



The HHSA Connection

AUGUST 2005

SAFE, HEALTHY AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Working for Operational Excellence!

The Year in Review

Highlights of the Agency's Fiscal Year 2004 - 05 Accomplishments

The Agency achieved a great deal this year to advance its vision of safe, healthy and thriving communities. A sampling includes:

All Regions

- Provided 3,710 low-income, working families free tax preparation assistance through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, resulting in \$5.2 million in state/federal tax refunds.
- Increased by 3.7% (8,133) the number of children enrolled in Medi-Cal and Healthy Families from a baseline of 222,522 to 230,655. This exceeded the 1% growth target, and will enhance access to physical and dental prevention and treatment services.
- Responded in a timely manner to 95% of 2,000 hotline referrals each month in order to assess

children in need of protective services, exceeding the 94.4% federal and State accountability outcome goal.

Central Region

Ensured that 89% (1,048) of youth who received juvenile diversion services had no contact with the juvenile justice system for at least 6 months after their case closed, better than the target of 80%.

North Central Region

Responded to 86% (18 of 21) of referrals under the Drug Endangered Children Program, and enhanced the quality of care provided for at-risk dependent youth.

East Region

Improved outcomes for low-income mothers and their children through the Nurse Family Partnership Program, serving 300 families in East, Central and South Regions. For example, ensured that 94% of women (282) delivered a child with normal birth weight.

Continued on page 2

A Message from Agency Director Jean Shepard

Would it surprise you to know that more than 50% of staff in management classifications in the Agency are more than 50 years old? Or that 30% of these staff have more than 20 years of service? These are some of the interesting statistics we have learned as we look at our Agency work force and talk about succession planning.

Agency Human Resources Director, Jean Vukotich, recently led a "deep dive" to look into this matter, and convened a number of focus groups to explore it further. These focus groups included front line staff, front line supervisors, middle managers and unclassified managers to brainstorm employee development, career paths, coaching and mentoring and succession planning.

We've made significant progress in the last few years in providing employee development/training opportunities, from the Management Development Institute to several administrative/supervisory academies. But we need to do more.

The Agency Executive Team has committed to making this a goal for the current year. We will emphasize development and growth at all levels of the Agency. We will build a "coaching" culture, increasing opportunities to grow through unique assignments, and providing mentoring opportunities. We have an abundance of talent in the Agency, and we need to make sure we provide all of our staff with the opportunity to advance and be successful. Over the next few months you will learn more about our succession planning efforts and opportunities for work place development.



Jean Shepard

For More Information

[County of San Diego CAO Proposed Operational Plan Fiscal Year 2005-2006 & 2006-2007](#)

The County's Chief Administrative Officer, **Walt Ekard**, prepares this plan in the spring for approval by the public and Board of Supervisors. The plan reviews past accomplishments and looks at future goals - and ties the budget to the services that will be provided.

[Additional Operational Plan & Budget Information](#)

Review plans that have been adopted in the past, and changes that were made along the way.

Give Your Loved Ones a Boost

Vaccinations Offer Protection Against Numerous Diseases

August is National Immunization Awareness Month. The San Diego County Immunization Initiative (I-3), a coalition of more than 150 public and private health-related organizations, is asking people throughout the region to check if they and their loved ones are up-to-date on their immunizations. At this time of year, parents are enrolling children in school, older students are entering college, and seniors and others are preparing for the upcoming influenza season. It's a good time to think about immunizations.

Vaccines provide protection both to individuals and the community by preventing the transmission of infectious diseases to persons who cannot be, or have not been, immunized. "Before vaccines protecting against diseases such as measles, polio and pertussis became available, those diseases caused tens of thousands of deaths each year in the U.S.," said **Nancy Bowen, M.D.**, Public Health Officer for San Diego County. "Because today's vaccines are recognized as safe and effective, members of our community can and should be protected by being up-to-date on their immunizations."

The CDC and HHS's Immunization Branch recommend that children receive vaccines against 13 infectious diseases, including pertussis and measles. Adolescents and adults should also be vaccinated against certain diseases.

For more information about vaccines, vaccine-preventable diseases and other helpful materials, contact the San Diego County Immunization Initiative at (619) 692-8661, or visit www.immunization-sd.org.



Immunizations at Work

In 2004, 116 cases of pertussis, or whooping cough were reported in San Diego County. This is an increase over the last few years, although not as high as 2002's yearly total of 230 reported cases.*

In contrast, no cases of polio, measles, diphtheria, tetanus or Haemophilus influenzae type B were reported in the County in 2004.*

To request additional health statistics describing health behaviors, diseases and injuries for specific populations, health trends and comparisons to national targets, please call the County's Community Health Statistics Unit at (619) 515-4318. To access the latest data and data links, including the 2004 Core Public Health Indicators document, visit www.sdhealthstatistics.com.

* Immunization Branch, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, 2005.

Central Region

Working for Kids - Making Sure Our
Children are Cared For and Protected!

More Kids Buckled Up

Car Safety Seat Distribution Program Makes a Difference

In partnership with Children's Hospital and Health Center of San Diego, HHS developed a countywide child injury prevention program for low-income families to raise parental awareness and knowledge concerning vehicle and home safety. This partnership builds upon an existing car safety seat distribution program and links car seat distribution and passenger safety education to injury prevention life skills. During a three-month period, more than 2,000 safety risk assessments and plans were completed and 827 car safety seats were distributed. The success of the program is a direct result of the multiple countywide networks and linkages established by the County and Children's Hospital.



Stars of the Fair

Adoption and Foster Family Opportunities Promoted at County Fair



San Diego County Adoptions and Foster Care Licensing teamed up during the months of June and July to recruit potential foster families and adoptive families at the San Diego County Fair. The Fair opened on June 10th and ran through the Fourth of July holiday weekend. The recruitment booth was decorated with professional pictures of more than 40 foster children waiting for adoptive placements. Some of our most difficult to place children were displayed in hopes of finding permanent homes for those waiting for a "forever family." The booth fit into the Fair's 2005 theme of "Cinema Summer." The booth proposed the belief that "Every child deserves a home...YOURS." Fairgoers were encouraged to "Be the star in the life of a child - ADOPT."

More than 75 County employees from Child Welfare Services assisted in recruitment efforts and answered questions about our waiting children, our foster care system, the licensing process, and the adoption homestudy process. Interested families were invited to attend foster care licensing orientations or to complete formal inquiries to begin the adoption homestudy process. As a result of this event, more than 150 interested families and individuals are being invited to attend a San Diego County Adoption orientation.



Shirley Williams-Fink and Lori Correa share information about adoption and foster care with San Diego County Fairgoers.



Congrats Class of 2005!

Spotlight on San Pasqual Academy Brand New Alumni

Senior year of high school is an exciting time for any teenager, but for San Pasqual Academy foster youth, it is especially thrilling. Highlights started on June 10th, as 90 Academy students and their guests attended prom at the Hotel del Coronado, enjoying dinner and dancing. A senior brunch was held on June 23rd. The graduating seniors received duffel bags



The future looks bright for San Pasqual Academy's graduating class.

and laundry baskets filled with essentials for college and transitional living from the Assistance League and a watch from San Diego Nice Guys, a philanthropic organization. The top five academic seniors also received digital cameras from Sony. The Friends of San Pasqual Academy sponsored both events.

On June 24th, 22 seniors received their high school diplomas at the Academy's fourth graduation ceremony. The graduates were cheered on by their family, friends, and Academy staff, as well as First District County Supervisor **Greg Cox** and retired Juvenile Court Presiding Judge **James Milliken**. Other County representatives applauding the graduates' success included: **Helen Robbins-Meyer**, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer; **Jean Shepard**, HHSA Director; and **Joan Zinser**, Interim Child Welfare Services Director. Four graduates will attend four-year colleges, 3 have enrolled in technical/trade schools, 11 are enrolling in community colleges, 1 has enlisted in the U.S. Navy, and 3 others will seek full-time employment. Approximately \$200,000 in scholarships was awarded to the graduates to support them in their future endeavors.

Earning Respect

The Meeting Place becomes first ICCD certified clubhouse in California

The Meeting Place has earned certification from the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD). It has the distinction of being the first officially certified clubhouse in the State of California.

This is a remarkable achievement that the members themselves elected to pursue about three years ago. In order to achieve this status, the clubhouse needed to approve and substantially implement the standards found on the [ICCD Web site](#). This process included developing transitional employment opportunities outside the clubhouse in private business, which they achieved and are continuing to develop.

The members and staff of *The Meeting Place* worked hard toward this objective and deserve to feel proud of the accomplishment.

For more information, contact **Sharron Hedenkamp**, Director at: themeetingplace@mhsinc.org or (619) 294-2058.

For information on clubhouses in San Diego County (and other Mental Health issues), visit the [San Diego Network of Care for Mental Health](#).

What is a clubhouse?

From the ICCD Web site: "A clubhouse is a place where people who have had mental illness come to rebuild their lives. The participants are called members, not patients and the focus is on their strengths not their illness. Work in the clubhouse, whether it is clerical, data input, meal preparation or reaching out to their fellow members, provides the core healing process. Every opportunity provided is the result of the efforts of the members and small staff, who work side by side, in a unique partnership. One of the most important steps members take toward greater independence is transitional employment, where they work in the community at real jobs. Members also receive help in securing housing, advancing their education, obtaining good psychiatric and medical care, and maintaining government benefits. Membership is for life so members have all the time they need to secure their new life in the community."

What is the ICCD?

Mission statement: "The International Center for Clubhouse Development is a global network creating opportunities for people living with mental illness to be respected members of society."

Regional Program Support

Welfare to Work is Working

Regional Events Celebrate Success

In May and June, the Regional Program Support Division coordinated five recognition events around the County. The events were to acknowledge and thank local businesses, community partners and staff for their collaborative efforts in helping San Diego County achieve the highest rate statewide of helping those receiving public assistance to find and keep employment. Each event was co-hosted by the regional Welfare to Work provider in that region.

Appearances by members of the Board of Supervisors, **Jean Shepard**, HHS Director and Regional General Managers, as special guests, underscored the appreciation being extended by the County for everyone's efforts in the success of the County's implementation of Welfare Reform locally.

Highlights included panels with success stories told by past Welfare to Work participants who related how their experience in the program changed their lives. Additional highlights included motivational speakers, video presentations with more client testimonials, and specific awards presented to the many community partners that helped with the continuing success of the Welfare to Work employment case management services.

Appreciation goes to the many Agency staff who worked together to coordinate these events and ensure their success.

Planning for the Worst

Disaster Drill Helps Prepare Staff

Have you ever wondered how the Agency manages a disaster? In an emergency, Agency executives and other managers report to the Departmental Operations Center (DOC) to direct Agency business. In addition to coordinating its own services, the HHS A DOC also supports the Office of Emergency Services' Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is responsible for working with other city and State government organizations.

The 2003 wildfires gave County employees experience in dealing with large-scale disasters. Ongoing trainings strengthen preparedness and develop better systems. On June 10th and June 29th, two parallel DOC exercises were conducted. These exercises, titled "Operation Dirty Bomb," were based upon a simulated scenario of a dirty bomb explosion at Petco Park. A complete, eight-hour scenario was developed before the exercises to provide a realistic environment for potential DOC staff to understand the roles, responsibilities, and relationships within the DOC and with the EOC. Participants reported to the DOC in three shifts to provide experience in updating oncoming shifts and to train a larger number of people.

After the exercises, debriefing sessions were held where the participants identified areas for improvement in the tools and processes. Changes will be implemented based upon this input.

This was the second exercise conducted for the HHS A DOC responders. Future ongoing training and exercises are planned. Together, these should significantly increase the level of preparedness to continue critical services in the Agency, and subsequently the County of San Diego, in the event of a real disaster.



Jean Vukotich, Group Human Resources Manager; Henry Tarke, Children's Mental Health Services Assistant Deputy Director; and Nick Macchione, North Region General Manager participate in disaster preparedness training.

Have Some News? Proud of a Co-worker?

Please submit article ideas, or Kudos items (and photos) to your section editor listed in the box to the right, or to Jennifer Mallory, via Outlook e-mail (Jennifer.Mallory@sdcounty.ca.gov).

Change a Law for Your Clients' Good

Have you ever thought about changing laws to make it easier to serve your clients? The bottom line is that most everything we do as County employees is based on law, and from your view on the front line, you may have a great idea for a way to change the law (or create a new one) that would make it easier, more efficient, or more cost effective to serve our clients. If so, tell your manager! Managers play a key role in this legislative sponsorship process. Who knows - one day your idea might just be a bill on Capitol Hill!

A legislative sponsorship training for managers is scheduled for August 10th, 1:30 - 3:30. For more information, contact **Dottie Sullivan** at (619) 515-6593.



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An ethical workplace is your right...and your responsibility.

Director's Call-In

Share your ideas and concerns with HHS A Director Jean Shepard on the **first Friday of each month, from 8:00 a.m. - noon, at (619) 515-6555.**