



# Pathways TO INDEPENDENCE™

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

## *Congrats to Our Graduates*

**GRADUATIONS OFTEN HAVE PREPARED SPEECHES AND REMARKS BY DISTINGUISHED GUESTS. THE PATHWAY'S GRADUATION ON JANUARY 23 WAS NO DIFFERENT, THE DISTINGUISHED GUEST SPEAKERS INCLUDED OUR VERY OWN GRADUATES, MENTORS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GORETTY RAMOS.**

Our time together was filled with welcomes, character awards and game winners announced. Goretty emceed her 4th virtual ceremony and opened with encouraging words for pandemic weary clients. She reminded them that wherever you may be on your journey: "You are enough right now, just as you are. You are in the best place you can be." Mentors also offered assurances using song, poetry, famous quotes and quotes from personal journaling. "Trust the process, even if you cannot see or understand the process." "Courage does not always roar. Sometimes it is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying: I will try again tomorrow."



### **CONNIE BEDELL**

Bachelor Degree in Studio  
Art and Minor in  
International Marketing

**CSU, LONG BEACH**  
GPA 3.72

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." — Albert Einstein



### **CATHERINE TRUONG**

BA in Psychology

**CSU, FULLERTON**  
GPA 3.35

"The more that you read, the more things you will know, the more that you learn, the more places you'll go." — Dr. Seuss



With her professionalism, warmth and bright smile, Goretty introduced the graduates, their fields of study and their accolades. Reflective of the times we live in, she addressed graduates with an enthusiastic and apt greeting: "Welcome to the Zoom stage!" The Zoom stage became the platform for graduates to share stories of both joy and struggle. Questioning themselves, is this program for real and how did I become the beneficiary of its goodness? On the stage, each graduate spoke of voids and fears being transformed into accomplishments and life skills for the next chapter.

As is custom, graduates share a bit of their personal journey, they offer gratitude that is often too large to contain all the feelings or the say all the names of those who walked with them on their journey. Last, they are asked to speak words of wisdom and offer advice to the women who are continuing members of Pathways. Connie, Maggie, Maddie and Catherine became the distinguished speakers of evening when they shared these words as parts of their stories:

**"I AM WORTH BEING AROUND"**

**"I FINALLY FELT SAFE AND HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW"**

**"I LEARNED TO ASK FOR WHAT I NEEDED"**

**"I BEGAN TO TRUST THAT I COULD MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS"**

**"I ROSE UP TO MYSELF AND WAS ABLE TO GET ON THE RIGHT PATH"**

**"LIFE WILL ALWAYS HAVE ITS HARD PARTS, BUT I HAVE LEARNED TO BE RESILIENT"**

These phrases are far more than words and advice from our graduates and their lived experiences. These words are from women who have found their way with the help of Pathways and its support system. These words are transformative because they amplify hope. Again, reflective of the times we live in, hope may be rare, but it is a gift! Hope changes things, our graduates are living proof that we live differently when we have hope.

Thank you graduates for your message and congratulations on your milestone!



**MAGGIE BRYAN**

AS natural sciences, AS biology,  
AA Liberal arts

**ORANGE COAST COLLEGE/  
GOLDEN WEST COLLEGE  
3.92 GPA**

"Sometimes the bravest and  
most important thing you can  
do is just show up"  
— Brené Brown



**MADDI MAZA**

Associate of Arts for Transfer:  
Psychology, Associate of Arts in  
Liberal Arts (Arts, Humanities,  
and Communication), Associate  
of Arts in Liberal Arts (Social  
and Behavioral Sciences)

**SANTIAGO CANYON COLLEGE  
4.0 GPA**

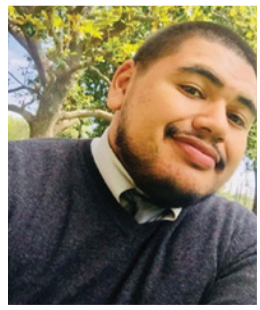
"It is not joy that makes us  
grateful, it is gratitude that  
makes us joyful"  
— Brother David Steindl-Rast



## *Message from Board Chair, Raymond Cervantez*

**THE FUTURE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE IS LOOKING EVEN BRIGHTER, WITH THE ADDITION OF FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS. THIS BRINGS THE NUMBER OF BOARD MEMBERS TO THIRTEEN.**

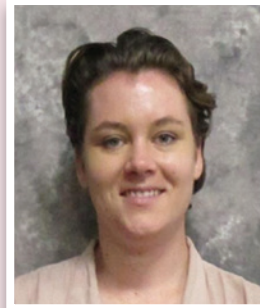
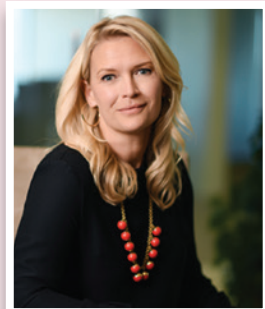
Returning to the board in 2022 are Raymond Cervantez, Lindsay Mais, Tracey Hutton, Joseph Dzida, Nikki Harris, Sharon Dickson, Lisa Fluke, Jerry Green, and Anita Beltran-Sutt; and they were eager to welcome Max Estrada, Sylvia Hendron, Cristina Stricklin, and Leslie Wulff.



**MAX** currently serves as a Program Director for a non-profit organization serving Los Angeles County's homeless population. His background also consists of assisting victims and survivors of violence. With over 15 years of case management direct service experience, he understands

what it takes to help someone in need. Max states, "I have helped some of the most vulnerable people get connected to services that eventually lead to permanent housing and becoming self-sufficient."

**SYLVIA** is a civil engineer with Bioenergy Development Company, where she is a Chief Development Officer. Her work involves the development of anaerobic digester projects in the US and Europe, which convert organic waste material into renewable natural gas and divert waste from landfills into clean sources of energy. Sylvia has been involved with Friends of Pathways for six years before joining the board and serving as a mentor.



**CRISTINA** is a native of Long Beach and a former client of Pathways of Independence. After receiving her BA in Psychology from CSU, Dominguez Hills, she is currently working as a case manager for Starview Community Services. She is working on

gaining more experience within her field before attending graduate school to become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

**LESLIE** is the founder and Managing Partner of Carefree HomeCare, a 10-year-old, award-winning home care agency in Orange County. Carefree specializes in helping seniors "age in place." Philanthropy has always been a passion of Leslie's. She was actively involved for years with Big Brothers Big Sisters, CASA, and served on the Board of Trustees for Olive Crest.



The board is excited to be working hand-in-hand with Pathways To Independence staff and Friends of Pathways to increase funding to grow further, strengthen, and continue our programs & services. We are ONE organization with a common purpose, executing our mission of transforming the lives of disadvantaged single young women.

## *New Things Blooming at Pathways*

**WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF SPRING, THE SEASON OF REBIRTH. PATHWAYS ALSO FINDS THEMSELVES IN A PERIOD OF RENEWAL.**

Earlier this year, we said goodbye to Pathways Executive Director Goretty Ramos. Goretty was with us for six years and did a spectacular job bringing Pathways from a volunteer organization to a professional nonprofit with excellent governance. Goretty had a great heart for our mission and loved our clients. We wish Goretty all good things in her next adventure and know that she will continue to make a massive difference in the world.

My name is Diana Hill, and I have the honor of acting as interim Executive Director for Pathways. I was on the board for 14 years and mentored three clients. I look forward to helping Pathways in this time of transition and growth.



One of the things we are very excited about here at Pathways is the return of Lisa Mais (out of a short retirement). She will be our Fund Development Officer and lead the Friends of Pathways, a fantastic group of volunteers who put on our event each year. We are grateful that Lisa has returned to us, and I look forward to working with her closely.

Another great change for our staff is the promotion of our very own Eydie Pasicel. Eydie has been with Pathways for almost three years and will now be working closely with our Volunteer Directors of education, clients, therapy, and mentors. Eydie has a loving and strong vision for the Pathways Program and our clients. I look forward to supporting her as she grows our program.



Please join me and congratulate Lisa and Eydie and stay tuned for more good news!

~ Diana Hill



# Looking for a few good friends!

Interested in Joining  
Friends of Pathways?

In addition to the joy of “giving back”, we also benefit from enduring friendships formed while working alongside other men & women who are equally committed and big hearted.

Our Kick-Off meeting is  
May 17th.

Please call or text:

Lisa Mais at 562-884-3629

or Email: [Lisa.mais@  
pathwaystoindependence.org](mailto:Lisa.mais@pathwaystoindependence.org)

Friends of Pathways  
welcomes all levels of  
commitment from our  
volunteers:

- Join us to plan the event
- Help us with auction items and sponsorships
- Pitch in on the day of the event.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

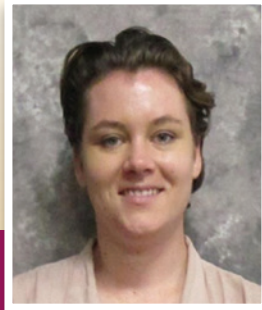
# *Pathways is proud to feature Cristina Stricklin, 2016 graduate and current Board Member.*

Cristina learned of Pathways through some friends who graduated our program the same year she entered. Though she knew the direction she wanted her life to take, she needed support to bring her goals within reach.

After failing out of many courses at Long Beach City College, due to personal and financial issues, she began studies at Cypress JC as a Pathways client. She was able to transfer with an Associates degree and complete her B.A. in Psychology at Cal State Dominguez Hills in 2019.

She credits Pathways with providing her the emotional baseline to weather life's ups and downs and manage to maintain balance.

Cristina loved having a safe study and living space in her Pathways Apartment, where she was able to connect with other Pathways clients. She learned skills for managing routine household responsibilities, as well as collaborative study.



**"LIFE ISN'T TAUGHT. THERE'S NO BOOK WHICH TELLS US HOW WE DO THIS, BUT WITH PATHWAYS TO INDEPENDENCE, I WAS ABLE TO GET THE EMOTIONAL, FINANCIAL, AND EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED TO MAKE MY OWN START."**

Cristina describes her surprise at her ability to juggle responsibilities:

"Amazingly, my last year in Pathways, I was attending college full-time, had two part-time jobs to help to support myself, took on a volunteer position one night a week

to gain experience and knowledge in my field, and was able to maintain my grades and relationships!"

Cristina is currently employed at Starview Community Services as a Case Manager and Support Counselor for adolescents and transitional youth, where she's gaining professional experience as she prepares to pursue a graduate-level degree with a view to becoming a Marriage and Family Therapist. Coupled with her position on the Board of Directors for Pathways, you might think Cristina has a lot on her plate. But since she needed additional responsibilities, she also volunteered to serve as Chair for our Marketing Committee.

We wish Cristina continued success in her future endeavors and thank her for "paying it forward" through her service at Pathways to Independence.





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#### BOARD MEMBERS

Raymond Cervantez – *Board Chair*

Sharon Dickson

Joseph Dzida

Max Estrada

Lisa Fluke


Jerry Green

Nikki Harris, LMFT

Sylvia Hendron

Tracey Hutton – *Secretary*

Lindsay Mais – *Treasurer*

 Cristina Stricklin

Anita Beltran-Sutt

Leslie Wulff

 *Pathways Graduate*

.....  
Diana Hill – *Interim Executive Director*

FRIENDS OF PATHWAYS PRESENTS

# PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022



**norbgren**

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