

SPECIAL NEEDS COMMUNITY FACES INCREASED NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES POST PANDEMIC

Hope Services Fills the Void

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, December 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Hope Services](#) will hold a media event Thursday, December 8th, to celebrate a \$250,000 grant from Santa Clara County enabling the organization to expand its transportation and mental health services. Spearheaded by County [Supervisor Joe Simitian](#) and approved by Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors in June, the grant specifically funds a small fleet of Ford Explorer vehicles as well as 60 laptop computers to enable clients to access behavioral and psychiatric services remotely.

"The vast majority of us have rebounded from the pandemic, but that journey has been much longer for those in the disabled community who were disproportionately impacted by the isolation," says Chip Huggins, President and CEO of Hope Services. "Funding for transportation and telehealth access is crucial to helping this vulnerable population rejoin the larger community."

"It is fun riding in the vehicles to visit De Anza College," client Scott McMillen said. "The staff treats the vehicles very well so that we are comfortable while out in the community."

A large chunk of the County grant will fund four Ford Explorers, a key support for Hope Services' day programs that serve those with intellectual or developmental disabilities. "Like anyone else, our clients want to be out in the community," explains Hope Services North District Director Suanne Rinta. "Taking classes, going to jobs, exercising, shopping – these are all outings our clients depend on." Hope Services currently has over 300 clients taking part in its day programs. The new vehicles are large enough to enable better physical distancing and meet internal protocols for client safety in transporting a staff member and up to four clients.



Hope Services CEO Chip Huggins

Client Tony Salazar said, "I'm really happy to ride in the new Ford vehicles so I can explore new places in my community. I feel safe when going out to do different activities because I know the vehicles are in good shape."

The grant will also fund 60 new laptops along with appropriate training so that Hope Services clients can better access mental health services. As Hope Services Director of Mental Health Anna Fernandez points out, "Accessing mental health services for those with special needs can be a challenge. The laptops and training funded by this County grant will enable our clients to more easily access the psychiatric counseling they need. Over time, that means the quality of service improves, along with better care and better outcomes."

"Hope Services does important work. And with help from the County they can do even more to improve the quality of life for local folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Simitian. "It's a smart partnership. If something as simple and basic as a van or a laptop can connect the program participants at Hope Services with the larger community, that's a winner."



Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian



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*Chip Huggins, President and
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