

Summer 2016 Volume 20

Summer Newsletter



New artwork in the lobby by the kids!

What a 40th Anniversary Celebration we had!

Over 170 guests filled San Juan Oaks to celebrate Chamberlain's 40 years in Hollister! There was a lot of laughter, tears and so many wonderful memories shared! Each person had a special story to tell of how they got involved with Chamberlain's. The comments ranged from "I lived at Chamberlain's for 2 years", "I helped put in the playground" and "I was on the board" to mention just a few.

The evening started with festively dressed Executive Director Robert Freiri opening the event with thanks for everyone's attendance and their continued support of Chamberlain's. He recognized several staff members with a *special appreciation award* for their milestone anniversaries at CCC. Yolanda Soza: 41, Lupe Grimaldo: 33, Rachel Hernandez 33, Charlotte Mendoza: 33, Imelda Ceja: 27, Gloria Gonzales: 27, Gracie Lucatero: 22 and Retha DeLaRosa: 20. Robert was also very honored to present the annual "Rosemary Cardinali" award to Patrick Ellis for his dedication, hard work, creativity and for especially for his significant leadership in helping Chamberlain's to achieve National Accreditation (a THREE year project!) last January.

The keynote speaker Michael Pritchard has been an advocate for foster youth for many years, entertaining and motivating those lucky enough to hear him speak. He touched on many subjects but talked at length on self accountability. A moving talk, leaving everyone wanting more!

Many previous Chamberlain residents were in attendance, now as adults. They spoke about the loving help they received at CCC so they could overcome their early year traumas, gain the skills they needed to succeed and push forward into a happier, healthier life. Many of them knew each other from when they lived together at CCC and were excited to reconnect, sharing warm hugs and stories.

One previous resident was a special speaker. Jessica Craven lived at CCC 1989-1993. She now lives in Texas with her husband and children and is running a successful non-profit organization "Benjamin's Right Hand" (see Facebook page). You'd be hard pressed to see the pain this woman suffered through as a child. Lupe Grimaldo; Powell Cottage supervisor recalls "She arrived a scared little girl. Over the 3+ years she lived here, we addressed one by one all the troubles this girl had seen and felt." Together with the caring staff, Jessica gained valuable skills like self-confidence in the arts, giving her a path to healing and be able to discover love and trust. Jessica wrote after the event "20 years ago when I came to Chamberlain's Children Center abused, hurt, confused, angry, rejected by my mother and family and placed in and out of foster care wondering when this roller-coaster would end....I fell into this lady's arms. That day I walked in as a orphan with so much fear that I would have to leave again. For the first time I finally felt like I was home. First time I had ever felt accepted and I will never forget the love you gave me."



By the end of the evening, through generous sponsorships, the raffle, silent and live auction items bought and a few surprise donations after the event, over \$30,000 was raised. Quite a celebration and quite a special evening! Program Director Patrick Ellis summed up the night perfectly. "Blue Jeans, Boots and Bling Ball was a fun, emotionally impactful and reinvigorating event that perfectly honored our long-standing tradition as an organization with a heart of gold."

Event photos and generous sponsors, auction and raffle prize donors list on pages 4-5.

V.F.W. Post 9242 has become another wonderful group of caring volunteers at Chamberlain's.



Their first chosen project was installing a flag pole in front of the classroom. They were able to secure a donated flagpole that needed a little touch up and did all the work themselves in a few sessions. After all their hard work, they held a ceremony and performed the color guard with the children, staff and visitors in attendance. Afterward, the classroom children hosted a breakfast in the Veteran's honor, preparing all the food as part of their science, math, reading and social skills learning.

The flag is raised when school is in session and the children are selected to raise the flag and start the pledge of allegiance under the guidance of special education teacher Matt Morrison. "It's a great addition and could not have happened without our fantastic local veterans' generosity." says Morrison. Their next project at CCC is the renovating of the Wellness Center deck late this summer.



A favorite summer time activity!

CCC Briefs

◆ **Summer activities-** The program coordinator Gracie Lucatero has her hands full most of the time coordinating all the activities the children participate in, but during the summer, her hands are *extra full!* The kids' summer activities this year included weekly gardening, a variety of field trip trips such as soccer matches, football All Stars games, museums, beach trips and movies. There were weekly baking sessions and bible story time by members of the Sunnyslope Christian Center,

Zumba classes sponsored and taught by Amy Redmond Waran; artistic director of Flying Colors Dance & Fitness and art classes taught by Sunnyslope school teacher Rhonda Dynneson. One week was filled with vacation bible school sponsored by First Presbyterian Church, where some of the younger children attended and some of the older ones were trained in supervising. There is the usual summer at home play like slip and slide, bike riding and more. And of course, like any child wants during summertime... *sleeping in was allowed!*



Staff and kids learning new dance moves!

◆ **SV Gives-** The 3rd Annual Non-profit fundraiser sponsored by Silicon Valley Community Foundation raised over \$2,200 for CCC. This included a matching grant from Community Foundation for San Benito County for Chamberlain's Endowment fund! Thank you to everyone who donated during this event.

◆ **Life Skills Classes-** Due to a generous grant from the local Women's Fund, CCC was able to fulfill a dream of providing a Life Skill course geared towards our teen girls while they were on summer break. Direct Support Manager Vanessa Garcia oversaw this inaugural nine week program which taught the girls everything from finances, problem solving, substance abuse, recognizing healthy relationships, self esteem building exercises, job market and so much more! The sessions were taught by various experts in the community such as Heritage Bank for finances. The girls also participated in a special trip to San Francisco where they learned planning, budgeting, team work, public transportation and more. Overall, a very successful course.

CCC Briefs (continued on page 7)

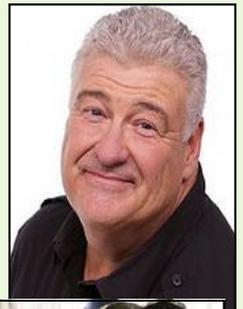


“You don’t stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.”

-Michael Pritchard

We sure *laughed* a lot at our 40th Anniversary event! It was quite a night and I believe everyone in attendance had a great time! I wish we could have had two time, maybe three times as many people at our special evening as the evening was filled with so much joy! Being the Master of Ceremonies was a thrill to be able to introduce our special speakers and recognize the significant milestones of some of our long-time staff.

Our Keynote Speaker Michael Pritchard was phenomenal and had everyone roaring with laughter. He was the perfect choice for the event as he had won first place in the San Francisco International Stand Up Comedy Competition as well as winning the prestigious California Probation Officer of the Year. With his diverse background, Michael draws from his counseling background, using humor to inspire, teach communication skills, anger management, diversity, conflict resolution and overcoming burnout and stress. He entertained and more at our event! Thanks Michael for your inspirational talk and good humor!



Our other special speaker is a former resident of Chamberlain’s. Jessica Craven described her life prior to Chamberlain’s, her years at Chamberlain’s and her life now raising her own children with her husband in San Antonio, Texas. She was generous and shared her story twice! Once with our Chamberlain children, letting them know that their lives can get better with help and guidance from caring staff and then, the second time at our event, causing a few tears to shed as we heard of her turbulent life as a child. We all smiled as she disclosed how her life changed permanently for the better while at Chamberlain’s and the good path she is on. We will be forever grateful to her for telling her story to so many.



I am also grateful to everyone who attended and especially proud of our event committee. Thank you so much Calla Bertao, Josie Bravo, Denise Cauthen-Wright, Michelle Damm, Amalia Ellis, Karen Firstbrook, Nancy Kops, Will Sutton, Susie Swing, Valerie Westerdale and Gabby Zuna. These folks spent a lot of hours planning and pulling off an amazing event!! I am humbled by the spirit of our community of guests, volunteers, donors and sponsors in giving.

I am very exciting to be involved in a new program at Chamberlain’s: “Girls Group”. This summer we were able to offer a nine week “Life Skills” program that will help prepare our teen girls for life after CCC. The teens learned about and discussed self-awareness, problem solving, healthy relationships, substance abuse awareness, practical life skills, and money management. They also participated in planning every aspect of spending a day in San Francisco and learned to take public transportation, buy meals, tipping wait staff and agree on the excursions for the day, all while staying within the budget and timeline they are given. Thank you to the Women’s Fund of the Community Foundation for their generous grant. This program really made a difference in these young ladies lives!



Have a great rest of the summer! - Robert Freiri, Executive Director Chamberlain’s Children Center

The 40th Anniversary Celebration in Pictures

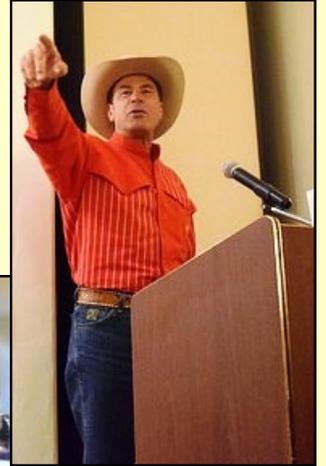
Visit Chamberlain's Facebook page and website for *more* event photos and special video.



Left: Table full of smiling faces!

Right: Phil Fortino as "Live Auction" auctioneer.

Below: Guest Juli Vieira & other guests looking over the many silent auction items.



Below: Lively music from The Flashbacks!



Above: MC Robert Freiri a bit "blinged" out!

Upper Right: Keynote speaker Michael Pritchard with special appreciation plaque made by Chamberlain's children!

Right: Mark Vivian enjoying a spin on the dance floor with his wife Annette.

Below: The flower buckets on tables were decorated with boot art from Chamberlain's children.



Right: "These Jeans tell our Stories" display by the Chamberlain's teen girls showing their memories, passions & more.

Above far right: Ted Davis who gave the highest bid during the live auction on Grissom's art.

Above right: Heritage Bank gals having fun in the photo booth!

Above: A first time showing of Chamberlain's new "Starfish" video.

Left: Artist Shannon Grissom finishing her painting during the event for the live auction.



Thank you to our Generous Sponsors & Donors! You made a BIG difference!

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Our deepest appreciation for your sponsorships and donations!
Our apologies if we inadvertently left anyone off this list. Thank you to all!

Raffle, Silent & Live Auction Donors

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Cozy Cup Café * Ted Davis



Anniversary Party Cupcake Display!

As part of my continuing series on Chamberlain’s great Board of Directors, my focus this newsletter is on Josie Bravo. She has been a stalwart member of the Chamberlain's Board of Directors since 2008, serving as Board Secretary this past year. She is frequently the first person to raise her hand when something needs to get done and is the embodiment of that old saying, "If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it."

She has lived in Gilroy all of her life starting out as number 12 of 14 children! Josie and her husband have five sons-two biological sons and three adopted, ranging in ages 12-28 years. They are also blessed with a beautiful daughter-in-law, a 14 month old grandson and another grandbaby on the way! And the family is also fostering a seven year old great-nephew at the present time. To say their lives are full is an understatement but Josie still has time to give.



Josie has been fortunate enough to work locally all of her life with 26 years at the same company and same site-making it easier for her and her husband to work and raise children at the same time.

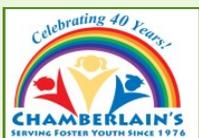
She became involved with our sister organization Chamberlain’s Mental Health Services (CMHS) in Gilroy by using their services. When she started doing foster care over 10 years ago, most of the children that came through her home (ten total in ten years) needed some type of counseling, therapy or family visits. CMHS provided great services not only to her foster children but to her entire family. *“The therapists were so kind and caring and would chat and counsel with me on a regular basis. I remember keeping one poor therapist on the telephone for almost three hours one night!”* Josie recalled.

“I am proud to say that CMHS had so much to do with the decision we made on adopting our first son. If it were not for their encouragement, counseling and supporting us in so many ways, we would not have been able to make that commitment. It was never our intention to adopt, but as the heart strings were attached and tugged at- there was no other option!”

While she was getting the much needed services from CMHS, Josie became very familiar with staff and the director there and was always quick to give them her input and advice. One day the director approached her and said *“You know-you would make a really good board member- would you consider it?”* Josie smiled and said *“Sure- why not?”* She remembers *“I never given it a second thought, although I had no idea what I was supposed to do! I just knew that Chamberlain’s had given so much to my family that I knew I had to give back.”*

Josie’s love for children and family has deepened over the years and she is hoping to soon start “working” at recruiting other foster parents. There are many children in need and she knows that there are many families out there that may need some information and encouragement to make the leap to become foster parents.

Josie has definitely given back to Chamberlain's as well as to the community. Her experience also demonstrates the critical role played by a caring mental health services provider. *Thank you, Josie!*



DONATION FORM

Thank you for helping us achieve 40 years!

Please consider donating \$40 in honor of our 40th anniversary serving at-risk foster children.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Amount Donated _____

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to Chamberlain’s Children Center, Inc.

Mail to: Chamberlain’s Children Center PO Box 1269, Hollister, CA 95024-1269

Federal Tax ID# 94-2357401

Donate by credit card, please visit www.chamberlaincc.org and click on the “Donate Here” button.

Fond Farewell To Patrick Ellis

Since early 2000, Program Director Patrick Ellis has worked with abused and neglected children living at Chamberlain's, giving them the love and support they need to succeed in school and life. With the announcement of his departure early July to pursue a dream of a college degree, Patrick will leave behind quite a legacy.



For the last 16 years, Patrick, who began working with CCC right out of high school, learned his craft through on-the-job training. His beginnings started as a child care worker and with his thirst of learning, kind disposition, quick thinking and immense capacity to learn, love and teach, he quickly rose to his current position of Program Director.

Gracie Lucatero, who filled Patrick's last position of Program Coordinator 10 years ago said *"He is amazing! One of my favorite memories of him was when we took the children to the beach. One boy didn't know how to swim, so Patrick stepped in and taught him. The boy's confidence soared and Patrick's smile got bigger!"*



Top: Patrick in the early years conducting staff training. **Above:** Patrick surprised at receiving the Rosemary Cardinali award at the 40th anniversary event.

We'll miss you Patrick and wish you the best in your pursuit of a higher education! Feel free to visit between classes and finals!

CCC Briefs (continued)

Spring Clean up- WOW! OVER 300 hard working people came out in force to help complete many of CCC's "wish-list" projects on April 30th from fixing sprinkler systems, deep cleaning the cottages, planting flowers, cutting down a dead tree to installing a walkway and so much more! Many thanks to members of the Church of Latter Day Saints, Sunnyslope Christian Center, Kohl's



teams- Gilroy and Salinas, Boy Scout Troop 455, Gavilan College service learning students, members of UA Local Union 393, Recology of San Benito County and many other CCC friends. Special thanks goes to LDS Church members for the fantastic BBQ Tri Tip lunch and help organizing this huge event. Your team did an amazing job all the way around!



Great Day, Great People!

For more great pictures from volunteer Gary Cameron, visit: <https://goo.gl/photos/1zhsEZavyjgq7yhH9>.



Save the Date!

San Jose Giants vs. Visalia Rawhide

Sat., Sept. 3 at 6:00 pm

San Jose Municipal Stadium



Have a great night out with friends & family AND help raise funds for Chamberlain's!

It's Italian Night! The entire night will be a celebration of Italian culture with raffles, Italian music and food, vendor booths and giveaways. There will be a silent auction for the special Italian themed, game worn player jerseys and many fun activities for the whole family.

It's San Francisco Giants Joe Panik Backpack Giveaway Night! The first 1,000 fans in attendance will receive a Joe Panik Backpack, perfect for the upcoming school year!

It's Martinelli's Apple Juice Kids Run the Bases Night! Following the conclusion of the game, kids are invited down onto the field to run the bases and have even more fun!

It's "Going to be a WHOLE lot of FUN & you won't want to miss" Night!

2 ways to purchase: Contact the Chamberlain's office for "hard copy" tickets (cash or check only)
or buy online at www.ticketreturn.com (credit card)

At the upper left corner, login using Username: **chamberlains** Password: **center**

For more info. email Denise@chamberlaincc.org or call 831.636.2121 x129

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