

Pathways TO INDEPENDENCE™

Education, Healthcare, Therapy & Mentoring for Young Women in Need

Summer 2017

As another season passed, we gathered to celebrate the next group of women graduating from the Pathways program as they take their next steps into the world. It was with bittersweet reverie that we came together to celebrate the victories of these women in addition to the triumphs of the continuing clients. The spirit of gratitude filled the air as each woman shared a glimpse of her story with those fortunate enough to hear.

The program began with a warm welcome from our director Goretty Ramos, as she thanked the Pathways providers and donors for their continued support. We were given the opportunity to acknowledge the mentors, coordinators, and directors who work tirelessly behind the scenes supporting our clients on their journey. We turned our attention to Richard Waide as he received the Unsung Hero Award for his attentive contribution to these women's cause. The opening statements culminated with a welcome to the incoming clients from both the graduates and continuing clients bringing about both hugs and well-wishing.

The awards began by acknowledging those clients with a GPA of 3.50 or higher. Each client does her best balancing school, work, therapy and her personal life, and we are proud of every single effort. We know academic achievement is different for each individual, and we present these awards not only as recognition

of hard work, but as an inspiration to all. The recipients were Samantha (3.50), Janica (3.50), Susan (3.50), Bridgette (3.50), Emily (3.66), Danielle (3.69), Serena (3.75), Briana (3.75), Brenna (3.75), Javanna (3.75), Sierra (3.77), Lauren (3.93), Vanessa (4.00), Chelsea (4.00), and Jen (4.00).

While academic achievement is important, Pathways understands underlying integrity is essential to living a full and happy life. We encourage our clients to look deep within to realize their fullest potential, and we recognize this with our Character Awards. This season's recipients were Chaely, Christina, Vanessa, Sarah, Julie, Margaret, Alyssa, Chelsea, Samantha, Lauren, Claudia, Cheyenne, Teresa, Veronica, and Cristina.



We arrived at the apex of the program where we were able to hear from the graduates. The first to share was Sarah. She spoke of how she went against conventional wisdom to follow her heart and pursue her passion for skincare at the Career Beauty Academy. There she completed the Masters Aesthetics Program with a 4.0. She worked harder

than she ever had before to realize her goal, and along the way was able to break unhealthy bonds and be freed from her demons. She reminded us that she stands as a testament that Pathways clients do make it!

continued on inside..



Bridgette was the next to tell a bit of her story. Graduating with her AA and a 3.5 GPA, she will transfer to Cal State Fullerton in the fall to continue her studies in Communications. She realized in her



past she had stopped using her voice. She found it through Pathways. She told us she learned to not only love herself without anyone else's approval, but has learned to create healthy boundaries which took both practice and determination. She wants all to know you can absolutely survive that which was meant to break you.

Next to address the audience was Jacqueline. She earned her BA from Cal State Fullerton in Psychology, with a minor in Kinesiology receiving a 2.9 GPA. Her enthusiasm and love for her experience was palpable. She emphatically exclaimed she had been told to do her best and has been doing it ever since. She firmly believes Pathways is the best deal in town.



The following graduate to speak was Jessica. She studied Sociology at Cal State Fullerton and earned her BA. Additionally she holds an AA in Math and Science with a certificate in Health Science. Her touching reflection revealed she always felt like the forgotten child. Her problems were never "bad" enough to require help. In

Pathways she experienced compassion and discovered she was worthy of love. She reminded us all to just keep going.

As we continued, Susan had her time to address the group. At Cal State Fullerton she earned her BA in Electrical Engineering with a 3.01 GPA and will begin grad school in the fall. Her message of thankfulness conveyed her appreciation for the support she felt from Pathways. She knew we always had her back, and can carry that inner security into her next academic endeavor.



The evening progressed and Sarah arrived at the podium. She received her BA from Cal State Long Beach in the field of



Sociology with an emphasis in Gender Studies. Her efforts earned her a 3.84 GPA. Her goal is to start a non-profit within the next 5 years. She explained that she had no self-worth or esteem. Never before had she been given a gift such as the one she received from Pathways; the gift of unconditional love. While learning to accept love she realized she had achieved what she didn't even know she wanted-freedom.



Our evening was brought to a close when we heard from Janica. Her focus at Cal State Fullerton was Business Management where she earned her Bachelor's degree and a 3.87 GPA. She embraced her Pathways experience because as she exclaimed, she loves a challenge. Through her journey she was able to break unhealthy cycles instead of being destined to repeat them. She vowed to us all that she will pay it forward.

Love and enthusiasm for life permeated every aspect of this cherished event.

None who participated left feeling less than inspired. The highs and lows of each woman's journey were punctuated by the account of their personal achievements. They reminded us that growth can be both terrifying and exhilarating, that confidence can be found in the rigors of hard work. They reminded us all that sacrifice for our own greater good is never in vain.

**Photos by Pathways Client, Brenna
Story by Pathways Mentor, Janet Nelson**

I graduated from Pathways in 2004, and now 13 years have passed. It seems like ages and at the same time like yesterday. Thinking about what's happened in the last 13 years brings a mixture of emotions and realize that all good and bad in life shape who we are. We must live a variety experiences to grow and evolve. Just to look back at how I encountered Pathways, I met Dave Bishop through the pastor Fr. Bill Barman at our community parish, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Santa Ana. I come from a traditional Mexican family and my parents were unable to help with college and so I worked and attended school. I was very blessed to be part of Pathways and have a great support system that included a mentor, psychologist and doctors, I suffered from severe acne and thanks to Pathways I was able to see a dermatologist that greatly improved my self-esteem.

“While in Pathways during my undergraduate studies in Studio Art, I had a great interest in studying abroad.”

When I spoke about this interest with my mentor Annie she was extremely supportive which then led to the opportunity to study abroad for a year in Florence. Without a doubt it was an experience that changed my life forever. During that year I studied Italian, painting and drawing with a professor that is now a very close friend. I learned that my passion for art would lead my career to a different path, not as a painter but as a curator. In that year I completely fell in love with Florence and Italian culture, I felt at home and loved everything in my surroundings. It was very hard to return home, and something told me I had to return somehow. Upon my return to the US, I finished my BA in Studio Art with minor in Italian and graduated from Pathways. This was also a tough year because my father passed away unexpectedly and it was comforting to have the Pathways support system through those tough times.

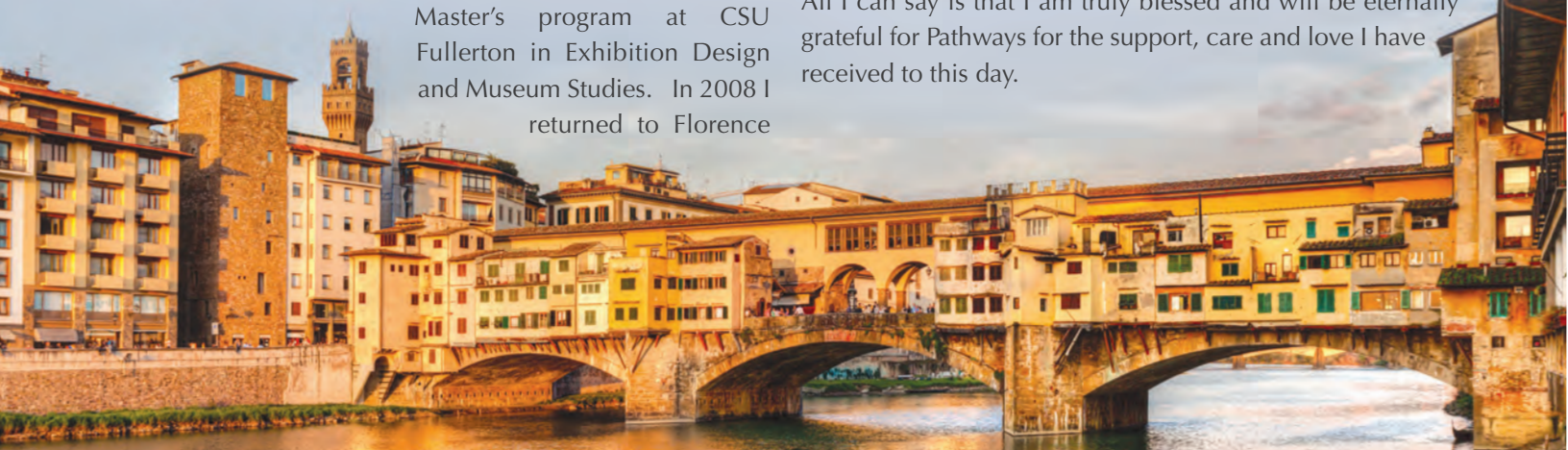
After graduation, I began working in the non-profit sector for a few organizations in Orange County. The idea of returning to Italy was always in the back of my head but how to fund another trip was tough and the idea of moving back to Florence seemed like a far-fetched dream. In 2007 I began a Master's program at CSU Fullerton in Exhibition Design and Museum Studies. In 2008 I returned to Florence



by doing a summer painting course and during that trip I met a person who led me to an opportunity for an internship in Florence. I was thrilled to find a way to spend more time in Florence. I interned with a contemporary art organization in Florence for 5 months for my Master's degree and at the end I was offered a job as curator. My dream had come true, I had an opportunity to move to Florence and work. Upon finishing my MFA in Exhibition Design, I moved to Florence permanently in July of 2011 to work as curator of a Florence Art organization, where I worked for 5 years, where in 2014 a Pathways client, Gina had the opportunity to intern with me in Florence for a few weeks. It was such a pleasure to share a bit of life and the Florentine art world with her.

Last year, I changed jobs and currently work for a study abroad center called ACCENT where I am programs coordinator and work with students from various universities across the US to study abroad in Florence. In the last 6 years I have settled into life in Florence where of course living here is different than the usual vacation or study abroad.

It has opened my eyes even more to beautiful culture, diversity and adaptation that has treated me well in time. This has enriched my life not just in my career but also in my personal life. In fall of 2012 through common friends I met my now husband Marco who is a native Florentine, a wonderful caring man that I am truly blessed to share my life with. We were married in November of 2015 and now happily waiting for our first child due this coming September. All I can say is that I am truly blessed and will be eternally grateful for Pathways for the support, care and love I have received to this day.





HOP ON YOUR HORSES AND ROUND UP YOUR POSSE!

We're going to the wild west for the 21st Annual Friends of Pathways benefit, "Wild, Wild West in the Park" on Saturday, October 7th. With dueling pianos, lots of good grub, strong drinks, and a whole lot of hootin' and hollerin', all to benefit Pathways to Independence.

We're changing things up this year with dueling pianos at the center of the event. You'll find your favorites with the best auction items around, and best chow in town served up from the area's finest restaurants and caterers. Think wild west, think saloons and cowboy hats, gunslingers, and corrals. Mosey on down for a wild evening, raising money to help Pathways to Independence transform the lives of existing clients and add more young women to the roster.

If you can't make it, we would still love your support of this worthwhile cause.
There are many ways to help out:

ATTEND THE EVENT

purchase tickets at
www.pathwaystoindpendence.org

SPONSOR OUR EVENT

Starting at \$500, includes event tickets
& recognition contact Lisa Mais
at friendsofpathways@gmail.com

DONATE FUN STUFF

to feature in our Silent or Live Auction -
contact Linda McDonald
at Mcdonaldmouse@gmail.com



PURCHASE OPPORTUNITY TICKETS: 3 FOR \$25; 12 FOR \$100

Contact Robin Jenks at rdjj@yahoo.com
Winners need not be present to win!

GRAND PRIZE

\$3,000 GIFT CERTIFICATE TO THE HISTORIC HOTEL DEL CORONADO

Enjoy the majestic oceanfront beach resort in San Diego/ Coronado.
The hotel and residential villas offer luxurious accommodations and highly
personalized service. *No restrictions, gift certificate may be used anytime.*

If you would like to purchase opportunity tickets, donate an
auction item, or become a sponsor, just let us know. You can
always send a check made out to "Friends of Pathways" to:
3152 Blume Dr, Los Alamitos CA 90720

2ND PRIZE \$1,000 CASH

3RD PRIZE 2 TICKETS to the Stagecoach Concert Spring 2018

We hope to see you at Wild West in the Park and are grateful for
your continued support of Pathways to Independence!



SPONSORSHIP FORM

☐ **DIAMOND \$10,000**

Benefits include:

- 10 invitations to VIP party & event
- VIP check-in & priority checkout
- Full page ad on front or back cover in event program
- Recognition on website & signage at event

☐ **PLATINUM \$7,500**

Benefits include:

- 10 invitations to VIP party & event
- VIP check-in & priority checkout
- Full page ad in event program
- Recognition on website & signage at event

☐ **GOLD \$5,000**

Benefits include:

- 8 invitations to VIP party & event
- 8 invitations to event with VIP check-in
- 3/4 page ad in event program
- Recognition on website & signage at event

☐ **SILVER \$2,500**

Benefits include:

- 6 tickets to event
- 1/2 page ad in event program
- Recognition on website & signage at event

☐ **BRONZE \$1,000**

Benefits include:

- 4 tickets to event
- 1/4 page ad in event program
- Recognition in program & signage at event

☐ **COPPER \$500**

Benefits include:

- 2 tickets to event
- Recognition in program & signage at event

☐ **EVENT PROGRAM AD**

- Cover Full Page, Full Color Digital Ad (5.5" X 8.5")
- Full Page Digital Ad (5.5" X 8.5")
- 3/4 Page Digital Ad (5.5" X 6.3")
- 1/2 Page Digital Ad (5.5" X 4.25")
- 1/4 Page Digital Ad (2.75" X 4.25")

CORPORATE, BUSINESS OR INDIVIDUAL: (Please Print)

Name: _____ Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Phone (Day): _____ E-mail: _____

Nature of Business _____ ☐ Sorry, I am unable to attend. Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ _____

DEADLINE: All checks and graphics must be received by September 15th, in order to be recognized in the program.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!

Please mail this form & a check to:

Lisa Mais, Fund developer
3152 Blume Dr. Los Alamitos, CA, 90720
lisa.mais@pathwaystoindpendence.org

For more info about program as call/email:

Lori Giacomini
562.673.2832
lgiacominiathome@yahoo.com

Federal Tax Id # 33-0148082

How would you like your name or business name to be displayed on signage at the event:

Options on submitting info/graphics for program:

- ☐ I've mailed a hard copy of the graphics to be scanned to Lori Giacomini, 12392 ballantine DRIVE, los alamitos CA 90720
- ☐ I've emailed the graphics to lgiacominiathome@yahoo.com. Any graphics sent should be in .jpg format and will be sized according to donation amount.
- ☐ Please use the below information to create an ad for me.

BOARD MEMBERS

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Pathways Graduates



Thank you to the **Eileen Fisher Foundation** and the sales teams at the stores in South Coast Plaza, El Paseo, Palm Desert and the Robertson location in L.A. Lasamy Sengsouriya generously donated her time to organize the event, complete with a fashion show, raising \$5,000 for Pathways to Independence. It was a delightful day for all.



10 of our clients were given 5 beautiful pieces of clothing from the **CABI collection**, following a luncheon at a Day of Networking and Empowerment event. We are very grateful to Holly Richards of Gals Starting over and Lauri Blanchard of CABI and their teams of volunteers, for both coordinating and hosting the great event.



Another great event and month from Patti Blake and her **Blue Moon Boutique**, as she hosted an event on June 24th, and donated a portion of June sales to Pathways to Independence. Patti has always been a big supporter of Pathways, and since opening her doors 5 years ago, she has donated almost \$10,000 to Pathways to Independence. Thank you, Patti, and thanks for showing us Blue Moon really does care!