

COMPASS

2023 Winter Edition

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Supported Living and Independent Living

Growing Gains



By Sadie Hess, Founder & CEO

THE LEGACY OF COMPASS, PART 2

Compass SLS and ILS has been who we are as an organization for 25-plus years. Over the course of those 25 years, we have grown and matured. People have joined our organization with diverse talents and skills, and we have diversified in so many ways. Our capacity to steward more than SLS & ILS has grown and we are much more than those titles now.

I have realized the language of calling ourselves an SLS & ILS company is now too small for where we are headed. We do so much more, and those things should be highlighted and shared. Let me highlight a few other parts of our organization beyond SLS and ILS.

QUICKSOLVEPLUS (QSP)

We started looking for a software product over 14 years ago. We tried some and found them to be grossly inadequate because they didn't quite get what we do. We were left sorely lacking functionality and flexibility as well as a cost-effective solution, in one comprehensive solution.

We needed a program that would take away some of our pain: trying to manage schedules, people, IHSS, Regional Center requests, timecards... the list went on and on!

We wanted to focus on people. We wanted to focus on our clients and their care, so we needed to come up with a solution. QSP is our solution, a solution that meets our complex needs, but is still simple enough for everyone in our organization to use.

Instead of stopping with this, we realized this was something our industry needed, so we began selling our software as a subscription service. We now have over 70 QSP customers that use QSP in nearly every Regional Center in California.

QSP is part of who we are and part of what we do. As we go after continuing to provide this as a service to our community and the larger community it is important that we make room for QSP in our name. QSP is now part of our DNA and has made our world infinitely better.

BUILD

We have received several contracts to provide training to social and recreational organizations to move through the vendor process as well as help youth connect with needed services with their local Regional Center. We have been doing this, this year through the Build Project.

We are focused on building the capacity of youth and emerging adults to engage in social recreation within their communities and helping build the capacity of caregivers and families to support their youth. We are helping develop the capacity of the existing social recreation providers to provide inclusive and adaptive opportunities for youth to engage with their community.

We are very proud of what we have done in a short period of time to serve a slightly different population with a slightly different focus. But it is still aligned with our mission and our values.

COORDINATED FAMILY SUPPORT (CFS)

We are getting ready to embark on a new journey of Coordinated Family Services. This is a new service; it is a highly needed service in our communities. It is going to provide services to Individuals with disabilities in their family homes. It is going to provide the opportunity for us to go in and hire people who speak the same language and have the same cultural value system. It is an opportunity to serve an entire family, to make their quality of life better.

Individuals with disabilities who want to choose to live in their family home should get that option and be able to get a service that wraps around them in their own home. We are very excited about this and deeply feel it fits with our overall vision and mission. This is a new era for us and will again change our language to include more of our overall community.

REBRANDING

We will be expanding our language and branding to include all these services. A huge part of who we are will always be SLS & ILS. It is in our roots and here to stay but we are making room for all these much-needed services to enrich the lives of those we serve and agencies that serve alongside us.

We are changing our limitations and breaking out of the box we have been cozy in for many years. As we grow, change is inevitable, and we will continue to evaluate our language and tools. As we look forward, we will not limit ourselves, it is a bigger mandate to serve the community of individuals with disabilities, to serve agencies, and to provide and promote inclusivity to our community at large.

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A Winter Gift

By Amanda Burnett, QA Coordinator

Now that the seasons have changed and winter is upon us, I find myself asking, am I using these precious moments wisely? Am I taking time to be mindful of the gift that winter is to us? Most recognize winter as a time to be cold, hunker down and wait for the warmth of Spring and Summer to come back into our lives. I, however, look to it for so much more, I know this is a time to be cherished.

Somehow this magical season finds a way to defy the hours on the clock and slows time for us. Allowing our bodies much needed restoration from the whiplash we experience when carefree summer turned into busy autumn schedules.

This season is not just for Christmas sweaters and holiday parties; it is filled with opportunities. Opportunity to bring forth time for rest, reflection and to express our feelings of gratitude. As we transition into this new season, we begin to realize our days are getting shorter, the weather is getting colder, and the magic of winter starts to blanket our souls like the first snow of the season silently covers the treetops.

These slower months come with the time we need to spend reflecting on the year we have just experienced. Compiling all the moments in our mind like a movie only played for us. (Oh, just think about all those wonderful memories made and lessons learned). Often it is with this reflection that

we find what it is we wish to accomplish in the new year, what worked for us throughout the past year, and what we could stand to change in the coming months.

While we all know it is important to bring rest and reflection into our lives as a healthy act of balance, many of us don't know when to honor this time. If we listen, Winter tells us; the time is now. With our days ending more abruptly, we feel a pull to spend more time closer to one another indoors, we feel the promise of coziness in the company of those we love reflecting back on the year that was.

As I take the time to reflect, I often find it folds beautifully into warm hearted feelings of gratitude. I let these emotions fill my heart and am reminded that my life is a gift, and those that I get to spend it with are cherished. I try to never miss an opportunity to let someone know how their presence impacted me; as a mother, a daughter, a wife, a friend, or colleague, and I choose to share how grateful I've felt to have them with me throughout all the seasons of my life.

I encourage everyone, as we brave the cold winter, to remember to open your hearts and minds to this opportunity for reflection and gratitude. Take the time to figure out what worked best for you in the year, and what needs to be changed. Use this time to share what made your year special with the people around you, share with them fond memories you have, share what it was you loved this past year, and even what you could do without.

Don't forget every moment, whether good or bad, was what got us here. I ask that all of you take the time to slow yourselves through the hustle and bustle of the holidays and remember to embrace the gift that winter reflection can bring.

If we listen, Winter tells us:

The time is now.



Meet Alice

By Adrian Salas, SLS Supervisor

This last fall we had the great opportunity to work with, and get to know, Alice. Her story is filled with strength, beauty, and humor. Alice has lived independently for the last few decades, figuring out what it means to support her home and life. Of course, living independently does not mean living alone, as Alice has many different people and organizations that support her in living her life the way she wishes.



Moving from ILS to SLS is not an easy decision, as it involves being brave enough to ask for help. This was a concern that I had for Alice, not that she wouldn't partner with us, but that she may lose some of her independence that she fought so hard to keep. I am so glad that I was wrong. Alice has been able to maintain her way of life, and Compass is doing our job of making things more accessible to her.

Alice loves planning her day out and having Compass follow along beside her, partaking in all the necessary and fun outings that come along with that. Alice maintains her autonomy in most areas of her life and shows her strength in how much she wants to participate in everyday living, including her amazing fashion and coordination choices!

Alice's community is something to be admired. She has built a foundation of love and friendship through the organizations that she participates in and the relationships she maintains. I have witnessed the way her laughter brightens the room, how her stories leave you wanting more, and how her jokes just hit the right spot, often leaving you needing a minute to breathe and recover.

Alice participates in her art day program, weekly church services, living with her roommates, talking with her son, and finding love in her relationship with her boyfriend. Being involved with that many different groups would leave me exhausted, but Alice is energized by it, and it shows in her spirit.



ILS FEATURE

Meet Susan

By Shannon Laird, ILS Manager

Allow me to introduce you to Susan, a remarkable individual who has been an integral part of the Compass family for nearly eight years. Susan embarked on her Compass journey in Supported Living Services (SLS) and, approximately two years ago, she seamlessly transitioned into Independent Living Services (ILS). Susan's tenure with Compass is a testament to her dedication and resilience.

Beyond her professional achievements, Susan's personal journey is nothing short of inspiring. A fighter at heart, she faced and conquered the challenges of a stroke a couple of years ago, demonstrating remarkable strength and determination in her path to a full recovery. Susan's resilience is not only a testament to her character but also an inspiration to everyone around her.

Family holds a special place in Susan's heart. A proud mother of two daughters and a doting grandmother to her grandson, Susan is deeply committed to fostering strong family bonds. Her love extends to the furry members of her household, as she is an avid animal lover with two dogs and a grand-doggy.

Susan's kindness radiates, making her one of the kindest individuals within our Compass community. As an SLS work-

er, she extends her compassion and support to clients with disabilities, enriching their lives with her caring presence.

Susan's multifaceted personality is reflected in her creative pursuits, from needlepoint to diamond art, showcasing her artistic flair and passion for crafting.



Outside of her professional and creative endeavors, Susan finds joy in simple pleasures. Whether it's enjoying a delightful lunch or dinner, taking a leisurely stroll while window shopping, or savoring the warmth of the holiday season, Susan cherishes these moments and spreads joy to those around her. Notably, during the

holidays, Susan shares her culinary talents by crafting some of the most delectable homemade fudge, adding a sweet touch to the festivities.

In every aspect of her life, Susan embodies the values of compassion, resilience, and creativity. Her journey with Compass is not just a professional commitment; it's a testament to her spirit and the positive impact she has on those fortunate enough to know her. Susan, with her warmth and zest for life, truly makes Compass a brighter and more compassionate place.

Meet Conrado

By Sara Cowan, Case Facilitator



In the heart of a small mountain town, where winter transforms the landscape into a magical wonderland, lives a man who goes by Rado.

Rado's love for life is contagious. He cherishes the company of friends and family, always ready for a gathering or celebration. Parties and events hold a special place in his heart, and the holiday season is his absolute favorite. Any excuse to celebrate is a reason for Rado to shine, showcasing his talent for bringing joy to others.

Music is a favorite companion for Rado, and he can often be found rocking out on his headphones. The rhythm of life syncs with the beats of his favorite tunes, adding an extra layer of happiness to his days. Balloons and puzzles further engage his playful spirit, creating moments of shared joy with those around him.

Despite the challenges he faces in his life, Rado's vibrant spirit and positive attitude light up the lives of everyone he encounters. He is the epitome of outgoing and friendly. His infectious smile and easygoing nature make him a beloved figure in his community.

A typical day for Rado involves a blend of structure, routine, and the simple joys of life. From the moment he wakes up, he eagerly anticipates connecting with his loved ones and having adventures. Having goals and being rewarded for his achievements is also important to him and brings a sense of accomplishment that fuels his enthusiasm.

Despite the isolation of living in a rural area where there are more cows than people, Rado loves life and loves being outside. He relishes time at the lakes, rivers and streams, and pretty much anywhere where there are trees. He also enjoys attending a weekly dance class, going bowling and an occasional movie at the local theater.

Rado's story is a testament to the power of a positive attitude and the transformative effect of love. In a winter wonderland, where over two feet of snow can fall overnight, Rado lives as a beacon of warmth, radiating happiness and reminding us all to embrace the simple pleasures of life.



ILS FEATURE

Meet Lisa

By Cassandra Sales, ILS Program Manager

If you have been to a Carrville Camp or retreat in the last few years, you have probably met Lisa. Lisa is a hardworking mama who is navigating the world through some health issues. Pain can be an everyday occurrence in her world and over the years she has worked diligently and courageously to be more active, make healthier decisions, and to choose Hope.

While at the Carrville Camp for ILS this year, she was having a moment of pain and she pulled out a rock and rubbed it. Almost like a magic genie, her wish for her pain in that moment to subside was granted. When asked about the rock, she told the story of how her Life Coach, Kelly, gave it to her to cling to hope even in the moments it's tough. The inspiration given to her by Life Coach manifested as something powerful.

Desmond Tutu said, "Hope is being able to see the light despite all the darkness." It has helped Lisa through so many dark moments. Despite 8, yes 8, falls and many surgeries in the past year, Lisa has not missed out on one moment. She has worked persistently to get more steps in, to make health choices with food, and her goal for the next year is to lose 50 lbs. What Lisa's story shows us regardless of what you are going through, there is always something to cling to and it will get you through.

Next year you will see Lisa on another Carrville adventure, and plenty of other once in a lifetime moments as well. When you do, take the time to hear her story of triumph and ask her how her dream of losing weight is going. Hearing her story and progress might just be the light that gets you through a dark day too.



Hope is being able to see the light despite all the darkness.

SLS FEATURE

Meet Jack

By Michael Pence, Senior Case Facilitator

Jack started with Compass SLS in March of 2023 after originally starting with our ILS division. Jack has lived in San Jose for his entire life, and for the last 30 years has lived independently in his apartment. Jack has always been a relatively social guy, participating in sports and different community groups in his youth. But during COVID, as was the case for many, several of the social opportunities known to Jack went away and have either not come back or have not come back to their fullest effect. Additionally, Jack worked at a movie theater for over 20 years(!) but that opportunity came to an end due to COVID as well. This is where Compass stepped in and Jack stepped up! to take walks with staff to the mailbox without the use of her walker.

Jack has really made a fantastic effort to reengage with his local community, including attending all available Compass events for the last several months. Jack has joined us for beach day, hiking, movie day, the zoo, ice cream socials, and office birthday parties just to name some of the events he has attended. Jack has also taken an interest in self-improvement during this most recent season, joining a



weekly exercise class through The College of Adaptive Arts that meets at West Valley College. Jack has also enrolled in two more classes, one of which offers an online or in person attendance option. Sticking with the theme of his recent life choices, Jack chooses to attend all of those classes in person as well and has really gotten into a good rhythm with that class and his fellow classmates. As the current school semester is coming to a close, Jack is already looking at the upcoming class options for the Spring 2024 semester and will be continuing his amazing newly rekindled social enjoyment.

At every turn, Jack has shown he can put aside any social anxiety he has about a situation and really go all in to enjoy life's experiences. Jack displays a welcoming attitude with all of his staff and is very accommodating and gentlemanly when they are at his home, making him a pleasure for all who interact with him. Me, as his SCF, and Compass as a whole are really looking forward to seeing Jack blossom even further in 2024!

Meet Brent

By Terrah Starling, ILS Life Coach

Brent is a great model of independence and fulfillment. He is a four time cancer and stroke survivor. Diagnosed at 18-years-old, he has had quite the health journey. Daily Brent works on his health and wellness by keeping track of his doctor appointments, following the advice and instruction of his physicians, and making sure he is scheduling and is on time for all of his appointments. Due to his hard work and diligence, he has been in remission for 6 years.

Brent spends his spare time helping others. This is how he is able to exercise his skill in community resource awareness. If you have ever caught a flight from San Jose or San Francisco airport, it's possible you and your bags were checked in by Brent. For seven years, he has dedicated Fridays to San Francisco airport. On Mondays, he's at the San Jose airport and has been there for 12 years! Thursdays he maintains the front desk at Stanford Hospital and is on the emergency room board. He is also an advocate for people with disabilities.

Brent is a sports connoisseur, baseball being his favorite sport. During the summer he enjoys spending time with the little ones, coaching the junior giants baseball team. When he isn't coaching, he checks in the players when they arrive to the field.

Somehow with his busy schedule, he has also managed to find love.

Brent doesn't only help people. He has a love for animals and has been a volunteer for 16 years at the ARF Animal Rescue Foundation. There he helps by walking the dogs and looking after the cats. Did I mention he is also a full-time fur dad? He cares for his service Shih Tzu, Milly. No matter what, his service dog, Milly, is by his side. Somehow with his busy schedule, he has also managed to find love. He adores his girlfriend of one year, Allison, who supports him in everything he does.

Brent is putting his best foot forward to meet his goals with Compass, and is doing an excellent job doing just that.



SLS FEATURE

Meet Ernie

By Ramona Tate, Senior Case Facilitator



As of today, Ernie accesses the community whenever he wants. He has learned to ride the public bus, keep track of his own spending money, and administer his medications with minimal guidance. He has heartfelt conversations with his staff and enjoys talking about his interests, hopes, and dreams. Ernie has discovered that Compass events are safe and fun. He would be extremely disappointed if he ever missed one. This year Ernie stepped outside his comfort zone and attended Carville Camp.

This past week I was so proud of him when he spoke up and introduced himself to Pastor Denny. His introduction of himself was so precious when he said, "Hi I'm Ernie, also known as EZO", which was the first time he spoke up in a group setting. It brought great warmth to this SCF's heart to see how much growth Ernie has made.

It just goes to show you that hard work, determination, and grit will pay off and make a difference for the people you support. Ernie is happy healthy and safe living in his own apartment within a community of friends and support.

I would like to introduce Ernie. In 2021, Ernie graduated from a juvenile residential group home with a very structured setting into supported living. When Ernie first arrived in SLS, his independent skills were minimal at best. He could not perform a task, make a choice, or a decision without asking for permission. His medication administration was completed for him, any activities within his home could not be done without approval. Ernie didn't understand he could have money in his wallet and spend it as however he wanted. When he would go out into the community he was always transported by others as he never experienced public transportation. Ernie stayed in his bedroom with the door closed 80% of the time and would seldom engage his staff in conversation.

Now two years later in 2023, with support, Ernie has truly grown with his skills and desire to be independent.



Meet John

By Cassandra Sales, ILS Program Manager



At Compass, we thrive in the gray area. However, we all know the gray area can be very messy. We aim to make that less messy by finding win-wins in situations. We may not be able to accommodate everything, but if it is important enough to you for you to put in the work, we can absolutely work towards a win-win.

John is the champion of the gray area. One of our core values is Freedom, and John is a true testament of the power of freedom. John's independence is very important to him, and he wants to remain as independent as possible. John has struggled to find a system that works for him when it comes to his medication. As a result, he was transitioned to SLS about a year ago to ensure his medications were

properly managed. John didn't desire to remain in SLS as he wanted to put in the work to find a better system and return to ILS.

How can we as a team support John towards his win-win? As a team, we began to think outside of the box. If John needs support with medications and does not want staff here every time he takes them, how can we make this a win-win.

Through a partnership with Redwood Coast Regional Center and lots of research, he has since received a timed medication box. The medication box has allowed John the freedom to have minimal staffing and ensure that his dream to do as many things independently as possible comes true. John, who a year ago needed more support than ILS could provide, is now thriving in his independence. That's what we like to call a Win-Win.

“Don't define your world in black and white because there is so much hiding in the gray.”

– Unknown

One Family's Journey to CFS

By Kira Webster, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

In the realm of caregiving, this one family's story is one of unwavering dedication. For over three decades, the mother and father have been the primary caregivers for their son, John, who has developmental disabilities. John's journey has been filled with love and care, but as he has grown, so have his needs. These parents, like many parents in similar situations, have been patiently waiting for a solution that can provide the support John requires while allowing him to continue living at home.

Enter Coordinated Family Support (CFS), a game-changing service designed for adults with developmental disabilities who choose to remain with their families. CFS was born from the collective voices of families who had been facing the challenge of limited services for their adult loved ones living at home.

CFS is a ray of hope, offering tailored, individualized, and flexible support that adapts to the changing needs and preferences of the individual and their family. It is a lifeline that simplifies the coordination of services, ensuring that the family and the adult with disabilities receive the assistance they need.

One of the pivotal aspects of CFS is its proactive approach to planning for the future. It allows families to outline their loved one's desires if their living situation changes, providing peace of mind and clarity in uncertain times. Moreover, CFS brings together a network of trained professionals who can work harmoniously with both the individual and their family, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.

Transportation, back-up providers, and access to additional "generic" services are also part of the CFS package, ensuring that individuals receive holistic care that respects their culture, ethnicity, and linguistic preferences. The support provided through CFS is not just a service; it's a bridge to self-advocacy groups in the community, promoting independence and empowerment.

For families like this one, CFS is a long-awaited solution that paves the way for a brighter, more supported future. With this innovative service, they can continue to provide the loving environment John needs while accessing the necessary assistance for daily activities like morning showers. Coordinated Family Support represents a significant leap forward in enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families, offering a profound sense of relief, security, and empowerment. .



This family, along with
countless families
across California, are
on the cusp of a new era
in disability services,
and CFS is the guiding
light leading the way.

#IT'SAWRAP!

It's a wrap on another fantastic year at Compass! 2023 was a blast with so many fun events including adventure retreats and Camp Carrville. And everyday community, too. Looking forward to 2024!

