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## National Social Work Month

BY RICHARD PULS

SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR

\*RETIRED

National Social Work Month, observed annually in March, recognizes the dedication and empathy of social workers across Orange County and their service to children and adults in need. This recognition informs the public, policymakers and legislators about the services social workers provide in an array of sectors, including hospitals, mental health centers, schools, social service and health care agencies and community centers.

The National Association of Social Workers first organized National



The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized Social Work Month with a resolution presentation in March.

Social Work Month in March 1963 to encourage public support for the work social workers do. In 1984, Congress passed a joint resolution and President Ronald Reagan officially proclaimed the month of March as National Social Worker Month.

Social work is a fast-growing profession, with more than 800,000 social workers expected to be working in the U.S. by 2030 — a 12% increase from 2020, according to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**.

The 2022 theme for National Social Work Month, "The Time is Right for Social Work," embodies

■ Continued on page 2

the dedication and hard work of social workers who rose to meet the challenges brought by COVID-19 and continued to serve their communities throughout a time of uncertainty.

SSA's social workers play an essential role in serving our clients and the community. They advocate for and provide high-quality services to children, adults, families, seniors and the disabled.

We thank all social workers in Orange County and across the nation for their hard work, sacrifice and dedication and we encourage you to thank the social workers in your community as well.

**“Today, we honor social workers from the Social Services Agency and Health Care Agency, who serve our communities with dignity, compassion and dedication. In helping to meet the basic needs of our most vulnerable children and families, they embody the very definition of public service. Thank you to all our County social workers for the vital roles they play in service to our communities.”**

– Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District

**“I have been a Senior Social Worker with the County for 17 years ... I came into social work with the goal to help the vulnerable. Every individual deserves a chance at life and sometimes our clients have lost hope. I love when I know I have made an impact on someone else's life and given them the light and hope that maybe they couldn't see on their own.”**

— Beth, Senior Social Worker

**“I feel very fortunate to work in a program that supports not only the population we serve but the hard-working, dedicated staff at the County of Orange Social Services Agency.”**

— Sabrina, Senior Social Services Supervisor

**“Thank you for acknowledging the effort and attentiveness that I put into a career I am passionate about. I strongly believe in helping and supporting families so they may receive the assistance they need to achieve their goals. I will continue to do my part knowing it is appreciated.”**

— Melyssa,  
Senior Social Worker

# What does being a social worker mean to you?

**“Compassion and kindness go a long way, especially with those who are hurting. It's most meaningful when I am able to serve others with compassion and kindness, and they can sense that my true intent is to help and they accept.”**

— Starlene, Senior Social Worker

**“The most meaningful role in my job as an In-Home Supportive Services Social Worker is helping my clients receive the physical support to live safely in their homes where they can maintain their independence and be surrounded by loved ones. It is rewarding to witness an improvement in the health and abilities of my clients during the annual home visits. I truly enjoy being part of their journey and listening to their stories with empathy and compassion when they need it most.”**

— Linh, Social Worker



# Child Abuse Prevention Month

BY JAMIE CARGO  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I



The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized Child Abuse Prevention Month with a resolution presentation in April.

**S**SA and its many partners commemorated Child Abuse Prevention Month throughout April, starting with the Blue Ribbon Kickoff Event on March 31.

The virtual event, hosted by The Raise Foundation and emceed by Vicky Nguyen, formerly of Spectrum News 1 in Orange County, featured not only Children & Family Services Division Director Christine Snapper, but also Orange County Board of Supervisors Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District. Resource parents Erin and Tony Kim shared about their experiences opening their hearts and homes to youth.

Chairman Chaffee and the rest of the Board also recognized the month with a resolution during their April 12 meeting.

"This month and every month throughout the year, the Orange County Board of Supervisors encourages all individuals and organizations to help make our

community a better place for children and families," Chairman Chaffee said during the Board presentation. "By ensuring parents have the knowledge, skills, resources and support they need to care for their children, we can help promote the well-being of children and youth."

The Chairman also encouraged County staff to wear blue for OC kids on April 12. To see photos SSA staff submitted, turn to [Page 4](#).

CFS Deputy Division Directors Kim Ragen, Ken Santini, Scott Burdick and Kristi Fiskum came together to record a video for Children's Memorial Day. On the fourth Friday of every April all 58 counties in California raise the Children's Memorial Flag in honor of those children who died due to abuse or neglect in the previous year. Please watch the video available [here](#) and take a moment to remember the young lives lost.

Families and Communities

Together (FaCT) and Orange County Fire Authority continued the tradition of planting blue pinwheel gardens to increase awareness.

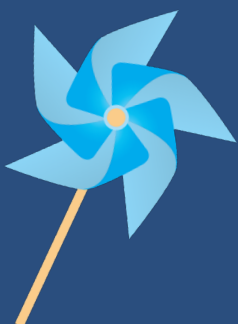
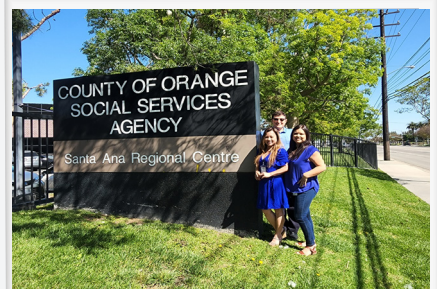
The Raise Foundation hosted its annual art contest for school children across the county to create visual representations of this year's theme, "Creating a Community that Cares." The Raise Foundation has plans to create art galleries to showcase the work of these talented young artists from this year and from previous years.

CHOC also reminded residents about the importance of preventing children, especially those younger than 4, from falling out of windows as part of Window Safety Month from April 4-10.

The effort to bring awareness to child abuse and neglect is truly a collaborative one. We thank all of our partners who work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure children can grow up safely.

# Child Abuse Prevention Month

On April 12, 2022, SSA staff wore blue in honor of victims of child abuse and neglect, and to show their support for prevention efforts across the community. #GoBlueForOCKids





# Foster Care Month

BY TRACI MULDOON  
STAFF SPECIALIST

On May 10, 2022, the Orange County Board of Supervisors presented a resolution to SSA in recognition of May as Foster Care Month. The month of May is dedicated to honoring all relative caretakers, non-related extended family members, resource families and adoptive families for opening their hearts and homes to children in foster care. From resource parents to child welfare professionals to mentors and volunteers, all help build healthy, lifelong connections for children and youth in care.

Board members presented a resolution to SSA leadership in recognition of SSA's efforts to recruit qualified foster families, also known as resource families. The Board also honored local resource parents Joseph and Sharon Dooley, who received a certificate on behalf of the Orange County resource parent community.

"We recognize that brighter outcomes are achieved when children are provided opportunities to grow and develop in family settings and we are committed to ensuring that foster children are placed in family-based care whenever possible," said Board Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District Supervisor. "We would like to thank the Dooleys on behalf of all resource families and our County staff for their compassion, devotion and commitment to helping improve the lives of Orange County children, youth and families."

For nearly 44 years, Joseph and Sharon have fostered more than 117 children and fostered-to-adopt two children, providing them with a "forever" family. Joseph, Sharon and their two children work as a team to welcome children into their home.



The Orange County Board of Supervisors recognized Foster Care Month with a resolution presentation in May.



Children & Family Services Division Director Christine Snapper, right, with resource parents Joseph and Sharon Dooley.

"To me, fostering means fulfilling a role to provide safe and loving care to children who have been removed from their parents until the parents can be reunified and have their children in their care again," Sharon said. "I learned a lot taking care of different children, including how to address children with special medical needs."

In Orange County, more than 2,000 children and youth are in foster care. Foster children range in age from infancy to late teens. Their backgrounds cross all ethnic and economic lines. Resource

family homes are especially needed for teenagers, sibling sets and children with special medical, educational, behavioral or emotional challenges.

Fostering a child can be a challenging yet rewarding journey for families. For more information on becoming a resource family, or other ways you can help foster youth, please call (888) 871-KIDS or visit [www.oc4kids.com](http://www.oc4kids.com).

Thank you to all caregivers for providing safe and loving homes and the SSA staff who support them.

# Meet SSA's Leadership Development Team

**Name:** Marsela Gastelum

**Title:** Deputy Division Director, Assistance Programs, Operations and Policy Team

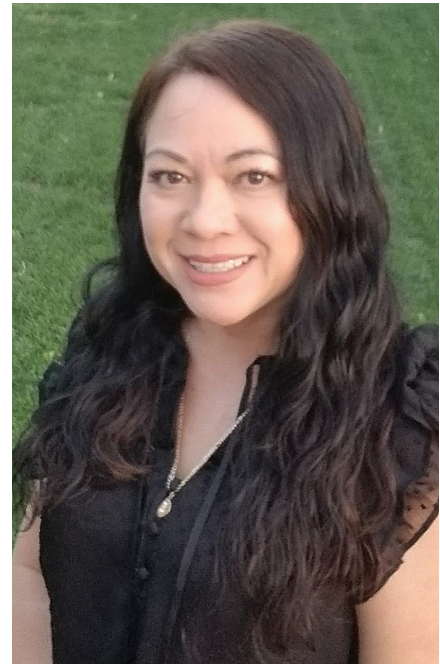
## **Areas covered in your position:**

Oversight of the Operations and Policy teams for Medi-Cal, CalFresh, General Relief and Cash Assistance Programs for Immigrants (CAPI)

**Years of service with the County of Orange:** 30

## **Divisions worked/previous experience:**

I began my career as a Medi-Cal Eligibility Technician in 1992 at the Anaheim Regional Center. I have spent most of my career working in Assistance Programs, where I promoted through the various classifications of supervision and manager positions. I had the privilege of working in both Assistance Programs and Administrative Services divisions. I supported Medi-Cal, CalFresh and General Relief Operations and Policy, as well as the regional offices in many capacities. I also had the pleasure of working at Training and Career Development as a Medi-Cal trainer for five years. Training new staff and seeing them evolve in their careers within the Agency was one of my most rewarding experiences. I feel fortunate to have been given the opportunity within the various positions that I have held at SSA.



Marsela "Marcie" Gastelum

## **Fun fact about you (hobby, favorite food, movie, sports team, etc.):**

I enjoy visiting national parks, hiking and attending concerts with my husband and kids. On summer days, my husband and I enjoy going on Harley rides wherever the road takes us. I also love Mexican food. I look forward to our traditional yearly get away to Mexico, with my mom and siblings, where we get to spend time with family during the fiestas and enjoy a variety of authentic Mexican food such as gorditas, mole, enchiladas and, of course, every type of taco you can think of.

## **Professional development tips for staff:**

Challenge yourself by getting out of your comfort zone in order to continue learning and growing. Take on new challenges by talking to your supervisor/manager about volunteering for assignments that will stretch your skills. Additionally, find ways to be innovative to make continual improvements and take calculated risks. Lastly, be passionate and committed to making a difference in everything you do and be sure to have some fun along the way, too!



# Mapping SSA's Flight into CalSAWS

BY PERLA CABRERA  
SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR

Imagine boarding a flight but not having a plan for where to stay or what to do on your trip once you land. Or suppose you have a plan but need to make some changes to the itinerary. We all know a little preparation and flexibility can make a journey easier and more pleasant. Similarly, SSA's migration to the new California

Statewide Automated Welfare System, or CalSAWS, requires a well-thought-out plan that is also flexible enough to adjust to our customers' needs as they evolve during the process.

Taking off on April 24, 2023, CalSAWS will replace California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Information Network (CalWIN) to support eligibility determinations, benefit calculation, benefit issuance, reporting and case management for programs such as CalWORKS/Welfare-to-Work, Refugee Cash Assistance, Foster Care, CalFresh, Medi-Cal and General Relief.

To identify changes to tasks to adapt to CalSAWS, SSA staff participated in the state's Business Process Reengineering project in November 2021 to outline how the Agency will serve its clients under the new system.

This project consisted of two phases. The first studied how day-to-day work is completed

using CalWIN. The second phase analyzed how that work would be accomplished in CalSAWS.

In partnership with Deloitte, the Agency's Implementation Support Services contractor, nearly 200 SSA staff participants worked to refine internal processes to create consistent and efficient workflows that will eventually be converted into business processes.

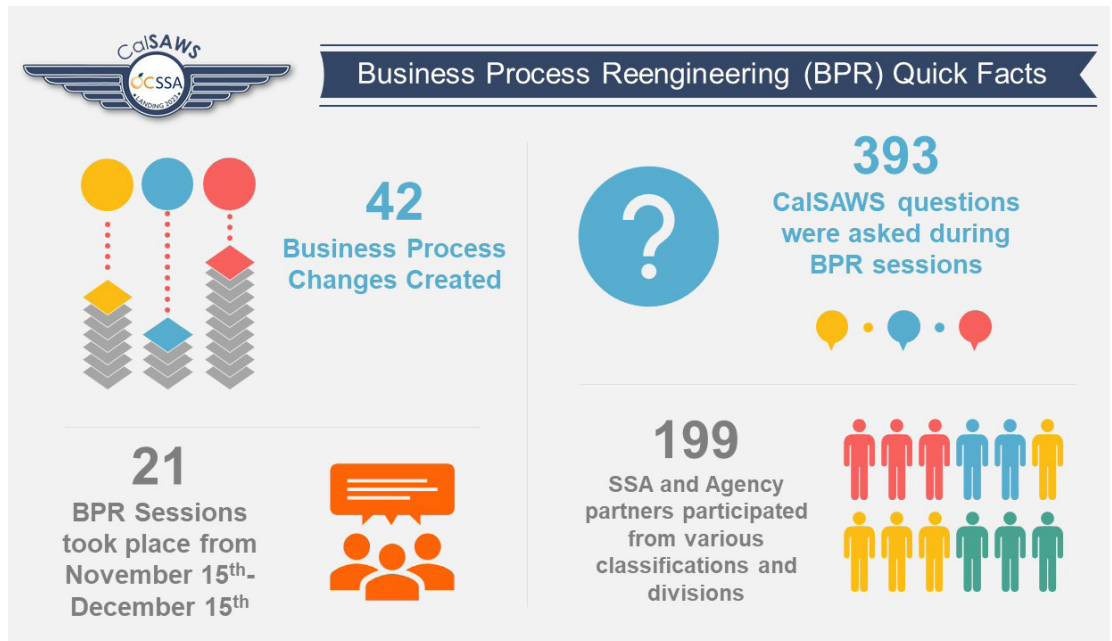
Updated business processes include:

- MyBenefitsCalWIN customers will have the ability to schedule their own appointments through **BenefitsCal**.
- Staff will receive a task automatically once specific customer documents are scanned into CalSAWS.
- Reports of suspected fraud will be initiated and processed within CalSAWS instead of sent to fraud investigators outside of the system.
- Additional changes can

be viewed by visiting the CalSAWS **Business Process Reengineering Page**.

Staff can expect the proposed business changes to take place in staggered phases prior to and after the April 24, 2023, migration date. The proposed changes aim to create a consistent and uniform process across all divisions, allowing us to serve our customers more quickly and efficiently.

"The Business Process Reengineering project was valuable in preparing for the transition to CalSAWS," Eligibility Technician and Business Process Reengineering participant Daisy Ramirez said. "As an In-Home Support Services Eligibility Technician for Medi-Cal working with clients, it was helpful to work together, provide feedback on workflows, offer training recommendations and ask questions."



# March Spotlight:

## Trust-Based Relational Intervention Implementation Across Orange County

BY ANGELA SANTOS  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I

\*RETIRED

In 2020, SSA began a collaboration with several community partners to implement Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) across Children & Family Services (CFS). Developed by Child Development Psychologist Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross at Texas Christian University, TBRI is a trauma-informed intervention designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. It is an approach to caregiving that is developmentally respectful and responsive to trauma. While the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing and neuroscience research, the heart of TBRI is connection. Implementing this intervention process into practice, SSA's goal was to build the capacity of certified TBRI practitioners within Orange County and to make it a widely used intervention.

To launch the project, SSA selected 12 CFS employees ranging from direct service staff to supervisors and managers to take part in a TBRI training series.

In June 2021, a TBRI Steering Committee and Implementation Workgroup formed to devise a strategy to integrate this holistic intervention into SSA's work with children and families. As a result, TBRI is now incorporated into the Resource Family Pre-approval training curriculum, providing caregivers an introduction to TBRI principles. In addition, TBRI trainings are available to our Foster Family Agency (FFA) partners and other community partners.

In October, a panel of caregivers, parents, school personnel and FFA representatives provided CFS staff a presentation in which they shared insight



and experience into the application of TBRI and the impact it has had on their families and communities.

**“During home visits, I see resource parents implement TBRI and I’m amazed and excited about the skills taught through this method. I have received positive feedback from families on how much TBRI has helped them. With nearly 30 years of child welfare experience, I can see that TBRI is a game changer for families!”**

— SSA Social Worker

With the tools provided by TBRI, social workers look forward to becoming better equipped to assist in placement stabilization, help caregivers better understand the needs of children and provide a more supportive, healing and trauma-informed approach to parenting.

For more information on TBRI, [click here](#).



# April SSA Spotlight:

## Disabled Adult Child Unit

BY LORI MITCHELL  
ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR

The Medi-Cal Disabled Adult Child (DAC) program serves individuals who are diagnosed with severe disabilities in childhood. The DAC unit was established in June 2019 as the result of an agreement between Legal Aid and the County of Orange to improve services and ensure this population receives timely and accurate benefits. Assistance Programs centralized all the Orange County DAC cases at the Santa Ana Regional Center to ensure a more seamless experience from

start to finish. The case carrying approach provides beneficiaries exceptional customer service and a continuum of care while providing full service.

DAC beneficiaries are referred to SSA through a practice known as the Craig v. Bonta monthly report, a ruling that protects a client's Medi-Cal benefits in the event a client is disenrolled from Social Security benefits. If a client under the disabled adult children classification is discontinued from Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment (SSI/SSP) benefits, the client is

given a transitional Medi-Cal aid code and are placed on the Craig v. Bonta report until they are evaluated for a Medi-Cal program.

Initially, the DAC unit consisted of three Case Maintenance Eligibility Technicians and three Intake Eligibility Technicians who maintained about 800 cases. Within the same year, the DAC unit volunteered to process a backlog of 1,300 individuals requiring conversion to a Medi-Cal program. The DAC unit successfully reduced the backlog by half in three months and processed the

remaining backlog by January 2020. To ensure the ongoing consistency of services to the DAC population the unit was assigned to permanently process the monthly Craig v. Bonta report. The DAC unit has now grown to eight employees and currently maintains over 1,300 DAC cases.

The DAC unit continues to successfully determine Medi-Cal eligibility accurately and within established timeframes for disabled clients.



SSA's Disabled Adult Child Unit from left to right: Lori Mitchell, Janette Diego, Krista Rodriguez, Maria Venegas, Diane Gonzalez, Hanh Hoang and May Huang.



# May SSA Spotlight:

## SSA Accounting Payroll Unit

BY THOMAS HOWARD, ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER III  
TIFFANY THIBEAULT, ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II

**S**SA's Accounting Payroll Unit is a satellite team of seven staff members from the Orange County Auditor-Controller's Office whose focus includes managing and overseeing the bi-weekly pay of and reimbursements for SSA's 4,300 employees. The unit audits timecards by running reports in SSA's timecard report system to ensure all timecards follow current labor laws pertaining to the employee's exempt or non-exempt status. The unit is also responsible for reviewing adjustments to employee timecards, separation payouts and retroactive merit increases, and works closely with SSA Human Resources, County labor unions, County Executive Office Risk Management and the Auditor-Controller's Office to ensure payroll transactions comply with union Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regulations and labor laws.

In addition to timecard oversight, the SSA Accounting Payroll Unit assists with password resets, answers countless paycheck inquiries, and reviews and processes mileage reimbursement claims. Thanks to the team's outstanding attention to detail

and quick turnaround time, the SSA Accounting Payroll Unit completes an annual average of 4,900 timecard adjustments and 400 mileage reimbursement claims. The projected sum of SSA employee salaries and benefits audited by our skilled payroll team to be recorded with the County this year is \$455 million.

The SSA Accounting Payroll Unit is assisting the Auditor-Controller's central payroll team with implementing a new timekeeping system called OC Time. The unit's staff serve as the subject matter experts as the County runs tests and makes adjustments to launch OC Time in late 2022.

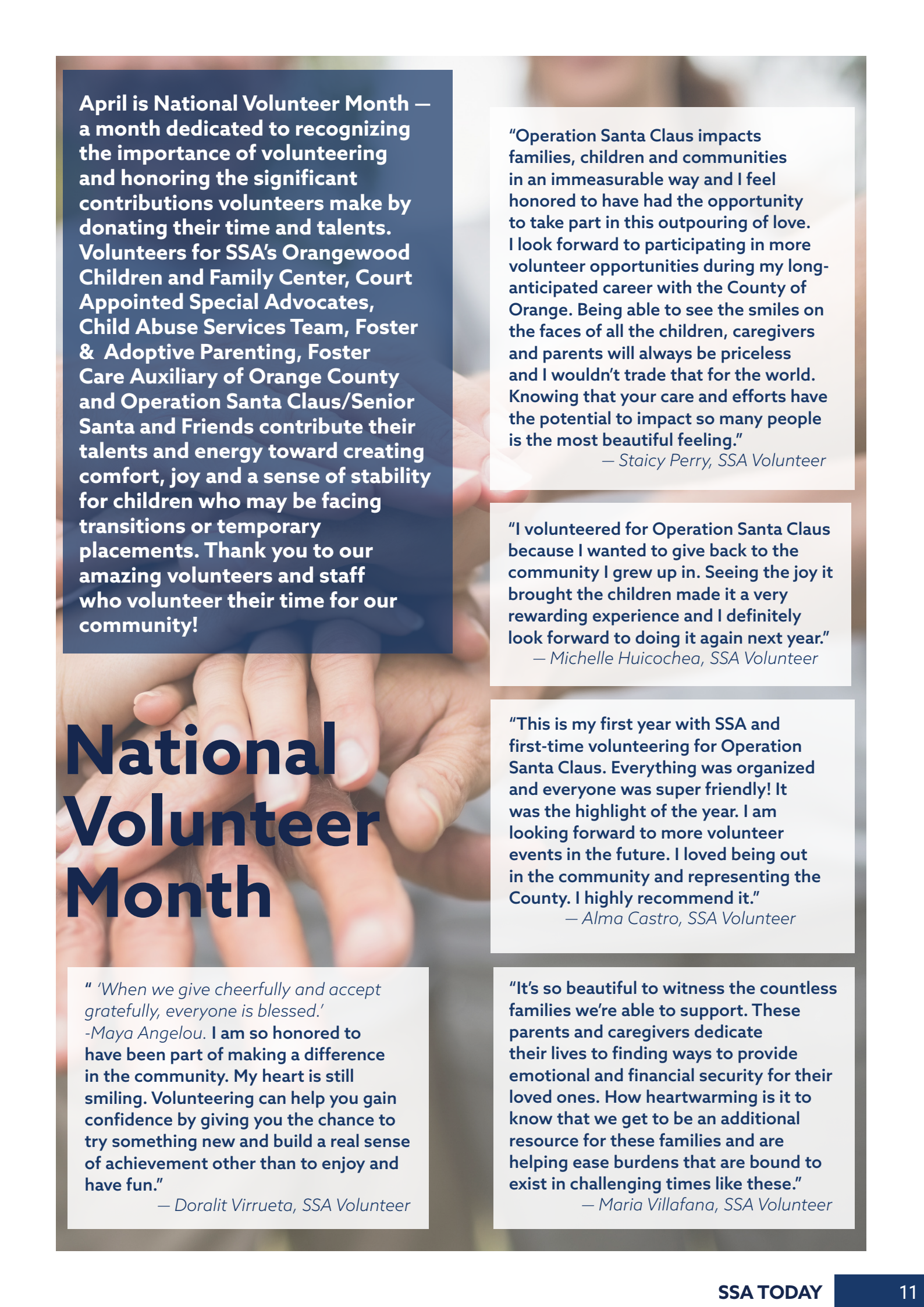
The SSA Accounting Payroll Unit focuses on the needs of the Agency every day and is committed to maintaining the accuracy and timeliness of payroll processes.

"SSA's collaboration with the Satellite Accounting Payroll team is essential to the operations at SSA," said Administrative Services Division Director Dortha Lee. "This team is exceptional and works hard to ensure staff receive their paychecks in a timely manner and we are grateful for their commitment and dedication to our staff."



The SSA Accounting Payroll Unit from left to right: Ivan Alvarado, Brett McBride, Shannon Chen, Antonio Guzman, Sunny Nguyen, Vasanthi Gurunath and Neeru Gau.





**April is National Volunteer Month — a month dedicated to recognizing the importance of volunteering and honoring the significant contributions volunteers make by donating their time and talents. Volunteers for SSA's Orangewood Children and Family Center, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Child Abuse Services Team, Foster & Adoptive Parenting, Foster Care Auxiliary of Orange County and Operation Santa Claus/Senior Santa and Friends contribute their talents and energy toward creating comfort, joy and a sense of stability for children who may be facing transitions or temporary placements. Thank you to our amazing volunteers and staff who volunteer their time for our community!**

# National Volunteer Month

*" 'When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.'  
-Maya Angelou. I am so honored to have been part of making a difference in the community. My heart is still smiling. Volunteering can help you gain confidence by giving you the chance to try something new and build a real sense of achievement other than to enjoy and have fun."*

*— Doralit Virrueta, SSA Volunteer*

*"Operation Santa Claus impacts families, children and communities in an immeasurable way and I feel honored to have had the opportunity to take part in this outpouring of love. I look forward to participating in more volunteer opportunities during my long-anticipated career with the County of Orange. Being able to see the smiles on the faces of all the children, caregivers and parents will always be priceless and I wouldn't trade that for the world. Knowing that your care and efforts have the potential to impact so many people is the most beautiful feeling."*

*— Staicy Perry, SSA Volunteer*

*"I volunteered for Operation Santa Claus because I wanted to give back to the community I grew up in. Seeing the joy it brought the children made it a very rewarding experience and I definitely look forward to doing it again next year."*

*— Michelle Huicochea, SSA Volunteer*

*"This is my first year with SSA and first-time volunteering for Operation Santa Claus. Everything was organized and everyone was super friendly! It was the highlight of the year. I am looking forward to more volunteer events in the future. I loved being out in the community and representing the County. I highly recommend it."*

*— Alma Castro, SSA Volunteer*

*"It's so beautiful to witness the countless families we're able to support. These parents and caregivers dedicate their lives to finding ways to provide emotional and financial security for their loved ones. How heartwarming is it to know that we get to be an additional resource for these families and are helping ease burdens that are bound to exist in challenging times like these."*

*— Maria Villafana, SSA Volunteer*

# National Administrative Professionals Day

BY TRACI MULDOON  
STAFF SPECIALIST

**N**ational Administrative Professionals Day, also known as Secretaries Day or Admin Day, celebrates the work of secretaries, administrative assistants and other office professionals for their contributions in the workplace that keep offices operating efficiently.

Administrative Professionals Day is observed the Wednesday of the last week of April and was first launched in 1952 by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer. Originally taking place in June as National Secretaries Week, the day of recognition was eventually changed to Administrative Professionals Day in 2000 and is now recognized in the month of April. While the

name of this special day has changed and evolved over the past few decades, the importance of recognizing these vital individuals has continued to grow.

The support provided by administrative professionals greatly benefits their colleagues and the organization at large. As the COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges to the operations of the workplace, administrative professionals stepped up to offer critical support and their work has been essential to tackling each new challenge.

According to the **U.S. Department of Labor**, as of 2020, more than 3 million secretaries/administrative assistants are part of the U.S.

workforce. SSA is grateful for the 372 secretary/administrative staff that play a key role in our day-to-day office operations.

These dedicated staff perform critical duties ranging from the purchasing of office supplies to drafting reports to being the first SSA employee a client sees when visiting our offices. Our secretaries and administrative staff serve as the backbone of our day-to-day operations and play an instrumental role in helping SSA to serve the residents of Orange County.

Thank you to all SSA Administrative Professionals — we celebrate you and all that you do!





# Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action

## Ana Lavenant

Social Services Supervisor I, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services



*Ana received the following words of appreciation from the Training & Career Development (TCD) team:*

“Thank you for being here to provide support and guidance. Your expertise in both continuing CalWORKs and Welfare-to-Work case management is invaluable, and (TCD) just can’t thank you enough. Thank you, Ana, for all that you do!”

## Tyler Pham

Case Manager, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

*Tyler received the following words of recognition regarding his outstanding service from a client:*

“I am lucky to have Tyler as my case manager. He was patient and listened to my concerns regarding my son’s birth as well as questions I had about social security card information, Medi-Cal enrollment, my work and study plan. I shared that I couldn’t afford gas because I couldn’t keep working until my son went to school. Tyler considered my difficulties as a single mom of two children and helped me apply for a gas card. I am very grateful for the time and effort Tyler spent with me.”



## Evelyn Pineda

Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs



*Evelyn received the following words of recognition regarding her exceptional service from a client:*

“A customer called to express that she had received great customer service from Evelyn. The customer stated that Evelyn was clear, helpful and resourceful in providing her information for the Restaurant Meals Program. The customer was very grateful for the wonderful service she was provided. Great job, Evelyn!”

# Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action

## Amelia Chaffin

Staff Specialist, Children & Family Services

*Amelia received the following words of recognition from a colleague after being recognized as Children & Family Services Employee of the Month:*

“ Amelia holds compassion as a driving value. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, SSA received numerous inquiries from youth and community partners regarding current, exiting and former foster youth greatly impacted by the pandemic. During this time, Amelia quickly responded to the many incoming messages and put forth additional effort in reaching out to the youth, engaging them, allaying their worries and encouraging them. Thank you, Amelia, for your empathy and dedication to the foster youth in our community. ”



## Jamshid Dehshat

Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs

*Jamshid received the following words of recognition regarding his exceptional service from a client:*

“ A customer called to express her deepest gratitude to Jamshid for the excellent customer service he provided during her time in need. The client said she has a medical condition that makes it difficult for her to communicate but said Jamshid was very patient and accommodating. Thank you, Jamshid for your great work and service! ”



## Salvador Gonzalez

Eligibility Technician, Assistance Programs

*Salvador received the following words of appreciation from a colleague:*

“ I wanted to show my appreciation for my co-worker Sal. Anytime I have a question regarding a Medi-Cal case, I know I can go to Sal and ask for his help in figuring out why a case won't pass, how to process retroactive cases or have him look over a challenging case with me. Sal always rises to the challenge and is resourceful in finding solutions. He is always willing to help out his team. Thank you, Sal for everything you do. Your kindness does not go unrecognized and we appreciate you very much. ”





# Celebrating Public Health Nurses

BY TRACI MULDOON  
STAFF SPECIALIST



**M**ay celebrates the vast contributions and positive impact of America's more than **3 million** registered nurses. The 2022 Nurses Month theme, "You Make a Difference," is intended to help all of us recognize nurses for their highly specialized knowledge, critical thinking skills and compassion in making a difference in the lives of patients and their impact in their community. It also offers an opportunity to celebrate OC Health Care Agency's (HCA) Public Health Nurses and their contributions in serving SSA programs and the Orange County community.

The Public Health Nurses who support SSA's Children & Family Services (CFS) Division, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) programs understand the public health needs of their clients and work to provide thorough and timely access to health services through assessments, consultations, care coordination, advocacy and connections to community resources. The goal of these nurses is to provide comprehensive and holistic services to support those at risk in the Orange County community and improve the quality of life as it relates to safety and health.

## CFS Public Health Nurses

The services that Public Health Nurses in CFS

administer are divided into two programs: the Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care (HCPCFC) and the Child Abuse Registry/Emergency Response (CAR/ER) program. HCPCFC assists families and social workers with referrals and resources to meet the medical, dental, developmental and mental health needs of children in the foster care system. HCPCFC is made up of 15 Public Health Nurses, one Information Processing Technician, one Office Specialist and two Public Health Nurse supervisors. The program equips social workers and caregivers with health education and provides case management and care coordination for medically fragile youth, including discharge planning for proper placement. To ensure children 5 years and younger entering the child welfare system receive early intervention services, HCPCFC also administers the Early Childhood System of Care program to arrange developmental screenings and referrals for youth entering the child welfare system.

HCA Public Health Nurses also provide consultation to CAR/ER social workers by helping them understand the health conditions of children who are suspected victims of abuse/neglect as well as evaluate potential risk for negative health outcomes in children. The CAR/ER public health nurse team includes six Public Health Nurses and

■ Continued on page 16

one supervisor who conduct joint field visits, nursing assessments for at-risk youth, on-call emergency response to support social workers with after-hours investigations and short-term follow-ups with caregivers and/or parents.

### CalWORKs Public Health Nurses

Public Health Nurses who support CalWORKs help families and individuals participating in the Welfare-to-Work (WTW) program overcome medical barriers and receive the care needed to successfully participate in the WTW program and increase self-sufficiency. These Public Health Nurses provide a wide span of services for clients and their families including support for general ongoing medical conditions, pregnancy and mental health services, assistance with substance use disorders, developmental concerns in youth, referrals and help with the medical exemption process. This team of Public Health Nurses began supporting CalWORKs in January 2020 and consists of four nurses co-located throughout the CalWORKs regional offices with one supervisor and one Information Processing Technician.

### IHSS Public Health Nurse

Also instituted in January 2020, the Public Health Nurse who supports IHSS ensures disabled IHSS clients receive in-home services to live safely in their home. This role involves partnering with Social Workers to conduct consultations, perform

in person and telephonic assessments, review and facilitate completion of IHSS-related medical forms/documentation and obtain clarification of paramedical services as needed. The team consists of one Public Health Nurse and one supervisor, both with expertise on the complex medical needs of disabled adults.

Overall, the Public Health Nurses who support SSA programs provide education and consultation to staff to promote awareness of nursing services available for eligible SSA clients and train staff on how to make appropriate referrals. Throughout the last two years, the nurses supporting CFS managed 150-200 cases each, while those supporting CalWORKs managed 450 cases and the nurse supporting IHSS managed 590 cases in total.

“During National Nurse’s Month, I want to thank each and every Public Health Nurse on our team for the work they do every day to make a difference in the lives of their clients,” said Cathy Martinez, Administrative Manager II for HCA’s Community & Nursing Services. “Our public health nurses exemplify compassion and are innovative problem-solvers. It is a joy to work with an amazing group of dedicated and caring professionals.”

Thank you to HCA’s public health nurses for your ongoing support to SSA and helping to increase awareness of physical and mental health wellness across all populations served.

**Do you know of an employee who recently went above and beyond in their job or witnessed them in action? Did you know that you can give them a shout-out to recognize them for their hard work?**

Acknowledge their extraordinary service in the “Exceptional Service in Action” column of SSA Today! Download our “Kudos” form [here](#) and email your completed recognition to [ssatoday@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:ssatoday@ssa.ocgov.com). Kudos may also be highlighted in a future Director’s Corner email as well.

We look forward to highlighting your team member and their recent accomplishments, big or small, in future editions of SSA Today!





# Cultural Recognition

BY KENYA AVILA, STAFF SPECIALIST  
MICHAEL KIM, STAFF SPECIALIST  
AND ALEXIS MARQUEZ, PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS INTERN

The spring season marks several observances recognizing the cultural diversity of our nation and world, along with some special days for advocacy. Read below to learn more.

## International Independence Days

South Korea celebrates **Independence Movement Day**, also known as “Samil Jeol,” on March 1 to commemorate the 1919 demonstrations that took place to liberate Korea from Japan.



**Ghana Independence Day**, on March 6, is a national holiday dedicated to celebrating Ghana’s declaration of independence from the United Kingdom in 1957 by then-Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. The country’s independence served as a precedent for many African countries to break free from colonial rule.

**Independence Day of Bangladesh** is celebrated on March 26 and commemorates the country’s independence from Pakistan in 1971. The holiday is marked by memorial ceremonies for those who lost their lives in the war for independence. The morning is kicked off with a 31-gun salute and the evening is closed by lighting the capital buildings in Dhaka in the country’s national colors.



## International Women’s Day



March 8 marks **International Women’s Day**, celebrating the social, political and economic achievements of women. International Women’s Day also raises awareness for women’s equality and highlights the contributions of various female-focused organizations and charities. Observances of International Women’s Day include both online and in-person social gatherings, such as festivals, art exhibitions and awards ceremonies. The 2022 theme for International Women’s Day is “Break the Bias,” which acknowledges the biases that make it difficult for women to progress.

## Gathering of Nations

The **Gathering of Nations**, brings together different Native American tribes throughout the U.S. This year, the Tingley Coliseum hosted the 39th annual gathering where tribes celebrated their cultures and customs from April 28-30 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Dancing, singing and drum group competitions are among the many activities held. Attendees also get the opportunity to buy and sell traditional Native American art at the Indian Traders Market.



## Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday

**Ash Wednesday** marks the beginning of Lent, where fasting, sacrificing and praying take place for about six weeks before **Easter Sunday**. Church attendance is common on Ash Wednesday and as a symbol of repentance, the priest or pastor often marks the forehead of each participant with ashes in the shape of the cross. Christians worldwide commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday annually.



For many, religious or not, **Easter** is a time of family gathering with food and activities. The Easter bunny came to the U.S. with German immigrants in the 1700s. Known as the “Osterhase,” the hare would leave eggs and treats in colorful nests children built. This evolved into the Easter egg hunt many children love today.

## Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo, also known as the Battle of Puebla, celebrates the Mexican army’s victory over France on May 5, 1862, during the Franco-Mexican War. Cinco de Mayo is frequently celebrated with parades, parties, mariachi music, Mexican folk dancing including the “Ballet Folklórico” performance and traditional foods such as tacos and mole poblano.



## Buddha’s Birthday

On April 8, Buddhists commemorate the birth of Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who is recognized as a spiritual leader and the creator of Buddhism. Celebrations vary but are usually intended as a time of reflection. Common celebratory practices are the hanging of lanterns, enjoying communal meals, parades and visits to temples with offerings.

## Vesak Day

“Vesak,” or the Day of the Full Moon, is observed in May by Buddhists in South and Southeast Asia, Tibet and Mongolia. Vesak Day celebrates the birth, enlightenment and passing of Buddha. Throughout this holiday, Buddhists around the world congregate in temples, raise the Buddhist flag and bear gifts and offerings from flowers to incense sticks to symbolize life and its fall to decay and destruction, just as a flower withers.



## Memorial Day

Memorial Day (originally known as Decoration Day) is an American holiday, observed the last Monday of May, honoring the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military. The first national celebration took place May 30, 1868, at Arlington National Cemetery, where both Confederate and Union soldiers were buried. Maintaining this tradition, the U.S. president, or the president’s designee, lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Memorial Day each year.



## Cultural Heritage Observances



Since 1991, U.S. presidents have designated March as **Irish-American Heritage Month** to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Irish Americans to our nation. Did you know that according to the U.S. Census, nearly 33 million Americans claim Irish heritage? Additionally, **St. Patrick's Day** is a cultural and religious celebration held on March 17 in observance of the death of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

**Scottish-American Heritage Month** is recognized in April and celebrated by Americans across the nation. Scottish immigrants were among the earliest settlers in the American colonies and helped build society through their work as inventors, artists, politicians and more. They are also known for their tenacious spirit as patriots of the American revolution. Among 46 U.S. presidents, 35 of them are of Scottish decent.



May is designated as **Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month** each year to commemorate the historical and cultural contributions of people of Asian American and Pacific Islander descent. The month was selected in honor of the arrival of Japanese immigrants to the U.S on May 7, 1843, as well as the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad by a large community of Chinese immigrants on May 10, 1869.

## Vimy Ridge Day

On April 9, Canada commemorates the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France during World War I. This day honors the Canadian Corps troops who were injured or died as they seized a heavily fortified seven mile ridge that retained the commanding view over Allied lines. Historical storytelling, laying of wreaths at memorials and a national ceremony bring remembrance of the brave Canadians who fought during the battle of Vimy Ridge.



## Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr

Observed during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, **Ramadan** celebrates the angel Gabriel visiting Muhammad and the revelation of the Quran. This year Muslims observed Ramadan, recognized as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, from April 1 to May 1 with sawm fasting (fasting specifically from dawn to sunset), introspection and prayer.

**Eid al-Fitr**, also known as the “festival of breaking the fast,” marks the end of Ramadan and is celebrated during the first three days of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. This year, Eid al-Fitr took place May 1 to 2, beginning with the sighting of the new moon, a large breakfast, followed by congregational Eid prayers in mosques or public spaces.



## Mother's Day

Mother's Day is an international holiday dedicated to honoring mothers. In the U.S., Mother's Day was created by Anna Jarvis in 1908, became an official holiday in 1914 and is celebrated on the second Sunday of the month. Although the date can vary by country, Mother's Day provides an opportunity for mothers and mother-like role models to be celebrated and appreciated, traditionally with flowers, cards, gifts and quality time spent with loved ones.

# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Abbott, Tommy P	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Aguilar, Ignacio	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Ainslie, Noelle Renee	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Alarid, Agustin	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Almazan, Armando	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Althaqeb, Stephanie Santos	Staff Specialist	Administrative Services
Alvarado, Brittany Marie	Eligibility Supervisor	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Andaya, Yesenia	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Anglin, Brandon Curtis	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Aranda, Vanessa	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Arbid, Selena M	Social Services Supervisor II	Administrative Services
Arroyo, Zinnia	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Arteaga, Misty Mesias	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Bailey, Lydia Rose	Eligibility Supervisor	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Behboudi, Mitra	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Behrouz, Mojgan	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Berea, Adriana	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Bivins, Kimberly Ann	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Bun, Stephanie Arauz	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Burgos, Michelle Denise	Eligibility Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Celestine, Ivanoe M	Sr. Office Supervisor (C/D)	Assistance Programs
Cervantes, Laura Avila	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Cervantez, Marisol	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Chavarria, Berenice Gricelda	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Childs, Marc Dannon	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Contreras, Carlos James Rodriguez	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Coromac, Melanie	Data Entry Technician	Assistance Programs
Cuellar, Sylvia	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services



# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Dale, Leslie M	Administrative Manager II	Administrative Services
De La Torre, Diana	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Delgadillo, Yvette	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Dodds-Tsang, James Curtis	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Dulac, Charles Jerez	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Emami, Claudia Sharlene	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Esparza, Mariela	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Espinoza, Gina Maria	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Esquerra, Sylvia Guadalupe	Data Entry Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Estrada, Liliana	Eligibility Supervisor	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Evans, Lori	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Faghihi, Reza	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Felix, Susana	Office Supervisor C	Assistance Programs
Fiskum, Kristi	Administrative Manager III	Children & Family Services
Franco, Crystal	Staff Specialist	Administrative Services
Frias, Cristina	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Frias, Enrique	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Gallardo, Jennifer Irene	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ganceda Flores, Antonio G	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Garcia, Maria De Jesus	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Garcia, Sonia L	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Garcia, Stephen Joshua	Sr. Social Worker	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Garza, Jacquelyne Danielle	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Gonzalez, Audra Michelle	Office Supervisor C	Assistance Programs
Gonzalez, Hugo J	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Gonzalez, Jose Luis	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Gonzalez, Miguel Angel	Office Supervisor B	Children & Family Services
Gurbach, Andrea Christine	Staff Specialist	Assistance Programs

# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Hanna, Phoebe Faheem	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hernandez, Vanessa Vargas	Office Supervisor C	Administrative Services
Herrera Tellez, Nancy L	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hickman, Shannon J	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Hossein, Nahid Piloti	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hunter, Ingrid Nicole	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Hunter, Kristen Bjorklund	Administrative Manager I	Children & Family Services
Hurtado, Aracely	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Jackson, Da Juan Anthony	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Jackson, Tammy L	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Jamaica, Carol Jacqueline	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Jones, Nia M	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Kurtovic, Edja	Administrative Manager II	Children & Family Services
La Rue, Steven Paul	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Le, Katrina Briann	Sr. Social Worker	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Le, Thuy T	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lett, Jordyn Michelle	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Lomeli, Evelyn Del Rocio	Office Specialist	Administrative Services
Loo, Mitchell Terence	Office Supervisor C	Children & Family Services
Lopez, Linda Marie	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Lotfian, Mojgan	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Luu, Nhi Anh	Eligibility Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Mages, Daniel Kevin	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Maldonado, Adreana	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Maldonado, Carmela	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Manzo, Maria	Administrative Manager I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Martinez, Kelley A	Administrative Manager II	Assistance Programs
Mathy, Deborah Dawn	Administrative Manager I	Children & Family Services



# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Matthews, Kristin	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Mendez, Micaela Fatima	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Mendoza, Bianca Ann	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Mendoza, Erica I	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Mills, Jill A	Administrative Manager II	Administrative Services
Molina, Mariela	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Morales, Edith	Staff Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Mota, Cynthia Alvarado	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Mothershed, Kristal Latrice	Social Services Supervisor I	Assistance Programs
Munoz, Michael	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Murillo, Roxanne Aracelly	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Naghaway, Amina	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Nava, Shelly Rene	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Negrete, Brenda	Sr. Social Worker	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Nguyen, Han Tat-Bao	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Nguyen, Kenny Vinh	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Nguyen, Phong Van	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Nguyen, Vicky	Information Processing Technician	Children & Family Services
Nguyen, Xuanthu Thi	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Nicolas, Lilly Poblete	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Nowak, Amber Marie	Administrative Manager II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Orendain, Karla Cecilia	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ortiz, Jessica Marie	Sr. Office Supervisor (C/D)	Children & Family Services
Osuna Lopez, Juan	Eligibility Supervisor	Administrative Services
Palica, Thomas Wayne	Social Services Supervisor I	Children & Family Services
Parker, Dorothy	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Pham, Dien N	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services
Phung, Anhtu L	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

# Employee Promotions

NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
Pinto, Tina Marie	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ramos, Sophia B	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Resendiz, Carlos L	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Rivera, Filadelfio J	Eligibility Technician	Assistance Programs
Romero, Diana Evelin	Social Services Supervisor I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Rubio, Jaime	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ruvalcaba, Jose Angel	Group Counselor II	Children & Family Services
Saenz, Jennyfer	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Sanchez, Angelica	Staff Specialist	Administrative Services
Sanchez, Monica Maria	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Schlesinger, Nannette Nickerson	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Silva, Shawnda Marie	Social Worker II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Solarte, Mauricio Anthony	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Sosa, Lucette R	Sr. Social Worker	Children & Family Services
Stanford, Sarah Ann	Group Counselor II	Children & Family Services
Talamantes, Alana Brooke	Eligibility Technician	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Tarin, Claudia	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Tober, Angela Renee	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Ton, Jeremy D	Social Worker I	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Torres Perez, Lucila	Social Services Supervisor II	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Torres, Jose G	Office Supervisor C	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Tran, Nhat-Tan	Social Services Supervisor I	Administrative Services
Umemoto, Margot M	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Villa, Lucila	Eligibility Supervisor	Assistance Programs
Villa, Sandra	Employment And Eligibility Specialist	Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services
Whiteley, Amy E	Administrative Manager II	Administrative Services
Wilson, Marie Elizabeth	Sr. Social Services Supervisor	Children & Family Services
Yuasa, Leanne Terumi	Administrative Manager I	Administrative Services



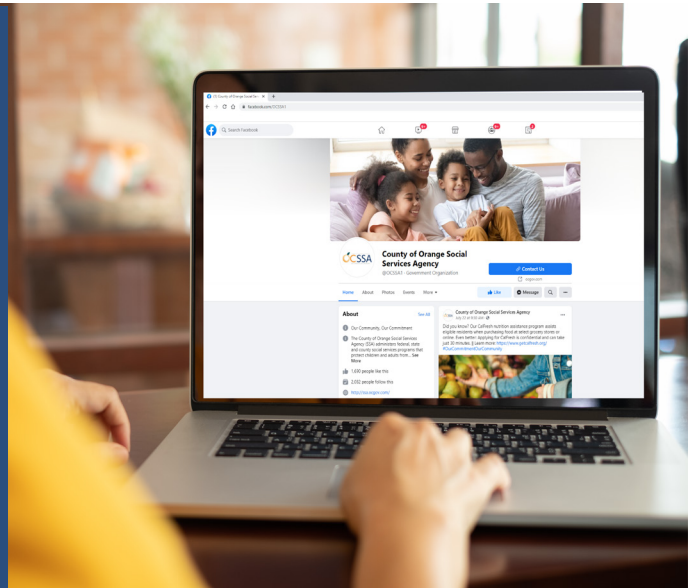
# In Memoriam

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of James Czadek, former Eligibility Technician at Orange's Call and Processing Center (OCPC). James began his career at SSA in 2007, after previously working in the private sector. James also served as a Medical Service Specialist in the U.S. Air Force.

Beyond his day-to-day job with OCPC, James was well known among many across SSA by his contributions to the Heart of SSA Workgroup and through his mindfulness teachings. He was filled with tremendous positivity and had a passion for helping people — he will truly be missed.

## Connect With Us!

SSA Today is published monthly by SSA's Community and Government Relations team in collaboration with the SSA Today Newsletter Committee. For **information on how to submit content** for the SSA Today newsletter, please email **SSAToday@ssa.ocgov.com**. To contact the SSA Executive Team with your questions, comments or suggestions, please email **directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com**.



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