

All the News Worth
Chirping About from
Villa Esperanza Services
Fall 2022 Newsletter



Providing Love, Care
and Hope for Individuals
with Intellectual/
Developmental Disabilities
and their Families since 1961



Yahaira photographed with the staff and administrators who have helped guide her through her time spent with Villa Esperanza School.

Yahaira: Dancing to the Finish Line!

Article By Jordan Paggett, Villa Esperanza Services Community Engagement Coordinator

When you meet Yahaira on campus at the Villa School, it is impossible not to smile. She is a bright girl whose love for music and dance choreography continues to positively impact those around her.

Nine years ago, Villa welcomed Yahaira through our gates, and it was a challenge for young Yahaira to gain footing and grow comfortable within her surroundings. Change can be difficult and knowing she had new routines, new staff, and new teachers, meant building from the ground up. Villa always provides full support to our students, ensuring they receive the help they need during their prominent learning years. When Yahaira started, staff in the classroom worked as a unit to provide the absolute best care for her. It was a work in progress for Yahaira to grow at ease with the staff. She wasn't quite able to settle with a singular staff, and hard days persisted for a while until Yahaira grew comfortable working one-on-one. Yahaira's school team has always seen the potential within her and still plays a role in her educational career today.

"She's really come out of her shell from when she first started with Villa in Room 2, one of the elementary classes," Nelly, the Administrative Coordinator for the school and previous aide to Yahaira, said in regards to Yahaira's cheerful



Yahaira reading and identifying animals in a book during her speech session.

demeanor.

Villa's dedicated staff took time and effort to create a tailored plan that would allow Yahaira to learn forms of independence, open up further, and express her personality. Part of that plan included adaptive technology, which allowed Yahaira to communicate more easily. Yahaira uses Touch Chat, a communication app that helps non-verbal individuals communicate with images. With one-on-one speech lessons, Yahaira was able to practice and tailor her personal page within the Touch Chat app to include frequently used buttons that allow her to converse at a quicker pace and express her own thoughts and feelings. The patience and planning of the Villa team, along with the hard work Yahaira herself did personally and her willingness to tackle new challenges, allowed Yahaira to steadily grow and learn at her own pace.

While many of her accomplishments came over the course of the nine years, it's the impressive methods by which she adjusted to school after Covid-19 that are worth noting. As others began the transition back to in-person in the school, Yahaira started back later. The return mimicked

the way she began in 2013, with a new classroom, new staff, new teachers and new rules and regulations. The main difference was that this time around, Yahaira could adjust to the large changes with more ease. It was rewarding to see that remote learning did not take away her progress and that the bright light within Yahaira still shines through in all the tasks she performs: whether it be working in the student store, where she practices her social skills and money management through taking food orders and providing correct change, or working in the office, where she is able to give an extra pair of hands in the speech center with paper organizing and shredding. Yahaira is the type of student peer who will always help her friends even if that means playing the role of a mentor to those younger than her and teaching them tasks she has accomplished.

Yahaira is in her final year at the Villa School, and as school staff reflect on her memorable moments, one moment stands out. During a school dance, Yahaira's love of dancing was on full display when she started doing the worm on the floor with everyone cheering her on. Libni Ambrose, one of Yahaira's Speech Language Pathology Assistants (SLPA's), noted, "She can be the life of the party!"

Yahaira will be remembered in the halls of Villa Esperanza School for years after she graduates, and we'll remember to dance in celebration when she puts on that cap and gown. Let us be the first to say congratulations to Yahaira on all you've accomplished and all we know you'll achieve in the future!

**"She can be
the life of the
party!"**

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Magic for Allen House

Article By Jacqueline Knowles, Villa Esperanza Guild member and James' mother



James (right, front row) photographed with Michael, Ronnie, Zachary, James W. and Carson (left to right) with Residential staff, Steven Castellanos, celebrating James' 60th Birthday at MonteCedro.

The Allen House Gang of Six trekked to a magic show July 12 to celebrate James Knowles' 60th birthday at MonteCedro, where I (James' mom) live. James knows almost everyone at the retirement community in Altadena by name and invited them all to the show. Many of them remarked about the attractiveness and well-mannered demeanor of the gents from Allen House, which is one of seven Residential homes operating within Villa Esperanza, where residents are given support in achieving individual living skills and provided opportunities to have an active lifestyle in their community.

A few of the gentlemen being praised are — Zachary, James W., Carson, Ronnie, and Michael. After the show, they all went to the MonteCedro bistro for hamburgers, fries, and birthday cake.

James has been at Allen House since 1999 and says he is very happy there. "I love my boys!" he says. Allen

House has a definite spirit of camaraderie. Much credit goes to the Allen House live-in staff Steven Castellanos Corona, Marites Beltran Gayacan, Residential Administrator, and their dedicated staff. Not only are they encouraging and supportive of the residents and their wants and needs, they also keep Allen House spic and span and serve delicious meals. Allen House is a great place to live. Our family is grateful that James' quality of life is good thanks to Villa and that he can live his life out there.

"Our family is grateful that James' quality of life is good thanks to Villa and that he can live his life out there."



James accepting an award during his 60th birthday celebration at MonteCedro.

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Speech & Language Center

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Occupational Therapy Clinic

626-449-2919, ext. 140

Community Integration Program (CIP)

626-449-2919, ext. 172

Employment Services

626-449-2919, ext. 161

Adult Residential Program

626-449-2919, ext. 113

Independent Living Skills (ILS)

626-449-2919, ext. 108

Dimensions Adult Day Program

1990 E. Walnut St.
Pasadena, CA 91107
626-346-9109, ext. 103

Adult Day Program (ADP)

1757 N. Lake Ave.
Pasadena, Ca 91104
626-398-4435, ext. 106

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Community Conscience
Human Services Center
80 E. Hillcrest Drive, Suite 206
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Main Number

805-446-1939

Community Integration Program (CIP)

805-446-1939, ext. 129

Employment Services

805-446-1939, ext. 126

Independent Living Skills (ILS)

805-446-1939, ext. 129

2022-2023

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In the month of August, Villa was excited to welcome Civitan International Foundation for a visit to our campus! One of Villa Esperanza's longstanding contributors, the Civitan Foundation, purchased much of the block that the Villa campus is on today and donated it all to Villa in 1998! They joined Villa CEO, Kelly White, for a tour through Villa's many programs and had a look at what the future for Villa Esperanza holds.



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