

# HHSA Connection

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

## Named National Medical Director of the Year Edgemoor's Ferrini Wins National Honor

Dr. **Rebecca Ferrini**, MD, MPH, CMD, Medical Director at the Health and Human Services Agency's Edgemoor Skilled Nursing Facility has been named the 2009 "Medical Director of the Year" by the American Medical Director's Association (AMDA). Ferrini was recognized for her work as a physician leader, educator, patient advocate, and clinician. She was chosen from a group of more than 50 nominees.

Edgemoor Administrator **Gwenmarie Hilleary** and Director of Nursing **Nancy Beecham**, RNC, BS, nominated Ferrini.

"She zips through things, she's very productive, and she has a photographic memory," said Hilleary. "At the same time, she brings her heart and soul into the practice of medicine; and we all benefit from that."

"She can size up a situation quickly. If there is an upset patient or someone who doesn't understand something, she can calm them down and make them feel better in minutes."

AMDA Executive Director Lorraine Tarnove said Ferrini exemplifies the passion, commitment, and leadership abilities that they see among their members.

"She has embraced challenges and tackled them head on. She makes a difference everyday and touches the lives of

"No work at Edgemoor belongs to an individual - it is through the teamwork and collaboration of people with different expertise, perspectives and strengths that we have been able to make such incredible strides from (being) the 'last resort' to a quality facility...where patients get 'whole person care.'" - Dr. Rebecca Ferrini

residents, staff, family members, and her medical colleagues," said Tarnove. "We are proud to have her as our 2009 Medical Director of the Year."

Ferrini worked with her team to develop a robust quality assurance program and improvement plan that resulted in Edgemoor becoming a restraint-free facility. She also led development of a poster campaign called "Skin Is In," which helped reduce pressure ulcer incidences. Ferrini also has a passion for passing on her knowledge. She educates medical students about Huntington's disease and is working on a handbook about how to deal with the long-term effects of this illness.

The nominees were judged on their contributions and accomplishments in long term care medicine, specifically clinical expertise, staff education, leadership, and community involvement. The AMDA is the national professional association of medical directors, attending physicians, and other professionals practicing long term care medicine.



*Edgemoor's Dr. Rebecca Ferrini was honored as the National Medical Director of the Year. She will be featured in an article in the March issue of Caring for the Ages and at an educational session at the 2010 Annual Symposium.*

## April Key Month for Employee Blood Drive

To meet the needs of local hospitals and patients throughout the county, the San Diego Blood Bank must collect 400 pints of blood every day. The County, with its 17,000 employees, has become the 3rd largest donor organization after the Chargers and Comic Convention Blood Drives. This year the County will celebrate our 25th Anniversary as a donor organization by hosting 25 County employee blood drives at 25 County sites. Join us this April (and year-round) by making a donation.

Year-round collaboration between the County and the SD Blood Bank has contributed to the addition of donation opportunities including more frequent blood drives at the county sites that generate the most collections.



*The County of San Diego exceeded our 2008 goal of 1000 blood donations with a grand total of 1270 units collected.*

# LOYALTY

## Pride in Your Work

### *From the Director's Desk*

What do we mean by loyalty, particularly in the workplace? For me, it speaks to respect for your colleagues, your profession and your customers. It's pride in your work for our Agency and its mission, vision and core values as well as the sense of commitment to the important work that we do every day. It doesn't mean following an individual or organization blindly, but rather fostering an openness at all levels to question the status quo for the purpose of improving services for individuals, children and families.



Nick Macchione

As we've continued to explore the dynamic of different generations in the workplace, the concept of loyalty has shifted among these different groups as well. In the past, people were loyal to a company or organization. Gen X'ers and Y's and now millennials tend to be more loyal to people, such as their supervisors and managers, and not necessarily the organization itself. Think about an outstanding supervisor or manager you've had and how you felt a particular loyalty towards them. As a result, you and your team may have worked harder for them because you knew they cared about you and the Agency's mission in helping people.

And it's perhaps during the toughest of times when loyalties shine. Take a look around and you'll see it in your colleagues who help to bal-

ance workloads, or who submit ideas on streamlining processes and improving efficiencies. You'll find "random acts of kindness" toward customers and toward our Agency as a whole. You'll see employees teaming up for such events as the March of Dimes Walk-a-Thon wearing the Agency t-shirt and proudly carrying our banner. These are the loyal people that that make our County great.

Much research has been done in recent years on workplace loyalty. Gary Topchick, managing partner of a Los Angeles-based management consultancy sums it up like this: "What's important to employees is a belief that they can grow and develop in their work." Sound familiar? It should, as it embraces the Gallup principles of "Focus me, Know me, Care about me." Our emphasis on strengths-based management leads to a strong sense of loyalty among employees who feel that their employer cares for them. Our commitment to knowing our employees and focusing them toward their strengths results in people who genuinely enjoy what they do and who do their best with the team in mind.

As you read this newsletter, be sure to check out Lori Bays' article featuring two Agency employees who are "examples of loyalty," the Employee Spotlight and the numerous other instances where loyalty in all its forms is highlighted. And as always, thank you for all that you do to make a difference every day in the lives of children, families, seniors and vulnerable adults!

## True Loyalty

By Lori Bays

Public Administrator/Public Guardian

Loyalty signifies a person's devotion or attachment to a particular object; another person or group of persons, an ideal, a duty, or a cause. Loyalty is also the willingness to embrace change when it is happening to or within that object.

We can all agree change is happening and it is happening at HHS. Facing budget cuts and staffing changes, we are still being asked to take on more, to be innovative, to thrive. How do we do that? Where does our strength come from?

From our loyalty to the cause, the people that we serve, our coworkers, ourselves. Our loyalty allows us to embrace change, to adapt, to become better as an Agency.

Two great examples of loyalty at HHS are Sisamay Sam, NCRC Human Services Specialist and Sary Villarreal, IHSS Social Worker. Both Sisamay and Sary see beyond a job description and a paycheck and know that the work they do everyday contributes to the mission of the Agency. Sisamay consistently displays a strong work ethic, never complains about her work load and is often first to volunteer for additional assignments and to lend a helping hand to co-workers while still making sure customers are her priority. Sary left a higher paid position outside HHS to return to the occupational satisfaction that she feels as a Social Worker.

As we are faced with a rapidly changing environment and trying times, I challenge us to remember that our Loyalty, our willingness to embrace that change, is what will carry us through.



# LOYALTY

## Finding Strength in Loyalty

Nowadays, loyalty in the workplace plays a particularly important role. People are nervous about the economy and their jobs, but loyalty can help provide a sense of stability for both individuals and the team. And loyalty isn't just about years served. It has more to do with dedication, commitment, and attitude - a willingness to do what is necessary for the greater good. When a team shares this feeling, difficult times become challenges rather than downfalls.

HHSA has a head start when it comes to building loyalty because of a shared commitment to the well-being of San Diego residents. Along with all HHSA employees, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) staff can feel good about their contribution to the quality of life for

so many individuals. In addition to this shared goal, taking some time out of the day to invest in each other makes all the difference. Doing this when everyone is busy and anticipating even greater demands in the future can take more deliberate planning and effort.

The BHS culture includes several elements to help foster loyalty:

- Communicate quickly and honestly (especially personnel changes)
- Encourage training and development
- Recognize and reward often
- Commit to succession planning
- Treat employees as individuals, look for ways to foster solid relationships
- Celebrate special occasions together

In BHS, loyalty is demonstrated by employees willing to work off hours, to volunteer at weekend rallies and events, attend program graduations, participate in support walks, and make donations for clients. It's also nourished by potlucks as people come together to build positive relationships. BHS management encourages the use of Individual Development Plans, to help people grow in their current roles, look forward with hope, and have a better understanding of how some of their tasks align with bigger picture goals.

People enjoy meeting a challenge when they believe they are really making a contribution and being appreciated. Empower employees, turn to their creativity – if they feel mutual loyalty, they will find a way to face hard times.

## Employee Spotlight

### “You Really Have to Care About People to do this job”

Claudia Bell's job occupies more than her hours at work – and that's a good thing. Bell, a Protective Services Supervisor in North Coastal, has extended her work for the Agency into a “second career” as a community volunteer benefiting foster youth and others in our neighborhoods.

Bell has worked with programs such as My First Home, which helps foster youth aging out of the program furnish their first apartments; Foster Christmas Wishes, a program that fulfills holiday wish lists; Camp Connect San Diego, where she served as a camp counselor for foster siblings reconnecting; the Presbyterian Urban Ministry Crisis Center, which finds her spending her days off doing intakes and helping people released from prison re-establish their ties with the community; and Hope Without Boundaries, a program that takes

her to Mexico to work with a shelter for the elderly and to help build a school.

“It's kind of my passion,” said Bell. “I try to build more support for foster youth in our community.”

This month marks Bell's 20th anniversary with the Agency. She started as an eligibility worker before moving to Child Welfare Services. “It's been 20 years, and I still love my job,” she said.

When she was promoted to supervisor, she missed the “hands-on” work she used to do, even though she enjoys being a supervisor and mentor.

“That's the reason I volunteer outside of work,” she said. “When I promoted, I gave up direct client interaction and I

miss supporting people and helping them get what they need. (Volunteering) fulfills that part.”

As a supervisor, Bell enjoys helping new social workers adjust to the demands of their jobs and working to fulfill the Agency's mission. “You have to have compassion for people and it's a hard job to do,” she said.

“You can easily get burned out and you have to figure out if this is the job for you. You really have to care about people to do this job, as well as have good time management and organizational skills.”



**Claudia Bell**





## A Smokin' Hot Safety Lesson

Sometimes we're so busy serving the public that we forget to take care of ourselves and our co-workers. Safety in the workplace is one way that we can take care of one another. Knowing how to put out a fire or use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) are just two examples of how we can prepare ourselves to respond to emergency situations in the workplace. The Public Health Services (PHS) Safety Committee recently coordinated training events to help employees be ready to respond to fire and cardiac arrest emergencies.

Partnering with San Miguel Fire Department, hands-on fire extinguisher training was attended by 52 employees (19 at Askew, 33 at Rosecrans). **Janet Wicjorek** of PHN Administration coordinated the training at Askew and **Bob Gerard** of Support Services/Facilities Maintenance coordinated the training at Rosecrans. **Phyllis Bech** documented the training in photos.

Eleven Askew employees attended AED training in January conducted by **Ruth Duke**, Emergency Medical Services Registered Nurse. The training was repeated at Rosecrans in February and 24 staff attended.

### AED Usage

- Know where your building's AED is located
- Know who is CPR certified
- You don't have to be CPR qualified to use the AED
- Initiate the EMS System – call 911 immediately
- Have someone wait at the front door to escort paramedics
- Start CPR or send for someone that knows CPR – DON'T WAIT
- Get the AED or send someone for it
- Place the pads – listen to the prompts
- If the person down has a shockable rhythm, the machine will deliver a shock
- The machine will shock even if CPR is not done
- Don't be afraid to use the AED – you could save someone's life

### Fire Safety

- Remove anyone in immediate danger and confine fire by closing doors
- Sound the alarm – pull box
- Notify the Fire Department – call 911
- Notify the Emergency Response Team and the site Emergency Coordinator
- Attempt to extinguish the fire – only if fire is small and it is safe to do so
- Get the extinguisher and pull the extinguisher pin
- Aim at the base of the flame
- Use a sweeping motion to deliver the retardant
- Evacuate the building if fire cannot be put out quickly
- Know location of EXITS – do not use elevators
- Do not break windows to vent smoke



## head·hand·heart

call First 5 San Diego for a good start<sup>SM</sup>

## First 5 San Diego Reaches Out to New Asian Parents

First 5 San Diego and the University of California-San Diego Medical Center's Regional Perinatal System's "Welcome Baby" Program announced the availability of the popular First 5 Kit for New Parents in four Asian languages - Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Korean - for the first time.

The free kit has been adapted from the original English-language version to be linguistically and culturally appropriate for Asian American parents and caregivers. It includes everything from practical advice on prenatal care to information about a child's first five years. The kit is also available in English and Spanish.

"Babies don't come with instruction manuals. That's why First 5 San Diego offers new and expecting parents in San Diego the Kit for New Parents," said First 5 San Diego Commission Chair **Dianne Jacob**, "The kit contains parenting information, advice and practical tips that parents can use for the joys and challenges that lie ahead."

Highlights of the kit include:

- "Parents Guide" - An easy-to-navigate reference guide for new parents with tips and up-to-date information on topics such as child development, health and safety, finding quality child

care and getting children ready for school.

- "What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick" - An easy-to-read book that answers questions parents may ask about common childhood illnesses and injuries.

- "Puppy and Friends" - An interactive children's book filled with stimulating colors and textures that encourages brain development as babies touch and feel a puppy's fur, nose and toys.

- Other resources including poison control information, brochures on topics ranging from oral health to the "Smoke-free Cars with Minors" law, and information on programs such as Paid Family Leave and Healthy Families.

This past year more than 64,000 Kits were distributed to local families through Regional Perinatal System's 'Welcome Baby' program. The Kit for New Parents in four Asian languages is a welcome addition to the First 5's network of services.

For more information or to receive a Kit for New Parents, call 1-888-5 FIRST 5 (1-888-534-7785) or go to [first5sandiego.org](http://first5sandiego.org).



First 5 San Diego now has new parent kits available in four Asian languages.

## HEALTH NEWS

### World TB Day VIDEO



[Click here to see the video](#)



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## Nurses Deliver Important Message to Moms, Moms-to-be



Public Health Nurses (PHN) from the North Central Public Health Center played a vital role in the 19th Annual Life Skills Conference for Pregnant and Parenting Teens. The event was held at the First United Methodist Church in Mission Valley on January 13th and St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Encinitas on January 14th.

Approximately 250 high school students participated in workshops lead by the PHNs that addressed important infant health topics such as Shaken Baby Syndrome, Plagiccephaly (flattened head) and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). They also hosted a resource table. The theme of the two day conference was "Target Your Future" and was sponsored by Mentoring Mothers, a program of Jewish Family Services.



Pictured from left to right include Public Health Nurses **Lisa Roberts, Anna Sherrod, Caitlin Clemens, and Sherry Ceccanese.**

# Kudos!

**Gemma Custodio**, Southeast Family Resource Center  
"I've never applied for Medi-Cal before Gemma took over my case and she's been excellent, very kind, and very alert and giving all the right info and processing my case. She is an asset to your department."

**Anna Brothers**, Southeast Family Resource Center  
"She is very special she is always prompt with her appointments. I am so happy and satisfied if everyone was to be like her what a delight."

**Elizabeth Moreno**, Southeast Family Resource Center  
"She is the best worker you have. You need to hire more people like her."

Compliance Office:  
(619) 515-4244

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(866) 549-0004

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

## Employee Assistance Program

# EAP

The County of San Diego, in partnership with the Employee Assistance Program, wants to remind you of this valuable resource during these difficult times.

The current economy and housing market, mixed with everyday issues may cause you to feel a sense of hopelessness. Fortunately, you have somewhere to turn - the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP provides confidential, professional counseling, education and referral services to you and your family members.

You can contact EAP 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by calling toll-free 1-866-208-0436 or by visiting the EAP web site at [www.achievesolutions.net](http://www.achievesolutions.net).

To nominate someone for the Employee Spotlight, simply send an email to: [Connectioneditor.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Connectioneditor.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov) with Employee Spotlight in the subject line

## Meth Strike Force Helps Turn the Tide

The County of San Diego Methamphetamine Strike Force released its 2008 Meth Report Card, which shows local meth use is on the decline.

“The tide is turning on meth,” said San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman **Dianne Jacob**. “Most of the key indicators on the fight against meth clearly show that our efforts to eradicate meth from our communities are having positive results.”

The latest meth report card revealed improvements in several areas, including:

- Emergency room mentions are down 29%
- Treatment admissions declined 3%
- Number of arrestees testing positive for meth is down 7% for adults; 3% for juveniles
- Number of arrests because of meth is down 25%
- Meth seizures are also down 40%

San Diego County did see the number of meth deaths increase from 174 in 2006 to 184 in 2007 and the number of children removed from drug-infested environments in 2007 remained practically the same. Officers rescued 375 children from meth-infested homes, one more than the year before. Authorities also cleaned 14 meth labs in 2007, four more than the previous year but dozens less than eight years ago.



HHSA Director **Nick Macchione** speaks at the unveiling of the 2008 Meth Report Card. County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman **Dianne Jacob**, Behavioral Health Director **Jennifer Schaffer** and **Susan Bower**, Alcohol and Drug Services Deputy Director also participated in the news conference.

### HHSA Multimedia VIDEO

Indicator	2006	2007	Change
Meth Deaths	174	184	+6%
ER Mentions	1,160	826	-29%
Treatment Admissions	5,632	5,467	-3%

## East Region Initiative Helps At-Risk Youth



Neighborhoods  
For Kids  
East County

In the past, communication barriers have prevented multiple agencies from communicating seamlessly to help at-risk families in a coordinated fashion.

Aligning with the East Region Neighborhoods for Kids initiative that aims to safely keep abused and neglected

children in their school and community, the Health and Human Services Agency, East County schools, law enforcement and community groups have found a way to formalize communication about its most at-risk families by removing those barriers.

The impetus of the collaboration was a student safety program supported by a federal grant (Project SHIELD). A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on February 5th.

The interagency information sharing program will be called GOALS - Global Oversight Analysis Linking Systems. Project SHIELD hired a constitutional law professor from Pepperdine University and consultant with the US Department of Justice to help work through issues identified by various entities.

This product was a year and a half in the making—attorneys and privacy officers came together to determine what could be shared. HHSA was represented by County Counsel **Steve Magruder** and Privacy Officer **David Nelsen**.

This group will select at-risk youth from Grossmont Union High School District for analysis, such as those involved in gangs, high school dropouts, and teen prostitutes. The youth and family names will not be used, but their profile information will be collected from each agency with whom they interface.

G.O.A.L.S. will then conduct a “social autopsy” to analyze the root of the problem facing this youth, and a collaborative solution will be formed to get the youth back on track.



# Social Workers: Everyday Heroes

## What it Means to be a Social Worker

“You can't save the world, but you can make differences in people's lives. When you think about what we do, day in and day out, it's about quality of life. It's about preserving somebody's quality of life.”

“The rewards of social work have long legs. The positive results live and grow beyond what we see in any given day.”

“Social work is rewarding because we connect families to services to build stronger communities.”

“I feel it is my job to make sure that every child has a safe and caring home (not just a house to live in), so I do everything I can to make this happen.”

“One day, I was talking to my father about my job as a protective services social worker - the frustrations, the sadness, the harsh reality that cruelty and children can be in the same sentence, and he looked at me and said 'You, my son, as a social worker to those children, you are a real-life, honest-to-goodness guardian angel.’”

“When they (parents) get it, you talk to them, and you talk to them, and then you see the light in their eyes, they are able to tell you what they have learned and what has changed. That is very satisfying.”

“Children are a reflection of their environment, just as families are a product of their society. As role models, we need to inspire change where needed and realize that there is potential in everyone we encounter. As our families change, so will our children. That is what I find rewarding about social work.”

“Social work gives me the opportunity to do something I love and call it a job. Through social work, I am given the opportunity to plant seeds and nurture souls.”

“You do make a difference in the kids' lives. I can be someone they can count on. They call you years later to say hi or tell you what's going on in their lives...that's when I know that somehow I made a difference.”

“What I find rewarding about social work is having a career where I have the ability to make children realize that they matter and that they deserve to be heard.”

“I like the sense that I'm working with people and helping them. I have a deep interest in helping - especially the Spanish speaking community. Some people are first generation in the United States. I'm there to translate and assist them.”

“The rewarding aspects of social work are the changes you see in families long term...when a family or child calls you years later and you realize you touched their lives. It only takes one person to change a kid's life and give them hope.”

“After all the anger, all the proclaimed injustices, all the questions with no answers, unfulfilled dreams, broken hearts, the lies, the sadness, depression, blank stares, the I don't care's, the you can't make me's and the swearing they will never come back, you look up from your desk and there they stand, smiling, in uniform, hugging, dreaming again, loving again, remembering, twinkles in the eyes, thank-you's on their lips, moving on, living, knowing and taking a little part of you with them. Not all of them, but just enough.”

“Children are the best judge in character-they know when you are really trying to help. When I have a bad day, I just look at all of the pictures from kids I have helped and it makes it good again.”