

## LSF SoCal Adult Services: Announcing Retirement of CEO Kristine Engels and the Appointment of Patricia Flores to Lead the Team

After 28 years of unwavering commitment to Life Steps' mission and our participants, Kristine Engels has stepped down as CEO of Life Steps Foundation SoCal Adult Services based in Long Beach, California. Ms. Engels was ceaseless in her efforts to ensure the well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities and maximize their opportunity to advocate for themselves, live as independently as possible, and participate in their communities.

Kristine's career began in 1968 working as a volunteer for the Fairview Developmental Center planning recreational outings for the women who lived there. Intuitively, she knew she had found her niche. Her initiative and strong work ethic led her to accept offers as chair or member on several committees. She sat on three committees with Harbor Regional Center: Service Provider Advisory Committee, Client Service Committee, and HOPE Board of Directors.

In collaboration with Harbor Regional Center, Ms. Engels also developed the Harbor Friendship Center, a facility where adults with developmental disabilities can meet and participate in positive, meaningful, safe social experiences. From Girl Scouts leader to assistant teacher and from volunteer to committee chair, Ms. Engels has proven countless times to the people she serves that her instincts were good—she belonged in social services. Engels has amassed over 40 years of experience helping children and adults who have developmental disabilities.



Patricia Flores who has been with Life Steps Foundation SoCal Adult Services for over 20 years has been appointed as Program Manager to oversee all aspects of programs and services for adults with developmental disabilities offered at her location. Ms. Flores is delighted to have the opportunity to lead her team as they work together to enhance programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Life Steps Foundation CEO Susan Chang will act as CEO of LSF SoCal Adult Services. Life Steps' SoCal Adult Services program location serves adults residing across Los Angeles County and Orange County. If you have any questions, please call (562) 366-7131 or email at [scas@lifestepsfoundation.org](mailto:scas@lifestepsfoundation.org).

## LSF SoCal Adult Services: The Spirit of Giving



LSF SoCal Adult Services showed the gift of giving this year! Twenty-two cheery participants received Target gift cards this holiday season. Our very own Robert Turner and Ana Lopez worked hard to make sure recipients of the gift cards this year received them on time for the holidays. During this tumultuous and trying time, we want to give participants a choice to buy themselves something special. One of our participants Eddie H. was ecstatic to receive his gift card. He decided to purchase much needed necessities and buy himself a notebook to finally write down his songs.

SoCal Adult Services gift giving was made possible by the gracious donors and the efforts of the Life Steps staff. We are thankful for the resiliency of our supervisors and staff during these tough times. Happy New Year from LSF SoCal Adult Services and stay safe!

## LSF Central Coast Adult Services: Lompoc Valley of the Flowers Peace Prize Nominee

Life Steps Central Coast Adult Services is excited to announce that one of Life Steps' long term staff member has been nominated for the eleventh annual Valley of the Flowers Peace Prize! Help me in congratulating Tara DeLira in this amazing achievement. Tara was featured in The *Lompoc Vision* December 2020 issue for her work in the community through the Senior Homemaker Program. We are so PROUD of you, Tara!

To read the article, visit our website under News and Events tab and click Press or you can go to [www.lompocvision.com/](http://www.lompocvision.com/) issues and click on December 2020. The annual Peace Prize ceremony will be held on January 31, 2021.



Image of Tara DeLira



## Life Steps Foundation in Northern California: Life Steps Foundation is Awarded \$15,000 from San Mateo County



We are pleased to announce Life Steps Foundation programs in Northern California have been approved to receive \$15,000 in funds from the San Mateo County Strong Fund grant. The primary impact of the COVID-19 situation has been on Life Steps

Foundation's center-based programs including LSF Children and Family Services We Play We Learn inclusion preschool program in Pacifica, and LSF Northern California Adult Services Social Dynamics program in Burlingame. Due to the current stay at home protocols in place, Life Steps is unable to provide in-person programs and services. We have been quickly working to implement new tele-conferencing technology when it is possible to continue program delivery using remote video teleservices. Life Steps Northern California Adult Services provides crucial programs and services in the Bay Area for adults with developmental disabilities who struggle with maladaptive behaviors. The services provided by the dedicated staff members at LSF Northern California Adult Services is life changing for the men and women we serve as they work hard to overcome the unique behavioral challenges each individual faces. San Mateo County's support will help us continue to address the needs of children with special needs and adults with developmental disabilities in San Mateo County as we respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to making it possible for us to deliver and enhance vital programs and services, your generous grant will enable us to raise awareness about the programs and services we provide to assist individuals with developmental disabilities.

## LSF Children and Family Services: Support Our See's Candies Fundraiser!

We are happy to announce that Children and Family Services in Northern California has partnered with See's Candies to fundraise to support our Early Interventionist program and We Play We Learn inclusion preschool. The proceeds will directly benefit the children and families we serve. To support our fundraiser, visit our website at [www.lifesteps.org](http://www.lifesteps.org) and click the link to See's fundraiser page. If you do not want to purchase chocolates or candies you can also support us by leaving a donation, small or large, through our website. For more information, please contact us at (650) 777-9182.



Thank you for supporting the Life Steps Foundation Children & Family Services! We'll receive all profits from any items you purchase below. Order more to help us reach our fundraising goal!

## LSF Children and Family Services: Collaborating via Teletherapy: Empowering the Parent to Empower the Child by Neeti Sharma

It made me smile to look at my phone and see a picture of Elisa (name changed) sitting on a wooden rocking boat that her mother built over the weekend. I was so thrilled to see her rocking and enjoying herself, because until last month she was not even able to rock to sleep in her mother's lap when she was sick.

Elisa is an 18-month-old girl who was born with hip dysplasia, Torticollis and sensory defensiveness (her brain gets overloaded with multiple sensory stimuli, and she resists movement, touch and new sounds). Because of her sensory processing difficulties, it is hard for her to explore and learn from manipulating different textures. She is a picky eater and does not like to be held in her mother's arms. Most of her activities end in crying because of her frustration.

When Elisa was a year old, and we were all just a few months into the pandemic, a team of professionals including a physical therapist, an occupational therapist and myself, as an infant development specialist, started providing early intervention services to her due to developmental delays. Given her needs, I was initially concerned about whether offering services virtually would be effective; but considering the new world we were all in, I knew we would have to do our best using remote services.

At first it was difficult for Elisa to participate in services because new faces and voices, even via Zoom, overwhelmed her. My first step was to build trust and a positive relationship, not only with Elisa but also with her mother, Susan. While listening to Susan's concerns and thinking about Elisa's feelings and experiences, I tried to put myself in their shoes. I let Susan know that we would be in this together and soon we started working as a team. We agreed to focus on helping Elisa with communication in order to reduce her frustration and give her a way to experience some control. She had no words yet, so we introduced her to signs like "more", "all done" and "no". To our delight, this was a real turning point. Soon, Elisa knew the power of "no" and it became easy for her to express that she did not like something. Susan was then able to build on this success, adding communication strategies that helped prepare Elisa for new activities while giving her time to process information about what was coming next. Elisa slowly became more flexible, more open to trying and participating in new activities, and able to discover new likes and dislikes.

These days Susan is always excited to talk about Elisa's progress each time we meet. My skepticism about the virtual services is long gone. In fact, what I have really learned through this experience is the value of empowering parents. It was particularly important in this case because Elisa was so uncomfortable with new faces and voices. Building a collaborative relationship with Susan and offering her tools to use to support Elisa has helped her to feel effective as a parent. At the same time, the skills she has taught her daughter have allowed Elisa to feel less overwhelmed and more capable herself. Best of all, they were having fun and growing closer along the way. Elisa is now walking with support and using signs and ten words. She enjoys rocking herself on the wooden boat that her mother built for her, while her mother sings, "Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, merrily merrily merilly merilly, life is but a dream."



### Donate to Life Steps!

Life Steps is always looking for ways to support their programs. Your gifts, both large and small, will help us to achieve our mission of helping the children, adults, and their families affected by our cause. Your support can change a life! The entire Life Steps Foundation organization operates over 10 programs serving individuals across California. Your support today can make a vital difference in our abilities to help those we serve.



## LIFE STEPS LOCATIONS

Life Steps Foundation (HQ)  
5757 West Century Blvd., Suite 880  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
(310) 410-8190

LSF Central Coast Adult Services  
(Program Site)  
218 West Carmen Lane, Suite 108  
Santa Maria, CA 93458  
(805) 549-0150

LSF Northern California Adult Services  
(Program Site)  
828 C. Mahler Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
(650) 259-1808

LSF SoCal Adult Services  
(Affiliate)  
500 E. 4th Street  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(562) 366-7131

LSF Children and Family Services  
(Affiliate)  
1930 Brea Canyon Road, Ste. 265  
Diamond Bar, CA 91765  
(562) 699-4991

401 Santa Lucia Avenue  
Millbrae, CA 94030  
(650) 777-9182

632 West Avenue, H-8  
Lancaster, CA 93534  
(661) 266-0756

700 Rose Avenue  
San Gabriel, CA 91775  
(626) 614-9345

830 Rosita Road  
Pacifica, CA 94044  
(650) 660-5404

We need your support! In the face of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak situation, many of the adults with developmental disabilities served by Life Steps Foundation are in need of essential items. We are working diligently to assist these individuals but need additional help. Donations of items or monetary contributions at this time is greatly appreciated. Please consider joining our Life Steps Community with a donation. Visit [www.lifesteps.org](http://www.lifesteps.org) and click the “Donate” button today!

Follow us on:



[lifestepsfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/lifestepsfoundation)



[lifestepsfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/lifestepsfoundation)



[LSFNDN](https://twitter.com/LSFNDN)

