

Thirty-four at 35 and Counting!

As CEO, Rebecca Lienhard celebrates her 35th Anniversary with Tierra del Sol, she reflects on the challenging journey that adults with developmental disabilities have endured and what lies ahead as we continue our work to move the employment needle in the right direction.

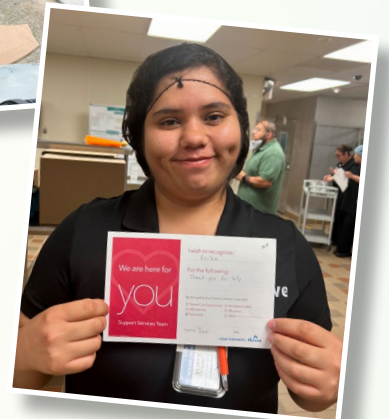
“The national employment rate for people with developmental disabilities has been 25% for as long as I can remember. And for someone who has served in the field for over 40 years, that fact is horrific!

My first job as an employment coach at West Hills Target in 1988 is still vividly clear to me, as if it were yesterday. I lived in Camarillo at the time and would drive through the back roads on the 118 freeway just as the sun was rising to arrive at Target by 6 am to greet my clients, who helped open the store as stockers. I also remember driving home well after dark when the last of the individuals I served at a second location, a movie theater, waved goodbye to the stragglers and cleaned the theater before clocking out. Although I loved every minute of the work and every person served between then and now, we, as a service system, have not cracked the code of moving the employment needle for people with the most pervasive developmental disabilities... until now.

In the first decade of my tenure as CEO, our organization delved deeply into the world of inclusion and value for all. People found places of belonging as professional volunteers at non-profit organizations, as students at post-secondary institutions, as artists at galleries and museums, and as employees at 30 businesses in the San Fernando Valley. Our numbers were worthy! Almost 500 people contributed their volunteer service to the greater good each day, month, and year, benefiting their communities across Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. Stories of growth and achievement abounded. But our unemployment rate still hovered around 75% of our total population served.

Then came 2024 - a decade into our journey of inclusion and value for all. The State of California launched a progressive new Paid Internship Program, and we enthusiastically embraced this enhancement with all that we had. In my 34th year, we saw our employment numbers rise along with the goosebumps on our arms and success stories on our social media pages.

Now, in my 35th year of service at Tierra del Sol, we have officially moved the needle. We have achieved a 34% employment rate for our entire population of people served here at Tierra. Our goal for next year is to increase that number to 35%, which means 30 more people need to get jobs! Who knows? For my 36th anniversary, we may even reach a 36% employment rate! Wouldn't that be beautiful! Either way, lives are changing, one person at a time. Join us.”



Honoring Our Employment & Volunteer Partners

Congratulations to our 2025 Honorees!

2025 World Changer Award
for innovation and leadership
in employment diversity and
inclusion

**National Health Foundation
Arleta Recuperative Care
Center**

2025 Trailblazer Award
for pioneering accomplishments
in exemplary internship
opportunities

ONEgeneration

**Noah's Place –
Because Children Matter**

2025 Pacesetter Award
for establishing and implementing
an exemplary volunteer to
employment program

YMCA East Valley

Wildlife Learning Center

2025 Star Thrower Award
for opening doors
to career-building opportunities
in the digital media field

Friends We Love

On October 16th, Tierra held its annual Employment & Volunteer Partners reception at Valley Presbyterian Hospital (VPH). The evening was filled with heartfelt speeches and moving testimonials from companies that believe in Tierra's mission and have provided life-changing career opportunities to the people we serve.

Rebecca Lienhard, Tierra CEO, shared, "Many of you who are in the room with us tonight have been partners of ours for a long time as well as some of our newer partners. We appreciate each and every one of you and what you make possible."

Special recognition went to eight-year Tierra Board Member, Peter Koettters MD, Pediatrician and VPH Board Member, who shared, "When my son was about to enter Tierra's College-to-Career Program at LA Mission College, I was nervous because I knew he was challenged and realized how hard it would be for him to navigate everything that college required. I remember meeting Gabriela Sanchez, (Chief Program Officer at Tierra) and asked her if college was a good idea for Benjamin. She said that it was Tierra's mission to help anyone who believes they can do it and they can make it happen. It was the first time I had ever heard that, and it almost brought me to tears. Since that day, Benjamin has earned several certifications in Culinary Arts and today he holds a part-time job as a prep-cook at a restaurant at Universal City Walk. Thank you Tierra for everything you've done for my family."

For every business, organization, and parent who provides an opportunity and/or takes a chance with Tierra, thank you for leading by example.



Christian Vargas Celebrates 22 Years of Paid Employment!



ability to deliver impeccable customer service. Thanks to his dedication and positive attitude, Christian landed a paid position at Home Depot in Canoga Park in 2003.

Cesar Ramirez, Tierra Program Director, shares, "Christian has seen people come and go - from coworkers to managers.

Christian Vargas has been in Tierra's Workforce Development program since 2001. During this time, he gained valuable skills through various volunteer opportunities, especially fine-tuning his

But the one thing that has been constant during his tenure is his dedication. Christian is beloved by all. His customer service skills are unmatched, and he consistently exudes a friendly, welcoming demeanor to anyone who crosses his path, and is known for his infectious smile."

Christian shares, "I appreciate Tierra. No matter what happens, I never feel alone because I know that Tierra will always support me."

This October, Christian celebrated his 22nd work anniversary with Home Depot. His co-workers surprised him with balloons, decorations, and loud cheers. They weren't just celebrating a co-worker; they were acknowledging, with respect and admiration, Christian's professionalism, tenacity, and unquestionable loyalty.

If you're ever in the garden section at Home Depot Canoga Park, be sure to stop by and look for the man with a water hose and a big, bright smile. Chances are, it's Christian.

Tierra Welcomes New Board Members

Tierra officially welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors with the election of Heather Edwards and Vince Dominguez.

While Heather and Vince may be new to Tierra's Board, the two are no strangers to its mission, having worked at organizations that have partnered with Tierra for over a decade as both volunteer and employment partners.

Heather, of Child Care Resource Center (CCRC), and Vince, with Kidspace Children's Museum, share why being a part of Tierra's Board is an opportunity they're excited to embrace.



Heather Edwards is joined by (L to R) Tierra volunteers, Janet, Sherina and Chloe

Heather first learned of Tierra del Sol in 2000 during her career as a legal professional, through partners in her law firm. When she joined CCRC in 2016, Tierra's associate volunteer group was on site Monday through Friday. "Having worked with the Tierra associates since day one has been one of the best parts of my job. I am fortunate to be able to mentor them in many

different areas. We work on administrative, problem-solving, organizational, and planning skills. Those skills will last a lifetime, and they can take them wherever they go," shares Heather, Executive Administrator to CCRC's CEO, Dr. Michael Olenick. "CCRC has grown so much over the years; and, we're thrilled to have such capable and committed Tierra volunteers grow with us."

As California's premier provider of support, development, and education for children and families, CCRC serves over 100,000 people each day and employs over 1,400 professional staff members in 30 locations throughout the state.

"Working under Michael's leadership during these expansive years has been an honor and privilege, and partnering with Tierra has mirrored our commitment to service and inclusion in the community," notes Heather. "In addition to the Tierra volunteers, CCRC has had six paid interns at two of our Head Start Child Care Centers since 2023. It's been a great way to introduce Tierra associates to a career in Child Development."

Heather adds, "I've always loved Tierra's mission and am grateful that my current position has allowed me to get even more involved as a member of the Board of Directors. I look forward to all that we can make happen together in the future."

Vince, Senior Manager of Floor Operations at Kidspace, shares, "I have a deep appreciation for the role Tierra plays in our community, which has been an inspiring model for our own programs. It's helped shape Kidspace's commitment to ensuring an accessible and inclusive experience for every child and adult that visits the museum."

Founded in 1979, Kidspace moved to its current home at Brookside Park near the Rose Bowl in 2004. Over the years, the museum has provided children with engaging, hands-on experiences that inspire curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning.

"Our journey with Tierra began over 14 years ago with a team of three Tierra associates, Becky, Kurt, and Karen, who showed tremendous dedication volunteering three days a week," recalls Vince. "In 2019, the volunteers began earning a paycheck through Tierra's Paid Internship Program, and following the pandemic, the team returned to Kidspace as paid employees of the museum in July of 2022. Having Tierra associates on our team sets an example to all the children that come here. Representation matters. It says, yes, you can have a disability and still have a career and make a difference."

During the last several years, Vince has been instrumental in featuring the work of Tierra's artists in three community art exhibitions, the latest of which is on display through early 2026. "I'm honored to join Tierra's Board and am excited to bring my years of operational experience, the support of Kidspace, and our wide network of community partners to Tierra, an organization that I care deeply about."



Vince Dominguez (Center) and Tierra Kidspace Employees, (L to R) Kurt, Becky, Karen; and Tierra WFD Instructor, Pauline Zuniga

Thank You for being our champions of inclusion and value for all people with disabilities through creative pathways to employment, education, and the arts. Your exceptional generosity is a true commitment to empowering Tierra associates, students, and artists to lead productive and personally meaningful lives.

2024-25

Circle of Inspiration Members

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The Ahmanson Foundation
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LEGACY OF LOVE

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2024-25 Giving Levels

Visionary	\$50,000 and above	Benefactor	\$2,500 – \$4,999
Innovator	\$25,000 – \$49,999	Patron	\$1,500 – \$2,499
Partner	\$10,000 – \$24,999	Friend	\$1,000 – \$1,499
Advocate	\$5,000 – \$9,999	In-Kind	\$1,000 and above

2024-25 Tierra Ambassadors*

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* Gifts of \$500 - \$999

"Government funding is not enough to sustain the quality programs and services that our daughter receives from Tierra. That is why our family financially supports Tierra each year. I think every parent and family wants the best care possible for their loved ones, which is why every parent and family member should do their part to support Tierra."

- Karren McClenahan
Board member and past COI Chair



Walking on Sunshine

Tierra's Inaugural Fashion Show

The runway was set in West Hollywood on Saturday, September 27, for Tierra del Sol Gallery's Inaugural Fashion Show. Attended by over 200



guests, Tierra artists strutted the catwalk draped in bold designs, bright colors, and whimsical patterns inspired by steampunk, nature, horror, and even high-end couture ballgowns!

Walking on Sunshine, the exhibition that preceded Tierra's fashion show, featured dozens of works in a range of media by a variety of studio artists. Eight of these artists were selected to debut their creations - Tony Barnes, Aracely Ellis, Austin Gackstetter, Angelica Grande, Ashley Higgins, Marissa Holmberg, Thomas Lamb, and Alondra Lozano. The show was visually stunning and generated impressive day-of-sales.

"Over time, Tierra has come to understand how self-expression through personal style is equally important to artists. It allows for the communication of ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings through artistic styles - from paintings to ceramics, to textiles and cloth," tells Paige Wery, Tierra Gallery Director.

Special shoutout to Levi's®, who generously provided raw denim and assembled garments for artists to deconstruct and embellish, as well as Priscila Martinez, Tierra Board Member, and her PR firm, The Brand Agency, for the features on NBC California Live and seven major publications.

This project was supported, in part, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Department of Arts and Culture and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

tierradelsolgallery.org
7414 Santa Monica Blvd
West Hollywood





Save the
Date!



Tierra del Sol Gallery is proud to present

Model World

a group exhibition guest curated by
Elliott Hundley, on view

January 17 – March 1, 2026 at Tierra's Gallery.

Hundley brings together artists from both within and beyond Tierra del Sol's studios, including Claire Chambless, Carissa Hackman, Chiffon Thomas, Christopher Suarez, David Romero, Joe Zaldivar, and Karl Haendel. From macro to micro, these artists respond to their environments as both participants and observers, using art as a language to explore and make sense of the world we share.



THE 2026 FELIX ART FAIR AT THE ROOSEVELT HOTEL

February 26 - March 1, 2026

Tierra is excited to exhibit
paintings and sculptures at the
upcoming, renowned Felix Art
Fair. Find us in room #133!

FELIX



9919 Sunland Boulevard, Sunland, California 91040
www.tierradelsol.org

SAVE THE DATE
Tee Off for Tierra!



Monday, May 4, 2026
details coming soon

Moorpark Country Club

19th Annual Charity Golf Tournament, Dinner, and Auction



Don't Miss Tierra on Season 2, Episode 3 of the Hit Hallmark Show
Celebrations with Lacey Chabert!

Streaming Available NOW on Hallmark and Hallmark+

