



The HHSA Connection

THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

JULY 2007

Agency Addresses Issue of Underage Drinking

"Minors are not allowed to buy alcohol, period. Whenever minors drink, one question must be asked: 'Who provided the alcohol?'" said County of San Diego Supervisor **Dianne Jacob**. Jacob is a member of the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Advisory Board and spoke during an Agency news conference highlighting the dangers of underage drinking and warning adults about the consequences of providing alcohol to minors.

"If adults acted responsibly, alcohol-related deaths of minors could be prevented. Families and communities should not have to suffer the devastating consequences," added Jacob, who was joined by **Susan Bower**, Interim Deputy Director of the Agency's Alcohol and Drug Services; San Diego County Undersheriff Bill Gore; and Beth Sise, Chair of the San Diego County Alcohol Policy Panel.

The warning came on the heels of the latest alcohol-related tragedy and in anticipation of graduation celebrations and summer, when consumption of alcohol by minors tends to increase.



Susan Bower, the Agency's Interim Deputy Director of Alcohol and Drug Services speaks at the press conference.



Posters show the most common sources of alcohol for teenagers, including family members, older friends, the Internet and using fake IDs.

"We're reminding adults that it is dangerous to provide alcohol to a minor," said Bower. "Underage drinking is not a rite of passage. Giving alcohol to a minor can lead to criminal penalties or, worse, the loss of a loved one."

Alcohol continues to be the number one drug of choice among teenagers and it's taking its toll. In the last two years, 59 people under 21 had alcohol in their system at the time of death, according to the County of San Diego Medical Examiner's Office.

Alcohol-related crashes are the leading cause of death among youth ages 15 to 20. Underage drinking also leads to increased rates of suicide, sexual assaults, and high-risk sex.

According to data from the 2005 Monitoring the Future study, an annual survey of U.S. youth, three-fourths of 12th graders, more than two-thirds of 10th graders, and about two in every five 8th graders

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**A Message from
Jean M. Shepard**

Health and Human Services Agency Director

For more than 10 years, under the leadership of Supervisor Dianne Jacob, the Agency's Alcohol and Drug Services has been working very closely with the County's Meth Strike Force and approximately 70 organizations and agencies addressing meth-related problems throughout the region.



This strong collaboration has produced measurable results, namely eradicating meth labs, controlling the sale of chemicals used to make meth, saving children from meth-infested environments, and referring people to treatment for meth addiction.

Despite these efforts, however, meth remains a serious problem in our community. And we are seeing new trends in meth use.

While a meth user can be anyone—a teen, a parent, a college student, a man or a woman—over the last five years a new face of meth has evolved: that of older adults. The powerful and addictive stimulant is being used by an increasing number of people age 50 and older.

In the past five years, 1,000 meth-related deaths occurred in San Diego County. However, the number of meth-related deaths of persons over 50 nearly doubled, from 22 in 2002 to 41 in 2006.

To help address this problem, Supervisor Jacob, the Agency, the Meth Strike Force and Scripps Mercy Hospital have launched the "Get Off Meth" campaign. This campaign targets the friends and relatives of meth users, so they can assist their loved ones in seeking help.

A brochure has been developed that we hope will increase awareness of the dangers and signs of meth use, reduce the number of meth-related deaths, and encourage people to seek treatment.

It is currently available in English and Spanish, and will be distributed at hospital emergency rooms, trauma centers, and many other locations throughout the County.

In the work we do in the Agency we see all too frequently the devastating results of meth use on families and children. Hopefully these brochures will serve as one more resource on the road to recovery.

Jean M. Shepard

Central and South Region Host Job Fair

Thirty-nine eager teens in Central and South Regions recently attended the first annual Summer Youth Employment Fair in Mid City, held on May 19th.

They were able to meet one-on-one with employers to find a great summer job opportunity and were also able to complete applications, schedule interviews and gain more knowledge about the professional world. These youth came dressed for success with several great questions for prospective employers.

The event was hosted by Central Mid City and South Child Welfare Services, Central Region Employment, Independent Living Skills, YMCA, South Bay Community Services, and the San Diego Workforce Partnership. The goal was to promote permanency and successful emancipation and to connect youth with the work force, instilling a positive work ethic and self-responsibility.

Seven employers attended, including SeaWorld, Starbucks, Goodwill Industries, Lowes, Job Corps, US Navy Recruiting, and the San Diego Labor Council. In addition, Knotts Soak City and Build A Bear provided applications for those attending the Fair.

Special thanks to the staff who worked well together as a team to make the fair a success:
Patricia Bevelyn, Gigi Burns, Elias Garcia, Vincent Peppard, Angie DeVoss, Angel Bennecke, Jon Ogle, Rosie Trejo, Thai Sukrachan, Thelmon Jackson, Kari Shideler, Mike Kenfrick, Rachel Pinuelas, Angel Perez, Adriana Gutierrez, Rose Tomlison, and Margaret Katungi.

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with
HHSA Director Director of Operations
Jean M. Shepard Paula Landau-Cox

First Friday of each month • 8 a.m. - noon
(619) 515-6555

Adoptions Staff Impress Kazakhstan Visitors

On May 10th, a delegation of legislators from Kazakhstan met with the Agency's Adoption staff stationed at the Nuestros Niños unit. Their discussion centered on policies that would improve adoption procedures in Kazakhstan. The program was sponsored by the US State Department and organized by the Citizen Diplomacy Council of San Diego.

Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world by area, and was once part of the Soviet Union. It lays north of Afghanistan, and is bordered by Russia, China, and Mongolia.

The delegates included Human Rights Commissioner Mr. Bakladamov, Senator Ms. Jalmagambetova, and Mazhilis Deputy Ms. Nuketayeva. They were accompanied by State Department interpreters to assist by translating.



San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency Adoptions staff met with Kazakhstan legislators to discuss adoption procedures. Front, from left: **Annette Carpenter**, PSW; **Patricia Braswell**, PSW; **Fatimah Abdullah**, SPSW; **Ofelia Figueroa**, PSW; and **Lucina Saenz**, PSW. Back row: **Karen Hockensmith**, PSS; **Jose Santana**, PSW; **Almadelia Torres**, clerk; Ms. Jalmagambetova, Senator; Ms. Nuketayeva, Deputy; Mr. Baikadamov, Human Rights Commissioner; **Jennifer Hancock**, PSW.

The delegation from Kazakhstan is currently reviewing their international and national adoption laws in hopes of making changes that would allow more children to be adopted in their own country. The Kazakhstan visitors were curious about the recruitment of adoptive families, the use of national databases to identify children that need homes and the use of incentives for adoptive parents. They also asked about the type of people who adopt, the rights of adoptive children, and the need for placement options, including orphanages.

The Kazakhstan visitors said that they currently have 6000 children that need homes and that 900 were adopted internationally last year. Although happy that those 900 children have permanent homes, their goal for the future is to have more of their children adopted by families inside Kazakhstan.

San Diego County Adoptions staff shared an Adopt 8 Success Story video from their collaboration with KFMB-Channel 8. It features a local couple that adopted two children from San Diego County who are now thriving and the joy of the family is clearly displayed. This type of recruitment tool has been very successful here in San Diego County and could be replicated as a method of recruitment in Kazakhstan.

Send in kudos!

Proud of a coworker? Send text (and photos): thomas.christensen@sdcounty.ca.gov - or contact your section editor.

Have you submitted a [DIBBS](#) lately?

Emergency Survival Program

There are many resources available to help you. For example, the [County's Office of Emergency Services](#) offers an Emergency Survival Program (ESP) with monthly tips to increase emergency preparedness at home, in the community, at work and at school.



The July theme is "Bomb Threats."

[The County's emergency page](#) will provide valuable information in the event of a disaster.

RAP Builds Bridges for Older Foster Youth

The Residential Adoptability Project (RAP) is a project developed last fall that bridges San Diego County's Residential and Adoptions programs.

The project identifies older youth who are assigned to Residential Services (RS) but can be placed for adoption or guardianship, either with their current caregiver or by locating one through the resources of the the Adoptions program. A selected and specially trained team of staff from both programs meet weekly with residential staff to review every case in the RS section and assess which children meet the RAP criteria.

Adoptions and residential social workers work together to ask questions while managing the child's placement and behavioral needs.

Thus far RAP has screened over 500 cases. Approximately 12% of those have been accepted and the success stories continue to grow.

In another case, a 14-year-old boy named Keshawn, who has been in foster care for many years and unsuccessfully placed for adoption in the past, had been referred to RS in 2005 due to escalating behavioral problems.

RS placed him in the home of a single woman and he has made great strides while in her care. An adoptions RAP worker talked to the caregiver and she has decided to adopt Keshawn, and they are both very excited.

There is a warm relationship between Keshawn and his foster mother. He calls her "Mom" and they watch American Idol together. Keshawn also loves Spiderman. This is a child who has had no contact with his birth family and he is thrilled at the thought of being in a "forever family." His new adoptive mother has grown children whom Keshawn now calls his big brothers and sisters.

Agency Group Helps with Enrichment Activities for Kids

Like all of us, you probably have shared the joy a child experiences while participating in activities such as football, ballet lessons, soccer or joining friends at camp. Unfortunately, many children are not able to participate in activities like these because their family lacks the necessary funds to pay for them. However, Children In Need (CIN), Inc., can help.

CIN, a non-profit charitable corporation started in 1968, is administered by staff of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). Their mission is to assist children's participation in sports, arts and cultural interaction through financial support. It is their focus to ensure that children are given the opportunity to mature into individuals who will succeed for themselves and for society. Many of the children benefiting from their funding are HHSA clients, such as foster children, who may not have had the same enriching experiences that we (or our children) had growing up.

This County-sanctioned charitable group has no administrative costs - 100% of donations go directly to help children. For more information about the organization or how to contribute visit the Children In Need website (<http://www.childreninneedsd.org/>) or call CIN chairperson **Mindy Ripley** at (760) 967-4541. For easy ways to donate (such as signing up with Ralphs or Albertsons rebate program), click on the fundraising section of the website.


 The logo for Children in Need features the word "Children" in a blue, sans-serif font. Below it, the words "in need" are written in a smaller, orange, sans-serif font. The "in" is positioned to the left of "need". The entire logo is set against a white background within a yellow-bordered box.

Graduating Foster Youth Celebrate Hawaiian Style

Annually, the Independent Living Skills (ILS) Program is pleased to recognize foster youth for graduating from high school, earning a GED or a Certificate of Completion. Completing High School is a noteworthy achievement and this year the youth celebrated Hawaiian style.

The graduation celebration was held at the Balboa Park Club thanks to a generous donation from community members Jerry and LuAnne Brand. Entertainment included a performance by Polynesian dancers as well as few brave young men who took center stage and learned some of the dances. A limbo stick, Hawaiian music and beach balls added to the fun.

The Masters of Ceremony were former foster youth Sophia Herman and a Protective Services Worker **Jose Cintron**, whose focus is working with teens. Gift bags for the graduating youth were donated by County of San Diego Board of Supervisors Vice-Chair **Greg Cox** and "Just in Time," a non-profit organization designed to assist current and former foster youth. Supervisor Cox personally delivered the gift bags to each of the youth attending the event.

In support of education, the ILS program offers a scholarship opportunity to youth who decide to further their education beyond high school. Scholarships are awarded to youth who are enrolled in college or a vocational program. Scholarships can then be renewed to eligible youth up to the age of 21.

The ILS program also provides on-going case management and education to eligible foster and former foster care youth between the ages of 16 and 21. The Independent Living Skills Unit can be reached at 1-866-ILS-INFO.



*Board of Supervisors Vice-Chair **Greg Cox** hugs one of the foster youth graduating as part of the ILS Program.*

KUDOS ♦ KUDOS ♦ KUDOS ♦ KUDOS

North Inland Public Health Nurse **Gerri Matthiesen** received the 2007 Honor Society of Nursing Sigma Theta Tau International "Excellence in Nursing Award in Leadership." Gerri received the award during the Gamma Gamma Chapter's induction ceremony at the Admiral Kidd Conference Center on April 28th.

The vision of the Society is to create a global community of nurses who lead in using knowledge, scholarship, service and learning to improve the health of the world's people. Matthiesen received this honor for her leadership with North Inland

Public Health Nurses in the Mobile Remote Workforce Business Process Re-engineering pilot project. Her peers nominated her for this award to acknowledge her contribution to Public Health Nursing.

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An ethical workplace is your right... and your responsibility...

Little Hands Make Big Quilts for Polinsky

During the 2006-2007 Olivenhain Pioneer Elementary school year, 780 small pairs of hands, assisted by 35 adult volunteers, designed, created and sewed theme quilts.

Started more than 10 years ago by a parent classroom volunteer, this project is a collaborative effort by every child at the school.

Each year in February, every classroom selects a theme such as cowboys, dogs, fish, or sports, for example. Using their chosen theme, Each child draws on a seven-inch white fabric square using colorful fabric markers. At completion, parent volunteers collect the squares and shop for coordinating fabric to complete the quilts.

Volunteers then get busy sewing the squares and adding batting, backing and borders. The result is colorful and original, and each individually designed quilt is displayed during an open house and hung in a classroom.

At the end of this school year, Polinsky was a proud recipient of 21 of the quilts, presented during three separate formal assemblies: kindergarten through second grade; third and fourth grades; and fifth and sixth grades.

The intense pride of the children's effort is visible as classroom representatives, holding their quilt up for the entire assembly to see, come up on stage to present their quilt.

The children at Polinsky are sincerely grateful for the selfless time and effort put into this project by the Olivenhain community.

[Search the HHSA Web Site by Key Words](#)

This is a handy link to send out to people who are not yet familiar with our site.

Just copy the URL from the address bar of an Internet page and paste it into an e-mail.

North Regions' First Tri-Region Employee Recognition Event

North Regions (North Central, North Coastal, and North Inland) hosted its first All-Staff Tri-Region Employee Recognition Event at Felicita Park in Escondido on May 31st. More than 550 staff celebrated together.

Managers commended staff for their hard work all year long and shared stories of how different divisions have been able to cross-thread efforts to bring the best for the families they serve. Staff relaxed and socialized as they enjoyed fabulous food and great entertainment, including the Horse Derby Race and the Hat's Off to You Contest.

All divisions participated in the Horse Derby with spirited cheers from the crowd rooting for their favorite horse. Staff expressed their creative side by designing and wearing handmade hats for the Hat's Off to You Contest, with awards for the most original, wackiest, tackiest, biggest, and tallest.

Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** unveiled the new North Regions logo, providing North Central, North Coastal and North Inland Regions a single identity. The new logo includes a "North Star" symbol and the tenets of Leadership, Innovation, Quality, and Excellence.

California Children Services, a county-wide program under North Regions has its own branded identity using a modified version of the same logo.



The North Regions logo was developed through a contest open to all staff. **Nina Constantino**, North Regions Administration, designed the winning logo for the first place prize. **Karen Ablan**, Mission Valley Family Resource Center, won second place and **Frances Scarlett**, North Coastal Child Welfare Services, earned third place.

Foster Family Fun Day with Neighborhoods For Kids and La Mesa Sunrise Rotary

Neighborhood for Kids 'Bowls' Them Over in East County

On April 28 more than 160 foster parents, children and youth participated in East Region's Foster Family Fun Day. Families had the chance to participate in face painting, crafts, Frisbee tossing, coconut bowling, trampoline quad, jump rope, and karaoke stations.



At lunch, everybody enjoyed a health-conscious menu consisting of grilled turkey hot dogs, hamburgers, and vegetable and fruit trays. Each participant had the chance to meet new people, enjoy tons of healthy fun activities and receive a variety of gifts. In addition, each foster family received a Polaroid picture as a memento of this experience.

The event was co-sponsored by the Agency's Neighborhood for Kids (N4K) and the La Mesa Sunrise (LMS) Rotary. This community partnership, initiated by the LMS Rotary, is a natural collaboration since each year rotary members hold a service project day called Rotarians at Work Day.

This year's event marks the second year the LMS Rotary has worked with N4K to create a day where volunteers spend one-on-one time with children. The day's activities allow volunteers to connect with children and foster parents as they experience a new sport, develop a new skill or talent, and learn new ideas and points of view.

With the generous commitment of HHSA East Region and LMS Rotary, this year's volunteers set a wonderful example and demonstrated the power of individuals to effect remarkable change and lasting fond memories in a familiar environment.



At left, East Region's **Dennis Leggett** and **William Durning** man the Frisbee station. Other fun included the Bounce House, top left, and trampoline quads, top right. The field, bottom right, was filled with foster families enjoying the activities.



Reach For The Sky! Ergonomics Fitness Course Stretches Bodies, Relaxes Minds

In 2004, there were more than half million injuries in private industry, costing businesses \$15-20 billion a year in the United States. Repetitive motion injuries, such as those caused by excessive typing without proper breaks, caused long absences from work.

In order to remind San Diego Immunization Branch staff to take stretch breaks and avoid Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WRMSDs), the Branch's ergonomics leaders, **Christine A. Garcia** and **Pat Birtz**, developed a series of ergonomics stretching stations around the office. On May 23, all immunization branch staff participated in the Ergonomics Par (Fitness) Course.

All staff took a moment to stretch whenever they passed through the fifteen ergonomics stretching stations, each with instructions and diagrams for stretches that targeted muscles that can be stressed and strained in everyday office work. Daily stress and strain on muscles can cause painful problems such as tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, nerve compression and other WRMSDs.

Studies have shown that brief task breaks reduce injury and increase productivity. Ergonomics specialists recommend taking four 5-minute breaks spaced throughout the day or taking "micro-breaks" - spending less than a minute to stretch, blink, focus eyes on a distant object, etc.

Staff were really pleased and impressed with the event. "It was helpful to have reminders to stretch since we forget to stretch enough during the day. That was a great execution of ergonomic proportions!" said **Anita Secor**, Public Health Nurse.

Mark Lindstrom, Administrative Analyst, also enjoyed the stretching course, noting, "It was fun and very innovative. Good job thinking out of the box. Great job to you both!"

For more information about the Ergonomics Par Course, please contact **Christine Garcia** at (619) 692-8805 or Christine.Garcia@sdcounty.ca.gov.



Immunization Branch staffers (left to right) **Kim Ralston** and **Michelle Dzulynsky** practice the finger stretch.



Enjoying their stretch break in the Course are Immunization Branch staff members (left to right) **Mildred Flores**, **Joyce Morgan**, **Carmen Phruksukarn** and **Mark Lindstrom**.



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Southeast and Northeast FRCs Celebrate "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day"

This year the Southeast & Northeast Family Resource Centers welcomed 102 children to their sites to celebrate "Take Our Daughters and Sons To Work Day - Revolutionizing the Work Place."

At the Southeast FRC each child received a name badge color coded by age. Small gifts of notebooks, highlighters, or coin purses were provided by a community college. The participants ranged in ages from six to eighteen.

The day began with the parents checking their e-mails for the itinerary to demonstrate how important it is to read your e-mails for important information for the day. They were advised to meet in the lunch room for a morning meeting. During the meeting they were introduced to managers and supervisors. That was followed by a tour of the office and showing them where to report in case of an emergency drill.

All participants were given assignments based on their age. Duties ranged from placing labels with return address on envelopes, preparing packets, Quarterly Reports, delivering messages to workers from the message desk, making copies of documents for reception, and acting as a unit clerk for the workers.

Healthy snacks were provided in recognition of the County's Work Safe Stay Healthy Quality First Program, which consisted of fresh fruit and juice for the morning welcome. During the morning break they were escorted to the employee parking lot for a nature walk and returned to the office for a mid-morning break.

After the break they were escorted to their parents for a sample of the duties that they perform on a daily basis. Upon returning to the office after lunch, they were provided a reprieve with the viewing of a movie "Happy Feet" and treated to popcorn and fruit juice.

At the Northeast FRC the children participated in a full day of planned activities including a scavenger hunt game that required each child to collect various office items and various manager information.

Lunch was provided for each child and then some children accompanied their parents to the Employee Forum Meeting. After



*Southeast FRC Manager **Patricia Lopez** gives a hug to the daughter of **Elizabeth Perez**, eligibility worker.*

the meeting, everyone attended an all staff meeting. During the recognition portion of the meeting, all the children in attendance assisted in handing out certificates of recognition to various staff. Each participating child was also given a certificate.

Although the day was long, the kids were kept busy and this year was the most successful Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day yet.

The Southeast FRC event was coordinated by **Susan Romero** with support and assistance from **Rocio Rocha, Susie Hargress, Martha Butler, Stacy Cox, Nancy Hoyt, Delores Rendon, Elizabeth Perez, and Rosie Urbano**. For the Northeast FRC, **Yvonne Contreras** took the lead with help from **Mario Nunez** and **Lisa Johnson**.



***Alma Webb**, Office Assistant at the Northeast FRC brought her son **Richie** and daughter **Kayla** to work with her.*

Agency Addresses Issue of Underage Drinking

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have consumed alcohol. It is against the law for young people to drink, yet more than 13 million of the nation's 113 million drinkers are underage.

Statistics show that one-third of 6th and 9th graders get alcohol from their own homes and many teens cite other people's homes as the most common setting for youth consumption of alcohol. Minors also get alcohol from older friends and siblings, from the Internet, from adults who are willing to buy it for them, and using fake IDs.

To help alleviate the problem of underage drinking, 16 incorporated municipalities and all unincorporated areas of the County of San Diego have adopted "social host" ordinances, making it illegal to host underage drinking parties. Any person who sells or provides an alcoholic beverage to a minor can receive a fine up to \$1,000 and up to 32 hours of community service.

Help is available for people with an alcohol problem or drug addiction by calling the County of San Diego Access and Crisis Line at (800) 479-3339.

The Realities of Teen Drinking

On March 30, 2000, a **15-year-old** was drinking beer and vodka in a vacant lot. He then tried to cross the trolley tracks walking between two cars. He never made it across. On April 1, a **19-year-old** college student and track athlete was drinking heavily with his friends. He passed out. He never woke up. Recently, **four high school students** were on a graduation trip. They were drinking and driving. They crashed. They will never get to graduate. A **19-year-old** SDSU student died last month of acute cocaine and alcohol intoxication.

The circumstances behind these deaths were all different but they had two things in common: The victims were under 21 and had been drinking before they died. They were not old enough to legally drink, yet they were able to get alcohol. Where did they get it? Who gave it to them?



A "Paws'itive" Party for All

The Agency's California Children Services (CCS), in partnership with the Paws'itive Animal Assisted Therapy (PAAT) Program, initiated a new program using therapy dogs to assist in physical and occupational therapy.

The CCS Medical Therapy Unit (MTU) located at Nicolaysen Center School launched the program by hosting an open house May 10th in Escondido.

Children with disabilities from the CCS Escondido MTU participated in a therapy dog group activity with their siblings and parents to highlight the benefits of this new partnership. The open house featured service dog demonstrations, informational booths, refreshments, and an opportunity to meet and pet the dogs.

The event raised awareness of CCS' Medical Therapy Unit and the unique partnership they have created with the PAAT Program to bring important therapy services to their clients.

The CCS Medical Therapy Unit provides occupational and physical therapy for children with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, spinal cord injuries and other eligible medical conditions.

Adoptions, Foster Care at the Fair



The Agency's Adoptions and Foster Home Licensing has a booth at the San Diego County Fair. The booth is receiving lots of visitors and interest.

HHSA in the News

May 15 - June 15

Press Conferences



Pandemic Flu Education - May 23



Underage Drinking - June 13

Sample Headlines

Actor to deliver speech at conference on aging

SAN DIEGO: A conference on aging will feature actor Edward James Olmos.

San Diego county families benefit from Prop. 63 mental health funds

County sells cars, jewelry, etc.

Aging, disability resource guide available

U.S. administration on aging honors county program

Aging & Disability Resource connection selected a 2007 'Champion'

Tax volunteers recognized

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency recognized more than 100 tax volunteers.

County health campaign stresses flu preparation

County health officials have launched a new awareness campaign offering flu shots to the public.

NEWS BY THE NUMBERS

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Got Story?

Do you have a person, place or program in your area of the Agency that would make a great story for the citizens of San Diego County? Call the Office of Media and Public Affairs and let them know about it.

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