



Lives Transformed



In This Issue:

- **SPOTLIGHT:** Felton Senior Division Director Cathy Spensley
- Hilltop Graduation
- PREP San Mateo Open House and Anniversary Celebration
- NASW hosts City of San Francisco's Jeff Kositsky at Felton
- Healthy Apple Awards
- Felton at Early Psychosis Symposium
- FDC Celebrates The Week of the Young Child
- Felton and You

Spotlight: Cathy Spensley Felton Senior Division Director



Cathy Spensley

some of my family members developing mental health issues. So at a fairly young age, I developed a deep understanding of severe mental illness, later becoming a caregiver and an advocate," Cathy shares.

From kindergarten to 12th grade, Cathy received a Quaker education at the Westtown School, which shaped her worldview regarding community service, collaboration, and consensus. As a teenager, she participated in Vietnam War moratorium marches in Washington, D.C., joined a non-violent social change group that performed guerrilla theater in Philadelphia and continued her study of classical piano. Cathy found her calling in communications, specializing in film at American University in our nation's capital and studying abroad with Federico Fellini's protégé, screenwriter and director Lina Wertmüller.

"Lina told me that the best way to become a good filmmaker was to buy a typewriter and start writing," Cathy remembers.

After graduation, Cathy took Wertmüller's advice to heart. She wrote short stories, feature scripts, and novels, in addition to working on films. Her career path included work as a disc jockey in Rome, a commercial scriptwriter in Philadelphia, and a writer for a sailing magazine in the Virgin Islands. After two years in St. John, California beckoned. Cathy and her husband, a fine artist and musician, have lived in San Francisco for 30 years and consider it home.

Cathy's first experience with a nonprofit was as director of a national, educational organization called Food, Land, and People. It provided an opportunity for her to utilize her skill of connecting people through collaboration on a local and national level.

Felton Senior Division Director Cathy Spensley's enthusiasm about improving the lives of seniors is contagious. A Pennsylvania native who grew up in a rural area 30 miles outside of Philadelphia, Cathy is the youngest of four. Her father was an early developer of helicopters for Boeing, as well as an avid horse trainer and polo player; her mother devoted her time to the family until she and her husband divorced. At that time, Cathy's mother went back to school to become a librarian.

"Divorce was not so common in those days, and as the case dragged out in court, the kids were required to witness the proceedings in the courtroom and choose at the end which parent they wanted to live with. I was six at the time, but this court case probably became a factor for

During this time, Cathy's mother developed significant cognitive impairment, so Cathy moved her mother from the East Coast to senior housing in the Bay Area. These poignant new developments led to Cathy's career change.

"When her impairments became more extensive and she needed skilled nursing, I arranged for her to live in a family-run nursing home, by promising that I would be there every day, and bring in my husband and friends to support the limited social services and arrange and participate in events and outings," Cathy recalls.

"We regularly hosted parties, as well as trips for residents to visit the arboretum, the zoo, and drinks at the Hyatt. Although I had expected this time with my mother to be difficult and depressing, it was far from that for both of us. My mother appreciated spending so much time with me. And I had never been around seniors before, having lost my grandparents when I was young. I found the experience unexpectedly fun and surprisingly rewarding. She lived at the nursing home for three years, and before she died, I had decided I wanted to work with seniors. I was advised to get a master's degree, and so I attended University of California at Berkeley, which is one of the top social work schools in the country, and one of the few to have a specialization in aging."

At UC Berkeley, advisers recommended that Cathy gain more field experience during the summer by volunteering at Felton Institute, where several Berkeley alumni worked. In 2004, she visited the Older Adult Day Support Center to learn about volunteer opportunities and at the interview was offered a summer job running the center's activities. Cathy continued working one day a week during her next two years in school and after her graduation, she became a fulltime staff member at Felton. Cathy smiles as she talks about her work.

"Felton is exceptional in that it recognizes a broader perspective of what excellence in social services really means. First of all, the agency works across the entire lifespan, from infants to the oldest old, as well as with families, both biologic and chosen. And Felton has tremendous strengths in being able to breakdown silos, meet clients where they are, and recognize that the people we serve live in environments that need our advocacy. We specialize in critical areas that can use our help, such as early childhood development, criminal justice, and geriatric mental health. And Felton also provides many opportunities for professionals to deeply experience and receive additional training in their areas of specialization. This is accomplished by an agency culture that encourages openness, flexibility, and an appreciation of new opportunities to learn and grow, from all levels of the agency."

In her role as Senior Division Director, Cathy continues to develop Felton's Geriatric Mental Health model, a continuum of care for older adults with persistent and severe mental illness, which is unique in mental health systems often fragmented. The continuum allows for Felton to pursue the recovery model goals of "meeting clients where they are" and provide successful step-downs and step-ups in care for both support and promotion of resilience. Cathy is also involved in expanding the Aging Services side of her division, including long-time Felton programs, such as Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions and the Ombudsman. Cathy continues to be involved in a number of local and national efforts to improve the lives of older adults. As an acting member of various workgroups, committees, and associations, Cathy is involved in a number of local and national efforts to improve the lives of older adults.

In her spare time, Cathy practices self-care by reading, writing, hiking, camping, playing music, traveling, working with great people, and having fun with friends and family. Reflecting upon her life's mission, she says, "I hope that I can make a difference on many levels, because I believe that much work still needs to be done."

Hilltop Graduation with CYF's Yohana Quiroz as Keynote Speaker



The month of May in San Francisco means many things to different people, spring (finally), warmer weather (sometimes), baseball (Go Giants!), but for a certain group of teenage girls who have faced and overcome many challenges, May is the most anticipated month of the entire year. For these girls, May brings events of promise for a future they once hoped for but feared was an impossible dream.

These young ladies now comprise the graduating class from the San Francisco Unified School District's Hilltop High School, and they will proudly take to the stage and receive their high school diplomas as the Class of 2017 on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at the Brava Theater located at 2781 24th Street, San Francisco, California, starting at 10:00 a.m. Felton's Children, Youth and Family Division Director, a Hilltop alumna from the class of '97 who is celebrating her 20th work anniversary with Felton this month, will deliver the keynote address.

Last year's keynote speaker was Felton board member Veronica Garcia; enjoy some of the highlights from her speech [here](#).

Students at Hilltop High School are pregnant and parenting teens who receive case management through Felton's Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Program (TAPP). Participants in TAPP also receive services from Felton's Family Developmental Center (FDC), where they have access to a number of resources and services specifically developed to effectively address their needs.

The Hilltop High School graduation ceremony is a special time for the graduating class, their families, teachers and staff, as they celebrate many successes. Most teens would agree that graduating from high school is no small task. For the graduates of Hilltop, completing high school involves all the hard work necessary to complete requirements for graduation, just like other students. Additionally, Hilltop students are also learning to navigate the many challenges that come from pregnancy and parenthood; they are responsible for the seemingly endless needs of their young families. They juggle it all, sometimes without support they anticipated from those who are closest to them.

The graduates have been able to triumph despite the pressures they experience.

Last year, during her address to her fellow classmates at the 2016 Hilltop High School graduation, Jade Porche gave these words of hope: "Today, we are one step closer to achieving our goals for the future, like finding careers we love and are passionate about, going to college and figuring out what majors we are going to study. We are entering new territory today ... but challenges are not something new for us. Each of us has struggled to keep up with the classes or with trying to find quiet time for ourselves when your child wants your attention every ten seconds. But throughout all the struggles, Hilltop teachers, social workers and day care staff have worked hard to make these last four years easier - the challenges less challenging."

TAPP and FDC programs have life-changing impact for their participants. Past graduates have attributed their success to the support of their teachers, staff and to the many services provided. Working in tandem, these programs offer wrap-around, comprehensive services and community support, such as onsite childcare and case management.

Please plan to join us; we look forward to seeing you at this moving ceremony!

City of San Mateo to Honor PREP at Open House



On Thursday, May 25, 2017, Felton Institute's [Prevention and Recovery in Early Psychosis](#) (PREP) program will celebrate an important milestone. Created in 2007, this is PREP's tenth year of influencing the treatment of mental health, transforming lives and serving people in northern California in Alameda, Monterey, San Francisco and San Mateo counties. PREP San Mateo will celebrate five years at an Open House on the same day from 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at 1108 S. El Camino Real in San Mateo.

PREP's influence in the mental health community is modeled and respected worldwide. The city of San Mateo is issuing a proclamation commending PREP's impact and Deputy Mayor Rick Bonilla will present the proclamation.

Felton's PREP program is committed to transforming the treatment and perception of psychosis and by extension, the lives of young people and their families, by intervening early with evidence-based, culturally competent assessment and diagnosis, so that within two to five years of entering treatment, most cases are treated to remission. PREP delivers comprehensive treatment grounded in wellness, recovery and resilience to youth and young adults ages 14-35 experiencing symptoms of psychosis, as well as to their families.

For more information, please visit felton.org.

Please plan to join us!

NASW Hosts Jeff Kositsky at Felton



Pictured - Caroline Thomas, Clinical Director, Senior Division; Jeff Kositsky, Director of San Francisco's Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing; Laura Dinsbach, Program Manager, Older Adult Full Service Partnership Program; Benson Nadell, Director of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program; Cathy Spensley, Director, Senior Division; Ed Fowler, Director of the Older Adult Day Support Center and Senior Peer Recovery Center

On May 10, 2017, the local chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) hosted an engaging meeting at Felton's Training Room on Van Ness Avenue featuring a presentation from Jeff Kositsky, Director of San Francisco's Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

FollowingThe sobering statistics shared included:

- San Francisco has 1,400 shelter beds with over 1,000 people on the wait list
- On any given night, 6,500 adults and 853 youth experience homelessness, and
- over 15,000 people access services for the homeless each year.

Mr. Kositsky noted progress since taking his position in the summer of 2016 in the areas of Strategic Planning and Systems Change, Encampment Resolution, Expanding Navigation Centers and

Expanding Housing Options.

At the Mission Navigation Center, of 1,084 individuals served, 79% of all exits have been to stable destinations and, at the Civic Center Navigation Center, of 171 individuals served, 60% of exits have been to permanent housing in San Francisco.

Navigation centers focus on providing long term solutions for people leaving encampments and those with the longest experience of homelessness.

The question and answer portion of the evening included poignant accounts of people impacted by homelessness and questions about expanded resources for those in need.

NASW is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 132,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. Caroline Thomas, Clinical Director in Felton's Senior Division, coordinated execution of the event.



MLK and FDC Centers Earn Healthy Apple Awards



2017 Healthy Apple Award Winners with Raegan Sales, Healthy Apple Program Coordinator

On April 23, 2017, Felton's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) and Felton Learning Center (FLC) were among 22 San Francisco child care providers who received [Healthy Apple Awards](#) from the Children's Council of San Francisco for successfully implementing strategies to increase healthy eating and active living in the child care environments that they supervise.

Citing a study conducted in 2011, the Children's Council reports that in San Francisco, nearly one out of three low-income, preschool-aged children are overweight or obese. The council created the Healthy Apple Program as a voluntary quality improvement opportunity designed to empower and support child care providers with establishing and promoting lifelong healthy habits for the children in their care. The goal is to ultimately reduce rates of childhood obesity in San Francisco through strategic citywide collaboration and partnerships.

Both MLK and FLC received silver awards in the Nutrition category and bronze in the Physical Activity category. The awards were signed by program supporters Mayor Edwin Lee, Barbara Garcia, Director of Health, City and County of San Francisco; Ingrid Mezquita, Executive Director of First 5 San Francisco; September Jarrett, Executive Director of the San Francisco Office of Early Care and Education; and Sandee Blechman, Executive Director of Children's Council of San Francisco. For more information, visit HealthyApple.org.

Felton at Early Psychosis Symposium

Pictured - Felton PREP staff with Tamara Sale, Director of the EASA Center for Excellence at Portland State University Regional Research Institute and Brandon Staglin, Communications Director of One Mind Institute.



Felton PREP (Prevention and Recovery in Early Psychosis) staff were on hand for a one day symposium entitled "Serving Early Psychosis Populations: Evidence-Based Practices and Systems" at UC Davis in Sacramento on May 1, 2017. The forum for exchanging information about evidence-based practices and systems serving early psychosis populations brought together decision-makers, providers, consumers, family members and researchers. Dr. Lisa Dixon, Professor of Psychiatry at the Columbia University Medical Center and director of the Division of Behavioral Health Services and Policy Research within the Department of Psychiatry and Tamara Sale, Director of the Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA) Center for Excellence at Portland State University Regional Research Institute were keynote speakers. One Mind Institute's Brandon Staglin was one of four providing a stakeholder perspective.

The UC Davis Behavioral Center of Excellence was launched October 1, 2014, with initial funding from California's Mental Health Services Act. The state budget allocated \$15 million to UC Davis and UCLA to launch two centers.

FDC Celebrates the Week of the Young Child



Each spring, Felton's Family Developmental Center's (FDC) Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs celebrate The Week of the Young Child™, a celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the world's largest early childhood education association, and the week is designed to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. This year's theme was Honoring Our Diverse Families!

Joyful and educational activities for both students and parents included Music Monday, when children improved math, language and literacy skills as they explored music and sounds from different instruments and cultures; Taco Tuesday focused on cooking together and fitness; Work Together Wednesday fostered collaboration as students built fruit towers; Artsy Thursday resulted in creative artistic works that were displayed in the hallways, and Fancy Friday/ Family Fun and the Seventh Annual Walk Around the Block culminated with parents, students and staff walking together in advocacy for the care and education that young children need. Participants walked through FDC's hallway art gallery and enjoyed a food fiesta afterwards.

Several Felton FDC/ ECE program administrators, teachers, and families participated in the Walk Around the Block held on April 24, 2017, in Sacramento to advocate for young children's education.

The purpose of the rally was to inspire the Governor and Legislature to focus on the concerns of ECE educators, facilities and families face.

The requests included an \$800 million increase in funding for pay for salaries for teachers and staff, more ECE slots for working families, and safe and decent facilities for children.

Felton and You


Throughout our newsletter, we've shared the incredible work executed through some of Felton's 46 programs. They are made possible through investments like yours in Felton Institute. We ask that you continue to collaborate with us in transforming lives through a donation of any amount. It's easy to text FELTON to 41444 and donate or you may contribute through our website, felton.org.

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