

# *Santa Ynez* VALLEY EXTRA

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## STAFF REPORT

In response to over 200 requests from around the country to form chapters, Hidden Wings, the Solvang-based program for young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), has decided to spread its own wings.

Hidden Wings will be creating a "how to" manual for starting a Hidden Wings project, and will also be choosing a first site for replication.

Hidden Wings offers programs designed to help those dealing with ASD acquire the skills they need for everything from making friends to getting a job. It's the brainchild of Valley locals Rev. Jim and Dr. Julia Billington, themselves parents of children with ASD.

Their work became nationally known as a result of a film about Hidden Wings being shown as audiences entered the five

Grateful Dead "Fare Thee Well" concerts this summer. Thanks to the support of the band's drummer Mickey Hart, a Hidden Wings supporter, more than a quarter million people saw the short film. It has also been viewed by Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese, who may include a clip from it in a documentary he's making about the Grateful Dead.

"We have never advertised ourselves to be a model for other communities but we have always believed we could be of benefit to many more, partly because there are so few projects like ours," said Rev. Billington.

"A small working group is now being formed, with the goal of consolidating the key success factors of Hidden Wings, and founding the first affiliate chapter by summer of 2016," he said.