

# Spotlight on Gatepath

By Julia Ballantyne and Gatepath

## *Gatepath Celebrates 100 Years of Serving Individuals with Special Needs*

Gatepath, a nonprofit founded in 1920 as the Welfare and Public Health Service of San Mateo County, has grown significantly over the past 100 years to become a cornerstone of the community. Today, Gatepath is the largest provider of services on the Peninsula for children, youth and adults with special needs and developmental disabilities. Each day, its dedicated and compassionate staff serves more than 1,500 individuals and families at 13 locations in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

Gatepath's comprehensive service portfolio includes free developmental screenings, pediatric therapy, and three inclusive preschools for infants and children, as well as independent living skills programs and job training and placement for adults. All programs are designed to promote inclusion and prepare individuals to actively participate in their schools, community, and workplaces.



*Members of the Gatepath Auxiliary's Advocacy Committee met with State Assembly Member Kevin Mullin to discuss state funding to the disabilities system in California. (Pictured left to right: Katie Sharp, Kathy Cook, Mickey Bock, Cathy Nessier, Carol Windsor)*

What many people don't know is that the safety net of support services provided by Gatepath are largely made possible by supporters in the community, such as volunteers, corporate and community partners, individual donors, and board members. Gatepath's most vital supporter, who is celebrating 70 years of service, has been the Gatepath Auxiliary. Established in 1950, the Auxiliary's first president, Catherine Campbell Hearst, was a distinguished resident of Hillsborough. Through events and fundraising efforts, the Auxiliary has raised more than \$4 million for

Gatepath programs and its 165 members have generously provided the nonprofit with thousands of volunteer hours each year.

Through the support of Gatepath's stakeholders and Auxiliary, the nonprofit has been able to grow and thrive, not just survive. The organization has developed

innovative programs and invested in technologies to improve efficiencies. In July, Gatepath merged with Palo Alto-based Abilities United.

Over the past two decades, funding to California's disabilities system has been reduced by more than \$1.1 billion, while costs of doing business have increased. The resulting economic pressures have created a systemwide crisis seriously impacting service delivery to some of California's most vulnerable residents. However, Gatepath and Abilities United have proactively addressed these financial pressures by joining forces to ensure continuity and quality of the services they provide to those with developmental disabilities.

"In all ways, we are better together and can make an even larger impact on the lives of those we serve," said Bryan Neider, CEO of the combined Gatepath and Abilities United organization. "With the amazing support of our community members, we have been able to stand the test of time and are extremely excited about what the future holds as we head into our next 100 years."

To celebrate the nonprofit's milestone 100th anniversary year, on May 14, 2020 Gatepath will host its Power of Possibilities event featuring two special guests: Emmy Award-Winning Actor, Author, Director and Producer Henry Winkler and Animal Scientist and Autism Self-Advocate Dr. Temple Grandin.



*Members of the Gatepath Auxiliary posed for a group photo in 2017. Several members not pictured.*



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