

Headlines

Greg Brooks Turns Childhood into Book

**Experience Counts!
Supervisors Honor
Veteran EHSD Staff**

**Annie Barrett – NewWFS
Deputy Director**

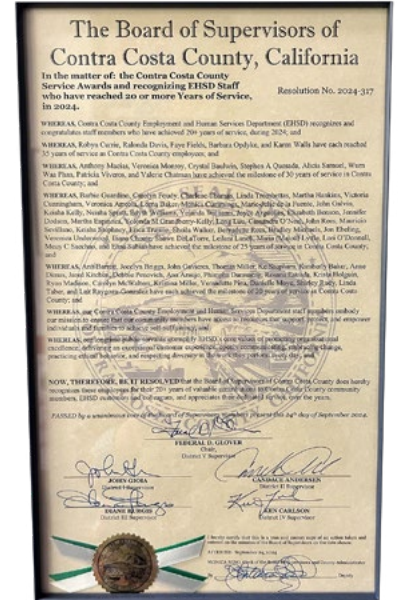
Famous Filipinos



Recognizing 20+ Years of County Service

Congratulations to our EHSD staff members who are achieving 20+ years of service during 2024! The County Board of Supervisors honored our longtime employees during the County Service Awards presentation on Tuesday, September 24th. An EHSD proclamation named 71 staff members who reached service milestones of 20, 25, 30, or 35 years. Several of our honorees attended in person and others viewed the recognition online. EHSD Director **Marla Stuart** highlighted five 35-year staff members during her presentation, including **Faye Fields, Barbara Opdyke, Robyn Currie, Ralonda Davis, and Karen Walls.**

“All our longtime EHSD staff members embody our mission to ensure that our community members have access to resources that support, protect, and empower individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency,” said Marla. “On behalf of our entire department, I thank all our honorees for their 20+ years of valuable contributions to Contra Costa County community members, our EHSD customers, and our colleagues.”



Director **Marla Stuart** edifies the dedicated and experienced EHSD workers who support our County residents by delivering human services programs.



Barbara Opdyke, Clerk Specialist in WFS' Data Coordinator Unit, and **Faye Fields**, QC Reviewer in Admin/Internal Ops' Quality Control Unit are two of EHSD's 35 years-of-service honorees. Three others (not pictured) from Workforce Services are **DM Robyn Currie**, **SSPA Ralonda Davis**, and **EW Supervisor Karen Walls.**



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Annie Barrett: WFS Deputy Director

By Alan Wang, Community Relations, Media Specialist

Annie Barrett is a perfect example of an EHSD employee who has climbed the career ladder while amassing a wealth of experience along the way. As the new Workforce Services Deputy Director, Annie brings more than 20 years of extensive experience in Social Services. She earned her bachelor's degree from Saint Mary's and began her career with the Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department as an Eligibility Worker I in the Medi-Cal program.

Annie's career progression includes significant roles within our department. She worked in Staff Development, where she was instrumental in launching the Affordable Care Act training and onboarding staff in Medi-Cal and CalFresh programs. As a Workforce Services Specialist and Division Manager of MediCal Service Center (MCSC), she collaborated with the MCSC administrative team to create operational policies and procedures, including piloting a Work-From-Home initiative for staff. She has been an asset to the Aging and Adult Services Bureau in her most recent role as Division Manager of In-Home Supportive Services. Annie has demonstrated her ability to excel in strategic initiatives and leverage technology to enhance community services.

Here's what Annie had to say about her work history and current role at EHSD:



Annie Barrett started at EHSD in 2004 as an Eligibility Worker.

When did you start at EHSD? May of 2004

What positions have you held at EHSD and for how long? Eligibility Worker (2004-2007), Medi-Cal Program Assistant (2007-2011), Eligibility Work Supervisor (2011-2012), Social Services Staff Development Specialist (2012-2015), Workforce Services Specialist (2014-2019), Division Manager (2019-2024), Workforce Services Deputy Director (2024-)

What are some of your work priorities in your new position and how will you accomplish them? I want to provide support to both our Executive Leadership team as well as the direct reports and staff that will report to me. I want to give people the tools they need to effectively do their job, whether that is providing the leadership with data and compliance or ensuring staff have the training and tools necessary to be successful. I want to reinforce the connection to our mission. While technology enables us to assist a greater number of vulnerable individuals in our community, it's important not to lose sight of the human element in human services. By engaging in discussions with our staff, I hope to renew our focus

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Annie Barrett: WFS Deputy Director

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on the mission and keep on the forefront the reason why we all chose careers in civil service.

What advice would you give to fellow workers who want to climb the career ladder? Volunteer. There are so many different opportunities and career paths that you may not have considered or been aware that your skills can cross into. Volunteering allows you to create a professional network which can open doors to new opportunities. Communicate, make sure your Supervisor or Manager is aware of your interest to grow and develop.

Building Brighter Futures Together

Annie Barrett with Angela Bullock-Hayes who was promoted to WFS Director earlier this year.



Recognizing 20+ Years of County Service

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Several EHS D honorees pictured with Supervisors and Directors who helped celebrate their dedicated service to our community.

Several EHS D honorees pictured with Supervisors and Directors who helped celebrate their dedicated service to our community.

In the News – \$29.7M Head Start Grant

The County recently announced \$29.7 million in federal grant awards for Head Start programs in Contra Costa County (see September *Headlines*). This means early childhood education for thousands of children, age 0 to 5 years.

For Contra Costa County, EHSD’s Community Services Bureau administers the Head Start program. The renewed funding is great news that showed up in several outlets and on social media. You can view the KTVU interview with District I Supervisor John Gioia by clicking on the arrow.



On September 12th, Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia spoke with Fox 2 and explained how the Head Start money will be used. **CLICK** on the play button to watch the full interview.

Check out more media coverage about this federal funding for Head Start in Contra Costa County:

Richmondside.org: <https://richmondside.org/2024/09/05/free-childcare-richmond-contra-costa-county/> (September 5)

Antioch Herald: [Contra Costa agencies awarded \\$29.7 million in grants for Head Start early childcare programs | Antioch Herald](#) (August 29)

Contra Costa Herald: [Contra Costa agencies awarded \\$29.7 million in grants for Head Start early childcare programs | Contra Costa Herald](#) (August 29)

What do Head Start programs do?

- 1 Head Start programs promote the school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from diverse backgrounds.
- 2 Head Start services are provided in a variety of settings including centers, family child care, and children’s own home.
- 3 Head Start programs build relationships with parents or other key family members, supporting program leadership and family well-being.

October is National Head Start Awareness Month

Learn more: [Head Start Approach | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)

#HeadStartAwarenessMonth
#CelebratingHSAM

International Media Spotlight on Aging & Adult Services



Aging & Adult Services Director **Tracy Murray** with the reporting team from South Korea's *Bravo My Life*.

Tracy Murray, Aging & Adult Services Director, was interviewed by *Bravo My Life* <https://bravo.etoday.co.kr/> on September 26. Reporter Hyojeong Son-Hyejin Moon traveled with two colleagues to discuss the services EHSD offers to support vulnerable community members, particularly older adults who have difficulty leaving their homes. Their main focus was on senior transportation services, so Rashida Kamara from CCTA was able to be present for the interview as well.

The South Korean media organization Korea Press Foundation (<https://www.kpf.or.kr/eng/user/engmain.do>) selected *Bravo My Life* for this special reporting project. *Bravo My Life* is a monthly Korean magazine published by the economic newspaper *Etoday*. Its content includes health, finance, assets, housing, beauty and travel, and appears to be geared toward middle-aged and older adults.

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*



Healing, Holding, and Centering Survivors

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

In 2023, Contra Costa County law enforcement agencies received more than 3,200 domestic violence-related calls for service, with approximately 88% involving the use of a weapon. That same year, 13 domestic violence-related homicides occurred in our County. These statistics underscore the urgent need for continued awareness and action to support survivors and prevent future violence.

Domestic violence refers to a pattern of abusive and coercive behaviors used to exert power and control over an intimate partner or family member, affecting that person's physical, emotional, mental, sexual, spiritual and/or financial wellbeing and relationships.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) is a national campaign, and, in 1989, Congress declared the month of October to be dedicated to this effort. Every October, organizations and individuals unite across the country for a national effort to uplift the needs, voices, and experiences of survivors.

This year's theme, "Heal, Hold, & Center," highlights the connection between survivor justice and racial justice and calls on us to embrace the many cultural ways we can *heal* from violence and oppression, commit to *holding* space for survivors, and *center* those most marginalized in our efforts to end domestic violence.

3 Things You Can Do to *Heal, Hold, and Center* Survivors:

1. **Reflect.** Read the prompts in the [Heal, Hold & Center Reflection Guide](#).
2. **Read** the Alliance to End Abuse and Community Strengths toolkits to learn how to create and uplift safe spaces for survivors, especially those from historically marginalized communities.
 - a) The [Culturally Sustaining Approaches to Prevention Toolkit](#), developed in partnership with RCF Connects' Equity for Black Women and Girls Initiative and its Sister Circles. It amplifies the voices, needs, and hopes of Black women and girls while promoting culturally sustaining practices.
 - b) The [Trauma-Informed Practices in Organizations Toolkit](#), shaped in collaboration with The Latina Center, helps organizations adopt trauma-informed principles to break the trauma cycle and promote healing.
3. **Join** Collective Efforts Against Violence (see below info)
 - a) **Walk for Awareness** – Sunday, October 27th at 11 a.m. in Central Park, San Ramon. Email Admin@rewirecommunity.org for more information.
 - b) [Mission Possible Conference III: Creating Community and Opportunity](#) – Thursday, November 7th from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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Healing, Holding, and Centering Survivors

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Together, we can create a future where everyone is safe and free from violence in our homes, schools, and communities.



If someone discloses domestic violence to you, don't minimize it. Listen, thank them for sharing, ask how you can best support them, and share resources:



STAND! For Families Free of Violence offers a range of prevention, intervention, and treatment programs to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence, as well as child abuse. People who have experienced domestic violence can call the toll free 24/7 crisis hotline at 1 (888) 215-5555. CLICK [here](#) to watch see how STAND saves lives.



The **Family Justice Center** partners with local agencies to provide comprehensive services, including healing spaces and survivor leadership programs. The Family Justice Centers are located in Antioch, Concord, and Richmond, with a fourth center opening soon in Danville. Navigators, including EHSD Measure X-funded Navigators, are on site to assist survivors and their families access critical support, public benefits, and other resources.

FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH OCTOBER **Filipinos in America Since 1587**

The Board of Supervisors is celebrating October as Filipino American History Month to recognize the rich heritage, history, and contributions of Filipino Americans to the Contra Costa County community and the nation. The commemoration took place on October 1st at the Board of Supervisors' meeting.

Filipino American History Month recognizes the first recorded presence of Filipinos in the continental United States on October 18, 1587, when



EHSD staff members joined the Filipino American History Month celebration at the Board of Supervisors on October 1st. Pictured with California Attorney General Rob Bonta are (L-R) **Anna Domingo** (Information & Systems), **Mari Solis** (CFS Staff Development), AG Bonta, **Tamina Alon** (Information & Systems Director), **Lionel Galiste** (AAS IHSS Public Authority), and **Marla Stuart** (EHSD Director).

“Luzones Indios” came ashore from the Spanish galleon Nuestra Senora de Esperanza and landed at what is now Morro Bay, California, according to the Filipino American National Historical Society.

The commemoration also highlights the significant impact Filipino Americans have made throughout U.S. history, from their role in agriculture and labor

movements to their contributions in the fields of medicine, arts, and public service.

“We are honored to recognize the invaluable contributions of Filipino Americans to our community,” said Vice Chair Candace Andersen, District 2 Supervisor. “Their rich culture, history, and achievements have greatly enriched our society and continue to inspire future generations.”

Attorney General (AG) Rob Bonta, who is the first person of Filipino descent to occupy the position, also joined the Board to celebrate.

“As a proud Filipino, it is an immense honor to celebrate Filipino American History Month with the Board,” said Attorney General Rob Bonta. “This month represents the rich culture, resilience, and the contributions of Filipino Americans to this nation. I am proud to carry forward the legacy

FAMOUS FILIPINO AMERICANS



Vicki Draves/Olympian: From the South of Market district of San Francisco to the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, Draves became the first female and Asian American woman to win an Olympic gold in both the platform and springboard events.



Vanessa Hudgens/Actress: Born in Salinas, CA, she rose to fame for role as Gabriella in the High School Musical films.



Bruno Mars/Singer: An American singer-songwriter, record producer, musician, dancer, and music video director.

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Filipinos in America Since 1587

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of those who came before us, and I am inspired by the incredible impact we continue to make in shaping the future of America.”

Throughout the month, the Board of Supervisors encourages all residents to participate in various events and activities celebrating Filipino American culture and history. These events include educational forums, cultural performances, art exhibits, and community discussions designed to foster a deeper understanding of the Filipino American experience.

The recognition reaffirms the Board’s commitment to honoring the cultural diversity that strengthens and enriches our community.



EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Building Brighter Futures Together

FAMOUS FILIPINO AMERICANS



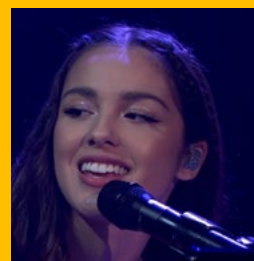
Jo Koy/Comedian: Stand-up comedian and actor. He has since had a total of six comedy specials released by Comedy Central and Netflix. In 2024, Koy hosted the 81st Golden Globe Awards.



Larry Itliong/Activist: A leader in The Delano Grape Strike of 1965, and the labor movement for better wages and working conditions for farmers. Itliong partnered with Cesar Chavez to lead the formation of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) union.



Pedro Flores/Entrepreneur: Introduced the word “yo-yo” to the United States and began producing yo-yos trademarked by that name in 1928.



Olivia Rodrigo/Singer: An American singer-songwriter and actress. She first became known for starring on the Disney Channel series. Known for her hit songs “Drivers License” and “Vampire.”



Captain Jose Calugas/Medal of Honor Recipient: Fought valiantly for America when the Japanese invaded his homeland, the Philippines. He earned the Medal of Honor while doing so, but to receive it, he had to survive nearly two brutal years in captivity.



Alez Tizon/Pulitzer Prize-winning Author: His book *Big Little Man*, a memoir and cultural history, explores themes related to race, masculinity, and personal identity. Tizon taught at the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication.



Celebrating our Hispanic/ LatinX Communities

National Hispanic Heritage Month began as Hispanic Heritage Week more than 50 years ago. It is now a month-long commemoration that runs from September 15th through October 15th.

Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the histories, cultures and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. It celebrates the rich diversity, cultures, and contributions of the Hispanic/Latino population in the U.S.

Between September 15th and 18th, several Latin American countries celebrate their independence, including:

September 15 - Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua

September 16 - Mexico

September 18 - Chile

Día de la Raza (Race Day) is celebrated on October 12th and recognizes the mixed indigenous and European heritage of Mexico.

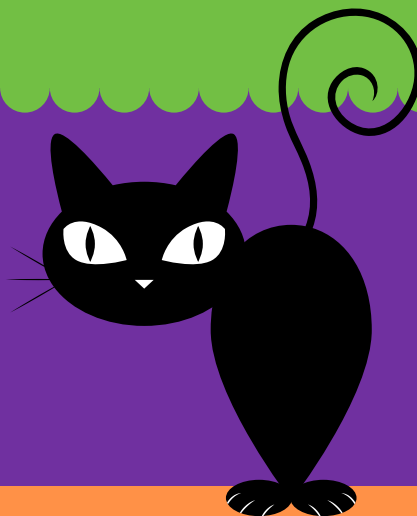
Learn more at www.hispanicheritagemoth.gov/ (Library of Congress-hosted website).

EHSD Halloween Pet Parade Costume Contest is back October 31st



The winner of the Halloween Pet Parade Costume Contest will don the cover of *Headlines* in November.

Details to come



Drawing from Childhood to Help Clients

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

Admittedly, **Greg Brooks** says he was not the easiest child to raise while growing up in Phoenix, Arizona. But only after raising his own son did he realize how much grief he had given his mother. Greg says his experience inspired him to write a children's book as a gift to his mother to thank her for her love and patience. As a former journalist, Greg had excellent writing skills. But he wanted to know how to transfer his ideas into a children's book. So, he contacted the Children's Institute of Literature and learned how to craft the proper text and find a suitable illustrator.

The result was "The Hiding Game" which tells the story of a boy who amuses himself by hiding during shopping trips while stirring his mother into a panic. The book turned out to be a handy tool for Greg, an In-Home Supportive Services Social Worker whose clients, often times, have unruly kids. "Ultimately, the book is designed to help mothers, with rambunctious children, to form paths of communication between each other," says Greg.

Listen to the rest of our interview with Greg by **CLICKING** on the play button below.



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Drawing from Childhood to Help Clients

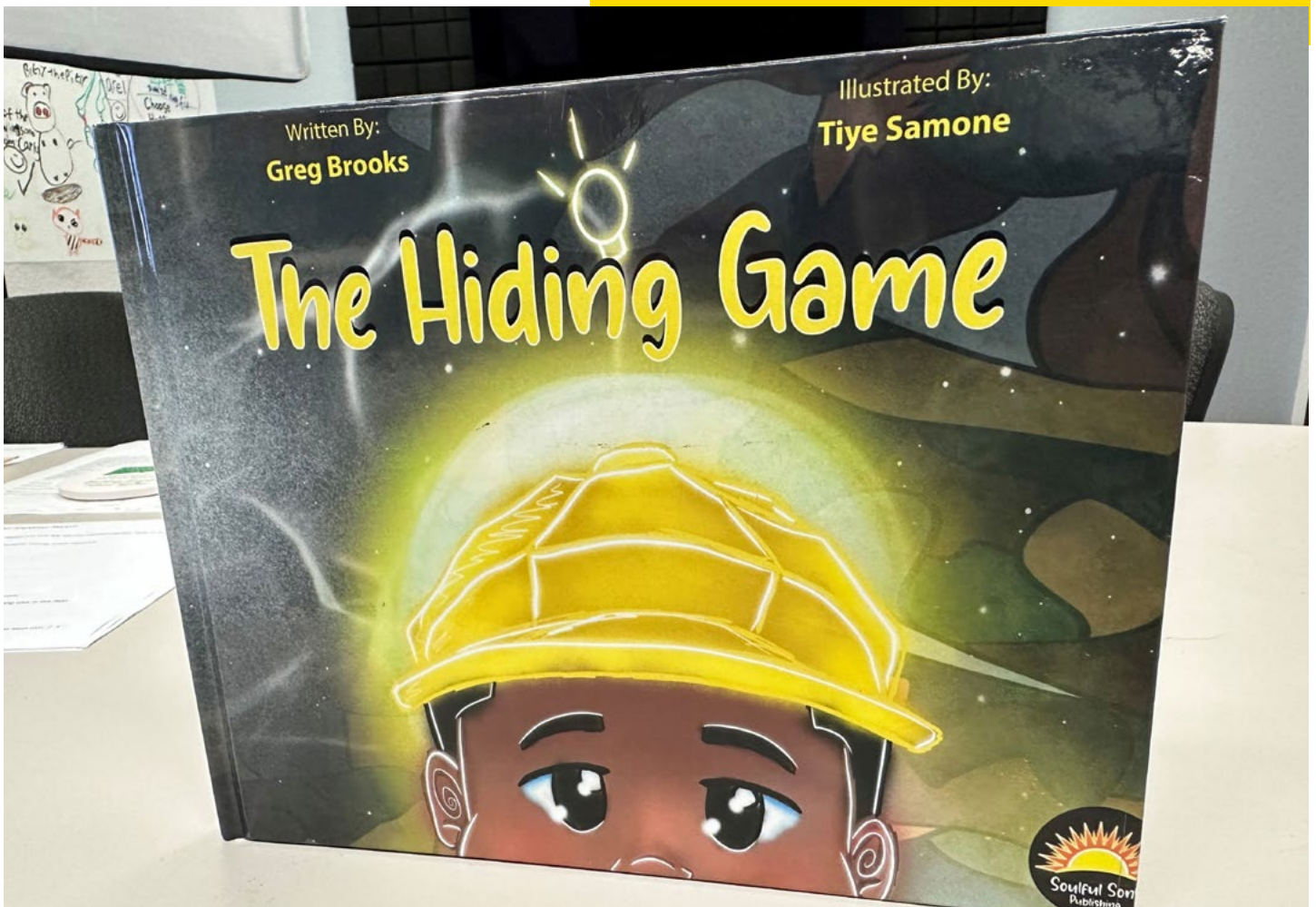
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The Hiding Game's main character, Malik, is based on book's author, **Greg Brooks**, seen here.

About the Author:

From 2013–2018, **Greg Brooks** served as a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Case Manager for Workforce Services, in the America's Job Center of California Career Center in Antioch. He joined EHSD in January, 2020, as an IHSS In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Social Worker in the Antioch Office. In December, 2021, Greg transferred to the IHSS office in Richmond, where he continues to work as an IHSS Social Worker.



Exciting Insights from Executive Bootcamp

By LaTosha Stockholm, WDB Workforce Services Specialist



As part of their journey through the California Workforce Association’s Executive Bootcamp, Regional Organizer **Michael Katz** and Workforce Services Specialist **LaTosha Stockholm** dove into

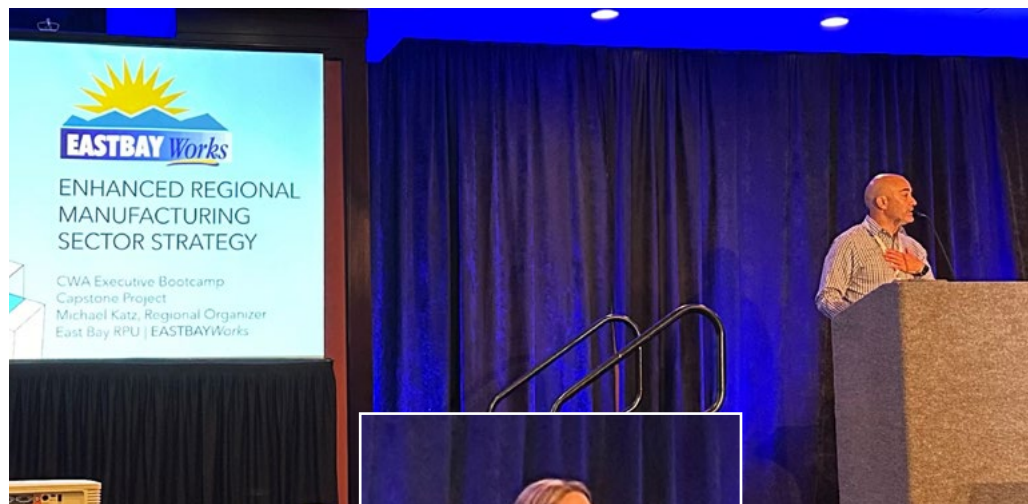
impactful Capstone Projects aimed at addressing key challenges in Workforce Development.

This dynamic program, designed for workforce directors, deputy directors, and executive staff, spans a year and focuses on nurturing the next generation of leaders in workforce systems.

Throughout the Bootcamp, participants partnered with seasoned mentors and conducted thorough research on their topics, culminating in presentations at the CWA’s Meeting of the Minds in Monterey, CA, from September 3rd to 5th. Michael delivered a compelling presentation on the “Enhanced Regional Manufacturing Sector Strategy,” while LaTosha energized the crowd with her focus on “Getting Young People Fired Up About Careers in Public Service.”

Both presentations garnered enthusiastic responses from attendees, who left with actionable strategies to tackle similar challenges in their own workforce initiatives. The insights shared at this

event are sure to inspire and elevate workforce development efforts across the board!



Above: **Michael Katz**, Regional Organizer, East Bay Works

Right: **LaTosha Stockholm**, Workforce Services Specialist, WDB

Building Brighter Futures Together

Safe Sleep for Our Little Ones

On average, about 3,500 infants die suddenly and unexpectedly each year in the United States. Most of these deaths result from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes, such as suffocation, according to the Centers for Disease Control (https://www.cdc.gov/sudden-infant-death/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/sids/AboutSUIDandSIDS.htm).

“Thousands of sleep-related infant deaths, including in our own County, occur yearly,” explained Hannah Slade, Social Services Program Analyst for Children & Family Services. “While we have worked on education and training and support on Safe Sleep practices for our foster and CFS- involved families for several years, it is really something that can happen to anyone.”



October is Safe Sleep and SIDS Awareness Month. Safe to Sleep is a national campaign that launched in 1994. It was formerly known as the Back to Sleep campaign. Its mission is to educate parents,

caregivers, and health care providers about ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death.

The U.S. SIDS rate dropped more than 50% between 1994 and 2016. However, at the same time, the rate of infant deaths from other sleep-related causes increased.

To create a safe sleep environment for the little ones in your care, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommends:

- Always place baby on their back to sleep, for naps and at night.
- Share your room with baby. Keep baby close to your bed, on a separate surface designed for infants.
- Use a firm and flat sleep surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved crib*, covered by a fitted sheet with no other bedding or soft items in the sleep area.
- Clear the crib. View this NIH video to learn how to safely keep baby warm during sleep while reducing the risk of sleep-related death. [Clear the Crib to Reduce the Risk of Sleep-Related Infant Death \(youtube.com\)](#)

**For more on crib safety, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) at 1(800) 638-2772 or [CPSC.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov).*

Learn more and help your family and friends understand what safe sleep looks like. Visit the NIH website: [Homepage | Safe to Sleep \(nih.gov\)](#) for more information. #SafeToSleep



Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Outreach Roundup

Rubicon Job Fair

On September 11, 2024, Casey Costa and Joanna Thieme, Contra Costa County Navigators, played an instrumental role at the Rubicon Job Fair, assisting attendees in accessing essential resources.



Casey Costa, Sam Hearn, Joanna Thieme

Their efforts greatly supported Sam Hearn, a financial coach from Rubicon, in connecting job seekers with opportunities for financial stability. The collaboration between the navigators and Sam highlighted the importance of providing holistic

support for individuals striving to improve their employment prospects and overall well-being.

Joybound Shelter Open House Event

On September 14th, 4 Our Families Navigators **Al Gibson, Sandra Figueroa, and Susan Padan** attended the Joybound People & Pets (formerly known as ARF) Open House in Walnut Creek. The event provided an excellent opportunity for the navigators to connect with community members and share valuable information about public benefits and other community services available. Visitors were able to explore the various programs and resources 4 Our Families offers, including assistance with navigating essential services for families in need.

In honor of National Service Dog Month, attendees had the chance to learn about the transformative impact of training shelter dogs to become psychiatric service animals, a mission

that saves both human and animal lives. The event featured a psychiatric service dog training demonstration, as well as a tour of the state-of-the-art facility. Participants were able to meet mental health professionals, Shelter to Service program partners, and service animals in training. The 4 Our Families Navigators were on hand to offer services and support, further bridging the gap between families and the resources they need to thrive.



Sandra Figueroa, Al Gibson, Susan Padan

East County Community Partner Health Resource Fair

Led by EHSD's Children & Family Services, The East County Community Partner Health Resource Fair on Saturday, September 21st, brought together many organizations who serve our residents in the areas of education, health, family support, safety, violence prevention, and more. The event, held at the Nick Rodriguez Center in Antioch, featured games and activities for all ages, free giveaways, a safe place for community building, food trucks, and lots of resources and information. EHSD's 4 Our Families Navigators **Sandra Zepeda-Lopez and Joanne Thieme** were there to provide information and assistance about our services and benefit programs.

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Outreach Roundup

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2024 Community Rock the Block Party Celebration

The township of Rodeo in West Contra Costa County rocked the block on Saturday, September 28th. EHSD's 4 Our Families Navigators **Natalie**

Aguilar and **Sandra Figueroa** were on hand to support families and individuals in the community, and share information about our services. The Community Rock the Block Party was a day full of fun and unity with vendor booths, games, delicious food, prizes, jumpers, etc.

Liana's Sleeping Bag Drive, a Success

Liana's Sleeping Bag Drive was a success thanks to the kindness and support of her family, friends, and EHSD employees! She donated and collected a total of 63 sleeping bags, with an approximate value of \$1,575 to VESTIA, EHSD's 501c3 nonprofit partner. You might think, *what inspired a 10-year-old to put something like this together?*

A YouTube video.

Liana (Lili) says she watched a short clip of an individual handing out meals to those in need, and wanted to extend the same kindness.

On Monday, Sept. 29, Liana, her mom, **Larena Baldazo** of Community Relations/Media, and brother, Vicente, met with **Cynthia Smith** with

EHSD's Volunteer & Emergency Services (VES) office that manages VESTIA donations, and completed the final hand-off of the sleeping bags. Cynthia Smith was extremely supportive of the effort since its launch earlier in the month and even gave Liana a tour of the VES office. There were shelves of backpacks, a closet full of clothes, and even a stocked food pantry, for those in need.

What was the most challenging part of all this for Liana? Making the video, requesting donations. Liana is a pretty shy kid, but something tells us this is not the end of her volunteer work in Contra Costa County.

Liana and her mom thank every supportive hand involved in this effort, whether you made a contribution or helped spread the word – you are appreciated!

If you would like a donation receipt from VESTIA, please send your name, email and quantity of sleeping bags donated to Lbaldazo@ehsd.cccounty.us.



CLICK the play button to watch Liana's donation to 400 Ellinwood. Liana and Cynthia finish packing two large bins full of sleeping bags.

Building Brighter
Futures Together

How to Get Unstuck

Contributed by Personnel Services



MagellanAscend

Escaping a rut often takes self-reflection, a change in your perspective and a willingness to foresee something compelling in your future.

- Everyone gets “stuck” sometimes. Markers of a rut can include feelings of boredom, along with an absence of motivation, excitement and fulfillment.
- Take some time to examine where your life is now and whether it has turned out the way you hoped. Identify specific life events and relationships that likely spurred self-limiting thoughts that keep you from moving on confidently now.
- Explore your life’s purpose. Ask yourself, “What am I passionate about? Am I pursuing it yet? If not, how can I start?”
- Change something! Go somewhere or do something out of the ordinary. This new stimulus can be the catalyst for making positive changes in your life.
- Plan an activity or get-together that you can look forward to and get excited about!

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

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: **Managing Intense Emotions in the Moment** NOVEMBER 13

This webinar will:

- Define emotional regulation.
- Identify intense emotions and how to manage them in the moment.
- Discover skills to prepare for intense emotions before they arise.

You have access to webinars, articles, videos and services focused on Life, Mind, and Body through Magellan EAP services. 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.”

ECOTIME DUE DATES

October 11

(Oct 1-15 pay period)

October 24

(Oct 16-31 pay period)

Combined Charities Campaign Kicks Off with Easy Donating!

By Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

Contra Costa County is aiming to raise \$100,000 during October to help support health, wellness, research to cure diseases, food for families, plus efforts to reduce homelessness, protect the environment, save wildlife and much more.



The annual **Combined Charities Campaign** to create healthier communities is officially on for 2024, led by the Contra Costa County Animal Services Department, this year's coordinator. County employee donations are welcome from **Tuesday, October 1st** through **Thursday, October 31st, 2024**.

EHSD staff is known for *always making a difference* within our communities. Last year, EHSD was THE LEADER and raised the most funds (\$19,549!) out of all County departments. We can do it again in 2024!

Combined Charities is a **100% online giving campaign**. [Click this link to donate](#) one of two ways:

- 1) Pledge 12 equal Payroll deductions with after-tax dollars beginning January 10, 2025.
- 2) One-time online donation (credit or debit card)

You can pledge \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50 or more per month and split your giving between one or more of your favorite charities. No pledge is too small.

Donations are made with payroll after-tax dollars or one-time credit card or debit card payments. Charitable donations can be used for personal tax purposes.

Thank you for considering a donation to the 2024 Combined Charities Campaign.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE.](#)



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: [WeCareThatYouCare Guidelines_FINAL.pdf](#)
We Care nomination form: [WeCareThatYouCare Nomination Form_FINAL.pdf](#)



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!

Omar Barajas

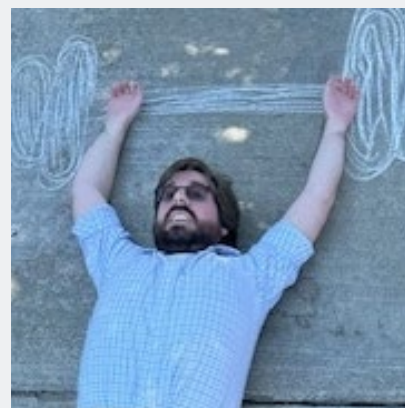
Omar Barajas demonstrates commitment to Medi-Cal Calfresh Service Center's (MCSC) operations by assisting with various technology components in our division. Using his knowledge, skills, and abilities, Omar is revamping MCSC's SharePoint, using Microsoft Teams as the platform. Once completed, this new platform will facilitate the sharing of best business practices among staff and Supervisors to best serve our customers. Omar has already revamped MCSC's overtime roster to better assist with overtime productivity reporting requirements. During the recent Crowd Strike system outage, he helped coordinate MCSC's response. Using his telecommunications background, he often troubleshoots technical and connectivity issues for our On-the-Job Training (OJT) Team where he is now a supervisor. He recently assisted with this year's Civil Rights case sample review. Omar also assists co-supervisors with best practices to ensure that MCSC is delivering timely service. Aside from all his technical work, Omar helps onboard new Supervisors to MCSC, and he does this in a kind and respectful manner, ensuring that his new colleagues can effectively support MCSC's mission.



Omar Barajas combines Technical and Personal Skills

Corey W. Jones

Corey W. Jones is a dedicated member of the Medi-Cal Calfresh Service Center. As a Change Network Champion (CNC) for CalSAWS Go Live last year, he pivoted his efforts to assisting staff with troubleshooting CalSAWS case actions in real time. During this period of real-time transition support, Corey found the time to build out real cases in the CalSAWS Sandbox (simulation region) to reverse-engineer data entry protocols for staff to use, all without adversely affecting customers during proof-of-concept trials. He would then translate these findings into internal Desk Guides for MCSC staff to use. Last year, Corey assisted Policy by sharing his knowledge CalSAWS Systems with counties that went live in CalSAWS after Contra Costa County. Recently, he facilitated a Think Tank training module for Transitional Medi-Cal (TMC) in the most recent Medi-Cal Cross Over Training. Currently, he is working on interactive desk aids to assist staff with complex case actions. Corey is patient and respectful and has a gift of being able to explain how the CalSAWS system reacts to data entry.



Corey Jones

More Customer Service Champions on the next page



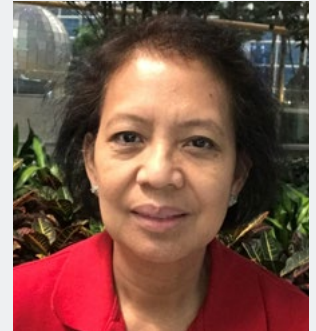
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More Customer Service Champions

By Antonia De Leon, EHSD Retiree

After recently retiring from EHSD after more than 23 years, I wanted to share appreciation for two staff members.

Manette Domingo, Account Clerk-Advanced Level, was my EHSD payroll clerk. She is an amazing and outstanding person. She is a one-of-a-kind, hard worker, who is compassionate, and understanding. I can go on and on. I have known her over the years, and appreciate her very, very, much.



Manette Domingo



Cynthia Sonaco

The other person is **Cynthia Sonaco**. She is the Experienced Level Clerk who handles reception at 40 Douglas. Every time I go to the office, I encounter her – a very nice, kind, hard worker, who is knowledgeable, and very helpful. I also appreciate her tremendously.

EHSD is very blessed to have these two staff members!

Building Brighter Futures Together



EHSD SHOUTOUT



Born on the 4th of July – Elk Osiemo



Born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya, **Elk Osiemo** came to the United States in 2017 with his family. He started working in EHSD's Fiscal Unit in September 2023 as an Account Clerk- Experienced Level, and passed his probationary period in June 2024.



Elk celebrates with members of the Fiscal Team. Front Row (L-R): **Rossel Tongol, Elk Osiemo, Judith Flores, Elise Allison** (standing), **Heidi Bernas** Back Row (L-R): **Malou Lyttle, Natalie Shandera Smith, Arti Bhandari, Ernestine Cook, Kahina Delane, Jill DiNapoli**

On July 4th, he turned 40 on Independence Day, promoted to Advanced Account Clerk and, on top of this, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration (BSBA).

On September 6th, Elk reached another milestone when he received and took his Oath of Allegiance to become a U.S. citizen. He is the second person in his family to become a proud American.

Elk recently started working on his master's degree in business administration/accounting, and has a bright future!

If you or a colleague have a work-related milestone or accomplishment, we want to hear about it. Email a 2-3 sentence description and photo to EventsCommittee@ehsd.cccounty.us and you may get a "shout out" in *Headlines* or on EHSD Live!

Run Up to Election Day

A few reminders from the Contra Costa County Elections Division as Tuesday, November 5th, approaches:



Safe & Secure

Voting by mail is safe, secure, and convenient. There are many checks to keep it secure and prevent fraud, such as:

- Unique ID numbers on ballot return envelopes
- Ballots are only mailed to registered voters
- Strict chain-of-custody rules for returned ballots
- Three separate checks on voter's signature on the ballot return envelope
- Voters are contacted to "cure" their signature if it's missing or doesn't match what's on file



Register to vote

Check your voter registration status or register to vote at contracostavote.gov.

Voting by Mail

The Contra Costa County Elections will mail a ballot to every **registered voter** on October 7th. Voted ballots

must be postmarked by Election Day or returned to a **drop box** by 8 p.m. on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5th.

Also, a voter's activity is logged in the elections system, so Contra Costa Elections only counts the first ballot they receive from each voter. Learn more at secure-election.org/facts-voting.

Drop Off Your Ballot

Outdoor Drop Boxes are available 24/7 beginning on October 7, 2024, and close on November 5, 2024, at 8 p.m. sharp.

Drop Boxes are located throughout Contra Costa County, at libraries, city halls, and other public sites. EHSD has drop boxes at two of its buildings: Administration Office at 40 Douglas in Martinez, and District Office at 1305 Macdonald Avenue in Richmond.

Visit [Official Ballot Drop Boxes - Contra Costa County \(contracostavote.gov\)](https://contracostavote.gov) to find a Drop Box near you.

Continued on next page

Run Up to Election Day

Continued from previous page

Track Your Ballot

Sign up to track your ballot using [BallotTrax](#).

Use the [My Voting Information](#) tool on the [Contra Costa County Elections Division website](#) to confirm when your ballot is issued or received. If you are registered to vote and did not receive your ballot, or it's lost or damaged, request a replacement vote-by-mail ballot at contracostavote.gov.



CLICK the arrow to learn more about safe and secure election in Contra Costa County.

A graphic with a background of a waving American flag. A white box with a blue border contains the following text:

ELECTION KEY DATES

- Oct. 7 Ballots mailed to registered voters, [ballot drop boxes](#) open and in-person voting at [Election Office](#)
- Oct. 21 [Voter registration](#) deadline – after this date, you can register in person at the [Election Office](#), at an [early voting site](#) or on Election Day at a [polling place](#)
- Oct. 29 Last day to request a [replacement vote-by-mail ballot](#)
- Nov. 1 [Regional early voting](#) starts
- Nov. 5 Election Day - [polling places](#) open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Nov. 12 Last day to receive mailed ballots postmarked on or before Nov. 5
- Dec. 5 [Election certification](#) deadline

SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

35 YEARS

Faye Fields, Quality Control, Admin Internal Operations

30 YEARS

Stephen Quesada, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

25 YEARS

Bradley Michaels, Info Sys Technician II, Admin
Linda Trombetta, Social Worker III, AAS

15 YEARS

Tracy Lewis, Administrative Svcs Asst III/EHS Division Mgr, CSB
Anjana Pathak, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB

10 YEARS

Catrina Beverly, Social Worker, WFS
William Chatham, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Michelle Collins, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Joel Dela Cruz, Child Nutrition Cook-Project, CSB
Alysia Dellaserra, Soc Svc Program Analyst, CFS
Teroll Melton, Social Worker III, CFS
Zaria Minor, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Cheryl Orr, Social Casework Assistant, CFS
Julie Wayne, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Monique Young-Edwards, Secretary-Advanced Level, CSB

NEW EMPLOYEES

Christina Aragonés, Intermediate Clerk, CSB
Muriel Clemente, DHR Supervisor, Admin Internal Operations
Charlize Howay, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Lawrence Lee, Information Sys. Programmer and Analyst II,
Admin Information & Systems
Florita Lopez, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS

Elyonah Martinez, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Leonor Millan, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS
Dora Romero, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Andreozzi Tabin, Student Intern II, CSB
Ricki Whate, Intermediate Clerk, CSB

RETIREES

We apologize for the misspelling of Angela Shakensnider's name in last month's issue under the Retirees section. Below is the corrected listing:
Angela Shakensnider, Social Services Program Assistant, WFS

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*

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

October 2024

- HEAD START AWARENESS MONTH
- SAFE SLEEP AND SIDS AWARENESS MONTH
- NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
- NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION MONTH
- OCTOBER 2-4 – Rosh Hashanah
- OCTOBER 14 – Indigenous People/Columbus Day
- OCTOBER 16 – National Boss’s Day
- OCTOBER 17 – The Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drill
- OCTOBER 31 – Halloween & EHSD Pet Parade



November 2024

- ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH
- HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH
- CHILD SAFETY & PROTECTION MONTH
- HOME CARE & HOSPICE MONTH
- NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH
- NOVEMBER 3 – Daylight Savings Time ends
- NOVEMBER 5 – Election Day
- NOVEMBER 11 – Veterans Day
- NOVEMBER 20 – Universal Children’s Day
- NOVEMBER 28 – Thanksgiving Day (holiday)
- NOVEMBER 29 – Day after Thanksgiving (holiday)

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
October 3 or 17 • 4 to 6 p.m.
November 7 or 21 • 4 to 6 p.m.
December 5 or 19 • 4 to 6 p.m.



For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at www.ehsd.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

We Care... You Care
 CLICK here to learn more about nominating a coworker and see page 20

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

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



The next Issue of *Headlines* will publish in early November. Email EHSD *Headlines* at Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us, by **Tuesday, October 15th** if you have an upcoming event, article, or idea you would like to submit.