



The HHS A Connection

JUNE 2006

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

The MRW Buzz

A Win for the Team

On March 23, CAO **Walt Ekard**, Assistant CAO **Helen Robbins-Meyer** and HHS A Director **Jean Shepard** celebrated the successful conclusion of the Mobile Remote Workforce (MRW) pilot project with the MRW Executive Committee members. The celebration highlighted the accomplishments of the pilot, which demonstrated a 25% increase of North Inland Public Health Nurses' client contacts in the field. This increase equates to serving 2,400 new patients a year. Additionally, there was a 75% reduction of time elapsed between case referral and customer contact - meaning a more timely response for clients. These were achieved by re-engineering the referral process and utilizing technological enhancements to increase productivity. Rather than using paper-based referrals, nurses use web-based referrals and electronic data to access and record information for client visits using an electronic tablet. The team was congratulated for its diligence and success. No sooner had the celebration ended than the team began planning the next phase of MRW implementation at all Public Health Centers county-wide. Leading this effort is Deputy Director **Nick Macchione**, who expects the web-based referral system to be operational in all County Public Health Centers by September.



Promoting Safe and Livable Communities - Preventing Adverse Health Risks!

[Click here for more information on MRW](#)

CLASSY CLASSIFICATIONS: ANALYST II - FACILITIES MANAGER

Never a Dull Moment

Have Mobile Office, Will Travel

Mindy Ripley likes to tell people she works out of her car. The Analyst II is always on the go as the facilities manager for North Inland, Coastal, and Central Regions. She also helps to coordinate events.



Ripley oversees 20 sites.

"I'm never in the office," she says. "I would go crazy if I had to sit behind a desk."

One of Ripley's current projects is completing business continuity plans for all the North Region facilities. Her job also encompasses purchasing and handling information technology matters.

For the last three years, she's chaired [Children in Need](#), a nonprofit organization founded and run by Agency employees, which funds enrichment activities for children in the HHS A system.

Ripley's County employment started 17 years ago, as an Intermediate Clerk in Children's Services.

A Message from Jean Shepard Agency Director

As many of you are aware, we have been in the process of a major automated system conversion called CalWIN. This involves replacing the current system for public assistance programs with a new, client-based, fully integrated, on-line interactive system, and a major change for more than 2,100 Agency employees. Staff have spent many, many months preparing for the new system, and their efforts have paid off!



CalWIN was successfully launched in San Diego County on June 5. In the first two weeks, more than 12 million transactions were completed - more than in any of the 16 preceding counties that have gone on the CalWIN system. More than 300,000 records were sent through the conversion process, with 99.95 percent converting successfully. Congratulations to all involved in this effort. Your dedication and persistence has made CalWIN a model in San Diego.

Jean M. Shepard

Harborside Park Opening

A Welcome Addition

As of April 29, west Chula Vista residents and Agency employees can now enjoy the beautiful scenery at the new Harborside Park. The first park to open in western Chula Vista in 25 years, this new and modern recreational facility is located adjacent to South Region's Family Resource Center. South Region staff worked with local businesses, leaders, and the nearby elementary school to celebrate the grand opening and offer free health education and promotion materials to those in attendance.

This park adds to public health efforts to reduce childhood obesity. Through the South Region's Healthy Eating, Active Communities initiative, local health department employees work with schools and neighborhood residents to improve their nutritional and physical environments. The Harborside Park is an example of how, by working together, local residents, educators, and HHS employees can improve their living environments and address emerging public health issues.

Harborside Park is a great place to rest and relax, and bring many children, families, and workers together for fun and active lifestyles. Whether one uses the park to play soccer, have a picnic, climb the jungle gym, or enjoy the sunshine, the added green space provides all with a high quality recreational resource.

Since 2001, local residents had advocated for a park in the older, urban part of the city. The collaboration expanded to include local leaders, school officials, and public health employees. Due to the dedication of these groups and individuals, the Chula Vista City Council purchased an empty lot next to the Family Resource Center and began construction. Since the groundbreaking, local residents have taken advantage of all that the park has to offer and South Region employees have used the space for walks during break periods as part of their Work Safe and Stay Healthy campaign.



Agency staff celebrate park opening - back row: Maddy Morris (Supervisor Cox's staff member), Supervisor Greg Cox, Ae Senethachith, Martha Viazcan, Elena Quintanar, Sharney McLaughlin, Cristina Robles, Rene Santiago (& son, Adrian); and front row: Crecencia Garibo-Soto, Angelica Pimentel (& son, Lionel), Fely Bonifacio, and Paulina Bobenrieth.

Public Health

Health Statistics

Underage Drinking is Not Just a Legal Problem

For many people this summer, along with parties and fun, comes the temptation of alcohol. It's a good time to pay close attention to your kids.

- People who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely than those who begin drinking at age 21 to abuse or develop a dependence on alcohol.¹
- People with one or more first degree relatives who abuse or are dependent on alcohol are two to seven times more likely to abuse alcohol or develop dependence on alcohol at some point in their lives.²

1. National Institute of Health & National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. (1998). Age of Drinking Onset Predicts Future Alcohol Abuse and Dependence. Retrieved July 11, 2005, from <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/press/1998/aging.htm>

2. Grant, B.F. (1998). The impact of a family history of alcoholism on the relationship between age at onset of alcohol use and DSM-IV alcohol dependence: results from the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiological Survey. *Alcohol Health & Research World*, 22 (2), 144-148.

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

Honoring Foster Families

Taking a Moment to Thank These Quiet Heroes

May was National Foster Care Month. In San Diego County, 1,600 foster families open their homes to help children in need. With the help of generous community partners, the HHSA Foster Home Licensing Program celebrated Foster Care Month in several ways. The 45th Annual Foster Family Appreciation Banquet was held on May 12. More than 150 foster families were honored for their special service to children and families. Two hundred guests included foster families, Agency staff, and representatives from the Board of Supervisors who presented a proclamation to the four Foster Parent Associations. The Foster Home Licensing Program also purchased 500 tickets for foster families to attend a Padres baseball game on May 9. Additionally, foster families enjoyed free admission to the San Diego Museum of Art and the Escondido Children's Museum. Plus, Legoland, Wave Water Park, Chula Vista Nature Center, Boomers and SeaWorld, as well as numerous local hotels and restaurants generously donated over \$45,000 in gift certificates to the foster families!

Thanks go out to the 1,600 San Diego County foster families who open their hearts to abused and neglected children. Families helping families will make our San Diego community a better place to live.



Foster families help take care of one of our most precious community resources - our children.

There are many ways to help foster kids. Find out what you can do - [click here](#) for a flyer of 8 Great Ways to Help a Child.

Safety in the Agency

Ensuring Operational Excellence!

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

From Central Region

Central Region staff began a wellness exercise program in July 2005 where over 80 employees have logged 5,826 hours!



From Information Technology

Follow the 20/20/20 Rule - If you tend to work on your computer for prolonged periods of time, be sure to take a 20 second break every 20 minutes and look at least 20 feet away. This gives your eyes a break and chance to adjust and focus - a great way to avoid visual fatigue.



From Public Health

Do not stand on chairs, tables, or desks to reach items. Use a step stool or small ladder instead. Remember to work safely!



From Medical Care Program Administration

Take advantage of the "[Ergonomics Self-Assessment Tool](#)" on the DHR website. Staff can use the ergonomic tips to improve workplace health and safety. ([More on the County's WSSH program.](#))



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

From Strategic Planning & Operational Support

Reaching Out to Touch Someone

Did you know that there is a wonderful unit within Strategic Planning and Operational Support that helps citizens of San Diego County access needed public assistance services? The Public Assistance Information unit (PAI) provides information on general eligibility for CalWORKs, Food Stamps, and Medi-Cal programs as well as directing callers to the proper location and assisting with Medi-Cal and Healthy Family mail-in applications. The phone line is manned by 7 Human Services Specialists under the supervision of **Barbara Silvia**, PAI supervisor, and sometimes receives more than 10,000 calls per month.

Several months ago, a man contacted PAI via the Web site asking for medical help. He needed an operation for his hand in order to return to work, but he was ineligible for Medi-Cal. The customer explained that with an operation, he would be able correct a degenerative condition and return to work. He didn't know where to turn. Barbara gave him all the usual referral numbers to other County and community services but he continued to receive denials for all programs.

This gentleman continued to keep in touch with Barbara, letting her know every time one of her referrals didn't work out. Barbara was persistent, though, and sent an e-mail to the Information & Referral network, where she received the suggestion that he try a local group of doctors and nurses, operating out of Scripps Hospital, that volunteers to perform free corrective surgery on children with deformities. Barbara met with the group and without revealing his identity, discussed the gentleman's situation. She was told to refer him.

Barbara provided the information to her customer and felt she had done all she could for this man, and then lost touch with him. Several months later, she received an e-mail from him. He had his operation, and he thanked her for helping to make it happen. Barbara Silvia epitomizes how Agency employees make a difference every day. She showed caring and compassion, tenacity and ingenuity, and went beyond the call of duty to assist a customer and achieve breakthrough results.

North Regions

Increasing Access to Care

Partnering to Spread Health Coverage

North Regions collaborated with community partners to offer health insurance application information and assistance to the public on special enrollment days in an effort to increase the number of eligible children enrolled in Medi-Cal and Healthy Families healthcare programs. In North Coastal and North Inland Regions, Agency staff partnered with Ocean Knoll Elementary School, Ramona Elementary School, San Diego County Office of Education, and North County Health Services on May 2 and May 4. In North Central Region, HHSA staff partnered with SAY San Diego on May 5. Collectively, nearly 100 people were reached.



CalWIN is Here!

The Journey to a New Software System

Now officially under CalWIN, the Agency has moved from a mainframe-based computer system to a Windows-based system to determine eligibility for many of its programs such as Medi-Cal, CalWORKS, Food Stamps, Foster Care, and General Relief.



Mandated by the State, the new system is much more user-friendly and determines eligibility using information given to employees by the customer. More than just a new application program, CalWIN is an interactive system that allows staff to enter information while interviewing customers and determine eligibility while the customer is still there. This real-time feature means that staff will no longer have to do hand budgets and calculations to determine eligibility. CalWIN is nearly paperless with most information stored online. Huge paper case files that staff currently have will become small manageable paper case files.

An extensive training program took place to prepare nearly 2,000 staff. It took incredible teamwork to plan, coordinate, and implement 12 continuous weeks of training - and the effort is paying off as all the preparation turns into reality. This intensive part of the CalWIN training started in March, and continued non-stop through May. There were 8 to 11 classes running at any given time, each class with up to 24 trainees. Trainers worked hard at making their classes informative and fun. Two University of Phoenix campuses accommodated this massive project in Kearny Mesa and San Marcos. Staff trained included: Clerical, Human Services Specialists, Human Services Specialist Supervisors, and other support staff and managers.

Everyone who had a part in CalWIN training no matter how large or small should feel extremely proud. This has been an excellent model of real teamwork.



CalWIN Mock Go Live

Dress Rehearsals Prove Helpful

June 5, 2006, was a significant date for many: It is the County of San Diego's "go live" on the new CalWIN operating system. Many tasks were completed along the implementation road, including conducting Mock Go Lives (MGLs). MGLs were proven to be extremely beneficial, providing staff with the opportunity to get familiar with the process, test and validate functionality and interfaces with other sections within the Agency. San Diego County was a leader in providing more MGLs than in any other County implementing



CalWIN. For example, on one day alone, 745 line staff and 43 support staff at 36 sites participated.



Several MGL events were during February through May, each taking 3-5 hours to practice the implementation process. MGL work groups conducting the events were coordinated by a North Regions manager and comprised of staff from each CalWIN site across the County (Eligibility, Employment, Foster Care, Health Coverage Access Division, Appeals, Overpayment Specialist Unit, Quality Control & Public Assistance Information), with representation from many classifications from management to line staff. Overall reaction to MGL activities was positive and helped to make a

smoother transition for staff and clients alike.



Do You Know Where Your Stuff Is?

And, Whose Stuff Are You Using?

In September, the Agency will perform a triennial inventory of fixed assets and minor equipment. The goal is to identify where assets are physically located and who is in control of funding them.

For those of you who have been through this before, this year's inventory should be much improved over previous years. For example, since asset data has been loaded into Oracle and various reports are available, preparing for and organizing the Agency's inventory effort will be easier.

The rest of you may be called upon to help your office identify what equipment you have, and determine where it belongs (on paper at least).

Getting Ready

There are some things you can start doing now to prepare for a smooth and efficient inventory.

Gather Inventory Information

To gather this information, the Auditor & Controller forwards a Report of Change (ROC) form to the requisitioning Org, requesting location information and that a numbered Asset Tag be placed in a visible spot on the asset (on the front of a computer, for example). This ROC form is a great opportunity to get data correct. It can save valuable staff time by eliminating the need to search for assets during the triennial inventory.



When You Get Something New

If, later, you acquire a new asset, you can use the form AUD 253 to notify the A&C about the asset, its value and its physical location. Again, this will save time and effort in the future.

Learning What You Need to Know

A training course is available. Please call (619) 692-8071.

What are Fixed Assets?

- Fixed Assets are items valued at \$5,000 or greater.
- Fixed Assets are assigned an Asset Number, and a numbered sticker (the Asset Tag) is provided.
- Inventory items are assigned to Orgs and tracked by Location Code.
- It is the responsibility of the owning Org to account for its inventory.

Note: Although minor equipment does not have the same level of control as fixed assets, it must still be inventoried and accounted for using similar inventory controls.

Go on a Treasure Hunt in Kearny Mesa!

Check out a PA/PG Auction

Every two months, the Public Administrator/Public Guardian (PA/PG) sells personal property from estates they have been managing. Learn more about this interesting process - and take a peek at the latest treasures available - on the [PA/PG auction Web page](#).

Items featured at estate sales include: vehicles, furniture, appliances, electronics, computer equipment, jewelry, artwork, antiques, coins, and other collectibles.

The next PA/PG auction will be Saturday, July 15, starting at 8:00 a.m., at the PA/PG warehouse, 5201-A Ruffin Road. Find more details on the Agency's on-line [event calendar](#).

Recognizing a Job Done Well

Thanks for Going the Extra Mile!

Linda Spaulding, Psychiatric Nurse II, has been named Nurse of the Year for 2006 by the North Coastal Civic Association. Spaulding is a Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) Clinician who is currently riding with the Oceanside Police Department. PERT teams of San Diego County pair licensed, experienced, professional mental health clinicians with specially trained law enforcement officers. They address psychiatric emergencies in the community to identify citizens in crisis and to intervene in an effective way to prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and incarcerations while protecting the citizen and the community. PERT teams respond to emergencies in the field and follow up with citizens who present with mental illness to law enforcement agencies, schools, Child Protective Services, and Adult Protective Services. Spaulding is currently organizing a more comprehensive PERT monthly round table meeting to include additional mental health workers from other facilities in the area.



Linda Spaulding works in the middle of lots of action.

Spaulding works to ease the stigma of mental illness daily through her work and her education of others. She has demonstrated excellence in all areas of nursing while riding in a police car, often going "Code 3" - with lights flashing and sirens blaring. She is willing to face danger every day to find treatment for the mentally ill. She must wear a bulletproof vest to perform her job, carry a police radio and flashlight, scale over fences, and climb down slopes filled with ice plant. As a first responder, she performs life saving skills until paramedics arrive. As a psychiatric nurse, she responds to unimaginable psychiatric crises with professionalism, caring, intelligence, clarity, and integrity thus making her invaluable to us as an organization, and to the community at large.

Frank Larios, Appeals Representative in the Fraud and Integrity Section of Strategic Planning and Operational Support, has been awarded the 2006 CandleLife Award from the Supportive Parents Information Network (SPIN). The purpose of the award is to recognize individuals whose service and dedication have illuminated the lives of the low-income families that SPIN serves.

Larios was unanimously voted to receive this honor, and this is the first time SPIN has honored a San Diego County employee. Larios was recognized because he has never once failed to conduct himself with the utmost respect, compassion and dignity toward the parents that SPIN serves during the County fair hearing process. Even when the State judge upholds the County's action and the hearing is lost by the parent, Larios demonstrates kindness, offering a certain measure of healing to the individual.

Larios will be presented with SPIN's highest award on Friday, June 23, at an award dinner. Congratulations for demonstrating outstanding customer service.

June is **California Elder and Dependent Adult Awareness Month**, and the first **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** will be **June 15**.

- Learn more [about Elder Abuse](#)
- Learn about [reporting it](#)



[HHSA Events Calendar](#) - Check out what's happening, or, advise your Web contact to post events.

[Search the HHSA Web Site by Key Words](#)

This is a handy link to send out to people who are not yet familiar with our site.

To send a link, just copy the URL from the address bar of an Internet page and paste it into an e-mail.

Compliance Office: (619) 515-4244

Toll-Free Hotline: (866) 549-0004

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

Bringing Help to Families

Getting Closer to the Action - From Journalist to Social Worker

Every year, East Region Child Welfare Services (CWS) hosts about 15 interns from San Diego State University's Bachelor's and Master's in Social Work programs. For the past three years, **Mike Jones**, a senior protective services worker with CWS, has supervised the intern unit. This year, Jones' hard work and dedication earned him SDSU's Field Instructor of the Year award, the first such honor bestowed upon a CWS employee in the intern program's history. Jones came to East Region from Adoptions where he worked as a children's social worker for three years. Before that, Jones worked in broadcast journalism for 15 years. Jones found that when he was covering stories, many of which involved families in crisis, he wanted to help the families. When the interview was over, he wanted to stay and counsel the family. So he hung up his microphone and got his Master's in Social Work so that he could pursue a career helping people.



Mike Jones - wants to make a real difference for families.

"It's important for the interns to have an experience that complements their syllabi," Jones says. "By tying in their school work to their internship, the interns learn the real life application of their education. My goal is to teach them how to be social workers first, and that's a much bigger thing than child welfare." "Mike is focused, patient, supportive, and available for help," says Jason Sweet, an MSW intern. "It's no surprise he won the award because he's so dedicated to the field of social work in general, and to interns, in particular."

The award comes as Jones prepares for the next step in his career - private practice. Jones earned his License in Clinical Social Work (LCSW) in December and is ready to work closely with kids and families.

Director's Call-In

- Share your ideas and concerns with
**HHSA Director
 Jean Shepard - or
 Director of Operations
 Paula Landau-Cox**
- First Friday of each month
 - 8 a.m. - noon
 - (619) 515-6555

Have you submitted a **D.I.B.B.S.** lately?

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.



Emergency Survival Program

There's been a lot of talk about disasters lately. Is *your* family prepared? There are many resources available to help you. For example, the [County's Office of Emergency Services](#) offers an Emergency Survival Program (ESP) with monthly tips to increase emergency preparedness at home, in the community, at work and at school. **June's focus is: Learn what to do during an earthquake**, whether you're at home, work or school. Taking the proper actions, such as "Drop, Cover, and Hold On", can save lives and reduce your risk of death and injury.

[Click here for more information about the ESP.](#)



[Check out the County's emergency page](#), which will provide valuable information in the event of a disaster.



County of San Diego
 Health and Human Services Agency

Board of Supervisors

Greg Cox, District 1 Dianne Jacob, District 2
 Pam Slater-Price, District 3 Ron Roberts, District 4
 Bill Horn, District 5

Chief Administrative Officer

Walter F. Ekard

Health and Human Services Agency Director

Jean M. Shepard

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

Editor
 Jennifer Mallory

Section Editors

- Aging & Independence Services:Denise Nelesen
- Alcohol & Drug Services:Kim Frink
- Central Region:Elise Lorentz
- Child Welfare Services:Cathi Palatella
- East Region:Eve Leon-Torres
- Financial & Support Services:Marion Morris
- Information Technology:Maria Tellez
- Mental Health:Bonita Maglidd
- North Central Region:Nina Constantino
- North Coastal Region:Nina Constantino
- North Inland Region:Nina Constantino
- Public Health:Pete Sison
- South Region:Angie DeVoss