

COMPASS

2025 Summer Edition

Volume 39



Supporting Adults with Disabilities since 1996

A Culture of Generosity

By Sadie Hess, Founder & CEO

At Compass, generosity isn't just something we do—it's who we are. It's one of our core values and a powerful way we strive to be a blessing to others, rooted in our deep gratitude for the many blessings we've received. Generosity is a way of life here, and this year we've experienced it not only through grand gestures, but also in the quiet, simple moments—like picking a flower for a friend, helping a neighbor with yardwork, or donating time to a local charity.

Generosity doesn't always require money. It can be as simple as showing up, offering your time, lending your kindness, or writing a note. It's not only about helping strangers, it's also about loving the people already in your life. Sometimes, the most meaningful acts of generosity are directed toward those closest to us. These intentional, thoughtful moments often land the deepest—because they're personal and filled with love.

This year at Compass, we've been building a true community of generosity. We started a **Generosity Committee**, led by none other than Cassandra Sales. Cassandra has made generosity an art in her life, and I am so proud of the group of people who have stepped up, brainstormed, and collaborated on efforts to spread generosity throughout the Compass community. What's even more beautiful is how these efforts overflow into our other core values like community and faith. We're seeing people give together, show up for one another, and learn that it's okay to ask for help—and trust that someone will come alongside them.

One of the creative tools Cassandra made is our **Generosity Bingo**—a thoughtful and fun activity designed to inspire simple acts of kindness for strangers and friends alike. It's helping people become aware of what generosity can look like and encouraging us to be generous not just with resources, but with our time, our presence, and our hearts.



Compass has also planned multiple events this year to serve our broader community. From picking up bags of trash and helping at local soup kitchens, to volunteering at animal shelters, organizing Generosity Fairs, participating in creek cleanups, supporting Bridge to Belonging events, and so much more—the impact has been wide-reaching and deeply felt. One of our clients even started a **Generosity Facebook Page** where community members can post or give away items that others might need. It's been a beautiful reminder that we all have something to offer.

The Generosity Committee has also been able to support individual staff and clients in meaningful ways. One client needed help keeping her Disney+

subscription, which is part of her daily routine—the committee stepped in and covered that. When a team member moved out of state recently and was facing the financial stress of relocating, the Compass community rallied together to raise over \$650 for him and his family. The Generosity Committee matched those funds, sending him off feeling deeply valued and cared for.

If you want to stay connected, there’s now a Compass Generosity Facebook Group where you can follow monthly events, share needs, or be part of the giving. The stories pouring in this year have filled my heart with joy and pride.

On a personal note, I’ve been donating to Sober Grads this year—just one small way I can give back and support something good in my community. I think we often get stuck in the mindset of “I’ve done enough,” but lately I’ve been embracing a new question:

“Can I do more? What more can I do for the people in my community—and for the people I love?”

This heart posture has shaped my 2025 in the most meaningful ways.

Because the truth is—generosity changes us. It benefits the recipient, yes, but it also transforms the giver. When we realize we have something—anything—to give, we gain both gratitude and purpose.

I’m excited to see what becomes possible when a group of people lean into generosity together. Our collective generosity doesn’t just lift individuals—it uplifts the entire community.

Because generosity isn’t about what you give. It’s about who you are.

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

— Pablo Picasso



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Summer Connectin'

By Jessica Noble, PCT Training Assistant

The arrival of summer brings with it the anticipation of relaxation, fun, vacation, and a little bit of freedom from some of the daily routines that inevitably must be followed throughout the year. In most of our regions, summer also brings nicer weather that beckons people to venture outdoors, enjoy the sunshine, and participate in community-building, energizing, and healthy life-giving activities.

These summertime activities provide some stress relief from the monotony of daily responsibilities. Sometimes this freedom, extra time, and fun can build or even strengthen connections and community opportunities that can be difficult to make and maintain the rest of the year. With all of our Bridge to Belonging in-person events that are happening and will be happening in the next few months, this summer is definitely going to be a time of connection, community, and fun!

We have already kicked off our summer in-person events with the Poppy Festival, painting classes, WrestleMania, and a creek cleanup event, and a fully booked floral class!



The Poppy Festival at the Shasta State Historic Park was our very first in-person event led by Shannon DeMars. A dozen or more of our people from ILS showed up and participated in several of the activities, including branding designs on pieces of wood and making poppy flowers. Connections were made with vendors and other participants regarding the types of events, retreats, and activities Compass hosts and how well we embrace community!

Our WrestleMania event, led by John Allen, streamed a wrestling match with a competition afterwards where participants showed off their most creative moves in an effort to win the Best WrestleMania Entrance. We held a Florals with Friends class in early May, led by Maraya Villarreal, where a dozen or more of our people in the SARC region created beautiful bouquets!



One of our other in-person events was the Calaboose Creekside cleanup at Plantable this last weekend, and there were people from Compass, other Far Northern clients, and community members who work for PG&E all working together to help our environment and to beautify Redding. Cleaning Calaboose Creek happens once a month, and it is not only about cleaning up part of a local business, but it also brings community connections as people work together to beautify our city, which in turn, brings the wildlife, like otters, back into their natural environment. This handful of events has already established strong community connections that will develop over time.

In light of these events, it is amazing to think that summer has just begun! Other upcoming events include Karate Power in FNRC and the BMX Bike Fest and Drum Circle Fun in SARC. And we have Elliot's Movie Making event that will be streamed to create an in-person event in each of our regions, followed by Books & Bingo in SARC and Karaoke and Fresh Adventure in ACRC.

These are just a few of the more than 70 events that we will be hosting this summer, covering a vast array of interests ranging from health and wellness to arts and crafts, music, and social recreation activities. Every event provides an opportunity for clients to explore how many outside connections they can form—connections with other people in their community who share their interests.



SLS FEATURE

MEET JOANNA

By Yolisa Bam, Case Facilitator

At first glance, Joanna's art is a swirl of textures—fabric, paint, torn paper, and found objects—all intricately layered into bold, emotional pieces. Take a closer look, and you'll find something even more powerful: a story of perseverance, and an artist turning her dreams into reality with the help of a devoted support system.

Joanna, known by her Compass SLS staff and family as "JoJo" tells a story through every piece. "She is a really prolific working artist", says her mother, Dee, who introduced JoJo to art early on in life.

Over the years, JoJo has created hundreds of pieces inspired by family dinners, nature walks, and childhood memories. Her work has been featured in galleries and sold online, with admirers drawn to her ability to translate feeling into form.

But JoJo's journey isn't one of talent alone. Her life as a working, celebrated artist with a love of music, dance and socializing has been enhanced by a powerful partnership: her family and her Compass SLS team.

Behind the scenes, JoJo's Compass SLS Life Guides — who she works with daily to maintain her independence, play a vital role in helping her fulfill her destiny. They assist with the everyday logistics that allow her creativity to flourish, from supporting her in her day-to-day routine, planning schedules to coordinating her transport to gallery showings and more.

"They're a big part of how JoJo gets to live the life she chooses," says her father, Steve.

JoJo now spends her days with her peers and is immersed in her work the Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland California. Each creation is more than just a piece of art—it's a symbol of what's possible when ability is supported by community, honor, and the right team.

JoJo's participation in the art community showcases "the boundless creativity and impact of artists on cultural dialogues in the Bay Area and beyond" says the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Through dedication, creative passion, and a circle of support that believes in her completely, Joanna is showing the world what it means to have dreams, direction and fulfill her destiny—layer by beautiful layer.



MEET AKASHA

By Shannon Laird, ILS Facilitator

I am really excited to introduce one of our newest clients from the East Bay, Akasha! She started our compass ILS program just a short time ago. And right from the start she was sweet, kind and had a lot of things that she was eager to work on. She attended our spring fling and really shined. She danced, she introduced herself to others and was just pleasant to be around.

Akasha has a deep passion for art and self-expression. She attends creative growth day programs in the Oakland area and thrives in her environment. They allow her to explore new ideas, use her imagination as she takes her artistic superpowers to the next level.

Akasha is an anime enthusiast, she is drawn to its unique character's, variety of narratives and exploring a wide range of genres-from action and fantasy to a slice of life and romance. Akasha enjoys drawing, painting, and doing projects. She loves poetry, she considers herself to be a lyricist. When it comes to movies, romcoms are her jam. Her current favorite movie is love hurts and Paul. Akasha is always up for a good adventure. She loves being out whether exploring a new event or attending a rave where she can dance the night away.

Akasha has not always had an easy life, and she is always open to sharing her story in hopes of encouraging others not to give up, not to allow their disability to hold them back or discourage them from going after their dreams. She wants to motivate others to recognize their disability as a superpower.



Maybe it is hard to think of it in that way, but just like any superhero, superpowers are not always visible to the eye. Akasha takes a lot of pride in herself, she shows herself love, compassion and gives herself grace when she has had not so great days.

Some other great attributes about Akasha are that she is loyal. Once she is your friend and you have earned her trust she will show up for you when you are feeling down, she will be consistent and offer support along with words of encouragement. She will celebrate with you and be your cheerleader.

SLS FEATURE

MEET OLGA

By Moises Fuentes, Senior Case Facilitator

This past year has been nothing short of inspiring for one of our incredible clients, Olga, who has made tremendous progress with the support of SLS (Supported Living Services). Her journey has been marked by courage, resilience, and personal growth, demonstrating the true impact of personalized support and a strong will to thrive.

Early in the year, she achieved a major milestone by moving into a new apartment. This transition has provided not only a fresh start but also a sense of stability, independence, and pride. Creating a space that truly feels like home has been empowering for her, and she's embraced the opportunity to make it her own. Since the move, she has also been able to expand her community and many Compass clients live nearby, allowing her to build new friendships and feel even more connected and supported in her daily life. She's also had the chance to broaden her horizons through some exciting travel opportunities.

This past year, she experienced the magic of Disneyland, the fun and connection of Camp Carville, and the thrill of Six Flags during a "Backyard Adventure" getaway. These moments have brought her immense joy and a renewed sense of freedom.

While the year brought joyful experiences, it also came with serious health challenges. She faced them with remarkable courage and perseverance, never losing sight of her goals. With continued medical care, personal strength, and support from her SLS team, she has worked through those difficult times, and we are thrilled to share that her health has now stabilized.

She is feeling stronger and more energized, ready to continue building on all she's achieved.

Her progress is a testament not only to her inner strength but also to the power of consistent, compassionate support. She continues to pursue new goals with determination and hope. We are incredibly proud of all that she has accomplished and can't wait to see where her journey takes her next.



MEET GIRISENIA

By Felicia Sims, ILS Supervisor

In every community, there are people who make a difference with small actions full of love, and Girisenia is one of them. With unwavering dedication and a generous spirit, Girisenia has shown that serving others is not just an act of kindness, but a way of life. Her warm presence and willingness to help make her a fundamental pillar in her surroundings. Through her example, she reminds us of the importance of being present, of listening, and of lending a hand when it is most needed.

Compass defines "Community" as "Shaping individuals into a dynamic group of people, drawing our power from each person's unique potential." Girisenia leads her life by this definition, demonstrating each and every day that anyone can choose their dreams and actively work toward their destiny with just a little support from a large community.

Girisenia is the kind of person whose warmth, kindness, and joy radiates outward and touches everyone she meets. Girisenia is known in her family and community for her generosity, welcoming others in with a smile and a warm homecooked meal, most likely enchiladas or chilaquiles! She lives with her husband and children, ensuring that her and her family needs are met and everyone is happy, healthy, and safe.

Her nurturing spirit extends beyond her human guests; she loves her cats like they are her own children and supports neighborhood cats with finding good safe homes. Meeting the needs of others truly is Girisenia's language of appreciation that she lives genuinely each and every day.



Since joining Compass in October 2024, Girisenia has been quietly working on her goals while making loud statements with her results! In less than a year, she's built a healthy routine for herself, balancing family life with a new commitment to wellness by going to the gym twice a week and re-establishing a routine with her medical providers.

Girisenia is a shining example of strength, compassion, and perseverance. We are proud to celebrate her and all the heart she puts into everything she does.



SLS FEATURE

MEET DAN

By Cindy Cobb, Senior Case Facilitator

Dan has been with Compass since March 2020. While his full name is William, he prefers to go by his middle name—or simply “Dan.”



When Dan first came to Compass, he shared that his dream was to live in his own home after years in a group setting. That dream came

true when he joined Compass. Since then, he’s lived with two roommates and now shares a four-bedroom, three-bathroom home with an SLS and an ILS client. The three housemates get along wonderfully and support each other like true friends.

Dan receives 24-hour support from his LG staff and deeply appreciates his Compass team. A quiet and kind man, Dan lights up every room with what he calls his “cheeser” smile. His caring nature showed when he recently asked to visit a hospitalized roommate—grabbing his hand and smiling big for a picture together.

Dan once dreamed of living in an apartment, but now says that dream truly came alive when he moved into a house. “A house is so much better,” he says. “It feels more like home.”

Dan attends Siskiyou Opportunity Center three days a week and enjoys sitting in the sun and chatting with friends. He also loves outings—especially the Carrville Retreat, where he swings, eats great food, plays games, and dives into art projects.

At home, Dan enjoys helping plan family-style dinners with his roommates and winding down in the evenings with TV. He’s well-known around Yreka for his friendly smile and gentlemanly handshakes.

Though Dan no longer travels like he once did with Trips Inc., he now cherishes holidays with his brother Doug and other family. He’s also an artist, proud of his hand-drawn maps of Fort Jones and Etna, which he loves to share along with stories of his past travels.

Dan truly is living his best life at Compass—spreading joy wherever he goes.





ILS FEATURE

MEET AMANDA

By Lacy Berry, ILS Facilitator

Everyone will be pleased to meet our amazing ILS client, Amanda! If you don't know her already that is, because she knows a lot of people. Amanda joined Compass in 2018 and has been such a light for her staff as well as her peers. Amanda really encompasses the meaning of connection, always staying busy helping others or attending whatever activities she finds interest in.

Amanda loves volunteering her time at Shasta College Head Start while she studies to get her Early Childhood Education credits. She is also volunteering at Mercy Family Hospital. Amanda loves working with babies and even though she has decided to take a semester off from classes, she continues to support the Head Start program. She will return to school this fall to continue her education with her ECE 8 class.

This summer Amanda is excited to go to the Backyard Retreat at Waterworks Park. She already has her own season pass and is excited to attend with her Compass friends! During the month of June, she is travelling with her family to Nashville, Tennessee to attend her half-brother's graduation ceremony and to have some fun! Amanda really values travel and normally goes on a few out-of-town excursions a year.

One of Amanda's superpowers is being a great friend and girlfriend. She has a wonderful relationship with her boyfriend, and they enjoy spending time cooking together. Amanda has been improving her kitchen skills, while they both work on their cooking objective. They research recipes together and cook side by side. Amanda is a great motivator and encourages others

to accomplish their goals while pursuing her own.

This past Christmas, Amanda was crowned as Prom Queen during our Compass Christmas Event and was very excited to be awarded such a prestige title. This title really incorporates everything that Amanda is. She is fun, friendly, outgoing, and involved.



Whether it's activities in the community, Townhall, Camp Carrville, Bridge to Belonging, or Community of Dreamers you are likely to find Amanda there connecting with others and offering the best of herself to the world. If you are in need of a positive friend, a caring volunteer, or an attendee for an event, you should get to know Amanda. She treats each day like a brand-new adventure!



SLS FEATURE

MEET RYAN

By Mariza Flores Rodriguez, Case Facilitator

We are pleased to introduce Ryan, a member of the Compass SLS family for nearly 15 years within the SARC region. Ryan is known for his friendly and charismatic personality, and he remains an active and engaged member of his community. He enjoys living independently in his two-bedroom apartment, where he continues to thrive. Ryan continues to benefit from his circle of support that includes family, friends, and the Compass team. He especially enjoys spending quality time with his father, often participating in activities such as golf and bowling.

Ryan truly values his support network, which plays a vital role in helping him pursue and achieve his personal and community-based goals.

Ryan is an active and engaged client who enjoys participating in a wide range of events, both through Compass and within the broader community. Over the past year and into the current year, he has taken part in several Compass-organized activities, including a memorable trip to Disneyland.

During this trip, he enjoyed quality time with staff and had the opportunity to be with his family. Ryan also regularly visits the Compass office, where he enjoys connecting with staff and sharing updates about his daily activities. His enthusiasm and positive energy continue to bring joy to everyone.

Ryan is an enthusiastic participant in the Fourth Street Bowling League, where he enjoys spending time with his team and engaging in friendly competition. In 2024, Ryan and his league proudly took part in the Special Olympics Bowling Tournament—an experience he thoroughly enjoyed and one he looks forward to repeating in 2025.

Bowling is important for Ryan's weekly routine, with practice sessions on Tuesdays and Sundays. His dedication to the sport is evident in his ongoing efforts to improve his performance.

Ryan has already achieved an impressive personal best score of 267 and is steadily working toward his ultimate goal of a perfect game.

While Ryan is focused on accomplishing a perfect game, he also finds joy in the recognition and celebration that comes with earning trophies. Furthermore, he continues to build friendships and connections within the competition and learns new skills.

We are excited to see what the upcoming year has in store for Ryan and look forward to supporting him as he continues to grow and reach his goals.



MEET JESUS

By Terrah Starling, ILS Facilitator

Tender, kind-hearted, soft-spoken polite, sincere and gentle are the best words to paint a portrait of Jesus. His genuine, innocence and kindness is enough to fill anyone's basket. Jesus' presence is one that can bring comfort, joy and a smile to everyone's face.

Everyone loves to see him in the community at Compass events, fully participating with other clients. Jesus has also become South Bay's own personal Kris Kringle. Every year, without fail, he dresses up as Santa Claus for the Compass Christmas party in San Jose. With a bright red suit, a fluffy white beard, everyone waits in line to take pictures with Jesus. Or should I say Santa?

Jesus has been working with his long time life coach, Linda, to build skills that support his independence. Each week they set small, achievable goals such as meal planning and budgeting. Every goal reached is a meaningful milestone, in which allows Jesus to build his confidence and approach the next goal with stride, in hopes to conquer.

The key to Jesus' success is his gentle determination and positive attitude. He's not just learning skills. He is also building his confidence to live a full life independently.

Jesus is a lover of many things, one of those being animals. He is the proud father of several parakeets, in which are his pride and joy, and takes very good care of. He is very attentive with his support birds, making sure they are well fed and cages are clean.

You'll never have a hard time finding Jesus' apartment. Just follow the squawking. Jesus takes pride in his birds, just as he does with job. Washing dishes at a local restaurant is hard work but Jesus's loves it and is excelling there. He gets to meet new people everyday, and have house made snacks on his breaks. What could be sweeter.

In every way, Jesus reminds us of the things that really matter. His compassion for animals, participation with community by attending events, and joy for the simple things are great examples of that and what Compass represents.



MEET JARED

By Melissa Garcia, Case Facilitator

Jared has been part of the ACRC region for just over a year. Lively, bright, and playful, he greets everyone with a fist bump and a hearty, “What’s uuuuuuppppp?” A fan of Marvel and DC characters—especially Spider-Man—Jared brings joy and humor wherever he goes. His vibrant personality and commitment to making connections make him a standout feature for the Summer of Connection newsletter!

When Jared first joined Compass SLS, he had two major goals: to get in shape and to secure his own “bachelor pad.” In November he moved into his



own superhero’s lair. His new apartment is adorned with Marvel and DC posters, reflecting his superhero spirit. He enjoys hosting friends for WWE wrestling nights or Warriors games and is eagerly awaiting the summer pool season to fire up the BBQ.

Jared is smashing his fitness goals too. He has lost over 180 pounds in the past year. He takes two walks a day, often challenging himself to tackle steeper hills just to show his staff that he’s more fit than them. He attends a day program that takes a group to kickboxing aerobics classes and loves calling his CF afterward to brag about the muscles he just made. Additionally, he’s making healthier food choices and learning about super foods for superhero strength.

Jared builds strong ties in his local community through his church. A significant milestone was his baptism last summer, where the pastor noted that Jared had the largest group of family and friends in attendance—a testament to his deep connections. His church also introduced him to a Cornhole league, where he competes weekly and even won a tournament!

Jared went on the Compass Disney trip and is still talking about it. It was a big moment for Jared to conquer a fear of roller coasters. He rode several rides and his support reported that they had a hard time keeping up with him. His next Compass adventure will be Camp Carrville. This will be his first time going to camp. He’s half packed already and ready to go already! If you see him there, make sure to say, “What’s uuuuuuppppp?”





CFS FEATURE

MEET MEGHAN

By Daniel Oberg, CFS Facilitator

You might not know Meghan, but once you do, you'll never forget her. With her great sense of humor and wit, Meghan has a way of brightening every room she enters. She has been part of Compass for just over six months and has already made a tremendous impact on our community. Whether she's doing chores at home, working on art, or going on outings and excursions, Meghan brings energy, heart, and creativity to everything she does.

Her days are filled with meaningful moments, but one of Meghan's favorites is when Tylar, her CFS Specialist, comes by. Together, they dive into life skills; cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and enjoying fun outings and activities that bring both learning and laughter.

Art is a cornerstone of Meghan's world. She's hard at work on a comic book featuring original characters and also has a budding small business. Her business is named One Beautiful Design, she designs keychains and bracelets according to how she understands people in her life. She takes into account the person's personality, life experiences, and their dreams and allows her art to reflect that.

She also wants to begin a line of Tie-Dye shirts following the same approach starting this Summer and is looking into running booths at local farmer's markets and craft fairs.



When she's not creating, you'll likely find her watching classic '90s Disney movies or spending time with her grandpa. Nothing lights up Meghan's day quite like time with her grandpa. "He calls me 'Bubba' and 'pain in the butt,'" Meghan says with a laugh, "but I know he loves me, and I love him." Whether grabbing lunch, running errands, or watching movies together, their bond is strong and full of joy.

Since joining Compass, Meghan has embraced every opportunity to grow. A highlight was the Compass Christmas Party, an unforgettable night of dancing, spending time with friends, and raffle prizes. More recently, she proudly helped represent Compass with her CFS Specialist Tylar at the Autism Carnival hosted by Little Red Hen in Chico, where she connected with the community and shared her experiences at Compass.

Meghan thrives in the broader community. Trips to the mall and local art museums aren't just about the sights; they're about her passion. Meeting new people and sharing her passions fuel Meghan's dream: to earn a degree in art history and work in a museum someday. So, if you see Meghan at a Compass event, an art show, or just out and about this summer, don't hesitate to say hello. You'll walk away inspired and probably laughing too.





COMMUNITY CANVAS



SUMMER MOMENTS



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