



December 2012

“I Wouldn’t Be Here Without You.”

By Richard D. Harris-Teacher – *TREES Program, Hanford, California*

You never think it can happen to you . . . until it does. After receiving an e-mail about donations to the Catastrophic Leave Bank, I thought it would be a good idea to write about the importance and saving grace of this program. In a situation where I almost died at 42, the program gave my wife and children relief.

On May 18, 2012 I came home from a shopping trip to the store. I sat down on the couch and complained to my wife that I was short of breath. I had lung issues, but my last appointment with the doctor was great. I got myself to the ER at Clovis Community Hospital. I have few or no memories from that day, May 18th until I woke up in ICU June 10th. I lost 23 days of my life. I found out later that I had been on a ventilator because a form of organizing pneumonia had attacked my lungs. This was strange because it didn’t present itself with a fever. I was bedridden the entire time and lost 40 lbs., mostly muscle mass. I awakened to the relief of my family and hospital staff who had worked round the clock to save my life and I had survived *by the skin of my teeth*. Later, the doctor told me if I had been much older, I wouldn’t have

survived. What I didn’t know at that point was WestCare was already working for my welfare and for that of my family.

I spent 31 days in the hospital and then I transferred to Horizon Health Sub-Acute Rehabilitation in Fresno. This happened just before Father’s Day and was a good present for my wife and kids as I was almost out of the woods. I couldn’t even sit on the edge of the bed without my oxygen saturation dropping into the low 80s or high 70s. When I entered rehab, my sick leave and vacation were gone. I had applied for SDI, but with me out of work long-term, it would not be enough. I applied for Catastrophic Leave and the approval came through in a timely manner. This took major stress off my wife as she now had more resources to keep our family afloat as I recovered. The income covered a month of expenses and paid my health care benefits as well. We did report the income to SDI. I recommend following applicable laws for reporting income to SDI, it is simple honesty and reflects well on you later. The leave filled a huge financial gap, where SDI did not.

I spent another 50 days in rehab, gaining the oxygen and strength to walk and breathe again with help from my physical and occupational therapists. By the time I left, I could walk 100 feet with a walker at a stretch, a far cry from a ventilator. I returned home on August 7, 2012 and found my house in order in absolutely every way, thanks to my wife and others, including WestCare. After more rehabilitation and loving care from my wife and kids at home I’m happy to report that I have

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“I Wouldn’t Be Here Without You.” *(continued from page one)*

graduated to a cane and minimal oxygen. I returned to work October 22, 2012 and found my job and WestCare colleagues happy to see me. My supervisor, Jenny Gonzalez had been very patient and always responded in e-mails with how much they missed me at work. Tara Estrada, Human Resources had guided my wife through all the applications for SDI and Catastrophic Leave. These simple kindnesses and the existence of the Catastrophic Leave Bank had removed stressors and allowed me to recover in peace. In time for Christmas!

If you haven’t considered donating at least some time to the Catastrophic Leave Bank, please reconsider it now. Thanks to the employees who donated, I am reminded of the load lifted off of us as a family when we received approval.

Thanks WestCare family, I wouldn’t be here without you!

Richard with his sons Brett, 13, and Evan, 8.



The Warriors

By Rodney Branch – TASC Coordinator & Warrior Coach

The Men’s Village Warriors Softball team took 2nd place in their first annual Family Fun Day softball tournament, hosted by the South Florida Behavioral Health Network. The team was organized to help clients build their self esteem, and to promote team work and leadership. Timothy Holmes stated “*playing softball for The Warriors taught me about team play, it’s not about winning or losing, it’s about having fun in recovery.*” Alfred Kluge expressed “*it was exciting, good sober fun, and competitive.*” Michael Vanderwyder mentioned “*playing in the tournament, made me feel good doing something that I have always enjoyed, instead of using drugs or drinking.*” The Warriors will be scheduling tournament games with other local treatment facilities during the up coming weeks.



Hard-earned hardware for the Warriors

Florida



National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is December 7th

National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is a day to remember and honor all those who died as a result of their service at Pearl Harbor. December 7, 1941 is the date America was attacked and marks the day America entered into WWII. It is a tradition to fly the U.S. Flag at half-staff until sunset.

Taking It To The Streets!

By: Sainabou Njie – *Prevention Specialist, WestCare Georgia*

“If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him . . . We need not wait to see what others do.”

This quote by Mahatma Gandhi speaks volumes! Taking an active interest in changing ourselves can change the view that the world has of you! WestCare Georgia and community partners literally stepped up and stepped out in the Pittsburgh community in Southwest Atlanta to help change the view that individuals in the community had on their ability to work towards RECOVERY! Approximately 55 volunteers from the Pittsburgh Civic League, Trinity Community Ministries, Santa Fe Villas, Covenant Community, Pittsburgh Ministerial Alliance, Morehouse College, Georgia Perimeter College (Decatur Campus), *IamWE* (Inspiring All Men and Woman to Excel) Atlanta Teen Leaders, and several individuals in the neighborhood helped make this wonderful National Recovery Month Community Outreach Canvas a success.

As we made our way through the community, we knocked on every door on targeted streets and distributed over 800 Resource flyers and Guides filled with FREE information about supportive community services that will assist

residents on their road to recovery! The Pittsburgh community has been suffering with substance abuse issues for a significant period of time. “It was refreshing for the community to see the concern and compassion expressed by WestCare and its team of volunteers. Your presence is a welcome sight!,” stated long time resident and former State Representative Douglas Dean. WestCare is excited about being able to service the people of Pittsburgh through this outreach effort . . . “Everyone should be RECOVERING from SOMETHING.”

– Andrew Young

Special thanks to the following partners for their generous donations: Georgia Council of Substance Abuse, Next Level Petroleum LLC, Atlanta City Councilman Kwanza Hall, and the Mayor’s Office of Constituent Services.

Georgia

WestCare Georgia team members with other community volunteers



Atlanta teen leaders helped with the community canvas

The Circle of Life

By Kim Anthony – *Georgia HR Specialist*

I believe in pink . . . Nothing is impossible, the word itself says ‘I’m possible!’

– Audrey Hepburn

Celebrate, Courage, FearLess, Unity, Powerful, Love, & Awareness, are all expressions identified by the WestCare Georgia BOGGS team, used to describe and honor the survivors of October Breast Cancer Month. As we come together to inform the world of this magnified illness, we are joining forces with the Komen’s Foundation motto – “The best protection is early detection.” Never too young, never too old – we are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, co-workers, and loved ones – we lead the Circle of Life. FACT: Every two minutes, there

is a new breast cancer diagnosis. Every 14 minutes, a life is lost to this disease. One in eight women is diagnosed with breast cancer, which is the leading cause of death between the ages 40 and 55.

So make it possible – Think pink and don’t wait! Help join the fight to **BELIEVE** in a Cure!



They Think Pink at Boggs!

Down the Mountain to Salute Our Veterans

By Hubert Ergenbright – *Harris Springs Ranch*

WestCare Nevada participated for the first time in the Annual Las Vegas Veteran's Day Holiday Parade – "The Largest Veterans Parade West of the Mississippi." All who participated in building and riding in the float said it was a complete success. We had volunteers such as AmeriCorps veterans *LC and Terry Blaneky*, Community Triage Staff *Richard Longoria* and *Brenna Benas*, Harris Springs Ranch staff *Chance Kiapo Torres*, *Hubert Ergenbright*, and our driver, the lovely Harris Springs Ranch Director *Jennifer Hilton*. "From building and decorating to waving and smiling at the crowds and being able to give thanks to our brave veterans made the day most enjoyable. Thanks again to our Vets!"



The WestCare contingent show their pride



Nevada



Putting in hard work to build the float

Harris Springs has its own veterans to thank

WestCare Nevada, working hard to serve those who served!

After the Parade . . . Back Up the Hill for PIG!

By Kevin Hall – *Harris Springs Ranch AmeriCorps Volunteer*

The Second Annual Harris Springs Ranch Veterans Day Hog Roast was a hit with the veterans, guests, and the clients! They roasted the hog overnight in a ground pit, covered in banana peels and special Hawaiian seasonings, made in the traditional Hawaiian style. With over 300 lbs of meat, they fed not only the camp, but 30 guests and families as well, including all those that participated in the Las Vegas Veteran's Day Parade. Many said Ms. Maria, Harris Springs Ranch Cook "made some of the best salsa I have ever tasted."

Special thanks to Kevin "Kekoa" Wong, E4 Specialist US Army, and Robert Cui, Corporal Hawaii National Guard who volunteered their time to make this day amazing for all!



John tends the hot, hot fire pit



Time to eat!



Keoka is cookin'



Re-entry Clients Give Back Through Creativity

By Charlene Hamann – Recreation Therapist

WestCare clients in the Re-entry Program at Sheridan Correctional Center recently participated in a pumpkin painting activity. The clients were given pumpkins donated by an area farmer. They then painted selected Halloween pictures on them, and donated them to a local nursing home and YMCA.

Allowing the clients to be part of an activity where they can do something fun and yet give back to the community shows growth and compassion. Clients who participated said it felt good to be able to do something positive, something that would brighten someone's day, considering many nursing home residents are not able to get out and enjoy the Fall/Halloween season or decorate their own pumpkins.

"I never thought I would be doing things that are so simple but touch me so much. Just the act of painting pumpkins for kids' events at a YMCA and elderly people made me feel useful and alive. In all my years I have lived, I struggled to feel like I was part of something to be proud of. I have been given this chance when I needed it most and I am grateful. In doing this activity, it has sparked a fire in me that will have me looking to give like this in the future. I am happy to be able to help . . . and be helped!"

– Anonymous Client
Pumpkin Painter



Illinois

▲ Charlene Hamann with a finished product



◀ Array of cleverly painted pumpkins

WestCare Illinois Wears Purple to Raise Awareness

Submitted by staff

WestCare Sheridan recently wore purple to raise awareness about domestic and sexual violence in our communities and society. A local organization has helped many victims and their families overcome this problem. Freedom House located in Princeton, IL has a mission to provide compassionate, confidential, and free services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It provides to men, women, and children of any age, offering quiet comfort from chaos, violence, fear, and threats.

Many places that provide safe places for victims of abuse not only provide shelter but also counseling services, educational services, and professional training. There is always 24-hour access to shelter and to advocacy. The more awareness that is provided to individuals about places in their communities they can go to get out of harms way and also seek a variety of support systems can help break the cycle of abuse. Many women do not seek shelter because they think there is no help or that seeking help will only cause more problems in the home.

WestCare staff wore purple in November for continuous reminders of domestic violence and abuse and to help victims break free from the vicious cycle.



Sheridan staff rockin' the purple



A Tour of the American Legion Posts in Iowa

From Rhonda Jordal – *Chair*

Editor's note: The Family Alliance for Veterans of America continues to be a shining porch light for services to our nation's servicemen and women. This is another photo glimpse at their latest activity.



Another service dog, *Allegiance*, helps decorate FAVA headquarters.

FAVA gave a tour to a number of Commanders and Vice Commanders from American Legion Posts in Iowa. Also included in the tour were the American Legion National Vice Commander and Iowa State Commander. FAVA staff on hand included Laura, Julie, Rhonda, Joy and Alicia and of course, Honor one of our service dogs.

Please note on the far right WestCare HR Director Mike Shields. He too is an American Legion member!



Iowa FAVA CORNER

Human Resources

Corner

By Michael Shields – *Director, Human Resources*

OK everyone. We are rushing full-speed into the Holiday Season, and the end of 2012. Time flies, doesn't it? Here are a few things I want to remind everyone, as little "assignments" that will be helpful for you:

- For those of you with Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), please remember that whatever you don't spend, you lose under IRS regulations. Unless you are comfortable giving more money to the government than is already required of you, I would advise Dr' Visits; glasses, prescription refills or something to use up those funds.
- Address info. Please make sure you give Human Resources any address changes that have taken place this year. So that your 2013 insurance ID cards, and your W2's make it to you in a timely manner, we need to have the correct info on file. We don't "have an app for that," but we DO have a form! Your friendly neighborhood HR Department will gladly share.

Thanks to all of you who participated in the recent "Health Fairs", which featured biometric screening, and the ever-popular "body fat measurement." THAT was a pleasure! I hope all of the participants received either really good news, or found some areas in which they can improve. You'll hear a lot more about wellness from us in 2013.

One last reminder. There are ALWAYS jobs available across all of WestCareland. If you are looking for a change in geography, weather, or are looking for a career growth opportunity, make sure to visit www.westcare.com, and go to the Jobs link.

Until next month, that's it from the wonderful world of Human Resources.

– Thanks, Mike



December Calendar

December 1st
World Aids Day

December 1st
6:00pm -10:00pm
Nevada Holiday Party
Elks Lodge, Las Vegas, Nevada

December 7th
Nat'l Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 7th
10:30am -11:30am
Eastern KY CAC Meeting
1:30pm/ET – 6:30pm/ET

December 8th
Hanukkah Starts

December 10th
Human Rights Day

December 11th
3:30pm - 4:30pm
FLGC-CAC Meeting
3:30pm/PT – 6:30pm/ET
City Center, 100 2nd Ave.

December 13th
3:00pm - 4:00pm
FAVA Board Meeting
3:00pm/PT – 5:00pm/CT

December 14th
11:00am - 12:00pm
CA-CAC Meeting
(Data Evaluation only)
MLK Facility, Fresno, CA.

December 16th
Hanukkah Ends

December 17th
Wright Brothers Day

December 18th
8:00am -9:00am
Executive Committee Meeting
8:00am/PT – 11:00am ET

December 21st
First Day of Winter

December 25th
Holiday – Merry Christmas

December 26th
Kwanzaa Begins

December 27th
9am - 10am
FLGC-CAC Monthly Fundraiser Conf. Call
12:00 Noon/ET – 9:00am/PT

December 31st
New Years Eve

December Observances

December 1st is World Aids Day

Courtesy of – www.aids.gov/world-aids-day/

World AIDS Day is held on 1 December each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died. World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day and the first one was held in 1988.

The first cases of what would later become known as AIDS were reported in the United States in June of 1981. Since then, 1.7 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have been infected with HIV, including over 615,000 who have already died and more than 1.1 million estimated to be living with the disease today. Every 9½ minutes, someone in the U.S. is infected with HIV. The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic spans the nation with HIV diagnoses having been reported in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. dependencies, possessions, and associated nations.

World AIDS Day is about increasing awareness, fighting stigma, improving education, mobilizing resources and raising funds to better our response to HIV and AIDS. According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now more than 34 million people living with HIV. Started on 1st December 1988, World AIDS Day gives the world an opportunity to reflect on the epidemic and the response thereof.

Wear a Red Ribbon on December 1st, 2012

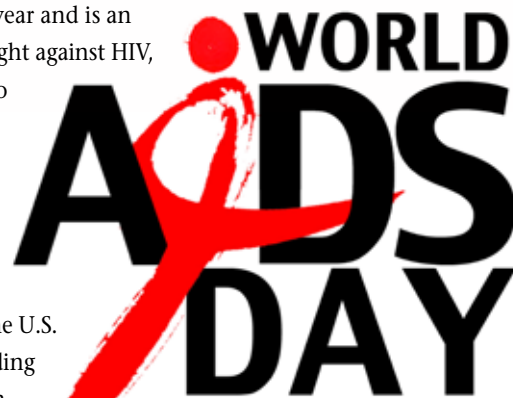
Wear a red ribbon and raise awareness on World AIDS Day. The red ribbon is an international symbol of AIDS awareness that is worn by people all year round and particularly around World AIDS Day to demonstrate care and concern about HIV and AIDS, and to remind others of the need for their support and commitment.

The red ribbon started as a “grassroots” effort; as a result there is no one official AIDS ribbon manufacturer, and many people make their own. It’s easily done - just use some ordinary red ribbon and a safety pin!

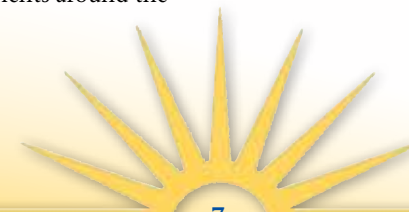
If you want to take your awareness raising a step further then try finding a local event to take part in. Around the world there are hundreds of activities taking place to mark World AIDS Day, including candle light vigils, art shows, marches and religious services. If you can’t find anything in your area then why not organise an event yourself?

The vast majority of people with HIV and AIDS live in low- and middle-income countries. But HIV today is a threat to men, women and children in all continents around the world. For more information, go to:

<http://www.aids.gov/world-aids-day/>
and: <http://www.who.int/hiv/en/>



**World Health
Organization**



Fresno AIDS Walk, November 10th, 2012

Hundreds gathered at Fresno's Woodward Park for the return of the Fresno AIDS Walk. The walk was presented by WestCare California and in support of The Living Room, Fresno's only social support center for those at risk of, infected, or affected by HIV/AIDS. The walk generated over \$18,000 in donations from sponsorship partners and members of the community. Donations have continued to come in days after the walk.

Over 300 walkers took on the 2.5 mile walk through the park's scenic trails. The day was full of entertainment and inspirational words. The day ended with the reading of names of those who have been lost to HIV/AIDS followed by the release of 30 white doves.

It was truly a moving event that paid honor to those who are living with the virus, those who have been lost and those that have felt the effect of that loss.

California



AIDS Walk 2012

Women's Residential Haunted Open House

Staff and community partners were treated to a glimpse inside the MLK Women's Residential program with a spooky theme. Visitors were greeted by a hallway full of costumed clients dancing to Michael Jackson's Halloween hit, "Thriller." All clients were in costume along with their children who were also dressed up for the event. Other festivities included a haunted house and a moving slideshow featuring the clients and their little ones.



Haunted House

Veterans Day Parade

Fresno's 94th annual Veterans Day Parade held on November 11, 2012 was a successful event. WestCare's San Joaquin Valley Veterans program was there to show their support. We honor all heroes whether they served in peace time or in war, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, and those still missing in action we say "thank you." We thank you for your service.

In Fresno there was a huge turnout for this year's parade. Veterans young and old with their families turned out for the event. Fresno has one of the largest parades west of the Mississippi and airs on the Pentagon Channel. This year's Grand

Marshal was Bill Dietzel and the honoring branch of service was the United States Air Force.

The float this year was headed up by Erin Shelton and Debra Borjas. The artwork was donated by Debra's son, AJ, and he did a phenomenal job. SJVV's float was seen by many for miles away because of the great artwork. A special thanks to Raymond Gonzales, an RMSC counselor at the men's residential treatment facility, for driving us safely down the street. Residents from our transitional veterans programs were there to show their support as well. SJVV participates every year in the parade and each year is better than ever.



Veteran's Day Parade



Veteran's Day Parade



WestCare California Fall Graduation, November 15th

By Michael Mygind

California

New lives and clean paths were affirmed as 45 graduates from nine of WestCare California's programs from Fresno and Bakersfield walked across the stage as part of the annual Fall Graduation. The night was full of song, emotions, reflection on the past and thoughts about the future. Some crossed that stage with a simple thank you, others gave many thanks and words of advice, and one alumnus was simply too excited to say anything.

It was truly a beautiful night of celebration. Congratulations to the newest graduates of WestCare and to their friends and family!



On the Move

Illinois



Stacy Munroe

We are excited to announce that effective December 1, 2012 WestCare Illinois will have a new "home." Our new Chicago administrative office and Community Involvement Center will be located at 1100 W. Cermak.

Senior VP Leslie Balonick and Dawn Ruzich will oversee this new location, which will include a 4,500 square foot Community Involvement Center. It will eventually house the 2nd Chance and AmeriCorps programs, as well. More citizens of the Chicago area will be able to access our services.

Stacy Munroe, is the new Grant Specialist for the Central Region along with Nicole "Nikki" Munoz as new Executive Assistant.



Nicole Munoz

Happy New Years Eve!

Mulled Pomegranate Sipper Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (64 ounces) cranberry-apple juice
- 2 cups unsweetened apple juice
- 1 cup pomegranate juice
- 2/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 3 cinnamon sticks (3 inches)
- 10 whole cloves
- 2 tablespoons grated orange peel

Directions:

In a 5-qt. slow cooker, combine first five ingredients. Place the cinnamon sticks, cloves and orange peel on a double thickness of cheesecloth; bring up corners of cloth and tie with string to form a bag. Add to slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 1-2 hours. Discard spice bag. Yield: 16 servings (about 3 quarts).

Courtesy of: <http://www.tasteofhome.com>





What is the Real Significance of Christmas?

There are many many historical events and stories of both good and bad that can be told about the start of Christmas and the “real” significance of Christmas.

Isn't the real significance of Christmas is what you believe it to be and the way you celebrate it? People all over the world have different beliefs and whether you celebrate it as the birth of Jesus, in the spirit of Saint Nicholas for giving and generosity, as a season to celebrate with family and friends, as a time to show love for and think about others, or as a time for gift-giving, festivities and family get-togethers, Christmas is the most beloved and popular holiday around the world.

Hanukkah / Chanukah

Feast of Dedication / Feast of Lights Dec 8-16

Chanukah is an eight day holiday which begins on the 25th day of the month of Kislev. It marks the miraculous victory of the Jews, led by the

Maccabees, against Greek persecution and religious oppression. In addition to being victorious in war, another miracle occurred: When the

Maccabees came to rededicate the Temple, they found only one flask of oil with which to light the Menorah. This small flask lasted for eight days. In order to commemorate this miracle, we light a Menorah for the

eight days of Chanukah.



New Years Eve Quote

*F*or last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice. And to make an end is to make a beginning. – T. S. Eliot



Bluegrass Blurbs

Our guys helped unload a semi truck full of Christmas donations for the St. Francis church to give to Pike County kids for Christmas. Another great example of the good works WestCare brings to our community! ▶



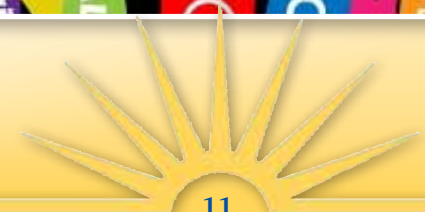
Kentucky

And Elsie Tiller sends along this Christmas-like photo, taken at her home not far from Ashcamp. This was the late-October scene as a result of the western edge of Super Storm Sandy. ◀

Human Rights Day is December 10th

Inspired by Eleanor Roosevelt's belief that, *"The destiny of human rights is in the hands of all our citizens in all our communities,"* more than 125 organizations participated in the *In Your Hands* campaign. Men, women, boys and girls worked together to mark the December 10 anniversary through citizen action and *Town Hall Meetings* in cities across the United States. Human Rights Day is celebrated each year on December 10.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world." – Eleanor Roosevelt



Kudos!

WestCare Honors Their Employees and Clients

Our monthly shout-out to members of the WestCare family, who stand tall and 'uplift' others in their care and peers around them. Please submit your nominees by the 15th of each month.

Promotions and Appointments:

WestCare employees have earned special recognition from their supervisors:



Lisa Poos

Lisa Poos

WestCare Florida is pleased to announce the promotion of **Lisa Poos** to Personal Growth Center Program Director. She recently served as a Rehabilitation Counselor. A graduate of Southern Illinois University, Lisa's administrative responsibilities will include program promotion and outreach, program development and direct supervision of PGC staff.

Jennifer Wolverton

And, **Jennifer Wolverton** Wade has been appointed Inpatient Unit Coordinator at the Middle Keys facility. She is a nursing graduate of the University of Connecticut. She will assume the day-to-day management and administration of the Crisis Stabilization/Mental Health Residential Unit, among other duties.



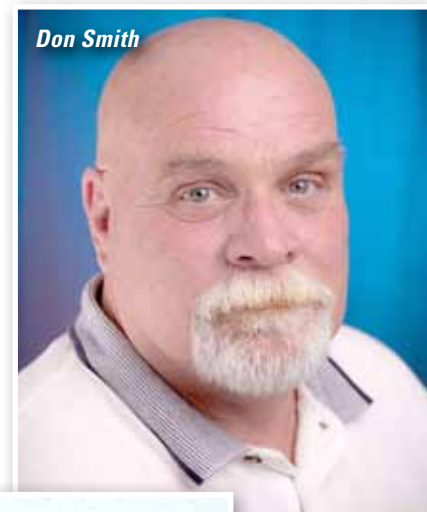
Jennifer Wolverton



Maryellen Pistalu

Maryellen Pistalu

In California, **Maryellen Pistalu** has been elevated to Contract Compliance Director for all WestCare services in the state. A long-time employee, Maryellen has served in Grants and Research and directed the acclaimed SMART 2 program.



Don Smith

Honors

Don Smith

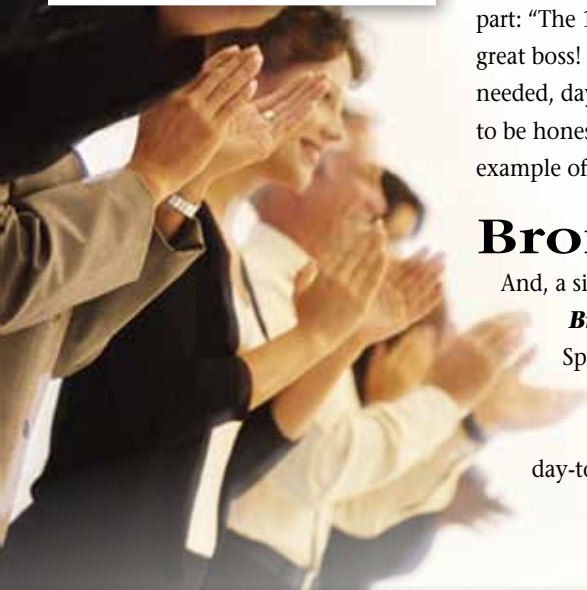
Also in California, the SASCA program announces its Employee of the Month: Don Smith. The glowing announcement reads in part: "The 12 year WestCare employee is a great boss! He is available to all staff when needed, day or night. We can count on him to be honest, fair and direct. He is a prime example of 'uplifting the human spirit!'"

Bronda Foster

And, a similar honor was bestowed on **Bronda Foster**, Client Services Specialist, for her tireless efforts on the financial side of California's various fund raising events and day-to-day operations.



Bronda Foster



Kudos!

WestCare Honors Their Employees and Clients

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Special Thanks:

WestCare employees have earned special recognition from their supervisors:



Landon Merrill

Landon 'L.C.' Merrill

And, from Nevada comes a trio of highly-appreciated members of the WestCare family. – **Landon 'L.C.' Merrill**, a Navy veteran, is an AmeriCorps volunteer helping servicemen and women secure VA services. He works with a smile on his face and a commitment to the WestCare mission.

Caren Lopez

Caren Lopez, has been a big part of the local Narcotics Anonymous community since her sobriety date in 1999. She is a mother of 3, and a caretaker for her elderly mother and her ailing husband. She is truly a Superwoman! Caren is a mainstay at the Community Triage Center, even coming in on her days off to help. Caren is truly loved by her Nevada coworkers.



Caren Lopez

Misti Mohler

Misti Mohler embraces and embodies what we stand for:

Caring for and respecting our clients. She is among the first people a client sees, and that is a critical position in treatment services. Truly a shining light at WestCare Nevada



Misti Mohler



The Month of December

December Birthstone: The Turquoise.
Symbolism: Prosperity, success, happiness and good fortune

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

The hidden message of the Birth Flower, the Narcissus, so favored during the Victorian era varied "You're the Only One."

Sign of the Zodiac and Dates:
Sagittarius – November 23 - December 21

Characteristics of Sagittarius:
Ethical, Humorous, Generous, Dynamic and Compassionate



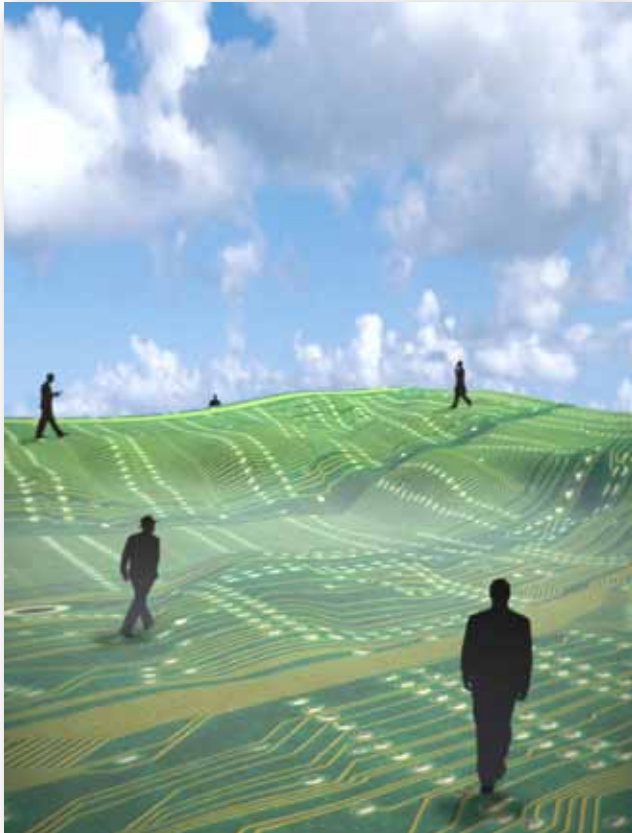
Information *Technology*

IT Corner

(An occasional column of advice from our Information Technology team)

Connecting to a Webinar

By Sean Harrigan – *Systems Administrator*



What is a Webinar?

A Webinar is a web based meeting and presentation meant to bring people together from different geographic locations for training, and to exchange information.

As a part of your day to day responsibilities at WestCare you may be required to connect to a webinar. You will find that most webinars do not work using a WestCare computer due to our security configuration.

How Can I Connect?

The help desk at WestCare can help you connect. If you are scheduled to attend a webinar, give us as much notice as you can. You should submit a help desk ticket through the "Technical Support" link on the WestCare Intranet. Make sure to include current phone contact information and the time and date of your webinar. It is also helpful to include a descriptive subject such as "Webinar on December 1st."

On the Day of Your Webinar

We need you to be available 30 minutes before your webinar begins so that we have time to make any necessary changes to our network or your computer configuration. We will give you a call at the number you provided, or you can call the help desk for assistance.

WestCare Help Desk

E-mail: helpdesk@westcare.com

Phone: 702-410-7595 or Ext. 10200 from a Polycom phone

Intranet: <https://secure.westcare.com/intra/ctl/techsupport/request>

Kwanzaa is Dec. 26th – Jan. 1st

Kwanzaa, or "*First Fruits of the Harvest*," is an African-American and Pan-African holiday which celebrates and strengthens community, family and culture over a period of seven days. Kwanzaa begins December 26th. Each day, a principle of Kwanzaa is celebrated:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Principle in English</i>	<i>Principle in Swahili</i>
December 26	Unity	Umoja
December 27	Self-Determination	Kujichagulia
December 28	Collective Work & Responsibility	Ujima
December 29	Cooperative Economics	Ujamaa
December 30	Purpose	Nia
December 31	Creativity	Kuumba
January 1	Faith	Imani



Operation “Punch-Through”

We in Arizona are in serious need of more space. We’ve outgrown our space by leaps and bounds. Because of this, we recently punched a door through into our Thrift Store to gain one additional office to house up to 3 staff members. We called this “Operation Punch-Through” With the help of Mike Lavin’s team and our own Maintenance Coordinator, they broke through the wall and installed a doorway making a nice pathway to go in and out of the Thrift Store without having to go outside. This was a suggestion from our own HR Manager, Didi Buono, while on a recent visit. I can honestly say, this was the best idea ever. Now we have more room and the traffic flow is more user-friendly. Thank you Maintenance Team for making this happen!

By Kim Mitchell – *Interim Area Director*

Arizona

Hammer time! Mike Jackson and Joe Grabowski



Human Resources

Our Workplace

Editor’s note: Mr. Shields spotted this poster above AmeriCorps volunteer Robyn Callanan’s desk at FAVA’s offices in Forest City, Iowa. It is a message we should all remember and follow. It goes a long way in making our total lives more enjoyable!

As you enter this place of work, please choose to make today a great day. Your colleagues, clients, team members, and you yourself will be thankful.

Find ways to play. We can be serious about our work without being serious about ourselves.

Stay focused in order to be present when your clients and team members most need you.

And should you feel your energy lapsing, try this surefire remedy: Find someone who needs a helping hand, a word of support, or a good ear, and make their day. – *Anonymous*



WestCare Foundation

Foundation CIO Earns High Praise

WestCare’s Chief Information Officer, **Keith Spresser**, has been honored with the Top Tech Executive award in the non-profit category by Vegasinc, a business-to-business newspaper. Says Chief of Staff Peter Sullins: “In an industry where resources are always at a premium, Keith has worked to move WestCare’s information environment forward, efficiently and with aplomb.” Congratulations, Keith, and thank you for all you do for us!



Employees Enjoy WestCare Holiday Party

Submitted by WestCare Wyoming staff

Wyoming

WestCare Wyoming met in Cheyenne, Wyoming at Little America, for its second (2nd) annual Staff Holiday /Appreciation Day this holiday season. There were informational seminars and staff focus groups conducted by the three (3) Program Directors; Andee Hardesty, Torrington, Therapeutic Community and new Director, Richard Burton, Sex Offender Treatment Program in Torrington and Director, Ashley Christianson, Wyoming Women's Center Therapeutic Community in Lusk Wyoming. WestCare, Senior Vice President Maurice Lee attended the event and shared well wishes with the forty four (44) staff members from all WestCare Wyoming sites in Torrington, Lusk, Newcastle, Rawlins and Riverton Wyoming. Members of the community and supporters of WestCare Wyoming were also in attendance from Wyoming Department of Corrections, Program Director



Sam Borbely, Wyoming National Guard Chief Warrant Officer, Travis Hattan, Wyoming Department of Health, Director of HIIV and AIDS, Robert Johnson, and Tai Wright, Special Projects Coordinator, and Laura Griffith Executive Director, Recovery Wyoming. Vice

President, Richard Jimenez handed out Red WestCare baseball caps to all WestCare Wyoming employees. Vice President thanked the staff for their hard work and commitment to West Care Wyoming.

Pacific Islands

WestCare Pacific Island Launches HIV Rapid Testing on Guam

By Kelly Jensen

GUAHAN Project, a program of WestCare Pacific Islands has provided services to the island of Guam, as the only HIV/AIDS service organization in the Western Pacific for more than a decade. The GUAHAN Project, seeks to promote the vital importance of knowing your STD/HIV/AIDS status, reducing shame and stigma associated with getting tested and educating members of at-risk populations on Guam, which includes young people ages 15-24, men who have sex with men (MSM) and high risk heterosexual males and females.

On October 19, 2012, with visiting Senior Vice President Maurice Lee on hand, GUAHAN project received its first shipment of Clearview© HIV rapid test kits, becoming the first community-based organization on Guam to provide testing services. Project staff worked diligently with the Department of Public Health and Human Services

to develop testing protocols and meet all the requirements to become a CLIA waved HIV rapid testing site.

GUAHAN Project currently has five (5) STD/HIV Certified Risk Reduction Counselors. Each of the counselors participated in a week long training followed by observation hours with another certified counselor to meet all the requirements of the CDC and local health department.

WestCare Pacific Islands would like to send special thanks to Bernie Schumann and Liz Adriatico from the Department of Public Health and Human Services and Kunane Dreier from Life Foundation who provided an abundance of technical assistance, a wealth of information and their professional expertise.



Another Doctor's Opinion

As a participant in the Boyle County Detention Center's Substance Abuse Program, I gain tremendous knowledge on a daily basis about the disease of addiction. I learn about the "how and why" and how to arrest my debilitating condition. Other than a chapter in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, I previously had little knowledge of the medical aspect of this disease. This was, however, until I had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Burns Brady, practitioner out of Louisville, KY, speak on the disease.

I felt a warm, calming aura in the room as the addict, alcoholic, and distinguished M.D. entered the room. His smile and whole demeanor assured me that I was in for a real treat.

Dr. Brady opened with a short synopsis of his life and the role that drug and alcohol addiction played in it. He explained that there was no difference between us residents, and him; a doctor. In listening, I very quickly noticed the similarities in our stories telling me that he knew exactly the type of person that I was. He too had experienced

By Eric Cox – *BCDC-SAP client*

the trials and tribulations brought along by the disease of addiction.

Dr. Brady taught us how drug and alcohol addiction is a disease defined by genetics and requires the need for a 12 step program. We also learned how our "feel good" receptors, also known as Dopamine, get affected by prolonged drug and alcohol abuse resulting in co-occurring disorders. Dr. Brady spoke on PTSD, depression, opiate replacement therapy, holding resentments, recovery dynamics, and doing the next right thing.

Dr. Brady's personal and medical aspects were appreciated and understood by all. On behalf of the clients and staff here in the SAP, I would like to thank Dr. Burns Brady for carrying the message and continuing to help addicts and alcoholics to recover.

Kentucky



WestCare Foundation

A Message from Dick Steinberg

The Gregorian calendar says 'December 2012,' the month of Christmas and other religious observances. And my mind says "Whaaaaah?! How can it be, already?" As I look back, my response is truly more joyful than quizzical.

We have accomplished so many wonderful things since we welcomed the new year 11 months ago. WestCare's comforting and caring blanket has covered thousands more individuals; so often, human beings who have merely needed direction and a welcoming hand.

Our WestCare family has reached into new areas of need, including a growing responsibility for veteran services. Our Boards and Community Councils (for whom I work) have guided us with incredible foresight and wise financial decisions. Our generous donors continue to assist us in meeting the cost of changing lives. And everyone, from Senior Vice Presidents to entry-level employees, has done phenomenal work. I am reminded of a Peace Corps motto: *"The hardest job you'll ever love."*

My, what a wonderful holiday season it is. Sharon, Olivia and I are so proud to call you "family," so thankful for who you are, and so blessed by all you do.

Merry Christmas and good tidings to our entire WestCare family!

Dick Steinberg – *President/CEO*



Dick Steinberg

