Paving a New Path in Our Communities

It is an exciting time for Community Gatepath. We are evolving towards a new delivery model, designed around the needs of families to build community support and inclusion. We are paving this path, guided by a strategic plan that delivers sustainable and new inclusive programs for people with special needs and disabilities.

Gatepath continues to be an innovator in the world of disabilities, anticipating the needs of the community. Our plan ensures there will be a life-span of inclusive programs while addressing the major service gaps for individuals with special needs and disabilities. In addition to direct services to over 9,000 children, youth, adults and professionals, our websites received 430,000 visits this year, and our reports on anti-bullying, obesity, and life after high school have received national attention and following.

Consider these statistics:

$10 The amount saved for every $1 spent on early intervention.

Autism The fastest growing developmental disability nationally, growing at a rate of 10-17% per year. One out of 40 children is diagnosed in some school districts in San Mateo County.

87% The unemployment rate of people living with developmental disabilities in the State of California.

Our goal is building inclusive communities where people with special needs and disabilities are engaged, active and thriving in our community; classrooms include children of all abilities and income levels; employment opportunities and wages are equal to individuals/peers living without disabilities; and quality education, opportunities, and health and wellness benefits continue to be accessible.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the support of all of our partners, including the Hillsborough Auxiliary. Thank you for “Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities.”

Gratefully,

Sheryl Young, Chief Executive Officer
Community Gatepath and AbilityPath.org
**Children’s Services**

**Determined: That’s the best word to describe Lucas and his parents, Meg and Don.** After a tough pregnancy and prenatal test results that were not reassuring for parents, Lucas was born five weeks premature, with a club foot.

He remained in a cast for six months after his birth. “Needless to say, the cast delayed his ability to crawl,” says Meg, Lucas’ mom. At 17 months he began to walk.

As Lucas grew, other developmental delays became apparent. An early start program addressed his needs for speech and occupational therapy. “It was a struggle just to get him to string two words together, and use a sippy cup, but we were determined,” Meg recalls. Then, at the age of three, it came time for preschool.

“We needed a full-time preschool where he didn’t have to be potty trained,” Meg says. “And I also needed a place where they didn’t look at me like I had three heads when I started talking about Lucas’ issues.” Most preschools didn’t know if they could accommodate Lucas. “That's when we found Community Gatepath’s Learning Links Preschool, and the director said, ‘No problem!’”

“The preschool and Family Resource Center (FRC) staff have been great! The school kept track of Lucas’ developmental progress and provided supports in the classroom wherever possible. The FRC helped to get the meetings we needed with the school district. Together, we advocated with the school district and helped ensure that his services remained in place even when we had to hold him back from kindergarten for a year,” Meg says.

Although little for his age, Lucas is thriving and will start kindergarten next year. All that determination paid off. Meg shares, “his favorite thing to do is play superheroes with his friends. They are all over the place and we can’t slow him down.”

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**We were awarded a contract to operate the City of Mountain View’s preschool – Learning Links Preschool Mountain View – which expanded our area of service into Santa Clara County.**

**24% Increase in our Early Intervention Program participants over the last year.**

We now serve 326 children ages birth to three years.

**83% Learning Links Burlingame general education students who showed substantial progress in Self & Social Development, Language and Literacy Development.**

**Birth to five – we provide the most comprehensive services for children who have special needs and those at risk of developmental delays.**

**Early Intervention Services** provide a variety of programs for children ages birth to five, in a therapeutic and supportive environment focusing on the enhancement of childhood development.

**Learning Links** Inclusive Preschools provide educational development for children of all abilities and income levels. Our strong play based curriculum fosters learning and critical thinking with the goal of kindergarten readiness.

**Children’s Therapy Services** has an experienced team of pediatric therapists who provide individualized therapies and classes to support the development of children from birth to pre-teen.
Growing up, Garrett Lees had an extremely difficult time getting along with other kids. As a child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, he seldom connected with his peers no matter how hard he tried. “I made weird noises and strange movements that I couldn’t help making and some kids called me a weirdo and others just ignored me,” explains Garrett. They simply didn’t understand his way of communicating and he began to feel like an outcast.

Garrett struggled to fit in and things were not getting better. Then he enrolled in Community Gatepath’s Autism Social Connection (ASC), an inclusive film class that helps young adults with autism improve their social skills, interact with their peers, but most importantly – have a good time. Garrett began improving socially right away! “It helped me to make friends and to understand that people with autism need to be understood and treated fairly for them to understand and get along with other people,” he said. ASC provided a safe and fun environment for Garrett to express himself and his creativity. Once enrolled, Garrett began to change – he was more social, outgoing, and allowed his creativity to flow. “Just because we have any form of autism, we still have really creative and great ideas that we want to express.”

Now seven years into the program, Garrett has a completely different outlook on life. “I hope to get a job in Hollywood, in the future.” And he doesn’t just have high career goals, “I hope I can show the world having Asperger’s doesn’t define you.” Currently Garrett travels around the county and teaches children at schools about special needs and inclusion. It is these actions and his aspirations that will put Garrett’s indelible mark on the world.

Gatepath fosters social, creative, and technical skills through media, arts and sports that transcend barriers in ability, language and cultural backgrounds. We motivate, empower and increase the confidence of our participants.

**Buddy Bunch** is an after school therapeutic social skills program involving fun recreational activities. Several different classes, or “Bunches,” are structured around different areas of interest. A board-certified behavior analyst and a recreation specialist coordinate fun activities in an inclusive supportive environment.

**Autism Social Connection (ASC)** is a creative arts community where individuals with and without autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can learn social, technical and pre-vocational skills. Classes include learning direction and camera work and film making, editing, animation and sound.

**CollegePath** is designed for young adults of every ability. This program empowers our participants to attend college courses while providing support services such as study groups.
Jamie Hanson looked for a job for two years before being referred to Community Gatepath. “I had a very hard time finding a job on my own because I have autism and ADHD. I tried practically everywhere – retailers, fast food places, stores, restaurants, and even the local dry cleaner.” Hiring managers gave the same story every time saying, “We decided to go with someone else,” or “You didn’t meet our requirements to work here.”

For many adults with special needs, finding a job is incredibly difficult. However, Jamie along with others say, “I want to have a good job, make some money, and earn my keep.”

Through Community Gatepath, Jamie was able to receive a Workability Assessment and on-the-job training which assisted her with work skills and managing job responsibilities. “The training helped me understand how to work, correct my mistakes, and do a good job,” stated Jamie.

After a few months of training and working with Gatepath’s job developer on a resume and interview skills, Jamie’s hard work paid off. She landed a job in San Mateo with a new Japanese clothing company called Uniqlo. “Without Community Gatepath, I wouldn’t have been able to get the job interview,” says Jamie. “The skills I gained from the Workability Assessments and the interview practice all helped me get the job, but I had to sell myself!”

And Jamie did just that. With nearly six months on the job, she is thriving in her new role, has proven herself, and received a promotion. Jamie could not be happier saying, “And, because I speak Japanese and love the culture and their beautiful traditions, working at Uniqlo is the perfect job for me.”
Agency Outcomes

16,086 volunteer hours dedicated to Community Gatepath

12,779 individuals and families reached by Gatepath Services in Silicon Valley

243 individuals placed in jobs by our employment services

63% increase last year in children served in our inclusive preschools

240 community partners

175 dedicated staff

One amazing organization!
We pride ourselves on the quality of our services matched by a relentless focus on fiscal responsibility, accountability, and transparency.

**Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Financials**

**REVENUE**
- Public Funds 48%  
  $6.5M
- Private Fees 25%  
  $3.3M
- Development 26%*  
  $3.5M
- Other 1%  
  $0.1M

**EXPENSES**
- Programs 74%  
  $9.6M
- G&A 19%  
  $2.3M
- Development 7%  
  $855K

**ACCREDITATION AND EFFICIENCY RATING**

*Includes Legacy Giving*
Family Support & Resources

In addition to our services, we house a Family Resource Center and online resource hub. Both offer free support for families of children with special needs.

The Family Resource Center at Community Gatepath provides parent to parent support, outreach, information and referral services to families of children with special needs and disabilities and the professionals who serve them. We facilitate support groups, prevention programs, parent mentors, education training and assistive technology support. Our services are available to anyone that lives or works in the County of San Mateo.

AbilityPath.org is an online community providing information, peer-to-peer support and special reports for families and professionals internationally.

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Hiring workers with special needs makes good business sense: Gatepath participants have a proven track record of productivity, dependability, and high retention rates. It also creates an environment of tolerance and diversity, one that embraces a wide variety of perspectives, circumstances, and backgrounds. We partner with employers throughout Silicon Valley, preparing motivated candidates for group and individual placement. Our employment and staffing services help to assess business needs, provide placements, and train new recruits.

Thank you to our current community employment partners.

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