

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Amanecer
COMMUNITY COUNSELING SERVICE



Our mission is to deliver compassionate innovative mental health services that empower individuals and families to overcome barriers and significant life challenges to achieve more fulfilling, resilient, and self-sufficient lives.

Our Values



We believe in the **POTENTIAL, HUMANITY, DIVERSITY, COURAGE** and **STRENGTH** of our clients.



We **INSTILL HOPE** and **EMPOWER** clients to believe in themselves and their capacity for recovery and resiliency.



We are **PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE** in the lives of others.



RESPONSIBILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, and **INTEGRITY** must be visible at every level of Amanecer.



Every individual deserves **RESPECT AND COMPASSION,** and **ACCESS TO CULTURALLY COMPETENT AND AFFORDABLE** treatment & support.



Decision-making that is **STRENGTHS-BASED** and **SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED** should guide staff, management, board, and client care.



Amanecer is a **POSITIVE AND GUIDING FORCE** in reducing the stigma of mental illness.



When we **HELP ONE, WE HELP ALL.**

At A Glance

Increased Funding & Expanded Services

- Amanecer added two co-locations at Casa Libre/Freedom House and Karsh Family Center providing mental health services to unaccompanied minors and the diverse Koreatown community.
- Dignity Health Foundation funded \$80,000 for Cultural Trauma and Mental Health Resiliency Project. Our Outreach Specialist and Case Managers were trained in Mental Health First Aid to train community partners to identify mental distress and reduce stigma.
- Fundraising revenue increased by 36.4% due to the investment of the fund development staff which secured more foundation grants and increased Amanecer's donor base.

Outcomes & Impact

Sustainability of Evidence Based Practices (EBP) and closely tracking client outcomes has showed that clients heal from trauma with skilled trained therapists.

- Secure trainings on a regular, on-going basis with experienced trainers; promotes and incentivize 'train the trainer' programs to have the ability to train in EBPs and assist staff to get certified.
- Client data collection improves clinical practices and enhances Amanecer's mental health services showing positive healing.

Innovated Technology

Faced with challenges of Covid-19, the leadership team successfully launched telehealth and continue to provide uninterrupted service to our clients and families.

- In 2017, Ahmanson Foundation funded \$100,000 for technology upgrades, which prepared Amanecer for the technological challenges this pandemic created.
- Cedar Sinai Foundation funded \$75,000 to purchase computers needed to implement telehealth quickly.
- Verizon provided 30 low-cost cell phones for clients to have access to telehealth.

Marketing

- Amanecer's marketing strategy is progressive; we are adaptable to the ever-evolving needs of the populations we serve in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.
- Our diligent Development Associate and Fund Development Committee strengthened Amanecer's community partnership by increasing social media presence, outreach to corporate and business donors, establishing strong partnership with foundations, and the philanthropy community.
- Our dedicated Outreach Specialist is one of the many faces of Amanecer with community presentations of our various programs to help increase referrals and boost visibility.

Executive Message

Dear Friends of Amanecer,

Have you noticed, Amanecer looks different? A change in leadership under the guidance of a dedicated Board of Directors made that happen! It has been over a year since I was promoted to the Executive Director position. After 20 years with this agency, I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to lead Amanecer into this new and exciting phase while preserving its exceptional 45-year legacy.

This year was about empowering resilience, as we re-examined who we are as an agency, what strengths we have as an agency, and who we serve. Amanecer has a rich legacy of providing high quality mental health services; we have been stewards for thousands of children experiencing trauma, making it possible for generations of adults to lead lives filled with opportunity and life skills. Thoughtful conversations with members of the Board of Directors, staff, clients, and consultants, helped us retain our past strengths and overcame obstacles to refine our brand. We hope our new brand honors the tenacity and resilience of our children and their families, adults, older adults, and our Domestic Violence Program.

Refining our brand illuminated two truths about Amanecer: 1) We are dedicated to providing mental health services to children and their families, adults, the homeless, undocumented immigrants, victims of human trafficking, and victims of domestic abuse; and 2) our hard working staff go above and beyond the call of duty to help all individuals with their trauma. These truths are the pillars of my leadership at Amanecer.

We empower resilience for those who seek services at Amanecer. Our dedicated staff members, in tandem with evidence-based, trauma-informed practices, set the stage for individuals to succeed by intervening in their lives and stabilizing their chaos, treating their trauma, and ensuring they become their own best selves. With the continued support of the Board of Directors, our partner agencies, our financial supporters, our volunteers, and our incredible staff, I look forward continuing our 45-year legacy of providing life-saving mental health services and ensuring the wellbeing of individuals throughout Los Angeles County.

With Gratitude,



TEDDIE VALENZUELA, LCSW
Executive Director



Senior Leadership Team



Alice Cardenas
Chief Financial
Officer



Carlos Quintero
Director of Children
Clinics



Julisa Lendo
Director of Adult
Clinics



Kelly Williams
Director of Quality
Assurance

Manuel's Story



Manuel, 15, struggled with depression the last few years. When Manuel was 12, his father was killed in El Salvador; his family fled to LA for safety.

Manuel did not adjust easily to this new life and had extreme difficulty in coping with the murder of his father. He made progress in treatment, but when the Safer-at-Home measure was implemented and Manuel's mother lost her job, Manuel slid back into his depressive state. He would spend all day in

bed and began to completely ignore his schoolwork.

Telehealth sessions with his therapist helped him to work through his emotions, and begin to feel hopeful. Manuel is even showing interest in school again. Case managers continue to deliver food and protective health equipment to his family.

A Trauma-Informed Agency

The following stages form the basis of creating a trauma-informed organization:

- Commit to creating a trauma-informed agency.
- Create an initial infrastructure to initiate, support, and guide changes.
- Involve key stakeholders, including consumers who have histories of trauma.
- Assess whether and to what extent the organization's current policies, procedures, and operations either support TIC or interfere with the development of a trauma-informed approach.
- Develop an organizational plan to implement and support the delivery of TIC within the agency.
- Create collaborations between providers and consumers and among service providers and various community agencies.
- Put the organizational plan into action.
- Reassess the implementation of the plan and its ability to meet the needs of consumers and to provide consistent TIC on an ongoing basis.
- Implement quality improvement measures as needs and problem areas are identified.
- Institute practices that support sustainability, such as ongoing training, clinical supervision, consumer participation and feedback, and resource allocation.

Amanecer was certified as a Trauma Informed Organization by National Council for Behavioral Health in 2017. We created a Trauma Informed Committee (TIC) consisting of staff members from various departments to implement an institutional framework for trauma-informed services from 2016-17. Amanecer was committed to implementing these stages to become a trauma-informed organization. The TIC committee continues meeting regularly to support sustainability.



The Trauma Informed Care committee developed a vision statement:

Amanecer is committed to respecting the unique journey of each person's path to healing in a compassionate, safe, and accepting community.

Sonia's Story

At 6 years old, Sonia's mother was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer and passed away within weeks. Sonia attributed her mother's death to her mother not loving her anymore.

When Sonia's father began drinking, she had to move in with her aunt. After losing interest in most everything, Sonia began to hide in the house--claiming monsters were chasing her. A neighbor suggested the family get help for Sonia at Amanecer Community Counseling Service. Sonia was able to get the help she needed.

Sonia's therapist helped her understand death and loss, taught her how to keep her mother alive in her mind, and provided tools to keep "the monsters" away.

"I'm not afraid of monsters anymore"
-Sonia, 6 years old



"I am not angry anymore and my mom is happy."
-Amy



"I don't have tantrums anymore"
-Miguel



Violet's Story



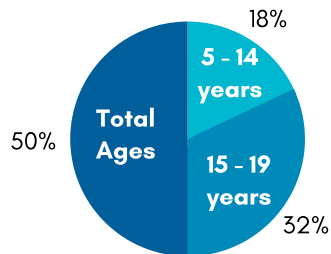
Violet, 16, lives in a group home after being discharged from a psychiatric hospital.

In the hospital, Violet came in contact with a person that possibly had COVID-19. She had to quarantine for 14 days, and was completely alone. This was stressful and lonely for Violet, who was already feeling a little apprehensive about this new group home. Communication with her therapist gave Violet comfort.

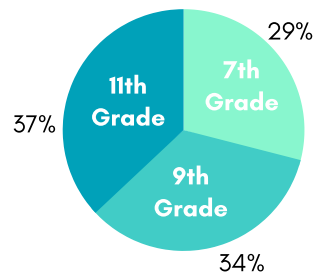
Her therapist was able to get a pre-paid smart phone to Violet that allowed her to attend telehealth sessions. This helped her feel connected to her therapist and calm her anxieties about quarantine.

Children's Programs

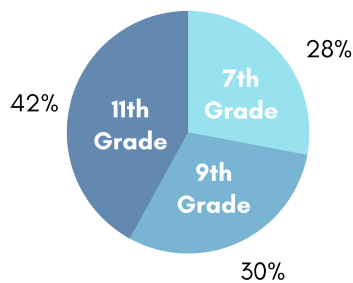
Did you know that 55.1% of youths need help for emotional or mental health problems in Los Angeles?



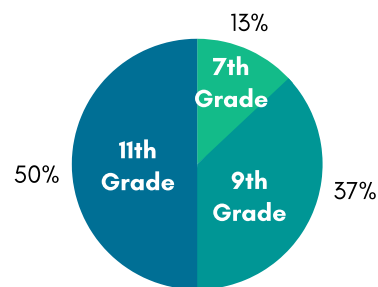
Hospitalization for Mental Health Issues, by Age Group



Depression Related Feelings, by Grade Level



Suicide Ideation, by Grade Level



Alcohol Drug Use, by Grade Level

We helped **1127** children and their families this year

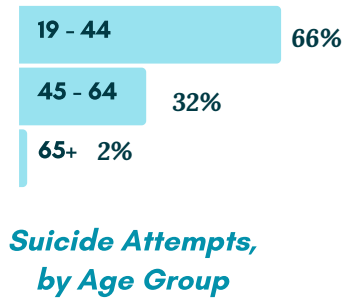
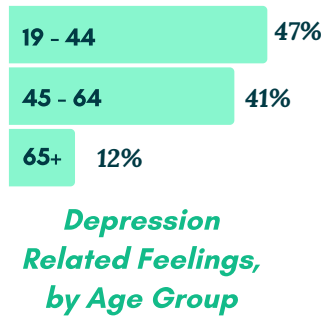
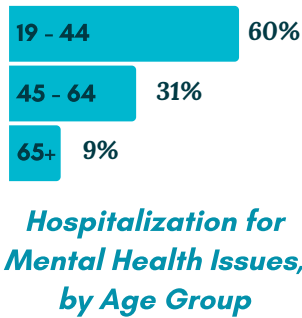
Amanecer's Children's Clinic offers a full range of compassionate, culturally competent mental health services to children, ages 0-17, and transitional age youth (TAY), ages 18-26. Our cutting-edge individual, group, and family behavioral health care addresses a wide range of childhood behavior and emotional challenges, traumas, and community case management needs.

Amanecer is a leading provider in the community of trauma-focused practices. Trauma, in many cases, is the common thread impacting families. Some children have been abused and neglected, while others have stood by and helplessly witnessed the abuse of others. Homelessness, violence, and substance abuse also traumatize young minds and can tear families apart.

Incorporating Individual and Family strengths promotes a holistic planning process that supports children where they are and where they're comfortable, be it at the schools, in the community, in their homes or at our agency sites.

Adult's Programs

Did you know that 30% of adults need help for emotional or mental health problems in Los Angeles?



Amanecer’s Adult Clinic offers a full range of compassionate, culturally competent mental health services to transition age youth (TAY), ages 18-26, and adults from 26-60+. Each client is assigned a treatment team that includes a therapist, case manager, and psychiatrist/nurse practitioner when necessary.

Therapists collaborate with each client to create a personalized treatment plan to help reduce symptoms, improve strong support systems, achieve productive daily routines, and develop healthier coping skills. Case managers connect clients with social resources such as safe housing, vocational training, employment, education, etc. to help stabilize their life outside of therapy.

We helped **744** adults and their families this year

Domestic Violence Program

15% of all violent crime involves an intimate partner

Women between the ages of **18-24** are most commonly abused by an intimate partner

19% of domestic violence involves a weapon

Amanecer’s domestic abuse program, The First Step Forward, offers individual, family and group therapy, intensive case management, parenting and life skills training, and access to employment, education and job-training resources to individuals who have been traumatized by abuse in the home. Our goal is to transform victims into survivors.

Rosa's Story



Raped and abused as a child, Rosa found herself in a string of emotionally and physically abusive relationships. At twenty, Rosa was seven months pregnant with her youngest child. One night, her husband nearly killed her by repeatedly kicking her with his steel-tipped boots.

Before she had even recovered from the attack, she fled with her children to California. With a friend's help, Rosa arrived at Amanecer with a limp from the beatings and a knife scar across her face.

After a year of therapy, Rosa has learned to recognize the patterns of abuse, to identify red flags, and avoid potentially dangerous relationships. She now recognizes her self-worth and talents and has developed a positive outlook on her future.

Although building her self-confidence is a work in progress, Rosa is determined to build a life for herself and her four children. She is working on her GED and taking advantage of Amanecer's employment and job-training resources.



"Amanecer taught me to have better communication with my children and to manage my stress."

-Victor

"The group therapies helped me to understand my situation and mood."

-Eva



"Well the truth is that I am very grateful for the support that my therapist has given me. I liked her method and her personality and the willingness to help me. I think that everything is good for me in this clinic, I feel safe for that. I'm glad I chose Amanecer and not the other clinic in 2012, although they treated me and helped me too."

-Maya, 26 years old



Telehealth

Like the rest of the country, Amanecer was challenged to adapt to a new way of doing business due to Covid-19. In early March 2020, when the reality of the pandemic began to set in Los Angeles the Amanecer Senior Leadership Team jumped into action. We formulated contingency plans to close our offices and solidified best practices for keeping our staff and clients safe.

By March 18, 2020, when Safer-at-Home measures were put in place, we were prepared to put those contingency plans in motion and shift to an exclusively telehealth model of service. Amanecer's history with numerous foundations laid the groundwork for our telehealth services. In 2017, the Ahmanson Foundation funded \$100,000 for technology upgrades to expand our field-based services; this resulted in the purchase of lightweight laptops and tablets loaded with HIPAA compliant software. This technology upgrade grant also allowed Amanecer to implement telepsychiatry services in 2018. This ensured psychiatric evaluations were available to all clients, regardless of their ability to access our offices in-person. In 2019, the Cedar-Sinai Foundation funded \$75,000 to augment this field-based service expansion, which allowed us to expand to more clients who could not access services in our offices. Though we didn't know it at the time, these upgrades enabled us to rapidly shift to a fully-telehealth model of services.

Clear communication and adept coordination from program Directors and Managers allowed us to smoothly transition from working in-office to efficiently providing telehealth to all our clients. Our IT department quickly distributed laptops to all staff members who did not already have one and rolled out new software to enable our vital team players to continue to serve from home. The utilization of Microsoft Teams allows staff to be in constant contact—staff can easily chat, share documents and files securely, and meet regularly via video conferencing.

As a team we were able to conduct telehealth to meet the needs of the community and our clients, but we still had to overcome the technological barriers so many of our clients faced. The reality for many of our clients is they are struggling financially and do not have a smart phone/laptop/tablet, do not have adequate data and/or do not have Wifi. Thanks to urgent Covid-19 funding from Cedars-Sinai, we were able to purchase very low-cost cell phones through Verizon and pre-pay the \$45/month data plan to ensure that all clients can access telehealth.

This pandemic has created challenges for us all. At Amanecer, we are so grateful to the Ahmanson Foundation, the Cedars-Sinai Foundation, and donors who made it possible for us to continue providing vital mental health care, psychiatric care, and case management services to vulnerable and at-risk individuals during this difficult time when our support is more needed than ever.



What do our clients say about Amanecer?

“My therapist has a lot of patience and before we had these blessed therapies, everything was more difficult and my daughter's behavior was worse, but thanks to the consultations she is improving a lot...”

"I am very grateful to Amanecer for receiving mental therapy has helped me a lot to be a better person and especially with my family which is my main interest..."

"This is the best mental health treatment center I've ever been in."

"We barely have two months in treatment, but little by little we have seen small changes in my son."

"Amanecer has helped me deal with my depression & anxiety issues, it has been a good experience for me, the staff here is very helpful and understanding."

"I like coming to Amanecer. Seeing my therapist helps me deal with my situations."

"Thank you all who work at Amanecer!"

"My therapist is incredible. My progress correlates with her skill set with her work."

"I'd just like to say thank you for all the help I've been given. It's really changed my life a lot."

"Listening to the experiences of the other moms in the class helps me to feel that I am not the only one with problems with my daughter."

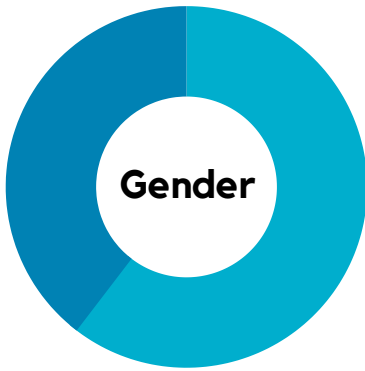
"They help me calm down and talk well with my son and understand him better."

"My child has been able to express herself better."

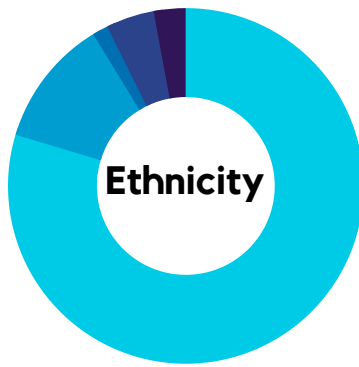
"I see myself differently after talking to my therapist."

"I'd just like to thank you so much for all the help I've been given. It's really changed my life a lot."

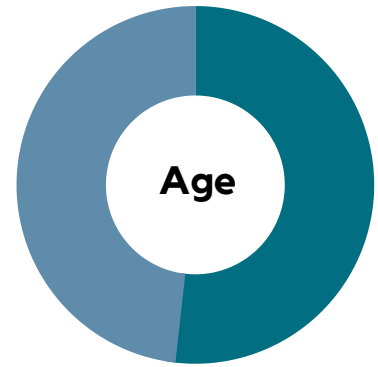




Female 58.7%
Male 41.3%



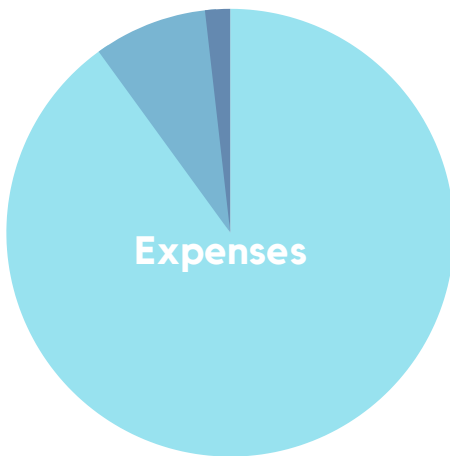
Hispanic 78.9%
African-American 8.7%
Unknown 7.3%
White 3%
Other 2.1%



Children 57.4%
Adult 41.3%



Government Contracts 95.7%
Grants and Donations 4.3%



Program Services 89.9%
Administration 8.2%
Fundraising 1.9%

Last year,
Amanecer served
1,871
clients & families

Demographics & Highlights

Betty's Story



Betty is a single mother of two young children. When Safer at Home orders were implemented, Betty was laid off as a hotel housekeeper and struggled to find other work to support herself and her children. A week after getting laid off, she learned she had contracted Covid-19.

The virus turned Betty's life upside down. She rushed her daughters, aged 4 and 5, to her mother's apartment so that they did not get infected. The virus progressed, and Betty was bedridden for weeks all alone.

Betty got better physically, and was able to be with her children again. However, she is facing immense emotional stressors. The weeks passed with no income, and rent is overdue. Betty fears she will be evicted.

The treatment team at Amanecer helped Betty through this difficult time. Her therapist worked with her to utilize coping skills to reduce stress and fear. Betty's case manager is working with her to identify community resources, and apply for rent assistance and new jobs.



"My case manager and therapist are so nice. They have helped me find housing and food banks when things got hard."
-Angelina

"I can finally talk to someone about the things that keep me up at night. I sleep better now."
-Luis



Sylvia, 68, was laid off from her job as a housekeeper due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each week in therapy, Sylvia and her therapist worked through coping mechanisms to help with the severe anxiety this crisis has created. Because she is immunocompromised and does not have a car, accessing food banks was extremely challenging. Her case manager helped her identify resources that are accessible for her and delivered basic-needs items to her home.



"I am still scared about the future, but I feel more able to face each day thanks to Amanecer." -Sylvia, 68 years old

Service Expansion on the Horizons

Did you know that 31.6% of Adults and Transitional Age residents of Los Angeles County suffer from co-occurring disorders? The term co-occurring disorder refers to the condition in which an individual has a co-existing mental illness and substance use disorder. While commonly used to refer to the combination of substance use and mental disorders, the term also refers to other combinations of disorders, such a mental disorder and an intellectual disability. (The terms dual disorder and dual diagnosis were previously used to describe the same condition.)

When a substance use disorder and a psychiatric disorder co-occur, they may differ in severity, and the severity of each can change over time. Compared to individuals who have a single disorder, those with a combination of disorders may experience more severe medical and mental health challenges and may also require longer periods of treatment.

Right now, Amanecer must refer clients struggling with substance abuse disorders to agencies specializing in substance abuse treatment. Part of our Strategic Plan for the next two years is to expand our services to provide a full continuum of behavioral health treatment, including treatment for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

To begin treating substance abuse, Amanecer must become a certified substance abuse treatment agency. This two-year process requires Amanecer to first receive certification with the State of California Health and Human Services Agency and then obtain certification with the County of Los Angeles Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Control.

Amanecer's Key Advantages for providing Substance Abuse Treatment are as follows:

- No additional staffing needed initially
- Ability to 'scale up' or 'scale down' as needed
- Therapists are already pre-qualified with minimal training required
- Case Managers can get trained and certified over time
- Therapists and Case Managers already have extensive experience with individual and group rehabilitation services
- Psychiatrists can provide medication-assisted treatment under their current licenses

Los Angeles County is aggressively pursuing expanded treatment and provider networks due to the high demand for substance abuse treatment. Amanecer wants to meet the growing need not only for our clients, but all individuals who need treatment. The Senior Leadership Team is excited about expanding our services. We want to be a "one stop agency" to provide array of behavioral health treatment.

Board President Message



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Development Consultant

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Insight Marketing, Inc.

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Javier Hernandez
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Jesus Gonzalez
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*Hill & Piibe,
Immigration Lawyers*

Andy Rosillo
Indie Printing

Alexia Valencia
Alexia Valencia Consulting

Friends,

This past fiscal year has brought forth a lot of change--we promoted our Chief Programs Officer, Teddie Valenzuela, to the role of Executive Director; hired Alice Cardenas as our Chief Financial Officer, welcomed Carlos Quintero back to ACCS as our new Director of Children's Services; partnered with new co-locations; experienced a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic that paved the way for our new telehealth services; and welcomed three new board members to our leadership. Throughout all of this change, our incredible staff members were resilient, adaptable, innovative, and dedicated to serving those most in need.

As we continue to grow and carry out our strategic plan over the next few years, we hope to fulfill our mission with even more tenacity than previous years. Your continued support of our clinics has allowed us to dream big and reach for higher standards of client care even in times of great uncertainty. We hope that as we continue to invest in our communities, that you and your loved ones continue to invest in us.

We are so excited for the new era of Amanecer, we hope you are too!

MARIA LOPEZ

Board President



Foundation Grants

Amanecer would like to thank the grantors below for believing in our mission and investing in the well-being of our community.

Weingart Foundation

Cedars Sinai

Dignity Health

**Ralph M. Parsons
Foundation**

**QueensCare
Foundation**

**Silicon Valley
Community Foundation**

**California Community
Foundation**

**Lucille Ellis Simon
Foundation**

**The Sheri & Les Biller
Family Foundation**

**Adams Mastrovich
Family Foundation**

CalMHSA

**Richard Dunn Family
Foundation**

Amanecer applied for a grant with the **Weingart Foundation** seeking to improve leadership capacity by investing in the development of our Board of Directors, Senior Leadership Team and Program Managers.

We are very excited and grateful to have been awarded \$150,000 towards these efforts. Together with Amanecer's CFO, Alice Cardenas, we sought out leadership consultants that best fit Amanecer's current needs. After several interviews, we chose The Breakthru Alliance and started a conversation with Richard Greenberg, President. We sat down with Mr. Greenberg to discuss the current state of the agency, the growing pains we were experiencing as we evolved, and the new direction in which we planned to take the agency

What matters most to Amanecer:

- Increase knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead and manage
- Increase understanding and alignment about Agency business and people challenges
- Generate effective, efficient, and productive solutions to meet those challenges
- Drive toward a fun, productive, and sustainable way of working together to provide compassionate client care and accomplish the Amanecer vision, mission, values, and goals.

Mr. Greenberg developed a yearlong road map to strengthen the leadership's ability for agency growth and sustainability:

- Designing and facilitating leadership modules, workshops, retreat experiences, and meetings
- One-on-one coaching
- Team coaching.

Amanecer leadership is excited about the leadership journey we are embarking on to better serve employees and clients.

Individual Donors

Amanecer is grateful to the many foundations, businesses, individual donors, and families whose support empowers and provides resilience for those in our community who need it most.

\$15,000+

Pedro Marti

\$10,000+

Maria Lopez

\$5,000+

Magda Haidar

Jaime Marti

PepsiCo, Inc.

Andy Rosillo

\$2,500+

Isaac Cuevas

Fifth Generation Inc.

Jesus Gonzalez

\$1,000+

J Bee Boutique

Richard Greenberg

Javier Hernandez

Cecil Hoffman

Maggie & Cliff Maraschino

Magda Marti

Yamile Marti

Jonathan Pun

\$500+

Veronica Alvarado

John Perkins

Alary Piibe

Craig Simmons

Hilda Solis' Office

\$250+

Sandra Barsoum-Babakhanian

Teddie Valenzuela

Teresa Valenzuela

IN-KIND DONATIONS

1111 Wilshire

AttaGirl

Academia Avance Charter School

Veronica Alvarado

Patti Azevedo

Baby2Baby

Michael Bakert

Mario Barra

Sandra Barsoum-Babakhanian

Christina Briones

Councilmember Gil Cedillo's Office

Curacao Foundation

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Debbie Valenzuela

Julie Valenzuela

Sucely Vargas



Partners and Donors



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.





Amanecer

COMMUNITY COUNSELING SERVICE