WINTER 2017

lifehouse
Serving People with Developmental Disabilities Since 1954

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PUBLICATION OF LIFEHOUSE

LIFEHOUSE EXPLORES MARIN PARKS

Helping the People we Serve Participate in our Community

FROM LEFT: Cathleen Cordone enjoying a Thanksgiving meal; Meredith Lloyd + Gail Williams fishing from Tiburon pier; Hayes Wilsey, Cari Burns, Gail Williams, Kate O'Connor + David Galvan at Stafford Park

As an agency, our goal has always been to provide opportunities for the people we serve to live a full life by offering services that enable them to actively engage in the community. We have been stepping up our game in terms of incorporating recreational activities into our services and programs. You may have read from last year's newsletter that we received a generous grant of $10,000 from the Marin County Parks' *Breathe!/¡Respira! Program* for the agency to use for one year. The goal of this fund is to encourage underserved populations to use and access county parks throughout Marin. With this grant in hand, we have been assisting people in our programs to participate in park outings that enable them to have fun, enjoy nature, and socialize with each other and the wider community.

Lifehouse Program Managers and Assistant Managers have been busy planning lots of fun activities in different parks, each with a theme. Last October, we had a Pier Fishing trip at Paradise Beach Park in Tiburon, which quickly became a favorite for the people we serve. The excursion was made even more special by a park ranger and local anglers teaching them secrets and tricks of the trade when fishing from a pier. It was so much fun and for some of them, it was their first time fishing! Some have even expressed interest in more fishing trips around the Marin coast.

In November, we had a very memorable park event at Stafford Lake County Park in Novato to celebrate Thanksgiving. This event was especially important for individuals who are unable to spend time with family during the holiday season. All 32 guests were served a delicious meal prepared by local chef, caterer, and longtime Lifehouse supporter Esther Lee, the extraordinary chef behind "SimpLee Delicious". Esther and a member of her staff, James Wilbee, generously volunteered their time preparing a meal of roasted turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, and yams, and brought it to the park on Thanksgiving Day. Everyone loved the meal, and were thankful for Esther's generosity and culinary skills. Despite the chilly weather, everyone had a great time enjoying each other's company, some lively music, and the scenery at Stafford Lake County Park. They even had a fun art project to complete. On foam leaves, everyone wrote about what they were thankful for, and glued it onto a large poster. The result was a beautiful collage that highlighted everyone's thoughts.

Thanks to the wonderful grant from the Marin County Parks, the people we serve will be able to participate even more fully in the community, engage with the natural world, and have more opportunities to participate in social activities that allow them to flourish both mentally and physically. The feedback for these events have been amazing, and we are looking forward to organizing more activities. In the upcoming months, we are planning another fishing trip, an Easter egg decorating event, an excursion to the beach, orienteering, as well as an event for Cinco de Mayo. Please say hello if you see us in the parks!

The President's Corner

Dear Friends,

We have a busy year ahead of us! I am happy to share that we are beginning the first stages of our new Five Year Strategic Plan with our Board of Directors and key management staff. The first phase of our strategic planning began when we sent out surveys to our staff, the people we serve, and their families to gauge how Lifehouse is performing. The responses we received show that Lifehouse has been very successful in meeting the needs of the people we support. From the survey, we have identified areas to grow, and will use it to strengthen our strategic plan for the next five years. Thanks to all who responded!

We have some exciting things planned for this upcoming year. Riding on the success of last year's advocacy for a rate increase, we are pushing for more legislative involvement this year to advocate for people with developmental disabilities who are affected by policy changes. As members of the Service Provider Advisory Committee, we are brainstorming ideas for legislative advocacy at the local, state, and national levels. Additionally, with the support from a Peninsula Outreach Programs grant, we are in the process of developing an assistive communications technology center for people in our community. Our Tech Manager is researching technology that has been shown to improve communication and cognitive skills for people with developmental disabilities. We are so excited for this program to develop! We've also converted the Lifehouse employee retirement plan to a 401k that offers more variety and lower fees. This new roll-out has attracted participation from an additional 40 Lifehouse employees.

Focusing on the needs of the whole person and increasing quality of life is important to our mission. In response to community needs, Lifehouse continues to grow and this is reflected in our current budget of $13.5 million. Fiscal responsibility is important to us, and we are fortunate to have a generous community of supporters. As our budget grows to meet the demand for quality services, the gap between revenue and the cost of providing services in the Bay Area also grows. We *depend* on our supporters now more than ever.

Our most important fundraiser of the year, **Great Chefs and Wineries**, is right around the corner on **Saturday April 22nd at Peacock Gap!** We are excited to share with you the delicious food, amazing wine, and unique auction items from our generous community supporters throughout Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and San Francisco. I hope to see you all there to support our cause and most importantly, to support people with developmental disabilities in our community!

Thank you for your continued support. Please remember that your donation to Lifehouse in any amount is appreciated and makes a difference.

Warmest wishes,

Nancy

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Lifehouse Resident Joins Board of Directors

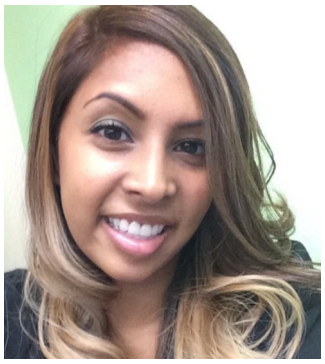
We are pleased to announce that Justin Tedford, a resident since 2015 in the Supported Living Program, has joined the Lifehouse Board of Directors. You may recognize Justin from the 2016 winter newsletter, in which he was featured in an interview spotlighting Lifehouse residents. A native of Hartford, Connecticut, Justin moved to the west coast after receiving a B.A. in Communications with an emphasis on film. He knows everything there is to know about films, and has been inspired to pursue a writing degree after realizing that many films are the product of novels. Justin is currently studying for a Master's degree in English Literature at San Francisco State University. A man of many achievements, Justin is also pursuing credentials to teach Remedial English. We are excited to have Justin join the Lifehouse Board of Directors and look forward to working with him. Congratulations, Justin!

Congratulations to Dori McDonnell on Her Retirement

For 23 years, Dori has provided exceptional care to Lifehouse residents. Upon retirement, Dori was the Manager of North Bay Programs. Dori has had a noteworthy career; she started the first supported living program at The Meadows in Novato's Lark Court and implemented a new community living program in Sonoma, two supported living programs, and a senior independent living program in Novato. In 2007, Dori opened the Lifehouse office in Rohnert Park, from where she worked as Manager of North Bay Programs.

With an educational and professional background in psychology and counseling, Dori joined Hope Counseling in Petaluma in 2007. She plans to continue her work as a Marriage and Family Therapist and is collaborating with Lifehouse to offer group therapy for individuals with disabilities and their families. Thank you, Dori for your years of dedication. We wish her all the best on her next journey.

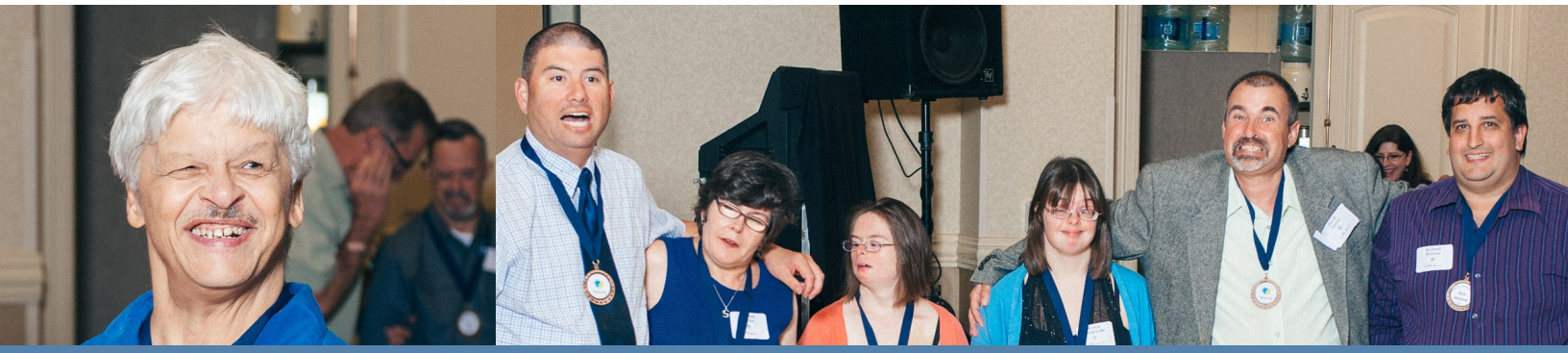
Staff Updates



The new Assistant Manager at Sweetwater, Melissa Satram, is a registered behavioral Technician specializing in Autism and has been working in this field for over 7 years. She has a B.S. in Criminal Justice, and is currently finishing up her Master's degree at Touro University for Marriage and Family Therapy. Melissa is outgoing and always has a smile. She loves working in this field because helping people with disabilities is the most rewarding part of the job.

Tina Siletz, our new HR Assistant, joined Lifehouse after returning to California following a year abroad in the United Kingdom. While overseas she earned her M.A. in Human Resource Management at Keele University, graduating with distinction and receiving the Student of the Year award in her program. She also holds a B.A. in Psychology from Sonoma State University. Tina is extremely passionate about HR and is thrilled to be embarking on her new career with Lifehouse. When not reading up on the latest employment law, Tina enjoys spending time with friends and family, traveling, trying new restaurants, wine tasting and running. Tina also plays soccer, is a big Sci-fi nerd, and has a minor bird obsession.

And the Awards Go To...



FROM TOP LEFT: Greg De Souza; Ian Gray, Siobhan Cooke, Michelle + Jessica Casagrande, David Burns, Richard Molinar; **BOTTOM LEFT:** Lifehouse Assistant Manager Holly Skidmore, Lifehouse VP/COO Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, Lifehouse Counselor Fernando Macias; Lifehouse Director of Autism + North Bay Programs Michelle Condit, Dr. Terry Larson, Lifehouse resident Fabio Garavito, Lifehouse CEO Nancy Dow Moody, Lifehouse Director of Services Kate O'Connor; Buck Kamphausen, Lifehouse Director of Development Ann Elias

On September 30, 2016, Lifehouse held its Annual Awards Banquet at Embassy Suites to honor the people we serve, Lifehouse staff, and our generous community supporters. The dining room was brimming with excitement as everyone gathered to celebrate. The dynamic **Marin County Superintendent of Schools, Mary Jane Burke,** served as Master of Ceremonies, and as always, she made everyone feel appreciated. The evening was dedicated to those whose hard work enables Lifehouse to provide quality services. The highlight of the night was when Dr. Terry Larson was given an award for his excellent medical services to Lifehouse residents for 20 years. His dedication was reflected when longtime Lifehouse resident Fabio Garavito went on stage to thank Dr. Larson! Then it was time for all the people we serve to receive a medal for all their achievements.

This important community event was made possible by our **Independence Sponsor, All American Printing,** our **Contributing Sponsors, HUB International , AXA Advisors, Filice Insurance, John Morre and Jane Ferrante,** with additional support provided by **BioMarin and Marin Office Supply Co**. Thank you to **DJ Terri DeLangis**, photographer **Richard Wheeler, Embassy Suites**, and a special thanks to all of our **volunteers** who helped make this event possible.

Congratulations 2016 Honorees

Philanthropist of the Year– Buck Kamphausen, *Mt. Tamalpais Mortuary & Cemetery*
Charles L. Martin Award - Roy Bateman
Distinguished Community Service - Dr. Terry Larson, R.N
Employer of the Year - Round Table Pizza
Extraordinary Community Service - David Haydon, *Il Davide*
Open Arms Award - Susan Brixon-Hastings
Outstanding Corporate Involvement - Marin Independent Journal
Outstanding Individual Service - Sid Sall
Personal Achievement Award - Willa Duggan
Spirit of Lifehouse Award - Steven Hoffman
Volunteer of the Year - Bea Byrdon

Outstanding Staff Recognition

Fernando Macias – Counselor, SLP
Trice Padecky – Senior QIDP/Administrator
Joseph Jackson – Residential Skills Trainer
Howard Powell – Counselor, SLP North Bay
Nancy La – Executive Assistant
Megyn Robb – Residential Skills Trainer

Out & About with Lifehouse

TOP: Mark Harris enjoying the party
BOTTOM: Lifehouse residents singing carols

Lifehouse Holiday Party

The Lifehouse Annual Holiday Party was once again a huge hit and a joyful celebration! The people we serve enjoyed each other's company and sang Christmas and winter carols with Kate O'Connor, DJ Terri DeLangis, and members of the Girls Scouts. Santa even went on stage to tell tales and interacted with our guests.

Thank you to the **Girls Scouts of Northern California** (Cadette Troop #32571, Brownie Troop #10954, and Junior Troop #31477) who sang carols, packed goodie bags, and served delicious cookies that they baked in their homes. Everyone loved it!

Our community supporters who helped make this event possible include **Peet's Coffee- Northgate, Oz West & Carol Martin, Safeway Las Gallinas, Safeway Nave, Safeway Strawberry Village, Safeway Corte Madera,** and **Safeway San Rafael (B Street).** Thank you to our photographer **Rocio Rivera** and our **volunteers** who helped make the event a success!

Yacht Club Party

Every December, **Colm and Ursula Donovan** and **the San Rafael Yacht Club** hold a party for the people we serve. Depending on the tide, guests get a chance to go on board a yacht. Even though we had a low tide this year and could not go on board, we still had a great time with Colm, Ursula and the other yacht club members. Santa and his elf showed up too. We even had gourmet burgers and french fries prepared by yacht club members!

Colm and Ursula are long time Lifehouse supporters, and we appreciate the kindness that they and the Yacht Club members have shown to us and the people we serve!

Lifehouse residents enjoy a beverage and hang out at the San Rafael Yacht Club

Gifts That Make a Difference

Once again, the congregation of **St. Patrick's Parish** in Larkspur has generously fulfilled the gift wishes of many of the people we serve as part of their holiday giving tree program. Each gift was thoughtfully wrapped and personally addressed to each recipient. Our office Christmas tree (donated by Chris and Steve Wilsey) looked even more festive with these gifts underneath!

Their kindness has made such a difference in the lives of many of our residents, some of who do not have family members. A gift from the people of St. Patrick's Parish means a lot to us and especially for the people we serve.

Lifehouse resident **Noni Hall + Huey Lewis** at Great Chefs & Wineries

Huey Lewis

at Great Chefs & Wineries

Don't Miss Out!

Rock Star Huey Lewis, of *Huey Lewis and the News*, will host **Great Chefs & Wineries on April 22nd at Peacock Gap. Don't miss your chance to see Huey!** As always, he looks forward to celebrating with guests and the people we serve.

We are honored to have him as our **Honorary Chairman** and appreciative of his support for Lifehouse. **Thank you Huey!**

Cuba

A Trip of a Lifetime

We are excited to share that a trip to CUBA is up for grabs in our Live Auction! You will enjoy the sights and sounds of **Cuba** on this **7 night/8 day adventure.** Experience **Havana,** a city of nostalgia, impromptu bursts of music, and countless vintage cars. **You'll even get a chance to ride around town in one!** You will also spend two days in **Trinidad (a province in central Cuba)** visiting its fine palaces, cobbled streets and red-tiled roofs. Other historical sites include a visit to **Playa Giron** (Bay of Pigs).

Vintage car in Havana
source: Business Insider www.businessinsider.com/photos-that-will-make-you-want-to-travel-to-cuba-2014-12

This incredible trip includes:

- 2 roundtrip tickets from Los Angeles to Havana on board Alaska Airlines; all airport transfers in Cuba
- Seven nights of accommodation in Cuba with buffet breakfast daily; hotel service fees and taxes; all TIPS
- Six lunches and four dinners
- Drink package
- Six days of touring in a private, air-conditioned van with licensed English-speaking guide; all entrance fees
- Cuban entry visa

Mobile Bidding

With help from our partners at **Gesture**, all bidding will be done through your smartphone! Once you have registered your number, registration is quick and painless. From check-in to check-out, we've got you covered.

Preview Auction Items

in April

www.gcw2017.gesture.com

Saturday,
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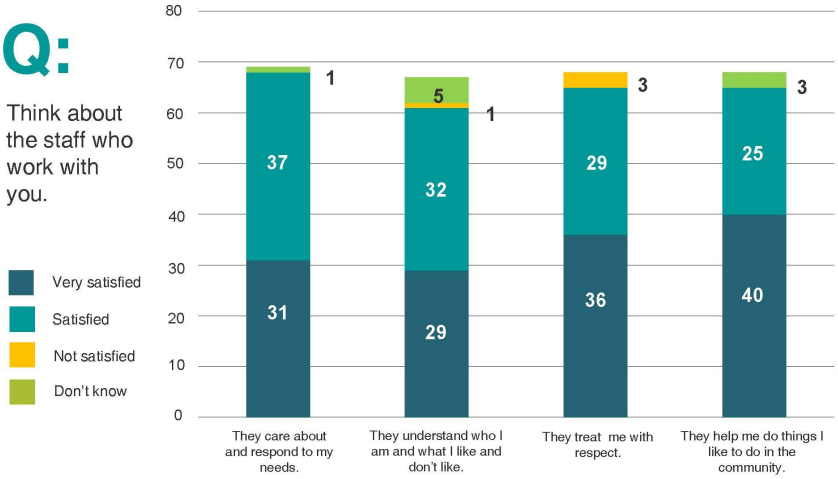
Lifehouse Client Satisfaction Survey

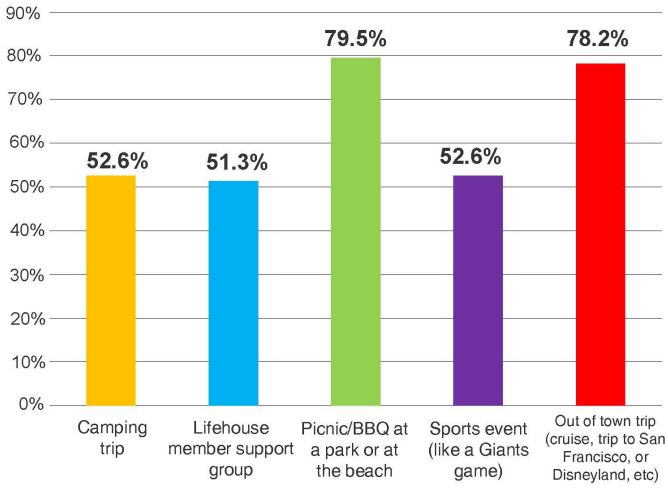
Q:

Think about the staff who work with you.



Q:

Please choose activities that you want to do the most. **You can choose more than one.**



As part of the first phase of our Five Year Strategic Plan, Lifehouse sent a satisfaction survey to our parents, staff, and the people we serve to gauge how Lifehouse is performing. We received a good response rate: 43% from the people we serve, 43% from parents, and 27% from staff. Overall, the results have been positive, and we have identified areas for improvement and development.

The graphs on the left show the results from the people we serve. All responses have been tallied by Survey Monkey. The top left chart shows that our clients are satisfied with the services that Lifehouse staff are providing. The bottom chart shows that the people we serve are most interested in social activities at the park, beach or out of town trips.

Our program managers will use these survey results when thinking of ways to improve services so that the people we serve get a chance to thrive in our community. The management team is also excited to incorporate these into developing our strategic plan for the next five years!

Assistive Technology Program Update

By Johanna Schleret

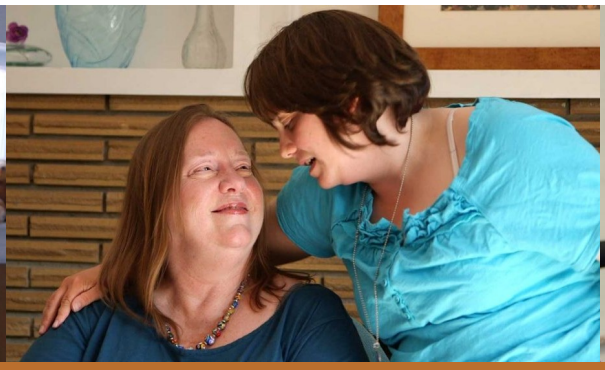
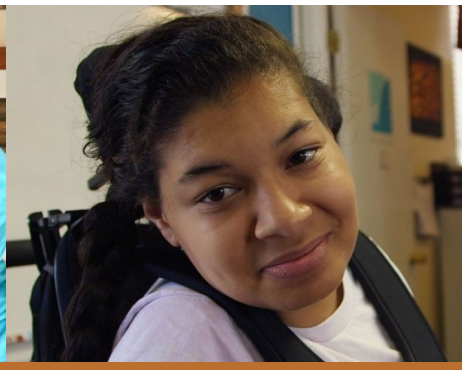
The development and implementation of Lifehouse's new Assistive Technology Program began this year. We will focus on independence in communication and daily living skills for the people we support. Our technology team is currently setting up iPads with specialized apps for several people served by Lifehouse. In addition to that, we are researching opportunities to implement voice controlled assistants, like Amazon Alexa, and other smart-home controls to enhance independence and quality of life. Thanks to a grant from the Peninsula Outreach Programs, we have been able to get the program started and are actively researching additional avenues of support for this important program.

In December, Lifehouse was able to bring the Virtual Reality Autism Simulator to the entire management team. We got to experience a 60 second immersion into the world and perspective of a person with Autism using the Oculus Rift Headset. Thank you to Hulu VR in Marin for providing the technology! In February, our HR & Technology Manager, Johanna Schleret, attended the CSUN Assistive Technology conference and brought back the latest developments in the assistive technology world.

Lifehouse President & CEO Nancy Dow Moody tries the Virtual Reality Autism Simulator

The Lifehouse Film

helping us understand the lives of people with developmental disabilities

FROM LEFT: James Scott, Lifehouse Counselor Carol Loughlin + Allison Jones, Nikki Comaroto

In 2014, we approached filmmakers Chikara Motomura and Paul Zehrer to help us tell the stories of the people we serve with developmental disabilities. The result was a poignant 25 minute film documenting their complex lives. Through a series of intimate portraits and interviews, individuals with disabilities speak candidly about their frustrations, dreams, and passions. The film dispels prevailing myths and reveals the unique contribution people with developmental disabilities offer to our community and the world. The film has also been shown in private home screenings as well as presented to service clubs and organizations throughout Marin and Sonoma Counties.

The 25 minute film is available for viewing at lifehouseagency.org

Lifehouse Film in Marin Anti-Bullying Programs

The Lifehouse film highlighting the lives, challenges and victories of people with developmental disabilities served by Lifehouse is being used in anti-bullying curriculum in Marin County schools. Our DVDs were sent to all 93 elementary, middle, and high schools in the county. The district encouraged the schools to use the DVD as a complement to any anti-bullying programs already offered in the schools. After the distribution, there was even one school that requested information related to a formal showing with a superintendent from the district.

We are delighted that schools in Marin have an opportunity to watch the film, learn about people who are different, and to help prevent bullying in their community. Mary Jane Burke, the Superintendent of Marin Schools, said that "If we are to have a truly inclusive community where all children and adults know they belong, we cannot ignore those who have developmental issues. This video provides an inside look into the way people who are developmentally challenged feel they are treated and how our community can respond with kindness and compassion". Thank you Mary Jane Burke and Marin schools for bringing awareness about people with developmental disabilities in our communities!

The Lifehouse film was made into an award winning 15 minute film entitled "Being Seen". It has won numerous awards, including the SF IndieFest and is being considered for submission at the Cannes Film Festival. "Being Seen" continues to be shown at film festivals around the world, including the Napa Film Festival.

Check out the trailer at www.beingseenmovie.com

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SAVE THE DATE

BAY AREA HUMAN RACE™

Saturday May 13, 2017

Thanks to our generous community, we raised $13,000 last year. This year, we are hoping to raise $20,000. Please help us!

Watch out for future communications on how to participate!

INSPIRE INDEPENDENCE

- Help Fred walk comfortably with orthopedic shoes. *($900)*
- Help Nikki stay "on the go" with a wheelchair battery pack *($500)*
- Help Michele participate in community events by providing funds for a year of paratransit transportation. *($400)*
- Help Amy get a small desk and chair for her room *($200)*

Please contact mail@lifehouseagency.org or 415.526.5300
if you are interested in helping!

Become a Friend for Life

As you plan your legacy, we would be honored if you would consider Lifehouse as a partner.
We promise to do the most good with your generosity today and in the years to come.

For more info, please contact Nancy Dow Moody at 415-526-5309 or ndmoody@lifehouseagency.org.

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"It fills my heart with joy to include Lifehouse as part of my legacy. They accepted my brother, Mike, with open arms and changed his life. By helping to secure the future of this wonderful organization, I know that the lives of many, many others with disabilities will be touched for the better. I will rest in peace knowing that I did my share, even if just a little, to make a difference in the world."

- Roberta Rigney

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mail@lifehouseagency.org

Sonoma Office

6050 Commerce Blvd.
Suite 105
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

707.586.1961 P
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SAVE THE DATE

April 22, 2017	**Great Chefs & Wineries**
1st Saturday Night	**Novato Youth Center Dance (monthly)**
3rd Friday Night	**Rec, Inc. Dance, Larkspur (monthly)**
May 13, 2017	**Bay Area Human Race**
July 15, 2017	**Lifehouse Picnic**
September 29, 2017	**Awards Banquet**