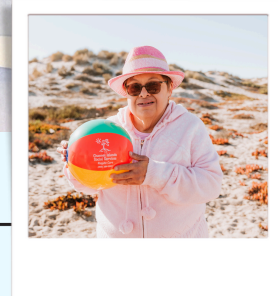


CISS NEWSLETTER  
SPRING EDITION

HAPPENINGS-HIGHLIGHTS-EVENTS-AND MORE!

*Celebrating*  
*-21 years-*



*just relax*

**“Through trusted partnerships, CISS offers individuals and families supportive resources to live meaningful, self-determined lives.”**



**Channel Islands Social Services**  
**Celebrating 20 Years!**  
**(805)384-0983 [www.IslandSocialServices.org](http://www.IslandSocialServices.org)**



# Happy Spring

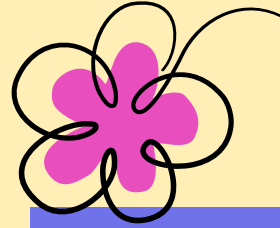
From our Executive Director,  
Karen Toto, LMFT

Spring has sprung...Spring reminds us of the growth and transformation that comes with the season, and I'm excited to report that we have taken that seriously here at CISS! Two of our newest programs, Coordinated Family Supports and Personal Assistance are "blooming," and our team is focused and working hard to be certain that we meet the needs of each family member and individual we support as these programs mature. I am impressed daily with the team's commitment to making this possible, and we have been hiring, training and developing the infrastructure for both programs to ensure the best quality of service possible.

## An exciting journey...

We came to the realization that with the changes this past year, our mission statement no longer fully reflected the broad array of services and supports we now provide. This realization set us on a journey to rethink our mission statement. Our goal was to work together to design a mission statement that included our purpose and values and encompassed the work that we do and those that we serve. It was an incredible opportunity to hear the teams' ideas, core values, and beliefs about why this work is important to them and to our community. It took several months, but you are the first to see the unveiling of our new mission statement...

**"Through trusted partnerships,  
CISS offers individuals and families  
supportive resources to live meaningful,  
self-determined lives."**



On another note.....the CISS "Tide Turners" are taking the Aut2Run by storm! I'm excited to report that CISS will be participating in the 14th Annual Aut2Run on April 26th. Sharon and Tim have been sponsors of this important event for many years and they will be walking the 5K with our team. There is more information if you'd like to run, jog, walk, or donate to the Autism Society of Ventura County. Come on out and join our team, the CISS Tide Turners.

[Visit the Aut2Run website for more information.](#)

A heartfelt thank you for taking the time to stay informed and for being a part of this journey. Please feel free to reach out with feedback, questions, or to say "hello".

Warm regards, Karen





# Celebrating Direct Care!



## Lisa shares her meaningful experience at CISS



This June is my 15 year anniversary with CISS! I am so proud of myself. I still feel just as excited and eager as I did when I first started. It's also so nice to be able to work and live in beautiful Ventura.

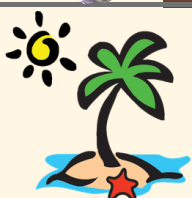
It's quite an incentive to see the kids that I support, along with their smiles. It's so meaningful to be able to provide support and to see the growth of the person. I am blessed to work for such a great company; one who cares for their employees and families.

This job requires lots of patience and listening. Don't get your feelings hurt when the one you support is more than ready for you to go home.

I also had the opportunity to work in the respite mentoring program with my manager, Terri N., who also was and is very supportive. It was a delight to train potential respite workers and to pass along my skills and knowledge. But most of all to meet families that need support.



It's quite an incentive to see the kids that I support, along with their smiles.



# Celebrating Milestones

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION!

## 5 years!

Alejandro A.  
Aliyah D.  
Angelina P.  
Brandon C.  
Catalina H.  
Celia P.  
Daniel M.  
Destinee O.  
Elizabeth O.  
Elsy D.  
Emilie M.  
Fatima G.  
Gabriel S.  
Jamie S.  
Jasmine F.  
Jessica S.  
Jessica P.  
Jose J.  
Khonarik G.  
Laurie P.  
LyMiere B.  
Ma Luisa S.  
Melida G.  
Mia S.  
Miriam G.  
Niki P.

Norma D.  
Ramona C.  
Rhyan A.  
Rogelio C.  
Samantha C.  
Valerie M.  
Varsha V.  
Vicki A.

## 10 years!

Clara C.  
Edgar R.  
Edith C.  
Estefany F.  
Katherine S.  
Lauren M.  
Nicole E.  
Petra G.  
Rocio F.  
Sandra C.  
Sangeeta S.  
Stephanie W.

## 15 years!

Maria M.  
Jessica S.  
Lisa K.

## 20 years!

Garbriel G.  
Rosa P.

## EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY & MARCH



**Krystal V.**



**Sonia V.**

## Others

**Kamryn T.**  
**Pilar B.**  
**Chloe S.**  
**Ramon H.**  
**Areli P.**  
**Miguel A.**

AMAZING  
WORK!



Channel Islands Social Services  
Celebrating 20 Years!

(805)384-0983 [www.IslandSocialServices.org](http://www.IslandSocialServices.org)



★★★★★  
REVIEW US!

# ILS UPDATES!

## CELEBRATING IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT



### MEET SHELLIE, ILS PROGRAM COORDINATOR

In this role, I am collaborating with the ILS admin team to facilitate opportunities for individuals to learn independent living skills. I look forward to providing personalized support to individuals and their instructors as they work toward achieving their goals.

For over 10 years, I have worked with individuals with disabilities and held multiple admin roles. I appreciate this opportunity to expand my knowledge as well as bring the insight and expertise I've learned throughout my career into this new role. Thank you CISS!

## WHAT HAPPENED AT THE LATEST ILS MEET & MINGLE?

February's meet and mingle was centered around self care. Our friends, Heather and Robin, put together a station for participants to fill a heart shaped balloon containing a filling of their choice to squeeze their stress away.

Riley indulged us with some lovely valentine themed heart shaped cookies that were a hit! We played many holiday themed games and many met and made new friends! To wrap up the evening, the group learned some helpful tips about self care and made vision boards to highlight personal goals and incentives for the year.



"I recognize that life with a disability can be difficult or lonely when trying to navigate services, support, and make social connections. This field of work can also be isolating for instructors and direct support professionals. My vision for the ILS program at CISS is to build a community of people who can relate to one another, establish relationships, and support each other." - Erin Hirsch, ILS Program Supervisor



# SUPPORT MORE FAMILIES

**SPRING BREAK IS HERE!**



## SAMPLE RECRUITMENT BOARD

Our families are gearing up for Spring Break and Summer, and they're waving the help flag! If your schedule's got some wiggle room, give us a ring or shoot us an email. Our families are counting on you!



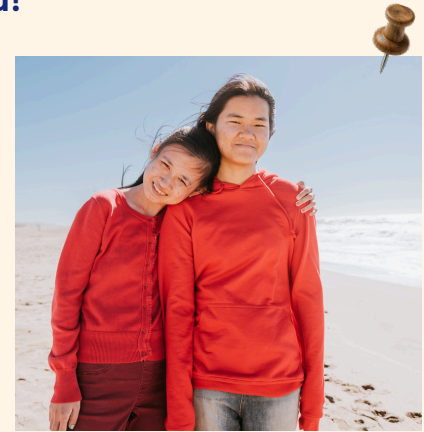
### OXNARD

6 yr. old female who loves going to the park & doing arts & crafts. She has autism and is non-speaking. Family is looking for help on Saturdays from 10am-1pm.



### CAMARILLO

11 yr. old male who likes music, watching movies, & reading his Kindle. He has autism. Family is looking for help on Tuesdays from 5pm-9pm.



### SIMI VALLEY

26 yr. old male who loves balloons/arts & crafts. He has autism and an intellectual disability, and is non-speaking. Family is looking for help Monday-Friday from 8am to 8pm.



[Click here to update your availability & check out our sample Recruitment Board!](#)



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# The Blue Envelope Program

## Interview with Sergeant Ogonowski, TOPD Traffic Bureau

**Q:** Can you explain what the Blue Envelope program is and why it was created?

**A:** The program is about communication and achieving a better outcome for everybody. It started back east, where police encounters with autistic drivers went badly. Police officers then realized they could do things a little better when it came to providing a better communication system for people who had communication barriers. In Connecticut, they then started training police officers and others on this Blue Envelope Program. People would provide officers with the Blue Envelope when getting pulled over to share what communication barriers they had. This system provided great results for all involved. It then made its way to California and now has made its way to Ventura County.

**Q:** Who is eligible to participate in the Blue Envelope Program?

**A:** This program is available for anyone with a disability or condition that affects communication. In Ventura County, everyone is eligible for this program. You do not have to prove a condition or share any medical information or diagnosis. There is no approved list of disabilities or conditions.



**Q: How can families obtain a Blue Envelope?**

**A:** This program is completely free, and all envelopes, items and materials ("Swag") are available for free at every police station in Ventura County. There is no sign up or registration. No database is maintained and law enforcement does not keep any of your personal information. You simply choose to participate by using the Blue Envelope or displaying some of our Blue Envelope "swag" such as our wrist bands, keychain fobs, stickers, pens, and or buttons. **Our swag can also be found at some community events where the Sheriff's Office or local police departments participate in, such as Agency 101, or the upcoming Aut2Run in April!**



**Blue Envelope  
Outreach Material**

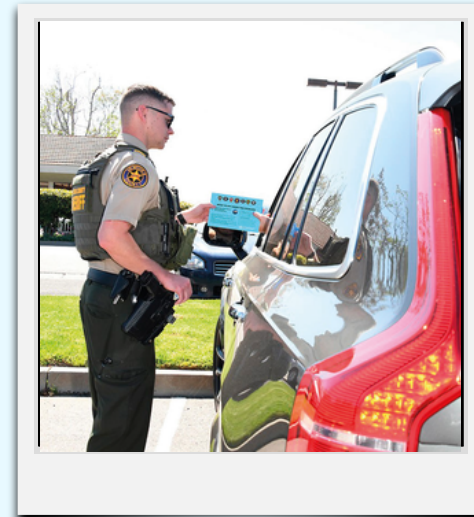
Free resources to support  
communication and safety

The following items are available for free at  
all participating agencies:

- ✓ Blue Envelope (English & Spanish)
- ✓ Wristband
- ✓ Lanyard
- ✓ ID cards
- ✓ Reflective key chain
- ✓ Button
- ✓ Reflective car sticker
- ✓ Seat belt cover
- ✓ Window sticker
- ✓ Key tag
- ✓ Pen and more



**SCAN HERE** ↙



**Q: What kind of training do deputies receive regarding this program and individuals with disabilities?**

**A:** Every law enforcement officer in Ventura County (College Police, CHP, Sheriff's office, Police Department) goes through training regarding the Blue Envelope Program. Officers do have proper training to determine what level of safety and procedures are needed with the Blue Envelope Program. It's in our best interest to make the best possible outcome for all involved. Also, almost every patrol officer in Ventura County is a graduate of our CIT program, a 40-hour program where officers learn how to best interact with individuals in our community with disabilities.

**Q: What would you like the disability community to know about law enforcement interactions?**

**A:** We recognized that not everyone is the same. This program is our best effort to establish a bridge of communication and a better outcome for all involved.



# CATCH US IN THE COMMUNITY




CSUCI | 1 University Dr, Camarillo, CA, 93012

Join us for our 14<sup>TH</sup> Annual Aut2Run and Southern California's **LARGEST Autism Resource Fair**, Celebrating Neurodiversity In Ventura County!

Join 3,000+ participants to help expand ASVC's programs and services for the community.

Run, walk, or stroll!  
FunK, 1 Mile, 5K, 10K Trail, 15K or virtual race!

**FREE RESOURCE FAIR AND EXPO!**  
Enjoy our FunZone, DJ, community information booths, activities, sensory relief room, and much more.

**"Together We Shine"**  
Sunday April 26, 2026



[www.aut2run.org](http://www.aut2run.org)



## BOSWELL ART WALK AND OPEN HOUSE

MAY 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 FROM 10:00 -11:00 A.M.

TAKE A STROLL DOWN THE HALLWAYS AND CHECK OUT STUDENT CREATED ART.

5190 LOMA VISTA RD.  
VENTURA, CA 93003

## CISS POP UP EVENTS!

- 4/8/26, 11am-3pm  
Moorpark College Career Fair
- 4/14/26, 10am-1pm  
Oxnard College Spring Career Fair
- 4/15/26, 10am-2pm  
Spring Career Fair at CUSCI
- 4/15/26, 3:30pm-6pm  
Oxnard College Job Expo
- 4/16/26, 10am-2pm  
Ventura Collage Spring Career Fair

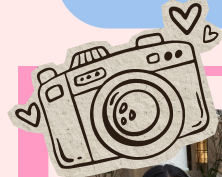




# Cheers to 10 Years!

Join us in celebrating two Administrative Anniversaries!

*“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress & working together is success!”-Henry Ford*



## Miriam Family Services

Looking back on my 10 years here, I am most proud of the relationships I’ve built with the families we serve. Being able to provide respite and support during challenging times, and seeing families feel relieved, supported, and less alone, is incredibly meaningful to me. I’m especially proud of the trust families place in us and knowing that our work truly makes a difference in their daily lives.

When I first started, I was learning the foundations of the role and how to best support families and our DSPs. Over time, I’ve grown into a more confident advocate and resource for the families we serve. I’ve gained a deeper understanding of their needs and how important RESPIRE is in their lives. What keeps me motivated is knowing even small actions can make a difference. Every time a family feels heard, supported, or relieved because of our services, it reminds me why I chose this work 10 years ago.

What I enjoy most about supporting my colleagues is the sense of teamwork and shared purpose. We all come together with the same goal to support families in the best way possible. I value being able to collaborate, share experiences, and learn from one another. It’s rewarding to know that we support not only the families we serve, but each other as well.

## Danielle Instructional Services

Looking back on the past 10 years, the moments and accomplishments I’m most proud of are the times I’ve been able to support families through challenging situations. Seeing that support grow into something positive and ultimately bring stability to their lives means everything to me. My purpose is to serve and love others, and no matter the situation, that’s what I strive to do every day.

Throughout my time here, I’ve had the opportunity to serve in a variety of roles from Family Services to Special Projects, and now working alongside our Instructional Services/Adult teams. I’m continually motivated by the growth I see and the number of families impacted by the work we do. And honestly, my coworkers inspire and motivate me each and every day.

I am passionate about helping people grow and learn, and I truly enjoy pouring into others through collaboration and building solutions to help everyone succeed. For anyone just starting here, my advice would be: remember that every day is a new day. Keep your focus on the purpose and mission, and be a light...even when it’s hard.



# Ventura County Community Events

## Spring 2026



### Spring Egg Hunt

April 4th, 2026

Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District presents its Easter Eggstravaganza event on Saturday, April 4th from 10am to 1pm at Community Center Park, 1605 E. Burnley Street, Camarillo.

Free event is open to the public, featuring crafts, Easter bunny visits, food trucks, live music, craft vendors and more. For more details click on the photo/link or call (805) 482-1996.

### Simi Valley Street Fair

May 2, 2026

The Simi Valley Street Fair is back! Join with your friends and family on May 2, 2026, from 9 AM – 4 PM on Simi Town Center Way. The street fair will include artisan craft vendors, delicious food, a FREE Kids' FunZone, live music, a beer and wine garden, and more! For more information go to: <https://simivalleystreetfair.com/>



### Strawberry Festival

May 16th-17th, 2026

General admission is \$15, active military with ID and family and seniors 62 and over, \$10, youth ages 5 to 12, \$8 and children 4 and under are free. For more information, go to [www.CAstrawberryFestival.org](http://www.CAstrawberryFestival.org).



# Crafts & Recipes

Click on the images  
for instructions!



# Ventura County Partners



## BLOOM WITH COMMUNITY!

Check out these exciting programs by clicking on their logo!

There are many different resources in Ventura County.  
We encourage you to check out each organization listed below!



Special  
Olympics  
Southern California



Rainbow  
Connection  
Family Resource and  
Empowerment Center



easterseals  
Southern California



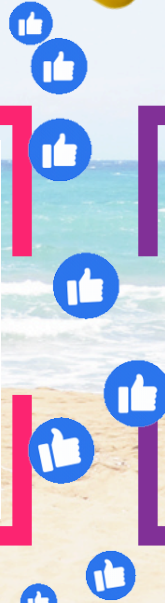
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# FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA & DON'T MISS OUT!



**DID YOU KNOW?**  
We now offer Personal Assistance!  
Contact your assigned Family  
Support Specialist for more info.



# SEE YOU IN THE SUMMER!



Channel Islands Social Services  
Celebrating 20 Years!  
(805)384-0983 [www.IslandSocialServices.org](http://www.IslandSocialServices.org)

