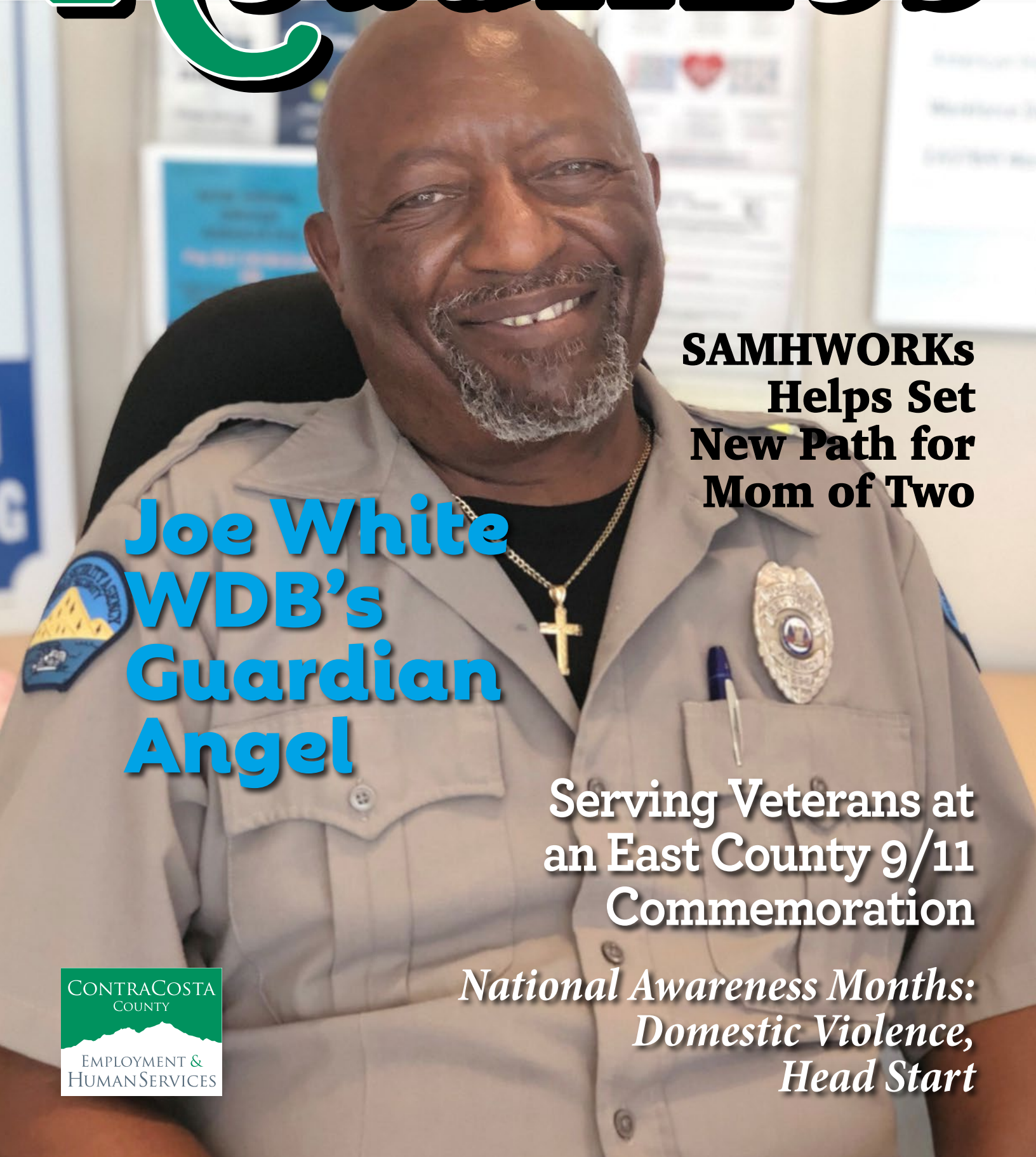


# Headlines



**SAMHWORKs  
Helps Set  
New Path for  
Mom of Two**

**Joe White  
WDB's  
Guardian  
Angel**

**Serving Veterans at  
an East County 9/11  
Commemoration**

*National Awareness Months:  
Domestic Violence,  
Head Start*

# Combined Charities Campaign Kicks Off!

By Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

**Give today for a better tomorrow.** We can usually envision how we want tomorrow to be even a little better.

To turn our visions and dreams into reality, EHSD staff has another opportunity to help build a brighter future for Contra Costa community members by participating in the **2021 Combined Charities Campaign.**

The countywide campaign just launched and will run through October 31st. The campaign offers a convenient way for you to give so you can support your favorite nonprofit causes.

If you would like to donate, submit your contribution online or set up a monthly payroll deduction (takes effect in January 2022). You can find more details [here](#), including:

- How to donate
- Donation Form (you do NOT need to fill this out if you donate online)
- List of Contra Costa County 501(c)(3) agencies (including VESTIA, nonprofit that supports EHSD customers)
- 2021 Donor Source Guide

We continue moving through some very challenging times. The needs of our most vulnerable community members are greater than ever and, as we know, wildfires, the pandemic, job losses, business closures and other adversities have resulted in financial hardships that many may never have expected.

A donation of any amount can make a difference for an organization or cause that supports others or has special meaning for you and your family.



## QUESTIONS

about the 2021 Combined Charities Campaign? Email [EventsCommittee@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:EventsCommittee@ehsd.cccounty.us).

*Thank you for considering giving today for a better tomorrow.*

# More Resources for Your Clients

By Alan Wang, Community Relations/Media Specialist

School backpacks are delivered to EHSD district offices for distribution to clients, but the backpack program is just one of the many benefits available for our customers.

“It seems that not enough staff members know the department has an in-house nonprofit called VESTIA,” says Volunteer Program Coordinator, **Cindy Smith**. “Our Volunteer & Emergency Services volunteers created it, and it’s managed from our office at 400 Ellinwood as part of a unique public-private partnership.”

To see what else VESTIA can offer your clients, check out the EHSD nonprofit’s [website](#) to view donated resources that may be available. Workers can also contact the VESTIA office on behalf of their clients at (925) 655-1208.

VESTIA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has provided between \$600,000 and nearly \$1 million in goods and services to EHSD clients. When on the [VESTIA website](#), click “about us” to see the past several years of annual reports. Donors receive the benefit of a tax deduction.



VESTIA board members (L-R): President Judy Pieralde, Secretary Michelle Barnaba, and At-Large Member Carolyn Harley

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If you'd like to support VESTIA with a donation, you can easily do so through this month's [Combined Charities Campaign](#). See the previous story for details about how you can contribute to VESTIA, the nonprofit that helps EHSD customers, and to other nonprofits.

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# We Will Never Forget

On the 20th anniversary of the September 11th attacks on our nation, several EHSD staff members were eager to serve our Veterans at a special event in East County.

WFS Navigator **Sandra Zepeda-Lopez**, WFS EW III **Lori DiMercurio**, AAS Whole Person Care/Community Connect Program Assistant **Martha Hankins**, and IT's Information Systems Technician II **Willie Balitaan** were the outreach team at "We Will Never Forget," a 9-11 commemoration at the Veteran's Memorial, Antioch Marina.

The EHSD team offered information and resources to the Veterans and community members at the event hosted by the Delta Veterans Group.

"It went very well and we were able to provide some housing and employment resources, and information regarding our Navigator program," said Sandra. "I enjoyed being part of it."

Several other community organizations were on hand for the event, which also included a free pancake breakfast for attendees. Thank you to the EHSD team who generously helped our Veterans and all community members, while honoring the victims and survivors of the tragic events of September 11th, 2001.



Martha Hankins, Sandra Zepeda-Lopez



Sandra, Antioch Mayor Lamar A Thorpe, Martha



Sandra helps Veteran



Veterans Memorial

# Fleeing a War Zone

By Rebecca Darnell, Workforce Services Deputy Director

Most of us have seen news about the evacuations that happened in Afghanistan at the end of August. The reality of those events came to EHSD on September 1st when a husband and wife landed at Oakland International Airport with their three young girls – ages five, three, and four weeks old.

The Afghan family experienced events that no one should have to go through, but they are now safe!

EHSD's cross-departmental efforts to assist this family were absolutely heart-warming.

Upon receiving word that this family was on its way, staff members started preparing for their arrival to Contra Costa County. Donations of clothing, toys and diapers were gathered, as well as gift cards to help with necessities, until it was possible to conduct a benefit assessment and secure a place for the family to stay after tumultuous travels.

“The collaboration between Workforce Services and Aging & Adult Services staff has been really great, and all parties are working hard to assist the family,” said **Tracy Murray**, director of Aging and Adult Services.

WFS and AAS staff are continuing their efforts to support the family with resources and services as the parents and their children resettle in Contra Costa.

The following staff deserve **BIG kudos** for all their efforts to help the family:

- **John Rees**, Program Analyst
- **Lynne McGraw**, Journey Level Secretary
- **Meghan Shultz**, Social Work Supervisor II
- **Charlene Thomas**, Social Worker III
- **Stefany Martinez**, Social Worker III
- **Pascualito Co**, Social Worker
- **Karina McAfee**, Social Service Program Assistant
- **Lora Duncan**, Eligibility Work Supervisor
- **Claudia Lam**, Workforce Services Specialist
- **Alvaro Florez**, Volunteer and Emergency Program Specialist
- **Sandy Bustillo**, Division Manager



Afghan community members resettling in Contra Costa County can apply for and receive benefits for which they may be eligible. You can find information and resources on [EHSD.org's Immigration page](#) to help support individuals and families from Afghanistan who are in transition.

# Making Contra Costa County a More Welcoming Place for Immigrants

By Sandra Orellana, WFS Eligibility Work Supervisor

The EHSD Gateways for Growth (G4G) planning team is building an inclusive foundation to make sure immigrants in Contra Costa County feel welcome, valued, and heard. The team is currently working on a Language Access Plan, Resource Website, and a Welcoming Plan for Immigrant Inclusion to present the Board of Supervisors in December 2021.

Contra Costa County received the G4G Technical Assistance Award to support establishing the new County Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice. For 2020-21, 19 localities across 10 states received this award.

According to [New American Economy's recent report](#), immigrants in Contra Costa are playing an outsize role in several key industries, including 41.2% of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), more than 38% of construction, and 36.3% of hospitality. As of 2019, 295,400 immigrants lived in Contra Costa County, accounting for 25% of its population.

**How can you help?** Share your experience as an immigrant or your story as a child of immigrants by completing our survey online today. Distribute the survey to family and friends, and volunteer to help with translating survey responses. The survey is available in various languages on our website.

## EHSD's G4G Team

Tamina Alon, Patricia Perez, Rosalie Uy, Yvonne Anderson, Jacqueline Mesner, Claudia Lam, Daly Young, Debora Bertasi, Mari Solis, Sandra Orellana, Sandra Motta, Martha Ayala, Njideka Onyeagucha.

## More About Our Members

### Rosalie Uy

Country of origin – Philippines  
Position – Workforce Services Specialist  
Years of service – 15

Being an immigrant myself, navigating through available resources was in itself a challenge. I joined the team with the hopes that through collaborative efforts, we will be able to provide easier access to resources, and improve support to our immigrant population.



### Claudia Lam

Country of origin – U.S. My parents are from Hong Kong  
Position – Workforce Services Specialist  
Years of service – 1

I grew up and currently live in Contra Costa County. I want to take an active role in making sure everyone feels welcome here, regardless of where they are from.



*Continued on next page*

## Making Contra Costa County a More Welcoming Place for Immigrants

Continued from previous page

### More About Our Members

#### Daly Young

Country of origin – Peru  
Position – Advanced Level Secretary, Administration  
Years of service – 15

I volunteer for Gateways for Growth because, as an immigrant, I feel the need to support those who are coming to Contra Costa County from other countries and will probably experience the same things

I did when I first arrived here from Lima, Peru, in 1985. The more we learn about what's needed, the more we can do to help make it possible for them to succeed in their new country. Very happy to provide my little grain of sand to this big effort.



#### Debora Bertasi

Country of origin – Italy  
Position – Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Unit  
Years of service – 2

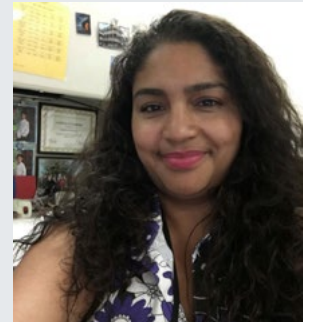
I volunteered because immigrants strengthen and enrich our communities every day and in so many ways.



#### Sandra Orellana

Country of origin – El Salvador  
Position – WFS Eligibility Work Supervisor  
Years of service – 10

My family and I arrived in Contra Costa County in 1981. Growing up as an immigrant, I remember the lack of resources available in our county and traveling to San Francisco weekly with my family. I am happy to volunteer my time towards a project that will assist in facilitating services to our immigrant community.



#### Mari Solis

Country of origin – Philippines  
Position – Children & Family Services Staff Development  
Years of service – 5.5

I volunteer to be part of County efforts that help to ensure that all immigrants feel welcomed and included as they move toward achieving the American Dream.



*Building Brighter Futures Together*

# SAMHWORKs Spotlight: Road to Recovery

By Nanci Powers, WFS Program Analyst, & Roshawn Adams, SAMHWORKs Liaison

**A new starting point can set a different direction for a person’s life. That was exactly the case for Sheena Webster, a 36-year-old single mother of two from Richmond.**

From the age of 12, Sheena faced multiple barriers to success and self-sufficiency. Her family was unable to support her upbringing, largely due to its own challenges. Sheena says her grandmother raised her in the church, and focusing on her faith played a vital role in her overcoming major life challenges, such as homelessness, medical illnesses of substance use disorder (SUD), and mental health disorder (co-occurring). Sheena also lost custody of her children during her journey, which turned out to be her primary motivation for building new skills and coping mechanisms in order



to become a more effective and self-sufficient parent.

Sheena Webster and Fadia Galdamez, SAMHWORKs Liaison



Sheena Webster holds her infant daughter

The CalWORKs SAMHWORKs program helped provide a new starting point for Sheena’s road to recovery. SAMHWORKs is the Contra Costa County partnership between EHSD’s Workforce Services Bureau (WFS) and Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) Behavioral Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Services. For more than 30 years, SAMHWORKs has been providing substance use and mental health services for CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work participants, transforming the program while encouraging each participant through connections with positive, robust County programs.

In part due to the services available through SAMHWORKs and CalWORKs WTW, Sheena and her children are now living in recovery. These supports include:

Children & Family Services (CFS) Family Engagement Unit - Sheena has built a loving relationship with her children’s foster parents and works with them to support her children. Sheena has support from a counselor and family partner. She describes CFS staff members as loving, caring, and understanding as they help prepare her to reunite with her children and stay on track with recovery.

*Continued on next page*



## SAMHWORKs Spotlight: Road to Recovery

*Continued from previous page*

Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Services (CCCBHS), Alcohol and Other Drugs Services – Perinatal Counselor Lashondra Goode encouraged and supported Sheena through the birth of her second child, and coordinated with the SAMHWORKs team to access mental health, transitional housing support as well as transition to outpatient substance use disorder treatment for her long-term recovery. Sheena successfully completed a Ujima Outpatient SUD treatment program and continues to receive mental health services from Touchstone Counseling, SAMHWORKs contract provider. She also receives support with parenting skills and developing a healthy parent-child relationship from Lynn Center, also a contract provider.



Roshawn Adams, SAMHWORKs Liaison, and Sheena

Sheena is very grateful to the CalWORKs WTW team and the SAMHWORKs team for supporting and linking her to many programs and services.

“I have coping skills to manage mine and my children’s stressors, emotions and challenges life can bring,” says Sheena when asked



Sheena (center) and baby pictured here with those who supported and encouraged her: Fadia Galdamez, SAMHWORKs Liaison, and Lashondra Goode, Perinatal Substance Abuse Counselor

what is different about her life now. “I have a huge support system which I will continue to check in with for the rest of my life. I have hope and my life’s perspective is different. Seeing my children healthy and smiling is the highlight of my day.”

Sheena recently accepted a job performing administrative duties. In the future, she is planning to secure her own housing and to return to school to create a better future for her and her children.

Sheena Webster is a SAMHWORKs Shining Star! The SAMHWORKs Team honors and congratulates Sheena’s hard work, commitment and dedication to her own well-being and that of her children as she continues on the road to recovery.

**The SAMHWORKs team wishes to thank Sheena for her willingness and bravery to share her journey, which will help many others. We also wish to thank all of the many partners (noted in the article) who were and are critical to Sheena’s recovery. It truly does take a village and we are thrilled to have you in ours to help and support our shared clients in need.**

Many other supports – Sheena credits Black Infant Health, Support 4 Recovery, First 5 California, Ginger Lapierre of Contra Costa County Community Connect, and Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP), which provides shelter, housing case management, training opportunities, and revitalization to participants to eradicate homelessness.

**EHSD’s WFS Bureau thanks the SAMHWORKs Team, Trisha Seastrom, Roshawn Adams, Fadia Galdamez and Kathy Peters for an excellent job done with each participant and WFS CalWORKs WTW staff. We cannot express how much we appreciate all of the support and hard work you do!**

# National Domestic Violence Awareness Month

By Nanci Powers, EHSD Workforce Services Specialist, and Reina Sandoval-Beverly, STAND! Director of Client Services

Workforce Services (WFS) has a long-standing relationship with **STAND! for Families Free of Violence** to provide domestic violence services for our CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participants.

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) – a time to draw attention to the unspeakable acts of interpersonal violence, and to continue efforts to raise awareness and stop it. We appreciate STAND! for all of the wonderful work and dedication to the clients we serve.

Below is additional information from STAND! for all of us at EHSD:

While STAND! holds awareness-building activities throughout the year, we re-double our efforts each October as DVAM arrives across our country. In a typical year, STAND! staff members and volunteers provide and attend community events; offer numerous presentations in various workplace, business and school settings; conduct our trademark Rebuilding Lives Luncheon event; and provide partner agencies with supplies and swag to share widely with staff, clients and program participants. This year Rebuilding Lives will again be a virtual event.



## Save the Date: October 28, 2021

Promote peace, celebrate resilience, and be inspired by uplifting stories from survivors and advocates during this virtual event.

Visit [www.standffov.org](http://www.standffov.org) for registration information.

Each year STAND! prepares and distributes DVAM swag to help you raise awareness in your work community. Our staff and volunteers are ready to provide

you a DVAM “kit” of information and swag for distributing to your staff and clients. **Call us at (925) 676-2845 to arrange a DVAM kit pick-up or delivery.**

***A BIG THANK YOU to our STAND! community partner for supporting some of our most vulnerable CalWORKs/WTW program participants and families.***

# We're Baack!

By Iliana Choate, Staff Development



Mentees (L-R) – Yvonne Ybanez, Farhad Ziaee, Fabiola Quintero, Theresa Anderson, LaChawn Robinson, Denise August, Veronica Ramos, Monique Young-Edwards, Julie Deemer, Catrina Kilgore, & Catrina Beverly

**The EHSD Mentoring Program is back for 2021!** Due to the pandemic, the 2020 Mentoring Program was cancelled shortly after launch. It was challenging, but Staff Development trainers **Iliana Choate** and **Antonio Vasquez** were able to design and create a new hybrid model for the current program. This new model combines instructor-led workshops and virtual online training for the six-month program.

We were thrilled to invite back the original group of mentees to participate in the new 2021-2022 program, and they were happy to find out that they could participate again! This year's program will run from September 2021 through February 2022, culminating in a graduation ceremony in March 2022.

The EHSD Mentoring Program was created to offer professional growth, development and leadership opportunities to employees throughout the department. This program provides a positive environment where employees benefit from learning opportunities offered through a one-on-one mentor and mentee relationship.

We encourage you to consider being a mentor or mentee when the next program launches in 2022.

Huge appreciation to our mentors: **Deborah Drake, Tomika Taylor, Sandy Bustillo, Randolph Hudson, Gloria Navarro, Mari Solis, Christina Reich, Maria Torres, Linda Linnell, Amber Sandoval-Sullivan and Antoinette Bailey-Nesbitt.**



# Calling All EARTH FRIENDS

By Tom Ta, EHSD Facilities Manager

According to NASA, climate change is real. Its Global Climate Change website states the current warming trend is of particular significance because it is unequivocally the result of human activity since the mid-20th century, and is proceeding at a rate that is unprecedented over millennia.

Please join EHSD in our fight to curb climate change. We want future generations to have the opportunity to enjoy Earth in the way it was meant to be, the way it used to be. If you are interested in battling climate change, email me at [tta@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:tta@ehsd.cccounty.us) to become an EHSD Climate Action Plan Committee member. Be sure to first obtain your supervisor's approval.

Signs that global warming is real include global temperature rise, warming oceans, shrinking ice sheets, glacial retreat, decreased snow cover, sea level rise, declining arctic sea ice, extreme events, and ocean acidification. If you would like to read about each of these signs,

go to [Evidence | Facts – Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet \(nasa.gov\)](#).

The window to prevent going down this path at an alarming rate is slowly closing, and EHSD is part of the countywide effort to address this issue in Contra Costa. Climate change is too big for any one person or organization to tackle.

**EHSD**  
**EARTH FRIENDS**

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES  
*Building Brighter Futures Together*

We are coming together to curb climate change locally. You can help by joining the new EHSD Climate Action Plan Committee!

**Who can join the committee?**  
EHSD staff members (must have supervisor approval)

**What's the commitment?**  
1 to 3 hours per month

**When does it start?**  
Virtual kick-off meeting in mid-October

**What will we do?**  
Come up with ideas to improve EHSD's earth friendliness, as part of a county-wide initiative.

**Why have a Climate Action Plan?**  
As carbon dioxide emissions are rapidly accelerating, there is "no sign of growing back greener."  
– United in Science 2021

**We can step up our efforts to curb climate change.**

**CONTACT** To be an EHSD Earth Friend who helps shape the department's Climate Action Plan, contact Tom Ta, EHSD Facilities Manager, at [tta@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:tta@ehsd.cccounty.us) by October 7th, 2021.

"We have reached a tipping point on the need for climate action. The disruption to our climate and our planet is already worse than we thought, and it is moving faster than predicted."  
–UN Secretary General António Guterres

## Collectively, WE can make a difference.

## Worm Your Way into this Free Workshop

Learn how to make your own worm compost! The Contra Costa County Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) is offering a **FREE virtual Worm Composting Workshop on Saturday, October 16, 2021, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.**

Vermicomposting (“vermi” is Latin for “worm”) is the process of using worms to process organic food waste into nutrient rich soil. Worms eat decaying food waste and produce vermicompost, a very effective soil supplement. The worms will produce both a liquid fertilizer and worm castings – a fancy name for worm poop (the best compost!). It is a solid, odor free byproduct of worm digestion. You can periodically collect your worm castings and use them as a soil addition, soil conditioner, or light mulch.

Instructor Todd Sutton, an expert with more than 29 years in the environmental field, has appeared on national television, including Discovery and History channels, and has educated thousands on waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and composting.

Did you know that each person is responsible for an average of 700 pounds of material disposed of in landfills annually? According to a recent California study, an average of 37.4 percent of the waste from households is potentially compostable (yard and food waste). You can make a difference by just composting at home.

All Contra Costa County residents are welcome. Call Maureen at (925) 655-2909, email at [maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us](mailto:maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us), or register on [Eventbrite](#). To learn more about composting or recycling, just go to <http://www.ccrecycle.org/>.

DCD will host this event live online via Zoom. Participants will receive the Zoom link once they register from [Maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us](mailto:Maureen.parkes@dcd.cccounty.us). Check your junk folder or contact Maureen at (925) 655-2909 if you do not receive confirmation.



## Joe White, Workforce Development Board's Guardian Angel

By Alan Wang, Community Relations/Media Specialist



A spread of two large pans of hot, delicious lasagna, three bowls of salad, rolls and soft drinks, from the Spaghetti Factory, are waiting for the employees at the Workforce Development Board on Port Chicago Highway, in Concord. Security guard, **Joe White**, quietly walks by the office cubicles announcing that lunch is being served in the break room. The employees are delighted. Their masked faces are smiling as they get up from their chairs and stroll into the break room. The mood is jovial. People are laughing and talking while enjoying their meal. I'm invited to help myself to a plate of lasagna, but first I ask, "Where did all this food come from?"

"Joe brings it," says one of the employees. "Who is Joe?" I ask. "He's the security guard downstairs," I'm told. Then Joe walks in to make sure everyone is happy and getting what they need. He's humble, soft spoken with a pleasant smile. I remember how he made sure I signed in and asked me what my business was at the Port Chicago office, which also houses the America's Job Center of California (AJCC). "Joe takes care of us," says an employee. "He protects us, and he feeds us. How good is that?" I later find out that Joe buys and serves these scrumptious meals to his co-workers once or twice a week. Sometimes it's bagels or croissants and coffee from a local shop. Other times, it's a full lunch from a nearby restaurant.

*Continued on next page*

## Joe White, Workforce Development Board's Guardian Angel

*Continued from previous page*

Joe shies away from the lens when I try to capture the moment on my video camera. I finally corner him and ask him why he does this. "Because I can," he says. "My parents always taught me to take care of the people around me. So I do what I can." I'm guessing Joe is in his 60's and I later find out, from a co-worker, that he's a retired Contra Costa County employee who worked in the Tax Assessor's office. I ask a few more questions, but he doesn't open up easily and I get the feeling he doesn't want any praise for his unselfish deeds. I have the camera trained on him and he realizes he's in a position to pontificate and share his wisdom. But he's reluctant to speak much about himself. He cracks a smile of satisfaction, sits back in his seat and looks out the window as though he's enjoying every second of his presence, reminding me that actions speak louder than words.



Joe White takes customer service to another level of kindness and compassion. To watch and hear Joe, CLICK on the play button.



# When a Loved One is at Risk

Contributed by Personnel Services

Sometimes a person who's integral to our life will experience an emotional or substance use crisis that puts their well-being at risk (with just under 50,000 Americans dying from suicide annually, such risks are real).

If your loved one appears to be on a self-destructive path, react with compassion, kindness and support.

- Identify warning signs. A person may be feeling suicidal if they mention having lost hope, feeling unbearable discomfort, wanting life to end, being a burden to or withdrawing from others, and/or being deeply depressed.
- Gently ask them to talk. Studies show that asking and talking about someone's suicidal feelings—in a non-judgmental way—helps generate relief, not further risk.
- If you believe someone might harm themselves, strive to remove potential suicide means such as weapons or stockpiled medications.

Make sure to be there. It's vital to stop, listen and truly hear what the other person is feeling. Ask how you can help. If they're clearly struggling but aren't yet ready to talk, let them know you're available to listen anytime.

Browse more resilience tips and more topics at [www.magellanascend.com](http://www.magellanascend.com).

Magellan Ascend



**UPCOMING WEBINAR:**  
*Fostering Understanding between Veterans and Civilians for Workplace Success*  
**October 13**

Register for this webinar to:

- Know the basics on military demographics, structure and common sacrifices made in order to serve
- Understand the unique needs of veterans and their common challenges with civilian workplace culture
- Identify valuable skills and attributes veterans bring to the civilian workforce
- Learn key communication and workflow differences between civilian and military work culture and strategies to overcome

If you miss the live webinar, you can access webinar recordings by clicking on "Learning Center" and selecting "Webinars." If you haven't signed up to use the County Employee Assistance Program yet, follow these two easy steps:

**Step 1:** Go to [www.magellanascend.com](http://www.magellanascend.com) and click on "Sign up".

**Step 2:** Complete the online registration form and click on "Get Started".



# Personnel Track-It has Taken Off

By Cheryl Leonor, Administrative Services Assistant III

We are excited to announce the release of “Personnel Track-It” to help monitor incoming requests for services, similar to a Help Desk ticketing system in Information Technology. In the last few months, we have been working tirelessly with some of your peers to improve our product and we believe Track-It will strengthen your customer experience with Personnel.

Earlier this year, we conducted a survey to find out how you (our valuable customers) feel about our services. An overwhelming response indicated we need to do better in several key areas. You wanted improvements in communication, transparency, responsiveness, and consistency? You got it! We believe Track-It will improve customer service delivery, and is another step in our master plan to build confidence in your interactions with our team.

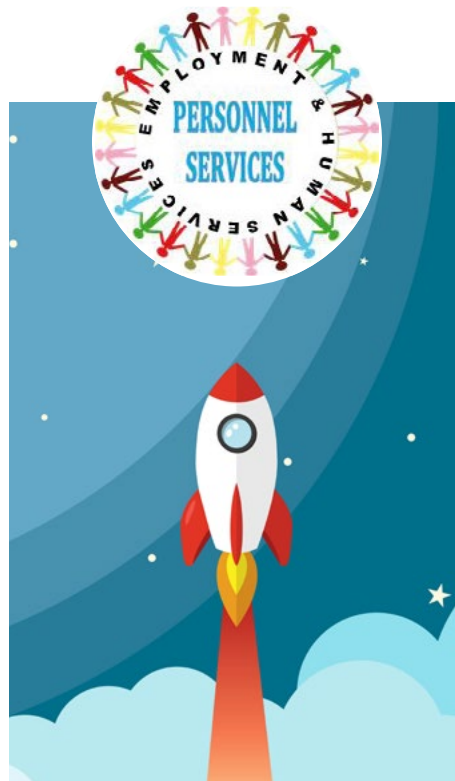
## Read on to learn more about Track-It.

### Self Service Portal

Access a Self-Service portal where you can create, update, and obtain the status of your requests (tickets) to the Personnel team. Think of it as a one-stop shop.

### Communication & Responsiveness

Receive a notification via email when your



request ticket is opened or closed, and to get updates on status. You can also respond via email.

### Transparency

The Self-Service portal shows you who is working on your ticket as well as the status at any given time.

### Easy to Use

Track-It is a simple system that allows requestors to create a ticket by filling out a short form for instant delivery to Personnel. That’s it!

### Consistency

Tickets will be monitored daily and re-assigned if a Personnel team member is unavailable.

All communication between the requestor and Personnel is stored in the history of each ticket.

### Data & Metrics

Built-in reports and dashboards will give us the ability to track trends and identify areas of improvement.

### Tools & Support

Prior to using Track-It for the first time, you will be required to complete a brief e-Learning in the SMART system. **Access Track-It through the [EHSD Home Page](#) or [Personnel Page](#). If you have trouble logging in, contact the IT Help Desk at 1-7200 or 521-7200.** Explore Track-It today!

# Head Start Awareness Month

By Sarah Reich, ASAlll, Community Services Bureau



*Building Brighter Futures Together*

October is National Head Start Awareness Month! Head Start was established in 1965 and promotes school readiness by offering educational, nutritional, health, social and other services. For more than 50 years, the Community Services Bureau (CSB) has been providing high-quality early learning and wellness afforded by the Head Start program to the children and families of Contra Costa County.

CSB is the largest childcare provider in the County, providing a variety of services to families, pregnant mothers, and children age 0-5 years through the California Childcare and Development and Head Start programs. CSB provides services through 13 directly operated childcare centers, and many partnerships with early education providers countywide.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, CSB developed a reopening plan, which aligns with local, state, and federal guidance for the provision of childcare services. The plan is comprehensive in nature and includes best practices to mitigate the spread of illness including face coverings, personal protective equipment and stable cohorts. CSB's phased reopening plan includes gradual classroom capacity expansion, which aligns with the Office of Head Start's expectations for full enrollment by January 2022. Within this plan, CSB is safely working towards reaching full capacity and therefore will be enrolling through the fall.

Children who have disabilities, are involved in child welfare services, are facing housing insecurity, are in foster care, or are living below the federal poverty level, have priority for enrollment into Head Start and can benefit from these comprehensive services. **To inquire about services or refer a family, please contact CSB's enrollment hotline at (925) 272-4727 or [csb-eligibility@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:csb-eligibility@ehsd.cccounty.us).**

## EOC Pushes Back on Poverty

By Sarah Reich, ASAIll, Community Services Bureau

A new executive team is leading the Contra Costa County Economic Opportunity Council (EOC), responsible for administering the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds for alleviating the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. The EOC is a 15-member, tripartite board that includes five community members of the low-income sector, five from the private/non-private sector, and five delegates appointed by the county's Board of Supervisors.

The EOC recently elected Chair **Renee Zeimer**, Vice-Chair **Devlyn Sewell**, and Secretary **Desiree Medlen** to be its 2021–22 executive team. The

three began their roles by leading one of the board's most exciting activities – the 2021 site monitoring visits. These in-person and virtual site visits provide the opportunity for board members to meet with the subcontractors and see the great work they are doing to support the community.

Together, the EOC and community partners are directing CSBG dollars to reduce poverty in Contra Costa County. For more information about the EOC or to view the 2022–23 Draft Community Action Plan, visit [EHSD.org](http://EHSD.org) and click on the Community Action Agency tab under Head Start/Community Services.



EOC Vice-Chair Devlyn Sewell



EOC Chair Renee Zeimer



EOC Secretary Desiree Medlen

### Your Employee Discounts – Save on Major Brands & Everyday Essentials

Save with your Employee Discounts on LifeMart, your online members-only discount center, where you can save big on major purchases like travel, tickets, attractions, electronics, cars vacations, or on day-to-day essentials like groceries and child care. And best of all, access is free!

[Click here to access the LifeMart Discount Center in your web browser.](#)

# Kids at Work Preschool

255 Glacier Drive, Martinez

A Discounted Child Care Benefit for Contra Costa County



**Kids at Work** is a

non-profit preschool designed to benefit the employees of Contra Costa County. We provide a safe, clear, nurturing environment where children can learn through play with a balance of child initiated and teacher-directed activities. Our experienced staff will stimulate and challenge your child's learning through stories, songs, art and other activities.

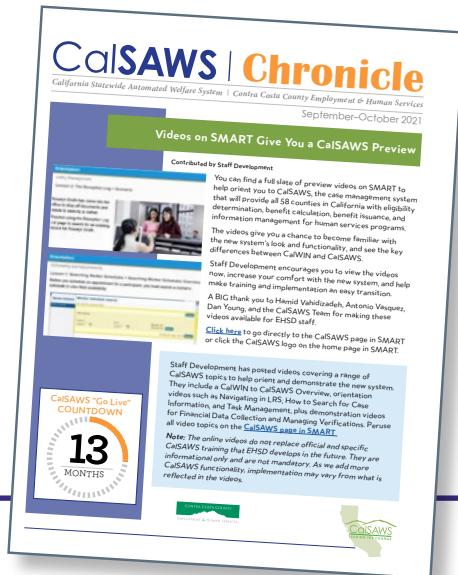
Now  
enrolling  
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preschool

Call today  
to schedule a tour!  
(925) 313-2380

Email : [kaw@pw.cccounty.us](mailto:kaw@pw.cccounty.us)

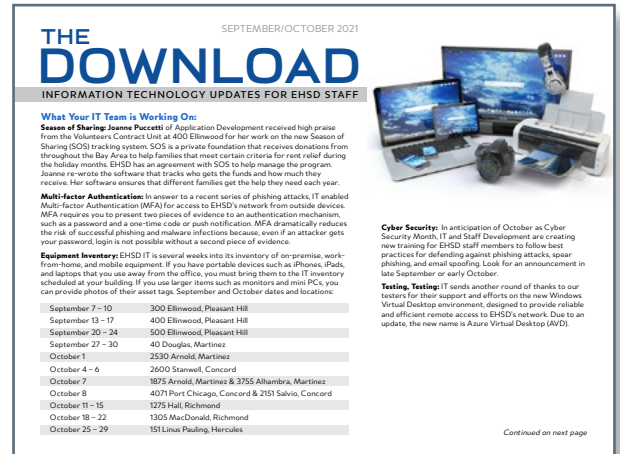
## CalSAWS Chronicle, September/October 2021

Contra Costa reached a big CalSAWS milestone with Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) as the project team continues preparing for “go-live” next fall. Find out more in the September-October 2021 issue of the [CalSAWS Chronicle](#).



## Get The Download

EHSD’s IT Team wants to make sure you’re in the know! Be sure to read the September-October issue of [The Download](#) for the latest IT news and updates including cyber security, ergonomic tips, equipment inventory, and much more.



# COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

To meet Contra Costa County’s COVID-19 Vaccine & Verification Requirement for all staff, you may provide proof of vaccination status in one of three ways:

1. Photocopy of CDC card
2. WHO Yellow Card
3. CDPH COVID-19 vaccine record

Send a copy of your vaccine verification to your direct supervisor and copy Personnel Services at [EHSD\\_Personnel\\_Forms@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:EHSD_Personnel_Forms@ehsd.cccounty.us).

**Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can help protect the health and safety of EHSD customers and staff.**

Visit the [Contra Costa Health Services Get Vaccinated](#) page to learn more and schedule an appointment.

[EHSD Procedures to Implement County Vaccination Mandate](#) (August 31) - details about mandate requirements, vaccination verification, and exemption requests.

[Contra Costa County Vaccine Requirement Update](#) (September 27) - recent information about the County mandate.

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can help protect the health and safety of EHSD customers and staff

# Halloween Pet Parade

## Save the Date!

We are looking forward to our second annual Halloween Pet Parade, an exciting and fun virtual event to show off your non-human family members.

**This year's pet parade will be on Thursday, October 28th.  
Look for more details soon!**

Last year, Stefany Martinez, SW III in Aging & Adult Services, dressed up pet parade winners Otis & Buggy as minions!



## Name That Training Contest Winner!

The winning title is: **Empower to Perform: A Training on Supportive Performance Management**

Submitted by Kellie Case, Social Work Supervisor II in CFS!

Thank you to all who submitted, it was a challenging decision to make.

Kellie will be receiving a \$25 Amazon gift card for her winning entry. Thank you Kellie!

## EHSD Provides Cross-County IHSS Help

By Annie Barrett, IHSS Division Manager Aging & Adult Services

In June, San Joaquin County reached out asking if we can walk them through our organizational processes for In Home Supportive Services (IHSS). IHSS has been making tremendous improvements

in our efficiencies and reports over the past few years so without hesitation we agreed to assist a neighboring county.

Social Work Supervisors **Yesenia Orta** and **Patsy Secrease** were essential to the success of this process. They met virtually with the staff from San Joaquin County and made themselves available for any additional questions as IHSS subject matter experts. They were a great help to San Joaquin County and a wonderful representation of EHSD staff.

I am grateful to have these two Supervisors on my team. Their assistance helps us develop and foster relationships with our neighboring counties!



Patsy Secrease



Yesenia Orta



## We Care...You Care

**We Care...You Care** is how we recognize our peers, emphasizing internal customer service. **We Care...You Care** nominations tie directly to one or more of our six Core Values. The program gives you the opportunity to show your coworkers how much you appreciate them. If you work with someone who deserves special recognition for internal customer service, check out the We Care...You Care link to the guidelines, then fill out a nomination form and submit it to the supervisor of the person you are nominating.

**Guidelines:** [http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Guidelines\\_FINAL.pdf](http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Guidelines_FINAL.pdf)

**Nomination Form:** [http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Nomination%20Form\\_FINAL.pdf](http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Nomination%20Form_FINAL.pdf)



## SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

### SERVICE AWARDS

#### 20 YEARS

Anna Domingo, Soc Svc Business Syst App Mgr, Admin  
Maria Gaspar, Infant Toddler Assoc Teacher-Prj, CSB  
Nicole Gremillion, EHS Division Manager, CFS  
Maria Luna, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB

Omar Pastora, Medical Program Assistant WFS  
Shawn Stewart, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS  
Tomika Taylor, Social Work Supervisor I, AAS  
Balsam Nimir, Master Teacher-Project, CSB  
Sandy Valdivia, Social Case Assistant, CFS  
Adrienne Tucker, Soc Svc Employment Place Cnsl,  
WDB

#### 15 YEARS

Shaniko Brown, Soc Svc Program Assistant WFS  
Jessica Connolly, Soc Svc Program Assistant, CFS  
Jay David, EHS Division Manager, Admin

#### 10 YEARS

Qing Xu, Comprehensive Svcs Asst Mgr-Pr, CSB

### NEW EMPLOYEES

Levon Gibson, EHSD DM, AAS  
Dominique Harvey, Social Worker II, CFS  
Jacqueline Horne, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS

Tana Reed, Site Supervisor I, CSB  
Richard Russell, Social Worker III, CFS  
Maritza Sanchez-Ware, Social Worker II, CFS

### RETIREES

Gina Fincher, Eligibility Worker III, WFS  
Golie France, Eligibility Worker III, CFS  
Consuelo Hanson, Teacher-Project, CSB  
Mary Jane Harris, Social Work Supervisor II, AAS

Yvette Mazone, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB  
Gwendolyn McKneely, Infant Toddler Teacher-Prj, CSB  
Melanie Smith, Aging & Adult Svcs Sr Staff As, AAS

Are you planning a retirement celebration for a staff member and would like to present them with a retirement certificate? **If so, please contact Deb Johnson at [djohnson@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:djohnson@ehsd.cccounty.us) or (925) 608-4904.**



# SPREAD THE WORD

## October

- **HEAD START AWARENESS MONTH**
- **NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH**
- **OCTOBER 1-31** – Combined Charities Campaign
- **OCTOBER 4** – Clerk-Recorder-Elections Dedicates “Stephen L. Weir Building”
- **OCTOBER 11** – Indigenous People’s Day
- **OCTOBER 16** – National Boss’s Day
- **OCTOBER 24** – United Nations Day
- **OCTOBER 28** – Halloween Pet Parade (virtual)
- **OCTOBER 31** – Halloween

## November

### ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

- **NOVEMBER 7** – Daylight Saving Time Ends
- **NOVEMBER 11** – Veterans Day (Holiday)
- **NOVEMBER 25** – Thanksgiving Day (Holiday)
- **NOVEMBER 26** – Day after Thanksgiving (Holiday)
- **NOVEMBER 28** – Hanukkah begins
- **NOVEMBER 29** – Cyber Monday



Is there room in your home for one more?

Make a change in a child’s life and become a Resource Parent/ Family for a foster child. Contra Costa County has more than 1,000 children who need your help. Join a free virtual orientation during the COVID-19 Health Order. We will update the in-person orientation schedule as restrictions lift.

### FREE VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS

October 7 or 21 • 4 to 6 p.m.  
November 4 or 18 • 4 to 6 p.m.  
December 2 or 16 • 4 to 6 p.m.

For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at [www.ehsd.org](http://www.ehsd.org). To register for a class, please call (925) 602-6960, toll-free at 1 (866) 313-7788, or email [ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us)

### We Care... You Care

<http://ehsdhome/Pages/Service-Champions.aspx> and see page 19

Want to know what else we’re doing at EHSD?

Follow us on Twitter @ContraCostaEHSD  
Like us on Facebook



Contact us at our *EHSD Headlines* email, [headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us), if you have an upcoming event, article, our idea you would like to share.