

Headlines

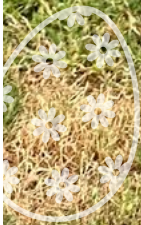


Sierra Flores How Early Prevention Saved Her Family

Important Remote
Work Update

Contra Costa's
Outstanding Women

EHSD Spotlight:
Catrina Kilgore



WFS Director Angela Bullock-Hayes Retires After 33 Years

After more than three decades of dedicated service, Workforce Services Director **Angela Bullock-Hayes** is retiring from Contra Costa County, marking the close of a distinguished 33-year career defined by leadership, innovation, and a deep commitment to public service.

Angela began her career with the county on December 9, 1992, taking on short-term assignments in the Probation and Health Services departments before joining the Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) in 1996. Starting in clerical roles, she steadily advanced through the ranks, ultimately holding 13 different positions throughout her tenure.

Her career trajectory reflects both persistence and versatility, with roles spanning eligibility services, personnel administration, and executive leadership. Over the years, she served as an Eligibility Worker, Supervisor, Division Manager, EHS Deputy Director, and most recently, Workforce Services Director.

Throughout her time at EHSD, Bullock-Hayes played a central role in shaping major service delivery systems that continue to benefit Contra Costa County residents. She helped lead the implementation of the EHSD Medi-Cal and CalFresh Service Center and the Contra Costa County Covered California Call Center during the

rollout of the Affordable Care Act—both critical efforts that expanded access to essential services.



More recently, she contributed to the department's successful CalFresh State Management Evaluations in 2024 and 2025 and played a key leadership role in coordinating food distribution efforts during the 2025 federal shutdown. She also supported the launch of innovative initiatives such as the Guaranteed Income Pilot and Empowering Enrollment program, while helping guide the department in preparing for upcoming federal changes to CalFresh and Medi-Cal eligibility under H.R.1.

Colleagues describe Angela's leadership as grounded in equity, compassion, and a drive

for excellence. As a member of the department's Executive Team, she brought deep institutional knowledge while championing innovation and an enhanced customer experience.

"Angela's contributions have had a lasting impact on our department, the community, and the many individuals and families we serve," said EHSD Director **Marla Stuart**. "We are grateful for her extraordinary service and wish her all the best in her next chapter."

Angela leaves a legacy of meaningful change and a strengthened foundation for the future of human services in Contra Costa County.

EHSD Welcomes Three Leaders to Executive Team



Sarah Reich, Interim Community Services Bureau Director



Erick Untal, Interim Director of Administration for Information & Systems



Desireé Bodiford, Department HR Officer II

EHSD has announced three additions to its Executive Team, bringing extensive experience in community services, data systems, and human resources.

Sarah Reich has been named Interim Community Services Bureau Director. With 15 years at Contra Costa County—including more than a decade with the Bureau—Reich has held progressively responsible roles supporting Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Most recently Interim Deputy Bureau Director, she has overseen partner agencies, managed complex contracts and grants, and led strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts. She has guided the Bureau through federal reviews with no findings and advanced innovations in enrollment systems and service delivery.

Erick Untal will serve as Interim Director of Administration for Information & Systems. A 20-year EHSD veteran, Untal began as an Eligibility Worker and advanced through leadership roles in operations, staff development, and policy. He

later built a multi-functional Research & Evaluation team and led cross-bureau initiatives such as Data Council. His work includes developing widely used tools like public dashboards and executive data systems that support informed decision-making.

Desireé Bodiford joins EHSD as Department HR Officer II, bringing more than 18 years of public sector human resources experience. She has led large-scale HR operations, modernized systems, and partnered with executive teams to strengthen organizational culture and equity-focused practices. Most recently, she led personnel operations for the Solano County Health and Human Services Department.

EHSD leadership expressed confidence that Reich, Untal, and Bodiford will help drive innovation and strengthen services for Contra Costa County residents.

Staff are encouraged to join in congratulating Reich and Untal on their new roles and welcoming Bodiford to the department.

Big Switch for Remote Access: Citrix to Azure

By Mike Roark, EHSD Information Systems Manager

EHSD is ending its use of Citrix in its environment on Saturday, May 9th, 2026. We will be using Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), as a replacement remote access method while we work on getting an alternative method purchased and configured. AVD offers better performance, enhanced security, and a more seamless connection to your work resources.

Purpose of This Initiative

This transition is essential to ensure our PC security remains up-to-date and robust.

Impact on Your Work

We understand that any change can bring some inconvenience, and we appreciate your patience and understanding during this transition. To minimize disruption, AVD access via the Windows App has already been deployed to most devices.

Our team is committed to making this process as smooth as possible.

Process

If your device does not have the Windows App installed for AVD use, please work with your building IT technician to schedule a time for installation.

Next Steps

- Check if the Windows App is installed on your PC or laptop.
- If not, contact your building IT technician for assistance.

We appreciate your partnership in this endeavor to enhance the technological landscape at Employment and Human Services. If you need support, contact the helpdesk at 1-7200 or ehsd_helpdesk@ehsd.cccounty.us.



Contra Costa County's Voice in Sacramento

By Tish Gallegos, Division Manager, Community Relations/Media

On Tuesday, March 10th, **Dr. Marla Stuart**, EHSD Director, was one of a four-member County leadership group who met with state legislators on how to support our most vulnerable residents.

“Our legislative delegation is very attuned to the importance of and cost of our CalFresh and Medi-Cal eligibility work,” explained Dr. Stuart. “They appreciate our efforts to ensure all eligible individuals and families are able to retain their enrollment.”

Board of Supervisors Chair Diane Burgis, Vice-Chair Ken Carlson, and Contra Costa Health Director Dr. Grant Colfax were also part of the Contra Costa team that had a full and productive day meeting with seven members of our state delegation and their staff:

- Senator Arreguin, Staff: Blanca Zarate
- Senator Grayson, Staff: Samantha Yturralde
- Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan, Staff: Jamie Velasco
- Assemblymember Avila Farias, Staff: Mark Stivers and Matt Boer
- Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, Staff: Nicolette Genovese
- Assemblymember Lori Wilson, Staff: Laura Edwards
- Senator Cabaldon staff: Toby Uptain-Villas & Nicole Cuellar-Nelson

The ongoing partnership and communication with state representatives helps ensure Contra Costa County's voice is heard in Sacramento. County leaders expect to continue working closely with our state lawmakers to advance policies that reflect our values and support our residents.



(L-R): Dr. Grant Colfax of Contra Costa Health, Board Chair Diane Burgis, Assemblymember Lori Wilson, Vice-Chair Ken Carlson, and **Dr. Marla Stuart**

“Our legislative delegation is very attuned to the importance of and cost of our CalFresh and Medi-Cal eligibility work...”

–Dr. Marla Stuart



Contra Costa County leaders visit Senator Jesse Arreguin in Sacramento.

Trust, Transparency and Teamwork Pay Off

By Drina Rowland, CalWORKs Division Manager

As a gesture of gratitude, the Workforce Services' (WFS) CalWORKs, Field Management and Supervisor staff presented CalWORKs Field Eligibility Workers and EHSD Navigators with stylish notebooks and sleek pens.

The notebooks proudly featured our "3 T's" logo—Trust, Transparency, and Teamwork—serving as a meaningful reminder that our work is grounded in open communication, integrity, and collaboration. These core values guide us as we partner with clients to better understand their needs and thoughtfully respond to their unique circumstances.

Each pen includes a motivational quote to inspire us to keep the spark alive in our daily service, encouraging continued compassion, empathy, and patience in every interaction.

Our 56 Eligibility Workers dedicate their days to supporting our community by processing Temporary and Permanent Housing Assistance, CalWORKs/CalFresh/Medi-Cal renewals, SAR 7s, Season of Sharing applications, and collaborating with Welfare-to-Work, Child Support, and other programs. They regularly provide waivers and referrals available through CalWORKs and Contra Costa County. They conduct interviews both in person and over the phone, depending on household needs.

Our Eligibility Workers and Navigators are essential and outstanding members of our EHSD team. They consistently exemplify EHSD's vision and mission by assisting families in Contra Costa County to become self-sufficient and thrive within our community, all while delivering exceptional customer service as they work together to build brighter futures for the communities we serve.



- 1.** CNG Unit Group (L-R): Jennifer Guerrero, Ana Arroyo, Daniel Jameyson, Rose Vargas, Jovana Lara, Elidia Morales, Cierra Dunn, and Shamia Bell.
- 2.** Danette Palladino - CNQ Unit
- 3.** HNC Unit Group: (back) Preetkanwar Sandhu; (middle L-R): Ashley Avie, Viann Bartlett, Massiel Angulo, Elizabeth Morales, Miriam Tovar-Gonzalez, Anjana Singh; and (front): Moueylinh Rodillas
- 4.** HNQ Unit Group: (L-R): Evelyn Kondo-Cohen, Sofia Vazquez, Noorullah Haidari, Robert Phillips, Carlos Palacios; and (floor) Andrew Lejano

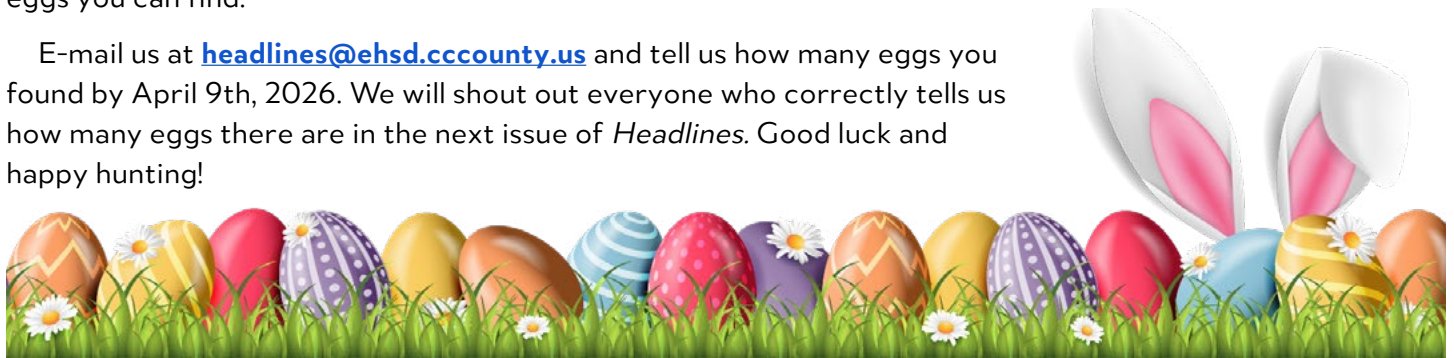
Building Brighter Futures Together

Eggstravaganza!

By Paul Truong, Administrative Services Assistant III, Community Relations/Media

The Community Relations and Media team has *hidden* eggs between the lines in this issue. Come along on this adventure and hunt for some elusive eggs. Search throughout the pages and count how many eggs you can find.

E-mail us at headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us and tell us how many eggs you found by April 9th, 2026. We will shout out everyone who correctly tells us how many eggs there are in the next issue of *Headlines*. Good luck and happy hunting!



A Touch of Green and a Bit of Luck

St. Patty's Day at ILSP

Contributed by Katherine "Rin" Kimsey, CFS



P&T Division celebrates St. Patrick's Day (L-R): Jessica Connolly, Licia Parsons, Karina Gomez, Jose "Santos" Medrano-Santos, Brian Coughlin, Katherine "Rin" Kimsey, and Jennifer Chalco

Celebrating at CFS West

Contributed by Ellen Wienecke



(L-R): Tammi Cason, Ellen Wienecke, Anna Jackson, Tammy Hill, Rajvir Gill, LaShonda Wallace, Zoé Vernier, Nicole Koprek, and Sarah Thomas

Celebrating our CFS Social Workers

Contributed by Children & Family Services

In March we celebrated Social Work Recognition Month. It's an important reminder to pause and reflect on the truly meaningful and difficult work our social workers perform for the children and families in our community. This year's theme identified by the National Association of Social Workers is "Social Workers: Uplift.Defend.Transform." It could not be more fitting for who our CFS Social Workers are and what our CFS Social Workers do.

To all our CFS Social Workers from **Roslyn Gentry**, Director, Children and Family Services, "Thank you for your integrity, compassion, commitment and for choosing this work. Because of you all, the lives of children and families are protected, strengthened and communities are transformed."

For the hard, compassionate work you do every day, we celebrate you! In addition to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Social Work Month proclamation, CFS hosted a series of celebrations throughout the bureau during March.

Thank you for the skill, courage and commitment you bring to this work every single day.

Our CFS Social Workers:

UPLIFT children and families in their most vulnerable moments with compassion and commitment

DEMAND dignity and accountability for better outcomes and support for the families we serve.

TRANSFORM lives through advocacy, empathy and promotion of resilience, turning uncertainty into hope.



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Celebrating our CFS Social Workers

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2026 Celebration Dates:

East County Operations, March 3; Permanency and Transition Division, March 4; Quality Assurance Division, March 10, Resource Division March 11; West County Operations, March 25; Central County Operations, March 25.



Building Brighter Futures Together

Packed House, Powerful Voices: Celebrating Black History at Macdonald Ave

By Christian Rodriguez, Administrative Services Assistant III, BEACON Unit – Policy & Planning

Macdonald Ave came alive this February as staff gathered for their annual Black History Month Celebration, hosted by the ART Social Committee—and the energy was undeniable. The sold-out event drew more than 70 participants, filling the space with positivity, connection, and community pride.

The staffroom was transformed into a vibrant tribute to Black Excellence, featuring educational displays honoring influential leaders, innovators, and trailblazers whose legacies continue to shape our world.

Emcee **Shana Griffin** kept the program lively and engaging, while staff took center

stage with live musical performances and powerful poetry readings. Each moment served as a reminder that Black history isn't just something we reflect on—it's something we actively carry forward together.

The celebration also delivered on flavor. Guests

enjoyed a full spread of comfort favorites, including fried chicken, green beans, yams, mac and cheese, potato salad, fresh salad, rolls, and a variety of desserts. Sharing a meal created space for meaningful connection and camaraderie.

The afternoon wrapped up with a lively Family Feud—



A banner featuring prominent figures in Black History



Emcee **Shana Griffin** (far right) keeping the crowd entertained.

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Packed House, Powerful Voices: Celebrating Black History at Macdonald Ave

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style competition, where teams tested their knowledge of Black history in a fun, spirited showdown.

ART Committee Member **David Gomez** captured the essence of the event: “It’s about pride. It builds solidarity. Even after it ends, the energy stays with you—people are still talking, still smiling.”

For Shana Griffin, the tradition runs deep: “Black History Month at Macdonald is historical. It’s been a staple long before I joined nearly 10 years ago. It’s about bringing people together—and it shows.”



Andrew Lejano (Eligibility Work Supervisor) performing “L-O-V-E” in honor of Nat King Cole.



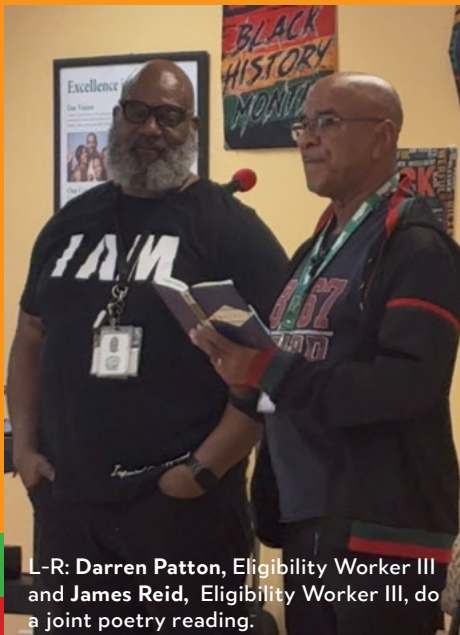
One of many educational displays featuring biographies of heroes and innovators in Black History. This poster spotlights Black pioneers in aeronautics and space exploration, Guion Bluford and Mae Jemison.



James Gibson, WFS Clerical and Building Supervisor, performed a powerful rendition of “Can You Stand the Rain?” by New Edition.



Kasandra Knox (Employment Placement Counselor) performing an opening reading by Anna Julia Cooper, an African American author, educator, and activist.



L-R: Darren Patton, Eligibility Worker III and James Reid, Eligibility Worker III, do a joint poetry reading.



A delicious spread featuring fried chicken, mac and cheese, yams, green beans, potato salad, fresh salad, bread rolls, and more.



Treats from the dessert table: cheesecake, sweet potato pie, pecan pie, and cookies.

Building Brighter Futures Together

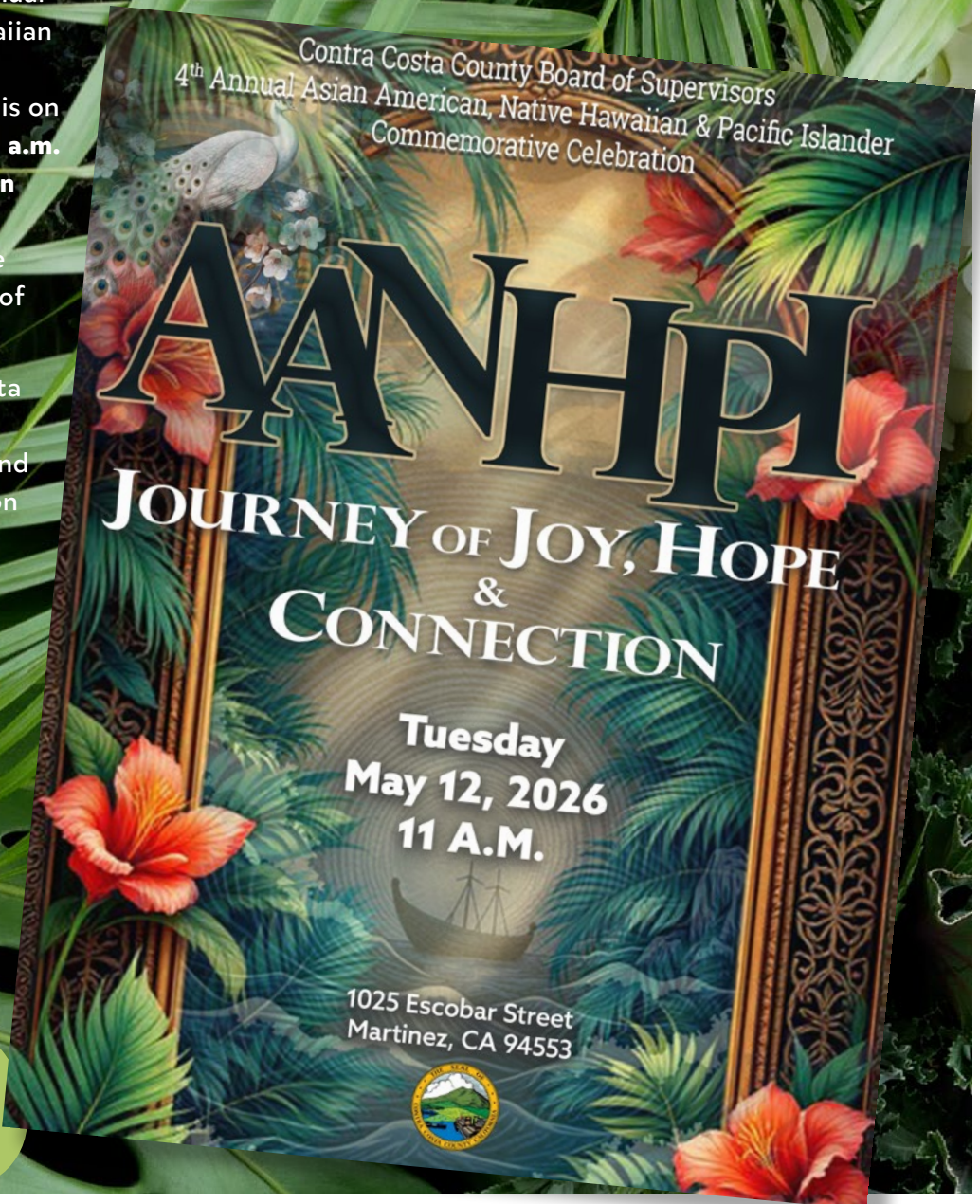
Journey of Joy, Hope & Connection

Save the Date for the AANHPI Celebration

Contra Costa County's annual Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) commemorative celebration is on **Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 11 a.m. at the County Administration Building in Martinez.** This special event is hosted by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

Check out the Contra Costa County website for more information. If you can't attend in person, you can view live on the County website or check out a recording later.

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*





Belonging | Engagement | Access | Collaboration | Opportunity | Navigation

Core Team/Unit News

By Iliana Choate, Program & Projects Coordinator, BEACON Unit, Policy & Planning

Community Services Bureau

Community Services Bureau (CSB) kicked off the year, February 5th, with their first All Cluster meeting, featuring a wellness team-building activity that encouraged collaboration, creativity, problem solving, and honoring all perspectives. The event also included a special awards ceremony recognizing the dedication and hard work of staff.

BEACON Core Intranet

March was full of meaningful events and celebrations. We honor Women’s History Month, and Irish American Heritage Month. Visit the

BEACON Core Team intranet page to learn more about these observances. We will post new events for April around the 13th of the month.

You can also find details on the upcoming Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Celebration, “Journey of Joy, Hope & Connection”, taking place at the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on May 12, 2026.

We welcome your ideas. Email BEACONCore@ehsd.cccounty.us with any suggestions and topics you would like to see featured on the BEACON Core Intranet.



CSB staff (L-R): Top row: Linda Frazier-Stafford, Marilyn Doss, Haley Zieger, Monica De Vera, Alicia Prieto, LaTonya Saucer, Ana Araujo

Middle row (L-R): Karla Villarpando, Jessie Black

Bottom row (L-R): Veronica Calvario, Mercedes Ibarra, Jenny Andres, Janet Rivera, Stephanie Houston, Tina Ham

Parent Partner Program is Expanding with Prevention Focus

By Alan Wang,
Community Relations/Media Specialist



A program built on second chances is now helping families avoid crisis altogether. In partnership with Contra Costa County Children and Family Services, the Child Abuse Prevention Council – long recognized for its Parent Partner Program helping parents reunify with their children – is expanding with a new Early Prevention Parent Partner Program designed to support families before they enter the child welfare system.

At the heart of both efforts are Parent Partners: mentors with lived experience who have successfully navigated the system and now guide others through it. One of those mentors, Joanie Morrow, represents the program's impact in deeply personal terms.

Years ago, Morrow lost custody of her four children – three daughters and a son – amid struggles with substance abuse and domestic violence, cycles she herself had endured as a child. Through the Contra Costa County Parent Partner Program, she rebuilt her life, regained custody of her children, and ultimately broke a pattern of abuse that stretched back at least three generations.

Today, she has come full circle. Morrow now serves as an Early Prevention Parent Partner, working with parents before they reach the point of losing their children. Because she has walked

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Parent Partner Program is Expanding with Prevention Focus

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in their shoes, she brings something no textbook or training can replicate: immediate credibility and trust.

“She’s been where we are,” said Sierra Flores, one of the parents Morrow now mentors. “That makes it easier to trust her.” The Early Prevention Parent Partner Program builds on the success of the traditional model, which pairs parents in the child welfare system with trained peer mentors to help them navigate services and work toward reunification. The new initiative shifts that support upstream, intervening earlier to prevent family separation altogether.

For families like Flores’, that early support can be life-changing. “If they took my child away, it would have defeated me,” Flores said. “I would have sunk deeper into depression and drug use and might not have had the will to fight for my baby.”

Instead, with Morrow’s guidance, Flores connected to resources including a nurturing parenting class that helped her build skills and confidence.

Morrow continues to encourage her. “These babies don’t come with instructions,” she tells parents. “We can all use help in becoming better parents.” That message, rooted in empathy rather than judgment, is key to the program’s success. By engaging families early, the Early



CLICK the play button to see how **Joanie Morrow** applied her lived experience and helped Sierra Flores keep her child while she recovered from drug addiction.

“I broke the cycle in my family and now I’m helping others do the same.”

– Joanie Morrow
Parent Partner

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Parent Partner Program is Expanding with Prevention Focus

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Prevention Parent Partner Program aims to reduce the trauma children experience when they are removed from their homes while giving parents the tools they need to succeed. It also reflects a broader shift in child welfare: moving from reaction to prevention.

For Morrow, the work is both professional and deeply personal. “I know what it’s like to be on the other side,” she said. “I broke the cycle in my family and now I’m helping others do the same.”



Strengthening Families, Changing Systems

Parent Partner programs are increasingly recognized nationwide as a best practice in child welfare. They not only support families but also help reshape how agencies engage with parents – fostering trust, improving communication, and increasing participation in services. ([California Dept. of Social Services](#))



As a Parent Partner who also lost custody of her children, Joanie Morrow had instant credibility with Kathy Rodriguez. She helped Kathy reunite with her children after struggling with drug addiction.

More Data and Resources

Parent Partners – are parents who have successfully navigated child welfare cases, including reunification with their own children, and now use that experience to guide others. ([Child Abuse Prevention Council \(CAPC\) Contra Costa](#))

Research has shown the model can have a measurable impact. In Contra Costa County, about 60% of children whose parents worked with a Parent Partner were reunified within 12 months, compared to 26% of those without that support. ([Casey Family Programs](#))

County officials say the program’s strength lies in its peer-to-peer approach.

Parenting education and support services have been shown to improve parent confidence, strengthen relationships, and reduce risks associated with child abuse and neglect. ([First 5 Contra Costa](#))

Outreach Roundup

Friday, January 16: Hillview Junior High Grand Opening with EHSD Navigators Embedded

By Lloyd Among, Workforce Services Specialist



EHSD Navigators are now embedded at Hillview Junior High School where they proudly celebrated the grand opening of its beautiful new campus, in Pittsburg, on January 16, 2026. The event featured a festive atmosphere with food trucks and a wide variety of local community organizations tabling throughout the campus, giving families an opportunity to learn more about available support services.



EHSD was honored to participate in this milestone alongside other community partners. Navigators **Cecilia Felan** and **Joanna Thieme** joined Eligibility Work Supervisor **Bhupinder Singh** and EHSD Deputy Director **Ann Barrett** in engaging with attendees and celebrating with the Hillview community. The grand opening served as opportunity for families to tour the new campus, strengthen community partnerships, and celebrate continued investment in Pittsburg's youth.

(L-R): EW Supervisor, **Bhupinder Singh**; Navigator, **Cecilia Felan**; WFS Deputy Director, **Ann Barrett**; and Navigator, **Joanna Thieme**



Saturday, February 28: Spring Family Support – Living Hope Neighborhood Church (LHNC) in Richmond

The event was hosted by Today's Youth Matter (TYM) and EHSD Navigators **Sandra Figueroa** and **Jetzabel Diaz** shared resources and programs with attendees.



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Outreach Roundup

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Saturday, February 28: BRAVE Empowerment Event – Salvation Army in Concord

On February 28, 2026, EHSD Navigators **Jetzabel Diaz** and **Joanna Thieme** tabled at the BRAVE Event held at The Salvation Army on Clayton Road in Concord. The event was designed to help young girls find their voice, build confidence, and “find their brave”.



Navigators Joanna Thieme and Jetzabel Diaz

Wednesday, March 11: APD Sycamore Sub Station Grand Opening

At the Sycamore Plaza in Antioch there was food, music and games for those who attending the ribbon cutting, Building stronger neighborhood partnerships and a space for connection. EHSD Navigators **Casey Costa** and **Jetzabel Diaz** were there to share programs and services available to those Contra Costa County community members.



*Building Brighter
Futures Together*

Honoring Our County Social Workers



Our Contra Costa County social workers – from EHSD, Contra Costa Health, the Public Defender’s Office, and many more who serve in our schools and community-based organizations – truly reflect the 2026 Social Work Month theme, Social Workers: Uplift. Defend. Transform. On Tuesday, March 9th, the Board of Supervisors honored and thanked our County’s 1,126 Social Workers (340 from EHSD) who help our Contra Costa residents through human services, health clinics, hospitals, the court system, and outreach activities.

Schedule an Exit Interview



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

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

Rooted in Resilience – Enraizados en la Resiliencia Celebration of Farmworkers’ Rights Movement

Reflecting a more inclusive recognition of the diverse communities and histories that have shaped and continue to drive the broader Farmworkers’ Rights Movement, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors will host the 32nd Annual Celebration of Farmworkers’ Rights Movement at 11 a.m., Tuesday, April 14th. The event will take place in Board Chambers at 1025 Escobar Street in Martinez, and will be broadcast live on Contra Costa Television channels and the [County’s website](#).

“Following the lead of the United Farm Workers, Contra Costa County remains focused on supporting farmworkers and advancing equity, safety, and opportunity in agriculture,” said Board Chair Diane Burgis, District 3 Supervisor. “Our goal is to ensure this event honors farmworkers, highlights urgent issues like fair wages and safe working conditions, and reflects our shared values of dignity and inclusion.”

Rooted in Resilience – Enraizados en la Resiliencia will feature keynote speaker Jane Garcia, Chief Executive Officer of La Clínica de la Raza. Since becoming CEO in 1982, Ms. Garcia has expanded the organization from a \$2 million project to a \$170+ million health system with over 1,200 employees. La Clínica now serves more than 85,000 patients across 35 sites in Alameda County, Contra Costa County, and Solano County. Garcia is a longtime advocate for equitable health care access, including protections for immigrant families and underserved communities. She holds degrees from Yale University and the University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health.



The event will include live performances by Mariachi Monumental and Pittsburg High School Ballet Folklórico, along with remarks from the Board of Supervisors.

Learn more about the Farmworkers’ Rights Movement Celebration by visiting <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/6039> on the County website.

Watch the event live online www.contracosta.ca.gov/6086 or www.contracostatv.org. The celebration will broadcast live on Contra Costa Television channels: Comcast Cable 27, ATT/U-Verse 99, and Astound 32 & 1027.

2026 Youth Hall of Fame Awards

At Contra Costa County's Celebration of Farmworkers' Rights Movement on April 14th (see previous article), students who have made outstanding contributions to their communities will also be honored with the presentation of the **2026 Youth Hall of Fame Awards**.

Contra Costa County's 2026 Youth Hall of Fame Awards winners:

High School Awardees 2026 Youth Hall of Fame Awardees:

- Good Samaritan: Amadeus Castillo, 11th Grade, Freedom High School
- Volunteerism: Marisela Villezcas, 12th Grade, Alhambra High School
- Teamwork: Symone Jewell, 11th Grade, Northgate High School
- Leadership & Civic Engagement: Morriah Crose, 11th Grade, Pittsburg High School
- Perseverance: Cesia Jesus Gonzalez, 10th Grade, Oakland Technical High School
- Innovation & Empowerment: Adya Gupta, 11th Grade, Dougherty Valley High School

Rising Stars:

- Good Samaritan: Eden Rosekind, 7th Grade, Homeschool
- Volunteerism: Claire Cho, 8th Grade, Foothill Middle School
- Teamwork: Pablo Cabrera, 6th Grade, El Dorado Middle School
- Leadership & Civic Engagement: Soraya Dang, 7th Grade, Pleasant Hill Middle School
- Perseverance: Camilla Rodriguez Cantwell, 7th Grade, Excelsior Middle School
- Innovation & Empowerment: Samantha Pedraza-Lindsey, 8th Grade, Black Diamond Middle School



Stronger than Ever: Honoring Resilience of Sexual Assault Survivors



By Claudia Gonzalez & Laneisha Terrell, Alliance to End Abuse

This April, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors will officially proclaim Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) on April 14th, joined by the Alliance to End Abuse, Community Violence Solutions, the Contra Costa County District Attorney’s Office, and Contra Costa Health.

This year’s theme, 25 Years Stronger: Looking Back, Moving Forward, honors the resilience of survivors and the progress of a growing movement—while renewing our commitment to a safer future.

people feel physically, emotionally, and mentally safe. Everyone deserves to feel valued, respected, and protected.

SAAM shines a spotlight on the far-reaching impact of sexual violence and underscores the importance of prevention, education, and access to resources. Sexual assault includes any non-consensual sexual contact or behavior, such as harassment, rape, abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and nonconsensual image sharing.

The need for awareness remains urgent. More than 53% of women and 29% of men report experiencing some form of sexual violence. In 2024 alone, 297 rapes were reported in Contra Costa County. In 2025, the District Attorney’s Office filed 129 related cases, with 10 convictions secured through jury trials.

Raising awareness—and working together as a community—is how we move forward.

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The future is prevention.

We stand united to end sexual assault, abuse, and harassment to protect future generations.

>>>>>

nsvrc

The Alliance to End Abuse champions a coordinated, survivor-centered approach that addresses individual needs, holds those who cause harm accountable, and fosters environments where

Stronger Than Ever: Contra Costa Marks Sexual Assault Awareness Month



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Learn more about how you can take action and make a difference in creating safe and respectful communities for everyone at <https://www.nsvrc.org/saam>.

For help, contact:

- Community Violence Solution's 24/7 Crisis Line: 1-800-670-7273
- Children and Family Services/Child Abuse 24 Hour Hotline: 1-877-881-1116
- The Family Justice Center: Richmond 510-974-7200, Concord 925-521-6366, Antioch 925-281-0970, Danville 925-486-0100
- [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](https://www.nsvrc.org)

Wear Denim to Support Sexual Assault Survivors

By Claudia Gonzalez & Laneisha Terrell, Alliance to End Abuse

Denim Day is a powerful way to stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. On April 29, join the Alliance to End Abuse and many others around the world by wearing denim to make a visible statement of support and awareness.

Observed each April during Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Denim Day started after a 1998 ruling by the Italian Supreme Court, which overturned a rape conviction because the court believed that the survivor's tight jeans implied consent. The decision sparked global outrage, and activists, led by Peace Over Violence, launched Denim Day to challenge harmful myths about sexual assault and victim-blaming.

Wearing denim is more than a symbolic gesture; it's a way to spark conversations. It clearly shows that clothing never implies consent and that survivors deserve belief and support. By participating, you help raise awareness, challenge stigma, and foster a culture of respect and accountability.

Join us by wearing denim and encouraging others to do the same. Small actions can lead to meaningful change. Learn more about Denim Day at <https://denimday.org/why-denim>.



Be part of the Alliance to End Abuse Denim Day campaign for social media. Send a picture of yourself or your team wearing denim to cgonzalez@ehsd.cccounty.us. Photos may also appear in the May issue of *Headlines*!

Outstanding Women

By Paul Truong, Administrative Services Assistant III, Community Relations/Media

“Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls” is the official theme for International Women’s Day 2026 coined by the United Nations. Although International Women’s Day is marked as a day of celebration, its origins are rooted in the continuing pursuit of equity on issues such as gender equality, justice, violence against women, and empowerment.

In Contra Costa County, The Board hosted its inaugural International Women’s Day celebration on March 17th. The celebration started with a short video honoring Nancy Fahden, who became the first woman on the board of supervisors in 1976. The celebration continued with a keynote address by Chair Diane Burgis as well as other remarks by several prominent speakers, followed by a rendition of “The Voice Within” performed by Ellie Ramos.



Larena Baldazo is the Web Producer for EHSD’s Community Relations team. The team recently won a national award for publishing the best digital newsletter among government agencies.

Each district Supervisor also had the opportunity to present their honoree to recognize leadership, service, and contributions to the community.

Closer to home, our colleague, **Larena Baldazo**, Community Relations/Media Web Producer, talks about the journey of her career. Being a young mother isn’t easy. Finding the strength and resilience to pursue a college education and juggling being a mother—it’s otherworldly. Larena further distinguishes herself by thriving in media – a field where women are still fighting for a seat at the table. She tells me, “What I do today, I really wear it as a badge of honor because I know what it took to get

here”

EHSD is proud to champion our female colleagues, and we continue to advocate for the equality and empowerment they deserve.



Board of Supervisors Chair, Diane Burgis (front, right) presents a proclamation to County employees.

Building Brighter Futures Together

Calm Presence, Powerful Impact

By Paul Truong, Administrative Services Assistant III, Community Relations and Media

Can you feel the breeze on a windy day? You can't see it, but you can sense its presence. Administrative Professionals Week is April 19th-25th and Administrative Professionals Day is April 22nd this year.

Administrative Professionals Day is observed on the Wednesday of the last full week in April, annually. Here at EHSD, we recognize all 373 staff that fall under the varying classifications that make up our administrative professional team.

Administrative Professionals Day was first established in 1952 as "National Secretaries Day" during the post WW2 economic boom as there was a growing need for skilled administrative professionals in the workforce. As time went on, roles evolved and the day was renamed Administrative Professionals Day to better

Administrative PROFESSIONALS DAY

reflect the roles and responsibilities of modern-day administrative work.

Administrative work often goes unnoticed but is vital to daily operations within EHSD. Administrative staff

are often the backbone of an organization. They perform important duties such as calendaring, coordinating communication, gathering and organizing information, etc. The administrative work coincides with all other work performed here at EHSD with everyone contributing to the goal of serving customers and residents of Contra Costa County.

Cheers to our incredible administrative staff who keep everything moving at EHSD. Your hard work and dedication are the foundation to building brighter futures together.



Strengthening Medi-Cal Expertise: Catrina Kilgore Leads Hands-On Training at EHSD

By Tracy Lee, Division Manager, Staff Development



Since joining the team in May 2025, Staff Development Specialist **Catrina Kilgore** quickly made a meaningful impact through her passion for staff development and commitment to high-quality training.

CalSAWS Training Region, allowing participants to practice real system actions used in case management.

Exercises included entering and updating case information such as address changes, income reporting, expenses, and opting into text messaging, as well as importing data from

“One of the best trainings I have been to...I learned so much. The hands-on exercises were so helpful.”

Catrina Kilgore, Social Service Staff Development Specialist

Over the past nine weeks, Catrina led the Medi-Cal Reinforcement Training Series, conducting 56 in-person sessions across three offices. Each training day included two half-day sessions, giving staff multiple opportunities to participate. The sessions offered experienced workers the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge and skills in ongoing Medi-Cal case management.

The series covered 18 Medi-Cal topics and focused not only on policy and regulatory guidance, but also on practical application and system navigation. Each topic included hands-on exercises in the



2600 Stanwell (p.m. class, L-R): Kathya Lipson, Laurie Havas, Ashley Payne, KimLien Pruner, Yogini Somanthan-Shadram, Michael Schwartz, Kathleen Khalik, Vera Calhoun, Vignesh Naidu, Janie Ly, Sarah Williams, Kylie Bigornia, Ebony Burks, Andrea Kurek, Chenyi Yuan

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Strengthening Medi-Cal Expertise: Catrina Kilgore Leads Hands-On Training at EHSD

Continued from previous page

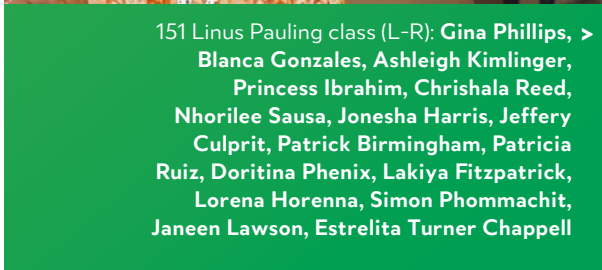
BenefitsCal and Covered California. Staff also practiced reviewing case budgets, completing journal entries, clearing pending tasks and alerts, and applying NVRA requirements.

Training participants praised the engaging format and practical value of the sessions with Catrina.

Reflecting on the experience, Catrina says “It was a pleasure supporting staff through the training series and helping strengthen the tools and knowledge that support the department’s work for the community.”



< 2600 Stanwell (a.m. class, L-R): Darien Ordonez-Smith, Jennifer Diego, Auzuray Pittman, Jamie Miller, Marco Ruiz-Madrigal, Albert Juson, Jacqueline Ramos, Lida Sheerzad, Justina Johnson, Ditas Bautista



151 Linus Pauling class (L-R): Gina Phillips, > Blanca Gonzales, Ashleigh Kimlinger, Princess Ibrahim, Chrishala Reed, Nhorilee Sausa, Jonesha Harris, Jeffery Culprit, Patrick Birmingham, Patricia Ruiz, Doritina Phenix, Lakiya Fitzpatrick, Lorena Horena, Simon Phommachit, Janeen Lawson, Estrelita Turner Chappell



< 4545 Delta Fair class (L-R): Jessica Melgoza, Marilyn Acasio, Michelle Collins, Amber De Guzman, Jacklyn Thrower, Eilan Zeng, Joshua Melgoza, Pherlawna Leslie, Destiny Hall, Gerilyn Molina, Christina Bess, Catrina Beverly, Trenea Colman, Stephanie Navarro, Diana Santiago, Nadiya Salcedo



Building Brighter Futures Together



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.

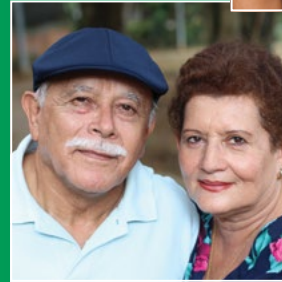
Deliver Exceptional Customer Experience: We are customer driven, responsive, and respectful. We stand for dignity for all, working to ensure everyone reaches their full potential.

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.



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](#)



SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

35 YEARS

Bonnie Bienkowski, Accountant III, Admin

25 YEARS

Sophia Webb, Social Worker III, CFS

20 YEARS

Sonya Hopkins, Sr Soc Svc Info Sys Analyst, Admin, Information & Systems

Maria Rios, Master Teacher-Project, CSB

15 YEARS

Leeland McMasters, Eligibility Worker III, WFS

Jennifer Quesada, Senior Clerk-Project, CSB

Mahdieh Rassi, Teacher-Project, CSB

10 YEARS

Martha Ayala, Social Worker III, CFS

Beth Bottorff, Human Services Division Mgr, CFS

Kimberly Durley, Clerk-Experienced Level, AAS

Warren Fong, Social Worker, AAS

Leticia Garrido, Clerk- Senior Level, CSB

Precious Jones, Social Worker III, CFS

Susan Kraft, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS

Brittany Melendez, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Angelina Orduna, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS

Sorina Perez Diaz, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Darlene Ramos, Children's Svc Sys Sup Spec, CFS

Merridith Rapp, Eligibility Worker II, WFS

Dayana Rodriguez Cabrera, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Patricia Ruiz, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Jazmin Saro, Eligibility Worker II, WFS

Mari Solis, Soc Svc Staff Dev Specialist, CFS

Jennifer Stuart, Children's Svc Sys Sup Spec, CFS

Rossel Tongol, Account Clerk-Advanced Level, Admin

Theodore Trinh, Administrative Svcs Asst III, CSB

Mayra Valencia, Eligibility Worker II, WFS

Guy Walker, Eligibility Worker III, WFS

NEW EMPLOYEES

Alondra Berumen, Intermediate Clerk, CSB

Desiree Bodiford, Dept. HR Officer II, Admin

Marlona Carrington, Clerk Experienced Level, WFS

Rianne Connor, Departmental HR Analyst II, Admin/Information & Systems

Jonathan Flores, Information Systems Assistant II, Admin/Internal Operations

Tenia Green, Administrative Services Assistant III, Admin/Information & Systems

Marina Halim, Clerk Experienced Level, CFS

Athena Karnsouvang, Clerk Specialist Level, WFS

Leslie Ledesma, Associate Teacher SUB, CSB

Roxana Matute, Clerk Experienced Level, WFS

Grishma Patel, Administrative Services Assistant III, Admin

Michelle Ross, Clerk Experienced Level, WFS

Jerome Spears, Social Service Fraud Prevention Supervisor, Admin/Internal Operations

Alvin Vitug, Child Nutrition Food Operations Supervisor, CSB

Marriam Zamanudin, Clerk Experienced Level, WFS

Venessa Zepeda, Eligibility Worker II, WFS

RETIREES

Angela Bullock-Hayes, Workforce Services Director, WFS

Lisa Cleveland Finney, Clerical Supervisor, WFS

Bruce Dibley, Eligibility Work Supervisor, Admin, Internal Operations

Kam Phoummathep, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Karen Walls, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

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

- SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH
- CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
- NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH
- APRIL 1 – April Fool’s Day
- APRIL 1-9 – Passover
- APRIL 4 – National Walk to Work Day
- APRIL 5 – Easter
- APRIL 11-17 – Week of the Young Child
- APRIL 14 – CC County Celebration of Farmworkers’ Rights Movement
- APRIL 15 – Tax Day
- APRIL 22 – Earth Day
- APRIL 22 – Administrative Professionals’ Day



Is there room in your home for one more?

Make a change in a child’s life and become a Resource Parent/ Family for a foster child. Contra Costa County needs your support to provide care for children 0–18 years of age. Please join us for a virtual orientation and learn more about becoming a caregiver.



FREE VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS

April 2 or 16 • 4 to 6 p.m.
 May 7 or 21 • 4 to 6 p.m.
 June 4 or 18 • 4 to 6 p.m.

May

- COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH
- CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH
- OLDER AMERICANS MONTH
- ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH
- FOSTER CARE MONTH
- MAY 4-8 – Teacher’s Appreciation Week
- MAY 5 – Cinco De Mayo
- MAY 10 – Mother’s Day
- MAY 16 – Armed Forces Day
- MAY 21 – Cultural Diversity Day
- MAY 25 – Memorial Day



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 and 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 28

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

Facebook and X @ContraCostaEHSD
 Instagram @HumanaCosta



Medi-Cal Reinforcement Training (see article page 25) 151 Linus Pauling (a.m. class, L-R): Alma Robles-Castro, Kelly Sullivan, Charles Lopez, Matthew Szczepanski, Eddy Vien, Erika Garcia, Romena Calonsag, Clariese Freeman, Danielle Howard, Mitzi Medina, Michelle Palmer, Karla Riley, Brianna White



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

May2026 issue – submissions due Tuesday, April 21, 2026