



A BRIDGE & BEYOND

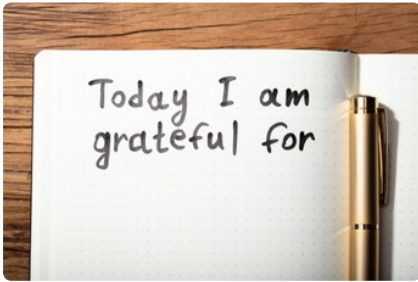
December 2023-January 2024

A vibrant display of fireworks exploding in a dark night sky, with colors ranging from bright blue and purple to green and orange. The fireworks are scattered across the frame, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere.

Happy New Year!

Starting This New Year Right 

2024 holds the promise of new opportunities, growth, and positive change. As we embark on this year, let's embrace the possibilities, work towards our goals, and foster a spirit of unity and collaboration. May 2024 bring joy, success, and fulfillment to each one of us, as we collectively shape a brighter future.



Daily Gratitude 🧘

The goal is to start every day of 2024 with **ONE** thing you are grateful for.



Speaking Truth and Hope

Each week we can focus on one affirmation. Place that affirmation in places where you will visually be reminded of it (ie mirror, screensaver, bulletin board, dashboard, etc.).



Break the Habit 🧘

You read it here! Vowing 30 minutes of phone-free time every day! What wellness-based choice can do you during those 30 minutes?

🔗👉📱 Tips to Keep Your New Years Resolutions 👈📱🔗

Click on the link above for ideas to help you move forward in 2024.

Written by Allison Aubrey, NPR News correspondent

NEWS FROM EL MONTE! 📣



December Delights: A Month of Togetherness and Joy

As December unfolded, Esperanza and Tranquilas embraced the spirit of the season with a series of heartwarming events that brought clients and staff together in the truest sense of community.

Pickleball Fridays: Every other Friday, Esperanza clients enjoyed spirited games of pickleball alongside the Tranquilas team. Laughter echoed on the courts as everyone relished the camaraderie that comes with friendly competition.

Hot Chocolate Social (12/19/2023): Mid-December brought warmth and sweetness as Tranquilas and Esperanza joined forces to host a delightful Hot Chocolate Social. The highlight? A hot chocolate bar that allowed clients to craft their perfect cup, adorned with an array of treats, flavors,

and sprinkles. The joyous chatter mingled with the aroma of chocolate, creating memories that lingered long after the last sip.

Christmas Brunch Extravaganza (12/22/2023): On the 22nd, Esperanza and Tranquilas treated clients and staff to a festive Christmas Brunch. The tables were adorned with an array of delights - pancakes, bagels, eggs, hashbrowns, bacon, pastries, and fresh fruit. It was not just a meal; it was a shared experience. Clients and staff sat together, savoring not just the food but the sense of togetherness that filled the room. Post-brunch, the festivities continued with Christmas games led by our two counselors, Zitlally and Jasmine. Laughter and cheers echoed as we played "Guess How Many," the Christmas saran wrap game, cotton ball scoop, and "Roll a Can" for prizes.

Year-End Celebration and Musical Chairs (12/29/2023): As the year drew to a close, Esperanza and Tranquilas took a reflective stroll around Whittier Narrows Park on the 29th. The crisp air echoed physical exercise, shared memories, and conversations. Back on-site, musical chairs brought a lively end to the year, with both clients and staff joining in the spirited game.

December's Joyful Legacy: In a nutshell, December at Esperanza and Tranquilas brought connection, fun, laughter, and shared experiences. These activities were not just events; they became our collective story, reminding us that activities that foster team, shared experiences, and community can add a spark of joy. We are hopeful for peace and recovery in 2024.

NEWS FROM WOODLAND HILLS!



Celebrating Success: A Journey to Stability with BRIDGES FSP

At BRIDGES Full-Service Partnership (FSP), we embark on a mission to provide intensive field-based services for individuals facing chronic mental health illnesses, comorbidity disorders, homelessness, and those who are justice-involved. It is a challenging path, requiring dedication, hard work, and patience from our staff to advocate for this underserved, and vulnerable population. Equally admirable and challenging is the perseverance demonstrated by our clients, who, through their commitment and resilience, actively engage in the journey to recovery and success. While success may be hard-won, when it arrives, it is a cause for celebration. We share one such triumph from a client who has been an integral part of our program since 2018.

This client's journey involved receiving individual therapy, brief family sessions, medication management, and case management services. Battling severe mental health diagnoses, and navigating through multiple relapses, this individual now stands in a place of recovery—clean, sober, medication-compliant, and hopeful about life. The recent achievement includes securing a Section 8 voucher for housing stability after a history of chronic instability.

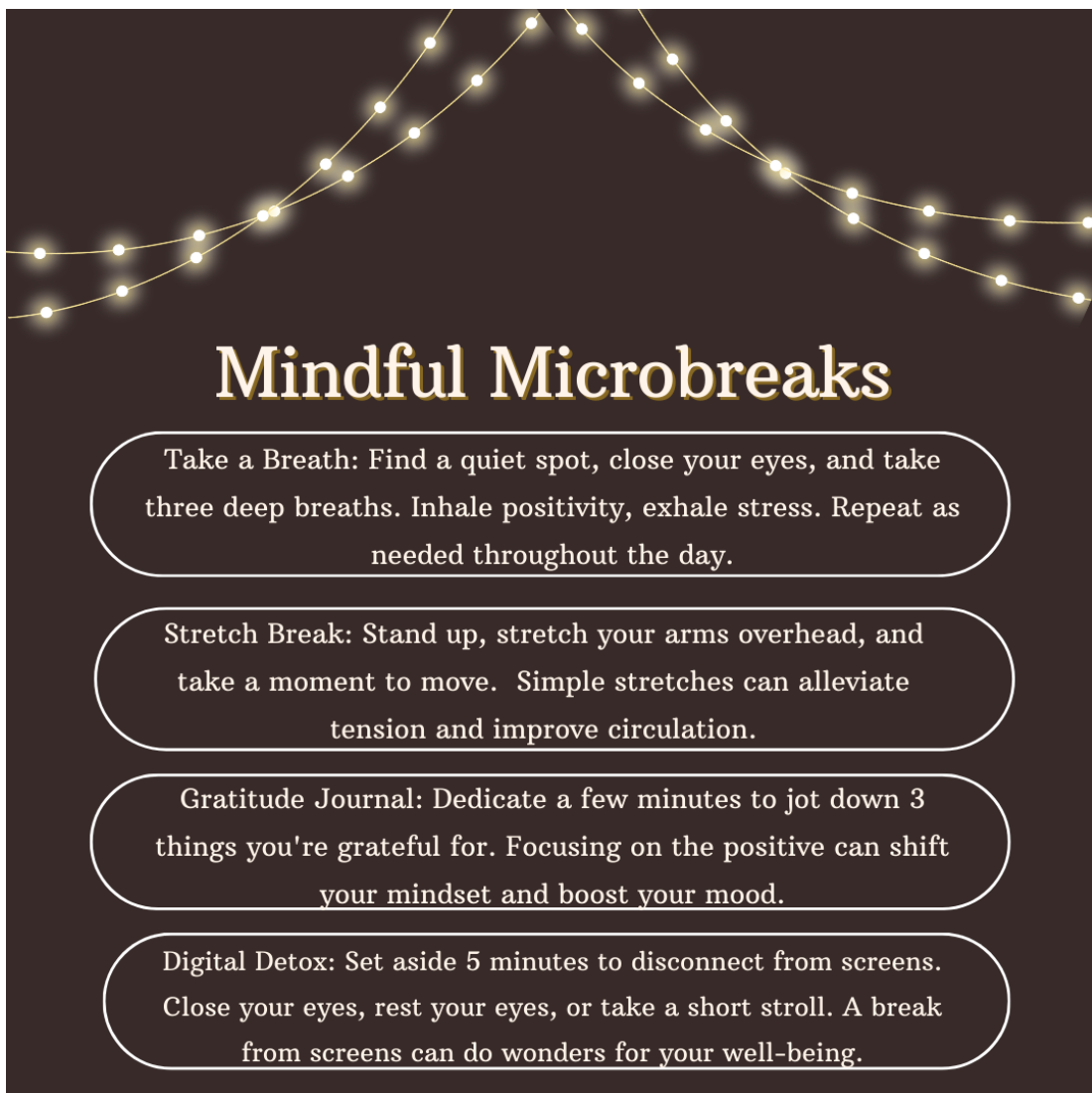
How did the BRIDGES FSP team contribute to this success? Our therapists and case managers invested countless hours in finding housing opportunities, submitting applications with supporting

documentation, and adhering to strict time constraints imposed by external sources. Utilizing our CSS funds, we were able to assist with crucial needs such as security deposit, and furniture once a suitable home was identified.

The outcome? Our client has now secured a permanent home, marking a significant milestone in their journey. The BRIDGES FSP team takes immense pride in our client's success and being part of the journey. We are thrilled to have been there for our client, providing the essential support and resources that helped inspire forward movement toward recovery. As we witness this triumph, we eagerly anticipate the unfolding chapters of their future. This is not the end of this client's journey; it is the hopeful beginning to a satisfying future.

This success not only reflects the dedication of our team but also underscores the transformative impact that collective efforts can have on the lives of those we serve. It is stories like these that inspire us to continue our mission of providing crucial support to individuals navigating the challenges of mental health and homelessness.

MINDFUL MOMENT



Mindful Microbreaks

- Take a Breath:** Find a quiet spot, close your eyes, and take three deep breaths. Inhale positivity, exhale stress. Repeat as needed throughout the day.
- Stretch Break:** Stand up, stretch your arms overhead, and take a moment to move. Simple stretches can alleviate tension and improve circulation.
- Gratitude Journal:** Dedicate a few minutes to jot down 3 things you're grateful for. Focusing on the positive can shift your mindset and boost your mood.
- Digital Detox:** Set aside 5 minutes to disconnect from screens. Close your eyes, rest your eyes, or take a short stroll. A break from screens can do wonders for your well-being.

Healthy Coping Strategies

These next 4 questions will allow us to gauge which positive coping skills are most utilized by our community. Please choose the best option for each question and we will happily share the results on our next issue.

If I am upset, what I will usually do is:

Go for a walk (leave the space that is making me upset)

Talk to someone

Watch something that will improve my mood

Loading...

Something else

 Voting ends in 37 days

Votes are anonymous but results are public

If I am feeling lonely, something that helps is:

Have an honest conversation with someone I trust.

Journaling

Listening to music that boosts my mood

Loading...

Watch something with someone

 Voting ends in 37 days

Votes are anonymous but results are public

If I am experiencing stress, what I find helpful is:

Reach out and ask for help

Use one of my hobbies or interests (cooking, art, etc.)

Take it one day at a time

Loading...

Get some physical activity in (run, walk, dance, etc)

 Voting ends in 37 days

👁️ Votes are anonymous but results are public

Something that I appreciate as I enter 2024 is:

How important my family and friends are

It is important for me to take care of my health

Spending time with loved ones as much as possible

Loading...

Finding new ways of dealing with stressful things

📅 Voting ends in 37 days

👁️ Votes are anonymous but results are public

MONTHLY SHOUT-OUTS 🙌





JANUARY
Birthdays

Zitlally Alvarez
Lizbeth Gonzalez
Melanie Gudino
Felipe Perez
Mark Rodriguez
Paulina Rojas

JANUARY

Anniversaries

Zitlally Alvarez - 1 year
Monica Martins - 6 years
Gary Mathis - 2 years
Natalia Mathis - 4 years
Lori Pendroff - 17 years
Adela Portillo- 1 year
Kaylee Rhoades - 4 years
Zulima Serrano - 2 years

SAFETY CORNER

RESOLVE TO STAY HEALTHY THIS NEW YEAR!

With respiratory virus transmission increasing in Los Angeles County, resolve to take simple safety measures, like staying home, testing and getting treatment if sick.



Got COVID Symptoms
such as unusual fatigue, sneezing, coughing, fever, or muscle aches?

**Get tested.
Get treated.**



Tested positive for COVID?

Antiviral oral medications can reduce health risks and hospitalization if taken within 5 days of symptom onset.




**County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Health**

COVID-19 treatment is available.

Here's how to get it:

- Ask a health care provider
- Check with your pharmacy
- Call 1-833-540-0473

Learn more at:
ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines





Courtesy of the County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health.

YUMMY FOR THE TUMMY 🍷

De-Stress Smoothie

KICKSTART 2024

This De-Stress Smoothie is packed with ingredients that will help reduce stress and anxiety naturally. An added bonus: it tastes great!

Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 1 cup milk of your choice
- 2 TBSP peanut butter
- 2 TBSP cacao powder
- 1 TBSP flaxseed
- Handful of ice

Directions

Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth



Notes

WHY THIS SMOOTHIE WILL CALM YOUR NERVES:

- **Banana** – this fruit contains the amino acid tryptophan, a brain chemical that helps regulate mood. They also contain vitamin B6. Having a low level of this vitamin has been linked to depression.
- **Spinach** – this superfood contains folic acid which reduces fatigue and alleviates depression. It also boosts the immune system which is important when feeling stressed.
- **Peanut Butter** – Peanuts are also a good source of tryptophan, an essential amino acid for serotonin production. Peanuts are high in healthy fats. Remember, 60% of the brain is made up of fat so if you're not eating healthy fats, you're definitely not going to be feeling well mentally and emotionally.
- **Cacao** – Dark chocolate or raw cacao is not only high in antioxidants but has been proven to reduce the stress hormone, cortisol. It's a natural anti-depressant and also improves cognition and mental health.
- **Flaxseed** – these lovely seeds are full of omega-3 fatty acids which decrease anxiety, sleep disorders, and depression.

Recipe by He+She Eat Clean

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR YEAR?

2024

Contributors to this newsletter include Jasmine (Esperanza), Lizbeth (Project Independence), Natalia (FSP), Judi (HR), Nicole (Executive Assistant), and Lori (Executive Director).

   **Donate Here**   

Support BRIDGES, Inc. by making a donation that directly impacts the lives of our clients. Your contribution ensures essential services reach those in need, fostering positive change & providing support to those facing challenges.

Contact Us!

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