



# The HHSA Connection

DECEMBER 2005



SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

**Ensuring Operational Excellence!**

## South Region Embraces Change!

### *New Technology Will Bring Growth*

**C**alWIN is the largest automation endeavor the Agency has ever made for a public assistance program. It will be a new way of conducting business, a new way of interacting with clients, workers and supervisors. South Region embraces this change wholeheartedly and looks forward to the challenge of transitioning staff to this new way of business. San Diego County is scheduled to "Go-Live on CalWIN" in June 2006.



South Region staff gear up for new technology.

To assist staff in making this transition a success, South Region has opened up a new Training Lab in its Family Resource Center. The vision and focus is to provide staff with hands-on training and easy accessibility to an area where they can practice and enhance their CalWIN skills. Once we "Go-Live on CalWIN" South Region plans to use the Training Lab as a Conversion Room to continue to assist staff in the transition to CalWIN.

## A Message from Jean Shepard

### *Agency Director*

**F**ifty Agency employees who represent many of the different regions, divisions and programs within HHSA have volunteered to join me in an Agency-wide Employee Satisfaction Workgroup. On November 18, **Paula Landau-Cox**, Director of Operations, and I held our first meeting. We had a lively brainstorming session on "What's right with the Agency and what's not?" Here is an example of some of the issues shared:

**What are we doing right; things that make us feel valued; and**

**things that improve our morale:**

- Regular staff meetings
- Diversity of employees
- Coaching and mentoring
- Quality First
- Casual Fridays
- And many more...

**What is not working; things that made us feel less valued or negatively affect our morale:**

- No such thing as an outstanding performance evaluation
- Poor behavior not dealt with
- Retribution/retaliation for bringing issues up
- Management not seeming to understand workloads and the need to prioritize
- Favoritism in hiring/promotions

- Supervisors lacking interpersonal skills
- And many more...

Our next meeting is December 9, when we will finalize the comments, and move on to major themes and discussions on how to proceed. I will periodically keep you posted on our progress.

On another note, please take this time to enjoy the holidays. I encourage you all to take some time around the holidays to spend time with family and loved ones.

**Happy holidays!**

*Jean M. Shepard*





## Worth a Thousand Words

*Heart Gallery San Diego Introduced to the Community During National Adoption Awareness Month*

**O**n November 2, San Diego County families and community leaders attended the opening of the *Heart Gallery* and the unveiling of the 2006 *Leap of Faith* calendar. The *Heart Gallery* is a San Diego



County Adoption recruitment effort that has also been used across the country in states where recruitment is assertively used to find adoptive families for the most difficult-to-place waiting foster children. At any given time there are up to 150 foster children waiting for adoptive families in San Diego. Each of these children need the permanent connection of a family throughout their lives.

San Diego County Adoptions, with support from The Child Abuse Prevention Foundation and local professional photographers, presented *Heart Gallery* San Diego as an art exhibit of more than 40 captivat-

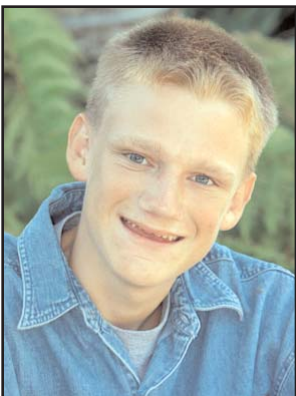
ing photographs featuring children waiting to be adopted and children with successful adoptive placements. The Cohn Restaurant Group hosted the opening at the Prado restaurant in Balboa Park. That evening, individuals were asked to support the critical need for more committed adoptive parents throughout our communities.

The *Heart Gallery* collection is now available for other businesses and organizations in San Diego to reserve for display. San Diego County Adoptions is seeking local venues interested in hosting this powerful recruitment project.

The *Leap of Faith* calendar, also presented to the public that evening, was created with *Heart Gallery* photographs of children who are waiting for permanent parents. These

poignant photographs, which have captured the effervescent spirits of the children, are attractively

displayed in a calendar available from the County Adoption Program for free distribution. Community members are invited to call **1-(877) I Adopt U** to receive a calendar and learn more about the adoption process.



*Children shown here are from the Heart Gallery and Leap of Faith collections.*



## Protecting At-Risk Children in the North Regions

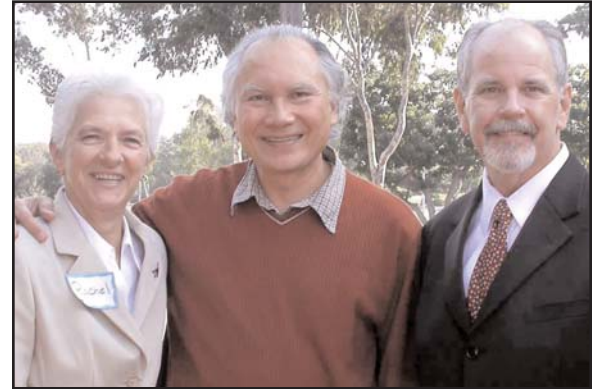
### *Working Together for Results that Work*

The Agency's North Regions hosted two collaborative forums that served as a first step in helping to develop new and innovative strategies for improving and strengthening the Regions' current child welfare system. The events were held on June 30 in the North County, and November 1 in the North Central Region.

The forums were coordinated by the North Regions' *Safer Living Environments Initiatives*, whose overall goal is to create healthy and safe environments for children and families through strong community partnerships and dedicated efforts. More than 100 key community partners participated, including service providers, schools, foster youth and parents, health services, law enforcement officers, government official representatives, and child welfare services partners.

After a brief presentation on the HHSA North Regions Strategic Initiatives, participants listened to an "insider's" view of the foster system - former foster youth presented at both forums, plus a foster parent at the North Central forum. Attendees then engaged in a facilitated discussion to provide input and feedback on five focus areas including asset mapping, collaboration, expectations, barriers/challenges and solutions.

Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** encouraged the participants to continue the momentum gained from the forums to help at-risk children and their families thrive in North Regions, and he noted the tremendous potential to do so with the strategies outlined. All agreed about the importance of continuing to work together and strengthen partnerships by building on the many opportunities that now lie before them. The forums will now serve as catalysts through the *Safer Living Environments Initiatives* to foster future collaboration in creating more shared outcomes for children and families.



North Central Strategic Initiative Community Co-chairs, from left: Rachel Burnage, SAY San Diego (Safer Living Environments); Joel San Juan, Operation Samahan (Healthy Communities and Lifestyles); and Sean Minogue Catholic Charities Family Services (Self-Sufficiency).

# Strategy and Planning

## What's Going on with State and Federal Legislation?

### *Keeping an Eye on those Regulations that Trickle Down to San Diego*

While certain times of year bring big legislative impacts to the County of San Diego, the Agency's legislative team is always monitoring State and federal activities that may affect us down the road. For example, although the State Legislature is in recess until January, Congress continues to work on federal appropriation bills, budget reconciliation, and tax relief. They should have wrapped up work in October, but have been unable to agree on how to reduce federal spending. Changes that may impact Agency customers are being considered in Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF, Child Welfare Services, and Child Support. However, they are still not close to any agreement on what changes should be made. Congress is on recess until December 5, and is expected to work through December trying to reach consensus. If they are unable to reach an agreement, they may have to continue funding at the 2005 level and try to work through their differences next year.

If you are interested in researching legislative news and activities, take a look at [this page](#) for a number of useful links.





## North Regions' Supervisors ADVANCE Forward

### *General Management System in Action*

Rather than "retreating," the North Regions held two special "ADVANCE" days for its supervisors: one for the North Coastal and North Inland Regions on October 18, and another for North Central Region on October 25. Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** felt that an ADVANCE was particularly important for supervisors since they are vital in developing a strength-based organization and integrating key concepts of the General Management System with line staff. Supervisors from all the North Region divisions were included: California Children's Services, Child Welfare Services, Family Resource Centers (FRCs), the Health Coverage Access Division, Public Health Centers (PHCs), and the Fallbrook and Ramona outstations.

The main focus of the ADVANCE was centered around the Gallup concept on measuring the strength of the workplace, which can be gauged by asking employees a set of 12 questions (such as "Do I know what is expected of me?"). Supervisors worked together in teams on activities related to the questions that could be translated into their own work environments and participated in an exercise on linking operations to the Agency's Strategy Agenda and County's Strategic Plan to help them understand how instrumental they and staff are in delivering outcomes.

Throughout the day, supervisors engaged in competitive teambuilding activities aligning their duties with the vision of the Agency and the County. Three teams emerged as "winners" and in true teamwork, voted to include all supervisors in the photos below. When asked why her team rose to the top, North Inland PHC Senior Clerk **Sharon Kinney** stated that her team worked well together, earning extra points when opportunities arose. North Central Kearny Mesa FRC Medi-Cal Supervisor **Andy Hua** noted that his team was enthusiastic and creative on their tasks. Both also commented how they enjoyed the ADVANCE and how they shall apply the skills learned.



Supervisors from the North Coastal and North Inland Regions are pictured above. Two North Coastal/Inland teams voted for first place, including the Light Orange Team (Ronald Coleman, Vivian Demaree, Sherry Frisby, Laurie Horton, Vicki Liles, John Prieto, Carol Schier, Maria Torrico, Liz Watson, and Robert White) and the Yellow Team (Priscilla Alcoser, Kris Call, Ronald Dailey, Jodi Giesler, Randy Jo Harris, Demi Hungerford, Sharon Kinney, Patsy Landis, Roy Mitchell, and Mikee Reynante).



Supervisors from the North Central Region are pictured above. In North Central, winners from the Purple Team included Maria A Casas, Erika Eberman, Kristen Grande, Jeanne Hadaway, Andy Hua, Debbie Pasamonte, Karen Rotolo, and Maria Martinez.



## A Great Agency Achieving Great Things

### *Keep up the Good Work!*

**E**ugene Schiller Psy. D., LCSW was presented the *Support Employee of the Quarter* award by the Probation Department at the East Mesa Juvenile Detention facility for the third quarter of 2005. Gene is a very hard working, dedicated and compassionate member of the Crisis Team. He has many years of experience in the Mental Health field as a social worker and now as a psychologist. He has worked in both Adult and Childrens' Mental Health settings and, for the past few years, has been a pivotal member of the Crisis Team with Juvenile Forensic Services. He has been with the County for many years and is always a pleasure to work with. Others learn from his vast experience. Additionally he does consultant work for the Courts by completing forensic evaluations and is active as a consultant with the California State Board of Behavioral Science. On a local level, he supervises pre and post MFT's, Ph.D.'s, and Psy.D. interns in preparation for licensing requirements.



Eugene Schiller (left) receives Employee of the Quarter award from Craig Stover, Superintendent of East Mesa Juvenile Detention Facility.

**T**he California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recognized "It's How We Live," a joint project of HHSA and Parks and Recreation, as an event that significantly contributes to the health and well-being of Californians. "It's How We Live" took place Nov. 19 in Spring Valley and attracted hundreds of community members who learned about the importance of physical fitness and good nutrition. **Chimene McElwain** of HHSA's Strategy and Planning Division, coordinated with Parks and Recreation on the event.



## Team HHSA

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

### HHSA Walks for Life

#### *First Annual Suicide Prevention Walk Moves Agency Employees*

**T**he American Foundation for Suicide Prevention held its first annual San Diego community walk, *Out of the Darkness*, on Sunday, October 30, in Balboa Park. Hundreds of people turned out for this very successful event. The walk was held in honor of those who have lost their lives to suicide, and in support of those who have lost their loved ones to suicide. Money raised from the walk will aid in prevention, education, research, and programs that provide support groups for survivors of suicide.

Festivities included music provided by a disc jockey and an opera singer, 13 exhibitors, a ribbon cutting ceremony, and a

Remembrance Area. Speakers included Mariette Hartley, actress, **Alfredo Aguirre**, acting director of Adult Mental Health Services, Dr. Ken Druck, speaker and author, Chaplain Joe Davis, Office of the Medical Examiner, and Gina Stevens, walk coordinator. So far this year, approximately \$27,500 was raised in San Diego and more than \$1 million nationally, with donations still being made at [www.outofthedarkness.org](http://www.outofthedarkness.org).

Participants from the Agency included representatives from Mental Health Services, Alcohol and Drug Services, and Aging and Independence Services. Each division had an exhibit that included information about County programs, as well as resources and advice on stress reduction, depression, and suicide statistics and prevention. Together, the three divisions formed a team of 14 walkers who raised more than \$500. The Agency plans to participate in this event in the future.



Left to right: Alfredo Aguirre, Mental Health Services; Lori Jones, Alcohol and Drug Services; Sharon Ippolito, Mental Health Services.

## Warm Wishes

### Agency Staff Appreciate Each Other

With the holiday season upon us, it's an ideal time to share some of the good feelings that our "families away from home" share throughout the year. Following are some messages direct from one employee to another.

**Word of Appreciation to Someone I Have Never Forgotten:** As I recall, the three years from 1997 to 1999 were dramatically bad for me, but 1999 was the worst one. I had to face many problems and hardships especially financial and personal ones. I felt really depressed and confined myself in my room for three days. Then I heard about the ET [human services specialist] job from a friend of mine. I didn't want to give up, I got out of my house, went directly to Human Resources on Pacific Highway to obtain the application, took the ET test and passed it in December 1999. Most of the year 2000 was not much better for me. I did hear about the interviews several times but nothing specific. I often tried to find out whether I was on the hiring list or not. Finally, Mr. **Mark Silvia** [HHSA II, Centre City/Metro FRC] talked to me and was surprised that my name hadn't been on the hiring list. On the phone, he was always patient and seemed interested in my situation. He promised he would go to Human Resources and add my name. Because of him, I got the opportunity to become an ET on November 8, 2000. This was a new beginning for me, a debut of an interesting and fulfilling career.

Whenever the holiday season comes, I remember Mr. Mark Silvia, a man who went out of his way to go to Human Resources to add my name on the hiring list, a man who kept his promise and a man who gave me a new lease on life. I want to show my appreciation by saying "Thank you very much" to Mr. Mark Silvia.

***Chau Tran, HM49, HSS at Kearny Mesa FRC***

I want you and the rest of the county to know a wonderful person, **Jannette Kutchins** PSWII. I went to work as her assistant in August 2005. She is the Foster Youth mentor coordinator in HHSA special projects. When she took over the position approximately four years ago there were about 30 mentors. Today we have over 230 active mentors, mentoring over 270 foster kids. Jannette puts in long hours facilitating training classes (on Saturdays), support groups (after hours), picnics, volunteer fairs and any other activity that will help us spread the word about the program. She tirelessly gives of herself and makes herself available to mentors, groups and anyone who needs her assistance or expertise. I believe she deserves a little praise from her peers on a job well done.

***Diane Ainsworth SW I, Foster Youth Mentor Program***

I would like to send a "kudos" to **Shirley Ingram**. Shirley is a PSW II and a QMHP [Qualified Mental Health Professional] at the Polinsky Children's Center. She works for the day rehabilitation program, under **Greg Watson**. She runs groups, writes curriculum, meets individually with, and provides crisis intervention for the teenage girls on the Polinsky campus. Shirley is tireless in her work and is constantly creative and energetic in her interaction with these girls. She is an artist at heart, and was the inspiration for the Polinsky Children's Center Clothesline Project, which was displayed throughout the various regions of the County of San Diego over the last year and a half.

Shirley is someone that we should all strive to be like...caring, compassionate, positive and a team player. She incorporates her sense of humor into her work and makes these teen girls feel valued and cared for, which is something that is often new for them.

***Tami Ferrari, MSW, Program Specialist II, San Diego County Alcohol and Drug Services***



# Happy Holidays!



## Front Line Success Stories

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

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.

### From North Central Region

#### *Public Health Nursing Practice Concepts*

North Central Region's own Public Health Nurse (PHN), **Quynh-Nga B. Gredig**, had two articles published in the *Public Health Nursing Journal* in September 2005. The articles were entitled, "Public Health Nursing Practice Change and Recommendation for Improvement" and "Improving Public Health Nursing Education: Recommendation of Local Public Health Nurses." They were based on Gredig's research work while completing her Master of Science degree in Public Health Nursing as well as Master of Public Health degree with an emphasis in Community Health Education at the University of Minnesota. Her research reported the characteristics of recent PHN practice change experienced by PHNs, including population-focused PHN practice, advocacy for more public health resources, and collaboration with academic partners for education and research.

Currently, Gredig enjoys providing public health nursing services to women, infants, and children while making home visits. She also takes pride in being the Student Liaison for the San Diego State University and Point Loma Nazarene University nursing students, ensuring they receive excellent experience working with the community. The Health and Human Services Agency North Central Public Health Center is proud to have Gredig excel in her profession in the public health arena and to recognize her service in the community.



Quynh-Nga B. Gredig shares her enthusiasm for public health.

## Program Success Stories

Improving Outcomes for Kids -  
Working for Prevention!

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.

### From Child Welfare Services

#### *Mom Clean Ups Her Act*

**M**s. "Smith" has three boys in elementary school. She had a history of smoking marijuana and when she first entered the system, she was still living with the father of the boys. She entered Dependency Drug Court and appeared quiet, not saying much during the court sessions. As time went on, she became more comfortable in court, speaking up a lot more and sharing more details of her life. One day, as she was meeting with staff, she appeared very upset. When asked why, she stated that the father of

her boys had hit her and she didn't know what to do. After discussing options with her counselor and Drug Court staff, she decided to move out and into a sober living facility. She had relied on the father to support her, but it had become clear that she needed to be independent. Although she had a few financial ups and downs, she eventually obtained stable work as a security guard and was able to reunify successfully with her three boys. She has become a strong part of the recovery community, volunteering at her treatment program and actively participating in 12-step meetings. Her case was closed more than two years ago, and the family has not re-entered the system.

## Safety in the Agency

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

This new section, featuring tips direct from the Safety Committees, meets Quality First goals for all groups.

### From Mental Health Services

**M**ental Health Services suggests caution around tall trees. Avoid parking next to tall eucalyptus and pines when the ground is saturated or Santa Ana winds are strong. Over the past year, tree limbs have fallen on cars and across the driveway at Camino del Rio headquarters.



# Employee Satisfaction Committee

## Working for a Happier Environment

The following staff are members of the Agency-wide employee satisfaction committee. They will work with **Jean Shepard** and **Paula Landau-Cox**, to help improve overall satisfaction with our working culture. Contact any one of them if you would like to contribute ideas or comments.

- [Rea Alvarez](#), [Mona Anaya-Heckscher](#), [Martha L. Armenta](#), [Marie H. Bauer](#), [Karen Bingman](#), [Jill Bolden](#), [Penny Bussey](#), [Cathy A. Cardoza](#), [Josie Castillo](#), [Maria Castillo](#), [Martha Castillo](#), [Merci Castro](#), [Shirley Chin](#), [Gloria A. Clark](#), [Alene Cox](#), [Martin Dare](#), [Walfredo Don](#), [Jonathan Galloway](#), [Carol Gorman](#), [Leatrice Gross](#), [Patricia Haskell](#), [Roderica \(Teri\) Huffman](#), [Gilbert Jimenez](#), [David M. Keenan](#), [Elsa Koches](#), [Elizabeth Locano](#), [Jennifer Mallory](#), [Sabrena Marshall](#), [Paulina Martinez](#), [Chimene McElwain](#), [Regina Micone](#), [Monica Miller](#), [Delia Morris](#), [Marion Morris](#), [Giffan Morse](#), [Kathleen Moser](#), [Janet Myhrvold](#), [Andy Nguyen](#), [John Rasmussen](#), [Cecily J. Ryan](#), [Romana Serafin-Tyler](#), [Jayne D. Shale](#), [Cheryl Storm](#), [Cindy Taylor](#), [Sandi Thomas](#), [Charo T. Tilaro](#), [Patricia Tufford](#), [Pascual Villalpando](#), [Terra Wright](#), [Daphne Yuhas](#).

# Child Welfare Services

Improving Outcomes for Kids - Working for Treatment & Care!

## San Pasqual Academy News Briefs

Congratulations to the San Pasqual Academy - The mighty Dragons football team just became **CIF Citrus League 8-Man Champs!** Go Dragons!

Check out the Dragon teams' schedules and scores at [MaxPreps!](#)



# Public Health

Promoting Safe and Livable Communities - Working for Emergency Preparedness & Response!

## Hot Off the Press

### Agency Staff Get Published

In addition to managing their departmental responsibilities, Agency executives often participate in outside organizations and educational efforts, such as writing articles for publication. A recent example is an article by **Nancy Bowen**, M.D., Public Health Officer, and Dr. **Michele Ginsberg**, Chief of Epidemiology, along with two other professionals, discussing a quarantine exercise for publication by the national Center for Disease Control. [Read article.](#)



County of San Diego  
Health and Human Services Agency

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## 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**

## HHSA Events Calendar

Check out goings-on, or, advise your web contact to post events.

## Compliance

Office: (619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Hotline: (866) 549-0004

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