



# 50

Years of  
Leading the Way



# LEADING THE WAY

*“Every great journey  
starts with **a single step.**”*

*Maya Angelou*

Taking that first step is never easy and journeys are rarely straight.  
But finding a new way forward was never about what was easy.  
It was about what was right.  
It was about taking care of our community.

**50 years later, it still is.**

The journey continues as we build tomorrow with the work of today,  
knowing that where we lead will build **safer communities for all.**





Partnering with Waymakers for over two decades has been an incredible journey of compassion and transformation. Their unwavering dedication to providing shelter, advocacy and diversion support for the neglected, victimized and abused is a testament to the power of community and the strength of the human spirit. It has been an honor and privilege to support an organization that has not only changed lives but also created a brighter, more hopeful future for those in need. ”

**Rick Vaughn,**

Director of Community Relations, Swinerton

## DEAR WAYMAKERS COMMUNITY,

As the Board President of Waymakers, it is my great honor and privilege to celebrate our 50th anniversary with you. We are so grateful to do the work we do and know it's because of our incredible volunteers, irreplaceable staff, donors and community members like you.

Over the years, Waymakers has organically grown to meet the needs of those we serve — from sheltering and counseling teens and young adults to addressing human trafficking, assisting victims of various crimes, advocating for rights, providing grassroots health education and working to help children seek alternatives to gangs — we are at the forefront of addressing the most complex challenges a community can face.

Waymakers is a part of me and it gives me joy to support the work we do. Over the past ten years, I've witnessed immense growth in the services we provide, the number of people we assist and the way we collaborate with other organizations and agencies.

Our evolution is in direct correlation to the generosity of our donors, advisors, grantors and, perhaps most importantly, our talented, hard-working, compassionate staff members. Together, we are committed to continuing our mission of improving the lives of all people in Orange County, especially our most vulnerable members.

As we look toward the next 50 years, I am excited by the possibility of the opportunities to come. Through it all, though, we promise to remain committed to our goal of fostering a community that is safe, healthy and equitable for all.

Thank you for your support. It has truly made all the difference.



Sincerely,

**Ann Stawicki**

Board President of Waymakers



# COUNSELING FAMILIES

## WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Over the last 50 years, we have led the way when it comes to transforming the lives of our community members. The work we've done and the programs we've built didn't start all at once, but organically grew as the needs of those we serve became pressing.

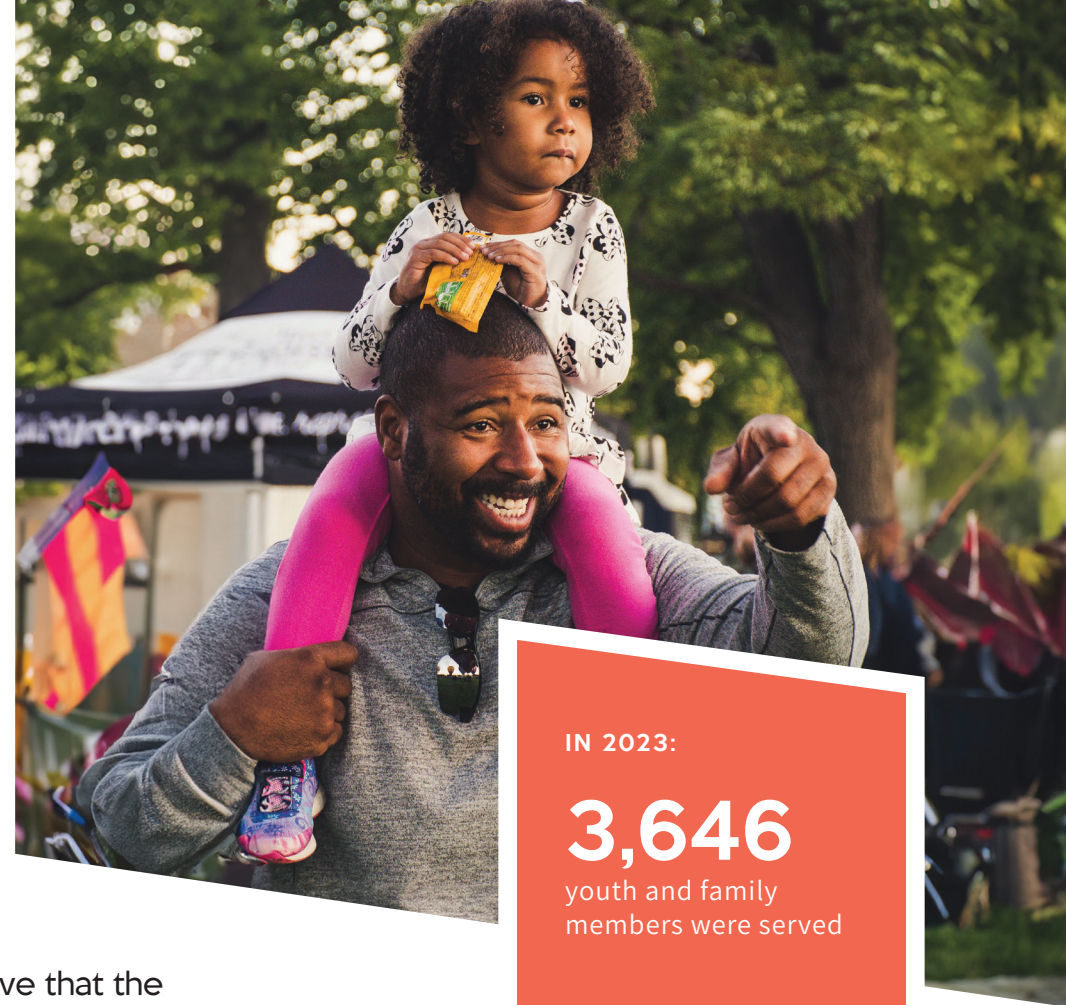
Our very first program began as a way to prevent youth caught committing petty crimes from becoming repeat offenders facing a lifetime of imprisonment. We worked with law enforcement to identify vulnerable youth and quickly learned that these behaviors were often a symptom of larger problems in their lives. We provided the youth and their families with solutions, alternative paths, skills and guidance.

These initial efforts began what would become the heart and soul of Waymakers.

Our intervention program paved the way for the creation of counseling programs, which work with young people ages 12 to 25. We help them make changes in their lives, providing resources and support. From meeting basic needs to educational support, career training to job placement, they begin to develop the skills they need to get back on a path to stability and success.

## REWRITING THEIR FUTURE

We're proud of our five-decade legacy walking alongside young people and helping prevent them from experiencing a life of potential crime to one as a productive, whole member of society, giving them the best chance to lead a happy, fulfilled life.



The program really helped me reflect on my actions and taught me to think before I do. I appreciate the opportunity. ”

**Former participant,** Juvenile Diversion Program

“ I truly believe that the diversion staff were interested and invested in bringing about a positive change in my son. ”

**Parent** of participant and recipient of family counseling.

IN 2023:

**3,646**

youth and family members were served

**9,386**

counseling hours were provided to youth and family members



IN 2023:

**1,556**

youth and family  
members served

**94%**

of youth successfully  
reunited with their  
families

## A SAFE HAVEN

Having somewhere to call home can make all the difference. When working with youth, we realized many of them needed a safe space where they could reset and then reunify with their family. We opened our first youth shelter in 1979 with a team of local volunteers, focusing on short-term crisis intervention for runaway and homeless youth, creating a space they could go.

## WHERE HEALING HAPPENS

From the very start of our shelter, we were able to take in youth between the ages of 11 to 17, day or night, seven days a week, and we had a waitlist early on. This immediate demand signaled the growing need and we focused our services around counseling, pro-social activities, a daily schedule designed to rebuild the individual, mandatory parent participation and access to help for the family. From there, we received grants to expand our reach, offering further mental health assistance and adding new shelters in Huntington Beach and Tustin. In 2021, we added a Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Crisis Residential Program in 2021 for young adults between 18 and 25 years old who are in need of shelter, counseling, educational opportunities and ongoing care.



# SHELTERING CHILDREN



We have proudly observed the advancement and development the shelter has achieved by empowering youth with stability, education and opportunity. We have been working with Waymakers' Huntington Beach Youth Shelter since 2005 and while our leadership and team members change, our support and unwavering commitment stands. We are proud to continue to offer our time, talent and resources to the future success of the shelter. ”

**Peter Rice**, General Manager, Hyatt  
Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa



# SUPPORTING VICTIMS

## WHERE TO TURN

In the face of crime — whether it's intimate partner violence, homicide, sexual assault, human trafficking or community violence — victims may feel they have little support when it comes to rebuilding, processing and alleviating the impact those crimes have had on their lives. When the state of California developed requirements for victim services, Waymakers, known for our leadership and groundbreaking work in the County, was selected to take on this crucial program in 1978. Stepping into this new field of service, we identified the needs of victims, creating programs that allowed them to determine their own path forward with care and support from a team of victim advocates.





IN 2023:

**21,217**

victims of crimes served

**\$3,506,009**

in financial restitution secured for victims

## RESOURCES MATTER

Our comprehensive victim services are designed to provide unwavering support to individuals who have experienced victimization. Recognizing the disorienting impact of such incidents, we understand that victims may feel lost and unsure of where to turn for assistance. That's where we step in.

We individualize services through Victim Assistance Centers, or specialized programs that respond to victims of sexual assault, gang violence, human trafficking, intimate partner violence or mass victimization.

While the crime itself cannot be undone, our overarching goal is to minimize the emotional and

psychological toll inflicted by the incident and the subsequent involvement in the judicial process. We are committed to offering a supportive framework that empowers victims on their path to healing and recovery.

## BEYOND ADVOCACY

Our commitment to enhancing support for victims reaches beyond Orange County. We have led the way by building and implementing state-of-the-art training initiatives for victim service providers and school resource officers. These statewide initiatives provide best practice models for crime victim services, school resource officers working with youth and response to victims and communities in situations of mass victimization.



I would not have mentally survived these trials without you. I also wanted to thank you for all your communication and support over the past 2 years. ”

Name withheld



IN 2023:

**2,016**

disputing parties served



Mediation brings resolution to disputing parties that cannot be brought about by courts or judges. When two people are able to agree to a solution and move forward, there is a closure that happens that is invaluable to all the parties. Seeing this happen over and over is why I continue to volunteer as a mediator. ”

**Lloyd Felver**, Attorney and Dispute Resolution Services Program Volunteer

## FINDING COMMON GROUND

When it comes to conflict, one of the most profound and powerful tools in finding resolution is mediation. In the early 1990s, Waymakers began offering school mediation and eventually moved to court and small claims mediation. By offering juvenile mediation, we are able to step in at an earlier point of intervention, creating the opportunity for restitution rather than having to face court. This allows for a flexible forum in order to find sustainable solutions that encourage positive change.

## FOSTERING RESOLUTION

Waymakers actively engages in the recruitment and training of volunteers who play a crucial role in mediating a diverse array of cases. From instances of elder abuse to civil harassment, unlawful detention and small claims, our focus extends beyond traditional judicial solutions. We emphasize community and restorative justice, positioning mediation as a powerful alternative.

We have established a dedicated space for heightened communication. This intentional approach not only facilitates the resolution of conflicts but also cultivates an environment where meaningful dialogue can flourish. Our services empower individuals and communities, ultimately leading to more effective and positive outcomes in conflict resolution.



# RESOLVING CONFLICTS



## IT STARTS WITH PEOPLE

We know that when people know better, they do better. We learned that without the right resources, folks are not always able to meet their needs, create safe environments, prevent harm or stop dangerous issues. By assessing the root causes within our communities, we learned that education and prevention programs helped to mitigate risk factors while promoting healthy behaviors and decision making within our communities.

# EDUCATING COMMUNITIES

## IT GROWS WITH COMMUNITIES

We focus on programs that prepare and benefit members of our community to create safe, whole and enriching environments for all. Our programs are centered around bypassing conflict, deterring gang activity, sexual assault and the reduction of problems associated with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. We are actively educating our communities through our diverse network of partners, schools, colleges, healthcare sites and faith groups.



You guys are AWESOME!! You work so hard to put these trainings together and it shows. I enjoy working with each and every one of you. ”

Training participant

IN 2023:

**5,806**

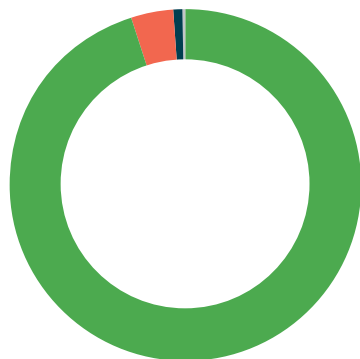
individuals received education trainings



# HELP US LEAD THE WAY

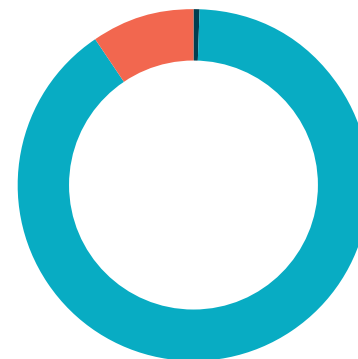
For 50 years, it's been Waymakers' unending mission to build safer communities by helping individuals make their way through conflict and crisis to a place of strength and stability. We know that helping those in need starts with a clear path to safe and reliable resources and to the support systems that will get them there. We are so grateful for your support for these past 50 years and we are as committed as ever as we look forward to another 50 years in service to our community and those who need us most.

## FINANCES



### REVENUE

- **95.2%** Federal and State Agencies
- **3.9%** Donations and Fundraising
- **0.80%** Other Grants and Contracts
- **0.05%** Client Fees



### EXPENSES

- **90.02%** Program Services
- **9.64%** Management & General
- **0.34%** Fundraising & Development

## OUR EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



**Ronnetta Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Hether Benjamin**  
Chief Program Officer,  
Youth Development



**Tiare Escobedo**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Lita Mercado**  
Chief Program Officer,  
Victim Assistance Programs



**Melinda Ramos**  
Chief Financial Officer

# OUR BOARD LEADERSHIP

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**Vice President**  
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*Orange County Business  
Journal*



**Francisco Barajas**  
*Adelante Partners Inc.*



**Isabel Becerra**  
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*Los Angeles District Attorney's  
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**Gutha "GK" Kannan**  
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**Jay Lee, MD**  
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**Eileen McCoy**  
*Pink Bra Project*



**James Pike**  
*Lutheran Church Of The  
Resurrection*



**Tim Sandel**  
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**Jason Smallwood**  
*Flagstar Bank*



**Barbara Steensland**  
*Mag-Trol Electrical Distributors*



**Kris Thordarson**  
*K2 General Contractors, Inc.*



**Greg Tippin**  
*Newmark*



We proudly stand alongside Waymakers in their dedicated efforts to bring about a meaningful and immediate change in the lives of vulnerable children and families. Waymakers' pivotal role in providing essential support to those in need has left a lasting impression on me, as I've personally witnessed the positive impact of their programs on individuals striving to transform their lives. There's no better time than now to assist these individuals in charting a fresh and hopeful path for their future. ”

**Mark Larsen**, Board Member, CEO/Founding Principal, Purus Wealth Management



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