

THE *Express*

OUR WESTCARE STORIES
FROM AROUND THE WORLD



WE STAND WITH YOU



Welcome from Dick Steinberg

President & CEO

June has been a pivotal month for not just observances - but celebrating diversity, acceptance, inclusion, and recognizing the need for equal justice. June 1st marked the start of both **LGBT Pride Month** and **Black Lives Matter Month**. On June 18th, we were also proud to recognize **Juneteenth** for the first time in our 48 years as an organization with a paid holiday in observance of its anniversary on June 19th.

At WestCare, we believe that love is love and recognize that everyone's story and treatment in this world is unfortunately not always equal and that the issues of homophobia, transphobia, and racism are all in fact very much present – even in 2021. With the continued help of our Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Staff Work Group, we hope to not only educate our staff and those that we serve - but inspire them to actively listen to the lived experiences and hardships of others and embrace the differences that make this diverse family of talented and dedicated individuals such a special one.

Throughout the month, they have distributed information on LGBT Pride Month and Juneteenth, respectively, that shares the history and emphasizes the importance of each observance. In regards to Juneteenth, they have also created a special toolkit that shares many thoughtful ideas for ways that you can help celebrate this important date in history, materials for internal awareness campaigns of your own, and ways to incorporate education regarding its significance into our programming for the benefit of our staff and those that we serve. To our amazing team members that comprise the DEI Staff Work Group as well as the members of our Board of Directors that serve on the Diversity, Race, and Social Justice Committee – thank you!

I would also like to take this time to wish a very **Happy 246th Birthday to the U.S. Army**, our largest and oldest branch of the U.S. Military. The U.S. Army as we know it today was first formed as the Continental Army on June 14, 1775, when the Second Continental Congress agreed that we needed a force among our 13 colonies to fight the forces of the British Empire in what would become the Revolutionary War just over a month later. As an Army Medical Clinical Specialist during the Vietnam war, I can attest to the lessons that I've learned and how my service has shaped me and the countless Army Veterans before and after my service.

In closing, I hope that you will all stand with me as we recognize this important month and would like to share my sincere appreciation for all that you do for your fellow staff and those that we serve.

Stay safe and stay well,

Dick Steinberg

I would like to applaud the efforts of WestCare Board Member, **Senator Spencer Coggs of Wisconsin**. While the city of Milwaukee has been celebrating Juneteenth for 50 years, thanks to his efforts, Juneteenth has been a state-recognized holiday since 2009. His efforts as a State Senator to champion this initiated through legislation that began in 1987 and didn't come to fruition until 22 years later. Spencer is quoted as saying that, *'Things take time,'* during one of our Diversity Board Committee's most recent meetings. Thank you, Senator Coggs, for not only your service to your community but your unwavering commitment to what is right!



Planting the Seed

By Emily Selby, Case Manager/BHT



WestCare Arizona's Hildy's House residential treatment program is growing in full force! Being creative and innovative to guide our women in recovery is always

at the forefront. When a client arrives at the facility, they are often broken and have lost much of their self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence. Upon arrival, one of the many steps with the intake process is giving the client a seed and a planter. They are asked to decorate the planter any way that they prefer and help is given to plant the seed. The seed and planter are the first step in their recovery and represent our women served and the start of their new life. During their time with us, they will water and care for the seed, just as they will care for themselves. As the seed sprouts and begins to blossom and grow, it is a reminder of themselves and the progress that they

are making. As we know, for a seed to blossom into a plant, it takes time, nurturing, and care. The seed matures into a plant, which at some point, may need to be transferred into a bigger pot. This is exciting as it creates a sense of accomplishment and reflects on their own path in recovery. Each week, discussion occurs regarding the seed and the meaning as they reflect on themselves and their growth. The plant becomes a keepsake, which travels with them when they move on from Hildy's House and is meant to remind them that growth continues after their treatment. We are hopeful that they will remember where they started and just how far they have come. We are grateful to be a part of planting the seed to a beautiful future!

In the spirit of celebrating growth and positive change, we'd like to share a very special poem about the process by our amazing Mary!

"Seeds of Life"
A poem by Mary H, Client,
Hildy's House

*Hildy's is here
And a place I call home
They took me in
When I was lost and alone
This is the place
That I chose to be
Hoping to grow
And see what they see
That I'm no throw away person
And dreams can be real
That pain doesn't last
And its okay to feel
So I planted a flower
To watch day by day
And to witness such magic
Just blew me away
As each day blossoms
And the sun reaches high
I know that one day
I'll touch the sky
So, thank you to WestCare
For a new seed of life
For helping me become
A better mother, sister,
friend, aunt and wife*



Learn more about Hildy's House

WestCare Arizona @westcareaz



Our California team has been hard at work getting prepared for the 2021 Fresno AIDS Walk and 5k Run to be held on Saturday, October 23rd as a virtual event in support of The Living Room, a Project of WestCare California, Inc. and Fresno's only social support center for those infected, affected or at risk of HIV/AIDS!

While this year's event will be comprised of a virtual event viewable [on our official YouTube channel](#) as well as a free-form walk and 5k run with our participants taking part in their own way - wherever they are, it will also be a very special one with this year marking not only the 10th year of the event, but the 25th anniversary of The

Living Room's founding on April 1st, 1996! As part, we are proud to unveil our new branding, which not only commemorates these milestones with a fresh new look, but draws attention to our event's focus on awareness and education.

For example, The "I" in AIDS looks like a "1" to represent current stats:

- 1.2 million people in the US are living with HIV
- 1 in 7 people have HIV, but don't know it
- There is only 1 HIV/AIDS focused center in Fresno - The Living Room
- One day, we hope to have a world with no HIV diagnoses

Meanwhile, "We're here, together," isn't just a way of saying that we will be celebrating this event virtually together, but that the fight/journey surrounding the virus is one in which we need to take together.

We have also made some other exciting changes to celebrate this year of milestones, but the biggest of all has been the introduction of [our new, streamlined website!](#)

As we continue to plan for what we hope to be our biggest year yet, we invite you to visit our site and help support a program that is so close to the hearts of our team and those that we serve!



Connect for more events online

WestCare California Inc. @WestCareCA @westcarecalifornia



Sharing Our Blessings

By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator



To pay it forward simply means to repay a kindness received with a good deed to someone else. This is the story of **Guara Bi - Dominican Republic**. Our community outreach tells the story of how the acts of giving back and paying it forward are key to helping our communities achieve strength. Thanks to the kindness and help received from generous donors, our staff are able to offer food to the people of our community who are in need. This distribution of food happens near our facilities as well as the Malecón of Santo Domingo, so our staff can help others while also enjoying the view and ocean breeze of the Caribbean Sea!



Read more stories from Guara Bi



LSP Upgrades to Mustard Seed Inn Unveiled



June 5th Wire Article by Mark Parker, St. Pete Catalyst

The **Leadership St. Pete (LSP)** class of 2021 held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday to showcase the drastic improvements it has made to the **Mustard Seed Inn**.

Owned by WestCare and located in the Grand Central District, the Mustard Seed Inn has been a beacon, for more than 20 years, for homeless people beginning their recovery from addiction and/or mental issues. In addition to temporary housing, it also provides counseling, case management, job support, and numerous other services.

Every year, LSP conducts a class project to provide planning, fundraising, and labor for the

betterment of a local nonprofit. When Larry McArthur, Vice President of WestCare Gulf Coast Florida, heard that the Mustard Seed Inn was in the running for the project he thought that this home for addicts and the homeless may be a long shot.

Those fears were unfounded, he said to the Friday gathering, getting choked up in the moment.

"This is a testament to the commitment and excellence of Leadership St. Pete," McArthur said. *"They made a miracle a reality."*

Denyve Boyle of the Community Foundation

of Tampa Bay, who spearheaded the project, said that the vote was held in November and under the shadow of the pandemic they spent the next five to six months raising money and completing the transformation.

More than \$158,000 was raised, and *"with sweat equity that is over a million,"* Boyle joked.

The difference is noticeable from Central Avenue, as artist Bianca Russell has painted bright and positive murals over the walls surrounding the building. On one wall is the motto for the project, Seeds of Hope. Inside the lettering are handed from all races spelling out the motto in sign language.

For the rest of the story on how LSP and our local community helped breathe new life into the Mustard Seed Inn, [click here!](#)



View more photos online





The G/CC is HIP with PRIDE!

By Christopher Homberg BA, MA, HIV Prevention Specialist

On June 5, the **Guidance/Care Center's (G/CC) HIP (High Impact Prevention) program** joined with the **Florida Department of Health (DOH)** and **A.H. of Monroe County** to provide HIV outreach, education, and counseling on-site at the **Key West Pride Street Fair** - the first one since June 2019! Attendees could pick up free packets of condoms and lube, red AIDS ribbon pins, and Florida DOH water bottles, and other items. Another popular free item that was available was hand-held fans with information about the new Test FL Keys website, where all three of the G/CC's locations are listed as free and confidential HIV test sites. Each listing features direct phone numbers to our HIP program contacts in Key Largo, Marathon, and Key West.

Of course, literature to promote HIV education and testing was plentifully available in both English and Spanish.

There were many attendees enjoying a sunny and breezy day on the 700 - 900 blocks of Duval Street. Sure Check rapid HIV tests were also available from 10 am until 2 pm. The Bourbon Street Pub graciously made a private room available where HIV tests and risk assessments could be completed, ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Meanwhile, for attendees that preferred testing at home, OraQuick at-home tests were available for free, courtesy of the Florida DOH. Between G/CC and A.H., six attendees were tested/counseled at our booth.

Another three attendees inquired about housing, two of which were referred to the **Keys Overnight Temporary Shelter (KOTS)**, as they had been sleeping in abandoned structures or in their vehicles.

It was an amazing and exciting feeling to be able to facilitate HIV education, testing, and counseling in an outreach setting again! The Key West G/CC HIP program is very much looking forward to seizing as many opportunities that become available in the future. It was great to be out in the community again!



Connect with the G/CC

WestCare Guidance/Care Center, Inc



The Village South to Open the Pembroke Pines Children's Academy

By Beatriz Del Rio, Marketing Director

The **Village South** is proud to announce the upcoming opening of the **Pembroke Pines Children's Academy (PPCA)**. PPCA will provide childcare to ages infants and five years old. The Academy is designed to have a welcoming and engaging environment where children will feel valued and safe. By utilizing a research-based curriculum based on the studies and findings of Jean Piaget, Howard Gardner, and Erik Erikson, an emphasis will be put on positively influencing early childhood cognitive development. While our services will be both interactive and enriching for our children served, they will also be cost-effective for their parents.

The state-of-the-art facility has eight classrooms in total accommodating:

- 1 *Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (Age: 4 - 5) classroom for 20 children*
- 1 *Pre-School (Age: 3 - 4) classroom for 20 children*
- 2 *Twaddler (Age: 2 - 3) classrooms for 20 children each*
- 2 *Toddler Classrooms (Age: 1 - 2) One for 18 children and one for six children*
- 2 *Infant Rooms for 12 Babies - One for 2 - 6 months and one for 6 - 12 months*

Vice President of The Village South, Danny Blanco, stated, "We are excited about our new educational endeavor and it will be our privilege to work with community families to create the most successful experience for our children at Pembroke Pines Children's Academy. Our ambitions are bold, but our dedication to the work required to achieve these goals is not new. We are proud of our longstanding commitment to being a leader in our communities and believe that our culture of operational excellence will help us thrive."

We will also be offering our PPCA services to our clients' children as well as those from surrounding communities. Affordable subsidized fees based on a sliding scale will enable parents to get back to work during these unprecedented times.

Each classroom is designed with materials to help all areas of development according to age levels and student-to-teacher ratios according to the **Florida Department of Children and Families** to ensure every child has the attention they need. There are two outdoor playgrounds - one for ages 2 to 5 and another for infants.



Connect with Us
 The Village South, Inc
 @thevillagesouth
 @thevillagesouth



Returning to the Community

By Eldredge Washington, *Community Service Coordinator*

After a long, but necessary hold on all things pertaining to outdoor community outreach, **WestCare Georgia** is officially back on the move! We were given the opportunity to provide HIV testing at the **CNTRD Community Block Party** on May 28th. CNTRD is a luxury wellness brand dedicated to helping men become healthier and stronger leaders in our community. The block party included free food, a live DJ, giveaways, and a safe space for our people to learn their status through HIV testing. We are excited about kicking things back into gear and Uplifting the Human Spirit by providing quality care and services to our community.



Learn about more events

 WestCare Georgia
 @westcarega



Pizza Game Day

By Carlos G. Rodriguez, *Program Director*

WestCare staff Carolina Diaz, Carlos Rodriguez, and Lydia Shepard partnered with teachers from the **Excel Academy** in mid-May to bring students together for a "Pizza Game Day." Not to be deterred by a rainstorm, our staff took the fun-filled Saturday activities inside. The event's goal was to introduce and potentially recruit students from the south and west sides of Chicago to our **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA)** prevention program called, **Partnership for Success**.

A Month of Celebrations

By Talisha Paul, MBA, MSW, CADC, *Program Director*

WestCare staff at **Sheridan Correctional Center**, along with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), celebrated **Asian Pacific American Heritage Month** in May by highlighting a different Asian/Pacific American each week or by hosting a celebration each week in the offender housing units. Bruce Lee and Sandra Oh were the highlighted individuals and the celebrations included lessons on the Korean etiquette for tea, the Japanese matcha ceremony, Chinese tea ceremonies, and the history of fireworks. Staff also celebrated Older Americans Month by celebrating Betty White, Morgan Freeman, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Leonard Nimoy. In addition, we celebrated **Jewish American Heritage Month** by commemorating the holiday of Shavuot and recognizing Rabbi Theodore Tsuruoka aka "Rabbi Ted" and Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl.



Congratulations
JONATHAN THOMPSON

The **Sheridan Correctional Center's** May Employee of the Month is Jonathon Thompson! Jonathon started with WestCare in 2011 as a substance abuse counselor and has devoted several years to providing treatment in many phases. He recently worked with a committee to present Black History Month trivia to clients in a remote setting. Jonathon's encouragement and enthusiasm really helped promote participation. He continues to assist the **Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)** with the Offender Committee to support both clients and staff. Jonathon's involvement in the program has grown tremendously, along with his recent promotion to supervisor. The support that you provide to our staff and clients does not go unrecognized. You are doing a great job! Thanks for all that you do! - **Sheridan CC Staff**



Follow Illinois online for more

 WestCare Illinois



FAVA Opens a New Location in Sioux City and Welcomes Aboard an Army Veteran!

By Darlene Terrill, *Regional Administrator*

Our new office in Sioux City, located at **519 Nebraska St., Sioux City, IA 51101**, is now open to the public for us to begin the rewarding task of helping our homeless Veterans find places to live!

The **U.S. Army** was created on the 14th of June in 1775 when the Continental Congress authorized the enlistment of expert riflemen to serve the United Colonies during the Revolutionary War. General George Washington himself imposed special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, conduct, and fidelity of these riflemen. Today, that special trust and confidence are guided by the seven Army values that the Army teaches to every soldier: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

An Army Veteran himself, Darrell Mayo was hired as the new Veteran Advocate for the office. "I am a Veteran who has fought for our country during Operation Iraqi Freedom and I plan to use the Army values that were taught to me to lead homeless Veterans toward a better path to get them permanently housed. Some of our soldiers came home from war traumatized or mentally unable to cope with civilian life and it has cost them nearly everything. Veterans do not deserve to be on the streets when they have served our country and I plan to do my very best to ensure

that these former service members get the help that they need to rebuild their lives." Darrell was born and raised in Sioux City until he joined the U.S. Army in 1999 and served as an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Operator. In the civilian mindset, this job would be called a drone operator, but they flew much bigger aircraft than what you would likely think of. The aircraft at the time, the Hunter UAV, had a 23-foot wingspan and weighed thousands of pounds. He was in a branch of military intelligence that performed reconnaissance missions, surveillance, and battle damage assessments.

During his time in the military, Darrell was deployed three times to a country located just outside of Kosovo called Macedonia. His unit provided aerial reconnaissance for important targets during the Kosovo peacekeeping campaign from 2000 - 2002. His unit was also deployed to Iraq during the initial invasion in 2003, where they performed various missions for the 4th Infantry division near Baghdad and then for the 101st Airborne Division in Mosul, Iraq.

After leaving the military, Darrell continued to do the job of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator, but this time as a civilian instructor who taught incoming U.S. Army students at Fort Huachuca in Sierra Vista, Arizona. After teaching for three

years, he deployed and went overseas three different times with the U.S. Navy aboard three different ships to prevent other container ships from being hijacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia. During this time, he went back to Iraq for a second tour and finished his deployment with a trip to Afghanistan. In 2015, Darrell went back to teaching at Fort Huachuca, but then sadly develop seizures and lost the ability to fly aircraft. He attended Sioux City Community College, where he received an Associate of Biology degree. Recently, he graduated from the University of South Dakota with a Bachelor's in General Studies degree.

He has a sincere passion to work with the Veterans in this new capacity and stated, "During my time both as a civilian and as a U.S. Army soldier, I got to understand how Veterans think and act and I hope to use my knowledge to reach out to the homeless Veterans community and help them by finding them homes or by providing them with the information needed to begin turning their lives around."

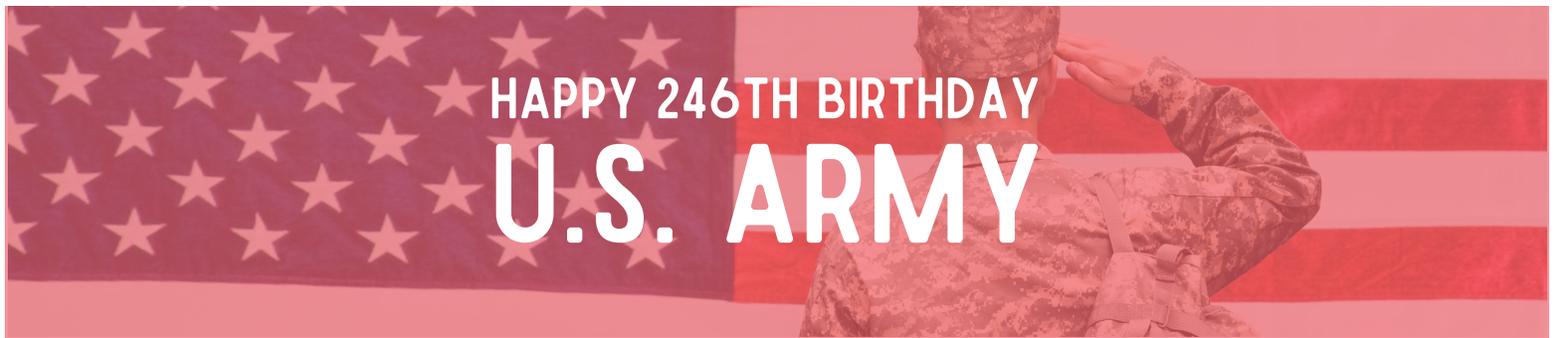
WestCare is fortunate to have Darrell joining our team. Thank you to the Army for preparing this young man to work in civilian life in this manner. Happy Birthday, U.S. Army!



[Read more stories online](#)



FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America)



Serving Those That Served

By Jeremie Delauder, MAT Research Assistant



Along with all of WestCare's regions, Veterans hold a special place in the hearts of our staff throughout **WestCare Kentucky**. We work tirelessly to ensure that our Veterans receive the utmost care in all of our programs. Grants are a fundamental tool that helps us develop and implement a variety of services to these special citizens of our communities. All of our grants are specifically written to include Kentucky's vast population of women and men that have served their country and are in need.

The **Perry Cline Emergency Shelter** provides shelter for those Veterans that find themselves in need of a place to stay while they look for a more permanent solution. While there, they have access to our **SAMHSA Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (GBHI)** program that can assist them in locating and securing funding for housing. Also available to them at the shelter is the Offender Re-Entry Program that helps veterans who are justice-involved with evidence-based practices to learn the skills necessary to transition back into

society. The Perry Cline Emergency Shelter is also used as a warming station through the winter months.

Through our **Judy Patton Center for Healthy Families** and **Hal Rogers Appalachian Recovery Center**, both female and male Veterans have access to residential substance abuse programs where they are part of a therapeutic community and offered a variety of supplemental services from our partnerships throughout Kentucky. One supplemental service that is available at our residential programs is the Supportive Employment Program that can assist our Veterans in their search for employment after treatment.

All WestCare Kentucky facilities and programs have access to our Medically Assisted Treatment program that has partnered with two local physicians to provide a medication option to assist Kentucky's ever-growing Veteran population with opiate use disorders in their treatment and recovery.



Follow for more in Kentucky



A Night Under the Stars



By Gardis Canty, MS, CADC, Clinical Manager

If you want to know how to celebrate a long weekend, check out what was going on at the **Women and Children's Campus** in Las Vegas, NV! Over the Memorial Day weekend, our program celebrated with a special movie event that we called, "*Night Under the Stars*." It was a huge success and was well-received by our ladies. Here's just some of what our ladies had to say about the night:

"I had no idea there was such a thing as sober fun. I have never done anything like that before or have been to a drive-in movie. To be outside under the night sky, kick back on a blanket and enjoy popcorn - it was amazing to me." - MR

"It was awesome and all of the treats that we had to choose from! The frozen yogurt was my favorite. I had a great time being out with my sisters and doing something so fun." - DD

Leading up to the event, they were provided with "*WestCare Dollars*" to shop for refreshments from the concession stand that we set up for the night. Goodies ranged from refreshments to cotton candy, hot dogs, nachos, and more! We also offered frozen yogurt cups with delicious toppings, thanks to a generous donation from Yogurtland!

The ladies laid out blankets and quilts to relaxing under the stars while enjoying movies displayed on a 16' movie screen. This event would not have been possible without the generous support of Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Jason Engel, who sponsored the evening. In addition, he also came out and worked the concession stand to make this amazing event possible!

Thank you, Dr. Engel, for your support!



Learn more about Nevada





Expanding Services and Introducing New Programs

By Abby Hofrichter, *Communications & Social Media Coordinator*, Hofrichter Creative LLC

Our team has big things on the way, but we can't skip over all the work that was done during the month of May, which was busy for **East End Community Services**! Our team hosted end-of-year celebrations, planned summer camps, worked on spearheading new community programs, and more! Our **PILOTS After-School Program at Wright Brothers Middle School**, collaborated with their science classes as well as the Mission of Mary Cooperative to turn a lot of empty concrete into a new urban garden, right here in our neighborhood of East Dayton! The garden, a part of the program's emphasis on food insecurity, includes six raised beds with a mix of veggies, herbs, and an assortment of plants. These gardens will be used during our PILOTS Program summer camp.

Other kudos this month go out to our **Camp Mariposa** Program and Program Director, Wendy Berkshire, for successfully making a relationship with a local linens company to provide linens for all weekend camps during the summer of 2021, taking the stress and cost out of COVID-19 precautions! Other kudos go out to our teammates developing a new housing stability program focused on connecting pregnant women in need with care providers, education, and more - all funded by Dayton-area hospitals.

Thank you, Dayton hospitals!



Learn more about East End

East End Community Services @eastendcommunityservices



Best Food Anywhere

By Nancy Pine, *Case Manager* and Chris Blakney, *Cook*

Salem Oregon's **VETcare Transitional Program** is proud to have a full-time staff providing three hot meals a day for our Veterans. The woman in charge of ensuring our Veterans get nutritious and delicious meals is Chris Blakney. Here is a little bit about Chris, in her own words.

"With four younger sisters, I started helping in the kitchen when I was 10 years old. Over the years, I was fortunate to collect cookbooks and recipes from my mother's 'Southern' family members and elderly neighbors.

Fast forward 30 years....

More recently, I remarried in 1994. My husband's prior service was in the Navy. After 9/11, he re-enlisted in the National Guard, where I was brought on board as a Family Program Coordinator. I started cooking for three companies of guardsmen and women.

There were very large family events where my sister, myself, and an army of volunteers would prepare for and feed 250 - 600 people. For my contributions, I received a number of certificates of achievement/service from Governors, Generals and my favorite, which I'm most proud of, was from Army National Guard Captain Vince Habeck, who

awarded me the 'Molly Pitcher' award.

My sister is an excellent chef and baker and through word of mouth, we gained notoriety and ended up catering several events including birthdays and receptions. I received a phone call from Brenda Powers from the VETcare Transitional Program about five years ago. VETcare was going to have a dedication event and asked if I could make cupcakes. But, it turned into much more! Two entrees, four salads, fruits, breads, sides, and a U.S. flag designed with 260 red, white and blue cupcakes. John Lee and Ray Switzer were very pleased, as were the 160 plus guests.

One year later, VETcare was finally ready for a full-time professional food service program in-house. I was hired and have been here for almost three years serving good food to our residents. No institutional fare here... We do a very wide variety of international dishes as well as the best meatloaf ever! We serve fresh baked cookies for lunch every day and more elaborate dinner desserts. It has been my honor to serve our hero Veterans."

Thanks, Chris, for your outstanding service to our Veterans and for making the best tasting food in town!



Not Too Cool for I Lina'la-Hu

By Regina Shiroma, *Research Assistant*, I Lina'la-Hu

Pool noodles, banter about two truths and a lie, egg relay races and exclamations of, 'Wah!' (An ice breaker activity) filled the month of May and the fields of Agueda I. Johnston Middle School. The **I Lina'la-Hu (My Life)** team interacted and engaged with youth in outreach events at the school site to incite interest about joining the program.

The 6th grade students showed up bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, always willing to participate in whatever wacky activities we had for the day. The 'too-cool' 8th grade students who were apprehensive at first (as

would be any pre-teen), showed up week after week and eventually broke down their 'cool kid' exteriors.

The team's recruitment efforts rendered 49 enrolled participants! We look forward to getting to know our youth and teaching them the importance of fostering healthy relationships, encouraging them to set goals and helping them to achieve their aspirations. In the meantime, we've been secretly enjoying the cheesy jokes they pass along and inwardly laugh at the witty ones.



Continue the journey online



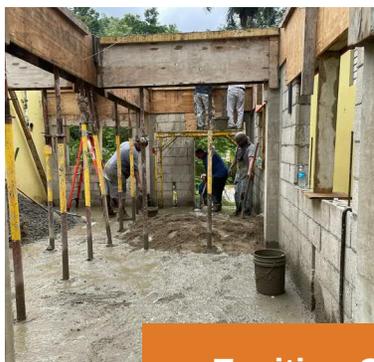
WestCare Pacific Islands



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Exciting Changes are Coming!

By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, *Program Assistant & HR Coordinator*



"The biggest room in the world is the room for improvement." - Helmut Schmidt

At **WestCare Puerto Rico**, some of our facilities are being upgraded to improve how we provide services as well as working areas and recreational spaces for our clients. At **Guara Bi - Caney**, a conference room is being built for a more efficient area for meetings and trainings. Meanwhile at **Guara Bi - Manaya**, a garden for rest and reflection was created for the enjoyment of our clients. In addition, five new rooms and bathrooms are being built at the facility. Last, but not least, our long-term care facility, **Bartolo Joy**, is facing a major improvement with the construction of 10 new rooms and bathrooms, which will increase our capacity and ability to serve the elderly population.



Follow the journey online



Guara Bi

Highlighting Members of our Dandridge Team



Maykayla Barrett
Employment Navigator

Makayla Barrett was born and raised in Cocke County, Tennessee. She has recently moved back to the area with her husband, Ethan, and two dogs, Stella and Elmer. She is an East Tennessee State University (ETSU) graduate with a Bachelor's in Psychology and Criminal Justice. Makayla is excited to work with WestCare and continue her passion for working with and advocating for those in the criminal justice system.



Shandi Hill
Project Coordinator

Shandi Hill joined the **WestCare Tennessee** family in 2018 because she wanted to continue to make a difference within the community. She loves talking to people and meeting new friends. She is a wife to Jonathan, a mother to Jania, and an animal mama to her dog, Jenny, and her senior cat, Wiley. She earned her degree from Walters State and will continue to pursue an additional degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in Human Services. Shandi has led a Tennessee State AmeriCorps program for five years across the whole state with over 100 members. She has 10+ years in working in finance and helping folks develop financial literacy. She has 20+ years in working with high-risk youth, economically challenged individuals, diverse cultures, young adults, seniors, and Veterans. Shandi loves helping her community, watching others grow, and is an advocate for positive change.



Ross Wells
Research Assistant

Ross Wells is a former U.S. Marine, firefighter, and Russian interpreter who has been with **WestCare Tennessee** since 2018. With over 25 years of service to the nation and his community, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Tennessee team.

With a servant's heart, Ross is excited to work with the underserved rural populations of Northeast Tennessee to ensure better outcomes for the youth and adults who seek education, treatment, and after-care for substance use disorders. Ross works as a research assistant by gathering data, interviewing clients, administering surveys, and conducting focus groups and town hall meetings. Bringing all sectors of the community together is vital to our success in Uplifting the Human Spirit and Ross uses his long-established relationships in the local communities to facilitate this goal.



Meet more of the team

- WestCare Tennessee
- @WestCareTN



Towne Twin Village Breaks Ground

By Jessica Cerda

Read more online

- WestCare Texas

WestCare Texas is partnering with the **Housing First Community Coalition (HFCC)** to develop the vacant plot of land that used to be the 1957 Towne Twin Drive-In into permanent supportive housing for homeless seniors on San Antonio's Eastside. A decade of planning, fundraising, and organizational alignment reached a milestone on Wednesday, May 12th, when the community broke ground on **Towne Twin Village**, San Antonio's first permanent, single-site supportive housing community with wraparound services for homeless seniors over 50 - the most vulnerable homeless population in the country.

In its former glory, the site off Dietrich Road was a nice, 1,200 car drive-in theatre with two screens called the Towne Twin Drive-In. The 17.3-acre Eastside property was vacant for decades until the HFCC and its partners including WestCare Texas, **Catholic Worker House**, **Traveling Loaves & Fishes**, **SAMMinistries**, the **Center for Health Care Services**, and **Street Medicine San Antonio** identified the space as the right fit for the creation of Towne Twin Village.

The master plan touts 205 units featuring 100 tiny homes, 80 efficiency apartments, and 25 RV trailers with hospice and respite units included. Based on a "housing first" model, rent for residents will depend on income. Compared to other housing programs in the city, this allows homeless seniors over the age of 50 to receive help even if they are struggling with addiction or mental health issues. On-site caseworkers will help residents access medical, dental, and mental health clinics as well as harm reduction and addiction treatment. Volunteers called **PALS, or Please Alleviate Loneliness**, will spend time with residents. Additionally, **Catholic Worker House**, an organization that serves homeless people, will relocate from Nolan Street to the Towne Twin Village. All residents will receive three free meals per weekday and one to two meals per day on weekends.

The Towne Twin Village's residents will also have a multiuse center and an amphitheater for social events as well as a food pantry, community garden, chapel, library, computer center, gym,

dog park, barbershop, nail salon, and laundromat. Residents will have access to free hygiene supplies, educational services, and activities such as GED testing and music/art classes. **VIA Metropolitan Transit** plans to build a pavilion at the southwest corner of the site to accommodate residents who will be using the nearby bus stop.

Towne Twin Village will be built in two phases with funding from a combination of public and private sources. WestCare Texas is partnering with the lead organization, **HFCC** to provide support for on-site case management services to help meet the need for wraparound services. WestCare was also instrumental in helping HFCC secure \$9 million from the **City of San Antonio** and **Bexar County** for the project. The first phase is fully funded at \$11.8 million and includes 42 tiny homes, the RV trailers, several buildings, and the land. The second stage is expected to cost another \$8 million, not including the apartments.

Youth Shatter Alcoholism Myths with Artistic Expression

By Kariel Granger, *Prevention Coordinator*

The Village Virgin Islands Prevention Program invited our community to find new ways of shattering the myths of alcohol addiction through artistic expression. Residents ages 12 - 24 were invited to participate in this art competition aimed at bringing awareness to alcoholism in the territory. For some, the idea of alcoholism is pretty cookie-cutter and one-size-fits-all. However, alcohol use disorder manifests itself differently in each person's life. We shared four misconceptions that are common when talking about the issue of alcoholism and asked the participants to choose one or multiple myths that they "shattered" through their artwork. We asked them to tell us what makes these statements myths or untrue through their work.

- **Myth #1:** "You can always tell when someone has a substance abuse problem"
- **Myth #2:** "Alcoholism only affects the person who suffers from it and no one else"
- **Myth #3:** "Addiction only affects people of certain age groups."
- **Myth #4:** "Alcohol isn't as harmful as other drugs"



Michaela T., female, 15 years old, 10th Grade, "Cheers, Y'all"



Cameron B., male, 16 years old, 11th Grade, "Death Pouring"



Follow along for more



The Village - VI Partners in Recovery Inc / WestCare

The Veterans Connection Café Receives National Recognition

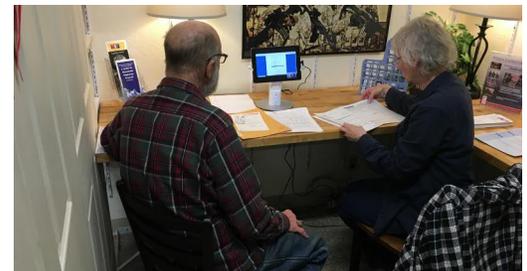
By Donald Lachman, *Special Projects Coordinator*, and Andrea Talmadge, *Regional Coordinator*

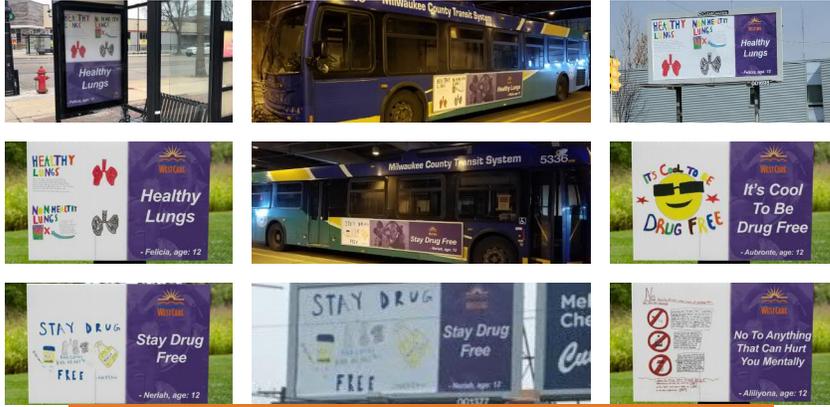
In 2017, **WestCare Washington** was selected to conduct and evaluate a rural Veterans services demonstration project funded by the **VA Office of Rural Health**. The purpose of this funding was to stimulate innovative model practices to engage and assist underserved rural Veterans. In 2019 and in collaboration with **Timberland Regional Library**, **Lacey American Legion Post 94**, **Home Depot**, and **Lacey Veterans Services Hub**, we helped launch the rural teleservices network at the **Mt. View Library** under a service model called the **Veterans Connection Café (VCC)**.

In 2021, the VCC was recognized by the **Institute of Museums and Libraries** as one of

the leading Veterans serving library-based collaborations in the nation. Representatives of the VCC were invited to present and promote replication of our service model at the **Institute's National Veterans Forum** scheduled for June 2020 at Texas A&M. This Veteran-focused event was postponed due to the Pandemic.

The Institute for Museum and Libraries, again in recognition of our exceptional library-based service collaboration, has again extended an invitation to present and promote replication of the VCC service model virtually or in-person in the fall of 2021.





Using Creativity to Spread Awareness

By Felicia Williams, LST Program Director

WestCare Wisconsin and its **Life Skills Training (LST)** program's scholars have been busy with getting their voices heard throughout the Harambee Community. Each of the schools that enrolled in the program challenged their scholars to create their own prevention campaign. Those who put in the work were awarded with having their work displayed on billboards and buses that travel through the City of Milwaukee. As an extra added reward, their work was printed on yard signs to display in their own communities. Of course, we had some very eager scholars who accepted the challenge and rose to the occasion. We are very proud of all of the hard work that was put in by them! **WAY TO GO, SCHOLARS!**



Meet **RESHAR ALLEN**
Prevention Specialist

Hello, my name is Reshar Allen. I graduated from HOPE Christian High School right here in the Harambee community. After finishing high school, I attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. There, I received my bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a minor in Psychology. As a prevention specialist with WestCare, I expect to bring knowledge and growth to the role obtained while gaining new skills and knowledge. My goal is to bring awareness to youth and their families, essentially informing them how detrimental drugs can be to one's own life and lead to their deterrence of drugs. This journey will be grand!

Get connected with Wisconsin



WestCare Wisconsin



@westcare.wi

Sending Kudos to Our Teams!

On May 28th, our California team bid a very happy retirement to Anna Champ and Art Valdivia! As we wish them many years of happiness and well-deserved relaxation in the days ahead, we'd like to share some sentiments from their respective teams!



Art Valdivia's last day of employment was May 28, 2021. He was able to achieve his dream of retiring to Mexico. Art began his Counseling career with WestCare in January of 2006 and worked in various positions within residential, in-prison, and outpatient programs. Art's final position was with the **Day Reporting Center (DRC)** and was well known for his creative, fun, and educational groups. Many previous clients returned to visit Art and express their gratitude and appreciation for his guidance. On his final day, WestCare DRC staff threw him a retirement party/potluck and reminisced about the old times. - **Derrick Bressel**, Program Director, Day Reporting Center



Anna Champ has been a most valued member of the **Support and Overnight Stay (SOS)** team. She dedicated seven years to the program and especially to the clients. One could always count on her to be available to coworkers and accessible to clients. She had such compassion towards the clients and worked diligently and patiently to serve and assist them in a multitude of ways. Anna projected kindness and possessed a non-judgmental attitude with the clients, which garnered strong trust and motivated clients to reach for better. The SOS program feels a little empty without her, especially in the mornings as she was always first to work! We sincerely wish Anna much luck and happiness in her new chapter in life. - **Jamileh Miller**, Data Assistant, SOS Specialty Mental Health Clinic



The **Guidance/Care Center (G/CC)** joined the country in celebrating National Nurses Week in May by recognizing our own nurses by presenting each one with a shiatsu back and neck massager! They were purchased to help relieve stress during these challenging times that required additional efforts around COVID-19 protocols. G/CC staff also showed appreciation with sweet treats and thank you messages. Our Lead RN, Emily Pace, worked with the non-profit, **Slice Out Hunger**, which donates pizza to healthcare workers with their "Pizza vs. Pandemic" program for a nice lunch. Our heartfelt thanks go to the G/CC Nursing Staff for their dedication to our clients and the Florida Keys community. We appreciate your hard work not only during Nurses Week but every day of the year! You are our shining stars! - **Maryanne Johnson**, BS, Executive Assistant, G/CC

Grants & Resource Development



June Grants Update

By Lisa Jackson, GPC, *Interim Vice President*

In the month of June, we celebrated the **U.S. Army's Birthday** and **Women Veterans Day**. WestCare's experience and knowledge of the needs of Veterans is paramount in many of our grants. Each year, we try to gather information about our programs to establish our expertise and demonstrate our commitment to this population.

To this end, the grants team will be updating WestCare's portfolio on Veterans' services in the next few weeks. MaryEllen Pistalu, from the Grants Department, will be reaching out to our Veterans programs to gather essential data. Our last portfolio was completed in January of 2020 and is in need of a complete update.

The type of information that we seek includes: The program name, region, address, the current contract's duration, a program description with target population and services described, the name of the funding and funder, the program director and their contact information, the number of Veterans served annually, any partners supported by the funding and the amount of funding allocated for WestCare's services.

The last time that we updated this information, WestCare had 23 distinct programs in nine of our current regions. The programs were helping military families, women Veterans with children, Veterans in drug court, chronically homeless and disabled Veterans, and many others. There were more than seven different funding sources including self-pay, the Department of Veteran's Affairs, the Department of Labor, local county funding, and FEMA funding.

But, things have changed significantly in the last 16 months. We need to re-canvas our programs and update our records. We use this in the Grants Department to display your experience and skills in working with this target population. So, please be on the lookout for an email from MaryEllen to update your program's information and help us depict all of our Veteran's programs.

Thank you all for your assistance in this endeavor and to our Veterans and active-duty military members, thank you for your commitment and dedication. We are forever in your debt.

We'd also like to wish a Happy Women Veterans Day, which is proudly celebrated organization-wide to highlight the contributions of women in our armed forces.

Last but certainly not least, we'd like to wish a very Happy Birthday to the U.S. Army! This will be their 246th year of supporting our nation with courage and valor.

Information Technology



Over the past few months, BlueJeans has added many new features to help with conducting and participating in meetings. Here are some of the best new features, all of which are available in the most recent version of the Windows app (2.29):

Additional Breakout Sessions

Support for up to 75 simultaneous breakout sessions per meeting.

Background Blur

Attendees can turn on background blur and choose their own blur density. You can enable this in [BlueJeans > Preferences](#).

Binge Meeting

On-screen notifications provide one-click access to join your next meeting without having to return to the meeting dashboard.

Content Share Improvements

Magnify in and out buttons allow participants to more easily view shared smaller content.

Disable Background Noise Suppression

Retain your natural microphone audio, including background sound, to successfully use music in your meetings. Go to [Settings > Preferences](#) to enable this feature.

Disable Bi-Directional Video

Toggle off incoming and outgoing video to optimize audio quality when network performance is poor.

Disable Non-Video Participants from Showing Up On-Screen

Now you can disable non-video participants from showing up on your screen during a meeting. This option is available under in-meeting settings.

Emoji Reactions

React to moments in a meeting using emojis.

Expanded Gallery View

For larger meetings, see up to 25 participant videos (5x5) at the same time. The layout adjusts itself when people join or leave.

Lock Screen Sharing

Moderators can restrict who has the ability to share their screen and take over screen share controls.

Lower Thirds

Whether you are presenting, training, or teaching - boost production quality with custom titles and overlay graphics. To use this feature, go to [Preferences > Lower Third](#).

Multipinning

Participants can now pin up to 25 participants simultaneously across different video layouts.

Noise Suppression for Keyboards

To prevent a participant's typing from interfering with the active speaker, BlueJeans has fine-tuned the audio stack to help reduce the tapping sounds from a user's keyboard.

Participant Interactions

Access a menu of interactions directly through a participant's video tile, to quickly pin their video, sending direct messages, or manage their audio and video. To access, click anywhere on the video feed or the (...) button.

Participant Name Editing

Moderators can now edit participant names in their meetings.

Participant Scrolling

Moderators and participants can now scroll through the video tiles to see more participants in the meeting.

Participant Search

Search for a participant by their name during a meeting, which is great for large gatherings.

Preassigned Breakout Sessions

Split meeting participants into pre-assigned breakout sessions while scheduling the meeting. This allows participants to directly join their respective breakout sessions from the main meeting.

Profile Image for Non-Video Participants

Users can have their BlueJeans profile shown to everyone when their camera is off.

Raise Hand

With the raise hand feature, participants can present a visual cue to the moderator without having to speak or send a chat. This is especially useful in large meetings and in training/education scenarios where the moderator may not want participants to interrupt but want them to use nonverbal reactions to contribute to the discussion.

Restricted Meetings

A two-step authentication ensures that only those you invite can enjoy your meeting. Participants don't need a BlueJeans account to join.

Show Participant's Local Time

Share your local time with others during meetings, which is particularly helpful in meetings spread across time zones. You can enable this feature from Settings.

Spotlight

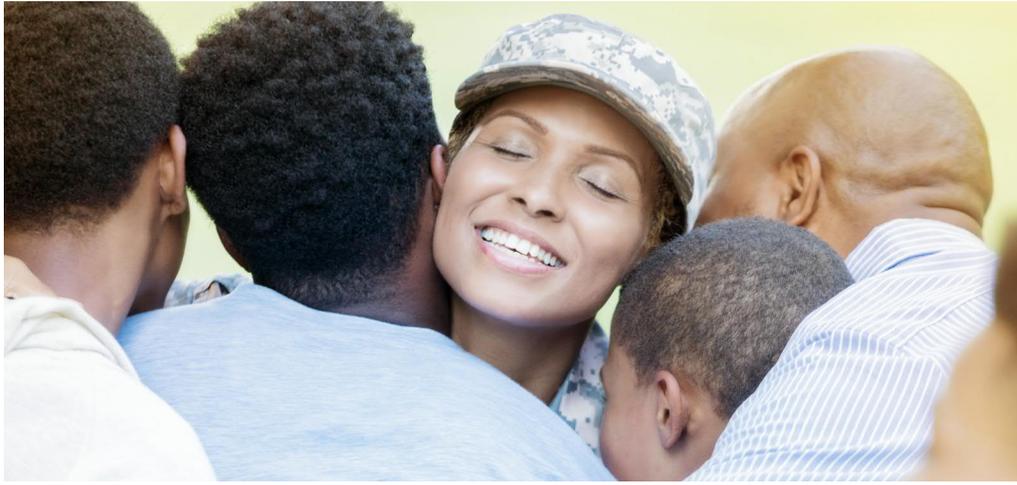
Moderators can put their participants in the spotlight during the meeting. When a moderator pins a participant, the layout will be updated for all participants in the meeting.

Video Quality Improvements

Enjoy 720p resolution video during good bandwidth conditions, improved video quality in the gallery view, and content share quality improvements.

Virtual Backgrounds

Replace your video background with an image. You can either choose from a collection of free images or upload your own background image to serve as your conferencing background. They can enable this in [BlueJeans > Preferences > Enable Virtual Backgrounds](#).



Storytelling is part of *The Express*

The Express is made possible through stories submitted by our amazing WestCare teams around the world. We know that each and every day, a positive change is happening for our clients with our support.

Have a story to tell? Please email marketing@westcare.com and let's share the impact WestCare makes in Uplifting the Human Spirit.



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