SteppingStone Celebrates the Holidays

Beginning in late November and continuing through the Lunar New Year, SteppingStone Centers celebrate the holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year’s and Lunar New Year’s. This means two months of special decorations, activities and food for each holiday and a holiday gift bag for all participants.

As with all activities the celebrations varied between Centers to reflect what participants wanted and the staff able to provide. Mostly these were variations of normal activities that occur at each Center, plus a little extra.

"At Presentation Center we celebrated Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa in December and decorate with arts and crafts projects for each one. We also had a pajama party day in December which has been a longstanding and fun tradition here." Nicole Clause, Program Director, Presentation Center.

At Golden Gate Center celebrations were slightly different to reflect the preferences of their program participants.

"The clients did a number of holiday
Centers celebrated multiple holidays in different ways. Here is how Presentation Center recognized Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

"We celebrated Hanukkah on Dec. 20 with latkes and applesauce. Decorations were put up and participants worked on Hanukkah arts and projects. During the week of Kwanzaa starting December 27 decorations were put up and we discussed the principle of the day during our morning announcements." Nicole Clause, Program Director, Presentation Center.

At Mission Creek Center small gifts were given to participants and there was a visit by Santa Claus. Dancing, a favorite activity at the Center, was organized by Activity Coordinator Maria Martinez. These activities were joined by all program participants. In addition, the LGBTQ+ program organized their own holiday activities.

"We watched an LGBTQ+ Christmas romantic comedy over two weeks in our Rainbow Cinema activity. In "Shooting Stars", our weekly LGBTQ+ Social Group led by Wil Simpson from Curry Senior Center, we discussed New Year's Resolutions and how they can benefit us when put into practice." Avi Critz, LGBTQ+ Program Coordinator.

At every Center staff eagerly performed the task of organizing multiple events for dozens of participants all of whom have serious health challenges, both physical and cognitive. Clients come from differing cultural backgrounds so activities need to be planned so that so that everyone feels welcome and enjoys the festivities.

For many clients the Center they attend is their home-away-from-home and their fellow participants
and Center staff are friends who they see multiple days each week. Knowing this, SteppingStone does whatever it can to mark the holidays and make them joyous for everyone involved.

As this is being written the Centers are already celebrating the Lunar New Year, and though there are no dragon dancers this year, the decorations are up, special foods prepared, and fun activities planned.

Happy new year to all our friends! Welcome to the Year of Rabbit.

SteppingStone operates four Adult Day Health Care Centers 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 including to read past issues of this newsletter, visit our website: steppingstonehealth.org.

Photos: (Masthead) Mission Creek Program Assistant Xinguang Deng dressed as Santa Claus with a table of small holiday gifts for program participants.
(Top left) Presentation Center Occupational Therapist Yamin Zaw with participant.
(Middle 1) Mabini Center Activities Coordinator Mei Chen dancing with program participant.
(Middle 2) Presentation Program Assistant Dan Feng Wen and Social Work Assistant Janice Lau with participants after decorating holiday tree.
(Middle 3) Program participant at Presentation Center looking at holiday gift bag.
(Bottom) Mabini Center participant making a holiday card that reads “Merry Christmas”.

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