

Headlines

Winning!

WDB Delivers Most Successful Hiring Fair Yet



Off and Running with Lots of Q&A

How Coffee Cured the Pandemic Blues

Your One Stop for EHSD COVID Info



Big Audience for Debut of EHSD Live!

By Alan Wang, Community Relation, Media Specialist

Nearly 700 staff members tuned in to watch and interact with EHSD Director **Marla Stuart** during the debut of EHSD Live! It was a chance for the entire department to hear our new director introduce herself and her style of leadership. The interactive meeting took place via Zoom, on Tuesday, July 19th, and originated from the 1275 Hall Avenue staff room in Richmond. Marla gave an update on the



latest EHSD news, and HR Officer **Deb Boutté** provided Personnel Services information. But most of the time was devoted to answering staff questions submitted in advance and through the Q&A function on Zoom. The department will have an EHSD Live! meeting each month, eventually at different locations as COVID precautions allow. The next EHSD Live! is a virtual-only event scheduled for

August 24th. You can watch the most recent recording of EHSD Live! [here](#) and use the password, **EHSDLive#1** to get in.



Animated character of Marla created for EHSD Live! **CLICK** the **play** button to see the animation.

To quickly find the Q&A topics of particular interest to you, check for the time-stamped questions on the [Question Log](#) and go to that part of the video for the answer.

CLICK the **play** button to watch a recording of the debut of EHSD Live! (password: **EHSDLive#1**)



CFS Best Practices Created by You

By Ariana Martinez, CFS Staff Development Specialist

It's hard to believe it has been more than a year since the initial launch of the statewide Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Toolkit!

SOP provides on-the-ground practice tools to help child welfare staff achieve positive federal child welfare outcome measures, including improved timely permanency, placement stability and reduced recurrence of maltreatment and re-entry to foster care.

The launch of the Toolkit on the [CaISWEC website](#) marked the completion of the first phase of this ambitious project.

With this important first phase now well behind us, it's time to make a giant leap toward Phase Two.

CFS – Phase Two is You!

The larger vision shared by the SOP Backbone Committee is to provide a text that is collaborative and easy to adjust as practice improves. We will need all of our CFS SOP champions to keep things moving forward. We can achieve this by using the [SOP Toolkit form](#) to share new and/or improved tools, tips, strategies, and/or impactful SOP stories from the field. To create a forum for such a community of practice to thrive, we're proud to introduce *SOP: Tools from the Kit and Stories from the Field!*

What is *SOP: Tools from the Kit and Stories from the Field?*

This will be a new monthly eNews series, where we will curate specific components of the SOP Toolkit

SOP Toolkit



Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Tools from the Kit and Stories from the Field

We need all of our Safety Organized Practice (SOP) champions to keep things moving forward. This can be achieved by sharing new and/or improved tools, tips, strategies, and/or impactful SOP stories from the field. To create a forum for such a community of practice to thrive, we're proud to introduce *SOP: Tools from the Kit and Stories from the Field!*

This is a new monthly eNews series, where we'll curate specific components of the **SOP Toolkit** and explore how they might be used by both child welfare leaders and social workers in their unique roles. We'll also offer a forum for submitting new and/or refined SOP tools for the Toolkit—to make sure we're consistently offering the best tools available. Lastly, we'll also be seeking and then sharing out SOP-specific stories from

Visit the Toolkit

<https://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/safety-organized-practice>

Featured Sections

- ✓ [Definitional Tools](#)
- ✓ [Implementation, Sustainability & Leadership Tools](#)
- ✓ [Practice Tools](#)
- ✓ [Supervision & Coaching Tools](#)
- ✓ [Fidelity & Evaluation Tools](#)
- ✓ [Quick Guides](#)
- ✓ [County-Specific Tools](#)
- ✓ [SOP Regional Contacts](#)

To Submit:

If you have a specific tool or a story from the field you'd like to share, you can do so through our [submission form](#). Simply fill in the fields, attach the tool or story, and we'll be in touch from there!

Your complete resource for SOP implementation, sustainability, leadership, supervision and practice tools and supports!











and explore how they might be used by both child welfare leaders and social workers in their unique roles. We'll also offer a forum for submitting new and/or refined SOP tools for the Toolkit—to make sure we're consistently offering the best tools available. Lastly, we'll be seeking and then sharing specific stories from the field from all of our valued colleagues.

Grand Group of New CFS Social Workers

By Ariana Martinez, CFS Staff Development Specialist

Children and Family Services (CFS) welcomes nine new Child Welfare Social Workers! On May 31st, 2022, the new group successfully completed training, and CFS Director **Kathy Marsh**, awarded them graduation certificates, alongside other leadership team members, during a hybrid graduation ceremony.

This graduating class exemplified compassion, dignity, and grace throughout their time together. They contributed greatly with thoughtful questions that sparked valuable dialogues to help them learn how to serve children and families to the best of their ability. The level of connection, engagement, and growth they have demonstrated will carry them far in their full time work in the offices.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our new Child Welfare Social Workers!

West County

Karalyn Foster – Court

Stacey Govan – Continuing Services

Crystal Johnson – Continuing Services

Central County

Cynthia Briseno – Court

Samantha Gange – Emergency Response

Uche Uzegbu-McGhee – Continuing Services

East County

Jamie Adams – Emergency Response

Michelle Joya – Emergency Response

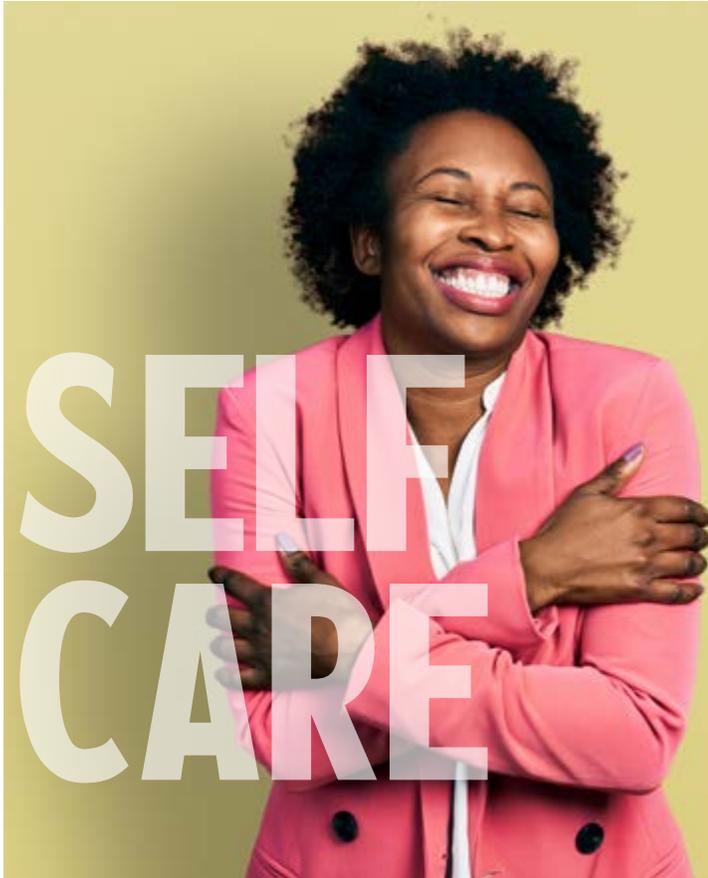
Sequoia Stanley – Emergency Response

Congratulations to our Summer 2022 Graduates!



Thanks... and Stay Healthy Out There

By Joan Morrow, Lisa Williams, Faye Herald, CFS Wellness Environment Team Members



Many have heard the saying, “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” The Children and Family Services (CFS) Wellness Environment (WE) Team sought to remind their colleagues to fill their cups by promoting a Self-Care Week during the month of June. Each day focused on a different way to care for yourself at work. These are simple and effective ways like meditating, taking a walk, wearing your favorite color, being thankful, and continuing to practice your self-care in and out of the office. The team shared some examples of how to participate and included useful YouTube links as a resource. We know that there’s a great impact of secondary trauma and stress for everyone doing this amazing work. Our goal is to motivate everyone to step out of their comfort zones to develop positive habits that will nourish each person’s well-being and further bolster their resilience. On behalf of the CFS WE Teams, we thank these “resilient individuals” for everything they do. Our workplace would not be the same without each of you. Everyone is such a vital part of our workplace, so we all deserve to rest and repeat as needed. By filling our own cups, we able to serve more from the excess. Keep a look out for future Spirit and Wellness Weeks and be sure to join us in working towards a healthier workplace together.

Up-to-date EHSD COVID Info, Now!

By Cheryl Leonor, Administrative Services Assistant III

You are invited to explore the brand new [COVID 411 Intranet Page](#), your one-stop shop to learn and reference pertinent COVID-19 information. This page was developed to provide our employees and supervisors with up-to-date COVID-related resources in one central location. Our goal is to provide you with the current tools and resources available in assessing your individual circumstances as it relates to COVID.



COVID links to Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS), Risk Management (RM) and Human Resources (HR) are included. Current mandates, County recommendations and Prevention Strategies during an Outbreak sections are excerpts from the County COVID Prevention Program (CPP). This page will be updated as new information becomes available.

Improving the Life–Mind–Body Connection

Contributed by Personnel Services



It's important to recognize the vital connection between your body and mind if you want to live a balanced, healthy life. To improve your mind-body health:

- Relax your mind and body regularly. This helps you ward off stress, anxiety, depression, sleep problems and more. Try deep breathing (which helps your brain calm down and relax), guided imagery (imagining yourself in a serene setting), progressive muscle relaxation (which can alleviate sleeping problems), mindfulness meditation (awareness and acceptance of moment-to-moment experiences) or yoga.
- Laugh. Laughter increases creativity, reduces pain and speeds healing.
- Get enough sleep. Not getting quality sleep can increase your risk of accidents, high blood pressure and feeling depressed. Adequate sleep helps repair cells overnight that have been damaged by stress, fatigue and muscle strain.
- Find a physical activity that you enjoy. Most people are happier, less stressed and sleep better when they're active.

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.](#)

UPCOMING WEBINAR:

Make Life Easier: Create More Peace and Balance at Work and Home

–
August 10

What this webinar will address:

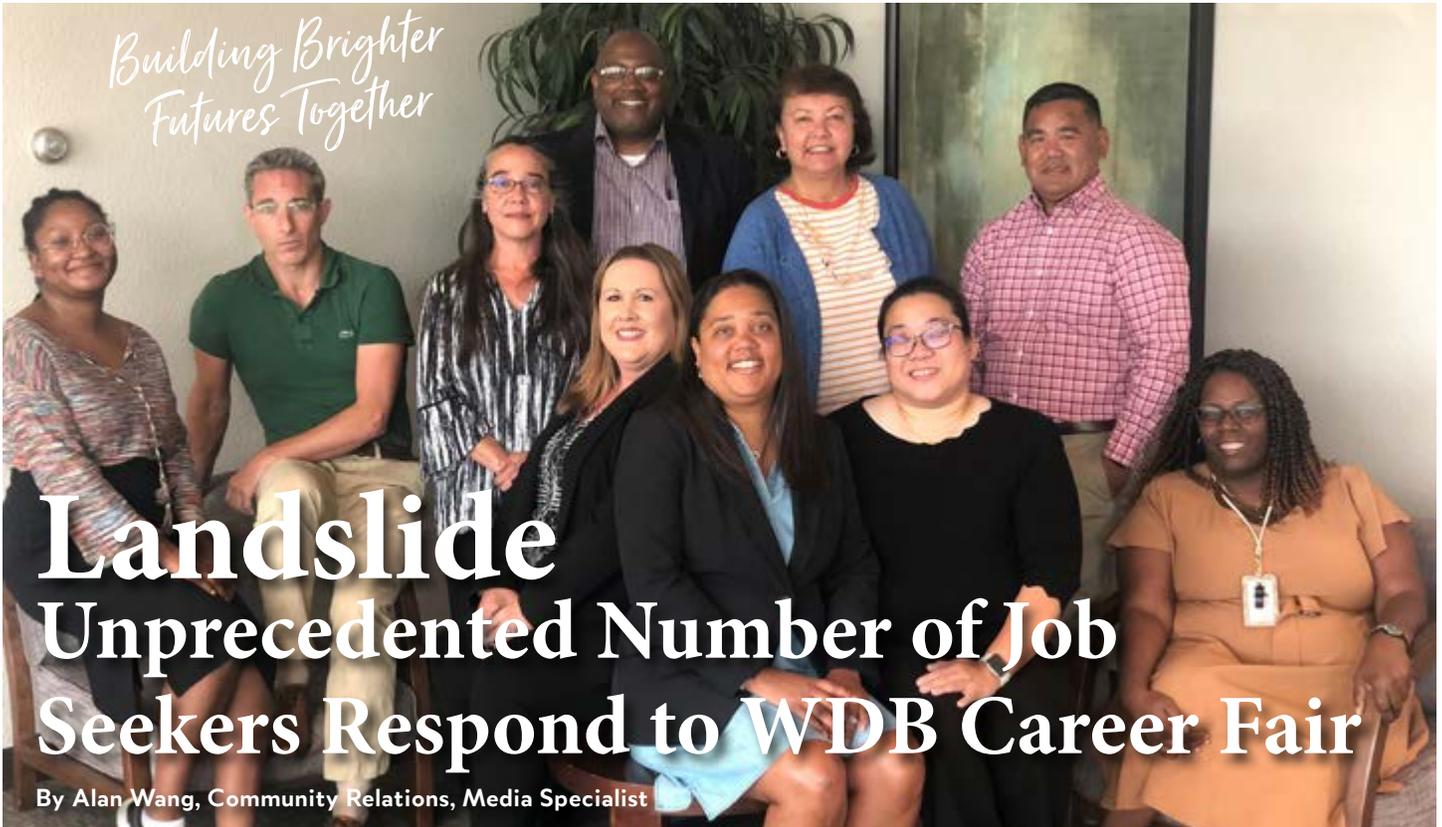
- Defining what peace and balance means.
- Describing mindsets and how to set practical expectations.
- Identifying strategies to help create calm and manage work-life flow.

Missed the live webinar? 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.magellanascent.com and click on “Sign up.”

Step 2: Complete the online registration form and click on “Get Started.”

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*



Landslide Unprecedented Number of Job Seekers Respond to WDB Career Fair

By Alan Wang, Community Relations, Media Specialist

Front row, L to R: Lauren Talbert, Jed Silver, Noramah Burch, LaTosha Stockholm, Tamia Brown, Jennifer Joel, Vee Clapp.

Back row, standing, L to R: Charles Brown III, Patricia Conley, Donn Matsuzaki

Not Present: Patience Ofodu, Maureen Nelson, Rochelle Soriano, Veronica Ramos, Rene Tucker, Michelle Graham, and Kasandra Knox

In what could be a good indicator of the Bay Area’s strengthening economic health, the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board (WDB) says it saw a huge spike in registered job seekers at its 2022 Contra Costa Spring Career

Fair on Tuesday, June 28, at the Port Chicago office in Concord.

“A few weeks ago, we were not seeing anyone at Bay Area career fairs,” said WDB Specialist, **Patience Ofodu**. “We were only expecting about a hundred job seekers so we kept the number of employers down to fifteen. But a shocking amount of interest grew in the last few days leading up to the job fair, so we had to accept more employers who were on the waiting list to accommodate all of the job seekers.”



A surprising number of job seekers lined up in front of the Workforce Development Board offices at 4071 Port Chicago Highway, in Concord. A total of 425 people – the most ever. The Contra Costa Spring Career Fair also included free career counseling and resume reviews as well as job seeker services for veterans, youth and individuals with disabilities.

The number of job seekers, eager to enter, snowballed to 425 people. It was the most the WDB had ever seen. Meanwhile, the number of employers also doubled. Some employers at the Contra Costa Spring Career Fair were Tesla,

Continued on next page

WDB Career Fair *Continued from previous page*

Amazon, Southwest Airlines, United States Postal Service (USPS), Transportation Security Agency (TSA), and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to name a few.



Click the play button to watch KPIX-TV News Coverage: **Big turnout at East Bay job fair may signal turnaround for pandemic-era job market.**

“We were puzzled as to why all of these people suddenly showed up,” said Patience. After the event, a survey of job seekers revealed that the

Building Brighter Futures Together

WDB’s marketing campaign, using a new company called Capacity Marketing, made the biggest difference. “Our initial social media advertising posts that referred to the event as a ‘Career Fair’ were not performing well,” says Patience. “So we changed it to ‘Hiring Event/Career Fair’ and it performed 3-times better.”

“It was challenging with extremely hot temperature for the day,” said WDB Director, **Tamia Brown**. “But our staff was prepared for the crowd. We provided water and cooling tents for the extended wait times. Teamwork and collaboration with our partners made it happen.”



CLICK on the play button to watch **LaTosha Stockholm** in “Crowd Control” mode. LaTosha is our new CCWORKS Program Manager who recently replaced George Carter.



Survey Monkey Data

- Initial posts event referred to as “Career Fair” not performing; changed to “Hiring Event/Career Fair” performed 3 times better than “Career Fair”.
- Ages 55+ served fewer ads but had higher click-thru rates (CTR).
- Ages 35-54 served the most ads, had highest # of clicks, but had a lower CTR.
- WDB Facebook page gained 54 new followers during the campaign.

Having a Blast!

Have you ever wondered who is “behind the mortars” when you watch fireworks light up the night sky? And how do they actually set them off to create such a beautifully explosive display for the Fourth of July or other festivities? *Headlines* recently learned that we have a licensed pyrotechnic among us. **Rebecca Darnell**, EHSD’s Interim Workforce Services Director, has been professionally setting off fireworks for shows around the Bay Area since 2012. We asked her about this thrilling pastime!

Headlines: Why did you pursue becoming a professional pyrotechnic?

Rebecca Darnell: When I moved to California from the Mid-West, I was shocked that recreational fireworks were outlawed in most areas. Where I grew up, there were fireworks stands EVERYWHERE, starting in early June every year. I always lit fireworks with my friends and family over the 4th of July holiday. It became clear to me that the only way I was going to light fireworks in California was to join a pyrotechnics crew.

Headlines: What is the licensing process like?

Rebecca: You apprentice with a professional display crew for at least two years and work a minimum of eight public fireworks displays during that time. You also have to get five letters of recommendation from California Pyrotechnic Operators who have been licensed for a year or more. Then you apply for your own license to the State Fire Marshall’s Office, pass a thorough background check, and take a written exam based on the California State Fireworks Laws.

Headlines: So, you’re busy every Fourth of July?

Rebecca: This past Fourth of July I worked two shows... one on a barge where we set up all the guns and shells, float out into the Bay, and shoot over the water. The other show was in San Jose.

Continued on next page



Rebecca decked out in her pyrotechnic gear, including hard hat, and safety goggles.

As a licensed pyrotechnic, Rebecca knows how to keep herself and others safe while handling explosives that illuminate the sky.

Having a Blast! Continued from previous page

Headlines: How many people work with you on a single show?

Rebecca: Depends on the size of the show. For example, the 75th Anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge was a HUGE show and took over a 100 pyrotechnics. The recent barge show was a crew of about 12 to 14.

Headlines: What do you like best and least about being a pyrotechnic?

Rebecca: Least – the clean up! But, the thrill of firing shells makes that all worthwhile. I love the excitement of the shells shooting out of the guns, the explosions going off at rapid fire and all embers floating around while the crowd cheers!

Headlines: What is the most important thing to learn/know as a pyrotechnic?

Rebecca: It's DANGEROUS! Fireworks should never be taken lightly... **Safety first!**



Launching into the dark skies at a Contra Costa show. **CLICK on the arrow to watch** Rebecca light up the sky in this slow motion video (watch all the way to the end!).



Prepping for a major display along the Russian River in Monte Rio (Sonoma County).

Coffee Helps Reconnect Employees

By Claudia Lam, WFS Specialist

After a lengthy hiatus of over two years, the Marina West Activities and Recognition Team (ART) proudly hosted a hybrid Coffee Klatch event in May. EHSD Workforce Services Bureau (WFS) staff at 1305 Macdonald Avenue, in Richmond, gathered in person and virtually for good company and morning refreshments. The event offered an opportunity to meet new staff and reconnect with others. Highlights included a revealing game of ‘two truths and one lie’ while enjoying “pillow-y” donuts and coffee from a local shop. Special thanks to the Marina West ART for bringing us all together again.

Kudos to the Marina West Activities and Recognition Team (ART) Members: Stephen Quesada, Barbara Opdyke, Jessica Monroy, Thouy Khansuwong, Shana Griffin, Kasandra Knox, Rubi Dimas, Danielle Howard, and Tanya Perez.



Samantha Perazzo and Ashley Dixon



Brenda Rodriguez and Michelle Palmer



Thouy Khansuwong, Stephen Quesada, and Shana Griffin setting up for the festivities



Celestein Tyson and Barbara Opdyke



Carlos Palacios, Robert Phillips, Katsiaryna Sheludziayeva



Craig Roney, Yvonne Anderson, Karen Walls



Shaniko Brown, Jalilah Bluiitt, Brent Johnson, Barbara Henry

Welcome to the EHSD Library

By Kellie Ellison, Clerical Supervisor, Staff Development/Building Coordinator

Staff Development is thrilled to announce the opening of our Resource Room at 2600 Stanwell Drive. It's a small library with many books available for your personal and professional growth.

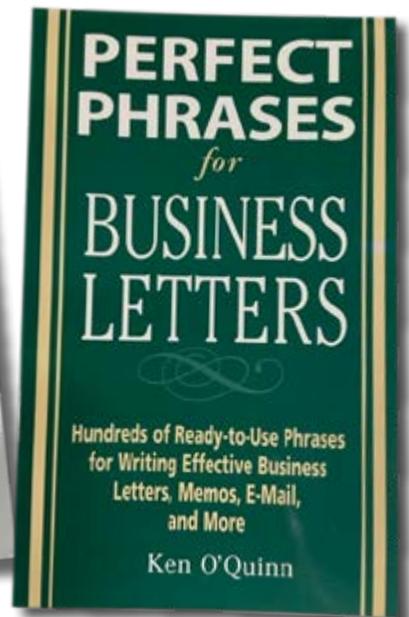
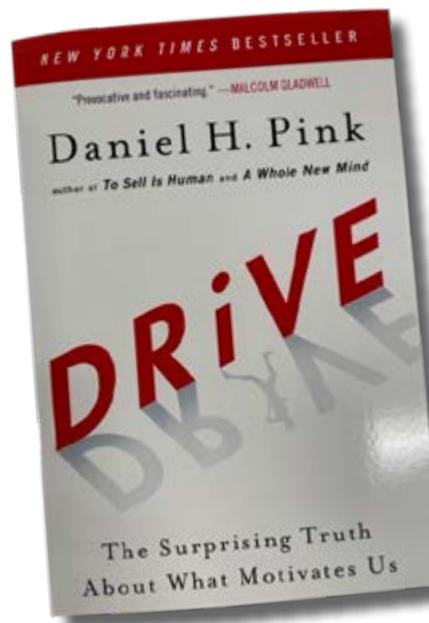
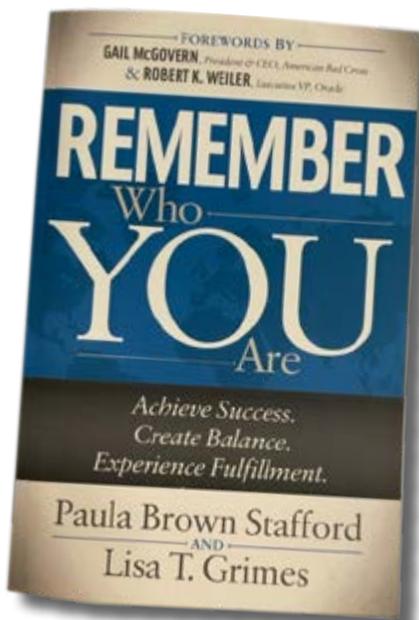
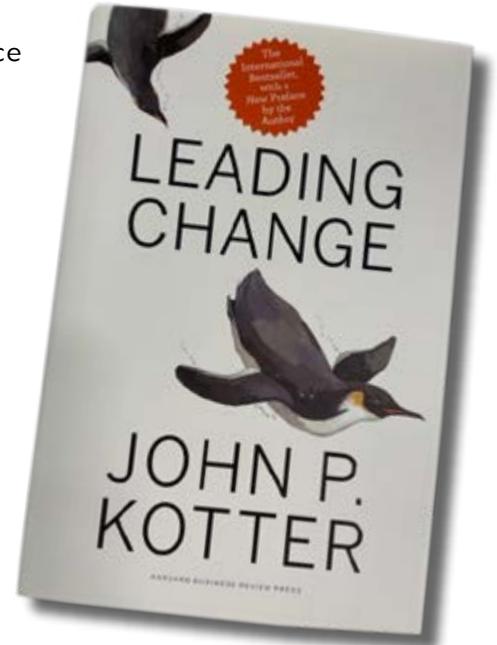
Visit the Staff Development home page, via the EHSD Intranet, to see what we have in stock. You can view the list of books by selecting Resource Room, under Useful Links at the bottom of the page. Once you decide which book(s) you would like to reserve, send an email to [EHSD Resource Room \(resourceroom@ehsd.cccounty.us\)](mailto:resourceroom@ehsd.cccounty.us) with the following information:

- **Title and Author of the book(s) that you are interested in.**
- **Your work location.**
- **Your PCN.**

Delivered to your office mailbox

Staff Development will send the book(s) to you through inter-office mail. If your request is not available, you will receive an email letting you know. If you are visiting Staff Development and would like to check out the selection in person, tell our Receptionist so that someone from our clerical team can assist you.

Books must be returned to Staff Development. The due date will be indicated on your confirmation email.



Get THE DOWNLOAD

THE DOWNLOAD
 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATES FOR EHSB STAFF
 JUNE/JULY 2022

What Your IT Team is Working On

Windows Upgrade:
 An upgrade to Windows 10, version 20H2 is in the works. This upgrade will simplify how EHSB IT handles equipment issues while enhancing security and providing a better visual experience. EHSB IT technicians are making the upgrades over the weekends and have updated 1,500 desktops so far. This is a "behind the scenes" effort with no expected disruptions. However, if you notice any problems, please call the EHSB IT Help Desk at (925) 521-7200.

Coming Soon

- The Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) environment is now available for EHSB staff to access their office desktops and applications from anywhere on any desktop computer, laptop or smartphone.
- Emergency texting communication tool coming soon. EHSB IT is working with DoIT to communicate better during a disaster or large outage due to an unknown situation. The solution includes texting, pop ups on your desktop, computer, and cell phone notification.

EHSB IT Help Desk Request
 Staff with equipment that needs to be returned should contact EHSB IT and make arrangements to return equipment. Contact: Extension 1-7200 or ehsd_helpdesk@ehsd.cccounty.us.

Ask IT
 What topics would you like to hear about from IT?
 Email ksuzughen@ehsd.cccounty.us

Happy Summer from your IT Team!

What's happening, **IT Team**? Get the latest IT updates by checking out the [June-July issue of The Download](#). From Windows 10 upgrades to enhance security and the visual experience, to an emergency texting communication tool that is in the works, EHSB's IT Team is on it!

You can view The Download by clicking [HERE](#).

CalSAWS Chronicle

Initial tests on the new system are showing positive results as the first wave of users move closer to implementing CalSAWS. Read the July 2022 issue of [CalSAWS Chronicle](#) to find out how the insight and expertise of a Change Network Champion (CNC) helps enhance how CalSAWS will work for Contra Costa. Plus, get the very latest with seven month left in the countdown to "Go Live."

CalSAWS | Chronicle
 California Statewide Automated Welfare System | Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services
 July 2022

Change Network Champion Spotlight: Julie Stuscavage

By Alan Wang, EHSB Community Relations/Media Specialist

When she's not riding her horse, hiking with her dog, or crawling in the mud through an outdoor obstacle course, **Julie Stuscavage** is lending her veteran expertise in foster care to the statewide CalSAWS project.

"Right now, California eligibility workers use three separate eligibility determination systems that are unable to share information," says Julie Bureau (CFS). "So when a policy change is made, it can take months before every county can implement the change."

Contra Costa and other CalWIN counties will soon join up with others in the state to form a single California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS).

"So now when there's a policy change, we'll be able to pay our foster care providers without any delays," says Julie.

The automated case management system for county eligibility staff will also provide CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Refugee Assistance, and individuals.

CalSAWS will also determine eligibility, calculate benefits, issue benefits and inform management.

Julie was involved in the past conversion from EHSB's older system to CalWIN. "But, the difference with the new CalSAWS conversion is that more eligibility workers and other critical EHSB staff are being asked to

Julie with 12-year-old border collie Frankie who loves hiking, jogging and playing with his stuffed pig which is his tenth pig toy.

Julie, who breaks her outdoor, recently completed in the Spanish Flats, near Sacramento, which included 20 obstacles over a four-mile course.

Cedar is Julie's 19-year-old rescued mustang who enjoys trail rides, easing preparation exercises and practicing dressage in which rider and horse perform a set of artistic movements.

CalSAWS "Go Live" COUNTDOWN
 7 MONTHS

Continued on page 3

CalSAWS
 Building Brighter Futures Together

Building Brighter Futures Together



EHS&D Around the Globe

Contributed by the EHS&D Equity & Inclusion Team

The Equity & Inclusion Team received many great pictures from staff who decorated their cubicles/offices. It was a wonderful reminder that here at EHS&D we have a diverse workforce. With such diversity comes a variety of perspectives, increased creativity, innovation, and cross-cultural understanding.

All staff who submitted pictures were entered into a drawing.



Rossel Tongol - \$20
Starbucks gift card



Nancy Bishay - \$15
Starbucks gift card



April Whytus - \$25
Kinder's gift card

Thank you to all who participated and to the E&I members who donated the gift cards.

View the drawing and all the pictures submitted...

To view the video of the drawing and all the pictures that were submitted click on the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion page](#). Pictures submitted by **Ann Bennett Nut, Diane Marin, Megawati Gondosiswanto, Krystina King, Isabel Renggenathen, Rossel Tongol, LaShonda Wallace, Dina Ghobrial, Iris Lopez, Mercedes Ibarra, Nancy Bishay, Olga Roman, Kayla Swanson, LeTanya Fleming, Amalia Gratteri, Emmah Ngaruiya, Delilah Borg, Amy Obad, April Whytus, Satrina Waiwaiole, Leslieanne Henriquez, Fabiola Ribeiro.** E&I members who participated in the decorating of their cubicle/office: **Annie Phetinta, Deborah Drake, Patricia Perez, Iliana Choate and Nannette Dupree.**

The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion intranet page will have videos, articles, micro trainings and much more posted to the page monthly. Check it out and email us at equityandinclusion@ehsd.cccounty.us if you have any requests or suggestions on content.

Continued on next page



EHSO Around the Globe

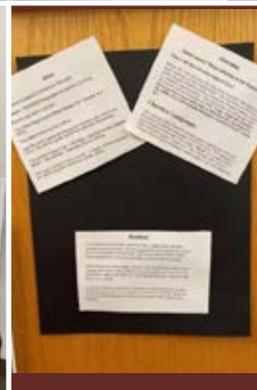
The Coqui Frog Legend

The legend is that there was a beautiful goddess who fell in love with Coqui, the chief's son. When he went out to fish, she would make sure he came back with a big catch, and he would sing praises to her. One evening, she came to him in the form of a Faia maiden, and they fell in love. She told Coqui that she would come back the next evening at moonrise, but the next evening came, and with it came the evil Juracan. The sky blackened and his winds howled and the goddess tried to protect her lover, but Juracan snatched him away and she never saw him again. She did not know how she could go on without her beautiful Coqui, so she created this tiny frog that will forever call for him: "Co-kee! Co-kee!"



The coqui frogs are found on a number of islands throughout the Caribbean, but only the ones in Puerto Rico sing, and only the males are vocal. The male coqui's song has been measured at 90 to 100 decibels, making it the loudest existing amphibian.

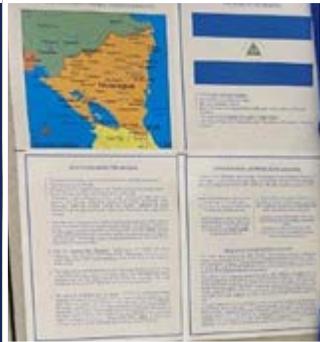
The coqui is Puerto Rico's national symbol.



*Building Brighter
Futures Together*



EHSD Around the Globe



Building Brighter Futures Together





EHSO Around the Globe



The Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Intranet page is here!

Diversity of people and perspectives, Equity in policy and practice, and Inclusion of all voices and visions.

Located in the Organizations/Bureaus Tab under Administration, or click on this link: <http://ehshome/Admin-Services/DiversityEquityInclusion>



Out and About

EHSD's Outreach and Education team has had a busy season of events. Here's a roundup of recent activities. Heartfelt thanks to all the staff members who showed up to serve our community and contributed to this article.

June 1 – Highland Elementary Resource Fair, Richmond

Community Service Bureau staff members **Theresa Anderson** and **Dara Morataya** offered information and resources at this very successful West County event. Community members attended to learn about nutrition, job opportunities, volunteering, mental health and more.



Highland Elementary Resource Fair offered resources to families on a Wednesday afternoon in Richmond.

June 3-5 – Stand Up On The Delta at the Contra Costa County Fairgrounds in Antioch

EHSD's **4 Our Families Navigators** and Workforce Services staff helped our Veterans at this multi-day event to support those who have served our country. **Fred Aldana** and **Staci May** from IT were also on hand to provide tech support.

"We assisted with questions about ongoing Medi-Cal and CalFresh cases. We also helped complete CalFresh applications for Contra Costa County in addition to surrounding counties. I personally enjoyed greeting our veterans and hearing stories of their experiences while serving our country. The stories brought joy and a sense of gratitude for their selfless service and acts of heroism."

– **Maria R. Muñoz, Navigator**

"Stand Up on the Delta was such a well-organized volunteer-led event. Many community agencies were there to provide support including Disabled American Veterans, Bridge Hospice and Home Health, BART police hiring event, the Veterans Affordable Home Ownership Program (V.A.H.O.P), Berkeley Food and Housing Project, Shelter Inc., and CCC Child Support Services. In addition, there was a whole building dedicated to providing medical services to Vets including dental, chiropractic, vision, and other needed support."

– **Susan Padan, Navigator**



Lori Juarez, Fred Aldana, Staci May, Erika Ramirez-Orozco and Sandra Zepeda-Lopez. (not pictured: Susan Padan).

June 16 – Elder Abuse Awareness Fair, Concord Senior Center

Daisy Gallegos of Aging & Adult Services, and Navigators **Susan Padan** and **Maria R. Muñoz** of 4 Our Families supported our community's seniors and disabled adults at this event commemorating Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in June. In recognition of this serious and growing crisis, the Contra Costa Elder Abuse

Continued on next page

Out and About Continued from previous page

Prevention Project sponsored the Elder Abuse Awareness Fair with tabling by local senior advocates. Attendees received valuable senior resource information as well as fun door prizes and giveaways.

June 25 – Unity in the Community, Bay Point

EHSD Navigators Maria Muñoz and Sandra Zepeda-Lopez made great connections with about 200 community members and 60 other service providers at the Unity in the Community event on June 25th in Bay Point, and IT’s Staci May enthusiastically supported the team. White Pony Express and other organizations provided more than 4,000 pounds of groceries, and children received books from the Contra Costa County Library and backpacks from Sparkpoint.

“Community members enjoyed DJ music, dance performances, and joyful energy. We provided information regarding CalWORKs, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal benefits... It was also very nice to have an opportunity to meet Contra Costa County Supervisor Federal Glover, and share information about the 4 Our Families program.”

– Sandra Zepeda-Lopez



Sandra Zepeda-Lopez, Maria R. Muñoz and Supervisor Glover at Unity in the Community

Building Brighter Futures Together



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

Nomination Form: http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Nomination%20Form_FINAL.pdf

Struggling Client Praises Cari Ann Sparacino

Customer Compelled to Write Letter About Her Experience at 1470 Civic Court Office

I am applying for help with my PG&E bill through LIHEAP. I had to turn in some paperwork ASAP, and I went to the office on Civic Court, yesterday (7/6/2022).

I am disabled, in a wheelchair, and have recently lost my family in the area. My support system is gone, and I literally have nobody else to turn to for help.

So I made the trip to Concord (1470 Civic Court) and eventually found my way inside the building (no easy task in a wheelchair). It was so difficult for me to get into the building. I was on the verge of tears by the time I reached the LIHEAP office.

Then I met Cari Ann. I do not know her last name, but she was working at the front desk of the office when I arrived about 3:30 pm.

Cari saw how upset I was, and she helped me with everything I needed help with. Her compassionate professionalism was so welcome, I cannot tell you.

I hope that someone will recognize her for her kindness and diligence. I just can't rest until I tell someone how great she was.

*Thank you,
B.*



Cari Ann Sparacino is a Senior Clerk (left) with the Community Services Bureau (CSB) who noticed a client in need and rushed to help her. **Dr. Aaron Alarcón**, CSB Executive Director (right), recognized Cari Ann for her exemplary customer service during a recent unit meeting.



Showcasing CSB Teachers, Building Confidence and Skills

By Isabel Renggenathen, CSB Assistant Director

On May 18, 2022, the Community Services Bureau's (CSB) Early Head Start and Head Start teaching staff held their first annual "Teachers Showcase" at the Pleasant Hill Community Center.

The Teachers Showcase provides a robust professional development opportunity for CSB Head Start and Early Head Start teaching staff by showcasing samples of their work with children, families and their teaching team.

The Education Managers, Site Supervisors, Assistant Directors and coaches worked closely with those who signed up to present their work.

Presenters shared their work with passion and pride, and their colleagues were fully engaged during the session. All teaching staff felt recognized for their hard work, and appreciated the opportunity to learn from each other. Those who were initially nervous were elated as they finished their presentations with their colleagues cheering joyfully.

They all agreed to do the "teacher Showcase" more often because they felt so empowered and inspired to continue the great work they have been doing with children and families.



Ms. Bangoone, Ms. Amtus and Ms. Gabina from Young Preschool Room at George Miller Concord presented their work with young preschoolers on "Exploring Water"

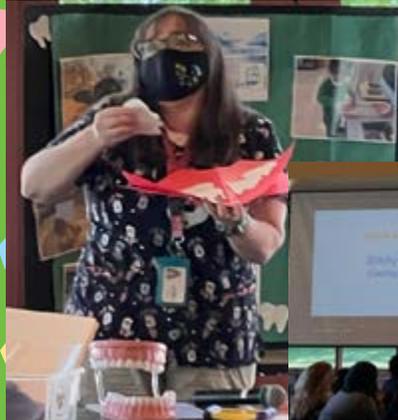


Ms Veronica, Ms Lorena and Ms. Alaysia from Rm 10 at George Miller III, Richmond, presented on their work with preschoolers on "Recycling Project"

Ms. Alexandra from Room 2 at Bayo Vista located in Rodeo, demonstrated her work with toddlers on "Dental Health"



Ms. Antoinette and Ms. Monique from Balboa center presented on their with preschoolers on "Exploring Emotions"



Ms. Rose Ann from Infant Room in George Miller Concord presenting their work with Infant on "Sticky Side of Contact Paper" project.

Giving Children a Head Start

By Sarah Reich, CSB Administrative Services Assistant III



Deputy Director Dr. Easter Calvit with staff at the George Miller Child Development Center.

During the 2021-2022 program year, the Community Services Bureau (CSB) provided quality early care and education services to more than 1,700 children, ages zero to five, in Contra Costa County through the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This work is not possible without the dedicated teaching staff who remain passionate about supporting the well-being and development of our youngest community members in need.

On June 22, 2022, CSB's senior management team members adopted each of CSB's directly-operated childcare centers and organized visits to recognize the amazing work of each teaching team. Together, management and teaching staff celebrate another successful program year of operation.

As we begin a new program year for the Head Start program, the Community Services Bureau is recruiting and accepting applications to welcome

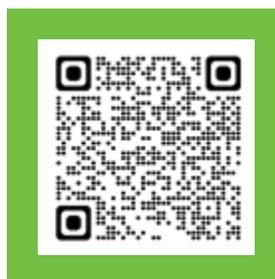
new children and families into the program. Among recent successes, CSB launched an online application that can be accessed through the "Apply for Services" link at www.csbconnect.org. Families of children ages zero to five who are low income, experiencing housing insecurity, receiving

public assistance or CalFresh, and foster children qualify for CSB's free or low-cost childcare and preschool. Children with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Through csbconnect.org, community members can also apply for the

Alternative Payment and Home Energy Assistance Programs!



Division Manager Christina Reich with teachers at the Ambrose Child Development Center.



QR Code to apply for CSB services via CSBConnect.org

Stuff a Backpack! A Program They Rely on Each Year

By Cindy Smith, Program Coordinator, Volunteer & Emergency Services

“Where’s my backpack?” is a familiar phrase to any parent trying to get children out the door to school in the morning. Each year, thousands of low-income children enter schools throughout Contra Costa County ready to learn but without the resources they need to succeed. These children are at a serious disadvantage and are not able to get the most out of their educational experience. Expenses for backpacks, school supplies, and uniforms or new clothes can cost hundreds of dollars per child. Many low-income families are struggling to make ends meet, and expenses can really add up with back-to-school shopping, especially if there is more than one child in the home.

Our theme this year is “Stuff a Backpack!” Beginning in June, we are collecting donations of new stuffed backpacks to provide to EHSD workers to distribute to our clients. *Distribution will begin in July.*

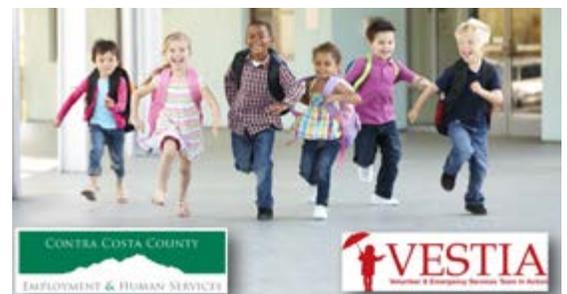
We work closely with service groups, generous community donors, and the special partnership with the [Sydney Paige Foundation](#) to provide 1,000 backpacks to Contra Costa County kids in need.



Volunteers stuffed the backpack this student is wearing. You can also donate to the program by clicking [HERE](#).

This is where VESTIA’s “Project Ready-To-Learn” program comes in! It’s that time of year again when our nonprofit partner VESTIA and our staff at Volunteer & Emergency Services team up to distribute new backpacks stuffed with new school supplies to EHSD families with children.

You can be a part of supporting children’s education by stuffing a new backpack with school supplies. Visit <https://vestiainc.org/project-ready-to-learn/> for a supplies list by grade level. Drop off your new stuffed backpack at the Volunteer & Emergency Service office located at 400 Ellinwood Way in Pleasant Hill. No time to stuff? No problem. You can also donate to the program by clicking [HERE](#). For more information, please call (925) 655-1204.



Customer Service Champions

These individuals are being recognized for going the extra mile by delivering excellent service to our customers. They went above and beyond in their willingness to help and demonstrate EHSD's emphasis on providing exemplary customer service. Congratulations on a job well done!



Antonay Brown

Born to Care and Serve

By Ann Barrett, IHSS Division Manager

Antonay Brown has been an IHSS Social Worker for a year this month,

but you would think that she was born into the job. Antonay is extremely professional and poised when speaking to clients, peers and community partners. She is very familiar and knowledgeable with regulations and IHSS processes. Recently she attended a hearing where she was very organized, well-spoken and was able to provide clear concise factual information to assist with clarification. Antonay got into Social Services to help people. She always considers if roles were reversed "what information and resources would I need?" and then she provides those to her clients. Antonay has volunteered to complete testing for IHSS computer systems. She provides great ideas and suggestions to help improve our program and the client experience. When she is not at work, Antonay enjoys traveling and spending time with her family. *We are so happy to have Antonay on our team!*



Mariano Vazquez

Dear Mr. Vazquez...

By Leilah Ahranjani, MSW EHSD DM

Mariano Vazquez is a CommunityConnect IHSS intake and field

Social Worker who has been with the program for three years. Mariano has demonstrated a continuous profound work ethic and commitment to outstanding customer service. He goes above and beyond in every situation to serve the client and support his colleagues. It only takes a simple conversation with Mariano to know that he is here to serve, and he does so with the most positive attitude and a teamwork approach. Most recently, Mariano received a thank you card from a client he served that stated, *"Dear Mr. Vazquez, just wanted to drop a note for a great job you are doing for families with a smile and the right attitude. You are a rare person to find. I wish everyone worked and cared like you do. Your help goes beyond family health. I appreciate it."* Thank you Mariano for all that you do. You are uplifting to all, and we appreciate you.

– CMCT & IHSS Leadership

Customer Service Champions

Children and Family Services' Heart and Soul



Back row, left to right: **Jason Mayers, Michelle Lopez-Kelly, Sheila Daniels, Melany Rodas, Rhonda Lywandowsky**
Front row, left to right: **Cheryl Manion, Nicole Hartman**
Not pictured: **Felicia Casados, Marisol De Castro, Monica Galvan, Maile McKeown, Heather Parsons, and Robin Turner**

Our Children and Family Services Clerks at East County are the heart of their units. They go out of their way to make sure our division shines! They have an intimate knowledge of their job, and of each individual they assist in day-to-day operations. Their unwavering devotion to the success of their unit's and to each other is what makes them a true team. You don't know support until you have worked with them.

Thank you and congratulations to all our Customer Service Champions

Building Brighter Futures Together



SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

30 YEARS

Carmen Castaneda, Child Nutrition Assistant-Proj, CSB

25 YEARS

Rebecca Fisher, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
James Reid, Soc. Svc. Program Assistant, WFS
Renata Pierce, Social Work Supervisor I, AAS
Katherine Berdal Dutro, Soc. Svc. Program Analyst, WFS
Adrienne Brooks, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS

20 YEARS

Subramanian Chidambaram, Info Sys. Programmer/Analyst IV, Admin
Alvaro Florez, Volunteer and Emergency Program Specialist, Admin
Vickie Kaplan Wetzel, Administrative Svcs. Asst. III, Admin
Harinder Kaur, Master Teacher-Project, CSB
Jacqueline Mesner, Clerk-Specialist Level, Admin
Shannon Sargent, Accounting Technician, Admin
Licia Parsons, Social Casework Assistant, CFS



15 YEARS

Ayaba Adams, Eligibility Worker III, WFS
Geraldine Bolanos, Social Worker, AAS
Jonalyn Camaisa, Soc. Svc Program Assistant, Admin
Elizabeth Chambers, Social Casework Assistant, CFS
Magdalene Gabel, Soc. Svc. Program Analyst, AAS
Miguel Galvez, Eligibility Worker III, WFS
Antoinette Garcia, Soc. Svc. Staff Dev Specialist, Admin
Jon Garcia, Clerk-Specialist Level, WFS
Anita Goehring, Soc. Svc. Program Assistant, WFS
Michelle Graham, Soc. Svc. Employment Place Cnsl, WDB
Rebecca Halvorson, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB (LOA)
Shari Horton, Clerical Supervisor, WFS
Sandra Motta, Eligibility Worker III, AAS
Maria Munoz, Eligibility Worker III, WFS
Maria Preciado, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Rahsaan Robinson, Social Worker, AAS
Maria Rojas De Cortes, Teacher-Project, CSB
Vincent Villacorta, Accountant III, Admin
Nataliya Zhyrova, Account Clerk-Experienced Lvl, AAS

10 YEARS

Christina Bess, Eligibility Worker III, WFS
Deana Buckner, Social Casework Assistant, CFS
Ebony Burks, Eligibility Worker III, WFS
Patricia Duncan, Social Casework Assistant, CFS
Edward Gibson, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Mary Jones, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Colleen McLaughlin, Sr Soc. Svc. Info Sys Analyst, Admin
Mathilde Mishork, Eligibility Work Supervisor, Admin
Njideka Onyeagucha, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Damon Preston, Eligibility Worker III, WFS
Wendy Renslow, Soc. Svc. Program Assistant, WFS
Marco Ruiz-Madriral, Eligibility Worker III, AAS
Muey C Saefong, Social Worker, AAS
Nicole Viscovich, Soc. Svc. Program Assistant, WFS

New Employees and Retirees listed on next page



SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

Continued from previous page

NEW EMPLOYEES

Monee Bailey, Social Worker III, CFS
Miracle Bennett, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Gladys Diaz, Soc. Svc. Staff Development Specialist, Admin
Ellen Drey, Social Worker, AAS
Veronica Lemieux, Social Worker II, CFS
Keymana Gandy Lloyd, Teacher Asst. Trainee, CSB
Jeremy Louie, Social Worker III, AAS

Kalimat Maake, Social Worker II, CFS
Willie Milton, Social Casework Asst., CFS
Lisa Odom, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Sherry Resurreccion, Soc. Svc. Program Assistant, WFS
Imani Savage, Social Worker II, CFS
Patricia Veliz, Secretary Journey Level, AAS

RETIREES

Patricia Anderson, Secretary-Journey Level, WFS
Constance Delaney, Clerk-Specialist Level, CFS
Trina Dukes, Clerk-Specialist Level, CFS
Barbara Ryan, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS
Kimberly Shaw, Clerk-Specialist Level, CFS
Julie Stuscavage, Soc. Svc. Program Analyst, CFS



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 or (925) 608-4904.**

SPREAD THE WORD

August 2022

- **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**
- **AUGUST 1** – National Minority Donor Awareness Day
– Respect for Parents Day
- **AUGUST 10** – National S’mores Day
- **AUGUST 10** – Make Life Easier: Create More Peace and Balance at Work and Home webinar (see page 6)
- **AUGUST 13** – Left Handers’ Day
- **AUGUST 21** – Senior Citizens Day

September 2022

- **HEALTHY AGING MONTH**
- **SEPTEMBER 5** – Labor Day (holiday)
- **SEPTEMBER 11** – Grandparents Day
- **SEPTEMBER 21** – International Day of Peace
- **SEPTEMBER 22** – Fall Prevention Awareness Day
– Autumn Equinox
- **SEPTEMBER 23** – Native American Day



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 needs your support to provide care for children 0–18 years of age. Please join us for a virtual orientation and learn more about becoming a caregiver.

FREE VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS

- August 4 or 18 • 4 to 6 p.m.
- September 1 or 15 • 4 to 6 p.m.
- October 6 or 20 • 4 to 6 p.m.

For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at www.ehsd.org. To register for a class, please call (925) 602-4230, toll-free at 1 (866) 313-7788, or email ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us

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

Headlines September Issue
The next issue of *Headlines* will publish in early September. Contact us at our *EHSD Headlines* email, headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us, by **August 16th** if you have an upcoming event, article, or idea you would like to submit.

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

Follow us on Twitter @ContraCostaEHSD
Like us on Facebook




CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES
Building Brighter Futures Together

