



MAY 2023

# GOOD VIBRATIONS

AIRPORT MARINA COUNSELING SERVICE



2023 SPRING CELEBRATION

## AMCS Raises More Than \$390,000 for Community Mental Health

Community mental health supporters rallied on May 18 at the Drollinger Family Stage on the campus of Loyola Marymount University to raise more than \$390,000 to support Airport Marina Counseling Service's (AMCS) efforts to deliver low-cost community mental health services and train new therapists at the organization's 18th annual "Spring into Well-Being" Celebration.



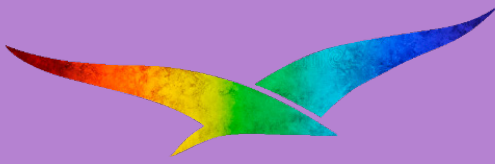
The event celebrated AMCS's 2023 Community Builder, LAWA CEO Justin Erbacher, who has made giving back to the local community a cornerstone of his time leading the city's airports.

"We are so excited that the community recognizes the important role AMCS plays in making sure everyone has access to mental health services," said AMCS CEO Edén García-Balís. "We were excited to honor Justin for all he has done to help the community we serve."



The event, emceed by retired NBC4 Weathercaster Fritz Coleman, attracted hundreds of key local community and business leaders, including Los Angeles City Councilmember Traci Park, and raised more than \$390,000 to continue to support the clinic's mission to provide affordable, community-based mental health services and to support the training of more than 60 mental health therapists each year.

The Clinic currently serves hundreds of individuals, children and families and couples weekly, and its services are provided on a sliding-scale basis.



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# Pride Fest 2023 is Almost Here!

## AMCS'S LGBTQ PRIDE FEST WILL INCLUDE FREE FOOD, FUN, MUSIC AND MORE!

Airport Marina Counseling Service (AMCS) will celebrate diversity and inclusion at its annual LGBTQ Pride Fest – a free community event aimed at reducing stigma around mental health and raising awareness of low-cost or free mental health services in Los Angeles. Pride Fest will be held from 12 to 2 p.m. on Saturday, June 17 at the Drollinger Family Stage on the Loyola Marymount University campus in Westchester.

The family-friendly outdoor event, funded by the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health in conjunction with the Take Action LA program administered by CalMHSA, Pride Fest will feature fun and educational “wellness stations” facilitated by therapists from AMCS’s LGBTQIA+ Affirmative Therapy Center, notable guest speakers, free food trucks, music, a photobooth, gift bags, face painting and more.

Dr. Mimi Hoang, psychologist, longtime LGBTQ advocate, and Program Coordinator of AMCS’s LGBTQIA+ Affirmative Therapy Center, will be the host and coordinator of the annual Pride Fest event.

“We’re thrilled to host this event in celebration of LGBT Pride Month and to raise awareness of the importance of mental health services in the LGBTQ community, which is at higher risk of mental health concerns due to minority stress,” said Dr. Hoang. “We hope that Pride Fest will help reduce the stigma around mental health services and encourage more people to seek the help they need.”

Established in 2018 as one of the few centers of its kind in Los Angeles, AMCS’s LGBTQIA+ Affirmative Therapy Center offers individual and group psychotherapy to the LGBTQ community on a sliding scale provided by diverse therapists who are culturally competent and LGBTQ affirmative.

Pride Fest is open to the public and all members of the LGBTQIA+ community and allies are welcome to attend. The goal of the event is to bring the community together to celebrate Pride, create a fun, safe, and supportive space for individuals to connect with mental health services and learn about the many resources available to them. It will also include special presentations from Yuè Begay (she/her), public health consultant and Co-Chair of Indigenous Pride LA; and Gerald Garth (he/him), Executive Director of the AMAAD Institute (Arming Minorities Against Addiction & Disease) and President of CSW/LA Pride.

To register for the event, please visit [www.AMCSPRIDEFEST.eventbrite.com](http://www.AMCSPRIDEFEST.eventbrite.com)



## AMCS MISSION

Airport Marina Counseling Service (AMCS) provides accessible community based mental health services; and provides quality training to therapists.

# Meet MFT Trainee Devika Parmar

## DEVIKA HOPES TO INTRODUCE ART THERAPY TO FIRST GENERATION IMMIGRANTS

Devika Parmar has been making her own art for a long time, but as a training therapist at AMCS, she has seen how art can make a real difference in helping people of all ages understand their mental health.

“Making art can be therapeutic,” she said. “You can glean a lot of clinical insight from art therapy. Art therapy allows clients to process challenges, gain insight, and even build self-esteem through art and metaphor.”

Devika just completed 10 months of working with teens and pre-teens as part of the Boys and Girls Club of Venice track where art therapy is a natural fit, but she said art therapy can be useful for clients of all ages. As a first-generation immigrant, Devika ultimately hopes to work with first generation immigrant adults.

Devika’s parents immigrated from Mumbai, India in 1989 and, though she was born here, she said it is important for both immigrants and children of immigrants to see therapists who might have a more intimate understanding of their experiences.

“I didn’t know a single South Asian therapist growing up,” said Devika, who said she hopes to help people of the South Asian diaspora eliminate the stigma attached to seeking mental health services. “I want to be able to provide help that is culturally relevant and informed.”



**Devika Parmar**  
*Airport Marina Counseling Service  
MFT Trainee*

# Immediate Intervention Program Changes Lives

## FUNDED BY THE WILLIAM H. HANON FOUNDATION, THE PROGRAM HAS SPENT 20 YEARS HELPING PEOPLE

First launched with The William H. Hannon Foundation support in 2003, the William H. Hannon Immediate Intervention Program is designed to offer attention to those who are struggling with an array of challenges such as the death of a loved one, being a victim of or witness to a crime, domestic violence, dissolution of a marriage, sudden economic loss or a severe medical problem, according to the foundation.

The Foundation’s generous support enables the clinic to continue to provide critical help to community members who have experienced a recent traumatic life-changing event.

“We cannot know how many suicides, acts of violence or other desperate or angry acts against family or community have been prevented or de-escalated through this unique intervention program,” said Airport Marina Counseling Service Clinical Director Dee Dee Hoffman. “We do know that we often intervened early enough to prevent more serious emotional or physical harm to our clients and their families.”





Airport Marina Counseling Service (AMCS)  
7891 La Tijera Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA, 90045

## Eden's Message

Our community's mental health supporters rallied to raise more than \$390,000 to support AMCS at our annual "Spring into Well-Being" Celebration!

There are far too many people to thank in this limited space, but please know that we value each and every person who helped make this event possible.

It was an outpouring of support that makes it clear how much our services are valued in this community and inspires all of us to continue doing the hard work AMCS has been doing since 1962. The event was emceed by NBC4 Weathercaster Fritz Coleman and celebrated our 2023 Community Builder Justin Erbacci, who has been an incredible community leader. Thank you all again for the best Spring Celebration yet!

Wishing you nothing but Good Vibrations,



**Eden Garcia-Balis, LMFT**  
*Chief Executive Officer,  
Airport Marina Counseling Service*

*Eden*



SAVE THE DATE

## Gateway LA's Progressive Dinner Supports AMCS

Gateway LA's popular and fun Progressive Dinner will make its return this year and will benefit AMCS! So, be sure to mark your calendar now for 5 to 9 p.m. on Sunday, August 13 and join us in hopping from hotel to hotel along Century Boulevard to enjoy some of the best food in the area for a great cause!