

OCSSA TODAY

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

By Debra Baetz



Dear SSA,

Traditionally, spring represents warmer weather, an occasion to clean and organize, and a time for development and renewal. This year, the COVID-19 crisis has changed our lives more than we have known before. In the midst of much uncertainty, it is comforting to witness the many moments where our SSA staff have demonstrated powerful energy and creativity that continues to shine through. These moments provide a beacon of strength and hope, not only for us personally, but for the vulnerable populations we serve.

Even though our daily business has been disrupted in ways we never thought possible, we have mobilized SSA services to address the growing needs of our communities. Once the decision was made to close our lobbies to the public, SSA mobilized over 1,800 staff to telework in order to meet social distancing guidelines and protect the safety of our workforce. And even with a modified operational structure, we have been able to issue more than \$5.4 million in CalFresh benefits for new applicants over the past eight weeks, plus we have helped issue an additional \$12 million in benefits for emergency CalFresh allotments for existing clients.

In reaching out to our 34,000 IHSS recipients, our IHSS staff and SSA staff volunteers have not only helped to ensure needs are met, but have offered a touchpoint for isolated individuals who are frightened and concerned, and for some who may have no regular contact with people right now, you have provided an invaluable lifeline.

As we work to help protect our children, recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month, we come together to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect and promote child abuse prevention efforts in Orange County. Our emergency response social workers are in the trenches meeting with the most vulnerable. Our Child Abuse Registry staff continue to take calls. And our case carrying social workers are still connecting with children by phone, video conference technology or text to make sure we are meeting our mandates and working hard to safeguard those who need help most.

As SSA employees, we step up, take initiative and collaborate to make a difference for those in need. We work hard to help ensure our children are safe and able to thrive in a nurturing environment. We ensure families are able to bring food to their tables with CalFresh benefits and we help facilitate their access to health care through the Medi-Cal program. We make sure our older and disabled populations have what they need to live safely in the comfort of their homes when possible. As an Agency family, we have faced challenges before and we will face them again. What will not change is the fact that as an Agency and a family, we will overcome them together.

On behalf of the SSA Executive Team, we thank you for your positivity, compassion and the lasting impact you make in the lives of all we serve.

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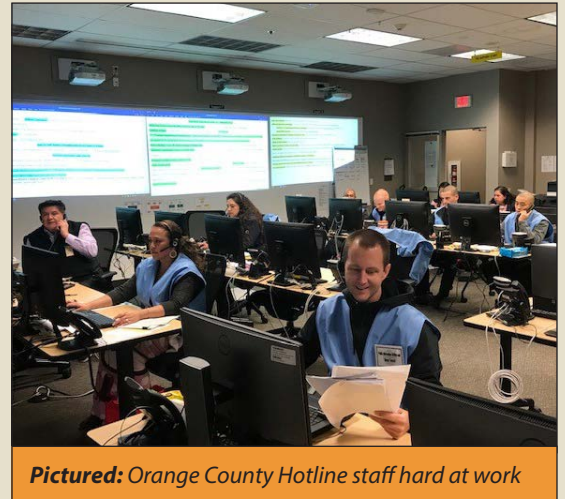
COVID-19 COUNTYWIDE RESPONSE: SSA ANSWERS THE CALL

By SSA's Emergency Management Team

On March 13, the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located in Silverado, was activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Trained staff from a variety of SSA programs are ready to respond to the EOC at a moment's notice to support the residents of Orange County during times of crisis, and respond they did!

Over the course of 36 days, dedicated SSA employees (Rocio Ancheta, Christine Salas, Araceli Guillen, Adriana Pfeifer, Shaun Sweeney, Valerie Gribschaw, Walter De Azambuja, Marisol Leal, Lorena Yonamine, Joe Leon, Jose Villasenor, Ashley Clark, Assadullah Niazi, Jaime Reyes and Loan Vo) manned the Orange County Hotline, completing over 150 shifts to help answer calls from the public. The hotline is the primary point of contact for our community during disasters and other emergencies and takes the burden off our 9-1-1 dispatchers. The importance of this role cannot be overstated. In speaking with staff about their experience, they had these comments to share:

- Marisol Leal: *"I take pride in being able to support our community by working the hotline because I've been the point of contact to help ease people's fears and support them with resources and guidance."*
- Adriana Pfeifer: *"I enjoy assisting at the County hotline because it allows me to help the community during a time of need."*
- Rocio Ancheta: *"I feel that I am helping those most in need by doing my part...no matter what the deployment. I always feel I am doing my best by serving our community."*
- Shaun Sweeney: *"I enjoyed assisting at the County hotline because it gave me the opportunity to see some of the inner workings of our local government and allowed me to assist people in desperate times by connecting them to valuable resources. Directions received at the EOC are very clear and the level of support received to do the job is excellent."*



Pictured: Orange County Hotline staff hard at work

Mayra Wheeler, Hadi Zargarbashi, Tim Blosky and Christian Zacarias were assigned to the Situation Analysis (SASS) Unit. The SASS Unit plays a critical role in the day-to-day functions of the EOC. Staff assigned to this unit are responsible for maintaining situational awareness and creating the necessary documents that guide the actions of the EOC. SASS Supervisor Mayra Wheeler said this about her experience, *"Working at the EOC in the Planning and Intelligence Section not only gives me work experience provided in this environment, but skills that are also applicable to many aspects of my career and life. I've learned to always be ready, flexible and adaptable. Most times I don't know who I'll be teamed up with when I get here, but I can always count on the fact that those who respond want to be here and are equally passionate about emergency management and getting our County through whatever emergency we face."*

SSA staff also take leadership roles in supporting the mass care needs of Orange County. Led by Delcie Hynes and Diana LaRusso, the Care and Shelter Branch coordinates with the Orange County Board of Education, Health Care Agency, OC Animal Care, American Red Cross, 34 city jurisdictions and other community partners to support the mass care needs of the whole community. For the 39 days of in-person EOC activation, Delcie and Diana worked over 700 combined hours to ensure the County was, and remains, ready to support any mass care needs of the community. Odon Sanchez and Carol Taylor supported the effort by providing backup to ensure continuity of operations in the event someone became ill, as well as providing for much needed (although rare) days off throughout the response. John Danczak coordinated, both in person and remotely, the collection of information from SSA programs to ensure that the needs of our most vulnerable clients are considered in mass care planning. The Care and Shelter Branch is one of two operational branches that will remain activated for the duration of the COVID-19 incident as the County EOC moves to a lower-level activation.

As part of mass care, Ed Crow and Debbi Romero-Holman responded to the EOC to take a lead role in supporting the needs of the whole community. As Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs (DAFN) Group Supervisors, their thoughtful collaboration with hotline staff, the Public Information Officer (PIO) team and others ensures that the entire EOC has the information they need to better support and respond to members of the DAFN community.

(Continued on page 3)



Pictured: Claudia Gomez (left) serves as Assistant Volunteer Unit Leader

A first-time EOC responder who jumped in to take a lead role was Claudia Gomez. Initially called to assist with documentation in the Care and Shelter Branch, Claudia quickly became a key player in the response. She transitioned to the Logistics Section where she worked with the Collaborative Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) group as the Assistant Volunteer Unit Leader. She said this about her experience, *"Being part of the EOC during the COVID-19 epidemic was an incredible experience. I got to see firsthand how every agency in the County of Orange and community partners come together for one goal: Serving the residents of Orange County. You could see everyone's dedication and commitment day in and day out, just to make sure the vulnerable people of the community had basic necessities, like food and shelter. This was a humbling experience -- it makes you realize how blessed we all are of things we sometimes take for granted."*

The entirety of the EOC operation is guided by the Policy Group. The Director of Emergency Services works in collaboration with other directors and representatives from all County agencies and partners as appropriate. SSA Director Debra Baet continues to offer invaluable input and guidance to the team to help make global decisions that drive the countywide response to COVID-19. During the times Debra needed to attend morning Orange County Board of Supervisors meetings or take a much needed day off, SSA Chief Deputy Director An Tran represented the Agency in her place.

The dedication and professionalism of all SSA staff who have responded to the County EOC in times of crisis cannot be understated. The COVID-19 response has been unprecedented and SSA's EOC team rose to the challenge as they always do. Thank you all for answering the call! We don't know when you will be called upon again, but we do know that when you are, you will not hesitate to respond!

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: TEAMWORK AND GRATITUDE

Can you imagine being removed from your family, whatever the circumstances – your school, your friends and possibly other relatives, your city and neighborhood, all things familiar and comforting – and moving into a stranger's home apart from your siblings? SSA's social workers have long played a critical role in making every conceivable effort to ensure that siblings who are removed from their families due to abuse or neglect remain together. They regularly take on the challenges of meeting state regulations and requirements, limited resources and placement options, all the while providing them with the safest environment to reside in. Below is a story from Senior Social Worker Ligia Espino of Children and Family Services Placement Coordination that was shared with SSA's Director's Corner regarding the importance of teamwork in making a successful placement happen:



"Today I find myself without a computer but I wanted to take the time to thank everyone who helped me in yesterday's placement of three siblings. I had two children at the 23-hour First Step Assessment Center (FS) and one child at Children's Hospital of Orange County. We received the hospital release and this was approved yesterday by our doctor. Because I wasn't sure if we would be able to place the baby that day, I reached out to Benedetto Manzella and he was able to help me secure a backup Emergency Shelter Home (ESH) in case I was not able to approve the Paternal Great Aunt (PGA) yesterday. When I completed the home assessment and she was approved, I reached out to Raul Huerta to assist me in signing placement paperwork with the PGA. I also reached out to Ben again and he assisted me in completing the hospital letter for the release to take place while I headed out to complete a second home assessment with another PGA. I then reached out to Annaliza Bumacod who was in the cottage and asked if she could help me bring up to the front a car seat and a gift card for the placement of the baby. Later after completing the second home assessment, I reached out to Larissa Elias who assisted me in completing FS release slips and submitted to FS while I drove back to the office. I met with the second PGA at Orangewood Children and Family Center and the two children were successfully placed. I also want to thank Junko Tominaga because I pretty much asked her to take on a case and she ran clearances, observed two home assessments and completed a risk assessment questionnaire with the family all the while also helping me contact Susan Collins-Rogers for additional gift cards.

It was a very long day but we succeeded at placing all three siblings in homes with family. Thank you all who I recruited and who helped me be able to make these placements happen. Teamwork! It takes a village and we are an awesome one."

SSA GIVES BACK TO COLLEAGUES AND THE COMMUNITY

On April 9, County of Orange Health Officer Dr. Nichole Quick issued a recommendation strongly encouraging all essential employees, including County of Orange employees, to wear cloth face coverings while at work, aligned with the April 1 guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health. Since then, we have received an influx of heartwarming stories into the SSA Director's Corner mailbox. These accounts reflect just a few of the many thoughtful and selfless efforts of current and former SSA staff who have devoted their own time and resources to support both their colleagues and the community by designing and donating much needed face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

"I wanted to highlight an employee at In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). Her name is Minh Thai and she is an Office Technician. Due to the urgent need and lack of supplies, Minh has been sewing masks out of fabric. Not only has she made these masks for her unit members, but she's been donating them to local hospitals: St. Jude, St Joseph's, Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) to name a few. In a time of crisis, it's easy to get caught up in negative aspects. It takes a special person to rise above and do something selfless for another. Minh is addressing a need in our community and is taking action."



Pictured: Minh Thai (left) and Chan Ho (right)

"Turning a challenging situation into true care and compassion: Staff at Garden Grove Regional Center (GGRC) were greeted Monday 4/6 with bags full of bright, colorful, handmade cloth face coverings for all those who wanted to take one. After a little bit of investigative work, we found that Chan Ho, previously an Eligibility Technician at GGRC and now a Social Worker I for IHSS, coordinated with a peer to provide bags of face coverings that she hand-made with the help of her sister. Chan had spent the whole weekend sewing in order to ensure her peers were able to follow the recent recommendations for face coverings. Adversity truly reveals character and in this case it has revealed the compassionate heart of one of our own."

"During this COVID-19 crisis, Andy Nguyen (Senior Social Worker) has volunteered outside of work to assist our community in making masks. These masks are donated to hospitals, nursing homes, and front line workers. At this time, Andy has assisted in making and donating more than 25,000 masks and has another 30,000 masks on the production line. In addition, Andy assisted Children and Family Services by donating masks to Court Services, Special Medical and multiple other programs within our agency. His organization does not accept any monetary donations and only accepts fabric. During this same time period, Andy has continued to complete Conditional Release to Intensive Supervision Program (CRISP) home visits utilizing the COVID-19 precautions to ensure child safety and to support his families during this difficult time. Andy has gone above and beyond his call of duty by helping the families on his caseload, our agency and our community as a whole."



Pictured: Face coverings sewn by former SSA employee Kim Ngo

"Kim Ngo worked in the Child Abuse Registry/Emergency Response department in SSA for over 29 years. I supervised Kim for about a year before she retired and wanted to share her efforts to help our community during this pandemic. She became involved with making and donating face masks when her daughter, who is a nurse at UCI Medical Center, heard they were short on masks and worried that they would run out. With some support from her former SSA colleagues, she was able to receive fabric to make more masks, with about 200 donated to UCI Medical Center thus far. She also shared with me, "I am so happy to be able to help the frontline and so grateful for my friends who are helping make this all possible."

To all SSA staff who have helped sew face coverings or have helped the community in other ways during the COVID-19 crisis, we salute you. Thank you for your servant's heart and for showing an outpouring of compassion and kindness during a very difficult time. You truly demonstrate the Heart of SSA!

YOUR MONTHLY MICRO-MINDFUL MOMENT

When your day is stressful as our days have been with COVID-19, it can be easy to get caught up in the news or whatever situation is stressing you out.

As a way to turn your day positive, consider keeping a daily gratitude journal of at least three things for which you are thankful, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant. Record them at night before bed; in time, you will likely notice a shift in your energy and a more restful sleep.



APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

By Judi Arroyo, Social Services Supervisor I



Many children are abused each year by a parent or caretaker. Some actually die as a result of the abuse. According to the 2019 Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County, there were 4,485 allegations of child abuse that were found to be substantiated. Children are victims of neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. All types of child abuse and neglect can have long lasting effects throughout life, damaging a child's sense of self, ability to have healthy relationships and ability to function at home, at work, and at school.

Children and parents need care and extra resources especially now as the stress and pressures of daily life

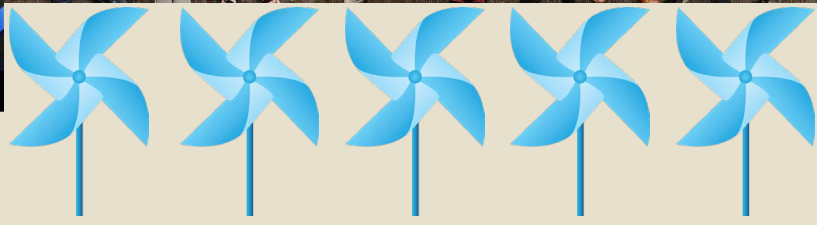
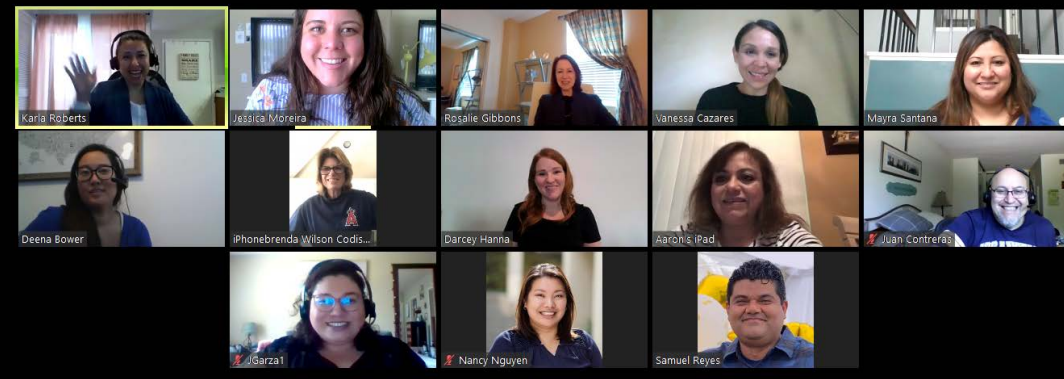
increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic. You can make an impact by identifying struggling families and referring them to any local community organization such as the Working to End Child Abuse and Neglect (WE CAN) Coalition or Families and Communities Together (FaCT), a network of 15 Family Resource Centers (factoc.org) throughout Orange County that provides families in crisis with services and resources. You can also raise awareness in your community or by using social media.

Whenever a child says they have been abused, it must be taken seriously and immediately reported. Other signs of abuse include suspicious marks, cuts, injuries, bruises or someone telling you a child has been abused. Signs of neglect include poor hygiene, hoarding of food, noticeable tooth decay or chronic lice.

All individuals and organizations play an important role in making Orange County a better place for children and families to live. By ensuring that parents have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to care for their children, we can help prevent child abuse and neglect, protect children and strengthen families in our communities. Protective factors are present in healthy families. Protective factors such as concrete supports for parents and social connections help mitigate risks and promote healthy development and wellbeing. Promoting these factors by providing families resources is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk and prevent child abuse and neglect. Everyone can make an impact and participation is critical.

SSA employees are mandated reporters. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, please do not hesitate to make a call to our Child Abuse Hotline at (714) 940-1000 or (800) 207-4464. You can also find helpful information on our SSA Internet at ssa.ocgov.com/abuse/child, as well as information about child abuse prevention programs and activities at the WE CAN's website at ohealthiertogether.org/tiles/wecan.

SSA & FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS #GOBLUEFOROCKIDS!



RESOURCE PARENT MENTOR HOSTS LEARNING CIRCLE

May is National Foster Care Month. During this time of families being at home, Saddleback College's Foster & Kinship Care Education has been providing a wonderful online resource for caregivers. Held twice a month and facilitated by Resource Family Mentor, Erin Kim (whose own journey as a Resource Parent through SSA was shared in the [October 2017](#) issue of SSA Today), the Learning Circle is an online training and support group that provides a supportive learning environment for Resource Parents to explore and deepen their understanding of important topics chosen to strengthen and equip them on their caregiving journey. Additionally, it provides a time for parents to connect with others and offers a life line of virtual support for caregivers during this unprecedented time. Resource Parents receive two hours of training credit for attending these groups. (The Learning Circle was initially launched in February 2020 as an in-person group, but was adapted to a virtual platform due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.)



LET'S FOSTER TOGETHER:

RESOURCE PARENT MENTOR

Erin Kim
Experienced Resource/Adoptive Parent & Trainer

Resource Family Support:
ekim241@saddleback.edu
949-348-6177
Foster & Kinship Care Education-Saddleback College

For more information about upcoming classes, visit saddleback.edu/hs/fkce. To learn more about fostering, fostering-to-adopt or the many ways to support children and families in Orange County, visit OC4Kids.com or call (888) 871-5437.

AGENCYWIDE OUTREACH TO IHSS CLIENTS

By Dina Bagues, Administrative Manager I



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." – Helen Keller

One simple statement that means a great deal. While simply said, it is a testament to the teamwork that has exemplified the SSA workforce during this worldwide time of crisis.

On March 17, SSA Director Debra Baetz tasked the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program with checking in with each and every IHSS client and assessing for any unmet needs. Simple as it seems; however, IHSS has over 34,000 elderly and disabled clients throughout Orange County!

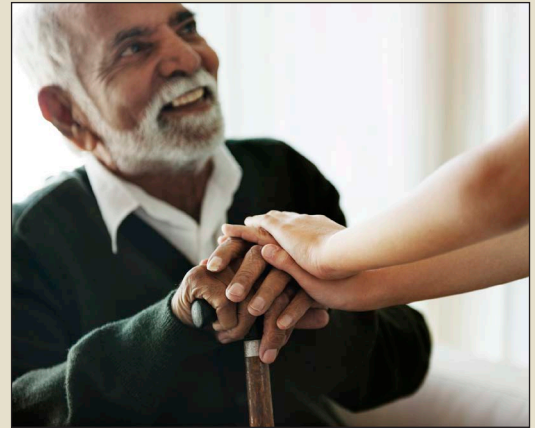
To make this ask a reality, over 150 staff from all classifications across different programs throughout the Agency have been mobilized in a joint effort to reach out to all IHSS clients. Since March 20, over 40,000 calls have been made, including a second round of calls to those identified as IHSS's most vulnerable clients which began on April 20. As a result of this outreach effort, IHSS has implemented a 10-person triage team and created a seven-person IHSS hotline for the community to call in with requests for essential needs. As urgent, unmet needs such as food, medication and caregivers are identified, the triage team has been vetting these needs and assigning them to volunteers in other programs to deliver items to the homes of those in need. To date, 80 deliveries of food and necessary items have been made along with thousands of referrals to community resources. In-house and community partners such as Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, Senior Santa and Friends and the Emergency Operations Center have secured critical items such as non-perishable food boxes, adult diapers and wipes and nutritional drinks to deliver to our clients. In addition, all IHSS staff continue to serve our IHSS recipients and providers on a daily basis by providing resources. In the month of March alone, IHSS social workers processed an average of 2,500 reassessments and 600 intakes.

IHSS thanks everyone who has contributed to these efforts with a special thank you to Family Self-Sufficiency & Adults Services Divisional Operations, Policy and Quality Assurance, Adult Protective Services, OCIT and Facilities.



CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS DURING COVID-19

We do not know very much about the COVID-19 virus, but research has shown that older adults and those with chronic conditions are most at risk. For many of us, that includes someone that we love and may even provide care for. This can cause a large amount of concern and stress as we are unsure of how we can continue to provide care to our older loved ones, do our best to keep them protected from the virus and prevent them from becoming isolated or lonely.



In ordinary times, there is an entire network of agencies you would work with to provide all of the essentials to your loved ones. And you can rest assured that the same agencies are still here for you, to help you care for your older loved ones. These agencies have adjusted their services so they can still effectively, but safely, provide care and resources. Many of the agencies have locations all over the country, so you can still make sure your loved ones are being looked after, even from a distance.

Meals/Social Connection/Hotlines/Additional Resources:

- **Orange County Office on Aging (OC Community Resources)** - <http://www.officeonaging.ocgov.com> or call (714) 480-6450. You can contact the County's Office on Aging for information for additional resources that may be available in the community.
- **Alzheimer's Orange County** - currently maintaining information on senior grocery shopping hours and community food resources. Go to <https://www.alzoc.org/coronavirus-covid-19-updates> and scroll down to additional information and resources.
- **Caregiver Resources** - <https://www.caregiver.org/californias-caregiver-resource-centers> or 1-800-445-8106. Serves families and caregivers of adults affected by chronic and debilitating health conditions including dementia, Alzheimer's disease, cerebrovascular diseases (such as stroke or aneurysms), degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's, Huntington's and multiple sclerosis, or traumatic brain injury (TBI), among many others.
- **Eldercare Locator** - <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx> or 1-800-677-1116. Nationwide directory for elders or caregivers to find services in your community, for questions they will answer live or will call back within 24 hours.
- **Disaster Distress Helpline** - 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY | 1-800-846-8517)
- **Friendship Line** - 1-800-971-0016 - The Institute on Aging's Friendship 24-hour toll-free line is both a crisis intervention hotline and a warmline for non-emergency emotional support calls for people age 60 and over and adults living with disabilities.
- **Healthy Meals Delivered** - Visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/findmeals.
- **Senior Center Lunch Program** - www.myagewell.org or call (949) 855-8033 or (949) 855-9766. Age Well's Senior Services Grab and Go lunch program for South Orange County.
- **National Hunger Hotline** - 1-866-348-6479 - National Hunger Hotline staff connects callers with emergency food providers in their community, government assistance programs and various social services.
- **2-1-1 Orange County** - runs a comprehensive information and referral system for Orange County. 2-1-1 OC provides a resource database of health and human services and support, accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week online and through our multi-lingual hotline, connecting people quickly and effectively to existing programs and disaster response information. Just dial 2-1-1 from within Orange County or 1-888-600-4357 (toll-free) 24 hours-a-day or go to www.211oc.org.
- **Access COVID-19 information in other languages** - If you are looking for information on COVID-19 to share with an older adult that is their preferred language, you can find flyers in seven different languages at <https://www.napca.org>.

ORANGEWOOD RECREATION TEAM GETS CREATIVE

The Recreation Team at the Orangewood Children and Family Center (Orangewood) is primarily responsible for planning activities and field trips for the youth residing at Orangewood; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has sought creative ways to help the 40+ youth who currently reside there adjust and remain in positive spirits.



Over the last month, the team promoted social distancing-conscious activities such as karaoke, pickle ball, gardening, bike repair, bike wash as well as an obstacle course in the gymnasium. From ensuring that the children stay active on a daily basis, to providing opportunities for them to experience positive, memorable moments, the team has been extra focused on supporting youth at Orangewood and making sure that the facility runs smoothly during this time.



TELECOMMUTING EQUIPMENT DEPLOYMENT EFFORTS

Beginning March 23, with the assistance of the Department Operations Center (DOC), OC Information Technology (OCIT), their contractor SAIC and staff from all four divisions, SSA began an agency-wide effort to deploy equipment and resources to enable staff to work from home. Deployment strategies follow the California Governor's Executive Order and initially focused on prioritizing staff falling into high risk categories. The process includes identifying and prioritizing SSA staff candidates for telecommuting, coordinating appointment times for each selected employee for equipment pick-up, granting Virtual Private Network (VPN) access and facilitating with the on-site team at SSA's Training and Career Development facility to ensure staff check-in, equipment deployment and training for all of the new users,



Pictured: Alex Catalan, Hung Nguyen, Mike Roman, Anthoni Arevalo, Reina Mantle, Elaine Hauser, Kevin Ly

while maintaining appropriate social distancing guidelines for the safety of all individuals.



Pictured: Mike Pagano, Miguel Anguiano, Michael Garcia

Additionally, SSA's Assistance Programs and Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services divisions collaborated with OCIT, Facilities and Centralized Operations to deploy headsets to telecommuting staff to allow the ability to assist customers over the phone (otherwise known as "soft phones"). Staff coordinated the deployment by setting up a drive-through process for telecommuting employees to safely pick up their headsets at SSA's Headquarters parking structure. An intake Eligibility Technician from the Santa Ana Regional Center shared, "You mean I can call my customers now and actually help them? Thank you. This is awesome!"



Pictured: Phillipe Moreno and Monalisa Tran

The Agency has begun deploying Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) to the next wave of staff. The DOC and leadership teams are committed to deploying telecommute capabilities to as many staff as possible, all the while ensuring that we are able to continue providing accessible, critical services to the growing number of Orange County individuals and families in need.

ADJUSTING TO WORKING FROM HOME



Many of us are living a very different life than we were a few weeks ago. Kids are home 24/7, some individuals haven't interacted or socialized much, and employees may be working from home and homeschooling or caring for parents. As every household has their own challenges, there is no one size fits all solution for navigating the changes during this time.

Working from home has suddenly become the new norm for many employees across the globe. People everywhere are adjusting to this change and working to define what work-life balance will look like for them.

Managing our well-being can be difficult during this uncertain time due to a variety of factors such as change in normal routine, increased responsibilities and increased stress. It's important to find a balance between work and home responsibilities. Here are tips that can help.

- **Try to stay positive and relaxed** - The more stress you feel, the worse your attitude will be, and the harder it will be to get things done. Focus your energy on completing one task at a time—whether it be work or family-related—rather than worrying about how to do all of them at once.
- **Prioritize your to-do list** - Create a to-do list and a schedule of tasks you need to complete, with the most important ones at the top. Budget time for each of those items, and stick to your schedule as closely as you can.
- **Set limits** - When your to-do list is already full, connect with your supervisor to discuss obstacles or concerns. Set realistic expectations together.
- **Log off at the same time every day and be sure to mentally log off** - Try to make a practice of logging off at the same time each day. Otherwise, if you regularly stay online to answer that “one last email” that just hit your inbox, your work-life boundaries can quickly become blurred. Logging off at the same time doesn't just protect those boundaries; it also helps add some productivity-fueling structure to your workday.
- **Leave perfection at the door** - Don't try to be perfect. We're in a time when competing priorities means that perfection may not be attainable. Allow yourself room for imperfections.
- **Do your best to stay healthy** - To do your best at work and at home, you've got to take care of yourself. Eat regularly and stick to nutritious foods, and do your best not to “stress eat.” The gym may be closed, but you can take walks and build in exercise breaks at home to manage stress and enjoy a little time for yourself. And be sure to get plenty of sleep each night—it's one of the best ways to give your immune system the support it needs.
- **Practice mindfulness** - When you feel overwhelmed, take some time to relax. Focus on the present. Try to breathe deeply with your eyes closed, concentrating on your breathing. Consider some yoga or gentle stretches. Relax your muscles by starting with your toes and slowly relaxing each muscle in your body as you work your way up to your head.
- **Take time for yourself** - A few quiet minutes to yourself each day can recharge your batteries and help with your resilience. You'll be a better employee and a better family member by doing this.

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



PETER ESPINOZA, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII Peter Espinoza of the CalWORKs office at Santa Ana Regional Center recently received the following words of gratitude from a client in an email:

"Mr. Espinoza, you're awesome. Thank you for your support in my education. I will forever remember you."

Peter's supervisor shared further: *"Peter had encouraged a client to pursue her high school diploma. He pointed out how education can assist her with gaining employment to become self-sufficient, acquire new skills and role model the importance of education for her children. The client agreed and enrolled in school. At the onset of the current pandemic, Peter reached out to the client and inquired about her needs. The client disclosed trouble making the transition to online learning due to lack of equipment. Through ancillary services, Peter was able to help the client obtain a laptop and supplies. Now successfully transitioned to online instruction, she's keeping up with her school work along side her children safely at home."*

MARIA LEDESMA, Group Counselor Nights (GCN)/Children and Family Services

GCN Maria Ledesma was recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for March 2020. The following comments were shared about Maria:

"Maria is an outstanding example of an employee for any of the SSA Core Values, but to choose one, I would have to choose Integrity. Being a Group Counselor at Orangewood is not only a job for Maria, but a way of life. When Maria is not working, she is constantly thinking up and looking for ways to improve her work environment and the Orangewood experience for the youth in our care. Only this evening, Maria brought in inspirational cross stitch kits she had purchased and wants to give to the young girls currently in the Intermediate Girls Cottages with encouraging messages for them to take with them when they are released."



Maria is the type of staff who constantly is doing the little things to help others, whether other staff, youth in our care, or for the good of the facility as a whole. Recently Maria transitioned from Courtesy Float on the Night Shift to a Regular Group Counselor Nights in the Intermediate Cottage, and she immediately jumped full bore into her new duties and took on extra chores such as decorating the cottage for different holidays/seasons, spring cleaning projects and anything she could do around the cottage to make improvements. Maria showed a similar work ethic in her previous position of Courtesy Float, where it has been commented she will be missed for all 'the little extras' she did, from stocking paper in all the cottages and supervisor offices, and completing Maintenance Requests to keep the facility safe and in good repair anytime she found something out of order, to adjusting her shift or working extra hours as needed to cover hospital runs or school transports. The past few years, for her PIP Goal, Maria has taken on the meaningful position to become FAST (Functional Assessment Service Team), Children's Disaster Service Worker and Emergency Services Responder trained, in order to be of greater service to Orangewood youth and the community. Bravo Maria for all you do, keep up the good work!"



ANNA GUTIERREZ, Employment and Eligibility Specialist (EES)/Agency Administration

EES Anna Gutierrez of Program Integrity recently received words of recognition from a client, as shared by her supervisor:

"Your client called me to compliment you on great customer service you provided. She said 'Anna is a wonderful woman. She represented herself well and is a sweetheart!' She added that you were 'very professional' and answered all of her questions while being 'super informative!' Great job Anna!"

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



JIM BOYD, Social Worker II (SWII), and ROXANNE SALAZAR, Employment and Eligibility Specialist (EES)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII/Mutual Client Case Manager Jim Boyd (left) and Continuing EES Roxanne Salazar (right) received the following words of recognition from a client:

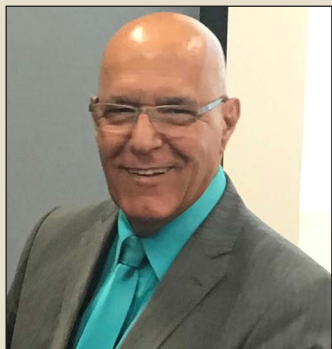
"I just wanted to inform you that Jim and Roxanne are outstanding at what they do for SSA. They make everything understandable with all the paperwork and most importantly they help with any crisis, especially this virus. They have been there every step of the way with my life goals and support of my children! Communication

is key and I love this about them. I just want to thank you as well for everything that you do for my family and I. I would not be where I am today if it weren't for this program helping every step of the way. God bless."

KRISTINA TRAW, Administrative Manager I (AMI)/Agency Administration

AMI/Legislative Manager Kristina Traw of Community & Government Relations received the following words of gratitude from OC Information Technology's contractor SAIC for her recent support and collaboration with them on SSA's agency-wide telecommuting coordination:

"Kristina, I would like thank you for the awesome support and teamwork. It's always great to work with someone that cares and is easy to work with."



MICHAEL AOUN, Administrative Manager II (AMII)/Agency Administration

AMII Michael Aoun of Facilities and Emergency Management Services received the following words of gratitude from OC Community Resources' Office on Aging and Veterans Service Office for his recent support to their call centers:

"I wanted to thank you and your team for all of your help in getting our call center up and running as quickly as it did. This implementation would not be possible without you and your team's help. I also appreciate you being patient with me during this time as some of the technical pieces were foreign to me. Once again thank you for your help on this. I truly appreciate it."

DONNA YORK, Systems Technician II (STII)/Agency Administration

STII Donna York was recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for April 2020. The following comments were shared about Donna:

"Donna has been instrumental in the setup of my 'work at home' station. She is always pleasant and cheerful and, most of all, extremely patient with me and my lack of technology skills. Donna has been a crucial part of easing the work at home transition during this difficult time of the COVID-19 crisis. I appreciate her and thank her for her dedication to us at the Child Abuse Registry and Adult Protective Services Hotline."

"March 17, 2020 was no ordinary day at the office as it was the beginning of my 'new normal' quarantined life. Even after receiving authorization to work at home, I continued to feel a sense of loss and uncertainty until Donna came to my rescue. Without Donna's calming and reassuring demeanor, my ability to telework would not have become a reality. Navigating an untrained person through the complexity of setting up an IT telework desk can be very frustrating. Donna's overabundance of patience and respect toward me gave me the confidence and ability to tackle my new telework assignment and give me some direction in this very uncertain world."



SSA PROMOTIONS

EMPLOYEE NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
AGUILAR, VANESSA	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
AVILA, CONSUELO MARIBEL	SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
BALDUCK, RANDALL J	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
BECERRA, ROSA K	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
BLAUVELT, JULIAROSE MONICA	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CAZARES, VANESSA YASMIN	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
CLAUSSEN, LILY A	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
CORNEJO-RIOS, OMAR GUILLERMO	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
DAGMY-GOFF, POLLY	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
DIXON, VICTORIA KRISTINE	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
EKSTROM, SARAH GUTIERREZ	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
GARCIA, STEPHEN JOSHUA	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
GARZA, XYANYA NADINE	OFFICE SPECIALIST	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
GONZALES, MIKHAEL EVIAN	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
HERNANDEZ TREJO, YESSICA G	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
HINES-BROWNLIE, TANEKA JAQUAN	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
LEAL, LISBET LOPEZ	OFFICE SPECIALIST	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
LOOMIS, VICTORIA MARIA	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
MOCTEZUMA, MONIQUE RAQUEL	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
MOJICA, YOLANDA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
MULLINS, WENDY M	GROUP COUNSELOR II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
PARUSHEV, OMAR ALEXANDER	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
PEREZ, ANDREW JOSHUA	GROUP COUNSELOR, NIGHTS	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
PEREZ, EDITH	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
PIGUEE, ALYSON ANNE	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER III	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
RAMIREZ ANAYA, LUIS ALBERTO	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
RAMOS, ANGELO A	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
READERS, ELLEN JOYCE	SOCIAL WORKER I	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
RENFROW, GABRIELA ALEXANDRA	ELIGIBILITY TECHNICIAN	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
SALINAS, VIOLETA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
SANCHEZ, BEVERLY	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
SANTOS-ALVAREZ, MARTHA	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
VIZCARRA, ARLENE	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
WHITAKER - IRIZARRY, AMY S	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR II	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
ZAVALA, LETICIA	SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES



COVID-19 RESOURCES

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has developed several helpful infographics for the community to address concerns regarding the COVID-19 coronavirus. For the latest updates and information on COVID-19, please visit HCA's website at www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus. For questions, call HCA's Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. For a repository of all SSA communication related to COVID-19, visit the Community and Government Relations Sharepoint page by clicking [here](#).



**NOVEL CORONAVIRUS
(COVID-19)**

Latest News | FAQs | Infographics | Guidance

ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus



ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

**TEXT
"OCCOVID19"
TO 888777**

You'll receive text messages from the Orange County Emergency Operations Center with updates and resources related to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Orange County, California.



For COVID-19 resources, call



**ORANGE COUNTY
COVID-19 HOTLINE**

1-833-426-6411

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