



**“Freedom Is  
Nothing But  
A Chance  
To Be  
Better.”**

*Albert Camus*

## celebrating independence every day

Fireworks, barbeque and the American flag! July is at the center of our proudest American holiday and in just four short days we'll celebrate our nation's freedom and independence. At Casa de Amma independence and freedom is celebrated throughout the year. Many of our residents have stories of their own struggle and journey to have the freedom to live as other adults do- with the independence to live where they want, with who they want, and pursuing the goals they want. This might not sound like a unique concept to you and I but for many adults with special needs these personal choices often aren't allowed. All too often adults with disabilities have been told where they will live, what they can and can't do and what constitutes for a meaningful and productive life.

At Casa independence and freedom aren't just being able to do what you want when you want. It's being enabled and supported to pursue dreams and goals that otherwise seemed out of reach. At Casa staff and family listen and validate a person who is explaining their desires instead of just explaining why something "isn't realistic". We know that every resident should have the freedom to make life decisions in a way that fits their desires and personal goals. We also believe each resident should be continually supported to be more independent with life skills. This allows each person to begin to be less reliant on support staff and more capable of mastering these important skills on their own.

Our forefathers knew independence meant they could follow their dream for a new nation. At Casa de Amma independence holds much of the same promise — the opportunity to live a life where each person's hopes and dreams can be realized, the opportunity to work hard to create a life they are proud of, and the choice to determine for them what's important. And that's something to celebrate year around!

Update your  
calendar with  
these upcoming  
Casa events!

**2016**

Join Us For Our  
**Community Dinner**  
**July 27th and September 28th**  
held at Casa de Amma  
27231 Calle Arroyo, San Juan Capistrano  
The evening starts at 5:30 pm and includes  
a quick program, dinner and dessert.

**Saturday, November 5th**  
**Casa Benefit Dinner**  
held at Laguna Hills Community Center

## congratulations are in order!

There has been some program restructuring at Casa and three longtime staff members have been promoted. Matt O'Hara, Shannon Susanka and Wendy Rundle are now part of Casa's Management team!

Matt is our new Resident Director. His duties will include overseeing our resident's personal and social needs, advise and train staff on the best ways to work with our residents in an individualized and effective manner, and work with therapists or psychologists as needed. In his ten years at Casa, Matt has consistently shown enormous dedication to our residents and is skilled at facilitating growth in many areas of their lives.

**Matt O'Hara**  
Resident Director

**Shannon Susanka**  
Healthy Living Director

Shannon is now Casa's Healthy Living Director and will oversee medical support, medications, nutrition and exercise. She has been with us for eight years assisting residents with their medical needs and medications. Her promotion will also consist of providing nutrition guidance and exercise support, two key areas that greatly effect the health of our residents long term.

**Wendy Rundle**  
Life Skills Director

Wendy is Casa's Life Skills Director. She will oversee Casa's supports and services — specifically apartment life, community activities, CasaU, and personal finance. She will also be in charge of scheduling support plans, charting in support areas, and evaluating the quality/effectiveness of supports. In her six years at Casa, Wendy has shown great dedication to our residents and has always been willing to assist with any needs that may arise.

## where are the resources?

Did you know there are five million citizens with intellectual / developmental disabilities (I/DD) in the USA and only 10% have access to supports to live outside of their family home? At Casa de Amma we talk to people every week who are desperately looking for a place for their loved one to get the support they need. Unfortunately, there are far too few options and many of the more sought after programs are full — with long waiting lists. Families often struggle to find programs that are available, as before now there have been very few resources that bring this information together.

Good news! There is a new resource for individuals and families looking for the right fit when it comes to housing and supports for adults with disabilities. The Autism Housing Network, a project of Madison House Autism Foundation, has compiled a much needed resources for adults with autism and other disabilities. Their website <http://www.autismhousingnetwork.org> offers a variety of solutions such as an integrated housing directory with multiple filters to refine the search, a resources page with up-to-date information, a discussions page with a variety of topics in an interactive forum, and personal/family stories, and suggestions for programs that are available throughout the country. Take a minute and check out this new site today!