

OCSSA TODAY

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

DIVISION DIRECTOR JOHN HENDRICKSON RETIRES AFTER 28 YEARS OF SERVICE

As of August 14, 2020, after an illustrious 28-year career with SSA, John Hendrickson, Assistance Programs Division Director, has retired.

John was a generous and dedicated leader who led by example, an example which he proudly learned and embraced from his beloved grandmothers. Although born in New Jersey, John spent much of his childhood in the quiet, tranquil town of Damariscotta, Maine. Growing up alongside one sister with whom he forged a tight knit relationship, John vividly remembered the principles instilled in him by his grandmothers, Marie and Mary. Marie was exemplified by her unyielding work ethic, while Mary embodied a life defined by honesty and kindness. An enduring childhood memory of John's involved some mischief and a lesson learned. "Living in a remote town in Maine, the telephone party line was always bustling, and one day I hid from Grandma Mary and picked up the phone to eavesdrop. Grandma Mary saw me listening and told me it was not right, and I should always do the right thing even though no one knows I am doing the right thing. To this day, I have lived by that message."



Pictured: Grandma Marie and baby John (upper left), Grandma Marie (upper right), Grandma Marie and adult John (bottom)

While in high school, John and his family moved to California, and although he enjoyed his upbringing on the East Coast, he never looked back. In his free time, he enjoyed lending emotional support as a Buddy with Aids Project Los Angeles (APLA). Before his tenure with SSA, John was employed in the private sector in the field of accounting. Uninspired with his accounting job and ready for a positive change, John took the advice of his APLA Buddy, Jeff Bedwell, and applied for a position with the County of Orange. Within two weeks of applying, he was hired and ready to embark on a new and meaningful career, while enjoying the added benefits a County job had to offer. In retrospect, John realized that his volunteerism with APLA had repaid him twofold, stating, "Do things that you think are paying it forward, and you will be repaid with dividends."

Hired in 1992, John found himself as an Eligibility Technician in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (now CalWORKs) program at the Metro Regional Center, which was ironically on the corner of State College and Orangewood, right across the street from 500 N. State College, his last office. Eager to learn, grow and serve, John was

subsequently promoted several times, across three divisions, to positions including Eligibility Supervisor, Program Assistant, Social Services Supervisor I, Social Services Supervisor II, Administrative Manager I, Administrative Manger II, Deputy Division Director and finally Division Director. While serving in a multitude of roles with increasing responsibility, John also intently focused on furthering his education, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Social Science in 2006 and a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership in 2008 from Chapman University. When asked about work-life balance, John responded, "It is a balancing act that requires the clear communication and collaboration between an individual and their leaders in order to leverage the necessary tools and flexibility to make it happen."

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SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

SSA CALL CENTER AT ORANGE'S CALL AND PROCESSING CENTER

At the heart of the SSA Call Center at Orange's Call and Processing Center (OCPC) is a team of dedicated professionals committed to providing excellent customer service to Orange County residents. In March 2020, faced with the onset of an unprecedented global health crisis, the Call Center quickly established itself as a primary public access point for SSA. Prior to the pandemic, plans were already underway in the Assistance Programs (AP) Division to enhance the center's support to the community; however, the pandemic presented a new sense of urgency, and what was originally anticipated to be a four-month timeline was suddenly accelerated to a critical 72-hour window for the Call Center's service expansion plans to be implemented.

When the Agency closed all public assistance offices to the public on March 17, 2020, the Call Center quickly responded to the need to continue supporting vulnerable populations and meeting program mandates. By March 20, 2020, the center immediately mobilized to help re-allocate staff from other regional offices and increase its workforce by approximately 55%. This effort involved collaboration between the AP Operations and Policy Team and the Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division to add General Relief and CalWORKs support at the Call Center. Additionally, the center's business hours were expanded to Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A significant number of call agents voluntarily modified their work schedules to cover the expanded business hours and they cannot be thanked enough for demonstrating their flexibility and compassion for the families we serve.

In the last five months, the Call Center's productivity and level of service have been remarkable. For example, the team has successfully managed a 60% year-over-year increase in call volume (see table below comparing March-July point in time data in 2019 vs. 2020):

Call Volume Year-Over-Year			
Month	2019	2020	Difference
March	49,616	75,905	52.98% ↑
April	48,625	82,578	69.83% ↑
May	47,702	77,521	62.51% ↑
June	49,005	76,873	56.87% ↑
July	48,700	78,423	61.03% ↑
Combined	243,648	391,300	60.60% ↑

Despite the substantial increase in the number of calls received at the Call Center, in July 2020 almost 95% of all customer calls were responded to, and nearly 85% were answered within four minutes. The call agents regularly put the SSA core values into action to provide customers with the help they so desperately need, as was recently exhibited late one Friday night, in which a call was received from a customer who needed urgent medical



Pictured: SSA Call Center staff at Orange's Call and Processing Center

attention. The call agent spoke calmly to the customer while showing compassion and quickly resolving the case issues, then swiftly took the initiative to coordinate with their supervisor and members of the clerical team to issue the customer their benefits, ensuring that the customer was able to access critical health care. This is just one example of the thoroughness and respect the call agents display daily. Many similar positive customer interactions, both internal and external, have been observed in which the call agents have demonstrated integrity, courtesy, efficiency, thoroughness and teamwork, which only underscores that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little "extra." It is also noteworthy that during the August 2020 Management Evaluation Review conducted virtually by the California Department of Social Services, the Call Center was congratulated on the low call wait times and solid customer service they observed.

The SSA Call Center service expansion offers an excellent example of our Agency's ongoing efforts to assist our community and demonstrate our No Wrong Door philosophy. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the center has been able to consistently provide ongoing access to Medi-Cal, CalFresh, General Relief and CalWORKs services for our community's most vulnerable members, which would not have been possible without the amazing dedication and hard work of the call agents, supervisors and administrative staff at OCPC!

Thank you to the SSA Call Center at OCPC for the continued support you provide to the community and congratulations on being selected as the SSA Spotlight for the month of August 2020!

HONORING ALL ELIGIBILITY PROFESSIONALS

August is the month in which the County of Orange celebrates Eligibility Professionals Month, and while this year looks much different compared to years past, more than ever our dedicated eligibility staff have demonstrated their compassion, initiative and willingness to go above and beyond to helping OC residents in need.

At the August 25th Board of Supervisors meeting, SSA Director Debra Baetz and Second District Supervisor and Chairwoman Michelle Steel acknowledged SSA, OC Health Care Agency (HCA) and Orange County Community Resources (OCCR) eligibility staff who work diligently to provide access to critical services and supports to applicants and recipients of many programs including: CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, General Relief, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, Foster Care, Refugee Cash Assistance, Medical Safety Net, Adoptions, California Children's Services, Housing Assistance and Veterans Service Programs.



Chairwoman Steel commented, "These programs represent and serve over one in four Orange County residents and, especially now during the pandemic, our eligibility staff have answered the call to serve our most vulnerable populations." Chairwoman Steel continued, "Our Eligibility Professionals demonstrate compassion, dedication and extensive experience in their collaborative efforts to create a strong, safe and supportive county and make a positive and lasting contribution to our community. We thank you for your hard work and for all you do to serve and support our residents."



Although the Board resolution was not presented at the meeting in order to ensure the safety of all due to COVID-19, Chairwoman Steel recognized the following SSA eligibility staff selected by the Agency's Leadership Development Team as our 2020 honorees:

- Alba Fierro, Assistance Programs Division
- Lawanda Underwood, Assistance Programs Division
- Kathy Vu, Administrative Services Division
- Angelica Hernandez, Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services Division

SSA Director Debra Baetz acknowledged that eligibility professionals make up over 40% of SSA's approximately 4,000 employees who provide vital services to the community. She added, "With the significant increase we've seen in our public assistance benefits and safety net caseloads since the beginning of COVID-19, SSA eligibility staff have stepped up to the challenge and supported the expansion of service hours and offerings to help meet the

critical needs of the community. I'd like to commend them on their efforts to ensure those we serve are heard and are treated with dignity and respect during what may be the most difficult time in our clients' lives."

Our Eligibility Professional honorees had these words to share:

Angelica Hernandez: "I believe that showing kindness and respect to everyone we encounter is the best way we can help. That way, we can make a difference that is truly meaningful to each individual, especially those vulnerable adults and children whom we serve."

Alba Fierro: "I have worked for the County for almost 28 years. I have the privilege of working with amazing people from whom I learn and continue to learn. My biggest reward is being able to provide assistance and help our community the best that I can on a daily basis. It is an honor for me to be recognized during Eligibility Professionals Month."

Lawanda Underwood: "Eligibility Professionals Month means making a vital difference as part of the "heart" of SSA. I feel during this pandemic, we've made a difference helping the community with CalFresh, Medi-Cal and all of the other programs we offer. It's rewarding knowing I'm helping someone else."

Kathy Vu: "I'm honored to be recognized for Eligibility Professionals Month. The County has helped me grow in so many ways by challenging me to pursue a higher standard of goals for myself. I'm happy to be able to utilize my knowledge and skills to contribute back to our community and SSA while providing a higher level of service and understanding for the individuals in our community."

Congratulations to Alba, Lawanda, Kathy and Angelica on being selected to represent SSA--and with great appreciation, we honor all of our dedicated eligibility staff who work tirelessly to assist our clients.



Pictured: John and friend Carol Floyd

When asked of his proudest achievement at SSA, John shared that it very well could have been the revamping of Family Self-Sufficiency's Service Delivery Model, which boosted the work participation rate above 40%, or possibly his efforts in enhancing Assistance Programs with a dedicated focus on customer service. Ultimately, he acknowledged that the relationships built were his most rewarding accomplishment. To this, John quoted from the Wizard of Oz, "It's not where you go, it's who you meet along the way." He expressed gratitude for the experiences shared with customers and colleagues alike, always ensuring to conduct each interaction with professionalism, responsibility and respect. Reflecting on our role as SSA staff, John had this to say: "We make a difference in people's lives and have a fun time doing it. At the same time, we all have a lot of authority and we need to take it seriously and ultimately see our job as a privilege, because our peers count on it and the public counts on it." Additionally, an endeavor near and dear to John's heart was his long-lasting participation in the Multicultural Advisory Committee, and the successive creation of the Agency's LGBTQ group in 2007, which was spearheaded by Administrative Manager I, Kelley Martinez. John's mission of inclusivity and acceptance of diversity has always been a top priority, and he is appreciative of the efforts put forth by SSA staff to cultivate and uphold these principles.

With the topic of career advancement in mind, John reflected on the positive changes that the Agency has experienced in the last 28 years, most notably, "an individual's ability to have upward mobility in the organization, and the availability of trainings, coaches and mentors as guidance for career growth, along with increased tuition reimbursement and flexible schedules." He also stressed the importance of being open to new opportunities. As a servant leader and staunch supporter of mentorship, John always enjoyed guiding others, himself having drawn on the positive leadership qualities of the people he had worked with over the years. His past manager, Brenda Roa, showed John that "a leader's job is to identify the strengths of others, and place them where they will shine. There is no point in putting a round peg in a square hole." Of all the leadership attributes he finds important, at the top of his list are benevolence and integrity, as personified by his former colleague and longtime friend of 28 years, Carol Floyd, who always did the right thing and was kind to everyone. John also advised that staff should strive to remain present in all situations, to speak with intent and, as advocated by John's very first SSA supervisor, Bev Flake, to maintain a stellar reputation in the workplace.

SSA Director Debra Baetz shared the following words of appreciation for John: "In my history of working at SSA, no one has ever been as committed to the growth and development of our staff as John Hendrickson. As an executive, John has given much of himself and of his time to help nurture and guide the growth of future SSA leaders, meeting with individuals as part of our mentorship program to help support and encourage the achievement of their career and educational goals. Through John's guidance, many of our staff have advanced and propelled their career growth far beyond their expectations. I personally want to thank John for his leadership contributions and the impact he has made with staff. Our SSA family will truly miss John. While his loss will be felt for years to come, I'm very proud of the legacy of work he has built here -- he has left an indelible mark."



Pictured: Staff wish John (far right) farewell on his last day at the office

John's plans after retirement include a potential job in leadership, along with volunteering with organizations that work towards suicide prevention in the LGBTQ community, while striving for equality for all populations. John also aspires to acquire a part-time home in his cherished childhood town of Damariscotta, Maine, which he hopes to decorate with fun and interesting antiques. While John will most certainly fulfill all of his retirement goals, his first call to action on August 14 was a hard-earned and well-deserved celebratory lunch with his esteemed mentor and former SSA Chief Deputy Director, Carol Wiseman. Congratulations John!

YOUR MONTHLY MICRO-MINDFUL MOMENT



Summer is upon us and it's a great time to go outside! (While also being mindful to socially distance and wear face coverings, of course.) Focus on the abundance of summer light and commit it to memory. Focus also on summer's heat and commit that to memory. Experience summer's coolness: water, breezes, early mornings, late evenings or night. Pay attention to how each of these affects your mind and body. Try going for a walk and paying attention to details that you have not previously noticed, for example the color of flowers, what plants are blooming or details of a neighbor's home. Also try listening for new sounds or smelling what's in the air. Try to stay in the moment. What did you experience?

TCD CONTINUES TO MODERNIZE WITH SIX BOXES MODEL

By Jessica Moreira, Senior Staff Development Specialist

Instructional designers, trainers, administrative support and managers with Training and Career Development (TCD) are seeking to add measureable value to the Agency, to help accelerate business results through people. As the department looks to be recognized as training consultants and advocates, they are partnering with training requesters to engage in conversations utilizing the [Six Boxes Model](#). This is an easy-to-remember categorization of behavioral influences that have been researched for over 60 years. The [Six Boxes Model](#) includes six areas for performance improvement:

1. Expectations & Feedback
2. Tools & Resources
3. Consequences & Incentives
4. Skills & Knowledge (Training)
5. Selection & Assignment
6. Motives & Preferences

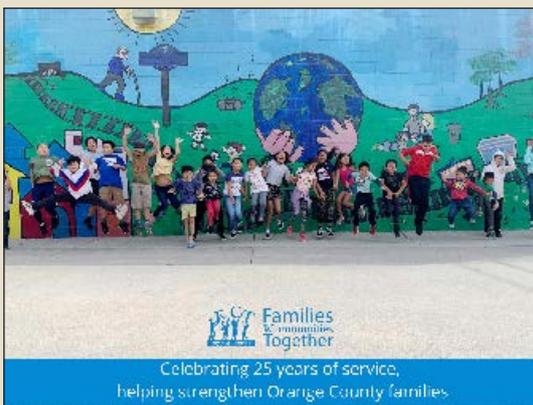
6 Boxes Performance Thinking		
1	2	3
Expectations & Feedback	Tools & Resources	Consequences & Incentives
Desired outcomes and how employees are meeting expectations, as well as reviewing the support and coaching staff receive to meet these outcomes.	Enablers such as job design, processes, environmental and ergonomic factors, tools, people, and other resources needed to produce desired outputs.	Explicit compensation and incentives, as well as informal and formal consequences, which can either increase or decrease performance.
How do people know what is expected of them? Are these expectations documented and communicated?	To perform their jobs, what information, tools, and work environment do people need?	What are the explicit and non-explicit incentives and consequences for meeting performance expectations?
How do people know how job expectations impact and support agency goals?	What information or tools do they not currently have that would improve performance?	How are people made aware of these incentives and consequences?
How often is performance measured and feedback given?	How do the job design, structure and responsibilities support successful performance?	How do you determine what incentives and consequences motivate or demotivate?
What metrics/measurements are in place to track performance?	How are the processes and staffing levels designed to maximize performance?	Do people feel they have the same opportunities to succeed as others in the same position?
4	5	6
Skills & Knowledge	Selection & Assignment (Capacity)	Motives & Performance
Comprehension of information, understanding, expertise, and competencies that individuals must have to perform effectively.	Personal and professional characteristics and behaviors that the individual brings to the job.	Factors that reflect + or - feelings about the job (pay, title, etc.) – if factors in the first 5 boxes are well managed, this one is positive.
What are your top three performance issues?	What requirements are sought in the selection process?	What motivates these people to perform their jobs?
What are the three most common mistakes that contribute to the problem you're experiencing?	What basic competencies and traits equip someone to succeed in this position?	How do these people feel about working in this organization/on this team?
What are the skills and knowledge people need to perform these skills? If their lives depended upon it, would they be able to perform these skills?	Do people in this position have the capacity to learn how to perform the job?	What are common career goals or aspirations for a person in this position?
What training and support do your people receive to perform their tasks?	Who currently performs at the desired level? Why?	What is the career path for this position?

Former TCD manager Brenda Wilson-Codispoti shares her experience: *“During my time at TCD, I often received training requests that appeared as the logical solution to meeting the Agency’s needs. However, there were times when we met a training request and later realized that training was not the optimal way to remedy the situation. As we have stepped into a collaborative approach to modernizing training, I have started to incorporate the [Six Boxes Model](#) to better support the business needs for staff.*

This past year, TCD partnered with the Assistance Programs (AP) leadership team to strategize a modernized approach in creating a Pilot Dual Intensive Induction Training (IIT). As we leaned into this collaboration, I reflected on earlier discussions with AP leadership as we shared “out of the box” ideas. Our discussions often revolved around what the expectations were of Dual Eligibility Technicians (ETs), what tools and resources they had and what the business consequences were for not meeting these expectations. These conversations were unconsciously driven by the [Six Boxes Model](#). From those conversations and our partnership, TCD began to explore and establish what “skills and knowledge” were needed to get Dual ETs in the field as quickly as possible, yet effectively and efficiently.

Due to the pandemic, the Pilot Dual IIT has been placed on hold; however, this experience has strengthened TCD’s role as training consultants and advocates. TCD will continue to utilize the [Six Boxes Model](#) to collaborate with leadership teams to create comprehensive training programs that meet and contribute to building skills and knowledge-ultimately improving performance and enhancing the customer experience for the community we serve. [Please join me in learning about the Six Boxes Model on Performance Thinking.](#)”

25 YEARS OF STRENGTHENING OC FAMILIES



Congratulations to Families and Communities Together (FaCT) on 25 years of service! FaCT provides essential family support services, education and resources through its network of Family Resource Centers (FRCs) located throughout Orange County's highest-risk communities. This important network of FRCs delivered critical family strengthening services to more than 14,000 clients in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, continues to make a significant impact on child abuse prevention throughout Orange County and has been integral in the development of child abuse prevention and quality family strengthening services throughout California.

Learn more about FaCT by visiting factoc.org.

KEEPING CHILDREN AND YOUTH SAFE FOR 35 YEARS

This year, we also celebrate the 35th anniversary of Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC). OCFC opened its doors in 1985 and continues to serve as a protective presence and safe refuge for vulnerable children who have faced abuse and neglect.

Let's recognize the important work being performed by our amazing OCFC staff to keep our youth safe and well. Stay tuned for more information in our coming issue!



MEET SSA'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Name: Julie Poulos

Title: Deputy Division Director, Assistance Programs Regional Centers

Areas covered in your position: I provide support to the following Assistance Programs Regional Centers that administer Medi-Cal, CalFresh and General Relief Programs: Santa Ana Regional Center (SARC), Anaheim Regional Center (ARC) and Aliso Viejo Regional Center (AVRC).

Years of Service with the County of Orange: 25

Divisions worked/previous experience: The vast majority of my experience lies within the Children and Family Services (CFS) Division (20 years). As a social worker and supervisor, my primary assignments involved child abuse investigations and Juvenile Court dependency cases. As a CFS manager, I supported child abuse prevention efforts, on-call emergency investigations and the Child Abuse Services Team (CAST), which is a Multi-Disciplinary

Team designed to reduce trauma to children going through the investigation process. As a member of the Administrative Services Division for over three years, I served as the Public Inquiries Coordinator on the Quality Support Team. This was a great opportunity to learn more about all four SSA divisions, external stakeholders and the impact of customer service. Most recently (December 2019), I joined the Assistance Programs Division and have been welcomed by consummate and dedicated professionals. I am very eager about the possibilities, moving forward. Throughout my experiences, I have had the great privilege to learn from and build relationships with so many amazing colleagues. I still vividly recall my first years as a social worker and how lasting bonds were developed by working together "in the trenches."

Fun fact about you (hobby, favorite food, movie, sports team, etc.): I played competitive team sports throughout the majority of my life and incorporate many of the lessons learned and values into the workplace. Years back, the Agency developed roller hockey teams and I was proud to be the only female member of an otherwise male team. I have "roots" in Texas and spent all of my Thanksgivings with extended family, watching the Dallas Cowboys. I fully appreciate being active and healthy. I enjoy the outdoors and traveling. To relax, I take trips in my RV. Some of my favorite trips have been to Yellowstone, Jackson Hole and Colorado. I do have an adventurous side and have learned to appreciate taking very calculated risks-they tend to produce more desirable results.

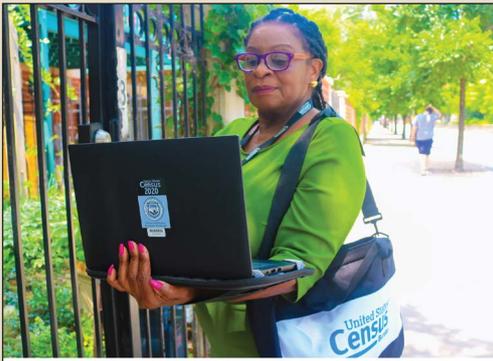
Professional development tips for staff: Broaden your lens and take advantage of various and diverse work experiences available across our Agency. This is not only good for your professional development; it is a great opportunity to invigorate interests and ultimately strengthen our "greater" agency team, as a whole.

You have to know where you want to go, to get there. Use reliable data to drive informed decisions, track intended outcomes and legitimize your course. If you don't have it, develop it. Otherwise, you are aimless.

Try to keep in mind your values, purpose and the "big picture"-it helps keep the small stuff small and directs energy into the most important places to effect influence and change. Humility, kindness and generous listening pair quite nicely with a respectful "backbone" and strong advocacy. Be the person that others want to work alongside of. Our influence toward serving the community is only as strong as we are together.

WHY THE CENSUS MATTERS

By Richard Gomez, Office Supervisor C



Did you know that the United States conducted its very first census in 1790? We are now in the midst of the 24th iteration of the U.S. Census, which is a once-in-a-decade, federally mandated count of every person living in the U.S. and five U.S. territories. The data collected during the Census has a tremendous impact on the shape of our communities over the next decade.

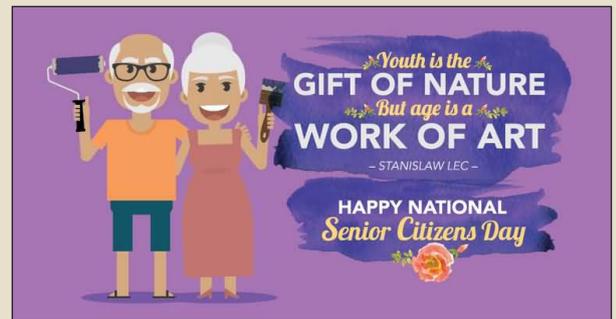
The Census matters because it determines how much money goes to the crucial programs and services that our Agency administers each day to children, adults and families in need, including public benefit assistance programs such as Medi-Cal and CalFresh. It facilitates funding and planning on infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, fire departments and roadways. It also provides important data that businesses and lawmakers rely on to make decisions that can impact the community.

Please, be counted! It only takes 10 minutes to fill out the Census that will shape the next 10 years. Make sure you and your family members are counted by completing the Census today at my2020Census.gov.

CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

By Perla Cabrera, Social Services Supervisor I

August 21 is recognized as National Senior Citizens Day and it is a day to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions senior citizens have made for our families, communities and country. National Senior Citizens Day was proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan on August 19, 1988 to acknowledge the leadership roles taken on by senior citizens and their dedication to serving their communities. This proclamation emphasized the benefits of seniors' volunteer service, their influence on younger Americans as positive role models and "making their presence felt-for their own good and that of others."



As the number of seniors continues to grow across the nation, so does their positive impact. Many seniors volunteer in the community. According to a report by Independent Sector and AARP (formerly called the American Association of Retired Persons), 42 percent of retired Americans who are 50 years and older volunteer. Not only do many seniors dedicate their time to bigger causes, they also make more charitable donations per capita than any other age group. Seniors serve as mentors by sharing words of wisdom and guidance during crucial stages in life. They form an integral part of our traditions as many cultures revere their elders and learn from their life experiences. Volunteer work provides seniors with learning opportunities, an outlet for professional skills and a sense of accomplishment. By volunteering their time and experience, seniors have proven to be a priceless resource.

Seniors enrich our communities and it is vital that we protect them during these difficult times. Older adults are considered most at risk of contracting COVID-19. In April, our County's Wellness Center shared some resources ([including this article](#)) to help our older adults during the pandemic and highlighted the importance of social connection. To help our seniors feel included and reduce feelings of isolation, they recommend: using video communication tools like FaceTime to check in, downloading apps to play games with others or making a simple phone call to catch up. During a recent In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) outreach phone call, one client expressed gratitude towards the Agency for "simply checking in and reaching out to meet any needs." Another client recognized her IHSS worker for making her "feel like he truly cares."

About 16 percent of the U.S. population is 65 or older and the Census Bureau predicts that seniors will outnumber children by 2034. By recognizing the value that senior citizens bring to our communities, we can become a more age-inclusive society. Happy National Senior Citizens Day!

Let's also remember to do our part to protect our most vulnerable elders from abuse and neglect. The abuse of elders and dependent adults occurs at all income levels and in every city in Orange County. If you suspect abuse or neglect of an elder or dependent adult, please call the Adult Protective Services 24-hour hotline at (800) 451-5155.

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

ANGIE AGUILAR, Employment & Eligibility Specialist (EES)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services



Continuing EES Angie Aguilar of the CalWORKs North regional office recently received the following words of gratitude from a client:

"First and foremost, I'm very grateful for the amazing work you have done to provide assistance and represent the County with the utmost professionalism. With the COVID-19 outbreak (and inability to meet with someone face-to-face), it was a challenge to get through to someone and seek help through the 1-800 number. You took on the challenge of my confusing caseload and made things happen. I would like to let your supervisor know how I feel with your assistance. I want to emphasize how grateful I am and make sure they know."

DONNA MATTHEWS, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs (not pictured)

ET Donna Matthews of Orange's Call and Processing Center recently received the following words of appreciation from a customer who had contacted the SSA Call Center, as shared by a supervisor:

"The customer wanted to express her appreciation to you for the great customer service you provided to her and her son. You were very friendly and patient, and took your time to answer all of their questions and explain the information thoroughly. You were wonderful and she gives you 10 stars! Thank you, Donna."



RHONDA CHILDS, Senior Office Supervisor (SOS)/Children and Family Services

SOS Rhonda Childs of the Operational Support Services program was recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for July 2020. The following comment was one of many shared about Rhonda:

"Rhonda embodies all 11 SSA core values, but the one that stands out is her Integrity to herself and to her team especially in these new times we live in and operate. She is the leader we need and deserve, the one who is willing to show what it takes to get things done. During this time of a pandemic and given our working conditions, she was able to hear our unit out on how to be efficient in working half day at home and half day in the office, and be transparent of this new day-to-day operation; at the same time, she entrusts us to hold ourselves accountable for the work we do because she believes that we will maintain the same level of work and efficiency in the office and at home. For me, that is all it takes, is someone who is willing to take the time to listen to the team's needs and be transparent of the situation and consequences."

OPERATIONS & POLICY TEAM, MEDI-CAL SECTION/Assistance Programs

SSA staff members from the Assistance Programs Division's Operations & Policy Team, Medi-Cal Section, were recently recognized by the Community Legal Aid (CLA) SoCal organization for their hard work and dedication to resolving Medi-Cal related issues and customer concerns. CLA SoCal, which works in collaboration with the Medi-Cal Policy Section to ensure customers have access to health care, expressed their appreciation to the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA):

"Our office wanted to recognize our county liaisons at the County of Orange Social Services Agency's Medi-Cal policy team for their great work during the pandemic. In the past, we at CLA SoCal have escalated Orange County's problematic system issues to DHCS (e.g. Disabled Adult Child, Spousal Impoverishment, Qualified Medicare Beneficiary), but we also want to provide them credit when credit is due! We want to highlight to DHCS their recent efforts on quickly resolving our client's eligibility issues. Their dedication and fast response time have assisted our clients in accessing needed medical treatment and medication during this difficult time. We value our partnership in serving the OC Medi-Cal community together."



Left to right: Manuel Roa, Melissa Vargas, Adriana Gardea, Albert Alvarez, Connie Gonzalez and Michael Pagano
Not pictured: Yesenia Zapien, Maria Jaques and Maricela Longoria

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



JEFF MOLINA, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SSW Jeff Molina of the Adult Protective Services (APS) program was presented with Adult Services' You Rock Award for August 2020. His supervisor shared the following words of recognition for Jeff:

"Jeff has served the Orange County community for 25 years and will soon be moving on to his next chapter in life. During the time I have been supervising Jeff, I have learned that he has a passion for serving the community. Jeff has been a solid APS worker for many years, exhibiting a strong work ethic, great interpersonal skills and a great team spirit. Jeff has developed a great relationship with the Buena Park Police Department and often teams up on complex APS cases with intimidating alleged abusers. Jeff

doesn't complain and does his job with a positive attitude. It is obvious that Jeff cares about his clients and wants to help. Jeff has also been involved with the holiday committee and assisted APS in having some awesome holiday parties through the years. All the supervisors agree that Jeff has always been a pleasure to work with and makes our jobs easier. Jeff, we thank you for not only your great service to APS clients, but also everything you have done during your career with the County. You will be missed very much, but I know that you have great things to come."

DAVID BOJORQUEZ, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs (not pictured)

ET David Bojorquez of Orange's Call and Processing Center recently received the following words of recognition from a customer who had contacted the SSA Call Center, as shared by a supervisor:

"The customer wanted to commend David for the excellent customer service and assistance he provided in answering the customer's Medi-Cal questions. The customer asked that David be recognized for his patience and kindness during the call. Great work, David!"

MARIA VEGA, Office Technician (OT)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

OT Maria Vega of the CalWORKs West regional office recently received the following words of gratitude from a participant in the Employment Preparation Program:

"I am so grateful for this opportunity that was given to me to learn to be of service to my community. I have no doubt that it was my experience here, in such a dynamic environment, that gave me the skills to obtain my new job at the Orange County Fire Authority. Thank you for helping me become a success story. It is my heart's hope and desire to return to the Social Services Agency in the future when that opportunity becomes available."



INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STAFF/Children & Family Services

SSA staff members from the Independent Living Program (ILP) recently received a letter of gratitude that was sent to SSA Director Debra Baetz:

"On behalf of our family, we thank you and the ILP staff for assisting our family and El Paso County Department of Human Services with the youth's transition plan. This would not have been possible had it not been for the efforts of Ms. Lourdes Chavez and her team, especially Ms. Lucinda Solorzano, in providing guidance and information regarding SSA to El Paso County team members

as well as myself. We are encouraged that the youth will be able to access services in Orange County through Chaffee services offered through Orangewood Foundation, under California's iteration of the Federal Fostering Connections Act (AB12), that are critical for the youth's success and mental wellbeing. Again, we appreciate the contributions and time from you and the ILP team for the youth's transition to Orange County."

BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



JAIME REYES, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII Jaime Reyes of the In-Home Supportive Services program recently received the following letters, one from a client and the other from an authorized representative, expressing gratitude for his customer service:

"Sometimes, the heroes and angels behind the scenes need to be acknowledged for the great job that they are doing, especially in a time where there is great fear and negativity present. Mr. Reyes makes you feel like he truly cares. He is always available to answer my questions and concerns very patiently, compassionately and empathetically. He offers insights and suggestions to help improve my quality of life and always encourages me to keep a positive mental attitude. I am so grateful for his assistance and the program's help. It has made all the difference in the world in the quality of life for me and my family. Thank you so much."

"Dear Mr. Reyes, thank you for all that you do. You are always so kind and even with the client's limited abilities, you always make a point to speak directly to him to make sure he feels that he is being cared for properly and that he is still happy to be living at home with Mom and Dad. Thank you again for your kindness and efficiency."

VANESSA AHUMADA, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII Vanessa Ahumada of the In-Home Supportive Services program recently received some words of recognition from a client's daughter, as shared by her supervisor:

"The client's daughter wanted to give a good word about Vanessa. She was very friendly and kind. She listened very attentively and was very professional and detailed. The client's daughter said that Vanessa was really sweet and felt that Vanessa really cared about her and the client. She stated that she feels very lucky to have Vanessa as the social worker. She stated that Vanessa is the best social worker they have ever had."



MICHELE GALINDO, Staff Specialist/Agency Administration (not pictured)

Staff Specialist Michele Galindo of the CWS/CMS Data Analysis and Reporting Team (DART) recently received the following words of appreciation from a staff member in another division:

"Michele has been a BIG help with the Bringing Families Home (BFH) program. As you probably know, we are in the process of developing a BFH data system. Her knowledge of BFH, CWS and reports has been invaluable! Thank you Michele for your guidance and patience – I appreciate you!"



JIM BOYD, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII/Mutual Client Case Manager Jim Boyd recently received the following words of appreciation by email from a participant in the Employment Preparation Program (EPP):

"I interviewed and received a job offer from the Orange County Fire Authority as a Health Screener. It is an extra help position. I will say it is my hope to eventually find my way back to SSA because learning to be of service here was amazing. I am confident this job offer came due to my experience through EPP. Thank you for being so supportive and for your direction. I will always be grateful that we crossed paths and you encouraged me to do EPP instead of just school. It has made such a difference in my journey. You made a huge impact in my life and in the future for my children. Thank you for what you do. Grateful and with all thanks."

SSA PROMOTIONS

EMPLOYEE NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
ACUNA, FELIXIA JANINA DOMINGO	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
ALHAMBRA, ROSA MARIA MENDEZ	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
BROOKER, TIFFANY ANN	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
FISHER, VERONICA PAOLA	SOCIAL WORKER II	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
FLETCHER, CHARLES D	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR II	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
JACKSON, PAMELA KAY	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
JIMENEZ, VIRGINIA	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
LEE, KATHRYN HUI	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
LOPEZ, SANDRA	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
MEDRANO, MIRKELIA	STAFF SPECIALIST	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION
PHAM, LIEN	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
WATERS, RODNEY CHRISTOPHER	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	AGENCY ADMINISTRATION

IN MEMORIAM

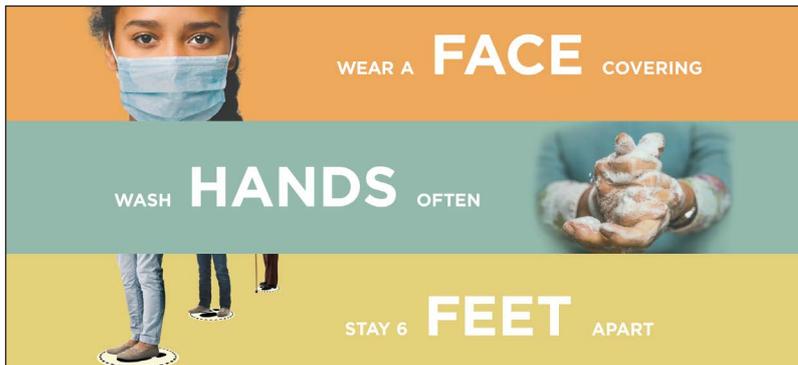


SSA would like to acknowledge the recent passing of an SSA employee. Please keep their family and friends in your thoughts during this difficult time.

Phoebu Wu, Information Processing Technician

COVID-19 RESOURCES

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has developed several helpful resources 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 [occovid19.ochealthinfo.com](https://www.ochealthinfo.com/occovid19). 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](#).



NEW

COVID-19 HOTLINE
(714) 834-2000

For general questions, guidelines or information about COVID-19, call the hotline, M-F from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or email your questions to Eteam@ochca.com.

www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus

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