

Headlines

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EHSD Prevails Over CrowdStrike

Global Tech Challenge is No Match for EHSD's Resilience & Solid Backup Processes

By Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

CrowdStrike set off a global tech incident unlike any other: the largest IT outage in history. The morning of Friday, July 19th, it was clear that EHSD would not miss out on this worldwide event.

The outage caused disruptions to airlines, banks, healthcare facilities, 911 services, and businesses due to the release of a software update for Microsoft devices late Thursday, July 18th. At EHSD, it affected 1,500 EHSD workstations with staff experiencing trouble logging into computers and systems.

Despite the tech challenges, EHSD staff members sprang into action across our County offices, prioritizing and serving community members without a break, including operating our Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS) hotlines – a testament to our staff's resilience and well-developed offline processes.

"The Executive Team launched the Department Operations Center by 8:15 a.m. to coordinate, support IT, and provide updates to staff in all Bureaus," said EHSD Director **Marla Stuart**. "Our IT team expertly and quickly restored us, and EHSD workers implemented backup procedures to serve our customers. Our communications and lobby

teams and all who interact with our community members ensured they knew how to access our services through the outage."

IT deployed support to our more than 2,000 users by 8 a.m. and IT staff were on hand at our 30+ buildings and childcare centers. They helped significantly reduce the outage impact, bringing

EHSD back online faster than many companies that were still reeling from the outage during the days that followed. Especially impressive is the way the IT Team supported us with great attitudes, patience, calm, and expert assistance.

Aging & Adult Services' Information & Assistance (I&A) social workers provided resources and referrals in real time to people who call the I&A line for information, to start an application for In-Home Supportive Services, or report elder abuse. An innovative

workaround enabled workers to access the call center technology outside of the usual routing through the county network.

Children & Family Services screening staff immediately implemented existing manual processes to continue receiving reports of suspected child abuse on the CPS hotline and used



EHSD helped reassure community members that our services were still available during the global outage by posting messages on ehdsd.org and on our social media channels.

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phone or fax to send them to the appropriate district staff for response. In-person responses and home visits were not affected.

For **Community Services Bureau (CSB)**, all 10 child development centers were fully open and operational amid the technology outages. CSB's policies, procedures, and training on secondary systems enabled families to seamlessly drop off children and sign paper forms. CSB staff kept children safe and used hard copy forms for safety monitoring and head counts.

The **Workforce Services (WFS)** staff took immediate action to assist clients in our District Offices. They rely on electronic systems for most of their work and, without the availability of CalSAWS, staff helped clients with paper applications. Reception staff accepted documents related to customer applications/cases and provided paper receipts as an alternative to our electronic Mail Kiosks. WFS staff provided food resources from our onsite Food Pantries for emergency needs. Clerical staff processed mail and managed work through manual processes until the outage was resolved. Our Call Center Managers immediately placed an outgoing message on our Interactive

Voice Response System to alert callers about the outage and instruct them to seek assistance for urgent needs at our District Offices until systems were accessible.

The **Workforce Development Board** reports that the American Job Center of California (AJCC) at Port Chicago experienced a temporary lack of computer access for a couple of hours. However, customers still received assistance and resources through other means. Thanks to a quick response from IT, the

AJCC was soon fully operational again.

Building Managers, Clerical Supervisors, and leadership teams in all bureaus were instrumental in the overall response and communication flow throughout the department. The County's DoIT team recovered the DNS server and mostly restored all County systems by 10 a.m. EHSD's IT Team closely coordinated with DoIT and continued working on residual impacts through the rest of the day.

The global tech outage presented challenges and lessons for everyone, but EHSD was ready to take this on thanks to your expertise, teamwork, and commitment to delivering an exceptional customer experience despite any glitch, big or small.

“We all embodied our goal of excellence in all we do! A huge thank you!”
– Marla Stuart, EHSD Director

Inside IT's Application Development Team

By Derek Forrest, Application Development Team Lead, EHSD IT



EHSD's App Development Team (L-R) **Nick Montemayor**, **Joanne Puccetti**, **Seema Walse**, **Lisa Matsubara**, **Michael Glass**, **Derek Forrest**, **Leon Chan**, and **Kevin Balderston**

To understand the Application Development Team, it's essential to know our mission, our role within the department, the applications we develop and support, and our processes. You can find those details [here](#). Below, we spotlight the remarkable individuals on our team and their invaluable contributions to EHSD.

Seema Walse was hired to help improve the ASSIST system. Seema worked to stabilize it, and, over the years, she transformed it into one of the vital systems for the Department. Remarkably, she also helps with several other systems while supporting Personnel with ASSIST daily.

Joanne Puccetti is the master problem solver of the team. When all else fails, she is willing to help find a solution. Joanne has developed several essential new applications and has completely rewritten outdated ones. Her upcoming launch of LiveScan—an older application in desperate need of

rewriting—underscores her immense contributions as she adeptly supports and maintains a vast array of complex applications.

Mike Glass would undoubtedly be in the EHSD Hall of Fame if there were one. He performs remarkably as the lead developer for Workforce Distribution Tool (WDT). He spearheaded the development of the most complex enterprise wide system our team ever undertook, while easily navigating high-pressure environments. He can also solve a Rubik's Cube in two minutes.

Nick Montemayor is talented at simplifying even the most complicated applications, earning him consistent praise for his approachable and easygoing nature. He is known for tackling any problem and has played a pivotal role in developing and supporting numerous critical applications and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). Currently, Nick is dedicating himself to the

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Inside IT's Application Development Team

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development of a solution for Staff Reporting, demonstrating his commitment to enhancing department operations.

Leon Chan is the SharePoint guru with unparalleled expertise navigating the platform's intricacies. The Online Court Reports (OCR)—a critical system for the Contra Costa County court system—had been in disarray, with many complaints from judges, lawyers, and other users. Thanks to Leon's dedication and expertise, the OCR system now receives compliments. Leon's ongoing administration and support is indispensable as the department heavily relies on SharePoint.

Kevin Balderston is not only a WordPress expert, but always shares his invaluable knowledge with the team. Responsible for supporting our external websites, Kevin has been instrumental in ensuring their smooth operation. Recently, he further showcased his talents by developing and releasing the mobile employee directory, a project that has garnered overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Lisa Matsubara is the cornerstone of our Access database support, overseeing critical applications

such as the Contract Tracking System. She has also taken on the substantial role of ServiceNow administrator, providing vital support for Helpdesk and future systems. Lisa's positive, outgoing demeanor, that colleagues consistently praise, makes her a pleasure to work with and a valued team member.

It's truly a pleasure to collaborate with an intelligent, dedicated, and remarkable group of individuals every day. This summary only scratches the surface of the extensive work they do. Managing a combined 200+ web applications, SQL databases, SSIS packages, SS reporting projects, DB jobs, external websites, SharePoint sites/ administration, APIs, scripts, non-web applications, and ServiceNow administration is a significant undertaking for our small team. Additionally, we handle ongoing new projects, maintenance, and support.

Like other EHSD units, we constantly balance providing system support and handling new requests. Nevertheless, we are committed to serving our department in the best way we can to ensure everyone's success.

*Building Brighter
Futures Together*

Moving a Call Center – No Easy Task

By Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

It may not have been a physical move, but a daunting effort, nonetheless. EHSD’s Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) Administrator **Martin Lara** recently explained to industry peers just how he and his team successfully transitioned from a site-based call center to a cloud-based solution.

NICE, the company that purchased what was formerly known as InContact, held its annual NICE CXOne Interactions conference in early June.

Martin, whose telecommunications career spans 35 years, including 31 in contact center development, and the past eight at EHSD, shared his expertise and experience related to EHSD’s recent call center “move.”

Martin covered the ACD challenges in the old space, as well as some of the pitfalls he and his team encountered moving to the new platform. He also discussed the outcomes and some of the unexpected benefits with NICE CXOne as the call center provider.

Thousands of customers and industry leaders attended the three-day conference, sharing knowledge and best practices related to the latest innovations in AI, cloud, digital and self-service.



Martin Lara, ACD Administrator, was presenter at the NICE CXOne Interactions Conference in Las Vegas in June.

“We learned from other organizations facing the same challenges that we face here in our department,” explained Martin. “We also met with several of our providers and discussed opportunities for getting the best performance out of our existing environment and introducing AI to some of our call flows.”

Undoubtedly, Martin’s industry colleagues learned from him as he emphasized the major effort involved in moving an entire call center from one platform to another, and the level of detail required to ensure a successful transition.

Kathy Marsh Honored for Public Service as She Retires

Former CFS Director receives ASPA Award

By Tish Gallegos, Community Relations/Media Manager

Retired CFS Director **Kathy Marsh** was quick to recognize Children & Family Services staff as she recently accepted a distinguished award for her dedication to service.

The [American Society for Public Administration \(ASPA\)](#)

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter presented its Public Service Recognition Awards during a virtual event on Thursday, June 20th.

Kathy, who retired from EHSD in March after 30 years, received the Dedication to Public Service Award, presented to an individual for especially meritorious service in the field of public administration over the course of a lifetime. ASPA celebrated Kathy's commitment to protecting, serving, and supporting children, youth, and families in Contra Costa County, and for inspiring her colleagues through her leadership, encouragement, support, and resources to achieve outstanding results.



“A true servant leader! Kudos to you, Kathy!”

– Kimberly Baker,
CFS Quality Assurance DM

Kathy's family and several colleagues joined the online event to celebrate and congratulate Kathy for this well-deserved honor.

ASPA also recognized other Bay Area nominees in the categories of Rising Star, Administrator of the Year, and Distinguished Public Service.



With her characteristic humility and grace, Kathy accepted her ASPA award for dedication to public service with heartfelt thanks to her EHSD colleagues.

Our best wishes and gratitude to Kathy for leaving a legacy of integrity and compassion for Contra Costa County's children and families.

The Future is Bright New Child Welfare Social Workers

By Pat Ensley and Ariana Martinez, CFS Staff Development Specialists

On May 28, 2024, Children and Family Services (CFS) celebrated the graduation of a remarkable group of three new Child Welfare Social Workers. During an in-person graduation ceremony, CFS Interim Director, **Roslyn Gentry**, delivered inspiring words to welcome the group. CFS Social Work Supervisor **Brittanie Mills**, alongside their Division Managers and Supervisors, awarded them graduation certificates. This dedicated trio exemplified a passion for serving others during their time together

We warmly welcome **Prabhjot Sandhu** in Central County, who is primarily working with youth to overcome challenges towards permanency in Children's Residential Placement Unit. **Fausto Fuentes** and **Miriam Ramirez**, are working in West County's Court Unit contributing to Discovery Investigation of cases for the families we serve.

We commend their commitment to child welfare and wish them success in their important roles!



NWTU Graduation Ceremony (L-R): **Cindy Vogl, Fausto Fuentes, and Roslyn Gentry**

New Social Worker Graduating Class with CFS Staff Development (L-R): **Mari Solis, Pat Ensley, Miriam Ramirez, Fausto Fuentes, Prabhjot Sandhu, and Brittanie Mills**



NWTU Graduation Ceremony (L-R): **Prabhjot Sandhu and Roslyn Gentry**

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES
Building Brighter Futures Together

More Help for Children and Families in Need New CFS Social Casework Assistants

By Mari Solis, CFS Staff Development Specialist

Children & Family Services (CFS) is proud to introduce its latest cohort of Social Casework Assistants (SCAs). This new group brings a wealth of passion, empathy, and fresh perspectives to CFS, promising to make a significant impact on the lives of children and families in need.

The role of an SCA at CFS is critical, encompassing a wide array of responsibilities aimed at supporting vulnerable populations and fostering positive outcomes. From assisting in case management and advocacy to providing crucial

support and resource coordination, SCAs play a vital role in ensuring that every child and family involved with CFS receives the care and attention they deserve.

As the group embarks on their individual journeys as SCAs, they can rely on a supportive network of other SCAs, social workers and mentors. We look forward to witnessing the growth and success of **Nihinlola Fasanya, Elizabeth Wahl-Polivka, Hana Day, Martin Aquilar, and Shavonne Wallace!**



(L-R): **Mari Solis** (CFS Staff Development); **Nihinlola Fasanya, Elizabeth Wahl-Polivka, Hana Day** and **Martin Aquilar** (new SCAs); **Chinwe Ehenemba, Hayley Augustine, DeAna Buckner, Gigi Carruth** and **Mollie Fischer** (SCA Trainers). Not pictured: **Cheryl Orr, Angie Saeteurn, Satrina Waiwaiole**, (SCA Trainers) and **Shavonne Wallace** (temp SW).



Cultivating our own Leaders

Why EHSD's Mentoring Program Needs You

By Iliana Choate & Antonio Vasquez, Staff Development

On May 23rd, EHSD's Staff Development Team hosted a meet-and-greet kick-off for the newest Mentoring Program participants. This was an opportunity for the mentees to meet their mentors and start getting to know each other. The program officially started June 1st and will continue for six months. The pairs will meet at their own discretion during that period, and one last time as the program concludes—to celebrate at the Mentoring Program Graduation Ceremony on December 3rd!

When the next application period opens, there will be announcements on STARS and in *Headlines*. Virtual info sessions are also available for those who would like to learn more before making the commitment.

Why become a mentor?

Mentors have a chance to develop the future leaders of EHSD. Other perks include networking opportunities and opportunities to learn about how other areas within EHSD operate. Mentees reap benefits that are sure to strengthen their leadership skills and professional portfolios. If you would like to learn more about becoming a mentor or mentee, visit the [Staff Development intranet page](#).

The EHSD Mentoring Program offers professional growth, development and leadership



MENTORS (L-R): Farhad Ziaee, Mario Pando, Ellen Wienecke, Tamina Alon, Nanci Powers, Tracey Lee, April Bolin, Ernestine Cook, Sandra Orellana, Cynthia Mallory.
Not shown: Patricia Perez and Renee Resendez



MENTEES (Front, L-R): Mary McFarland, Maria R. Munoz, Darnell Jones, Gigi Carruth, Evette Thomas. (Back, L-R): Daniel Busch, Kimlien Pruner, Ryan Madison, Rose Casteneda, Brandi Brokaw.

opportunities to employees throughout the department. This program provides a positive environment where employees benefit from learning opportunities through a one-on-one mentor and mentee relationship.

Thank you to our mentors. We are fortunate to have a mix of some brand new and returning mentors.

*Special shout out to April Bolin.
This is her 5th year mentoring for our department.*

Blue Ribbon Baker Veronica Bercaives Shares Her Secret Recipe

By Alan Wang, Community Relations Media Specialist

The County Fair is an excellent place to show off your skills in baking, crafts, photography and more. But be forewarned, there are some highly skilled competitors including EHSD's Veronica Bercaives who is a trained chef. Veronica is a Contracts Administrator for EHSD's Policy and Planning division who recently developed a gingersnap cookie recipe that took home a 1st place blue ribbon at the Alameda County Fair.



But this wasn't her first rodeo. Veronica has walked away with numerous blue ribbons in multiple cooking and baking categories, including Breads, Cakes, Cookies, Pies, Preserved Foods, Puddings, the Guittard Chocolate Contest, the King Arthur Flour Contest, and the Honey Contest. Twice, she was awarded best of show at the Alameda and Solano County fairs. Two of the biggest in the state.

"I am always looking to develop the next best recipe," says Veronica. "It's about learning to work with different complementary flavor combinations and refining your sense of smell and taste to

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Blue Ribbon Baker Veronica Bercaives Shares Her Secret Recipe

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identify what flavors and textures pair well together.” Her secret ingredient for her prized gingersnap cookies is Five Spice. A popular Chinese mixture that contains star anise, fennel, cinnamon, cloves and Szechuan peppercorn. “In the process I learned about the origin of Chinese Five Spice which is based on the five elements of fire, water, wood, earth, and metal which need to be balanced in the body according to traditional Chinese medicine.”

Veronica’s collection of blue ribbons reflects the same caring and innovative approach she uses when administering staff reports and contracts for various EHS programs. “The blue ribbons signify that I have refined my skills, precision, and attention to detail. It’s one way I have demonstrated to my daughter to put her best effort into everything she sets her mind to,” says Veronica.

In fact, Veronica encouraged her daughter to enter her own baked goods into county fair competitions. “I think every family should visit their local county fair and explore opportunities for enrichment. There’s something to learn for everyone. I believe children are our most valuable resource and the learning opportunities at the fair competitions are invaluable. There are several educational groups that guide their students to enter the fair contests and learn, such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, the 4H group, schools, etc.

If you have any baking questions, feel free to send them to [@VeronicaTheBaker](#) on Instagram.



You can bake Veronica’s award-winning ginger snap cookies (see recipe on page 13). **CLICK** the play button to watch how Veronica developed her blue ribbon cookies.



Veronica was also a finalist on KGO Radio’s “Dining Around with Gene Burns” program. KGO selected 25 amateur cookie bakers from throughout the state to compete for “best cookie” bragging rights.



Among Veronica’s collection are ribbons for “Best of Show,” “Best of Division,” and “Judge’s Favorite.”



Veronica has had many of her award-winning recipes published in these popular cookbooks.

RECIPE ON NEXT PAGE



Veronica Bercaives' Recipe

Blue Ribbon Five-Spice Gingersnap Cookies

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon ground ginger
2 ½ teaspoons Chinese five-spice powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup unsalted butter (2 cubes) at room temperature
1 ⅔ cups granulated sugar
⅓ cup molasses
½ cup heavy (whipping) cream
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
Sparkling sugar, about a cup for rolling the dough balls in



1. Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, ground ginger, Chinese five-spice powder, and cinnamon in a medium-sized bowl.
2. Put the softened, room temperature butter in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium-high speed for about a minute until mostly smooth. Add the 1 ⅔ cups granulated sugar and continue beating until incorporated for about 1-2 minutes and scrap the bottom of the bowl, so all sugar is mixed into the butter. The mixture will appear partially grainy and that's fine.
3. Spray a Pyrex glass measuring cup with a light film of oil and, place your measured molasses, cream and vinegar into it. Mix lightly until incorporated.
4. Turn the mixer on low speed and add the molasses-cream mixture, stopping the machine at least once to scrap the sides of the bowl.
5. Gradually add the flour mixture, mixing until just the ingredients are incorporated. Be gentle with the mixing. Don't overmix. You want tender cookies.
6. Scrap the dough into a container or bowl, cover and chill for at least 2 hours or overnight. Overnight is better to allow the flavors to cure and develop deeper flavors.
7. Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 350°F. Line baking two baking sheets with parchment paper. Shape the dough into ¼ cup size balls, roll in the sparkling sugar and arrange them 3 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets.
8. Bake for 15 minutes or until the cookies have spread, are light golden brown and the tops have cracked. Cool the cookies on the baking sheets for about 5-10 minutes before moving them to a cooling rack. Store the cookies in a container for up to 5 days or freeze extras.

Outreach Roundup

Immigration Forum in Richmond

Stand Together Contra Costa hosted a big and busy Immigration Forum on June 8th that The Latina Center of Richmond helped promote. Navigators **Sandra Figueroa** and **Susan Padan** with 4 Our Families represented EHSD at the event held at the St. Cornelius School Gym. Other participating agencies were Brighter Beginnings, Jewish Family



Services of the East Bay, Outreach Program Services of America, the US Citizenship & Immigration Services, and Contra Costa Health.

Sandra Figueroa and Susan Padan

Antioch's Juneteenth Celebration

Al Gibson and **Joanna Thieme**, 4 Our Families Navigators, were key participants at the Juneteenth: A Freedom Celebration on June 16th, held at Williamson Ranch Park in Antioch. This year marked the third annual city-sponsored Juneteenth celebration, bringing together individuals from all walks of life

to honor freedom, culture, and community. Al and Joanna provided valuable



Al Gibson and Joanne Thieme

information on low-income housing, utility assistance, health services, and other essential resources, supporting attendees in accessing the help they need.

The event was a vibrant and reflective celebration, showcasing the richness of African American heritage and embracing the vibrancy and resiliency of Black culture as attendees learned more about the significance of Juneteenth.

Unity in the Community

4 Our Families Navigators **Al Gibson** and **Maria Muñoz** supported the Bay Point Community All-N-One "Unity in the Community" event on Saturday, June 22nd. Held at the Ambrose Community Center, this Health & Wellness event brought together community members for a day of support and celebration. Al and Maria were on hand to help attendees understand and access information about public benefits and resources available to families in crisis, offering much-needed guidance and support.

The event featured a vibrant array of activities including healthy food options, live

music, dance performances, and the chance to win exciting prizes. Local health agencies offered essential services such as vision screenings and blood pressure checks, ensuring that community members had access to important health resources in a fun and engaging environment.



Al Gibson, Pittsburg Council Member Shanelle Scales-Preston and Maria Muñoz

Building Brighter Futures Together

Contra Costa 2024 Summer BLOCK PARTY

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

The sixth annual County Block Party took place on Thursday, June 27th from 4 to 7 p.m. at Richmond's Civic Center Plaza. Carrying on the tradition as a "traveling" event that originated in Martinez in 2017, this year's Block Party returned to West County after the first collaboration with the City of Richmond five years ago.

The goal of the annual County Block Party is to display the availability and accessibility of our County programs, connecting with community members at a one stop, family-friendly event. With more than 38 County, City of Richmond, and community-based organizations represented, residents had the opportunity to access various services, and learn all that is available.

Attendees also enjoyed the Contra Costa Library's live story time and took plenty of selfies alongside the City of Richmond Fire Department fire truck. Community members also joined the lively Zumba by Rosa team for a fun and effective workout!

EHSD teams from Workforce Development Board, Children & Family Services, 4 Our Families Navigators, Community Services Bureau, Adult Protective Service, Information & Assistance, Workforce Development Board, and Community Relations turned out to connect with community members.

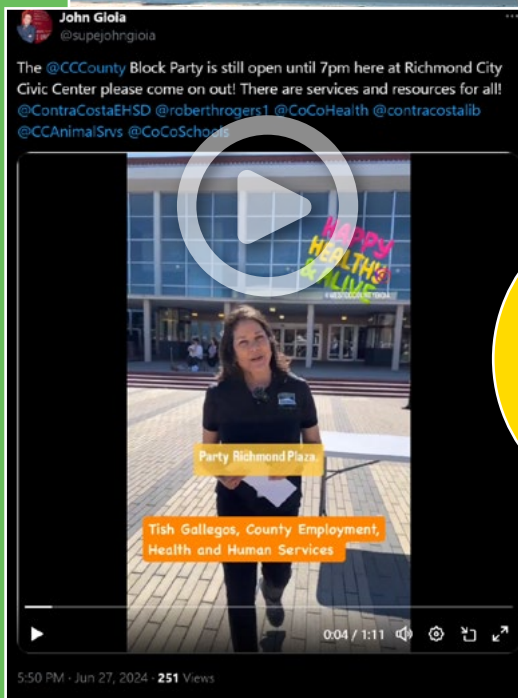
A BIG thank you to all the EHSD staff members who participated.



Daisy Gallegos from Adult Protective Services



Live Story Time with Contra Costa County Library



View a recap of the 2024 County Block Party at these links:

[English](#)

[Spanish](#)

CLICK the play button to see our own Community Relations/Media Manager Tish Gallegos in action

[More photos on next page >](#)

Contra Costa 2024 Summer

BLOCK PARTY

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Elections staff offering voter information, registration, and more.



PIO's from various departments organize the annual County event. The 2024 team included (L-R) **Dawn Kruger**/Elections, **Kelly Kalfsbeek**/Public Works, and **Tish Gallegos**/EHSD. Not pictured: **Larena Baldazo**/EHSD & **Brooke Converse**/The Library.



Griselda Tovar and **Kyu (Kelly) Chun** from Community Services Bureau

IHSS Program Celebrates More than 50 Years

Since its inception more than 50 years ago, the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program has been enabling California residents to live independently and safely in their own homes, avoiding institutionalization.

The IHSS program is one of the longest standing state programs, with 670,000 providers serving over 730,000 recipients statewide. Achieving this significant milestone demonstrates the continued commitment and teamwork that was attained over the past five decades. This unwavering commitment continues today.

You can learn more from CDSS Director Kim Johnson in this [video](#) that includes personal stories from some of the many voices that helped shape the success of the IHSS program.

You can also visit [In Home Supportive Services \(ca.gov\)](#) on the CDSS website, or our own [IHSS page](#) on ehds.org.

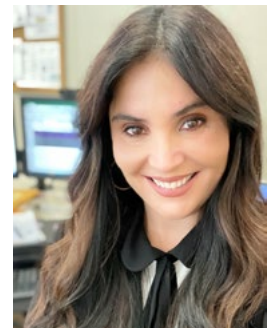
Source: California Department of Social Services



IHSS Medi-Cal workers (L-R) **Mark Kim, Brianna Morris, Elizabeth Crowe** and **Oscar Menendez**



Kim Durley, IHSS Clerk



Yesenia Orta, IHSS Social Work Supervisor



A New Twist to EHSD Live!

Our next ***EHSD Live!*** is **Thursday, August 22nd**. Everyone who watches has a chance to win a gas gift card, but this time we will have a LIVE drawing for this highly coveted prize. In other words, you must be “present” on Zoom to win!

Mark your calendars for ***EHSD Live!*** on August 22nd to hear from your colleagues, get the latest departmental updates, have a little fun, and maybe win a prize!

Watch for the Zoom link in your email soon.

EHSD Live!
guest spotlight:
Creature Feature!

EHSD *Live!* Creature Feature

Do you have an exotic pet or a pet that does unusual tricks? If so, we would like to make you and your pet a part of our new “Creature Feature” segment that will air on the next *EHSD Live!* If you and your pet would like to be a part of the show, send us an email at EventsCommittee@ehsd.cccounty.us by **Friday, August 9th**. Include a couple of sentences about your pet and a photo.



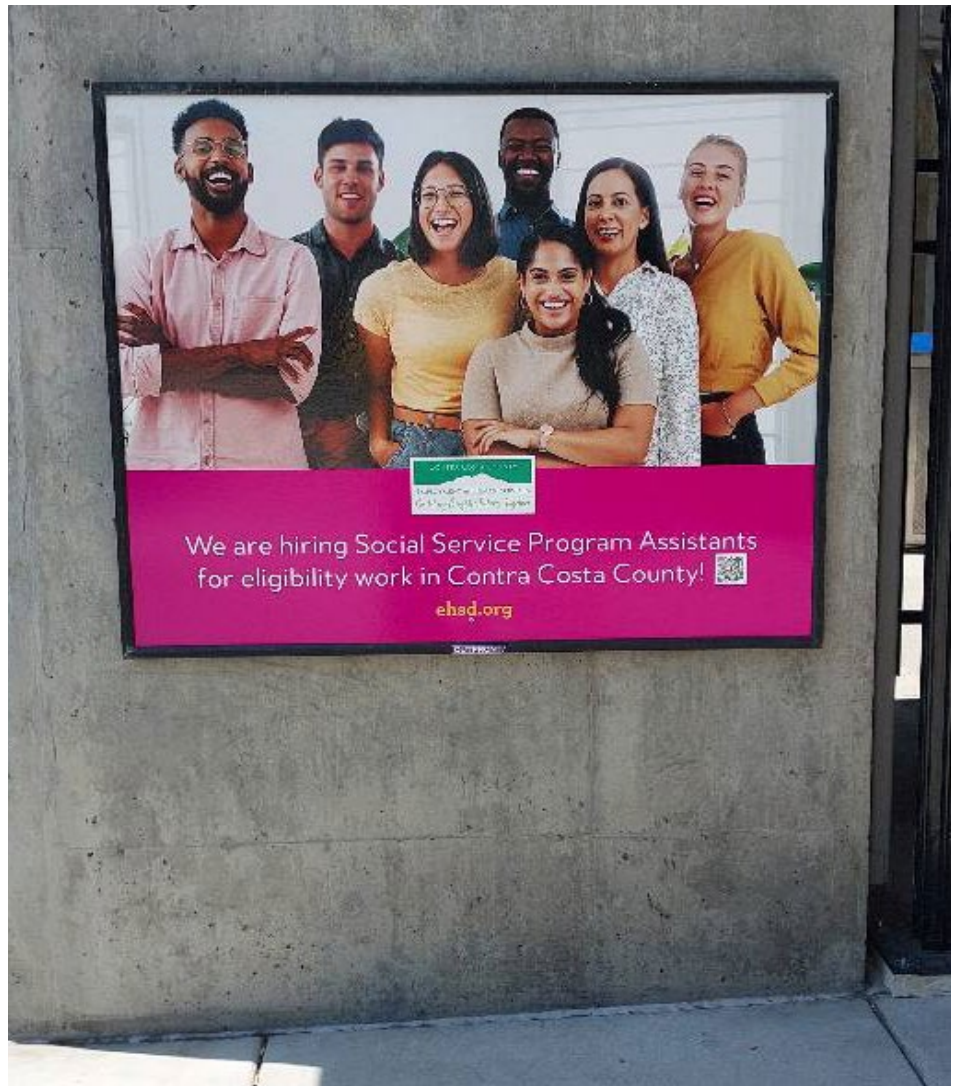
Look Out for Our Staff Recruitment Billboards!

By Larena Baldazo, Web Producer, Community Relations/Media

Community Relations has teamed up with Workforce Services to promote job openings for Social Service Program Assistants (SSPAs). During peak commute hours, look for our digital signs on freeway billboards in the following cities:

- Pleasant Hill
- Antioch
- Dublin
- San Francisco: Bay Bridge Toll Plaza
- Oakland/Emeryville
- Cordelia
- Richmond

This campaign will also be visible to BART commuters at the Walnut Creek, 12th Street (Oakland), and Civic Center (San Francisco) stations, and is part of EHSD's overall effort to have more SSPA's join our team. Check out our social media posts @ContraCostaEHSD on [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) or share our flyer on ehsd.org.



Building Brighter Futures Together

Discover & Go Offers Free Clipper Cards for Select Attractions

Contra Costa County Library is once again offering free Clipper cards for use with [Discover & Go](#) reservations starting August 1st until supplies last. The offer is good for select Discover & Go attractions. County residents, who are 18 or older, can submit a request for Clipper cards by clicking on the banner ad on their Discover & Go pass starting August 1.

Visit the Library's [Discover & Go](#) page, log in with your library card number, and browse for Discover & Go passes by date or attraction. Make your reservation, then print or download your pass shortly before your visit. You can sign up for Clipper cards by viewing your **August–December 2024** reservation on your Discover & Go account, then:

1. Click the “Print/Download” button
2. Click on the “Free transit passes” banner on your Discover & Go pass to request your Clipper cards. The banner will look like this:



Clipper cards will be mailed to cardholders’ homes approximately five business days prior to their museum visit. The offer is limited to one request per household (for up to two \$20 Clipper cards) and is available while supplies last. This promotion is a partnership between [511 Contra Costa](#) and the Library and is intended to encourage the use of public transportation to visit museums.

“There is no better way to enjoy cultural venues, museums and fun attractions around the Bay Area than Discover & Go,” said County Librarian Alison

McKee. “Thanks to 511 Contra Costa you can use public transportation to get there.”

Take advantage of the Discover & Go Clipper card promotion at the following attractions:

- Ardenwood Historic Farm
- Asian Art Museum
- Bay Area Discovery Museum
- Beat Museum
- Bedford Gallery
- California Academy of Sciences
- Cartoon Art Museum
- Contemporary Jewish Museum
- de Young Museum
- Exploratorium
- Freight & Salvage (Berkeley)
- Legion of Honor
- Lindsay Wildlife Experience
- Oakland Museum of California
- Pacific Pinball Museum
- Peralta Hacienda Museum
- Richmond Museum of History
- Ruth Bancroft Garden
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- San Francisco Symphony
- San Jose Museum of Art
- San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles
- Shadelands Ranch
- Smuin Modern Ballet (San Francisco)
- UC Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive
- UC Berkeley Botanical Gardens
- The Tech Interactive
- Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum

Building Safety Reminder

It is important that we all follow building and door security when in county buildings for the safety of our coworkers and guests.

Remember to follow the below procedures:

- Ensure doors close and latch firmly behind you when you enter.
- Each employee should enter the building using their own badge.
- Don't "hold the door" for employees, clients or visitors to enter the building.
- If you forget your key or badge, contact your supervisor and enter through the main building entrance.
- Immediately report lost or stolen badges/keys.
- Maintain control of your access badge and/or building key at all times.
- Don't ask coworkers, custodial, or maintenance staff to let you in the back doors.



Thank you for your vigilance and cooperation in keeping yourself and your colleagues safe.

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

August 26



Women's Equality Day is celebrated August 26th, on the anniversary of the passage of the [19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution](#) in 1920. Today, Women's Equality Day celebrates women's achievements and contributions, and reminds us of women's advancements toward equality, and the unique daily struggles that women still face.

To learn more, visit <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Womens-Equality-Day>.

Elevating Trust in Elections

Contra Costa Elections Launches Countywide Campaign

In light of a growing tide of election misinformation, the [Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder-Elections Department](#) is taking a stand. The Elections Division has launched a far-reaching marketing and community engagement campaign to reassure voters of election integrity and security by shining a light on the comprehensive steps taken to deliver on that promise.

“Elections are more secure than ever and we’re proud of Contra Costa County’s reputation for fair and secure elections. We have to make sure our voters know about the work we’re doing and have the information that inspires faith in our elections,” says Kristin B. Connelly, Contra Costa Registrar of Voters.

A multi-faceted marketing campaign is in place to deliver that message. It includes print, television, radio and digital media ads, and the recruitment and training of nearly 100 election ambassadors who have volunteered to carry forward the election integrity message through social media channels and speaking engagements around the county.

A companion website, www.secure-election.org, includes a comprehensive collection of videos, fact sheets, Q&As and social media graphics illustrating how Contra Costa County protects its elections. All this is complemented by opportunities for the public to observe election activities and the county’s award-winning Certified Election Observer program.

“While trust in Contra Costa County elections is high, we’re facing a growing tide of mis- and disinformation that

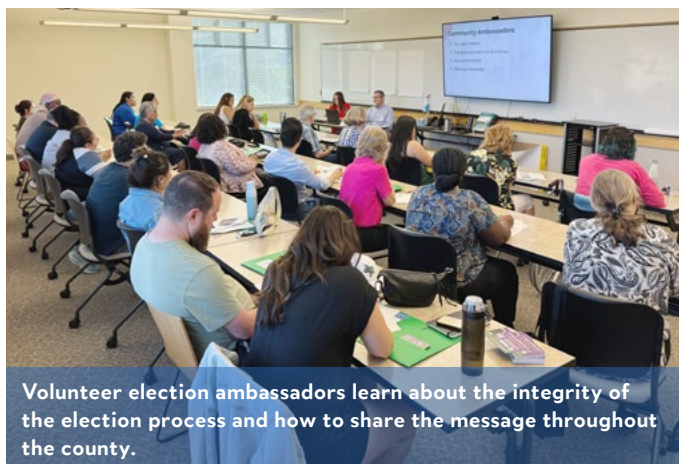
confuses voters and undermines the legitimacy of our elections,” says Dawn Kruger, the Election



Division’s Community and Media Relations Coordinator. “This voter education campaign fights those myths with solid facts and information, equipping volunteers in our community with a host of tools to help put the real story out there about how safe elections are.”

The ambitious and robust campaign is expected to reach every resident of the county, hammering home the many steps and precautions in place to ensure only eligible voters vote, that every legitimate vote is counted, and that the county’s

election system is secure from fraud. The campaign is predicated on transparency, inviting the public to look more closely at how elections are handled and the exhaustive efforts to protect them.



Source: *Contra Costa County Elections*

EHSD SHOUTOUTS

Congratulations to these EHSD staff members for recently achieving a significant accomplishment!



I would like to give a shout out to **Roshunda Ward** who just completed the 10-week series called Leadership Launchpad offered by the Professional and Organizational Development Team, which gave her hands-on practice with the 21st Century Skills in leadership. Roshunda joined CSB in 2023 and quickly became a rising star in the bureau. Roshunda's biggest takeaway:



Roshunda Ward, ASA III, CSB

Stop being a fixer. She says, "Leadership is not about always having or giving the answer, but, teaching them how to go through the process of maximizing their own ability to come up with the answer.

This in turn builds their self-confidence and helps them to grow. Give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, he'll eat the rest of his days." Thank you, Roshunda, for bringing this richness to CSB!

By Christina Reich, DM, CSB

Michelle Mankewich recently earned her certification as a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Child Nutrition Professional. CACFP is a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and provides CSB reimbursement for the meals we serve our children in our centers if we follow their very strict policies around nutrition and serving modalities. Michelle oversees the child nutrition for our childcare programs. Michelle says, "Earning my certification as a CACFP Child Nutrition Professional



Michelle Mankewich, ASA III CSB

allows me to ensure that the children served in the Community Services Bureau childcare centers are receiving healthy meals that support their growth and development thereby allowing every child to get a "Head Start" on a being school ready!" We applaud Michelle for adding to the culture of continuous improvement and quality for CSB and its programs.

By Christina Reich, DM, CSB

If you or a colleague have a work-related milestone or accomplishment, we want to hear about it. Email a 2-3 sentence description and photo to EventsCommittee@ehsd.cccounty.us and you may get a "shout out" in *Headlines* or on EHSD Live!

CONTRACOSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

We Care that You Care

Bobby Stange

Nominated by Rose Castaneda, Accountant II, Fiscal Unit

All who work with **Bobby Stange** know that he consistently exemplifies EHSD's core values. While in the Fiscal Unit, Accountant II **Rose Castaneda** nominated Bobby for our *We Care That You Care* program. Accountant Supervisor **Arti Bhandari** endorsed his nomination and Division Manager **Nancy Hager** is in full support now that Bobby has moved to the Contracts Unit after being promoted to ASA III in December 2023.



No matter what unit he is working in, Bobby consistently creates an inclusive and supportive environment. He readily engages in team-building activities, ensuring that everyone feels valued and supported, and is always responsive and respectful. Bobby also excels in honest and transparent communication, whether it's recognizing achievements or addressing concerns, and fosters a collaborative and trusting work environment. He willingly assists his colleagues, showing a spirit of teamwork during various transitions.

Integrity is a core value for Bobby and his decisions and actions reflect a commitment to doing what is right. He respects diversity by honoring individual differences within his team and ensures that everyone is treated with fairness to foster a sense of belonging for all. We appreciate you and your example, Bobby!

Based on EHSD's Core Values, We Care...You Care is our staff peer recognition program for exceptional internal and external customer service.

CONTRACOSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

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](#)



SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

SERVICE AWARDS

25 YEARS

Lorna Baker, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS

15 YEARS

Yin Ko-Young, Soc Svc Appeals Officer, Admin
Niluka Wann Arachchilage, Teacher-Project, CSB

10 YEARS

Jessie Black, Assistant Director-Project, CSB
Monique M Broussard, Social Casework Assistant, CFS
Analilia Ceja, Medical Program Assistant, WFS

Magnolia Cruz-Allas, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Nicole Hefner, Secretary-Journey Level, CFS
Barbara Henry, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
William T Hodson, Clerk-Senior Level, CFS
Jessica Jimenez, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Deborah Leftridge, Social Worker, AAS
Ashley Payne, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Alicia Pena, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB
Elsa Perez, Social Worker, AAS
Clarissa Ramirez, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Diane J Ridgley, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Tina Scott, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
LaTasha M Shepherd, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS
Toni Thomas, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS
Joleen Yuhre, Soc Svc Program Assistant, WFS

NEW EMPLOYEES

Nia Ablao, Social Worker, AAS
Martin Aguilar, Social Casework Asst., CFS
Roseetha Albert, Information Systems Programmer and
Analyst II, Admin Information & Systems
Robert Barnard, Senior Soc Svc Info Sys Analyst, Admin
Information & Systems
Derrick Bautista, Intermediate Clerk-Project, CSB
Juan Bernal, Social Worker, AAS
Rena Blake, Social Worker, AAS
Angelina Camacho, CNW Transporter, CSB
Arleth Carrillo, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Christina Cervantes-Lopez, Clerk Experienced Level
Manickalakshmi Chithraputhra Pillai, Info Sys Programmer/
Analyst II, Admin Information & Systems
Chris Colburn, Student Intern II, CSB
Cindy Dam, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Fatima Davis, Intermediate Clerk-Project, CSB

Hana Day, Social Casework Asst., CFS
Ritchel Estrada, Registry Training Specialist, AAS
Rosanna Fajardo, Social Worker II, CFS
Nihinlola Fasanya, Social Casework Asst., CFS
Kiaria Flores, Social Worker II, CFS
John Fong, Facilities Manager, Admin Internal Operations
Arjumand Ghufuran, Acct. Clerk Experienced Level, AAS
Andrew Gonzalez, Secretary Journey Level, WFS
Victor Guillen, Social Worker, AAS
Laura Hernandez, Account Clerk Experienced Level, AAS
Katherine Herzfeldt, Clerical Supervisor, WFS
Sabrina Huffstutler, Social Worker, AAS
Chelmesa Johnson, Clerk- Experienced Level, Admin Internal
Operations
Cherise Johnson, Intermediate Clerk, CSB
Livier Johnson Villalobos, Social Worker, WFS

Continued on next page

SERVICE AWARDS | NEW EMPLOYEES | RETIREES

NEW EMPLOYEES

Continued from previous page

Victoria Jones, Social Worker II, CFS
Jerome Jones, Info Systems Technician II, Admin Information & Systems
Luz Esther Juarez, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Ana Lino, Accounting Technician, Admin Internal Operations
Natalie Lopez, Social Worker II, CFS
Julie Lutz, Social Work Supervisor, CFS
Venus McMurrian, Comp Services Manager, CSB
Jose Merlos, Departmental HR Analyst I, Admin Internal Operations
Aaron Nasalga, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Toni Nestore, Social Work Supervisor, CFS
Chinda On, Clerk Experienced Level, WFS
Andriah Payton-Jones, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Dexter Peralta, Secretary Journey Level, AAS
Jamaria Prince, Social Service Program Assistant, WFS

Lydia Quisumbing, Clerk- Experienced Level, Admin Internal Operations
Ariana Rhodes, Social Worker, AAS
LuzMaria Rodriguez, Teacher Assistant Trainee, CSB
Jessica Schaffer, Social Worker III, CFS
Cynthis Sonaco, Clerk Experienced Level, Admin Internal Operations
Theresa Spruner, Intermediate Clerk-Project, CSB
Crystal Taper, Social Worker II, CFS
Tia Tonne, Social Worker II, CFS
Dexter Valencia, Info Systems Technician II, Admin Information & Systems
Elizabeth Wahl-Polivka, Social Casework Asst., CFS
Danyeil Woods, Social Worker III, CFS
Wing Wong, Intermediate Clerk, CSB

RETIREES

Susan Bain, EHS Director of Admin Internal Operations
Monika Bugarin, Social Worker III, CFS
Barbara Crespo, Social Work Supervisor II, CFS
Antonia DeLeon, Clerk-Senior Level, WFS
Carmen Encarnacion, Associate Teacher-Project, CSB
Yesenia Heredia, Eligibility Work Supervisor, WFS
Mercedes Jaime, Social Service Program Assistant, AAS
Sandra Motta, Eligibility Worker III, AAS
Matthew Welch, Info Sys Programmer/Analyst, Admin

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 or (925) 608-4808.**

SPREAD THE WORD

August 2024

- **AUGUST 19** – World Humanitarian Day
- **AUGUST 21** – National Senior Citizens Day
- **AUGUST 26** – Women’s Equality Day
- **AUGUST 28** – Rainbow Bridge Remembrance Day

September 2024

- **HEALTHY AGING MONTH**
- **NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MONTH**
- **SEPTEMBER 2** – Labor Day (holiday)
- **SEPTEMBER 8** – Grandparents’ Day
- **SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15** – Hispanic Heritage Month
- **SEPTEMBER 17** – National IT Professionals Day
- **SEPTEMBER 22-28** – National Employ Older Workers Week
- **SEPTEMBER 22** – Falls Prevention Awareness Day
- **SEPTEMBER 23** – National Family Day



We Care... You Care

CLICK here to learn more about nominating a coworker and see page 24.

Want to know what else we’re doing at EHSD?

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



The next Issue of *Headlines* will publish in early September. Email EHSD *Headlines* at Headlines@ehsd.cccounty.us, by **Tuesday, August 20th** if you have an upcoming event, article, or idea you would like to submit.

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

- September 5 or 19 • 4 to 6 p.m.
- October 3 or 17 • 4 to 6 p.m.
- November 7 or 21 • 4 to 6 p.m.



For more information about becoming a Resource Parent visit us at www.ehsd.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

