

Imagine Supported Living Services



Annual Report 2016

WHAT IS IMAGINE?

Imagine Supported Living Services is a 501c3 public benefit corporation in Santa Cruz County, providing services to adults with disabilities since 2002. Our mission is to empower individuals with disabilities through service and advocacy. We value people of all abilities and their inherent right to live with dignity. We work cooperatively with our community to increase access, foster meaningful relationships and reduce barriers to full inclusion.

Imagine provides an average of 11,000 hours per month of supported living to adults with developmental disabilities living in Santa Cruz County. We currently support four families through our Family Home Agency. In addition, we host an annual film festival with the purpose of building community and securing a diversity that includes people with developmental disabilities. We currently employ 109 people, 65 of whom are full time, benefited employees.

SUMMARY OF 2016

During 2015, Imagine completed a strategic plan meant to carry our mission, values and tradition of excellence into a more secure future. Having started our Family Home Agency program in 2014, the remaining challenges from our plan were accomplished:

- Our services expanded and remained extremely individualized. We currently provide end-of-life care to one individual, support to young people transitioning out of their parents' homes, adults with decades of experience at the job, people with mental health needs and individuals with severe physical challenges. We remain very proud of the quality of service we can deliver to such a diverse group.
- Our family home agency (FHA) program doubled in size.
- We held our fifth Imagine Film Festival, our first at the Colligan Theater at The Tannery Arts Complex and our first that wasn't also a fundraising event.
- We continued our Self-Determination Learning Community programs in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties.
- We began the roll-out of our Person-Centered Service Incubator program, providing assistance to individuals and families seeking to provide needed new supports to people with developmental disabilities. We began this program supporting a new transitional independent living program and Costanoa Commons at no cost to the new resources. We hope and intend this program will help address disparities in access to and the appropriateness of services.
- We had our best ever fundraising year, raising about 20% more than ever before.

- Which, along with funding increases from the state, allowed us to raise wages for all direct-care staff and facilitators by an average of about 10%. Since 2013, our lowest-paid employees have seen their compensation improve by around 50% which has made an enormous difference in our ability to recruit and retain excellent people as care-givers.
- Imagine continues to pay 100% of the health, dental and chiropractic insurance for our employees working more than 30 hours/week. This year we added a tele-medicine benefit and an Employee Assistance Program as well.
- Continued to work with the Person-Centered Advocacy Partnership and California Disability Community Action Network to pursue a political agenda which supports the value of people of any abilities.

Regarding our financial position:

- We were disappointed to have a third year of deficit spending, although the deficit decreased substantially both in dollars and as a percentage of expenses. Since the start of the new fiscal year in July, we have been in surplus each month.
- Unrestricted grants and donations exceeded \$65,000, a 20% increase over the previous and our best year.
- Total revenue for the fiscal year rose to \$2,712,000 from \$2,201,000, an increase of 23%.

OUR CORE VALUES

Imagine is driven by our mission and values and we check in often to make sure we live up to them. Recent events in the broader community have worried some members of our community, especially minorities and marginalized groups. We want to be clear that as an organization we cannot sufficiently support inclusion, equality, dignity and pride for people with developmental disabilities unless we see those things as good in themselves and value them for everyone. Imagine is proud to be and intends to remain a diverse organization. Among the people we serve, the tax-payers who support us and our employees we have a broad spectrum of religions, ethnicities, economic backgrounds, national origins, family types, gender identities and orientations. Everyone with a role in our community should expect us to protect, respect, defend, support and be grateful for them.

We believe the values we have selected as “Core Values” reinforce one another organically and we credit a great deal of our success to the fact that we are able to follow them in small and systematic ways.

Empowerment

Empowerment is Imagine’s mission and one of our core values. We observe this by promoting the independence and advocacy of the people we serve; by focusing on our own dependability so that the people we serve can be as courageous as possible and by serving them unjudgementally; and by seeking to maximize the transparency and accountability of agency management to all stakeholders including the individuals we serve, their loved ones, the broader community and everyone who works at Imagine.

Outstanding Service

Imagine seeks always to improve our services and constantly to earn our reputation as a premier service provider. We are currently piloting a Continuous Quality Improvement system as well as an employee performance measurement system both of which acknowledge the individuality of our programs and the variations is what quality means to each person we serve. We plan to use these systems as they develop to better identify which trainings, management techniques, people etc. lead to the best outcomes for the people we serve.

Fabric of The Community

Imagine has always provided leadership to the developmental disability services community as well as following an extroverted approach to the rest of our county, state and nation. As a small agency, Imagine was very unusual in the depth and breadth of its outreach. We continue that tradition with a culture which has led to many from our community volunteering to support other agencies including the Homeless Garden Project, Costanoa Commons, and other causes including human rights, diversity and homelessness. Imagine provides housing and support to other agencies and causes and our events invite people with disabilities not served by Imagine. Our Film Festival brings the broader community together and the Gathering of Extraordinary, which we co-sponsor and help fund through a grant from the Bernini Foundation, people brings together hundreds of people from the developmental disability community. Imagine supports Shared Adventures Day On The Beach event and develops relationships with local and statewide government to advocate for people with developmental disabilities. Our commitment to diversity comes partly through a recognition that we cannot serve our community, influence our community or expect the support of our neighbors without honoring the personal histories of everyone we meet in our work.

Employer of Choice

Imagine recognizes that our hope for excellence and faith to our mission depends on the people who work here. As such, we prioritize that our culture, compensation and management honors everyone who works here. Imagine is one of the last service providers paying 100% of our employee's health insurance costs and was one of the first to implement raises through the wage pass-through enabled by the legislature this year. Every manager at Imagine has an open door policy and is covered by a communication policy that promotes openness and candor in response to questions. As the cost of benefits has risen, Imagine has been expanding them.

Lifelong Learning and Innovation

Imagine commits itself to teaching, learning and listening throughout the life cycle of the people we serve. We look for opportunities to help the people we serve gain skills that will help them live more fully and meaningfully in the community. We look for training and dialogue to support the growth of the staff. We work to maintain an open culture for experimentation where safe and appropriate and for feedback from many sources.

Safety and Security

Empowerment, independence and learning requires courage and bravery comes easier to those with safe spaces and reliable allies available during and after a challenge. Imagine takes seriously a preventive, proactive approach to safety, security and health. For the people we serve, Imagine creates individualized approaches to their physical and behavioral challenges which seek to balance their autonomy with their need for assistance. We have a Critical Incident review program that takes a broad approach after a crisis to learning whatever is there to be learned in the preparation of new preventive strategies.

We recognize that the excellence of our staff depends on their having a physically and emotionally safe work environment and we investigate every staff grievance and concern after welcoming feedback, concerns and fresh ideas from all who work here or interact with us on a frequent basis.

OUR SERVICES

Supported Living (SLS)

Imagine has been providing Supported Living Services since July 2002. This service model provides opportunity for personal choice, self-direction and dignity in residential care. Supported Living ac-

knowledges a person's strengths and abilities, and supports that individual in planning the life that they will find personally rewarding in homes they control and in the communities they seek.

. Imagine Supported Living Services provides a variety of direct services and supports, determined by the individual needs and desires of each client, with support from the people that are closest to that individual. These services may include, but are not limited to; finding and securing housing, direct staff support for personal care and tasks, money management, social and recreational facilitation, and medical management. We are currently serving twenty-five individuals in Supported Living.

Although the people we serve have and deserve unfettered choice in their service provider, we plan our supported living services to last the length of our clients' lives.

Family Home Agency

A Family Home Agency certifies family homes which offer the opportunity for up to two adult individuals diagnosed with a developmental disability per home to reside with a family and share in the interaction and responsibility of participation in that family. The individual with a disability receives the necessary services and supports from the family and Imagine to enable the individual to be a full participating member of the family and community where they reside. The family home arrangement allows for the sharing of food, shelter, experience, responsibilities and love. Unlike in SLS, the program is principally created in the home by the members of the new family with Imagine playing a crucial but supporting role.

Imagine will carefully match individuals with families where the individual can find authentic, permanent membership in the family unit. We acknowledge that each family situation and individual served will have unique gifts and challenges. Imagine will work to support both the individual and family providers in creating the kind of family which best serves all interests.

A key distinction between supported living service and family home agency is that the former is centered on the individual served while the latter is centered on the family.

Self-Directed Services

A new model of service delivery called "Self-Directed" or "Self-Determined" services (SDS) should become available to individuals and families in our area in 2017 and Imagine is preparing to join the other participants. Just to note, the previous sentence was pasted from our 2015 Annual report with the year changed, but we're hopeful. Under SDS, the open entitlement of the traditional system will be replaced with a limited budget and new freedoms to plan, purchase and replace supports not limited to existing service codes and categories.

During the current year, Imagine staff will be preparing to provide new, flexible, cost-effective and innovative services to clients choosing SDS.

We are also working outside of Imagine to foster the infrastructure on which clients and families using SDS will rely. With assistance from a grant by the Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group's Community Healthcare Endowment Fund, we have been training parents, individuals and other professionals to serve as Independent Facilitators. Our Executive Director represents Monterey County on the San Andreas Regional Center's Self-Determination Advisory Committee and we are preparing to provide innovative new services to individuals and families enrolled in Self-Determination.

Person-Centered Services Incubator

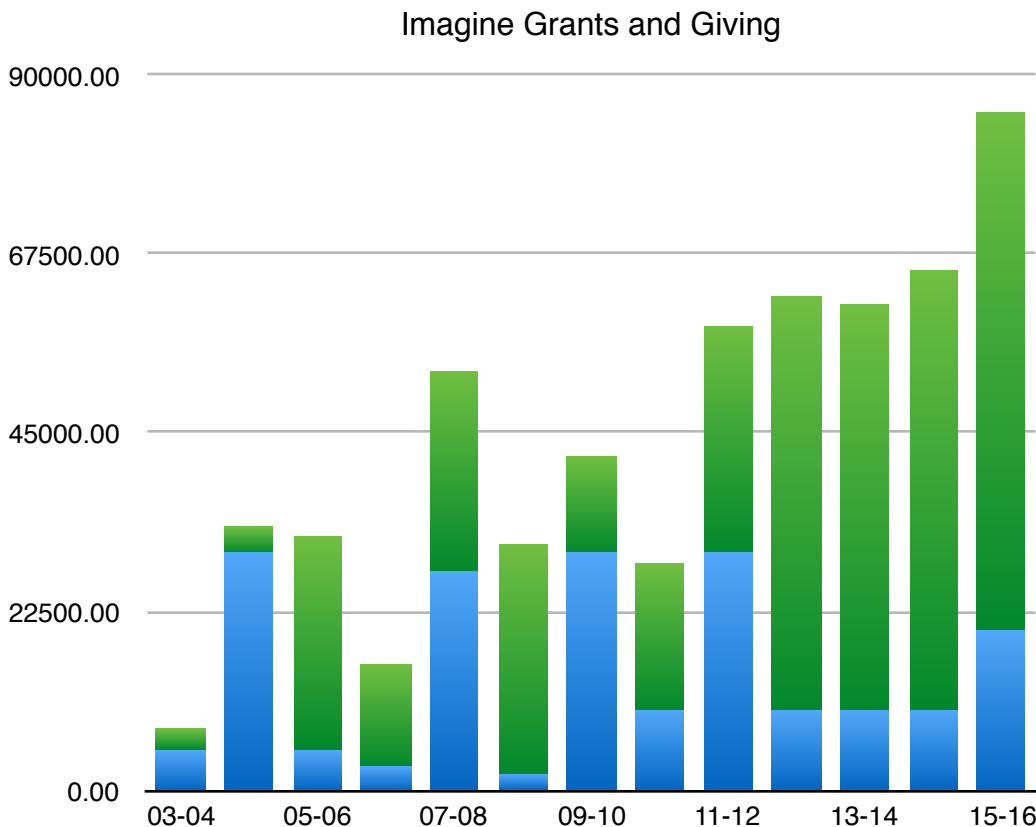
In 2015, Imagine began the process of developing a new system-facing program to help other organizations establish new person-centered services and supports. The purpose of this program is to help address mis-matches between the services now available and those needed as well as disparities in the accessibility and appropriateness of available services in underserved communities. Individuals, families and organizations can, without cost, receive mentoring, office space, program-design and tenderization help, HR and bookkeeping expertise as well referrals to legal and other forms of assistance. We hope, in this way, to improve how our system performs for everyone without having to grow our own organization beyond our ability to assure excellence.

Since our founding, Imagine has provided leadership and mentoring to individuals and other organizations and this program grows out of that original orientation. We are seeking funding to expand, market and evaluate this program. Without separate funding, however, Imagine already assists two start-up organizations that intend to serve needs not being met by existing parts of the local regional center service provider community.

Person-Centered Advocacy

Imagine teamed with the California Disability Community Action Network (CDCAN) and other local stakeholders to promote a person-centered approach to public advocacy and system reform. Imagine works both statewide and locally to empower stakeholders, work with elected officials and policymakers and promote a healthier, more sustainable environment for people with developmental disabilities, their caregivers, family and friends.

We have been working with CDCAN, Claraty Arts and other organizations and individuals around the state to develop an art show at the California Museum in Sacramento to share the experience of individuals with developmental disabilities.



Imagine staff have participated in the development of the new Self-Determination waiver by the state, in the state's approach to overtime laws and in the transition of the state system into compliance with developing federal guidelines.

Community Collaborations and Advocacy

Here are some of the activities that Imagine directed to support the Santa Cruz County community of individuals with disabilities:

☆Co-Hosted the thir-

teenth annual Gathering of Extraordinary People with Employment and Community Options, Monarch ILS and Santa Cruz Supported Living Services. There were over 300 people in attendance at this Harvey West Park event.

- ☆ Hosted our fifth Imagine Film Festival with films by, about and/or starring people with disabilities. This event was attended by over 200 people and held at the new Colligan Theater at The Tannery Arts complex. This year, we left behind the fundraising purpose of the film festival and focused on our neighbors with developmental disabilities being central in our community.
- ☆ Hosted a monthly Men's Group which includes people with and without disabilities. This year we re-created the Women's Group.
- ☆ We threw parties. Lots of parties in our Village Hall, to which the people we serve, people served by other agencies and the community at large. We're pleased to say our Halloween party is already notorious and our St. Patrick's Day party ended without scandal.
- ☆ Provide advice on an ongoing basis to Costanoa Commons.
- ☆ Participated in a working group assisting the Department of Developmental Services to develop new regulations and institutions supporting individuals to leave the developmental centers.
- ☆ Worked with both the State of California to promote self-determination and to assist in guiding the transition to new medicaid waiver rules. In 2017, Imagine will be one of a few organizations piloting a self-assessment tool to insure compliance with new federal rules.

Community Resource Lending Library

The Imagine Community Resource Lending Library is housed in the Julie Rienhardt Village Hall at 9063 Soquel Drive. The library offers resources, including adaptive technology, communication devices, books and CDs for community lending.

The Imagine Disability Short Film Festival

The Fifth annual Imagine Disability Short Film Festival was a great success. Our film festival manifests our mission and values, helping to bring to the attention of the broader community to what we know to be true: that some of our most interesting and valuable neighbors are people with disabilities. This year, we discontinued the film festival as a fundraiser so that we could better focus on the film festival's mission- to promote the inclusiveness of our community and to feature people with developmental disabilities in a central place.

Our film festival moved this year to the Colligan Theater at The Tannery, a difference which was appreciated by many. Although we raised the price of the ticket, we offered discounts and free tickets to anyone who asked. Food and soft drinks were included and the quality of the films continued to get better and better. For the first time in the last three editions of the film festival, the general community was well represented and we made a bunch of new friends.

MAIN ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016

- ☆ Continued to fulfill our mission of high-quality, empowering support to individuals with developmental disabilities.
- ☆ Hosted our fifth annual film festival. This event focused on advocacy and empowerment for people with disabilities by showing 12 films by or about our community.
- ☆ Expanded both our SLS and FHA programs.

- ☆ We provide meeting space at no cost to the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Easter Seals of Central California and other non-profits and organizations that share our mission.
- ☆ Began our Person-Centered Services Incubator program.
- ☆ Co-Hosted the thirteenth annual Gathering of Extraordinary People.
- ☆ Participated in the Human Race.
- ☆ Hosted a Holiday Party for staff, family and friends.
- ☆ Received a clean audit report for fiscal year 2014-2015.
- ☆ Hosted an all-day retreat with Imagine's Leadership Team and Board of Directors to begin development of a new five-year strategic plan.
- ☆ Continued our monthly newsletter "Imagine That. . ."
- ☆ Received many generous donations from family members and local businesses and foundations (please see "Financial Report" for more information).
- ☆ Managed the registration booth for the 25th Annual Day on the Beach with Imagine volunteers.
- ☆ Hosted birthday celebrations and holiday celebrations for our consumers.

STAFF, OFFICERS, AND BOARD MEMBERS

Imagine's Board Members:

Mark Tracy	President
Fountain Jeng	Treasurer
Julie Picquet	Secretary
Jo Quinn	
Casie Wright	
Martha Johansson	

Imagine's Leadership Team:

Doug Pascover	Executive Director
Julie Ross	Director of Services
Peggy Carter	Book-keeper
Patty Lopez	Administration and HR Coordinator
Drea Batteast	Facilitator
Heather Cahill	Facilitator
Robert Dunbar	Facilitator
Cherice Lovell	Facilitator
David Robles	FHA Facilitator
Gregory Bondi	House Facilitator
Alexis Kargl	Administrative Assistant

FINANCIAL REPORT

Imagine is a financially sound organization, receiving a clean audit report from Armanino, LLC. We would like to gratefully acknowledge the support we received from individual donations, grants from foundations, essential volunteer hours, and in kind donations from our supporters!

Although the fiscal year ended in an annual loss, Imagine's finances have been in balance since November 2015 and we have begun rebuilding our reserves.

During the period when Imagine ran deficits, our response included reducing our overhead, administrative and fundraising costs both in absolute terms and as a percentage of expenditures. We accomplished these reductions while maintaining a high level of administrative support to the organization. Over the past four years, General, Administrative and fundraising costs have fallen from about 15% of our expenses to less than 9%. We are comfortable that 10% is a sustainable share of cost but it has become clear that innovation, creativity and training sponsored or supported by management has become difficult to see through. At this point, management strategy includes allowing our administrative costs to increase with overall revenues. That is to say, at this point we intend that overhead and fundraising will continue to share about 10% of our expenditures.

The return to surplus brings welcome relief but also this new tension: We owe it to our stakeholders both to invest in the excellence of our current services but also to prepare for challenges ahead throughout the long lives of the people who will continue to rely upon us. Higher rates have helped a lot and made good people easier to find and keep, but the long-term pressures from the Santa Cruz housing market and the near-certainty that the sufficiency of funding will cycle over time, many times, require us to also save. Imagine's financial strategy is to place first priority on maintaining a savings rate of not less than 2% and no more than 5% of revenues and to maximize the compensation and benefits of direct care staff within that constraint.

Our fundraising and development play a key role in meeting those two challenges. In the 2015-2016 fiscal year, unrestricted giving and grants provided nearly 2.5% of our revenues. If Imagine can consistently support itself to that degree, we can confidently invest our earned income in current services and our people.

Where does our money come from?

Fee-for-service from San Andreas and Golden Gate Regional Centers provide resources covering modest wages and salaries and above industry-standard benefits for our staff.

Foundation grants, individual donations and fundraising events provide for critical additional resources that our community and the people we serve deserve. A generous grant from the Bernini Fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation provides the people we serve with additional support for social opportunities, wished-for adventures and celebrations which would be harder to come by and rarer without that support. Our Human Race fundraiser in 2016 exceeded the excellent year we had in 2015.

Operating support from our donors as well as the Newman's Own Foundation support Imagine's leadership to the system, staff retention, innovation, advocacy, community partnership and sustainability.

Leadership: Because of the public support we've received, Imagine sends staff to participate in workgroups for the Department of Developmental Services, to participate in the state's changes to In-Home Support Services and to promote engagement between our community and our elected representatives. Imagine has been a leading force in the development of a self-directed services infrastructure in the SARC catchment area offering trainings and curricula to prospective participants.

Staff retention: For the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the Imagine Board of Directors once again earmarked a portion of unrestricted giving and grants to staff bonuses. We were able to end a rough period for

people working at Imagine with nearly \$30,000 worth of fiscal-year-end bonuses. Thanks to the increased funding from the state, we were able to make substantial inroads on benefits and wages for direct care staff. Over the last three years, paid housemates have seen their compensation rise by about 50% while other wage-earners at Imagine , as well as Facilitators have seen 10-15% wage and salary increases. In June, Imagine added an Employee Assistance Program and a tele-medicine benefit to our benefits for full-time employees.

We will never be able to fully compensate our direct-care staff for all they do, but these wage increases have made an enormous difference in our ability to find, choose and keep great people. Reducing the time and energy spent on hiring takes a lot of stress from our administrators and stable support does the same for the people we serve. The less time our facilitators spend on hiring, the more time they can spend focused on planning and training and we're starting to see better outcomes for the people we serve as a result of our better compensation.

Innovation: Gifts received in 2015 have helped support Imagine partnering with other agencies to broaden the options available to individuals receiving supported living and other supports through regional centers.

Advocacy: Imagine has been working with the California Disability Community Action Network (CD-CAN) to promote person-centered advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, loved ones and caregivers.

Community Partnership: Although events held in the community are often labeled by us as fundraisers, they are primarily self-supporting opportunities for community-wide fellowship in which people with developmental disabilities participate centrally. Contributions from the Bernini Fund support Imagine's organizing leadership for the Gathering of Extraordinary People each year. In 2015, The Gathering was attended by more than 300 individuals receiving services from more than a dozen agencies as well as Assemblymember Mark Stone's and County Supervisor Bruce McPherson.

The Imagine Disability Short Film Festival introduces our general community to their neighbors with developmental disabilities in an atmosphere of dignity, mutual respect, insight and fun. The film festival is partially supported through ticket sales but is made possible in its high quality atmosphere through enormous community support, volunteers and key in-kind donations from, among others, Woodstock's Pizza, Santa Cruz County Bank, our sponsors and many local artists, businesses and community partners. Imagine is proud to offer this event as a positive, community-wide day to celebrate people with developmental disabilities.

Sustainability: The most important commitment of Imagine's is to our clients and their family members to be there throughout the life cycle. As California's economy changes and public resources go through cycles, the support of the community is the key to ensuring that Imagine's support will not fade away from the people we serve.

Thank you to all our supporters listed below

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Rodney & Sheila Williams
Roger Picquet & Sharon Dvorak
Santa Cruz County Bank
Santa Cruz Derby Girls
Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Stanley and Lauren Boskoff
The McGraw Hill Companies
Volunteer Centers of Santa Cruz County
V's Demolition, Incorporated

"The only disability in life is a bad attitude."
- *Scott Hamilton*

For more information please contact Doug Pascover at 831-464-8355 extension 1 or email at Doug_Pascover@imaginesls.org.