Looking Forward to New Possibilities

Tierra’s associates, their families, and our staff each have a story to tell. Their experiences, development, and overall involvement – be it professional or personal – are part of the intricate fabric that makes the history of Tierra del Sol dynamic and essential to our community. As we lead with our values of person-centeredness, honesty, respect, and full engagement, we continue to open the doors of opportunity and lay the foundation for generations to come.

In this issue, you’ll read about Tierra through the words of the people we serve, our families and staff, and those who weren’t afraid to support our mission and make noise at the Capitol level. You’ll also enjoy highlighted moments from our 50th Anniversary celebration as well as successes that took place this Fall.

Rebecca Lienhard, Tierra’s CEO, shares, “It warms my heart to see so many testimonials from our folks. These individuals are shining examples of the hundreds of people we serve each day who are in the community, making a difference, helping propel Tierra’s mission forward and reminding us that we are creating a world where value, employment, and independence are possible, regardless of the notion of disability.”
What is **Tierra** to you?

“I look at Tierra as not only an organization, but we are a big family, helping and uplifting each other. No matter what background we come from or what ethnicity we are, we don’t look at that. We look at how we can better ourselves. Some people who have inspired me at Tierra are my coach, Romina, for teaching me how to take feedback and be more positive. And, Michael Leon, for helping me become more confident with my public speaking skills.”

Matt Maher
Tierra eLearning Instructor and Workforce Development Associate

“Tierra helps me conquer my fears and believe in myself. To me, Tierra del Sol feels like home. I can always reach out to my job coach, or anyone else, if ever I need anything. They are there for me.”

Chloe Houghton
Tierra Board Member and Workforce Development Associate

“Not only is Tierra a place for people to learn to work in a professional environment, it is also a place where all people are accepted and included. May this great foundation continue for the next 50 years so all people, everywhere, are accepted and included every single day.”

Michael Leon
Tierra eLearning Instructor and Workforce Development Associate

“All of our past and present associates at Tierra del Sol are family. We help each other achieve our desired goals and objectives while learning and sharing valuable life skills and experiences.”

Minerva Davila
Workforce Development Instructor

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**Hired!**

Anthony Vasquez
Hired by Smart & Final as a Store Associate

Jacqueline Cuellar
Hired by Khol’s as a Part-Time Associate

Natalie Loera
Hired by Macy’s as a Recovery Associate

Sirui Chen
Hired by California Pizza Kitchen as a Kitchen Assistant

Congratulations to those who landed the job! And, good luck to the well-trained candidates who are looking forward to earning a paycheck in the coming year.
“What would our world be without those that can paint, draw, weave, or sculpt? The creativity and talent of our artists never ceases to amaze me. By giving these individuals the freedom and tools to express themselves, we’ve found a way to not only share their talent with the world, but to also give the world the gift of their work. The business of being an artist is real. From preparing a portfolio and curating work to creating art, this is a career path that Tierra artists definitely take seriously.” —Rebecca Lienhard, Tierra CEO

“Check out the highlights from Zines del Sol, a group show of artwork, zines, ceramics, textiles, and more, all created by the artists at the Tierra del Sol Studios!

If you would like to purchase artwork from this show as well as from other Tierra artists, visit tierradelsolgallery.org and check out our online store.

“My name is Evan and I’m proud to be an Artist. I am also an art curator, arts educator, and a spokesperson for both my art and the art of others with developmental disabilities.”

Evan Hynes
Upland Art Studios Artist

“To me, being an artist grants me purpose and a sense of belonging to show that we can reach our goals and we can reach new heights we aren't even aware of. My goal is to use my art and my public speaking as a vehicle for advocacy. And, not just for me, but for all the individuals at Tierra, and beyond!”

Shaina Barnett
Sunland Studio Artist

CAREERS IN THE ARTS
ZINES DEL SOL
Celebration
TO THE NEXT
F O U N D A T I O N

We need to support organizations like Tierra...50 years of not just inclusion, but helping people live to their full potential. It’s one of the things I love about Tierra. You see it in all the folks who have spoken today, that they are living life and they are doing things, it’s positive, and it warms my heart every time I interact with this organization. I am so grateful for the work that you do and will continue to be supportive in any way that I can.

Happy Birthday, Tierra!

Bob Blumenfield
Los Angeles City Councilmember
3rd District

“This celebration is about the people we serve. Their stories, their accomplishments, and their challenges were made possible by you, their family members, our amazing staff, and many dedicated community partners. Thank you for the role you played and helping us celebrate and honor those who have been a part of Tierra’s history, today’s successes and tomorrow’s endeavors.”

Rebecca Lienhard
Tierra del Sol CEO

“I’ve been with Tierra’s NEXUS program for nine years. I started at Los Angeles Pierce College and graduated with a certificate in Child Development. I did my internship at Child Development Institute (CDI) and have had several internships that followed CDI.” My last internship was with Metro Link, which was paid. Internships have helped me learn my strengths and weaknesses, and I’m still taking college classes online to pursue office work. I’m also learning acting from the Born to Act Players and am loving Tierra’s eLearning workshops!

Nilasha Kurukulasuriya
NEXUS Student in Tierra’s College to Career Program

L to R: Tierra’s Rebecca Lienhard, CEO, Nancy Bissonnette-Andrew, Chief Clinical Officer, Julie Snyder, Life Planning Navigator, and Rebecca Hamm, Director of Arts, were each honored for 30+ years of service with Tierra.
Celebrations and Cheers

TO THE NEXT 50 YEARS!

“I am proud to represent this community and Tierra del Sol in the state assembly. When I was elected, one of the first persons I met with was Rebecca Lienhard and other advocates, who came to my office to tell me more about, not just this organization and the amazing work they do in our community, but about the movement of inclusion. And that’s what we are celebrating here today, 50 years of inclusion and training everyone for the workforce.”

Luz Rivas
California State Assemblymember
District 39

“My name is Debbie Bidel and I am 38 years old and I came to Tierra del Sol ten years ago. I was nervous when I started my program because I did not know anyone. The staff made me feel very welcome. Tierra has taught me so many skills and I have worked at wonderful places. Last year, I learned a lot about computers, and I did not know anything about Zoom before the pandemic! Now, I can show my dad what to do when he is stuck and needs to get into his zoom meetings.”

Debbie Bidel
Associate in Tierra’s Workforce Development Program
Several months after we said goodbye to Shirley, Karen passed away. In honor of Karen’s life, Shirley’s son, Erik Sydow, wrote a loving, unconventional obituary about his sister that went viral after LA Times journalist, Daniel Miller, retweeted it and wrote an article. The story touched hundreds of thousands of people and resulted in McDonalds and Coca-Cola hosting multiple fundraisers in honor of Karen, designating a percentage of the funds to Tierra’s programs and services. It’s moments like these when the universe reminds us we are not alone and the story of our lives is more impactful than we realize.

In May of 2021, Tierra and others said farewell to Shirley Sydow, a longtime Tierra parent whose devotion to her daughter Karen, inspired thirty years of remarkable volunteer service and the love of so many whose lives she touched.

As the parent of a daughter born with cerebral palsy and autism in 1960, Shirley experienced firsthand the challenges and isolation of raising a child with developmental disabilities. “There were no services back then to help Karen or support her,” shared Shirley in a 2017 interview. “Tierra became her life and we were happy for her to have a place to go; a place that provided the best environment for each individual.”

Her role as a tiger mom and passion to get involved at an organization that helped her daughter was immediate and contagious. For 15 years she led a parent service group and organized annual spaghetti dinners that raised money for a new pool heater and air conditioners for the classrooms among other on-going improvements for clients and staff. Although soft-spoken, Shirley was never intimidated to address a room full of people, especially when it came to advocacy for those with disabilities. As a highly skilled quilter, she hand-crafted beautiful quilts that were donated to Tierra’s fall festivals, galas, and golf tournament auctions. In 1998, she joined Tierra’s Board of Directors and continued inspiring parents to get involved through advocacy, volunteerism, and fundraising.

Having worked closely with Shirley for many years, Steve Miller (Tierra’s past CEO) recalls, “When I think of Shirley, I’m reminded that love is an action word. She poured her love for Karen into devoted service to every school and organization that served her daughter. Her service to Tierra as leader of our parent service group and on our board, helped us establish a culture and set of values that honor the uniqueness and basic goodness of each person and family it serves. What a Legacy!”
Thank You to Our 2020-2021 Circle of Inspiration Members

Your exceptional generosity is a true reflection of your commitment to empowering all individuals with developmental disabilities to be accepted, valued and included.

VISIONARY
($50,000 plus)
John Gogian Family Foundation
The Rose Hills Foundation
The Stanton Family
INNOVATOR
($25,000 - $49,999)
The Green Foundation
Center for Strategic Partnerships and Community Partners
QueensCare
Lon V. Smith Foundation
MUFG Union Bank Foundation
PARTNER
($10,000 - $24,999)
Anonymous
Anonymous
Diana & Kevin Brown
CLA Foundation
Carrie Estelle Doheny Foundation
Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation, Inc.
The Fanny & Svante
Community Partners
Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council
Karren & Patrick McClenahan
Loren & Jennifer Philip
Rebecca & Mike Quevedo
Patti & Don Redding
ADVOCATE
($5,000 - $9,999)
All Nations Church
Autism Speaks, Inc.
Bolton & Company
Mara W. Breech Foundation
Sara P. Eisein Trust
Patti & Tel Gilroy in honor of Darryl Ann Parker
Joyce & Henry Harris in memory of Clare Katherine Zeitlin
Hochman Salkin Toscher Perez PC
Raul Huerta in memory of Elsa Huerta
Sharon & Marc Littman
Thomas Mike III
Montrose Church
Because You Matter
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
Elisabeth & Matt Stimson
TDA Investment Group, Inc.
Michelle & Frank Vega
Kim & Richard Villa
BENEFCTOR
($2,500 - $4,999)
A-1 All American Roofing WLA
Cecilia Adame
AIG
Bill Allen – Weingart Foundation
Leonor & Thomas Anderson
Anonymous
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The Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Christa & Matt Chase
Shadi & Greg Eisenman
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Foothills Trails District Neighborhood Council
Birdie & Dave Gilman
Hamer Toyota
Virginia Garcia Herrera Foundation
Interior Removal Specialist, Inc.
Kay & Randall Huff
Catherine & Peter Koetters
Laborers’ International Union of North America Local #300
Laborers’ International Union of North America Local #1309
Rebecca & Ray Lienhard
Christine Likes
Elizabeth Likes
Sharon & Marc Littman
MNZ Janitorial Services
Walter W. Mosher, Jr. Foundation
Los Angeles Trial Lawyers’ Charities
Jan & Stephen Maseda
Katie & Steve Miller
Pat & Kevin Moore
Northrop Grumman
Alma & Stan Paplaskas
Pacific Southwest Administrators
Marly & Larry Sack
Howard Sherman & Gregg Houston
Charles & Molly Thayer
Jeanne Ward Foundation
Larry Wong
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PATRON
($1,500 - $2,499)
AmWINS Insurance Brokerage
Besseco | Hawthor LLP
CLC Builders Inc
Rocco & Tensie Davis
Disney Worldwide Services
E-Central Credit Union
First Lutheran Church of Northridge Lifehouse Church
Foundation Flooring
The Freidenberg Family
Cathy & Jim Galarneau
Julie & Roy Gonella
Carol & Lloyd Harris
Julie & Greg Hoegge
Image 2000
Laborers’ International Union of North America Local #652
Margaret & Dwayne Lundsford
Muir Chase Plumbing
Network for Good
Off the Walls Floors, Inc. in honor of Angela Miliareis
Pegi Matsuda Consulting
Philadelphia Insurance Companies
Kim Roffes in honor of Jennifer Kaiser
Rountree Glass
Betsey & Daniel Savant
Southern California District Council of Laborers
Doreen & Dean Stoutland
Technicolor Federal Credit Union
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gustavo & Rini-Sultana Valdespino
Valley Presbyterian Hospital
Lisa VanLanduyt
Bill & Elisa Van Lingham
Mary & Robert Villar
John Waid
Joyce & John Walter
FRIEND
($1,000 - $1,499)
Anonymous
Best, Best & Kreiger LLP
Thyr & Karl Boeckmann
Althea & Bud Brown
Kristopher Brown
Merrilyn & James Brown
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in honor of Anna Cannella
Christina & Harry Essex
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Eric, Raquel & Kadence McClenahan
Sally & Thomas Meersman
Sarah & Joseph Montes
Richard Pernia
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Catherine Saillant in honor of Nancy Saillant
Patricia & Michael Smith – California Community Foundation
Stay Green Inc.
Erik & Shirley Sydow
in honor of Karen
Lauren & Kyle Stoutland
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Andrew Weedon – Wells Fargo Advisors
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Liz Likes
Princess Cruises
Kristine & Anthony Raluy
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The Bartus Family
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Estate of Patrick Harris
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Joseph Nicoletta
Estate of Armand Ouellette
Lary & Marlys Sack
Patricia & Steven Smith
The Stanton Family
Sister Harriet Stellern SSND
Elisabeth & Matt Stimson

COI Members: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021
SAVE THE DATE

15th Annual Tee Off for Tierra!
Charity Golf Tournament and Auction

Monday, April 25, 2022
details coming soon

On behalf of the men and women we serve, Tierra’s Board of Directors, and staff, we wish you a wonderful holiday season filled with good health and happiness. Thank you for celebrating this commemorative year with Tierra del Sol. We look forward to the opportunities that await us all in 2022!

Check us out on social media:
@tierradelsolfdn
tierradelsolfoundation
tierradelsolfdn