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THROWBACK



BRAVO BUCK
2013

We are celebrating 20 years in business and we could not be more excited about it! Reflecting on the last 20 years has been a fun part of the celebration process. With that

being said, these pictures are a throw back to our Bay Area Bravo Buck Event in 2013. We hope you enjoy this trip down memory lane just as much as we do! Stay tuned for more throw backs!

COMPASS

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COMPASS NEWSLETTER

Celebrating 20 years in business!

2016
Winter
South Bay
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 20th 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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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 use to say that

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.



phrase. It was one of 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

ILS Feature: Cassie by Ramon Robles, ILS Manager



Cassie is an outgoing, optimistic and energetic person who loves to learn new things.

One of Cassie’s favorite things to do is shop. She helps shop for her family groceries every week. While shopping, she practices her budgeting.

Cassie is very good at finding the best deal. Her favorite grocery store is Grocery Outlet, but she also enjoys going to Target and new stores, such as ethnic markets, every chance she gets!

Cassie is working on improving her health and managing her weight. With that goal in mind, in the last year she has started attending the Indian Health Center free gym in Downtown San Jose, as well as occasionally going to the Camden Community Center gym as a drop-in. Her favorite exercise is the treadmill. She also gets exercise by helping walk her new dog. Cassie attends a healthy living class at College of Adaptive Arts and has pledged to increase her exercise levels.

Partnering with her ILS Coach, Cassie helps cook dinner for her family 2-4 times a month. She looks through cookbooks or online for a recipe, then copies out the ingredients into a shopping list (making sure she spells all words correctly!). She purchases the items at the store, then makes the food at home.

Cassie has type 1 diabetes, so her health is very important to her. She checks her sugar throughout the day with skin prick blood tests. With encouragement from her ILS coach, she and her mother have asked her endocrinologist for a continuous glucose monitor. She finally was approved for that this February and she looks forward to learning how to use it. This is a huge step for her in gaining the independence she craves, as well as giving her parents peace of mind. Her next step, once she masters the CGM, is to ask Kaiser to approve a continuous insulin pump, so she won’t have to inject herself before meals, or when her sugar spikes up. This would work in tandem with her CGM.

One of Cassie’s personal goals is to start a business and start making money from it. She already helps some neighbors with dog and cat sitting and walking. She would love to eventually have a paper-shredding business, as that’s one of her hobbies. Cassie also drew 8 colored Christmas designs this past Christmas. She enlisted her mom and her ILS staff’s help in printing dozens of copies of these unique designs, and assembled them into Christmas cards and gift tags. She set up a booth at the PHP Christmas gift boutique and earned about \$50 from selling them!

Cassie looks forward to what the future holds for her, and we at Compass are honored to be part of that journey with her!



SLS Feature: Rachel by Lisa Herrera, Case Facilitator



Rachel is a warm, serene woman who enjoys spending time in her home taking a few visitors. Those visitors are the lucky ones to know her spunk and sweet snicker. On most days, you can find Rachel, a long-time Compass client of the South Bay, looming hats she donates to people who are homeless.

In the summer of 2015, Rachel found herself facing the common housing challenges of the Bay Area and in need of apartment hunting. The initial news was devastating after living in the apartment for 10 years. Rachel looked to her family and Compass team for support. With limited options, they got her name added to waitlists that were so long it seemed fruitless.

After years of paying it forward in kindness, Rachel had won the lottery—a housing lottery that is—and was in place for a brand-new affordable apartment being built. Another Compass client opened her home for a few months

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to Rachel until the new apartment building opened. During that time, her family and Compass Team rallied to pack, store, and move her belongings for the grand move-in date in December.

When you ask Rachel about her new home, she beams, “I love it so much!” Living in a larger apartment building, Rachel has also started to expand her community. More people have been adorned to know her moxie. She now participates in community events where she has found other avenues to give back to others and continues to loom hats for the homeless community.

