HCAR

Member Newsletter

Issue 06



*HCAR staff, clients, and family group photo at the Sequoia Park Zoo. (Edited version)

In this issue:

- Learn about our SLS staff
- Canvas + Clay Artists branch out
- Spotlight: What IS a Developmental Disability?
- And MORE!

Autumn 2026

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear HCAR Community,

As we approach fall 2026, we find ourselves reflecting on the fun activities that we enjoyed this past spring and summer. We are excited to share our experiences with you in this newsletter. We are pleased to introduce some of our wonderful employees who are helping to further HCAR's mission.

We wish to thank you for being a part of the HCAR community. With your support and encouragement, you help us make our community stronger, healthier, and more inclusive.

We wish you a safe, healthy, and joyous fall season.

Warmest wishes,
Kim Nash, Executive Director

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Zoo-tastic Adventures

HCAR is invited to the annual Summer Fun Family Mixer

The Eureka Chamber of Commerce hosted their yearly Summer Fun Family Mixer at the Sequoia Park Zoo. As members of the chamber, HCAR was given free tickets for our staff, clients, and family to attend. We all had a blast getting to see the animals including a live otter feeding and a chance to greet and pet the goats.

The event centered around a raffle which included collecting stamps from all the various businesses and organizations hosting booths throughout the Zoo. Thank you, again, to the Eureka Chamber of Commerce for hosting this community-centric event and we look forward to next year's!

HCAR staff, clients, and family group photo at the Sequoia Park Zoo.



Connecting Artists with Businesses

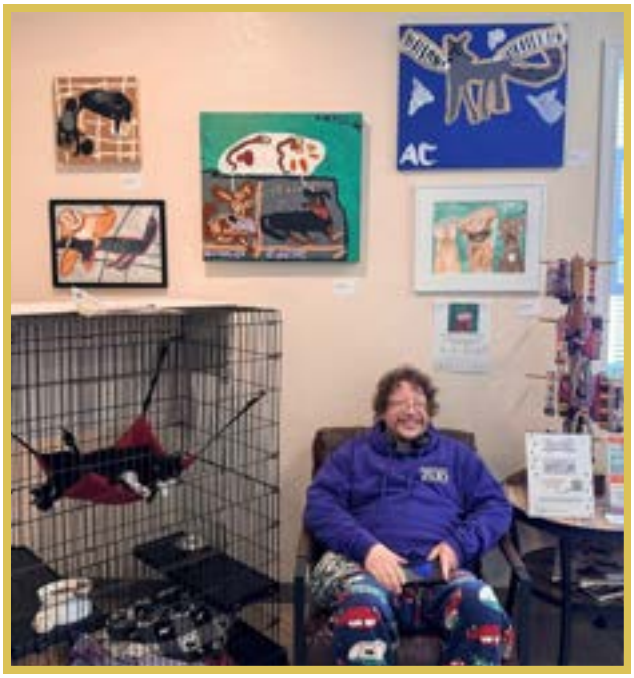
Our Studio helps HCAR artists show off their pieces throughout the community

Clients of the Canvas + Clay Studio are given opportunities to partner with local businesses and organization to better showcase their artwork to the community. Artist Nichole McKinney (left) held her showing at Eureka's Old Town ice cream shop "Living the Dream" while artist Allen Cassidy (right) held his showing at "Humboldt Spay & Neuter Clinic" in Myrtletown.

Art pieces showcased are often available for purchase and 90% of all money earned is given directly back to the artists. Want to see our artists' work at anytime? Visit the Canvas + Clay Studio on 272 C Street in Eureka from 9am-2pm Monday through Friday or call (707) 443-1428 to schedule a tour time.



Canvas + Clay Artist Nichole McKinney pictured at "Living the Dream" in Old Town, Eureka.



Canvas + Clay Artist Allen Cassidy pictured at "Humboldt Spay and Neuter" in Myrtletown

HCAR Community Garden

A New Program has been Tended and Continues to Grow

This spring, HCAR set out to build garden beds and plant a community garden. This garden is developing into a shared space for the HCAR community, giving folks a chance to develop their gardening skills and spend time outside. Vegetables, herbs, and flowers that were planted this spring consisted of squash, zucchini, snap peas, golden wax beans, tomatoes, sage, rosemary, thyme, marigolds and lavender. All harvests were cleaned and stored in the HCAR building for a fresh addition to the Food Pantry that HCAR provides for all Regional Center clients.



We have begun planting the garden beds for a fall/winter garden. This first year has been a success that we would like to continue to build on. The garden currently has three garden beds. We would like to double our growing space for next spring.

We would like to thank Pierson Building Center and Green Lot Nursery for donations towards this spring's garden. Donations are a huge help to keep this project growing!

Ways to donate:

- Send or drop-off cash, check, gift card or physical supplies donations at 1707 E Street Suite 2, Eureka, CA 95501
- Hop onto our website at hcarcenter.org, click on the Support HCAR tab and head over to Donate.



Summer of Outreach

HCAR participates in Disability Pride and the RCRC Family Resource Fair

In order for HCAR to support community members with developmental disabilities; the community must know about the services that HCAR can provide. This summer HCAR had the privilege to table multiple events such as Disability Pride Fest and the RCRC Family Resource Fair.

On July 25th, in honor of Disability Pride Month, a parade and festival were held at the Adorni Center in Eureka to celebrate and support people of all different types of disabilities. Disability Pride Month is observed every year in July in honor of July 26, 1990, the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in America. Our table showcased the many accomplishments of our clients and various fidget toys free to take home.



CCS client Jack Rhodes, CCS staff members Brandon Boyd and Emma Miller (left to right) tabling for the Disability Pride.

On August 1st, our local Regional Center hosted their annual Family Resource Fair. Local organizations centered around supporting those with developmental disabilities were there to present. The event gave HCAR the opportunity to connect with both adults and parents, providing them with information on the programs that exist to support themselves and their children as they get older. We also formed relationships and exchanged information with other organizations and programs to better expand our knowledge on the other resources that that can be used by our clients and staff members.



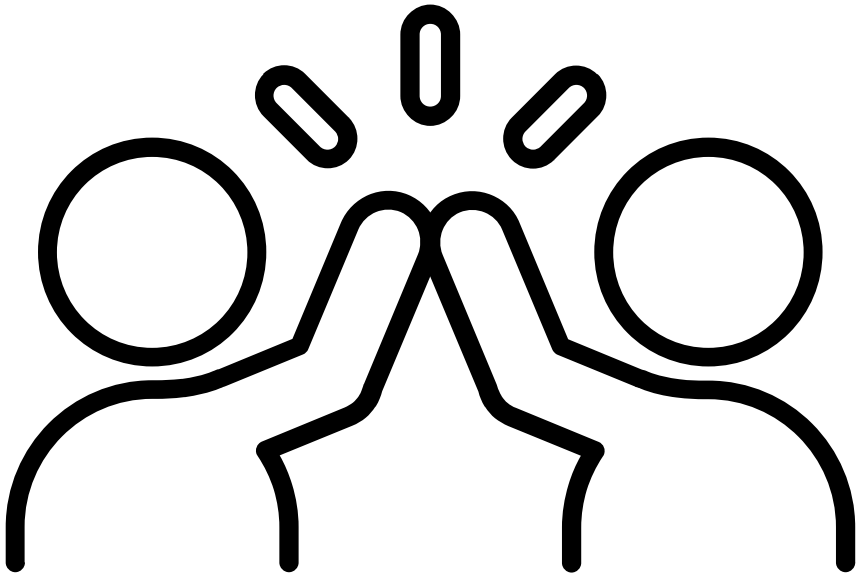
HCAR Client Allen Martin (left) and Clinical Services Director Pennie Lee (right) tabling at the RCRC Family Resource Fair.

What's Happening at CCS?

Director of CCS, Chris Miller, updates us on the growth of our Career Comprehensive Services.

A lot of great things are happening in Comprehensive Career Services! Emma Miller, the Employment Specialist, has been promoted to Career Services Program Manager. Emma began this new role on August 1st. (Yay Emma!) CCS also has a new Job Coach joining the team. Her name is Gabby Fell and we are so happy to be welcoming her very soon.

In April Emma Miller submitted a grant proposal to the Redwood Coast Regional Center's Realizing Interdependence Success & Empowerment (RISE) client leadership team to help upgrade technology, training for job coaches, and office upgrades that are sensory friendly and improve accessibility. We have already begun working on plans to make these office upgrades. This will help CCS grow and be able to better support those we serve in employment or educational goals.



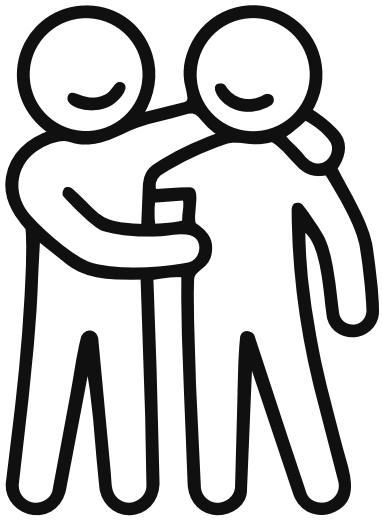
In addition to the RISE grant, the CCS team has been partnering with other community organizations to help fill resource gaps. The Personal Care Pantry received a sizeable supply donation, and several local organizations stepped up to assist with school supplies for Vocational Education.

All the growth in the Employment Services department has led to an increase in personal successes for the program participants. There have been 11 new employment placements for CCS participants between Internships and Community jobs in 2026 so far in 2026!



Job Coach Gabby Fell (left) and Employment Service Manager Emma Miller (right)

What it means to be a Supported Living Services Staff Member



Meet Trinity Sweatmon

Q Introduce yourself, how did you end up working for HCAR?

A: My name is Trinity Sweatmon. I'm 21 and I moved to Arcata about a year ago now. The only other jobs I've had were I worked for a friend's small business, then retail, My aunt knows Kim, actually. And I was in a coffee shop with my aunt one day, and I was like, I feel like retail is draining me. There has to be something where I can help people and actually feel like I'm making a difference in my community.



SLS Staff member Trinity Sweatmon

She was like, oh, I actually know somebody that maybe I could get you in touch with. From there, I met my first client and just kept meeting people.

Q: How has the experience been so far?

A: Oh, I've definitely learned a lot! A lot of the situations I've been put in, you don't really know how to handle them until you're in it. Like taking clients to appointments and making sure I take good notes to get back to the SLS Director [cont]

*Original script has been altered for ease of reading and clarification.

things like that. I've definitely learned what it means to be like so community based and it's cool.

Q: How many clients do you serve here at HCAR?

A: I have four and then one I see when filling in for other people. But yeah, I see three and then also a married couple which is pretty interesting. I like that.

Q: What have been some notable moments for you so far?

A: One of my favorite things is, I'll take one of my clients out of the house and he just loves talking about the media and movies he likes. And I love connecting with people on that level. It's really cool to have those conversations about the things we have in common, even when many of my clients are seniors. I feel like that's been a big highlight for me.

Q: What have been some challenges for you?

A: It's the drive back home, I'll just be like, that was a heavy day. When a client of mine is having a really emotionally hard day and you have to understand that you can only do so much when you're there with them.

A: How has it been working with our SLS Director, Ericka Everhart, and Executive Director, Kim Nash.

Q: I come from experiencing only major retail like leadership and it's like 'do your job as fast and as good as you can and then leave'. There's no real connection. In the past, I always struggled with asking for help and asking questions. But here at HCAR, I've honestly not had that problem with that at all. The second I'm not quite sure about something, I'm like, oh, let me just text Ericka or let me call Ericka. I can even reach out to Kim if I need to, which is really cool that even the leader of HCAR is like that reachable.

Spotlight: What are Develop

At HCAR, we service community members who have been diagnosed with one or more developmental disabilities
Developmental disabilities are diverse and cause a multitude of factors. Some are purely genetic or acquired during pregnancy, while others may be caused by exposure to certain environmental toxins or illnesses at a very young age.

Let's explore some of the most common developmental disabilities we support here at HCAR.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorder, also known simply as autism, is a genetic developmental disorder that person is born with. Most individuals begin showing signs of autism in early childhood. Autism causes a multitude of symptoms, most commonly those that affect a person's ability to communicate and socialize with others. Autism can also cause difficulty in self-regulation, with many individuals being hyper- or hypo-sensitive to different stimuli in their environment. The behavior of "stimming" often comes from an autistic person's attempt to self-regulate.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy is a group of disorders caused by abnormal brain development or damage to the developing brain that affects a person's ability to control their muscles. ". The inability to control one's muscles may show through awkward movements, lack of balance, tremors, speech difficulties, spasms, seizures, and the need for mobility aids. The condition is not hereditary or progressive.

Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome is a genetic condition where an individual is born with an extra chromosome, known as chromosome 21. Individuals with Down Syndrome usually have learning difficulties along with certain physical characteristics such as smaller builds, flat facial features, and almond shaped eyes. People with Down Syndrome may also have heart defects, hearing loss, and other health related problems.

Sources:
Mayo Clinic (www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions)
Cleveland Clinic (my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases)

mental Disabilities?

What causes a condition to be labeled as a developmental disorder is that it impairs the development of an individual child's physical, learning, language, or behavioral capabilities.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are a group of conditions that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth. Symptoms can vary greatly; from behavioral issues, language delays, intellectual disabilities; to low body weight, abnormal facial features, and hearing and vision loss.

Fragile X Syndrome

Fragile X Syndrome is an inherited genetic disorder caused by a genetic mutation of the FMR1 gene in one of the X chromosomes. While effecting both men and women, those born male at birth are more likely to inherit it and have more severe symptoms. Symptoms include intellectual and learning disabilities and language processing issues. Physical characteristics can include a larger forehead, crossed eyes, flat feet, and large jaw.

Intellectual Disabilities

Intellectual disability refers to developmental conditions that affect functioning in two areas:

- Cognitive functioning, such as learning, problem solving and judgement.
- Adaptive functioning, activities of daily life such as communication skills and social participation.

Although all individuals with learning difficulties are capable of acquiring new skills, they often do so at slower rates than the average population. Some individuals with learning difficulties may never develop the ability to read, or write, or understand complex problems.

Comorbidity

Several of the above disabilities can co-occur in individuals with developmental disabilities. A person with Down Syndrome can also have an intellectual disability. A person with cerebral palsy can also be born with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Many of our clients at HCAR can have developmental comorbidities or have a physical disorder or mental illness comorbid with their developmental disability.

In Memoriam of Bill Spenceley



It is with extreme sadness and broken hearts that we share that Bill lost his battle this morning. We find comfort in knowing that he is now at peace and no longer suffering. Looking back, we now understand just how important it was to Bill to come home—to the place he loved and where he truly wanted to be. He was able to spend a week in his own home, and Cler shared that he was genuinely happy to finally be there. He needed that time in his happy place, and we are so grateful we were able to give that to him. Cler was by his side as he took his last breath. Knowing that Bill was surrounded by love, with the person he loved beside him, brings our family a great deal of comfort. Thank you for every prayer, every kind word, every donation, and every act of love you have shown Bill and our family throughout this journey. You helped us give Bill something he wanted so deeply—to be home. And today, please send a little extra love Bill's way as he begins his next journey—free from pain, free from suffering, and whole again. We love you, Bill. You will be deeply missed. - Christine Peter, Oct 5th

April 17,1950 - October 5, 2026

Thank you for your 34 years of service with HCAR.

Humboldt Community Access and Resource Center
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