“Go Wherever Our People Are”

With a new mobile testing and outreach van, GLIDE joins the OPT-IN effort to connect the most vulnerable to services

On a remote stretch of road just west of the Third Street artery that runs through San Francisco’s Bayview neighborhood, a young man is about to receive life-saving treatment.

The setting is anything but residential and yet full of makeshift housing—weathered campers, trailers and other vehicles, tents and lean-tos, all situated in an abandoned industrial landscape decorated over in graffiti and sectioned by torn chain-link fencing topped with razor wire.

GLIDE’s Harm Reduction Community Outreach van makes a bright addition to these surroundings, the iconic orange heart on the front acting as a beacon of support to the neighborhood.

Frank Castro, GLIDE case manager and the van’s driver, has just pulled up in front of a slightly run-down mobile home with covered windows. Alix Strough, a nurse with the Department of Public Health’s Street Medicine unit, hops out of the GLIDE van and looks around. A moment later, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) outreach team pulls up, too, just in front of GLIDE. Roy and Damon step out of SFAF’s white cargo van, which sports a random assortment of stickers promoting harm reduction and decrying the war on drugs.

Greetings exchanged, the crew scans the area. The mid-September day is cloudless and unusually hot, already into the low 90s, and at first no one seems to be around. “Normally there would be more foot traffic,” says Frank, “lots more.”

This is the team’s usual Friday stop. For the past several months, they have been spending several hours here each week, and been well received for the services and support they offer the homeless people living in the area. GLIDE and SFAF typically divide up the services to maximize their time here, with SFAF offering syringe access, Narcan training and distribution, and other harm reduction services while GLIDE’s specially equipped van allows the GLIDE team to concentrate on testing and linkages to care.

Frank, in cargo shorts and a black GLIDE tee, opens the van’s sliding door. He has decided to keep the engine on today in order to keep the air-conditioning running. Inside the van, GLIDE Health Systems Navigator Khaiya Croom is arranging equipment by the phlebotomy chair, preparing the space for testing.

The van is equipped to test for HIV, Hepatitis C and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). HIV and Hep C test results can be had on-site in a matter of minutes. With Alix onboard, the van can also offer rapid testing for syphilis, which alarmingly has been on the rise among women of childbearing years. As a nurse, Alix can treat STIs on-site as well.

Today, Frank has test results for someone he has been engaging with in this area. “When we see this person, I’ll let him know. At that point I’ll ask him if he wants to be in the OPT-IN program,” he explains, referring to the collaborative street outreach effort managed by the City’s Department of Public Health. “At that point, I’m his case manager.”

Alix decides to venture around the area and let people know there are harm reduction and testing services available. She and Damon load up a backpack with bottles of water and head down the nearby railroad track, respectfully pausing by the tents and camps scattered along either side to offer water (gratefully accepted on this scorching day) and let people know the vans have arrived with services for those who want them.

Across the street from the GLIDE van, beside a camper with a boat on a trailer, two men and a woman express their appreciation for the outreach, not only for the material support but for the judgment-free way in which it is offered.
“It’s amazing how looked down upon you are just because you live on the street,” the young woman tells Roy. “You guys all talk to us just like we’re anyone else.”

Back at the van, meanwhile, Frank is speaking with a young man with a neatly cropped beard who has ridden over on a bicycle. Alix has returned from the railroad track and joins the interaction. Afterward, she takes her laptop into a patch of shade as Frank relates the successful result: The young man has learned his status, and has agreed to sign up for treatment for Hep C.

Alix registers him with the Department of Public Health and will ultimately be able to administer his medication here on-site. Frank, as his case manager, will coordinate regular contact, offer emotional support, help with related challenges, and generally work to mitigate factors that could impede successful treatment.

In a matter of months, the young man can expect to receive treatment and eradicate the virus, all without ever having to enter a clinic or hospital.

“This is what our hope was,” says Frank, referring to the days of outreach before OPT-IN, “but this is the piece we needed. We needed a nurse.”

Project OPT-IN

OPT-IN arose to meet the challenge of reaching the most marginalized populations with successful health interventions and services for addressing the HIV and Hep C epidemics and other harms among the city’s homeless residents.

Funded by a five-year grant to the city’s Department of Public Health (DPH) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the program joins DPH’s Street Medicine unit with two social service agencies that have extensive experience working with the populations concerned: SF AIDS Foundation and GLIDE.

It was GLIDE’s Director of Harm Reduction Services, Paul Harkin, who offered the name, which stands for “outreach, prevention, treatment and integration.” But the name also points to a fundamental approach, grounded in the harm reduction principle that health interventions must be invited and not coerced.

“We see our approach as meeting trauma-informed criteria with cultural competency and humility,” says Paul. “Our staff genuinely get what’s going on in these populations and are respected by them for the way that they treat everyone. Any approach to the most vulnerable populations has to come with that perspective. The notion of using coercion or threats is a failing approach. It’s totally counterproductive. It scares people away from care. It adds to their trauma and it actually makes them more vulnerable and more at risk.”

For Paul, OPT-IN is the logical extension of the outreach GLIDE has long done in the Tenderloin and South of Market, and more recently in monthly visits to encampments across the city. Now, with the van, that citywide relationship-building runs five days a week in places like the Bayview, the Western Addition, and Haight Ashbury. This consistency, showing up regularly and reliably to build trust, is crucial.

“One of GLIDE’s strengths is our presence on the streets,” he explains. “That’s how you build up cred. You get to know people. We’ve only added to that with OPT-IN, by adding more outreaches, and increasing that engagement.”

Going where the need is

On the way back to GLIDE, Frank confers with Khaiya and Alix about an idea he has for maximizing floor space in the van to further improve the care they provide. Alix, in turn, updates Frank on the status of a pregnant young woman they know who had been living in a small RV. She’s at San Francisco General now, says Alix, and doing well.

The day invariably includes many such conversations, as well as the sharing of information with the public, distribution of harm reduction supplies, and other social interactions that increase trust, knowledge, solidarity and options between the outreach team and the people they serve. The hard stats for the afternoon: two people were tested, one person learned their health status, and one person was connected to treatment.

Treatment is a process, however. Increasing access for people on the margins to the range of available services, from clinics to pharmacies, is also a daily effort.

“That’s the other part of this job,” says Frank, “going to service providers, talking to the staff, letting them know the feedback I’ve gotten and seeing how receptive they are to a conversation about how we can make this situation better for our clients—how we can widen the margins for getting services.”

“We have a lot of resources in this city,” he says. “Our job here is being the grout between the tiles.”

Monday the van will be at another populated area in the Bayview, but each weekday the team makes a different regular stop across the city. These stops change only as populations move around. As that happens, the OPT-IN team adjusts its schedule accordingly.

That’s the mission, as Frank explains. “Paul told me: Go wherever our people are.”

WAYS TO GIVE

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Dear Friends,

When Lizzie Glide created the GLIDE Foundation in 1929, she made clear that GLIDE was to serve the people of San Francisco, all the people. This great legacy enjoyed a dramatic rebirth in the 1960s with the visionary leadership of Rev. Cecil Williams and Janice Mirikitani who opened GLIDE’s doors wide and grew its programs and congregation to embrace the full range of humanity across the Tenderloin, the city, and the world. GLIDE has always gone out into the community as an ally and advocate for the poor, oppressed and forgotten among us. In doing so, the GLIDE community grew to include not only the poor, hungry and marginalized but also those who are better off materially but seeking connection, meaning and justice. Thus, GLIDE has become woven into the fabric of our city—and the city is woven into the fabric of GLIDE. We hire much of our staff from communities we serve. Thousands of people come through GLIDE’s doors every day—and return again and again—for support, for the opportunity to serve, for community, for a reminder of what is most important. As we serve the growing need around us, San Francisco in turn gives us purpose and direction, as we keep focused on what is meaningful, essential, and common to us all.

Today, as we enter a new phase in GLIDE’s evolution, we have the great opportunity to serve the people of San Francisco at a bigger scale, to improve material and spiritual wellbeing, and expand our loving and inclusive community, like never before. That’s why we have embarked on a five-year strategic vision, GLIDE Forward, to extend our reach and deepen our impact across the widening and shifting landscape of need in our city.

Our approach remains grounded in GLIDE’s values of unconditional love and radical inclusion. It honors the dignity and worth in every life and compassionately meets each person wherever they happen to be on life’s journey. This is why our model of care works: we partner with people to help them realize the change they want to see in their lives, bringing to bear expertise and methods rooted in evidence of what works and what does not.

While our values and mission remain the same, with GLIDE Forward we are actively pursuing greater impact by:

- expanding, integrating and refining our comprehensive cutting-edge programs and services to stabilize and materially and measurably advance the lives of those struggling in our most underserved communities;
- growing our advocacy and social justice efforts in order to shape policies, influence systems and empower our communities to reduce poverty, inequities and injustice;
- and welcoming new generations into our thriving and radically diverse spiritual community, to celebrate life together and build connections and solidarity among all people.

I’m proud of the progress we are making as we enter the second year of this strategic growth. As you will read in these pages, there are many ways in which GLIDE continues to innovate and refine our programs to better meet the needs of the people, and city, of San Francisco.

We have already redesigned and ramped up efforts to serve more people in more locations—meeting people where they are across the city. From our new mobile meals program and harm reduction outreach, to reaching more women in jails, we are finding new ways to break cycles of poverty, homelessness, chaotic drug use, incarceration and violence.

Our progress is already measurable and transformative. It would not be possible without the commitment and enormous effort of our devoted staff, congregation and board. And it all could not have been possible without our exceptional executive director, Rita Shimmin, who has dedicated 17 years of brilliant and loving service to GLIDE and the people we serve. As she enters a well-earned retirement, I speak for all of us at GLIDE in saying she leaves us better, wiser and richer for her leadership, friendship and example.

I am humbled by the compassionate work we do each day at GLIDE, the creativity and resilience of our Tenderloin neighbors, and the diverse and endlessly enriching contributions to our community from those we serve. GLIDE remains, more than anything, what Lizzie Glide wanted: a collective movement to realize a better, more just and loving world for us all, right here and right now.

Thank you for joining us in this great venture.

Karen Hanrahan
President and CEO, GLIDE
You Are GLIDE. I Am GLIDE. Without Exception, We Are All GLIDE.

After 30 years of nonprofit work, the last 17 years in leadership at GLIDE, Executive Director Rita Shimmin has decided to retire. Below, Rita shares some thoughts about GLIDE and her retirement.

Rita, why do you think this is a good time for you to retire? There are a lot of beautiful people here who will take GLIDE forward. I am impressed with and confident in our staff and congregants’ ability to carry on the emotion, spirit, values and good work of GLIDE. GLIDE’s staff and reputation are our most important assets. We are doing a lot that continues the vision of GLIDE as a community of unconditional love and radical inclusivity: the LEAD program, the OPT-IN program, the Leadership Academy, our outreach to women in the local jail, innovations in the Meals program, and new social justice programs led by Rabbi Lezak, to name a few.

Our work continues to attract wonderful people like our CEO and President, Karen Hanrahan. The best is yet to come!

I know the organization is in a good place, and I am ready to open myself to new opportunities. When people hear the word “retire,” they often think that someone is just going to stop doing things. That’s not the case for me. I feel excited about who I am and what will come next. I’m still young. Apparently 75 is still very young. I recently saw a YouTube show about well-known celebrities over the age of 90, and quite a few who had reached 100! So I’m looking into planning my next 30 years.

How did you end up staying at GLIDE so long? In November of 2002, I joined GLIDE as the Associate Executive Director in charge of programs. I was confused about GLIDE for a while. Was it a church, or a foundation, or programs? At that time, I was responsible for different service centers, representing many different programs and business models—a primary healthcare clinic, a family and childcare center, a 364-day meals program, and an array of social services. And the church, of course, overlapped with many of these activities. Every day was different, and I never had a dull day. When I think of leaving GLIDE now, I have tremendous gratitude for the visions of Jan and Cecil. GLIDE is a playground, a place to have big fun! GLIDE is a platform from which to express your life and your life purpose.

GLIDE has to be experienced, a place that exists beyond what can just be seen. For me, it’s been a place to stimulate the expansiveness of my soul and mind and heart. It is not a place to be comfortable. There are many opportunities here to feel centered, to feel grounded, to feel joy. But very soon you’ll be uncomfortable for some reason. And those times of discomfort are the times when growth and love happen. My capacity to care and love has grown here. GLIDE will always be with me. I will always be with GLIDE.

We wish Rita much happiness in her future endeavors and are grateful for her love and contributions to the success of GLIDE!
Three times a week, Saundra Haggerty, Peer Case Manager at GLIDE’s Women’s Center, heads down to the San Francisco County Jail on Bryant Street to conduct case management and teach evidence-based, trauma-informed classes to women in E Pod.

“The first thing I ask the ladies is, ‘What are you charged with?’—not, ‘What did you do?’” she explains. “It’s about leaning away from criminalizing language in order to meet people where they are at, and allowing them to tell their story, in their own words.”

Saundra’s outreach to incarcerated women, which began in May of this year, comes as part of GLIDE Forward, the strategic five-year initiative to expand GLIDE’s community care and provide services where the need is greatest.

“Women of color who are currently or formerly incarcerated with children are among the most vulnerable in the population we serve,” says Ken Kim, who as Director of Behavioral Health Services lends support to GLIDE’s new outreach to the jail. Rates of homelessness and unemployment are especially high among formerly incarcerated women of color. Formerly incarcerated Black women in particular face many barriers to securing stable jobs, childcare and housing, which can lead to homelessness.

The program at E Pod hopes to break the destructive cycle between jail and the streets by creating connections and supports that can smooth the reentry process for women, so that they and their families can not only heal but thrive in their reintegration into the community.

For Saundra, the work is a natural extension of what the Women’s Center is all about. “These women are mothers, they are daughters, sisters, grandmothers—they are family...They may have made poor choices, but they are still part of our community.”

In addition to individual case management, Saundra teaches three strengths-based classes to support and empower women in their pathways toward stabilization and self-sufficiency. These classes include Morning Mindfulness, Strength and Resilience and Women Overcoming Violence. All the classes are voluntary, and all are almost always fully attended.

In the first three months of the program alone, 12 women completed their jail time and enrolled in various community programs, while becoming frequent visitors at GLIDE’s Women’s Center. Jamie is among them.

Like her companions who are negotiating life’s challenges and opportunities post-incarceration, she comes to GLIDE to engage services, to continue working on her goals, and to connect with familiar faces and friends.

When asked what is next for her, Jamie says she will soon begin volunteering. Her hope, she says, is to get a job working for the community.
Marvin K. White Wants to Celebrate You!

A talk with GLIDE Church’s new Minister of Celebration

In July, Marvin K. White became GLIDE’s permanent, full-time Minister of Celebration. Marvin, an acclaimed poet, ranks among his spiritual influences artists and writers. “People with actual magical gifts, who demonstrated healing powers and gathering powers and who bravely and exquisitely told stories that move people in and didn’t exclude people.” He is joined in pastoral leadership by Rev. Harry Williams, GLIDE’s Interim Minister of Compassionate Care. We hope to catch up with Rev. Harry in a later issue. Below we ask Minister Marvin about his role and vision for GLIDE Church.

What is the Minister of Celebration responsible for?

My responsibilities are multi-directional. I am responsible for taking my theological and creative training to lead the Church out and lead the world into GLIDE Celebration. I am responsible for creating the atmosphere for the wisdom of the ages to come down and the wisdom of GLIDE Church to go up. The Church’s primary contribution is our Sunday Celebration—the spiritual, service, and social justice energy we create there. We offer it freely to the Church, community, staff, and to the world. Our impact is measured by the response to our preparation, our invitation and our sending. We generate enough unconditional love on Sundays to empower everyone, no matter who they are, if they want some.

Celebration is the tool we use. Our moral obligation is to disrupt “conditional love thinking” and “uncelebrated thinking” by demonstrating what unconditional love and celebration look like on you. Every part of Celebration, which I lead with an amazing group of folks, is designed to bring people closer to their truth. “Look at the prayer, the embrace, the music, the dance, the sermon, the offering and the witness that we have prepared for you!” We as a church think that the odds are greater, because we are gathered together, that we all will come into an answer that will restore our hearing so we can hear and live into our owned truths and then transform the world.

How does this work connect to the rest of GLIDE?

I think church is prophetic public policy. I think church is advocacy. I think church is a meals program. We offer spiritually what the rest of GLIDE now offers in social services and in the social justice realm. Like the Panthers and Huey taught us, you can’t think on an empty stomach. A free breakfast means at least my kids can have a fighting chance at thinking. There is that real sustenance that the Daily Free Meals program provides. But after your stomach is full, GLIDE Church is here to ask what you’re still hungry for. We’re advocates for well-being, moving from a gnawing sense of self, to a knowing sense of self, and the interconnectedness in the world.

What are your hopes for the Church and GLIDE?

There are several entrances to this building. I want to open wide the door for folks seeking spiritual, creative and sacred services. As for Sunday Celebration, more of the same but better—amplified—being good stewards of the deposits of unconditional love that Cecil and Jan discovered and mined here, and transforming it for a time such as this. Making sure that the invitation is spread even wider. Making sure that what is generated on Sundays is sustainable and powerful enough to light up this whole world. I don’t care if you call it religion, spirituality, faith, esprit de corps, energy, ancestral knowing and knowledge, guidance, fervor, social justice, movement work—all of that. That energy to want to stand up for someone, to love, and know that everyone deserves it. That is generated out of the Church.

Congregational Life – An invitation

Now, what to do with your re-energized self? GLIDE Church offers many opportunities for you to plug in. We have groups of all kinds, from the GLIDE Ensemble to A Better Me, an ongoing wellness workshop. Want to spread unconditional love? Join our weekly Prayer Circle and pray over the hundreds of hand-written prayers that we receive every year. The world got your cables coiled? Join our Yoga group. Ready to change the world? Put your efforts towards our Immigration Task Force group. Want to volunteer to be a Sunday Ambassador or to person our information table in Freedom Hall? We are waiting for you. Maybe you want to address food insecurity? You can also volunteer to serve meals with us at GLIDE. Connection is a practice that gets better the more you do it. Be in Congregational Life practice with us.
“Keeping It Going”
Edna Webster Coleman’s inspired, inspiring life

“You know, people ought to protest again, just like in the ’60s,” says Edna about our current political climate. “They should keep it going. It can’t die down. If you go to sleep on this and are passive, what’s going to happen? They are going to take away what you have gained. That’s the way it goes. So, these young people are going to have to get out and keep it going. They need to keep things moving and not give up.”

Edna grew up in the projects of New Orleans. While in the army, she saved up money to attend a historically black college in Baton Rouge and taught in an elementary school there for a few years prior to moving to the Bay Area in 1967. Edna took part in Civil Rights activism in New Orleans and continued her efforts upon arriving in San Francisco. Very quickly she found a spiritual home in GLIDE. “Cecil was very active at that time—he’d been active all along. He has a lot of good programs at GLIDE for battered women, homeless people, and children.”

She went back to school at San Francisco State University and got her California teaching and reading specialist credentials as well as a master’s degree. Thus began a lifetime career teaching in San Francisco public schools. Politically aware travel further informed and infused her teaching style, including trips to the Middle East, South Africa and Cuba, among many other places. When she retired, Edna was showered with awards, including the San Francisco School District’s Teacher of the Year award and the Unsung Hero award from Mayor Willie Brown.

Regarding her generous legacy gift to GLIDE, Edna simply says, “I came from nothing. I’m in a position now to give back.”

You can read more about Edna’s inspiring life story on GLIDE’s RealTalk blog: glide.org/the-latest
The Year in Action:
An Update from GLIDE’s Center for Social Justice

GLIDE’s Center for Social Justice continues to grow and gain momentum. CSJ is deepening GLIDE’s advocacy efforts, training programs and educational forums—empowering our community members to influence the intersecting issues and public policies that result in poverty and marginalization. Below are just a few updates and highlights from a busy year.

You can learn more about all that CSJ has going on at glide.org/justice

Helping the community lead the way
In September, GLIDE’s Leadership Academy graduated its second cohort of community activists. Launched in August 2018 in collaboration with Tenderloin arts-based empowerment organization Skywatchers, the Leadership Academy is a 16-week curriculum that supports community members in raising their voices and visions for the betterment of the neighborhood and the city. Students share their stories and hopes, learn organizing skills, and develop final projects that emerge from their core concerns and experiences.

“I realized I wanted to become an advocate and motivational speaker to help women who were in my situation find resources and escape domestic violence,” reports graduate Lisa Galinis. “It was so incredible to have my group here working with me when we did our first workshop on domestic violence. Fifty people were there and that was only the beginning.” In addition to the domestic violence workshop, members of the first graduating class have hosted or participated in numerous successful community events—including three press conferences on housing and shelter; a panel on homelessness for high-school students; and a performance for over 600 guests in the GLIDE Sanctuary, which preceded a screening of “The Public,” a new drama about homelessness, followed by a panel discussion with filmmaker and star Emilio Estevez. “It’s helped me get clarity about my goals and find my voice,” says graduate Regi Meadows of the curriculum. “It motivates. It keeps you moving forward for the better. We have so many things to be thankful for and so many things we need to fix, like housing most of all. But it’s good to be doing it and I’m enjoying it very much.” (You can read more about the Leadership Academy at glide.org/the-latest)

Advancing housing as a human right
GLIDE is a founding member of the Our City Our Home movement, a broad-based coalition that put Proposition C, a bold plan to tackle San Francisco’s homelessness crisis, on the November 2018 ballot. Through community organizing, get-out-the-vote drives, the preacher’s pulpit, and the press, GLIDE reached tens of thousands of San Franciscans, contributing to Prop C’s passage with a resounding 61% of the vote. This historic measure mandates funding to help end chronic, family and youth homelessness in San Francisco. While the results have been delayed by a lawsuit filed by opponents, the City Attorney—and our coalition—is confident that Prop C will ultimately prevail and go into effect for the benefit of our unsheltered and insecurely housed neighbors and to the betterment of our entire city.

Confronting a legacy of oppression
GLIDE’s second annual Justice Pilgrimage to Alabama in March convened 80 people from GLIDE, The Kitchen, University of California San Francisco, Dignity Health, and IDEO. The group spent two powerful, thought-provoking days in Montgomery visiting the Equal Justice Initiative’s Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Prior to the Montgomery gathering, GLIDE convened a curated group of healthcare, tech and criminal justice reform leaders who spent three days in Birmingham, Selma and Wilcox County to look at racial and economic disparities in healthcare. They worked together relating these disparities to our communities in California. “Our trip together was transformational,” says GLIDE Executive Director Rita Shimmin. “We were inspired by our conversations and self-reflections to important insights. We have forged a strengthened solidarity between colleagues and allies from the Bay Area and the Deep South.” The next Justice Pilgrimage will be in February 2020.

Bringing a GLIDE lens to the justice system
CSJ’s most recent An Officer and a Mensch trainings took place in June and September. This non-traditional leadership program, led by CSJ’s Rabbi Michael Lezak in partnership with University of Oregon Police Chief Matt Carmichael and Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig, provides criminal justice professionals and first responders with the opportunity to don what the Rabbi calls “GLIDE goggles” in order to build understanding and empathy between law enforcement and historically oppressed communities like the Tenderloin. Participants—police officers and district attorneys from up and down the West Coast—come to GLIDE for three days of immersive service, learning and reflection, serving side by side with GLIDE staff while focusing on four areas of leadership: Wellness, Growth, Spirit and Empathy. In exploring the meaning of compassionate service to those impacted by poverty and inequity, the program also provides de-escalation techniques that promote effective and compassionate services to our diverse and complex communities. September’s class was joined by Los Angeles Times columnist Nita Lelyveld and photographer Genaro Molina, who together movingly captured this “mind-shifting course” in the Sept. 14 edition of the newspaper.
Over 1,000 birthday messages came in from around the world for Rev. Cecil Williams, including those gathered on this giant birthday card.

It's not a party without the community! That's Cecil's way. And on Sunday, September 22, that's just what happened, as the community came out to celebrate the 90th birthday of GLIDE’s legendary Co-Founder and Minister of Liberation at two rollicking, dashiki-clad, and heartwarming Celebration services at GLIDE Church, where Cecil first arrived back in 1963. Open-mic birthday wishes flooded the sanctuary with the impact of Cecil’s legacy of love and the GLIDE Ensemble, sporting Cecil’s own collection of colorful dashikis, uplifted spirits with a special selection of his favorite songs. Celebration was followed by a gathering across the street in Boeddeker Park—the short walk lovingly accompanied by San Francisco’s trailblazing Lesbian and Gay Freedom Band—where all enjoyed sunshine, music and cupcakes, as members of the Tenderloin community shared heartfelt birthday wishes for the Rev.

Asked a few days later to name a highlight of that great day, Cecil didn’t hesitate. “Hearing from the folks in the park,” he says with a smile. Ever and always a man of the people. Happy Birthday and much love, Cecil, we’re thankful for you!

Celebrating Cecil!
A community-wide party for Rev. Williams’ 90th birthday

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 Couldn’t join us in person? Re-live the special Celebrations and check out all of the photos! glide.org/CelebrateCecil

Original artwork for Rev. Williams’ 90th Birthday by Thelma Andree
LOVE Prevails!
GLIDE’s 2018 Annual Holiday Jam

On November 28, 2018, GLIDE family and friends gathered at the Masonic in San Francisco for an uplifting evening of celebration and music for our Annual Holiday Jam. Guests flocked from around the country to enjoy luminous performances and delicious bites from some of the Bay Area’s finest restaurants as well as our very own GLIDE Daily Free Meals program.

The Syncopated Ladies, a tap troupe sensation, energized attendees with their special blend of beats, movement and passion. The world-renowned GLIDE Ensemble, led by Vernon Bush and accompanied by The Change Band, offered musical selections to honor the late, great John Turk who passed away earlier in 2018. Turk was a longtime friend and former leader of the GLIDE Ensemble.

Lisa Fischer took center stage, showcasing her incredible vocal range and India. Arie, four-time Grammy Award-winning singer and songwriter, helped GLIDE end the evening on a high note with her message from the stage of social justice and her epic collaboration with the GLIDE Ensemble on the anthem “One.” Honorary co-chairs for the 2018 Holiday Jam included Richard C. Blum, Angela Y. Davis, Roberta Flack, Felicia and Ben Horowitz, Maja Kristin and Craig D. Ramsey.

Over the past half century, GLIDE has shown first-hand that LOVE always prevails. In these challenging times when people are feeling anxious, unsettled and not heard, it is especially important to affirm that LOVE overcomes divisiveness and brings people together.

“GLIDE has been doing what we do best for over 50 years,” said President and CEO Karen Hanrahan. “We practice unconditional love and radical inclusion and acceptance every day through our innovative, evidence-based programs that break cycles of poverty, and we regenerate our spirits on Sundays through our joyful and uplifting Celebrations. We meet our divisive and fractured world with material and spiritual support, social justice advocacy and loving community.”

“We are deeply grateful to our supporters who give generously of their time, money and resources,” said GLIDE Co-founder and Minister of Liberation Reverend Cecil Williams. “We are especially thankful for their unconditional love and commitment to our shared values.”

Each year, the GLIDE Annual Holiday Jam raises funds for GLIDE’s services, including the Daily Free Meals program, “Mo’s Kitchen,” which serves 750,000 free meals annually to San Francisco’s most in-need individuals and families.

Save the date for this year’s Holiday Jam: Dare to Love! on Thursday, November 14, 2019 at The Masonic in San Francisco.

Info & Tickets: glide.org/DareToLove
“Every day I walk to and from work. I zigzag my route, but I always take the same last two blocks on Jones and Ellis. When I see our people, I know I am going to do something for our folks, shortly, I will be nourishing their body and soul.

My background is in the restaurant industry. I spent 21 years at the Cheesecake Factory, until one day I admitted I wanted to do something different. I wanted to give back, do more than just for myself. GLIDE was an aligning of the stars. I volunteered before interviewing here. When I got the job, I set out to nourish people as a whole, body and soul. We softened the colors of table clothes, added music and resized the food trays. We formed partnerships to improve the quality and variety of our food. One hundred percent of our kitchen workforce come from the local community. This creates a special bond with the staff and the population we serve. Many have lived the lives that our clients are living right now. They can relate and understand, have empathy and love. You can’t put a price on that good feeling.”

George, Director, Daily Free Meals

“I have lived in the Bay Area my whole life. My mother was an elementary school teacher in the Tenderloin, so I started volunteering in the community. The Bay Area generally and the Tenderloin specifically have always been cultural melting pots, and I love that GLIDE reflects that. The diversity here is beautiful. Everyone is celebrated as a unique individual and no one is shunned or silenced for being themselves.

“GLIDE is special because it is often a last resort for many. People that have been pushed out or are in some way more difficult to serve show up at GLIDE, and we have a robust process to make sure that we find solutions, so people get the services they need. We do that by meeting people where they are at and treating everyone with respect.”

Caitlin, Data Coordinator

Thank you, Arthur Rock & Toni Rembe Rock!

Thank you, Craig D. Ramsey & Family!
“People on the streets know me as O.G. Rev. That’s what GLIDE means to me: an urban ministry. I am not just praying with you, I am helping you fill out job applications. I see my ministry as an opportunity to really serve people in the belly of struggle and empower people to speak for themselves. This is grassroots, hands-on work in a community that needs tender love and care. GLIDE is not just this building on Ellis Street. GLIDE is a community; this community is our parish.”

_Rev. Harry_, Minister of Compassionate Care, GLIDE Church

“GLIDE is a challenging and rewarding place to work. Every day is different but every day you see the struggle. I myself was incarcerated in Texas, and I am grateful to give back by directing folks to GLIDE’s services. Since joining the Community Safety Team I have reversed seven overdoses. That’s what I do, I bring people back, back to the community.”

_Robert_, Community Safety Team

“Thank you, Maja Kristin!”

“Thank you, Chip Conley Foundation!”

“Thank you, eBay for Charity!”
“Food, shelter and health are a priority for so many here and the prospect of making time for art might be the last thing on their minds. Setting up a space to make art at GLIDE, the hub of the Tenderloin, makes art-making easy and accessible for people who might not have ever considered sitting down to paint. It offers them the opportunity to express their creativity and gives voice to a community who is all too often unheard. One artist told me, ‘I’ve been having all these dreams and thoughts but didn’t have a way to express them until now.’ Another artist told me that he had never considered making art as a way to cure boredom during idle-time when he’d normally be inclined to drink. Working with ceramics, especially, involves a process that intersects technique with creative autonomy. Molding a ball of clay into a functional object like a cup, bowl or ashtray fosters a sense of accomplishment and a growth-mindset that many of our artists have lost during their difficult journeys to homelessness. I believe that we need mental and creative stimulation to stay alive in any real, sustainable way, and offering art at GLIDE, a center where so many other life-saving programs and services are available to the community, makes perfect sense.”

Toby, Volunteer

“GLIDE was a drastic shift for my professional culinary experience. My background is in nutritional health in skilled nursing facilities and hospitals, so the nature of the work was strict and more clinical. At GLIDE, we are all about meeting people where they are at and you see that in the Meals program. We plan our meals menu in response to the community need. On a hot day we can serve popsicles. If the weather is nice, we can grill in the parking lot. I know our community recognizes and appreciates this. Not only does it reinforce our values as an organization, but it also acts as a daily reminder to our staff of why we are here and who we are really here for.”

Joselyn, Culinary Manager

“GLIDE uniquely meets everyone where they are at. Not just the people accessing our services but the staff too. That is why we have Workforce Development, to support staff in bettering themselves by pursuing skills that interest them. I love that I am encouraged to be curious and learn from all our different programs and departments. Right now, I am volunteering in the Women’s Center, the Men in Progress program, and Tuesday nights with the Harm Reduction team. When staff are more well-versed in each department, we are able to provide better services to the community.”

Niamh, Workforce Development Coordinator

Thank you, Richard C. Blum & Senator Dianne Feinstein!

Thank you, Felicia & Ben Horowitz!

Thank you, the Lord Family!
“I feel more alive professionally than ever before. This place is a redemption factory, a place that takes people who are on the margins and helps them to see the sacred light inside of them, helps remind them of who they once were and who they might yet become. That is what we have built at GLIDE. An interconnected web of services run by some of the most righteous people I know. All of whom believe that radical transformation is possible. Many of whom have experienced radical transformation in their own lives, often thanks to this very building. GLIDE is social justice, social programming and spirituality. To have this recharge station of music and soul and love-creating is among the greatest forces in the world. Once you connect with that transformative force, I can think of nothing else to do in the world. It will save this street, this city and possibly America.”

Michael, Rabbi at GLIDE’s Center for Social Justice

“Have joy in our life. It’s unavoidable for tears. We meet each other inside the Freedom Hall. It’s more laughter than sadness.

Life is inevitably rugged and it’s hard to worry about. We’re in the same boat and we should help each other. Abandon distinction and seek agreement.

To create a radically inclusive, and loving community mobilized to alleviate suffering and break the cycles of poverty and marginalization.”

William, Senior Accountant of Finance & Operations

“I wanted to work at GLIDE because of its sense of community. I was impressed by the sense of family I felt, by the way employees treated each other. Especially the participants. The second day I was here, this man came in crying, saying that he wanted to give back because he has been using GLIDE’s services for years. A lot of people who used services come back to serve as volunteers. I like the fact that GLIDE reaches out to everyone; it breaks from the norm. I want to be part of that, of helping GLIDE move to higher heights. Creativity and community. When you mix the two together that is GLIDE.”

Stephen, Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator

“Thank you!

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Mary Glide & Chris Munoz
Pincus Family Fund
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# GLIDE Annual Holiday Jam

**Wednesday, November 28, 2018 | The Masonic**

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Please remember GLIDE in your will.

SAVE THE DATE!
Join us for DARE TO LOVE GLIDE’s Annual Holiday Jam on November 14, 2019 at the Masonic in San Francisco.
glide.org/daretolove

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