A LETTER FROM *LUANA VAETOE* 



EAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS, Fiscal Year 2013–2014 has proven that when we set out to do great things in our community, we will not only be successful—we can exceed expectations. Looking back, we were fortunate to not only grow, but to also become more efficient in continuing our long tradition of creating innovative programs.

Thanks to all our dedicated supporters and

the committed work of the entire Becoming Independent staff and volunteer team, we saw the largest increase in funding revenue in our history. These results are not only inspiring, but also a humbling reminder of how much faith people have placed in our organization. Each day, the community is growing more aware of

Becoming Independent and relying on the services we offer. Last year, hundreds of our participants gave their time and skills to build up the well-being of our community through a variety of partner organizations. They helped feed Sonoma County through the Redwood Empire Food Bank, organized the inventory of Sonoma County Libraries, and delivered friendly greetings and over 500 nutritious meals per month to homebound seniors through Council on Aging's Meals on Wheels. Becoming Independent participants are making a positive difference in the lives of others and playing a vital role in the community. These volunteer opportunities give each participant a great sense of pride—and we are so delighted to help them achieve it.

In 2014 we set out to serve another segment of our community—adults with autism. By pioneering a new program, we are answering the call to meet the needs of adults in our region on the autism spectrum through our Autism Integrated Services. We have dedicated hours and energy into laying the foundation for the new program. We're happy to say we are progressing towards reaching our goals for

But as one new program takes shape, other programs face major challenges. We will see significant cuts from state funding sources for several programs,

such as the Community Living Supports—which allows the people we serve to live independent lives in the community. At the same time, the rest of our programs have not received a rate increase in almost two decades.

We have examined these challenges from every angle, and it has become very clear that selfsustainability is not an option—it is a necessity.

Becoming Independent participants are making a positive difference in the lives of others...

So in 2014 we embarked on the mission to diversify Becoming Independent revenue streams to reduce—and eventually eliminate—our dependency on the State of California. We dedicated resources to renew and develop our business relationships within the community.

We welcomed new board members who have inspired new ideas. And we are joining together with philanthropic partners that share our desire to elevate human abilities for the mutual benefit of our community.

Looking forward, we are expecting another magical year at Becoming Independent. We are not only charting a course for self-sustainability, we are setting out to further engage and inspire our community. We believe our pioneering model will continue breaking barriers for people with disabilities. We believe we are all connected and our community is enriched when we invest in one another. And we believe that every social investment has the potential to be broadly transformative.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,



Chief Executive Officer

A LOOK AT THIS YEAR'S FINANCIALS GROWTH THIS YEAR

## **SUPPORT & REVENUE** \$697,611 (5%) \$677,477 (4.8%) EDUCATION SUBSIDIES \$585,112 (4.2%) \$14,005,508 INVESTMENT INCOME (83.5%) \$11,698,720 \$228,293 (1.6%) \$32,223 (0.2%) **EXPENSES** SUPPORTING SERVICES



### 2013-2014 OUTCOMES OF BECOMING INDEPENDENT SERVICES

Success and progress experienced by individuals served by Becoming Independent are measured in real terms. Becoming Independent tracks the number of people served, how many hours of service they received from staff, the number of hours of work they performed and wages they earned, and their level of inclusion in mainstream community activities. Becoming Independent also gauges overall satisfaction with the Becoming Independent experience.

PEOPLE SERVED

1,446\*

568,287\*\*

HOURS OF INCLUSION

HOURS OF SERVICE

198,273

HOURS OF WORK

RATE OF SATISFACTION

92%

ncludes 4,620 hours of service during this fiscal year for service through community dances

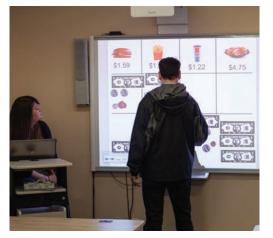
## **PIONEERING AUTISM SERVICES**

One of our community's fastest growing needs is to develop services that effectively support the rapidly expanding population of adults with autism. Today, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnoses are ten times more common than 40 years ago, and according to the Sonoma County Office of Education, over 180 teenagers with ASD will soon age out of the public school system. In order to become engaged and productive adults, strong supportive services will be required. As the largest, strongest resource for people with developmental disabilities, Becoming Independent is uniquely positioned to respond.

During 2014, a task force was convened that includes lead staff, parent and Board member, Donna Cates, and our consulting behavioral psychologist, Dr. Xavier Polk. Extensive research, visits to cutting edge programs, and input from experts at The UC Davis Mind Institute, among others, has provided the team with valuable insights. Curriculum development and staff training are on the immediate horizon. Meanwhile, we've dedicated a wing of our Santa Rosa campus to Autism Integrated Services and are actively seeking the partnership of local businesses, service organizations, foundations and individuals to help secure the funding necessary to launch programming in Santa Rosa, Sonoma and Healdsburg during 2015. Kaela Talafili, pictured to the right with Sean, is poised to assist Sean and dozens of his peers as they advance their social skills utilizing a SmartBoard acquired thanks to the support of a generous grant from the Celebrate Community Partnership.















GROWTH THIS YEAR

We always have a lot of work to do at Becoming Independent and we're happy to say our participants do, too. Last year our Employment Services contracts expanded exponentially, providing partner businesses with the valuable talent of Becoming Independent participants.

Participants and businesses find Employment Services contracts to be mutually beneficial. "It's a win-win. It's great to have them on site with us" says Ron Nersesian, CEO of Keysight Technologies, pictured here with participants who hold jobs in document destruction and gardening. Patti, pictured above with Ron Lindenbusch, CMO of Lagunitas Brewing Company, takes great pride in helping Lagunitas produce quality promotional materials at a competitive rate.

Our unique approach to employment services is rooted in highlighting and developing the talents of our participants. We help match each person's skills to employer needs—ranging from retail and maintenance to production and assembly. And with continued investment in job coaching, we help guide participants toward fully individualized employment.

As our employment program has grown, we've discovered work can be a great equalizer. Finding success in a job is a universal longing, helping each of us to find a greater sense of self-fulfillment and economic empowerment. We're making progress and laying the groundwork toward realizing our ultimate vision—being sought after for innovative partnerships.

# MANY THANKS

Becoming Independent thanks the following for their support and generous donations throughout the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

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**VERY SPECIAL** THANKS TO

#### **LEGACY GIFTS...**

Becoming Independent is grateful to the following supporter who passed on and so generously included us with a bequest through her will:

Geneva Scheihing Folsom

#### **LEGACY CIRCLE..**

Many thanks to the following individuals who have included Becoming Independent with a legacy gift in their estate plans, most often through a bequest in a will:

Anonymous (4), Eileen Adams, Norman Chalmers, Glenn Dewick, Geneva Scheihing Folsom\*, Lisa Folsom-Ernst & Richard Ernst, Whitney Fuller, Jayne & Peter Hamel, Lucia Milburn & Joseph Como, Jack T. Morris\*, William Morris, Lené & John Prior, Ed Rimbaugh, June Waite\*, Cami Weaver

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## **BECOMING INDEPENDENT**

#### **OUR VISION**

An improved quality of life meaningful work, recreation and support of family, friends and the community.

### **OUR MISSION**

To promote community inclusion and participation for people with developmental disabilities.

#### **OUR STORY**

Close to 1,000 people, all living with a variety of disabilities, seek their own paths to personal fulfillment and independence with the help of programs and opportunities made available at Becoming Independent

Developing since Becoming Independent was established in 1967, our programs provide instruction in activities and skills essential to successful everyday living. The skills are wide ranging and include the most basic and incidental, to the very sophisticated and personal. Becoming Independent provides individualized programs for each person served, promoting personal choice based on areas of interests and passions

As the North Bay's largest nonprofit human services organization dedicated to people with developmental disabilities, Becoming Independent services are available in Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties. We are dedicated to "promoting community inclusion and participation for people with developmental disabilities."

### WHO ARE THE PEOPLE AT BECOMING INDEPENDENT?

They are the largest and most diverse minority in the world. They are all ages, genders, religions and ethnicities. They come from all socioeconomic levels and sexual orientations. And they are people with different disabilities.\*

AUTISM

• LEARNING & PHYSICAL DISABILITIES MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

DOWN SYNDROME

And they are like everyone. They want to be free, happy, independent and respected full members of the community

\* Adapted from "People First Language," by Kathie Snow, www.disabilityisnatural.com; and used with permissior

They are people.

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# **SERVICE LOCATIONS**

Becoming Independent provides services throughout Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties for close to a thousand people with disabilities.

#### SANTA ROSA

1425 Corporate Center Parkway 1455 Corporate Center Parkway 1375A Corporate Center Parkway Santa Rosa. CA 95407 Phone: (707) 524-6600 Fax: (707) 527-1206

SONOMA VALLEY 355 West Napa Street Sonoma, CA 95476 Phone: (707) 996-5988 Fax: (707) 935-7861

## 625 Center Street, Suite B

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ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014

Please forgive us if we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name. Call Becoming Independent at (707)524-6606 with any corrections, omissions or preference