

## Hilton Los Angeles Universal City and Tierra del Sol

### *A partnership of excellence!*

At the Hilton Los Angeles Universal City, business never slows. With over 495 rooms and 32,000 square feet of meeting facilities, the hotel operates on a 24-hour schedule that aims to provide distinguished excellence in hospitality. For Tierra clients, Jimmy Barrientos, Jonathan De Luna, and Niko De Guzman, excellence is an important part of the work ethic they developed at Tierra del Sol, making them ideal candidates when the relationship with Hilton began.

"When our team started working at Hilton about 18 months ago, we needed to evaluate where our clients would excel, while fulfilling the hotel's needs," recalls Candy Zavala, Tierra's Community Integration Program Director. "Housekeeping, banquets, and the kitchen proved to be the best fit. And, although they were the most demanding departments, our guys learned quickly, worked hard, and proved that they could get the job done."

### *Kitchen and Banquets – where speed and concentration count*

Prior to working in the main kitchen and alongside Hilton's senior banquet team, Jonathan DeLuna and Niko De Guzman trained extensively for two weeks with Hilton's Stewarding Supervisor, Vilma Cruz. Jonathan and Niko learned how to differentiate between 50 types of dishes and silverware, as well as how to operate large machinery that not only sanitizes the dishes, but



Jonathan DeLuna, Nelson Ancheta, Niko De Guzman

polishes them as well. Vilma beams with pride when she talks about her first trainee, Jonathan, calling him "a firecracker" in the kitchen. "He's number one. And, after I trained him, he became the teacher for all of our new staff!"

Nelson Ancheta, Hilton's Assistant Executive Steward in the Stewarding Department, says that the best part about bringing Tierra clients on board is, "They listen and learn quickly. I trained them once, and now, they know exactly what to do. Jonathan and Niko are fast and remember what I tell them. They give 110%, and at Hilton, we value that above all else." Nelson adds, "I even use them as an example of what excellence in customer service is at staff meetings."

*Continued on page 3*

## Message From Rebecca Lienhard, CEO

*"We are what we repeatedly do."*

*Excellence, then is not an act, but a habit." -Aristotle*



What images come to mind when you think of Excellence?

For Tierra del Sol Foundation, our vision of excellence encompasses *Empowerment, Acceptance, Value, and Inclusion*. These are not just words, but the actions and values we live by each day. In this issue, you will find Excellence in all we do. *Empowerment, acceptance, value, and inclusion* through our contributions come to life in the stories about our employment partnership with The Los Angeles Hilton Universal City, and our volunteer partnerships with ONEgeneration, MEND, Jewish Home for the Aging, Skirball Hospice, and one of our newest partners, Discovery Cube of Los Angeles. These are all stories of Excellence.

*Continued on page 2*

## CEO Message from page 1

Throughout this edition, you will meet everyday true heroes – the faces of our vision. Joe is “Empowerment.” Once a shy young man, he now spends his days fulfilling the demands of his commissioned pieces throughout Southern California. And Tony, who has changed his life by setting goals and achieving them.

Renee, Oscar, Jenny, Angela and Christopher are the role models for *Acceptance* through their work at the Jewish Home for the Aging, Skirball Hospice.

*Value* can be seen through the eyes of MEND volunteer, Higinia Medrano, as she articulates the precision of Matthew Lawrence’s work.

And finally, we are moved by the level of *Inclusion* the men at The Los Angeles Hilton Universal City have achieved in just a few short years. Jimmy, Jonathan, and Niko are our true inspiration for *Excellence* as they earn a livable wage, while exceeding everyone’s expectations.

Let’s ring in the New Year by celebrating these stories, as well as the many more accomplishments of the men and women of Tierra del Sol.

Let us “Choose Excellence” in all we do in 2016!!!

## TONY’S TIME!

Since coming to Tierra del Sol six years ago at the age of 21, Tony Contreras has enhanced his computer skills and embraced Tierra’s ceramics program with fervor and enthusiasm. But when asked what he enjoys most, Tony indicates, “it’s giving the tours.” As one of Tierra’s most knowledgeable clients, Tony has become an important part of sharing what Tierra has to offer with those who are considering entering our program, as well as their family members.

One of Tony’s proudest accomplishments is his recent move to an apartment which he shares with a roommate in Sylmar. “After living in a group home for eight years with 15 people, I wanted to move. I saved my money for three

years and it wasn’t easy.” But hard work and discipline paid off for Tony, who also spent a great deal of time advocating to move with the help of staff from Tierra and the LA North County Regional Center. “Being at Tierra and having my own place is great,” tells Tony. “I’m happy now.”

Special thanks to AEG, who, after learning that Tony’s biggest passion is in fact, the Los Angeles Lakers, hosted him and family members in a suite during Kobe’s December comeback game against the Milwaukee Bucks!



## Join. Lead. Inspire. CIRCLE OF INSPIRATION

Last year’s inaugural Circle of Inspiration Campaign was a tremendous success, thanks to the support of a committed group of individuals who believe in the vision, values and mission of Tierra del Sol. As we kick-off this important Annual Campaign for 2016, we’re excited about the prospect of continuing to build a strong foundation for the individuals we serve today, as well as those who will look to us for help in the future. Join us, as we embark on this much needed campaign to further Tierra’s mission. Your contributions in helping us reach our goal of \$250,000 is greatly appreciated! Details to make a gift at one of the following levels can be found at [tierradelosol.org](http://tierradelosol.org) or, contact Cathy Galarneau, Chief Development Officer at [cgalarneau@tierradelosol.org](mailto:cgalarneau@tierradelosol.org).

“Tierra has done so much to empower people with developmental disabilities. With the right support, we can continue to do much more. The greatly needed funds that this campaign generates, ensures that Tierra’s vision to have all people with disabilities fully included and accepted in our society, will come to fruition.”

Karren McClenahan  
COI Chair & Tierra parent

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“Giving just a little more each month, enabled us to join the Circle of Inspiration. Our budget is still manageable, and with all that Tierra does, we knew it was important to make the effort.”

Anonymous

“Through my company’s matching gifts program, my husband and I were able to give at a higher level. I’m glad we were able to take advantage of that and help further Tierra’s mission even more.”

Pat & Kevin Moore, Tierra parents



# Hilton Partnership from page 1

Both Tierra clients take their jobs seriously. When asked what Jonathan loves most about his position, he immediately replies, "The plates. I'm really fast at that. It gets busy, so I like organizing them and putting them away." Niko interjects, "I prefer the silverware. I wasn't good at first and had to work on it, but little by little, I improved. Now, I'm really fast."

"My job makes me feel happy, calm, and great, because everyone is nice here," continues Niko. "I like my job, and my pay check is good, but I like my job even more." Jonathan shares, "I'm helping my family in the Philippines. I feel so proud telling them how much I work on at my job. And, I'm proud I can help them with their bills."

## Housekeeping – laundry and so much more...

Down the hall, the same diligence, dedication, and hard work is being applied by Jimmy Barrientos, who's already made quite a name for himself in the Housekeeping Department. In addition to sorting linens (a complex task which requires exceptional attention to detail), Jimmy operates large steam and press machines worth over \$10K.

Martha Castillo, Executive Housekeeper and Jimmy's supervisor, admits that initially she was skeptical about working with someone with a disability, mainly because of safety issues. "We work with very complex machinery that requires skill and care to operate. Accidents can happen if procedures are not followed; but Jimmy has done a remarkable job. He follows instructions, is always on time and has been a blessing to work with," notes Martha. "His calm and cheerful demeanor, as well as his positive attitude, inspire his co-workers too."



When Martha first added Jimmy to the weekly schedule, he was working three days a week. After proving that he was as capable as the other housekeeping staff, Martha increased his hours to five-days-a-week.

"I feel valued and respected and I have more confidence in myself now," tells Jimmy. "I talk to all my co-workers. Also, I help my mother and I pay all my bills with my checks. I am never late to work, because I love what I do."

## So, why take the chance? Why hire Tierra clients?

"Hilton's partnership with Tierra has helped us in so many ways. Our existing team has embraced Jimmy, Jonathan, and Niko, and developed a strong bond with each of them. They are happy to come to work, and that positive energy transpires to everyone here. Our partnership with Tierra has been a wonderful experience on many levels. We look forward to continuing that for a long time."

**Emma Manzano**

Human Resources, Benefits Administrator

"Try it. Everything is about putting ourselves in the same shoes as them. Give them an opportunity to do something, and they will not let you down."

**Martha Castillo**

Hilton Executive Housekeeper

*"We all need to help change the world. If you don't give people a chance, you don't change anything. I'm glad Hilton has given them a chance, because they are incredible."*

**Nelson Ancheta**

Assistant Executive Steward



# Tierra volunteers further the mission of 110 non-profits,

## ONEgeneration

Partnership since 1995



Walking into ONEgeneration, Deborah "Debbie" Bidel exclaims, "I love being a Tierra volunteer!" Her enthusiastic attitude is echoed by her cohorts, all of whom spend over 20 hours a week at ONEgeneration's senior center. Tierra volunteers Nancy Lopez, Ramon Vasquez, Frank del Olmo, Mark Silberstein, Donna Casterson, and Deborah Broudy all know exactly what to do when they arrive. Half of the team grabs supplies needed to get started on the perimeter of the building, and the other half ventures into the kitchen to prepare for serving meals to over 50 hungry seniors.

Walter Beltran, ONEgeneration's Maintenance Supervisor, who has worked with Tierra volunteers for the last two years, says, "They are all good workers. And, when they are not here, we know, because they're so helpful. I give them an A+ every time."

Brenda Bradford, Assistant Director of One Generation's Senior Enrichment Center says, "Tierra volunteers definitely help keep the place running. From cleaning the outside and inside of the building to serving lunch, they really make a difference." But, the impact they have on ONEgeneration is far greater than the tasks they perform.



***"When the seniors experience the younger people from Tierra volunteering, it inspires them and we become one community."***

As an intergenerational program that serves infants to seniors, this directly aligns with ONEgeneration's mission. "We've also had Tierra volunteers at our child care center, and one of them became an employee. It's been a win-win on many levels, and truly brings our communities together."

## MEND

Partnership since 2000



MEND is a local non-profit that focuses on treating individuals living in poverty with dignity. Each month, a variety of volunteers from all backgrounds donate more than 14,384 hours to MEND giving the organization "life." Two of MEND's hardest working volunteers are Tierra clients, Matthew Lawrence and Zulema Terrazas. Each week, Tuesday through Friday, they sort through mounds of clothing, shoes, books, and other donated items, making a huge impact in the MEND clothing store to ensure that all items are presented neatly.

Long time MEND volunteer, Higinia Medrano, boasts about Tierra volunteers, particularly remarking on Matthew's keen attention to detail.



"Matthew notices things others miss. If there is a button missing or zipper broken, he brings it to my attention, and we fix the piece of clothing before it goes back on the rack."

Veronica Soto, Volunteer Supervisor states, "Tierra volunteers are an asset to our Distribution Center. Without them, it would all be a mess. When they are not here, we feel it. They

keep everything organized and clean, and that is truly important, because it's in our name – MEND, meeting each need with dignity. When families and homeless individuals come into our clothing store, we want them to be comfortable and feel valued. Tierra volunteers make that possible."

Working together with other volunteers, Tierra clients break the bonds of poverty in more than one way. Tierra Coach Marisol Zamaron explains,

***"Tierra volunteers have not only developed their skills in customer service and ability to work with other employees, they've taken ownership of their responsibilities, and really made an impression."***

Mend Volunteer, Higinia, agrees, "They are a joy to work with and always make our day."



# dedicating 50,000 hours of volunteer service each year!

## *Jewish Home for the Aging, Skirball Hospice*

Partnership since 2006



For the past nine years, Tierra clients have volunteered their time at the Jewish Home for the Aging, Skirball Hospice collating care packets, sorting general mailings, shredding documents and filing. While all tasks are essential to JHA, one of the most impactful ways Tierra volunteers contribute to the hospice care for terminally ill seniors, is by creating and designing Chanukah cards. Longtime Tierra volunteer, Linda Anderson, says with a bright smile, "I like making cards, because it feels good when someone gives you a gift. You feel special."



Joining Linda every Monday and Friday are Renee Steimer, Oscar Hernandez, Jenny Loo, Angela Hale, and the newest member of the team, Christopher Conroy. Each Tierra volunteer possesses unique skills and abilities that enhance the duties they perform at JHA, and their contributions do not go unnoticed.

When asked what kind of impact Tierra Volunteers have at Skirball



Hospice, Lee Rothman, JHA Volunteer Coordinator, says, "We absolutely love having them here. We are so lucky they help out, and their attitudes are always positive." She adds,

**"They are always willing to work and are never afraid to try something new. Their contributions are truly valued by all."**

## *Discovery Cube*

Partnership since August 2015



The Discovery Cube of Los Angeles (DC) is one of Tierra's newest partnerships, providing ample training opportunities for Tierra Volunteers, Leon Dahlquist, Lisa Schlegel, and Connor Martin. As the "go-to," family friendly haven, filled with over 100 educational exhibits, the Discovery Cube produces countless tasks and responsibilities that keep Tierra Volunteers busy and on their toes.

"When we first began volunteering at the Discovery Cube, there was so much to learn," recalls Tierra Coach, German Gonzalez. "Initially, it was somewhat overwhelming, but our team worked hard and has really gotten the hang of things."

Rotating every 30 minutes, Tierra volunteers provide full coverage at the Early Learners Exhibit, (specifically geared to educate children ages five and under), Santa Ana Winds, and the main entrance. At Early Learners, Lisa, Connor, and Leon monitor the entire exhibit, keeping it clean and orderly (no easy task with over 30 children hopping from station to station), and radioing for supplies, when necessary. At the Santa Ana Winds Exhibit, volunteers control the hurricane tunnel, ensuring safety, and keeping the attraction neat and well stocked.



At the front, greeting guests is one of Leon's specialties, even though it wasn't always the case. As Coach German explains, "Leon has a great personality, but we needed to work with him on his social skills - making eye contact and verbally greeting guests. He's definitely improved, and looks forward to welcoming people of all ages who visit the Cube each day."

"We have so much to do here at the Discovery Cube, and Tierra Volunteers learn fast. Their performance and presence make a big difference," states DC Volunteer Coordinator, Dawn Monde, who adds,

**"We love our Tierra volunteers; their enthusiasm is infectious."**





# Tierra's Fall Festival

*A traditional hit!*

## Did you know?

It takes over 200 dedicated volunteers to put on Tierra's Fall Festival each year!

Tierra's Fall Festival originally started as a spaghetti dinner organized by a committee of dedicated parents in the 80's.

With over 1,000 attendees, the Festival is the our largest annual community event.

Each scarecrow at the Fall Festival is handmade by our clients and staff.

Parent volunteers lead the festival planning committee from start to finish. Special thanks to Jan Maseda & Elisabeth Stimson for chairing this year's committee!

Hungry festival goers consumed 240 lbs of beef brisket, 500 hot dogs, and 80 lbs of chicken, all donated by US Foods.

The Festival's Petting Zoo had a debut guest appearance by Humphrey, a four-month old, 9 foot tall baby camel.



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# Artist Spotlight: JOE ZALDIVAR

The Reinvention of both Place and Points of View

Joe Zaldivar is a prolific and successful artist working with Tierra's First Street Gallery Art Center, and a champion who opens wide the doors for appreciating and valuing individuals who experience Autism. This year alone, Joe has completed 17 commissioned art works for businesses, organizations and community members throughout Southern California. His exhibition resume includes solo exhibitions at *The Claremont Community Foundation* and *First Street Gallery*, an extraordinary collaborative artwork for *The Storefront for Art & Architecture* in New York City, NY, and group exhibitions at *Pitzer College Art Galleries*, *The Ginger Elliot Exhibition Center at Claremont Heritage*, *Los Angeles City College*, *Hamer Toyota*, *Club Nokia*, and *The Special Olympics World Games Art Exhibitions*.

## **What is the secret to Joe's success and surge in popularity?**

Many who know and love his art work are attracted to Joe's mastered skill of rendering whimsical and animated presentations of realistic street views and interior spaces. Joe works with satellite and ground level views of maps and photographs to reinvent the "beauty of place". His colorful, expansive and highly detailed images incorporate multiple views and are often constructed as multi-paneled artworks. By combining Google Maps and iPad technology with an innate sense of proportion and perspective, Joe developed a cutting edge method of image researching and reinterpreting familiar images to inspire his vivid creations, often incorporating 360 degree perspectives and monumentally scaled maps.

Those who have commissioned his work find that Joe expertly illustrates the unique details of each site, elevating the final image to be both memorable and extraordinary. Whether he is capturing the individual tiles on the roof of the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, the delectably rendered cream puffs in the case of The SomeCrust Bakery in Claremont, the specific strings of a guitar displayed on the wall of the Folk Music Center and Museum, or the atmospheric intrigue of the Musso & Frank's Restaurant in Hollywood; Joe's astounding attention to detail draws the viewer into the scene, transporting them in front of, or inside, the place he has created. "It's not unusual to hear comments from fans of Joe's work, that he has captured a new perspective or never-before-noticed details of a favorite museum, restaurant or even their home," tells Seth Pringle, Gallery Manager for First Street.

Since joining First Street Gallery nearly six years ago, Joe's career as a professional artist rose to new levels and continues to expand. Tierra del Sol Fine Arts provides innovative supports for individuals to explore and develop their uniquely creative talents throughout all of Tierra's programs. First Street Gallery Art Center and Sunland Studio Arts specialize in guidance and encouragement for artists to explore inner creativity. Seth, and all of the Tierra family, share the understanding that these artists are uniquely talented and creatively driven. For artists like Joe, developing his talents at a level that empowers him to sell his work and truly achieve a career in the arts is an indescribable accomplishment in which we all take pride.

To view further images of Joe's work, and all the Artists working with Tierra del Sol Fine Arts, log onto

[www.1ststreetgallery.org](http://www.1ststreetgallery.org)  
and Facebook pages:

- First Street Gallery Art Center
- Joe Zaldivar
- Tierra del Sol Foundation



Joe's Phoenix Area Map is comprised of 10 separate panels that line up for total dimensions of 90" H and 48" W. This piece took him over five weeks to create.



Transit Across



Greene & Greene Darling House



Claremont Heritage



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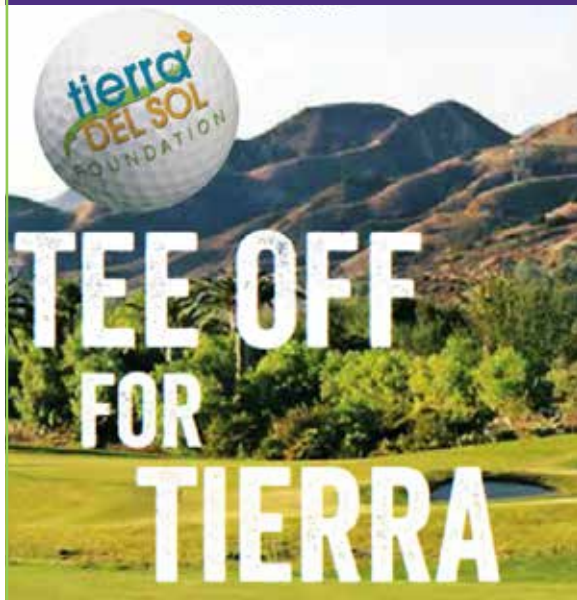
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## SAVE THE DATE!

### *Tierra del Sol's Annual Golf Tournament!*

*Monday, May 16, 2016  
Angeles National Golf Club  
Sunland*



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Los Angeles Daily News



**ur Values:** Each and every human life has value and meaning. Regardless of the notion of disability, each person has the potential and the right to lead a full, productive, and personally meaningful life. A life with quality includes participation in the economic, cultural, civic, and spiritual affairs of the community. A life with quality includes loved ones and valued social relationships. Families and communities are stronger when all of its members are accepted and valued for their contributions.

## Mark Your Calendar!

### **Friday, February 5, 2016**

11:00 am - 1:00 pm  
NEXUS Discovery Celebration  
Van Nuys Office

### **Saturday, February 6, 2016**

6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Guest Curator Exhibition Series  
First Street Gallery Art Center - Claremont

### **February 6 - March 19, 2016**

First Street Gallery Art Show  
First Street Gallery Art Center - Claremont

### **Tuesday, February 9, 2016**

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm  
Sunland Celebration  
Sunland Campus

### **Thursday, February 11, 2016**

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm  
NEXUS Certificate Ceremony  
Sunland Campus

### **Month of March, 2016**

2016 Distinguished Speakers  
Series Kickoff  
Date to be announced  
Sunland Campus

### **Friday, April 29, 2016**

11:00 am - 1:00 pm  
NEXUS Discovery Celebration  
Van Nuys Office