

NEWS RELEASE May 1, 2019

Media Contact and Public Information:

Suzanne Grimesey, MFT
PIO/Chief Quality Care and Strategy Officer
desk: 805.681.5289; cell: 805.886.5403

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH Public Invited to Free Showing of “55 Steps” Starring Hilary Swank and Helena Bonham Carter

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) - In recognition of May being Mental Health Awareness Month and to raise awareness about the impact of mental illness, the Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness Department is sponsoring a free showing of the motion picture titled “55 Steps” on May 21 in Santa Maria and Santa Barbara. Please refer to the show times listed below. Behavioral Wellness is asking those attending the film to wear lime green in recognition of mental health awareness.



“55 Steps” was released in the U.S. in November 2018 and is based on the inspiring true story of Eleanor Riese, played by Helena Bonham Carter, who was a patient committed to a locked mental health facility in San Francisco. She brought forward a class action lawsuit to give competent mental health patients the right to have a say in their medication while hospitalized. Her suit changed the rights of patients receiving forced medications in psychiatric hospitals to this day. The film title was inspired by the amount of literal steps that Riese ascended on her first day in court (she counted them as a way of calming herself). The attorney who represented Eleanor Riese is played by Hilary Swank.

WHEN:

Santa Barbara: 8 p.m. Tuesday May 21

County Courthouse Sunken Gardens, 1100 Anacapa St. (Film-goers may begin setting up on the lawn at noon and arrive beginning at 6 p.m.)

Santa Maria: 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 21 (Doors open at 5:30 p.m.)

Santa Maria Public Library, Shepherd Hall, 421 S. McClelland St.

The goal of Behavioral Wellness is to build public understanding about the impact that mental illness has on those in our community and most importantly, how to access help and support. The 24-hour toll free Crisis Response and Service Access Line is (888) 868-1649. For more information, go to www.countyofsb.org/behavioral-wellness.