



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

January 2023 by Debbie Bertrando

Like many organizations, OPTIONS has experienced changes and challenges due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have developed many resources and tools to help guide us along the way and remain strong in promoting our core values of responsibility, caring, respect and trustworthiness within our organization.

This year, as part of our Strategic Plan, we have reviewed the strengths of our organization as well as the areas in which we can continue to improve. We have continued to strive to provide the highest quality services possible during the most unprecedented times. One of our greatest strengths include our level of teamwork and flexibility. Through this crisis, our team has banded together with an “all hands on deck” approach. We have worked hard to keep our staff and persons served healthy. With the dedication of our staff, our ability to provide a wide continuum of services to persons with a variety of needs and individual goals has continued. Our organization remains fiscally sound and we have been able to provide wage increases to our well deserving staff. This year we have also been able to move our main office to a more central location and are working to expand services in several of our departments.

We have remained informed of current issues and best practices, but have certainly felt the impact of the pandemic. We have had some changes over the past two years, such as discontinuing our decades long contract at Hearst Castle. We recognize with every loss there are opportunities and our Vocational Services Department is moving in a new direction. Our team is excited about the new opportunities that are evolving.

As we are learning to live with COVID-19 and resume many of our pre-pandemic activities, we are working to make adjustments to move forward and enjoy our community. Current areas of focus include leadership development for new supervisors and training for new staff. As many new responsibilities were attended to, priorities shifted to more immediate needs. We are now able to re-focus on areas that have been set aside.

I am proud to be part of OPTIONS Family of Services, surrounded by an incredible group of caring individuals. We have weathered a storm over the past two years and have emerged stronger with an increased appreciation of the little things that matter so much. This year we are developing and expanding services and ensuring we continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those we support each day.