

OCSSA TODAY

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Mike Ryan

March is National Social Work Month and we are celebrating our social work staff who exemplify excellence in serving our community and exude positive qualities that make lasting contributions to our community.

As you know well, the role of the social worker is ever changing and has become even more complex over the years. Family dynamics have changed, socio-economic factors are ever-evolving and our technologically-advanced society has increased pressures and created greater stress for all parties involved.

With the changing dynamics and needs of our clients in Orange County, our social work staff have had to learn how to adapt. This includes participating in various trainings, such as cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed training, as well as staying up to speed on new trends in abuse and neglect and techniques for how to prevent and remediate these complex issues. We've seen positive outcomes due to our greater understanding in the ever-changing culture, regulatory and economic environments.



On March 13, the Board of Supervisors presented SSA with a resolution in recognition of Social Work Month, commending and thanking you for the work that you do in our community. I want to take this opportunity to recognize all of our social work staff for the



Pictured from left to right: Supervisor Todd Spitzer, Griselda De La O, Rori Aguilar, Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, SSA Director Mike Ryan, Jill Lux, Chairman Andrew Do, James Boyd, HCA Director Richard Sanchez, Ruth Ledesma, Rachel Guerrero, Norma Macias (HCA), Julie Holmes (HCA), Supervisor Michelle Steel, Lauren Sanders (HCA) and Jeannie Huynh (HCA).

quality, responsive, efficient and effective services you provide to thousands of individuals and families in Orange County each month. National Social Work Month is a wonderful opportunity to honor your hard work and commitment to providing exceptional services to our community and for paving the way for a better tomorrow for the populations we serve. On behalf of the SSA Executive Team, thank you for the incredible and inspirational work you do every day to assist the residents of our County.

I also want to share that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. The Raise Foundation, our Child Abuse Prevention Council, is hosting the annual Blue Ribbon Kick-Off Event on Wednesday, March 28 at Bowers Museum at 9 am. For more information on this event, please visit http://blueribbon_kickoff.eventbrite.com. Also, please be sure to **wear blue** on Tuesday, April 24 in solidarity with our County colleagues in support of Orange County's efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect – Go Blue for OC Kids!

CONTENTS

<u>SSA Spotlight: Excellence In Service</u>	2
<u>April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month!</u>	3
<u>SSA Assists at Santa Ana River Trail</u>	4
<u>SSA Toastmasters Host Open House Events</u>	5
<u>The Career Advisory Program Celebration</u>	5
<u>Spring Fest 2018</u>	6
<u>In-N-Out Foundation Develops Serenity Rooms at Orangewood</u>	6
<u>Medi-Cal Redetermination Training</u>	7
<u>Black History Month Celebration</u>	7
<u>Are You Prepared?</u>	8
<u>Upcoming Events</u>	9
<u>Stories From the Field</u>	10
<u>Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action</u>	10
<u>The Educational Advisory Program</u>	14
<u>SSA Promotions</u>	14
<u>SSA Executive Meet & Greet</u>	15
<u>In Memoriam</u>	15
<u>Looking To Promote?</u>	15
<u>Connect with Us!</u>	15

SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

The Bringing Families Home Team



Pictured from left to right: Edja Kurtovic, Eddy Surya, Mario Murillo, Michele Galindo, Ericka Danczak, Alexia Castro (Mercy House), Ken Santini, Leticia Galvez and Amanda Sanchez (Mercy House). Not pictured: Donovan Bayron.

Homelessness is a significant challenge impacting families involved in the child welfare system. Unfortunately, the issue is amplified in Orange County given the scarcity of available low-income housing and the overall complexity of serving homeless families with diverse financial, health and employment barriers. As reported by the [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#), episodes of homelessness causes family separations, compounding the effects of housing instability on children. [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Report System](#) data indicates that, nationally, child welfare case workers have reported that for approximately 10 percent of children placed in foster care, inadequate housing was one of the reasons for removal from their home.

In the spring of 2017, SSA applied to be a recipient of the [Bringing Families Home Program](#) (BFH), established by Assembly Bill 1603. Through a rigorous application process, Orange County was one of 12 California counties selected to implement BFH. This housing assistance program affords Orange County an opportunity to provide invaluable housing support services to families involved in the child welfare system. SSA began implementing the BFH Program in November 2017, with goals of reducing the number of families in the child welfare system experiencing homelessness, increasing the number of families reunifying and preventing foster care home placements when homelessness inhibits a parent or guardian from addressing issues that could lead to foster care home placement.

In order to implement the BFH program, SSA developed the BFH team, which is comprised of the Resource Development and Management (RDM) program, Children and Family Services (CFS) Personnel Coordinator and Special Projects units, Information Technology's CWS/CMS Data Analysis and Reporting Team and the Planning and Permanency Services Deputy Director. The BFH team manages the operations of the program and functions as a support to CFS social workers and the families they serve. Through a partnership with Orange County Community Resources (OCCR), the BFH team works closely with [Mercy House](#), an independent nonprofit organization, to provide [Rapid Rehousing](#) services to homeless families who are part of the child welfare system. This public/private partnership allows CFS to leverage the expertise of an established community provider to offer comprehensive housing assistance services to families served by CFS.

When a family is identified by a CFS social worker as needing housing assistance, the social worker generates a short referral form in the CWS/CMS benefit system and electronically submits it to a designated inbox. The CFS RDM program receives and processes the referral and submits it electronically to Mercy House, who then assesses the referral within 10 days of receiving it to determine if the family qualifies for the BFH program.

Services provided by Mercy House for the BFH Program include, but are not limited to:

- Housing Identification
- Rent and Moving Assistance
- Case Management Services

To date, RDM has received 101 BFH referrals from CFS social workers and has moved 98 of those on to Mercy House for assessment for services. Since the implementation of the program in late November of last year, 12 CFS families have been housed through BFH. The quick mobilization of this program and its success in housing families in such a short period of time is a true testament to the dedication of the BFH team. Thank you to the BFH team for all of the hard work you are doing connecting families to housing services.

Congratulations to the Bringing Families Home Team for all of the great work you do and for being recognized as the SSA Spotlight: Excellence in Service team for March 2018!





**APRIL IS NATIONAL CHILD
ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH**

**APRIL 24TH IS WEAR BLUE DAY!
GO BLUE FOR OC KIDS!**
#GoBlueForOCKids



**CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE
800-207-4464**

For more information and resources on child abuse prevention, please visit oc4kids.com



facebook.com/OCSSA1



[@OrangeCountySSA](https://twitter.com/OrangeCountySSA)



SSA ASSISTS AT SANTA ANA RIVER TRAIL



Pictured: SSA employees ready to assist clients at the Santa Ana River Trail.

In mid-February, the County of Orange, per an agreement reached in court with lawyers representing seven homeless individuals, developed an intensive outreach plan to transition individuals encamped along the Santa Ana River Trail into motel housing for 30 days in order for OC Public Works to carry out an environmental remediation project on the riverbed. On February 14, SSA was asked to deploy the Mobile Response Vehicle (MRV) to the riverbed the following day in support of these efforts in order to ensure that all individuals were

aware of and connected to our eligibility programs.

Beginning Thursday, February 15, and through Saturday, February 24, the SSA MRV team deployed to the riverbed in various areas to assist the Health Care Agency (HCA) with outreach and to connect clients to services. The MRV team worked daily, including the weekends and a holiday, interacting with over 700 clients and processing nearly 280 applications for Medi-Cal, CalFresh and General Relief (GR) during the 10-day period.

What stands out most about SSA and the MRV team's support of this incredible effort was the compassionate and flexible collaboration between SSA and other County partners. The MRV served as a central hub for folks looking for information, and SSA staff ensured that they had the most up to date information in order to effectively connect clients with the various resources being provided. Demonstrating this collaboration, SSA's Information Technology team worked with OC Public Works to ensure that they could use the MRV's connectivity to create identification (ID) badges, as many of the homeless did not have ID cards. Additionally, SSA worked closely with HCA to ensure that clients were obtaining and providing the necessary documentation in order to determine eligibility for benefits. In one example, SSA shared with HCA that an individual could not receive GR until a doctor's note was provided. HCA drove the individual to the doctor immediately, received the appropriate documentation, and submitted the documentation to the MRV team in order to process the GR application.

"[The MRV] team is amazing. The group is extremely professional, and they manage to always remain calm in order to assist every person they come in contact with. I cannot say enough about [this] wonderful team. They are true partners in serving as One County!"

Becky Juliano, Deputy Director of Administrative Services at OC Public Works, shared the following kind words about SSA's role in this collaborative effort: "[The MRV] team is amazing. The group is extremely professional, and they manage to always remain calm in order to assist every person they come in contact with. I cannot say enough about [this] wonderful team. They are true partners in serving as One County!"

Many folks pitched in to ensure that our role in this outreach effort was successful. Thank you to everyone who worked long hours, worked on weekends and a holiday, and tirelessly served our clients. Your flexibility, compassion and positive attitudes were noticed by all and are greatly appreciated!



Pictured: Orange County Sheriff's Department assists hundreds of people at the Santa Ana River Trail. Over 700 individuals were re-located over a 10-day period.

SSA TOASTMASTERS HOST OPEN HOUSE EVENTS



Pictured from left to right: Junaidi Tjen, Mike Ostgaard (Toastmasters), Minda Herman and Annette Nieves.

Toastmasters International is a worldwide, nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, California, the organization's membership exceeds 352,000 in more than 16,400 clubs in 141 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. The Social Services Agency (SSA) values the impact and contributions of Toastmasters for staff development, allowing for the creation of the following chapters for our Agency:

SSA Trailblazers (ST) meets every Wednesday from 12 to 1 p.m. at Training and Career Development (TCD). The room selected for the meeting is posted on the TCD marquees. ST held its second Open House on Wednesday, February 7, 2018, entitled "Fire Your Fuel". The event featured two guest speakers who exemplified the importance of communication skills for today's professional in a comfortable atmosphere. After the guest speeches, members and guests participated in Table Topics™, impromptu speeches and evaluation activities. The Table Topics™ activity challenges members and guests to speak for one to two minutes in response to questions without prior preparation. The purpose of Table Topics™ is to assist participants in articulating their thoughts in a clear, concise and spontaneous manner. Afterwards, prepared speeches were evaluated by members Minda Herman and Brenda Scherr. For more information about this chapter, please e-mail SSA Trailblazers Toastmasters President, Jocelyn Litatco at Jocelyn.Litatco@ssa.ocgov.com or visit <https://www.toastmasters.org/Find-a-Club/06036543-ssa-trailblazers>.

Social Justice Warriors (SJW) meets every Thursday from 12:05 to 1 p.m. in Room 1304 at 800 North Eckhoff in Orange. SJW held its first Open House on Thursday, February 22, 2018, commemorating Black History Month. Members and guests were greeted with traditional Afro-Cuban music and treated to African American cuisine with refreshing beverages. Rosemary "RP" Orozco and Priscilla Deason delivered informative and moving speeches, which left guests and members in awe and feeling inspired. Afterwards, members and guests participated in the regular meeting that included Table Topics™ and evaluations. There was even time for "Testimony Thursday," where members speak about how Toastmasters has benefited them both personally and professionally. For more information about this chapter, please e-mail Social Justice Warriors Toastmasters President, Rhonda Childs at Rhonda.Childs@ssa.ocgov.com. You can also visit <https://6498713.toastmastersclubs.org/>.



Pictured: Angela King delivers a speech as other Toastmasters observe.

THE CAREER ADVISORY PROGRAM CELEBRATION



Pictured from left to right: Advisor Tom Villanueva, John Hendrickson, Advisee Brenda Scherr and Carol Kubota.

Led by Co-Chairpersons Sandra Mastrud and Carol Kubota, the Career Advisory Program (CAP) Celebration Tea was held on February 28th, honoring the success of the October 2017-February 2018 cohort of CAP Advisor and Advisee participants. John Hendrickson, Division Director of Assistance Programs, spoke on behalf of SSA's Executive Team, offering his insight and thanking all participants for their commitment to such a worthwhile program. If you would like more information about CAP, please visit the [CAP Page](#) on the SSA Intranet or send questions to CAPInbox@ssa.ocgov.com.



Pictured from left to right: Advisee Patricia Cory and Advisor Sandra Mastrud.

SPRING FEST 2018

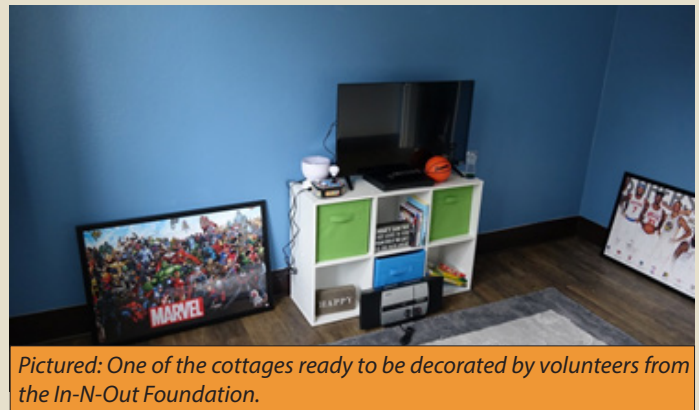


Pictured from left to right: Cheryl Alexander, Francisco "Paco" Perez, Ericka Danczak and Steve Pagaduan.

On March 11, 2018, in appreciation of Social Worker Month, the Foster Care Auxiliary of Orange County (FCAOC) invited foster and adoptive resource families as well as Children and Family Services (CFS) staff and their families to attend their annual Spring Fest 2018. The event was held at Garden Grove Elks Park and featured games, crafts, food, opportunity drawings and a chili cook off. The children were able to enjoy pony rides, a bounce house and other fun activities. Each CFS staff member in attendance received a gift of appreciation from the FCAOC. CFS continues to have wonderful working relationship with the FCAOC, which does incredible work for our foster, adoptive, kinship and resource families. Thank you to CFS staff and to FCAOC for all the great work you do for our resource families.

IN-N-OUT FOUNDATION DEVELOPS SERENITY ROOMS AT ORANGEWOOD

The idea of creating serenity rooms at Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC) came about after staff attended Trauma Informed training. Serenity rooms, also known as calming rooms, are designed to provide comfort and relaxation for an individual during times of stress. Betsy DeGarmoe from the Orange County Department of Education contacted the In-N-Out Foundation to gauge their interest in providing support for this idea.



Pictured: One of the cottages ready to be decorated by volunteers from the In-N-Out Foundation.

On Wednesday, February 21, 2018, approximately 25 volunteers from the In-N-Out Foundation painted and decorated serenity rooms in each residential cottage at OCFC, including in the First Step cottage which is available for staff use. The In-N-Out Foundation donated toys, stuffed animals, artwork and electronic equipment. Each serenity room was created to ensure that age appropriate items were included for each cottage, and volunteers painted and decorated the rooms accordingly. Upon completion, Group Counselor II Dustin Gerard coordinated a kickball game between staff and the youth, and the In-N-Out Foundation provided a pizza dinner for the participants. The kitchen staff also made a "thank you" cake for all of the volunteers. Thank you to the In-N-Out Foundation for making these special rooms a reality!



Pictured: Walls in the cottages were painted and decorated.



Pictured: Some of the items donated by the In-N-Out Foundation.



Pictured: Thank you cake decorated by the kitchen staff.

MEDI-CAL REDETERMINATION TRAINING



Pictured from left to right top row: Anthony Crews, Mikael Taman, Yajaira Cervantes, Kristen Timmins, Mayra Arroyo, Maria Santana, Terry Noble, Alicia Martinez, Melissa Rodriguez, Dana Ardeleanu and Corina Ortega. Middle Row: Damian Lambey, Maureen Erickson, Yolanda De Avila, Alexander Lomov, Luis Torres and Jovanna Garcia. Bottom Row: Isabel Alvarez, Cecilia Hernandez, Lauren Singletary and Michael Garcia.

The Medi-Cal program requires an annual eligibility review of active cases called the Redetermination Recertification Review (RRR). Processing an RRR is an integral part of an Eligibility Technician's (ET) duties. As such, comprehensive and informative Medi-Cal RRR training is vital. In order to meet staff's need for an extensive RRR training, a collaborative effort headed by Administrative Manager II Maureen Erickson, along with Assistance Programs (AP) Eligibility Supervisors (ES), AP Operations, Medi-Cal Policy Team, Systems Support Team, and Training and Career Development (TCD) representatives, was undertaken. As a result of this group's work, a one-day training at TCD was developed and presented in November and December 2017 for all Medi-Cal/CalFresh ET, ES, and Social Services Supervisor I staff, that focused on how to accurately process Medi-Cal RRRs. The training covered the background of past

practices, the importance of following procedures outlined in the training, and provided specific Medi-Cal policy, operational, and systems-related instructions with the goal of ensuring consistent and uniform Medi-Cal RRR processing by all staff.

The training was co-facilitated by TCD trainers and workgroup members who engaged staff with a multi-faceted learning approach.

Over 800 SSA staff attended their assigned training during the multiple, concurrent sessions conducted at TCD with great success. Staff shared that they felt the content and materials provided were comprehensive, timely and useful. Kudos to the workgroup members and all staff involved for a job well done!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION



Pictured from left to right: Robin Hinds, Steve Sakamoto and Cheryl Alexander.

On February 28, 2018, SSA's Multicultural Advisory Committee (MCAC) African American Roundtable (AAR) celebrated the contributions of African Americans to United States history at Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC). The event featured Ngozi Nnorom's OCFC Youth Dance Troupe, "Did You Know?" sessions with SSA's Elaine Wilkins and a discussion focusing on a healthy mind, body and soul with former NFL linebacker, Chris Draft (son of Senior Social Worker, Rose Draft). SSA staff, employees and children enjoyed the learning sessions and raved about the delicious food that was prepared by AAR committee members. Thank you to the AAR committee members and to Orangewood staff for hosting this wonderful event!



Pictured from left to right AAR committee members: Ruby Moore, Elaine Wilkins and Ngozi Nnorom. (Photo courtesy of Tiana Tovar)



Pictured: Some of the beautiful art displays.

ARE YOU PREPARED?

In recognition of Earthquake Preparedness Month in California, please review these Seven Steps to Earthquake Safety:

Step 1: Secure it now: Conduct a "hazard hunt" to help identify and fix things such as unsecured televisions, computers, bookcases, furniture, unstrapped water heaters, etc. Securing these items now will help to protect you tomorrow.

Step 2: Make a plan: Planning for an earthquake or other emergency is not much different from planning for a party or vacation. Make sure that your emergency plan includes evacuation and reunion plans; your out-of-state contact person's name and number; the location of your emergency supplies and other pertinent information. By planning now, you will be ready for the next emergency.

Step 3: Make disaster kits: Everyone should have disaster supply kits stored in accessible locations at home, work and in their vehicle(s). Having emergency supplies readily available can reduce the impact of an earthquake. Your disaster supply kits should include food, water, flashlights, portable radios, batteries, a first aid kit, cash, extra medications, a whistle, fire extinguisher, etc.

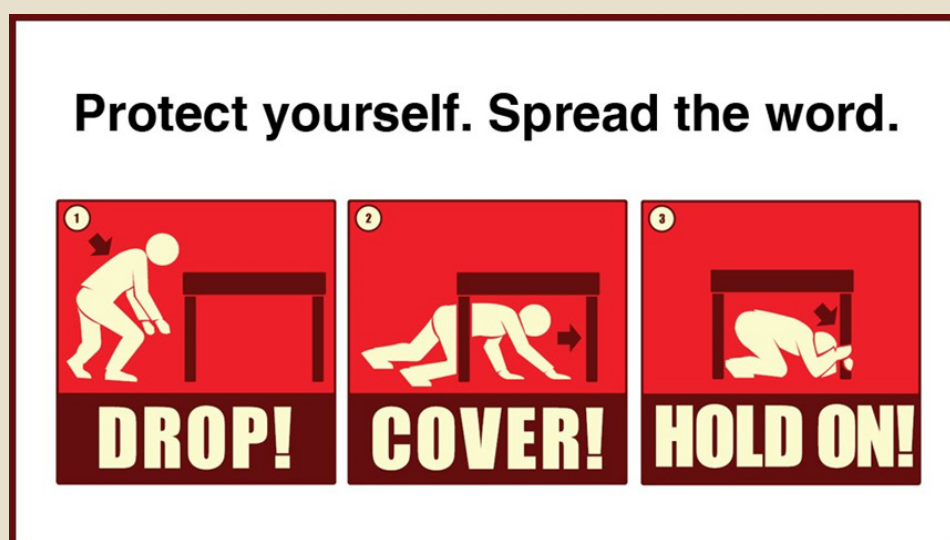
Step 4: Check if your place is safe: Most houses are not as safe as they could be. Whether you are a homeowner or a renter, there are things that you can do to improve the structural integrity of your home. If you are a homeowner, consider consulting a building contractor or professional to check your foundation, bracing and chimney for damage. If you rent, consider contacting your landlord/property owner and ask them questions such as: "What retrofitting has been done on this building?"; "Have the water heaters been strapped to the wall studs?"; "Can I secure furniture to the walls?"; etc.

Step 5: DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON: Learn what to do during an earthquake, whether you're at home, at work, at school or just out and about. Taking the proper actions, such as "Drop, Cover, and Hold On", can save lives and reduce your risk of death or injury. During earthquakes, drop to the floor, take cover under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it firmly. Be prepared to move with it until the shaking stops.

Step 6: Check it out: One of the first things you should do following a major disaster is to check for injuries and damages that need immediate attention. It's a good idea to get trained in minor first aid and in damage assessment techniques by identifying hazards such as damaged gas, water, sewage and electrical lines.

Step 7: Communicate and recover: Following a major disaster, communication will be an important step in your recovery efforts. Turn on your portable radio for information and safety advisories. If your home is damaged, contact your insurance agent right away to begin your claims process.

For more information on earthquake preparedness please visit: <http://www.earthquakecountry.info/alliance/index.html>, <http://www.readyoc.org>, <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/earthquake> and http://www.conservation.ca.gov/index/Earthquakes/Pages/qh_earthquakes_what.aspx



UPCOMING EVENTS

You are invited

TUSTIN FAMILY CAMPUS (TFC) Open House

Meet and tour TFC's five current providers:

- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation[^]-Admin Bldg.
Early Childhood Development Center/Child Care
- Olive Crest-Cottage A & B
Sibling Residential Homes
- Rite of Passage-Cottage C & D
Specialized Residential RCL 12 Youth Group Homes
- Transitional Housing Program/New Alternatives Inc.-Cottage E
Residential Units for emancipated foster & probation youth
- Prototypes-Cottage F & G
18-Month Residential Treatment for mothers and their children

Refreshments* to be provided.

*RSVP not required but appreciated to ensure adequate refreshments.

[^]Please note naptime for MAOF children will be from 12pm-2pm

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

11am-3pm

15405 Lansdowne Road

Tustin, CA 92782



Tustin Family Campus invites you to attend their upcoming Open House on Wednesday, April 18th from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Employees are allowed to attend on County time with supervisory approval. To view the full event flyer click [here](#).



Save the date! The 2018 FaCT Annual Conference will be held on Thursday, May 18, 2018 from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Great Wolf Lodge in Garden Grove. Explore effective programs and strategies to fully EMBRACE a growing and diverse Orange County. Keynote Speaker is Dr. Jaiya John, author, poet, and founder of Soul Water Rising.

For more information regarding the FaCT Conference, including breakout sessions and registration information, please visit FaCTOC.org/factconference. Registration is \$75; you can use Educational Reimbursement (EPRP) and County time to attend with supervisory approval. To view the full event flyer, [click here](#).



STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Pictured from left to right: Esmeralda Jimenez and Elena Valle.

The SSA Today Newsletter Committee is proud to introduce a new feature entitled, "Stories From The Field". "Stories From the Field" will highlight significant and impactful examples of employee interactions with the communities we serve. These stories will display the ways staff make a meaningful difference by illustrating what it means to be a public servant.

Senior Social Worker Esmeralda Jimenez and her supervisor, Senior Social Services Supervisor Elena Valle, shared an instance where they demonstrated Safety Organized Practice (SOP) and compassion for a family. Esmeralda was assigned case where the mother was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer and had declined treatment. The concern was that the mother was unable to care for her two teenagers, and the father was abusive.

Esmeralda approached her supervisor and expressed that she needed to treat this case differently; Elena supported Esmeralda in her effort. They gathered a team of SOP program experts and created a case plan that would specifically meet the needs of this family which included arranging an in-home therapist and Wraparound services. Esmeralda contacted her previous In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) supervisor to arrange for a home care provider and hospice worker. She was also

able to advocate for the teen daughter to attend winter formal and requested to use the Manchester Office Building's (MOB) café funds so she could attend. Esmeralda said none of this would have been possible without her supervisor's support. The mother was able to see her daughter dressed up and ready for the dance before she lost her battle with colon cancer. Elena and Esmeralda are now focusing on ensuring that the children are being cared for by other family members. **If you have a story that you would like to share, we want to hear from you! Send an email to SSAToday@ssa.ocgov.com. The story does not have to be recent, but please ensure that confidentiality is maintained.**

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

Diana LaRusso, Administrative Manager I (AMI), Administrative Services Division

AMI Diana LaRusso leads the effort to train volunteers from SSA and local jurisdictions to respond to disaster relief shelters and work on the Functional Assessment Services "FAST" Team and the Child Friendly Spaces "CFS" Team. She recently received these kind words of appreciation from Eligibility Technician Raymond Saylor on his experience attending the recent training:

"I wish to thank everyone for their efforts shown during the Functional Shelter Exercise training. You were prepared, knowledgeable, energized and willing. I had a little trepidation leading up to this exercise, that I/we may come off as a little confused as this is our first exercise together, but I was overwhelmingly impressed with ALL of your knowledge and energy. Thank you for giving a part of your weekend to practice what Diana has put together for us. Thank you Diana for your diligence and being there."



BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



Monica Ortega, Senior Social Worker (SSW), Children and Family Services

Congratulations to SSW Monica Ortega who was recently recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for February. Here is an example of Monica's selfless work:

"Monica distinctly illustrates the core values of our agency. She is someone with great integrity, collaborating with all as she demonstrates the utmost respect towards every single person. In particular, it is her compassion for others that is clearly remarkable and inspiring. It is something that can be noticed each and every time."

Congratulations

Marjie Rose-Hollins, Social Worker II (SWII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (Not Pictured)

SWII Marjie Rose-Hollins recently received this note of appreciation from a grateful client:

"I wanted to thank you for your kindness and help you have given me and my family. Just wanted you folks to know I really appreciate it while I still can do so. The world needs more people like yourself and the other case workers. If it did, this would be a much better place for everyone. Thank you again for everything!"

James Czadek, Eligibility Technician (ET), Assistance Programs

ET James Czadek recently received these kind words of gratitude from a client as re-told by an Eligibility Supervisor:

"She had called to report the passing of her sister, and although still very upset wanted to ensure that the supervisors were aware of how [attentive] James was, and how much his compassion and professionalism meant to her. She expressed her gratitude for having had James as his sisters' assigned worker."



BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



Federico Vindigni, Eligibility Technician (ET), Assistance Programs

ET Federico Vindigni's recently received these kind words of gratitude from a client as re-told by his supervisor, Eligibility Supervisor Claire Jackson:

"Federico was very professional and knowledgeable during our call. He patiently explained the answers to my many questions making sure that I understood."

Dawn Boersma, Social Worker II (SWII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (Not pictured)

SWII Dawn Boersma recently received this note of appreciation from a grateful client:

"We want to thank Mrs. Dawn because she is very helpful and very kind to me and my wife and always listens to us carefully. She never gives us bad feelings because of our language even though I always ask her to repeat words. She is always accepting. Thank you very much, Mrs. Dawn. God bless you and your family."

Miguel Bahena, Eligibility Technician (ET), Assistance Programs

ET Miguel Bahena received these kind words of gratitude from Administrative Manager I Connie Gonzalez for his attentiveness in assisting a client:

"I want to acknowledge the great collaboration and fast action taken by AVRC ET, Miguel Bahena. Miguel received a request for urgent assistance from Medi-Cal Policy and benefits for this client were immediately restored. He completed an EW 15 and corrected the administrative error. The state Ombudsman representative was able to let the client know that she can now get the urgent medical services that she needs. This immediate action was greatly appreciated by the Ombudsman representative that is currently assisting this client. Thank you for your help with this urgent request for assistance!"



Douglas Howerton, Social Worker II (SWII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII Douglas Howerton recently received this note of appreciation from a grateful client:

"I was skeptical being placed in a job, but I think I am happier at this place than anywhere I have worked in a while. Thank you for always being helpful Mr. Howerton. It's really appreciated."

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



Stacey Lindberg, Administrative Manager II (AMII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

AMII Stacey Lindberg recently received these kind words of gratitude from Callie Freitag of the County Welfare Directors Association:

"I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate Stacey Lindberg. She was essential in pulling together the information that has become Senate Bill (SB) 1093, our license plate confidentiality bill. She was applauded yesterday at our meeting because she had the guts and competence to go after something they all have been wanting for awhile – and succeeded. She is organized, responsive and respected."

Lupe Gonzalez, Social Services Supervisor I (SSSI), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SSSI Lupe Gonzalez recently received these kind words of appreciation from Social Services Supervisor I Betty Maldonado and Administrative Manager II Liz Rivera for her assistance during a staff shortage:

"Lupe, you have been gracious in taking phone calls and walking our staff through the registration process. Many would not have been able to access the Work Number without your assistance. You are valued and very much appreciated by our staff."

"Great job, Lupe. Thanks so much for your flexibility and willingness to always assist with our internal and external partner needs."



Kenia Quintana, Social Services Supervisor I (SSSI), Administrative Services Division

SSSI Kenia Quintana's Supervisor, Edwin Crow, recently received this letter of gratitude from a client:

"I find myself in need often of having to deal with various government agencies. Your employee Kenia Quintana contacted me because we had a special need in which I filed an appeal to be heard. I was extremely impressed that Kenia spent so much time and effort to [explain] all the related and unique [resources]. Although I was not eligible for continued Medi-Cal, I felt [comfortable] with her level of knowledge. She also took the time to research IHSS resources for me. In times that supervisors only hear when something has gone wrong, I wanted to make sure you knew of Ms. Quintana's fine work and assistance. Thank you!"

Karina Avalos, Continuing Employment and Eligibility Specialist (CEES), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (Not pictured)

CEES Karina Avalos recently received this note of appreciation from a grateful client:

"I want to express my appreciation for your assistance. I am truly grateful for your guidance in navigating this difficult transition for my family and it is a big relief for my mom who is taking care of my sister's two children. Your professionalism and efficiency set the bar high for all public service employees. Thank you again!"

THE EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY PROGRAM

In August 2016, SSA's Training and Career Development established the Educational Advisory Committee in order to develop a new, comprehensive Educational Advisory Program (EdAP). The purpose of EdAP is to encourage, assist and coach employees who are pursuing or planning to pursue their higher educational goals. The program supports SSA's goal of providing employees with opportunities for professional development and growth. EdAP was officially authorized by SSA's leadership in early 2018.

In 2017, the committee sent out the first Educational Advisory Survey to all SSA staff. The survey results presented vital information to the committee, which were enlightening and indicated that 60% of all staff is interested in higher education. Additionally, the survey results indicated that the number one reason for pursuing higher education is for personal enrichment. Research shows that employees with a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree have increased their opportunities for promotion. Staff who are pursuing their higher education, or are contemplating doing so, will benefit from the support provided by the EdAP program that will foster success and better prepare them for promotional opportunities or for new roles/program assignments. This program aligns with SSA's efforts for succession development and staff retention.

EdAP can assist in leveraging internal and external resources to coach, support and facilitate a positive experience among staff who are attending academic programs while working concurrently. This program pairs Participants with Educational Coaches (ECs) who have experienced the challenges of balancing work/life while pursuing their higher education. The ECs will assist staff with exploring their educational options such as offering information about colleges and universities, introducing staff to school representatives, financial aid, admission processes, programs such as CalSWEC, public speaking programs such as Toastmasters, resource fairs, trainings, Lunch N Learn information seminars and the Educational and Professional Reimbursement Program (EPRP). For more information about the Educational Advisory committee please email EDAPInbox@ssa.ocgov.com.



SSA PROMOTIONS

Employee Name	Title	Division
AHMATH, MAGUL	GROUP COUNSELOR II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
BECERRA, ASHLEY	INFORMATION PROCESSING TECHNICIAN	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
HERTENSTEIN, TRACY	SECRETARY II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
MGBEKE, ETOOM	GROUP COUNSELOR II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
MOTHERSHED, KRISTAL	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
ORTEGA, MONICA	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
TEJEDA, TERESA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
VILLAFANA, GUILLERMO	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
ZAPIEN, YESENIA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR II	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SSA EXECUTIVE MEET & GREETINGS

The SSA Executive Team looks forward to seeing you at your office this year at their annual Meet & Greet! To submit questions in advance of the Meet & Greet, please email the Executive Team at directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com and indicate which Meet & Greet you will be attending in your email. Please see the schedule below for upcoming Meet & Greet:



Location	Date	Time
OCFC - 401 The City Drive, Orange, Classroom 5	3/29/2018	1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
AVRC - 115 Columbia, Aliso Viejo, Room 228	4/3/2018	10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

IN MEMORIAM

SSA would like to recognize the recent passing of two retired SSA employees. Please keep their family and friends in your thoughts during this difficult time.

Anna Marie Marquez - Secretary I, Children and Family Services, 11 years of service

Dane Clark - Employment and Eligibility Specialist, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services, 25 years of service



LOOKING TO PROMOTE?

Please click on the link below to see the list of current job openings within the County of Orange.

www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oc



CONNECT WITH US!



www.twitter/OrangeCountySSA



www.facebook/OCSSA1

SSA Today is distributed monthly by SSA's Strategic Communications, Legislation, and Policy Team (SCLPT) and is published by the SSA Today Newsletter Committee. To contact the committee, please email:

Marco Rodriguez - SSA Today Coordinator
SSAToday@ssa.ocgov.com

Do you have questions or comments for the SSA Executive Team? Email questions, comments or suggestions to: directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com