regardless of all these supposed shortcomings, we all have what it takes inside ourselves.”

Joining *Saint John's*, in her own words, is one of the most important changes she has ever experienced. “I’m so grateful,” she exclaims. “I couldn’t ask for a better team. I can’t believe, out of all the qualified candidates under consideration, I was chosen.... I’m just so fortunate.”

Deeply committed to the cause of *Saint John's* and the women she serves who are striving to find their own paths, Julie is equally excited about building deeper relationships throughout the program. Not just within the organization itself, but with local government, the private sector, and other like-minded nonprofit organizations. “This is not a competition,” she states matter-of-factly.

“Collaboration is the key. Just in the last five years, so much has changed in our world... the more we can learn to work together, the more we can accomplish.”

There is no question in Julie’s mind that she is on a new path; one that she has been destined to travel from the very beginning. From the start of her career, she has always found the most joy and fulfillment through a variety of volunteer and nonprofit work. It’s no wonder she finally found her way to the Red Door of *Saint John's*.

“I don’t believe in grasping at predetermined outcomes,” she confides. “I much prefer to do the work, solve the problems, and focus on that which is sitting right in front of me....and doing so with no expectations of how that must happen.”

Perhaps a radical shift in thinking for many, that is a lesson she intends to pass on to all the women of *Saint John's* as a way to tackle the more daunting hurdles life places in our path. Perhaps, if we too are willing to look in that proverbial mirror, slow down for a brief moment to consider the path before us, and tell ourselves we are O.K... it is a lesson we could all learn from her. 💕

RED DOOR



desserts

With the closing of our two restaurants and our catering business, Plates Café and Catering and Plates Midtown due to COVID-19, we needed to redevelop our employment training. The leadership and experience of our culinary services director, as a classically trained pastry chef, quickly shifted to our business to combine our internal strengths with a practical and memorable product that helps share our stories.

INDULGE AND EMPOWER.

We were thrilled to launch RED DOOR desserts at the beginning of December. Available to order now, RED DOOR desserts range in price from \$30-\$35 for a dozen delectable desserts hand-made by the women in the employment training program at Saint John's. With RED DOOR desserts, women at Saint John's continue their hands-on employment training and learn to not only bake beautiful and delicious cookies and desserts, but also learn order management, supply chain elements, packaging and shipping.

100% of the proceeds from RED DOOR desserts directly support formerly homeless women at Saint John's working to build self-sustaining lives for themselves and their children. For those craving cookies now or needing extra holiday gifts, this is a perfect solution. A beautiful gift with an extra special mission. Visit sjpreddoordesserts.com to learn more.





S A I N T J O H N ' S S I S T E R H O O D :

THE GIFT OF GIRL SCOUTS

BY KELLIE DEMARCO

Sometimes life's biggest lessons come from the smallest acts of kindness. For Erin Uribe, it started with a simple question, "How can I help?"

Giving back was something instilled in Erin since she was a little girl. By the time she was 12 years old, her mother brought her to volunteer at the local shelter in San Jose. So when it came time to answer the call again as an adult and a new mother herself, Saint John's Program for Real Change was the perfect fit. But Erin never could've imagined how deeply she would be changed, just like the families living behind Saint John's red doors.

Her eyes filled up with tears after sitting with me over coffee, saying, "These little girls have given me faith in humanity again. This is how we ALL should be. When you see someone in pain, you should always give, always try to help."

Erin was referring to one of her favorite moments as a Saint John's volunteer and Girl Scout leader. She took the girls to Sacramento's McKinley Park to sell cookies for their annual fundraiser when a few of them noticed a homeless man sitting alone with his dog. "He looks hungry, can we help him?" Without hesitation, she walked the girls over with two boxes of cookies she'd paid for herself. "It warmed my heart," Erin said. "Considering the situation they're in and they still found kindness and compassion for someone else. I'm here to teach them, but really, they're teaching me."

Less than a year ago, Erin stepped up to start the first ever Girl Scout troop at Saint John's. She'd been volunteering for Saint John's Children's Program for a few years and was looking for a way to give back on the

weekends, in-between working at a local PR/Marketing firm, dovetail solutions, and caring for her one year old son, Nolan. Troop #434 was formed with twelve girls, ages 8 to 14, many of whom had never even heard of Girl Scouts before.

The original Girl Scout program was created more than 108 years ago to support and facilitate the development of girls and young women. Just like founder Juliette Gordon Low did all those years ago, they work to ensure *any* girl who wants to be a Girl Scout can. Along the way, girls learn incredible life lessons about kindness, responsibility, service and friendship—lessons so desperately needed at Saint John's after many experience abuse, a parent's drug addiction, alcoholism and at times, hopelessness.

“...girls of all ages who are hungry for a sisterhood and a way to develop their courage, confidence and character come together to make magic!”

**Linda Farley,
CEO of Girl Scouts Heart
of Central California.**

Erin and her co-leader Angela Kellogg have already taught the girls how to cook and create art, explore their community and yes, give back. They even made the troop their own tote bags, now covered in Girl Scout badges they earned — something each girl can take with them when they leave the program at Saint John's. The girls have grown to love it and so have their moms, who use the time to work on themselves in recovery and job readiness programs.



“You expect their walls to be up because of their past but a simple thing like this has opened their eyes. They accept the lessons, follow directions and rules. They want consistency. They want love,” Erin tells me.

Every troop meeting is a unique opportunity to come together under extraordinary and heartbreaking life circumstances, sharing a type of bond that typical troops don't have.

“It makes me appreciate my own family and makes me a better mom because of this experience. I don't get caught up in the little things anymore that just don't matter. Gratitude is everything.”

And that's the best lesson of all. ♡



Kellie DeMarco, an Emmy Award-winning journalist and former anchor for KCRA and a Girl Scout leader herself, is president of Kellie DeMarco Communications (kelliedemarco.com).

REDUCING RECIDIVISM, ONE INMATE AT A TIME

BY SCOT SORENSEN
CCTRP PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Even during this summer of COVID, the mission of the state's Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program (CCTRP), remains the same: unleash the potential of women in crisis. CCTRP is a residential treatment program for female offenders. Since December of 2017, Saint John's has operated one of five CCTRPs in the state in partnership with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), with the emphasis on REHABILITATION.

The CCTRP program was launched in 2014 when the first facility opened in San Diego. Since then four other locations have opened in Santa Fe Springs, Bakersfield, Stockton, and here in Sacramento. The size of each location varies based on the facility. The Sacramento and Stockton programs each accommodate 50, San Diego and Santa Fe Springs each hold as many as 112, and Bakersfield has a capacity of 75.

“98 women have successfully exited on parole or probation.”

Since December 2017 when Sacramento's CCTRP opened, Saint John's has welcomed and served 158 clients. Over this same period, 98 women have successfully exited on parole or probation. At publication there were 40 clients currently being served in the program. As the state continued to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic this summer, all of the state's CCTRP facilities are at about 65 percent capacity as CDCR is cautiously moving inmates at a slower rate than normal to provide for the safety of all populations. Before transfer from prison to CCTRP, each client is tested multiple times. Great care, caution and safety is followed in the transfer of clients.

How does an inmate, all of whom are serious and violent offenders with two years or less left on their sentence, get transferred to the CCTRP program? Potential clients go through a rigorous three- to six-month application process to be accepted to a CCTRP facility. They must commit to sobriety, and be willing to address the issues that led them to prison. A full range of life skills courses are offered at CCTRP to help prepare the women for re-entering society – well beyond what they might receive in prison – including classes addressing healthy relationships, anger management, parenting, money management, and coping with the repercussions of trauma and abuse. In addition, the clients are able to

gain transferrable and employable skills in Saint John's Employment Training Program, with some placed in jobs even before being paroled. A favorite saying of one of Saint John's very first CCTRP clients, and a sentiment that is often repeated to this day is: “The worst day at CCTRP is better than the best day in prison.” Life at CCTRP is demanding, but Real Change is hard work.

Though official recidivism rates are not yet published by the CDCR for those completing Saint John's CCTRP program in Sacramento (it takes three to four years after release to compile complete recidivism rates), the unofficial rates appear to be in the 4% range. Compared to the general female inmate recidivism rate of 37% for prisoners released from custody in the state of California, this is a tremendous success story for the CDCR, and a program that is being closely monitored by other states for adoption. ☺



Scot Sorensen, Director, CCTRP

Working Together. Focusing on the Future.

Our Child Development Project

BY DR. SUSAN BARRON

We recently entered our 3rd year of our Child Development Project which provides an array of services to address the needs of our youngest and most precious residents. Additionally, the project provides research data that focuses on the impact of homelessness on children and how to positively improve outcomes for children.

Living in challenging circumstances including unsafe/unstable environments, financial hardship, abuse or neglect vitally impacts a child's growth and development opportunities. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) refer to a range of events or situations a child may experience that can result in stress and trauma. Each mother entering Saint John's completes the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) assessment for their child and themselves. Moderate to high ACE scores are shown to impact brain development as well as physical and mental health in adults.¹ Nationally, ACE scores reflect that 10% of children have experienced 3 or more ACEs. Child Development Project finds 70% of formerly homeless children living at Saint John's Program produce an ACE score of 3 or more. Along with the ACEs scale, each child that enters Saint John's Program for Real Change is assessed via specialized instruments focusing on developmental milestones, socio-emotional progress, and age appropriate capacities, to identify strengths, vulnerabilities and target specific needs. These evaluations are completed by trained clinical team members from both Integrated Health Services and Children's Program teams.

All children receive trauma-responsive services from our entire Saint John's team. For children who exhibit developmental, emotional, or behavioral needs, targeted treatment and referrals are identified to address them and increase adaptive functioning.

Strategic interventions to meet children's specific needs are offered both internally at Saint John's and externally via specialized resources in the community. Individual child therapy, family therapy, and parental coaching for moms to acquire skills and structure to meet their child's needs all serve to improve children's and total family functioning.

Graduate interns from California State University, Sacramento, come on-site to deliver universal socio-emotional learning curriculum offered to all our pre-K and school age children. The Emoji club



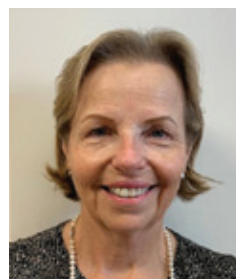
Moderate to high ACE scores are shown to impact brain development as well as physical and mental health in adults.

is a group that teaches relational skills, emotion identification, coping skills, and behavioral competencies. For a child who displays more serious concerns, a functional behavioral analysis and behavioral intervention plan may be completed.

Our team assists mothers in completing referrals to outside organizations to support their children's growth and development. Active collaboration with local schools including Peter Burnett Elementary School assist children who have academic and/or social needs in the referral and assessment process for individualized education plans (IEPs) and support services. We support mothers who are in reunification services with their children in foster care through Child Protective Services to gain skills, plan and prepare

for their children's return. Help Me Grow provides services for children under 5 and their caregivers. Children that are identified to have ongoing needs after their stays at Saint John's are connected with local community providers to provide emotional and behavioral support to provide continuity of care and prevent lapses in treatment.

All in all, our highest responsibility as a community is to foster all our children's best health and wellbeing. We, at Saint John's feel happy and privileged to be a part of this most essential and meaningful endeavor. 🌸



*Susan Barron Ph.D.
Chief Program Officer,
Integrated Health*

1. Christina D. Bethell, Paul Newacheck, Eva Hawes and Neal Halfon. Engagement and the mitigating role of resilience. Adverse Childhood Experiences: Assessing the impact on health and school. Health Affairs, 33, no.12 (2014):2106–2115



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2019 IMPACT

534

Clients Served

255

Women

279

Children

PROGRAM IMPACT

55 women and **67** children
stably housed

48 women
placed in jobs

46 Employment Training
Program graduates

171,915 meals served

4,300 hours of childcare provided

Average client savings
\$1,008

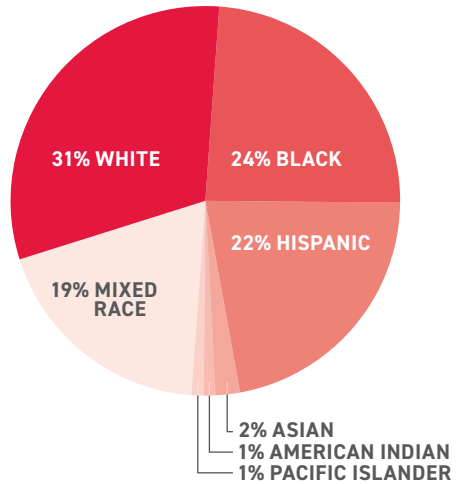
Average income
\$1,123

156 hours
of exercise classes delivered

Average of **768** hours of job training
hours completed by clients

Average of **624** hours of high school
instruction delivered to clients

728 hours of life skills classes
delivered to clients



DEMOGRAPHIC BARRIERS

84% suffer from addiction

69% are victims of domestic violence

56% have mental health challenges

60% have criminal backgrounds

51% do not have a high school diploma

25% have CPS cases

60% are single female heads of household

100% ARE HOMELESS

THANK YOU, DONORS!

The impact of your giving is evident in every single woman and child here at Saint John's. On behalf of all of us Saint Johns, the staff, the clients and their children, thank you for your commitment and generosity.

Saint John's has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this information. If you note an error or omission, please bring it to our attention so that we may correct our records: info@saintjohnsprogram.org (January 1, 2019–December 31, 2019, Donors contributing \$5000 or more)

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DISTANCE LEARNING AT SAINT JOHN'S



The school-aged children living at Saint John's have started the school year remotely, working in our newly created on-site classroom from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. A tremendous amount of structure, supervision and one-on-one tutoring is required to keep our students on task and in step with their classmates, especially those with special needs and IEPs. With moms who are focused on their own recovery from abuse, mental health and legal challenges, addiction, generational poverty and in many cases, all of the above, we have hired two credentialed teachers and purchased the supplies to accommodate this need, but this \$180,000 expense to cover the 2020-2021 school year was not in the 2020 budget developed and approved by the board last year. Thank you so much to those of you who have already stepped up to help! Please consider helping our children with distance learning.

HELP SUPPORT OUR DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

\$25

Provides one hour of extended learning for a classroom of kids

\$50

Provides 60 nutritious meals for children

\$100

Provides a printer/scanner/copier for homework assignments

\$200

Provides five hours of individualized tutoring

\$500

Provides a laptop or tablet

\$1000

Provides 10 hours of special education, developmental learning and mental health support

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