



March 2013

Making the World Braver and Stronger WestCare Helps Pop Star Lady Gaga's Crusade

By Erin Kinard – *Clinical Director-WestCare Nevada*

When I first received the email inquiring if I wanted to represent WestCare by volunteering with the Born Brave Bus Experience, I almost fell out of my chair. I thought to myself, "NO WAY, THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!" I grabbed a little slice of composure and professionally responded by agreeing to volunteer in support of the mission spearheaded by Mother Monster herself. My co-worker, Lauren Cardarelli, was also selected to volunteer and we both struggled to stifle our inner-Gaga as the event approached.

This was a program presented by the Born This Way Foundation and the Born Brave Bus Tour was designed to be an interactive, tailgate experience that would follow Lady Gaga's Born This Way Ball which started in January and is

scheduled through March 2013.

We showed up the first day of the event, not really knowing what we were expected to do, although we were prepped and trained that her tour provided a safe space for young people to connect with on-site local, community resources including behavioral and mental health services, school psychologists, mentoring, volunteer opportunities, bullying, and suicide prevention resources. Then we were given our assignment; create a grid on a white board/table consisting of a list of character strengths and a list of the trusted resources (i.e. parent, sibling, etc). We would then ask the event participants to select their top three strengths and their top three trusted resources. Over the

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Born Brave Bus

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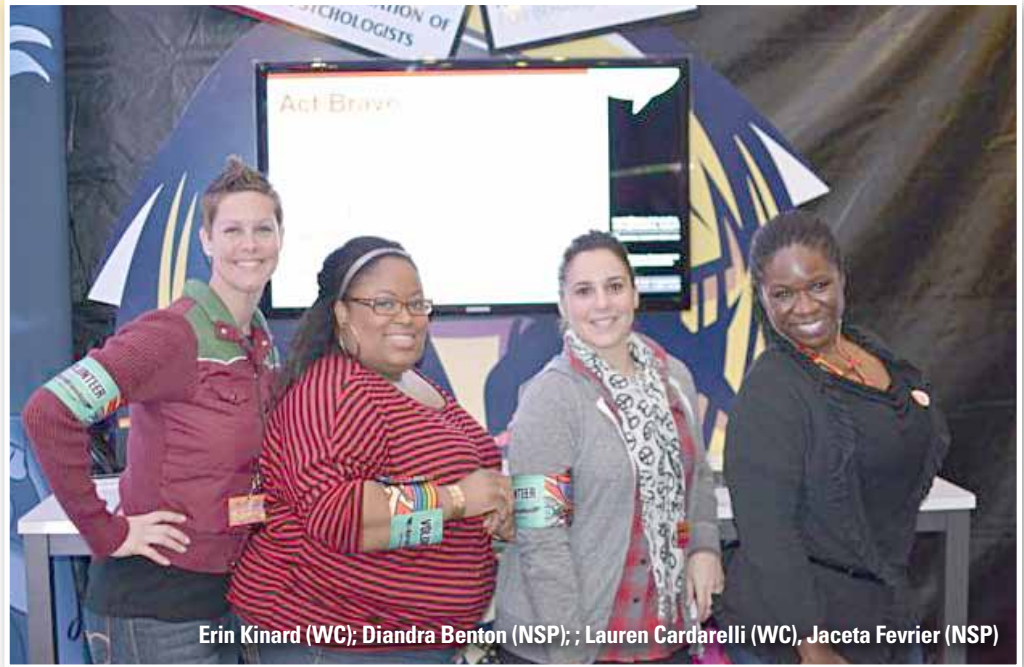
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Kudos



Making the World Braver and Stronger *(continued from page one)*

course of the two days we volunteered, we interacted with 306 individuals who collectively listed creativity, loyalty, and kindness as their top strengths. When we tallied the results for the top trusted resource in their lives, the option of “parent” was chosen the most, on both days. Lauren and I were thrilled with this information and hope was restored. Day in and day out, we bear witness to dysfunction and dysfunctional families; but not on these two days, not at the Born Brave Bus Experience, parents ranked highest in the adolescent’s life and this was breathtaking.

At the end of the second night, Lauren and I were blessed to receive a concert ticket which was completely unexpected. Her show was just as amazing as her philanthropic efforts to make this world a braver, kinder, accepting place to live. WestCare was so proud to be a part of the cause!



Erin Kinard (WC); Diandra Benton (NSP); Lauren Cardarelli (WC), Jaceta Fevrier (NSP)



Lady Gaga



Lauren Cardarelli



Lady Gaga



Lady Gaga



Back to Basics

By Jim Carr – Assistant Director

“Why Are We Here?” This is a great question and one the Sheridan WestCare counselors discussed recently as part of an in-service. Because of the Lincoln’s birthday holiday in Illinois, client groups were suspended and staff was divided into morning and afternoon sessions for the in-service. The focus of the session was on “back to basics,” with each clinical building team sharing one of their most difficult hall issues. Another hall then gave feedback on possible ways to deal with the issue. Many practical and innovative suggestions were made, with teams feeling a real sense of connection on dealing with the mission of the therapeutic community at Sheridan.

The philosophy “Why Are We Here” written by Richard Beauvais was discussed line by line, with emphasis on why each counselor chose to work at Sheridan. The discussion became very personal, with sharing of stories of commitment and personal growth. All this was done in the familiar group circle of sanctuary used daily by clients in their groups. The in-service gave all a sense of community and mutual support so vital to the therapeutic community.



Editor’s note: “Just for Today” is an uplifting daily affirmation that circulates in WestCare’s Central Region. In Illinois, Sheridan counselor Steven Gledhill followed up a recent message with his own recovery perspective.

Trapped In a House On Fire

By Steven Gledhill – Sheridan Substance Abuse Counselor

Surrender can go one way or the other with step 1. I might admit that I am powerless over my addiction but then still surrender to my addiction when there isn’t a viable higher power. My addiction is a power greater than myself. I can’t change it; I can’t stop it; if I can’t beat it, I’ll join it and surrender to the ritualistic power that my addiction has over me. OR, I can come into a connection with a power greater than myself; and more powerful than my addiction.

I am trapped in a house on fire . . . thick flames and smoke is all around me . . . everything is on fire. I admit I am powerless to the fire, but there is nowhere to go. I am on the floor breathing my last breaths as smoke and flames are overtaking me. But then suddenly it happens. Someone is lifting to my feet. It’s the fireman. He is equipped to not get burned. He wraps me in his coat, puts an oxygen mask over my face and says, “Let’s go . . . come with me!” There is no doubt in my mind that I am not better off without the fireman. I believe, or at least hope enough, that the fireman can and will rescue me if I give up my position and go with him (steps 1 and 2). I suppose I could look back or try to hold on to some things in the house; maybe grab onto some things I can carry with me. Then the fireman says, “Let go . . . that’s too much weight . . . and

besides, it’s all on fire!” I decide that the fireman is right and I let it go and do what he says for me to do, and go where he says for me to go (step 3).

The house is my life and the fire is my addiction. The fireman is my higher power that saved me from my addiction. I look back at my life and it’s smoldering. It’s in ruins. I look back at the fireman and he is dressed like a doctor. The doctor helps me to heal. I look at myself and see that I am much better. I look back at him and he is dressed like a construction worker. He is wearing a tool belt and hard hat. He also has a tool belt and hard hat for me, and says to me lovingly, “Let’s go . . . we have work to do.” He is committed with me to do the work to rebuild my life until it is working better than ever (steps 4-12).

Every day, as I surrender to my higher power in recovery, compelled by loving kindness, my Higher Power is committed to me and the work of rebuilding the house that is my life . . . it was a cottage; but I have seen the blue print . . . my life’s not a cottage according to these plans . . . it’s a castle.



Sheridan Substance Abuse Counselor Steven Gledhill. More on this perspective can be found at:

www.freedomfrommedom.com



WestCare Express Family Feedback

“The February Express . . . was a beautiful tribute to the work of WestCare employees, their families and clients. I am going to appropriate Maurice Lee’s words about his wife: (Valentine Message). They are perfect for weddings, and as a notary I’m always looking for new material!” – Marianne Benvenuti – *Regional Controller-Guidance/Care Center, Florida*

“Thank you for the uplifting articles and stories about WestCare. There are some great programs all over the United States, and, I was pleasantly surprised to see something on Guam.” – Mary Jordan-Church – *Crisis Response Team-California*

Foundation



Information Technology

An occasional column of advice from our Information Technology team

IT Corner

Connecting to a Webinar

By Sean Harrigan – *Systems Administrator, WestCare Foundation*

Editor’s note: Many of us are still mystified about ‘Webinars’ and how to access them. IT Guru Sean Harrigan offers a refresher

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 IT Help Desk

- Email: helpdesk@westcare.com
- Phone: 702-410-7595 or Ext. 10200 from a Polycom phone
- Intranet: <https://secure.westcare.com/intra/ctl/techsupport/request>



Daylight Savings Time Begins March 10th



A Point in Time

By Brittany Funes – AmeriCorps Member

On January 25, 2013 WestCare staff Anthony Nangauta, Carmelita Calvo, and Lolita Munoz along with AmeriCorps members Theresa Puzan, Anjelika Castro and Brittany Funes met bright and early at the Salvation Army offices in Tiyan to volunteer with The Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Authority and the Guam Homeless Coalition, in the annual "Point-In-Time" (PIT) Homeless Count.

Our Pacific Islands group was assigned to the central villages of Asan, Piti, and Agana Heights, taking with them incentive/care packages containing water, soap, toilet tissue, toothbrushes and canned goods such as Spam – a local favorite!

During the all-day venture they were able to come into contact with many persons in need. The experience helped staff and AmeriCorps members better understand the trials and circumstances that bring about homelessness in our community, and make them better able to identify gaps in services, as well as better able to provide referrals and educate the community at large.

Each year the PIT count takes place across the United States and is coordinated locally at the state, county or territorial level. The count reveals the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. The outreach will be beneficial to helping Guam determine existing resources, identify gaps, and highlights the progress towards ending homelessness.

Last year, the PIT count identified 1,301 people that were homeless or living in conditions not meant for human habitation. Preliminary data of the 2013 PIT Homeless Count was shared with the Guam Homeless Coalition, volunteers, the community, and policy makers, and indicates a slight drop in homeless rates during this year.

It was a great joy to join other community volunteers in donating time and resources to further progress in ending Guam's homelessness, and team members are already signed up to participate again next year! The teamwork and collaboration served everyone well in "Uplifting the Human Spirit."

The WestCare West Management Team: (Front) Maurice Lee, Senior VP, (L-R Back) Amy Roukie (Arizona and Nevada), Sarah Thomas-Nededog (Pacific Islands), Richard Jimenez(Wyoming and Washington), and Shawn Jenkins (California).



Guamcount: WestCare staff members gather at daybreak for important census



When WestCare's West Region leadership team manages to get together in person, it's a rare occasion. That's understandable. For example, the distance between Las Vegas and Guam is 6, 227 miles. For you numbers crunchers, that's 32,878,560 feet. We haven't calculated the number of swim strokes that might be needed.



Pacific Islands



Thousands of Guamians live in lean-to shelters . . .

. . . along paths winding through the lush interior of the island.

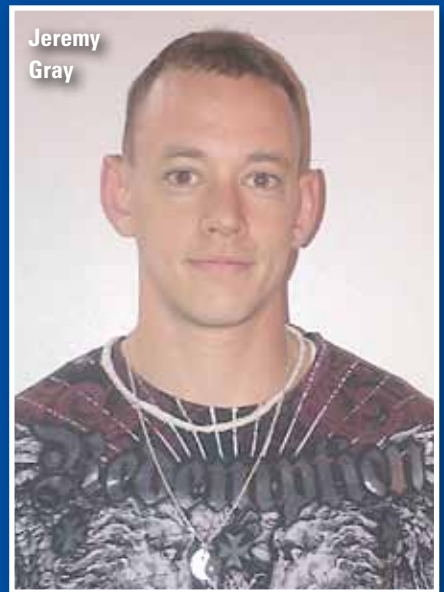


When I Get Out

An original poem by Jeremy Gray – *Keys to Recovery Client*

I'm outside and I'm free and clear,
 Or maybe that's just what's in my ear.
 I have so much time to think of what's right,
 I think of those things all day and all night.
 I'm thinking ahead of the things that I'll do,
 One step at a time, analyzing each step, too.
 I realize now how wrong the things were that I've done,
 A man taught me through a Book, because I'm his son.
 I've been on the wrong path for too many years,
 Faking my death, bringing people tears.
 The shoulders of my family are getting tired and weak,
 Now their forgiveness is all I can seek.
 There are demons all around me but I just block them out,
 Trying to figure out what this poem's about.
 As I open the Book it all seems so clear,
 Taking away my confusion and even my fear.
 I wave at my future with a smile on my face,
 But my hand is getting tired, because I'm still in this place.
 I was getting used to feeling so helpless.
 Now I truly believe that can I can go through this.
 I know I can do it, I'll prove it, you'll see,
 But the biggest satisfaction will be proving it to me.
 My actions will speak more that the words that I say,
 But until I get out, I have the power to pray.

Florida



Jeremy Gray

New Digs for Village South:

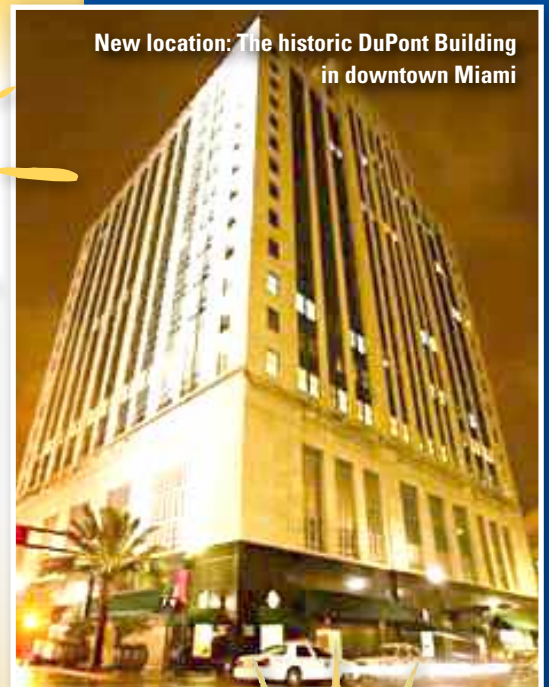
Village South/WestCare Foundation
 169 East Flagler Street, Suite 1300
 Miami, Florida 33131
 Our main phone number is
 (305-573-3784).



Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to you visiting our new offices!



New location: The historic DuPont Building in downtown Miami



Inspiration . . . From One Who Has Been There

By Eric Cox – *SAP Client and Office Coordinator*

Kentucky



John Brady addresses staff and client



When thinking of people who use and abuse drugs, the basic text of Narcotics Anonymous describes them as; "Purse snatching junkies," and the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says they are "derelicts." For myself and many others, viewing drug addicts and alcoholics as such is nowhere near taboo. This was until I had the opportunity to hear Mr. John Brady, attorney; tell his incredible story of having it all, losing it all, and gaining it back.

As most all addicts and alcoholics are, Mr. Brady was a "go-getter." As a child he strived to excel in everything that he did, including sports and academics. Growing up in a home with judges and college professors as parents, nothing less was accepted. Brady pushed himself straight into a rampant addiction to heroin.

Being a successful criminal attorney held no immunity against the horrors of addiction. Brady's addiction lead him from his American dream family, prestigious career, and exemplary lifestyle, to a practicing lawyer living in a homeless shelter.

Brady emphasized that he had to change his 'core beliefs.' "Things that were instilled in me at a young age had to cease," Brady noted. Being physically, spiritually, and emotionally broken, and having no where to turn; Brady became an active member in Alcoholics Anonymous. Through the process of working the 12 Steps, working with a sponsor, and doing service work, (all three are a must) Brady began to see positive changes in his recovery and life in general.

Mr. Brady is now clean and sober and gaining back all of the things he once lost. Brady left us with the following; "Even though there are things I can't get back, I now have the ability to stop, process, and act appropriately to every situation."

This just goes to show us that no matter your situation, race, sex, religion, career, or any other defining characteristic; the disease of addiction affects us all. On behalf of the Boyle County Detention Center Substance Abuse Program staff and residents, we would like to thank Mr. John Brady for his inspiring story.

Beautiful Family, Wonderful Story

By Anna Coleman – *Program Coordinator*

Keith and Tammy Johnson were brought to the WestCare shelter on January 13, 2013 by social services. They had been living in a house with no electric and only a kerosene heater for heat. Keith is a Veteran of the Navy. They have 3 small children.

The shelter staff worked with the family and on January 28, 2013 they applied for housing assistance through the Big Sandy Area Community Action Program Continuum of Care Grant. They were given the Supportive Housing Program which will provide them with 2 years free rent. The program also paid the deposit on the rent and all utilities for the family.

They moved into their home on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2013.

On February 18, 2013 Keith started working at Pikeville Medical Center as a Maintenance Technician. I recently spoke to a Veteran's representative and he is in the process of working on an agreement with Pikeville Medical Center so all Veteran employees can use their GI Bill for on the job training, which would provide an extra income for their families. Keith was the inspiration for this program initiative.

Through all their trials and tribulations the family was a happy, well rounded, God-fearing couple who provided stability for their children and continually made life "normal for them." I hope we made a small impact on their lives because I know they sure made a great influence on ours.



Homeless Veteran Finds More Than Just a Home. He's Found a Family.

By Rhonda Jordal – *Chairman*

Karl Hartkemeyer served his country in the U.S. Army. He is now being thanked by the Family Alliance for Veterans of America, which is making sure he has a stable job and comfortable housing.

To express his own appreciation, Karl brought in chocolates for each of the females at headquarters in Iowa. (See photo on right).

Another member of the Family! Welcome, Mr. Hartkemeyer!



FAVA Follow Up

Here's an update on FAVA's receipt of a Hansen Foundation Grant. The money is being used to purchase much-needed computers and they began arriving in mid-February.

▶ Pictured is Andres, a Waldorf (IA) College Communications intern.

Iowa FAVA CORNER



▶ Mr. Hartkemeyer and his new FAVA Family.

Sunday, March 17th is St. Patrick's Day



St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17, the saint's religious feast day and the anniversary of his death in the fifth century. The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for over 1,000 years. On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink and feast – on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.



Facts about Irish Americans

- There are 34.7 million U.S. residents with Irish ancestry. This number is more than seven times the population of Ireland itself.
- Irish is the nation's second most frequently reported ancestry, ranking behind German.
- Across the country, 11 percent of residents lay claim to Irish ancestry. That number more than doubles to 23 percent in the state of Massachusetts.
- Irish is the most common ancestry in 54 U.S. counties, of which 44 are in the Northeast. Middlesex County in Massachusetts tops the list with 348,978 Irish Americans, followed by Norfolk County, MA, which has 203,285.

Collaboration for the Good of the Whole

By Dr. James G. White – *Regional VP-WestCare Wisconsin*

Pastor Mark Fossie, CEO of M&S Clinical Services, a Central Intake Unit contractor with the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division, Rochelle Landingham, Family Services Coordinator for WestCare Wisconsin, and Coalition Lead for the Families Moving Forward Providers Network, Sue Gadacz, Director Community Services Branch, Milwaukee County BHD, Shawn Green, Executive Director of Faith Partnership Network, and Dr. James G. White, Regional Vice President, WestCare Wisconsin participated in the February 2013 coalition meeting of the Families Moving Forward Providers Network.

Six of the (16) member agencies of the group were recently awarded a \$176,000 prevention grant by Milwaukee County due to the advocacy efforts and innovative approach of Ms. Gadacz Community Services Branch to engage grassroots community stakeholders in preparations for behavioral health systems changes. WestCare Wisconsin was awarded \$49,500 for an effort that will focus on educating and raising awareness about preventing Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

Fossie, Landingham, Green, and White all participated in a national cohort of faith and community based summit convened in 2010 by SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse

Treatment or C-SAT. Jocelyn Whitfield, an administrator for SAMHSA CSAT and the White House Office for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships led the effort to engage stakeholder networks from across the country in a more strategic effort to foster collaboration between faith based and community based organizations. Whitfield who participated in the meeting via teleconference has been a strong supporter of the group and praised them for their collaborative efforts with the County.

As the Coalition Leaders, WestCare Wisconsin Family Services Coordinator Rochelle Landingham, Shawn Green, Director of Faith Partnership Network (a WestCare Wisconsin Nonprofit Incubator tenant), and Pastor/Therapist Mark Fossie of M&S Clinical Services continue to advance an aggressive agenda bring institutional leaders and grassroots stakeholders to the table to improve the quality of behavioral health services delivery in Milwaukee County.

Wisconsin



WestCare Regional VP Dr. White, at right

A Community is Only As Strong As . . .

WestCare Wisconsin has been invited to serve as Project Management Consultant to Faith Builds Community, a nonprofit housing development corporation that builds new homes for low income families in partnership with the City of Racine. WestCare Wisconsin Housing Coordinator Travis Landry inspects a new construction homesite at 61 Riverside Drive in Racine.



Gather of Families Moving Forward Providers Network



March Calendar

March 2nd
Read Across America Day

March 4th
9:00am - 10:00am
Central KY-CAC Meeting
Irvine, KY

March 7th
2:30pm - 3:30pm
FL Village South CAC Meeting
5:30pm/ET (TBD)

March 7th - 8th
CA Faces of Change

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

March 10th
Daylight Savings Time Begins

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

March 14th
5:00am - 6:30am
FLGC-CAC Fundraiser Breakfast
8:00am/ET

March 14th
3:00pm - 4:00pm
FAVA Building Meeting
3:00pm/PT - 5:00pm/ET

March 15th
10:30am - 11:30am
Eastern KY CAC Meeting
10:30am/PT - 1:30pm/ET
Mr. Bairds Office

March 19th
8:00am - 9:00am Tentative
Executive Committee Meeting
8:00am/PT - 11:00am/ET

March 20th
9:00am - 11:00am
FLG/CC-CAC Meeting
Noon/ET - 9:00am/ET

March 21st
First Day of Spring

March 26th
Passover

March 31st
Easter Sunday

March

Health Awareness

March is National Nutrition Month

Celebration Ideas -

Courtesy of - www.eatright.org

March is National Nutrition Month. During formerly known as the American Dietetic Association, encourages its members to take part in an education campaign to increase the public's awareness of the importance of good nutrition and position AND members as the experts in nutrition. Registered dietitians (RDs) are encouraged to take advantage of this national campaign to raise their profile as nutrition experts among patients, coworkers, clients, business associates, and the general public.



The National Nutrition Month theme for 2013 is *"Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day."* This theme encourages personalized healthy eating styles, based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 recommendations and MyPlate messages. It also recognizes that food preferences, lifestyle, cultural and ethnic traditions, and health concerns all impact individual food choices. Registered dietitians play a critical role in helping people *"eat right, their way, every day."*

This theme lends itself nicely to a variety of activities and events. You can celebrate National Nutrition Month in your businesses, work settings, and community in many ways. Use the annual theme designated by AND as a way to narrow your focus. Use this opportunity to raise your profile among colleagues, patients, and the community as a whole.

National Nutrition Month materials, including handouts and promotional materials, are available on the AND Web site at <http://www.eatright.org/nnm/>. The following are just a few ideas to help plan your celebration.

In a Workplace or Community

- E-mail a nutrition fact of the day to your colleagues every day during March. Post the same fact in a visible place in your workplace.
- Incorporate National Nutrition Month tips on your Web site and as part of your signature on e-mails during March.
- Write an article for your local newspaper on "Nutrition Facts and Myths."
- Use technology. Think about the listservs, chat rooms, blogs, and Web sites you interact with on a regular basis. During March, incorporate nutrition messages into your posts and generate nutrition discussions whenever possible.
- Prepare a tasty, healthy treat for your coworkers. Provide the recipe and nutrient analysis.
- Approach local senior groups and other clubs/organizations that have speakers at their regular meetings. Suggest a nutrition presentation during March.
- Design a nutrition true/false quiz for your coworkers. Provide small prizes for those who answer correctly. Enter all participants into a drawing for a larger door prize (nutrition related, of course)!



Human Resources

Corner

By Michael Shields – *Human Resources Director, WestCare Foundation*

As you know, we are trying to improve the manner in which we communicate career opportunities. All new opportunities are sent out via email to all employees, as well as posted on the WestCare Intranet site. Interest in possible movement from one WestCare Region to another has increased. Unfortunately, I have found there is confusion about the process.

As you well may expect, “we have a form for that”! Anyone interested in possibly relocating from one WestCare Region to another, or even from one part of your particular State to another, should contact Human Resources to request a “Staff Transfer Form.” Basically it is just a document expressing your interest in a particular position. It notifies your current supervisor of your interest as well as the supervisor at the WestCare operation in which you are interested. Supervisors on both ends work together to make the transition a smooth one if your skills, education and experience match the career opportunity.

If you are a supervisor, and one of your staff members has an interest in moving, you need to be supportive of the move. It may be for a potential promotion. It may be because the staff member wants a change in climate. It may be a spouse has to move, and it’s a good opportunity for a current WestCare staff member to stay with us in another location. Whatever the reason, and despite your reluctance to lose a good employee, you need to help that person grow. You should never be in the position of making it difficult for someone to improve his or her lot in life, or to make a move that is suddenly required because a spouse has been transferred in his or her position.

We are in the business of “*Uplifting.*” There is a lot of satisfaction in seeing one of your “mentees” grow. It’s also the right thing to do. Who knows, you may be on the receiving end of this process at some point, and “inherit” a superstar from another part of WestCare!

Please support your staff in their career growth, whether it’s their interest in a higher level position on your team; in another department in your particular operation; or in a move across the country! – *Thanks, Mike*



The Month of March

March Birthstone: The Aquamarine, which reflects – faithfulness, courage and friendship. The Traditional Metaphysical Properties for the March Birthstone Aquamarine are awareness, quick response and easing communication problems. The healing properties of the March birthstone are reputed to be effective for health problems relating to throat problems and stress-related illness.

March Birth Flower:

The March Birth Flower is the Jonquil (aka Daffodil or Narcissus), as shown in the picture on the left.

Sign of the Zodiac and Dates:

Pisces – February 20 - March 20.

Characteristics of Pisces: Romantic, Generous, Receptive, Honest and Affectionate.



Golden State Goes Red

The Bakersfield staff participated in Wear Red Day for the Go Red for Women initiative. In honor of the Go Red campaign and the start of National Heart Month, staff and residents received information about heart health. Informational pamphlets and activity sheets included how to recognize and act in the event of a heart attack, as well as preventing/maintaining heart-related conditions such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.



California

And in Fresno . . .

Two hours north in Fresno, staff at the Martin Luther King campus promoted Healthy Heart Month with a variety of activities.

▲ Pictured are, clockwise: Brian Tuttle, Danny O'Neal, Melodie Estle, Holly Bishop, Heather Mahan, Sarah Marks, Mamie Welch and Rashid Frye.

◀ Pictured, left to right: Barbara Varner, Raymond Gonzales, Burnett Irons, Lynn Pimentel, Margaret Sosa and Susan Shaw.

Passover Begins March 26th

The eight-day festival of Passover is celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan. It commemorates the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. And, by following the rituals of Passover, we have the ability to relive and experience the true freedom that our ancestors gained.

Courtesy of – www.chabad.org

The History of Passover

After many decades of slavery to the Egyptian pharaohs, during which time the Israelites were subjected to backbreaking labor and unbearable horrors, God saw the people's distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: "Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me." But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed God's command. God then sent upon Egypt ten devastating plagues, afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops.

At the stroke of midnight of 15 Nissan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), God visited the last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians, killing all their firstborn. While doing so, God spared the Children of Israel, "passing over" their homes – hence the name of the holiday. Pharaoh's resistance was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land.

The Israelites left in such a hurry, in fact, that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise. Six hundred thousand adult males, plus many more women and children, left Egypt on that day, and began the trek to Mount Sinai and their birth as God's chosen people.



Random Acts of Kindness . . . Year-'Round!

By Michael Mygind – *WestCare California*

California

Typically, Random Acts of kindness week lasts from February 11th until the 17th, but the staff of WestCare California set their sights beyond to make *"Paying it forward"* a regular habit. From feeding the hungry to lending a stranger a bus token, these acts have instilled a sense of pride in staff for the work that we do and that helping is not restricted to just the field of recovery.

To spread the spirit, the OPTIONS program has devoted a wall at their site that their consumers will write acts of kindness on, actions that they've seen or pledged to push as a life-long commitment. One staff member provided tuition so that an underprivileged person could take CNA courses. Another staff member donated half of the clothes in her closet to the homeless. Other staff members have noted acts of kindness that strangers have committed such as simply holding a door open or letting them use a cell phone instead of a pay phone.

While there are many more deeds to list, it's evident that WestCare is truly about *"Uplifting the Human Spirit!"* Great job, everyone!



Frank Torrez, OPTIONS, shows a consumer the proper way to knot a tie.

Easter Sunday is March 31st

Courtesy of – www.timeanddate.com and www.123holiday.net

In Pagan times, many groups of people organized spring festivals. Many of these celebrated the re-birth of nature, the return the land to fertility and the birth of many young animals. These are the origins of the Easter eggs that we still hunt for and eat.

In Christian times, the spring began to be associated with Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. The crucifixion is remembered on Good Friday and the resurrection is remembered on Easter Sunday. The idea of the resurrection joined with the ideas of re-birth in Pagan beliefs.

For people with strong Christian beliefs, the cross that Jesus was crucified on and his resurrection are important symbols of the period around Easter. Other symbols of Easter include real eggs or eggs manufactured from a range of materials, nests, lambs and rabbits or hares. Sometimes these symbols are combined, for example, in candy models of rabbits with nests full of eggs. Eggs, rabbits, hares and young animals are thought to represent the re-birth and return to fertility of nature in the spring.



Easter Facts

- The custom of giving eggs at Easter time has been traced back to Egyptians, Persians, Gauls, Greeks and Romans, to whom the egg was a symbol of life.
- In medieval times a festival of egg-throwing was held in church, during which the priest would throw a hard-boiled egg to one of the choir boys. It was then tossed from one choir boy to the next and whoever held the egg when the clock struck 12 was the winner and retained the egg.
- Easter is now celebrated (in the words of the Book of Common Prayer) on the first Sunday after the full moon which happens on or after March 21, the Spring Equinox.
- The first Easter baskets were made to look like bird's nests.
- The traditional act of painting eggs is called Pysanka.

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.



Joan Forreider

◀ Florida

Kudos to **Joan Forreider**, Research Assistant with the CSAT-funded Offender Re-Entry Program in Key West, FL who is one of the first people in the U.S. to earn the GAIN PMET (Program Evaluation and Evaluation Training) certification from Chestnut Health System. The PMET certification process is a challenging one, designed to help program managers and evaluators effectively use GAIN data to improve practice. At the conclusion of the current ORP grant Joan, originally from Michigan, will be joining another newly-funded Offender Re-Entry Project serving women and their children in Key West.



John Bascom

Georgia ▲

Our Community Service Coordinator in Georgia, **John Bascom**, continues to quietly go about his duties . . . helping his beloved city of Atlanta and surrounding environs. His work certainly deserves more attention than merely a mention in this section.

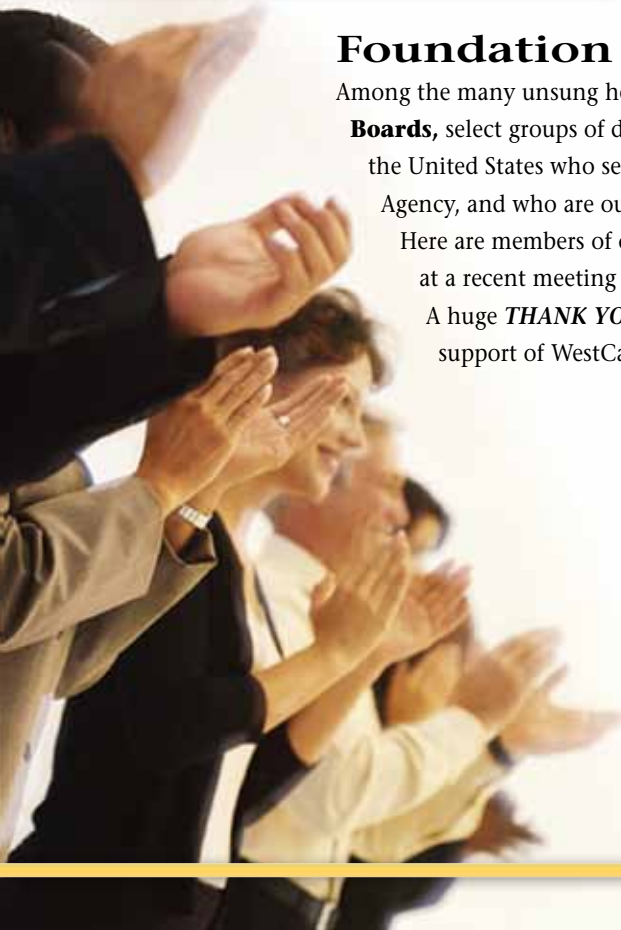
That said, and concluding Black history month, WestCare salutes this wonderful gentleman whose life-long leadership has served as a model for those in his wide circle. His grandson once wrote: "John Bascom is one of Atlanta's most dedicated political and civil rights activists."

Mr. Bascom was once honored for his work with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and is pictured here receiving accolades from former Atlanta Mayor and U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young. God bless you, **John Bascom!**

Foundation

Among the many unsung heroes of WestCare, are the **WestCare Boards**, select groups of dedicated volunteers from throughout the United States who serve as 'civilian watchdogs' for our Agency, and who are our eyes and ears in their communities. Here are members of our Foundation and Regional boards at a recent meeting in Nevada.

A huge **THANK YOU** to all Board members for your support of WestCare!



Kudos!

WestCare Honors Its Employees and Clients

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WestCare employees have earned special recognition from their supervisors:



Mark Binowski

▶ California

In California, **Mark Binowski** has been chosen as the Employee of the Month for playing the role as the only Outpatient Counselor in Bakersfield while they have been searching for relief. He has gone through each day with a positive attitude and has taken on the challenge admirably. *Great job, Mark!*



Late last month, **Richard B.**, Lead Resident at WestCare's Veterans Plaza, noticed a suspicious truck that was empty and left running. Richard took the initiative and called Fresno police and gave them the plate number.



Richard B.

The vehicle was stolen, and had been abandoned behind the Veterans Plaza complex. Thanks to Richard's actions, the police wrapped up the situation and were able to return the vehicle to its

rightful owner. This was done selflessly as an act of good-faith, but on behalf of SJVV and WestCare California, we would like to

Richard and his fellow helpful veterans for not only their years of service to our country, but their continued service to all of those around them.



And a wonderful job by California's **Rashid Frye**, who hosted several members of the famed Tuskegee Airmen at his Bakersfield Church during Black History Month.

Rashid, (*shown in the middle of photo*), is himself a military veteran and a terrific WestCare employee!



Rashid Frye

