



dialog

*Fall 2018*

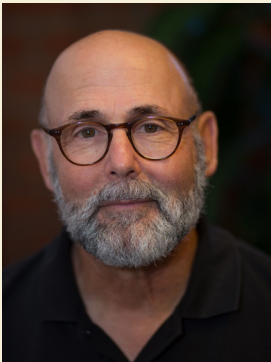
A publication for supporters of the  
Southern California Counseling Center

# Making an Impact



# A Vision Comes to Life

**Donors plus our remarkable volunteers equals a powerful means to serve those in need**



**Robert Mendelsohn**  
Clinical Director

First, we wish to welcome our new cohort of incoming counselors! They are much needed as the demand for our services continues to grow. The word is out that SCCC offers a wide range of individual, couple, family and group counseling in combination with psychiatric services and trauma treatment at a level of accessibility that to my knowledge exists nowhere else.

We're pleased to report that we have realized a well-thought-out vision over the past year that made us, in a sense, three counseling centers in one: Our Mid-City location, a second counseling center in Watts, and our third fully functioning virtual counseling center online.

Our new fall counselors will find a Center that is considerably more complex than the one that greeted my training cohort back in 1995. And we have been reminded this year that a vision realized is just the start: Next comes the hard work to fully anchor, build and sustain it.

**With your help, we will continue to introduce cutting-edge programming and ideas.**

ing list of clients, as well as supervision and on-site training if it is to truly grow. A virtual counseling center requires close monitoring so that its work is done safely and ethically. So with this issue we welcome SCCC alum John Berndt, who as Clinical Program Manager has strengthened our online efforts.

With your help we will continue to introduce cutting-edge programming and ideas, such as the Insider Witness Practices program led by Larry Zucker, the TAPP program's development of a 40-hour Probation Department-approved facilitator training, and Outreach's creation of a formal Social Justice Training Track. And a final word must be said about Nancy Steiny, Ph.D., LMFT, who completed her 49th year of clinical supervision this August with the announcement that she is retiring from that role. Nancy has been responsible for training literally thousands of therapists over

A second counseling center must be in full clinical and administrative communication with the first one and have the counselors and support staff it needs to accommodate its grow-



**The life of SCCC's Pico Blvd. location revolves around its iconic front desk. Here, Vadym Zhyrov assists clients as they check in and answers questions for counselors, supervisors and staff.**

nearly five decades. She truly embodies the values and aspirations of the SCCC community.

We always will treasure her invaluable contributions as we seek to live up to the rigorous standard she sets for us.



## John Berndt takes the helm as WeCounsel's first clinical program manager

We're pleased to welcome SCCC alum John Berndt, who steps into an important new role as the WeCounsel program continues to make powerful strides in the changing world of mental health services delivery. WeCounsel enables counselors and clients to connect and work remotely using a secure HIPAA-compliant online portal.

"I'm excited to be a part of SCCC's continuing commitment to provide mental health care to our community," John said recently. "By training counselors in the use of this online video therapy platform, we can provide even more therapy to a wide range of clients who are unable to come to the Center in-person for various reasons. I've already seen that the platform is easy to use, and clients seem more at ease because they can have a therapy session from their own living room. Offering this technology allows SCCC to continue meeting the evolving needs of our community."

# SCCC-Watts Flourishes!

In March 2018, the Southern California Counseling Center opened the doors to its first-ever satellite location in Watts on the campus of Watts Labor Community Action Committee or WLCAC. Today, six months in, SCCC-Watts is thriving.

“When we signed the lease at the start of the year, we didn’t know what to expect,” said Marianne Diaz, Director of Outreach Services. “We were told that the community would not be willing to pay for mental health services and that local residents wouldn’t be interested in non-court-ordered counseling. Turns out, not only is the community interested, they’re also comfortable with sliding-scale fees.”

“Our 2018 budget anticipated no revenue for services for our first year in Watts. However, soon after we opened, we began seeing clients who were paying small, sliding-scale fees,” added Executive Director Gail Wilburn. The number of clients in Watts receiving vital services from SCCC’s team of paraprofessionals and counselors keeps climbing week by week. When the building first opened, counseling services wrapped up at 4 pm each day. Today clients can meet with counselors until 8 pm Mondays and 9 pm Wednesdays as well. More counselors have joined the ranks as a SCCC-Watts supervision group met for the first time at our new location this September. The range of services being offered in Watts is also expanding, growing from its initial offering of only group and individual counseling to include couples and family counseling as well. SCCC-Watts now also includes trauma-informed yoga as part of its stress and anger management program.

“For many it’s the first time they’ve ever been exposed first-hand to yoga or meditation. These tools are outlets that historically have not been an option for this community,” said Marianne Diaz. “It’s really cool to see people showing up, wearing their jeans or whatever, and practicing yoga or meditation for the first time.”

As news of SCCC-Watts has spread, new relationships are being forged with other community organizations that see a need for these services as well. Our programs are



For the first time this fall, SCCC-Watts supervision groups will be on location in Watts. [Above] Watts counselors Nicole Burns Henderson, Candace Yoder, Raquel Serrano, Martin Pettis and Melinda Vyvyan.

now receiving referrals not only from WLCAC/FSC for their clients, but from Children’s Institute, Inc. (CII), Child Guidance and local schools. We collaborate with CII’s Project Fatherhood and offsite with other CII programs as well.

Currently, SCCC-Watts serves clients Monday through Thursday. By early next year, we hope to expand into the rest of the week. “We need more counselors,” Marianne said. “If we get more counselors who are willing to work in SCCC-Watts, we could stay open seven days a week. The need is there.”

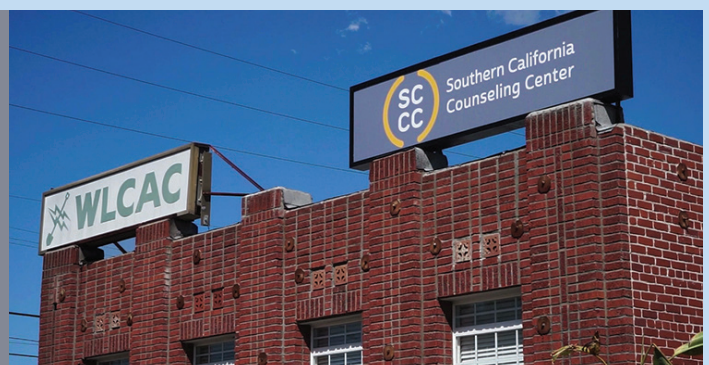
“What we’re most excited about,” beams Marianne, “is that word of mouth is spreading not just about the services we provide, but about the way those services are provided. People feel supported in their struggle and supported in their desire to become self-empowered.”



**Marianne Diaz**  
Director, Outreach  
Services and SCCC-Watts

## A Beacon of Hope Rises

From the red brick exterior, to the familiar faces and quality of care – there are many ways in which SCCC-Watts’ location echoes its Mid-City headquarters... there’s even a waitlist!



# Agastock Returns!

An annual benefit concert to support Trauma services at SCCC

The fifth annual Agastock benefit concert took place this year at the Silver Lake Echo on Saturday, July 29th, and raised nearly \$9,000 in support of Trauma services at SCCC. The event is produced each year by Melissa Monroe in memory of her two-year-old daughter, Alice Ferguson, who passed away at the age of 2. Melissa is thankful for the life-changing Trauma counseling services she experienced at the Southern California Counseling Center after the loss of her daughter. She raises funds each year to ensure that others will continue to have access to this affordable, specialized care. Alice is also remembered through a special room dedication at SCCC's Watts location (see below). Thanks, Melissa, for all your support and commitment to affordable mental health services for all!



[Above] Bands included Agastock headliner Mike Stinson.  
[Below] Even kids got into the act, with Cheetah Emoji with [from left] Melissa's daughter Grace Ferguson, Perci Edmonson and Leo Morse.  
[Below left] Melissa Monroe chats with Clinical Director Robert Mendelsohn and Board member Sandra McClean.



## Our Dedicated Rooms in Watts

Donors offer tributes and remembrances in support of our work in the community

During this year's Silent Auction at our annual Gala held April 28th, we auctioned off room dedications at our new building in Watts. A lot of people responded enthusiastically with their choices of people to honor or remember by having a room named for them. Three of our supporters were the lucky winners.

Alumnus Rolf Danner won two room dedications, one in memory of astronaut Sally Ride and one in memory of Kiyoshi Muranaga, a U.S. Army recipient of the Medal of Honor for bravery in World War II. Sharon Morrill won one, which she named in honor of Christine Mourad, an alumna who believes everyone's story should be heard. And past Board member and alumna Katrina Dornig made her dedication in memory of past SCCC Executive Director and Supervisor Marsha Jacobs, who had the insight in 1992 to see that SCCC could reach out in powerful ways to address the needs of marginalized communities. That vision brought Outreach Director Marianne Diaz on board and inspired development of vital new programs, including the Community Counselor Certification course, the Rage Recovery and Teen Violence Prevention groups, and most recently, our new location in Watts.



This year's Gala hosted a Silent Auction that included room dedications at SCCC-Watts. Winners got to inscribe dedications to special individuals. A dedication to Alice Ferguson, Melissa Monroe's daughter who passed away at age 2, will be posted soon (see above article).

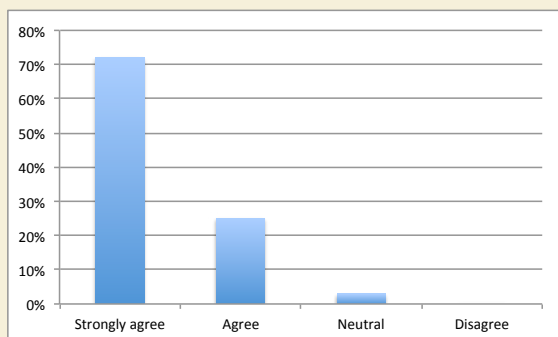
# Our Annual Survey: Measuring Impact

Our annual Client Satisfaction Survey offers a detailed picture of how our clients evaluate the counseling services they have received at SCCC. 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 latest survey revealed that 97% of respondents are satisfied with the services they received.**

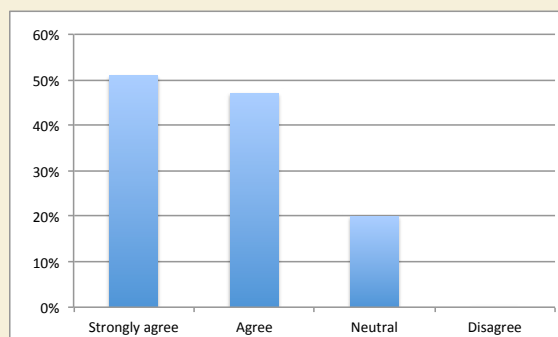
The charts below highlight areas where our clients note they have made important progress in their lives. These results are based on 153 responses to our 2017 survey. It's always incredible to us to see the progress clients make in reaching toward their goals. We are glad to be part of the process.

## I am satisfied with the services I have received at SCCC



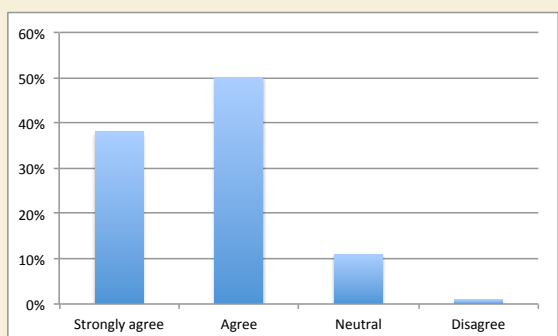
More than **95% Agree or Strongly Agree**

## I am more aware about my feelings, thoughts, and actions



More than **98% Agree or Strongly Agree**

## My sense of well-being has improved



More than **88% Agree or Strongly Agree**

# Upcoming Events

## October 11 Alumni Mixer

Calling all Alumni! On Thursday, October 11, 5 pm - 8 pm, we'll be hosting another fun-filled Alumni Happy Hour at 6th & La Brea —a brand new brewery/restaurant in Mid-City. Come catch up with SCCC friends over delicious Californian/Asian flavors and fresh craft brews, unique cocktails and wine. Vegan and gluten-free friendly. We'll be sending an Alumni Update email with details soon. Contact Alyssa Johnson at [ajohnson@sccc-la.org](mailto:ajohnson@sccc-la.org) with any questions.

## October 20 Fall Retreat 4 pm - 7 pm

All SCCC counselors, alumni, staff and board members are invited to attend. This year we invite you to join us as we throw it back to 1974, the year SCCC moved to its location on Pico Blvd., for food, drinks, games and fun right here at SCCC! For more info, contact Marisa Ice at [mice@sccc-la.org](mailto:mice@sccc-la.org).

## November-December 2018

### Outreach Holiday Food and Gift Drives

SCCC Outreach Services will once again sponsor gift and food drives for clients in need this holiday season. Announcements will appear online and in the Thursday Bulletin. Your help and support is always deeply appreciated.

## December 2 Supervisor Appreciation Party

This year, 2018, marks the 49th and final year of Nancy Steiny's clinical group supervision at SCCC. To honor her contribution and the many supervisors she has trained over the past half-century, Nancy will host a Supervisor Appreciation Party at her home on Sunday, December 2, 4 pm - 7 pm. Nancy, our Board of Directors and the SCCC staff look forward to welcoming our current and past supervisors. Watch your email for further details.

## December or January 2019 TBD

### Continuing Education: Law & Ethics

Marisa Ice, SCCC's Assistant Clinical Director, will offer a six-hour refresher that will clarify changes to rules governing our professional work. FREE for current SCCC supervisors; SCCC Alumni can receive a 20% discount off the fee. More details will be coming soon. Contact Robbyn at [rcoffey@sccc-la.org](mailto:rcoffey@sccc-la.org) with any questions.

## Coming soon! Our 2019 Film Screening

A few years ago, SCCC began a tradition of holding free film screenings for the the whole SCCC community. In 2016, we screened Director Jamie Redford's film "Paper Tigers." In 2017, we presented its sequel "Resilience," which documents the emerging science around toxic stress and how it alters the brains and bodies of children if left untreated. Watch for an email announcement about our 2019 film as soon as it is confirmed. Everyone will be invited!



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#### On the Cover:

**Just a few of SCCC-Watts' counselors  
and paraprofessionals!**

[Top, from left to right] **Alexandra Lippens,  
Melinda Vyvyan, Damani Atiba;**

[Middle] **Michael Manzo, Kusema Thomas,  
Marianne Diaz, Diana Godinez, Raquel Serrano**

[Bottom] **Jamilla Lightner-Cedeno, Sydney  
Dieudonne, Eric Robinson Jr., Candace Yoder**

Photo credits: Jonathan Vickburg,  
Fresh Focus Photography

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Lisi Cash, Weekend Clinical Coordinator

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Marianne Diaz, Director, Outreach Services

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