



THE SURVIVOR

Survivors of Torture, International:

- Facilitates the healing of torture survivors and their families;
- Educates professionals and the public about torture and its consequences;
- Advocates for the abolition of torture.

“SURVIVORS helped me stand on my own two feet again...They allowed my family to build a safe and secure life.”
 - SURVIVORS’ client from the Middle East, who wishes to be anonymous

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Newcomer Children Build Success Facilitated by SURVIVORS

Cajon Valley Union School District (CVUSD) has again partnered with SURVIVORS to provide in-school therapy and socio-emotional groups, known as Power Up, to support newcomer youth and their families. These collaborative programs were designed to foster community. “It’s not just about academics, but promoting a sense of belonging...we want to develop a relationship with them, become friends,” Program Specialist, District Counselor, and Military Liaison for CVUSD Tami Johnson explained.



Cajon Valley Middle School

CVUSD has seen an influx of refugees and asylees, mostly from the Middle East, in the past several decades and has residents from 80 countries, who speak over 40 languages, Tami said. As of 2017, CVUSD reported that one in five of their students were refugees and the number of newcomer students continues to grow. In response, the school district initiated the Power Up program several years ago. They looked to SURVIVORS to provide therapists for socio-emotional groups to help newcomer students reduce stress, manage

emotions, and learn coping mechanisms. The school district believes that developing healthy emotions and navigating stress will help these students to become their “best selves.”

The Power Up groups led by SURVIVORS have yielded significant results. The school district has found that these groups are paramount in achieving their goal of equitable education. “Some kids need Power Up to learn skills... we are trying to give every kid what he/she needs,” Tami explained. These groups include a therapeutic curriculum but are also shaped by student input and experience. Recognizing that many Power Up students require additional support and care, CVUSD again turned to SURVIVORS for guidance in cre-

ating a brand-new position to provide in-school therapy to these vulnerable students in a middle school. Dr. Christine Kimmel, a children and family therapist at SURVIVORS, provides these services at CVUSD. Tami shared, “Christine is a gift to us. We love her. She jumped into what was an impossible job...midway through the school year. By the second day, her caseload was full.”

Newcomer families often lack the resources - transportation, finances, and time - to access psychological care. Having an in-school therapist eliminates these barriers and allows newcomer students to receive the care they need and deserve. “CVUSD believes that happy kids in healthy relationships are on the pathway to gainful employment [and a bright future]...I believe SURVIVORS is helping us with this mission. Our partnership with SURVIVORS has helped us provide equitable education to our most vulnerable students by supporting their social, emotional, and developmental needs,” Tami added. The success of this partnership has led the school district to add another children and family therapist to expand these services in an elementary school so more newcomer students in the district will succeed.

More Clients Need SURVIVORS’ Services

In the past couple of years, SURVIVORS’ staff has often been asked by community members if current policies on asylum have led to a reduction in demand for our services. The answer is no. SURVIVORS is experiencing an unprecedented increase in the demand for medical and psychological evaluations, psychiatry, therapy, and case management services. In September, SURVIVORS coordinated a record number of 25 psychological and 11 medical

evaluations have increased significantly. I have never seen anything like this before,” SURVIVORS’ Program Manager Dr. Mahvash Alami reported. It’s a common misconception that only newcomer asylum seekers and refugee families are in need of our services. There are approximately 35,000 torture survivors currently living in San Diego County and many still need our services.

The trauma suffered during torture is often insidious and hinders survivors’ ability to engage with a post-torture world. The effects of trauma can resurface even after years of living in San Diego County,

especially without the support of psychological and medical services. Many torture survivors living in San Diego County are experiencing feelings of fear and isolation and need our services more than ever. We continue to steadfastly serve torture survivors and their families while rising to the challenge of providing more and more services.



Pro bono physician demonstrates a medical evaluation

“I have worked at SURVIVORS for eight years and the requests for foren-

Clients Find Self-identity

One of the biggest challenges for our clients is to combat loneliness while they work hard to rebuild their lives. They miss the sense of community and having family around them. SURVIVORS' Healing Club, an opportunity for our clients to gather and participate in the activities as a community, is a popular healing method for our clients.

In September, SURVIVORS' Clinical Case Manager Nance Lovell organized a special Healing Club activity – creating self-affirmations and self-portraits. “I often use art for healing purposes because it uses creativity and imagination. Self-portrait as a therapy is a very powerful tool because it connects our clients with their identity - not only how they look, but also who they are and who they want to be. Often the trauma and displacement that our clients suffer disorients them, disconnects them from their identity. This exercise, to some extent, restores their feeling of self,” Nance explained.

The Healing Club activity

of self-portrait and self-affirmation serves two purposes. It teaches clients how to use self-affirmations to replace negative and/or distorted perceptions with positive, health-affirming quotes, goals or statements. It gives clients an opportunity to use acrylic paints to create a self-expression or self-portrait on canvas in order to improve self-esteem and decrease their depressive and anxious thoughts related to the severe trauma of torture.

Clients responded to this exercise with increased feelings of empowerment and relaxation. “It was very interesting to touch the materials. I want to be like a bird that has strength to fly. I want to go where I want to. I want a house, it doesn't have to be a big house, even an old house with my family in the United States,” a client explained. The client's painting reflected her feelings and had a figure with arms stretched upward, which the client described, “This is me. I'm feeling happy. I'm feeling free. This is how I want to be.”



Client's self portrait

Embodying a Welcoming Community

Headquartered in a rural and arid area of Arizona, the Hopi Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports community projects on the Hopi Reservation, may appear to be an unlikely partnership for SURVIVORS and other torture treatment providers. However, the Foundation is dedicated to promoting the Hopi's values of total reverence and respect for all things and to be at peace with all things.

The organization promotes the healing of torture survivors by bestowing a significant humanitarian prize, the Barbara Chester Award, to a deserving candidate in the international field of torture treatment. The Hopi Foundation spends countless hours and efforts to raise funds, identify, and interview torture treatment leaders from organizations scattered across the world to present the prestigious Barbara Chester Award to a deserving awardee. This award is a way for the Hopi community to honor the outstanding clinicians who treat survivors of torture and their families.

Through this award, the Hopi Foundation recognizes the collective impact and acknowledges the role of small, local grassroots efforts to bring about change.

SURVIVORS' Executive Director Kathi Anderson had the honor of being invited to join the Hopi Foundation's Community Advisory Board because of the shared values of both organizations. SURVIVORS, like the Hopi Foundation, works towards expanding a welcoming community. The Hopi Foundation creates a space of healing and renewal to discuss how these values of inclusiveness, peace, and respect can be practiced in day-to-day life with greater impact. Collaboration with organizations, such as the Hopi Foundation, informs and shapes how SURVIVORS continues to foster a welcoming San Diego community for torture survivors and their families.



Kathi Anderson (2nd from left) with 2019 Barbara Chester Award Recipient, Dr. Sana Hamzeh (3rd from right)

Thank you to our 2019 Helping Survivors Heal Fundraising Luncheon Underwriters!

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Eighty-two cents out of every dollar raised goes directly to SURVIVORS' programs. Our Federal Tax ID Number is 33-0743869.



Support SURVIVORS during the holiday season through alternative giving and everyday activities. Visit notorture.org/donate to learn more.



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Client Referrals	Total Clients Served		Number of Psychological & Medical Evaluations		Number of Clients Detained at Intake	
	SURVIVORS has seen a significant increase in the need for our services in the past few years. It is critical that all torture survivors can access and receive the help they need at SURVIVORS. New clients are referred to us by attorneys, church leaders, community members, former clients, interpreters, and mental health providers.	FY 2017	314	FY 2017	77	FY 2017
FY 2018		310	FY 2018	120	FY 2018	35
FY 2019		427	FY 2019	243	FY 2019	91

#GivingTuesday - December 3

Giving Tuesday, the Tuesday following the Thanksgiving holiday, is a global day for donating to your favorite charities. It's an ideal way to give back to our community and to kick off the charitable season. What better way to begin the holiday season celebrating community and the giving of thanks than by donating to SURVIVORS. Your donation will help our clients and their families rebuild their lives.

"SURVIVORS helped me through the darkest times. I know I am not alone anymore. You are like a second family," Maya, a SURVIVORS' client from Central America.

In fiscal year 2019, SURVIVORS helped 427 clients heal and conducted 139 psychological evaluations and 104 medical affidavits. We also helped hundreds of newcomer students find their path to personal success. All of our services are free of charge to our clients and their families. Our clients were forced to flee their home countries following torture and need your support to rebuild their lives. #GivingTuesday is the perfect opportunity to make a donation to help torture survivors and their families experience a happy and healthy holiday season.



#GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is celebrated around the world



Survivors of Torture, International
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Holiday Shopping with Purpose

There are many opportunities to support SURVIVORS while shopping this holiday season. SURVIVORS has partnered with SERRV & Earn to help fulfill your philanthropy goals while purchasing incredible handicrafts. A portion of every purchase made at serv.org?sr=Survivors benefits SURVIVORS' clients. You can also support SURVIVORS every time you shop at Amazon Smile. Just sign into smile.amazon.com and select Survivors of Torture, International as your charity of choice prior to making a purchase. It's that simple!

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