

Headlines

**Kelsey Entwistle
Freshly Minted
SSPA**

**Mentoring Program
Generates Future
EHSD Leaders**

*H*oliday Pics from
Around EHSD

**Four Customer
Service Champs**



Mentoring Program Celebrates 2024 Graduates

By Iliana Choate, Staff Development Specialist, Internal Operations



Mentors & Mentees: Back Row: (L-R): Cynthia Mallory, Tamina Alon, Daniel Busch, Renee Resendez, Raquel Santana-Pizana, Rita Loza, Patricia Perez, Mario Pando, Ernestine Cook, Nanci Powers, Ellen Wienecke, April Bolin, Rose Castaneda. Front Row: (L-R): Evette Thomas, Sandra Orellana, Maria R. Munoz, Gigi Carruth, Darnell Jones, Mary McFarland, Tracey Lee



EHS Director **Marla Stuart**



Staff Development Manager **Tracey Lee**

On December 3rd, the Mentoring Program proudly celebrated the accomplishments of its 2024 graduating mentees. The event, with presentations provided by EHS Director **Marla Stuart**, Staff Development Manager **Tracey Lee**, and Program Coordinator **Iliana Choate**, highlighted the journey and achievements of participants over the past six months.

The graduation ceremony included a delightful skit performed by the mentees, capturing their experiences and growth throughout the program. Balancing their professional workloads with a demanding schedule of workshops, presentations, special meetings, job interviews, and job shadowing, these mentees showcased remarkable dedication and resilience.

Their efforts led to numerous notable accomplishments, including:

- Attendance at the REIB Executive Leadership Learning Collaborative
- Enrollment in the Supervisor series
- Promotion to Social Worker
- Promotions to TU Supervisor positions
- Participation in the Pathway to County Employment Event
- Presentations on EHS Live!
- Promotion to Eligibility Training Unit (ETU)

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Mentoring Program Celebrates 2024 Graduates

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- Graduate with a BS in Management
- Delivery of special leadership presentations to Staff Development
- Recording a training video for Welfare-to-Work staff

We give a special mention to some of our mentors for the 2024 session:

- **Cynthia Mallory:** Provided individualized career pathways for our mentees over the past two years.
- **April Bolin:** A mentee from 2013 who has since mentored for four years and contributed significantly to the Mentoring Advisory Group. Thank you, April, for your dedication.
- Our mentors from the past two years: **Tamina Alon, Farhad Ziaee, and Mario Pando.**

- **Tamina Alon:** Provided invaluable support to her mentee during EHSD Live!, showing her commitment and dedication.

The graduation not only marked the culmination of a rigorous program but also celebrated the mentees' personal and professional growth. The support and guidance from mentors and supervisors were instrumental in their success, fostering an environment of continuous learning and development.

As the Mentoring Program looks forward to future cohorts, the 2024 graduates serve as a testament to the power of dedication, mentorship, and community support in achieving outstanding personal and professional milestones.



Suited up and ready to shine! The mentees brought humor and heart to the graduation ceremony with a skit reflecting their journey of growth and achievement. Despite balancing busy professional lives with workshops, presentations, and job shadowing, their resilience and dedication truly stole the spotlight.

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*



CALL FOR Mentees, Mentors, and Advisory Members

By Iliana Choate, Staff Development Specialist,
Internal Operations

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the 2025 Mentoring Program! This year, we are looking for enthusiastic mentees who are eager to learn and develop a comprehensive career plan. Additionally, we seek dedicated mentors who are ready to guide, support, and share their invaluable expertise with others. We also invite supervisors and managers to apply for the mentoring advisory group to represent all bureaus and join us in shaping the program's success.

Watch for STARS announcements regarding upcoming informational sessions, application details, and important deadlines. This is an incredible opportunity to enhance your professional journey, whether as a mentee looking to grow or as a mentor wanting to make a positive impact. Let's work together to create a vibrant, supportive learning community in 2025!

Making Spirits Rise

Welfare-to-Work (WTW) employees at 4545 Delta Fair got into the holiday spirit and shared a glimpse of their festive decorations capturing the creativity and spirit of the staff.



Santa's Reindeer Stable – Division Manager, **Robyn Currie's** WTW team (C4M Unit) (L-R): **Amber Brown, Florita Lopez, Asha Bland, Nicholas Williams, Rebecca Hagen, Diana Lopez.** Two staff were not present for the photo and video however, they are in the unit: **Toni Thomas and Karyn Kuppe**

Members of the WTW C4M Unit turned their cubicles into reindeer stables. They decorate their office for other holidays, as well, to boost morale and strengthen team unity. **CLICK** on the play button to see more.

"Mr. Christmas" **Andrew Lejano**, WTW, SSPA is assigned to one of **Robyn Currie's** 4545 Delta Fair units.

EHSD Live! Trivia Challenge Winner



If you were watching EHSD Live! on December 12th, you had a chance to win a \$25 gas gift card. Viewers had to pay attention to the show for the answer to the trivia question, then submit their answer by using their Zoom chat box. The next EHSD Live! show is scheduled for **Thursday, March 27th, 2025.**

Winner: **Ana Lina**, Accounting Technician, Administrative Services

Question: VESTIA is the acronym for what nonprofit?

Answer: Volunteer & Emergency Services Team in Action



Major Gift Brightens Future for Former Foster Students

By Christine Anuszkiewicz, Community Relations

For nearly four decades, EHSD's nonprofit collaborator, Volunteer Emergency Services Team in Action (VESTIA), has provided vital support and emergency supplemental assistance to our clients. One of their key initiatives is offering educational scholarships to our former foster youths. Many of the recipients of these scholarships have taken part in Children & Family Services' (CFS) Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP), which offers services and resources to help emancipating foster youth transition to adulthood and independence.



During the recent EHSD Live! broadcast on December 12th, Ruth Morentz, representing herself and Doug Vogt (who was not present), presented a substantial donation of \$50,000 for VESTIA's "Need to Succeed Scholarship" for former foster youth. This generous contribution was graciously received by VESTIA Board President, Judy Peralde; District 4 Supervisor (and incoming Board Chair) Candace Andersen; CFS Director **Roslyn Gentry**; and EHSD Director **Marla Stuart**.

"We understand ILSP's value in supporting young adults to help 21 to 26-year-olds who have transitioned from foster care so they can further their education."

Supervisor Andersen conveyed her gratitude for the generous donation and significant support for our youth in care who may have participated in ILSP. She noted, "I am deeply committed to uplifting and empowering children and youth in foster care.

Additionally, I have always been a strong advocate for VESTIA, the nonprofit branch of EHSD, which plays a crucial role in making these scholarships available to our exceptional youth."

Former foster youth are encouraged to apply for the "Need to Succeed" scholarship. To do so, they can email their applications, transcripts, and other required supplemental documentation to: vestiainc@gmail.com, and put "Scholarship application" in the subject line. [Visit VESTIA's Foster Youth Scholarships page](#) for more information.

The Vestia scholarship committee will review the applications and verify the status of each applicant as a former foster youth in Contra Costa County. The deadline to apply is April 30th, 2025. Candidates can only apply once during the fiscal year. Application does not guarantee award.

To donate to VESTIA's "Need to Succeed" Scholarship program, [visit the donor page](#).

The Backbone of CFS West

The CFS West Clerical Team gathered at the Yard House for our December Off-Site Unit Meeting. This dedicated team supports five units comprised of social workers, social casework assistants, and social work supervisors across Emergency Response, Dependency Investigation, and Continuing Services.

The clerical staff handles a wide range of essential tasks, including formatting reports for juvenile court, receiving and distributing referrals from the Child Abuse Screening Hotline, conducting Absent Parent Searches, arranging drug testing, ordering birth certificates, preparing the court calendar, organizing case files, ensuring timely mail distribution, maintaining and dispatching County vehicles, managing the unit phone line, staffing reception, providing customer service, and ordering building supplies.

The team also includes a Spanish translator and two Spanish-speaking clerks, enhancing communication and accessibility. The clerical unit truly serves as the backbone of our division, keeping everything running smoothly.



Back Row (L-R): **Damien Williams, Suli Teo, Theresa Nash, William Hodson, Tammy Hill**
Front Row (L-R): **Anna Jackson, Ellen Wienecke, Virginia Paraizo, Cristina Montufar, Paul Erquiza**

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CALLING ALL KARAOKE CONTESTANTS AND FANS \$500 in CASH PRIZES

Wednesday, January 22nd, 5:30 – 9 pm
Retro Junkie, 2112 N. Main St, Walnut Creek

No-host bar. No one under 21 years of age admitted.



CONTESTANTS –
FREE ENTRY!

EMAIL BY JAN 15th TO ENTER

EventsCommittee@ehsd.cccounty.us

INCLUDE

- Name
- Job Title
- Bureau
- Two song titles w/original artist's name



FANS –
BUY TICKETS NOW & CHEER
ON YOUR FAVORITE SINGERS!

\$5/TICKET (MAX 4 TICKETS PER PERSON)

Venmo ticket order to:

@Alan-Wang-82 (Community Relations)

INCLUDE

- Each ticket holder's full name
 - # of tickets in Venmo Description box
- Name and ID required for entry*

QUESTIONS: awang@ehsd.cccounty.us

Kelsey Entwistle Finds New Meaning in Her Career



By Alan Wang, Community Relations, Media Specialist

A year ago, **Kelsey Entwistle** would ask her customers, “Do you want cream or sugar with your coffee?” After several years working at Starbucks, she decided to pursue a new career path doing eligibility work as a Social Service Program Assistant (SSPA). Today, the questions she asks her customers carry more weight: “Do you need life-sustaining benefits like Medi-Cal or CalFresh?”

This transformation reflects not just Kelsey’s personal journey but the broader recognition of the vital work performed by Eligibility Workers. Eligibility Work Month celebrates these professionals, who assess individuals and families to determine their eligibility for critical services such as food assistance, Medi-Cal, and housing support. These dedicated individuals, often employed by government agencies, nonprofits, or healthcare organizations, play a pivotal role in ensuring essential resources reach those in need.

Kelsey’s story is a testament to the importance of this work and the opportunity it provides for growth and purpose. Here are some highlights from her journey:

1. The Spark of Encouragement

Kelsey credits her best friend, **Taranjeet Sokhi**, a social work supervisor at 500 Ellinwood, with inspiring her to apply for the position. Taranjeet described it as a stepping stone into the county system, offering diverse career paths. “She encouraged me to do well and try everything,” Kelsey recalls. Now, working next door to her best friend, she says, “I got super lucky getting placed at Ellinwood!”

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Kelsey Entwistle Finds New Meaning in Her Career

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2. From Training to Mastery

Kelsey's journey began with the Eligibility Worker Training Unit (EWTU), which ran from January 22nd to May 24th. She is currently in On-the-Job Training (OJT) for her role as a Social Service Program Assistant, which will continue until January 21st.

3. Balancing Work and Education

Kelsey notes that the entry-level SSPA role was accessible for her due to the flexibility to supplement relevant work experience with educational requirements. As a student at Arizona State University, she believes her concurrent studies sharpened her ability to absorb new information and excel in her training. Set to graduate in May with a bachelor's degree, she plans to pursue the CFS MSW Title IV-E Internship Program.

4. From Coffee Shops to Community Support

Kelsey's Starbucks career took her through multiple locations, including Brentwood, Pleasanton, Laguna Woods, and Pleasant Hill. Her final store was in Oakley. Reflecting on her past, Kelsey shares, "What Starbucks didn't I work at!" But now, she's brewing a new kind of satisfaction, helping people access vital services and building a career that truly makes a difference.

Kelsey's inspiring journey from barista to SSPA demonstrates the profound impact of choosing a career centered on service. If you'd like to learn more, check out the Eligibility Work Month presentation at the January 21st Board of Supervisors' meeting!



Lisa Odom (left) is one of several experienced workers who have helped guide **Kelsey** (right) to a wealth of resources for her clients. Newly trained SSPA's rely on the institutional knowledge of their veteran co-workers. **CLICK** on the play button to watch Kelsey's video story.

Program Cultivates Super Supervisors

By Lori O'Donnell, Staff Development Supervisor, Internal Operations

Kudos to all who attended the 2024 Supervisors Series. This invaluable seven-session program offered participants the chance to acquire new skills, techniques, and collaborate with peers. Hosted by Brain Squared Solutions, the series provided a platform for professional growth and networking.

Missed out this year? Don't worry! Look forward to the launch of the 2025 Supervisors Series, coming soon! Stay tuned for more opportunities to enhance your supervisory skills and connect with fellow leaders.

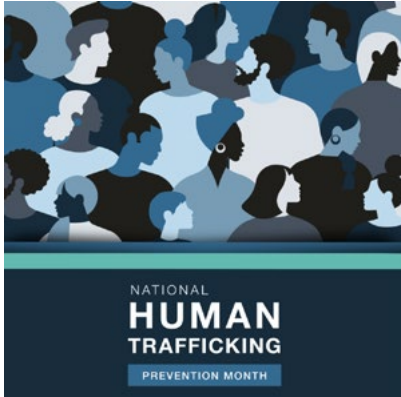


Front Row (L-R): **Evette Thomas, Michelle Collins, Katherine Herzfeldt, Elizabeth Crowe**
Middle Row (L-R): **Pascualito Co, Lan Morris, Pamela Horne, Rose Castaneda, Brittany Melendez, Dayana Garcia, Maria R. Munoz, Ayaba Adams, Erika Ramirez-Orozco, Patricia Ruiz**
Back Row (L-R): **Oscar Estante, Ryan Maddison, Michael Gallego, Guy Walker, Teddrick Harris**
Not Pictured: **Craig Roney, KimLien Pruner, Laura Daviess, Sophia Moreno, Sorina Perez Diaz**

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Can You Recognize Human Trafficking?

By Claudia Gonzalez, Administrative Service Assistant III, Alliance to End Abuse, & Corinna Espino, CSEC Services Program Coordinator, Children & Family Services



Human trafficking is the exploitation of a person for the purpose of compelled sex or labor for adults and minors. **National Human Trafficking Prevention Month** is observed in January to raise awareness and educate the public about this crime.

Models and Principles

Contra Costa County employs several models to guide best practices in addressing human trafficking, all requiring interagency collaboration. These models include:

1. **Harm Reduction:** Trauma-informed approach that supports individuals through the continuum of safety.
2. **Human Rights-Based Approach:** Trafficking is a violation of fundamental rights, emphasizing the protection and agency of all survivors.
3. **Community Safety:** Creates safe communities where everyone can live without fear or violence by engaging key stakeholders.
4. **Public Health:** Prevents trafficking by addressing its root causes and improving environments where people can thrive.

These models share principles like trauma-informed care, strength-based, culturally responsive, survivor-centered practices, to prevent and address human trafficking.

Collaboratives

Contra Costa Human Trafficking Coalition: The Coalition aims to equip residents, professionals, and organizations with the tools to recognize and respond to human trafficking, offering a space for education and advocacy that anyone can join. <https://www.contracostacoalition.org/join>

Human Trafficking Multidisciplinary Team (HT MDT): This team tackles the most complex and high-risk human trafficking cases in the county. The MDT is a robust collective of over 30 agencies coordinating plans to address survivor needs and ensure a comprehensive and compassionate response. To nominate a human trafficking case, email Natalie Oleas at natalie@cocofamilyjustice.org.

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Can You Recognize Human Trafficking?

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What Can I Do if I Suspect Human Trafficking?

The safest approach is to avoid direct intervention with the suspected exploiter. Do not put the victim at risk. Report what you've witnessed and call for help. In emergencies, call 911.

- Report any child, under 18, at risk of or experiencing trafficking, through the 24/7 Child Abuse Hotline at 1 (877) 881-1116.
- Community Violence Solutions 24/7 Crisis Hotline at 1 (800) 670-7273
- CCC Human Trafficking Tip Line at (925) 957-8658.
- National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1 (888) 373-7888.

Wear Blue Day on January 11th!

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is recognized each year on January 11. To help spread the word, post a selfie of you or your team wearing blue on social media/ LinkedIn and tag [#WearBlueDay](#) for the national campaign and [#ContraCostaWearsBlue](#) for our County-based campaign. Anyone can participate, all you need is a piece of blue clothing!

SAVE THE DATE

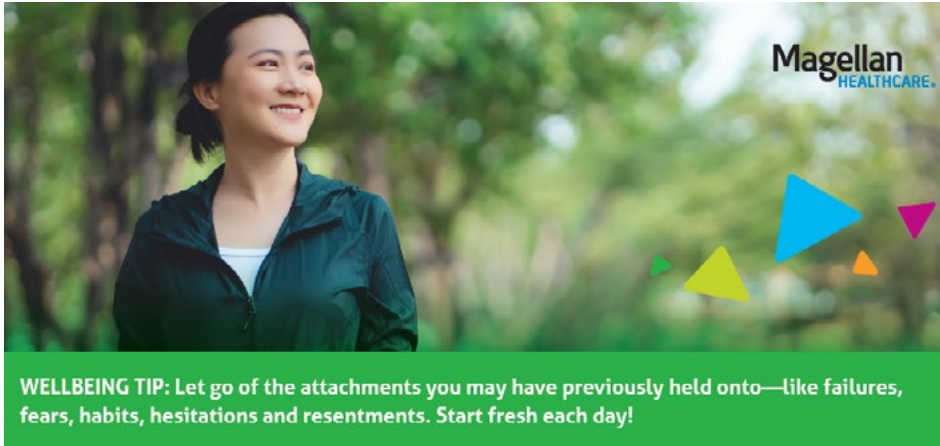
**January 11th is
#WearBlueDay**

Learn more at dhs.gov/bluecampaign

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BLUE CAMPAIGN
One Voice. One Mission. End Human Trafficking.

Reset Your Energy

Contributed by Personnel Services



The kickoff of a new calendar year is a natural time to desire a clean slate in life. Start fresh with these tips.

- **Let go of last year.** As with the old calendar, say goodbye to the attachments you may have previously held onto, like failures, fears, habits, hesitations and resentments.
- **Be open to reinventing yourself.** Start doing what matters to you the most—every day. It could be the same as what mattered yesterday, but it might not. Regardless, insist on being passionate and happy now.
- **Set some healthier boundaries.** To protect and preserve your energy, set boundaries around what you can do. Do not worry about others' reactions if you decline a request.
- **Strengthen your socials.** Connect with positive people who identify with and understand you.
- **Prioritize your health.** Eat a balanced diet and get adequate sleep and exercise.

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

Wellbeing Coaching

Need a little help overcoming a challenge? One of our certified coaches can help you with a variety of life areas such as career, work and educational concerns, relationships, sleep problems, weight management and more. Your coach will help you clarify your goals, identify obstacles that may be holding you back and develop action-based solutions. Visit your member website to learn more.

MagellanAscend

UPCOMING WEBINAR: Recharge Your Mental Wellbeing JANUARY 8

This webinar will:

1. Describe mental wellbeing and why it matters
2. Learn strategies to improve your outlook
3. Practice simple techniques to boost overall positivity

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 childcare. And best of all, access is free!

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

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!

Meet the Heart of CFS Central

By Nicole Banks, Senior Level Clerk, Children & Family Services

Our CFS Central clerical team supports five units, consisting of social workers, social casework assistants, and social work supervisors from Emergency Response, Dependency Investigation, and Continuing Services. Our clerks perform a wide range of duties, including formatting reports for juvenile court, receiving/distributing referrals from the Child Abuse Screening Hotline, performing Absent Parent Searches, coordinating drug testing, ordering birth certificates, preparing the court calendar, making/ordering casefiles, ensuring timely mail delivery, maintaining/dispatching county vehicles, as well as answering the unit phone line, manning reception, providing customer service, and ordering building supplies. Our team includes a Spanish translator as well as two Spanish-speaking clerks. The clerical unit is truly the glue that holds our division together. We'd like to recognize the following individuals as Customer Service Champions:



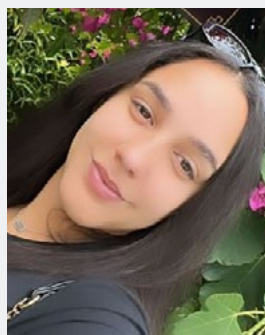
Cindy Conklin, Clerk-Specialist Level, became a Lead in March of 2023, and she has been doing a great job helping our team by motivating us all to become stronger clerks. She is an energetic, thoughtful,

problem solver with a willingness to complete all assignments on time. Cindy's positive attitude and growth over the past few years has been amazing.



Jacquie Parrish, Clerk-Specialist Level, is a Children Family Services Lead in Admin. Without her, our world would crumble. She is very attentive, positive and always gets the job done. We all come to Jacquie for answers.

She understands her position down to the tee, is very helpful and never turns away anyone who needs help.



Aryanna Jefferson, Clerk-Senior Level, recently took over managing linkages in the CFS Central location. She's productive, demonstrates excellent teamwork, and her dedication is truly inspiring. Aryanna

embodies our value of respect. She treats every team member with kindness and consideration, fostering a positive work environment for us all.

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Customer Service Champions

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Senior Level Clerk, **Sholeh Boushehri**, is a strong clerk who works in CFS central location. Her efforts and hard work don't go unnoticed. Sholeh is a role model for the team, and her dedication to excellence influences everyone around her to strive for excellence.

Thank you, Cindy, Jacquie, Aryanna, and Sholeh, for being the glue that keeps us together!



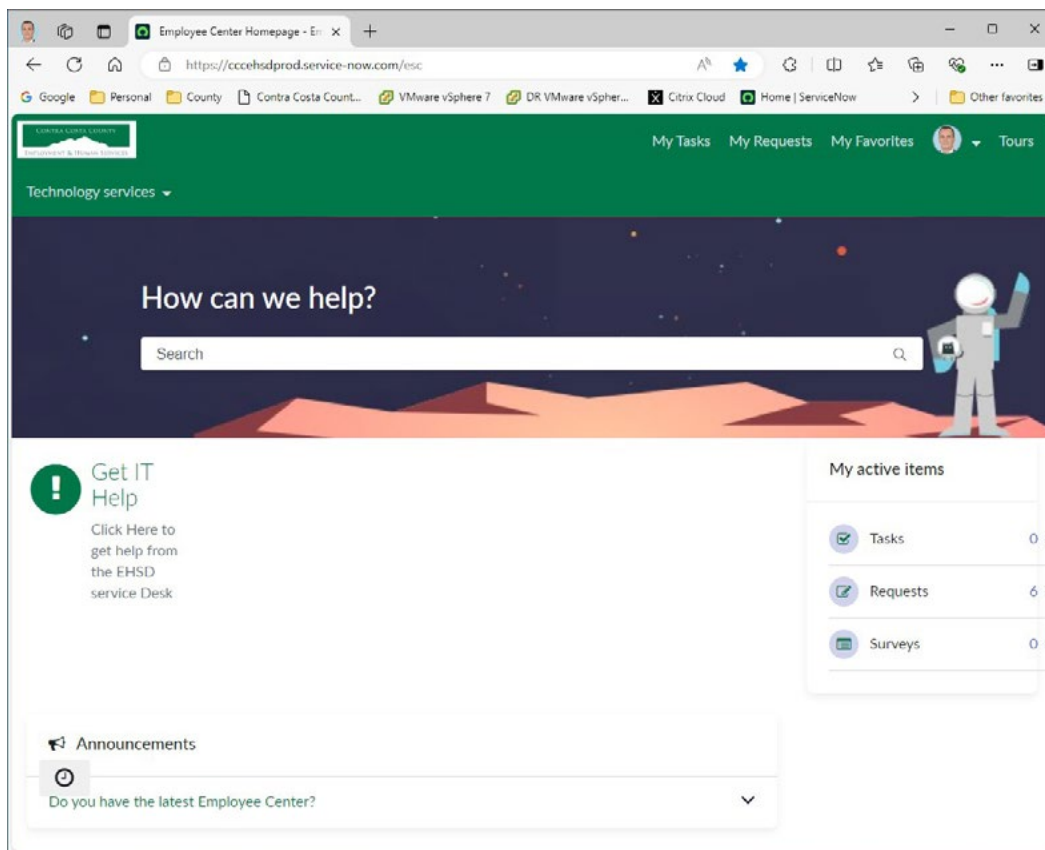
Get Ready! EHSD IT Help Desk Introduces a Ticketing Portal

By Kathleen Gaughen, Project Manager, Information Systems

This month, EHSD IT Help Desk will unveil its ticketing portal where you will be able to request software and hardware online. You will also use the portal to follow up on your requests.

No need to make a phone call or complete a form. You just click the link, make your request, and hit send.

More details to come in a STARS announcement and via SMART training information.



Outreach Roundup

THU, NOV 21: “Richmond Works” 2024 Annual Career Fair

Despite the rain, there was a large turnout at this very successful event. Navigators **Sandra Figueroa** and **Susan Padan** provided resources and information to over 200 attendees. In addition to outreach, they were able to network and exchange information with vendors from several organizations including BART, Employment Development Department (EDD), East Bay MUD, El Timpano, Contra Costa County Family Support Services, Richmond Promise, Rubicon, San Francisco International Airport, Second Chances, West Contra Costa Adult Education, Youth Works, and many others.



Sandra Figueroa and Susan Padan

TUE, DEC 3: “Black Infant Health Holiday Health Fair” at the Pleasant Hill Community Center

Navigators **Cecilia Felan** and **Al Gibson** participated in this event, dedicated to supporting African American women who are expecting or currently parenting young children. The festive atmosphere with food, music, and raffle prizes provided a welcoming space for families to access crucial health and wellness resources while celebrating the holiday season.



Al Gibson and Cecilia Felan

Cecilia and Al were on hand assisting attendees with enrolling in vital programs like CalWORKS, CalFresh, and MediCal, helping them to access financial and medical support. Additionally, they offered information for individuals seeking low-income housing and assistance with overdue utility bills, including PG&E. Their efforts ensured that families attending the event obtained tools and information to improve their well-being and financial stability.



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Outreach Roundup *Continued from previous page*

SUN, DEC 15: “Hijas Del Campo Fiesta Navidena” at G&S Farms in Brentwood

On December 15, Contra Costa County Navigators **Sandra Figueroa** and **Casey Costa** braved the cold to support the nonprofit Hijas Del Campo at their festive “Feliz Navidad” Event. Dedicated to uplifting farmworker families, the event brought warmth and joy through the distribution of blankets, toys, hot chocolate and hot meals, along with a visit from Santa to spread holiday cheer. Sandra and Casey also provided valuable resources to attendees, exemplifying their commitment to community service and ensuring that those in need felt cared for during the holiday season.



Sandra Figueroa and Casey Costa

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EHSD Holiday Food Fight Drawing – Winners!



Thank you to all who donated to the Holiday Food Fight and participated in the EHSD Drawing.

Our EHSD Drawing Winners are:

- **Lori DiMercurio**, WFS - SSPA at 1650 Cavallo, Antioch - \$50 Target gift card
- **Rodney Dixon**, Admin. - IT Info Systems Supervisor at 300 Ellinwood, PH - \$50 Safeway gift card
- **Kathy Ames, Admin.** - Clerical Supervisor at 40 Douglas, Martinez - \$50 Southwest Airlines gift card
- **Donyale Thornton**, WFS - Social Work Supervisor 1 at 151 Linus Pauling, Hercules - \$50 Trader Joe's gift card
- **Renee Giometti**, Admin. - Division Manager at 40 Douglas, Martinez - \$50 Target gift card
- **Frances Banda**, CFS - Social Worker III at 500 Ellinwood, PH - \$50 Fandango gift card with movie fun pack

The Holiday Food Fight returns at the end of 2025 with another chance to support Contra Costa families (plus another chance to win a prize!).

We will share the County's overall fundraising results as soon as available.

EHSD, we appreciate your generosity!



We Care...You Care

Submitted by Nicole Banks, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS Central Operations

In our department, handling difficult clients is never easy, but these two ladies do it with grace and professionalism.

I nominate **Ursula Jimenez**, Clerk-Senior Level, and **Arielle Cole**, Clerk-Senior Level, for We Care That You Care recognition, and express my appreciation for all that they both do to help keep our office running smoothly.



Ursula is responsive and respectful to our clients, welcoming each with a warm smile and great attitude, ready to help them. She speaks very calmly to clients although it can be overwhelming at times, and she remains positive and professional. Ursula practices ethical behavior though being honest, trustworthy, and dependable. She is also embraces change and develops new ideas or approaches to our workplace. Ursula also gives compliments and sends messages of appreciation to her coworkers, always promoting organizational excellence.



Arielle is very helpful and willing to teach how reception and admin works. She always answers the phone with the intention of helping the individual on the line, no matter the situation. Her personal interaction are always with a smile and ready to help, a true example of delivering exceptional customer experience. Arielle is very polite and talks to customers who might be overwhelmed in a way that eases their minds. She give children color pages and helps the clients feel better. Arielle is also trustworthy, always follows rules and regulations, is there for other team members, and helps create a positive work environment.

Ursula and Arielle, your hard work, expertise, and positive attitudes are invaluable to our team, and we are lucky to have you as our administrative professionals.

Thank you for everything you do.

CONTRACOSTA
COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT &
HUMAN SERVICES

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: [We Care... You Care Guidelines](#)

We Care nomination form: [We Care... You Care Nomination Form](#)



“...I hope you will have a wonderful year, that you’ll dream dangerously and outrageously, that you’ll make something that didn’t exist before you made it, that you will be loved and that you will be liked, and that you will have people to love and to like in return. And, most importantly (because I think there should be more kindness and more wisdom in the world right now), that you will, when you need to be, be wise, and that you will always be kind.”

– Neil Giaman

SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

35 YEARS

Jacquie Foust, Eligibility Work Supervisor, Internal Operations
Karyn B Kuppe, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

30 YEARS

Holliedayle Hertweck, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS
Michelle Milum, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Cassandra Youngblood, ASA III, Information & Systems

25 YEARS

Kelly Ackelbein, Clerk-Specialist Level, Information & Systems
Deborah Drake (Nov. 2024), Comprehensive Svcs Assistant Manager, CSB
Jessica Johnson, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Carmen Rivera, Social Casework Assistant, CFS
Georgette Shipe, Social Worker III, CFS
Edyth Williams, Social Worker III, CFS

20 YEARS

Lloyd Amog, Workforce Svcs Specialist, WFS
Genise Anderson-Long, Social Worker, WFS
Pleshette Brown, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Ulda A Ibarra, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB
Julie Larsson, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Felicia Shepherd-Secrease, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

15 YEARS

Reina De La Rosa, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Luna Foster, Soc Svc Program Assistant, CSB
Shana Griffin, Soc Svc Staff Dev Specialist, WFS
Natalie Guerra, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Paula Jimenez, Social Work Supervisor I, WFS
Angela Lualhati, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

10 YEARS

Lorieann Loza, Clerk-Specialist Level, CFS
Yesenia Parra, Social Worker III, CFS
Fabiola Ribeiro, Comprehensive Svcs Asst Mgr-Pr, CSB
Detrona Stith, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Jaclyn Thrower, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Trakema Williams, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

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SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

Continued from previous page

NEW EMPLOYEES

Marcó Arreola, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Erin Brigance, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Aisha Burnett, Personnel Technician, Admin Internal Operations
Laura Calica, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Justin Lidete, ASA III, CSB
Temia Holliday-Archie, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Allison Joseph, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Victoria Kennedy, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Rachel Madrid, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Jaspreet Minhas, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Crystal Morales, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Danette Michelle Palladino, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

Julie Penezic, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Lillia Refes, Master Teacher, CSB
DaMali Ross, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Jazmin Ruvalcaba, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Shafiq Sahar, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Lida Sheerzad, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Irizjoy Sims, Clerk-Experienced Level, CFS
Shirley Slaton, Clerk-Experienced Level, CFS
Sesen Smith, Social Worker, WFS
Dana Williams, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Grenita Young, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

RETIREES

Shawn Stewart, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Yolanda Patterson, Public Auth Benefits Clerk Sup, CFS
Cindy Vogl, EHS Division Manager, 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.**

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

Building Brighter Futures Together

SPREAD THE WORD

January 2025

- ELIGIBILITY WORK MONTH
- HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH
- STALKING AWARENESS MONTH
- JANUARY 1 – New Year’s Day (Holiday)
- JANUARY 8 – [Recharge Your Mental Wellbeing webinar](#)
- JANUARY 9 – National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
- JANUARY 11 – Wear Blue for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day
- JANUARY 12 – National Youth Day
- JANUARY 15 – Entries due for EHS’s Got Talent
- JANUARY 18 – Stalking Awareness Day of Action
- JANUARY 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Holiday)
- JANUARY 20 – Inauguration Day
- JANUARY 21 – 47th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ceremony (BOS Chambers in Martinez)
- JANUARY 22 – EHS’s Got Talent Karaoke Event (Retro Junkie, Walnut Creek)
- JANUARY 29 – Lunar New Year (Year of the Snake)



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

January 16 • 4 to 6 p.m.

February 6 or 20 • 4 to 6 p.m.

March 6 or 20 • 4 to 6 p.m.

February 2025

- BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH
- FEBRUARY 1 – National Freedom Day
- FEBRUARY 2 – Groundhog Day
- FEBRUARY 7 – National Wear Red Day
- FEBRUARY 14 – Valentine’s Day
- FEBRUARY 17 – Presidents’ Day (Holiday)
- FEBRUARY 19 – EHS Years of Service Event
- FEBRUARY 28 – Linus Pauling Day
- FEBRUARY 28 – Ramadan begins in the evening



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 21

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

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



Celebrating Mentees (story pg. 2) – Back Row (L-R): Daniel Busch, Raquel Santana-Pizana, Mary McFarland, Rose Castaneda. Front Row (L-R): Evette Thomas, Maria R. Munoz, Gigi Carruth, Darnell Jones. Not pictured: Rita Loza, Ryan Madison, KimLien Pruner

February 2025 issue – submissions due Tuesday, January 21, 2025

We appreciate you closely following our [Submission Guidelines](#) to ensure that your news and photos appear in *Headlines*.