

CONNECTION

MISSION STATEMENT

BACS's mission, to the people of our community with specific needs imposed by age or disability, is to improve the quality of their lives through the quality of our services.

We commit ourselves and the resources of the community entrusted to us to:

- the development of stable support services to promote community-based independent living and other alternatives to traditional institutional care
- the operation of a select range of ongoing services that are safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and cost-effective, and that recognize our clients' abilities, interests, and cultural preferences, as well as their changing needs.

BACS Staff Honored for Service

FOR BACS STAFF, helping others is its own reward. Recently, however, not one but two dedicated BACS workers received a reward of a different kind: a Mental Health Achievement Award presented by the Mental Health Association of Alameda County (MHAAC).

Suzanne Gorham is Program Director of the BACS Case Management/Supported Independent Living (CM/SIL) Program. Edy Nicolini recently retired from a 10-year career at Towne House Creative Living Center. Both women share an unswerving passion for improving the lives of those in need.

"Suzanne and Edy demonstrate exceptional leadership, beyond the requirements of their positions," comments Steve Bishoff, Executive Director of MHAAC. "Suzanne increased services for people with mental illness through CM/SIL, while Edy helped Towne House members increase their self-esteem and function more independently in the community."



Suzanne directs CMISIL's growth and success

Suzanne: Expanding Services

Suzanne Gorham began her career at BACS in 1990 as a counselor at Manzanita Halfway House. She recalls, "I truly felt I had found my calling." At Manzanita, Suzanne became aware of the lack of housing available for members ready to move towards independence. So she did what all

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Congregate Sites Provide Food and Fun

AS PART OF MEALS ON WHEELS, BACS offers a Congregate Nutrition Program for seniors who want to enjoy a nutritious meal in the company of peers. Twenty-two sites are located in senior centers, churches, and housing programs throughout Oakland and Alameda. Each site offers a daily well-balanced meal and provides social and recreational activities to keep seniors active and healthy.

Many volunteers keep the congregare sites thriving. Minnie Scruggs, a 17-year veteran at Mastick Senior Center in Alameda, is the volunteer kitchen coordinator and the backbone of the dining program there. She reflects: "Members know they can get a nutritious meal right here in the middle of their activities. That's a big draw for them to come."

Congregate site activities may include classes, movies, and bingo. Says Mastick Community Board vice-president Chuck



Always a full house for lunch at Mastick

Mondero, "We have just about everything—even hula dancing. If seniors want a program, we try to make it happen." To make the day complete for members, they can enjoy a great lunch courtesy of BACS Meals on Wheels. Bringing meals to congregare sites reinforces BACS's mission of helping participants maintain independence and interaction in the community.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am excited to tell you about our upcoming Meals in May campaign to strengthen Oakland's Meals on Wheels program. Many of you have long been committed to this program, and we deeply appreciate your support. Building on that, we are beginning a grassroots campaign to broaden our base of support—from both individuals and local businesses. This is a new direction for BACS, and I hope that you will come forward to lend your knowledge and connections in the area to make this campaign a success.

Why does BACS need community support for Meals on Wheels? While federal and state dollars provided through the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging supply the bulk of funding, about a quarter of the budget must be fundraised. For BACS Meals on Wheels, that amount is more than \$250,000 each year. These government sources expect that client and community donations will cover the gap. The formula works in communities where clients can afford to make a donation towards the cost of their meals. But Oakland, with its high proportion of low-income seniors, is a different story. Many Oakland seniors receiving meals can only afford to make a nominal donation, and some seniors cannot contribute at all.

We hope to raise awareness among those in our community who can afford to support those who need a hand. Our vision is to make Meals in May an annual event involving individuals, businesses, restaurants, and service clubs so that the support continues to grow. Our first goal is to eliminate our waiting list. Beyond that, additional funding will allow BACS to meet further needs such as expanding our meal service to those most vulnerable who could benefit from more than one meal per day.

We welcome your contributions—ideas, leads and connections will help us in our mission to protect seniors from illness and hunger. You can find out more about the campaign on the last page of this newsletter or by calling Mary Frizat at 510-613-0323. I look forward to sharing the results of our campaign with you in our fall newsletter. Stay tuned!

Sincerely



Liz Prince
Executive Director

A Chance to Start Again

ALMOST TEN YEARS AGO, Tanya Aviles was in a dark place. Depression and other factors led her to quit her job and enter a psychiatric treatment facility. In 2004, she entered BACS transitional housing through the Case Management/Supported Independent Living Program (CM/SIL). Today she is a program aide at the BACS Adult Day Care Program in Oakland and has goals of moving into her own housing and attending college.

How did Tanya achieve such a remarkable turnaround? “BACS really changed my life,” Tanya said. “Suzanne [Gorham, Clinical Director of CM/SIL] had such faith in me. I was in a dark hole, but through everyone’s help I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel.”

Tanya says the defining moment came when Suzanne told her about the BestNOW program, which trains consumers moving towards wellness to be peer providers and help others like themselves. Not only did Tanya successfully complete the program, she gave the graduation speech in 2005—“all from the heart,” she says.

Tanya found an internship at the BACS Adult Day Care program. Here, Tanya



“I can do anything my heart desires. I am on top of the world!”

helps with crafts, meals, and other activities. “If I can make the participants laugh, it makes my day,” she says. “Working here leaves me feeling so much joy.”

Looking back on her journey, Tanya explains: “When you have a mental illness, you feel there is no reason to go on. Now, I’ve been reborn. I can do anything my heart desires. I am on top of the world!”

BACS Staff Honored (Continued from Cover)

leaders do: When faced with a problem, solve it.

“I moved to the CM/SIL Program, where we needed more housing for our clients. From four houses and one apartment, we’ve grown to 49 beds throughout Alameda County. We also teach people how to shop, cook, do laundry—the basic skills.”

Today, CM/SIL includes six case managers and a psychiatrist helping over 200 consumers with job training, housing assistance, and more. Suzanne explains, “It’s incredibly fulfilling to make real connections with people and support them with whatever they’re going through. The quality of life we help people find is amazing.”

Edy: Promoting Independence

Starting as an intern, Edy Nicolini wore many hats at Towne House. She worked as a teacher, then a team leader, and finally the Program Coordinator.

In this role, Edy did everything from intakes and orientations to coordination with outside agencies for crisis management, obtaining county case managers, and more. She arranged for speakers to come and present on topics of interest to members.



Edy finds creative ways to help others

And she led the development of many groups, including the recovery and hope group, the related wellness recovery action plan group, and the dual-diagnosis group.

Edy reflects, “My experiences at Towne House have been stimulating, enriching, fulfilling, and rewarding. The members have taught me a great deal about mental illness, courage, and recovery. The staff has helped me grow in knowledge and skill. With BACS support I have learned and grown professionally.”

Congratulations to Edy and Suzanne for being recognized as leaders in the field of mental health!

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Campaign to End Senior Hunger

FACT: 21% of Alameda County seniors reported they were hungry but did not eat because they could not afford food; 13% reported going at least one full day or more without eating at all.*

FACT: By supporting BACS Meals on Wheels, you can make a difference for seniors in Oakland.

BACS Meals on Wheels delivers 3,600 meals weekly to homebound seniors. Through the Meals in May campaign, BACS has set a goal to raise at least \$25,000 to ensure that seniors in Oakland and Piedmont continue to receive warm, nutritious meals.

Many thanks to our sponsors confirmed as of the date our newsletter went to print:

SILVER SPONSOR—\$5,000

\$5,000 feeds 7 seniors for a year.

**Wealth Management
at The Mechanics Bank**

BRONZE SPONSOR—\$1,500

\$1,500 feeds 2 seniors for a year.

March Development

For information and updates on the campaign, see our website: bayareacs.org. Join us to make this campaign a success!

Deliver a Helping of Hope

Donate today to
BACS Meals on Wheels!



BACS Meals on Wheels
helps homebound seniors avoid
illness, isolation and hunger.



510/613-0323 · BayAreaCS.org

Contributions of any amount are welcome. To become a sponsor or make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope or contact Mary Frizat, BACS Development Director, at 510-613-0323.

* Statistics from Alameda County Community Food Bank, *Abating Hunger Among the Elderly*. May 2003.

BACS Telephone Directory

BACS helps right here at home in Alameda County.

Among our 40 locations are:

Administrative Offices

Administration	510-613-0330
Accounting/Finance	510-613-0327
Development Office	510-613-0323
Personnel	510-613-0326
FAX	510-569-4589
TDD	510-613-0328

Older Adult Services

TDD for Following Programs	510-986-8902
Adult Day Care Services, Fremont	510-656-7742
Adult Day Care Services, Oakland	510-601-1074
Affordable Home Care Services	510-271-6078
Care Management	510-271-8843
Money Management Assistance Program	510-271-6075
Meals on Wheels	510-986-8900
Senior Nutrition	510-986-8907
Senior Transportation	510-272-4769

Mental Health Services

TDD for Following Programs	510-271-8832
Case Management/Supported Independent Living	510-272-4797
Creative Living Centers	510-613-0320
Four Bridges, Alameda	510-750-8810
Hedco House, Hayward	510-247-8235
South County, Tri-Cities	510-657-7425
Towne House, Oakland	510-658-9480
Valley, Tri-Valley	925-484-8457
Crisis Residential Program – Woodroe Place	510-537-1688
Employment Program	510-654-7355

Website: www.bayareacs.org

E-mail: bacs@bayareacs.org



Keeping Adults Connected
to Their Communities.

Since 1953.

Bay Area Community Services

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