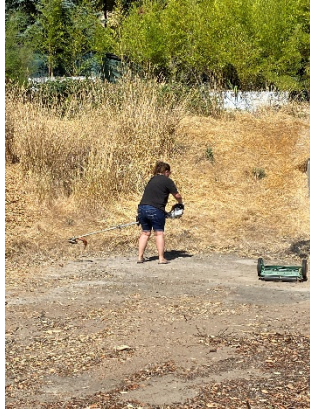


Athena House at Stonehouse has been a tobacco free campus since 2012; however, that does not change the degree in which clients come into treatment addicted to nicotine. As a result of receiving a grant from California Department of Public Health and California Tobacco Control Program we have had an opportunity to put a greater emphasis on those suffering from nicotine addiction in addition to other substance abuse issues. The Pandemic made our treatment environment very challenging, but we chose to embrace the time quarantined by establishing a garden on a vacant lot the program owns adjacent to the program.



Gardening became a very therapeutic endeavor for both clients and staff. We combined the outdoor physical activity with nutrition classes which created a healthy outlet for stress and cravings. Clients became less focused on their struggles and more focused on achieving our goal of completing the garden to grow our own veggies. They exceeded their own expectations of what would emerge from the pile of weeds and dirt. The emerging of beauty from weeds became symbolic to their recovery. We utilized this enthusiasm to bring greater awareness to a whole-body healthy lifestyle. Exercise is a regular part of every day's program schedule but with this grant we were



able to purchase actual exercise equipment to foster the physical aspect of the whole-body healthy approach. Another significant change to our program is the intake and admissions process. We have been offering NRT immediately because we are a non-smoking facility but issues with nicotine addiction have not been part of the assessment process. Now as new clients enter our program, we ask the questions about not only nicotine addiction but gambling issues as well. Treatment plans now include goals around remaining abstinent from smoking as well as other substances. We recognized how critical addiction to nicotine was when we had clients walk out on treatment even with a CPS case because they were craving a cigarette. Now we are stronger as a program in our approach to helping these women because we have placed as much importance on smoking as a primary addiction as we have every other substance. We are also stronger because as we focus our efforts to create a whole-body healthy programming approach, our clients complete physically and



emotionally healthier and grateful for the life that is ahead of them. We believe this health-conscious programming will transcend to the children who have come to expect lots of fruits and veggies in their daily diets as well as water throughout the day. The lives of the women and children of this program will continue to transform just as our garden has thanks to the education and support from CTCP and the SCLC Leadership Team.

