

CISS NEWSLETTER HOLIDAY EDITION

HAPPENINGS-HIGHLIGHTS-EVENTS AND MORE!



Happy
Holidays

just relax

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



Channel Islands Social Services
Celebrating 22 Years!
(805)384-0983 www.IslandSocialServices.org



Warm Wishes

A SEASON OF NEW SERVICES, FESTIVE FUN, HEARTFELT
APPRECIATION, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KAREN TOTO, LMFT

Welcome to Fall !

As the season shifts, we are excited to share what has been happening in our community. Fall brings new opportunities, festive traditions, and continued gratitude for the people who make our work meaningful every day.

Introducing Personal Assistance Services

We are thrilled to highlight our new Personal Assistance service, designed to provide individualized support that helps people participate more fully in daily life, home routines, and community activities.

Personal assistance is centered on each person's needs, preferences, and goals, offering practical help while supporting dignity, independence, and inclusion. As we begin to receive referrals, we look forward to seeing the positive impact this service will have. Be sure to contact your Service Coordinator for more information and to let us know how we are doing, we'd love to hear from you.

Halloween Shenanigans

October is always a festive holiday at CISS bringing plenty of spooky, silly, and creative fun.

From costumes and decorations to a very competitive pumpkin-carving competition, we are looking forward to a season filled with laughter, imagination, and memorable moments together. We hope that you will all celebrate safely, have fun, and enjoy the playful spirit of fall.

Looking Ahead

As we move toward Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, we are reminded of the importance of connection, kindness, and community. The holidays can be very busy and can add stress to our already hectic schedules. This year my goal is to focus on slowing down, reflecting on what matters most, and celebrating the relationships that bring warmth and joy to our work and to our lives.

Thankful for Our Team

We are especially thankful for our entire team and for every DSP who shows up with care, professionalism, and heart. Your work strengthens families, supports independence, and creates opportunities for people to thrive.

Thank you for all you do - not only during DSP Week or the holidays, but every single day. We are grateful to move into this season together and proud of the difference our team continues to make.



“

“The Joy of
brightening
other lives
becomes for us
the magic of the
holidays.”
-W.C. Jones



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Celebrating Milestones

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
DEDICATION!

5 years!

Amber F.

Amelia C.

Brenda W.

Corazon V.

Evelyn C.

Francisca G.

Gabriel C.

Lisha B.

Irene A.

Jenna L.

Jenni O.

Jennifer L.

Jessica D.

Johannah K.

Kuldeep G.

Linda M.

Maribel T.

Michael A.

Priscila V.

Sylvia U.

Terah O.

Thomasina G.

Ulany V.

Yovana M.

10 years!

Brianna K.

Jacqueline B.

Jennifer D.

Kia W.

Leonor A.

Maria S.

15 years!

Abbey A.

Sofia C.

20 years!

Robin K.

EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER



Kathryn S.

Other Awardees

Amelia C.

Andres E.

Alejandro J.



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REVIEW US!



MEET OUR DSP'S & WHAT THEY ENJOY MOST!



ALISHA K.

What do you enjoy about your DSP role?

I love helping kids out. I feel that it's a blessing and I want to be a fairy God mother for everybody.

What advice do you have for someone that is new in this field? It's hard work so be prepared for the hurdles but you will enjoy it. It's very beneficial and self satisfying.

How have you seen the services impact families?

I have seen the families or parents take care of themselves while I take care of their kids.

Tell us a fun fact about you? I speak 5 languages.



LOURDES R.



What do you enjoy about your DSP role? I love spending time with my little ones and getting to know them.

What advice would you give to another DSP?

I recommend to be open minded and learn at your own pace. As you learn from each person you are supporting, they are also learning from you. Be open minded.

How have you seen respite services support families?

Mom's need a break. One of the moms I was working with was pregnant and she needed a lot of support with her little ones and appointments. She needed someone she could trust and rely on. She was assured that she would make it to her appointments because of my support.

Tell us a fun fact about you?

I am trying to learn ASL on my own and on TikTok.



New Season New Faces

EXPANDING OUR ADMIN TEAM



*GREETINGS FROM STAFF (LEFT TO RIGHT)

My name is **Vivian** and I am an HR Associate supporting East Ventura County. I'm looking forward to building positive relationships with our applicants, employees, and families while helping create a smooth and welcoming experience throughout the hiring process. I am grateful for this opportunity and excited to continue learning, growing, and supporting our team in this new role.

Happy Fall! My name is **Alyssa** and I work as an HR Associate II/Recruitment Coordinator, hiring DSPs for cities mainly within East County. I am looking forward to getting to know existing and new DSPs and learning how to best support them.

Hello, my name is **Marques** and I look forward to helping impact families with growth and moving towards getting the appropriate support they need! I am the Program Manager of Instructional Services for the ILS and Coordinated Family Support (CFS) programs.

Hello, I am **Carmen** and I'm enjoying my new role as an HR Associate. I'm excited for the opportunity to learn new things, grow in my career and build strong relationships within my team and the families we support.

My name is **Ashley** and I am proud to serve as a Family Support Specialist. I coordinate supports for families in Port Hueneme, Oxnard (93030 North and South), and exclusively support Spanish-speaking families in Westlake Village, Thousand Oaks, Oak Park, Newbury Park, Agoura Hills, and Calabasas. I am excited to work alongside families and be a source of guidance, encouragement, and support throughout their journey. My goal is to help families establish a healthy and well-balanced routine that allows them to feel confident, comfortable, and supported as they navigate challenges and celebrate successes.

Hi, my name is **Daisy** and I am an Administrative Assistant Intern. I am enjoying my time here working alongside the administrative team and I look forward to helping others along the way. I can't wait to see what CISS holds for my future!



DSP APPRECIATION WEEK

ANOTHER YEAR, LET'S CHEER!

Direct Support Professional Appreciation week was celebrated nationwide September 13–19, 2026. It is a time set aside to honor the dedication and vital work of direct support professionals in empowering individuals with disabilities.



WHAT WE'RE THANKFUL FOR

- Our dedicated DSPs and community partners
- A hardworking and passionate administrative team
- A year full of growth and learning
- Opportunities to give back to our community
- The chance to serve and connect with you!



REMINDER: HOLIDAY HOURS

We'll be closed on:

- Thursday, November 26
- Friday, November 27
- Thursday, December 24
- Friday, December 25

*Regular hours resume
Monday, December 28th



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REVIEW US!

 ILS GRATITUDE

Thank you Gabby for being my ILS Instructor and helping me grow in the areas where I need to achieve. I don't know what my confidence and independence skills would be like without you. I used to be very nervous during social interactions, like asking where an object is at a store or ordering from a menu on my own in a restaurant.

Also, having eye contact with people is a struggle and I am getting better at that. I still get a bit nervous doing things out of my comfort zone, but that means you are helping me realize that it isn't as bad as I thought. Thank you Gabby for everything and being here for every step of my way.

Thank you,
Riley R.



WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

ILS Instructor, Kathy C., helped me to be more confident in my kitchen by overcoming fear of turning the stove on and using my kitchen appliances.

I like feeling independent in my kitchen and feeling safe.
I love cooking chicken nuggets in my air-fryer!!!
Thank you, Kathy! -Colleen



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Ventura County Community Events

Holidays 2026



El Panteon Dia de los Muertos October 17, 2026

Come celebrate a cherished family holiday, Día de los Muertos. You'll be immersed in an ancient tradition that centers family and loved ones through brilliant display Altars. Festivities to include theatrical story telling, live mariachis, theatrical play, Aztec dancers, along with fun activities throughout the day.

Conejo Valley's Turkey Day Dash November 26, 2026

This year's event will take place on Thanksgiving Day! Every dollar raised by the Turkey Day Dash goes to benefit three outstanding local nonprofits: Hospice of the Conejo, Kiwanis Club of Thousand Oaks Foundation, and Scouting America Ventura County Council.



Christmas on the Farm December 1st-24th, 2026

Underwood Farms' Christmas on the Farm is a special holiday event that takes place each year. Visitors can enjoy a variety of festive activities, including a hayride to the North Pole, a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus, and a live nativity scene.



CATCH US IN THE COMMUNITY

ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC



This summer we held our CISS Annual Family Picnic! We offered sensory friendly and interactive carnival games, face painting, music, & catering by Chick-fil-A Camarillo and Mister Softee Ice Cream for all the individuals we support and their families.

We are incredibly grateful for our Admin Team who ensured our picnic ran smoothly and for the creativity shared with our families and community partners.

CISS POP-UP EVENTS

October 22: Oxnard College
2026 Fall Career & Internship Fair

October 28: CSUCI
2026 Fall Career & Internship Fair

December 2026: Annual Sensory-Friendly Family Movie Day
More details coming soon. You don't want to miss it!



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SUPPORT MORE FAMILIES

“OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS THE LIGHT THAT YOU CARRY”

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT BOARD

Our families are planning for the holidays, and they're needing support.
If your schedule's got some wiggle room, give us a ring or shoot us an email.
Our families need you!



VENTURA

4 yr. old male who loves playing with cars, and watching Disney movies. He is non-verbal.
Family needs vary.



CAMARILLO

12 yr. old male who likes listening to music, jumping, and playing on his iPad. He is diagnosed with Autism.
Family needs support
Tuesdays and Thursdays
from 4pm to 6pm.



THOUSAND OAKS

8 yr. old male who likes to draw, build blocks, and play Minecraft. He is diagnosed with Autism and ADHD.
Family needs support
Fridays and Saturdays any
time after 4pm.



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



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REVIEW US!





I want to start by introducing our Family. We are the Lagunas Family, and our sons Isaiah and Joseph. Our family is full of support with the services we receive from TCRC and Channel Islands Social Services. It has benefited our family and our boys greatly.

Maria has been supporting our boys for many years as well. I am grateful for how happy she makes the boys when she's around our family. The fact that she's also their grandmother makes it more wonderful for the boys. When Maria is around, they love the time they get to spend with her. She has been an amazing DSP for our boys, and we couldn't be happier and thankful for all her support.

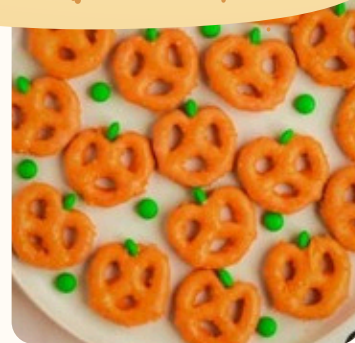
We are happy to announce Isaiah is receiving Personal Assistance Services (PA) from Channel Islands, which has been wonderful for Isaiah. Maria gets to work closely alongside Isaiah taking him shopping locally or helping him with tasks around the house like laundry, making certain foods, folding clothes and working on his own personal errands that are helpful to him in his daily routines.

We want to say how lucky our Family is in being able to receive services, plus how wonderful the admin are from both organizations. We love Maria and are so thankful for how great she is with our boys. Thank you again for making our Family be in such amazing hands!



Crafts & Recipes

Click on the images
for instructions!



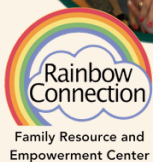


COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*"Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen."
-Brene Brown*

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!



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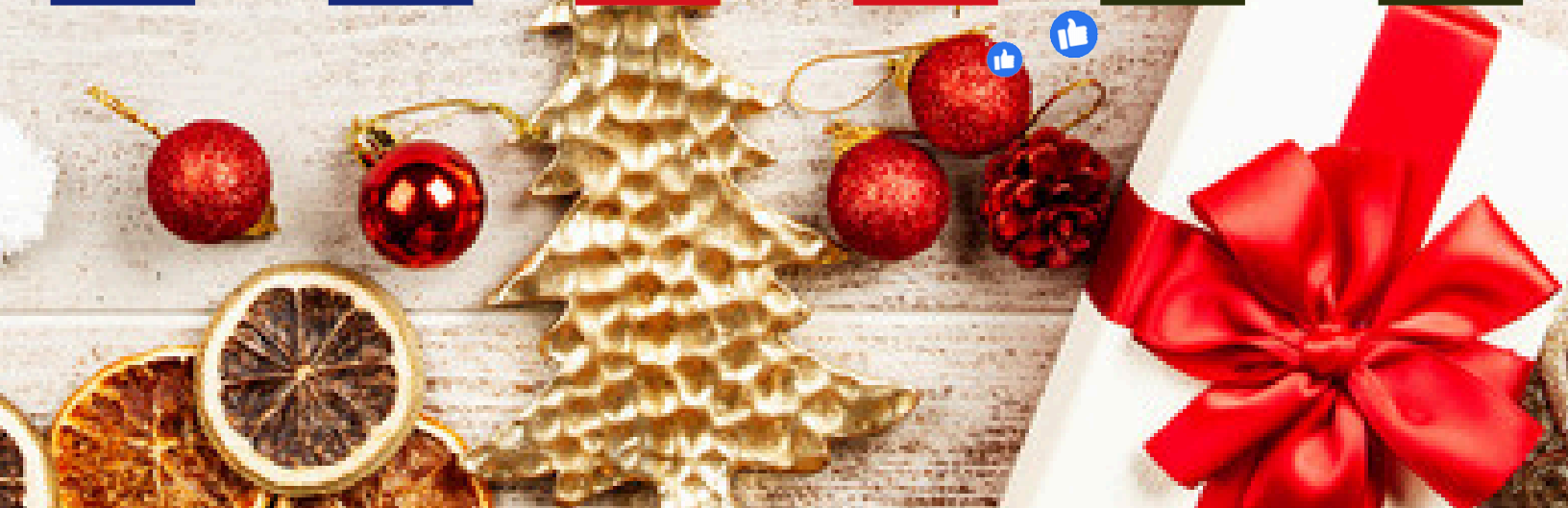


FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA & DON'T MISS OUT!



DID YOU KNOW?

Every year our co-founders sponsor a sensory-friendly movie day at a local theater so our families can enjoy a movie in a safe, accepting environment? Check your email in Nov. to RSVP



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