

# THROWBACK

# '15



## #KEEPTHEPROMISE Rally in Redding December 10th 2015

We are super honored to be a part of a community that stands together to support one another as we all try and deal with the rising budget crisis! We have been impressed by our own community as well as the community state-wide. This year has definitely confirmed something we already knew to be true about our community:

### WE ARE STRONG AND WE AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE.

To see the KRCC news clip from rally, go to : <http://www.compasscares.com/2015/12/california-dd-community-noise-12-10/>



We were honored & appreciated **Laura Larson** from FNRC coming out to show her support!



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# COMPASS NEWSLETTER

Celebrating 20 years in service!

## 2016 Winter Far North Edition

March 2016



### Why I Started Compass by Sadie Hess, CEO & Founder

Many of you have heard various versions of my journey that brought us to this place. I plan on taking this year to tell you all the major milestones of this journey, as we celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> year in business. But today I start at the beginning.

My beginning was as a twenty-year old kid who wanted a paid internship. I applied at a small mom and pop agency that had freshly received vendorization. They had but a few clients. It was a Wild West season in Supported Living as regulations hadn't even been finalized and philosophy was the main staple of a program plan. This is to say this agency had an idea of SLS, but had not actually done SLS. They needed staff and my advisor allowed me to use care giving as my internship for my psychology program.

I will never forget the day I walked into Cindy's house. I felt nervous and unsure. I had never spent time with a person with disabilities and I wasn't sure what to say or if we would have anything in common. My training was quick—too quick really. The owner, Mary, and a staff I would later get to know as the one with horrible boundaries, introduced me to Cindy. We will call her Stacy because I can't remember her name.

I don't remember if I even heard Cindy speak that day. I was given a few basics about Cindy's house and shown a pivot transfer. There is something to be said about the courageous ignorance of youth. I didn't even attempt one transfer. I just watched and we all seemed to think that would be enough. I arrived to my next shift with a fair amount of trepidation. I was going to be alone with Cindy and I was convinced we would have nothing to

talk about. The staff with bad boundaries (still calling her Stacy) showed me one more time how to do a pivot transfer and left.

I was on my own. I was too naïve to fully understand the gravity of my situation, but it was never lost on Cindy. She at once began to train me. She was the most patient and kind coach I had ever had. I learned so much sitting at her Park West apartment.

When I am extremely nervous I talk....a lot. I began to talk Cindy's ear off. She was so graceful about it as she listened. She asked me to share what I had done the last summer. I had been in the Philippians the summer before and was anxious to share about my trip. All my nervousness vanished as I came to realize I was going to spend time with a companion. I was going to get the rare and special gift of caring for not a patient or a client, but a wise and loving friend. In those initial moments, the first thing she taught me was that she was a person and we would be having a relationship, not a transaction. She then taught me about transfers and positioning, but in the midst of that there was a deeper, lifelong lesson. She taught me about how to have grace when in unbearable pain.





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use to Cindy's hallmarks.

I remember vividly the agonizing process of getting her into bed. I would go out to the couch once she was in bed and marvel at what she did each and every day to be part of society. She would endure unspeakable pain to live amongst us. There, I realized heroes come in all forms and I had met one.

Most importantly, Cindy taught me about friendship and awakened an unknown part of my heart. My professor remarked on it when he saw us together. He said, "Sadie, you are an athlete and your body working well is so important to you. Did you ever think that you would use your body to help another person live her life?"

It was in that moment that I knew I wanted to do this for the rest of my days. I wanted to use my voice for those who had no voice. I wanted to use my legs to push others who could not propel themselves. In turn, Cindy would give me

I would transfer her poorly or go over a bump too quickly and you could see the pain etched on her face, but she would always say in her Cindy way, "That's okay." If you knew her, you can probably hear the falsetto voice she would say that phrase. It was one of



things I did not have. She would share her experiences and let me into her world. She would also give me her wisdom she had acquired through both her pain and triumphs. Compass was not born on this day, but my heart for people with disabilities was.

Later, Cindy became our client here at Compass. We served her for over fifteen years. Last year, Cindy decided she was done with her job on this earth. The day she passed away, family, friends, staff and former staff gathered from all over to be with her: to have one more moment of her strength and courage.

I will admit I was scared to go see her that last day. I wasn't ready to lose my mentor and I wasn't prepared to say goodbye. But when I walked in her room, over six people were crammed in around her and the love was palpable. I witnessed the indelible mark she left on so many. I was reminded of an earlier lesson: conquerors come in all forms.

I heard it said that the amount of pain you feel in mourning is proportionate to the love you feel in life. If so, I must have really loved Cindy because her death hurt like hell. I loved Cindy for Cindy, but I also loved what she opened up inside of me and what I now share with this community. I will

be eternally grateful that she took a chance on a twenty-year old kid and opened me up to not only a career, but also a passion for people with disabilities. She gave me far more than I could ever repay. She will forever be my hero.



## ILS Feature: Noni by Michele Gilbertson, ILS Manager and Cari Grisell, ILC

Noni started with Compass in ILS a little over a year ago because she wanted assistance with increasing her independence. Naomi (Noni) is a loving, caring, courageous, beautiful woman that has changed so many lives because of who she is. She is one of five siblings from Yreka, and is loved endlessly by her family. Noni always makes sure to call her niece, Casey and her two nephew's daily just to tell them she loves them. Recently her nephew, Erickson age 11, flew here from Oklahoma on his own to visit her during the holidays. It had been years since they had seen each other and Noni considers Erickson's visit her best Christmas present.

Noni has had an amazing career at the Occupational Center in Redding as a janitor for the past 28+ years. She is known for wearing her famous baseball cap to work and loves to talk about her favorite teams (the San Francisco Giants and the Dallas Cowboys) to anyone who will listen. Noni has been fortunate to see the San Francisco Giants play at AT&T Park and often dreams about going to see the Giants in Arizona during Spring Training. Her favorite player is Barry Bonds (who has retired), but if she still ever had a chance to meet him face to face she would tell him not only is he awesome, but he is the greatest baseball player there ever was.



Noni likes to attend Compass events and enjoys her relationships with the people when she does. The Prom this last year was a big step for Noni as she "boogied down" in her black and white checkered dress she specifically picked out for this very special night. Noni plans to go to the

Compass Cruise this year and talks about it frequently. Noni has found that Compass events are a great way for her to make friends and hang out with some of the best people she knows.

In ILS, setting goals are very important and every step towards achieving them is celebrated. One of Noni's goals is to increase her advocacy skills so that her voice is heard and her opinions are respected. Over the past year, Noni has demonstrated courage and strength as she has made difficult (but powerful) choices to not allow others to take advantage of her. In many situations, Noni has had to find creative solutions so that her voice would be heard when others in her life didn't want to listen. Noni has a huge, generous, and compassionate heart and has learned that saying "No" doesn't mean she is mean or bad. There are many ways to say "No" and Noni has discovered that she has the right to say it the way she wants to. Although speaking up for herself is still a challenge, Noni has discovered that she is powerful and has gained the confidence to keep using her voice even when it is difficult. Congrats, Noni, to a year of growth and breakthrough!



## SLS Feature: Richard by Robyn Martin, Case Facilitator

Richard Still deserves the spotlight for he has achieved milestones since he has been with COMPASS. Richard lived in a group home for many years before coming to COMPASS in May 2010. Prior to this he expressed his desire to want to make his own choices, live in his own apartment and learn independent living skills and we knew right away SLS was going to be a great fit and there would be no doubt he would thrive. Richard was not only excited about being able to choose his own meals everyday but was really interested in learning how to prepare his own meals. Even though learning a new skill can be a little overwhelming, Richard never gave up and has become quite talented in the kitchen. When asking Richard what he likes to cook he said, "pancakes and I can also cook some mean chicken". Richard looks forward to learning how to further his cooking skills by taking a cooking class someday. When asking Richard what he likes most about living on his own he said, "being able to do what I want to do".

Richard has attended several work/day programs over the years with excellent attendance. This past October he decided to change programs to the Skill Center with aspirations of seeking employment in his community. With Richard's determination and positive mind set he recently landed himself a housekeeping job at the Hilton Garden Inn 5 days a week. Richard takes pride in his work and when asked what he likes best about his new job he commented, "I have made new friends and I like the staff there, they are nice."

Richard really enjoys helping others in his community and we really appreciate his generosity. Quite often when someone is in need of assistance, Richard is there willing to lend a hand. So let's all put our hands together for Richard and congratulate him on a job well done!

Richard, why do you like SLS?

"I get to do what I want to do!"

