

# Headlines

**WTW  
Full Circle –  
Rene Tucker &  
Amber King**

***New EHSD Director  
Marla Stuart***

**Cubicle Decorating Contest  
to Celebrate Your Heritage**

**Customer Service Champions  
Kendra Williams-Soares & Mark Bishop**

CONTRACOSTA  
COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT &  
HUMAN SERVICES



## Welcome New EHSD Director Marla Stuart

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors has appointed **Marla Stuart** as EHSD Director. Marla is taking on the role that Kathy Gallagher recently retired from, and will start at EHSD on Monday, April 11th.

Marla has dedicated her 35 years in public service to promoting social justice and ensuring individual and community wellbeing. She most recently served as Deputy Director at Solano County Health & Social Services Department. There, she oversaw the Employment & Eligibility Services Division and administration of CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, and General Assistance programs.

Marla started her career in the Midwest as a probation officer at a youth detention center and a case manager at an outpatient mental health services clinic. She earned a Master of Social Work with an emphasis on community organizing and planned social change at the University of Washington.

In the mid-90s, Marla worked for the Indian Health Service, taught at Diné College in Arizona, served on the local school board, and led Girl Scout troops. Marla moved to California in 2007 and worked at the Sonoma County Human Services Department leading planning, research, and evaluation activities.

In 2013, Marla joined the School of Social Welfare at University of California Berkeley. She earned a PhD and learned more about community wellbeing, public-private partnerships in the delivery of health and social services, complex systems, and data science.

Marla is looking forward to getting to know our department and working with our dedicated staff to continue delivering services that support, protect and empower Contra Costa individuals and families.



*Building Brighter Futures Together*

# Steps to Help End Sexual Violence

By Claudia Gonzalez, Alliance to End Abuse

Each April during **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**, we aim to raise public awareness about sexual violence, educate about how to prevent it, and point to resources. Types of sexual assault include sexual harassment, rape, sexual battery, child sexual abuse, and same-sex assault. Before interpersonal violence happens in our communities and online spaces, we can get involved in stopping it. Learn more, take action and make a difference in creating communities that are safe and respectful for everyone by taking the following **four steps to help end sexual assault and rape culture**.



EHSD's Alliance to End Abuse team (L-R): Laneisha Terrell, Claudia Gonzalez, Oravanh Thammasen, and Tamina Alon

1. **Learn more about rape culture.** The Public Books Rape Culture Syllabus defines rape culture as “the trivializing of sexual violence and the tendency to blame victims while exonerating or excusing assailants.” If we want to end rape culture, the environment that permits sexual assault and sexual violence to occur, we need to dive deep into the issue and challenge ourselves to become as informed as possible and share our knowledge with others.

Get the syllabus: [www.publicbooks.org/rape-culture-syllabus/](http://www.publicbooks.org/rape-culture-syllabus/)



2. **If someone discloses sexual harassment or assault to you – don’t minimize it.** Listen, thank them for sharing, and ask how you can best support them. While sexual harassment happens to people of all genders, studies show that women have to de-escalate and minimize situations all the time – mainly with men – to avoid danger.

Read: [The Thing All Women Do That You Don’t Know About](#) (Huffington Post)

As part of **Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Denim Day is on Wednesday, April 27th**. Wear denim that day to bring awareness to victim-blaming and destructive myths that surround sexual violence. For more information and resources, visit [contracostaalliance.org](http://contracostaalliance.org).

3. **Use language carefully.** Even though we often think of rape culture as being perpetuated by direct actions, we don’t always think about how our casual, everyday language plays into it. Avoid the big words that contribute to rape culture and avoid the small ones too, like the common use of “guys” to refer to women and men. Or using “girls” or “girl” to refer to adult women. Language like this subjugates the identities of women and undermines efforts toward gender parity.

Read: [10 Examples of Everyday Language That Supports Rape Culture](#) ([www.everydayfeminism.com](http://www.everydayfeminism.com))

Continued on page 13

# Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect affect children of all ages, races, and income, and is 100 percent preventable. We each hold the responsibility of nurturing and protecting all children, and helping ensure they become healthy and productive adults. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, an opportunity to remind ourselves and others about ways to protect our young community members.

The Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) and Child Protective Services (CPS), a program of Children & Family Services, collaborate to continue protecting children through preventive services, response, intervention, and investigation.

Despite outreach and community efforts, the rising number of reported child abuse cases remains a great concern, and highlights the need for individuals and communities to work together to increase protection and improve services for children who are abused or neglected.

More than 4 million cases of child abuse per year are reported across the country, and two of the major risk factors leading to child abuse and neglect are family isolation and stress.

We cannot put a dollar value on the life of a child, however the benefits of implementing prevention programs greatly outweigh the substantial economic costs of maltreatment. In 2020, the cumulative financial impact to Contra Costa County for the 720 verified survivors of maltreatment is \$338 million.

These costs accrue over the course of survivors' lives, yet the community will continue to incur the



same cost each year until we are able to reduce and ultimately end child abuse.

Most experts believe the number of incidents of abuse are far greater than those reported. Early intervention is critical for preventing abuse and can positively affect at-risk families.

In Contra Costa County, there are numerous committed agencies, parents, relatives, community volunteers, public policymakers and professionals, who collaborate to eliminate child abuse and give our children hope, security and safety.

As a child abuse prevention service provider to Contra Costa County, CAPC urges community members to report suspected child abuse to law enforcement, child welfare agencies or other community hotlines.

**Child Abuse Hotline for Contra Costa County  
(877) 881-1116**



# Love Never Fails Finding Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

Contributed by Children and Family Services' CSEC Team

The Children and Family Services (CFS) Commercially Sexually Exploited Child (CSEC) Team is excited to announce a new partnership with Love Never Fails (LNF). In our efforts to identify and serve youth who are at risk or victims of commercial sexual exploitation and/or human trafficking, we have determined that a significant number of youth are missing from care, which puts them at an even higher risk.

LNF operates a Search and Recovery Program for exploited youth who are missing from care. Fueled by love and equipped with a Recovery Investigator and Clinical Case Manager, LNF will assist and support CFS efforts to locate and serve youth who go missing from care. Dr. Vanessa Russell, Founder and Executive Director, shares this story:

*In 2011, Dr. Russell was teaching dance to inner city youth. One of her 15-year old students was assaulted in a Bay Area city, and trafficked for one year. Throughout that time, her student was missing 10+ times. It was then that LNF created Project Look 4 Me, a CSEC Search and Recovery Program, and the alliances and partnerships needed to find missing people. Dr. Russell's student was eventually recovered and stabilized, but the agency realized there was a great need to continue searching for other vulnerable youth.*

Since then, LNF has recovered hundreds of people and is now contracting with CFS to bring missing children to safety.



Dr. Vanessa Russell, founder and executive director of Love Never Fails

*We look forward to broadening the safety net through this great partnership!*

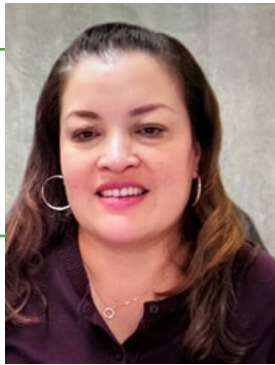
## CFS Social Workers:

Do you suspect or have a commercially sexually exploited child/youth in your caseload? Are you interested in learning more about available CSEC services? Please send your CSEC referral (CSEC 04) and/or inquiry to the CFS CSEC Team at [cfcsec@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:cfcsec@ehsd.cccounty.us).

# Becoming a Better Parent Help is Here

By Rita Loza, CSB Comprehensive Services Manager

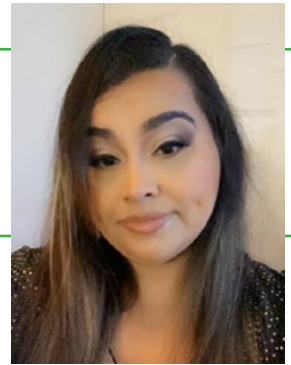
Comprehensive Services Assistant Managers provide direct support services and resources to our program families for the areas of: Health; Mental Health and Disabilities; Nutrition; and Parent, Family, and Community engagement.



Darling Rivera



Ellen de Senna



Raquel Santana-Pizaña

Children don't come with a manual to help raise them, but there is help available. The Community Services Bureau (CSB) uses the "Make Parenting a Pleasure" curriculum, which is both research and evidence-based, to offer parenting education to our families in our childcare programs (Head Start and Early Head Start) throughout Contra Costa County. We encourage families to participate.

A team of three Comprehensive Services Assistant Managers – **Darling Rivera, Ellen de Senna, and Raquel Santana-Pizaña** – will teach the virtual workshops for all CSB families in 12 interactive sessions. The sessions are in a group setting to provide social and emotional support to parents. This curriculum helps to reduce the stress that families experience.

It also provides resources and tools for parents to promote nurturing parent-child relationships. The virtual sessions offer skill-building opportunities to enhance communication skills. Families learn to help support children with academic performance, social competence and minimize behavior concerns, as well as great strategies to polish their parenting abilities. They have the opportunity to learn and share their experiences with one another while they continue their parenting journey.

- Parents receive flyers via group email and at our centers with a QR code to complete a brief survey to express interest in the class.

- Parents can also register with our Comprehensive Services staff at their child's preschool center.
- Once the parents register, they receive the link to the virtual sessions.

Parents have incentives for participating in the workshops and earn a certificate after completing the last session. The Make Parenting a Pleasure curriculum supports parents so that their children thrive in their early years and continue to do well throughout their lives due to growing up in nurturing and loving families.

## Making Parenting a Pleasure Topics

- Our Values and Goals
- Caring for Ourselves
- Special Time
- Understanding Stress
- Stress Busters
- Who is My Child
- Family Helpers
- Communication
- My child's Emotions
- Discipline is Teaching
- Strategies for Effective Discipline
- Reflection and Celebration

# Emilia Gabriele Returns to EHSD in New Role

## Welcome Back!



New Director of  
Administration  
Emilia Gabriele

**Emilia Gabriele** is returning to EHSD as our new Director of Administration. She fills the position that Mike Roetzer retired from last year. Emilia starts at EHSD on Tuesday, April 12th.

Emilia is an executive with more than a decade of experience leading fiscal and administrative operations of government-funded programs in the public and nonprofit sectors. Most recently, she was with Sonoma County as Assistant Director for the Department of Health Services where she led the administrative functions including Privacy and Security, Fiscal, Revenue Management and Auditing, Contracts and Board Items Development, Information Technology Support, Behavioral Health Program Support, and Public Health Program Support. Most notably, Emilia worked with Public Health staff to provide fiscal and administrative

leadership in the planning and implementation of the COVID-19 Emergency Response, and redesign of the Behavioral Health System of Care. Emilia was Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for the Department until her promotion to Assistant Director in March 2020.

Before Sonoma, Emilia was CFO for EHSD where she led the Fiscal team of 45 staff members. Her previous experience also includes working as CFO/Controller for the San Diego Workforce Partnership, an agency charged with administering Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the County and City of San Diego.

A Canadian native, Emilia has a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree with concentration in finance and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with concentration in finance and economics from the Universite de Montreal's business school, HEC Montreal. She is a California licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA), a Certified Management Accountant (CMA) and a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).

During her spare time, Emilia enjoys hiking with her husband, Jimmy, and is always looking forward to a new trail adventure. Please join in welcoming Emilia back to EHSD!



## Breaking the Poverty Cycle – a WTW Success Story WDB’s Rene Tucker & WFS’ Amber King



By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

Amber King was like many EHSD clients. A single mother, working an hourly job with a good chunk of it going toward childcare. She was an Esthetician (beauty specialist) applying eyelash extensions at a local salon, but the job did not provide health insurance, a pension or paid vacation time. “I didn’t know where to go to make my life better. When you grow up in poverty, that’s what happens,” says Amber.

Amber finally asked for assistance at the EHSD Delta Fair intake office in Antioch. She entered the CalWORKS/Welfare to Work (WTW) program, which provides employment training, subsidized work experience, childcare and other support services. Amber received encouragement to join CCWORKS, a program that positions jobseekers with employers throughout the County. That’s when she met Rene Tucker, an Employment Placement Counselor with EHSD’s Workforce Development Board (WDB). “I just needed somebody to give me a shot,” says Amber. “I needed somebody to give me a chance and there’s no way I would let them down.”



**CLICK** the play button to watch Amber and Rene’s reunion.

*Continued on next page*



## Breaking the Poverty Cycle – a WTW Success Story WDB’s Rene Tucker & WFS’ Amber King

*Continued from previous page*

“When Amber sat across from me, I saw myself in her,” says Rene. “Like Amber, I was on aid as well. That’s one of the reasons why I really enjoy my job.” Rene had also gone through the same WTW program, and earned her degree from UC Berkeley before working at EHSD.



Amber was a single Mom with two kids and receiving government assistance before entering the CCWORKS program that led to a professional career

Rene helped Amber get her first job doing clerical work where she honed her soft skills. It didn’t stop there. Rene continued following Amber’s progress and sent her more job opportunities until Rene convinced Amber to apply for a position as an EHSD Eligibility Worker. “I wasn’t sure I could do it, but Rene had full confidence in me and supported me the whole way. Nobody had ever done that in my life,” says Amber. The value of Rene’s pep

talks were priceless. “I mentored her and coached her through it, and assured her that she could do it,” says Rene.

Amber passed the Eligibility Worker exam with flying colors. She learned how to screen for Medi-Cal and CalFresh. She graduated on January 27th, and began on-the-job training at the Cavallo office.

“If it wasn’t for joining the CCWorks program, I’m sure I would still be making minimum wage with no retirement plan,” says Amber. “My eyes were opened to the barriers in my life and Rene gave me the tools and resources to overcome those barriers. I want to be able to encourage others and let them know that it’s possible to break the cycle of poverty and give them tools to succeed in their life.”

At the same time, Amber’s success is what drives Rene to work harder to find more job opportunities for others to improve their lives. “It’s the best part of my job,” says Rene.



Amber graduated and became an Eligibility Worker on January 27th

*My life has changed for the better. I have a new mindset and great skills to pass down to my children.*

– AMBER KING

# Welfare-to-Work Resource Fair

By Rebecca Darnell, WFS Deputy Director

Welfare-to-Work hosted a Resource Fair for customers on March 22, 2022, at First Presbyterian Church in Concord. We had a variety of vendors present to provide information in a number of areas, both internal and external to EHSD, including benefit programs, services, education, childcare, food resources, housing and more. About 250 attendees were excited to have the opportunity to speak with representatives about critical services they need to help them move toward self-sufficiency. We look forward to hosting the next WTW Resource Fair, possibly in the fall of 2022.



(L-R) SSPAs Wendy Renslow, Toni Thomas and Casey Costa of WFS East handled event check-in.



Welfare-to-Work Team (L-R): Kimberley Williams, Katherine Berdal-Dutro, Kelly Sullivan, Lynne McGraw, Robyn Currie, Lisa Deslierres, Rosalyn Guillory and Farhad Ziaee

## SPECIAL KUDOS AND A BIG THANK YOU

- All WTW Staff
- LaTosha Stockholm
- Cassandra Amador
- Donyale Thornton
- Elizabeth Benson
- Kimberley Williams
- Kelly Sullivan
- Lynne McGraw
- Liza Bollas
- Natalie Guerra
- Christine Borrego
- Genise Long
- Lisa Deslierres
- Gail Decatur
- Lydia Barron
- Kellee Franklin
- Ashley Steele Bernard
- Jalilah Bluitt
- Jamilla Heaven
- Katherine Berdal-Dutro
- Farhad Ziaee
- Robyn Currie
- Rosalyn Guillory
- Reina Aguilar-Ortega



Kimberley Williams ready to greet participants with a smile; WTW staff made signs with encouraging messages that they posted at the event



## WE APPRECIATE OUR PARTNERS

- EHSD WTW & Linkages
- Contra Costa Housing Authority
- EHSD Navigators
- EHSD Community Services Bureau
- New York Life Insurance
- Department of Child Support Services
- Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano
- Stand!
- Liberty Adult Education
- SAMHWORKs
- Diablo Valley Community Colleges
- CocoKids



# Navigators Double Team to Reach Contra Costa Families

By Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

You might bill this as a double feature: EHSD’s **4 Our Families Navigators** had two teams connecting with Contra Costa community members in a single day at two separate events, and maximized their reach across the county on Saturday, March 26th.

“We had a beautiful and typically windy day at the **Stand Together Contra Costa (STCC) Immigration Fair** at SparkPoint/Bay Point – Ambrose Center,” reported Navigator and Social Services Program Assistant (SSPA) **Susan Padan**. In addition to attendees receiving free legal consultations and other community services, they visited Susan and Navigator **Maria Muñoz** to get answers to lots of questions about Medi-Cal, food resources and Denti-Cal. EHSD’s **Staci May** graciously provided IT support for the team.

Other providers at the STCC event included the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Family Justice Center, Brighter Beginnings, Jewish Community Services of the East Bay, Catholic Charities and Clean Slate. According to Project Manager Lanett Williams, the Immigration Fair was a huge, collaborative success for East County families.

Another set of Navigators enthusiastically showed up for the **Health Fair/Vaccine Clinic** at Dover Elementary School in San Pablo that same day.

“There was a very good turnout of participants, mostly Spanish-speaking families of the community, DJ music/dancing, and a positive energy,” said **Sandra Zepeda-Lopez**. Supported by EHSD’s Ron Berry from IT, Navigators Sandra and **Bhupinder Singh** provided CalWORKS, CalFresh, and Medi-Cal information and application assistance, and answered

questions related to immigration/public charge concerns and Social Services Rapid Response Team (SSRRT services). Plus, they had backpacks with school supplies on hand that were a big hit with the children, and gave them to families in need.

Event organizer Yaquelin Valencia reported that more than 100 people registered at the Health Fair, representing more than 500 people included within their households, and Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) administered 107 vaccinations.

“It was a great pleasure to have been a part of the event,” said Bhupinder.



1



2



3

1. Sandra and Bhupinder at the Health Fair/Vaccine Clinic at Dover Elementary in San Pablo, ready with many backpacks full of school supplies for children
2. Navigators Maria Muñoz and Susan Padan with partner staff from Family Justice Center
3. Susan Padan, Staci May and Maria Muñoz at STCC Immigration Fair in Bay Point

## Back in Business

# Animal Services Resumes Spay/Neuter Clinic Appointments



Beginning in March, Contra Costa Animal Services (CCAS) resumed taking spay and neuter appointments for owned pets in Contra Costa County. Surgery appointments will be available Tuesdays-Fridays at CCAS's Martinez shelter. You can visit the department's [Spay/Neuter & Vaccination Clinic](#) page to schedule an appointment.

"We're excited to be resuming our spay and neuter clinic for pet owners in Contra Costa County," said CCAS Director Beth Ward. "We appreciate your patience and understanding while we ramp up this service, as we expect appointments to fill up quickly due to the high demand."

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, appointments for pet owners were limited or suspended at times for most of the last two years. Despite this challenge, CCAS was able to provide more than 2,800 low-cost spay and neuter surgeries for adopted pets, transferred pets, shelter pets that were reunited with their owners, and community cats in 2021.



To view animals available for adoption, visit [www.ccasd.org](http://www.ccasd.org).

SAVE  
THE  
DATE

**May 5, 2022**

**Contra Costa County Block Party  
in Antioch**

Animal Services plus many other County resources, music, food and fun!



# CalSAWS | Chronicle

March 2022

The CalSAWS countdown continues and “go-live” is in just seven months! Find out about User Acceptance Testing (UAT) involving script writing and reviews (sounds very Hollywood!). Check out the March issue of the [CalSAWS Chronicle](#) to also learn about new CalSAWS terminology, how EHSD is preparing stakeholders for the transition, plus CalSAWS insights.



## Get THE DOWNLOAD

Find out what EHSD’s IT team is up to by checking out the March/April edition of [The Download](#). Read about software and equipment upgrades and iPhone replacements. Plus, how IT is looking at new ways to streamline the Help Desk.

## Steps to Help End Sexual Violence

*Continued from page 3*

4. **Learn about** loud and enthusiastic consent, and that the understanding of what consent means begins at an early age. If we understand as children, we’ll be better off as adults.

**Watch:** [Consent for Kids](#) (Blue Seat Studios) and [Tea Consent](#) (copyright ©2015 Emmeline May and Blue Seat Studios)

The cover of 'THE DOWNLOAD' magazine for March/April 2022. The title 'THE DOWNLOAD' is in large, bold, blue letters. Below it, the subtitle 'INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATES FOR EHSD STAFF' is in smaller, blue, all-caps letters. The cover features a photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone. Text on the cover includes: 'What Your IT Team is Working On', 'Out with the Old, In with the New', 'What else is New?', 'Helping the Help Desk', and 'Security'. There is also a 'Happy Spring from your IT team!' message and an 'Ask IT' section with an email address: kgauglin@ehsd.cocounty.us.



# Decorate Your Cubicle, Win a Prize!

By Iliana Choate, Social Services Staff Development Specialist & EHSD Equity & Inclusion Core Team Member



The Equity and Inclusion Team (front, L to R): **Rene Tucker, Annie Phetinta, Deborah Drake, Patty Perez, Iliana Choate**; (back, L to R): **Jay David, Deb Boutte, Craig Roney, Patience Ofodu, Rodney Dixon**; (not pictured): **Tracy Murray, Shannon Currie, Lisa Harris, Nannette Dupree**

We invite everyone to join us in the EHSD Ethnic & Historic Decorating Event where you can decorate your cubicle or office, **May 2<sup>nd</sup>– 31<sup>st</sup>**, to represent your ethnic culture. This is a beautiful way to share your culture so others might learn about the people they work with and foster cultural immersion. Culture can be defined as all the ways of life for an entire society and includes codes of manners, dress, language, art, music, historical content and more that are passed down from generation to generation.

## Guidelines

Height limit of 24 inches from desktop for stationary displayed items. If item is animated or has movement, be sure to turn it off or remove at the end of the day to prevent setting off an alarm.

## What to display

Pictures of historical places, cuisine, people, currency, flag, map of a country, demographics, population, tourism (places to visit and things to see), art, literature, sports, national-bird, flower, etc., traditional dress, stories of family celebrations and traditions.



## Refrain from displaying

Religious items, noisy items that can be distracting and obstruct the workplace, government politics, or political information, and anything that needs to be plugged in (if unsure, reach out through the equity and inclusion email).

**Submit pictures of your decorated cubicle or office to [EquityandInclusion@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:EquityandInclusion@ehsd.cccounty.us) to be published in *Headlines* and on the Equity & Inclusion intranet page which is currently under construction.**

**Also, submit a favorite ethnic recipe to be included in a future EHSD cookbook.**

All pictures submitted will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a prize.



## Foster Teens Receive Crucial Boost— *Why Community Support Matters*

By Kristin Olsen, CFS ILSP Specialist



Left: Members of the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church partner with ILSP.

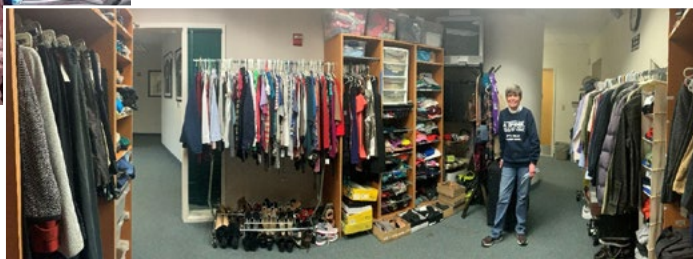
The women of the Walnut Creek United Methodist Church (WCUM) have been partnering with EHSD’s Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) for several years and keep finding new ways to support our foster youth population.

In 2017, the WCUM Women were looking for a project. A new member of the group, Mae Lee, suggested ILSP and the group got started by adopting the ILSP food pantry. Judith Hall began working closely with ILSP Specialist **Alfred Arroyos**, and a metal shelving unit was set up in the ILSP kitchen and stocked with food and supplies for our youth in need.

The successful effort to provide a consistently full food pantry led to the women’s group sponsoring food baskets for Thanksgiving. The WCUM women also provided backpacks filled with essentials for foster youth. Later, the group asked for some undesignated funds raised by the church be used for scholarships for ILSP graduating seniors. That money makes it possible for two graduating seniors from the class of 2022 to receive \$1000 each towards furthering their education.



The ILSP food pantry is stocked for EHSD’s ILSP youth.



Below: Lynda Justice takes care of the ILSP Clothing closet

One dedicated member of the church, Lynda Justice, adopted the ILSP clothing closet and makes it her mission to keep it organized and stocked for youth in need of casual, formal or interview clothing. Lynda shows up weekly and makes order out of chaos in the little closet.

The group also supports the Extended Family Furniture Assistance program. When a young mother from ILSP expressed the need for furniture for the apartment she had just moved into with her partner and their son, the WCUM Women filled her wish list.

This kind of community partnership is what helps ILSP make Transition Age Youth feel supported and connected to their community. Offering these essential tangible resources can open up deeper conversations about housing, employment, and education. That’s why community support matters.



Judith Hall bringing needed items to Jenna and her family.

# Achieving Your Retirement Goals

Magellan Ascend



## Contributed by Personnel Services

Thoughts about your retirement may not be top-of-mind each day, but they should be a high priority when it comes to your life planning. The reliability of Social Security funding now appears uncertain, so it's up to you to build your retirement nest egg.

- Start early and build your savings over the long term. Take full advantage of the compounding earnings growth of an IRA or a 401(k) account with employer match.
- Increase your contributions as your income grows. Even boosting contributions 1% per year can lead to significantly higher savings over time.
- Diversify your investments among different asset classes (e.g., cash, bonds and stocks). This will help you manage overall market ups and downs.
- If you're age 50 or older and have gotten a late start in saving, make catch-up contributions. They help!
- Regularly review your retirement savings balance(s) to see how your investments are doing.

Browse more articles at [www.magellanascend.com](http://www.magellanascend.com).

## YOUR EMPLOYEE DISCOUNTS – Save on Major Brands & Everyday Essentials

Save with your Employee Discounts on LifeMart, your online members-only discount center, where you can save big on major purchases like travel, tickets, attractions, electronics, cars, vacations, or on day-to-day essentials like groceries and child care. And best of all, access is free!

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

## UPCOMING WEBINAR: Overcome Exhaustion and Burnout

–  
April 13

### What this webinar will address:

- Summarizing what is causing feelings of fatigue and burnout.
- Recognizing the symptoms of burnout.
- Identifying practices to help restore emotional health and wellbeing.

Missed the live webinar? Access webinar recordings by clicking on “Learning Center” and selecting “Webinars.” If you haven't signed up to use the County Employee Assistance Program yet, follow these two easy steps:

Step 1: Go to [www.magellanascend.com](http://www.magellanascend.com) and click on “Sign up.”

Step 2: Complete the online registration form and click on “Get Started.”



# Personnel Services Congratulates Cameron Jewell on His New Role

By Debora Boutté, Departmental Human Resources Officer II



Please join me in commending **Cameron Jewell** on his new role as Secretary-Journey Level for the Personnel Services Division!

Cameron has been with EHSD since 2017. He began his career with the department as an agency temp working for the Medi-Cal Service Center (MCSC) Unit in Antioch under the supervision of **Maria Velez**, Clerical Supervisor. It was then that Cameron's interest for work in the public sector began to peak.

After his assignment ended with the MCSC Unit, Cameron made his transition to the Personnel Services Division that same year where, little did he

know, he would be responsible for the conversion of 2,000+ employee files into an electronic filing system. After the encouragement of his peers and colleagues at EHSD, Cameron applied for a permanent position with Contra Costa County as an Experienced Level Clerk. By June 2018, he became a permanent employee and has continued to call Personnel his home ever since. During his time in Personnel, Cameron has become the "go-to" person, assisting and supporting the entire department with a plethora of complex situations, issues and assignments.

Cameron is a Bay Area native and received a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology from the historically Black college, the illustrious Hampton University, located in Hampton, Virginia.

Cameron enjoys working in the public sector and learning the many intricacies and facets of human resources. He is excited and grateful for this new opportunity to work in a larger capacity on the EHSD Personnel Team and with the department as a whole.

We are excited to continue working with Cameron as he transitions to his new role.

# Congratulations!



## New Year, New Social Workers

By Ariana Martinez, CFS Staff Development Specialist

Welcome to the three new amazing and dynamic workers who just completed the *Contra Costa County Children and Family Services New Worker Winter 2022 Training* on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

### West County:

**Erica Harland** – Court  
**Maritza Sanchez-Ware** – Continuing Services

### East County:

**Dana Stennis** – Emergency Response

This trio continuously demonstrated their numerous strengths in the classroom. They bring positive attitudes, quick wit, and fortitude to their new teams. CFS Deputy Director **Roslyn Gentry** welcomed and awarded graduation certificates alongside some of their Supervisors and Division Managers during a hybrid graduation ceremony. Please join us in extending a warm welcome and congratulations to our new CFS Child Welfare Social Workers.



New Social Workers Graduating Class (L to R foreground) **Maritza Sanchez-Ware**, **Erica Harland**, **Dana Stennis**



**Erica Harland**, **Roslyn Gentry**



**Maritza Sanchez-Ware**, **Roslyn Gentry**



**MyKeisha Lewis**, **Dana Stennis**, **Roslyn Gentry**



# Help the Homeless by Donating Hygiene Kits

By Judy Peralde, President, VESTIA, Inc.



Judy Peralde, President, VESTIA, Inc.

As we move beyond the first two years of the pandemic, we are seeing increasing numbers in our homeless communities. As we promised, we are always going to “spring into gear” and help whenever and wherever we can, with your support, of course.

As spring begins, we are in great need of male and female hygiene kits. You can use the two links below if you would like to donate. The already pre-packaged kits sent directly to VESTIA assist our volunteers who are distributing them.

Use the links below to purchase hygiene kits online and have them delivered directly to:

VESTIA, Inc., 400 Ellinwood Way, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523



[Go2Kits](#)

[Convenience 10-pc. Travel Kit](#)



THANK  
YOU FOR  
YOUR  
SUPPORT  
THIS  
SPRING.

## It's about the *Why*

By Annie Barrett, IHSS Division Manager Aging & Adult Services

In January, EHSD hosted a celebration for Years of Service. As I sat in the virtual audience celebrating my staff who hit milestones in career achievement, I found my mind pondering what brought everyone here and what makes them stay. On cue, as if she was reading my mind, I received an email from Social Work Supervisor **Sena Maxine Perrier-Morris**.

Sena has spent her lifetime as a civil servant, 20 of those years committed to Social Services in Contra Costa County. The past 15 of them she has been an In-Home Support Services (IHSS) Social Work Supervisor. Sena continues this life-long journey by pursuing her clinical license.

In her 20-year tenure with Contra Costa, Sena, like all of us, has experienced adversity - her unique situation being her first day with the County (read on). However, what Sena has shown me is resilience in the face of adversity. A strong sense of service to the community continues to push us daily. With her permission, I am sharing her email after the Years of Service celebration. I will use it in the future to reflect and motivate me to continue to navigate through the unexpected, serve our community and support my colleagues.

Thanks so much for your acknowledgment of me during today's Years of Service ceremony. It meant a lot to me to see your comments across the screen as my photo was shown.

My first day at the County was supposed to be 9/11/2001. I didn't make it into the office that day because I woke up to videos of planes crashing into the World Trade Center and spent my first moments desperately trying to contact my family in Brooklyn. When I arrived at my three-year-old daughter's school in Oakland, it was closed because the staff felt the situation was too dangerous to have parents going on freeways to pick up their children. As I recall, I was so glad to be hired at Costa Contra County, and so worried that I would miss my first day there. And then, there was the terror of not knowing if family and friends were safe at all.

This year on 9/11 my daughter will be 24 years old! We deal now with an entirely different but also totally unexpected and terrifying situation, without knowing exactly when or how it will end. But seeing your names beside mine reminded me of how much I have gained in my 20 years of service with Contra Costa—all the support and mentoring, the friendships, the myriad of experiences I have found here. Viewing your congratulations brought up so many memories. I felt supported and honored.

For that, I am deeply grateful.  
-Sena



Sena with her daughter

*Thank you Sena, for your years of service and reminding me why I have mine!*



## CFS Share Your Care Event

By Faye Herald and Lisa Williams, CFS Wellness Environment Team Members

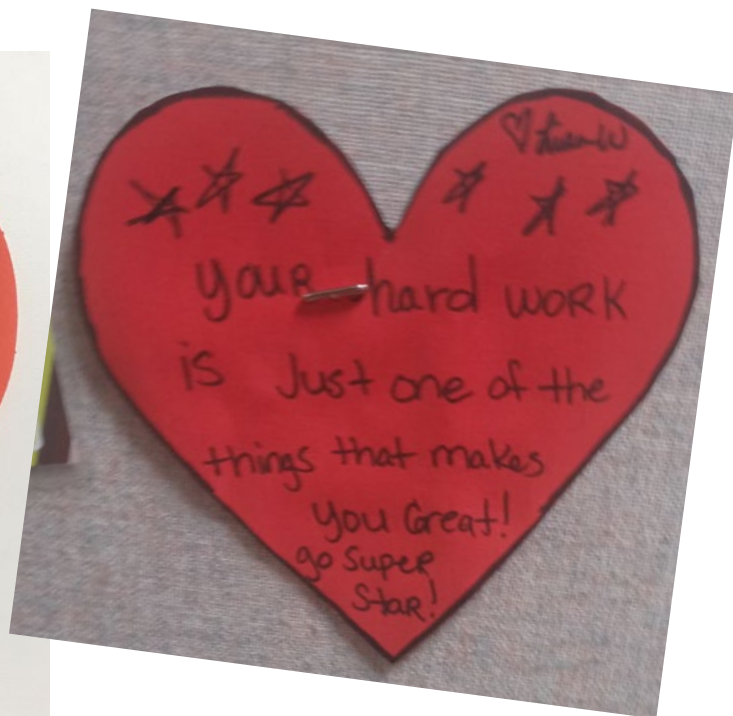
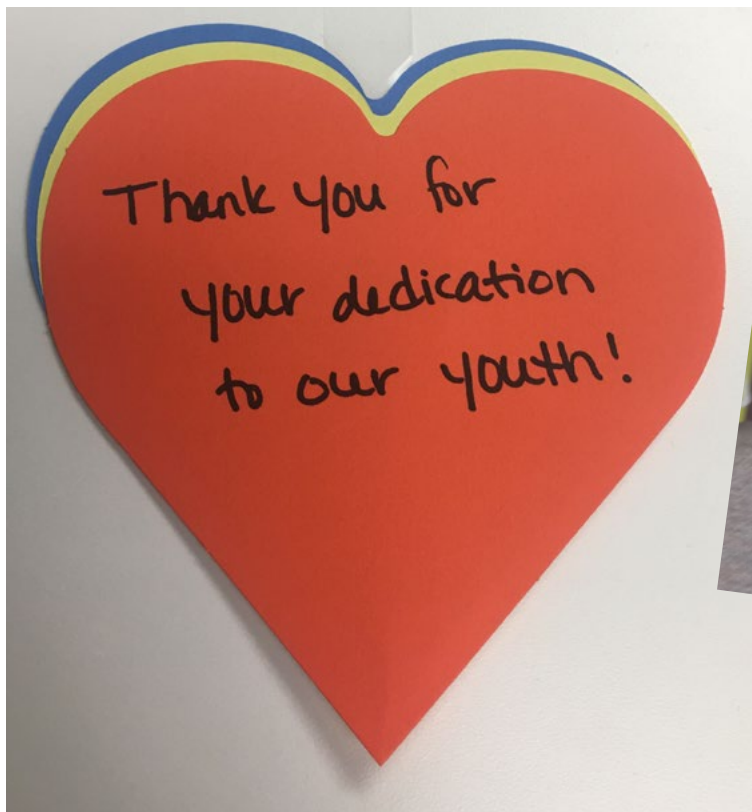
The Healthy Workplace Committee observed decreasing morale as a result of COVID-19 changing the way we conduct business. In an effort to increase morale and strengthen our working relationships, the CFS Wellness Environment (WE) Teams created a “Share Your Care” activity for workers to write notes of appreciation in hearts.

The goal of this activity is to have colleagues look inside themselves and appreciate those around them. We spend more time with coworkers than with our own families, in most cases. So, it’s pretty



awesome when the people you spend so much time with “share their care.” However, we are more than coworkers; we are family, so we should show continued support and appreciation for each other.

This activity was well-received by all participants, with greater participation than expected! Some created their hearts, many asked for more hearts, and everyone we spoke to loved the hearts! It doesn’t have to be a grand gesture to be effective; it just has to be sincere and from the heart!



## Customer Service Champion

These individuals are being recognized for going the extra mile by delivering excellent service to our customers. They went above and beyond in their willingness to help and demonstrate EHSD's emphasis on providing exemplary customer service. Congratulations on a job well done!



### Kendra Williams-Soares Going the Extra Mile

By Annie Barrett,  
IHSS Division  
Manager Aging &  
Adult Services

**Kendra Williams-Soares** is a Social Worker I for the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Division. Recently she answered a provider's call that was not part of her caseload. The provider was frustrated because she had been speaking to multiple people and could not get an answer to her question. To assist the individual Kendra contacted the State to identify the disconnect and find out what information was needed to get a resolution for payment.

Kendra knew she could not resolve the individual's needs, but she was there to advocate and help the provider navigate through the system. Our Payroll team was able to assist the provider in resolving her issue, and they were very impressed with how far Kendra researched to help.

*Continued on next page*



### Mark Bishop Mark Remains Calm

By Rosalie Uy,  
Workforce Services  
Specialist

**Mark Bishop**, Eligibility Worker II, WFS, is one of the many workers at the Medi-Cal CalFresh Service Center (MCSC) whose dedication and commitment to job represents the core value of what we do to assist our customers to the furthest extent possible. He remains calm and professional even when dealing with the most challenging customers on the phone while ensuring that each transaction is well handled and pleasant. Mark is always ready to take on additional work. He is open to challenges, unfazed by changes and he adapts quickly

Before coming to the County, Mark was a Fleet Manager for Wonder Bread for 16 years. He moved to Covered California, in Concord, in December of 2014, and was there until the County's contract with the State ended in 2016.

*Continued on next page*



## Customer Service Champions

### Kendra Williams-Soares

*Continued from previous page*

IHSS has multiple layers and departments that are often confused with each other. Where it is easy to say, “It is not my department” and provide a phone number to the correct contact, Kendra took time to help the provider. She understood that we are all here to help a vulnerable population, and she was willing to go the extra mile to provide that assistance.

I appreciate Kendra’s hard work and stellar customer service.

### Mark Bishop

*Continued from previous page*

After CoveredCa, he joined EHSD as an EWTU Trainee, and arrived at the MCSC in 2018 where he has been a Medi-Cal worker ever since. In his free time, Mark likes to play bingo. Since 1984, he has volunteered for Alameda Park and Recreation where he helped managed the Saturday Bingo Fund raiser for the Mastick Senior Center.

MCSC is proud to have Mark on our squad. Thank you Mark for all that you do!



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.

**Guidelines:** [http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Guidelines\\_FINAL.pdf](http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Guidelines_FINAL.pdf)

**Nomination Form:** [http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Nomination%20Form\\_FINAL.pdf](http://ehsdhome/Community-Relations/Documents/WeCareThatYouCare%20Nomination%20Form_FINAL.pdf)





## SERVICE AWARDS | RETIREES | NEW EMPLOYEES

### SERVICE AWARDS

#### 30 YEARS

Laura Pacheco, Admin Services Assistant III, Admin

#### 25 YEARS

Guadalupe Gomez Ramirez, Associate  
Teacher-Project, CSB

Eileen Olson, EHS Division Manager, Admin

#### 20 YEARS

Monica Khanchalern, Infant Toddler Associate Teacher-  
Project, CSB

Gaova Vu, Social Worker, WFS



#### 15 YEARS

Honey Rosila C Amog, Social Services Program  
Assistant, WFS

Lydia Barron, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Amber Brown, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Tanisha Burton, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Eva Gaipa, Departmental HR Analyst II, Admin

Sharonda Grant, Social Services Program Assistant,  
WFS

Jylyn Lacson, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Roberta Martinez, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Shiela Paderes, Medical Program Assistant, WFS

Erika Ramirez-Orozco, Social Services Program  
Assistant, WFS

Hannah Slade, Soc Svc Program Assistant, CFS

Victoria Virgen, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS

Sima Wardak, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB

Tavare Warfield, Social Worker, AAS

#### 10 YEARS

Maureen Nelson, One-Stop Operations Consort Admin,  
WDB

Aida Naranjo, Comprehensive Services Asst  
Mgr-Project, CSB

Patience Ofodu, Workforce Svcs Specialist, WDB

Judy Owens, Eligibility Worker III, WFS

*Retirees and New Employees listed on next page*





## SERVICE AWARDS | RETIREES | NEW EMPLOYEES

### RETIREES

Annette Anicete, Eligibility Worker III, WFS  
Susan Austin, Social Services Program Assistant, AAS  
Magda Bedros, Assistant Director-Project, CSB  
Jonathan Chapman, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS  
Lisa Epps, Departmental Fiscal Officer, Admin  
Eva Garcia, Neighborhood Services Coord-Proj, WFDB  
Marta Gordovez, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB  
Leona Hartmann, Senior Staff Assistant, AAS  
JoAnn Lofton, Social Worker III, CFS

Tiffany Miller, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS  
Gloria Navarro, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS  
Araceli Ramos, Eligibility Worker III, AAS  
Patsy Robinson, Social Work Supervisor I, AAS  
Nora Rodriguez, Social Services Program Assistant, AAS  
Janelle Taggart, Children's Services Clerk Spec, CFS  
Sophia Talbot, Comprehensive Services Manager –  
Project, CSB

### NEW EMPLOYEES

Ray Acosta, Social Worker II, CFS  
Soore Akinfemiwa, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Cynthia Briseno, Social Worker II, CFS  
Nathalie Cetoute, Accountant III, CSB  
Alison De La Torre, Social Worker III, CFS  
Karalyn Foster, Social Worker II, CFS  
Erika Gonzales, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Stacey Govan, Social Worker II, CFS

Crystal Johnson, Social Worker III, CFS  
Michelle Joya, Social Worker III, CFS  
Jenny Lam, AAS Senior Staff Assistant, AAS  
Yumi Santiago, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
David Scott, Social Worker, AAS  
LaKeisha Spears, Social Worker II, CFS  
Sequoia Stanley, Social Worker II, CFS



Are you planning a retirement celebration for a staff member and would like to present them with a retirement certificate? **If so, please contact Deb Johnson at [djohnson@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:djohnson@ehsd.cccounty.us) or (925) 608-4904.**

# SPREAD THE WORD

## April 2022

- SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH
- CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
- NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH
- APRIL 1 – April Fool’s Day
- APRIL 1 – National Walk to Work Day
- APRIL 2 – May 1- Ramadan
- APRIL 13 – Magellan webinar: Overcome Exhaustion and Burnout ([www.magellanascend.com](http://www.magellanascend.com))
- APRIL 15–23 – Passover
- APRIL 17 – Easter
- APRIL 18 – Tax Filing Deadline
- APRIL 22 – Earth Day
- APRIL 27 – Administrative Professional’s Day

## May 2022

- CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH
- COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH
- OLDER AMERICANS MONTH
- FOSTER PARENT RECOGNITION MONTH
- MAY 1 – Ramadan ends
- MAY 5 – Cinco De Mayo
- MAY 3–7 – Teacher’s Appreciation Week
- MAY 8 – Mother’s Day
- MAY 21 – Armed Forces Day
- MAY 31 – Memorial 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 has more than 1,000 children who need your help. Join a free virtual orientation. We will update the in-person orientation schedule as restrictions lift.

**FREE VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS**

April 7 or 21 • 4 to 6 p.m.  
May 5 or 19 • 4 to 6 p.m.  
June 2 or 16 • 4 to 6 p.m.

For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at [www.ehds.org](http://www.ehds.org). To register for a class, please call (925) 602-6960, toll-free at 1 (866) 313-7788, or email [ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us)

**We Care... You Care**  
<http://ehsdhome/Pages/Service-Champions.aspx>  
and see page 23

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

Follow us on Twitter @ContraCostaEHSD  
Like us on Facebook



Contact us at our **EHSD Headlines** email, [headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us), if you have an upcoming event, article, our idea you would like to share.