



The HHSA Connection

AUGUST 2003

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

AGENCY NEWS BRIEF

Hail From the Chief's Commission

Report showcases Agency Web site

The Agency's "Network of Care for Mental Health" Web site was lauded July 21 by a Presidential commission as "a model for how consumers can use Internet technology to find pertinent mental health information."

President Bush's *New Freedom Commission on Mental Health* honored the site in its final report titled, "Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America."

"I am extremely proud to see San Diego County's efforts praised by the Presidential Commission," said **Supervisor Greg Cox**, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "This is yet another example of what our County is doing to

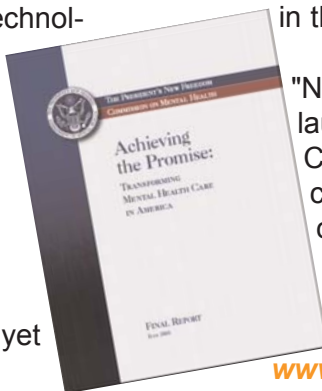
reach out to people who suffer from mental illness and help them achieve their maximum potential."

Bush appointed the Commission in 2002 to study the mental health service delivery system and make recommendations that enable adults and children with mental health problems to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.

Sponsored by a grant from the State, the "Network of Care for Mental Health" was launched in April, as a pilot program for California and the nation. Similar sites are currently being developed for other California counties.

To view the Network of Care Web site, visit www.networkofcare.org, or to view the text of the Commission's report, visit

www.mentalhealthcommission.gov. ❖



CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: S. REGION COMMUNITY LIAISON

This Oscar Is No Grouch

Liaison encourages community participation in treatment programs

As a community liaison for the South Region, **Oscar Talaro** helps build partnerships with local groups to respond to substance abuse issues.

Talaro is a 13-year County veteran, beginning his career with Alcohol and Drug Services. He spends half his time in the field working with community groups to help prevent alcohol and drug-related problems, and working on improving access to health care coverage, and supporting the Region's business plan development.

Talaro is part of the South Region *Community Connections Team*, which works to build and strengthen relationships with community partners.

The outgoing Talaro says his job suits him perfectly. "I love it," he says. "It fits who I am and my focus in life, which is to help connect people with the resources they need to improve their lives." ❖



Talaro works to expand access to treatment programs for residents in the South Region.

PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE: SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Dream A Little Dream

Conference helps low-income residents

To help low-income individuals, CalWORKS participants and educationally and socially disadvantaged students expand their skills and link up with resources, the North Coastal Region presented a free conference in April, called "The Possible Dream: Making The Most of Your Future."

More than 300 people attended the conference, where they participated in workshops and explored resources focused on health, family, money, school and work.

"Helping those with low incomes become self-sufficient is a priority for us," said **Supervisor Bill Horn**. "I commend our partners for joining with us to help people reach their own American dreams."

The event brought together County staff and community partners to address barriers to self-sufficiency including transportation, housing, childcare and financial literacy. ❖

Did You Know ...?

Nearly 50 percent of staff have been with the Agency five years or fewer, while less than 10 percent have been with the Agency for more than 20 years. ❖

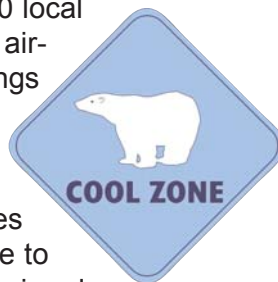
It's Gettin' Hot In Here!

Summer is back with a vengeance and so are Cool Zones

After a gloomy June, summer weather burst forth in July, with temperatures regularly surpassing 90 degrees in some parts of the county. While this may be the natural course of things, such temperatures can pose serious health risks to older adults or the disabled, particularly those who do not have or who cannot afford to use air conditioning.

Enter the zone ... the Cool Zone, that is. With the support of **Supervisor Dianne Jacob**, Aging and Independence (AIS) services first organized this program three years ago, at the height of the energy crisis. Concerned that seniors would suffer, County officials organized a partner-

ship of nearly 150 local businesses, with air-conditioned settings where seniors and others can gather to escape the heat. The sites encourage people to share air conditioning during the heat of the day, lowering individual usage and helping to conserve energy for the whole community.



This year's Cool Zone campaign was kicked-off in late June, by Supervisor Jacob, at the Salvation Army Nutrition Center in El Cajon. For more information about Cool Zones, contact AIS at (800) 510-2020. ❖



From The COO Straight To You

A message from Agency COO Jean Shepard

This column runs every other month, alternating with a column by Agency Director, Rodger Lum

The wait for a state budget goes on. We had hoped this crucial issue would be settled by now, but we still await the governor's final decision on the budget. The County is committed to doing everything it can to keep employees on the job, and crucial social services available to the community.

The Agency has made an effort to protect jobs by "freezing" 178 positions. We've also eliminated 182 vacant positions.

Restructuring of Agency divisions and regions has streamlined the way we do business, but it also means fewer people are doing more work. That's the difficult reality of a budget crunch.

The services we provide help people become - and remain - productive members of society.

It's important to remember this while we're working in a new fiscal environment. Budget woes come and go, but our service to the community remains the same. ❖

Jean Shepard

FROM THE REGIONS: N. COASTAL/INLAND REGIONS

Love Is A Warm Blanket

North Regions Donate Quilt, Funds to Slain Officer's Family

In June, the north county community tragically lost Oceanside Police Officer **Tony Zeppetella**, who was shot and killed by an assailant at a routine traffic stop.

Annie Brown, from the North Coastal FRC, was so touched by the tragedy that she approached Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** about raising funds on behalf of the north county regions for Zeppetella's wife and infant son. Macchione gave his enthusiastic support for the idea.

Brown conceived of the creation of a quilt to serve as an outlet for staffs' heartfelt thoughts and wishes for the family. Co-worker **Fame Chanelle**, eager to contribute, crafted the quilt in just one weekend so that staff could

begin signing and making donations quickly. She was assisted by the local fabric store *Sew Much Better* and Annie additionally worked with a local quilt store, *Prairie Canyon Quilts*, to donate the decorative stitches that beautifully adorn the quilt. Agency staff contributed to the quilt fund, collecting nearly \$2,000 for the fund and 200 signatures for the quilt.

On July 9, **Supervisor Bill Horn** presided over the presentation of the quilt to Oceanside Police Chief Mike Poehlman, who expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Zeppetella family, and noted that he had been in contact with Zeppetella's wife, who was overwhelmed by the Agency's compassion. ❖

FROM THE "PAT-ON-THE-BACK" DEPT.

Welcome Home!

Marine Reserve **Sgt. James Jabinal**, a former student worker for the *Strategy and Planning Division*, returned home safely, from his tour of duty in Iraq, where he served with the Marine Wing Communications Squadron 48. Jabinal married his fiancée at the CAC on Feb. 26, a few days before shipping out. He proposed to his wife only a week earlier, shortly after he received orders to report for duty. ❖



Sgt. James Jabinal and his wife Jessica were wed at the CAC before leaving for Operation Iraqi Freedom.



County of San Diego

Health and Human Services Agency

Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1 Dianne Jacob, District 2
Pam Slater, District 3 Ron Roberts, District 4
Bill Horn, District 5

Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

Health and Human Services Agency Director

Rodger G. Lum, Ph.D.

The HHS Connection is produced by the Office of Media and Public Affairs, a section of the Health and Human Services Agency Strategy and Planning Division

Editor: Leslie Ridgeway

Asst. Editor/Designer: Jonah B. Weinberg