



The WestCare Foundation Employee Newsletter

Page 1

February 2013

### The Beautiful Faces of LOVE . . .



CONGRATULATIONS to Tommy Lapp and Lori Thompson, Guidance/Care Center's Substance Abuse Counselor on the adoption of their beautiful daughter, Heaven. The adoption was finalized on December 28th and the Florida courtroom was packed with family and friends for the moving ceremony. We wish them all the best as they move forward as a Forever Family. What a perfect way to start 2013!!!!

### And in America's HEARTland . . .

After leaving North Iowa 27 years ago, **Debbie Abu-Dames** found herself home again. But this home wasn't in Mason City, it was with the staff and veterans at the Family Alliance for Veterans of America office in Forest City. FAVA works with veterans and their families to provide a variety of services including job counseling, housing assistance and others, and is a WestCare sister agency.

"This is my second home and this is my family too," Abu-Dames said inside the FAVA office. Abu-Dames is a veteran of the Army and Army Reserves. She and **Andrew King** were married inside what Abu-Dames considers her second home on December 31.





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UPLIFTING THE HUMAN SPIRIT





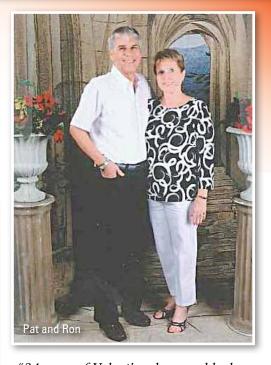
"My Valentine always . . .
forever and a day."

– Kristina "Didi" Buono –
Human Resources Manager
Nevada/Arizona



"To my favorite sailor . . . and WestCare 'Valen-teer'"

- Kelly Jensen –
Pacific Islands,
Haya Youth Center-Guam



"34 years of Valentine days, and he has not disappointed one of them!" – Pat Gericke – Payroll Assistant-WestCare Foundation



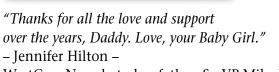
"To the world, you may be just one person. But to me you are my world. I did not marry you to live my life with; I married you because I couldn't live my life without you. For as long as I live, I dedicate my every heartbeat to our love."

– Maurice Lee –Senior Vice President –









WestCare Nevada-to her father, Sr. VP Mike Lavin



"Not only my partner, but my best friend."

– Sean Whitten –
Job Developer-Day Reporting Center, California



"My Valentine is my 19 month old daughter, Annah. 'You are my blessing. I love you for life.'" – Miltina Fraser –

Outreach Specialist – Georgia



# **Living Right . . . Free From Fear**

By Andee Hardesty – ITU Program Director

The third Tuesday of each month, WMCI-Torrington (Wyoming Medium Correctional Institution) is the home of ITU graduation. This is historically a day of excitement, fears, joys, and tears. This is the one day the men look forward to the most as a participant of ITU, as it represents their hard work and dedication to themselves, to their families, and to their fellow community members.

A recent graduation was a particularly special one. The graduates requested the Warden of our facility, Steve Hargett, as the guest speaker. Warden Hargett graciously accepted the invitation and presented the men with an outstanding speech about Freedom from their Fears, the theme (chosen by the men) for the ceremony. It was also a pleasure to have Director Bob Lampert and Deputy Director Steve Lindley in attendance for this special event.

In the recent past, ITU community members requested to reassemble a choir. With the help of Ms. Lynette Belknap, the choir came together and began practicing for their first performance last fall. The success of the choir was well recognized by
WestCare and DOC staff alike! For the
December graduation, The Right Living Choir

provided entertainment by singing White Christmas and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

With holiday spirit in mind, Ms. Andee Hardesty, ITU Program Director, requested that all attendees of the graduation sing Frosty the Snowman as a group. The Right Living Choir led nearly 200 inmates and staff in the song. Although smiles could be seen by all, it was clear that the next time we attempt a group sing-a-long, we better practice first!



# **Wyoming**



Family and friends support ITU graduates



Warden Hargett addresses graduates

# Discovering Their 'True Selves'

By Ashley Christensen – Program Director

WestCare Wyoming held its third outpatient graduation at the Wyoming Women's Center. It was an opportunity to provide women with a sense of accomplishment and to identify all the hard work that they put into their individual program. The outpatient services at the Wyoming Women's Center are overseen by our senior counselor, Melody Greibel, Ms. Griebel works with the women not only on substance abuse issues but also underlying issues that have led them to use, with a variety of curricula through Stephanie Covington (Women in Recovery, Women's Way through 12 Steps and Helping Women Recover). The graduation ceremony was held at the facility and gave not only staff but clients' family members an opportunity to

congratulate them and recognize the hard work they have put into becoming healthy women who now have the tools to live up to their full potential.

As Stephanie Covington states in her work, "Each woman's path of healing is unique, but most of us find that it involves discovering our true selves, connecting in healthy relationships with others, understanding our sexuality, and gaining some spiritual connection. Recovery is like a spiral upward, away from a life that revolves around the objects of addiction and outward into everwidening circles of freedom, self-knowledge and connection with others."

Congratulations and best wishes, Ladies!



### **Compassion Has No Barrier**

By Charlene Hamann – Recreation Therapist

For the fifth consecutive year, WestCare Sheridan offered clients in the therapeutic community the opportunity to decorate their housing units in the holiday spirit.

One of the most poignant displays included a memorial to the victims at Sandy Hook, Connecticut. The men made candles out of construction paper and tissue paper for all 26 victims; pink construction paper lined the candles for the girls,

and blue construction paper lined the candles for the boys. Although the clients couldn't do much for the victims and their families since they are in prison, they felt making this memorial was something they could all come together and worked on.

Working on this kind of activity helped the guys get through the holidays easier. It offered a sense of teamwork and togetherness and eased the pain of not being home with their families. And as with the Sandy Hook display, it revealed a sensitive side to those incarcerated.



# **Pacific Islands**



# Lending a Hand at Guam's "Big Wrap"

By Sarah Thomas-Nededog

The Holiday cheer resounded all around the lobby at the Bank of Hawaii, as volunteers from the Island's non-profit organizations and government agencies gathered together to wrap donated gifts for the Island's most needy: the homeless of all ages and the elderly, who lack family support and would spend the holidays alone.

The Sugar Plum Tree is a non-profit organization, which has assisted our island community for over 28 years, and works

effortlessly to ensure everyone has something to be thankful for each holiday season. Thirty-Six clients of our Sagan Mami Drop-In and Enrichment Center were recipients this year.

Illinois

WCPI staff and AmeriCorps volunteers with their families assisted in this years "Big Wrap". What great joy to witness community volunteers donate their time and resources to ensure the citizens we serve had a very Merry Christmas.

Coming together and "Uplifting the Human Spirit."





# Setting it Straight

The January 2013 issue of The Express contained several errors that were brought to our attention.

- The identities of Liz Cook and Laura Schwarz were reversed in Kentucky photos.
- Credit for authoring the Caren Lopez feature story from Nevada should have been given to Angelina Vente-Garcia.

We regret the errors.



# **Foundation**



# Information Technology

# IT Corner

(An occasional column of advice from our Information Technology team)
WestCare System Security Requirements

By Sean Harrigan - Systems Administrator, WestCare Foundation

#### **Changing Your Password**

In order to comply with security privacy regulations, WestCare requires that you change your password every 90 days. Our systems are set up to automatically prompt you when a password change is required. You will be notified that you need to change your password when you log in to your computer, or when you log in to your email using our webmail system.

#### **Password Requirements**

In order for the system to accept a password, it must meet certain minimum requirements. A password cannot contain any part of your name, cannot be the same as any of your previous passwords, must be at least 6 characters in length, and must contain any 3 of the following:

- English uppercase characters (A through Z)
- English lowercase characters (a through z)
- Base 10 digits (0 through 9)
- Non-alphabetic characters (for example, !, \$, #, %)

# Here are some examples of passwords that will work:

- Abcd12 Uppercase and lower case letter and a number
- Abcde& Uppercase and lower case letter and a non-alphabetic character
- 1234a! Number, letter, and a nonalphabetic character

Of course there are billions of possible combinations, and you can even use spaces in your password.

### **Keep It Simple**

The biggest problem with passwords seems to be remembering them. Of course you should never write a password down on paper, or share a password with anyone else; in fact our company policy forbids this.

There are ways to make your password easy to remember, and still secure. You can use words and numbers that have some significance and even a sentence can work as a password. Your password can be as long as 127 characters, so there's virtually no limit to the possibilities. For instance, the following is actually a valid password:

#### This is a valid password.

It's valid because it contains not only uppercase and lower case letters, but also spaces and a period that count as symbols. It's also super easy to remember, certainly easier than something like HgY\$Tv1.

#### For Technical Support:

E-mail: helpdesk@westcare.com

**Phone:** 702-410-7595





### **Project IMPACT Has Arrived!**

By Tashia Ameneiro – Project Impact Prevention Specialist

Greetings: We are Project IMPACT from Miami Florida, and would like to introduce ourselves! Our little clan of prevention consists of Denise Estrada, our Coordinator, and Noelle Granda and Tashia Ameneiro our Prevention Specialists. We have started our program with several community events including the S.O.S. AIDS walk in December, and our HPV Awakening 1st annual Cervical Cancer Day on January 25th.

Our mighty IMPACT-ters have guided 298 Miami Beach Senior High School students from November through January, teaching them the ways of the Life Skills Training Program. We have taken the Hi-Tides and taught them that what they do today can impact them tomorrow, ways of being healthy, developing communication skills, thinking things through and that options and decisions are always available.

We are seeking our next territories and challenges, those of the parent group and the formidable Middles Schools . . . But fear not, we may not be Sparta but we shall leave all in our wake IMPACTed!

Project IMPACT is also working with several local coalitions, middle schools, and local groups in educating the public about drug safety,

prevention, and training them in the Life Skills program. We are looking forward to our conquests and to sharing the bounty with you all, for together we stand as one WESTCARE!

# **Florida**



🛕 The terrific trio: Noelle, Denise and Tashia

# **Healthy Start Reunion**

By Heather Baker – Healthy Start Program Director

A t the request of a group of clients who had attended a large number of prenatal Healthy Start classes during the summer and fall of 2012, a December reunion was held. Ten mothers, infants in tow, participated in a postnatal parenting group, and again requested ongoing classes for themselves and their families. Shown here is a subset of the attendees who are now attending an ongoing infant massage class; based on their ongoing participation and interest, the Healthy Start program will be offering an infant/child





Healthy moms, healthy babies!



# **California**





# **Keeping Up With . . . Barbara Varner**

By John Wallace

Our WestCare employees are a diverse bunch; More than a thousand individuals representing various ages, talents and hobbies, hopes and dreams. Awhile back, we peeked in on California Data Collection Specialist Barbara Varner as she went deep sea diving and scaled cliffs in Mexico. Then, as a follow up, we found Barbara slaying dragons! Well, a big ol' rattlesnake at her foothill home, anyway.

What's she up to today? Well, she's proudly "in my 70s" and remains one of WestCare's most loyal workers. (21 years!) She recently caught the home improvement bug, and went to work on her Squaw Valley home. As planner, designer and builder, Barbara put a new roof on



her carport, converting half of it into a fitness center and the other half into a living room with wood burning stove.

It's a comfortable living for Barbara, who lives alone with her two dogs, 4 cats and "lots of gophers." Now that she has remodeled and expanded her home she's become a landlord of sorts, giving shelter to a homeless person in exchange for help around the property. She says the roomer is a "nephew of Johnny Mathis, the singer."

That's Barbara Varner. She's hard to keep up with!



# Kindness Awareness Week is February 10 - 16



Kindness Awareness for the United States came about in 1993 when then-Congressman Walter Tucker of Compton, California and Dr. Chuck Wall negotiated an appropriate date. Congressman Tucker became involved when he, along with many other Americans, watched the television show "The Crusaders." On this show, an appeal was made by the senior reporter Mark Hyman: Contact your legislator to encourage him or her to help create a national day of kindness recognition. Congressman Tucker contacted Dr. Wall through the Bakersfield College Public Affairs Office to find out how we might collaborate on a Kindness Awareness

### Courtesy of - www.timeanddate.com

Day for the United States. Eventually, the week of February 12th was determined to be the best week of the year with the least number of conflicting events. Since that time, we have tried to stay close to the original week selected. We then read in the news that Canada had decided to use the same week to celebrate Kindness. It was our unilateral decision to include Mexico in the selected week, thereby declaring all of North America as part of the celebration.

### Always Giving Back . . .

Submitted by WestCare California staff

WestCare California's Health and Wellness department took the initiative and organized a blood drive at their MLK facility in conjunction with the Central California Blood Center. Twenty Five donors took part and combined efforts to donate 16 pints. On behalf of the Health and Wellness department and the event's organizer, Irene Gutierrez, thank you to everyone who volunteered to help organize the event, and thanks especially to everyone who took the time to donate to this worthy cause! Volunteers included Lynda Chapa, Kathaleen

DeLeon, Suzanne Alaniz, Raymond Gonzales, Bernie Baiza, Domenica Jimenez and Louis Aguero. Great job!



# California



Bloodmobiles line up at WestCare  $\wedge$ 

# lowa **FAVA CORNER**

# **Staying Connected**

By Rhonda Jordal – Chairman

 ${
m F}$  amily Alliance for Veterans of America (FAVA) submitted a grant application to the John K.

and Luise V. Hanson Foundation for funds to purchase computers for the national headquarters in Forest City, as well as continued construction projects at the facility.

FAVA uses computers for staff, for the National Database of over 100,000 resources across the United States as well as for the veterans and family members to use in the computer center. There have been a number of times that all the computers in the computer center were being used and staff gave their laptop to a veteran to use. This grant will help purchase the much needed additional computers. The funds will also pay for the computer server and server components to run the internet for the veterans and staff at FAVA.

FAVA has had a number of construction projects at the National headquarters and has future plans for which the grant will be used.

FAVA is a national 501c3 non-profit whose mission is to provide information, education, advocacy and support to families of veterans and veterans.

Dave Kingland from the Hanson Foundation, with FAVA Chair, Rhonda Jordal



# February 2nd is Groundhog Day

Courtesy of – www.timeanddate.com



Groundhog Day falls on February 2 in the United States. It is a part of popular culture among many Americans and it centers on the idea of the groundhog coming out of its home to "predict" the weather.

Groundhog Day is a popular observance in many parts of the United States. Although some states have in some cases adopted their own groundhogs, the official groundhog,

Punxsutawney Phil, lives at Gobbler's Knob near Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. The town has attracted thousands of visitors over the years to experience various Groundhog Day events and activities on February 2.

### The Dream Continues . . .

By Jennifer Hilton – Harris Springs Ranch Director

anuary 21st was the 31st annual Las Vegas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade. WestCare Nevada participated in this event for the 1st time. The float used was designed by Jade Wolfe, a WestCare Nevada Re-Entry client and decorated by her and volunteers from the BOYS adolescent program. The murals were beautiful displays of the Dr. himself and some of his most inspiring quotes!

Then with over 50 volunteer staff, their families, and clients . . . all wearing shirts with the WestCare logo on the back and Dr. King's speech I Have A Dream on the front . . . marched through downtown Las Vegas for over two miles; chanting "Who Cares? WESTCARE! Who Cares? WESTCARE! What do we do? STAY CLEAN! What do we do?

STAY CLEAN! What did Martin Luther King do? HAVE A DREAM!"

In talking to those that participated, it was an inspirational experience that they will never forget!

# Nevada







# National Freedom Day is February 1st

#### Courtesy of - www.timeanddate.com

National Freedom Day is an observance in the United States that honors the signing of a resolution that proposed the 13th amendment of the nation's constitution on February 1, 1865. Abraham Lincoln, who was the president at the time, signed the resolution to outlaw slavery.

For some people, it is a time to promote good will, equality, and to appreciate freedom.

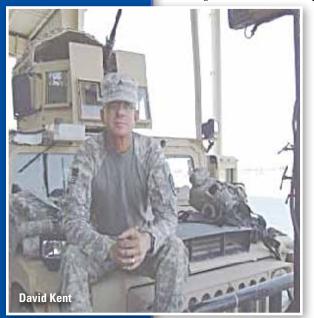
Wreath-laying at the Liberty Bell has also been a tradition to mark National Freedom Day for many years. Other events include annual breakfasts, luncheons, musical entertainment, film screenings, and literature meetings that explore the theme about freedom.



# AmeriCorps Spotlight Reinforcements Bolster AmeriCorps

By John Szimhardt – Veteran Peer Leader/Peer Support Specialist

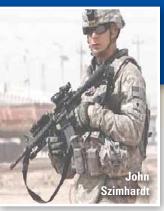
Last year was an exciting year in Arizona with our AmeriCorps Veteran Initiative. And this year looks to be even better. This year in Arizona we had the privilege of having three new AmeriCorps National Members added to forces in Arizona



with me. I'm a 20 year ARMY Veteran of Operations Desert Shield / Desert Storm / Southern Watch. I also served in Operations Enduring Freedom / Armored Falcon Campaigns. Most of my military career was in the Military Police Corps. I am now joined by 11 year NAVY Veteran David Kent who after a break of service of almost 15 years joined the ARMY Reserve and is an Operation Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn veteran. David is working in our Kingman office. I have another NAVY veteran who served 6 years during the Vietnam era, Gordon Snyder. He was an Aircraft Flight Mechanic. I also have the pleasure of working with **Bryan Shortsleeve** who served in the ARMY as a Petroleum Product Analyst. Both Gordon and Bryan are working in the Bullhead City office with me. Last year in Arizona we helped 63

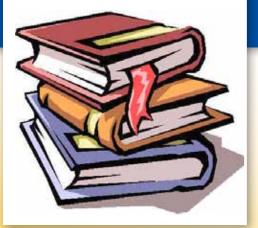
Veterans and their families in just our Bullhead City Office, and this year with our Kingman Office covering the Northern part of Mohave County we hope to at least double that number.

Our offices in Arizona help our Veterans by assisting with filing for VA Benefits, getting copies of their DD214, getting copies of their Military Personnel Records, getting food baskets, referral to other community services, job searching, resume writing and we hope to add new services this year.









# February is Library Lovers Month

Courtesy of - www.timeanddate.com

It's Library Lovers Month – and it seems to have come at just the right time as many local libraries are struggling during the economic downturn. A month long celebration of school, public and private libraries of all types. This is a time for everyone, especially library support groups, to recognize the value of libraries and to work to ensure that the nation's libraries will continue to serve.

So why love your local library? Libraries are a sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life; they offer security and peace and quiet. They are also a place where you can focus surrounded by like-minded people with the desire to acquire knowledge.

### **February Calendar**

**February 1st** National Freedom Day

February 2nd **Groundhog Day** 

**February 4th** 12:00pm - 1:00pm **Central KY-CAC Meeting** Noon/ET Irvine, KY

**February 8th** 1:30pm - 2:30pm **CA-CAC Meeting** MLK Facility, Fresno, CA

February 12th Lincoln's Birthday

February 14th Valentine's Day

February 12th 3:30pm - 4:30pm **FLGC-CAC Meeting** 3:30pm/PT - 6:30pm/ET City Center, 100 2nd Ave., #10

February 17th Random Acts of Kindness Day

February 18th President's Day (Washington's Birthday)

February 19th 8:00am - 9:00am **Executive Committee Meeting** 8:00am/PT - 11:00am/ET



# February Health Awareness

### Celebrate American Heart Month in February

Courtesy of – <a href="http://foodandnutritionmagazine.com">http://foodandnutritionmagazine.com</a> /celebrate-american-heart-month-in-february

 ${f A}$ merican Heart Month is a time to battle cardiovascular disease and educate Americans on what we can do to live heart-healthy lives. Heart disease, including stroke, is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. These diseases, the nation's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, claim more than 865,000 American lives a year.

# Symptoms of a Heart Attack

Common Signs and Symptoms of a Heart Attack

By Rod Brouhard - About.com Guide

 $oldsymbol{\Pi}$ eart attack symptoms typically follow a classic pattern. The list below includes several common signs and symptoms of heart attacks. The victim does not need to have every item on the list in order to be having a heart attack, but if two or more of the items are present then it is important to call 911 immediately.



Readers who have experienced a heart attack before know those classic symptoms don't always happen – or they don't always feel the way we expect them to. Heart attacks in women look very different than heart attacks in men.



### The Classic Symptoms Are:

- Chest pain
- Pressure, heaviness or tightness in the chest
- Pain or pressure in the neck or jaw
- Pain or pressure in one or both arms (especially the left)
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Pain or throbbing between the shoulder blades

### If You Suspect You're Having a Heart Attack

- If you suspect a heart attack, **do not** make an appointment to see the doctor. A private physician will probably not have the tools necessary to treat a heart attack. Instead, call 911 immediately!
- If you have chest pain, always go to the ER or call 911.

#### While waiting for the ambulance:

- Sit down and rest. The more exercise or stress you put on the heart, the more damage the heart attack will do. Sit and rest until the ambulance arrives.
- *Have someone gather your medications*. If there is someone with you, have them gather your medications or an updated list. It's a good idea to have personal medical information available at all times for the ambulance crew.

# WestCare EXPRESSions

# **Kentucky Shines in WestCare Fundraising Push**

By Sharon Steinberg – Resource Development-Foundation

This December showed a rise in both in-kind and cash donations in Pikeville, Kentucky WestCare facilities. The credit goes to the extra effort of our Community Council and friends. Elliot Supply donated and installed kitchen upgrades in our Perry Cline Homeless Shelter on the By-pass, and Helping Hands of Shelbiana, Kentucky donated almost \$10,000 in supplies.

I think we forget what an impact we as staff, management, and council members have to garner financial and in-kind help from our communities. In giving back through volunteering, our clients have widened our circle of friends as well. Clients from our Hal Rogers facility at Ashcamp have unloaded semi-trucks for Helping Hand and the Catholic Church of Pikeville. They have also cleared tree-blocked roads and cleaned highways and Fishtrap Lake.

From the Council encouraging their corporate and personal friends to visit and support our facilities, to our clients and staff furthering our cause, this is the way for us to

maximize the service we provide to our community. If you would like help with brochures or materials to help get others interested in helping WestCare serve your community you can contact Jaqueline Cashmere at 702 385 2090 on the west coast, or Sharon Steinberg at 727 480 9027 (east coast).







# The Month of February

**February Birthstone:** The Amethyst. The February birthstone reflects – stability, peace, balance, courage, inner strength, sincerity and a calm disposition.

### February Birth Flower:

The February Birth Flower is the Violet or Primrose. the Violet or Primrose symbolizes faithfulness, humility, and chastity.

### Sign of the Zodiac and Dates:

Aquarius - January 21 - February 19

### **Characteristics of Aquarius:**

Independent, Creative, Entertaining, Stimulating and Progressive

# **Kudos!**

# WestCare Honors Its 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.

WestCare employees have earned special recognition from their supervisors:



### Florida

Congratulations to Alfred Fair, Urinalysis Program Coordinator and **Shante Davis**, Urinalysis Coordinator with WestCare Florida. They were presented with an award for outstanding service and dedication by Judge Donald Cannava of the 11th Judicial Domestic Violence Court.



### California A Couple of California Stalwarts Garner Employee of the Month Honors

Virginia Sparks – Says MLK Campus Director Gary Knepper:

"Virginia makes everyday fresh and exciting. She does not stop where her 'job description' ends and she works throughout the facility never saying 'no' to anyone who asks for her help."

> Joe Estrada - Joe was honored for his willingness to always help with all IT needs despite whatever else he might have on his agenda. Whether it be a lost network connection or a copier that's on the fritz; Joe's

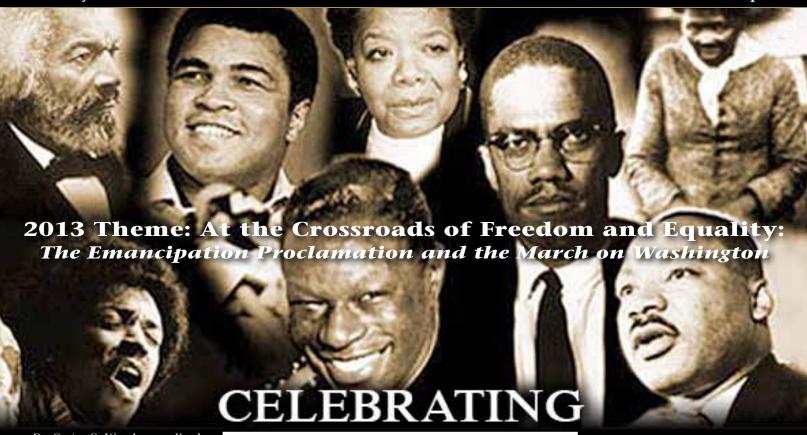


service and dedication are held in the highest regard.

And the SASCA program honors, **Melodie Estle** as its Employee of the Month. She has been with WestCare for 5 years and has managed the SASCA Bakersfield office as the Senior Community Service Coordinator. Great job, Melodie!







Dr. Carter G. Woodson realized the importance of providing a theme that would focus the attention of the public when he established Negro History week in 1926. The ASALH dedicates the 2013 Annual Black History Theme to celebrating the anniversary of two important African American turning points - the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation and the 1963 March on Washington.

The Emancipation Proclamation, decreed by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1st, 1863,



# BLACK HISTORY MOVING FORWARD

Courtesy of – www.timeanddate.com

declared slaves in all confederate states then at war with the Union "forever free" and made them eligible for paid military service in the Union Army. Although it did not end slavery in the nation, it did transform the character of the war. After the proclamation was made, every advance of Federal troops expanded the domain of freedom and black men were allowed to serve in the Union Army and Navy. By the end of the war almost 200,000 black soldiers and sailors had fought for freedom.

