

Centralized data and enhanced tracking helps A Place Called Home





[A Place Called Home](#) (APCH) is an established multi-service agency founded in 1993, that provides a safe, nurturing environment with proven programs for youth in south central Los Angeles to help them improve their economic conditions and develop healthy, fulfilling and purposeful lives. APCH uses a membership model to provide programs and services at zero cost to more than 900 members and their families a year.

APCH addresses multiple areas of need, including academic achievement, socioemotional development, mental health, the arts, nutrition and well-being, and basic family needs. They provide linguistically and culturally accessible services in a neighborhood where a high percentage of residents are English language learners.

Programs are delivered year round after-school and via all day summer camps, and are offered through four departments: educational services; arts and creative expression; teen and young adult services; health, nutrition, and well-being. Programs are augmented by core services through counseling and membership services, which form the backbone of our case management structure for holistic care.

CUSTOMER

A Place Called Home

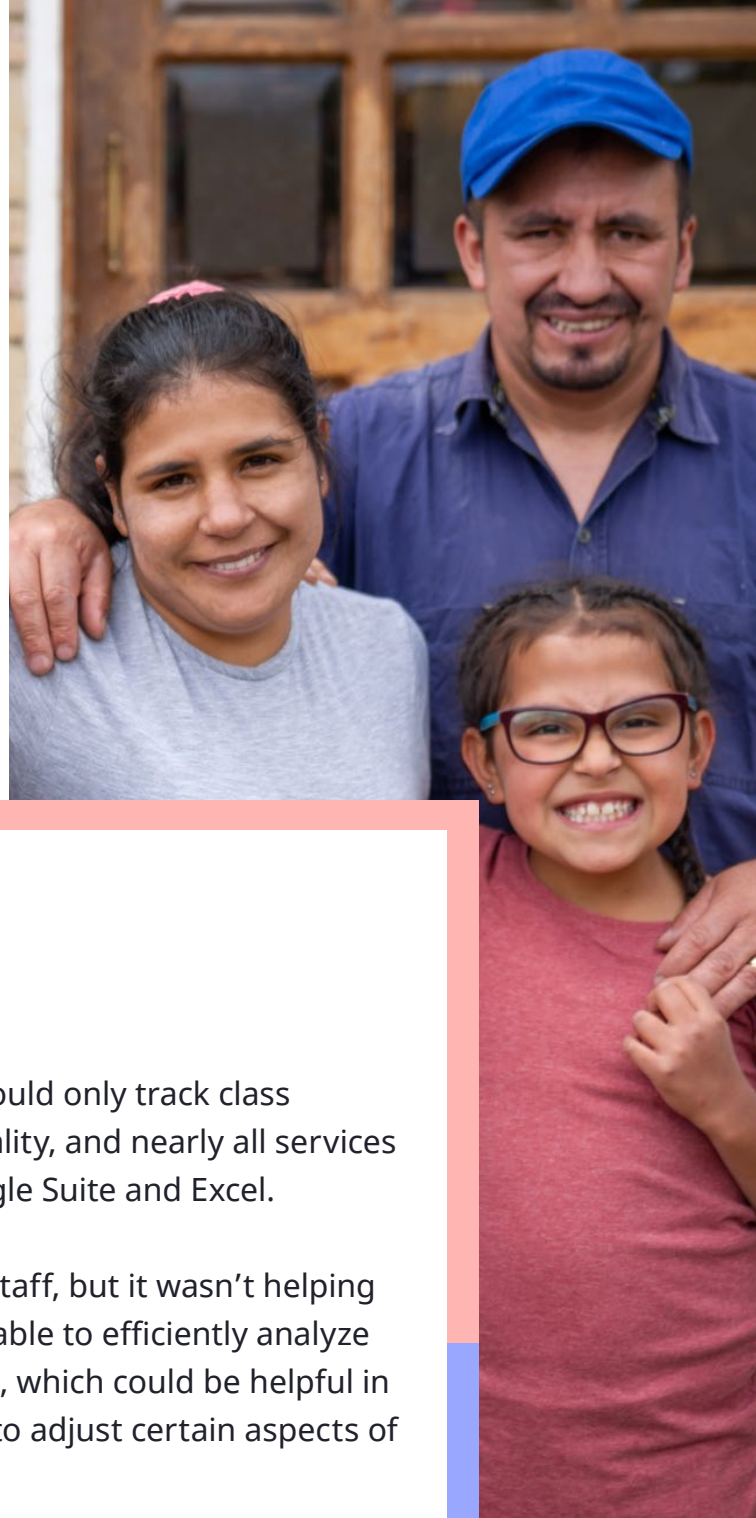
VERTICAL

Education, out-of-school time, community development

PRODUCT

Bonterra Case Management

APCH partners with Da Vinci Schools to host RISE High at APCH, a cutting edge charter school that is specifically designed to serve students that face significant obstacles to completing their education. APCH also has robust college preparation and scholarship and career and vocational development programs. Since 2002, APCH has sent more than 460 young people from south central on to college through its APCH Shaheen Scholarship program.



Challenges

TRACKING LIMITATIONS

A Place Called Home's previous software tool could only track class attendance and had limited reporting functionality, and nearly all services were tracked manually using tools like the Google Suite and Excel.

Not only was this time-consuming for its busy staff, but it wasn't helping the center reach its full potential. APCH wasn't able to efficiently analyze things like program participation or attendance, which could be helpful in informing the organization of a potential need to adjust certain aspects of its services.

Each individual department had been keeping spreadsheets on their respective services, so in order to collect that information, the program managers would have to go to that specific staff member and request the files. Staffing transitions meant that data could be lost or irregularly tracked. While the center was tracking as much as they could, the process was arduous, timeconsuming, and vulnerable to errors and data loss.

20X INCREASE IN TRACKING CAPABILITIES

Service tracking with Bonterra Case Management enables APCH to measure program efficacy.

INTERNAL CONNECTIVITY

One characteristic that makes APCH unique in the south central community and its area of service is its internal referral process. It is hyper-focused on meeting the needs of all of its members and knows how important it is that a child or family can go to any member of its staff for help navigating the center's services. For example, if a child has a question about meal assistance, but doesn't know anyone in the meal assistance program, he can ask someone he is comfortable with—like his athletic instructor—and that staff member will guarantee the child is connected with the right person. This process has been critical to the success of many of APCH's members, so making the internal referral process more efficient would make an enormous difference to the organization as a whole.

BETTER FUNCTIONALITY

Approaching three decades in service, APCH is a foundational community asset in south central Los Angeles. It has served thousands of youth and families and has expanded its programs to address a wide variety of needs for its members over the years. With this maturity comes a need for a more functional and robust tool that could level-up the organization and help it operate more like a well-oiled machine. In the past, APCH would rely on manual imports of spreadsheets, manual attendance record-keeping and had to create individual profiles for each participant manually. While the programming was there, the attendance was there—even throughout COVID-19—and the data was there, it wasn't being collected, organized or analyzed in a sophisticated way.



“We're better at driving now, so we had to upgrade from a Honda Accord to a Ferrari. We just needed more functionality overall.”

— Laura Mills | Director of Data and Analytics
A Place Called Home



INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC SOLUTION

Many of the tools that APCH had been using had broad application and were customizable but weren't specifically made to serve social services organizations. This meant that the software they were using didn't offer census data integration, dynamic program data representation or advanced impact reporting—all metrics unique to the nonprofit and social good sector.

Solution

After evaluating several other tools, APCH began working with Bonterra Program Management's (formerly Social Solutions) Case Management solution in May 2021. After just one semester using Bonterra Program Management, the agency has already noted several significant improvements and measurable impacts to its internal processes.



CENTRALIZING INFORMATION

All of APCH's information is now held within a single platform. With one login, staff can view every data point across every program and every department within Bonterra Program Management. Notably, the agency is able to create household profiles for the first time that include the portfolios of every member of a household from child to parent. This enables APCH to maintain a truly holistic and whole-child perspective. Each individual portfolio now contains a variety of datasets on scholarship applications, staff interactions and utilization of any number of APCH services. Having this information in one centralized place helps APCH's staff to make internal referrals and act on new information quickly and efficiently.

**REPORTING TIME
16X FASTER**

A report that previously took eight hours now takes 30 minutes.



Centralizing all of this information in one place significantly reduces recall time. Instead of searching folders for piecemealed spreadsheets that might all be formatted differently, staff know exactly where to look and can pull up the information they need in a matter of seconds. This contributes to faster response rates, which APCH further links to higher retention rates among its members.

Lastly, a centralized platform for APCH's information allows staff to begin making comparisons on outcomes semester-to-semester. Less than a year after implementing Bonterra Program Management, the agency already saw improvements in staff interactions and program attendance, even with lingering social distancing mandates that left some programs virtual.

TRACKING THAT EVERYONE LOVES

Attendance tracking is significantly easier for staff now, resolving a long-standing pain point at APCH. Attendance tracking enables the agency to see how participation impacts graduation rate, scholarships, and member retention.

“ I hear from our instructors that class attendance is about 10 times easier to enter—it’s a matter of minutes for them. So, on the staff user end, it’s a lot easier.”

— Ana Maria Perez-Paulino | Director of Program Operations

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Impact

MAINTAINING ACCOUNTABILITY

Ninety-five percent of APCH seniors graduate from high school in a ZIP code where 42.9% of residents 25 and over have less than a ninth-grade education. The agency has provided more than 460 college scholarships for first generation scholars. APCH has also provided vocational training and paid internships for dozens of teens and young adults every year, and it retains 80% of its members year over year with many staying on for more than a decade, signifying the high value members place on APCH's role in their lives. The strength of these interpersonal relationships are core to the agency's success as the staff attend to each participant, new or existing, as quickly and effectively as possible. With the introduction of Bonterra Program Management, APCH is already able to report historically fast response times, which improves member experience and retention. Average retention has increased to 86%, enabled in part by Bonterra Program Management. By using Bonterra to communicate needs of individuals across programs and specialties internally, all APCH staff can have visibility into any open cases or unaddressed needs and can act quickly to make sure no child is left behind.



MORE CONNECTED. BETTER TRACKING.

1:1 services can now be tracked which wasn't possible prior to Bonterra Program Management.



REPORTING IN SECONDS

When APCH was relying on spreadsheets and emails to track and analyze program data, reporting took hours to pull, and sometimes valuable data would get lost. Similar to any nonprofit, reporting is essential to effectively articulate its story and its impact with funders. However, to pull reports for funders would consume several days in some cases, which took time away with clients. But after onboarding Bonterra Program Management, that changed drastically—from several hours to just minutes.

In one instance, ACPH Director of Data and Analytics Laura Mills recalls her colleagues in the counseling department pulling data for a funder. She says, “We have a great funder that has funded our counseling department for a number of years, and they wanted to see service records for the counseling services we’ve been providing. It used to take multiple days to pull service reports and the counseling team was responsible for putting it together manually. Rather than seeing clients, doing case management or forming new partnerships, they were spending hours putting together these reports for our funders. With Bonterra Program Management, it took me 30 minutes to pull that report this year.”

“Reporting is the clear winner for me in terms of Bonterra Case Management’s use cases.”

— Laura Mills | Director
of Data and Analytics
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APCH board members have taken notice of the revamped reporting capabilities, remarking to the agency’s chief program officer at a recent meeting that the center’s new reports were more helpful than those in the past.



EMPOWERED STAFF

At APCH, the staff are truly “detectives of their kids’ needs.” They are continuously finding ways to improve connection despite pandemic-induced constraints. APCH has developed even closer relationships with many of its members throughout the pandemic because staff is more intentionally connected with youths and programs are more accessible and transparent than they were before. More visibility into programming options for members coupled with a team that is empowered with the tools they need to connect members with the programs that fit their unique needs means greater impact. The fact that staff only need to think about one singular case management platform to accomplish all of these things is the cherry on top. APCH adds it has committed to a multi-year technology transformation commitment, in which Bonterra Program Management will be integral. “Bonterra Case Management will be foundational to a lot of the programming we will be doing in the years ahead,” says Mills.

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