

# OCSSA TODAY

## RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN ORANGE COUNTY



On December 13, 2016, the Orange County Board of Supervisors authorized SSA to submit a proposed plan to the State of California to implement the pilot phase of the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). This Program allows elderly, disabled and homeless CalFresh recipients and their spouse to use their Golden State Advantage (EBT) card to purchase prepared meals from participating restaurants in the cities of Santa Ana and

Anaheim. RMP offers meal options for eligible CalFresh recipients who may not be able to prepare meals, have a place to store and cook meals, and/or have access to a grocery store.

The pilot phase of the RMP officially launched in Orange County on February 1, 2018 at participating restaurants in the cities of Anaheim and Santa Ana. Orange County became the ninth county in California to offer this program to eligible participants. We continue to recruit restaurants located in Anaheim and Santa Ana to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) in order to further enhance accessibility of the program. To learn more about the Restaurant Meals Program, please visit this [website](#).

## MARCH IS NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH



**SOCIAL WORKERS**  
leaders. advocates. champions.

March is designated as National Social Work Month. Social Workers exemplify excellence in community service and their positive effort establishes a lasting contribution to the County of Orange and its residents. At SSA, our Social Workers provide a high level of service to our clients through many of our programs. Please join SSA's leadership in recognizing the efforts of this group of dedicated individuals and thank them for the incredible and inspirational work they do to assist the residents of our county.

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# SSA SPOTLIGHT: EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE

## Centralized Operations Warehouse Team



Pictured from left to right: Alex Gurrola, David Anguiano, Robert Macias, Marcos Lopez, David Avila, Cris Rodriguez and Greg Reyes. Not pictured: Simeon Fuentes, Fernando Arteaga, Albert Garza, Eduardo Gallegos and Alex Caudillo.

Have you ever found yourself in any of these situations?

- My desk just fell apart! My file drawer is stuck! My chair broke! *What do I do now?!*
- Our event is coming up! *Where will everyone sit?!*
- This lease is ending, staff needs to move to the new location! *How are we going to make that work?!*

"Who you gonna call?" The SSA Centralized Operations Warehouse Team!

The Warehouse Team is part of SSA's Centralized Operations, located at 1505 E. Warner Ave in Santa Ana. This team operates out of a 90,000 square foot warehouse which houses hundreds of pieces of office furniture and equipment, surplus, e-waste, forms and office supplies, emergency supplies, the Mobile Response Vehicle (MRV), as well as Operation Santa Claus and Senior Santa & Friends. The Warehouse team is always ready to support and serve all SSA divisions.

Our drivers travel many miles each day picking up and delivering US Postal Service and pony mail to SSA offices and other County agencies such as the Health Care Agency (HCA), OC Animal Care and County Correctional Facilities. Utilizing surplus inventory, the team also collaborates with other county agencies like the Sheriff's Department, Probation, OC Animal Care, HCA, Orange County Public Works and District Attorney to assist them in obtaining necessary office furniture. When you need to set up a community outreach event, have toys, gifts or purchase orders delivered, or need ergonomic office modifications, SSA's Warehouse Team is able to do it all professionally and efficiently.

No job is too small or too big, from replacing pencil trays and keyboards to moving entire offices and reconfiguring cubicles and furniture in new locations; the Centralized Operations Warehouse team has it covered! The team receives, assigns and tracks all requests through the OC Expediter system.

Some of the tasks performed by this team provide an essential part of SSA's support to our community. Warehouse staff assisted a Senior Santa & Friends client who was insulin dependent and required refrigeration for their medication. The team delivered and completed the installation of the brand new refrigerator and also hauled away the client's old one to better serve his needs. The team also provided logistical support in setting up for the "Be the One" press conference which was held at the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC) in May 2017. This event raised awareness of child sex trafficking in Orange County. And, every week, the team supports The Courtyard homeless outreach by deploying the MRV onsite and providing set up and breakdown of the mobile offices for eligibility staff.

The SSA Centralized Operations Warehouse Team is always willing and able to lend a helping hand. Their professionalism and friendliness do not go unnoticed!

**Congratulations to the Centralized Operations Warehouse Team for all of the great work you do and for being recognized as the SSA Spotlight: Excellence in Service team for February 2018!**

# SHARE YOUR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY WITH US!



Did you return to college as a full-time employee? What were the challenges and how did you handle them? We want your stories of success!

We want to celebrate you and demonstrate to others that it is possible to balance work and life while completing one's higher education. We want to hear from you about how you balanced work and life while attending school to further your education. You are invited to submit a short paragraph or two about your experience to [Training Partner Inquires/Updates](#).

Stories may be published on the SSA Intranet and in the SSA Today Newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you!

## THE "WE CAN" COALITION

SSA launched the Working to End Child Abuse and Neglect (WE CAN) Coalition in January 2016. Led by SSA's Medical Director, Dr. Anne Light, WE CAN is a coalition of over 60 agencies and 100 programs and partnerships across Orange County, working toward the common goal of preventing child abuse and neglect. Through WE CAN, nine task forces are currently addressing the needs of children, families and the community in order to prevent, diagnose and treat child abuse and neglect and related issues across the county.



Since that time, the WE CAN Coalition has accomplished numerous things to help children in Orange County. They helped launch medical services at SSA's Child Abuse Services Team (CAST). They also developed and supported the opening of Orange County's first Physical Abuse and Neglect Diagnosis and Assessment (PANDA) Clinic, hosted by the Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC). The PANDA Clinic includes a team of medical, psychological, and case management staff able to assess and manage difficult or complicated child abuse and/or neglect cases.

WE CAN has also created a secure portal to share protected data across the County of Orange Sheriff's Department, Probation Department, Health Care Agency and Social Services Agency and collated data to examine the intersection of substance use and child welfare. This project was chosen as a case study by the 2017 Association of State and Territorial Health Officers. Additionally, WE CAN developed a multidisciplinary educational team and provided numerous trainings in child abuse diagnosis and management to a variety of professionals.

The WE CAN coalition continues to make great strides in connecting the medical community, child welfare professionals, and our service providers in order to enhance our system of care in Orange County. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact the SSA Medical Director, Dr. Anne Light, at (714) 541-7776.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFETY ORGANIZED PRACTICE

By Bob Abair, Administrative Manager I, Administrative Services Division



*Pictured from left to right front row: Phil Decter, Becki DeBont, Jennifer Jindrich, Kathleen Bridges, Nellie Hernandez, Polly Dagmy-Goff, Cynthia Barrientos, Anna Stempniak and Vanessa Montalvo. Back row: Scott Burdick, Jorge Cabrera, Bob Abair, Pete Swisher, Birute Ranes, Leslie Gould, Mark Boyce, Kristen Hunter, Mo Sapiga, Carlos Muñoz, Carmen McCorvey, Francisco "Paco" Perez, John Mannings, Khac Quy Nguyen and Sylvia Cordova.*

Safety Organized Practice (SOP) describes a collaborative approach to Child Welfare casework. It is a model that helps all parties who are involved with the child stay focused on assessing and enhancing child safety.

SOP was first introduced to Children and Family Services (CFS) in 2012. In 2013, 120 CFS Social Work/Supervisory staff were trained in SOP's 12 modules by the Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA).

In April 2016, full implementation of SOP was launched CFS-wide with the objective to integrate SOP skills and concepts into daily social work practice. SOP implementation is a collaborative effort between CFS and Training and Career Development (TCD) with the support from external Child Welfare partners the Casey Foundation and PCWTA. As of January 2018, SOP Module 5 was started and SOP Module 6, the last of the series, is projected to be completed by August 2018. This will complete the first phase of SOP Implementation training. The next phase will be sustaining SOP and aligning it to the CFS Core Practice Model.

On January 16th and 17th, 2018, CFS hosted Phil Decter, Interim Director of Child Welfare with National Council on Crime and Delinquency/Children's Research Center for two days of Safety Organized Practice Training. Also present were Becki DeBont and Jorge Cabrera from the Casey Foundation.

The SOP Training was titled "Supervising with Safety Organized Practice" and it was geared towards CFS Supervisors who learned how to bring SOP principles into their case conferences and meetings.

The SOP Leadership Team is made up of a group of SOP early adopters and champions (Supervisors and selected Senior Social Workers) from CFS and TCD who facilitated and designed the trainings, curriculum and eLearns in their program. The SOP Leadership Team is supported by three managers from TCD and CFS.

Through the SOP Leadership Team's efforts, four of the six SOP modules have been completed with an average of 600 staff being trained per module. SOP concepts such as Harm and Danger Statements, Safety Goals and Family Mapping have been integrated into court reports and other CFS documentation.

The Training and Facilitation phase is almost complete, but the SOP journey will continue on and be a part of CFS Social Work practice for years to come, thanks to the efforts of all of those involved.

**"SOP was first introduced to Children and Family Services in 2012. In 2013, 120 CFS Social Work/Supervisory staff were trained in SOP's 12 modules by the Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA)."**

**"Through the SOP Leadership Team's efforts, four of the six SOP modules have been completed with an average of 600 staff being trained per module."**

# WHAT IS CALWORKS 2.0?



*Pictured from left to right: Mayra Chavarria, Denise Beas, Rosa Palacios, Nia Jones, Carol Salazar, Angela Perez, Valerie Gribshaw, Annette Nieves, Elvia Hill and Phillippe Moreno.*

In partnership with Mathematica Policy and Research, CalWORKs 2.0 is part of the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) effort to assist California's most vulnerable families by using a goal-achievement service delivery framework.

Per CWDA: "California counties have partnered with Mathematica Policy Research, on a multi-year project that will help create the CalWORKs of the future – CalWORKs

2.0, while also clarifying and simplifying the program as it exists within today's regulatory framework. This innovative, creative project will build knowledge, focus on improving program quality, efficiency, and effectiveness, and help with immediate policy and program decision-making while building the capacity for continual improvement."

The vision of CalWORKs 2.0 is to "Clarify. Simplify. Unify" and to get everyone on the same page about the priorities to help CalWORKs families. The goal is that CalWORKs 2.0 will make it easier for individuals to understand program requirements, forms will be easier for staff to complete, and available tools will better assist staff in monitoring client/case progress. Mathematica Policy and Research has been working collaboratively with the Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (FSS & AS) division by providing staff the opportunity to pilot the program and share their feedback about CalWORKs 2.0 development. Pictured are frontline FSS & AS staff who are previewing aspects of CalWORKs 2.0 with their peers and clients and providing their input and expertise. SSA will be rolling out CalWORKs 2.0 in summer 2018. Stay tuned for more information.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RECENT FOSTER CARE INTENSIVE INDUCTION TRAINING CLASS



SSA's latest class of the the Foster Care Program's Intensive Induction Training concluded on January 26, 2018. This three week course has prepared the staff to provide services and benefits to foster and adoptive families through the avenue of the Foster Care programs. Way to go!

***Pictured from left to right top row: Nancy Ahlers, Ivette Jaime and Roberta Gardea. Bottom: Sherry De Hoog and David Nguyen.***

# FACILITY CONSOLIDATION CREATES THE NEW CYPRESS REGIONAL CENTER

By Brittany Davis, Staff Specialist, Administrative Services Division



*Pictured: Cypress Regional Center.*

At its most robust real estate portfolio, the Social Services Agency (SSA) maintained twenty office locations to provide services to clients throughout the County of Orange. This real estate portfolio includes a combination of owned and leased facilities. In collaboration with CEO/Real Estate, SSA began to look more strategically at its real estate footprint to ensure the ability to continue providing responsive services to the community while maximizing the use of our assets, minimizing costs and more effectively managing our facility needs.

When a facility's lease is near its end, the Facilities and Emergency Management Services Team, in partnership with CEO/Real Estate and in consultation with program management and approval of the executive team, determines if it should either renegotiate a

new lease with that facility, find another facility or allow the lease to end. The leases both at Sand Dollar and Cypress Regional Center (previously known as CalWORKs West) were ending in 2017 and presented an opportunity for SSA to realize its goal to review its entire portfolio strategically.

After months of extensive review, it was determined that the consolidation of services into the Cypress Regional Center (CRC) and the closure of Sand Dollar was the most prudent and strategic option for our agency. This option would create a new regional center which would provide multiple services to customers at one location. To facilitate this goal, there needed to be a coordinated effort to redeploy staff from Sand Dollar to three different buildings: CalWORKs West, CalWORKs North/Anaheim Regional Center (ARC) and Garden Grove Regional Center.

The County was able to negotiate a rate reduction of 31 percent for CRC and create savings of \$470,000 annually while maintaining the same amount of space. In addition, the County negotiated a Tenant Improvement (TI) allowance of \$1.4 million—fully funded by the building owner. The TI allowance included modernizing and improving the facility to accommodate the expanded use and needs of the agency. The CRC TI consisted of building a suite designated for 27 interview stations, new carpet, painting, remodeling restrooms, building four hard wall offices, building a new reception window for the increased volume of clients, adding seating in the lobby, new exterior building signage, building additional conference rooms and a Personal Computer (PC) lab, and adding electrical and data cabling for the additional workstations. Based on current business needs and to more productively use available space, CRC was reconfigured to add over 100 workstations. In addition to the savings from CRC, the closure of Sand Dollar allowed the County to reduce its annual lease payments by another \$1.3 million. These savings will be reinvested into SSA's staff and operations for anticipated growth in salaries, increased employee benefits and other increased costs of doing business.

During the construction phase, many staff had to be temporarily relocated. The Children and Family Services (CFS) team that occupies CRC was temporarily relocated to Eckhoff, while Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services (FSS & AS) staff remained on site working in PC labs and conference rooms that were modified to create temporary workstations. FSS & AS added the cities of La Palma and Buena Park to their service area for CalWORKs benefits at CRC and Assistance Programs (AP) relocated approximately 100 staff to CRC to offer Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits at this site.

The Facilities and Emergency Management Services Team also planned the movement of staff from Sand Dollar to ARC by consolidating space and creating additional workstations utilizing existing furniture from Sand Dollar. Everything needed to happen before January 31, 2018 when the lease officially terminated. Despite the holidays, Sand Dollar was vacated six days ahead of schedule.

SSA successfully completed these large projects with limited time thanks in large part to the successful collaboration across the Agency and with external partners. Furthermore, Facilities and Emergency Management Services would like to thank all the staff affected by the moves, reorganization and construction for their flexibility and cooperation.

# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



## Wendy Flores, Senior Social Worker (SSW), Children and Family Services

SSW Wendy Flores recently received these kinds words of appreciation from a court program supervisor for her work:

*"The employee is a mover and shaker. She has assisted two different workers in court programs and I believe it was on her own initiative. Wendy is definitely a team player and is working to make sure Orangewood Children and Family Center's population goes down. Wendy you are truly appreciated. Thank you for all your help."*

## Phi Phi Thai, Eligibility Supervisor (ES), Assistance Programs

ES Phi Phi Thai recently received these kind words of gratitude from a client as re-told by her supervisor, Social Services Supervisor I Luis Vasquez:

"A customer was very excited to say that your customer service today was fabulous. She went on to say that, *"you went beyond the call of duty"* and was amazed at your thoroughness and expertise on the subject matter. She finished by saying *"This is how you treat people."*

Thank you for your great customer service!



## Silvia Lopez, Social Worker II (SWII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services

SWII Silvia Lopez recently received this letter of appreciation from a grateful Welfare-to-Work (WTW) client:

*"I just wanted to recognize Silvia Lopez for her outstanding work. I have received Social Services assistance from several Counties and never had a worker as great as her. I applied for benefits in the beginning of September and was wanting to do the WTW program.*

*Once I was reassigned to Silvia, she has always been so helpful without hesitation. She is always quick to respond and gets things done in a timely manner. She goes above and beyond the call of duty. She has been a true pleasure. She has made it so much easier to do what I needed to do in order to become self-sufficient. She has been my worker for less than a month, and has given me the services and support I needed. I am now employed, and no longer homeless (my family and I are finally in a shelter). I cannot thank her enough and appreciate her so much."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



## **Selene Estrada-Villela, Senior Social Worker (SSW), Children and Family Services**

Congratulations to SSW Selene Estrada-Villela who was recently recognized as the CFS Employee of the Month for January. Here is an example of Selene's selfless work:

*"This difficult case took almost 7 months to resolve and involved 5 children who were victims of extreme abuse. As we approached the hearing date, Selene's dedication and genuine concern for the children's wellbeing was evident by her close teaming with County Counsel to advocate on behalf of the children's best interest, including taking the time on weekends to evaluate opposing counsel's evidence. On several occasions, I would come to work on Monday and have an email that Selene had sent to County Counsel refuting opposing counsel's evidence. Selene also went out of her way to go to Operation Santa Claus to make sure the children had a wonderful Christmas. What sets Selene*

*apart is her honesty, moral principles and moral uprightness which the dictionary defines as INTEGRITY."*

## **Gino Barzotti, Eligibility Technician (ET), Assistance Programs (Not Pictured)**

ET Gino Barzotti recently received these kind words of gratitude from a client as re-told by his supervisor, Eligibility Supervisor Florence Puente:

*"A customer called and wanted to be sure that Gino was recognized for his excellent service. He stated that Gino was a great help, that he made the call easy, and that he relieved a lot of stress from his family! Great job serving our community, Gino!"*

*Thank You*

## **Rosalva Garcia, Senior Social Worker (SSW), Children and Family Services**

SSW Rosalva Garcia recently received these kind words of appreciation from Nila Pacheco of Our Small World Foster Family Agency:

*"I have worked with SSA SSWs for 2 1/2 years and Rosalva has been a great pleasure to work with. Her time, dedication, and communication with me for our mutual client is way above anyone I have ever worked with. Rosalva is exemplary of what a good Social Worker is and a real team-player. Rosalva has always made sure we are on the same page, that I am up-to-date with the facts, and responds very promptly to my calls and emails. If there is an award to give anyone, it is her as she truly deserves to be recognized for all of her hard work."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



## **Angela Perez, Social Worker II (SWII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SWII Angela Perez recently received this letter of gratitude from an appreciative Welfare-to-Work (WTW) client:

*"I wanted to express my appreciation and gratitude to my Case Manager Angela Perez. Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself. In my toughest times, I looked forward to our meetings. I was not just a case number to you, and I will always keep that with me! In your own battles and trials, I never saw a grumpy side of you! You were always there being the best that you could be. There are really no words that I can say that will express how blessed I am to have someone like you. You are a legend. Thank you for your support. Thank you!"*

## **Tomas Garcia, Eligibility Technician (ET), Assistance Programs (Not pictured)**

ET Tomas Garcia recently received this letter of appreciation from the sibling of a grateful client:

*"The reason for my letter is to advise you of Mr. Garcia's excellent work ethic. Since he has been the worker for my sister's case, anytime I have called him with a concern over paperwork, he has been helpful and explains procedures in a detailed manner so that I am able to understand. I just wanted to express my appreciation for the way Mr. Garcia has handled my sister's case. I realize he must have many other cases that he handles and a heavy workload, yet he showed patience in answering any questions that I asked of him and he worked on my sister's case in a timely manner. I wanted you to be aware of what a good employee you have in Mr. Tomas Garcia!"*

## **Lorena Zavala, Social Worker II (SWII), Family Self-Sufficiency & Adult Services**

SWII Lorena Zavala recently received this letter from a grateful client:

*"I would like to thank you for the invaluable support you provided to me during my recent job and career search. Throughout the second half of last year, you've assisted in providing me the support I needed. From the beginning, you've been informative, polite and acting with the right intentions within your guidelines. When I began this search, I had very little idea how this was all going to turn out for me and my family – or especially, how to discover new job opportunities. The information and advice you gave made all the difference in helping me regain focus on my job but more so my career. I'm happy to report that I have started school at The University of California Irvine and I am on my way to getting my Paralegal Certification. Again, thank you so very much. I greatly appreciate your generosity."*



# BEYOND THE CALL: EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE IN ACTION



## Javier Peña, Systems Technician II, Administrative Services Division

Systems Technician II Javier Peña recently received these kind words of appreciation about his excellent customer service:

*"Javier Peña from IT was very patient and was able to clearly identify the printer problem we had been experiencing. He came early when things are not as hectic to work on getting us set up and to explain the solution.*

*I know that with the upgrade to Windows 10, it has been very busy for the IT department and sometimes they are limited regarding time. Just wanted to extend the thank you for great customer service.*

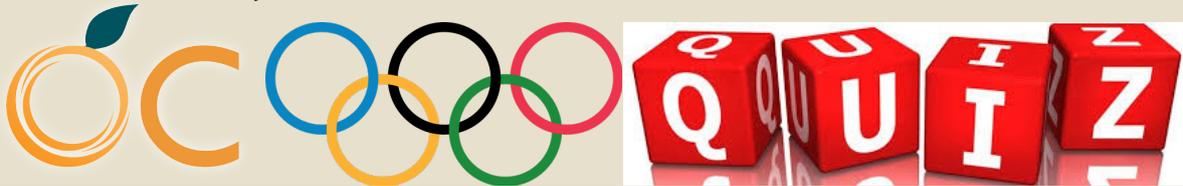
*Not only did Mr. Peña demonstrate a respectful attitude, he showed patience and ability to listen to find a solution. Javier is an exceptionally outstanding employee. Thank you so very much, Javier, for your help and especially your patience."*

# SSA TODAY QUIZ

We apologize, but due to some technical issues with the December 2017 SSA Today "Toys of the 80's" Quiz, we were unable to identify a winner. If you were one of the 13 individuals that answered all eight questions correctly, please email [ssatoday@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:ssatoday@ssa.ocgov.com) to be entered into a random drawing.

In honor of the 2018 Winter Olympics, this month's quiz is focused on present or former Olympians who are from Orange County. Entries that have all seven questions answered correctly will be entered into a random drawing and the SSA Today Newsletter Committee will randomly select one lucky winner. Good luck!

To take this month's SSA Today Quiz, [click here](#).



## SSA PROMOTIONS

Employee Name	Title	Division
CORDOVA, SYLVIA	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
MENDOZA, ERICA	GROUP COUNSELOR II	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
MESDARY, JULIANNE	SOCIAL WORKER I	FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY & ADULT SERVICES
NGUYEN, TIFFANY	SENIOR SOCIAL WORKER	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
RAMIREZ, STEPHANIE	SECRETARY I	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

# SSA EXECUTIVE MEET & GREETINGS

The SSA Executive Team looks forward to seeing you at your office this year at their annual Meet & Greet! To submit questions in advance of the Meet & Greet, please email the Executive Team at [directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:directorscorner@ssa.ocgov.com) and indicate which Meet & Greet you will be attending in your email. The first two Meet & Greet of 2018 have been scheduled:



MARCH 2018

Division	Location	Date	Time
Admin	HQ - 500 N State College Blvd. Orange 92868	3/6/2018	10:30 - 11:30 A.M.
CFS	OCFC - 401 The City Drive 92868	3/29/2018	1:30 - 2:30 P.M.

## IN MEMORIAM

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

**Jodie Dirden - Accounting Office Supervisor, Administrative Services Division, 37 years of service**

**Mary Jones - Administrative Manager III, Assistance Programs, 29 years of service**



## LOOKING TO PROMOTE?

Please click on the link below to see the list of current job openings within the County of Orange.

[www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oc](http://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/oc)



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