



The HHSA Connection

MAY 2006

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Promoting Safe and Livable Communities - Working for Treatment & Care!

Celebrate HHSA Nurses

National Nurses Week is May 6 - 12

The role of nurses in the Agency and healthcare organizations throughout the nation will be celebrated during National Nurses Week, May 6-12.

HHSA nurses perform a variety of valuable services. Following are just a few examples:

- There are 222 nurses in the Agency. Most of the Public Health Nurses (PHNs) and other nursing staff work at Public Health Services branches including TB, STD, HIV, Immunizations, Maternal Child and Family Health Services, Epidemiology, PHN Administration, Border Health, and County Medical Services/Healthy San Diego, as well as the County's six Public Health Centers, and California Children's Services.
- At Aging and Independence Services, 50 nurses provide services at Edgemoor and 16 PHNs partner with case managers to serve seniors in the field.

- Two nurses work at the County's two juvenile halls, through Children's Mental Health. They work with parents to make sure that children in the juvenile halls have the medication and treatment they need, and help with referrals.

- In Mental Health Services, nearly 50 nurses work at the Psychiatric Hospital, administering medications, providing counseling therapy, crisis intervention and case management in the clinics and in the field. Several nurses also work on the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team, working with law enforcement in the field to provide services to homeless individuals.

National Nurses Week has been officially recognized since 1974, though it was first celebrated in 1954 to mark the 100th birthday of Florence Nightingale's historic mission of mercy to English soldiers during the Crimean War. Nightingale's birthday also is May 12.

The Board of Supervisors agreed to extend the "Mobile Remote Workforce" pilot project from North Region to all six Public Health Centers, to help nurses who work in the field do their jobs more efficiently by using new technology.

CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY IV

She Loves to Help

Behind Every Good Office...

A love of helping others is one reason that **Anita Loza** enjoys her job as Administrative Secretary IV.

Loza is secretary to **Paula Landau-Cox**, Director of Operations. As part of her job, she ensures that Landau-Cox's schedule is organized, creates organizational charts, works on PowerPoint presentations, and more.

"You have to be a multi-tasker," Loza said. "Times have changed for administrative professionals. We need to be knowledgeable about the Agency to help make sure our bosses are successful."

Loza started her County career nearly 21 years ago in Child Welfare Services. She says she enjoys the team atmosphere in the Director's Office.

Loza says she's lucky to have had many great bosses in her career. "It really makes a difference," she says.



Loza strives to help her boss be successful.

A Message from Jean Shepard

Agency Director

The Employee Satisfaction Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis, with representatives from across the Agency.

After several brainstorming sessions, we've come up with three main categories that address a majority of the concerns voiced. The issues fall into the categories of Supervisor-Employee roles: relationships, communication/decision making, and human resources (promotional opportunities and training). Suggestions for improving these areas range from small things that make a big difference, such as using common courtesy, to systems and process improvements.

As we move further into identifying solutions to address these concerns, I will continue to share information through a variety of venues, including this newsletter.



Jean M. Shepard

Student Labors Produce Cornucopia

San Pasqual Academy Grows a New Program

In March, San Pasqual Academy, the first-in-the-nation residential education campus for foster youth, held its Agriculture Program Open House showcasing the one-acre Student and Community Garden. As part of a 20-acre parcel of land on the campus, the one-acre plot has room to grow.

The program offers agriculture elective courses, incorporates health and wellness into the youth's residential life and is an after-school internship program - participating students are paid for their work. The youth, along with the foster grandparents on campus, are digging into the land to prepare, plant and sustain their crops.

Through this program, independent living skills are being incorporated into the daily life of the youth. For example: agriculture in the classroom supports math and science skills; agriculture as an internship develops the students' work readiness skills; agriculture from a health standpoint reinforces the students' sound nutrition choices; and agriculture from a business perspective strengthens their entrepreneurial skills.

The program plans to use the harvested fruits, vegetables and herbs in the daily menus in the Academy homes and Cyber Café. After the crops become plentiful, there are plans to sell the goods at local farmers markets.

Through the Agriculture Program, the Academy is further enhancing the program opportunities for the youth. In the future, look for the fruits...and vegetables...of the students' labor at your local farmers market!



The fields of San Pasqual Academy are sown.

Aging and Independence Services

Active Minds, Active Bodies, Active Lives

Seniors Can Have it All

Every two years, Supervisors **Dianne Jacob** and **Pam Slater-Price** host the Aging Summit to highlight three significant areas of concern for older adults in San Diego County. This year, the summit, coordinated by Aging and Independence Services, will feature prominent speakers on the topics of the Older Adult Workforce, Older Adult Obesity, and Older Adult Mental Health. Breakout sessions will follow the talks.

Keynote speaker for the Older Adult Workforce will be Carleen MacKay, a career management professional and expert in the changes older adults and employers will be facing as baby boomers consider employment beyond retirement.

Also speaking will be Dr. Nick Yphantides, an Escondido-based physician, who wrote the book "My Big Fat Greek Diet," after successfully losing half his original size of 467 pounds. Professionally and personally, he knows the cost of extra weight on one's health and self-esteem.

Also presenting is Dr. Jürgen Unützer, a geriatric psychiatrist and lead researcher on a study of a depression treatment, called IMPACT, which teams the older adult's primary physician with a depression case manager.

The Aging Summit will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (registration at 8 a.m.) on Friday, June 2, at the Town and Country Convention Center. Cost will be \$25, or \$5 for seniors age 60+, disabled persons or students. Reservations are required: call **1-800-501-3495**.

**Aging
Summit
2006**

Prom Dress Project

Giving Foster Teens a Night of Glamour

Whether the event was a dance, quinceanera, or wedding, countless young women have dresses they will never wear again. This thought occurred to South Region Administrative Analyst, **Martha Armenta**, while looking in her daughter's closet. Armenta brought her idea to South Region Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff and together they developed "The Prom Dress Project." The project aims at providing young foster teen girls with evening gowns for special occasions.

The foster girls from the 2006 graduating class will receive an invitation to schedule a personalized "dress appointment" at the "boutique" designed by the South Region CWS Placement Unit. From the Christina Aguilera music, purple plush carpeting, and pink blinking lights, the Unit has gotten into the minds of teenage girls and designed a space any department store would envy.

"The Prom Dress Project" has become an amazing community collaborative. South Region Family Resource Center Coordinator, **Ruby Zepeda**, posted flyers and is collecting dresses from Agency staff, SDG&E workers, and South Region residents. South Region CWS Placement Unit Supervisor, **Adrianna Alvarez**, believes there may be enough dresses for South and Central Region foster girls. El Dorado Cleaners is laundering the dresses at cost and local hair stylists are providing free services. Local resident, Patricia A. Meyer, has helped defray remaining costs and South Region CWS hopes to secure discounted tuxedo rentals for the boys.

If anyone you know has a gently used evening gown, please consider donating it to this wonderful project and giving a teenage girl the prom of her dreams!



Helping dreams come true - The South Region CWS Placement Unit (pictured from left to right, top to bottom: Adrianna Alvarez, Luisa Coria, Elizabeth Rosas, Leticia Abrego, Gabriel Diaz, and not pictured: Luis Contreras).

Human Resources Division

Ensuring Operational Excellence - Information Management!

Learning is Just a Click Away

Training & Development Goes High Tech

It's coming! The trend towards technology is impacting everyone: the academic arena, private corporations, non-profit organizations, and the government. To embrace this movement, the Agency's Training & Development team now offers [online class registration](#) to employees! Click on the link and check out what's new at T&D!



May is Mental Health Month

Information is Key

May, which has been nationally celebrated as Mental Health Month for more than 50 years, is once again an active month locally for the mental health community. County Mental Health Services, the City of San Diego, Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), local National Alliances for the Mentally Ill, the Mental Health Association, UCSD Department of Psychiatry, and the Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy are coordinating a calendar of local events to commemorate Mental Health Month.

Our Mental Health Month goals include:

- Celebrating California's implementation of the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63), with major new programs being funded under the Community Services and Supports component of the Act.
- Advocacy for both public policies and for individuals to improve health and quality of lives.
- Public education and research to reduce the stigma of mental illness and advance the science of treatment and prevention.
- Full access to high-quality, culturally competent services focused on rehabilitation and recovery.
- Developing the link between mental and physical health.

Local events include:

- A Mental Health Board celebration May 4.
- Radio shows May 6 and 13 on CASH AM 1700.
- Several productions of the "Side-by Side" comedy show during the week of May 22 - a live, one-man stage show about his personal journey with mental illness (depression).
- A proclamation presented by the Board of Supervisors May 16.
- A Children's System of Care Annual Conference May 25.
- A Client Forum on May 25.
- Various special celebrations at Clubhouses throughout the county, including barbeques and a chili cook-off contest.
- A lobby display at the Rosecrans County Health Services Complex throughout May.
- Distribution of resource packets at various community and HHSA events throughout May.

Web links, educational materials and full information on local events will also be distributed electronically to area residents and posted on County Mental Health Services' Network of Care Web site, <http://sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh>.

County Connection

Countywide Blood Drive Helps Save Lives

Thanks go out to all of the County employees who donated blood during April's annual San Diego Blood Bank blood drive! Many will be helped, and lives may even be saved.

Special thanks go to Public Health Services' **Lori Senini** and **Juan Olmeda**, who organized all of the site coordinators, and of course, thanks to the extra efforts of all the site coordinators who helped inform and rally the troops at their various locations.

For more information about donating blood, [click here](#).



Supervisor Cox lends an arm to save lives.

Finding Common Ground

Working Together to Serve Clients

On Thursday April 6, more than 170 service providers, clients and County staff gathered at the San Diego County Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center to participate in Finding Common Ground: HIV, Alcohol & Drug, and Mental Health Service Provider Workshop. The workshop challenged service providers from these different fields to address many of their common clients' multiple diagnoses and how their individual services could be integrated to reduce barriers to care.

The afternoon began with opening statements from **Nancy Bowen**, M.D., County Public Health Officer, **Connie Moreno-Peraza**, Deputy Director of Alcohol and Drug Services and **Alfredo Aguirre**, Deputy Director of Children's Mental Health Services and Acting Deputy Director of Adult Mental Health Services. The keynote address, delivered by Doug Braun-Harvey from the Sexual Dependency Institute of San Diego, was entitled "Addiction, HIV & Mental Illness: Implementing the Triage Triangle to Maximize Health Outcomes."

Two panel discussions, one consisting of providers of services and the other of client recipients of services, punctuated comments made earlier with examples from their own programs and personal experiences. The event culminated with announcing the winners of the poster contest, which were created by clients receiving services for HIV, substance abuse and mental health. Workshop participants called the workshop "an excellent way to connect HIV to mental health issues" and "informative, useful and entertaining."

The planning committee looks forward to finding more common ground at next year's workshop.



Poster contest entry highlights benefits of finding Common Ground.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away

Access and Crisis Line Expands

County residents seeking treatment for a mental illness, a substance abuse problem, or both, can now call a single hotline to get assistance in finding appropriate treatment programs.

The County of San Diego's 7-day/24-hour Mental Health Access and Crisis Line, 1-800-479-3339, expanded April 1 to include Alcohol and Drug Services.

Callers to the renamed Behavioral Health Access and Crisis Line will be screened over the phone by professionals and referred to appropriate treatment programs. Callers can also be provided information or crisis and suicide intervention. Adding Alcohol and Drug Services to the Access and Crisis Line is one of many steps in the County's Behavioral Health Initiative, which will result in more coordinated services for people with mental illness and/or substance abuse problems. The Access and Crisis Line is operated for the County of San Diego by United Behavioral Health.



Close to Home

Program Aims to Keep Foster Kids in Their Communities

The Casey Family Program, a County community partner, recently honored **Karen Martin**, Manager of Child Welfare Services in East Region, in their newsletter. They described Martin as "a leader in the formation of the San Diego Foster Care Coalition, comprised of 15 county-wide foster care agencies and social services."

Martin oversees 120 social workers and child protective staff. Her office responds to more than 300 child abuse referrals each month and provides case management services to more than 700 dependent children.

Martin described her motivation for starting the Coalition: "I make a vision list every year of things I want to accomplish. One of the things that we are working on in the East Region is a way to keep children in their familiar environments if they have to be removed from their homes. If we had more foster homes in each neighborhood, we would be more successful in reaching this goal. Then I realized that there are multiple agencies working independently to recruit foster homes. Multiple agencies going to the same locations could confuse potential foster parents. What if we coordinated recruitment efforts so that we matched potential foster parents to the agencies best suited for them right up front? We could maximize the numbers of homes we recruit, and they would have a better chance of being happy, fulfilled foster parents for a long time."

This idea led to a joint effort of approaching several agencies to join the cause of collaborative recruiting efforts based on fostering awareness and education for the needs of youth and families.

In the past 10 months, relationships with 15 agencies have been established, moving toward a solid foundation for this new coalition. On February 7, the San Diego Foster Care Coalition launched its first kick-off event in East County, with more than 200 in attendance.

Martin said, "It was truly a heartfelt and inspirational event for community members as well as foster care and child welfare staff. As a result of this event, we now have more than 40 invitations to speak at several organizations about the needs of foster children. I would like the Coalition to set its sights on establishing lifelong connections between future foster parents and the children they foster - so that even if a child is returned to their birth parents, the foster parents stay in the family's life as an additional layer of support."

Martin went on to say, "It has been an honor working with Casey Family Program staff. They have really stepped up to the plate in forming this coalition."



Want to learn more about becoming a foster parent? [Click here.](#)

County Connection - Save the Date!

Ensuring Operational Excellence!

Your Money, Your Future

Investment and Retirement Symposium

San Diego County's Deferred Compensation Division is presenting an Investment & Retirement Symposium on Saturday, June 3, at the Holiday Inn on the Bay from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Speakers include Robert K. Ross, M.D., former Agency Director and current President of The California Endowment, and Channel 10's multiple Emmy award-winning anchor Bill Griffith. Topics include: estate planning for health and medical issues, maximizing your health, choosing the right investments and more.

The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 per couple. Lunch is included and free parking is available at the County Administration Center. Great giveaways and prizes too! Seating is limited and pre-registration is required. To register, or for more information, call **David Baker** at **(619) 531-5454**.

This section, featuring stories direct from the front lines, meets Quality First goals for Child Welfare Services, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, and the Regions.

From Central Region

Happy Nurses Month!

Changing Lives Through Service

Central Region Public Health Nurse, **Janet Finkel**, helped to change the lives of a family in need. A pregnant mother had lost custody of her eight children due to her re-incarceration and long history of substance abuse. Previous attempts to assist the mother's progress toward a therapeutic relationship with her children were unsuccessful. Finkel's weekly home visits, referrals to local agencies, and overall empathy and attentiveness allowed the mother to "open up" and comply with Child Welfare Services (CWS) recommendations. CWS worker, **Cathy McAdams**, states that Finkel "opened the door to this mother feeling like she could trust someone." With Finkel's support, the mother has regained custody of two of her children and had a healthy baby. In addition, the mother has since been promoted at her workplace, completed parenting classes, and attended a smoking cessation program. Her children have received their immunizations and well-child check-ups and CWS has closed the case as a successful reunification. By gaining the mother's trust, Finkel made it possible for the family to receive the services necessary to better their lives.



Janet Finkel unlocked the door for a family to receive needed services.

Human Resources

Ensuring Operational Excellence - Skilled, Competent Workforce!

Job Matchmaking

Clerical Hiring Hall Success Story

Agency Human Resources (HR) has conducted four clerical hiring halls since June 2005. They coordinated hiring halls at various locations in the County and invited all supervisors who had clerk vacancies. All the active candidates on the current intermediate clerical list were invited as well. The Agency's Hiring and Background unit set up on-the-spot background checks. As a result, more than 100 intermediate clerks were hired and the hiring process was shortened by at least two weeks. One such successful hiring was **Miralei (Leah) Samaniego**.

When Samaniego was invited to the Agency's Clerical Hiring Hall on Saturday, June 11, she didn't know what to expect. She arrived at the Scottish Rite Center at 5:30 a.m. to wait for the doors to open at 8:30 a.m. She knew that job interviews would be done on a first come, first served basis. She was one of 170 job applicants who turned out hoping to land one of 55 openings. She so impressed the interviewers that she was instantly selected for one of the positions with a conditional job offer, pending full background and medical clearance.

When **Helen Moody**, Child Welfare Services Personnel Aide, was asked to participate as an interviewer at the hiring hall, she was initially hesitant - as were other supervisors. However, she quickly became a convert and loved the opportunity to meet all the candidates. She and her colleague, **Jessie Furrer**, were able to interview 60 candidates and fill all the vacancies that same day. Moody remembered vividly how Samaniego stood out and had the desire to do something different. She made Samaniego that conditional offer on the spot. Moody was grateful to Agency HR for coordinating the hiring hall, conducting on the spot background checks, and the overall process.

Samaniego now works for Moody. One of her duties is helping coordinate the hiring halls! At the December 2005 hiring hall, she participated actively, even assisting with some interviews. She looks forward to a long career with the County of San Diego.



Leah Samaniego found a new position in a new way.

This section, featuring stories direct from the front lines, meets Quality First goals for Child Welfare Services, Strategic Planning and Operational Support, and the Regions.

From North Coastal Region

Community Works Together to Help Young Suicidal Girl

North Coastal protective services worker **Marlene Dugan** exemplified the spirit of collaboration through her above and beyond efforts to make sure 10-year old Angelina received the services she needed and had the support she deserved.

Angelina came to the attention of Child Welfare Services (CWS) when she had been out of school for three months due to suicidal thoughts. She was also allegedly not being provided mental health services.

Angelina's schoolmates had teased her relentlessly about her weight and teeth. Classmates sat behind her in school and made chopping noises with their mouths and called her "beaver teeth." The mother then removed her from school and just kept her home. She did not enroll her in another school or pursue the formal process for home schooling. The mother simply had her do assignments from her (the mother's) old school books. She also failed to properly follow up with mental health services for Angelina. She had her assessed at Aurora Behavioral Health, but did not follow their recommendations for follow-up care.

During the course of CWS involvement, Dugan worked with the family, Lifeline Community Services, the school, and a maternal aunt to successfully intervene on Angelina's behalf. Today:

- Angelina is back in school and her teacher is securing her a position as a teacher's aide for the librarian, with whom Angelina has a special connection.
- She is enrolled in an after-school program to address how far behind she is academically, and to have some fun, too.
- The school has addressed the overall issue of bullying with their student population.
- Lifeline is providing counseling services for Angelina, and, although they had a waiting list, they started providing services to her immediately.
- Lifeline is also working in the home with the mother to follow up on issues of parenting and has secured funds for a mental health assessment for the mother.
- Angelina's aunt takes her to the gym twice a week and works out with her. Angelina has already lost two dress sizes.

It truly does take a village to raise a child. Thanks to the entire community coming together, Angelina is feeling better about her life and her future.

Emergency Survival Program

The Emergency Survival Program (ESP) is an awareness campaign designed to increase emergency preparedness at home, in the community, at work and at school.

This month's focus: Make Disaster Kits

Everyone should have personal disaster supply kits in the home, car, and office.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with
HHSA Director

Jean Shepard - or

Director of Operations
Paula Landau-Cox

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

HHSA Events Calendar

Check out goings-on, or, advise your Web contact to post events.

Compliance Office:
(619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Hotline: (866) 549-0004

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

On Your Mark, Get Set, Hunt!

Egg Hunt Benefits Kids and Adults

On March 23, California Children Services (CCS) Vista Medical Therapy Unit hosted its first annual "Spring Egg Hunt" at California Avenue Elementary School. Approximately 150 children participated in the egg hunt, which included those receiving physical therapy in the Vista Unit and other students from the school.

Several CCS staff members were involved, including **Alisha Nash** who conceived the event, **Julie Conley** (pictured), and **Paul Katsaros**. The event was a great success, delighting both young and old alike. Not only did it provide a fun activity for the students, but it was also an informal way for CCS staff to meet school staff and the families of the children that they serve.



Julie Conley encourages young egg hunters.

Front Line Success Stories

Ensuring Operational Excellence -
Continuous Improvement!

This section, featuring stories direct from the front lines, meets Quality First goals for Child Welfare Services, the Strategic Planning and Operational Support, and the Regions.

From the North Regions

North Regions Roll Out "Structured Decision Making"

North Regions Protective Service Supervisors (PSSs) have successfully rolled out a new computer Web-based risk assessment tool, Structured Decision Making (SDM), in San Diego County. SDM is a Web-based safety and risk assessment tool that provides social workers and supervisors with state-of-the-art assistance in making appropriate decisions about children remaining in or returning to their own homes based on enhanced assessments while using a research based assessment tool.

In November 2005, North Central Region PSSs were the first group trained on SDM. They assisted training North Coastal supervisors, who are now helping train North Inland supervisors, with remaining Child Welfare Services regional operations staff to follow. "Each group has been very receptive and appreciative of the tool," noted one SDM trainer. Although recently implemented, SDM has already begun to improve assessments and assist in placing children in the least restrictive, safest, and most stable environments. Many staff found that the relevant examples and tips trainers provided were the key to using the tool and making a smooth transition to putting it into practice. The training team includes: in North Central, **Kathryn Wieand** and **Susan Solis**; in North Coastal, **Leah Kahn**, **June Herzog**, **Jodi Giesler**, and **Amanda Wilkins**; and in North Inland, **Kathy Jackson**, **Samantha Anderson**, **Janice La Freniere** and **Marivic Fields**.



Teaching to Fish

North County Supports Self-Sufficiency Through Conference

Low-income single parents in North County received needed support through a free conference entitled, "The Possible Dream: Single Parents of Power," on April 22 at MiraCosta College. The North County HHSA Self-Sufficiency Initiative partnered with MiraCosta College and Palomar College to host this year's self-sufficiency summit - the fourth event of its kind.

This year's focus was on building parenting skills and included keynote speaker Norma Jordan, an expert in the field of parenting and the single parent household and author of *The Ministry of Single Parenting*. Participants also selected from five breakout sessions: The Power of Purpose, The Power of Boys to Men, The Power of Girls to Women, The Power of Communication, and The Power of Being Alone.

More than 60 people attended the event. North County HHSA also participated in the MiraCosta College Job Fair on April 27. About 50 employers (including our own Human Resources) were at the Job Fair and recruited for various positions. Both events were part of MiraCosta's Career Expo, a week long series of events that also included work readiness trainings and a fashion show.



Parenting is not an easy job. North County conference helped parents find the power within.

Safety in the Agency

Promoting Safe and Livable Communities Working for Prevention & Protection!

This new section, featuring tips direct from the Safety Committees, meets Quality First goals for all groups.

From the North Regions

To insure that everyone is up-to-date on office safety, all North Regions' employees have completed the safety orientation, regardless of time at the site.



From Strategic Planning & Operational Support

According to the CDC, 30 percent of U.S. adults are obese (30 or more pounds overweight). The formula for maintaining a healthy lifestyle is simple (not always easy!): Regular exercise + a nutritious diet low in fat.



Click here to check Out the Health and Wellness information, resources and benefits available to you through the County's Department of Human Resources.



County of San Diego
Health and Human Services Agency

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The HHSA Connection is produced by the Agency's Office of Media and Public Affairs.

Editor

Jennifer Mallory

Section Editors

Aging & Independence Services: Denise Nielsen
Alcohol & Drug Services: Kim Frink
Central Region: Elise Lorentz
Child Welfare Services: Cathi Palatella
East Region: Eve Leon-Tarres
Financial & Support Services: Marion Morris
Information Technology: Maria Tellez
Mental Health: Bonita Magjidi
North Central Region: Nina Constantino
North Coastal Region: Nina Constantino
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