



The HHSA Connection

OCTOBER 2005

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Promoting Safe & Livable Communities - Working for Prevention & Protection!

Hurricane Effects Felt In San Diego

HHSA Comes Together to Help, and to Learn More About Preparing

H HSA rallied staff and equipment to set up a station for providing services to evacuees from Hurricane Katrina, at the Red Cross Family Assistance Center (FAC). Located in the Grantville neighborhood, the FAC is a one-stop resource where evacuees can find all of the services they need from government and community organizations, to help put their lives back on track.

HSA is on-site offering a range of self-sufficiency services, including emergency food stamps, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Public Health Nursing has also provided medical assistance to evacuees, and Agency Mental Health staff were available to help with crisis counseling. The County Department of Housing and Community Development is also at the FAC to assist people with low income and Section 8 housing.

The Agency also assisted the local school districts to help evacuees obtain vaccination records and other information through the Immunization Registry.

More than 1500 evacuees have come through the FAC for services. Only about 100 came here as part of an "airlift" out of the hurricane affected areas. Most came to San Diego on their own to stay with friends or relatives.

Preparing San Diego

San Diego County, working behind the scenes, has an extensive system in place should a disaster strike. In addition to emergency response, the County is also focusing on business continuity planning (BCP), so the County can continue to operate its normal services during an emergency. Several Agency facilities must maintain 24/7 operations, including Polinsky Children's Center and Edgemoor Hospital.

The countywide BCP team is co-chaired by **Renée Sherrill** of the Agency's Financial and Support Services Division, and **Leslie Luke**, of the Office of Emergency Services, who report to **Harold Tuck** and **Bob Copper**, Deputy CAOs for the Public Safety Group and Land Use and Environment Group, respectively

The collaboration of representatives from across the Agency and across the County will result in more thorough and extensive preparations.



BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

A Message from Jean Shepard Agency Director

Despite heavy news coverage, the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina can seem very far away from us in San Diego County. However, our residents are no exception when it comes to demonstrating a generous and united spirit to help those in need.



I am proud of the services we have been able to offer the evacuees who have come to our county, and want to express my appreciation to the HHSA staff who responded on extremely short notice to serve those in need. While we are all aware that we may be called upon in times of emergency, it is impressive to see the actual response.

I am also proud of the efforts and contributions made by Agency employees on their own time, through church and community groups, at the 211 information line, and in countless other ways. We are also learning a great deal from this event, and adding that knowledge to our own disaster preparations. Thank you for the outstanding work you do!

Jean Shepard

Time for a Shot in the Arm

Flu Season - it's Back!

It's fall, and time to think about getting flu vaccine. The flu is a contagious respiratory disease caused by influenza viruses. For most people, catching the flu can mean feeling miserable and missing work or school. For older people and those with certain chronic health conditions, the flu is more serious and can lead to complications like pneumonia and other health problems.

The best protection against flu is to get vaccinated every year, when possible. And, despite what some may believe, flu vaccine **cannot** give you the flu.

In addition to getting vaccinated, take these other steps to avoid catching the flu:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
3. Stay away from people who are sick.
4. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
5. Get regular exercise, enough rest, and eat healthy, balanced meals.
6. Stay home when you are sick.

These habits can help protect you and those around you from diseases all year long, not just during the flu season.

Always check first with your health care provider or health plan for flu and flu vaccine information. Also, you can visit the following Web sites, which are updated regularly:

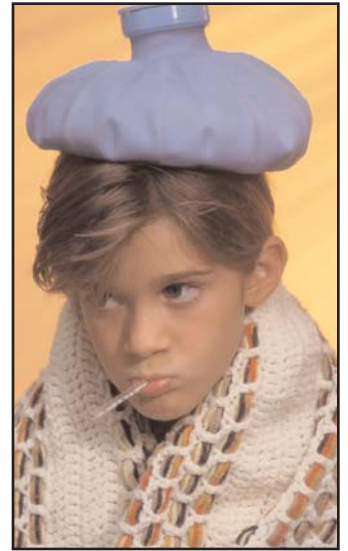
[San Diego County Immunization Initiative](#)

[HHSA's Flu Update](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

In October and November, the following resources are also available:

Go to www.sdchip.org/immunize.html for local information on sites giving flu shots, or call the San Diego CHIP Adult Immunization Information Line at (877) 358-0202.



Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is asking healthy people to wait to get their flu shots until October 24 and after.

Director's Office

Taking a Hard Look at Our Effectiveness

Performance Diagnostics Workshops

What is *performance diagnostics*? Simply put, it's looking at what has happened, identifying what went well, and what needs improvement. Are we meeting the needs of our clients? Are we generating support for our efforts? But it's not enough for the Agency to understand a given situation - the next step is to communicate the outcomes of our work.

The County has embarked on a major performance management initiative. As part of this effort, **Jean Shepard** asked all Agency managers to enroll in a "Getting from Measurement to Meaning" workshop. In the dynamic, half-day session, Instructor Kevin Baum, of *inCentergy*, draws from his own experience as a career fire chief. He explains and gives examples of how to measure our performance, use data to diagnose problems, and engage everyone, especially front-line staff, in finding solutions. And, he emphasizes the importance of telling our stories to the public in a meaningful way - whether the performance was positive or negative. In fact, sharing a negative performance honestly can be a perfect start of a call for help from the community, and the beginning of turning the situation toward improvement.

Workshops are being conducted through early December. For more information on enrollment and times, contact Strategic Planning and Evaluation at (619) 685-2524.

Raising the Bar

Integrating Services to Tackle Domestic Violence

In observance of October as *Domestic Violence Awareness Month*, South Region is pleased to share an exciting County initiative that aims to put a stop to the harmful effects that exposure to domestic violence has on our communities. It's called *Raising the Bar: Models of Excellence in San Diego Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Systems for Children and Families*.

Domestic violence usually brings to mind violence between adult intimate partners, but children who witness domestic violence are also victims of this problem. An estimated seven million children witness the abuse of a parent or adult caregiver each year in the U.S., and the trauma resulting from this exposure can have significant negative effects on children's emotional, social, and cognitive development. Even more concerning is that these children are at increased risk for developing into adult perpetrators and victims, who will parent future generations of children susceptible to domestic violence.

In HHSA, many of us encounter families experiencing domestic violence, who come seeking health or self-sufficiency services, as well as assistance from other County and community-based domestic violence programs. Unfortunately, domestic violence services in the community are equipped to respond to the needs of only a small proportion of children.

The *Raising the Bar* initiative aims to create a comprehensive, integrated system of services for them and their families. While San Diego is recognized across the country for its model programs for children and families, this initiative will go even further, by developing a child-focused and family-centered service delivery system, to promote healing and health among individuals affected by domestic violence.

Institutional and societal changes can only begin with a comprehensive network of service providers that integrate expertise, resources, and services to eliminate domestic violence in their communities. The *Raising the Bar* initiative will address and prevent the harmful effects that exposure to violence has on San Diego's youth and families.

For more information about the *Raising the Bar* initiative, contact the Office of Violence Prevention at (858) 581-5800.



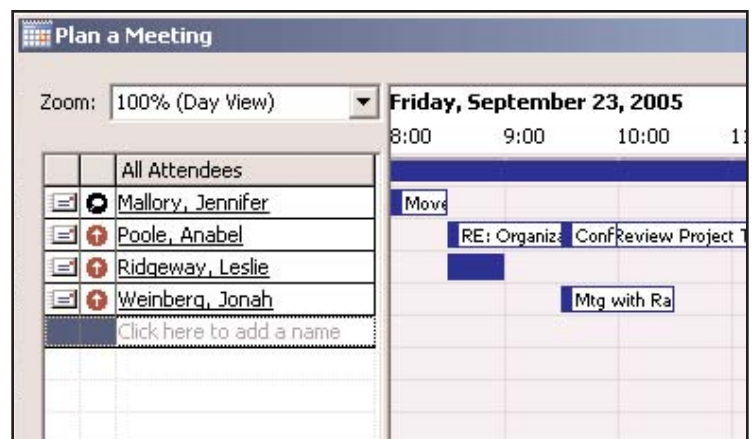
Domestic violence hurts witnesses, too.

Information Technology

Setting Up Meetings - It's a Snap!

Use the Tool Right at Your Fingertips

You can set up meetings using your Outlook Calendar feature. In Outlook, just click on the calendar icon, go to the top of the screen and click on Actions. Choose "Plan a Meeting." On the left hand side of the dialog box that pops up, type in the names of the people you want to invite. In the right side, you can see their availability. When you find a date and time that works, click on the button that says "Make a Meeting" and you fill in all the details and comments. You can also look at availability in a regular appointment window - just click on the "Scheduling" tab.



Reading, Writing, and Getting Healthy

HealthLink North County: Connecting for Healthy School Children

A family of four at an Escondido preschool needs health insurance. A child at an Oceanside elementary school needs glasses, but has no resources. A student in San Marcos has advanced dental disease, but no dental coverage. Aside from the typical school health issues, these are just a few examples of additional challenges schools face now. With fewer school nurses, larger school populations and increased complexity in health issues, schools and districts need all the support they can get to ensure their students are healthy and ready to learn.

One such support program in the North Coastal and North Inland regions is *HealthLink North County*, a school-health collaborative. *HealthLink North County* works to provide the link between the Agency and community programs for school-age children and their families, and the school personnel from the 22 North San Diego County school districts that serve those families. Partners include school nurses, community clinics, local and countywide community-based programs, public health nurses and other Agency staff.

In addition to networking and resource sharing, the more than 140 participants of *HealthLink North County* also participate in various regional and countywide efforts. Some examples include: the 2005 School Food Summit, the North County Dental Task Force, the American Cancer Society's Coordinated School Health program, the County Office of Education's Safe Schools Unit, and the upcoming 2006 School Fitness Summit.

Future directions for *HealthLink North County* include the addition of two dedicated public health nurses to take referrals for school-age children and help link them to services for acute or chronic conditions that may be interfering with school attendance or performance.

For more information, see [HealthLink North County](#) on the Agency's Web site.



A School Health Initiative of the
County of San Diego
Health and Human Services Agency

Strategy and Planning Division

Willkommen Ralf Schaefer

HHSa Goes International

The Strategy and Planning Division (SPD) is host to a visitor from Germany - **Dr. Ralf Schaefer** - who has come here from his hometown of Stuttgart to learn how business is conducted in HHSa.

Schaefer, a PhD in law, is here as part of a special program offered by his federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, in southwest Germany. The program, *Learning Academy*, teaches participants business skills, and includes a three-month visit with a foreign administration. Out of 120,000 applicants, Schaefer was one of 20 selected.

"I'm very happy to be here," he said. "The people in SPD do a fine job. I've always wanted to come to America."

Schaefer says he's particularly interested in how new management methods are being applied throughout the Agency, and at the end of his stay in November, he will write a report that suggests ways to incorporate what he has learned at HHSa into his state government in Germany.

If you would like to have Schaefer sit in on a meeting or attend an event that will help him learn more about how HHSa does business, contact **Lynn Neal**, at (619) 515-6933.



Visitor Dr. Ralf Schaefer wants to learn all about American government - and more!

Hope is Available

National Depression Screening Day

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one out of every five adults may experience depression some time in their lives. Everyone, including children, can develop serious clinical depression which, left untreated, increases the risk of suicide.

National Depression Screening Day (NDS), October 6, is a national outreach, education and screening event that began 15 years ago and is held the first full week of every October. Today, NDS offers both in-person and online screening for depression, bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. For on-line screening, visit the NDS Web site www.mentalhealthscreening.org and www.depression-screening.org sponsored by the National Mental Health Association.

Locally, *San Diego Depression Screening Week* evolved from NDS. Last October in San Diego County, mental health clinicians conducted 1,336 in-person confidential screenings, to provide educational and treatment resources as well as provider referrals. The Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) is supporting the San Diego community's involvement in the San Diego Depression Screening Week. This year, in observance of *National Depression Screening Day*, clinicians will conduct **free in-person mental health screenings in several locations October 2-8**. Call CHIP for more up-to-date site location and other information at (888) 565-4228 or visit www.sdchip.org. Announcements will be posted on the Network of Care Web site for Mental Health: www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/mh



North Regions

It's Time to ACT

Reaching Children in Need of Health Care Coverage

The *Access to Care for Children Team* (ACT) Initiative is making great strides toward its goal of ensuring the estimated 53,000 eligible yet uninsured children in San Diego County have access to, use, and retain their health care coverage. Last year alone, an additional 8,536 children were enrolled in Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. This 3.8 percent increase in enrollment far exceeded the Agency target of 1 percent for the fiscal year. Leading the charge on numerous efforts are core programs such as Maternal, Child and Family Health Services, San Diego Kids Health Assurance Network (SD-KHAN), the Health Coverage Access Division, Family Resource Centers, numerous community partners, ACT support staff and Deputy Director **Nick Macchione**.

New strategies were recently implemented and promise to reach thousands of children in need. Just a few examples include:

- **Outreach** - expand the SD-KHAN school lunch flyer program into additional school districts, and implement numerous cross-threading activities working with other Agency departments.
- **Enrollment** - put into operation an automatic computer referral process to SD-KHAN, and improve the intake and screening process for Medi-Cal applications.
- **Retention** - implement a "help team" to assist Family Resource Centers, and develop a reminder renewal sticker for benefit identification cards.

Plus, ACT members recently received essential information from the State that will help staff move forward with a study on the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families health coverage gap by analyzing population by census tract. This will be very helpful in planning outreach efforts.

For more information about the ACT Initiative, please contact **Susanne Boston** at (760) 967-4567.

This new section, featuring stories direct from the front lines, meets Quality First goals for Child Welfare Services, the Regional Program Support Division, and the Regions.



Keshawn, ready for a family of his own.

From Child Welfare Services

San Diego County Adoptions Searches Nationwide For Adoptive Placement

San Diego County Adoptions reflects the philosophy that children deserve to grow up in permanent, loving families who are committed to them. Of the approximately 7,000 children in foster care, most children will return to their birth families after the parents receive services to resolve the problems that brought the children into care. Of the children who cannot return home, many will be adopted by the birth relatives or foster parents who have been caring for them for the previous year. However, at any given time, there are approximately 100 to 150 children who do not have anyone willing and able to care for them on a permanent basis and who are waiting for adoptive homes.

San Diego County Adoptions aggressively recruits potential applicant families for these children. You may have seen ads on TV, radio, in the *Union Tribune* as well as community newspapers, or seen some of the recruitment staff and social workers at the San Diego County Fair and at other community events. An active partnership with KFMB's ADOPT 8 continues to feature children available for adoption, as well as follow-up stories about their successful placements. Last year 590 children were placed for adoption and the goal is to increase that number in the coming year.

Sometimes children who are waiting for homes do not have a "match" here in San Diego. When that happens, San Diego County Adoptions works outside the County. Our recruiters and placement staff are familiar with statewide and nationwide agencies, clearinghouses, and websites which specialize in finding homes for "hard-to-place" children, including children over 5, large sibling groups, and children with emotional, behavioral, and medical challenges. In the past year, 25 children who could have been labeled "unadoptable" have been placed, or are in process of being placed, in out-of-county or out-of-state families who are committed to providing stable, loving "forever" homes to these children.

One such child is 12-year old Keshawn, who has been waiting for a family to call his own since becoming a foster child at the age of seven. Unable to reunify with his birth parents, Keshawn was placed locally in group home care. Keshawn participated in efforts to find him an adoptive home by attending annual matching events designed to introduce him to families already approved to adopt, in fun settings such as the annual "Spring Fling Picnic." Keshawn was also featured on "Adopt 8." Once asked what he really wanted his adoptive family to look like, he sighed and answered, "My own."

In the spring of 2005, Adoptions staff made special efforts to locate a placement for a medically challenged 17-year old teen. Via Web sites and networking, a homestudy was located describing a medical doctor in New York who has adopted a number of children of different races, ages, and special needs. When the medically challenged teen found another placement, the same doctor, a woman named Nancy, was told about Keshawn. She was interested in meeting him and he in meeting her. After receiving background information and videos about Keshawn, she flew to San Diego to meet him in June 2005. Keshawn had been told about her and had seen videos and pictures of her home and other children in New York. The trial visit was successful and the communication between Keshawn and his new family is continuing. At the end of August, Nancy returned to California with four of Keshawn's new adoptive siblings and they travelled across the country to introduce Keshawn to his new home.

San Diego County Adoptions believes that what makes a child adoptable is finding the right family for that child, and will make every effort to do that.



San Pasqual Academy News Briefs

The San Pasqual Academy, an innovative residential school for San Diego foster teens, is home to nearly 130 students. In addition to a full-time course load, the students take part in numerous activities that broaden their horizons, and help prepare them for the future. Just a few examples include:

- Students in the summer woodshop class built two sheds for use on campus and a concession stand to be used for football season. Horticulture students began work on a five-acre plot on campus, the start of a campus community garden.
- Several students participated in a Staff Appreciation Day by hosting an ice cream bar for the staff.
- 14 students had the opportunity to learn how to scuba dive in the campus pool. A set of houseparents, who are certified divers, provided the lessons.
- San Pasqual Academy students were shining stars at the 2005 San Diego County Fair's Cinema Summer! They received a total of 51 awards in the categories of Typography, Digital Paint and Illustration, Computer Graphics, and Animation. Two of the students received top honors.
- In July, a new grandparent, **Jeffrey Wheat**, joined the intergenerational program. Mr. Wheat is a Harvard-educated teacher, who is presently teaching at San Diego City College. He is very excited to be part of the program.

For more information about life on campus, take a look at the latest [San Pasqual Academy Bulletin](#).

Save the Date

Working for Communities - Enhancing Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life!

Saturday, October 29

Investment and Retirement Symposium

Learn more about the retirement plans at the County and gain valuable insights into estate planning, management of retirement risks, and investment real estate.

- Half-day workshop
- Holiday Inn on the Bay
- 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- Lunch is included
- \$15.00 per person or \$25.00 per couple
- Offered by Treasurer-Tax Collector **Dan McAllister** and presented by the Deferred Compensation Division.



Seating is limited and pre-registration is required. Please contact **David Baker** at david.baker@sdcounty.ca.gov or go to http://www.sdtreastax.com/edc_info.html for more information.

"Your Money, Your Retirement, Your Future. Isn't it worth it to learn more?"

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with HHSA Director Jean Shepard

- First Friday of each month
- 8:00 a.m. - noon
- (619) 515-6555

Compliance Office:
(619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Hotline:
(866) 549-0004

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

Send in kudos!

Proud of a coworker? Send text (and photos): Jennifer.Mallory@sdcounty.ca.gov - or contact your section editor, listed in the box to the right.

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



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