

# >AVANZA>

## Adventures

First Edition | Fall 05

### Contact Info:

AVANZA  
Monterey County  
Transition Age Youth Program  
1000 South Main Street, #105  
Salinas, CA 93901

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### Announcing>We Need You!

As you may know, our youth are in trouble and unfortunately, many youth services and centers are being shut down. We are looking for interested members of our community to share their expertise, knowledge and guidance to help our youth acquire as much support as possible. So...if you or anyone you know in the community would like to be on our board, give us a call!

If interested please call our community outreach specialist, Manuela Valdez, at: 784-2123

### Avanza Transition Age Youth Program Has Begun Servicing Youth!



Avanza, Monterey County Children's Behavioral Health's Transition Age Youth program has begun offering services to our youth. In our beginning months we have already seen how remarkable our youth are – and with just a little bit of guidance – how far they can go. We look forward to watching, mentoring, coaching and guiding the youth as they grow into amazing adults! You may have a youth you want to refer. You may also be wondering...

What we do at Avanza:

- Provide services to youth ages 16-22
- Assist youth in developing goals and dreams
- Assist youth in creating specific plans to achieve their goals
- Tailor the program to each youth based on their strengths
- Provide weekly mentoring and coaching. (We meet with the youth 1-2 times per week or as needed)
- Meet with youth's family to develop a supportive network
- Offer vocational counseling and coaching
- Assist with job placement
- Assist with school/college enrollment and support
- Offer assistance with financial aid and/or securing scholarships
- Social skills training
- Assist with Independent Living Skills
- Assist with Housing
- Individual and Family Therapy
- Engage youth by taking them on fun-filled trips and outings.
- Take youth on educational outings (to colleges, universities, seminars...)
- Inspire youth with speakers and mentors from the community who have faced similar struggles in young adulthood
- And much much more... (if the youth need it, we try our best to provide it!)

### Avanza Adventures> Photography Trip to Lover's Point

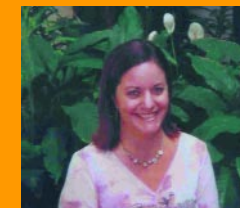
In August the Avanza staff took a few of our youth that are interested in exploring photography to Lover's Point in Pacific Grove. They had a wonderful time getting out in nature, watching the marine life, playing games and taking each other's pictures. Here are a few!



Please Place Postage Here

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### Meet Our Staff



Program Supervisor:  
Dana Edgull

Program Co-Directors:  
Marni Freedman-de los Rios  
and Pat Herro

Vocational Specialist:  
Pat Herro

Therapist :  
Marni Freedman-de los Rios

Youth Coordinator:  
Juan Estrada

Drug and Alcohol Specialist:  
Megan Barnes

Educational Specialist:  
Veronica Gonzalez

Community Outreach Specialist:  
Manuela Valdez

## Spotlight On a Hero for Our Youth

Hero for  
Our Youth  
>Dodi Rowe<



“ Thank you for your years of hard work and dedication. Our youth are lucky to have you...”

As Mental Health Workers, our work often goes unacknowledged – so we at Avanza have chosen to highlight one outstanding staff member each newsletter!

When we asked Dodi, “What was your best day as a therapist?” she replied, “It was the day a teenager who had struggled through the system for years brought me his diploma and showed it to me proudly.” He had been continually expelled from school, been sent to multiple group homes, was on and off meds and was in and out of day treatment. “It brings tears to my eyes just thinking about it.” This is the kind of therapist that Dodi is – and the reason we picked her to spotlight as our Hero.

Dodi has been a therapist for eighteen years and has been with Monterey County for the last five years. She has recently changed positions from Day Treatment therapist to Behavioral Health Specialist for the FAST (Family Assessment Support and Treatment) team. She says that the best part of her job is seeing the change – seeing the growth in the youth she works with. She recently had an experience where a teenager was able to be integrated into the mainstream – despite many who had said that this would never be possible.

So, Dodi, our hats are off to you! Thank you for your years of hard work and dedication. Our youth are lucky to have you as an advocate, a teacher, a mentor, a guide, and a truly remarkable therapist!

## Spotlight On Our Youth >Jeff<



What a difference half a year can make...

When Jeff entered the Avanza program six months ago he told us that he could not see himself achieving much of anything in life. Due to an overwhelming depression, he was sleeping all day and staying up all night. He stated that he had no motivation to interact with the world and had been this way for five years. Despite being incredibly bright, Jeff had struggled in school for years and had eventually dropped out after the tenth grade. He had no interest in getting a job, going back to school, getting his GED, learning how to drive or making any plans for his future.

Today, Jeff not only has a positive attitude but a sparkle in his eye. He has several goals and dreams and is motivated to accomplish them. He has just received his GED and after investigating several options, he will be attending a computer tech course at The Spot next month. He also recently acquired a driver's permit and is back to a regular sleeping schedule. He helps around the house and his parents boast that he is a positive role model for his two younger brothers. When he graduates, Jeff plans to use his education to get a job as a computer technician. Jeff believes that his future looks great. When asked what he would say to other youth who may be struggling to get motivated and to believe in themselves Jeff says just one thing: “Just push through it and it will get better!”

# YOUTH Testimonials

“ I've met new people that otherwise I would have never known.”

>Clarissa, 17

“ It's great to have a program that helps youth that are not quite ready to face the real world.”

>Jason, 18

“ This program makes me feel like an adult.”

>Amy, 20

“ I like the activities and the program is cool.”

> Aracely, 20

“ This program has meant a lot to me. I'm actually moving and my life is a lot more organized.”

>Jeff, 22