



The HHSA Connection

APRIL 2006

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES



Promoting Safe and Livable Communities - Working for Prevention of Adverse Health Risks!

Reading, Writing and Weighing In

School Fitness Summit Focuses on Combating Childhood Obesity

Vice Chairman **Ron Roberts**, the Agency, HealthLink, and the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego teamed up to bring together more than 400 education leaders and health and physical fitness experts on March 2 for a summit to discuss strategies on increasing physical activity opportunities for youth on school campuses.

The School Fitness Summit sought to address the issue of childhood obesity, a nationally recognized public health crisis.

"Preventive steps must be taken to address our very real problem with childhood obesity and physically unfit children in our county and throughout the nation," said Vice Chairman Roberts, who in January helped unveil the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan. "It is up to parents and school leaders, county government, health experts and the community to take positive steps to prevent childhood obesity."

The summit included breakout sessions, "Community Champion for Student Fitness Awards," and keynote speaker Jean Blaydes Madigan, an internationally known educational consultant and author on the subject of how brain research supports the need for movement in learning. Primary

sponsors of the Summit include Vice Chairman Roberts, the Agency, The California Endowment, Health Net, Kaiser Permanente and the San Diego Chargers. The Summit took place at the Town and Country Resort, followed by a reception with California Senator Tom Torlakson, the closing speaker and champion of childhood obesity prevention efforts around the state.



Supervisor Ron Roberts and Agency Director Jean Shepard are on the team to fight childhood obesity.



The School Fitness Summit even included physical activity for the audience.

A Message from Jean Shepard Agency Director

San Diego County's present and future healthcare needs and availability of resources are the focus of a Healthcare Safety Net study. The study, requested by Supervisors Cox and Roberts, is focused on how we can maintain the visibility of the safety net that serves the uninsured and underinsured. The Abaris Group, in partnership with George Washington University, is conducting the study, which will take approximately six months. Five Town Hall meetings have been scheduled this month across the County, to give those who receive and provide care an opportunity to bring up their concerns and opinions.

Healthcare is an ongoing concern for any community. The Healthcare Safety Net study is designed to bring our community together to brainstorm on ideas and work toward solutions that improve healthcare for everyone.



Jean M. Shepard

Remember to donate blood this month! There's a site that works for you. [Click for more info.](#)

It Takes a Village

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

The theme of this month's national child abuse prevention campaign is "*Safe Children and Healthy Families are a Shared Responsibility.*" While the primary responsibility for children's well being rests with parents, they cannot do it alone.

A nurturing home environment, quality schools, safe places to play and good medical care are the key ingredients in keeping children safe and healthy. Each of us has a role to play in **preventing** child abuse, **reporting** child abuse, and **supporting** children in the child welfare system.

The Commission on Children, Youth and Families Child Abuse Prevention Committee (CAPC) sponsored a forum to kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month on April 4 at Marina Village.

Featured speakers covered the following topics: "Childhood Trauma and Adult Health: Lessons from the Adverse Childhood Experience Study"; the "Incredible Years" parenting program; and "Trauma Focused Cognitive Therapy."

The kickoff forum also provided the opportunity to recognize individuals who are exemplary in preventing and treating child abuse in our community by honoring them with the 2nd Annual STARS awards.

The award recipients in each category for this year are:



VOLUNTEER STARS AWARD

Vina Sandal, Protective Services Worker, HHSA

LAW ENFORCEMENT STARS AWARD

Mark Foreman, Sergeant, San Diego Police Dept
Tenaya Webb, Police Officer, El Cajon Police Department

LEGAL STARS AWARD

Lorenza Craig, Deputy Public Defender, Dept. of the Public Defender

SOCIAL SERVICES/CHILD WELFARE STARS

Debbie Comstock, Little House Family Services, Community Services for Families East Region
Steven Smith, Admin Analyst, HHSA East Region



The Commission is also sponsoring a Blue Ribbon campaign with 2"x 6" blue satin ribbons that adhere to employee name badges and promote the national message. Approximately 10,000 ribbons were distributed.

The Blue Ribbon Campaign had its early beginnings in 1989 in Virginia with a grandmother's tribute to her grandson who died as a result of abuse.

The Blue Ribbon Mission

- ✘ **Encourage** community and individual involvement in recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect.
- ✘ **Educate** families, children, neighbors, organizations and communities on how to prevent abuse and neglect.
- ✘ **Assist** families in achieving healthy parenting practices through education and resources.
- ✘ **Empower** individuals to intervene in abuse and neglect situations when appropriate.

The statewide message is "*It only takes a minute...to make a difference in the life of a child.*" Throughout the month, please take opportunities to inform people that there are tangible steps they can take to prevent child abuse. It is not enough to care about the problem; we have to support parents and caregivers to prevent child abuse from occurring.



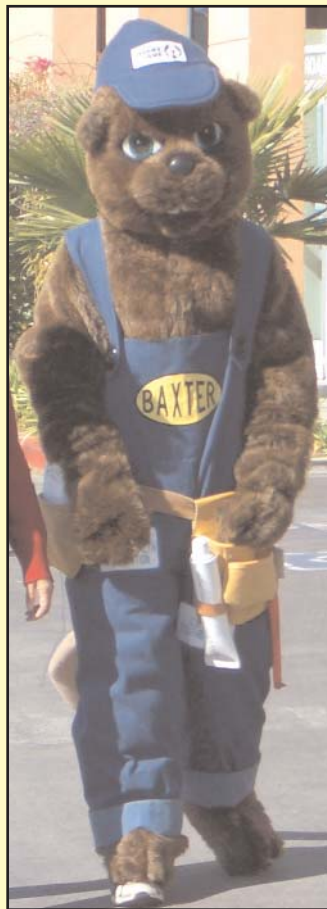
Honored for their work in preventing and treating child abuse, from left: Lorenza Craig, Vina Sandal, Mark Foreman, Judge Susan Huguenor (Commission Chair), Debbie Comstock, Tenaya Webb, and Steven Smith.



Something to Smile About

Children in North County Pampered with Prevention

More than 300 children without dental resources received the gift of prevention at a free dental sealant and fluoride varnish clinic held on Saturday, March 4, at North County Health Services in San



Baxter the Beaver encourages healthy smiles.

Marcos. County Chairman **Bill Horn** and the San Diego County Dental Society funded the



The Smiles Booth offers information at North Region's free dental clinic.

clinic, which was coordinated by the County Health and Human Services Agency's North County Dental Task Force.

"We are so pleased to offer this clinic for the first time in San Marcos," said Chairman Horn, who funded a similar clinic last year with the Indian Health Council in Valley Center. "The County of San Diego is committed to improving the health of our kids. Together, we can make a difference."

Tooth decay is the most common infectious disease among children, accounting for 5.1 million school hours lost annually in the nation. "Placement of dental sealants and fluoride varnish on teeth is a safe and painless way to help prevent cavities," said **Peggy Yamagata**, R.D.H., M.Ed., with the County's Dental Health Initiative.

Unfortunately, many children do not receive routine dental care and prevention services due to lack of insurance. In fact, for every child without medical insurance in this country, it is estimated that over twice as many lack dental insurance. Adding to this problem is the shortage of dental professionals in some areas of North San Diego County. More than 60 volunteers, including numerous dental professionals, provided free dental screening, preventive care and health education for children and their families, with services valuing just over \$28,000.

[HHSA Events Calendar](#) - Check it out! And, remember to 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.

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with HHSA Director **Jean Shepard**, or Director of Operations **Paula Landau-Cox**, at (619) 515-6555.

- **First Friday of each month, 8:00 a.m. - noon**

Managing Care

California Children Services and Provider Conference

On February 8, more than 250 providers, staff from Electronic Data Systems, the State of California, and California Children's Services (CCS) attended a half-day networking and information-sharing conference co-sponsored by CCS and managed care plans. The purpose was to bring them together to discuss common issues and concerns for improving the quality of service to clients.

Participants learned about navigating the CCS program and Medi-Cal, were informed about the Provider Inquiry Project from a Children's Hospital representative, and heard from a panel of managed care plan experts, including: Blue Cross of California, Community Health Group, Kaiser Permanente, Blue Shield of California, Health Net of California, and Molina Healthcare of California.

Overall, participants gave positive remarks about the conference (according to survey results), with many noting that they hoped other conferences would be held in the future.

Front Line Success Stories

This section, featuring stories direct from the front lines, meets Quality First goals for the Regions, Child Welfare Services, and the Strategic Planning and Operational Support Division (formerly Regional Program Support Division).

From North Inland Region

Mentoring Student Nurses

"I know that someday I will work in public health. I never considered it until now. This semester has been unlike any other. I have been independent in my actions and decisions."

Nursing students can choose from a variety of avenues available when deciding what type of nursing career to pursue. One of the most enlightening experiences for a nursing student is the practicum, where students are placed with professional nurses for valuable, hands-on experience. Actually, as Public Health Nurses (PHNs) mentor the nursing students who rotate through the North Inland Public Health Center, everyone involved benefits.

"My nurse was awesome - she really knew her stuff and had great relationships with the families."

The role of mentor is added to the already multifaceted job of a PHN, and is taken very seriously as it significantly helps shape young professionals. PHNs strive to challenge and inspire the students and, judging from excerpts from student practicum journals at Point Loma Nazarene University, they have succeeded in doing just that.

"I feel like I have had to learn a lot about flexibility and patience in this kind of nursing...it requires a broad knowledge base and accurate communication skills."

This feedback has shown PHNs the success of the mentoring program and its real impact on the students. It has challenged PHNs to develop the program further and it has inspired them in their passionate pursuit of excellence in public health nursing.



Julianna Rhinehart, PHN (left) demonstrates weighing a baby to Point Loma Nazarene University student nurse Teresa Barnes.

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 extra-curricular activities.

In February, the Department of Parks and Recreation organized a snowboarding trip for participants in the Academy's Outdoor Adventure Program. Thirteen students participated. Most of the youth had never seen snow before and took snowboarding lessons. All reported that they enjoyed the trip and would like to do it again. The students participated in a community service project in January to earn this trip. Snowboarding was the third of 10 annual outdoor adventure trips for Academy students funded by a grant from the Habitat Conservation Fund. Kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, and surf camp are all planned activities.

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

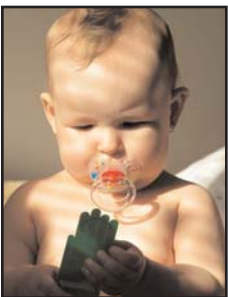
Public Health

Improving Outcomes for Kids - Working for Prevention!

Immunization Celebration

Raising Healthy Communities

Public and private healthcare groups and community partners in San Diego County and across California are gearing up for another successful *National Infant Immunization Week and Toddler Immunization Month* (NIIW/TIM) campaign. **National Infant Immunization Week is scheduled for April 22-April 29, 2006, and May is Toddler Immunization Month.**



This year's NIIW/TIM theme is "Community Immunity." A key message is that immunization protects both families and communities. Children who are not immunized increase the chance that others will be exposed to disease.

The County HHSA Immunization Branch and many public and private community partners who are members of the San Diego County Immunization Initiative, are working together on a number of events in April and May to help celebrate NIIW/TIM. Events are expected to include: a meeting of the San Diego County Immunization Initiative featuring Board of Supervisor's Chairman **Bill Horn**, and Public Health Officer **Dr. Nancy Bowen** as special guest speakers; a proclamation by the County Board of Supervisors; displays and activities at community fairs and other venues; and an educational program for physicians.

More than 40 counties across California are expected to participate in numerous outreach events to raise awareness about the importance of immunizations across the lifespan.

For more information about NIIW/TIM and immunization in general, please call the Immunization Branch at (619) 692-8661 or visit: www.immunization-sd.org.



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 below.



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

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