



Southern  
California  
Counseling  
Center

# dialog

*Fall 2016*

A publication for supporters of the  
Southern California Counseling Center

## Our Impact Issue:

- Investing in South Los Angeles
- An Evening to Remember
- Ensuring the Future of SCCC

**Collaboration • Innovation • and More**



# Exploring our Impact



**Gail Wilburn**  
Executive Director

In this issue of the Dialog, we are pleased to provide an overview of our exciting accomplishments and endeavors at SCCC. It all happens as a result of your generosity, and we

send you our deepest thanks.

Three years ago, we began working with clients through the Watts Labor Community Action Committee. Thanks

**Our mission: We change lives and strengthen communities by providing affordable mental health care to people in need.**

to funds raised at our spring events over the past two years, we are now able to provide free, high-level Trauma and Resiliency services to those in the South Central Los Angeles community who

have been impacted by violence, poverty and social injustice.

This year we began a collaboration with the Wilshire Blvd. Temple's Karsh Center in Koreatown where SCCC will to provide counseling services in that community. We have also introduced Internet-based counseling services, which help to alleviate pressing issues around scheduling and space restrictions SCCC.

These big steps take the work of SCCC into the larger community where the needs we serve are great and the resources are hard to access. As an organization, we are committed to social justice, to the value and strength of each human being, and we believe that access to affordable mental healthcare is a right, not a privilege. Thank you for making our work possible.

**On the cover:** Grace Ferguson at SCCC benefit she and her mom host each year in remembrance of her sister.



## Investing in South Los Angeles

**Donors enable families and individuals to overcome violence and trauma to transform their lives.**



South Los Angeles is home to a highly diverse population of working-class families and individuals, many of whom struggle daily with the realities of low income, lack of community resources, and systemic racial oppression that limit opportunity for many.

In 2013, SCCC's Outreach Services under the direction of Marianne Diaz began working with men, women and youth at Watts Labor Community Action Committee to address domestic and community violence and substance issues. Since then, we have expanded our services to provide Trauma & Resiliency counseling services, which can be key to overcoming the significant emotional impact of living in stressful and overwhelming environments.

### Overcoming Pain and Trauma: One Client's Story

Meet Raquel (pictured right), a South Los Angeles client who spoke movingly at our recent fundraising event in April. The 27-year-old was born and raised in Compton, and grew up thinking she wasn't worth anything.

"My childhood was filled with emotional and physical abuse, and eventually, I became angry," she shares. "I didn't have a healthy outlet for my anger, so I started experimenting with drugs, physically hurting other people and myself, and not caring for my life at all."

She eventually ended up in the justice system, where she says she experienced a lot that no one, especially a girl her age at the time, should ever have to experience. Later as a young mother with small children, Raquel found herself homeless; even after entering low income housing, she struggled without guidance

**"Because the counselors believed in me, I found it possible to believe in myself."**

and support. She wanted to be a good parent, but didn't know how, and her deep emotional pain remained bottled up inside. Then she found the Southern California Counseling Center in Watts, where she also attended a Trauma & Resiliency group. "Because the counselors believed in me, I found it possible to believe in myself," she says today. "None of this would have been possible if the Counseling Center had not come to Watts. SCCC changed my life."

Raquel now serves as a volunteer counselor running groups in Watts and at SCCC.







## An Evening to Remember

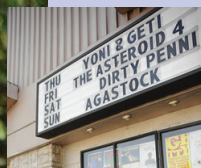
**Melissa Monroe lost her 2-year-old daughter Alice in 2013. Now she celebrates her life with an annual benefit concert for SCCC.**

On July 24th, former client Melissa Monroe hosted the 3rd annual Agastock Music Festival at The Echo to benefit SCCC's Trauma & Resiliency Training & Services program. Once again, the event raised nearly \$9,500 to help ensure those in need can access these highly effective services and support. The event also celebrates the life of Melissa's daughter, Alice Ferguson, who died just 11 days after her second birthday, due to SUDC (Sudden Unexpected Death in Children). Melissa credits the Trauma & Resiliency program with helping her get back on her feet after such a sudden and devastating loss.

The benefit, named Agastock after Alice's favorite 'binkey', is an Americana music gathering made possible by generous donations that include the Echo Park venue, sound by Bedrock-LA, The Grand Ole Echo, Masa of Echo Park, and a silent auction with more than 25 items. Featured musicians and bands also donated their time, including headliner Waynesboro, The Neptunas, Greg Felden, Tony Gillyson, Brian Whelan and Mike Stinson & band.

After experiencing panic attacks, Melissa sought help at the Counseling Center in 2013, where she received a trauma-focused therapy called EMDR that enabled her to reprocess her sudden loss. Her experience reinforced her awareness of the need for more therapists trained in EMDR, which is used to treat victims of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other effects of trauma.

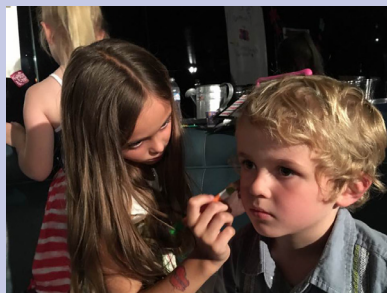
At Agastock, Melissa shared her story and underscored the importance of access to affordable mental health services. At our website, you can view a clip of Melissa sharing her story. As a tribute to the help she received, Melissa, her 7-year old daughter Grace, and many friends pledge to continue to put on this benefit concert each summer on Alice's birthday weekend. Be sure to join them next year!



Left, Melissa with daughter Alice in 2013. Above, the event marquee.



Below, Mike Stinson and band with Brian Whelan.



Above, 7-year-old Grace raised a \$106 for SCCC by offering face painting at the event in memory of her little sister.

## Collaboration:

**SCCC partners with Karsh**

**Center to serve Koreatown**

Karsh Family Social Services Center at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple has created an exciting multiservice community health center in the heart of Koreatown and SCCC is a part of it. The Karsh Center offers the community a foodbank, legal assistance, basic medical, vision and dental care, and now, with SCCC, provides mental health services. "We are happy to be a part of this exciting new model of holistic care right in the neighborhood," said Clinical Director Robert Mendelsohn. "We look forward to a rich partnership."



## Innovation:

**Tapping technology to help change lives**



As part of our continuing effort to move beyond the constraints of our four walls, SCCC has begun an exciting pilot effort to increase accessibility. WeCounsel is a fully HIPAA-compliant internet portal that allows our counselors to provide



real-time psychotherapy from their homes to clients who have access to a computer, tablet or smart phone. We currently limit

WeCounsel sessions to six but hope that soon it can help reduce wait times for our services.



## Ensuring the Future

### One volunteer's never-ending commitment to SCCC

After 40 years of serving as a volunteer paraprofessional counselor for SCCC, Claire Becker considers the Counseling Center her second home. That is why, when it came to planning her legacy gifts, she elected to include SCCC. She sees this as the best way to help ensure that affordable mental health services remain available for those in need.

Born and raised in Manhattan, Claire married her sweetheart Dick Becker in 1947, and from that point on lived for adventure. Just a few short months after getting married, the couple moved across the country to Los Angeles to build a new life together out West. Thanks to the success of Dick's business, they traveled extensively, making friends everywhere they went—China, Japan, France, Italy, Peru.

After completing a master's degree in dance therapy at UCLA in 1976, Claire met SCCC stalwart Goldie Ivner, who told her about the work of the Counseling Center. Feeling a call to help people to be more expressive, Claire applied to become a counselor. Her own difficult childhood inspired her to connect with people in emotional pain, doing what she can to help them find comfort, safety and healing.

"At SCCC, I have made some of my most important friends, learned about myself, and helped others learn about themselves," she says. Through an estate gift, Claire sees an invaluable way to maintain her legacy of service and healing.

Consider making SCCC a part of your estate plan. For more information, please contact Gail Wilburn at 323-937-1344 or [gwilburn@sccc-la.org](mailto:gwilburn@sccc-la.org). Or visit our website at [sccc-la.org/donate](http://sccc-la.org/donate).



**Newlywed Claire Becker in 1947**

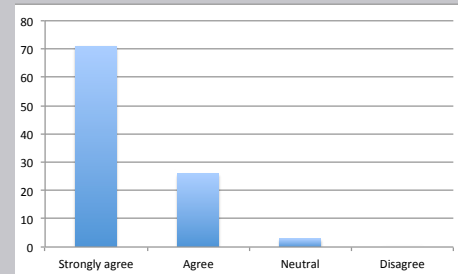
## Measuring Our Impact

Our annual Client Satisfaction Survey provides a detailed picture of how our clients evaluate the counseling services they have received. We look at several questions to identify the kinds of changes clients see in their lives, such as how well they are coping with challenges.

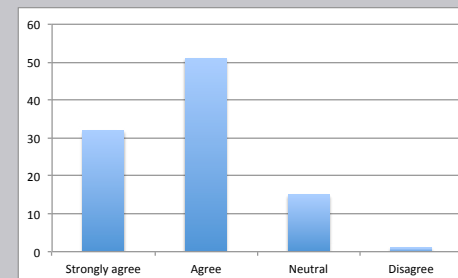
**Our last survey revealed that 95% of respondents are satisfied with the services they received.**

The charts below highlight a few areas where our clients note they have made important progress in their lives.

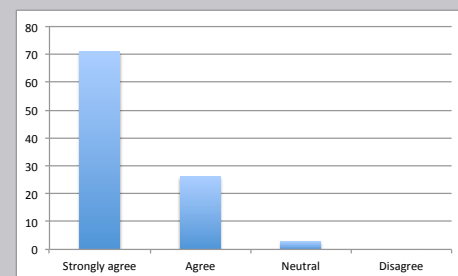
**"I am more aware about my feelings, thoughts, and actions."**



**"My sense of well-being has improved."**



**"I am satisfied with the services I have received at SCCC."**



These results are based on 113 responses to our 2015 survey. The next survey is scheduled to take place in October 2016, with results available in mid-2017. We're proud of clients' hard work to make effective changes in their lives.





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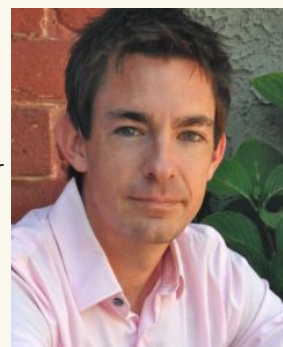
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## Upcoming Events

**October 23**

### Continuing Education: Law & Ethics Update

This fast-paced workshop with Dr. Ben Caldwell will clarify many recent changes to rules governing our professional work. Specific attention will be given to new requirements for supervision, technology-assisted services, and record-keeping, as well as major recent changes to the AAMFT Code of Ethics and proposed changes to California's MFT licensure requirements. Dr. Caldwell uses case examples and complex ethical scenarios to bring the material to life.



**November 14**

### Difficult Couples: Moving from Despair and Deprivation to Secure Bonding in Emotionally Focused Therapy

As part of our 50th anniversary celebration, Dr. Sue Johnson will provide a two-hour presentation at no charge to SCCC counselors, supervisors, staff, and alumni. (Due to overwhelming response, no seats remain for this event but interested individuals can be placed on a waiting list.)

Dr. Johnson is a best-selling author, clinical psychologist, researcher, professor, popular presenter and speaker and a leading innovator in the field of couples therapy. She is the primary developer of Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy, which has demonstrated its effectiveness in over 25 years of peer-reviewed clinical research.



**December 11**

### Alumni Reunion & SCCC Film History Project

Supervisor and former Executive Director Nancy Steiny will host an Alumni Reunion at her home. Over the last five decades, many have come through our doors and received the best training Los Angeles has to offer. SCCC alumni will gather to celebrate, reconnect, and capture some of our favorite Counseling Center memories on video. Invitations will be coming soon! Please come and share your memories.



**February 8, 2017**

### Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope Ahrya Fine Arts Theatre, Beverly Hills

In 2017, SCCC will continue its new tradition of hosting a FREE film screening for our whole community: donors, counselors, supervisors, alumni, friends and family. In 2016, we screened Director Jamie Redford's film "Paper Tigers." This year we are pleased to present its sequel "Resilience," which documents the emerging science around toxic stress and how it negatively alters the brains and bodies of children if left untreated. Watch you email for an invitation!



For more information, please call the Counseling Center at 323-937-1344 or email [ccrosby@sccc-la.org](mailto:ccrosby@sccc-la.org).



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