

livewell

A Beach Cities Health District Publication

Summer 2022



WE  OUR
Volunteers



A Public Agency

Beach Cities
Health District



BEACH CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT IS ONE OF THE LEADING preventive health agencies in the nation, and has served the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach since 1955. It offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases across the entire lifespan.

MISSION

To enhance community health through partnerships, programs and services for people who live and work in Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach.

VISION

A healthy beach community.

Cover photo: 2020 and 2022 Volunteer Core Value Award winners pictured with BCHD CEO Tom Bakaly. Winners from left to right: George Schmeltzer, Joanna Wong, Lydia Johnson, Marisa Nwoke, Rani Crosby, Max Kelber, and Nancy Bhatt.



Dear Beach Cities Resident,

Here at Beach Cities Health District, our volunteers never cease to amaze me. This dedicated group of people is the engine that makes BCHD go, providing their time, energy, smarts and smiles to help residents and make the Beach Cities a healthy beach community.

In 2021 – in the middle of a pandemic – BCHD was assisted by 921 volunteers who contributed 25,830 hours of service to the community, equivalent to \$918,514.80* in time and services to benefit their neighbors in the Beach Cities.

In my five years with BCHD, I've been able to meet hundreds of our dedicated volunteers and even work side-by-side with them as they help enhance the many programs and services BCHD provides for our community.

The impact our volunteers have on our community is profound, whether it's an Event Ambassador signing up Free Fitness participants, a Garden Angel providing healthy eating tips to students, a CHF volunteer cleaning exercise equipment, a doctor giving their time to administer COVID-19 vaccines, or an Errand Volunteer helping their client with a trip to the grocery store.

There are numerous other examples of great things done by our volunteers, led by the people on the cover of this LiveWell – our Core Value Award winners who we honored at our Volunteer

Recognition Brunch June 18 in Manhattan Beach. If, after reading about these selfless individuals who take a great deal of time and care to make their community a better place to live, you make the decision to volunteer with BCHD, we have opportunities available. You can learn more at bchd.org/volunteer.

It's been inspiring working with so many dedicated volunteers and BCHD staff to provide preventive health partnerships, programs and services that enhance community health for people who live and work in Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach.

In Health,

Tom Bakaly
CEO, Beach Cities Health District

* Cost of volunteer time (in California) = \$35.56 per hour, per value of volunteer time by Independent Sector.

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Volunteering for Well-Being

Our network of volunteers form the backbone of Beach Cities Health District (BCHD). Diverse, motivated and talented, BCHD volunteers have the opportunity to work in a variety of community-focused programs and play an integral role in improving the health and well-being of Beach Cities residents.



Garden Angels

Garden Angels maintain the school gardens in all Redondo Beach elementary schools, prepping them for the LiveWell Kids program lessons.



Errand Volunteer

Errand Volunteers are matched with one of our Community Services Care Management clients and shop weekly for basic needs like groceries and prescriptions for older adults and adults with disabilities.



AdventurePlex Camp Volunteers

AdventurePlex Volunteers help kids play their way to good health at our AdventureCamp by keeping the facility area clean and safe and assisting with activities like arts and crafts, games and rock climbing.

THE IMPACT OF VOLUNTEERS IN 2021



921

Volunteers



25,830

Hours



\$918,514.80

In time & services

Want to get involved? There's a wide variety of meaningful opportunities available through BCHD. Visit bchd.org/volunteer or call (310) 374-3426 to learn more.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2022 VOLUNTEER CORE VALUE AWARD WINNERS!



Dr. Joanna Wong
BCHD Vaccination site
COVID-19 Hero Award



Marisa Nwoke
Center for Health & Fitness
Core Value Award:
Accountability



Nancy Bhatt
Event Ambassador
Core Value Award:
Integrity



Max Kelber
Center for Health & Fitness
Core Value Award:
Compassion



Rani Crosby
Youth Advisory Council
Core Value Award:
Excellence

The *Impact* of Connecting Through Conversation



Beach Cities Health District's "Conversation Companion" program brings together two like-minded women who have now met weekly to chat for 10 years.

Patricia B. and Kim Neglia have been connecting weekly for more than 10 years — but they didn't meet through friends, church, online or by any of the other typical ways people meet. Though the women both live in Redondo Beach, their paths never crossed until they were brought together through Beach Cities Health District's (BCHD) "Conversation Companion" program. Overseen by BCHD's social workers — also known as "Care Managers" — the program matches volunteers with local older adults and adults with disabilities to talk and check in once a week.

When they were matched in December 2011, Patricia was experiencing serious health problems. Patricia's BCHD Care Manager noticed she was home alone a lot and suggested she join the Conversation Companion program.

"When I started meeting with Kim, I could hardly get out of the house due to my health challenges, and this ray of sunshine used to come and make me much happier," Patricia said as she pointed to Neglia. "I always looked forward to her visits and actually now, strange as it might seem, even though I'm older, I'm in better health in a lot of ways than I was in those days."

The "ray of sunshine," Neglia, is a 25-year volunteer with BCHD and has served as a Conversation Companion to various BCHD clients for about 24 of those years since the program's inception. With her faith, she felt a strong pull toward the role. When she learned about BCHD and saw a newspaper ad for the volunteer opportunity, she knew it was something she needed to get involved in — even while then working full-time.

"It's always a joy and I think one of the reasons I got involved with the program was that my mom came to live with me when she was very ill before she passed," said Neglia. "She had a home health care nurse, and I could feel the energy boost whenever she or anybody else came into the house. Family visits are great, but we volunteers come into the homes with no "history" with our clients so we can "start fresh" and build from there."

"When I started meeting with Kim, I could hardly get out of the house due to my health challenges, and this ray of sunshine used to come and make me much happier."

Patricia credits Kim and their visits with helping her improve her physical and mental health. She claims the connection and mental health boost she receives from their weekly chats is unmatched.

"Being able to request a Conversation Companion for our clients allows us to increase a client's contact with others who may not have family or friends living in the area and who would benefit from additional socialization," said Sherry Lindemann, Patricia's BCHD Care Manager. "This was greatly seen during the pandemic when so many lost contact with friends and family. Our

volunteers were able to pivot and change from in-person to weekly calls or virtual visits. This program is one of many great ways our volunteers make a big difference in the lives of our clients!"

Even throughout COVID-19, the pair continued to check in weekly. Their hour-long hangouts in Patricia's home and lunch dates to Panera Bread transitioned to phone calls. When it became tough for Patricia's daughters to visit during the pandemic, Patricia felt like she could always count on Neglia for a check-in — describing her as being a "constant rock in her life that never fails." 🌈



FOUR WAYS VOLUNTEERING CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

Research shows that those who give back to their community reap a variety of healthy benefits, ranging from decreased daily stress to an increased life expectancy.

1 A Sense of Purpose

Volunteerism is good for the heart and is linked to providing people with an enriched sense of purpose in life. According to Harvard University's School of Public Health, satisfaction and optimism are closely linked to a sense of purpose.

A Perfect Match



Beach Cities Health District's Alejandra Sierra gets inspiration from managing volunteers – and being one.

Matchmaking sites and apps have been used by many people over the years. Beach Cities Health District's (BCHD) Alejandra Sierra used a matchmaker in 2018 to find a perfect fit.

"I love animals, and children, too," says Sierra, who is BCHD's Purpose & Engagement Coordinator. "I went on Volunteer Match, entered my information and was matched with the Michaelson Animal Foundation."

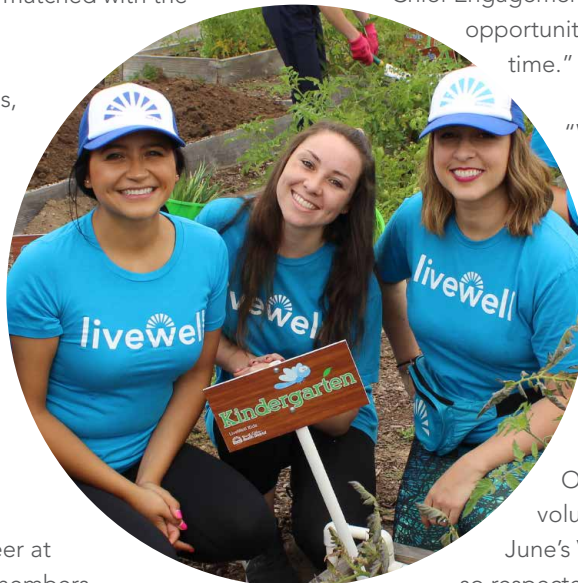
"It wasn't always rainbows and butterflies, I was taking care of a litter of kittens, cleaning up a lot," she says. "I also did some admin work and volunteer trainings for the animal rescue."

Her experience as a volunteer has had a profound impact on Sierra, who's now in her 12th year with BCHD, where she started out as – what else? – a volunteer.

As a freshman at Redondo Union High School, her mom suggested she volunteer at the Clubhouse, providing childcare for members working out at BCHD's Center for Health & Fitness (CHF). She started volunteering once a week, and the staff liked her work enough to make Alejandra a paid employee, a post she held for two years before taking a front desk position at CHF.

She worked part-time while attending Cal State Long Beach, then accepted a full-time role in 2017 in BCHD's Human Resources department, which also manages the District's army of volunteers.

"Most of my early work was for HR," says Sierra. "But I really enjoyed working with the volunteers, and Megan Vixie, (BCHD's Chief Engagement Officer) saw this and gave me the opportunity to move to Volunteer Services full-time."



"With her background as a volunteer, Alejandra understands the true value and power volunteers bring to their communities and causes," said Vixie. "She is compassionate, kind, dependable, enthusiastic, and a true people-person, who connects well with others."

Sierra now oversees Health & Fitness, Older Adult Programs, and youth volunteers, partnerships, and events, like June's Volunteer Recognition Brunch. She is so respected by her co-workers that they selected Sierra to receive the District's Core Value Award for Integrity, the equivalent of an "employee of the quarter" award. Congratulations Alejandra! 🌻

2 Stress Reduction

Researchers at Carnegie Mellon University found that volunteering reduces stress and highlights the relationship between lower stress levels and key health outcomes.

3 Increased Longevity

Students from the University of Exeter (England) discovered evidence suggesting that volunteers have a 20% lower risk of death. Additionally, a national survey by United Health Group found that 76% of volunteers in the past year reported feeling healthier.

4 Social Connectedness

Volunteering can help build a sense of community and widen your social circle, driving positive feelings like camaraderie and connection, improving overall well-being.

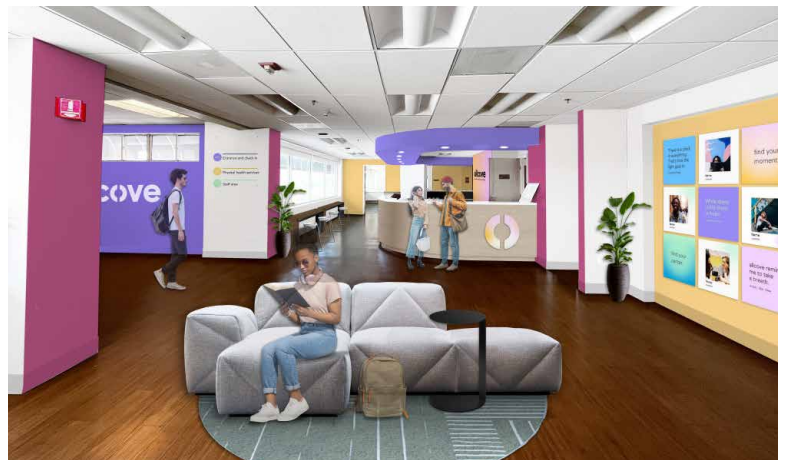


Prioritizing Youth Mental Health at allcove Beach Cities

allcove Beach Cities, a youth wellness center, will be opening in a temporary location this fall at Beach Cities Health District (BCHD), 514 N. Prospect Ave., 4th Floor, Redondo Beach.

allcove Beach Cities will offer mental and physical health services, education and employment assistance, peer and family support, and substance use prevention programs for young people ages 12-25 in the greater South Bay.

The center is funded by the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission through a \$2 million, 4-year grant. BCHD was endorsed by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health to apply for the funds. In addition to the state grant, BCHD received \$1 million from Congress for allcove Beach Cities when President Joe Biden signed the \$1.5 trillion omnibus spending package into law in March 2022. This funding is one of ten community projects that were requested and championed by Congressman Ted Lieu to serve California's 33rd Congressional District.



Conceptual renderings of allcove Beach Cities' temporary location at at Beach Cities Health District, 514 N. Prospect Ave., 4th Floor, Redondo Beach.

The Need:



37%

of Beach Cities 11th graders reported chronic sad or hopeless feelings within the past 12 months



18%

of Beach Cities 11th graders reported seriously considering attempting suicide within the past 12 months

Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, 2022

Meet the Members of the allcove Beach Cities Youth Advisory Group

To ensure that youth voices continue to be at the forefront of the allcove Beach Cities center experience, BCHD selected a volunteer group of eight young leaders ages 16-25 who represent the diversity of the Beach Cities and surrounding communities of the South Bay. allcove Beach Cities Youth Advisory Group members will help allcove Beach Cities gain a better understanding of young peoples' needs and opinions to provide them with relevant and effective services.



Marin

16 years old, Redondo Beach

"I'm really excited to be able to work towards destigmatizing mental health and making it easier and more "normal" to access help and talk about it."



Colin

16 years old, Redondo Beach

"I strongly believe in what allcove stands for and agree that we need a space to find community, support, advice and even just a moment to pause. Having this space available in the South Bay through Beach Cities Health District is such a valuable resource for the community. I am honored to be part of the team to help spread the good work and word of what this organization has to offer the youth in our community."



Camille

17 years old, Manhattan Beach

"allcove Beach Cities is very important to me as it can be a place where people, no matter their differences, can come together and enjoy the company of others. With so much stress and activity around us at all times, it is important to be able to take a step back from some chaos and relax. I think that allcove can be a place where people are comfortable as themselves."



Rani

16 years old, Redondo Beach

"I can imagine the new youth wellness center becoming a safe space for young people who want to be able to share experiences with not only professionals who can support them, but also each other. Connecting over shared experiences with mental health acts as therapy in itself. I also appreciate how allcove values youth opinion and allows us to advocate for ourselves. I especially admire the way that allcove campaigns for diversity in its members. Acknowledging the differences in experience and perspective with mental health across different races, genders, sexual orientations and socio-economic statuses makes a significant impact."



John

25 years old, Torrance

"allcove Beach Cities is important to me because I view it as an opportunity to come together with other people, out of a pure and genuine place, in order to achieve something greater than ourselves. I see it as a chance to start something that can seriously change the path of a young person's life."



Mollie

16 years old, Manhattan Beach

"allcove Beach Cities is important to me because I believe it will make an impact on the community. Many of my peers struggle with anxiety, depression and other mental health issues. A youth wellness center in our community could provide much needed services."



Jennalee

16 years old, Redondo Beach

"I am looking forward to being a part of an advisory group that I feel is pioneering the way mental health should be treated in communities. It is inspiring to have the opportunity to make a direct impact on the community in such a positive way."



Chase

17 years old, Manhattan Beach

"This youth wellness center is something that could make a big difference in our community, especially as much of our youth are still recovering from the effects of quarantine and adjusting to life at school again. By offering this safe space, we can give young people a chance to relax and decompress from the many stresses of life right now."

To learn more about allcove Beach Cities and other ways for young people ages 12-25 to get involved, go to bchd.org/allcoveBeachCities.



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Upcoming Events

Beach Cities Summer Free Fitness Series

Mondays, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m

Mindful Yoga in Hermosa Beach, in front of Scotty's Restaurant in the sand – August 15, 22, 29

Register online at bchd.org/freefitness.

Virtual Families Connected Parent Chat

Tuesday, August 30, 10 – 10:50 a.m

Join BCHD and South Bay Families Connected for a free support group led by a licensed professional from the Thelma McMillen Center at Torrance Memorial Medical Center. Learn more at southbayfamiliesconnected.org.



Virtual Mindfulness Drop-in

First Wednesday of the month, 4 - 4:30 p.m.

Take 30 minutes to downshift and practice mindfulness techniques. The session will be led by a trained BCHD instructor.

Register online at bchd.org/mindfulness.

Virtual Happiness Chats

Second Tuesday of the month, 12:30 - 1 p.m.

Join us for a lighthearted discussion group to spark conversation. Share ideas, tips, resources, jokes, quotes – anything that supports our happiness! Register online at bchd.org/series.

Virtual Social Hour with BCHD Care Manager Charlotte Barnett

First and Third Tuesday of the month, 10 -11 a.m.

Join us if you want to learn more about community resources or BCHD, or if you just want to connect! Open to all. Learn more at bchd.org/classes-workshops.

Virtual Talk with BCHD Care Manager Jennefer Hernandez

First Monday of the month, 11 a.m.

Jennefer will offer older adults a variety of resources related to health, wellness, housing, programs and much more. Learn more at bchd.org/classes-workshops.

Visit bchd.org for more information on upcoming events.