

A newsletter for the North Bay Community

My Contact Information:

Ellen Sweigert, Consumer
Advocate

Phone: (707) 256-1208

600 Airpark Road, Napa, CA
94558

Ellens@nbrc.net

Winter issue 2024

Like a lighthouse that guides ships, The ADVOCATOR Newsletter guides our NBRC Community together.

A Message to All Consumers

Happy New Year NBRC, I hope you all had a nice time celebrating the New Year as we welcome 2024 together.

This new year I would like to allow our NBRC community to be aware of multiple ways to become active in your day-to-day life and your community. I want to emphasize that this newsletter is for YOU, those who are involved at NBRC, or our vendors out in the community. So, if you have any suggestions that you want me to share, please feel free to contact me and share those ideas. As the Consumer Advocate for North Bay Regional Center, it is important to share resources and information about all the exciting things happening in the North Bay area. I hope this newsletter will provide you with information that will help you learn more about how things work at North Bay Regional Center, and how things work in our community. Just remember you and our vendors are a vital part of NBRC in your community.

Art Resources Out in the Communities

Are you interested in trying a new hobby? Have you always wanted to try painting or working with clay or some other art form? Maybe you are good at drawing or writing? Maybe you always wanted to be an actor or a singer. Expressing yourself through the arts is a great way to show others your strengths and gifts, while at the same time building your confidence in who you are and what you want in life. There are lots of ways to start looking into art opportunities in our community. Local

community colleges offer several different classes that you might consider. In addition, NBRC is developing new social recreational programs that include art and dramatical classes. Sonoma county has De Colores and the Movement Lab. These vendors teach art and dancing to individuals served by



Ellen Sweigert, Consumer Advocate

the regional center. Talk with your service coordinator to see if these resources might be an option for the artist in you!

The Art of Advocacy Through My Eyes

There are many ways to express yourself through art. Painting, sketching, photography are all ways to express yourself and share with others your perspective about the world and your life. By expanding your skills and learning new things, you create value in your life and may learn to advocate in a way that you haven't tried before. Knowing yourself and growing in new ways and working with your Service coordinator, you are making art. Working towards an independent life of your own; this is the Art of Advocacy that can be rewarding for you and your family.

“Nothing can dim the light that shines from within.”

Maya Angelou

NBRC's Spotlight

This month's spotlight is on The Mary Ida Cook Annual Arts Crafts Fair was started in 2002 as a PIP (Performance Incentive Plan) Project by two Service Coordinators, Mary Cook and Heidi Oestreich. Both Mary and Heidi were strong advocates for promoting our client's artistic talents and realized that our folks had very few venues to showcase their amazing work and be able to sell things they have made.

The art show has happened every year (except COVID-19) in some form ever since its founding. This event started with only two people coordinating and maybe 8-10 day programs. It has grown into having an entire team to support and coordinate the event, filling multiple rooms at NBRC and over 40 individual artists and programs participating. The event now includes individual artists who are not necessarily part of a program but still want to showcase their talents and also includes individual and group musical artists.

We have had many amazing NBRC staff help to make this Fair happen over the last 21 years. NBRC staff have worked on the organizing team as well as others helping to set up and take down the event. Some staff who have since left NBRC still return for this event! Our NBRC employees have helped this event grow over the years and turn into this spectacular annual event to celebrate and showcase the talented artists we have in our community.

-Heidi Oestreich



Consumer Artwork

Elizabeth Quezada is 8 years old and loves creating art through drawings, and loves using scissors as well. This piece is an acclaimed self-portrait.



Sofia Lopez is 14 years old and loves art and fashion. She even creates costumes on her own after sketching her ideas.



Iker Garcia is 9 years old and enjoys art. He recently participated in an afterschool art program and is looking forward to enrolling in more art classes.



Closing Thoughts and Ideas

What will you do in 2024? How will you challenge yourself and grow your creative side? Do you have a hidden talent that you want to share with others after taking a class or practicing at your program or with the help of family and friends? Maybe next year you will showcase your talent at the next Mary Ida Cook Craft Fair? I am looking forward to 2024 and all the ways we can advocate for more opportunities for our North Bay community.

- **Monthly Consumer chat 1\24\24 at 1:00 pm via Zoom**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83733267705?pwd=VmQ4bDRUNjFiVjRjVDAybElHVmZEdzo9>
- **Meeting ID: 837 3326 7705 Passcode: 354934**

Happy New Year

Your Advocate,

Ellen