Mission Creek Center Participants Return to In-Center Care and New Clients Enroll

“Last year I was very depressed, didn’t go out of the house at all and did not want to go to an adult day program when it was suggested to me. I thought it would be people sitting around coloring and I didn’t want to do that or really be around other people. Then I began to get calls from Naomi (the Mission Creek Center Social Worker), and she was wonderful. She let me vent and we talked. Eventually I began to attend the Center. I like it. The staff is excellent, and I have even made friends with other participants.”

“When I arrived, I told the staff that I had never been one to exercise and wasn’t going to use the gym. But then I noticed that I was having some difficulties walking and carrying groceries. I told Deirdre (Deirdre O’Brien, the Center’s Physical Therapist) about that, we began doing some exercises and I have seen a real improvement. I also like Janet Gee’s Body Dynamics class.

“I am surprised I like the program as much as I do. It’s been helpful for me.” Alex J., Mission Creek Center Program participant.
All SteppingStone’s adult day care centers are filling up again as participants choose to receive their care in-Center, rather than using remote services. Mission Creek Center, which operates morning and afternoon care shifts, is serving more clients in-Center every week as current clients return, and new participants join the program. (All care will be provided in-Center after October 1 when state authorization for remote adult day health care programs officially ends.)

The Center’s Program Director is Jimmy Goh, RN.

“Mission Creek is fortunate to serve a large and diverse number of participants with supportive staffing to address their needs. Our facility capacity allows us to have the Alzheimer’s Adult Day Care Center and the LGBTQ+ program based here, providing enhanced care for participants (funded by the SF Department of Disability and Aging Services). Not only are we supporting our seniors, but we also provide respite and support for their families and caregivers. We are eager to get all clients back in their Center once again.” Jimmy Goh, RN- Program Manager, Mission Creek Center.

The staff at the Center are observing that most participants’ health has declined because of the isolation, inactivity and stress caused by the COVID pandemic. Returning to in-Center care, where they can get therapies, have their health monitored and socialize with friends, will provide real benefit.

“Mission Creek is coming back to full speed as most program participants return to in-Center care and new clients are enrolling. It is much easier for me to provide care when participants are on-site. Meeting with the participants in-person makes it easier to provide assistance with important applications (CalFresh, SSI, IHSS, LIHEAP, etc.) and communication with outside agencies.” Naomi Childs, Social Worker, Mission Creek Center.

“The social isolation and decreased activity caused by COVID has been very hard on seniors and people with disabilities, including our clients. In our team evaluations we are finding that many participants are physically weaker and have declined cognitively as a result of isolation and loneliness. But getting back to the Center, where they will get therapy and socialize again multiple days every week will help them improve.” Grace Huang, RN, Nurse, Mission Creek Center. (Every six months participants meet with a team of clinicians to assess their needs and build rapport. From this, care plans are developed.)

However, many of the disruptions caused by COVID remain. Transportation is difficult for many clients, causing some scheduling issues. Referrals to get participants additional support also can be very difficult, particularly for mental health services and home care.
To Maria Martinez, the Center’s Activity Director, participants are very happy to resume in-Center activities.

“I am able to engage 90% of our participants in some way. We offer many different recreational activities such as art projects, dancing, bowling, singing and games. I always ask clients what they would like to do and then find a way to organize it. I have just ordered new equipment for that very purpose and will begin a number of new activities in the next few weeks.

“I often tell participants that ‘music is energy’ and ‘exercise is health’. I urge them to be involved because it will make them feel better.” Maria Martinez, Mission Creek Center Activity Director.

Trace B., a participant at Mission Creek Center for over two years, agrees.

“I came here after having a serious stroke the upended my life. I had gone from being very active to having difficulty getting out of bed. My husband urged me to find a way to get out and we found Mission Creek Center.

“All the staff have been wonderful to me. Deirdre and Melissa, help me in the gym with physical therapy and even got me upright, walking using the parallel bars. Dina, one of the Center’s nurses, and I have become very close. I have made friends with other participants, too. I even met someone who knew the beaches in Hawaii, where I used to work as a lifeguard.” (Deirdre O’Bryan, PT-Physical Therapist, Melissa Nazzaal, OT-Occupational Therapist, Dina Fridman, RN-Nurse)

“For me, this place lifts up my spirit. I am not sure I would be here without it.”

Jimmy Goh, reflects on the Center’s status at this time:

“The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt and we continue to see the effects that it has had on our participants. Many were already in situations bereft of regular support and the company of others. I think we can all share how isolating the experience of the pandemic was and how great it is to reconnect with people.

“We are very excited to welcome new and returning participants to our center. As noted already, many of our returning clients have regressed in terms of physical stamina and mobility, so we are eager to have them return to center to help them achieve their goals through exercise. We take tremendous pride in the enhanced services available to our participants through our LGBTQ+ program and the new Alzheimer’s Day Care Resource program and hope to see growth in participation as we see more individuals coming to center.

“I am proud of the care and support we are providing seniors and adults with disabilities here at Mission Creek Center. My hope is they find their experiences here as rewarding as it is for the staff here to provide them this service.” Jimmy H. Goh, CEO, Mission Creek Center.
Mission Creek Center is one of four SteppingStone Adult Day Health Care Centers and is located at 930 Fourth Street in San Francisco. Nearly all program participants have their care covered by managed care insurance (Medi-Cal, VA) so have no out-of-pocket expenses whatsoever. For more information contact Jimmy Goh, Program Manager at 415-974-6784 or jimmygoh@steppingstonehealth.org.

Photos: (Masthead) Mission Creek Center participants dancing. (Activity Coordinator Maria Martinez, places paper crown on one client’s head.).
(Top left) Naomi Childs, Mission Creek Center Social Worker with program participant Alex J. in the Center’s courtyard.
(Middle 1) Jimmy Goh, RN- Program Manager, Mission Creek Center.
(Middle 2) Grace Huang, RN, Nurse, Mission Creek Center.
(Middle 3) Mission Creek Center program participant Trace B. with her friend George doing art projects.
(Middle 4) Maria Martinez, Mission Creek Center Activity Director.
(Bottom) Naomi Childs, Social Worker, Mission Creek Center.

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