

COMPASS

Newsletter

Future
**WORLD
LEADER**

Winter 2016

Supported
Living
Independent
Living

Far North Edition

www.compasscares.com



THE 20 YEAR CELEBRATION CONTINUES...



Compass Values

GENEROSITY

Being a blessing to others,
because we are thankful for
our many blessings.

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The Compass Story

By Sadie Hess | Founder & Director

[1]

Like all great adventures, the Compass story starts with uncertainty. I had landed a job right out of college as a social worker. It was a wild ride with little support and a lot of unknowns. I quickly formed a connection to the other social worker struggling alongside of me named Joanne McCarley. I think two keys to doing social work well are a sense of humor and an affection for people. Joanne had both of these, so we quickly became connected to not only the clients but each other.

In July, 1996, we were unceremoniously told that our program was going to be shut down due to budget cuts. We were devastated. In one short year, we had formed connection and a sense of family with the sixteen clients we were serving. We couldn't stand the thought of their hard work undone by a single decision. We had these amazing people get their own set of keys, fix their own meals, meet a friend for coffee and other new experiences for the first time in their lives and it was addicting. We didn't want it to stop just because an agency didn't think the program was financially viable anymore. These were people and they deserved someone fighting for them, not just looking at a budget and cutting them. It is a precious gift to watch a person find freedom and discover they have more skill and talent than they ever imagined. We realized we had been given a precious gift and would do whatever it took to keep working with these individuals.

"I found a treasure in this group of people, sold everything I had and bought the field."

So, Joanne and I went to work to rescue sixteen clients and their Supported Living Services. Within six weeks of herculean effort and a lot of help from God, we had created a life raft we named Compass. Compass started serving its first client on August 19, 1996.

I was only twenty-three years old when the organization launched! We opened the agency with dedication, hard work, and two thousand dollars leaping into the unknown. I truly had no idea what I was getting into. When we made this somewhat rash, quick decision, I had no idea of both the joy and anguish such a life-altering decision would mean. I have watched clients make both great and terrible decisions and have walked with people as their lives came to an end. I wouldn't trade a minute of it.

There is a parable in the Bible that says a wise man, when he finds a treasure in a field, should sell all he owns to buy the field. When I first read that parable, I thought the man was rash and foolish, but I now see it differently. It is wisdom to put everything you have into the treasure God shows you. God revealed the treasure in this group of people, both clients and staff alike to me at such a young age. I found a treasure in this group of people, sold everything I had (not much at 23!) and bought the field. I have had twenty years of discovering the many, many treasures of clients and staff in this field.





SLS Feature: Kayla

By Josh Flom, **SLS Supervisor**

[2]

You know, growing up can be difficult. We have all done it; some of us may still be trying to grow up. One particular rite of passage that is associated with growing up and that we all inevitably must face at some point is the day we move out of the safety of our parents' home. Some of us eagerly jump at the opportunity; while others take their time and milk it for all it is worth. Whatever the motivation we experienced, it happened, it didn't it? I remember the day that I moved out. I was 19 years old; I was eager and excited. I remember my parents hugged me and my dad handed me \$40.00 and said, "Good luck son, I believe in you."

I would like to focus on one particular individual that recently took this leap in their own life. I want to take a moment to reflect on how well she did too. Within the last year, I took over as the Case Facilitator for our Tehama County clients. This particular individual is one of my SLS clients, Kayla Rodriguez. Kayla came to us at the age of 18 years old. She was living at home with mom, enjoying life incredibly, listening to as much Justin Bieber as possible and pretty much had all she needed available to her. Suddenly, everything changed. She went from the familiar to a new situation with 24 hour staffing, and new people learning her routines and morning start times to staying in her apartment. There were early work and of course, there was a bus pick up schedule. It was different. Kayla did amazing. She faced every challenge the best she knew how. Some days she would voice her opinions, and other days, she patiently waited through the processes in front of her. At times her team attempted to guess what she needed or wanted; but slowly, Kayla learned to have confidence in herself and to trust those around her.

"I am so proud of who she is and the transition she has made into living independently this last year."



Kayla has come so far! She is learning to advocate for herself, she deliberately reached out independently to her Case Facilitator to ask for assistance on several occasions, she has learned to let staff ask questions to help guide her communication, she has overcome some of the struggle of climbing into bigger vehicles, she has made effort to walk without her walker or wheelchair, and she has even met with her day program to advocate what she needs and doesn't need for herself. I am so proud of who she is and the transition she has made into living independently this last year. Kayla is an inspiration and she loves to connect with the community of folks around her. She is proud of her accomplishments and even insists on doing the dishes independently when she is able.

Kayla, great job overcoming one of the hugest hurdles you've had to experience in life. Starting out as an adult can be difficult and scary, but you are taking charge and helping lead your life and the team of people around you. I am so eagerly excited to see how you do in the years to come. Well done Kayla. I believe in you and wish you the best of luck.



ILS Feature: Juan

By Zandee Meadows, **ILS Manager**

[3]

Juan Aguirre is 28 years old and lives in Red Bluff with his Dad and his two brothers. He first decided to come to Compass when his dad, who is also a Compass client, and his Service Coordinator noticed that Juan was frequently sick and was experiencing unexplainable weight gain. Juan was afraid to go to the doctor and find out what his health issues were due to negative experiences with medical professionals in the past.

Juan's previous experience with doctors left him feeling scared and misunderstood. Juan felt as if he was treated poorly due to the fact that he spoke only Spanish and because of his disability. Therefore, it was also difficult to fully understand his physician's diagnosis and instructions. Juan finally agreed to seek medical attention with his father's influence and the confidence that he gained from his ILS instructor. Juan was diagnosed with High Cholesterol and Diabetes. Knowing that he wasn't alone was integral in Juan's journey to better health.

Juan's journey hasn't been easy. When Juan was first diagnosed there were many tests to be performed, blood to be drawn, and medications to take. All of this was very overwhelming and confusing to him. Most of all he hated having his blood drawn. Juan does not like needles, and had a bad experience in the past when he was poked several times, bruised, and hurt. There were months when he refused to go back to his doctors, have his blood work done, or monitor his diagnoses because he was afraid and unsure of what he would find out.

Today Juan is well on the road to health and wellness. He takes all of the medications prescribed by his doctor and tries to attend all of his medical appointments. He is not tired all the time and has more energy to spend on doing the things he enjoys. He is eating and cooking healthier, as well as incorporating new fruits and vegetables into his daily diet. He still

hates needles and getting his blood drawn, but knows it is a necessary step to monitor his progress. Juan eats out much less now, and he loves that the money he has saved can be spent on purchasing gear for his favorite pastime with his family – camping and fishing!!

Juan's success story is one that continues to inspire us all. The joy that he experiences when he has a checkup and his blood sugar levels are where they are supposed to be, or his cholesterol numbers have dropped, are the motivation that he needs to know that he is on the right path. He continues to receive support and motivation from ILS, but largely is encouraged by his family, as well as the changes that he sees himself making in his own life. The journey for Juan isn't just about better health; it's about a better life.

"Juan's success story is one that continues to inspire us all."



Team Member OF THE MONTH

[4]

Linda

AUGUST

STAFF ADVICE: If there is an activity go to it even if you do not have a client-they are always lots of fun. Don't be afraid to ask questions

even if you think it is lame.

QUOTE: People often become what they believe themselves to be. If I believe I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. But when I believe I can, then I acquire the ability to do it even if I didn't have it in the beginning. - Mohandas Gandhi

RANDOM FACT: I had a dog named Curly who appeared in a national dog magazine- Dog Fancy August 2002.

COMPASS VALUE: Faith because if you believe it can be done (it can be done).

STAFF ADVICE: Go with the flow.

RANDOM FACT: People are surprised to learn that I was a carpenter before Compass.

NICKNAME: My family and friends call me Trace

JUNE

Traci

JULY

David

STAFF ADVICE: Everyone is doing the best they can, if they could do better they would. Even if you know they can do better, or you've seen them do better, that's the best they've got in that moment. Love them through it and be a positive support.

QUOTE: "The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it" -Peter Pan

RANDOM FACT: I use to play trumpet and sing in a reggae band on the east coast before I moved to California to continue my education.

We are so thankful for all of our staff!

Our Team Members of the Month represent the **BEST OF THE BEST.**

We are always looking to add to our TEAM. If you are interested in joining the Compass Staff Team, **apply on our website at www.compasscares.com**





Financial Basics

PART ONE

By Aaron Zint
Payroll Coordinator

[5]

You've likely heard some well-known phrases about planning. "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail" and "Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable." While we all conceptually understand the importance of planning, we tend to ignore it in practical application, especially around the area of finances. One Gallup poll reveals that only 32% of Americans utilize a budget month-to-month. It's understandable. Just saying the word "finances" will evoke fear and anxiety in a lot of people. 80% of Americans are in debt, which in and of itself is not a bad thing. Debt is what allows us to purchase homes, vehicles and other necessities. But there is a dark side to debt that most of us are all too familiar with. Typically it's credit card, medical or legal debt that keeps us from feeling at peace financially. Whether you are fearful or chill-axed, in the red or in the black, in good standing with the IRS or forever watching your back, making a plan is essential.

Financial planning does not bring short-term reward, which is why we tend to avoid it. We are a fast food nation and we want to feel good this instant. If we can't microwave it, we'll eat it frozen or not at all. Financial planning is a gift that you are giving to your future self. It's to the retiree that you aspire to become or the generous grandparent who gives an inheritance to their children and grandchildren or both.



So where do you start? You start with the most basic and most difficult word in the English language: a budget. Creating a budget can be done in 4 simple steps. Set aside at least an hour to do these.

1 **INCOME:** Add up how much you make in a typical month (look at your bank statements or just save your pay stubs to figure this out).



3 Subtract the total of step 2 from the total of step 1. If you get a negative number, then you need to either spend less or make more. Probably both. You will definitely need step 4. If you get a positive number, congratulations you have money that you can save! You still need step 4.



2 **EXPENSES:** Add up how much you spend in a typical month (create categories for things like bills and groceries that you have to pay for no matter what and things like entertainment and eating out that are not absolute necessities).



4 Make a decision about how much you will spend in each category that you created in step 2 and stick to it.





By Melanie
Anderson
Interim RM
San Jose

Gratitude: The Art of **THANKFULNESS**

[6]

Even though my parents raised my siblings and myself to be thankful for our many blessings, I did not truly understand the concept of gratitude until I traveled through the pain and experience of loss. When I was a teenager, my Mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. I knew it was serious but I was completely ill prepared for the challenging years ahead. At first I was positive, sharing hopeful energy with my Mom every day. It was not long before I found it difficult to have any hope and I became quite bitter as she suffered through surgeries, treatments, new diagnoses and literally, pain. I had been working at a residential care facility and the owner, a nurse, noticed my work was suffering. She was not someone I had perceived as nurturing and I had labeled her, in my infinite 19 year old wisdom, "old school" and difficult to please. She pulled me aside and asked about what was happening with my Mom and offered to share honest information about what I could expect to happen to my Mom as her illness progressed. The conversation was graphic, painful and frightening. After the reality of what I could expect broke me down to my lowest point, she told me I was lucky. Lucky? She pointed out that we had been given the gift of time that so many others were not. She pointed out that personally caring for my Mom, tending to her wounds, hugging her as she cried, talking to her about what she wanted at her funeral, hearing about her faith, and simply being present with her through her journey were things I should be grateful for. She was right and I have since been grateful to her for changing my paradigm that day. She attended my Mother's funeral and I thanked her for the gift she gave me. I started appreciating the smallest of blessings and have tried to make a practice of that ever since.

Gratitude defined is, "a feeling of thankfulness". When you look up "thankful", it reads "appreciation". "Appreciation" reads "to value highly". Gratitude shifts your focus from what you perceive your life to be lacking to the abundance that is already present. Because gratitude encourages us not only to appreciate gifts but to repay them (or pay them forward), the sociologist Georg Simmel calls it "the moral memory of mankind." There is behavioral and psychological research that has shown the surprising life improvements that can stem from the practice of gratitude. Giving thanks makes people happier and more resilient, it strengthens relationships, it improves health, and it reduces stress.

What does practicing gratitude look like? It could be so many things...Being present in the moment and being thankful; expressing appreciation to another; sending a card; seeing the positive in a situation; repaying a favor; random acts of kindness; noticing the simple things; finding the lesson or purpose in a tough situation; smile; not waiting to tell someone you love them or appreciate them; focus on intention; take a 30 days of gratitude challenge... A common method to develop the practice of gratitude is to keep a gratitude journal. There are journals for this purpose and lots of free printables online. I downloaded an app on my phone that I used when I was feeling down and not very grateful about much. It only took a few days to transform my mood and remind me of the good in my life. I started to reflect on little things that I was previously taking for granted. I recently discovered a website, 365grateful.com, that has inspirational stories and the creator's own gratitude project. Another site, gratefulness.org, is devoted to living gratefully.

It is said that a grateful heart is a magnet for miracles. Why don't we start attracting those moments of greatness right now? What are you grateful for? And how can you share your gratefulness with others?

Cruise Memories!

Just sit right back
And you'll hear a tale
A tale of a favorite trip,
That started from this Cali port,
Aboard this massive ship.
The mate was a mighty sailin' boss,
The Skipper brave and sure.
120 passengers set sail that day,
For a 7 day tour,
A 7 day tour.

**Adapted from Gilligan's Island theme song.*

Skipper

Boss

[7]

