

LSF Northern California Adult Services Social Dynamics Christmas Celebration



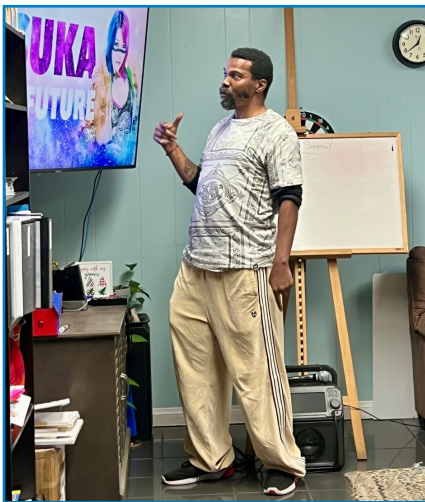
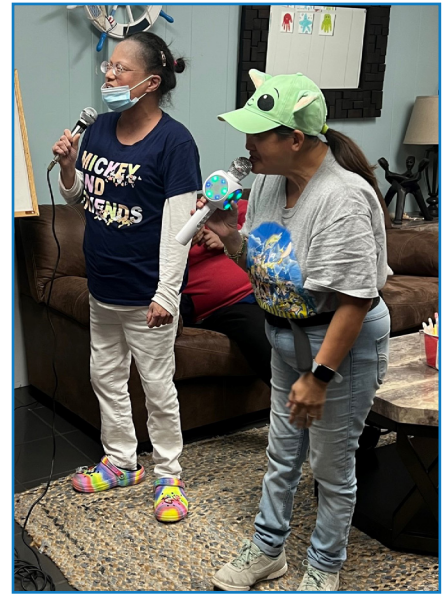
Social Dynamics ended 2023 with their annual Christmas celebration. Program participants showed up with their festive red attire ready to participate in games and activities. The celebration started with group photos for the Social Dynamic's memories album. Everyone then enjoyed some lunch and a few table top activities and games before receiving gifts. Some popular gifts included coffee mugs, puzzles, and board games. Social Dynamic's annual Christmas celebration always ends the year on a positive note and allows participants and staff to step into the new year with confidence. Cheers to a prosperous 2024!



LSF Southern California Adult Services Seaside Learning Center Talent Show

To start the year on a high note, Life Steps Foundation's Southern California Adult Services Seaside Learning Center hosted its first talent show on January 26, 2024. The event was a huge success! The show featured performances ranging from stand-up comedy, poetry reading, to Karaoke. Marcos entertained the crowd and made everyone laugh with his stand-up comedy. Karaoke was a popular act at the talent show, some notable performances included Jamode

performing the entrance song "The Future" from WWE Superstar Asuka; Danny singing "Tragos Amargos" by Ramon Ayala; Michelle performing "Hit me with your best shot" by Pat Benatar; and Myra performing "Baby One More Time" by Britney Spears. Everyone had a blast! Performers and audience members all had fun participating and cheering on the show. The Seaside Learning Center is looking forward to hosting another talent show soon!



LSF Southern California Children and Family Services Participant Spotlight

Deonte was 29 months old when he began speech services with Life Steps Foundation. When we first saw him, he would only point to objects and toys to request them, follow one step instructions, make eye contact with whoever called his name, and occasionally make sounds during play.

To provide Deonte with more tools of communication, the early interventionists taught him some

sign language. They started off by signing "more", "please", and "help". Deonte would pull his hands away quickly, cry, and reach for the toys he wanted. However, as the weeks passed, Deonte became comfortable when prompted to sign and waited until we completed each sign to take a toy. He also started vocalizing during play and imitating vehicle and animal sounds.

Deonte turned 3 years old in January, 2024, and the program staff couldn't be prouder of all the progress he made. Now, Deonte consistently uses two- to three-word phrases, sings songs, and is practicing combining phrases. His determination, patience, and enthusiasm made working with Deonte a delightful experience. We all wish him and his family the very best in everything they do.

LSF Northern California Children and Family Services Grow With Me Program Update

Life Steps Foundation's Grow With Me virtual playgroup is in its fourth year. The group is a safe space to educate parents about child development, model age-appropriate activities, and provide individualized resources and support to each family. We support new families by connecting them to other families with children of similar ages.

We consider our Grow With Me playgroups a success when we have families who continue to join and participate in multiple sessions. For example, we have a family who joined our first ever Infant Group with their son. The family shared that their primary reason for joining Grow With Me was for socialization opportunities for both mother and son. We had the opportunity to watch this first-time mother and her son learn and grow over the course of the group meetings. They continued to participate each progressing group, as it was appropriate for their son's age, all the way through our Preschool Group. This allowed the mother to ask meaningful questions and share stories, challenges, and triumphs. What stood out to her especially was learning about development and gaining some ideas of activities she could do with her son. These activities, especially through song, helped to address the son's gross motor and expressive language development. The mother shared that she enjoyed learning new songs and activities that were modeled during the group.

The family also found the resources provided through the group to be particularly helpful. Some resources we offer are within the group, such as PowerPoint presentations and the "Warm Line" we offer. We also connect families to resources within their community that they can tap into to assist with their child's development. These resources helped the family address some of the son's challenging behaviors and provided the support the family needed while learning how to best encourage their son. By connecting the family to early interventionists and referring them to



local community resources, Grow With Me was able to create a safe space where both mother and son were fully supported. We were then able to help them find an appropriate day care for their son when he was ready to go to school.

In 2024, this family welcomed a newborn daughter and joined the Infant Group again where they were able to ask questions, socialize with other parents, and focus on her daughter's development. This time, both mother and father participated in this Infant Group and attended every session despite their work schedules, being sleep deprived with an infant and a toddler and balancing the needs of two children during the group. We were able to support both infant and toddler with their development regardless of what stage they were at developmentally and what their journey looked like.

This family's commitment to this program and desire to learn how to support their young children has been beautiful to witness. We have seen the progress over the years in their son's development, as he has grown and shown increased confidence in all he does. It has been a joy to watch them navigate the challenges and celebrations of parenthood as they learn how to best support their newest daughter. This family has a true desire to learn, grow, and be the best parents they can be for their children.

LIFE STEPS FOUNDATION

LIFE STEPS PROGRAM LOCATIONS

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Life Steps Foundation was launched in 1983 and has successfully improved the lives of thousands of children and adults diagnosed with delays or developmental disabilities. The purpose of our programs and services is to enhance participants' lives, empower them to achieve life goals, foster self-advocacy, and ensure they can live as independently as possible as adults. We accomplish this by enhancing their abilities and providing aid in the areas of communication, money management, household upkeep, mobility, socialization, and making healthy life choices. In addition, we provide in-home assistance to frail seniors who desire to remain living in their own homes. Please consider joining our Life Steps community with a donation. All donations support of our work to brighten the lives of the children, adults, seniors, and families we assist. We accept donations in the form of stocks, bequests, and vehicles. Visit www.lifesteps.org and click the 'Donate' button today!

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