

“Yes, Chef!” The Innovative Partnership of Tierra del Sol and National Health Foundation’s Arleta Kitchen

Tierra del Sol has embarked on a new journey with National Health Foundation (NHF) to serve the San Fernando Valley’s most fragile population of unhoused senior citizens and low-income families. The Recuperative Care Center, located in Arleta, is a 43,000 square foot, state-of-the-art housing complex with 148 beds that provides interim and short-term housing for community members in need.



Angie Negrete, Director of NHF Arleta Recuperative Care

Angie Negrete, Director of NHF Arleta Recuperative Care, explains, “Our interim housing guests come from programs like the Los Angeles Homeless Authority housing queue, while our recuperative guests come from hospital and insurance partners and are with us for a shorter stay. For both groups, we focus on helping people get back on their feet and into permanent housing. In some cases, we’re also able to support family reunification.”

At its current capacity, the center has over 100 guests who receive three meals a day. Mario Ledesma, Arleta’s Chef and Kitchen Supervisor, shares, “Preparing such a high volume of meals takes a consistent pace from a strong crew. We support the dietary and nutritional well-being of our residents and prepare fresh dishes that are low-sodium and nutrient-rich.”

With 20 years of experience in food service and preparation training, Tierra was approached by NHF in 2023 to inquire about creating a partnership where associates would work in the kitchen to prepare and serve food. At that time, the center was in the early stages of development, which gave Tierra time to continue training associates who were eager to step in and take on the challenge of joining Arleta’s fast-paced kitchen crew.



Jonathan Bolanos-Butler, Paid Intern from Tierra’s Workforce Development Program, showcases strong food prep skills in the Arleta Kitchen.

Negrete exclaims, “We love Tierra! Arleta operates 365 days a year, and we are nearing full capacity, so Tierra associates have been instrumental in making our kitchen services a success. Tierra provides quality interns and mentors who help us operate our kitchen with complete confidence and meet the needs of the people we serve. They are fast learners and eager to grow! And I also appreciate how they get to know the Arleta guests and staff. It’s been a great experience so far, and we are grateful for all the help they have provided. As NHF’s programs and services are expanding in the coming year, so will our partnership with Tierra. It’s been almost a year since the partnership began and it has already exceeded expectations.”



Rony Giron and Rodney Monroe, Arleta Kitchen Team Members, Tierra Workforce Development Associates

JUST HIRED!

This April, NHF hired Rodney Monroe and Rony Giron, who were both interning in the Arleta Kitchen. Erika Garcia, Master Instructor in Tierra's Workforce Development program, shared, "Rodney and Rony focused on developing their skills—from dishwashing and food prep to nutrition and serving."

They received valuable mentorship from both their NHF supervisors and Tierra staff. Their hard work paid off, and now they're working full-time, Monday through Friday. Congratulations, gentlemen, we are so proud of you!"



Rony Giron; Mario Ledesma, Arleta's Chef and Kitchen Supervisor; and Rodney Monroe

Flor Garcia, Workforce Development Program Manager, shares, "We've always seen guests at Arleta being treated with dignity and respect no matter what their hardship, which has been powerful for Tierra interns to experience. For some of the interns who have been here since the beginning, they've come out of their shells. There have been so many great relationships built at Arleta, and the atmosphere is continuously welcoming."

Tierra strives to create a world where everyone is seen for who they truly are. Regardless of perceived disability, all people have the right to live productive and personally meaningful lives. Through our partnership with NHF's Arleta Housing program, we are proud to align our visions—creating a world where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Together, we are building an inclusive community that heals, supports, and uplifts—making us stronger and more resilient than ever before.



Left to right: Flor Garcia, Tierra Manager; Ernest Holton, Intern; Kevin Vu, Intern; Roxana Montoya, Tierra Mentor; Jacob Fraigun, Intern; Hayro Ramirez, Intern; Mario Ledesma, NHF Chef



Rodney plates a warm meal for Arleta guests.



Rony prepping vegetables for next meal rush.

Meet the Invincible Roman Brown

This June, Roman Brown, Tierra College to Career student, graduated with a Master's degree in Computer Science. Roman is the second student in Tierra's College to Career program to earn a master's and the first in Tierra's Personalized Community Support Services program (PCSS).

Diane Brown, Roman's mother, shares, "I never thought I would be standing here today, celebrating Roman graduating from college with a Master's in Computer Science! Words cannot express how proud our family is of him and how grateful we are to everyone at Tierra del Sol for supporting him on this journey! It hasn't been an easy road, and I must confess, there were times when we almost gave up. But Tierra never gave up on Roman, and I think it's safe to say Roman impressed all of us, too, by showing us what he was capable of."

Rosa Dahlquist, Tierra Program Manager, who's been part of Roman's academic journey since 2015, states, "It was a big learning process for all of us in the beginning, but I am just so proud of Roman and all that he has accomplished in the last 10 years. We weren't expecting the Masters, but are impressed with everything that he has overcome to get to this point."

Smiling ear to ear, Roman shares, "My mom and dad encouraged me to pursue a master's because of my love for computers. Even as a kid, I loved to play around and create documents. And so, I did. And now I have a Masters degree in Computer Science!"

When asked what it's like to be the official family expert on computers, Roman explains, "My dad used to be the expert on everything in the house, including computers. Now that he's up in heaven, I'm taking over that role. And I dedicate all of this to him."



I Voted!

Matthew Rodriguez at the Vincent Price Art Museum



This Spring, art major Matthew Rodriguez in Tierra's College to Career program submitted a powerful piece he painted for a chance to be part of the New Voices Exhibition at the Vincent Price Art Museum at East Los Angeles College. The theme of his work? **Voting.**

We sat down with Matthew for a quick chat about his inspiration for this piece of artwork.

Why did you choose to paint this, Matthew?

There was a sign outside where I dropped off my ballot that read, "I Voted." I took a picture of it. I have autism, and I wanted to show people I voted. So, when I got to class, the first thing I did was grab oil paints and began painting.

Were you hoping to inspire others to do the same and get out and vote in this last election?

Yes. Voting is important, especially when it comes to choosing our next President.

What was it like submitting your art for the first time?

I was very nervous! However, my mentors and counselors encouraged me, so I felt confident, and I went ahead and did it. When I got selected, it felt very cool! My family even celebrated and made tacos.

Steven Y. Wong, the Director of the Vincent Price Art Museum, shares, "This is a highly competitive exhibition. Out of 398 entries received, we selected 58. Matthew's piece was powerful and fit perfectly in our district-wide, diverse showcase of student-produced works."

Matthew will be completing his Associate of Arts degree and graduating from Los Angeles Mission College next Spring. We are very excited to see where his artistic dreams continue to take him.



Message from our CEO

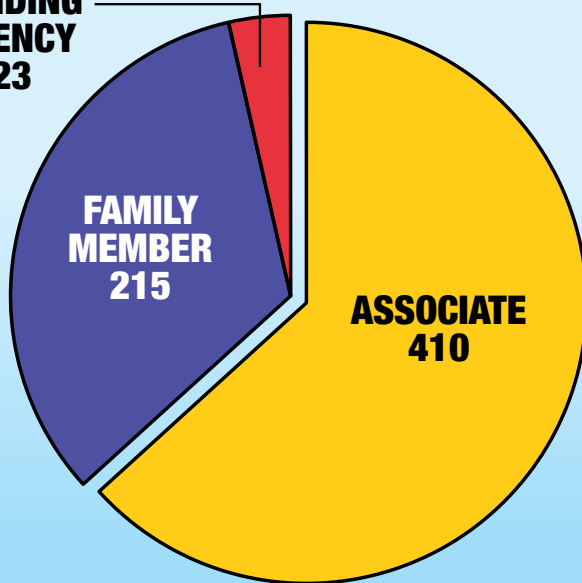


Throughout the year, Tierra del Sol tells our stories in pictures, one person at a time. Pictures of individuals making beautiful pieces of art. Images of graduating students holding college diplomas. Snapshots of employees successfully working or interning at our local businesses. Each story makes up a beautiful thread in the tapestry we call Tierra del Sol. However, once a year, we tell our story in numbers. The numbers you find on these pages drive our constant quality improvement of our support and services. These numbers tell us whether or not we are walking the walk of our Values, Mission, and Vision. Our beautiful tapestry is the people we support and their families. We strive to ensure that each staff member serves with our values of person-centeredness, honesty, respect, passion, and full-engagement, as they support each person served to create a productive and personally-meaningful life in this world. How did we do?

648 Recorded Responses

Increase of 66 responses over 2023 Survey

FUNDING AGENCY
23



Careers in the Arts

60 Artist-Led Community Workshops—
an increase of 10 from the prior year

\$230,000 in Gallery Art Sales—
up 169% from 2023!

\$17,500 Studio-based Sales

Curatorial – our artists are now curating shows at
our gallery, online, and off-site

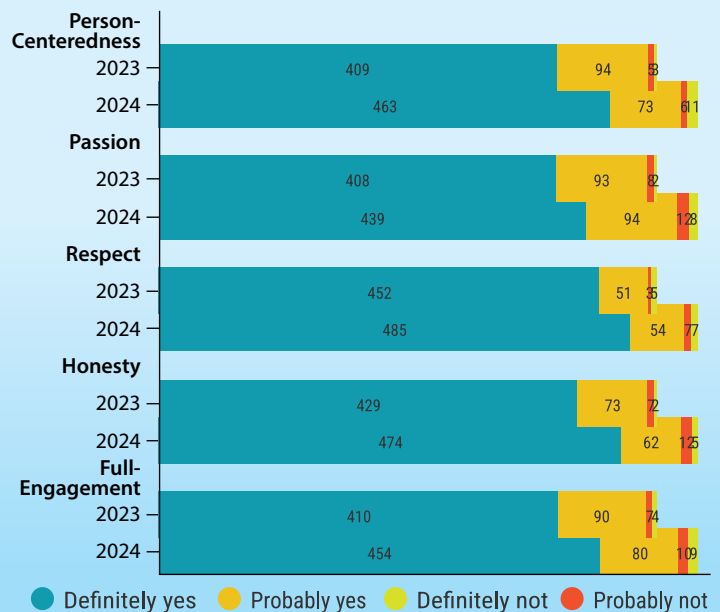
Increase in Community Art Partners –
Natural History Museum, Academy
Museum, Bob Baker Marionette Theater, Lucas
Museum, and Descanso Gardens

First-time museum artist commission

First-time Artist Residency

Tierra del Sol leads with its values.

Do you agree?



KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

College to Career

183 students served

12 colleges and universities

(4 campuses added in 2024: supporting 1 student remotely
at Cal State San Luis Obispo and another at Cal Lutheran)

5 students earned certificates (Child Development, Culinary Arts,
Graphic Design, Micro Literacy, and Office Clerical)

9 students earned A.A.'s (Child Development, 3D Design, Film,
General Studies, Graphic Design, Social and Behavioral Health,
and Studio Design)

8 students earned B.A.'s (Arts, English, History, and Psychology)

1 student completed a postgraduate certificate in
Geographic Information Systems

1 student earned a Master's degree in Applied Behavior Analysis

TOP REASONS TO HIRE

a Tierra del Sol Associate

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

Here's what companies get when they hire our associates:

- Gain Motivated, Reliable Employees
- Reduce Turnover and Improve Retention
- Take Advantage of Tax Credits and Financial Incentives
- Receive Comprehensive Employee Training at No Cost
- Access Free On-the-Job Coaching and Support
- Increase Productivity Across Your Team
- Boost Community Recognition for Your Brand
- Position Your Business as an Inclusive Leader
- Strengthen Your Community While Growing Your Business

Through our innovative Workforce and Paid Internship Programs, we connect businesses with skilled, dedicated individuals ready to work and succeed. Our tailored approach includes pre-training, job matching, and ongoing support to ensure long-term success for both employees and employers.

Tierra empowers businesses through talent and diversity.

We are committed to connecting businesses with motivated individuals who are eager to contribute, helping you build a skilled and diverse team, while strengthening your community.

For more information, contact partnerwithus@tierradelosol.org.



David Cruz Celebrates his four-year work anniversary at CPK



Meleny Sanchez, Tierra Workforce Development Associate hired by Noah's Place Day Care at the Van Nuys Courthouse



PLISHMENTS

Workforce Development

We have launched our new 10-year initiative—**Employment for All.**

This means that we are doubling down on our vision that all people live productive and personally meaningful lives through creative pathways to employment!

	2024	2023
Paid Internships	64	34
Internship Partner Sites	24	18
Competitively Employed	67	65
Professional Volunteers	393	414
Volunteer Partners	126	108



Natalie Lorea, Macy's Team Member and Tierra Workforce Development Associate

Leave a Legacy and Invest in the Values You Cherish

For most of us, our values define who we are.

At Tierra, our values of *person-centeredness, passion, honesty, respect, and full engagement* have been the foundation of our success for 54 years—the success that we see within each and every one of our associates.

From the very beginning, it was families that invested in Tierra. Eight families who had the vision and fortitude to sustain the values that gave their loved ones a better life. And since that time, numerous families have invested in Tierra's mission, making it possible for others to see people with disabilities for who they truly are.

With one in six children being born with a developmental disability in the United States, the future of Tierra is now. Won't you help us sustain our future and consider joining Tierra's Legacy of Love with a planned gift?

Ways to Give:

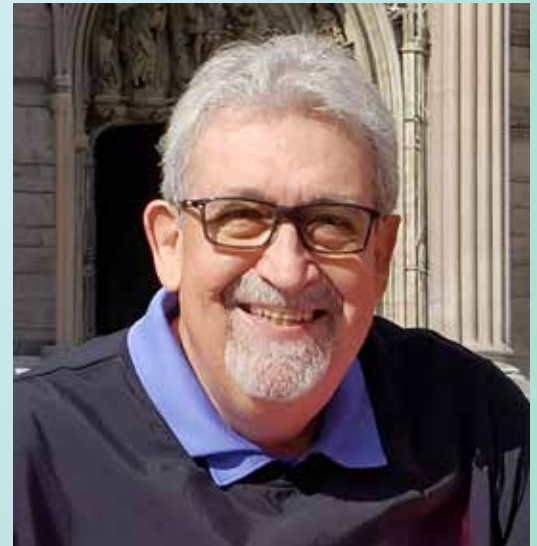
- Bequests from a Will or Trust
- Name Tierra as a Beneficiary of a Life Insurance Policy or Retirement Plan Asset
- Gifts of Stocks, Bonds or Mutual Funds
- Gifts of Real Estate

For more information on becoming a legacy donor, contact Cathy Galarneau, Chief Development Officer at 818-540-5296.

"I recently updated my Special Needs trust for my son, Matthew, and included Tierra del Sol", tells Pat Gregory. "Tierra has been there for us over the years, and if it wasn't for staff like Julie Snyder and Lelani Dixon, Matthew would never have been able to stay in the program. It's been 20 years since Matthew started coming to Tierra, and he still gets on the bus each morning with a smile as he leaves to volunteer in the community. I am thankful for Tierra and all they've done for Matthew."



Thank You, Sal Esparza



Tierra is filled with gratitude for the generosity that the Esparza Family has shown to Tierra for many years. Sadly, Sal Esparza, a past Tierra Board member and professor at CSUN for 25 years, passed away last Spring.

Caroline, his wife shares, "Sal and I chose to put Tierra into our estate plan many years ago. We have seen the care and support that our son Erik has received during his 27 years at Tierra. It was my husband's intention to thank Tierra with a legacy gift after he passed to show his gratitude and support for an organization that my son loves."

Mark Your Calendars for Tierra's Upcoming Family Forums

Join Life Planning Navigator, Julie Snyder, on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 4-5 pm via Zoom. Network with other family members while gaining valuable insight on a variety of timely topics.

July 22, 2025

The Effects of Government Funding Cuts & the New Normal for People with Disabilities

Featured Speaker: Rebecca Lienhard, Tierra CEO

August 26, 2025

There's No Place Like Home: Housing Resources for People with Disabilities

Featured Speaker: Anastasia Swan, New Horizons

September 23, 2025

Supported Decision Making vs. Conservatorship

Featured Speaker: Bertha Sanchez Hayden, Bet Tzedek

October 28, 2025

Special Needs Trusts: Red Flags and Fraud

Featured Speaker: Alicia Anderson, Bet Tzedek

Watch your email to register!



The LA Central Public Library Presents

LOOKS LIKE A HOME TO ME

Inside the Progressive
Art Studio

Opening Reception:
Saturday, July 19th, 2-4 pm
All are invited!

LA Central Library—Getty Gallery
630 W. 5th Street
Downtown Los Angeles

Tierra artists will comprise nearly a third of the 100 artists being highlighted from eight progressive studios throughout California. Work from these studios for artists with disabilities is being featured in this historic show curated by Tierra's Director of Arts, Paige Wery, on view Saturday, June 21st to Sunday, December 7th.

Top: LA Central Public Library Drawing — Artist: Joe Zaldivar; Left: Artist: Marlena Arthur; Right: Artist: Victor Frias



Walking on Sunshine Inaugural Tierra Fashion Show

Tierra artists are runway-ready to showcase their creativity and craftsmanship at "Walking on Sunshine," Tierra's Inaugural Fashion Show, being held on Saturday, September 27th. Eight artists from Tierra's Sunland and Upland Studios will feature their unique hand-crafted creations in this first-time fashion extravaganza.



The show will take place at West Hollywood's Plummer Park Fiesta Hall from 2-6 pm with a post show reception at Tierra's Gallery from 4-6 pm. The designs will be on display through November 1st.

"Walking on Sunshine is a celebration of creativity, inclusion, and innovation," shares Tierra CEO, Rebecca Lienhard. "Our artists are getting a platform to showcase their talent, and we couldn't be prouder to share their incredible work with the world."

tierradelsolgallery.org
7414 Santa Monica Blvd
West Hollywood



Designer: Alondra Lozano
Model: Emily Nguyen



Designer: Thomas Lamb
Model: Evan Hynes



Designer: Tony Barnes
Model: Bill Marshall



Designer: Ashley Higgins
Model: Jenny Phan



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



Maximiliano Ruiz, Tierra Team Member attending Hands Off Medicaid! Rally at the Sacramento State Capital

TAKE ACTION TODAY

Help Protect Medicaid

Call Your U.S. Senators

Tell them you oppose the proposed cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and ACL programs. Demand they protect funding that supports people with disabilities and their access to inclusive, community-based services.

Call the Capitol Switchboard: 1-202-224-3121

Write to Your Local Media

Submit a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or contact a local journalist. Share how these cuts will harm your community, your work, or your loved ones.

Educate Others

Talk with colleagues, family members, and self-advocates. Host a discussion or webinar. Use your platform to amplify the message.

Share on Social Media

Tag your representatives.

Use hashtags like:

#SaveMedicaid

#DontTouchMedicaid

#HandsOffMedicaid

#SaveMediCal

#DisabilityRights

#IAmTierra

