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Sheryl Young
*Chief Executive Officer
Community Gatepath*



March 2, 2009

Congresswoman Jackie Speier
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Speier,

Community Gatepath appreciates the opportunity to submit the enclosed appropriations request for \$402,914 to invest in children during their most critical first five years of development. The number of children with special needs in our community continues to grow rapidly, and many more children are going undiagnosed due to lack of timely developmental screening.

The impact of the state budget has already caused a delay in children receiving screening, assessment and early intervention services, which we expect will worsen with the coming additional reductions in funding. Through the developmental screenings, early intervention services and family supports proposed in the enclosed project, Gatepath will ensure all children and families receive the support they need for a healthy, successful future. Early intervention is not only the best way of addressing developmental delays for the child; it is also cost-effective for society.

With your support, Gatepath will meet a growing community need for our services. If you have any questions about the enclosed request, please contact me at 650-259-8518 or sheryl@gatepath.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheryl Young", is written over a large, stylized loop that extends from the signature down to the typed name below.

Sheryl Young
Chief Executive Officer

875 Stanton Road
Burlingame, CA 94010
Tel: 650-259-8500
Fax: 650-697-5010
www.gatepath.com

FY2010 Appropriations Request Form

Office of Congresswoman Jackie Speier
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: 202/225-3531
Fax: 202/226-4183
Website: www.speier.house.gov

Date Submitted: March 2, 2009

Project Name: Developmental Screening and Early Intervention Services

Individual/Organization (*Is the grantee located in the 12th Congressional District?*):
Community Gatepath, a non-profit organization located in the 12th Congressional District

Amount Requested (*if requesting report language, please attach*): \$402,914

Appropriations Bill/Account/Relevant Authorization law/bill/status (*e.g., "Public Law 107-111"; "FY2008 DOD Authorization", "Currently pursuing authorization through Agriculture Committee", "Safe Drinking Water Act" or "Hatch Act"*):

We do not have this information currently. If you kindly provide us with the appropriate number, we would be happy to complete the relevant information.

Local Contact (*Please provide full contact information, including any relevant phone extensions, and indicate if there is a separate D.C. contact.*):

Sheryl Young, Chief Executive Officer
Community Gatepath, 875 Stanton Road, Burlingame, CA 94010
(650) 259-8518
sheryl@gatepath.com

Organization's Main Activities (*Please limit your response to 250 words and indicate whether it is a public, private, non-profit or private for-profit entity.*):

Community Gatepath is the largest non-profit organization in San Mateo County and has a 90-year history serving our community. We foster hope, dignity and independence among children and adults with disabilities and dedicate ourselves to creating inclusive environments where individuals of all abilities can thrive. Our services span a lifetime, including infants, children, adults, and seniors.

For nearly 40 years, our Early Intervention Services have provided support for children with special needs from birth to three years and their families. Our staff of talented service professionals works closely with parents to enhance a child's motor, cognitive, communication, social and emotional development. Our trans-disciplinary team consists of special education teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists. Children, along with a parent/caregiver, attend two-hour group classes and/or one-hour individual therapy sessions where activities are based on the developmental level of the child. Programming is

provided in a variety of settings, including the center and the child's natural environment (places the child receives regular care, such as the home, day care or preschool).

Gatepath also offers a Family Resource Center to provide support and resources for families of children with special needs. To broaden our services for children, we recently launched Learning Links Preschool where kids with and without special needs, ages two to five, learn together in preparation for kindergarten.

For adults with disabilities, Gatepath focuses on independent living and vocational skill development through our Transition for Young Adults, Life Skills, Community Integration, Employment and Senior Services.

Please show main items in the project and total cost in a simplified chart form. (Please include the amount of any Federal/State/Local/Private funds, including any in-kind resources.)

Early Intervention Services Projected Budget
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2010

Private Contributions/Grants	16,000.00
Federal Funding	402,914.00
State Funding	1,495,622.00
Private Pay Fee for Service	33,000.00
Community Gatepath In-Kind	66,733.83
Total Revenue	2,014,269.83
Staff Salaries	1,173,640.00
Staff Benefits	246,464.40
Professional Fees	4,554.86
Supplies	15,185.14
Telephone	13,815.43
Occupancy	149,631.43
Equipment Lease & Maintenance	10,578.86
Marketing & Communications	1,962.86
Vehicle & Travel	5,434.29
Conferences & Meetings	3,360.00
Recruitment & Recognition	6,514.29
Membership Dues	257.14
Administrative Expenses	303,352.00
Postage & Shipping	2,177.14
Subtotal	1,936,927.83
Depreciation	77,342.00
Total Expenses	2,014,269.83
Change in Net Assets	0.00

Project Description, including a timeline, goals, expected outcomes and specific uses of Federal Funds. (Your response must focus on the requested funds rather than the organization's mission and general activities. Please limit your response to 250-500 words).

Developmental screening, early intervention services and support for parents of children with special needs are vital to the health of the child and family unit. The first five years of a child's life are critical because the brain is developing most rapidly during this time. Community Gatepath is currently a partner agency in the Watch Me Grow Special Needs Project, which provides universal developmental screening in targeted communities of South San Francisco; thus far, 10-20% of the children screened have been identified with a special need. Following this model, Gatepath will provide a new screening service using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire so developmental delays can be identified as early as possible and children can be enrolled in appropriate early intervention services. Gatepath will continue to provide our portfolio of early intervention services, while enhancing our services for children with speech delay. In addition, we will provide parent training and family support services, including identification of those with or at risk of high stress and depression. Because 44% of the children we currently serve are Hispanic and there is an expressed need among this population, we will continue to develop culturally appropriate early intervention and family support services.

Timeline

Hire staff to conduct developmental screenings and assessments (Month 1)

Conduct outreach to families of children birth to three who have not yet received screening (Months 2-12)

Conduct developmental screenings and assessments (Months 3-12)

Provide early intervention services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and special education, for children birth to three years (Months 1-12)

Provide family support services, including weekly support groups, stress assessments, workshops and training (Months 1-12)

Market private pay option to families of children birth to age five (Months 1-12)

Goals

- Increase the number of children from birth to age three who are screened and assessed for possible developmental delays.
- Provide high quality early learning environments for children birth to age three to improve school readiness and support each child in reaching his/her maximum potential.
- Educate, engage and support parents and caregivers so they can encourage their child's development.
- Ensure all children with special needs have access to developmental services.
- Provide culturally and linguistically competent and family-focused services.

Outcomes

- 416 children will be screened for developmental delays and referred for services when appropriate.
- Children identified with special needs will transition successfully to preschool at age three with active ISPs.

- Increase the number of children with special needs who are receiving appropriate, integrated intervention services for their identified special needs by serving 100 children from the 12th Congressional District.
- Families of the 100 children served from the District will be offered support to better cope with stress and understand how they can impact their child's learning.

Uses of Funds

Funding will support staff salaries and benefits for the provision of screening, assessment, early intervention and family support services; Stress Day Index (SDI) materials; project supplies for administering Ages & Stages Questionnaire; outreach and marketing; and administration.

How will this earmark serve to expand the capacity of your organization and how will your organization sustain this work beyond the federal funding? (Your response must focus on the impact of the requested funds rather than the organization's long-term goals.)

This earmark will allow Community Gatepath to expand our services to include screening and assessment for children birth to age three. With increased identification of developmental delays, we will also provide high quality early intervention services to more children.

Community Gatepath is always working with the State of California to secure funding for the critical services we provide; however, we just received a 3% cut in state funding (\$22,800 through our fiscal year ending June 30, 2009) and anticipate an additional 7% cut for a 10% total reduction (\$144,914) next fiscal year.

We greatly value revenue diversification so we also seek private funding from individuals and foundations to support our services. Like state funding, private funding has decreased due to the current economic environment and a reduction in assets. To further expand diversification of funding and support the project's sustainability, Community Gatepath recently began implementing a business model that includes private pay options and will continue to make this effort a priority.

What is the local significance of this project?

The impact of the state budget has already caused a delay in children receiving screening, assessment and early intervention services, which we expect to get worse with the coming additional reductions in state funding. Through the developmental screenings, early intervention services and family supports proposed in this project, Community Gatepath will be able to address numerous significant community needs.

Early intervention services have been shown to have a significant return on investment and cost-savings over time. Cost-benefit analyses of early intervention programs show estimated rates of return are 16%: 4% for participants and 12% for society at large.¹ Benefits include greater success in school, decreased grade repetition, lower rates of placement in special education, higher graduation rates, better health outcomes, increased economic self-sufficiency, lower crime rates, greater tax revenues and lower welfare costs.

¹ Heckman, James J. and Dimitriy V. Masterov (January 5-7, 2007). The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children. T.W. Schultz Award Lecture at the Allied Social Sciences Association annual meeting, Department of Economics, University of Chicago.

Locally, 10.4% of children from birth to age five in San Mateo County have special needs² and as many as 5,800 more children may suffer from undetected special needs³. Universal screening of children is critical for identifying developmental delays at the earliest possible time, maximizing opportunities for early intervention. The children in the 12th Congressional District are currently not receiving proper, timely screening; in fact, 41% of children in San Mateo County have never received a developmental screening from their doctor or other health care provider¹. Furthermore, the local regional center is backlogged with screenings and assessments.

Once identified, children with special needs must have access to appropriate services. Our local regional center has discussed tightening eligibility criteria for early intervention services and the children most likely to be affected are those who have only a speech delay. This is especially problematic for the Hispanic population, and there are areas within the 12th Congressional District that are 35% Hispanic. Researchers are increasingly finding that the prevalence of speech and language disorders among the Hispanic population of children is significant and affects social development, language, learning, and school achievement. In December 2005, the California Department of Education reported 3,432 children with speech or language impairment enrolled in special education programs in San Mateo County; of those, 37% were Hispanic.

A significant factor in the development of a child with delayed speech and language is providing families with resources, intervention for children, and specialist support. Family education, information and counseling to increase their modeling of language behavior and language stimulation for their children is vital in the early years when a child's brain plasticity is optimal for learning.

Families also need assistance navigating a complex system of services to ensure their child can maximize their developmental potential. The first years of a child's diagnosis can put enormous strain on the family unit. Twenty-four (24%) of primary caregivers of children birth to age five report needing help with sadness or depression since their child was born, and 8% of primary caregivers show clinical symptoms of depression, according to the Edinburgh depression scale¹.

How many residents of the 12th CD will benefit from this project? (i.e. jobs created, services rendered to, how many people, etc.)

The proposed project will employ 31 individuals, which includes a 10% increase in Gatepath's early intervention services employees through the creation of 3 new jobs. Additionally, 416 children will receive screening and 100 children and their families will benefit from early intervention services. The total anticipated reach of the project is 747 residents of the 12th Congressional District.

List any other organizations or state/local elected officials who have expressed support for the project in writing. (Please submit copies of support letters along with the proposal.)

Supervisor Adrienne J. Tissier, 5th District, County of San Mateo
Supervisor Jerry Hill, 19th District, California State Assembly

² First 5 San Mateo County 2006 Family Survey

³ First 5 San Mateo County, 2005

Does the organization have any other funding requests for this project? (*Federal, State, Local or private pending?*)

Community Gatepath has submitted a \$15,000 grant request to Cisco Foundation to support early intervention services next fiscal year and we are a grantee of First 5 San Mateo County. We also intended to seek support from Silicon Valley Community Foundation, but the foundation recently notified us they will not be releasing the applicable RFP.

Has the organization previously received Federal funds for this project? (*Please list any funds received [by fiscal year] and briefly describe how those funds were spent.*) No.

Please attach a list of your organization's staff and board members (*if any*).

Please attach any additional relevant materials.

Adrienne J. Tissier

Member • Board of Supervisors • San Mateo County

February 27, 2009

Office of Congresswoman Jackie Speier
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Community Gatepath and FY 2010 Appropriations Request

Dear Congresswoman Speier and the 12th Congressional District Citizen Oversight Panel:

As a former board member of Community Gatepath and a longtime advocate for people with disabilities, it is with distinct pleasure that I express my support of Community Gatepath. For nearly 90 years, they have been providing vital services to children and adults with disabilities and their families in San Mateo County. Last year alone, their combined efforts reached over 8,000 individuals by providing jobs for unemployed workers with developmental disabilities, giving children with special needs the means to thrive developmentally through essential early intervention services and offering social and emotional support to families, including nonnative English speakers, to help them better navigate the complex system of care. Their work makes our community stronger.

Further, as the largest agency serving people with disabilities in San Mateo County, Community Gatepath continues to play a key role in several countywide and regional collaborations. Their ability to leverage resources and partners continues to be essential in fostering innovation, systems change and enhanced service models.

I am confident that Community Gatepath is well positioned to receive federal appropriations to continue that sense of innovation and effective outreach they've done to keep our citizen's with disabilities engaged and contributing members of our community. As their tagline says, they are "*Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities*" and in many cases changing lives and bettering our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Adrienne J. Tissier, Supervisor
County of San Mateo

400 County Center, Redwood City, California 94063

Direct Line (650) 363-4572 • Fax (650) 599-1027

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 842949
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0019
(916) 319-2019
FAX (916) 319-2119

Assembly California Legislature



JERRY HILL
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, NINETEENTH DISTRICT

February 27, 2009

Office of Congresswoman Jackie Speier
211 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Community Gatepath and FY 2010 Appropriations Request

Dear Congresswoman Speier:

I am pleased to write in support of the funding request submitted to you by Community Gatepath.

It has been my pleasure to work with the staff and volunteers at Community Gatepath, as they embody their slogan: *Turning Disabilities into Possibilities*. For nearly 90 years Community Gatepath has provided vital services to children and adults with disabilities and their families in San Mateo County. Last year alone Community Gatepath reached over 8,000 individuals by providing jobs for unemployed workers with developmental disabilities, giving children with special needs the means to thrive developmentally through essential early intervention services and offering social and emotional support to families, including nonnative English speakers, to help them better navigate the complex system of care. Their work makes our community stronger.

As the largest agency serving people with disabilities in San Mateo County, Community Gatepath continues to play a key role in several countywide and regional collaborations. Their ability to leverage resources and partners is an important component in fostering innovation, systems change and enhanced service models.

Community Gatepath's effective work in the community, enabling citizens with disabilities to become engaged and active contributing members of our community, is vital and merits support.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Hill".

Jerry Hill

Community Gatepath Board of Directors

Lee Caraher, Chair
Barry Parker, Vice Chair
Joe Galligan, Treasurer
Steven Williams, Secretary

Alberta Aldinger
Cathy Beardsley
Elaine Breeze
Jeff Fallick
Joel Friedman
Carole Groom
Elaine Cohen
Timothy Krozek
Mendy Boettcher Minjarez
H.G. (Toby) Mumford, Jr.
Dave Pine
G. Bradford Solso
Monique Yohanan
Sheryl Young

Community Gatepath Staff

Leadership

Sheryl Young, Chief Executive Officer
John Marvuglio, Chief Compliance Officer
Gabrielle Karampelas, Vice President of
Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships
Rod Frink, Chief Financial Officer
Malyka Chop, Chief Administrator

Early Intervention Services

Julie L. Akin
Patricia Black
Carolyn Bookspun
Oscar D. Castro
Patricia Chambers
Cecilia Dibono
Christine Franco
Mirtha A Garcia
Nadine Ginzberg
Delmy Es Jaimes
Teresa E Jurado
Deanne M Kelly
Michelle Kemper Verplaetse
Mariella Knutson
Katie Krabbenschmidt
Mary Ann Linh
Nicole L Longa
Barbara Marcum
Mario En Menjivar
Isabel B Pineda
Manolita Salazar
Maria Cl Scroggie
Nancy Pa Soto
Michele Tatos
Victoria Torres
Scarleth Waddell

never giving up hope

After 85 years of turning disabilities into possibilities, Community Gatepath is excited about the future.

Text by Jennifer Massoni

Photography by Margot Harford

In 1920, a group of socially minded individuals in San Mateo County wanted to make sure that every child had access to healthcare. They were vital in starting an organization that has become the county's largest non-profit agency. From the early beginnings set by philanthropic volunteers, Community Gatepath has had reason to celebrate. It is now in its 86th year as a Peninsula resource for children, adults, and seniors with disabilities. CEO Sheryl Young credits their success to dedicated volunteers,

while their Burlingame facility undergoes renovations. While Young had long worked for the County of San Mateo as the Developmental Disabilities Coordinator for the Department of Health, she was saddled to the policy side. "I really wanted to have a hands-on impact, and contribute at the grass roots level to make a change." And it was after one special phone call that Young made her own life change and joined the organization. "I got a call from a person who said a baby had been born with Down Syndrome in a local hospital. The family had been told there was no hope for the baby and asked me what I could do for them. So, I met with the family, the

"Community Gatepath gives people a sense of hope and a sense of dignity."

partnerships with local businesses, and the involvement of community leaders who have enabled Gatepath to now serve nearly 4,000 San Mateo County residents throughout the year.

And Young has seen the direct result of much of that dedication during her 18 years at the organization's helm. "It still feels like I started a couple of months ago," Young says from the family therapy room at the organization's interim Children's Services Center in Foster City,

nurses, and the two-day-old baby. I told them it seemed too early to give up hope and that they should come to this agency," Young says, taking pause. "I decided to come along with the baby. Today, that girl is 18 years old. Ever since, that story has motivated me to make changes."

On a daily basis, nearly 500 people can make significant changes in their own lives thanks to the programs and services Community Gatepath offers.

Pat Barr, president of the Hillsborough Auxiliary to Community Gatepath and Sheryl Young, CEO of Community Gatepath



On a daily basis, nearly 500 people can make significant changes in their own lives thanks to the programs and services Community Gatepath offers.

Young plays with participants at the Children's Services Center

Children's Services focuses on motor and cognitive development as well as communication and social skills for children from birth to the age of three. Adult Services provides recreational and educational programming as well as encouraging paid work or volunteer opportunities, while Senior Services concentrates on health, wellness, and recreational activities for individuals over 50 with developmental disabilities. But their programming, operating from two main facilities in Burlingame, also extends beyond individual needs and into the community where these individuals can contribute and fulfill their full potential—the ultimate mission of the organization. Employment and Staffing Services

works with local businesses to provide appropriate job training and placement. And for the past two years, one of Community Gatepath's programs titled Pigmillion Possibilities has promoted disability awareness with creative, educational storytelling, sensitivity exercises, and art projects. After all, creating true change is about educating the next generation to be responsible, tolerant, and compassionate citizens. "We utilize community partnerships because the need is so great, we can't do it alone," says Gabrielle Jones, Community Gatepath's director of community affairs and marketing. And beginning this month, the organization will begin operating its Transition Services, a program that

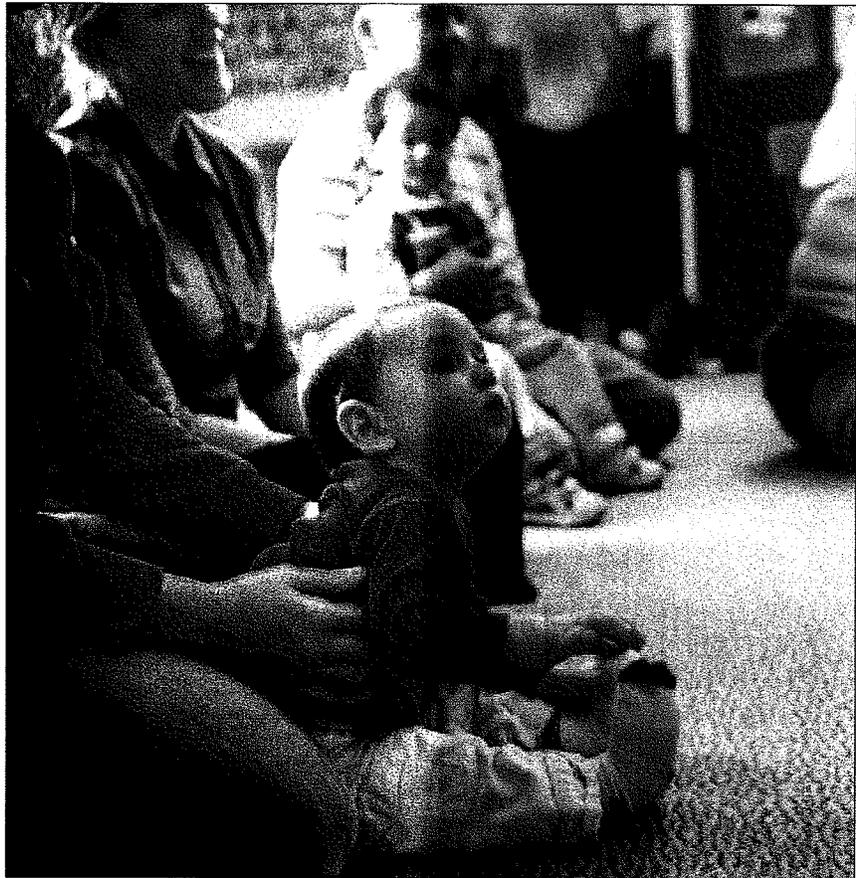




through collaboration with the San Mateo Unified High School District will provide job training as well as health and wellness activities to high school seniors and recent high school graduates—an age group often underserved by traditional special needs programming.

Community Gatepath will soon fill another crucial gap when they expand their Children's Services with an Early Childhood Development Center designed for 3- to 5-year-olds. After all, it is well known what a critical learning period exists from birth to age 5, regardless of how normally a child is developing. "This year is very exciting here at Community Gatepath, with the expansion of both our services and facilities," says Niall McCarthy, chair of the board of directors for the past two years. "Traditionally for kids with disabilities, there's a gap in services provided for kids between the ages of 3 and 6. And Community Gatepath took the lead.

"It doesn't come into your imagination that it could happen, that you could have a child who could have disabilities."



During "circle time," kids are introduced, get to pick their photo, choose a song from a picture board, and all sing together.



The children enjoy parachute play before the class breaks up into three groups for rotations of books, playdough time, and bean play, a sensory experience

“Parents finally have a place to let their guard down before they have to go back into the system and fight for what they need. If you can identify an issue early enough, you can be sure that when your child gets into kindergarten they aren’t so far behind.”

We’re going to be the first organization to provide these services on the Peninsula.” Their Marco Polo facility in Burlingame is also undergoing an extensive remodel, to be completed by the fall, in order to have the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the needs of these kids.

Lee Caraher is a parent and board member well aware of the significant benefits Children’s Services provided for her son Liam, who joined the program at 11 months and is now 5. “The Early Start 0 – 3 Program was so important to

my son’s development, and my husband and I felt so strongly that Gatepath had helped us so much that after Liam graduated, I just wanted to help more,” Caraher says. “When you have a child, you give birth and think everything is going to be great. It doesn’t come into your imagination that it could happen, that you could have a child who could have disabilities. Due to the condition my son has, he was born with low muscle tone, neurological speech, and muscle disorders. You just don’t know what to

do. Your pediatrician says you need some help and you get qualified, recommended, and there’s all this red tape, and it’s so impersonal. You want to scream ‘We’re not taking care of my kid, just paperwork.’ It’s horrendous. The day we got to Gatepath, from the introduction to the team who met with us, you know that it’s all going to be okay. Finally, there were people who were ready to help. It’s not about why, but about what are we going to do. They make you feel that you have a beautiful human being

as a child, and they have a very holistic attitude toward the child and the family.”

Part of that holistic approach includes family therapy, an important and often overlooked component of creating a positive environment at home and meeting the unique needs of the family as well as the child, whether its knowing what questions to ask at the next doctor’s appointment or just having a few minutes for a parent who drops her child off in the morning to talk to someone who understands. “Gatepath just goes far and beyond what it has to do,” adds Caraher. “Parents finally have a place to let their guard down before they have to go back into the system and fight for what they need. If you can identify an issue early enough, you can be sure that when your child gets into kindergarten they aren’t so far behind.” Indeed, today Liam is an active 5-year-old attending a special education preschool, and adjusting because Gatepath exposed him to and made him

comfortable around other children, circle time, wheelchairs, and other distractions. “It gave him such a big boost. My husband still takes him there all the time. He loves all those ladies.”

McCarthy also articulates what sets Community Gatepath apart. “I don’t even like to say they provide services. Community Gatepath gives people a sense of hope and a sense of dignity,” he says. “When you talk to a client, you really get a feel for how important Gatepath is in their lives. It has done more than any other organization on the Peninsula to improve the lives of people with disabilities.” In San Mateo County alone, approximately 107,000 people are living with a disability. And one in four of us will develop either a mental or physical disability at some point in our lifetime. And with only a three percent increase in state spending going towards community-based services this year (when the need calls for 35 percent),

what a shoulder Community Gatepath has been able to provide to these individuals and their families, and to us all through its outreach and educational programs. “This organization has always had a strong board that makes a concerted effort to find the funding and not have to turn people away,” says Young, well aware of the tremendous need in the community. “If anyone has any questions or concerns about how a child or grandchild is progressing, please give us a call,” she is careful to advise.

And don’t forget to mention Community Gatepath on **Thursday, May 17**. Their annual **Shopping Cause Day** will be held at Stanford Shopping Center’s **This Little Piggy Wears Cotton**, with 20% of proceeds benefiting the organization.

The Hillsborough Auxiliary to Community Gatepath will host its annual gala, **Evening of Elegance**. Lend your support on **Saturday, May 20**, at a private estate on the Peninsula. For more information about this year’s gala and to learn more about Community Gatepath’s services, please call **650.259.8500** or visit **www.gatepath.com**.



One little girl participates in the day’s closing activity of the Hokey Pokey and singing “Goodbye” to friends.

“The most important thing to give parents is hope. You do need the right tools and resources, but it starts with hope,” Young says, circling back to her own original inspiration for lending her energy to Community Gatepath—the story of one little girl and the hope her parents were given to go on with their journey. As Gentry’s photo shoot wound down and Young dove into a sea of colorful plastic balls with the other children, there seemed to be much more than hope on the faces of those kids and parents gathered in the classroom that morning. There seemed to be pure joy. ■



We have had our youngest son, Ryan, in the Community Gatepath class for eight months now, and the difference we have seen is incredible. When we started, Ryan was 16 months and not walking or speaking. He has made such progress with the help of his wonderful teachers and aides. Not only is he walking and running now, but he's starting to put two words together and imitating all sounds and words spoken. My family is so thankful for this wonderful program at Gatepath, which has assisted us in getting all the individualized help that Ryan needs.

★ Susana and Jeff Leuner

★ Ryan



COMMUNITY
GATEPATH[®]
 CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Our daughter, Zoe, first came to Community Gatepath at six weeks of age. Ever since then, Community Gatepath's staff has become THE most critical part of her development, education, and just as important, an amazing source of love, support, friendship and advice to our entire family. Now, 31/2 years later, Zoe is a happy, healthy, social little girl. She is well on her way to acquiring the skills she will need for pre-k and beyond. We are very optimistic about the bright future Gatepath has provided to Zoe, and we will all stay involved with the organization for years to come.

★ Jeff and Shannon Fallick

★ Zoe



INSPIRED TO INDEPENDENCE



KONSTANDINOS GOUMENIDIS/MEDIANEWS STAFF

KENNY LYBRAND, of Pacifica, gathers shopping carts at Draeger's in San Mateo. Lybrand is a participant at Community Gatepath, a nonprofit organization serving people with developmental disabilities.



Burlingame nonprofit gives valuable lessons to disabled

By Jessica Bernstein-Wax
MEDIANEWS STAFF

Kenny Lybrand was feeling discouraged and aimless when he approached a local nonprofit for job training two decades ago.

Diagnosed with the neurological disorder cerebral palsy as a baby, Lybrand had struggled to fit in and find the right path.

"My self esteem was so low — I wasn't anything," Lybrand said.

But that all changed, Lybrand said, when he received job training at Bur-

lingame nonprofit Community Gatepath, then the Poplar Center, and began working at Bell Market in Belmont. The job boosted Lybrand's confidence and made it possible for him to support himself.

Today, the 38-year-old single father bags groceries at Draeger's in San Mateo and is the sole provider for his 5-year-old daughter and 3-year-old son. He even received the father of the year award from the Fatherhood Col-

See GATEPATH, Page 4

Gatepath

FROM PAGE 3

laborative of San Mateo County.

"Kenny is very conscientious, very genuine in his ability to learn new things," said Keith Myers, store director for Draeger's in San Mateo. "He's always trying to be helpful to people and trying to do a good job."

Lybrand attributes his success to Community Gatepath's job placement program, which trained him all those years ago. A job coach from the program continues to visit him at his workplace every week.

"Working is another step toward complete independence," said Claire Withycombe, a public information assistant at Community Gatepath. "With medical advances, people with disabilities are outliving their parents. I would go so far as to say it is vital for them to be employed."

Community Gatepath, founded more than 85 years ago, provides a range of services for more than 6,700 children and adults with disabilities and their family members each year.

In addition to the job placement program, the nonprofit offers recreational and educational activities for adults, senior health and wellness services, early intervention programs for children at risk of developmental delays and an inclusive preschool for both normally developing children and those with disabilities.

Participants in the organization's programs also work as landscapers and package products like tea.

Oliveria Nuñez brings her

son Christopher to the early intervention program at the organization's Niall P. McCarthy Center for Children & Families twice a week for group classes and speech and physical therapy.

About four months into her pregnancy, Nuñez learned Christopher had Down syndrome, a genetic disorder that affects about one in 800 babies and causes mental retardation, facial deformity and, often, serious heart defects.

Christopher, now almost 3, couldn't sit up on his own when he started coming to the center a little over two years ago, said Nuñez, a 44-year-old Redwood City resident.

In early December, Christopher sat in a circle with children in a Spanish-language program, grinning broadly and singing a song about parachutes.

"He has learned to say different sounds, to draw triangles and sit in his chair at snack time," Nuñez said, speaking in Spanish. "It's amazing."

Patty McCluskey, of El Granada, said her son Tom had made similar advances in his 10 months in the early intervention program.

Tom has mild autism and barely said one word at a time when he started the program in February.

"He's a completely different child," McCluskey said. "He can say six-word sentences. He's starting to use pronouns correctly, getting the tenses of verbs correctly. This is a kid who just said 'bubble' for the first time in April."

Tom will graduate from the Community Gatepath program early next year and is set to start a mainstream preschool, his mother said, adding, "He's ready for it if he has the right support."