

CISS NEWSLETTER
SUMMER 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 21 Years!
(805)384-0983 www.IslandSocialServices.org



Sunny Shout-Out

Executive Director, Karen Toto

A seasonal update of our impact and services:

As we move into the summer season, I want to take a moment to personally thank our families, staff, and community partners for the trust, compassion, and commitment you bring to this work every day. As our programs grow, we are grateful for your support and for placing your trust in us. July marks my one-year anniversary in this role and I am excited about the future as our programs evolve and expand to meet the needs of our community.

Coordinated Family Supports (CFS)

I am encouraged by the growth of our CFS program and the meaningful support it provides to families. Our team has added new team members who are focused on helping families navigate resources, plan with confidence, and create opportunities for their loved ones to build skills and thrive.

Independent Living Services (ILS)

Summer brings many opportunities for growth, and that is especially true in our ILS program. I am proud of the commitment of our staff and the steady progress of the individuals we support as they build confidence in daily living skills and take meaningful steps toward greater independence.

Personal Assistance (PA)

Our newest program, Personal Assistance, is now available and we are so happy to hear how impactful this support is for the individuals and families who rely on this service.



Respite

We believe that respite is one of the most important ways we support whole families. During the summer months, when routines shift and caregivers often carry more, dependable respite can make a meaningful difference. We remain committed to providing support families can trust, and our team is so thankful for the caregivers who make that possible.

Thank you for being part of our community and for the many ways you help carry this mission forward. It will be fun to see what the future holds..... Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, feedback or just to say hello! Wishing you a summer filled with peace, rest, and joyful moments with the people you love.

Kind regards, Karen

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken." – James Dent



Celebrating Milestones

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION!

5 years!

Andrea H.
Belmaris G.
Chang-Yeong H.
Claudia H.
Dayana G.
Elvira S.
Evelyn L.
Francesca M.
Gladys R.
Jaira J.
Jethro C.
Karen S.
Maritza O.
Martha R.
Mckayla M.
Michael L.
Noah M.
Richard S.
Susana G.
Teana H.
Terry V.

10 years!

Ana M.
Daniel C.
Karla R.
Matthew H.
Michael C.
Nicole J.
Niobi C.
Reuben V.
Sau T.
Ulises D.
Victoria D.
Victoria-Ana C.

15 years!

Corina M.
Margarita M.

20 years!

Margarita M.
Maria C.



EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH APRIL, MAY, JUNE

Great
Work



Neggin M.



Shane W.



Justeena C.

you're
AMAZING

Others

Socorro V.
Guadalupe B.
Luciana L.
Lily P.

You did it!

BEACH

SURF

RELAX



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★★★★★
REVIEW US!





WELCOME ABOARD!

Leydi, Family Services

Something I look forward to in my new position as a Family Support Specialist is building rapport with families and connecting them with needed support. I have enjoyed helping individuals in different settings throughout my professional career but being able to help the family as a whole is something I look forward to, along with building connections with each of the families I support. As far as my background experience, I have worked as an AVID tutor in a middle school, a paraeducator in a K-1st grade classroom, a substitute teacher for 1st-8th grade students and a 1:1 special education aide at Casa Pacifica.

I do not have a specific area I am supporting yet; I usually help wherever help is needed. Some things I do currently are helping other FSS with their family calls or reaching out to any families that have stated they are not interested in services at the time to see if anything has changed. I hope to grow alongside the families, build connections, and find them the support they need!



Cheyenne, Family Services

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve in my role at Channel Islands Social Services, supporting families throughout the East County areas. As a mother myself, I understand how essential it is for parents to have meaningful breaks, and I am especially excited to help connect families with compassionate caregivers who can provide that support.

I hold a master's degree in Sociology from Arizona State University and bring experience as a family coordinator for adults with disabilities, as well as a background in providing ABA therapy to children. I look forward to partnering with our families and contributing to the important work we do in our community.



ALOHA DIRECT CARE



About me

Hi, my name is Petra G. I would like to take a moment to talk a bit about myself and personal life.

I am a mother of two children, my daughter is 22 years old, and my son is 19 years old. I have two beautiful grandsons.

Thank you CISS!

I became a single mother eleven years ago after my husband unfortunately passed. It was a very difficult time. Shortly after, I started working at Channel Islands Social Services, and they provided me with an opportunity to meet other professionals. The amazing Admin staff are always happy to help and answer any questions I have while I'm providing support to our families and amazing children.

Every day we spend with the families that we support, we give thanks for the love they show us and this makes it a pleasure to work with them.

Thank you!



♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ILS SUNSHINE ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥



IN THE BEGINNING OF JUNE, THE INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES TEAM SURPRISED ILS INSTRUCTOR, DENISE P. AT WORK WITH DANIEL P. TO THANK HER FOR ALL THE HARD WORK AND SUPPORT SHE HAS PROVIDED TO THOSE SHE WORKS WITH IN THE ILS PROGRAM.

DURING THE VISIT, DANIEL SURPRISED DENISE WITH A HOMEMADE LEMON CAKE WHICH SHE HAD TAUGHT HIM HOW TO MAKE EARLIER THIS YEAR. DANIEL ALSO MADE HER A CARD HIGHLIGHTING HIS APPRECIATION TOWARD HER INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT.

DANIEL B. INTERVIEW

What do you enjoy most about working with Denise?

"I like it when Denise works with me on cooking, baking, walking, and setting up new chore lists. Denise is so friendly, outgoing, and very open minded!"

What is one skill that you have learned from Denise?

"Money math to identify and count coins and bills." These lessons help Daniel to prepare for grocery trips where he buys ingredients for his cooking lessons.

What ILS skills do you hope to learn or achieve in the future?

To develop greater independence next, Daniel wants to learn about road safety which includes "looking both ways for cars and crossing the street."



SUPPORT MORE FAMILIES

"AND IT FEELS LIKE SUMMER..."



SAMPLE RECRUITMENT BOARD

Our families are gearing up for 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!



VENTURA

9 yr. old female who loves playing outside, riding bike/scooter, and baking. She has an Intellectual Disability. Family needs support Monday-Sunday from 9am to 9pm.



CAMARILLO

27 yr. old female who loves dancing, Goodwill, and having her nails painted. She has autism. Family is looking for support on Mondays & Thursdays from 5:30pm-8:30pm



SIMI VALLEY

8 yr. old male who likes reading, watching cartoons, and playing Roblox. He has autism. Family is flexible with schedule and hours will vary.



Click here to update your availability & check out our sample Recruitment Board!



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MEET BRANDON & FAMILY



We are a blended family with 4 children ages 25, 28, 33 and 35. We also have one 5 year old grandson. We've been in our current house in Camarillo for the past 12 years. We have a small little ranch with 3 dogs, a cat, a few chickens, lots of fruit trees and a healthy garden. Brandon of course still lives at home and is our special guy. He enjoys going in the pool and jacuzzi, taking care of alpacas at a local farm, and loves to watch Disney on TV as well as YouTube on his iPad. Brandon also loves his cookies and is constantly asking for them. He also likes fruits, Pakistani beef, pecans and chicken. He is a very good eater and maintains his health and physique by going to the gym and on walks with his respite worker.

The best thing about respite care is it gives us the opportunity to do basic things like grocery shopping, household chores, yard work, date nights and things we previously couldn't do if we had to stay home and look after Brandon. Another benefit is it allows us to unplug and take much needed vacations throughout the year. Most importantly it enables us to work full time to be able to run the household and support Brandon.

Because Brandon cannot speak for himself, I would say he loves each worker individually. Each one of them provides a different relationship and companionship he would not normally get if it weren't for the respite care.

We have been very fortunate to have some great respite workers supplied by CISS. It takes a village to raise these kids, and you need to take advantage of the services provided so that you can take "me" or "our" time to relieve the pressure and stress that comes with raising a special needs child.

We are very grateful to CISS for providing us with their services. Over the years, each one of our helpers has received employee of the month. We have been very fortunate to have an amazing team to help care for Brandon. Each member has become an essential part of our family, and we are so thankful and blessed to have these people in our lives.



☀️☀️☀️☀️☀️ **MEET THE CASTANEDA FAMILY** ☀️☀️☀️☀️☀️



Tell us a little about your family

"My family is made up of six people. Julio is the youngest and he has two brothers and one sister. We are very close, and we all try to help Julio so that each day is better for him."

As a mother, what do you like most about receiving respite care?

"I like being able to attend my appointments without feeling rushed. I have other children, and this allows me to dedicate a little more time to them as well."

What does your son enjoy most about receiving respite services?

"Julio really enjoys his time with Anthony because they do different activities. They play together, and it helps him get out of his routine."

Any advice you can give other families on how to make the most of respite services?

"Even though a mom can manage all the chores with the kids, it's also important to dedicate quality time to the other children or to enjoy some time for yourself."

Anything you would like to share?

"I am a happy mom every time I see those little eyes that speak to me without saying a word. I am fortunate to have happy children."





CATCH US IN THE COMMUNITY!

Diversity in Culture Festival

In April, our Instructional Services team attended the "Diversity in Culture Event" put on by Ventura College where there were many resources and workshops available. This was an opportunity for many students and individuals to express their individuality and learn about the culture of their communities.

Two young men who receive services through CISS came out to join our team to share information about the Independent Living Program, how the service has impacted their lives, and connect with community.

JOEY'S REFLECTION

WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT THE DIVERISTY FESTIVAL?

"I LEARNED THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES THAT DON'T GET TREATED NICELY
AND THAT WORDS THAT WE USE HAVE IMPACT."-
- JOEY L.

A PIECE OF ADVICE FROM JOEY:

"IF ANYBODY IS GOING THROUGH WHAT THEY
EXPLAINED AT THE WORKSHOP, KEEP YOUR
HEAD HIGH AND STAY STRONG. IF PEOPLE ARE
NOT NICE TO YOU, I STRONGLY ADVISE
CUTTING TIES WITH THEM AND FINDING A
GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND, CARE
ABOUT YOU, AND WON'T CALL YOU ANY
NAMES."- JOEY L.



Aut2Run Benefitting ASVC

We had such an amazing time at the Aut2Run! It was so fun to see so many families and companies come out to connect with new faces, meet future applicants, and spend time with our wonderful community partners.

We look forward to next year's event.



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Ventura County Community Events

Summer 2026



Ventura County Fair

July 29th-August 9th 2026

The Ventura County Fairgrounds has been the heart and soul of the community for over a hundred years, growing and grooving right along with the area it calls home. It started as a hotspot for farm fests and oceanfront shindigs, and now it's a buzzing hub for events, entertainment, and cultural celebrations all year long. Don't miss out on all the fun this year!



Old Town Heritage Days Fiesta

July 15th-19th 2026

Get into summer festivities at one of Old Town Camarillo's most popular festivals. Bring your friends and family to celebrate Camarillo's rich heritage. Experience Camarillo with local food vendors and trucks, live music, art, car show, and carnival rides.



Aloha Beach Festival

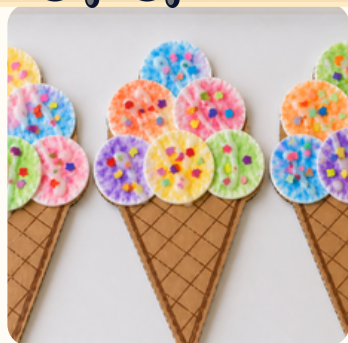
September 5th-6th 2026

Aloha Beach Festival brings the spirit of Aloha to Ventura's beautiful coastline. What started as a small community gathering has grown into one of the most anticipated biennial events on the Southern California coast. Held at Surfer's Point and Promenade Park, the festival celebrates the connection between surf culture, Hawaiian traditions, and Ventura's cozy coastal community.



Crafts & Recipes

Click on the images
for instructions!





Summer friendships!



*"Alone, we can do so little.
Together we can do so much".-Helen Keller*

Check out our partners by clicking on their photo !

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



Tri-Counties
Regional Center



ARCH
National Respite Network
AND RESOURCE CENTER



VC Families
Ventura County Children & Family Services



Autism Society
Ventura County



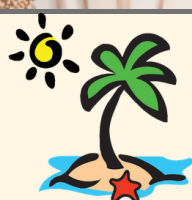
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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA & DON'T MISS OUT!



DID YOU KNOW?
Families can refer their own respite caregiver! If you have a trusted friend or family member that you would like hired for your family, contact our HR department!



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★★★★★
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