PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026 ISSUE 36

Who Will Care When You're Not There?



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Supportive Housing Community Land Alliance

Building a future where families never have to wonder "who will care when I'm not there?"

One of the most urgent questions families in our community face is the one at the heart of this newsletter issue: Who will care for my child when I can no longer do it myself? For families of adults with serious mental illness, that question often doesn't have a clear answer — and the housing system, as it stands, makes long-term planning feel impossible. Operators change. Facilities close. Funding runs out. And families are left scrambling, often without resources or a road map.

That's why Proxy Parent Foundation is proud to introduce one of our newest and most meaningful partnerships: Supportive Housing Community Land Alliance (SHCLA), the only Community Land Trust in the country dedicated exclusively to permanently affordable housing for adults with serious mental illness. SHCLA buys and protects land so it can never be sold for profit — ensuring that homes remain affordable forever, and that the stability families fight so hard to secure cannot be taken away by market forces or operator turnover. Both organizations will actively cross-refer individuals and families to one another, ensuring they receive the specialized housing and Special Needs Trust resources.

"SHCLA exists because we believe that stable housing is the foundation of everything else — recovery, connection, and a life of dignity. The Community Land Trust model means that once a home is affordable, it stays affordable. No operator transition, no rent spike, no family left scrambling." — Teslim Ikharo, J.D., Executive Director, SHCLA

Two models. One shared promise.

SHCLA operates two distinct housing models, each designed to meet adults with serious mental illness where they are, and to give families the long-term certainty they deserve.

The first is the Licensed Board and Care Model, designed for residents who need higher levels of daily support. Under this model, SHCLA acquires and renovates existing licensed facilities, then master leases them to certified operators who provide 24/7 staffing, medication management, meals, case management, and life-skills development. SHCLA retains ownership of the land and property in perpetuity, provides asset management and oversight to protect the asset over the long term, and ensures that even if an operator changes, the home — and its affordability — remains protected. Families can trust that their loved one's housing is not tied to the fate of any single provider.

The second — and the one most directly relevant to the families Proxy Parent serves — is the Family Partnership Model.

SHCLA - continued

The Family Partnership Model: Planning for the Future, Together

The Family Partnership Model is built around a simple but powerful idea: families can play an important role in helping plan for the long-term housing stability of their loved ones. For many families, one of the greatest concerns is ensuring that a son, daughter, or family member has access to a safe, affordable, and supportive home both today and in the future. This model is designed to help address that concern.

Through the Family Partnership Model, SHCLA acquires and preserves small-scale homes in community-centered neighborhoods with access to parks, grocery stores, public transportation, healthcare, and other essential resources. Properties are thoughtfully renovated to create welcoming living environments that support resident wellbeing, including design features that encourage connection to nature, comfort, and community.

What makes this model unique is its focus on long-term housing stability. Rather than relying on short-term program funding or time-limited housing arrangements, SHCLA works to preserve homes as permanently affordable community assets. Residents benefit from long-term leases, predictable housing costs, professional property management, and access to supportive services that help them remain successfully housed. Families gain peace of mind knowing that housing is stewarded by a mission-driven nonprofit whose purpose is to preserve affordability and stability for generations.

SHCLA supports residents and families throughout the housing journey—from property acquisition and renovation through move-in and ongoing community life. Services may include property management, resident coordination, wellness programming, and opportunities for community engagement. Resident feedback plays an important role in shaping each community, and families are encouraged to participate in appropriate advisory and engagement opportunities that help inform programming and resident supports.

For families who have spent years coordinating benefits, arranging services, establishing Special Needs Trusts, or planning for the future, the Family Partnership Model can serve as one part of a broader long-term housing strategy. By combining affordable housing preservation with supportive community-based services, SHCLA aims to create housing opportunities that promote stability, dignity, independence, and belonging.

Join SHCLA Housing Interest List

JOIN NOW

SHCLA is building a housing interest list for future affordable housing opportunities throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Joining the interest list does not create any obligation or guarantee housing. It simply allows SHCLA to better understand community needs, identify areas of high interest, and keep interested individuals and families informed as new housing opportunities become available.

If you are seeking stable, affordable housing options for yourself or a family member, we encourage you to complete the interest form and stay connected as future communities are developed.

To learn more about SHCLA's work, visit **www.shcla.land**
or email SHCLA at **admin@shcla.land**



A Summer of Connections, Growth, and Opportunity

Summer has arrived, and I am delighted to share another colorful, information-packed edition of the Proxy Parent Foundation Newsletter! I hope you'll grab a cool drink, find a comfortable spot, and spend a few moments catching up on everything happening at PPF.

Our small but mighty team has been busy—and that's exactly how we like it!

This year, Carol Larkin, our Director of Client Relations, and I have conducted more than 18 in-person and virtual presentations, webinars, and community resource fairs, introducing families and professionals to the life-changing benefits of Special Needs Trusts. One of my favorite parts of every presentation comes after it's over—when the questions begin. Those conversations tell us we're making a difference, helping families understand their options, and providing peace of mind for the future.

Networking has also been a major focus for me. I firmly believe that every conversation has the potential to change someone's life. In fact, I teach a Master Class on Networking for Women in Business, where I remind professionals that meaningful relationships begin with a simple conversation. Being approachable, sharing your organization's mission, learning about others, and—most importantly—following up are what transform introductions into lasting partnerships. Every event we attend strengthens our network and expands the resources available to the individuals and families we serve.

Another area of exciting growth has been our digital presence. When I joined Proxy Parent Foundation, I recognized an opportunity to strengthen our communications and outreach. Today, I'm proud to say we are consistently sharing informative content on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. If you haven't connected with us yet, I encourage you to do so! Our social media channels feature special needs trust educational resources and event announcements. We follow trusted organizations such as NAMI, Autism Speaks, Many Mansions, New Horizons, and many other outstanding community partners share advocacy updates and valuable information. Together, we're creating an online community where education, encouragement, and hope are just a click away.

And speaking of exciting things on the horizon...

Our team has been working diligently behind the scenes on a completely redesigned Proxy Parent Foundation website. We can't wait to unveil a more modern, user-friendly experience designed to make it easier for families, professionals, and community partners to find the information they need. Our goal is to officially launch the new website in time for our Fall 2026 Newsletter, and I can't wait to share it with you.

Before I close, I'd like to leave you with one important thought.

If you've been thinking about establishing a Special Needs Trust for yourself or someone you love, don't wait. Every presentation we give reinforces the same message: the best time to plan is before a crisis occurs. A thoughtful plan today provides security, stability, and peace of mind for tomorrow. Our team is here to answer your questions and guide you every step of the way.

Thank you for being part of the Proxy Parent Foundation family. Whether you're a beneficiary, family member, professional partner, volunteer, donor, or friend, your support makes our mission possible.

Here's to a summer filled with learning, meaningful connections, and opportunities to make a lasting difference.

Carmen Bowen, MBA

BUILDING POTENTIAL. CREATING FUTURES.

PPF Proudly Participates in New Horizons Intern Program

At Proxy, we are thrilled to share that we are participating in the **New Horizons Supported Employment Intern Program**—a remarkable partnership that is already making a positive impact!

PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION



Day One in Action!
Jacob organized and processed our donation thank-you letters—preparing them, stamping them, and taking them to the mailbox.

A PROGRAM THAT CHANGES LIVES

Through the New Horizons program, adults with disabilities receive job training, mentorship, and valuable work experience in a supportive environment. New Horizons provides the intern's wages, insurance, and a dedicated job coach—at no cost to PPF.

Our role is to provide meaningful projects, guidance, and encouragement. The impact is profound—for Jacob, for our organization, and for our community.

OFF TO AN AMAZING START

Jacob's first two days with PPF have been outstanding!

Day One: Jacob was off and running! He organized our outreach inventory, helped set up his computer, and began learning how to input data in our CRM. His attention to detail and enthusiasm were evident right away.

Day Two: Just as productive! Jacob continued working on data entry, asked thoughtful questions, and demonstrated a genuine desire to learn and grow.

Jacob's positive attitude, strong work ethic, and curiosity are an asset to our team already!

A TEAM EFFORT

PPF has a remote staff, and when I shared this with the New Horizons team, they wondered if it would work. They made a visit and were happy to see I have three workstations, a bathroom, breakroom amenities, and a separate office entrance—creating an ideal environment for Jacob to learn and thrive.

Carmen Bowen – PPF Executive Director
Jacob – Intern
Isidro – Job Coach
Vincent – Trainer

Together, we are creating a workplace where learning thrives and potential becomes progress.



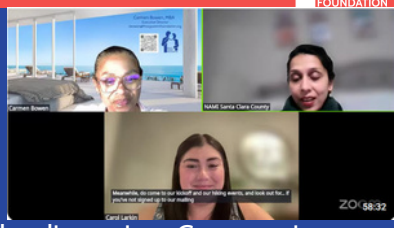
From left: Isidro (Job Coach), Jacob (Intern), Carmen Bowen (Executive Director), Vincent (Trainer)

"When we invest in skills, we invest in independence, confidence, and brighter futures."
Thank you to New Horizons for this inspiring partnership.
We look forward to supporting Jacob on his journey!

New Horizons Supported Employment Program



What's Happening in the Proxy World



On June 9, 2026, **Proxy Parent Foundation** was honored to present at the **NAMI Santa Clara County General Meeting** and share information about Special Needs Trusts, planning for the future, and resources available to individuals with disabilities and their families.

We appreciate everyone who attended, asked thoughtful questions, and participated in the discussion. Community education is an important part of our mission, and we are grateful for opportunities to partner with organizations like NAMI to help families make informed decisions.

📹 Missed the presentation? No problem!

You can watch the entire presentation on our YouTube: 👉 www.youtube.com/@ProxyParentFoundation
Click here to see video: https://youtu.be/vEONKH9wuTA?si=Ub_y7fZycxopaeh4

Please feel free to share this recording with family members, caregivers, professionals, or anyone who may benefit from learning more about Special Needs Trusts and long-term planning.

Thank you, NAMI Santa Clara County, for your partnership and commitment to supporting the mental health community. We look forward to continuing the conversation!











I attended the 19th Annual DisCo at the Capitol: California Disability Community Advocacy Conference in Sacramento, where more than 700 self-advocates, family members, service providers, disability rights leaders, and community partners from across California came together for two days of advocacy, learning, celebration, and connection.

The event kicked off with an evening reception that included a book signing with actress, author, and advocate Sofia Sanchez. Attendees were also treated to a surprise appearance by Congressman Lou Correa and his son, Adan Correa from Love on the Spectrum, which brought excitement and energy ahead of the advocacy activities at the Capitol.

One of the highlights of the evening was celebrating the 60th Anniversary of California's Regional Center System. Speakers reflected on how far the system has come in supporting people with developmental disabilities and emphasized the importance of continuing to strengthen community-based services.

The second day focused on advocacy and action. The conference honored The Kelsey and the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge with the California Disability Innovation in Advocacy Award for their work advancing inclusion and opportunity for people with disabilities. Speakers shared powerful personal stories about inclusion, advocacy, and the importance of using your voice to create meaningful change.

After legislative meetings and lunch, the conference wrapped up with the always-popular Silent DisCo, ending the event on a fun and memorable note while celebrating the ongoing work of advancing disability rights and community engagement.

I was honored to attend this event on behalf of our clients and also as a mother of a child with special needs. The experience reinforced the importance of advocacy, community, and ensuring that individuals with disabilities and their families continue to have a strong voice in shaping the future of services and supports throughout California.



Carol Larkin
Director of Client Services

More Happening in the Proxy World







🏅💙 Another Wonderful Year at the Special Olympics Summer Games! 💙

The Proxy Parent Foundation team had an amazing time at the Special Olympics Southern California Summer Games held on June 6–7, 2026, at California State University, Long Beach.

Our team—Carmen, Carol, Lisa, Karen, and volunteer Lauren—was proud to greet athletes and their families, share information about Special Needs Trusts and our programs, and answer questions from families seeking resources and support.

We were also proud to see our Board First Vice-President, Tom Stevens, who serves on the Board of Special Olympics Southern California, help organize and speak at the annual Rafer Johnson Breakfast for Champions.

One of the most rewarding parts of the weekend was seeing the warm smiles, determination, and joy of the athletes and their families. The Special Olympics Summer Games are a beautiful reminder of the power of inclusion, community, and celebrating every individual's abilities.

Thank you to Special Olympics Southern California for another incredible event.



🎙️💻 Great Webinar with NAMI California!

NAMI California

Webinar: Proxy Parent Foundation

PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION

Proxy Parent Foundation had a fantastic webinar with NAMI California on April 29! The session was engaging, with lots of thoughtful questions—and we were happy to help fill in the blanks and provide clarity for families and caregivers navigating these important topics.

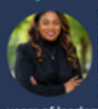
A special thank you to Matilda Grace from NAMI California for hosting this event and creating space for such meaningful dialogue.

At Proxy Parent Foundation, we look forward to continuing the conversation—now and in the future—with those seeking guidance, resources, and support. 💙

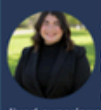
#ProxyParentFoundation #NAMICalifornia

Wednesday, April 29th
12PM-1PM
Virtual on Zoom!

Speakers



Carmen Bowen, MBA, currently serves as Executive Director of Proxy Parent Foundation and Board President of OMG Women Outreaching Women (OMG W.O.W.). With over 20 years of leadership experience across nonprofit, education, and community-based organizations, Carmen is known for her compassionate, mission-driven approach and her ability to build strong partnerships that create lasting impact.



Carol Larkin is the Director of Client Relations at Proxy Parent Foundation. She brings over a decade of experience in the nonprofit sector and lived experience as a mother to a child on the autism spectrum, which deeply informs her commitment to accessibility and equity. She holds a B.A. in Political Science from the College of Saint Benedict





PSS Perspective...



Making a Difference, One Life at a Time

At Proxy Parent Foundation, our Personal Support Services (PSS) team is at the heart of our mission. Every day, our PSS professionals provide guidance, encouragement, advocacy, and compassionate support that empowers beneficiaries to live more independent and fulfilling lives.

We wanted to feature a member of our PSS team to share their experiences, insights, and the moments that remind us why this work matters. Director of Social Services Lisa Lam asked questions of PSS LuLu to learn more about her journey and the passion that drives her commitment to those we serve.

What got you into this work in the first place?

After a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry, I realized that despite my professional achievements, I felt empty. I worked for one of the largest pharmaceutical companies and was on track for a promotion, but I knew my work no longer gave me purpose.

I left that career to pursue the dream I had since college—serving my community through social work. As a nursing home discharge planner, I helped residents transition to assisted living facilities, board and care homes, or return home with appropriate ADA modifications and support services. Watching individuals regain their independence was incredibly rewarding. For the first time, I truly felt my work had meaningful purpose.

That experience reaffirmed my passion for advocating for vulnerable populations and eventually led me to work with both LPS (mental health) and probate conservatorships, where I carried out conservator-of-the-person responsibilities for conservatees. My ability to build trusting relationships, navigate complex systems, and advocate with compassion has allowed me to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those I serve.

What's one misconception about mental health that you wish people understood better?

Navigating mental health challenges comes with both progress and setbacks, and no two journeys are exactly alike.

Throughout my experience, I have come to believe that these challenges can be managed more effectively when individuals have access to consistent support, compassion, and strong advocacy. Having people who listen, encourage, and connect individuals to the right resources can make a meaningful difference in their overall well-being.

I firmly believe it takes a village. Families, friends, healthcare providers, and community organizations all play an important role in creating a support system that empowers individuals to overcome obstacles, achieve their goals, and lead fulfilling lives.

What did you learn that you didn't expect to learn?

The importance of advocacy.

Attending court hearings with beneficiaries and hearing a judge personally thank me for being there to support them was incredibly rewarding. It reinforced how meaningful it is to simply show up, stand beside someone, and ensure they know they are not facing life's challenges alone.

What's a small but important detail that made the biggest difference in your work with beneficiaries?

My family celebrates Christmas Eve more than Christmas Day. Last year, I spent Christmas Eve with beneficiaries who had lost their last surviving parent earlier in the year. It was their first holiday without a parent, and I didn't want them to face that difficult milestone alone.

Sometimes the greatest support we can offer isn't found in paperwork or appointments—it's simply being present when someone needs it most.



Randall's Legislative Corner

Board Member Proxy Parent Foundation



Introductions: Let me introduce myself. I am a family member who has worked as a mental health advocate and registered lobbyist for over 25 years. My son was diagnosed with a psychotic disorder two months shy of his 16th birthday – so my interest in the subject matter related to severe mental illness is both professional as well as personal. I help the Proxy Parent Foundation stay abreast of the news and analysis about policy making pertinent to families, psychiatrists and others who provide care to those with severe and persistent mental illness.

Public Interest: About 80% of the public in California list mental health concerns as a priority for state government investment and programs. Which translates to a lot of activity related to legislation or state budget issues in the state capitol – much of it of interest to the larger Proxy Parent Foundation family. I'll report in this regular column on selected issues moving through the legislature. Let me know if you have subjects you want to see covered, or have questions about measures pending before the legislature, or questions about the laws governing mental health treatment and I'll try to respond.

Intensive policy maker interest: California is emerging from a 6 year period of intense legislative focus related to behavioral health – perhaps its greatest attempt to create a behavioral health transformation related to severe mental illness. Much of that focus is on programing that will address homelessness. Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed innumerable programs addressing homelessness, including CARE Courts, modernizing our statutes related to involuntary care for the gravely disabled, establishing financing bonds to build more treatment facility beds and assisted living facilities.

Modifying a 50 year old law: Let's focus first on SB 43 which modernized the Lanterman Petris Short Act criteria for involuntary holds and conservatorships. Prior to the enactment of SB 43, the LPS Act provided for involuntary holds only if the individual with a severe mental illness was dangerous or unable to meet basic human needs for food, clothing or shelter. To better address the needs of homeless individuals in today's world SB 43 expanded those criterion so that they additionally included individuals unable to meet their basic needs for personal safety or necessary medical care.

Expansion of Criterion: One significant expansion of the grave disability standard in the LPS said that individuals with a serious substance use disorder could be assessed for grave disability based on the SUD alone. All the above modernizations were adopted in the hope they would provide more tools to address the complexity of chronically homeless individuals – particularly those who suffered multiple arrests and/or involuntary hospitalizations mostly because they refused medication, or they stopped taking medication. This complexity requires protections for individuals who cannot manage health conditions or safely navigate encampments on city streets. SB 43 addresses these dimensions and provides protection.

Continued...



Randall's Legislative Corner

Board Member Proxy Parent Foundation



SB 43 modernized the criterion in the 50 year old Lanterman Petris Short Act by expanding the criterion for involuntary treatment. It was signed in 2023, counties were authorized to delay full implementation until January 1, 2026, so the establishment of this new policy is not yet able to provide coherent outcomes. But I have high hopes that the outcomes when they eventually become available will show us that we're indeed protecting individuals who cannot care for themselves. In all transparency this was a bill that I helped develop and I think it can help us treat individuals who reject treatment because they don't believe they are sick. They don't need to be homeless or in jail or prison to meet these new criteria – they can be dwelling in the back bedrooms of family homes or couch surfing with acquaintances.

Anosognosia is medical terminology used to describe a neurological condition in which a person is unable to perceive that they have an illness such as schizophrenia. It's not denial but a physical deficit in the brain that can manifest across many medical conditions or illnesses. If you don't believe you are sick, why would you need help? This is a huge problem when this lack of insight causes you to be hospitalized or arrested repeatedly for expressions of a mental illness. National surveys indicate that 53.7 percent of people with schizophrenia have anosognosia - about 3.7 million nationally according to the Treatment Advocacy Center . The accompanying rejection of treatment due to anosognosia is not trivial but a very costly burden for state and local authorities.

Knotting together loose threads: LPS state audit. The state of California audited the use of the LPS criterion before it was transformed by SB 43, looking closely at three counties. Several of the more significant findings were that people with severe mental illness did not receive adequate ongoing care once they were released from inpatient care, and that the most salient cause for revolving door arrests and/or readmissions was discontinuation of medication in the community. Anosognosia was acknowledged to play a significant role in the discontinuation of treatment. Assisted Outpatient Treatment was specifically called out as a treatment modality that could reverse some of these trends. AOT is available in most California counties.

We the people: So, we are back to the central question of what can we, the people, do to help? Educate yourself, your community to the meaning of anosognosia! The Treatment Advocacy Center has a wonderful resource page available.

Until next time!

Randall EmpiricalPolicy@gmail.com



Don't Let "Later" Become "Too Late"

⌛ The Best Time to Plan Was Yesterday. The Next Best Time Is Today.

If you've been putting off setting up or completing your Special Needs Trust, you're not alone—but now is the time to take that important step.

Every day you wait is another day without a plan in place for the person who depends on you most. A Special Needs Trust can protect benefits, preserve assets, and provide lasting peace of mind. Start the conversation today—because planning ahead is one of the greatest gifts you can give.

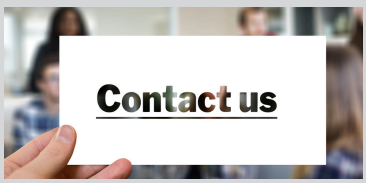
Click the "**Schedule Now**" button to book an appointment with our **Director of Client Relations**, who will guide you through the process with clarity and care. We'll help you put the essential pieces in place so your loved one is protected and supported—especially when you're no longer there to do it yourself.

Prefer email? Reach out directly to **Carol Larkin** at clarkin@proxyparentfoundation.org or use this link: https://calendly.com/clarkin-proxyparentfoundation/ppf-info-call to get started.

💙 Peace of mind starts with a plan. Let's create it together.

Special Needs Trust

Schedule Now

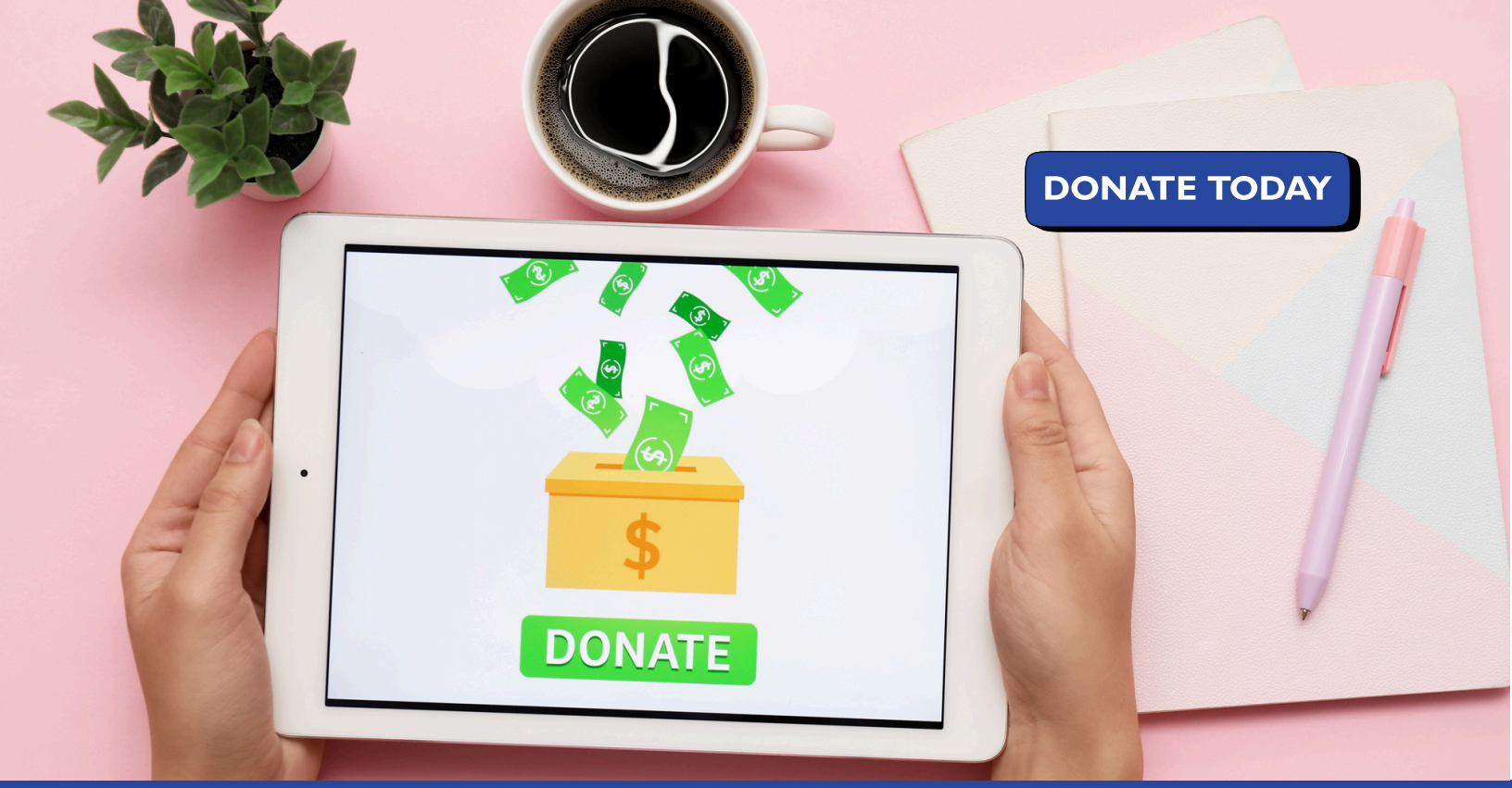


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Your Support Sustains Our Mission

Proxy Parent Foundation's Mission is to serve the disabled community and their families by acting as a Trustee of the PLAN of CA Master Pooled Trust open to beneficiaries of all disabilities and providing Personal Support Services to our trust beneficiaries who are mentally disabled. Our operations rely on trust fees and the generosity of donors like you. Your donation directly supports our ability to provide these essential services to those who need them most.

✓ 501(c)(3) Tax-Deductible Donation
Proxy Parent Foundation is a registered nonprofit organization



Quick and secure donation:
www.proxyparentfoundation.org/donate

Make checks payable to:

Proxy Parent Foundation
15243 La Cruz Drive #889
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INFO@PROXYPARENTFOUNDATION.ORG
PROXYPARENTFOUNDATION.ORG
714-997-3310

Keep Your Contact Information Current

Have you moved, changed your phone number, or updated your email address?

At Proxy Parent Foundation, staying connected with our families and beneficiaries is incredibly important to us. We want to ensure you receive important updates, resources, event information, and any communications related to your trust.

If you've recently moved, changed your phone number, or updated your email address, please take a moment to share your current contact information with us.

✉ General Email: info@proxyparentfoundation.org
🌐 Website: www.proxyparentfoundation.org

The Proxy Parent Foundation Team:

- Executive Director: Carmen Bowen, MBA
- Director of Client Relations: Carol Larkin, MA
- Director of Social Services: Lisa Lam, MSW, CMC
- Director of Administration: Karen Clark, MBA



We are here to support you—and we want to make sure we can always reach you when it matters most.

Thank you for helping us stay connected. 💙

👉 Please email us at info@proxyparentfoundation.org
if you need to update, change, or correct your contact information.



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Thank You for Reading This Newsletter!

Look for our next edition in Fall 2026