**Inspiring New Traditions for Clients**

Throughout the year SURVIVORS offers monthly Healing Club activities such as outings to various fun places throughout San Diego County, often out in nature. These outings allow survivors to experience a new culture, get to know one another, explore free resources and opportunities in San Diego, and interact with their community. The Healing Club is a safe haven for our clients to share their stories, feelings, and fears with one another. It can be difficult for clients to find a sense of home after being forced to flee their countries of origin, often without their families, and moving between multiple countries prior to settling in San Diego. Therefore, our Healing Club takes on a special meaning for many clients.

Our autumn activities blend a sense of home with the opportunity to learn new traditions. Many of us know the sense of community we feel when eating a big Thanksgiving dinner surrounded by family and friends or watching the delight on our children's faces as we put the candle into a jack-o-lantern.

For our clients, these traditions are brand new and provide a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar land. Each October, our clients explore a pumpkin patch at a farm with our clinical team. At the pumpkin patch, clients are offered a free tour of the farm and agricultural lessons on how pumpkins are grown. A client reflected on this experience stating "I feel at home here and it brings me peace of mind. It is an escape from my stress." Clients are able to pick out their very own pumpkins to carve into jack-o-lanterns and display in their homes. Clients often discuss with staff the origins of Halloween traditions in the United States including the meaning of pumpkins.

Every November, SURVIVORS' clients, interpreters, volunteers, and staff gather for a Thanksgiving Healing Club. Volunteers and donors supply a delicious Thanksgiving feast for all to enjoy. Clients learn about Thanksgiving traditions in the United States and are encouraged to share their holiday traditions with the group. Following the meal, clients can participate in art projects such as creating a Tree of Gratitude where clients write what they are grateful for on paper leaves and hang them on the tree to share with everyone. The Thanksgiving Healing Club allows clients, staff and volunteers to reflect on their lives, their community, and this new tradition created at SURVIVORS. We are proud to create a piece of home here at SURVIVORS every year.

**Ambassadors Create Welcoming Community**

In June 2018, SURVIVORS launched our new volunteer Ambassador Program. This program allows us to partner with community members like you. We can all help torture survivors by spreading the word about SURVIVORS' mission and services. The more people who know about SURVIVORS, the more our clients can get the help they need and deserve. You can help by becoming a volunteer ambassador. Ambassador are passionate community members who help SURVIVORS provide hope, rebuild lives, and create a welcoming community for torture survivors. The volunteer ambassadors invite 10 people such as their family members, friends, coworkers, book club members, and/or fellow-parishioners to attend a one-hour long journey to Healing tour. The tour is conducted by SURVIVORS' staff and volunteers at our office. This is one of the many ways SURVIVORS creates a welcoming community by partnering with our supporters to let people know about the consequences of torture, and that torture survivors are our neighbors who are capable of being healthy and productive members of society. We are always looking for new ambassadors to help us expand our welcoming community.
SURVIVORS Accepts Countywide Award

Former Master of Social Work intern, Lisa Palmer, nominated SURVIVORS for the San Diego County Children Youth and Families System of Care Advancing Principles Award. Only one organization and one individual are selected to receive this award per year. SURVIVORS was deeply honored to accept this award on behalf of our board, staff, contractors, volunteers and, most importantly, our clients. Lisa’s nomination so eloquently states how important our collaborative work is.

“Survivors of Torture, International (SURVIVORS) is a small agency that makes a big impact for its clients. As an intern in this office, I have witnessed the unwavering commitment to provide comprehensive and integrated services in their work with youth, adults, couples, families, schools, and the community. It is no surprise that the clients are able to heal and move forward with their lives. SURVIVORS recognizes the uniqueness of each individual and the need for a culturally responsive, holistic, and trauma-informed approach with an eye focused always on the most positive outcome possible. The clients at SURVIVORS are greeted with a cup of coffee or tea and an offer of food in the kitchen area. They communicate with the help of interpreters so that they can fully understand and make choices regarding their treatment, and they learn to take responsibility for their journey of healing. Integrated, trauma-informed care is the cornerstone of the many services provided, and all staff members and mental health contractors are uniquely trained to work effectively with this population.

This agency has an impressive reach in the community as well. SURVIVORS creates meaningful partnerships with other providers, and strives to be both a trainer and a learner. This collaborative approach benefits both the clients and the community. SURVIVORS is small but tenacious. For over 20 years they have been dedicated to serving torture survivors, a population that is seldom heard from but tremendously worthy of our attention. For these reasons, and many more, SURVIVORS is deserving of this special recognition.”

Collaborative Approach to Serving Asylum Seekers

SURVIVORS annually hosts a small gathering of immigration attorneys, medical evaluators, and mental health evaluators to share their thoughts on how to continue to effectively serve asylum seekers, a vulnerable population. Asylum seekers are individuals who flee their countries of origin due to persecution or violence to reach a safer country's border and apply for asylum. They typically wait months or years to receive the results of their asylum applications and during this waiting period have limited access to resources.

With the coordinated efforts of forensic evaluators, attorneys, and SURVIVORS’ staff we provide hope. Year after year, 80-90% of our asylum-seeking clients win their cases, notably 26 times higher than the 3% of asylum seekers nationally who present their cases on their own. This meeting is an important opportunity to ensure we can continue to provide these critical services to our most vulnerable clients.

SURVIVORS is grateful to the staff of Ben & Jerry’s Seaport Village for providing delicious ice cream to over 200 guests at our 2018 ice cream social.
Because of you, survivors are rebuilding their lives. We are grateful. We apologize for any errors or omissions and extend our gratitude for support that may not have been recognized. Please contact us at 619-278-2400 with corrections.
**Celebrate Your Birthday by Supporting SURVIVORS**

Facebook makes it easy to celebrate your birthday by supporting SURVIVORS. In recent months we’ve had many wonderful supporters create a birthday fundraiser to benefit SURVIVORS. It’s easy to do! The Facebook Fundraisers platform allows you to raise money for a charitable cause with just a few clicks of your mouse. Just click on the “Fundraisers” tab under “Explore” on your homepage. Select “Survivors of Torture, International” as your charitable cause. Set a fundraising goal. Share with all of your friends on your page to encourage them to donate in lieu of birthday gifts. It’s a simple and effective way to help support SURVIVORS. Facebook does not charge fees for nonprofits. So, all of your friends’ gifts will directly support SURVIVORS’ programs and services.

**Shop to Make a Difference at SURVIVORS and in the World**

We are excited to partner with SERRV & Earn to inspire your end-of-year shopping needs. A portion of every purchase made at [serrv.org?a=Survivors](serrv.org?a=Survivors) benefits SURVIVORS. Your shopping will make a difference for our clients and the thousands of global artisans who create beautiful handmade, fair trade products for SERRV.org.

SURVIVORS’ audited financial statements, completed by Sonnenberg & Co. CPAs, for fiscal year 2017, are found at GuideStar.com.