

SUMMER ISSUE 2021

Looking Back... Looking Forward – 50 Years!

Message from Rebecca Lienhard, CEO



I am not the same person today as I was 50 years ago. Thankfully, I have grown, matured, and learned from my mistakes as well as honored my successes. It is in these significant passages of time that we are able to reflect on who we really are, as people, as a family, and as a community.

Like myself, Tierra del Sol may not be the same organization as we were when we first started, but our heart and our soul still shine with the same guiding light. This light is our values and our values are this light. Although not quite worded the same way in 1971, our values have guided our way for 50 years, rain or shine.

Let me introduce our values to you one more time – *person-centeredness, passion, honesty, respect, and full-engagement.*

Despite the chaos of the 2020 storm in which we were all shaken to our very core, Tierra stood firmly planted in these values. They did not fail us; they did not fail you.

From our early humble beginnings of one location, born for the sole purpose to serve individuals with developmental disabilities, to our current vast array of creative pathways to employment, our commitment to being person-centered, passionate, honest, respectful, and fully-engaged can be seen by the success of those we serve and by all those who serve.

2020 provided Tierra an additional opportunity to streamline our Mission and Vision statements and by doing so, we became laser-focused on creating productive and personally meaningful lives in partnership with those we served. Let me introduce you to our newly worded Mission and Vision.

Our Mission:

We champion inclusion and value for all individuals with disabilities through creative pathways to employment, education, and the arts.

Our Vision:

All people live productive and personally meaningful lives, regardless of the notion of disability.

You will see, throughout this issue, our values in action. You will hear the voices of those we serve. You will see their successes and joy. You will see a road that clearly says, “We are champions of inclusion and value for all individuals with disabilities”.

Won't you join me in celebration as Tierra rings in another 50 years of productive and personally meaningful lives, regardless of the notion of one's disability.



Tierra Welcomes New Board Members!

On July 1st, Tierra del Sol elected Sister Andrea Diebel, SSND, and Ric Alviso to its Board of Directors.

"We are fortunate to have both of these individuals become a valued part of Tierra's leadership," states CEO Rebecca Lienhard. "Sister Andrea represents a significant part of our history as the School Sisters of Notre Dame's mission is interwoven in Tierra's and Ric's diverse and creative background brings an exciting new level of expertise to our board."

Sister Andrea



As a young teacher, Sister Andrea Diebel first learned of the School Sisters of Notre Dame's mission in 1976 and was drawn to living in a community where all shared a goal of educating people to their fullest potential. She took her vows two years later and continued her career as an educator, principal, and administrator throughout Central and Southern California.

"I was first introduced to Tierra in the mid-70s since the Sunland Campus is where the California School Sisters would meet for community gatherings. Prior to that, the campus had been the Preparatory Institute of Notre Dame for 16 years, where young girls who were considering entering religious life, attended high school and boarded there as well.

Joining Tierra's Board so many years later has been a true blessing," tells

Sister Andrea. "It's not only a wonderful way to stay connected with an organization where we have our roots, but it also has been a special way to pay tribute to 18-year BOD member Sister Harriet Stellern, who had a genuine love and concern for those Tierra serves. I look forward to learning more about all that Tierra has become and the amazing work they've done to change lives for the people they serve."



Ric Alviso

Dr. Ric Alviso has more than 20 years experience as a music professor at California State University Northridge (CSUN) and Santa Monica City College. He received his B.M. degree in music composition from California State University, Long Beach and his M.A. and Ph.D degrees in ethnomusicology at UCLA. During his fieldwork in Africa and the Southwestern United States, Ric studied and performed music from many cultures including Shona and Mandinka music from Africa, Indonesian gamelan, Albanian folk music, and various Latin and Native American styles. As a composer, he has combined elements of Western and non-Western traditions with an emphasis on microtonality. Ric is also an accomplished pianist and author.



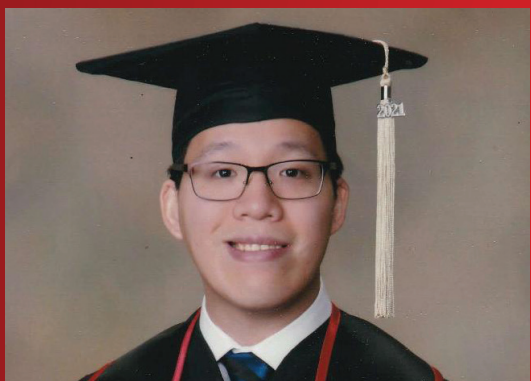
Prior to pursuing his career in music, Ric had 15 years of administrative experience in programs that served people with developmental disabilities. "I have known about Tierra del Sol for 35 years and have heard nothing but good things about the organization. I've been wanting to get involved again with social services for many years and I think Tierra is a perfect fit. I hope to bring my years of experience as a service provider to help the organization continue to offer excellent services to our community."



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2021!

NEXUS began in 2007 with only three students attending classes at L.A. Valley College. Today, over 178 Tierra students receive academic and professional mentoring at California State University Northridge, College of the Canyons, Glendale Community College, and Los Angeles City, Valley, Mission, and Pierce Colleges, as well as West Valley Occupational Center.

Join us in celebrating the incredible strides that the students in Tierra's College to Career Program have made this year. Through an innovative individualized model, students with developmental **disabilities are obtaining certificates and degrees in fields that match their goals and interests and ultimately transitioning into meaningful employment.**



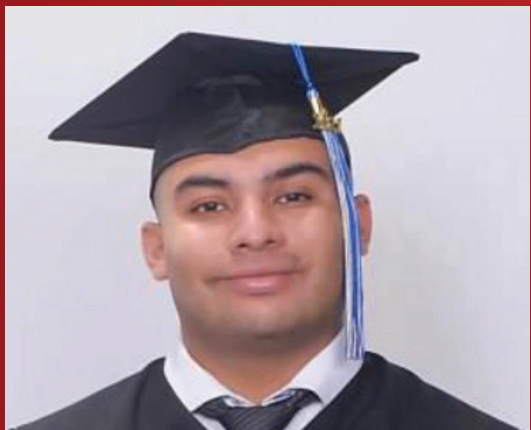
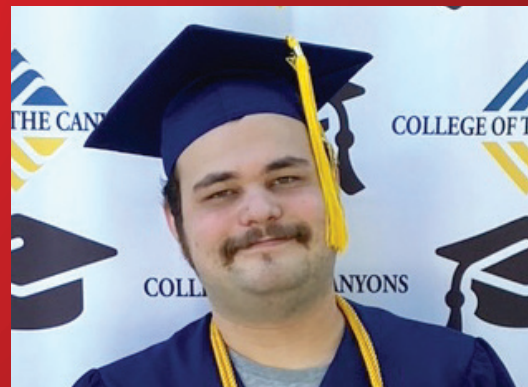
Steve Nguyen

"I have been in NEXUS since June of 2014 and began my journey at Pierce College. I was at Pierce College until 2018. I received an Associate Degree in Business Administration, and then attended CSUN from 2018 to 2021. I have taken math, science, and business classes at Pierce College and CSUN and chose Business Management as my major because I can get a job at most corporations." —Steve Nguyen

Tyler J.

Tyler graduated with honors in June from the College of the Canyons with an Associate of Arts Degree in Computer Applications and Web Technologies. He's beginning a paid internship this Fall at Valley Presbyterian Hospital.

"Graduating with HONORS! Congratulations, Tyler. We are all so incredibly proud of you." —Diala Dennison, NEXUS Program Manager



Daniel Geddes

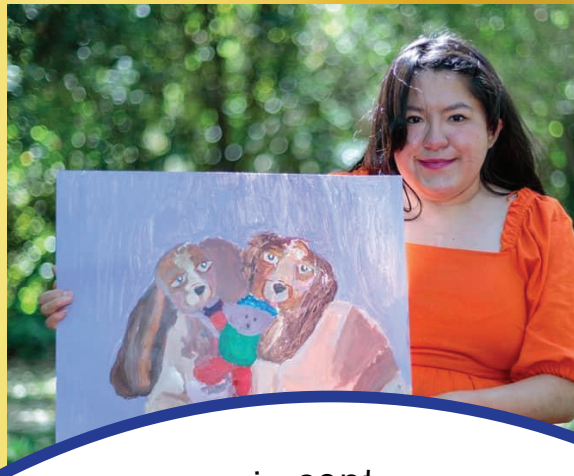
Daniel has been in Tierra's NEXUS program since 2014. He graduated from Mission College this June with an Associate Degree in Arts, and has been accepted into CSUN where he will be majoring in Psychology this fall.

"I am so proud of the NEXUS program staff and so grateful for everyone's support. Thank you Diala, Janet, and Nina. Awesome teamwork! How I wish I could thank everyone in person and the coaches that supported Daniel all these years. It's been such a journey and I am grateful for Tierra's support and patience. Thank you!" —Violet Geddes, proud mother of Daniel

Tierra champions inclusion and value for all individuals through creative pathways to employment, education



Douglas Molina, hired by McDonald's



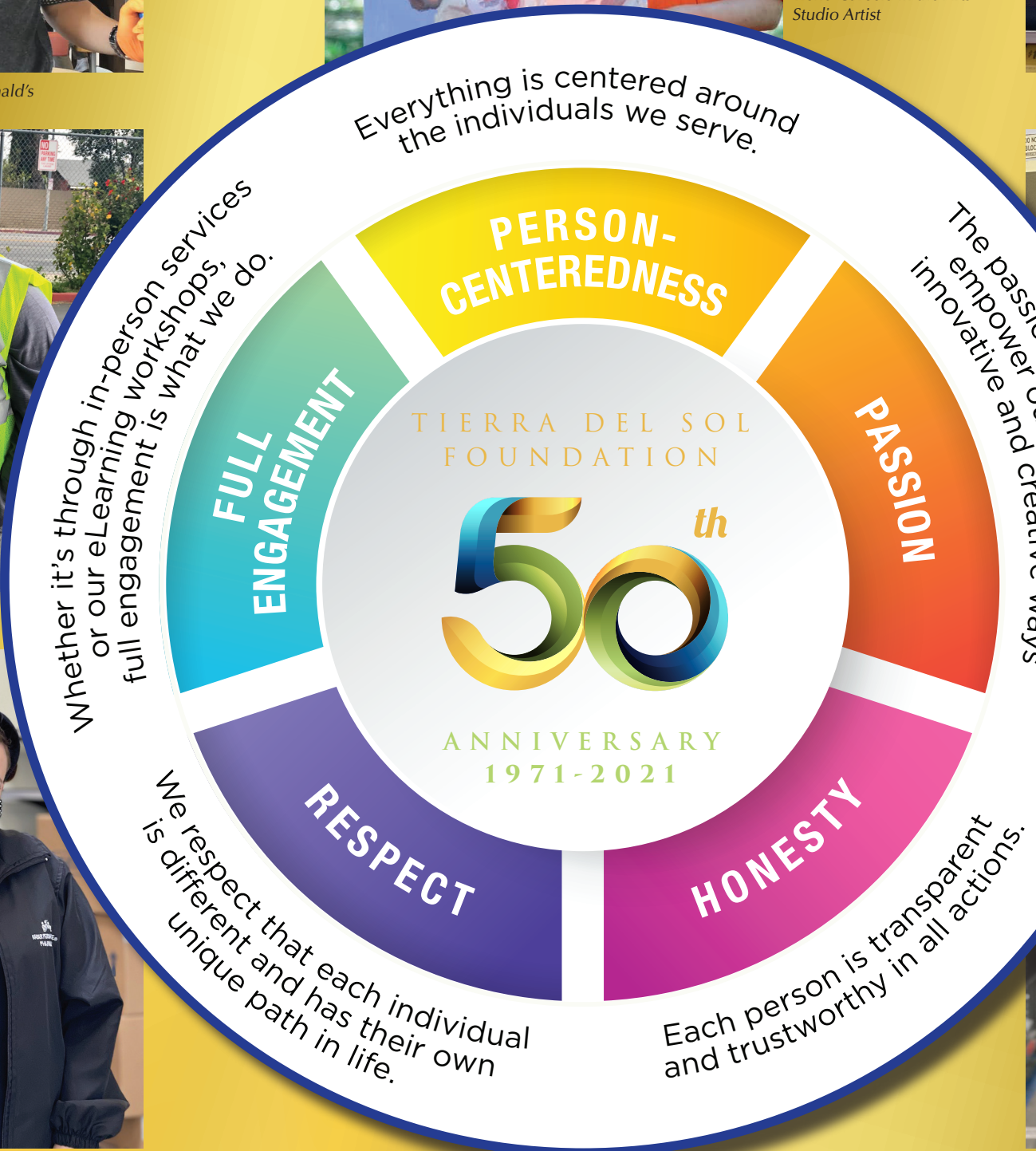
Esmeralda Ballesteros,
Tierra Careers in the Arts
Studio Artist



Destiny Pritchett, hired by Miller
Career and Transitional Center



Raven Gentry, hired by Grocery Outlet Bargain Market and McDonald's



People with disabilities employment, and the arts



Griselda Zamarripa, hired by
Grocery Outlet Bargain Market



David Cruz, hired by
California Pizza Kitchen



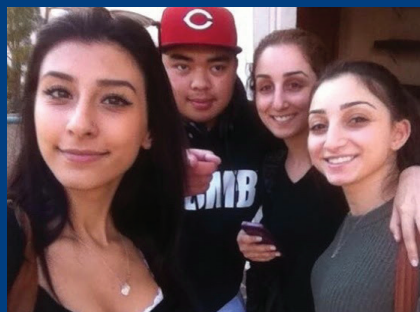
Angela Hale, hired by Amazon

Autism is Fearless

By Neil Natividad

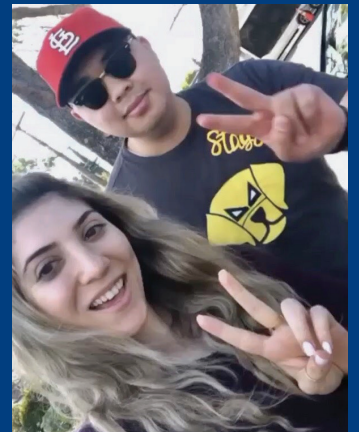
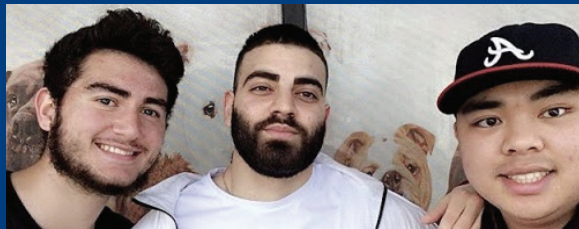
Tierra Workforce Development Associate

My name is Neil Natividad. I'm 25 years old, and full of high expectations and confidence. I was born in 1995 and diagnosed with autism at the age of two years old. Living with autism is sometimes challenging because it made me feel different. Making friends was difficult because I didn't know how to react to others. I was scared and felt socially overwhelmed. When I was younger, due to my social anxiety, I was bullied by others and mistreated because I was misunderstood. My thought process was different than others. I felt like it was a bit delayed. Over the years, I remained positive and learned basic skills to socialize. I learned techniques from family, relatives, friends, school, therapists, and Tierra!



It's been amazing, the progress I've made over the years. I am able to talk to people, and now, I have a close group of friends. My friends are very supportive and caring. It makes me feel happy that I'm part of something. They give me great advice and we have a lot of fun hanging out and calling each other.

At the age of 17, as a Senior in High School, my life changed. My parents adopted Buddy, a Labrador Retriever. Buddy instantly became a part of our family, and we've had him for eight years now. He has been a big part of my life because he has helped me by calming me down when I am feeling a lot of anxiety. There are times that I feel sad, anxious, and overwhelmed, so I turn to Buddy for support.



My dog inspired me to create a logo that represents autism for me. The logo is called AIF (Autism Is Fearless) because just like Buddy, all of us, together, can help each other manage our autism with confidence, love, and support.

My dream is to one day have my own company and to help people with disabilities.



Together, we can show the world that we should never be afraid of autism, or any other disability. We can be fearless.



passion to move forward and
power our associates in
and creative ways

ms.

Thank You Stanton Family

In March of 2020, June Stanton, parent of longtime Tierra Associate Kathy Stanton, passed away; and four months later, Kathy joined her. Tierra pays tribute to both mom and daughter for the joy and generosity that they brought to Tierra, not only during the 35 years that Kathy spent in Tierra's program, but also for the legacy that June left Tierra, the beneficiary of a recent planned gift made through her will.

June was an industrious and accomplished woman, whose love for her daughter Kathy, born with Down syndrome, became the driving force for advocacy for people with disabilities. This passion led June and her husband to be founding members of Valley Village, where Kathy eventually lived; while during the day, Tierra del Sol became her second home. "Kathy was quite a character," laughs Julie Snyder, Tierra's Late Life Planner. "Although initially shy, once she got to know you, she was full of life and would do anything for a can of Diet Coke."



June Stanton



Ana Garcia and Kathy Stanton

"She also had a creative side to her," recalls Maria Jones, Sunland Studio Arts Program Director. "She loved animals and drew countless pictures of dogs, each with their own unique name and story." Ana Garcia, her favorite Direct Support Professional (DSP) and Art Mentor, shared, "Kathy was quiet, but loving and had many friends here. As Kathy aged, Julie worked with the family to transition Kathy into Tierra's senior program."

Pat Farris, June's daughter, notes, "My mom always trusted Tierra to handle my sister with gentle skill and that is why she wanted to make sure Tierra was included in her estate. We were glad to continue helping an organization that meant so much to our family, and leave a legacy that will help others in the future."



June and Kathy Stanton

Leave a Legacy That Transforms Lives!

When you support Tierra del Sol, you help to empower people with developmental disabilities to fulfill their potential and lead a full and meaningful life. There are many ways to help a loved one and others, while making an impact for future generations.

Plan a gift that plays a vital role in changing the way people think about individuals with disabilities now, and in years to come.

Learn more about ways to make a planned gift and join Tierra's Legacy of Love Society. Visit www.tierradelsol.org/planned-giving or contact Cathy Galarneau, Chief Development Officer, at cgalarneau@tierradelsol.org.

Estate Plan Gift

Beneficiary Designations

Individual Retirement Account (IRA)

Stocks, Bonds or Mutual Funds Shared

Special Needs Trust

Legacy of Love

The Bartus Family
Bud & Althea Brown
The Bryant Family
Sarah Eisner
Fortman Trust
Estate of Lois Hansen

Estate of Patrick Harris
Estate of Mary Ellen Hughes
Jan & Stephen Maseda
Jennifer & Alan Moses
Joseph Nicoletta
Estate of Armand Ouellette

Larry & Marlys Sack
Patricia & Steven Smith
June Stanton
Sister Harriet Stellern SSND
Elisabeth & Milt Stimson

Save the Date!

TIERRA DEL SOL
FOUNDATION

50th

ANNIVERSARY
1971-2021

Tierra champions inclusion and
value for all individuals with
developmental disabilities.

Saturday, October 9th | 1 - 4 pm

Program 2 pm

9919 Sunland Blvd., Sunland

Music by Masanga Marimba, art, awards,
refreshments, silent auction & more!

**This event is complimentary.
Watch your mail and email for details.**

Our History

It's hard to believe that Tierra del Sol opened its doors 50 years ago and officially became a non-profit organization on February 8, 1971. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been touched over the last five decades thanks to the fortitude and vision of eight founding families and the partnership they formed with the School Sisters of Notre Dame.

Over the years, it has become clear that Tierra is not a place, rather it is a dynamic organization that empowers people with developmental disabilities through creative pathways to employment, volunteerism, education, and the arts.





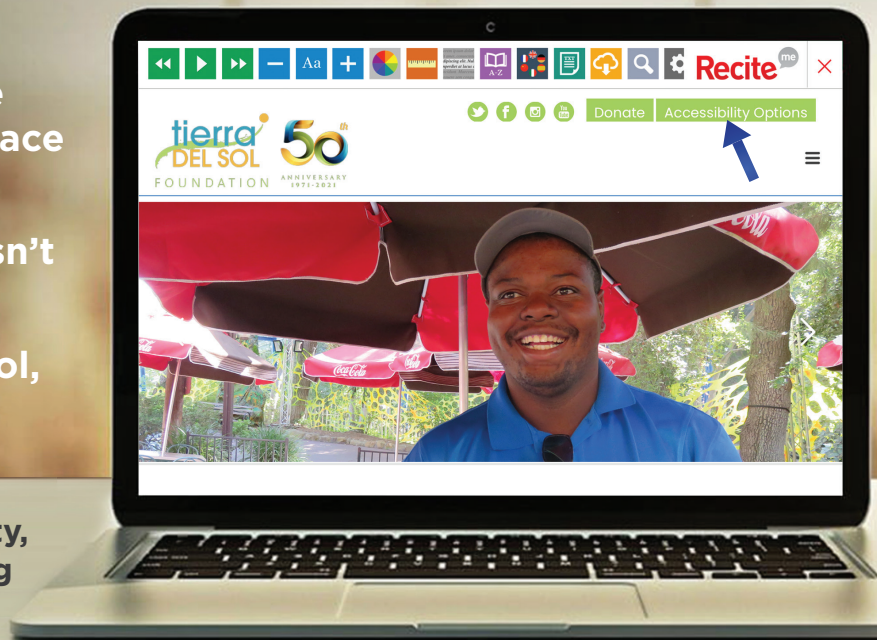
9919 Sunland Boulevard, Sunland, California 91040
www.tierradelsol.org

Approximately one billion people globally have a disability and often face barriers when visiting websites.

Tierra wanted to make sure that wasn't the case with our website.

Check out our new Accessibility Tool, *Recite Me*, on tierradelsol.org.

Features include text to speech functionality, fully customizable styling features, reading aids and translation tools.



Don't miss out on Tierra news! If you haven't been getting our updates on the incredible accomplishments of our associates, artists, and students, as well as events, advocacy efforts, and important messages from Tierra's leadership, then it's time to sign-up and register today!

Visit www.tierradelsol.org/enews and stay connected!

Check us out on social media:

Instagram: [tierradelsoldn](https://www.instagram.com/tierradelsoldn)
Facebook: [tierradelsolfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/tierradelsolfoundation)
Twitter: [tierradelsoldn](https://twitter.com/tierradelsoldn)

