

Headlines

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ehsd.org

Battlefront to Homefront, Mariano Vazquez Finds Peace

**Praise for
CalFresh Service**

**César Chávez Legacy
Lives on in Youth**

**Recognizing Customer Service Champions
Chantia Wade and Kimberley Williams**



EHSD Shines in CalFresh Evaluation

By Rosalyn Guillory and Nanci Powers, Workforce Services Specialists

EHSD achieved outstanding results in its Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 CalFresh Management Evaluation (ME) Review, receiving high praise for its dedication to program integrity



and exceptional customer service. The evaluation, conducted from November 4–8, included in-person visits to the Hercules and Pleasant Hill offices and a virtual review at the Medi-Cal Service Center (MCSC) East.

Mandated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) performs these annual evaluations in large counties to ensure compliance with essential program standards. This year, the assessment emphasized Payment Accuracy, Corrective Action Assessment, Program Access, and Application Processing Timeliness.

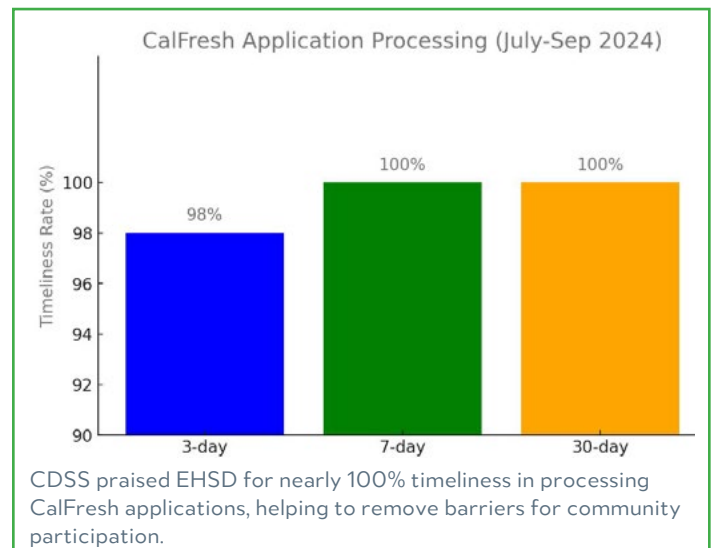
CDSS applauded EHSD for its remarkable performance, recognizing the staff's commitment to providing high-quality service and expanding access to CalFresh benefits. Between July and September 2024, Contra Costa County exhibited impressive timeliness in processing applications, maintaining nearly perfect rates. Despite an 85% increase in the county's CalFresh caseload—adding over 27,935 cases from September 2019 to September 2024—EHSD consistently kept its timeliness rate above 90%.

The review also highlighted EHSD's strong adherence to key regulatory certification components, including:

- ✓ **Confidentiality**
- ✓ **Rights and Responsibilities** (e.g., reporting lottery or gambling winnings)
- ✓ **SAR 7 Compliance**, with verbal and written guidance, sample forms, and assistance resources
- ✓ **Voter Registration**

This achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of EHSD's CalFresh team, comprising SSPAs, Supervisors, Workforce Services Specialists, Division Managers, Building Managers, and Clerical & Reception Staff, all of whom played a vital role in ensuring a seamless review process.

A special thank you goes to **Victoria Virgen**, CalFresh Program Analyst, for her exceptional coordination, collaboration, and leadership with EHSD Operations, Systems, Staff Development, and CDSS throughout the evaluation.



Contra Costa Celebrates 20 Years of Giving

Contributed by Heather Stone, Development Manager, Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

The 2024 Counties Care Holiday Food Fight has officially wrapped up, and we are proud to celebrate Contra Costa County's incredible achievement as the recipient of the "World Peas: 2nd Place Runner-Up" award! This recognition reflects your steadfast commitment to fighting hunger and supporting your community through two decades of generosity.

Since first joining this friendly fundraising competition in 2004, Contra Costa County has raised an astounding \$1,768,032.86 to support the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. This year alone, county employees, residents, and supporters contributed \$54,831.87, playing a vital role in the 2024 campaign's total of \$115,845.75.

A heartfelt thank you to Contra Costa County's Board of Supervisors, county employees, and Friends of the County for your incredible dedication. This year, employees donated an average of \$6.37 per person, directly helping individuals and families struggling with food insecurity.

Your generosity has a profound impact. Across Contra Costa and Solano counties, 260 local nonprofit agencies—including food pantries, after-school programs, soup kitchens, and family resource centers—depend on your support to provide nutritious meals year-round. Because of you, thousands of people facing hunger will find relief and hope.

Raising over \$1.7 million in 20 years is an extraordinary achievement. It speaks volumes about compassion, dedication, and giving spirit of Contra Costa County. We celebrate this milestone with you and look forward to continuing this legacy of generosity in the years ahead.

Thank you, Contra Costa County, for making a difference!

Special thanks to our EHSD staff members who raised \$4,347.77 during the 2024 Holiday Food Fight. We ranked 5th out of the 23 teams on the leaderboard—another testament to the power of teamwork and generosity!



EHSD Leaders Unite with Purpose

By Tracey Lee, Staff Development Division Manager

For the first time since the pandemic, the EHSD Leadership team came together in person to connect, communicate, and collaborate—reinforcing our commitment to guiding staff effectively in the coming fiscal year and beyond.

Kicking off this new quarterly event, **Director Marla Stuart** shared her vision for leadership, emphasizing the importance of supporting, guiding, and serving those we lead. She also provided



updates on potential federal-level changes that may impact our work, ensuring leaders stay informed and prepared for the road ahead.

Chief Deputy Director **Anissa Basoco-Villarreal** and EHSD Director **Marla Stuart** led the all-morning Leadership Team Meeting on March 12th

To foster connections, participants engaged in a speed networking activity, followed by a deep dive into the findings of the 2024 EHSD Staff

Survey. Each bureau analyzed key insights and collaboratively developed strategies to drive growth in areas identified for improvement—demonstrating a collective commitment to continuous enhancement. The survey results will be shared with the department in the coming weeks.

Adding to the day's learning, Terry Fulton from Value Centered Solutions led an engaging session on DiSC communication styles, equipping leaders with tools to better understand and meet the diverse needs of their teams. This interactive workshop empowered attendees to go beyond managing—to truly lead with intention and excellence.

This first-of-its-kind quarterly gathering marks an exciting step forward for EHSD leadership. With renewed connections, shared strategies, and a deeper understanding of communication, we are poised to lead our teams with clarity, confidence, and purpose in the months ahead.

EHSD's Leadership Team, including directors and division managers, gathered at the Pleasant Hill Community Center for the first time since the pandemic.



Outreach Roundup



SAT, MAR 15:

Navigators **Joanna Thieme** and **Casey Costa** provided crucial assistance to clients at the Hijas Del Campo Immigration Forum in Byron. They connected attendees with essential resources, offering guidance on legal aid, housing support, and community services. Their dedication helped ensure that individuals and families received the information and assistance they needed to navigate the complexities of the immigration process.

THU, MAR 20:

Navigator **Sandra Figueroa** participated in the Richmond High School Open House to offer essential information about the resources accessible to students and their families. The event welcomed both students and their families, featuring a College and Career Presentation alongside a Student Work Showcase focusing on Academics.



Joanna Thieme and **Casey Costa** provided vital support at the Hijas Del Campo Immigration Forum, helping attendees access crucial resources.

*"Alone, we can
do so little;
together, we can
do so much."*

— Helen Keller

Audience Engagement Boost on *EHSD Live!*

By Alan Wang, Community Relations, Media Specialist



Employees tuned in and showed up to one of the most interactive and engaging EHSD Live! shows ever. On March 27th, the quarterly Zoom webinar featured eight Watch Parties from around the county. The Community Relations team sent popcorn to each viewing party and brought up their camera shot during the live show. Some of the Watch Party viewers were dressed in party hats and boas, while others waved balloons and jumped up and down in front of the camera.

EHSD Live! also expanded its Trivia Challenge segment with more trivia questions and more \$25 gift cards to give away. You can watch a recording of the show by CLICKING on this [link](#). The next EHSD Live! will be on May 15th. See you there.

Trivia Contest \$25 Gift Card Winners

- **Danette Palladino**, SSPA, WFS
- **Jose Merlos**, Departmental HR Analyst II, Admin
- **Anna Adriano**, Departmental HR Analyst II, Admin

WATCH PARTY
Photos next page →

EHSD Live! WATCH PARTY



151 Linus Pauling, Hercules: Jazmin Ruvalcaba, Crystal Morales, Jaspreet Minhas, Oscar J Estante, Titayna Patrick, Manjeet Kaur, Lida Sheerzad, Margo Arreola, Da'Mali Ross



500 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill
(L-R): Tim Brown, Cindy Conklin, Jacquie Parrish, A'Dee'Sha Williams, and Debbie Penovich, (not pictured)



We are Business Systems!
300 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill: Jocelyn Ortiz, Htejany Fernandez, Mehtab Badh, Eduard Castro, Byron Devera, Ritche Martija



1650 Cavallo Rd, Anitech - (Rear L-R): Natalie Guerra, Renita Johnson, Alicia Barrera (Front L-R): Tanya Castro, Giselle McNeill, Jennifer Miller



War Vet Finds Peace at EHSD

Unexpected reunion with writer after 15 Years

By Alan Wang, Community Relations, Media Specialist

As an In-Home Support Services (IHSS) Social Worker, **Mariano Vazquez** knocks on doors with empathy and care. But few know that, years ago, he specialized in kicking them down. In 2007, he was a battle-hardened U.S. Marine Corporal, wielding an M249 SAW machine gun with the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division. “I did over a hundred missions in Iraq,” says Mariano. “That was a very different time in my life.”

Mariano’s journey has taken him from the Iraqi desert to a jail cell and back out as a civilian dedicated to serving others. Now based at 4545 Delta Fair Boulevard, his mission is to assist vulnerable clients by connecting them with caregivers and vital services. “These people have literally nobody—no family, no friends. Some of them are very sick and all alone,” he says.

He understands their struggles firsthand. Fresh out of an adrenaline-charged environment of death and destruction, Mariano says he was 20 years old and self-medicating with alcohol when he was arrested and charged with Driving Under the Influence. “Imagine being in that environment during your early adulthood and suddenly being told, ‘You’re out.’”

Recognizing the crisis of PTSD among veterans, the justice system established special courts to provide support

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Mariano Vazquez in Ramadi (2007), Iraq providing security along the Euphrates River.

War Vet Finds Peace at EHSD

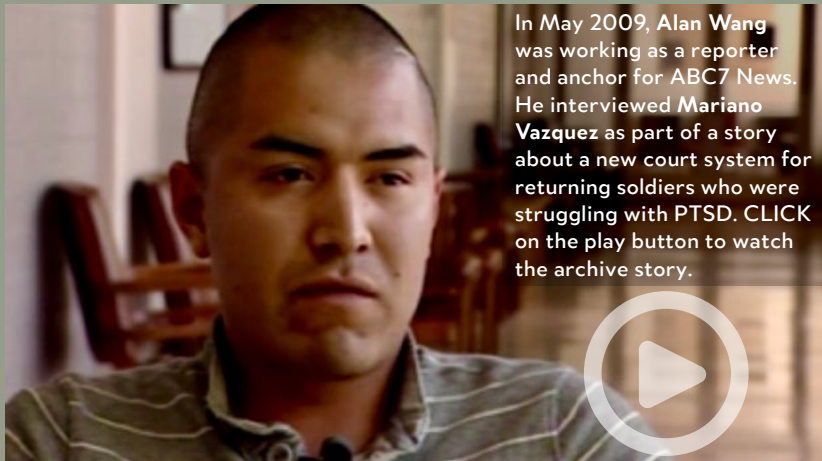
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rather than punishment. At the time, I was a reporter and anchor for ABC7 News in San Francisco, covering Mariano's story as he walked out of the courthouse. To my surprise, he openly shared his struggles, making for a powerful interview.

Fifteen years later, our paths crossed again when a Division Manager suggested I profile an outstanding social worker for National Social Work Month. CLICK the play button to watch the moment Mariano and I recognized each other.



An unanticipated reunion. IHSS Social Worker, **Mariano Vazquez** and Community Relations Media Specialist, **Alan Wang**, reunite more than 15 years after Alan interviewed Mariano as a struggling war vet. CLICK on the play button to see the moment they recognized each other after Alan was assigned to interview one of EHSD's exemplary social workers.



In May 2009, Alan Wang was working as a reporter and anchor for ABC7 News. He interviewed **Mariano Vazquez** as part of a story about a new court system for returning soldiers who were struggling with PTSD. CLICK on the play button to watch the archive story.

AMERICAN VETS STILL STRUGGLING

A Harvard Medical School study shows among all veterans, there are 20 suicides a day, and between 2015 and 2020 there was about a 40 percent increase in suicides among active-duty service members. Thirty thousand veterans have died by suicide in just the Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom conflicts over 20 years. Since 9/11, there have been more than 125,000 deaths by suicide of all-era veterans.



Mariano Vazquez returned home from the Iraq War to start a family and job with EHSD. Mariano with daughters Valentina (3-years old) and Vanessa (15-years old).



With family; Miguel (brother), father (Gaudencio), mother (Yolanda) and Vanessa (daughter).

“Future of Work” Takes Focus at CalGov HR Conference

The EHSD Personnel team sent three staff members—**Muriel Clemente**, Departmental HR Supervisor, along with **Anna Adriano** and **Jennifer Cendejas**, both Departmental HR Analyst II—to the CalGov HR Conference in Rohnert Park.

This year’s event focused on “The Future of Work!” During the three-day conference, speakers highlighted how technology and federal policy changes are reshaping the HR landscape. With rapid changes impacting how HR and Personnel serve employees, team members must stay informed about legislative updates. All three attendees found networking with fellow HR professionals invaluable, with a key discussion topic being the creative use of AI in HR settings and organizations. We look forward to sharing more details with the Executive Team and the department!



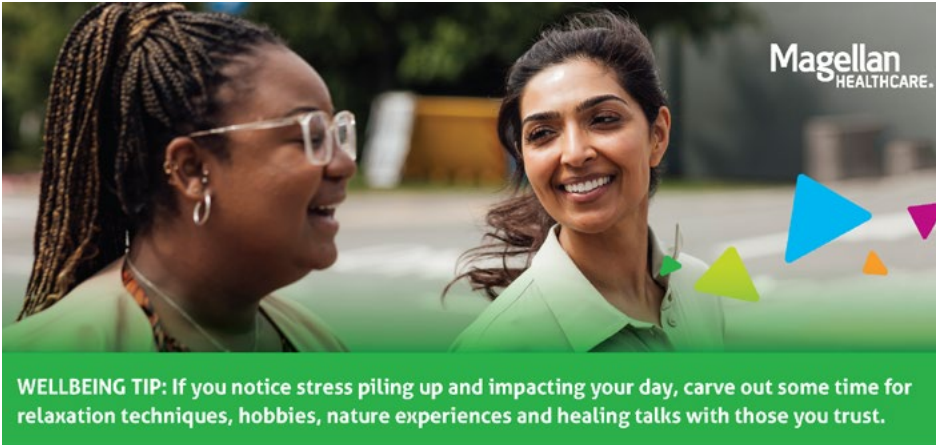
L to R: **Jennifer Cendejas**, **Anna Adriano**, and **Muriel Clemente**. Anna is displaying the drawing her partner from another agency completed during a team building activity.

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*

Be a Mental Health Ally

MagellanAscend

Contributed by Personnel Services



WELLBEING TIP: If you notice stress piling up and impacting your day, carve out some time for relaxation techniques, hobbies, nature experiences and healing talks with those you trust.

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

- **Build awareness.** A lack of understanding can lead to less compassion for those struggling with mental health or substance use. Educating yourself is the first step toward genuine support.
- **Start the conversation.** A simple question like, “I noticed you’ve been having a hard time lately; what can I do to help?” can create a safe space for someone to share their feelings.
- **Value your role.** By encouraging those in need to seek care, you contribute to breaking down stigma and building a culture of understanding and support
- **Share your story; reduce isolation.** Sharing your own experiences with mental health challenges, whether ongoing or temporary, can help reduce the sense of isolation others may feel.

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.

UPCOMING WEBINAR:

Support Loved ones with Mental Health Concerns – APRIL 9

This webinar will:

1. Recognize common signs of mental health concerns
2. Learn tips to provide meaningful support to loved ones
3. Discover valuable resources

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.](#)

Action and Awareness: Standing Against Sexual Assault

By Claudia Gonzalez, Administrative Services Assistant III, Alliance to End Abuse

This April, we recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) under the powerful theme: *“Together We Act, United We Change.”* This theme serves as a reminder that preventing sexual violence and supporting survivors is a shared responsibility—one that begins with everyday actions.

Sexual violence affects people from all backgrounds, yet it is often misunderstood or overlooked. Prevention isn’t just about policy changes; it starts with calling out harmful jokes, challenging outdated beliefs, and fostering environments where survivors feel safe, heard, and supported.

Supporting survivors is essential. Many hesitate to come forward due to fear of judgment or uncertainty about where to turn. By listening without judgment, believing survivors, and sharing resources, we help break the silence and reduce stigma. Even small acts of kindness—offering support, sharing information, or advocating for change—can make a significant impact.

It’s also important to acknowledge that sexual violence does not affect all communities equally.

Marginalized groups, including people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with disabilities, often face greater risks and more barriers to justice. Advocating for inclusive, survivor-centered solutions is key to meaningful change.

How can you make a difference?

- Start conversations about consent, respect, and survivor support.
- Educate yourself and others about the realities of sexual violence.
- Speak up when you witness harmful behavior.
- Support local organizations working to end sexual violence.

Change happens when we come together—as individuals, communities, and workplaces—to create a culture of safety, respect, and accountability.

Let’s make this month count. If you’re looking for resources or ways to get involved, visit [Community Violence Solutions](#), the [Family Justice Center](#), or the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center \(NSVRC\)](#).

Together, we can build a future where everyone is safe and respected.



Honoring César Chávez: 31st Annual Contra Costa Event

By Christine Anuszkiewicz, Community Relations/Media

On April 1st, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors hosted the 31st Annual César E. Chávez Commemorative Celebration, honoring Chávez's enduring legacy of justice, community, and public service. The event took place at 11 a.m. in the Board Chambers in Martinez and was broadcast live on Contra Costa Television and the County website.

The event also honored the 2025 Youth Hall of Fame Awardees—exceptional students whose contributions embody Chávez's values of resilience, leadership, and community service.



Photo from Glenn Kimball, Contra Costa County Office of Communications & Media

This year's theme, *His Legacy, Our Time – Su Legado, Nuestro Tiempo*, highlighted the lasting impact of Chávez's mission and its relevance for today's changemakers. The celebration featured live performances by Salseros with Arthur Murray Dance Studios and keynote speeches from two distinguished leaders: Armando Quintero, Director of California's Department of Parks and Recreation, and Douglas Lezameta, CEO of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Contra Costa County.

High School Honorees:

- **Volunteerism:** Megan Reese Dowdy, Heritage High
- **Teamwork:** Christophe Davis, Miramonte High
- **Perseverance:** Kaelyn Matthis, Pinole High
- **Leadership & Civic Engagement:** Karlina J. Meyer, Carondelet High
- **Good Samaritan:** Arianna Shirin Bustamante, Campolindo High
- **Innovation & Empowerment:** Johann Webber, Stanford University Online High

Middle School Rising Stars:

- **Volunteerism:** Hope Huffmaster, Knightsen Elementary
- **Perseverance:** Maddox Lindsey-Pedraza, Thomas Gaines Virtual Academy
- **Innovation & Empowerment:** Aalia Bachar, Knightsen Elementary

This uplifting celebration honored both past and future generations of leaders, reinforcing that every act of service contributes to a better tomorrow.

To learn more about the César E. Chávez Ceremony, visit [Contra Costa County's website](https://www.contracostacounty.gov/31st-Annual-Cesar-E-Chavez-Commemorative-Celebration).

LET US HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN FINDING YOUR NEXT EMPLOYMENT OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING!

WORKFORCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY ACT (W.I.O.A)

AMERICA'S JOB CENTER OF CALIFORNIA CONCORD

📍 4071 Port Chicago Hwy, Suite 250, Concord, CA 94520

What is WIOA?

The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a federally-funded program that is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training & supportive services to be successful in the job market. The program offers **FREE** comprehensive range of career services.

Services Offered:



- Networking Opportunities
- Employment Leads
- On-Site Recruitment
- Resume/Cover Letter Assistance



- Mock Interviews
- Job Search Workshops
- Community Resources



- Computer Access
- Referral to Support Services
- Individual Career Counseling
- Potential Training Funds up to \$5,000

Who Qualifies?

- Unemployed or Underemployed Adult
- Veterans and Eligible Spouses
- Basic Skills Deficient
- Justice-Involved Individuals or Returning Residents
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Recipients of Public Assistance/ Low Income
- English Language Learners/Refugees

America's Job Center of California (AJCC) WIOA Title I financially assisted programs or activities are an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.



Workforce
Development Board
Contra Costa County



415-456-7890

For More Information

Contact

Rita Hidalgo

Workforce Navigator

ritah@rubiconprograms.org

(925) 294-0410

Marissa Sison

Site Coordinator

concordajcc@rubiconprograms.org

(925) 671-4500

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8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Computer Access only until 4:45 PM

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Preventing Abuse, Empowering Families: EHSD & CAPC

By Christine Anuszkiewicz, Community Relations/Media

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Contra Costa County is reaffirming its commitment to keeping children safe by supporting families before a crisis occurs. Through a long-standing partnership

between the Employment & Human Services Department (EHSD) and the Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC), families across the county are receiving the support they need to stay strong and connected.

Founded over 35 years ago, CAPC is a leading nonprofit dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. In partnership with Children & Family Services (CFS), CAPC works to reduce risk factors and build protective ones—like resilience, connection, and parenting knowledge—through education, home visits, and community outreach.



CPAC Celebrates 20 years of service for their Parent Partner Program at 500 Ellinwood.

Front Row: Joanie Morrow, Carol Carrillo, Priya Moorkoth-Phelps, Lorena Tobar

Back Row: Robert Martinez, Shafica Davis, Dorothy Lewis, Melissa Stamps, Meshelle Flittie, Shiley Perez, Ashley Lacey-Ontiveros and Samuel Gray.

“Preventing abuse starts with strengthening families. Our partnership with EHSD makes this possible.”

— Carol Carrillo, Executive Director, Child Abuse Prevention Council

A cornerstone of this collaboration is the Parent Partner Program, led by Lorena Tobar, which

matches parents currently navigating the child welfare system with mentors who have lived experience. These Parent Partners have walked a similar path and are now thriving with their reunified families. “They offer real support, emotional guidance, and hope,” Tobar said. “It makes all the difference.”

Tobar shared the inspiring story of a father who, despite many challenges, never gave up on reuniting with his son. He learned parenting

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Preventing Abuse, Empowering Families: EHSD & CAPC *Continued from previous page*

skills from caregivers, saved on gas by riding a motorcycle to visits, and maintained consistent contact with his support team. With help from CAPC's Special Needs Fund, he overcame barriers and is now his son's sole caregiver.

According to the 2023 Safe & Sound report, the economic cost of abuse and neglect in Contra Costa County totaled \$229 million last year. These costs include healthcare, lost productivity, education, and criminal justice. Prevention isn't just the right thing to do—it's also a smart investment.

"Preventing abuse starts with strengthening families," said Carol Carrillo, CAPC's Executive Director. "Our partnership with EHSD makes this possible."

Last year, CFS responded to nearly 20,000 calls to the CPS hotline and maintained over 1,300 open cases. With timely investigations and community collaboration, the goal is to keep children safe while helping families heal and reunite.

EHSD staff are encouraged to refer families to CAPC for resources and support. To learn more, visit capc-coco.org.

*Together, we're
creating a safer,
more supportive
Contra Costa for
every child.*



By the Numbers: Child Abuse Prevention in Contra Costa County

**\$229
MILLION** Total economic impact of child abuse and neglect in Contra Costa (2023)

19,719 Calls received by the Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline in FY 2023–24

1,302 Open child welfare cases

**35+
YEARS** CAPC has served Contra Costa families

1 Motorcycle-riding dad who never missed a visit on his journey to reunify with his son

Source: 2023 Safe & Sound Report, EHSD and CAPC data (2024 Safe & Sound report is not available until mid-April.)

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!

Exceeding Expectations

Going the Extra Mile: Chantia Wade's Dedication to Customer Service

By Dana Wargo,
Workforce Services
Specialist

Chantia Wade, Social Service Program Assistant, is a shining example of dedication, reliability, and exceptional customer service. She consistently steps up when needed, ensuring that clients receive timely and critical support.



Recently, a prerelease Medi-Cal application arrived late on a Friday afternoon—just before the weekend. The applicant, an inmate set for release on Monday, urgently needed access to medication and treatment. Without hesitation, Chantia took immediate action, going above and beyond to ensure the customer's benefits were in place upon release. Thanks to her swift response and willingness to take on extra work, the individual could access the care they needed without delay.

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Recognizing Kimberley Williams

By Farhad Ziaee, Eligibility Work Supervisor

Kimberley Williams deserves recognition for her outstanding contributions to our team. As a dedicated Social Services Program Assistant (SSPA) who joined the STEP-UP/ WPR Unit in 2019, Kimberley has consistently exceeded expectations, making a significant impact on both client satisfaction and team growth.



Over the past several months, Kimberley has handled all assigned CalWORKs/WTW WPR state case reviews with unwavering dedication, despite staffing shortages. Her ability to ensure quality assurance during challenging times is truly commendable.

Kimberley's exceptional commitment to supporting our clients is reflected in her ability to listen, understand, and address their needs.

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Customer Service Champions

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Chantia Wade

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Chantia's expertise in CalSAWS allows her to assist colleagues with complex cases and troubleshooting, making her an invaluable resource within her unit. With ten years of dedicated service to the county, she continues to exemplify EHSD's commitment to community support. Her willingness to go the extra mile makes a meaningful impact on both her coworkers and the individuals she serves.

Thank you, Chantia, for your outstanding dedication and service!

Kimberley Williams

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Her efforts have strengthened relationships and upheld our organization's high standards.

Additionally, Kimberley's willingness to help new SSPAs learn our processes is truly inspiring. Her patience, guidance, and readiness to share knowledge have created a welcoming and supportive environment for newcomers.

We are truly fortunate to have Kimberley Williams on our team. Her positivity, professionalism, and teamwork set a remarkable example for all. Thank you for your hard work and dedication—your efforts do not go unnoticed!

Schedule an Exit Interview

As you are preparing to leave EHSD, we encourage you to take part in an exit interview. This is a valuable opportunity to share your feedback about your experience with the Employment & Human Services Department. Rest assured, these interviews are confidential and will be reviewed directly by EHSD Director **Marla Stuart**.

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



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](#)



Our Core Values

Promote Organizational Excellence: We value our staff and encourage all to do their best work. We provide an environment that encourages wellness and work-life balance.

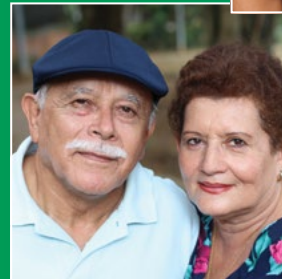
Deliver Exceptional Customer Experience: We are customer driven, responsive, and respectful. We stand for dignity for all, working to ensure everyone reaches their full potential.

Openly Communicate: We are transparent, honest, respectful, and assume positive intent in all communication. We actively listen to our customers, responding to their feedback, questions and needs.

Embrace Change: We embrace change as an opportunity to improve and provide excellent services to our customers and deepen our partnerships with community providers. We look to innovation and technology as an important avenue for change and strive to remain curious and strategic in all we do.

Practice Ethical Behavior: We value integrity and honesty in all our interactions. We hold ourselves accountable for exemplary work by all.

Respect Diversity: We honor individual differences, value inclusion, and equity for all.



SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

30 YEARS

Victoria Duong, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Yesenia Orta, Social Work Supervisor I, AAS

25 YEARS

Martha DeLaTorre, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Bruce Dibley, Eligibility Work Supervisor, Internal Operations
Carol Hackett, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Maureen Kiernan, Soc Svc Program Assistant, CFS
Nhang Luong, Program/Projects Coordinator, AAS
Cheryl McDaniel, Account Clerk Supervisor, Admin

20 YEARS

Maile McKeown, Clerk-Specialist Level, CFS
Michael Urrutia, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

15 YEARS

Jacqueline Lopez, Comprehensive Svcs Man -Prj, CSB
Manjeet Suman, Inf/Tod Master Teacher-Prj, CSB

10 YEARS

Trina Downes, Social Worker III, CFS
Cecilia Gutierrez, Social Worker III, CFS
Rhonda Lywandowsky, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS
Virginia Paraizo, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS
Shawna Vaquera, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

NEW EMPLOYEES

Maria Amaya Merlos, Teacher, CSB
Adrian Araza, Assistant II, Admin
Connor Auerbach, ASA II, Admin
Mehtab Badh, Business systems Analyst, CSB
Giselle Campos, PA-Senior Benefits Clerk, IHSS Public Authority
Darryl Davis, ASA III, CSB
Elizabeth Decherd, Associate Teacher SUB, CSB
Karima Dehak, Infant Toddler Master Teacher, CSB
Aaron Graifman, Planners & Eval Level A, Admin Info & Systems
Rafiullah Hadafmamand, Intermediate Clerk, CSB

Rachel Haynes, Intermediate Clerk-Project, CSB
Alexandra Heinitz, Accountant III, Admin
Candace McLean, Social Worker II, CFS
Mabel Paz, Social Worker II, CFS
Lilian Perez, Assistant II, Admin
Regina Posey, Social Worker II, CFS
Nayeli Roman, Student Intern II, CSB, (Temp)
Doris Smith, Intermediate Clerk, CSB
Stella Wang, Accountant III, Admin
A'Dee'Sha Williams, Clerk-Experienced Level, CFS
Jelilah Winters, Social Worker, WFS

RETIREES

Lisa Deslierres, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Faye Herald, Soc Svc Program Assistant, CFS
Susan Padan, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

Suliana Teo, Clerk -Senior Level, CFS
Danielle Wharton, Soc Svc Staff Dev Specialist, Admin
Sandra Zepeda-Lopez, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS (delayed)

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

April 2025

- SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH
- CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
- APRIL - CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH - Board of Supervisors presentation
- NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH
- APRIL 1 - April Fool's Day
- APRIL 4 - National Walk to Work Day
- APRIL 12 - Passover begins at sunset
- APRIL 15 - Tax Day
- APRIL 20 - Easter
- APRIL 20 - Passover ends at nightfall
- APRIL 22 - Earth Day
- APRIL 23 - Administrative Professional's Day
- APRIL 24 - Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

May 2025

Building Brighter Futures Together

- COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH
- CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH
- OLDER AMERICANS MONTH
- FOSTER PARENT RECOGNITION MONTH
- MAY 4-10 - Public Service Recognition Week
- MAY 5 - Cinco De Mayo
- MAY 5-9 - Teacher's Appreciation Week
- MAY 11 - Mother's Day
- MAY - FOSTER PARENT RECOGNITION MONTH - Board of Supervisors Presentation
- MAY 17 - Armed Forces Day
- MAY 26 - Memorial Day

We Care... You Care

CLICK HERE to learn more about nominating a coworker and see page 19

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

April 3 or 17 • 4 to 6 p.m.

May 1 or 15 • 4 to 6 p.m.

June 5 • 4 to 6 p.m.



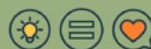
For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at www.ehds.org. If you belong to an organization or community group interested in learning more about Resource Family Approval/ foster parenting, we can schedule an individual session for your group, in English or Spanish. To register for a class, please call (925) 655-4230 or email ResourceFamilies@ehds.cccounty.us

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

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Instagram @HumanaCosta
Like us on Facebook



APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH



nsvrc



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

May 2025 issue - submissions due Tuesday, April 15, 2025