

# Headlines

**Pipe Dreams**  
Melissa Anino  
Took On the Big Dawgs

**Face to Face –  
Years of Service  
In Person Again!**

**Get Connected:  
Steer Your Clients  
to Wifi Subsidies**

**Customer Service Champion  
Eileen Lepas**



# EHSD Welcomes Navdeep Singh as Chief Financial Officer

By Emilia Gabriele, EHSD Chief Deputy Director

I am delighted to announce the hiring of our EHSD Chief Financial Officer **Navdeep Singh** effective April 13, 2023.

Navdeep has over 18 years of fiscal experience in public and private sector organizations. Most recently, she was the Fiscal Manager for the County of Madera, Department of Social Services wherein she developed recommendations for the preparation and maintenance of the department budget of \$120 million and supervised 24 employees. Navdeep Singh developed and implemented policies, procedures and innovations that improved staffing, generated cost savings and enhanced services. She was significantly involved in county system changes, oversaw fiscal reports, ensured funding compliance and coordinated preparation and response to agency audits.



Navdeep is also very engaged in a team-oriented approach, collaborating with others and especially focused on being present to support her staff.

Navdeep's educational background includes a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Computer Science and Master's degree in business administration. Navdeep also teaches a Fiscal Essentials for Children's Services program with UC Davis and represents the Central California Regional Counties. During her tenure with the County of Madera, she represented the valley 13 counties with CWDA FAADs committee.

Please join me in welcoming Navdeep to the EHSD family.

## Welcome Navdeep Singh

## Years of Service Event Live and In Person

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

After three years of pandemic absence, the EHS&D Years of Service event was live and in person with more than a hundred employees and friends gathering at the Pleasant Hill Community Center on March 16th. Other employees were able to watch the live-streamed event from their office desk and chime in via the chat room.

Longtime employees, who transferred to other bureaus, were reunited with former co-workers, gift cards were raffled off, photos were snapped, refreshments gobbled up and awards handed out during the two-hour presentation. **Linda Linnell** (Staff Development Supervisor) and **Stephanie Potts** (CFS Clerk Specialist) were the special honorees for serving 35 years with the County.

### CLICK on the links below to see more:

- Find your friends in the video slide show <https://vimeo.com/806966282>
- Download your pictures from the photo gallery [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hAeTFaqFSYPLmPwDKvd-Zlthgh4q0-zo?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hAeTFaqFSYPLmPwDKvd-Zlthgh4q0-zo?usp=share_link)
- Watch the full event <https://vimeo.com/809975175>

Jacquie Mesner (Policy & Planning)  
and Vickie Wetzel (Admin)



Ilena Ferrer (CCTV), Mark Reardon (IT),  
Todd Roberts (IT), and Alan Wang



Laura Pacheco (Admin) and her sister Monica Pacheco

Continued on next page

## Years of Service Event

Continued from previous page



**Tracy Murray** (AAS Director) and **Leilah Ahranjani** (AAS Division Manager)



**Alan Wang**, **Larena Baldazo**, and **Deb Johnson** (Community Relations)



**Dana Wargo** (WFS Program Analyst), **Leilah Ahranjani** (AAS Division Manager), **Veronica Alvidrez** (AAS Program Assistant), and **Shani Bobo** (AAS Social Worker)



**Drina Rowland** (WFS Division Manager)



**Kathy Marsh** (CFS Director) and **Gail Zappattini** (CFS Social Worker III)



Honorees lining up to receive awards



**Kathy Marsh** (CFS Director) and **Kelli Taylor** (CFS Social Worker III)

*Building Brighter Futures Together*

## Years of Service Event

### CELEBRATING DEDICATION AND SERVICE

It was wonderful to celebrate the EHSD Years of Service event on March 16. EHSD honored those who reached milestone years of service – 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 – during 2022. There were awards, appreciative remarks, a video montage featuring EHSD staff members, pop culture notes from years past, and raffle prizes. EHSD staff who reach milestones this year will be the honorees for the 2024 event.

Many thanks and congratulations to our 185 honorees for your dedication and contributions over the years!

#### 10 YEARS

##### **Aging & Adult Services**

Gail C. Armato  
Leenetta A Bailes  
Roxanne Cabriaes  
Michael Chatham  
Donna Day  
Sarah E. Hankins  
Antonio Malacas  
Carlo Moore  
Cassiday Morris  
Wendy Renslow  
Marco Ruiz Madrigal  
Beatriz Salgado  
Nicole Viscovich  
Kendra Williams-Soares  
Christina Zahner

##### **Children & Family Services**

Janice Bowman  
Deana Buckner  
Patricia Duncan Hall  
Vernita O. James  
Milton Johnson  
Grace Martinez  
Jacqueline Parrish  
Jody A. Silva

##### **Community Services**

Adriana Arceo  
Salvadora Castro  
Carlos Lopes Ribeiro  
Catherine Lucero  
Amelia Martinez  
Aida Naranjo  
Bangone Somboosab  
Agrupina Yumul

#### 10 YEARS

##### **Workforce Development Board**

Maureen Nelson  
Patience Ofodu

##### **Workforce Services**

Reina Aguilar-Ortega  
Charlotte Alvarez  
Sheryl Beckett  
Noemi Bermudez  
Christina Bess  
Ebony Burks  
Lori DiMercurio  
Daniel A. Escalante  
Andral L. Ford  
Emily E. Garcia  
Cynthia Harris  
Ian Harryman  
Heather Henn  
Pamela Horne  
Trina Huerta  
Corey Jones  
Mary Jones  
Lena P.D. Lawrence  
Giselle Lucas  
Mariah Marabuto  
Njideka C. Onyeagucha  
Judy Owens  
Manuel V. Parada  
Aaron Perez  
Tonia Quinones  
Laura D. Rossini  
Gina Scott  
Diana Silva  
Barbara Smiglewski  
Meredith Smith  
Yukin Tang

#### 10 YEARS

##### **Administrative Services**

Michael Glass  
Zenaida R. Manalo  
Colleen McLaughlin  
Mathilde J. Mishork  
Jo Schliesman

#### 15 YEARS

##### **Aging & Adult Services**

Jenny Avelar  
Geraldine Bolanos  
Magdalene Gabel  
Sandra Motta  
Ivory Olden  
Rahsaan Robinson  
Nataliya Zhyrova

##### **Children & Family Services**

Tania Anderson-Brown  
Elizabeth Chambers  
Gabriela Derrer  
Doris Durniak  
Kim Padilla  
Maria Preciado  
Hannah Slade  
Robin Turner

##### **Community Services**

Mercedes Ibarra  
Nelly Ige  
Haydee Ilan  
Ritche Martija  
Melissa Molina  
Tiffany Mullner  
Nadya Perez  
Alicia Prieto

*Continued on next page*

## Years of Service Event

*Continued from previous page*

### **15 YEARS**

Blanca Rizo De Torres  
Maria Rojas De Cortes  
Sima Wardak

### **Policy & Planning**

Antoinette Garcia  
Karen Labaniego

### **Workforce**

Development Board  
Michelle Graham  
Rochelle Soriano

### **Workforce Services**

Ayaba Adams  
Honey Rosila C Amog  
Lydia Barron  
Cara Bennett  
Tanisha Burton  
Kathleen Dumlao  
Miguel Galvez  
Jon Garcia  
Brooke Gillis  
Anita Goering  
Sharonda Grant  
Shari Horton  
Suzan Jordan  
Jylyn Lacson  
Shelly Maguire  
Roberta Martinez  
Rebecca Monteith  
Maria Munoz  
Shiela Paderes  
Erika Ramirez-Orozco  
Melody B. Short  
Gloria Untalan  
Corrie Velasquez  
Victoria Virgen

### **Administrative Services**

Rossio Aliaga-Caro  
Amber Brown  
Jonalyn Camaisa  
Lorraine Hill  
Vincent Villacorta

### **20 YEARS**

#### **Aging & Adult Services**

Veronica Alvidrez  
Shani Bobo  
Elizabeth Dondi  
Olivia Martini  
Yolanda Patterson

#### **Children & Family Services**

Licia Parsons

#### **Community Services**

Kirsten Hougen  
Harinder Kaur  
Monica Khanchalern  
Hannah Nguyen  
Meuy Vang Saechao

#### **Policy & Planning**

Alvaro Florez  
Jacqueline Mesner

#### **Workforce Development Board**

Veronica Ramos

#### **Workforce Services**

Yvette Hall  
Rosalinda Hernandez  
Maria Velez  
Gaova Vu

#### **Administrative Services**

Vickie Kaplan Wetzel  
Shannon Sargent  
Betty Steggall  
Chidambaram Subramanian  
Jolanta Ustaszewska

### **25 YEARS**

#### **Aging & Adult Services**

Leilah Ahranjani  
Renata Pierce

#### **Children & Family Services**

Adrienne Brooks  
Jessie Rojas

### **25 YEARS**

Kelli Taylor  
Nicole Thigpen  
Cindy Vogl  
Stacy Wood  
Sabrina Young  
Gail Zappettini

#### **Community Services**

Janette Quintanar  
Thoot Saephan

#### **Workforce Services**

Silvia Alvarez  
Katherine Berdal Dutro  
Chekesha Jackson  
Gabriela Perez  
James Reid  
Patricia Richards  
Dana Wargo

#### **Administrative Services**

Kathleen Ames  
Nancy Hager  
Eileen Olson

### **30 Years**

#### **Aging & Adult Services**

Angela Bullock-Hayes

#### **Children & Family Services**

Candace Yates

#### **Community Services**

Carmen Castaneda

#### **Workforce Services**

Sandra Figueroa  
Drina Rowland  
Jerald Sams  
Tomi Smith

#### **Administrative Services**

Laura Pacheco

*Continued on next page*

## Years of Service Event

*Continued from previous page*

### **35 YEARS**

#### **Children & Family Services**

Stephanie Potts

#### **Workforce Services**

Hoa Van

#### **Administrative Services**

Linda Linnell

Thank you to EHSD Director **Marla Stuart**, Bureau Directors **Tracy Murray** (WFS), **Kathy Marsh** (CFS), **Nic Bryant** (CSB), **Tamina Alon** (Policy & Planning), **Tamia Brown** (WDB), and Chief Deputy Director **Emilia Gabriele** (Admin.), support staff and event volunteers **Annie Gant**, **Paige Lewis-Villa**, **Patty Lund**, **Laneisha Terrell**, **Bobby Stange**, **Jeane Allard**, **Deborah Drake**, **Susan Klein**, and **Janet Theobald** for all the help in honoring our staff members' dedication over the years. Special thanks to the Community Relations Team of **Deb Johnson**, **Alan Wang**, **Larena Baldazo**, and Tish **Gallegos**, and CCTV's **Ilena Ferrer**, **Warren Kawamoto**, and **Chris Verdugo**, for their extraordinary work in producing this event.

*"I am who I am today  
because of the choices  
I made yesterday."*

– Eleanor Roosevelt, Former First Lady of the U.S.

# CSB Offering Career Paths for High School Grads

By Larena Baldazo, Web Producer, Community/Media Relations

It has been said that the conversation about career pathways doesn't happen soon enough when it comes to young adults, and CSB is looking to change the narrative. **Stephanie Canulli**, Site Supervisor for the Community Services Bureau (CSB) at the Bay Point location, teamed up with Personnel to connect with seniors at Mt. Diablo High School, on Friday March 17th. The topic was all about careers at EHSD!

Stephanie brought the new outreach program to the Executive Team in November of last year, with the support of **Tamina Alon** and **Nic Bryant**, and started planning her events by February.

## Here's a look at the current High School Outreach schedule:

WED	4/12/2023	11:30AM-1:30PM
WED	4/19/2023	12:00PM-2:00PM
WED	4/19/2023	2:00PM-3:15PM
THURS	4/20/2023	11:30AM-1:30PM
WED	5/17/2023	12:00PM-2:00PM
WED	5/17/2023	2:00PM-3:15PM

Mount Diablo Unified School District is the pilot school district and the goal is to visit every high school in MDUSD this spring. The outreach events will present job opportunities that EHSD has available to soon-to-be high school graduates.

“We talk to them about career paths, benefits and how working for the county is helping the community they live in. In the fall I hope to grow the program and take it county wide,” says Stephanie. So far, the schools she has connected with have been very receptive to the program, and she has received great feedback from Mt. Diablo.

Once the school year has ended, the next phase of the program is to connect with parents who may be interested in a career path with EHSD.



Left to Right: **Cynthia Mallory**, **Stephanie Canulli** and **Anna Adriano** attend an outreach event at Mt. Diablo High School.



Above: **Cynthia Mallory** highlights the possibilities at EHSD for current students, college students and college graduates.



Right: The same crew tabled at Clayton Valley Charter High School's career fair, Thursday, March 30.

Students were happy to share their 'after graduation plans' with the group and learn about how EHSD could fit into them.



## Appreciation for Social Work

*“You have to know a whole lot of things about a whole lot of things.”*

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

While more and more professions are specializing in their field, Social Workers are doing more to expand their knowledge to fulfill the “whole person care” of their clients. A lack of transportation can impact a person’s health if they can’t get to a doctor. So, today, an experienced social worker has to know the ins and outs of every County, State and Federal program available to their clients.

On March 21st, the Board of Supervisors recognized Social Work Month and our Contra Costa County Social Workers for their broad knowledge of resources, and their ability to weave together customized service plans for each of their clients.



Among the County social workers who were recognized were EHSD’s **Pascualito Co** (WFS Social Worker), **Andoni Luzuriaga** (CFS Social Worker III), and **Aijah Smith** (AAS Social Worker).



With more recognition and a better understanding of social work, the Board of Supervisors supported and celebrated the County’s Social Work staff, including those from Contra Costa Health Services,

the Public Defender’s Office and other community organizations that take a “whole person care” approach.

Social Work Breaks Barriers is the 2023 Social Work Month theme. **CLICK on the play button** and watch our video story to see how this is evident in Contra Costa County. Thank you to all our Social Workers.

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



# Community Supporters: Essential for Ending Child Abuse

By Carol Carrillo, Executive Director, Child Abuse Prevention Council, & Kathy Marsh, Children & Family Services Director

Child abuse and neglect can have significant long-term psychological, emotional, and physical effects with lasting consequences for many children and families.

Yet child abuse is preventable and everyone can be part of the solution. It is our collective responsibility to ensure children can grow up in safe and healthy environments.

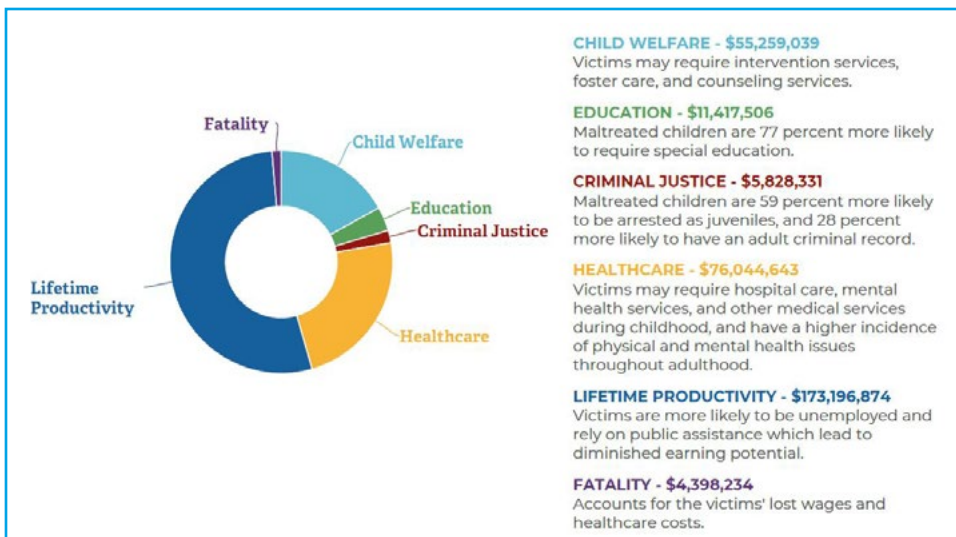
While reporting child abuse is an extremely important action to take if you suspect it is happening, nurturing strong family connections, keeping children safely with their families, and promoting social and emotional well-being represents a paradigm shift in how we can work together to end child abuse.

A movement toward *community supporters* is gaining momentum. Contra Costa County and local partner organizations such as the Child Abuse

Prevention Council (CAPC) support this regional and statewide effort led by Safe & Sound and The Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition.

CAPC and Children and Family Services, collaborate to continue protecting children through preventive services, response, intervention, and investigation. County partnerships between child welfare professionals, education, health, community- and faith-based organizations, businesses, law enforcement agencies, and families are key.

We are all community supporters. During April, Child Abuse Prevention Month, and every day, we can give our children hope, security, and safety by dedicating ourselves personally and professionally to improving the quality of life for children and families everywhere.



In 2021, the cumulative financial impact to Contra Costa County for the 678 verified survivors of child maltreatment is \$326 million.

Source: Safe & Sound "The Economics of Abuse Report: A Study of Contra Costa County"

Week  
of the  
Young  
Child



## CSB Celebrates Our Young Ones

By Amy Wells, Division Manager, Community Services Bureau

The Week of the Young Child, celebrated April 1st through 7th this year, provides early childhood educators the opportunity to shine a spotlight on their classrooms through exciting activities, advocacy opportunities, and family and community engagement. This fun-filled week recognizes the importance of families and communities coming together to support children's growth and learning. EHSD's Community Services Bureau has planned activities for the week include:

**Music Monday**  
**Tasty Tuesday**  
**Work Together Wednesday**  
**Artsy Thursday**  
**Family Friday**

Each CSB classroom will expand these themes in a way that supports children's individual needs.

*Building Brighter  
Futures Together*



## Sexual Assault Awareness Month DRAWING CONNECTIONS PREVENTION DEMANDS EQUITY #SAAM2023

### 4 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP END SEXUAL ASSAULT & RAPE CULTURE

Each April we aim to raise public awareness of sexual assault, educate on how to prevent it and where to seek resources. Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention month will be recognized with a proclamation taking place at the April 4th Board of Supervisors meeting. Types of sexual assault include sexual harassment, rape, sexual battery, child sexual abuse, and same-sex assault. We can take a part in stopping sexual harassment, assault and abuse before they happen in our communities and online spaces. During Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month we can learn more, take action and make a difference in creating communities that are safe and respectful for everyone.

**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 – mainly with men – all the time to avoid danger.

**Read more:** [“The Thing All Women Do That You Don’t Know About”](#) - via *Huffington Post*

**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

*Continued on next page*

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

DRAWING CONNECTIONS

PREVENTION DEMANDS EQUITY • #SAAM2023

## 4 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP END SEXUAL ASSAULT & RAPE CULTURE

*Continued from previous page*

men. Or using “girls” or “girl” to refer to an adult woman. Language like this subjugates the identities of women and undermines efforts toward gender parity.

**Read more:** [“10 Examples of Everyday Language That Supports Rape Culture”](#)

– via *Everyday Feminism*

**4. Learn about consent.** View this video about Loud and enthusiastic consent. And understand that the understanding of what consent means begins at the earliest of ages - it’s something that if we understand as children, we’ll be better off.

**Watch:** [“Tea Consent”](#) – via *Blue Seat Studios*

**For more information and resources, visit [contracostaalliance.org](https://contracostaalliance.org).**

Community Violence Solutions produced a new video “Imagine a World” for 2023 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. **Click here to view:** <https://vimeo.com/813375763>



# We Care...You Care

**We Care...You Care** is how we recognize our peers, emphasizing internal customer service. **We Care...You Care** nominations tie directly to one or more of our six Core Values. The program gives you the opportunity to show your coworkers how much you appreciate them. If you work with someone who deserves special recognition for internal customer service, check out the We Care...You Care link to the guidelines, then fill out a nomination form and submit it to the supervisor of the person you are nominating.

**We Care Guidelines:** [click here](#)

**We Care Nomination Form:** [click here](#)



# Melissa Anino Still Craves the Thrill

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

It's been almost 20 years since Melissa Anino went head-to-head with a couple of future Olympic snow boarders on the slopes of Lake Tahoe. But even today, Melissa says she can't help but feel the urge to drop in on a half-pipe with the intent of catching some crisp mountain air.

In her freshman year of high school Melissa's parents moved the family to South Lake Tahoe where she joined the South Lake Tahoe High School snowboard team. "I thought I was a pretty good snowboarder," says Melissa. But when she saw the competition, she quickly realized she was in way over her head. "A lot of these kids had been snowboarding since they were toddlers," says the Planner and Evaluator for EHSD's Policy & Planning division. "And they were really, really good!"

Melissa competed in the Half-Pipe, Slalom, Boardercross and

*Continued on next page*



# Melissa Anino Still Craves the Thrill

*Continued from previous page*

Slopestyle events against two snowboarders who just happened to be future Olympians. Jamie Anderson went on to win gold medals in two consecutive Olympics (2014, 2018), while Elena Hight became a two-time Olympian and seven-time X Games medalist.

“Hopefully, I got an A for effort because I went up on the mountain and competed side-by-side with them and always placed second, third or fourth to them,” says Melissa. “My dad recently reminded me of how upset I was when I placed second to Jamie Anderson. I didn’t know she was going to the Olympics at the time, so I don’t feel so bad now,” she laughs.

---

## “The data tells a story...”

---

When Melissa is not chasing powder on the slopes, she’s chasing data from every bureau in EHSD. She gathers it, evaluates it, and then helps create charts and graphs to show the latest trends on how social services are affecting EHSD clients. “The data tells a story and we want to share those stories so we can learn from them,” says Melissa. One of the most ambitious data projects yet is the Program Data Dashboard that contains trend lines, bar graphs and narratives showing where and how many clients receive services in specific areas of Contra Costa County. You can check it out on the [EHSD Public Information Sharing Tools page](#) on ehsd.org, and you can watch Melissa in action by **CLICKING** the play button or [CLICKING on this link](#).



# 4 Our Families Navigators Support Youth Event

by Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

## Brave Conference 2023

4 Our Families Navigators **Maria R. Muñoz** and **Sandra Figueroa** represented EHSD at the Brave Conference held at Bay Church in Concord on March 4th. This one-day youth event was for those who had been in the foster care system or exposed to human trafficking. It featured inspirational and motivational speakers, art, music, dance, spoken word, and giveaways for the young people who attended. Maria and Sandra connected with several attendees and community organizations, all in support of the brave youth who are overcoming challenging life experiences.



Brave Conference at Bay Church in Concord



## Prioritizing Self-Care

Contributed by Personnel Services

Self-care isn't selfish. Instead, it's defined as making a commitment to activities that support your emotional, physical and spiritual health. If you take care of yourself first, you'll have more energy to effectively care for others. Consider adopting these elements of self-care.

- Follow healthy habits in sleep, diet and exercise. Drink plenty of water.
- Schedule at least 15 or 20 minutes of "you" time each day for creative hobbies or spiritual practice— whatever means a lot to you on a personal level.
- Take breaks throughout the day to stand up, stretch and move. This helps recharge your creativity.
- Set boundaries on your time and say "no" to requests sometimes. If something doesn't fit with your priorities right now, you can gracefully decline.
- If you have a life partner, be sure to take a little one-on-one time each day to stop and share stories from your day. This helps keep your relationship healthy, intimate and supportive

Source: Healthwise Staff

Browse more articles at <https://member.magellanhealthcare.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.](#)

Magellan Ascend



#### UPCOMING WEBINAR: Financial Setback? Regroup & Rebuild April 12

This webinar will:

- Assess where the financial setback occurs (income or expenses)
- Rebuild your finances in multiple areas
- Practice steps to address behavioral changes and prevent future setbacks

#### Missed the live webinar?

Webinars are listed in your Dashboard under "Upcoming". If you haven't signed up to use the County Employee Assistance Program yet, follow these two easy steps:  
Step 1: Go to <https://member.magellanhealthcare.com/> and click on "Sign up."

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

# Get Connected Contra Costa! Highlights Affordable Connectivity Program

By the Policy & Planning Team

EHSD's [Get Connected Contra Costa!](#) website page has recently been upgraded to highlight the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**, a federal program that provides monthly subsidies up to \$30/month toward internet service bills of income-eligible households, as well as a one-time discount up to \$100 toward the purchase of a laptop, desktop computer or tablet.

The page now features a series of steps designed to help users understand and walk through the ACP enrollment process. Samples of a Medi-Cal Renewal Form and CalFresh Notice of Approval (NOA) are included in Step 2 for additional clarity about suitable documentation.

In addition to the federal ACP, several local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are offering higher speed connections in their low-cost programs. This means that eligible households may obtain effectively free broadband internet service with an ACP credit. CalFresh, Medi-Cal and CalWORKs recipients, and others served by EHSD, are likely to qualify for these programs.

Since early in the COVID pandemic, EHSD has partnered with the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) to inform our community about low cost, income-eligible internet service offers by Comcast, AT&T and other providers. Step 3 on the [Get Connected Contra Costa!](#) webpage provides access to these offers.

A big Thank You to **Larena Baldazo, Kevin Balderston, Patty Perez, Angela Verarde and Dana Wargo** who helped guide and implement the enhancements.



*Building Brighter Futures Together*



## Joyful Ramadan

Ramadan, the holiest month on the Islamic calendar, is observed this year from March 22nd through April 20th. It is marked by fasting, reflection, charity and prayer.

You may have coworkers who observe Ramadan and are fasting. It is a practice integrated with everyday life, which can make it less apparent to others. No matter where you live or work, it is safe to assume you know someone observing Ramadan. The final evening of Ramadan is Eid al-Fitr, when the traditional month-long fast ends with a feast.

Learn about the Ramadan schedule and ways you can be supportive of those who observe its rituals by clicking on the play button or this link:

[4 Ways to Respect Ramadan in the Workplace: DEI Video Template \(vyond.com\)](https://www.vyond.com/4-Ways-to-Respect-Ramadan-in-the-Workplace-DEI-Video-Template)



---

*We'd be lost without you*  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS' DAY IS APRIL 26



*Thank You!*

## Customer Service Champion

This individual is being recognized for going the extra mile by delivering excellent service to our customers. She went above and beyond in her willingness to help and demonstrate EHSD's emphasis on providing exemplary customer service. Congratulations on a job well done!

### Eileen Lepas

By Maria Preciado,  
CFS Social Services Program Analyst

**Eileen Lepas** is a CFS Social Services Program Assistant in the Foster Care Program.

Eileen has gone above and beyond helping the Foster Care Program prepare for the CalSAWS conversion. She was our CFS division's volunteer for CalSAWS User Acceptance Testing (UAT) and quickly became our CalSAWS expert. She took the initiative to set up TEAMS meetings to share her expertise with staff in all of our districts on how to process a case in the new system.

Eileen created pointers for different scenarios she encountered in the system that became part of the formal instructions to be used in training. Eileen's commitment to the successful rollout of CalSAWS was recognized when she was approached by management to assist with writing the CalSAWS Foster Care instructions. She agreed without hesitation and has been working on the instructions, all the while maintaining her caseload and making sure her foster children are taken care of.

Eileen's passion for her work and her zest for learning is contagious. We are very lucky to have Eileen as part of our team!



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

*Building Brighter Futures Together*



## SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

### SERVICE AWARDS

**35 YEARS**

Vangie Eisley, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS  
Vondell Hodges, Medical Program Assistant, WFS

**25 YEARS**

Robert Stange, Accounting Technician, Admin

**20 YEARS**

Uju Chimara, Sr Soc Svc Info Sys Analyst, Admin

**15 YEARS**

Maria Ibarra, Infant Toddler Assoc Teacher-Prj, CSB

**10 YEARS**

Byron Devera, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS  
Renita Johnson, Secretary-Journey Level, WFS  
Dina Marie Lopez, Senior Clerk-Project, CSB  
Mary Rensch, Social Worker, AAS  
Natalie Shandera-Smith, Account Clerk Supervisor  
Tamesha T Shaw, Social Work Supvsr II, CFS  
Romanye Willis, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS

### NEW EMPLOYEES

Lanika Evans, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Gina Hana, Secretary-Journey Level, WFS  
Jonesha Harris, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS  
Marilia Rosario, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS

Melanie Smith, Administrative Svcs Asst III, Admin  
Saneyha Tillman, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Damien Williams, Clerk-Experienced Level, CFS

### RETIREES

Janel Free, Soc Svc Program Asst, WFS  
Ronald Pipa, Comprehensive Svcs Man-Prj, CSB

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 2023

- SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH
- CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH
- NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH
- APRIL 1-7 – WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD
- APRIL 1 – April Fool’s Day
- APRIL 2 – Palm Sunday
- APRIL 5 – Passover begins
- APRIL 7 – National Walk to Work Day
- APRIL 7 – Good Friday
- APRIL 9 – Easter
- APRIL 18 – Tax Day
- APRIL 18 – Holocaust Remembrance Day
- APRIL 21 – Ramadan ends
- APRIL 22 – Earth Day
- APRIL 23-29 – National Library Week
- APRIL 26 – Administrative Professionals’ Day

## MAY 2023

- COMMUNITY ACTION MONTH
- CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH
- OLDER AMERICANS MONTH
- FOSTER PARENT RECOGNITION MONTH
- MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH
- ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH
- JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
- MAY 1-5 – Teacher Appreciation Week
- MAY 5 – Cinco De Mayo
- MAY 9 – Mother’s Day
- MAY 12 – Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- MAY 15 – Peace Officers Memorial Day
- MAY 20 – Armed Forces Day
- MAY 22 – Harvey Milk Day
- MAY 24 – Emergency Medical Services for Children Day
- MAY 26 – Shavuot
- MAY 29 – Memorial Day (County holiday)



Is there room in your home for one more?

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

### FREE VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS

April 6 or 20 • 4 to 6 p.m.  
 May 4 or 18 • 4 to 6 p.m.  
 June 1 or 15 • 4 to 6 p.m.

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

**We Care... You Care**  
 CLICK here to learn more about nominating a coworker.  
 Updated We Care...You Care nomination form: [click here](#) and see page 13

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

Follow us on Twitter @ContraCostaEHSD  
 Follow us on Instagram @HumanaCosta  
 Like us on Facebook



The next issue of *Headlines* will publish in early May. Contact us at our *EHSD Headlines* email, [Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us), by **April 18th** if you have an upcoming event, article, or idea you would like to submit.