

Family Self-Sufficiency News

Upcoming Career Fairs

- **January 16, 2008**– HIRE-QUEST: Embassy Suites, 4550 La Jolla Village Drive, 92122 (8:30am-12:30pm). For more info: http://www.hirequest.com/events_sd2.html
- **March 18, 2008 and July 24, 2008**– Monster Jobs Fair: Holiday Inn San Diego - On The Bay, 1355 Harbor Drive, 92101 (11am-2pm). For more info: http://www.nationalcareerfaairs.com/monster/job_fairs/details/CA/San_Diego/March/18/2008/ or call (619) 232-3861.

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First Time Home Buyers Classes

To find classes in your area or to register for a class please call 1.800.308.2227 x1436. You can also look online at: <http://www.crediteducation.org/index.php>

Successful FSS Graduates!

We received the following inspirational letter from a recent FSS graduate named Linda:

It's not as if as a little girl I dreamt about my future saying, 'When I grow up I hope to be low-income and need housing assistance.' It just happened that way. And for a while I let it control my life, thinking there was little to no hope and that my children would probably end up in the same situation. However, this could not be further from the truth. Several years and many college courses later, I now have my teaching degree. Never in my wildest dreams, did I think I was smart enough to get a degree. However, slowly but surely, the credits started adding up and before I knew it so did my degrees. Each class built my confidence to conquer my fears of not being *good enough*. I was able to prove to myself, and many others I was worthy of succeeding. This was only possible due to the assistance of the Housing Authority and the County of San Diego. I asked if



I could write this article, because society enforces the belief that people on welfare or housing are lazy and incapable of making change. This is an unfair and untrue statement. You too can have a college degree and a future for you, and your family. I am living proof that there is hope.

When asked what advice she would pass on to other FSS participants Linda said, "Take advantage of the opportunity, believe in yourself and work with your FSS worker to see what advice they have to offer. Look into a community college for general-ed classes, or community classes for GED's. You can be what ever you want to be, as long as you believe in yourself."

More Successful Graduates on Page 3!

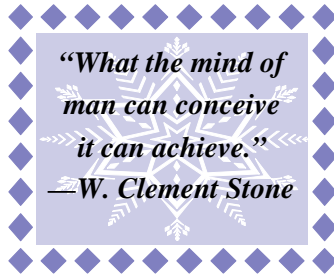
Pre-schooling Your Children

Although you'd love to keep their smiling faces around forever, more and more people are finding that Preschool is hugely beneficial. Not only does it help socialize kids and help them with group situations, but also kids that go to pre-school often go further in school and as a result make more money. Thankfully, in California with programs like Head Start, First 5, and San Diego CARES, children from low-income families can reap the benefits of Pre-Kindergarten education. The Head Start Program has 169 childcare centers in the San Diego area serving kids from birth to Kindergarten age and also offers various services for the entire family. First 5 San Diego, in association with San Diego CARES, also offers the same services in addition to kits for new parents (available in English and Spanish for free). To see if you qualify simply go to the websites listed below and register online.

<http://www.sandiegoheadstart.org>

<http://www.first5sandiego.com>

<http://www.ymcacrs.org/>



Almost Time for Taxes

It's nearing that time of year again, tax time. See if you're eligible to receive Earned Income Tax Credit. The EITC is geared towards low-wage taxpayers that make under \$39,000 a year. It is greatly beneficial because it returns a portion of the tax money you've already paid. When thinking about filing taxes this coming tax season, take advantage of the free tax assistance available. Check our next newsletter for a list of tax assistance centers around San Diego County.

Disaster-Proof Your Family

Firestorm 2007 was definitely one for the books, being referred to as one of the worst fires ever in California. We hope that all our FSS families were safe during this trying time. Here in Southern California we are most susceptible to wildfires and earthquakes, and with Firestorm 2007 fresh in our minds, here are some suggestions to safeguard your family in the time of a disaster.

In preparation for a fire:

- Sit down with your family to create a plan in the case of an emergency, and designate a meeting place outside. Get out and stay out.
- Practice evacuating your home low to the ground and with your eyes closed.
- Teach and practice the stop, drop and roll method
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters or police, but to get out quickly and call for help from another location.
- And most importantly, install smoke alarms. Check the batteries every month and change them once a year.

In preparation for an earthquake:

- Hang heavy items, such as pictures or mirrors, away from beds or couches. Place breakable items in lower cabinets with latches. Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- During an earthquake, **DROP** to the ground; take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table or desk near you, cover your face and head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- If you are outside, move away from buildings, streetlights, trees, overpasses, elevated expressways and utility wires.
- Stay inside until shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. **Expect aftershocks.**
- Inspect utilities for damages or leaks and know how to shut them off.
- To better prepare your household for an emergency, visit www.sdcountyemergency.com for lifesaving tips and a Family Disaster Plan.

San Diego Gas & Electric Offers Assistance

Assistance with bills may sound too good to be true, but San Diego Gas & Electric’s Outreach Around the Region Program lends a hand to members of the community that face difficulties paying their gas and electric bills. This comes at a time when crude oil prices are skyrocketing and raising fuel and energy costs. The bill assistance programs are geared towards low-income households and can offer either discounts of up to 20% or financial aid up to \$250 a month, to those that qualify. On their website, SDG&E goes into detail about the variety of assistance plans they offer that might be beneficial to your family. Special consideration is given to families that spend a substantial amount of their income on electricity due to having children under the age of 3, elderly, or those with specific medical needs in the home, but anyone can qualify. More specifically, the programs mentioned here are: California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE), Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA), Neighbor-to-Neighbor and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). To find out more, you can call 2-1-1 to get directed to the nearest participating agencies. Additional information is available 24 hours a day at 1-800-411-SDGE, or visit SDG&E’s website at http://www.sdge.com/residential/assistance_services.shtml. If you wish to apply, download an application from their website, complete it and if you are eligible based on total household income and household size, you can start receiving the discounts as soon as 30 days after SDG&E receives your completed application.



Number of persons in household	Maximum Annual Income	
	CARE/ Energy Team	FERA
1 or 2	\$29,300	Not Applicable
3	\$34,400	\$34,401 - 43,000
4	\$41,500	\$41,501 - 51,800
5	\$48,600	\$48,601 - 60,600
6	\$55,700	\$55,701 - 69,400
Each Additional	\$7,100	\$7,100 - 8,800



More Successful FSS Graduates

“I have graduated college at the age of 38 and was able to make a whole new career change. After almost 8 years of graveyard shifts I am able to be home at night with my family.” - Marion



“Today, I am receiving my highest degree of pay yet and am privileged to be working in an educational environment that allows me to practice and build my personal and administrative skills.” -Lynda

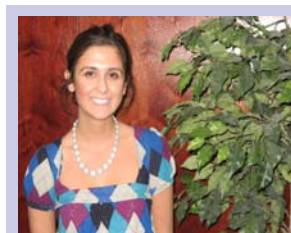


“I never dreamed of becoming so successful. It has helped me get a car, and what it has done for me, and my self-esteem is beyond words. I am just a happier person now and I can’t ever imagine not working.” -Tammy



Introducing Our New Student Worker

Some of you have already met Frankie over the phone, but we’d like to take this time out to welcome her to our Family Self Sufficiency staff. As a student at San Diego State University, Frankie is studying under the Public Administration College. Frankie also comes to us from a Section 8 family; and is a success story being that her family is completely self-sufficient now. To reach Frankie at the FSS Program you can email at: Faranak.Nazari@sdcounty.ca.gov or call her at (858) 694-4809.



This coming year will prove to be an exciting one in regards to the presidential elections. As always, those that are eligible to vote are highly encouraged to voice their opinions with a ballot. The County is encouraging people to register as absentee voters. Not only is it a convenient way to vote, but you have more time and less pressure to make your choices. To request a mail ballot, visit the Registrar of Voters website at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/voters/Eng/Findex.html>, and print out the simple application that you can mail, fax or deliver back to the registrar. This is also a great opportunity to apply to be a poll worker for the 2008 elections. The Registrar is looking for U.S. citizens that are eligible to vote, and that speak English. Spots are open for College students registered to vote as well as High School students, at least 16 years in age, looking for community service. Poll workers will receive \$75-\$150 per day, depending on their assigned tasks, and bilingual poll workers will earn an extra \$15 a day. Take advantage of this great opportunity to get involved in what could turn out to be the most interesting Presidential election. To apply for a poll worker position visit <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/voters/Eng/election/PollWorkerNeededEnglish.htm> for more information.

2008 Elections



Board of Supervisors



Greg Cox, District 1
 Dianne Jacob, District 2
 Pam Slater-Price, District 3
 Ron Roberts, District 4
 Bill Horn, District 5

Chief Administrative Officer
 Walter F. Ekard

Department of Housing and
 Community Development
 Catherine Licherman,
 Director



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