



Here's what has happened in the last month and what's to come!

Welcome to our Janus of Santa Cruz newsletter! We are thrilled to share with you the latest developments in our mission to make a positive impact in our community.

March is Women's Empowerment Month! This month, we're honoring the strength, leadership, and resilience of the women who make up 74% of the Janus team. Their dedication fortifies our mission every single day.

Our commitment to women extends beyond our workforce. Through our Perinatal Program, we support women with compassionate, specialized care—helping them build healthier futures for themselves and their families. Their courage is at the heart of what Women's Empowerment Month is all about.

Janus of Santa Cruz is also pleased to share some exciting news. On Saturday, March 28th, we will be recognized as the

honored organization during the Santa Cruz Warriors' Fan Appreciation Night, which also happens to be the last game of the season!

This event offers a valuable opportunity to increase community awareness of our work, and we encourage all community members to attend and show their support. There will be team autographed Spaulding balls for auction with all proceeds going to Janus. Also, be there to see our CEO and Assemblymember Gail Pellerin pass the ball to the ref at 6:49 PM before tip off! Additional details about the game are included in the CEO's corner.

Grab your seat today!

Enjoy this month's newsletter!

-Development Team

CEO's Corner

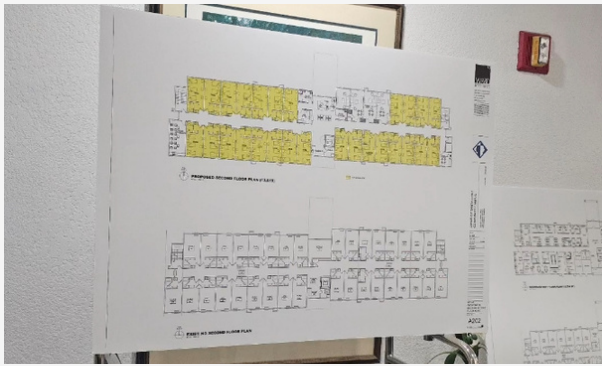
Texas Legends
VS. Santa Cruz
Warriors

March 28, 2026
7PM PT

First 1,000 fans
in attendance
will receive a co-
branded Santa
Cruz Warriors
and Janus scarf



Buy Tickets



Organization Updates

Janus of Santa Cruz has recently acquired the former Rodeway Inn, marking an exciting step forward in expanding access to treatment services in our region. The project has already gained attention, with features on KSBW, the Santa Cruz Sentinel, and the Pajaronian highlighting our commitment to addressing the critical need for additional treatment programs —specifically, a new facility dedicated to supporting men in recovery.

With support from the state's Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program funding (BHCIP), the former Rodeway Inn will be transformed into the Regional Hub, a comprehensive model that includes a 120-bed residential and outpatient treatment center for men, with completion targeted for September 2027. This investment represents a transformative regional milestone for Santa Cruz County, Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Benito, and Monterey Counties.



Community Updates

Earlier this month the Santa Cruz Warriors had our Perinatal Program staff tabling at their Mental Health Awareness game on Friday, February 27th! It was a wonderful opportunity to engage with the Santa Cruz community and teach people about the services that Janus provides to treat substance use disorders. We hope to see many more community members at the upcoming game on the 28th!



Women's Empowerment Month

This Women's Empowerment Month we encourage you to donate to our Perinatal Program. Your donation will support the expansion of our soon-to-be new Perinatal Center located in Watsonville.

Donate Here:





A Message from Our CEO, Amber Williams

At Janus of Santa Cruz, we often talk about the power of lived experience. But Kailey Keller's story reminds us in the most vivid way that lived experience is also a bridge — a bridge between systems that have historically failed women and the support that can change their lives.

Kailey's journey from incarceration and homelessness to leading programs at Janus is remarkable. But what makes her story truly transformative is how she has chosen to walk alongside other women facing the same struggles she once knew so well.

I have witnessed firsthand the courage and compassion Kailey brings into every interaction. I believed in her vision so strongly that I, along with our COO Jessica Guiver, worked tirelessly to earn the trust of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office. That trust allowed Kailey to go into the jail and Blaine Street and meet women where they were — sometimes at their lowest points — to support them in preparing for the next step: treatment. Her work is about more than program delivery. It is about building connection where there has historically been distrust, hope where there has been

fear, and pathways to recovery where there were once only barriers.

Kailey's story — and the lives she touches every day — remind us why we do this work. When we invest in people, when we earn trust and meet them with dignity, we create change that ripples far beyond what we can measure.

I am incredibly proud of Kailey and our team for the courage, persistence, and humanity they bring to every person we serve. And I am deeply grateful to our supporters, whose generosity makes it possible for us to meet women where they are, guide them toward treatment, and ensure they have someone walking beside them every step of the way.

At Janus, we don't just provide programs. We provide people who believe in people — and Kailey is living proof of what is possible when that belief becomes action.

*-Amber Williams,
CEO*



Reach Out Today

If you or someone you know is dealing with substance abuse, please call today at

831-462-1060

to explore substance use disorder (SUD) treatment options or scan the QR Code above



Kailey Keller, Janus of SC

Stories of impact: Nothing About Us Without Us: What the System Missed — and What Finally Worked

In 2016, while I was incarcerated in Santa Cruz County Jail, a report was written about the women inside those walls — **Gender Matters: A Profile of Women in Santa Cruz County Jail by Dr. Susan Greene**. I didn't know it at the time. Years later, I opened that report and saw a photograph of myself and my friends sitting in G-Unit.

The report led to the creation of the Santa Cruz County Justice and Gender Commission (JAG), a body formed to reduce harm to women and families impacted by the criminal legal system.

Recently, I was invited to speak at a JAG Commission meeting.

Standing at that podium — no longer incarcerated, no longer cycling through the system, but now serving as Outpatient Program Manager at Janus of Santa Cruz — was a moment I will never forget. The Commission that exists in part because of data collected while I was in jail was now asking for my expertise.

At the time that report was written, I had been arrested more than 20 times. I had been homeless on and off for seven years. I cycled between addiction, jail, short-term programs, and the streets. I believed I was the problem.

I will give you a snapshot of what one day was like— just one — that helps to tell the story.

I got into an argument with my mom. It escalated quickly, and I became emotionally overwhelmed and unsafe in my own mind. I did what we tell people to do when they are in crisis — I asked for help. I went to the hospital and tried to place myself on a 5150 hold. I was turned away. There was no stabilization, no safety planning, no connection to follow-up care. I was simply discharged back into the same chaos I had walked in with.

Later that day, while withdrawing from heroin and walking the streets, I was recognized by the police and arrested for being “under the influence.” Instead of mental health care, I was locked in a cell. After several hours, I was released in the middle of the night — alone, still in crisis, still dysregulated. Afraid to continue walking while law enforcement was actively looking for me, I made a desperate decision to drive. I fell asleep at the wheel and crashed into a water main.

All of this happened in a single day.

What stands out to me now is not the mistakes I made — but how many opportunities there were for intervention. At the hospital. During the arrest. At booking. At release. Each moment was a chance for someone to step in with care instead of punishment.



The shift came during my final incarceration. For the first time, I was connected with a case manager before release and transported directly to treatment. I didn't have to navigate detox, intake, transportation, or paperwork alone. Someone believed I was worth planning for.

That bridge between systems changed everything.

Today, through Janus and Women's Recovery and Reentry Program (WRRP), I get to help build those bridges for other women. I sit with women who are overwhelmed, ashamed, and exhausted from surviving — and I get to be the person I needed.

Here is what I know with certainty: women don't fail programs. Programs fail women when they are released into homelessness, when they lack transportation to treatment, when they are juggling court dates, untreated trauma, childcare, and survival all at once. You cannot heal trauma while sleeping in your car. You cannot focus on recovery when you don't know where your next meal is coming from.

What changes lives is connection. Coordination. Someone walking beside you.

That is what your generosity makes possible. It funds care coordination, so women are not released into chaos. It funds treatment access, so crisis does not become incarceration. It funds staff who answer the phone when someone is in crisis. It funds transportation, advocacy, and the steady presence that makes healing possible. It funds dignity.

When I first saw my photograph in that report, I didn't feel exposed. I felt seen — and reminded of how far healing can carry a person when the right support is in place.

My story is not rare. But with your support, it can become less common.

There are women right now standing at the same missed intersections I once stood at. Your investment ensures that this time, someone is there to catch them.

And sometimes, that makes all the difference.

Thank you for reading! - Janus Team

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