

# Headlines

## Stefany Martinez, Protecting Older Adults

**Meet the  
Newest SSPA's**

**Candy & David Hogan –  
Taking in Foster Teens**

**Amnesty for Your Pet**



## Now That's SMART Staff Development Announces New SMART Page



EHSD Staff Development is excited to announce the launch of our new SMART page. The same link for SMART on the EHSD intranet homepage will take you there.

*Note that our new SMART page will be complete a few days after we launch.*



### What you can do in SMART now that it's been launched:

- Take the **Orientation training(s)** found in the “**Featured Courses**” section on the homepage.
- Familiarize yourself with how to navigate.
- Follow through with Instructor-Led and Virtual Classes that you previously enrolled in.
- Find and enroll in any new Instructor-Led and Virtual Classes that are available.
- Take any EHSD Mandatory training that you are sure you did not complete in the past.
- Submit External Training... but **remember that it is ONE AND DONE because you cannot modify your External Training record after it has been submitted.** Do your External Training record entry only after you complete your college class, workshop, seminar, etc. **Be sure to have all your supporting documents scanned into a single PDF before starting to enter your ET record.** These two things are the major changes in the External Training Protocol.
- Your historical records will become available in SMART this month.

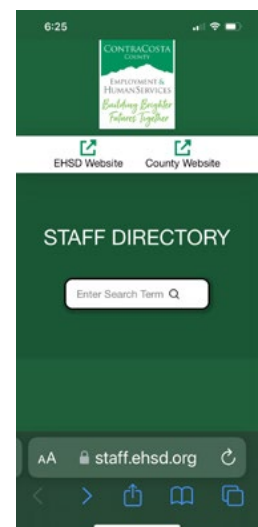
Contact Staff Development at (925) 608-4570 or email [smarthelp@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:smarthelp@ehsd.cccounty.us) with any questions.

## It's Back! New EHSD Mobile Directory to Find Your Coworkers

By Bruce Milani, Division Manager, EHSD IT

We are excited to announce the launch of the new Mobile Employee Directory, which replaced the existing directory for EHSD-issued devices. On May 21<sup>st</sup> the new Mobile Employee Directory was automatically installed on EHSD cell phones. The updated directory is now accessible remotely.

**If you encounter any difficulties or have questions, please contact the EHSD Help Desk at (925) 521-7200.**



## Runaway Pet? Take Advantage of June License Amnesty

Those loud explosions, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, could cause your pet to run away from home. “The 4th of July sees more pets becoming lost than any other time of the year,” said Ben Winkleblack, Director of Contra Costa Animal Services. “Licensing your pet can be the difference between losing your pet and getting them back, so there’s no better time to offer this program to help people protect their pets.”

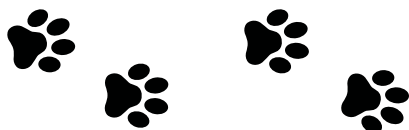
Contra Costa Animal Services (CCAS) is offering a License Amnesty Program this June to help county residents protect their pets in advance of the 4th of July holiday. During the month of June, county residents who have overdue animal licenses, or who have never licensed their pets, will have all late and penalty fees waived. Pet owners who take advantage of the License Amnesty Program will also receive a free designer license tag equipped with 24/7 lost pet protection services, adding an additional layer of protection to ensure their pets find their way home if they ever become lost.

Contra Costa County residents are required by law to license owned dogs that are over four months of age. While not required, Contra Costa Animal Services recommends licensing of owned cats that are allowed outdoors. Licenses can be purchased online at CCAS’s website: [www.ccasd.org](http://www.ccasd.org).

### License fees are as follows:

- 1 yr. license for altered pet – \$25
- 1 yr. license for unaltered pet – \$65
- 3 yr. license for altered pet – \$60
- 3 yr. license for unaltered pet – \$180
- Military veterans and senior citizens over 65 years of age – Free for first pet, if altered

CCAS partners with Docupet to provide pet licensing services for Contra Costa County residents. Through our partnership with DocuPet, Contra Costa County residents with licensed pets have access to an array of additional free services to keep their pets safe. **For more information, visit [www.ccasd.org](http://www.ccasd.org).**



**More pets get lost on the 4th of July than any other time of the year.**



**If you could do one thing to keep your pet safe, would you?**

**LICENSE YOUR PET!**

**Always know where your pet is when you license through Contra Costa Animal Services.**

License your pet during our limited-time **June Amnesty Program!**



Ensure their safety, avoid late fees, and get a free smart tag with 24/7 lost pet services.

Don't miss out—act now to protect your pet!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

\*offer valid for Contra Costa Residents Only



## Outreach Roundup

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Veterans Job and Resource Fair

This year's outdoor event was on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill. It was an opportunity to share many programs and services that are available to our Veterans. These include housing, education, employment, legal, counseling, and general assistance. Navigators **Susan Padan** and **Casey Costa** staffed the event offering insight and support to those who have served our country.



Susan Padan and Casey Costa

### Pittsburg Senior Center Health and Resource Fair

4 Our Families Navigators **Susan Padan** and **Al Gibson** attended the Cinco De Mayo themed event on Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. It was a vibrant and lively celebration that brought together healthcare vendors offering an array of services including blood pressure checks, exercise sessions, hula demonstrations, light massages, entertainment, and DJ music.

Susan and Al offered essential resources specifically geared towards seniors, ensuring access to vital information and support services to assist them and enhance their quality of life.

Our Navigators' presence helped bridge the gap between seniors and services, contributing to the overall success of the fair and the well-being of the attendees.



Susan Padan and Al Gibson

### Empowering YOU: Teen Health & Wellness Fair

On Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup>, The Empowering YOU: Teen Health & Wellness Fair featured over 35 vendors, offering a variety of resources, activities, and information to teenagers and young mothers. The fair at the Marina Community Center in Pittsburg was comprehensive in promoting teen health education and providing critical support to the community. **Natalie Aguilar** and **Al Gibson**, 4 Our Families Navigators, exemplified their commitment to empowering youth and their families by connecting them with necessary resources to thrive.



Natalie Aguilar, SSPA and Navigator Al Gibson

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# Outreach Roundup

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## Spring Resource Fairs Are in Full Bloom!

Every year, since 1963, the nation observes Older Americans Month in May. In Contra Costa County, there were a variety of events to celebrate Older Americans Month and honor older adults' contributions to our communities. The Information & Assistance (I&A) program participated in five of these community events to hand out resource information, answer questions, and help seniors connect with local services that support their well-being and independence. The I&A workers and the events they participated in: **Teresa Gonzalez** at Hercules Senior Center's Spring into Wellness Fair, Rosalinda Camacho at Pittsburg Senior



**Teresa Gonzalez**, I&A Social Worker, AAS, at Hercules Senior Center's Spring into Wellness Fair.



**Juanita Harden Lee**, I&A Social Worker, AAS, at Pleasant Hill Senior Center's Laugh, Love & Learn Resource Fair.

Center's Health & Resource Fair, **Juanita Lee Harden** at Pleasant Hill Senior Center's Laugh, Love & Learn Resource Fair, **Nhang Luong** at City of Richmond's 40th Annual Senior Information Health Faire, and **Eve Quezon** at Oakley Senior Center's Resource Fair.



**Nhang Luong**, I&A Program/Projects Coordinator, AAS, with an attendee at City of Richmond's 40th Annual Senior Information Health Faire.

## Mental Health Event

On May 15, 2024, **Casey Costa** and **Natalie Aguilar** from 4 Our Families attended a Mental Health Event at Pittsburg High School. At the event, they connected with high school students and shared important information about community resources. This event was a great opportunity for students to learn about how to take care of their mental health and where to get help if they need it.



**Natalie Aguilar**, SSPA and **Casey Costa**, SSPA

Casey and Natalie talked to many students and explained how 4 Our Families can assist them. They provided brochures and answered questions about mental health services, counseling, and other community resource programs. The goal of the event was to make sure students knew they were not alone and had people they could turn to for help. Thanks to Casey and Natalie, many students left the event feeling more informed and supported.

## Clean Slate Event

On May 17, 2024, Clean Slate hosted an impactful event, which brought together a multitude of organizations dedicated to supporting individuals with criminal convictions. **Casey Costa** of District 3 and **Joanna Thieme** of District 5, both esteemed 4 Our Families Measure X Navigators, were in attendance, underscoring their commitment to community rehabilitation and support. The event provided a crucial platform for individuals seeking a fresh start, offering services that included

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# Outreach Roundup

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housing assistance, employment opportunities, and credit counseling. The presence of Costa and Thieme highlighted their dedication to connecting community members with the resources they need to rebuild their lives.

The Clean Slate Event was a testament to the power of collaboration and community support. Various organizations came together to offer a comprehensive range of services aimed at facilitating reintegration and reducing recidivism. Housing services addressed the urgent need for stable accommodations, while employment booths offered job placement and career counseling. Credit service representatives provided financial guidance to help individuals regain financial stability. The Measure X Navigators, represented by Costa and Thieme, played a pivotal role in connecting attendees with these essential resources, demonstrating their ongoing commitment to fostering resilience and providing second chances within their districts.



Joanna Thieme and Casey Costa

## Resource Family Fair

On the evening of May 30, 2024, **Al Gibson** and **Casey Costa** from 4 Our Families attended the Resource Fair at Marsh Elementary School in Antioch. As navigators, Al and Casey help families find the support and resources they need. At the fair, they set up a table with brochures and information about different programs that can help students and their families.

Al and Casey talked to many parents and students during the event. They explained how 4 Our Families can assist with things like housing, healthcare, food, transportation, childcare, employment, counseling, mental health services, senior services, disability, immigration and other support programs. The goal was to make sure families knew about the resources available to them and how to get help when needed. Thanks to Al and Casey, many families left the fair feeling more informed and supported.



Al Gibson and Casey Costa

*Building Brighter Futures Together*

One Stop for Your County Service Needs

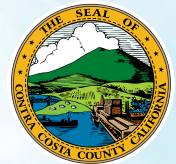
2024 Summer  
Contra Costa County  
**BLOCK PARTY**

In collaboration with the City of Richmond

**Thursday, June 27 • 4 to 7 p.m.**  
**Civic Center Plaza • Richmond**  
(27th and Nevin Street)



County Services ■ Fun Activities  
**FREE ADMISSION**



## Your Table at the Contra Costa County Block Party Awaits!

The 2024 event is on Thursday, June 27th, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Civic Center Plaza in Richmond.

Registration is now open. [Sign up to participate](#) by Friday, June 14th.

This is a chance to reconnect with residents in West County and provide services and information to our community members. Check with your bureau director about participating with your EHSD program, or plan to attend!

Our goal is to show the availability and accessibility of our County programs.

[Register HERE](#)

We look forward to seeing all our County departments in Richmond!

## Stefany Martinez Sees It All Elder Abuse Trends in Contra Costa County

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

Elder & Dependent  
Adult Abuse  
Awareness  
Month

There are several types of elder abuse: physical, emotional, sexual, neglect (or abandonment) and financial exploitation. But **Stefany Martinez**, with Adult Protective Services (APS), says she's been seeing an uptick in two types of abuse over the past year: financial abuse and neglect.

"These scammers are using artificial intelligence (AI) to deceive people which makes the elderly easy targets," says Stefany. AI makes it possible to clone the voices of loved ones and even mimic video clips to seem like a loved one is video chatting with you. Scammers pretending to be a loved one in trouble can trick people into sending money, gift cards, or other forms of currency, believing that they are helping. "When elderly people are neglected or alone, it makes them even more vulnerable. That's why I encourage people to check in on their elderly family members or neighbors on a regular basis," says Stefany.

These trends can be traced back to the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies show older adults experienced amplified risks of abuse and neglect, as well as novel risks involving

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## Stefany Martinez Sees It All Elder Abuse Trends in Contra Costa County

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cybercrime and remote technologies in health and social care.

The pandemic led to social isolation and limited access to health services for older adults, exacerbating their vulnerability.

**CLICK** on the play button to watch the full interview with Stefany Martinez.

**Elder & Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month**



Stefany Martinez convinces an elderly woman to move out of her dilapidated trailer and introduces her to programs that will provide her with healthcare and food. **CLICK** on the play button to watch an interview with Stefany.



After work, Stefany comes home to her three pugs, Buggy, Otis, and Roxy. Buggy and Otis were the winners of EHSD's first-ever Halloween Pet Parade and they are now 11 years old. We featured them on the cover of the November 2020 edition of *Headlines*. Roxy joined the family later and now she keeps the award-winning pugs on their toes!

*Building Brighter Futures Together*

# Eligibility Training Unit Graduates Take on Assignments

By Leilani Lunch, EHSD Staff Development

A cohort of new EHSD staff members recently completed CalFresh/Medi-Cal Training. These workers were hired in January of this year and graduated from the Eligibility Training Unit on May 24th.

While eight of these new Social Services Program Assistants (SSPA I's) will head out to West and Central County Intake and General Assistance (GA) District Offices, five of the trainees will continue training for CalWORKs Field Crossover. If you see them in your office, be sure to say hello and welcome to EHSD!



Back row (L-R): Sandra Cross, Ennicia Smith, Selene Calderon Perez, Oriana Carney-Dunn, Erik Tunaes, Kelsey Entwistle, Massiel Angulo, Stephanie Navarro, Kathya Lipson  
Front row (L-R): Anai Rojas, Ashley Avie, Cynthia Ramos, Tammy Allen



## CSB Recruitment Takes the Spotlight! Marketing Blitz Features \$6,000 Hiring Bonus

By Larena Baldazo, Web Producer, Community Relations/Media

In a true effort of commitment and collaboration, Community Relations/Media helped launch an ad campaign highlighting a Community Service Bureau (CSB) career fair and Early Childhood Educator positions.



The campaign focused on print and digital ads spanning from mid-January to April 1, 2024. The Facebook and Instagram ads generated 163.6k impressions and 8,155 clicks to the County’s Early Childhood Educator job posting webpage.

Additionally, print, web and email ads were placed in The Press highlighting CSB’s Career Fair in Brentwood, which generated 80,785 impressions! Even more engagement with the community came through leveraging social media posts on Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor and X.

Once the campaigns wrapped up, CSB’s **Amy Wells** confirmed that 28 new hires were brought on board. Community Relations is working to repeat this success by promoting the most recent Site Supervisor job openings as well.

“Our recruitment efforts have generated a buzz as we have seen an increase in applications for permanent and sub staff,” says Amy Wells, CSB Division Manager. “We tailored our efforts towards reaching the largest audience and the data shows that social media platforms offer high visibility.”



Snapshot of the ad preview, which launched on Facebook and Instagram from January to the beginning of April.

If you’re on the road or on BART in the coming weeks, you can see how this outreach has expanded to billboards on Highway 80 in West County and Highway 680 North in Central County, and BART station ads in Richmond and El Cerrito.

Print and digital billboards along Highway 80 and 680 North! In addition to these billboards, we have several posters displayed at the Richmond, El Cerrito Del Norte, and El Cerrito Plaza BART stations.



Billboard currently on 680 North, near the North Main exit.

The Community Relations/Media team thanks **Amy Wells, M.J. Robb** and **Scott Thompson** for this successful collaboration.



BART ads have placement where our biggest recruitment needs are – West County!

## Hometown PRIDE in Contra Costa *June is PRIDE month!*

By Laura Locke, Contributor, Community Relations/Media

While NYC & San Francisco traditionally host the largest U.S. PRIDE extravaganzas drawing millions of attendees every year, increasingly, smaller metro areas and suburbs are hosting their own celebrations.

The rise of satellite PRIDE events nationwide signals wider societal acceptance of different lifestyles and identities, as well as a very practical nod to holding commemorative events where most Americans live and work.

In recent years, for example, we have seen new parade routes and hyper-local PRIDE festivities spring up across Contra Costa and other Bay Area suburbs.

Notably, this year, U.S. Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (CA-10th District), will keynote [Clayton PRIDE](#) on the importance of acceptance and advocacy. “Clayton Marches with Pride, Stands With Love” is the theme for the city’s 3rd annual event, Contra Costa’s biggest PRIDE celebration, featuring a parade, decorative floats, face painting, a student poetry slam, local food vendors, and arts & crafts.

[Richmond](#), meanwhile, is celebrating its 10th PRIDE at Civic Center Plaza downtown. It’s the longest-running event of its kind in Contra Costa. “A Decade in Unity and Community” is the theme for this year’s event, which will be a “walking” parade from Nicholl Park up 26th Street to Civic Center. Richmond Rainbow Pride organizes the annual march, which was created in 2014, when Councilmember Jovanka Beckles was targeted with repeated hate speech during elections for being an out Lesbian.



[Walnut Creek](#) has a grab-bag of LGBTQIA+ events this month, including a flag, block- and print-making workshop on June 15th; a PRIDE pool party at Larkey Park; and for kids there’s a Drag Queen Storytime + Crafts event at Civic Park Community Center on June 1st from 11am to noon.

[Read With Pride](#) is yet another way to celebrate our diverse & inclusive community through new queer titles for adults, teens, and children, plus a series of LIVE events at Contra Costa County libraries, including:

**June 5 – Drag King Story Night in El Cerrito**

**June 7 – Moraga Library has a jewelry making workshop for teens & tweens (ages 12-18)**

**June 28 – Crockett Library PRIDE lunch and workshop on making your own “Rainbow Flower Crown” with fresh and silk flowers.**

No matter how you choose to enjoy this month’s PRIDE celebration, Contra Costa has considerable offerings for everyone ranging from loud and proud community parades to smaller and more informal gatherings. Note that some cities such as [Concord](#) and [Martinez](#) officially celebrate PRIDE at later dates. [Pinole](#) celebrates both PRIDE and Juneteenth on Sunday June 9th from 12 noon to 3pm.

Also, be sure to check out the [LGBTQIA+ Resources in Contra Costa County](#) on the County website.

*Building Brighter  
Futures Together*

# Creating Creative Spaces

By Alice M. Dietrich, Division Manager, Medi-Cal and CalFresh Service Center

Creativity is flowing at Cavallo where staff can create displays to share. **Jennifer Miller** created a “Zen Den,” a pod with puzzles, colored pencils and mandala prints, and a mini Zen Garden. Anyone can stop by on their break to do a puzzle piece or get in the zone by coloring. We encourage more contributions, so staff are welcome to add a puzzle, art project or other activity to the pod by contacting **Jenn Miller** ([jmiller1@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:jmiller1@ehsd.cccounty.us)).

During May, two staff members created displays

at Cavallo. **Evette Thomas** created a *May the Fourth Be with You* entrance door, which is colorful and fun! **Jennifer Diego** created an armed forces honor wall where everyone can post pictures of their family who is serving.

It’s a unique way to learn about our team members and very inspirational to see the pictures and information the MCSC team shares. It is lots of fun and something all can enjoy.



MCSC Staff created a wall to share about their family members who are serving or who have served in the armed forces.

*Building Brighter Futures Together*



An MCSC unit created a “May the Force Be With You” threshold for May 4th

# Juneteenth Gains Traction in Contra Costa

By Laura Locke, Contributor, Community Relations/Media

On June 19th we celebrate Juneteenth, our newest national holiday and a commemoration that is fast gaining traction in Contra Costa County. Many of our cities are marking the occasion with events, including Brentwood, Antioch, Martinez, Richmond and Pleasant Hill.

“Juneteenth,” a play on “June” and “nineteenth,” signifies the final days of American slavery and the end of the Civil War. To be clear, **Juneteenth** was not the actual day slavery ended, but it signaled the ugliest, most brutal chapter in American history was on the way out.

The Civil War ended about two months before Juneteenth in 1865 when Confederate soldiers surrendered.

Specifically, June 19, 1865, refers to the day when 250,000 enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas learned from the Union Army they had been freed – more than two years after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery in the Confederacy in 1863. It was the ratification of the **13th Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution on Dec 6, 1865 which formally ended chattel slavery and involuntary servitude throughout the entire country.



Black Americans have been celebrating independence on **Emancipation Day** for generations. Annual festivities began first in Texas in 1866, and later spread to Northern and Western states as people migrated, bringing their culture and traditions with them.

Like much of Black history, however, Juneteenth hasn't typically been taught  
*Continued on next page*

## Juneteenth Celebrations in Contra Costa County

### Pinole

2nd Annual Pinole Pride & Juneteenth Celebration  
Sunday, June 9, 12 noon to 3 p.m.  
Fernandez Park

### Oakley

2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration  
Saturday, June 15, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Civic Center Plaza

### Antioch

3rd Annual Juneteenth: A Freedom Celebration  
Saturday June 16, 12 noon to 5 p.m.  
Williamson Ranch Park

### Pleasant Hill

2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration  
Wednesday, June 19, 5 to 9 p.m. Lake at City Hall

### Brentwood

Inaugural Juneteenth Celebration  
Wednesday, June 19, 4 to 8 p.m.  
Brentwood City Park

### Richmond

Juneteenth Parade & Festival  
Saturday June 22, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Nicholl Park

### Concord

2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration  
Saturday, June 23, 12 noon to 4 p.m.  
Todos Santos Plaza  
2175 Willow Pass Rd

### Martinez

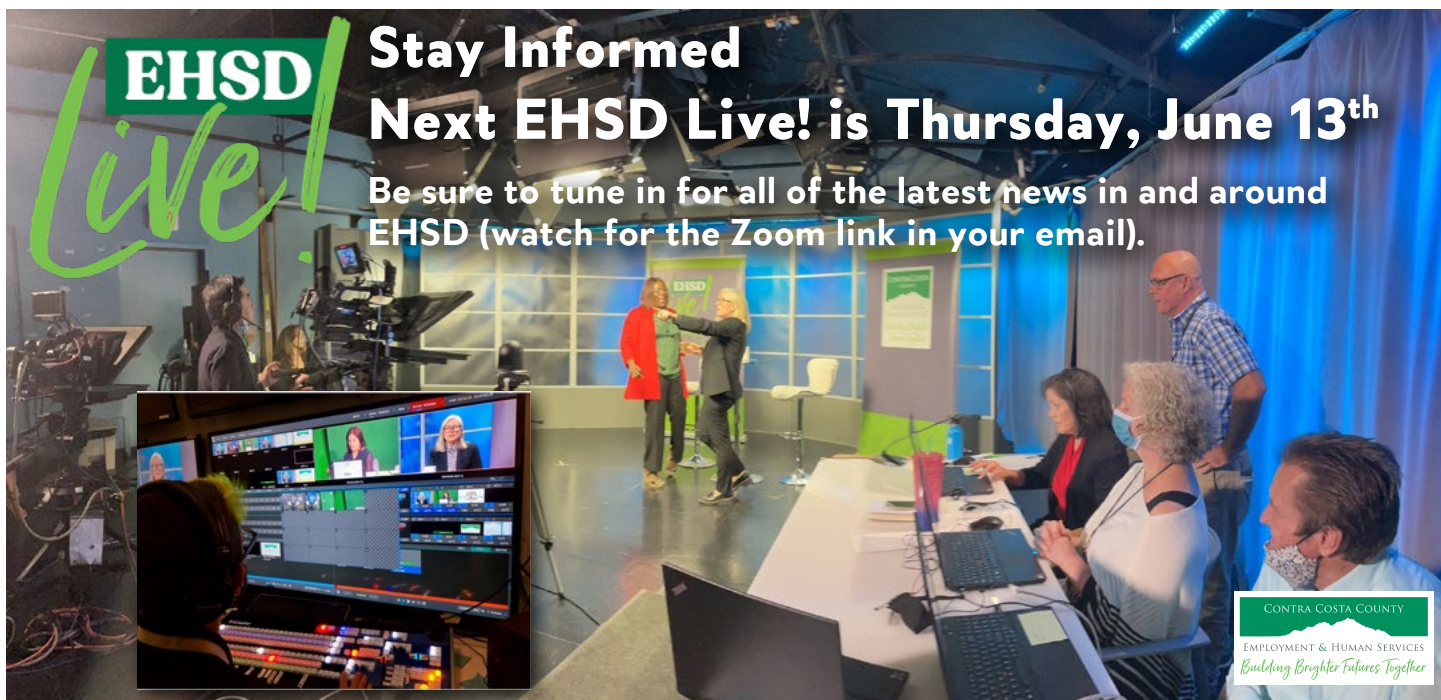
2nd Annual Juneteenth  
Saturday, June 29, 11 a.m to 3 p.m. 245 N. Court Street

## Juneteenth Gains Traction in Contra Costa *Continued from previous page*

in schools. Making it a federal holiday has helped raise awareness, and now all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia commemorate Juneteenth as a paid state holiday or observance. It is also celebrated internationally in Ghana, Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, Honduras, Trinidad, and Tobago.

Juneteenth is an important commemoration and most recognize there is still more work to do.

“This is an important day in our history as Americans,” Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear said. “One where we stand united in acknowledging our past and our nation’s greatest injustice. A day when we honor the strength and courage of African Americans and the contributions they have made and continue to make for our country.”



### EHSD Live!

## Stay Informed Next EHSD Live! is Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>

Be sure to tune in for all of the latest news in and around EHSD (watch for the Zoom link in your email).

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES  
*Building Brighter Futures Together*



# We Care...You Care

**We Care...You Care** is how we recognize our peers, emphasizing internal customer service. **We Care...You Care** nominations tie directly to one or more of our six Core Values. The program gives you the opportunity to show your coworkers how much you appreciate them. If you work with someone who deserves special recognition for internal customer service, check out the We Care...You Care link to the guidelines, then fill out a nomination form and submit it to the supervisor of the person you are nominating.

**WE care guidelines:** [WeCareThatYouCare Guidelines\\_FINAL.pdf](#)

**We Care nomination form:** [WeCareThatYouCare Nomination Form\\_FINAL.pdf](#)



## FOSTER CARE MONTH

# Teens in Foster Care Welcome Here

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

Candy and David Hogan are considered a “rare find” in the world of foster care. That’s because they’ve been caring for teens in foster care when most Resource Family or foster parents tend to take in younger children.

So far, Candy and David have fostered four teenagers on their small farm in Oakley. A 15-year old girl, a 14-year old girl and two 13-year old twins (a boy and girl). “Our biological children were already grown and out of the house, so we felt we had the time and space to foster teenagers,” says Candy who works in home health and hospice.

“My husband wanted to care for teens because he said there’s a greater need for placement families to care for foster teens,” says Candy.

“The shortage of families willing to open their homes for teens in foster care is a national issue,” explains **Beth Bottorff**, Children & Family Services Manager who oversees the Resources Division. “It takes a special set of skills and talents to care for adolescents and we are especially in need of caregivers for our LGBTQ+ youth, pregnant and parenting teens, and minors who have been victims of human trafficking or sexual exploitation.”

While misconceptions exist about teens being more difficult to care for than infants or young children, challenging behaviors can come up at any age.

Candy took advantage of free classes, provided by Contra Costa County, including a five-session class called the Heritage Project which helped her understand the behaviors of children impacted by drugs and alcohol. “It made me more aware of how substance abuse can have a biological effect on a child’s behavior,” says Candy.

It can make a huge difference for youth to have a safe, caring adult who is willing take a chance and connect with her/him. If you know someone who wants to explore becoming a Resource Family Home, call (925) 655-4230.



Candy and David Hogan are focused on fostering teens because they understand they have different needs that not all Resource Families are prepared to meet. **CLICK on the play button to hear Candy talk about their experiences.**



## NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

# Book Donation Brings Literature to Contra Costa Kids

By Michelle Fullem, VESTIA Board Member



In a heartwarming act of generosity and support of foster children in Contra Costa County, Julia Booker has donated 2,139 new books to VESTIA, EHSD's nonprofit partner, for distribution to Children & Family Services. This donation marks the sixth year of her commitment to raising readers and supporting the community by increasing book access to all children through her Bookers Book Nook project.

**Personal Connection:** Julia's involvement with the Contra Costa County's foster program is deeply personal, as she herself is a foster parent who adopted her son. She understands the challenges faced by foster children and is committed to providing comfort and stability to these young lives.

**Empowering Children:** Julia's donation ensures these young individuals have something precious to call their own – a book that can accompany them throughout their journey.

**Celebrating Milestones:** Each October, Julia organizes a book drive in honor of her son's adoption anniversary. This event not only raises funds but also awareness of the needs of foster children and that they matter!

**Record Breaking Contribution:** In an unprecedented move, Julia donated 50% of her last quarter's book sales to add to her fundraising efforts. This resulted in the largest contribution to date!

**Six years of giving:** Julia's consistent donations over the past six years continues to bring a valuable resource to those who need it the most

**Future Goals:** Julia hopes in the future she will be able to provide not only a book to each child in need but an activity kit as well. Her passion drives her to keep making a difference.

VESTIA cannot express enough gratitude for Julia's donation and dedication to Contra Costa's foster children. Her actions remind us that there are always new chapters to be written and new stories to be told. Thank you for helping our children turn the page to a brighter future!

For information on how to donate to Julia's book drive please visit: <https://linktr.ee/bookersbooknook>

VESTIA donor Julia Booker (right) and EHSD Volunteer & Emergency Services Program Specialist Eugenia Hidalgo-Malacas (left).



Julia Booker's book donation to VESTIA



Julia Booker  
[@bookersbooknook](https://www.instagram.com/bookersbooknook)  
Instagram photos  
and videos

## Celebrating Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American  
Pacific Islander  
Heritage Month

By Clifford Tracey, Temp Program/Project Coordinator, Community Relations/Media

Sparkling, brilliant colors of traditional attire. Invigorating sounds of drums and folk music. Warmth, smiles, and enthusiasm from County leaders, staff, and community members ready to celebrate diverse cultures.

The energy and excitement were palpable at the Contra Costa County Board chambers on Tuesday, May 14th, as the Board of Supervisors honored Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) culture and traditions at the 2nd Annual AANHPI Heritage Month Celebration. EHSD was the sponsoring department for this year's event.

Building on Our Legacies was the theme to honor and recognize our AANHPI communities across the County. Close to 20% of the County population is of AANHPI heritage, and the EHSD-led planning

committee was privileged to help bring the richness and diversity of Contra Costa County to this community celebration.

“We believe we achieved our goal of educating about AANHPI heritages, experiences, cultures, and traditions,” said Tish Gallegos who co-chaired the AANHPI event planning committee with Oravanh Thammassen. “Everyone who was involved helped meaningfully convey the importance of honoring and remembering these rich legacies for future generations to hold and build upon them.”

The exciting multi-media program included elements representing traditions from Japanese, Filipino, Cambodian, Chinese, and other AANHPI cultures that brought audience members to their feet as they embraced the experience through live song and dance. Video stories featured

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The Board of Supervisors and honorary guests after the event: Front row (L-R): Pinole Councilmember Cameron Sasai, Eizo Kobayashi, **Oravanh Thammassen**, Supervisor Candace Andersen, Sonnara Sen, Supervisor Ken Carlson. 2<sup>nd</sup> row (L-R): Martinez Councilmember Satinder Malhi, El Cerrito Councilmember Lisa Motoyama, Supervisor Diane Burgis, **Tamina Alon**, **Tish Gallegos**. 3<sup>rd</sup> row (L-R): Lafayette Vice Mayor Wei-Tai Kwok, **Marla Stuart**, **Alan Wang**

## Celebrating Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American  
Pacific Islander  
Heritage Month

*Continued from previous page*

Contra Costa County residents Sonnara Sen and Eizo Kobayashi, each depicting their unique lived experiences and challenging journeys. They attended the event along with city leaders from across the County who also shared their stories in a video “Building Legacy through Public Service.”

Contra Costa County youth from Pittsburg High School, Heritage High School and the Saadhana School of Dance demonstrated their dedication and commitment in carrying on their cultural legacies through Filipino, Polynesian, and Indian dance and music in another video feature.

The expression and display of AANHPI cultures throughout the celebration was warmly received and recognized by the live audience and online viewers. This was possible through the collaboration

across departments, community groups, county and city leaders, honorary guests, and volunteers.

As the Board of Supervisors closed the celebration, Supervisor Diane Burgis recognized the efforts of the organizing team, expressing “...what you have done today, you have raised the bar.” In addition, Lafayette Vice Mayor Wei-Tai Kwok said, “Today’s AANHPI celebration was a terrific event, it was so much fun!”

Like the inaugural AANHPI celebration in 2023, live simultaneous interpretations were available via Zoom in Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Khmer, Japanese, Spanish, and American Sign Language.

You can watch the recorded event and learn more about the AANHPI celebration by visiting the [AANHPI page on the County website](#).



All performers, team members and volunteers pose for a colorful group photo before the event.

## Celebrating AANHPI Heritage Month in West County

Asian American  
Pacific Islander  
Heritage Month

CFS West had a Luau potluck on May 29th to celebrate Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month. The festivities included Senior Level Clerk **Suli Teo** performing a Samoan dance.



L to R: Suli Teo, Virginia Paraizo, Cristina Montufar, Stacy Legras, Marie Mosley, Karla Kattengell, Ellen Wienecke, Damien Williams



L to R: Ellen Wienecke, Damien Williams, and TaWana Bishop



L to R: Monse Vazquez, Andrew Jones, Rosa Silva, and Nidia De Leon

## SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

### SERVICE AWARDS

#### 15 YEARS

Ayana McLeod, Comprehensive Svcs Asst Mgr-Pr,  
Griselda Tovar De Magana, Comprehensive Svcs Asst  
Mgr-Pr, CSB

#### 10 YEARS

Angel B. Arias, Clerk-Specialist Level, CFS  
Tasha Mizel, Social Worker III, CFS  
Penny Williams, Social Worker III, CFS

### NEW EMPLOYEES

Kevin Ayyoub, Accountant II, Admin  
Naobi Balcazar, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Samantha Beard, ASA III, Admin  
Ryan Caoile, Student Intern II, CSB  
Kathleen Cyr, ASA III, Admin  
Kahina Denane, Accounting Technician, Admin  
Erika Garcia, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Marcia Jones, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS  
Harshita Kabra, Intermediate Clerk-Project, CSB  
Elaine Kilpatrick, Information Systems Technician II, Admin  
Sakari Lewis, Clerk-Experienced Level, CSB  
Hortensia Lopez de Paniagua, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB

Dahnya Martinez, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Zeralyn Mason, Teacher-Project, CSB  
Shaquilla McCoy, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS  
Teresa Munoz, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Hoshang Noory, Clerk-Experienced Level, WFS  
Daisy Nunez Banda, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Sir Zah'Mein Owens, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Iris Phonthavy, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Jing Shui, Accounting Technician, Admin  
Stacey Smith, Clerk-Senior Level, Admin  
Xitlali Valdovinos, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB  
Maria Villasenor, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB

### RETIREES

Shelly Draper, Medi-Cal Program Assistant, WFS  
Brittanie Mills, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS

Are you planning a retirement celebration for a staff member and would like to present them with a retirement certificate? **If so, please contact Deb Johnson at [djohnson@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:djohnson@ehsd.cccounty.us) or (925) 608-4808.**

# SPREAD THE WORD

## June 2024

- LGBTQ+ PRIDE MONTH
- ELDER & DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH
- MEN'S HEALTH MONTH
- JUNE 9 – National Abused Women & Children's Awareness Day
- JUNE 14 – Flag Day
- JUNE 15 – World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- JUNE 19 – Juneteenth (holiday)
- JUNE 27 – National PTSD Awareness Day

## July 2024

- PURPOSEFUL PARENTING MONTH
- JULY 4 – Independence Day (holiday)
- JULY 16 – Ashura Begins
- JULY 26 – Anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act
- JULY 28 – Parents' Day



## We Care... You Care

CLICK here to learn more about nominating a coworker.  
 Updated We Care...You Care nomination form: click here  
 and see page 15

## Want to know what else we're doing at EHSD?

Facebook and X @ContraCostaEHSD  
 Instagram @HumanaCosta  
 Like us on Facebook



## Is there room in your home for one more?

Make a change in a child's life and become a Resource Parent/ Family for a foster child. Contra Costa County needs your support to provide care for children 0–18 years of age. Please join us for a virtual orientation and learn more about becoming a caregiver.



## FREE VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS

June 6 or 20 • 4 to 6 p.m.

July 18 • 4 to 6 p.m.

August 1 or 15 • 4 to 6 p.m.



For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at [www.ehdsd.org](http://www.ehdsd.org). If you belong to an organization or community group interested in learning more about Resource Family Approval/ foster parenting, we can schedule an individual session for your group, in English or Spanish.

To register for a class, please call (925) 655-4230 or email [ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:ResourceFamilies@ehsd.cccounty.us)

Reminder: *Headlines* will take a break in July. Look for our summer issue in early August! July/August 2024 submissions due Tuesday, July 16, 2024 – Email EHSD *Headlines* at [Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us](mailto:Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us).