



# annual report

## 2023



“ One thing I love about Project Independence is that adults with intellectual disabilities can live on their own with some help, and there’s nothing wrong with that. --John Correa, Client ”

# one big family

Our staff, Board members, and volunteers are dedicated to promoting civil rights for people with developmental disabilities through services which expand independence and choice.



# our programs

## **independent living**

Assistance with budgeting, driving to medical appointments, teaching cooking skills, and more.

## **supported employment**

Helping clients find employment and supporting them on the job until they are able to work on their own.

## **day program**

Providing essential opportunities for social interaction, skill development, and community inclusion.

## **supported independent living**

24/7 support for clients with more significant needs.





# Trevor's story

Trevor has been receiving independent living services from Project Independence since January of 2018. He has had a great journey over the past 5 years. He originally was living with his cousin, first in their family home, then sharing an apartment together.

In February of 2020, Project Independence helped Trevor move into his own studio apartment. Trevor receives assistance with money and benefits management, shopping, learning to prepare new meals, medical appointments, medication monitoring, and socialization opportunities. Trevor is very happy living independently and is a friend to all in his apartment community.

Trevor just purchased a multi-game table for his savings goal. Game nights will be at Trevor's!

# Ellen's story

Ellen has been receiving Independent Living services from Project Independence since August of 1999.

She had lived with roommates for several years before Project Independence was able to help her move into her own one-bedroom apartment in July of 2013.

Ellen receives assistance with benefits as needed, shopping, housekeeping, medical appointments, and socialization opportunities.

Ellen is very happy living independently and is always helpful to neighbors in her community.



Staff clothes shopping with Trevor and Ellen.



# message

## Bob Watson, CEO

As we reflect on the past year, I am happy to share with you the remarkable ride we have taken. In January of this year, our day programs ended their two-year journey with alternative service delivery and resumed traditional support services to people with physical and intellectual challenges. Our remote services with the day program individuals ended and we are providing direct face-to-face services once again.

All other programs continue as they always have in providing supervision to the individuals we serve. The biggest challenge we have faced in the past year is staffing. As in all industries, finding quality staff to join the PI family has been taxiing but recently the number of applicants responding to our ads has been on the uptick.



# CEO message continued

Our staff quality is a number one priority in the hiring process. The hiring of new staff will allow us to grow in the coming year. Our donors have contributed through their support of our Empowering Possibilities drive and our 14th Walk for Independence. The Board of Directors has given its time and energy and oversight during the past year. A new client Board member was unanimously elected to fill a vacant spot.

I want to personally thank the Board members and our great staff for their unwavering support to advocacy and dedication as we continue to shape a future defined by excellence.

Warm Regards,  
Robert Watson, CEO, Project Independence

## 2022/2023 Highlights

- Transitioned back to community service after COVID
- Completed the process of going paperless in all our programs
- Celebrated our 14th Annual Walk for Independence



# Board of Directors

Dan Pittman, Chairman  
*President*

*Dan Pittman and Associates  
Public Relations*

Kurt Yeager, Vice Chair  
*Retired Attorney, Stradling,  
Yocca, Carlson & Rauth*

Del Hart, Treasurer  
*Financial Consultant  
Crown Capital Securities, L.P.*

Diane Pritchett, Secretary  
*Executive Director  
South Coast Metro Alliance*

Judy Cole  
*Retired, Regional Manager  
Social Security Administration*

Jami Countryman, Member  
*Educator*

Debbie Miller, Member  
*President  
Social Hospitality*

Ian Rice, Member  
*Benefits Consultant  
Alera Group*

Harry Stahl, Member  
*Attorney  
Law Offices of Harry Stahl,  
P.C*

Nick Westphalen, Member  
*Client  
Project Independence*

“ Project Independence draws strength from the diversity of our clients and staff. We celebrate the many things we have in common and strive to understand and accept our differences. We're all stronger when we work together to improve everyone's life. --Dan Pittman, Chairman

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# financial info

## income

TOTAL INCOME: \$3,741,806.00 (Fiscal Year 2023)



## expenses

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$3,806,461.00 (Fiscal Year 2023)



## who we serve

Over 300 individuals with physical and developmental disabilities throughout Southern California, ages 22 - 78.



# looking forward

## 15th Annual Walk for Independence

This year, Project Independence will be inviting champions for the rights of people with developmental disabilities to run, walk or roll at its 15th Annual Walk for Independence to help launch National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Funds raised from the walk will help support the organization's Independent Living, Supported Employment, and Day Program services that assist more than 600 adults. More than 400 people are anticipated to participate in the event.

We look forward to celebrating independence for people with developmental disabilities with everyone who joins us! Stay tuned for information about the date, location, registration, and sponsorships.





## Access 2 Adventure

Through our Access 2 Adventure (A2A Program), Project Independence has proven that part of true independence comes from a sense of venturing into the unknown, accomplishing what you did not think you could do, and laughing along the way with your friends by your side. COVID restrictions and budget constraints have limited our program over the past few years. In 2024 we will re-launch the program to bring new adventures and excursions!



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