

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2007



HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Adoptions and News 8 Team Up

They Just Want a Family to Call Home

The headlines are touching and heart-wrenching:

- Family of Five is an Adopt 8 Success Story
- Brothers Brandon and Bailey in Search of a Family
- Local Brother and Sister Hope to Find a Permanent Family
- Man able to Share Love Through Adoption

There are dozens of similar stories on the Adopt 8 website, each a touching story about San Diego County children looking for a "forever family," or searches that have had a successful ending finding an adopted child a new family to call home.

Adopt 8 is a partnership between the Agency's Adoptions program and KFMB-TV channel 8. Each week News 8 anchor Kathleen Bade features children waiting for adoption or a success story that has matched a child to a new family. There's hardly a story that gets told that doesn't tug at your heart strings.

One recent summer day, Adoptions social workers brought a handful of children to a local park to film their stories for the Adopt 8 series. The stories are usually done at a local



News8 Anchor Kathleen Bade interviews 7-year-old Dejuan for his Adopt 8 story. park or similar location. Sometimes Adopt 8 calls in an assist from the Padres, Chargers or someone else the child considers special.

"We try to make the children feel good and feel special," said Bade. "We don't want them to feel like we are intruding on their privacy (by doing these stories)."

The first story being told that day was nine-year-old Alex. So far, she has been in 22 foster homes. "She really needs a good family and home," according to her current foster parent.

--continued on page 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

San Pasqual Academy Graduates 27 Seniors

Agency Celebrates Immunizations

Central Region FRC Makes a House Call



From the Director's Desk

Jean M. Shepard Agency Director

As you know, an Agency-wide Employee Satisfaction Committee was convened to address key issues that were raised in the employee satisfaction survey. Two issues which the group focused on were Human Resources practices and policies and communication between supervisors and subordinates. After much discussion, a number of specific recommendations came forward. I'm pleased that we've been able to implement several already.



One recommendation was to develop a training program so that employees could better understand the area of Human Resources. Working with the County Department of Human Resources, a course entitled "De-mystifying Human Resources" has been developed. It will be included in our Agency training calendar, and offered on a quarterly basis.

Another recommendation was to ensure that all supervisors and managers had the benefit of attending the three-day Interaction Management (IM) training. IM training assists in improving communications between employees at all levels. It consists of three workshops – Conflict Management, Essentials of Leadership and Coaching for Development. Training sessions have begun and will be offered over an 18-month period. We've already heard from one manager who was able to use the techniques learned in Conflict Management to turn a potentially difficult situation into one with a mutually satisfactory outcome! Managers and Supervisors are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible, as classes are expected to be full.

Thanks to all who were involved in the Employee Satisfaction Committee, and in developing these two programs.

Jean M. Shepard

Swing to the Big Band

It's time once again to swing to the classic melodies of "yesterday." So gather the family, put on your dancing shoes and join the fun at the 11th annual Big Band Bash by the Beach on Saturday, September 29 from 12-7 p.m. This year's concert features seven hours of continuous music from three bands on two stages at the Oceanside Pier Plaza Amphitheater. The \$5 ticket price includes the concert, a meal, and opportunity drawing.

This year's event is dedicated as a benefit concert for health and human service nonprofit organizations who serve residents in North County. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of County Supervisor **Bill Horn**, 100% of the ticket proceeds will go to the numerous participating community agencies who serve children and families.

Agency ticket sale proceeds will benefit Children In Need, Inc., a nonprofit charitable corporation organized by HHSA employees to provide financial support to assist disadvantaged children's participation in sports, arts and other enrichment activities. For ticket purchase, contact the North Coastal Regional Center (760-967-4500) or the North Inland Regional Center (760-740-4181).

For more information about the concert, please visit the Big Band Bash web page at: www.bigbandbash.org. For more information about Children In Need, please visit their website at: www.childreninneedsd.org.



Protective Services Supervisor **Jeanette Kutchins** dances with her partner Aaron at the 2006 Big Band Bash by the Beach.



Brittany B.

Andre H.

Veronica F.

Ashley S.

Tymbre B.

San Pasqual Academy Class of 2007

“Being Here is the Best Thing I Did for Myself”

Twenty-seven seniors proudly received their high school diplomas from San Pasqual Academy (SPA) on June 21st. The graduates shared their day with a gymnasium filled with family, friends, SPA staff and County officials.

Four of the graduating students were selected to speak on behalf of their fellow class members: Veronica F., Tymbre B., Andre H. and Ashley S. All four of them spoke about their time at the Academy and took the opportunity to thank the people who supported and encouraged them during high school. They also shared their plans for the future.

“For the past four years, all I wanted to do was leave,” said Tymbre. “Now that it is time to go, all I want to do is stay.

“Being here (at SPA) is the best thing I did for myself. The teachers don’t give up on us,” she added.

Tymbre mentioned the support she received from the school staff, as well as from the residential, work readiness and county social work staff. Their encouragement has helped her gain acceptance to California State University-Northridge.

The Academy has a tremendously successful track record of sending graduates on to higher education after they graduate. This year, 22 of the graduates will be attending four-year colleges, universities or community colleges, while the remaining graduates will either attend trade or technical school and work part-time, or enter the workforce directly.

Academy Artists Flourish

Students at San Pasqual Academy have been finding many outlets recently to display their artistic talents.

Grandma Jean, through the intergenerational mentoring program, San Pasqual Academy Neighbors, hosts weekly poetry slams in her home, providing a forum for students to gather and discuss published poetry, as well as to share their own creative work.

Grandma Jean teams up with Grandma Jane to teach craft classes and encourage students to display their artwork

on campus and in local art galleries. Several Academy students have had some major artistic accomplishments. Harold T. is having quite a bit of success as a budding playwright. He recently completed a playwriting residency taught by the Playwrights Project.

On June 20th, the residency culminated with professional actors reading excerpts from his play and those of others in the program. He has also written his first play in the Write On! Program and he was selected to be a member of the Step Up

Company, a teen acting group.

Current Academy students Stacey S. and Christina D., along with alumnus Michael M., submitted their original art for exhibit at the 6th Annual Children’s System of Care Conference Youth Art Show held on May 30th at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego.

Their art work, demonstrating the topic of “Trauma in Our World and in Our Lives,” was available for sale at \$25 each. All nine pieces submitted were sold!



All They Want is a Family to Call Home



Seven-year-old Dejuan climbs on top of the playground equipment after beating his social workers in a couple of foot races. Dejuan is looking for a "Forever Family," after seeing his siblings all get adopted.



News Channel 8's Kathleen Bade poses with Alex after they finished the interview for Alex's Adopt8 segment. Alex enjoyed the interview, "hamming" it up for the camera and telling Bade that her goal was to become a good person in life. Alex, at age 9, has been in 22 foster homes so far.

--Continued from Page One

"She does wonderful in school with reading and drawing, but finds math a little challenging.

"She's a very happy child who likes to draw a family, with a house and grass...she's a very loving child."

She's an exuberant child who has a lot of love to give. When Bade asked her if she wanted to say anything to a potential new family that might be watching, Alex said, "I'll always be there for them if they are sad."

Dejuan was the second child being highlighted that day. The darling seven-year-old is the child for October in this year's Adoptions calendar. It's also his second time being featured on Adopt 8.

It takes a lot to make Dejuan smile. He sat quietly playing his Gameboy for most of the interview. As much as Bade tried, his answers were quiet and he rarely made eye contact, although she did get him to tell her that he wanted to grow up and be Spiderman.

"He's sad," said his social worker **James Legant**. "His brothers and sisters have been adopted and moved away.

"He's a real sweet kid, but he understands his siblings have been adopted. He just wants a family he can call home."

Dejuan finally cracked a smile when **Anzette Shackelford**, Adoptions recruitment, and Largent challenged him to a foot race. Despite their best efforts, Dejuan won every race.

Trayvon is a teenager that loves to swim. "He's a sweet-natured, engaging teenager," said his social worker **Stephanie Gross**. "Once you meet him, you get wrapped up in his personality."

One thing you do not want to do, however, is challenge Trayvon to an eating contest. According to Gross, he's a good eater that can put away 4-by-4's from a popular fast food chain. Trayvon starts high school this fall and would like an active family that likes outdoor activities.

Since Adopt 8 began in 1999, more than 150 children have been matched with homes. For more information about local adoptions, contact San Diego County Adoptions at 1-877-I-ADOPT U (877-423-6788), or email info@iadoptu.org.

In Honor of Ziggy

For 35 years, Zigmund (Ziggy) Turoski worked as a physical therapist for the California Children Services (CCS) Medical Therapy Program. He passed away last year after several years of retirement.

In his memory, his daughter Patti Read, a special education teacher at Lindbergh Schweitzer Elementary School in Clairemont, collected contributions and donated

two beautiful outdoor tables to the San Diego North Medical Therapy Unit (MTU) located on the same campus.

On May 2nd, CCS held a dedication service in honor of Ziggy at the campus. Speeches about Ziggy's service to the County were followed by refreshments and a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new tables and benches.

Ziggy began working for CCS in the 1950s and retired in 1984. After the passing of his wife, Ziggy returned to his passion for helping disabled children by working for CCS again in 1987. He continued as a staff physical therapist for another five years where he met his second wife, another physical therapist working for the County.

The new tables are located outside the San Diego North Medical Therapy Unit where children and therapists enjoy the garden and the California sun.



The outdoor tables donated by Ziggy Turoski's daughter will provide a nice outdoor spot for staff and visitors.

Helping Youth Find a HOME

Each year, more than 200 youth exit the dependency system in San Diego County. Some youth experience difficulty establishing and maintaining stable housing and employment. To assist former foster youth with housing, the Agency's Child Welfare Services (CWS) has partnered with Housing and Community Development (HCD) to create the HOME Emancipated Foster Youth Housing Program.

The HOME Program provides housing assistance and case management services for 24 months, promoting stability, responsibility and long-term employability. The program also seeks to help youth establish positive rental credit histories while they are working towards self-sufficiency through continued education and/or work experience. Participants pay approximately 30 percent of their income towards their rent, while HCD pays the balance.

There are currently 62 youth actively participating in the HOME program. For further information, please contact Dianna Hildreth at (619) 767-5459.

Youth who have previously completed the HOME program have shared the following comments:

"I was able to learn how to become independent. It also established some credit for future renting."

"I was able to start off on my own and I was able to save money and buy a car."

"It was a blessing! I don't know where I would have gone to live with the money I made."

"It helped me to be able to save money. It made me feel safe and independent."

Compliance Office:
(619) 515-4244

Toll-free Compliance Hotline:
(866) 549-0004

An ethical workplace is your right...
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HSA connection



Families Receive Heroes Medals

Foster Care, Adoptions Heroes Honored at the Fair



This year's San Diego County Fair was a Salute to Heroes, and the Agency's Child Welfare Services took the opportunity to honor foster and adoptive parents - true, everyday heroes.

During this year's fair season, CWS created a special exhibit to honor adoptive and foster families. A display in the Heroes building showed an ongoing video display of successful adoptive stories. Fair goers had the opportunity to collect information on adoption and foster care.

The Adoptions and Foster Care program also had their annual booth on Fairway west to provide personalized attention to interested families.

The Adoptions and Foster Care program also had their annual booth on Fairway west to provide personalized attention to interested families.

On June 21, The San Diego County Fair celebrated the heroic work of foster and adoptive parents. Each honored family was given free admission and parking to the fair.

Adoptive families took the stage in the Heroes building to share the joys of adoptive parenting. A short video highlighted children awaiting an adoptive home. The foster family community was also honored in a similar celebration. Foster parents shared their stories and answered questions from the audience.

The celebration continued as adoptive parents and children were recognized as heroes. Families were called up to the O'Brien stage and presented with Hero medals.

How can you be a hero? Contact Adoptions recruiter, **Donna Boissiere** at 858-964-5332 to learn how you can help promote adoption awareness in your community organizations or place of worship.



Several of the Agency's foster and adoptive families were honored as heroes at the 2007 San Diego County Fair.

PA/PG Auctions

PA/PG Auctions are held the third Saturday of every other month at 5201 Ruffin Road in Kearny Mesa (Sept. 15th is the next auction). Registration and viewing of items begin at 8:00 a.m. Vehicles will be auctioned at 8:30 a.m. and all other items will follow. Customers are required to pay for and pick up the auction property by 2:00 p.m. that day. Items available for sale at this live auction include vehicles, furniture, appliances, electronics, household items, jewelry, artwork, antiques, coins, collectibles and much more.

Agency Celebrates Immunizations

The Agency celebrated National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) and Toddler Immunization Month (TIM) earlier this year with a well-attended press conference and mini-health fair. Now, Immunizations is busy with the rush of back-to-school immunization season.

NIIW and TIM are held annually to help raise awareness of the importance of childhood immunizations in protecting children's health. This year's theme is "Up to Date? Celebrate!" and is geared to encourage parents to check that their babies have had the full series of recommended childhood immunizations.

A press conference and mini-health fair was held on Thursday, April 26 at the City Heights Wellness Center in San Diego to celebrate kids who are up to date on their immunizations and highlight the role of WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program staff in assessing their clients' kids' immunization records. **Adrienne Collins Yancey**, Agency Immunization Branch Chief; Dr.



Everyone enjoyed the mini-health fair.

Start program also participated in the mini-health fair.

Representatives from La Maestra, WIC, the County's Central Region Public Health Center, Immunization Branch and Share the Care programs conducted activities for the children attending the fair designed to teach them the importance of immunizations, handwashing, dental care and other health topics. Izzy the Bear and the Share the Care Tooth Fairy also made an appearance and took pictures with the kids.

For more information about immunizations and the diseases they prevent, please visit the immunizations website: www.sdiz.org.



Dr. **Wilma Wooten**, County Public Health Officer, thanked the event participants and all Immunization Initiative partners for their efforts to promote and deliver immunizations. She also reminded everyone that anyone who provides care for babies (parents, older siblings, grandparents and babysitters) need to be up to date on their immunizations, too.

Wilma Wooten, County Public Health Officer; and Carole McCrary, Scripps Mercy Hospital WIC Program Manager spoke at the press conference about the importance of immunizations and highlighted WIC's efforts to review clients' children's records.

WIC families were honored and presented with certificates during the press conference for keeping their children up to date on their immunizations.

The WIC families and dozens of children from the Neighborhood House Association's Urban Village II Head



The Share the Care Tooth Fairy and Izzy Bear the Immunizations mascot posed for photos with the Scripps Mercy Hospital WIC program families.

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 August theme is "Heat Wave," protecting yourself from overexposure to high temps.

The County's emergency page will provide valuable information in the event of a disaster.



Nurses Visit Local Adult Day Care

Central Region PHS Makes a House Call

One sunny morning, clinic staff at Central Region Public Health Center (CRPHC) found their lobby suddenly abuzz with the sound of many foreign voices. Coming out to check on the noise, clinic nurses found the lobby overflowing with elderly people. Some of them had walkers or canes, and a couple of ladies were pushing others in wheelchairs, but all were chatting happily and gazing about the clinic as if on a field trip. A quick peek to the parking lot outside confirmed there were two vans, one of which was unloading even more people.



Pauline Tulppo, CRPHC LVN, reads a TB skin test for a guest of Golden Life Adult Day Health Care.

Finding none of the group spoke English, it was a relief when their driver, Dimitri, came in. He explained that these were fifteen patrons from the Golden Life Adult Day Health Care center who spoke Russian. They were at the PHC because they all needed TB skin tests that day.

As staff assisted the new patients with paperwork and registration, it quickly became apparent it would be easier on everyone if the clinic went to the care center for the TB skin test readings. Dimitri relayed this suggestion to his director who readily agreed. Two days later CRPHC clinic staff hit the road and made the journey to the care center.



Pauline Tulppo, LVN, and **Josie Dar**, RN read a TBST at Golden Life Adult Day Health Care.

At the care center, results were read for the TB skin tests given earlier, and clients who had not yet been given TB skin tests had them taken. Arrangements were made for those who had positive readings to get X-Rays. All CRPHC clinic staff agree - we made new friends that day. Staff who made this possible were **Denise Thompson**, PHN IV, **Josie Dar**, RN, **Cora Dotimas**, LVN, **Pauline Tulppo**, LVN and **Lupita Juleen**, NA.

Save the Date: AIDS Walk September 30th

Come out to Balboa Park and enjoy the sunshine on Sunday, September 30th to cheer on Team County of San Diego for [AIDS Walk 2007](#).

Established in 1989, AIDS Walk San Diego is San Diego's largest one-day HIV/AIDS fundraiser and the biggest non-governmental financial provider for HIV/AIDS in San Diego 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 the Agency'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.

For more information on how you can participate or support the walk, please contact the County's Team Leader, **Shannon Hansen** at 619-293-4719, shannon.hansen@sdcounty.ca.gov or visit www.aidswalksd.org.



Charger Role Model Gives Waiting Children a Day to Remember

Challenging childhood experiences can become positive life experiences. Shawne Merriman of the San Diego Chargers is a living example of how a difficult childhood experience can fuel you to become a successful adult.

As a child, Merriman was often homeless and lived in shelters. He used this experience to motivate his support of his Lights On Foundation. In conjunction with the Salvation Army and Alpha Project for the Homeless, the Lights On Foundation sponsored a free football clinic for children on June 29.

Several Charger players and coaches were on hand to spend time with the children, who were invited by the Salvation Army. Ten lucky children in the Adoptions Program were invited to attend, and spend the day practicing football drills with Charger football players and staff.

The children did group drills and had a pep talk from Merriman. One lucky young man, Jacob, a child waiting for an adoptive placement, played catch with Shawne and was given an autographed football.

After an exciting morning of football drills, all children were given lunch and goodie bags to remember their special day. At the event closing, the children met legendary rapper DMC who is an adult adoptee and interested in promoting adoption awareness.

Keep your eye out for future collaborations with San Diego County Adoptions and the San Diego Chargers!

Employee Spotlight

He Has Influence

John Rasmussen De-mystifies Contracts

When staff in Public Health Services need help with contracts, **John Rasmussen** is their knight in shining armor.



Rasmussen, a contract administrator in PHS Administration, provides technical assistance and guidance for staffers who are managing contracts.

“Some branches in PHS have no analysts, but they have to do requests for proposals to provide services to the community,” he says.

Along with **Elena Pascual**, his supervisor, Rasmussen reviews documents for accuracy and holds monthly meetings with PHS staff to share information and help those managing contracts improve their skills.

“I like that I’m influencing services for the community and making (those services) more efficient and effective,” says Rasmussen, who has worked for the County for nearly six years.

Serenaded by the CAO



County Chief Administrative Officer **Walt Ekard** stopped by the Agency Contract Support (ACS) Office to deliver a pie and serenade the staff after ACS’ **Tony Potter** won Ekard’s recent trivia contest in the County News.



Kudos!



North Regions: Mission Valley FRC

"The YMCA would like to extend it's gratitude for your continued support. Your contribution helps us stretch our resources, thereby providing a new ray of hope to women, children and families who are receiving services in our emergency confidential shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children. Thank you for these wonderful gifts."

-MCA Executive Director Judy Case

North Coastal FRC: Mary Ritter

Supervising Human Services Specialist **Mary ("Mikee") Ritter** received a call from a client's representative who thanked her for her help. "She was grateful that (Ritter) met with her to get the case active again. The client can now have a life-saving operation."

Adoptions: Charlene Campbell, Jennifer Savay, Joe West and Sarah Lavia

"I am writing to express my sincere appreciation to your staff for facilitating the adoption of my son Devin. I have had an overwhelmingly positive experience and a smooth process for this adoption. The system worked for us. I am grateful.

Thank you for the work you and your staff do on behalf of children and families in San Diego. I hope that you will celebrate the adoption of Devin and know that what you do makes a big difference."

-Dart S. Rhoades

Public Health: Shahla Abtahi-Sepah

"I'm writing to express my appreciation for the extraordinary professionalism and expertise that has been demonstrated by **Shahla Abtahi-Sepah**, a Public Health Nurse who has been working with me at Garfield Elementary. The services Shahla has provided the teachers and support staff at Garfield is an exemplary example of interagency communication and support."

Public Health: Health Statistics Unit

"Mona, I wanted to thank your department for recently supplying us with asthma data for National City. Your ability to provide data at the local level made our case statement for needing a program in National City strong.

The Health Statistics Unit staff was very responsive to our requests, giving us quick replies as we approached the grant deadline. And as always, your ability to interpret what we want, even when we may not be clear, is helpful. This is one unit where customer service and community support shine."

-Lorna Hardin, MPH CHES

American Lung Association of California

Adoptions: Linda Johanesen

Adoptions received a letter from new adoptive parents praising the work of **Linda Johanesen**. "...none of this would have been possible without the hard work and determination of our Social Worker, Linda Johanesen. During the course of our adoption, Linda was the cornerstone...and rose to the occasion on ALL items.

As she would no doubt attest, this adoption required a great deal of work between additional organizations and she had to "adorn more than one hat." We owe her a great deal and respect her as a professional and a fantastic example of child advocacy.

We owe this opportunity to the efforts of people like Linda Johanesen. If this is the level of professionalism that your organization represents, than it is a very fine thing indeed!"

Financial and Support Services

"Thank you and your department for assisting the San Diego REACH program with our recent move.

Alan Makinson and **Rob Fritchman** stepped in and coordinated the move...our experience with your staff was nothing short of excellent, supportive and efficient.

I would like to recognize Rob Fritchman in particular who had many demands and deadlines placed upon him. He was always professional, willing to help and did not act put out although he could have easily done so given the scope and complexity of the move.

There were a number of others who were helpful and worked behind the scenes: **Phyllis Bech, Joe Coyne, John Clement and Victor Malof**.

- Gary F. Hubbard, MFT

Regional Administrator

San Diego Community Programs



Cesar Smiles Again

Adoptions, Padres and News 8 Team Up

Prior to the generosity of News 8's Kathleen Bade and the San Diego Padres, 10-year-old Cesar's smile had not been seen for a long time.

Cesar and his five-year-old sister, Star, have been living in foster care for over three years. Cesar and Star are waiting and hoping for an adoptive family.

After News 8 Anchor Kathleen Bade caught a glimpse of Cesar's sorrow while filming him for San Diego County's "Adopt 8" Program, she decided that she was going to help him find that missing smile.

Since Cesar lives and breathes baseball, Kathleen knew that the San Diego Padres could help Cesar find his grin again. The Padres game with the Chicago Cubs on May 24th at Petco Park was the day that Cesar had his dreams come true, and his smile restored.

Cesar's glee began to emerge when Padres Community Relations Manager, Nhu Tran greeted him with the news that he was a "Very Important Padre" for the day.

Cesar's personal escort for the afternoon was his hero, Brian Giles. Brian took Cesar under his wing and made sure that he got to meet all of his favorites on the team. Cesar even got to practice batting with his idols, tour their locker room, and watch the game from some pretty amazing seats - Trevor Hoffman's dugout seats!

Neighborhoods4Kids Helps Foster Kids Graduate

One of East Region's service integration goals is to continue to increase high school completion rates for foster youth in East County. To achieve that goal, Neighborhoods for Kids (N4K) East County is committed to keeping children in their current schools, among friends and teachers, and in familiar surroundings so that children can achieve success.

N4K identified the need for an education liaison; a role focused on assisting students, parents, social workers and other caring adults to resolve issues that may affect foster youth's educational stability and success. In addition, each local school district has a Foster Care Liaison who is charged with assisting foster families and kids in care with their educational issues. By working together, we have seen remarkable results. N4K had 29 students enter the 12th grade this past year and 27 of them graduated, earned their GED, or received a Certificate of Completion.

There are several success stories: Geraldine, Jonathan and Lakishia are off to a university; Celestina, Christopher, Jacob, Paul, Rebecca, Syrenthia, and Yared will be attending community colleges. Christina and Tiffany are attending vocational colleges and Gina is at Job Corps. Many of our other grads have decided to go to work. Each of these students worked hard to achieve their success in school. Each was supported by caring adults who regularly checked on their academic progress and connected with them in encouraging ways.

Foster care alumni consistently report that supportive and caring foster parents, relatives, and kinship care providers can be credited with helping them complete high school. Social workers who do "whatever it takes" to keep kids in their neighborhood schools also contribute to positive educational outcomes.

To continue to improve outcomes for kids, the East Region support system must build on significant adults providing significant support to produce significant results.

This academic year, five mentors have been cleared, trained and eager to work with foster teens on the high school campuses of Santana, Chaparral, Granite Hills, Steele Canyon and Grossmont.



Miwa Pumpelly, second from the right, with her husband Miguel, her daughter, a family friend and the San Diego Padres' Swingin' Friar just moments after Miwa was designated the 10 millionth Padres fan at Petco Park.

Miwa Pumpelly

Agency Employee is Padres 10 Millionth Fan

Miwa Pumpelly, Admin. Analyst III, was honored as the San Diego Padres' 10 millionth fan at Petco Park recently. Pumpelly entered the park and was showered with confetti. She received four front-row seats to the game, a Padres gift bag and team merchandise.

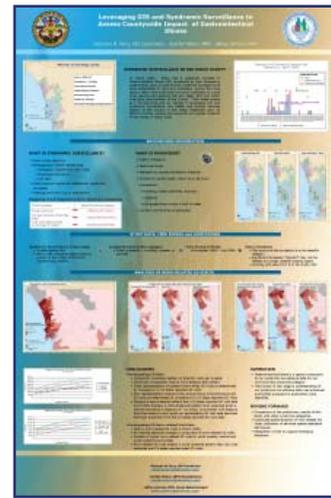
"We go to Padres games maybe once a month or so," said Pumpelly. "We went to that particular game because the San Diego chicken was going to be there and we love to see him, especially my daughter.

"They had a nice restaurant at the park that I never knew about before and as part of our prize we got to eat there for free," she added.

"We also had servers bring us food and drinks all night to our seats (also free) so the kids had all the ice cream, hot dogs, popcorn and pizza they could handle. It was so much fun - stuff like this never happens to us so it was all very surreal."

Agency Trio Win Award

Adrienne Perry, GIS Coordinator; **Jennifer Nelson**, MPH, Biostatistician; and Senior Epidemiologist **Jeffrey Johnson**, MPH, won the Most Analytical Award from the Environmental Systems Research Institute San Diego Showcase recently. They were honored for their map "Leveraging GIS and Syndromic Surveillance to Assess Countywide Impact of Gastrointestinal Illness."



The San Diego Showcase includes submissions from San Diego gov't groups, universities and consulting firms.

Award-winning map

Edgemoor Enjoys a Luau



From left: Edgemoor Acting Director of Nursing Nancy Beecham; East Region Deputy Director Pam Smith; Edgemoor Licensed Nurse of the year, Grace Ezekafor; and District 2 County Supervisor Dianne Jacob enjoy the Edgemoor summer party for staff and residents, which had a Hawaiian luau theme this year.

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with

HHSA Director
Jean M. Shepard

Director of Operations
Paula Landau-Cox

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



Agency Director Jean M. Shepard speaks at an event officially launching a new website (www.fosteringchange.org), designed with input from foster kids, for the Independent Living Skills program.

ILS Unveils New Website

Recently, a new website was launched designed for current foster youth getting ready to live an independent life and for former foster youth looking for resources, support and information. The **Fostering Change** website was reviewed and shaped with input from former foster youth. "It makes sense that former foster youth should have a hand in developing this new site," said **Greg Cox**, San Diego County Supervisor, District 1. "They know the unique challenges that exist. This site puts them in a better position to become independent and live successful lives."

For former foster youth, who have already experienced a lifetime of challenges, the Fostering Change website provides a one-stop shop of resources and support. Information includes employment, housing, money matters, schools and scholarships, staying healthy, staying safe and more. It also includes a calendar of events and links to other helpful sites. Former foster youth Sophia Herman said, "The webpage has an abundant amount of information with beneficial resources and accurate descriptions. This site will definitely be a helping hand to our youth outside the hours of 9 to 5."

The Fostering Change website is a work in progress. Currently, an incentive program to attract visitors to the site and solicit their feedback is underway. Don't hesitate - log on and give us your input!

Compliance Bulletin #13

Reporting Compliance Concerns

As public employees, all Agency staff have a duty to safeguard the taxpayers money coming from local, State and federal sources. In fact, Agency Policy M-3.2, "Responsibility for Reporting Compliance Issues," requires employees to report "in good faith" if they believe there has been an actual or potential violation of law, regulation, Agency policy and procedure or Agency Code of Conduct and Statement of Incompatible Activities.

How do you report an issue?

- Talk to your supervisor, manager, or other management staff in your Division, program or Region. The easiest way to resolve concerns is at the lowest level possible.
- Call the **Compliance Office** at (619) 515.4244.
- E-mail: compliance.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov.
- Mail a written concern to the office at Mailstop P501, Attention: Compliance Officer.
- Call the toll-free hotline at (866) 549-0004.

When reporting a compliance concern, you may remain anonymous if you wish. Agency policy, as well as federal and State law, prohibit retaliating against employees who report compliance concerns.

The Agency's best defense against fraud, waste and abuse is the honesty and integrity of its employees.

ORD Distributes \$24.2 Million

The Office of Resource Development had another very busy year! They distributed 1,733 various federal, state and private foundation notices of upcoming grants. Participants received 134 associated awards totaling \$24.2 million for community projects! The Annual Report is available [online](#).



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Trykes for Little Tykes

July 14th was a very special day in young Caeley Talcup's life. This was the day when more than fifteen California Children Services (CCS) occupational and physical therapists volunteered their time to help fit and distribute some very special tricycles to disabled children, including Caeley. CCS therapists joined forces with therapists from Rady Children's Hospital and the AMBUCS team in an inspiring collaborative effort benefiting many physically challenged children in San Diego County.

This year's annual bike rodeo was held at the Westin Hotel in downtown San Diego, where 50 children from the San Diego area were fitted for the free donated bikes. "These trykes are an excellent way to promote fitness and the health and well-being of our physically challenged children who sometimes have difficulty finding physical activities they can participate in," said **Beverly Knauer**, Chief Therapist for CCS. "But the great thing is, the kids don't care if it is healthy, they just know it is so much fun to ride bikes along with their siblings and peers." Some parents have reported that they can't get their children off the bikes once they have been fitted and ride for the first time.

AmTrykes® are unique tricycles that are driven by hand, foot, or both, and are designed to give physically challenged children the pleasure of riding their first bike! The event was hosted by AMBUCS, Inc., a national service organization dedicated to creating mobility and independence for people with disabilities.



Above, CCS Occupational Therapist **Mark Alonzo** and client **Julian Pascual** try out her new set of wheels. To the right, CCS Physical Therapist **Rachael Gladue** and client **Caeley Stalcup** on her new AmTryke.®



Agency Public Health Centers Recognized for Immunizations

Representatives from the Agency's Public Health Centers (PHCs) and other public and private clinics all over the County received awards for their clinics' immunization achievements on July 25th at the San Diego County Immunization Initiative Advisory Council meeting.

"Every day, the staff at these clinics show their commitment to protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases, and these awards are recognition of that commitment," said Dr. **Wilma Wooten**, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "To the staff, I want to say thank you for all of your hard work."

The awards recognized a number of immunization accomplishments. For instance, all six of the Agency PHCs, a number of their satellite immunization clinics and the VIP Trailer immunization clinic received awards for sustaining an 80% or better immunization rate among their clients for the past 5 years. Some of those same clinics also garnered awards for achieving a 90% or higher coverage rate in 2007.

For a complete list of all of the clinics, both public and private, which have been recognized for their immunization achievements, please visit www.sdiz.org.

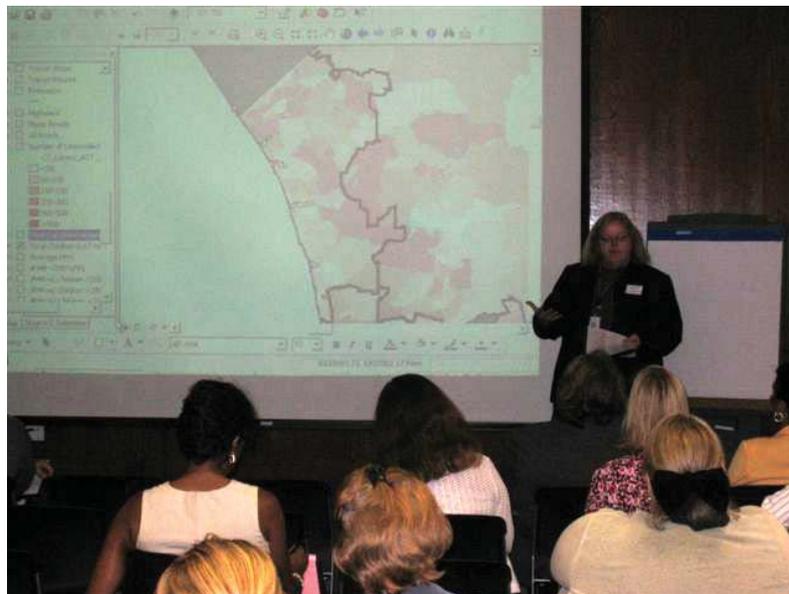
This website also contains a wealth of information about immunizations and the diseases they protect against.

North Regions, CHIP Partner Up to Host Children's Access to Care Forums

HHSA, in collaboration with the Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), hosted six regional Children's Access to Care Forums to identify ways to reduce the number of uninsured children in our county.

Held during July and August, these important forums provided HHSA with an opportunity to present its first Children's Healthcare Coverage Gap Analysis. This innovative analysis identified potential geographic opportunities for enrollment of income eligible uninsured children. Attendees were encouraged to work cooperatively to develop region-specific strategies and action plans to improve outreach, enrollment, retention, and utilization in identified target communities.

Participants represented a diverse network of health care professionals, including children's healthcare providers, community-based organizations and other key stakeholders working to improve children's access to care. The potential actions discussed in each regional forum will be incorporated into a comprehensive set of recommendations included in a "Next Steps" Policy Recommendation Report being prepared by CHIP and set for release in mid to late November.



Leslie Ray, Senior Epidemiologist, makes a presentation during one of the regional forums.

By the Numbers

In the 2005 California Health Interview Survey, the number of San Diego County residents who reported having prescription drug coverage was 92%.¹

Forty five percent of the United States population received at least one prescription drug in the past month while eighteen percent received three or more prescription drugs in the past month.²

¹California Health Interview Survey, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2005.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1999-2002.

To request additional health statistics describing health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, health trends and comparisons to national targets, please call the County's Community Health Statistics Unit at (619) 285-6479. To access the latest data and data links, including the Regional Community Profiles document, go to www.sdhealthstatistics.com.

Agency In the News

June 15 - August 15

TV Stories

47

Radio Stories

13

Print Stories

30

Press Events

Get Off Meth
Heat Danger
Chili Recall

connection spotlight: east region

Community Team Tailors Its Message

For the East Region Community Team, it's all about the ABC's – as in Adaptability, Breaking down information and Community.

The Community Team is charged with taking the mission of the Agency and priorities of the East Region and breaking it down to best serve the unique communities of the region.

“We have our (East Region) health priorities in wellness (dental, obesity/diabetes, respiratory illness) and safety (motor vehicle, unintentional injury),” said Amy Menolez, Community Team Manager. “But we often have to tailor those for urban and rural areas.

The East Region is home to the largely urban eastern suburbs of San Diego stretching to the unincorporated areas that border Imperial County, some 60-odd miles from San Diego.

But the breakdown doesn't stop with the variety of communities they serve. East Region has developed an approach that allows them to individualize programs right down to a neighborhood within a community.

“We are working on getting our community-level data and then narrowing down



The East Region Community Team: Amy Menolez, Felicia Baxter and Katie Judd.

the priorities and breaking down the data,” said Menolez. “We have a real concrete focus and using community-level data helps us measure outcomes and strategically target our interventions on certain communities and age groups, etc.”

The team, comprised of Menolez, Health Promotion Specialist Katie Judd and Administrative Analyst II Felicia Baxter (a second Health Promotion Specialist position

is currently open), has spent several years building relationships in their communities. That work should pay off as the East Region counts on those types of relationships in a huge effort to work with cities and neighborhoods on community design.

“We just really see us focusing on environmental changes,” said Menolez. “We're getting out of our comfort zone as health promotion people – getting out of the one-on-one re-

lationships to make change and making new partners with engineers and planning staff.

“We're just embarking on that and meeting with local cities and unincorporated folks, (asking) ‘What's going on in their communities and how can the Agency work with them and fit into what they are doing?’”

For some of the older, more established communities, some of these changes may not come about easily. Many would have to be retrofit into long-established infrastructure. Newer communities, and especially those still being designed and proposed, are much easier to influence with healthy design concepts.

“I keep using the word umbrella,” said Menolez. “It covers everything from trees to what types of businesses are easily accessible.”

Another big part of the community design model is making sure there are plenty of walking and biking trails and other health-inducing recreational activities. That nicely dovetails with one of the County's big objectives: reducing childhood obesity.

The goal, after all, is healthier communities. Starting with the basics – the ABC's, if you will – will help ensure the East Region and its Community Team successfully reach that goal.

East Region: The Power of Storytelling

By Pam Smith

Agency Deputy Director, East Region



East Region is on a journey to share our stories of great public service. The power of story telling allows others to connect with the work that County employees perform every day and gives meaning to our performance measures.

We use storytelling as a tool to capture the hearts and minds of employees and community partners. At unit meetings, all staff meetings and community forums, East Region employees share stories of great customer service, collaborative approaches, successful results and innovative practices which inspire and unify teams and communities.

We have found that stories also deepen your network; people want to become a part of what you are doing. These unique stories also allow staff to generate a personal connection to their work that positively and personally impacts their commitment to improve the lives of East Region residents by doing what they do best: great public service.

East Child Care: Meeting Goals for the Community

Throughout every program implementation and each interaction with county residents, HHSA's East Region has one theme in mind: Community. Remembering who they are trying to help is what guides them in everything they do.

The Child Care Section is no exception. There are many low-income families in East communities who need assistance in order for them to work toward self-sufficiency. The County of San Diego's Welfare-to-Work program has been successful in providing this much-needed aid.

The Child Care section makes child care assistance available to these families

as well as families with foster children as they transition from welfare to work. This program is funded by the State of California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services.

“We work a lot with our community partners... our staff works with both partners and providers to make sure we are delivering for the children,” explains Barbara Jimenez, Manager of East Region's Child Care Section.

The Child Care Section actually provides administrative services agency-wide. “We have staff in nine locations and we are in all regions. A little more than half our staff is located in Lemon Grove,” she

adds. “Our supervisory staff is stellar. Some have to drive from location to location, but they keep our staff engaged.”

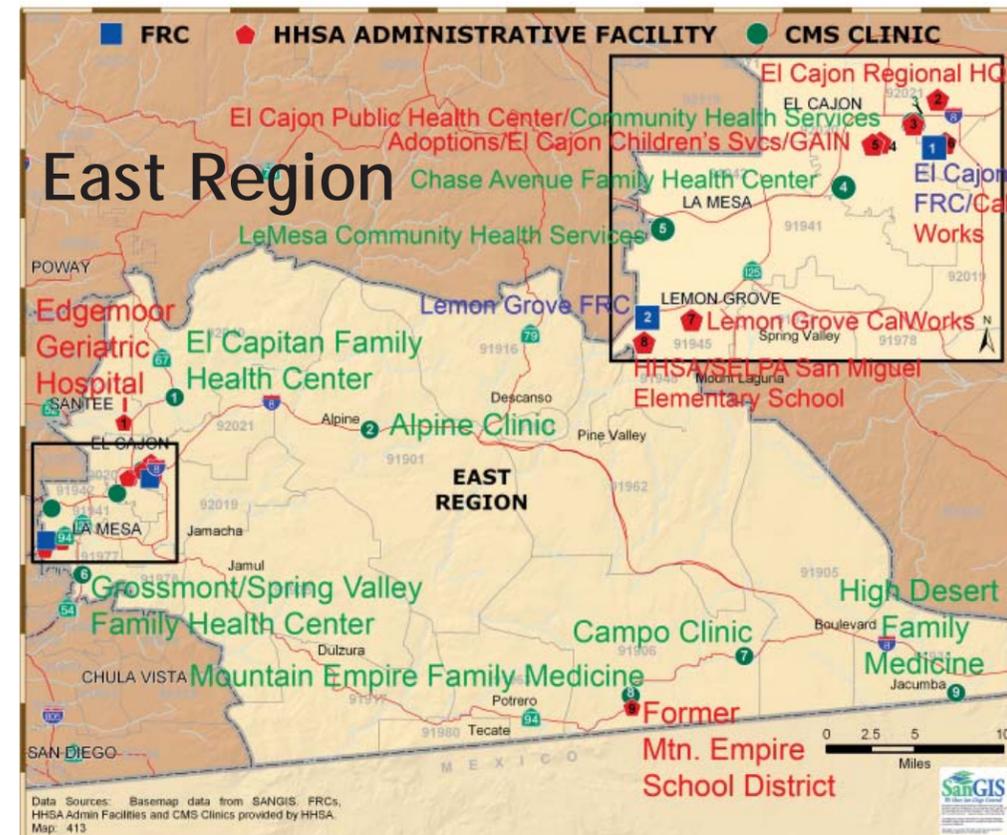
Another challenge is that the program itself and its administration are unique - they administer stage one child care as well as three contracts to provide stage two and three child care. The Child Care staff has the responsibility of making sure the agency and its programs meet the requirements necessary to obtain grant monies. Even with all of this on their plate, they have a great track record of meeting goals.

“Our FY06-07 Quality First goal is to ensure timeliness of payments within ten days,” notes

Jimenez. “For stage one it was 100 percent, and that was with 70,746 payments, worth over \$33 million, so that's phenomenal.”

When you combine stage one and stage two, timely payments were made 99.83 percent of the time. “The staff is awesome,” exclaims Jimenez, and want to ensure our families get the services they need.”

Our staff are dedicated and engaged, while maintaining a sense of team with staff in nine locations,” said Jimenez. “That presents challenges but the exceptional child care leadership team makes it work.”



Nurse Family Partnership Changes Lives

It's a well-established fact that the first few years of a person's life are important formative years that are key to a foundation for a successful life. Sometimes, the odds are stacked against you in those early years, due to circumstances that are obviously beyond your control at that age.

That's where the East Region's Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) tries to make a difference. The NFP is an evidence-based prevention program for first-time pregnant mothers that work with them from pregnancy until the child's second birthday.

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) provide home visits for these moms where they deliver important health-related information to the new mothers-to-be. The PHNs will sit down with them and discuss what will happen between then and the birth of their child – the pregnancy, prenatal care, labor and delivery.

They also provide them vital information for after the baby is born. Topics include immunization, safety, domestic violence and nutrition. "These mothers learn life skills they can use for the rest of their lives," said Martha Bartzen, Public Health Nurse Manager.

The successes of the NFP are many. Immunization rates are 97 to 100 percent; there is a decrease in emergency room visits for non-emergencies; and a decrease in smoking.

It's not just health care habits that change. "Many of these women learn the value of education and complete high school and continue to college," said Bartzen.

One NFP success story that follows that path is Cynthia W. and her daughter IEsther. They worked with RN Terry Akens during their time in the NFP program.

Cynthia is currently working as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)/home health aide and is continuing her education at Grossmont Community College to become an RN.



Cynthia and IEsther with Public Health Nurse Terry Akens on graduation day.

Cynthia and IEsther live with members of her extended family. They assist in the care of IEsther, who also attends preschool through the Chicano Federation, while her mom attends school and works.

"Cynthia has worked as a CNA for several years and is an extremely compassionate and fun-loving woman," said Akens. "She will be a powerful asset to the nursing profession.

"I feel very honored and blessed to have played a small part with assisting this lady and her daughter for the past two-and-a-half years, allowing me to come into her home and 'play with her daughter.'" Akens is proud of all that Cynthia has accomplished through the NFP and feels she will do very well as a mother and Registered Nurse.

A family graduates from the NFP program when the child is two years old. The program holds a graduation ceremony to celebrate their accomplishment of staying with the program this length of time and learning life skills they will carry forever.

"Long-term studies have shown the success that continues when these clients were contacted 15 years later," according to Bartzen.

Neighborhoods for Kids an East Region Cornerstone

With the communities of the East Region struggling in the aftermath of school shootings in 2001, the Agency staff in the region had to formulate a plan how to respond to the events and utilize the resources of the Agency to best serve the community in its time of need.

"We were a community in crisis," said Sharon Mann, Protective Services Supervisor in the East Region's Child Welfare Services Placement Unit. "The schools staff were reaching out – 'What can we do?'"

"(The Agency) helped set up resource centers in the schools," said Mann. "We (the schools and the Agency) got to know each other and work together very successfully."

In the course of developing those plans, the East Region's very successful Neighborhood for Kids (N4K) had its beginnings, although the actual program didn't get fully off the ground until 2004.

The early architects of N4K were Pam Smith, East Region Deputy Director; Rhonna Burrelle, East Region Assistant Deputy Director; and Renee Smiley, Child Welfare Services Policy and Program Support. The meetings expanded to include much of the East Region staff.

A Focus on Customer Service that Shows

"We get reminded about great public service," said Sylvia Melena, HHS Administrative III from the Lemon Grove Family Resource Center (FRC).

"Everything is about serving the public – we focus on great customer service."

And the East Region has a lot of "customers." The El Cajon FRC averages nearly 800 brand-new Medi-Cal applicants monthly. It also sees nearly 350 CalWORKs intakes. Together, those two programs mean over 12,000 cases are being managed by the 90 caseworkers in the El Cajon FRC.

"The program really came from the staff-level up and the staff developed the steps," Mann said.

One of the key changes to how services were being offered was to change the actual delivery system. "Staff used to go to many different schools a day," said Mann. "That all changed. We organized staff in smaller geographic areas or clusters. Now the staff service schools in the same areas and develop relationships. It's all about getting to know everyone."

With that change made, the East Region took a look at what the end result was for the child. "When a kid was removed, you never knew where they would end up," said Mann. "Would a child from Lemon Grove end up in Chula Vista? Perhaps Vista?"

The focus of N4K is to keep kids in their own neighborhoods, where people and places are familiar to them. "We have been very successful in keeping East Region kids in the East Region," said Mann. "However, our current goal is keeping them in their own school – not just in East Region. This is a lofty goal."

So far, over 90 percent of the kids in

out-of-home placement will stay in the East Region. Mann says a story about "Mary," a 16-year-old, highlights what N4K has been able to accomplish.

It became necessary to remove "Mary" from her mother's home and there was no chance at reunification. It is difficult to find foster homes willing to take older teenagers, but Agency staff was able to locate a home for "Mary" so she wouldn't have to change schools.

"Mary," despite all the turmoil in her life, was a straight "A" student and involved in several clubs and extra-curricular activities.

"We wanted to make sure 'Mary' was able to stay at Grossmont High," said Mann. The Agency's social workers worked together to find a way to make this happen.

"'Mary' was working at a day care facility at a church in East County," according to Mann. "We contacted the church and they put us in touch with someone who knew 'Mary' through the day care center. 'Mary' was able to be placed in their home and she will be able to continue at Grossmont, increasing her chances of successfully completing high school."

The East Region staff's hard work, in putting in the extra effort of contacting the church and working with them, paid off with Mary's new foster family. "If this happened four years ago, she would have had to leave Grossmont because there were no appropriate foster homes in that area. This would have had a great impact on her to leave her friends and her school where she had been so successful," said Mann.

The N4K approach has also resulted in a high level of job satisfaction. "I feel our workers are passionate about this," said Mann. "It's part of our mantra. At the beginning, some were skeptical, but now we have 100 percent buy-in."

"People who come (to work) here are excited and they see the benefits to going the extra mile. They feel good about the connections they've made in the community."

Neighborhoods For Kids vision is that all East County children are surrounded by familiar people and places that encourage them to thrive. Standing by the motto: What ever it takes, until it takes - one kid at a time.

ing on obesity prevention and working with local schools, including Grossmont Union High School District, which is comprised of several East County high schools.

They also participated in the Convoy of Hope. "The Convoy of Hope came out to the community and we had two East Region representatives that shared information about the services available at our two Family Resource Centers," said Melena.

One of the East Region's eligibility managers also participates in the Access to Care Team. "There are many collaborative we're engaged in," Melena said.

The East Region's commitment to customer service is also seen in their everyday work. They have an outstanding record for timely processing. For example, in the Lemon Grove FRC, they have an 85 percent rate for Medi-Cal and 93 percent for CalWORKs for processing within the requirement of 45 days.

When you add it all together, the Agency employees in the East Region work cooperatively and provide timely and efficient customer service to a great number of County residents.