

FEBRUARY 2008



HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

A San Pasqual Academy Shining Star



James J. Monroe

James Monroe, 17, a senior at San Pasqual Academy, has earned the honor of having his original script, *Step by Step*, professionally produced at the Lyceum Theatre in Horton Plaza by the Playwrights Project. James entered his work, along with 288 other writers, in the California Young Playwrights Contest and was selected as one of four new artists featured in the 23rd season of Plays by Young Writers. Monroe's play will run from January 31st to February 10th.

James is not new to the Playwrights Project, a non-profit organization "dedicated to promoting literacy, communication skills and creativity through drama-based activities." He was part of the Project's intensive school playwriting residency program for three years, which nurtured his talent and confidence to submit *Step by Step* for production consideration.

You can see *Step by Step*, presented by the Playwrights Project on:

Sat., Feb. 2nd at 7:30 p.m.
 Wed., Feb. 6th at 10 a.m.
 Fri., Feb. 8th at 10 a.m.
 Sat., Feb 9th at 7:30 p.m.
 Sun., Feb. 10th at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 for general public or \$15 for students, seniors (62 and over) and military.

Step by Step will be directed by Esther Emery and "focuses on a teenager in the foster care system who is so determined to find his birth mother that he considers going AWOL from his group home placement."

A shining star as a young playwright, James is also an honors student in school, captain of the CIF League Champion Academy Dragons 8-Man Football team, a Class of 2007 recipient of the San Diego Chargers Champions Scholarship, and a leader on the residential education campus.

For a complete performance schedule of Plays by Young Writers and information on purchasing tickets, you can visit the [Playwrights Project website](#).



From the Director's Desk

Jean M. Shepard, HHSa Director

Last year marked the tenth anniversary of a defining moment in our County's history. In 1997, the County Board of Supervisors voted to merge two large departments and four smaller departments to form the Health and Human Services Agency. The redesign brought about a significant transformation in the delivery of health and human services in San Diego County.



I've been asked many times if the creation of the Agency has been successful. I would say, unequivocally – yes! Through the creation of HHSa we've promoted innovative services, demonstrated tangible outcomes and achieved positive changes in the communities we serve.

Merging programs within one agency has allowed us to work seamlessly across program lines. Notable accomplishments include: bridging the generational gap through Aging & Independence Services and Child Welfare Services programs; providing life-saving services through partnerships in Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Services; and improving the health of our youth through home visits and caregiver services offered by Public Health Services and Children Welfare Services.

These success stories, and others, can be attributed to the incredible efforts of HHSa employees. Your inventive ideas, adaptability and dedication to the clients and communities we serve are evident in the progress we have realized in the past ten years. Thank you for "Making a Difference Every Day." I look forward to working with you to achieve another decade of innovation and excellence.

Jean M. Shepard

Kudos!

From **Stephanie VanGaasbeck**, Human Resources Specialist:

"I want to thank **Sharney McLaughlin**, Health Information Specialist, South Region, for all her help with the Health Fair. **Angie Pimental**, Senior Clerk, South Region, was such a help with the door prizes and assisting me with the signs. She demonstrated what customer service is all about. I also want to thank **Cindy Gregory**, South Region Facilities Manager, for assisting me with storing the giveaways we had for the health fair. She was right there when we needed her.

"These people and their staff made it so much easier to get ready for the Health Fair and help make the South Bay Fair so successful."

Compliance Office:
(619) 515-4244

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

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

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with
HHSa Director Director of Operations
Jean M. Shepard Paula Landau-Cox

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

CONGRATULATIONS SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY DRAGONS!



on your third straight
San Diego County
8-Man Football Championship

Don't Leave Possible EITC Benefits Hanging

Did you know that January 31st was National Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day? Established in 1975 by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program was created with the goal of lifting low-income working families and individuals out of poverty. Since the program's countywide implementation in 2003, over \$16 million EITC tax dollars have been returned to our communities. To date, the EITC program remains one of the most effective anti-poverty strategies, helping individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency and greater financial stability.

For tax year 2007, individuals and families may receive between \$428 and \$4,716 from the IRS by claiming the EITC. Single filers who earned less than \$12,590 may receive as much as \$428 in credit. Additionally, many families may qualify for up to \$1,000 for each child with the Child Tax Credit. For more information, and to find a free tax preparation site near you, visit the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov.

EITC Assistance Locations

Central: Home Start - Mid City 619-283-3624

East: Home Start - El Cajon 619-283-3624

North Central: SAY San Diego 858-974-3603

North Coastal: North County Lifeline – Oceanside 760-757-0118

North Inland: Interfaith Community Services - 760-489-6380

South: South Bay Community Services - 619-420-3620 or
MAAC – National City 619-472-2900



Reading Program a 'ROR'-ing Success

All three of the North Regions' Public Health Centers participate in the Reach Out and Read (ROR) program by providing new books to children seen at the Child Health and Youth Clinics. The program supports the North Regions' Initiative that champions Healthy Communities and Lifestyles. "I have to tell you, the difference in our lobby is something to see," said **Kitty Roche**, North Inland Public Health Nurse Manager. "Kids that used to run around and scream now pick up the books, and their parents are reading to them."

The national ROR program received the 2007 Confucius Prize for Literacy, one of five United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Literacy Prizes. The award recognizes ROR's work in the U.S. in reaching low-income children who are most at risk of school failure by offering literacy guidance to their families and promoting a reading culture. This program is an excellent way for North Regions to advance the goals of their Healthy Communities and Lifestyles Initiative.

The Reach Out and Read San Diego program, funded through the First 5 Commission in April 2007, is required to be self-supporting after two years. The North Regions' Public Health Centers are seeking ways to fund the program beyond that period. North Inland Public Health Center is raising funds through an innovative recycling program to buy used children's books.

"It's wonderful to see a child light up when we give them their book," commented North Central Public Health Nurse Manager **Maureen Brewer**. "You just know you are doing a great thing for them." The Public Health Centers have set a goal of distributing 300 books to children in each of the regions by the end of fiscal year 2007-08.



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.



Arnold De Guzman

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.”

Public Health Nurses Conduct Operational Analysis

Staff involved with the implementation of the Mobile Remote Workforce (MRW) Project goals and strategies recently completed an operational analysis of an electronic health record. A product by CareFacts was selected for analysis because it incorporates a standardized nursing terminology called the Omaha Classification System and because the company has demonstrated success working with Public Health Departments, including Public Health Nursing.

An operational assessment team was assembled consisting of all levels of PHN staff, invitees from enterprise-wide programs who may benefit, and information technology staff. Over a four-month period, the assessment team performed an in-depth analysis of a software program with favorable findings.

A summary of the operational assessment team findings was provided to HHSa PHN Managers and Supervisors in December. Findings included positive outcomes for documentation of current nursing programs for PHN home visit activity; potential for documentation of aggregate and multidisciplinary activity; and potential for billing, reporting and time study data collection.

The next step is an analysis by Information Technology staff to determine if the software meets County IT standards.



Left to Right: **Chyrel Ramirez**, PHN II South Region; **Jeri Pechtel**, PHN IV East; **Laura Carter**, PHN III East; **Carol Judkins**, PHN Manager Retiree PHN Admin; **Linda Lake**, Chief PHN Admin; **Vivian Demaree**, PHN IV North Coastal; **Whitney Pinto**, PHN II North Central; **Robin Anderson**, PHN II North Coastal; **Ofelia Gamez**, PHN II Central; **Ute Powell**, PHN II South (Not pictured: **Gerri Matthiesen**, PHN IV North Inland, **Angie Durdiev**, PHN II East, **Julianna Rhinehart**, PHN II North Inland and **Nahid Rastakhiz**, IT)



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INTERGENERATIONAL GAMES: WHAT'S AGE GOT TO DO WITH IT?



Bridging the gap between young and old, the Intergenerational Games encourages more insight into the lives of each age group.

During recent events in East County and South Bay, the spirit of the games was on display: a young girl was able to let go of her lucky sweater that she had not parted with all year, as it casually hung on the shoulders of her older adult partner who had quickly become a trusted mentor for the young child. Others smiled as they indulged in the sharing of common interests through sports activities and trivia challenges.

The recreational activities improved healthy behaviors and relationships for all ages. Each individual's biological age did not play a factor in the day's event, but served as a tool to break down misperceptions. One child wrote in his post-event essay, "I used to think old was seventy-nine, but now I think old is dead."

The event fostered a strong sense of community connection with the elementary school children and active older adult participants. The day reached beyond the needs and interests of the individuals involved and will continue to enrich the community as a whole.



Somali Social Worker Supervisor is One-of-a-kind

Mahamed Mohamud, Supervising Social Worker, Northeast Family Resource Center (Central Region) arrived in San Diego in June, 2000 as a Somali refugee, with the assistance of a U.S. Department of State program that has resettled more than 10,000 Somalis in this county.

Arriving in San Diego alone with no relatives in the region, Mohamud faced the daunting challenges of adapting to a new language, culture, and country. Determined to succeed, he was hired by Catholic Charities as an immigration case-worker and simultaneously enrolled as a full-time college student. He completed a B.A. in Sociology at Springfield College.

Mohamud became interested in a career with the County of San Diego while working at Catholic Charities. He was hired by HHSA in December, 2004, and was promoted several times over the next three years to his current classification as Supervising Social Worker for CalWORKS. Mohamud is, to his knowledge, the first and the only Somali Social Work Supervisor in the State.

He now oversees eight social workers, who assist clients in obtaining services to become employed and self-sufficient. He takes great satisfaction in his work, and says that nothing pleases him more than to hear a client tell him to close their case because they now have the skills and resources they need.

Mohamud's dedication to helping his community doesn't end when he leaves his office. For the past three years, he has devoted his free time to serving as a crisis intervention volunteer. He responds with the San Diego Police Department (SDPD) to crime scenes, providing victims with emotional and logistical support, resources, and referrals. His knowledge of Somali, Turkish, Arabic, Russian and English, as well as his extensive familiarity with county and community resources, makes him an invaluable asset to the SDPD Crisis Intervention program.

Mohamud believes wholeheartedly in his obligation to serve as a role model for the Somali community. He strives to continually improve the quality of his program and knows that helping clients achieve self-sufficiency will ultimately contribute to a rise in the overall quality of life for all San Diego County residents.

He has taken advantage of several classes offered by County Training & Development to enhance his professional growth. He has ambitions to continue his education by pursuing a Master's degree in Public Relations at SDSU.



Mahamed Mohamud, a Supervising Social Worker at the Northeast Family Resource Center, may be the only Somalian social work supervisor in California.

AIS Advisory Council Chair Receives Statewide Award

Bob Prath, chair of HHSA Aging & Independence Service's Advisory Council, has received California's 2007 AARP Andrus Award for Community Service, the association's most prestigious and visible volunteer award for community service.

Prath believes that volunteering is the ultimate healthy aging activity. He has been a volunteer in health advocacy, disaster preparedness and intergenerational work, as well as projects involving mobility and transportation.

He has served AARP as a regional mobilizer, regional volunteer leader and, most recently, as the state coordinator for Community Presence teams, managing regional volunteer leaders throughout the state.

Prath and his wife, Karen, can often be found volunteering side-by-side at both AARP and AIS events.



Fallbrook Community is Receptive

North Coastal PHNs Find Success With Diabetes Program

Finding a receptive audience for your message gives you a head start at success. That's good news for the Fallbrook Diabetes Program that the North Coastal Public Health Nurses (PHNs) are working on with community partners.

"We have found parents were really receptive to teaching from Public Health Nurses and the follow up done by San Diego State University students," said **Audrey Lopez**, North Coastal Public Health Center and Public Nursing Manager.

"When parents were told that their children had a problem, they wanted to help."

The program originated at a community meeting in Fallbrook that involved HHSA Public Health Nurses. "The biggest obstacle was finding medical providers for kids that didn't have one," said Lopez. "We started beating the bushes to find a doctor to serve the kids."

PHNs chose to target fifth graders, aiming to educate them early about the dangers of diabetes. This required the cooperation of local schools to allow PHNs access to the students and classrooms.

"The schools have an awareness of the problem," said Lopez. "They have been very cooperative. It's a good age to catch kids behavior-wise."

Many of the fifth graders were already overweight, and the program is designed to continue their education well past the end of the school year. Monitoring progress is a slow process because the program is working on lifestyle changes.

"We go into the home and do teaching with the whole family," said Lopez. "This is pure public health nursing."

The program got off the ground in 2005 and now the Community Collaborative in Fallbrook is managing the program.

There are currently two PHNs and a HealthLink nurse working on the program. "The HealthLink nurse was instrumental in the beginning because she was bilingual," said Lopez.



HHSA's Alcohol and Drug Services hosted a training session for Southern California counties.

Alcohol and Drug Services is a Role Model for Other Counties

HHSA's Alcohol and Drug Services (ADS) recently hosted a California Addiction Training and Education Series (CATES) training. The training focused on improving client engagement and retention in treatment. More than 130 participants came from various Southern California counties to attend the training that provided professional staff with Continuing Education Units (CEU's).

The training presented the concept of process improvement planning by making one small process improvement change at a time. The participants were given the opportunity to develop and implement "Change" teams and develop a quick process improvement strategy to reduce wait times, increase client engagement/participation in programs, decrease no shows and increase client retention and program completion.

If this all sounds familiar, it is because HHSA has a similar process called Continuous Improvement Projects (CIPs) where county employees are tasked to find ways to increase efficiencies and work more effectively. Offering trainings such as this extends the County's Continuous Improvement initiative to our service providers. The training also offered an opportunity for ADS contracting officer technical representatives and service providers to work together on access to care issue as well as treatment and care improvement strategies, which are included in the HHSA Strategy Agenda.

ADS is recognized by other counties for its innovative approach to addressing program and client needs. Providing training opportunities to staff and ADS community partners is a priority for ADS and demonstrates a continued commitment to excellence.



Agency and SDSU Continue to Strengthen Relationship

HHSA's North Regions and the San Diego State University (SDSU) School of Public Health continue to expand their partnership. Graduate students studying under Dr. Moshe Engelberg actively collaborated with North Regions managers and staff members to develop communication plans for several local projects.

The students developed a health communication plan with specific recommendations to ensure eligible individuals and families have the opportunity to participate in the Food Stamp program. HHSA's Family Resource Centers (FRC) engaged in strategic planning efforts, partnering with community organizations and developing strategies to promote Food Stamps as a family nutrition program.

"Working with SDSU helped us to gain a better understanding of how to improve communication and barriers faced with our communities," said **Ida Bell**, Kearny Mesa Family Resource Center Assistant Manager.

In a separate project, North Central Region's Healthy Communities & Lifestyles Committee, under the leadership of the North Central Region Public Health Center, is partnering with community-based organizations to promote safe and walkable communities within North Central Region. The group is addressing the childhood obesity epidemic by focusing on environmental barriers and health disparities related to physical activity in the Linda Vista community.

A health communications plan was needed to engage key leaders and community members of all different ages, cultural backgrounds and languages in the Linda Vista area. Plans include the Walking School Bus model and a project called Taking Back the Park. "It's been great having access to these students – normally you'd have to pay a consulting agency to do this," said Public Health Manager and Committee Co-chair **Maureen Brewer**.

Sycuan donates \$10,000 to Polinsky

The Polinsky Children's Center gratefully received a generous donation of \$10,000 when the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation hosted its Second Annual Gift Giving Ceremony.

The mid-morning festive breakfast ceremony, held outdoors at the Sycuan Casino, was feted by costumed carolers while Sycuan staff presented the donations with Sycuan Tribal Chairman Daniel J. Tucker. Sycuan's funding priority is to pay tribute to some of the city's finest individuals and organizations who have greatly devoted their efforts to improving the quality of life in San Diego.

"There is no better time than the holiday season for the tribe and our employees to share in the joy that comes with giving back to the community," said Chairman Tucker.

Legacy Corps Wins National Award

The Legacy Corps, a program of HHSA's Aging & Independence Services that pairs senior mentors with teens to provide respite for family caregivers, is receiving one of three national Awards of Excellence from the 2007 Older Volunteers Enrich America program sponsored by MetLife Foundation. The award program, administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), recognizes organizations nationwide for effective recruitment and engagement of older volunteers.

The Legacy Corps was selected for this honor because its "practices in recruitment, training, retention and recognition of older volunteers set a standard of practice for others," according to the n4a press release.

The program is recruiting senior mentors, plus teens and young adults, for its fourth year, which begins April 5. Benefits to the team members include a monthly living allowance of \$200, an educational award of \$1,250 for a year of service, an opportunity to continue learning, and the chance to make a difference for caregivers and older adults.

The program is part of a national project with the University of Maryland Center on Aging and AIS. San Diego is one of nine sites for this international initiative. AIS partners with New Alternatives, Inc., to coordinate the program.

To find out additional information about the Legacy Corps and/or to volunteer, contact New Alternatives at (619) 253-5155.

Mexican Consulate Honors HHSA



Dr. Wilma Wooten, right, received certificates of recognition from the Consulate General of Mexico for six County of San Diego HHSA programs: Cure TB; Dental Health Initiative: Share the Care; HHSA, South Region; Office of Border Health; San Diego Immunization Branch and San Diego Kids Health Assurance Network (KHAN). The certificates were presented during a Binational Health Week reception held at the Consulate General of Mexico.

A Quilt of Hope and Dreams

The hopes and dreams of those wanting to adopt a child through San Diego County Adoptions were captured and brought together in the form of a beautiful quilt.

Families approved for adoption came together in May 2007 with children needing a forever family at the adoption section's annual Spring Fling event. As part of the event, families were asked to draw a picture on a fabric square of what adoption means to them. The fifty or so fabric squares were then made into a hand-crafted, exquisite quilt that is truly a work of art.

The quilt was fashioned together by a volunteer who is herself an adoptive parent. The quilt squares are framed by a purple, marbled fabric. Purple is the Adoption Program signature color, and it beautifully accents the cream colored fabric squares. San Diego County Adoptions is skillfully stitched across the top and bottom of the quilt.

The quilt will be displayed at the Levant Street Health and Human Services Office so that this very meaningful and inspiring work of art can be appreciated by all.



The San Diego County Adoptions quilt, with 50-plus squares put together by families approved for adoptions, will be on display at the Levant Street office for people to stop by and admire.

Kudos!

Stephanie Gunning and **Regina Foster** in North Coastal who were key staff in coordinating the North Regions annual Toys for Tots program. Coordinating family distribution were **Deborah Allison** and **Carmen Meraz** in North Inland; **Craig Maze** at Kearny Mesa Family Resource Center; and **Kathleen Kremer** at the Mission Valley Family Resource Center.

Numerous staff gave generously of their time and volunteered at each site to unload, sort and distribute toys to more than 1,600 low-income children. Toys were available for children of all ages through the Oceanside, Escondido, Fallbrook, Ramona, Kearny Mesa and Mission Valley offices.

Congratulations to the recipients of the first-ever North Regions Starfish Awards. They were selected by the entire North Regions General Management Team for their Excellence, Innovation, Quality and Leadership.

This year four recipients were honored for their valuable contribution to North Regions: County Counsel, HHSA Financial and Support Division, HHSA Information Technology Division and HHSA Office of Media and Public Affairs.

New Human Resource Tools for Supervisors Rolled Out

One of the recommendations of the Employee Satisfaction Committee was to provide all supervisors and managers with self awareness and development opportunities in the area of communication. Improving these skills is expected to enhance interactions between employees and their supervisors by creating a work environment that is both productive and comfortable for all employees.

To address how to provide supervisors and managers with development opportunities, a committee called "360" was formed in 2007. This Committee developed a number of recommendations. One recommendation was to send a monthly topic to supervisors and managers on improving and maintaining strong communications with their employees. Another was to develop an intranet site which supervisors can utilize to sharpen their supervisory skills by tapping into resources and tools, and review all policies and procedures pertaining to supervision. The intranet may also include a mechanism that would allow supervisors and managers to ask advice from the HHSA Human Resources Division. The 360 Committee also plans to pilot a 360 degree assessment tool among the Managers Development Institute (MDI) participants in an effort to increase supervisor self-awareness.

The first monthly topic on the Supervisor Monthly Topic series was issued in January. The web site for supervisors and managers is currently under development and is expected to be in full operation by the end of this month.