

# OCSSA TODAY

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

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

By: Loreen Montagnon, Administrative Manager I

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), over 50 million U.S. adults suffer from a variety of mental disorders, including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month, a national movement to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental illness. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the importance of more open and candid conversations regarding this issue.



- One in five U.S. adults experience a mental health illness each year
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10-34
- Over 8 million people in the U.S. provide care to an adult with a mental or emotional health issue
- About 37 percent of people incarcerated in state and federal prisons have a diagnosed mental condition
- Depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$41 trillion each year in lost productivity

These statistics, compiled by NAMI, show the ripple effect that mental illness has on an individual level but also the impact it has on families, communities and the world.

### Know the Signs

Unlike readily apparent physical injuries, identifying and diagnosing mental illness is much more challenging as symptoms may vary across a large spectrum. However, some common signs and/or symptoms include:

- Feelings of overwhelming sadness or being withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Feelings or desire to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so
- Risky or sabotaging behavior that causes harm to oneself or others
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
- Strong worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

If you, a family member or friend are struggling with mental illness, there are supportive resources available for you.

### Helpful Resources:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) [www.ocgov.com/gov/hr/eb/eap](http://www.ocgov.com/gov/hr/eb/eap)
- NAMI - Orange County [www.namioc.org/](http://www.namioc.org/) and [www.namioc.org/podcast](http://www.namioc.org/podcast)
- Each Mind Matters [www.eachmindmatters.org](http://www.eachmindmatters.org) – California's Mental Health Movement, organizations and individuals working together to advance mental health
- MentalHealth.gov [www.mentalhealth.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth)
- Orange County and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) [www.ocapica.org](http://www.ocapica.org)
- Multi-Ethnic Collaborative of Community Agencies (MECCA) [www.ocmecca.org](http://www.ocmecca.org)

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# SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

## ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS DATA ENTRY TECHNICIAN HUB

By: Nicole Kramer, Senior Office Supervisor

SSA's Assistance Programs (AP) Data Entry Technician (DET) Hub is a powerhouse group of highly specialized staff who provide clerical support to all AP regions. The group consists of 90 DETs, 12 Office Technicians, eight Office Supervisors and two Senior Office Supervisors.

The centralization of the AP DET Hub was initiated in July 2019 to minimize variations in the volume and type of applications processed by each AP region and standardize the virtual imaging process for all new customer applications. By housing the DETs in one location, the AP Division set out to maximize efficiencies and productivity, ultimately benefiting our internal and external customers. As a result, over the last two years the DET Hub has achieved greater consistency in services, enhanced job knowledge across the DET membership and streamlined the clearance, application registration and virtual imaging processes for the CalFresh, General Relief and Medi-Cal applications received from customers. Furthermore, the creation of the DET Hub increased our team's flexibility to swiftly implement or modify new processes in response to changing times.

The AP DET Hub is a multi-faceted and talented group who focus on application processing in preparation for the eligibility workers as well as conduct several other specialized assignments. These assignments include: processing telework mail for all AP eligibility staff working from home, completing MEDS transaction requests, assigning incoming and outgoing Inter-County Transfer requests for the AP and Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (FSS-AS) divisions, supporting the Call Center and specialized units such as Long Term Care and Social Security Income/Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (SSI/QMB) located at the Cypress Regional Center and collaborating with community partners to answer inquiries on mutual customers.

When the pandemic hit last year, the agility and effectiveness of the AP DET Hub were on full display. DETs generally process approximately about 22,000 customer applications per month; however, in March 2020, the group received a whopping 39,384 applications, representing a 79 percent increase from the monthly average. The following months also saw increases in applications received, reflecting the growing needs of our community. Ultimately, the Hub processed nearly 300,000 applications in 2020 and routinely rallied to complete their work quickly and efficiently. During this time, many DET Hub members also began teleworking. Thankfully, due to the standardizations made during the implementation of the Hub, this was a largely seamless transition.

The AP DET Hub also plays an essential role in helping to ensure the safety of our customers by processing all walk-in applications within 15 minutes on average. This quick processing reduces the time customers spend waiting in one of our regional lobbies. We're proud of the team for their responsiveness and ability to handle an average of 1,200 applications each day. The partnership between the DET Hub and the AP regions ensures our community members, who desperately need assistance during this unprecedented time, receive their benefits timely.

Since its inception, and especially throughout the pandemic, the AP DET Hub has embodied some of the Agency's key core values such as integrity, compassion, initiative, teamwork, thoroughness, efficiency and creativity as they managed an influx of applications expeditiously during a most challenging period.

Huge kudos and congratulations to the AP DET Hub team members for the outstanding work they continue to do to support our Division, Agency and community!



**#SpotlightSuperStars**

# MEET SSA'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM

**Name:** Hilda Juarez

**Title:** Deputy Division Director, Human Resources (HR)

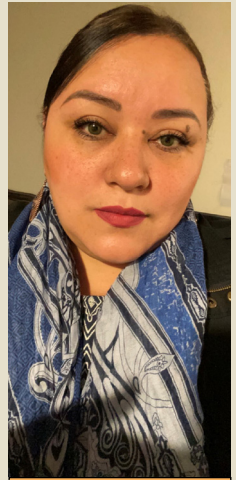
**Areas covered in your position:** As the Deputy Division Director, HR, I'm responsible for overseeing the SSA Satellite HR Team of 23 staff. I'm responsible for a full range of HR support and consultative services as well as directing, leading, managing and coaching the HRS SSA Satellite Team. This includes oversight of employee and labor relations; classification reviews, EEO complaints; return-to-work; recruiting; HR related training and ongoing support and guidance to staff at all levels of the organization. I am also responsible for direct supervision of the HRS SSA Return to Work and Recruitment teams. I am also a member of the Leadership Development Team (LDT), responsible for making recommendations to the Executive Management regarding high profile and critical employee relations issues with union-related matters such as labor inquiries, MOU negotiations and meet and confer obligations, among other duties.

**Years of service with the County of Orange:** I've been with the County of Orange for approximately 23 years; working 21 years in HR and two with Health Care Agency Public Health.

**Divisions worked/previous experience:** In my career with the County, I've had the opportunity to work the majority of my career in HR in various classifications (from an entry level position all the way into management positions). My experience as an HR Generalist and working in various functions of HR (Records, Recruitment, Employee Relations, Return-to-Work and as a HR Manager) have helped me provide prompt and high-level service to internal and external customers. I provided HR support for the Board of Supervisors, County Executive Office, Health Care Agency, elected departments and many other departments.

**Fun facts about you:** I'm known for making delicious salsa and flan. I love cooking and enjoy spending time with my family.

**Professional development tips for staff:** Be persistent and consistent in your approach and professional development. Take the time to fully develop and when the time is right, the opportunity will come. Finally, see challenges as opportunities to develop and build stronger professional relationships.



**Pictured:**  
Hilda Juarez

## WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

*In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, please show your support by wearing purple on June 15th!*



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization. The focus of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of elder abuse and neglect by raising awareness on the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes that affect older adults.

In collaboration with the Orange County Aging Services Collaborative, Adult Protective Services will be hosting a virtual webinar on Tuesday June 15, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. to recognize World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This year's theme is "Loneliness Pandemic: The Unforeseen Impact of COVID-19."

**Youth is the gift of nature, but age is a work of art. – Stanislaw Jerzy Lec**

For more details or to register for the virtual event, please visit: <http://bit.ly/WEAAD2021>

To report suspected elder abuse or neglect, please call the Adult Protective Services 24/7 hotline at (800) 451-5155.

For more information about elder abuse and Adult Protective Services, please visit: [www.ssa.ocgov.com/abuse/elder](http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/abuse/elder)

# FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Everyday people give of themselves to ensure children in care experience stable, supportive and safe home environments. From resource parents, to child welfare professionals, to mentors and volunteers, the efforts of these individuals help build healthy, lifelong connections for children and youth in care. We honor and celebrate all caregivers and those who work in helping capacities – especially during National Foster Care Month in May.

Consider becoming a resource parent to children in need – because every child deserves to know the love of a family. For more information about the approval process, click [here](#).

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



# CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH

**By: Raymond Fajardo, Social Services Supervisor II**

May is CalFresh Awareness Month, the official month dedicated to increasing public awareness of CalFresh. CalFresh helps to improve the health and well-being of qualified households and individuals by providing improved access to healthy and nutritious foods. Efforts are being made to bring awareness to potentially eligible individuals and families.

Many of our Medi-Cal customers are unaware they may be financially eligible to receive CalFresh benefits and a special outreach effort is currently underway to bring awareness to this population. Assistance Programs (AP), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services and Children and Family Services staff have collaborated and are working towards a lofty goal of conducting direct outreach to over 300,000 Medi-Cal recipient households.

Outreach efforts provide these Medi-Cal recipient households key program information for CalFresh and the various ways to apply. Upon successful phone contact, staff are going the extra mile by providing customers the opportunity to submit a CalFresh application right over the phone. This CalFresh outreach effort has resulted in an increasing number of CalFresh applications and approvals and it is anticipated the numbers will continue to ramp up.

Many families with school-aged children who are potentially eligible for the CalFresh program are not receiving benefits. A virtual outreach presentation was conducted earlier in May by AP staff to increase CalFresh awareness for Orange County school district representatives. CalFresh information and resources were shared at the presentation with the goal of reaching potentially eligible families with school-aged children.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CalFresh eligibility rules for students of higher learning have been temporarily modified to make CalFresh accessible to more students. Campaign efforts conducted by the California Department of Social Services brought awareness of these eligibility rule changes to university and college students/staff and community-based organizations (CBOs). As a result, we have seen an increased number of CalFresh applications from students of higher learning and CBOs are now actively assisting students with submitting applications for those who were previously ineligible for CalFresh benefits.

Our goal is to help more households overcome barriers when applying for CalFresh through our ongoing direct outreach and application assistance efforts. These activities and awareness campaigns will continue until we achieve our ultimate goal of expanding CalFresh program accessibility to all who are eligible.

For more information about CalFresh, please visit: [www.ssa.ocgov.com/calfresh/calfresh/info](http://www.ssa.ocgov.com/calfresh/calfresh/info)



# MULTI-CULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRESENTS:

## ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

By: Monica Kim, Social Services Supervisor I

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, in which we celebrate the contributions that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) have made and continue to make. Orange County is home to the third largest AAPI community in the nation. The AAPI experience has helped shape our country's narrative in many important ways.

In addition to weathering a global pandemic over the last year, we as a nation, have witnessed civil unrest and polarization across the country that has increasingly impacted our communities in negative, sometimes violent ways, and our County is not immune.



Although we can't be responsible for the actions and beliefs of others, we can be responsible for how we respond to those around us. At SSA, we are dedicated to our work serving the community, including the most vulnerable, because every person deserves to live in a safe community where they are treated with dignity and kindness. COVID-19 has shown us that we are resilient and can navigate through the turmoil and unrest using our moral compass and good intentions to guide us. We ask that amid tension, we stay engaged, remain hopeful and walk with integrity. It's not "what" we decide to do, but "how" we do things that speaks volumes. – At SSA, we live our core values – demonstrating compassion and respect, operating with integrity, treating others with fairness and celebrating diversity.

We invite you to help become a catalyst for a revitalized Social Services Asian Forum (SSAF) and join in the Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee's (MCAC) mission to address diversity and multi-cultural issues within SSA, with a goal of delivering culturally sensitive and competent services to the community.

## JOIN THE MCAC COMMITTEE!



The MCAC consists of a cross-section of management and non-management employees representative of the diversity of the Agency and community and serves as a forum for various cultural groups to address issues of diversity within the workforce of SSA, as well as acting as a resource to provide culturally sensitive services to our clientele. Presently, there are five subcommittees of the MCAC, welcoming all interested employees to join them and participate in their activities.

- African American Roundtable
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender League
- Middle Eastern Multicultural Association
- Social Services Asian Forum
- Spanish Speaking Workers Forum

To learn more about the MCAC and its subcommittees, click [here](#). Feel free to contact any of the subcommittee members for more information on how to join and participate!

# 2021 CAREER ADVISORY PROGRAM GRADS

By: Perla Cabrera, Social Services Supervisor I

The Career Advisory Program (CAP), now in its 12th year, has long been a staple of professional development for non-supervisory SSA employees interested in taking the next step in their careers. The program matches Advisees with experienced Advisors who provide career coaching, guidance on developing short and long-term goals, and professional growth experiences such as interview preparation and job shadowing opportunities. With many SSA employees working remotely and promotional opportunities on the rise, CAP coordinators Vanessa Montalvo and Perla Cabrera successfully transitioned the CAP experience online and created virtual opportunities to network and build purposeful relationships.

After a year-long hiatus, CAP welcomed the first virtual cohort of 22 motivated employees on February 4, 2021, eager to embark on a four-month learning adventure. During this period, Advisees met with their Advisors monthly to collaborate on a professional development plan and attended two highly interactive online courses: Leadership Communication Skills for Everyone facilitated by Susette Cordova-Jerro and Isela Rodriguez, and Career Next Step Essentials facilitated by Rosalie Gibbons. These courses offered insight into application fundamentals, interview techniques and essential leadership skills conducive to CAP Advisees' professional growth.

As CAP Advisees and Advisors navigated their journeys together, they expressed appreciation for one another and developed meaningful relationships. The dedication of Advisees inspired numerous Advisors who were glad to pay it forward by helping others realize their full potential. Advisor Phuc Nguyen shared that he was "honored" and thankful for the opportunity to share his experience, and equally grateful for the opportunity to learn from Advisee Santiago Rueda. As CAP Advisees collaborated with their Advisors and continued to make significant progress in their development, many felt accomplished with the knowledge, skills and experience they obtained. Advisee Marcos Esparza shared that his Advisor Saul Viramontes inspired him and "instilled the desire to work towards improving oneself" by equipping him "with some of the best tools," to accomplish his goals. Advisee Jacquelyn Santaella also shared that the experience with Advisor Rosalva Garcia "will forever remain a major contributor" to her success.

To celebrate the completion of another successful CAP cohort, Advisees and Advisors participated in a virtual graduation ceremony on May 13, 2021. Training and Career Development wishes success to all CAP graduates in their future endeavors and looks forward to the launch of the upcoming July 2021 cohort.



## SSA Career Advisory Program Participants

Christa Tipton, Mehrsa Dorostkar, Vanessa Montalvo, Lilian Carmona, Felissa Garcia, Salma Noori, Jordan Knapp, Jacquelyn Santaella, Francisco Perez, Marcos Esparza, Emilia Garcia, Natalie Hay, Rosalva Garcia, Nicole Kramer, James Carter, Quatana Hodges, Saul Viramontes, Adriana Pfeifer, Perla Cabrera, Anton Morales, Maricela Villa, Phuc Nguyen, Lawanda Underwood, Dianne Saylor, Paul Nguyen, Lizeth Carstensen, Robert Chaffee, Alejandra Cruz, Elizabeth Davis, Laura Turtzer, Melanie Frias, Xyanya Garza, Kristina Traw, Mitchell Loo, Priscilla McKinney, Ednita Ramirez, Ivory Medina, Nadine Alam, Santiago Rueda, Queen Udofia, Monica Broderick, Mariana Vindigni, Taylor Pham, Sarah Walrath and Rosalinda Ocegueda.

**CONGRATS, GRADS!**  
**WE APPRECIATE**  
**YOU!!**

# CELEBRATING FAMILIES: BRINGING SMILES AT HOME

## SPRING 2021

By: Julianna Gil, Office Specialist

The Family Engagement/Child and Family Team with SSA's Children and Family Services (CFS) Division has traditionally hosted a bi-annual heartwarming, in-person event known as "Celebrating Families." This event honors the incredibly hard work made by parents to overcome severe obstacles, reunite with their children and provide a safe and loving family home. Celebrating Families also acknowledges the collaboration between the families' former social workers and the nominated families during the reunification process. Despite our current unprecedented times, the Family Engagement/Child and Family Team has continued to pursue the tradition of honoring successfully reunified families by developing a new recognition event they call, "Celebrating Families: Bringing Smiles at Home."

Pedro Vargas and the families' former CFS social workers visited eight families who accepted the honor from their homes. Parents received certificates of recognition and the children of the nominated families enjoyed gift bags filled with toys, blankets and goodies. Each family also received gift cards to the Costa Mesa Toast Kitchen and Bakery. The restaurant has provided catering for two prior CFS Celebrating Families events. SSA gives special thanks to Maribel Toan of Newsong Community Church, in Santa Ana, for generously providing the Toast Kitchen and Bakery gift card donations to recognize our nominated families.



**Pictured top row:** Shaoming Chang, Jessica Chilton, Danielle Hensley and Roxanne Biles  
**Pictured bottom row:** Janet Ford, Aine Alejandre and Tamara Whiteside

Janet Ford stated:

"The role of the social worker is very intense with each of the families we work with. So when a family successfully meets their goal of reunification after lengthy involvement, it is very satisfying and something I found to be emotional when recognizing the family for their accomplishments."

Jessica Chilton stated:

"It is extremely rewarding to see the family change and move forward towards a better life together! I love educating all members of the family and seeing and being a part of their change so that they can be together again!"

## COMMUNITY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The Community and Government Relations Team is proud to introduce our new team members:

Loreen Montagnon Administrative Manager (AM) I serves as our Community Relations Manager, focused not only on outreach coordination, but expanding SSA's community engagement footprint in the County. In her role, she will develop key partnerships and outreach programs in collaboration with SSA program staff that will build awareness of our public benefits programs and ultimately help increase benefits participation rates. Loreen will also serve as Agency outreach liaison, working with our Board offices on community engagement activities.

Jamie Cargo (AMI) is SSA's new Public Information Officer, working on public-facing communications campaigns, media inquiries and media relations activities.

Elizabeth ("Lizz") Mishreki (AMI) joins the team as our Communications and Policy Manager, primarily focused on employee-facing communications and development/update of our Agency Policies & Procedures.

Charles Dulac (Staff Specialist) is our new Agenda Staff Report (ASR) Coordinator and will provide legislative analysis and support to Legislative Manager (AMI) Kristina Traw.

Traci Muldoon (Staff Specialist) serves as a CGR Public Affairs Specialist, with responsibility for managing, designing and distributing SSA Today and The Source publications, creating and monitoring our social media content and preparing/refining collateral materials (graphics, flyers, reports and other promotional communications).

Please join us in welcoming these very talented individuals to SSA!

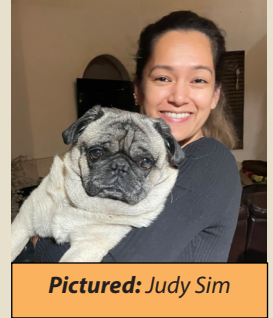


**Pictured left to right:** Jamie Cargo, Lizz Mishreki, Traci Muldoon, Laura Turtzer, Kristina Traw, Kenya Avila, Loreen Montagnon and Charles Dulac

# STORIES FROM THE FIELD: GIVING HOPE

By: Judy Sim, Social Worker II

My name is Judy Sim and I am a Social Worker II with In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS). IHSS is a program in SSA Adult Services (AS) that assesses and authorizes in-home care services for elderly and disabled persons. These services enable clients to remain in their home safely with the assistance of a care provider. Without IHSS services in place, our IHSS clients are at risk of placement in out-of-home care due to their medical, physical and/or cognitive impairments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, not only did IHSS staff continue to provide routine services to our IHSS clients (such as reassessments, change assessments, intakes), we – along with volunteers from many other SSA programs – also conducted regular welfare calls with this extremely vulnerable population to ensure their safety and ability to access resources in order to meet their basic needs.



There is one IHSS client and his family that continues to resonate with me after speaking with them two months ago. The client is in his late 80s, cognitively impaired and bedbound living in a home with many other family members, including his daughter who is his primary caregiver. Due to his medical and physical impairments, the client is completely reliant on his daughter and family to oversee and assist him with his day-to-day activities. In March 2021, I contacted the client and his daughter to complete an IHSS annual reassessment. During our conversation, his daughter shared with me that in early 2021, all members of the client’s household became ill with COVID-19 at the same time. She stated that they all suffered from varying symptoms and had difficulty caring for themselves in addition to caring for the elderly IHSS client. She shared that the illness put a lot of strain and stress on the family.

While the family recovered, the IHSS client was able to receive continued care with the assistance of extended family members. The client’s daughter expressed her gratitude for the IHSS outreach calls to check in and ensure the family had sufficient food, water and resources. She explained that during that dark time, a representative from the IHSS outreach team contacted them, not just once, but twice to make sure the client and the entire household had enough food and supplies to meet their needs. She stated that the outreach calls made them feel like the County was available to help them when they needed it most.

After speaking to the client’s family, I felt many different emotions. The daughter was so grateful for the outreach efforts. However, I imagined the despair and stress they must have experienced when their entire household was ill with COVID-19, as well as how they struggled to care for themselves and each other during that time. The conversation also left me feeling proud of SSA and IHSS efforts — giving hope and helping our clients during the pandemic.

This case reminded me why I wanted to become a social worker. My take-away from this experience is to concentrate on the joy we receive from our clients rather than the challenges. Although we know the challenges tend to take a lot more effort and energy to resolve, the short interactions we have with our grateful clients makes this job worth it.

## YOUR MONTHLY MICRO-MINDFUL MOMENT

Take a morning or evening walk around your neighborhood. As you walk, just notice what you see, hear and feel, then let it go, as if it started fading away the moment you experienced it.





# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## **ANN SHACKELFORD, Secretary I/Children & Family Services:**

Secretary I Ann Shackelford of the CFS Court Services Program was recognized as CFS Employee of the Month for April 2021 and received the following words of recognition from her fellow colleagues:

*"Ann is the heart and the medulla oblongata of the Court Services program. From start to finish, she is here to meet, greet and help our new employees have a great start. Ann makes sure to make mini posters to welcome new staff and posts them outside and inside of their office, making all new workers welcomed. She starts the paperwork and email trail for their work badge, cell phones; laptops; computer accessories, etc. And, this is only the beginning of the many tasks that she performs month in and month out. Court Services is lucky to benefit from all of Ann's patience, steadiness and smiles. She truly is a compassionate person which is emulated in her work. She is a person whose work identifies her as a standout and awesome Program Secretary."*



**Pictured:**  
Ann Shackelford



**Pictured:** Ginna Ricci

## **CARMEN DIPIETRANTONIO and GINNA RICCI, Intake Employment Eligibility Specialists (IEES)/Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

IEES Carmen DiPietrantonio and Ginna Ricci from the Santa Ana Regional Center, CalWORKs office received these kind words of appreciation from clients, as shared by authorized representatives:

*"I just want to say thank you for making this process as easy as possible, being very understanding and getting back to me at a reasonable time. Everything you said you would do you've done, within the time frame you stated. This is such a traumatic situation for me and you have definitely made me feel like I'll be okay. So I'd just like to thank you"*

## **QUANTANA HODGES, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Adult Protective Services**

SSW Quantana Hodges of In-Home Supportive Services received the following words of recognition from a supervisor in Domestic Abuse Services Unit (DASU):

*"Thank you again for taking the time to join us during our DASU Unit Meeting. I think you did a fantastic job presenting all the information in an informative and interactive manner. It is apparent that you are knowledgeable and passionate about your role as an SSW, protecting the health and welfare of elderly clients. You are an excellent presenter and I appreciate you shedding light on this issue for DASU, who also work with adult clients. I really liked the PowerPoint as well. I think it flowed well, was organized and I appreciated the statistics which puts things into perspective."*



**Pictured:**  
Quantana Hodges

## **JENNIFER TU, Registry Training Specialist/ Family Self- Sufficiency & Adult Services**



**Pictured:** Jennifer Tu

Jennifer Tu from In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority received the Adult Services You Rock Award and the following words of appreciation from her fellow colleagues:

*"Jennifer Tu undoubtedly deserves recognition for her incredible work ethic and her genuine passion for helping people. Jennifer's commitment to treating everyone she supports with dignity and respect is admirable and inspiring, and she never loses sight that the work we do has a real and tangible affect on the quality of life of our clients, their families, and our providers. She truly brings a humanistic approach to her work, and has deservedly earned the respect of those she supports. This respect translates into a strong rapport, based on trust, enabling her to work through challenges and issues to achieve positive results. Jennifer is a true representation of the commitment and passion needed for working in social services to help those in need, and the Public Authority is proud to have her as a member of our team."*

# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION

## **SYLVIA CUELLAR, Senior Social Worker (SSW)/Children & Family Services**

SSW Sylvia Cuellar of CFS Court Services received the following words of gratitude from a client, as shared by a supervisor:

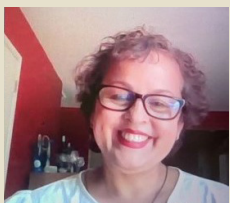
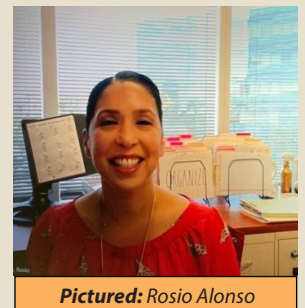
*"I am writing to you today to let you know how elated we were to work with Sylvia Cuellar as our assigned social worker with our second child. During our first foster-to-adopt process with our older daughter we were fortunate to have a relatively smooth process, with little to no involvement with the biological family. However, with our second child, our situation has been quite different, and through all the challenges we appreciated the openness and honesty we have had with Sylvia as well as the support she has given to us through this challenge as we are dealing with a biological father that is requesting custody.*

*Sylvia has always shown compassionate for our concerns and fears, she would listen to everything we had to say and offer words of encouragement and advice. She always made sure to let us hope for the best but prepare for the possible outcomes with our second child. Going forward we understand the road ahead will be difficult and we are hoping to adopt our second child as well. I am confident that with all the openness, advice, and support we received from Sylvia, we will be able to deal and navigate the challenges ahead. We will continue to keep her updated with many pictures and stories as they come along and we thank you for assigning her to our special wonderful child."*

## **Rosio Alonso and Evette Sanchez, Social Services Supervisor II /Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

Rosio Alonso and Evette Sanchez of FSS & AS Policy & Quality Assurance (PQA) received the following words of appreciation from their colleagues:

*"Rosio demonstrates compassion every day, not only with her words but with her actions as well. She considers her words carefully and is always respectful. She is very compassionate when communicating and truly shows how much she cares about everyone. She listens attentively, shows interest in what the other person is saying and demonstrates true empathy in her responses. No matter how demanding her job is with a million things that require her attention she always makes sacrifices, provides cheerful encouragement, and is an advocate for her team. She gives direction with a loving attitude and makes herself available for any support and guidance. If you've ever had the opportunity to work with her, her sincerity, dedication, and emphasis on ensuring the clients are the most integral part of her work is inspirational. Rosio is empathetic, attentive, and considerate to others without ever expecting anything in return. She goes above and beyond when interacting with everyone to make sure they are comfortable and feel supported. She is a true team player. Her kindness is contagious, and this encourages others into similar actions. Thank you Rosio for all you do! We are grateful to be part of your team!"*



*Evette is one to say "yes" whenever she is asked for help and she volunteers to help wherever she is needed. She has been a tremendous help to me as I have leaned on her with the Family Stabilization assignment. She always tells me it's her pleasure to help out and she demonstrates that by always stepping in to help. I've observed Evette to engage well with staff. We recently had changes in our team structure that required Evette to take on additional tasks. Again, Evette immediately agreed to help out and never complained. I feel so lucky to work with Evette! She truly is the epitome of compassion!"*

## **VIVIAN NGUYEN, Eligibility Technician (ET)/Assistance Programs**

Vivian Nguyen of Orange County Processing Center received the following words of recognition from a client, as shared by a supervisor:

*"When a customer called to inquire on her CalFresh benefits, you explained why her case was closing. You also obtained clarification of her UIB situation. You forwarded the information to the worker, who was able to process the changes that made the customer eligible to her much-needed CalFresh benefits. Thank you, Vivian, for providing exceptional service to internal and external customers."*

# SSA PROMOTIONS

EMPLOYEE NAME	CLASSIFICATION	DIVISION
ADRAY, TAYLOR JEANNE	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
ALCARAZ, VERONICA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
BUI, CHRIS PHUVIET	STAFF SPECIALIST	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
CALILUNG, JOSHUA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
DE HARO, YULIANA	SR. SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
DIAZ, KATIE JO	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
DUBON, NEIRY ARACELY	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
FLOCKHART, KYLEE ANNE	SOCIAL WORKER I	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
GARZA, XYANYA NADINE	STAFF SPECIALIST	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
GONZALEZ, HECTOR MANUEL	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
GUERRERO, JAVIER	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
GUTIERREZ, SAMANTHA MEGAN	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
HILL, ELVIA MESTA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
HOANG, STACEY YOO	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
KIM, LAURA GOEUN	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
LAM, DUSTIN TRUNG	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
NELSON, BRIAN AKIRA	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER I	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
NGUYEN, PHUONG-CHI	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
RIOS-FLORES, VERONICA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
RIVERA, KELLENY	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
RODRIGUEZ, DIANA AGLAE	SR. SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
ROMERO, JANESEA EILEEN	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
SALAZAR, LETICIA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
SALDIVAR, ALVARO	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
SALDIVAR, ERICA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
SAN, MALISA	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR II	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
SOTELO, LISA	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
TRAN, LYLAN PHAN	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS
ULLRICH, BROOKE ELIZABETH	SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
VALADEZ, EMMANUEL	SR. OFFICE SUPERVISOR (C/D)	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
VILLA, ELVIA Y	SR. SOCIAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
WHITMORE, CARMEN MICHELLE	SR. SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
ZIEMKE, AMY HAYDEN	ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISOR	ASSISANCE PROGRAMS

## 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 recognize the recent passing of a former SSA employee. Please keep her family and friends in your thoughts during this difficult time.



**Emy Hillhouse, former Senior Social Services Supervisor/ Children & Family Services**

## COVID-19 RESOURCES

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has developed several helpful resources for the community to address concerns regarding COVID-19. For the latest updates and information on COVID-19, please visit HCA's website at [occovid19.ochealthinfo.com](http://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com). For questions, call HCA's Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. For a repository of all SSA communications related to COVID-19, visit the Community and Government Relations Sharepoint page by clicking [here](#).

**COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Channels**

Different Ways to Get COVID-19 Vaccine When It's Your Turn

ochealth CARE AGENCY

The graphic features a blue background with a white circular icon containing a tree diagram. To the right, a person in a blue mask and gloves is shown administering a vaccine into a person's arm.

**NEW** ochealth CARE AGENCY

**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](mailto:Eteam@ochca.com).

[www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus](http://www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus)

@ochealth @ochealthinfo ochealthinfo

The graphic shows a smiling woman wearing a headset, representing a customer service representative.

LATEST NEWS

**SIGN UP**

COVID 19 Vaccine **for our COVID-19 Vaccine Newsletter**

ochealth CARE AGENCY

The graphic features a blue background with a white bottle of COVID-19 vaccine and a laptop keyboard.

**What you feel is real**

ochealth CARE AGENCY BeWell

The graphic shows a close-up of a person's face and a dog's face, with the text "What you feel is real" overlaid.

## CONNECT WITH US!

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