



# Hillsides

*Outreach Annual Report 2007*

## With Your Wings, I Can Do Anything!

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**Hillsides**

*Creating safe places for children*

[www.Hillsides.org](http://www.Hillsides.org)

[www.HillsidesEducationCenter.org](http://www.HillsidesEducationCenter.org)



## Hillsides' Family Helps Kids Spread their Wings

When I think about our mission, creating safe places for children, I think about the feeling that children get when they become familiar with our campus—a sense of security, comfort, and love. The wings that have been tucked inside begin to slightly shift. With the support from our staff, children begin to spread their wings and parents begin to be the wind beneath their children's wings.

Our family also includes volunteers and donors who dedicate time, talent, and treasures to ensure that children and families continue to spread their wings by exploring enriching and cultural activities throughout the year. Mentors commit to a year service to provide our youngsters with stability and teach them how to build trusting relationships with others.

Others dedicate time to children and youth living with families in crisis. By developing social skills, building self-esteem, and empowering them to change their future, our extended family creates wonderful opportunities to help these families thrive and change

the course of their destiny.

Education is just as important as every other aspect of a child's homelife. We provide special education to help them achieve academic successes while our volunteer groups provide fun, educational outings and monthly incentives.

To help our youth develop into productive adults and transition into adulthood successfully, some mentors work one-on-one with our former foster youth at Youth Moving On, Hillsides' transitional living and housing program.

We also strive to advocate for issues that are critical to the lives of foster care children and families in crisis. With our advocacy network of friends, we spread awareness of issues that impact foster care children and those families who need our support. Together, Hillsides' family helps our children and families spread their wings so they can learn to fly on their own.

John M. Hitchcock, LCSW  
Executive Director

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*Friends who contribute \$1,000 or more annually to help Hillside's ongoing funding needs*

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## Youth Mentors Give Children a Hand Up

On average California youth between the age of 16 and 24 volunteer sixty hours a year in comparison to the national average of 39 hours, according to a report published by Corporation for National and Community Service, *Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings*.

For youth mentors Aubrey Rho and John Michael Pennington, one person can make a difference. Both have tutored Hillside's children for three years through Hillside's Mentor Program, which was established thirty years ago in partnership with Polytechnic School in Pasadena.

Each year, about fifty to sixty foster care children, ages seven to 18, participate and are each assigned to one mentor to meet with for one hour a week for a minimum of one school year. The mentors, also known as "tutors," usually do things like help with homework, play games, and have conversations with their mentees.

A senior at Polytechnic School, Aubrey thought tutoring kids in foster care would be difficult, but now says she looks at them as normal. "It's been really cool to see

Carol grow up. I've also learned not to judge people."

According to Rob Wherley, director of the Mentor Program at Hillside's, mentoring helps expose youth to outside perspectives, helps them form healthy social relationships, and gives them hope for their futures, such as the hope of going to college or of having a career.

Michael, also a senior at Polytechnic School, has worked with three different adolescent boys. Demonstrating a tough exterior, the foster care boys progressed in their social skills and learned to talk about everyday things.

Volunteering at Hillside's gave Michael a different perspective on life. "You learn how much of a need the foster care system has and how easy it is to help in the young people's situation"

"Volunteering is truly gratifying no matter the size of your commitment," Michael said.

Both Aubrey and Michael received Hillside's Children Stand for Children Awards for their youth leadership and community volunteerism.

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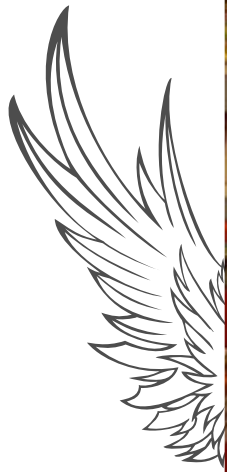
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## Authors Encourage Students to Imagine

Children who experience instability in their lives because of numerous placements from home and school may fall behind in school. These same children often find themselves struggling with reading, a fundamental skill needed to promote from one grade to another and achieve further academic success.

With the help of Sherri Ginsberg, Hillside's librarian, our children are learning to enjoy reading, a first step to honing their literacy skills. She has asked authors to come and read to the children, talk about writing, and the process of becoming published authors.

Producer of "There's Something About Mary," Frank Beddor entertained children with the backstory on his first book, *The Looking Glass Wars*. The story is relatable, said Frank, equating Alyss' life with that of many of the students here. "It's about the hope, the strength of imagination, and believing in who you are. The story is appropriate for this population who can use the power of imagination in their own lives."

Alison Bell, author of the *Zibby Payne* series, and L.

Rifkin, author of *The Nine Lives of Romeo Crumb* series, have also made appearances and distributed copies of their books. In addition, Hillside's children were captivated with children's author Lisa Dunn-Dern, who read her latest book, *Dr. Duncan Dog on Duty!*

"I truly believe whatever the child's situation, literacy transcends wherever you are in life," said Lisa. "These children, as adults, can be teachers if they shared their stories to help others who are experiencing challenging and difficult times in their lives."

Having authors take time to read and listen to them significantly boosts the children's self-esteem. Sherri said the children's interest also increases when an author reads their own published work. "I never know what is going to inspire a child and that's exciting for me," said Sherri.

The children have discovered worlds of science fiction and mystery. Reading at all levels and different paces, the children and youth explore the magic of words and imagination.

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## Therapists Empower Kids During Early Years

For several staff at Hillside's Family Center, the role of therapist extends beyond what we may traditionally think--patient sitting down and talking about issues while therapist listens attentively. Implementing The Incredible Years, a small group children's training series for five to eight year olds, therapists facilitate children's social learning, emotion learning, and academic learning by becoming instant social skills coaches, emotion coaches, and academic coaches.

Overseeing the program is Georgi Heltz who describes The Incredible Years as "animated play through the use of puppets to promote pro-social behavior in children." Incorporating life-size puppets, therapists use these dolls to empower children and teach how these four-foot buddies would address a difficult situation.

The Family Center offers two groups, one for children and the other for parents. In the parent group, Monica Borunda said they provide "a setting for parents to feel comfortable sharing stories about their parenting experiences, learn from each other, and discover different ways of looking at their children's behavior and responding to them so they can continue to grow in a positive way."

Children are encouraged throughout their session by giving tokens later to be exchanged for stickers and prizes. Georgi and Monica see the payoff when children they see in individual therapy use the language from the program, ask when they are meeting, anticipate the next activity, and share personal stories.

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## Parent Partners are Wind Beneath the Wings

Hillsides Wraparound held another graduation. Six-year-old Suzy\*, who presented with symptoms of adjustment disorder, and her younger sister were placed with an aunt and uncle after being removed from their parents. Their mother had abandoned them and the father was struggling with substance abuse. When the mother returned home, the Department of Children and Family Services removed the young girls from their parent's care.

"The children's behavior was more reactive to what had happened in the home," said Aaron Zaima, Wraparound director. Tiny Suzy was stiff and tense with shoulders shrugged close to her chin, among other physical symptoms.

Relative caregivers found it difficult to function as a family, being late to school and work, eventually "paralyzing this family." In less than a year, Suzy and her sister had experienced the removal from their parents, their relative caregivers, and placement in two additional foster homes. Their only constant support was the Wraparound team who provided continuity of service through their ordeal.

A key component to this family's success was the

Wraparound Parent Partner, an individual who has been through a similar situation and has transitioned successfully to maintain the family unit. This Parent Partner worked with the mother to make appropriate decisions to have her children return home. "The Parent Partner helped to empower the mother; attended Al-Anon meetings with her because of the husband's substance abuse, and linked her to community supports," said Aaron, adding the parent partner was able to get the mother on track to do what was necessary for the kids.

Working with the Wraparound Team prevented the young girls from being bounced around the foster care system for an extended period of time. "They have returned home to their mother and the DCFS case is closed." No longer tense and stiff, Suzy's symptoms have resolved.

Supporting the mother through this process to help navigate and mediate interaction with the foster care system was a significant contribution to the success of this family. Aaron adds, "linking her to resources and supports in her community were additional advantages of her children being served through Wraparound."

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# Setting a Record of Excellence in 2007

1 Hillsides major accomplishment of the last two years was establishing Youth Moving On, a transitional living program for emancipating foster youth. Hillsides purchased and renovated a Pasadena apartment building, launched and completed a \$7.1 million capital campaign and are now providing comprehensive services to young men and women with diagnosed mental illnesses. With Youth Moving On, Hillsides has become a recognized leader in the movement to provide more and better services to transition age youth. Our executive director has made numerous presentations to both public and private sector agencies to share our experience and raise awareness about the plight of emancipating foster youth, particularly those who suffer from mental illness.

2 Most recently, Hillsides expanded services in central Los Angeles and opened a new Hillsides Community Center in Echo Park to reach more at risk children and families in this area. This center will have the capacity to serve 1,500 at risk children and adults. Hillsides recently raised funds needed to complete this program expansion.

3 In September 2007 Hillsides raised the funds and completed renovations to an empty bungalow at a Baldwin Park high school, transforming it into a welcoming, therapeutic environment for more than eighty low-income children and teens at high risk for child abuse, academic failure, delinquency and substance abuse.

4 Hillsides initiated two additional programs: 1) Wraparound Services and 2) Mental Health Services Act Family Support and Family Preservation, both funded through allocations made available as a result of Proposition 63 funding. These programs are focused on the prevention and intervention aspects of the treatment spectrum and designed to prevent the removal of children from their homes and to find permanent homes for children in the child welfare system. Hillsides was awarded contracts in both Service Provider Areas 3 and 4.

5 We have maintained a 100% occupancy factor in our children's residential treatment program on our main campus in Pasadena. Many other children's agencies have been forced to close their residential services or decrease the number of children being served due to funding cuts.

6 We have maintained Hillsides facilities through renovations and improvements, necessary in our ability to deliver the high level of care and treatment services to at risk children and families. The agency, in partnership with American Society of Interior Designers—Pasadena Chapter, renovated a cottage on its Pasadena campus that is home to four boys in the residential treatment program.

7 We enriched the special K-12 education offered through the Hillsides Education Center by providing additional educational support, vocational training programs, and extra-curricular activities.

8 We have taken on a stronger leadership role in collaboration and advocacy with other children's agencies to further protect the rights and benefits of youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood, which is a priority concern.

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# 2007 Financial Statement

## REVENUES AND EXPENSES

For the year ending September 30, 2007 (summarized in thousands)

Revenue	
Government Service Contracts	\$14,065
Contributions	2,572
Other	628
Gain or (Loss) on Investments	760
Total Revenue	<u>\$18,025</u>
Expenses	
Program Services	\$15,536
General and Administrative	1,496
Development and Fundraising	880
Total Expenses	<u>\$17,912</u>
Change in Net Assets	\$113

## BALANCE SHEET

Year ending September 30, 2007 (summarized in thousands)

Assets	
Current Assets	\$3,621
Investments	6,122
Fixed Assets	12,270
Total Assets	<u>\$22,013</u>
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	\$3,614
Long-Term Debt	1,319
Total Liabilities	<u>\$4,933</u>
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	\$15,695
Temporarily Restricted	629
Permanently	756
Total Net Assets	<u>\$17,080</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$22,013</u>

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listed incorrectly or omitted,  
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at (525) 255-9005 so that  
we may correct our records.  
Thank you.*

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# Save the Dates

## Give Back Program

Vroman's Bookstore supports Hillside's through its Vroman's Give Back Program. We receive 1% of the total purchase when you specify you support Hillside's. To be a VGB member, register at the bookstore or visit [www.vromansbookstore.com](http://www.vromansbookstore.com).

To date Vroman's Bookstore has donated over \$12,000. We sincerely appreciate friends who have designated Hillside's through this wonderful program.



Do you remember getting ready for the first day of school? Packing your backpack and filling your pencil box was a highlight the day before the big day. Help us make back to school an enjoyable and memorable experience for Hillside's children too. The following are supplies needed for children and the classroom:

- |                       |                                    |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Dictionary            | Kid scissors                       |
| Thesaurus             | Folders/Report covers              |
| Scientific calculator | Homework memo pad                  |
| Pencils               | Spiral notebooks                   |
| Blue and black pens   | Compass                            |
| Colored pencils       | Protractor                         |
| Backpacks             | Red pens                           |
| Glue sticks           | Loose leaf wide ruled filler paper |
| Elmer's glue          | Mechanical pencils                 |
| Ruler                 | Bottles of glue                    |
| Markers               | (Partial List)                     |
| Crayons               |                                    |

If you would like to donate in-kind items listed above, please contact Laura Kelso, director of community resources, at (323) 254-2274, ext. 251 or e-mail [info@hillsides.org](mailto:info@hillsides.org). If you would like to designate funds for items listed above, please contact Jackie Broxton, director of major gifts and planned giving, at (323) 254-2274, ext. 236.

## OCTOBER

*The Ice House Anniversary Comedy Show to Benefit Hillside's Volunteer Network on Oct. 12*

## NOVEMBER

*Children and Families' Holiday Wish Lists are Available*

## DECEMBER

*Hillside's Guild Hosts the Annual Holiday Celebration at Parkway Grill on Dec. 2*

## JANUARY

*Hillside's Annual Benefit Sponsor Reception on Jan. 27*

## FEBRUARY

*Hillside's Annual Benefit Tangerine Dreams: A Jazzy Affair on Feb. 28*

*If you are interested in more information about these events, please call Carrie Espinoza, (323) 254-2274, ext. 254, or visit [www.Hillside's.org](http://www.Hillside's.org).*

## OUTREACH

Nancy Garni  
*Editor*

Marisol Barrios-Jordan, M.S.P.A.  
*Writer and Graphic Designer*

Marisol Barrios-Jordan, M.S.P.A.,  
*Photo Credits*

## MISSION

Hillside's creates safe places for children, strengthens families, provides special education, and advocates for children's rights.



**Hillside's**  
*Creating safe places for children*

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