

the
GOLDEN RULE

THE MAGAZINE OF HOAG'S COMMUNITY HEALTH INITIATIVES



hoag.

DAD'S GROUP
Strengthening the
Fatherhood Bond

SHARE OURSELVES EXPANSION
Growing to Meet Demand

MOMS
It Takes A Village

**Message from
the Leadership**



Welcome to the Winter 2024 issue of The Golden Rule, the magazine dedicated to Hoag's Community Health initiatives at the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living.

This issue highlights our latest efforts at the Center, beginning with a focus on our Dad's group — *Papas Comprometidos* — and the supportive, positive impact the group has had on these fathers. Having a safe space to share the challenges of fatherhood is crucial, as parenting struggles don't just impact an individual's daily life — they have a ripple effect across the family unit.

We feature the recent renovation and expansion of the Center's partner Share Ourselves at a school based site, which has enabled them to double the weekly patient-load and increase clinic hours.

The Center is fortunate to collaborate and partner with many local organizations who share in our mission toward achieving better health outcomes for the underserved community. We also spotlight MOMS Orange County, an agency dedicated to

helping mothers and their families have healthy babies by providing health coordination, education and access to community services. Lastly, this feature also highlights Newport Mesa Unified School District's School Attendance Review Board (SARB), and the numerous advantages of providing the Center as a host-site for their meetings; as well as a Back-to-School Resource Fair in partnership with IKEA and NMUSD.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living is now celebrating its eighth year of compassionately meeting the health and wellness needs of the underserved community.

Many thanks for your continued support.

With deepest gratitude,

Minzah Malik, MPH, MBA
Principal,
Community Benefit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

04



STRENGTHENING THE FATHERHOOD BOND

Papas Comprometidos (engaged fathers) is a program designed to support and encourage fathers' active involvement in their children's lives.

05



THE BENEFITS OF AN INVOLVED DAD

Fathers occupy a critical role in child development. Positive findings are outlined.

06



SHARE OURSELVES EXPANSION

Share Ourselves has expanded – growth that has enabled them to better meet the increasing needs of the low-income population in Orange County.

08



MOMS PROGRAM: IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Becoming a new mom can feel overwhelming, so having a village of support can make all the difference in the world.

10



THE COMPLEX PROBLEM OF TRUANCY

A solid education contributes to a child's development and greatly enhances the likelihood of a successful life.

12



HEALTH PROFESSION TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A program at the Center to advance health knowledge benefiting students, professionals and the community.

14



DEXA SCANNER

Hoag's recent donation of a much-needed DEXA scanner to Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC), benefits children, families, and physicians alike.

BACK



BACK TO SCHOOL

Back-to-School Resource Fair in partnership with IKEA and NMUSD.

Dad's Group

Strengthening The Fatherhood Bond

The role of fathers has changed, both with the times and out of necessity. Now more than ever, dads are taking on diverse roles in parenting and in the family. Studies show that kids benefit from a closer bond with their fathers, yet unfortunately, more children than ever are growing up without a dad actively involved in their lives. The Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living is working toward providing resources to address this issue — beginning with a support group designed specifically for Latino dads.

Launched in 2022, “Papas Comprometidos” (*engaged fathers*) is a 16-week program with the goal of supporting and encouraging fathers’ active involvement in their children’s lives and in the lives of their families. Held in Spanish, the program targets socio-cultural parenting challenges that Latino dads face and it seeks to overcome the stigma perceived in seeking support.

PROGRAM FEATURES

Features of the program promote fathers’ well-being, relationships between partners, relationships with their children, and address generational family patterns. Stress management is taught and round-table discussions allow for shared experiences. Guest speakers include wellness instructors, community partners and nurse navigators, adding valuable expertise and information.

04



One of the most appreciated features of the program is “the family meal,” which provides the opportunity for community building and bonding during the first 30 minutes of each two-hour session — over a meal. In addition to fostering a sense of community, the family meal is also a practical feature, since most of the fathers come straight from work to attend.

TEAM

Led by Hoag clinician Marlene Abarca, ASW, and co-facilitator Santiago Pedraza, BA, the clinician and case manager duo lead group discussions on men’s mental health topics that can have a profound impact on members and their families in the Latino community. The group provides a safe space for the men to have an open dialogue and fosters a supportive environment where fathers can share their experiences, challenges, and emotions without stigma.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Case Manager Santiago Pedraza notes that in many cultures, discussing fears and insecurities can be perceived as a sign of male weakness, making it difficult to open up with family or friends. Participants trust that Santiago understands their perspective. Major concerns expressed within the group are the cultural and social expectations placed on Latino men, and the stigma and reluctance they feel in reaching out for help. “While they struggle to engage and open up in the beginning, after a few weeks of hearing other fathers discuss similar issues, they begin to let their guard down and feel more comfortable sharing with the group,” he says.

POSITIVE RESULTS

The group’s success is evident in the way the men build community and continue meeting after the conclusion of each session to continue sharing. “It’s inspiring to see their bond,” Santiago notes, “and tells us we’re on the right track.” When the participants graduate at the end of the program, Santiago feels good about his contributions as co-facilitator, sharing, “The relationships that the fathers build is remarkable. You can see how happy they are not only for themselves, but also for the other fathers in the group.”



The Benefits of An Involved Dad

According to research done by “The Fatherhood Project” at Harvard Medical School, active, daily emotional engagement between father and child benefits children in numerous, life-impacting ways.

Fathers occupy a critical role in child development. Some positive findings of the study concluded that:

- Children who feel a closeness to their father are: twice as likely as those who do not to enter college or find stable employment after high school, 75% less likely to have a teen birth, 80% less likely to spend time in jail, and half as likely to experience multiple depression symptoms.
- Children with actively involved fathers are: 43% more likely to earn A’s in school and 33% less likely to repeat a grade than those without engaged dads.
- High levels of father-involvement are correlated with higher levels of sociability, confidence, and self-control in children.
- Father-engagement reduces the frequency of behavioral problems in boys while also decreasing delinquency and economic disadvantage in low-income families.

Share Ourselves Expansion

Growing to Meet the Needs of Our Neighbors

Share Ourselves is a Costa Mesa-based nonprofit healthcare organization guided by the mission that everyone deserves access to quality healthcare. And now, thanks to the generous investment from Hoag, *Share Ourselves* has expanded – growth that has enabled them to increase access to primary care services for the low income and underinsured in Orange County.

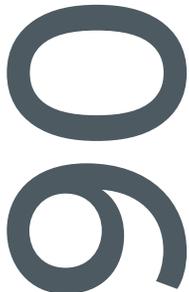
GREATER CAPACITY, EXPANDED SERVICES

In June of 2023, with the support of Hoag, *Share Ourselves* took ownership of the HOPE Clinic, a school-based health clinic for children run by Newport Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD). Less than two months later, the newly renovated clinic opened its doors.

Prior to renovation, the old clinic operated just two days a week and with only one healthcare provider. With the newly-expanded capacity, two full-time medical providers now offer care to 150 patients, five days a week, including

Saturdays. Early evenings have also been added to accommodate working families, which ensures increased access to the much needed services.

Over the course of a year, *Share Ourselves* anticipates serving 2,000 patients in this location. Expanded capacity now also enables them to serve patients of all ages, from infants to seniors. Services that *Share Ourselves* will provide at this new location include: wellness visits, physical exams and health screenings as well as medical care for sick visits, chronic disease management,



immunizations, and behavioral health care. They will also provide referrals to additional Share Ourselves services available at other locations such as dental care, pharmacy, case management, and their food pantry.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE ACCESS

According to Share Ourselves CEO Christy Ward, there is a lack of access to healthcare for many students and families in Orange County, particularly those with Medi-Cal coverage or individuals who are uninsured. Thanks to the community health investment from Hoag, the newly renovated clinic will help fill this healthcare gap and increase access to our most vulnerable. Ward notes that, “Our goal is to serve students and their family members in the community with health services that they may otherwise struggle to receive in the community where they live, work and play.”



MOMS

It Takes A Village

Becoming a new mom can feel overwhelming, so having a village of support can make all the difference in the world. This is especially true for new moms who are also experiencing challenges related to their socioeconomic circumstances.

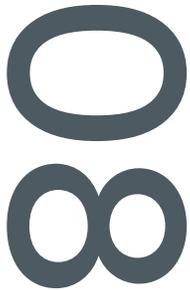
Here to assist is MOMS Orange County, the region's largest non-profit dedicated solely to infant and pregnancy health — helping moms to build their confidence and knowledge while growing their village of support through free community programs. One of MOMS programs, “Abriendo Puertas,” now offered at the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living, is doing just that.

Abriendo Puertas, or Opening Doors, is a ten-week class held in Spanish that provides new moms with valuable information on a baby's health and development. Launched in Spring 2024, the group focuses on empowering new moms and building a strong sense of community. This class prepares moms for what is to come with their children by educating them on different milestones and how they can prepare them to enter Kindergarten. This information is invaluable as we know that the first five years are crucial for a child's development.

A HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP

A collaborative partner at the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living since the Center opened, MOMS OC's mission is to help mothers and their families have healthy babies through health coordination, education, and access to community services. MOMS OC also facilitates Spanish and English Childbirth Preparation and Mommy & Me classes at the Center,

The classes provide an opportunity for parents to help introduce their baby to new experiences and understand social and developmental milestones and skills. Cost can often be a barrier for accessing enrichment classes, and Hoag's ability to offer them at no cost removes barriers in accessing vital services at an important stage for both the mother and baby.



“Opening Doors program helps parents lead the way to positive outcomes for their children.”



MOMS' MISSION

MOMS OC programs are designed for low-to-mid income families experiencing socio-economic challenges including food and housing insecurity, barriers to healthcare access, and inequities that can lead to worse maternal-child health outcomes. This partner organization offers new mothers in Orange County other important sources of support, such as home visits. Under the home visitation program, maternal child health workers fluent in Spanish and Vietnamese offer support to mothers at their homes during their prenatal and postpartum journeys.

BENEFITS OF A VILLAGE

MOMS OC serves as a lifeline for new moms, providing them with the opportunity to form their own support network among classmates, share resources, meet outside of class, and learn from one another during this shared journey. "Good information and good support can make such a big difference in the mother-baby bond and healthy family outcomes," says Dr. Allyson Brooks, Ginny Ueberroth Executive Medical Director Endowed Chair, Hoag's Women's Health Institute.

Miriam Bustamante, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Perinatal Mental Health specialist at Hoag Mental Health Center confirms the value of a village concluding that, "We all know it takes a village to raise a child. However, we often don't know where to find that village anymore. Is there a number you can call? Well, the answer for our community is, yes. You can call MOMS OC. For new moms, having that support network is critical, not just for baby's development, but for their own maternal mental health." MOMS and Abriendo Puertas are stepping in to become part of that village for new moms in need.



Chronic Absenteeism:

A Holistic Approach to Attendance

How does going to school each day connect to wellness? A solid education contributes positively to a child's development and greatly improves the likelihood of a successful life. Consistent attendance plays a crucial role in shaping that future, creating a strong foundation for academic and personal growth.

Newport-Mesa Unified School District's bold new multi-media attendance campaign is emphasizing the importance of regular school attendance. But when truancy becomes an issue, the District's School Attendance Review Board (SARB) steps in and the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living is there to support it.

The California Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as a student missing 10% or more of the school year for any reason, excused or unexcused. When all efforts by school sites to improve attendance have been exhausted, students may be referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB). SARB addresses the concerns surrounding chronic absenteeism while taking into account the social and systemic barriers that students may face, ensuring a comprehensive and compassionate approach to resolving attendance issues.

THE CENTER AS HOST

According to the District's Child Welfare & Attendance Coordinator, Angela Allen-Hess, the District recognizes the barriers to attendance that students may face and has adopted a more compassionate, holistic approach to tackling absenteeism by hosting

SARB meetings at the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living. The Center's resources provide families with access to services that address the underlying causes of absenteeism in a non-threatening, supportive environment. This approach fosters open dialogue and creates a safe space for families to collaborate with the district, ensuring that both immediate and long-term needs are met to improve student attendance.

There are several key benefits to hosting the SARB hearings at the Center — beginning with the Center's welcoming atmosphere, reducing the anxiety and stress often associated with SARB hearings. The Center ensures privacy and confidentiality, crucial for these sensitive matters. Bilingual, culturally sensitive social work specialist, like Zorayda Velez, who serves as a SARB panel member, helps families feel at ease. This cultural competence enhances the openness and productivity of these hearings.

Since the Center offers a comprehensive range of health and social services, this location perfectly supports the holistic needs of students and families involved in SARB hearings. These services include mental health, social services and access to healthcare.



Students and families have direct access to various support services on-site, including counseling, educational workshops, and health screenings. On-site services can help address the underlying factors contributing to absenteeism more swiftly and efficiently. This access to support reduces the time and stress families might face in seeking services on their own.

And of course, the Center's staff of experienced professionals, ranging from counselors, social workers and healthcare providers can offer immediate support and follow-up services as needed. "The presence of a multidisciplinary team allows for comprehensive assessments and interventions, ensuring that all aspects of a student's well-being are considered," says Angela Allen Hess.

A PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

The collaboration between NMUSD and the Center is a partnership rooted in meeting community needs. By shifting from a punitive approach to a supportive one, the District and the Center are tackling the root causes of chronic absenteeism and helping students succeed academically and personally. This innovative partnership exemplifies how understanding and addressing the complex factors behind absenteeism can result in more effective outcomes for students, families, and the community.



“This approach fosters open dialogue and creates a safe space for families to collaborate with the district, ensuring that both immediate and long-term needs are met to improve student attendance.”

Health Profession Training & Development Program

A Program Benefitting Careers and Community

Both students and professionals alike are drawn to the Health Professions' Training and Development Programs at the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living. The programs are comprised of two initiatives, first to advance the mental health profession through our internship program which has been fundamental to the growth of the center and second is to provide professional development opportunities to continue elevating the health workforce.



HISTORY & GROWTH

The Mental Health Program was established in 1998 and was staffed by just one social worker providing free mental health therapy to the uninsured or underinsured of the community. To better meet the significant demand for services, the internship program was formed with Master of Social Work (MSW) students to increase capacity and decrease the growing waitlist. Affiliations with the University of Southern California and California State University Long Beach were executed, and served as the first academic partners. Today, the CEU-accredited program has 16 affiliate schools, now including both local and remote learning academic institutions like, Columbia and Fordham.

As the needs of the community grew, so did our internship program. Our intern students became more diverse coming from different disciplines including public health, nursing, associate and bachelor level students from sociology, human services, community health workers and health administration programs.

THE INSIDER ADVANTAGE

Having interns at the Center during the school year greatly reduces the wait time for services, allowing clients to get connected with services sooner, a tremendous advantage for all. Additionally, having interns for the nine months of their school practicum allows the Center to have a working interview, providing the opportunity to hire the best of the best to join the Center as staff upon graduation and as vacancies become available. A prime example of this insider's hiring advantage is the current 13 staff in the department that were former interns.

WIN-WIN

The internship program allows for our Center to expand our reach into the community. Interns participate in weekly individual and group supervision for clinical advancement and support. Students pursuing their MSW degree carry a clinical caseload of 8-10 clients, working with individuals, couples, families and groups.

They develop and deepen assessment, diagnostic, and treatment skills to work with individuals seeking mental health services. As part of our internship experience we offer professional training to our students to enhance their clinical skills and knowledge of best practices. The internship program has received Agency of the Year award twice from University of Southern California and Field Instructor of the Year by Azusa Pacific University. Students are drawn to the program and vie for placement.

“Our affiliations, reputation, trainings, and practicum experience have allowed us to remain competitive and sought out among internship sites, and have our pick of the top interns to serve our clients,” says Sahar Naraghi-Babaei, Mental Health Center Manager, “We strongly believe that it is important to provide students with exceptional training to ensure the highest quality of care to the community, in line with Hoag’s high standards.”

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The program’s coveted training opportunities expanded to also include professionals working at non-profits in Orange County. The Workforce Development program officially launched six years ago and was created to provide free professional training opportunities and to advance health knowledge. Mental health training opportunities are often cost prohibitive or can be difficult to access. Due to increased expectations, requirements from governing licensure boards and The Center’s goal to increase mental health services that are equitable, the Health Profession’s Training and Development Program has grown year over year. As the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living grows and expands programs and services, greater opportunities are created to better serve the low-income and vulnerable population and increase health equity.



DEXA

Making a Difference for the Kids of OC

Neighbors working together can benefit the whole community. Hoag's recent donation of a much-needed DEXA scanner to Children's Hospital of Orange County(CHOC) is a sterling example of this — benefitting children, families, and physicians alike.

DEXA EXPLAINED

DEXA, short for Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry, is a body-scanning machine that uses low-level radiation rays typically aimed at the hips or spine, permitting bone mineral density tests to be made. DEXA scans are commonly prescribed for women over 65 to assess osteoporosis – but can be equally impactful in diagnosing childhood bone issues.

A pediatric DEXA scan is used to detect bone loss resulting from chronic childhood illnesses or treatment for other conditions, allowing for intervention if bone loss is detected. Detection is especially important in chronic conditions such as Cystic Fibrosis, Diabetes, Hyperthyroidism, Kidney disease, Anorexia, and assessing the impact of certain medications for cancer and arthritis. Azam Eghbal, MD, Medical Director of CHOC Radiology summarizes the value of its use in tailoring and tracking treatment plans for pediatric patients saying, "It is safe & non-invasive while giving a comprehensive view of a child's bone health."

THE NEED

Historically, children needing this service at CHOC were required to go elsewhere, which was not only an inconvenience for families, but also caused delays in medical assessments. Through conversations at a Healthcare Convening, the need for this vital piece of equipment was brought to the attention of Hoag leadership. In response to

this identified gap in care, Hoag purchased a new DEXA for CHOC. Since its delivery in June 2023, this brand-new DEXA has been in heavy use.

ADVANTAGES

The donation of the scanner has provided numerous benefits to doctors and patients, alike. Mark Daniels, MD, Division Chief, Endocrinology explains the efficiency and ease of having an embedded, accessible DEXA scanner at CHOC. "We now can get the DEXA scan completed quickly. The reports are accurate and automatically uploaded into our Electronic Medical Records. We no longer have to search for the results or call outside facilities to beg for the report. Most importantly, the CHOC DEXA techs are kid friendly." Dr. Daniels reflects on the value and impact of Hoag's donation, saying, "We are grateful every time we request a DEXA scan, as we can now be certain that it will be done with care, compassion and the child's best interest at heart."

Hoag's donation to CHOC is a perfect example of Hoag's wider effort to increase access to health care for the Orange County community. CHOC identified this need and Hoag stepped in to fulfill this gap, essentially improving access to services for children. Hoag's DEXA donation to CHOC not only fills a healthcare need for the children of Orange County, but it also reminds us of the power of community partnership.

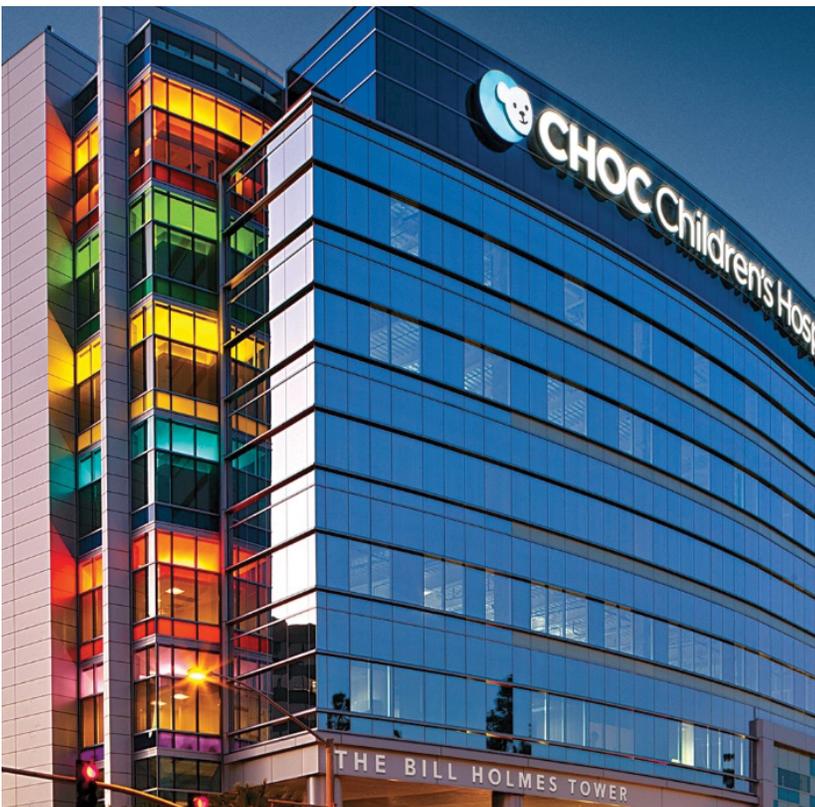




“ We are grateful every time we request a DEXA scan, as we can now be certain that it will be done with care, compassion and the child’s best interest at heart. ”

– Dr. Mark Daniels, Division Chief, Endocrinology, CHOC, reflecting on the value and impact of Hoag’s donation

15





Hoag and the Community Come Together for a School Resource Fair

The annual Back-to-School Resource Fair was a big success, providing students with a head start to the 2024 school year. The annual event benefits low-income and under-resourced families in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) and was hosted in partnership with the Melinda Hoag Smith Center for Healthy Living and IKEA. Over 60 partner organizations shared an array of resources benefiting more than two thousand students/community members. Backpacks, school supplies, shoes, lunch boxes, and bicycle helmets were provided at no cost. In addition, thanks to our collaborative community partners, we were also able to provide health and dental check ups.

NMUSD Back to School Resource Fair – Collaborating Partners

Alianza Translatinx

America on Track

Assistance League of
Newport-Mesa

Beyond Athletics Orange County

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County

Boys & Girls Club of
Central Coast

California State Assembly on Behalf of
Petrie-Norris

Choc Wellness on Wheels

City of Costa Mesa - NHS

City of Costa Mesa Parks and
Community Services

Clinic in the Park

County of Orange Social Services Agency

Court Appointed Special Advocates
of Orange County

Epilepsy Support Network of
Orange County

Fair Housing Foundation

Families Forward

Families Together of Orange County
Community Health Center

Fit First Youth Fitness Training

Forever Soccer Champions

Foster Love - Together We Rise

Hoag Project Wipeout

Hope Harbor

Human Options

IKEA

Huntington Beach Adult School

Karina's Backpacks

Koinonia Family Services

LGBTQ Center OC

Little Roots Pediatric Dentistry

Living Success Center

Moms of Orange County

Newport Beach Public Library

Newport Mesa Family Resource Center

NMUSD - Early Childhood Education

NMUSD Expanded Learning

OC Community Liaison

OC United Way

Office of Orange County;
Supervisor Katrina Foley

Olive Crest: Strong Families

Orange Coast College Adult
Education Office

Orange County Bar Association

Orange County Head Start, Inc.

Orange County Public Libraries

Orange County Soccer Club

Orange County Transportation Authority

Partners4Wellness - Tobacco-Free
Orange County

Planned Parenthood of Orange
and San Bernardino Counties

Pretend City Children's Museum

Project Hope Alliance

Regional Center Of Orange County
(RCOC)

Save Our Youth

School On Wheels, Inc.

Serving People In Need

Share Ourselves

Smile Generation

Standup for Kids

The Priority Center - School
Readiness Program

The Raise Foundation

Turning Point Center for Families

UCI Pediatric Exercise and
Genomics Research Center

Waymakers Huntington Beach
Youth Shelter

Western Youth Services

YMCA of Orange County