

Headlines

**Embedded –
How “4 Our Families”
Navigators are
Connecting**

**Call for African-American
Hair Products**

**The Beauty of
Intergenerational
Relationships**

**Taking Care of Yourself
and Your Co-workers**

CONTRACOSTA
COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT &
HUMAN SERVICES

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*

A Crucial Connection Measure X-funded Navigators Expanding Reach into Schools

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

During this past winter's unusually rainy season, many hourly paid laborers were out of work and unable to provide for their families. EHSD Navigator Sandra Figueroa says she noticed this after several students at La Vonya De Jean Middle School in Richmond were consistently absent and exhibiting behavioral problems.

"These were signs there was a lack of food and other resources in their homes," says Sandra. "These families were going hungry, and because I'm embedded in the school where teachers can notify me, I was able to reach out and connect the students' families to Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs, and other services EHSD's community partners provide."

Sandra is the first Measure X-funded Navigator to be embedded in a Contra Costa County school. Measure X is a county-wide 20-year, half-cent sales tax that voters approved to support crucial safety net services; invest in early childhood services; protect vulnerable populations; and offer other essential county services.

"You can see when there's poverty. You can tell when they're wearing the same clothes every day. The children are depressed," says Sandra. "I'm a friendly face in the school who can offer my 31 years of experience. I know what services Contra Costa County has to

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A Crucial Connection – Measure X-funded Navigators Expanding Reach into Schools

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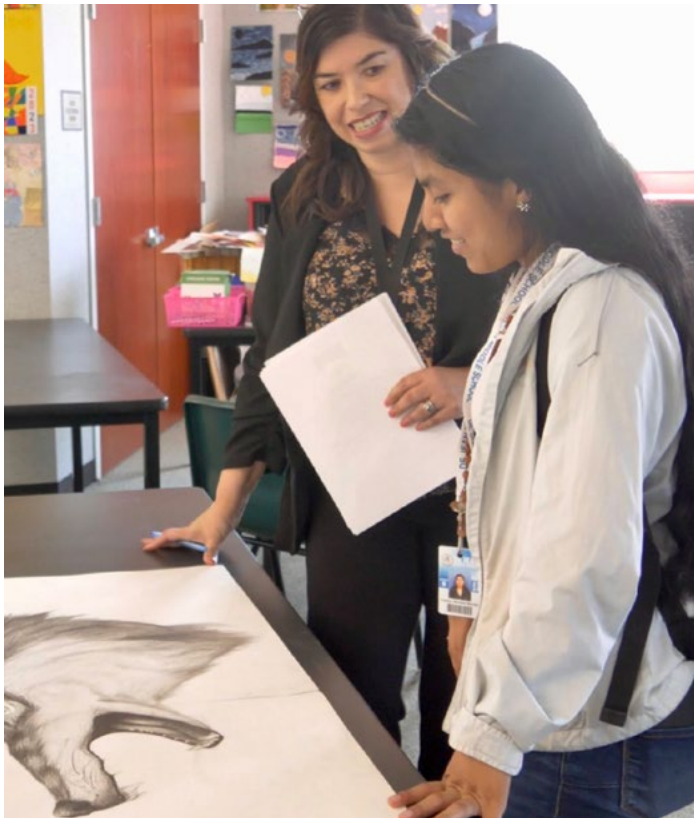
offer and I'm always networking with other community partners to help my families."

Measure X-funded Navigators will represent each of the five County Supervisor districts. Sandra provides services in District 1 where the Family Navigator program is part of a larger effort to increase school district-county partnerships to improve outcomes for families with children in lower income communities. Supervisor John Gioia initially developed the program in District 1 in collaboration with the County, City of Richmond, and West Contra Costa Schools.

Navigators in other parts of the County are in the process of onboarding and getting training.



Measure X Navigator **Al Gibson** counsels 8th grader Daniel. Al will be embedded at Oak Grove Middle School in Concord. **CLICK** on the play button to watch EHSD's "4 Our Families" program Navigators in action.



Measure X Navigator **Sandra Figueroa** checks in with 8th grader Yoselyn. Many at-risk students can be reluctant to reach out for help when their families are in crisis.



Sandra maintains a friendly presence at De Jean Middle School while keeping in close contact with school staff to detect behavior problems that might be related to poverty and other social issues..

Social Services Program Assistant **Al Gibson** is a Measure X-funded Navigator assigned to Oak Grove Middle School in Concord.

"Navigating the maze of available resources can be overwhelming, and my role is to guide them with compassion and understanding," says Al. "While traditional training lays out procedures and necessary steps, it's not like that in training as a Navigator. True learning occurs through experiential activities with

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A Crucial Connection – Measure X-funded Navigators Expanding Reach into Schools

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participants. We spend time shadowing seasoned colleagues, observing how they interact with families in need. This first-hand experience helps navigators grasp the nuances of emotional support and personalized guidance.”

The Family Navigator program also recognizes the power of collaboration. Navigators actively

engage with each other to share strategies, tips, and resources they've discovered. In District 1, Sandra also meets weekly with school staff and discusses students and families in need of help.

Ultimately, the hope is that the Family Navigator program can be expanded to empower more at-risk families to become self-sufficient.

Pilot Program to Keep Children & Families Safe



This team has a plan to support children and families in Contra Costa County. Probation and Children & Family Services, along with many community partners, will implement a pilot program in Antioch as part of the CDSS-approved Comprehensive Prevention Plan (CPP) for Contra Costa County. The CPP is designed to provide concrete support to keep families in crisis safe, offering more resources, parenting skills, and accessible services. The CPP focuses on three prevention areas to help ensure the well-being of parents and caretakers and to ultimately reduce child maltreatment.

During the presentation of the County's CPP before the Board of Supervisors on August 8th, the Probation Department's Director of Specialty Field Services Kiki Farris, CFS Program Analyst **Alysia Dellaserra**, and CFS Director **Kathy Marsh**, outlined next steps.



African-American Hair Products for Foster Youth—You Can Help

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) group is putting together a fundraiser to help gather hair products for African-American foster youth.

Every child deserves to have basic necessities. Unfortunately, there is a lack of African-American hair products available for these youths.

Imagine going into the foster care system and not having your own personal hygiene and/or hair products. Many of our children, especially children of color, enter foster care without the appropriate items they need for self-care. You can help make their transition easier by donating products specifically for African-American skin and hair.

This fundraiser is an opportunity for anyone at EHSD to help the youth in foster care.

Watch for more details concerning this fundraiser through STARS announcements, *Headlines*, and the DEI intranet page.

Thank you for your support!

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

DIVERSITY



of people and perspectives

EQUITY



in policy and practice

INCLUSION



of all voices and visions



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Building Brighter Futures Together

Outreach Roundup

Oak Grove Middle School

During school registration at Oak Grove Middle School in Concord on August 2nd through 4th, more than 750 students registered for the upcoming school year. EHSD's 4 Our Families Navigators **Sandra Figueroa** and **Al Gibson** provided information on public benefits, utility assistance programs, internet discounts available for low-income families and much more. Many community organizations, including the Community Services Bureau, Upward Bound, and the After School Program C.A.R.E.S., participated. Students and families were thrilled to receive backpacks and essential school supplies, making the registration process a breeze while fostering a sense of community and support.



Sandra Figueroa and Al Gibson

Back-to-School Block Party

Navigators **Susan Padan** and **Sandra Zepeda-Lopez** represented the 4 Our Families Team at this bustling event Saturday, August 5th in Richmond. Free backpacks, prizes, games, and food, as well as Qigong and Kung Fu instruction attracted a huge crowd to participate in the party! Additional providers such as RYSE, LEAP, Richmond Community Services Department of Recreation,

Contra Costa Health, West County Health Center, West County Salesian Youth Club, Contra Costa College, Reentry Success, the Contra Costa & Solano Food Bank, Hope Solutions, and Child Support Services were also there to support West County families.



Sandra Zepeda-Lopez and Susan Padan

Annual Spring Back to School

Navigators **Sandra Figueroa** and **Al Gibson** attended the Back-to-School event at Peres K-8 school in Richmond on Saturday, August 12th. They saw more than 60 families and networked with San Pablo Smiles Dental, Richmond Public Library, NAMI, GVF Richmond, LifeLong Medical Care, Peres K-8 After School Program, EAST BAY Center of the Performing ARTS and WCCUSD FABLAB.

East Contra Costa Career & Resource Fair

Workforce Development Board presented the **East Contra Costa Career & Resource Fair** in Pittsburg on Wednesday, August 23rd. Additional partners included Pittsburg Adult Education Center, Eastbay Works, Antioch Community Foundation, and more. The fair was a chance for community members to get career counseling, resume help, jobseeker services, educational resources, and to learn about on-the-job training opportunities.

EHSD Employees Value Intergenerational Relationships

September is Intergenerational Month

By Claudia Gonzalez, Mélody Saint-Saëns and Laneisha Terrell, Alliance to End Abuse

Intergenerational Month is a chance to connect across generations. For the Alliance to End Abuse staff, this is an opportunity to reflect on our own meaningful relationships and experiences with other generations. **Claudia Gonzalez**, Administrative Services Assistant, recalls the time she lived with her grandparents in Mexico, where she learned Spanish and the importance of celebrating cultural traditions. **Mélody Saint-Saëns**, Division Manager, remembers how her grandmother (Mamou) taught her how to read, sparking a lifelong love for mysteries.

Launched in 2000 by the Intergenerational Foundation, Intergenerational Month is a global movement that highlights friendships among all age groups and reinforces the importance of knowledge transfer and learning across generations. Multi-generational community building also encourages community connectedness and helps prevent interpersonal violence. See [Contra Costa County's Call to Action](#) for more information.

Everyone can participate in Intergenerational Month in their own small way. You can:

1. Call your parents, grandparents, elderly friends, and family.
2. Visit or volunteer at a retirement home. Mélody has fond memories of volunteering as a teenager at a home for retired elderly ladies in New Orleans, forging many friendships while watching Hollywood classics.
3. Consider becoming a mentor or tutor for youth.
4. Volunteer as a family.



CLICK on the play button to see how all age groups are coming together to celebrate Intergenerational Month in Contra Costa County.



Mélody Saint-Saëns with her grandmother, mamou, in December of 2022 in Rouen, France. "This was the last time I saw her in person before she passed away. A lovely memory."

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EHSD Employees Value Intergenerational Relationships

September is Intergenerational Month

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Left: ASA III **Claudia Gonzalez** and her grandfather. She lived with her grandparents in Jalisco, Mexico, where she learned to appreciate the culture. Right: **Claudia Gonzalez** and her grandmother.



Through her relationship with her grandfather, ASA III **Laneisha Terrell** has a deep respect for his generation.

“I was raised by my grandparents,” says **Laneisha Terrell**, Administrative Services Assistant. “My grandfather (Papa) was always trying to be hip. When he got me my first iPhone, he liked it so much he had to get one too. When I was teaching him how to text, we typed up a message and he asked me ‘how to make it transmit.’ I showed him how to press the send button. Once we got past “transmitting” the texts, he tried using slang when texting. He would say things like ‘my bag’ when trying to say ‘my bad.’ Teaching him to use the smartphone enhanced our bond. It helped him stay connected to me while I was at work and he was at home alone. I still look at saved screenshots of our text conversations for laughs when I miss him. My relationship with my papa opened my eyes to the importance of bonds that span generations. My Papa had a million stories which he would share while we played gin rummy together. I will cherish these stories and memories forever.”

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*

Survey for You, Your Clients, Anyone 55+ Insights to Pave the Way for Older Adults

The Contra Costa Area Agency on Aging wants to be sure our community members know about and respond to an important survey. The California Department of Aging (CDA) is conducting a first-ever statewide survey to assess the needs of older adults (55+) across the state.

The Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA) enables our seniors to voice their needs and preferences. Their input will help improve programs, supports, and services, while empowering older adults to share what matters to them now and in the years ahead.

The CASOA is also a significant opportunity to gather information about sexual orientation and gender identity, ensuring that healthcare remains patient-centered and of the highest quality across California.

CDA understands that surveys can sometimes feel complicated or intrusive and assures that all CASOA responses will remain confidential.

The survey is available at <https://polco.us/n/res/vote/state-of-california-department/community-assessment-survey-3?pn-method=open>, and can be accessed online in multiple languages - English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Hindi, and Arabic.

For technical support in accessing the survey, email casoa@polco.us, or call (916) 970-9948 for additional information.



Care for Yourself

By Cheryl Leonor, Personnel Services

When you consider the concept of caring for yourself, does it seem frivolous or even unnecessary? It shouldn't. Particularly if you're caring for a family, it's important to look after your own wellbeing each day. By doing so, you're helping your loved ones just as much as yourself.

- Try starting small by doing one thing every day that improves your mental or physical health in some way. You could meditate or take a walk after dinner.
- Experts recommend finding a mix of activities that help you feel balanced and fulfilled.
- Regularly make firm plans to have lunch or see a movie with a friend.
- To keep your self-care from falling by the wayside, enlist your partner or a babysitter to take over if you're out. Children benefit from spending time with other caring adults.
- By eating well, sleeping enough and fitting in some "me" time, you'll be better able to care for those in your charge.

Browse more articles at <https://member.magellanhealthcare.com/>

Magellan Ascend



UPCOMING WEBINAR: How to be a Mental Health Ally in Your Personal and Work Life – September 13

This webinar will help you:

- Define what it means to be a mental health ally
- Learn how to help someone who is struggling
- Discuss how to foster a positive environment

Missed the live webinar?

Webinars are listed in your Dashboard under "Upcoming". If you haven't signed up to use the County Employee Assistance Program yet, follow these two easy steps:

Step 1: Go to <https://member.magellanhealthcare.com/> and click on "Sign up."

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

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.](#)

September is Workforce Development Month



It is a time to recognize, honor, and promote the contributions of our nation's workforce professionals, such as those at EHSD's [Workforce Development Board \(WDB\)](#), who aim to achieve equitable economic growth for our region.

Workforce Development Month showcases the opportunities that Workforce Development offers for Americans to develop workplace experience and skills that employers value.

Our colleagues work to ensure a steady pipeline of diverse workforce talent to keep local companies competitive while creating upward economic mobility and security for Contra Costa workers. They help connect employers with jobseekers, and jobseekers with training resources to bridge the gap between unemployment and job openings.

We thank the WDB team for its tireless efforts to improve the quality of life for all who live in Contra Costa County.

WDB serves more than 5,500 businesses and approximately 8,000 individuals, of whom 7,200 received basic career services and 947 receive individualized career services through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.

The Honorable Lois Haight Keeps on Giving



During a festive ceremony on August 9th, the Honorable Lois Haight personally handed out \$2,000 checks to each of 11 youth participants in Children & Family Services' Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP). Haight provided the generous scholarship awards, totaling \$22,000, through her Foster Children Foundation. The foundation, established by her husband after Judge Haight requested it in place of a birthday celebration, has provided more than \$500,000 in scholarships since 2001. The former Contra Costa County Superior Court judge gave an emotional and motivational speech, encouraging the young adults at the event. She acknowledged their perseverance and resiliency as they move forward in pursuing their dreams.



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.

We Care Guidelines: [click here](#)

We Care Nomination Form: [click here](#)



EHSD Staff Survey Update

Our 2023 EHSD All Staff Survey is now closed! We received 881 surveys – an overall 50% response rate – meaning that half of all EHSD employees completed the survey.

Workforce Development Board and Policy & Planning achieved the 75% response rate goal! Everyone in these two Bureaus will receive a sticker and directors **Tamina Alon** and **Tamia Brown** will raffle some gift cards.

The next step is for our Policy & Planning team to analyze the results and prepare reports. The Executive Team will review the reports and identify action steps, then share them with you and welcome additional suggestions at that point.

Thank you to all survey respondents for your time and input!



Schedule an Exit Interview

If you are leaving EHSD, please consider participating in an exit interview. This is an excellent way to provide feedback to the Employment & Human Services Department. These interviews with outgoing staff are confidential and go directly to EHSD Director **Marla Stuart**.

You can schedule one by contacting **Julie Peck**, EHSD Ombudsperson at jpeck@ehsd.cccounty.us or (925) 788-1722.

INFORMATION ABOUT ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDERS (AANHPI)

**The DEI Team presents information
on AANHPI in Contra Costa County.**



**The video presentation can be found
in SMART, under the 'Introduction to
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Playlist'
and the DEI webpage.**

DIVERSITY



of people and perspectives

EQUITY



in policy and practice

INCLUSION



of all voices and visions

Contra Costa County Children & Family Services
CSEC Services Team Presents:

NOLA BRANTLEY SPEAKS

Commercially
Sexually
Exploited
Children

CSEC Definition:
The commercial sexual exploitation of children refers to the act of sexually abusing a child or youth for economic gain.

**Tues.,
Sept. 26th
Via Zoom
9:00am—
4:00pm**

Trainers:
Nola Brantley &
Nicole Klasey, Psy.D

"Harm Reduction Strategies for Working with CSEC"

Harm reduction is identified as a best practice for working with CSEC youth. This 1-day training will provide an overview of harm reduction and how to utilize it with the CSEC population.

Participants will be able to:

- 1) Define harm reduction.
- 2) Describe why harm reduction principles are a necessary aspect of treatment with CSE youth.
- 3) Apply harm reduction principles with youth when they are in different stages in the Stages of Change model.
- 4) List at least three (3) harm reduction strategies that can be utilized with CSE youth.
- 5) Develop advocacy plans with commercially sexually exploited youth.



IF NON-CFS, PLEASE REGISTER THRU MARI SOLIS, SOLISMA@EHSD.CCCOUNTY.US



SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

25 YEARS

Amber Tillman, Clerk-Senior Level, Admin

20 YEARS

Adriana Diaz, Master Teacher-Project, CSB
Monica Montano, Comprehensive Services Asst. Manager-
Project

15 YEARS

Matthew Domnick, Social Worker III, AAS

10 YEARS

Jeane K. Allard, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Baboucar Diatta, Account Clerk-Advanced Level, Admin
Diana K. Harryman, Clerk-Senior Level, Admin
Maria Hendrickson, Social Service Program Assistant, WFS
Amanda Johnson, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS
Leticia Navarro, Child Nutrition Fd Service Trns-Project, CSB
Darling Rivera, Comprehensive Services Assistant Manager-
Project, CSB

NEW EMPLOYEES

Savannah Baker, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Deanne (Dee Dee) Barrett, Administrative Services
Assistant III, CFS
Hera Chan, Administrative Services Assistant III, Admin
Andrea Chavarria, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS
Vanessa Chorro, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Arielle Darby, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Ashley Dixon, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Amy Elstermeyer, Chief Deputy Public Admin, AAS
Masoume Fereydoon, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Kylie Frost, Public Admin Program Assistant, AAS
Richard Garcia, Clerk-Experienced Level, CFS
Jennifer Gomes-Figueira, Clerk-Experienced Level, AAS
Anna Gresko, Intermediate Clerk Project, CSB
Anicia Henry, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Stephanie Houston, Site Supervisor II, CSB
Bandana Khadka, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Candace Knox, Eligibility Worker I, WFS

Anita Luu, Administrative Services Assistant III, Admin
Sheila Membreno, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Terry Mitchell, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Alireza Mohamadmoradi, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Serena Moore, Workforce Service Specialist, WDB
Vignesh Naidu, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Hannah Pinelli, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Vanessa Plascencia, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Lizbeth Plascencia Amaya, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Jeanne Polk, Senior Public Health Nutritionist, AAS
Preethanwar Sandhu, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Jaimie Scroggins, Deputy Public Administrator, AAS
Brittany Stevenson, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Lynne Tran, Administrative Services Assistant III, Admin
Darcy Trautman, Eligibility Worker I, WFS
Roshunda Ward, Administrative Services Assistant III, CSB
Shan Whitney, DHRA II, Admin

RETIREES

Crystal King, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS
Alice Levy, Social Worker III, AAS

Torey Lovett, Social Worker, WFS
Sumeth Prasuehsut, Social Worker, 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 or (925) 608-4904.**

SPREAD THE WORD

September 2023

- INTERGENERATIONAL MONTH
- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MONTH
- NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH
- SEPTEMBER 4 – Labor Day (holiday)
- SEPTEMBER 10 – Grandparents' Day
- SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15 – Hispanic Heritage Month
- SEPTEMBER 19 – National IT Professionals Day
- SEPTEMBER 21 – International Day of Peace
- SEPTEMBER 22 – Fall Prevention Awareness Day
- SEPTEMBER 22 – Native American Day
- SEPTEMBER 23 – Autumn begins
- SEPTEMBER 24-25 – Yom Kippur

October 2023

- HEAD START AWARENESS MONTH
- NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
- COMBINED CHARITIES CAMPAIGN
- OCTOBER 2 – Child Health Day
- OCTOBER 7 – Ageism Awareness Day
- OCTOBER 9 – Columbus Day / Indigenous People
- OCTOBER 10 – World Mental Health Day
- OCTOBER 16 – National Bosses Day
- OCTOBER 17 – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- OCTOBER 24 – United Nations Day
- OCTOBER 31 – Halloween & EHSD Pet Parade!

We Care... You Care

CLICK here to learn more about nominating a coworker.
Updated We Care...You Care nomination form: [click here](#)
and see page 13

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

September 7 or 21 • 4 to 6 p.m.

October 5 or 19 • 4 to 6 p.m.

November 2 or 16 • 4 to 6 p.m.



For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at www.ehdsd.org. If you belong to an organization or community group interested in learning more about Resource Family Approval/ foster parenting, we can schedule an individual session for your group, in English or Spanish.

To register for a class, please call (925) 655-4230 or email ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us

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

Facebook and X @ContraCostaEHSD
Instagram @HumanaCosta
Like us on Facebook



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Building Brighter Futures Together



The next Issue of *Headlines* will publish in early October. Please Contact us at our EHSD Headlines email, Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us, by **September 19th** if you have an upcoming event, article, or idea you would like to submit.