

The HHSA Connection

SEPTEMBER 2003

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

AGENCY NEWS BRIEF

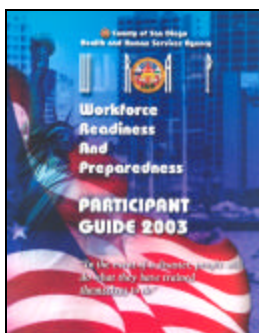
It's a WRAP

Employees trained for disasters

Destructive earthquake, flooding, city-wide power outage, terrorist attack - while natural, technological, or terrorist disasters make for exciting movies, most of us would rather avoid experiencing such a situation first hand.

And while it may be impossible to truly predict how we would behave in the event of a disaster, preparation is the key to improving our abilities to react and respond, so we can help ourselves, our loved ones, our neighbors, and complete strangers.

The mandatory County employee Workforce Readiness And Preparedness (WRAP) trainings, provided this summer, demonstrate the County's commitment to the people



and communities of San Diego.

According to **Wilma Wooten**, M.D. and **Rose Fox**, PHN, who coordinated the trainings, "as County employees, we are each responsible for responding to disasters and lending a helping hand when and where we can."

For some, the workshop information may be the first step in understanding emergency readiness, while for others, it may prove a refresher course. In any case, every additional bit of preparation will bring peace of

mind. Remember to consult the WRAP training materials, and put into motion the basic principles of the plan: prepare and practice. Hopefully, none of us will ever need to respond to an event, but will remember that "in the event of a disaster, people will do what they have trained themselves to do." ❖

CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: SPD EVALUATION & RESEARCH MANAGER

How About a Data?

Going Ballistic on Statistics

Work adds up for **Suneel Bhasker**, Evaluation and Research manager for the Strategy and Planning Division.

Bhasker deals in statistics, assembling data to help Agency programs track and plan projects. One of his biggest projects is assembling a database of every program and each case managed by the Agency. "The database will help them with staffing, based on their caseloads," said Bhasker.

Recently, Bhasker coordinated the Agency's participation in the Land Use and Environmental Group "All Hands Fair," which displayed how the Agency uses the General Management System to create business plans, as well as information about community partnerships.

Though many people could be daunted by all the numbers, Bhasker says he finds his work interesting.

"I enjoy it," he said. "I wish I had more time so I could help in more parts of the Agency." ❖



Bhasker puts numbers to work for the Agency.

PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE: OFFICE OF MEDIA & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Risky Communication

"Calming the Storm" talks prepare leaders

Communicating with the public during a disaster is as crucial as providing shelters or medical care. Recognizing this, the Office of Media and Public Affairs organized two risk communication symposia in June to give County and regional public information officers and leaders training in this critical function.

Dr. Peter Sandman, a nationally known expert in risk communication, shared his experience with nearly 300 people, representing several County departments, the FBI, local police and fire departments and others. Dr. Sandman worked on several high-profile disasters, including Three Mile Island.

Those who attended learned how to arouse public interest in such issues as fighting obesity and smoking, as well as calming the public during a terrorist attack. His theories were thought provoking and many came away with tools they could use immediately. ❖

Did You Know ...?

The County pays up to \$65 per month toward the purchase of a mass transit pass. Nearly 187 Agency employees turn in reimbursement forms to Payroll. ❖

MONTHLY HEALTH AND SAFETY TIP

Goodness, Gracious, Great Ball of Fire!

Fun in the sun has serious health effects

San Diego's year-round sunshine creates lots of envy, but despite on-going popularity, a golden suntan is not a sign of good health. Actually, it's just damaged cells, which may lead to melanoma, or, skin cancer in the U.S.

Every year approximately 32,000 new cases of melanoma develop, causing about 6,700 deaths. Monitoring moles and skin irregularities for early detection greatly reduces risk.

Since unprotected skin can be harmed in as little as 15 minutes, most people do not adequately protect themselves or their children. Choose the truly healthy look and adopt these simple habits:

- Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Generously apply a UVA/UVB sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15, 30 minutes prior to exposure and reapply every 2 hours, even on cloudy days.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses.
- Stay in the shade when possible.
- Protect children from exposure and begin applying sunscreens at six months of age. ❖

Sources: American Academy of Dermatology, American Cancer Society, and Center for Disease Control



The Director's Cut

A message from
Agency Director
Rodger G. Lum, Ph.D.

This column runs every other month, alternating with a column by Agency COO, Jean Shepard

The County's Quality First plan is a true win-win situation. It benefits the people we serve by inspiring great service, and it benefits all HHSA employees in many ways - perhaps most notably with a bump in your paycheck.

You may have received the first in a series of six temporary pay increases with your August 29 paycheck. The amounts are determined by how well we meet qualitative and quantitative goals set by the Agency and individual programs each year, with areas including: service, safety, productivity, new ideas, and accountability.

While the financial rewards provide tangible thanks, I would like to offer my personal appreciation to each and every one of you who perform your jobs with pride and commitment. These traits will serve you, your colleagues, and the residents of San Diego County throughout the year.

Together, we can continue to improve the quality of life for everyone. ❖

Rodger G. Lum, Ph.D.

PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE: ALCOHOL & DRUG SERVICES

Doing Time on the Front Line

Local substance abuse screening program receives national award

Timing is everything, as demonstrated by the *Alcohol and Drug Services Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral program (SBIR)*. Health educators talk to patients while they actually sit in ER's throughout the County waiting for medical treatment for alcohol or drug abuse - with award-winning results.

The brief SBIR screenings provide feedback to patients about their use of alcohol or drugs. The information is then communicated to medical personnel and discussed again with the patient, with referrals made for treatment or counseling services if warranted.



SBIR received the 2002 Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Award, sponsored by the *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services*

Administration/Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, the National Association of Alcohol And Drug Abuse Directors and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

SBIR endured a rigorous national review process, and was selected as one of 10 programs that received awards at the National Prevention Network conference in Albuquerque in August. ❖

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

Parties and Publishing

Current and former Agency and Social Services employees - If you've worked for 10 years or more you're invited to join *The Decaders* for their annual luncheon at Tom Ham's Lighthouse on Sunday October 26. For more information contact Jessie Burrows (858) 488-8194 or Jean Stasko (858) 495-5005.

Congratulations and farewell! **Barry Fox** has been appointed to the position of Chief, Residential Services in CMHS; **Terry Hogan** is the new Finance Director for HHSA; **Al Medina** is retiring from ADS; and **John McTighe** has been promoted to Director of General Services. **Jackie Baker Werth** has been published in *The Public Manager*, with her article "Getting to the Bottom Line in Local Government." ❖



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