



December 2011

# California Readies Second Homeless Veterans Project

By Julie LeFils – Special Projects Officer

WestCare California certainly understands the meaning of community, and we have taken it to a new level with our venture at Veteran's Plaza. Although still in the process of renovating the facility, San Joaquin Valley Veterans wanted everyone involved with this project from day one. An open house was in order – with food, music, tours, and a ribbon cutting, it was a perfect way to set the stage for such an incredible transitional living space for homeless veterans of Fresno County. One apartment was ready to go – with furniture, pots & pans, appliances, and candles showcasing the beautiful new home. Council member Baines spoke on the importance of continually helping those in need, and how grateful he is that WestCare California is doing everything we can to achieve this.

Veterans, WestCare staff, community leaders at ribbon-cutting.



- Ribbon Cutting Picture Left to Right:*
- Pat Farmer - Fresno Police Department
  - Richard Barnes - Veteran
  - Oliver Baines - City Councilmember
  - Richard Graham - Veteran
  - Pete Molina - California Dept. of Veteran Affairs
  - Shawn Jenkins - WestCare California
  - Kurtis Foster - Office of Representative Denham
  - Hilda McQueen - United Way
  - Gregory Barfield - City of Fresno

Veterans Plaza apartment interiors.



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# California Readies Second Homeless Veterans Project

The ribbon was cut by all different members of the community representing the Police Department, City of Fresno, Congressman Denham's Office, United Way, and California Department of Veterans Affairs. On top of all this, individuals and organizations have begun adopting the other apartments in the facility! They can make a payment or furnish it on their own – from the kitchen, to bathrooms, to the entire living space, SJVV is depending on the community to come together and make this a true home for the veterans. This marks WestCare California's second transitional housing facility for veterans; homeless female veterans and their children are currently living in Home Front.

We are truly honored to give back to those who have already given so much.

▶ Veterans, WestCare staff, community leaders at ribbon-cutting.



*Continued from page one*

Courtyard view at soon-to-open Veterans Plaza.



▶ Veterans, WestCare staff, community leaders at ribbon-cutting.



## News from Around the Treatment Industry

Courtesy: [jointogether.org](http://jointogether.org)

### Treatment of Substance Use Disorders, Mental Illness Varies Among Veterans

The type of care veterans receive for substance use disorders and mental illness varies around the country, according to a new study. No Veterans Affairs facilities consistently performed above or below average, the researchers found.

Only 16 percent of veterans with alcohol dependence are treated with drug therapy, while 60 percent of veterans with acute depression receive drug treatment, Medical News Today reports. Less than one-third of veterans diagnosed with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder receive continuous treatment with antipsychotic drugs or mood stabilizers, the article notes.

“There is a need for substantial improvement in the care of these veterans, particularly with respect to ensuring the delivery of evidence-based

treatments,” the researchers report in the journal Health Affairs.

The study, conducted by the RAND Corporation, found the quality of care for veterans was similar to or better than the care given to comparable patients with private insurance, or those enrolled in Medicaid or Medicare.

“While the VA does a better job at providing mental health services than other health care systems, there is still substantial room for improvement,” lead researcher Dr. Katherine Watkins said in a news release. “With some changes, the VA could provide even better and more cost-effective care for the nation’s veterans, as well as serve as a model for other health care systems.”

According to RAND, the number of veterans

diagnosed with mental illness and substance use disorders increased 38 percent between 2004 and 2008, to 906,394. The greatest rise was seen among veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The study found treating U.S. veterans with substance use disorders and mental illness cost more than \$12 billion in 2007. The average cost for treating a veteran with mental illness and substance use was \$12,337, or 2.7 times the cost for an average veteran without these conditions.



# Re-entry Summit 2011

By Charlene Hamann – *Recreational Therapist*

## Illinois



Dr. Dennis Deer.



Left to right: WC Sr. VP Leslie Balonick and Shelby County Corrections Administrator Stanley B. Lipford.



Joe Green, WC Clinical Supervisor

Sheridan WestCare, along with Illinois Department of Corrections and other vendors involved in the therapeutic community, held a re-entry summit October 26, 2011 titled “All Roads Lead to Community: Focus on System, Services and Family Role in Recovery and Public Safety.”

With a warm welcome by Leslie Balonick, WestCare senior vice president, Stanley B. Lipford, administrator for Shelby County Division of Corrections, opened the re-entry summit with an interesting presentation for more than 100 Sheridan Correctional Center employees and many guest speakers. His presentation focused on what the TC that he developed from the ground up looks like today. He talked about the struggles he has endured and overcome to put together a sound program that offers treatment to both men and woman with substance abuse problems in the Shelby County area. Lipford shared pictures of a typical group, wall murals, Inside-Out dads group photos, and housing units. He also described a typical day at his facility, which resembled closely much of what goes on at the WestCare Sheridan program daily as well.

Lipford concluded with costs per client, as well as how many clients are learning to help pay for their own stay at the treatment center and to help pay back society for their crimes while still in prison. He concluded his presentation by stating that the cycle will continue until fathers step up and take responsibility in the lives of their children.

After this opening presentation, clients attended multiple smaller presentations on a variety of topics, including secretary of state/ rules of the road, Narcotics Anonymous, relapse prevention, post-release services, life skills, and faith-based programs.

Dr. Dennis Deer, a sub-contracted employee of WestCare, presented on the topic “Domestic Violence: What is it?” He opened to a group of more than 200 WestCare clients with the quote, “With great power, comes great responsibility, and with responsibility comes choice.” Deer told the audience that domestic

violence is viewed as a crime, not just a family issue. He asked the audience to get involved in the discussion and then asked, “How many of you would beat up a guy who hurt your daughter?” Then he came back with “Why? You beat up her mother.” Dr. Deer gave clear definitions of domestic violence: physical, emotional, and sexual; some of these many clients were unaware of, such as intimidation and simple aggressive conversations with your spouse. Other topics included power-control, abuser characteristics, anger management, and having a safety plan. He noted that men can be the victims of domestic violence also; it isn’t only a crime against females. Deer concluded by stating that intervention, setting goals, going to treatment, and practicing what you preach is what will make a difference in your family lives once reunited after treatment.

Joe Green, WestCare clinical supervisor, spoke to a highly attentive audience on relapse prevention, planning, triggers, and warning signs. Emphasis was placed on knowing the early warning signs of relapse and developing refusal skills. Green, a USMC disabled Vietnam veteran, has more than 26 years of counseling and clinical experience. He has been a clinical supervisor at a youth care and adult outpatient program and recovery home; has also worked for TASC, IDOC, DCFS and drug courts; and has also helped with DUI evaluations. He is also involved with motivational interview therapy and CBT. Green is both blessed and excited to be working with WestCare now. He enjoys working with clients in a prison setting, helping them and seeing the results. Green stated he cannot think of a better place to be right now than helping these men try to save their lives. He knows if he can help save one life, then his time has been well spent in doing what he loves to do.



## Feedback from Our Family

### For The Love of Running: From One Runner to Another

By Charlene Hamann – *Recreational Therapist*

I found Tim Ropers article and accomplishments very uplifting in last months newsletter, so much that I wanted to write back this month and tell him how proud other people in the WestCare family are of him as well. I being a runner understood every word and every obstacle he has endured and spoke about. Although not in recovery myself I love to run and I started it for a different reason, mainly to simply stay in shape and I have met so many wonderful people over the years all who run for different reasons but all who share a common bond. I too started with the small races and achieved those 2nd place

ribbons you speak of, but we both know that running gives us more, something inside, a sense of accomplishment, self worth and pride, that only you feel, and that “after race high” feeling is only a bonus. Tim, I hope you continue to keep up your new hobby and move onto bigger races and possibly even a marathon. Running helps us set goals and if we set goals in our leisure life it makes it easier to set goals in our personal life. Being in recovery Tim, I hope that you continue to use your running as a positive path that will keep you sober for the rest of your life. Good job Tim, maybe some day we will cross miles!

### Illinois



Charlene Hamann enjoys another personal achievement ▲

### Pacific Islands



WestCare's Kate Baltazar, the vice chairperson for Payu-ta. ▲

### WestCare Leader Helps Drive Non-profit Consortium in Guam

The second Micronesian Non Profit Congress drew representatives from nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations to talk about policy and sustainability of the nonprofit sector in the region.

Payu-ta Inc., Guam's umbrella organization for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, convened the conference at the Westin Guam Resort. Assistant Secretary Anthony Babauta of the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Areas, and the Office of Minority Health, and Department of Health and Human Services sponsored the conference. The conference was themed “Weaving Policy and Practice: The Role of Nonprofit Organizations in Sustaining Pacific Communities.”

Excerpted from  
Pacific Daily News

“I thought it was spectacular,” said WestCare's Kate Baltazar, the vice chairperson for Payu-ta. “We had a wonderful turn out, and we hope to be doing this for years to come.”

Baltazar said about 300 people attended the three-day event and came from places all over the world such as Hawaii and Washington, D.C. Now that the event is over, Baltazar hopes the dialogue started continues.

“We, as nonprofits, bridge the gaps so we'd like to see continuing dialogue . . . on how we can improve upon serving the communities we serve,” she said.

# December Calendar

**December 2nd**  
Kentucky

CAC Strategic Planning Session  
10:00am – 4:00pm ET  
Natural Bridges SP, SE or Irvine, KY

**December 6th**  
Nevada

CAC Strategic Planning Session  
9:00am – 5:00pm PT  
WestCare Foundation, Las Vegas, NV

**December 7th**  
CAC Monthly Report Due  
12:00pm / 1:00pm  
(Executive Committee)

**December 10th**  
Florida Village South  
CAC Strategic Planning Session  
9:00am – 5:00pm ET  
Miami Florida

**December 12th**  
California  
CAC Strategic Planning Session  
Action Steps Meetings  
7:30am – 9:00am PT  
MLK, Fresno, California

**December 13th**  
Florida Guidance Center  
CAC Strategic Planning Session  
9:00am – 5:00pm ET  
6:00am – 2:00pm PT  
Marathon Florida

**December 16th**  
CAC Florida GulfCoast  
10:00am – 6:00pm ET  
Davis Bradley, St. Petersburg, FL

**December 21st**  
Executive Committee Meeting  
8:00pm PT/11:00am ET

**December 21st**  
First Day of Hanukkah!

**December 22nd**  
Winter Begins

**December 25th**  
Merry Christmas!

**December 26th**  
First Day of Kwanzaa!

**December 31st**  
New Years Eve!

# Looking Back *On Halloween!*

## Some Fun Photos from WestCare's World



Yadi Renteria

Sean Whitten and Domenica Jimenez

Jeremy Brownstein

## California



Bakersfield SASCA staffers wind down. JR, Danny, Holly, Leticia and Deysi

## Solemn Respect on Veterans Day

By Lauren R. Greer – Program Director

### Wyoming



(Excerpt)

*O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!*

*America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea*

They were seventy-two men; some not even born when words such as Tet Offensive, the Hanoi Hilton and Grenada were used. Seventy-two men, who for the first time in a long time sat in Procedural Proper Positions (Props) without being told just because they knew it was the right thing to do - reverent some would say, while they sat listening to their fellow inmates describe both the incredible honor of serving their country in military combat and the horrors of war itself.

Seventy-two men; and for some when confronted with the hollow sound of a pounding gavel during their sentencing hearing and showing little emotion as the verdict was read, now tears on some of them could be observed secretly being swept away as one inmate described witnessing the loss of his fellow army comrade on the front lines of battle.

And as the names of inmates who proudly served in past wars were read one by one with both dignity and grace; one of the seventy-two stood up from his seat, slowly walked toward the front of the speaker area and gently placed an 8 x 10 hand-colored red, white, and blue poster-board American Flag down on the cold concrete floor in front of his fellow inmates; as if now this precious symbol of American freedom lay on hallowed ground. With a nervous, yet oh-so proud salute, he turned silently back toward his seat and slowly walked away.



WestCare Wyoming ITU inmates celebrated their first Veterans Day observance by writing patriotic poems, personal account war stories, and creating poster-board tribute cards for all the inmates to sign.

"Veterans Day is a chance for us to honor our great warriors and those that have provided us with the opportunities that we have in this great country to live under the blanket of freedom," said Michael Witham, counselor and veteran.

With unit inmates continuing to be deafening with polite silence, the first ITU Veteran's Day observance ended with all unit members standing and singing in unison a final tribute to those who silently served – America the Beautiful.

## News from Around the Treatment Industry

Courtesy:  
[jointogether.org](http://jointogether.org)

## Two Teen Musicians in Drug Treatment Win 2012 GRAMMY Experience

Two teenagers who wrote a song about their experience in drug treatment have won the MusiCares and GRAMMY Foundation's *Teen Substance Abuse Awareness through Music Contest*. The annual contest is held in conjunction with National Drug Facts Week. It is coordinated by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Contest entrants, ages 14 to 18, were asked to

compose or create an original song and/or music video that explores, encourages, and celebrates a healthy lifestyle or accurately depicts a story about drug abuse.

Winners are invited to attend the 54th Annual GRAMMY Awards Backstage Experience, a special backstage tour while artists rehearse for the live GRAMMY Awards show early in 2012.

First-place winners Harvie and Amanda are in treatment at the Phoenix House Academy in Los Angeles. Their winning song is entitled "*Like a Phoenix in the Air.*"



## A Wonderful SOAR Success Story

I did a claim for a Homeless Vietnam Veteran in January of this year. He's been my client at our facility since January of 2010. I first met him on April 5, 2010 after his visit with our Psychiatrist. He was diagnosed with Combat PTSD. I thought what a difficult client he's going to be because he didn't trust the doctor and myself and was very reluctant and disagreeable with anything & everything that was recommended by the doctor.

He had a length history of mental illness and he was a victim of Agent Orange & Jungle Rot. He isolated himself from his family for about 30 years. He struggled for years without the proper mental treatments thinking that he could handle his problems himself. He worked as a fisherman in Key West during those years. He came to the Guidance/Care Center (GCC) when his symptoms became unmanageable; he was unable to maintain a job and his activities of daily living were ineffective.

In August of 2010, he had a brain aneurism and was hospitalized at Baptist Hospital in Miami. Additionally he had a subsequent hemorrhage and he was in a coma for 2 months but survived. When he was well enough, he came back to Key West and

As told by Yanic R. Amblard, CRPS-A

he returned to see me. He was humble and very grateful to be alive as he said "the people at Baptist saved my life and treated me like a son." They even were able to communicate with his sister in California.

So, I got busy assisting him with everything that he needed including filing a SOAR Claim on his behalf in February 2011. During this time, I kept in touch with his sister in California to assure her that I was taking good care of him because she was so worried about his wellbeing.

He was approved within 40 days which is within my average. Since then, he rented a room, he adopted a "jolly fat cat" as he puts it and gradually was able to recuperate and now he's doing so well. As a matter of fact, he is now visiting with his sister in California. She wrote to me and he called me to tell me how wonderful it is to be reunited with sister after all these years. When I came in to work today, in my mailbox, I received pictures from her. I got goose bumps and my eyes filled with tears of joy. I was so happy to share them with my coworkers.

You know, I was an accountant before I became a Case Manager at GCC. I found my calling in life



Yanic Amblard

helping 19 people since my SOAR training in 2009. This story is very dear to my heart and it will always be. To see him and his sister in each other's arms is worth more to me than anything else.

*Thank you for letting me share.*

## Arizona

WC Arizona holds outdoor community events year-round, taking advantage of warm, dry weather.



Even in late October, participants enjoyed the shade.



## Raising Awareness...and a Little Money!

By Tracy Stevens – Area Director

WestCare Arizona held its 13th Annual Domestic Violence Fun Run/Walk on Saturday, October 29th in support of Domestic Violence Awareness month. The event is held annually to help raise money for the Safehouse Domestic Violence shelter and to raise awareness in the local community about the prevalence of domestic violence. There were a total of 84 walkers/runners who showed up at 7am to register and participate in the event. The sun was shining and the weather was cool and calm. We had about 14 community volunteers and staff to help set up and clean up after the event.

Besides numerous raffle gifts for participants and others who just came out to support WestCare, we got to hear first hand from a victim as to what she actually experienced in her marriage where domestic violence and abuse was happening to her on a daily basis.

For almost 20 minutes, the crowd was silent as she talked about the psychological mind games and physical abuse she endured. It was hard to find anyone without tears in their eyes.

The event definitely brought awareness to the community about the prevalence of domestic violence. In Bullhead City, where WestCare's Safehouse Domestic Violence shelter is located, we provided services to 450 women through crisis calls, safety planning calls or actually women brought into the shelter in FY 10-11. This is up 16% from the previous years numbers.

All in all, we raised \$4,222 and for those that did attend, we had a great time.

# A Great Way to Celebrate Christmas!

## Holiday Mail for Heroes Program Overview

Courtesy: <http://www.redcross.org/holidaymail>

The holiday season is just around the corner and it's time again to start thinking about being part of the 2011 American Red Cross Holiday Mail for Heroes. For a fifth year, American Red Cross and Pitney Bowes are partnering to ensure all Americans have an opportunity to send a touch of home this holiday season to members of our U.S. military, veterans and their families, many of whom will be far away from home this holiday season.

Starting this fall and throughout the holiday season, the Red Cross is working with Pitney Bowes, a mail stream technology company, to collect and distribute holiday cards to American service members, veterans and their families in the United States and around the world.

The process is very simple and takes no time at all - All you need is a pen and piece of paper to share your appreciation for the sacrifices members of the U.S. Armed Forces make to protect our freedoms. The Holiday Mail for Heroes mail box is open and ready to receive for your cards. *Please send all mail to:*



More than 2,000 servicemen have been wounded in action on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan  
Photo: AFP/GETTY

Holiday Mail for Heroes  
PO Box 5456  
Capitol Heights  
MD 20791-5456

*Sending a "touch of home" to American men and women who serve our country is the perfect way to express your appreciation and support during the holiday season.*

# Celebrate Kwanzaa! Dec. 26th – Jan 1st

## Honoring the Values of Ancient African Cultures

By Holly Hartman

The year 2011 will see the 46th annual Kwanzaa, the African American holiday celebrated from December 26 to January 1. It is estimated that some 18 million African Americans take part in Kwanzaa.

Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, nor is it meant to replace Christmas. It was created by Dr. Maulana "Ron" Karenga, a professor of Black Studies, in 1966. At this time of great social change for African Americans, Karenga sought to design a celebration that would honor the values of ancient African cultures and inspire African Americans who were working for progress.

Kwanzaa is based on the year-end harvest festivals that have taken place throughout Africa for thousands of years. The name comes from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza," which means "first fruits of the harvest." Karenga chose a phrase from Swahili because the language is used by various peoples throughout Africa.

### The Seven Principles (Nguzo Saba)

Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa honors a different principle. These principles are believed to have been key to building strong, productive families and communities in Africa.

During Kwanzaa, celebrants greet each other with "Habari gani," or "What's the news?" The principles of Kwanzaa form the answers.



To read more: Kwanzaa: History, Food, Colors, Candles, Symbols, Activities, Crafts, 7 Principles – Infoplease.com <http://www.infoplease.com/spot/kwanzaa1.html#ixzz1eFi3wDAI>





# Celebrate Chanukah (Hanukkah) 2011

Chanukah -- the eight-day festival of light that begins on the eve of the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev -- celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, of purity over adulteration, of spirituality over materiality.

More than twenty-one centuries ago, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who sought to forcefully Hellenize the people of Israel. Against all odds, a small band of faithful Jews defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of God.

When they sought to light the Temple's menorah (the seven branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks; miraculously, the one-day supply burned for eight days, until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity.

To commemorate and publicize these miracles, the sages instituted the festival of Chanukah. At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah (candelabrum) lighting: a single flame on the first night, two on the second evening, and so on till the eighth night of Chanukah, when all eight lights are kindled.



## The Menorah – Make Light!

**Why:** The Menorah lighting was instituted as a publicity strategy: advertising to the entire world that God makes miracles for those who stand up for truth and justice.

**When:** The Maccabees chased away the forces of darkness with swords; we do it with candles. That's why we light the Menorah shortly after sunset. Two exceptions: On Friday evening, light the candles *before* sunset. On Saturday evening light them after dark.

**Where:** Wherever you happen to be living at the time. Set up the Menorah in a central doorway, near the doorpost opposite the *mezuzah*. Others

have the custom of placing it on a windowsill facing the street.

**Who:** Every Jewish person – men, women and children. In many homes, the head of the household lights one Menorah for everyone. In others, everyone lights their own. Some light one candle and let the kids light the rest.

**The Menorah:** The *Chanukah* miracle involved olive oil, so that's the fuel of choice. But you can use any candle that will burn until one half hour after nightfall. Electric menorahs are good for decoration, but you need the old fashioned one to fulfill the *mitzvah*.



## Happy New Year!

### Tips for Making Good New Year's Resolutions

There is a right way and a wrong way to make a New Year's resolution. Here are a few expert tips to see that your resolution actually makes a difference:

1. **Create a Plan**
2. **Create Your Plan IMMEDIATELY**
3. **Write Down Your Resolution and Plan**
4. **Think "Year Round," Not Just New Year's**
5. **Remain Flexible**

To read the entire article, please go to:  
<http://www.mygoals.com/about/NewYearsTips.html>

Courtesy of  
[www.mygoals.com](http://www.mygoals.com)

### About MyGoals.com

myGoals.com is the Web's leading destination devoted to helping you identify and accomplish anything you set out to do. Whether your goals are personal or professional, short-term or long-term, lofty or simple, we can help. It's what we do.

## Georgia

*Front row:* Leslie Balonick, Jeannie Lewis, Harolyn Davis, Cinnethea Springer, Joyce Randle, John Bascom

*Middle Row:* Canzada Twyman, Marcia Jackson, Jewel Chandler, Jerome Knight

*Back row:* Douglas Newsome, Demetrius Henderson, Dwayne King

*Not shown:* Michael Langford, Susan Rinaldi and Miltina Fraser



## Successful Accreditation Survey

By Jeannie Lewis – Program Director

It all began 3 years ago – when WestCare Georgia’s Atlanta CIC began preparations for our first CARF accreditation site visit. Our follow up survey to our initial 3 year accreditation was held in late August, and this time the experience was very different. Our knowledge base was strong, our checklists had been reviewed over and over again and our “failure is not an option” philosophy was in effect. In the weeks before the survey we bought items for the surveyors’ gift bags and organized the boxes with the information they needed prior to showing up on site on the scheduled date and time.

Our Board Chair, Dr Eugene Walker, and Derrick Boazman, both members of the Georgia Community Council, provided information about their role in giving guidance and direction to staff as we

design and implement new programs. Current and former clients were also interviewed by our surveyors, Demetrius Henderson from South Carolina and Douglas Newsome from Virginia. They helped to make the accreditation survey less stressful and really made our day when they gave us many compliments for the way we embody the mission and vision of WestCare. It was evident to the surveyors that our clients receive good care from all the staff who work with them. Our survey went very well and WestCare Georgia received another 3 year accreditation.

A special thank you goes to the staff of WestCare Georgia who really went above and beyond to help us have a successful survey. We would especially like to thank Marcia Jackson for her leadership and guidance through this process. Without Marcia keeping us on task with the checklist and those little details, our outcome would not have been the same.

## First SAP Residents Earn GEDs

By Billy Pierce – SAP resident

“A work in progress” for some of the residents in the Substance Abuse Program. That’s what this is. For some, it’s just a quick way to make it back home, but not for Josh Bonar and Matt Skinner.

When they entered the program 6 months ago they realized their disease was either life or death and they acted to do something about that. These men are highly active and very productive members in the WestCare SAP at the Boyle County Detention Center in Kentucky. Josh and Matt applied themselves in the program as well as in the GED.

Since WestCare took over the program in this jail, Matt and Josh are the first two residents to get this accomplishment. Congratulations to Josh and Matt for their achievements and proving that the program does work, if you work for it, and desire to change. Honesty and hard work pays off.



## Kentucky



Proud honorees, Matt Skinner and Josh Bonar.

# Ranch Clients and Staff Go “Whole Hog” for Veterans!

By Jennifer Hilton – Program Director

This year the staff at Harris Springs Ranch wanted to start a new tradition to celebrate and honor the Veterans we serve and that have served this country so bravely. It only took the staff moments to decide to host a Hawaiian Style Pig Roast. As the director I was proud to watch my staff pull together and plan this event, where a 300 pound pig with all the fixings was the featured item. As they were planning, the team decided that this would have to be our new annual tradition. The pig roast allowed family, friends, veterans, and community supporters, such as several local VA representatives a chance to hang out and enjoy the serene Spring Mountains and practice celebrating Vets in a new clean and sober way.

*Quoting two of our clients:*  
 “The Veterans Day Pig Roast was an exciting day for me because I have never witnessed a pig roast. What impressed me the most was the many people involved who came together as a team. It wasn’t just one person but many in accomplishing this task and it reminded me of the military. I was proud to be involved in the Navy and I am proud to be part of the Pig Roast at Harris Springs Ranch. It was a great day and I hope to experience more to come.” Scott S.

*“I appreciate WestCare having a BBQ for Veterans Day. I served in the Marine Corps from 1963 to 1969. When I came home from Vietnam I was called a baby killer. I was not involved in that.*

*Over the years we are recognized more so than thirty years ago. I was proud to serve my country once again. I thank you for caring for the Vets.”*

Robert M.



Thanks to all who worked on this event, and next year everyone is invited to our 2nd annual Veterans Day Pig Roast!



## Nevada



▼ Prep time ▲



# Flower of the Month: Narcissus

While most Narcissus's, like the Daffodil bloom in the spring, there are several that bloom in the fall and winter. The Narcissus is mostly native to the Mediterranean region but there are a few found in Asia and China. Because of modifications there are new species being created in nurseries almost every year.

The name Narcissus is from the narcissistic youth of Greek mythology called Narkissos. Technically “Narcissi” is the plural form, The American Daffodil Society prefers the use of “narcissus” for both singular and plural.

Narcissus are often called jonquils in North America, but in reality that name belongs only to the rush-leaved Narcissus jonquilla and cultivars derived from it.

The meaning of the December Birth Flower, the Narcissus is respect, modesty and faithfulness.

# WestCare Wellness Watch



## Heart Attacks in 3 Teens Linked to K2

*Courtesy WebMD.com*

Nov. 4, 2011 -- Three previously healthy Texas teens had heart attacks after smoking the "legal high" products sold under names such as K2 and Spice.

All three of the 16-year-old boys survived, report Colin Kane, MD, and colleagues at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Kane's team treated each of the boys. The teens obtained and smoked the K2 products in separate incidents.

"They certainly did damage to their hearts," Kane, a pediatric cardiologist, tells WebMD. "Hopefully there will be no long-term health implications, just a scare. But time will tell."

In an effort to skirt state and federal laws, K2-type products usually are sold as incense, plant food, or even as toy cleaner. With a nod and a wink,



they are marked "not for human consumption." But the herbs are spiked with synthetic cannabinoids -- designer drugs that mimic marijuana.

Although the effects of K2 drugs are similar to those of marijuana, the drugs have little in common with the real herb. Synthetic cannabinoids were initially created for lab use only. They are based on chemicals that never would be approved for human use. As a result, most drug screens do not detect these drugs.

Invoking its emergency authority, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has made five of these drugs illegal. But new versions pop up all the time. And the old ones are still widely available in products sold on the Internet, in specialty shops, and at convenience stores.

"They did comment it was very easy to get. They had no trouble buying it at gas stations, and they said lots of other kids were doing it," Kane says. "But one of the kids was a high school football player, and he was attracted by the idea it never would show up on drug screens."



### K2 Heart Attacks in Teens

Each of the boys suffered chest pains one day to one week after smoking a K2 product. Examination at the emergency department showed that they had suffered the same kind of heart attacks.

It's not yet clear exactly how K2-type drugs cause heart attacks. There are reports in the medical literature of healthy young people having heart attacks after smoking marijuana. These reports are relatively rare, given how widely marijuana is used.

The heart effects of marijuana are likely due to the drug's ability to bind to cannabinoid receptors, switches on brain and body cells that trigger different functions. Synthetic cannabinoids bind more strongly to these switches than do the cannabinoids in marijuana. This results in stronger potency and more intense effects.

"We don't know everything about these drugs, but there are certainly health risks," Kane says. "This should not be seen as a safe alternative to marijuana."

Kane and colleagues report the three cases in the December issue of *Pediatrics*.

SOURCES: Mir, A. *Pediatrics*, December 2011. Colin Kane, MD, assistant professor, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas. 2011 WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved.

# Employee Spotlight

## Julie LeFils

### **What is your role at WestCare California?**

I serve as the Special Projects Officer involved in community relations, fundraising, and events.

### **How do you see so-called 'Social Media' in the not-for-profit big picture?**

Non-profits have always been in a league of their own. We don't have the funding other corporations do, but yet we need our message and our services displayed and advertised even more heavily than other corporations do. Through the media, through big events, and through sponsors we constantly strive to get the message of who we are and what we do out to the community. Social Media now takes this to a whole new level that is beyond our original expectations. We have the ability to show people our organization from the inside out, and help people in ways that we've never been able to before. From Facebook, to twitter, to our new blog, we can create relationships and engage with the community in a whole new way.

### **Tell us about your upbringing, schools, prior work:**

Raised in Panama City, FL, I am definitely a southern girl at heart. I attended the University of Central Florida in Orlando where I received my Bachelor's Degree in both Advertising/Public Relations and Theater, and my Master's Degree in Mass Communication. I've been truly blessed to have worked in all different areas of the communication field.



### **How is the life of a military wife?**

Being together since high school, we were part of the "2% Club" at the United States Naval Academy. Apparently, only 2% of the girlfriends stay with the midshipmen for all four years of their collegiate experience before commissioning. We got married two weeks after his graduation, and have lived in four different places over the past three years. Going from Florida to Texas to California has been quite a whirlwind, but I have enjoyed every single minute of it. Now my husband (Lt.J.G. Ricky LeFils) is flying his dream plane – the F-18, and is like a kid in a candy store every day he goes to work. Although I know deployments will be hard, I am blessed to have friends and family beside me, and honored to have a husband who serves this incredible country each and every day.

### **What hobbies do you and your husband enjoy?**

Our main hobby right now is traveling and sight-seeing. We have only lived here since the end of May, and have already been to the national parks, the coastline, the big cities, and all the things in between. We love being close to everything California has to offer, and are definitely not taking that for granted! Throughout the week we enjoy dinners with friends, church Bible studies, and watching the television show "Modern Family."

### **What have you enjoyed most about your short time with WestCare?**

WestCare truly is a family, and for someone like me whose entire family is across the United States, that has been such a beautiful gift. I have been able to jump in head first into everything, and have been blown away by all the incredible programs and services WestCare California offers.

### **What would people be surprised to learn about you?**

I was also a theater major in college, and have worked for ten years as musical director and choreographer for children's theaters. I was recently on stage in Visalia, California as "Shelby" in the production of Steel Magnolias, and have also traveled around California as dance instructor and producer for Flash Mob America. Last but not least, my husband and I did a choreographed first dance at our wedding that you can watch by typing in "Ricky Julie Dance" in You Tube – it was a blast!

## Recovery Thought for the Month:

**"Even though the drinking is not the main problem, we are not going to see solutions to the problems in our lives if we are constantly drunk. Sobriety has to come first along with a sincere desire to clean up our life and find that direction we want the rest of it to take. First you get sober, then you get better." Submitted by Neal**

# Kudos!

## WestCare Honors Their Employees

(Note: If your state or program has a similar recognition tradition, please submit to The Express by the 15th of each month)

### Holly Bishop

*Says Melodie Estle, Senior CSC:*

The SASCA office in Bakersfield, CA proudly honors Holly Bishop as their Employee of the Month. Holly has been a dedicated employee of WestCare since 10/21/2008. She works tirelessly to meet the demands of her position and volunteers for additional duties around the office while maintaining a professional demeanor. Her great attitude and professionalism is noted by her co-workers, supervisory staff and participants. Holly recently completed her Masters in Criminal Justice and we are very proud of her and this most recent accomplishment.



## Guidance/Care Center Honored as Employer of the Year

*By Lisa Watson – Peer Support Specialist*

The Marathon Business and Professional Women's Club (BPW) honored the Guidance / Care Center (GCC) with their Employer of the Year Award. Local BPW organizations use this award to recognize employers who have demonstrated through their policies and actions a commitment to the development and advancement of women in the workplace.

This recognition is a great way to express the BPW's thanks and support for the Guidance / Care Center's contributions to women.

The local Marathon Business and Professional Women's Club will now submit the Guidance / Care Center to the committee for consideration at the state level. The committee will notify each local organization before the state conference if their candidate is the state winner. Candidates will be invited to attend the Recognition Luncheon at the state conference.

Marathon BPW member Lisa Watson, a Peer Support Specialist with the Personal Growth Center (PGC) nominated her employer, the Guidance / Care center and attended BPW's meeting to accept the award along with Lisa Marciniak, PGC Program Director and GCC Marathon Site Director, and A.B. Malloy, GCC's Area Director of Monroe County.

Lisa Watson,  
A.B. Maloy &  
Lisa Marciniak



# Commencement: Record Number of Eligible Graduates

Submitted by staff

No fewer than 53 clients from an assortment of WestCare programs made history on November 10th at California's semi-annual graduation ceremony. They marked the culmination of hard work and determination as the largest eligible

group of graduates in memory. Some were unable to attend due to job and family commitments-the kinds of excuses we like!

The ceremony, at the West Fresno Seventh-day Adventist Church, featured stirring client testimo-

## California

nials and an encouraging address by Superior Court Judge David Gottlieb, who renewed acquaintances with many of the graduates.



Smart 2 participants were among the California graduates.



Proud graduates pose for group picture.

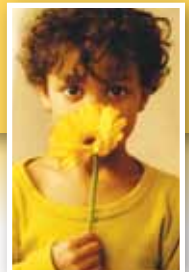


Current residents (in left) take part in the ceremony.



# SMART 2 News!

SMART 2 works collaboratively with First 5 Fresno County, Exceptional Parents Unlimited and Babies First. It is funded by a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Youth and Families and First 5 Fresno County.



## Art Hop a Big and Bright Success

Submitted by Mary Ellen Pistalu, MS

WestCare's highly-regarded Smart 2 program showcased children's art at a recent multi-venue display in Fresno. "Through the Eyes of a Child" art was created by Children of Parents Seeking Recovery through services at WestCare California, Inc. SMART 2 staff provided information to visitors regarding the importance of Trauma Informed Services to children whose parents have a history of or who are seeking recovery for alcohol and other substance abuse;

- Child Development
- Child Development Screenings provided by SMART 2
- Attachment & Bonding
- Infant Massage
- Supervised Visitation
- One on one positive parenting training
- Incredible Years Group parenting classes
- Case management
- Child Abuse potential screenings
- Trauma informed children's services driven by individual learning plans

Special thanks to Jeremy Brownstein for his innovative leadership.

SMART 2 is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families and First 5 Fresno County.



Preschool/School-Age Corner

# WestCare Foundation

## WestCare Links with Military to Medicine Employer Network

Courtesy Inova Health Systems

Falls Church VA – Inova Health System's program, Military to Medicine®, welcomes WestCare Foundation as a national healthcare employer and an organization committed to support the hiring of qualified military family members. WestCare Foundation has over three decades of experience in community oriented health programs and high quality services, with numerous locations throughout the U.S. and in the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.



Military to Medicine®, a non-profit, national military service organization of Inova Health System, seeks to connect qualified military spouses, wounded warriors and their caregivers, Veterans, National Guard, Reserve and service members transitioning to civilian employment with careers in healthcare.



"WestCare is an ideal partner for our military families. They are a solid organization that values military service in a growing industry with opportunities in numerous communities," says Daniel Nichols, Executive Director, Military to Medicine®, Inova Health System. "By joining in the support of our military families they are part of the solution needed by our nation in these tough economic times," explains Nichols, adding "We salute you WestCare!"

Dick Steinberg, WestCare President and CEO, noted, "Veterans and their families are part of the fabric of WestCare and its delivery of services."

Mr. Steinberg, himself a Vietnam veteran, went on to say, "WestCare provides veteran programs addressing substance abuse, mental health, and family assistance. Additionally, WestCare's FAVA entity (Family Alliance for Veterans of America) focuses on the families of veterans in need throughout the country. Veterans helping veterans is a keystone of WestCare veterans' programs. WestCare looks forward to working with Military to Medicine® as we continue to *uplift the human spirit!*"



Richard Steinberg





# Rx Drug Abuse Summit

**Operation UNITE will host a National Summit on Rx Drug Abuse on Tuesday, April 10, through Thursday, April 12, 2012, at the Walt Disney World Swan Resort in Orlando, Florida.**

*(Editor's note: WestCare enthusiastically supports this Summit and its driving forces, Congressman Hal Rogers and Unite President and CEO Karen Kelly)*

**UNBIASED. INFORMATIVE. DATA DRIVEN.**

# SOLUTIONS

**National Summit on Rx Drug Abuse • April 10 – 12, 2012 • Walt Disney Swan Resort • Orlando, FL**

This inaugural, must-attend event 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, 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. The National Summit on Rx Drug Abuse will bring all parties together to find data-driven solutions. Attendees will have an opportunity to learn from state and national leaders, local law enforcement officials, medical professionals, local advocates, treatment experts, educators 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.

**Eastern Kentucky Congressman  
Hal Rogers, Chair, House  
Appropriations Committee:**

"We cannot afford to ignore the fast-growing drug problem in America. It impacts everything from medical expenses to workforce 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."

*Your peers at this Summit will come from:*

- Federal and state legislators and policy makers
- Federal and state executive leaders
- Healthcare practitioners with prescription privileges
- Certified substance abuse counselors and recovery specialists
- Law enforcement personnel
- Treatment facility managers
- Advocates, families, and patients working to increase awareness and effect change
- Pharmaceutical executives
- Prominent academicians and researchers
- Government officials tasked with regulatory oversight
- Suppliers of prescription monitoring technologies

Your presence at this national Summit signifies a firm commitment to meaningful dialogue and cooperation in addressing the prescription drug abuse epidemic in our country. Through this type of collaboration, our work can be more impactful. We look forward to seeing you in Orlando! For ticket and sponsor information go to: [operationunite.org](http://operationunite.org).



Congressman  
Harold 'Hal' Rogers



Karen Kelly  
President/CEO Operation Unite