

# Partnering for Positive Mental Health Outcomes

Cities, Schools and Community-Based Organizations  
Collaborating to Support Students



## Community Unites to Provide Essential Services for Youth

In 1973, local community members worked with four local school districts and three cities to form a joint powers authority and non-profit organization in response to drug and alcohol use among adolescents. More than 40 years later, the Community Health Awareness Council (CHAC) continues to operate as a mental health services agency with support from the cities of Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills, as well as Mountain View-Whisman School District, Los Altos School District and Mountain View-Los Altos Union High School District.

Executive Director, Monique Kane, has been with CHAC since 1986. In her experience, in these high-achieving school zones, students are expected to “achieve a 4.5 grade point average, take advance placement courses and balance a full load of extracurricular activities outside of school time...students are under pressure to get into college and achieve more than their peers. This pressure is not always coming from their parents but themselves.” The resulting pressures lead to challenges for the individual, the family and the greater community.

*“...students are under pressure to get into college and achieve more than their peers. This pressure is not always coming from their parents but themselves.”*

*Monique Kane,  
CHAC Executive Director*

Through CHAC's unique partnership with local agencies and connection to qualified service providers-in-training, youth receive clinical support to address depression, anxiety, homelessness, dysfunctional family life and stress, including stress from conditions such as high-expectations of academic performance. Among the 33 school sites where CHAC provides services, more than a third of local youth are receiving assistance to address stress from poverty and dysfunction, including depression and extreme loneliness from family units where caregivers work multiple jobs to maintain homes in the school district. The majority, more than two-thirds, of students receive mental health services related to stress and depression. Interns report to clinical supervisors and school psychologists or principals to connect youth with additional support services as needed. Clinicians may recommend a youth's hospitalization due to serious suicidal thoughts or a suicide attempt was made - such instances have increased since 2010.

CHAC's unique model operates as a training facility for nearly 100 clinicians as they acquire the necessary 3000 clinic hours required by the State of California. Interns are in training to become psychologists or marriage and

family therapists. Individuals work at CHAC part-time, 20-25 hours per week, at a school site and receive individual and group supervision and training. School-based student services are provided at no-cost, and services at CHAC's clinic are provided on a sliding price scale. Schools sites may have one to four clinicians on site depending on the needs of that campus and its students. In addition to serving youth, CHAC's main clinic provides parenting classes and counseling for individuals, couples and families.

The JPA governing board includes representatives of the cities and school districts that support the organization as well as members of the public. The JPA operates under the rules of the Ralph M. Brown Act and meets 10 times per year. CHAC regularly reports on its operations to the full governing boards of the cities and schools that make-up the JPA as those organizations provide designated general fund dollars to support the mental health services and operations of CHAC.

In addition to the partners contributing 11-13% of the organization's annual funding, CHAC receives foundation grants, support from corporate and individual donors as well as the El Camino Hospital Foundation. CHAC also hosts fundraising events in the communities it serves. While the adjacent City of Sunnyvale is not an official partner in CHAC, a city council member does serve on CHAC's advisory board; CHAC currently serves 10 elementary schools in Sunnyvale.

For more information about CHAC, see [www.chacmv.org](http://www.chacmv.org). To learn more about collaborations and partnerships among cities, counties, schools and community organizations, and the collective impact joint efforts have, visit the Community Schools Partnerships Toolkit at [www.ccspartnership.org/resources/community-schools-partnerships](http://www.ccspartnership.org/resources/community-schools-partnerships).