



NEVADA: *Project Homeless Connect*

By Darlene Terrill, Director of Development



When looking at the beautiful lights on the Las Vegas Strip, it is hard to imagine the reality facing many individuals and families in our community. Thankfully, there is help for those who are the most at risk.

WestCare Nevada participated in *Project Homeless Connect*, which is aimed to stop homelessness in Southern Nevada. There were over 3,000 homeless and at-risk community members served on November 15th, at the Cashman Convention Center. Services included housing/shelter, medical/dental/vision care, legal/court

services, job and training support, clothing, food, haircuts, social services and much more! WestCare had three booths to assure that all our service availabilities were covered, including a booth for the youth, *VIVO Veteran Services/Outreach* and one for all our other adult services, including detoxification, mental health triaging, outpatient and residential services.



This annual event has been going on for over 20 years with huge success. It was heartwarming to see so many of the participants gravitate to our booths to seek services or to have former clients update us on their successful status.



FLORIDA: *New Partnership in St. Pete*

Submitted by Maureen-Ann Gula, Administrative Assistant

The St. Petersburg Free Clinic (SPFC) has partnered with WestCare GulfCoast-Florida to open a free health clinic inside the Davis Bradley Community Involvement Center. The building currently operates two men's and one women's residential substance abuse treatment programs, as well as a transitional housing program.

Staffed by Nurse Practitioners, a Nurse Clinic Manager and a Drug Assistance Program Coordinator, the clinic is open two days a week and sees residents by appointment. It offers primary care as well as a Drug Assistance Program, which provides no or low cost prescription medications. The goal of this Free Clinic is to make care

and services more available and accessible to the surrounding community's residents.

Since the health clinic opened, 55 WestCare residents have received care at no cost. This much needed service has already assisted with diverting residents away from local emergency rooms for non-emergency needs. The staff is friendly, professional and helpful and provide excellent care to our residents.



How Anyone Online Can Support WestCare

If you know someone who loves to shop online, they can help WestCare by shopping at **AmazonSmile** (bookmark <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/86-0852629>) and selecting **WestCare Foundation**. A portion of the purchase will be donated to WestCare at no cost to the shopper.



WestCare is registered with **PayPal Giving Fund**. When shopping on eBay or using PayPal online, users can select WestCare as their charity of choice. Donations can be made by visiting <https://www.paypal.com/fundraiser/105865137050618816/charity/74402>.



WestCare is also on **Razoo**, the online fundraising engine. The organization participates in events like #GivingTuesday. Donations can be made by heading to the following link: <https://www.razoo.com/us/story/Westcare-Foundation>.





FLORIDA: *A Deeply Personal Walk Out of Darkness*

By Kristin Flores, MLS, Research Assistant–Guidance/Care Center

Guidance/Care Center, Inc. staff participated in the 2nd Annual *Out of Darkness Walk* in Key West on November 6th, a national observance through the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Monroe County has the highest rate of suicide in Florida, as well as in most other parts of the US.

Several staff members signed up under my team: *Team Daniel Flores*. You see, I lost my husband of 18 years to suicide on April 16, 2015 and this team was created in his honor. It helps to know I am fighting for a cause and raising awareness for something so near and dear to my heart. It warms my heart even more to have my wonderful coworkers from our Key West and Marathon offices walk in honor of my husband



Kristin and son, back row right.

and their loved ones who have been lost to suicide.

I am reminded that I am not alone as I walk through my grief. I want to thank everyone for being a part of my journey by participating in the walk again this year.



DID YOU KNOW? *World AIDS Day is December 1st*



World AIDS Day is held on the 1st 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, held for the first time in 1988.

This Month's Question: *"What is your favorite memory of the holiday season?"*



"My children and I have had this tradition. It started over 40 yrs ago when I lived in San Diego and my boyfriend at the time was stationed

there in the Navy. We decided to have an Orphan Thanksgiving for anyone who was not able to go home. We made turkey and all the trimmings and celebrated in our one bedroom apartment. To this day, every year, I have upheld the tradition. My daughters and I make a plate for those who are working on that day. Thanksgiving IS my favorite Holiday."

- **Connie Contreras**, Receptionist - Foundation

(Editor's note: And we hope it was another wonderful, satisfying day of giving, Connie!)

"Christmas is the best time of year. I got my decorating skills from my Grandma Kelly. She always had the tree decorated by the 2nd of December. Her house was like walking into Santa's House with the smell of cookies as you came in, decorations in every room, Christmas music playing and her singing along."



- **Colleen Kelly**, Administration - California

"What is the craziest thing you've ever done?" Send your response and photo to john.wallace@westcare.com by Tuesday, December 20th.

LGBT: *Remembering Victims of Anti-Trans Violence*

Courtesy of the LGBT Advisory Council



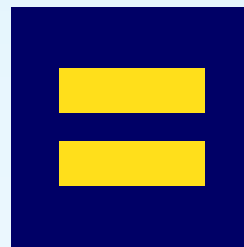
November included *National Transgender Awareness Week* (14th-20th) and *Transgender Day of Remembrance* (20th).

Transgender Awareness Week helps to raise the visibility of transgender, gender non-conforming or gender-variant people, and address the issues the community faces. The week is dedicated to the progress, continued challenges, and unfinished work in the fight for transgender equality.

Transgender Awareness Week culminates with the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). On TDOR, the world honors the memory of transgender individuals who lost their lives to hate crimes.

TDOR was established in 1998, to honor the memory of **Rita Hester**, a 34-year-old African-American transgender woman, who was brutally murdered in her

Boston apartment. The victimization of Rita continued after her death as news reports consistently misgendered her or used her first name in quotes. Rita wasn't the first transgender victim of hate, but the transphobia and violence she suffered spurred the launch of TDOR.



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN[®]

According to the Human Rights Campaign, 2015, was the most lethal year on record for transgender people in the U.S. At least 21 transgender men and women were killed last year (19 victims were people of color). It's estimated that every 3 days a transgender or gender nonconforming person is killed around the world.

Transgender and gender nonconforming individuals are also disproportionately affected by poor health outcomes and face many challenges when seeking healthcare.

The National Coalition for LGBT Health notes that 50% of transgender individuals report having to teach their healthcare providers about transgender care; 19% of transgender individuals are refused care due to their gender; and more than 28% of transgender individuals delay medical care due to discrimination.



LGBT: Remembering Victims of Anti-Trans Violence (Cont.)

In honoring TDOR, the U.S. Department of State, stated, *“The U.S. Constitution affirms that everyone has equal protection under the law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every person is born free and equal in dignity and rights. Every person includes transgender women, transgender men, and other individuals who face marginalization on account of their gender expression or gender identity.”*



For more information about TDOR visit www.glaad.org or www.hrc.org. To join WestCare’s National LGBT Awareness and Advisory Council email david.rosynsky@westcare.com.



KENTUCKY: Now HERE’S Affordable Health Care!



The Smile-Faith Foundation visited the Hal Rogers Recovery Center in Ashcamp in late October.

The organization is based in Jenkins, Kentucky and travels across the region to provide a wide range of free dental services, reading glasses and eye exams to those in need.

The dental team, which originates in Daytona, Florida, traveled to Eastern Kentucky and offered free quality dental services, including tooth cleanings, fillings and extractions. Throughout their two day visit here, approximately 50 of our residents were treated.

IOWA: FAVA, Military Saluted on the Ice

(Family Alliance for Veterans of America Director Rhonda Jordal, checks in with this first person account)



We had an amazing night at the North Iowa Bulls hockey game. They are the National Champions (NAHL Tier3) and took on the Willmar WarHawks in Mason City.

Their jerseys, with camo and stars and stripes, were made especially for the game, which was *FAVA* and military appreciation night. They love our service dog program and wanted to do something to raise money for it.

Our own **Laura Lindsay** sang the National Anthem, **Denise Holst** (FAVA Coordinator), dropped the puck for the start of the game and at the first period intermission we had three of the service dogs - **Campbell**, **Benning** and **Lejeune**, along with **Steven Jordal** (*Battle Buddy* Coordinator), and two of the *4H* youth, **Ben** and **Teigen** doing demos on the ice (carpeted) for the crowd.

I spoke during the demo about the WestCare Iowa

FAVA Battle Buddy program. After winning the game 2-0, the Bulls auctioned off the jerseys to the crowd with the proceeds going to our service dog program.

One fan came up afterwards, shook my hand and told me, *"thank you for everything you do...you saved my life."* He had come into our program homeless and suicidal. We got him housed, gave him lots of things for his apartment and helped him get a job. He still has that job today and is doing well. It was wonderful to talk with him.

Everything was amazing and we are so thankful for all of it! Go Bulls!!

GEORGIA: *A Tribute to American Heroes*

By Bonnie Ware, Property Manager



Veterans Day is a highly celebrated holiday in America, and it was only befitting for *VetsCare*, a permanent supportive housing program for male and female veterans, to share in the celebration. VetsCare held its first Veterans Appreciation event this year as a part of the many activities that took place across Atlanta and America. American flags were displayed on the property and the previously homeless veterans were honored for their distinguished and dedicated service to our country.

The brave men and women residents who served in various branches of the armed forces both home and abroad were greeted by the WestCare Regional Vice President, **Michael**



Michael Langford

Langford and the VetsCare staff.

Prominent community leader **Jane Ridley** also joined in the celebration to thank our veterans and welcome them to the community. As the residents feasted on

seafood delicacies, they reminisced about their experiences. They were also grateful that WestCare took the time to celebrate Veterans Day with them.

VetsCare opened its doors to veterans in 2014. Presently, there is 100% occupancy. Through the City of Atlanta's Community Development Block Grant program, the eight units were renovated by FitzHouse, an entity of WestCare. The City of Atlanta continues to offer grant funding to support the program.

Family Feedback

"We do so much for so many..... that is why I come to work every day."

Lynn Pimentel, Deputy Administrator - Fresno, CA





KUDOS! Our Monthly Shout-Outs to Exceptional Individuals

Thanks to Counselor **Joe Wright** for representing WestCare Kentucky on the airways on a local radio station program, “*Appalachian Issues*.” Mr. Wright skillfully described addictions, treatments, family issues and the residential program at Ashcamp.

He was a hit, and was invited back to ‘*Kickin’ Country 102.3*’ for more discussions.



It is always wonderful when our clients make their feelings known about the treatment and services they have received. WestCare California’s **Susie Ostad** is an educator at our transitional reentry program in San Diego. Here’s her report card:



“We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation and highest gratitude to Susie, our educator and mentor at CCTRP San Diego. She has never failed to meet us right where we are as individuals during this learning process in our lives. We commend her for always looking out for our personal needs and giving us a deep feeling of accomplishment that keeps us focused on our goals. Her selfless approach to teaching has no doubt instilled many positive attributes that will serve us in all areas of our lives. Thank you, Suzie. You are truly one of a kind. You have made us see ourselves as achievers and for that we humbly give our sincere thanks.”

- Your Students at CCTRP - San Diego

ILLINOIS: *The Modern Phenomenon: Soldiers Behind Bars*

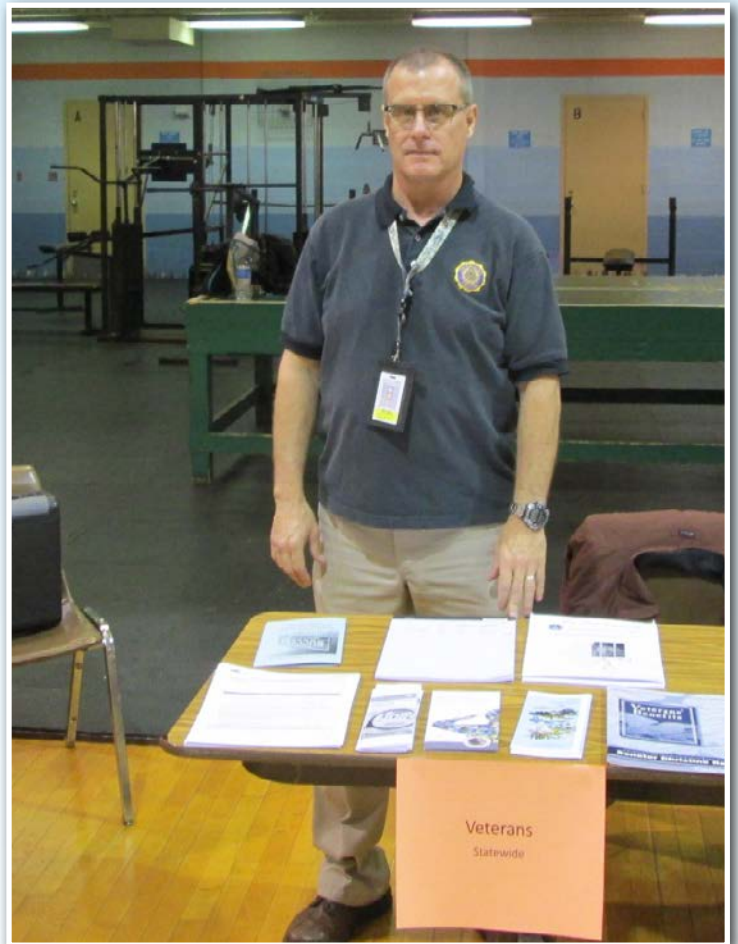
By Jeff Adams, Certified Counselor

Sheridan Correctional Center hosts two reentry summits each year, with numerous vendors invited to present information on resources and services available to our clients when they are released. Something that has been missing over the years was resources specific to our **veterans**.

Being a veteran myself, I see the struggle some vets have reintegrating into society. Some do fine on their own, but most have too much pride to ask for help, or don't know where to go.

In 2012, there were 885 per 100,000 veterans incarcerated in the United States. That number continues to grow. When our clients are discharged from the military they may not have the coping skills to deal with life as they knew it before they enlisted. Some have no place to live and find it hard to find a job. Others cannot find jobs because their training doesn't carry over to civilian life. Some have PTSD or other mental illness and turn to drugs to self-medicate.

At our most recent summit, WestCare had our first resource table specifically for veterans and their needs. We had information on federal and state benefits, resources on employment opportunities for veterans, and information on educational resources and grants available.



Counselor Adams

Our veteran clients at Sheridan were glad to have resources made available to them, and we hope to participate in future reentry summits.

ILLINOIS: *Past Mistakes Guide, Not Define, One's Future*

By Alexandra Chwalik and Susan Decker

Two wonderful young men have a lot to look proud and determined about these days. They're employed at jobs they enjoy and have bright futures ahead of them. Their stories are truly inspiring. WestCare is proud to have played a role in helping these two young men put their past behind them.



Before being introduced to WestCare, the two had been struggling to succeed. Both had non-violent offenses on their juvenile arrest records. As they discovered, these arrests can be a barrier to jobs, housing, education, and other things we often assume we can get easily. Thankfully, they found WestCare. Our employees knew just what to do to get them moving forward. **Kelly Lindstrom**, the staff attorney of the John Marshall Law School Pro Bono Program, worked with them to request the court to remove their arrests through a process called *expungement*. As long as the court's criteria are met, non-violent juvenile arrests can be removed. This way, an individual is not penalized for the rest of their life for

something they did in their youth.

After being referred to WestCare by his school, the first gentleman participated in our *Face Forward* program. Lindstrom helped him through the expungement process which was completed on last February. With his arrest record clear, the young man landed a job two months later. Thanks to his dedication, he is now a full-time sales associate at Walmart and has become a peer leader in his community.

The second young man came to WestCare thanks to his brother's recommendation. He participated in the WestCare-facilitated *Junior Achievement Work Readiness* training while his expungement request went through the court process. It was approved in December, 2015. Once the arrest was off his record, he worked temporary jobs for the next six months and looked for a permanent job. This past August, he landed a job as a security guard!

To date, WestCare has assisted 30 youth in getting their Illinois arrest records expunged. Another 13 have upcoming court dates. Changes in the law effective on January 1st, 2017 will allow for even more to have their records cleared. Among other positive revisions, minors under 18 will now be eligible for expungement, giving them a chance to put their past behind and helping them prepare for a positive future – another great way to uplift the human spirit! WestCare is here and ready to help!



WISCONSIN: *How Busy was YOUR Place on Thanksgiving?!*



WestCare Wisconsin went all out again this year at their 2nd annual *CommUnity Thanksgiving Feast*. Staff and volunteers served a whopping 466 meals and gave away 200 free turkeys at the MLK Community Center

in Milwaukee!! A touch of Christmas added to the wonderful environment, as area businesses and services joined in welcoming the community.



Let's Have a Laugh



Avoid buying flowers from monks.
Remember: Only you can prevent florist friars.

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I heard you'll get fined if you don't use your windshield wipers when it rains in Sweden.

Well, how in heck do I know when it rains in Sweden?



OFFSHORE / CARIBBEAN: *Plentiful...and Plenty Full!*

Our community and staff members are always supporting our participants, especially during the holidays when many of them are missing that warm hand from the family.



During November, we served Thanksgiving dinners in all of our projects, honoring all the services and saying *"Thank You"* to second chances and the people that give us a hand.



CALIFORNIA: *Commencing Into a Bright Future*



Congratulations to the fall 2016 graduating class of WestCare California! Over 50 individuals from various programs throughout the Golden State walked the stage in completion of their recovery programs. Clients from Fresno, Hanford and Bakersfield were represented, and hundreds of their relatives and friends were there to share the joy. The pride is widespread for all that they have accomplished, and everyone wishes only the best for our newest alumni on their road ahead.



The merry WestCare Puerto Rico rascals pose for their annual Christmas card, sent to sponsors and grantors. Nice!!



WestCare Wisconsin marshaled numerous agencies and volunteers to begin an apple orchard in the neighborhood. The tree planting project is a collaborative and learning experience for urban agriculture and future jobs in the industry.

— **WESTCARE** —

*Wishing Our Friends and Families
a safe, joyous, and peaceful
holiday season!*

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY HANUKKAH

HAPPY KWANZAA

and a

HAPPY NEW YEAR

