



Impact Report





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"GO CONFIDENTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DREAMS. LIVE THE LIFE YOU HAVE IMAGINED "

- HENRY DAVID THOREAU







FROM THE DESK OF OUR CEO

Greetings,

As we close another remarkable year at Toward Maximum Independence (TMI), I want to take a moment to extend my deepest gratitude to our incredible staff, Board of Directors, clients, and all other stakeholders. Your unwavering support and commitment have enabled us to achieve new heights and provide unparalleled services to our clients and community.

This year, we have seen tremendous growth and improvement in our services. Along with TMI's commitment to invest in our own staff's professional development and growth, we were also very grateful to receive additional support from partnerships with the Department of Developmental Services, Department of Rehabilitation, and Regional Centers. These collaborative efforts have further advanced our staff's competency by providing courses that elevate the quality of our industry.

Being awarded USA Today Top Workplace 2024, USA Today Top Nonprofit 2024, and receiving the Career Advancement Partner Award for our outstanding support to advance the professional growth and development of our employees from Nonprofit Solutions, I believe, truly confirms that we are headed in the right direction with our promise to do our very best to meet the personalized needs of those we are honored to serve!

Our mission to provide personalized choice and advocacy is of the utmost importance to us. We are confident that we are making a tangible difference in the way our clients work, live, and integrate into their communities. Every step we take forward is a testament to the collaborative spirit and shared vision of everyone involved.

As we look to the future, we are excited and ready to expand our services throughout California. The journey ahead is promising, and together, we will continue to forge a path of growth, inclusion, and excellence.

Thank you all for being an integral part of our success and for believing in our mission. Here's to an even brighter and more impactful future!

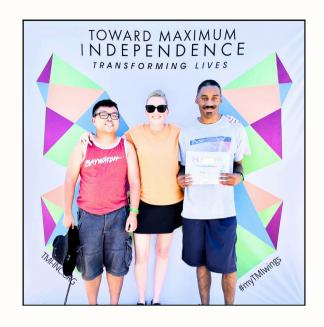
Warmest regards,

- Vain

DR. RACHEL L. HARRISCHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

ABOUT US

Headquartered in San Diego, Toward Maximum Independence (TMI) was formed in 1981 to provide Independent Living Services as a vendor with San Diego Regional Center. In 1986, the agency became a California nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation. Over the next several years our services were expanded to include Employment Solutions, Community Living Services, Family Support Services and, in 2000, for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In 2020, we launched our services for veterans with disabilities. TMI grew from a small sole-proprietorship based out of a home office, to providing support to now more than 1,600 individuals with offices in San Diego, Escondido, Temecula, El Centro, and Corona.



ALL PEOPLE WE SUPPORT EXPERIENCE **FULL INCLUSION IN** THEIR DAILY LIVES IN ALL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY LIFE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE THREE CORNERSTONES OF A STRONG LIFE **FOUNDATION ARE:** LIVING AS INDEPENDENTLY AS POSSIBLE, HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR REAL WORK FOR REAL PAY. AND A SAFE AND CARING HOME.

MISSION

To provide personalized services to those who require support, enabling them to make informed choices regarding how they live, work and function productively and independently in the community.

VISION

Achieving valued roles, making critical life-defining decisions, gaining the respect of others, and contributing to the life of the community are opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

VALUES

Respect: having a valued place and role among a network of family, friends, colleagues and neighbors. Choice: having autonomy in decision making both in small every day matters and large, life defining issues. Competence: having the opportunity to perform functional and meaningful activities or work with whatever level of assistance necessary. Full inclusion: sharing ordinary places with a growing network of personal relationships and making a contribution to the life of the community.

DEPARTMENTS



SCAN FOR SERVICES



Employment Solutions

Employment Solutions provide programs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and veterans with disabilities. Our clients can absolutely enjoy the rewards of being a contributing member in society and have the satisfaction and pride that comes with having a job or volunteering. We work with our clients to secure and maintain gainful employment in the community, if desired, and also work in collaboration with local businesses to develop volunteer opportunities for our clients. We offer a variety of innovative employment programs.



Community Living Services

We are honored to offer Independent Living and Supported Living Services to individuals with IDD. In order to live in a home or apartment in the community, one person may need live-in support, while others may need only intermittent support once or twice a week to help with such things as meal planning, grocery shopping or banking.

TMI's mission and core values are the driving force behind our emphasis on helping people develop and build skills so they can do things for themselves; be independent.

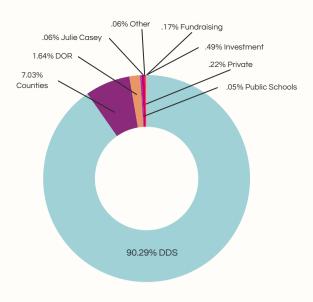


Family Support Services

TMI provides Resource Family placements for children with IDD, as well as additional innovative and trusted programs to meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

Family preservation is important and, even when temporary placement is necessary, the ultimate goal is reunification. In cases when it is not in the best interest of the child and the courts have advised against a reunification plan, TMI has been successful in finding a long-term stable Resource Family for the child where they are loved and nurtured.

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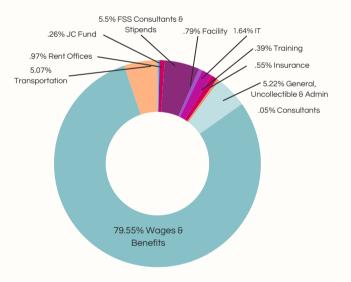


INCOME

- Depart. of Developmental Services (DDS)
- San Diego & Imperial Counties
- Department of Rehabilitation
- San Diego Public Schools
- Private Pay
- Investment Revenue
- Development & Fundraising
- Other
- Julie Casey Honorary Fund

Program Revenue - Department of Developmental Services	\$22
Program Revenue - San Diego County & Imperial County	\$
Program Revenue - Department of Rehabilitation	
Program Revenue - San Diego Public Schools	
Program Revenue - Private	
Investment Revenue	
Development & Fundraising	
Other	
Julie Casey Honorary Fund	
Consolidated Income	\$2

\$22,932,268	90.29%
\$1,785,703	7.03%
\$416,732	1.64%
\$12,625	0.05%
\$55,222	0.22%
\$124,318	0.49%
\$41,928	0.17%
\$15,373	0.06%
<u>\$14,016</u>	0.06%
\$25,398,185	100.00%

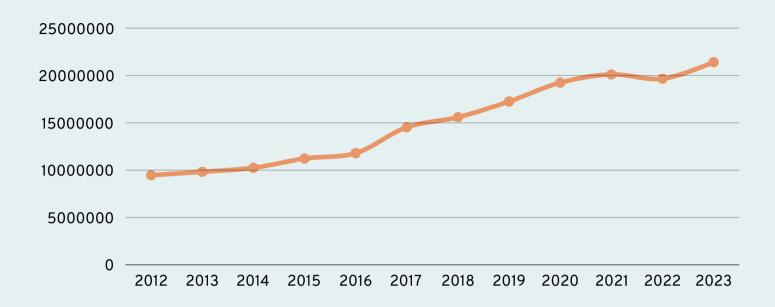


EXPENSE

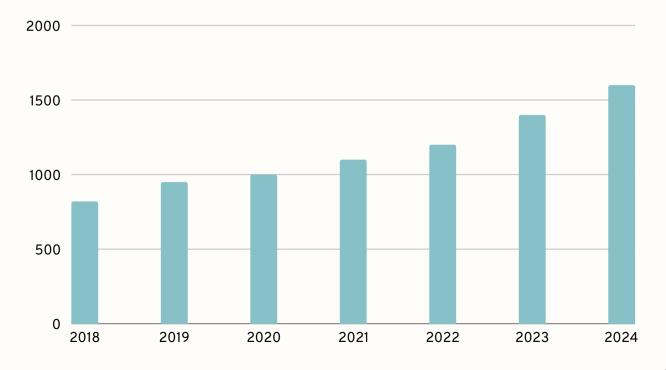
- Consultants
- Julie Casey Honorary Fund
- Facility
- Family Support Consultants & Stipends
- Insurance
- IT
- Rent Offices
- Training
- Transportation
- Wages and Benefits
- General, Uncollectible & Administrative

Consultants	\$16,055	0.06%
Julie Casey Honorary Fund	\$64,540	0.26%
Facility	\$197,673	0.79%
Family Support Consultants & Stipends	\$1,373,641	5.50%
Insurance	\$136,558	0.55%
IT	\$408,542	1.64%
Rent - Offices	\$242,408	0.97%
Training	\$98,436	0.39%
Transportation	\$1,266,534	5.07%
Wages and Benefits	\$19,868,014	79.55%
General, Uncollectible & Administrative	<u>\$1,304,576</u>	5.22%
Consolidated Expenses	\$24,976,977	100%

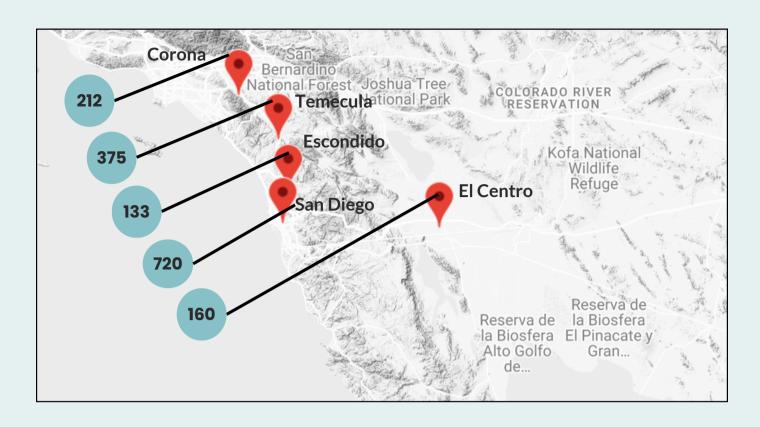
REVENUE GROWTH



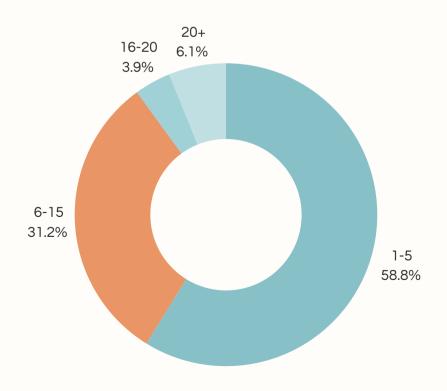
CLIENT GROWTH



CLIENTS SERVED BY EACH OFFICE



YEARS CLIENTS SERVED



1,600

Total clients served

177

Community partners

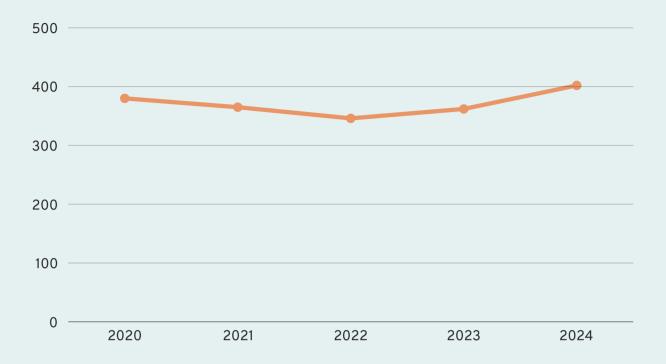
276

Clients working in paid employment settings

20%

Increase in clients served by our Community Integration Training Program

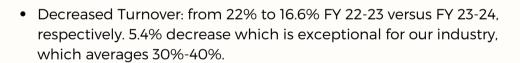
EMPLOYEE GROWTH

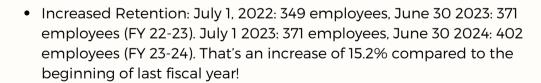


WE RECOVERED FROM THE COVID DOWNTURN AND NOW CONTINUE TO GROW TO SERVE OUR CLIENTS IN NEED OF VITAL SERVICES

A TOP WORKPLACE

We were honored to be chosen as a Top Workplace overall, as well as for the Nonprofit Industry, Woman-Led, and for Appreciation Top Workplace. This is a testament to what it means to be a part of the TMI family. We are growing each day!















Scan to Join
Our Team



TRANSFORMING LIVES LUAU

Mahalo nui loa to everyone who made our luau a huge success! We had a blast at the beautiful Kona Kai San Diego. A special thanks to our Platinum Sponsors: Sycuan Casino Resort, Hill CCM, and Better Days Community Services, and our Bronze Sponsor: Home of Guiding Hands. We couldn't do it without you! We're also grateful to all of our in-kind donors and everyone who attended. Your support helps us provide essential services to our clients. Congratulations to our Honorees: TMI Client Board Representative Maurice, TMI Employee and Advocate Desaray Reno, Resource Parent Michelle Thornton, Community Partner Texas Roadhouse, and "Engaged" Community Partner Sycuan. See you in 2025!











THANK YOU TO OUR 23/24 SPONSORS







THANK YOU TO OUR 23/24 DONORS



SCAN TO VIEW DONORS



23/24 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Heather Martin Mental Health Professional

Maurice Client Representative

Jenna Plante TMI Associate Director of CLS Staff Representative

Christopher Walters Lawyer Walters Law Group

Dr. Shavonne Williams Program Director Stepping Higher, Inc.

Empowering Our Clients



SCAN TO SHARE

Our innovative services assist individuals with disabilities with finding employment or a volunteer opportunity. We hosted our first "Mock Interview Training Day" and "Clothing Boutique" to help our clients prepare for job interviews.

Organized by the San Diego Supported Employment (SE) program, the event included two presentations. "Dress for Success" presented by SE Division Manager Mary Carrington provided clients with specific tips for what to wear and not wear to interviews. "Interview Tips" presented by SE Division Manager Julie Takahashi featured essential qualities employers are looking for, as well as discussed practice interview questions.

In addition, our clients had the exciting opportunity to practice their interview skills with three employers: Texas Roadhouse Managing Partner Joshua Bacon, Fire Etc Sales Representative Jaime Takahashi and TMI SE Associate Director Nick Pelosi.

"I really enjoyed myself and learned some new things today and I'm ready for some interviews," said TMLSE Client Chad.

On the day of the event, the clients arrived in interview clothes, toured the TMI Resource Room and participated in a few office skill assessments, as well as practiced copy room skills, listening skills, teamwork, and professionalism.





Our hardworking and motivated clients Cassie, Chad, Luis, Maurice, Nate, and Paela received a Certificate of Completion for their training along with helpful feedback from the interviewers.

"This was a valuable event for our clients," said Julie. "The interviewers were instrumental in the success of the training which helped our clients learn new skills, as well as gain confidence in their ability to find jobs."

Our employment partners include Smart & Final, San Diego Zoo, Sea World, Sycuan Casino & Resort, VONS, as well as many other outstanding companies.

There are many reasons why it makes good business sense to have TMI clients be contributing members of your organization either as paid employees or volunteers. Learn more: TMI-INC.ORG

Alexis' Story



SCAN TO SHARE

As a young man with autism, Alexis has a passion for cooking. He loves the creativity and precision of it, and the way food brings people together. Alexis knew that it wouldn't be easy to pursue his dream of becoming a chef. With his hard work and dedication and TMI's assistance he was able to achieve his dream!

Alexis enrolled in the Southwestern College Culinary Arts program which provides real-life practice and experience in the art of cooking. Students learn the theories behind professional cooking, train their palate to become an expert in distinguishing flavors, work to increase the speed in which they can operate in a kitchen, and encourage teamwork and a collaborative atmosphere. Alexis was nervous about how he would do, but he was determined to succeed.

A client with TMI for six years, Alexis worked with his TMI Tailored Day Services Facilitator Vanessa Lopez to be able to thrive in the program. He initially struggled with transitioning from in-person services to remote classes during the pandemic, but he faced the challenges head on with Vanessa's reassurance and support. Vanessa explained to him that things don't always go as planned, but that change can be a good thing. Alexis grew to feel comfortable with the change and confident in knowing he had the support he needed to move forward with the program online



The program was challenging, but Alexis excelled, all while holding a part-time job at Chili's restaurant. Alexis learned a great deal about the culinary world and received his culinary certificate this year.

"My hope for Alexis is that he continues to further his education, as well as expand his social skills," said Vanessa. "With one foot in front of the other, we continue to move forward."

In his free time, Alexis enjoys putting puzzles together, shopping and going to amusement parks. His favorite is Disneyland! He enjoys sharing with people that he was the top student in his math class when he was in high school. He is very proud of his accomplishments, as he should be!

"Every day is a new day for progress," said Alexis.

Alexis is an inspiration to other people with autism who wish to pursue their dreams. He has shown that anything is possible if you set your mind to it. Congratulations, Alexis!

Israel's Story



SCAN TO SHARE

We are thrilled to share the inspiring story of Israel, a client on the autism spectrum who is working at his dream job as a photographer at SeaWorld! With support from the TMI Tailored Day Services program, Israel has been able to overcome challenges and pursue his passion for capturing special moments. Israel shared his employment journey, what he loves about working at SeaWorld and much more!

Q: Israel, congratulations on this exciting position! Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your role at SeaWorld?

A: Hi everyone! My name is Israel. I started working at SeaWorld in February of 2023 as a photographer in their Sea Pixels department.

Q: How has TMI helped you on your journey to finding employment?

A. They've been a huge help in getting me started in the workforce. TMI helped me find this job, which is actually my first ever! We still have much more to do from here.

Q: What are some of your biggest strengths that you bring to your role as a photographer?

A: I'm really dedicated to making sure that the customers and their families look their best in their photos. I take a lot of pride in my work.



Q: Did you have any prior experience with photography or working with animals before starting this job?

A: Actually, no! I hadn't worked with animals before, and my only experience with photography was taking cosplay photos.

Q: Starting a new job in an unfamiliar environment can be stressful. How do you manage any anxieties you might have about social interaction?

A: It can definitely be challenging, especially when I'm put in a new situation, and I don't quite understand what's going on. I try my best to ask questions and get guidance from my coworkers who have more experience. Meeting new people can be daunting at first, but making friends at work has really helped to ease the stress.

Q: That's a great strategy! How did you learn about this opportunity at SeaWorld?

A: One of my TMI Job Coaches, Carol Atherton, recommended the position to me. I'm so grateful to her for helping me find this amazing job!

Israel's Story (con't)

Q. What was the application and interview process like for you?

A. It was nerve racking, mainly due to it being my first time really going for a job. My TMI Job Coach Abraham Perez helped guide me through creating a resume, preparing documents, practicing before interviews, and knowing what to say at interviews.

Q. What are some of your favorite aspects of working at SeaWorld?

A. Mainly the atmosphere SeaWorld brings. The park, the people, my coworkers, and the fact that I am getting paid for working at an awesome theme park. It's something I never would have thought my life would lead me to.

Q. Have you faced any unique challenges or experiences in this role due to autism?

A. There are moments when I feel panic if I don't understand my position and what I must do to keep doing a good job or keep a good impression among my coworkers or superiors, but Abraham is there to give me pointers and assist me along the way.

Q. How has SeaWorld supported your success and well-being in the workplace?

A. SeaWorld has been nothing but supportive. Some of the employees and superiors are aware of my condition, and if I ever have questions they are available to assist me if needed.

Q. How has this job opportunity impacted your confidence, independence, and overall well-being?

A. This opportunity has given me a new perspective on some things, as well as benefits myself and my family. I look forward to seeing how far I can take this and how much more I can grow.

Q. What advice would you give to other autistic individuals seeking employment?

A. To always be grateful for what you have been given. Not many people are fortunate to have your view of life. What you choose to do with those gifts is up to you. It's never too late for anyone to pick themselves up on the path to a good life and that is what I aim to achieve.

We love that! Thank you for sharing, Israel, and thank you to Abraham and Carol for being outstanding TMI Job Coaches!

"Israel was able to learn how to use transportation thanks to this job," said Abraham. "It has also enabled him to make new connections and meet new friends who he hangs out with occasionally. I am very proud of all that he has accomplished!"

TMI is proud to support Israel as he continues to flourish in this role. His story is a shining example of how much can be achieved with dedication, perseverance, and the right kind of support.







CBS8 ZEVELY ZONE NEWS STORY

Rancho Springs



SCAN TO SHARE



We are pleased to announce a new partnership with Rancho Springs Hospital in Murrieta, CA! This exciting collaboration will provide opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to play an important role in the hospital's daily operations.

TMI and Rancho Springs share a core belief: that everyone, regardless of ability, deserves the chance to experience the dignity and fulfillment of meaningful work. This partnership will empower TMI clients to utilize their skills and become active participants in their community.

The Power of Partnership

TMI Community Integration Training Program Job Coach Robin Harrington spearheaded the initiative. Recognizing the potential for a mutually beneficial partnership, Robin approached Brian Connors, Director of Marketing & Volunteers at Rancho Springs & Inland Valley Hospitals, in December of 2023. Brian's enthusiasm for the idea mirrored Robin's, and together they laid the groundwork for this groundbreaking collaboration.

"This endeavor took time," said Robin. "I had a vision to approach the hospital where I believed there would be an opportunity for our clients. I scheduled a meeting with Brian who exhibited the same enthusiasm as me. I knew then this partnership was born. The hospital stands for building relationships that touch the heart. Brian understood our mission and my vision."

How the Partnership Works

TMI clients are integrated into the hospital environment in a variety of ways. They are responsible for assembling welcome packets for new patients, ensuring they feel comfortable and informed upon arrival. Additionally, they operate a "comfort cart," delivering essential items to patients throughout the day.

Rancho Springs (con't)

"Our partnership with Rancho Springs Hospital is a fantastic opportunity for our clients," said TMI CEO Dr. Rachel Harris. "Volunteering allows individuals to develop new skills, gain valuable experience, and give back to their community. We are grateful to Rancho Springs for providing this platform for our clients to grow and thrive."

Benefits for All

Rancho Springs Hospital recognizes the value of individuals with IDD. People with IDD are known for their reliability, dedication, and positive attitudes. Their contributions will undoubtedly enrich the hospital's work environment.

'TMI is a valuable addition to the Southwest Healthcare Auxiliary Volunteer Organization here at Rancho Springs Hospital and Inland Valley Hospital," said Brian. "Their ability to take on tasks with a cheerful heart and attention to detail has been remarkable. They are organized and willing to step in and contribute to whatever is asked of them. We are thrilled with the collaboration and appreciate this new relationship. We look forward to additional opportunities to have them serve in a variety of other tasks throughout our hospitals."



TMI's Role in Supporting Clients

Robin along with our other dedicated Job Coaches Heather Clapper and Mandi Telford will support our clients: Erin, Cassie, Karljon, Eliana, Daisy, Typhanee, and Kaitlyn. The coaches will play a crucial role in ensuring the success of this partnership. They will provide ongoing support, individualized instruction, and ensure all safety protocols are followed. TMI's coaches are committed to helping our clients achieve their full potential and thrive in their new positions.

"Robin has been an amazing addition to the TMI team," said TMI Division Manager Andrea Rivera. "Her passion for our clients shines through as she has helped coordinate multiple community partnerships where our clients have benefited greatly in learning a variety of skills which have allowed them to become acquainted with varying work environments. Thank you, Robin, for all your hard work and care that you provide!"

The Future Looks Bright

We are confident that this collaboration will empower our clients, enrich the hospital environment, and serve as a model for future partnerships within the community.

"Thank you to Rancho Springs Hospital for allowing us to come alongside you and support your staff and clientele," added Andrea. "Brian, we appreciate your willingness to foster this partnership and for believing in our clients and cultivating the talents that they bring to the table!"

This partnership is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when organizations come together with a shared mission. It is a testament to the power of inclusion and the value that individuals with IDD bring to the workforce. We are excited to see this partnership flourish and provide a springboard for future opportunities!



THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE NEWS STORY

Inclusive Arts



SCAN TO SHARE

The Jason Mraz Foundation's production of "Kaleidoscope" at the California Center for the Arts, Escondido was a concert and so much more! It was a vibrant celebration of inclusion, accessibility, and the power of artistic expression, featuring inspiring individuals like Andrea. Luis. and Jordan.

Andrea Rivera, a Division Manager with TMI, and a member of Wheelchair Dancers Organization (WDO), took center stage alongside Jason Mraz and other talented performers. As a wheelchair dancer, Andrea embodies the spirit of "Kaleidoscope," showcasing the transformative power of dance for individuals with mobility impairments. WDO, was one of eight San Diego nonprofit arts organizations participating in the event, highlighting the diverse range of artistic talents within the nonprofit community.

"Growing up I never thought that I would be able to dance as I never saw people in wheelchairs dancing and I never thought that I would get to dance on stage with some of the best," said Andrea. "I encourage everyone to go after their dreams, even if there seems to be no way. All you need is creativity, imagination, and passion. I'd like to thank the Jason Mraz Foundation, TMI, and Wheelchair Dancers Organization, for their continued support!"

Luis, a TMI client and student at the San Diego Young Artists Music Academy, brought his musical passion to the stage. His participation in "Kaleidoscope" is a testament to the Academy supporting individuals with disabilities in pursuing their musical aspirations. Luis's performance serves as an inspiration to others, demonstrating that with the right support and opportunities, individuals with disabilities can thrive in the world of music and the arts.

"Luis loves music and art. It's one the gifts God granted him and he uses it well," said Luis's mom Cristina. "He is a good pianist who plays classical and contemporary music. He is studying to be a piano teacher. Luis is very kind and loves to help people. He often prays for the well being of who he encounters whether they are a friend or not. We are very proud of him!"

TMI Job Coach Abraham Perez assists Luis with transportation to music and choir practice, as well as assists him with completing his music homework and practicing his music scales and song list. Luis can get nervous before performing so Abraham encourages him to smile and remember why he enjoys music so much!





Inclusive Arts (con't)

Jordan, also a TMI client and a member of the Banding Together music program, had the chance to share his musical talent with the audience by being a rockstar on the drums. Banding Together provides music education and performance opportunities for individuals with special needs. Their participation exemplifies the program's success in fostering social connection, self-expression, and a sense of belonging through music.

Jordan, who has Williams Syndrome, has been working at Vons for 11 years as a courtesy clerk with the support of a TMI Job Coach 20% of the time. His favorite duty is bagging groceries which gives him an opportunity to chat with the customers. Jordan is well-known and liked in his community. According to his mom Deena, employment has been a process but it has helped him acquire independence and reliability.

"Kaleidoscope" was a powerful message of inclusion and independence. It showcased the talent, resilience, and determination of individuals from diverse backgrounds, and the crucial role nonprofit organizations play in supporting their journey. The production re-enforced that with the right support and opportunities, anyone can achieve their full potential, regardless of their abilities.

What can you do to support inclusive arts?

- Learn more about organizations like the Jason Mraz Foundation.
- Support programs that promote artistic expression for individuals with disabilities.
- Challenge your own biases and assumptions about disability.
- Create opportunities for inclusion in your own community.

Together, we can build a world where everyone has the opportunity to shine their light!

Thank you to Jason and the Foundation for all that they are doing for the nonprofit community. Congratulations to the entire cast and crew on an outstanding production!





Fason Mraz & Andrea

Connect with us!





TMI-INC.ORG

PREPARED BY: GINGER COHEN



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