

HHSA Connection

JUNE 2008 A Monthly Newsletter for the Employees of San Diego County Health & Human Services Agency

From the Director's Desk

Jean M. Shepard, HHSA Director

As you know, this is my last column as HHSA Director. I am retiring from County service June 5th. It's been an incredible career, and I'm so proud of all that we've accomplished together.



When I look back at the County when I first began, and the County today, it is like night and day. We have come so far!

I've had the opportunity to work with some great bosses, and many very talented staff. I've learned so much from all of you.

Nick Macchione will be taking over as the Director. He's very fortunate to have this team to work with. Thank you again for all of your help these many years, and I wish you the best in all you do!

Jean M. Shepard

Macchione Named New Agency Director

When Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Director **Jean Shepard** retires on June 5th, the leadership of the County's largest department will be taken over by **Nick Macchione**. Shepard is retiring after 32 years of serving San Diego County residents through her work at HHSA.

Macchione has served as an Agency Deputy Director/Regional General Manager for the past 10 years. He has a diverse professional background including work experience with universities, academic medical centers, for-profit and non-profit healthcare corporations, political advocacy groups, and the County of San Diego.



Nick Macchione

"The Director of HHSA is a critical position for the County of San Diego and the region as a whole. Nick Macchione brings tremendous leadership skills, knowledge and experience to the position," said **Greg Cox**, Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors.

"Nick has done a tremendous job as a Regional General Manager for HHSA for many years; he is the right individual to take command of this extremely important position," said County Chief Administrative Officer **Walt Ekard**.

Macchione earned an Executive Master's of Public Health in Healthcare Administration & Policy from Columbia University. He also earned a Master's degree in management from New York University and a B.A. in biology from Rutgers State University. Macchione also holds three professional fellowships in the fields of healthcare administration, public health, and community health.

Meth is Hell



Left: Child Welfare Services Director **Mary Harris** speaks at the press event celebrating 10 years of the Drug Endangered Children program while Board of Supervisors Vice-Chairwoman **Dianne Jacob** and John P. Walters, the nation's "Drug Czar" listen. To date, 2,276 children have been safely removed from meth-infested homes. Above: The meth "Wall of Hell." Below: The meth hotline saves lives.





East Region Provides Foster Family Fun

The Foster Family Fun Day in East Region has become an annual event that dozens of foster children look forward to each year. Thanks to the support of community partners, more than 185 foster children and parents enjoyed some fun in the sun and quality one-on-one time together.

The event is sponsored by the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary Club in partnership with Neighborhoods for Kids and held at the Helix Charter School. It features a whole football field of activities for foster parents and their children to explore including: a bounce house, trampoline jump, rock wall, obstacle courses, sports games, crafts, and a police car and fire truck for them to explore.

Foster families generously offer their homes, their time and their hearts to care for our community's most vulnerable children. The Fun Day allows the Agency's East Region and the La Mesa Sunrise Rotary Club an opportunity to give back to those families who give the most to help our kids. The generosity of the Rotarians, through their fundraising efforts and donation of time for the event, have made a lasting impact in the lives of hundreds of children and their continued support of the Neighborhoods for Kids program is appreciated. *Face painting was part of the fun for the kids.*



New Cell Phone Laws July 1st

The Work Safe/Stay Healthy program wants you to be safe.

All drivers will be prohibited from using a handheld cell phone while operating a motor vehicle after July 1st. Drivers 18 and over may use a hands-free device, while those under 18 may not use a cell phone at all while driving.

The only exceptions to the law are to make an emergency call to a law enforcement agency, medical provider, fire department or other emergency services agency; if you are the operator of an authorized emergency vehicle and use the cell phone during the course of your employment; or if you are operating your vehicle on private property.

Law enforcement can pull you over for using a handheld cell phone. The first offense is a \$20 fine and subsequent violations are \$50 (with the addition of penalty assessments, the first offense is \$76 and a second offense is \$190). It is a reportable offense, but the Department of Motor Vehicles will not assign a violation point.

Employee Spotlight

Ed Beccera, a North Coastal Region Social Worker I, is described as "indispensable" by his supervisor and someone who does more than his job duties require. That might be because after 26 years with SBC (now AT&T), Beccera came out of retirement in July, 2001 to put his passion to work helping families help themselves and their children.



Ed Beccera

Beccera says the most rewarding part of his job is working with the community under the Agency's Family to Family Program. He provides community outreach services at two of the City of Oceanside Resource Centers: Crown Heights Resource Center every Thursday afternoon (3-6) and at the San Luis Rey Resource Center twice a month (9-12) when the Women, Infants and Children program is there.

He also participates in the North County Cares and Safer Living Initiative meetings. He has volunteered and participated in various fairs; coordinated an office candy drive for the annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Chavez Resource Center; coordinated an office Christmas Toy Drive for the City of Oceanside/Oceanside Fire Fighters Christmas Toy Drive; volunteered to be a Community Evaluator at Vista High School's Senior Exhibition; and has worked the last three elections providing bilingual service to Spanish-speaking voters.

Away from work, Beccera's love is music, including watching American Idol, although he admits he can't sing "worth a darn." He loves oldies music and on Sunday nights from 5 to 8 p.m. you can find him listening to Xavier the X-Man on Magic 92.5. He also loves Ranchera music - which is what his parents listened to as he grew up.

He has one son and four daughters - which includes twin girls - ranging in age from 23 to 32. Beccera also has a new love in his life; his entire family adores their first grandchild, Keoki, born January 15, 2008.

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with

HHSA Director
Nick Macchione

Director of Operations
Paula Landau-Cox

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



Business Process Re-engineering **ELIGIBILITY**

In support of the County's commitment to continuous improvement, the Health and Human Services Agency recently embarked on an ambitious effort to streamline and modernize the process of determining client eligibility for programs such as Medi-Cal and Food Stamps.

The Eligibility Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is a series of projects with the overall goal of developing a more efficient eligibility determination system. In all, more than 120 staff members representing all regions are involved in the effort.

The project stresses the importance of both process and service improvements. Our customers – such as taxpayers, community agencies, partner programs and clients who apply for our services – share our expectation that we operate as efficiently as possible.

The Agency expects to see improvements such as reduced visits by clients to the Family Resource Centers by expanding access through an Agency-wide customer call center and making forms and documents available electronically. Additional changes will include scanning case files rather than only having paper files, and cross-training eligibility workers to give them more flexibility to work on multiple programs.

Revising the eligibility determination process will also allow the Agency to better utilize CalWIN, the computer system implemented in 2006 for managing social services programs. All aspects of the Eligibility BPR are currently scheduled to be initiated or in place by December 31, 2008.

“Take Me Out to the Ballgame...”

The Agency's San Diego County Foster Home Licensing program, in conjunction with the San Diego State baseball program, sponsored 'Foster Family Day at the Game' when the Aztecs took on Long Beach State Tuesday, May 13th. The event took place during National Foster Care Month and was attended by 100 foster family members.

Mixing Fun and Learning in South Region

The second annual Youth Empowerment Summit, “Making Lifelong Connections,” was held in the South Region on April 26th. More than 125 foster youth attended the free event held at the Turning the Hearts Center, a Teen Center in Chula Vista.

They enjoyed a day of entertainment, food, resources and education. Highlights included comedian Willie G., a San Diego native who has been featured on Nickelodeon and the Disney Channel; Full Control Entertainment founder Wesley D., who grew up in foster care; and Key-note Speaker Doug Luffborough, director of the Turning the Hearts Center. Doug spoke about the challenges he faced growing up homeless and how he overcame barriers to complete a Master's Degree at Harvard University.

The youth were offered several workshops to choose from including Genograms and Ecomaps as tools to identify relationships; Hip Hop dance; teen dating violence; and 'My Fight With Fat'. Youth were provided with gift bags at the end of the day that included the books “Somebody's Someone” by Regina Louise, an adult adoptee; and “Rising to the Top”, featuring Doug Luffborough.

The event was sponsored by HHS South Region, Casey Family Programs, San Diego County Adoptions, Turning the Hearts Center, South Bay Community Services, Cornerstone Church of San Diego, Pat & Oscar's and Wal Mart.

Five (and a half) meeting tips

Five and a half easy things to do to keep your meetings (and you) healthier:

1. Know why you are there. One of the surest ways to drain productivity from your staff is meetings that have no clear intent. If you are leading it, then it's your responsibility to decide on the purpose. If you are attending it, it's your duty to ask the leader to be clear.

2. Know what kind of meeting you are having. If you don't know, ask. An almost universal malady of meetings is haziness. Is this a discussion, debate, decision, devising or dialogue meeting. All are completely different.

3. Give yourself time to breathe. Don't book back-to-back meetings. You'll spend your life arriving late, leaving early – or both. This is a sure recipe for stress and constant apology as well as not getting the full benefit of the meeting.

4. Know who is on the conference call. As meetings become increasingly virtual we are having to develop new skills of concentration, engagement and listening.

5. Lead the meeting – or see that someone else does. A leaderless meeting is like a driverless vehicle - an accident waiting to happen.

5½. Create Value. If your mantra is 'how can I create value in this meeting?' you will be surprised at how much more engaging – and well attended – your meetings will suddenly become.

Excerpted from an article by Dr. David Pearl on the website www.simply-communicate.com.

HHSA connection



North Regions Have a 'Supremely' Good Time



Craig Maze, left, did his best Diana Ross as he, Duane Lager, center, and Mark Silvia, right, competed as the Supremes in the North Regions Idol competition at the regions' employee appreciation event.

North Regions employees wore their "tackiest" tourist outfits to win prizes at the annual all-staff employee recognition event held at Admiral Baker Field on May 29th. Staff from the three North Regions (North Central, North Coastal, and North Inland Regions) and California Children Services also enjoyed a picnic lunch, played beach boardwalk games, and were recognized for the work they do.

Employees shined like stars in the North Regions Idol contest as they competed for the inaugural trophy. The "Kearny Mesa Supremes" carried the day by performing "Stop in the Name of Love" for cheering co-workers. Twinky Piekarkski from the North Inland Family Resource Center was honored with the North Star Award, the regions' highest level of recognition for exemplifying the North Regions tenets of Leadership, Innovation, Quality, and Excellence.

Day of the Child in South Region



A family looks over healthy lifestyle information at the HHSA South Region's display during the 8th annual Day of the Child in Chula Vista. The event, held in two locations, featured live entertainment, games, a running contest for the kids and booths exhibiting services, educational information and prizes.

Agency Aims to Keep Kids on Track

Immunizations: Stay On Track For A Lifetime Of Good Health! was the theme of this year's National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) and Toddler Immunization Month (TIM) observances.

Both are held annually to emphasize the need to fully immunize children age two and younger against a number of vaccine-preventable diseases. This year, NIIW was celebrated the week of April 19th-26th and TIM was celebrated during the month of May.

As part of the celebration, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services' Immunization Branch and San Diego Regional Immunization Registry held a special kids event on Tuesday, April 22nd at the San Diego Model Railroad Museum in Balboa Park. The event included reading immunization books to the children, distributing goodie bags with educational materials and reviewing children's immunization records. Children also had their photos taken posing as an engineer in a poster representing a train. More than 50 kids and 25 parents attended the event.

Helping make the event a success were immunizations chief **Karen Waters-Montijo** and staff members: **Mildred Flores**, health promotion specialist; **Kimberly Ralston**, health promotion specialist; **Martin Venegas**, provider services assistant; **Joyce Morgan**, coalition assistant; **Anne Cordon**, registry manager; **Jaе Hansen**, registry provider liaison; **Christine Garcia**, community health promotion specialist II; **Harrison Bolter**, health information specialist II; and **Tania Farley**, community outreach manager.



Children line up for books and other informational giveaways during the National Infant Immunization Week and Toddler Immunization Month celebration.

Compliance Office:
(619) 515-4244

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

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



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
Alcohol & Drug Services: vacant
Central Region: Jayne Reinhardt
Child Welfare Services: Margo Fudge
East Region: Katie Judd
Financial & Support Services: Donna Matta

Mental Health: Sabrena Marshall
North Central Region, North Coastal Region,
North Inland Region: Nina Constantino
Public Health: Wilma Wooten
South Region: Jayne Reinhardt

Employee Spotlight

Do you work with someone who deserves to be recognized in the HHSA Connection Employee Spotlight?

Each month the HHSA Connection Employee Spotlight will feature one of your co-workers and let you get to know them a little better. 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.

The Agency's Media Strategy Team will select an employee to be featured each month from the nominations received.

To nominate someone for the Employee Spotlight, simply send an email to thomas.christensen@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!

Employee Spotlight

It's easy to figure out where Esperanza Pettit, Senior Clerk, can be found on a Sunday afternoon or Monday or Thursday nights in the fall. It's highly likely she's in front of the television watching football.

"I love football!" said the self-described football fanatic. "My favorite day of the week is Sunday..., Monday... and Thursday during the playoffs. I live for football."

It's amazing she has time for football when you consider how busy the North Coastal Public Health Center in Oceanside. "The biggest challenge of my job is not having enough hours in the day to complete all my work but I work with a wonderful group of clerks who, thanks to their hard work and dedication, make my job a lot less challenging," she said.

"I enjoy having the opportunity to really serve the public and make a difference in people's lives big or small and I enjoy working with my staff. They are just a wonderful group of hard working people."

Pettit has been with HHSA for over six years. She started as a temporary worker in December, 2000 and then passed the Intermediate Clerk Typist test, working as an ICT for nearly four years. She then passed the Senior Clerk test and worked as acting Senior Clerk for about a year. When the opportunity opened up, she dropped the acting tag from her job title and was promoted to Senior Clerk.

"I chose to work for HHSA because it is the best department in the County of San Diego," Pettit said. "There is nothing more gratifying than helping to better peoples' lives and giving people a helping hand and a friendly face."



Employee Spotlight

For most Californians, when they hear the name Arnold they automatically think of Governor Schwarzenegger. Not around HHSA. Anytime anyone mentions the name Arnold, they think of **Arnold De Guzman**, Graphic Design Specialist with the Office of Media and Public Affairs. He also handles all the audio-visual duties.

De Guzman has been a lifesaver for many HHSA employees making presentations, giving trainings or conducting press events.

"He did an exorbitant amount of work on the Administrative Secretary's appreciation event," said **Jenny Pietila**, Administrative Secretary III, Strategic Planning and Operational Support. "He brought all the equipment and set it all up. Everything went smoothly and he went above and beyond the call of duty."

De Guzman's job includes a wide variety of duties. He provides audio-visual consulting and support, graphic design materials, HHSA website content support, backs up the audio/visual services at County Board meetings and more.

The newest addition to his workload is video production, which has him excited.

"It's new for HHSA and I'm looking forward to producing videos for the Agency," said De Guzman. "My background is heavily in video production and I'm glad I'll get to share my talents with HHSA."

