

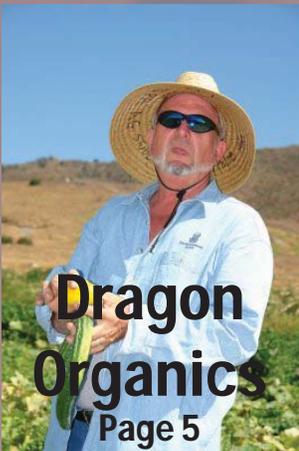
# HHSA Connection

AUGUST 2009 A Monthly Newsletter for the Employees of San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency

## What's Inside



**Camp  
Connect**  
Page 4



**Dragon  
Organics**  
Page 5

## Medical Therapy Unit Changes Lives

See Photos on Page 6

# EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT/ LEVERAGING STRENGTHS

## Getting the Right Things Done During Difficult Times: Our Drive to Thrive!

### From the Director's Desk

During the past year I've noticed some emerging and quite impressive traits across our entire Agency. I'll address one of the traits for this issue – perseverance.



Nick Macchione

I have witnessed all types of employees - clerks, security guards, social workers, nurses, supervisors, analysts, managers and executives – increase their drive to thrive. In talking with many employees and observing them while doing office visits, conversations are focusing on finding ways to improve our Agency while never losing sight of what we believe in as an organization. In essence, they are exemplifying Jim Collin's 'Good to Great' principles by preserving our

core beliefs in improving and protecting lives while seeking ways to improve our bottom-line.

There's no doubt that we're experiencing extraordinary times. Fortunately, we have extraordinary employees rising up to the challenge. I've observed this quality in employees like Sary Villareal, a social worker from our In-Home Supportive Services program in Chula Vista. I recently joined her on a ride-along and observed first-hand the compassionate care she provided to Phyllis – a frail and very ill 85-year-old great, grandmother.

It was quite impressive to witness Sary's relentless drive in improving the remaining quality of life that Phyllis has on this earth – in her home - and not in a skilled nursing institution. She does this for hun-

dreds of other people like Phyllis in her caseload, as well.

Yet, throughout all these demands and challenges of her work Sary is grounded in today's reality and committed to finding new and more cost-effective ways of serving her customers who are counting on her.

Yes, it's employees like Sary, who are exemplifying those leadership traits grounded in GMS 2.0. So, a BIG thanks to all of you who are helping lead our Agency through these challenging times --- we will transform together in becoming an even stronger organization in improving and saving lives!

Next month I will highlight the other emerging traits that are characteristic of our Agency. Until then: work smart, improve lives!

## Do you work with someone who deserves to be recognized in the **Employee Spotlight**?

Each month the HHSA Connection Employee Spotlight will feature one of your co-workers. If you know someone who provides excellent customer service, works hard at their job or is just an interesting person with a story to tell, you can submit their name for the Employee Spotlight.

To nominate someone for the Employee Spotlight, simply send an email to [Connectioneditor.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Connectioneditor.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov) with Employee Spotlight in the subject line. Tell us the employee's name, where they work and why you think they should be featured in the employee spotlight. It's that simple!



# Unlocking the Potential in Employees

By Pam Smith  
East Region General Manager/  
Aging and Independence Services Director

Now more than ever we need to be crystal clear about where we are headed. The outcomes we are striving for need to be clear to our staff, and to our customers. Technological advances have provided us with data that can drive discussions about how well we are meeting our program goals and outcomes.

Still, meeting outcomes remains a daily challenge. The economic crisis redefined the way we do business and disrupted the lives of our customers. In this fast paced, challenging environment, our most valuable asset is our employees. These individuals have the power to generate ideas and to carry them out. When the hearts and minds of employees are tied to helping our customers and reaching program goals anything is possible.

So how do we unlock that potential? The Gallup Organization extensively researched this very question. First, leaders must be clear about what they are trying to accomplish (outcomes & goals), and ensure staff understand that vision. Second, they need to make sure employees have necessary tools to meet those outcomes. Third, leaders need to take the time to understand the natural strengths of each of their staff, and of themselves, so those strengths can be used to meet defined goals. And fourth, leaders need to get out of the way to allow employees to use their own creativity and ingenuity to serve their customer. This recipe for success can be easily applied to customer service as well.

The Gallup Organization also discovered that followers want four specific things from their leaders: trust, stability, compassion and hope. By sticking to these simple principles, research has demonstrated increased productivity, decreased staff turnover and decreased workplace injuries. Most importantly, our customers will receive great public service and our neighborhoods will be healthy, safe and livable.

## Employee Spotlight

### “The kids are ultimately my joy, my passion, my love”

It might not be much of a stretch to say that Kim Miller’s work at Polinsky Children’s Center (PCC) helped prepare her for motherhood.

Miller is the Training and Quality Assurance Coordinator for PCC, but she spent the first several of her eight years with the County working directly with the children in the cottages.

“The kids are ultimately my joy, my passion and my love,” she said. “They are what keeps me here.”

In her current job, she does staff development, behavior modification training and diversity and harassment training.

“I work with the staff, but you’re train-

ing them to work with the kids, so you hit all aspects of the program,” she said.

Kim and her husband had not one, not two - but three bundles of joy just over a year ago.

“For the first three months, we were in shock,” she said. “I don’t think anyone could plan or prepare for it (triplets).

“But my husband and I survived a year. We’re still smiling and they’ve been a blessing - they are our life right now.”

Miller said one of the toughest challenges is being outnumbered by her children. She said her and her husband joke that “two of them would be easy and we could do one with our

eyes closed.”

They still manage to find time to enjoy the beach and the zoo.

Outdoor activities are a family favorite.

Miller said having a great group of co-workers at PCC has made the transition to being the mother of triplets easier. “I’m very blessed to work here at Polinsky with a great management team. They are a huge support system - the staff and everyone here,” she said.



Kim Miller





## Foster Siblings Bond at Camp Connect



### Camp Connect Scrapbook

*Click any photo to view the Camp Connect photo slideshow.*

Camp Connect San Diego brought 64 separated siblings together at Camp Cedar Glen in Julian for four days of rock wall climbing, swimming, scrap booking, a talent show, and many other great activities. The youth participated in a day trip to Julian to experience a gold mine and enjoy slices of homemade apple pie and ice cream. The children also participated in a dance on Sunday night, with a DJ and talent show.

The camp was made possible through a partnership between the Health and Human Services Agency, United Way of San Diego and Promises2Kids.

For a list of HHSA employees who volunteered their time at camp, please see page 7.



Purple Carrots? Red Pumpkins?

## San Pasqual Academy Garden Uses Niche Varieties to Fuel Growth as Organic Food Supplier

What was once a mere acre of 6-foot tall weeds has blossomed into a 10-acre dynamic, living outdoor classroom that provides San Pasqual Academy (SPA) students with real-world experience in agriculture, math, marketing, food literacy, financial management, job skills and business acumen - not to mention a good solid work ethic.

It started as a way to preserve the agricultural heritage of the land, but the school's agriculture program has become a certified organic grower, supplying produce to fine-dining establishments and Whole Foods Markets. Talks are underway with potential new customers such as Chipotle and the University of California-San Diego.

"It was weeds in the beginning and all those first classes did was pick weeds," said Scott Murray, who's in his fifth year at the helm of the SPA agriculture program.

"It's become an integral part of the campus," said Yvonne Campbell, Director of Special Programs for the Academy. "The program really started as an attempt to maintain the agricultural history of this property and to provide an opportunity for the students to experience agriculture, gain work experience and eat healthier."

Now there's hope the farm will become self-sustaining. A lot of the effort toward that goal lies with the students. "At any one time there are an average of a dozen students working in the garden," said Murray. "Over half of the last graduating class (of 27 students) had participated in the program."

"We see it as so much more than an ag program," said Campbell. "We have so many kids where the whole four-wall classroom is not the best setting and this program's flexibility helps."

Murray said it has been a good experience for everyone involved using the garden to maximize educational opportunities. "We have seen the wisdom of giving students the opportunity to have work experience early at school."

As Dragon Organics has expanded, so has the student's work experiences. They are now involved in the packaging, marketing and advertising of Dragon Organics, as well as quality control. "They learn about quality - no squished tomatoes in a package," said Murray. "You never want a 'yuck', you always want a 'wow' (when someone looks at your product). I call it the 'wow' factor."

A partial list of the products grown by Dragon Organics:	
Jalapenos	Lemons
Green Bell Peppers	Limes
Yellow Pear Tomatoes	Oranges
Cherry Tomatoes	Red Carrots
Roma Tomatoes	Purple Carrots
Celery	White Carrots
White Pickling Cukes	Green Beets
Asian Cucumbers	Red Beets
Sweet Red Onions	Red Pumpkins
Red Cabbage	White Pumpkins
Green Cabbage	Watermelons
Texas Grano Onions	Zucchini
Thyme	Sweet Corn
Oregano	Strawberries
Chives	Cipollini Onions
Marjoram	
Tangerines	

Educational opportunities afforded by the garden continue even after a student graduates. The first SPA student to graduate from a four-year college has come back to work part-time with the program, utilizing his graphic arts degree to design the labeling and website for Dragon Organics.

"The neat thing is to see how the garden changes the youth and to see the kids blossom," said Murray.



[Click to view the slideshow](#)

### DRAGON ORGANICS VIDEO



[Click here to play!](#)



## Olympic-Sized Fun for Everyone

HSA's California Children Services Medical Therapy Units held activity days where kids were able to work on their skills in a fun environment. There was an Olympic-themed event in the South Bay and day at the beach in North County.



### PHOTOS



[Click to view the slideshow](#)

### MEDICAL THERAPY UNIT VIDEO

[Click here to play!](#)



## Car Seat Giveaway



Supervisor **Greg Cox** demonstrates proper use of a child's car seat during a press conference held by Corazón de mi Vida (You are the center of my life). It's a national bilingual initiative created by the National Latino Children's Institute to inform Latino families, child care providers and the Spanish-speaking community about the importance of safety seats and seat belts in saving children's lives. HHSA South Region selected families to receive donated car seats from the program.

## San Pasqual Academy Notes

Twenty-seven youth residing at San Pasqual Academy earned their high school diploma during the 2008-2009 school year.

Eleven youth celebrated their eighth grade graduation from San Pasqual Union School District.

Fourteen Academy youth submitted entries in the Digital Arts category at the San Diego County Fair earning four 1st place, five 2nd place and four 3rd place awards! In addition, four students performed a Hip Hop routine as part of their dance class.

## HHSA Camp Connect Volunteers

Gisella Aguilar  
Stephanie Bailey  
Estella Banuelos  
Rodney Bates  
Claudia Bell  
Nicole Champagne  
Caitlin Clemens  
Ron Dailey  
William Durning  
Margo Fudge  
MaryBeth Hadaway  
Louis Harris  
Pam Hurd  
Carol Kozik-Sproule

Tin Le  
Regina Leyva  
Roseann Myers  
Deborah O'Keefe  
Brad Opfer  
Sara Otto  
Robin Palmer  
Gail Pomare  
Jessica Schmidt  
Anna Sherrod  
Vicky Swenson  
Angelina Thomas  
Barbara Wojtach

## New Website to Aid Veterans

HHSA has launched a new website aimed at helping veterans, service members, and their families access mental health counseling, emergency housing and employment assistance.

"The Network of Care for Veterans and Service Members website is an essential bridge to mental health services and other programs available at the local, state and federal level," said San Diego County Supervisor **Bill Horn**.

**Nick Macchione**, HHSA Director; **Alfredo Aguirre**, Director, HHSA's Mental Health Services; **Tom Splitgerber**, County Veterans Service Officer and veterans and their families participated in the website launch, which took place at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park.

The website, [www.sandiego.networkofcare.org](http://www.sandiego.networkofcare.org), is a state-of-the-art resource that serves as a one-stop-shop for veterans, National Guard, reservists, active duty personnel, and their families to learn about services and organizations that can help them. Information on the website is offered in 11 languages.

"The transition from military service to civilian can prove challenging," said Macchione. "HHSA is making efforts to ease that transition, especially when it comes to accessing services such as mental health resources."

At the new website, veterans and their families will find housing resources and counselors that provide career advice and job assistance. The site is also a place where they can communicate with peers, share their experiences and get connected.

## VETERANS WEBSITE VIDEO



**Board of Supervisors**  
Greg Cox, District 1  
Dianne Jacob, District 2  
Pam Slater-Price, District 3  
Ron Roberts, District 4  
Bill Horn, District 5



**Chief Administrative Officer** - Walter F. Ekard

**Health & Human Services Agency Director** - Nick Macchione

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

**Editor:** Tom Christensen

### Section Editors

Aging & Independence Services: Denise Nelesen  
Behavioral Health: Jennifer Mallory  
Central Region: Jayne Reinhardt  
Child Welfare Services: Margo Fudge  
East Region: Katie Judd

Financial & Support Services: Donna Matta  
North Central Region, North Coastal Region,  
North Inland Region: Nina Constantino  
Public Health: Wilma Wooten  
South Region: Jayne Reinhardt



## Polinsky Children Reaping Rewards from Their Garden

This spring an area was selected and prepared for a new garden at The Polinsky Children's Center. The vision and implementation was led by Protective Services Supervisor **Misty Relyea**.

The initial planting of radishes, peppers, green beans, strawberries, basil, cucumbers and flowers was done in May by the younger children and middle-school age youth. Since that time many PCC residents have had an opportunity to plant, feed, water, weed and harvest the fruits and vegetables.

The children were delighted to spend time tending the plants and seeing them grow. They have enjoyed sampling their work, and are looking forward to tasting ripe tomatoes. Recently cucumbers from the garden were served on the cafeteria salad bar.

The therapeutic reward of being outdoors, participating in the wonder of nature and being nourished by the food is adding to the overall health and healing for the youth.



Montana and Kimberly use teamwork to harvest a cucumber from the new garden at Polinsky Children's Center.

## Support Your Co-Workers AIDS WALK 2009 Efforts!

Come out and enjoy the sunshine on Sunday, Sept. 27, with Team County of San Diego for the 20th annual AIDS Walk/Run 2009. The walk kicks off at Balboa Park, 6th and Laurel, at 8 a.m.

Established in 1989, AIDS Walk San Diego is our community's largest one-day HIV/AIDS fundraiser and the biggest non-governmental financial provider for HIV/AIDS in the county. Dozens of agencies - serving thousands of clients - rely on funds raised at the annual Walk to help provide essential prevention and care programs to thousands of men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS.

Staff from HHSA's HIV, STD & Hepatitis Branch of Public Health Services has joined up to form Team County of San Diego in support of this charitable event. All are welcome.

For more information on how you can participate or support the walk, visit the team website by clicking [here](#), or contact Shannon Hansen (619) 293-4719 or [shannon.hansen@sd-county.ca.gov](mailto:shannon.hansen@sd-county.ca.gov).

## Quick Response Saves Co-Workers Life

During a routine training session, the last thing anyone may expect is a serious medical situation. But that's just what happened when one student suffered a stroke right in the middle of a class.

Fortunately, Behavioral Health Services' **Stephanie Hansen** and **Timothy Tormey** took swift action. During the training, they became aware that a student was not answering direct questions, had a blank stare and appeared to have weakness in one arm. Based on experience with a family member who had suffered strokes, Hansen recognized the emergency and called 911.

It was later determined the student had suffered a stroke and the efficient action taken by Hansen and Tormey got her the immediate medical attention she required to avoid further damage.



BHS Director Dr. **Jennifer Schaffer** (right) acknowledges the caring expertise demonstrated by **Stephanie Hansen** and **Timothy Tormey** in the face of a medical emergency.

## HHSA on New Social Platforms...Follow, Become a Fan and Stay Updated!

By: Maria Bitanga, Office of Media and Public Affairs Intern

Twitter and Facebook ...does it ring a bell?

In this day and age we live in the fast lane with the constant need to be in the “know”. Due to technological advancements, modern amenities are necessary. Gone are the days when letters and telephones are the only means of communication. Texting, Instant Messaging, and E-mailing have now become the norm. The newest method of staying connected is so-called “social networking” tools such as Twitter and Facebook. Twitter and Facebook have all become familiar websites that many of us visit daily in addition to checking email.

Now, you have all the more reason to check for updates! HHSA has launched Facebook and Twitter accounts. Updates relating to HHSA events, programs/services, community outreach, and public announcements will be posted to the Facebook account. Important updates on topics such as H1N1 or other breaking health news and information about upcoming events will be “tweeted” on Twitter. You can also find news conference footage, Connection videos and important public health announcements on HHSA’s YouTube channel.

Make sure you sign up to ‘follow’ SDCountyHHSA on your Twitter account and become a ‘fan’ of SDCountyHHSA on Facebook. You can simply search SDCountyHHSA on the search engine within the designated websites. On YouTube, search for SanDiegoCountyHHSA.



## Stand Down Event Helps Homeless Veterans

HHSA took part in the annual Stand Down event for homeless veterans in July. Hundreds of homeless veterans got free access to a wide range of necessities including food, clothing, medical, legal and mental health assistance, job counseling and referral, and most importantly, companionship and camaraderie.

It provided an ideal setting for the integrated services of HHSA to reach individuals truly in need. In addition to sponsoring a tent for shelter, sleeping, and counseling, HHSA had veteran’s services representatives, mental health professionals and family resource center staff on hand.

The first Stand Down was held in San Diego in 1988, developed by two Vietnam Veterans to help other veterans “combat” life on the streets. The popularity of the event has steadily grown to around 300 similar annual events throughout the nation.

For more information or to volunteer for the next event, click here.



Maria Corcoran, left, and Salvador Perez, center, from the Metro Family Resource Center assist a veteran during the Stand Down event.

## Raising Awareness About Relationship Violence

The HHSA Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) is gearing up for October’s Domestic Violence Awareness month. OVP is supporting the San Diego Domestic Violence Council’s “Not to Be Forgotten Rally,” which includes six rally “walks” held throughout the County on Thursday, Oct. 1. Those walks will be followed by an event at the Old Town Plaza from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. The event will include speakers, food, t-shirts, resources, and performances. All are welcome to join in the event.

The goal of the public awareness campaign, called the EVERY-ONE Campaign, is to bring public awareness to the far-reaching impact of relationship violence, the concept that relationship violence can only be stopped through community-wide efforts, and that victims can be anyone – pets, women, men, elders or children.

In 2008, about 17,000 domestic violence incidents were reported to law enforcement in San Diego County. In the past 12 years, there have been over 250 known intimate-partner related fatalities - about 21 deaths each year. There were also more than 15,000 calls made to the San Diego Countywide Domestic Violence Hotline (888-DV-LINKS) in 2008.

For other event details taking place throughout the County during October, you may call the Office of Violence Prevention (858-581-5800).



## Pamela Smith Receives National Award for Intergenerational Programs

**Pamela Smith**, Director of HHSa's Aging and Independence Services (AIS), received the Generations United Intergenerational Innovation Award at the organization's 15th International Conference in Washington, D.C. The prestigious award honors an individual or organization that has made an outstanding contribution to advancing the intergenerational field and uniting the generations through creative and exemplary practice.



"Pamela Smith is an outstanding advocate for older adults and intergenerational programming," said Generations United Executive Director Donna Butts. "She is always looking for ways to further improve the San Diego community and the lives of those who live there."

As Director of AIS and Deputy Director of the East Region, Smith oversees 30 individual programs serving older adults and disabled adults and eight programs serving children and families. Smith was instrumental in developing two intergenerational programs: San Pasqual Academy Neighbors and Seniors on Broadway; and created two nationally recognized programs: Workforce Academy for Youth and the Legacy Corps. Smith developed San Diego County's Intergenerational Programs Directory, urged local colleges and universities to include intergenerational programming classes, and testified in front of the Senate Special Committee on Aging to advocate for intergenerational programming language to be added to the Older Americans Act.

### Two HHSa Programs Win National Recognition

The National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) recently issued a report entitled Innovative Prevention Programs for Improving Children's Healthcare in California -- profiling 30 innovative programs, including two programs that HHSa is involved with: the Share the Care dental initiative and the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative. Both were honored for their innovation.

NICHQ is an organization that works to improve child health by improving the systems responsible for the delivery of children's health care.

### Rowe Honored by San Diego County Medical Society

The San Diego County Medical Society has named **Jeffrey Rowe**, MD, Supervising Psychiatrist with HHSa's Behavioral Health Services, as one of "San Diego's Physicians of Exceptional Excellence." Rowe will be among those featured in the October edition of San Diego Magazine. The award reflects the Society's vision: "Physicians United for a Healthy San Diego."

The award is earned by a vote of physician peers and several hundred candidates are nominated.

"This is a major honor for Dr. Rowe and the entire County of San Diego team," said HHSa Director Nick Macchione. "It's also a clear reflection of the great clinical work Dr. Rowe does each and every day for children in need of mental health services."

Rowe also currently serves as the president of the San Diego County Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

## HEALTH NEWS

### Immunizations VIDEO



HHSa's Intergenerational Games were featured in the July/August edition of UpdatePLUS, the national magazine published by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

### Did you ever want to know about the pitfalls of contracting?

Carrie Hoff, a Manager for HHSa's Purchasing and Contracting has published a "white paper" which addresses the three most common pitfalls of contracting published as part of San Diego State University's Project Management Certificate Program. You can read it by clicking here.