

# OCSSA TODAY

Respect · Compassion · Fairness · **Courtesy** · Diversity · Creativity · Initiative · Efficiency · Integrity · Teamwork · Thoroughness

## SSA STAFF PERFORM ARMORY OUTREACH

By Juan Plascencia, Eligibility Supervisor; Maria Rojas, Social Services Supervisor I; and Catherine Garrett, Administrative Manager I

With the beginning of winter and a drop in temperatures comes a need for shelter for some of the county's neediest residents. Last December, the County announced the opening of the Cold Weather Armory Emergency Shelter located at the National Guard facilities in Santa Ana and Fullerton. The Orange County Armory Emergency Shelter program annually provides up to 400 beds per night for homeless men, women and some families. Every evening, homeless individuals receive a hot meal, a warm shower and a safe place to sleep. Donations of clothing, blankets and personal hygiene items are distributed to those in need. Nonprofit organizations offer drug and alcohol addiction counseling as well as health and mental health services.



For the past several years, SSA staff members have had the opportunity to assist at both Armory locations. For the 2018–2019 season, the County made the decision to open the Santa Ana and Fullerton Armories to single adults only. Central Regional Office (CRO) is responsible for the coordination of staff to assist at both Armory locations every Tuesday evening from 7:00 to 9:00 PM during the emergency shelter season. Both locations serve men and women who are living on the streets and are vulnerable to crime and abuse.

So far this season, eligibility staff have assisted over 100 individuals at both



**Pictured:** Marisol Romero and Desiree Reyes, two of SSA's employees at the Armory

Armories, offering paper applications for Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits and information to customers on ways to apply for aid through MyBenefits CalWIN—an online application service. Staff also provide information to clients on the various programs SSA offers as well as support in transferring cases from other counties to Orange County, directing clients to appropriate offices for services, relaying messages to workers, handing out fliers with food, housing and clothing resources, and setting up appointments to engage clients in employment opportunities through the CalFresh Employment and Training Specialist.

Some of the feedback received from staff participating in this outreach effort includes appreciation for seeing how communities and agencies come together and how SSA staff display professionalism, commitment and eagerness to serve others. Aside from handing out information and resources, staff often find themselves listening to the clients' stories about their lives and how they ended up at the Armory. They are always trying to assess the clients on how they can be better served.

Thank you to all SSA staff who are taking part in this outreach, displaying truly our value of courtesy and providing accessible, responsive, and quality customer service to this vulnerable population in the community!

## CONTENTS

SSA Spotlight: Excellence in Service	<a href="#">2</a>
Meet SSA's Leadership Development Team, Part 1	<a href="#">3</a>
March's Core Value: Teamwork	<a href="#">3</a>
SSA Volunteers Join Countywide Point in Time Count	<a href="#">4</a>
Stories From the Field: Act of Compassion	<a href="#">4</a>
SSA Shows Courtesy with Some Red for February!	<a href="#">5</a>
Operation Santa Claus Drive Winds Down	<a href="#">6</a>
Employee Educational Journeys in SSA	<a href="#">6</a>
SSA's Annual Report	<a href="#">7</a>
Black History Month Celebrations	<a href="#">7</a>
2019 FaCT Conference: "Reframe"	<a href="#">8</a>
Emergency Operations Center Drill	<a href="#">9</a>
SSA Appoints New Civil Rights Coordinator	<a href="#">9</a>
Meet SSA's Leadership Development Team, Part 2	<a href="#">10</a>
Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action	<a href="#">10</a>
SSA Promotions	<a href="#">13</a>
SSA Today Quiz	<a href="#">14</a>
SSA Executive Meet & Greets	<a href="#">14</a>
Connect with Us!	<a href="#">14</a>

# SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

## SANTA ANA REGIONAL CENTER'S HELP CENTER UNIT



**Back row:** Claudia Bayron, Laura Trujillo, Adriana Newman, Jorge "Tony" Gutierrez, Vanessa Ricot

**Middle row:** Marisela Palacio, Teresa Tejada, Yvonne Delgado, Lizbeth Salinas, Michelle Mai, Brian Gonzalez

**Front row:** Maggie Paz and Nestor Hernandez

**Not pictured:** Teresa Rojas

When was the last time you heard of a single unit of Eligibility Technicians (ETs) helping over 22,300 customers in a year? It definitely is not common, but the ETs of the Help Center Unit at the Santa Ana Regional Center (SARC) did exactly that this past year! Established in 2015, SARC's Help Center Unit assists an average of over 1,800 Medi-Cal customers in the office per month, and it is all done with courtesy, compassion and a commitment to providing excellent customer service.

After the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), many customers came to SARC requesting assistance with understanding the new ACA information and the forms they were receiving. In an attempt to quickly but efficiently answer ACA questions and help with filling out new forms, SARC implemented the Help Center Unit. This special unit began with a rudimentary setup that consisted of folding tables and chairs, with no accessible

computer system in the room and one copying machine. To assist with increasing daily customer demands, the Help Center has now evolved to a fully operational area with computers for unit members to help with eligibility on the spot. Additionally, the center has nine computers on a public network available for customers to use when selecting health insurance plans or downloading/printing verifications for both the Medi-Cal and CalFresh programs. The unit consists of ETs and supervisors who primarily focus on helping customers with forms assistance, eligibility questions, Covered California plan selection and Benefit Identification Card (BIC) issuance.

SARC's Help Center ETs have learned to work at a very fast pace while paying careful attention to detail to avoid customers having to return to the office for the same issue. They are known for their excellent customer service skills and their eagerness to help customers. When asked what they enjoyed about the heavy customer contact and fast-paced environment of this specialized unit, the ETs' number one answer was a feeling of accomplishment. They enjoy the instant gratification of seeing a customer leave with the confidence that they have the best possible coverage for their families. The pride they take in their customer service and program knowledge is easily evident in the reaction from our customers. One customer shared, "My worker was amazing; I was so scared I would make the wrong choice and not have the correct insurance for my chemo, but now I am sure that what I picked will cover my needs and also be the least expensive insurance plan for my family and me. Thank you!" Another customer stated, "Coming to the Social Services Agency office can be intimidating; my worker treated me with respect and made me feel better at a time when I needed it most." Comments such as these are the kinds of feedback that continue to make the Help Center a great place for customers and an even greater place for staff to work in.

If you have questions or would like more information about SARC's Help Center, please call (714) 435-7209.

**Thank you to SARC's Help Center Unit for your hard work and service to the community, and congratulations on being recognized as the SSA Spotlight for February 2019!**

# MEET SSA'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM, PART 1

**Name:** Tricia Smith

**Title:** Deputy Division Director (temporary), Agency Administration/Professional Standards and Operations

**Areas covered in your position:** Training and Career Development, Program Integrity, Facilities and Emergency Management Services and Centralized Operations

**Years of Service with the County of Orange:** 20

**Divisions worked/previous experience:** I began my career with the County of Orange as a Senior Social Worker in the Children and Family Services (CFS) Adoptions program. I rotated to Contract Services where I worked on the CFS Contracts Team for three years. I later promoted to Senior Social Services Supervisor in CFS' Policy and Development Unit and then rotated to the role of Assistant to the CFS Division Director. While in this position, I promoted to Administrative Manager I and also managed CFS' Foster and Development Recruitment Team. When the Quality Support Team (QST) was developed, I joined as the Public Inquiries Coordinator. I then rotated positions within QST and managed the Quality Assurance program until 2016, when I promoted to Administrative Manager II overseeing QST. I'm happy to now be taking on my newest assignment as the temporary Deputy Division Director of Professional Standards and Operations.




**Fun fact about you (hobby, favorite food, movie, sports team, etc.):** I grew up in the Bay Area and still try to go back to visit a few times a year. I enjoy spending my free time with my husband and two young kids. We love taking road trips, boating, going to our favorite sushi restaurant, spending time with our friends and throwing parties at our house. My hobby is photography and I am the team photographer for my kids' sports teams.

**Professional development tips for staff:** Be proactive in your professional development. Take on new challenges and be open to new opportunities, even if means stepping out of your comfort zone. Take advantage of learning from mentors, whether it be formally or informally. I have been very fortunate in my career with SSA to have learned so much over the years from mentors that I admire.

## MARCH'S CORE VALUE: TEAMWORK

By Jordyn Lett, Staff Specialist



**“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”**

- Phil Jackson

Have you ever heard the phrase, “It takes a village?” Well, that’s the first thing that comes to mind when I think of teamwork. Teamwork is working with others to complete a task or accomplish a goal. It is important to recognize when a task is too big for one person and to ask for help when you need it. By working together, teams can find solutions that work best to solve problems.

Many of us recently watched the New England Patriots defeat the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl LIII. When people think about the New England Patriots, they usually think about players like Tom Brady or Julian Edelman or Rob Gronkowski, but the truth is every single player on the roster is just as important as these three players. In order for the Patriots to win the Super Bowl, they needed the players on defense to stop the Rams from scoring and they needed their offensive line to hold off the Rams defense to allow the Patriots to score points. The coaches and sideline personnel also had very important roles on the team. The coaches developed the plays and communicated them to the quarterback. The players on the sideline had to stay focused on the game and be ready to go in at any moment. The injury personnel had to be ready in case of an injury to a player and find the best way to get the player off the field without worsening the injury. Each person had a specific role and all had to work together as a team to win the game.

Employees at SSA require teamwork in order to provide the best services to our internal and external customers. Relying on other staff members allows us to build relationships with the individuals we work with on a daily basis. Teamwork requires communication and trust. Just like the Patriots, each person at SSA has a specific role and we have to work together as a team to accomplish tasks and achieve our goals. The ability to communicate effectively and work with other staff members to accomplish a goal represents our Agency’s core value of Teamwork.

We are stronger when we work together. Let’s all practice teamwork by working together to provide the best services possible to the community we serve.

# SSA VOLUNTEERS JOIN COUNTYWIDE POINT IN TIME COUNT

By Kasey Spatz, Social Services Supervisor I



**Pictured:** Volunteers congregate after an early morning shift

Clipboards in hand, more than 1,000 volunteers took to the streets in late January to conduct the countywide Point in Time count. This event surveyed people experiencing homelessness in order to assist the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in providing statistics for future funding and to address housing shortages.

Donna Garza, Social Services Supervisor I with Program Integrity, was one of those volunteers who donated her early morning hours to scour her team's assigned area of Santa Ana to interview individuals without shelter. The team of 20 was also accompanied by law enforcement for possible safety reasons. Donna's role was that of a Field Surveyor, where she would approach individuals

she could locate and then ask and record responses to a set of approximately 30 interview questions. Anyone contacted received a hygiene kit which the volunteers carried in their backpacks; however, those who were willing to complete the interview also received a one-day bus pass for their time. "I was surprised that these individuals were so receptive and understanding to the process," Donna remarked as she recalled her experience.



**Pictured:** Volunteers conduct an interview in Santa Ana near the historic Ebell Club

Tassiana Mervilus, Senior Social Services Supervisor with the Quality Support Team, also participated in this outreach effort, serving as a Team Captain of four Field Surveyors who surveyed their assigned area during the evening hours.

According to Tassiana, some of the questions on the survey delved into rather personal topics, which offered "a real perspective of unsheltered homeless individuals, including a military veteran. There are stories behind all of the faces of homelessness." She expressed that the event was well-organized, from the online training to the check-in/check-out process, and that this volunteer experience was something that she always wanted to do and would recommend other staff to participate in the future.

For both Donna and Tassiana, it was quite the effort to access some of these encampments, but the first-hand experience gained in the process was overwhelmingly rewarding. When asked if they would volunteer again, Donna and Tassiana both said, "In a heartbeat."

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD: ACT OF COMPASSION

By Kimberly Rivas, Eligibility Technician



During a fire drill at the Cypress Regional Center on December 6, 2018, I witnessed several SSA employees (Idalia Parra, Jorge Ramos, JoAnn Mugica and Julia Luft) exemplify an act of kindness and compassion. There was a client who was sitting by herself, shivering from the cold and rain; she looked confused, overwhelmed and helpless. The lady did not seem well at all. I saw Idalia approach her and the client began to cry. Idalia then hugged her. Jorge saw that the client was extremely cold, as she was shivering uncontrollably, so he took the sweater he was wearing and placed it around the client's back; however, it did not cover the client completely, so JoAnn took her sweater off and gave it to the

client to provide extra warmth. At that point, someone went to get Julia, who immediately went to assess the client in the cold weather conditions. She just jumped right into action. It was very windy and JoAnn gave them her big umbrella to act as a shield against the wind and rain.

I decided to write this article because I was walking through the breakroom and saw that the core value being celebrated for the month of December was Compassion. Idalia, Jorge, JoAnn and Julia all acted without hesitation and demonstrated compassion to the client. They acted quickly and effectively. It's definitely an admirable act, and I feel blessed and inspired by them.

# SSA SHOWS COURTESY WITH SOME RED FOR FEBRUARY!



# OPERATION SANTA CLAUS DRIVE WINDS DOWN

By Mary Sanchez, Administrative Manager I

While the Operation Santa Claus (OSC) season of 2018 may have concluded for the majority of us, the season is barely winding down for the employees of SSA's Centralized Operations. In fact, they are still receiving holiday donations through February. Overall, this season has been very successful. SSA locations, in collaboration with the Heart of SSA Compassion activity in December, donated over 36 boxes of needed items to OSC. This represented an increase over last year's contributions and provides a significant benefits to the community we serve. The 2018 OSC drive results reflected the following:

- Over 18,700 children benefitted from the generosity of OSC donors and volunteers.
- Over 40,800 gifts were distributed, including toys, bicycles, electronics, clothing, stuffed animals, stocking stuffers, books and more.
- Over 230 community volunteers generously donated their time, some serving



- multiple shifts. This does not include the numerous SSA staff volunteers.
- In addition to SSA, children and families served by the Health Care Agency, OC Community Resources, Child Support Services and Orange County Probation were recipients of this important donation drive.



**Pictured:** Dene Andrea (left) and Alin Buna experience the joy of donating to OSC

For the 2019 season, the Centralized Operations team hopes to increase public awareness in order to generate even more donations and create greater access to the resources available through OSC.

Thank you all for exhibiting compassion and generosity in donating items to OSC and for volunteering to support this effort! Congratulations and kudos to the OSC coordinators and Centralized Operations for their hard work, diligence and commitment to the needs of our vulnerable children in Orange County.

## EMPLOYEE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS IN SSA

### Mario Bustos

Administrative Manager II  
Assistance Programs Division



My current educational goal is to complete the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) program at the University of California, Irvine, in June 2020. Also, I seek to continue applying the concepts and tools I am learning to my current position of Regional Manager in the Assistance Programs division. What I've enjoyed most is the ability to immediately apply what I am learning in school to my work at SSA.

### TIP

Balancing work, school, and family is challenging so allow yourself time to adjust, reflect and celebrate along the way.

The most significant challenge I've experienced while in graduate school is balancing work, school and life activities. Being fully employed, having the same personal responsibilities

most of us do, and going to school can push you to your limit. One way I opted to handle this challenge was by enrolling in a hybrid graduate program, where half of my school activities are in-class and the other half are online.

In November 2017, I was privileged to be offered a promotion to Administrative Manager II at SSA. I am confident that this and many other opportunities are a result of both completing my undergraduate studies and taking this next challenge to earn an MBA through the UCI-Orange County Fellowship program.

# SSA'S FY 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Communications, Legislation and Policy Team (SCLPT) is pleased to announce the release of SSA's Annual Report for the 2017-18 Fiscal Year! The report highlights the agency's accomplishments and initiatives and shares positive impacts SSA has made to the community as a whole, serving over one in four county residents.

Among SSA's efforts highlighted are the increased homeless outreach services, expanded food access with the Restaurant Meals Program and family strengthening services through our Families and Communities Together (FaCT) Family Resource Centers.

To read the full report, click [here](#).



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATIONS



Earlier this month, the Multicultural Advisory Committee's (MCAC) African American Roundtable (AAR) hosted their annual Black History Month celebrations, beginning with a Lunch and Learn at the Annex Auditorium on February 13. The auditorium was filled to capacity with SSA staff who were treated to a lunch meal of hot dogs, popcorn, drinks and dessert along with an educational discussion and viewing of the movie, "Hidden Figures," about the amazing contributions of three African American women to the United States' space program during the 1960s. Denise Churchill, Deputy Division Director, offered words of acknowledgment and gratitude to the AAR committee, sharing, "The display of information, the showing of Hidden Figures movie, the lunch and movie snacks, and the history discussion was all meaningful and well-received."

On February 20, the AAR hosted the Black History Learning Event at the Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC). The OCFC gym was transformed into a festive setting featuring posters

designed by the current and former children at OCFC. The event kicked off with a performance by the OCFC Youth Dance Troupe, led by OCFC's Ngozi Nnorom, Social Services Supervisor I, followed by musical performances of the Star-Spangled Banner and the song "Lift Every Voice and Sing" by three of the children at OCFC. The children and participating staff then broke out into mini group sessions, taking part in dramatic storytelling by Dream Shaper's Ina Buckner-Barnette, an interactive talk with former NFL player Chris Draft and a history lesson with Elaine Wilkins and Alison Conard. The program concluded with a Southern cooking-inspired dinner that included pork ribs, mac and cheese, greens, oxtail stew, plantains, sweet potatoes, cornbread and a variety of desserts.



**AAR committee from left to right:** Alison Conard, Elaine Wilkins, China Neal, Rose Draft and Cheryl Alexander

The African American Roundtable would like to thank all of those who helped bring these events to life and those who participated and supported these efforts! Your participation and support did not go unnoticed!

For more information about the MCAC and AAR, click [here](#).



**Left to right:** Ina Buckner-Barnette, Chris Draft and Elaine Wilkins conduct their breakout sessions with children and staff



**Left to right:** Guillermina (GiGi) Lewis, Norma Diaz, Yolanda Correa and Sophea Mao

**Left to right:** Cheryl Alexander and Ngozi Nnorom

# REFRAME

*Changing the Way We View Our Work*

*Each of us experiences the world in a different way.*

Join us at the 2019 FaCT Conference for a robust discussion that will challenge us to “reframe” our thinking about how and why we serve.

## Breakout Sessions

*Full Descriptions at [FaCTOC.org/FaCTConference](http://FaCTOC.org/FaCTConference)*

**The Journey Home:**  
*Seeking Shelter in Orange County*

**Out of Place:**  
*Existing as a Foster Youth*

**Trauma:**  
*Yours, Mine, and Ours*

**Divergence:**  
*Rethinking the Justice System*

**Head Above Water:**  
*Navigating the Mental Health System  
While Struggling with Illness*

**The Sacrifices of Service:**  
*The Unique Experiences of Military  
Members and their families*

**Thursday, May 16, 2019**  
**8:00 AM - 4:00 PM**  
**Great Wolf Lodge**  
**12681 Harbor Blvd.**  
**Garden Grove, CA 92840**

**Registration: \$110**  
**Register at [FaCTOC.org/FaCTConference](http://FaCTOC.org/FaCTConference)**

*SSA Employees May Use Tuition Reimbursement  
(EPRP) and County Time to Attend!*



Families and Communities Together (FaCT) is a public-private partnership program supported by the County of Orange Social Services Agency



# EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER DRILL

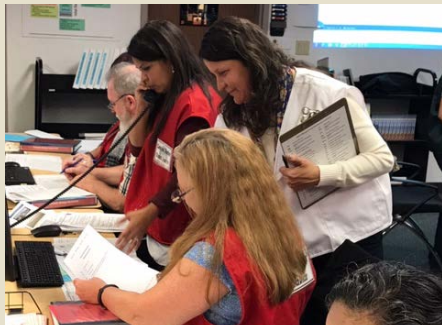
By Delcie Hynes, Administrative Manager I

On January 31, the County held its yearly Emergency Operations Center (EOC) functional exercise. The scenario was a major earthquake impacting all of Orange County and over 130 County staff members participated in a variety of capacities; from exercise players and controllers/evaluators, to observers and other guests, there was definitely a full house at the EOC. Participants from SSA included:

- Agency Director Debra Baetz who filled our seat in the Command (Policy) Room and was part of discussion and decisions impacting all County agencies at the executive (or “command”) level.
- Division Director An Tran who observed in Command and, as one of the SSA Policy Team members who has responded a number of times during real world events, was available to assist as necessary.
- Madeline Hernandez and Norean Lubchenko filled our Care and Shelter Branch Director and Assistant Branch Director seats in the Operations Room where they managed and coordinated Mass Care and Shelter for the County. Leading a group of partners from the Orange County Department of Education, OC Animal Care and American Red Cross, they worked to address the care and shelter needs of the community.
- Debbi Romero-Holman served as the Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) Group Supervisor coordinating with, and assisting, a number of groups within the EOC to ensure that persons with disabilities or other access or functional needs were being considered during all decision making.



**Pictured:** SSA Director Debra Baetz joins other County staff in the command center



**Pictured:** Diana LaRusso provides assistance to Norean Lubchenko and Madeline Hernandez

- Mayra Wheeler worked as the Situation Analysis Support Staff (SASS) Supervisor, overseeing a team of staff responsible for gathering, analyzing and vetting important information impacting County agencies.
- Delcie Hynes and Diana LaRusso from SSA Emergency Management served as controllers/evaluators in Operations. They helped to guide exercise play among the Care and Shelter Group, answered questions and offered suggestions and guidance when necessary and evaluated the overall success of the exercise documenting all they observed throughout the day.

Functional exercises take months of planning and coordination in order to ensure a successful and productive experience for all. The goal of these exercises is always to test the processes in place that guide how we respond to emergencies and disasters. On the day of the exercise, players were asked to arrive in the early morning hours (in the cold and pouring rain) and spend an entire day away from their normal duties. They were asked to focus on a scenario designed to stretch them to their limits and test their ability to problem solve and they did so with great success! Without a team of dedicated responders committed not only to the success of the exercise but willing to engage in play and act as if they are responding to a real world event we would not be successful in our efforts. Thank you to everyone who spent the day testing our capacity to respond efficiently, effectively and with compassion in order to ensure Orange County is prepared to meet the needs of our community during a disaster.

## SSA APPOINTS NEW CIVIL RIGHTS COORDINATOR

Effective March 22, 2019, Stacy Lee, Administrative Manager II, will be rotating to Program Integrity to serve as the new Civil Rights Coordinator for SSA.

The Civil Rights Coordinator monitors and facilitates compliance with Division 21, which puts into effect the provisions of the following laws: To ensure that the administration of public assistance and social services programs are nondiscriminatory and that no person shall, because of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, marital status, sex, age, disability or sexual orientation, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal or state financial assistance. Another important duty is the investigation of discrimination complaints, whether the complaints are made against individual employees, the agency or any of our contracted service providers. Finally, the coordinator is responsible for providing training and guidance to all staff, to prevent civil rights violations and complaints.

The Civil Rights Coordinator will be located at 1928 South Grand Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92705, and can be reached at (714) 438-8877.



# MEET SSA'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM, PART 2



**Name:** Sumit Sapra

**Title:** Deputy Division Director, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services/Divisional and Regional Operations

**Areas covered in your position:** Divisional Operations and CalWORKs/Welfare-To-Work, Foster Care Eligibility and Adult Services Regional Operations

**Years of Service with the County of Orange:** 19.5 years

**Divisions worked/previous experience:** I began my career with the County of Orange as a Medi-Cal Eligibility Technician in 1999 in the Adult Services & Assistance Programs (now known as Assistance Programs) division. I transitioned to the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) (now FSS & Adult Services) division and served as an Employment and Eligibility Specialist (Ongoing Services Worker) and Social Worker II (Initial Services Worker). I promoted to Social

Services Supervisor I, supporting the FSS Program Compliance Team. As an Administrative Manager I, I served in the role of CalWIN Manager in the Administrative Services division; Assistant Program Manager in FSS Operations, AP Operations and the CalWIN System Support Team; and Assistant Regional Manager at CalWORKs North Region. As an Administrative Manager II, I served as Regional Manager for CalWORKs South Region, Program Manager for the FSS Policy and Quality Assurance (PQA) team, and most recently as Program Manager for Program Integrity before receiving a promotion to my current role as Deputy Division Director in FSS & AS.

**Fun facts about you (hobby, favorite food, movie, sports team, etc.):** I was born in New Delhi, India and travel back to see my family when able. My family and I love to travel and make it a point to stop along the way to help break up the journey and see new places around the globe. If you live in Orange County, there is a good chance you will catch my wife and me with our three loving and energetic children at local parks playing sports, enjoying our beautiful OC beaches, shopping around town or eating at our favorite spots. I am a diehard fan of the Lakers! Although it has been a tough few years, I am looking forward to seeing our team get back to making another run for a championship soon!

**Professional development tips for staff:** I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve in a variety of roles in my journey with SSA and have tremendously benefited from learning from great servant leaders. What I would like to pass on to our interested readers is to remember that learning is a lifelong process. If you see someone do something well, take note of it, learn from it, and most importantly—apply it. When you see things not go well, also take note of it and make sure that you learn from those situations so that you do not repeat the same mistakes. Seek out feedback and opportunities, even if it feels uncomfortable. Always know that you have the ability to make changes to things that are in your control to help demonstrate your leadership. Maintain genuineness and authenticity so that who YOU are can shine!

## BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

### Richard Le and Ngan Phan, Senior Accounting Assistants (SAAs)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

A provider from the In-Home Supportive Services program recently contacted Social Services Supervisor II Kim Don Nguyen to share that that SAAs Richard Le and Ngan Phan were "very courteous, helpful, provided good work and were very understanding with her tax inquiries."

Thank you Richard and Ngan for your great customer service!



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## Lucy Solorzano, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Children and Family Services (not pictured)

SSW Natalia Gonzalez recently shared the following words of appreciation to SSW Lucy Solorzano:

*"I want to show my appreciation and gratitude because you always go above and beyond when it comes to helping our youth succeed, especially when it comes to their education. Thank you for getting in contact with the school district and helping me navigate the system, which in return allowed me to have my client transferred between schools. The client was becoming involved in a gang and despite his excellent academics, he was going down a really bad path full of really bad choices. He was in detention every day. Because you helped me intervene, the client is now at a school that not only will help him succeed academically, but change his whole world perspective. Due to this school change the client will now be seen as a straight A Honors student, versus the gang affiliated foster youth, and it is all thanks to you."*

## Ruth Franco, Employment and Eligibility Specialist (EES)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

Intake EES Ruth Franco of Laguna Hills Regional Center recently received the following note from a client:

*"Ruth goes beyond helping...she communicates so clearly and helped me understand everything easily. She is positive, kind and a pleasure to work with. She works hard to help and goes the extra mile to assist."*



## Izamar Herrera, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs

ET Izamar Herrera, a call agent at Orange's Call and Processing Center, was recently acknowledged by a customer for her great customer service with the following words:

*"I was in a really bad mood. Ms. Herrera treated me with kindness and did not rush me. She made me feel as though I mattered. She resolved my problem and was very understanding."*

Eligibility Supervisor Mohammad Siddique also added: *"Thank you, Izamar, for representing SSA so well and for displaying the core values of compassion, respect, courtesy and thoroughness in your interaction with this customer."*



## Nadia Adams, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs

Social Services Supervisor I Stacey Olivencia recently shared the following comment regarding ET Nadia Adams:

*"A customer called to make sure that Nadia Adams got the recognition she deserved. The customer expressed concern over the federal shutdown and was very pleased with the explanation Nadia provided. She was able to calm and reassure the customer, and she was grateful that Nadia took the time to answer her questions. She said Nadia is fantastic! Thank you Nadia!"*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## Lilian Carmona, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Children and Family Services

SSW Lilian Carmona was recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for January 2019. The following comments were shared about Lilian from fellow staff:

*"You truly went above and beyond with this family!"*

*"We couldn't be happier to have you as a part of our Emergency Response team."*

*"Thank you for writing such a wonderful piece on our Core Value of Thoroughness to kick off SSA's Core Value Campaign. You did a GREAT job introducing thoroughness and tying its importance to the jobs we do every day. It was also fun to read the article about how you achieved your education. You are a WONDERFUL example to your children and your colleagues!"*

*"It really helped knowing there are workers like Lilian available and willing to help!!"*



## Claudia Kavetsky, Office Assistant (OA)/Agency Administration

Training and Career Development (TCD) recently presented OA Claudia Kavetsky with their Total Customer Dedication Award and notable title of "Employee of the Quarter" for demonstrating her exceptional talents and resourcefulness at TCD in supporting her administrative team, training teams and agency collaborations. Here are some comments shared by her peers:

*"Claudia has been recognized at many all staff meetings for her patience and willingness to assist with room reservations. Along with this, she is known for jumping in with last minute coffee setup, rush copy requests, covering the Reception Window and phones, and escorting visitors to their trainings. She has been very helpful with everyone, and TCD appreciates everything she has done."*

## Rachel Polidori, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs (not pictured)

Eligibility Supervisor Federico Vindigni recently shared the following comment regarding ET Rachel Polidori, a call agent at Orange's Call and Processing Center:

*"Rachel was acknowledged by a customer for a job well done. The customer said his experience talking to Ms. Polidori was wonderful and praised her professional and courteous behavior. The customer shared that he felt Ms. Polidori was a model employee. Thank you, Rachel, for assisting this customer in such an exemplary way!"*

## In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Staff/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

An IHSS recipient recently commended all IHSS staff at the Warner office with the following words in a handwritten letter:

*"As an IHSS recipient from Orange County, I am now living with a terminal illness. I've been blessed in having a phenomenal provider. I also feel blessed that the Santa Ana office at Warner and Grand has phenomenal personnel. Being a dependent adult and also a senior citizen, the Santa Ana Social Services Agency office at Warner and Grand is always so very helpful as the personnel all provide professional, empathetic and compassionate client services. Please recognize all of your personnel for providing great client services."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## CalWORKs 2.0 Training Team/Agency Administration

Following last month's recognition in "Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action," Training and Career Development's CalWORKs 2.0 training team received additional words of acknowledgment from two staff members who had attended their training:

*"While attending the training I had such a great experience sitting with different workers in different fields from CWET to Senior Social Workers. Overall the CalWORKs 2.0 training for me was very rewarding and I really enjoyed the experience and learning more of the tools and how to interact with clients and understanding different service that can be offered to the client."*  
-Brianna Magana, Eligibility Technician (CalWORKs ET)



*"I just wanted to take a moment to let each of you know that the CalWORKs 2.0 training you both led last week was both enjoyable and informative. I was very impressed with how closely you timed each of the modules with respect to: breaks, lunch, etc. And the practices were relevant and opened up fruitful discussions in the class."*  
-Jim Boyd, Social Worker II (Case Manager)

## SSA PROMOTIONS

EMPLOYEE NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
ALMANZA, VANESSA	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CHAVEZ, RAUL	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
DE LA TORRE, DIANA	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
EDWARDS, ERICA SYBIL	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
FINDLEY, RAE LYN	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
FLORES, MARIELA	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
GARZA, ERIC	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
GUERRERO, ANA LAURA	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
GUILLEN, JESSE	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
KAMIAB, ELIZABETH LAURA	EMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
LOPEZ, MIGUEL AUGUSTIN	EMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
MENDOZA, MAGDALENA MARIA	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
ORTEGA, ANGELICA J	DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
ORTEGA, BEVERLY	EMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
ORTEGA, DAVID	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
PHUNG, ANNIE THIEN	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
PINEDA, CINDY	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
TAJALLE, YANNINE LOARA	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
THAI, NGOC-HUE THI	EMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY SPECIALIST	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
VILLA, YENI	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
ZAMBRANO, ROBERT	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
ZAPIEN, YESENIA	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

# SSA TODAY QUIZ

Due to the high number of perfect scores from December's holiday-themed SSA Today Quiz, we have TWO winners! Congratulations to Juanita Vela (left) and Monalisa Tran (right)! They were randomly selected among 40 respondents who answered all questions correctly and received some County souvenirs for their participation.



As a tribute to Black History Month, this month's quiz consists of eight (8) questions dedicated to the contributions and accomplishments of the African American community. Entries that have all eight questions answered correctly will be entered into a drawing and the SSA Today Newsletter Committee will randomly select one lucky winner. Good luck!



To take this month's SSA Today Quiz, click [HERE](#).

## 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](mailto: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:



### MARCH 2019

Location	Date	Time
SSA Headquarters 500 North State College, Orange Room 1012/1014	3/7/19	1:30 - 2:30 PM

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