

Successful Life Stories

a seasonal COMPASS publication

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Six Flags Adventures

2011 Community Retreat
by Natalie Jones

What an amazing time it was for our COMPASS family to enjoy a whole day at Six Flags together. We all packed up on a bus and headed to Vallejo for a grand adventure. Whether it was a roaring roller coaster, a screaming fan, or contagious laughter; heard all around were sounds of continuous fun! For some, the rides were the best part, such as the terrifying Medusa! For others it was the animal shows that captured attention. How fun it was for all of us to see the dolphin show together! And let's not forget about the amazing BBQ we all gathered for. The hamburgers and hotdogs were a big hit after a long day of fun in the sun. In the end, the best part of the day wasn't the BBQ, the animals or rides, but the time we all got to spend together. The laughter, the memories, and the excitement will be with us forever. We all anticipate the next big adventure with COMPASS!



Administration Retreat 2011

Admin Team Prepares for Changes & Decompresses
by Helyn Huffmaster

The Admin Retreat in late September was once again a smashing success. This is the second year that we have met at Westerbeke Ranch in Sonoma. The relaxing time begins with the beautiful drive – that is, for those who do not get lost on the way!! I could not decide which good memories I wanted to share, so I asked around for others' favorite memories. Here is what I found. There was a resounding consensus that it was an awesome time of connecting. I kept hearing phrases like "getting to know people's talents," "appreciating more of who everyone is," "seeing another side of those we work with," and finding people in different roles and settings."

One member, Luci Belcher, of a midnight marauding party discovered something about herself as well as her comrades. She said the after dark hike showed her that in spite of their tough Administrative talents, they are just girls at heart. The laughing, the fun and the constant question "are we lost yet?" proved to be a connection for them that made for good memories.

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Director's Note >>>

Do you remember the song from Shrek called "Changes"? Here is the chorus:

"Ch-ch-ch-ch-Changes
(Turn and face the stranger)
Ch-ch-Changes
Don't tell them to grow up and out of it
Ch-ch-ch-ch-Changes
(Turn and face the stranger)
Ch-ch-Changes
Where's your shame
You've left us up to our necks in it
Time may change me
But you can't trace time"

This has been a year of change! Change is something we dread, but I am not sure why – it is inevitable. We have been changing since birth. We grow, we start walking, we start eating with a spoon, we go to school, we leave our parent's home (eventually....). We change as a part of growing up.

I just thought I would dedicate my article to talking about the changes and why we are doing these changes, so you too can see that we are growing up and it is all GOING to be OK.

#1 We are focusing more on ILS. One of our values is Freedom. ILS is a group of people that adore freedom. We need to make room for them in our organization. We have promoted Luci Belcher in South Bay to be our ILS Manager of both regions. She will be working with both regional centers to make sure all service coordinators are aware of our ILS service. She will be performing the assessments to bring the new clients into our community. It is an exciting change, as we get to add more people to our community who are they themselves growing.

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#2 We have begun services in Siskiyou County. Trust me, this is a heart decision, not a money decision. We will probably pay for the privilege of serving that area next 3-5 years. However, we believe fiercely that all clients should have SLS and ILS as a choice—even if they live in the sticks. Amanda Nolan moved to McCloud to help our organization in this area.

#3 We have developed a computer system for scheduling, human resources, billing and case management. We are doing this to join the computer age! Seriously, with resources being stretched tighter and tighter, we need to make sure we are utilizing our team the most effective and efficient way possible. It has been a bit of a bumpy change, but in the end, it will be a powerful tool. Special thanks to Jenn M., Eric and our software developer, Guy.

Change – it's not so bad if you embrace it. You don't want to be in the same place forever. •

Sadie Hess Director of SLS & ILS



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Client Corner

Hello Compass family I am Nicole and I live in the East Bay. This year I started to express my feelings. I have never felt safe enough to tell others how I feel. I usually will express it instead.

Expressing my feelings has not been working and this year with the support of my parents, my team and my staff I learned to say what I feel. When it was time to meet for my annual ISP I expressed that one of my dreams was to have friends I could spend time with. My new very close friend is Christy. I invited Christy to my birthday celebrations. I made her an invitation card and she came. We had so much fun. Since, then Christy and I have watched movies together and gone bowling. I am very grateful to my team leader Nicole V who sets up dates for Christy and me to meet. My parents and Compass staff are also very supportive.



Making new long term friends has really helped me be more open and social.



My name is Derek Webb. I live in a studio apartment in downtown San Jose with my cat, Kimmy. I enrolled in college classes at

San Jose City College this semester. I am taking two classes: English and yoga. I like my English class a lot. We are reading classical literature, and it's so great. I enjoy writing and have been told that I am a talented writer.

At home, I really enjoy doing puzzles, writing in calligraphy, reading, and creating art. I also love walking, visiting bookstores, and going to see movies.

I started a diet about six months ago, and I have lost 37 pounds through diet and exercise. It's not always easy, but I take it a day at a time. I am very proud of the fact that I have lost so much weight.

I am very close to my family. My brother, Adrian, lives in Las Vegas, and I really enjoy visiting him. My parents, Ann and Maurice, are from Ireland. They have been here since 1979. They live nearby, and I enjoy having dinner with them regularly and visiting them on weekends.

Someday, I hope to get married and have children. I hope to start dating soon. Ladies...?

Frances joined the COMPASS family in November of 2010. Frances lives in her newly decorated house in Anderson, CA. Frances has had a busy year; she has successfully recovered from knee surgery and has become much more active in the community. Frances spends her days enjoying her staffs companionship and assistance; she crochets, attends many activities in the area and loves to eat Mexican food. Frances is fluent in Spanish and enjoys speaking Spanish with some of her staff. Frances has two dogs which also keep her busy.

While at home, Frances spends her time working in her beautiful flower garden and enjoying the fresh outdoors. Many times you can find her out walking the Sundial Bridge and the river trail. Frances always has a warm welcome for everyone she meets or sees, she visits the office weekly and it is always a pleasure to see her smiling face.



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Administration Retreat 2011

Everyone I spoke to made mention of our star performer for the weekend. Donn proved to be a musician/song writer/dancer/choreographer/producer/actor extraordinaire. He provided most of the entertainment for the three days. Fortunately, this is all recorded for posterity – another word for blackmail!

There was a launching of a famous and talented new group (at least it will live in our hearts forever), singing their one hit wonder—an exciting and informative song about the future of their job. This was one of five teams given the task of making a video, doing a play, and writing a song to go with our “All things HR” theme. This particular team consisted of Jenn M, and Luci. All the teams did a fabulous job on their projects and made for much light-heartedness.

Oh yes, and we did work! There is always that—plenty of meetings and speakers and trainings to attend in order to keep us from calling it a fun-filled vacation. They say the only constant is change, and we discovered the truth in this at the meetings. They rolled out new job descriptions, new heads of departments, new responsibilities, new payroll methods – if it is

true that learning new things makes you young, we will be quite youthful in the very near future.

I would be most remiss if I did not mention our Golden Girl of the retreat! Val is now head of HR in all of the offices. She led much of the training and will be spearheading most of the upcoming changes.

In all it was a GREAT jumping off for the upcoming new face of COMPASS Administrators. We know everyone will continue to excel at their jobs, even helping to improve on the improvements as we forge ahead. ●



Living Independently

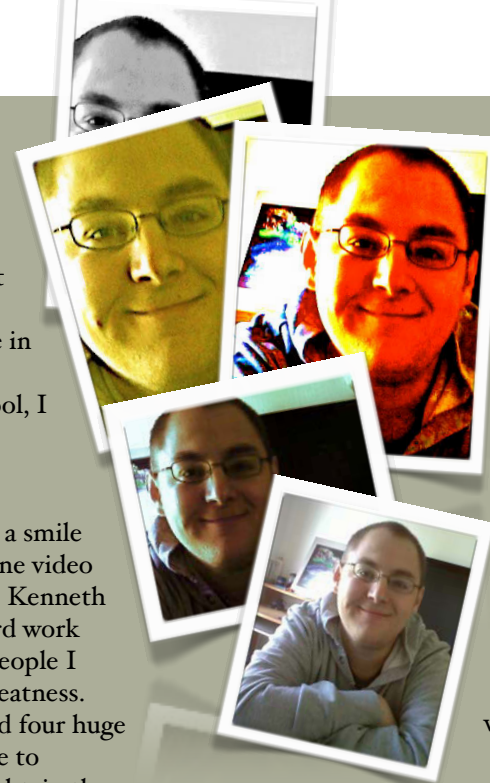
by Michele Gilbertson



Kenneth Harper started with COMPASS, ILS January of 2011. He states that, “The thing I love the most is that I socialize more than ever. Before COMPASS, I would stay alone in my room and not go out. Now, with correct medications and going to school, I

am a lot more confident in myself. I no longer get uncomfortable being around people anymore, and I actually really love being out and about”.

Kenneth is known for his charming personality and a smile that lights up a room. Kenneth enjoys playing on-line video and computer games as well as anything electronic. Kenneth knows that life is not all games and realizes that hard work pays off. As one of the most polite and courteous people I have ever met, Kenneth is paving his own way to greatness. This year alone, Kenneth has successfully completed four huge goals that he set for himself. The first was his desire to advocate for himself with medical professionals to obtain the appropriate healthcare he wanted. The second was to obtain his driver's license, which didn't feel realistic at the time. The third was to create a budget and follow it independently. And lastly, Kenneth wanted to start classes at Shasta College and overcome his frustration with transportation. Kenneth has met these goals and continues to make new ones, even while playing a video game here and there. Kenneth enjoys working with his current instructor, Natalie Jones. Registering for college just happens to be Kenneth's favorite COMPASS memory. He states that, “Learning about computer



programming is hard, but I really like it. I know this will benefit me in getting a better job and create a more successful future. My friends come to me now, and since I started going to college, they are asking me to fix their computers. So far, all my customers have left happy with my work.” So,

if you see a happy guy at college around the computer lab with a phone in one hand and a possibly a mouse in the other, it might be Kenneth. It is said that “greatness doesn't come overnight, but by making one good choice at a time,” and it is clear Kenneth is well on his way.

“Kenneth is known for his charming personality and smile...”

“I socialize more than ever...”

“All my customers have left happy...”

“...charming...”

Be the One

by Donn Kropp, RN, BSN



“Nine out of ten people quit before they should.” I heard this small, seemingly insignificant, statement one day. It was one of those, “Aha!”, moments that stopped me in my tracks. During that season in my life, I was grappling

with multiple pressing issues that demanded commitment and perseverance. My first struggle was that I was given a diagnosis by a medical professional that I would have back problems and pain for the rest of my life. My second issue was that I was failing with the launch of fledgling business start-up.

When I was struggling with my “dark night of the soul” season, the aforementioned statement made me say to myself, “I am supposed to be the 1 out of the 10. I shouldn't quit.” If the statement was worded any other way, it probably wouldn't have impacted me as much. Well, as the story turns out, I started a two year rehabilitation process that has cured my back 98%. Every day, for almost two years, I would stretch, do yoga, and build my core muscles for one to two hours per

“...I was grappling with multiple pressing issues...”

day. What if I would have quit after a three months, six months or a year? My business aspirations and dreams are still a work-in-progress, but I am confident, because of commitment and persistence, I will be successful in those endeavors.

I challenge you all to be the one out of the ten. My goal is not to fill this article with cute platitudes and cliches but to encourage you to attain greater levels of health, happiness and wellness through determination, persistence and commitment. It worked for me, and it can do the same for you.

Dates to Remember>>>

- Nov. 11: Office Closed for Veteran's Day
- Nov. 24-25: Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- Dec. 9: Redding Christmas Party Open House
- Dec. 13: Dublin Christmas Party Open House
- Dec. 14: San Jose Christmas Party Open House
- Dec. 26-27: Office Closed for Christmas