

“It takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, and a day to love them, but it takes an entire lifetime to forget them.”

— Anonymous

casa's support plans - part four

*This year we are discussing the components of Casa's Support Plans, highlighting one every month. Please take this opportunity to learn more about these plans and the impact they have on our residents. Our subject this month is **SPIRITUALITY**.*

The fourth subject in Casa's Support Plan is **'Spirituality'**. This component was added for residents who are interested in connecting with our local places of worship, Bible Studies, synagogues, or wish to participate in other spiritually-based activities. For those who want this support, we offer guidance to help determine what best fits their needs, or if they want to form practices of their own versus follow ones they have always participated in with their family. For some, staff has accompanied them as well to make the initial introduction and help get them started.

Once a resident is connected we have marveled at their growth and some have even invited their friends to participate. Recently after being invited to church with a friend, one resident commented, "I like the service, but I loved the donuts!" A great example of our support can be found in Chris' story. Moving to Casa three years ago he immediately became friends with Brad. Brad had been looking for a local church when he and Chris were told about a new Bible Study for adults with disabilities in San Clemente. Brad invited Chris to join him and they both enjoyed the friends they met and the message they heard. Both became regulars at this weekly Bible Study and evolved as role models for the younger members in the group — offering hope that they too could one day live an independent life. Shortly thereafter, Chris began attending the Sunday services too with his friend Brad and other residents joined them at times. When asked about this area of support Chris commented, "It was great to have the staff help show me where to find a good place to go and learn more about life. I've really like attending there. I've really liked the lessons I learn there and the nice people I've met. I'm glad Casa helped me be more of a part of my community" Chris added, "Casa has really helped me in so many ways and I wish I had known about it years earlier." In the area of spiritual it is clear that when Casa offers support — **good things can and DO happen!**



gone but not forgotten . . . remembering Jorge

Jorge Solano moved into Casa in August of 2007 and sadly passed away after a brave battle with cancer in March of 2018. Jorge's ten-plus years at Casa were equivalent to what many of us experience in thirty years. He made more friends than in all his previous years combined, enjoyed more community opportunities than he would have imagined and certainly experienced many firsts such as meeting Arnold Schwarzenegger, touring Rodeo Drive, cruising to Mexico with Casa, and taking a number of trips with friends to enjoy the snow in our local mountains.

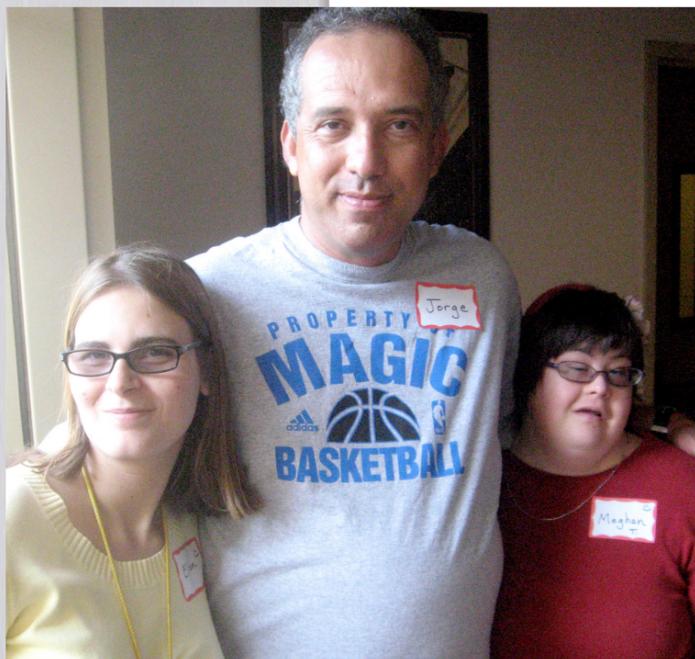
The legacy of Jorge at Casa won't be what he experienced here. It will be what he demonstrated through his amazing, and dignified life and everyone felt better when he was around. He was always kind, always respectful and always exhibiting his very best manners. He was the type of guy that would bring you gifts after a trip home or thank you repeatedly for the smallest gesture towards him. Jorge's kindness to others made him a favorite at Casa and he didn't know how to hold a grudge. Any issue that came up with someone he quickly forgave and treated them with the respect he wanted in return.

Jorge had a larger than life love for adventure. Always planning his next outing, he had an insatiable appetite to experience new things especially in America. Originally from Columbia, he studied American history and our culture. His knowledge impressed many of his friends who were natural born citizens - often knowing less about America than he did. Jorge always dressed well and was known for wearing three-piece suits to our Community Dinners. Though staff would try to explain he didn't need to dress up, to him any occasion with friends was a good occasion to wear his best clothes! Jorge gave his best whether it was required or not — that's who he was. He gave his best to Casa's Healthy Lifestyles events, to the Talent Show which he often won, to the art classes he frequented and the beautiful masterpieces he created, and lastly did his best to live with the cancer he was diagnosed with nearly eight years ago.

From the initial diagnosis, the setbacks hearing his surgery wasn't completely successful, the subsequent meeting about options like chemo and radiation, or the final meetings to discuss end-of-life options, Jorge always entered with two questions . . . what can I do to beat the cancer and no matter what news was, when could he start his next adventure. This amazing spirit was evident by everything he did the last six months of his life; a trip to Columbia, meeting Arnold Schwarzenegger, trips to Disneyland / Universal Studios, piloting a Duffy Boat with friends in Newport Bay, spending the day on Rodeo drive, just to name a few. Jorge's love for life and adventurous spirit encouraged all who knew him to plan their own adventures and not take life for granted. He was Casa's example how to not live life with the brakes on!

Most importantly Jorge left a legacy of love and kindness toward others. His big heart made so many feel accepted regardless of their disability or struggles. He showed us the power of a smile and a heartfelt hello. In his passing Jorge leaves a hole that will never be filled. One of his family members said he lived more in his ten years at Casa than the forty-two years previously. That may be true but Jorge gave more to Casa in those ten years than we could have ever given back . . . he gave kindness and love, and for that he will always be remembered. From all the Casa Community, we love you and will always miss you Amigo!





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