



The HHSA Connection

MAY 2005

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Aiming for the Best

North County Conference Gives Low Income Residents a Chance at a Dream

Employment, children, health, housing and financial literacy all present major barriers to those who are striving to become self-sufficient in today's tough economy. Help is available, however, thanks to an innovative collaboration between HHSA North Coastal/Inland Regions, and numerous community partners.

On Saturday, April 16, about 160 CalWORKs participants and low-income individuals attended a free conference, *The Possible Dream: Making the Most of Your Future*. Held on Palomar College's San Marcos campus, the goal of this third annual event was to assist attendees in expanding their skills and obtaining resources to provide the best for their family.

Opening remarks were made by Regional General Manager **Nick Macchione** and Robert Deegan, President of Palomar Community College. The event featured keynote speaker Barbara Sanfilippo, an award-

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winning speaker and author, who spoke about taking responsibility for one's own happiness and discovering the secrets to "dreaming big." Participants received a free copy of her book, *Dream Big! What's The Best That Can Happen?*

Skill building workshops and resources centered on family, health, money, and work were offered by numerous organizations, and a lunchtime fashion show featured low-cost business attire. New this year was a job fair, which provided participants the opportunity to speak directly to potential employers, pass out resumes, and set up future interviews.

The summit was the result of collaborative efforts of the HHSA Self-Sufficiency Strategic Planning Committee in the North Coastal and North Inland Regions, which engages County staff and community partners in addressing barriers to self-sufficiency.



Daniel Alvarado provided job seekers with County info

CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: SENIOR PAYROLL CLERK

Personal Service Counts

Ashraf Hassan Goes the Extra Mile

Ashraf Hassan doesn't get to see much of the public in his job, but he's aware of their presence in everything he does.

Hassan, senior payroll clerk for staff at Polinsky Children's Center and North Inland Mental Health in Escondido, says he wants to help business flow as smoothly as possible for the employees there, many of who have direct contact with the public.

"I make sure they are paid correctly and update their records," he said. "Part of my job is to make payroll for them easy so they can do their job more effectively."

He has done his job so well that staff at Polinsky gave him a recognition certificate. He also enjoys his co-workers - "We have a good team here, and a motivating boss. I will continue to do more than is expected of me."

Hassan, a native of Egypt, started with the County in 2001 as an intermediate account clerk at the Mission Valley FRC, and began his current position in 2003.



Hassan enjoys making employees' jobs easier

A Message from Jean Shepard Agency Director

I am pleased to announce that I have appointed **Paula Landau-Cox** as Director of Operations for the Agency. Paula will be working with me, helping to manage Agency operations, as a peer to my other Deputy Directors.

Paula is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and has a Masters of Social Work and a BA in Social Work. After working in various non-profit community based organizations and hospitals, she joined the County. She has headed up four major divisions in the Agency, including Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services, Agency Contract Support and Human Resources. She is an exceptional talent. With her broad experience in Agency programs, strong communication and interpersonal skills, along with a positive and productive management style, Paula will continue to serve the Agency well as the lead in a number of key program areas, as well as for specific projects.



Jean Shepard

Earning a Bright Future

Unique New Work Advancement and Support Centers Provide Multi-Faceted Approach to Increasing Financial Independence



The Work Advancement and Support Centers (WASC) project is an exciting new research partnership project with MDRC [a health services research organization]. This project is designed to increase the economic self-sufficiency of low-income working families/individuals. San Diego's project, *Project EARN*, is one of six that will be located throughout the United States. The model provides a two-pronged service delivery approach comprised of employment retention and advancement services, and financial work supports. The partnership consists of San Diego Workforce Partnership, the South Region Career Center operator TTI America, and HHSA's South Family Resource Center. The pilot project began in mid-January 2005; the full project will begin in May 2005.

Employment services include further training, schooling, and employer-based strategies to help workers stay employed and to advance in the workplace. Financial work supports provided by HHSA include Medi-Cal, Food Stamps and subsidized childcare. Additionally, assistance with receiving the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is an important component. Both employment services and financial supports are provided at the South Region Career Center through HHSA and TTI America staff co-located at the Career Center.



Two Human Services Specialists (HSS's), an Intermediate Clerk Typist, and three TTI America staff make up the Project EARN team and have been cross-trained in job development and HHSA eligibility functions, however by State law only County HSS's can authorize payment/eligibility for financial supports and enter information into the County Case Data System (CDS).

Child Welfare Services

Kicking Up Some Fun!

Summer Camps for Polinsky's Kids

The Toby Wells YMCA is a new 45,000 square foot facility, located in a six-acre park setting that was formerly known as "Missile Park." The new facility, which is down the street from the Polinsky Children's Center (PCC), will open in August 2005. Polinsky's recreational therapist met with YMCA program administrators to discuss opportunities that would benefit PCC youth.

The Mission Valley YMCA and the Toby Wells YMCA will offer a variety of summer day camps that will be available to PCC children at no cost. These day camps include many sports and a wide variety of arts and crafts. The Toby Wells YMCA will reserve about 10 slots per week for 11 weeks for Polinsky youth. This will give the children at PCC an opportunity to experience off-site age appropriate programs.



The Toby Wells YMCA will also offer PCC memberships, which will allow small groups of children to use the facility. The facility will feature a youth gymnastics center, indoor soccer field, fitness center, aerobic center, mind/body studios, pool with a slide, climbing tower, gymnasium and playground. With the supervision of PCC staff, the children will be able to access these great features. This will be an excellent motivator for the children and a tool for the Polinsky Active Teaching Approach.

In addition to these great opportunities, the Mission Valley YMCA and the Toby Wells YMCA have agreed to be listed as potential emergency evacuation sites for PCC and will be included in Polinsky's Emergency Evacuation Plan.

This is a wonderful example of the County and the community working together for the benefit of children.

Intergenerational Program Turns One Year Old

Celebrations Happen Every Day

It isn't enough to have six grandchildren. Shirley Boyett, a 66-year-old ObGyn nurse practitioner retired two years ago and jumped into a volunteer program where she is surrounded by toddlers.

"This is just up my alley," says Boyett of the First 5 Commission of San Diego County's Intergenerational Program, which helps kids ages five and younger prepare for a lifetime of learning.

The intergenerational component, coordinated by Aging & Independence Services, just celebrated its one-year anniversary.

San Diego's commission is funding nine various intergenerational programs this year. For example, senior volunteers help the preschoolers learn to read, aid new parents by tapping into their own experiences, and assist kids with special needs.

Boyett and the other mentors help both parents and children.

They don't take the place of the therapists and case managers; instead, they share

their experiences. "I can say, 'This is what I learned when I was in a similar situation,'" says Boyett.

The mentors also give individual attention to the little things like teaching the youngsters to tie their shoes, how to draw, and they sing with them.

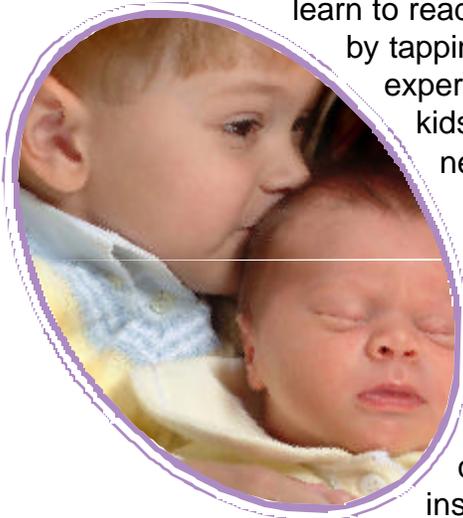
"They tend to look at us as grandmothers," she says. "They sit on our laps and we cuddle them and read stories with them. We build up an interest in reading."

"At first, just getting them to open up and talk can be difficult. But they leave laughing, singing, playing games. They don't want to go. It's very rewarding in that way. You can't help but become very attached - to the mothers, too; I admire their courage and their decision to better themselves and the lives of their children."

More senior volunteers are needed, including those who speak Spanish. Because of the importance of consistency for the children, mentors are asked to make a commitment of 15 to 20 hours of service a week, and, in return, receive a stipend of \$225 to \$300 per month to help cover volunteer expenses. The program provides an orientation of three four-hour sessions, plus individual settings have additional training. To find out more, contact the AIS Call Center at (800) 510-2020.



Volunteer Shirley Boyett shares her time and experience



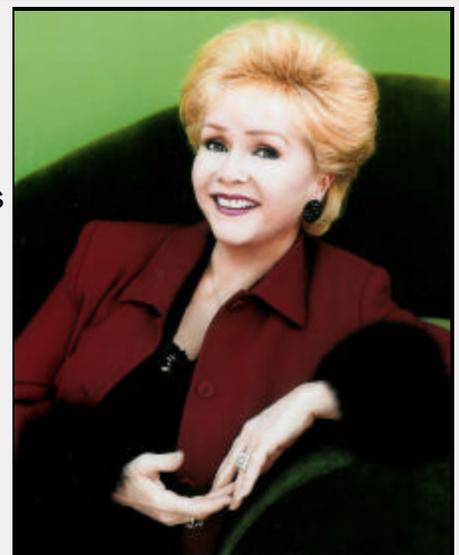
Vital Aging Conference

Entertainer Debbie Reynolds will keynote Aging and Independence Services' upcoming Vital Aging Conference. Reynolds will talk about her experiences as a caregiver, among other aspects of her life. The Vital Aging conference is a biennial event to encourage older adults and others to eat healthier, exercise and maintain an active and meaningful life. Previous keynote speakers have included Jack LaLanne and Art Linkletter.

The Vital Aging Conference will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 9, at the Town & Country Resort Hotel, 500 Hotel Circle North in Mission Valley. Cost of \$5 includes breakfast and lunch; parking is \$4 extra.

Other event sponsors include AARP, Sharp HealthCare and Classic Residence by Hyatt at La Jolla Village.

To register, call (800) 82-SHARP or register online at www.sharp.com



Vital Aging Conference Keynote speaker celebrity Debbie Reynolds

School Food Summit Focuses on Combating Childhood Obesity

County and Schools Working Toward Better Nutrition Policies for Students

In what's being called an overwhelming success, the School Food Summit on March 9 brought together more than 240 education leaders and health and nutrition experts to address a national public health crisis: childhood obesity.



Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price

The countywide School Food Summit was hosted by HHSA, HealthLink North County school health collaborative, the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego, and County Chairwoman **Pam Slater-Price**, who highlighted childhood obesity as one of her health care priorities in her recent State of the County address.



"Preventative steps must be taken to address our very real problem with childhood obesity and physically unfit children in our County and throughout the nation," said Chairwoman Slater-Price, who was recognized for her leadership and dedication to the cause during the morning program. "It is up to parents and leaders of our schools, County government, health experts and the community to take positive steps to prevent childhood obesity."

School board members, superintendents, principals, food service directors, and school health professionals representing 36 of the 42 school districts in San Diego County participated in strategy development sessions and reviewed best practices as they discussed strategies to promote good nutrition in the entire school environment. The keynote speaker was Terri Soares, Commissioner of State Superintendent Jack O'Connell's Task Force on Childhood Obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, and Cardiovascular Disease.

Several awards were presented at the summit. Among them, District 4 County Supervisor, **Ron Roberts**, was recognized for his many years of dedication to the fight against childhood obesity with the Community Champion for School Nutrition Award.



Supervisor Ron Roberts

Experts agree that childhood obesity can be affected by improving nutrition and physical activity for kids. One of the goals for this summit was to ensure that school leaders are aware of the many programs and resources available to them to help develop

healthier campuses. In addition to the resource binders each participant received, the Coalition on Children and Weight's School Workgroup will provide follow-up to those districts requesting assistance with policy development and implementation.

The summit, which focused on the nutrition aspect of childhood obesity, was funded by a number of sponsors, including Palomar Pomerado Health, Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price, the County HHSA, Buena Vista Foods, Health Net of California, Hollandia Dairy, Little Caesar's Pizza, Maisano Produce Distributors and Super Snax.



Beverly Tuzin, North Regions Supervising Community Health Promotion Specialist helped plan the event. She is pictured here (l to r) with attendees Adrienne Collins-Yancey, Health Planning & Program Specialist, Public Health Services; and Jennifer Danzig, Director of Development and Communications, Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP).



Leading the Way

Trainers of Excellence

The Eligibility Training Team at the Kearny Mesa Family Resource Center (FRC) strives to improve the Agency's operational excellence by leading staff in learning or improving skills crucial to delivering public assistance benefits. The talented team consists of six trainers and six lab staff who train FRC staff in all six regions.

The team benefits from a challenging, exciting assignment that provides unparalleled opportunities to be creative and to expand their public relations skills. They are always looking for new members to join the team. Excellent career enhancing opportunities also exist for human services staff, who can

assist as "star performers" in developing or presenting training sessions. This is an outstanding learning experience and can enrich their resumes.

It takes a person with special talent to train staff on assisting customers. Trainers enhance staff's technical expertise, and instill self-confidence, teamwork, and a positive work approach. Whether it's teaching a class or working one-on-one, the training team is committed to providing comprehensive and quality training with creative flair.

If you are an experienced supervising human services specialist who is an effective communi-



Eligibility trainers (l to r): Frances Walker, Marion Keeler, Katherine Trinh, Ingrid Russon, Jerry Asbury and Wendy Matulich



Training lab staff (l to r): Blake Hubbard, Linda Pilcher, Chris Loeffler, Jasmine Gilham, Geraldine Gibbs (supervisor) and Mohammad Rashan

cator and has a knack for training, call for information on how you can apply for a training position. Human services specialists and supervisors are also encouraged to sign up as "star performers" to assist our training team. Contact Laura Hattaway at (858) 694-3898.

Mental Health Services

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Seniors Helping Seniors

Escondido Seniors Complete Peer Counseling Training

On March 4, Escondido families, County officials and community providers gathered together at the Joslyn Senior Center to celebrate graduation of Senior Peer Counselors and Senior Peer *Promotores*. The graduating senior volunteers completed 12 weeks of intensive training to provide home visits to isolated older adults.

Senior Peer Counseling is a widely recognized "Best Practice" (Surgeon General's Report, 1999) to address the emotional needs of seniors and to assist them in maintaining independent lifestyles for as long as possible. Offered in both English and Spanish, the primary goal of this very valuable and empowering service is to help seniors bridge the gap to mental health services and to connect them with the range of supportive services offered by the Aging Network.

The Senior Peer Counselors and Peer *Promotores* use skills and life experience of older volunteers specially trained to serve older adults facing life transition, short-term crises, chronic stressors and other difficulties by providing emotional support, social activities, shopping assistance/excursions, and home visits in the community.

Seniors who typically benefit from these services are those experiencing loss of friends, spouses or other close family members (sometimes outliving their children); isolated seniors with lack of connection to their communities; and seniors with undetected or unheeded medical and mental health needs.

Lost to budget cuts in 1992, the program has now been re-established, thanks to self-advocacy efforts of the Joslyn Senior Center of Escondido and the leadership and responsive intervention of Supervisor **Pam Slater-Price**.

Viviana Criado, the County's Mental Health Older Adult Coordinator, has been assisting the Joslyn Senior Center and Neighborhood Healthcare with the development and implementation of the Senior Peer Counseling Project. For more information, contact her at (619) 584-5029 or viviana.criado@sdcounty.ca.gov.



Danae Ramirez, Health Policy Advisor to Chairwoman Slater-Price, and Alfredo Aguirre, Interim Adult/Older Adult Mental Health Director handed out Certificates of Completion and Recognition Awards to participating agencies. Center: Recipient Jeannette Olsen.

Health Statistics

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Breathing Easy?

Does it seem like every other kid has an inhaler these days? May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.

Asthma hospitalization rates for children ages 0-4 in San Diego County were 309.4 (age adjusted rates per 100,000 population). The highest rate was 458.9 in Central San Diego followed by 346.8 in the South region and 318.4 in the East region of San Diego County. North Inland region was 271.1, North Central region was 265.7 and North Coastal was the lowest rate at 192.7.¹ In San Diego County, 33% of all youth ages 13-17 with asthma are African-American.²

For more information, go to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America website at www.aafa.org. To request additional health statistics describing health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, trends and comparisons to national targets, call HHS's Community Health Statistics Unit at (619) 515-4318. To access the latest data and links, including the 2004 Core Public Health Indicator document, go to www.sdhealthstatistics.com.

1 California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, 2002.

2 California Health Interview Survey, 2001, Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, July 2002.

News You Can View

Countywide videos are now easier to use: two are posted on the CAO's Web page. You can now find a 10-minute overview of San Diego County government called "We Are San Diego County" and a video on the County's General Management System, "GMS: What's in it For You?" at www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cao/video.html.

Use the videos for staff meetings, orienting new employees, at conferences or workshops, or to review if you're going for a promotional interview.



HHS's Shining Stars

Working for Operational Excellence!

HealthLink North County was presented with an award from Health Net of California for Outstanding Community Service. HealthLink is a school-health focused, public/private partnership to improve health and education outcomes for North San Diego County's school children. Coordinator **Carey Riccitelli** received the award at the School Food Summit on Wednesday, March 9.

On April 4, North Central Children's Services worker **Azucena Greenwell** was awarded the "Jay Hoxie Award" for her work with the Flying Samaritans of El Rosario (professionals interested in bringing healthcare to Mexico). The annual award is given to a social worker who embodies the spirit of Jay Hoxie (a child welfare services worker who died 15 years ago) and demonstrates their commitment to caring for others through volunteerism, charity work, and service in the Agency. Greenwell travels monthly to El Rosario where she teaches parenting classes and has helped establish Alcoholic Anonymous groups locally.

Have Some News? Proud of a co-worker? Please submit article ideas, or kudos items (and photos) to your section editor listed in the box to the right, or to Jennifer Mallory, via Outlook e-mail (Jennifer.Mallory@sdcounty.ca.gov).

Compliance Office: (619) 515-4244 Toll-Free Hotline: (866) 549-0004

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

Director's Call-In - Share your ideas and concerns with HHS's Director Jean Shepard on the **first Friday of each month, from 8:00 a.m. - noon, at (619) 515-6555.**

HHS's Events Calendar - check out goings-on, or, advise your web contact to post events.



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