

Hope for Change

Photovoice Workshop

From LEEW Members

*With the support of the Office of Diversity and Equity and the
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San Mateo, April 2021



SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
& RECOVERY SERVICES



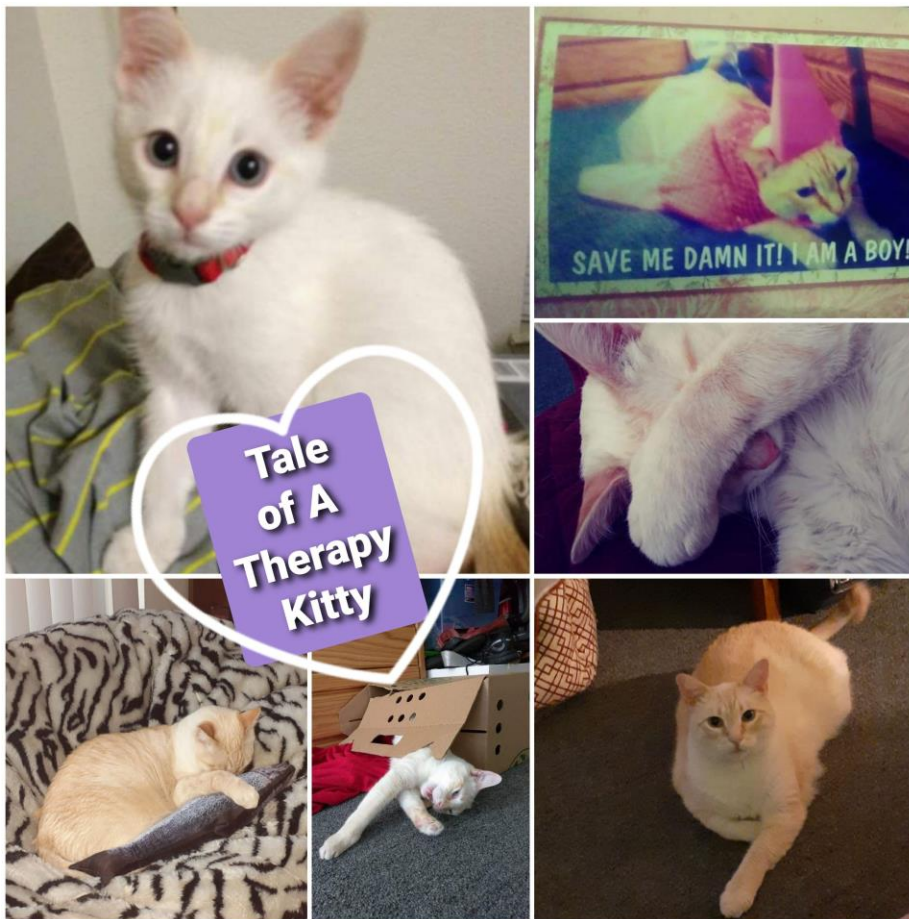
When I look at this photo, I see memories. **Hope Filled Memories**. There go I but for the grace of God not that long ago. I have walked in the shoes of the eyesore, the waste, and struggling. When you investigate this photo, only you can share how you see this photo. Is it a blur, a shame, an eyesore, or does your heart bleed for the humans?

I have leaned on several walls like this one where my mental disability had crippled me to self-harm. In the dumpster, I could often find things recently dumped that was better than I had. Especially takeout still in the bag. Where is the grass, the smiling faces, the hope in the air? Perhaps the lady against the wall is so mentally beaten down her last hope after she lost it in herself is in a helping hand.

Is it too much for someone to beg for help, asking, **Is there someone** that can help me back up to fight on? The man approaching is me. I had been the one on the sidewalk, the one with the severe disability behind with the cane, and even one of those in the mix.

I could not understand why sell drugs rather than getting a minimally paid legal job until I got a case. They are humans of their environment and not simply criminals? Today, I am the one sharing hope to the ones that have succumb to pressures of mental disease and reach my hand out creating more hope filled memories.

Darryl Hall



My Furever Family

My name is Kronos and I am a Therapy Cat. When I was a baby kitten I got separated from my mom. I wandered around blind, terrified and with no hope. Then one day, when I was on my last paw, a nice lady found me and took me home. She bottle-fed me and I began to grow. And you know what, we had something in common... She was kind of lost too!

You see, she had been through a very scary experience too. A bad man hurt her. We both suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or as its called PTSD.

I Love my Mom sooooo much but as you can see above, sometimes she embarrasses me, or frustrates, or annoys me to the point that I play dead just to get her to go away. Lol!!! But, she is a good Mom. She feeds me, buys me toys and treats and gives me a safe home to live in, which is something I really needed. My Mom DEFINITELY saved my life and says I saved hers TOO!

I love being her Therapy Kitty. When she is scared or upset I purrrr and cuddle her and when I'm scared she holds me and pets me. We are a good Team, my Mom and me! I can't imagine a better life! We give each other hope, companionship and most of all Love. I Hope that YOU have someone in your life that supports and cares about you as much as my Mom and I do about each other, but if you don't:

I HOPE, WITH, ALL MY HEART,
 THAT YOU WOULD CONSIDER ADOPTION AND
 GIVE AN ANIMAL, LIKE ME, HOPE FOR THE FUTURE AND LOVE

Ellen Darnell



Knowing The Signs

There was an open road ahead, no other cars in sight.

I know the message was for me.

I was so awestruck.

I had to stop.

Yes.

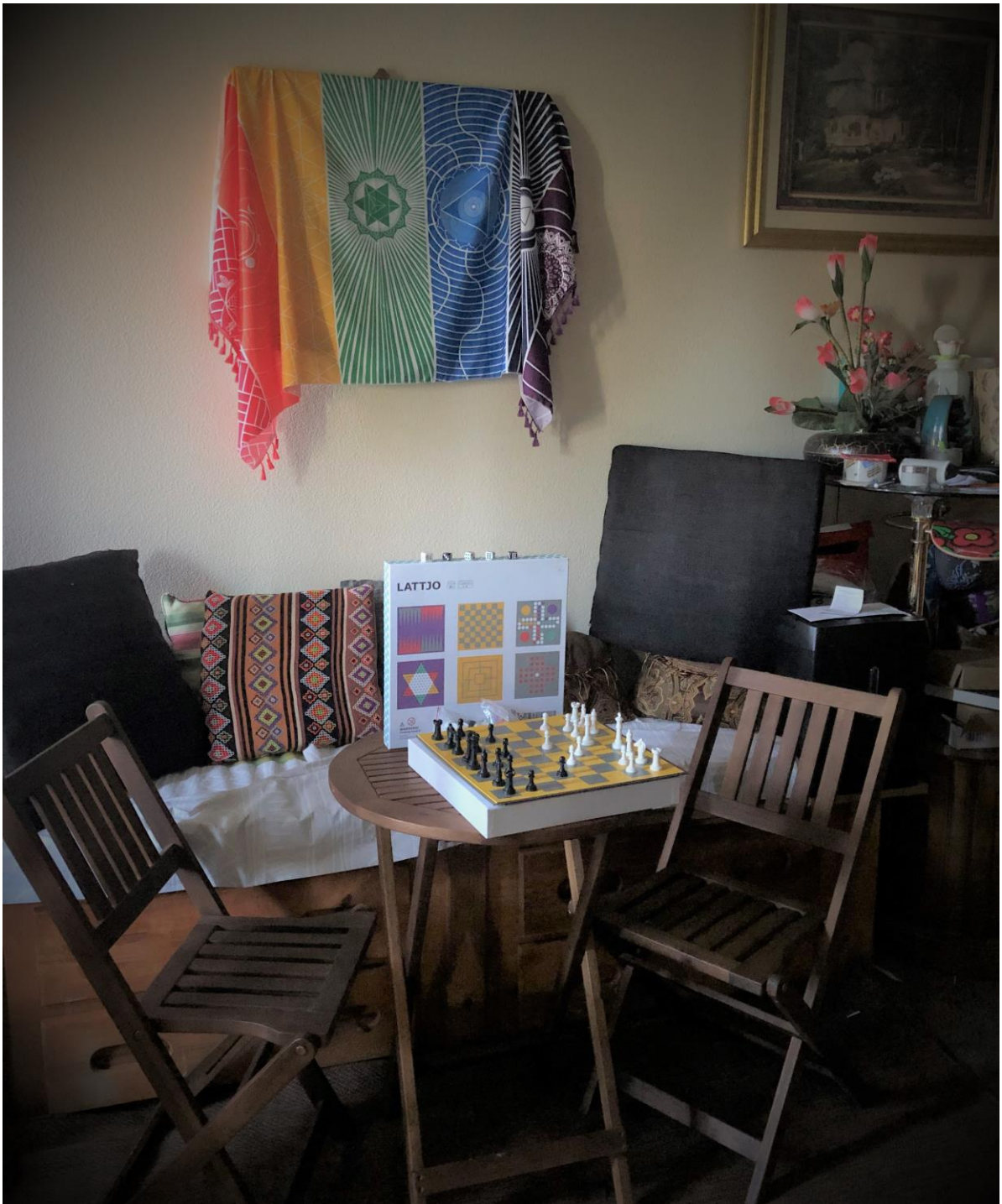
That was what the sign said.

I am not sure who loves me but I know that **SOMEBODY** does and that was exactly what I needed to hear.

Whoever you are,

Thank You.

Lanajean Vecchione



Here in this photo we see games to stay at home during covid-19. My family and I found chess as a therapeutic game since it brought us together, and when playing it, it reassures us and makes us think and connect to have a good game of play. Here we also have more board games to stay at home, these games were played when I was a child at my parents' house, a sign that we have a good culture, such as playing lottery, Chinese checkers and dice.

Lourdes Briseno



My Journey to Independence!

The picture above is very simple in context, but has very profound meaning other than having a disability. I've been hit by a lot of curveballs in life, but none have knocked me down to the point of begging for mercy.

A significant choice I have made is to live life at my own pace. Quite a few of us need a walker for orthopedic support, but in my eyes, it's much more than that. This picture represents my life in a manner that I can always take a break (the seat on the walker), and continue my journey to being more independent (stairwell).

At first, I saw this device as an excuse to not live a full life. Then again, I'm only given one life and have a choice whether to make the best of it, or sink into the world of self pity. Will you choose to be alive with me?

Natalie San Juan



I connect with these flowers because they symbolize a life I once lived and the life I am living now. As a person who lives with mental illness, life can be very difficult. I struggled for years to attend therapy and receive the right medications. I lived either in the dark depths of depression or the bright and energetic highs of mania. I made several attempts to end my own life because I felt I was too broken to help anyone else.

Now I have finally found the right medications, attend therapy regularly and want to help others in recovery. I used to be the wilting lily, but now I am strong and healthy like the second lily.

I hope people will be able to relate to this photo even if they don't have mental illness. This pandemic has been so difficult for so many people, and through vaccinations, and preventative precautions this pandemic is starting to dissipate. The wilting lily could represent COVID and the healthy lily could represent times now and for the future.

Natasha Philips



This dynamic mural is painted on a house in West Oakland, California, where the Black Panther Party started in 1968. It is a powerful tribute to the Women of the Black Panther Party (BPP). I want to share this historic photograph because **I was a Woman of the Black Panther Party in Oakland from 1975-1982**. My name is written on this house.

In equal measure, female and male comrades seeking social justice committed to provide vital human services such as a children's breakfast programs, police patrols, medical clinics, an award winning school, a national newspaper, security escort services for senior citizens, free food giveaways and testing for sickle cell anemia to underserved communities. Women and men struggled and served communities in Oakland, Seattle, Chicago, New York and numerous other locations across the United States.

There was no gender discrimination in the Party. Women worked in the security cadre and men cared for the children. It was a supreme honor to serve seven years as a comrade in the BPP. *Acknowledgment of the BPP gives me hope for the future*. The BPP Breakfast Program for Children was replicated by the federal government and continues today. Sickle Cell Anemia Testing is now mandatory for every newborn in California. Because of this mural, in the current era of food insecurity, inadequate education, and police brutality, new generations of young people are inspired to learn the true history of the BPP and may even replicate or develop similar community organizations to serve the people.

Pam Ward Pious



My plant is dried up; however, it is also blooming with purple blossoms and a bit of green coming out in the middle. I think the blossoms symbolize hope for a change into a new beauty. It makes me think of the last year and how the first responders worked tirelessly; the green part of the plant is like their untiring efforts to strive to see the light in the tunnel. This picture represents the beauty of life, hope, and change back to a not perfect, but beautiful, world.

Robert Cartagena



In Honor of George Floyd: 10/14/73 - 5/25/20

This is a beautiful unified bush of blooming flowers growing together in perfect harmony. The flowering bush shows a unity of purpose, growing and changing together. These flowers started off as tiny seeds progressed into unique individual flowers and finally a beautiful blooming bush. My hope is if these flowers can grow healthy and strong individually and as a group so can the human race.

William Pious