Here at CWG, we have just celebrated two important milestones: the 10th birthday of the Opportunity Center (OC), and the launch of our strategic alliance with Abode Services.

At our celebration event, we took a moment to reflect on accomplishments: creating the first permanent supportive housing complex in the county — a place where our clients gain the tools to knock down obstacles standing in the way of their progress — and seeing so many people take the opportunities offered to improve their lives and their prospects.

As we shared stories with longtime friends and supporters, walked the hallways, and toured the spaces of the Center, we saw and felt its history, purpose and substance. Together we celebrated its extraordinary success.

Now we are preparing for more extraordinary progress, by partnering with Abode Services! As part of our alliance, we have reshaped a bit: many of our board

See “A Message from the Board”, page 2

A longtime friend of CWG reviews the program schedule for the Opportunity Center 10th birthday party, an event designed to celebrate the OC’s first decade of operation and those who made it possible.

See “Happy Day”, page 3
Almost 20 years ago a small gathering of volunteers came together to help local people who were experiencing homelessness — and Community Working Group (CWG) was born. Together with thousands of supporters from diverse segments of the community, CWG has achieved great success: it has developed three affordable home communities in Palo Alto, including the Opportunity Center. Today, approximately 300 formerly homeless or very low-income working families and individuals enjoy the safety and peace of mind of a CWG affordable home; while every month hundreds more have access to critical supportive and rehabilitative services needed to stabilize their lives.

Now CWG has taken the next step in its evolution, a step that will enable the organization to make even more progress in its drive to end homelessness in the mid-Peninsula: CWG has entered into a strategic alliance with Abode Services. Under the alliance, CWG increases its capacity to fulfill its mission of eliminating homelessness in the community by gaining access to Abode Services’ well-developed infrastructure; while retaining its status as a separate tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

CWG and Abode Services have created a unified board of directors to oversee both agencies’ activities.

For more information on CWG’s strategic alliance with Abode Services, please visit https://communityworkinggroup.org/cwg-abode-strategic-alliance/
Nina was just 25 years old when her partner became abusive. Nina immediately found another home, clearing all the approval hurdles by phone, so she could move out to protect herself and her soon-to-be-born child.

But when she arrived on the landlord’s doorstep to sign the lease, she was met with a shocking response. The landlord said, “You’re black and pregnant. I need someone dependable.” As a result, Nina found herself without a home and landed in a Palo Alto homeless shelter.

Nina’s life changed forever when Philip Dah, the LifeMoves Senior Director who manages services at the Opportunity Center, spotted her and her new baby and helped to place them in CWG’s then-brand-new Opportunity Center. Upon walking into the tiny but well-appointed apartment for the first time, Nina knew she was home.

During her earliest weeks living in the Opportunity Center, Nina got help to build her emotional and physical health. She developed trusting relationships with her caseworker and other staff, and formed friendships with her neighbors. In the ensuing years, Nina learned how to be the best mother possible, caring and advocating for her son to help him grow socially, emotionally, and academically. Now he is a happy and healthy boy who respects himself and others, and sees a world of possibility open to him every day.

The world looks bright for Nina as well. She is on track to finish her college degree next year and is planning a career in the healthcare field. She and her child have moved from the Opportunity Center into their own place; even though she was sad to leave, she knew it was time to give someone else a chance to step onto the path of a bright future in an Opportunity Center home.

Client names and images have been changed to protect their privacy.

celebrated the hundreds of lives that have been transformed through the Opportunity Center and its services over the past decade.

One special former client shared her personal success story, Palo Alto Mayor Greg Scharff and State Senator Jerry Hill praised the center and its work, and several founding board members shared their memories. Former CWG Board President John Barton spoke about his vision for the future, and introduced Louis Chicoine, executive director of CWG’s new partner agency Abode Services.

The event culminated with music, tours, and birthday cake, all designed to recognize the tremendous work made possible by CWG supporters — volunteers and donors — and the accomplishments of so many Opportunity Center clients who are working hard to improve their lives and brighten their futures.

Visit https://communityworkinggroup.org/oc10/ to view our photo album from the event!

Help us make “Thresholds” more interesting and relevant to you; please fill out our one-minute survey at https://communityworkinggroup.org/Thresholds/
All great partnerships start with a shared vision; like CWG, Abode Services is working tirelessly to end homelessness in our region. Now we are using our complementary strengths to bolster our collective ability to serve! Here’s what you need to know about CWG’s newest partner:

Founded almost 30 years ago, Abode Services is the largest provider of services and housing opportunities to people experiencing homelessness in the Bay Area. Abode Services believes in treating all clients with dignity and applying the principle of “housing first” in its work.

The agency serves more than 4,400 adults and children annually in five counties and is Santa Clara County’s designated provider for Project Welcome Home, which aims to provide permanent supportive housing for those who suffer chronic homelessness. Abode Services has helped more than 6,000 people find permanent homes since 2010.

Under the direction of the CWG board (now the unified board), Louis Chicoine, the executive director of Abode Services, is lending his organizational expertise as executive director of CWG as well. Louis has been building and running programs to end homelessness for more than 20 years.

“The strategic alliance between Abode and CWG is a great fit; our missions and values are the same, and we’re both working to get people safely and stably housed in our region,” said Louis. “It made perfect sense to join forces and amplify our collective impact.”