



CalWORKs Works!



Testimonials from Successful CalWORKs Clients

ABOUT ADPA

The Los Angeles County Alcohol and Drug Program Administration (ADPA) contracts with over 300 community-based alcohol and drug treatment and prevention organizations throughout Los Angeles County. ADPA is part of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

About CalWORKs Substance Abuse Program

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Supportive Services/Substance Abuse Program is part of the national welfare program in which counties provide mental health, domestic violence, and substance abuse treatment. The aim of these services is to remove potential barriers for participants' employment. ADPA's network of alcohol and other drug treatment/recovery programs provide services for CalWORKs recipients. CalWORKs participants comprised over 2,000 admissions for alcohol and drug services during 2006-07 Fiscal Year.

The statements in this newsletter are testimonies from CalWORKs recipients. These success stories were written by the clients and are presented here with minimal editing in order to share their accomplishments with others, as well as to encourage community support for this program.



RICK'S STORY

I am grateful recovering father. My story begins in the mid '80s. I was employed as a line inspector for large petroleum company. I was temporarily laid-off and that is when my trouble began. Being informed that I would be rehired and believing that information to be true, I did not follow up with any other employment. After four months of being unemployed they did bring me back, but for only for a few months. Ultimately, they laid me off permanently. I received unemployment benefits while I sought employment. These funds were not enough to maintain my basic living needs. I started doing odd jobs to assist with that income. I also started bowling in tournaments and betting on the game. This helped with my income for a while. As time continued, I found myself having really tough times.

I met my son's mother while touring the different bowling alleys and competing in tournaments. She worked as a waitress in one of the bowling alleys. This was during the time when rock cocaine became an epidemic in the Los Angeles area. Cocaine became a household name after Richard Pryor's accident, where he severely burned his face smoking rock cocaine.

During this time, my new girlfriend and I experimented with rock cocaine occasionally. Neither one of us used drugs prior to this time. Still having rough times, but winning a tournament from time to time, allowed us to celebrate the occasion with rock cocaine. I was able to obtain employment at UCLA as a Parking Attendant for two years. I ended up getting fired due to false accusations and my girlfriend and I were evicted shortly thereafter for not being able to keep up with the rent.

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In a survey* of CalWORKs participants:

- 75% felt very satisfied with their experience
- 83% said they felt they were treated with respect
- 93% said they would recommend the program to a friend
- 83% trusted the main staff person

When asked† which areas of their lives CalWORKs treatment services helped some or a lot, clients responded:

- Substance abuse (98%)
- Parenting (96%)
- Coping with daily activities (95%)
- Emotional problems (95%)
- Domestic violence (92%)
- Employment issues (86%)

Statistics at a glance‡:

- 65% of clients were rated by staff as having high to moderate motivation for change
- 51% of clients completed their substance abuse supportive services programs
- 94% of those who completed treatment were very or somewhat satisfied with the services they received
- Providers rated 69% of clients as having very good or good participation in treatment

Most Recently Available CalWORKs Data:

- Number of admissions: 2194 (FY'06-'07)[^]
- Gender: 81.5% female, 18.5% male (FY '05-'06)[^]
- Ethnicity: 3.5% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 25% African American, 44.3% Latino, 21.5% White, 4.2% Other (FY '05-'06)[^]
- DPSS GAIN reported that 49% of clients successfully completed substance abuse treatment[†]
- 20% of clients were working at discharge[†]
- 21% of clients regained custody of a child[†]
- 43% of clients moved to a better housing situation[†]

* CalWORKs Supportive Services Customer Satisfaction Survey #5, 2007.

† Outcomes of CalWORKs Supportive Services in Los Angeles County, Substance Abuse (Year 3) 2006.

[^] Annual Review of Adult Participants in Alcohol and Drug Programs Contracted by the Alcohol and Drug Program Administration, FY '06-'07.

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RICK (Continued from page 1)

This began a downward spiral. We were both unemployed, had nowhere to live, had no income coming in, and were really feeling helpless. Different friends would allow us to stay in their home. Before we knew it, my girlfriend was pregnant. We were using crack cocaine on a daily basis. We came to terms with the fact that it would be beneficial to both of us to live apart with our relatives, family, or friends.

I managed to obtain an apartment with the help of my family members and GR. My girlfriend and I were able to live together again. My girlfriend began using again through her pregnancy. I managed not to use and became angry and frustrated that she would not quit using while eight months pregnant. I ended up asking her to leave, and she did. Needless to say, she tested positive for cocaine when she gave birth to our son. Our son was placed in protective services at the hospital and they started a search for the nearest relative. I went to visit my new son and girlfriend only to find out that he had been placed in protective services. One of the workers informed me that as the father I had the right of sole custody because I was not using drugs. Of course, I wanted my only son!

The three of us returned home. My girlfriend continued to use immediately following her discharge from the hospital. I managed to stay drug-free for a short time. I ended up using crack cocaine with my girlfriend and soon we were on a road of destruction again. We ended up being evicted. This time there were three of us. We wandered from motel to motel and eventually found one with a rate we could afford, meaning that it was in a drug infested neighborhood. My girlfriend could not pull it together whatsoever. I came to realize that we had a child who needed us and we needed to get it together for his sake. We ended up having a huge argument about our drug use and I wrapped up our son in a blanket and took off on a bus. She could not stop me because I had sole custody.

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THERESA'S STORY

My name is Theresa. I'm a former client of the Asian American Drug Abuse Program. I came to this program seeking change from my hopeless lifestyle with drugs and alcohol. This cry for help wasn't only for myself, but for my two children and one on the way. I wanted to reunite with my two oldest kids and experience independent living for my family.

With the help of my primary counselor, we sat down and wrote a treatment plan designed to "Make my Dreams a Reality." In this plan, CalWORKs came to my rescue. When it was time for me to deliver my baby, CalWORKs provided me with Medical that helped me to have the best doctor ever. CalWORKs helped me through its Job Search Unit to prepare me for work. During the job search, they provided me with childcare and transportation. That was a burden lifted.

I was able to get a job and provide everything for my family and I gained total independence that made me feel good about myself. I see my self-esteem grow and just being a productive woman in society was the most rewarding feeling ever. CalWORKs helped me with the deposit for my place! To my surprise, CalWORKs also helped me with getting a stove and refrigerator. Today, I have been in my place for almost 3 years. My family is together and I have 3 years of sobriety. □

DIEDRA'S STORY

My name is Diedra and I am a 42-year-old single parent of a 2-year-old little boy. I've been doing drugs off and on for 9 ½ years. I started doing drugs when I was 32 years old. I still say to myself today what a late age to start using cocaine. Everything happens for a reason.

I'm not going to get into what happened in those 9 ½ years when I was in that other world, but I will let you know I am forever grateful for CalWORKs for sponsoring my stay and Socorro and for allowing me to enter their program. Since I've gone through treatment, I was able to dig deep within myself to find out that I was my problem. I thank God for giving me an open mind to receive the help I've been longing for.

During my time in residential treatment, I was able to take parenting classes, therapy, and also life skills. I completed each and every one of them. Even though I am a grown woman, I had to be taught how to live my life and be a mother all over again because I had lost myself.

After four months of being in treatment, I was able to seek employment. I was hired at the Nokia Company. I am now a tax payer and also a productive member of society. Today I am a good provider for my son and a very good mother. Without the help of God, the CalWORKs program sponsoring my stay, and the staff at Socorro, I don't know where I would've ended up. I guess I will never know. I completed treatment on October 22, 2008 and never look back.

I wouldn't trade the way I feel for nothing in the world. □

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Rick (Continued from page 2)

My mother allowed my son and me to move in with her. I went through the process of obtaining DCFS. With the assistance of my mother and DCFS, I was able to acquire an apartment for my son and me. My brother moved in so that finances would be easier for both of us.

I began using rock cocaine again shortly after moving in. I would drag my son everywhere with me. I did not have child care and I did not trust most people with my son. It felt impossible at this point in my life to obtain employment and I found myself just surviving. We didn't always have enough food. I often found myself in grocery parking lots or gas stations, with my son in my arms, asking for hand-outs of food or money.

I learned of a Church's Chicken in the neighborhood that would give away bags of food to the needy. I sought out the Church's that did this and this helped us out for a period of time.

I met a woman through using who I became attracted to and she took an immediate interest in my son, who was about three at that time. I was in a relationship with this woman on and off for a few years. I lost my apartment again because I was unable to pay the rent. The three of us moved into a motel. I was able to find employment, which worked for us for awhile. Before too long though, we found ourselves in public places for shelter, such as the Greyhound bus station in downtown LA.

My girlfriend ended up getting arrested because of drug related offenses. I took my son, who was 5 years old, to my mother's house. She agreed to allow us to stay if I would find employment. I was not able to find employment and I was still using on occasion. My mother was not happy with my behavior because I was not being responsible as a father and was putting too much of the parenting on her.

DCFS was called because I was not picking up my son from school on time. A social services worker would come to my mother's to check on my son and me. At this point, I became involved with an outpatient substance abuse program in the area. Once I was involved with this program, they got me involved with CalWORKS. CalWORKS got me involved in the Gain Program. They started preparing me for seeking a decent job.

I started working at the Unified School District and at Raider Games as a food service worker. These jobs worked out for a couple of years. My disease crept up on me again and I began using crack cocaine daily. This time, I ended up getting arrested for possession and once again I lost my job. I was sentenced to PC 1000, which is a diversion drug program. My mother stated that she had enough of my lifestyle and informed me that she was not willing to care for my son as she had been doing. While in the treatment program, I continued to use crack cocaine. My counselor recommended that I seek residential treatment. I was resistant because I knew that my mother was not willing to care for my son on her own. When looking at my life, there was this horrible feeling of overwhelming guilt and shame that began to haunt me. Here I was a 46-year-old father, and unable to get my life in order. I felt that my son would be better off without me. I tried to commit suicide on two occasions—one time by overdosing on sleeping pills, and the other by cutting my wrist. I did not succeed in these attempts. I was still attending the outpatient program and my counselor continued to insist that I go into long-term residential treatment.
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TIFFANY'S STORY

Hi, my name is Tiffany and I am an alcoholic and addict. I'm proud to say that today because I'm no longer an active participant in that long, hard, meaningless lifestyle. I've invested 22 years of my life to addiction, violence, criminal activity, and incarceration. What a waste!

I did get tired of living how I was living but I didn't know how to make it any other way! I had no idea what I was up against! I really wanted to stop but found it virtually impossible. I begged God for help and my prayers were answered. Though, not the way I wanted them answered. On the night of December 5, 2007, Lennox Sheriff's Department arrested me on a possession charge. I went to jail for one week and was given an opportunity for treatment at AADAP, Inc. located in the city of Inglewood. I was excited about this!

I wish I could say that was my last episode with drugs and alcohol but I cannot. I lasted about 1 1/2 weeks and on New Year's weekend, I was off and running again. For the first 29 days of 2008, I used and cried every day, begging God to help me once again. And as always, he sent some people to rescue me. On January 30, 2008, Inglewood Police Department raided the house I was in and took me to jail on a warrant. I was at peace with this arrest because I believed I could get help now. I begged AADAP, Inc. to reaccept me into their Drug Court outpatient program and they did. Thank God!
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Tiffany (Continued from page 3)

I was released from jail in March and have been in treatment, coupled with 12-step programs, since. I went into a sober living home for six months, which was kind of rough, but it was a stepping stone for me to enter into independent living.

Today, I have a full-time job and my own apartment. I work in an oil refinery and make a decent living. I'm still active in my treatment at AADAP as a CalWORKs recipient and a serious 12-step member. These two entities have helped me to save my life. An addict like me who couldn't stay sober ten minutes is now coming up on ten months. I owe my life to AADAP, Inc. and the 12-Step program. They saw something in me and today, I'm starting to see it too. I'm so glad I didn't go to prison this time around. I never want to go back to the "Tiffany" I was to prior January 30, 2008.

One more thing before I close, I would have never made it this far without the services and financial aid from the CalWORKs program. My children would have suffered a lot more than they already did. But thanks to CalWORKs, they received aid and I got support for treatment. □

VANESSA'S STORY

My name is Vanessa W. I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. I am 30 years old and I am an addict. My clean date is May 13, 2007. I am a mother of four. I entered into treatment at American Recovery Center May 14, 2007, with sponsorship from CalWORKs and did seven months. I was torn up from the floor up and I needed help. I have used meth since I was 13 and I came from a family of addicts. I was in an abusive relationship for 11 years and I just couldn't do it anymore. I just wanted to take my own life. I had my son, who is now three, in treatment with me and it was a struggle because there were times in treatment I wanted and tried to take my life. I learned that I had a lot to work on within myself and it was hard. I didn't want to feel the pain, the hurt. I learned in treatment that I had to find a higher power but I didn't want to because I wanted to run my own program. People continued loving me until I learned how to start accepting that I can't live life the way I was living it - selfish and self-centered.

I have kids and my son was there with me so people loved me until I could love myself and they lent me their higher powers until I found my own. (Continued on page 5)

Rick (Continued from page 3)

I called Tarzana Treatment Center about being admitted to their program. I was informed that I could come into treatment, but my son would not be allowed because he was 15 years old. My mother, realizing the seriousness of my condition, agreed to care for my son while I went to treatment to receive the help I needed.

I entered treatment in May 2001. I was in the TANF program and therefore had to work in the nursery and attend parenting classes, along with my chemical dependency classes. My son would come and visit me on the weekends with my mother. I had not realized in the past just how angry and upset my son was with me. In the beginning when my son would visit he would verbalize how he felt and I realized the pain that I had caused him. He had to play the role of the parent sometimes when I was using because I was so out of control. As time went on and he continued to visit, there seemed to be some hope on his end that this time it would be different. In the months following, the relationship between my son and me seemed healthier. My discharge plan goals consisted of maintaining employment, having housing for my son and me, and continuing involvement with my 12-step network. I was feeling good about myself when I completed treatment after 7 months. I found employment as a salesperson prior to leaving and was able to provide housing in a motel for my son and me. My son continued to go to school while I went to work.

I qualified for Section 8 while in treatment as a TANF father. My Section 8 came through four months after leaving treatment. My son and I were able to move into two-bedroom apartment of our own. After working as a salesman for a year, I ventured out looking for a job that could turn into a career. I applied at Tarzana Treatment Center. I was hired as a Technician.

I attended Pierce College and obtained my certification as a Drug and Alcohol Counselor. I have now been working at Tarzana Treatment Center for almost six years.

My son is now 22 years old and we continue to live with one another. He is employed at Time Warner as a sales representative.

Today, I am a respected father, son, employee, and neighbor. My life path has been changed because I was allowed to come into treatment as a TANF father and address the issues that kept me out there using drugs. I learned coping skills, parenting skills, and was able to build my self-esteem so that I could live a healthy, productive life.

I am a grateful recovering father and have gratitude for Tarzana Treatment Center and the TANF program for the opportunity to become a responsible citizen. □

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ANNIE'S STORY

I was born in Boyle Heights. I was raised in a family with a history of substance abuse. I was a polysubstance abuser for 17 years. My drug/alcohol use began at age 11. My use progressed quickly. I was a full-blown addict by age 14. Age 14 was when I first went to Juvenile Hall jail. I was on probation and in the system, in and out of jail 'til about 26 years old. I had three boys, all born addicted to different substances. Doctors never knew 'til I had my third son, due to the fact that I had no prenatal care and I was under the influence when I went into labor. I had never been in treatment; I actually hadn't even known about treatment. My boys were taken away. I didn't have a stable environment for them.

In 1992, I went into my first recovery home in Boyle Heights called Latina's Recovery Home. My sister had known about this program and told me to call. She was a previous client there who did not complete. No children were accepted at this program. The program was four months. I completed. After I completed, I was offered a job working in a recovery home for teenagers,

Palomas Recovery Home in Los Angeles. I enjoyed this job. I began to save a little money.

The DCFS workers enabled me to reunite with my children. However, before I was able to get my boys back, I had to complete the reunification program. I was still homeless when I completed the four-month program. Therefore, I ended up staying with three different families from the 12-step community and my children remained in foster care. My children were given back to me and were in my custody when there was an opening in a shelter. We lived in three different shelters for homeless families. I was able to save money and was blessed to be put in the Section 8 program. I found a three-bedroom home in La Puente where I still live 14 years later. I went to school to become a dental assistant in the Hacienda/La Puente School District and graduated. I began working for a dentist in La Puente.

(Continued on page 6)

Vanessa (Continued from page 4)

I started working a program and by doing that the promise that was made to me was living a life free from active addiction. I was able to go to school while I was in treatment and, believe it or not, I went to school to become a drug and alcohol counselor. Why not give back what was so freely given to me?

I finished the program and continued school. I came back to the treatment facility that I went through and did my internship. I graduated from school November 9, 2008 and I still volunteer at the treatment facility. I am also an alumni there. With the program and graduation completed, I received the award for Most Turned Around. One thing I have learned is that I never have to use again, no matter what!

I still go through a lot today, but I have a support group and a sponsor and attend meetings on a regular basis.

You have to want to change in order to change. □

KRISTINE'S STORY

My name is Kristine and I am a recovering individual. I don't know if I'd be able to say that without funding for treatment through CalWORKs.

Growing up in private schools, I was a "good kid," the last one that my family would've expected to become an alcoholic. In public high school, an older schoolmate invited me to a party where I tried alcohol and meth for the first time. I found myself hanging out with her a few more times and doing the same thing.

At 17 I met my ex-husband and we later had two children. His brother tragically died in a hit and run and we were devastated. Neither of us had used in several years. After this death, I started drinking daily. My husband wanted to show me how to smoke meth. Before then I didn't know that was possible. I started with tin foil and a straw, then a light bulb, and soon graduated to a pipe. By the age of 27, I had lost my job and found myself divorced, homeless, using daily, and unable to stop on my own.

After disappearing for six months, for the second time, my boyfriend made me call my grandmother. She begged for me to seek help and asked me to stay with her until I could get into a residential treatment program. I called everywhere and was on every waiting list. After about a month I got into Acton Rehabilitation Center. I was admitted on December 1, 2005 and right away, I started jogging the track there. When I complained of a sprained ankle, I was given a bandage and compress. It was cold at night and the pain made me unable to sleep. Two weeks later, after my counselor found me limping off grounds, I was brought back to talk to their doctor who decided to transport me to Olive View. Thinking I was finally going to get my ankle taken care of, I was happy to go. It took awhile for me to figure out that I was really sent there for a psychiatric evaluation. After running blood work I found out I was pregnant and was placed on a hold until after the holidays. That was the worst holiday of my sober life. The doctor diagnosed me with sleep deprivation and a reoccurring mood disorder with behavioral discontrol. Looking back that would make sense; I was hormonal because of the pregnancy and moody because I was coming off the drugs! The doctor didn't want to put me and my unborn child at risk and tried to get me into another residential bed. After being unable to get me in anywhere, they couldn't hold me any longer. (Continued on page 6)

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Annie (Continued from page 5)

I continued to attend 12-step meetings regularly and had several 12-step commitments. I had four years clean and almost everything I wanted and got clean for. Well, I thought I was strong enough to save my family from the drug lifestyle and started to let them into my life and visit me regularly. They were still using and 1½ years later I relapsed. I informed my GAIN worker that I had begun using and I needed help. I ended up at American Recovery Center Detox, where I had previously come to detox panels with a friend in recovery in 1995-1998. I left detox for outpatient and ended up using. Then I went to a residential program in Acton, where I tested positive for Hepatitis C. I used there and left the program. Then I met with Ms. Barbara Green and she informed me about the CalWORKs program at American, which was new at the time, and told me that maybe I should give it a try. I was ready for anything. I came into American Recovery Residential Program in March 1999.

I was the first client to complete and graduate from the CalWORKs program. I am proud to say that I am the first “Alumni” from CalWORKs.

As soon as I program completed, I went to school at Mt. San Antonio College to become a drug and alcohol counselor. I never knew college was available to someone like me. I did not even know Mt. SAC existed. I did very well and then did internships at David and Margaret’s Girls Home in La Verne and here at American Recovery. Ms. Barbara Green told me she would hire me if I finished school. I applied for a job and was hired. My sons are 21, 18, and 16 years old now and then I had another two children who were born clean. I was blessed with my only daughter, who is now 6, and another boy who just turned 3. They are ALL my miracles and I hope to continue my journey of life.

p.s. My other half also came into treatment at American Recovery Center Detox and Residential Program after I did and he is also a substance abuse counselor and teaches DUI classes. We are happy to be able to be given the chance to be clean parents and to help other recovering alcoholics/addicts. This past March, I had nine years clean and am looking forward to many more. My sister who told me about my first program is no longer here. She passed away due to her addiction and substance abuse. I would like to thank God and my sister—Thank You Jennie—and, of course, Thank You, American Recovery Center. □

Kristine (Continued from page 5)

Early January I was released to my grandparents and immediately called my boyfriend to pick me up. He was still using and soon I was too. A few days later, he was back in jail. Once again I was left alone. This time I had enough.

I called Tarzana Treatment Center and inquired about my status on their waiting list. My mother picked me up and got me into a not-so-sober living and I started day treatment February 2, 2006. By the 22nd, a bed was available and I was on my way to recovery. I stayed there for five months and graduated a month before my daughter was born. After graduation, I was able to move into a Tarzana Treatment Center sober living. This is where I was able to complete the day treatment program and graduate seven months later.

Not wanting to leave yet, I was given the opportunity to volunteer in the nursery. Nine months later, I was offered a job. At first accepting a job was scary for me. Who would watch my daughter? What would I wear? How would I get there? Would I make enough money to cover those new expenses? Up until then I had been just getting by on aid and thought I would be cut off completely. Never having been on CalWORKs before, I was unsure of how that would work. At that time I was participating in the GAIN program and volunteering, satisfying the requirements of that program. My GAIN worker helped me to get childcare for my daughter. GAIN also helped with a clothing allowance so that I could look professional at work. I now work full time for the same program that helped me get clean and sober. As of October of last year, my daughter and I moved out of sober living into our own place. My two other children are back in my life and I see them all the time. Recently, while unpacking boxes in my brand new apartment, my eight-year-old daughter came across a book. She asked “Mommy what is this, a Bible?” I said, “Kind of honey; it’s a book of Alcoholics Anonymous.” She then said, “Good mommy, you need it because you used to drink and smoke a lot.”

When I was growing up I didn’t understand why people got drunk and did drugs. After the first time, it wasn’t a big deal for me to keep doing them. Now I look back at everything I lost as a result and never want to go there again.

My CalWORKS case was terminated in December of 2007. GAIN still helps with transportation money to get to my child to day care and me to work. I now have two years and four months sober. Without this stepping stone, I would not have been able to afford the treatment I so desperately needed.

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CALWORKS PROVIDERS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Alcoholism Center for Women· Alcoholism Council of Antelope Valley/NCA· Asian American Drug Abuse Program· Avalon-Carver Community Center· Beacon House Association of San Pedro· Behavioral Health Services· California Hispanic Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse· Cambodian Association of America· Casa de Hermandad· Casa de las Amigas· Children’s Institute· City of Compton· City of Long Beach· City of Pasadena· Clinica Monseñor Oscar A. Romero· Cri-Help· Didi Hirsch Psychiatric Service· Do It Now Foundation· El Proyecto del Barrio· His Sheltering Arms· Homeless Healthcare Los Angeles· I-ADARP· Joint Efforts· Live Again Recovery Home· Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse· Mary Lind Recovery Centers· MELA Counseling Services Center· Mid-Valley Recovery Services· Mini Twelve Step House· MJB Transitional Recovery· National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence—Long Beach Area· People in Progress· Plaza Community Center· Pomona Community Crisis Center· Principles· PROTOTYPES· Salvation Army· San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center· Santa Anita Family Services· Santa Monica Bay Area Drug Abuse Council· SHIELDS for Families· Social Model Recovery Systems· Soledad Enrichment Action· South Bay Alcoholism Services· South Bay Human Services Coalition· Southern California Alcohol and Drug Programs· Special Services for Groups· Stepping Stones Home· Substance Abuse Foundation of Long Beach· Sunrise Community Counseling Center· Tarzana Treatment Center· URDC Human Services Corporation· Valley Women’s Center· Watts Healthcare Corporation