

# THE *Express*

OUR WESTCARE STORIES  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD



## Welcome from Dick Steinberg

President & CEO

The month of March is Women’s History Month, a time to reflect on the often-overlooked contributions of women throughout history. This year’s theme, “Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope,” is especially important as we’ve seen a huge dedication of caregivers and frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All throughout WestCare, women show their remarkable talents, skills, and passion while holding leadership roles such as our senior management Chiefs, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Administrator, and Director roles. Each oversees a large, important role of WestCare’s daily operations as we uplift the human spirit. We appreciate all the women who are helping manage our facilities, writing grants, running regional operations, and even facilitating individuals’ journey through recovery. All of these roles are important.

As we continue to grow, I want to share a message that our friend, community activist, and first lady, Judi Patton, shared

back in August when we opened a treatment facility for women and families in Kentucky: *“WestCare is a name, but it is the men and women of the WestCare family that make it what it is. When I think of WestCare, I think of faith, love, compassion, and hope.”*

With faith, we know that we can help almost all women who come through our doors with a little bit of hope. When a woman walks through our doors, we want them to know that they are loved. We’ll teach them how to love themselves and how they are worthy of living the life they want. With compassion, we hug you and take you in as you are. With hope, we know that you can start a new chapter. Your hope can be fulfilled.

This month, we act with intention. We are here for understanding and we both acknowledge and realize that future actions must continue to take place past this month.

To all of the women on our team, to all of the women participating in a program or service of WestCare, please consider me your ally.

*Dick Steinberg*



# THANK YOU

*for all you do*

## 2022 EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY



## Employee Appreciation

By Emily Selby, Case Manager/BHT



It takes a team of very special people, which is what we have! Bullhead City, Arizona is not very big, in fact - we are best described as rural. Sometimes, many do not even realize this small town across from Laughlin, Nevada even exists! But, for those of us who come to work every day making a difference in so many lives, we know more than anyone how important changing lives is! Each day is a special day, but there is one day that we take a timeout and appreciate all of those that are part of our work family and a day in which we show how much we care. On March 4, **Employee Appreciation Day**, much gratitude was shown to our staff with lunch and a gift card attached to personalized cards. Thank you to our wonderful team!



WestCare Arizona



@westcareaz



## Clients Learn to Recognize and Treat Substance Abuse

By Belinda Morales, Program Assistant

As part of our educational initiative to our population, on February 9, Mr. Yunior Sánchez, Coordinator of **Guara Bi - Dominican Republic**, coordinated a workshop focused on recognizing withdrawal symptoms according to the type of drugs that the person is using. This was offered by **Mr. José De Jesús**, who holds a Bachelor's in Psychology and is also the director and owner of a rehabilitation program in the Dominican Republic.

The highlight of the event was teaching clients the most effective way to recognize, treat substance use addictions, and the prevention of relapse of active users. During the workshop, clients were actively participating, asking questions, and interacting with the staff. All clients were grateful for the opportunity to participate in this workshop. Thank you, Mr. De Jesús, for sharing your expertise with us!



Guara Bi



## The 2022 Fresno Madera Homeless PIT Count

By Michael Mygind, Director of Marketing

**WestCare California** staff on behalf of **Housing Services, San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV), The Living Room, BEAT**, leadership, and marketing joined over two hundred volunteers in this year's homeless **Point-In-Time Count** presented by the **Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCOC)**. Over the course of the three-day event, volunteers tallied and surveyed individuals experiencing homelessness in Fresno and Madera Counties to provide the collected information to the **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** and show the need for more services in our community geared towards ending homelessness among Veterans, families, and the chronically homeless. We'd like to thank our staff who put in long nights to meet and speak with our brothers and sisters on the streets as well as those on our team who played a part in organizing this crucial event!



WestCare California



@WestCareCA



@westcarecalifornia



**Thank You, Village South Staff for All That You Do**

By Danny Blanco, Vice President

2021 was an eventful year filled with many achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities. During our annual employee awards, we wanted to pause to thank you for your vital contributions and commitment to **The Village South**. I am honored by the work that we have been able to accomplish as an organization and the growth that our recipients have shown. Together, we continue pushing the limits as we continue our mission. Each of our award recipients showed extraordinary dedication, work ethic, and leadership.

I am immensely proud of the work that you are doing in making The Village South a behavioral health leader in Florida. I cannot be more excited about what is in store next and to have the opportunity to work with all of you to make it a reality. I have no doubt that any challenges that are presented will be handled with grit and determination.

On behalf of the Village South Leadership Team, CONGRATULATIONS!

You may not know this, but your efforts and hard work do not go unnoticed. We cannot thank you enough. Each of you went above and beyond to execute your roles and make an impact on the communities and individuals we serve.



The Village South, Inc



@thevillagesouth



@thevillagesouth



**The Guidance/Care Center Marches Forth**

By Maryanne "Maj" Johnson, Executive Assistant

On March 4, in celebration of **Employee Appreciation Day**, the **Guidance/Care Center (G/CC)** recognized staff for their hard work and exceptional commitment to the Florida Keys' community by implementing an **Employee of the Quarter** recognition program. Previously, we gave out 12 annual awards, but have since increased to quarterly awards since we have so many deserving employees! The program will allow more opportunities for recognition and rewards! Managers and all staff can fill out a survey nominating coworkers in all 12 categories that go above and beyond.

*next right thing as we March Forth," she said. "Every time I look at the results of our work, I am amazed at each individual and team contribution. You deserve recognition for the great effort that you give day-in and day-out. Please remember you are a valued employee as we March Forth! I look forward to new challenges that we can tackle together with great success as we March Forth!"*

Vice President, Maureen Dunleavy, shared some inspirational words with staff. *"Today, we celebrate you as we March Forth! When the going gets tough, you've already gotten going with more determination and commitment to the cause. Despite the challenges, we March Forth! It has been a challenging year with increased client needs, staffing shortages, and trying to fit it all in and you do what you can first things first to focus on the*

Additionally, the many efforts of our amazing staff were celebrated with special pizza parties that were held at all four G/CC locations from Key West to Key Largo!



Guidance/Care Center by WestCare



## Camp Mariposa is a Place to Transform

By Jennifer Brynh-Lash, *Camp Director*

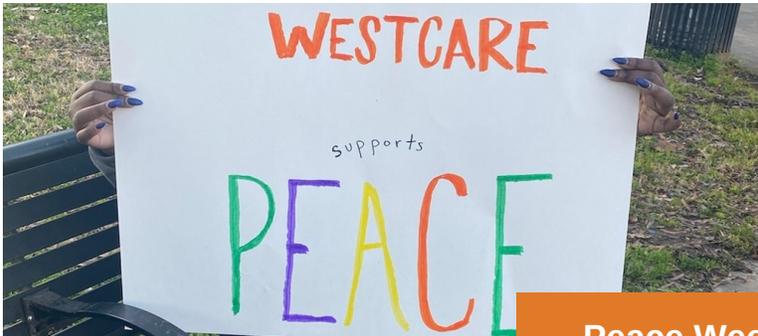
**Camp Mariposa - St. Petersburg** headed back to overnight camp and we all had a lot of fun reconnecting with each other. Camp Mariposa is a year-round prevention mentoring program where we provide a weekend camp experience at no cost to the families. Our campers have someone in their life dealing with addiction and the goal of Camp Mariposa is to provide them with the skills to make healthy choices. Camp is a place where they can be themselves and realize that they are not alone. During our February camp, our campers learned about goals, the difference between short and long-term goals, and why they are essential. They participated in team-building exercises that strengthened their communication skills. We also did some art that they took home to provide positive affirmations about themselves. This is only a snippet of camp and all the activities during the weekend that enrich the campers' lives.



WestCare GulfCoast - Florida



@WestCareGCFL



## Peace Week in Atlanta

By Miltina C. Fraser, *Program Director*

*"Peace is the hope of every nation, the promise of every politician, the pulse of every religious tradition, the goal of every prayer. Peace is the bold, courageous, and ultimate response to the notion that violence provides any viable solution for the conflicts of our world,"* as described by Reverend Kent Winter-Hazelton from the First Presbyterian Church in Lawrence, Kansas. This is what **Peace Week** here in Georgia is founded upon.

The **WestCare Georgia Youth Academy** embraced this sentiment and celebrated Peace Week by collaborating with various agencies in our community to make peace signs and march throughout the Mechanicsville community in Gwinnett County, Georgia. This march displayed unity, support, hope, and commitment to making the neighborhoods that we serve the best place for us to work, live, play, and thrive. It was refreshing to gather with our neighborhood organizations and come together on one accord in the name of peace!



WestCare Georgia



@westcarega



**A SSVF Success Story Featuring Jesse**

*"Our **Supportive Services for Veterans & Families (SSVF)** Regional Coordinator, Michael Boyd requested some success stories from the work that we do that he will send to Congress. Lead Veteran Navigator, Rose Holmes, graciously wrote about her work with one special Veteran." - **Darlene Terrill**, BSW, LADC, LADC Supervisor, Regional Administrator of Iowa/Minnesota Operations*

"A referral was made to **Family Alliance for Veterans of America (FAVA)** by an **Iowa Veterans Affairs (VA)** outreach social worker for SSVF for rapid rehousing of a single Veteran in Fort Dodge, Iowa. Jesse was a 35-year-old homeless, Afghanistan Veteran who was out on probation struggling with substance abuse and maintaining personal relationships. At that time, he said, *'My family wants nothing to do with me and my rampages. They kicked me out and I have nowhere to go. I can't even see my son. I don't blame them. I don't even want to be with me.'*

Staff made him aware of the SSVF Grant which is an opportunity for Veterans in difficult situations to utilize as temporary financial assistance and case management. Jesse initially hesitated to accept the help and insisted that he did not need charity. Staff assured him that this was not charity and he earned this through his service and bravery in the military. With the case management, financial assistance, and other services provided through the SSVF grant, he was able to secure permanent housing. He became active in his recovery from substance abuse while receiving therapy to address his Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Jesse became compliant with his probation conditions and paid his

restitution in full. He started paying child support and building healthy relationships. His family became involved and supportive. Most importantly, he was able to begin spending quality time with his 10-year-old son.

Jesse benefited from the case management that SSVF staff provided. With FAVA's help, he was able to move into a one-bedroom apartment in Fort Dodge, Iowa close to his family and where he worked at a construction site. The staff of FAVA staff worked diligently to coordinate services with the VA and other community resources to meet his needs. He learned to better manage his VA compensation and earned income. The short-term financial assistance from SSVF consisted of rental and utility deposits, rent, and utility bills. He then got his truck repaired which allowed him to get to work and attend his appointments. He was also able to start furnishing his home.

Upon successful completion of SSVF, Jesse seemed healthier, proud, and confident. He had increased his income, allowing him to sustain his new home. He demonstrated that he was able to move forward with the new life skills he had acquired. He was grateful and determined to pay it forward."

- **Rose Holmes**, Lead Veteran Navigator, FAVA



FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America)



**Partnering with Rush University System for Health**

By Carlos G. Rodriguez, Program Director

**WestCare Illinois**, along with several other providers, has collaborated as part of a grant with **Rush University System for Health** in the battle to reduce opioid-related calls and deaths. In the month of March, we were featured in the Rush Regional Leadership Center newsletter. The last few months' data show fewer Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls and more "Street Medicine" like Naloxone and Narcan distribution, which has

increased our motivation to push forward.

In Chicago, we have an overdose crisis. Rush is looking to impact national-level changes in Substance Use Disorder (SUD) policy and continued decriminalization of substance use. On a state level, Illinois General Assembly representatives reintroduced the HB 110 Safer Consumption Services Act which would allow the Department of Public Health to approve or deny programs that aim to make the use of pre-acquired drugs hygienic and safer. Persons participating in these programs would not be subject to civil or criminal charges for the use of substances. The bill has increased momentum and we hope to see the passage of this important pilot program for specific assistance in substance use services on Chicago's Westside.

Finally, our work with Rush has led to increased awareness of the use of Narcan and Fentanyl-testing strips and has allowed us to assist with citywide efforts to enhance outreach efforts in targeted neighborhoods. Thank you, Rush, for helping WestCare Illinois Uplift the Human Spirit!



WestCare Illinois



## Employee Appreciation Day

By Jeremie Delauder, *Data Coordinator*

Staff throughout **WestCare Kentucky** consistently outperform their expectations. This year, Employee Appreciation Day gave us an official chance to let our wonderful staff know just how much their hard work and dedication is valued here!

Having time to sit down as a group and eat lunch is rare these days. When lunchtime came around on this day, each WestCare Kentucky facility was surprised with a scrumptious sheet cake. Many facilities took this time to sit down together and have fellowship.

Thank you again, WestCare Kentucky and WestCare itself for putting the care in WestCare and allowing us to celebrate our staff!



 WestCare Kentucky



## The Village at The Women and Children's Campus Receives a Major Boost of Support

By Andrew Moran, *Development Director*

Our proposed women's transitional living project, **The Village at the Women and Children's Campus**, was a part of history last month when the **Las Vegas City Council** voted to gift \$120 million to worthy nonprofits and we were picked as one of the lucky recipients. It was a unanimous decision from the Las Vegas City Council, all in favor of granting The Village \$2.5 million out of funds allotted by the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)**.

The ARPA or as it's known to many, the COVID-19 Stimulus Package, is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by Congress on March 11, 2021. The State of Nevada received \$6.7 billion and they have distributed this among municipalities. The City of Las Vegas approved the relief for local businesses, affordable housing projects, and other pandemic-related response groups.

Our team worked very hard and we applied back in November and on February 16, in an open council meeting, we were approved - bringing us much closer to our overall goal of breaking ground by this summer.

City Manager, Jorge Cervantes, approved and authorized the award and allocation of funds, totaling \$121,070,000 allocated to the city.

We met numerous times with the city's representatives giving them tours of our facilities and explaining how important our 84-apartment Village will be for the community. We have gained their support and received letters to aid us in our efforts. Out of 500 requests for funding, totaling about \$2.2 billion, only 149 eligible applicants were selected.

Clark County also received \$440 million in ARPA funds and we are currently in the application process to receive the third round of funding.

We will continue our pursuit of breaking ground on The Village as soon as possible and will keep our WestCare Family up to date on further developments with this exciting project!



WestCare Nevada



@westcarenevada



@westcarenevada



## East End Community Services Receives an AES Foundation Power Grant

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

In late February, the **Dayton Power and Light Foundation** announced its new name, the **AES Ohio Foundation**, along with the recipients of their **2021 Ohio Foundation Power Grant**. **East End Community Services** is honored to be one of their recipients for the Power Grant. The grant is \$50,000 and will be awarded a total of four times, totaling \$200,000!

*"The AES Ohio Foundation is the largest corporate foundation in the Miami Valley where every dollar is distributed locally with a commitment to award sustainable grants that make a positive impact on our region,"* said AES Ohio's Director of Community and Corporate Social Responsibility, Holly Wiggins. *"Congratulations to our grant recipients whose hard work, dedication, and passion drive community building while strategically navigating the challenges of the COVID pandemic."*

The AES Ohio Foundation awarded its Power Grants in the following strategic areas: Economic Development and The Arts, Workforce Development, Poverty Reduction, Diversity, and Inclusion. This grant will allow the **East End Whole Family Hub** capital campaign to continue to provide youth, family, and neighborhood development programs in East Dayton. Thank you, Dayton Power and Light Foundation; we are incredibly grateful!

View AES Ohio's announcement video for the 2021 Ohio Foundation Power Grant online at: [aes-ohio.com/aes-ohio-foundation](https://aes-ohio.com/aes-ohio-foundation)



East End Community Services



@eastendcommunityservices





## Recognizing Our Outstanding Employees

By Nancy Pine, Case Manager

**VETcare Transitional Program** in Salem, Oregon has nine full-time staff members and they were treated to an amazing Olive Garden lunch in recognition of their dedication and service on Employee Appreciation Day. We only recognize them officially once a year, but their accomplishments impact our facility every day. Here is a little background on some of our employees.

**Director, Ray Powers** has been with VETcare from the beginning. He started as the part-time maintenance technician, was promoted to full-time senior case manager, and was then promoted to director because of his dedication and hard work. Ray is a retired Army Veteran with over 30 years of service.

**Senior Case Manager, Jim Stackhouse** has been with us for a year and has proven to be an invaluable asset to our facility! Not only does he manage approximately 15 cases himself, but he also supervises the other case managers and night monitors. He is a retired Army Veteran with over 20 years of service.

**Mental Health Counselor, Shawn Gutierrez** is new to our facility. He is a retired Army Veteran after 20 years, and upon retirement, chose to pursue his education as a social worker. He specifically wanted to help Veterans in the community. He is the perfect fit for our program and his years of experience gives him invaluable insight to help our homeless Vets.

**Case Manager, Matthew Beardsly** started with VETcare as a night monitor and was quickly promoted to case manager. He has an educational background in psychology, which gives him the insight he needs to assist our Vets.

**GPD Case Manager, Nancy Pine** has been with VETcare for two and a half years. She assists our Veterans once they are ready to leave the facility. She follows them for up to 6 months after they move out to ensure they are heading in the right direction and helps prevent homelessness in the future. Like many of our staff, she is a military Veteran and served in both the Navy and Army. She retired after over 28 years of service.

We thank all of our employees and have named a few in this article. Next month, we will recognize the amazing support staff who keep this facility running behind the scenes! They are essential to our success and will be recognized accordingly.

*Pictures left to right: Matthew Beardsly, Shawn Gutierrez, Jim Stackhouse, Nancy Pine*



## Uplift Counseling Services Expands their Reach to College Students

By Lavina Camacho, Behavioral Health Administrator

In October of 2021, **Uplift Counseling Services** began a new partnership with the **Guam Community College (GCC)** offering behavioral health support and services, allowing the community college to address mental health directly. This collaboration stemmed from **WestCare Pacific Islands (WPI)** identifying the unmet needs and barriers for this young adult population when accessing urgent mental health services. WPI took things a step further by also actively addressing the emotional wellbeing of the college staff as they support the various academic, social, and emotional needs of the students. This partnership comes at a critical time as the island's primary mental health resource for college students was discontinued and COVID-19 continues to negatively impact college students' mental health and ability to cope.

Uplift's behavioral health team is committed to providing the GCC community with virtual and in-person presentations on topics related to wellness, individual counseling, referrals, linkages based on need, readily accessible screenings for suicide, depression, anxiety, and professional consultation on concerns that adversely impact individual students and employees.

Together, Uplift Counseling Services and GCC are collectively fostering a conducive environment of encouragement and empowerment by focusing on positive mental health and the importance of taking care of the emotional wellbeing of students and faculty!



**Lavina L.G. Camacho, MS, MFT, LPC**  
Behavioral Health Administrator



**Beverlyn Coleman, MA**  
Clinical Program Director



 WestCare Pacific Islands

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## Guara Bi - Yara Ri Celebrates Three Years of Service

By Elizabeth Roldan, *Administrative Assistant*

On February 15, **Guara Bi - Yara Ri** celebrated its third anniversary. This program offers substance abuse treatment with assisted medication and direct support services to clients with opioid use disorders residing in the municipality of Vega Baja and neighboring towns. For the past three years, they have served the community with the purpose of providing outreach, education, guidance, and being a source of support for participants to take control over their integral health.

The program promotes the commitment of the participants to maintain their treatment, recovery process, and achieve a better quality of life free of substance use. Guara Bi - Yara Ri has distinguished itself by being a service organization of excellence and commitment to a marginalized society by serving and helping with professionalism, dignity, and respect for all people with social problems. As part of an anniversary activity, they shared with the participants and employees a delicious lunch and thanked all of their staff for their contributions. Congratulations, everyone on our third anniversary!



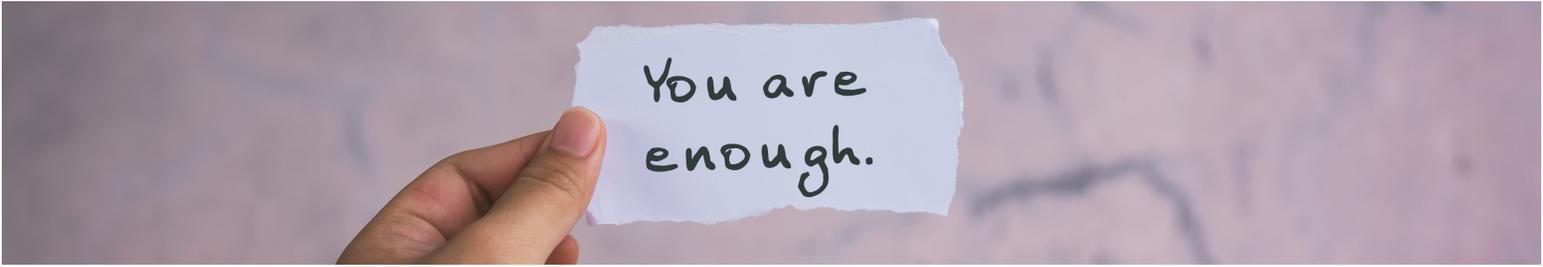
## Family Fun and Education

By Chris Smith, *Program Director*

On February 28, **WestCare Tennessee** and the **Prevention Alliance of Cocke County (PACC)**, conducted its first **Family Fun Event** at the **Boys and Girls Club of Newport, Tennessee**. Over-the-counter medicines, primarily cough medicines containing dextromethorphan, were the topic of focus. The event was intended to engage club members and their family members in discussing ideas that they could use to keep their homes safe from possible abuse of these medicines. Club members worked with a family member to paint a picture showing how they can keep their home safe. A PowerPoint presentation was available for viewing and flyers were available to take home with information about this subject. There were 37 youth and nine adults that participated in the event. A meal was also provided for participants by **Smoky Mountain Home Health and Hospice**. Thank you to our amazing community partners who came together and contributed to help make this important awareness event possible!



 WestCare Tennessee  
 @WestCareTN



## San Antonio Mothers to Receive Crucial Support Thanks to the ROSE Grant

By Jessica Cerda



**WestCare Texas San Antonio** along with three other local nonprofit agencies in San Antonio were awarded the **ROSE (Reach Out, Stay Strong, Essentials for mothers of newborns)** grant in 2021 to participate in a program designed for young, soon-to-be, and postpartum mothers.

This is a joint project by **San Antonio Metro Health** and **Voices for Children of San Antonio**. The program tackles postpartum depression, domestic violence, interpersonal relationship abuse, and how to leave abusive relationships.

WestCare Texas' Community Safety and Engagement Coordinator, Debbie Howelton Cruse, served as the ROSE grant coordinator that completed the training program and implemented the inaugural program for WestCare Texas.

The program will kick off in August 2022 with staff training. Participants will complete the eight-week course work from September through October requiring weekly online sessions. Some of the course topics include Child and Selfcare Education, Becoming a Mother, Relationships and Communication, Planning for the Future, Postpartum Depression and Where to Get Help, A Mother's Survival Kit, and Changing Roles. Group discussions with a questions and answers session will also be part of the curriculum.

The WestCare Texas headquarters at the Ella Austin Community Center, home to the Early Head Start Child Development Program, after school youth programs, and senior nutrition and activities is undergoing multi-million-dollar renovations this year that will transform the campus into a modern community resource center offering new and culturally relevant services. Senior Vice President, Beverly Watts Davis, led the community effort to secure bond funding, American Recovery Act funds, and Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone funding which totaled \$23.7 million dollars.

The Ella Austin Community Center occupies a city block at 1023 N. Pine Street with multiple structures including a main building with a cafeteria, library, auditorium, and offices. The campus also includes a gymnasium, senior center building, and a workforce development building.



WestCare Texas



**Partnering with Safeway/Albertsons to Improve Nutrition**

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

As you may have noticed, “sticker shock” has been on the rise lately! Escalating food and fuel prices are a trial experienced regularly by many of our community members. As we know, it can be particularly stressful for the people we serve at WestCare where many have a modest income as they manage through recovery from serious social and health risks.

In the fall of 2021, WestCare Foundation’s Interim Vice President of Grants, Lisa Jackson, shared details on opportunities for food security partnerships with major grocery outlets including Safeway and Albertsons. Acting on her information, we reached out to their local Public Affairs Representative, Sara Osborn. We provided Sara a stream of messages and pictures describing **WestCare Washington/WAServes’** efforts with community partners to reduce food insecurity among Veterans and members of their households.

We informed Sara of our success in coordinating a growing network of organizations and people who are dedicated to improving the lives of our nation’s Veterans.

We described WestCare Washington’s unique capacity to connect our clients to a significant and often unclaimed inventory of benefits, pensions,

and resources exclusively available to Veterans. We described to her our success as we employ gift cards and other resources as temporary bridges, allowing us time to connect clients with a mix of community and Veteran specific resources.

In response, she invited our team to apply for participation in a regional food partnership where members receive and distribute grocery gift cards provided by the employees of **Safeway** and **Albertsons**. We hoped to receive several thousand dollars in gift cards to share with our clients and partners. We figure every dollar helps!

In late January, our donation of gift cards finally arrived. Andrea and I experienced unexpected joy and demonstration of community generosity. We did not receive the \$6,000 in grocery gift cards we had expected - instead, we were blessed with over \$60,000!

We worked closely with our network of partners including the **American Legion**, **Timberland Regional Library**, **Heroes’ Café**, **YWCA**, the **American Red Cross**, and select county-hosted Veteran service centers to thoughtfully manage, distribute, and share this unprecedented nutrition support for local Veterans in need!



**Showing Support for Local Students and Appreciation to Our Schools**

By Felicia Williams, *Program Director*



During the month of February, the **Life Skills Training (LST)** program worked with various schools to distribute goodie bags. The goodie bags included some coloring books for mental stimulation, some trinkets so the youth could share with others in their families, and hygiene bags. The LST staff also assembled approximately 200 bags which included: combs, brushes, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, lotion, and a washcloth. All bags were distributed for the students at **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. African American Immersion School**, **Robert M. LaFollette Elementary**, **Shining Star Christian Academy**, and **Thurston Wood Campus**. We always want them to have a fresh start. The goodie bags also included Valentine’s Day cards for each of the staff that assists us with making our program successful including the office staff, teachers, principals, and vice-principals. Everyone had a treat to remember!



 WestCare Wisconsin

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# Grants & Resource Development



## The 2022 Faith & Fundraising Conference

By Martin Bimler, *Grant Development Officer*

More than 300 fundraisers gathered in Milwaukee on February 22 to kick off the three-day **2022 Faith & Fundraising Conference**, hosted by **ALDE (formerly the Association of Lutheran Development Executives)** and **The Nonprofit Alliance's Catholic Development Council (TNPA's CDC)**. This was the first time that these two organizations combined their efforts to host a conference dedicated to the support and education of Christian fundraisers. The conference is open to individuals who work for Christian non-profit organizations as well as to individuals whose faith calls them to serve secular organizations. I was honored to be able to attend this conference and earn continuing education hours necessary for maintaining my Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) status. In past years, I have had the pleasure to present at this national conference (formerly IGNITE) on Organizational Grant Readiness as well as Strategies for Corporate Fundraising.

This year's conference featured several keynote presenters. Andy Bales, CEO of **Union Rescue Mission**, a 130-year-old organization that provides housing services to homeless individuals and families in Los Angeles, spoke passionately about the joys and challenges of running capital campaigns to create safe, supportive places for homeless individuals with substance use disorders. Dr. Tyrone McKinley Freeman, Assistant Professor of Philanthropic Studies and Director of Undergraduate Programs at **Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy**, spoke about "Black Women's Philanthropy during Jim Crow," and shared how visionaries like Madam C.J. Walker and Ida B. Wells used their voices and resources to challenge traditional models of philanthropy and how their approach continues to influence the way in which African American communities engage in philanthropy today.

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, President and CEO of **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS)** and former Policy Director for First Lady Michelle Obama, shared her experiences as a young Sri Lankan refugee to her time in the White House and her role in helping to grow LIRS into one of the most influential nonprofit voices in immigration and refugee services. The final keynote address was delivered by Fr. Don Senior, President Emeritus and Chancellor of **Catholic Theological Union** in Chicago, who stated that fundraising and development enables people to be generous, attentive, and responsive to the human experience. It was a poignant reminder that while most WestCare staff see the impact of homelessness, substance use, mental illness, and other traumas on a daily basis, the average person does not see or experience these things, does not know there is a need, and does not know how to respond. This is where development professionals can share needs and stories and are ultimately able to help others to live generously through the giving of time and resources.

While professional development is essential for maintaining certifications and credentials, understanding one's vocation – a strong sense of connection and suitability to one's work – is essential to career longevity, whether that vocational calling comes from a place of faith or some other place of personal understanding.

## Meet WestCare's *Information Security Team*

WestCare's **Information Security Team** is a division of the Information Technology Department that is responsible for the strategy and implementation of an information security program through governance, awareness, monitoring, and assessment activities with the goal of ensuring the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of WestCare's information assets. We recently added two new team members, so we wanted to take the opportunity to introduce you to this entire team of dedicated IT professionals so you know the names and faces of those working to protect you and our clients every day.

### Laura Zannucci, *Information Security Director*



My name is Laura Zannucci and I started with WestCare Foundation in February as the Information Security Director. In this role, I get to work with a great team promoting information security governance and awareness. I am especially excited to work with the Security Champions team to help them get a better understanding of WestCare's environment, needs, and concerns.

The majority of my information security career has been related to the financial sector including banks, credit unions, mortgage companies, and insurance companies. I am a graduate of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and have obtained several information security/technology related certifications.

I have lived in Knoxville, Tennessee, just a short distance from the Dandridge office, for 27 years and I have two amazing children, Hannah (19) and Thomas (17). My favorite things to do are spending time with my family, camping, reading, or doing anything outdoors.

I look forward to supporting each of you and WestCare for many years to come.

### Ricky Hamilton, *Information Security Analyst*



Hello, my name is Ricky Hamilton and I am excited to be here. First, let me say thank you to the WestCare staff all around the world. I was told during my interview about what a welcoming place WestCare is. I can sincerely say that everyone that I have had the pleasure of interacting with has embodied that sentiment.

So, what do I do? I am the Information Security Analyst here at WestCare and have been working in and around the IT industry since the late 90's. Both employees and clients of WestCare desire and expect our network and their data to remain secure. So, I do my part to Uplift the Human Spirit by analyzing data flowing through our network, training users on security issues, and remaining vigilant of emerging threats so that our business and front-line employees can do what we do best: serve our clients and perform their jobs without worry.

My previous experience includes working as an IT auditor, process improvement engineer, and IT technician. In each of these roles, I assessed computers systems for privacy, security, data integrity, improved business, and supply chain processes and worked on IT infrastructure. I spent the majority of my time in academia, telecommunications, and healthcare. I also performed as a professional magician and balloon artist for over 10 years!

I have a wonderful wife and eight-year-old daughter and my hobbies include playing chess, guitar, board games, and of course working with computers. Thanks again for welcoming me to the WestCare family!

### Johnny Charles, *Information Security Specialist*



I am Johnny Charles, Information Security Specialist at WestCare Foundation. I have worked at WestCare for seven years and had the pleasure of meeting many of you in person from my previous role with FitzHouse Enterprises.

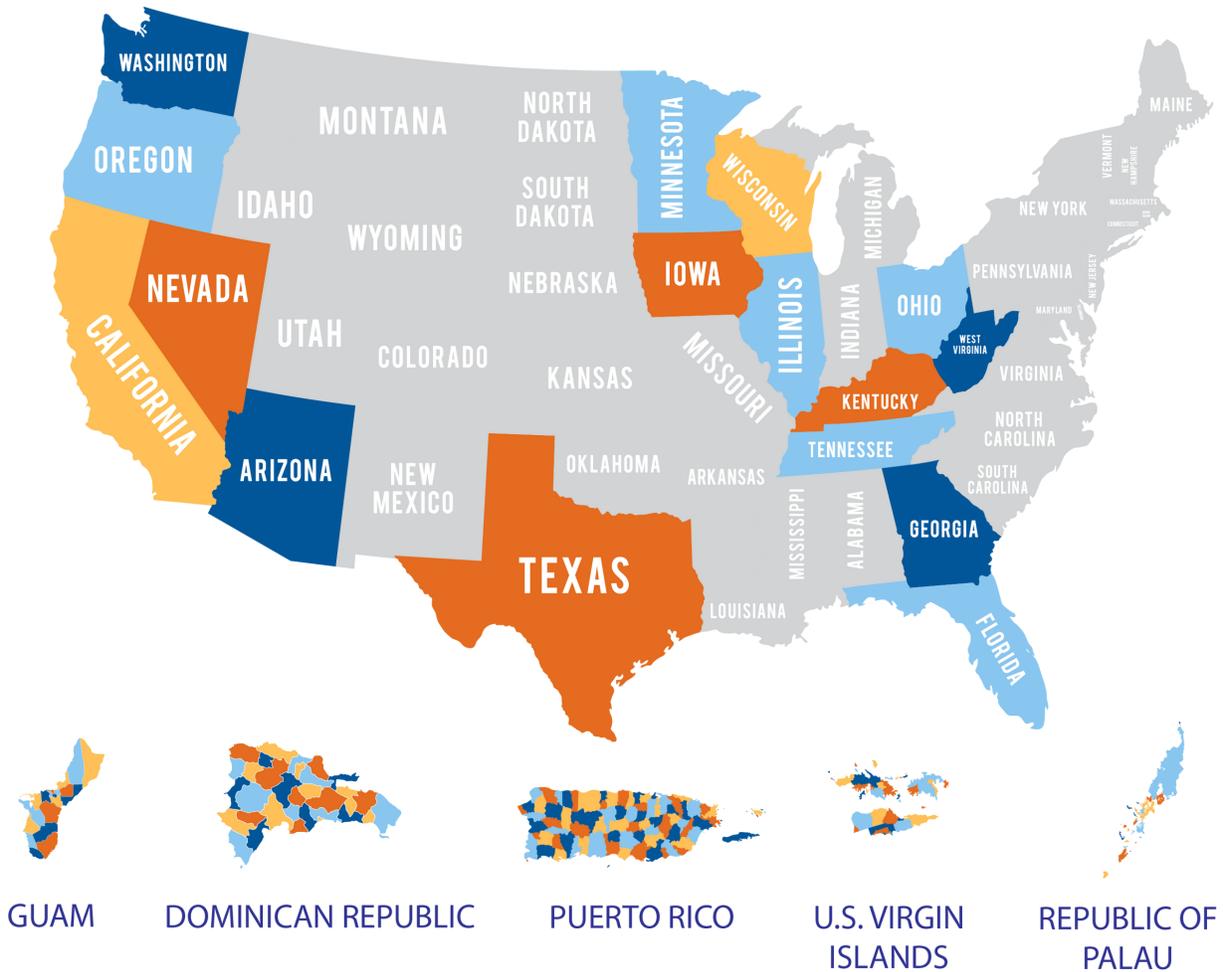
Three years ago, I was invited to join the Information Security Team. It has been a big shift for me, but I have enjoyed every minute. I have learned so much and enjoyed meeting and collaborating with even more of our teammates through email and Microsoft Teams.

Protecting the confidential data of WestCare's clients and team members, especially during these trying times, has been both a challenge and an honor for me. Although I have went from working with a hammer and nails to using network scanning tools and phishing simulations, it remains a great blessing in my life to be able to provide a secure environment for our front-line employees so they can provide the life changing services they give to our clients.

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