

# COMPASS

2025 Spring Edition

Volume 38



Supporting Adults with Disabilities since 1996

# What More is Possible

By Sadie Hess, Founder & CEO

Our last strategic planning session in 2024 was focused on the future. We took time to figure out what our heart was for the future, and we focused on three concepts: innovation, holistic services, and industry transformation. We eagerly brainstormed and dreamed together about what our future can be. The future is always a concept you cannot fully comprehend; you can plan, and things do not always go according to the plan. We know we cannot control the future, but we can control who we are as a light in the industry we provide services in.

We have decided we will lean into looking at problems with a mindset that there is a solution. As an organization, we are committed to embracing opportunity and asking ourselves, "What more is possible?" We are eager to find new approaches to old challenges and continue our dedication to serving individuals with disabilities. Our goal is to not just enhance the services we currently provide but also explore new ways to support our clients holistically, creatively, and generously. We are excited for our future and leaning into the vision of all it can be. We have several services and projects we have been working on that are taking us into the future.

## **Innovation**

Innovation is at the core of who we are and will continue to drive us forward. Planning for long-term sustainability in digital solutions and technology is invaluable for our ongoing success. An example of innovation in our past has been QSP. We are excited to see how we can develop even more impactful tools and solutions in the future through QSP.

We want to look for new creative solutions in technology for our industry. Is there a device or application that can improve the lives of the community we serve? Can we create a solution to a problem we face? What more is possible in the world of technology for us when we lean into the future?

We will be nationally recognized in the human services space, known for innovative solutions, heart-driven leadership, and a deep commitment to those we serve. It is our mission to set national standards for care, person-centered support, and organizational support.

## **Creative & Holistic Services for Clients**

As we look to the future, client services will remain at the heart of our mission. We are looking for opportunities to serve our whole client. Our SLS, ILS, and CFS services have been our benchmark services, and those will remain. We want to look at things such as employment for clients, social recreation, support in creative endeavors, health and wellness opportunities, and much more.

We have started working on obtaining grants and are looking at ways we can partner with state councils and other organizations on how to support clients. As one example of this, we have started a program called Bridge to Belonging.

Bridge to Belonging is a grant-funded initiative aimed at addressing isolation and loneliness in adults with IDD. Bridge to Belonging, to me, is helping our clients and community at large discover what more is possible, inspiring them to live vibrant lives filled with



meaningful connections and valuable skills. Through health and wellness activities, creative arts experiences, and community-based events, we are building bridges that lead to lasting friendships and a stronger sense of belonging.

### Industry Transformation

At Compass, dreams propel everything we do. We will continue to empower both clients and staff to pursue their dreams and goals. Over the next seven years, we will expand and grow our core programs—SLS, ILS, and CFS—and introduce new services that align with our values and expertise. Business-to-business services will also be part of our future, helping other organizations adopt our proven methods. These supports might look like software, consulting, and specialized services. This advancement will enable us to innovate, collaborate and scale empowering other organizations to elevate care standards. This will extend our impact beyond our immediate community to a national level.

We are always looking for ways to bring more life and light to our industry. It is our dream and hope to become the number one leader in our field, serving more clients, creating greater opportunities, and exponentially improving the lives of those we serve.

One example of this is our podcast, hosted by Melanie Bazile, Side of Hope. Melanie is Compass's Director of Innovation & Expansions. She shares stories of hope and grit in the world of human services, social work, advocacy, and the IDD community. Through the podcast, we aspire to bring an authentic voice to social work, highlighting incredible resilience, determination, and hope within the field.

Compass will demonstrate what more is possible when individuals with disabilities are supported to live lives full of meaning, hope, and every opportunity to pursue dreams both big and small. Our heart is to leave something that will outlast us, that will impact generations to come with an excellent standard of care and support for our community that is universal and lasting.



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# Sowing Seeds of Generosity

By Cassandra Sales, ILS Program Manager

Compass loves a good theme. From retreats to camps to the year in general, any reason for us all to come together with one mindset, the better we are all for it. 2025 marks a quarter of a century into this new millennium. We have experienced so much in these past few decades, and regardless of any triumph or hurdle, our community and organization has had one driving force: being a blessing to others because we are grateful for our many blessings. With that, 2025 has become our year of generosity.

Generosity has become synonymous with donations of money over time. However, if you think back to the most generous act, you ever received, I bet most of you don't think of anything to do with money. Maybe it was the time the church showed up to help you move your entire house without even being asked. Perhaps generosity showed up in your life when your team showered you with positive words and stories for your birthday. It might have been when someone sat with you in your grief and let you just be unapologetically human for a while. Generosity is an act of love. As Compass embarks on this year of generosity, that is our mission, to love others well and abundantly.

Generosity also doesn't have to be a big grandiose act. While those make a large impact fast, often, the small everyday actions sow the seeds of generosity on a deeper more profound level. "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" is an old proverb

we have all come to reference. Generosity is that proverb in action. Generosity is the teaching of our teams, community, clients, and stakeholders to give of their unique gifts, talents and abilities to a person, place, or cause that would benefit.

Sowing the seeds of generosity starts with each of us. It's raking your neighbor's lawn because you know they just had surgery. It's volunteering at the local Humane Society to walk dogs and inviting a few of your friends to join along. It's challenging another HUB to a trash pickup challenge at your favorite local park. There are endless ways we as an organization and community can show up generously this year.



Recently, Lacy in our Shasta Region organized a Valentine's for Seniors event where clients got together to write words and make bracelets for Seniors in an Assisted Living Facility, and they delivered them to each resident in person on Valentine's Day. So many of those residents had their entire seasons uplifted because of the generosity of words and time from our ILS, CFS, and SLS clients.

One of the amazing benefits of working with such a vast and diverse team is that all our ideas are wildly different and equally impactful. Think of generosity as confetti. When it's in the bag, it's not that magical, but the second you toss it around, the world gets more vibrant and fuller of passion. Spread your generosity in the same manner – abundantly, wildly, and without restraint this year.

If you have ideas on how we can be generous with our time, words, and actions this year, share them with others. Bring those ideas to your team meetings and partnership meetings. Often, others want to help, and they don't know how. If we collectively work together, the ones with the creative ideas and the ones with the means to make them a reality can make generosity our compass that guides us everywhere.



*Think of generosity as confetti.*

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# Meet Richard

By Ramona Tate, Senior Case Facilitator

Today, I want to share with you a remarkable journey of personal growth, one that exemplifies the transformative power of supported living services with an individual who faced numerous challenges, but has since shown incredible resilience and progress.

Our client Richard entered the world of supported living services in 2011 seeking assistance, guidance, and a place to belong. When Richard first walked into the SLS world after being in residential homes or treatment centers for the majority of his life. Due to being blind he was not taught independent life experience and faced a multitude of barriers. The journey they embarked upon has been one of discovery, self-improvement, and empowerment. Richard was this SCF's first client being transitioned to SLS and I can remember him only saying "I can't do that I'm blind".

The first steps were not easy, as they rarely are. Richard had to learn everyday tasks that most of us take for granted, like cooking and cleaning. Richard worked at a day program shredding paper for 35 years and retired in 2024 to enjoy his wonder years in his own home making his own decisions. Our SLS team was there every step of the way, offering guidance and encouragement, and Richard responded with an incredible drive to learn and improve.

Today, Richard stands before you as an inspiring example of personal growth. Their journey is a testament to the transformative power of supported living services, the dedication of our staff, and, most importantly, the incredible potential within each and every one of us. Richard makes his own bed, helps with chores, and helps with cooking. Richard and his staff have a baking day every Wednesday and he there stirring away.

In closing, I want to remind you all that personal growth is not confined by past experiences or initial challenges. Richard's story demonstrates that with the right support, determination, and a nurturing environment, we can all achieve remarkable personal growth. Let us be inspired by their journey and continue to provide the support and encouragement needed for others to reach their full potential.





# Meet Lee

By Jeanie Russell, ILS Facilitator

In a world that can sometimes feel rushed and impersonal, Lee stands out as a beacon of generosity, kindness, and unwavering support for his family. Known for his deep love for his brother, Ken, Lee has proven time and time again that his care goes beyond words, he's always there in the ways that matter most, offering support, encouragement, and a steady presence.

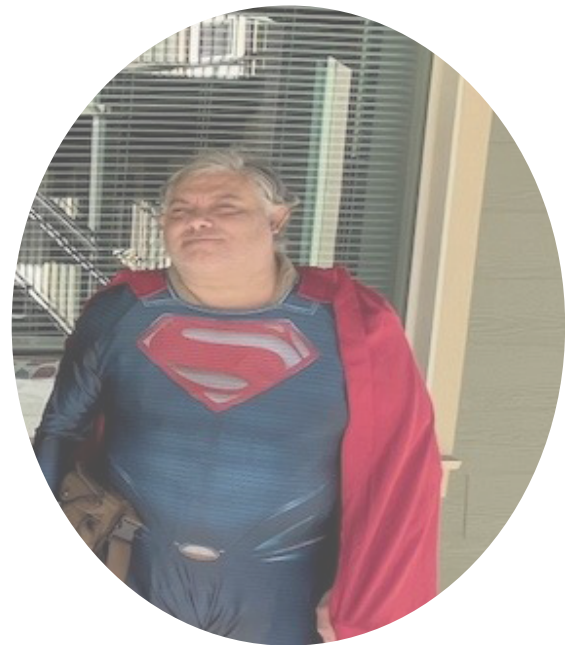
Lee's bond with his brother is one of deep devotion and affection. His commitment to Ken is inspiring, whether it's offering a helping hand during difficult times or simply being a source of emotional comfort, Lee is always there. His actions remind us that true family support isn't just about grand gestures, but about being present in the small, meaningful ways that make a lasting difference. This consistency and genuine care reflect Lee's selfless nature and his ability to put others' needs above his own.

Beyond his incredible role as a brother, Lee is a man of many passions that add even more layers to his character. One of his favorite pastimes is crocheting beautiful blankets. With each stitch, Lee creates intricate and cozy works of art, using his craft as a way to express his love and creativity. His blankets, which range in a variety of colors and patterns, are a testament to his patience and dedication to making something that provides warmth and comfort. Lee's crocheted blankets aren't just pieces of fabric—they are tangible representations of his heart, carefully made to bring joy to the world.

In addition to his creative endeavors, Lee is also an avid reader, with a wide range of interests that keep his mind constantly engaged. His love for reading allows him to explore new worlds, gain knowledge, and deepen his

understanding of the world around him. His passion for books highlights his curiosity and his constant desire to grow as a person.

In every sense, Lee's life is a testament to the power of love, creativity, and generosity. His dedication to his family, his passions, and the people he cares about shines brightly. Thank you, Lee, for being an incredible example of kindness and for reminding us all of the importance of family, creativity, and giving from the heart.



# Meet David

By Cindy Garcia, Senior Case Facilitator

Meet David! For the past five years, he's been a part of Compass, always going the extra mile for those around him. Despite the challenges of his heart condition, he refuses to let it dim his nature. In fact, he draws strength from it, using his time and resources to make a meaningful impact on others' lives. David's generosity is at the core of everything he does, making him a shining example of what it truly means to give back. His passion for service is undeniable, and volunteering remains a constant priority in his life all year long.

For nearly 20 years, David has been a steadfast volunteer at live nation music venues, where he plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals, especially those with physical disabilities, can fully enjoy the magic of live music and festivities. His passion for the music world fuels his commitment, and he finds immense joy in creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for all participants. For David, volunteering at Live Nation isn't just about giving back, it's about being part of something bigger, helping others experience the joy and connection that music brings!

Beyond his work at Shoreline, David also dedicates his time to The Family Giving Tree, where he serves as a devoted "Elf." Whether it's during the Back-to-School Drive or the Holiday Wish Drive, he plays a significant role in ensuring children and families in need receive essential supplies and heartfelt gifts. He spends countless hours organizing, transporting, and distributing donations, bringing warmth and hope to those who need it most. His dedication to this nonprofit mission is truly inspiring, and his efforts have a direct impact on so many lives.



David's unwavering generosity, love, and empathy continue to leave a lasting impression on his community. His commitment to helping others, whether through music or charitable giving, reflects his deep sense of compassion and selflessness. He doesn't just give his time, he gives his heart, making the world a little brighter for everyone he meets!



# Meet Brent

By Terrah Starling, ILS Facilitator

Brent is a great model of independence and fulfillment. He is a four time cancer and stroke survivor. Diagnosed at 18-years-old, he has had quite the health journey. Daily, Brent works on his health and wellness by keeping track of his doctor appointments, following the advice and instruction of his physicians, and making sure he is scheduling and is on time for all of his appointments. Due to his hard work and diligence, he has been in remission for 6 years.

Generosity. Freedom of meanness; readiness or liberality in giving. There isn't a better term to describe Brent. He spends his spare time helping others. This is how he is able to exercise his skill in generosity. If you have ever caught a flight from San Jose or San Francisco airport, it's possible you and your bags were checked in by compass' own Brent Portman. For seven years he has dedicated Fridays to San Francisco airport. Mondays he's at the San Jose airport and has been there for 12 years! Thursdays he maintains the front desk at Stanford hospital and is on the emergency room board. He is also an advocate for people with disabilities.

Brent is a sports connoisseur, baseball being his favorite sport. During the summer he enjoys spending time with the little ones, coaching the junior giants baseball team. When he isn't coaching, he checks in the players when they arrive to the field.

Brent doesn't only help people. He has a love for animals and has been a volunteer for 16 years at the ARF Animal Rescue Foundation. There he helps by walking the dogs and looking after the cats. Did I mention he is also a full-time fur dad? He cares for his service Shih Tzu, Milly. No matter what, his service dog, Milly, is by his side. Somehow with

his busy schedule, he has also managed to find love. He adores his girlfriend of one year, Allison, who supports him in everything he does.

Brent is putting his best foot forward to meet his goals with compass, and is doing an excellent job doing just that.



# Meet Allan

By Arturo Medrano, Case Facilitator

Allan is an exemplary client who has demonstrated remarkable growth over the past year. His commitment to personal improvement and community engagement is truly inspiring.

One of Allan's most notable qualities is his dedication to self-development. Throughout the past years, he has actively sought opportunities for personal growth, whether it is working with his Life Guides or Behaviorist. His eagerness to learn and adapt has been impressive. In addition to his personal growth, Allan has become active in his community. He regularly attends local events such as festivals, parades, church groups, Compass events, and the Special Olympics. Bowling is one of his favorite activities, where he was able to make friends and hang out on a weekly basis. Every time Compass puts on an event, he is the first one to sign up. His presence to the community allows him to connect with individuals and build meaningful relationships.

Another significant aspect of Allan's transformation is the change in his behavior. He has made efforts to adopt healthier habits such as regular exercise, balanced eating, and stress management. The changes have not only improved his physical health but also improved his mental health. Allan consistently demonstrates remarkable generosity. His selfness acts inspire those around him, fostering a culture of kindness and compassion. He is always looking for a way to help.

In conclusion, Allan is an amazing client who has made significant strides in his personal life over the past years. His dedication to self-improvement and community engagement is admirable. Next time you see Allan, make sure to introduce yourself. Meeting and making new friends will make his day!



# Meet Brandon

By Tiffany Holland, ILS Facilitator

Brandon is an amazing example of dreams do come true. Brandon had a long-term dream of moving out of his home and living independently for quite some time. Brandon has faced many challenges and let downs in the process of searching for a home. Brandon met each of these challenges head on.

In December of 2024, Brandon moved into his own home with two roommates. Brandon has navigated understanding how to communicate with his roommates and as well learning new life skills. Brandon is eager to lend a hand and learn from his landlord when he stops by to make repairs. Brandon is generous with his roommates and often tries to prepare his famous sandwiches for himself and his roommates. Brandon is thriving in his new environment and has taken pride in his newly found independence.

Brandon has a huge heart and cares about others. Brandon at times would shy away from communication. Since moving out on his own Brandon reaches out to say hello and check in with staff. Brandon has made such a tremendous leap in his life and has plans to keep furthering his independence. Brandon dreams of one day being completely independent in all areas of his life and is actively working on that dream as often as possible. Brandon was also a client of the month and was very happy to share his achievement with his family and friends.

Brandon enjoys spray painting art and is very talented. Brandon is also an avid gamer and enjoys spending time with his group of friends online that he has known for many years. When Brandon and I first started working together, he found my lack of knowledge regarding gaming and internet services very funny. Brandon's humor is top notch, and he is

always ready for a good laugh! Through good humor and a fair amount of teasing, Brandon was able to teach me some basic gaming technology and why having good internet is such a priority for gaming. Brandon knowledge of technology is truly amazing. He is my go-to for anything technology related.

Our team has been so blessed to watch Brandon's dream come true and we are so excited for what the future holds for him!



*Brandon is an amazing example of dreams do come true.*



# Meet Zena

By Anika Lehr, Senior Case Facilitator

## Zesty, Ernest, Neighborly, Admirable

These are the qualities of the rose that is Zena. Zena blesses everyone she meets with her beautiful personality. Her story is one that inspires and motivates the work that we do here in Supported Living Services. She became a part of the Compass family in April 2024. In that short amount of time, with the support of her staff, Zena has had a tremendous amount of growth. She has developed an outstanding self-care routine, had amazing community outings, and achieved an award from her supervisors at work.

Zena's transformation is apparent to her entire circle of support. One of her biggest achievements is her beauty care routine. Zena has learned to dress up with her favorite colors. Every time I see her, she shows me her necklace and earrings. I just learned that she now puts on her mascara and does her beauty routine on her own. Her ability to master her daily routine independently demonstrates beautiful resilience and growth.

This was also noticed and rewarded at her workplace. Zena works for CSS in Richmond. She participated in a Fashion Show hosted by CSS in January. Zena's entrance to the event was preceded by a speech given by her supervisor. The supervisor announced to the audience how proud she was of Zena and her journey. Zena strutted down the red carpet. With her floral dress floating behind her, her wide red-lipped smile, and her big floppy sun hat, Zena gave sweeping full-arm waves to her fans on both sides of the runway. The crescendo of the show was her final twirl and bow. In the photo, you can see Zena with the two awards she received for placing in the top contenders of the fashion show.

I could go on and on about how bright Zena shines. She is the definition of a social butterfly. She talks to the bus driver, the bank teller, the store owner, and everyone in between. She creates relationships that are genuine and grounded, based in love and connection. Zena is a strong and independent woman who laughs with her whole body. I'm honored to know her, partner with her, and call her a friend. Thank you Zena for being you!



# Meet Chris

By Shannon Laird, ILS Facilitator

I would like to introduce to you one of our wonderful clients from the East Bay, Chris! He has been with Compass for a year and has really come out of his shell. Chris was hesitant to start ILS services and was not sure if this was something that he was ready to commit to. Learning something new can be intimidating and it took Chris outside of his comfort zone. But with consistency, encouragement and a no-pressure approach Chris is enjoying his new extended family here at compass!



Some fun facts about Chris, he has a passion for building Gunpla, which are inspired by Japanese humanoid robots called Gundam. They are futurists and appear in anime, video games and manga. Gunpla are plastic models that you can build and customize, really making them your own creation. Some other hobbies that Chris has are playing video games, he really likes Turn based games which are games where players take turns performing different actions or tactical role play.

You can also find Chris streaming YouTube channels. One of his favorite channels is Dead Meat. It is geared towards the discussion of different horror films, video games and other horror related media providing comedic commentary and behind the scenes information. Chris enjoys all types of horror films, appreciates the artistry behind the scares, special effects, and storytelling. Whether dissecting classic horror or seeking out the last chilling release.

Chris also likes hanging out with his friends and occasionally cats sitting for his sister when she is away. If you ever have the opportunity of meeting Chris, he would love to talk to you about video games or your favorite horror films.

Chris has been striving over the last couple of months. One of his newfound enjoyments is cooking, turning what may have once felt like a grueling task into a creative and rewarding experience. Chris has been experimenting with new recipes and making some of his favorite dishes and really embracing the process of making homemade meals. Along the way he has learned about kitchen safety, keeping things clean, using tools properly and being careful with heat and the handling of sharp knives with care as well as staying vigilant while things are cooking.



# Meet John

By Carrie Jones, Senior Case Facilitator

If there were an award for "Best Big Brother," John would be a top contender! A client with Options/Compass since 2016, John has flourished in supported living services, making the most of every opportunity. Whether he's watching movies, battling it out in video games, or taking long walks with his staff, John knows how to keep life interesting. But his most impressive superpower? Sowing seeds of generosity—especially when it comes to his little sister, Jessica.

Earlier this year, John took a big step—literally—moving into the same apartment complex as Jessica. This dynamic sibling duo both receive Compass SLS services, and John has naturally taken on the role of mentor, motivator, and all-around #1 Big Brother Extraordinaire.

Like many of us, John has had his fair share of ups and downs with his weight, but he's currently on a mission to get healthier. And guess what? He's bringing Jessica along for the ride! Whether it's encouraging her to go on walks or making smarter food choices together, John is always there to cheer her on (and maybe challenge her to a friendly step competition).

But John's generosity goes far beyond fitness tips. Since Jessica has been adjusting to new staff, John has stepped up in a big way—making sure her team knows exactly how she likes her coffee, oatmeal, and all the little details that make her feel at home. Any time Jessica needs help, all she has to do is call her "Bubba," and he's there in a flash, ready to lend a hand and share a smile.

The pair haven't always been big on community events, but John's enthusiasm is turning that around! With a little encouragement from their teams, the siblings have been stepping out more—hitting the movies, joining in on Options-Giving, and gearing up for the upcoming game day event.

Watching John look out for his sister is truly heartwarming. His kindness, patience, and unwavering support prove

that generosity isn't just about giving—it's about showing up, time and time again, for the people you love. Way to go, John! Keep sowing those seeds of generosity—because the world could always use more big brothers like you.





# Meet Dexter

By Alice Byer, CFS Facilitator

I am honored to introduce Compass' newest client, Dexter. Born to Señor Miguel and Señora Stacey, Dexter has been described by his parents as their "angel." Dexter has lived in his family home, surrounded by love, support, and a strong connection to his community. His mom and dad have worked tirelessly to ensure he has every opportunity to engage in the activities he loves, and we are incredibly privileged to walk alongside him as he continues his journey with Compass.



Dexter is deeply integrated into his community, participating in the Special Olympics and almost every sport, including bowling, soccer, basketball, and softball. For the past 20 years, Dexter has dedicated himself to horses – initially with riding on a weekly basis. Though a medical condition now prevents him from riding, he continues to commit himself to groundwork, demonstrating his compassion and dedication. Dexter is also an ice skater who visits the ice-skating rink nearly weekly. While at home, Dexter enjoys puzzles, online games, and unwinding with a good TV show. If Dexter was not talented enough, he also loves music and takes weekly guitar classes.

Less than one year ago, in 2024, Dexter and his father experienced the heartbreaking loss of Señora Stacey. In the face of such a difficult transition, Dexter and Miguel have continued to honor the life and legacy that she helped build. Miguel and Dexter have only further strengthened the strong bond they already had with Miguel saying that Dexter has taught him life lessons that he never could have learned elsewhere. Though Dexter may not express a grand dream for the future, there is one thing he will always say he wants: time with his dad.

Dexter is a kind man who thrives on connection, valuing shared moments over material objects. The minor funny face can make Dexter burst into laughter, highlighting Dexter's willingness to enjoy the small things in life. Dexter rarely has a bad day and is constantly filled with joy; simply happy to be with the people around him. Dexter loves going on car rides with his dad and is the ultimate car ride companion—starting as the co-pilot and quickly earning a "promotion" to assistant. Whether adjusting the temperature or setting the perfect music selection for guests, Dexter ensures that every ride is a comfortable and enjoyable experience. And, of course, when it's just him and his dad, the volume gets turned up just a little louder.

I am super excited for you all to meet Dexter at a Compass event. We look forward to getting to know Dexter more and sharing the joy and connection he effortlessly brings to those around him.

This article is dedicated to Stacey – the heart of you shines through Dexter, and anyone who has met Dexter has felt that love.

# #OURCOMMUNITY



## SPRING SMILES



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