

# HHSA Connection

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



Child Welfare Services Director **Mary Harris**, second from right, and Board of Supervisors Vice-Chairwoman **Dianne Jacob**, right, joined the San Diego County Association of Fire Chiefs and San Diego County Association of Fire Districts in announcing that nearly 200 County fire stations are now Safely Surrendered Baby sites. They join 19 area hospitals as locations where a newborn less than 72 hours old can be surrendered and taken into custody for proper care with no questions asked.

## Aging Summit Generates a "Buzz"

Buzz Aldrin, one of the first astronauts to walk on the moon, will share his inspiring stories at Aging Summit 2008 being held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 26th at two sites: the Town & Country Resort and Convention Center in Mission Valley and the California Center for the Arts in Escondido.

Dr. Aldrin's inspirational commitment to work and learning is why Aging & Independence Services asked him to speak at this year's Aging Summit, which promotes lifelong learning.

The biennial Aging Summits were initiated by County Supervisors **Dianne Jacob** and **Pam Slater-Price** as a venue for our community to talk about issues that are important to older adults, Baby Boomers and others.

There is no cost to attend for persons age 60 and older or persons with disabilities. Cost for others is \$40 and includes lunch. Registration is required; call (800) 82-SHARP or (800) 827-4277, or see [www.agingsummit2008.org](http://www.agingsummit2008.org).

## Agency Launches New Video News Release Service

The Agency's Office of Media and Public Affairs (OMPA) has debuted a new service for San Diego County media outlets. The department has begun producing video news releases for use by local media.

The video news releases feature video that highlights Agency programs or may be hard for news organizations to gather on their own, such as footage of laboratories and other health care facilities. The videos are shot and edited by OMPA staff.

The first video news release focused on the mental health services offered to 2007 wildfire victims through a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant. It featured an interview with **Yvonne Purdy-Luxton**, a county mental health outreach worker who lost her own home to the fires.

The County of San Diego Tuberculosis Control Program's Directly Observed Therapy program is featured in the second video news release. The video demonstrates how public health nurses and outreach workers monitor patients regularly to make sure they are taking their medications as directed.



## From the Director's Desk

### Jean M. Shepard, HHSA Director

As the Baby Boomer generation reaches retirement age, the American workforce is facing a major upheaval. Many companies and government agencies are grappling with a loss of organizational history, expertise and continuity of personnel as older employees retire. The Agency's Executive Team has addressed this issue by launching a succession planning project aimed at preparing younger staff to assume leadership roles as older employees retire. The Agency has adopted a strategy that provides growth opportunities, on-the-job coaching, "stretch" assignments and staff mentoring. The Health and Human Services Agency's futuristic approach to succession planning was the topic of a recent panel discussion sponsored by the San Diego Regional Training Center. I would like to share with you several of the innovative programs available to Agency employees.



The Managers Development Institute (MDI) is a 12 month training opportunity for current HHSA managers. The program facilitates professional growth and development and prepares participants for upper management and executive level positions. Interested managers should contact **Mayda Downs**, Training and Development Manager, for additional information at [Mayda.Downs@sd-county.ca.gov](mailto:Mayda.Downs@sd-county.ca.gov) or at 858-694-3812.

The Frontline Leadership Development Program (FLDP) is targeted at HHSA line supervisors and middle managers seeking to identify and strengthen their unique leadership talents. The program is also appropriate for staff seeking middle management positions. Participants are required to attend classes and complete a special project or participate in a mentoring program. To learn more about this program, visit the Agency intranet Human Resources Training and Development page.

The Job Shadow Program allows Agency employees interested in other positions to shadow a fellow employee and learn about their job. This program is currently underway throughout the Agency. You can learn more about this opportunity by clicking on the "What's New in HR" tab of the Human Resources intranet page.

I encourage you to take advantage of the many training and professional development opportunities the Agency has to offer.

Our challenge is to strengthen the leadership and technical skills of existing staff, provide opportunities for growth and development, and create a workplace that fully engages all employees in the Agency's goal of making a difference every day.

## Employee Spotlight

If you come across **Zia Nawabi** and don't leave with a laugh, there's probably something wrong with you. Nawabi, a Supervising Human Services Specialist for the Food Stamps and Medi-Cal Combo Unit in the South Region Family Resource Center, is known for bringing a sense of humor and common sense to his job.



Zia Nawabi

"This helps adjust my attitude on a daily basis and enables me to deal with all kinds of clients (internal and external) who come here from different backgrounds," said Nawabi. "Most of my co-workers are surprised when they meet me in person and when they leave with smiles and chuckles, and in the meantime, they get the help and assistance they were seeking.

"Our organization has a tremendous group of people who care for each other, who work as a team toward one common goal and that is to serve our customers and clients with respect and dignity by providing timely services that enable them to continue their lives with common decency," said Nawabi.

Nawabi has been with the Agency for more than five years and has been a supervisor for a little more than one year. He is intrigued by hi-tech gadgets and computer technology and spends his time away from work traveling and learning different languages and cultures. He speaks eight languages fluently: English, Farsi, Pashtu, Urdu, Hindi, Panjabi, Hindko (or Seraiki) and Zargari. He also speaks some Spanish, Arabic and Kurdish.

"It's hard to explain in words how good of an employee, supervisor and team player Zia is," said one of his colleagues.

### 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



## Community 'STARS' Honored



The Health and Human Services Agency's East Region was honored with a 'STARS' Award for its innovative Neighborhood for Kids program. Several staff that work on the program were on hand to receive the award from Commission on Children, Youth and Families Executive Director **Tonya Torosian**, far right.



Wesley Davenport, left, a youth advisor for Leadership Empowers All Possibilities, was honored with the Youth Leadership Award. He also entertained at the breakfast.

Lynda Sparks, below left, was given the Family Leadership 'STAR' Award. Sparks is a foster mother who lost her home to the October, 2007 wild fires. She received the award from Judge Susan Huguenor, right.



Support children and parents in our community

Take a positive perspective

Address the issues

Recognize that parenting can be challenging and offer support

Strengthen coping skills

The San Diego County Commission on Children, Youth and Families honored nine 'STARS' of our community at their 2008 STARS Breakfast and Community Forum.

Dennis Leggett,  
SPPSW, HHSA  
East Region

Casey Gwinn  
YWCA of SD  
County

Judge Desiree  
Bruce-Lyle

Talin Yesaie  
Mental Health  
Systems, Inc.

Wesley  
Davenport  
LEAP Youth  
Advisor

Laura Carter  
HealthLink PHN  
East Region

Neighborhood  
For Kids  
HHSA East  
Region

Lynda Sparks  
Foster Mother

Christopher  
Davis, SD County  
Sheriffs Dept.

# HHSA connection



## Laying the Foundation for a Safe Start

More than 500 individuals attended San Diego County's 2nd annual Safe Start San Diego conference sponsored by the Agency, First 5 California, the Commission on Children Youth and Families, the San Diego Domestic Violence Council and the National Safe Start Center. This two-day event featured leading local and national experts in the fields of domestic violence and child maltreatment.

The theme of this year's conference, Collaboration and Partnerships, was selected to help improve outcomes for children and families impacted or at-risk of domestic violence. Conference speakers illustrated approaches and models that have proven effective including model collaborative partnerships, parenting programs, and prevention approaches. Highlighting the newly developed and county-wide Public Health Nursing protocol, the different roles and responsibilities of various local public and private systems in the identification, screening, and assessment of children's exposure to domestic violence was emphasized during this event, with a special emphasis placed on early childhood and family-centered practices.

To learn more about childhood exposure to violence, visit the [National Safe Start Center's web site](#).

**HHSA employees have saved thousands of dollars and earned money for their great suggestions. You could be next! Submit your great ideas to [DIBBS](#).**

## Did You Know?

### New Online Application System - NeoGov

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) recently launched a new online job application system called NeoGov. Here are some of the benefits of the system:

- Save an application at any step and return later
- Store key information that pre-populates when completing future applications
- Apply without revealing applicant's full Social Security number
- Receive email notification when recruitments open
- Preview supplemental questions prior to applying
- Review benefit plans for each recruitment
- Check the status of an application
- Separate link for promotional opportunities

DHR encourages you to try out the new system and see how easy it is to apply online. For more information, [click here](#).

## North Central Drill Focuses on Anthrax Threat



It was a normal spring day on April 29th at the Linda Vista Bay-side Community Center. Seniors participating in the Senior Lunch program were just completing their meals and the Bayside Kids After-School Program was about to get underway when suddenly all attention turned to an "anthrax attack." Instead of chaos and panic there was order as a large number of people began calmly going through lines to receive simulated oral antibiotics.

Fortunately, this was not the real thing but a Point-of-Dispensing drill to help prepare Health and Human Services Agency North Central Region staff to dispense medications to the community in the event of a major disaster or health emergency. The mock drill involved community volunteers who acted as patients and a cross-section of HHSA staff who ran logistics and supported the operation.

"Bayside Community Center is particularly sensitive to the needs of vulnerable populations. Our main service area is Linda Vista, an underserved community, with a significant newcomer, minority, and low-income population, including a large senior population and over 4,000 children," said Bayside Executive Director Jorge Riquelme.

As part of the drill, the Agency efficiently moved "patients" through several stations. North Central Public Health Manager **Maureen Brewer** noted, "While we didn't give out real medication for the drill, exercises like this help the County and community agencies like Bayside Community Center respond to the needs of diverse communities in the event of disaster."

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** - Jean M. Shepard

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency

**Editor:** Tom Christensen

### Section Editors

Aging & Independence Services: Denise Nelesen  
Alcohol & Drug Services: Martha Armenta  
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](mailto: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.

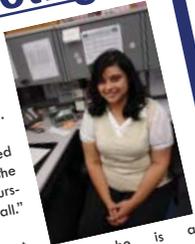
"I love football!" said the self-described football fanatic. "My favorite day of the week is Sunday..., Monday... and Thursday during the playoffs. I live for football."

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."

