



The HHSA Connection

SEPTEMBER 2005

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Working for Kids - Making Sure Children are Cared for and Protected!

A Little Bit of Serenity in a Cozy Setting

Polinsky Children's Center Opens New State-of-the-Art Nursery

Supervisor **Ron Roberts** officially opened the doors to *Serenity Cottage*, a new, state-of-the-art nursery at Polinsky Children's Center, on July 29. The guests, who had gathered for the opening, toured the facility, which is designed for infants, toddlers and teen mothers.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, Roberts presented a proclamation thanking the many donors who had made the facility possible. Funding came from an initial \$2 million donation from the Serenity Fund established to support children's charitable projects, along with major contributions from Arthur and Jeannie Rivkin, the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation, and the First 5 Commission of San Diego County.

Construction began in January 2004 and was coordinated by the County's Department of General Services. The County operates the Polinsky Children's Center to provide emergency shelter care for abused, neglected and abandoned children.



Serenity Cottage, Polinsky's new nursery, offers a peaceful haven for unsettled youngsters.

CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: CASE MANAGER/SOCIAL WORKER

Christmas in September

Enjoying The Gift of Giving

If it were up to **Edith Lozares**, case manager/social worker for Child Welfare Services (CWS) South Region, every day of the year would be as special as Christmas for children in foster care.

Lozares started a program at her office in National City, called "Santa's Secret Shoppe." With the help of coworkers and anonymous donors, she stocks food, clothes, toys, gift certificates, and even Halloween costumes. Parents whose children are in foster care, and other low-income parents referred by staff, can "shop" at no cost for holiday gifts for their children.

Lozares began working with the County in 1989 as a social worker. When asked about the most satisfying part of her job, she responded, "Knowing that everyone is working together to make a difference in a child's life."

To contact Lozares about donations (year 'round!) call (619) 341-1153.



Lozares gives kids the best gift - caring.

A Message from Jean Shepard

Agency Director

I'm pleased to announce the appointment of **Mary Harris** as Director of Child Welfare Services. Mary, who started on July 22, comes to us from the Orange County Department of Social Services, where she worked for 27 years, beginning as a children's social worker and ending as Deputy Director.

Mary is committed to improving outcomes for children. She says that she is already very impressed with CWS staff, calling them "innovative" and praising the regional delivery model and staff accountability. One of her main goals is to emphasize devising creative solutions for children. She is aligned with the Agency in its quest to find permanent homes for children.

Mary's experience also includes systems integration with Children's Mental Health and with the Orange County First Five Commission. She is a key asset to our team. Please join me in welcoming her to San Diego County.



Jean Shepard

Behind the Glass Curtain

Don't Miss Out - Meet the Pharmacists

One of the most under used health professionals is someone people probably see every month but seldom talk to - their pharmacist. Most patients pick up their prescriptions, check the box that says "No consultation" and figure they'll just swallow the new pills with the other medications they're taking and hope for the best.

The Health Promotions Committee, coordinated by Aging and Independence Services, is partnering with the local pharmacist association and other groups in offering Meet the Pharmacist Days at different sites in the County.

The next Meet the Pharmacist event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, September 22, at the Cameron Family YMCA, 10123 Hoffman Lane, Santee. An October event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 28, at the Magdalena Ecke Family YMCA, 200 Saxony Road, Encinitas.

People who don't consult with their pharmacist miss out on the expertise of a professional who studies medications for a living. Pharmacists don't just fill prescriptions; they check to make sure new pills aren't adversely affected by certain foods or other medications. They stay alert to all the new drugs and keep doctors informed about possible side effects. They know how pills should be taken, such as on an



empty stomach or a full one. They can find alternatives for folks having trouble swallowing pills.

Seniors and others are encouraged to bring their medications (and vitamins and supplements) to this event, so they can sit down with a pharmacist to discuss any issues they might have regarding their pills. The event also includes speakers on the wise use of medications, plus the benefits of exercise. Participants receive Vials of Life, which are pouches containing their personal medicine and health information that can be attached to their refrigerators and spotted by paramedics in case of emergencies.

Meet the Pharmacist Days will also include a presentation on the new Medicare prescription drug program (Part D) that begins January 1. There are many complex facets to this new law, so seniors are encouraged to come to this event to learn how the change in Medicare will affect them.

Employee Benefits

Take Advantage of Your Employer!

Let the County Help You

As a County employee, you have a wealth of [resources](#) to help enhance your life. A few examples follow.

Employee Assistance Program: For professional help or information on depression, parenting, stress, addictions, relationships, elder care, legal and financial issues, health and wellness, career development or a number of other subjects, log on to the EAP Web site. You'll find a provider search tool, timely articles, interactive quizzes, online courses, news

stories and other helpful resources. Find your temporary login information on the County Intranet site - cww, two-thirds down in the left column. EAP is available 7/24 at (866) 208-0436

Tuition Reimbursement: Expand your education.

Computer Discounts: Look into special rates for Dell and Apple computers, for your personal purchase and use.

Employee Discounts: Have some fun - and save some money!

South Region Honors Foster Parents

Partnership with Casey Family Foundation Means Better Care for Foster Children

County Supervisor **Greg Cox** and South Region Child Welfare Services (CWS) honored foster parents at a foster parent appreciation luncheon on June 30. The event highlighted the success of the program and the generous individuals who serve as foster parents.

The luncheon included a foster youth panel consisting of current and former foster youth, talking about the positive impacts that foster parents made in their lives and continue to make in the lives of foster children. In addition, the Foster Parent Association discussed the support it can provide to foster parents. Local businesses contributed gift cards and free meal coupons for the event.

Lynn Waldman, Chief of the South Region CWS office, stated that "Our foster parents in South Region have up to 43 years of experience as foster parents. Our oldest license dates back to 1962, and we have 17 foster homes with 20 or more years of service. These parents are making a difference in the lives of many children in our community. We truly appreciate all their support and efforts."



Rene Santiago, South Region General Manager, and **Lynn Waldman**, Chief for South Region CWS.

The Agency, in partnership with the Casey Family Foundation, is working on a "Family to Family" initiative that includes the basic principles that every child deserves a safe and caring family, families need the support of their communities, and that public child welfare agencies need community partners.

One of the primary goals of the Family to Family program is to ensure children are placed in safe and stable families in their own communities when they cannot be with their parents or relatives. As the result of a strong foster parent community in the South Region and tireless efforts by social workers, support staff, and others, Agency staff have placed 92.8% of children removed from homes with foster parents in the same community.

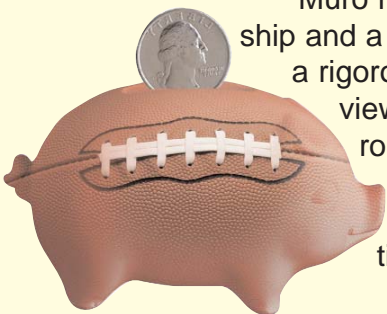
Child Welfare Services

Scholarships! Grants!

Chargers Take On San Pasqual Academy

On May 11, the San Diego Chargers formally announced the recipients of the 2005 Chargers Champions Class Scholarships and School Grants at San Pasqual Academy. The location was quite fitting since Academy junior, **Juan Muro**, was one of sixteen County students honored for demonstrating leadership, service, citizenship and commitment to their schools and communities.

Muro received a \$7,000 scholarship and a laptop computer following a rigorous application and interview process. Muro is a well-rounded student who hopes to attend UC Berkeley and study criminal justice.



The Chargers also awarded the Academy a \$75,000 grant to add bleachers to the football field and buy new athletic equipment. This generous grant will provide additional support for the Academy's four-year old athletic program, which has already claimed great success in several sports.

Last season, the Academy Dragons' football team celebrated a 10-3 record, winning the Citrus League title and facing La Jolla Country Day in the 8-Man Division Finals. In addition, both the Boys' and Girls' Varsity Basketball teams placed second overall in the Citrus League.

The Chargers Champion School Grants are designed to help San Diego County schools meet some of the basic physical fitness, athletic and nutrition needs of their students.

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



The Information Connection

Countywide "Mobile Remote Workforce" Initiative Improves Services to Clients

Early this year, the Agency began a challenging assignment: Plan and implement a pilot program to re-engineer the way business is done at our Public Health Centers, and improve operational efficiency.

Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** was selected as project manager for this initiative, which would serve as a pilot for other County programs as well as other County departments. He quickly assembled a high performing team to put together the Mobile Remote Workforce (MRW), which includes Public Health Nurses (PHNs) throughout the Agency, Information Technology, Pennant Alliance, Public Health Services, and Human Resources staff.

MRW evaluated PHN staff in the North Inland Region, and developed a plan that increases time spent in the community and reduces administrative time. Referral procedures now assign cases to PHN's more quickly, by submitting requests on-line, through a Web site. This pilot system automates case assignments to nurses, and alerts them of new cases even when they are in the field.

Beginning in October, more technological enhancements will be introduced. PHNs will use "electronic tablets" that function like a laptop computer, but are the size of a note pad. Nurses will pilot caseload reviews at clients' homes, looking up resources and medical references, and finding directions to their site visits - all electronically while in the field. As one of the nurses involved in the pilot remarked, "I feel we are moving into the 21st century."

This new system is expected to show a significant increase in time available for nurses to work with clients and meet the needs of the community. Improved customer and employee satisfaction are also anticipated. Now, that is working more efficiently!



On the right, Heather LaBelle, Public Health Nurse, displays the handy new electronic field work tablet.

Good Fun for a Good Cause

Big Band Concert Coming to Oceanside

It's that time again, time to gather the family, put on your dancing shoes and join the fun at the 9th Annual Big Band Concert and Dance. The "big" event is Saturday, Oct. 1, from 1-5 p.m., at the Pier Plaza Amphitheater, located at the Oceanside Pier.

An \$8 pre-purchase ticket (\$10 at the door) will benefit the *Straight from the Heart Resource Center* for foster families and the valuable programs and services they offer our county's foster families.

To purchase tickets in advance, send a check payable to "Straight from the Heart" to Dolores Keeling, HHSA North Coastal Children's Services, MS N-189. Include your name, phone number, number of tickets requested and a return mail stop.

Groups of ten or more will have reserved seating. For more information, call the Big Band Info line at (760) 716-4824 or visit www.straightfromtheheartinc.com.



Don't miss out on the fun - the Annual Big Band Concert and Dance is good for everyone!

Shining Stars

Governor Schwarzenegger appointed **Nancy Bowen**, MD, MPH, to the *Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention and Treatment Task Force*.

Dr. Bowen, San Diego County public health officer since 2003, has more than 20 years experience in public health service. She is a member of the American Public Health Association, the American College of Preventive Medicine, and the California Conference of Local Health Officers. This appointment does not require Senate confirmation and there is no salary.



Dr. Nancy Bowen,
Public Health Officer

Heidi Shaffer, Health Services Project Administrator in Mental Health Services and Aging and Independence Services, was recently recognized with a state level achievement award by the California Health Information Association (CHIA). CHIA is a non-profit association that provides leadership, education, resources and advocacy for California's credentialed health information management professionals. Shaffer, a Registered Health Information Administrator, received CHIA's 2005 Professional



Heidi Shaffer,
Health Services
Project
Administrator

Achievement Award on May 24, for her professional and technical expertise, leadership in educational services and achievements in professional practice. Marie Conde, CHIA's 2004-05 President, noted Shaffer's "outstanding leadership, infectious enthusiasm and can-do attitude," at the statewide recognition event. Shaffer has been working on various medical records projects for Mental Health Services and Edgemoor Hospital.

In July, **Susanne Boston**, North Regions Community Health Promotion Specialist II, completed the nationally acclaimed fellowship program, "Creating Healthier Communities," through the American Hospital Association. Participants are selected from a competitive application process, with only 16 fellows from across the nation completing the program this year. The yearlong program included intensive leadership classes, national seminars and an action-learning project. Deputy Director **Nick Macchione** (fellow alumnus class of 2000), supported and encouraged Boston's application, and mentored her and another fellow on their project. Boston helped develop a curriculum to educate and increase capacity of Spanish-speaking residents to effectively navigate through the healthcare system, find a medical care home, and utilize preventive health services.



Susanne Boston,
Community Health
Promotion
Specialist II

Public Health

Working for Kids - Making Sure Children are Cared for and Protected!

Health Statistics - Firearm Safety

- In San Diego County from 1999 - 2001, there were 38 cases of non-fatal, pre-hospital patients, injured by firearms, between the ages of 0-14.¹
- In San Diego County from 1995 - 2004, 19 children between the ages of 0-14 were killed by firearm-related incidents.²

September is Baby Safety Month. Information on firearm safety in the home is one of several measures to protect infants. For more information about firearm safety, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Web site at <http://www.aap.org/>.

For more information about general product safety for infants in the home, visit the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association Web site at www.jpma.org.

County's Community Health Statistics Unit

Access data - health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, health trends and comparisons to national targets.

Request statistics: (619) 515-4318.

Access the latest data (including the 2004 Core Public Health Indicator document):

www.sdhealthstatistics.com

1. County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services, Prehospital Database, 1999-2001. 2. County of San Diego, Emergency Medical Services, Medical Examiner Database, 1995-2004.

San Pasqual Academy News Briefs

The San Pasqual Academy, an innovative residential school for San Diego foster teens, is home to about 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:

- The improvisation team competed in an improvisation tournament at the National Comedy Theatre, in San Diego. They won an award for the perfect execution of a routine.
 - Six weeks of summer school began on June 20th. Core classes (English, Math, and U.S. History) and elective classes (Driver's Education, Advanced Technology, PowerPoint, Horticulture, Woodshop and Associated Student Body) are being offered. An intensive reading acceleration program, UROK, is also being offered in partnership with New Alternatives, Inc.
 - On June 17th, Kenny Goldberg of KPBS returned to campus to interview the Opportunity Passport instructor, **Brett Litoff**, and one Opportunity Passport student, alumni **Terri H**. The program was entitled, "New Program Teaches Foster Kids Money Management," and it aired on June 29th.
 - Sixteen Academy graduates, including 13 from the Class of 2005, are currently living in the Alumni Housing Program on campus.
 - **Grandmas Donna and Kellie** started the tradition of monthly birthday cookouts for the students. Each month the grandparents invite students who have birthdays that month for a special birthday barbeque.
- For more information about life on campus, take a look at the latest [San Pasqual Academy Bulletin](#).

Change of Address

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

La Mesa Stage One Child Care staff has changed: MAXIMUS has been contracted to provide employment services in the East Region. The La Mesa office closed as of July 31. Staff has moved to two new locations in East County. Below is a listing of the new offices, staff assigned, and phone numbers effective August 1.

1300 N Johnson Street, Suite 100
El Cajon, CA 92020 (Mailstop W463)

Sonia Martinez	(619) 937-4441
Irma Paredes	(619) 937-4442
Michelle Cote	(619) 937-4439
Sharon Claar	(619) 937-4440
Angie Riley	(619) 937-4443

7150 Broadway
Lemon Grove, CA 91945 (Mailstop W427)

Cris Stanfill	(619) 937-4507
Sharon Claar	(619) 937-4509
Angie Riley	(619) 937-4510

Have Some News? Proud of a Co-worker?

Please submit article ideas, or Kudos items and photos to your section editor listed in the box to the right, or to Jennifer Mallory.

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with HHSA Director Jean Shepard on the **first Friday of each month, from 8:00 a.m. - noon, at (619) 515-6555.**

Compliance Office:

(619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Hotline:

(866) 549-0004

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

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



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Health and Human Services Agency

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The HHSA Connection is produced by the Agency's Office of Media and Public Affairs.

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