



OTTP-SF

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY TRAINING PROGRAM'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



As a skincare and Hello Kitty enthusiast, this youth was excited to use her bath kit as a way to practice self-care and celebrate her individuality!

OTTP-SF DELIVERS HOLIDAY CHEER TO BAY AREA YOUTH

Holiday Gift Drive

From November 1st to December 2nd, OTTP-SF hosted our annual Holiday Gift Drive, aiming to spread holiday cheer to underserved youth while supporting their ongoing therapeutic journey. With the help of donors, volunteers, and community organizations, we successfully delivered over 150 gifts to the clients we serve!

Many of the gifts promoted wellness and provided an outlet for self-expression. In some cases, items were simply chosen to bring joy to a youth during the holidays and beyond.

OTTP-SF extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in making the Holiday Gift Drive a success. Your generosity has not only provided material gifts but has also bestowed the invaluable gift of joy during the holiday season. To highlight the impact of your kindness, OTTP-SF clinicians shared these reactions of youth as they unwrapped their gifts.

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Client Reactions to Opening Gifts

Emily Tunnat, an OTTP-SF Occupational Therapy Program Manager, shared a heartwarming moment with one of her 14-year-old clients when they opened a Sharkitty Plush Keychain:

"Omg this is the best gift I've ever gotten! This is the best ever! This is going to be my new coping object! [for anxiety]," all said with a huge grin and exuberance.

Ada Le, an OTTP-SF Occupational Therapist, reflected on one of her clients unwrapping a Spider-Man LEGO:

"She was smiling and shared that she looked forward to building it immediately as a self-care activity for herself. The holidays can be tough and she was excited to do something hands-on and add to her personal collection."



This gift gave the youth a chance to practice self-care over the holidays while also nurturing her passion for building Legos.

Iliana Santellan, an OTTP-SF Occupational Therapist, shared how one of her youth client's showed significant growth by taking charge of choosing his own gift:

"Last year, he was reluctant towards picking a gift with his moms approval and this year he was on it! He was advocating for what he wanted and didn't even want me to check in with his mom! This is a big milestone because he is developing a sense of self-confidence and decision-making."

Paraphrased from Meta Bodewes, Psychotherapist at OTTP-SF:

One of Meta's clients, a passionate Magic: The Gathering player, received a gift bag filled with Magic-themed items, including a t-shirt, card sleeves, and a pre-release set. Though typically reserved, his quiet excitement was unmistakable as he eagerly examined each card in the set. Learning that his Christmas at home had been minimal made the moment even more poignant. Playing Magic weekly at his local card shop is a significant part of his life, and these thoughtful gifts brought him joy and a sense of connection.

In the SOAR classroom at James Denman Middle School, Meta delivered gifts to students before the holiday break. The scene was magical as the youth eagerly gathered around, bursting with excitement. A student who received LED lights hugged Meta—a rare gesture of gratitude from someone known for her playful sarcasm. Another student was thrilled with a remote control car, eager to test it out, while the recipient of a Bluetooth speaker started playing music, sparking smiles and laughter throughout the room.

The generosity of our donors doesn't just provide holiday cheer; it has a profound therapeutic impact. These gifts offer moments of joy, connection, and growth, helping youth feel supported and valued in ways that last far beyond the season. Thank you for making these moments possible!



The VMware team generously volunteered their time to wrap gifts for the youth we serve, showing their commitment to giving back to the community.

VMWARE VOLUNTEERS BRING HOLIDAY CHEER TO OTTP-SF YOUTH



Volunteer Spotlight

In a heartwarming display of community spirit, volunteers from VMware by Broadcom, led by Sheeva Banisalam, The Sales Leader & Regional Director, generously dedicated their time to help wrap gifts for our Holiday Gift Drive. This marks the third time VMware has supported OTTP-SF, having previously assisted with organizing our San Francisco supply room and wrapping gifts for last year's drive.

Banisalam, who organized and led the volunteer group, shared her thoughts on VMware's partnership with OTTP-SF:



This collaboration between VMware and OTTP-SF demonstrates the powerful impact of community partnerships.



Volunteers joined forces to spread holiday cheer to youth across the Bay Area.

"We are truly moved by the work OTTP does for children in the community and are glad to help in any way we can. We are honored to be invited back to help wrap gifts this Holiday season."

The contributions of these dedicated volunteers were crucial in ensuring that our clients experienced the joy of unwrapping gifts. Their efforts highlight the power of collaboration in spreading holiday cheer and making a lasting impact on the lives of others. OTTP-SF is grateful for VMware's continued support and looks forward to working together in the future.



Left to Right: Katie Gordon (OTTP East Bay Occupational Therapy Services Manager), Susan Elizabeth Winters (Church Member), Gary Winters (Church Member), Colleen Devine (OTTP Division Director), Kinohi McLoskey (Regional Manager, Welfare & Self Reliance Services)

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS VISIT OAKLAND BUILDING TO SEE THE IMPACT OF THEIR DONATION

Grantmakers Visit Oakland

During a recent visit to OTTP-SF's Oakland building, Kinohi McLoskey, Regional Manager of Welfare and Self-Reliance for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, joined Gary and Susan Winters from the Church's headquarters in Utah to assess the impact of a generous grant provided by the Church. The group witnessed firsthand how these funds have helped create a warm and supportive space for both staff and clients.

The partnership between OTTP-SF and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began through a connection between Tracy Feldman, OTTP-SF's Development Officer, and Heather Davis, leader of the Relief Society group at the Church's Moraga branch. In their initial discussions, Heather introduced Tracy to the women's Relief Society, which has since generously donated kits containing food, holiday meals, craft kits, jewelry kits, baby items, and laundry essentials, providing invaluable support to the youth we serve.

As the partnership grew, Heather Davis introduced OTTP-SF as a potential candidate for a grant through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This connection led OTTP-SF to Kinohi McLoskey, who oversees grant management. With McLoskey's guidance, Colleen Devine, OTTP-SF's Division Director, successfully submitted a grant request to support the organization's Oakland building.

The grant underscores the transformative power of community partnerships in fostering spaces that promote the growth and well-being of youth, empowering them on their therapeutic journey.



OTTP-SF hosted a tour of the Oakland building for visitors from The Church, highlighting the positive impact of their generous grant.

OTTP-SF CELEBRATES COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & FIRST TIME EXPERIENCES FOR YOUTH

Community Partner Event

OTTP-SF hosted a successful Community Partner Meet & Greet at our San Francisco building, offering a heartfelt thank you to the many partners that support our work. These community partners, who have ongoing contracts with OTTP-SF, play a crucial role in referring youth clients to our organization.

The event, which featured food, engaging activities, and a live performance from an OTTP-SF youth client, fostered a warm and welcoming atmosphere for attendees to connect and celebrate their shared commitment to youth.

Partners from The Department of Rehabilitation, The San Francisco Department of Public Health, San Francisco Unified School District, McAuley High School, C.A.R.E. Bayview Middle School, Denman Middle School, Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 Community School, and Herbert Hoover Middle School attended the event.

One of our valued partners, Toni Allen, a Regular Education Teacher at C.A.R.E. Bayview Middle School, shared her perspective on working with OTTP-SF:

"OTTP is calm, positive, and provides affirming interactions with our students, helping them feel safe to open up. What sets OTTP apart from other service providers is that they are knowledgeable, empathetic, non-judgmental, accepting, and truly respectful listeners to both clients and teachers."



Left to Right: Teresa Barnes (Board Certified Behavior Analyst from SFUSD), Shasta Rice (OTTP Occupational Therapist), Claire McCormack (Board Certified Behavior Analyst from SFUSD), Molly Wyman (OTTP Psychotherapist), Rachel Bellin (OTTP Psychotherapist)



Left to Right: Kylah Webster (OTTP Occupational Therapist) and her client, who performed at the partner event

During the event, an OTTP-SF client played ukulele and performed a song. Kylah Webster, the youth's occupational therapist, shared her thoughts on this opportunity:

"Witnessing my client overcome her fear of stage fright was an incredibly rewarding experience. This was her first performance, and despite having doubts just moments before stepping on stage, she found the courage to push through. Her ability to face those fears head-on and still deliver a powerful performance not only showed immense strength but also set the tone for a bright future in singing. It was a powerful reminder that growth often begins at the edge of our comfort zones."

The event not only served as a celebration of OTTP-SF's partnerships but also as a reminder of the meaningful impact these collaborations have on the youth we serve. OTTP-SF looks forward to continuing to strengthen these relationships and working together to empower even more youth in the community.



Advisory Board Members from L to R: Sheela Ivlev, Susan Edelsberg, Karina Rosinzonsky, Chi-Kwan Shea, & Keith Pearce

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS KEY UPDATES AND FUTURE PLANS FOR OTTP-SF

Advisory Board Meeting

On Friday, December 6th, OTTP-SF held an Advisory Board meeting at our Oakland building, bringing together staff and Board members to discuss important updates and plans for the future. During the meeting, we discussed East Bay programs expansion efforts led by Katie Gordon, OTTP-SF's East Bay OT Services Manager, the success of the recent Holiday Gift Drive led by Tracy Feldman, OTTP-SF's Development Officer, plans for a new sensory space in Oakland, and preparations for the upcoming Youth Empowerment Fundraiser, led by Natalie Doane, OTTP-SF's Development Assistant.

Board members provided valuable feedback and suggestions to help improve our programs and expand OTTP-SF's community impact.

The meeting highlighted the crucial role the Advisory Board plays at OTTP-SF. With expertise in mental health, research, finance, and technology, the Board helps keep OTTP-SF aligned with best practices and emerging trends. Board members also play a key role in supporting OTTP-SF's annual fundraising events.

The Advisory Board continues to be a crucial partner in OTTP-SF's work, offering strategic guidance and support to strengthen our services and impact on youth mental health across the Bay Area.

OTTP-SF TO LAUNCH NEW SENSORY SPACE IN OAKLAND TO SUPPORT YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Oakland Sensory Space

Micah Lessans, OTTP-SF's Outpatient Mental Health Services Manager, and their housemate Zach Fish are creating a new sensory space at our Oakland building. The goal of the space is to design a welcoming, calming environment where youth of all ages can feel safe, explore their feelings, and regulate themselves while receiving the essential services they need.

The project began with a walkthrough of the empty Oakland space, followed by meetings with OTTP-SF clinicians who would be utilizing the room. Lessans and Fish consulted with these clinicians to understand what would be most supportive for their clients, aiming to design a room that is not only functional but adaptable to the diverse needs of young people.

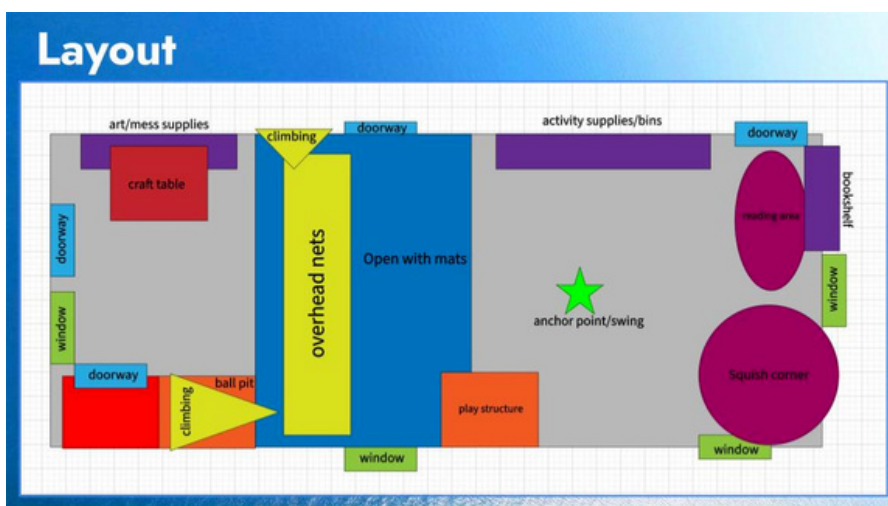
The sensory space will include a variety of activities and tools designed to support both high-energy and calming needs. Plans for the room include a foam pit, climbing wall, monkey bars, and swings to help clients release energy.

Additionally, a quieter, calming area will feature soft or weighted items, rocking chairs, and slower-paced activities to help youth soothe and regain focus.

The space will also incorporate adjustable lighting and vibrant colors to create an environment that is both flexible and customizable. These features will allow the space to meet the needs of clients with varying sensory preferences--whether related to audio, visual, tactile, proprioceptive, vestibular, or interoceptive processing.

To bring the vision to life, Lessans and Fish are sourcing materials from local communities and organizations, as well as utilizing donation funds. These resources will allow them to either custom fabricate or purchase sensory tools that are specifically tailored to the needs of their clients.

This new sensory space will be a valuable resource for OTTP-SF, helping youth engage with their mental health care in a way that feels comfortable, supportive, and empowering.



“Addressing mental health needs can be incredibly dysregulating, and having a space that can meet youth where they’re at provides a container to access growth edges.”

-Micah Lessans, OTTP Outpatient Mental Health Services Manager

DEBRA WONG: EMPOWERING YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Staff Spotlight

Debra Wong, OTTP-SF's Contract Specialist, has been an integral part of our organization since 2017. With a BA in Psychology from San Francisco State University and diverse experience in office support and IT, Wong was drawn to OTTP-SF because of our mission to support youth mental health, aligning with her own values and education. Since joining OTTP-SF, Wong has continued her professional growth, earning a Nutrition Assistant Certificate from City College, a Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate from T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies, and recently completing her training to be a licensed Food for Life Instructor from Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

In her role at OTTP-SF, Wong plays a vital part in managing contracts and overseeing invoicing to the Department of Public Health. She also spearheads OTTP-SF's emergency preparedness efforts, organizing emergency training and drills for staff. Beyond her administrative responsibilities, Wong takes on the important task of providing healthy snacks for the office and sourcing food for program activities and clients through the food bank. Wong was able to enroll in the food bank shopper program, which provides access to low or no-cost food items donated by grocery chains.

Her passion for nutrition stems from personal experience, witnessing her family struggle with a variety of health-related diseases. *"I hope to share what I learned and hopefully help others avoid the disease that has shortened and reduced the quality of life of my family members,"* she shares.

Outside of her work at OTTP-SF, Wong has completed training to become a licensed Food for Life Instructor and lead nutrition classes. In these classes, she will teach participants basic nutrition principles and simple cooking techniques, with a focus on health topics such as diabetes management, cancer prevention, and heart health. Wong's first class, "Healthy Basics," will take place on January 15th from 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. at OTTP-SF's San Francisco office. The class is open to all OTTP-SF clients, with additional classes scheduled for January 29th, February 12th, and February 26th.

Looking ahead, Wong hopes to expand these nutrition classes to OTTP-SF staff, other SSG divisions, and community partners, offering both online and in-person sessions. For more information about these classes, contact Debra Wong at debra.wong@ottp-sf.org. You can also explore other Food for Life classes offered by instructors nationwide at pcrm.org.

DEBRA WONG



"Many of our [OTTP-SF's] youth come from low income families and live in food deserts where access to healthy food is minimal. Being able to offer food, especially healthy food, to our clients can help reduce hunger and improve their health outcomes."

-On what inspired her to become a food bank shopper

THE LAMORINDA CARE COLLECTIVE: BENEFITTING OTTP-SF AND BAY AREA NON-PROFITS

Lamorinda Care Collective

This December, the Lamorinda Care Collective, created by Maya Smith and Julie Marsh, brought holiday joy to families and individuals in need. This free "store" offered toys, books, toiletries, nonperishable food, clothing for all ages, and houseware like tea kettles and Holiday decorations. Everything was 100% free, and visitors could take as much as they needed, creating a space of generosity and support.

OTTP-SF clinicians accessed hundreds of dollars worth of new and gently used items to share with youth clients, ensuring they had essentials for winter. Volunteers also collaborated with OTTP-SF to create over 100 bracelet kits, providing our youth with creative projects during their long winter break, sparking joy and engagement.

Maya Smith shared, *"The thesis of this space is that if we create margins for each other—of kindness, money, time, grace, and joy—we will not only survive but thrive together. This is about community, kindness, and leveraging abundance to meet unmet needs."*

Gratitude to Our Supporters

Initiatives like the Lamorinda Care Collective highlight the critical role of our supporters. Your generosity enables OTTP-SF to meet the unique needs of our youth clients, from accessing vital resources to offering creative and therapeutic programs. Together, we create the margins that allow our community to flourish. Thank you for helping us thrive.



Left to Right: Tracy Feldman (OTTP Development Officer), Josh Leonard (CEO of East Bay Agency for Children), Maya Smith (Kindness Champion & Mental Health Advocate)

FLOWER DONATION BRINGS NEW LIGHT TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER

Donation Spotlight + Success Story

Thanks to a combined donation of over 500 flowers from Diablo Foods in Lafayette, courtesy of Shaun Robinson, Floral Department Manager, and from donor Joanne Mosellen, OTTP-SF was able to offer a unique therapeutic experience to youth at the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center (JJC).

The flower arranging activity, led by OTTP-SF Occupational Therapist, Alina Lareybi, and OTTP-SF Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialist, Tamica Edwards, provided an opportunity for the boys and girls units to engage in a hands-on, sensory activity designed to promote healing and personal growth.

As part of the activity, youth were encouraged to select and arrange flowers into bouquets, focusing on color coordination, symmetry, and the sensory experience of handling living, natural materials. In an environment with limited access to the outside world, this activity allowed the youth to connect with nature, bringing colors and scents into the space and helping to foster a calming, soothing atmosphere.



Left to Right: Alina Lareybi (OTTP Occupational Therapist) and Joanne Mosellen

Flower arranging proved to be an activity with multiple therapeutic benefits. It promoted emotional regulation by reducing stress and anxiety, while also fostering creativity and self-expression, particularly empowering for those who have experienced trauma. Completing a floral arrangement also boosted self-esteem and confidence, offering a sense of accomplishment. Additionally, the group setting encouraged social skill development, as participants collaborated, practiced teamwork, and communicated, all of which are vital for reintegration into society.



Shaun Robinson, Floral Department Manager at Diablo Foods, generously donated over 90 flowers to OTTP-SF

In the boys unit, Lareybi observed enthusiasm from the participants, with some even requesting to join on both days the activity was offered. According to Lareybi, *"One youth shared that arranging the flowers allowed him to feel calm and think more clearly, while another was excited to place the arrangement in his room, saying the smell and sight would help during meditation."*

Meanwhile, in the girls unit, led by Edwards, one youth demonstrated positive social interactions by collaborating with peers, discussing their preferences, and working together to create their flower arrangements. Another youth used the activity as a form of emotional self-regulation, embracing the mindfulness aspects of flower arranging to calm herself and reflect.

Donations like this provide invaluable experiences for the youth at the JJC—opportunities they may otherwise never have the chance to enjoy. OTTP-SF is deeply grateful for the support from the community that makes these healing activities possible.

"Being able to express yourself in a creative way is good for the soul. Flower arranging brings joy, builds confidence, and fosters a sense of accomplishment. I wanted to give the youth a chance to do something new, feel empowered, and experience the beauty of nature in a hands-on way."

-On what inspired Joanne's donation

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS!

OTTP-SF would like to thank our sponsors, Realize CPA (Platinum Sponsor), the Bryant & Kirsti Chou Family Fund (Gold Sponsor), Mark's Paint (Silver Sponsor), and Lana Fitzpatrick (Silver Sponsor). Through their sponsorships, OTTP-SF continues to provide mental health services to Bay Area youth who need it most!



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