

# WestCare Express

The WestCare Foundation Employee Newsletter



## In This Issue

Page 1-2

Guam – WestCare's New Home in the Western Pacific

Page 2

Beyond the Call

The Endowment Campaign Keeps on Chugging Along

Page 3

The St. Croix Unity Coalition

WestCare Georgia Memorial Day Weekend

Page 4

On the Road Back

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual Conference

Page 5

Serving Up Positive Youth Development!

The Mustard Seed Inn Volunteers for Local Letter Carrier's Food Drive

Page 6

A Sheridan Father's Day Tradition

Page 7

Mother's Day Breakfast Was All About "Mom"

TOUR SEKY Awards "Let's Paint the Town" Funding to Irvine

Page 8

WestCare Wellness Watch

5 Questions



## Guam – WestCare's New Home in the Western Pacific Islands'

By Kate Baltazar Aguon– *Project Director, WestCare Pacific Islands'*

WestCare is proud to announce the opening of its new home in the Western Pacific on the Island of Guam. The island is a territory of the United States and is fondly known as "Where America's Day Begins." It is home to 175,000 people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, making the culture and life-style of Guam truly unique.

WestCare's relationship of uplifting the human spirit on Guam began as an ordinary meeting that was supposed to last half an hour between Sarah Thomas-Nededog, executive director of Sanctuary, Incorporated of Guam, a 37-year-old nonprofit agency providing shelter and counseling to runaway and homeless youth, and WestCare CEO Richard

Steinberg. The meeting stretched out to close to five hours and several meals later a blossoming partnership was born. WestCare provided the treatment model, training and technical assistance to Sanctuary's residential substance abuse treatment facility for adolescents, the first and only one of its kind in the region.

Over the last five years, watching the behavioral health community on Guam develop, WestCare saw many opportunities to fill the gaps in services

to the people of the island and decided that it was time to plant some roots into the beautiful Guam landscape.

WestCare Pacific Islands is currently headed by a project director, Kate Baltazar Aguon, who has diverse experience in human services. Before joining

the WestCare family, Kate was the case manager for the Transitional Living Program, the policy research and program development coordinator at Sanctuary, executive director of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Guam, and media and community outreach coordinator for a domestic violence victims' advocacy organization. She studied psychology at the



Kate Baltazar Aguon

University of Guam and is the daughter of a retired Command Master Chief in the United States Navy, growing up throughout California and the Pacific in different countries.

WestCare Pacific Islands' immediate future plans include a partnership with Sanctuary on a Youth Offender Re-Entry Program under SAMHSA, providing prerelease services to youth incarcerated at Guam's youth correctional facility and assisting with their transition back to their homes and families.

## Beyond the Call

By Kim Mitchell – Office Manager, WestCare Arizona

WestCare Arizona's annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner was held recently at the Tropicana Express. The theme was "Beyond the Call." More than 50 volunteers were recognized with dinner, a certificate and gift bags. Door prizes were given out throughout the evening via sporadic telephone calls to the podium, which made for a lot of laughs. The night ended with the Volunteer of the Year award presented to Cameron Broadcasting for going above and beyond the call. Shawn Jenkins, Tamara Bohn, Mike Lavin, Ann Taylor, Ivette Martinez and Barbara Mason came down from the Foundation office to attend this event. It is one of our highlights of the year.



Pictured: Bottom Row-L to R- Tonya Boyett, Francine Collier, Tracy Stevens, Norma Van Horn, Kim Mitchell, Regina Decker – Cameron Broadcasting and Don Jagger – Cameron Broadcasting. Top Row-L to R-Debbie Marcusson, Tony Gann.



Arizona



## The Endowment Campaign Keeps on Chugging Along!

By Chris Argento

Campaign Corner

Kirby Burgess, Sr. VP of the Endowment Campaign, has been hard at work this past month, traveling to various WestCare regions in support of the campaign.

In June, Kirby visited Georgia (Augusta and Atlanta), Kentucky (Irvine, Lexington and Pikeville), California (Fresno as well as video conferences with San Diego, Sacramento and Bakersfield) and Nevada (Reno). During these visits, he spoke to numerous individuals regarding their possible involvement in the Community Campaign phase of the endowment, and he recently made a presentation to a local tribal council in California, asking them to partner with us on the Endowment Campaign. It is truly an exciting time for the campaign as we head into the summer months!

Kirby would also like to personally include many thanks to the "persons on the ground" assisting with the campaign in various regions, working alongside him on a daily basis to keep the campaign successfully chugging along: John Bascom (Georgia); Sharon Yates (Kentucky); Geri Ramirez, Mardi Palacios and Claudia Dossantos (California); and Heather Frost and Zazzi Pico (Nevada).

Finally, the employee phase of the California Campaign is nearly complete. The generosity and participation of staff has been exceptional. Many thanks to them for a job well done!



WestCare Foundation  
Endowment Campaign



# U.S. Virgin Islands

## The St. Croix Unity Coalition

By Alexis George – Program Coordinator  
St. Croix Unity Coalition, Inc.

The St. Croix Unity Coalition, Inc. is a community coalition whose main goal is to reduce alcohol and other illicit drug use among adolescents by decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors through educational initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of perception of harm in the community. We are a coordinating body that identifies and generates resources for the various initiatives to be implemented within the community. Although the coalition is an independent organization, we are closely affiliated with WestCare's Village – Virgin Islands Partners In Recovery, who have been our biggest contributor to the coalition's functioning and existence.

Our initiatives have been the defining factor as to the strength of our overall strategy. We have been extremely successful over the past nine years implementing these strategies, building on the foundation that was laid previously by the Victory Partnership. Today the coalition is in a unique phase of its existence. It is currently in its third year of its second funding cycle of the Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant. We are at a point where all of what we do significantly ties to the coalition's relationship with its stakeholders and the overall community. In order for the coalition to accomplish its initiatives, it has to collaborate and cooperate with various stakeholders that are comprised of governmental agencies,

private entities, community-based organizations and individuals.

The coalition has made a significant effort to institute and maintain Teens on Point (TOP), the junior board of the coalition. Thus far, the Teens On Point youth group has been quite active in the community, conducting vendor compliance check



for sale of alcohol to minors and also planning and implementing a drug-free rally, making special appearances on television shows and appearances as guests on local radio talk shows. The group of young people are constantly working toward improving themselves to take on the task of being peer mentors in the community. They are the future of the coalition and are the future leaders in our community.

The St. Croix Unity Coalition has worked to

become the primary outlet for resources and information in the community, providing education to youths and families about the dangers of alcohol, underage drinking and other substance abuse. The coalition has become the voice of the community that is working to change the cultural norms regarding underage drinking and substance use on the island.

Another important initiative for the St. Croix Unity Coalition is our media campaign that focuses on substance abuse prevention and intervention strategies. It provides information about resources available for youth and families to access prevention – education services. The public service announcements provide positive messages to youth and families to abstain from alcohol and drug use to make our community healthier and safer. In conjunction with a monthly newsletter and a brochure, a poster contest, essay contests and bumper sticker contests will be utilized to encourage participation in the media campaign to

promote drug-free living. The planning and implementation of the media campaign is spear-headed by the media committee and the public relations chair. The St. Croix Unity Coalition, Inc. launched its website [www.stcroixunitycoalition.org](http://www.stcroixunitycoalition.org) in January 2009. This will serve as a primary medium for the coalition to convey and disclose pertinent information about its activities and highlight our stakeholders and their initiatives.

## WestCare Georgia Memorial Day Weekend

By WestCare Georgia Staff

The Memorial Day weekend included family day at Boggs, and all of our residents were excited about visits from their families. A complete day of activities was planned, which resulted in excitement and joy by the families that attended.

The day began with presenting drug education with the families and a play that featured our boys about treatment and community that brought tears to the eyes of many. The county emergency medical service and fire department came on site to

demonstrate their procedures and allow a close look at their rescue equipment. The day also featured an array of games and competition and, of course, an extravaganza of food that our residents helped to prepare. All families seemed to have a wonderful time.

The next day was capped off with residents attending a Major League baseball game between the Atlanta Braves and the Toronto Blue Jays. Parents donated funds to support the food and beverages for the game and the tickets were also

donated. The family day weekend was enjoyed so much by one parent that she expressed her feeling in a letter to Boggs. We are grateful for all that occurred during the weekend and look forward to our next family day.

Georgia

## On the Road Back

### California



▲ RMS Staff Benjamin R., proudly read his article that he submitted to the local newspaper ~ The Fresno Bee which was published on June 5th.

By Benjamin Rodriguez – *WestCare California*

I am but one of many in one of Fresno's most prestigious programs called WestCare. I couldn't help but sit down and write how fortunate I am to be in this program. I am an ex-con, and at one time I had no sense of directions – until the day I was sanctioned to be here. I don't find myself groping in the dark any longer.

I'd like to express my gratitude to all of Fresno for having a WestCare in our community. I am learning the Golden Rules on how to be a productive citizen, and one day I'll have all the tools I need to give back to our community. I thank Fresno for WestCare R.M.S.

– Benjamin Rodriguez, Fresno California

▶ June 9, 2009 ~ WestCare California graduation committee members attended the ice cream social that was held in appreciation of our MLK clients for their efforts with the recent May graduation. Certificates were made and presented to those clients who volunteers to either be an usher or assist at the program table.

## National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual Conference

By Amanda Turpin – *WestCare California*

There is nothing like a well-polished soldier standing proud in his/her uniform, displaying their commitment to the American way of life. Shiny shoes, polished meta, and a stern, meaningful look expressing the importance of the mission they serve. Most of us did not sign up to serve and the soldier willingly (in most instances) stepped up to serve in order to protect our culture of democracy and freedom. Many of us go about our days without a thought that there are still soldiers serving under fire and military families praying that their loved ones come home safely.

But what happens when they return home safely but they cannot assimilate back into the lifestyle they fought to protect?

Seanna Herring-Jensen (San Joaquin Valley Veterans) and Amanda Turpin (Special Projects Officer) attended the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Annual conference in Washington, D.C. June 19–22 to learn more about strategies for prevention, grants and pending legislation relating to homeless veterans. Homeless service providers from all around the country converged and shared ideas and concerns. They heard from dignitaries like Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and met with Retired U.S. Army General Eric K. Shinseki, who now serves as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

WestCare's San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV) is the only nonprofit agency in Fresno that works with homeless veterans. In the next couple of months, SJVV will be opening the "HomeFront" transitional housing program for

women veterans and their children. Twenty female veterans from Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare and Kern Counties will be housed for up to two years while they complete their education, secure employment, and take control of underlying mental health issues. A similar program for male veterans is also planned for Fresno and Reno.



Seanna Herring-Jensen and Retired U.S. Army General Eric K. Shinseki



## Serving Up Positive Youth Development!

### Nevada



By Jennifer Hilton – *WestCare Nevada*

Positive Youth Development is a belief that given guidance and support for caring adults, all youth can grow up healthy and happy and make positive contributions to their families, schools and communities. When WestCare Nevada's Young FACES program, residential substance abuse for teen girls, began putting this in place, even the youth were unsure of what they could to contribute to anyone or anything.

Well these young ladies have taken the ball, or rather the plate for that matter, and run with it! As part of them developing their own programming, they asked that one of the things they do was a community give-back project. At first the girls were vague and undecided on what to do, until one of the young ladies who had lived on the streets for the year prior to coming to treatment suggested feeding the homeless.

That one suggestion has set off a committed team effort that "infects" every girl coming into the program.

In February of this year, the girls began to feed the homeless once a month at one of the many local shelters, Las Vegas Rescue Mission. The girls were so touched and had such emotional reactions that they asked to do more. They now serve once a week at a different shelter each week: Las Vegas Rescue Mission, Shade Tree (a women's shelter), Catholic Charities and St. Vincent's. The girls have become a team of servers that have a reputation of bringing smiles and joy to the shelters they visit, and they have a following of people that come to expect their visits.



### *Client Quotes about how this has affected their lives and recovery!*

*"This is a mirror into my future, if I keep using."* – Kelly, age 15

*"For the 1st time in along time I feel helpful."* – Lacy, age 16

*"I appreciate what I have now. It feels good to help others."*

– Tana, age 17

*"It is a great reminder of why I should never give up on myself."*

*It keeps me holding on to my sobriety."* – Katrina, age 17

## The Mustard Seed Inn Volunteers for Local Letter Carrier's Food Drive

By Sandy Patnode – *Community & Vocational Liaison, WestCare Florida*

The temperatures were warm, but so were the hearts of more than 300 volunteers who enthusiastically volunteered to assist the St. Petersburg Free Clinic on May 9 with the National Letter Carriers Food Drive. Among the volunteers were Mustard Seed Inn staff members Julie Favre, food service specialist and Joe Doswell, maintenance technician and several clients from The Mustard Seed Inn.

The Free Clinic depends on this food drive for a major part of the 1.3 million pounds of food they distribute annually to the community, stated Angel Schumaker, director of Volunteers and Special Events, St. Petersburg Free Clinic. Even in this economic climate, the food drive was able to match last year's

figures of food collected. More than 80 tons of food was collected and will be sorted and distributed to benefit the many partner agencies that helped at this event. Julie Favre stated that The Mustard Seed Inn received two pallets of food, which was distributed between The Mustard Seed and A Turning Point.

As quoted in the "St. Petersburg Free Clinic News Letter," "We, as human beings, are all on life's journey together; we must look out for each other, lend a hand when someone needs one, and work collectively toward common goals that bind us together as one people." On behalf of all us at WestCare GulfCoast Florida, we would like to give a special thanks to Julie, Joe and the clients of The Mustard Seed Inn for their participation.

### Gulf Coast Florida



## A Sheridan Father's Day Tradition

By Jessica L. Witkowski – *Family Therapist*

**W**estCare at Sheridan Correctional Center held their annual Inside Out Dads Father's Day Picnic Friday, June 19. This picnic was eagerly awaited by the 49 clients who participated in the Inside Out Dads Program and earned the opportunity to attend the special Father's Day Picnic with their families. Inside Out Dads is a program designed to help educate incarcerated men as they develop their fathering skills and prepare to be involved and supportive role models to their children. This program is delivered by Judith Pedersen and Jessica Witkowski,



### Illinois



family therapists at the WestCare Sheridan.

Each father was allowed to invite two adults and up to three children to the event, which was scheduled from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. The menu included traditional picnic favorites such as chips, soda, rice crispy treats, hot dogs and hamburgers. Families spread out across the visitor's center to play board games and cards, to draw family posters and color pictures from coloring books. Our recreation therapist, Charlene Hamann, was on hand to assist with activities for the children. Additional WestCare staff volunteer every year to help with the serving of food and clean-up.

The Father's Day Picnic is an event that the clients look forward to every year. It is a privilege to attend and offers a chance to spend extra time with the ones they love when family time is at a

premium. This picnic is also a special opportunity for us as staff to get to know each client not just as an individual, but as a father, a part of their family. This great event gives us a chance to learn more about them through their interactions with their families. We get to see them in a different light.

With so many staff, clients and guests involved, planning an event of this size in a correctional setting takes a lot of time and attention to detail; this year was no exception. Fortunately the smiles on the faces of the clients and their families make it all worth it. The popularity of the picnic grows every year, as evident by increased family attendance. Clients whose families are unable to attend still get to participate and usually sit together as a little family of their own, and spend the afternoon playing cards or board games.

## Did You Know?

### July is National Ice Cream Month!

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan designated July as National Ice Cream Month and the third Sunday of the month as National Ice Cream Day. He recognized ice cream as a fun and nutritious food that is enjoyed by a full 90% of the nation's population. In the proclamation, President Reagan called for all people of the United States to observe these events with "appropriate ceremonies and activities."

In 2009, National Ice Cream Day will be Sunday, July 19.





# Mother's Day Breakfast Was All About "Mom"

By Renee Alexander – *WestCare Kentucky*

**A** Mother's Day breakfast was a fundraiser hosted by WestCare, PADD, Marcum & Wallace Memorial Hospital and Estill Arts Council at Irvine Masonic Lodge dining hall.

H.T. Hardy chats with Marguerite Witt (grandmother of Jenifer Noland) and local dignitary C.D. Noland and his wife Bobby Carol (parents of Jenifer Noland).

Jean Miller (and late Francis Miller) family enjoyed celebrating Mother's day together.



Everyone enjoyed the music provided by three volunteer musicians playing the dulcimers.

# TOUR SEKY Awards "Let's Paint the Town" Funding to Irvine

By Michelle Spencer - *TOUR SEKY*

**T**our Southern and Eastern Kentucky (TOUR SEKY) celebrated National Tourism Week Tuesday, May 12, 2009 with "A Region Under Construction." The luncheon event was held at the center for Rural Development in Somerset, KY. More than 200 guests, including Mayors, judges and tourism officials took part in the celebration. Mrs. Cynthia Rogers and Miss Redbud Madison McCowan were also in attendance.

During the event, TOUR SEKY awarded funds through its "C.I.T.Y." and "Let's Paint the Town" downtown revitalization programs. The C.I.T.Y. program is intended to assist southern and eastern Kentucky downtowns in attracting people to live, work, shop and play. The program has secured more than \$600,000 for

revitalization efforts in the region's downtowns. C.I.T.Y. eligible projects include downtown/streetscape master plans, facade improvements and landscape projects, among others.

"Let's Paint the Town" is a community based program to clean up, paint and revitalize communities in southern and eastern Kentucky. Annually, projects will be eligible for the program with funding of as much as \$2,000 each. Some of the eligible projects under the program include new windows, signage, awnings planters and murals. These opportunities are available through the efforts of Congressman Hal Rogers.

During the event, the city of Irvine was awarded a total of \$4,000 in "Let's Paint the Town" funds. \$2,000 will go toward a history of medicine mural project at Marcum Wallace Memorial Hospital. The WestCare building project also received \$2,000.

For more information about National Tourism Week, or how you can get involved with TOUR SEKY, contact Michelle Spencer 606-6747-6142 or [mspencer@tourseky.com](mailto:m Spencer@tourseky.com).

TOUR SEKY is an initiative of Congressman Hal Rogers. The organization's mission is to educate, expand, develop and market the existing and potential tourism industry throughout southern and eastern Kentucky, while contributing to the economic, cultural growth, health and awareness, and overall quality of life of the region. For additional information about TOUR SEKY contact 606-677-6142.



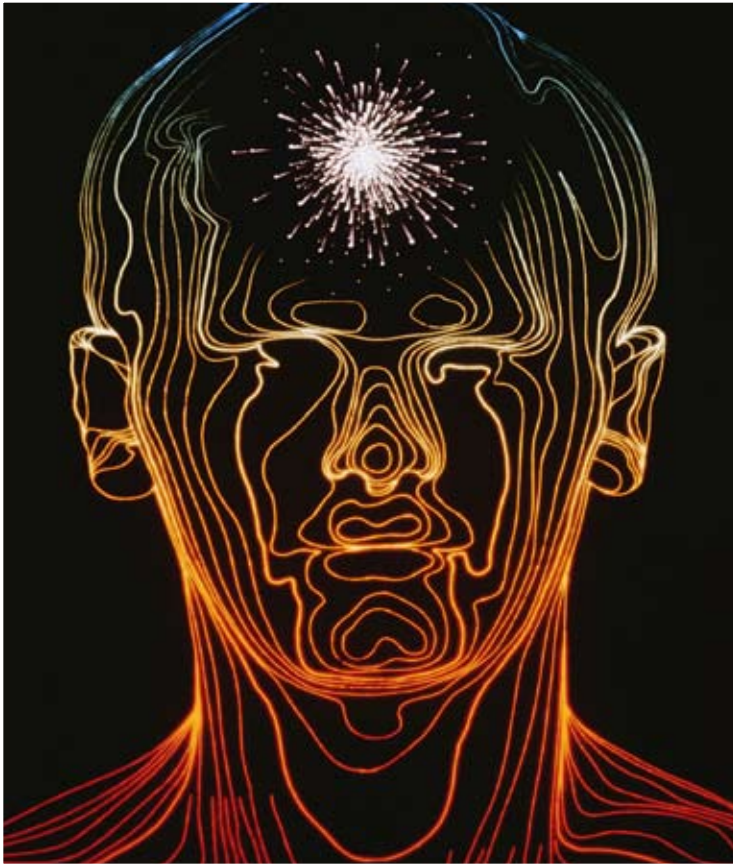
Jeff Crowe (TOUR SEKY), Mrs. Cynthia Rogers, Miss Redbud Madison McCowan, Michelle Spencer (TOUR SEKY) and Irvine Tourism Representatives.

## Need B12?

By Wendy Simpkins

“Inadequate B12 levels are quite common, and harmful, but fortunately easily treated,” says neurologist J. David Spence, MD, at Ontario’s Robarts Research Institute. Increasing age, malabsorption, poor diet, and veganism can lead to deficiencies.

Here’s why some experts believe this B vitamin might rival D as the latest nutrient Americans need in greater quantities.



- **Brain Power** – Older adults with lower-than-average B12 levels are six times more likely to suffer brain shrinkage, a potential forerunner of cognitive impairment and Alzheimer’s disease.
- **Mental Health** – Women with low levels of B12 are more than twice as likely to be depressed as those with normal vitamin status.
- **Bone Strength** – People low in B12 have decreased bone density.
- **Cancer Fighter** – Women who supplement with high doses of this vitamin have 25 percent lower risk for cancer of any kind and 38 percent less risk of breast cancer.
- **Healthy Vision** – macular degeneration for women over 40 by 34 percent.

Animal protein is the best food source of this vitamin, but fortified cereals and supplements don’t require stomach acid for absorption, making them preferable for older people.

SELECTED SOURCES “7 Reasons to Aim for More Vitamin B12 than You’re Probably Getting Now,” Environmental Nutrition, 5/09, “How Common is Vitamin B12 Deficiency?” by L.H. Allen, Am J Clin Nutr, 2/09

## 5 Questions with . . .

**Mike Shields** – Transplanted Detroit, in Las Vegas since 1993. Have been with WestCare since 2002, as Director-Human Resources.

**1. What is your most rewarding experience and biggest challenge working for WestCare?**

Let’s go with the rewarding experience!! Attending a Graduation ceremony really brings home what we do. I am proud to contribute in some small way.

**2. What do you do in your spare time?**

Lots of travel. Reading. Still like to get out and hit the stage as a VERY part-time musician. Have to stick with WATCHING sports now!

**3. What would everyone be surprised to learn about you?**

That somehow, the same woman has been married to me and has put up with me for 32 years! In a row!

**4. What is your proudest personal or professional accomplishment?**

See above, and raising my 2 children into successful adults with their own families.

**5. What is your favorite TV show? If you do not watch TV what is your favorite type of music?**

I watch all sorts of different TV shows. Funny always comes first, then history. Music-wise, I am a “Blues Man.”

