



OTTP-NorCal 2025 IMPACT REPORT



Healing Through Doing



Occupational Therapy
Training Program - San Francisco
is a division of

Special Service
for Groups, Inc.

A top-down photograph of three children sitting on a grey sidewalk. The child on the left is wearing a white shirt with a butterfly pattern and a pink headband. The child in the middle is wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and has dark hair in a ponytail. The child on the right is wearing a light blue shirt and grey pants. They are surrounded by various art supplies, including a box of markers, a box of crayons, and a small book titled 'HOW TO DRAW'.

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LETTER FROM OUR DIVISION DIRECTOR

Dear Valued Donors, Partners, and Volunteers,

As Division Director of Special Service for Groups, Inc./OTTP-NorCal, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your generosity and belief in our mission. Your support throughout 2025 made a truly meaningful difference in the lives of the children, youth, and young adults we serve across Northern California.

Because of your commitment, we were able to expand our reach in powerful and exciting ways, including opening our new Oakland building and launching a partnership with Sutter Health to bring critical mental health services to some of Sacramento's most vulnerable youth. These milestones were only possible because you chose to stand with us and trust in the impact of this work.

Through your generosity, time, and collaboration, OTTP-NorCal was able to strengthen our services and bring stability, opportunity, and hope to young people facing complex challenges.

The impact of your support reaches far beyond our programs. It shows up in moments of healing, growth, and resilience for the youth and families we serve, and in the reassurance that they are not alone.

On behalf of the entire OTTP-NorCal team, thank you for your continued commitment, generosity, and partnership. We are deeply grateful for the role you play in building a brighter, more supportive future for the young people in our community.

With sincere appreciation,



Colleen Devine
Division Director
Occupational Therapy Training Program-NorCal

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Marion Wise, LCSW -
Clinical Director



Teresa Ricado, MS, OTR/L -
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Director



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Secondary School

Sam Wang, CPA - Finance Director, Exact Sciences

Sheela Ivlev, MS, OTR/L, CIMHP - Author, Occupational
Therapy Disruptors

2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

In 2025, donor support reached
over 1,100 youth across OTTP-NorCal

OUR REACH

OTTP-NorCal clinicians served youth at more than 100 locations across Northern California, including our San Francisco, Oakland, and Sacramento offices, school campuses, juvenile justice settings, nonprofit community organizations, and in youth homes.

EMPLOYMENT

In 2025, OTTP-NorCal's Employment Program supported 42 youth in securing internships and part- and full-time jobs across fields like retail, food service, and security. Using the evidence-based Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, the program integrates mental health care with personalized job placement and ongoing support to help youth find and keep meaningful employment.



ABOUT OTTP-NORCAL

MISSION

OTTP-NorCal is dedicated to providing youth with increased opportunities for personal, educational, and vocational success.

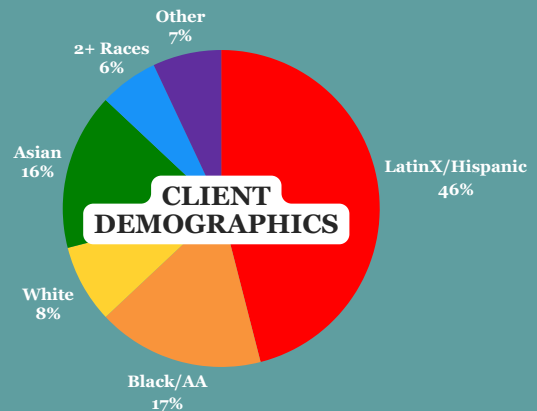
ABOUT

OTTP-NorCal is a division of Special Service for Groups, Inc., a 501c3 non-profit. We have a multi-disciplinary clinical team comprised of Licensed Occupational Therapists, Psychotherapists, Case Managers, and Licensed Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners. With a history spanning over 25 years, we remain committed to providing comprehensive mental health services to youth in Northern California.

WHO WE SERVE

OTTP-NorCal provides services to promote the mental health of youth ages 2–24 and their families. Youth are referred to our programs when they are navigating mental health needs, the impacts of trauma, learning differences, social-emotional challenges, and/or developmental delays. Youth are often navigating multiple systemic barriers to care including housing instability, food instability, involvement in the juvenile justice system, being pregnant or parenting and/or navigating the foster care system.

OTTP-NorCal's team of clinicians reflects a richly diverse workforce, including staff who identify as Latino/a, Black, Chinese, Mexican, Japanese, biracial, other Asian, White/Caucasian, and more, and who collectively speak nine languages, ensuring that clients see themselves reflected in their care and benefit from services informed by varied perspectives and lived experiences.



WHAT WE DO

Through a network of school-based, community-based, and clinical programs, OTTP-NorCal supports children and youth across Northern California with evidence-informed, culturally responsive mental health care.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

OTs support children ages 2-5 in building social-emotional skills, sensory regulation, and readiness for learning.

At sites like Saint Vincent's Day Home, OTTP provides individual support, classroom strategies, staff training, and family resources to foster self-regulation and growth.

CHILDHOOD

OTs, psychotherapists, and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners support children ages 6-10 with social-emotional skill-building, self-regulation, and mental health. At sites like Mission Education Center, OTTP provides group and in-class support to help newly arrived Spanish-speaking students gain the skills and confidence to thrive in regular schools.

ADOLESCENCE

OTs, psychotherapists, and psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners support youth ages 10-18 in building social-emotional skills, self-regulation, and independent living. At sites like Civic Center Secondary School, OTTP helps students facing expulsion, foster care, or justice involvement build confidence, skills, and community connections.

TRANSITION AGE

OTs and case managers support youth ages 18-24 with employment and community-based mental health services, helping them build career skills, daily routines, and social-emotional self-regulation. Through OTTP's Employment Program, youth receive guidance to secure and maintain jobs and work toward their career goals.

IMPACTS

CLIENT TRANSFORMATIONS



Emily Tunnat, OTR/L, Occupational Therapy Manager, works with youth incarcerated at the Alameda County Juvenile Justice Center. One of her clients initially struggled to engage with occupational therapy, refusing to participate despite encouragement from staff.

With support from OTTP clinicians, this youth was given another opportunity to join sessions and took it. Over the next 2.5 months, he began fully engaging in OT activities, demonstrating creativity, generosity, and connection. He shared his ideas, taught his therapist new skills, and even shared what he made with her, a meaningful gesture reflecting his growth and trust.

His progress extended beyond the JJC. He successfully advocated in court for an early release and proudly said, "It was because they liked the letter you wrote." Emily reminded him, "You get the credit! It was your hard work and strengths." He paused, then beamed, recognizing his own achievements.

This story illustrates how OTTP-NorCal helps youth build confidence, self-advocacy, and meaningful connections, empowering them to take positive steps toward their goals and futures.

TESTIMONIAL

What one of our partner programs has to say about OTTP-NorCal:

"We have never, in my 11+ years, had a partner as collaborative, responsive to the staff and students, and easy to work with as you all have been."

-Sarah Kipnes, Former Director of Student Programs at the Alameda County Office of Education



IMPACTS

DONOR IMPACT

At OTTP-NorCal, our Incentive Program is a donor-funded initiative that helps youth move toward their goals by pairing encouragement with practical support. Through items like sneakers, gift cards, and school supplies, incentives reduce barriers and motivate progress, especially for youth navigating challenges such as anxiety, depression, family stress, and housing instability.

By breaking larger goals into manageable steps and celebrating progress, incentives help sustain motivation during moments of fear or fatigue. Research shows that pairing goal-setting with incentives strengthens commitment and follow-through, helping turn aspirations into achievable milestones (Incentive Research Foundation).

Psychotherapist Meta Bodewes, LCSW, shared how she used the program to support a client who struggled with school attendance due to mental health and family challenges:

“We were able to adjust how this client earned rewards so the goals felt reachable and supportive of where they were at.”

Meta created a personalized system tied to attending school at least three days per week, allowing the client to earn weekly boba treats and essential items for their 8th-grade Six Flags trip. As attendance increased, school became energizing rather than overwhelming, improving mood, reducing suicidal ideation and self-harm, and supporting learning at grade level. Meta is now using the Incentive Program to help the client transition into high school with greater motivation and stability.

Donor support makes moments like this possible, transforming encouragement into meaningful, lasting progress.



TESTIMONIAL

Heather Davis has been a dedicated supporter of OTTP-NorCal since 2019. She reflects on what motivates her continued commitment to our organization:

“Once you truly understand the scope of OTTP’s work, it’s hard to walk away, and even harder knowing there are needs going unfulfilled.”

DONOR FUNDING

6 PILLARS OF YOUTH STABILITY AND GROWTH

Donor contributions are strategically invested across six core pillars, addressing essential needs that are not always supported through traditional funding.



BASIC NEEDS AND EMERGENCY SUPPORT

Food, clothing, hygiene supplies, groceries, transportation, and baby essentials.



ACCESS, OPPORTUNITY, EDUCATION

DMV costs, driver's courses and license fees, college application costs, and tuition support.



ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION

Providing incentive-based rewards that support personal responsibility, goal setting, and school readiness.



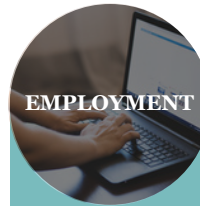
HEALING & SKILL-BUILDING

Sensory and tactile items, art and cooking supplies, and therapeutic games.



MOBILITY & CONNECTION

Telehealth supplies, transportation support to ensure youth can access school, services, and community programs.



EMPLOYMENT

Interview clothing and technology to support job search and career preparation.

2025 HOLIDAY SEASON

DONOR IMPACT
Over \$18,790 raised to Support Over 500 Youth

During the 2025 holiday season, three coordinated efforts, the Holiday Gift Drive, Gifts for Groups, and the Steve Lee Grant-funded gift cards, ensured that youth received gifts and essentials. Every gift, provision, and dollar was 100% donor-funded, turning generosity into moments of comfort, regulation, and basic need fulfillment.

Andrea Hernandez, Occupational Therapist and Vocational Specialist, shared how one gift will support a young person's transition to independence:

“As the youth transitions to independent living, the safety box provides a secure way to organize important documents needed for employment and education.”



DONOR FUNDING

ANNUAL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FUNDRAISER

DONOR IMPACT
\$68,000 raised

NEW HEALING SPACES: OAKLAND SENSORY ROOM

The Sensory Space is the result of a collaborative effort that brought together clinical expertise, thoughtful design, and generous community support. Designed by Zach Fish, with collaboration and mural work by OTTP's own Micha Lessans, the space was created through intentional planning and a combination of monetary and in-kind contributions.

Foundational features, including adjustable colored lighting, calming tones, and core sensory supports, were made possible through individual donor funding. At the Youth Empowerment Fundraiser, a dedicated live auction funded the ball pit and overhead rope climbing net, while Mission Cliffs at Touchstone Climbing in San Francisco generously donated the climbing holds. Additional highlights, including climbing and balance elements, a nature mural, and a quiet corner, complete the space.

Guided by occupational therapists, youth engage with the environment based on their individual sensory needs, making the Sensory Space a powerful tool for regulation, resilience, and therapeutic growth.

Donations turned a simple room into a daily resource that helps youth feel calmer, more confident, and better able to engage in their care.



ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

EXPANSION

In 2025, OTTP-NorCal expanded our reach, bringing mental health services to new communities across Northern California.

Sacramento

OTTP-NorCal expanded our reach into Sacramento through a new partnership with Sutter Health, bringing community-based mental health occupational therapy to youth with limited access to in-person care. Working alongside local partners such as AcademySTAY, City Year (AmeriCorps), and the Sacramento Youth Center, we've supported youth with mental health and wellness, job readiness, driver's license support and real-world community engagement. By introducing OTTP's trauma-informed, community-based model to a region with wide geographic and service gaps, we are helping ensure more youth receive the care, skills, and support they need to thrive.

Oakland

OTTP-NorCal hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of our new East Bay site, bringing together staff, community partners, supporters, and government leaders to mark an important expansion of mental health access for youth and families across the region. Speakers included Edwin Sevilla, Northern California Regional Director from U.S. Senator Adam B. Schiff's office; Shalini Rana, Senior Director of Community Health at Sutter Health; and Elizabeth Vacca, District Representative for California State Senator Dr. Aisha Wahab.

Name Transition

As our work has grown beyond San Francisco, we have transitioned from OTTP-SF to OTTP-NorCal to more accurately reflect the regions and communities we serve.



Partners from Sutter Health joined us at our Oakland ribbon-cutting to celebrate our expansion into Sacramento.

L to R: Katie Gordon (OTTP East Bay Services Director), Colleen Devine (OTTP Division Director), Shalini Rana (Senior Director of Community Health, Sutter Health,) Josue De Avila (Manager, Community Health, Sutter Health)

ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

BRIDGING HEALING & LEARNING

Equipping Educators to Support Trauma-Impacted Students

For many students who have experienced trauma, the classroom can feel overwhelming and unsafe. Across the Bay Area, OTTP occupational therapists and psychotherapists work directly on school campuses, often serving as the only mental health support students receive.

Healing isn't limited to therapy sessions; it also happens in classrooms. OTTP partners with schools to reduce the barriers to learning through a culturally responsive, whole-child approach. While many educators receive trauma-informed training, they are often left without practical, day-to-day tools they can immediately apply. OTTP bridges this gap.

Through professional development and coaching, OTTP clinicians equip teachers with concrete, achievable strategies, including:

- Modeling calm, regulated behavior
- Supporting students through shared regulation
- Building strong, student-centered relationships - High 5 Approach
- Creating predictable, safe routines
- Choosing connection over control
- Using simple sensory supports

Teachers learn how to apply these tools in real classrooms, reducing sensory overload, posting clear daily agendas, and building predictable routines. While these changes may seem small, for students who have experienced trauma, they can dramatically reduce anxiety and increase engagement.

The impact is twofold:

Students experience classrooms as calmer and safer, allowing them to participate more confidently, engage with peers, and stay connected to learning.

Teachers feel more equipped, less burned out, and better supported in managing complex classroom needs.

Perhaps most importantly, OTTP's training shifts how behavior is understood. Instead of viewing behavior as defiance, educators begin to see it as communication; a signal that a student needs support with safety or regulation. This shift transforms discipline into problem-solving and strengthens relationships.

By supporting both students and educators, OTTP multiplies its impact. One clinician supports many teachers. One teacher supports many students. Together, trauma-informed school communities create lasting change for thousands of youth each year.



ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

CERTIFICATIONS, LICENSURES, AND RECOGNITIONS



CARF International Accredited

OTTP-NorCal is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) in Behavioral Health and Employment Programs, recognized for its highly qualified, dedicated team and commitment to delivering high-quality, client-centered services to vulnerable youth.

IPS Certified

The Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) model is an evidence-based approach that supports employment, improves mental health outcomes, and promotes independence.



Licensed Medi-Cal Provider

OTTP-NorCal received an “exceeded expectations” rating in Program Deliverables, Program Compliance, and Client Satisfaction in our recent Medi-Cal monitoring review, affirming our licensure and commitment to providing high-quality specialty mental health services for children and youth.

Functional Family Therapy

In 2025, OTTP-NorCal clinicians completed a year-long training in Functional Family Therapy (FFT), an evidence-based, family-centered approach that supports youth with complex mental health needs, including substance use challenges, severe depression, and school avoidance.



Certificate of Recognition - California State Senator Dr. Aisha Wahab

OTTP-NorCal was honored by California State Senator Dr. Aisha Wahab at our ribbon-cutting ceremony, celebrating the opening of our new East Bay location and recognizing our mental health support for youth in Alameda County.

Mayor's Proclamation - Mayor Barbara Lee, City of Oakland

OTTP-NorCal was recognized by Mayor Barbara Lee at our ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of our new Oakland location, acknowledging our commitment to advancing equity, inclusion, and the well-being of youth, regardless of their background or life circumstances.



ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

OTTP-NORCAL STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS



Supporting Caregivers and Trans & Gender-Diverse Youth Through Evidence-Based OT

Tenaya Jo, OTD, provides occupational therapy services to children ages 3-5, their families, and staff at 13 Early Childhood sites across the Oakland Unified School District. They developed the Behavior-Sensory Tree, a tool that helps parents understand and respond to children's behaviors through a sensory lens, fostering safer, more supportive environments, stronger connections, and healthy development.

Building Empathy, Resilience, and Advocacy

Jacqueline Cantrell, OTR/L led 7th graders from St. Paul's Episcopal School on a week-long experiential learning trip to San Diego focused on migration, social justice, and humanitarian issues. Through nonprofit visits, community engagement, and hands-on activities, students developed empathy, leadership, and advocacy skills. Guided reflection and journaling helped them process challenging topics while practicing self-care, leaving the trip with greater resilience, compassion, and confidence to take action in their communities.



CULTIVATING FUTURE CLINICIANS

Internships

Each year, OTTP-NorCal hosts a diverse group of student interns from fields including social work, counseling, occupational therapy, and psychiatric nursing. In 2025, OTTP-NorCal had a university partnership with the 7 establishments below.



ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

OTTP-NORCAL STAFF CONTRIBUTIONS

OT Doctoral Students' Capstone Projects

Doctoral occupational therapy students complete a capstone project, dedicating hundreds of hours to exploring a focused area of practice and developing solutions that directly support youth. At OTTP-NorCal, these projects are shaped by both student interests and real needs identified by our clinicians, ensuring they are practical, collaborative, and grounded in real-world care. Capstone projects strengthen our programs by introducing new tools, strategies, and insights that enhance services and expand opportunities for the youth we serve.

In 2025, the following topics were presented by OTTP-NorCal interns for their capstone projects:



Occupational Therapy Intervention for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals Post-Gender Affirming Surgery - Tenaya Jo, Occupational Therapist

Juvenile Justice Through an OT Lens: A Digital Diary Approach Promoting Self-Efficacy and Quality of Life - Brierre Johnson, Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialist



Relationships Between Occupational Therapy, Self-Efficacy, and Aspirations Among Youth in a Juvenile Justice Setting - Daniel Chin, Occupational Therapist

COMMUNITY PARTNERS/FUNDERS

OTTP-NorCal provides mental health services to youth residing throughout Northern California. Youth are most often connected to our services through collaborative partnerships with schools, the Department of Public Health Behavioral Health Services, and trusted community-based organizations.

CURRENT FUNDERS

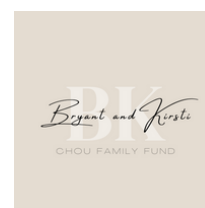
Alameda County Office of Education
 Alameda County Probation Department
 County Community Schools
 Department of Children, Youth and Their Families/San Francisco Probation Department
 Department of Public Health/Behavioral Health Services
 Department of Rehabilitation
 East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation
 Edgewood Center for Children and Families
 Lincoln Families
 Oakland Fund for Children and Youth
 Oakland Unified School District
 UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland
 San Francisco Unified School District/Special Education
 St. Paul's Episcopal School
 Saint Vincent's Day Home
 Sutter Health

CORPORATE PARTNERS

Thank you to our current corporate partners. These partnerships enable OTTP-NorCal to provide critical mental health services to youth in Northern California who are most in need.



The Kelly Crawford Team is a highly regarded East Bay-based brokerage that believes communities flourish when the people within them thrive.
kellycrawfordhomes.com



The Bryant & Kirsti Chou Family Fund



comprehensive
wellness

Comprehensive Wellness
comprehensivewellness.org



Crane Terrace Winery
craneterracewinery.com



Mark's Paint
markspaintmart.com



SYDNEY PAIGE
 BACKPACKS AND BEYOND
 TO HELP STUDENTS SOAR
Sydney Paige Foundation
sydneypaige.org



Bedell Frazier Investment Counselling
bedellfrazier.com

WAYS TO ENGAGE

Every contribution, from corporate sponsors and individual donors alike, strengthens our mission. Together, let's make 2026 a year of positive change and growth. Join us in making mental health support accessible to all. Cheers to progress and shared victories.



SPONSOR

For corporate sponsorship opportunities, contact development@ottp-sf.org



VOLUNTEER

To learn about the unique ways to support OTTP-NorCal with your time, contact development@ottp-sf.org



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Join our social media community



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