PROXY PARENT FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2026 ISSUE 35

Who Will Care When You're Not There?



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Meet Many Mansions...



In 1979, a collection of community members, civic leaders, and representatives of faith organizations joined forces to address the Conejo Valley's growing affordable housing crisis. They started by expanding upon the model of a local rental assistance program, but soon realized they were building something new, a whole greater than the sum of its parts. This new coalition was dedicated to ensuring that struggling friends and neighbors could remain housed and supported in their own community. That meeting marked the beginning of Many Mansions.

Almost 50 years later, Many Mansions has become a leading provider of affordable housing in Southern California, and the largest Permanent Supportive Housing provider in Ventura County. Owning and managing 24 communities that serve over 2,000 economically disadvantaged residents, Many Mansions is guided by its dual mission to develop and maintain quality affordable housing and to provide services that enrich the lives of its residents, uplifting the community. Those services include Supportive Services, which serve chronically homeless or disabled individuals; Community Services, which provides resources and support to low-income families; and Youth Programs, which offer educational support, afterschool and summer activities, and skill-building opportunities to over 500 children.

At a time when thousands of Californians are at risk of losing their homes to climbing rents and costs, Many Mansions works hard at every level to ensure that those with low income remain housed — and thrive. You can find out more about programming and how to get involved by visiting www.manymansions.org, or by emailing HannahB@manymansions.org.







Message from the Executive Director...



As I reflect on my first year as Executive Director of Proxy Parent Foundation—from April 15, 2025, to today—one word comes to mind: **whirlwind**. But not just any whirlwind—*a special one.*

This past year has been a season of learning, growth, and deep connection. I've had the privilege of immersing myself in the world of Special Needs Trusts, meeting remarkable family members and beneficiaries, and building meaningful relationships with community partners who share our commitment to advocacy and care.

Education and outreach quickly became a priority. During my tenure, we intentionally expanded our educational offerings through podcasts, webinars, special presentations, and both in-person and virtual events. We've attended numerous resource fairs and hosted information tables across the community. Simply put—we've been busy, and purposefully so.

From May through December 2025 alone, we completed 23 events and presentations, significantly increasing awareness of Proxy Parent Foundation and the services we provide. Along the way, we also implemented important operational changes and process enhancements to help our organization run more smoothly and effectively.

This Spring edition marks the fourth newsletter under my leadership, and I'm proud to see how it continues to grow and evolve. Communication has been a major focus—we now post on social media at least weekly and have expanded our presence to include Instagram and YouTube. You may also notice more consistent email communications designed to keep you informed and engaged.

While I'm only highlighting a few of the many improvements made in 2025, I can confidently say that 2026 is shaping up to be even better. We are focused on growing our client base, strengthening outreach partnerships, and continuing to expand Special Needs Trust education within our communities. You'll also see a revamped website later this year—so keep an eye out and be sure to share your feedback when it launches.

None of this would be possible without our small but mighty team. It has been a pleasure working alongside Carol (Director of Client Relations), Karen (Director of Administration), and Lisa (Director of Social Services). We are also deeply grateful for the many behind-the-scenes supporters who help keep Proxy moving forward. Strengthening our resources and capacity remains a priority so we can continue providing the highest level of service to those we serve.

Thank you to everyone who has made this past year so meaningful for me. I'm grateful, inspired, and excited for what lies ahead—and I look forward to many more years of impact together.

With appreciation,
Carmen Bowen, MBA



What's Happening in the Proxy World

Finale Update: Gratitude to the Pepperdine Service Leadership Team!





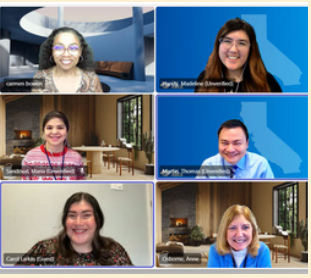


On December 2nd, we had the honor of attending the final presentation in person at Pepperdine University's Malibu campus, where the Pepperdine Service Leadership Class—the Pacific Consulting Group—shared their culminating insights and recommendations for Proxy Parent Foundation.

Their presentation was impressive, thoughtful, and full of fresh ideas. They offered innovative strategies to help guide our next chapter and reaffirmed that many of the initiatives we recently implemented are on the right track. The team delivered a strong pitch, and their comprehensive marketing plan was both well-structured and filled with valuable recommendations.

A heartfelt thank you to Dr. Bernstein, Alicia, Tanner, Kyle, Chloe, and Hana for your hard work, dedication, and meaningful consultation. Your contributions will help us continue to grow, evolve, and better serve the communities who rely on us.

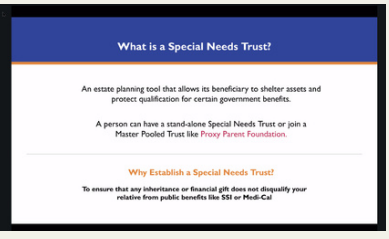
We are grateful for your partnership—and excited for what the future holds!



Proxy Parent Foundation was proud to partner with **CalABLE** for a highly attended educational webinar focused on how Special Needs Trusts and ABLE accounts can work together to support individuals with disabilities. With over 1,500 registrants and more than 600 viewers, the response reinforced the importance of accessible, practical information for our community. The recorded webinar is now available for those who missed the live event, allowing families and professionals to continue learning at their convenience. We are grateful for this impactful partnership and look forward to continuing collaborative education opportunities that strengthen planning, confidence, and long-term support.

View Video: https://youtu.be/2qpbAlmMo5Y





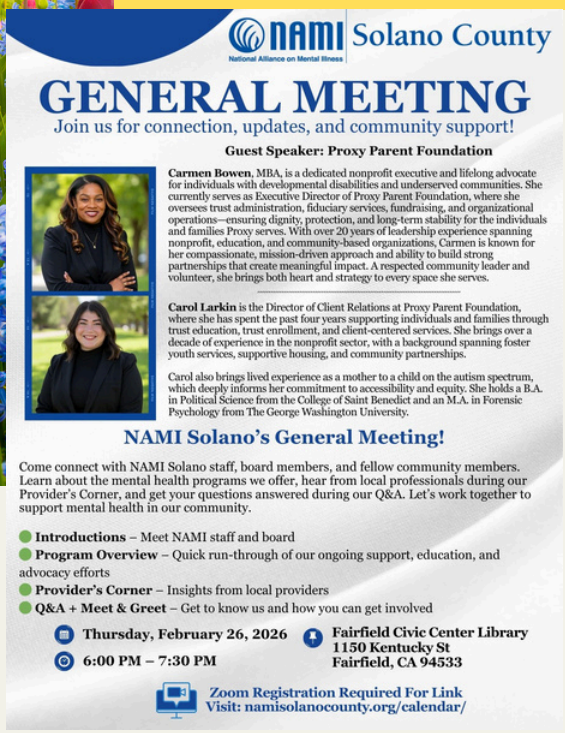
Community in Action: Proxy Parent Foundation with NAMI San Fernando Valley

On January 21, Proxy Parent Foundation had the privilege of presenting at the NAMI San Fernando Valley Monthly Meeting via Zoom. The photos captured here reflect the strong sense of connection, engagement, and shared purpose that defined the evening.

Carol Larkin, Director of Client Relations, led an informative presentation on Special Needs Trusts, followed by a lively Q&A supported by Carmen Bowen, Executive Director. The thoughtful questions and open dialogue offered valuable insight into what families are seeking and continue to shape how we serve our community.

We are grateful to NAMI San Fernando Valley for the opportunity to share this important information and for their continued partnership. We look forward to future collaborations as we continue working together to educate and support families.

More Happening in the Proxy World



Thank You, NAMI Solano County!

On February 27, Carol Larkin, Director of Client Relations, and I had the pleasure of serving as guest speakers at the NAMI Solano County General Meeting. We are truly grateful for the opportunity to share information about Special Needs Trust planning with such an engaged and thoughtful community.

Thank you to the entire NAMI Solano County team for the warm welcome and for hosting a well-attended hybrid session. We especially appreciated the insightful questions and meaningful dialogue. It was a privilege to provide clarity around Special Needs Trusts and discuss how proper planning can help protect benefits and provide long-term security for individuals living with mental illness.

We are thankful to Deb for coordinating the event and for sharing our contact information with attendees.

We look forward to future collaborations and the opportunity to serve the NAMI Solano County community again.

Proxy Parent Foundation was proud to participate in the **New Horizons Walk & Roll** Annual Event, a fun-filled family day dedicated to celebrating and supporting individuals with special needs and their families. The event brought the community together for a morning of activities, connection, and shared purpose. Families enjoyed social activities while learning about valuable resources from the many organizations present. It was a wonderful opportunity for Proxy Parent Foundation to connect with families, share information about Special Needs Trusts, and stand alongside other organizations committed to supporting the special needs community.









Save the Date: Special Olympics Summer Games 2026!

June 6 & 7, 2026

Proxy Parent Foundation is thrilled to share that we will once again be hosting a booth at the 2026 Special Olympics Southern California Summer Games!

This extraordinary event is filled with determination, joy, sportsmanship, and powerful community spirit. We are honored to return and participate in a weekend that celebrates the incredible athletes who inspire us all through their courage and achievement.

We invite you to mark your calendars and plan to stop by our booth to say hello as you cheer on these amazing competitors. Together, we can continue to champion inclusion, opportunity, and the limitless potential of individuals with disabilities.

We look forward to seeing you there!

For full event details, visit:
https://sosc.org/summergames/

Our Clients...



A Heartfelt Connection: Meeting Dorothy and Supporting Her Family's Future

Every so often, we have the privilege of meeting someone whose spirit, warmth, and determination leave a lasting impression. This spring, I had the honor of getting to know Dorothy, our newest member of the Proxy Parent Foundation community. At 92 years young, Dorothy is bright, sharp, engaging, and full of life—and she is the devoted grantor of Special Needs Trusts for two of her adult children.

Dorothy reached out after receiving one of our newsletters. She shared that she had been thinking about setting up Special Needs Trusts for her children for many years, and reading more about our services gave her the nudge she needed to take the next step. As she put it, "Time is flying, and I want everything in place so my children are cared for when I can no longer do it myself."

A Personal Approach for a Meaningful Process

Some of the documents involved—such as the joinder, service plan, trust contribution schedule, and Personal Support Services (PSS) contract—can feel a bit cumbersome. Dorothy was determined, but the paperwork felt overwhelming. So, we scheduled a Google Meet appointment, and with a little help from her son (who is not a beneficiary), she logged in beautifully.

Together, page by page, we completed two full sets of documents for each of her adult children. I updated the forms with her in real time, simplifying the process and easing her frustration. What could have taken days of back-and-forth was completed—accurately and stress-free—in just two hours.

A Special Visit

The next step was finalizing signatures and notarization. Dorothy kindly asked if I would come to her home to assist, and I happily agreed. I arranged for Anne, our wonderful mobile notary, to meet us there. Dorothy welcomed us into her home with such warmth—and even surprised us with delicious chocolates that we definitely didn't need but gladly enjoyed. We reviewed each document, signed, notarized, and ensured everything was ready for the next steps. Anne was fantastic, and I look forward to involving her in future visits with other families who may benefit from this level of personal support.

Planning for Today and Peace for Tomorrow

During our conversations, I also had the pleasure of meeting Dorothy's son, who will play an important role in helping support his siblings. It was clear that meeting in person gave him peace of mind, knowing that Proxy Parent Foundation will be here to guide and support him when his mother is no longer able to. Dorothy expressed a deep sense of relief when the process was complete. After years of contemplating, she could finally take a breath knowing her children's future is secure and her wishes are clearly documented. Her son echoed that sentiment—grateful that everything is now properly set up and that he has support moving forward.

A Note of Gratitude

Dorothy, thank you for trusting us, welcoming us into your home, and becoming part of the Proxy Parent Foundation family. It was a joy to spend time with you, to support your planning, and to help ensure your children will be cared for exactly as you envision. Thank you for allowing us to share your journey with Proxy.

We wish you many wonderful moments during your upcoming visits to your special getaway spot—and please know, whenever you need us, we are here.

Board Member Spotlight



RANDALL HAGAR

Can you tell us a little about yourself—your background, your path into policy work, and what drives you in this field?

My path into mental health policy began with my mother. She was a first-generation mental health advocate, involved locally and at the state level, and I grew up listening to conversations about legislation and advocacy around our dinner table. She helped establish a suicide hotline in Sacramento County—work that continues to benefit communities today. That early exposure gave me both inspiration and a head start.

While at UC Davis, I had my first hands-on experience with policymaking when I worked on a two-year effort to reverse restrictions placed on campus media. I helped research, draft, and advocate for regulatory changes—my introduction to finding an issue, building a case, and lobbying for reform. I discovered that I truly loved policy work.

I later interned with Assemblyman John Vasconcellos, known for his leadership in mental health legislation. There, I saw firsthand how policymaking directly affects families and communities.

Years later, the work became deeply personal when my son was diagnosed with a psychotic disorder. Suddenly, the policy conversations weren't theoretical—they were our reality. That intersection of policy and lived experience is what drives me today: ensuring families are supported, systems function with compassion, and individuals facing mental health challenges are treated with dignity and understanding.

What brought you to Proxy Parent Foundation?

I became aware of Proxy Parent Foundation during its earliest days, when two NAMI Sacramento members helped establish it. At the time, I was navigating serious crises with my son, so while I believed in the mission, I didn't yet have the capacity to get involved.

What resonated most was the need to understand California's treatment laws. I was only able to get my son hospitalized because I happened to know the law at the right moment. That experience led me to study involuntary treatment laws—5150 holds, conservatorships, and assisted outpatient treatment—and ultimately to policy reform work.

I served as Legislative Director for NAMI California, later joined the California Psychiatric Association, and also serve on the board of the Treatment Advocacy Center in Virginia. Bringing that expertise to Proxy Parent Foundation allows me to keep the board informed about developments in mental health law and policy so we can better serve families and advocate for meaningful change.

How long have you served on the Proxy Parent Foundation Board?

Gosh, it's been about seven or eight years now. It's been meaningful to watch the organization grow and evolve over that time. Being part of that progress—and helping shape it through policy insight and lived experience—has been incredibly rewarding.

Looking ahead to 2026 legislation, what bills or policy shifts should our community be watching most closely?

We're still in the bill introduction period, so the full slate of proposals won't be clear until the deadline passes. That said, a key trend is legislation at the intersection of mental health and artificial intelligence, particularly as it relates to psychotherapy and behavioral health services.

Lawmakers will discuss protections for individuals seeking online therapy—questions like: are they speaking with a licensed professional, or interacting with a chatbot? Just as we've seen debates around children's access to social media, it's important that people know exactly who—or what—they're engaging with. Clear warnings, labeling, and safeguards will be essential to ensure online mental health services are safe, effective, and transparent.

Board Spotlight Interview Continued...

California leads the nation in mental health and disability policy. What's moving through the legislature that could fundamentally change how we serve children with mental health needs and disabilities?

A major trend is integrating mental health care directly within schools. Through the California Child and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative over the past four years, nearly $2.4 billion has been allocated to schools to establish on-campus mental health services and require health plans to cover them. Early intervention is critical—helping children when they first show signs of struggle and providing support right in the school environment.

Some of this funding also supports programs that train primary care physicians, recognizing that children often first present mental health concerns during routine medical visits.

Beyond schools and clinics, California is innovating in services for vulnerable populations, including people experiencing homelessness. Programs in cities like San Francisco are taking a comprehensive approach—providing housing, mental health care, and substance use counseling. Innovations like street medicine bring care directly to people on the streets, and expanded assisted outpatient treatment programs help ensure individuals who refuse care can still receive evaluation and treatment to stabilize their lives. State investments in new psychiatric beds are also slowly coming online. Altogether, these initiatives create a more connected system of care for children and adults alike.

If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing about how California supports mental health or disability systems, what would it be?

If I had a magic wand, I'd create a 24/7 comprehensive system of care for anyone with a severe mental illness. A system that supports people through every stage—ensuring safety, providing emergency medications, helping them stabilize, and then supporting them as they return to school, find jobs, and regain independence. Consistent, accessible care like that goes a long way toward restoring dignity, self-esteem, and hope.

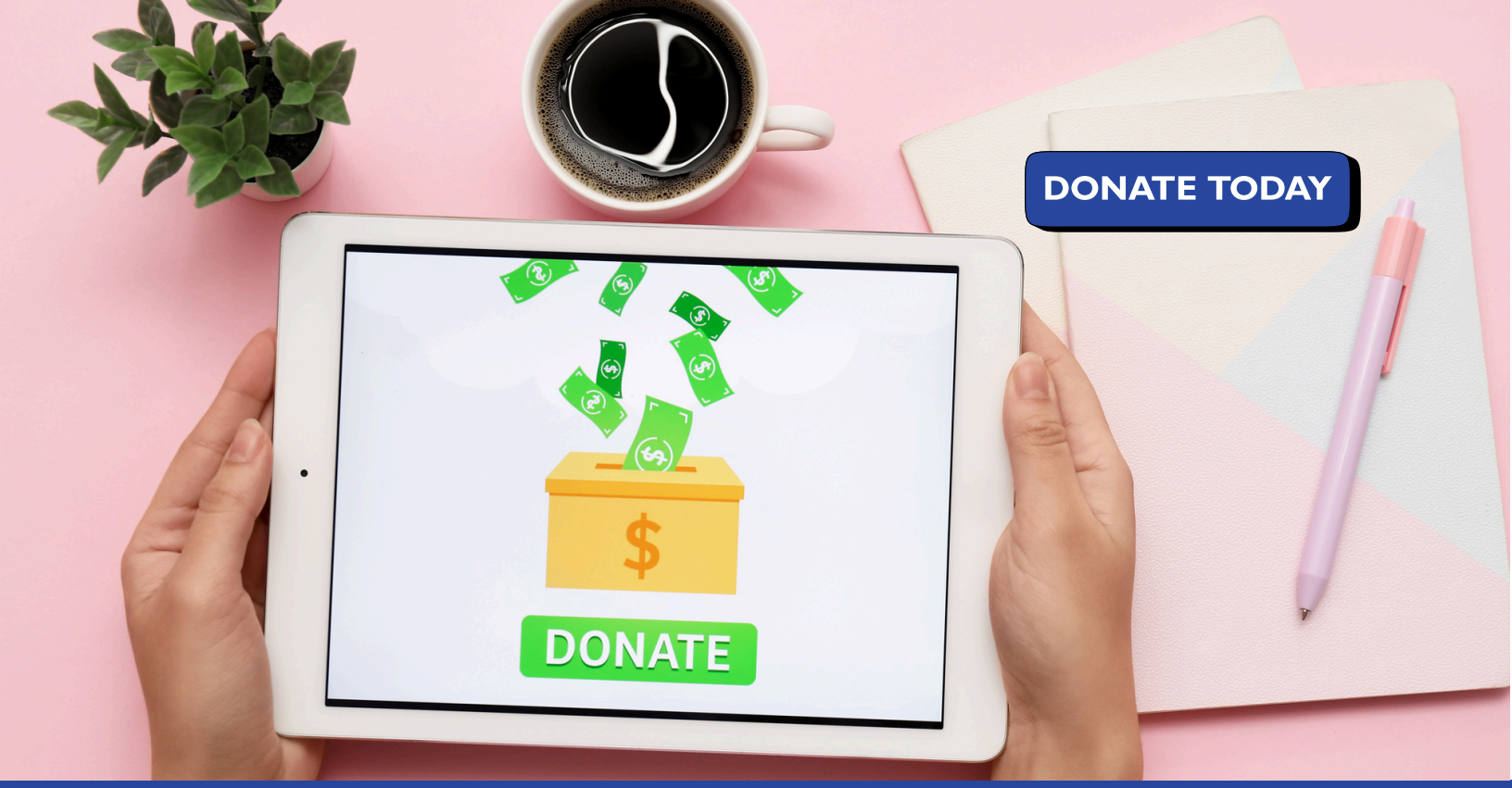
Randall Hagar's dedication to mental health policy is deeply personal, profoundly informed, and unwavering in its commitment to families and individuals facing challenges. On the Proxy Parent Foundation Board, he combines lived experience, legislative expertise, and compassionate leadership—reminding us that strong governance and advocacy aren't just essential—they save lives. His guidance helps ensure our community remains informed, supported, and empowered to navigate complex mental health and disability systems.



Randall's Legislative Corner



Beginning with our Summer 2026 Newsletter Edition, we are proud to introduce a new feature: **Randall's Legislative Corner.** In this dedicated section, Board Member Randall Hagar will share timely updates on legislative issues, advocacy efforts, and upcoming bills impacting the mental health and disabilities community. With his deep policy expertise and lived experience, Randall will help keep our families, partners, and supporters informed about what's happening in Sacramento and beyond. We're excited to bring you insights that matter—and to keep our community engaged, empowered, and in the loop.



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
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

New Resources and Coming Soon!

NEW!



Website Update — We Heard You!

Exciting news is on the horizon! We are currently working with our web designer to completely refresh our website, and we couldn't be more thrilled about what's coming.

Your feedback has been invaluable. Many of you have reached out asking for easier access to FAQs, Testimonials, a Calendar of Events, and essential forms and resources — and we listened! The new site will feature all of these additions, along with a fresh new look and feel that reflects the heart of our community.

We are committed to staying abreast of what our community needs, and this update is a direct result of your voices being heard. We hope to have the new site ready for you to explore by August 2026.



Stay tuned — we'll be sure to let you know the moment it's live!

YouTube We're Officially on YouTube!

We're excited to announce that Proxy Parent Foundation is now on YouTube! Our channel will continue to grow with meaningful video content—created and curated to inform, inspire, and keep you connected to our mission.

Subscribe today so you don't miss new videos as they're released and shared.
Find us on YouTube: @proxyparentfoundation

Thank you for being part of our community—now let's connect on screen!

Coming in 2026:

Website Update:

- Adding resources, documents and links

Need Information more frequently?

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Thank You for Reading This Newsletter!

Look for our next edition in Summer 2026