



April 2012

Giving Back: "It Felt Good."

WestCare KY Aids in Relief Efforts for Tornado Victims

By Ashley Morgan – Case Manager

On the evening of March 2, 2012, Eastern Kentucky was hit by tornados that caused severe damage to the area. These tornados were brought about by the largest storm system in the area in 24 years. The tornadoes left 23 dead in KY and many without homes. On March the 6th and 7th, fifteen WestCare KY residents, along with staff, traveled to Magoffin County to help with the relief efforts.

The residents left early Tuesday morning and returned to the facility late that night. Then, they repeated the round-trip the next day. The residents worked diligently both days without stopping, except for a one hour lunch which was provided by area churches. On Tuesday, WestCare residents loaded a tractor trailer full of bottled water from the Health Department, and then unloaded and distributed them at City Hall, where a refuge had been created for local victims, providing food, drinks, clothing and access



Our workers manned the food lines, too

to showers. The residents also packed and distributed clothing donated from local churches and organizations.

On Wednesday, much time and effort was exerted by WestCare residents helping with cleanup of the devastated homes and working along with the victims. Furniture was moved and stored; clothing salvaged and personal belongings boxed, in efforts to help the community members affected by the storms collect what was left of their past and move forward.

I spoke with three of our workers who took part in the relief effort. Two of them were natives of the Salyersville area. When asked what the conditions were like, one responded, "Terrible, awful, the hotel on the Salyersville strip was

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Other regional charities joined the WestCare effort.

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leveled, McDonalds was destroyed along with most of the businesses. Houses from my home town were a mess, and people stood in front of what used to be their homes." When asked if there was any situation in particular they would like to share, the residents quickly recalled two different families. "We helped a lady and man in their 70's pack up their stuff. They had lived in the house for 55 years together, and now had to move because nothing was left. It was really sad," stated one resident.

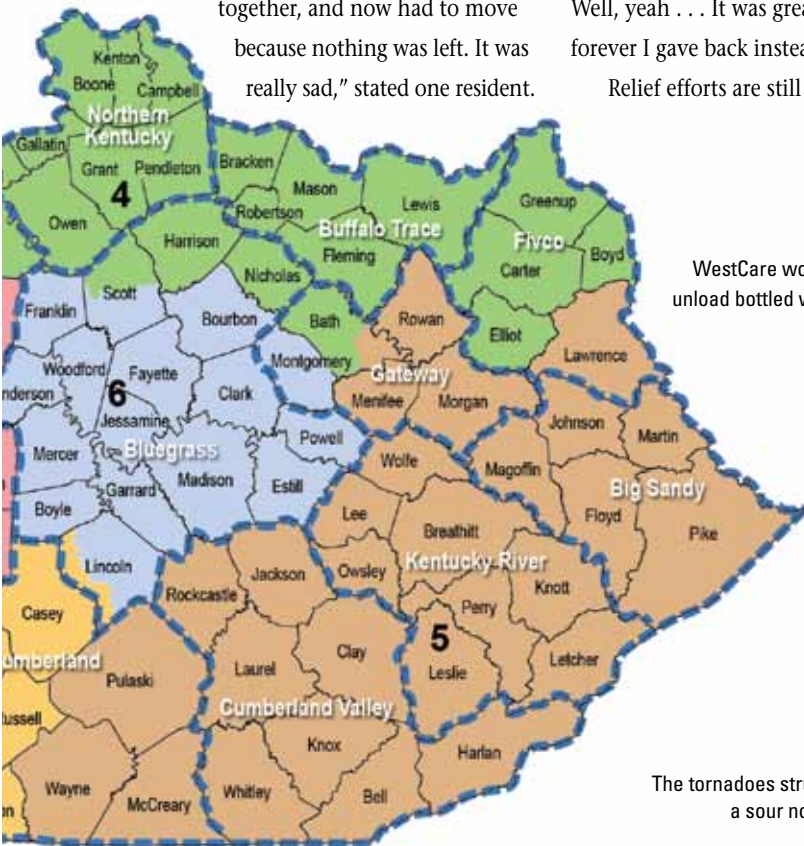
The other talked about another family they helped that day. "I remember this Christian couple. They had two children and had lost everything, but they always had a smile. All they kept talking about was how God had saved their family. That really impressed me." When asked if they enjoyed their time spent with the families and cleanup one of our workers spoke up immediately and said, "Well, yeah . . . It was great. It was the first time in forever I gave back instead of taking. It felt good."

Relief efforts are still in progress as the

community tries to pick up the pieces and move forward. WestCare residents planned to visit Magoffin County again in March to further help their new friends.

(Editor's note: WestCare CEO Richard Steinberg praised all those involved in the cleanup. "This is a tremendous gesture of goodwill to our neighbors, families and friends. I am very proud of our WestCare crew in Eastern Kentucky.")

It should be noted that Dick's wife, Sharon, has family and friends in the affected area. All escaped relatively unscathed.)



WestCare workers unload bottled water.



The tornadoes struck a sour note!



Crew stores property in secure building.



A Day at the Ballet in Florida: *Gizelle*

Village South Girls Adolescent Treatment Program enjoyed a day at the Ballet being able to see Giselle. The quintessential 19th-Century romantic ballet telling the story of a young peasant girl who is betrayed by her disguised aristocratic lover, dies of grief and madness, yet comes back from the grave to rescue him from the implacable revenge of the fearsome Wilis.



Florida

California

Congressman Denham with veteran Richard Barnes, Veterans Plaza House Manager.



High-Ranking Congressman Visits Veterans Plaza

By Julie LeFils – *Special Projects*

WestCare news conferences are always well-attended!

San Joaquin Valley Veterans, a project of WestCare California, welcomed Congressman Jeff Denham to our brand new Veteran’s Plaza apartment complex near downtown Fresno. As a member of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, Congressman Denham took a firsthand look at what is being done for the veterans of our community.

Scheduled for completion at the end of next month, this transitional living facility will offer a home to the homeless and a hand up for those in need. With a case manager on site, those who have served us will receive the gratitude they deserve: A place to stay and staff to help them engage in a process of healing, growth and change



benefiting themselves, their families, and communities.

Congressman Denham also helped make a pitch for ‘adoption opportunities,’ allowing groups and individuals to sponsor various portions of the facility.

Chinese New Year’s Parade

SMART 2 staff members participate in the annual Chinese New Year’s parade in Fresno’s historic Chinatown. Notice they got takeout! SMART 2, led by MaryEllen Pitalu, along with our alumni group, The Living Room and other WestCare California programs are regular participants in community events such as this.



Reflecting on Respect

It's all about respect.

Middle School students from across Kings County assembled to learn about a major factor in determining the kind of person they'll be: How they treat other people.

About 300 students gathered at the Hanford Civic Auditorium to learn the importance of showing respect for others at the 11th annual Office of Education's Youth Development Conference.

Valentin Ferrel, a substance abuse counselor with WestCare, taught students about respect using stories about his past. Ferrel was a gang member and a methamphetamine addict who admittedly spent years mistreating other people. "I was very disrespectful to my ex (-wife)," Ferrel said. "The reason she's my ex now, is that as soon as I went to jail, she left me." When he got out of jail, he had no clothes, no job, no place to stay and an untreated

Excerpted from Hanford Sentinel

drug problem. He had to first learn self-respect, which involved eliminating negative influences and losing a lot of old friends.

"I changed the things that were destroying me," Ferrel said. "I changed those habits that I needed to change, the things that weren't acceptable. I don't allow alcohol in my house. I don't allow people who are gangbangers at my house. And I pick and choose who I keep as friends." . . . *It all begins with self respect.*



California

▲ Valentin Ferrel, a substance abuse counselor with WestCare

Project LiftOff: Help for the Homeless

News release prepared by Julie LeFils

WestCare California Vice President Shawn Jenkins announces a Federal Grant for \$663,583 will help Fresno provide homes for homeless families, as WestCare and the Fresno Housing Authority collaborate for project LiftOff.

The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) is awarding \$663,583 for Fresno's new project: LiftOff. A partnership between WestCare California, Inc. and the Fresno Housing Authority, LiftOff stands for LIFTing up the spirits Of Fresno Families.

The project will target families with special needs and provide 14 units of scattered/tenant-based housing to approximately 74 persons experiencing homelessness (special needs means that one adult member in the household must have a documented disabling condition). The project will not stop there. Through supportive services and



case management, WestCare will work path to self-sufficiency.

WestCare and Fresno Housing Authority are excited for this partnership, and honored to bring such a unique project to help the homeless of Fresno County. This is a notification of award, and the final contract agreement with HUD will take 10-12 months.



'Faces of Change: A Portrait of the 2012 Offender'

By Julie LeFils – *Special Projects*

California

Great turnout for a first event! ▼

On March 1st & 2nd in Fresno, CA, 300 eager participants gathered for the first annual SASCA conference, organized and hosted by WestCare California. This one and a half day event focused on the new parolee of California's realignment process, mandated by the state. From co-occurring disorders and cultural differences to gang members and violent offenders, the conference detailed how we as providers can create positive change in their lives. With guest speakers such as Dr. Igor Koutsenok from UC San Diego and PA II JD Garcia from Los Angeles, there was never a dull moment. With such a great event under their belt, the SASCA team is already being asked how they're going to top it next year! Stay tuned to find out:)



◀ Los Angeles Parole Officer J.D. Garcia tells no lies!



▲ Some of the hundreds of attendees at SASCA conference



◀ Colleen Curtin, Office of Offender Services, speaks to Fresno gathering

April Fools Day

April Fools' Day is celebrated in different countries around the world on April 1st every year. Sometimes referred to as All Fools' Day, April 1st is not a national holiday, but is widely recognized and celebrated as a day when many people play all kinds of jokes and foolishness. The day is marked by the commission of good-humored or otherwise funny jokes, hoaxes, and other practical jokes of varying sophistication on friends, family members, teachers, neighbors, work associates, etc.



Cares Alternative Spring Break

By Miltina Fraser – *WestCare Georgia*

Eight students and two staff mentors from The University of Central Florida came to visit with The Cares Team and provide volunteer services for their Alternative Spring Break activity. Since March 8 was Women's HIV Awareness day, the activities were centered on how women are affected and infected with HIV/AIDS. We provided interactive and vigorous day long training, exposing them to knowledge about HIV, our testing protocol for successfully implementing large testing events, and information about the forms being used. We estimate having tested over 200 youth between Georgia State University and Agnes Scott College. Our Street Outreach activity resulted in 350 condom packets and educational information being handed out. The students also participated in an evening conference/roundtable discussion with other

community providers sponsored by The Balm of Gilead. They were pleasantly surprised to hear information that they had just learned being discussed at the event.

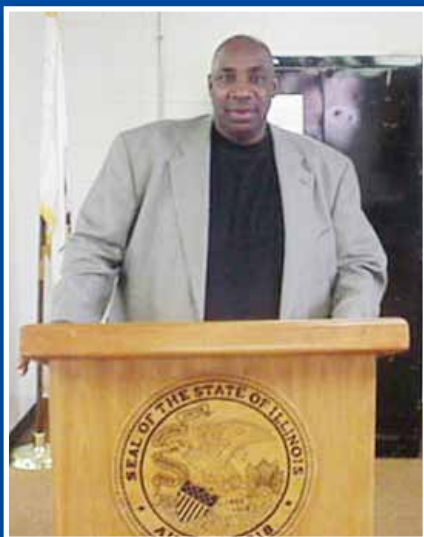
The students were a focused, task oriented and Pro-Fun-Tive group (productive + fun). They came with little awareness of the possible tasks related to HIV prevention, and left with a zeal to continue the challenge on their college campus and communities. One of the students stated his experience was "extremely informational and personal." All of the participants wanted time to do more, especially HIV Testing.

Georgia



The Cares Team is especially proud to have had this experience, not only giving back to the community but giving others the tools to do the same.

Illinois



▲
Mr. Mark Sanders

Black History Activities Focus on Education, Music, Food and Fun

By MaryBeth O'Hara – *WestCare Sheridan Office Manager*

During the month of February, WestCare Sheridan clients and staff participated in many Black History Month events. Special guests from the community came into the prison to talk with clients about positive community reintegration and being role models and big brothers once back in their neighborhoods. Mr. Tio Hardimon from Cease Fire discussed violence in the communities and how to promote peace with healthy solutions. Mr. Warr discussed the Culture of Addiction. Mr. Eric Deobler presented facts on the Civil War and the increased education and opportunities over the decades for African Americans. Mr. Mark Sanders, (photo) renowned author, speaker, and trainer for drug/alcohol counselors, discussed recovery issues and relapse planning with clients. He then met with WestCare staff on cross-cultural interactions. The WestCare staff found the training to be insightful

and interactive, learning facts about your co-workers and motivating on *Uplifting the Human Spirit*.

There was also a Black History Trivia challenge where many clients from all housing units were encouraged to participate. Other Black History Month events that staff could also participate in were ethnic meals served in the facility chow hall (fried chicken, fried catfish, okra, country style ribs, corn bread, collard greens, red beans and rice) served to both staff and clients on different days throughout the month.

Finally, the leisure time service department conducted a variety of bands through the ages, consisting of clients in the treatment program at Sheridan Correctional Center all performing in the gym on the weekends throughout the month.

April Calendar

April 1st
April Fools Day

April 1st
Palm Sunday

April 4th
CAC Monthly Report Due
12:00pm / 1:00pm
(Executive Committee)

April 5th
Kentucky Central CAC Meeting
3:00pm ET/12:00pm PT
Estill County Community
Involvement Center

April 6th
Good Friday

April 7th
Passover

April 8th
Easter

April 10th
Executive Committee
Pre-Board Meeting
8:00am PT/11:00am ET

April 10th – 12th
National Rx Drug Abuse Summit
Orlando, Florida

April 12th
FAVA Board Meeting
3:00pm PT/5:00pm CT

April 16th
California CAC Meeting
7:30am PT

April 19th
Nevada CAC Meeting
12:00pm
401 S. MLK, Las Vegas

April 21st
Eastern Regional Board Meeting
8:00am PT/ 11:00am ET

April 28th
Western Regional Board Meeting
8:00am PT/ 11:00am ET

April

is Alcohol Awareness Month

About Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol Awareness Month encourages communities to focus on alcoholism and alcohol related issues by raising public awareness and educating people about the devastating effects alcohol can have on our youth, individuals and families.

April marks Alcohol Awareness Month. This year, CDC is drawing attention to the risks to women from binge drinking, a dangerous behavior that leads to many health and social problems for women, particularly if they are pregnant or may become pregnant.

This nationwide campaign is intended to raise awareness of the health and social problems that excessive alcohol consumption can cause for individuals, their families, and their communities. Excessive drinking is a dangerous behavior for both men and women. This year, CDC is drawing attention to the risks to women's health from binge drinking, the most common type of excessive alcohol consumption by adults.

Alcohol Consumption and Chronic Diseases:

Women are often more vulnerable than men to the long-term effects of alcohol on their health. Over time, drinking too much alcohol can lead to:

- **Cancer:** Alcohol consumption increases the risk for breast cancer and cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon.
- **Liver Disease:** The risk for cirrhosis and other alcohol-related liver diseases is higher for women than for men.
- **Heart Problems:** Studies have shown that women who drink excessively are at increased risk for damage to the heart muscle than men. Binge drinking can lead to high blood pressure and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke.

All Women Can

- Avoid drinking alcohol if pregnant or planning to become pregnant. Remember – Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are 100% preventable.
- Choose not to binge drink and help others not to do it. Binge drinking leads to many health and social problems for the drinkers, their families, and their communities. If women choose to drink alcoholic beverages, they should do so in moderation. Moderate drinking is defined as the consumption of up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men, according to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Seek care from a health care provider for excessive drinking. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening and behavioral counseling for alcohol misuse by adults, including pregnant women. Screening and Brief Intervention has been shown to significantly decrease the number of drinks consumed per week and the number of binge drinking episodes.

For more information, go to:

www.wikihow.com/Observe-Alcohol-Awareness-Month



Alumni Club Project

By, Bobby DeBatt – *Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. Counselor*

My name is Bobby De Batt . . . yea, that's me with the bullhorn . . . and while working with WestCare Arizona I realized that there was nothing in place for clients once they completed their services and care with us. There was a need for something more, something seamless; something familiar for our clients so they could continue to grow in an atmosphere that is familiar and be part of something; something that would make them feel as special as they are. While talking with my supervisor, and our Area Director; they gave me the idea of an Alumni group. They put me in contact with WestCare Nevada Alumni and I was off and running . . . the Arizona Alumni Project was born. We have worked hard to develop this project, tailoring it to the needs of rural clients and the result of our hard work is evidenced by the turn out we had for this, our first Alumni event this past Saint Patty's Day.

The weather forecast predicted cold and wind and it was remarkably accurate; it was cold and it was windy. There were concerns that the weather would interfere with many of the clients' decisions to attend, but staff believed in the clients and moved forward with the event. The clients did not let anyone down as more than 75 adults and children attended the event.



Even though it was cold and windy, the atmosphere was warm . . . and there was laughter throughout the whole area. Children were making messes and parents were cleaning up after them, while staff was ever present, being sure that all needs were being attended to.

Seven WestCare Nevada Alumni showed up and gave encouragement and hope to many as they each spoke to the crowd. The Alumni spoke about their sobriety; having productive lives; really enjoying life, being able to laugh when things are fun and humorous; being able to cry when sadness occurs; and someone being there to support you. Arizona thanks the Nevada Alumni Robert, Lisa, Mathew,



Ryan, Desiree, Amber and Darleen, for being a great group of people and giving back so impressively.

After the presentation, a raffle was held for the adults and children. There were gas cards, Subway gifts cards and inspirational books for the adults and toys for the children. There were in excess of 60 toys and *we are proud to say that not one child went without a toy.* The adult raffle was almost more fun than the children's as some were yelling out their own numbers in hopes that would prevail over the numbers being called; it was really fun to watch parents and attendees act so uninhibitedly. After the raffles there were many thank you's from the clients and their children. Everyone pitched in and helped clean up, leaving the area as clean as it was before we started.

. . . Great Job Everyone!!!



Leading by Example. A Staff Spotlight.

By Yolanda Laurent – Program Coordinator-Positive Changes Program

We would like to give special recognition to **Simone Edwards**, Assistant Program Coordinator for the Positive Changes Program. Simone took charge of the program in the St. Thomas/St. John district and went that extra mile to assure that all services were rendered to our clients ethically and efficiently and she's been able to inspire her staff to go "above and beyond" to serve the students.

Simone is always enthusiastic and eager to guide her team into reaching

the goals of the program. She is a strong leader and has taken the motto "People First" and applied it to her fellow workers as well as the public. She shows the same level of courtesy and attention to all the clients, her staff, and her colleagues at the Alternative School. She exemplifies fairness, and is truly passionate about her job. She continues to go "above and beyond" and we are proud to have her on the team. We would like to thank Simone for being a strong and capable leader! *Great Job Simone!*

U.S. Virgin Islands



Kentucky



Heart to Heart: Unlocking the Gates to Knowledge

By Jeremy West and Julio Garcia

"I teach from an outlook that to a willing heart, nothing is impossible. And if your heart is willing, I will do whatever I can to help." This is quoted from Laura Gibson, the Adult Education Instructor at WestCare's SAP program in Boyle County, KY. She has brought a fresh outlook to a redesigned program that assists residents obtaining their GED. Ms. Gibson teaches Wednesday evenings to an increasingly expanding group of residents. She has peer tutors assigned to help, due to the growing size of the class. "I am truly committed to helping others achieve their goals, whatever the goals may be. My job, I tell my students, is to help you understand your work, not to catch you making mistakes." stated Ms. Gibson. She presents material to her students in a way that they can understand, no matter what their learning style may be. Through June, 2012 the GED testing fees are waived in the state of Kentucky. Hopefully, many residents of SAP will be able to take advantage of this situation in the next few months.

Easter Sunday is April 8th

Pagan traditions give us the English word "Easter" which comes from the word "Eostre." The Anglo-Saxon word for April was "Eostre-monath" (the month of openings). However, it should be remembered that Christians celebrated the resurrection of Christ long before the word "Easter" was used, and the word they used for the celebration was "Pascha," which is derived from and linked to the Jewish festival of Passover.



Four-Legged Crusaders in the Recovery Process

Editor's note: WestCare is so proud to be associated with this group of outstanding Americans. This information is submitted by their steadfast leader in Iowa, Rhonda Jordal.

FAVA has three Spokesdogs – Honor, Allegiance and Victory. I have Allegiance, the only female of the Spokesdogs. Victory and Allegiance are brother and sister. A deputy sheriff heard about what FAVA was doing with the service dogs and wanted to donate from a litter of yellow labs that he had. That is how we went from one dog – Honor, to three dogs with Allegiance and Victory.

The Spokesdogs are part of FAVA's Battle Buddy Program. We use them in the educational outreach in a number of the pieces. Speaking to military families, to communities, to law enforcement, to judges & attorneys, to colleges & technical schools, to corporations & businesses and at Elementary schools.

FAVA is working on a book entitled, "Honor, The Service Dog" It is all about a dog growing up to be a service dog for a veteran! It is filled with pictures of FAVA's Honor growing up and the things he is learning and doing. We will be going to Elementary schools and reading the book to children and then leaving the book for the school library. FAVA is also working on coloring books about service dogs.

Each of FAVA's Spokesdogs will be trained to be a service dog for PTSD/TBI Post Traumatic Stress Disorder/Traumatic Brain Injury and will also be

trained to be a mobility dog. They will be able to push the handicap door button, pick up items and bring to the veteran, untie shoes, help to pull off a jacket/shirt at the sleeve, things like that.

We have pictures on the FACEBOOK page and we are updating the website and will have a continuing blog about each dog, will have video clips of their training and updated pictures. We will also have donate buttons to help defray the costs of upkeep, vet bills, toys, treats, training, etc. . . . They will go through 1 ½ - 2 years of training before any placements are made.

Applications will be taken from veterans seeking a service dog and a Battle Buddy Board will make the determination of placement. The chosen veterans will then go through training with the service dog before placement in their home. Allegiance will be in the FAVA headquarters office for all the veterans who come in and in the educational outreach pieces in Iowa.

Ashley Anderson, Lead Educator, with Honor ▼

Iowa



▲ Elementary kids are mesmerized by Honor

FAVA

Family Alliance for Veterans of America

▼ Allegiance and Victory, patriotic partner puppies!



Kudos!

WestCare Honors Their Employees and Clients

Editor's note: If your WestCare program has honored an individual or group – whether staff, client, or community figure – please send brief description with jpeg photo to john.wallace@westcare.com

Kentucky is proud of its lifelong learners!

Gary Brown

Gary Brown, a client in WestCare's Substance Abuse Program in Kentucky, is the third resident to receive his GED since the start of an Adult Education Program in the Boyle County Detention Center. The Jailer, Barry Harmon, and Lieutenant Chris Hubbard approved the funds from a drug bust to be used to pay the fees for Mr. Brown's testing. *Wonderful job, Gary!*



Gary Brown



Brandy Harvey

Brandy Harvey

Brandy Harvey has been employed with WestCare since Family Foundation opened in July 2007. In this time she has worked as Administrative Assistant and presently the Vocational Counselor. She has been a role model of what it means to be a team player at the FFP Fresno program. Brandy has outstanding attendance and is always willing to assist whenever needed.



Carmen Soriano

Kudos from California

Carmen Soriano

Leticia Almendarez and SCSC Kathy Roberts, sending KUDOS to CSC **Carmen Soriano**, for being organized and on top of her authorizations. Earlier in the year this office struggled with completing this task in a timely manner, and after addressing this issue with all staff Carmen has developed a system to help her stay on top of her authorizations, even when dealing with NSG placements.

So Carmen here are your KUDOS, KUDOS, KUDOS

*Much appreciated by SCSC Kathy Roberts,
Leticia Almendarez as well as all of data,
and Sacramento office.*



Kudos!

WestCare Honors Their Employees

Editor's note: If your WestCare program has honored an individual or group – whether staff, client, or community figure – please send brief description with jpeg photo to john.wallace@westcare.com

And Florida REALLY showers the Kudos on this Sunshine Lady!

By Kathleen Casper – G/CC Behavioral Health Therapist

Maureen Kempa

On February 3, 2012 the Monroe County Department of Juvenile Justice held their 9th annual open house and luncheon in Key West, Florida in celebration of 'Youth Success Week'. Partnering agencies and local providers set up displays showcasing the variety of programs and services offered to youth and families within the community. As a part of the event, an awards ceremony was held to honor a few selected youth, staff members, and local service providers who have made a significant difference within the DJJ community. Maureen Kempa, Director of Children and Family Services for Guidance/Care Center, Inc., was recognized by Chief Probation Officer, RaiEtte Avel, and Superintendent, LaWanna Tynes, for her outstanding leadership and continued dedication as the Designated Mental Health Authority (DMHA) for the Department of Juvenile Justice. Maureen has served as the DMHA since 2006, when she was initially employed with Guidance/Care Center, Inc. as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

In her current position as the Director of Children and Family Services, Maureen continues to administer, direct, and supervise all aspects of outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment programs throughout Monroe County. Among her many roles, she also actively serves as a liaison to various community boards, planning committees, and interagency meetings



Maureen Kempa (on right) with RaiEtte Avel, Community Council member

throughout the Florida Keys. Over the past six years, Maureen has demonstrated a genuine passion for her work as a mental health professional, and it is clear that she continues to be a valued asset not only to the Guidance/Care Center, Inc. and the Department of Juvenile Justice; but to the entire community as a whole.

Congratulations Maureen on this well-deserved honor! Your continued dedication, leadership, and countless contributions to the community are recognized greatly appreciated!



The Month of April

April Birth Flower:

Month of April Flowers, the Sweet pea or Daisy, to celebrate Easter, Good Friday, Palm Sunday and Passover. The meaning of the April Birth Flower, the Sweet pea can mean Good-bye or Blissful Pleasure.

April Birthstone:

The Diamond

Sign of the Zodiac and Dates:

Aries - March 21 - April 20

Characteristics of Aries:

Loyal, Patriotic, Courageous, Adventurous, Confident & Passionate

The researchers published their findings in *the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.



AmeriCorps Member Spotlight

Submitted by Pam Ungvary – WestCare Florida, Village South



Michael Reynolds

WestCare Florida AmeriCorps member Michael Reynolds serves at the Village South in Miami under the supervision of Denise Connor, National Coordinator of Research and Evaluation.

Michael is helping the Village staff implement a project that links veterans with programs and services offered by WestCare in the Miami area. Michael's objective is to provide outreach and options to active military personnel and veterans with substance abuse and/or mental health issues. Michael is also assisting WestCare by working on the Village South's Project Style, which provides HIV/AIDS counseling and testing at St. Thomas University.

Michael feels that his military background helps to serve veterans and military families better, stating: "I am a veteran and I can relate to the veterans we serve."

Michael served in the Florida National Guard for 27 years. During his military service he worked in conjunction with the U.S. Customs Service for 14 years in the campaign to reduce drug trafficking. After deployment to Kuwait for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Michael monitored drug trafficking by working with the U.S. Border Protection in Arizona and New Mexico. Michael also worked with the Department of Defense, where he served as a Defense Support of Civil Authorities Liaison. There he was responsible for training and educating South Florida counties on preparedness for emergency situations and how the military could offer support during such disasters.

"I learn a lot of things and get a lot of great training at WestCare. The people here have helped uplift my spirit' so that I can uplift others," says Michael.



United By Service Welcomes New Peer Team Leader



AmeriCorps Gulf Coast says goodbye to Dan Bernal, who will now be a Team Leader. Dan is shown here (2nd from left) with Bob Canada, Sandy Leger and John Coachman.

Florida AmeriCorps Member Dan Bernal has returned to his former home in Las Vegas, Nevada to transition into a new role as an AmeriCorps Peer Team Leader. HR Director Michael Shields and AmeriCorps Director David Rosynsky are working with Dan as he prepares for the new leadership role.

As a Peer Team Leader, Dan will ensure that the esprit de corps among members remains high. He will also spearhead peer-to-peer member support and development activities.

"I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to help facilitate communication among and between my fellow AmeriCorps Members and the entire WestCare family as we collectively meet the challenges presented to us in providing service to veterans and veteran family members," said Dan.

Dan graduated with a degree in International Relations from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York where he was a two-time Corps boxing champion and NCBA All-American Boxer. Dan, an Army Ranger, served 17 years of active & reserve duty in the Army Infantry and Military Intelligence branches. Dan continued service as a police officer with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. He graduated from the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Las Vegas in August 2011, and is currently studying in preparation to sit for the Nevada Bar examination.

Earth Day is April 22, 2012



Mobilize the Earth. Earth Day. 4.22.2012

On April 22, more than one billion people around the globe will participate in Earth Day 2012 and help Mobilize the Earth™. People of all nationalities and backgrounds will voice their appreciation for the planet and demand its protection. Together we will stand united for a sustainable future and call upon individuals, organizations, and governments to do their part.

Attend a local Earth Day event and join one of our Earth Day campaigns as we collect A Billion Acts of Green® and elevate the importance of environmental issues around the world. Together we will Mobilize the Earth™ on April 22 and demand change.

Start Planning Your Earth Day 2012 Event and Get Involved.

- Attend an Earth Day event –
- Organize an Earth Day event –
- Organize a Day of Service –
- Pledge an Act of Green –
- Sign our Petition –
- Join an Earth Day campaign –

Go to: <http://www.earthday.org/2012>
for more information and ideas on how to contribute!

— Orlando, FL • April 10-12, 2012 —
NATIONAL
RX DRUG ABUSE
SUMMIT



National Rx Drug Abuse Summit Orlando FL – April 10-12, 2012

This inaugural, must-attend National Rx Drug Abuse Summit, April 10-12, 2012, is unlike any other national conference, bringing all impacted parties together to address the prescription drug abuse epidemic. Conference programming is designed to convey a synergistic approach to include: prevention, education, treatment, law enforcement, health care providers, advocates, and human resources – among other impacted parties.

Diversion of prescription medications from their legitimate medical uses has become an epidemic that requires a coordinated national effort to find data-driven solutions. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn from state and national leaders, law enforcement officials, medical professionals, community advocates, treatment experts, educators, private industry leaders, and others who are finding success in battling this epidemic. In addition, the event is intended to foster better understanding and cooperation between all groups and how that cooperation can lead to successful outcomes. Conference programming features breakout sessions impacting law enforcement, treatment, health care, advocacy and prevention.

“We cannot afford to ignore the fast-growing drug problem in America. It impacts everything from medical expenses to work-force viability and it requires a multi-faceted approach with support, from not only state and national leaders, but also leaders on the ground in our rural and urban communities. This first of its kind Summit will get all parties together to address this issue.”

Congressman Hal Rogers, Chair, House Appropriations Committee. For more information about the Summit call 1-866-678-6483, visit www.NationalRxDrugAbuseSummit.org, or follow news about the event on Twitter using @RxSummit.

