

# IPS Supported Employment in Alameda County Behavioral Health Care

Winter 2017 Issue

## What is IPS?

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment is an evidence-based practice that helps people with mental health or other challenges find and keep regular jobs in the community. We focus on people's strengths and believe that work can facilitate recovery and wellness.

IPS is guided by eight practice principles:

1. **Competitive jobs:** focus is on getting people regular jobs in the community, not sheltered or volunteer work.
2. **Rapid job search:** we help people look for work right away.
3. **Zero exclusion:** people can receive IPS services if they want to work and are not screened out for other reasons.
4. **Benefits counseling:** people get help to learn about how working will impact their public benefits.
5. **Job development:** IPS staff make frequent, in-person contacts with hiring managers.
6. **Job retention support:** people get help keeping their job as long as they need it.
7. **Integration of services:** IPS and mental health staff work closely together.
8. **Attention to people's preferences:** we respect and follow people's preferences for jobs, schools, and services.

## IPS Grows in Alameda County BHCS and Beyond

IPS Supported Employment is catching on, not only in Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services, but in counties throughout the region and the state! There are many efforts from the newly named Alameda County IPS Collaborative that demonstrate a passion to see our clients have an improved quality of life through increased income from working. There is nothing more satisfying than seeing people's lives changing for the better through employment in our ten IPS programs!

We have decided that, in honor of this expanded community effort, our annual newsletter should reflect the success stories and hard work of all of our programs. Please enjoy reading highlights from each program, working client success stories, an employer feature, and other tidbits. We are excited to host leaders from throughout California at our December IPS Leadership Conference in Oakland. Thank you all for your continued support and growing enthusiasm for connecting people with mental health challenges to meaningful work!

Theresa Razzano – BHCS Interim Director of Vocational Services



# Who We Are:

We are a network of people within Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services who help people with mental health challenges find and keep regular jobs in the community. In 2016-17, we served 605 people. You can find IPS services in the following programs:

- Abode Services Greater HOPE
- BHCS Vocational Program
- Bay Area Community Services
- Bonita House
- Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency
- East Bay Community Recovery Project FACT
- Early Psychosis Program (Formerly PREP)
- Fred Finch Youth Center
- Telecare STRIDES
- Telecare CHANGES



We also have two benefits counselors at the Center for Independent Living who advise people on how working will impact their public benefits. Lastly, our IPS Technical Training Team does ongoing training, consultation, and evaluation.

## BACS IPS Team “Does Whatever it Takes”

Bay Area Community Services (BACS) is a non-profit agency in Alameda County that helps underserved communities in the Bay Area. They provide much needed community support, including IPS. BACS has had a strong IPS presence in their agency since 2010. The IPS team includes one supervisor, Nurges Gheyzada, and six employment coordinators (EC).



**The BACS IPS Team helped 71% of their participants get jobs last year! (L-R, Supervisor Nurges, EC's: Antonio, Tanisha, Tamahtra, Astrid, Elliott, Veronica)**

Four of the EC's, Astrid Scott, Veronica Pacana, Tanisha Otis-Taul and Elliott Geneste de Besme serve at Wellness Centers throughout Alameda County. Tamahtra McClure is a part of the Intensive Case Management Team and Antonio Montesinos serves the Housing Fast Support Network (HFSN). Each EC works within their clinical teams to support people with vocational goals.

The BACS agency motto is “do whatever it takes,” and each EC truly does that for every person they support. The

team firmly adheres to the IPS principle of honoring preferences. The dedication and hard work of the BACS IPS team is not only seen through the high fidelity review scores and job outcomes, but also from the appreciation of the clients. An IPS client stated, “My employment coordinator has helped me so much. I love my job. I love having more money and not having to

worry about paying my bills and having enough left for food.” Another person remarked, “Working with my EC has not only helped me get a job, but I feel good about myself. I’m actually doing something I like. She was one of the few people in my life that believed in me.”

The IPS team believes that it’s not *just* supporting them in getting a job, it’s supporting them in making positive changes in their lives. It’s about believing in them and supporting them in achieving their goals.



## IPS Specialist Smitty Gets Everyone a Job

Alameda County BHCS Vocational Program serves 14 mental health teams, including Eden Community Support Clinic in San Leandro. Eden's Employment Specialist, Anthony "Smitty" Smith, has worked for the Voc Program since 2001. Although he has developed and secured jobs for hundreds of people over the years, Smitty is recognized for helping 100% of his 20 person caseload work during the month of May 2017!

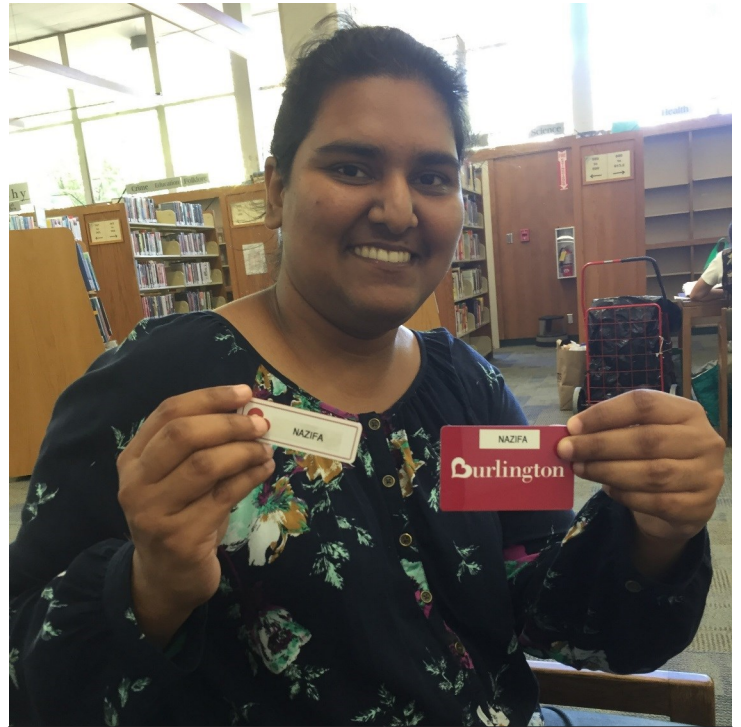
Smitty attributes his success to the strong collaboration between the Voc Team and the Eden Clinic team, who work together daily to address obstacles to clients accessing and retaining work successfully. He remarked, "I love my job and making a difference in people's lives." He remains motivated because someone was there to help him in his life when he needed it, so this is his way to give back to others.

Smitty's wish for his clients is to "go for it... if there's something you want to do, tell me what you want to do and where you want to do it- don't hold back," and he'll do his best to find the job that fits. For providers, he recommends, "Listen to the client – don't try and create the job for them, let them create it." Even if someone wants a job that seems out of reach, when asked what the appeal is to that kind of work, there's usually a nugget that can lead to a job that meets their vision.



**Smitty attributes his May 2017 100% competitive employment rate to his awesome team and clients.**

## Employee of the Month Sets Sights on School



**Nazifa proudly shows her employee badge for Burlington Coat Factory, where she received "Employee of the Month" honors after only three months on the job.**

Nazifa is 27 years old and receives services from the East Bay Community Recovery Project FACT program. She lives in a residential home and is known for her friendliness. She worked previously at a gas station and wanted to get back to work after a period of unemployment.

Her Employment Specialist Ramesh Malla helped her right away to look for jobs that match her interests in merchandising, customer service, and sales. They met weekly to maintain momentum in the job search, including exploring different jobs and employers to see what it might be like to work there. Ramesh had a strong lead at Burlington Coat Factory and helped her apply online. Nazifa was called for an interview, which was exciting and anxiety-producing. To prepare, Ramesh and Nazifa practiced interviewing and researched the company. They also visited the store before the job interview to get a feel for the workplace. At the end of the job interview, the hiring manager said, "You are a good fit for the position; I cannot tell you our decision right away but you will not be disappointed when we call you again."

Nazifa was offered the job and started working part time as Receiving Associate. She was named employee of the month after three months on the job. Ramesh and Nazifa meet regularly for job coaching support and she is very happy in her position. She looks forward to going back to school next semester and living independently in the future.



## Employer Spotlight: Wendy's



**Wendy's General Manager Juan Martinez and Employment Specialist Martin Pacheco: Supporting great employees and sharing a love for Wendy's vanilla Frostys.**

Two years ago, Voc Program Employment Specialist Martin Pacheco walked into Wendy's at 23969 Mission Blvd in Hayward looking for a job opportunity for one of his clients who lived nearby. He immediately connected with General Manager Juan Martinez, and they have maintained a strong partnership since. Juan shares that he appreciates Martin's responsive communication whenever he needs something, and Martin praised Juan's empathy and patience with teaching new employees their job tasks.

Currently, Wendy's employs one person from the Voc Program, and Juan remarked, "He is doing a great job. He's such a hard worker and I like him a lot. He makes chili, Frostys, cleans the grill, restocks the front line, and cleans the restaurant inside and out."

Juan Martinez has worked at Wendy's for 23 years, his whole career so far. He moved from Mexico after high school and started on the grill, then moved to fries, sandwiches, cashier, and crew leader. He's been the general manager in Hayward for 12 years and takes great pride in treating customers and employees well. His current favorite sandwich at Wendy's is the spicy chicken sandwich and he and Martin agree that vanilla is the superior Frosty flavor. Thank you, Juan, for being an excellent employer partner!

## Telecare CHANGES Celebrates 1st Year of IPS

As 2017 comes to a close, Telecare CHANGES prepares to celebrate the one year anniversary of their IPS program. CHANGES is a dual recovery program in Oakland serving individuals who have both mental health and substance use disorders and who frequently use emergency psychiatric services.

The launch of IPS in CHANGES was met with high enthusiasm and the entire staff has banded together to keep the momentum going. IPS Specialist Kelly Bystedt, who is affectionately referred to as "The Job Lady" by many of her partners, sees the program's success thus far as a result of the team's strong belief in people's potential to achieve their education and employment goals.

Case Manager Charlissa Jones exemplifies this attitude and strives to foster hope with people, saying: "The beauty of IPS is that when you start working with someone on their work goals you see so many developments in different areas. Both mental and physical health see improvement and you are suddenly working on the whole person, not just the person looking for a job. You are able to gain a new perspective of your partners and see an awakening of this new person you didn't even know."

Promoting IPS principles of zero exclusion and rapid job search has helped partners feel more motivated and believe that they can get good jobs. During this first year, several CHANGES partners have gotten jobs, maintained employment, attended college classes and GED programs as well as being linked up to the Department of Rehabilitation for vocational training. We are confident that 2018 will bring more growth and our



**Team Lead Hilary Davis, Clinical Director Dani Marchman, and IPS Specialist Kelly "The Job Lady" Bystedt are pleased with people's vocational success.**

# Veteran Lands UPS Job and Learns Computers

Arthur Brooks retired from the Army in 1986 and has done occasional work since as a handyman. He enjoys working with the public and retail but finds that most of the positions he wants requires some kind of computer literacy. Whether it's a cash register or having to log in information into a data system, knowing technology of some kind is required.

Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS) IPS Employment Specialist Jackie Anderson assisted Arthur with learning basic computer skills by helping him practice logging into his email, writing short notes, and then printing them out. Arthur said, "I've always been intimidated by computers of any kind, I just couldn't understand how to use them, but this time, I really want



**Not Afraid of Hard Work: US Army Veteran Arthur Brooks develops his computer skills at BOSS.**

to work for the holidays, so I decided to give it my best shot and I realized that all I needed to do was practice simple things every day."

Arthur really wanted to work for this holiday season and decided to apply for UPS as a loader/unloader. The position requires quite a bit of physical lifting and standing throughout the shift. This didn't deter him from successfully completing the UPS online application with Jackie's support. At times it was frustrating, but he stuck with it and as a result he landed his first interview, second interview and then was hired!

Arthur is currently completing his paid training and is well on his way to a very happy holiday season. His

job with UPS is a permanent position, with health benefits, education benefits, perks and bonuses. Jackie reflects, "What a privilege and a joy it is to not only work with Arthur, but to also witness him achieve his goal."

## Telecare STRIDES Helps Vincent Get His First Job

Telecare STRIDES program believes in helping people recover their lives through meaningful change directed by the hopes and dreams of the individual. One participant, Vincent Miller, worked for six months recently as a janitor with the help of IPS services. Vincent is 58 years old and had never held a job before. He takes great pride in having accomplished his goal of getting a job and reflects on his experience fondly, saying "It was a beautiful job." He appreciated the assistance from his IPS Specialist Nick Craft with filling out the application, getting him to the interview, and being supportive once he started working.

Vincent shared that he had to adapt to asking for help, communicating with coworkers, and managing his time and his money. He also used other coping skills to solve problems at work related to organization and memory. "I had set myself a prime goal to learn something new," he added. "It made me glad and fulfilled that I had the job." "The money was good, I got \$81 per check," and he was able to use this money to help him meet basic expenses for laundry and transportation. Getting those kinds of essentials enabled him the ability to engage in more activities outside of his home and live a higher quality of life.

Vincent is still deciding when is the right time for him to return to the workforce and seek out his next job. When asked what advice he would give to others who might be thinking about going to work, he said, "Right on, man, you just need to break it on down and let em know. I was given a lot of support and I would tell other clients - just go in there and do the job, and then when you do the job you feel really good."





# Abode Services: Housing + Employment Together

Denah Nunes, LCSW is the Director of Health and Wellness at Abode Services. For the past two years, she has led the startup of IPS on the Greater HOPE FSP team as the Program Manager. She sat down with us to share about her experiences and offer advice to new programs.

When I first heard about IPS, I thought of it as 'Employment First' in the same vein as Housing First, because I was already so couched in that model. Both models share a mindset that when people want something, whether it's housing or education or employment, they deserve to have it without anyone putting forth more barriers for them. This got me excited about IPS. When we get new staff, even in the interview process, I shape the mindset early on that we help people find jobs and housing right away if they want. I've learned that this message and philosophy needs ongoing strengthening and review, because staff come in with different experience and beliefs.

It is paramount that agencies and leadership hold the belief that clients can work if they desire it. Clients can be struggling with really severe issues, but they can definitely still work. For example, one woman on our team is struggling with symptoms of Schizophrenia and is not taking medications, however, she secured a job at Taco



**Dir. of Health and Wellness Denah Nunes:**  
"People can be struggling with really severe issues, but they can definitely still work."

Bell. She's had some bumps, but she got the job and has worked for several weeks so far. She wanted a job and chose our program specifically because of IPS services, so each staff member supports her with her mental health needs through her work goal.

As a Mental Health Supervisor, I took the online training for IPS supervisors through Westat and received training from Jackie and Chris to help me comb through different strategies that would work for our program. Going through and committing fully to the fidelity review process has also been really helpful for seeing where we are strong in IPS and

where we need to strengthen. In this process we have been able to look at ways we can do better and compare where we are at to six months ago. We want to do what works, what gets results.

I would encourage new IPS supervisors to go out with your IPS specialists as much as you can in the beginning because it's important to be very connected to the work that they are doing and to understand job development. I would also advise you to think about what areas you might have a hard time implementing in your agency and think through your strategies, including bouncing ideas off other IPS supervisors because they often have similar struggles. Wishing you success in your IPS endeavors!

## IPS Technical Training Team Spotlight

The mission of Alameda County's IPS Technical Training Team is to promote and encourage individual, organizational, and system effectiveness around IPS Supported Employment. To that end, the team provides a range of quality improvement activities, including training, consultation, evaluation, and promotion.

Jackie and Chris regularly deliver an array of trainings and technical support to agency leaders, multidisciplinary mental health teams, vocational service providers, families, peers and other interested stakeholders. Through their personalized technical assistance, they evaluate IPS programs using the fidelity scale and identify areas of excellence, growth opportunities, and solutions. The goal is to increase IPS practice knowledge and help people develop the necessary skills to maintain high fidelity IPS.

Chris shares, "My favorite part of the job is meeting with service providers and working collaboratively." Jackie is proud of their Employment Specialist Learning Collaborative, which has provided skills training to vocational staff every month for the past six years.



**IPS Trainers Jackie Pogue and Chris Llorente are even more excited about effective vocational services than this photo conveys.**

## Early Psychosis Program Provides Education Supports

Most young adults want to work and go to school, often at the same time. If you ask almost any person what they were doing or wanted to be doing between the ages of 16 and 24, you would almost always hear as a reply some combination of employment and education. Almost any other chosen venture is either reliant upon income or considered an education experience towards a greater long term outcome in vocational and life satisfaction.

When a young adult starts to work with the Employment and Education Specialist at our Early Psychosis Program (formerly known as PREP), they

**Young adults in the Early Psychosis Program attend various high schools from Berkeley to Fremont, Laney College, Berkeley City College, UC Berkeley, Cal State East Bay, Chabot College, Los Positas College, and Ohlone College, as well as various adult schools and GED programs.**

complete an Employment and Education Interview to give a sense of their strengths, goals, and support preferences for school and work. Many young adults identify school as a natural step or support to employment and the specialist will help them to do both if they choose. The specialist and young adult create a support plan for school and/or work together.

School plans often focus on connecting with supports and resources on campus, including Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams and Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS) offices. The specialist connects and collaborates with supports based on the plan. Throughout the semester, they also help the student establish good routines, access accommodations, and understand expectations in the same way that a follow along support plan would do for an employment placement. The whole team supports the plan in their various roles, including peer specialists, who help people feel more at ease in school by discussing disclosure and how to utilize resources.

While a young adult is in the school process, the Education and Employment Specialist will also support their employment goal with job search support, employer contacts, and job retention supports, as needed.

## Fred Finch Youth Center Expands IPS for Young Adults

In 2012 Fred Finch Youth Center's STAY program was selected by Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services as a pilot site for IPS Supported Employment. IPS focuses on helping people get competitive jobs, which is defined as a "regular" job that anyone would be competing for – not subsidized or sheltered employment – and the opportunity to work is offered to anyone who wants to, regardless of symptoms or other challenges. Unlike traditional youth employment programs, IPS focuses on teaching people employment skills as part of the process of getting employed, rather than delaying employment by spending time teaching them first. For STAY participants in IPS over the last five years, the employment rate has ranged from 23% to 58% each quarter.

In 2016, FFYC expanded IPS successfully to three other programs: Turning Point, Rising Oaks and Contra Costa TAY. Although the population of each program varies somewhat, the principles of IPS are applicable and the added structure in the programs' existing employment efforts has led to an increase in the number of participants that rapidly obtain and maintain competitive employment.

In recognition of the agency's accomplishments, Fred Finch Youth Center has received two exciting awards in the past two years. In 2016, they received the Transformation Award from the International IPS Learning Community for their successful implementation of IPS for young adults. In 2017, they received the Alameda County Mental Health Advisory Board's (MHAB) Community Service Award in the Promising Innovative Program category.



**Fred Finch was an original IPS pilot site in Alameda County and now has IPS in four programs: STAY, Contra Costa TAY, Rising Oaks, and Turning Point.**



# Special Thanks to our Employers who Hired 275 People from IPS Programs in 2016-17!

99 Cent Store  
Ace Hardware  
Admiral Security  
Alameda County IHSS  
Allied Universal Protection  
Amazon  
Andersen Windows  
Arrow Sign Spinners  
Baija Pasta  
Balance Staffing  
Bank of America  
Bed Bath & Beyond  
Big Lots  
BIS Computers  
Bizxlink  
Blackwell, Santella, and  
Johangiri  
Blommer Chocolate Factory  
Blue Apron  
Boot and Shoe Service  
Bridges Rock Gym  
Burlington Coat Factory  
Cheesecake Factory  
Coffee Conscious  
Contemporary Services Corp.  
Costco  
Creekview Health Center  
Dansuemor Inc.  
Days Inn and Suites  
Dennis School Uniforms  
Denny's  
DeSoto Cab Company  
Dogtime Now Stay and Play  
Dollar Tree  
DoubleTree Hilton Berkeley  
Dress Barn  
East Bay Innovations  
Eden Villa Assisted Living  
El Parariso Nieves Y Respados  
Employer Mobile Car Wash

EP Containers  
Epic Cancer Center  
Everett and Jones  
Every Dog Has It's Daycare  
Fear Overload Scream Park  
FedEx  
For Paws Spay and Neuter  
Forest Forever  
Gaylord's Coffee  
Greyhound Bus Lines  
Home Depot

Macy's  
Magnolia House  
Maleko Co.  
Manpower  
Mattler-Toledo Rainin, LLC  
Metro PCS  
Michael's  
Mission Foods  
Mobile Car Wash  
Mountain Mike's Pizza  
MS International Inc.

Sammi's Skin Care  
San Leandro Auto Upholstery  
San Leandro Car Wash  
Savers Thrift Store  
See's Candy  
Shell  
Shelter Security Services  
Sketchers  
Smart and Final  
Snelling  
Saul's Restaurant  
Sprouts Farmers Market  
Saint Moritz Security  
StaffPro  
Starbucks  
Stepping Stones  
Strategic Threat  
Management  
Strides Center  
Superior Gas and Car Wash  
Taco Bell  
Target  
Telecom Inc.  
Tesla  
The Habit  
Thred Up  
TJ Maxx  
Togo's Sandwiches  
Toys R Us  
Trader Joe's  
Trillium Construction  
Uber  
UPS  
USPS  
Walgreens  
Walmart  
Wendy's  
Whole Foods Market  
WIS International  
Wisteria Care Center



Hoodline  
Ike's Love and Sandwiches  
Java Spot  
JB Hunt Transport  
Jiffy Lube  
Joynus Staffing  
Kimber Hills Academy  
Korbmacher Engineering  
La Familia Counseling  
La Quinta Inn  
Labor Maxx Staffing  
Labor Ready  
Landmark Event Staffing  
Liberty Tax  
Little Caesar's Pizza  
Lucky's  
McDonald's

National Trench Safety  
Oakland Coliseum  
Oakland Unified School  
District  
Office Team  
Oil Changers  
Orion Security  
Pacific Homecare Services  
Panera Bread  
PeopleReady  
PG&E  
Propark  
Rainbow Auto Center  
Ross Dress for Less  
RSI International  
Safeway  
Salvation Army



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