Alcott awarded innovative arts research grant

In a groundbreaking partnership, Alcott Center has been awarded a grant by the California Community Foundation to study the impact of our Studio Arts program on our clients' well-being. The Foundation combined the efforts of both its arts and health care arms to fund the $25,000 grant. Over the course of the next year, Alcott will conduct a series of surveys which will culminate in a report and presentation of the results to other mental health service providers. Our thanks to Jim Herr, Arts Program Officer and Dr. Rosemary Veniegas, Health Care Program Officer of the California Community Foundation for their pioneering support and interest.

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Client Successes

We're proud of our work with the local community and, with the collaborative assistance of our partners, we help our clients get back on track. Here are some success stories.

Alcott recently received a referral from our partner, Beth David Congregation, requesting help for someone facing imminent homelessness. This client had become very involved with Alcott Center activities, groups and treatment and had also participated in the Studio Art program. Alcott sprang into action, placed the individual in a transitional living facility, referred her to another partner, Chrysalis employment services and the client is now settled and seeking full-time employment.

A referral from Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church led Alcott to help a chronically mentally ill and homeless individual. Lacking insight into his condition and challenged by extreme withdrawal and nearly non-existent communication – Alcott staff helped him secure the benefits and stability he needed to move ahead. He's now settled in permanent housing and is active in Alcott programs.

The "Big Issue" on everyone's radar now is homelessness. Los Angeles County has committed over $100 million to the problem and it's moved front and center as a key social challenge.

As the number of homeless continues to increase, income inequality seems to be the political clarion call. And, as housing affordability becomes an increasing challenge, "clean-sweep" areas are exacerbated. Venice has become Silicon Beach; the City of Westchester wants its public park back and Downtown LA Skid Row real estate is increasing in value and more and more people find themselves living in their cars and on the street.

At the moment, all levels of government and philanthropy are promising money to solve the problem. A direct service provider, Alcott Center has been serving homeless clients through our programs for many years. As part of the evolving health neighborhood concept – we envision strengthening our outreach and services. The homeless and near homeless are in our community and we can and do help.

Kristi Rangel, LCSW, Director of Programs, recently received a Suggestion Box note from one of our homeless clients, Travis, saying "I just want to say that I’ve greatly benefited from the Alcott program and want to give special thanks to my case worker, Neal, who always makes me feel like I am somebody and he encourages me to believe again...”

Thanks for your support and please help us continue to do this life-changing work.

Penny Mehra, Executive Director

Help us “Go Green!”

We'd like to cut down on the amount of paper we use and need your help. Please sign up for our "e-newsletter." It's easy. Just visit our website: www.alcottcenter.org and enter your email address in the box located in the bottom-right portion of the first page - and you're done. Thanks in advance for helping us conserve a valuable resource!
Herbert Freed - also known as Amadeus - was born in August 1954 in The Bronx, New York City. A musician at heart, he began drumming at the age of 10, and over the years developed into a world-class player working with such recording artists as Meat Loaf, Frank Zappa, The Chambers Brothers, Mandrill and more. Locally he played piano at the Improvisation in West Hollywood, where Robin Williams, during an after-hours set, gave him the name Amadeus. He’s also an accomplished poet and visual artist - his works displaying a wildly creative and free-form nature.

Amadeus, currently an Alcott Center client, was recently at risk of losing all of his life’s works. “I took some time to visit his storage space over several days with Toni Hashkov, our art instructor,” says Bill Moreno, Studio Art Program Director, “and we were astounded by what we saw – we’d never seen anything quite like it and felt the works needed to be saved.” Bill arranged to move the artworks from storage to Alcott Center – where they are now secure.

Completed in the late 80’s to early 90’s, the work utilizes simple cartoon-like characters that have been preserved. Over time the art will be documented, archived and offered for sale with proceeds benefiting the artist. While Amadeus no longer creates such works, he can rest assured that this important legacy is now safe and can be shared with the public.

Alcott Artist Spotlight: Amadeus

Alcott Center is pleased to announce the election of David Sall to our Board of Directors. David, a former Alcott Center employee, possesses a B.A. in psychology from Tufts University and an MBA from the USC Marshall School of Business. He formerly worked for Mattel Corporation and is currently the Operations Manager for the Chrysalis staffing agency, a non-profit social enterprise that seeks to help those with barriers to employment reenter the workforce. “I’ve always had a heart for social impact…I realized that my passion for social service would be best fueled by working directly with those most in need,” says David. Welcome!

New Addition to the Board of Directors

Alcott Center is pleased to announce the appointment of Nick Maiorino as its new Associate Director. Nick has more than 25 years of experience working in various community based, non-profit settings.

An East Coast transplant, Nick earned his Master’s in Clinical Psychology/Behavioral Medicine from Connecticut College and spent years working with Medicaid clients impacted by serious and persistent mental illness prior to relocating to Los Angeles in 1998. Before joining the Alcott team, Nick served in various managing capacities including Deputy/Associate Director with a local multi-social service agency. During his 15-year tenure, Nick became the trusted “go to” person, resource and ally for other managers and staff while maneuvering a rapid agency expansion and restructure, resulting in solid agency finances. Nick has known about the Alcott Center’s solid reputation in the community, working in partnership with Alcott (then Beverlywood) since 1999, and is excited to be part of navigating the agency into its next phase of development.

As Associate Director, Nick will be responsible for administrative oversight of the agency while identifying and applying for publically funded expansion opportunities. He plans to establish formal working relationships with area health and substance abuse providers to better align the agency with future funding and expansion possibilities. “I really believe that Alcott has great potential to increase its reach more deeply into the community, while continuing to provide the quality services they are so well known for,” says Nick.

Nick is also interested in environmental issues and conservation efforts, loves animals and anything outdoors especially hiking and fitness.

Have you considered Alcott Center in your will?

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Please help us meet the needs of our clients.
We realize you have many giving options and ask that you consider Alcott Center in your plans.

Every dollar you give counts and is put to use on our programs.

For example:
• $50 provides studio art supplies for clients who can’t afford them;
• $100 helps fund our regular “Pizza Party” free lunch events for our clients.
• $250 covers monthly transportation expenses for extracurricular activities and necessary appointments;
• $1,000 helps support client services not covered by other sources. You can give using the enclosed envelope or via our website:
www.alcottcenter.org