

## Graduation Celebration 2022

A most memorable song from **Hamilton**, the Broadway sensation is the catchy, showstopping tune called “*The Room Where It Happens*” by Lin Manuel-Miranda. It came to mind as I drove to the Pathway’s graduation ceremony – the first in-person event in several years. I was SO looking forward to being in “the room where it happens.” Zoom enlarged our room and was welcome technology as it united us with those unable to attend in person by bringing their faces, stories, and celebratory joys into the room where it was all happening. There was lots going on:

**Warmth and hospitality:** Each take time and effort when offered in their most generous forms of welcome place-settings, food, flowers, and gifts of recognition. Mission accomplished.

**Friendship and support:** Both are easy to spot and normally quite tangible between mentors, clients, and friends. However, the “knowing” that clients have for one another is separate and distinct. After each graduate shared their Pathway’s experience, complete with the good, the bad, the ugly, the beautiful and the powerful words of advice for clients still in the program – there is an undertone of understanding among clients that says: “We know you; we know parts of your story, we know your obstacles, we know you have worked hard. You are one of us, we see you and we celebrate your milestone with you. The joy and the sense of



### CHARITY

Major in Social Work & Minor in Psychology

#### CSU, LONG BEACH

“Try not to become a man of success. Rather become a man of value” - Albert Einstein



### CARISSA

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

#### CSU, FULLERTON

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”  
- Victor E. Frankl



### BRIANNA

Associates in Psychology

#### IRVINE VALLEY COLLEGE

“All of us are in the gutter but some of us are looking at the stars.”

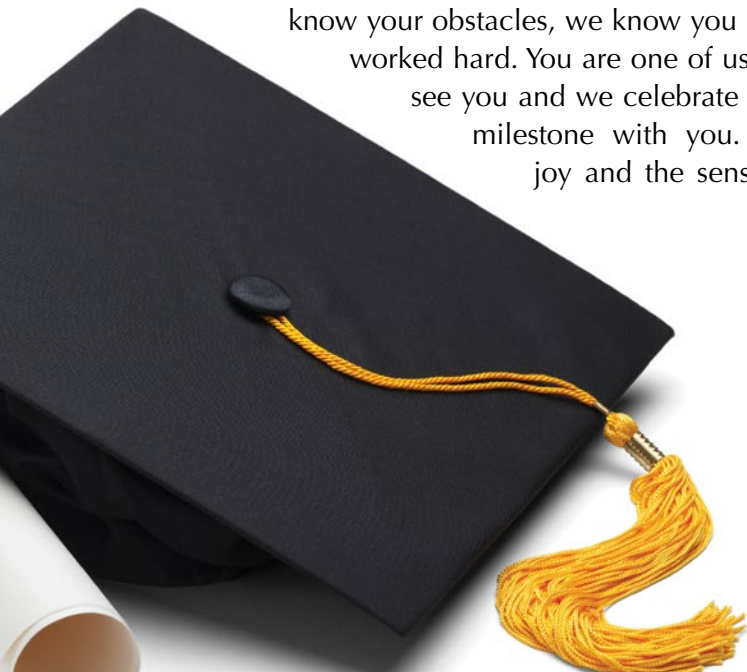


### VANESSA

Bachelors in Women & Gender Studies & Studio Art

#### CSU DOMINGUEZ HILLS

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.”  
— Maya Angelou



accomplishment for every graduate ran deep enough, in and out of the Zoom room and back into the room where it was happening to saturate everyone gathered with a deep sense of pride and accomplishment. Like a shawl – pride, kinship, and joy were draped over each graduate.

**College degrees with new paths:** No one knows exactly what tomorrow brings but we do know that a toolbelt of healthy living skills, college degrees and solid foundations are the way forward. Our graduates are dreamers who dared to dream of life very different from the one they were living a short time ago. This year's Pathways' graduates are nurses, social workers, aspiring doctors, and artists. They hold degrees in art, psychology, kinesiology, human services, and criminal justice. They are our success stories!



**WHILE IT WAS WONDERFUL  
TO GATHER IN PERSON,  
THERE IS ALSO A  
REALIZATION THAT IT  
ISN'T THE PLACE THAT  
MATTERS – IT'S WHAT  
HAPPENS IN THE SPACE.**

Together we celebrated seven graduates, seven milestones, seven wonderful stories of seven women moving forward with great accomplishment and who leave us with the best gift, inspiration.



### KELLIE

Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology  
with a concentration in clinical  
movement studies

**CSU, FULLERTON**

"And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." 1 Corinthians 13:13

### MARIA EMANUEL

Bachelor of Arts in Social Work

**CSU, LONG BEACH**

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."-Mahatma Gandhi

### ALLIE SCHEETZ

Associates in Science

**GOLDEN WEST COLLEGE**

"May the wind always be at your back and the sun upon your face. And may the wings of destiny carry you aloft to dance with the stars."

## Champions of Ability

**CHAMPIONS OF ABILITY IS A NON-PROFIT WITH VOLUNTEERS FROM VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS. THE VOLUNTEERS ARE MOSTLY COMPRISED OF CLIENTS AND STAFF FROM VOCATIONAL INNOVATIONS WHO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS.**

Our Champions created an awareness walk to raise money to help provide emergency care kits for the women of Pathways to Independence. The idea behind the awareness walk was that any person from any background can do what they set their mind to. The Champions raised \$3,000.00 to help provide these women with a basic need: safety, to which every human should be entitled. Christina Ruiz, a Champion, took charge of this project with the help of her peers and staff and created these beautiful fire safety kit bags. Not only did this make the Champions feel amazing for helping those in need but they had fun doing it.



## I cannot believe that we are more than halfway through 2022, and only a few months away from our “Pathways to the Future” event in the Park Estates neighborhood of Long Beach.

Back in April, the Pathways to Independence Board of Directors and staff attended a full-day retreat. The time spent together allowed us to have deep dialogue and reflect on our mission and how we want to execute on that mission. Shortly after, we realized that we needed to fill our open vacancy on the board, which was created when Diana Hill transitioned from the board to our Interim Executive Director. In June, we held interviews and we are so pleased to have brought on two dynamite additions to our Board, Robert Casares and Ana Lopez.



Robert is an Owner/Agent of State Farm Insurance and Financial Services in Long Beach, CA. He grew up in Downey, CA and graduated from Warren High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in Economics from San Jose State University. During that time, he volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club of America

and traveled to Ecuador and Peru to work with children of impoverished communities. Growing up in a family of insurance agents, he witnessed the impact his father and grandfather had on so many lives. This experience inspired him to follow in their footsteps and pursue a career with State Farm.

When he is not working, Robert is usually very active. He spends his time weightlifting, running the Shoreline beach path, snowboarding in the winter, wakeboarding in the summer, and hiking often. Cooking meals from scratch and spending time with his family is how he relaxes. Robert stated, “Being a member of the Pathways’ Board is an amazing opportunity, I believe this will allow me give back to this community and help others that are in need. I am very excited to work with

all the incredible people who have made this organization the success it is today and hope that my experience can bring new insight to the board and its growth moving forward.”



Ana serves as the Community Impact Division Officer for the City of Long Beach, Health and Human Services Department. She oversees the development, implementation, and sustainability of the city's collective impact approaches for violence prevention. She facilitates and co-leads several

intradepartmental collaborations to advance peace, equity and trauma-informed approaches towards working with communities most impacted by violence.

Previously, Ana worked at the Center for Latino Health, Evaluation and Leadership Training, where she continues to serve as an advisory board member and is an adjunct faculty member at the Department of Health Care Administration, California State University Long Beach. She received her Master's degree in Public Policy and Public Affairs from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Social Ecology-Criminology and Political Science from the University of California, Irvine.



**WE ARE SO FORTUNATE  
TO ADD ROBERT AND  
ANA TO THE BOARD.  
WELCOME TO PATHWAYS  
TO INDEPENDENCE!**





It has been an amazing first six months of 2022 for Pathways to Independence. As we have come out of a difficult time of change and challenges, we are finding incredible strength in our clients and the future. Here are some highlights:

### NEW PATHWAYS CLIENTS:

On June 1st, we accepted five new clients into Pathways. We implemented a new “provisional client” category. These are clients who may be lacking units or length of sobriety but are committed to their future. We accept them with additional conditions, and they are housed in a one of the Pathways apartment buildings in a guest unit, while they work towards permanent placement status.

### PATHWAYS GRADUATION CELEBRATION:

On June 29th, we had our first in-person graduation in 2 ½ years. It was amazing to come together as a community to celebrate our seven grads. We also were able to award nine clients with GPA awards (for a GPA of 3.5 or higher), two clients were also recognized for making the Honor Roll at their schools, and mentors gave 13-character awards to clients showing extraordinary character. We also recognized a well-deserving volunteer.



### SEVEN NEW GRADUATES:

As mentioned above, we celebrated seven graduates as they launch into the next stage of their lives. It was a magical evening. Read more about them in this newsletter.



### PARTNERSHIPS:

We are working diligently at building relationships and partnerships with CSULB, Long Beach City College, and Golden West College. These partnerships are to bring awareness to the Pathways program for students who fit our profile. We have also been asked to serve on the EOPS Advisory Boards of LBCC and Golden West. Champions of Ability is also a wonderful partnership. They did a fundraiser to help with fire safety kits for our clients (read more about this awesome group in this newsletter).

### LOUNGE DEDICATION:

We converted a two-bedroom unit at our Huntington Beach location into a study lounge and community meeting place for our clients. There is a common room with a big screen TV and bean bag chairs for watching movies and creating community, a “Well Space” for quiet reflection or therapy sessions, and a dedicated study room with desks, a printer, and office supplies. This lounge was made possible by



In memory of our friend  
**Lori Giacomini**  
who was dedicated to  
transforming the lives of  
those who pass through these doors  
into strong, independent &  
confident young women  
July 9, 2022

generous donations that were made in memory of beloved Friend of Pathways' long time member, Lori Giacomini. Lori's family was in attendance and cut the ribbon to open this space which will be a living legacy in honor of Lori's memory and dedication to Pathways.

### AWARDS:

This year, Pathways has been blessed with the following recognition awarded to either the organization, our volunteers or our clients:

- **Best Non-Profit in Long Beach** – Beachcomber Publication
- **The Spirit of Volunteerism Awards** – recognizing Suzy Gowin for her decades of service to Pathways
- **Invest in Others Award** – Honorable Mention for Lindsay Mais for her leadership and support of Pathways and Friends of Pathways
- **Pathways Volunteer Award Winner** – Elizabeth Hogrebe (Former Board Chair)
- **GPA Awards** – Andrea C., Kellie D., Maria E., Erika E., Carissa K., Jessica K., Katie H., Mia H. and Maddie L.

### BOARD & STAFF RETREAT:

In April, the board and staff came together to take a hard look at the organization and set a vision for the future. We had an excellent facilitator, Julie Truong, of Leadership Savvy. She helped us identify areas we want (and need) to focus on, such as a system for reviewing and admitting clients and merging our fantastic volunteers, Friends of Pathways, with the rest of the organization, to name a few. We determined the theme for 2022 is "United in Mission". We see a very bright future for Pathways and our clients.



Warmly,  
Diana D. Hill  
*Interim Executive Director*

# PATHWAYS TO THE FUTURE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022

PARK ESTATES, LONG BEACH, CA

### SPONSOR

Starting as low as \$500, Includes recognition and Event tickets

### ATTEND

Purchase tickets at  
[www.pathwaysgives.com](http://www.pathwaysgives.com)

### DONATE

Can't attend? You can still make a tax-deductible contribution to support all our Pathways programs.

### BID

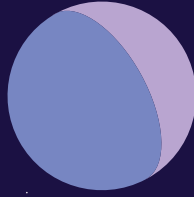
Support our epic online auction when it launches before the event. Buy an item (or donate one to be auctioned off). All proceeds benefit Pathways programs. Contact [smgowin@gmail.com](mailto:smgowin@gmail.com) to learn more.



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPONSORSHIP

### DIAMOND SPONSORSHIP \$20,000

- 20 GUESTS FOR PRE-EVENT VIP PARTY
- 20 TICKETS TO EVENT WITH VIP CHECK IN
- TWO PREMIER TABLES OF 10
- 1 TABLE SERVER
- 8 BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE
- PRIORITY CHECKOUT
- FULL PAGE COLOR AD ON FRONT OR BACK COVER IN EVENT PROGRAM (5.5"W X 8.5"H)
- RECOGNITION DURING OPENING REMARKS
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT



### RUBY SPONSORSHIP \$10,000

- 10 GUESTS FOR PRE-EVENT VIP PARTY
- 10 TICKETS TO EVENT WITH VIP CHECK-IN
- 1 PREMIER TABLE OF 10
- 8 BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE
- PRIORITY CHECKOUT
- FULL PAGE COLOR AD IN PROGRAM
- IN EVENT PROGRAM (5.5"W X 8.5"H)
- RECOGNITION DURING OPENING REMARKS
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT

### PLATINUM SPONSORSHIP \$7,500

- 10 GUESTS FOR PRE-EVENT VIP PARTY
- 10 TICKETS TO EVENT WITH VIP CHECK-IN
- 1 TABLE OF 10
- 4 BOTTLES OF CHAMPAGNE
- PRIORITY CHECKOUT
- FULL PAGE AD IN EVENT PROGRAM (5.5"W X 8.5"H)
- RECOGNITION DURING OPENING REMARKS
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT

### GOLD SPONSORSHIP \$5,000

- 8 GUESTS FOR PRE-EVENT VIP PARTY
- 8 TICKETS TO EVENT WITH VIP CHECK-IN
- 3/4 PAGE AD IN EVENT PROGRAM (5.5"W X 6.3"H)
- RECOGNITION DURING OPENING REMARKS
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT

### SILVER SPONSORSHIP \$2,500

- 6 TICKETS TO EVENT
- 1/2 PAGE AD IN EVENT PROGRAM (5.5"W X 4.25"H)
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT

### BRONZE SPONSORSHIP \$1,000

- 4 TICKETS TO EVENT
- BUSINESS CARD SIZE AD IN EVENT PROGRAM (2.75" X 4.25")
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT

### COPPER SPONSORSHIP \$500

- 2 TICKETS TO EVENT
- RECOGNITION ON WEBSITE, IN PROGRAM & SIGNAGE AT EVENT

VISIT [PATHWAYSGIVES.COM](http://PATHWAYSGIVES.COM)

✧ ✧  
**A SPECIAL THANKS  
TO OUR SPONSORS**

— Lisa & Frank —  
**CHAPMAN**

TITLE SPONSOR



PRESENTING SPONSOR



# Chelsea Nunn

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

### Pathways Alumni is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of CSUF

Before entering Pathways, I spent a year living in an indigent women's home recovering from a heroin addiction. My addiction started in high school at the age of 16 and I was consequently expelled for substance use on campus during my sophomore year. Because of this, I began attending continuation school.

My addiction led me to homelessness, jails, and toxic relationships. I spent what should have been my formative years developing into a functional adult, merely surviving, and feeding an addiction that left me hopeless and close to death.

Once I was finally "tired of being sick and tired" and given the tools to recover, there was no looking back for me. I found recovery at 21 years old and when I reached one year of sobriety. I started working in substance use treatment centers and knew I wanted to get an education to learn how to help others through therapy. At the time, I was working full time, living in a sober living home, sharing a bedroom with 3 other women, and riding a bicycle to and from work. In reality, I was not in a position to attend college full time as I desired.

When I first found out about Pathways to Independence, through a friend who was in the program, it sounded like an answer to my prayers; and in fact, it turned out to be just that. The things I desired to achieve in life were made possible through this program. Upon entering Pathways, I was given an apartment, a vehicle, a laptop, and financial support through a rent stipend, so that I could start attending school full time.

I was provided with a mentor, therapist, doctor, dentist, and a mechanic, so that any potential barrier to success was removed. After years of neglecting my physical health, Pathways helped me to become healthy again. For instance, after seeing a dentist for the first time in years, I was able to have 13 cavities filled.

Pathways exceeded my expectations of only receiving a higher education, it also helped me to achieve overall wellness, and transformed into the balanced person I am today.

I was in Pathways for 4 years and earned a bachelor's degree in Human Services from California State University, Fullerton. Not only did I graduate, but I maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA, graduating in the top 1% of my class, an accomplishment made possible by all the support given to me in the Pathways program.

Following my graduation from Pathways, I completed two more years of education earning a master's degree in Social Work. I am now an Associate Clinical Social Worker earning hours towards licensure, with 9 years clean. I am currently working as a Counselor in a medication assisted treatment center where I counsel adults battling the same substance use disorders that once plagued my life. Pathways has helped to enable my success by giving me the opportunity to meet my educational and career goals and gifted me the confidence to strive for more.

I am forever grateful for the support I received from Pathways. Every success I have had this far, I can relate back to the solid foundation Pathways provided me. I am filled with gratitude for all of the donors and volunteers who make up Pathways as I continue the journey to reaching my full potential.





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Los Alamitos, CA 90720  
562.493.9048  
PathwaystoIndependence.org

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#### BOARD MEMBERS

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Sharon Dickson, LCSD

Joseph Dzida

Lisa Fluke

Jerry Green

Nikki Harris, LMFT

Sylvia Hendron

Tracey Hutton – *Secretary*

Ana Lopez

Lindsay Mais – *Treasurer*

✿ Cristina Stricklin

Anita Beltran-Sutt

Leslie Wulff

✿ *Pathways Graduate*

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

Through your donations to Pathways, our clients learn independence and their futures are changed for the better. Thank you for your consideration in contributing to Pathways.

Since its inception in 1991, over 300 young women have participated in the program. Pathways is appreciative of its personal, corporate and service organization sponsors, as well as the health care providers who donate their services without charge to improve the quality of life of Pathways clients.

For more info call, 562-493-9048



#### DONATE YOUR CAR!

Contact Diana Hill at  
Diana.hill@pathwaystoIndependence.org

## Amazon for Pathways

AMAZON WILL DONATE .5% OF ALL ELIGIBLE PURCHASES

**Simply do your shopping via [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)**

**CLICK ON:** Your Account

**CHOOSE:** Change Charity

**TYPE IN:** Pathways to Independence

**SELECT:** The choice that includes Los Alamitos, 1994

*Thank you so much for your support!*

#### WISHLIST ITEMS THAT ARE ALWAYS NEEDED:

Paper Towels

Cleaning Supplies

Laundry Detergent

Sponges

Hand Soap

