

# OCSSA TODAY

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

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Debra Baetz

Autumn is finally here, and this change in seasons is reflective of the changing nature of the world around us. It seems incredible to look back over the past seven months and realize the enormity of the journey we have all been a part of. While this season and the upcoming holiday months may look and feel very different than in years past, our response to the COVID-19 crisis, along with the recent Orange County wildfires and so many other events and challenges, have provided clarity on what is most important, giving focus to our top priorities.



Many of us have been asked to take on new and extra duties both at work and at home, juggling the needs of our families and communities, with increased technological and social distancing challenges. And yet, we find the fortitude to keep moving forward and work together to accomplish amazing things. I continue to be inspired by your resiliency and willingness to offer help when we are faced with new challenges.

In response to the Silverado and Blue Ridge fires affecting our County, our Emergency Management Team was recently activated to stand up a temporary evaluation point (TEP) for residents to seek a short-term safe zone and they noted that SSA once again had a significant number of staff who jumped at the chance to assist. Additionally, SSA staff continued to support the Emergency Operations Center Hotline in providing vital information to those impacted by the fires, along with COVID-19.

Our SSA staff continue to demonstrate their commitment to providing accessible and responsive services to the community, and to one another. From our clerical staff, who diligently support our eligibility and front-line employees, to our Administrative teams who work tirelessly behind the scenes, to our social work staff who work to protect our most vulnerable and to our eligibility staff who provide critical resources to those in need, our SSA family continues to work above and beyond to help meet the needs of our community and continue to achieve our mandates.

Thank you for your hard work ensuring that vulnerable children, seniors and adults are safe, have food on their tables, are working towards self-sufficiency and have access to quality health care. Even during the most difficult of times, you continue to show your commitment and compassion to serve those in need – living the SSA core values and showing each other what the Heart of SSA is all about. meet the needs of our community and continue to achieve our mandates.

Our shared persistence, determination and courage will continue to help us make a difference in the lives of others and bring innovation to the services we provide. I am proud of the empathy and ingenuity you bring to your work every day. This month's SSA Today will share examples of the significant impacts you make.

On behalf of the SSA Executive Team, thank you for your optimism, resourcefulness and selflessness. I am grateful for you and am proud to be part of this SSA family.

Wishing you all a safe and comfortable fall. Be well.

## CONTENTS

SSA Spotlight: Specialized Family Services Continuing & Court Officers	<a href="#"><u>2</u></a>
SSA Pays it Forward to HCA with N95 Training	<a href="#"><u>3</u></a>
Employee Educational Journeys in SSA	<a href="#"><u>3</u></a>
Your Monthly Micro-Mindful Moment	<a href="#"><u>4</u></a>
Happy Birthday, Eureka!	<a href="#"><u>4</u></a>
Stories from the Field: Safe and Happy at Home	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
Overcoming the Barriers of Domestic Violence	<a href="#"><u>5</u></a>
Creating a Better Future for the Next Generation	<a href="#"><u>6</u></a>
Beyond the Call: Exceptional Service in Action	<a href="#"><u>6</u></a>
SSA Promotions	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
Looking to Promote?	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
In Memoriam	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
Celebrating U.S. Military Veterans	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>
Connect with Us!	<a href="#"><u>11</u></a>

"AUTUMN IS A SECOND SPRING  
WHEN EVERY LEAF IS A FLOWER."  
ALBERT CAMUS



# SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

## SPECIALIZED FAMILY SERVICES CONTINUING & COURT OFFICERS

Specialized Family Services (SFS) Continuing and Court Officers is a program within SSA's Children and Family Services (CFS) division. It is comprised of two distinct departments of 47 Senior Social Workers (SSWs) and seven Senior Social Services Supervisors (SSSSs).

The SFS Continuing department consists of 31 SSWs and five SSSSs serving children who are victims of abuse or neglect and require specific medical or developmental services. The children are either prenatally exposed to illegal drugs and alcohol, have a diagnosis of autism or are identified as developmentally delayed and are receiving regional center services. The program serves on average 682 dependent children and their families per month.

The medical needs associated with substance-exposed infants (who are frequently born prematurely) are not routine, but often require numerous monthly medical appointments with physical and occupational therapists, as well as specialty medical providers such as gastroenterologists, neurologists, pulmonologists, cardiologists and dietitians. The children with developmental delays and/or autism often require services from physical and occupational therapists, specialty medical providers, school personnel, mental health therapists and other specialized service providers.

Under the supervision, assistance and guidance of an SSSS, the SFS Continuing SSW monitors the services and care of a child while the child is under the supervision of a relative or resource family home or in the care of their parents under the oversight of the Juvenile Court. The SSW ensures the caretakers/parents have the resources needed to address the child's medical, psychological and physical needs. The SSW is also responsible for seeing the child, caretakers and parents monthly while obtaining regular updates from the medical, developmental and other service providers to verify that the child's needs are being met effectively.

The SFS Continuing SSW is also charged with assisting the child's parents in their efforts to address the concerns that led to the child being declared a dependent of the Orange County Juvenile Court. The SSW is mandated to assist parents in their efforts to reunify with their children or maintain their children safely in the home through court approved case plans, in compliance with all court orders as well as Federal and State mandates and regulations. The SSW regularly informs the Orange County Juvenile Court on the progress or lack thereof made by the parents, information related to the child's well-being, updated information from service providers and the Agency's recommendation regarding the need for or changes to the ongoing supervision of the case. In addition, the SSW may be subpoenaed to testify during hearings or trials related to the disposition of the dependency case. The ultimate goal of the SFS Continuing SSW is to assist families in mitigating the reasons that brought their family to the attention of the Orange County Juvenile Court and ensure the children vested in the care of SSA are safe and properly cared for while a permanent plan is established, whether that entails returning safely to the care of the parents, adoption or long-term out-of-home care.

The Court Officers department consists of 16 SSWs under the supervision, assistance and guidance of two SSSSs. Fourteen SSWs



**Pictured:** Various SSA staff from the SFS Continuing & Court Officers program

work within the OC Juvenile Courtrooms and two work within the OC Family Law Courtrooms. The OC Juvenile Court oversees the care of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and the OC Family Law Court oversees families working to resolve custody disputes, domestic violence, restraining orders and other domestic-related issues.

The role of the Court Officer SSW in Juvenile Court is to act as the liaison between the SSA's case carrying SSWs in all court related programs and courthouse staff including judicial officers and attorneys. On average, the Court Officers in Juvenile Court process over 2,800 cases per month, attend court hearings and relay information and questions to case carrying SSWs. Behind the scenes, the Court Officers ensure all necessary forms are present and appropriately completed in compliance with the court requirements and legal mandates. They work to ensure court deadlines are met and collaborate closely with the attorneys and other courtroom staff to ensure court proceedings run smoothly and share information with SSA staff not present in the courtroom.

The two SSWs working within the Family Law Courtrooms function as a liaison between SSA and the OC Family Law Court. Their role is to assist the Family Law Court by providing necessary and relevant information regarding involvement between SSA and the Orange County Juvenile Court with the families they are presiding over, as well as provide case carrying SSWs information on what is occurring in Family Law Court on any cases they may be overseeing. The Court Officer in Family Law Court also provides CFS information to Family Law mediators and Probate Court investigations. Further, they inform the Family Law Court regarding Juvenile Court regulations and procedures and provide testimony in court on behalf of SSA. On average, the Court Officers in Family Law Court assist with over 70 cases per month.

**Thank you to the SSWs and SSSSs of the Specialized Family Services Continuing and Court Officers for the amazing work you do to serve and protect our most vulnerable children and families. Congratulations on being selected as the SSA Spotlight for October 2020!**



# SSA PAYS IT FORWARD TO HCA WITH N95 TRAINING



Left to right: David Harper, Andrew Hyde, Mabel Gutierrez, Matt O'Campo

In March 2020, the SSA Procurement team, through extraordinary ingenuity, acquired a cache of N95 filtering face masks, which offer heightened protection from COVID-19. Prior to wearing N95 masks, staff must be “fit-tested” to determine proper size/seal and be medically screened. As highlighted in the [June 2020](#) issue of SSA Today, the Orange County Fire Authority generously loaned their fit-testing kits and trained six SSA staff on how to fit-test earlier this year. These six staff members then trained additional SSA staff while HCA devoted nurses for completing the medical screenings. Since April, the team of SSA fit-testers, support staff and HCA nurses have evaluated nearly 1,000 SSA workers to receive N95 masks. Now equipped with much accumulated experience along with brand new fit-testing kits acquired by SSA Procurement, SSA was ready to pay it forward when HCA asked for help in training their staff.

On September 16th, a small team of SSA staff conducted a live N95 webinar for 12 HCA nurses and approximately 25 skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) within Orange County. During the presentation, this team (Mabel Gutierrez, Andrew Hyde, David Harper and Matt O'Campo) conducted a live demo of the N95 fit testing process followed by a Q&A session with HCA staff attending in-person as well as SNF staff attending virtually via webinar. After the webinar, the 12 HCA nurses were given one-on-one training, affording them an opportunity to practice the N95 fit testing process.

The newly-trained HCA staff are now, in turn, supporting Orange County subacute care and skilled nursing facilities to provide N95 masks to approximately 10,000 SNF staff using fit-testing kits and supplies borrowed from SSA. HCA Deputy Medical Director Helene M. Calvet, M.D. offered the following words of gratitude for SSA's N95 webinar team: *“Thank you all so much for putting on this training. The facilities will be so grateful for the help; they have all been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. You all are awesome!”*

The biggest challenges can be met by a series of combined gestures aimed at helping. One employee assists another, an agency extends beyond itself and a workforce comes together to rally its combined strength. This pattern has repeated itself time after time: through our mutual support, we are empowered to serve and safeguard the most vulnerable populations of Orange County. In this context, the recent SSA/HCA training is one thread of effort, braided together with many other meaningful contributions, to weave an expanding net of support and safety.

## EMPLOYEE EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS IN SSA

My name is Amy Whiteley and I am the Assistant Regional Manager of the CalWORKs Laguna Hills Regional Center. I began with SSA in 2001 as an Eligibility Technician soon after graduating from California State University, Northridge with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Religious Studies. While working on my bachelor's degree, I had hoped to enter into a master's program but wasn't able to because I needed to work. At that point in my life, a graduate education seemed like a luxury I couldn't afford. In 2008, I was introduced to the Organizational Leadership program at Brandman University. I had learned that County of Orange employees were given a 10% discount on tuition and I was eligible for tuition reimbursement. I loved the program and graduated with my first Master of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership in 2010.



Pictured: Amy Whiteley

I loved going to school and eventually started looking into different programs for either another Master of Arts degree or a doctorate. I decided to enroll in a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program at Brandman which complemented my existing education and was relevant to the current stage in my career. Education, for me, has provided a framework through which I can apply my experience to benefit the Agency and continue to grow professionally.

During my MPA program, I got married, blended my family, maintained my job and graduated during the COVID-19 pandemic. To be honest, it was hard and I had to learn to let the little things go. I learned to not let the “perfect” get in the way of the “excellent” and to be okay with “good enough” at times. Learning when and where that really matters is a skill that is essential for success in an environment where competing priorities can cause you to feel overwhelmed and burnt out. Education has taught me how to think in different ways that has extremely enhanced my personal and professional life. Orange County is generous with [educational and professional reimbursement](#) and has [partnerships](#) with several area schools that provide employee discounts so you can find the one that fits best with your aspirations. If education is important to you, then you are in the best place to achieve your goals. Go for it!

# YOUR MONTHLY MICRO-MINDFUL MOMENT



Feeling a little stressed or anxious? This month, try this relaxation exercise. Periodically during your day, notice where and how you are holding tension in your body. While seated in a chair, close your eyes and do a quick body scan, gently tightening on the inhale and relaxing on the exhale each muscle group from your head to your toes. The processing of tightening and relaxing your muscle groups can help you relax your entire body and guide you into a greater state of calm and awareness of the present moment.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EUREKA!

by Brian Smith, Senior Social Services Supervisor

[Eureka](#), the County's new Learning Management System (LMS), was launched on October 22, 2019 to great fanfare and has maintained much success through its first full year of operation. Eureka is a powerful tool as it allows users to access training on demand, wherever they are. Users can learn just about anything, from recognizing and addressing unconscious bias to building pivot tables in Microsoft Excel. Between October 22, 2019 and October 7, 2020, SSA staff completed 116,419 hours of instructor-led training (ILT) through Eureka.



From January 2020 to March 2020, SSA users completed an average of 1,908 virtual learning modules in Eureka each month, compared to an average of 10,026 virtual learning modules per month since March 2020 (post-pandemic). A notable highlight of Eureka is the SSA Professional Development Playlist. Learners can follow the playlist by searching for "SSA Professional Development" in Eureka or clicking [here](#) to access recommended courses.

The Eureka Administration Team at SSA's Training and Career Development remains hard at work supporting the platform and managing daily user inquiries at [EurekaInquiries@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:EurekaInquiries@ssa.ocgov.com). The most commonly inquired training on Eureka is Workplace Harassment and the top 10 non-mandatory trainings completed by SSA staff are:

Rank	Training	Completions
1	SSA Telework/Telecommute	1277
2	Writing Effective E-mails and Instant Messages	362
3	The Art and Science of Communication	252
4	Covid -19 Post Click Education Message	245
5	Leading through Positive Influence	205
6	Choosing the Right Interpersonal Communication Method to Make Your Point	192
7	Difficult People: Strategies to Keep Everyone Working Together	182
8	Facing Confrontation in Customer Service	175
9	Positive Atmosphere: Establishing an Engaged Workforce	165
10	Emotional Intelligence: Owning Your Emotions	160

Reflecting on the one-year anniversary of the LMS, the Eureka Admin Team had these thoughts to share:

Paola Saunders, Office Specialist: *"Eureka has proven to be full of surprises! It has a variety of trainings for employees. Eureka has been a continuous learning experience. Even after a year of working with the new LMS, we as Eureka admins are constantly learning the different ways it works."*

Deena Bower, Staff Development Specialist: *"It's been a busy year for our Eureka Admin Team and we appreciate everybody's patience and support as we continue to build. We have so many exciting plans for SSA Eureka and we can't wait to share them with you!"*

Anne Price, Office Supervisor B: *"It's amazing how quickly a year has gone by! Here's to many more years of learning for us all! Happy Birthday, Eureka!"*

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Eureka, please send an email to: [EurekaInquiries@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:EurekaInquiries@ssa.ocgov.com).

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD: SAFE AND HAPPY AT HOME

by Yen Huynh, Senior Social Worker

My three years of experience as a social worker for the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program were very meaningful to me. My favorite part of being an IHSS social worker was the human interaction in the field and the relationships I established with my clients. As an alternative to out-of-home care, the program pays in-home caregivers to provide clients with everyday services such as dressing, bathing, cooking and housecleaning. What I like most about the program is that it helps eligible clients live independently and safely in their homes rather than in institutional settings, such as nursing homes or board and care facilities. Eligible clients include persons who are over the age of 65, blind or disabled. Receiving services at home where clients are happiest and healthiest increases their quality of life and by having clients live at home, the IHSS program saves the state money on more costly care provided in an institutional placement.



My main role as an IHSS social worker was to conduct home visits to assess the types of authorized services that clients needed and the amount of time required for each service. As clients' medical conditions can be atypical, cases with complicated paramedical services (e.g., glucose checks, injections, wound care, G-tube feeding) are challenging to assess at times. There was a case where I had to conduct an initial needs assessment for a three-month-old child with significant medical needs and developmental disabilities. To complete a thorough needs assessment, I requested assistance from the program staff nurse to conduct a joint home visit with me to assess the child's need for paramedical services. At the home visit, the nurse helped with reviewing the child's medical records/history and clarifying requested paramedical services, including frequencies and duration, with the child's mother. I was fully able to document the child's need for services and authorize service hours for the child. My role as an IHSS worker allowed me to make a positive difference for clients and every home visit worthwhile.

## OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

by Jennifer McDonald, Senior Social Services Supervisor



**Left to right:** Elizabeth Napoles, Nelda Sanchez, Carmen Valencia, Romy Barba, Adrienne Flores, Monica Arriaza, Denise Ramirez, Sara Tehranchi, Pamela Pantiru, Carol Taylor, Sally Monsoor, Jennifer McDonald, Amy Whiteley, Patricia Wenskunas (Crime Survivors founder)

**Not pictured:** Racquel Ruiz, Christina Enriquez

The month of October has been designated as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a nationwide campaign dedicated to raising awareness about the signs of abuse and ways to stop it. Did you know that SSA's Domestic Abuse Services Unit (DASU) was formed over 20 years ago to assist families on CalWORKs public assistance to overcome the barriers of domestic violence in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency?

DASU is an innovative, preventative and collaborative program that strives to empower clients through education, a trusting relationship and linkage to supportive community services. The DASU program consists of ten Senior Social Workers (SSWs), one Data Entry Technician (DET) and two Senior Social Services Supervisors (SSSSs) based at all four of SSA's Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services regional offices. DASU SSWs demonstrate a solid understanding of the power dynamics within an abusive relationship and the subsequent safety issues

these present to all family members. The team works collaboratively with CalWORKs Case Managers, Employment and Eligibility Specialists, Behavioral Health Therapists and a multitude of external community partners such as the Families and Communities Together (FaCT) Family Resource Centers (FRCs), local justice centers and domestic violence shelters. DASU SSWs complete initial and ongoing assessments of safety and continuously engage with victims to develop individually-tailored case plans that meet both the needs of the family and the requirements of the CalWORKs program. Case plan components typically include counseling, Personal Empowerment Program (PEP) classes, Emergency Shelter/Transitional Shelter services, parenting resources, linkages to education and job training, connecting clients to legal and immigration services and basic needs. The DASU team works to motivate and empower victims to participate in therapeutic and employment-related services and activities.

A typical DASU success story would begin with a client in crisis, having just left the alleged abuser and nowhere to go with her children. Because of the trauma she has experienced, the client would often be reluctant to involve the police or seek child support or a restraining order for fear of antagonizing the situation. Due to the resources and tools she can obtain, this story often ends with the client emerging as a survivor who is able and willing to use all services at her disposal to stay safe and to financially support her family. If you or someone you know is affected by domestic violence, call (800) 799-7233.



# CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

by Roberta Martinez, Social Services Supervisor I



Orange County United Way shares a bold vision to create a positive future for the next generation. The plan identifies four key roles to target the most critical, interconnected challenges we “FACE” as a community. The more we unite community resources to support Orange County United Way’s Fund, Advocate, Collaborate and Educate (FACE) goals, the closer we come to ensuring that everyone in Orange County receives a quality education, is healthy and thriving, financially stable and has a place to call home.

These uncertain and unprecedented times have negatively impacted many families. The County of Orange has partnered with the United Way since 1979 and SSA employees have stepped up from the very beginning. Consider participating in charitable giving through United Way; your contributions will help fund local organizations so that Orange County’s residents in need receive assistance during these challenging times.

Support this year’s United Way Charitable Giving Campaign by donating through a [bi-weekly payroll deduction](#) or making a [one-time donation](#). Every contribution will help tackle our community’s most critical issues to create a stronger, more vibrant Orange County so that our children and residents can thrive to become the leaders of tomorrow. United We Fight. United We Win.

## BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



### **ELIZABETH GOMEZ, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Children and Family Services**

SSW Elizabeth Gomez of the Adoptions program recently received the following words of acknowledgment from a client:

*"I just wanted to take a moment and let you know what a wonderful experience we had with Elizabeth Gomez, our adoption social worker. This is my very first time getting called for placement and certainly my first time going through an adoption. Elizabeth has walked me so patiently through this journey...and all I can say is that I was truly blessed to have such a caring and knowledgeable social worker. She was a pleasure to meet with and I will greatly miss our monthly baby walk-throughs at my house. She made this very difficult and emotionally draining process manageable. She kept me informed and explained the process every step of the way. She is an absolute asset to your program!"*

### **NGA NGUYEN, Social Services Supervisor I (SSSI)/Agency Administration**

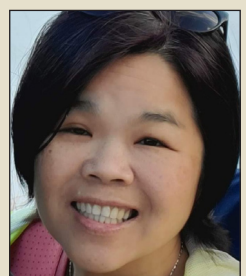
SSSI Nga Nguyen of the CFS Systems team (not pictured) recently received the following words of recognition for her recent presentations to CFS staff regarding the elimination of Personal Storage Folders (PST) in order to be compliant with the county policy:

*"Thank you for your helpful presentation to the Multi-Agency Family Partnership and Child and Family Team programs this morning! We greatly appreciate it! You did a great job – and the handouts are wonderful! Thank you!"*

### **LESLIE LEE, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs**

ET Leslie Lee of Orange's Call and Processing Center recently received the following words of appreciation, as shared by a supervisor:

*"The customer wanted to express her appreciation towards you as you were amazing and professional; you took the time to listen to her, explain in detail her questions and concerns regarding her CalFresh case and also assist her with a new application. The customer stated you were very sweet. Thank you for your great customer service."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## **ROXANNE SALAZAR, Employment and Eligibility Specialist (EES) and JIM BOYD, Case Manager (CM)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**



EES Roxanne Salazar (left) and CM Jim Boyd (right) recently received the following words of appreciation from a client:

*"I am writing you because of the incredible interaction I had with Roxanne and Jim. I have dealt with many case workers; Roxanne and Jim were extremely helpful, hardworking, easy to get in touch with, resourceful, professional and efficient. Roxanne and Jim both resonate a true love of helping people like myself. It's not just a job for them. Both of them are a godsend to me and to others I am sure. I only had them for a brief period of time and they got more done for me than anyone else. I learned about other programs and options to help me specifically for my situation. I'm truly grateful for these two and I can't say enough about them."*

## **RISA M., Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs**

ET Risa M. of Orange's Call and Processing Center (not pictured) recently received the following words of gratitude from a customer, as shared by a supervisor:

*"The customer wanted to thank you for your excellent service. He stated he was nervous when calling but you were very understanding, empathetic and caring. The customer said you spent time making sure he understood all his options. He was impressed that you went above and beyond to provide assistance and made a positive impact on him. Thank you for your great customer service, Risa!"*

## **AMANDA CARNEY, Secretary I/Children and Family Services**



Secretary I Amanda Carney of Family Maintenance Collaborative Services/Child Abuse Services Team was recently recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for September 2020. The following comment was one of several shared about Amanda by her colleagues:

*"Amanda can easily be seen as the glue that holds the program together and a strong member of our team. She is the 'go-to' person for pretty much anything: PPE supplies, IT issues, room scheduling, holiday events, new employees, interns and pretty much everything else. She can be counted on as a team player at all times. I have reached out to her when I am not available and she comes through to assist without hesitation. Most importantly, Amanda does things because she genuinely wants to. She is humble, respected and shows compassion for what she does. When celebrating events, it is always she who brings the extra bowls, decorations and goodies that most would forget. Amanda is a great employee, but a greater person in all she does."*

## **HUY TRAN, Senior Accounting Assistant (SAA)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SAA Huy Tran of the In-Home Supportive Services program was recently presented with Adult Services' You Rock Award for September 2020. The following comment was shared about Huy by one of his colleagues:

*"Huy is professional and knowledgeable in every aspect, not only in the accounting area, but also Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and even unemployment benefits. Huy always provides answers to my questions promptly and assisted me on one fraud case to provide the investigator what he needed in a timely fashion. Huy is a great asset to not only the accounting unit but also IHSS. Huy deserves the 'You Rock Award'. Thank you, Huy!"*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



## **SHIRLEY D. DOWNIE, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs**

ET Shirley Downie of Orange's Call and Processing Center recently received the following words of appreciation, as shared by a supervisor:

*"Shirley, a grateful customer called to sing your praises today, stating she had the absolute best experience calling the Service Center because of your kindness. She stated you were patient with her, very clear, and she now understands what she needs to do. Thank you for your great customer service."*

## **JONE'E FREEMAN, Office Clerk/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

Jone'e Freeman of the In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority was recently presented with Adult Services' You Rock Award for August 2020. The following comment was shared about Jone'e by one of her colleagues:

*"Yesterday I had the opportunity to work with Jone'e as part of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distribution/kit assembly project. I gained an appreciation for Jone'e's role through my recent experience. Since the implementation of PPE distribution, Jone'e has been stationed in the parking lot with the responsibility of ensuring the providers and recipients receive the essential supplies necessary for maintaining their safety. She ensures that supplies are packaged properly to make dispensing quick and easy. She collects data as she is dispensing supplies to account for inventory flow. She also invests time in training staff of various levels that come to offer support. Apart from dispensing supplies, it became very apparent that Jone'e's previous experience with IHSS continues to be of value when questions and requests from the public are a common occurrence. Besides battling the weather (it's hot out there), she maintains her composure in dealing with escalated matters and language barriers she is faced with on a regular basis. Jone'e is a remarkable employee with a smile and positive attitude; everyday, she is making a difference."*



## **PHUOC "PAUL" VUONG, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs**

ET Phuoc "Paul" Vuong of Santa Ana Regional Center (not pictured) recently received the following compliment from a customer:

*"I had the pleasure of being served by Paul Vuong. I want to let you know that I was so pleased by his work ethic, clarity, sense of humor and efficiency in helping my son and me. Unbelievable! I have been in the system for many years. I work at a public high school with many students with special needs and I have just been so impressed by Paul. He helped us with a few different benefit options and kind of sealed the deal all at once, so I just wanted to reach out to his supervisor and give him my highest praise. It was unbelievable service and I just really thank you. He was absolutely a delight and so incredibly helpful to me and my family."*



## **MARC CHILDS, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SWII Marc Childs of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program recently received the following words of gratitude from an IHSS provider in a written letter to his supervisor:

*"I just wanted to reach out and pay compliments to one of your team members, Mr. Marc Childs. Throughout the whole process of the annual assessment interview and follow-up, Mr. Childs has been very courteous and professional. It is so refreshing to work with someone who always has a smile on his face and treats you respectfully. Even during the COVID-19 shutdown, Mr. Childs was accessible while working from home and responsive to several of my requests. On urgent matters, he would email and call me to ensure that I received the correspondence and provide follow-up. It was truly a pleasure dealing with Mr. Childs. I wanted to apprise you of what a great member you have on your team. Thank you and please keep up the great work."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## **ARUNDHATI PATTNAIK, Case Manager (CM)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

CM Arundhati Pattnaik of Laguna Hills Regional Center recently received the following words of recognition from a client:

*"I started the CalWORKs program over three years ago. When I started this program, I lived in a shelter, was 7 months pregnant and had nothing. Thanks to CalWORKs, I was able to get back on my feet, pay for my own groceries and bills and go to the doctor free of charge. When COVID-19 hit, it left me unemployed and Mrs. Pattnaik signed me up for OC EARNs (a subsidized employment program), where I was able to find a really good job. The CalWORKs program really helped me through my darkest times. Mrs. Pattnaik is one of my workers and is always very helpful. I am very thankful to have her as a worker. Thank you CalWORKs!"*



## **JOYCE RILEY, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SSW Joyce Riley of the Adult Protective Services program (not pictured) recently received the following words of gratitude in a handwritten letter from a client:

*"Thank you for the information and aid offered by your Agency. As a senior, it is difficult to feel secure in this 21st century. It used to be that the threats were usually something we could see and/or understand. Today, dangers are so hidden and subtle, testing our lack of experience and practice, even when we're trying hard to be informed and aware. And thank you for the security you offered on our phone discussion. It was truly appreciated."*



## **CHRISTINE SALAS, Senior Accounting Assistant (SAA)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SAA Christine Salas of the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Accounting Unit recently received the following words of appreciation in a written letter from an IHSS provider:

*"Today I write this letter to you about Mrs. Christine Salas. She is very knowledgeable and helpful. She spent more than an hour to help with my case and clearly instructed me throughout my problem with kindness. She is the best worker I had ever talked with. I really appreciate her help."*

## **SILVIA PARDO, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SWII Silvia Pardo of the CalWORKs North office at Anaheim Regional Center (not pictured) recently received the following words of gratitude from a client:

*"Thank you again for helping me out with everything! I greatly appreciate it! You took the time to listen and help me out with going to school and my problems. Thank you!"*

## **THOMAS NGO, Social Worker II (SWII)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SWII Thomas Ngo of the In-Home Supportive Services program recently received the following words of appreciation in an e-mail message from a client:

*"Please accept a heartfelt thank you from our family for all of the support we have received from the IHSS program. It has been a tremendous help to our family. We are deeply grateful for agents like Thomas Ngo. Thomas is compassionate, knowledgeable and always making an effort to be available for any questions we had. He worked hard to understand our unique needs and we always felt like he was on our side. We will truly miss him."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## **MONICA ARRIAZA, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SSW Monica Arriaza of the Domestic Abuse Services Unit (DASU) was recently recognized for her recent efforts, as shared by a supervisor:

*"Monica clearly demonstrated the values of the DASU program when one of her Children and Family Services (CFS) mutual clients called her in crisis. Monica was described as going above and beyond the call of duty to help ensure the safety of the child. Monica exemplified the core values of our Agency by being compassionate, and demonstrating thoroughness, respect and integrity."*



## **MARIA MOREL, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs**

ET Maria Morel of Anaheim Regional Center (not pictured) recently received some words of acknowledgment in a written letter from a customer:

*"I would like to acknowledge your employee Mrs. Maria Morel for her outstanding customer service. The professional manner in which she handled my case must be commended. Her attitude towards her work is on an entirely different level and her genuine interest in helping others while doing the right thing is refreshing. She has a winner's attitude, and I appreciate the fact that she takes her clients seriously. Earlier tonight I was able to get enough groceries for the week and I can't tell you how great that feels—so...THANK YOU! I am incredibly impressed with the quality of the service you provided to me as well as the manner in which you did so. I am sure you are a recognized and a valuable member of your department."*

## **KRISTAL MOTHERSHED, Eligibility Supervisor (ES)/Assistance Programs**

ES Kristal Mothershed of Central Regional Office (CRO) recently received the following words of recognition from an Accounting Office Supervisor, as shared with the CRO management team:

*"I wanted to take the time to commend you for the extraordinary team you have. Kristal is a great team player. She works so hard and is always willing to go the extra mile to help the clients in need. She always assists the accounting unit by expediting tasks pending with eligibility staff. She has always helped us by processing the tasks that do not even belong to her unit. She is not only patient but also extremely resourceful. It sure makes my job easier knowing that my team can count on such a strong team player who understands the value of achieving a common goal. Contacting clients and confirming the status to Accounting of the EBT cards with no show statuses shows her commitment level. I want to let you know that we are very lucky to be able to collaborate with such a great teammate. Kudos to her for doing such an amazing job and to you for promoting teamwork and valued guidance!"*



## **RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM/Assistance Programs**

On October 2, 2020, the Restaurant Meals Program received the following words of recognition from the Government Affairs Manager at the Orange County Business Council (OCBC):

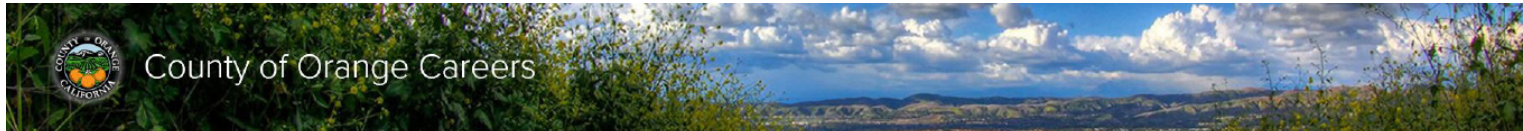
*"I wanted to share that OCBC gave the Restaurant Meals Program a spotlight this morning in our newsletter (below), which is distributed to about 10,000 recipients! It's an honor to highlight such a successful program."*

The spotlight reads, *"TURNING RED TAPE INTO RED CARPET SPOTLIGHT: The County of Orange Social Services Agency (SSA) implemented the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP), an optional benefit program enabling elderly, disabled and homeless CalFresh recipients to purchase meals at participating restaurants. The RMP provides warm, nutritious meal options for impacted populations who may have difficulty cooking or accessing groceries. In 2020 alone, more than 100 participating restaurants have been added to the RMP and annualized restaurant 2020 sales are expected to be \$2.2 million. Despite the pandemic, sales have grown by more than 17 times since the RMP's first year."*

# SSA PROMOTIONS

EMPLOYEE NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
CHAHARDAH CHERIKI, SARA	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
CHAVEZ, CHANTEL LYNN	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
GARCIA, STEPHEN JOSHUA	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
HOOKER, STEPHANIE D	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
LOOMIS, VICTORIA MARIA	SOCIAL WORKER II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
MOORE, MEGAN NICOLE	SENIOR SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

## LOOKING TO PROMOTE?



County of Orange Careers

Be sure to stay up-to-date on current job opportunities here at SSA and throughout the County! To view current recruitments, sign up for job alerts and/or apply, click [here](#). For Frequently Asked Questions about the County job application process including links to practice online assessments, click [here](#).

## IN MEMORIAM



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

**Shari King, Secretary I/Adult Protective Services & In-Home Supportive Services**  
**Marsha Medina, Case Manager/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**  
**Jose Vergara, Eligibility Technician/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

## CELEBRATING U.S. MILITARY VETERANS

Veterans Day is celebrated on the 11th of November each year. On this federal holiday, we have the opportunity to honor all of the courageous men and women who have served in the United States military. In particular, SSA would like to recognize and honor all staff who are veterans of a U.S. military branch. Thank you for bravely serving our country and for now proudly serving our Agency and the County of Orange. Your contributions are deeply appreciated, respected and valued!



## CONNECT WITH US!

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