



WESTCARE EXPRESS

FEBRUARY 2017

THE WESTCARE EXPRESS NEWSLETTER

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The Yarn Connection

By Michelle White, Program Director - CCTRP San Diego, CA

The women that we serve at the Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program (CCTRP) in San Diego make a concerted effort to give back and have a positive impact on the community with their volunteer work.



The Crochet Club worked all year to create hand made blankets, scarves, mittens, purses, leg warmers, booties, and stuffed animals to donate to our neighbors at the San Diego Center for Children. These are some of the comments that accompanied the homemade gifts:

"Dear Little Brothers and Little Sisters, I hope that you enjoy all of the items that the ladies and I have made for you guys. I know times are tough and sometimes very lonely. I know how you feel. I may have never met you, but I do feel I understand you because I have been where you've been. Never give up, especially on yourself. You are truly loved." – **Darlene N.**

"I really enjoy crocheting for the children because it is something I can do and make them happy. Crocheting has made me feel more connected to my children. I also have a sense of accomplishment. I really love that we have this activity here at CCTRP." – **Nicole J.**

Thank you, Ladies, for touching young lives, making a difference, and *Uplifting the Human Spirit.*



WISCONSIN: *In the News ~ Youth Action Council*

(Excerpted from Newscast)

By Mike Anderson, WISN Reporter

Link: <http://www.wisn.com/article/teens-hand-out-free-gun-locks-to-prevent-accidental-shooting-deaths/8543761>



Unintentional shootings are responsible for many injuries and deaths that could be prevented, and some Milwaukee teenagers are taking action by giving away free gun locks. Last spring, a Milwaukee mother was accidentally shot to death by her 2-year-old son who got hold of an unsecured gun. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said seven children die each day in the United States from gunshot wounds.

That statistic has prompted a call to action by Milwaukee's WestCare Wisconsin Youth Action Council.

"Show your love for life by locking down your guns," said one member of the Youth Action Council.

The council has launched a new program called Love Up, Lock Down, Show your Love for Life by Locking Down Your Guns. Teens are going door to door and appearing at neighborhood events giving away gun locks. The gun locks are paid for with a grant the kids received from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

THE CULTURE CORNER: *A Celebration of History*

For centuries, a rich history from the continent of Africa was hidden from people, and during the month of February, we celebrate the past, present, and future.



Images courtesy of Overlanding West Africa

These pictures depict traditional masquerades that represent cultural and religious events involving the wearing of masks to chase away negativity. The masquerade on stilts is known as Chakaba (pronounced as shah-kah-bah) in Western African and the Mocko Jumbi in the Caribbean.

Chakaba is actually the spiritual police of the village or community and brings blessings to the festivities. The Chakaba is also used by parents and elders to teach values and discipline.

The height of the individual on stilts is a reminder to look up to the great things our ancestors did and represents maintaining balance in life. The mask and costume contains objects that are flora (plant), fauna (animal), mineral (earth), aqua (water, the sea), pants (man) and skirt (woman).



Photo courtesy of Traveling Gal @ Panoramio

It brings forth the concept that these things are important, and a healthy world must strive to be in balance with nature for harmony, peace, and continuity.



FLORIDA: *Sweet Dreams in Marathon*

By Julia Grattan, Peer Support Specialist

A woman we serve at Guidance/Care Center's Wellness Program has limited heart function, which means she can't sleep flat on a bed. She must sleep in a propped up position in a reclining chair, but the one she had was broken.

Working with my colleague **Elizabeth Sampson**, we researched how we could procure a new or gently used recliner. We submitted paper work to a local realty company in the Keys that makes donations to those in need and we reached out to friends in the realty business to see if anyone had a recliner.

After doing some searching, a friend found an almost new recliner. Using Elizabeth's truck, my colleagues **Dean Rody** and **Andrew Bulla** helped me pick up the deluxe recliner and delivered it to its new home.

I am incredibly grateful to Dean, Elizabeth, Rody and our friends in the community, who made this happen. The woman we serve is very happy and thankful for her new recliner, and we all feel better knowing she has what she needs to sleep safely!



FLORIDA: *Martin Luther King - Day of Caring Event*



WestCare GulfCoast - Florida staff and people we serve participated in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Caring event held at Tropicana Field in St Petersburg.

People we serve at GulfCoast's Emerge, Wemerge, and Focus residential programs handed out 100 health & wellness bags which included men's and women's hygiene kits, personal first aid kits, pedometers, and nutritional information. 20 visitors received a free home blood pressure monitor. Everyone who participated did a great job telling all who stopped by about our local programs.



FLORIDA: *Lights! Camera! Project Impact!!*

By Herven Seraphin, Prevention Specialist



The Village South's Prevention Program, Project IMPACT, targets youth in middle school and high school to increase the number of Miami-Dade County students who are alcohol-free and abstain from the use of marijuana.

Gang Alternative is another local nonprofit organization in Miami-Dade County that assists adolescents and families from Miami's high-risk inner city neighborhoods. They are currently working with Island Television to produce a new teen talk show called *The Spot*, which is hosted by teenagers and targets adolescent audiences. *The Spot* focuses on discussing various issues and subjects that affect young people today.

Most recently, Gang Alternative reached out to Project IMPACT to appear on the television segment to discuss

underage substance use in our community.

Prevention Specialist, **Herven Seraphin**, appeared on the segment, which discussed topics like the most used drugs, how drugs are accessed, and why teens use drugs.

Mr. Seraphin also touched on the warning signs for substance use, and offered some ideas on how teens could avoid the peer pressure usually associated with drug experimentation. *The Spot* was a wonderful platform to allow Project IMPACT the opportunity to showcase what services The Village South's Prevention Department offers to youth in the community.

The Project IMPACT segment is available on *The Spot's* YouTube and Facebook pages.



FLORIDA: *A Holiday Highlight and Clever Idea*

By Kristin Flores - MLS, Counselor

The holidays can be a difficult time for some of the people we serve at the Guidance/Care Center. In an effort to help them through this challenging time, we came up with the idea of the Offender Re-entry Program (ORP) Gratitude Christmas Tree.



Each time an individual came in to see one of our staff members, I asked them to write what they were grateful for today on an ornament, and then hang the ornament on the tree. It didn't take long for the trend to catch on. Soon, they were coming into my office to write on their ornament! Here are a few moments of gratitude they shared:

"I am grateful to be clean and sober!"

"I am grateful I have ORP! I love ORP!!"

"I am grateful for my health and the support ORP gives me"

It was a success!



INDUSTRY NEWS: *Hospitals Retrain Staff to Minimize Opioid Prescriptions*

(Excerpted with permission from Partnership for Drug-Free Kids)

A growing number of hospitals across the country are rewriting protocols and retraining staff in an effort to minimize opioid prescriptions, PBS NewsHour reports. The changes are most pronounced in emergency departments.

At the University of Kentucky Albert B. Chandler Hospital, emergency room doctors used to give opioid painkillers right away. Dr. **Phillip Chang**, the hospital's

chief medical officer, says now doctors, pharmacists, and nurses use non-opioid pain relievers like Advil or Tylenol first. They try multiple regimens before considering opioids.

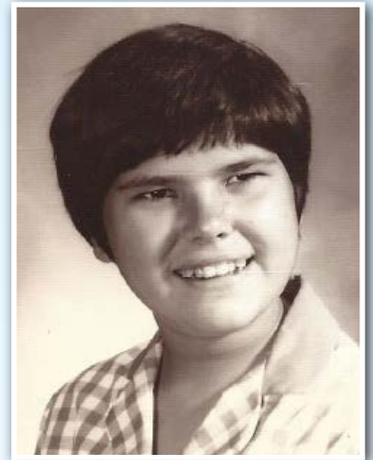


For more on this topic, visit drugfree.org.

This Month's Question: *"What was your favorite grade in school, and why?"*

"My favorite year of school was 7th grade because of the Language Arts teacher, Mrs. Amy Belsaas. She reminded me of a loving grandmother with her soft kind voice. That year she gave us a packet of questions that we had to look up in the library. There were questions from the Almanac, questions from the dictionary, questions from encyclopedias, from biographies and autobiographies and novels, from maps and Atlases and we had two weeks to find all the answers. I loved it. She gave good clues and I had a lot of fun combing through the library searching for these answers. This proved to be the perfect lesson for me as I became a newspaper reporter for ten years."

- **Barbara Ruiter**, Administrative Assistant - FAVA (IA)



"My favorite grade in school was third grade. I think it was because my teacher Mrs. Collins spent quality time teaching me and made me feel as though I could do anything I set my mind to."

- **Yvette Ennis**, Case Manager - The Living Room (CA)

"The eighth grade was my favorite grade because I talked and ate candy when I was not supposed to and would get referrals to the counselor's office. (But) The eighth grade taught me self-discipline, which I now teach my clients."

- **Rosalinda Nepomuceno**, Certified Counselor - San Diego, CA





THE QUESTION CORNER: February 2017 (Con't.)



"My favorite grade was kindergarten because it introduced me to a new setting that would eventually allow me to achieve my dreams. My mother often said: 'With an education, you are everyone's equal; without one, you are everyone's victim.' She prepared me for education as an outlet for achievement.

My first day of school allowed me the opportunity to explore things that could and would lead to something more than being a ghetto rat in New York City. I am all that I am today because my first day of school was built up as a portal to a positive future."

- **Dr. Herbert Cruz, MD, California**

Next Month's Question (March 2017): *"What is the one thing most people would find surprising about you?"*

Please send your response and a photo by Friday, February 17th to john.wallace@westcare.com.



"Oh, My Funny Valentine..."

If love is blind, why is lingerie so popular?

Money saving tip: Break up on February 13th, get back together on February 15th. (David Letterman)

I love you so much! (Less than my dog, but a lot)



FOUNDATION: *Annual Board Retreat 2017*



On the evening of Thursday, January 19th, the Board of Directors for WestCare Foundation, WestCare senior staff, distinguished guests, and community partners gathered in Henderson, NV, to mark the beginning of the 2017 Annual Board Retreat.

Peggy Quigg, Chief of Staff, served as the evening's emcee as each region was introduced with colorful anecdotes, historical references, and updates on new programs, services, and staff. **Dee Wirth**, Director of the Women and Children's Campus, took the stage to tell her story, providing an excellent reminder of why the weekend Board retreat is so important.

Throughout the weekend, Board members attended committee meetings, heard presentations from each of WestCare's Regions, and participated in valuable discussions on topics like integrating behavioral health with primary health and navigating the changing health care landscape.

We are thankful for our legions of dedicated volunteers serving not only on our Board but also on numerous committees and Community Action Councils. Their tireless work allows us to serve thousands every day and to truly "*uplift the human spirit*" in communities across the country.

FOUNDATION: *Tips and Techniques for Good Email Etiquette*

Courtesy of Jennifer Hilton, Director of Training and Technology



Don't Abuse the "Reply All"

Only use *Reply All* if you really need your message to be seen by every person who received the original message. Sending off irrelevant or unnecessary replies to everyone on the list can be annoying and confusing.

Use the BCC Field (Blind Carbon Copy)

When sending an email to a large number of staff or to "All Staff", put all the email addresses in the "To: BCC" line to help avoid the *Reply All* mishaps.*

* *Note: For most staff this should be the ONLY time the BCC line is used.*

Answer Swiftly

The golden rule for email is to reply within *24 hours*, and preferably within the same working day. If your response is complicated, send an initial email confirming that you received the email and will respond as soon as possible.

Abbreviations and Emotions

Be wary of using email abbreviations such as BTW (by the way) and LOL (laugh out loud) in business emails. Some people don't know what they mean, so best to avoid them. Emoticons, such as the smiley :-), don't belong in business emails unless a relaxed form of communication has been established.

Do Not Write in ALL CAPS

IF YOU WRITE USING ALL CAPITALIZED LETTERS IT SEEMS LIKE YOU ARE SHOUTING!! In addition to sending the wrong tone, it is difficult to read and might trigger an unwanted response in the form of a "flame email" (you get yelled back at!). Avoid using all caps in emails.

For more information or to request information on other topics please email training@westcare.com.

LGBT COUNCIL: *Obama's LGBTQ Legacy*



For LGBTQ Americans, saying farewell to the most pro-LGBTQ President in American history gives us a major case of the feels. When POTUS has your back, it's difficult to let him go. President **Barack Obama** and his Administration evolved into strong LGBTQ advocates that made momentous strides to advance equality and justice for all LGBTQ Americans.

While it's too soon to assess the full scope of Obama's legacy, the LGBTQ community salutes the President for all the ways he stood with us.

Repealing Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT)

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In 2010, Obama signed bipartisan legislation to repeal DADT, allowing lesbian, gay, and bisexual Americans to

serve openly in the Armed Forces. This change in military culture led to the Defense Department recently allowing trans people to serve in the Armed Forces.

Supporting Marriage Equality

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In 2011, the Obama administration announced that the Department of Justice would no longer defend the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which stated that marriage must be defined as only between a man and woman. This paved the way for the Supreme Court decision to strike down section 3 of DOMA, declaring it unconstitutional. In 2015, marriage equality became the law of the land after the Supreme Court's historic decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.



LGBT COUNCIL: *Obama's LGBT Legacy (Con't.)*

Ensuring a Diverse Administration

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The Obama administration included a record number of openly LGBTQ officials serving across the federal government.

Supporting LGBTQ Health

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Obama's Administration passed the Affordable Care Act, supported legislative efforts to ban the use of conversion therapy against minors, required hospitals accepting government funding to allow visitation rights for LGBTQ patients, funded a national resource center for older LGBTQ individuals, and developed and released the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States.

Supporting Transgender Individuals

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Obama worked with the State Department and the Social Security Administration to allow Americans to state a gender on their passport and other legal documents based on their identity, not the gender assigned at birth. Guidelines were also issued directing public schools nationwide to allow students to use the bathroom and locker room that matches their gender identity, or risk losing funding.

Strengthening Hate-Crime Laws

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Obama expanded hate-crime legislation through the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act to include crimes motivated by gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability.

Recognizing LGBTQ History & Contributions

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In 2016, the Stonewall Inn, the birthplace of the modern gay-rights movement, became the first national monument honored for its role in LGBTQ history.

From realizing marriage equality to removing barriers to opportunity, President Obama helped the LGBTQ community make history.

"I could not be prouder of the transformation that's taken place in our society just in the last decade," remarked President Obama during his final press conference in January. *"The primary heroes in this stage of our growth as a democracy and a society are all the individual activists, and sons and daughters and couples who courageously said, this is who I am and I'm proud of it."*



NEVADA: *A Long and Lovely Relationship*

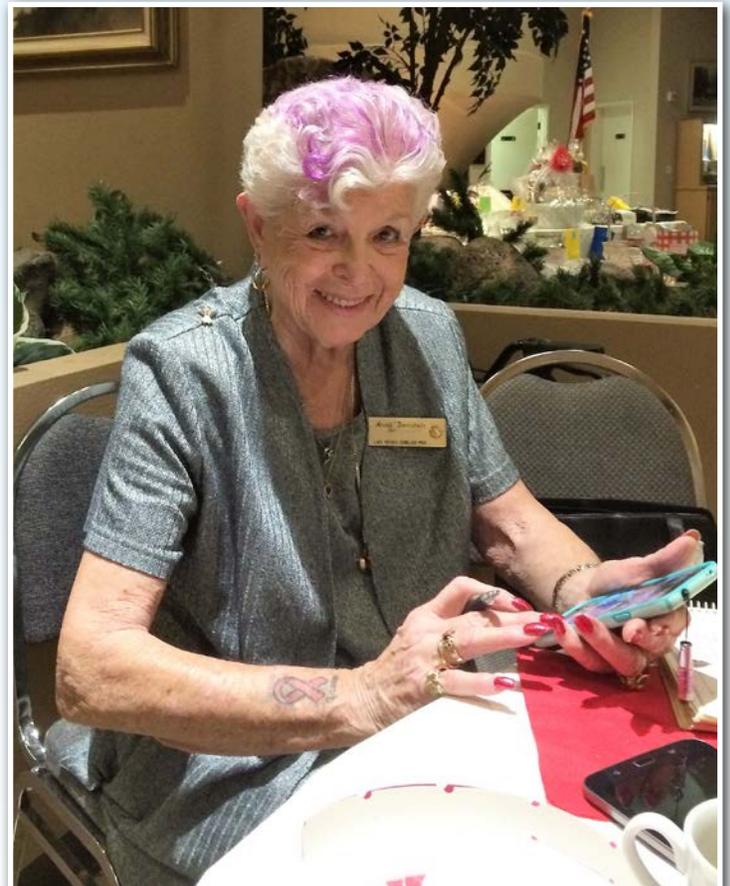
Submitted by Darlene Terrill

WestCare Nevada was invited to the Las Vegas Emblem Club installation ceremony where a check for \$600 was given to provide assistance with our Veteran Women/Women with Children Emergency Shelter program. We are eternally grateful for the on-going donations this club has provided for our agency the last 26 years. This is a hard working group of women, including several of our CAC members, who raise funds yearlong to help charities meet the needs that may not be funded otherwise.

We are incredibly grateful for this club and all they have done over the years. They have made a difference!



Mary Ann Hoban, Emeritus WestCare Board Member



Anna Bernstein

KUDOS! *Our Monthly Shout-Outs to Exceptional Individuals*

Florida Atlantic University's Owl Breaks is an opportunity for students to spend a course/semester break serving a community in need. The winter 2016 Owl Breaks service trip spent two of their five days at WestCare GulfCoast-Florida's Davis Bradley Community Involvement Building where they repainted the halls of the FOCUS long term men's residential program. Many thanks to these young volunteers: **Chastity Pascoe** (Site Leader), **Josh Mackrill** (Staff Leader), **Molly Bryan**, **Aisha Burwell**, **Gwendolyn Field**, **Lily Fitzgerald**, **Natasha Nunes**, and **Natalie Nunes**.



Congratulations to Mr. **Anthony Carter**, WestCare Wisconsin Community Council member, who was honored recently for his outstanding community service. At a Dr. Martin Luther Kings Jr. holiday event, Mr. Carter is seen receiving the Volunteer of the Year award from WC Board member **Spencer**

Coggs, CAC member **Dee McCollum** and Regional Vice President **Elizabeth Coggs**. In addition to his Board service, Mr. Carter also makes himself available to the entire community for many volunteer projects.

KUDOS! *Our Monthly Shout-Outs to Exceptional Individuals (Con't.)*



The congregation at the Willow Creek Church in Illinois frequently stopped by the nearby Sheridan Correctional Center during December to drop off a few packages. To be precise, 1,837 packages for the incarcerated clients! The holiday gift bags contained food items and treats, as well as books and spiritual reading materials.

Many of the people we serve reflected back to their childhood and the fact that they were not fortunate to have many positive memories surrounding the holidays.

As a result, they made thank you cards for the generous church members to show their appreciation.

Thank you, **Anna Coleman**, for continuing to represent WestCare so well in your community.

Anna, Program Director at the Emergency Homeless Shelter in Pikeville, Kentucky, was recently named a “Superhero” at Mullins Elementary School. The children honored Anna (Top row, 6th from left) for being among those who dedicate their lives to service.

