



## SteppingStone Program Participants Today

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Over the last 40 years SteppingStone has provided care and community to tens of thousands of San Franciscans. This changed as the city changed and the agency grew from one adult day health center to four. This newsletter looks at who the agency serves in April 2023 from the perspective of the Program Directors who manage each Center.

Most SteppingStone clients have two or more disabilities, either physical, cognitive or both. Virtually all are very low-income with managed care insurance, mostly Medi-Cal. They come from many backgrounds and speak many languages. Because of their serious health challenges, they need adult day health care two to five days every week and attend their center for four hours for each visit. Once there, program participants are seen by multiple clinicians, receive appropriate therapies, have lunch and meet their friends. There are approximately 30 to 50 clients at any one care shift along with 10 or 12 staff members.

On average, clients participate in the program for four years and some much longer, so they know their care providers and fellow participants very well. For many, attending their center is their primary social activity and they attend to stay connected to their community, as well as receiving health care. All Centers provide robust health care, but social activities involving neighborhood, language and culture vary depending on the needs and desires of the participants. All Centers have a number of participants who for health or other reasons occasionally cannot attend in-person and receive emergency remote services to maintain a continuum of care.

Because of the impact of COVID many clients have joined the program in recent months, changing the nature of the population served from before the pandemic. Agencywide, SteppingStone had just under 300 program participants in March, which is lower than pre-pandemic levels, but increasing each month. Below we summarize the populations attending each Center as last month.

*"Golden Gate Center had a bit under 50 clients enrolled last month from diverse populations and neighborhoods. Because we are located in the heart of the Tenderloin, many participants come from the neighborhood, but others come from throughout San Francisco to attend. Culturally our clients are very diverse with the largest groups at the Center being Chinese, Filipino, and Black. Because our staff is multilingual, we have the ability to serve participants in English, Cantonese, Tagalog and Mandarin. Participants range in age from 45 to 92. Two are veterans and under 10% say they are members of the LGBTQ+ community.*



*"Our participants have a range of health conditions most commonly mental illness, diabetes, dementia and stroke, which are monitored and treated by our staff, working in close coordination with each participant's primary physician and other health care providers." Martina Leader, Program Director, Golden Gate Center.*



The Presentation Center is also located in the Tenderloin neighborhood, but the population varies from that of Golden Gate as the Program Director Nicole Clause described below.

*"Here at Presentation Center, we serve many clients from the Tenderloin and Chinatown neighborhoods which are nearby, as well as people from throughout San Francisco. In March we had over 50 participants receiving both in-center and emergency remote services multiple days*

*each week. Roughly 40% are men and 60% women, with ages that range from their 50s through 103, SteppingStone's oldest program participant.*

*"The client population in March was nearly half Chinese, 20% Black and 10% each Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese. The language skills of Presentation staff allow them to serve clients in English, Cantonese, Taishanese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Russian. None of program participants are veterans and one identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.*

*"A key issue for the Center is that many participants are reluctant to return to full in-center care, so either do not attend all their authorized days or receive emergency remotes services if appropriate. I see this as a lingering effect of the pandemic, and it will take some time to overcome." Nicole Clause, Program Director, Presentation Center.*

Here is how Melissa MacDonald describes the population at the center she manages.

*"Mabini Center is located in the South of Market neighborhood and in March served over 50 participants, roughly 2/3s are women and 1/3 are men. We have an older client population with an age- range from 59 to 98. 20% of clients over age 90 and over half are 80 and over.*

*"Mabini's client population in March was 85% Chinese and over 10% Filipino. Care is provided in English, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog. Roughly 40% of our participants have a dementia diagnosis." Melissa MacDonald, Program Director, Mabini Center.*



Mission Creek Center is twice the size of other SteppingStone Centers, operating two care shifts, morning and afternoon, and three specialized programs. It is currently being managed by the agency's Director of Services and Outreach, Diana Almanza, filling the Program Director position, which is temporarily vacant.

*"Mission Creek Center is located in the South of Market neighborhood and has over 100 program participants attending both care shifts. Participants here are on average slightly younger than other Centers with 40% in their 60s, 30% their 70s, and the remainder in their 80s and 90s. English is*

*the primary language for roughly 70% of clients, followed by Spanish and Cantonese. Just under 10% of the Center's participants are Black. Approximately 15% are members of the LGBTQ+ community.*

*"Many clients participate in one or more of the Center's three specialized programs. These are the Alzheimer's Day Care Resource Center, the LGBTQ+ program and the Direct Access for Housing (DAH) enhanced care program. The DAH program, which has been in operation for over ten years, serves formerly homeless San Franciscans that live in the Mission Creek residential units. 100% of the clients in the DAH program have been able to maintain their health and remain housed. Building on this success we have prioritized outreach to formerly homeless residents and as of March some 30% of program participants are formerly unhoused. We are hopeful that adult day health care will have the same level of success in helping these clients maintain their health as it has with the DAH program." Diana Almanza, Director of Services and Outreach, interim Program Director, Mission Creek Center.*



All SteppingStone Centers are accepting new program participants from throughout San Francisco. Perspective clients are encouraged to visit and consider which would be best for them.

*"SteppingStone's program of adult day health care prioritizes personal choice, and every participant has a health care program designed for them. In addition, they may find that some Centers are more conducive for them because of the location or current client population. We know that if participants can find a good fit, they will attend the program regularly and we can help keep them healthy. This is what SteppingStone has accomplished for over four*

*decades and our program is stronger than ever."* Daniel Gallagher, Executive Director.

*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 they have no out-of-pocket expenses. For more information, including reading past issues of this newsletter, visit our website: [steppingstonehealth.org](http://steppingstonehealth.org).*

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**Photos:**

**(Top right)** Martina Leader, Program Director, Golden Gate Center

**(Middle 1)** Nicole Clause, Program Director, Presentation Center with participant

**(Middle 2)** Melissa MacDonald, Program Director, Mabini Center

**(Middle 3)** Diana Almanza, SteppingStone Director of Services and Outreach, interim Program Director, Mission Creek Center

**(Bottom)** Daniel Gallagher, Executive Director, SteppingStone

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