

AVIVA IN ACTION



With Change Comes Opportunity

As a supporter of Aviva, we want to keep you informed of changes at the agency. Aviva's Board of Directors and Leadership Team have decided to discontinue our group home/residential treatment contract with Los Angeles County, and explore other new residential programs.

About Changes to State Policy for Group Homes

With these moves, we're continuing a transition – alongside the State of California and LA County – toward providing treatment for children and families in the community.

California passed AB 403 in 2015, significantly changing the way residential treatment services will be delivered to youth in foster care. The changes are based on an understanding that children who must live apart from biological parents do best when cared for in committed nurturing family homes.

Changes include shorter stays in group homes, which, combined with other planned reforms, make it difficult for Aviva's trauma-informed and relationship-based program to work as it did in the past.

In addition, AB 403 will reduce the use of group care in general. This has ramifications for the long-term sustainability of a residential treatment program.

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In Times of Crisis, Aviva Helps Keep Families Together with Relative Support Services

Approximately 18,000 children in Los Angeles County do not live with their parents. Of those, more than 9,800 live with relatives or non-related extended family members (NREFM). These numbers only reflect those children under the care of Child



Protective Services. Although there is no definitive data, the actual number of children living with relatives could be as much as six times higher.

Faced with the sheer magnitude of this situation – and recognizing that these relatives and other caregivers needed support – the LA County Board of Supervisors created a program through the Department of Children and Family Services to

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Aviva Celebrates Giving

Aviva has flourished for more than 100 years because of our ability to respond to changes in our community. The decision by Aviva's Board of Directors and Leadership Team to discontinue our group home/residential treatment contract with Los Angeles County (please see page 1) is our most recent effort to meet these changing needs.

Home has been at the heart of Aviva since our founding in 1915. While our Residential Treatment Center was our most visible service, the 118 youth served in 2016 represent a fraction of the 1,561 clients we served overall. Aviva is exploring other residential programs that will serve current and critical community needs. With change comes opportunity and we look forward to the next chapter in Aviva's residential programs.

Legacy of Volunteers and Giving



Throughout Aviva's changes over the years, the generosity of time and resources from our friends and supporters have remained a constant. This issue of our newsletter spotlights some people and organizations who have made a significant impact on Aviva.

This summer, Aviva lost its former board member, long-time friend and unwavering supporter, Sherman L. Andelson. With a commitment to Aviva that dated back to 1990, he is the perfect example of someone who used his gifts to benefit those less fortunate. While we miss Sherman, his legacy continues. We describe Sherman's impact on Aviva on page 7.

Barbara Lazaroff is a lifetime Platinum Associates member and a long-time supporter of Aviva. She had a personal impact on individual teens with her many visits and gifts. One of her most significant gift was sharing her expertise and connections to remodel our Wallis Annenberg Residential Treatment Center in 2008. Most recently, she co-chaired our Platinum Associates luncheon with a new volunteer, Tonya Winfield. You can read about this spectacular event on page 4.

In this issue, we also say thank you and farewell to two of our long-time Board members, Barbara Van Wormer and Carolyn Bloom, both of whom are retiring from our Board. Each have offered Aviva their unwavering support and shared their incredible wealth of knowledge. (Please see page 7.)

The gifts of these people – in terms of time, knowledge and passion throughout the years – have proven to be invaluable.

Aviva also welcomed two new friends and volunteers to our "family" – Jessica Mansour and Ashley Griffis of the Jim Henson Company. Last September, the Jim Henson Company graciously hosted the Fourth Annual Aviva Youth in Action Film Collaboration screening at their studios. Rich with history, the Jim Henson Studios was the perfect location for our budding producers. Learn more about this program on page 3.

As you read more about the ways in which our friends and the community continue to give to Aviva, you may decide to share your personal talents with our clients and discover the joy of giving at Aviva.

On behalf of all of us at Aviva, we wish you joyous holidays and a happy New Year.

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Aviva is a not-for-profit, non-sectarian agency that believes every child and every family in our Los Angeles community deserves the chance for a brighter future. We provide compassionate support, therapeutic services, and guidance to at-risk children and families.

Aviva is accredited by: Council on Accreditation

Aviva is a member of: American Association of Children's Residential Centers • Association of Community Human Services Agencies • California Alliance of Child and Family Services • Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles • United Way • Alliance for Strong Children and Families





Stars are born during Youth in Action Film Collaboration

The Jim Henson Company graciously hosted the Fourth Annual Aviva Youth in Action Film Collaboration (YAFC) screening on Tuesday, September 12.

Spearheaded by Jason Lesner, YAFC's executive producer, nine teens from Aviva's foster and probation programs worked with more than 70 professional writers, producers, directors, editors, actors, and film and sound crews to produce three short films. In the tradition of Hollywood, the project culminated with a screening on the historic Charlie Chaplin lot in the heart of Hollywood.

More than 100 people gathered to watch the three films, "Project Runaway", "Luz" and "The Other Side." Following the screenings, Lesner moderated a Q&A with the teens and the volunteers who described their experiences creating the films.

Judging by the smiles on the teens' faces, they were extremely proud of their films and appreciated the entire experience.



Cast of Luz



Aviva's Taline Hanna and YAFC Director, Jason Lesner



What's in a name?

We have published our newsletter for many years, but we've always just referred to it as "Aviva's Newsletter." With this issue, we are happy to introduce you to Aviva in Action! Yes, we have a new name, but we will continue to provide you with news about Aviva's programs, services, volunteers and staff. So, what's really in a name? Action! We hope our new name will inspire you to take action - volunteering, donating or just promoting Aviva.

New Youth Expressive Arts Program Explores Impact of the Criminal Justice System

Aviva joins with UCLA to debut "Act One" with Reentry Through the Arts Grant

Recognizing the power of the arts and creative expression, Aviva recently launched "Act One," a series of 10 weekly performing arts workshops for teens who have been impacted by the criminal justice system.

Aviva is collaborating with the UCLA Visual and Performing Arts Education (VAPAE) Program and Agency Arts to provide teens with the opportunity to use visual and performing arts to share their stories in a fun, safe environment. The program will culminate in an original theatrical performance for a community audience. Full scholarships are available through the generous support of the Reentry Through the Arts Grant from the California Arts Council.

Aviva President/CEO Regina Bette said, "The arts and creative expression are critical interventions for all youth, but particularly at-risk youth. Aviva is proud to be working with UCLA VAPAE to offer our youth this creative opportunity that hopefully will change the trajectory of their lives."





Family Resource Center Buzzes with Excitement

Aviva's Family Resource Center is a hub of energy and activities this fall. Thanks to Aviva's talented volunteers and interns, our youth have had multiple activities available to them each week.

- Pop in on a Monday, and you'll be invited to join "She Is," a hip hop fusion dance group with Erin and Alexis. Meanwhile, in the Digital Media Lab, Lawrence and Christian from Young Producers Group are teaching youth to make beats.
- Stop by on Tuesdays and you can bake with Nancy, or work with Ben from Comic Book Sunday, learning how to tell stories through art.
- On Wednesdays teens do trauma-informed yoga with Jashmine, or spend time in the Open Art Studio with a creative team of interns from Loyola Marymount.
- Then on Thursdays, Aviva has an Open Studio in the Digital Media Lab, where teens work with Alex from Young Producers to create videos using stop-motion animation techniques.

Lawrence Grey, producer, educator and creator of the Young Producers Group, is an enthusiastic volunteer and adds energy to our Family Resource Center. He said, "When our

Aviva beat makers learn how to make music like the songs they love on the radio, it's inspiring for everybody in the room. They become not just passive enjoyers of music, but active participants!"



Annual Platinum Associates Luncheon Spotlights Client Success

Barbara Lazaroff and Tonya Winfield graciously hosted Aviva's Annual Platinum Associates luncheon on October 25 at Spago in Beverly Hills.

The afternoon was highlighted by a moving speech by Lucille Thomas, an Aviva Foster Parent who has fostered more than 40 children from infants to teens since 2012. Describing her experiences, she said, "I realized that there

are so many kids in the foster care system who need to be loved.

Anyone can be a mother, but it takes a lot to be



Left to right: Aviva President/CEO Regina Bette, Tonya Winfield, Lucille Thomas, Barbara Lazaroff

mom! Aviva has brought so many angels into our lives, and we are grateful."

Lucille concluded by sharing that she and her husband are adopting a 3-year-old whom they have fostered since she was an infant.

Other special guests included alumni Sandy Schlesinger, who lived at the Hamburger Home in 1943, and Linda Batt, who was at Aviva's current residential home in 1964. Both traveled to Los Angeles for the luncheon from Northern California.

More than 100 guests enjoyed a gourmet lunch and an impromptu routine by comedian and writer Elayne Boosler.

Aviva's Platinum Associates are a dynamic group of people who are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of at-risk youth. Since its inception in 2001, the Platinum Associates have raised more than \$1 million in support of Aviva's programs and services.



Real-Life Impact: Aviva Unites Family in Crisis

To see Anita,* her husband and her four daughters (ages 21, 18, 13 and 8) smiling, talking and thriving, no one would ever suspect that just 12 months ago, the family was on shaky ground.

Last year, the parents lived separately and fought extensively. Their turmoil ultimately filtered to their daughters. Plagued by pervasive domestic violence, the 8-year-old was shy, struggled in school, would throw tantrums and wet the bed at night due to stress. Her 13-year-old sister had low self-esteem, trouble with her peers and was very withdrawn. The 18-year-old was struggling in high school and her eldest sister was isolated from the family.

Initially, Anita was very guarded and resistant to help from Aviva's Wraparound Services, refusing to attend any parenting classes, support groups or counseling. She gradually opened up to her caseworker and attended ten classes on parenting and 26 on anger management and domestic violence. She also started to attend monthly parent support groups.

The results were dramatic. Anita learned to control her anger and to communicate with her daughters and husband. She also discovered how positive reinforcement could help her daughters' self-esteem. With Aviva's support, the girls also improved. The 18-year-old graduated high school and is attending community college; the 13-year-old has opened up; and the 8-year-old has stopped wetting the bed and having tantrums, and is excelling in school. Aviva also helped Anita's eldest daughter reconnect with her family.

Perhaps the greatest change is that the parents are living together and support their daughters as a family. In fact, the father is more involved in their lives. He actually has joined Anita at Parent Support Groups.

Anita said, "I am so grateful for all that Aviva has done for me and family. We are much closer as a family and I have learned how to be a better parent. I couldn't have done this without Aviva!"

** Not her real name*

"With Changes Come Opportunity" Continued from Page 1

Going forward, state and county policy supports treatment and recovery happening in the community with families. We will continue to work with foster and probation youth, but this will now happen in a family setting. These are areas that Aviva already has strong programs and a depth of expertise.

Aviva in the Community

While many people are familiar with Aviva as a residential program, of the more than 1,500 children served by Aviva in the last year, about 1,400 were served through Aviva's community programs like:

- Foster family and adoption
- Community mental health
- Wraparound services (which brings a team of professionals to homes or schools to help families in crisis)
- Support for relatives providing foster care
- School-based mental health
- Aftercare services

These are areas in which Aviva has an ability to expand and grow to serve even more children and families in transformational ways.

Looking Toward Community Need: Exploring New Residential Programs

We recognize that home has been at the heart of Aviva for more than 100 years. This decision will allow Aviva to explore developing new residential programs that serve current and dire community housing needs.

These decisions were not arrived at lightly. Aviva has thrived for more than 100 years because it has been responsive to changes in the community.

With change comes opportunity and we look forward to what lies ahead. We will keep you updated as plans are developed, because our community's support will be critical during the transition.



Giving Thanks To YOU

November is a time to be thankful, and to remember and celebrate those who enrich our lives. Aviva is grateful to you, our donors. Your generosity over the years is at the heart of all of our successes.

As you reflect on the richness of your lives and family, please remember those at Aviva who continue to seek brighter futures. You can express your gratitude by giving today at <http://www.avivacenter.org/donate/> or by using the enclosed envelope.

With heartfelt appreciation and wishes for a joyous celebration.

Erin

Erin Pierik

Aviva Vice President of Development

Aviva Angels: Spreading Holiday Cheer

As the holiday season quickly approaches, Michelle Brookman and Robin Shepard, co-creators of the Aviva Angels, are hard at work fulfilling the wish lists of Aviva's foster children.



Left to right: Michelle Brookman, Robin Shepard, Aviva's Elizabeth Rulon

"Participation in the Aviva Holiday Drive has become my favorite part of the season," said Robin. "Every child deserves to feel special. The more we learned about how many children Aviva supports, Michelle and I just want to do more."

The result? The Aviva Angels, founded in 2014, is now an ongoing holiday tradition. Michelle and Robin reach out to a growing number of friends each year to sponsor Aviva's foster children for the holidays. Then they host a holiday party at one of their homes. Everyone brings their gifts and celebrates the joy of the season and giving back. In 2016, Robin and Michelle and the Aviva Angels sponsored 35 Aviva foster children.

"What was really inspiring was that everyone who participated contacted me afterward and thanked ME," said Michelle. "They said that kicking off the holiday season by providing gifts for children in the foster care system is a gift for THEM; it's a really fun and a great way to begin the holiday season."

Robin said, "The best part of our now-annual gift drive and party is knowing that so many of Aviva's foster kids will have their holiday wishes come true!"

Cheers to the Aviva Angels, and the numerous foster children who have benefited from the Angels' generosity!

To learn more about ways to get involved, contact Holiday Drive Coordinator Elizabeth Rulon at erulon@avivacenter.org.



Farewell and Thank You

Aviva sends a fond farewell and much gratitude to two members of our Board of Directors.

Carolyn Bloom officially joined Aviva's Board of Directors in 2012. However, prior to 2012, Carolyn was a major supporter of the Beverly Hills Women's Club's Day of Inspiration, held for the youth in Aviva's Residential Program. Over her tenure on our Board, she consistently supported Aviva and our efforts. Aviva is grateful for Carolyn's years of support and service.

Barbara Van Wormer, a member of Aviva's Board of Directors since 2007, has shared her knowledge and expertise as a senior vice president and manager of City National Bank in Century City. For the past decade she has steered the agency to long-term financial stability. We will miss her astute financial insight and guidance, but wish her well in her retirement.



Welcome

Erin Pierik joined Aviva as our new Vice President of Development. She brings a background rich in resource development, fundraising and nonprofit management. Prior to joining us, she was the Resource Development Director for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Oxnard and Port Hueneme in Oxnard. Erin also has served as Executive Director of the Ventura County Sheriff's Foundation as well as the Conejo Valley YMCA in Thousand Oaks. Erin holds a Bachelors of Arts Degree in Child and Adolescent Development from California State University Northridge and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from National University. We are fortunate to have Erin leading our development efforts.

the A gala

Thursday, April 26, 2018
Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills

Sponsorship Opportunities Available.

For More Information, Please Contact:

Erin Pierik, Vice President of Development
epierik@avivacenter.org | 323.876.0550 ext. 1123



In Memoriam

Sherman L. Andelson
(January 2, 1925—June 20, 2017)

This past June, Aviva lost our former board member and long-time friend and unwavering supporter, Sherman L. Andelson.

Sherman's commitment to Aviva began in 1990 as a member of Aviva's Board of Directors. He served as Aviva's treasurer for more than 20 years. Sherman and his wife, Miriam, who also served on the board, were among Aviva's most ardent supporters – a legacy they passed on to their son, Bruce, who continues to serve on our board.



We gratefully acknowledge our donors who make our work possible. This newsletter only reflects financial gifts given during the period of October 1, 2016-September 30, 2017

Donors' cumulative gifts appear in our annual report.

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We apologize for any errors or omissions for this giving period. Please contact Iris Arias at iarias@avivacenter.org or by telephone at 323.876.0550 x1105.

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“In Times of Crisis, Aviva Helps Keep Families Together with Relative Support Services” Continued from Page 1

provide Relative Support Services (RSS). The purpose is to ensure that children who do not live with their parents will have their day-to-day physical, mental and emotional needs met, and that they will have improved permanency in a safe, nurturing home.

Earlier this year, Aviva was among 10 agencies in LA County selected to provide these services. Since then, Aviva has more than 250 applicants. Laura De La Cruz, Aviva's RSS Director, explained that there are two basic components to Aviva's work with the County on these services. First, staff work with relative referrals from the County to make sure they received the required 20 hours of training, various tests and home studies to receive home approval.

Once a relative or NREFM are qualified, Aviva steps in to help stabilize the family. Aviva will help them financially (with utilities, etc.) as well as provide mental health services.

“Our challenge is to provide the caregivers with all the support they need. There has been a very steady influx of clients,” said De La Cruz.

She added, “What I most love about this program is that the kids get to stay with family or extended family and there is nothing like family!”

Aviva employees turned out to participate in the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) Walk on October 7 at Grand Park.



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Change a Life This Holiday Season



There is still time to make the season merry and bright for Aviva's children and families in need. Consider "adopting" a foster child or teen, or a family in desperate need, by fulfilling their holiday wish lists. Whether you provide toys for young children or basic necessities like warm clothing and household supplies for families, lives will be positively impacted with your generosity.

Last year, through the generous support of friends like you, 55 families and more than 200 foster children and teens enjoyed a very joyous holiday. With your help, together we can touch even more lives this holiday season.

Change a life this holiday season... and you may discover that it changes yours in turn. To find out how, contact our Holiday Drive Coordinator:

Elizabeth Rulon | erulon@avivacenter.org | 323.876.0550 ext. 1107